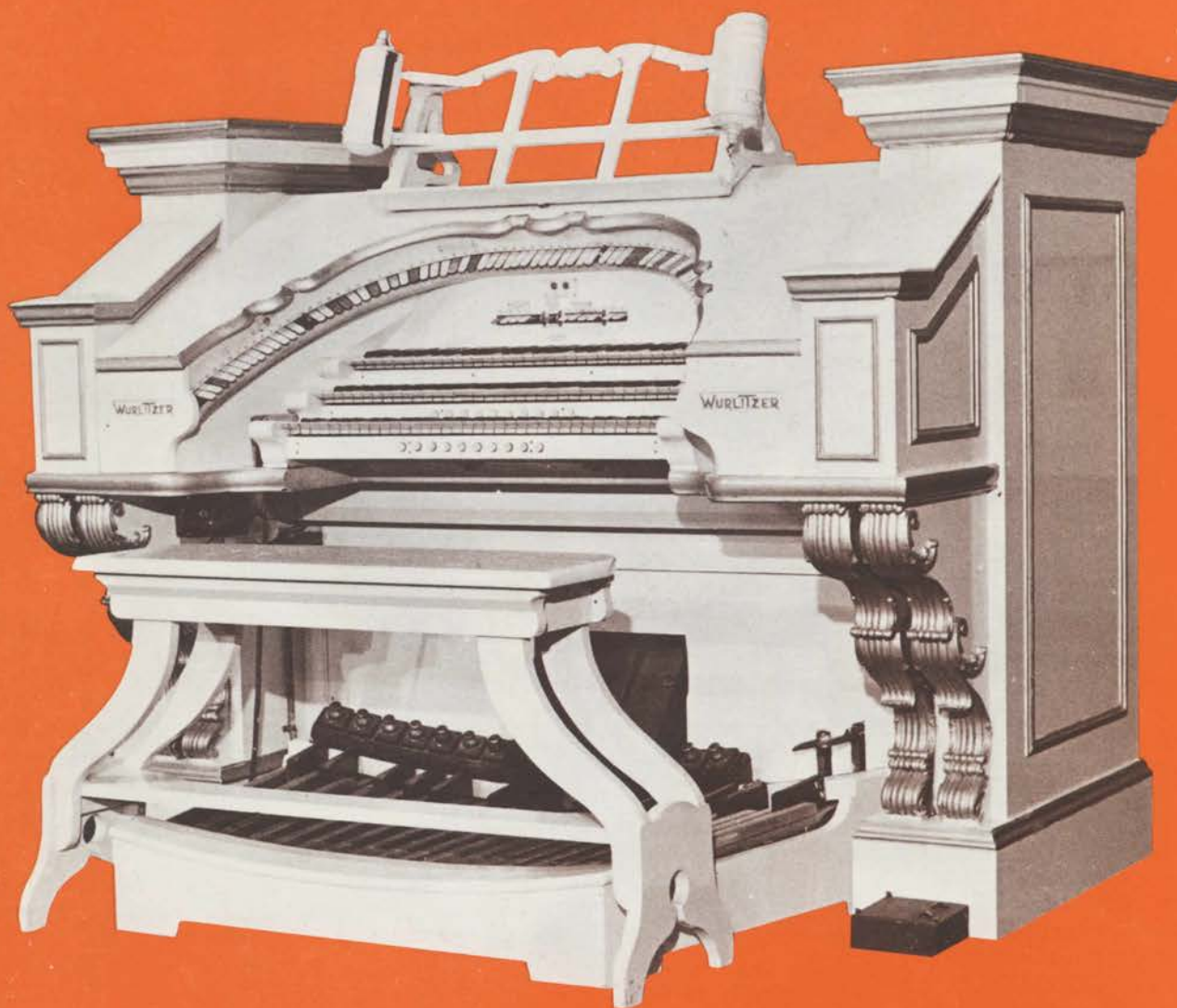
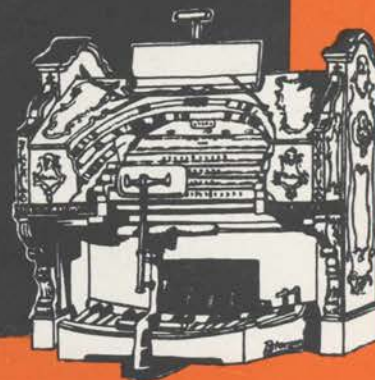


THEATRE ORGAN

VOLUME 13 NUMBER 5

OCTOBER, 1971



JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

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cover photo...

The 3/8 Wurlitzer, opus 2203, was shipped to the Granada Theatre, Woolwich, London, England in November of 1936. Story on page five.

JOHN D. SHARP PHOTO



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president's message...

Growth — one way of believing in theatre organ is to help our society grow. The simplest way is to send in your dues early. This cuts the cost and lowers the burden on all our unpaid staff. For you new members, the reason we are mentioning this is that *all* memberships expire December 31st. Please help next year get off to a booming start.

If you are in a city with a theatre organ and no chapter, why don't you form one? There is a lot more status as a member of an international society as far as a theatre manager is concerned, than as an individual. Keep those theatre organs alive.

While we have lost a couple of chapters, several more have become active groups. This is natural growth. A music magazine editorial says in the last five years, AGO lost 16 chapters and their members make their living from music.

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an acre of seats
in a palace of splendor...



By Bill Peterson, Number 24 in a series

THE SEVENTH AVENUE THEATRE – SEATTLE

Designed by Sherwood Ford, this house seats 2200. Originally called the Fox, and later the Music Hall, it was completely redecorated and restored about one year ago and renamed the Seventh Avenue. The nautical motifs on the organ grilles were inspired by the fact that the original name of the house was to be the Mayflower. The four manual Robert Morton organ in the Carl Greer Inn, Sacramento, California is from this theatre.

the GRANADA

Woolwich, London, England



"the most romantic theatre ever built"

by Ralph Bartlett

John D. Sharp Photos

April 21, 1937, a wonderful new theatre with architecture by Massey Uren and Komisarjevsky opened its doors to the public for the first time with a super pre-war screen and organ presentation. The theatre is in the dockland and arsenal and military area on the south bank of the River Thames some eight or nine miles southeast of town center. The new theatre had taken some nine months or so to construct after removing old properties in Powis Street and High Street, Woolwich, construction was in the hands of Bovis Ltd., and the main architects were Cecil Massey ARIBA and R. H. Uren ARIBA — the former was architect for the famed Granada, Tooting, London. Theodore Komisarjevsky was the interior architect, and once again he produced a theatre not unlike Tooting,

but slightly more refined in design, based on Italian Gothic, against Spanish Gothic for Tooting.

Described on its opening as "the most romantic theatre ever built," but everyone working on the site in 1937 was sworn to secrecy about its interior design. To view the outside of this theatre seating close on 3,000 gives no indication of its exotic interior, for it has a plain curved brick frontage with a large tower feature, a large canopy, and the usual Granada lettering, so one would possibly call the exterior "modernistic."

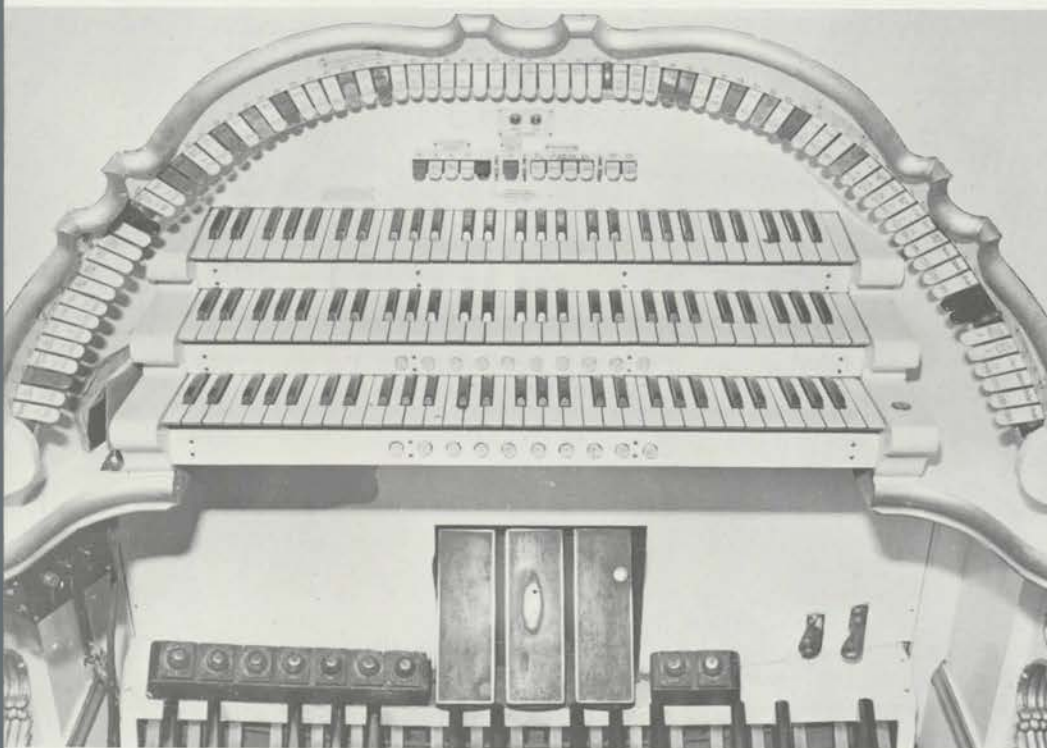
The shock of finding the theatre is something different comes after paying your cash at the entrance hall, for then one sees a sweeping staircase with golden gothic arches lit with concealed lighting plus paintings as from some

distant cathedral. In the old days one could partake afternoon tea in the foyer upstairs midst these surroundings, without having to enter further into the theatre. But today with Bingo in mind, it's a short step thru the Hall of Mirrors, into the balcony, where one notices heavy arches are prominent either side of the hall, plus stained glass windows, paintings and diffused lighting, plus magnificent chandeliers. Downstairs there is a carved wooden balustrade on two sides for waiting patrons, and also one at the rear of the stalls area.

All this for the then admission prices of Stalls: 9d., 1s.0d., and 1s.6d. Circle: 1s.6d., 2s.0d. Loges: 2s.6. The opening show was a British film with Will Hay in "Good Morning Boys" and an American film with Lew Ayres in "Lady Be Careful," plus British Sound News, plus



ORGANIST ROBINSON CLEAVER AT GRANADA WOOLWICH WURLITZER



CLOSE UP OF MANUALS AND STOP TABS.

Reginald Dixon at the advertised "Mighty" Wurlitzer.

With RCA High Fidelity sound system it would be a good sound feature, but sufficient to say that there was 44 miles of electric wire in the theatre construction, some 2 miles of silk damask for stage drapes, over a million bricks to build up the theatre, 558 gallons of paint for outside and inside the theatre, 59 tons of asphalt, one mile of

rubber, some 1,259 square yards of linoleum, so that the opening film stars, Glenda Farrell and Claude Hulbert, really had no trouble in declaring the theatre open, but on the evening of April 21, 1937 at 7:30 p.m. the opening of the Granada, Woolwich, was really something, if other openings by the same group were anything to go by.

The second organist to appear was the late Donald Thorne, followed by

one now in Canada — Harry Farmer, then came Nelson Elms, who has only of recent times retired from managerial side on Granada. The late Dudley Beaven then appeared followed by Eric Smith from the Bedford Theatre with Tony Lowery on piano (musical director at that time). Next came a duet with Dudley Beaven on the organ and Clive Richardson on piano, followed by the late Reginald Foxwell at the organ, but by now the BBC were to broadcast the organ every bi-week on a Monday at 3:15 p.m. commencing on August 16, 1937 by the late Lloyd Thomas and followed alternative sessions by Dudley Beaven, this was continued until the war, although the last one by Robinson Cleaver was cancelled thru a bomb cutting the lines from Woolwich to town. September, 1937, had Steffani and his show on the stage, and two weeks later the famed Bobby Howell Stage Show arrived, then another two weeks and Jack Fields with his stage show arrived, whilst in November, Troise and his Mandoliers were on the stage, for Christmas week, 1937, Bobby Howell came back with a super presentation on the stage, whilst Boyd Oxford brought 1938 in on the organ; a few weeks later there was another stage show called "Music Hall"; then in January came the return of Reginald Dixon at the Wurlitzer, plus a broadcast; but the following week saw the master himself at the console, newly from the ill-fated Union Cinemas — Harold Ramsey with his "Radio Rodeo"; this was followed in March, 1938, with a stage show backed by Reginald Dixon and the announcement in the press that within one year 1,332,486 patrons had visited the theatre!

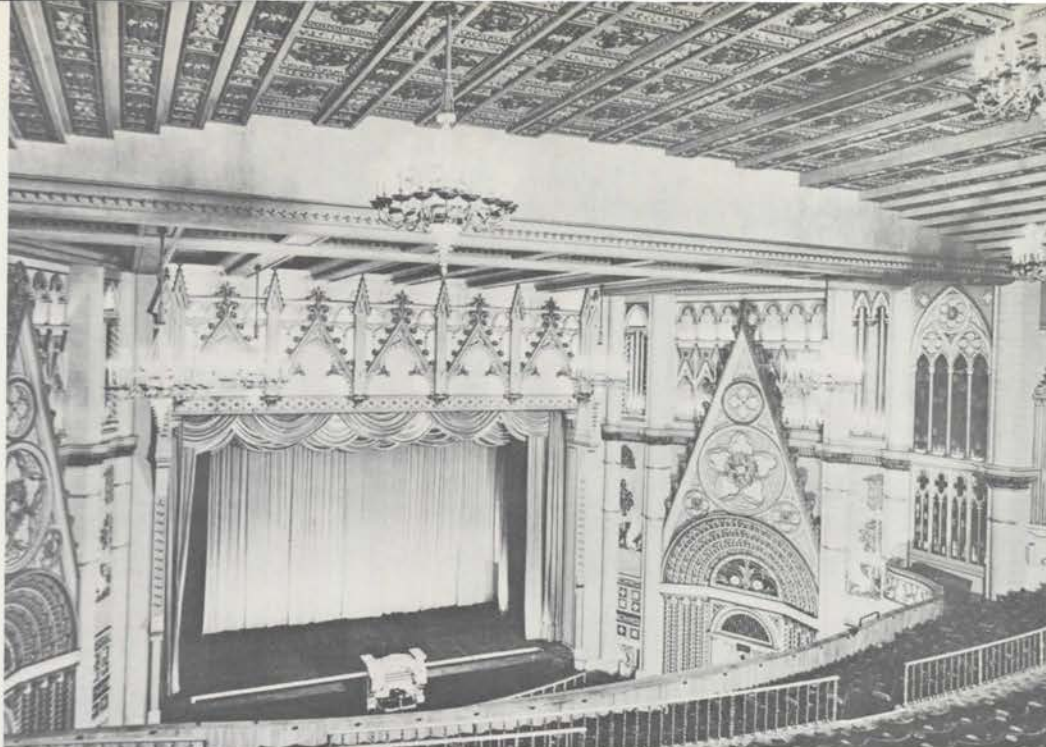
The second year commenced with a "Kerbside Kabaret" on the stage, mostly of acts connected with buskers who normally play outside West End theatres and cinemas whilst the patrons await the opportunity of entering the choice of their evening's entertainment. August 5, 1938, saw the initial visit by organist John Madin, who a few weeks earlier had been playing for Gaumont British Pictures Corporation. September brought "Big" Bill Campbell and his stage show, a bright and breezy Western style show much enjoyed by young and old of that day and age. November saw Hughie Green and His Gang on the stage, shades of Hughie today connected with TV. December brought organists Dudley Beaven and Cyril Gell together on piano and organ, whilst January, 1939, had the famous Mantovani with supporting acts on the stage. January also brought for the first time — after many tours around the

group, of organist Robinson Cleaver, who was followed a few weeks later by Reginald Dixon for the third time. April had the famous pianists Rawicz & Landauer together on the stage. This brought the second year to the amazing total of 2,675,657 patrons visited the theatre in two years.

June saw a new venture in Bryan Michie's Discoveries on the stage, perhaps it lasted more than one week, I should imagine so, as Bryan was immensely popular. June had Horace Bagot at the organ, an organist which most British fans would recall playing at the Odeon, Llandudno – or Winter Gardens as it was known in those days. Famed Ronald Hanmer of post war musical arranging then appeared at the Wurlitzer in September, and Neville Meale in January, 1940 – a nephew of the late Arthur Meale of Westminster Central Hall fame, and with Reginald Dixon later in the same month, I would suggest that this was his last visit to the Granada, Woolwich, as the war was going strong, and shortly he, as most of his fellow players, would be in the various services. The theatre records owing to the war periods are scarce, but Robinson Cleaver stayed for a few months, as also did Jackie Brown, and other visiting organists from memory included Florence de Jong, Thomas Dando, Leslie Simpson, John Madin and Lloyd Thomas, whilst on the odd occasion there was a stage show, much supported by the army, as Woolwich is also an army center, and with foreign navies in the docks across the river, what show via stage or organ could go wrong?

With some normal return to life, a stage show in January, 1961, was a pantomime – a British institution at Christmas – “Mother Goose” on the stage. Organists came and went, managers moved from here to there, and staff continued to support their patrons, but with time, films went out, and Bingo also took over.

The Wurlitzer organ is listed as number 2203 shipped November 30, 1936, but not opened until April 21, 1937, and with three manuals, and eight ranks consisting of: Diaphonic Diapason, Trumpet, Tibia Clausa, Clarinet, Violin, Violin Celeste, Concert Flute, and Vox Humana. It was a repeat of instruments placed in theatres on the circuit at Bedford, Mansfield, Wandsworth, East Ham and Greenwich. With a theatre seating close on 3,000 surely the revised specification of Diaphonic Diapason, English Horn, Tuba, Tibia Clausa, Gamba, Gamba Celeste, Saxophone and Flute would have been more suitable?



AUDITORIUM



FOYER

This style was lost in an under-the-stage installation but suitable for a 2,000 seater such as Bedford, Wandsworth and Greenwich, with side chambers, but East Ham, Mansfield and Woolwich suffer thru a decision in having this style rather than the revised specifications which came to be in September, 1937. One wonders what the effect of say Clapham Junction would have been at Woolwich had a different

style been sited, maybe those sitting listening to the organ shows might not have been so keen to sit under the console as they were apt to do in days of old.

Whatever faults were created in earlier days, the organ has been a favorite with organists for its orchestral tonal qualities, and the grand piano attachment of former days, it was a little gem. It still is today, although its



MAIN CHAMBER OF WURLITZER



SOLO CHAMBER OF WURLITZER

Trumpet could do with a little more opening up, the Diapason is very effective on straight work, and the Tibia really throbs away, and with the two String ranks thrown in, it has a character of its own. The Vox Humana and Flute are nothing special, but add some of that orchestral flavor already gained thru the other ranks, whilst the Clarinet adds a little brightness, but it's really overpowered by the Trumpet.

The Pedal has two 16s and five 8s plus one coupler, usual Bass Drum, Kettle Drum, Crash Cymbal, Cymbal — the 8s are effective but the 16s really make it worthwhile plus coupler. The Accompaniment has three 16s, and eight 8s, six at 4, a Twelfth, and Piccolo at 2, also available are Mandolin (from piano), Sleigh Bells, Chrysoglott (49 notes), Snare Drum, Tambourine, Castanets, Chinese Block and Tom

Tom — on second touch there are two at 8ft. plus Cathedral Chimes and Triangle, with a Solo 4ft. to Accompaniment coupler.

The Solo has four 16s, eight 8ft., five at 4ft., two at 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ rds, two at 2ft., and Tierce at 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ ths. There is also Cathedral Chimes, Xylophone (37 notes), Glockenspiel (30 notes), Chrysoglott (49 notes), Vibraphone (49 notes) and Vibraphone Damper, two couplers: Sub Octave and Octave, and on second touch Trumpet 16ft which rather cripples the effect trying to use second touch . . . as such. The third manual, is a pure coupler, having Accompaniment Unison to Manual 3, Solo Unison to Manual 3, Piano 8ft., Xylophone (37 notes), Glockenspiel (30 notes) and Chrysoglott (49 notes). It would appear that Manual 3 is basically the best of both Accompaniment and Solo together, giving a larger body than would normally be used on either other manual department, effective, but how much better it would have been to have relays on the top third manual.

