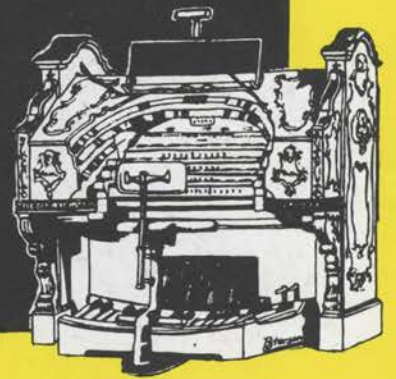


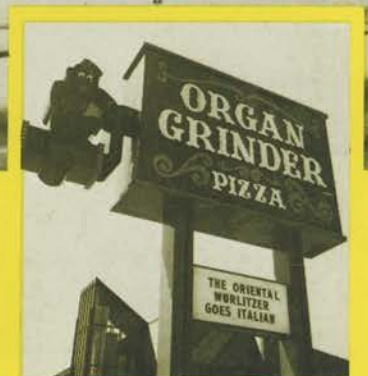
THEATRE ORGAN

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 4

AUGUST, 1973



JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY





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AUGUST, 1973

cover photo...

The Organ Grinder Restaurant (near completion) was a highlight of the 1973 ATOS National Convention in Portland, Oregon. The Convention story unfolds beginning on page 23. (Restaurant photo by Bill Lamb — Monkey photo by Stu Green.)

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president's message...



Serving as President of the American Theatre Organ Society for the past year has been a most rewarding experience, and my thanks are extended to all who have worked with me to make the year a success.

Our membership has increased to an all-time high of 4620, and approximately 3200 of this total are organized into 40 active chapters.

Good material for THEATRE ORGAN has been received in sufficient quantity to enable us to enlarge the publication for the entire year and there are additional improvements under consideration for the year ahead. You will notice also that our publication has been further improved through the addition of several important advertisers.

The activation of a separate membership office in Salinas has expedited the issuance of membership cards and has kept membership records up-to-date to within a few days of receipt of information.

I am honored that the membership has asked me to serve in this office for another year. It is with full knowledge of the work involved that I accept with the determination that every effort will be expended to work for an even greater ATOS. You have provided me with an excellent team of officers and directors with whom to work. My greatest desire is that our far-reaching lines of communication within the society can grow stronger and that I can realize more of the fun of belonging through knowing more of you personally in the next year.

Erwin A. Young, Jr.

THEATRE ORGAN

3



The church, with the van ready for loading.



Dick Beaver watches Linda Murphy and Laurel Haggart disassemble a pipe rack.



Marshall Willett (left) and Ron Downer remove screws from a swell shutter frame.

Raid!

by Elmer Fubb

Photos: Bruce Haggart, Stu Green

We don't often read an account of what might be described as an "organknapping." Actually it was completely legal; southern Californians Lee and Laurel Haggart of Granada Hills bought what at first appeared to be a 2/5 Smith organ from a northern California church. They were a little concerned about the reaction of Bay Area denizens to losing a pipe organ. But we must add a word of caution regarding this account of this event. The writer has been known to — well, exaggerate. While the main stream of the story is factual, Mr. Fubb's efforts to revive the Civil War remain his own syndrome. To be safe, skip the text and follow the photos.

"A guy can tell who his friends are when it comes to moving his organ," stated veteran organ builder Lee Haggart, with a sly smile.

That's how I got roped into getting up at 3:00 A.M. and travelling from Los Angeles to Oakland, California one summer night. Like an idiot, I volunteered before I learned the organ to be moved was 400 miles from home.

So at 3:15 A.M. I found myself being propelled northward in Dick Schroder's car. Dick is the owner of a Morton of undetermined size which he keeps well hidden in his hillside home in Encino. Along the way we stopped to pick up other sleepy-eyed night crawlers until the heap was loaded. There were mumbled greetings and soon the drone of gentle snores blended with the hum of the motor. Onward into the night!

I was rudely awakened by a loud yell, "All out for refreshments, et cetera!"

"Where's the head?" said Marshall Willitt. Marshall owns a 7-rank Robert Morton which he sent north to the State of Washington so it wouldn't bother him.

"Where's the bar?" queried Stu

Green probably surveying the lone lunch room only to find something missing.

I took this in before opening my sleepy eyes and when I did it was broad daylight. "The bar — at 7:00 A.M.?" I mused. We were at one of the few "pit stops" on the almost curveless strip of pavement between LA and the Bay Area, Route 5, which runs mostly across desert flatland. This oasis would be our last stop before Oakland. After Stu finished chomping the garlic sandwich he'd fished out of his barracks bag we climbed back into the car and proceeded north — with the windows open. Route 5 is a concrete ribbon stretching across desolate moonscapes. The most exciting sight along the route is a giant corral loaded with bellowing cattle, as far as the eye can see. It was several miles later that the barnyard aroma let up.

"We're gonna get clobbered by them Frisco organ nuts" said someone in the car.

We arrived in Oakland after more siestas, around 9:00 A.M., and started looking for the church from which the organ was to be extricated. We didn't have an address but Dick Schroder had been there before and thought he had a good idea of its whereabouts.

"I remember the tall tower with JESUS SAVES in vertical letters," recalled Dick. A half hour of criss-crossing streets in the general area failed to show any signs of church or tower.

"Elmer, ask that guy on the corner where it is?" suggested Danny Murphy. Danny is the Haggart's son-in-law, an organ fan by induction.

"Hey mister, where's the 'Jesus Saves' church?," I hollered.

The man pointed across the street. There it was. We pulled across the street and there on the church steps was a man wearing a hard hat. Inscribed across the front of the hard hat



The single chamber is behind and above the altar (note work lights). The console is in a recessed pit at left, front, before the altar.



Laurel Haggart, 'I think we need a truck!'

Preparing to lift the console out of its enclosure.



was "Jesus Saves." This had to be the place, but we approached with some caution.

"Now we're in for it," groaned Stu.

"I'm Mr. Sparks and churches are my hobby," said the hard-hatted one cheerfully.

Yes, there was an organ moving in progress. "They've been working all night" said Mr. Sparks. He seemed friendly.

The hard hat was a suggestion that there might be resistance to the organ move. After all, we were, in effect, raiders. Our mission was to shanghai an organ from northern to southern California. Our shock troops were two gals whose mission was to clear the way for us men. It was clearly a victory for "wimmin's lib." We approached a closed door at the top of a dark stairway and one of us knocked.

Silence.

Again, the knock.

From inside, a female voice — "password!"

"Ugga ugga boo ugga boo boo ugga!"

The door flew open and we new arrivals noted that Laurel Haggart, son Bruce and daughter Linda had been working all night and were a bit weary from wrapping and packing pipes.

"You gals look a little Haggart," said Marshall, in a weak attempt at humor.

Ignoring this, Laurel introduced Ron Downer, Bay Area enthusiast and organ owner. Ron had come to assure the organ's new owners that there would be no local hard feelings over the loss of the 5-ranker. And to show his good intent he had brought along some long coffin-like pipe packing cases. With no signs of hostilities in the offing, Stu dropped his brass nuckles into his barracks bag, alongside his WWII army helmet. No one had taken him seriously.

We were happy to learn that the gals, assisted by another Haggart friend, Dick Beaver (who had flown from LA to Oakland to help), had already removed and packed all the pipes. There were still the swell shutters to dismount and a huge chest, with regulators and a trem beneath it.

About the time the chest was up for transport, who should arrive but the guy who might have been the 4-star general of the resisting forces — Tiny James.

"No hard feelings about our losing this one. Frankly, it's a dog," said



A wistful look from Dick Schroder when he realizes he must cut the console cable. Note paucity of stopkeys on the console.



The console, which witnessed so many processions down the church center aisle, makes the trip in reverse on the way out.

The switch stack joins organ parts ready for loading in the church yard.





The blower, on a dolly, is edged down a stairway.



The blower crew puts on the brakes as the heavily-loaded dolly reaches the curb.

Up the ramp, into the van.



Tiny. Laurel glared at him but was glad the organ wouldn't be missed.

Tiny laughed, "I didn't mean that, just wanted to get your reaction. I never heard this organ. No one has for ten years. It's been silent that long."

I noted a two manual Conn on the altar, the obvious replacement.

The instrument was supposed to be a late Smith, built by Hope-Jones' associate Fred Smith who worked out of Oakland during the '30s. But later investigation indicated that the only genuine Smith parts were the console relays and switch stack. Therefore, it's doubtful that Fred Smith assembled or installed it.

As Tiny left, Linda beamed, "Gee, he's kinda famous. Did a hitch as prez of ATOS. Heard he plays, too." Back to the organ.

The swell shutters are genuine "gee dad" Wurlitzer, the type used on a style 185. The chimes are early style "M" North Tonawanda. The huge chest proved to be a Roosevelt, vintage circa 1900 and well-built. The switch stacks were also Wurlitzer. Pipe work is similarly varied.

The Open Diapason is Morton. The String, a Gamba, is Roosevelt. There are two unmarked open Flutes, one a Celeste, one Harmonic, and the Vox Humana is actually a small scale Vox Mystica from a Fotoplayer built in nearby Berkeley. It is set up as a church organ, with fewer and lighter voices on the upper manual (Swell) and the Open Diapason on the lower Great. There is unification in the Harmonic Flute, but most other stops appear only at 8' and some at 4'. There are two synthetics, an "Oboe" and a "Clarinet." The only pedal 16' is the Bourdon. With so little unification the stopkeys occupy only about one third of the horseshoe stoprail.

"What a mish-mash," I mumbled, half aloud.

"But it's going into the home of a guy who knows how to transform a mish-mash into a silk purse," said a voice behind me, literally booting me out of my reverie.

Slowly I turned, and my heart did a flip-flop; it was none other than Dewey Cagle, who would have had the rank of no less than Field Marshall, had the Northerners decided in favor of combat.

"I'll bet this instrument goes into the Haggart home as a fully loaded theatre organ," declared Dewey to the assembled throng. They had all ceased



Next is the oversize 4-rank chest.



Too large for the side door, the chest takes the same route as the console, up the center aisle and out the front door.

With Linda holding the coiled cable, the chest is moved into the van.





Unloading in Granada Hills. Lee Haggart (left) watches the blower emerge.



Bruce Haggart (center) and Dick Beaver wheel the blower into Lee's carport — which is already full of organ parts.

The Roosevelt chest is dollied toward the Haggart driveway.



work to size up Dewey because he's kinda famous in both the pipe and plug-in fields, having been a co-founder of the Pacific Council for Organ Clubs and a wheel in ATOS affairs since the year one.

Dewey Cagle didn't fathom how right he was. Little did he know that at that very moment, back in Granada Hills, Lee Haggart was standing on his front curbstone with a newly reconditioned Morton unification relay, ready to clap it onto the incoming instrument — even before it had been fully disassembled 400 miles up the Pacific coast. And he had dusted off that Morton set of Tibias which had been neatly stacked beneath his bed for no one knows how many years.

"Aren't any of you northerners sore because we're latching onto this mess of pipes?" asked Bruce Haggart.

"Nope," answered Dewey. "I've known about this odd assortment of parts for years. Besides, there are more pipe organs for sale in the Bay Area than there are buyers. So load her up and haul her away."

At that point we all glowered at Stu, who had predicted a pitched battle.

"Did you bring your brass knuckles, Stu?" asked Dewey, turning to leave. Stu grunted and pointed to his old army bag. "Where's the bar?" he muttered dully.

"Load her up?" screeched Laurel. "Load her on what? We need a truck!"

So we drew straws and Dan Murphy lost. He departed in search of "drive it yourself" transportation. Danny returned in a few minutes with a huge wheezing bucket of bolts leased from the Rentabucket Hauling Co. and Emergency Hospital. The neatly stacked organ parts were soon swallowed up by the van. Meanwhile, Stu Green had disappeared with Dewey Cagle. Dewey brought him back hours later, after Danny and wife Linda had taken off with the truck for the southward journey. The crew poured Stu into the Schroder auto. They expected to pass the truck pronto but they couldn't know Danny had disconnected the speed limiter and the Rentabucket was barreling southward at a goodly rate of speed. We never overtook them until we passed the pit stop; nearly 300 miles to the south Dan and Linda had stopped for a snack.

Next day most of the crew reassembled to unload the truck at the Haggart home and pipe shop.

Lee, who after an encounter with ticker trouble, could only stand by, waving a confederate flag and cheering the parts haulers from the sidelines.

"A guy sure knows who his friends are when it comes to organ moving" reprised Lee. "See, you didn't need the brass knuckles after all, Stu."

"Oh, but I did" said the owl-faced one, coming slightly alive. "I had to hock them in Oakland to buy Dewey a drink of Burpsi-Booma."

More on the Haggart project as it develops. □



Lee Haggart (left) points out to a willing but clumsy helper that a pipe's lip shouldn't be used as a handle.

Laurel gets the feel of the console, now placed where it will operate in the Haggart home.



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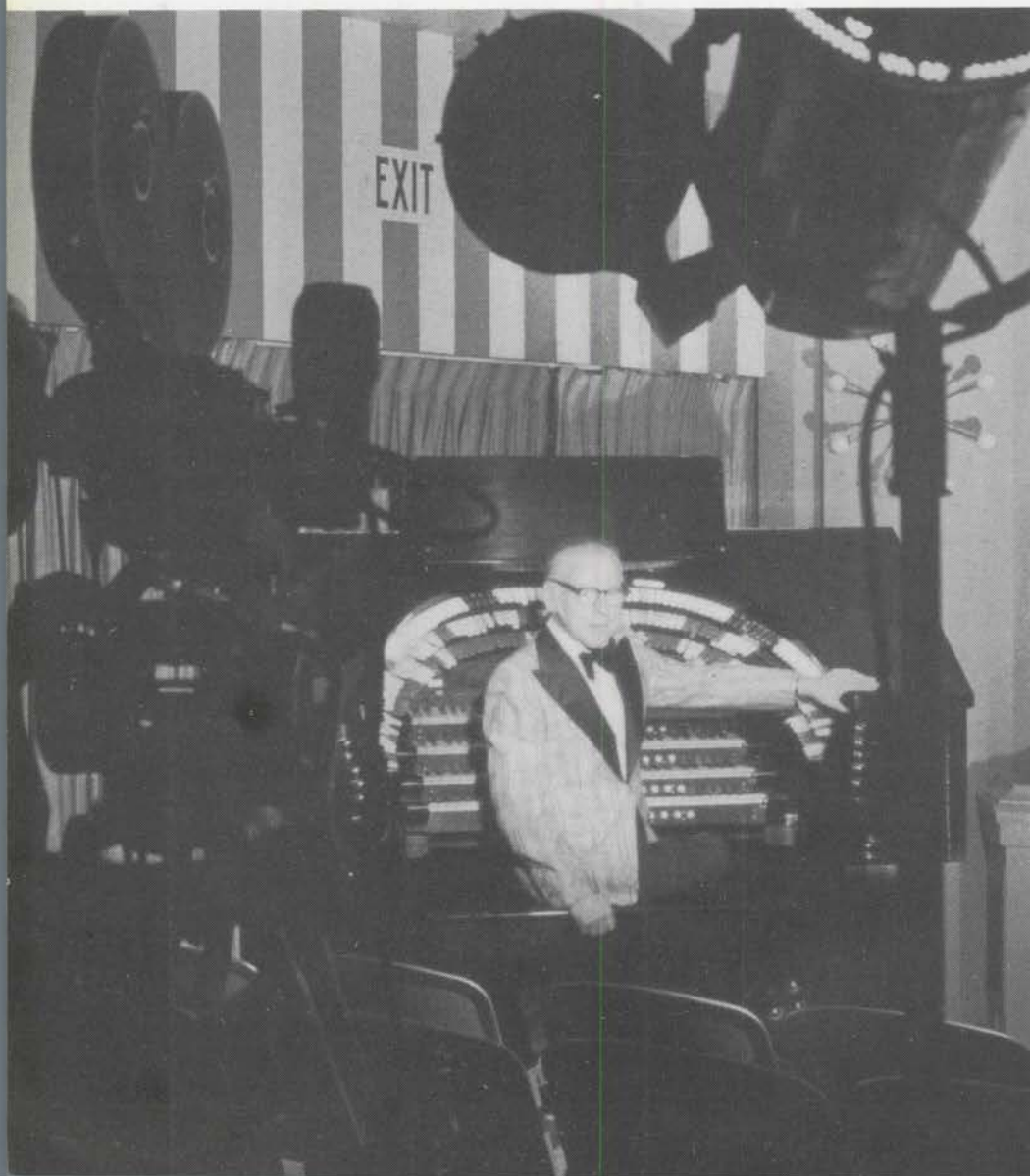
The New Yamaha E-5.

A HOLLYWOOD "DISCOVERY"

THE DRAMATIC VALUE OF THEATRE ORGAN

by Lyle W. Nash

Lights . . . Camera . . . Action — Gaylord Carter at the Wurlitzer in the Simonton Theatre at Toluca Lake.



Because Harold Lloyd and Mary Pickford and Richard Simonton, Sr., had an abiding love for their classic films, the art of creating motion picture music for silent films is being preserved and recorded for future generations.

For Harold Lloyd the desire for ideal movie music began more than 50 years ago. Lloyd first heard Gaylord Carter play in 1922. The two artists found a common cause in music that lasted a lifetime. Now Carter is marking the end of 50 years of making movie music with great Wurlitzers or Bartons or Robert Mortons. Surely one highlight of his long musical career is creating the lasting theatre pipe organ scores for Harold Lloyd films.

Lloyd began his project of adding music to his silent films in 1970 and personally supervised much of the recording work.

For Mary Pickford it was her husband Charles Buddy Rogers who sought the pipe organ music of Carter for her films when they were revived. A great example of what a pipe organ score can add to a film is the delightful music added to the Pickford and Rogers film, *My Best Girl*.

Carter and the theatre organ and Lloyd films were designed for each other. A movie screen chase without sharp organ punctuation is almost nude.

Although Hollywood has long been acclaimed the technical creative center of film making, it was the Toluca Lake home of Simonton which held the key to this posterity project.

Scoring of films requires — a music source — tape recording facilities — film projector/equipment with complete interlock and synchronism, all at one location. Many sound stages in Hollywood have one or two of these vital component units but none offer all three.

At the Simonton Theatre all units are almost within whispering distance of each other. This is exceptionally convenient for creating musical scores for films.

Key to the project is the magnificent four manual, 36 rank Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ. Beautifully voiced, superbly tuned and ever in good condition, the Wurlitzer is the heart of the Simonton Theatre.

For more than 10 years film producers, movie historians, film stars, and musical artists from around the

world have used the facilities for recording, researching, enjoying films and music.

Jesse Crawford used the Simonton Grande Organ for recording all his final albums.

The great and near-great of ATOS have visited the theatre and played the organ.

Today Gaylord Carter enjoys playing for films as much as he ever did — perhaps more. “Today’s audiences,” he said recently, “are starved for live music. TV is great but the in-person relationship and the now feeling is total magic. Silent film music added the extra dimension to the enjoyment of pictures. Accomplished organists kept your ear busy but never intruded on the action. A throbbing Tibia or crying Vox Humana in a darkened theatre with Janet Gaynor and Charlie Farrell pledging eternal love was an art blend you’ll never get from bongo drums or a jangling electric guitar.”

Early this year sound film producers learned of the theatre organ magic. Producers of the MGM feature, *Wicked, Wicked*, used the Simonton Grande Organ for special mood music for some of the terrifying scenes of the mystery film.

Ladd Thomas, chairman of the Organ department of the University of Southern California School of Music, was the organist. The film producers obtained the 1925 *Phantom of the Opera* score and had Thomas review it for use with the Duo-Vision picture.

Organist Thomas (he is only 37) explained the new experience this way:

“It was an exciting and hectic experience for me . . . creating mood music for films . . . it was my first . . .

I used several of the *Phantom* themes and also improvised on them . . . I would assume that playing for silent films (without dialogue) you would be the sum and total musical punctuation of the drama . . . You simply brought out the action in the old silent films . . . Today you have many sound effects of which music is but one. You approach it differently. Yes, I would say the theatre pipe organ as we know it and for what it was created to do and accomplish . . . there was never anything of its equal ever made.”

The renaissance of the theatre organ continues.

Now the Harold Lloyd Foundation trustees have made plans for a motion picture theatre on the fabulous Green



(L to R) Matty Kemp, Gaylord Carter, Richard Simonton Sr., Richard Simonton Jr., and an unidentified technician.



Technicians at work.

Acres estate. (See: THEATRE ORGAN, June, 1973, Page 4).

How does Simonton feel about all this?

“Nostalgia, or living in the past, is popular because something in our present lives does not totally satisfy us. We have a void. Maybe we lack daring to try the new — when we know how beautiful things were in the by-gone

era. With the theatre organ and old films we have a matchless time machine at our disposal.

“We can review fashions in women’s wear, the cars we admired, the language we used, our mortality outlook and our sense of humor.

“Have you ever noticed the titles on an old silent film recently? Some of them are dandies.” □

The Life and Times of Milton Charles

Transcribed by Lloyd E. Klos

— Conclusion —

The handsome Milton Charles at the CBS microphone in Chicago, around 1940. His big-time radio work started in the Windy City in 1936, and he did such network shows as "Ma Perkins" and "Vic & Sade." — (WBBM-TV Photo)



"In Chicago, the week's show would end on Sunday night. By the next day, you'd have to be ready with a new presentation. You had to change your combinations. You had to rehearse after 12:30 when the house was empty. You had to learn what you were doing. You had to memorize because you didn't use music. Many times, I didn't leave the theatre until 5 a.m. I'd be back by noon. But, this was a part of my life."

At this point, Mary Bowles asked Mr. Charles about the wonderful skits. "I heard one which involved a cowboy, a car and a crescendo pedal. What about that one?"

"As a matter of fact, Mary, until you mentioned it, I had completely forgotten it. We did a lot of things — you mentioned earlier the one about Vallee. That was rather good. I was down at Cape May, (N.J.) and I went over to Atlantic City. That was when Rudy was on his honeymoon, if you can believe this as a place to go. He was there on the beach in a roped-off area. I was swimming, and he hollered, 'Come here! I want you to meet my wife.' I went up there and was so embarrassed by all these people gawking at us, that I said, 'I'll see you later', and left. But, that's Rudy.

"It was a funny thing I dreamed up from that experience. There was a short film made of (me) leaving in my car, and going into the alley by the theatre, through the stage door, and walking right through the scrim, wearing a white suit. We dreamed up things like that."

"And", said Mary, "you played "Million Dollar Baby In a Five & Ten Cent Store" because I was there."

"We had a lot of fun," Charles went

Part I appeared in the June 1973 issue of THEATRE ORGAN.

on. "I remember in Chicago, I had a dear friend, Milton Weil, who had done quite well as a publisher, and had been a representative for Irving Berlin in the earlier days. He also had a thing about horses. He bought one and I heard he was in bad trouble. I went down to the office to see what had had in manuscripts. He had a number called "I'm Looking at the World Through Rose-Colored Glasses." I promised I'd put it on in three weeks at the Tivoli.

"So I introduced it, and had a young tenor, who was pretty good, but people didn't know him. I worked out a routine in which I told the audience that 'I have a friend who goes to the University of Chicago. He has a song which he's written, and if given a little encouragement, he'd come and sing for us.' He did very well, and by the time I got downtown, the thing was a sellout. Milton Weil was in business again. Sheet music was a big thing. This was a big exposure. We didn't have the other media. We had radio — *Amos 'n' Andy* etc. By the time I was through at the Uptown, business was booming for Weil.

"I was in Philadelphia from 1930 to 1934. The contract I had was called a 'play-or-pay' contract. They had to pay me regardless of strikes, theatre closings etc, as long as I was there and available. Once, I went to Europe, rather than just sit around. I told them they wouldn't have to pay me during that time. While overseas, I played at the Granada Tooting Theatre in London. They had an organist there who had played in Buffalo, N.Y. named Harold Ramsay, and the installation was a good Wurlitzer. It was under the stage and the sound came right out at you. I played there until about 4 a.m. for several people, including the big theatre man, Bernstein.

"I returned to the states and when the Mastbaum closed again, I gave them an out as I had a wire from the Chicago Theatre. They still wanted me to stay. I did until the following April when I went to New York and was told to see Boris Morros at the Paramount Theatre. You see what's going to happen?

"I cooled my heels in his outer office . . . nothing for about an hour. That was his little way. I saw him years later out here at the Brown Derby Restaurant with Mr. Bernstein from London. I couldn't resist my impulse, walked over and said, 'You

know, Mr. Bernstein, this is one of the best friends I have. Great man. Knows just what to do when you're in trouble. You can always count on him.'

"One event occurred before that. I was supposed to go to the Capitol Theatre in New York. Louis K. Sidney was a big name, and he called me from New York. My contract was up in Chicago at that time. Sidney offered me the Capitol Theatre at quite a bit of money. So, I accepted it, because I thought it was an advancement. This was verbal, over the phone, and the engagement was for a year. I sub-leased my apartment and moved my family to New York. But, all the time I was in New York, I merely went down and collected my check.

