THEATRE ORGAN

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

VOLUME 12 NUMBER 4 AUGUST, 1970

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THEATRE ORGAN

Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society

Volume 12, Number 4

August, 1970

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THE COVER PHOTO

Bill Lamb Photo

Radio City Music Hall organists Jack Ward, Dick Leibert and Ray Bohr performed at the Fabulous Fifteenth. Convention coverage begins on Page 26.

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ANOTHER SWAN, ANOTHER SONG

We have the good fortune to have the well demonstrated leadership of our new President, Stillman Rice, available to keep us moving forward. He will be ably assisted by Vice President Lee Erwin from New York, Secretary Treasurer Mary Bowles from Delaware Valley, and the consistent efforts of the new Executive Secretary from Connecticut Valley, Mrs. Eleanor Weaver.

Please note all the new addresses on this page. The Board of Directors and the President have appointed me the publisher of Theatre Organ to continue the team effort that is now producing the magazine. This means that all material for the magazine (except advertising) will continue to be sent to P. O. Box 2329.

My heartiest congratulations to Maestro Claud Beckham, Chairman Bob Balfour and all the superlative crew that accomplished the impossible . . . a New York Convention. They even timed the weather so we could all get home before the long, hot summer arrived. No one that attended will ever forget it and those of us who were there may well be a little patronizing about it. One of the nicest things noticed was the return of the fun and enjoyment that appeared at the Tulsa Regional. Another was the constant help from the native New Yorkers in getting around on the subways. This was not what one expected from reading the newspapers.

This will be the last time I occupy this page and Betty and I wish to thank all of the officers and staff for their help together with all those who have helped to make this an exciting and busy two years. We hope the friends we have made will remain so as this is the true reward for the amount of work that was required of us.

Many things are in sight for our Society as long as we keep working to make our great instruments available for the artists to play. Let's keep the friendship warm among us. This is as essential as all the leather, wire and wood that the organ makers ever used. Thanks for the memories.

Al Mason

Al Mason, *Past President*

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AN ACRE OF SEATS IN A PALACE OF SPLENDOR

By Bill Peterson, Number 22 in a series
LOEW'S THEATRE — AKRON, OHIO

This theatre is now the Akron Civic Theatre, and was designed in Moorish style by John Eberson. The house opened on April 20, 1929 with clouds and twinkling stars on its atmospheric ceiling. After 41 years the house is in immaculate condition.

The organ is a 3/13 Wurlitzer style 240 with waterfall console and rotating lift. Members of the Western Reserve Chapter of ATOS have restored the organ and plan to present concerts in the future.

— Photo courtesy of David Vargo

"The Voice of the Silent Drama"

The Kilgen Wonder Organ

by H. A. Sommer

Photography by John Sagorka Photo Copying by Bill Lamb

PART 1

When the popularity of theatre organs and the increasing demand for them created a "sellers market" in the '20's, a number of firms well-known for their church organs diverted some of their effort in order to cash in on the shortage of instruments designed to both accompany silent films and serve as solo instruments. The Kilgen Company of St. Louis, a firm with a history of organ building going back several hundred years in Europe, answered the call to a limited degree. George Kilgen remembers those hectic days vividly.

IN THIS present day it is most unusual to meet a person who was intimately engaged in the manufacture of theatre pipe organs, supervised theatre installations and was well acquainted with such pioneers as Hope-Jones, Marr, Colton, Moller and others of the golden era of the theatre organ. Such a person is George J. Kilgen, namesake of the grandfather who started the company in the United States. He lives now in Sacramento, California.

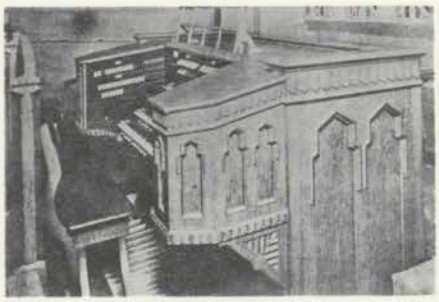
First, George filled me in on Kilgen history, which starts back in the middle ages. In 1639 when France was persecuting Huguenots (Protestants), young Sebastian Kilgen, a French Huguenot, fled into Germany after being wounded in the strife of intolerance at home. He took refuge in a monastery near Durlach, then the capital of the Duchy of Baden. While recovering from his injuries he heard the sound that was to shape his life – the organ in the monastery chapel. He learned that the instrument had been built at the monastery and his deep interest convinced the monks that he would be an apt apprentice to the art of organ building.

He completed his first instrument a year later, in 1640. Through the efforts of Sebastian and succeeding Kilgen generations, Durlach became famous as a "pipe organ town."

In 1851, George Kilgen (grandfather of our story teller), decided he'd had enough of Europe and its continual wars (the French invaded and burned Durlach to the ground, including the Kilgen shop, at one time). He decided to seek his fortune in the New World and in 1851 established a small shop in New York. A few organs were built there, but it wasn't until he moved his family to St. Louis in 1873 and set up shop there that the Kilgen reputation for excellence caught on. Three times during the ensuing half century the Kilgen factory facilities had to be enlarged to meet the incoming orders. There was always a pride in craftmanship at Kilgen which justified the Latin slogan on the Kilgen shield – "Mirabile auditu" (wonderful to hear).

Although George Kilgen has been retired for several years, he has a remarkable memory, especially in the organ field and of the St. Louis factory. He was responsible for many of the patents developed, particularly concerning electricity and was the designer of the famous Kilgen magnet, which is still said to be the quietest and most efficient of all, also the most expensive to make. This was important, because it helped bridge the great change from tracker and pneumatic to electro-pneumatic action early in the century.

His father, Charles, was a man of the "old school," believing deeply in tradition, as applied to the organ business and in the raising of his sons. As an organ builder he believed that the only place for an organ was in a church, auditorium or a home parlor. He was vehemently opposed to the building of theatre organ's. His sons, however, who took over about the time theatres were demanding organs, thought otherwise. George was playing on a clandestine football team, unknown to his father, and at age fifteen broke his arm during scrimmage. It had been a Kilgen tradition to apprentice all sons in organ building, so during his recovery his father decided that the time had come for George's apprenticeship to begin. Hence into the plant, and George's career in pipe organs started. The elder Kilgen held a firm unswerving view on pneumatic action and was very perturbed when George built the first all-electric action organ and installed it in a church in Kansas City. Normally the plant would build four to six organs in a year, depending on



Mainstay of the Kilgen Co. was always church organs. This stopkey console controlled an instrument installed in the Boston Avenue Methodist church in 1930.

their size. After the original start on theatre organ production, George says: "we ground them out like cheese." Usually they were produced in batches of twenty at a time. All were marketed through the National Theatre Supply Corporation. Kilgen ceased theatre organ production in 1930, when the "handwriting" had shown permanence, and so did not incur the losses so prevalent among many builders whose chief product remained theatre instruments. Subsequent portions of this series will deal with the history and operation of the Kilgen Organ Company during the "golden era" years.

Among the employees of the Kilgen Company around 1916 - 1917, was a young Illinois farm boy endeavoring to make his way in the big city. He was working as an apprentice and handy man at the plant and had exhibited talent as a pianist with organist aspirations. One day the apprentice stated to George Kilgen that a better finishing job could be done were an organist assigned to play the instrument in the erecting area. The young man had made up his mind that he would become an organist come what may, and it was decided that he should have this chance to play in the factory to assist the voicers. The apprentice has thrilled generations with his music ever since. We are speaking of none other than "Mr. Theatre Pipe Organ" himself, Eddie Dunstedter!

Recently, while Eddie was in Sacramento to promote his latest record and play a guest shot at the Carl Greer Inn, some tricky coordination brought George Kilgen and Eddie Dunstedter together for their first visit in 50 years. Kilgen later attended Eddie's presentation at the Greer and enjoyed it immensely. He remarked that Ed certainly didn't play like that when he hired him. Meeting Eddie again and hearing him was a culmination of surprises in which he was briefed on ATOS (which he'd never heard of). Since then George Kilgen has read every issue of *THEATRE ORGAN-BOMBARDE* and is highly pleased with the whole hobby effort.

Because of its centuries of organ building, Kilgen is best remembered for church and auditorium "straight" installations, stately and staid instruments. During the first quarter of the century mansions all over the world had Kilgen organs installed, many with efficient player mechanisms. In one California mansion a Kilgen was installed with player mechanism that not only played the 30-ranker but also a 12-rank Skinner, providing continuous alternate organ concerts. Among the mansions with Kilgen organs were those of the three Ringling brothers of Circus fame. Each Ringling was an organist of considerable note, according to Mr. Paul Luckey, Musical Historian, Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin.

Perhaps the most unusual Kilgen organ was built for the Ringling Brothers circus in 1902. It had nine manual ranks and two independent pedal ranks and was built to fit into an especially built horse-drawn circus wagon for use in the famous circus parade. The contract called for extra large-scale pipes voiced on 8 to 12 inches of pressure "to give great power." The woodwork was given "five coats of good varnish to withstand outside weather."

While the organ was being fabricated at the St. Louis factory, back in Baraboo, Ringling craftsmen were fashioning a sturdy wagon 25 feet long, 10 feet high (measuring from the ground) and 7 feet, 3 inches wide. On the outside they added fanciful ornamentation to warm the hearts of circus buffs.

THE CIRCUS ORGAN WAGON — This rare and ancient photo shows only a few of the teams required to pull the hefty wagon. With 16 teams before it the spectacle must have taken on the aspects of a '20 Mule Team' Borax caravan.

A LOT CAN HAPPEN IN 50 YEARS — George Kilgen and Eddie Dunstedter fill in the blank spots accumulated during a half century's separation.

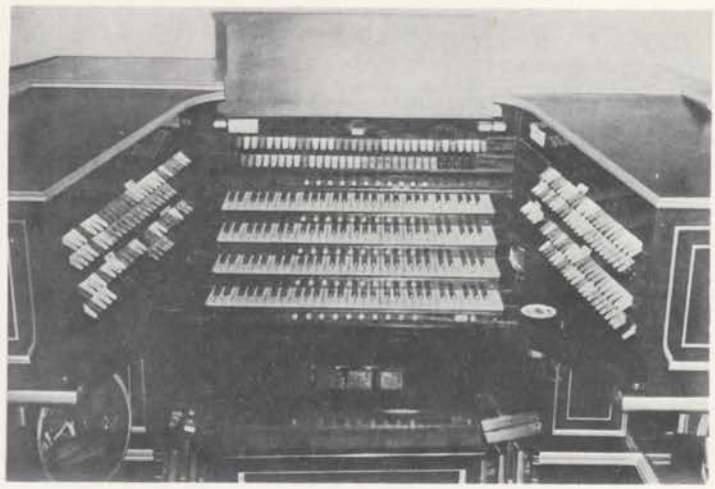
STOPLIST FOR THE CIRCUS WAGON KILGEN

		MANUAL	
1.	16 ft.	Tenoroon	Metal 49 pipes
2.	8 ft.	Open Diapason or Stentorphone	Metal 61 pipes
3.	8 ft.	Gamba	Metal 61 pipes
4.	8 ft.	Doppel Flute	Wood 61 pipes
5.	4 ft.	Octobo or Prestant	Metal 61 pipes
6.	2-2/3 ft.	Twelfth or Quint	Metal 61 pipes
7.	2 ft.	Fifteenth or Piccolo	Metal 61 pipes
8.	8 ft.	Trumpet or Tuba Mirabellos (sic)	Metal 61 pipes
9.	4 ft.	Tuba Clarion	Metal 61 pipes
		PEDAL ORGAN	
10.	16 ft.	Grand Double Open Diapason	Wood 27 pipes
11.	16 ft.	Trombone	Metal 27 pipes
		COUPLERS	
12.	4 ft.	Manual at Super Octaves	
13.	8 ft.	Manual to Pedal	
14.	8 ft.	Pedal to Octaves	

PEDAL MOVEMENTS

1 — Full Organ 2 — Mezzo Organ .3 — Piano Organ

The Kilgen console in the Piccadilly theatre, Chicago. Massively constructed, such a console provided the 'eye appeal' the theatres wanted. This instrument was removed several years ago and is now in the hands of hobbyists.



Radio Station installation. Originally a 3/12 installed in the mid-30's, the WHAS (Louisville, Ky.) Kilgen was later enlarged to a 4/18. It is now a welcome music maker in a convention hall. This style console, a compromise between horseshoe and straight, could serve as either unit or straight organ control center. Photo courtesy of Herbie Koch

Eight ranks of flues and three reeds, with no borrowing or unification. Also, no traps or percussions. Robert Hope-Jones was still in England, although he was already planning his foray to American shores, after which organ building would never be the same.

The "Pedal Movements" were simply presets – soft, medium and loud. Controlling volume were two sets of swell shutters, one along a portion of each side of the wagon.

The organ cost Ringlings $4,000 (not including the wagon), and within a few months questions arose as to whether it was a wise expenditure. While there is no record concerning its tonal qualities or how it "went over" with parade watchers, civic authorities quickly took notice of the huge conveyance. It was heavy! Mr. Kilgen says that 16 teams (32 horses) were neeeded to pull the organ-heavy wagon to the railway shipping point. The only existing photo shows only three teams pulling the wagon but others may have been out of camera range.

The organ had one recorded flaw, which most organists would consider major. While bounding over rough pavements, or none, the pipes in the unsprung wagon all too often popped out of their chest holes – sometimes while being played! At the end of the circus parade someone would have to spend the rest of the day putting pipes back on the chests properly. This "portable" organ took a lot of abuse. So did city streets.

The wagon's wheels were of wide steel tread and caused much concern to the street departments of cities in which the circus appeared. The city of Chicago, for instance, demanded and received a $25,000.00 bond to assure street repair during a Ringling performance there, In South Bend, Indiana the braking mechanism failed and a house became a casualty.

George Kilgen reminds us that this organ was built before electro-pneumatic action and blowers were commonplace. Therefore, the action was purely pneumatic and it was winded by devices known as "feeders." A feeder according to "The Contemporary American Organ" (Barnes), may be a single hand-powered bellows, or a series of them actuated by a crankshaft from a power source. The feeders for the circus organ were powered by a Stanley Steamer automobile engine installed in the circus wagon!

manual organ. However, the playing manual was coupled to the others, so all four could be used. It had an entirely independent pedal division of two 16' ranks.

The contract also called for "40 stop knobs which move, 14 of which operate." The 14 operating drawknobs controlled the voices listed, some familiar, some not. The unfamiliar "Tenoroon" and "Octobo" were simply hoked-up names for 16' and 4' Diapasons, respectively. After all, this was a circus organ!

WKY-TV and radio studio in Oklahoma City boasted this 4/14 Kilgen for many years (it was patterned from the WHAS console). Ken Wright cut many records on it. It was noted for brilliant reeds. It languishes unmaintained in an Oklahoma City civic hall. Ken Wright collection.

In late February 1903, Kilgen started moving in the completed portions of the organ. True to their word, the Ringlings had the wagon ready before the contractual date and installation was started in March. It was a most compact installation and no space was wasted. For example, the hindmost item was the console. Its 27 bass pedals were secured to the tailgate of the wagon. When the gate was lowered, and the bench placed across the now horizontal pedals, they were ready to play. When closed, the pedals folded upward in front of the console.

When completed, the organ had 581 speaking pipes. The contract called for "four keyboards of 61 keys each, one of which will operate the organ." So, despite the imposing appearance of a 4-manual console, it was actually a one

The Kilgen "organ in a wagon" toured with the Ringling Brothers Circus in 1903, and was used in the parade only during that season. It was then sent to the Kilgen factory for further modifications and, although it was returned to the circus, records do not indicate further usage. It could have been used in the show tent as the circus had a large singing chorus as well as a 38-piece band. As a parade vehicle it was replaced by the shrill calliope which came on the circus scene in 1905. Thus ended the brief sojourn of the "King of instruments" as a circus parade performer. Records do not indicate what disposal was finally made of the instrument. □

The next installment in the Kilgen story will appear in a future issue of *THEATRE ORGAN*.

TONY BERNARD SMITH

Snippets from England

London, England – Reginald Dixon, organist at the Tower Ballroom, Blackpool, since 1930, played his farewell concert on the 3/14 Wurlitzer there to a capacity audience on Easter Sunday.

Almost 4,000 people paid gala prices to say goodbye to Reg in the hall at which he has appeared so many times (and in which – balcony seat 33 – he proposed to his wife Vera while Max Bruce was at the console).

It was a night for sentiment, with singer Vince Hill on hand as master of ceremonies to whip the audience into a state of enthusiasm – not a difficult task.

Reginald Dixon was born in Shefield, England, in October 1904. He was playing church organ by the age of 13 and switched to theatre instruments six years later.

He had played in most of the movie houses in the North of England before, at the age of 26, he joined the Tower company. At first, he was featured on a 2/10 Wurli (later enlarged and transferred to the nearby Empress ballroom, and now sold to the BBC). In 1935, he was seen for the first time at the present instrument and he has remained associated with it for most of his career.

He has become known, in fact, as "Mr. Blackpool" and his is the one name most likely to spring to British lips when the subject is pipes and their players.

Part of his success lies, no doubt, in recognising the difference between accompanying silent films, or presenting a solo interlude, and accompanying dancing.

In April 1933, he wrote an article for the long-defunct CINEMA ORGAN HERALD in which he said that he had taken the Tower job because the novelty of it appealed to him.

"At first it was uphill work, for it took me all my time to keep my rhythms and tempos strict and correct. Once mastered, however, I found this part of the job simple enough, and I was well away."

So well away, in fact, that it was not long before he found a few couples trying to dance when he featured a selection from "The Belle of New York."

"Up here in Blackpool," he told his 1933 readers, "the most popular dance is the waltz, the flowing melody being very suitable for the organ; when playing a waltz for dancing, however, one has to be most careful not to get carried away by the melody and introduce the 'rubato' which is so characteristic of the cinema organ."

Reg Dixon has, of course, broadcast more frequently than any other British organist. He can also claim to have waxed more discs than any other pedal pusher in the world. To date he has more than 300 to his credit which compares with about 200 from his nearest rival, the Poet himself, Jesse Crawford.

Indeed, judging from the list of his concert dates which has reached me, his retirement will be just about as quiet as that of the other great Reginald of the pre-war British organ scene – Reg Foort. This winter has seen him recording in Holland and making appearances here, there and everywhere. To whole generations of North Britons, though, Blackpool will never be quite the same without Reg Dixon playing daily at the Tower.

Reginald Dixon at the Wurlitzer in the Tower Ballroom, Blackpool, England. He played his farewell there last Easter Sunday.

★ ★ ★

Computer science is coming to the aid of the crew currently rebuilding Europe's largest Wurlitzer.

The 4/21 instrument which QUENTIN MacLEAN used to play at the Trocadero, Elephant and Castle, London, England, is now being installed in the nearby Borough Polytechnic school.

Two 1,100 contact boards, made for computers, have been bought and will be inserted in the main cable. This will enable the console to be detached at will.

The crew having now got possession of the organ chambers, pipes are being collected from members' homes, where they have been stored, and brought together again in families.

Favourite holiday spot for many Europeans is the Spanish island of Majorca. You'll find plenty of electronics there and now some pipes, too.

The Compton 3/6 (one manual being a coupler) from the Odeon, Byker, England, has been bought by one wealthy resident for the entertainment of guests at his many parties.

Word is that the organ will be installed in an adjoining garage with the dividing wall containing the shutters.

★ ★ ★

Even in the Golden Days, the British county of Norfolk (famous as a centre for yachting holidays on the picturesque Broads) could only boast three organs installed in theatres. All were by the native firm of Compton. Two were in the capital city of Norwich and one was at the seaside resort of Great Yarmouth.

Now, with the renaissance, that figure will be topped by a good margin. Already playable are a Compton at Gorleston and another residence job. One Wurlitzer is abuilding at Diss and another is to be put together again not so far away. One of the Norwich instruments is in bits and pieces, but still within the county boundaries.

And local gossip is that yet another Wurli and Compton may be on their way to this once pipe-starved area.

★ ★ ★

Visitors to Amsterdam who wander into the colorful Jordaan district might notice the Capitol cinema in the Rosengracht. Should you venture inside, you will spot a three-manual console of unknown make in front of the screen.

That, alas, is all that there is. I did a bit of detective work the other day and traced some of the pipework to the cellar of the Plaza cinema in the Kalverstraat, a few miles away.

"You can have them cheap, if you want them," I was told. What happened to the rest? An expressive shrug of the shoulders but no information.

The probable final clue was given me by *Rene de Rooy,* one of the two organists at the Tuschinski theatre. "A friend of mine was building a residence organ some years ago and was looking for some ranks," he said. "I sent him to the management of the Capitol."

Meanwhile, the lonely console slowly rots to pieces.

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you to buy the organ, but if it doesn't, at least your home movies won't have to be silent anymore.

Conn Organ
616 Enterprise Drive
Oak Brook, Illinois 60521

A Quest For Versatility

The Gil White Residence Organ

by Ray Brubacher

The Potomac Valley Chapter of American Theatre Organ Society is indeed fortunate that in addition to the noted triumvirate of Wurlitzer organs playing in Richmond, Virginia's Mosque Auditorium, Byrd and Loew's Theatre, and a new installation of a Barton Organ in the Virginia Theatre, just one block from the four manual thirty-four rank Wurlitzer in the Alexandria Arena, there are more than fifteen residence organs ranging in size from four to twenty-six ranks either complete or undergoing installation. One of these, the three manual, eleven rank organ in the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Gil White of Derwood, a small village in the beautiful rolling farmland in upper Montgomery county, Maryland, possesses a history worthy of a true dyed-in-the-wool organ buff's full attention — a story of how to make a really glorious mountain out of not one, but many small mole hills. That story shall now come to light.