The two chambers are large enough to take additional ranks, and one wonders whether it was planned to install ten ranks rather than the eight sited, as there was a story that once Granada did think of ten ranks, but owing to excessive import charges it was reduced to eight, and the only two to have a ten ranker was the Granada at Kingston upon Thames in Surrey opened late in 1939 when the war was on, and Granada, Edmonton, London, opened 1933.

The blower room is situated between both chambers so that there is ample wind to both main and solo, all-be-it there are five ranks in the main against three in the solo, however, there are four sets of swell shades, two in each chamber facing towards each other, so that the sound mixes away from the console towards the audience, which is not bottled up by an orchestral wall, but open wood carved orchestral pit surround.

Why the criticism, and opinions, and much about the theatre? Well soon it will not be heard again in this venue, plans are afoot to create a new Bingo mecca with level floor so that the hall can be used for dancing, wrestling, as well as now Bingo sessions. Hence the organ will either be covered up for time to make some future enthusiast wonder what became of the Wurlitzer, or alternatively to be saved and rescued for some project away from the theatre, to be heard again in new surroundings, and to be enjoyed by future generations. □

The Harry Blair Legend

PART I



Rose Diamond about the time (1967) she started a new career as a film bit player in Hollywood, where she has lived for many years. Her first role was a brief stint as a confused wedding organist in "The Graduate."

The roster of the Blair-founded lunch club (usually held at Childs Cafeteria) was topped by this show card (in blazing color) which all members signed. The informal club resulted in the start of the Blair music and slide service which helped many organists keep jobs in the bleak '30s.

This is the story of a wonderful guy, and his equally wonderful wife — two people who invested their lives in helping others. It also chronicles an era, because our principals were entwined in the aura of the golden days of the theatre organ and show business in general.

One doesn't spend much time in the presence of a veteran organist before the name Harry Blair is mentioned. Harry Blair — a plain name, but one which is bound to trigger any organist who once rode a console skyward in a beam of blinding light. The name conjures a warm and friendly expression in the eyes of the veteran. This has happened to the writer time after time; say "Harry Blair" and the response is invariably "what a wonderful man he was."

With so many friends among organists, it soon became obvious that here was a colorful story about a man who had apparently made a friend of every

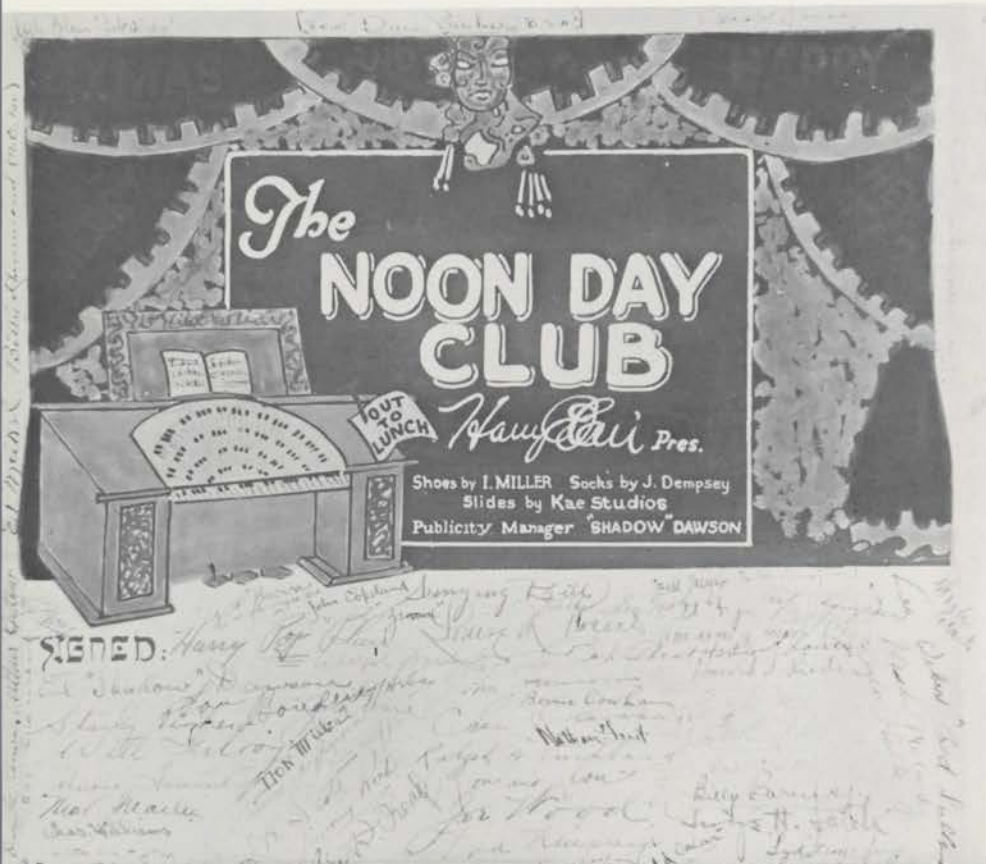


One of the atmospheric slides Harry Blair made for Rose Diamond while she was playing at Loew's State in New York City. Slides were photos of cards with hand-lettered lyrics. Each color slide was hand-colored with watercolors.

theatre organist who had crossed his path.

One organist who knew Harry Blair and much of the secret which endeared him to organists is Rose Diamond who was playing Loew's theatres in New York during some of the perhaps 25 years of Blair's operation. We asked Rose to write us an article about the legendary figure whose name was on nearly every Gotham organist's lips in the old days. When the resulting article arrived, we learned that Rose had gone far beyond our modest request: she had enlisted East Coast organist Rosa Rio in a search for links in the story. Together they came up with documentation from the Blair's contemporaries which steadily built a picture of a man and wife team interested in people above all else. We'll never know how much Harry's hobby of helping people, mainly organists, cost him in earning time lost. But that figure wouldn't have interested Harry or Adele Blair in the least. Their profits were in much larger terms — the reward of service to one's fellow man.

We learned nothing of the Blair's beginnings, where they were born, religion, racial extraction, education, politics, how they met and fell in love — and similar items which have little bearing on the big picture. We first meet Harry Blair when he switched from a career in already dying vaudeville (early '20s) to the role of song plugger for a New York publisher circa 1925. We have not been able to locate a photo of the Blairs, and we have no solid information on the dates of their passing other than it was in the late '50s. But no matter; it's what they did with their lives that counts and the evidence that follows builds to a story



of devotion to friends and colleagues one rarely encounters in these troubled times.

Our story consists entirely of the words their contemporaries have to say in retrospect about them, drawing on memories which brighten many an aging eye in the telling. There is no special order of letters and no attempt has been made to place events in chronological order.

First, a brief note from former NBC organist Rosa Rio, who helped make this tribute possible:



ROSA RIO

Many of us today are former members of the Blairs "Noon Day Club" and since that time have gone up the ladder of success. During the period of the pipe organ in the theatre, the Blairs supplied us with the necessary music and slides and rejoiced with us over the rewards of being theatre organists. Then suddenly the talkies came in and the theatre organists were sitting along the sidelines wondering what to do about their careers. Adele and Harry Blair came to the rescue; they gave positive words of encouragement, fed many a hungry pedal pusher, loaned money, and helped to secure jobs.

Adele and Harry Blair's humbleness and their love for their fellow man was certainly a rare quality. I shall always remember the Blairs with love.

Rosa Rio puts the Blair's lives in succinct perspective, but there is much more. Read what one of Harry Blair's co-workers has to say. Arlo Hults was for many years organist for the NBC afternoon "PDQ" broadcast. He explains the Noon Day Luncheon Club.

I remember the first time I met Harry Blair. I had just come to New

York City from my first theatre organ job in Moberly, Missouri, looking for a job in the big city. As every organist, pianist and singer did in those days I contacted the music publishers for their new "plug tunes." Happening into Shapiro-Bernstein (then situated in a walk-up building on Broadway) I asked for copies of their latest songs and the reception girl sent me to the desk of a Jimmy Clark, then boss of six or eight song pluggers and Jimmy introduced me to a jolly rolly-polly named Harry Blair who, I soon found out, was truly interested in helping anybody and everybody. He sent me to a Mr. Luz at the Loew's Theatres music department who gave me my first job in New York City at Loew's Lexington.

Professional copies and song slides were then, and continued to be for many years, the most important tools for a theatre organist. Harry Blair supplied hundreds of organists in New York City and across the country with this material and it didn't have to be published by Shapiro-Bernstein, his employer. Whatever you needed he'd pick it up at Irving Berlin or De Sylva, Brown and Henderson or others and bring it to you wherever you were playing — always a warm, grinning, happy man.

Harry Blair's office at Shapiro-Bernstein was the mecca for organists who were "downtown" or "in town" for music slides or possible jobs. Often eight or ten would go out to lunch together discussing the organists' greatest need — a good ENDING song to stimulate applause. Out of all this was born Harry's "Noon Day Club" which kept the pedal pushers supplied with music and slides, so vital to continuing employment. Harry, Bernie Cowham and I supplied organists with parodies, tongue-twisters and other special material written by Bernie, slides manufactured by me and sold and shipped by Harry Blair, our own "Song Slide Service".

As times changed (late '30s) and organists were no longer employed in theatres (Don Baker at the Paramount and I at the RKO 86th Street — the last two organ-playing theatres in New York City) but worked night clubs and restaurants, Harry serviced these, not only with the music they needed but with personal visits, many out of town — Boston, Washington D.C., Detroit; wherever organists played Harry would show up, the greatest

believer in pop organ music the country has ever known.

I've written a lot about myself but each sentence pertains to a long and happy relationship with Harry Blair and his sweet wife, Adele.

Don Baker needs no introduction; here's what he has to say about Harry Blair.



DON BAKER

I first met Harry about 1925 or 26. He was then what was called a song plugger. This often entailed sitting around a night spot where a band was playing for a set or two and talking to the band leader. In our case, as you remember, Rose, Harry would drop by of an evening and give out copies of tunes that his company was currently pushing. Harry did this until the day that he talked Shapiro-Bernstein into letting him start the organists' slide service which was such a help to all of us. You will remember that he went around to all the publishers every day or so and picked up copies of all their tunes which he passed on to us a weekly package. The cost to us was nominal, and included the loan of such slides as he had available, plus any special material or parodies which we had written and were glad to give to him. His wife, Adele was a great help to him in this venture.

On a personal note I remember him, Rose, as a man whose office it was a pleasure to visit. He was an ex-vaudevillian, and as such was a tremendous audience for a pun or a joke; dropping in on him was a high spot in a day. The camaraderie he created between all of us was a delight. I felt a great personal loss when he passed away.

While organist Harry Jenkins didn't

know Harry Blair personally, his comments are indicative of reactions of those who dealt with the Blairs by mail, as many organists far from New York did.



HARRY J. JENKINS

While working for the Paramount-Public chain in New England for many years I subscribed to the Blair song slide sets to introduce new songs to the public. I never met Harry Blair except through correspondence but was impressed by the completeness and quality of his work.

I looked forward to receiving this song slide service with its cue music — it was a means of assisting the organist to fill a niche in the program at his theatre after sound started, although I had been using them in the silent days as well. Slides became much more important in the bleak '30s because they were often the difference between a playing job or none.

When that big box of slides arrived parcel post I would take it to my room, sit down with the cue sheet in hand and go through the set, looking at each slide. Seldom was I disappointed. I wish I had known the man responsible personally.

Another who knew the Blairs from a distance was Billy Wright, an organist who never stopped playing in theatres. He took managerial jobs in houses with organs after "talkies". Currently he's playing a Conn Theatre model nightly between shows at the Eastland theatre in West Covina, Calif.

Good old Harry Blair! Gads, I haven't heard his name mentioned in years, but what would we old-timers have done without his dependable song-slide service? I never met the guy but talked to him long-distance a

number of times when I had to have slides in a hurry and he never failed me! Used to sell plain black and white (lyrics only) for 35¢ and illustrated 50¢; and he made up many special slides for me. You could make up a real good set of song-slides from his material, much better than most of the stuff the music companies would send.

Yes, Rose, it was wonderful to be in Show Biz back in those days. It was always a thrill to me to ride the big 4/22 Morton organ at Loew's Midland, Kansas City, up out of the pit to stage level, with the Crescendo pedal down all the way! WOW, what tone! And Harry Blair's song slides added the finishing touch.

In New York City organist John Gart remembers the Blairs.

Having been a theatre organist for many years I naturally knew Harry Blair and his lovely wife Adele. You just had to like and respect Harry Blair. I for one will always have fond memories of Harry and his "Noon-Day Club".

Gradually the picture begins to fall out. Radio City Music Hall organist Jack Ward adds further information.



JACK WARD

Harry Blair had been a vaudeville performer in the heydays of show business. He and Adele were very fond of the organ and they were responsible for a great many organists reaching the top. He sold the idea of putting song slides in Loew's, RKO and various independent theatres throughout the country. He persuaded the Motion Picture Herald to run full page articles on the activities of the organists through Ed Dawson. Ed would make the rounds of the theatres and write about the solos being performed and

it was a tremendous boost for the organists as it gave them recognition. Harry Blair was also instrumental in helping the organists by placing them in theatres through the General Managers of the various circuits. He also gave valuable advice to them in their problems.

I was with Adele when she was in Flushing Hospital just before she passed away. As if it was yesterday, I still remember what she said to me, — "Jack, I don't want to go, I have so many fine friends and memories."

We are indebted to Rose Diamond for collecting and editing the letters which comprised our tribute to the Harry Blairs. She was assisted by Rosa Rio; Stu Green provided the connecting lines.

The legend of Harry Blair will be concluded in the next issue.

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Toward Higher Standards in Theatre Organ Installations

by Judd Walton and Jack Bethards

Owning a theatre organ is both a public trust and an investment opportunity. The theatre organ era lasted only a few short years, during which time comparatively few organs were built. Only a small fraction survive today. Because of this, standards of excellence in the restoration and reinstallation of these unique instruments ought to be established. Not only to help preserve theatre organs; but also to enhance their future value as collectors' items. Breaking up complete instruments for parts, poorly executing reinstallations and additions, exorbitant pricing, and other unacceptable practices should be discouraged. Recognition should be given those theatre organ owners who meet high standards, as is done in other hobby endeavors.

To most enthusiasts, the purchase and installation of a theatre organ in their home is a remote possibility. Over 5,000 members are enrolled in theatre organ clubs around the world. Yet of this number, probably not over a hundred or so, about two percent, have attained the dreams of the other 98 percent — a theatre organ installed in their own homes for their own use!

It seems natural to assume that such an accomplishment would yield nothing short of perfection in the physical and musical characteristics of these relatively rare instruments . . . that an owner's own personal interest in his considerable investment, to say nothing of his pride of ownership, would assure such perfection.

But such is not the case. In fact, the statement can be bluntly and truthfully made that *most theatre organ reinstallations are nothing short of abominations.*

Most Theatre Organ Builders Knew What They Were Doing

A fortunate few of us have had the opportunity of inspecting original theatre organ installations, and most of them were marvels of craftsmanship. Each builder was unique, yet almost all strove for quality. This was necessary because theatre organs were subjected to the most rugged demands of endurance. The work of major builders is characterized by quality materials, first-class workmanship performed by dedicated experts, and a definite plan or concept of design — both tonal and mechanical.

For instance, Robert Morton had an "orchestral instrument" plan of tonal design which was highly developed over the years. According to the founders of the company, Guy, Niles and Leland Jacobus, the orchestra concept was natural in that their instruments were replacing pit orchestras in many theatres. The Robert Morton mechanism was successfully designed for rugged reliability.

Wurlitzer tonal concepts, originated by Robert Hope-Jones, were carried forward under the direction of Farny Wurlitzer by the head voicer of the company, Tom Ruggles. It was he who researched and discovered how to build

pipes on a production basis to meet the tonal requirements that made Wurlitzer a leader in the field of theatre organ sound, a position recognized even now. Also marveled at by today's organ men is the lightning fast action and responsive wind system of the Wurlitzer.

The W. W. Kimball Company engaged R. P. Elliot, who guided the company toward tonal and mechanical standards that resulted in instruments of high quality still valid today.

Even some of the smaller companies, whose product designs underwent almost constant changes to meet the needs of their limited resources, still maintained a high standard of quality. There were a few, of course, who resorted to inferior materials, inadequate pipe work, and a multiplicity of other faults. Either the company or the organ, or both, soon departed from the scene (together with some of the theatre owners' money).

Despite statements to the contrary, it is known that Wurlitzer provided tonal finishing to their instruments after installation in a theatre. On large instruments, this was done by a factory crew, while on the smaller organs the finishing was performed by local service people (It is possible that some installers may have collected pay for tonal finishing without ever completing the task. But at least the service was provided for.) Other builders also carefully "finished" their important installations.

Again, all of this goes to prove that

the theatre organ builders knew what they were doing, that they carefully carried out their plans, and that as a result, they have left the beautiful instruments we hear today . . . instruments that deserve far more care than too many of them are receiving. In view of all of the past effort and concern exerted toward achieving perfection, it is truly inconceivable that so many horrific examples of "rebUILds" or "reinstallations" exist today, as a result of the efforts of either an un-informed enthusiast, or one who just doesn't care.

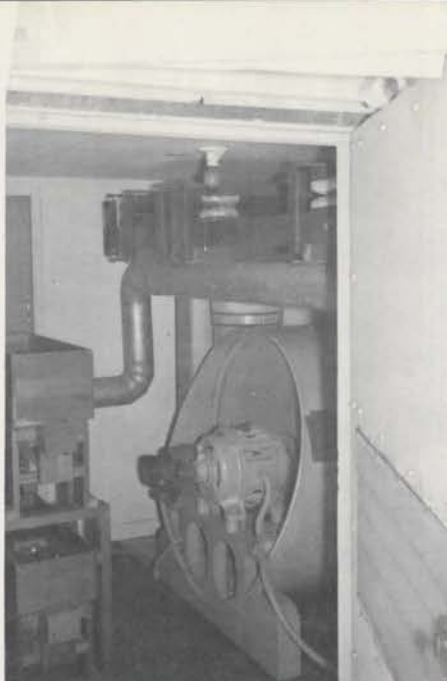
What Has Happened to Quality Standards Today?

Considering the fact that theatre organ builders established such high standards, resulting in easily recognizable, well engineered, neatly installed, mechanically reliable and tonally correct organs, it is with the utmost disgust, almost revulsion, that one reacts to the sight and sound of some of the home installations on display today.

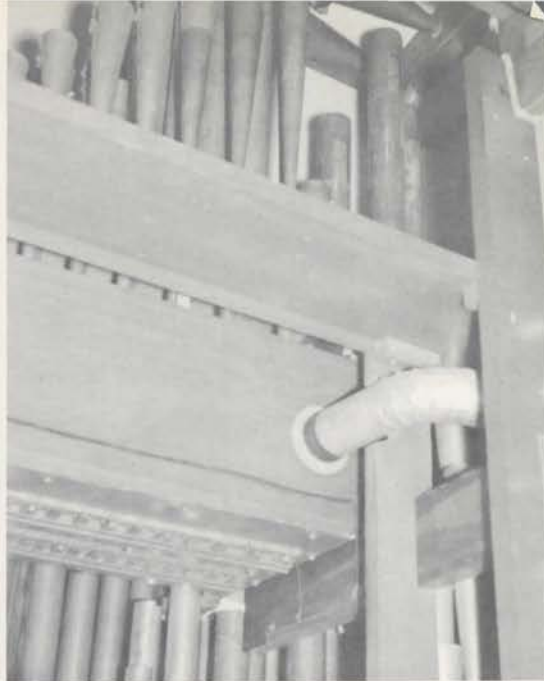
These installations demonstrate an abandon that borders on idiocy, with assorted sizes of duct work taped together with adhesive tape; a wild scramble of wires and a jumble of building supports and parts nailed together. It is very difficult to understand the motivation that causes such messes! If for no other reason, a prudent man should want to protect his investment.

