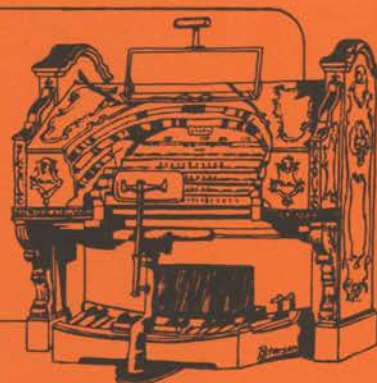


# THEATRE ORGAN

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

VOLUME 12 — NUMBER 5

OCTOBER, 1970



## REQUIEM FOR THE ROXY

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# THEATRE ORGAN

Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society

Volume 12, Number 5

October, 1970

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## THE COVER PHOTO

Only the Kimball's five-manual master console was all that survived the leveling of the Roxy Theatre. "Requiem for the Roxy" begins on page 4.



## In This Issue

### FEATURES

4	Requiem for the Roxy	Stu Green
12	End of a Dream	Stu Green
16	The Del Castillo Story	Lloyd E. Klos
19	Off the Record	Ray Brubacher
21	Howard Burton and Cedar Rapids New Theatre Organ	Charles G. Albrecht
22	The Larkin Building	Lloyd E. Klos
27	The Typical Versus the Top	John Muri
28	The Mighty Redwood Wurlitzer	Phil Freeman and Dewey Cagle
30	Organ Holiday	Elmer Fubb
37	Fabulous Fifteenth Footnotes and Flashbacks	Claud Beckham

### TECHNICAL

20	Adding a Celeste to a Small Wurlitzer	Al Miller
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### DEPARTMENTS

24	Vox Pops	36	Nuggets from the Golden Days
32	For the Records	38	Closing Chord
33	Book Review	38	Chapter News
34	Hollywood Cavalcade	39	Classified Ads
35	Snippets from England		

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our thrilling Fabulous 15th Annual Convention, held the week of July 11-17, 1970, was an outstanding success. It was the concerted action, typical of American Theatre Organ Society membership. I wish to add my personal congratulations to those of your Past President Albert Mason, to all who participated to make it so, and in particular to Claud Beckham, Bob Balfour and Allen Rossiter who headed the activities.

As your new President, I am deeply aware of the duties and responsibilities of this high position. I am positive that together with the National Officers, and the National Board of Directors that have been chosen and elected by you to work with me, that we can look forward to another year of success and growth, furthering the purpose for which this Society was formed.

It is my fervent hope that my efforts during my term of office will measure up to the outstanding job that has been done by our *Past Presidents*.

Our National Organization, with its allied chapters, must work together and not lose sight of the fact that *In Unity There Is Strength*. With our combined efforts, we look forward to a great year for the American Theatre Organ Society.

One of my first assignments is to complete the U. S. Treasury Department — Internal Revenue Service Exempt Application for National American Theatre Organ Society. At this time I wish to report that I have already started on this assignment and report progress. I hope to have a complete report and the benefits which will be applicable to National, in the December issue of Theatre Organ.

To all National Officers, Directors, Chapter Chairmen, and members, please feel free to write me concerning your thoughts and suggestions that you feel may help National to better serve your Chapter.

With the able assistance of our new Executive Secretary, Mrs. Eleanor Weaver, of the Conn. Valley Chapter, we plan to acknowledge letters as soon as possible.

Mildred and I wish to extend an invitation to members to stop and pay a visit if in the North Haven, Connecticut area.



*Stillman H. Rice*

Stillman H. Rice — President

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by Stu Green

**I**T WAS the last word in "colossal" movie theatres, a relic of the 1920's when florid gilt and marbled cinemas mushroomed across the land, each more ornate than the last. A zenith had to be reached one day and that ultimate was generally conceded to be the New York Roxy. If you were one of the 50 million visitors who climbed stairways during the cavernous theatre's first 12 years of operation, it is very likely that you came to see a marvelous theatre in operation more than for the current attraction. You entered under a sparkling galaxy of 4,500 marquee lights and as

you gave your ticket to the smartly uniformed doorman you felt the "give" in the deep carpet underfoot. At the same time you were greeted by the sound of organ music resounding in the spacious foyer. It was the real thing, too, because the Roxy had a duplexed Kimball playing from a little balcony in the big foyer; Frank White at the 3-manual console, which also played rolls. You were amazed at the luxury of the acres of rich rugs, the costly hanging of "dream cloth", all of which was dominated by a huge ton-and-a-half chandelier which cast its

shimmering sparklets all over the huge rotunda. Such was the Roxy Theatre, Broadway's fanciest, flashiest showcase from the era of "colossal" movie palaces. Now but a memory.

But let us turn time back to March 11, 1927 — the day the big theatre opened. You were hardy enough to endure the long lines to the boxoffice and managed to find a seat in the huge auditorium just in time for the organ presentation.

With the stage curtain softly flooded with variegated light as a backdrop, the three consoles rose in the orchestra pit



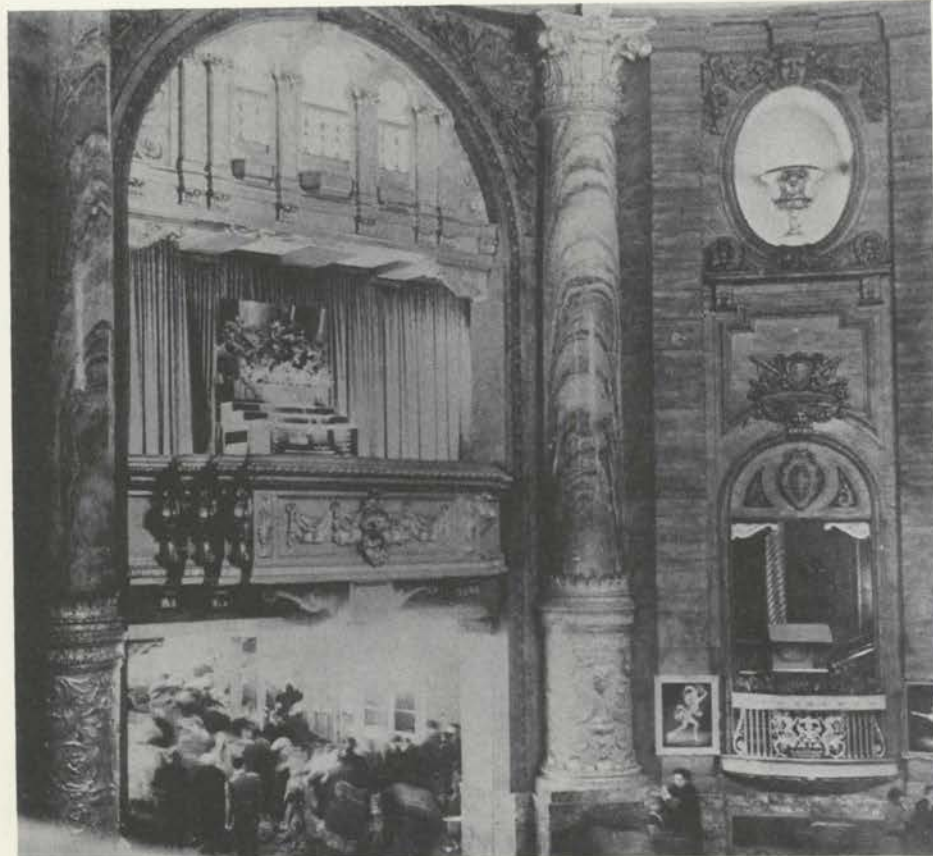
The Roxy was not impressive from the 7th Avenue approach. Only the marquee broke the solid facade of a hotel building.



The full magnificence of the structure became apparent only after one left 7th Avenue and walked down the one-way side street, as shown in these 1927 photos shot by Clealan Blakely. (Opposite page also.)



This badly deteriorated photo was taken by Clealan Blakely during a Lew White organ solo in 1927. The console is raised while the men of the orchestra await their turn on the lowered orchestra elevator. The understage organ grille is faintly visible. Photo has been retouched.



After a walk through a long passageway peopled by smartly dressed ushers, one entered the great rotunda and heard music played on the lobby Kimball either by one of the staffers or from rolls. This instrument was in use long after the auditorium organ fell silent. Many radio broadcasts originated here, often while the show was going on in the auditorium.

(From the DIAPASON, April 1, 1927)

## Roxy Theatre Opens In A Blaze of Glory

**Remarkable Motion Picture Palace in New York has Triple-Console Kimball Unit, is heard by 6,000**

With the interest of organists centered in its large organ with three consoles, the first equipment of its kind on record, the great Roxy Theatre in New York was opened March 11. There was an audience of more than 6,000 people who paid probably the largest receipts ever taken in at one performance in a theatre; prices ranged from \$5.50 to \$11.00. The theatre itself, the conception of S. L. Rothafel, is pronounced the most beautiful motion picture house in the world. It is artistic in its architectural design and in the scheme of its decoration. The Kimball organ, claimed to be the largest unit organ ever built, is installed under the stage, except for the Fanfare Organ, which is over the ceiling. The 3 consoles are on separate elevators in the front of the orchestra pit and for solos they come

up together with an organist at each console. The organists on opening nite were C. A. J. Parmentier, Emil Velasco and Dezso d'Antalfy. The opening number on the program was the "Pilgrims' Chorus" from "Tannhauser," followed by several numbers of lighter character, taking about 18 minutes. The effects produced in this short recital, with the limited time available for the 3 organists to practice together, show the possibilities of the 3 consoles. In the foyer the 3-manual Kimball 'Soloist' organ was played by Frank White to provide music for people going in and out of the theatre. His program was composed almost entirely of light numbers. The 5th organist is Lewis White who is playing both in the theatre and for broadcasting, which is done on a two-manual Kimball unit in the broadcasting studio.

until they were level with the rail, all the while giving out with that glorious music which echoes in the memories of those who heard, to this day. The men of the 100-piece symphony orchestra were all in their places, music racks lighted and ready, but the orchestra elevator remained at the bottom of the pit so as not to interfere with the organ sound rolling out from the chambers beneath the stage. With soft lighting on the gilded choral stairways on either side of the proscenium and attention drawn to the three consoles by shafts of rose-colored light from the arc spots, the effect, visual and auditory, was one of great beauty.

C. A. J. Parmentier presided at the center of the pit while d'Antalfy and Emil Velasco played the 3-manual "Woodwind" and "Brass" consoles flanking the big one. All too soon the mighty "end chord" sounded, the spots flipped from rose to a blinding white and the organists took their bows. Then the consoles sank slowly below the rail and it was over. Lew White later took over the master console. Occasionally, Lew would come up with a girl sitting atop the gold encrusted console and she would sing a chorus or two of the tune he was currently pushing.

Those were the great days of the Roxy, when it was the unchallenged number one showplace of the nation, a title it was to maintain until the opening of the Radio City Music Hall five years later.

Since our interest is in the big Kimball organ, let's examine it for size. As we have already mentioned, it was installed under the stage, in four chambers. A look at the summary of the ranks will indicate that it started out with 34 ranks (despite legends that it had up to 80 sets). Three sets were installed in a Fanfare Chamber above the auditorium. These ranks were Military Bugle 8', Fanfare Trumpet 16', 8' and 4' and Fife 4'. Hanging from a tower on the roof was a gigantic set of tubular Deagan chimes, the deepest being 21 feet in length. These were under expression and could be directed either into the auditorium or out into the street, although no one seems to recall their use as tower chimes. Then there were the three consoles.

S. L. Rothafel, the impresario who dreamed up the Roxy Theatre, decided to have the flashiest organ presentations possible and, being a showman of the old school, figured that what the audience saw was perhaps even more important than what was heard — thus the three consoles. This visual assault may also explain why the legend grew that the ranks numbered as high as 80.

So, "Roxy's" showmanship was sound enough, although it was regretted in some musical circles that the budget for the organ put out so much for consoles at the expense of ranks of pipes. Even so, there was never any complaint that the organ didn't fill the hall, although the under-stage installation made it necessary to saturate the rows closest to the orchestra pit in order to achieve a moderate level at the back of the auditorium. Then there was that orchestra pit moving up and down which blocked off much of the organ volume when the elevator was raised.

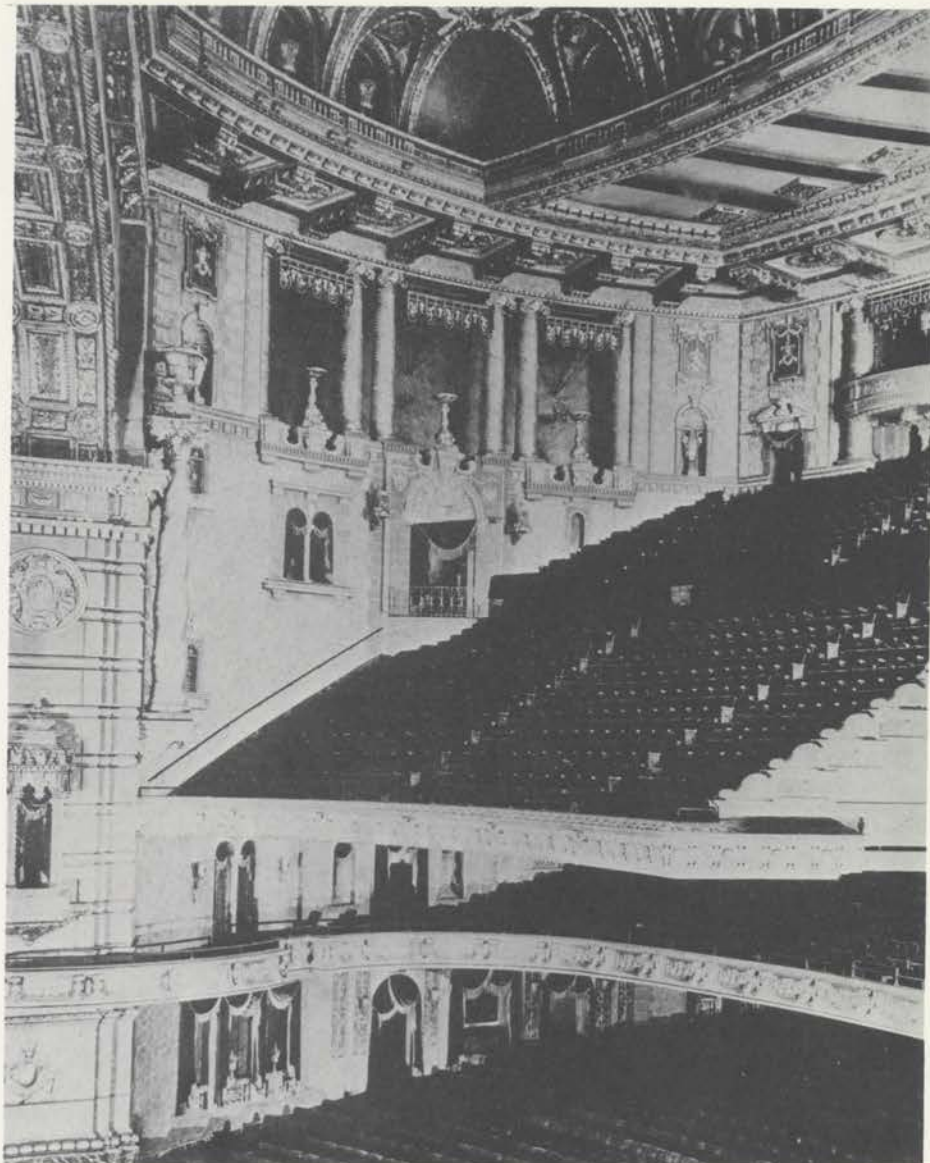
The very year (1932) the Radio City Music Hall opened saw an end to "live" organ music in the Roxy. When Rothafel left to guide the course of the RCMH the new Roxy management decided to extend the stage apron out over the orchestra pit, which had until then been large enough for over 100 musicians plus 3 consoles and their players. This architectural miscarriage not only immobilized the pit elevator; it left no room for any consoles. C. Sharp Minor, who was the house organist at the time, made a valiant effort to save the organ. He talked very persuasively to the management about relocating the pipework in chambers to be built on either side of the stage.

The Kimball people were willing to go ahead with the idea and suggested that the pipework be placed all on one side of the auditorium instead of divided. They believed the distance between the right and left sides would be too great for a divided organ to be effective. On July 9, 1932, Kimball's R. P. Elliot wrote the Chicago factory and outlined the plan, saying that the job would have to be completed in 20 days because the theatre was to re-open on July 29 under Mike Rubin's management. Elliot described the moving job in detail and obtained an estimate. But he couldn't sell the Roxy management on the cost of moving, so the organ fell silent. The three consoles were packed off to a warehouse, but no matter; the city building code forced the "remodelers" to fill the area beneath the new footlight line with a wall of fire-resistant brick, sealing the organ chambers off from the auditorium completely. Thus, between 1932 and 1936, the Fanchon and Marco management provided no organ music at all. So 1932 marked the last year the organ was ever heard — directly.

In 1936 Arthur Knorr came in as stage manager for F & M. He evidently

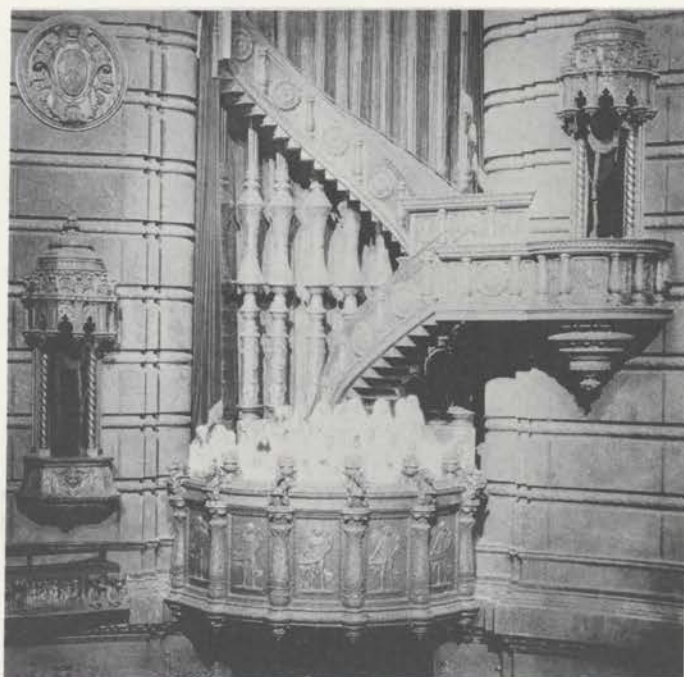
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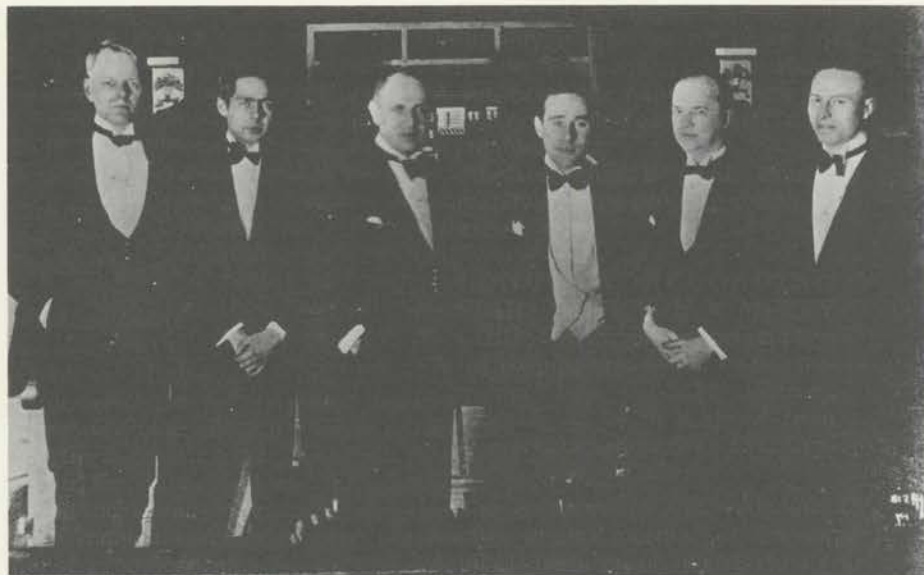
*Roxy Photos through the courtesy of Bill Lamb, Clealan Blakely and Richard Loderhose.*



*(Above) Six thousand first nighters crowded into the dual-balconied hall on opening night. The Roxy was the last word in decorative gingerbread, gold paint, drapes, alcoves and urns—the indications of elegance peculiar to movie houses of the 'golden age'.*

*(Right) The Roxy chorus is spotlighted on a balcony on the left wall of the theatre during a stage show. The 5-manual console spent several years on such a balcony, probably this same one.*





The Roxy organists in 1927. L to R, C. A. J. Parmentier, Dezso d'Antalfy, Lew White, Roxy, Emil Velazco and Frank White.



The 'Ice Age'. This photo shows how much the stage was extended to nearly obliterate the once huge orchestra pit. It is seen here after it was flooded to provide an ice surface for shows presented on skates. When this photo was taken (in the '50s), the console could be seen in the pit. It spent much of the 'Ice Age' perched on the little balcony (left of center).

had a weakness for organ music. Surveying the headless, slumbering giant with its pipework sealed in its under-stage tomb, he hit upon the idea of amplifying the organ from its sealed-in position, using the house public address system.