The initial injection of serum organitis fanaticus was administered to Gil, Francis, and their teen aged son Paul in the spring of 1964. The Whites had been up to that time organ enthusiasts in that they owned a large electronic theatre model and took an active interest in various local organ recitals and meetings of the local ATOS contingent. However, the thought of actually owning their own pipe organ did not occur to them until they heard a delightful 2 manual 5 rank Marr & Colton organ in the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Wendel Hill of Silver Spring, Md. The compactness of this instrument and its ability to sound rich and full even in a limited space, was the stage setting for the events which were to follow at quite a rapid pace.

A detailed inspection of the basement area in the White residence proved that space would be available for the installation of a moderate sized instrument of five or six ranks. An instrument was needed and soon found; a two manual, six rank Link organ in the First People's Congregational Church, Washington, D. C. The organ, originally a four ranker with a player, had been augmented after its removal from the Lafayette Theatre in Charlottsville, Virginia, with two more ranks, the player was now missing, but the church had retained the toy counter, harp and xylophone.

The installation of this organ began in the summer of 1964, however, son Paul, by now a well versed organ technician along with father, began to feel the effects of injection number two — organitis enlargus, namely that six ranks would just not begin to satisfy any normal red blooded organ fan, in short it would have to be Atlantic City or Bust!

Gil White and son, Paul.

Through much negotiation with an organ supply firm in eastern Pennsylvania, a new enlarged toy counter, xylophone, two more tremulants, a glockenspiel, a Moller kinura, tibia clausa, and the real prize, an immaculate three manual, eleven rank Moller relay in perfect condition were secured. Bringing home the relay was quite an operation, but getting it into the basement through a normal sized door which had to be removed frame and all, and down a short flight of stairs, was an organ builder's nightmare. After the removal of a wall at one end of the recreation room so that the relay could go into a storage room, peace and tranquility returned to Derwood. The neighbors all contributed their share of comments about the "nuts at 18812" and "Whites' folly" and "the junk dealer from Derwood," but this abruptly ceased with threats from the organ builders to shake down the neighboring residences with eight cycle fundamentals from that new rank of sixty-four foot pipes that were a planned addition.

Now remained the problem of where to obtain a three manual console with enough room for the extensive unification that was planned. A lead was obtained on a three manual horseshoe console which was built by a small upstate New York firm for a church but was now in a third floor office in the City Hall in Frederick, Maryland. Upon inspection, the console proved to be ideal for the plans that were already drawn up and the purchase was made. Now, the only problem was how to remove it from that third floor office without holding up a local bank in order to obtain the funds to hire a crane and a wrecking crew to knock out part of the brick wall to get it out. The answer after about ten seconds consultation between father and son was very simple. While the former owner of said console watched in shocked horror, the framework, after removal of manuals, and all associated equipment was simply sawed in half and carried down three flights of stairs, an operation which saved much time and money. The console since that time has been so skillfully rebuilt that no marks are visible at all.

Now with the console safely at home awaiting rebuilding, it was time again to go scouting for additional ranks. Several were eventually obtained from the removal of the large thirty one rank Moller in the Washington, D. C. Palace Theatre, and after much horse trading with fellow enthusiasts, the needed pipes were obtained.

Booster shot number three was now ready to be administered, prescription for serum read — organitis enlargus magnum — and like something out of a story book, the pipework from the two manual seven rank Kimball organ in the soon to be demolished Ambassador Theatre in Washington became available, and was immediately secured. Removal of this instrument took place in the spring of 1965, and now with all the organ that anyone could possibly want for a home installation safely stashed away in every room of the house, the next question was just where all of this metal and woodwork would eventually go.

Two chambers, each about seven feet wide and fifteen feet deep were built at one end of the spacious recreation room. The console was placed at the opposite end of the room, the relay in a room behind the console, and the blower and reservoirs in the workshop very close to the chambers, so that wind pressures would remain as steady as possible. It had been decided earlier that this instrument would be unique in that the amount of unification planned would make the organ one of the most versatile instruments available in the entire chapter area. Extensive rebuilding of the console involved the placement of a second bolster of stop keys, short third bolsters on each side plus a great number of tablets on the backrail which was completely redone with new wood. All stop keys were re-engraved, and many new ones were made for special purposes. There are one-hundred and seventy-nine stop tablets and eighteen couplers. The next unique addition to this instrument added in the winter of 1966 was a special electronic pizzacato device designed by chapter member Richard Jorgensen which enables the top manual to be coupled to the middle manual at three pitches, to render the pizzacato effect at a fast or slow speed, to give a reverse pizzacato effect on any of three pitches; a device capable of producing many varied effects which would blend perfectly with the concept of a twentieth century organ, a concept in the forefront since the beginning of installation.

ANALYSIS OF THE GIL WHITE 3/11 THEATRE ORGAN

MAIN CHAMBER

Open Diapason	Link	73 p.
Clarinet	Wurlitzer	61 p.
Concert Flute	Moller	73 p.
Violin I	Link	85 p.
Violin Celeste	Moller	73 p.
Xylophone	Moller	49 notes
Toy Counter	Moller	

SOLO CHAMBER

Tibia Clausa I	Moller	61 p.
Tibia Clausa II	Kimball	97 p.
Oboe Horn	Moller	61 p.
Kinura	Moller	61 p.
Tuba Horn 16′	Wurlitzer	12 p.
Tuba Horn 8′	Kimball	73 p.
Vox Humana	Kimball	73 p.
Harp Celeste	Kimball	37 notes
Marimba Harp	Kimball	49 notes

Glockenspiel, Bass Drums, Cymbals and other traps.

Chimes are large scale Deagan Class K and stand outside the chamber. Upright piano is playable at four pitches.

Stop tablet colors are:
FLUTES, TIBIAS, DIAPASON — White.
STRINGS — Blue.
REEDS — Red.
PIANO — Yellow Tortoise Shell.
TUNED PERCUSSIONS — Purple.
UNTUNED PERCUSSIONS — Green.
COUPLERS — White with Red Lettering.

Spencer Orgoblo 3 h.p. Wind pressures 6, 7, 9, 10 inches.

At this time, the instrument is beginning to undergo tonal finishing and final regulation, a step so often completely overlooked by the anxious enthusiast. However, the entire concept of the project was also to have the organ playing in order to provide a great deal of pleasure for the entire family as well as fellow organ buffs who frequent the premises. Paul, now eighteen and a devoted organ technician, has come a long way in pursuing what started out to be a casual interest and now has to his credit, the installation of the residence organ in the home of former chapter chairman Ray Brubacher, and the Moller organ in the broadcasting studios of Doug Bailey Advertising, in Rockville, Maryland. Last summer, he had complete charge of the Barton installation in the Virginia Theatre.

The installation of the Gil White organ has truly been a family project from the beginning, and can serve as an example of a real labor of love which has matured into a grand sounding instrument and one which is so very versatile that it is almost impossible to exhaust its potential. □

Another Theatre To Bite the Dust

The Connecticut Valley Chapter is sad to note that the New Haven Paramount is to succumb to the apparent fate of all Connecticut theatres, and will be razed to make room for more prosperous business in downtown New Haven. A final concert is being scheduled for this Fall on the 2 manual, 10 rank Wurlitzer which the chapter recently restored. □

NUGGETS from the GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected by Lloyd E. Klos

This month, Jason and I have included a few classified ads to spruce this up during the hot weather. References were American Organist (AO), Jacobs (J), and Metronome (Met.) magazines.

April 1916 (Met.) WANTED: Location for organist in picture theatre. Also am A-1 vaudeville pianist and double trombonist. Union man. New England state preferred, but will locate west if money is right. Address Organist, 1361 North Street, Springfield, Mass.

April 1915 (Met.) WANTED: Musicians to act as attendants with New Jersey State Hospital at Morris Plains. Pianist who doubles in pipe organ; also one who doubles as first violinist and cellist. Must be good readers and play standard and up-to-date music. Sober and reliable. Pianist-organist commence at $35 a month; violinist-cellist at $30 with board, room, laundry and uniform provided. Write George P. Grailey, Music Director at Greystone Park, New Jersey.

Nov. 1916 (Met.) WANTED: Organist for pipe organ in first class motion picture theatre. Must be experienced and willing to stand one week's trial. Six hours daily except Sunday. State salary. Box 839, Cooper Square, New York City.

March 1917 (Met.) BUEL B. RISSINGER directs the orchestra and plays the 3-manual Kimball in Nashville's Knickerbocker Theatre, a position he has held for over 50 weeks. He also supervises the music at the Hotel Hermitage and the Nashville Commercial Club.

April 1917 (J) The management of Boston's Park Theatre announces the appointment of ARTHUR J. MARTEL as organist. An accomplished pianist, he made a thorough study of the organ, and coupled with phenomenal memory, his artistry has attracted widespread attention, with many patrons attending the theatre just to enjoy his picture accompaniment.

June 1917 (J) Owners of the Lyric Theatre in Vinita, Oklahoma have installed a new Wurlitzer motion picture player at a cost of $1750.

Aug. 1917 (Met.) SITUATION WANTED: Experienced organist at liberty, desires good permanent position in high-class picture theatre. Thoroughly reliable man. Accomplished musician. Fine performer. Good organ and salary essential. Address Organist, Box 472, Hagerstown, Md.

Nov. 1917 (J) Loew's Theatres have bought the fire-ruined Columbia Theatre in Boston and spent $25,000 in refurbishing it. A modern organ has been installed for $50,000 which is presided over by PHIL SCHAEFER and HAROLD CROSBY, two recognized artists who are achieving wide popularity.

March 1918 (J) HAROLD J. CROSBY is playing both piano and organ at Boston's 2200-seat Columbia Theatre. He has written over 30 marches which have made him a great favorite in the Hub.

Oct. 1918 (Met.) SITUATION WANTED: Organist wants position in high-class motion picture theatre. Widely experienced. Perfect picture interpreter. Organ soloist at St. Louis, San Francisco and San Diego expositions. Expert on all makes of organs. Not subject to draft. Desires to locate in the West, state of Washington preferred. Address Organist, Box 936, Cooper Square, New York City.

June 1919 (Met.) SITUATION WANTED: At liberty, Aug. 1. Experienced vaudeville and picture house pianist and organist. Married man. Member of AFM. References. Prefers location in West, all considered. Address Pianist, 1713 State Street, Little Rock, Ark.

Feb. 1922 (Met.) The New York Society of Theatre Organists elected the following officers for 1922: JOHN HAMMOND, President; ROBERT BERENTSON, vice president; J. VAN CLEFT COOPER, recording secretary; RAYMOND WILLEVER, corresponding secretary; and SIGMUND KRUMGOLD, treasurer.

June 1922 (AO) A motion picture catalogue has been issued by Oliver Ditson Co. of Boston, showing 29 pages of thematics of light organ and piano works of great value to theatre organists. Pieces were selected and classified by EDITH LANG, well-known photoplay organist of Boston.

Nov. 1922 (Met.) A special course in musical accompaniment to motion pictures is being offered by Rochester's Eastman School of Music to a class limited to 12 students. A studio is fitted with facilities, including a 2/7 Wurlitzer, for screening motion pictures. The course consists of two one-hour lessons a week for 12 weeks, plus 2 hours of practice on the organ. Qualified students will get experience on the Austin organ in the Eastman Theatre at regular matinees.

GOLD DUST: 3/18, The Little Playhouse Theatre in Mt. Vernon, N.Y. has replaced its orchestra with an organ; EARL MORGA will open the 3-manual Kimball with echo division in the new Terre Haute (Ind.) theatre; An up-to-date pipe organ is featured in the recently opened Liberty Theatre in Fargo, N. Dakota . . . 1/21, RALPH BRIGHAM at New York's Strand; Prof. FIRMIN SWINNEN & J. VAN CLEFT COOPER at New York's Rivoli . . . 7/21, FREDERICK SMITH & HERBERT SISSON at New York's Strand . . . 6/22, The Howell & Ainsley Theatre in Merced, Cal. has ordered an organ; Capitol Theatre in Pittsfield, Mass. has a new organ; Victoria Theatre in Ossining, N. Y. has installed an organ because of differences with the local musicians' union . . . 10/22, RALPH S. BRAINARD at New York's Strand . . . 11/22, FRANK STEWART ADAMS at New York's Rialto; LELAND F. BENGER at the 2/10 Kimball in the Park Theatre, Rockaway, Long Island; The Cluster Theatre in Baltimore has ordered an organ . . . 1/23, Prof. FIRMIN SWINNEN at the Aldine, Philadelphia; MELVIN GILLICK at the Majestic's 4-manual Moller, Columbus, Ohio; EUGENE H. GORDON at the 3-manual Austin in the Strand, Montgomery, Ala.; LESLIE HARVEY in San Francisco's Coliseum Theatre; HARRY THORN & EMIL BREITENFELD in San Francisco's California Theatre; W. LEE WOOD at the Belvedere, Tuscaloosa, Ala.; JESSE KREMER in Baltimore's Cluster . . . 2/23, T. WILLIAM STREET in San Antonio's Empire; D. KENNETH WIDENOR in Chicago's Roosevelt; The Vogue Theatre in Kelso, Wash. has a new organ; A Kimball has been ordered for the Oakland Theatre in Marion, Ohio, while the new Sayre (Pa.) theatre will also get a Kimball; LEON DUSSAULT at the Pontiac Theatre in Saranac Lake, N. Y. . . . 7/23, EDWARD EIGENSCHENK at Chicago's Michigan . . . 10/23, GEORGE L. HAMRICK at the Arcade Wurlitzer in Jacksonville, Fla.; JAMES E. DURKIN at the Greenwood (Miss.) Morton; GEORGE H. LATSCH at the Capitol, Atlantic City . . . 12/23, J. RILEY CHASE at the 4-manual Kimball in Spokane's Clemmer.

Until we see you in October with some nuggets about broadcasting organs and organists, so long, sourdoughs!

— Lloyd & Jason

Song Slides and Theatre Organists

by John Muri

The theatre-organ solo in which glass song-slides were projected upon a motion picture screen developed from a humble beginning. In the early years of this century, many motion picture theatres were set up in rectangular store-buildings, with small screens framed and nailed up at one end of the building, a makeshift balcony for the projection machines perched and housed at the rear to keep down some of the projection noise (how hot those booths could get in the summer!) and a piano down in front. Some theatres engaged a singer to perform a song with slides as a special attraction. Many new songs were introduced in this fashion, and the music publishers thought it was great advertising. They liked it so well that they distributed free copies of their new tunes to theatre singers and musicians for years. In the twenties, they made up sets of slides for theatre organists all over the country. Hundreds of boxes of slides would be stored in publishers' offices in key cities. In Chicago, shelves were filled with slide-boxes (often numbering twenty or more slides per set) for distribution to theatre organists and one publisher (Irving Berlin, Inc., as I remember it) employed two ladies to work exclusively on the slides in the Chicago office. The sets were not outright gifts; they were lent for a week or two, after which they would be assigned to another organist.

The principal slide-manufacturers were Maurice Workstel in New York, and Quality Slide and Flashagraph Company and Ransley Studios in Chicago. The Kansas City Slide Company did some exceptionally beautiful work in pastel colors, whereas Quality, Ransley, and Workstel specialized in deep, bright colors. Quality Slides in Chicago probably deserved a prize for the most varied art work, while Ransley could be depended upon to get slides of consistent quality out in a hurry. Ransley's lettering and cartooning usually followed a single pattern, however. They didn't have much variety. Maurice Workstel of New York produced the most imaginative, interesting and humorous cartoons. Some of Workstel's conceptions of the way an organist looked at the console were hilarious.

By 1925, slide-makers were offering entire slide-solos for sale. M. S. Bush of Buffalo, New York, offered a fifty-eight slide set, "A Trip through the Organ," for eighteen dollars. It was the conventional demonstration of tone-groups and percussion that some of our organists like to do today. It even explained the second-touch mechanism. I wouldn't use it because I didn't believe in letting the audience understand our mechanical mysteries. I wanted them to stay awed and impressed. A solo titled "International Table d'Hote," sold by the Orgologue Slide Bureau of the Standard Slide Corporation (New York City), gave the organist an excuse for playing a medley of foreign music. Bush's slides were well-executed and colored; Standard's were white lettering on black background.

At the same time, the music publishers began competing in making the slide-solo not only a song-plug but something of a production. Feist, Berlin, Remick, Shapiro - Bernstein, and other publishing companies spent large amounts of money to furnish organists with ten to fifteen-minute programs. One of the first was Remick, who published a solo for a 1925 song called "Sweet Child," in which the organist tells of how he met a girl sitting behind him in the theatre and how a romance developed. One of the finest solos to be issued was Feist's "Gloomy Bill" (plugging "At Sundown") which told of "the company dub in Regiment Ninety-Two," a sort of Gunga Din tale. It was well-conceived and it was a moving little story, issued in 1928. The Chicago publishing houses of Milton Weil Music Company and Forster Music Publishers, Inc. were outstanding pioneers in developing slide-solos. Villa-Moret, Inc. of San Francisco also deserves honorable mention in this regard.

Slide-solos were now telling stories or developing themes or central ideas. There would be the tale of the deserted lover who had asked the organist to tell his love to return, or there would be a song to be sung whenever some important event or crisis occurred in the narrator's life. Because of the pressures of time and quantity production, some of the writing was poor; often the poetry that is essential when words are set to rhythmic music was downright bad. Sometimes it was deliberately ungrammatical, as in "like we was before" and "they'll learn it quick." *Noises* would be made to rhyme with *voices*. Words that didn't make sense were sometimes added to fill out syllables. Sometimes the material was in bad taste. It often glorified drinking during prohibition days and sometimes went all-out in propaganda for the repeal of the Volstead Act prohibiting alcoholic liquor. One favorite butt of joking was women; they were supposed to be the trouble - making descendants of Eve, they talked all the time, they ate too much, and they made dreadful mothers-in-law. Carrying on with other women while the wife was away was supposed to be quite funny. The rhymes seemed to take out some of the sting, but I felt uneasy using such material. Much of it I rejected.

One type of slide presentation in 1925 was the flashing of groups of letters or telegrams, purportedly written by different people, in which questions were asked of the organist to be responded to in song, or there were requests (usually phony) made to play particular pieces. In its best form, this kind of solo-organization could amount to what Jesse Crawford called "A Miniature Organ Recital." In its poorest form, the letters expressed any kind of nonsense just to give an excuse for playing a given tune.

Then came community singing, and the idea of a theme or unifying idea almost collapsed. For a while, organists tried to hold a solo together by flashing pictures of meter-gauges that registered volume of singing or by periodically exhorting the audience to sing so that they (the organists) might hold their jobs. Solos were made up of song-groups including holiday, college, patriotic, mother-love, and Irish material, depending upon the season. These usually "went over" successfully, and many organists had their own slide collections filled with materials of this sort to draw upon.

By 1929, the music publishers, intrigued by the easier new promotional avenue of the sound-movie, had deserted the organists and were no longer providing slides. The organists who had not yet been dismissed built their own collections of slides that they purchased at prices ranging from thirty-five cents to a dollar each from firms like the Harry Blair Organist Service in New York City and tied them together for a unified solo by interspersing "gag slides" between tunes. The gags consisted almost entirely of exhortations to sing, such as "Now let's raise the roof with this one," or "They didn't hear you out in Evanston. Sing!" and "Sing like the Devil!" Quality Slide Company offered several hundreds of these for sale.

It was a simple format, and the organist, reduced to being merely an accompanist to a singing audience, needed no longer to be much of a performer or to give much time to the preparation of his solo. The seeds of his destruction were planted the day he ceased to be an artist-performer and became a song-leader. He lost his place not only be-

(Continued on page 15)

"From the beginning . . ."

LAUNCHING HENRY

Little is generally known about the childhood years of most organists. Not the physical things, such as the places they lived, schools attended, or size of family, et cetera, but the events which shaped their thinking and directed their energies on the road toward a musical career, the little events which got the embryo genius started. Perhaps it was a concert by the village band which changed junior's mind about the drudgery of piano practice, or a day at the circus. Of course, at a later date there is bound to be a visit to a theatre where our subject heard his first cinema organ, a potent experience by any standards. But we are ahead of our story. The area we are about to examine deals with the very beginnings of the musical urge, and lack of it, experienced by a small boy. The boy matured to become one of the most famous theatre organists of the "golden era" — Henry B. Murtagh.

Henry Murtagh was one of those skilled soloists whose services were in demand to open movie palaces. His solid musical training provided an authority for the playing of classical selections while his remarkable sense of humor was applied to the pops.

Here he provides us with a sometimes tongue-in-cheek vignette of the start of his interest in music, as he wrote it for the December 1926 issue of "Metronome" magazine. We are indebted to TO staffer Lloyd E. Klos for rediscovering this gem.

by Henry B. Murtagh

Some folk are born musical, some voluntarily plug their way into music, and a few (like little Henry) are strong-armed into it, without being given any choice in the matter.

As a youngster, I was the historical and geographical champ of my grammar school grades. My arithmetic and spelling were passable – but in elementary music, I was impossible. I saw no sane reason for a difference existing between 3 sharps and 3 flats, and if so, it was none of my business. Sousa's band could parade past my window and not lure me away from my books. Singing annoyed me. I put violins and nocturnal felines in the same category (no pun intended), and the boy next door who took piano lessons, was beneath my masculine contempt.

When I was 11, my dad, for no good reason which I could see, sicked a piano teacher on to me! Yep, that was my birthday present! For three months, my musical progress discouraged everyone but I. My young mind was too full of dark and murderous thoughts to concentrate on Czerny or Matthew's Graded Course. When I did get some simple exercise right, it made me mad. The boy next door tried to talk shop one day, and his mother had to separate us with a garden hose.

One evening, Dad took me aside after dinner and delivered a few well-chosen and forceful remarks. "Henry, you have imposed on your teacher and me long enough. I don't expect you to become a concert pianist, but a little ability at the piano will be a social asset and enable you to work your way through college later on. I'm not paying out 50c a week for piano lessons just to be a spendthrift. You are going to learn a reasonable amount of music or your affectionate Dad will wallop the tar out of you."