"But, they had a working agreement. Paramount had asked Loew's for Dave Rubinoff, the violinist, and Loew's turned them down. And right on top of it, they took me away. Sam Katz said, 'You can't have him.' It was over Louis Sidney's head which meant Louis B. Mayer. That's how big this was. It wasn't that I was important, it was the idea of the thing. Sidney told me to collect my salary for a year, but you know I wouldn't do that! I was advised to go back and talk to Katz. He hemmed and hawed until my wife said, 'Do you want Milton, or don't you?'

"To punish me, they put me into the Oriental Theatre in Chicago which I loathed. I was there for a six weeks as my 'sentence'. That was before 1929. So, those were the little things they could do. Man, you learn!

"Getting back to the New York experience, I was up at Steinway Hall with Morton Downey. He was doing a broadcast and Walter Preston from CBS in Chicago came to town. We had known each other from my Chicago days, and when he asked if I'd like to go with him to Chicago and join CBS, I said, 'Sure'.

"That's how I got into radio in 1936 in a big way. I had done some in a small way previously. We played many of the soap operas, doing five or six a day, plus sustaining shows." (Editors Note: "Sustaining shows" were studio or network presentations — with no commercial sponsorship.)

Mary Bowles then brought up the three-in-one program with Ann Leaf and Eddie Dunstedter. "Yes, that was called *Three Consoles*, Ann Leaf from New York and Dunstedter from St.

Louis, playing great organs. And when Walter Preston wanted me for the program, I asked what type organ he had. 'Oh, a great big Wurlitzer, brand new.' When I got there, I looked through the peep hole into the studio, and I saw an organ console I had designed for the Gunn School of Music. It had one of everything on a small scale. So that was the one on which I had to compete with the other two and it wasn't easy. They had it installed wrong. Instead of installing it where you had sweep of the long dimension of the studio, they had put it where the sound hit a wall.

"It was an experience, and when the Hammonds came in around 1935, we'd alternate between the Wurlitzer and the Hammond. My concert work and sustaining shows were done on the Wurlitzer. In those days, we had to sustain ten seconds after system, and I had to do two shows in a row in two studios. I did *Ma Perkins* in one studio, sustain ten seconds, and did *Vic & Sade* across the hall. I don't think I'd want to do that today. But, it was fun then.

"Pearl Harbor came, and eventually, I came out here to Los Angeles to CBS, and they had a pretty nice Wurlitzer down there. That is where Ivan Ditmars played. When he left for the service, he had quite a few shows. He called me and said, 'You're the only

Milton Charles autographed this picture for his friend, fellow organist Joe Brite. Photo of this handsome musician was taken in Chicago. — (J. Brite coll.)

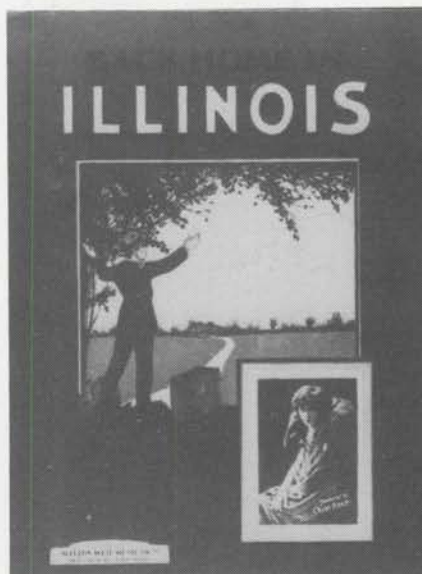


one who's not dancing on my grave. What do you want of mine?" I told him I'd take the *Dr. Christian Show*, but with one condition that I substitute for him only until he got back. I was with that show for 10 years until the end. I always knew that when that show went off, radio was dead. People would go to the phone and ask for Dr. Christian if they were ill. Jean Hersholt was great; so were Rosemary DeCamp and Neil Reagan, the director, who is our governor's brother. We had a nice little family going there.

"When Ivan came back, I called him, asking when he wanted to take over, and he said, 'Keep it; it's yours.' He's done greatly and deservedly so. He's solid and he plays a beautiful piano, too.

"And, let's make note of this: Everybody should have piano. I don't care if you play a harmonica. That's it. Piano is the foundation. And just don't kid about buying an organ and sitting down to play. That's for the people to come home from the office and play. That's great — don't knock it. But when we're talking professionally, you must have a background in piano.

"I don't know if you recall this or not, but we had 200 musicians in the Mastbaum in Philadelphia in a big production; we had the Philadelphia Symphony plus our orchestra of 85. The director once called on me to play



In 1925, Mr. Charles and Sam Stept wrote the music to "Back Home in Illinois", with words by Coleman Goetz. Both writers and organists who plugged the songs, were publicized on sheet music.

the piano — 'a concerto or something.' This man was out of his mind! I told him I couldn't do it! But, I got hold of our arranger, Murray Cutter, told him about the start I made on a composition in Chicago. I worked on it all night, and Murray did a remarkable copy job on it. We had a very brief rehearsal, but it went quite well at the concert. Eric Knight, famous author and the critic on the Philadelphia Ledger, came backstage in praise of the

work, but there was no title to it. I said, 'You name it and you can have it.' In his review, he said, 'Milton Charles played "Noonday Interlude". I did play it again with the Chicago Symphony, but the experience at Philadelphia was really the great one.

"Out here in Los Angeles, they had a rule that you could have only one transcontinental show if you were on staff, so I gave up the staff work. I did free lance work for quite some time.

"I worked with Herbert Marshall in *The Man Called X*. I did another show with John McIntyre for which I wrote the theme. I also did a radio show with Roy Rogers and Dale Evans for a time, in which I used guitar, organ, kettle drum and cymbals.

"I did some work with CBS with unusual combinations such as four French horns, organ and one reed. Good sound! There were also shows with Gene Autry in which I did (pardon the expression), a dramatic portion of the show.

"The organ at CBS was a pretty good instrument. It was put together by Ivan Ditmars out of Seattle. We did a lot of shows on it. One was *Prelude to Midnight* from 11:30 pm to 12, five nights a week over the CBS network. Opposite this on local station KNX was a guy named Steve Allen.

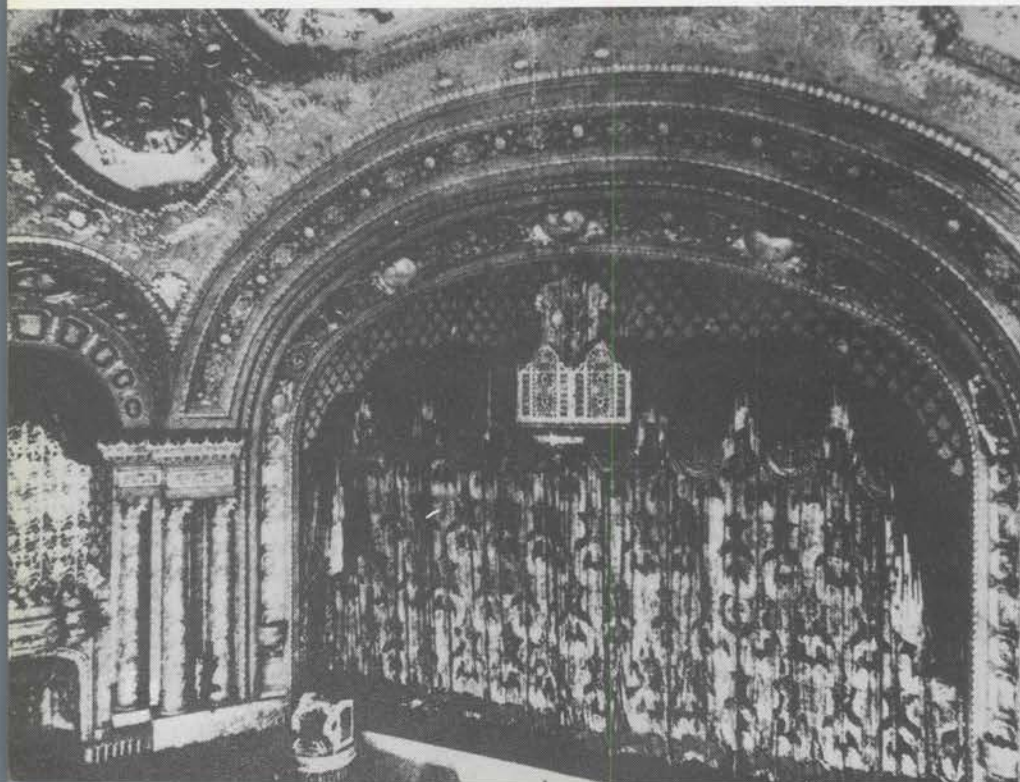
"One of the fellows we saw over at the King's Arms the other night was Roy Williams, an artist for Disney in the old days. His wife recalled the early days on a TV show of mine when Roy drew cartoons. This was at least 20 years ago."

"I believe", said Charles, "that the secret of success is that you must like people. If you don't, forget it. You saw the little fellow, George, who is a banjo player. He offered me \$1500 a week to go to Florida with a banjo outfit. I'm not about to go to Florida. No chance!

"When the King's Arms was opened, my wife advised me to go in to play. I had no experience at all in this sort of place. She went over to the owners and literally sold me to them. They had a piano in there, but I said 'Never! It would be murder to play four hours at a piano. Forget it!'

"I told them I'd bring in an organ, try it out for them, and if they didn't like it, I could go with no hard feelings. They didn't even know who I was; my name just didn't register. People were amazed that they got Milton Charles in there and they began

The Mastbaum's Wurlitzer console rose from the pit and turned so that the organist could better view the audience. The stage was 75 feet wide, and the proscenium arch 60 feet above the stage. Cost of the theatre was \$5,500,000. — (Philadelphia Public Library)



to pay attention. They were giving me odds of two weeks downtown. An old friend I hadn't seen in 20 years, one I had hired to play piano in the mezzanine of the Chicago Theatre, gave me some good advice: 'Don't take anyone's problems to heart. If you do, you'll have as many problems as the bartender and you won't make it.' That was good advice. I have been there 17 years."

Mary then recalled that on the previous night she had watched her favorite organist play at the restaurant from 9:30 until 1:30 without a break, and that he was as fresh when he finished as when he began.

"I don't recommend this — people don't understand how I do it. I don't drink, and what do you do at a break? I talk a bit. But I have a theory that when I'm busy, I feel better. If you don't do anything, you're just exhausted. I don't like to play until my hands ache, but I have done this at times. I'm a relaxed player which helps."

In answer to a question of types of music used for scoring pictures when Milton Charles began theatre work, he answered, "Improvisation entirely. The greatest improviser, and most organists who heard him will agree, was Oliver Wallace. Sid Grauman heard some of us organists talking about Wallace, so he brought him here from Seattle to play in the Rialto on Market Street on a little two-manual Wurliitzer. We all gathered one night to hear him. It was a great experience, especially for me.

"Wallace was a god to Jesse Crawford, and I could see why. We became great friends later on, as he went to work for Disney, and wrote many beautiful things for him. We'd often have lunch at the studio. At night, he'd come over to the King's Arms and listen to me. Such a great man! The music he wrote for Disney was an out-growth of his work as an organist.

"But, as I said, I improvised, playing not violently to take the play from the picture. For a big picture like *Birth of a Nation*, however, I used the score provided. That was obligatory."

We have come to the end of the story of Milton Charles, master organist, as told by the man personally. The American Theatre Organ Society is grateful to Mr. Charles for granting the original interview and THEATRE ORGAN thanks him for the use of the taped interview for this feature. □



Tom Comeaux at the 4/26 Robert Morton, Saenger Theatre, New Orleans.

GOOD NEWS from LOUISIANA

by Dolton McAlpin

It's been quite some time since Louisiana theatre organ activity has been chronicled in these pages. And good things are happening.

Many ATOS members from across the United States have visited the Paramount Theatre in Baton Rouge and have been favorably impressed with the 2/6 Robert Morton there. This organ gained wide notoriety several years ago through two discs released by Concert Recording. Now, after 52 years of continuous operation, the Paramount has received its first full-scale facelift, a stem to stern refurbishing of the venerable old vaudeville house. The theatre was recently closed for the installation of new carpets, screen, curtain and rocking chair seats. Fortunately the management of the Paramount has not succumbed to the economic expediency of draping the theatre, preferring instead to retain the unique flavor of the original decor. Tom Mitchell, manager of the Paramount for 23 years, has been most cooperative in financing major additions to the organ. A console elevator will

soon be installed, and structural alterations have been made to the building to allow the installation of several new ranks: Clarinet, Concert Flute, Orchestral Oboe, String Bass, and a 16' wood Ophecleide.

Meanwhile, on famed Canal Street in New Orleans, interesting things are happening at the 3800 seat Saenger Theatre. The Saenger management has employed Don May of Baton Rouge to completely rebuild the theatre's 4/26 Morton. The Saenger organ was considered by Morton executives to be the finest-sounding installation they ever made. At the time of this writing May has finished repairing the massive water damage which the instrument suffered several years ago, and he hopes that within six months he will have banished the electrical and other problems which typically plague a long-silent organ. The Saenger management is enthusiastically planning to use the organ once the restoration is completed.

The popular organist at the Baton Rouge Paramount is Tom Comeaux. In the four years that he has performed at the Paramount he has earned a wide reputation among Baton Rouge theatre-goers. The Paramount audiences are almost exclusively college-age, and to satisfy their somewhat eclectic tastes Comeaux styles his music in a light, up-beat mod style. In addition to his duties as house organist Tom has found time to become first runner-up in the Mr. Baton Rouge contest as well as to serve as a water-skiing instructor. Comeaux has entertained many organ groups from areas surrounding Baton Rouge. His Sunday morning Paramount concerts have become a hit with organ buffs in the south Louisiana area. Recently Tom performed for 500 members of the New Orleans Hammond Organ Club who travelled to Baton Rouge especially to hear him and the Paramount Morton. Tom is currently preparing to assume console duties at the Saenger when the restoration there is completed, and there is a record in the works on this Morton.

Although there are only two theatre organs now playing in Louisiana, Tom Comeaux and his associates are spreading their infectious enthusiasm for theatre organs, winning new converts and spreading the gospel according to Morton. Chalk up one more victory for the renewed interest in theatre organs. □

VOX POPS



Conducted by Stu Green

Readers are encouraged to submit interesting sidelights on the organ hobby (exclusive of chapter news items) material they believe will be of general interest about local organ activities and installations and the people who work at the hobby. We know "there's VOX POPS in them there chapters" and it only requires a 6¢ postcard to get it to VOX POPS Editor, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. If the contributor can afford an 8¢ stamp, why not include a black and white photo which need not be returned.

Wondering what movie to run in order to draw a crowd to a silent film presentation with organ accompaniment? Perhaps some expert advice will help. Bill Coffman and Bill Field, who run the very successful Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo, Calif., when asked which two feature films drew the largest audiences, replied that the films they have found to be sure-fire are those silent classics, Phantom of the Opera and Ben Hur.



Field & Coffman - (Stufoto)

From Howard Beach, N.Y. young (20) Ken Ladner is already "hooked" on the organ hobby, and he has a project: restoration of the 3/11 Austin in the Beacon Theatre, Port Washington, Long Island, an original installation. Ken, and one of his former high school teachers, Bob Atkins, are "graduates" of Mel Robinson's crew which restored the 3/15 Wurlitzer in the Academy of Music Theatre in New York. Skills learned then are being applied to the Austin, with additional help from Allen Miller whose technical knowledge of Austins (and most other brands) is well established. The restorers ran into water damage, some vandalism and missing pipes plus the usual ravages of time and neglect. To date, the console has been put in A-1 shape and the watered Main chamber is almost restored and playable. Work is progressing on the Solo chamber.



The Beacon's 3/11 Austin console. A new lease on life.

Ken writes, "Both Bob and I are impressed by the Austin's unique design and the efficiency of its 'Universal Chest' (large enough for a maintenance man to enter for servicing while the organ is playing. Ed.). While the Austin sound is not quite like that of a Wurlitzer, it's a pleasing sound." The cooperative theatre management plans on using the organ for intermission and kiddie shows when the restoration is completed.

Arizona ATOS chapsec Bob High informs us that the Chapter's June 24th en masse migration from Tucson via chartered Greyhound to hear Lyn Larsen at the Phoenix "Organ Stop" may have set off reverberations which could result in a similar pizzery for

Tucson. While Lyn was railroading his steam-oriented "Chattanooga Choo Choo" on the 4/27 Wurlitzer, ATOSer Art Crowell and the Organ Stop's mentor, Bill Brown, were discussing the possibility of a Tucson pasta palace with pipes, says Bob, who has high hopes that Tucson will be first in any plans Bill may have toward expanding his pizza-plus-pipes enterprise. Bob High has only praise for the Larsen performances, especially an original by Lyn, "A Place in my Heart for You."



Lee Erwin

In Gotham, organist Lee Erwin is all whomped up over the donation of the 4/23 "Wonder Morton" in Loew's Kings Theatre to New York's Town Hall. Lee reports that Pete Schaeble, whose home boasts a fine Morton installation, will be in charge of the transfer. Lee hopes the installation will be complete this time next year. Lee's been busy with concerts. He has especially kind words for the big Morton in the Ohio Theatre, Columbus: "One of the best-sounding Mortons in this part of the country."

It has been said many times that the future of the theatre pipe organ lies in the hands of the young enthusiasts and performers. Rochester's Tom Lockwood, in firm agreement, is actively promoting this idea. On June 7, he conducted eight classes in silent movie accompaniment, with considerable discussion of the use of theatre organ, at Martha Brown Junior High School in Fairport, N.Y. Total at-

tendance was 1100, and the youngsters were responsive and enthusiastic. Teaching aids included a plug-in, 3 films, slides, and samples of pipes native to the theatre organ.



When the Toronto Theatre Organ Society gets its Casa Loma organ playing, it will serve as a monument to that group's perseverance. It had hoped to finish the work by the end of last year. However, troubles with duct work, and rebuilding of the console took longer than expected. The dedicatory date was moved back to October 1973. When the brass trumpets were unpacked, parts were missing, necessitating a complete rebuild. The French horns were water-damaged in storage, and they had to be restored. On top of this, the summer tour season of Casa Loma began in early May, lasting until September 30 which meant no work on the organ involving noise. As a result, the new opening date has been moved back again to February 12, 1974, and hopefully, Dennis James will do the honors, according to Jim Lahay.



Our VOX POPPER travels far and wide to find choice tidbits for this column. In our never-ending search for variety we got to wondering how the organ might fare in the distant future, perhaps after man has been eclipsed by other creatures. What better place to explore for the organ's future than "The Planet of the Apes?!" Visiting the Hollywood set where the final ape



VOX POPPER Stu (center) looks into the future. — (Apefoto)

saga was being shot, we interviewed the script girl. A smashing chimpanzee, who assured us that the pipe organ doesn't figure in future monkey business. A gorilla, dressed in fatigues and toting an army rifle, overheard the conversation and volunteered that there was something with a lot of "teeth" (stop keys?) over in the ruins of Radio City, but that sequence had been cut out of the production. The big ape asked if we had any flea powder, and took off without waiting for a reply, apparently returning to his guerrilla activities. It was learned that all of the ape actors face unemployment with the final film completed. "Guess I'll have to go back to being a grease monkey," chortled one Baboon.

With no organs in the brave new world, we decided to leave the simianery and were escorted to the gate by a couple of "MP's" who were dead ringers for some we recall from our army stint (see photo).

"Got any flea powder?" asked one fuzzy ape fuzzi.

We didn't have any. But we have now.



While we're on the subject of movies, horror film addicts will note happily that the *Phantom of the Opera* genre is revived in *Wicked*, *Wicked* as cadaver-faced Maryesther Denver "plays" a bit of the original *Phantom* score while the All-American boy monster is shown stalking the girl through the lost rooms and hidden passageways of an ancient grand hotel. Organist Billy Nalle, slowly recovering



Billy Nalle

from his triumphal concert at the ex-Paramount "Dowager Empress" 4/36 in Wichita, submits a clip from New York magazine which reveals that Ladd Thomas did the off-screen playing. Nalle says the console seen is the 4/36 in Dick Simonton's California home.



Our travelling correspondent, Doc Bebko, assures us that things organ-wise are moving steadily in the upper middle west. Visiting daughter Barbara and her husband David recently the family visited Milwaukee's Schnitzelhaus Restaurant on two occasions. One was for Sunday brunch, and the group heard No. 2 organist, Gary Sette. During dinner, chief organist Don Lorusso did the honors.

Don, who studied with the late Quentin MacLean, "played things any fine English organist plays — classics, pops, sing-alongs and novelties in typical British style and most enjoyable." There was an organ group present from Kenosha and the night before a big delegation from Chicago.

Owner Gene Tenges remarked that he is set to host a session of the next Chicago-based ATOS national convention. He feels that the 3/28 Kimball in Milwaukee's Centre Theatre can be readied, as well as the Wurlitzers in the Avalon and Riverside Theatres.



Home Organ Festival Chairman Tiny James tells us that reservations are piling up for the event, which is held annually at Pacific Grove Conference Grounds (near Monterey,



Castillo and Hults. On the payroll this year. — (Stufoto)

Calif.), even though the Festival is still a month away (Sept. 19 through 23). This will be the 14th presentation of the event and Tiny adds that 14 major brands of electronic instruments will be demonstrated in concert and exhibited in showrooms. These will be played by such prominent artists as Tom Hazleton, Mildred Alexander, Byron Melcher, Jonas Nordwall, Bud Iverson, Rex Koury and many others. Ways are being sought to accommodate "drop-ins," visitors who come for one or two days. Tiny is investigating the possibility of bus excursions for one day trips to the Festival, departing from central locations in the Bay Area. In addition to such regular features as the Fashion Show and daily Champagne Parties, there will be a dance. Opening night festivities will be different, too. The opening night concert will feature a variety of artists in addition to those provided by the participating organ companies. Last year a duo of guests, Lloyd del Castillo (our 1972 "Hall of Famer") and Arlo Hults, caused something of a sensation with their after-hours entertainment in the showrooms. This year they'll be on the program.

Those planning to attend should make reservations immediately. For full information send an 8 cent stamped, self-addressed, legal-size envelope to Registrar, HOF, Box 248, Alameda, Calif. 94501.

An ATOS member for some time, is J. Earle Clarke of Aldan, Penna., once

worked as an installer for Wurlitzer and Austin. One was the 4/212 Austin which was installed in the Music Building at the Sesqui-centennial in Philadelphia in 1926, later bought by Mrs. Agnes Curtis and installed in the University of Pennsylvania's Irvine Auditorium in 1928. Originally, it had Orchestra Bells, Harp and Marimba, and these were used in the opening concerts by Dr. Frank Asper of the Mormon Tabernacle, and later by Alfred Reimenschneider. Mr. Clarke worked on the organ in both locations.

Another organ Clarke helped install is the 3/17 Wurlitzer in the Tower Theatre in Upper Darby, Penna. It has not been in use for some time. Organist Robert Lent, who maintained the instrument, has been in the service.



Carol Jones. Her Conn-tours expanded.

Organist Carol Jones took quite a ribbing when a large swelling saw her hospitalized in Chicago in June. Visitors entered asking "Are you expecting a boy or a girl?!" But one glance showed the swelling was in the wrong place for a parturition stanza; Carol's jaws were so puffed up she could hardly see. The swelling subsided after the removal of impacted wisdom teeth so Carol could resume her duties for Conn at the Chicago NAMM show. She's scheduled for a stint on Kimball pipes during the ATOS convention in Portland.

Add the 3/22 Barton in the State Theatre in Kalamazoo, Michigan to the

list of those playing on a regular basis. William Mollema and John Caterwood play 20-minute performances on alternate Saturday evenings, according to William E. Bastian. The organ was originally an 11-ranker, but was augmented by 11 ranks from the Barton in the Capitol Theatre in Kalamazoo. Stan Kann has been featured on the refurbished organ, and there have been several silent movie shows in recent months.

Bob Wilson reports that the voters in Yakima, Washington, on May 22 rejected a proposal to establish a convention-cultural center there which involved restoration of the 52-year-old Capitol Theatre. The unofficial vote was 4,162 against, and 2,198 for the project.

The 1500-seat Capitol Theatre was recently placed in the National Register of Historic Places, making it eligible for restoration funds. Originally, it had a 2/9 Wurlitzer with small toy counter. The organ was sold to station KIT, installed in its studios, and played on the air for several years by Harrison Miller, principal organist at the Liberty Theatre in Yakima. The day after Larry Langevin bought the organ for home installation, the studios burned, destroying the console and much of the pipe work.