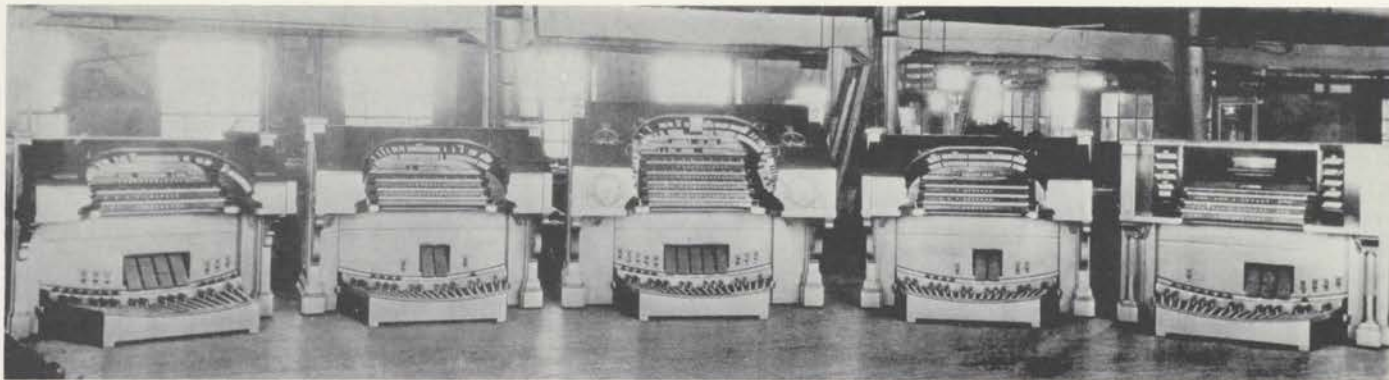
Meanwhile, Mike Schumm, the Roxy's organ maintenance man from the beginning, had completed a sad task. He had, on orders, moved the three ranks in the overhead Fanfare Chamber down under the stage to the tomb of the Orchestra Chamber. Then came the happy order to move the Master Console from the warehouse back to the theatre. When the console arrived it was swung up to the little balcony on the left side of the auditorium where it remained until the early '50s. It sounded strangely muffled through the house public address system. The distortion and limited frequency response of a PA system could hardly do justice to the big Kimball sound, but it was organ music and perhaps those who had never heard the organ played directly were satisfied.

Then came the "ice age." After a few years of amplified organ music the Roxy went on an ice show policy where everything presented on the stage was done by performers on ice skates. The big stage became a frozen lake and remained that way for many years, in fact, until the Cinemascope installation. Several times during the ice age, there were meltings and water dripped down into the organ chambers and damaged the chests, mainly those in the Percussion chamber.

Mike Schumm saved the day for the rest of the organ by removing all vulnerable pipework and covering the denuded chests with tar paper. At the end of the "ice age" in 1954, a time which saw some of the worst flooding of the chambers, the Master Console was removed from its perch on the "shelf" and returned to its accustomed place in the pit. Mike Schumm went ahead with the tedious job of tuning and in time had about 18 ranks going. The organ was used occasionally until January 1956 — always through the public address system. It was used during the 1955 Christmas show and for a few performances into the new year. The final performance was late in January 1956 with Gordon Seaman at the console.

Shortly after this, stage shows were abandoned for the abortive run of the Cinemiracle film, "Windjammer." The 100-foot screen swallowed up the Roxy's vast proscenium arch, the ornamental boxes and staircases. When stage shows were resumed, Bob Roth-





Following is a summary of the resources of the organ:

Diaphone, 16', 85 pipes  
Tuba Mirabilis, 16', 73 pipes  
Tuba Sonora, 16', 85 pipes  
Trumpet Fanfare, 16', 85 pipes (prosc.)  
English Post Horn, 16', 73 pipes  
Trumpet, 8', 73 pipes  
French Horn, 8', 73 pipes  
Wald Horn, 8', 85 pipes  
Tibia Clausa, 16', 97 pipes  
Diaphonic Horn, 16', 85 pipes  
Saxophone, 8', 61 pipes  
Oboe Horn, 16', 85 pipes  
English Horn, 8', 73 pipes  
Oboe, 16', 73 pipes  
Clarinet, 8', 73 pipes  
Musette, 8', 61 pipes  
Vox Humana, 2 rks, 8', 146 pipes  
Concert Flute, 8', 97 pipes  
Quintadena, 8', 73 pipes  
Tibia Minor, 8', 85 pipes  
Cello, 1 rk, 16', 85 pipes  
Cellos, 2 rks, 8', 146 pipes  
Violin, 16', 97 pipes  
Viols, 2 rks, 8', 146 pipes  
Viola, 8', 85 pipes  
Muted Viols, 2 rks, 8', 146 pipes

Kinura, 8', 61 pipes  
Vox Humana, 8', 73 pipes  
Military Bugle, 8', 61 pipes (prosc.)  
Fife, 4', 61 pipes (prosc.)  
Piano, Mandolin, 16', 88 notes  
Marimba, Harp, 8', 49 bars  
Xylophone, 4', 49 notes  
Celesta, 4', 49 notes  
Orch. Bells, Glockenspiel, 2', 37 notes  
Sleigh Bells, 2', 25 notes  
Chimes, 8', 25 notes  
Bass Drum (band)  
Bass Drum (orchestra)  
Tympani  
Cymbal  
Persian Cymbal  
Chinese Gong  
Snare Drum, tap  
Snare Drum, roll  
Muffled Drum  
Triangle  
Tom-Tom  
Double Castanets  
Double Tambourines  
Chinese Block, tap  
Chinese Block, roll  
Shuffle  
Bird

From the master console of five manuals the foregoing resources are available as set forth below:

#### ACCOMPANIMENT (Manual 1)

##### — First Touch —

Bass Viol, 16'	Vox Humana, 4'
Contra Flute, 16'	Traverse Flute, 4'
Diaphonic Diapason, 8'	Viola, 4'
Tuba, 8'	Muted Viols, 2 rks, 4'
Tibia Clausa, 8'	Nazard, 2-2/3'
Open Diapason, 8'	Flautino, 2'
Saxophone, 8'	Fifteenth, 2'
Wald Horn, 8'	Harmonic Piccolo, 2'
Violin 1, 8'	Tierce, 1-3/5'
Viols, 2 rks, 8'	Piano 8'
French Horn, 8'	Piano 4'
Tibia Minor, 8'	Marimba, 8'
Oboe Horn, 8'	Marimba, 4'
Clarinet, 8'	Harp, 8'
Oboe, 8'	Harp, 4'
Vox Humanas, 2 rks, 8'	Xylophone, 4'
Vox Humana, 8'	Celesta, 4'
Kinura, 8'	Glockenspiel, 2'
Concert Flute, 8'	Snare Drum, roll
Quintadena, 8'	Snare Drum, tap
Viola, 8'	Muffled Drum
Muted Viols, 2 rks, 8'	Chinese Block, roll
Octave 4'	Chinese Block, tap
Wald Horn, 4'	Tom-Tom
Violin 1, 4'	Castanets
Viols, 2 rks, 4'	Tambourine
Stopped Flute, 4'	Shuffle
Vox Humanas, 2 rks, 4'	Orchestral to Acc., 8'

##### —Acc. Second Touch —

Diaphonic Diapason, 8'	Chimes, 8'
Tuba, 8'	Snare Drum, roll
Tibia Clausa, 8'	Chinese Block, roll
Post Horn, 8'	Triangle
Cellos, 3 rks, 8'	Bird
Viols, 3 rks, 8'	Solo to Acc., 8'
Oboe Horn, 8'	Solo to Acc., 4'
Clarinet, 8'	Bombarde to Acc., 8'
Oboe, 8'	

The Roxy consoles. Lined up for inspection before being shipped from the Kimball factory are the broadcast studio 3/11 console, the three auditorium consoles and, at right, the roll-playing, duplexed rotunda 3/10. Only the 5-manual giant (center) survived the levelling of the theatre.

### THE ROXY KIMBALL STOPLIST

The main instrument consists of a 5-manual console which controls the entire resources of the instrument and two 3-manual auxiliary consoles equipped to play selected parts of the instrument (Brass Organ & Woodwind Organ). The Brass Console of three manuals operates the more powerful stops and percussions, and especially the large reeds. The Woodwind Organ is played from the Woodwind Console and includes the softer reeds and flutes, as well as suitable percussions.

#### ORCHESTRAL (Manual 2)

##### — First Touch —

Tuba, 16'	Viols 2 rks, 4'
Tibia Clausa, 16'	Ballad Horn, 4'
Bass Viol 1, 16'	Stopped Flute, 4'
Bass Viols, 2 rks, 16'	Oboe Clarion, 4'
Bourdon, 16'	Vox Humanas, 2 rks, 4'
Bass Clarinet, 16'	Vox Humana, 4'
Vox Humana, 2 rks, 16'	Traverse Flute, 4'
Vox Humana, 16'	Viola, 4'
Quintaton, 16'	Muted Viols, 2 rks, 4'
Trumpet, 8'	Tibia Nazard, 2-2/3'
Diaphonic Diapason, 8'	Nazard, 2-2/3'
Tuba, 8'	Viola Twelfth, 2-2/3'
Tibia Clausa, 8'	Violin Fifteenth, 2'
Post Horn, 8'	Flautino, 2'
Open Diapason, 8'	Harmonic Piccolo, 2'
Cello 1, 8'	Tierce, 1-3/5'
Cellos, 2 rks, 8'	Piano, 16'
Saxophone, 8'	Piano, 8'
Wald Horn, 8'	Piano, 4'
Violin 1, 8'	Mandolin, 8'
Viols, 2 rks, 8'	Marimba, 8'
French Horn, 8'	Marimba, 4'
Tibia Minor, 8'	Harp, 8'
Oboe Horn, 8'	Xylophone, 4'
Clarinet, 8'	Celesta, 4'
Musette, 8'	Glockenspiel, 2'
English Horn, 8'	Orchestra Bells, 2'
Oboe, 8'	Sleigh Bells, 2'
Vox Humanas, 2 rks, 8'	Vox Humanas, 2 rks, 8'
Vox Humana, 8'	Kinura, 8'
Kinura, 8'	Concert Flute, 8'
Concert Flute, 8'	Quintadena, 8'
Quintadena, 8'	Viola, 8'
Viola, 8'	Muted Viols, 2 rks, 8'
Muted Viols, 2 rks, 8'	Cornet, 4'
Octave 4'	Tibia Flute, 4'
Wald Horn, 4'	Octave, 4'
Violin 1, 4'	Wald Horn, 4'
Viols, 2 rks, 4'	Violin 1, 4'

##### — Orch. Second Touch —

Diaphone, 16'	Tuba Mirabilis, 8'
Tuba, 16'	Tibia Clausa, 8'
Post Horn, 16'	Tibia Flute, 4'
Cellos, 3 rks, 16'	Glockenspiel, 2'
Clarinet, 16'	Snare Drum, roll
Double English Horn, 16'	Solo to Orch., 8'

#### SOLO (Manual 3)

Contra Tibia Clausa, 16'	Oboe, 8'
Bass Saxophone, 16'	Vox Humana, 2 rks, 8'
Bass Viol, 3 rks, 16'	Vox Humana 8'
Bourdon, 16'	Kinura, 8'
Contra Fagotto, 16'	Concert Flute, 8'
Bass Clarinet, 16'	Tibia Flute, 4'
Vox Humana, 16'	Viols, 3 rks, 4'
Vox Humanas, 2 rks, 16'	Stopped Flute, 4'
Vox Humana, 16'	Clarinet, 4'
Bass Kinura, 16'	Traverse Flute, 4'
Tuba Mirabilis, 8'	Harmonics, 6 rks (mix.)
Trumpet, 8'	Nazard, 2-2/3'
Diaphonic Diapason, 8'	Flautino, 2'
Tuba, 8'	Harmonic Piccolo, 2'
Tibia Clausa, 8'	Tierce, 1-3/5'
Post Horn, 8'	Piano, 8'
Cellos, 3 rks, 8'	Marimba, 8'
Viols, 3 rks, 8'	Marimba, 4'
French Horn, 8'	Xylophone, 4'
Tibia Minor, 8'	Glockenspiel, 2'
Oboe Horn, 8'	Fife, 4'
Clarinet, 8'	Bombarde to Solo, 8'
Musette, 8'	Percussion to Solo, 8'
English Horn, 8'	

#### BOMBARDE (Manual 4)

Trumpet Fanfare, 16'	Diapason, 8'
Trumpet Fanfare, 8'	Saxophone, 8'
Trumpet Fanfare, 4'	Oboe, 8'
Military Bugle, 8'	English Horn, 8'
Diaphone, 16'	Clarinet, 8'
Double Trumpet, 16'	Musette, 8'
Tuba, 16'	Vox Humana, 8'
Post Horn, 16'	Concert Flute, 8'
Trumpet, 16'	Quintadena, 8'
Diapason Phanon, 8'	Cello, 8'
Tuba, 8'	Cellos, 2 rks, 8'
Post Horn, 8'	Principal, 4'
Trumpet, 8'	Clarion, 4'
French Horn, 8'	Flute, 4'
Tibia Clausa, 8'	Bombarde, 4' Coupler

#### PERCUSSION (Manual 5)

Post Horn, 16'	Marimba, 8'
Bass Kinura, 16'	Harp, 8'
Bassoon, 16'	Xylophone, 4'
Post Horn, 8'	Celesta, 4'
Tibia Clausa, 8'	Glockenspiel, 2'
Saxophone, 8'	Orchestra Bells, 2'
Vox Humanas, 2 rks, 8'	Sleigh Bells, 2'
Kinura, 8'	Chimes, 8'
Tibia Flute, 4'	Fife, 4'
Whistle, 2'	Percussion, 16' coupler
Piano, 8'	Percussion, 4' coupler

#### VIBRATOS

Tubas	Woodwind, Main
Horns	Cellos
Brass, Main	Viols
Tibia Clausa, special	Tibias
slow regulation	Vox Humanas
Vox Humana	Trumpet Fanfare

#### PEDAL

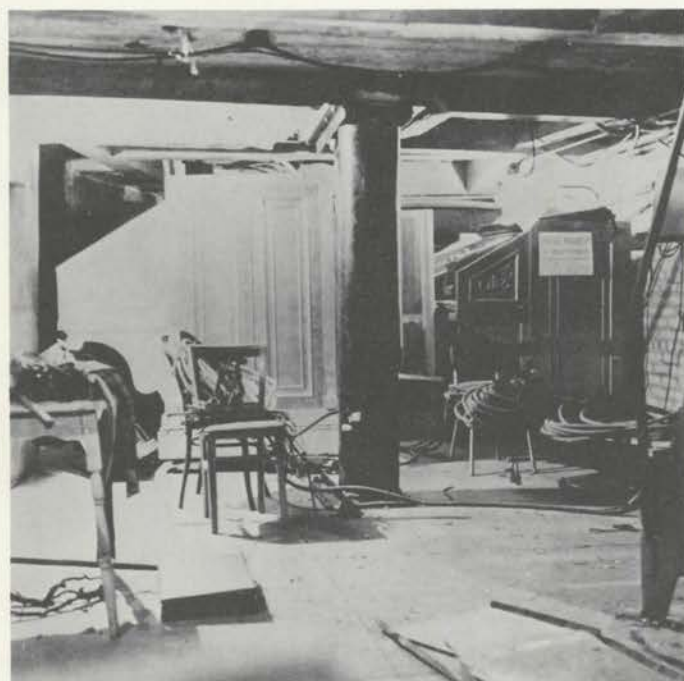
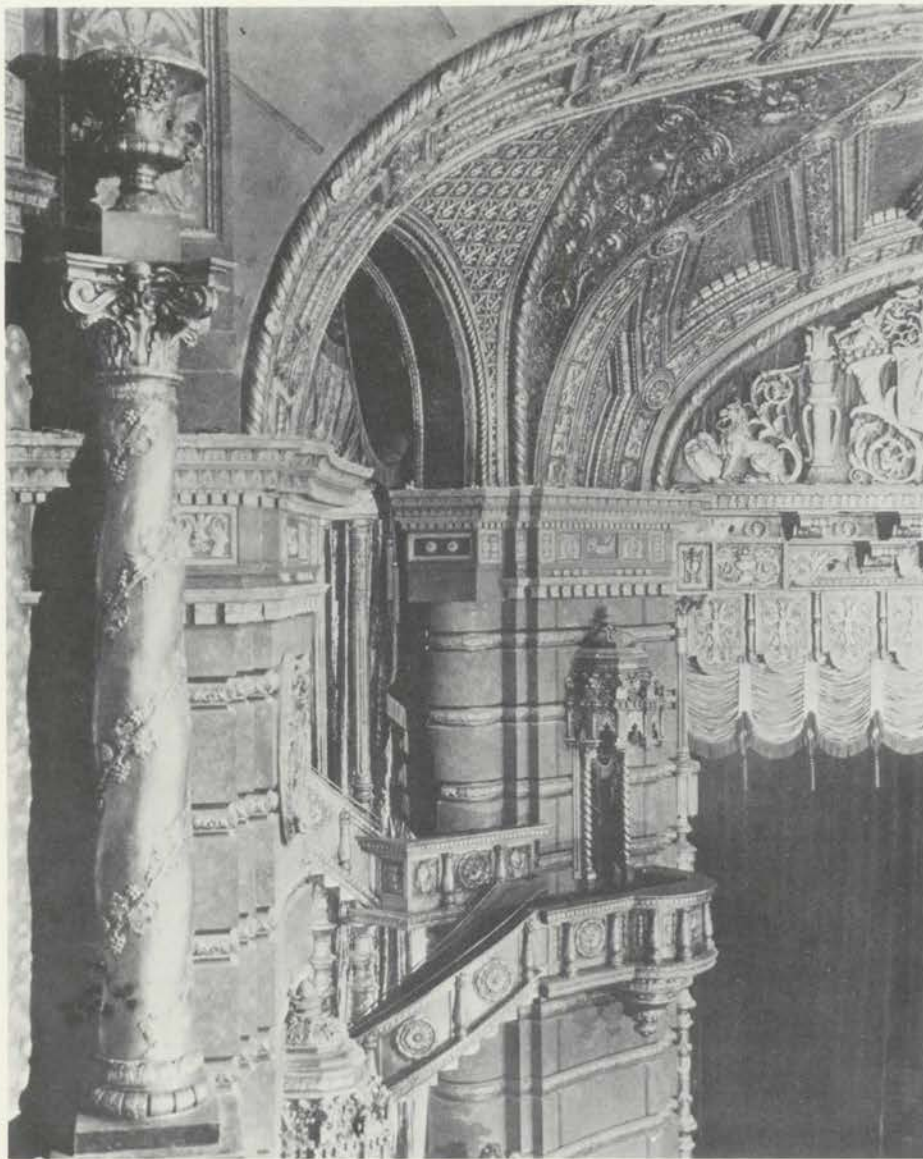
##### — First Touch —

Trumpet Fanfare, 16'	Cellos, 3 rks, 8'
Trombone, 16'	Viols, 3 rks, 8'
Diaphone, 16'	Tibia Minor, 8'
Tuba, 16'	Concert Flute, 8'
Contra Tibia Clausa, 16'	Viols, 3 rks, 4'
Post Horn, 16'	Piano, 16'
Diaphonic Horn, 16'	Piano, 8'
Contra Bass, 16'	Bass Drum, band
Bass Viol, 16'	Bass Drum, orchestra
Contra Fagotto, 16'	Snare Drum, roll
Bassoon, 16'	Accompaniment to
Tuba Mirabilis, 8'	Pedal, 8'
Diaphonic Diapason, 8'	Orchestral to Pedal, 8'
Tuba, 8'	Bombarde to Pedal, 8'
Open Diapason, 8'	

#### PEDAL

##### — Second Touch —

Tuba Mirabilis, 8'	Persian Cymbal
Chimes, 8'	Chinese Gong
Bass Drum, band	Tympani
Cymbal	



(Above) Columns and staircases. The gaudy proscenium was honey-combed with passageways which led to stairways that stopped briefly at balconies. These were often used for specialty acts during the stage presentations.

(Left) End of the road. Dick Loderhose found the 5-manual console (left) in company with one of the 3-manual consoles (badly cannibalized) in the Roxy cellar when he came to rescue as much of the organ as the wrecking schedule allowed.

afel (nephew of the great theatre's originator), who managed the theatre during its final 5 years, decided to enlarge the orchestra by 10 musicians. The once large pit was now cramped and the only way to make room for the extra sidemen was to get the console out of the pit. This time it was the "final curtain" for the organ. The console was heaved into a space beneath the pit and the floor replaced over it. This was the end of the Roxy organ. So far as is known, there were no commercial records ever cut on it and there are probably no hobby recordings, either.