HENRY B. MURTAGH first saw the light of day in Springfield, Mass. His musicality bloomed early, and he was encouraged by an organ builder named Robert Hope Jones to seek his fortune in the West. Murtagh did so and soon hit the "big time"—and remained there through the 'Golden Era.' This photo was made while he was organist at Grauman's Million Dollar theatre in Los Angeles circa 1924. From Bill Lamb collection

With my Dad, a promise was sacred.

Three months later, I was playing Paderewski's Minuet from memory. Not too well, perhaps, but it was sweet music to Dad's ears.

My enforced practice schedule called for an hour and a half on school days and on Saturdays. Sundays and holidays, three hours. Six p.m. was the deadline. After dinner, Dad insisted on an informal concert in the parlor. This would vary from an hour to two hours, and didn't count as practice.

He compiled a list of musical selections which embraced the favorite tunes of our visiting friends and relatives, bought the music, a little at a time and said, "Hank, my boy, go to it!"

When my grandfather dropped in, little Henry rendered Irish jigs and reels, Killarney, The Wearin' of the Green, etc. Aunt Teresa doted on sentimental ballads. She got 'em! Ed Tilton, the policeman on the beat, was a hard-shell Baptist and I played hymns for Ed. For Uncle Tom, I played rag-time and marches. I accompanied cousin Johnnie while he warbled "Asleep in the Deep" and "A Bird in a Gilded Cage." Dad invited little Minnie, from up the street, to drop in now and then with her violin. Did we ever render "Melody in F" and "Simple Aveu"!

When I was 12, Dad happened to meet a vaudeville team who were laying off in our town for a few months. He had another one of his paternal inspirations. Mr. and Mrs. Vaudeville were invited out to our house for at least 4 home-cooked dinners every week. After dinner, I was always obliged to wade through at least 100 popular songs with Elmer as he tried to determine the vocal material he needed for the fall season. As Elmer sang everything two tones higher than the original key, I perspiringly delved into the mysteries of transposition. He sang very much ad lib and after a while, my accompaniments stuck closer to him than his shirt.

Not because I had dreams of becoming a Frank La Forge! No, indeed! Dad used to drop his evening paper, stalk into the parlor and inquire sarcastically, "What is this, Henry, a friendly affair, or a battle? Use your brains and follow Elmer; don't make him chase after you!" Or, he would bellow, "Soft pedal, Hank, soft pedal! Elmer is not a train caller! Give him a chance!"

When Elmer's wind gave out, Mrs. Elmer would practice dance routines—buck and wing, waltz clog, Highland fling, essence of old Virginia, and Spanish dances, and music was, of course, indispensable at such times and I wearily obliged.

But don't get the idea that Dad was sacrificing his darling son for the sake of Mr. and Mrs. Vaudeville. He secretly figured their visits were a Heaven-sent opportunity to give me practical experience which I couldn't get from my piano teacher. I hated the sight of Elmer and his wife, in those days, and when they left town, I noticed the sunshine for the first time in months!

That winter, my teacher planned a pupil's recital and out of the goodness of his French-Canadian heart, assigned Gottschalk's "Last Hope" to me for public rendition. I couldn't see that particular opus with a microscope, and told him so, but he was adamant and finally submitted it to Dad for arbitration!

But, two weeks before the recital, Dad took me to a vaudeville show, and I observed his unstinted appreciation of a certain act on the bill. That moment, the great goddess, Hokum, smiled on me, and I saw a great light.

Recital night. Thirty nervous pupils for a perspiring pedagog—300 assorted parents, relatives and friends, lending moral support to the epochal event.

My turn came at last! I walked out to the piano and cold bloodedly removed half a bed sheet from under my vest and two glass paperweights from my pockets. After covering the keys with the sheet, I blindfolded myself, sat down, and played "Blaze Away," a march by Abe Holzman.

Poor teacher experienced probably the unhappiest five minutes of his life! I brazenly finished and bowed without removing the blind from my eyes. Sure, I took an encore! I snapped into "Bedelia," followed up with "Navajo" and finished with "Georgia Camp Meeting."

Did I catch "it" afterwards? Not in these United States, no sir! Dad slapped me on the back, Mother kissed me, and I heard teacher telling some people, "It took me one year to teach Henry that trick!" On the strength of my "faux pas," he enrolled 10 new pupils the following week.

Ten days later, my cousin, Mary Ellen, blew in from Boston for a short visit. She was 13 and her six years of piano study had left no signs of fatigue or worry on her beautiful face. She, like Delilah of old, made me think I was her hero. Within 48 hours, we were engaged, but couldn't decide whether we would marry 6 or 8 years later. I felt that even 6 years was a long time to wait. She compromised finally on 7½.

One Sunday evening, a horde of aunts, uncles, cousins and other undesirables gathered at our home to hear Mary Ellen concertize. Mary Ellen refused to open the show, so Dad said, "Henry you play something for the folks," and in a stage whisper, he hissed, "Show her up, Hank, show her up!" I had no desire to rob her of her laurels. On the other hand, I could not safely disregard Dad's request. So, I played my "flop-proof" solo, the "Sextet from Lucia." My 10 fingers certainly coaxed a hot interpretation of this classic from our square piano, and I honestly earned the polite applause which greeted my heroic last chord.

But, oh, the treachery of women! Mary Ellen perched herself on the piano stool, and grinning like a Cheshire cat, she hammered out the "Sextet" entirely with her left hand!"

My Dad looked at her with his mouth wide open. Then he looked at me—with his jaws clamped tightly together. I went out for a drink of water.

Next morning, I told Mary Ellen that our engagement was all off, and I didn't speak to her after that. She didn't seem crushed; which only proves what a cold-blooded female she was. □

SONG SLIDES AND THEATRE ORGANISTS

(Continued from page 13)

cause of community singing, of course; with sound movies the managers could do without him whether he was good or not, and they were out for every dollar, no matter what kind of show was in the theatre, just so long as the public would support the kind of entertainment they were (and still are) getting. Thus passed out the theatre organist, along with the organ solo. It is a long haul from the present situation to that in which people could go to a neighborhood theatre and hear an organist of talent and taste give a performance heard *only* in that theatre, performed live for the living, and performed uniquely and so well that it would be remembered years later. That was *real show business.* □

Theatre Organ Enthusiasts Boost Fresh Air Fund

The 1970 campaign of The New Haven Register Fresh Air Fund has received a substantial boost from the Connecticut Valley Theatre Organ Society, Inc. (ATOS). A check for $500, part of the proceeds of the Eddie Weaver Concert last fall, was presented to Mr. Charles T. McQueeney, Managing Editor of the New Haven Register.

In a letter to the ATOS Chapter, Mr. McQueeney states, "It has been a rewarding experience for me personally to be working with such fine people and you all are continually in my prayers. Because you are willing to help the unfortunates, I am sure that God will shower His blessings upon all."

The presentation was made by Stillman Rice, President of the group, and the Concert Committee chairmen, Michael Foley, Gene Hubbard, and Jack Heavens. The contribution was part of the continuing efforts of the Connecticut Valley Chapter to further the theatre organ as a worthwhile part of the community. □

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The Appeal of the Organ Was Not Forgotten . . .

Toronto's Odeon Carlton

by Stewart Duncan

Back in 1948, a little bit of history was made in the city of Toronto, Canada. At that time, the last new commercially built theatre organ was designed for, and installed in, a new modern theatre. The event was lavishly celebrated with all the pomp and glamour of famous people from the entertainment world, including a guest organist imported for the occasion.

The theatre was the Odeon Toronto (now the Carlton), seating 2300 people, built by the J. Arthur Rank chain, with headquarters in the British Isles. Fortunately, British memories had not completely forgotten the appeal of the organ, and so one was provided for in the plans. Originally, negotiations were made to purchase and rebuild the Wurlitzer organ from the Metropolitan Theatre in Boston, but (pity!) internal politics of the company and its supply house made it impossible to deal with anything but a new instrument.

Eventually, after bids were received from several organ firms, the Hillgreen-Lane Company was awarded the contract, and so it was that the Odeon Toronto opened its doors on Thursday, September 9th, 1948, complete with a new organ, and Al Bollington, the well known British theatre organist as guest artist.

The design of the organ ignored the accepted standards for theatre use, and instead reflected the moderation established by Hillgreen-Lane in most of their earlier installations. The instrument is by no means as flexible in registration as it could have been, but nevertheless it is well voiced and quite capable of providing pleasant listening. The greatest disappointment, however, is the lack of volume when the theatre is full. This is not the fault of the organ, but rather the result of ignorance on the part of the architect in understanding the design and acoustics of organ chambers. He committed the unpardonable sin of making the chambers long and narrow, with the only tone openings at the narrow end, and therefore far too small, thus destroying the glorious big sound that it should have had.

Although the theatre has a moderate sized orchestra pit, the console was located on the stage and set back in a niche in the proscenium wall, and when in use was pushed forward to the edge of the stage by a hydraulic cylinder, rather like the Radio City Music Hall. With the advent of Cinerama, the poor organist suddenly found himself buried behind the giant screen, and the audience, not seeing the organist, believed they were just hearing recordings. This was just too much for the experienced showmanship of Mr. Victor Nowe, who was manager of the theatre. In the Fall of 1964, as a result of his distress over this problem, enquiries were instituted with a view to moving the console to a place somewhere outside the screen. At this point, I was somewhat startled and pleased to be called in to discuss the problem. Managers are always rather cagey about requesting major expenditures, so we decided the cheapest solution would be to re-locate the console on the main floor, just outside the orchestra pit. In the meantime, Mr. Nowe went off on holidays, so I was now dealing directly with the head office. Mr. Devitt, the supervisor of all Odeon property, promptly suggested we do the job in proper style and put the console on a lift at centre stage. After checking my hearing, preparations were made for installing a lift and adding about 55 feet to the console cable. This was completed sufficiently so that the organ was usable for the premiere of a new film, along with all the fanfare and special guests that go with such an event.

The Odeon's beautiful proscenium is seen in this view which was taken at the time of the theatre's opening in 1948. The organ console can be seen at the right with the main chamber as a highlight of the left side. The contour curtain shown here weighs 2½ tons.

An amusing mishap occurred a week after the grand opening. Colin Corbett, the house organist, had never used a lift before, and was very nervous and worried about putting on a good solo performance. He pressed the button and started up, but a slight hesitation of the lift at about 18 inches created panic, so Colin pressed the button again just to be sure. Unfortunately, the second time he pressed the down button by accident, and locked the lift solidly. His 15 minute interlude was played in real misery, with only his head showing above stage, and unmercifully revealed in the glare of the spotlight. Following this episode, the lift was re-examined and the cylinder found to have been warped by welding on a pipe connection, so the entire cylinder was dug up and sent back to the manufacturer for honing. After re-installation and re-wiring the controls with a proper interlock, Colin has been able to regain peace of mind.

Since the opening of the Odeon theatre, there have been only four organists that I can recall. Al Bollington opened and stayed on for a short time after, then Bobby Jones, another British organist, played for awhile. After that, there was a period of silence, then Dorothy Bromby played for a short period. Eventually Colin Corbett took over, and has remained ever since.

Niagara Frontier Chapter has made use of the Odeon Carlton for a number of concerts over the past few years, and of course it was featured during the ATOS Convention in 1964. Mr. Nowe, as manager of the Odeon Carlton, deserved a sincere vote of thanks for his unfailing courtesy and his willingness to permit the Chapter to use the organ and theatre whenever they want to plan a concert. □

VOX POPS

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 a 5c postcard to get it to VOX POPS Editor, Box 5013 Bendix Station, North Hollywood, Calif. 91605.

Those organ-owning fans getting ready to add a rank of pipes would do well to send a self-addressed stamped (6c) envelope to the Junchen Pipe Organ Service, Sherrard, Illinois 61281, for Dave Junchen's latest list of organ parts for sale. The list includes many sets of pipes, chests, relays, percussions, tremulants and similar items to warm the heart of any enthusiast. Brands include Moller, Kimball, Barton, Aeolian, Wicks, Robert Morton, Gettfried and Wurlitzer. Fascinatin' reading.

* * *

A 1969 VOX POPS item reported that the cavernous Uptown theatre in Toronto would soon be subdivided into five small movie theatres. Dave Vuckson reports that the deed has been done and the new auditoria are open for business. The two small theatres piggybacked in the onetime stage area would seem to be the most interesting for theatre buffs; the original brick back wall (complete with exposed conduit) and the huge overhead scenery grid have been retained as part of the decorations. The organ is long gone.

* * *

Organist Billy Nalle sent us a clipping from the front page of a recent issue of the showbiz bible, VARIETY, describing a calamity which happened during a recording session by the London Philharmonic Orchestra in London's Kingsway Hall. Organist Leslie Parson's thunderous rendition of the "Mars" sequence from Gustav Holst's descriptive suite, "The Planets," literally brought the roof down. As the huge orchestra ("The Planets" requires over 100 musicians, a girlchoir and an octave of tuned kettledrums), bolstered by the organ, swirled through the brassy bolero, chunks of the ceiling crashed to the floor. Hastily summoned architects recommended that the taping session should continue minus the organ. That left Decca with a bill for $2500 to cover ceiling damage brought on by "Mars – the Bringer of War."

* * *

When our Silent Movie Music feature editor, Harry Jenkins, accompanied the 1929 movie, "Square Shoulders," for the benefit of fellow Elks at the San Fernando (Calif.) lodge he wondered if one of the stars, "Junior" Coghlan would like to attend. Frank Coghlan, now a Los Angeles business man, hastened right over and was given the "guest of honor" treatment. For the first time in 40 years the executive saw himself on the screen as the boy actor, Junior Coghlan, co-starred with the late flat-nosed character actor, Louis Wolheim. Coghlan, who played many a newspaper office copy boy ("Let 'er Go, Gallagher," Indians (Uncas in "Last of the Mohicans"), Sam in "Penrod and Sam" with Leon Janney, and later as Mickey Rooney's pal in the "Andy Hardy" series, enjoyed the experience so much that he asked to borrow Harry Jenkins' print of "Shoulders" so he could show it to his children. They had never seen their dad on the screen. The former child actor had warm comments for Harry's scoring of the silent tear jerker.

* * *

What man has played for Boston teams in three sports – the Red Sox, the Celtics and the Bruins? Give up? None other than stout, jovial John Kiley, former theatre organist at the Hub. With such a situation, John is never out of work. Baseball and possible playoffs of the hockey and basketball schedules keep him busy from April through September; then he is ready to start the hockey and basketball seasons all over. He plays a Hammond X-66 at Fenway Park.

* * *

Word comes from New Orleans that the management of the Saenger theatre may be considering some silent films with accompaniment played on the intact but rarely used 4/24 Robert Morton. First in line for a possible fall showing is the classic silent, "Wings." The organist? Who else but Rosa Rio, who is well-remembered for past performances at the Saenger.

* * *

It just had to be a mirage, but it wasn't – an organ under a bright orange umbrella in the middle of the Mojave Desert, the organist playing merrily on the plug-in in the 112 degree June heat. Passing motorists did a double take and some passed it off as a mirage. Those who returned to investigate learned otherwise. They were requested to sign a visitors book. It was all part of a TV stunt which played young (23) organist Eric Scott out there in the heat of the desert to test the reaction of passers-by. If he gathered 100 signatures in 5 days he could keep the organ. It looked as though he would make it on the fourth day. The scene was filmed for fall TV release.

* * *

After finishing the Poulene concerto and acknowledging the applause of his classic-minded audience, organist Fred Tulan decided on a novel encore – Leroy Anderson's "The Typewriter," a bit of rhythmic froth which calls for the sound of a bell and carriage return at the end of each phrase. In the following day's press Fred read his review. While the critic approved of his Poulenc, "The Typewriter" must have confused him. The reviewer complained about the "strident" bell, but added that "apparently Dr. Tulan made no errors – for we did not observe him using the eraser!"

* * *

Organists who burlesque film classics by cueing them with inappropriate music in an effort to be "cute" are toying with disaster. The Avenue theatre in San Francisco, normally the purveyor of proper and effective silent movie scores, is still reverberating with audience growls generated when the man at the console cued the pre-historic monster battles in "The Lost World" with a jazzy "Chinatown."

* * *

A recent TV showing of the movie "Angel In My Pocket", starring Andy Griffith, had a sequence which made theatre organ buffs laugh. It seems that this burlesque theatre had a 1925 vintage theatre organ. Preacher Griffith went to the theatre, and while putting the instrument through its paces, an undulating stripper went through her routine, unseen by the organist. The organ became the property of the church, and in a day's time (sic.), it was playing in the religious edifice. Hollywood has done it again!

* * *

ATOS ex-Pres. Dick Schrum is happy with the tapes he made on the Sacramento Carl Greer Inn 4/15 Morton for Concert Recording release soon. Meanwhile he's playing the 3/8 Wurlitzer at the Seattle Food Fair. It was recently rebuilt and reinstalled by Balcom and Vaughn following some damage and vandalism. Dick describes it as "a beautiful instrument."

If VOX POPS seem a little sparse in this issue, it's because of a broken bone – namely the left humerus of our VOX POPS editor, Stu Green. The portly one fell down a dark staircase while shooting photos of George Wright at the recent "Organ Holiday" in Santa Cruz, Calif. Stu's dive made such a clatter in the hall that George, unaware that it was caused by anything human (!), remarked to his audience, "Lady –, if you'd had your ears pierced, that wouldn't have happened!" Stu was pulled out of the pit by Conn-men Dale Zeiger and Don Harrington in time to catch part of a tune George was playing for him, then he was rushed to the first aid station, then the hospital by Peg Nielsen and Dewey Cagle. Perambulating to first aid under his own power, but assisted by a helmeted security guard, Stu couldn't resist a gag despite the pain of a shattered arm bone. Passing organist Helen Dell, Stu leaned heavily on the back-booted cop and called to Helen, "Call my shyster! I've been busted!"

* * *

Clealan Blakely reports from Picton, Ontario that Canadian cancer specialist and theatre organ owner, Doc Lawson, has just returned from a lecture tour in Russia. He has plans to visit Portland and Chicago during the summer.

* * *

Wonder how many of those who view the TV program "My Three Sons", are aware that a daughter of the late organist, Buddy Cole, is a regular on the show? Tina Cole plays "Katie."

* * *

While visiting friends and relatives in the middle west in May, Olean's Dr. Edward J. Bebko (Eddie Baker) was driving through Rockford, Ill. when he spotted a very attractive theatre. He stopped to have a look at the 2582-seat Coronado, a former Balaban & Katz house, which was as clean as the day it was opened. He talked to the friendly manager, and upon inquiring whether the 4/16 Barton was still in the theatre, the manager told him it is. About a year and a half ago, a group was given permission to restore the organ, but instead of doing what they promised, they "cannibalized" some of the parts. The manager understandably has become strict about letting anybody tinker with the instrument, but he inferred that if a group which has the right credentials (proven quality work on other instruments) would ask for permission to restore the Barton, he would be most co-operative.

* * *

Tony Fenelon needed his records badly. His tour would last only a couple of weeks and the 19 concerts booked would supply a fine chance to sell records. But the platters were stuck at the Los Angeles dock, stopped by a longshoremen's strike. Tony put on the thinking cap and came through with a brilliant idea – if it would work. It did. Tony contacted friends at L.A. and shortly thereafter a truck called at the struck dock and demanded the load of "meat." The striking dockers allow perishables to be picked up. Thus cartons of records bearing meat stickers were soon on the way to San Francisco to abet Tony's tour, reports Dewey Cagle.

QUAD is coming SOON

Organ builder Ed Link offers some information about the additions made to the 3/11 Link organ he gave to the Roberson Center in Binghamton, N.Y. To bring it up to 17 ranks he added a Posthorn especially voiced by John Steinkamp of New York; a Rohr Flute, Salicional and Oboe Horn removed from a dismantled Austin organ; a Quintadena; and a brand new Gemshorn voiced in Germany. Link supervised the building of the chests and switches. The specification for these additions was prepared by organist Searle Wright, head of the School of Organ at Columbia University. This organ has a special meaning for the music educator; he played his first concert on it as a boy, 40 years ago.

* * *

Wonder if a reader in Elgin, Illinois, recalls which local theatre was equipped with a 3/16 Geneva organ between 1921 and 1928? If so, organist Harry McCord, Corinth, Mississippi, would like to contact him because the organ was recently installed in the Fillmore Street Presbyterian church in Corinth, and is much appreciated. Before that it saw 40 years of service in an Aberdeen (Miss.) Methodist church. Despite the obvious addition of some churchly stops, the Geneva still has its Tibia and Vox and ATOSer McCord would appreciate some info on its theatrical stint.

* * *

There's a new organ club forming, The Organ Club of America, with headquarters in Toledo, Ohio. Dedicated to electronic organs, the club offers a monthly publication and discounts on published music and recordings for dues of $15.00 a year. On the writing staff are organists Jane Jarvis, Bob Ralston, Ralph Wolf and console veteran George Epstein, all identified as Thomas concert artists and demonstrators, although the Thomas Organ Company's PR man, Byron Melcher, informs us that the Sepulveda, Calif. firm has no connection with the club. No mention was made concerning the establishment of regional or local chapters in the club's initial announcement, so it is assumed it will operate with its publication serving as a focal point. Backers hope to name their publication "The Organ-izer" if the name can be cleared with Peg Nielsen, publisher of the original "ORGANizer." For information about the new club, drop a line to OCA, Box 5784, Toledo, Ohio 43613.

* * *

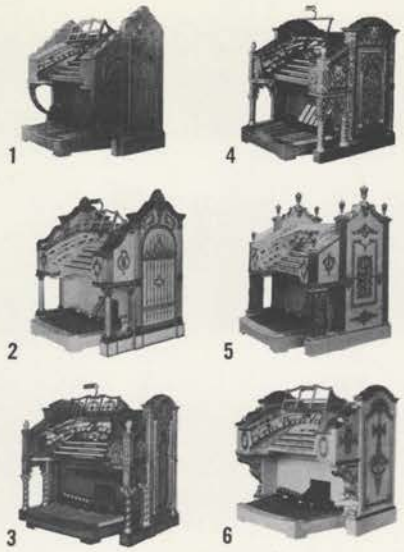
According to reports New York organist Billy Nalle's second Canton, Ohio concert was a huge success. Said Billy, "The people came despite there being a tornado watch! We in the theatre didn't know of it and so I had quite a shock learning of it afterward!" Will Billy's first selection when next he plays Canton be "Stormy Weather"?