From Fort Worth, Texas, organist Dan Bellomy reports that the Casa Manana Theatre music show season was cut short as of July 14 with the staging of Cabaret. Reason: lack of



Dan Bellomy. A sad closing but with encouraging overtones. — (Stufoto)

patronage. The closing left Dan unemployed. He had been the staff artist since the season opened, playing the 3/11 Wurlitzer installed last year. Dan had one last fling when Casa impresario Mel Dacus scheduled a concert to be played by Dan on July 7.



Bob Yates of Glenshaw, Penna., owner of one of three workable Marr & Coltons with Symphonic Registrators, had a silent movie evening for friends on June 9. At the console was Harold Rouse who accompanied Buster Keaton's *The General*. Rouse played for the silents in their heyday. In the audience was the fourth grade class of Glenshaw School, and according to Bob, "the class really enjoyed the movie, even if there wasn't any sound."



Always clowning. Stan Kann does some cutting up with Helen Dell. — (Stufoto)

TRIVIA: St. Louis Fox organist Stan Kann always gets in a plug for pipe organs during his frequent TV talk show appearances as a mechanical gadget (mostly vacuum cleaners) hobbyist... By actual birthday count, Don Baker is a teenager. His is on Feb.

29... Silent movie era sing-along organist Paul H. Forster sleeps in the buff... In the movie *Let's Live a Little*, now on late night TV, pop singer Bobby Vee appears as a hayseed guitar strummer named Jesse Crawford... Organist Luella Wickham admits she goofed when she predicted in 1929 that "talkies" just can't last" ... The Coronado Theatre Barton in Rockford, Illinois, now has a Posthorn



Paul H. Forster. Stark naked in the sack. — (Stufoto)

rank... Ex-theatre organist Herbie Koch was seen on TV's *You Asked for it* recently playing the *Stone Mountain Georgia carillon* which he does daily for visitors.



Our June story about the planned Ben Hall Theatre on the Harold Lloyd estate in Beverly Hills, Calif., was lacking something very important according to a number of correspondents; namely, an address where contributions may be sent. We didn't intend the article as a pitch for contributions but estate manager Woody Wise would be the last to discourage



Harold Lloyd. Still "box office."

generosity on the part of willing ATOSers. Checks may be made out to "Ben Hall Theatre Fund" and mailed to Harold Lloyd Estate, Box 470 Beverly Hills, Calif., 90210, attn. Woody Wise. Be sure to designate the Ben Hall Theatre Fund so your contribution will be used specifically for that project. The unexpected clamor for a mailing address reveals an enthusiasm that may portend a much sooner realization.



Organist Mildred Alexander read the caption under the photo and did a double take. There was her name (p.6, April THEATRE ORGAN) identifying her among a group of organists in a 1925 photo. "It couldn't be me," said Millie, "I was a preteener in 1926, a child, yet." She looked at the handsome woman in the photo, and added, "Maybe I should let well enough alone." But we didn't. We checked with author Lloyd Klos and he 'fessed up to a goof in captioning. The gal pictured was, of course, the subject of the story, Mildred Fitzpatrick. "I must have been thinking about Mildred Alexander when I wrote the caption," admitted usually accurate Lloyd.



Ever wonder how some ATOS chapters manage to put on well-attended public concerts to help finance organ restoration work? From Chicago, Richard Sklenar tells some of the

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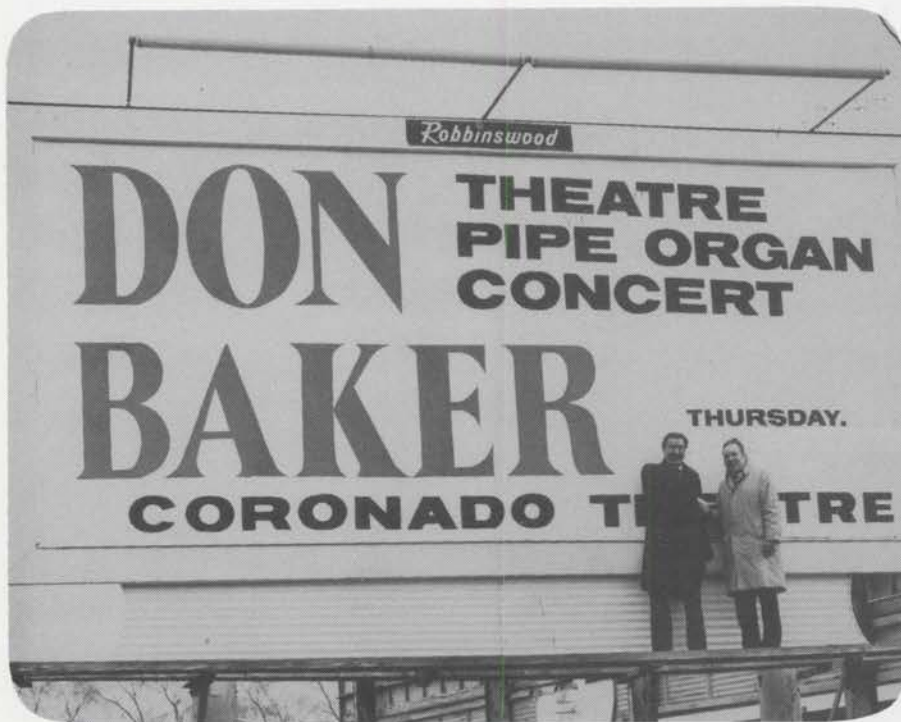


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Don Baker (left) and Orrill Dunn. Up the ladder to promote a full house.

secrets. It all boils down to organization and hard work. Most of us are familiar with the top-notch publicity work of CATOE's Bill Benedict. During the winter/spring months the chapter presented public concerts starring Don Baker, Gaylord Carter, Hector Olivera and Lee Erwin. All attracted good crowds and put money in the coffers. When so many ATOS chapter's depend on their organist members who play for little or nothing, how does CATOE manage a full "show biz" approach? For example, explains Rich, the Don Baker show at the Coronado Theatre. Orrill Dunn masterminded both the presentation and promotion, while George Smafield supervised the organ work. Promotion included flyers mailed to 3000 prospects, posters in store windows throughout the area, TV and radio interviews with Don, an appearance at a church banquet and seven outdoor billboards."

"It worked," says Rich, "because the house was sold out." The CATOE approach would seem to be most effective in areas of population concentration, and that appears to be everywhere these days.



ATOS members who may be passing through Brookline, Penna. on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon, have a standing invitation from Jim Brennan to see and play his Opus No.

6941 - 3/26 Kimball in the Brookline Theatre, but be sure to phone ahead: the number is 1-215-446-5299. The organ is played weekends as part of the theatre's program.



In RTOS' final concert of the season, Gaylord Carter, making his second appearance at the Auditorium Theatre Wurlitzer, played before an enthusiastic audience of 1325 on May 5. Fresh from appearances in France, Mr. Flicker offered movie music, a sing-along, the accompaniment to Douglas Fairbanks' *Mark of Zorro*, and quiet music to unwind the folks before leaving.



Gaylord. He never misses. - (Jim Osborn Photo)

Describing the RTOS organ as the "finest theatre organ in the world," Gaylord's drive and enthusiasm were much in evidence. He kept Old Prospector Klos and RTOS librarian Tom Lockwood on a crushing 4-day schedule which included a television appearance on the Louise Wilson show, practice sessions etc.



Attendance at the nine RTOS concerts during the season totaled 11,365, and the group hopes to top that figure next season as Program Chairman-President Gary Haines promises "top-flight artists". Family membership totals 910.



Rumors have been rife that the 4300-seat Music Hall Theatre (ex-Metropolitan) in Boston is to get the wrecking ball. The owners, the Boston Medical Center (Tufts College) flatly deny the theatre's impending demise, saying it is to be kept open. They did admit that the 4/26 Wurlitzer is available to anyone who comes up with a five figure offer, according to Curt Mangel of Bradford, Penna. Mangel is trying to locate a theatre organ to install in an auditorium in Bradford to be used for concerts. "Five figures is a bit too high for our group," he says.



Is there any measurable correlation between musical ability on a keyboard instrument and the ability to type expertly? In the reams of correspondence from organists which pass through our hands annually, we have often noted that hands that can do beautiful work on organ manuals often turn out "hunt and peck" typing loaded with crossouts and errors. There have been a few exceptions; Alice Blue can do 60 error-free words a minute, a skill she developed as a newspaper reporter/editor many years after her engagements as a prominent theatre organist in the '20s and '30s. Our most recent "discovery" in the field of organist/typists is Lawrence Welk's organist, Bob Ralston. Bob can turn out faultless pages of typed material at the rate of 100 words a minute. To prove it he copied several pages of these VOX POPS from our sloppy handscrawl at a speed which nearly charred the ribbon. However, he declined the secretarial post with



Bob Ralston. Speed demon on the 4-manual Underwood. — (Stufoto)

VOX POPS we offered in a frenzy of admiration for his skill. Bob is contemplating a pipe organ record to be grooved in the near future.



An early-morning fire on May 18, destroyed the picturesque Monroe Avenue United Methodist Church in Rochester, N.Y. The roof and cupola collapsed onto the main floor at the height of the blaze. Included in the loss was Opus No. 1493, 4 manual, 50-stop Moller organ which had originally been installed in the old Gordon Theatre in 1913. When that theatre, which was supposed to have had the first escalator in a theatre in the country, was razed to make way for the RKO Palace in 1928, the organ was removed, modified and installed in the church. Included in the modification was the removal of all percussions, including a set of tuned doorbells which were spotted along the rim of the Gordon's balcony with a colored light on each. Richard Henry Warren was the first organist in the

theatre. Others were Gladys Clark, L. Grace Drew, Forrest Gregory, Norman Nairn, Harry G. Sullivan and Art Taylor.



RTOS entertained 600 members and their friends with *Talent Night on May 24 at the Auditorium Theatre. This event was an outgrowth of Competition programs of 1970 and 1971. Those participating included 12-year-old David Peckham; 14-year-old Jim Young; 22-year-old Tom Lockwood, who accompanied a silent movie; Robert Legon, who came the greatest distance (Boston); Brad Kummer; Bruck Decker; and Dorothy White. If the calibre of much of the talent were an indication, the future of the theatre organ is assured.*

A suggestion was made that the windup of next season's 10th anniversary year of RTOS activities be an old-fashioned vaudeville show. Program chairman, Gary Haines, has pegged the opening concert on September 20, when Leroy Lewis makes his first appearance at the RTOS Wur-litzer.



In Reading, Penna., organ service expert Henry Hünsicker was using a quiet moment to review old issues of this publication. Turning to the October 1970 "Requiem for the Roxy," he noted the author's statement that no records of the 5/34 Roxy Kimball had been made. Not so, says Henry, who has a copy of part of a tape made by Ben Hall just before the organ was closed down for the last time. It features Gordon Seaman, Henry figures the complete tape is somewhere among Ben Hall's effects. Other reports claimed there was once a com-

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mercial record made, and so there was, but not on the 5/34. It was played on the lobby organ.



Should organ pipes be washed, or otherwise cleaned before reinstallation? We had assumed cleansing was a sound practice until reading an article by respected organ innovator Aubrey Thompson-Allen in the May issue of AGO/RCCO's MUSIC, who claims the cleansing changes the sound. He writes: "I eventually discovered why the pipework of an old organ, after it has been cleaned and washed and restored to its original condition, no longer sounds the same or as sweet nor as captivating as it did prior to cleaning. (After cleaning) people sometimes accused us, wrongfully, of having ruined a masterpiece. (The difference) is due to the fact that after organ flue pipes have been subject to 50 or 100 years of use, the flue (between the languid and the lower lip) becomes impregnated with a satin-like cloth of fine, sticky dust which softens and sweetens the eddies which pass the flue when a pipe is sounded. Cleaning and washing the pipe restores them to the original condition as when they left the factory. The fine, silken coating of the pipe mouths having been removed, the soft surface of the languid, lower and upper lips has gone. The pipes sound more harsh and less gentle in tone. As time marches on, this film returns and the pipes become mellowed again in tone, but I have noticed that it takes

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many years before this condition returns." Could we conclude that perhaps pipes are one item which old man time improves, if mellowness is the goal?



In these days of canned music in many public places, it is gratifying to note that in a few sports stadia the record player hasn't replaced the live musician. Helen Dell presides over a Conn at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles, and tenuously remained at her post into the wee hours of the morn-



John Kiley — (Red Sox Pic.)

ing of May 25, until her beloved Dodgers lost a 19-inning marathon in 5 hours and 42 minutes!

Across the country, ex-theatre organist John Kiley presides over a Hammond atop Boston's Fenway Park, a post he has held for ten years. Beantowners insist he plays the best National Anthem of any organist. John's career as a professional musician began in Symphony Hall when he played the organ at the age of 12. His theatre experience in the Bay State included stints at Boston's RKO Keith Memorial and the Washington Street Olympia; Egyptian in Brighton; Strand in Dorchester; and Critereon in Roxbury. He recorded the Metropolitan's 4/26 Wurlitzer under several nom-de-plumes.



Former theatre organist Johnny Mack had opportunities to witness the playing of some of the great organists of the past. Once known as Johnny



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— DEADLINE OCTOBER 1, 1973 —

McCartney, he heard Oliver Wallace, "who played a fantastic organ" in Seattle's Liberty Theatre. When the Portland Paramount opened, Johnny "heard a great show by Georga A. Johnson." Henri A. Keates was playing at the Liberty down the street" as only he could do it." Others he heard were Henry LeBel, C. Sharpe Minor, Homer McDonald, and Leo Terry.

In St. Louis, he caught both Stuart Barrie and Milton Slosser when they performed at the Ambassador Theatre's Wurlitzer. "Barrie and Slosser seemed to get more out of that organ than some others, though their styles were definitely different," he says.



Friends of former theatre organist, Harold Jolles, will be pleased to learn that he is enjoying retirement on his farm in Cattaraugus, N.Y. He played the Roosevelt Theatre's 4/18 Marr & Colton in Buffalo up to the final days in 1963, weekends only. Harold is particularly sad about the demise and removal of the Austin in Rochester's Eastman Theatre. Says that Tom

Grierson, who was demonstrating for Wurlitzer in 1922, almost was successful in getting a big Wurlitzer into the theatre.

Jolles played a couple weeks in 1924 at Loew's Willard Theatre on Long Island for Rosa Rio when she was on vacation. It was a 3-manual Austin of about 57 ranks, and "sounded great". Harold's regular job then was at Loew's new Coney Island Theatre "which had a draw-knob Moller console, with 32' Contra Bourdon and a 32' Bombarde — a really beautiful organ."



George Wright — (Stufoto)

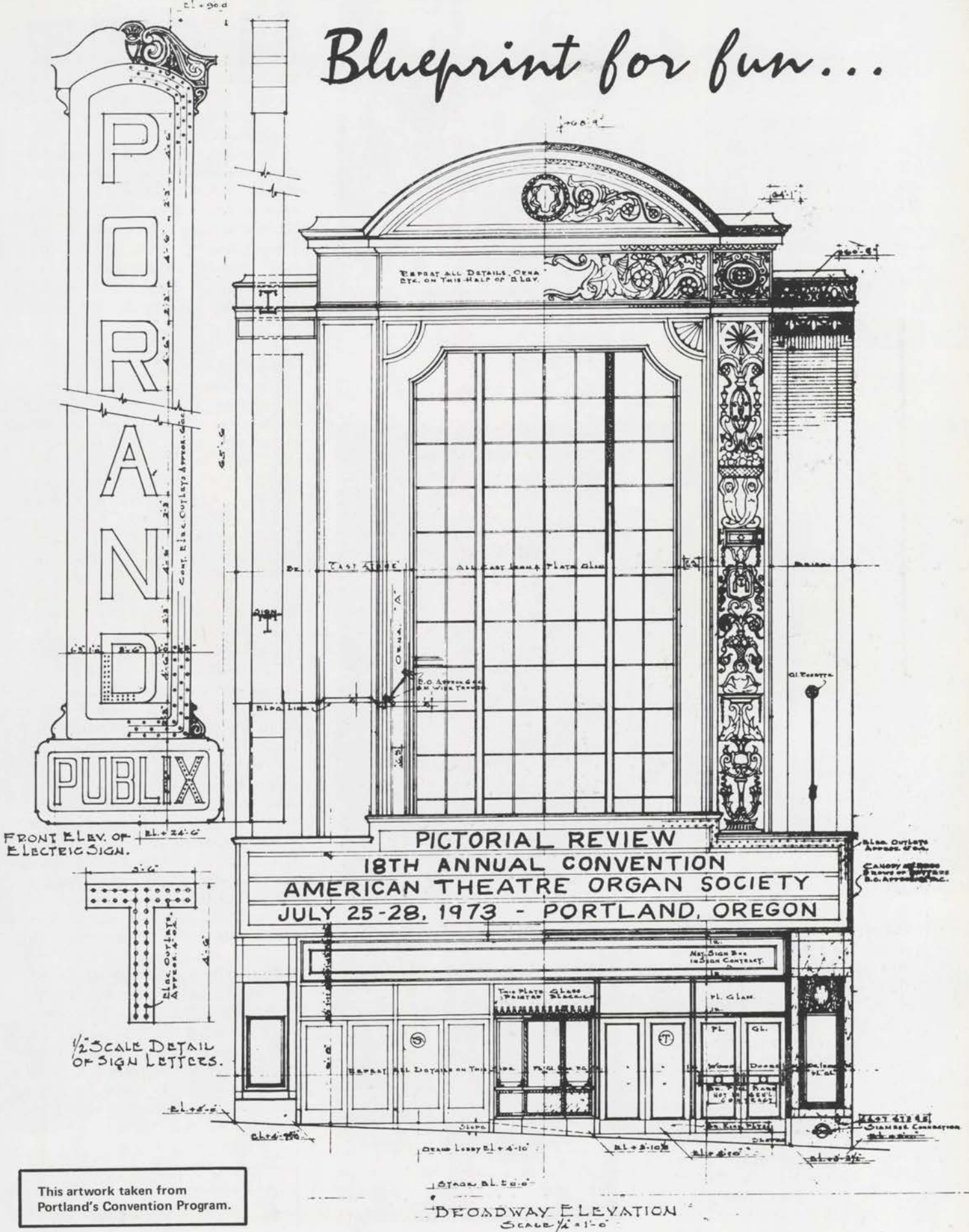
George Wright is recording again, but in limited edition available only to Conn dealers for use as a sales lubricant. "The Sound of Conn, at Home With George Wright" reprises several of his earlier pipe hits, including some in the Crawford vein. Because the disc is not for sale there was not point in our offering a review. Dyed-in-the-wool Wright fans might be able to arrange for a hearing by polishing their Conn dealers. □

LYN LARSEN

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Blueprint for fun...



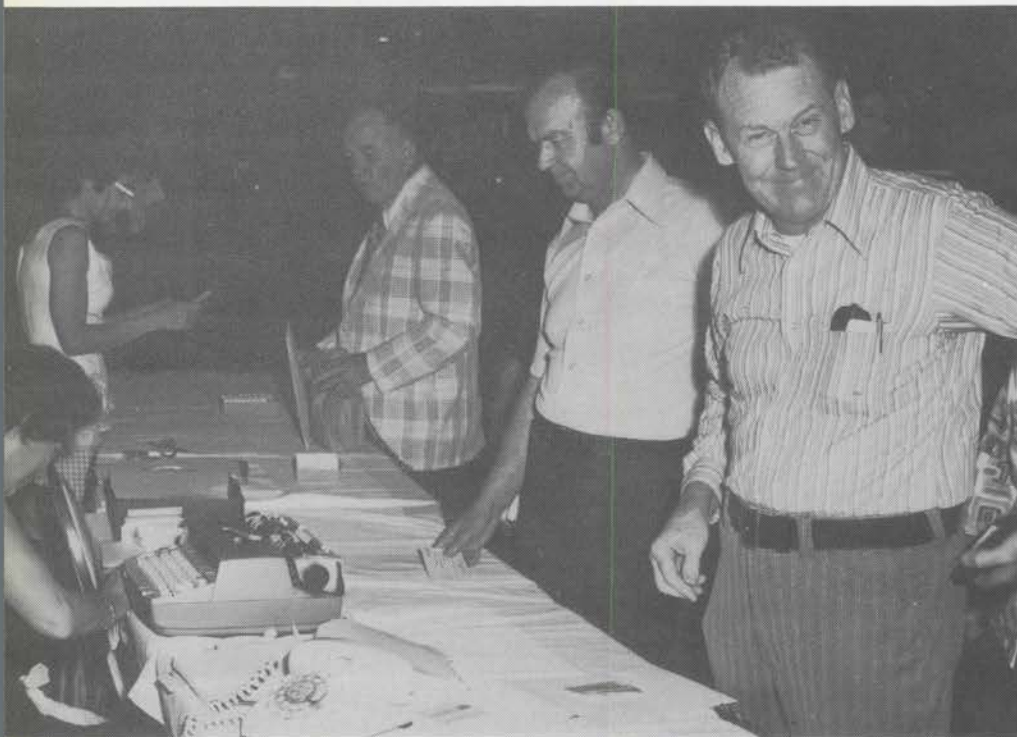
This artwork taken from
Portland's Convention Program.

BROADWAY ELEVATION
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"



Bill Peterson, Convention Chairman, was also one of the emcees. Although he underwent major surgery the first of June, he was able to carry out his duties and keep the convention running smoothly.

Convention registration at the Portland Sheraton... Note the smile on the face of the gentleman replacing his wallet — Registration wasn't so bad after all. Before it was over, 668 members and their families had joined the happy throng.



From the experience gained during the 1966 Portland meeting, the Oregon Chapter drew up their "specifications" for the "blueprints" of this "job" and executed these plans for a very satisfying convention for 1973.

Many member must have perceived that Oregon had the know-how to plan a good time, for they started arriving two or three days in advance. By Wednesday, July 25, opening day of the conclave, the Sheraton Motor Inn lobby area was teeming with over 600 registrants, all busily renewing acquaintances and eagerly anticipating the events to come.

Wednesday, July 25

The weatherman cooperated with a balmy evening which made it possible to hold the opening social outdoors, around the hotel's inviting swimming pool. As friendships developed, the Conn that had been moved outside felt the fingers of a variety of old pros and young alike and made a welcome contribution to the party. The casual atmosphere was ideal for getting acquainted and by the time the buses were lined up to take members to the first concert, it seemed that everyone knew each other.

When the 18th Annual Convention of ATOS got down to the serious business of listening to theatre organ music, the setting was the still-proud Portland Paramount Theatre with its 4/20 Wurplitzer. The artist for the blast-off concert was Rex Koury, a veteran in the organ music world, but a veritable newcomer to the concert field.

After a brief introduction by Oregon Chapter Chairman Dennis Hedberg, Rex came roaring up from the left side of the pit playing a stirring console riser. One Koury characteristic is that he has no identifiable style, trademark effects or gimmicks; the style is that which will best present the music being played, and the music he offered was most varied. The organ is much improved since it was last heard during the 1966 convention, partly due, perhaps, to the pipe compliment being unruffled by the presence of an added Posthorn. The overall sound was one of mellowness in the rich acoustics of the 3,000-plus seat house.

All photos by Bill Lamb except those where other credit is given.

Rex Koury spiked his program with brief announcements concerning the music or the conditions under which he had previously played it, and quickly warmed up his audience with his articulate and friendly approach. Rex didn't know it at the time, but his program had extended more than 20 minutes beyond the cut-off time of the house rental (this wasn't discovered until much later,) and still his audience demanded more.

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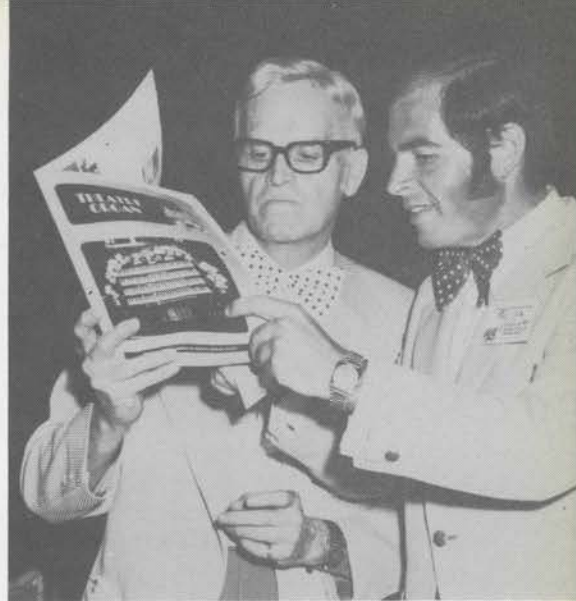
(Registration - 668)

It was a fine start for what proved to be a very memorable week. After the applause died away, the conventioners boarded the buses for the return trip to the Sheraton Hotel for a lobby-based rehash of the evening's concert. The electronic showrooms, well stocked with Conns, Wurlitzers, Yamahas, and Rodgers, were busy for a time, then it was to bed with echoes of organ tones still ringing in our ears.