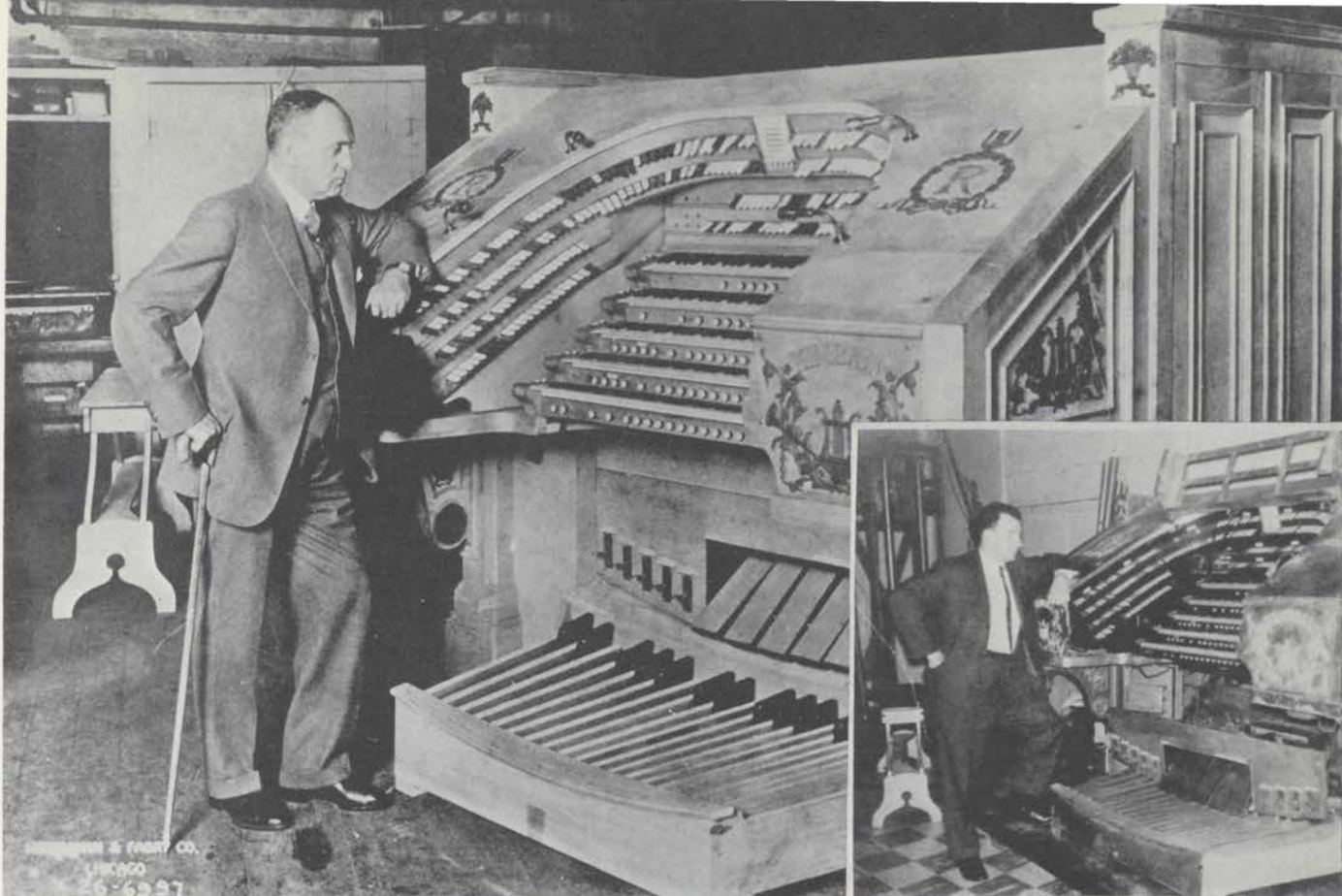
For the Roxy Story we are much indebted to Ben Hall for Roxy history, to Clealan Blakely for his description of the 3-console organ presentation and to Lee Haggart for the stop list. The specification for the Kimball theatre organ installed in the New York Roxy Theatre in 1927, is as released by the W. W. Kimball Organ Co.

**The preceding article first appeared in the June 1960 issue of the POST-HORN, journal of the Theatre Organ Club of Los Angeles.**

#### POSTSCRIPT

What became of the Roxy organ when the theatre was demolished? Most of it went down with the building, mainly because the wrecking firm was slow in processing bids for the instrument. The steel ball was ominously close to the building when Richard Loderhose of Jamaica, N. Y. came to the rescue. Dick, who already owned the N. Y. Paramount studio 4/21 Wur-litzer, entered the doomed cinema with his crew to be greeted by a scene of intense activity. Workmen were rolling up the once rich carpeting and tearing down the faded "dream cloth." In the huge foyer, Dick watched a crew of piano movers trying to hoist the console of the lobby organ over the balcony rail. Their block and tackle got the bulky package over and swinging free, but before the descent started the makeshift platform crumpled and the console fell 25 feet to the floor, ending up as junk. Dick recalls that the air was blue with the invective of the mid-west purchaser and his inexperienced crew. In fact, with that unfortunate event, the buyer gave up and consigned the whole lobby organ to the mercy of the steel ball.

There wasn't time to remove the entire 5/34 auditorium organ nor even the 3/11 from the broadcast studio, so Loderhose concentrated on collecting the "goodies" from both — the five-manual console and the distinctive Kimball reed pipework. In all, he saved 10 ranks of pipes, but there wasn't time to remove the matching chests. He man-



S. L. Rothafel ("Roxy") examines the five-deck console before its installation. Many years later, its current owner, Richard Loderhose, strikes a similar pose. Loderhose supplied many of the photos for this presentation.

aged to bring out some of the percussions, too.

Later, fascinated by the spectacle of destruction, Dick found himself drawn to the Roxy ruins whenever he was in the neighborhood. During one visit the great tower chimes (remember the longest measured 21 feet) came crashing down in twos and threes, clanging in harsh and final tintinnabulation, as the wreckers attacked their moorings. As the outline of the great auditorium disintegrated in rubble, one final scene remains etched in the Loderhose memory—the sight of the big wooden pedal diaphone pipes standing at attention in the same spot they had been installed 33 years earlier, proudly proclaiming to passersby and the open sky that here once was a pipe organ.

The tragedy in the destruction of one of the world's great showplaces, a theatre well-maintained and in perfect shape according to Ben Hall (who haunted the Roxy during its final year), is that it set a pattern. It was among the first of the great cinema palaces of the '20s to be sacrificed to the steel ball of "progress." Changing public tastes in the entertainment field (especially the advent of TV) made the big houses unprofitable, so they were simply torn down to clear the property for something that would make money — like a

parking lot. Once the pattern was set by the Roxy, there followed in dreary succession the levelling of the San Francisco Fox and Paramount, the Minnesota in Minneapolis, the Los Angeles Metropolitan/Paramount and Carthay Circle, the Chicago Paradise and Marbro, the Toledo Paramount, the Palace and Loew's in Rochester, N. Y., the Oriental in Portland, the New Haven (Conn.) Paramount and many more along New York's Broadway, among the memorable losses being the Capitol and Times Square Paramount. And we have named only a representative few of the many fine theatres lost to future generations in the decade since the Roxy went down.

All of these theatres were once equipped with historic pipe organs; most of the organs were removed in time and relocated. A few "went for parts" — notably the style 285 Wurlitzer Special in the Los Angeles Paramount.

In some cases there was a public outcry when the destruction of a theatre was announced and groups sprang up to find an alternative which would preserve a historic auditorium. Perhaps the most notable was the "Save the Fox" campaign waged by a small group of San Franciscans. The town is sorely in need of a suitable municipal audi-

torium and the "Fox savers" did their best to sell the city on the huge Fox. But to no avail. While most countries have commissions whose job is the preservation of historic buildings, apparently here only money talks. The Fox group could neither raise money or enough public protest, nor could they get the mayor interested. In fact, the mayor was quite opposed to any such plan. We can't even recall his name and it is possible that the Fox incident and related publicity helped speed him on to political oblivion.

One final comment on the Roxy 5/34 Kimball; the 5-manual console still exists, and in a fully sympathetic atmosphere. Dick Loderhose has enshrined it in his music room at Jamaica, N. Y. There it has the company of Jesse Crawford's New York Paramount studio 4/21 Wurlitzer (which Dick has now pumped up to 44 ranks). At various times the venerable console has been wired into the Wurlitzer pipework to provide 9-manual, 64-pedal control. This gave the old 5-decker the "feel" once again of controlling sounds and, in the process, it received maintenance which has kept it "in the pink." In fact, it's ready to go back to work whenever Dick Loderhose can find an application — such as, perhaps, 34 ranks of pipes in need of a control center. □

# The End of a Dream

## Exclusive Photo Coverage of the Fire Destruction of George Wright's Studio Organ

by Stu Green

The first George knew about it was when a policeman he had known for many years knocked on his door late on a Sunday afternoon in August.

"George — your studio is on fire!"

George hurried to the arch-roofed supermarket-type structure on Fair Oaks Avenue in Pasadena in time to see firemen chopping through the roof — directly over the chambers — then pour chemicals through the hole down into the funnels provided by reed pipe bells. Huge billows of smoke poured from the hole. There was nothing George could do until the firemen had extinguished the blaze. Then he took stock. The contents of the chambers — all pipes, relays, switches, wiring and chests — all totally destroyed.

To state that it was a heartbreaker puts it much too mildly. True, George was in the process of selling the instrument—as his message in the LETTERS column of the August issue indicated. But that doesn't mean he had lost any of his affection for the instrument he had so painstakingly constructed from the best parts of a dozen organs, especially the pipework. A number of the ranks consisted of pipes from several sets, the pipes which produced just the right sounds for the registers they represented. But no matter; it was all gone.

The only thing left was to shovel the charred contents of the chambers into vehicles bound for the Pasadena city dump.

Next day the studio was alive with insurance investigators and hobbyists who had come to volunteer help in cleaning up the mess. What had caused the blaze? No one really knew. The fire was of a type which had apparently smoldered for as long as two days before bursting into flame.

The electrical power had been shut off at the main switch when the studio was closed several days before the fire. One theory advanced concerned the possibility that the charged starting capacitors which are used to get the three-phase motor up to speed on one-phase 220 vac, had somehow discharged and caused a spark that ignited cotton cable insulation. But that's only a theory and is mentioned here only to warn those who use starting and running capacitors to discharge them when the power is turned off — just to be sure.

On the day after the fire it was decided to clear the building immediately so it could be repaired and Don Leslie could move some of his research projects in. (Don, inventor of the famous Leslie Speaker, owns the building which

housed the organ. He and George are longtime friends.) The next day (Tuesday) the charred studio was a beehive of activity. Movers were loading anything salvagable to storage — the console, some percussions and traps, a rank of pedal strings — all items which had been installed unenclosed in the spacious area before the console. These items suffered absolutely no smoke and water damage and were worth salvage.

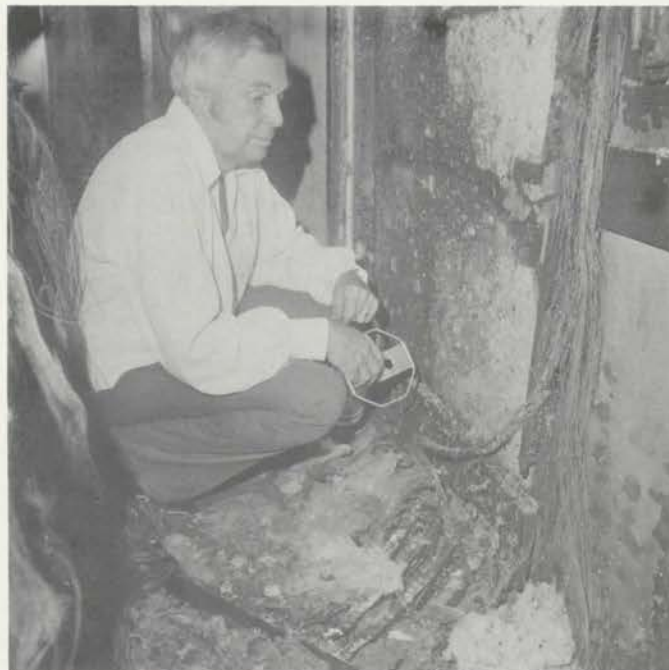
George was everywhere, directing the removal operation. He looked at the severed console cable and mused, "It took me a long time to solder all those wires." One of the workmen moving the smoke-mottled ebony console toward the fork lift to the truck complained to George that the pedals were dragging because of "this big fat wire."

It was the pedalboard cable which terminated in the console. George handed the man an enormous pair of pliers and said "cut it." We noted that George turned away when the man tackled the cable with little delicacy. He couldn't look. Just the same he yelled "ouch!" at the precise moment the plier's blades sunk into the cable. That "ouch!" said a lot.

Throughout the day George was besieged by volunteers who wanted to help in any way possible. One was a young man named Ray Thursby. Ray is articulate and writes well: I asked him to write down his impressions after George gave him the "guided tour" through the ruined chambers (a task George performed many times that day):



Otis Rashe solders final connections on junction board in relay room near end of 18 month installation period (1958-1960).



George examines remains of junction board.



*BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST.* George surveys the solo reeds in his Solo Chamber in this exclusive BOMBARDE photo made in 1964 shortly after the release of his initial album played on the then 28-ranker, "Let George Do It".



*MAIN CHAMBER AS IT WAS.* Firemen chopped a hole in the roof and poured water and chemicals into the chamber. What the fire started, liquids finished. No useful pipe or chests remained. (1964 photo by John Craig)

"Entering George Wright's studio on August 18th was like entering an organist's vision of Hell. The unmistakable signs of a recent fire were everywhere: water stains, charred wood, the all-pervading aroma of smoke. The real extent of the damage did not become apparent, however, until the organist took me into the chambers.

"There are no words to express the emotion I felt seeing the ruins of a once-magnificent Wurlitzer. A few pipes remained upright in their chests here and there but most had vanished into the ashes. Mitered offset ranks had collapsed from the fire's heat. No complete ranks remained. Most metal pipes

had melted and the wooden pipes were either gone or badly charred. Relays and chests were burned beyond use.

"According to George, nothing from the chambers can be salvaged. The only usable components are the piano, the unenclosed percussions and traps, a few ranks stored outside the chamber and the three-manual console. According to a newspaper account, the loss was set at \$70,000. Also lost was twelve years of hard work by the organist, work which resulted in several fine Dot LP's, and a record released on George's own "Solo" label. To keep this desolate scene in perspective, however, one must remember that the

beauty of these records was due to George Wright himself.

"I feel that George will not be long deterred by this loss. As I prepared to leave the studio, George began telling me about a forthcoming concert series to be held at the (South Pasadena) Rialto Theatre, for which the 2/10 Wurlitzer will be augmented with several additional ranks. His enthusiasm for the series was an encouraging sign that the most important component of the 'George Wright Sound' is on the way to many future triumphs."

As the day wore on, George realized that he had too much for the storage space he had rented. He looked at the



*George in the ruined main chamber. Not one rank intact.*



*The Solo Chamber. Remains of French Horn and Horn Diapason.*



(Left) Solo Chamber. George among the remains of the 16' Tuba offset chest and melted Orchestral Oboe pipes.



(Right) The charred relay room. George holds flashlight for photographer to focus.

huge metal harp and said, "Stu, can you use that harp?"

The writer was sorely tempted. To own a part of that glorious instrument which had brought pleasure to so many pipe enthusiasts through recordings would really be something. But that monster in the pad would leave little room for bowling, so the offer was reluctantly refused. "Perhaps Les and Olive Pepiot can use it," added George. "I'll phone Olive."

Olive, one member of a husband and wife team of organ maintainers, was quite willing. Another problem solved.

But the writer didn't come away empty-handed. When George took me on the now familiar guided tour among the askew, melted and charred pipes he said, "Take a few souvenirs."

He plucked a fat Tuba pipe from a fire-ravaged rack. It looked like the only damage was to the melted bell end, but the pipe produced no sound when blown. In fact the shallot was wet with a corrosive chemical when opened for examination.

"Here — have a Posthorn," said George, plucking a long slim pipe from his garden of ashes. Only the tuning roll area was burned, but it too was silent.

Next, a Vox pipe, with its resonator bent to nearly right angles with the boot. I gave it a blast of breath, something no one in his right mind would think of doing to a sound reed pipe. The Vox sounded a note. "That's 'A,'" said George, calling on his built-in tuning circuitry. I looked at the marking on the pipe. It also said "A". The capped pipe had escaped the fate of funnel-shaped reeds which collected the fire-killing streams of water. But when I again picked it up the resonator broke away from the block.

Last was a Tibia pipe, a treble G-sharp. It was only a little charred although the lip leather was burned black. These are my souvenirs of a once beautiful instrument.

The studio had been emptied of all salvagable items by mid-afternoon. The movers had left with their last load

and there were only Don Leslie, who was sweeping the concrete floor with a huge broom, and George.

During the time I had been there, George had been so occupied by the details of moving and loading that he had had no time for sentiment. As things quieted down, he admitted that the full force of his loss still hadn't hit him squarely.

Work finished, he locked the door to the studio building and started to walk away. After a few steps he turned and looked back at the building. His eyes wandered up to the corner which fire had eaten away. He stood there for a moment, then took a deep breath, shrugged his shoulders and walked to his car. He probably wouldn't show up when the trucks bound for the dump were being loaded.

An exclusive story about George Wright's studio organ (including the original stoplist) appeared in the first issue of ATOE's BOMBARDE, dated February 1964.



A wistful George before what's left of the Tuba Mirabilis basses. The Tibia basses behind them are fire-blackened.



The console ready to move. The author placed the ruined pipes mentioned in the text on the bench.



Console loaded and ready to go to storage. George signs the paperwork.

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**Pedal**  
Tuba 16'  
Diaphone 16'  
Bourdon 16'  
String Bass  
Sustain Pedal  
Tibia 8'  
Accomp.  
to Pedal 8'

**Accompaniment**  
Tuba 8'  
Diapason 8'  
Tibia 8'  
Cello 8'  
Echo Horn 8'  
Octave 4'  
Tibia 4'  
Violina 4'  
Horn 4'  
Piccolo 2'

**Great**  
Tuba 16'  
Diapason 16'  
Tibia 16'  
Soft String 16'  
Vox Humana 16'  
Brass Trumpet 8'  
Oboe Horn 8'  
Diapason 8'  
Tibia 8'  
Viole De Orch 8'  
Soft String 8'  
Vox Humana 8'

Clarion 4'  
Octave 4'  
Tibia 4'  
Soft String 4'  
Nazard 2 2/3'  
Tibia 2'  
Fife 1'

**Tremolo**  
General Trem. L  
General Trem. F  
Tibia Leslie Trem.  
Tibia Leslie Celeste

**Solo**  
Bombarde 16'  
Tuba 16'  
Kinura 16'  
Tibia 16'  
Eng. Post Horn 8'  
Clarinet 8'  
Orch. Oboe 8'  
Sax 8'  
Tibia 8'  
Quint 5 1/3'  
Tibia 4'  
Chime Harmonic

**General**  
Master Express Pedal  
External Speakers Off/On  
Console Speakers On/Off  
Phantom Bass (Off/On) & Lgt.

**Fun-Master**  
Solo Percuss. Off/On  
Solo Percuss. Short/Long  
Solo Percuss. Pizz/Repeat  
Solo Tibia Repeat Off/On  
0-8 (Rpt. Speed T. Whl.)

**Chiff**  
Chiff I  
Chiff II  
Tibia Harmonic I  
Tibia Harmonic II

**Rhythm Section**  
Bass Drum  
Crash Cymbal  
Conga Drum  
Tick-Tock  
Claves  
Tambourine  
Castanet

Snare Roll  
Snare Drum  
Brush Cymbal  
Short Brush  
Bongo Drum  
Manual Divide  
Rhythm F

## Conn Organ

616 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook, Illinois 60521

# The Del Castillo Story

by Lloyd E. Klos

**T**HE MOST FAMOUS of the New England theatre organists in the Golden Days, Lloyd Gould Del Castillo, was born in Boston on April 2, 1893. His paternal grandfather was descended from a long line of Spanish ancestors, but his parents were both New Englanders.

His early interest in music is credited to his mother, a pianist and organist, who was on the faculty of the Faelten Pianoforte School in Boston, and was music chairman of the National Association of Women's Clubs.

At the age of seven, under her tutelage, he made his first public appearance, playing a Haydn sonata in a student recital. Lloyd got his first newspaper publicity at age 13, when he accompanied a Russian violinist. It read: "After Mr. Cowlshaw passed out the Christmas presents, which ranged from toy instruments to rattles, he prefaced Radion Mendelewitch's appearance with a short description of his adventures in coming to Boston. His accompanist, an accomplished pianist, though young, was L. G. Castillo. A pie-eating contest was next on the program."

In high school, Del was conductor of the Glee Club. He also composed and arranged a school march for the orchestra, he serving not as pianist, but as a trap drummer.

A news item from Del's scrapbook, dated May 4, 1910, reads: "The program of the Rindge Manual Training School vaudeville benefit includes R.M.T.S. March by L. G. Castillo, played by the Rindge Orchestra; R.M. T.S. Glee Club, conducted by Lloyd Castillo; Gallup and Castillo in that pathetic little sketch 'Waiting for the Hook' etc."

His percussion experience in high school served him in good stead at Harvard University, which he entered in 1910, where he began his musical endeavors as tympanist with the university orchestra, known then as the Pierian Sodality. Eventually, he became its director. He also composed and conducted music for the Pi Eta Club musical shows, and co-founded the Harvard Musical Revue.

Photos from Del Castillo Collection

Not a fellow to remain idle during the summer vacation, Del Castillo attended summer camp, and, you guessed it, became thoroughly immersed in the musical affairs of the place. The Kennebec Journal of August 26, 1911, says this of the summer camp at Augusta, Maine: "Mr. Castillo, Harvard '14, is a wonder. Blindfolded and with the keys of the piano covered with a towel, he plays a sonata, as well as the latest popular airs."