* * *

Rochester area viewers of Educational Television Channel 21 during the week of March 22 has the opportunity to see the half-hour presentation of "My Wife Said 'That's Enough' ", a film revolving around ATOS Toronto member Bernie Venus' home installation. Narrated by Ben Hall and Venus himself, the show included sequences with Doc Lawson, Dick Simonton and Gaylord Carter. Carter's stint included references to his early theatre-playing days, some anecdotes, and scenes showing him playing a silent movie. The film was shown on two evenings, and is one of the better ones devoted to informing the public of the theatre organ hobby. It was premiered at the 1968 ATOS convention in Los Angeles.

* * *

The growing group of Buddy Cole fans, its members deeply concerned about the fate of the late organist's 3-26 WurliMorton, may be somewhat re-



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assured to know the instrument is now in the hands of men who know how to merchandise pipes – Bill Brewer (who operates pipe-equipped "Cap'n's Galleys" in Redwood City and Santa Clara, Calif.) and Jim Crank of Mountain View, Calif. The instrument arrived from the East early in July and is now in storage in the San Francisco Bay area. It has been badly damaged (partly from water) and it is estimated that it will require up to two years to repair it during which time a location will be sought where it can be heard by the public. Fans hope the "Wurli-Morton" characteristics will be retained (just as Buddy combined the two brands) for a sound which Cole buffs insist has never been equaled.

* * *

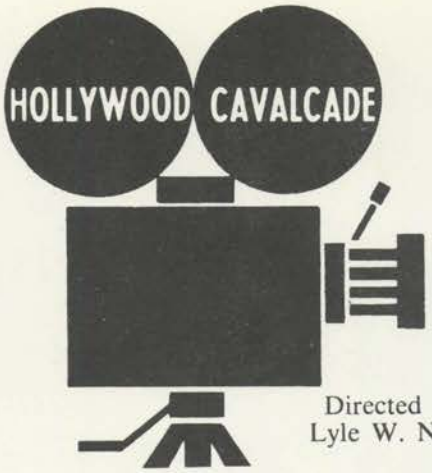
Australia's roving musical ambassador, Tony Fenelon, entertained an audience of 850 at Rochester's Auditorium Theatre on June 18. On his second American tour, which included the Hoosier Theatre in Whiting, Ind. and the John Hays Hammond organ in Gloucester, Mass., this 29-year old Australian displayed his talents via organ, piano solos, and as part of a two-instrument team which had Don Scott at the Wurlitzer, and Tony at the Auditorium Steinway.

* * *

Eddie May, former Rochester theatre organist, and now a resident of Miami, reports that his "minutes, hours, days, weeks, etc., are completely taken up via study, teaching, club dates, service playing and conventions." He recently finished the American Nurses annual convention. His annual recital of his students featured 23 performers. Professional and social commitments precluded his attending the New York ATOS convention, he says.

* * *

Erle Renwick, chairman of the Eastern Massachusetts Chapter, says that a period of organ restoration has been instituted, four nights a week. An organ was purchased, a site acquired, and in time, the organ will be playing in its new home. More of the membership is being encouraged to work on the various projects. Erle also reports that the Balaban & Katz Wurlitzer from the Salem Paramount has been removed from the theatre and is being installed in a specially designed auditorium in Weston, Mass. The new owner hopes to come up with the "perfect Wurlitzer" home installation. In the back of some of the members' minds is the possibility that in three or four years, the theatre organ climate of the region might beckon a national ATOS convention. More power to them!



Directed by
Lyle W. Nash

FILM GREATS Gloria Swanson and Lon Chaney, Jr., now call the San Clemente, Calif. seaside city their home. Chaney has lived in the region of the Western White House for several years while Gloria has been a resident just a short time. Bette Davis, John Wayne, Mae Marsh, Andy Devine and Claire Trevor are among those who have found the Pacific Ocean very soothing to the rigors of acting.

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BY Thanksgiving Hollywood should be reading: "Hollywood & the Great Fan Magazines." That should stir up endless memories.

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TWO Harold Lloyd comedies of the early '20s, "Sailor Made Man" and "Never Weaken," may be shown to select situations according to reports circulating in ATOS circles. When shown in Los Angeles, in May, the audience of nearly 2,000 at the Wiltern theatre was on the verge of hysteria from so much clean fun and great sight gags. Lloyd made a personal appearance and received a thundering ovation.

•

"SEE NO EVIL" by Jack Vizzard (Simon & Schuster) is a raucous, highly entertaining and readable volume on Hollywood censorship of 20,000 films for more than 33 years. You'll howl with laughter and shudder with shame at the religious hyprocrisy that millions of Americans ridiculed and never took too seriously.

•

CONTRARY to reports, retired film mogul Jack L. Warner does have a private collection of some of the films he produced at the giant Burbank film factory.

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WHO IS WHERE . . . A column reader reports that he visited with Lil Dagover (silent era) in Munich in June . . . One time child star Dick Winslow is now a Los Angeles musician. He played with Jackie Coogan, Junior Coghlan and Mickey McGuire (now Rooney) in the silent days . . . Mary Miles Minter, long in retirement and rarely in the public print, sued a TV network this summer. MMM charges that the network mentioned her in a libelous manner . . . Evalyn Knapp, 1932 Wampus choice, is still seen about Hollywood.

•

COL. Tim McCoy, 79, is still wowing crowds this summer with the Tommy Scott Country Caravan & Wild West Stage Show. McCoy, who has made about 91 movies between 1923 and 1965, includes in his act this summer the lighting of a match with a bullwhip.

•

OLDIES never die. "King Kong" and "Gold Diggers of 1933" dominated all activities at the Third International Film Festival in Atlanta this summer. Fay Wray and Busby Berkeley added sparkle to the affair with their personal appearances.

•

IF you live in an area that has an educational TV outlet, be on the lookout for a series called "The Toy That Grew Up." Films shown include such old silents as "Are Parents People," "Pony Express" and "Code of the Sea." Some old Rin-Tin-Tin thrillers are included.

•

AWARD winning cameraman Arthur Miller (he was on hand when "The Great Train Robbery" was filmed in 1903) recently recalled that some of the first Keystone Kops comedies were shot in Tijuana instead of all at Edendale.

•

CLOSE-UPS . . . Edward Everett Horton, 84 this summer, says he will "never" retire . . . Junior Coghlan (now Frank) is a Los Angeles business executive . . . In 1967 it was reported Buster Keaton and Bert Lahr made a film in color that has never been released.

•

QUESTIONS, contributions and comments are welcomed to P. O. Box 113, Pasadena, California, 91102.

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A Theatre Organ Biography

The Esther McDonald Stayner Story

by Lloyd E. Klos

Esther McDonald Stayner grew up in the little town of Rock Springs, Wyoming. Her father, John McDonald, was in the theatre business, and ran a theatre called "The Grand Opera House." Everyone in the town liked live performances, and as a result, there were many amateur shows with plays, dances and musicians. Rock Springs was home to musicians from many nations.

The Grand Opera House was an all-purpose building for road stage shows, vaudeville, prize fights, town meetings, etc. When the main event was over, the chairs were stored under the stage, the floor was waxed, and an orchestra assembled for a public dance. "I was the dance pianist," says Esther, "and was a full member of the musicians' union when only ten.

"I just learned by doing and with the help of my first music teacher, Mrs. Dwight Morris. Her brother was the director of the orchestra. The town dentist played the trombone; a butcher, the clarinet; the bookkeeper for the mining company, violin; the director's wife doubled on bass and drums; while a grocer played trumpet.

"One night, the members of the orcestra failed to appear. I played the entire time for the dancing and insisted on getting paid for the entire orchestra. The union scale was $1 an hour for each musician. I loved being a part of the theatre."

The beginning of the motion picture in the Opera House was a short, two-reel affair between stage shows. It was a comedy with a lot of action, accompanied by only the piano at first. Sometimes, a drummer was added for sound effects. "When the picture machine broke down, the poor audience was forced to listen to a concert on the piano." With the introduction of movies, the theatre's name was changed to "Grand Motion Picture House."

Mr. McDonald took on a partner, H. T. Moore, who wanted a better instrument to accompany the pictures. He bought what was called a Photoplayer. This instrument played about the same as an organ, but without pedals. There were several sound effects, such as a mandolin, and these were operated by pulling a string above the console. "It was a sort of fifth cousin to the organ," she says, "and I recall seeing them in Pendleton, Oregon; Lewistown, Montana; and Salt Lake City. Though crude, they were an improvement over the piano.

"One of my first engagements was in the American Theatre in Salt Lake City. The organ was a large Kimball with many effects, including an echo organ, chimes and an extensive toy counter. Alexander Schreiner was the other organist, and is famous today through his playing of the organ in the Mormon Tabernacle.

"The director of the orchestra at the American was John J. McClellan, who also served as chief organist at the Mormon Tabernacle. He also maintained a piano studio on Temple Street.

"Mr. McClellan kept the music standards high — nothing but the classics were played by his orchestra. A sort of prologue was played before the main picture was shown. When the organ was used in concert with the orchestra, Mr. Schreiner played the Kimball. He was a star organ student of McClellan. The organ had a glorious tone and was kept in excellent condition.

"I left Salt Lake City in 1923, and began an engagement at the Clemmer Theatre in Spokane, Washington. This theatre had a large Kimball with a very beautiful tone. The action was delayed, the organist had to anticipate the tone, and it was a little difficult to play a fast comedy. However, Balcom & Vaughan made some changes and added a few effects which improved it."

Esther Stayner at the Kimball console in the Clemmer theatre in Spokane about 1923. Though possessing a beautiful tone, the organ's action was at first slow for playing fast comedies. Some changes were made later which improved it. Stayner collection

Later in 1923, Esther went to the Chicago Musical College and studied under the old master, Clarence Eddy. He later came to Spokane and gave a concert on the Clemmer organ. The people of Spokane were delighted with his playing of the classics. He looked a little like Mark Twain and possessed a quaint personality.

To help defray expenses in Chicago, Esther broadcast over KYW on a Kimball. This was one of the first broadcasts from Kimball Hall. "Things started unceremoniously when I stepped on a bass pedal which started a 16-footer

Esther at Tacoma's Broadway theatre Wurlitzer about 1926. She used this organ for broadcasting over KVI. In regards to the dress, she says that "the styles revolve and return if one waits long enough." Stayner collection

ciphering. The broadcast was by remote control, but after the organ repairman was called, I went ahead with the program. I always kept clear of the mechanical phase of the organs, but have the greatest respect for those who can repair these instruments."

The manager of Kimball Hall arranged this series of broadcasts as a sort of experiment. Later he was transferred to New York and lived at the Waldorf, according to Esther.

In 1925, Esther went to Tacoma for an engagement at the Rialto Theatre, which was under the direction of her father's old partner, H. T. Moore. The organ was a Wurlitzer with many effects.

She then had a stint at Tacoma's Broadway Theatre where she had a nightly request program over KVI for the Almond Roca Candy Co., and a regular program for the Pacific Federal Home Loan Assn. On the candy co. program, listeners were invited to stump the organist by requesting numbers. If Esther couldn't play a number, the listener was rewarded with a box of candy. Esther was known in those days as the "Almond Roca Queen."

The other organist at the Broadway Wurlitzer was the talented Oliver Wallace, composer of "Hindustan". He later became musical director for the Walt Disney Studios, composing many hit tunes for cartoons such as "Dumbo" and "Fantasia".

In 1925, Esther, in co-operation with organist Harry Stone of Tacoma's Rialto Theatre, organized a company which made original organ novelties, some on film, others on glass slides. A mail order service was set up, and slides were sent to other organists on a rental basis. Stone did the art work, and it was very professional. However, it was difficult to send the glass slides back and forth. So many were broken in transit that the business ended.

In 1926, she played the Wurlitzer in Tacoma's Colonial Theatre. One evening, while playing her solo, someone in the front row stole her purse. The solo happened to be "The Lost Chord", and the alert cartoonist of the Tacoma News Tribune illustrated the event with appropriate verse:

Seated one night at the organ,
Trying very hard to please,
Her feet upon the pedals,
Her fingers on the keys . . .

Stewart Whitehouse was the reporter for the Tribune, and he used to call organists "The Vanishing Americans."

By 1929, sound was fast taking over the movies, and the theatre organist was relegated to playing solos between pictures, or running song slides.

Eventually, the organists went into other fields of endeavor. Many were not equipped with formal education. As Esther had never attended high school, she enrolled in the Emily Griffith Opportunity School, which was for adults, in Denver, Colo. It was a part of the public school system of that city.

"Those of you who wonder where the organists went, I will say that as far as I was concerned, it had a happy ending, for in 1935, I was awarded a #1 scholarship to the University of Denver by the Opportunity School.

"Following college, I taught school in Denver and then in Aspen, Colorado, a very interesting ski resort which is a restored ghost town where silver was once mined. It also served as a sort of culture center. I was there in 1943 and 1944, helping with ration stamps. I had a great time, lived in a log house with my dog, Woody. Weekends we would hike about the ghost houses and schools.

A more recent picture of Esther Stayner taken around 1940 when she became a teacher. Stayner Collection

"I returned to the coast and became a music teacher in Bremerton's public schools. Later, I changed to Teaching second graders, and found it very satisfying. In teaching from 1940 to 1968, I always used the background of my theatre organ profession and found it very helpful, especially in coaching children's plays and programs."

The writer is indebted to Mrs. Stayner for her co-operation in the preparation of this article, and to ATOS member, George L. Lufkin of Shelton, Washington, who appraised us of Mrs. Stayner's former status as a theatre organist. □

Another Organ Lost

by R. Summer Rand

The dateline is June 18, 1970.

The time is 9:00 A.M.

The place is the Albee Theatre, Westminster Mall, Providence, R.I.

I am standing in the orchestra, gazing around at a once opulent house, originally built to house legit theatre, and principally, the Albee Players. The house had been shuttered a week ago, and an auction had been held to dispose of furnishings, antiques and marble work, and at this time, it was being unceremoniously removed.

I had been in this theatre about three years ago while following up on our project as it once had a Wurlitzer, Opus 1122, Model H Special. The manager at that time told me that it had been removed as the theatre had been flooded during the Hurricanes in previous years, and as it was in the affected area, I gave it no further consideration.

However, I heard some commotion behind the proscenium openings, and suddenly, a section of the opening was smashed open and a shower of Wurlitzer pipe work came hurtling down onto the orchestra floor. A shout produced no answer, except another bundle of pipework, and before I could find my way up five flights, across the roof, and into the lamping area and over three catwalks, it was all over but the requiem. Tuba to 16', diaphone to 16', 2 strings, viole celeste, kinura, vox, orchestral oboe, clarinet. Have you ever seen Wurlitzer pipe work dropped about 75' onto a row of orchestra seats? It had brought 5c a pound for zinc, 10c for Hoyt, 17c for lead, and 40c for spotted organ metal; around $200 for the lot. The tibia and concert flute, being of wood, was still there, so I brought the tibia home as a memento.

The remaining casework was in excellent condition, and I have referred the local chapter to look into the possibility of obtaining same for their installation project at Babson College, which has no console at present.

YOU SEE, THEY DIDN'T KNOW THE ORGAN WAS THERE UNTIL AFTER THE AUCTION WAS OVER. SO IT WAS NEVER ADVERTISED. THUS, ANOTHER ITEM HAS BEEN LOST, FOR THE MOST PART. SUCH IS OUR FRUSTRATION IN THESE MATTERS. □

Let our advertisers know you saw their ad in Theatre Organ.

SIX YEARS AGO . . .

New York Paramount Now Nostalgia

by John E. Merriken

As it comes to all men, there dawns one day when it seems, of a sudden, that we are nearer to the end than the beginning. Such a day for me came in late September. Though heralded, in a way, by other signs at other events, it was nonetheless a moment of foreclosure that arrived brutally swift.

I had, of course, noted the distant whistle of the last steamer as the old Bay Line closed its gates. I had witnessed the farewell to steam on our railroads, and the last trolley car foreshadowed a darkness that still remains. But the epilogue was surely signed on that day in late September when the great pipe organ ended its final concert.

Now this ought not to bother one, for it implies merely a dynamic age of great change. It was so planned, and the price was so paid. Though, if you are today somewhere west of two score years, your memories will antedate the shrill glassy world of rubber tires and concrete; of canned music; and drive-in movies. More likely, they wander in reverie to those afternoons long ago when you used to attend the Palace, the Paramount, the Fox, or the Strand. By whatever name, it was a magnificent showplace of crystal chandeliers, marble staircases, velvet draperies, plus carpeting and ornate gold trim. This aura of opulence sort of paved your entrance to the weekly bill of real live entertainment that included acrobats, jugglers, comedians, magicians and trained animals. Those of the crooners, tap dancers and the spurious spinners of "sophisticated" humor were, happily, still a minority group which couldn't quite compete with the more advanced talent of career artists.

During the intermission, you were enthralled by popular melodies played on The Mighty Wurlitzer, whose massive gold console was accentuated by the spotlight from on high. This pipe organ was a fascinating instrument of seemingly endless voices that issued in all possible modulations from either side of the proscenium. From the muted singing of the vox humana to the triumphant blare of the brass trumpets; from the gentle warble of the marimba to the deep tremble of the giant diapason; it was the most versatile one-man band – ever. I've often thought that Man's quest for instruments of music reached its crowning achievement in the theatre pipe organ! And this organ gave rise to another entertainment medium known as the "Community Sing" which of course suggested that the audience participate. And they did–in a form of wholesome fun attuned to the spirit of lusty carol.

But the talking picture, and the demise of stage shows eventually ushered the twilight of that Golden Age of the great movie palace; and with it, the swan song of the mighty theatre organ. One by one the marquees went dark, and one by one the great organs grew silent. Finally, even Manhattan's majestic Paramount remained like a lone sentinel of an age that was all but gone; until at last word came that this too had reached its allotted span.

Thus came that fateful day in late September when disciples of the pipe organ gathered in conclave to pay homage to the Mighty Wurlitzer for one farewell concert. September 27, 1964, marked the end of an era. And though its memory may at times be blurred by the mists of sentiment, it will remain ever huge and poignant in that treasure-house we call nostalgia. □

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From left to right: Judd Walton, Farny Wurlitzer, and Lou Rosa in Mr. Wurlitzer's study at the time the templates were picked up in North Tonawanda. At extreme left is a portrait of Mr. Rudolph Wurlitzer, Sr.

A LIVING TRIBUTE

To Farny Wurlitzer and Lou Rosa

by Douglas Marion

MR. FARNY WURLITZER, chairman of the Board Emeritus of the Wurlitzer Company, through the efforts of Mr. Lou Rosa, field engineer, has granted permission for the production of stop tables from the original engraving templates used in the factory. This announcement is the result of a trip through the factory on December 13, 1969, by Judd Walton, who discovered the existence of the templates, the last remaining production entity of the Wurlitzer theatre organ. He discussed with Rosa, his friend, guide and host, the possible availability of the templates to Wurlitzer owners and ATOS members and proposed that he be allowed to conclude arrangements with Mr. Max Mogensen, owner of the Hagerstown Engraving Supply Company (known as HESCO) in Hagerstown, Maryland.

As a result of weeks of careful planning, the templates were picked up in North Tonawanda, New York, inventoried and delivered to Mogensen on July 6, 1970, by Walton and "Cap" Erwin Young of the Potomac Valley Chapter, ATOS, who agreed to serve as courier for the project. Working copies, exact in every detail, will be produced by Mogensen and the original masters will be returned to the factory by Young. An agreement has been signed by Mogensen, Rosa and Walton and recorded in Washington County, Maryland, which grants title of the working templates to HESCO, which is to revert to the other two parties if for any reason HESCO ceases production under Mogensen's ownership and management. It precludes breaking up the set, specifying that it remain intact, complete and unbroken. Contrary to statements made from time to time, original Wurlitzer stop tablets were not "hand" engraved. They were made from templates on a standard production model engraving machine. On the early Wurlitzer models, a wide-narrow lined style was used on the italic letters and these too were made from templates, all trace of which has been lost. Walton, during his tour of the factory, was visiting with Lou Markowitz, the last remaining production employee still with the company, who has since retired. Markowitz pointed out the engraving machines used and Walton noted a small cabinet on a nearby bench. Reasoning that if there were templates, they should be near the engraving equipment, he investigated the cabinet and discovered the templates. The scene that followed would be difficult to describe; suffice it to say it was one of amazement, unbounded joy and speculation.

Markowitz explained that stop tablets were produced as production required, although some commonly used tablets were made up in advance. The actual engraving work was done by two girls, Lena Brietenbach and Marion Poitras, whom Markowitz believes to be deceased. Walton was given three templates for a trial run and to fulfill one of his needs—the English Horn italic template, the 16' pitch, and the HORN tip engraving template. Four tablets were made for him last January by HESCO from these original templates, the first made since the factory ceased production about 30 years ago. They were obviously a perfect match and the determining factor to proceed with the project.

The templates available are as follows with an explanation for the correct use of each group.