Certainly there is a standard of excellence that should be unmistakably clear to those involved in the theatre organ hobby. Such standards obtain in other hobby activities. How can misguided individuals assemble such monstrosities and expect the results to be considered good? It should make no difference whether the enthusiast is assembling a complete and original organ — a Wurlitzer, a Morton, a Kimball, or what have you — or is putting together a carefully selected group of components from several builders. The job should be done carefully and correctly. And it can be.

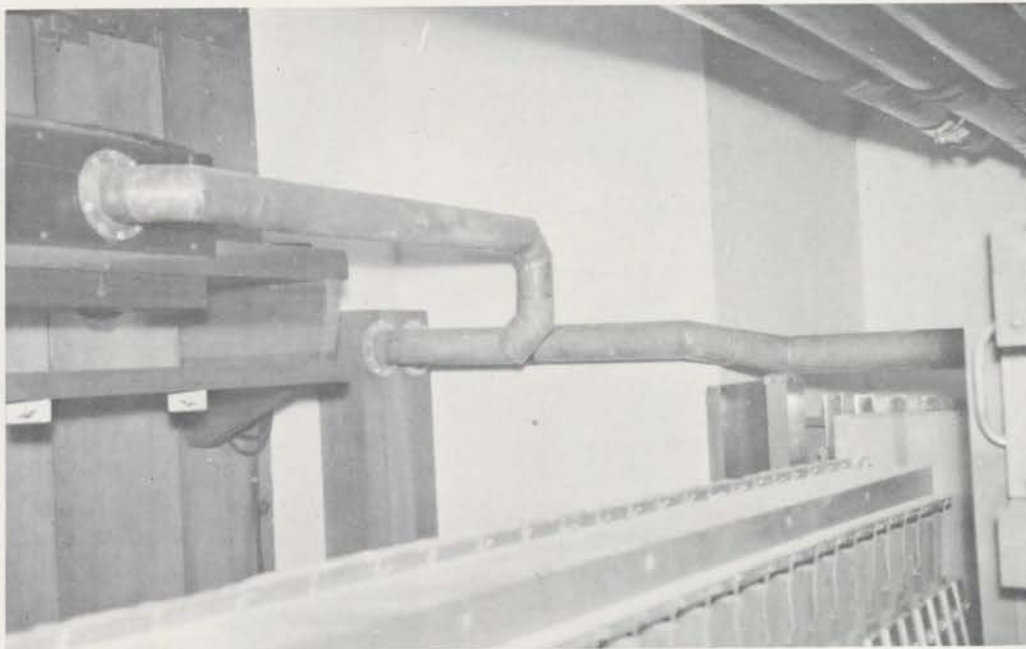
However, an "assembled" instrument should not be simply a collection of components picked up over a period of time with no thought given toward the ultimate tonal design of the instrument, with ranks installed only because they happen to be available. This is as bad as installing a complete organ and then making additions which have no musical sense. Adding ranks simply because they are available is



YES! — Observe the neat duct work installation in this blower room and space saving mounting of tremulants. All joints and seams were soldered on this installation.



YES! — Note neat wiring runs and construction details on this installation. Ends of construction number have been sanded and varnished.



YES! — Pictured is the neat layout of windlines from the vertical wind trunk to the swell shade motor's action and the windline behind running to the percussion units. Note the felt padded support under the elbow of this windline. Most of the elbows pictured were fabricated on the job by using a 22½° miter box and soldering up the elbows as was done in the Wurlitzer factory.

almost as nonsensical as installing five wheels on a Model "T".

Of course, an installation can be near perfect in theoretical design and physical characteristics, yet still leave much to be desired tonally. In some instances, misguided and uninformed "experts" have reamed the toes of the pipes, altered the windways and perpetrated terribly incorrect procedures

in pipe voicing, with the result that the original tonally correct sound of the ranks was unrecognizable. Certainly there are enough professionals and knowledgeable organ "buffs" around to assist anyone who wants to do the job right.

Aiding and abetting the "crimes" are the enthusiasts who applaud such efforts. These misguided and misin-

formed individuals see and hear these abominations and are lavish in their praise of the work and sound. Too often, these "critics" are happy with any sound as long as it is loud.

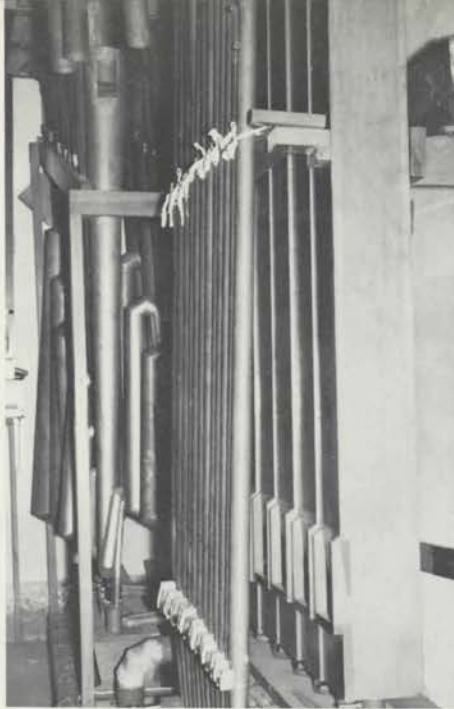
Our hobby news media also unwittingly add to the problem by printing glowing accounts of such musical monstrosities. To concede that they have no way of knowing any better does not resolve the problem which they create. But they could, and should, help raise the standards by being selective and discriminating in the installations on which they report.

The Crimes of Today

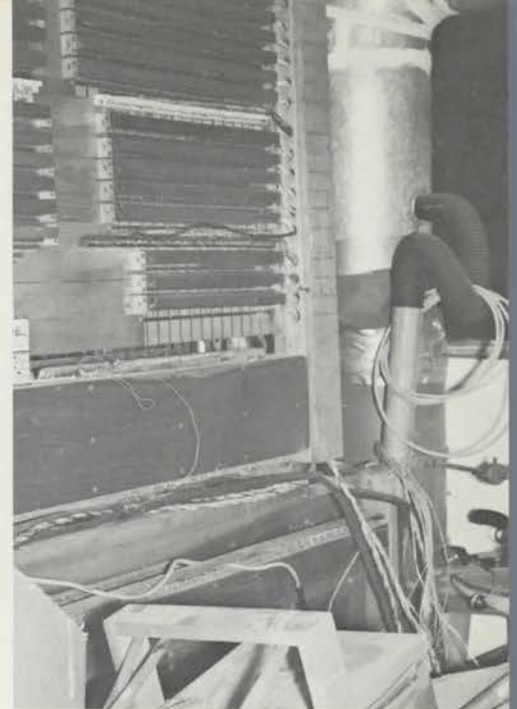
It would take many issues of *Theatre Organ* to catalogue all of the "crimes" perpetrated against the theatre organ in the name of "rebuilding", but here are a few of the mistakes most often committed, and some hints on how to avoid them:

1. Failure to assess the financial, spacial and timing practicality of the project. Many an organ has been butchered by well-meaning but incompetent individuals who "got in over their heads" with insufficient money, space or time. The organ, as a result, is ruined as an entity, and ends up on the parts market. Don't bite off more than you can chew! A good, small organ is 100 percent better than a bad, large one.
2. Poor handling in removal. Improper transportation and storage have ruined hundreds of priceless

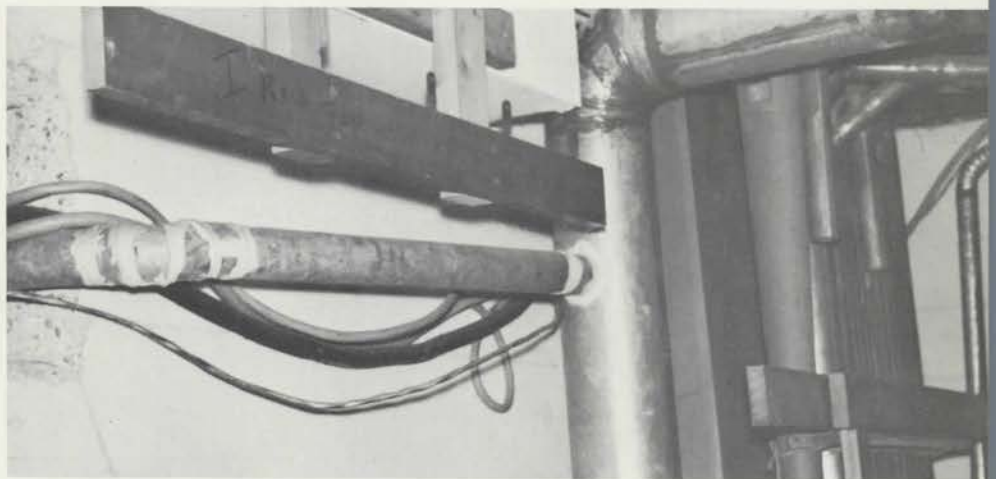
NO! — Note crude lumber on the left, sloppy wiring, and poorly planned main airline supply to the reservoir trunk causing extensions on the reservoirs for the spring loading bars. Observe the extremely crude methods used for these components shown in the center of the picture, one of which utilizes a piece of angle iron and the other of which is whittled from a piece of building material.



NO! — Note offset Tuba chest and offset String chest placed in front of Tuba and Bourdon chests, making it almost impossible to service these units. String pipes are not vertical and are secured to a rack nailed to the Bourdon pipes.



NO! — Note sloppy wiring on the relay. Excessive length of 3 inch flex is obvious as is misalignment of the 3 inch line to the relay. Stacking components on top of pipes as shown in the foreground is the ultimate in sloppy workmanship.



NO! — Note adhesive tape on the airline joints and cable looped over the windline which can also be seen hanging up the rear wall. No one component is plumb with another.



NO! — Building supports are made of ordinary 2' by 4' lumber, partly nailed and partly screwed. The hanging chimes provide a good reference for a vertical line and the misalignment of the parts is easy to observe.



organ components. While experience helps, it only takes common sense to avoid most of the unfortunate blunders made by enthusiasts . . . blunders resulting in bent pipes, damaged chests and bungled wiring.

3. Failure to re-build before re-installation. Many organs have been ruined by amateur re-builds and then cost a fortune to re-build. Quality materials and care in workmanship should be used.
4. Lack of planning. How often have you seen pipes stuck through a hole in the ceiling or mitered beyond recognition because of poor planning? If one is not working from a specification and floor plan, the result — especially in a large organ — can be a disaster.
5. Incorrect and poorly executed wind line layout. Winding offers a multitude of opportunities for amateurism. The friction tape industry must claim 90 percent of its sales from organ hobbyists taking shortcuts in winding. Wind lines should be run in logical patterns, soldered (or in the case of flex, clamped) securely and checked over for leakage.
6. Sub-standard wiring installation. Wiring is more often a mess than not. There is no excuse for sloppy wiring. Here is a place to use friction tape to advantage. Cables should be laced, wrapped and run neatly.
7. The use of poor quality lumber and other materials. Wood once used in concrete forms is not suitable for organ work! No nails — screws only. Frames and other building supports should be made of good quality wood, and finished.
8. Improper sequence of installing components. Untold damage has been wrought through premature installation of pipes just to “hear the first whistles”! Don’t install manual chest pipes until the rest of the installation is complete.
9. Abominable tone regulation. Take time to *listen* before changes are made in the pipe-work. Plan toward an authentic theatre organ ensemble. Don’t butcher pipes before starting

something you may not be able to finish. Avoid changing pressures — the original pressure was adopted for a sound reason.

10. Lack of pride in good workmanship. Throughout the work, try to enjoy a feeling of a job well done. After all, that is the real fun and feeling of accomplishment that comes from the theatre organ hobby.

Recommended Guidelines For ATOS And Its Members

If we are to preserve the theatre organ as it ought to be preserved, the following guidelines may help:

1. Where at all possible, theatre organs should be left in their original installations, un-altered, carefully restored and properly cared for.
2. When an organ is purchased, counsel should be sought if one is uninformed. Many who have purchased an organ at a price too high, and later try to re-sell, find they cannot recover their money. A prospective purchaser would be wise to seek counsel *before* buying to be sure he does not acquire more (or less) than he bargained for. Nothing really needs to be said about the seller who asks and receives more than a reasonable profit — a contemptible practice. As the old saying goes, “A fool and his his money are soon parted.”
3. If an organ must be moved, it should be set up as it came from the factory with modifications and additions made only along the lines established by the original builder. One should try to discover the principles which guided the builder, and then ask, “How would the factory men have done this?” If additions or specification changes are made, they should use original parts or copies — not parts from other makes of organs. If modern components are used (flex wind lines, color-coded wire), they should be installed to professional standards.
4. A complete organ, no matter how small, should not be broken for parts if at all possible.

5. If one has only a collection of parts, a hybrid organ can be assembled, but only with knowledgeable guidance, if musical results are desired. Organ design and building should not be undertaken without competent direction and supervision.

An owner of a theatre organ has in reality assumed a public trust. That endowment should not be betrayed through careless and selfish handling of a once beautiful means of artistic expression. A theatre organ owner has within his grasp the opportunity to restore an instrument of which all theatre organ enthusiasts can be proud.

Consider that what you are attempting to recreate is an excellent investment possibility. A well-preserved theatre organ can bring a high return to the competent enthusiast, whereas a badly installed, poorly designed and un-musical job is junk. As such, it may only be worth hauling away. And you will probably have to pay for that!

However else you view your theatre organ, take complete pride in your final results — and the other reasons for doing a good job with a remarkable instrument will fall into place.

Postscript:

It is recommended that ATOS appoint Regional Committees of THEATRE ORGAN STANDARDS. When invited, these Committees will assess a theatre organ installation and either present the “owner-curator” with a certificate of merit, or make recommendations to him as to necessary changes required to bring the installation up to the standards established in accordance with the principles of the ATOS bylaws.

Sec. III — to:

- (a) Preserve the historical tradition of the Theatre Pipe Organ in American music and theatre by:
 - (1) *Restoring*, in their home theatres where possible, the remaining specimens of the instrument.
 - (3) Arranging for removal, *rehabilitation*, and reinstallation of instruments no longer wanted.

The issuance of a certificate of merit would attest that the strict principles which the original builders held inviolate had been met in the restored instrument, both to the eye and to the ear. □



Fred Feibel at the console of the New York Paramount Studio Wurlitzer. This console has more combination pistons than any other Wurlitzer. It is now in Dick Loderhose's Renwick Studio. (Feibel Collection Photo)

FRED FEIBEL

from Neighborhood Theatre to New York Paramount

by Lloyd E. Klos

There must be some ATOS members who remember a radio program emanating New York City in the theatre organ's heyday, entitled *Organ Reveille*. The show was very successful, though it used more than a dozen announcers during its lifetime. The organist? Mr. Fred Feibel.

Mr. Feibel was born in Union City, New Jersey. "When I was nine, music was a parlor accomplishment, and since my sister played the piano, my mother thought I should be a violinist. I went along with that for a few years, but the piano keyboard fascinated me.

"Through my sister's study books, I was well on my way as a pianist before I abandoned the violin for organ lessons. Why organ lessons? Well, if the piano keyboard fascinated me, the organ with its multiple manuals absolutely overwhelmed me.

"I was the little boy who sat behind the organist at the local motion picture theatre in the days of the silents, often sitting through two or three shows, watching every move the organist made, and just drinking in the wonderful sounds. Sometimes, the manager chased me out for occupying the seat too long."

Mr. Feibel studied piano with concert pianist Hans Hanke, and organ

under Joseph Laufenberg, and he credits those years of instruction as giving him an excellent foundation in organ technique. Later, he would study organ arranging, orchestration, and conducting with Leo Kempinski, and the complete Schillinger System of Composition under Jesse Crawford. However, at 14 he became one of the organists in his church.

At this time, came his first adventure in theatre organ playing. During summer vacation, he attended a matinee at the Colonial Theatre in Union City, and noticed there was no musical accompaniment to the silent film. He wondered about this until he saw a notice flashed upon the screen, advertising for a pianist for afternoons. Fred leaped from his seat, made for the office, and proclaimed he was the man for the job, but specifying he wanted to play the organ instead. He got the position.

Another theatre in which he played in Union City, was the Summit. "The organ was a Beman Symphonie organ, built by the Beman Organ Co. of Binghamton, N.Y. The elderly Mr. Beman, a really fine gentleman and a great organ technician, used to come to the theatre when installing major additions, which once included a new

console. He enjoyed sitting beside me on the organ bench while I played for the silent movie."

Mr. Feibel later played theatres in neighboring communities. Among these were the Monticello Theatre in Jersey City and the Bronxville Theatre in Bronxville, New York which had a Welte-Mignon organ.

Then, becoming affiliated with the Paramount-Publix organization, he played the Paramount theatres in Toledo, Ohio; St. George, Staten Island, N.Y. and the Rialto Theatre in New York City.

His career in theatre-playing was capped by his becoming one of the organists at the famed New York Paramount in 1928, a position he held for 7½ years. His popularity at the 4/36 Queen Mother of all Wurlitzers led to his doing an early morning radio program called "*Organ Reveille*" for CBS. Fred started this program on September 16, 1929, and the theme was an original Feibel composition, "Thanks To The Dawn." The show was broadcast from 7:30 to 8, six days a week for more than seven years.

"The first 5½ years were the hardest. I was still playing a full schedule in the theatre, and had to be at rehearsal

for the broadcast each morning at 6:30. This meant rising at 4:15 to commute to New York from New Jersey. I don't believe I averaged five hours of sleep a night during that entire period, as it was often midnight when I left the theatre.

"But, that early morning radio show is best remembered of all the things I have done on the air. Because I tried to fulfill requests, the program earned one of the biggest volumes of fan mail for CBS. The show had some very well-known announcers: Mel Allen, later the Voice of the New York Yankees; Andre Baruch; Paul Douglas; Doug Edwards; Ralph Edwards; Bill Goodwin; John Reed King; Bert (Miss America) Parks; Kenneth Roberts; Bob Trout; and Fred Utall. There were others, but all became big names in radio, and later on television. It was a pleasure to work with all of them."

However, Fred remembers well the few times during these years of "*Organ Reveille*" when the announcer overslept and, with a stout heart, he undauntingly gave his own announcements. Somewhat more harrowing were the few times when the engineer overslept, and Fred had to turn on the equipment, set the dials, and thus put himself on the air with the knowledge that he must carefully gauge the volume of his playing so as not to overload the equipment and thereby find himself no longer on the air.

ATOS member, John W. Roblin of Pittsford, N.Y. fondly remembers the "*Organ Reveille*" broadcasts as he used to pick them up at his Niagara Falls home. It should be pointed out here that John was a dedicated theatre organ buff in his early youth, and combining that love with a love for electric railways, would frequently take the Buffalo-Niagara Falls high-speed trolley to North Tonawanda and see the mighty Wurlitzers being built and shipped. It was possible to combine two hobbies in those great days!

Anyway, John recalls that the program came over the air from WABC, the 50,000-watt station of the Atlantic Broadcasting Corp. in New York City. In July 1935, John and a friend made plans to visit New York, and wrote to Fred Feibel to see if there were a chance he could witness one of his broadcasts. He received a very nice reply, which he still treasures, instructing him to call Fred when arriving in New York.

This was done and on the appointed

day, John Roblin was witness to a broadcast by his theatre organ idol. The organ studio was on the ninth floor of the Paramount Building, and the organ was the famous 4/21 special Wurlitzer, the Crown Prince of the Wurlitzers, which is now owned by Dick Loderhose, ATOS member in Jamaica, Long Island.

Fred, earphones in place, was in his shirtsleeves and vest, but no tie. The announcer, John Reed King, was in the broadcasting studio on Madison Avenue, hence the earphones.

The program began with a trumpet solo of the familiar reveille, known to soldiers, then a modulation into his beautiful theme. There was a period of silence while announcer King would introduce the number, and so it would go throughout the program.