Lloyd G. Del Castillo

On May 20, 1913, he conducted his "Fantasia on Harvard Airs" with the Boston "Pops" Orchestra. Del fondly remembers that the then German conductor of the "Pops," seated near the podium, was so displeased by Del's repeated bows to enthusiastic applause, that he sat with hands over his ears, nursing a sour countenance. The Boston Globe went overboard with praise of the event.

Incidentally, his "Fantasia on Harvard Airs," "Crucible Overture" and "Cuckoo Clock" were later recorded by Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra. While at Harvard, he first studied organ on an old tracker instrument at Harvard Divinity School, and then under Raymond Robinson in King's Chapel, Boston.

Del Castillo was graduated from Harvard with a cum laude in music. Some very distinguished classmates included James B. Conant, later a Harvard president; Leverett Saltonstall, later a Massachusetts Governor and U. S. Senator; and Tudor Gardiner, later a Maine Governor.

Del's first professional job after college was writing and conducting the music for a Masonic Biblical play, "The Chosen King," which was on the road for a year throughout New England, concluding at the Boston Opera House.

Then, he became Music Director for the Bijou Theatre in Springfield, Mass. for nine months. When he dropped into the Western Union office to wire his mother that he had signed a contract for \$75 a week, the friendly clerk exclaimed, "My! You're young to be making all that money!"

Next came his first theatre organ job at Boston's Fenway Theatre. He was engaged to replace *both* organists there, and this double duty necessitated nearly a twelve-hour shift, interrupted only to answer the phone or something else. "At the Fenway," he says, "I was apt to arrive late during winter blizzards, and once played the overture in the pit (no console elevator) in overcoat and overshoes." When the United States entered World War I, Del's organ-playing was interrupted by 13 months in the Army.

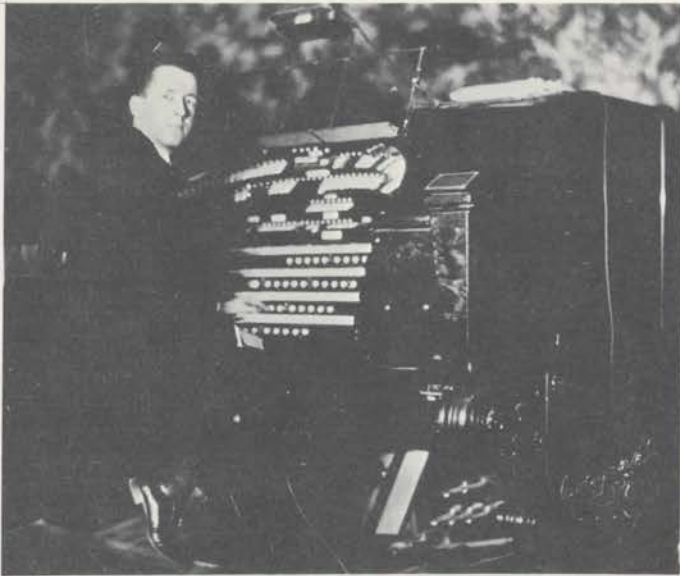
"I began service at Camp Devans, Mass. as sergeant-bandmaster, but got a commission one week before going overseas. So, I went over in a state-room instead of steerage. I was a lousy officer, scarcely knew the manual of arms. The captain threatened to confine me to barracks until I learned to salute properly.

"In France, I had to line up headquarters company for inspection by the colonel, in absence of other officers. I gave them 'Dress Right!', and left them that way as the colonel came down the line, hissing at me, 'Give 'em Front!'

"After the Armistice, I led the brigade band at the General Pershing review, the other bandleaders having gone home. An aide galloped up to shout 'Sound Officers' Call.' I didn't know how it went, so had to confer with a bugler before I could start it. As I said, I was a lousy officer.

"After my army discharge, I went back to the Fenway Theatre as organist. By 1923, I got sick of working every night, even though after Paramount-Publix took over the theatre, the work was easier, since I alternated with the orchestra. I found time in





*Del at the console of the 4/28 Wurlitzer in Shea's Buffalo in 1926. He opened the organ and later was locked in a chamber after stopping a cipher.*

1924 to compose a concert overture 'Don Gonzalo De Cordoba' for which I conducted the Boston Symphony Pops and the Boston Civic Symphony. I also had a midnight once-a-week show on the Fenway Wurlitzer, and wrote a regular column for theatre organists in *Melody Magazine*."

In November, 1924, Del switched from the organists' column to a humorous one, and in the process, invented an illiterate, but lovable character, Dinny Timmins. This operator of a non-existent elevator in the Jacobs Building, thrived in the column "The Elevator Shaft" until July, 1927, when Del's work in his new theatre organ school dictated a reduction in his writing proclivities. "So," says Del, "Dinny went into a prolonged Rip Van Winkle sleep until December, 1967, when, to my amazement, Lloyd Klos dug him out of the old files and revived him in 'Theatre Organ Magazine.' He is now a monthly feature in the West Coast newsletter, 'Off the Keyboards'."

The Fenway management was unwilling to release Del from playing solos every evening, so he quit there, and contracted with Loew's State Theatre to play alternate days with another organist, John O'Hara. Then, Paramount-Publix made him an offer to go to London. When he objected to leaving the country, they sent him to Buffalo, where he opened the 4/28 Wurlitzer in Shea's Buffalo Theatre in January, 1926.

"The house was so new that nothing was dried out. The organ keys stuck. Wurlitzer supplied me with a forked tool to straighten the oval pins under the keys, and I got so I could play with one hand during a solo, and straighten keys with the other. On one occasion, the organ died after the first few chords. I had to turn around, apologize to the audience, and lower the console in silence.

"Another time, I got a cipher shortly before the orchestra came in to finish the picture and then go to

a stage presentation, which started with the church scene from 'Cavalleria.' I figured I had just time to climb to the chamber, stop the cipher, and return for the opening bars on the organ. After taking care of the offending pipe, I was ready to leave the chamber, when a draft blew the door shut, breaking the latch. I was trapped!

"Helpless, I heard the church scene start with the thin notes of the piano. I was up there for over a half hour. I tried signaling through the grille with my flashlight, but couldn't even get an usher's attention. Finally, I wrote a note, dropped it through the grille where a patron retrieved it and gave it to an usher. Mike Shea's classic comment was: 'If he'd a been like some organists I know, he'd a flown down.'"

Del moved from Buffalo to the New York Rialto Theatre in April, 1926. During his first week there, he breezed in one day with less than five minutes before showtime. The stage manager grabbed him by the lapels and growled, "Listen, buddy, we don't go for that up-beat stuff here!"

Then to the Boston Metropolitan Theatre in July, where he opened with a slide solo entitled, "There's No Place Like Home." He was described by one magazine reviewer as "playing in a spotlight of ghastly and unbecoming hue." He says, "At the Met, I was criticized by the radio columnists for talking too much on my midnight broadcasts. I still talk too much!"

In April, 1927, he featured another slide show entitled "Goodbye," and left the Metropolitan to open the Del Castillo Theatre Organ School which featured three Estey organs, in the Loew's State Building in Boston. Enrollments built up rapidly to 115 students. He played three radio shows a week, did guest spots in theatres, and had church recitals throughout New England. He did a trick organ duet



*Lloyd demonstrates the art of accompanying song slides before a class at his organ school in Boston. Pictures of the east front of the U. S. Capitol, Old Ironsides and Del himself, adorn the walls.*



*Lloyd shows how motion picture accompaniment is done, using one of the Esteys in his organ school.*

radio show—he on a 3-manual Estey in his school, and Eddie Dunham on the Elks Hotel Wurlitzer downtown.

He did a wedding, piped into a living room in Brookline, Mass., where the ceremonies were timed to synchronize with his afternoon program. He also did an ensemble program with the two organs mentioned above, plus the orchestra from the WNAC studio.

Concerning some of his fellow organists, Del says, "I remember Arthur Martel's bouncing up and down on the seat, grandstanding overture finales." He also remembers Edith Lang, who whacked a bass drum she kept at the side of the console for sound effects.

By 1929, sound pictures had come into their own, negating the original purpose of the theatre organ. Enrollment at his school dropped from 115 to 15. He had to close the school. He was left with three pipe organs, movie and slide projectors, stereopticon machines, and a studio lease. To demonstrate his business acumen, he turned back two organs to the factory for the unpaid notes, and sold the third to WEEI, with himself installed as staff organist. He says that he graduated no well-known organists from his school, but there were 35 working in theatres before the school closed.

He had, in the meantime, founded the Boston Theatre Organists Club, serving as first president. But, that also dwindled from a top membership of 75 to a corporal's guard.

Radio became Del Castillo's field, and he used the situation to advance his moonlighting activity as a concert artist. He created several organ series, including "The Album of American Composers" and "The Tabloid Operas," sometimes with guest singers and sometimes with solo organ and an announcer-narrator, using copy he wrote.

"Probably the most horrendous contribution to WEEI radio was a program called 'The Goofs', in which I was one of the four zanies who held forth on a Saturday morning series with a studio audience. This became so popular that we started going out on evening dates. The series ended after five years of miscellaneous foolishness.

"In 1935, CBS took over the station, and I became respectable again as production manager, moving up to program director a year later. In 1938, serving as education director of the CBS New England network, I had a show in which I interviewed people from all walks of life—from Governor Saltonstall of Massachusetts to ecdysiast Ann Corio. I remained at WEEI until 1943, when I resigned to move to Los Angeles."

Upon arriving there, the only job open to him, staff director for CBS, paid too meagre a wage to support him and his family. Prevented by musicians' union rules from playing for six months, he went to RKO with a letter of introduction. Received pleasantly, he was asked as to what he could contribute to the picture business. He replied that he could write. Not knowing beans about screen scenarios, he borrowed one, used it as a model for a sequence which was accepted. For six months, he wrote and saw his efforts disappear, never to be seen again.

He then got a call from CBS to direct a network war-slanted show "We



Del Castillo, ready to go on the air over the CBS affiliate in Boston, WEEI.

Deliver the Goods," which originated from the Maritime Service Base at Catalina. Every Sunday for a year, weather permitting, Del's crew was taken on an antiquated tugboat to Catalina, all hoping the seasickness would vanish by showtime.

After this stint, Del worked with CBS as staff director (at a better salary than was originally offered when he arrived in Los Angeles). One of his first assignments was an audience participation show, working with MC Jack Bailey. His energetic attitude manifested itself on the first program. With a gigantic sweep of his arm, he knocked 20 pages of scripts out of Bailey's hand onto the floor!

Shortly afterward, he was transferred to KNX, joining the organists' pool there. Eventually, he left to freelance as organist and musical director for the four major networks.

When television entered the scene, he moved from the Skippy Peanut Butter "Hollywood Theatre" radio show to the Skippy Peanut Butter TV show "You Asked For It," working with the late Art Baker. Other shows on which he worked in this era were "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" with Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce; "Rogue's Gallery" with Dick Powell; "Escape"; "Stars Over Hollywood"; "Mr. and Mrs. North" with Barbara Britton and Richard Denning; and "Don't You Believe It." His name also appeared on the screen as composer-conductor for UPA cartoons.

When the "You Asked for It" show left the air, Del took a one-year sabbatical in Europe.

Since then, he has been, for more than 12 years, head of the organ department of the Sherman School of Music in Hollywood. He concertizes and teaches. The Del Castillo humor, which gave birth to Dinny Timmins in the Twenties, and which revived him in the late sixties, is much in evidence in his "Alphabetical Primer of Organ Stops," dedicated to the ATOS, and a must for every theatre organ enthusiast's library. He has also recorded the Los Angeles Wiltern Theatre Kimball, and the Elks Building Robert Morton on the Concert Recording label.

For two summers, he was musical director of the famed Laguna Pageant of the Masters for which he wrote a "Festival Overture," performed later by the Brentwood Symphony Orchestra. He has concertized for various organ clubs on the coast, using the Wiltern and Elks instruments frequently.

As one can surmise by the foregoing, the life of organist Lloyd G. Del Castillo can be summed up by the phrase "Extreme Activity." He has always been busy with several enterprises at once. Perhaps that is what keeps him young, full of that famous humor, and able to present concerts for west coast theatre organ enthusiasts which are the envy of performers many years his junior. He refers to himself as "The World's Oldest Living Theatre Organist." But his sprightly playing will certainly dispute this modest claim. □

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# Off the Record

by Ray Brubacher

In the Spring 1962 issue of THEATRE ORGAN there appeared an article by this author entitled REMEMBER THIS DISC. This compilation of theatre organ long play records was written to trace the resurgence of interest by commercial recording companies in the theatre pipe organ. Since that time, ATOS has grown by leaps and bounds the last five years, witnessing the greatest increase in membership so eight years later the thought occurred to me that many of the readers who have become members of the organization within the last few years would enjoy being brought up to date on this subject beginning with a review of the first article and progressing to the latest in what is taking place in this department.

Most of us are familiar with the early growth of theatre organ recordings in the 1920's the first being produced by acoustical means, the microphone not having been perfected. Advances were made both here and in Europe with such greats as Jesse Crawford, Sidney Torch, Quentin MacClean, Lew White, and others taking the lead. Those of us fortunate to have Dr. Mel Doner's monumental discography of theatre organ recordings issued many years ago can avail themselves of a real treasury of recordings made when the theatre pipe organ was in its first golden age.

The first company to become involved in the rebirth of theatre organ recordings to any grand scale was Replica Records of Des Plaines, Illinois. Their first set of l.p. discs called GLOCKENSPIELS, TRAPS AND PLENTY OF PIPES featured Leon Berry playing his Wurlitzer in the Hub Skating Rink in Chicago. This venture instituted in the early fifties proved immediately successful for two reasons.

First, here was a recording of a recent vintage and perhaps most important these records were the hottest thing in high fidelity and every major hi fi show in the country was capitalizing on them to show off the latest in equipment. Replica also released recordings of the Wurlitzer in the Paramount in Aurora, Illinois, the Oriental in Chicago, the Aragon and Trianon Ballrooms also in the windy city. Leon Berry scored big with his BEAST IN THE BASEMENT made on his home 2/6 Wurlitzer. After the "beast" came, believe it or not, GORILLA IN THE GARDEN with Byron Melcher playing a 4/24 Wurlitzer custom installed in the Replica studios. Arsene Siegel and Eddie Osborne also recorded on this organ.

Up in Stamford, Connecticut, Emory Cook was sharpening his recording style getting ready to cut into vinyl recent tapes of an unknown Michael Cheshire who in reality was Reginald Foort as later recordings were to prove. Foort made a series of Cook ten inchers on the Mosque in Richmond, Virginia and later did twelve inch pressings of INTERMISSION IN THE MOSQUE and WALTZ AND BALLET. Foort also did one at the Detroit Fox called FOORT POPS. Another small company, Prescott Records, engaged Ed Gress, now president of GRESS-MILES pipe organs to make a recording at the Detroit Fox. However, the south was rising again at the Byrd Theatre in Richmond where Westminster Records did many recordings with Dick Leibert, Ann Leaf and Graham Jackson at the console of the 4/17 Wurlitzer. Up north RCA Victor engaged Billy Nalle and Ray Bohr to record at the N. Y. Paramount and Columbia released albums of Ashley Miller at the Radio City Music Hall Wurlitzer.

Out in Hollywood, Rich Vaughn had recently purchased the five-manual from Loew's Paradise in Chicago and installed it in a special studio and engaged George Wright to do a series of records for the HiFi label. Columbia again entered the scene and recorded Burt Burman at the Mosque in Richmond and Raymond Shelley at the Fox in Detroit. A small company, Cabot Records, came up with a real sleeper in the form of the best recording soundwise ever released of the Music Hall again with Ashley Miller at the console. Victor made Christmas recordings of Music Hall chief organist Dick Leibert. Leonard MacClain did a number of recordings on the Tower Theatre in Philadelphia for Columbia's EPIC label.

However, by 1964 the big record producers started to lose interest in theatre organ recording. It would be difficult to render an analysis of why interest waned. Only two companies of major scale continued to produce theatre pipe organ discs, those being Warner Brothers with their recordings of Gus Farney at the Bray five-manual Wurlitzer and Buddy Cole and Ann Leaf at the Cole residence Wurlitzer and Dot Records who have continued to produce discs by George Wright at his own studio Wurlitzer.

Theatre organ enthusiasts owe a great deal to the smaller firms that have continued to specialize in theatre organ recordings. The sounds of the Wurlitzer in the now demolished San Francisco Fox with Everett Nourse and Tiny James can still be heard on the Fantasy label and Command Records still has a disc of Ashley Miller playing the dowager empress Wurlitzer that was in the now gone New York Paramount. Location Recordings has produced discs of Ann Leaf at the Los Angeles Paramount.

Perhaps the greatest venture into the revival of theatre organ recording has been with Concert Records located at Lynwood, California. This company,

*(Continued on page 26)*

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# Adding a Celeste to The Small Wurlitzer

by Al Miller

If you own a four or five rank Wurlitzer having a Salicional as the only string rank, you may have wondered if there was some easy way to add a Celeste rank. Well, there is.

A Celeste can be added to a Wurlitzer Salicional chest without any real difficulty due to the special construction of the Wurlitzer chest. The Celeste will always play with the Salicional, at whatever pitch the Salicional is played at, but this is no problem at all, and saves stop tabs, switching and many magnets.

First you will have to obtain a set of pipes of the same scale (diameter) voiced on the same pressure as your Salicional. While a second Salicional is preferred, a smaller Viole will usually work as a Celeste.

The Wurlitzer chest is unique in its construction in that each pipe hole is fed from a channel which is about half the width of the top board of the chest. This channel is a slot on the underside, and is covered by the long pallet valve. When the pallet valve is opened, the rush of air from the large valve immediately fills the channel, which acts as a concussion chamber and cushions the initial rush of air before it is fed into the toe of the pipe. You might think that this chamber would slow the speech of the pipe, because the chamber has to fill up before air goes into the pipe, but this is not the case. In actuality, a pipe will speak faster when on a channel because the initial turbulence from the air flowing past the valve is lost in the channel, and does not set up initial turbulence in the pipe, which would slow its attack.

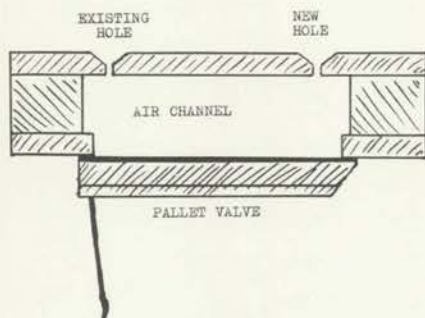


Figure 1. Cross section of Wurlitzer top board showing addition of new pipe hole.

In actual practice, this type of construction is more valid on large bass pipes voiced on low pressure with open toe holes, but Wurlitzer felt that the idea was valid enough to use, and incorporated it into all their chests. For one thing, the long channels allowed for the staggering of pipes on the chest without staggering the action or the valves.

The Salicional chest starts with Tenor C, which is the first pipe you want as a Celeste. Unfortunately, the first octave of pipes is placed centrally on the top board so that the pipe holes are bored into the center of the channel. This was done to allow the larger pipes on adjacent top boards to overlap the Salicional chest, thus saving room. It will be necessary to find or build a chest of twelve notes for this bottom octave of Celeste pipes.

You will note that the middle C octave of the Salicional on up is staggered, every other hole being at the opposite end of a channel. To accommodate the Celeste pipes, you need only to bore a second set of holes at the other end of the channels, so that you wind up with two parallel rows of holes fed from the same pallet valve.

To do this, you will have to remove the rackboard and top board from the chest. Number each pallet valve and remove the valves and springs. Support the top board for working by screwing it to two wood rails, such as 2x4s.

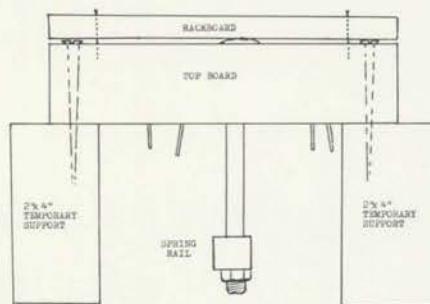


Figure 2. Top board and rackboard set up for boring "spot" holes.

Using finishing nails or brads, fasten the rackboard in place over and directly on the top board, carefully centering the holes in both boards so that they are concentric. When this is done,

lightly draw a straight line through the centers of each set of staggered holes, and using a square, draw a line across the rackboard from the center of each pipehole. This will give you an intersection between each hole for the pipehole you are going to add. It is suggested that you add only 25 holes from middle C up, for a total of 37 celeste pipes.

Using a drill smaller than the smallest hole you will need, drill through both boards to "spot" the position of each new pipehole.

Remove the rackboard and set it aside. Picking a drill the same diameter as the hole already bored into the channel, bore the new hole out to the same size. Although the countersink in the top board is a special angle, a regular countersink will give a sufficient seat for the size of pipes involved. For best results countersinking, the slowest possible speed should be used. A countersink in a bit-brace is probably the safest bet. If you have access to a lathe, you can make a tool with the same angle as the countersink, and using a high speed electric drill, burn the toe holes to match the original Wurlitzer toe holes. In any case, a smooth countersink is required for the pipes to seat properly.

The holes in the rackboard can now be reamed out to the proper size for racking the pipes. If the Celeste is the same scale or smaller than the Salicional, both holes can be made the same size on each channel.