Organ stop tablet italics

Aeoline
Angelica
Bass
Bass drum
Bells
Brass Trumpet
Carillon
Castanets
Cathedral chimes
Celestina
Cello
Chimes
Chinese Block
Chrysoglott
Clarabella
Clarinet
Clarion
Concert Flute
Contra Viol (ten c)
Cor Anglais
Cornet
Crash Cymbal
Cymbals
Dampers
Diaphone
Diaphonic Diapason
Diaphonic Horn
Drums
Dulcet
Dulcetin
Dulciana
English Horn
Fifteenth
Flute
Flute d'amour
French
Gamba
Gambette
Glockenspiel
Gravissima
Harmonic Clarion
Harmonic Flute
Harmonic Piccolo
Harmonic Tuba
Harp
Horn Diapason
Kettle Drum
Kinura
Krumet
Lieblich Gedackt
Mandolin
Marimba
Melodia
Minor
Musette
Muted
Nazard
Oboe Horn
Octave
Open
Open Diapason
Ophicleide
Orchestral Oboe
Phonon
Piano
Piccolo
Principal
Plena
Quintadena
Quintaton
Resultant
Salicet
Salicional
Sand Block
Saxophone
Sleigh bells
Snare drum
Solo Trumpet
String
Strings
Stopped
Sub
Super
Tambourine
(ten c)
(tibia)
Tibia Clausa
Tierce
Tom Tom
Tremolo
Tremulant
Triangle
Trumpet
Trumpet (ten c)
Tuba horn
Tuba Mirabilis
Tuba Profunda
Twelfth
Tympani
Unda Maris
Vibraphone
Vibraphone Dampers
Viol Celeste
Viol d'orchestre
Viola
Violin
Violina
Violins
Violone
Voix Celeste (ten c)
Vox Humana
Vox Humana (ten c)
Wald Flute
Xylophone

Organ stop tablet tip

AEOL
BASS
BELLS
BOUR
CARIL
CEL
CELLO
CHIMES
CHRYS
CLAR
COR ANG.
DAMP.
DIA
DUL
DULC
FLUTE
GAM
GED
GLOCK
HARP
HORN
KIN
KRUM
MAR
MELO
MIX
MUS
OBOE
OCT
OPEN
OPH
PIANO
PICC
PRIN
QUINT
SAL
SAX
STOPd
STRING
TIERCE
TIBIA
TROM
TRUM
TUBA
UNDA
VIB.
VIOL
VIOLA
VOX
XYLO
10TH
12TH
15TH
I
II
III
I
II
III

Organ stop tablet effects italics

Aeroplane
Bird
Fire
Gong
Hoofs
Hammer
Horse
Jazz
Rail
Slap
Surf
Tap
Wind
Wood

Player nameplate effects block letters

AUTO
BELL
BIRD
BLOCK
BOAT
CAST
CH BELL
CRASH
GONG
HORSE
KETTLE DRUM
LOC. BELL
LOUD
REP. GONG
RAIN
SIREN
SLEIGH
SNARE
SOFT
SURF
TEL.
TOM TOM
TRAIN
TREM.
WHISTLE
WIND

Organ stop tablet pitch

1 3/5
2
2 2/3
3 1/5
4
8
16
32

Organ stop tablet coupler

Great to Pedal
Echo to Pedal
Echo to Swell
Solo to Accomp.
Solo to Great
Solo to Pedal
Swell to Great
Swell to Pedal
Sub
Super
Unison Off
Unison
(Or any combination of the above, i.e., Great to Acc.)

Organ nameplate block letters

ACCOMP
GREAT
ECHO
GEN
ORCH
PEDAL
PERC
PIZZICATO
SOLO
SECOND TOUCHES
SWELL
TRAPS
TRAPS ON OFF
TRAPS 1st 2nd
2nd TOUCH

Organ stop tablet tremolos italics

Chancel
Choir
Echo
Etherial
Foundation
Gallery
Great
Main
Swell
Tibia Clausa
Organ
Percussion
Solo
Vox Humana

Piston letters and numerals

P	MF
PP	F
PPP	FF
	FFF
1	6
2	7
3	8
4	9
5	10

SUITABLE BASS

Player nameplate block letters

CANCEL
CANCELS
CHANGE
CONSOLE REWIND SWITCH
CONTINUOUS PLAY
DOUBLE
MANUAL
OFF
ON
ON-OFF
PLAY
(PLAY)
PLAYER STOPS
REROLL
REWIND
(REWIND)
SELECT
START
STOP
STOPS
SUPER
TREBLE

Player nameplate italics

Accomp.
Coupler
Crescendo
Double
Keys
Manual
Moderato
Note
Off
On
Pitch
Player
Roll
(soft)
Sustaining
Treble

Miscellaneous

Pedal traps 2nd touch
2nd
1st
GEN.
&

Max Morgensen, taking delivery of the templates from Cap Young in the Hesco office at 7:30 p.m. on the evening of July 6, 1970. Cap is holding a "pedal" template for a name plate in his right hand.

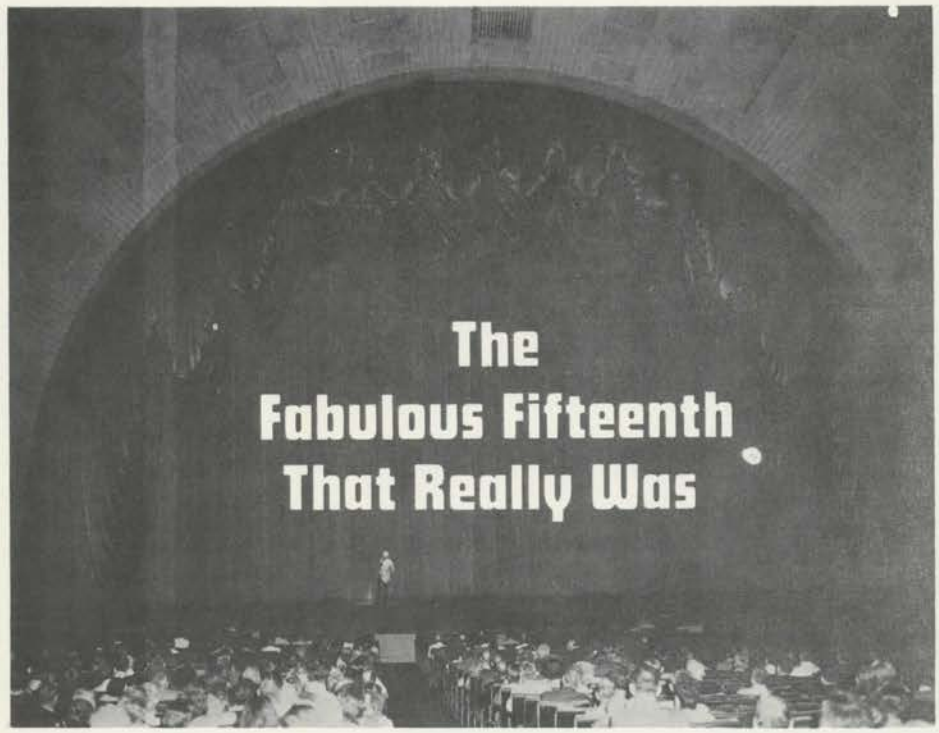
Mogensen announced that production will start in September, 1970, and the first order is in his hands for a complete new set of Style "B" stops for Jack Bethards of San Francisco. They will be made from their supply of new plastic blanks. These are altered slightly by them to correct the alignment of the fulcrum slot for a perfect fit on Wurlitzer consoles, which have a #9 wire fulcrum.

At long last, matching Wurlitzer stop tablets can now be obtained by ordering from HESCO, 720 North Mulberry Street, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740. Your order will have personal attention and the price will be $1.65 each on new blanks and $1.80 each on old tablets, from which they will remove the engraving. These original Wurlitzer tablets can be cleaned off and re-engraved, although they will be slightly thinner as a result, depending on the depth of the engraving to be removed. A new, mottled, yellow stop tablet, closely matching and resembling the original Wurlitzer "Celeste" tablets will be available soon.

Walton, who is largely responsible for the "discovery" and "Modus Operandi", stated, "The location of the original templates answers the long-considered question of matching Wurlitzer engraved stop tablets. No other single find of 'Materiel' could have possibly benefited so many organ enthusiasts as will the original templates. Therefore, these templates are rededicated as a Living Tribute to Mr. Farny Wurlitzer, who alone had and maintained against at times almost overwhelming odds, his faith and perseverance in the creation of the superb and unequalled Wurlitzer theatre organ, and to Mr. Lou Rosa, who almost single-handedly has kept alive the remaining links with the past and the future! It was he who immediately recognized the inherent and intrinsic value in perpetuating the availability of the original templates and who approached Mr. Wurlitzer with the proposal and secured his enthusiastic approval."

"The templates seem almost like the fabled 'Tablets of Gold' of antiquity and their location and reactivation are a fitting and living tribute to these two men and the Mighty Wurlitzer," he concluded.

Lou Rosa, left, and "Cap" Young placing the templates which have been inventoried and sealed in a wooden box in the trunk of the car at Rosa's residence.



The Fabulous Fifteenth That Really Was

In celebrating the fifteen years of A.T.O.S., the New York Chapter served as convention host for the first time. It proved to be the most ambitious undertaking ever attempted by a host chapter. It included ten days of events, loaded with sparkling performances by leading artists, and visits to both the largest Wurlitzer ever built (Radio City Music Hall), and two of the finest examples of Robert Morton craftsmanship, the famous "Wonder Mortons" (United Palace, formerly Loew's 175th St., and Shaeble Studio, housing the former Loew's Valencia organ).

The entire meeting was carefully planned under the leadership of Claud Beckham, convention chairman.

A pocket size sheet for each day giving exact directions, maps and traveling time to every event were given to each registrant.

There were some unusual events inserted into the scheme which included an unforgettable trip in cooperation with the National Railway Historical Society, on a newly renovated vintage subway train in cars that were built in 1917 and 1924.

There was a good range of instruments from small organs to large ones, for listeners to compare, and many artists to exhibit different styles of playing.

Coupled into the planning, the electronic organ interests were considered. They presented a program in which most of the leading makes were placed on stage in the Grand Ballroom of the Commodore and played by artists selected by the firms represented. The event was well attended and the reception by conventioneers was excellent.

Television interests discovered our meeting. The production staff of NBC's "First Tuesday" exposed considerable footage of several events, doing an "in-depth" coverage for national network release on August 4, 1970.

We were given TV attention on local newscasts too, which included film clips of a performance at the Beacon Theatre. (It turned out that televised performer was a staffer of WABC—Channel 7).

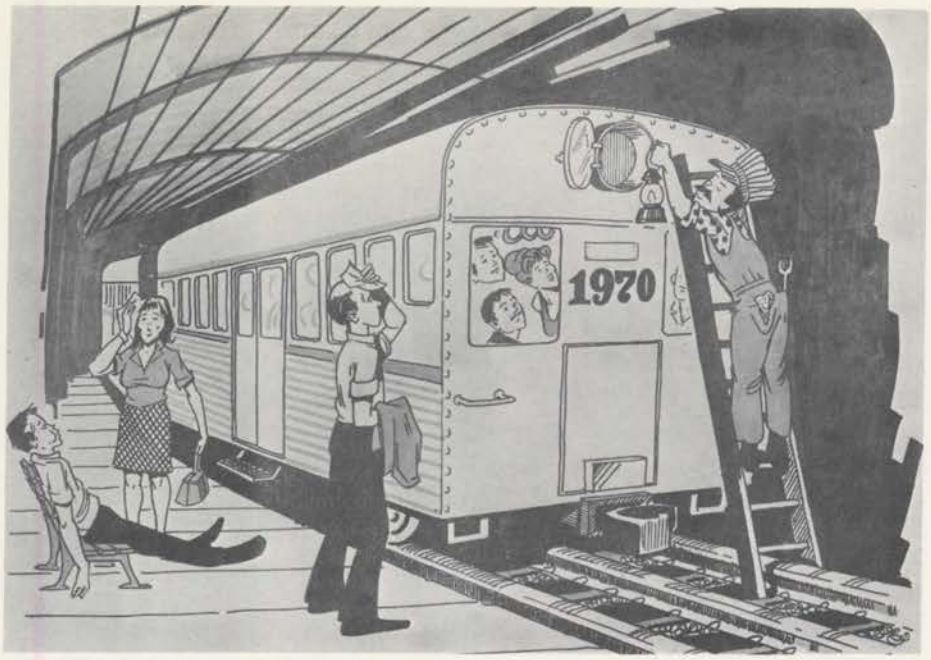
The Commodore Ballroom was aglow Friday evening, July 17, as the A.T.O.S. banquet got underway.

The beautiful setting was enhanced by the table decorations designed by the banquet committee.

Ed Welsh played a Baldwin Electronic for banquet entertainment. A short movie was shown (complete with sound) of some New York Chapter members removing a pipe organ.

A highlight was the presentation of the honorary member award. Recipient Bill Lamb was caught completely by surprise, to the point where he was literally speechless.

The convention moved forward with increasing tempo to a smashing finale at the showplace of the nation—Radio City Music Hall, and a fine presentation in the last remaining deluxe motion picture palace.



In a unique merger of historical interests, the theatre organ devotees traveled from their convention headquarters to the United Palace (former Loew's 175th St. Theatre) Saturday morning, July 11 aboard an old-time IRT subway train, chartered for the day by the New York chapter of the National Railway Historical Society.

After a "cruise" via the South Ferry terminal, the organ concert-goers detrained at 168th Street to hear a concert by Ashley Miller on the former theatre's original Robert Morton. The railway enthusiasts remained aboard their subway special for a tour of yards and other attraction highlights.

After the concert, their train returned to 175th St. just in time to pick up the concert-goers and whisk them off to Brooklyn via the Manhattan Bridge, for their convention's second concert which was held in Founders' Hall of Long Island University, the former Brooklyn Paramount Theatre.

Both the organ devotees and the railway enthusiasts left the special train at DeKalb Avenue station in Brooklyn.

Convention Chairman, Claud Beckham

— Jim LaVake Photo

In spite of all the problems arising in a gathering of this sort, Claud Beckham never lost his cool. He was always smiling, affable and always available to any and everyone who sought advice and information from him.

* * *

Three churches in Rahway cooperated in selling box lunches to the several hundred enthusiasts. As major eating places are at a premium in the area, this act of kindness enabled the day's activities to proceed on a regular schedule.

NBC 'shoots' Jerry Mendelson for First Tuesday coverage.

— Tom Yanitell Photo

The Taylors

— Bill Lamb Photo

Ray and Doris Taylor, with sons Bill and Dick, continue to be among the more avid convention enthusiasts. As a family, they have attended every convention in recent years.

They have always traveled to the meeting together until this year, when Mr. Taylor was transferred from California to Maryland. Since Bill and Dick had acquired and installed a fine Wurlitzer in a closed theatre at Burlingame, California, the parents agreed to let the boys work on the organ, while Ray and Doris live in Maryland. It seems no sacrifice is too great in preserving a theatre organ.

The trip to Rahway afforded many of the conventioneers the opportunity to engage in a second hobby — observing the trains which sped by on the 6-track Pennsy mainline. TO's associate editor Klos divided his time between train-watching and concert-going. "I was a boy again, if only for a short time," he observed wistfully.

* * *

ATOS invades Rahway. Natives said they hadn't seen so many people on the streets since the Mayor died in 1945.

— Bill Lamb Photo

To Claud & Aline Beckham In Appreciation

The Beckhams and all the workers in the New York Chapter are to be congratulated by all those who attended the Fabulous Fifteenth in New York City. It takes a great deal of planning, patience and just plain hard work over a period of many months to put on a convention of this magnitude.

Special thanks also go to members of the Connecticut Valley Chapter for their valuable assistance.

Artists at the Electronic Festival from left to right: Reynolds Galbraith, Compton; Frank Cimmino, Rodgers; Richard Rogers, Conn; Paul Quarino, Wurlitzer; Ed Welsh, Baldwin; Ashley Miller, Allen; Frank Renaut, Lowrey.

— Bill Lamb Photo

Claud and Aline Beckham receive the silver bowl presented by the chapter.

— Jim LaVake Photo

And, mark up still another first for the New York convention. An NBC-TV camera crew was on hand, beginning with the Rahway concerts to photograph the happenings. The result of their efforts was seen nation-wide in the television program "First Tuesday" with Sander Vanocur as narrator. Never has such scope been given the hobby, and when a far-reaching event of this kind is publicized, the theatre organ hobby can be said to really have come of age.

An interesting aspect of this year's meeting was the display of electronic organs in exhibit rooms of the Commodore. Among those showing instruments were Allen, Baldwin, Compton, Conn, Lowrey, Rodgers, Wurlitzer. Another exhibitor, a "friend in need" for all pipe organ owners, was Keyboard Entertainment Products Co. who will supply many hard-to-obtain repair parts.

The electronic firms have been interested in the activities of A.T.O.S. for quite some time, and their displays were well attended by conventioneers. Factory representatives of the electronics companies manned the exhibit rooms. Among those seen were Paul Mooter, Eddie Osborn, Lou Hollingsworth, Frank Renaut, Jack Scott, George Nadler, Jack Allison and Glen Kersten. The Compton, an English offering, took the honors for being the largest in physical size.

Knowing that convention veteran, Stu Green would be unable to attend the affair due to circumstances beyond his control, he was not forgotten. The roly-poly Editor Emeritus, who is well known for his candid tape recorder, kazoo, and various nom-de-plume identification tags, was remembered. Old Prospector Klos had a special greeting card made up by a newspaper colleague, and collected numerous signatures on it to send to the absent typewriter-pounder. Cheer up, Stu. Seattle is just 11 months away!

Larry Leverenz, our host and entertainer at a pre-convention luncheon at Tarrytown, N. Y.

— Jim LaVake Photo

Dennis James (left) and Dick Loderhose stand in front of the New York Paramount studio Wurlitzer Dick installed in a concrete block studio adjacent to his Long Island home. It has since been augmented by the Roxy Theatre's 5 manual console. Dick has utilized some of the best hands to install and maintatin the instrument — the late Dan Papp, Louis Ferarra of the Music Hall and others. Six groups took tours of the two home installations of which Dick's was one.

— Jim LaVake Photo

Loew's Valencia, New York, opened in 1929 and its 4/23 Robert Morton played for a few years until the depression took its toll. The orchestra and organ pit were covered with reinforced concrete to provide six more rows of seats. Peter Schaeble bought the Valencia organ in 1966 and installed it in his two-story studio which also contains a Wurlitzer player console, orchestrions and other instruments. The Morton console dominates the studio which has a post Victorian decor and everything is finished in excellent taste. The other home installation on the home tours.

— Tom Yanitell Photo

Al Mason hands over the 'Wand of Office' to new President, Stillman Rice. Could the can of Metrecal that topped the pipe be a hint to both these men? The real Tibia 'Wand' was then presented.

— Bill Lamb Photo

Over 800 dined on Prime Rib in the Grande Ballroom of the Commodore. Ed Welsh entertained at the Baldwin installed in the center of the room.

— Bill Lamb Photo

Claud Beckham turns over a check for $200.00 to Harry Harkness, chairman of Puget Sound chapter, to help get next year's convention under way.

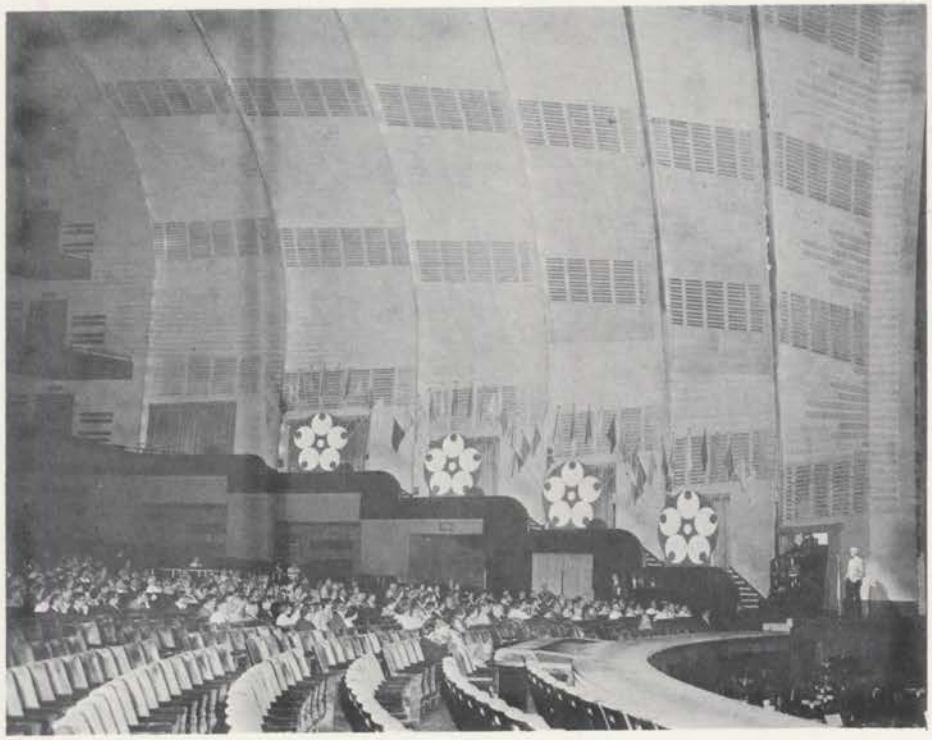
— Bill Lamb Photo

Mildred and Stillman Rice — our new President and the First Lady.

— Bill Lamb Photo

l. to r. Claude Beckham, John Henry Jackson and Dick Leibert back stage at Radio City Music Hall. Mr. Jackson showed us the versatility of the Music Hall stage at the Afterglow.

— Bill Lamb Photo



Afterglow at Radio City Music Hall.

— Bill Lamb Photo

"THE WINNER" — Lee Bounds

— Bill Lamb Photo

The extremely lucky six members who had their names drawn for the Radio City Music Hall Afterglow were Lloyd Olson, Mary Bowles, Bill Norman, Lee Bounds, Bill Taylor and Ed Welsh. All did a tremendous job with this rare opportunity. Ed Welsh played one of his own compositions called "New York Holiday" written especially for the Fabulous Fifteenth. Dick Leibert had a committee help choose the winner who turned out to be Lee Bounds. Congratulations, Lee.

Convention Headquarters — Commodore Hotel. On 42nd Street, next to Grand Central Station in the heart of mid-town Manhattan.

— Bill Lamb Photo

Arriving from his home town of Olean, N.Y. just minutes before the start of the Ashley Miller concert at the United Palace, organist-chiropractor Doc Bebko (Eddie Baker) remarked that the convention was a sort of old home week to him. His early years were spent in Brooklyn; he played many of the neighborhood houses during his early music days, and crowned his career with a two-year stint at the Music Hall. Son Edward, attending his first convention, was absorbing everything like a sponge.