AUGUST, 1973



Don and Arlene Ingram are to be congratulated on the smooth manner in which they handled a myriad of convention duties. They are certainly a credit to the Oregon Chapter.



Len Clarke (left), advertising manager for THEATRE ORGAN, listens as Karl Cole voices approval of his ad in the magazine.

The full sound in the cavernous Paramount brings back the memory of days gone by.





The music of Louella Wickham brings a smile of admiration from Carol Jones at the poolside social.

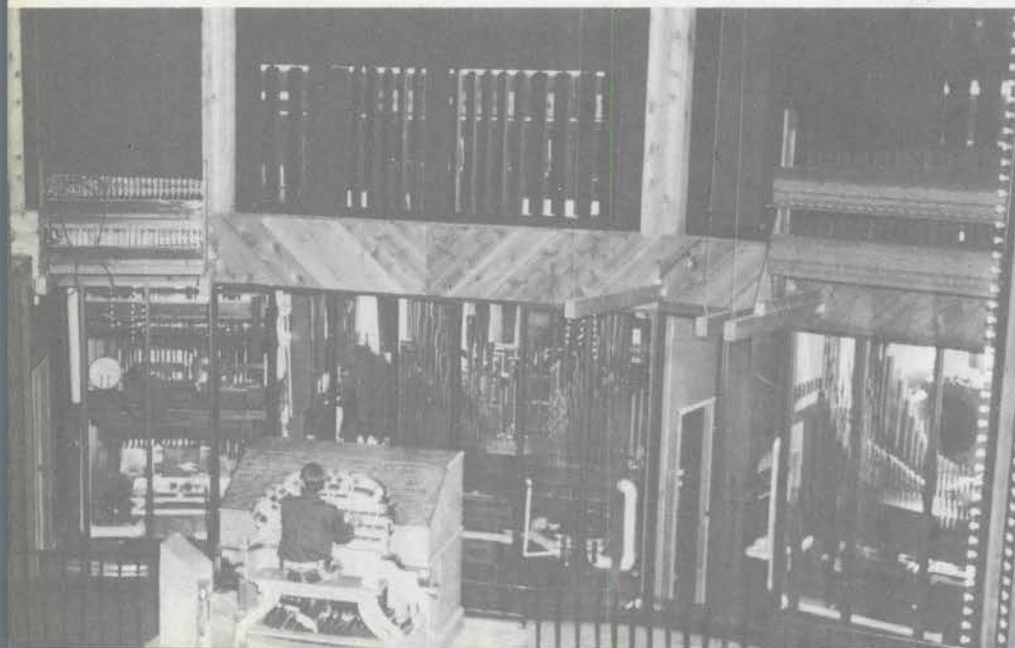


Puget Sound Chapter Chairgal Margaret Sabo emerges from the "64' Diaphone" entrance to the Organ Grinder as other ATOSers marvel at the oddball structure and its omnipresent angles. — (Photo credit: Stuofoto)



AUSTRALIAN VISITORS gather at the Benson organ with ATOS President. (L to R) Len Herd, Dot Herd, Beryl Jensen, Vera Crane, Neil Jensen, and Erwin Young.

THE PIPES BELOW, THE SWELLS ABOVE . . . Deep in the heart of the Organ Grinder the sound pours forth. No need to answer the question, "Where are the speakers?" here.



Thursday, July 26

At nine the next morning it was back to the buses for trips to the still unfinished Organ Grinder Restaurant and its now 3/34 Wurlitzer (built on the ex-Portland Oriental Theatre's 3/14). This place, even in its unfinished state, must be seen to be believed. From the outside, it's a structure on non-parallel wooden walls, with a giant showcase front window which displays the pipework and chests, including a set of unmitered 32' Diaphones which morning-glory upward. The inside is an interesting mish-mash

The souvenir program presented to registrants should be considered a hallmark of originality.

The Oregon Chapter, using original blueprints of the Paramount Theatre, Portland, produced a program with blue paper and white lettered text. Architectural drawings of the theatre's features were interspersed in the document. The contents were lettered in draftsman style by Willard Fawver. This established the theme, "BLUEPRINT FOR FUN".

A great amount of work and thought was involved in producing this unusual program and the efforts were not lost on those who received a copy.

of rough cedar planking in diagonal patterns — great from the acoustic viewpoint. Doorways and ceilings are bordered with thousands of low intensity 15-watt, clear lightbulbs somewhat akin to the 1890's effect nurtured at Disneyland.

The console is situated on a platform in front of the glass chamber walls with swell shutters mounted close to the ceiling. For ATOSers, rows of chairs had been set up, stretching to the back of the restaurant, which is low-ceilinged at that point, probably in anticipation of pizza chompers who would rather talk than listen. Soft drinks and coffee were "on the house" during the sessions.

The organist for the day was Jonas Nordwall, a young man whose artistry is reaching ever greater audiences these days. Jonas put the half-installed organ through some paces difficult for an instrument not entirely finished with the gestation process. He emphasized the more extreme effects appropriate to the pizza parlor atmosphere, including the grunt of the two 32' Diaphones

now winded. This type of restaurant also seems to call for plenty of bright brass and percussions which seem about one foot from the eardrums. Both artist and instrument were well doused with applause.

Our next stop was the Scottish Rite Temple, and the 3/13 mostly Wurlitzer, piloted by able Andy Crow. It's a mellow sounding instrument which has grown over the years from a small Wurlitzer to its present size. It has a remarkably good ensemble sound considering the somewhat piecemeal manner in which it grew (as opposed to the factory-designed instrument). It has some limitations; its action is a bit slow and the organist can't hear his music directly because the console is "around the corner" from the swell shutters.

It's an interesting and novel installation. Both chambers speak from one wall (with horizontal swell shutters) and the console is located at the edge of the balcony on the same side of the 500 to 600 seat auditorium. The acoustics are excellent. Using no PA system, Andy announced his tunes from the console, leaning over the edge of the balcony rail.

A feature of the Crow magic is many changes of registration within a selection. The audience responded warmly to Andy Crow and they let him know it in the usual manner.

Back to the buses, the Sheraton and the swimming pool where a great body of talent was on display — right down to the last freckle.

In the afternoon cameo recitals were held featuring chapter representatives at the Benson High School's 3/24 Kimball, within walking distance of the hotel.

Chapters had been notified in advance of the event and ten sent representatives. Gerry Gregorius of the Oregon Chapter was in charge and acted as emcee.

The order of appearance was determined by a drawing. Each person was allocated 10 minutes and played without previous experience at the Benson installation. Jean Lautzenheiser drew number one and led off the parade.

Mahon Tullis of Puget Sound was somewhat familiar with the instrument as he had played it 35 years ago.

The program included Warren Lubich of Northern California, who is well known in the San Francisco area, but had never appeared in a national event until now.



Organ innovator, and one of the convention emcees Dennis Hedberg explains the intricacies of his planned 34 ranks of pizza organ while introducing Lyn Larsen. Dennis plans to commit matrimony with local gal Margaret Dickson in September. — (Photo credit: Stuofoto)



LIT UP LIKE A CHRISTMAS TREE . . . The rows upon rows of lights on the ceiling and pillars never seem to come to an end at the Organ Grinder. Note — the pleasing effect of the angular cedar planking evident especially in the balcony.



EAST MEETS WEST . . . Herb Frank (N.Y.), Norman Ray (Conn.), Allen Rossiter (N.J.), Stu Green (Calif.), Dick Simonton (Calif.) and Mrs. Ashley (Jo) Miller (N.J.) strike a quick pose in the Sheraton lobby.

Tour No. 1 waits outside the Scottish Rite Temple for the buses.





BEAUTY AND THE BEAST . . . Margaret Sabo, Puget Sound chairman and Lloyd Klos, Associate Editor of THEATRE ORGAN pose for this picture after the banquet.

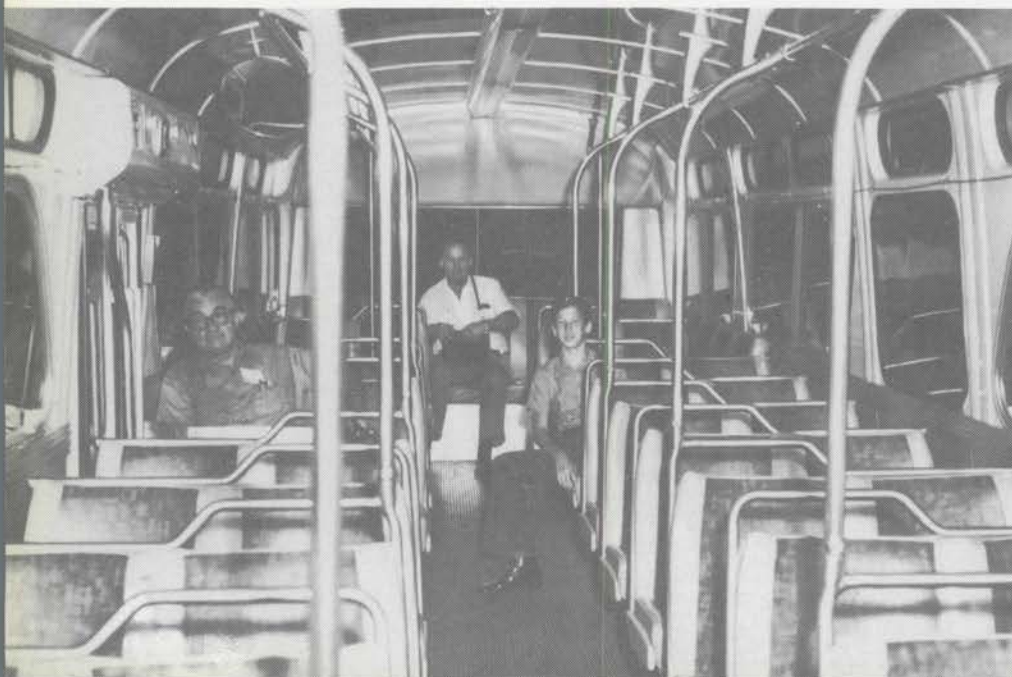


George Smafield, Vice Chairman of the newly chartered Land O'Lincoln Chapter will discuss the bright future of his Illinois based group of enthusiasts with you at any time.



No . . . This isn't a reunion of former Ziegfeld Girls . . . These are the ladies who've had the responsibility for keeping ATOS records through the years. (L to R) Ida James, Vi Thompson, Betty Mason, Verle Walton, and Marilyn Schrum. Along with being circulation manager, Vi has also been handling the job of membership records since it became an appointed position — the rest of the beauties inherited the duties by default, as wives of ATOS Presidents.

Up at the crack of dawn to get a window seat.



Although ten chapter delegates were presented to listeners, an eleventh cameo was Neil Jensen 17, of Australia who had never played a pipe organ and decided to "have a go at it." He played so well he rated an encore.

The participants were:

Bob Arndt, Land O'Lakes
 Karl Cole, Delaware Valley
 Reynolds Galbraith, West Penn
 Gerry Gregorius, Oregon
 Neil Jensen, Australia
 Virginia Kahapea, Aloha
 Jean Lautzenheiser, Potomac Valley
 Warren Lubich, Northern California
 Jack Pollock, Central Indiana
 Mahon Tullis, Puget Sound
 Lorin Whitney, Los Angeles

On Thursday evening, it was back to the Paramount for Jim Roseveare's concert at the 4/20 Wurlitzer. Jim, a San Francisco banker, is an authority on the Crawford style of playing. He makes no excuses for being a nostalgia buff and, judging from reactions of his audiences, listeners shared his enthusiasm for the "oldies". Jim is also an exponent of English light music, but it was the long-ago memory twangers which hit with the greatest impact. A program of many unfamiliar titles perhaps, but each was a gem as presented by Jim Roseveare. He searches constantly for interesting music and finds most of it in the past, however a "recent" one (for Jim) was an exciting arrangement of a 1950 tune, "Once In A Dream", written by our own Stu Green.

The combination of Jim Roseveare's music, the ornate 20's auditorium, and a well-maintained instrument provided a satisfying evening for ATOSers and they let the artist know it. As buses were boarded for the hotel one could hear snatches of the evening's program being sung quietly.

The showrooms were humming as the returnees poured into the Sheraton. In one of them, Bob Mitchell was performing. Bob Mitchell! The name is unforgettable to any World War II GI who had an opportunity to listen to Bob's daily 15 minutes on the NBC Hollywood studio Welte over the Armed Forces Radio Service. Bob even recalls hearing his own programs after he was inducted and sent out with the forces which invaded the Japanese islands.

Friday, July 27

On Friday morning, the buses left once more for the Organ Grinder for a program featuring Lyn Larsen . . . Out in front to greet us a genuine hand organ was being cranked by Virgil and Ramona Taylor with Pizza Pete, a six year old monkey, performing on top of the organ under an umbrella.

Lyn, on leave from the Phoenix "Organ Stop Pizzeria", must have felt at home in this radical new conception of a pasta parlor. After an introduction by Dennis Hedberg, Lyn sprung up to the platform and the music started. It was soon evident that the task of playing the request of pizza chompers has not dulled Lyn's delightful theatre organ stylings one iota. We noted Shirley Hannum, a young pro in her own right, sitting cross-legged on the thick carpeting, her eyes attentive, ears soaking up every note. Yes, Lyn is something of a spell weaver.

PORTLAND TO PORTLAND

Saturday night Lee Erwin closed the convention with his concert at Benson High School in Portland, Oregon. The following Saturday night he played for a concert in Portland, Maine.

Lyn's patter was fast-paced and entertaining, and he was aware of everyone in his audience. Observing one fan yawning, he said, "Yes, it is kinda early. isn't it!" Before the concert, Lyn had some apprehensions about playing the unfinished organ, but if any deficiencies bothered him while playing, it never showed. His audience hated to let him go but the buses were waiting for the trip to the Oaks Park Rink and a recital by Don Simmons.

The rink's 4/18 Wurlitzer, with unenclosed pipe work and chests suspended from the ceiling, speaks out with block-busting authority. Don is the staff organist for the rink and knows the organ well. He played numbers to satisfy every listener — you name it, Don played it. Because of his long experience at rink playing, Don exhibited a superior sense of rhythm. Selections were planned so that all of the organ's resources would be heard as the program unfolded.

An added attraction at Oaks Park, which intrigued the rail buffs in the assemblage, were the steam loco-



Judd Walton (dark trousers, left) enjoys the sound of a hand-cranked hurdy-gurdy, complete with monkey, during the second excursion to the Organ Grinder. — (Photo credit: Stuofoto)



VISITORS FROM "DOWN UNDER" . . . Roslyn and Warren Robbins, with children (R to L) David, Nicky and Andy poolside at the Sheraton. (The boys did the Australian Crawl, of course.)

No doubt about the make of this organ, with pipework nestled close to the rink ceiling. The console is encased in a glass block room of its own on the far side of the rink.





ONE MORE TIME . . . President Erwin Young accepts the wand of office (a Tibia pipe) from Master of Ceremonies Judd Walton. "Cap" received a standing ovation in recognition of a job well done during his first year in office.



Lloyd Klos, chairman of the Organists Hall of Fame nominating committee, announces this year's entrants.



UP THE GARDEN PATH . . . The walk up the drive to the Vollum residence is picturesque and well worth the sore muscles.

EVEN PHOTOGRAPHERS HAVE TO EAT . . . ATOS Official Photographer Bill Lamb joins Bill Peterson and the Rex Koury's for lunch at the Sheraton.



motives sitting in the park close to the rink. Indeed there was something for everyone.

A new dimension was added to our "Blueprint For Fun" Friday evening by Carol Jones who represented the distaff side. The setting sun streaming through the windows at Benson High School created unexpected and ever-changing lighting effects. Both the Kimball and the audience responded affirmatively to Carol.

This instrument is not the easiest to perform at since the organist cannot hear the organ as the audience does. The percussions are apparently placed deep in the chambers and are not easily heard by the organist. Carol handled this difficulty by selecting soft background stops for her rhythmic numbers, which proved her professionalism. Perhaps this expertise was considered when Conn Organ Company put her on their artists' staff, although her looks alone should be sufficient reason.

Most numbers played were in the contemporary vein and her taste in registrations always seemed right, which made for pleasurable listening.

Following Carol's concert, the society's legal obligations were met with the convening of the annual membership business meeting, in effect a resume of the Board of Director's meeting.

Regarding some tardy slides for the Detroit preview, Al Mason's predicament reminded us of the photographer's lament: "Some Day My Prints Will Come".

The evening was concluded with a 1974 convention preview by the Motor City Chapter . . . A five minute slide show detailing plans for the July 11-15 conclave.

Saturday, July 28

Bus tours to the fabulous Howard Vollum studio, located on a wooded hilltop overlooking the city, was a major event of the day. Beginning at 9 a.m. and continuing at hour-and-a-half intervals until three in the afternoon shuttle buses relayed conventioners from the hotel to the foot of the steep drive up to the Vollum residence.

Through the thoughtfulness of the Oregon Chapter, cars were waiting to drive those unable to enjoy the walk up the hill to the organ studio.

The artist was Tom Hazleton who

played a recital patterned to show off the many components of the 4/49 Wurlitzer. It was at this instrument (when it was the 4/32 Wurlitzer in the San Francisco Paramount) that Tom Hazleton began his study of theatre organ. It seemed fitting that he was playing the instrument he knows so well.

Overheard in the hotel elevator . . . "I understand we're going to see the largest and hear the loudest organ at the convention . . . I guess that is why they call it the 'Volume organ!'"

The two story Vollum music room had ample seating for the 150 persons who attended each of the five identical programs and seldom does an audience have a better chance to observe an artist's technique. The console is located on a landing — a full story above the floor of the spacious studio.

On one number, Tom effectively used the organ's ten-rank Diapason chorus, a most unusual feature in a theatre organ. It might be added that this instrument can be registered to provide an excellent sound and Tom proved this more than once in his program.

Among other goodies, the Vollum organ contains two pianos, an upright Wurlitzer in the chamber, and a Steinway grand by the large windows in front of the organ grills.

Saturday afternoon, listeners were treated to an electronic concert at Benson High School. Featured were Carol Jones, and Debbie Lynn for Conn, Jonas Nordwall for Rodgers, Paul Quarino for Wurlitzer, and Dennis Hinman for Yamaha. Each artist displayed the virtues of the instrument he or she represented. Since the organists were all first-rate musicians, a real comparison of styles was detected. Adding to the pleasure of this event was the opportunity for the audience to hear the tonal approach of four major manufacturers. The variety of music was excellent which delighted the gathering.

A high percentage of ATOS members are electronic organ owners, therefore the participation of plug-in builders is much appreciated and a welcome addition to the annual bash.

Saturday evening was set aside for the annual banquet. All participants look forward to this each year as a high point of the convention. As usual, good fellowship was the keynote.

AUGUST, 1973



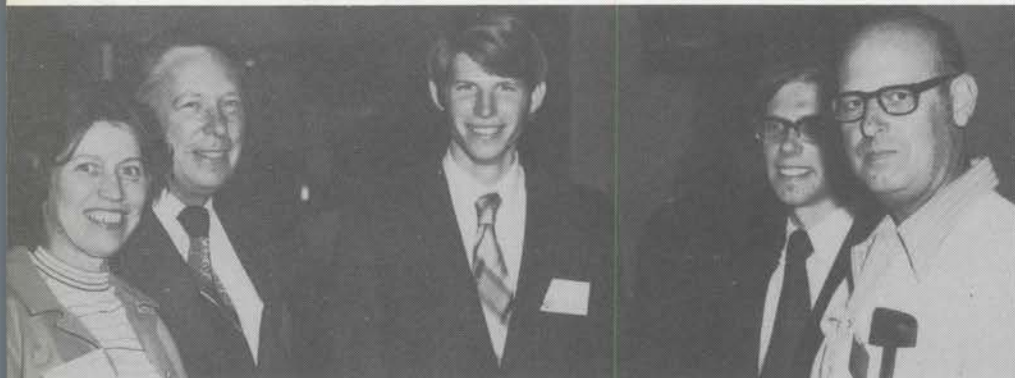
John Fischer, Don Lockwood and Karl Cole at the no host cocktail party before the first convention program.

ATOSers listen intently to an exhibition of the Vollum Post Horn. The basketball net shares this large room with several pianos.





Debbie Lynn (left) and teacher Carol Jones compliment each other on Conn organs at the electronic demonstrations at Benson High School.



The Taylors, who never seem to miss an ATOS convention, pause in the lobby with Bill Blunk (right).



Dan Engelhard, from Honolulu finds time to chat with Ashley Miller while waiting for an elevator at the Sheraton.

CATOE members (L to R) Charlotte Reiger, Doug Christianson, Rod Elliott and Bill Reiger visit in the Sheraton lobby. Unfortunately, the Reiger's daughter (back to camera) had to spend a few days in the hospital with pneumonia.



Able to exceed by Judd Walton, the necessary announcements were given with dispatch, spiced with subtle humor.

President Erwin Young called the role of chapters which revealed that 35 chapters out of 40 were represented. It also showed the meeting registration to be 668, which President Young commented was more than the total ATOS membership in 1958. Our 1973 membership at the present time is 4,625.

Following the announcement of this year's addition to the ATOS Hall of Fame, the Honorary Member Award for this year was presented to the ATOS publishing team of Al and Betty Mason.

The outstanding table decorations depicting Oregon industries and geographical features were a particular credit to the ladies of the Oregon Chapter.

After a steak dinner, announcements and awards, the assemblage was treated to a band which played a program ranging from much of the "Big-Band" era to contemporary. It seemed to some that being loud was the forte of the musical aggregation. For humor they had a slapstick piano player who did pratfalls off the bench.

Following the musical presentation, concertgoers walked from the hotel to the Benson High School to hear Lee Erwin's presentation of Rudolph Valentino's classic silent picture *The Eagle*.

Lee's program was a well executed original score written by him especially for *The Eagle*.

Lee Erwin is an experienced silent picture accompanist and his ability at this difficult type of music was reaffirmed throughout the evening.

Overheard in conversation at Portland: San Francisco organist Warren Lubich, while playing "I've Got A Feeling I'm Falling", felt the console drop about three inches. By the time it righted itself the organist had become so convulsed with laughter that he had difficulty continuing his program.

Many are of the opinion that silent movie cueing was a simple matter of applying suitable tunes to a given piece of action. However this is not the case if it is properly performed. The basic idea is to subtly indicate, by music, the

mood the director desired to convey to the viewer. The musician therefore must first determine what the director intended to say, how he wished the audience to react and the to accurately time this into the image on the screen. It is also necessary that he present the music in a subdued, unobtrusive manner. In other words, "The Picture's the thing", and if the organist plays the film correctly his audience "Lives" the movie virtually unaware of the background music which motivates that feeling.

Using his own score, Lee turned a 1926 vintage silent film into fine contemporary entertainment. □



Dennis Hinman, Yamaha demonstrator shows off the versatility of the Yamaha organ.

Hood is good!

or ...

WIND DOWN UP THE MOUNTAIN

Promptly at 8:45 on Sunday morning July 29, three out of four tour buses pulled away from the Sheraton bound for a scenic trip to Mt. Hood. The fourth bus, however, remained in the hotel driveway, stalled. The trouble was quickly remedied, we understand, by a good swift kick to the left rear tire, and everyone was on their way.

Following what was at one time the main highway from Portland to Chicago, the buses traveled along the two-laned roadway through the scenic Columbia River Gorge, separating the states of Oregon and Washington.

Other stops on the eight hour trip were at Multnomah Falls, the second highest in the United States, and at Bonneville Dam, the oldest of the many dams along the river.

A delicious lunch was served at Timberline Lodge, at the 6000 foot elevation, half way up Mt. Hood.

The weatherman couldn't have cooperated more beautifully in providing clear blue sky with a few puffy clouds skidding by from time to time, for the benefit of the photographers in the group.

The 180 mile loop excursion to Mt. Hood was a spectacular way to wind-down after a very pleasant and exciting convention. □



Paul Quarino, who may be heard playing a "Mighty Wurlitzer" pipe organ when the wind is right at a Los Altos, Calif. Pizzeria, stands ready to point out the best features of the current Wurlitzer electronic.

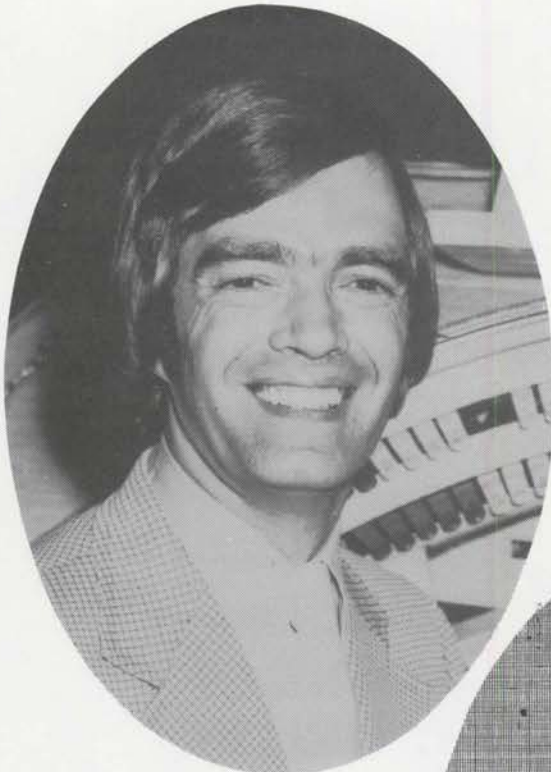
Lyn Larsen was a frequent visitor to the Rodgers display room. Several conventioners were able to visit the Rodgers factory in nearby Hillsboro.



the banquet...