John Roblin says that one of Fred's presentations revolved around a novelty number. For example, he'd take a song like "China Boy" or "Chinatown", and would play it as a Russian dance, a Spanish tango, an Hawaiian hula, an Austrian waltz, or Chinese theme. At the end, he'd turn it into a rousing American jazz number. It was a very colorful presentation.

At the conclusion of Fred's program, who walked into the studio but the Mighty Mite herself, Ann Leaf, to whom John was introduced.

John saw Fred six years later when in New York. This time, the organist was using a Hammond in a studio at 485 Madison Avenue, playing themes and background music for soap operas. "He was meticulously dressed - quite a dapper young fellow, and he stated to me", says John, that "the Paramount

studio organ was not being used; it was still in the studio, though under lock and key."

From 1935 on, Fred Feibel devoted himself entirely to radio broadcasting, mainly with soap operas. Among the radio serials for which he provided the music were "*Big Sister*" with Alice Frost and Dorothy McGuire; "*David Harum*" with Craig McDonnell and Bennett (Mr. Keen) Kilpack; "*Lora Lawton*" with Jan Miner and Marilyn Erskine; "*The Goldbergs*" with Gert-rude Berg and Everett Sloane; "*Rosemary*" with Betty Winkler and Ed Latimer; "*We, the Abbotts*" with John McIntire and Betty Garde; "*Nora From Nowhere*" with Toni Darnay and James Kelly; and "*Our Gal Sunday*."

Fred says that certain songs are very dear to his heart, and especially "*Red River Valley*", which he played every day, Monday thru Friday for 10 years on "*Our Gal Sunday*". "I love that song, and I made a lot of money playing it."

That program involved an orphan girl who married an English Lord, and asked the question: "Can this girl from a mining town in the west find happiness as the wife of a wealthy and titled Englishman?" The program used the talents of some fine actors during its run; Karl Swenson, Jay (Mr. District Attorney) Jostyn, Carleton Young, Van Heflin, Vicki Vola, Santos Ortega, and Anne Seymour, to name the more prominent. All went on to bigger things in television. Mel Allen was an announcer. Frank and Anne Hummert produced the program.

During World War II, Fred Feibel served over two years in the army

A recent photo of Mr. Feibel studying a new score.

(Feibel Collection Photo)



and entertained thousands of servicemen. He resumed his musical career in 1945.

He taught for three years at Steinway Hall in New York, four nights a week, instructing students in the Jesse Crawford organ courses and the Fred Feibel Master Course in Popular Organ Playing. At the same time, he was playing 11 radio and TV shows a week, plus privately teaching as many good pupils as free time allowed.

According to Fred's own calculations, he has played on over 8,000 radio and television programs which is a record very few organists have achieved.

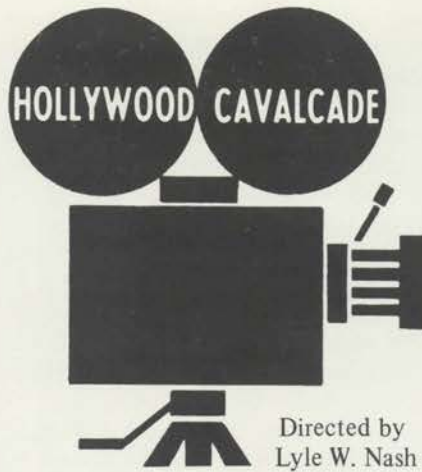
One of his major activities through the years has been his arranging and composing for publication. He has been a member of ASCAP since 1956. On arriving home from his vacation in June 1970, he found his latest publication awaiting him, "Action At the Organ In a Classical Manner," a book on arrangements.

The Feibel family moved to Vero Beach, Florida about eight years ago, and Fred is organist and choir director of First Presbyterian Church. He finds great happiness in his church work and gives two concerts a year for the Vero Beach residents.

Mrs. Feibel is a past president of the local branch of the American Association of University Women which she helped found. Daughter Janet received her bachelor of arts degree in music education from Florida Southern College in 1970, and was married in September of the same year. This was one wedding Fred could not play; it was his great pleasure to escort his daughter down the aisle.

To cover all his musical career adequately would take a book. "I wish I had the time to write that book," he says. "Believe me, when I see the pictures of the giant theatre organs in periodicals which are devoted to these wonderful instruments, it is difficult for me to realize at this date, that I played the glorious New York Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer every day for 7½ years. It was indeed a privilege and an experience which will never be forgotten." □

Fred Feibel Publications for Organ, including compositions and arrangements, have been published by The Boston Music Co., The Ethel Smith Music Corp., Emil Ascher, Inc. and Robbins Music Corp. among others.



"HAVE STORY, Will Talk" is the philosophy of Minta Durfee Arbuckle, now a proud 82. Minta shuns Hollywood's chronic self-pity sadness because she's busy with films ("Willard"), TV, radio and public appearances. From a tape recording with Minta recently we culled three questions. The first question was: "What comedians of today would have scored in silent films?" A. "Well, Jackie Gleason was one. He's tops . . . Art Carney I think is a very funny man . . . I like Jack Benny and enjoy some of Milton Berle's things . . . All of these men are great because they think funny and amass funny thoughts."

QUESTION 2: "Is there any fun factory, such as Mack Sennett's Keystone studio once was, in which to train new comics?"

Answer: "I don't know. I think actors then (1912-20) were more dedicated. Famed vaudeville artists gave their everything when they faced the camera. The traffic of today prevents any great chases of those days ever being made again. Today I note stuntmen getting \$1,000, for stunts the old Keystone Kops did free as part of their regular comedy routine."

QUESTION 3: "Had Mabel Normand lived for the sound era how would she have been received?" A. "I think she would have been very cute. She had her own individual way of talking. She had a sharp impishness about her and a certain tearful wistfulness that was catching. I think it is true that a humor halo hung over her. Lucille Ball is her counterpart today. Lucille is beautiful and clever and so was Mabel. But remember Lucille is a tall girl and Mabel was petite."

FRIENDS report that Prince David Mdivani, one time husband of Mae Murray, now lives in quiet retirement in Southern California.

SHORT TAKES . . . Robert Anderson has written a new book on Lon Chaney (with an in-depth index) to be published in October . . . Mary MacLaren told newsmen recently she's about the only survivor of the 1921 Douglas Fairbanks classic "Three Musketeers" . . . John Huston's address overseas is: St. Clerans, Craughwell, County Galway, Ireland . . . Some fans used to write Patti Andrews at 17310 Rancho St., Encino, California.

A READER says she contacted Tom Drake at 8218 Delongpre Ave., Los Angeles, 90046, California.

CALLS and letters have asked about the proposed Harold Lloyd Foundation/Museum. There's not much factual information — yet. Lloyd did will his mansion and the estate acreage for the purpose of creating an educational facility and museum for public viewing and scholarly research into the history of motion pictures in the U.S.

LLOYD wisely left the creation of the museum, et al to the trustees by saying they should have "the broadest discretion in achieving these purposes." Trustees are empowered to raise an endowment fund for the project.

RICHARD C. Simonton, one of the guiding creators of ATOS, was named a trustee of the "Harold Lloyd Foundation Trust." It seems logical that ATOS know-how and talent will be available when wanted.

HOLLYWOOD welcomed King Baggot IV about four months ago. The great-grandson of King Baggot I (1910-1941), who was an early day matinee idol, is the son of King Baggot III. The III is a TV cameraman (father King Baggot II, was studio cameraman for 25 years) and has no ambitions for a film career.

CONTRIBUTIONS, comments and questions are welcomed to P.O. Box 113, Pasadena, California, 91102.

POPULARITY AND PUBLICITY

by John Muri

Time rolls over us and brings forgetfulness. It is saddening to think that in only forty years the history of the theatre organ has become so remote that it leaves much room for speculation and guesswork. Exactly when, where, and how did the theatre organ come into being? I don't have any definitive answers, but I have some theories and a little information. The first American theatre organs (up until 1912 when Wurlitzer began installing instruments in theatres) were practically indistinguishable from church instruments and were used to provide music during orchestra rest-periods and to cut expenses.

Until the nineteen-twenties, despite the advent of the theatre organ, orchestras were the standard medium for theatre work of all kinds — legitimate vaudeville, and motion pictures. Theatre advertising of the early nineteenth-hundreds shows that the earliest movies had little effect upon the prosperity of stage shows. They seem to have had still less effect upon the entertainment scene in big cities like New York in which, according to present-day standards, the number of stage offerings was enormous. The movies were a bonanza largely to the small town and city operators who offered a fifteen to thirty-minute film-show for a nickel or a dime. The pioneer movie houses had a quick business turnover; after each performance the lights were turned on and the house emptied to let the next group of 200 or more that had been waiting outside. By 1915 the three-reel show (which consisted of three separate subjects usually a drama, a comedy, and maybe a travel picture) had been supplanted by the eight-reel performance running approximately two hours, with two or maybe three performances a day. A small orchestra was usually employed; often only a piano player was used. These musicians were paid forty dollars a week or less, and they might be asked to accompany a live singer who would perform with song slides, although this custom was passing out by 1915.

So far as the movie theatres were concerned, a small orchestra could easily provide all the music for a day's performances if the show was not

continuous. An organist doubling on piano could also fill the day's musical needs working alone. By 1921, shows were longer and performances were continuous; so something had to be found to make music while the orchestras were not on duty, and the theatre organ was the perfect substitute.

Popular as it was, the theatre organ never got much advertising. *The Detroit News* of January 3, 1915 mentioned the pipe organ currently in use at the Washington Theatre. On January 1, 1916 the same paper advertised Edward Benedict (who later went to Chicago to become a prominent teacher of theatre organ) at the Broadway Strand where he gave half-hour organ recitals at noon and 5:30 p.m. The Majestic and Regent Theatres were advertising their pipe organs and orchestras. The Washington had a 40-piece orchestra for the film "*A Daughter of the Gods*", and the Detroit Opera House had a 25-piece orchestra for "*The Birth of a Nation*." An organist might get some advertising in 1919. At the Adams Theatre Robert G. Clark gave an "organ recital at every performance"; Clarence Reynolds was giving featured numbers at the Broadway Strand, and Wendell Phillips was being featured at the Colonial, but the Madison advertised merely "organ music."

New York theatre men apparently never came around to advertising their organs and organists. On January 1, 1923 the Rivoli, Capitol, Strand, and Rialto Theatres were advertising their orchestras but they made no mention of organs, while in Chicago Jesse Crawford was noticed by *Variety* in March of that year as being the strongest draw of the several permanent features of the Chicago Theatre. It was only the Lexington Theatre in New York City that regularly advertised "organ recitals" and "organ solos" by Herbert Sisson. The orchestras got all the advertising in a year when movie advertising everywhere became steadily larger and more flamboyant. Victor Herbert and his orchestra were featured as they accompanied "*Under the Red Robe*" at the Cosmopolitan in December, 1923, and the Capitol Theatre advertised their "Capitol Grand Orchestra."

The December 3, 1923, *Times* article on Christmas music in the theatres gave details only on orchestras and singers, with only a brief reference to Sisson. The full-page ad for the film "*The Covered Wagon*" had not a single word about the musical accompaniment. The December 16, 1924 *Times* piece about "Music of the Movies" did not mention a single organist; it discussed only orchestras and stage specialties. When the Colony Theatre opened on Christmas Day with "*The Thief of Bagdad*," its half-page spread mentioned only Edwin Franko Goldman's orchestra. In 1925, Frederick Smith and Dr. Percy Starnes were publicized as closing the show at the Strand with organ solos. Organists Harold Ramsbottom and Frank Stewart Adams at the Rivoli and John Hammond at the Piccadilly were featured playing classical transcriptions such as Von Suppe overtures. Classical music was extensively featured in New York theatres between 1917 and 1922. In 1926, Harold Ramsay was being featured "in an organ novelty" at the Rivoli.

Then Jesse Crawford moved into the New York scene on November 19, 1926 and got himself a unique featured spot, although it seems that he did not get the publicity there that he had gotten in Chicago between 1922 and 1926. The advance advertising for the opening of the Paramount included a full-page ad (*Times*, November 14, 1926) expressing the Publix Theatres Corporation vice-president's delight with "the great organ, one of the largest in the world," but not a word about the man who was going to play it. During opening week, the ads said nothing about the current show. One quarter-page ad mentioned only the magnificence of the theatre and the fact that 30,222 people had attended during the first two days. On December 23, 1927 Publix splurged with a short mention of "Jesse Crawford Special Xmas Organ Concert with Mrs. Crawford." The December 25 ad had a brief line: "Jesse Crawford at the Mighty Organ."

I think it safe to say that the theatre organ was considerably more valuable to movie-theatre success and revenue than the managers of that day understood or appreciated. They destroyed it along with their business and their buildings. It must have been ignorance that prompted them. It couldn't have been anything else. □

Snippets from England

TONY BERNARD SMITH

We don't exactly have a Top Ten of British organists but each year members of one national group hold a ballot to choose a patron for the year. Which amounts to much the same thing, I guess, when the results get announced.

Anyway, the patron of the Theatre Organ Club for 1970 is *Charles Smitton* – by popular acclaim. He's a North Country man and master of the lush type of Wurlitzer noises. Unlike most Northerners, he's not a great one for the pint of beer (known locally as "wallop") but has the reputation of being a good eater.

He hails from Liverpool and it was hearing *Reginald Dixon* play which decided him initially on a theatre organ career. He became a "boy wonder" in his home city, getting the solo job at the Liverpool Curzon at the age of 16.

Later, he moved to the Gaumont, Manchester (Wurlitzer 4/14) and after touring the circuits was the last resident organist at the Odeon, Manchester (Wurlitzer 4/20).

This is the Crawford Special which is now lovingly preserved by the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust who have recently issued an LP with *Charles* featured on one side and *Trevor Willetts* on the flip side.

Nowdays you will mostly find Charles playing electronics in the clubs but he gets back to the big Wurlitzers wherever possible. And he has another musical sideline – he's a great lover of Britain's brass bands and can be found

conducting the oompah merchants from time to time.

All in all, there is no wonder that he's the tops with English fans this year.



Belgium's few theatre organs have now all gone the way of "progress". Some are residence jobs, some have just disappeared without trace.

One man seems to be making a bit of a last ditch stand to keep the Wurlitzer name and style of playing alive, though. His name is *Eddy Green* and he was for many years organist at the Roxy, in Antwerp.

Later, he moved to the Palace, Brussels, and it was in that city, at the Cap Nord bar in the Place Rogier, that I found him.

Every night he plays there, using an early model Wurlitzer electronic with plenty of amplification in a nice big room with hard acoustics. The resulting sound is not far removed from that of pipes.

"I've been here seven years now," he told me. "It's different from cinema work, but it does bring you more in contact with your audience."

And tests your musicianship, since requests range all the way from Bach to boogie and bop. Eddy's ability to cope with them all no doubt accounts for the large personal following he has built up. That, plus his nightly reminder to his audience of a sound no longer heard live in the land of Belgium.



The big theatre organ renaissance in Britain has drawn out of semi-retirement a few shy performers who thought they had ridden their last console elevator.



GEORGE WELLING – Back to pipes (in this case, the Granada, East Ham, London).

One of these is *George Welling* who still lives in the Eastern part of London where he did most of his solo playing.

I remember him telling me that one of his earliest jobs was at the lovely little 2/7 Wurlitzer of the Rex, Stratford (East London – not on Avon, which is where Will Shakespeare was top of the bill).

From time to time, he must have handled most of the installations in those parts and he was children's organist at the Granada, East Ham (Wurlitzer 3/8) in the days after this, one of the last bastions of stage-show plus films, had become an all films house.

Came the doldrums and George could be heard from time to time tickling a Hammond but it took a few persistent and knowing folk to get him performing on pipes. He has now been heard on several preserved and transplanted installations and is much in demand as a recitalist.

Oddly enough, he lives less than a block away from the Roman Catholic church of St. John Vianney, Clayhall, Ilford, which houses the beautiful Compton 3/6 of the Ritz, Nuneaton



CHARLES SMITTON – Voted the most popular. And seen here at the Town Hall Ossett (Compton 3/13).

(I wrote about this previously you may recall).

Sooner or later, George had to find his way to this console.

"I'm afraid I don't know any pious music," he told parish priest Fr. Gerard Kerr.

"Nor do I," replied Fr. Gerard stoutly. "Just play."



It certainly could not happen in England, but in Holland a hitherto forgotten theatre organ has turned up still in its original location.

It's in the Grand Theatre, Breda, in the south of the country and is a small two-manual Standaard — somewhere between four and six ranks. It could even be playable and some of my Dutch friends are itching to get their hands on it.

Cor Standaard, son of the organ builder, says this was probably put into the independently-owned cinema in 1933 or 1934.

Cor himself can be found in Arnhem where he plays Hammond in the Rembrandt theatre.



STACCATO SNIPPETS — Scots organist *Bob Leys* is also music master at an Aberdeen school and city carillonneur. His school boasts an organ from a local cinema and *Bob* was recently able to present his pupil *Alison Will* (12) to the public . . . French composer and classical organist *Oliver Messiaen* won the 1971 Erasmus Prize . . . GIs who happened to pass through the British military HQ town of Aldershot may recall the Ritz theatre. The Wurlitzer 3/7 (complete with illuminated surround) has now been sold and is being rebuilt as a residence job on the Isle of Wight . . . Latest of the many small local groups to open up is the North Lincolnshire Theatre Organ Preservation Society based at Scunthorpe. They didn't even have an organ preserve on starting up: first priority was finding one . . . The Compton 4/22 in the AVRO broadcasting studios, Hilversum, Holland, is scheduled for re-opening after a major overhaul in late October . . . Also on the October diary — the 50th anniversary of the Tuschinski Theatre, Amsterdam. *Jan Mekkes* and/or *Rene de Rooy* will be prominently featured at the 4/11 Wurlitzer/Standaard for the festivities. □



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

Address: P.O. Box 2329

Livonia, Michigan 48150

Dear Sir:

I want you to know how thrilled I was to receive your letter, informing me of my being selected as a name in the Theatre Organist's Hall of Fame. I cannot tell you how pleased I was to be chosen to join the company of theatre organ greats already in the Hall of Fame; such a good feeling to know that all the years of being part of the wonderful entertainment offered through the glorious theatre organs is so well-remembered and recognized. My most sincere thanks for your congratulations and I wish you would convey these same thanks to other members of your committee for me. Thank you . . .

Most sincerely,
Fred Feibel
Vero Beach, Fla.

Dear Editor:

I should like to compliment you on the very fine standards that your publication normally maintains but I was startled to see in the June issue, Page 38, how Jim Roseveare had altered in appearance from that of his photograph on a record cover I have of him playing at the Oriental, Portland. A closer study revealed that the handsome bearded player on the bottom left of the page must be Ray Frazier at the Kilgen, as I see Jim sitting at the console of the Oriental at top right.

Until 1939 I lived in England and Scotland, then after six years overseas in the second world war, I eventually settled in Canada. I still have very vivid memories of the outstanding British organists of the thirties and

it was with particular interest that I read on Page 21 that Gerald Shaw is at last abandoning the kilt and he is still playing. Finally on Page 30, the news that the 3/13 Compton from the Finsbury Park Astoria is going to Aylesbury is indeed good news as the town of Aylesbury must have been the only one of its size that never had an organ in a theatre. Now, after all these years, this mistake is being rectified.

E. MacPherson
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Sir:

In reply to the letter to the editor by Z. Hansen of Chicago, in the August 1971 issue of THEATRE ORGAN, I submit the following. The organ in this theatre I believe to be Wurlitzer Opus No. 1875 shipped on May 4, 1928. I have heard this theatre was known as the Kristall-Palast Theatre. So far as we know, all trace of this organ has disappeared and in our new updated Wurlitzer list it is therefore coded "XX". This is from information supplied me by Reginald Mander of Leeds, England in 1967 and amended in 1970.