Blow any sawdust out of the channels, and give the top board and rackboard a thin coat of shellac. Remove the temporary supports from the top board, replace the valves and valve springs, and reinstall the top board and rackboard.

For best results, install the Salicional in one row, and the Celeste in the other, and place a piece of 1/8" masonite between the two sets of pipes. The masonite should extend up about half the height of the pipes, and will eliminate any tendency for the pipes to "pull" into tune rather than beat as a celeste.

If you decide to make a small chest for the Tenor octave, do not try to use direct electric actions as they may not open a large enough hole on the higher pressures. Reisner pouch action units should make a reasonably inexpensive and simple chest. This chest is wired in parallel with the Tenor octave Salicional magnets.

Adding a Celeste is a project which is not very difficult or time-consuming, and will be more than worth the trouble in terms of the tonal difference the extra rank will make in your little Wurlitzer. □

## The 'World' Premier

# Howard Burton and Cedar Rapids New Theatre Organ

by Charles G. Albrecht

On June 13 a blessing was received by Cedar Rapids and its ATOS Chapter. On this day another theatre organ, in a theatre, made its debut. The story of the organ, and Howard Burton, the person responsible, should be an inspiration to members of other chapters.

Howard started his career as theatre organist in 1923. He worked hard, saved his money, and in 1929 took off nine months to attend the Vernon Knauss School of Theatre Organ Playing. He graduated only to find that theatre organs were rapidly phasing out and that playing jobs were just not available. Like many others, he changed his occupation several times, but never his first love.

Subsequently, he installed in his home a lovely 2/9 Geneva, and a 1/4 hybrid, one of only a few residences where pipe organ duets can be played.

From 1929 on he played intermittently in various theatres and studios. He was the last feature organist at the Cedar Rapids Paramount where he played from 1961 to 1963. Howard also played occasionally for radio station KMA in Shenandoah, Iowa, covering a very wide area. At that time there was a large auditorium called Mayfair, with radio studios at one end. A large 7x22 foot movable plate glass separated the auditorium from the studio. The auditorium was of atmospheric design with twinkling stars and moving clouds.

The station and auditorium belonged to the May family, now owners of the famous May Seed and Nursery Company and other enterprises in the mid-west. The organ in the studio was a 2/9 Reuter and was a present of the elder May to his wife, Gertrude. In fact, the programs that were produced were announced as played on the Gertrude May organ. In 1958 Howard learned that the auditorium was coming down and asked Gertrude's son, Edward, if he could have it. Luckily for us the answer was yes. Three years ago Howard found a home for the organ;

*Howard Burton performed at the 2/9 Reuter during the premier of the organ in its new home, the 1,000 seat World Theatre.*

— John Dyson photo



he removed it from storage and has rebuilt the entire organ with little help besides his wife, Dorothy. Around Christmas the console was moved into the World Theatre and then the countless tedious little tasks began. In between, Howard even found time to help at the Paramount where we were readying the Wurlitzer there for two silent movie nights.

Finally on the morning of June 13, the organ was premiered in the one thousand seat World Theatre. This was the tenth monthly meeting of the Cedar Rapids Chapter, but besides the members there were members of the AGO, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Metcalf, owner of the theatre, without whose cooperation this wonderful thing could never have happened, and Mr. Edward May, his family, and quite a few entertainers from KMA.

For this special event there were pro-

grams printed and congratulatory flowers. Edward May in his speech reminisced about the many fine shows that featured the organ. He produced the original bill for \$7,728.

Following a few old time opening numbers played by Howard, the dedicatory concert was played by Harry Christensen, an organ instructor in Cedar Rapids, and his protege (and one of our favorite member organists) Dick Neighbor. The whole event was very wonderful.

Howard Burton is seventy this year. In his lifetime he was a theatre organist, projectionist, radio serviceman, a government inspector, an organ restorer and serviceman, and he still produces and markets solid state pipe organ switching systems which he invented. That's quite a bit for our 130-pound member of whom we are all proud. □



*(Left to right) Harry Christensen and Dick Neighbor, featured organists at the premier; Edward May, son of the organ's original owners, and Howard Burton who fought to preserve the instrument for the enjoyment of all.*

— John Dyson photo

# THE LARKIN BUILDING AND ITS ORGAN

by Lloyd E. Klos

When columnist Anne M. Matthews of the Buffalo Courier-Express reminisced about caroling during the 1965 Christmas season, she recalled a place in Buffalo where this practice was an annual tradition for years, and utilized some of the finest organists and voices in the area.

This was in the Larkin Company's administration building on Seneca Street which was the first instance in the area of music being "piped" to all parts of the building, using an organ complete with chimes, marimba and grand piano.

The Larkin Company was founded in 1875 by John Larkin, Sr. who began the business by selling soap to grocery stores, using a horse and wagon. The company became famous throughout the United States. Its products for home and family had a very wide range — soap, dinnerware, furniture, athletic goods, games and bicycles. Tennis equipment was a great boon to sales, and many of the tennis stars of the Twenties got their start using Larkin racquets.

The business was conducted in two buildings — a 10-story factory and a 5-story administration building. The latter, opened in 1904, was a landmark in Buffalo. Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, it was revolutionary in style.



Exterior of Larkin Administration Building which housed the Moller organ. Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and built in 1904, it was razed in 1961.

Photos courtesy of Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society

*Interior of Larkin Administration Building. Grand piano could be played manually or from organ console which was situated between columns in right center. Notice similarity to Wanamaker store in Philadelphia.*



It was surrounded by a combination brick and wrought iron fence, with a beautiful wrought iron entry gate. Every floor was of marble; the main floor was graced with oriental rugs. Distances were enormous, and the office girls made their rounds on roller skates.

Incidentally, outside the office building was where the first traffic policeman in Buffalo was stationed. When the workers left for home at 5 p.m., red-haired Harry Watson expedited them. He was a confirmed bachelor, but had a waving acquaintance with more girls in Buffalo than any other man.

In 1925, when the firm celebrated its 50th anniversary, an organ was purchased from the Moller Company. It was a 4-manual, 75-stop instrument, and cost \$60,000. The mahogany console, installed on the main floor, had a player attachment above the manuals. The grand piano, located in the center of the floor near the organ console, also had a roll player which could be operated with or without the organ. The blower was of 40 horsepower.

The building was arranged as an open court in the center, and with galleries on three sides. Therefore, the organ was installed in much the same fashion as the Wanamaker organ in Philadelphia. The pipework was placed on the fourth and fifth floors at the extreme end, so with the console's being on the first floor, there was a decided time lag between key action and sound.

Included in the instrument were chimes, harps, marimba and 32' open wood diaphones. There were no percussions.

According to Mr. Stuart B. Wilkes, who served as Chief Clerk, correspondent, instructor in correspondence, librarian, editor of the company's 4-page weekly paper, and assistant to the president from 1908 to 1937, there were three qualified men who served as organists. They were Harry Whitney, who was a church organist; W. M. Isham, assistant office manager, who played by ear; and the ladies' wearing apparel buyer, strictly an amateur but approved by those who knew organ music. All are deceased.

After the organ was installed, those who had supervisory jobs were told that if any guests in the building desired to hear the organ, they were to ask one of the organists to play, and regardless of what he was doing, his work would be second to playing the organ.

People used to make excuses at Christmas time to go to the building. Coming by trolley or auto, they would sit or stroll, completely enthralled by the frequent concerts and choraling offered throughout the day. The organ was fabulous in size and excellence, and many artists vied to play it, including visiting concert celebrities, so that often the crowds heard free music from organists whose "standing-room only" recitals brought top prices in Buffalo's Elmwood Music Hall.

Besides C. Sharpe Minor, long-time organist at Buffalo's Lafayette Theatre, who played for the Christmas programs, organists from throughout the country played the Larkin instrument. Pietro Yon did a recital on it in the Thirties. Some broadcasting was done with it, though memories are short as to when or over what station.

In 1937, the Larkin Company disintegrated, financially and management-wise. The country was in the throes of depression which hit the business very hard. The administration building was closed, and the organ removed. Portions of the instrument were discarded, others sold. According to one source, an organ man in Cleveland bought it, made several smaller organs out of it, and sold them.

With the Larkin Company out of business, the office building became the property of the city of Buffalo in the forties for back taxes. However, the organ was not forgotten. An item in the Buffalo Courier-Express, dated July 18, 1945 reads as follows:

"If the city doesn't own it, it can't sell it. So the financial committee of the Common Council yesterday decided in rejecting an offer from the Lloyd Memorial Congregational Church to buy a pipe organ located in the old administration building of the Larkin Company, Seneca Street, now owned by the city.

"When the offer came before the committee, Deputy Comptroller, George M. Nelson reported the organ had been removed by the former owners before the building was acquired through tax foreclosure."

It wasn't until July 1961, after much procrastination, that the building was razed. Several parties in the preceding years had advanced rumors as to their intentions to take over the building for various enterprises. However, the structure eventually deteriorated into such a sad state, that the city had no recourse but to demolish it.

What was once the Larkin factory, a block away, is still standing. It is known as the Larkin Warehouse, owned by the family, and managed by one of them. Their business is entirely storage and warehousing. A tall antenna for one of the radio stations is installed on the roof.

Thus is noted the end of a business which gained fame nationally through its line of products, and gained added fame locally through the use of a magnificent pipe organ.



While slogging through the Everglades during his rip-roaring arrangement of "Chloe", Eddie Dunstedter felt something grabbing at his left foot. He managed to escort the swamp gal to dry land and then turned to his audience and appealed for help; somehow, some bubble gum had come between his left shoe and the 3/14 Wurlitzer's pedals. A titter ran through the audience as volunteers rushed to his aid. Our photo (by Bob Churchill) shows a bemused Eddie watching his bride of 53 years, Vee, scraping his sole while an unidentified gum shoer works on the pedals. In 5 minutes it was all over and Eddie's full house concert (March 8th) at the San Francisco Avenue theatre continued.

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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.

Seattle's Granada Organ Loft Club must hold the record for raising money in a short time. The former owner of the 4/32 Wurlitzer wanted out, so the 112-member club raised \$10,000 in sixty days, and the organ is now club property. The Granada Organ Loft Theatre features the organ every Friday and Saturday evening as an accompaniment for silent films. The 7-year old club is now expanding its program to include more top-rank concert artists. Theatre organ enthusiasts in the Pacific Northwest are indeed dedicated people.

\* \* \*

One of the features of next year's convention should be the 3/8 Wurlitzer in Seattle's Food Circus building. Besides ATOS' Advertising Manager Dick Schrum, featured performers on the organ have included Earline Hunt and Winifred Rhoades Emmanuel, the latter a theatre organist of long standing.

\* \* \*

Early in August, Rochester Theatre Organ Society's program director, Don Hall, left the city for Omaha. His return was a bit spectacular, as he was in handcuffs. And, meeting him at the airport was Monroe County Sheriff Albert Skinner. Before this causes a scandal in the ATOS, it must be explained that Don, a director of the Strassenburgh Planetarium, made the trip to obtain a moon rock for display. He was handcuffed to the rock container, much like a James Bond spy hero. After a night in a local bank vault, the rock (not Don) was transferred to the Planetarium.

\* \* \*

Organists Bill Floyd and Eddie Buck are still presiding at the 3/14 Wurlitzer at the Surf City (N.J.) Hotel from 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. daily. They are even adding a Solo String and a French Horn to the since levelled Hoboken Fabian theatre's former instrument according to the New York ATOS Chapter's "HORSESHOE." It's been many years since Leroy Lewis and Ted Campbell installed the Wurl in the oceanside hotel. It's good to know it's still going strong.

\* \* \*

Eddie Dunstedter celebrated his 73rd birthday August 2nd by accepting the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Power to visit their Camarillo, Calif. home and give the new \$50,000 Rodgers "style 260 Special" a workout. He and "bride" Vee arrived to learn that Eddie's wasn't the only birthday on hand; news-hen Peg Nielsen, there to cover for 'Theatre Organ', was enduring one also. Mrs. Power provided a cake with both names. Later, Eddie gave an inspiring concert on the big Rodgers for the Powers and their guests, which included the Dewey Cagles (T.O.'s former ad manager) and George Kirkland who developed much of the electronic circuitry for the Special. Eddie liked it.



"HAPPY BIRTHDAY EDDIE AND PEG" said the icing on the cake (center).

Messrs Coffman and Field, proprietors of the El Segundo (Calif.) Old Town Music Hall, tried an experiment during the Don Thompson August concert. Old Town performances usually run to three over a weekend, but Don wondered if scheduling one for Monday would attract the professionals on their traditional "night off." It would, and did. Not only did Don pull good houses at the three Saturday-Sunday shows but enjoyed a full house (250 seats) on Monday. And the pro's attending included Ann Leaf, Bud Taylor, Ralph Wolf, Arthur Freed, Bill Worrall, Del Castillo and Bob Garretson, to name a few.

\* \* \*

Much has been written about England's popular Reginald Dixon, who retired after nearly 40 years of playing dance music on the Blackpool Tower's 3/14 Wurlitzer. Why did he retire, with so many good tunes left in his fingers? Romantics will appreciate the reason he gave in a letter to organist Don Thompson. Don says the real reason for retirement was so Reg could spend more time with his wife, Vera. Such a thoughtful and romantic guy deserves to have his latest platter among Britain's "top 20" — where it is.



Carol's career on pipes was doing nicely over the summer. She's pictured here at a Rodgers.

Deeply hurt by the abrupt cancellation of her promised Australian concert tour, organist Carol Jones has resumed her stateside career with new vigor. Because she had made no plans for local concert activity during the time she expected to be "down under" the cancellation left her with no musical exposure at all during the first months of 1970. Carol started up again modestly with a plug-in (Rodgers) concert for a Pomona, Calif., music dealer which drew a full house to the club auditorium where it was held. But 21-year-old Carol isn't happy unless there are pipes in the offing — and there were. On August 23, 1970 she played a concert on the 4/49 Wurlitzer (formerly San Francisco Paramount) now installed in a special building on the Vollum estate near Portland, Oregon. The magnificence of the huge instrument in its "live" surroundings left her breathless. "It's like a dream — a beautiful dream" was all she could say after her initial encounter with the giant. Next would come the Los Angeles Wiltern with its 4/37 Kimball on Sept. 20th.

\* \* \*

East Coast theatre organ enthusiasts were given a 20-minute treat of TV watching on August 11 when the David Frost show featured Radio City Music Hall's chief organist, Dick Leibert. Introduced as the organist who has been



heard by "more people than any other organist on earth," Dick played a medley from "Sound of Music," demonstrated some of the voices on the Baldwin theatre organ, told of some of his early experiences as an organist and composer, and wound up his stint with a medley of requests, including "The Breeze and I," "Beer Barrel Polka," and the NY ATOS convention's most played-to-death number, "Raindrops."

\* \* \*

*Ken Minear of Cedar Rapids is one of several who reported the episode of TV's "Get Smart" which had the fussy producer of a radio show complaining to the show's prim plug-in organist about the unresolved chords she closed with. "If it happens again," he threatened, "remember we still have those Gaylord Carter albums!"*

\* \* \*

When vandals set fire to the Stockton (Calif.) Cathedral's parish school, organist Fred Tulan began to worry about all his choice ranks he had installed on a loan basis in the cathedral's organ. A check with the church's insurance agent revealed there was fire coverage only — no recompense for a possible visit by pipe thieves (e.i. the "Midnight Organ Supply") or thugs bent on destruction. Locking posthorns with the insurance company came to nothing, so Fred decided on a course of action; after a "farewell-to-the-pipes" candlelight concert, he slithered his "State Serpent" and all those special, French, German, Dutch and English ranks right out of the church chambers and into safekeeping — until there is insurance to cover them. But that left the hybrid organ partially speechless. To fill all the empty chest holes, Fred and friends scooped up all the beat old ranks owners couldn't get rid of by hook or crook and stuffed them in the chests. It's said there isn't a dull concert flute or listless Melodia rank currently available in the Stockton area. They are all having the times of their lives in Stockton Cathedral. And now Stu Green can't locate his infamous "Tonette." Hmm!

\* \* \*

*Steve Irwin, who writes organ stop dictionaries when he isn't travelling from console to console searching out new and different tonalities to classify, has some sound advice for boozers: "Make all your mixtures out of solo diapason pipes." (We "straight shooters" don't mix it, Steve).*

\* \* \*

Billy Nalle is still effervescing over the fine rapport he enjoyed with the NY Chapter ATOS crew which got the Long Island University (Brooklyn Paramount) Wurli into top shape for his

convention concert. Together they battled LIU's Physical Education Dept. for rehearsal time (the auditorium is now a gym). The upshot was that Billy's "Knights of the Chamber" presented him with a genuine LIU sweat-shirt with "LIU — BILLY NALLE — Physical Education Dept. Major" emblazoned across its front as a memento of one of the unforeseen travails encountered in preparing a first-rate concert.

\* \* \*

*Incidentally, we have learned that Mercury Records recorded most of Billy's final convention concert rehearsal, using their future-oriented "quadrisonic" sound system. The tapes, which are said to be real stunners, are to be used by Mercury for lab experiments in sound (recorders still come to the organ when they want a real challenge). If there's enough interest generated, Mercury's engineer felt that the tapes might be released in present stereo disc form. The key phrase is "interest generated." Mercury hasn't done much in the theatre organ field since those Ann Leaf and Dick Liebert records made in Richmond over a decade ago. Some "interest generating" letters might help them get back to our way of thinking. All it takes is a few lines to Mercury Records, 110 West 57th Street, New York, N. Y. 10019.*

\* \* \*

The TV coverage of the ATOS 1970 convention which appeared on the NBC "First Tuesday" program in August was perhaps the most widespread plug ATOS ever received from the viewpoint of the number of people contacted. Although obviously edited for very brief air time by a producer with little feeling for the organ and its music, in terms of the number of people exposed to the hobby, it was the most.

\* \* \*

*Howard Vaughn, brother of Richard (who started George Wright on his Hi-Fi recording career when he had the former Chicago Paradise 5/21 Wurli installed in his southern California home) is following in his brother's footsteps — in a modest way. He has secured the style D Wurli which once graced the Inglewood (Calif.) theatre from the local Methodist church (after 28 years) and installed the 6-ranker in his Inglewood home. He refinished and re-leathered the console, replaced the original Style D Trumpet with an Oboe Horn, and bolstered the pedal by adding a 16' octave of Geddeckt pipes. He's happy with the results.*

\* \* \*

Ralph Bartlett, England's "Mr. Theatre Organ Club" made a quiet visit to the USA in July, bypassed the ATOS



RALPH BARTLETT tries out southern California's latest installation — "the style 260 Rodgers".

convention and headed for California for a couple of weeks relaxation with his close friends, Lee and Laurel (Ruby) Haggart in So. California. Ralph, who established the first theatre organ hobby club in Britain back when our ATOS was a future dream riding on "round robin" letters between Judd Walton, Clealan Blakely and a few others, is still the secretary of England's Theatre Organ Club. It's a private organization which started as a fan club for organist Robinson Cleaver who is still the Club's patron. "We keep politics at a minimum that way" says Ralph. While in the Los Angeles area, Ralph managed some "organ crawling" which included major pipe organs in the area, as well as the Rodgers "260 Special" in the Bob Power home in Camarillo, Calif.

\* \* \*

*Fred Wood, the console designer at the Wurlitzer No. Tonawanda factory in the '20's, is living in quiet retirement in Santa Barbara, Calif. While Fred doesn't grant interviews to reporters, we have something in the mill concerning his remarkable career which started in England. He came over in the early years of the 20th century along with another organ builder named Robert Hope-Jones, who he worked for in the Elmira factory. He was taken over by Wurlitzer when they absorbed the H-J factory and turned his talents to console designing. He is also a first rate installation man, having supervised many major West Coast installations, among them the Wurli in the San Francisco California theatre.*

\* \* \*

Former ATOS publications director Bill Peterson has formed a partnership with organ tech Dennis Hedberg and they have leased the neighborhood 600-seat Colonial theatre in Portland. If resulting business looks encouraging they will install the former Portland Oriental theatre 3/13 Wurli in it — after Dennis has enlarged it to around 30 ranks.

(Continued on page 26)

**VOX POPs**

*(Continued from page 25)*

Remember the Style 260 Wurlli that Dick Loderhose used to advertise for sale in huge display ads in this mag? We missed the ads so we phoned Dick (California to New York) to inquire. He stopped playing his 4/40 plus long enough to advise us that it had been sold long ago and was now attracting customers to Frank Cimmino's Suburban restaurant in Wanaque, New Jersey. Dick corrected our terminology; it's a "260 Special" because it has a Posthorn in addition to the standard stop compliment for a style 260 (14 ranks).

**OFF THE RECORD**

*(Continued from page 19)*

under the capable hands of Bill Johnson, is producing a series which can be termed as enjoyable and historical in that organ fans can amass a heritage of theatre organ sounds which in most cases will someday become nonexistent what with progress overtaking theatre after theatre. While all recordings cannot be of the highest sonic calibre, there is however a need to record instruments in order that someday a generation who will perhaps never see a theatre organ in its proper place can still listen to a part of our musical tradition. There is also another facet to the recording of many artists and we should not only pay homage to the past greats and already greats, but we should encourage our younger players to try and keep alive a bit of our tradition. The young artists to be need support of all theatre organ fans and that involves interest in hearing them give concerts and supporting efforts in making recordings available. Because one has never heard of a particular individual who has made a record or is doing a concert this does not mean that there is no worth in hearing the new talent.