* * *

Canada's Mr. Theatre Organ Enthusiast, Clealan Blakely, remarked that only one thing marred the convention — the demise of the Paramount Theatre and its Wurlitzer, the queen mother of all of them. In the late twenties while attending school in Gotham, Clealan rarely missed a day when he didn't attend a show at Jesse Crawford's base of operations. "I'd sometimes stay and see three shows, and as the audience would file out, I'd work my way down to the front of the auditorium into close proximity with the master of them all."

Ted Alan Worth and Andy Crow concertized in the Grand Ballroom Foyer for a large crowd. Nobody seemed to mind the lack of chairs. The Rodgers Classic organ and the Theatre model travel all over the country.

— Jim LaVake Photo

l. to r. Virgil Fox, Dick Simonton and Phil Olsen relax between numbers at the Worth/Crow concert.

— Jim LaVake Photo

Seeing Loew's 175th Street Wonder Morton rise majestically into view once again on its turntable lift after being entombed for 20 years under concrete and steel is in itself a tribute to the organ crews, committee members, consultants and volunteer workers of the New York Chapter.

* * *

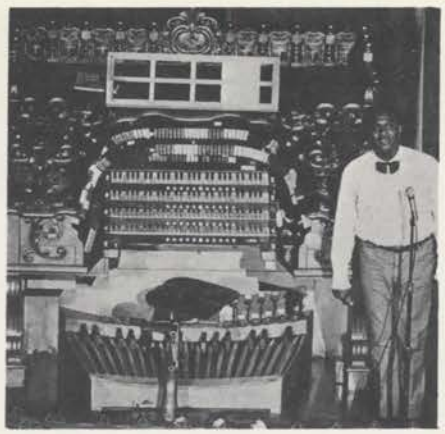
Ashley Miller gave everyone a start when, upon returning to the United Palace after a brief intermission, he tripped against the elevator's decorative enclosure and took a fall. He was back on his feet in an instant suffering no ill effect. All of this prompted Ben Hall to remark, "It is written into Ashley's contract that he take at least one fall during every performance."

Under the leadership of the Reverend Frederick J. Eikerenkoetter II, better known as Rev. Ike, the theatre has been refurbished not only as a church but as a cultural center. The former Loew's 175th Street theatre was the scene of many of our activities.

— Bill Lamb Photo

Leatrice Joy reminisced about her days in the movies during the Lee Erwin program.

— Tom Yanitell Photo



Jimmy Paulin, organist for the United Palace, is also a member of the New York Chapter. He opened the convention by playing the Star Spangled Banner on the piano plus a concert on Wednesday afternoon.

— Tom Yanitell Photo

Lee Erwin, playing his original score during the film presentation of "My Best Girl" (1927), starring Mary Pickford and Buddy Rogers, at the United Palace, carried great impact.

His almost perfect cueing and sensitive keyboard artistry made the picture an absorbing production. He showed the younger generation that silent movies are much more than jerky Keystone Kop slapstick. They can be, with proper accompaniment, a lasting emotional experience.

* * *

During the Lee Erwin show at the United Palace, the assemblage was given a surprise treat, the personal appearance of Leatrice Joy, well-known silent picture star. The vivacious and peppy lady, magnificently coiffured and attired, was a real show-stopper when introduced to the audience.

Don Baker playing the Conn organ — complete with pipes. He began his program on the Robert Morton then shifted his talents to the Conn.

— Bill Lamb Photo

(Left) Lee Erwin asked 14-year-old Robbie Irvin to show people that the young ones are interested in theatre pipe organ. Robbie has soloed at the Atlanta Fox and is a student of Bob Van Camp.

— Tom Yanitell Photo

(Right) Ashley Miller at 'Loew's 175th' Robert Morton. His concert opened the convention after our 'train ride' from Grand Central.

— Jim LaVake Photo

HONORARY MEMBER 1970

BILL LAMB

The award for Honorary Membership of ATOS is an honor bestowed on an individual in appreciation of his continuing contributions to further the preservation of the theatre organ as an art form.

Based on this, the National Board of Directors, by unanimous vote, selected Bill Lamb for 1970. Bill has served as official photographer for all national events for a number of years. In doing this, Lamb has exposed thousands of negatives, and furnished prints for the official journal without compensation.

Beyond this service, he has spent untold hours in copying rare photos and other artwork for use in practically every issue of "Theatre Organ." Without his generosity and devotion, some issues of the magazine would have had a meager selection of worthwhile pictures. At no time has he ever sought reimbursement or recognition.

Bill has been a devoted enthusiast since the inception of ATOS. He has two full-time jobs — one a theatre projectionist and the other in a jewelry factory. Yet he still finds time for all the photography work for ATOS and its members.

Judd Walton helps to support Bill Lamb who was caught off guard and couldn't believe that he had been named Honorary Member for 1970. — Jim LaVake Photo

Board reconvenes to take care of last minute business. — Bill Lamb Photo

RESUME OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING JULY, 1970

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 P.M. with six elected Board members and 17 chapter representatives present. The minutes of the previous two meetings were read and approved. A financial statement was submitted showing an expected break-even point at the end of 1970.

New directors, Mary Bowles and Allen Miller were introduced.

The demise of the Canton Chapter was announced with the area again serviced by Western Reserve Chapter. A Charter was approved for the Aloha Chapter whose area will be the State of Hawaii. An invitation was given to all members to attend the AGO Regional convention in Honolulu the weekend of July 4th, 1971 before attending our National Convention in Seattle, Washington, July 10-13, 1971.

Since we are now the American Theatre Organ Society, all chapters not returning the signed copies of the Charter Agreements before the end of 1970 will forfeit that Charter and their territory will be open.

By-law changes were discussed and a committee headed by Judd Walton was appointed to formulate any changes to be recommended at the 1971 Board meeting. Changes in tax status is to be considered, possible regional representation, school or student memberships, and/or scholarships. Discipline of members is at present a chapter function.

The office of publisher was established to retain the method of handling the magazine. Address for all magazine material (except advertising) will remain P. O. Box 2329, Livonia, Michigan 48150.

The option of having the magazine sent first class mail will be offered beginning in 1971 at the cost of an additional $3.00 (in U. S. and Canada) to cover the postage at the current rate. National dues still remain $8.00.

Our friends from England look like they are enjoying their visit to the convention. From left to right are, Les Rawle, Mrs. Edith Rawle, Mrs. Gladys Whittington, Stan Whittington, Mrs. Sue Ferguson and Jack Ferguson.

— Bill Lamb Photo

Board of Directors meeting, July 10, 1970

— Bill Lamb Photo

Mrs. Theresa Papp was able to attend the concerts at Rahway.

— Bill Lamb Photo

Front to back: Terry Kleven, David Junchen, Bon Smith in the solo chamber at the Beacon.

— Tom Yanitell Photo

Photographer Bill Lamb pauses to enjoy organ concert at L.I.U.

— Tom Yanitell Photo

A Theatre Organist Hall of Fame was established. Ten outstanding organists were chosen to form the nucleus of this Hall of Fame. (See page 3 of this issue for the list.) One new member is to be elected by the Board of Directors each year. LEE ERWIN has this honor for 1970.

BILL LAMB was unanimously elected the Honorary Member for 1970 for his arduous labors in all phases of photography for the magazine.

To allow for inflation and growth, it was decided to allow 5% of the dues for convention costs. Any profits will be split equally between the host chapter and the National treasury. Any losses will be absorbed by the local chapter as the National has already contributed its share.

The election of officers made Stillman Rice, President; Lee Erwin, Vice-President; Mary Bowles, Secretary-Treasurer, and Eleanor Weaver was appointed Executive Secretary. The National Headquarters address will be Box 90, New Haven, Conn. 06501.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 P.M.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING JULY 17, 1970

The annual membership meeting was held at 4 p.m. on Friday, July 17, 1970. New Charters, donated by the Leonard MacClain Memorial Fund, were presented to a representative of those chapters who had returned their Charter Agreements.

Al Mason gave a review of the decisions made at the National Board of Directors meeting.

A discussion on scheduling convention dates was held. It had been decided by the Board not to hold a convention over the July 4th week-end because of travel and hotel accommodations.

Bill Benedict, Chicago, spoke in favor of having the country divided into zones for better representation of the members. This idea is being studied by the by-laws committee.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

In a splash of showmanship, reminiscent of the "old days," Billy Nalle rose from the pit at L.I.U. aboard the splendidly refinished and ornate Wurlitzer, wearing a bright red jacket and formal trousers. As the brilliant light struck him, one could recall many memories of such sights in the days of deluxe presentations.

* * *

Speak of energetic and devoted members of the ATOS: Searle Wright in the opening comments of his concert-lecture remarked, "I have not joined ATOS this year. However, if I knew who to pay my dues to— — —" Ebullient Betty Mason couldn't wait: she practically set a track record in getting to the artist who promptly turned over his 1970 dues, rewarding Betty with a kiss of thanks in the process.

The Organ Survived. An NBC television crew was on hand at the Long Island University (once the lavish 4,500-seat Brooklyn Paramount) to film Billy Nalle as he brought the 4/26 Wurlitzer up through what is now the gymnasium floor.

— Bill Lamb Photo

Allen Mills at the L.I.U. Wurlitzer redecorated for the convention by Geoffrey Paterson.

— Bill Lamb Photo

SEARLE WRIGHT, National President of A.G.O., relaxes after his program at L.I.U.

— Bill Lamb Photo

A "first" in the convention was the clever introduction of the Quad Organ Player. During the Concert Cameo session at the Beacon Theatre, the audience was cleverly led to believe Allen Miller was playing the Wurlitzer, when he suddenly vacated his seat at the console. The organ kept playing! It was a real surprise, as the mystified audience moved en masse to the orchestra pit to see how this was accomplished. The orchestra elevator rose and displayed an Austin Quadruplex Player Unit which had been coupled to the Beacon console by Miller.

Allen reports that his company, Austin Pipe Organs, may market the device for attaching to a pipe organ for a price of less than $1,000. It is fully automatic and controls expression as well as registration.

* * *

For the second year in a row, one of the fair sex was honored because one of the ATOS events fell on her birthday. Mrs. Emile Lochner, manager of the Rahway Theatre, was escorted to the stage of the theatre, long-stemmed American Beauty roses were presented her by Bob Balfour, and organist Jerry Mendelson accompanied the singing of Happy Birthday. Last year, circulation manager Vi Thompson was similarly honored at the Chicago Stadium.

After listening to the many fine artists at the Beacon Theatre "Concert Cameo" program, we were reminded of a quotation given to us by Mrs. Theresa Papp, who stated that her late husband, Dan, always said: "All good organists have magic in their fingers."

* * *

Mention of the convention was made over local TV Channel 2, Sunday evening, July 12. The announcement was followed by a filmed sequence of concert organist Virgil Fox's home installation which is the largest in existence, according to the TV claim. Interviewer was Pia Lindstrom, daughter of actress Ingrid Bergman.

Theatre Organists Hall of Fame

LEE ERWIN
— 1970 —

It is most fitting that Lee Erwin was chosen as the first Organist of the Year for our new Theatre Organist's Hall of Fame. One of the country's outstanding musicians of the day, Lee has played most of the current installations throughout the East and Mid-West. He has also gained recognition as a composer of music for silent movies, having written new scores for the "Eagle" and Mary Pickford's "My Best Girl."

Lee has edited the first new book of Theatre Organ Music now available from the Edward Marks Music Corp., adding new lustre to our efforts. His services are invaluable in the repair and restoration of various New York theatre organs. Lee is one of the driving forces that helped to make the New York Fifteenth so Fabulous.

His services on the ATOS Board of Directors have been equally valuable. He was reelected to the Board and is now our Vice President.

Lee Erwin — the Compleat Theatre Organist.

Honoring our first elected member to the Hall of Fame, Lee Erwin.
— Bill Lamb Photo

"IT'S DOWN AT THE END OF THE HALL"

It was a rare occasion when one of the Commodore's eight elevators made it past the ATOS Exhibitors floor without stopping. Members frequented the many electronic organ displays and the Souvenir Shop operated by the New York Chapter. Anyone with books, music, records or anything of interest to the theatre organ fan was invited to exhibit their wares in the Souvenir Shop. Such a collection of theatre organ records and music was a treat to find in one room. A tremendous idea — a service to our members, lots of hard work for the 'office help' but certainly well worth the effort. From what we heard, this "business venture" was highly successful.

Jack Ward at the seldom-seen Studio Wurlitzer at Radio City Music Hall. The climax of the Afterglow was a trip up the stairs to see and hear this organ plus the wonders of back stage.
— Bill Lamb Photo

Photographer Jim LaVake (l), talks shop with Larry Fenner during a program at the United Palace.
— Bill Lamb Photo

Lee Erwin and New York Chapter Chairman, Bob Balfour, at their seminar "Recording for Real" at the United Palace.
— Bill Lamb Photo

M.C. Ben Hall noted the decoration on the conductor's stand he found at the Beacon is all on the back side which usually faces the audience.
— Bill Lamb Photo

Dick Kline, Fredericksburg, Maryland's gift to the hobby, was receiving compliments on the feature article in the June TO on his excellent home installation.

* * *

A most interesting seminar, conducted by Allen Hughes, theatre reviewer of the New York Times, was held in the Commodore Ballroom. Entitled "Learning From Listening," the talk was well received, and served as an inspiration to all enthusiasts to double their efforts in informing the public as to our efforts and goals. More concerning this seminar will appear in a future issue of T.O.

Sandy Ellis and Shirley Cole assist Ben Hall in opening the convention by holding giant size cue cards — as if we didn't know already!
— Jim LaVake Photo

Fabulous Fifteenth

LOWELL AYARS

DON BAKER

JEFF BARKER

RAY BOHR

LEE ERWIN

LOWELL AYARS — *Genial Lowell Ayars, the "singing organist" received his formal training at Philadelphia's Musical Academy and the Clarke Conservatory. Leonard MacClain was his teacher of theatre organ. He was the organist in the Stanley Theatre in Bridgeton, N. J. and the Broadway Theatre in Pitman, N. J. in the closing days of the silents and also accompanied vaudeville and did radio shows. Currently teaching music in Vineland, N. J. public schools, he finds time to concertize, having performed in Detroit, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Newark including three previous ATOS conventions.* **DON BAKER** — *Canadian-born Don Baker was playing piano in a Flushing, Long Island theatre when the supper organist failed to show one evening. Don was asked to sub; he did, and has been an organist ever since. Theatres he played centered in New York City — the Rialto, Rivoli and Paramount, the latter for 14 years. Since leaving the Paramount, Don's organ activities have included radio, TV, recordings, demonstration of Conn organs, and appearances before ATOS audiences. He was featured artist at the ATOS conventions in Chicago in 1965 and in Detroit in 1967.* **JEFFREY W. BARKER** — *Jeff Barker heard his first theatre organ at the Paramount Theatre in his native Manchester, England. He began playing for special events at the Manchester Paramount and the Odeon in Sale. After visiting the United States in 1964 with a group of English organ buffs, he decided to take up residence here permanently. Although he has had formal training in piano, as an organist Jeff confesses to being mostly self-taught. He has been heard at consoles in all parts of the country and played the Robert Morton in the studio of Peter Schaeble in Rosedale, Long Island. Jeff is a member of the restoration crew responsible for restoring the United Palace Wonder Morton.* **RAYMOND BOHR** — *Like so many other theatre organists, got his first taste of pipes by sneaking into church after hours. His first professional engagement was at the Rockland Theatre in his hometown of Nyack, New York. He studied with Robert Morse and Harold Friedell before Joining the Radio City Music Hall Staff in 1944. Ray traditionally "opens the house" at the Music Hall each morning.* **LEE ERWIN** — *A native of Huntsville, Alabama, this young man has had an exciting career. He played the silents in two Huntsville theatres, then to the Cincinnati Conservatory on a scholarship, where he defrayed college expenses by playing the silents in the Queen City's theatres. He went to the Alabama Theatre in Birmingham, then back to Cincinnati to be staff organist on WLW. It was here that he gained nation-wide fame on the "Moon River" show each evening for 22 years. Next came New York, where he played 14 years on the Arthur Godfrey shows. Following this tenure, Lee has been free-lancing via recordings, scoring silent movies, appearing on radio and TV, and concertizing for theatre organ audiences around the country.*

CALVIN HAMPTON

DENNIS JAMES

DON KINNIER

RICHARD LEIBERT

JERRY MENDELSON

CALVIN HAMPTON, *organist and composer, has become widely known for his Sunday afternoon recitals at Calvary Episcopal Church, where he became Organist-Choirmaster in 1963. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Oberlin Conservatory of Music and a Master of Music degree in Organ from the University of Syracuse. He has also spent time studying and composing in Salzburg, Austria, and Paris, and has toured as organist for the Robert Shaw Chorale. He has helped transform the Roosevelt-Hutchings-Skinner pipe organ into one of the nation's outstanding concert instruments.* **DENNIS JAMES** — *A performer at the age of 7, Dennis James appeared before his first theatre organ audience at 17, subbing for his ailing teacher, Leonard MacClain, at the 1967 ATOS convention in Detroit. He has since appeared before audiences in New Jersey, New York, Rochester and Syracuse. Having enrolled in the Indiana School of Music in Bloomington as classical organ major, he, with the help of two students, has restored an Estey Theatre Organ in the campus TV station. A brilliant future for this youngster is predicted. Dick Loderhose had him play at his home installation for the conventioneers.* **DON KINNIER,** *a lifetime resident of Philadelphia, was house organist at the Lansdowne Theatre for four years, and for seven years at the Abington Music Theatre. He studied under Elizabeth Sharkey and David Ubrich and is currently associated with Seller & Sons, piano and organ dealers in the Philadelphia area. In addition to the appearances at New York's Academy of Music Theatre, Don has performed for ATOS audiences from Rochester to Richmond.* **DICK LEIBERT** — *Dick Leibert has been chief organist at the Radio City Music Hall since its December 1932 opening. At the age of 15, he served as relief organist in Washington's Palace Theatre, eventually becoming chief organist. He was graduated from Baltimore's Peabody Conservatory, having won a scholarship. He toured for the Loew's circuit, playing theatres in Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Chicago, winding up at the Brooklyn Paramount. Winning a competition for RCMH chief organist, he was selected unanimously. He has made several recordings of the Music Hall organ and appeared with concert orchestras and before ATOS audiences.* **JERRY MENDELSON** *is vitally interested in all activities of ATOS, particularly focussing his attention on the Rahway Theatre Wurlitzer at which he first performed for the New York Theatre Organ Society. A native New Yorker, he studied under Herman Wasserman, famed teacher of George Gershwin, with further organ studies at Columbia University, Wesleyan University and the Juilliard School of Music. Now a resident of New Jersey, he was honored by the Garden State at the New York World's Fair with a special "Jerry Mendelson Day."*

Convention Artists

ASHLEY MILLER

ALLEN MILLS

BILLY NALLE

JIMMY PAULIN

RICHARD ROGERS

ASHLEY MILLER — *Well-educated in all facets of music through his study at the Juilliard School, Ashley Miller is no stranger to the Theatre Organ. Holding the associate degree of the AGO, and the Bachelor of Science degree from Juilliard, he was organist for seven years at Radio City Music Hall. He has appeared in leading hotels, and on radio and TV shows. Having several LP albums to his credit, he has entertained ATOS groups in New York, Rochester, Detroit and California. He was a featured performer at the 1967 ATOS convention in Detroit.* **ALLEN MILLS** — *Another of the younger element in the theatre organ profession, Allen Mills has had an extensive background in classical organ study. He has attended Westminster Choir College, Crane School of Music, and holds a degree in musical education. He is a teacher, is active in both AGO and ATOS, and in addition to his church duties in Albany, N. Y., has found time to give concerts in Detroit, Rochester, Buffalo, and Syracuse. This is his third ATOS convention, having performed in 1964 and in 1967.* **BILLY NALLE** — *Another well educated organist, one who was graduated from the Juilliard School, Billy Nalle personifies the attitudes and efforts of the young breed of theatre organists who are perpetuating the instrument. Much in demand by ATOS chapters and other concert sponsors throughout the country, he also has performed before AGO groups in Atlanta; Hartford, Conn.; and Canton, Ohio. Able to express his ideas lucidly via the typewriter, his literary efforts have been read in several music magazines. He has several albums to his credit, and has appeared on over 5,000 radio and TV shows.* **JAMES PAULIN** *was appointed the first official organist at his high school before he became choir director and organist of the Second Baptist Church in Freeport. He gained many good notices all over Long Island for his work with a choir of 80 voices. He earned a B.S. degree at Mannes College of Music. Jimmy confesses his theatre organ idols are Jesse Crawford, George Wright and the late Raymond Shelley, and it is through listening to their records that he has developed his particular style of organ playing. He is the regular organist at the United Palace.* **RICHARD ROGERS** *attracted national attention at the Tulsa Regional last February. While in his teens, he established quite a reputation playing for civic and private functions, teaching enthusiastic pupils and demonstrating and selling electronic organs. He is a specialist in "orchestral" registration and likes to blend traditional forms and modern music with unique results. He joined the staff of Conn Organ Corp. in Chicago this year.*

FRED TULAN

JACK WARD

SEARLE WRIGHT

TED WORTH

ANDY CROW

DR. FREDERICK TULAN *(personally) opposes pop music in religious services but sees nothing wrong in playing from Love Is Blue to rock in concerts after church. He calls his program "In Sanity and Madness" which can range from Let The Sunshine In to a Ray Brubeck composition. He has performed with major symphonies in 16 countries. Fred owns a 2/10 "Wurlikim b skinner" and is no stranger to theatre organ.* **JACK WARD** *was educated at Temple University, holds a L.L.B. degree from the University of Pennsylvania, was admitted to the bar in his home town which makes him the only Philadelphia lawyer who ended up as a theatre organist. One of the nicest things about catching the last show at the Music Hall is hearing Jack Ward play the exit music. He first joined the Music Hall staff in 1935, has performed with the NBC Symphony in addition to playing countless radio and television shows. He has played concerts in many cities for ATOS affairs. His demonstration of the Radio City Studio Wurlitzer was a rare opportunity to hear that unusual instrument.* **M. SEARLE WRIGHT** *is Director of Music at St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University and teacher of composition, organ and improvization at Union Theological Seminary. He was the first American to play a recital at the organ of Westminster Abbey; more recently he appeared as soloist for the Cinema Organ Society at the Granada Theatre, Tooting. Currently the President of AGO, his theatrical feeling for the theatre organ promises to further bridge the gap between AGO and the ATOS.* **TED WORTH**, *a student of Richard Purvis, Clarence Snyder and Virgil Fox, inspired one critic to write about his concert performances: "Ted Alan Worth is somebody who can make an organ recital exciting. The instrument and its literature can use somebody like him."* **ANDY CROW** *studied classical organ at University of Southern California but his first love is theatre organ. He has been actively involved in the restoration of several instruments on the West Coast where he taught and played. A staff organist for Rodgers, he started touring with Ted Worth as chauffeur-custodian of the 4000-pound classical touring organ. When a Rodgers theatre organ was added to the caravan, the Worth/Crow Duo was in business.*

30 Davids Tackle Goliath of Organ

Story and photos by Allen Miller

Interior shot of Allyn theatre now being demolished to make room for Civic Center.