REUNITED ONCE AGAIN. Tom Hazleton performed five identical programs at the Howard Vollum Wurlitzer, the instrument on which he cut his baby teeth. "A tremendous instrument," Tom said . . . musically.

"For a banker, he sure plays up a storm," said one ATOSer at Jim Roseveare's concert at the Paramount Wurlitzer. Jim specializes in nostalgia from the "golden era".



Rex Koury played the kick-off concert and received accolades for his blend of today and yesterday.



Don Simmons at the Oaks Park Rink. His "fascinatin rhythms" made us wish we had time to don a pair of skates and take a few turns around the floor.





Lyn Larsen, worried about the unfinished instrument, manages some masterful renditions on the 17 ranks of pipes playing so far.



Andy Crow did the honors at the Scottish Rite 3/13.

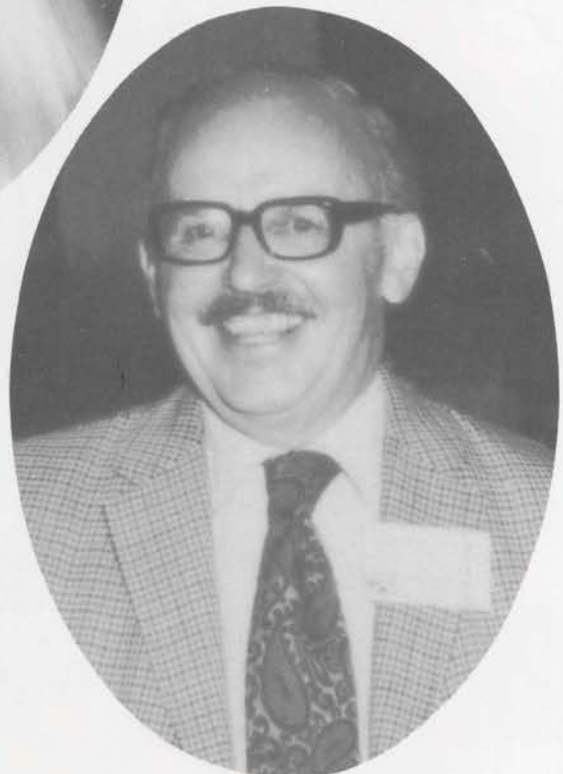


Jonas Nordwall was the first to be featured at the Organ Grinder Restaurant. He will be a house organist when the facilities are readied for business.

He played the windup concert. Lee Erwin, with an assist from Rudolph Valentino and Vilma Banky, made a solid hit with his original score for the silent movie "The Eagle".



Carol Jones, on leave from Conn, coaxed some lovely sounds from the Benson High School's 24 ranks of Kimball.



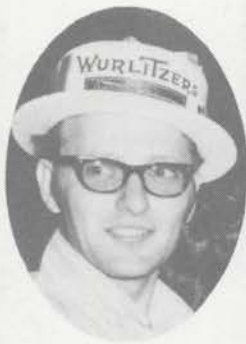
cameo performers...



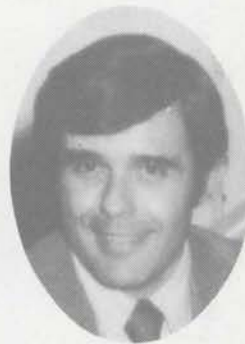
JEAN LAUTZENHEISER
Potomac Valley



GERRY GREGORIUS
Oregon



BOB ARNDT
Land O'Lakes



WARREN LUBICH
Northern California



REYNOLDS GALBRAITH
West Penn.



MAHON TULLIS
Puget Sound



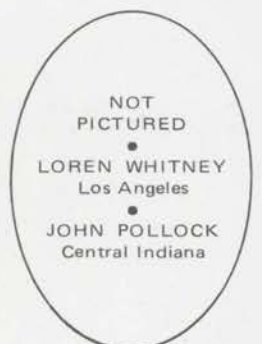
NEIL JENSEN
Australia



VIRGINIA KAHAPEA
Aloha



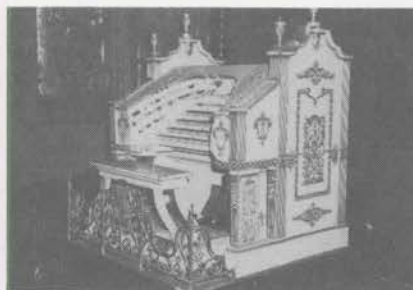
KARL COLE
Delaware Valley



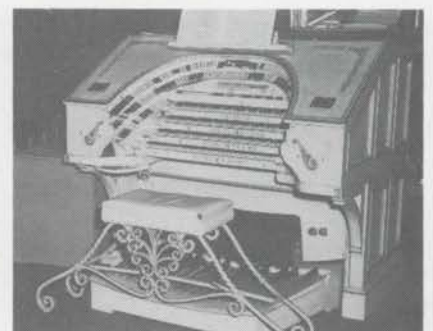
featured organs...



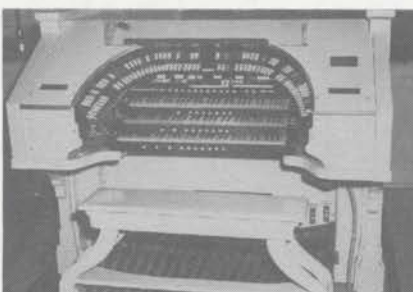
When completely installed, the instrument in the Organ Grinder Restaurant will be a 3/34 Wurlitzer. Jonas Nordwall is seated at the console.



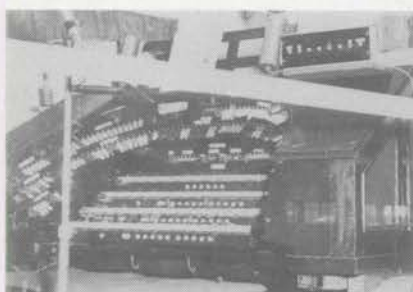
The one intact theatre organ installation in Portland is in the venerable Paramount, a Wurlitzer Publix No. 1.



4/49 Wurlitzer, Howard Vollum Studio.



3/24 Kimball, Benson High School.



4/18 Wurlitzer, Oaks Park Skating Rink.



3/13 Wurlitzer, Scottish Rite Temple.



THE NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS. (L to R) Duane Searle, Vice President; Erwin Young Jr., President; Jean Lautzenheiser, Sec'y/Treas., "Tiny" James, Mary Bowles, Dick Schrum, Al Mason, Dick Simonton, and Judd Walton. (Allen Miller and Stillman Rice, Past President, were unable to attend.)

board meeting...

The Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of ATOS was convened at the Sheraton Motor Inn, Portland, Oregon on Wednesday, July 25, 1973 at 12:20 P.M.

Reports from the membership, publication and advertising officers reported a healthy growth for ATOS during the year.

Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier was selected as the 1973 active entrant for the ATOS Hall of Fame.

A report on the Harold Lloyd Foundation indicated progress on the plans for the Ben Hall Memorial Theatre at the Lloyd Estate, while plans were also revealed for a similar Ben Hall memorial in Town Hall, New York City. The board authorized the

transfer of remaining funds from the Ben Hall Memorial Fund to the New York project.

New By-Laws were adopted which bring ATOS in line with the latest corporate laws of the State of California, and provide a more complete guide for the operation of our society.

New chapters approved include Alabama, Garden State (New Jersey) and Land of Lincoln (Illinois).

Approval was also granted for the addition of the State of West Virginia to the territory of the West Penn Chapter.

Future convention plans for Detroit in 1974, and San Francisco in 1975 were reviewed, while approval was given for conventions in Philadelphia

in 1976 and Chicago in 1977. A committee will be formed to investigate the possibility of holding a Regional Convention in London, England in 1976.

Officers for the year 1973-1974 include Erwin A. Young, Jr., President (re-elected), Duane E. Searle, Vice President (re-elected) and Jean Lautzenheiser, Secretary-Treasurer.

Directors taking office for a two-year term are Jean Lautzenheiser, Richard C. Simonton, Judd Walton and W. "Tiny" James. Remaining on the board for one additional year are Mary A. Bowles, Allen R. Miller, Richard H. Schrum, and Albert T. Mason. □

The Board of Directors, the magazine staff, chapter chairmen (or representatives) and guests at the conclusion of the annual board meeting. Business concluded, now it's time for fun!





Honorary members for 1973, Al and Betty Mason with 1972 Honorary member Stu Green.

honorary members...

The ATOS National Board of Directors, by unanimous vote, selected as this years Honorary Member Award recipients, Al and Betty Mason.

The Mason's involvement with ATOS began in 1964 when the Motor City Chapter was formed in their home — Al was elected the chapter's first chairman, and also served as chairman of the 1967 national convention held in Detroit.

In 1968 Al was elected to the ATOS presidency, and it was during that two year service that Betty became National Executive Secretary, charged with the full-time job of keep-

ing records for the Society.

In 1969 the Mason's undertook the additional burden of publishing THEATRE ORGAN magazine and are in large part responsible for its continued improvement over the past four years.

In addition to this impressive list of credits, Al is currently serving in his second year as a member of the National Board of Directors.

Their dedication to the theatre organ, ATOS, THEATRE ORGAN magazine and the Motor City Chapter have resulted in their well deserved selection for this high honor. □

Welcome...

TO OUR NEWEST CHAPTERS

alabama

garden state

land o'lincoln

Hall of Fame Procedure

There has been confusion and several inquiries concerning the method of determining entrants for the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame. In the following, it is hoped to inform THEATRE ORGAN readers and eliminate uncertainty.

Early each year, Lloyd Klos, Hall of Fame Committee chairman, compiles two lists of organists. One contains the names of 60 to 70 prominent names who are deceased or inactive. These names are culled from a master card file of over 900 organists.

The second list contains the names of 40 or more organists who are still active.

These lists are duplicated and a copy is sent to each member of the selection committee which this year included Dr. Edward J. Bebko, H. Clealan Blakely, Mary Bowles, John Muri, Rosa Rio, George Thompson and Robert S. Wilson. The committee members are given about three months to carefully consider the calibre of the organists and make their selections which are entered on a ballot which accompanies the lists. A point system is used to obviate tie votes as much as possible. Should a tie result, Lloyd breaks it.

It must be emphasized that Lloyd does not exercise any influence on the committee to name any candidate. He merely acts as coordinator and tabulator.

The committee members' final selections for the inactive or deceased members stand. The ATOS Board of Directors choose the active entrant upon the Hall of Fame Committee's recommendation.

Final results are announced at the annual convention banquet, as well as in the August issue of THEATRE ORGAN. □

A RECORD TO BEAT!

From Associated Press, Mansfield, England. David Klein, 35, played the organ for 51 hours non-stop. He was carried off afterwards, in the state of exhaustion, to a waiting ambulance. □

Coming...

"THE NOTE-ABLE NINETEENTH"

1974
NATIONAL CONVENTION
DETROIT — JULY 11-15

HALL OF FAME

DON BAKER
 BUDDY COLE
 JESSE CRAWFORD
 MRS. JESSE CRAWFORD
 LLOYD G. DEL CASTILLO
 EDDIE DUNSTEDTER
 LEE ERWIN
 GUS FARNEY
 FRED FEIBEL
 REGINALD FOORT
 PAUL H. FORSTER
 ARTHUR GUTOW
 HENRI A. KEATES
 FREDERICK KINSLEY
 SIGMUND KRUMGOLD
 LEONARD MacCLAIN
 QUENTIN MacLEAN
 "SANDY" Mc PHERSON
 ALBERT HAY MALOTTE
 DR. MELCHIORRE MAURO-COTTONE
 F. DONALD MILLER
 C. SHARPE MINOR
 HENRY B. MURTAGH
 RAY SHELLEY
 ARSENE SIEGAL
 MILTON SLOSSER
 FIRMIN SWINNEN
 SIDNEY TORCH
 EMIL VELAZCO
 DEZSO VON D'ANTALFFY
 OLIVER WALLACE
 LEW WHITE

1973
 Organist of the Year
 DR. C.A.J. PARMENTIER



BOOK REVIEW

by Lloyd E. Klos

PLAYER PIANO TREASURY, Second Edition by Harvey Roehl, Vestal Press, Vestal, N.Y. 13850. 316 pages — price \$10.



Some years back, the inveterate collector of player pianos, coin-operated players and other mechanical music-making machines, Harvey Roehl, put together an interesting first-edition book on the history of the mechanical music-makers. Its success spurred him to turn out a much larger volume of 8½ x 11" page size, with more information, more pictures, albeit more of everything in this new second edition.

Printed on slick paper and possessing excellent art work, the book has to be the definitive work in its field. There is a history of the development of player pianos and coin-operated machines. There are pages taken from catalogues. Advertisements, trade-journal articles and a sizeable text all contribute to the impressive store of knowledge included in this volume. For those whose hobby is restoration and maintenance of these musical instruments, and for those whose interest is less active, the book will prove educational as well as entertainingly informative. □

REGISTRATION AND RELATIVITY

by John Muri

You would think that the number of possible sound-combinations on any organ would be limited by mathematical permutations and combinations, but it is amazing how different organists get new sound effects out of the same old combinations. The variety comes, of course, from the method of attack — staccato, legato, etc. — and the use of swell-shades. Often a well-chosen sequence of combinations makes new effects possible. For instance, we can make an interesting contrast by alternating flue and reed stops.

In effect, good registration is a matter of coordinating and subordinating compatible sounds and suppressing incompatible ones. Sounds are compatible when they do not clash in their bid for listener attention. A good accompaniment never competes with or overshadows the main or solo line; therefor specialty stops like the Kinura or the Trumpet are best heard alone in single melody lines. When used with other stops they should assist only in relatively bright or brisk passages.

Freak registrations are sensational listening, but they should be used sparingly. I am thinking of 16 and 2 foot stops, particularly reeds without tremulant. Sometimes anything goes, and you're likely to hear anything. Believe it or not, I once heard a player accompany a right-hand Tibia 8-foot solo with a Flute and Kinura played in left-hand arpeggios. The Kinura or Krumet, used with a 4 or 2 foot Tibia, may be used for bouncy melodies only if the reed is not too raspy. Sentiment goes out of the window when Kinuras begin snorting. That stop is best suited for comic effects. It is invaluable for playing animated cartoons, where one can hardly use it too much, but it does practically nothing for a full organ ensemble. The vox humana may be given a special treatment by playing it in chords. If the vox is decent, the effect will suggest massed human voices. Even poor voxes do not come off too bad with this treatment.

The organist who has a favorite stop and over-uses it by putting it into practically all of his combinations is reducing the value of his other stop-changes. Perpetual Tibia becomes cloying. It is very effective when brought on after a combination of strings or light reeds has been used. Some of us are prone to over-use twelfths and other strident mixture sounds that quickly tire the ear. I save those for the moments when I want to shake up my listeners. I never set up twelfths on pistons but add them by hand when the infrequent need arises. And let me here parenthetically pronounce curses upon the Post Horn addict who can't leave that thing alone.

On the arty side, I urge organists playing transcriptions of instrumental music to use organ stops equivalent in sound to the prescribed instruments. Massenet's "Meditation" from "Thais" is a violin solo; it should be played on string stops. If Massenet had wanted thick sounds for his melody, he would have ordered horns or woodwinds. Piano pieces like "Rhapsody in Blue" and "Second Hungarian Rhapsody" need large blocks of piano sound, if the organ includes a piano. It is better to have a pianist play the solo parts and the organist play the accompaniment. In the absence of a piano, the organist must try to get the percussion effect as well as he can.

The beauty of any registration is affected by the player's musicianship. When playing a one-fingered melody in the right hand using accompanying chords in the left, one ought not to make the top note of the left hand the same as the one being played in the right. This means, of course, that since every chord has three forms (two inversions), the player will use one of the alternative two forms. The right choice must be determined by the ear. For a thicker or a darker texture, the accompanying chord will be that which contains the lowest note. If one is playing chords in both hands, then one would never play the same chord

in both hands at once. In such a case, why not just flip on a coupler?

Reeds like English Horn, Saxophone, Krumet, etc. should not be played in chords. They are best as single-note melody stops. I once heard a player (in the Chicago Theatre, of all places!) use the Saxophone as an accompaniment stop. An exception is the Clarinet, which I find quite pleasant when played in double notes or chords as an accompaniment with a Flute or a string.

Large organs, like the Wanamaker or Atlantic City behemoths, do not require combinations made up of great bunches of stops. Big organs should be played as if they were small ones. We can begin with small combinations — say, a single solo stop (like Clarinet 8, Tibia 8, or Sax 8) accompanied by Flute 8 with a pedal Bourdon 16. Play on these for a while; then gradually add for a very pleasing effect. I once heard Jesse Crawford use a nice simple plaintive combination (Tibia, soft Diapason, string and Clarinet 8 with an accompanying Diapason and Flute 8) for a neutral scene in a movie. The tune was a slow, bouncy thing named "When I Am with You", and it certainly helped make the organ sound magnificent when he later brought on more stops for scenes with livelier action.

Some players are duds in public performance because they put on everything at the beginning. Full theatre organ doesn't sound too impressive unless you build up to it. The way pipes were selected and installed in the old days more often than not militated against the production of good ensembles. You can't throw bunches of theatre stops together without getting much more than loudness. If one has two or three Tibias, there is no need to use them all at once. I like to use them singly or play them antiphonally, if they are located on opposite sides of the theatre. One can do that with voxes too. I know few organs where two Tibias played together sound as good or better than one played alone. I know one big Wurlitzer in which the Tibias playing together cancel each other out and become a thick Flute Celeste.

Full organ should be used sparingly, never more than a few times during a concert. More than that and the listener gets tired; his psychological mechanism turns off the noise. This is especially important to remember

when one is playing a small organ. Use only a few stops for most of the program. Then, when you open up later, the audience will feel a "big" sound. A respectable program may be done on even a five-ranker, but it requires special concentration by playing in different keys and tempos to make the few stops hold interest until the moments when you can use the weak full organ and make it actually sound impressive.

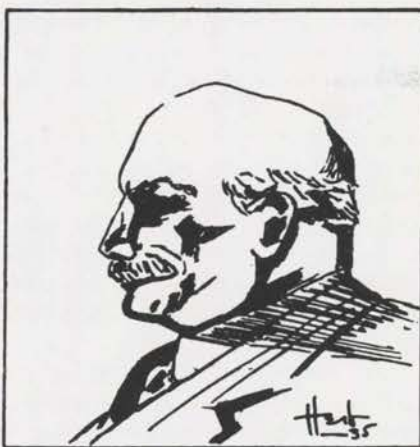
The key-word here is obviously *relativity*. You can make a small organ sound big by holding it in check and letting it roar infrequently. You can make a big organ sound harsh and noisy through over-play. You can't afford to let the instrument intoxicate or master you into a public indulgence of mawkishness or exuberance. You have to show it who's boss — all the time. □



Manufacturers, distributors or individuals sponsoring or merchandising theatre pipe organ records are encouraged to send pressings to the Record Reviewer, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. Be sure to include purchasing information, if applicable, and if possible a black and white photo which need not be returned.

THE ART OF FIRMIN SWINNEN AT LONGWOOD GARDENS. Available at \$5.95 postpaid from Swinnen Art, 1907 Veale Road, Wilmington, Delaware 19810.

Firmin Swinnen is best remembered as the organist at the Longwood Gardens estate of Pierre Dupont at Kennett Square, Penna., where he spent nearly half of his long life (87 years) playing for the gunpowder



Swinnen

magnate, his friends and family, mostly on the 4/177 Aeolian organ installed on the grounds in 1929. Swinnen and his wife, Augusta, came to the USA in 1916 after their native Belgium had been overrun by the "Huns." He had been in New York only a week when he was hired by Samuel "Roxy" Rothafel to play a huge (3/56) Austin in the Broadway Rivoli. But it was later at the Rialto that he came more into the public eye with spectacular organ/orchestra show pieces, playing an Estey church organ (which was discarded for a Wurlitzer in 1925). In addition to solo work, Swinnen gained a name as a film accompanist. In the days before the widespread installation of sound effects on organs used in theatres, Swinnen used his pipework and a fertile imagination to conjure up such sounds as train wrecks, sneezes, traffic jams, and even uncorking a bottle — on an Estey yet! Actually he was somewhat out of place as a film accompanist; he was basically a skilled concert organist with a record of hundreds of recitals in Europe. As an immigrant he needed work and for a time he confined his effort to cueing films and doing it well. His last theatre job was at the Philadelphia Aldine in 1923, where he quit to take the job offered by DuPont. This proved to be his niche; his name as a concert organist grew among the DuPont circle of friends, and by occasional public recitals. Strangely, Swinnen was not interested in making commercial recordings but he allowed his friends with amateur equipment to make occasional cuts. This recording consists of an assortment of such tracks, all made between 1950 and 1969 when Swinnen was 84. The technical quality varies from fair to good and the

presence of considerable surface noise on some cuts indicates they were probably dubbed from acetate discs. Loud passages suffer most with a sometimes high distortion content.

However, the platter serves to provide a profile of the organist and an absorbing picture it is. From the first track, Swinnen establishes himself as a master of the romantic style orthodox organ. Some selections illustrate his flair for showmanship, especially the opener, his own improvisation, "Daybreak," with its off-mike percussions, lush Vox chorus and bright brass. Five of the selections are Swinnen originals. These provide the best representation of the organist's theatrical style. His Saint-Saens, Brahms, Dvorak and Schubert go strictly by the book and the instrumentation is usually austere, but the originals reveal a theatrical leaning despite the limitations of an orthodox organ, although we noted a few luscious crash cymbal liberties during "Eastern Romance" by Rimsky-Korsakoff. Among the classical renditions are Schubert's "Ave Maria," Dvorak's "Humoresque" (with T.O. registration) and Saint-Saens' "The Swan," all in the easy listening class and making no great demands on the player. However, the skills are showcased during Brahms' "Hungarian Dance No. 6" and moreso during Tchaikowsky's dramatic "March Slav," a real zinger. Playing is technically correct and the over-all renditions warm. Swinnen's originals include "Soir d'Automne," "March Talleyville," "Aria," and "Soir de Printemps," with "Daybreak" the most like silent movie accompaniment. The sound of the 7-division organ is often lush, despite its "straightness," but by no means theatrical. Some interesting solo reeds show up with pleasant regularity.

This sampling of the work of a

moving?

Send your change of address to . . .

**VI THOMPSON
THEATRE ORGAN
P.O. BOX 1314
SALINAS, CALIFORNIA 93901**

classics-oriented organist with a feeling for showmanship is unique. If even rough comparisons can be made, the astute listener might find points of reference in some of the recorded work of Lynwood Farnam and Reginald Foort. This one is for the enthusiast who appreciates often inspired playing which makes itself felt despite the weak link of those \$59.98 recorders. Interesting jacket notes.

LYN LARSEN AT THE ORGAN LOFT, played on Larry Bray's 5/32 Wurlitzer in the Salt Lake City Organ Loft. PRS-01, stereo. Available at \$5.50 postpaid from P.I.P.E. Records, Box 2634, Riverside, Calif. 92506.



Lyn Larsen

The Organ Loft Wurlitzer hasn't been much in evidence in micro-grooves since the memorable series released by Warner Bros. Records in the early '60s starring the late Gus Farny. It's quite fitting that Lyn Larsen's first recorded venture for his new management/recording setup should be played on this magnificent instrument. Lyn maintains the high standards of musicianship which marked his previous efforts for the Malar and Essential labels. His selection of tunes, including a couple of originals, avoids the "usuals" and provides a framework for a variety of styles, from '20s jazz to the best organ rendition of Eric Coates' "Knightsbridge March" we've heard to date (we can hardly wait until Lyn discovers the same composers' "London Again" suite). Lyn's oldies include a bouncy "Doin' the Raccoon," "Swanee," "Taking a Chance on Love" and "I'll Take Romance." His originals are "Unfinished Dream" and "I Just Don't Under-

stand," tenderly registered ballads of considerable merit. Selections of current interest are "For Once in My Life" and "Dear World." One tune, "The White Dove," is followed by the words, "To Ruth." Only insiders would know that the selection is in memory of the late Ruth Carson, who as "Nora Peters" was Lyn's confidant and manager through the formative years of his career. Lyn feels the loss very keenly.