This brings the theatre organ record picture up to the present. Due to space limitations there have been a few omissions. Perhaps seven years from now another chapter in this rather informal theatre organ discography can be written. So when you see names like Eddie Weaver, Lyn Larsen, Dick Hull, Bob VanCamp, Lee Erwin and the many others on record jackets remember that earning their livelihood from giving others musical enjoyment is just one aspect of our common interest. They really are dedicated to their field, they could not put the time and tender loving care into their music if they did not feel a need for the continuance of the art. □

**GEORGE WRIGHT IN MONTHLY CONCERT SERIES**

Long before the tragic destruction of his 30-rank studio organ, George Wright had concluded an agreement with the National General theatre chain for a series of nine monthly concerts which started on October 12 (the second Monday of each month), all to be played on the 10-rank Wurlitzer in the chain's Rialto theatre in South Pasadena, Calif.

For this series three Wurlitzer solo voices — a Brass Trumpet, Brass Saxophone and Solo Tibia will be added.

Former Rialto manager, Don Boxwell, now a wheel in National General, is handling promotion. As the Rialto's manager, Boxwell did much to promote use of the house's organ, one of the last two remaining in Pasadena theatres.

Concerts will start at 8:30 p.m., and there will be a marked reduction in the price of admission when tickets for the entire series are purchased in a block.

The nine-concert series, which will assure southern California fans of Wright-style pipe music through next June, marks George's 35th year of playing for National General, starting back when it was Fox West Coast Theatres.

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Page 4

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# The Typical Versus the Top

by John Muri

In this day of the preservation and featuring of some of the finest organs ever built for theatres, some of us are prone to forget that the representative or typical theatre organ was a quite small affair. In the early days (1920 to 1924) the average theatre organ was not particularly impressive in tone. My first organ was a tonal horror with slamming swell-shades. It was a rare theatre in which the console rose on a lift. For every house that featured a lift in 1925 there were approximately twenty that did not. The typical theatre seated a little over a thousand people, it changed its movie attraction from three to five times a week, and it offered vaudeville on weekends. On most weekdays, the smaller theatres depended on their organists to supply the entire musical program, and if the organist was suddenly ill or incapacitated, what a panic was created in the management offices! Getting substitutes would seem to have been much easier then than now, but good players were always hard to find for everybody who was any good was busy on his own musical assignment.

How those organists did work! In most cases they were paid union scale (about sixty-five dollars for a seven days' week of playing) and they played long hours. Many of the theatres did not run matinees; so the organist would start work between six and seven in the evening and finish about eleven or eleven-thirty. During that time he would get about three fifteen-minute intermissions; the rest of the time he was playing. The good ones cued the pictures well, but the bad ones made all sorts of noises, some of which were so original as to be fascinating. Others made stabs at cuing, but their pre-occupations with eating at the console or talking to their friends resulted in horse-running music being played while the hero was kissing the heroine or in love-music being played while the horses were running. Favorite pieces of music of the particularly sub-mediocre organists were Ponchielli's "Dance of the Hours" and Felix Arndt's "Marionette." They must have loved these pieces, and I never could figure out why, for almost invariably they couldn't play the notes and keep the tempo. The best of the bad players might bravely try "Nola" and then mangle it. Since most of them had inferior instruments (many of the organs were four to six-rankers, some of them

with enormous consoles full of blank tabs for show) the results were poor, but the audiences in those days would stand for almost anything. Radio was just coming in, and you couldn't turn music on with a switch or faucet like tap-water. Almost anything was better than nothing.

There was something pathetic in the way the smallest houses would feature their organists. The daily newspaper ads would indicate that the theatre was presenting Joe Tibia in an organ novelty on the mighty something-or-other. Imagine doing a feature number when all you had to work on was a four-ranker that everybody in the theatre has just been listening to for the past hour! The managers also liked to call their instruments "grand organs." "Grande Organ" was even more posh, even though it didn't mean anything. It was standard practice for managers to claim they had paid twice as much for the organ as it really cost.

**"The good ones cued the pictures well, but the bad ones made all sorts of noises, some of which were so original as to be fascinating."**

Moral standards for organists varied with their positions. A top organist could not afford to get too bad a reputation. It would hurt business. Most of the featured organists behaved very well. Nothing has been more saddening and depressing than to witness the aged wreck of a man who had been formerly an organ star in some of the finest theatres in the country. The morals of the less-than-top or the second-stringers were less strictly judged, but they were certainly dealt with more rigorously than the transgressions of today's young performers. A man could be a periodic drunkard at the console and keep his job provided that he could keep on making music while under the influence. I have known players who had to be propped up at their consoles and music-stands. Many toppers were fired when the managers reached their boiling point, but a specially good man might be kept in spite of his weaknesses. Drugs were not much of a

problem; life then had plenty of its own legal and legitimate kicks.

Some reports I have heard about recent concert performances bring to my mind the elegance of men like Crawford, Gutow, Baker, and Miller at the console in contrast with the flamboyance of some of our more exhibitionistic colleagues. I am referring to the flying and flourishing of hands and arms, the convulsive twistings and contortions on the bench, all presumably supposed to convey to us the idea of how hard the artist is working and how deeply he feels the music. Tommyrot! Crawford and Gutow at the Chicago Theatre amazed me (and their audiences, I suppose) with their ease and relaxation at the console. Crawford always wore a plain business suit and never acted "artistic." Gutow didn't even seem to be moving his hands as he got superbly beautiful music out of his instrument. Rapid and difficult passages were played with ease as if he might just be operating a simple mechanical organ. When I worked in theatres I had one manager tell me to put more flourish into my movements. Recently a television producer asked me for some more body-English. It seems to me, though, that such gyrations take the audiences' minds off the music and are pure corn. They are a relic of the late eighteen-hundreds, when musicians were supposed to be super-sensitive and delicate souls, above the common herd of humanity. More tommyrot! A good performance is done with ease because it has been well-prepared and is almost second nature to the player. A fellow who makes it look hard is either trying to impress the least intelligent of his listeners or else he is trying to cover up his own deficiencies in playing-technique. The top organists didn't have to do such shenanigans; even most of the typical ones didn't have to do it. Only those at the bottom were the real hams who sweat drops of blood and tears for "art." □

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# The Mighty Redwood Wurlitzer



by Phil Freeman and Dewey Cagle

Organ-Buffs and music lovers in the San Francisco Bay Area are now being thrilled daily by the magnificent sound of the four manual Wurlitzer installed in the Cap'n's Galley #2 in downtown Redwood City.

The organ, originally installed in the opulent 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle, was acquired last year by Bill Breuer of Palo Alto and transported to the bay area for installation in the new branch of the Cap'n's Galley being established in Redwood City. The original 4/18 specification was redrawn to reunify and expand the instrument to 29 ranks of well balanced organ.

The relay and actions were rehabilitated, pipe work cleaned and polished, and winding devices overhauled. The console was first reduced to an empty shell, then remodeled and rebuilt to meet the stop-list and facility requirements specified by organist, Tom Hazleton.

Meanwhile, restaurateur Bill Breuer combed the mid-peninsula area for a suitable site for the new Cap'n's Galley and its "grand" organ, that met the following requirements, in order:

1. A hall large enough and acoustically ideal to recreate the great "house organ" sound of the theatre.
2. A floor plan and elevation to permit a close-to-ideal chamber installation and finally, of course —
3. A good business location suitable for a large Pizza Parlor — with adequate parking facilities.

A defunct auto service annex to the Redwood City Montgomery Ward store (50 by 100 feet) turned out to have

the best possibilities, though it took some foresight on the part of Bill Breuer to gauge its potential — the place was a shambles. A long term lease and a costly remodeling job gave the Seattle organ its new home.

A rather unusual group of technicians did the rebuild and reinstallation. Al Comtois, an organ builder/electronics technician, who had migrated from Phoenix, with the help of John Clair from Los Angeles and Bob Kingdon from Cupertino did the major portion of the structural and electrical rebuild and installation. Phil Freeman from Los Altos, who was associated with

Jesse Crawford during the mid-thirties, remodeled the console. Ed Stout, a tonal perfectionist, who restored the San Francisco Paramount 4/33 Wurlitzer for its swan song and whose other major charge is the 5/100 + Aeolian-Skinner in Grace Cathedral, did the revoicing and regulation to make the whole thing come together. Some "minor" assistance was provided by Bill Breuer, himself — like a few thousand dollars for this and that.

Since the organ could not be heard at the time of its removal due to condition, and since no known recording of its voice existed, all concerned were overwhelmed by what came from its first playing early in December. It was a magnificent sound and no doubt remained that this instrument, with only its original 18 ranks playing, was, as rumored, one of the great ones that North Tonawanda produced.



It was ready for the December opening.



Jack Gustafson announces his next swinger.

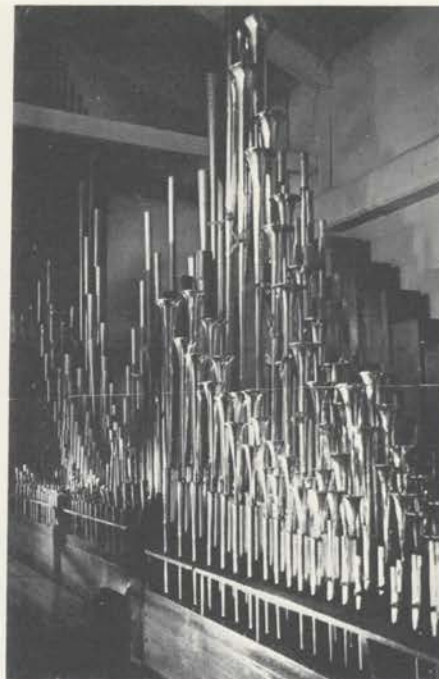
Early this year, a new Moller Post Horn was added and further expansion is now underway. Since last December the organ has entertained at least four hours a day, six days a week (except Mondays).

Three of the West's best known organists comprise the musical staff of the Cap'n's Galley — Tom Hazleton, Jack Gustafson, and Ralph Trout III — who alternate between the Redwood City Wurlitzer and the 3/12 Wurlitzer R-20 at the Cap'n's Galley in Santa Clara. Special guest organists are frequently booked to provide still greater musical variety.

An interesting note is that a whole new generation is becoming "hooked" by the glamour and spectacular sound of the theatre organ. From grade school through college age, kids really "dig" the pipe organ scene and are the Galley's best repeat customers. For those Bay Area buffs who remember the sound of the San Francisco Fox organ, the Paramount, et al, this sound is not just a memory — it's as it was, a real live thing — a magnificent sound that can be heard in a public place almost every day in the week! □



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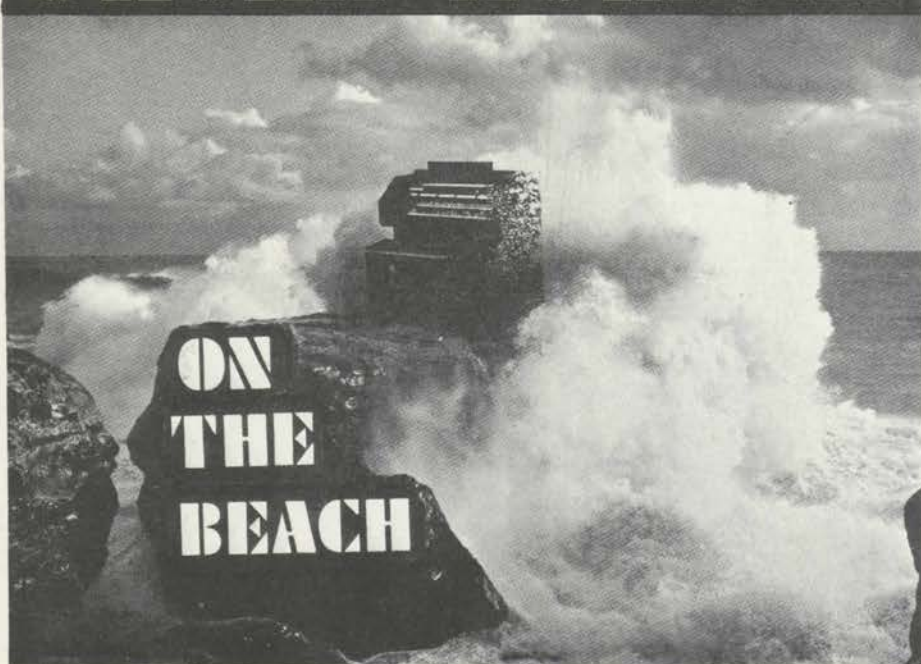
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# ORGAN HOLIDAY



by Elmer Fubb

For the past three years organ buffs have become increasingly aware of a spring event at a California seaside resort town. This event attracts crowds of music lovers for five days of electronic organ concerts by a growing list of top artists. This year the Santa Cruz "Organ Holiday," started as an informal spring supplement to the fall "Home Organ Festival," came of age.

Activities were moved to the beach front Cocoanut Grove where the huge oval ballroom, which once reverberated to the "jitterbug" music of Glen Gray and Benny Goodman, became a proper concert hall. It easily seated the attendees whose number had soared to 1500 by the closing concert, the largest attendance in the event's brief history.

The attractions for the pipe-minded were mainly in the concerts played by such pipe organists as George Wright, Bill Thomson, Helen Dell, Tom Hazleton and Don Thompson. There was another special item of interest—the first, and perhaps only, public airing of the new Rodgers Special which was built to resemble a style 260 Wurlitzer Special (3/14 with Posthorn) as closely as can be done with current tone generators and circuitry.

If any one person can be singled out as the driving force behind the "Holiday", that would be organist Larry Embury, who runs a music store in Santa Cruz. Right along with chairman Larry, credit must go to members of his smooth-run-

ning staff—Jim Kennedy, Bill Beaumont (the MC throughout), Merrill Morton, Reta Rogers, Kay Chenoweth, Peggy Schiele, Doris Beaumont, Flo Lehtinen and Dorothy Miller, to name but a few. Most are, or have been involved in the autumn Festival also.

The event got the full cooperation of the Santa Cruz city fathers. The Mayor, an organ owner, opened the festivities and he brought along eye-filling Miss California, a tall willowy lovely, who posed for photos with all the male artists and celebrities (whose wives would permit it). Events were schedul-



The Grove has long been a beach landmark in Santa Cruz. It is televised during annual beauty contests.

— Stufoto

ed in much the same context as they are for the fall Festival with an opening show which included all instruments and artists then present—a gala introduction.

Artists heard during the five days were Dale Zeiger, Larry Embury, Bud Iverson, and George Wright (for Conn); Dave Kelsey, George Knadler and Don Thompson (for Allen); Gus Pearson and Glenn Derringer (for Wurlitzer); Mildred Alexander, Richard Bradley and Leroy Davidson represented Hansen Publications and played Hammond and Conn; Helen Dell fronted for Pointer Publications and played the Rodgers Special; Tom Hazleton and Bill Thomson were there for Rodgers. Dick Bailey played for Hammond.

Performances were of high calibre throughout, but two deserve special mention. During an afternoon session witnessed by only 150 persons, Mildred Alexander, playing a Hammond X77, rose to heights of artistry which had her small but dazzled audience both stupefied and exuberant. After seasons of bad luck with inadequate installations,



Mildred Alexander sported a pair of golden shoes at the X77 Hammond.

— Stufoto

halls with miserable acoustics, a hotel fire, a badly out-of-tune pipe organ (for a concert), a narrowly-missed plane crash, and grasping business associates, "hard luck" Millie came through with a dazzling performance which had her small audience cheering. Despite the limitations of a "2/1" instrument, Millie enjoyed the kind of acceptance she has been trying for for many years; the plaudits of organ enthusiasts far removed from the little knots of "Hammond addicts" who worship her. This was recognition by hip strangers.

Why was Millie's audience so small? Santa Cruz is quite different from Hoberg's where the isolation insures total attendance at concerts. The concert hall at Santa Cruz is on the ocean front and the many windows overlooking the beach proved to be distractions



Tom Hazleton scored at the Rodgers.  
— Stufoto



Miss California (Susan Anton) added much eye appeal to first night activities.



Bill Thomson looked for all the world like John Wayne accepting his Academy Award — right down to patent leather boots.

— Stufoto

to males who found it difficult to tear themselves away from monitoring the well-filled bikinis romping among the breakers all day. The nearby amusement park took its toll also as did the many local bars and restaurants — especially during the afternoon concerts. Attendance was much better at night.

The other performance deemed worthy of special note was Bill Thomson at the Rodgers Special. Bill may be somewhat indebted to George Wright; when he is scheduled in the slot before George, he has, on two memorable occasions, come through with that extra degree of brilliance which puts a performance in the "super plus" class. It happened during the 1968 ATOS convention (both artists played the Pasadena Rialto 2/10 Wurlti) and again at the 1970 "Organ Holiday." Bill hit peak after peak and his special arrangement of "The Stars and Stripes Forever" with the pedal melody and Widor-like embellishment topped a program which ably demonstrated the resources of the Rodgers Special.

How about the Rodgers Special? Developed on a commission from Bob

Power of Camarillo, Calif., the order was to duplicate, as closely as possible, a Wurlitzer style 260. The Rodgers company has faithfully reproduced the style 260 console, including a magnet-controlled second touch system. A post-horn, not usually found on a 260, was added to the stop compliment. Even the Wurlitzer style nameplates on the side jambs have been reproduced, but of course they say "Rodgers." The copy is perfect from the physical viewpoint. How about the voices; do they simulate pipes?

The answer must be subjective; no two listeners will agree. The cost of the non-production model is said to be in excess of \$50,000. Bob Power wanted a whole new approach to the synthesis of pipe sounds. Much of that huge sum went into research, and it has paid off. He undoubtedly has the finest electronic theatre organ built so far (although it employs some live percussors via an Artisan "Bandbox."). Some of the voices approach pipe sounds much more closely than previous Rodgers models. This is noted in the middle and lower octaves of the Tibia, although the upper Tibia registers have a disturb-

ing octave content. The reeds are better than ever, Kinura especially. And the big brass is a dream, especially in the pedal octaves. Strings are bright without becoming strident. It's really something to hear and for those who missed its initial and perhaps only public performance, look for an upcoming Malar recording.

Also heard on the Rodgers Special were Helen Dell and Tom Hazleton, playing in their individual and distinctive styles. The big beast met all their demands.

The topper and closer of the "Holiday" was an informal Saturday evening concert played on the Conn 650 by George Wright. George was in a happy mood and made light of the draft which kept turning his music pages before he was ready. The emphasis here was on entertainment, although an unscheduled event interrupted one of George's announcements—a broken bone dive down an unlighted back staircase by reporter/editor Stu Green. The resulting clatter added some unordered tympani sounds to "At Sundown," a tune George was playing for—Stu Green. □



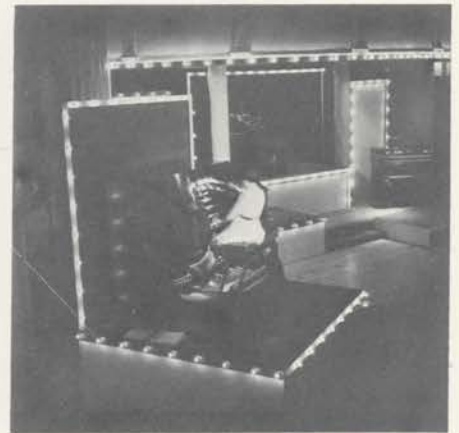
George Wright rehearses in his 'Cat Ballou' jacket at the Conn 650.

— Stufoto



A full house listens to Bill Thomson on closing night. The painted cloud backdrop is a fixture in the ballroom.

— Stufoto



During concerts, organs were framed with softly glowing incandescent bulbs. This is Helen Dell playing the Rodgers Special.

— Stufoto



Manufacturers, distributors or individuals sponsoring or merchandising theatre pipe organ records are encouraged to send review pressings to THEATRE ORGAN SOUTHWEST, Box 5013, Bendix Station, No. Hollywood, Calif. 91605. Be sure to include purchasing information, if applicable.

**JONAS NORDWALL AT THE WURLITZER PIPE ORGAN, Oriental Theatre, Portland, Oregon. Gamba Records JN 101 (Stereo only), available at \$5.00 postpaid from Bill Peterson, 565 N. Portland Blvd., Portland, Ore. 97217.**

Portland is a town rich in theatre pipe organs. When ATOS held its convention there a few years ago, one organist had the courage to play his concert on a plug-in. It seemed foolhardy — until the conventioners heard him. They soon forgot about it being an electronic when Jonas Nordwall came on so strongly. Now we can hear Jonas on pipes, playing the magnificent 3/13 Wurlitzer in Portland's now gone Oriental theatre. Recording is outstanding: the big sound as well as the soft stops and solo voices come through clearly with a considerable amount of natural "house" reverb, but never too much.

Jonas' first tune, a smashing "Hindustan," establishes him as an individual in the arranging department, although in a few subsequent tunes there's evidence that Jonas has heard some recordings by George. But for "Hindustan" his approach is atmospheric in that he weaves some oriental splendor to match the title into parts of his arrangement. At other times he bursts out into happy organ jazz. Plenty of variety.

The instrument is exquisite in all voices, having been restored and maintained by organ tech Dennis Hedberg (who now owns it).

The selection is a blend of the old (Nancy, Piano Roll Blues, El Relicario) and the new (This Guy's in Love with You, Windy), and there are none of the overcooked pop standards which dull so many current releases.