There is nothing new about a theatre closing. When the Allyn Theatre in Hartford, Connecticut closed last October, there was no last fanfare, no newspaper coverage, and perhaps only a few of the 25 patrons who sat in the 2000 seat house watching the last show even realized this was the end.

For the Connecticut Valley Chapter, the closing of the Allyn Theatre and its pending destruction to make room for a convention hall meant the loss of Mother Organ . . . the 3 manual, 12 rank Austin theatre organ around which the chapter was formed.

When the building was turned over to the Hartford Redevelopment Agency, a hassle ensued over the ownership of the Organ and other items in the building, and the bank which held the theatre as part of a trust eyed the organ as an item which could be sold to pay some back taxes. An agreement which would have enabled the owner to donate the organ to the Connecticut Theatre Organ Society was lost in the red tape.

As a result, Angelo Mastagni and Jack Martin of Clinton's, Inc., bought the organ and pianos, and donated the instrument to the ATOS Chapter.

The organ was removed in three weekends by 30 chapter members working under the usual conditions found in a closed theatre in the Winter. When work started, the temperature was just above freezing, heat and electricity had long since been disconnected, and the sewer had backed up into the basement placing the blower partly under "water." Some parts of the basement were eight feet under, but luckily the blower could be removed without the aid of scuba gear.

Work was accomplished in the chambers with the aid of the Connecticut Valley Theatre Organ Society Power Company . . . a 20 amp gasoline generator which was plugged into the chamber wall outlet. The chamber wiring, which was still intact, distributed the current to other outlets and chamber lights, but you can be sure we left all switches turned OFF to avoid feeding current throughout the entire theatre.

On paper, the removal might seem rather typical, but the problems encountered were due to the size and weight of individual parts, not the size of the organ itself. The Austin chests were of the type you can walk or crawl into . . . with the air on . . . to fix or adjust the actions. This is ideal for maintenance, but the chests themselves were of very heavy construction as well as being large. Removal of one chest required two blocks and tackle. To obtain a suitable anchor for the hoisting equipment, a hole was made through the one foot thick brick wall and a chain was fastened outside the theatre. A ramp was made using two extension ladders, and all hands were on ropes to guide the large chest down to the theatre floor.

With the organ now safely in storage, the Connecticut Valley Chapter has one more instrument saved, but awaiting arrangements for a proper home.

16' Open Diapason pipe being lowered from organ chamber.

Marie and Gerry Patzold carefully wrap pipes and pack them in trays for safe transport and storage. Pipes are being stored in Austin factory.

"Balance" is the secret of removing swell shade frames. Preston Miller is the acrobat.

Conn. Valley Offers Theatre Organ Scholarship Awards

Connecticut Valley Chapter will award up to three scholarships for study of theatre organ, according to Chapter Chairman Stillman H. Rice. The awards of $150, $100 and $50 will be based on auditions before three judges.

Organ students from Connecticut and Western Massachusetts in junior or senior high school will be eligible to compete. Prospective contestants are being contacted through organ stores and organ teachers, as well as widespread newspaper publicity in the area.

Just as important as the financial assistance to winners, in the opinion of the committee, is the interest stimulated in both organ teachers and students in the field of theatre organ music and techniques. Classic organ students have many competitions, but students of popular or theatre organ have had no opportunity to win such recognition.

Enrollment is timed so that students may use the school vacation to devote extra time to practice. The auditions are scheduled for October.

The scholarships were proposed by Eleanor D. Weaver of Bethany, now Chairman of the Scholarship Committee. The committee also includes organists and teachers Rosa Rio and Joy Zublena, Education Chairman Angelo Mastagni and Chairman Rice.

"This scholarship award is very much in accord with Connecticut Valley's status as an educational organization," said Chairman Rice. "We want to keep alive the knowledge and skills involved not only in building and maintaining theatre pipe organs, but also in playing them in the styles developed by the great theatre organists."

Each contestant will choose one semi-classical or serious number, one show tune and one current pop. At least one of the numbers must be in the student's own arrangement. □

ConnValChap's Scholarship Chairman Eleanor Weaver reviews plans with committee members Rosa Rio and Joy Zublena, under the watchful eyes of Education chairman Angelo Mastagni and Chapter chairman Stillman Rice.

Contestants from left to right: Hugh Ratigan, Brad Kummer, Tom Lockwood, Tom Dewitte, Nick Snow and RTOS President Dan Suter.

RTOS Holds Contest for Aspiring Organists

What was believed to be the first event of its kind was held in Rochester, N. Y. on May 14 when the Rochester Theatre Organ Society held a talent competition for young organists.

The RTOS brass decided to drop its annual picnic this year because of lack of interest, and in its place, run a talent show. Gayle Smith, RTOS vice president was in charge, and judges were area organists Dean Robinson, Don Scott and David Berger. Attendance was about 250.

The winners were Nick Snow, an organist and teacher in Butler, Pa. who won $100; Hugh Ratigan of Rochester, $75; Brad Kummer of Rochester, $50; and Tom Lockwood, RTOS Librarian, $25. The performers had to play two selections of their own chosing and all had to do their arrangement of Debussy's "Clare de Lune".

According to Gayle Smith, it is hoped to make this an annual event. □

Bill Thomson played the dedication concert on the CATOE installation at Downers Grove High School on June 13, 1970.

DON THOMPSON

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DUDLEY SAVAGE AT THE ABC THEATRE, PLYMOUTH, BBC label, No. 23M, monaural. For information concerning availability in the U.S.A. and price, write to Westminster Recording Co., 1330 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10019, attn. Mr. Robert Bialek.

Dudley Savage is one of the most beloved organists in Britain, and there is a petition bearing 40,000 signatures to prove it. The petition came about when the Britbroadcorp (BBC) decided to put an end to Dudley's 20-year-old weekly broadcast of requests for hospital patients. The complaints poured in and the program was soon back on the air.

This recording presents a selection of 27 favorite tunes from the "As prescribed" broadcast as played by Dudley Savage on the 3/8 Compton organ. About half the tunes are familiar to U.S. ears but all 27 are gems which sparkle with fine musicianship and arranging ability. As on the broadcast, Mr. Savage announces his selections. He speaks easily and his brief notes add interest value to the music. The organ is a beauty, both in ensemble and when solo stops (e.g. Tuba and Trumpet) are played. In Dudley's hands the 3/8 sounds much larger. It's an exquisitely voiced instrument with a sexy Tibia and Vox, mellow strings and bright brass. The organist's classical training is quite apparent at all times but he can play with a rhythmic beat too. He's a "trems on-trems off" player and there may be a little too much trems-off playing for some U.S. ears, although it fits the music whenever used. Only two selections can be classed as classics — Bizet's "Farandole" and "Trumpet Voluntary." Standards include "Smilin' Through" (his radio theme), "Love is Here to Stay", "Song from Moulin Rouge", "Never on Sunday", "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes", "Syncopated Clock", "Bells of St. Mary's", "Deep Purple" and "Besame Mucho" (the latter two employ a rich Melotone solo combination). There's a medley of operetta tunes by Lehar and Novello, a French group and four hymn tunes.

In all, it's a fine record and well worth the somewhat roundabout effort to obtain it.

* * *

TAYLOR-PLAYED PIPES, Bud Taylor at the Carson-Studio 3/26 Wurlitzer organ. Malar MAS-2010, stereo, available by mail at $5.00 postpaid from Malar Records, Box 3104, Glendale, Calif. 91201.

Bud Taylor is easily identified as a veteran of the "golden era," both by his theatre stylings and some of his former engagements (e.g. the New York Roxy). Long a supper club favorite in southern California (he played the 2/7 Wurli in the now gone Monk's Musical Pizza in Covina), this is his initial recording venture on pipes. He makes the Wurlitzer sing out in big organ style on mostly full combinations but with plenty of solo voices in evidence. His list of tunes is a joy; not a worn out "pop" in the lot. Included are Ellington's "I Aint Got Nothin but the Blues", "I'll Take Care of Your Cares", "Cuanto Le Gusta", "Blue Moments", "Do You Need Me?", "More and More", "So What's New?", his own "Blue Ice" and old favorites such as "Me and My Shadow" and "Bye Bye-Blues." Bud sometimes uses "suspense" effects, in which he seems to work himself into a harmonic corner with no exit, then gets out of it gracefully at the last moment (e.g. "Me and My Shadow"). But mostly he plays in solid harmonies embellished with intricate noodling (e.g. "Bye Bye Blues"). Interest is maintained throughout, and although most of his material comes from the theatre organ's past, his treatments never sound old-fashioned. Bud's registration is especially rich. Dick Stoney's recording captures the big sound effectively.

* * *

HEY LOOK, Dolton McAlpin at the 2/6 Robert Morton organ in the Baton Rough Paramount, Concert Recording No. CR-0076, stereo, available by mail $4.50 postpaid from Concert Recording, Box 531, Lynwood, Calif. 90262. Also available on 7½ ips 4-track stereo tape at $5.95.

The overriding question after hearing this one may be "is he ever serious?" Judging from some of the pixie touches employed on this record it might not seem so. For example, a phrase of "Rock of Ages" added to the end of "Old Devil Moon", the presentation of "Temptation" as a hootchy-coochie with all those harpy ripples on the percussers, the unlikely juxtaposition of "I Got Rhythm", "Stars & Stripes Forever" and "Old Man River" under the title "The Kitchen Sink." Nearly all of his tunes are rhythmic and upbeat, with just a touch of flippancy apparent in even the old standards, which makes one wonder if he's kidding. Then when "Love is Where You Find it" turns up with the arrangement one might expect to hear applied to "Temptation" — the suspicion grows. But then comes a gorgeous ballad treatment of "The Party's Over" and Dolton is at last serious (although we caught a brief reference to "Three O'Clock in the Morning" between phrases). "Party" is loaded with bits of "Thanks for the Memory" and "I'll be Seeing you." The full resources of the Morton are brought into play, and it sounds like a lot more than six ranks. For this one we can even forgive the Spike Jones style "My Heart Belongs to Daddy."

Dolton's technique is impeccable at all times and the little Morton really sings out. His use of the sharp brass for emphasis provides a good illustration of effective rhythmic styling. But has he got his tongue in his cheek through all this fine playing? We still don't know. Ben Hall's liner notes are entertaining and the cover photo (a stunner in a bikini drapped across Dolton's console) adds to this reviewers happy confusion. Even so, it's always good fun. Also heard are "Satin Doll" a "Salute to Petula" (Clark), "Cheek to Cheek" and "The Girl from Ipanema."

* * *

TONY FENELON IN AMERICA, played on the Detroit Theater Organ Club's 4/34 Wurlitzer in the Detroit Senate theater. Festival label, monaural FL 33755, stereo SFL 933755, either $5.85 by mail, postpaid from Tony Fenelon in America, 706 West Grove Street, Mishawaka, Indiana.

Recorded during the Detroit segment of Tony's whirlwind 1969 tour of the U.S., this is by far his finest recorded work to date. The tape was made before an audience during Tony's concert for the DTOC, a risky venture at best, but it couldn't be better if he had selected the best of a dozen "takes" on each tune. Perhaps the young Australian

works best before an audience. The combination of Tony and one of the finest recording organs, playing "live", is a combination hard to beat. The tunes are chosen to provide plenty of variety as well as opportunities for Tony to display his virtuosity. He takes full advantage of the great array of facilities provided by the huge instrument. Tony has assembled an overture of George M. Cohan selections. These are presented in imaginative arrangements fully orchestral in conception. Tony's fondness for Gershwin's music is apparent in his treatment of "Someone to Watch over Me" and he has fun at the piano (and later at the pipes) with "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" which he uses as a vehicle on which to mount an intriguing set of variations, ranging from Mozartean to "South of the Border." His "Confessin," a tribute to Jesse Crawford, duplicates Jesse's famous arrangement in all areas except tempo; Tony's version suffers from a speeded up final chorus which tends to obscure the details of the arrangement. "South" is dedicated to George Wright, and follows George's recorded version. Actually Tony is indebted to Crawford and Wright (as well as to Lyn Larsen) for rolls, riffs, fillers, mordants and phrasings used in other tunes heard on this record as well as in his concert work, which is no criticism; it only indicates the stylists who have influenced the Australian.

Side 2 opens with a tribute to Broadway shows which includes "Give My Regards to Broadway", "Mame", "Impossible Dream" and others. Also heard are "As Long as He Needs Me", "Voices of Spring" and "Now is the Hour", all presented with the taste and sensitivity which mark all of the Fenelon musical efforts. A truly fine recording. Our only negative comment is that our review copy was marred by a surface pocked with clicks and pops throughout. We assume that defective pressings are returnable for replacement.

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New York Theatre Organ Society
P. O. Box 1331
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AFTER MIDNIGHT, Buddy Nolan plays the 4/15 Page organ in the Embassy theatre, Fort Wayne, Indiana, No. CR-0071, stereo, available by mail at $4.50 postpaid from Concert Recording, Box 531, Lynwood, Calif. 90262. Also available on 7½ ips 4-track stereo tape for $5.95.

Here's one for those with fond memories of those late night organ broadcasts from theatres which once were a staple of radio stations everywhere. These are tunes which Buddy Nolan enjoys playing in the darkened Embassy theatre for his own pleasure, long after the last popcorn chomper has departed. However, Buddy, who has become a Fort Wayne institution through his late night public concerts at the Embassy, offers carefully prepared arrangements instead of the stream of tunes without much change in registration which marked too many of the broadcasts played by tired silent film organists who went from four hours of playing a film accompaniment directly into the radio request program ("phone 'em in folks. Jake knows 'em all!"). Yet, there's an aura of quiet contemplation in much of the music without dropping to the funeral "meditation" level. There are ballads and bright tunes and all are attractive for midnight listening. The rare Page has a tonality all its own and Buddy knows how to get the most out of it. The selection is excellent. Included are "I Know That You Know", "Home", "Smiles", "My Heart at Thy Sweet Voice", "If He Walked into My Life", Buddy's own "Probably", "It Looks Like Rain", "While We're Young", "Adventures in Paradise", "Beyond the Blue Horizon" and highly original versions of "Bye Bye Blues" and "Confessin."

All are a pleasure to listen to.

* * *

ALSO OF INTEREST

THE ENTERTAINERS, Bobby Howard playing the Hammond X77, stereo, available at $5.25 postpaid from Tonga Productions Box 7132, San Diego, Calif. 92107.

Well known in supper clubs throughout the U.S.A., Bobby Howard offers a varied selection on the X77, ranging from a wild "St Louis Blues" and "April in Paris" to nice ballad work in "Little Girl Blue" and "Climb Every Mountain." Bobby also plays probably the only non-Dunstedter recording of "Open Your Eyes". Some tunes have rhythm accompaniment and for some Bobby doubles on piano. Lots of variety. Included also are "Dansero", "Beyond the Reef", "Yesterdays", "Ebb Tide", "San Diego I Love You", "For All We Know" and "Hawaiian Wedding Song."

THE CITY OF LONG BEACH, Bill Worral playing six electronic organs, stereo, No. CR-E068, available at $4.50 from Concert Recording, Box 531, Lynwood, Calif. 90262.

Just what this album has to do with Long Beach remains to be explained (other than that the jacket notes read like they were written by the LB chamber of commerce) but the marathon hopping from one plug-in to the next by organist Worral provides some comparison material on the various models and adds up to pleasant listening with plenty of registration variety. Heard are "Alley Cat" and "Far Away Places" (Thomas "Celebrity"), "Fly Me to the Moon" and "Spanish Eyes" (Gulbransen "Paragon"), "My Happiness" and "Good Morning Starshine" (Baldwin HT2R theatre model), "The Sweetest Sounds" and "Harbor Lights" (Hammond X77), "Anchors Aweigh", "By the Sea" and "Red Sails in the Sunset" (Lowrey theatre model), Bill's own "Bella Maria" and "Life is Getting Better" (Conn 3-decker 650). Bill has overdubbed a grand piano for some selections. Registration is tasteful except during "Alley Cat" when Bill hits the "MEOW" tab so heavily it sounds like the MGM lion at 78 rpm.

THE CELEBRITIES, played on the Thomas "Celebrity" model by Ralph Wolf. CR-E055 (stereo). Available from Concert Recording, Box 531, Lynwood, Calif. 90262. $4.50 postpaid.

This is a case of an artist whose abilities are more expansive than the facilities provided by his instrument. Wolf plays 15 tunes, including: Running Off the Rails, Those Were the Days, Quiet Nights, Girl in Satin, Finesse (a gem!), Forgotten Dreams and Brazillian Sleighbells. The instrument is a gimmick — heavy plug-in but Wolf manages to shine through the limitations for a performance worthy of presentation on pipes.

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LETTERS

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 2329
Livonia, Michigan 48150

Dear Stu:

Here are a couple of items for the record.

First of all, there is an untrue rumor circulating again that I have been dropped by Dot Records. This probably came about because so many album titles were dropped from the Schwann LP Catalogue. All of my Dot tape masters have been leased to the Readers Digest Record Club for eventual release by that club. I will start a new backlog for Dot beginning with the album "Now Is The Right Time" which was first released last summer. A new album, "Reflections of My Life," will probably be in release by the time this reaches print. Under my present contract I still have an additional two albums to record for Dot Records.

The second bit of information is that I have voluntarily sold my studio organ. My increased activities at ABC – coupled with a complete disenchantment with constant organ maintenance – have led me to this action. The new owners, a research corporation, wish to remain anonymous. They have stated that the organ in its new situation will, as in the past, be unavailable for public audition or commercial use by outside individuals.

Thank you for allowing me this means of disseminating some information.

George Wright

Dear Mr. Thompson:

On page 31 of the June 1970 issue, a letter from James Zieba raises questions regarding the once Paradise, now Bill Brown Wurlitzer console in Phoenix, to which no answers were supplied. I assume that this will be corrected, but in the meantime, I would like to take issue with his reference to Dick Vaughn's re-working of the original to a 5-manual console whose appearance is very "un-Wurlitzer."

My introduction to Wurlitzer organs operating in theatres happened long after most of the theatres which had the instruments, also had them retired. However, one noteable example, and for the record, the largest Wurlitzer built, Radio City Music Hall, has a console which served as the pattern used to remake the Paradise 5/21 console. Not only did Wurlitzer build its largest with this "sleek, modern, and very un-Wurlitzer" design, but it did it twice in the same instrument, and then again in the Center Theatre next door, where was installed a most beautiful walnut(?) version of the same, modern console.

I object to calling the only Wurlitzer still in daily use in its original installation "un-Wurlitzer." Different from some of those which came before, certainly. But although its predecessors were limited in number to three, it cannot in fact be said that Dick Vaughn's changes had no basis in Wurlitzer!

Sincerely,
Don Hyde

Dear Mr. Thompson:

Mr. James Zieba asked about the original console to Miss Dionne, which I believe George Wright et al had dubbed the Wurlitzer, which at THAT time, was in the Richard Vaughn home in Los Angeles. I have, somewhere, a copy of this picture, and the story which was told to me, was that Vaughn had this same console scraped clean of all the cupids and stupids etc., and had it "modernized" veneered in red mahogany, and with new pedals (or so beautifully refinished that they LOOKED new), plus every thing from the piano down to the tuned sleigh bells ALL WORKED! I saw and got to play it somewhere in the early '50's – I had gone to the coast so many times about then, that I'm not sure of the exact year. Anyway, they told me that the console now used IS the original with drastic renovations.

Thanks for a fine magazine hope it stays on until .....!

Sincerely,
Ken Wright

Gentlemen,

I am thrilled and awed by what I have discovered . . . You. That's right. I guess you will wonder what brought you out of the blue and into my mind, so here is the story.

Last September, I was at a movie at the Malco Theatre (formerly the Orpheum, #18 in *An Acre of Seats*) and between movies, I decided to look around. I went up an old unused stairway and suddenly saw the beauties of the old theatre for the first time. It was then that I recalled that there was an organ. I talked to the assistant manager and was given permission to return one day to see the organ. It was my good fortune that on the day I returned, Bill Oberg, an ATOS member from Milan, Tenn., came in. It turned out that he had been coming to the Malco for eight years on and off and had kept the organ from becoming completely silent. For a few glorious minutes, though I hadn't really expected it, I was able to try my hand at the Wurli. Both of us sounded terrible, I through lack of pipe organ practice, not many available, and the organ through age and misuse. Two of the half burnt out chandeliers were turned on and I almost could fancy myself in the past, seeing the glories of the Malco for the first time. I will never forget it.

In December I learned that the organ was playing for people again. Bill was organist and I went up to see him once. Once a week for seven weeks. I go often now and have gotten to know the people up there better, played the organ once since then, before opening, and seen the theatre take a step toward being the showplace it once was. This is the only theatre organ left in town and its future looks bright.