Larry Bray's miking is tops. Jacket notes are mostly factual data on the instrument which consists basically of the twin console 3/19 Staten Island Paramount Wurlitzer plus the 10-rank Wurlitzer from the Egyptian theatre in Ogden, Utah, and a few odds and ends Larry has added over the years, always with impeccable taste concerning the ensemble sound. The P.I.P.E. label is off to an excellent start with this release.

THIS IS KARL COLE, playing the 3/11 Wurlitzer formerly in B.F. Keith's Theatre, Syracuse, N.Y. ERS-1011, stereo. Available at \$5.00 postpaid from Essential Records, Box 3544, Glendale, Calif. 91201.

This reviewer has sometimes been accused of favoring the artist rather than the buyer. Objectivity is an almost impossible goal, tastes and preferences varying as they do from listener to listener — but we try. However, the following will be prejudiced, so be forewarned. Yet the leaning is not



Karl Cole



Carleton James — (Alvah Finch Photo)

toward the artist (as good as he is) but for the instrument; it's the organ we considered the best in town during those all important formative years. The memory of hearing Carleton James and Byron Severance play it for silent movies at Keith's Theatre as well as the daily A.M. broadcasts by Carleton, these long ago experiences are brought to mind on hearing Karl Cole's record. The Wurlitzer, now in the care of the Empire State Theatre and Musical Instrument Museum (ESTMIM), sounds better in its current NYS Fairgrounds home than it ever did in the theatre where its full impact was buried in remote chambers.

Most of Karl's selections would place him in the illustrious theatre organ past, tunes such as "Blue Skies," "Zing Went the Strings of my Heart," "Birth of the Blues" and "Strike Up the Band," but there is nothing dated about his treatments. Arrangements offer much variety in tempo and registration. Listeners with an acute sense of pitch will note that Karl rarely ventures away from the key of B (yes, B!). However, excitement in the arrangements offsets any monotony from lack of key changes. He makes the most of the instrument's exceptionally lovely Tibia and occasionally solos the fine Tuba. Registration gets a little thick at times but rarely for long stretches.

Karl is especially effective when playing bouncy jazz such as "Sweet Georgia Brown" but his ballad treatments (e.g. "Look for the Silver Lining") score heavily, also. He has been very successful in his home area during the past 10 years, teaching and playing club dates. Now he's hitting the concert trail and doing equally well. Most readers know about Karl's recent pinch hitting job for ailing Leon Berry for the Niagara Chapter. Later

he drew an audience of 1800 at the Rochester Auditorium Theatre for RTOS.

Karl is representative of the young talent which Essential Records is intent on promoting, just as the firm did for such artists as Lyn Larsen in the past. This platter indicates Essential has another budding winner. Other selections are "Charade," "I Got Rhythm," "Things I Love," "Love Me or Leave Me," "Lida Rose" and "Somebody Loves Me."

Tom Anderson's miking catches the full glory of a beloved instrument. There's often a wide variation in the volume level between tracks which probably occurred during dubbing but that doesn't mar the music.

THE PHANTOM OF THE ORGAN, ERIK AT THE MONSTER CATA-COMBS ORGAN. Available at \$6.50 (plus 5% sales tax for Californians) postpaid from Electric Lemon Record Co., 7001 Franklin Ave., Hollywood, Calif. 90028.

This one defies description. Played by a "mystery" organist on a huge but unidentified instrument, it tries for the mood of the unmasking scene from the classic *Phantom of the Opera*. The jacket notes by horror movie chronicler Forrest J. Ackerman add to the puzzlement by giving off a suspiciously fictitious odor.



Erik

"They're a lot of malarkey" stated Electric Lemon's "Veep," Verne Langdon, when we asked for a clarification. He added, "The Phantom (Erik) is still alive. He's 103 years old and we flew him to Hollywood to make this

recording. He is staying at Grauman's Chinese and does his shopping in broad daylight at the Hollywood Ranch Market where no one seems to notice him." Big help!

But we can believe the organist is pushing 104 when he plays such compositions as "The Devil's Love," "Depression," and "Dementia Macabre," all of which (plus three others) just happen to be originals by Verne Langdon who also produced the record. The music is for the silent movie enthusiast who likes to either prolong a horror scene or repeat it over and over. Most of the music consists of lengthy slow-moving dirges, "misereres" and "threnodies." Registration is usually on the bombastic side with a thunderous pedal — just what one would expect a well-schooled phantom to be playing on a musty old tracker deep in the Paris catacombs (winded, no doubt, by power from a water-wheel in an adjacent sewer). But how long can that mood be sustained? For maybe 28:00 minutes? If one is a dyed-in-the-gore horror film music fan, yes.

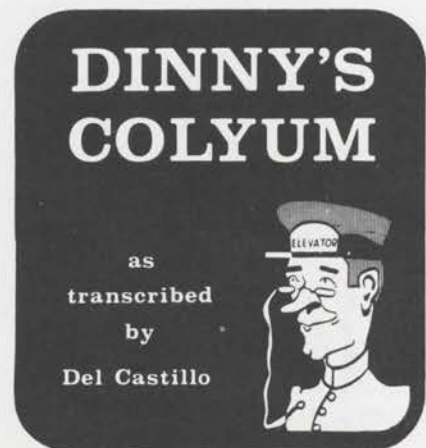
One 8:14 minute track breaks the music pattern by taking us on a sound effect trip to and under the Paris opera. We arrive in a horse-drawn carriage, then the buzz of voices in the lobby and the orchestra tuning up — then the chase: rapid footsteps in an echo chamber, dripping water, maniacal laughter, shots, splashes (catacombs always seem to have faulty plumbing) police whistles, a fist fight, splintering wood, creaking door opening, several uninspired screams and so on. Just improvise your own scenario.

Involved in the spoof is Electric Lemon's production chief, Milt Larsen, remembered for his still available "Smash Flops" album containing congratulatory songs for jobs well done to General Custer, Neville Chamberlain, Thomas Dewey, the Titanic and a Confederate victory song, among others. So this disc of elegiac trivia comes as no surprise. We can conceive an image of Milt and Verne with silly grins on their pans, conjuring up this 28:00 minute gag.

Trouble is, it's very apt to grow on one (like the "Blob"); for the second run through we turned up the volume of our reconverted Edison, installed a newly sharpened bamboo stylus, and allowed Erik's artistry, unhampered by polyphony, to crumple our asthmatic "woofers" and masticate the protesting

"tweeter." The mass of untrem'd minor chords piled up on one another to roof-raising climaxes. Yeeeeeay!!!!

When it was over and the last thunderous pedal grunt had died away we reached the conclusion that Erik's "style" was pretty much limited to what is in these grooves and we couldn't help but picture the consternation which might appear on that cadaverous visage should he find perhaps "Zing went the Strings of my Heart" on the rack of his cellar-bound 4-decker. But who cares? It's all in dirty, super-natural fun.



They is certainly a lot of different kinds of sounds comin out of organs than they was when I was a boy. The chief reason I remember about it is that I was a boy soprano in Boston in them days, and if they had ever been anything like a Pianny or Drums or Bells comin out of the organ in Emanuel Church where I sung the congregashun would of dropped dead of shock. I remember Mr. Hyde who was the quiremaster would oncet in a great wile cut loose with a couple chimes notes but mostly they was just that big full sound that I always got a kick out of in a church organ. I guess maybe they was a harp on the organ too, but I disremember ever a-hearin of it. I remember mostly how Mr. Hyde used to put on a pair of patent leather pumps to play the pedals better, and thats about as far as I ever got to knowin about a pump organ. Or about patent leather pumps, for that matter. I dont suppose you could even find a pair any more.

But then after I grew up was about the time theayter organs started to come in to play for the silent pitchers and we got to hear somethin entirely different. For one thing when the

theyater organ player opened up them swell shutters you could always hear the thumpy-thumpy-thumpy sound of them tremelents a-goin lickerty split. And for another thing the combinashun of stops was either to pep up the emoshuns for love seens or to get you excited for chase seens or fite seens. And then lastly they had to have sounds in the organ to imitate the things that was happening in the pitcher, so we had drums and simbals and bells and thunder and cowbells and telyfone bells and auto horns and train wissels and all like that there.

So then when the electronick organs come on the market and people started buyin them to put in their homes, why of course they had to have the same things. So the electronick people they had to invent all them sounds and then they went on from them things the theyater organ players called the Toy Counter, and after they got sounds like the Wood Block and the Bongo and the Castanet and the Pianny and Mandolin and such like, they got together somethin they called a Rithm Master that you could play all kinds of rithms on so all you had to do was follow it, that is if you could keep up with it. And then finely they added this thing they call the Synthesizer which you can make all kinds of queer noises on, and by that time you could just about see old man Bach a-whirlin around in his grave.

But then they was another thing that happened. Somebody discovered that people like to eat Pizzas and hear a organ at the same time, so they started to buy the old theyater organs and put them in the Pizza Parlors. But then they decided that the people eatin the Pizzas would like to look at the organs too, so they put the pipes behind big glass windows with lites so's the folks could see where the musick was a-comin from. That wasnt so bad, but then they got the brite idea of puttin all them traps and drums and sleighbells out in the open so's the people could see them jigglin away.

So now when you go in to enjoy a Pizza you cant do it without getting your ears batted in by all these Zylo-phones and Bells and Drums slammin away so you cant scarcely hear what youre eatin. Now dont get me wrong. I've heard a lot of fine organ playing in Pizza Joints, but sometimes I kinda hanker for the good old days when a organ always sounded like a organ. □



Hollywood Cavalcade

Directed by Lyle W. Nash

RALPH GRAVES was well and happy last month when he talked with us from his home, 474 N. Turnpike Road, in Santa Barbara, California. Film history shows that Graves was in films from about 1915 unwards and by 1918 was a contemporary of Gloria Swanson, Thomas Meighan and William S. Hart. Not too many remember that Graves had a major role in the first U.S. sound film produced by D.W. Griffith in 1921. It was called "Dream Street" and a better name might have been nightmare alley. It bombed.

LISTEN TO GRAVES: "I am feeling fine . . . Working on a play and two books . . . You know, I've been a writer all my life . . . I'd like to do a modern slam bang book on Paul Getty . . . Movies today bore the hell out of me . . . TV is not much better . . . Have lived up here nine years . . . Yes, I get fan mail now . . . More than in a long while . . . Young people write . . . They enclose non-flattering pictures for me to sign . . . I have six letters on my desk right now . . . I don't live much in the past . . . I have so much to get done . . . Come and see us when you are up this way."

GRAVES said he was 80 last birthday and sounded great.

"B MOVIES" by Don Miller (Curtis, \$15. \$1.50) is an excellent history of the golden age of the double bill when B movies pleased millions of fans. All you ever wanted to know about the B films. Choice reading.

SELECTED SHORTS — Beloved Mary Carr, 99, died in June . . . Myrna Loy, Alexis Smith, Rhonda Fleming and Kim Hunter are in the new Broadway edition of "The Women" . . . Pola Negri seemed happy when she socialized with Hollywood friends recently . . . MMMinter lost her big invasion of privacy suit against CBS . . . The Joan Blondell novel, "Center Door Fancy"

is most readable . . . Twenty-two year old Dick Powell, Jr. made his acting debut this spring in San Diego . . . Minna Gombell passed on at 81.

BOOK publishers are pondering how to "prove" that the Greta Garbo memories are from GG herself? No one wants to win the Second Clifford Irving Duplicity Award.

THEY REMEMBER — Junior Coghlan (now Commander Fran Coghlan, USNR) appeared in his first film as a baby and by 1921 had a part in the Leatrice Joy picture *Poverty of Riches*. For the next 25 years he played every role a young actor could imagine. Then he devoted 25 years to the Navy. Now he's a special events officer for the Port of Los Angeles. Frank got a big hand from a recent film fan convention in Houston. Fans recalled that Frank thrilled millions in the *Adventures of Captain Marvel* series. Friends may write him at 16036 Tupper St., Sepulveda, California, 91343.

EXPECT a very different point of view in a new film now in the making about the Assassination of President Kennedy.

MAYBE by this time next year the third version of "The Great Gatsby" will be on movie screens. First two were instantly forgettable. Fitzgerald estate got \$350,000. for screen rights — probably as much as author earned in his lifetime. Much of film about the U.S. Golden Twenties will be filmed in England.

COMMENTS and contributions are welcome. Mail to P.O. Box 113, Pasadena, California, 91102.



The line of concertgoers begins to form. The Capitol's manager, Don Lindner, was determined to make a success of the Erwin concert as the marquee advertising proves. Notice the red carpet from door to curb. — (Bill Lamb Photo)

DAVENPORT PREMIER... A SELLOUT!

by
Lloyd E. Klos

One of the newest chapters to be added to the ATOS family is the Cedar Rapids Area Theatre Organ Society. As a result, Davenport, Iowa is now a full-fledged city on the theatre organ concert circuit, thanks to a highly successful event, starring Hall of Famer, Lee Erwin on May 17 at the Capitol Theatre. And, judging from the response of the concertgoers during the affair and afterwards, it was only the beginning of a glorious future.

A focal point of CRATOS activities, is the 3/10 Wicks which was installed in the Capitol in 1928 at a cost of \$30,000. Prime movers in the restoration project were Bob and Carolyn Beck. Bob, though he confesses to not being an organist, had played the Wicks once a week, beginning in 1964, as a means of preventing corrosion of the electric contacts. In 1969, Stan Zimmerman of Moline, Ill., started working with Bob on its restoration. There were others

who assisted from time to time, but Bob stayed with it.

He inherited his love of music quite naturally. His mother was famed organist, Gladys Gooding, who played the Loew's circuit, Madison Square Garden, and Ebbetts Field for the old Brooklyn Dodgers.

Over 50% of the Capitol organ was dead when restoration began. Bob and his crew worked on Saturday and Sunday mornings. A worker at ALCOA, he transferred to a later shift to free his mornings for work on the organ. He had no knowledge of the workings of a pipe organ before he tackled the Capitol's instrument, but he had studied electronics while in the service, and that helped.

"When we started working", he says, "we found the two pipe chambers had been damaged by water leaks through the roof. Mice, dust, corrosion and other factors were prevalent from years of disuse. Since I like the noise-makers, the first thing I did was to

work on the chimes. The leather covering was shot, so I replaced it with a rubberized cotton material which is cheaper and easier to work with."

As is the case of all restoration projects of this kind, Bob Beck is not paid for his services, though he has purchased materials and parts. Other parts have been donated by CRATOS members. Intensely dedicated to this project, Bob says, "I must have expended a couple hundred dollars a year on the organ. Many people spend more on their hobbies. This organ is my hobby."

For the benefit of THEATRE ORGAN readers, the solo chamber on the left side of the auditorium contains the Tuba, Tibia, Kinura, Orchestral Violin, Diapason and Contra Bass. The main chamber on the right houses the Concert Flute, Violin, Violin Celeste, Gross Flute and Vox Humana. The Toy Counter is also in the main chamber and includes Auto Horn, Bass Drum, Castanets, Cymbal, Marimba-



CRATOS member Howard Burton plays his portable pipe organ in the Capitol Theatre lobby. — (Bill Lamb Photo)

Harp, Snare Drum, Tambourine, Tympani, Wood Block and Xylophone.

The Becks joined ATOS in 1957. When CRATOS was organized in 1969, they became members, thus becoming fully "organized." Besides

maintaining the organ, Bob serves as treasurer of the chapter, and his wife handles publicity. Other dedicated buffs who have worked on the instrument are Howard Adams and Brad Starcevich.

Of course, the project couldn't have

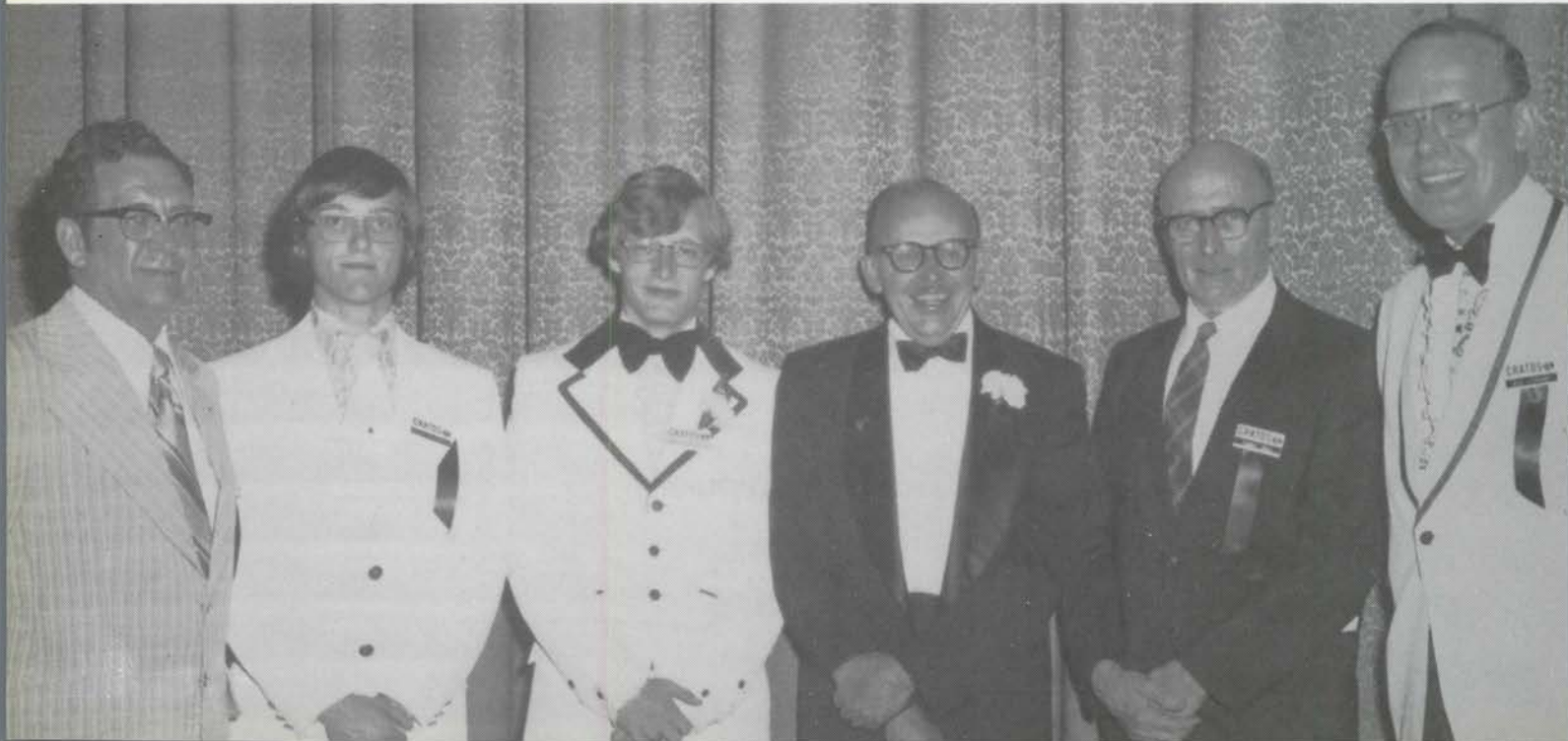
been brought to fruition without the approval and encouragement of the Capitol Theatre's manager, Dan Lindner. He had attended a concert, sponsored by the chapter, in Cedar Rapids and came away so enthusiastic that he wanted to put on a similar event at the Capitol. However, it was felt that the organ was not in good enough condition. After Lee Erwin played a November 1972 concert in Cedar Rapids, he was brought to the Capitol for his appraisal of the instrument. Believing it to be well along the way to complete restoration, he agreed to a date of May 17, 1973 for the initial concert.

There must have been someone from CRATOS who attended this writer's seminar at the 1972 convention in Washington, and heeded his advice on the great value of thorough advance publicity. Carolyn Beck was in charge of tickets and publicity, and what a job she did! The newspapers, radio and television stations tried to outdo each other in giving the concert publicity.

"I had to go to the theatre the morning of the show because the manager couldn't handle the phone calls! We were sold out by 11 AM!", says Mrs. Beck.

Picture the scene at the Capitol that historic evening: Lines of people waiting for the doors to open... A Hollywood-style searchlight oscillating

A happy sextet poses backstage at the Capitol. (Left to right): Howard Adams and Brad Starcevich of the organ maintenance staff; Paul Adams, master of ceremonies; organist Lee Erwin; Bob Beck, dedicated organ restorer; and Dave Lindner, manager of the Capitol Theatre. — (Bill Lamb Photo)



against the night sky . . . A busload of organ enthusiasts arrives from Cedar Rapids . . . A red carpet is stretched from the theatre's doors to the curb . . . Ushers sporting tuxedos . . . ATOS Staff Photographer, Bill Lamb snapping pictures of the first-night activity . . . Howard Burton performing on his portable pipe organ in the lobby . . . All the glamour and excitement of a real Hollywood premiere!

Lee Erwin had arrived a couple days earlier for practice sessions and combination settings, which is the hallmark of a dedicated musician. From the time he played the opening number he finished accompanying the final scene of Buster Keaton's *The General*, the 1610 persons who comprised the SRO audience (500 were turned away), were completely enthralled. They were there to forget the cares of the world for a couple hours, and when the announcement was made that similar programs were being considered, it met with loud applause.

The event was covered thoroughly by the press. Cameramen and interviewers were present, and the 10:30 TV news featured the show. The rivalry among the media was extreme to say the least, and the chapter basked in the attention spotlight. How sweet it was!

Ten days after the show, it was still discussed in the papers. A preliminary accounting by Mrs. Beck disclosed that



Lee Erwin talks to his audience at the Capitol. — (Bill Lamb Photo)

1610 \$2.50 tickets were sold. After expenses, the chapter made over \$1,000. The money will be used for maintenance and additions to the organ. The CRATOS board has authorized refinishing materials for the console and the purchase of a Chrysoglott. It is planned to place the console on a 3-foot lift so that the audience can see it better and to observe the footwork of the organists.

The money in the CRATOS treasury is used to maintain three organs —

the Capitol Wicks, the Cedar Rapids Paramount 3/14 Wurlitzer, and the 3/14 Barton in the Iowa Theatre in Cedar Rapids. All concerts have been self-supporting. Other costs are connected with the concerts — theatre rent, projectionist, stage help, artists' fees, tickets and advertising. Some cash is invested in savings certificates, and there is a contingency fund in case of cancellation of a concert for any reason.

Bob Beck says, "Dubinsky Brothers owns or leases the three theatres in which we hold our concerts. We lease the Paramount organ from them, and our legally-oriented members are working up an agreement in which we can lease the other two, with option to purchase in case the theatres are closed or razed. Right now, we have a verbal agreement.

"We are also planning to buy a private organ to place in a high school or civic auditorium. Theatre organs must be in locations where the public can hear them."

With the success already realized by this chapter, and with ambitious plans for the future, is there any reason to doubt that the Cedar Rapids Area Theatre Organ Society is firmly a part of the theatre organ's renaissance? If dedicated people who believe in high standards of organ maintenance, good artists, and extensive publicity of their programs, are given a fair chance, the success of the organization is guaranteed. □

Extensive advertising and promotion were responsible for the success of the Lee Erwin concert. This ad appeared in the Davenport Times-Democrat.

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NITE 8 P.M.

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All Seats \$2.50 (Capacity Sold Only) Tickets at Capitol Box office
(Sponsored by Cedar Rapids Area Theatre Organ Society)

**NUGGETS
from the
GOLDEN
DAYS**



Nuggets prospected by Lloyd E. Klos

Before Jason and I head for the prime lode, here are a few nuggets we picked up throughout the country. References were Diapason (D), Metronome (Met.), Motion Picture Herald (MPH) and Local press (LP).

Nov. 23, 1914 (LP) FREDERICK WEBER opened Baltimore's 3000-seat Hippodrome. He is to give a 15-minute organ recital at 8 each evening of opening week.

Fall 1918 (LP) The deluxe Strand Theatre opened in Portland, Maine. Organist is LEO LE SIEUR from Montreal. (Head usher was Rudy Vallee.)

May 1, 1922 (LP) P. HANS FLATH opens the Wurlitzer in the Miller Theatre, Wichita, Kansas. (Gaylord "Flicker Fingers" Carter has fond memories of this classical organist who became a theatre musician.)

Oct. 18, 1922 (LP) FRED BURR SCHOOL opens Grauman's Egyptian Theatre Wurlitzer in Los Angeles.

Jan. 15, 1926 (Met.) The program at Shea's Hippodrome in Buffalo, starting December 27, included the overture to "Student Prince", played by the Hippodrome Symphony Orchestra; an "Our Gang" comedy, "Good Cheer"; the feature, "A Kiss For Cinderella", starring Betty Bronson; and MAURICE B. NICHOLSON and CHARLES ALLISON alternating at the Wurlitzer.