Jonas has a good command of his instrument at all times and he seems equally adept at swinging in tempo or milking a ballad.

Other tunes are: The Wig, So Blue, How Long Has This Been Going On, and a toe-tapping Balling the Jack. Jonas is especially skilled in the use of the Posthorn while playing "big band" style.

All things considered, the platter is a delight.

\* \* \*

**THE BIGGEST LITTLE WURLITZER, Jerry Mendelson at the Console, No. CR-0072 (Stereo), available at \$4.50 postpaid from Concert Recording, Box 531, Lynwood, Calif. 90262.**

With only seven ranks to work with, the artist must be exceptional in order to overcome the limitations. Jerry Mendelson manages nicely; after a couple of tunes, the listener forgets it's a small organ and marvels at the variety produced both by the judicious use of stops and also by the imaginative technique of the organist.

Jerry's arrangements are straightforward, his harmony predictable and his tempos just right for the tunes played. He makes effective use of the organ's solo reed and there are rhythmic surprises in some of the second choruses.

The organ has a typical "little Wurlitzer" sound with emphasis on the bright side, and if our experience is indicative, we'll wager it sounds better now (after the tender loving care administered by restorers Rotter, Hughes and Balfour) than it did when originally installed (Wurlitzer wasn't noted for taking great pains in finishing small installations).

Jerry has an appealing way with ballads such as I'll Get By and You Were Meant for Me, and he really blasts off during the up-tempo tunes like The Sheik, Fascinatin' Rhythm and I'm Just Wild About Harry. There are pleasant surprises in his treatments of Spanish Town and Ain't Misbehavin'. In fact all the tunes are well thought out and played. This one shows what a seasoned performer can do with a well-maintained small organ. But don't assume that it's a small sound; the 1600-seat theatre acts as an effective sounding board to blend and even seemingly amplify the sound.

The selections are all memory teasers. In addition to those listed above, there

is Birth of the Blues, The Boy Next Door, Something to Remember You By, Lilac Time and Who Stole My Heart Away. Jerry's attractive style is all his own.

\* \* \*

**REQUESTS REPEAT, Tony Fenelon at the fabulous Regent theatre, No. CR-0077 (Stereo), available at \$4.50 postpaid from Concert Recording, Box 531, Lynwood, Calif. 90262.**

If we hadn't heard the Tony Fenelon recording played on the Detroit Senate 4/34 Wurlitzer (reviewed in the August issue), we would perhaps be more appreciative of this earlier recording which is played on the 4/19 Wurlitzer in Hoyt's Regent theatre in Melbourne. It is well-played and some of the arrangements foreshadow the direction of Tony's development as a theatre organist. However, at this point Tony hadn't made the study of registration which is apparent in his current work, nor is the organ as tonally well balanced and as well regulated as the Detroit instrument. Yet, it has its good points. An interesting selection of tunes, for one; among them is Everything's Coming Up Roses, Espana Cani, Chicago, Embraceable You, Tango (Albeniz), La Golondrina, Serenade from "Student Prince" and With a Song in My Heart. Also included is a delightful 10:17 minute medley of songs from "Snow White," the only one outside of the soundtrack album which includes the "Dwarf's Yodel Song."

It's vintage Fenelon, interesting from a historical viewpoint but lacking the pizzazz of Tony's current work.

\* \* \*

#### CHRISTMAS RECORDS

**CHRISTMAS WITH TERRY CHARLES AT THE WURLITZER PIPE ORGAN, available in stereo from Terry Charles, 2265 Lagoon Circle North, Clearwater, Florida 33515, \$5.25 postpaid.**

This is the first recording of the circa 18-rank Wurlitzer installed by Terry Charles in the Kirk of Dunedin, Dunedin, Florida. It's a wholly theatrical instrument but on this recording it produces some most cathedral-like sounds. Side 1 contains familiar religious Christmas hymns. These are played mainly on big combinations which come close to the sound associated with the Radio City Music Hall organ when it's in a majestic mood. This music is played straight with and without tremos, with few variations. Side 2 is different. It contains some of the less formal Christmas music, and we gain an opportunity to learn what Terry can do with Santa Claus is Coming to Town and I'll Be



Home for Christmas—and he does beautifully in fine theatre organ style.

It's a most impressive instrument, and it leaves one wanting to hear more of Terry Charles on a purely theatre organ disc.

The recording is good, capturing especially the low pedal bass with good effect.

\* \* \*

**CONCERT RECORDING STARS WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS, various artists playing six pipe organs and seven electronics No. CR-S070 (Stereo), available at \$4.50 postpaid from Concert Recording, Box 531, Lynwood, Calif. 90262.**

The artists range from fabulous to average in this melange of Christmas music. It has a lot of appeal, if only to indicate the superiority of pipes over transistors in recorded sound. The tunes are the lighter Christmas selections; the big "tremors off" tunes are missing. Instead we can enjoy such tunes as Silver Bells, Sleigh Ride, Winter Wonderland, Brazillian Sleigh Bells, Rudolph!, We Wish You a Merry Christmas, (all played on plug-ins) or Have Yourself a Merry Christmas, Santa Claus is Coming to Town, I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas plus some medlies (all on pipes).

Plug-in artists are Ralph Wolf, Jess Parker, Don Baker, Ena Baga, Bill Worrall and Johnny Kemm. Pipe organists are Roger Garrett, Jackie Brown, Bob VanCamp, Don Thompson, the late Jim Orcutt and the incorrigible Dolton McAlpin.

The pipe organs range from a 4/42 Moller to a 2/7 Morton with a couple of medium-size Wurli's in between. The emphasis on the lighter Christmas music is bound to bring some relief from radio and TV preoccupation with four or five of the perennial overcooked formal Christmas hymns. This one is well worth the price.

\* \* \*

#### — THE PLUG-IN CORNER —

**THOSE GOOD OLD DAYS, George Smith at the Kimball "Apollo," Volume 1 (Stereo), available at \$4.95 postpaid from Amron Music Co., Box 2501, Anderson, Indiana 46011.**

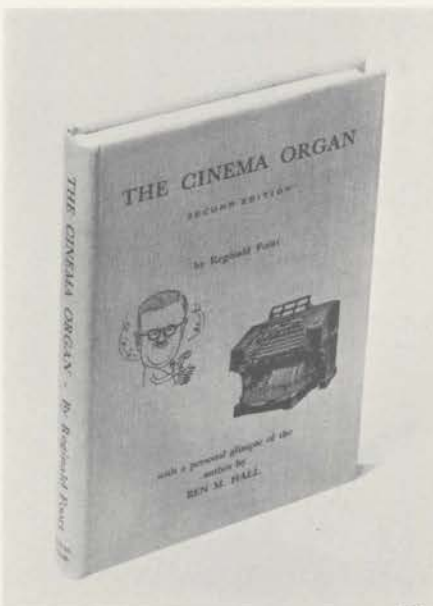
The artist makes effective use of the Kimball electronic model 1370, playing such favorites of the "good old days" as Jean, Happy Organ, If I Were a Rich Man, Yesterday (Lennon), Those Were the Days, the Goldfinger Theme, Misty and Alley Cat (yes, again!) plus a couple of genuine oldies (San Antonio Rose and Sweet Georgia Brown). A drummer maintains the beat for most of the selections.

## Book Review

by Lloyd E. Klos

**The Cinema Organ** by Reginald Foort. 200 pages. 74 pictures. 17 diagrams. Reproduced by Vestal Press, 3533 Stratford Drive, Vestal, New York 13850. Price \$6.

At least once a year, ATOS member, Harvey N. Roehl, whose specialty is reproducing old catalogues and books, comes up with a gem for any theatre organ enthusiast's library. This year, he has done it again. He has reproduced theatre organist Reginald Foort's 1932 book "The Cinema Organ", and what a fine collection of memorabilia and technical information this is!



The book is dedicated to the late British and Canadian organist, Quentin Maclean. It discusses the development of the theatre organ from the earliest. It describes in simple terms the operation of the instrument, and it is illustrated profusely with diagrams and pictures which will aid anyone to better understand the working of the King of Instruments.

There is a chapter on recording as it was done in the days before magnetic tape — a thoroughly harrowing experience for any artist. Adding to the book's scope are three new chapters which were added by the author to bring the reader up to date on his activities from 1932 to the present. Organologist Ben M. Hall contributes a chapter on his meeting and subsequent friendship with Mr. Foort. There are 14 pages devoted to a discology, compiled by Mel Doner and Reginald Mander — 187 recordings made by Mr. Foort during his career.

One of the brightest selling points of this book is the art work. There are rare pictures never seen by enthusiasts. A full page picture of Mr. Foort at the New York Paramount is a beaut. There is one of him seated at the Midmer-Losh console in the Atlantic City Auditorium; pictures of the BBC traveling Moller which Mr. Foort helped design and with which he went on tour; a rare picture of Foort, Jesse Crawford and Dick Simonton, taken a year before the Poet's death.

There is included a 15-page reprint of an illustrated booklet, written by Foort and describing the BBC 4/23 Compton in London's St. George's Hall. The building and installation were totally destroyed during the blitz in 1940. A Wurlitzer advertisement lists the 53 instruments which were in British theatres, skating rinks and dance halls in 1932.

For those who are new to the theatre organ hobby, this book is especially essential for a better understanding of the instrument. For those who have long been a part of the hobby, it is also a must for its historic value. For others, it is a must, simply for the pleasure derived in reading it. This reviewer heartily recommends Reginald Foort's "The Cinema Organ" to every member of the ATOS. □

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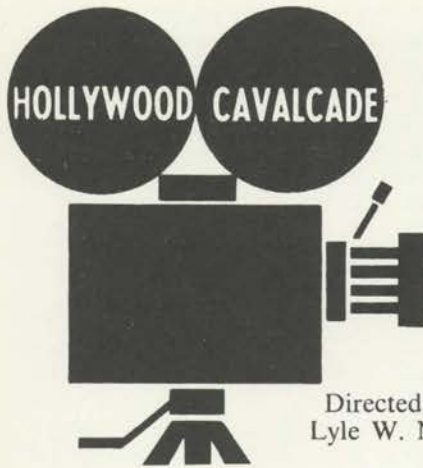
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Directed by  
Lyle W. Nash

ONE of America's greatest entertainers received a big boost from silent screen comedian Fatty Arbuckle in 1925. The tragic film funny fellow, while making personal appearance tours, needed local talent to fill out a bill in a Cleveland vaudeville theatre. He picked two partners in a blackface song-and-dance act. Arbuckle liked them and recommended them to a vaudeville manager. One of the fellows (aged 21) was Bob Hope.

WEST Germany's drive-in theatres advertise: "You can use a drive-in for more than just looking at a movie!" Thirty-five years ago American mothers protested that drive-in theatres were "vile passion pits."

LONDON sources report that the (entire?) Charles Chaplin film library will soon be available for world wide showing in theatres and TV.

WHO IS WHERE . . . Silent film actress Miriam Cooper Walsh has lived since 1953 at Pine Knoll N. Emmett,

Charlottesville, Virginia. Her phone number used to be 703-293-4703 . . . New address for lovely, petite Marion Nixon Seiter is 10433 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. . . . William S. Hart, Jr., real estate appraiser, 11603 San Vincente Blvd., West Los Angeles, Calif. is believed to be the son of the late-great western star.

KEYSTONE KOPS players are still with us. The happy film fun of 55 years ago was recently recalled when Eddie LeVeque, Bernard Harris, Billy Bletcher, Harold May, Bill Williams, Charles Conklin, Chester Conklin and Minta Durfee Arbuckle held a reunion.

REPORTS still persist that Buster Keaton and Bert Lahr made a color film feature in the '60's that has never been released.

ONLY two of the screen players who worked with Lon Chaney (he left this world 40 years ago) are still active. One is Joan Crawford, the most enduring actress of all time. The other is Jackie Coogan.

TED DONALDSON, one time boy actor in films, was vending books in the Pasadena, Calif., Free Press book store, when we talked with him recently. He's been away from the make-believe world for some years. "Oh, I might go back to acting if the part and circumstances were right," he said. Donaldson, now 36, was named for the great American writer Theodore Dreiser, friend of the family.

UNIVERSAL is considering the re-issue of the 1930 classic "All Quiet on the Western Front" with new sound and color tones.

THE LATE film director Leo McCarey had harsh comments about film makers who dolly their cameras through humanity's cesspools. He said: "I'll let somebody else photograph the ugliness of the world. It's larceny to remind people how lousy things are and call it entertainment."

ONLY one of Hollywood's 197 sound stages was being used for feature film production one day this past summer. In September 123 TV shows were shooting on these stages.

"LEWIS Stone was my favorite actor," Gertrude Astor told us last summer. "I learned much from him. He was great to work with. I got to know him very well in the work he did in establishing the Motion Picture Country House and hospital." The tall actress (once said too tall to be a star) has retired from film work. She feels that John Stahl, William Beaudine and John Ford were the best directors she worked with.

QUESTION: "Is it true that nine old-time screen players appeared in the 1938 UA feature 'Young in Heart'?" I am not sure. My resources show a cast of 15 players but no mention of any such nine. Can any reader furnish additional information?

SELECTED SHORTS . . . John Wayne's "Chisum" is his 201st feature film role . . . Neil Hamilton has left Hollywood for a new beach home in the San Clemente/La Jolla area . . . One time Wampus star Ruth Hall still lives in the Los Angeles area.

COMMENTS, questions and contributions are welcomed to P. O. Box 113, Pasadena, California 91102.

**JONAS  
NORDWALL**  
AT THE  
WURLITZER PIPE ORGAN  
ORIENTAL THEATRE  
PORTLAND, OREGON

### THE LAST RECORDING MADE ON THE ORIENTAL ORGAN

Jonas Nordwall is one of the greatest young musicians to come along in many years. He has played for ATOS chapters in Portland, Los Angeles, Phoenix, San Diego, and Seattle. Now his first recording is available. It includes such great songs as Hindustan, Nancy, The Wig, Old Piano Roll Blues, This Guy's in Love With You, So Blue, Ballin' the Jack, and others. You will want this great stereo disc.

ORDER BY MAIL TODAY—\$5.00 POSTPAID, FROM BILL PETERSON 565 N. PORTLAND BLVD. APT. 101, PORTLAND, OREGON 97217

London, England — In September 1968, the British Broadcasting Corporation announced that *As Prescribed*, a request show aimed mostly at hospitals, was to end its 20-year run from the West of England transmitters.

What followed is now pipe organ history. A petition with 40,000 names on it was delivered to the BBC protesting the decision. Within a matter of weeks, the program was back on the air.

And now, showing magnanimity in defeat, the Corporation have (from April 5 this year) transferred it to the national network. Admittedly, it is going out at an ungodly early hour, but it's one which sees hospital patients up and doing and most organ buffs have bedside transistors. So now England's radio listeners will wake up to theatre organ music on a Sunday morning.

All of which is somewhat of a quiet triumph for Cornishman *Dudley Savage* who is both master of ceremonies and organist. He plays all the requests on the 3/8 Compton of the ABC Theatre in Plymouth, the port from whence the Mayflower set sail exactly 350 years ago.

A quiet-spoken very British performer, he was born in the picturesque West country where his mother, a farmer's daughter, played organ in the village church. He studied the instrument early and won the organ solo event at the Cornish Music Festival, playing Bach, soon after his 16th birthday. He started on theatre pipes in 1936 and two years later was appointed resident at the theatre from which he now broadcasts.

He became a soldier in 1940, serving as a captain in the Indian Army, and turned to free-lance broadcasting and composing when the war was over.



Dudley Savage at the Compton in the ABC Theatre, Plymouth, England, from which he broadcasts "As Prescribed". — BBC Photo

'As Prescribed' has in the past normally been broadcast live "though there have been cold winter mornings when I wished it had been recorded," says Dudley. This, in itself, may be a tribute to his immaculate playing: he rarely hits a wrong note.

For an eight-ranker, the ABC Compton has an excellent array of tonal resources. Its tibias are lush for this maker and it boasts fine diapasons which can be heard to good effect when hymns are requested. Since the show goes out on the Sabbath, they often are.

Before the accolade of nationwide airing, the roster of regular listeners covered a wide area with pleas from France for particular items being quite frequent (take a peek at the map and you'll see how narrow the gap between the two countries is at the point from which the broadcast is made).

Now the circle looks like being even wider. There will be more letters of the sort that Dudley treasures. Like the one praising the presenter of the show who "sounds like a friendly fellow" but being less enthusiastic about "the chap who makes those horrible noises at the organ." Or the one from a proud mother who declared her daughter to be one of his biggest fans — except that she would insist on referring to him as "Dudley Cabbage."

\* \* \*

Amsterdam, Holland — Like James Dean and other super-stars whose careers seem to have carried on beyond the grave, the Dutch maestro *Cor Steyn* is currently just about the most popular organist in the lowlands. He died November 1965.

Search the copiously filled "hammondorgel" racks in any disc shop, and you will find the LPs he made in life. Some will be on Hammond. Many will be on the "Magic Organ", a custom-built three-decker which Steyn played for the VARA radio station.

But you may be lucky enough to pick up a copy of *Cor Steyn op het Radio Concert Orgel* (it's on the Imperial label) which features the last tapes he ever made. The instrument is the Moller 5/27 which Reginald Foort toured in England and which later became the BBC Theatre Organ. It's now installed in a protestant church in Hilversum for the benefit of all Dutch broadcasting outfits. Steyn inaugurated just before he died.

By the by, this instrument is still referred to as the "BBC orgel" by my Dutch friends and it's so described on the jacket liner for this LP.

This treasure apart — it is, too, being one of the best recordings ever made on this instrument — there are a number of posthumous LP anthologies around which can give you a few surprises.

One is called *De Beste van Cor Steyn* (on the Philips label) and it's a budget issue. It says "hammondorgel", but it also shows the hands of a performer at a three manual console which is obviously a pipe job. In fact, it's the 3/13 Standaard/Strunk in the VARA studios in Hilversum. Play the first side and you get good, lively Hammond. Flip the disc and you start off with more Hammond. But just over half-way through there's a neat bit of tape-editing and plug-in becomes pipes for an "Annie Get Your Gun" selection.

Similar surprises come on other boxed sets put together since the pedal-pusher's death. Information about the instruments used is hard to come by, but I think it's the VARA studio one in most instances.

Why all this fuss? Listen to his playing and you might get an answer.



Cor Steyn was born 1906 in The Hague. In his 20s, after studying at the Royal Conservatoire, he was playing accordion in an Amsterdam cafe. Then he got known through air-time on the organ and with various small groups. He made his name on the air-waves, with community singing from the City Theatre, Amsterdam, and gradually over a wider field.

Television added to his fame in his homeland, rather than hurt him. When he died, comedian Tom Manders with whom he had worked on the "Saint-Germain-des-Pres" shows said: "I have lost my best friend."

Oddly enough, I was in Hilversum at the time of his death. I mentioned it to the secretary of a radio producer for whom he had worked. She struggled for words and then said slowly: "He was such a nice man . . . so nice."

Seeing all the Cor Steyn records still selling well, I recall that he was, too, a first-rate organist. □

## NUGGETS from the GOLDEN DAYS



Prospected by Lloyd E. Klos

This time, Jason and I have searched the Mother Lode for items relative to the days of broadcasting organs and organists. References were American Organist (AO), Diapason (D) and Jacobs (J) magazines.

Oct. 1926 (J) EDWARD BENEDICT has been for some time a staff organist on WGN, Chicago, and instructor of theatre organ for the Kimball Co. A student in the class of ALBERT HAY MALLOTTE, he was 3 years organist at the Rialto in Tacoma, Wash. He makes organ rolls when he finds time after teaching, broadcasting and writing chores.

Aug. 1930 (D) AL MELGARD, Chicago organist on WBBM, recently lost a finger on the left hand while woodworking in his home workshop. The station's officials feel that Al's genius at the console will more than make up for the loss of one digit.

July 1931 (D) ARCHER GIBSON broadcasts over the Blue Network from his New York studio, "Archer Gibson, Concert Organist." A second series is broadcast on WJZ from his home studio, "Dream Pictures With Archer Gibson."

July 1931 (D) FRED HECK is broadcasting on the Kimball organ in the Memphis Auditorium over WREC, WMC and WNBR. The public is attending the broadcasts in considerable numbers.

July 1932 (AO) THEODORE STRONG has completed 10 years of organ broadcasting, beginning with WFAF and WOR in New York, and is now with KPO, San Francisco. His repertoire of 10,000 pieces has stood him in good stead through the years.

July 1932 (D) Contracts for 3 organs for 2 theatres being erected on the Radio City site at Rockefeller Center in New York, have been awarded to the Wurlitzer Co. Two of the organs

are to be 4-manual, the other a 2-manual broadcasting organ. New features in the theatres will be included, some being developed by RCA Laboratories in Camden, N. J.

June 1933 (D) The American Conservatory of Music in Chicago announces a class of Radio Organ Interpretation to be held from June 26 to August 5. FRANK VAN DUSEN and IRMA GLEN are instructors. Two lessons and one demonstration lecture weekly at the NBC organ studio are scheduled.

April 1934 (D) LEO TERRY, ex-Balaban & Katz Chicago theatre organist, has been appointed staff organist of WCFL, Chicago, playing the 2/4 Barton. He had long engagements at the Granada and Uptown theatres, and while at the Granada, broadcast over WIBO.