I had begun to be interested in organs so much, between the Malco and a visit the previous summer to the music machines, band organs and nickelodeons, at the Gay 90's Melody Museum in St. Louis, that I wrote my high school thesis on "Is the Organ Dying?" Bill loaned me some issues of TOB and *The Best Remaining Seats* and these became the proof of my thesis; to my relief, the organ is alive and well.

Which brings me to the end of my long story and the reason for this letter. I want to join you. I am indebted to you and Bill for the success (B+) of my paper. I am heartened to know just how many theatre organs are still operating and hope to see them all sometime. While reading Mr. Hall's book, I sometimes felt that I had been born twenty years too late. It seems people like me (I am 16) have missed so much. I am glad it is not all slipping away; this is due greatly to you and I am thankful.

I wish to join you. May I?

– Vincent C. Astor

"Gee, dad —, it's a Rodger!"

Rodgers Delivers 'Style 260 Special'

Photos: Stu Green

by Peg Nielsen

Bob Power is obviously happy with his purchase. He's much better at the manuals than he'll admit.

No original style 260 had this retractable refreshment support. Leave it to Rodgers and Power to come up with a 'stop' which most players will approve. Although it's a silent 'voice', Bob refers to it as his 'Stugreenphone'.

The style 260 console. Note the wrought iron bench. Power salvaged it from a faulty one which had been abandoned as junk.

For some months readers have followed full-page displays in this magazine which traced the building of an electronic theatre organ styled after a genuine "mighty Wurlitzer." The series of advertisements harvested reactions ranging from enthusiasm to skepticism. But the Rogers Organ Company was dead serious. It had an order from Bob Power of Camarillo, Calif. to "go all out" in patterning a very special "one of a kind" electronic to reproduce a style 260 Wurlitzer as closely as present day electronics permit.

The resulting instrument has been completed and delivered – at a cost in excess of $50,000, according to Power. Much of that considerable sum went into research and development; Power was not interested in merely a super extension of a current electronic model. The style 260 generally boasted 13 or 14 standard ranks. Any more and it was described at a "Special." In this case Power wanted a stop not ordinarily heard on a style 260 – a Posthorn; so the result qualifies as a "Special."

The Rodgers Company, confronted with many special problems, made a wise choice in Dennis Hedberg to oversee tonal matters. Dennis, one of the most skilled pipe organ technicians in the northwest, applied his years of tonal experience. In charge of electronic developments was George Kirkwood.

A Style 260 console was measured for dimensions and the result is a close copy. The console "sits" well. The veteran who once played a 260 will find that Rodgers has placed most of the stops where he remembers they were. One of the problems was a second touch system free of the "bleed through" so often encountered with variations in spring tension. So Rodgers eliminated the springs; the Special's second touch tension is governed by a magnetic field. It's a little stiffer than the traditional type but it is also very positive and each key requires the same amount of extra finger pressure. The professionals who have tried it like it.

The "capture" system of combination action is used e.i. all stop keys in use must be in "depressed" position. Percussions and toy counter are part electronic and part real. Some of the effects and percussions are accomplished by means of a "Bandbox" (snare drum, wood block and triangle, for example) and the Artisan Glockenspiel has real tone bars. Other percussions (piano, marimba and harps) are accomplished electronically.

The instrument now pours its sounds into a 25' x 25' room with a high ceiling, and also onto an adjacent patio when the glass doors are open. All of the electronic circuitry is contained in a cabinet located directly behind the console, leaving the console nearly "empty." Circuits are in modular form and the boards may be slid out of their racks for maintenance or even replacement. In the latter case the replacement board could be an entirely different voice, an extension of the "bench becomes music rack" syndrome overdone on some earlier electronics.

To preserve the tonal integrity, very little sharing of generators has been practiced. For a total of 14 voices 11 sets of tone generators have been used.

Tonally, the instrument is a victory for the Rodgers Company. The Special has the best Tibia yet developed by Rodgers, although some adjustment is needed to remove some harshness from the higher octaves. The reeds, flutes and strings have individuality when played separately but blend into a smooth ensemble, just as on the original Style 260.

A stoplist for the Rodgers Special is available from the Rodgers Organ Co., 1300 N.E. 25th Avenue, Hillsboro, Oregon, 97123. Send stamped (6c), self-addressed legal size envelope.

No, it's not pipes but it has much of the glamor, romance and integrity of its pipe forebear. It's a pleasure to play and the seemingly never-ending variety of resources holds the interest of the novice as well as that of the professional. The professionals who have been invited to the Power home (among them, Johnny Duffy, George Wright, Bill Thomson) are more than enthusiastic about the Rodgers Special.

Meanwhile Bob Power, who underplays his considerable ability at the console, is enjoying his acquisition immensely. An affable man whose wife and children understand his feelings about the instrument, Bob is comfortable in the knowledge that the research and development he underwrote will benefit future generations of electronic organs; he went the theatre organ route – all the way.

But why an electronic when 50 grand would buy an elaborate pipe installation? Simple; no room for chambers in the Power home.

The effect of Bob Power's R&D is already being felt at the Hillsboro Organ headquarters of Rodgers Organs. It seems the Power instrument is no longer unique; the firm is building a second "Rodgers Special" on order. □

CHAPTER NEWS

CEDAR RAPIDS

Besides monthly meetings in April, May and June this chapter held other exciting events. On April 25, at the invitation of Tom Yannitel of Chicago, forty-two members and their families went by bus to Chicago. At 10:00 a.m. we visited the Pickwick Theatre where Fred Kruse had arranged for Russ Young to play for us.

After lunch we stopped in briefly at the Downers Grove High School where CATOE's first meeting using the 3/10 Wurlitzer, was in progress. The moving of this organ from Ohio was captained by Tom and he was sure proud of it; as he should be. Tom Sheen played the concert and twice praised the organ.

Cedar Rapids Area Theatre Organ Society's bus at Downers Grove High School in Chicago.

Following this the group split into two and alternately visited the homes of Mr. and Mrs. J. Spurr and their 2/10 Wurly, and the home of Gary Rickert and his 2/9 Kimball. After dinner we visited the home of Mr. and Mrs. Stan Lechowicz and their 4/10 Barton — all forty-two of us and the two bus drivers.

Our thanks for the great hospitality of the big city people.

In May we held our second Silent Movie Nite at the Paramount with Gaylord Carter playing the "Mark of Zorro" to a packed house. Gaylord made many fine comments about the organ. The theatre organ is sure taking hold here in this city of 105,000. Our membership has now grown to eighty.

On June 28, 50 members and their families took a field trip to Muscatine, about 75 miles away, and visited the home of Dr. John Klein. He has a 3/14 Wurlitzer which he invited our members to play. We also visited an old mansion, now the Laura Musser Art Gallery and Museum. In the music room is a 2/11 Estey complete with player attachment and two hundred rolls, plus a Steinway grand piano.

Dr. Klein, also President of the Museum Society, is a chapter member who just doesn't have time to make the trip to Cedar Rapids. He did the next best thing by inviting the chapter to him. Our thanks to him and his gracious wife.

CONN. VALLEY

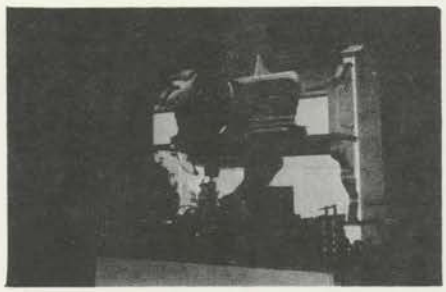
The April meeting of the Connecticut Valley Chapter was held at the Briere Piano and Organ Studio in Springfield, Massachusetts. Over 80 members were on hand, and a great amount of business was covered during the meeting, including the establishment of a Theatre Organ Playing Scholarship, another Connecticut first.

After the meeting, Fred Marcoux gave us a short concert on the Baldwin electronic organ. Fred's playing was highly polished, and showed that he had excellent control of the instrument. We hope to hear more from Fred soon, and would like to hear what he could get out of pipes!

About 11:00 p.m. we moved on to the Springfield Paramount where Joe Nickerson was waiting to bring up the 3/11 Wurlitzer. This instrument was installed "backwards" with the Solo chamber on the left, and the Main chamber on the right . . . rather unusual for Wurlitzer.

Several years ago, the Paramount became run down and was eventually closed. Fortunately, new management came along and the theatre was reopened to show movies on weekends and has been used for live stage shows, such as "Hello Dolly." Gene Bowers, Mario Constantini and Stanley Wonsek arranged to refurbish the Wurlitzer, and it has been played publicly during some of the live shows and for twenty-minute organ features during some of the better motion picture shows.

Joe Nickerson who has been featured at the Paramount for most of these shows, is well known in Springfield for his television appearances and programs. Joe is popular because he plays to his audience, and this concert was no exception. Joe is at home with any kind of music.



Joe Nickerson acknowledges applause at Springfield Paramount 3/11 Wurlitzer.

Following the formal concert, some of our "first-string" organists rounded out the night's program.

It is almost a tradition to meet at the home of Harold and Eleanor Weaver in June every year. The Weavers have always managed perfect weather, and this year was no exception.

The 3 manual, 9 rank Marr & Colton was open all afternoon for an informal jam session, a perfect opportunity for our playing members to build up time on a real pipe organ, our listening members to sit and hear their favorite instrument, and for our talking members to sit in the yard and socialize.

The meeting opened at 8:00 p.m. with Everett Bassett, Al Miller and Russell Hubbard each playing one number. A short recess followed this appetizer, during which Chairman Rice raffled off his wife's pocketbook. Actually, Mildred Rice had made the beautiful handbag and donated it to the cause. Our Treasurer, Don MacCormack, was pleased to add the additional funds to the treasury.

At this point, Program Chairman Gene Hubbard introduced our own Mike Foley as guest artist. Gene explained that we are liable to take our own members' talents for granted when they are so often called upon to perform one or two numbers at meetings, and that he was going to feature some of our own talent in the "guest spot."

Mike's background of fifteen years of piano and four years of organ study, plus his recent experience demonstrating for Allen Organ Sales, and his current church position was not known to most of those present.

—Al Miller

Mike Foley entertains Connecticut Valley Chapter at home of Harold and Eleanor Weaver.

EASTERN MASS.

Mildred Alexander was featured at the May 9 spring concert of the Eastern Mass. Chapter at Stoneham Town Hall. Since she has had more than her share of grief with balky instruments, it's a pleasure to report that the former WNAC 2/14 Wurli at Stoneham was in fine playing condition.

Miss Alexander arrived a couple of days before the concert to familiarize herself with the organ. Her judicious

use of single swell shoes proved she had taken the trouble to discover what was in each chamber. Chamber markers over stop tabs mean nothing at Stoneham as the Wurli is made up of two organs that were once housed in the Empire and Windsor Theatres in Brooklyn, N. Y.

A near capacity crowd warmly applauded Miss Alexander at the conclusion of her program which ranged from Jerry Herman to Siegfried Karg-Elert and included a Fatty Arbuckle silent comedy "Old Thinsides."

LAND O' LAKES

On June 6, our chartered bus took us to Milwaukee, where we were shown through the Jerome B. Meyer and Son organ pipe factory, although "factory" is hardly the word for the peaceful, family-operated firm. The present owner has been running the company founded by his father for the past 50 years, and three sons are ready to take over when he retires. We continued on to Racine. Members of the Dairyland and Chicago Area Chapters joined us and after dinner we went, en masse, to the home of Fred Hermes to hear John Muri in concert. His is a unique talent, having been a theatre organist since the days of the silent movies. John treated us to many anecdotes, a sing-along and an exciting accompaniment to a silent film about a railroad train.

Sunday morning our bus took us to the Capitol Theatre. We were fully expecting a fine program and our guest artist, Tom Gnaster, did not disappoint us. Mr. Gnaster's excellent style and letter-perfect musicianship made him a real joy to listen to. We thank him for the pleasurable experience he gave us all.

After another delicious banquet dinner, we were all off to the Hermes home again for the final concert of our trip by Kay McAbee. During a brief intermission, Fred Hermes, Jr. played a medley from "Sound of Music" which, along with lighting effects, was totally beautiful.

For those who mistakenly felt that the music of the 60's had hit an all-time low, Mr. McAbee played a medley of contemporaries, dispelling all such notions. Beautiful music is not just a thing of the past at all. Perhaps truly good performers are too few and far between, and Mr. McAbee, to our delight, is one of those performers. With fond memories of our Racine trip, our happy busload departed for St. Paul.

LOS ANGELES

May and June were busy months for the L.A. Chapter. In mid-May many members attended the week long Organ Holiday in Santa Cruz. On May 24 we joined the local Chapter of The American Guild of Organists (AGO) on an organ crawl which featured four organs including a Wurlitzer theatre organ (Dean McNichols, the artist) and George Wright on a new classical instrument. That evening a large number of members attended the dedicatory concert by Tom Hazleton on the Wurlitzer T.O. in a Culver City church. The organ was located, refurbished, and installed by L.A. Chapter members.

Two days later the Gaylord Carter Flickerfingers silent movie show at the Wiltern proved to be a great hit. Gaylord cued the two Harold Lloyd silent comedies with his always masterful technique. The house was a near sell-out. The management of Pacific Theatres Corp., operators of the Wiltern, supported the show by agreeing to an expense and profit sharing arrangement, in lieu of the previous straight rental deal. They also did most of the promotion and ran trailers in many of their other theatres. Delighted with this success, the management wants to do more silent movie and organ shows (it drew a larger crowd than they have had for a movie in years). Highlights of the show included the appearance of Charles Correll (Andy, of the "Amos and Andy" radio show, for which Gaylord performed "The Perfect Song" theme for 7 years), and Harold Lloyd himself. Lloyd described some of his experiences in filming the two comedies back in 1926.

A number of club members are presently enrolled in a class in theatre pipe organ techniques. It is being taught by member Gordon Kibbee on Dick Simonton's 4/36 Wurlitzer. On June 14-15 members attended concerts by San Francisco organist Larry Vannucci played on the 4/26 Wurlitzer in the Old Town Theatre in El Segundo.

On June 21 Tony Fenelon concluded his 1970 USA tour with another great performance at the Wiltern 4/37 Kimball. The following day Tony, and his bride Kay, returned to Australia.

Plans for the September dedication activities for the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium 3/15 Wurlitzer are proceeding in consonance with the installation progress. A special "social type" event is being planned for the near future. In our club, with nearly 500 members, it is often difficult for a new member to meet very many others at concerts. They try, however, as evidenced by the crowds congregating in the Wiltern lobby before concerts, at intermission, and afterward. So this event is being planned, emphasizing sociability and avoiding the impersonal tendencies of any large organization. Each member should feel that he "belongs." Concert activities will be in temporary suspension in July and August, before the Fall series begins.

—Ray Bonner, Liaison Chairman

NIAGARA FRONTIER

Philadelphia's Larry Ferrarri made his first appearance at a successful concert at the Riviera Theatre in North Tonawanda on May 13. His program was a tasteful blend of show tunes, patriotic songs, standards, secular pieces and current hits. Larry showed another side of his musical ability by accompanying a sing-along and silent movie. The audience thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Ferrari's registrations and repertoire.

Niagara Frontier Chapter's own Harvey Elsaesser performed at the same 3/11 Wurlitzer on June 10. During "The Burning of Rome" chapter member Andy Jarosik walked onstage as Nero fiddling, followed by two girls with a fire extinguisher—who promptly put out the "fire." Harvey's wife Edna and Mr. James Halbert sang selections from "My Fair Lady" accompanied by Harvey.

Lee Erwin came to the Riviera on June 29 to accompany the silent comedy "Live Wire" starring Johnny Hines. In addition to the movie, Lee played for a sing-along. Included in his pro-

gram were the overtures to "The Eagle" and "Cabaret."

In our May Silent Newsreel we reported on "Area Organs and What Happened to Them", representing some 40 locations. Only 4 are still in their original place, 17 were sold to individuals and 13 to churches. The balance were either destroyed or their disposition is unknown. Twenty of these were Wurlitzers, five Marr & Colton, four were Link, the balance being of various manufactures, including Austin and Skinner. Surprisingly no Robert Mortons are noted.

—Shirley Cole

OREGON

It was a hot night for a concert but a good crowd turned out to hear the staff organist of the Kimball Organ Company, Don Jenkins, give a benefit performance on a prototype of the Apollo II, flown here by the Kimball Organ Company for the occasion, at Benson High School. This concert was sponsored by the Kimball Organ Company, Sherman and Clay Co., the Oregon Chapter of the ATOS and the Benson High Dads' Club to aid in the renovation of the 3/25 Kimball pipe organ in the Benson High Auditorium.

Don gave a varied and enjoyable program on this versatile instrument and during the intermission President Gerald Duffy, Jonas Nordwall and Bob Burke gave some of the history of the project and explained the many man hours required and the expense of replacing parts of the instrument. The newly finished pipe organ was then unveiled for all to admire. A smaller Kimball was auctioned off for $500, the amount to be donated by Sherman and Clay Co. to the fund and a collection raised the fund to approximately $775. We hope to have the Kimball operating by September or October and negotiations are now in the process for the dedication concert.

Don Jenkins finished the evening with the playing of old and new favorites.

—Rachel Zenk, Secretary

POTOMAC VALLEY

Have the chapter organs been kept busy? You bet they have.

The April meeting of the Potomac Valley Chapter was held at the Byrd Theatre in Richmond, Virginia. A surprise opener announced by Vice Chairman Marvin Lautzenheiser as "9 fingers" Eddie Weaver turned out to be a talented young man, Lyn Lunde. Lyn, age 15 and a student of Eddie's, brought the 4 manual 17 rank Wurlitzer console up from the pit with a rousing rendition of "Cabaret." Lyn also played for us "As Long As He Needs Me" and "Consider Yourself," before turning the console over to Eddie Weaver. Eddie was the victim of a freak accident, causing him to temporarily lose the use of one finger on his right hand. Even though Eddie only had nine playing fingers one could not tell this by his renditions along with some deft left hand and pedal arrangements Eddie worked up to avoid using the injured finger. When Eddie had to leave for another engagement, Ray Brubacher took command of the console and finished the program. Ray played many tunes which are seldom heard today. It seems that Ray enjoys going through the archives digging up the oldies that many reminisced to years ago. Lyn returned to the console and finished a very delightful morning with what he said was one of his favorite songs, "This Is My Country."

The May meeting was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Erwin Young on Sunday afternoon, May 17th, on their 7 rank Wurlitzer E Special. Mr. Young gave a short history of the organ which originally was installed in the Regent Theatre in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The late Leonard MacClain had suggested to the Youngs that a cathedral ceiling should be installed in their studio.

After Mr. Young's introduction, our own chapter member, Mr. Earl Sharits, took command of the console and presented a program for the young and old, many of the melodies written for the pipe organ and included some arrangements by Crawford and Loesser. To complete the program Earl accompanied three silent films entitled "The Chase," "Invisible Woman" and "Railroad Stowaways." At the end of Earl's program the console was open for other members to try their hand with Dick Kline leading off.

The June meeting was held on Sunday, the 14th, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Y. Miller where a completely restored 2/10 Wurlitzer is installed in a clock shop. Due to limited space an informal open house meeting was held. The console was open and kept busy for three hours. Ray Brubacher and Doug Miller assisted at the console acting as co-pilots.

The 2/7 Wurlitzer at the Tivoli Theatre in Frederick, Md., is undergoing a releathering job by the work crews of the chapter, working on Saturday mornings.

Another removal and restoration job is about to begin. I can only hint at this time, but the organ will receive the utmost exposure.

—George R. Johnson, Chairman

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

The Chapter held its May meeting in the Denver Theatre on Sunday morning, May 3rd. Mr. Bill Johnston presented the program to an ever-increasing Denver-area audience as more and more people become aware of our society and its activities. The first portion consisted of favorite popular melodies and, after a short intermission, he presented music of a more semi-classical nature. Bill is associated with a local music company. Following the formal concert, a number of other talented organists played popular selections as most of the audience came forward to get close looks at the fine 3/15 Wurlitzer. The Denver Theatre is one of the last of the ornate structures to be built during the 'golden era' in the late 20's. A complete story on this fine theatre is forthcoming in a later issue of this magazine. It appeared recently in a Sunday edition of the Denver Post.

PUGET SOUND

A good number of chapter members attended the May 14 spring concert at Queen Ann High School. Dick Schrum did a beautiful job playing pre-concert and intermission music, in addition to the senior band. The school has an excellent 3/10 Kimball.

A large crowd turned out at the chapter's home base, Haller Lake Improvement Club to hear Tony Fenelon from Australia. A wide variety of selections were heard, including a special arrangement of "Theme from *The Apartment,*" featuring Tony at the piano with Eddie Zollman, Sr., at the organ.

The next night Tony was again in top form, playing the 2/7 Morton-Wurlitzer at Big Bob's Pizza Restaurant, Federal Way. The turn out was so great at the restaurant, many people waited outside for hours! Tony, who was featured at both these instruments last year, lauded the marked improvements in both organs.

June 28th began with a visitation to the McKee Piano and Organ Center, Tacoma, Washington and was followed by a banquet and business meeting at a local eatery. The group then moved a few blocks to the Temple Theatre where Jane Powers McKee gave a fine program at the 3/9 Kimball, installed over the proscenium arch. Jane has fond memories of this organ as she played radio broadcasts at the Temple Theatre in the early 40's.

Many members had their chance to try the Kimball, including special guest, Richard Rodgers from Tulsa, Oklahoma. Dick is a very talented young

theatre organist and was one of the featured artists at the New York National Convention.

That evening found many Puget Sound members at the Calvary Temple Church, Seattle. Lorin Whitney, well known for his work in gospel music, presented the first concert on the newly installed 3/19 Wurlitzer-Kimball. It is truly a magnificent instrument. A new three manual console was built by Balcom and Vaughn Pipe Organs but for the most part, the organ is Lorin Whitney's former residence 10 rank Wurlitzer.

—Eddie Zollman, Jr.

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