June 16, 1926 (Met.) Advertisement: Have you seen the greatest slide presentation? Feist's "Songbirds" is IT. Now showing at the New York Rialto Theatre. HENRY B. MURTAGH, HI C GEIS, ARTHUR MARTEL, WARREN YATES, TOM TERRY, HENRI J. KEATS, DEL CASTILLO, ERNEST

HUNT, TOM GANNON and others too numerous to mention are a few who have raved over the "Songbirds" slides. Standard Slide Corp. 209 W. 48th St. N.Y.

Nov. 23, 1926 (LP) W. RAY BURROUGHS opened Rochester's Madison Theatre 2/7 Wurlitzer tonite. Movies, vaudeville and road shows will be featured in the 1,000-seat house.

Dec. 1926 (Met.) The inaugural program last month of the new Paramount Theatre was the outstanding event of motion picture history in New York recently, 4,000 seeing the brilliant opening. The program included Tschaiakowsky's 1812 Overture by the Paramount Orchestra; songs by Helen Yorke, coloratura; JESSE CRAWFORD in "Organs I Have Played", a very attractive number. Feature film was "God Gave Me Twenty Cents."

Feb. 13, 1932 (MPH) BOB WEST, who is back at his old stand as organist at the Brooklyn Fox after an absence of four months, is just as popular with his audiences as the day he left. What amounts to an ovation is being given him at each of his appearances. He's still giving them the old personality and cheering them along to sing louder each time. The program consisted of the following numbers: "Try Something Else", "Blue of the Night", "Concentration on You", "Who's Your Little Whozis?", "Why Did It Have to be Me?" and a fine chorus of "River, Stay 'Way From My Door."

Feb. 13, 1932 (MPH) JULIA DAWN, the Singing Organist, is at the San Antonio Aztec Theatre. This golden-voiced songbird is going over in a big way, both in her daily offering from the Publix Theatre and over KABC, located in the Texas Theatre Bldg. Her requests are broadcast from the studio by remote control. She recently presented the following songs on a morning show: "Sweet and Lovely", "I Don't Know Why", "Just Friends", "Lazy River", "Call Me Darling", "Let Me Call You Sweetheart", "Down by the Sycamore Tree", "Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day", "Blue Danube Waltz", "Lies", "Love Letters in the Sand", "All of Me", "In a Monastery Garden", "When You and I Were Young, Maggie", and "River, Stay 'Way From My Door."

Apr. 1936 (D) The Wurlitzer Co. has installed a 3/13 organ in the NBC studios of Chicago's Merchandise Mart.

Included in the specs are English horn, marimba, xylophone, glockenspiel and cathedral chimes.

Apr. 1936 (D) The organ programs over WWAC, Indiana Harbor, have met with great success since the Indiana Theatre overhauled its organ, which stood idle for years. The theatre has more business, and the station has given up other instrumentalists and recordings. A one-hour program recently brought in 167 letters. JOHN MURI is organist.

GOLD DUST: 7/21 JOHN PRIEST & FRANK STEWART ADAMS at New York's Rialto... 9/24 EDWIN LYLES TAYLOR, Chattanooga's Tivoli... 5/25 W.D. WEIST, JR., State in Huntington, W. Va.... 6/25 ERNEST J. HARES (Dave Powell), Grand in Massillon, Ohio; RALPH H. BRIGHAM, Orpheum in Rockford, Ill.; A.W. WALTER named organist for new theatre in Highland Pk., Ill.... GRANT E. LINN at Capitol's 3-manual Robert Morton, Salisbury, N. Car.... 4/26 HARRY BROWN, Iris in Caton, Ohio; RALPH SCOTT, Iris in Milwaukee; GLENN GOFF, California Theatre, San Francisco... 5/26 BERT HOPPS, West Coast's Capitol and CYRIL GRAVES, Goddard's Theatre, Sacramento; R.H. MOORE, Gem in Salt Lake City; GEORGE HOCKENBERGER, Colorado Theatre, Denver; ARTHUR FLAGEL, Gaumont in Paris, France; HENRY E. LINGLEY, California Theatre in Salinas; ROSCOE KERNAN playing a 3-manual Wurlitzer in Great Falls, Mont.; FRANK GALLAGHER, "The Little Irish Organist", Loew's Doan in Cleveland; CARL HINTON on a 3-manual Robert Morton in Winston Salem, N. Car.; D. HARRY MC POYLE, Aldine in Wilmington, Del.; ROSCOE KERNAN, Liberty in Gt. Falls, Mont.... 8/26 HENRY FRANCIS PARKS opened Hollywood Theatre in Chicago, May 1; IRENE JUNO & EMILY THOMPSON at Washington's Central; CLYDE R. SULLIVAN, Capitol in Cumberland, Md.... 3/27 SAM LUCAS in Tulsa, Okla.; HAROLD L. LYON, Ottumwa, Iowa; CLYDE YOUNG, Columbus, Ohio... 4/27 LOUIS WEBB, Omaha's Rialto; CHARLES STIRN, Liberty's Moller in Richmond, N.Y.

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

Jason and the Old Prospector



Congratulations from Hector Olivera (right) bring a big smile from Ronnie Pedley, National Yamaha Festival winner in Chicago.

Yamaha Winner Bound for Japan

Another honor came to the Potomac Valley Chapter June 17 when 12-year-old member Ronald Pedley became the Junior Division Winner in the third Annual Yamaha National Electone Pops Festival. The 1000 nationwide contestants in 140 cities were narrowed down to 202 regional competitors in four regions. There were three divisions – Junior (under 16), Intermediate (16 to 25), and Pro/Am. One winner in each division plus four wild cards competed in the finals in Chicago's Conrad Hilton grand ballroom before an audience of over 2000. Steve Allen was the Master of Ceremonies. The impressive panel of judges included such notable musicians as Bill Irwin, Lenny Dee, John Seng, Fred Waring, Jimmy Smith, Sarah Vaughn, and Elmer Bernstein.

A medley consisting of "Joy" and "Jesus Christ, Superstar" was Ronnie's selection. He won first prize – an expense-paid trip to Japan for himself, one of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dever Pedley of Springfield, Virginia, and his teacher, Jean Lautzenheiser. They will attend the International Yamaha Pops Festival for a week in Japan this October.

In addition to his interest in the organ, Ron plays trumpet in his school band, and took up piano six months

ago. But in baseball season music takes a back seat while this Little League catcher gives his best to baseball. □

Closing Chord

Jack Ward, 75, died suddenly in New York City on July 25. Associate staff organist at Radio City Music Hall for 16 years, he played on NBC radio previously for many years. He is survived by three children, Jack, Jr., James and Mrs. Mary Griffith.

A Requiem mass was held at Faith, Hope and Charity Chapel Annex in St. Patrick's Cathedral with burial in Pennsylvania.



JACK WARD

Laurens Hammond, inventor of the Hammond electric organ and America's first electric clock, died in July, after a short illness. He was 78.

A native of Evanston, Illinois, he invented the electric organ in 1932 and founded the Electric Organ Co. in Chicago.

Mabel B. Grierson, widow of Rochester, N.Y.'s best known theatre organist, Tom Grierson, died on June 11. Mr. Grierson, who had played theatre organs in Brooklyn, St. Louis, Toledo and Buffalo before he achieved his fame in Rochester as house organist at the RKO Palace Theatre, died in 1966.

Mrs. Grierson is survived by a son, Jack, and a daughter Mary.

George E. Codd, for several years the treasurer of the Rochester Theatre Organ Society, died on June 12. His wife, Ethel, two sons and two sisters survive him. □



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

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

TO THE EDITOR:

In the April issue you mentioned the movie *WICKED! WICKED!*, and the fact that a theatre organ was played and seen on the screen. There was a movie made about 3 or 4 years ago that had an organ in it. The movie was *ANGEL IN MY POCKET*, starring Andy Griffith. In the movie Andy portrays a newly ordained minister that scrounges an old theatre organ to replace a wheezing old pump organ. My question is, what make of organ was it, and where was it located? When I saw the movie years ago, when it was first released, I didn't know the dif-

ference between a Wurlitzer and a Hammond. I am particularly interested in finding out where the organ is and the make and specifications. That tune and scene in the movie started my interest in the theatre organ, and quite possibly in several other people. HELP!

Sincerely,
Bruce Gentry
Organ Technician, Capitol Theatre,
Rome, New York

DEAR SIR:

May I be allowed through your publication to enlighten your readers on the comparative merits of British theatre organists.

I am an English organist now working in the U.S.A. but will never forget, as a boy of 12, being taken to the Regal Marble Arch to listen to Quentin MacLean at the Christie. At this time I had been studying violin for 5 years, but this gorgeous sound coming from one man completely knocked me out and from then on I had to play organ or bust!

Mac was a veritable giant among organists, tremendous technique, a master of registration and was probably the greatest of all time. Also, with his great sense of humor, to hear him accompany a short comedy was sheer delight. Way back when record masters were made on wax, he recorded the "Rhapsody in Blue". You could swear there was a pianist playing with him but he did this all on his own with, of course, no dubbing. The BBC has a copy of this recording which they keep in moth balls under lock and key.

Compared to Mac I am afraid all the others were as children. Of course he was offered the post as BBC theatre organist, but as the BBC was not notorious for paying high salaries, they could not meet the price this man's playing merited.

When he left Marble Arch, he was followed by Reg Foort and later by Sidney Torch. Both these players made substantial "improvements" to the organ but it never sounded as good again.

Mac's last job in England was at the Trocadero, Elephant and Castle Wurlitzer. This audience, I might tell you, was the roughest in London, but it was nothing for him to come up on the lift and play the Overture to Mr. Pickwick, or introduction to Act 3 of Lohengrin and hold the audience spell-bound. He sounded like he had four hands - we

will never see or hear the like again. When Jesse Crawford visited London to open the Wurlitzer at the Empire, they took him to hear Mac at the Trocadero. Mac played for 40 minutes to Jesse. When asked what did he think of him, Jesse replied "He's UNCANNY".

The finest theatre organist in England at this time is Gerald Shaw. He plays a 5 manual Compton at the Odeon Leicester Square with some ranks I suspect "borrowed" from other installations. Anyone going over

should make a point of hearing this player.

Of the younger school, Brian Rodwell is outstanding. Some of the jazz organists over here would do well to hear him take off on "Sweet Georgia Brown" on his recording at the Granada Tooting Wurlitzer. He realized the 8' pedals speak more quickly than 16' and put this knowledge to good effect.

Kindest regards,
Don Lorusso
Schnitzelhaus, Milwaukee, Wisconsin



ALABAMA

The last two meetings of the Alabama Chapter have featured open console with more of the members getting to know the 4/20 Wurlitzer at the Alabama Theatre in Birmingham. For most of us, it is a thrill just to sit on the seat of that famous old organ, and the thrill of hearing ourselves play it is understood only by other organ "nuts."

We feel particularly lucky to have as a member, Mr. Norville Hall. Mr. Hall helped uncrate the organ and was the first to play it - as a boy of only 17. I didn't hear him play it then, but he sure hasn't forgotten how.

Mrs. Lillian Truss is another of our members with many memories of the old organ. Mrs. Truss played the organ at the opening of the theatre and was the organist for the silent movies there for several years. She is preparing a program to present to us at our August meeting.

Mr. T.T. Miller, organist at the Trinity Methodist Church in Tuscaloosa, was with us for the first time at the last meeting. He had never played the Alabama Wurlitzer, but no one would ever guess it. After hearing him play, the rest of us were ready to go home. He particularly held us spell bound with his rendition of "Some-

where My Love", and the small but enthusiastic crowd shouted for "more".

Focus is on the completion of the restoration begun several years ago by members of the Southeastern Chapter. The percussion section is the object of attention at present. At the last work session, the pneumatics for the harp were reinstalled after being releathered by the Coles. The Coles have also releathered the pneumatics for the xylophone and they are to be reinstalled at the next work session.

ALLEEN COLE

CENTRAL INDIANA

The "greatest spectacle in racing" occurs in Indianapolis every May with the advent of the 500 Mile Race, but CIC-ATOS is not to be outdone by this event, and most every one of our meetings can easily compete as the "greatest spectacle" in "pipe organing", keeping the theatre pipe organ movement alive and ever soaring to new heights of accomplishment.

The May meeting reflected no competition by all the usual race-oriented activities. Despite the fact that many had to travel a considerable distance, 60 members were present at this meeting hosted by Maurice and Carol

Finkel in Shelbyville, Indiana. The Finkels have a 2 manual 5 rank Uniphone installed in a specially designed music room that easily accommodates 50 or more people. A sky light is built in one end of the room and provides a dramatic effect directly over the organ console.

Our host told a little about the history of the Uniphone. It was originally installed in the Dream Theatre in Indianapolis and was later moved to the Nazarene Church in Lawrence (Indiana) before being installed in the Finkel residence. Ken and David Finkel, ages 12 and 15, provided a delightful program. Each soloed on the Uniphone, then played several duets on the Uniphone and Hammond organ alternating instruments, each showing versatility on both. Open console time followed on both organs and the twin Steinway grands in the living room.

Announcement was made that Steve Jones, our young blind organist, had won 1st place in Yamaha's Organ Competition held in Indianapolis earlier in the month. Steve was entered in the Pro-Am Division which is the class for professionals over 16. Our congratulations to Steve. He will now compete in the Regionals at St. Charles, Illinois.

The May's meeting in June — sounds like I'm all mixed up (and sometimes I am), but the Mays, Frank and Frances, hosted the most delightful June meeting. They live in Kokomo and have one of the finest pipe organs installed in a residence in this area — if not the finest. It is a 4/18 Wicks-Barton and still growing.

No formal program was planned in order to allow more time for open console. However, an interview with Lee Irwin taped by Ken Double at the time of a recent concert by Lee at the Rivoli Theatre in Indianapolis was presented. Lee recalled many experiences in his early career in the movie theatre and later in radio and TV. It was most enjoyable and informative.

Prior to open console time Jimmy Boyer played a brief impromptu program, performing in his usual superb style. Later Dessa Byrd favored us with a couple of numbers on the May's magnificent organ. It's always good to have Dessa play for us — only wish she would do it more often.

The Mays also have a large Hammond installation with all kinds of speakers and electronic "extras". This is located in the large living room of

their home, and so completely away from the special room housing the pipe organ, that it makes open console time available on both instruments, a really ideal situation.

Our two programs over WIAN-FM Indianapolis still continue to be heard weekly. Ken Double who has worked so capably in presenting these programs *The Mighty Wurlitzer Speaks Again* is now accompanying the Tommy Bartlett Water Show at the Wisconsin Dells. The chapter is planning a trip to the Dells in August to attend the Water Show and hear Ken's entertainment. The itinerary also includes several stops in the Illinois and Wisconsin area where there are pipe organ installations in homes, restaurants, etc. Sounds like a really exciting trip — more about that later. A note of thanks here to Roger Whitehead who is doing a fine job of carrying the WIAN-FM program through the summer during Ken's absence.

RUTH D. WARD

CENTRAL OHIO

On June 17 our chapter was fortunate in having the West Penn Chapter elect to have their meeting in Columbus at the home of Tom and Ann Hamilton and later at the Ohio Theatre. Our members were invited to join them to see and play Tom's new Rodgers-Morton, as written up in the June issue of THEATRE ORGAN, and later to go to hear the Ohio's 4-20 Morton. Tom demonstrated his new instrument after which COTOS member Betsy Richard was featured as guest artist. Open console followed.

At the Ohio Theatre, manager and co-owner of the Morton, Carlos Parker welcomed the group and demonstrated the Morton's great capabilities and following a brief recital by COTOS President Mike Williams, West Penn Prexy Rey Galbraith proved his prowess at the theatre pipe organ with a delightful rendition of old favorites.

West Penn really does things up right as indicated at the luncheon preceding the day's activities when Program Chairman Bob Mitchell distributed a beautifully illustrated program of what was to be a well organized day.

The former RKO Palace 3-16 Wurlitzer, after extensive rebuilding, is about ready to be reinstalled in a new location but so far we have no suitable place for it.

The Ohio Theatre's regular summer series of dollar movies is about to start with regulars Tom Hamilton, Paul Noblitt, Mike Williams and Frank Babbitt playing for about 45 minutes before each show plus a 15 minute intermission and a 10 minute closing. Dennis James will be in town in August and has offered to do a few of the shows.

FRANK BABBITT

CHICAGO AREA

CATOE's third public concert of 1973 and its third sell out was on April 28 and featured Hector Olivera at the 3/10 Wurlitzer installed and maintained by CATOE at Downers Grove North High School.

Every word you have heard or read about Hector Olivera including "genius", "fantastic", and "phenomenal" is true. His playing technique is superb, his registrations fresh, his Spanish accent humor captivating. His pedal work is unbelievable. The melody line of "Danny Boy" was carried by both feet on nothing more than an 8' flute in the pedals. Two hands played chromatic runs on the harp while two feet played four notes in the pedals. An "American Fantasy" medley closed with Hector's trans-



Hector Olivera captivates his April 28 CATOE concert audience with his Spanish accent. (Bill Lamb Photo)



Downers Grove Principal Herb Adams (left) accepts \$600 benefit check from CATOE Treasurer Art Todesco during Olivera concert. — (Bill Lamb Photo)

cription of the Wilhousky arrangement of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic", the echoing trumpet version made famous by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. A jam session for guests from Detroit followed during which Dennis James sat in.

Forty Motor City Chapter members had bussed to the Hector show to be our guests. They also joined us the next morning for our regular monthly social, this one at the Patio Theatre. Young Walt Strojny, a recent graduate of the music program at Lane Tech High School, played a fine program at the 3/17 Barton. Walt intends to continue his musical education with a full scholarship at the Sherwood Music School, Chicago.

On May 12 and 13 some forty CATOEs bussed to Detroit. They heard Bill Thomson play at the Detroit Theater Organ Club on Saturday night. Sunday morning found the group at the Redford Theatre as guests of the Motor City Chapter to hear Rick Shindell play the 3/10 Barton with the new pit piano. After refreshments and open console time the group departed the city which will host the 1974 ATOS convention. *Blower* editor Don Grimshaw was disappointed that VOX CATOE's Tom Tibia was not on hand to play for his Detroit "fans". Surprise stops were made at the homes of Al and Betty Mason and the Stanley Albertsons to hear their Wurlitzers.

Gaylord Carter's concert at the Deerpath Theatre on May 16 was a near sell out. He reprimed a rare 3/10 Geneva (with piano) in the English guild hall style theatre located in the posh north shore suburb of Lake Forest. Three comedy shorts, a fiftieth anniversary sing-along, plus

organ selections delighted Carter's sixth Chicago area theatre organ audience.

The Civic Opera House Skinner organ is ready to play again due to the efforts of member John Peters. A local organist will play it for opening night of Carol Channing's new show, *Lorelei*.

Socials at WMBI and WGN and the Opera House plus fall shows at the Pickwick, Arcada (with stage acts), and Montclare Theatres will keep CATOE the busiest ATOS chapter, bringing more theatre organ to more people. And the big push is on to have the big one, the Chicago Theatre Wurlitzer, ready for a holiday show early in December.

RICHARD J. SKLENAR

DELAWARE VALLEY

The season came to an exciting close. The bus trip to Maryland proved quite informative and a lot of fun. Not only was the day bright and sunny, so were the people we came in contact with. Peter Moller Daniels and his father very graciously guided us through the intricacies of pipe organ manufacture and allowed us to try a new instrument on the erecting floor.

Next stop was the Dick Kline estate in Thurmont, Md. Built on a lake (formerly a quarry) the home is constructed around the organ. (See June, 1970 THEATRE ORGAN, Vol. 12 No. 3) Dick, our cheerful host, allowed one and all to try their hand at the 4 manual, gold-leafed console. It's an exciting sound, it's exciting to play and it's located in a breath-taking wooded section of Maryland.

The week prior to our bus tour, Dean Robinson, from central New York state was presented in concert at

the Brookline Theatre in suburban Philadelphia. With nostalgia as the theme, Dean's program took the beautifully maintained Kimball through its paces in music from the 20's and 30's. It became evident throughout the program that here was an artist who knew theatre styling from the old days.

Sunday, May 13 was chosen as the day to recognize a decade of continuous operation of the Lansdowne Theatre's 3/8 Kimball. Bill Greenwood, who originally restored and has continuously maintained this organ with the help of numerous enthusiasts, gave us a brief background. The organ was restored in a years time and was first presented to the public in early 1963 with a concert by the late Leonard MacClain. The major event of the day was a concert by Karl Cole of Syracuse, N.Y. who commenced his program with swinging renditions of the Gershwin "Rhythms" — I've Got and Fascinatin' — Karl played a varied concert, including several samples of his 'dual' handi-craft; that is, the ability to play and blend different melodies with a minimum of discord and confusion. A genuine sing-along was a most appropriate part of the show, and Karl sounded like an old pro at a 30 rank organ all the way through the old chestnuts. The program was concluded with requests from the audience. A very fine concert.

The date was April 28 but the magic carpet of John Muri swished us back to 1927 with his subtle and magnificent accompaniment to Buster Keaton's *The General* at John Dickinson High School. This movie, released just a short time before the pictures began to talk, has many funny moments — all of them accented with superb timing by John on the 3/28 Kimball. In addition to the film, he included a sing-along and several surprises such as P.D.Q. Bach's "Unbegun Symphony". The climax was a thrilling finale: "Entrance and Processional of Bacchus" from the *Sylvan Ballet* by Delibes.

After this flurry of springtime activity, it'll be a relaxing summer in Delaware Valleyland but plans are already beginning to take shape for the fall. This correspondent would like to thank Mr. Bert Preston and Grant Whitcomb for their help with this column.

SHIRLEY HANNUM



Maria Kumagai at the Wiltern Kimball. — (John Nagle Photo)

LOS ANGELES

Our May concert at the Wiltern Theatre was on Sunday the 20th and featured John Ferguson, formerly of the St. Louis Fox Theatre, at the console of the 4-manual Kimball organ. His program was made up of old standards plus a good selection of contemporary popular tunes. He made full use of the tonal resources of the organ and his arrangements were interesting and had lots of variety. His versions of "A Foggy Day" and "On a Little Street in Singapore" created the proper moods for these atmospheric tunes and showed real artistry. A brief



John Ferguson — (Stufoto)

business meeting was held after the concert to vote on proposed changes to the Chapter Articles of Incorporation.

June 17th was the biggest theatre organ day of the year with a concert at the Wiltern Theatre in the morning and an "Organ Crawl" in the afternoon. Maria Kumagai was the artist for the morning concert and it was truly an exceptional event with more than 600 members and guests showing up at 9:30 A.M. to hear a fine program. Miss Kumagai is a student of both Richard Purvis and Bill Thomson and she played both show tunes and light classics with equal ease. Her playing of the Liszt "2nd Hungarian Rhapsody" and then the music from *Kismet* brought the audience to its feet in a standing ovation. Her three changes of costume during the program, including a kimono, added color to the show.

After the Wiltern concert 250 members and guests boarded five chartered buses for a tour to see and hear three of the most famous and most recorded theatre organs to be found anywhere. Mini-concerts were presented at Bob Carson's home in Hollywood, at Dick Simonton's home in Toluca Lake, and at the Lorin Whitney Studio in Glendale. Helen Dell (Mrs. Bob Carson) played the former Joe Kearns Organ in her living room. We were fortunate that she had the day off from her regular job as organist for the Los



Bill Thomson — (Stufoto)

Angeles Dodgers and was at home to callers — 250 of them. Due to space limitations the groups were kept to 50 to avoid overcrowding in the two homes and the recording studio. The organist at the Simonton Bijou was Bill Thomson who had spent the morning at the Wiltern announcing the program for Maria Kumagai. After his last mini-concert at the 4/36 Wurlitzer, Bill advised his fifth audience that he felt as if he'd played six concerts that day. As a special bonus attraction, the 4/68 Aeolian-Skinner American Classic Organ in the Simonton living room was heard in a brief concert with Richard Warne, organist and choir director at the Hollywood First Methodist Church, at the console. John Ferguson, who played for us at the Wiltern in May, was the featured organist at the Lorin Whitney Studio. It was truly a great day of theatre organ music and enjoyed by all who participated. The chapter is very grateful to its three members who graciously made their organ installations available for this tour.

SAM DICKERSON

MOTOR CITY

Over the weekend of May 12-13 we were host to a bus-load of enthusiastic CATOE members who journeyed from the Windy City to sample the sounds of theatre organ in the Motor City. On Saturday night CATOE was invited to attend a concert given by Bill Thomson at the 4/34 Wurlitzer at the Detroit Theater Organ Club.

Bright and early on Sunday morning, CATOE members were the guests of the Motor City Chapter at the Redford Theatre in northwest Detroit. On hand to play the 3/10 Barton was Motor City member Rick Shindell who

performed a diversified program which also displayed the versatility of the newly installed upright piano. Following Rick's program, CATOE members were encouraged to try their hand at the Redford Barton in an open-console session.