Judd Walton

Mr. Editor:

I read your review of the Barnes-Gammons book, "Two Centuries of American Organ Building" (August 1971) with much interest, especially regarding the chapter about theatre organs. As an old timer who installed 32 organs in west coast theatres and auditoriums in the 1920s, I have some observations to add concerning that particular chapter.

I must disagree with the first statement of Chapter VI. The theatre organ was not intended to be "a specialized type of organ" etc. The theatre organ was the logical step-by-step development of the ideas of Robert Hope-Jones, beginning in 1886 in Birkenhead Parish Church, England. Hope-Jones felt that an organ developed along orchestral lines would be a better organ. When the many tonal, electrical and mechanical ideas of Mr. Hope-Jones were developed, most of the so called "modern" theatre organ characteristics were complete — by 1890.

It is an oversimplification to say that the theatre organ first appeared in 1910 when it is realized that most of the characteristic tonal advances had

already appeared in the Hope-Jones "straight" church organs in England years earlier. Incidentally, 41 organs that I could confirm were built by the Hope-Jones Electric Organ Company which was later (about 1898) to become a division of Norman & Beard, a long-established firm in England. In fact it was Norman & Beard, Wm. Hill and Sons that built the famous Cinema organ named after one of the firm's directors — Mr. Christie. Many large European Cinemas used Christie organs and it's not strange that they resembled Hope-Jones organs in construction and action.

Digressing briefly, let's dispell another falsification that has been around for decades — that of Hope-Jones being simply an "electrician" — and a poor organist. Mr. Hope-Jones was Chief Engineer of the Lancashire and Cheshire (later National) Telephone Company. He served his apprenticeship in the firm of Laird Brothers, Engineers and Shipbuilders. In the telephone field many English patents bear the name of Robert Hope-Jones.

Mr. Hope-Jones (born Feb. 9, 1859) was a member of the British Institute of Electrical Engineers. He was also an organist at Eastham Parish church at the age of 9! Later, he became a member of the Royal College of Organists and later yet a member of the American Guild of Organists. These points are rarely stated in print.

In 1903 Hope-Jones left England for the United States. He was then 44 years old. He worked with three established firms in this country: the Austin Organ Co., the firm of Harrison and Harrison and the E.M. Skinner Co.

In 1907 he had backing enough to form the Hope-Jones Electric Organ Co. of Elmira, N. Y. He then sent for the skilled men who had been associated with his plants in England. On Feb. 3, 1907 the Unit Organ, as such, became a reality. This is not to be confused with a Unified Organ, although electric "borrowing" was used. The unit organ consisted of five tonal families in independently controlled swell boxes: (1) Foundation = Diapasons, Diaphones; (2) Woodwind = Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets; (3) String = VDO, Gambas, Dulcianas; (4) Brass = Trumpet, Cornopean, Tubas; (5) Percussion = Tympani, Gongs, Chimes, Chrysoglott, Drums etc.

Some 38 organs that I could confirm were built at Elmira using variations of this plan. Upon financial

failure of the Elmira plant Hope-Jones and his entire staff of experts were transferred to the Wurlitzer Company of North Tonawanda, N. Y. Mr. Hope-Jones there made the final modifications of his original Unit Organ into the Unit Orchestra that he had envisioned way back in 1891!

I object to the extreme term "frying bacon strings". Mr. Hope-Jones' strings were near duplicates of the Viol de Orchestra strings on the Michelle and Thynne Exhibition Organ at Liverpool in 1887. Mr. Michelle, Mr. Hele and Mr. Whiteley also made many of these "etherial strings" according to one of the reviews of the Exhibition Organ. Mr. Hope-Jones always explored the useful limits of a new type of stop, but to his overlasting credit he had an open mind and did abandon many of the extreme scales, both large and small, during his lifetime.

I personally have a list of Hope-Jones improvements that resulted from developments of "the men who were Hope-Jones" and Mr. Hope-Jones himself. They number nearly 100 ideas that never before were used by organ-builders in the centuries-old art. He was really quite a guy and the entire modern organ building art is deeply indebted to him, although too few are willing to admit it. I have in my possession many documents covering Mr. Hope-Jones career given me by James H. Nuttall, Hope-Jones long time friend and chief tonal developer.

I can't agree with the conclusion of the writer on page 53 where he states that the leading builders of theatre organs were Wurlitzer, Robert Morton and Kimball, and in that order. He has already mentioned the high-powered promotion and sales forces maintained by theatre organ builders, yet he fails to recognize a solid effect of that setup; Wurlitzer was obviously No. 1 in the promotion field, but that has no bearing on product quality or numbers of organs built. For example, Robert Morton craftsmen, when the firm was called Murray M. Harris, installed the first large film accompaniment organ in Talley's theatre in Los Angeles in 1908. It was a 4-manual 54-rank instrument!

From that time until 1932, when the receivership ended, Robert Morton finished over 5000 organs, something like 1800 more than the Wurlitzer total.

Even the Wurlitzer total may be deceptive. Many of the Wurlitzer organs

listed were repossessed or repurchased then rebuilt and resold as new instruments. Mr. Meekin Jones' list shows many "C.O." (consigned organs) and "broken down" organs. These are re-installations or expansions of existing instruments, mostly shipped to foreign countries.

On page 54 the writer says that Wurlitzer built the best organs because of Hope-Jones men staying at the factory after he died. Actually there was a mass exodus of Hope-Jones' craftsmen out of Wurlitzer in 1914. James H. Nuttall, Joseph Carruthers, John J. Colton, David Marr, Fred Smith, Robert Pier Elliott and many other expert craftsmen easily found jobs all across the United States after leaving Wurlitzer. For example, Robert P. Elliott went to California and joined the Robert Morton Co., where (in 1917) he developed the first unified organ built by that company, a 3-manual circa 17-rank instrument. In 1920 he went to W. W. Kimball and presumably did the same unit layout; during the next 10 years 80% of Kimball's output was unified theatre organs.

Nor can I agree that the Tibia is the foundation of the theatre organ, although it is an integral part of the theatre organ sound. Of all Wurlitzer number styles only two have no Diapasons and only one of the "letter" styles has no Diapason (3 rankers; Flute, String and Vox). A Diapason was optional for the 4-rank style B. Many had a Trumpet instead. From style 260 up Wurlitzer supplied 2 Diapasons. For example compare the pedal foundation you would get from a Tibia Profunda with that of a 16' or 32' Diaphone! Hope-Jones usually specified two Diapasons and two Tibias, one Tibia Clausa and one Tibia Plena (H-J style 2 and up). The Tibia might better be described as a "characteristic" voice rather than a foundation stop.

Of course, the chapter has many good points, but I have rambled on long enough on the exceptions and extensions. In all, Mr. Bethards did well considering the space limitations. It is indeed quite a welcome indication of the theatre organ's growing stature that Mr. Barnes, whose field is the orthodox organ, would be moved to include a chapter on theatre organs at all. That is indeed progress.

J. Lee Haggart,
Organbuilder and Voicer
Granada Hills, Calif.

Angevines Open Studio

For over eight years, John Angevine of Warren, Connecticut has been laboring over the 3/10 Robert Morton which he removed from the Capitol Theatre in Danbury. Much of John's early efforts were spent in restoring the console and relay, which had been damaged by a flood.

Damage is hardly the word, for the relay had rotted away to the point where the wood was punky, and the console should have been written off as a total loss. But Robert Morton consoles don't grow on trees, so John attacked the project with determination and help from his mother and father, and the console today is a tribute to what can actually be done in a "restoration".

Right in the middle of the organ project, which took place in the Angevine basement amid egg processing equipment (the Angevines run an egg farm), John decided to get married.

The need for a home for Kathy . . . and the organ . . . got John thinking about an old house and tobacco barn down the road. With untold hours of reconstruction and restoration, the Angevines now have a fine old, modernized farmhouse with attached studio, complete with authentic pegged construction.

The studio has one end reserved for egg processing, which just didn't seem the same after all those organ parts moved out, and also serves as a retail egg market. And some egg market it is, with a three manual Robert Morton console and Steinway Duo-Art piano along one wall, and a ceiling



Joy Zublena at the 3/10 Robert Morton in the John Angevine studio.

grille opening into a lofty tone mixing chamber overhead. The chambers speak into this overhead area, then down into the room, which tailored the organ to the room without the need for revoicing.

John is working on the addition of a Solo Tibia, the Steinway, which will play from the console with expression, as well as preparations for a Quadruplex player so the egg customers can have "live" organ music while John minds the chickens.

The opening concert was played by Joy Zublena, who was John's organ teacher. Joy played a marvelous and generous concert to about 100 Conn-ValChaps and provided a well-planned program with something for everyone.

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Closing Chord

GEORGE WOODWARD WICKERSHAM III, Station Agent at Millburn, N.J. on the electrified commuter line of the Erie-Lackawanna R.R. was held up by a bandit who robbed him of over \$1000 company receipts, shot him and fled on the morning of Sept. 1, 1971. "Woody" was one of the line's most popular Station Agents, well liked by patrons and fellow employees, all of whom are heart-sick over the sad news.

Because of the date, the receipts were unusually large for monthly commutation tickets. The Bandit chose a moment between trains when few passengers were present. By coincidence, this writer was just passing this station on a commuter express train at the instant the tragedy was being enacted, at 9:34 am. The dying man called the DS at Hoboken to report the attack, and the Dispatcher alerted the Police in Millburn, who arrived within minutes, only to find the victim lying dead on the floor of his office. He had been struck several times on the head by some sort of bludgeon, and had been shot through the chest by a 38 calibre bullet, which was recovered.

"Woody" was a bachelor, the son of Rev. and Mrs. George W. Wickersham Jr. of Hot Springs, Va., was an enthusiastic railfan member of the Electric Railroaders' Association, ardent pipe organ enthusiast member of the American Theatre Organ Society, and is mourned by fellow members and all those who came into daily contact with him.

E. J. QUINBY
ATOS
Hon. Pres., E.R.A.



WALTER BENSON, retired Vice President, Marketing, of the Wurlitzer Company, passed away on August 31, at the age of 66. Mr. Benson was a long standing member of ATOS and helped at every opportunity to promote our aims through Wurlitzer dealers and personnel.

ATOS will miss the presence of Walter. Condolences are extended to the bereaved family.

NUGGETS from the GOLDEN DAYS



Prospected by Lloyd E. Klos

Again, we have found some choice nuggets relative to the builders of theatre organs. References were American Organist (AO), Diapason (D), and Jacobs (J) magazines.

Aug. 1923 (D) A Kimball Unit Orchestra will be installed in the new Elrae Theatre in Philadelphia. It will be a duplicate of the Stanley Theatre's Kimball.

Jan. 1924 (D) Marr & Colton again have remembered their friends with an engraved desk calendar for 1924, its artistry suggesting the same good qualities inherent in the product of their factory.

Feb. 1924 (D) The third Kimball orchestral organ for Alaska is being installed at Ketchikan. The others are in Anchorage, built in 1917, and in Cordova, built in 1919.

May 1924 (D) A luminous-console Estey organ was installed in Chicago's Ashland Theatre in April.

June 1924 (D) The Marr & Colton Co. is enlarging its Warsaw, N.Y. plant with a two-story, 60'x144' addition. The company's business the last few months has been the highest in its history.

Oct. 1924 (J) A piano, organ and talking machine department opened August 1 in Chicago's C.H. Taylor & Co. J.C. Cox, ex-sales manager for Page Organ Co. of Lima, Ohio, will serve as a distributor for Page organs.

Sep. 1925 (D) A very handsome booklet, "Building America's Finest Organ", has been issued by the Marr & Colton Co. In observance of the company's 10th anniversary, it shows snapshots of the craftsmen, the workshops and equipment of the factory. A picture of the first shop in 1915 is also shown.

October 1925 (D) Work on the \$200,000 improvement of the Robert Morton plant at Van Nuys, Cal. is half completed. The Berkeley plant will be merged into the new factory upon its completion.

Nov. 1925 (AO) Six large Wurlitzers have been ordered for theatres in the Denver area, the deal consummated by George E. Levy, Wurlitzer western representative.

Dec. 1925 (D) Three new 3-story buildings have been started at the Wurlitzer plant in N. Tonawanda, N.Y. They will be used for expansion of the organ departments, which have outgrown the space allotted for expansion when present buildings were completed last year. The company will then have a total of 475,000 square feet of floor space.

April 1926 (D) S.L. Rothafel (Roxy) has just awarded a 5-console, 3-organ contract to the Kimball Co. for instruments in his New York theatre. Included will be a 3-console organ for the auditorium, a 3-manual organ for the rotunda, and a 2-manual organ for the broadcasting studio.

April 1926 (D) A welfare plan for benefit of more than 1,000 employees has been announced by the Wurlitzer Co. A complete dispensary and rest room are features. An annual medical exam will be required of all personnel. Two physicians are retained by the company.

May 1926 (D) The movie organ is making progress in Germany. The Walcker Co. has sold 46 theatre organs to the largest film company which has opened its most palatial theatre in Berlin, described as the "eighth wonder of the world."

Oct. 1926 (D) The Stanley Theatre Co. has placed an order for 8 organs with the Kimball Co. They include instruments for theatres in Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and the Colonial, Desmond, Norwood and Orpheum theatres in Philadelphia. One theatre in Philadelphia and another in Frederick, Maryland have not been named. Forty organs have been bought by the Stanley firms.

Nov. 1926 (D) The Marr & Colton Co. is erecting two more buildings to handle its increased business. Sales for the first 8 months of 1926 equaled business of its biggest year, 1925.

*GOLD DUST: 1/23 FIRMEN SWIN-
NEN of the Aldine Theatre in Phila-*

delphia, opened the 4-manual Moller in Jersey City's State Theatre . . . 3/23 New organs are being installed in Gem Theatre, Centralia, Ill.; Capitol Theatre, Clearwater, Fla.; Liberty Theatre (Wurlitzer) in Jonesboro, Ark.; Rose-land Theatre, Omaha; Capitol Theatre, Victoria, B.C.; Eagles Theatre (\$12,000 Estey) in Wabash, Ind., and the Oatka Theatre (M&C) in Warsaw, N.Y. . . . 6/23 Natick (Mass.) Theatre gets 2-manual Hillgreen-Lane; Fox's Lynbrook (Long Island) a new Kimball; E.C. LEGGE opened a 3-manual Kimball in Tulsa's Alhambra . . . 10/23 PAUL H. FORSTER opens M&C in Liberty Theatre, Carnegie, Pa.; Keith-Stanley Theatre orders new Kimball in Phila.; Victoria Theatre in Mt. Carmel, Pa. to get new Moller . . . 5/24 Sunshine Theatre in Albuquerque to get new Hillgreen-Lane as in the Front Street Theatre in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio . . . 2/25 GEORGE LEE HAMRICK opens 3-manual Robert Morton in Winterhaven, Florida's Williamson Theatre . . . 11/25 Metropolitan Theatre in Boston has installed a 4-manual Skinner . . . 3/26 Mack Theatre in Port Angeles, Wash. getting a 3-manual Robert Morton; ROY L. MEDCALFE opens Wurlitzer in the Imperial Theatre, Long Beach, Cal. . . . 4/26 Victory Theatre in Tacoma packing 'em in since installing a \$10,000 Wurlitzer. MARION G. OLLERENSHAW is organist; GRANT LINN opens 3-manual Wurlitzer in Winston Salem's Colonial. CARL HINTANT is regular organist . . . 5/26 HARRY SIMMONS, Crandall Theatres' "Organ Doctor" installing a new organ in Washington's Colony . . . 8/26 PERCY BURRSTON, regarded as Oregon's finest organist, opens 4-manual Wurlitzer in new theatre in Elsinore, Wash. . . . 11/26 H.C. FERRIS will be at the new Pantages Theatre's Robert Morton in Portland, Ore. . . . 1/27 HENRY FRANCIS PARKS opens new 2/8 M&C in Warsaw, Indiana's Centennial Theatre . . . 3/27 JOHNNY DEVINE opens Patio Theatre Barton in Chicago. Theatre is Moorish-Spanish motif with atmospheric ceiling; LEO TERRY opens Chicago's Piccadilly; A new style F Wurlitzer will be installed in the Rialto in Bremerton, Wash., replacing an Estey. WILLIAM ROLLER & GEORGE WERNER are organists there.

That's it until next time. So long soursougs!

LLOYD & JASON

DINNY'S COLYUM

as transcribed by Del Castillo



Del Castillo once again recalls, the humorous sidelights of the world of theatre organ as seen through the eyes of Dinny Timmins, a semi-literate Bostonian operator of a non-existent elevator.

They's one thing always gets me kinda mixed up, and that is when is a organ not a organ. If anybody ast me I would of said that anything with at least two keyboards for the hands and an extry keyboard for the feet was a organ. Of course thats not tryin to be smart and say a organ is a part of the body of a gland-like in a animal or a hooman bein. Or like sayin a house organ is a organ played at home, only they tell me a house organ is a magazine for some especial interest like this here Theayter Organ magazine or one about Sychology or like that there. But since I started messin around with ritin about organs I find out that they is a rite wing of organ players that play classic music like Bach and people like that on a organ with a lot of pipes, and a left wing that is called left foot organ players that play what they call plug-ins. And as near as I can make out a plug-in organ is a kind of a insult like callin a broken down horse a old plug.

Now that dont seem quite rite to me. I get to hear a lot of organ players since I become a riter, and I got to admit I hear good organ players and bad organ players on pipe organs, and good organ players and bad organ players on plug-ins. Only I aint goin to use that word no more, on acct. the rite word for them kind of organs is electronic organs. And the fack is that I get to hear more pipe organs that has been took out of movie theyters and put into peoples homes, and so far as that goes a lot of electronic organs that has been put into churches. And some of them organ players in churches is left foot organ players, and some of the ones they

call saloon organ players on acct. they play organs in bars in restorangs turn out to be pretty handy with both feet, if that aint mixin up hands and feet in one of them metafors like they say.

So you lump them all together and they are all organs, is what I say. The only ones you have to stretch a point to call organs is these little one keyboard deals you can carry around like a acordeen that they use in these little combos that play a lot of rock and stuff like that there. When I first started tryin to learn about organs I found out that some of the first organs back beyond the Middle Ages was organs like that they called Positifis. I spose a Negatif would be one you couldnt carry around. But anyways organs got bigger and bigger until they had 1000s of pipes and up to 7 keyboards so it took a basketball player to play one. But then when the electronic got to goin, they went to the other extreme and put in two short keyboards that didnt match and foot pedals that was good for only the left foot.

But I guess you got to admit one thing. They got an awful lot of people interested in playin the organ. Every year they got new gimmicks. They can imitate bells and drums and castanets and guitars and mandolins and pianos. They can give you a short echo or a long echo. They can give you cords in the rite hand when all you play is a single note. They can lite up the keys to show you which ones to push down for the different cords. They can give you a fast shake or a slow shake. But one thing they cant give you. They cant give you that big roarin sound in a big audytorium that makes the shivers run up and down your spine. So I guess what it amounts to is that a good organ player is agoin to sound good on a pipe organ or a electronic, and if he aint a good organ player it dont make much difference anyways. □

RAHWAY THEATRE SOLD!

Former N.Y. Chapter chairman Bob Balfour's heart stopped for about 2 minutes on Thursday eve, June 17 at 10 pm, when he received a phone call that the Rahway Theatre, in Rahway, N. J., home of his beloved "Biggest Little Wurlitzer, had been sold.

Many close to this unique neighborhood house knew that business was going from bad to worse and that the future looked very grim, indeed. We were fearful of the house closing. The sale was a bolt out of the blue.

Bob recovered from his "seizure" rapidly, however, as he learned that the new owners were quite enthusiastic about the organ and it's crew. A meeting with the new owners a few days later allayed all fears. The theatre will be preserved and slowly restored to it's original grandure, and to capitalize on the current nostalgia kick, it has been re-named The Old Rahway Theatre. The organ's future is safe and bright, and the new policy will be family pictures with \$1.00 admission.

The new owners, the Wood Plaza Corp. of Linden N.J., have implemented many new ideas and programs to rejuvenate the sagging box office, since taking over on July 1. Some redecoration and renovation has already taken place and attendance has increased almost tenfold over the past on both weekdays and weekends.