May 1934 (D) Station KMOX, St. Louis, has ordered additions to its Kilgen organ, plus a 4-manual console. Recent organists have been KEN WRIGHT, ALBERT SCHOLIN and GEORGE L. SCOTT.

June 1934 (D) Station KFPY of the Simmons Broadcasting Co., Spokane, is installing a 2/7 Wurlitzer in its Golden Studio. This is the first organ to be installed in a radio station in the Inland Empire. N. Cocroft of the San Francisco Wurlitzer office is supervising the installation.

April 1935 (D) ROLAND POMERAT, organist at the Springfield, Mass. Paramount, also broadcasts extensively. In less than 6 months, he did 455 broadcasts involving 223 hours, and played 3,702 compositions and 442 requests.

March 1936 (D) The Kilgen Organ Co. is building a 2-manual organ for station KFPW in the Goldman Hotel, Ft. Smith, Ark. Other radio station installations by this firm include KMOX, St. Louis; WHAS, Louisville; WHDH, Boston; KOIL, Council Bluffs, Iowa; KLD, Denver, and WKY, Oklahoma City, the last an elaborate 4-manual, 14-rank job.

GOLD DUST: 6/30, 17-year old GEORGE BLAKE broadcasts over WJZ from the White Institute on Sunday mornings . . . 2/31, AL CARNEY, 33 years a radio and theatre organist who broadcast over NBC and WCFL, Chicago, died January 13 of pneumonia. He had his own studio from which the broadcasts originated . . . "Paul and Gus" (PAUL FORSTER and GUS LAMPE, announcer) originating from the Forster Studio over WSYR, Syracuse, N. Y. twice weekly . . . 4/31, BETTY LEE TAYLOR broadcasts over WGY, Schenectady,

N. Y., using a small piano keyboard to operate the pipe organ. Device was built by General Electric . . . 1/32, HUGH J. DODGE broadcasting daily from radio studio in Rochester's West End theatre over WHAM . . . CARLETON JAMES at the B. F. Keith's theatre organ over WFBL, Syracuse, N. Y. . . . 11/32, ARCHER GIBSON and IRENE HARDING broadcasting daily on WJZ, N. Y., as does ANN LEAF on WABC, N. Y. . . . 2/33, HELEN ANKNER on Rochester's WHAM; MAURICE B. NICHOLSON over Buffalo Evening News Station WBEN . . . 11/33, LEW WHITE over WJZ, N. Y.; DICK HULL over Rochester's WHEC, using Loew's Rochester 5/24 Marr & Colton . . . 2/34, GEORGE GARIS over Rochester's WHAM on the Madison Theatre Wurlitzer . . . 4/34, DION KENNEDY on WJZ, N. Y.; RAY BERRY, organist (later editor of The American Organist mag.), is in charge of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, broadcasting station KSOO . . . 10/34, ANN LEAF dedicates Rochester WHEC 3/11 Wurlitzer and does special broadcast on Palace Wurlitzer for Gulf Oil . . . HERBIE KOCH from WHAS, Louisville, Kilgen organ . . . 1/35, JESSE CRAWFORD, Royal Typewriter's "Poet of the Organ" over WFAF, N. Y.; FRANKLIN LEGGE over CRCT, Toronto; STANLEIGH MALLOTTE and WILLIAM MEADER over WJZ, N. Y.; EDDIE DUNSTEDTER at the Kilgen organ on nationwide CBS network from KMOX, St. Louis . . . 2/35, SQUIRE HASKIN over WHAM, Rochester . . . 4/35, EARL R. LARSON over WEBC, Duluth, in program "Evening Organ Moods" . . . 7/35, FRED FEIBEL's organ reveille over CBS network from New York . . . 10/35, ARTHUR CHANDLER over WLW, Cincinnati . . . 12/36, KAY REED over WNEW . . . 7/37, DICK LEIBERT and his ensemble over WJZ, N. Y. . . . 7/51, Heard on the BBC, London, were organists SYDNEY GUSTARD, FELTON RAPLEY, STANLEY TUDOR (recordings), ROBINSON CLEAVER on "Mainly Rhythm," HENRY CROUDSON on "Rhythm Around the World," THOMAS DANDO on "Bright and Early," REGINALD DIXON at the Tower Ballroom (Blackpool) on "Tuneful Tempo," ANDREW FENNER on "Melody Moments," NEVILLE MEAL on "Morning Rhythm," and SANDY MacPHERSON on "Chapel in the Valley" and "At Your Request."

That should do it until we get back from our December search. So long, sourdoughs!

—Lloyd & Jason

# Fabulous Fifteenth Footnotes and Flashbacks

by Claud Beckham

The editors of Theatre Organ have very graciously given me space to tell you how we planned for the Fabulous Fifteenth to be the "Convention of Comparing and Choosing" — a once-in-a-lifetime chance to sample the whole spectrum of music, the instruments, and the activities now available for organ lovers. Our members, of course, make these choices all the time, consciously or unconsciously — choosing the programs that their Chapters can support, choosing the projects that they will give their time and their energy and their money for, and ultimately choosing the direction that ATOS will move in.

In the Fabulous Fifteenth, we certainly wanted to give our Conventioneers fun-flavored festive experiences. And, underneath the fun and festivity, we just as certainly wanted to give them some substantial material for making more and more of their comparisons and choices *consciously and thoughtfully*.

For the dyed-in-the-wool theatre-organ buff, we started our planning by selecting the widest range of instruments you could imagine; the Rahway Theatre 2/7 Wurlitzer, the Radio City Music Hall Studio 3/13 Wurlitzer, the Academy of Music 3/14 Wurlitzer, the Beacon Theatre 4/19 Wurlitzer, the Schaeble "Valencia" 4/23 Robert Morton, the United Palace "175th Street" 4/23 Robert Morton, the L.I.U. "Brooklyn Paramount" 4/26 Wurlitzer, the Loderhose "Paramount Studio Plus" 4/41 Wurlitzer, and the biggest-ever Radio City Music Hall Grand 4/58 Dual-Console Wurlitzer. And most of these fine instruments in their original theatre settings!

For those who had wider-ranging instrumental interests (as most of our Conventioneers had), we scheduled two of New York's finest church organs and an unbelievably powerful and versatile concert electronic organ, played by superb artists who could explore the most spectacular examples of the "classical" organ literature — CALVIN HAMPTON at the Calvary Church Roosevelt-Skinner; FRED TULAN at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine Aeolian-Skinner (with state trumpets!); and TED ALAN WORTH at the Rodgers "Virgil Fox" Custom Special. We had seven concert exhibit-studio settings for the newest in theatre-style home and concert electronic organs, a spectacular electronic festival gala where all

seven exhibiting companies presented sparkling mini-concerts in the elegant Commodore Grand Ballroom, and three special electronic concerts — DON BAKER at a gigantic Conn theatre installation; the WORTH/CROW duo with a tremendous pairing of Rodgers classical and theatre specials; and ED WEICH with an incredibly beautiful Baldwin "Pro" ballroom-banquet show spot.

Where circumstances restricted us to one artist per installation, we scheduled a musician who could give our Conventioneers a broad appreciation of the instrument — JEFF BARKER at the Schaeble Morton; DENNIS JAMES at the Loderhose Wurlitzer; DON KINNIER at the Academy of Music Wurlitzer; and JACK WARD at the Music Hall Studio Wurlitzer. But at most instruments, we could schedule several



*Fabulous Fifteenth Budget and Finance Chairmen Roy and Mary Sharp look on approvingly as New York Chapter Secretary-Treasurer Allen Rossiter repays the cash advance received from ATOS Treasury early this year for Convention working funds. For Rossiter, settling this obligation — the last of the Convention's outstanding debts — climaxes a year of devoting every spare hour on bookkeeping, treasury, registration and internal publicity operations for the Fabulous Fifteenth. The smiles reflect the fact that, in spite of expenditures totaling almost \$30,000, the Fabulous Fifteenth wound up slightly in the black.*

different artists with a corresponding opportunity to compare a variety of styles and presentations — RICHARD LEIBERT and RAY BOHR at the Music Hall Grand Wurlitzer (along with six deliriously happy Jackpot Contest winners); ALLEN MILLS, BILLY NALLE, and SEARLE WRIGHT at the L.I.U. Wurlitzer; RICHARD RODGERS and a dozen spontaneous Concert Cameo artists (including ALLEN MILLER-CUM-QUAD) at the Beacon Wurlitzer; LOWELL AYARS and JERRY MENDELSON at the Rahway Wurlitzer, and DON BAKER, JEFF

BARKER, LEE ERWIN (with young surprise guest artist ROBBIE IRVIN), DENNIS JAMES, ASHLEY MILLER, and JIMMY PAULIN at the United Palace Morton.

A happy combination of planning and plain luck gave our Conventioneers a "choose and compare" opportunity to hear a few artists play on more than one instrument — DON BAKER (Conn and United Palace Morton); JEFF BARKER (Schaeble Morton and United Palace Morton); DENNIS JAMES (Loderhose Wurlitzer and United Palace Morton); ASHLEY MILLER (Allen and United Palace Morton); RICHARD RODGERS (Conn and Beacon Wurlitzer); and ED WELCH (Two Baldwins, Beacon Wurlitzer, and Music Hall Wurlitzer).

We and the National ATOS Offices especially wanted the Fabulous Fifteenth to reflect the fact that ATOS is a functioning educational and heritage-preserving organization. So we scheduled a full program of seminars, demonstrations, and films — SEARLE WRIGHT's demonstration concert-lecture on using "serious" techniques and registrations to create exciting new theatre-organ sounds; ALLEN HUGHES' great provocative lecture on the opportunities for ATOS to make a significant contribution to American music; LEE ERWIN's spectacular presentation of composing and playing theatre organ music for silent films; RONZEN Production's refreshing and revealing film chronicle of the Theatre Organ Movement, "MY WIFE SAID THAT'S ENOUGH!"; MEL ROBINSON's question-an-answer session on maintenance and repairs; ALLEN MILLER's technical survey of what's inside the chambers and his most impressive demonstration of the magic of the QUAD player; DON BAKER's recommendations for registration; LOWELL AYAR's re-creation of the old-time "singing organist" spots; the BOB BALFOUR/LEE ERWIN recording demonstration; the banquet-program excerpt from CHARISMA's forthcoming documentary on "Rescue of the Rivoli"; and, a last-minute surprise bonus, TOM NORMAN's slide-show, "ORGANS IN HAWAII."

For the heritage preservers, and for those who like to go back over all the choices and comparisons, Ben Hall and Geoff Paterson put together what they modestly called a "souvenir brochure." Actually, this beautiful 54-page book, within its spectacular blue-and-white covers, combines an unbelievable quantity of never-before-printed reference material on Fabulous Fifteenth artists, organs, and theatres (including an Organ Crawler's Atlas of Midtown Man-

## FIFTEENTH FOOTNOTES

(Continued from page 37)

hattan that ought to inspire similar fact-finding historical projects in every ATOS Chapter); collector's-item Paterson drawings of all the convention consoles (plus consoles of the only two home-studio Wurlitzers now playing in Manhattan); historic photos of Manhattan's demised picture palaces; and an impressive organ-ized survey of the support that the Fabulous Fifteenth staff received from volunteers, from advertisers, from benefactors, and from advisors. This extraordinary brochure has been acclaimed by our members (who have been ordering them for gifts; one enthusiastic individual has given away several hundred to his customers); by the press; and by our associates in the music and theatre professions.

That will give you an idea of the breadth and variety we wanted the Fabulous Fifteenth to cover. But to find out whether we succeeded — you'll have to ask one of the 800 people who came! □

## Closing Chord

**ALAN P. ROSS**, 47, Rochester organist succumbed after open-heart surgery on July 30. Mr. Ross, an enthusiastic ATOS member, played electronics in restaurants around the city, and was featured on pipe organ programs in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Connecticut. He is survived by his parents.

\* \* \*

One of the best known theatre organists in Buffalo during the Golden Days, **CARL E. COLEMAN**, 72, succumbed to a heart attack on August 14.

Mr. Coleman's biggest theatre stint was at Shea's Great Lakes, also a lengthy engagement at Shea's Buffalo. On the staff of the Buffalo Broadcasting Corporation, he broadcast over WGR, WKBW, WKEN, and WMAK, using a 2-manual Wurlitzer in the Wurlitzer building at 674 Main Street. For years, he played organ in the Churchill Tabernacle. A demonstrator for Hammond, he was organist and choirmaster of Pilgrim St. Luke's United Church of Christ at the time of his death.

*Seattle  
For '71*



## CENTRAL OHIO

Theatre organ activity has been very big in the Columbus, Ohio area this year, and progress of the Central Ohio Chapter has been equally good. Sad news is that our immediate Past President Jack Dommer has been reassigned by his company and will be moving East. His 2/5 Wurlitzer is up for sale and we wish Jack much luck in his new assignment.

Three very successful concerts have been given on the Ohio Theatre 4/20 Morton Organ but it has been used many more times. At Christmas time, Tom Hamilton played it with a 20-man orchestra for the "Sounds of Christmas at the Ohio" program. The club met there during the holidays for an "open console" night. It has been used for non-public meetings and has been played before at least three-night's presentations of movies.

Roger Garrett returned for a concert in March which was attended by approximately 2200. Worth and Crow, famous duo-organ team presented a concert on two giant Rodgers organs in May. The attendance was surprising and the audience was treated to a special when Andy Crow came up out of the pit playing the Morton — which he does as well as he plays the electronic.

On June 14, Tony Fenelon utterly captivated a nearly 2,000 person audience. As a special during his performance, Tony played a piano-organ number using the Baldwin Grand Piano with the phantom manual mounted in place of the piano's music rack. This too was a surprise for most of the audience which knew nothing of the extra manual.

Work continues on the 3/16 Wurlitzer Special which has been removed from the RKO Palace Theatre (Columbus) and its restoration has been the subject of a Sunday newspaper article and film has been shot by WBNS-TV, local CBS outlet, for a documentary.

Central Ohio members removed a 2/5 Wurlitzer from a residence in Mt. Vernon, Ohio, in late May - early June. The console has been on display in the local Wurlitzer music store and has attracted much attention.

New officers are Ed Lawrence, President; Paul S. Noblitt, Secretary; and David Billmire, Treasurer. Plans for the new fiscal year include promotion of a concert to be given in three sessions by local organist and member Mike Williams on a home installation 4/19 beautiful mongrel in Somerset Ohio for the benefit of the Retarded Childrens Schools of the county, October 3rd. A special feature will be a morning concert specially for children featuring tunes familiar to most youngsters.

Right now we're looking forward to a tentative November 1st appearance at the Ohio Theatre in Columbus by George Wright as well as a return engagement by Tony Fenelon.

— Paul S. Noblitt

## LOS ANGELES

After a relatively slow mid-summer period, club activities started up in a hurry on Sunday afternoon, August 23, with a "Pipes and Cycles" party at Joe Koon's motorcycle (and Wurlitzer) shop. Member Gaylord Carter kicked off the afternoon's festivities with a rousing performance on the 18 ranks. Approximately 300 members and their families enjoyed the beer, soft drinks and food provided by party director Chick Lander and his assistants (so much so that a number of unscheduled rush trips to nearby supermarkets became necessary). It is understood that our club had a large representation at the convention in NYC in July. In fact, two of the people interviewed on the NBC-TV "First Tuesday" August show were LA members Anna Olive and Wally Acton. Those who attended are still raving about all the good times and fine concerts. The San Gabriel Civic Auditorium organ installation is progressing, but somewhat more slowly than originally planned due to delays caused by stage shows booked into the auditorium. It is planned that the organ dedicatory concert will not be scheduled until the organ is actually playable. By agreement with the San Gabriel city council, LA ATOS will present the first organ concert. Members were saddened to hear of the loss by fire of the George Wright studio organ; but gladdened by the news that Byron Melcher now has his mighty Morton "Gorilla in the Garage" fully playing. (Remember Byron's "Gorilla in the Garden" organ in Des Plaines, Illinois and Replica

Records?) Many club members plan to attend the Home Organ Festival at Hoberg's Resort in Northern California in early September. On September 20 the club presents Carol Jones at the Wiltern, and in October our Program Director Byron Melcher will be the featured artist at the Wiltern Kimball.

—Ray Bonner  
Liaison Chairman

## MOTOR CITY

Perfect August weather helped to make our chapter picnic at Floyd Bunt's home in beautiful rolling hills near Oxford a pleasant success. Floyd is presently Headmaster of Kingsbury School, and the spacious grounds surrounding his 120 year old residence provided more than ample space for badminton, horseshoes and conversation. A member of the local law enforcement agency, Floyd admits that daily target practice (from his front door to a nearby tree) is indeed rare in this day and age. His 3/8 Page, heard during the 1967 Convention, still awaits installation in his new home.

In addition to a large chapter turn out for our first bring-your-own-food-and-grill picnic, welcome guests were ATOS National President and First Lady Stillman and Mildred Rice from the Connecticut Valley Chapter.

In a unique amalgamation of interests during their National Convention held in Detroit over the Labor Day weekend, the Society for Cinephiles with the cooperation of the Motor City Chapter presented the 1926 Paramount Pictures silent western epic, "The Vanishing American," at the Redford Theatre, featuring John Muri at the 3/10 Barton. This film, which is not available for commercial public showing, was presented through the courtesy of the American Film Institute in Washington, D.C. The Society for Cinephiles is organized in the interest of furthering the appreciation of the silent film.

It is hoped that other chapters of ATOS can be as fortunate as Motor City in similar presentations which combine interests of both ATOS and local silent movie enthusiasts.

—Don Lockwood

## NIAGARA FRONTIER

On July 29, Niagara Frontier's Art Melgier returned to the Riviera's 3/11 Wurlitzer and brought with him plenty of nostalgia. He opened the show with songs by Buffalo songwriter Ray Henderson as well as songs written by Henderson in conjunction with DeSylva and Brown.

A musical synopsis of the silent movie, "Wings," which Art accompanied several months ago in a local movie house, was presented to demonstrate aircraft and cannonfire. The 700-

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FOR SALE — Reisner Relay and Switches for 3 manual and pedal and 5 ranks. Assembled, \$875.00. W. H. BREUER, 20 Kirby Place, Palo Alto, California 94301.

WANTED — 6-rank chest (Wurlitzer). Small scale tibia to 8' with offset, 16' metal diaphone and chest. Tuba mirabilis. Send condition and price. W. H. BREUER, 20 Kirby Place, Palo Alto, Calif. 94301.

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WANTED: 3-Manual Console — prefer Wurlitzer with or without switch racks. Send photo and price first letter. Land O'Lakes Chapter ATOS, 3213 Windgate Road, St. Paul, Minn. 55119.

plus crowd was equally receptive to Art's accompaniment of Carole Lombard's silent comedy, "Run, Girl, Run." A wide range of melodies by Harold Arlen, another Buffalo composer, was performed with the Melgier treatment and a Gershwin medley closed the evening's repertoire.

Carlo Annibale commanded the Riviera Wurli on August 19, performing an interesting musical anthology, which included "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue," "Harlem Nocturne" and "Havah Nagilah." During his concert, Carlo asked Mrs. Dorothy Graney to join him at the console, something that had never been done at the Riviera.

On August 4 our chapter held its picnic at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Elwyn Guest in Angola, N.Y. Many members and their families attended and had a grand time.

— Shirley Cole

## OREGON

The July meeting of the Oregon Chapter of ATOS, held at Dick Pitts' home overlooking Yaquina Bay at Newport, Oregon, was called to order by President Duffy. The Treasurer's report and reading of the minutes were dispensed with. An August concert on Howard Vollum's San Francisco Paramount Wurlitzer was announced.

The meeting was adjourned for a concert by Don Simmons, staff organist

WANTED — 2-6rk Wurli chests, 4/12 note 16' offsets with relays and switch stacks, 2 regulators and tremis; 16' Bass String and Celeste, Musette, Krumet, Vox, Horn Diap., 1 set shades w/motors. Skinner Gamba and Celeste, scale 52 or larger, Spitzflute Celeste, stopped flute (16-1'), Cor Anglais, French Horn, Geigen Diapason, scale 46 or smaller. Any 32' Bourdon or 16' Open Wood (12 Pipes) and chests. Box 15371, San Diego, CA 92115. 714-463-0309.

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at the Oaks Roller Rink in Portland, on the Pitts' 4/14 Billy Woods. This organ originally came from the Oaks rink, was removed to Astoria and then eventually found its way to Newport. This is a very mellow instrument and is particularly suited to Mr. Simmons jazz stylings. After a very enjoyable concert we adjourned for tours of the organ chambers and a jam session.

— Rachel Zenk

## PIEDMONT

Members of Piedmont Chapter met Sunday, August 2nd, at the home of Gayle and Larry Hoke on Knollwood Drive in Burlington. The chief object of interest was the newly discovered (in a church) 2/4 Robert Morton Pit Organ which the Hokes have acquired. The organ originally had a player mechanism, but this had been removed from the console.

After a business session and refreshments, the group moved across town to Dr. Paul Abernethy's new "Cathedral of Music" to hear his newly finished ex-Center Theatre's 2/8 Robert Morton, beautifully played by Larry Keesler. Other members tried their hands at the wonderful sounding instrument. While there are some fine adjustments still to be made, the guests who remembered it when it was still in the theatre thought that it sounded better in its new home than it did in the Center Theatre.

— J. Marion Martin

*'Gee, Dad, it's a...Rodgers?'*



Photo courtesy of Stu Green

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