To all of this, Bob and his crew have pledged their fullest support. The "Biggest Little Wurlitzer" lives on. □

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MIDNIGHT AT THE CENTRE
— Paul Wesley playing the 3/27 Kimball in the Centre, Theatre, Milwaukee. L. C. Whalen label, No. 9445-0571 (stereo), Available (price not stated) from Stephen L. Adams, 4519 Drexel Avenue South, Edina, Minnesota, 55424.

Here's an organ and organist new to records. The taping was done under less than ideal conditions, according to Steve Adams who helped. The organ needed more restoration than the week available before miking allowed, so the remaining dead notes, off-voice pipes and the usual syndromes of neglect kept Paul Wesley from doing all he planned.

The instrument is a typical Kimball theatre organ — strings and reeds with treble emphasis predominate and the big Flutes (heard in chorus only once during "When Day is Done") have the sound of Stopped Diapasons. Even so the massed string sound is gorgeous, and the pedal is full and round. Don Peterson's jacket notes quote Paul Wesley describing the organ as a "combination of theatre and classic organs, simultaneously." And there's the rub. The absence of variety in registration handicaps the artist by limiting him to full combinations which help cover resource deficiencies.

Paul Wesley is his own man when it

comes to arrangements, even to altering melody lines to match his harmonic treatments. In one word — unorthodox. The selections are well chosen from the variety viewpoint. They range from such standards as a sometimes "mod" "Danny Boy" and "Song of India" to "Acquarius", "Let the Sunshine In" and "Spinning Wheel", with Paul obviously more at home in the latter mode — the mod sound. He conjures up some classical registration for "Whiter Shade of Pale" (based on Bach's "Air for a G String", it says) and his "Poinciana" has a novel setting with repeated counter figure. "Green Eyed Lady" offers a jazz improvisation in a rhythm which is often difficult to describe, with melody and beat sometimes loosely coupled.

Recording quality and miking are mostly okay, although sometimes the solo covers the accompaniment. Summing up, we would like to hear this artist and instrument recorded after the Kimball has been more completely restored. With Paul working at a mechanical and tonal disadvantage, we feel this recording doesn't do him or his instrument full justice.

JACK LOREN AT THE LOS ANGELES SHRINE AUDITORIUM — Available in stereo at \$5.00 post-paid from Artistry Records, Box 1356, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90213.

Jack Loren must like challenges. The more people "in the know" told



Jack Loren and the Moller console: "The beast is housebroken so far as recording is concerned."

him the 4/73 Moller in the huge (6600 seat) Shrine auditorium was unrecordable, the more determined he became to "show 'em." This platter is the end result.

Jack Loren is a west coast music lover, music teacher, composer, organist, wit and raconteur (not necessarily in that order) who cut his first records back in the days when they had to move Hammond speakers to a tiled men's room to obtain liveness in those lo-fi 78 rpm grooves. His last previous disc was played on a Conn electronic but his heart has always been with pipes — since he installed 10 ranks in the Berkeley home of his parents in 1938.

The Moller, installed when the Shrine was built in 1925 is essentially a straight organ (8' stops with upper and lower octave couplers) but is equipped with some theatrical voices, percussions and traps. A major problem was the reverb in the huge empty hall. Much experimentation with microphone positioning overcame the worst effects of echo and the time delay encountered in recording an organ with chambers so widely separated. (The house is 197 feet wide at balcony level). Jack uses the echo to advantage on some numbers with staccato chords which are allowed to die away naturally before the next chord, but fast ornamentation tends to run together. Fortunately, Jack leans toward ballads so only a couple of tunes suffer from reverb inundation. He has done a creditable job of getting theatrical sounds from the giant. Not that the classical accountments are neglected; some of the tunes have a more brilliant treble than is normally heard on T.O. records, and whenever a massive sound is called for (as in "Granada" and "Sound of Music"), those fat Diapasons are in there backing up the theatre voices.

Outside of "Granada" and a medley from "Sound of Music" the program is distinctly offbeat. Jack takes advantage of the reverb overlap during a rhythmic "Mambo-Jambo" then uses his best theatrical sounds for a languorous "Hawaiian Wedding Song" and slow tango "Rosita". He preferred the Moller's Stopped Diapason as a Tibia voice over the organ's squat, widemouthed Tibia and this voice carries the melody on Jack's one classical offering, a charmer called "Entry of the Little Fauns" by Piene, during which the Musette and French Trumpet

converse. Blues moods are represented by an old Don Redman tune, "Save it Pretty Baby", and there's anxiety in "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" which comes off as a nervous whistling exercise. Jack throws caution to the wind for his fast moving "Java", and even conjures up a "wah-wah" trumpet effect. "Mr. Sandman" is just as bouncy but is soon settles down into a ballad "Dream". Jack included "She Called Me Baby Baby All Night Long" because *my wife likes it* and finished off the tune list by taking advantage of an opportunity to plug his own tune, "Lullabye", which is played on the best Tibia/Vox mix heard on the record.

In summing up, it must be stated that the big Moller is still a straight organ and the continuous use of the few theatrical voices doesn't provide a wide variety of registration, although some of the solo reeds are used briefly but effectively for color. From the acoustics viewpoint there is some blurring of fast passages, although Jack allows for and uses the reverb well. The playing is clean (including some luscious rolls) although we disagree with some of Jack's phrasing (he often stops cold between phrases, apparently to separate them). Yet, considering the odds against any success, this is a landmark recording (the Moller's first) and its merits outweigh its faults.

YOURS SINCERELY—Rex Koury playing the 4/24 Wurlitzer in the Old Town Music Hall, El Segundo, Calif. NCR 12-994, stereo, available at \$5.00 postpaid from Rex Koury, 630 Robin Hood Drive, Reno, Nevada, 89502.

Rex Koury is one of the most underrated organists; perhaps neglected is a better word. In matters musical everything he does comes off beautifully yet his concerts are rare. Not that he needs the work; he's well ensconced in studio and TV work ("Gunsmoke" has used the theme he composed for 17 years). Yet, the theatre organ hobby is largely unaware of his immense ability on pipes. A recent concert at the Old Town Music Hall was a start in the right direction (thanks to the insight of proprietors Coffman and Field) and this recording recreates some of



REX KOURY

the excitement generated among attendees.

The program offers variety in style and selection. The brisk opener is a memory-tweaking "Yours Sincerely" (Rodgers and Hart) followed by "What are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?" both tuneful but generations apart, yet both are provided with effective showcase treatments. Mr. Koury has literally thousands of his compositions floating around the ether as cue music on TV shows he has scored. The short "bridges" and underscorings have absorbed much of his composing effort but he also writes pop tunes and an especially tuneful one is heard on this recording "Someday My Love" (no, its nothing akin to "Lara"). Next is "Fascinating Rhythm" with piano passages and very prominent xylophone pecks (the percussors are all unenclosed), then a ballad treatment of Frank Loesser's "Warm All Over". Side 1 closes with an understated "Serenata" (Leroy Anderson). The Kinura does a lot of commenting throughout "Autum in New York", contrasting with the lush combinations which carry the ball. The tune is equipped with a Gershwin-type intro and coda. *Gunsmoke* gets a concert treatment with only a suggestion of clip-clops but a very effective saloon piano sequence. "Love is Here to Stay" is heard partly as a ballad, partly in rhythm (even as a bright waltz) but its the sentimental moments which stand out.

Rex Koury's registration shows a preference for color reed-topped combinations, but never to the exclusion of the flues and mutations. If there's any criticism of registration indicated it might be said that there's a little overexposure of the Kinura; its heard frequently, sometimes as a mixer, sometimes topping the melody combination.

"Quiet Nights" is a brief rhythmic interlude with lots of registration variety preceeding the current pop, "Love Story" (which rates a snatch of Tchaikowsky's 6th Symphony for an intro). Mr. Koury's rendition is in turn dramatic and pretty. The closer is a brassy "March" from *Camelot*, with parading knights and much heraldry.

Recording is clean and the jacket notes tell us Rex was once billed as the world's youngest professional organist during an RKO theatre tour in the '30s, also that he studied with Jesse Crawford. However his style is his own and his playing is impeccable in technique and warm on the emotional scale. It's a good one.

MAGIC MOMENTS — Jesse Crawford, the Poet of the Organ, Vocalion (Decca) VL 73908, "simulated stereo," \$1.98 at record counters.

As we all know, all new Crawford releases must be rereleases. To date, Decca has done an abysmal job of grouping the many fine selections Jesse left us, mixing plug-in and pipes haphazardly. This one drops to a new low.

Somewhere in the mid-'50s the re-



A smiling Jesse Crawford about the time he recorded the album reviewed. Such happy pictures of the poet are rare.

cording company and Hammond merchants apparently conspired to deal the organist a joker, probably without malice. We'd like to have seen the expression on Crawford's face when he was approached about making an entire LP — playing a chord organ!

At the time it was first released the disc was avoided by most record reviewers, mostly embarrassed ones, because the enormity of the low blow dealt Crawford was apparently lost on its originators. Here was a musician who had earned his "poet" designation over many years of making music on the finest theatre organs reduced to the facilities afforded by one truncated manual of Hammond flutes, a self-contained "Solovox," a mess of fixed chord pushbuttons and two (count 'em) bass pedals!

The original disappeared from dealer's racks years ago but here it is back (with no reference to the type of instrument) to haunt us — and Crawford's memory. There is little of the Crawford that organ fans appreciate in these grooves, little of the "real Crawford"; perhaps an intro or a phrase here and there but the severe limitations of the toy prevent the organist from expressing himself adequately, although it's evident he's trying. Registration facilities allow a solo played on some setting of the Solovox (one note at a time) and an accompaniment played on Hammond button-grouped chords, plus a "pedal" consisting of the root or 5th of whatever chord button prevails. Occasional contrasting counter phrases suggest overdubbing. It is a terrible snubber to put on an organist of Crawford's reputation and potential. And we fail to see any reason for "simulated stereo" for a one-speaker chord organ. Surface noise and distortion are most audible on the outside tracks, diminishing in the inside tracks.

Tunes are "Around the World", "Catch a Falling Star", "Sail Along Silvery Moon", "Magic Moments" (early Bacharach), "Gigi", "Witchcraft", "A Very Precious Love", "Arrivaderci Roma", "Fascination" and "Whose Sorry Now" — any or all of which we'd love to hear Crawford play — on an organ. But in this form they do nothing for the Crawford charisma and our prayer to Decca/Vocalion is: please reissue some of those wonderful cuts JC made on the Lorin Whitney and Dick Simonton organs. □

Accent on Youth

The June 12 meeting of the Connecticut Valley Chapter was an Accent on Youth at the home of Harold and Eleanor Weaver, in Bethany.

It has been a tradition to have open console in the afternoon, with a concert in the evening, and even more of a tradition to have excellent weather, and this year was no different.

The evening concert featured performances of three of the 1970 Scholarship winners, and a concert by Bob Fazzino, one of our young members. Russell Hubbard made his debut as a full-fledged scheduled performer, although he has treated us with his playing for several years. A pupil of Rosa Rio, Russ works out his own arrangements. "Why Was I Born?" was an excellent example.

Linda Lovallo, a pupil of Eleanor Gaines Smith, included "On A Clear Day" and "Acquarius" in her selections, and George Bell, another student of Rosa Rio, demonstrated his talents on "That's Entertainment" and "Jean".

It was noted that each of these three musicians is just about the same age as ATOS itself . . . Sixteen.

Our special artist, Bob Fazzino, at the age of 20 years, is already a seasoned performer and organ teacher. Bob is expanding his 11 years of study at the organ learning theatre organ technique under the skilled guidance of Frank Konitz, well-known New Haven theatre organist.

Bob Fazzino at Weaver's 3/9 Marr & Colton



Left to right: George Bell, Linda Lovallo, Russell Hubbard.
(Allen Miller Photo)

Bob played a variety of selections demonstrating his wide musical tastes ranging from current ballads, to "Oldies-but-Goodies", to the classical themes the professional theatre organists always drew heavily upon.

Bob Fazzino proved to be a personable as well as proficient showman, and was well received by the Conn-ValChaps.

"Accent On Youth" was reassuring. The interest and enthusiasm these four young performers showed for theatre organ, as well as their skill in performing on the instrument, was obvious proof of ATOS' success in not only saving the actual instruments, but also sparking a resurgence in the popularity of its music among today's youth.

ALLEN MILLER
ELEANOR WEAVER

(Allen Miller Photo)

TWO ORGAN BUFFS...

from the same family tree

by L.A. Peckham

Most articles published in THEATRE ORGAN magazine related to "home installed" theatre organs have similar points. The happy owners of basement Wurlitzer installations usually got the bug at an early age while listening to theatre organs in the 1920's or early 30's. They made secret vows to own such a beast some day. Personally, I got hooked before I was born!

It really all started when my father, Augustus Peckham, was a boy growing up on a farm in Madison County, New York State. At age 15 he was the proud owner of a Mason and Hamlin reed organ "installed" in his bedroom. By the time he was 25 years old and a junior at Syracuse University studying for the ministry, a one manual tracker was installed in an upstairs hallway in

A look at the organ chamber showing two groups of Marr-Colton chests of five ranks each. In the background from left to right: M&C Tuba, Aeolian Free Reed Clarinet, Wurlitzer Tibia, Aeolian Vox. (Steere & Turner Salicional added after photo was made). Foreground shows from left to right: M&C Diapason, M&C V.D.O., M&C Concert Flute, M&C Kinura, (Steere & Turner orchestral Oboe has since been added. (O'Toole Photo)



the Methodist Parsonage!

In 1942, he purchased the 2/4 Wurlitzer from the Harvard Theatre in Syracuse and later installed it in the Methodist Parsonage at Chittenango, N. Y. The ladies of the Parsonage Committee weren't enthused with wind lines going through hard wood floors to the second floor organ chamber (former guest bedroom). The problem was solved by exchanging the furnace heat run for an 8" diameter air duct from the blower, located in the cellar.

In 1947, my father was considering a move to another Methodist Church and it was decided that the Wurlitzer should be sold, lest it be worn out by the many moves of a Methodist preacher! The organ was bought by a church in northern New York State and I got my first practical experience in packing, moving, and re-installing a theatre pipe organ at the age of 12.

We installed the Wurlitzer 2/4 console and relay, but a Marr and Colton Flute, String and Diapason were used instead of the Wurlitzer Flute/Bourdon, Salicional, Vox and Trumpet. My father figured that the Marr and Colton pipe-work was better suited for church services, plus he liked the simple and lighter M.&C. pipe chests. An opening recital was played by C. Sergisson of Newark, N. Y. in January 1948.

For a time I was out of touch with theatre organs. Meanwhile, my father taught me how to tune pianos and I later discovered the player piano. I re-

Rank:	Manufactured by:	Original Installation:
Flute/Bourdon	Marr & Colton	Madison Th., Oneida, N.Y.
Diapason	Marr & Colton	Madison Th., Oneida, N.Y.
Violin	Marr & Colton	Madison Th., Oneida, N.Y.
Harp	Marr & Colton	Madison Th., Oneida, N.Y.
Vox Humana	Aeolian	Whittier res., Elmira, N.Y.
Clarinet (free reed type)	Aeolian	Whittier res., Elmira, N.Y.
Kinura	Marr & Colton	Keeney Th., Elmira, N.Y.
Tuba	Marr & Colton	Civic Th., Syracuse, N.Y.
Tibia	Wurlitzer	Strand Th., Elmira, N.Y.
Orch. Oboe	Steere and Turner	Cornell Univ., Ithaca, N.Y.
Salicional	Steere and Turner	Cornell Univ., Ithaca, N.Y.
Diaphone (metal)	Wurlitzer	Webster Th., Rochester, N.Y.
Relay	Wurlitzer	Webster Th., Rochester, N.Y.
Console	Wurlitzer	Harvard Th., Syracuse, N.Y.
Chimes	Wurlitzer	Harvard Th., Syracuse, N.Y.
Blower	Kinetic-4 stage	Rivoli Th., Syracuse, N.Y.
Piano	Fischer (Ampico grand)	



Aeolian player mechanism sits atop the Peckham console. (O'Toole Photo)

built my first player piano when I was a junior in high school.

By the year 1959 I was married and living in a small bungalow in Horseheads, N. Y. My main occupation was that of an electronics technician with the Westinghouse Co. On the side I was repairing and tuning player pianos. My pride and joy was a Wurlitzer Mortuary organ plus an Aeolian Orchestrelle. The Mortuary organ was an oversized upright player piano with a rank of Flutes and three octaves of very soft Salicional pipes.

Through the efforts of Dave Teeter in Elmira, I obtained a pedal Bourdon, plus Diapason, Oboe, free-reed Clarinet, and Vox from an Aeolian residence organ. Putting my player piano experience to work, I built a chest to convert the Mortuary organ tubular-pneumatic action to electro-pneumatic operation. The Mortuary organ became a "console" to play the four Aeolian ranks.

With the encouragement of Dave Teeter, we began to attend theatre organ activities sponsored by the newly-formed Niagara Frontier chapter of ATOS Concerts at the Roosevelt and Lafayette Theatres in Buffalo rekindled our interest in the theatre organ sound.

Dave Teeter, Bob Oppenheim and myself decided about this time to rebuild the 3/20 Marr & Colton pipe organ installed at the Elmira, Theatre N. Y. (See Summer 1963 issue of THEATRE ORGAN.)

In the summer of 1960 I was able to buy the Wurlitzer-Marr & Colton that my father and I had installed 12 years before. The Wurlitzer console

and relay were installed in the basement and the three M.&C. ranks were added to the four Aeolian ranks. By this time my wife Joyce had learned to trace out cables, recover pneumatics, and help with tuning. Fortunately for me, Joyce is very interested in theatre organs and player pianos. As a math-science major in college, she has been able to gain a good understanding of electro-pneumatic actions.

By 1964 my wife and I were tired of entertaining fellow organ "buffs" in the basement, so we purchased a large three-story home in nearby Breesport. The organ was set up in the former parlor on the main floor. The swell shades were reduced to 1/3 their original size to keep the paper from being shaken off the walls in the adjacent listening room!

No attempt has ever been made to come up with an "in the theatre" sound with artificial reverb or oversized chambers. I feel that a theatre organ in the average sized home should be classed as a studio installation. The real theatre organ sound is certainly available at Radio City, the R.T.O.S. Auditorium Wurlitzer, D.T.O.C., etc.

My own installation includes pipes from theatre, residence, and church organs. All ranks have been voiced to produce a nice ensemble suitable to the size of the house. Needless to say, the twelve rooms and nine foot ceilings help too! The installation is presently composed of ten ranks played from the Harvard-Wurlitzer two manual console.

I built two automatic players — one uses regular 88 note player piano rolls and the other is a rebuilt Aeolian "short roll" residence job for classical music. The 88 note player is a real hair raiser when all ten ranks and grand piano are turned loose with "Sousa's King Cotton March". However, having had the use of Al Miller's pilot model Austin Quadraplex player for a few weeks last fall, I can see reason for the addition of a third player! I am looking forward to the day when the Quad is available in kit form. Needless to say, the fine Quad rolls being produced by Bill Petty at Fort Defiance, Va. will make the ultimate organ player a reality.

Things return to T.O. normalcy when John Muri, Dennis James, Don Kinnier, or Dean Robinson happen to drop by.

Thank goodness for automatic players and a stereo tape deck — I can't play a note! □

intriguing job!



(Laura Thomas Photo)

Nick Pitt, whom many will recall hearing at Loew's Richmond Theatre at the 3/13 Wurlitzer during the second Eastern Regional Convention, in 1966, is taking a hiatus from his Combo engagements in the Richmond area.

His summer engagement is far from the ordinary as organist for a traveling burlesque show, complete with strippers, the usual baggy-pants comic, straight man and chorus line.

The show was part of the Hamburg County Fair, in Hamburg, N.Y., a suburb of Buffalo, and is the oldest County Fair in the country.

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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 6¢ postcard to get it to VOX POPS Editor, Box 5013 Bendix Station, North Hollywood, Calif. 91605. If the contributor can afford an 8¢ stamp, why not include a black and white photo which need not be returned.

Organbuilder Lee Haggart's new voicing shop, in operation in Granada Hills, Calif. only 3 months, is already knee-deep in orders. Lee, whose specialty is the very difficult voicing of reeds, has retired from his electronics systems engineering career and is devoting full time to pipe making and doctoring. No sooner had he opened the doors than an SOS came from the Haven of Rest for repair of earthquake-stricken pipes on its 3/14 Wurl. Cornopean and String pipes had been snapped off by the temblor and organ-



Lee Haggart (left) shows visitor Tiny James some of the pipe making and voicing equipment he has collected over a lifetime devoted to pipes. The manual controls and voicing chest (left).

(Stufoto)

ist Dean McNickols was frantic. Next Bill Brown shipped in from Phoenix his historic Krummet (San Francisco, California theatre, Hope-Jones No.1, 3%³², 1917 vintage) for complete reconditioning and revoicing. As word spread across the land of Lee's availability, the St. Louis Chapter's vandalized Wurl. Brass Trumpet and Kimball orchestral Oboe arrived. The Trumpet proved especially interesting; it was an early Wurlitzer, factory-equipped with Clarinet shallots. "No wonder it sounded lousy" said Lee, reaching down into his collection of accumulated parts – and coming up with a full set of genuine Wurlitzer Brass Trumpet Shallots.



BILLY NALLE

Always exuberant Gothamite Billy Nalle is beaming over the fact that his "Big Bold & Billy" album got a good review in the DIAPASON, a mag which has traditionally downgraded theatre organ matters. But perhaps the most significant reaction to the Phase III biscuit came from a San Francisco buff who is only too familiar with the practice of style-copping. On hearing the Nalle sides he queried, "I wonder who he listens to?!" On October 22, Indianapolis fans will have a chance to hear Billy; Tom Ferree has signed him for a concert at the Rivoli theatre, playing the 3/17 "Louisville Special."



Steve Adams, ATOS member of Edina, Minnesota, reports that he found a theatre organ, hitherto unknown, in a Milwaukee theatre. It is a 3/28 Kimball in the Centre Theatre, formerly the Warner. A crew has succeeded in getting the box of whistles into playable condition, and a record-

ing has been made on it. (See "For the Records").



Gaylord Carter pauses for Times-Union cameraman Jim Osborn during practice session at the RTOS Wurlitzer.

(Jim Osborn Photo)

We nearly missed a newsworthy event regarding a certain organist's drawing power last Spring, but it's still newsworthy. Gaylord Carter, "Mr. Flicker Fingers", attracted about 1800 devotees of the theatre organ art to the Auditorium Theatre in Rochester, N. Y. on April 10. He accompanied two Harold Lloyd silents and a sing-along, played an excellent musical program and pronounced the 4/22 Wurlitzer "one of the finest instruments he has ever laid his hands on."

During his four-day visit to Liac City, Gaylord was kept busy by press interviews, photo sittings and practice sessions. He also found time to try out Jim Webster's 3/15 Wurlitzer home installation. The one-time Los Angeles "Phantom of the Organ" will be asked back to Rochester again. An 1800-fan draw ain't hay these days.



ATOSer Fred Tulan, he of the State Trumpet at the Fabulous Fifteenth concert in St. John The Divine Cathedral, said at the time he feared being struck dead for playing silent movie "chases", "Gone With the Wind", and "rock" in such a hallowed shrine. Now he feels almost retarded since the same cathedral recently presented a "Mass in F" by the composer of "Hair," with the show's cast leading a procession to the tune of "Aquarius". If ATOSers shared Fred's fears of "retribution from Above" for applauding, fear not – Time magazine reported the audience for the "Mass" even ate hamburgers and drank Cokes, thus making

ATOS conventioners quite couch in comparison! Incidentally, Fred played the new \$110,000 4/89 Italian (Ruffatti) organ in San Francisco's new 8 million dollar St. Mary's Cathedral Aug 18 during a full week of teaching advanced organists. And he's been invited to play at the next National Convention of the AGO. Fred gets around.



ATOS president Stillman Rice (center) is flanked by two former presidents, Judd Walton (left) and Dick Simonton, during the tour of the Harold Lloyd estate. (Stufoto)

A group of post-convention junketeers hit a novel jackpot in Los Angeles — a guided tour of the Harold Lloyd estate, arranged by Dick Simonton who is one of five trustees of the late screen comedian's property. The tour was an eye opener; the fortune amassed in just 10 years (1914-1924) of making silent comedies afforded the frugal Lloyd a 16½ acre tract on the edge of Beverly Hills, complete with mansion, many outbuildings, tennis court, handball court, huge swimming pool, acres of green lawn (still maintained), flower gardens (mostly gone to seed), rows of stately trees leading to summer houses, and fountains everywhere. The floor in the entry hall is still polished daily by the same house staffer who started when the house was first occupied in 1929 (it required 5 years to complete landscaping and buildings). Three mid-'30s Rolls Royce's, long unused, languish in garages, and a 32-rank Aeolian pipe organ (restored by LA chapter members) sounded forth in the huge living room. Without the master of the house present the feeling was akin to a real-life setting for "Sunset Boulevard." After a tasty buffet supervised by Mrs. Simonton, Dick spoke to the visitors

in the living room; the property will become a museum and a theatre will be built on the grounds for the show of silent films. Naturally the theatre will require an organ and that's where ATOS can score, explained Dick. There's a wide open opportunity there and the extent of ATOS participation should provide grist for many an upcoming ATOS Board of Directors meeting. But to the lucky visitors the tour will remain unforgettable.



The visitors to the Lloyd estate were something of a geographical cross section of ATOS. From Chicago (CATOE) there were Bill and Charlotte Rieger, also Nick and Carolyn Hingels. From Delaware Valley came Mary Bowles, from Puget Sound, Gennie Whitting. Frank May represented members in Indianapolis and from ConValChap were Mr. and Mrs. Stillman Rice (we signed him for prexie for another year) and Norm and Peggy Ray. From northern California were Tiny and Ida James, and Judd Walton. From nearer Porterville there was Gordon Belt. There was a sprinkling of L.A. Chapter members, some as visitors, others as co-hosts. The Gordon Kibbees, Tom B'hend, chapter chairman Neil Kissel, chapter program chairman Dwight Beacham, past chairman Bill Exner plus host of others, too many to list. A special guest was Dennis James (Delaware Valley) who was in town for his Wiltern concert. He got a crack at the Aeolian organ. Seldom is the City of



LA Chapter Program Director Dwight Beacham played a brief concert on the restored player organ in the Lloyd living room. Although it has 32 ranks, the chambers are buried in the cellar and full organ filtered through the tone chute is not the least overpowering. Tonally, it's typical residence organ — tepid. (Stufoto)

Angels graced with such a mass influx of normally faraway organ fans.



We heard Bill Thomson did a nice job at the 3/11 in the Hoosier Auditorium in Whiting, Indiana on Sept 15th. Owner Bob Montgomery seems determined to give concertgoers a wide variety of artists, and has noted an increase in the number of Chicago fans the policy is bringing in.



ANN LEAF — Love is a factor

Ann Leaf's motor is always running. On October 23 she'll cue a remembered movie, "The Covered Wagon," which she cued at the Los Angeles Million Dollar theatre during its first release (circa 1925). But this time she'll be playing the augmented Link 3/17 in the Roberson Center in Binghamton, N. Y. Then a full concert on the Link the next night. That will be the finale of Ann's excursion eastward (she lives in Hollywood). Before that, she sampled the wonders of the DTOC's 4/34 Senate Wurlt in Detroit on October 16 and the RTOS 4/22 Wurlt in Rochester on October 22nd. A rather demanding concert schedule for the "mity mite" but in there pitching for Ann is her helpmate and husband, Russ Butler, who promote's Ann's music with loving zeal. He's Ann's manager, press agent, stagehand and escort — and he knows his product is good. More gal organists should have husbands like Russ.



From New York Dick Loderhose reports that silent movies are back on Broadway. The New Paramount at 61st Street and Broadway is playing "Wings" accompanied by a pianist who played it also during its initial mid-'20s release,

according to the high-powered promotion plugging the project.



In Collingswood (Ontario) Canada, Dave Vuckson views the rise of clustered mini-theatres with alarm. What triggered him was an item in the Toronto Telegram describing four, five and six circa 100-seat auditoriums being built under one roof, with a common projection room run by one projectionist and everything automatic — lights, taped intermission music — the works. The only other humans employed are a smashing ticket seller and a ticket taker-security man. While some may feel this is the film industry's best hope to regain its share of the entertainment-seeking public, Dave feels it's regression: "They've gone the full circle — right back to the darkened store-type nickelodeons of the films' early days." Could be. With the old film palaces impossible to fill, distributors see some hope in the automated "minimultiple" house. Of course audiences attending such houses will have scant knowledge of the theatre organ, and even the concept of a real theatre will dim. Dave foresees tourists in New York taking in the "Radio City Music Hall Theatre Museum" along with the Bronx Zoo and Statue of Liberty excursion. But there's a big question, so far unanswered; where will they obtain enough films to keep all six projectors running continuously? TV reruns, perhaps?



AL BOLLINGTON

While we're North of the (US) border, let's note the reunion of two old friends — onetime British recording star Al Bollington and the then 3/15 Wurlitzer he played for three years at Shea's theatre in Toronto. The instrument was enlarged when it was

installed for a time in the Toronto Maple Leaf Garden (it was removed so they could add more seats to the sports auditorium) and is now in the famous Casa Loma. Al played there on Sept. 3. Incidentally, Al may follow the Reg. Foort trail and tour England next year. Plans are jelling.



When organist Rex Koury moves from the suburbs of Los Angeles to Reno, Nevada, this fall he'll be taking along a rare 3/7 Wurlitzer he's had stashed for a spell. Rex, who is moving to escape the big town smog and hurly-burly, will probably build chambers onto his new residence. The instrument is equipped with Tibia, Flute, Diapason, Vox, Trumpet, String and String Celeste. To this Rex hopes to add a sharp reed after he has the Wurli perking.



Ex-Rochester Theatre Organist, Eddie May reports that he and daughter Carol will bring their unique father-daughter organ duo to the Cyrano Room of the Deauville Hotel in Miami Beach from Sept. 1 to Nov. 1.



Organist Rosa Rio reports more bookings for the 1971-72 season. She was recently interviewed over WTIC in Hartford, Conn. and WFIF in Milford, Conn. She spoke on these hour-long radio programs about the golden days of radio and the nostalgia of theatre pipe organs. She is scheduled for October 15 and 16 at Thomaston, Conn. Opera House; on October 28 at the Pickwick Theatre in Park Ridge, Ill. for CATOE, and on October 30 and 31 at the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio.



Joahn Fox, the live-wire chairman of Rochester Theatre Organ Society's education committee, has begun extensive planning for that group's activities in the coming season. On August 13, she was hostess to a meeting of both RTOS and AGO people which featured movies, slides, exhibits and refreshments. One of the questions asked of each RTOS member is for his preferences in RTOS programs. Ed-

ucational activity has ranked very high with this group who want to learn as well as listen.



Youthful organist, Dennis James, spent a week in Rochester during August, taping his first record. Done on the Auditorium Theatre 4/22 Wurlitzer, it is hoped that the record will be released in time for his November 13 concert in Rochester with the Singing Hoosiers. Others who have recorded the organ were Billy Nalle, the late Leonard MacClain (Dennis' teacher), Dick Leibert and the late Tom Grierson.



Proof of the theatre organ's growing popularity are the frequent references to it on television. On August 21, on the ABC program "It Was a Good Year", the Fisher Theatre console in Detroit (now DTOC Senate) was shown, and a rendition of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" was played in the background. Though the year referred to was 1919, the Fisher Wurlitzer was built in 1928. On August 22, on the CBS News, a young heart transplant patient in California, a bearded musician, was shown at a theatre organ console in a restaurant. The organ appeared to be a Robert Morton.



Organist Bert Buhman of the School of the Ozarks in Pt. Lookout, Missouri, informs us that his series of "Music for a Sunday Afternoon" during July exceeded his fondest hopes. The initial performance drew over 700, and turn-way crowds were the rule thereafter. A 3-manual Wurlitzer was featured by Buhman for all performances. A feature story about this installation is being prepared for THEATRE ORGAN.

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Gaylord Carter Goes Baroque

by John J. Strader

On the evenings of July 18, and 19, Gaylord Carter kicked off the first in the "Strader Series" at the College-Conservatory of Music, at the University of Cincinnati in their Recital Hall auditorium.

It was typical Carter performance all the way . . . with the exception of the organ itself; rather than the mighty you-know-what usually associated with Gaylord, it was a three manual, 44 rank Balcom & Vaughan classic instrument. Gaylord got the overflow crowd off in a good humor at the very outset by congratulating them for "finding their way to the subterranean labyrinth, known as Recital Hall." From that point on, he launched into a program designed to show the importance of the musical score in its relationship to a given silent film.

With such visual aids for his demonstrations as Harold Lloyd's "Girl Shy," a segment from Lon Chaney in "Phantom of The Opera" along with "The Saw Mill" . . . a gag-filled series of stunts executed in a lumber camp setting featuring Larry Seeman, Carter forged ahead, much to the utter delight of his attention-riveted audience. Gaylord offered a bit of "Phantom of The Opera" accompanied by the most inappropriate music possible, i.e., in the sequence where the phantom is unmasked, the organ thundered out the familiar "Hello Dolly" theme, obviously followed by roars of laughter. The second time around, Gaylord played what he termed might be the "apparently proper score" to the film, with the result that the mood of the film, as well as that of the audience was altered 100%.

The rapid-fire and seemingly hazardous succession of events that flashed over the screen in "The Saw Mill" kept everyone on the edge of their seats in anticipation and laughter. Seeing Oliver Hardy (long before he had met Stan Laurel) as the whip slingin' boss of the lumber camp proved to be of much interest.

In attendance at the Sunday evening performance was Dr. Searle Wright who is taking up the post of organist

and choirmaster at Cincinnati's Christ Church Cathedral at Fourth and Sycamore Streets, starting in September. Gaylord introduced Searle to the audience, but otherwise received little or no assistance from him during the program . . . aside from Searle's contributions to the waves of laughter going the rounds throughout the evening.

Young and old, music students and just plain "organ buffs," they were all present and accounted for, yet no one seemed to miss the usual throbbing Tibias or heavy tremulants generally equated with such a performance. Under Gaylord's deft fingers, the Balcom & Vaughan sounded as if it might have been built just for this purpose. As Gaylord quickly points out, in his early days in playing for silent films, it was most always at the console of a "straight" organ. In any event, those who were present at both presentations, were not only amused but amazed as well. The distinguished Chairman of the organ department of the College-Conservatory, Wayne Fisher confided to the writer following the final program, that he "wouldn't have believed it possible!" Bach would have loved it I'm certain!

The second offering in the Series; designed to expand the horizon a bit for the young organ student, as well as to provide entertainment for the organ music-loving community, will feature Rosa Rio in a two-night concert in the Recital Hall on October 30, and 31st.

The evening of July 20, Gaylord Carter appeared at Stan Todd's Shady-Nook Steak House, to execute the score to "Girl Shy" at the console of Stan's 4/36 Wurlitzer. This was met with great delight and hearty approval by the diners in the restaurant who were taken by surprise with the whole affair. Gaylord did himself proud of course, with the giant facilities at hand, organ lift and all.

In the theatre section of the steak house (where the buffs can see all, hear all and miss nothing) there was an uncommonly interesting gathering, which included such luminaries as Searle Wright, Dr. and Mrs. Jack M. Watson (he is the dean of the College-



Dr. Searle Wright at Stan Todd's 4/36 mighty Wurlitzer at Shady-Nook Steak House.

Conservatory of Music of the University of Cincinnati).

"Fabulous" Eddie Osborn (of Baldwin organ fame) Hal Vincent (his fingers also fly for Baldwin and so does Hal when required by the situation at hand) plus a few others who were the dinner guests of Stan and Virginia Todd, in honor of Gaylord Carter and Searle Wright.

This was the night indeed, and Searle put on his theatre organist "cap" following the showing of the film. He proceeded to execute several selections at the console of Stan's Wurlitzer (with which he was unfamiliar) that brought down the house as could only be done by a true master of the craft. In Gaylord's own words, "Searle, the wretch . . . has covered himself with glory tonight!" Praise be to Searle, and to Gaylord for another unforgettable musical experience. Thanks also to Stan Todd for making a theatre organ buff's dream come true via his Shady-Nook Steak House; all this and such excellent food too! What more could one possibly ask — unless it was an encore? □

Stan Todd, Dr. Searle Wright, Gaylord Carter



Photos courtesy Robert White, Jr., of the Oxford Press, Oxford, Ohio.

FROM CLOUD 9 TO CLOUD 1009 IN TWO YEARS

by Bob Balfour

A mecca for all T.O. buffs has come to Wanaque, N. J. When organist Frank Cimmino and his boss Jimmy Provisiero agreed to put an addition on to their Suburban Restaurant and install a real live, genuine, Mighty Wurlitzer. NONE but the wildest speculation could have imagined the fantastic final outcome nearly 2 years later.

To say it is posh, elegant, magnificent, or almost anything else is to do an injustice and understate the dramatic effect you have on first seeing this installation! It is as breathtaking as your first in-person view of the Grand Canyon.

Organist Frank Cimmino went right up to Cloud 9 when the plans were discussed and was told he could have a real Wurlitzer. Then Frank found his dream organ, and went up to Cloud 109 — a 260 special, formerly installed in the RKO Chester Theatre in the Bronx, N.Y. and then owned by N.Y.'s Mr. Theatre Organ, Dick Loderhose.

The Wurlitzer, originally opus 1793, was a 3 manual 15 ranker plus piano. In negotiating the deal, Frank obtained a Morton Post Horn to replace a broken Brass Sax rank, and an additional Morton Tibia, plus a second Vox, to bring the organ to a total of 17 ranks. Then, instead of the original upright piano, he obtained a Duo-Art Grand piano, with organ hookup.

The stunning setting for all of this is an elegant room, 106 feet long, 50 feet wide and 16 feet high. It seats 350 people at tables, with two bars, and a 36 by 12 foot dance floor, directly in front of the "orchestra", flanked by the console on the right, and grand piano on the left. The organ is installed in 3 visible chambers, Main, Percussion and Solo, each 12'x12'x16', and all dramatically lit, with the Percussion under black light. A unique feature of this installation is that the chests are set into the floor. All magnets are serviced standing up in the cellar below, which also houses the blower, reservoirs and tremis.

All one can say is that those old Romans may have lived well in their day, but they never had it as great as this! Speaking of Romans, the Suburban has gained a fantastic reputation

for it's food over the years. Many of our N.Y. members have been regular patrons, listening to Frank play on the big Rodgers installation which formerly graced the old main dining room, while enjoying the unique Italian cuisine and famous "Roman Table", a seven course Italian smorgasbord that is a dining experience defying description.

On Saturday, June 26, 1971, Frank Cimmino's dream came true, and after many years, a sleeping Wurlitzer came to life. (Frank is now on Cloud 1009, and we don't think he'll ever land.)

Be sure and put it on your list of "must see" when in the N.Y. area. It will be a treat for your eyes, ears, and mouth! □

TEN MORE MEMBERS

A special committee selected nine organists, either deceased or no longer active, for entrance into the Theatre Organists' Hall of Fame.

The committee members were Lloyd E. Klos, Chairman; Dr. Edward J. Bebko (Eddie Baker); H. Clealan Blakely; Mary Bowles; John Muri; Rosa Rio; George F. Thompson and Robert S. Wilson.

In very spirited balloting, they chose:

1. Arthur Gutow — A top organist who performed in Detroit and Chicago.
2. C. Sharpe Minor — Perhaps the greatest showman theatre organist.
3. Mrs. Jesse Crawford — First woman to be named, she joins her illustrious husband.
4. Oliver Wallace — One of the early theatre organists and teacher of others, including Jesse Crawford.
5. Fred Feibel — Played N.Y. Paramount theatre and studio organs over 7½ years.
6. Milton Slosser — Active in Washington, DC and St. Louis.
7. Sidney Torch — One of the greatest British theatre organists.
8. Sigmund Krumbold — One of the greatest movie accompanists, he played the New York Paramount for years.
9. Lew White — Chief organist of the Roxy, was a teacher and broadcaster.



All news must be received at Box 2329, Livonia, Michigan 48150, by the 1st of the month preceding publication.

BEE HIVE

On June 20, the Bee Hive Chapter met at the Capitol Theatre, Salt Lake City at 9:30 A.M. Chairman Clarence Briggs informed the members that on July 1, 1971, the Scera Theatres, Sid Cohen, President, would be the new owners of the Capitol Theatre. Mr. Cohen informed Clarence he encouraged the use of the organ and that the Bee Hive Chapter could depend upon his cooperation and support.

Following the meeting, each member desiring to do so took a turn playing the Wurlitzer; after this Ethel Hogan Heinz presented a concert. Ethel was thrilled to again play this organ. She recalled having accompanied many times in the past, some silent movies on this organ and in this theatre. Everyone enjoyed hearing the old, as well as the new tunes as can only be played by this great artist.

On August 1, 1971, Mr. Sid Cohen, President of Scera Theatres, invited the entire Bee Hive Chapter to be his guests at the Capitol Theatre at 9:30 A.M. Sunday morning. To our surprise, the old-time silent picture, "The Winning of Barbara Worth" was to be presented. Mr. Cohen explained his desire to commence showing other silent pictures to the public in the very near future and wanted the Bee Hive Chapter to view it and give him our opinion. He invited any organist in the group to play along with the picture.

As the film commenced . . . dead silence . . ! After a few anxious moments of this strained silence, a former

Bee Hive Chapter member, from the Los Angeles area, Mike Ohman was encouraged to take command at the console. With no previous viewing Mike performed just like a veteran, pouring out the sweet tones for the love scenes and building up to a climax for the rushing water, running horses and also anticipating each and every scene. Needless to say, the organ is an absolute necessity to these silent pictures for without it . . . dead silence . . . ! Our hats are off to you, Mike, for a superb job.

Calvin Christensen, owner of the Arcade Theatre and Bee Hive Chapter's newest member, has just purchased a 7 rank Wurlitzer which is presently being installed in the Arcade Theatre. His father started this theatre in 1931 and the silent films were just giving way to sound, and now, 40 years later, silent pictures are making a comeback. Space is needed for the pipes behind the movie screen and flavorful touches of the old theatres will be added to the lobby. Just as soon as the remodeling is completed Cal will commence showing silent pictures. This is a new twist; a theatre pipe organ going into a theatre, rather than one coming out.

The Bee Hive Chapter, as well as the ATOS certainly wish Sid Cohen and Cal Christensen the very best in this new venture and we will support both of them all the way.

DARLENE WALKER

CENTRAL INDIANA

The months of May and June were traveling months for the Central Indiana Chapter beginning on May 16 when we traveled to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank May in Kokomo, Indiana, for our monthly meeting. Before the business meeting the group was entertained with the artistry of Dennis James, playing the May's 4/18 Wickes-Barton organ. Dennis played several selections and some requests.

Following the business meeting the members and several guests enjoyed more fine music by John Landon and Tim Needler. The different styles of each of these artists brought out the marvelous sound of this magnificent organ, which Mr. May has spent many hours in the past few years installing.

Then on May 22 the group was able to enjoy more of Dennis James when

he played a concert on the 3-manual Conn Theatre electronic organ at the Knights of Columbus Assembly Hall in Indianapolis, Indiana.

On June 13 the club traveled to Southern Indiana for their June meeting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Trinkle in New Albany, Indiana. It was an all day outing with lunch, swimming and music. The Trinkle's have a 2/7 Wurlitzer. Mr. Trinkle showed the group how he could play the organ automatically through a player piano that he has connected to the organ as part of his installation. The members also had a chance to try out the organ. So this was an all around fun day at the home of Trinkle's.

Sunday July 25 the club met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Ward of Carmel, Indiana. After the business meeting the members and guests played the organ and had a very enjoyable afternoon.

It was announced that the next meeting would be held at the home of member James Flanagan who has a 3/9 Wurlitzer-Barton installation. Mr. Flanagan is in the process of attaching an Aeolian player grand piano to his installation and hopes to have this completed by the August meeting.

RUTH HAWKINS

CHICAGO AREA

An ever-popular artist among CATOE members, Bob Coe, played the May 23 social at the Indiana Theatre in East Chicago. His long career as a theatre organist has given him a repertoire of many delightful but seldom-heard songs from the 1920s,



Bob Coe, veteran theatre organist of the Madison, Wisconsin area, entertains audiences at the Indiana Theatre during CATOE's May social.

(Tom Yannitell Photo)

including tunes written by both Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Crawford.

The 3/10 Wurlitzer is considered to be one of the finest built and the combination of "in-theatre" sound and authentic theatre organ styling made the performance very pleasant.

CATOE's June 27th social at the Pickwick Theatre's 3/11 (plus Post Horn) Wurlitzer was an "all-star" performance played by Dave Olson of Muskego, Wisconsin. He played a program of songs identified with other artists and in their styles.

While some critics frown on this type of concert, two facts must be kept in mind. First, Dave doesn't pretend to make the audience believe that he is playing his own arrangements. He gives the imitated artist full credit. Second, he plays the arrangements very well.

During the performance, Dave played a couple of his own arrangements and they were as well received as his "Crawfords", "Wrights", "McAbees", and "Sengs".

Dave displays great talent in arranging. It is hoped by this writer that he will continue to put more and more of his own work into his concerts. His, too, is a style worth copying.

There aren't enough good words to describe a Dennis James concert. At age 20 Dennis displays all the traits needed to become a great organist. His technique is superb. His playing is just full of life and feeling, and his personality seems to win audiences everywhere. His enthusiasm for the theatre organ is made obvious in every phrase.

Dennis played a concert on May 7 at Downers Grove High School's 3/10 Wurlitzer and the proceeds went to the school's foreign exchange program. It was CATOE's first benefit performance.

With the exception of one or two arrangements of his late teacher, Leonard MacClain, Dennis played his own arrangements, something which

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Dennis James, soon-to-be-Super Star, chats with audience during his May 7th CATOE concert at the Downers Grove High School 3/10 Wurlitzer. It was a benefit performance for the school's foreign exchange program. (Ed Schaefer Photo)

many veteran organists fail to do. His arranging, his sense of timing, his registrations, his well-rounded programming, and his rapport with the audience are not to be surpassed.

Remember that you read it in this column: Given the time required of any organist to make a name for himself, Dennis James will be a great organist.

Since July was convention month, it was decided not to have a social. However, 39 CATOE members were registered for the convention in Seattle, which is commendable, considering the distance they had to travel.

The August social at the Patio Theatre featured Ted Day at the 3/17 Barton. At that time the fall concert schedule was discussed.

Despite the fire which destroyed the Senate Kimball (see Aug., '71 issue of THEATRE ORGAN) the enthusiasm in CATOE which has been growing for the past few years continues and the club will remain as one of the nation's most active.

DENNIS MINEAR

CONNECTICUT VALLEY

The April meeting of ConnValChap was held at two member's homes where theatre pipe organs were inspected and played.

Starting in the early afternoon, two shifts of members visited Allen Miller's excellent installation in Glastonbury, Conn. where Al demonstrated his 3/8

Miller Special with Knabe-Ampico reproducing piano having controlled expression from the console, and the Quadruplex Player which can play both instruments.

As Al explained, the organ chamber with a total volume of only 300 cubic feet contains the pipes, direct-electric Chrysoglott with solid-state controlled action, and 5 Tremolos which are actually motor-driven winkers that waste no air, can be adjusted individually for speed and depth, and do not require separate regulators.

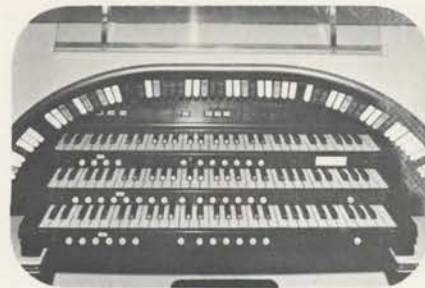
Twenty four 16' Diaphones (wood) have been mitred and chopped up and crammed into an old overnight bag and wired to some diodes, resistors and a speaker . . . a system Al designed himself. Darned if this thing doesn't sound just like real Hope-Jones!



Organ builder, — organist, Allen Miller demonstrates orchestral effects of 3/8 Miller theatre organ newly constructed in 1971. (Preston Miller Photo)

The solid-state relay and switch action including 2nd Touch and Sostenuito on the Great manual is mounted on the inside of the chamber door and has hinged components with plug connectors to allow addition and changes of stops without wiring changes. This relay system fits within the door jamb space, whereas a conventional relay the same size would require a room larger than Al's chamber. Al also demonstrated his Automatic Key Holder, a small box with 25 miniature switches, attached to a long cord that permits him to hold or play any notes singly or in combination for tuning or regulating without having to yell "Next", nobody need be at the console.

Al played several popular and semi-classical numbers to demonstrate the voicing which is definitely instrumental or concert (orchestral). This is truly an ingeniously designed instrument



Closeup of newest theatre organ in the world, 1971, constructed by Allen Miller of Glastonbury, Connecticut. (Preston Miller Photo)

with some outstanding features, last of which is a brand new three manual horseshoe console with capture combination action. You hardly see any of these any more.

In the evening, nearly the whole chapter jammed into Anita and Irv Twomey's basement Music Hall in Manchester, Conn. to hear and try the 2/7 Wurlitzer with added Mason and Hamlin-Ampico reproducing piano with expression controlled from the console, a very useful feature common to both instruments seen at this meeting.

The console is not the one originally from the organ which came from a Taunton, Mass. theatre, but will be recognized by some members as the slave console formerly attached to George Shaskan's organ in Stamford a few years back.

Solo couplers have been added which make this installation sound "really Big".

Our guest artist was our chapter's own Carmen Charette who showed that women can play too, and demonstrated that the bridge between her



Carmen Charette at Twomey's 2/7 Wurlitzer (Preston Miller Photo)

electronic and pipes is a very short one. Did she ever make that Wurlitzer get up and go! Carmen most enjoys playing up-tempo numbers, and does so with determination and a solid beat that kept the toes tapping throughout her concert.

Then, as a surprise, Carmen wowed them with a community sing — with slides yet. Several of the ladies of the ATOS Auxiliary were mumbling about wanting to take lessons.

When your reporter left, our new artist-member Frank Piliero was doing charcoal sketches of both the hostess and guest artist.

OBE O'HORN (Alias Ev Bassett)

LOS ANGELES

For 42 Los Angeles members the highlight of the summer season was the Sweet Sixteenth national convention in Seattle. The Seattle chapter deserves our sincere thanks for giving us such a memorable event.

Following the convention, on July 19th, the Los Angeles chapter and the trustees of the Harold Lloyd Foundation were co-hosts to the ATOS Directors for a visit to the fabulous Harold Lloyd estate. ATOS Director Richard Simonton, a long-time friend of Mr. Lloyd, was host and tour guide. Stu Green's impressions of the tour appear among the VOX POPs so we won't duplicate coverage here.

On Sunday morning, July 25th, the Los Angeles chapter presented Dennis James in concert at the Wiltern Theatre's 4/37 Kimball. Dennis presented a nicely varied concert, displaying his thorough command of styles ranging from purest Crawford to classical. For most of the members and guests in the audience it was their first opportunity to hear this young artist from the East, and they were loud in their praises of his musicianship. We hope that his tentative plans for locating on the West Coast materialize!

After three years of hard work by Chairman Neil Kissel and his dedicated crew, the formal opening of the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium's mighty, and once-again magnificent, Wurlitzer is firmly scheduled for Feb. 11, 12, and 13, 1972. The former Brooklyn (NY) Albee's style 235 (with piano) has been completely rebuilt and installed in chambers formerly occupied by a 2/27 residence-type Aeolian. No effort has been spared to make this a Class A installation. The console was refinished

to better-than-new appearance by member Stan Weisbard, and Bruce Skovmand's elevator installation is an engineering masterpiece. The organ is already playing, and although much reed re-voicing and regulation are yet to be done the acoustics of the hall are so good that the rough spots are minimized. What a sound! Pure Wurlitzer!

The grand opening will actually be a three-concert "festival" consisting of the formal dedication on Friday evening, a top-quality silent film with organ accompaniment on Saturday, and a wrap-up concert on Sunday. Tentative arrangements have been made with three artists who are absolute tops, but until final agreements have been reached I'd better not mention any names.

The Executive Board is now discussing the possibility of combining the San Gabriel opening with a winter regional ATOS convention. Prospects look good, but so far plans are only tentative. If the decision is made to go ahead read about it in the December THEATRE ORGAN!

BILL EXNER

NIGARA FRONTIER

On Friday, July 9, Greg Rister, 19, of Whittier, California, performed an informal concert at the console of the 3/12 Wurlitzer organ in the Riviera for club members. His ability to play all types of music well makes Greg a good prospect for future concert engagements. (All chapters, take note!)

Kay McAbee came to North Tonawanda on July 14 to make his Riviera debut. His performance was an interesting blend of show tunes, semi-classics, and recent pop hits. A spectacular "Land of the Pharoahs" with



Kay McAbee during his July concert at the 3/12 Riviera Wurlitzer.
(Shirley Cole Photo)

its amazing pedalwork was one of the high points of Kay's concert. His sister, Mrs. Rosemary Dymek, vocalized three beautiful songs in her outstanding soprano voice. Kay's program was a special treat.

Chicago's famous Leon Berry made a return visit to the Riviera Theatre, this time with his charming bride of one year, Mildred. The date was August 18, and the program was an interesting one performed for an almost capacity crowd. Leon's music held that unmistakable Berry beat which fascinated his listeners with such tunes as "Blacksmith Blues," "Huckleberry Duck," and "Tiny Bubbles." Leon's second Riviera concert closed with a standing ovation and an encore of songs of the military. It was an exciting evening of music, indeed.

SHIRLEY COLE

RED RIVER

Summary of the four chapter meetings for Winter-Spring, 1971.

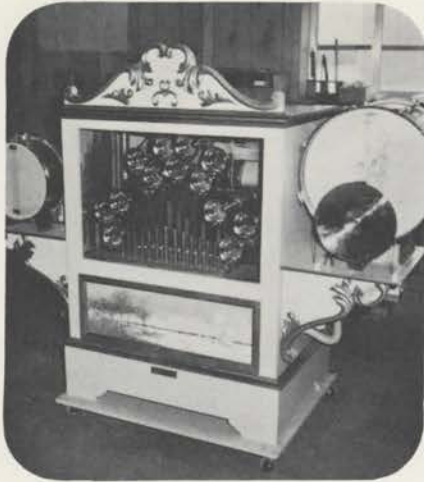
The Red River chapter met on January 10th at the home of Mel and Alice Harden. The most important item under discussion was the Harvey Gustafson concert-silent movie which had just been held at Bud's Roller Rink. Those attending had a great time, but it was found that the concert was not as successful from a financial standpoint as it should have been. Better promotion campaigns and ideas were discussed. The Red River Arts Council announced a silent movie symposium to be held in September, and a tentative date was discussed for the next chapter concert. Following the business meeting, a jam session was held on the Thomas theatre organ.

On Sunday, February 21st, the chapter gathered at the Red River Piano and Organ Company in Moorhead. Chairman Lance Johnson gave a lecture demonstration on band organs in Europe and America between 1850 and 1900, showing photos of some of the organs and playing recorded examples. Then the members had a chance to see and try out the new line of Wurlitzer electronic organs.

An interesting show was planned for members and guests at the Johnson Organ Company erecting room in Moorhead on April 18th. The program was a continuation of the band organ series, this time playing live examples

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of the Wurlitzer model 105 Band Organ and Calliola. Then the new Johnson Band Organ was unveiled and demonstrated. This band organ was patterned after the Wurlitzer 125 series and was built as a prototype for demonstration. The organ uses rolls which are still manufactured.



Lance Johnson at the JOHNSON theatre pipe organ

To top off the program, Lance played a few numbers on the Johnson Theatre Pipe Organ, which has two manuals and five ranks. After the program, members and guests (the largest number to ever assemble at a meeting) had a chance to see the various organs in the production stage.

For the last meeting before the summer break, chapter members gathered at the home of Hildegard Kraus in Fargo, on Sunday, May 23rd. Part of the program was a most fascinating talk by Hildegard about her life with her late husband, Eddy, and their years in the theatres in Fargo. She was organist at both the State and Fargo Theatres and Eddy was manager at the Fargo. The business meeting

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FOR SALE — Theatre Organ Rodgers 33-E. Perfect condition. Save! \$8,400. Write **R.G. Otto**, 618 Eberwhite Blvd., Ann Arbor, Mich. 48103.

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FOR SALE — Milne's THE REED ORGAN, 168 pages. \$5.00 postpaid. **Organ Literature Foundation**, Braintree, Mass. 02184.

FOR SALE — Garage Full of Organ Parts including 2M 3R Marr & Colton, direct electric chests, pipework, etc. Moving — must sell everything. \$750. **A.R. Johnson**, 147 Walrath Road, Syracuse, New York 13205, Phone: (315) 469-1273 or 834-9370.

FOR SALE — 2/7 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ with double touch (unused), chimes, new switchstack, rectifier, Mahogany Console. Reasonably priced, 22nd Wurlitzer ever made. (614) 389-3966.

FOR SALE — Wurlitzer stop tablets, long and short. 75¢ each plus postage. Send stamp for list. **R. Angell**, 3040 Manoa Road, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96822.

FOR SALE — 3/7 Theatre Pipe Organ with percussions, toy counter, etc. Very compact home installation, \$3500 Firm. Consider Electric organ, Nickelodeon, Band Organ, Mills Violin, DuoArt Upright, etc. in trade or part payment. **Bob Lilarose**, 527 Dorchester Ave., Lincoln Park, Reading, Penna. 19609, 1-215-7772461.

FOR SALE — Hope-Jones (and other early organ designers) patent applications and drawings. Copies of the original details — Wurlitzer and others — Available in sets — **H.A. Henning**, Box 633, Bellaire, Texas 77401.

WANTED — All Wurlitzer: Oboe Horn, brass Trumpet, brass Sax, Post Horn, and top 3 octaves of standard large scale Tibia, **Mike Foley**, Box 66, Buckland Station, Manchester, Connecticut, 06040, 203-646-4666.

WANTED — Barton Four-Post Lift for 2-Manual Console. **Paramount Theatre**, P.O. Box 1191, Baton Rouge, La. 70801.

WANTED — Wurlitzer Diaphone, 16' octave. **R. Angell**, 3040 Manoa Road, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96822.

UNIQUE RECORD available! 7", 33 RPM, Stereo record of 3,200 people singing along with Roger Garrett at the Mighty Morton 4/22 in Columbus' Ohio Theatre. Fund-raising effort to provide funds to restore 3/13 Wurlitzer from Col's Palace Theatre. To cover purchase, postage, tax, send \$2.30 to **Central Ohio Theatre Organ Society (ATOS)**, 4642 Musket Way, Columbus, Ohio 43228.

centered on revisions in the by laws, which were discussed at length.

A surprise guest was Frank Scott,



Frank Scott of the Lawrence Welk orchestra entertains the Red River Chapter at the Home of Hildegard Kraus.

who has done much of the arranging for the Lawrence Welk organization, and has appeared many times at the piano and harpsichord. Frank was coaxed into playing the piano, since there was no organ available, for an hour. To top off this fun meeting, Hildegard presented Lance Johnson with her entire remaining collection of silent movie cue music, consisting of a stack of sheet music 12" high and considered to be extremely valuable now, since it is all out of print.

Future meetings in the Fall of 1971 will include a regional meeting with the Red River, Land O'Lakes and Dairyland Chapters at Reiny Delzer's in Bismark, North Dakota. □

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