Ashley Miller, in his first appearance for the Motor City Chapter, was the artist for our May 21-22 public silent film and theatre organ program at the Royal Oak Theatre. Ashley played a wide variety of selections, making liberal use of our newly installed Marimba, Trombone and Salicional, which have increased the size of this Barton to twelve ranks. His light-hearted accompaniment to Jackie Coogan's antics in *Peck's Bad Boy* was enjoyed by our audience of 2,500.

More than one hundred members participated in our Round-Robin visit to three home installations on Sunday, June 24. The day-long event began at the Punch and Judy Theatre at 9:30 A.M. where Motor City Vice-Chairman John Fischer, at the 2/5 Wurlitzer, presented a slide and musical program highlighting the Hollywood musicals of the Thirties. After a short break, members took advantage of an open-console session to try out the "Little Sister" Wurlitzer.

Considerable time was spent by Betty Heffer, also Harry and Virginia Hadfield in decorations and preparations for the Punch and Judy program, and the chapter thanks them for their effort.

Splitting into three groups, members then toured the northeastern suburban Detroit installations of Herb Head (3/14 Wurlitzer-plus), Chuck and Betty Heffer (3/8 Robert Morton) and Lee Hohner (3/10 Robert Morton).

Both hosts and guests were well pleased and eagerly await the next Motor City get-together.

DON LOCKWOOD

NORTH TEXAS

Plenty more activity to report for the North Texas Chapter. It looks like this might be a really successful year, even with the usual obstacles created by "widespread activity." It's not the activity that's widespread, however, but rather the membership geographically. The Mothers' Day Concert, with Mark Kenning at the console of the Casa Wurlitzer, was a great success, and Mark did a great job of demonstrating his own musical capa-

bilities as well as those of the organ to the more than 350 members and guests present. Mark's well-chosen repertoire covered classics, semi-classics, mod, pop, nostalgia, all with his own special styling and unique arrangements. He's a versatile, capable and innovative performer on the theatre organ. Thanks again, Mark. We're proud to have you in the chapter, and really enjoy your performances.

On June 3rd, through the efforts of Stan Guy, Fred and Joye Mitchell, and our Secretary, Doris Garrett, the chapter filled up a Greyhound bus in Dallas in the morning, and journeyed through rain to the home of Fred and Joye Mitchell in Mexia. Despite the heavy rain most of the way down, things cleared off nicely just as we arrived, and we were in for a great time. Fred greeted us at the bus door and jokingly advised that we remove our shoes, since about 3 inches of rain had fallen in the couple of hours just prior to our arrival. Many of the members took Fred seriously on the shoe bit, and then proceeded to disrobe further at the poolside recreation house, don their bathing suits, and jump into the beautiful pool. Everyone enjoyed a picnic lunch on the Mitchells' ranch. Fred had a surprise for us in the form of a reed organ installed in a railroad caboose he has converted into a pleasant "guest house", without detracting from the railroad lore, but the dadburned Texas rain (everything is BIG in Texas) kept most of the membership away from that item, since neither hip boots or a rowboat were available. Fred was disappointed in that most of us didn't get to see that installation, but it's really a blessing in disguise. Maybe he and Joye will invite the bunch back again just to make sure we all see and hear that instrument.

The Mitchells have two other organs, both Rodgers theatre models, installed in their own beautiful home, and the home of Fred's mother, who lives only a few yards away from them. Mrs. Mitchell's home, we are told, is close to 150 years old, and has been completely renovated and re-decorated for her use. It's the original building, red brick, as built in the early 1800's. The white and gold Rodgers console, occupied for a good part of the afternoon by various chapter members in an open console session, is the first thing you see, looking in the front door of the building. Those in the room listening to the organ didn't

want to leave when the time came to board the bus back to Dallas. Actually, they had already had a considerable concert on the Rodgers in Fred and Joye's home, once again demonstrating the theatre organ talent in the chapter, before Fred escorted us over to the other house. The location? 7 - Oaks in Mexia (that's pronounced ma-hay - yah, ala Español, amigos).

Fred and Joye, we all really enjoyed that great Sunday. Thanks again, and please invite us back.

On June 17 we had a Sunday morning business meeting at the Fine Arts Theatre in Dallas where plans were made for more "fun activity", like maybe a bus trip to Tulsa and a visit with the Tulsa Chapter, or other such pleasant doings. After the humdrum of business, Jerry Bacon presented a brief concert on the organ he is building into the theatre. That was complete with stage lighting and special effects, run by program chairman Pat Kohl. Pat's been going great guns with his committee in keeping activities hopping, despite a sudden illness and a bad spill while on a factory tour (organ factories, that is) which put him on crutches for a while and interfered drastically with his pedal clavier manipulations.

Jerry's concert was great, with the lighting effects reminiscent of "the good old days" of theatre organ, and the chapter has shown its approval of Jerry's work, both musical and constructional, by the participation in the "work sessions" going on periodically at the Fine Arts.

What's ahead? Well, by the time this appears in THEATRE ORGAN, another Casa Mighty Wurlitzer Concert, played by chapter member Dan Bellamy, staff organist at Casa, will be history. It's scheduled for July 8th, with chapter members again hosting, ushering and handling the refreshments at intermission. The Summer Theatre part of Casa has been having some problems due to difficulties in casting commitments, but these should not interfere with organ and chapter activities, especially after the summer season is over. Dan is a very accomplished young organist from Houston, and plays that great Wurlitzer in real theatre organ style, with great technique. The chapter is helping to expand the organ with various additions such as a siren, added last month, which comes in mighty handy on silent movie bits, Casa stage pre-

sentations, and as part of the toy counter for the true theatre organists. Plans are working for other similar additions, although the organ, as relocated by chapter member Jim Peterson, had plenty already. These additions are more embellishments to an already fine theatre instrument.

JOE KOSKI

POTOMAC VALLEY

The May meeting of the Potomac Valley Chapter was held at the Rockville, Maryland residence of our Secretary, Marge Lane, and her husband Bob. The Lanes' 2/5 Robert Morton came from the Newport Theatre in Norfolk, Virginia (where Frank Lybolt played it) via chapter member Dick Sullivan. Dick refinished the console in white and gold, then decided to sell the organ. The Lanes jumped at the chance as it was only eight blocks away. The Morton is installed handsomely in the downstairs family room where it is played nearly every evening by Marge and ATOS friends. The guest artist for our program was Earl Sharits who played many years in Colorado under the stage name of Earl Sherdelle. He came to the Washington area in 1934 and recently retired from the IRS. Under Earl's capable hands the beautiful little Morton proved once and for all that one does not require acres of pipes to produce lush and thrilling theatre organ sound.

RECIPE FOR A PERFECT DAY

Assemble the following ingredients:

- 1 pair hosts
- 2 manuals, 5 ranks Morton theatre organ
- 1 family room opening into a patio



Bob and Marge Lane dedicated their Morton theatre organ to their eight year old grandson, David Gore. — (Roy Wagner Photo)



Since the Merriken studio itself can accommodate a limited number of guests a large canopy was attached to the outside of the barn-studio and additional TO fans sat in what was at one time a pasture. Larry Goodwin counts heads.

- 1 tuner (Doug Miller)
- 1 congenial organist
- 27 nostalgic melodies

Combine hosts, theatre organ, family room and tuner. Mix well, and simmer in dedication until the consistency of a chapter meeting is attained. Blend in organist and melodies. Add:

- 165 Potomac Valley Chapter members.
- 819 cookies, homemade
- 200 soft drinks, iced

Toss gently but thoroughly. Sift the following spices into an open console:

- 1 cup sweet and lovely Marge
- 1 cup Charlie Affelder
- 1 tbsp Rick Maryman
- 1 tbsp Phil Pensyl
- dash of Howard Murphy
- dash of "Stump" Miller
- 1 tsp Roy Wagner
- 1 tsp Al Worley
- 1 tsp Rolland Miller
- 1 tsp Norm Thibeault
- a pinch of Margie Bang
- a pinch of Hazel Lockwood

Mix, and bake at 78 degrees for one afternoon. Divide into two equal parts. Cover completely with sunshine, top with our pretty Marge Lane and serve.

A circus atmosphere prevailed as over 200 members and guests gathered under the big-top canvas at George Merriken's for our June meeting. The juggling act starred Jerry Cunningham who kept the multi-faceted plans in the air for several weeks, organizing and coordinating the day's festivities with ringmaster Merriken. Even open

heart surgery only five weeks prior did not deter George from guiding our vice chairman in carrying out another successful chapter meeting.

The 3/10 Wurlitzer from the Tivoli Theatre in Washington, D.C. and the 3/15 Wurlitzer from the Paramount Publix Theatre in Steubenville, Ohio were combined for this installation at the "Wurlitzer Music Hall." The Paramount console now commands 22 ranks installed in a barn in a picturesque rural setting in Maryland. The barn-become-studio houses memorabilia and furnishings from several bygone theatres and nostalgia envelops everyone entering the heavily draped and softly lit organ room.

JEAN LAUTZENHEISER



Dick Smith presented a fine concert which included many Crawford-style ballads at the special request of host, George Merriken, (left).



Mike Koons in concert at Big Bob's Pizza. — (Don Myers Photo)

PUGET SOUND

The first Puget Sound chapter meeting of the year was held on April 8 at Big Bob's Pizza Restaurant in Federal Way where we heard and enjoyed Mike Koons in concert on the 2/10 Robert Morton. At 16, Mike has developed a style which is appreciated by young and old alike, as evidenced by his popularity as one of the Big Bob's house organists. Mike's concert began with a rousing "Mission Impossible" showing off the newly-installed Wurlitzer upright piano as well as the rest of the exposed percussions and traps. His concert consisted of contemporary pieces, with a sprinkling of "Oldies", in a very modern style. His "Theme from the Summer of '42" was a beautiful example of what this organ can do, building from a soft ensemble of Tibias and Strings, to a crescendo of full organ, complete with the first public performance of the 32' metal Diaphones suspended above patron's heads.

This installation always seems to be getting bigger and better as the organ is maintained by Rainier Pipe Organ Service and is constantly being enlarged. Installed for this meeting were a Gottfried Bell Clarinet and Wurlitzer Krumet. The 32' Diaphones were installed over the past months and have slowly been brought to life. In fact, the low CCCC pipe was made playable only half an hour before Mike's program!

Many Puget Sound members turned out on May 18-19 to hear Portland

organist Jonas Nordwall in concert at the Granada Organ Loft in West Seattle. The Granada club houses the beautiful 4/33 Wurlitzer originally from Portland's Liberty Theatre.

May 20 saw the group meet for a noon luncheon at Meeker's Landing Restaurant in Kent. From there we went to Kent United Methodist Church to hear three local artists in concert on the church's Wicks classic pipe organ.

Our three artists were Mr. Bob Rank, organist at Seattle's University Congregational Church, Nancy Acheson, the church's organist, and Cliff Lenz, a local television and music personality. This Wicks organ features an outstanding unenclosed pipework display across the chancel and was a good opportunity for many members to get a firsthand look at a classic pipe organ.

Charlie Allen, the Wicks representative for the Pacific Northwest, was on hand to open the chambers after the concert and explain the details of this installation. Many thanks to chapter members Fred and Erma Gain as well as Conrad and Jean Bloomquist for arranging this fine outing.

The June meeting was held on Sunday, June 24. This gathering was billed as a "Mini Home Tour" featuring two local installations. First on the agenda was the Bob Wieland installation in Bellevue, east of Seattle. Bob has a lovely 3/6 organ of mostly Kimball pipework. Situated in a "mini theatre" in the Wieland residence,

complete with crystal chandelier and theatre-type wall decor, we heard member Don Myers put through the organ through its paces. Bob has done an outstanding job of restoring this fine instrument complete with brand new Balcom and Vaughan chestwork. It surely looks like a brand new organ. This was the first chance that the club has had to see Bob's installation.

Second stop on the tour was the residence organ of Genny Whitting in the north part of Seattle. Genny's 2/12 Robert Morton lured many members to try their hands in an open console session. The organ is a hybrid of the best of many builders all combined into a beautiful sound by Genny, Don Myers and others. A feature of the installation is an Aeolian Metal Bar Harp which is located on a stairwell landing to the left of the console. It's truly a lush sound, enhanced by the setting of a large beamed living room which really makes it sound like a theatre. On display in the Whitting basement was an exposed Kimball/Myers Trap Counter as well as a Wood Marimba/Harp, all connected to the organ, and the small "Silent Movie" console in the lower rec. room. Chambers are off of this room and many members were given chamber tours. In the far corner, there appeared to be something in the vague shape of a 5 manual horseshoe console! Hmm, what could Genny be planning next? Actually, this is the much-publicized 5 manual built and owned by Don Myers.

Plans are to schedule more home tours in the future as this is an excellent way for members to see each other's installations and make plans for their own home organs.

In Tacoma, the former Seattle Liberty Wurlitzer has been sold to a church in Spokane. This was the organ which put the Wurlitzer company "in the black" and skyrocketed them to fame in the theatre organ world. The organ was installed in a gymnasium at Pacific Lutheran University and was in poor condition due to neglect and poor installation. We're glad to see it being put to good use and it will be quite a sound in the planned church!

Upcoming is a planned chapter trip to Olympia to hear Andy Crow in concert at the Olympic Theatre sometime in late September. The Olympic is equipped with a beautiful Wurlitzer which is in excellent condition.

TERRY HOCHMUTH

SIERRA

Travel has always been a popular American pastime, be it "just to get away from it all" or in pursuit of a hobby. Theatre pipe organ lovers go to great lengths to hear their favorite brand of music. Consider the attendance at our National Conventions or at some special event like the rededication of the "Mother Wur-litzer" in Wichita. The Sierra Chapter exercises this great American pastime regularly.

Except in the San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego areas, California towns are many miles apart.

Herein lies our story.

Sierra Chapter members and guests, about 40, put on their traveling shoes for a trip in pursuit of theatre pipe organ music beautifully played. The date was Sunday, May 20 and the destination the home of John and Aurora Leininger, east of Redding, California at Shingletown. A *good* map is needed to find the exact location. Shingletown is not much more than a post office, store, bar, garage, service station and a few homes on State Route 44 enroute to Lassen Volcanic National Park. The road above Shingletown is closed every winter (as early as mid-September and



View from Leininger Sun Deck. The lake is part of a power producing reservoir system.



"Tiny" James explains one of his registrations to the listeners.

late as May, depending upon severity of the Northern California winter). Shingletown has the hospitable Leininger family and a beautifully preserved theatre pipe organ. That is what counts.

The organ is installed in two chambers, using the same dimensions as those in the theatre from whence it came. The pipe chambers speak into a "mixing" area. All of this forms one wall of the spacious Leininger living room. The instrument has not been changed from the original specifications which is a credit to John Leininger.

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its hot weather, but it had moderated making it a wonderful day to travel. The artist of the day was "Tiny" James. "Tiny" is no stranger to this instrument, having been staff organist for the Fox Oakland Theatre, the original home of the organ. He made a recording on it in the theatre (1956), which is an accurate reproduction of how lush this instrument sounded. (Ed. note: Reference is to Doric record No. DO (S) 1210). Listeners at this meeting who knew the original installation were amazed at how the "in" theatre sound has been retained. Needless to say, "Tiny" had the 235 special under his command and all those in attendance would travel any-time to anyplace for this type of performance.

This report would not be complete without mention of our hosts' home and its setting. There are no adjectives to adequately describe the superb location. It sits amongst Cedars, Firs, Oaks, and Ponderosa Pines, facing a lake with a well groomed lawn spreading from the sun deck to the lake. The home itself is gracious and impressive, designed by the Leiningers for California type of casual indoor-outdoor living. Being located above the 4000 foot elevation of the Sierra, the days are warm and clear with summer evenings air conditioned by nature. In the



The console at Pizza and Pipes holds the framed charter of Sierra Chapter of ATOS. Doorway on left is front entrance to establishment. Pipe chambers can be viewed from outside as well as in. Relay room is over entry way.

winter there is usually a blanket of snow.

Sierra Chapter does stay home once in awhile (but not for long).

The June meeting of Sierra Chapter was held in Sacramento with over one hundred members and guests enjoying Emil Martin at the Arden Pizza and Pipes 4/21 Wurlitzer. (Editor's Note: We are planning a full story on Pizza and Pipes in a future issue of THEATRE ORGAN).

By the time this is published Portland will have been history, but many,

if not most, of Sierra Chapter's membership will have been to Portland and the National Convention, and even more of them will have been to Pine Grove, California.

Pine Grove, California is home to Sierra Chapter members, Jim Welch and Jim Jr. The Welch family own a 2/22 Harris classic pipe organ. For three successive years they have played host to chapter members and the club's August board meeting. Pictures are being assembled now for a feature story on the Welch organ installation.

SOUTHEASTERN

On Sunday, May 13, Southeastern Chapter ATOS members heard organist Dolton McAlpin in his third musical performance at Atlanta's Fox Theatre. McAlpin is presently pursuing a law degree at the University of Mississippi at Oxford, which makes his artistry all the more phenomenal since playing theatre organ occupies only a portion of the young organist's time.

It is a rather warm experience under a solo spotlight perched over the Fox's cavernous pit, and (as an "organ widow" once remarked to author Ben Hall) all those "buttons and colored watcha-ma-call-its" can make even the veteran organists wince. McAlpin

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mopped his brow more than once, but his playing was smooth, direct, and his musical format was interpreted with an impressive facility. The 4/42 Moller seems to possess unique sound characteristics when various organists play — thanks to its wide tonal resources, and McAlpin has, in his three Fox appearances, established an anticipated “McAlpin sound.”

McAlpin's Fox concert closed another successful season for the Southeastern Chapter. Formal meetings will resume in the fall of 1973. Big news for Atlanta area ATOS members will be Lee Erwin's engagement to play at least three silent film scores for J. Hunter Todd's Atlanta International Film Festival to be held at the Fox Theatre in mid September.

JOHN CLARK McCALL, JR.

SOUTHERN ARIZONA

The January meeting was held at Northminster Presbyterian Church where chapter members Art Crowell and Ralph Cloos gave an explanation of some differences between a church pipe organ and a unified theatre pipe organ. Ralph played several concert selections; then on to the home of Lois Seamands, our chairman, for the business meeting. Types and designs of membership badges were discussed and the final choice is the console picture

of the Wurlitzer in the Byrd Theatre, Richmond, Virginia.

We decided to split the offices of secretary-treasurer, and Bob High continues as secretary, with Ken Fields assuming the newly created treasurer's post. Art Crowell played a short theatre organ type concert on Lois' 650 Conn, followed by open console.

The last business meeting was held on March 4 at the home of Ray and Anna Rodig. The present officers were reelected to another term. A special guest, Dr. William H. Barnes, was made an honorary member by acclamation of the membership. After a discussion of our upcoming concert, the console was “open for business”.

The first concert undertaken by SATOS which was open to the public was held on April 15 in the YMCA Gym/Auditorium which had very good acoustics. The organ was our chairman's Conn 650 with Conn pipe speakers furnished by the Broadway Organ and Piano Co. of Tucson.

Lon Hanagan, staff organist of the new National Theatre on Broadway in New York City, and ATOS member, and honorary member of SATOS, was our guest artist. After opening with “The Best Things In Life Are Free”, his program included some old songs, some for the younger generation, and an interesting improvisation from six

notes suggested by the audience.

Ralph L. Cloos, who played in the Milwaukee area under the name of Ralph Lewis, and Arthur N. Crowell, who played in the Los Angeles area also closed the Tucson Fox Theatre, were two of the theatre organists in the audience. Art also had a long contract on a Hammond in the Phoenix Hotel Lounge and is now teaching in Tucson.

Over one hundred attended Mr. Hanagan's concert including Dr. Camil Van Hulse, the composer. One comment was overheard from a non-member, “I enjoyed the music because I recognized the tunes played.”

The music stayed within the theatre organ realm of popular music, not the classics, with the exception of the “Palms” in honor of Palm Sunday.

Starting out in May 1972, we have since grown from 15 to 30 members.

BOB HIGH

SOUTH FLORIDA

SPECIAL NOTE:

Thanks to the speedy U.S. Postal Service and other unknown forces, the South Florida Chapter Notes submitted since November, 1972, have not been printed. For the benefit of our out-of-state friends, the following

— *Featured Organist on the Paul Whiteman Show* —

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Chairman Steve Fitzgerald presents Reggie Foort with an honorary membership in the South Florida Chapter.

Mr. Reginald Foort was his usual witty self at our February meeting and kept his audience captivated with fondly recollected highlights from his life as an organist. A short recital closed his program at the magnificent Trinity Cathedral.

Many thanks to our charming Queen of Harmony, Betty Lee Taylor, who proved, once again, that she is a "showman" all the way, and to Victor Tibaldeo, for hosting our March meeting. Betty Lee, who arrived in a cloud of smoke, thanks to the famous Miami River bridges, quickly captivated her audience with a varied and interesting program. She skillfully guided her listeners through several decades of nostalgic memories and left with each, a gift of inner peace. Betty Lee closed with a rousing "12th Street Rag" and when she turned to honor a standing ovation, it was the Conn organ that was smoking.

In April we attended a Miami Philharmonic Society sponsored concert featuring Virgil Fox and the orchestra. May found us in the Palm Beach Studios of Sunrise Music Company with Bob Ralston as the feature artist on the Thomas T.O.

The Jureit organ has never sounded better and our featured artist for June, John Steele, was in top form. He played selections from everyone's "book of favorites", whether mod or



Reggie Foort at the 4/52 Skinner at the Trinity Cathedral, Miami.

nostalgic, jazz or classical. The highlight of his recital was a cleverly arranged, flawlessly played, medley from *Snow White* — a portion of his convention program that he promised to do for us. Open console provided a few surprises, climaxed by an eight hand duet (quartet?) with John and Cal Jureit on organ and Art Venecia and Betty Lee Taylor on the concert grand.

STEVE FITZGERALD

synopsis of club activities is offered.

January found the chapter on a tour of Gusman Philharmonic Hall (former Olympia Theatre). Mr. Dutch Kasper, of the theatre stage crew, treated us to a demo of the atmospheric and other lighting effects. Hal Stanton, a former Florida State Theatre Manager, provided the anecdotes. This chapter is currently working on restoration of the original 15 rank Wurlitzer.

Dick Smith

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WESTERN RESERVE

The Western Reserve newsmakers, printless too long, now bring you up to date direct from the Gray's Armory in Cleveland, Ohio — where our 3/15 "Mighty Wurlitzer" resides. It was originally installed in the Stanley Warner Theatre in Erie, Pennsylvania. In the fall of 1969 when it was being readied to move to Cleveland, the original custodian of this theatre was there to see our instrument on its way!

Presented to WRTOS, Inc. by the Cleveland Grays who received it as a donation from the RKO Warner Theatres, Inc., it has been memorialized in honor of the late General Paul B. Roesch, past commander of the Cleveland Grays.

Outstanding are the two 32-foot diaphones weighing in excess of a ton. These were procured from the Loew's State Theatre in Cleveland, Ohio. They are standing with the two 16-footers on the south wall of the Armory drill hall floor and are magnificent to behold.

P.S. The Gray's Armory has been recently designated by the United States Government as an historical building.

Our Western Reservers are making history, too, with our "Mighty Wurlitzer" every first Sunday of the month. That day provides for chapter members' playing time, based on a random drawing, depending on the number of write-in requests and time available.

Appreciation wasn't reserved when our 3/15 had its premiere concert March 25, 1972, with Keith Chapman, organist for Philadelphia's John Wanamaker Grand Court Organ. Outstanding was Keith's special arrangement of the "1812 Overture" complete with sound effects by a real cannon and a combo of wires, bells and dynamite caps! And believe it or not, "Bach was beautiful" on the same instrument!

Great publicity preceded this event by way of TV coverage rebroadcast for the public "Eye" with Lou Hegybeli rendering that sweet, nostalgic sound of the theatre pipe organ. Also flyers were sent to all the schools in Cleveland and surrounding areas inviting the students to a special performance. This is well in keeping with our attitude of encouraging teaching and playing music in true theatre organ style, on either the restored theatre pipe or-

gans or on an electronic plug-in. To that end, our members are privileged to have open console at our Tuesday evening weekly meetings at the Gray's Armory and at our monthly meetings which are held in the homes of chapter members who have operating theatre pipe organs and also in various public facilities where there is an operating pipe organ. At such sessions we have theatre organists on hand to assist students with setting the desired registrations and combinations. We especially encourage youngsters who are learning organ to join us. We also actively promote technical education in the form of restoring, rebuilding, and reinstalling theatre pipe organs in suitable locations. Chapter members are currently helping each other with several home installations.

Since the March, 1972 performance, we've had three other paid lively and successful concerts, one a "return" concert with our very gracious and talented friend, Keith Chapman... and two featuring the "Silents" on our new 15-foot by 22-foot screen, presided over by outstanding Clevelander, Virgil Bartz and effervescent Eddie Weaver from the Byrd Theatre in Richmond, Virginia both of whom presented us with some really delightful comedies, one a Laurel & Hardy feature.

As of this writing, during the past year seven new organs have been acquired by Western Reserve members, eventually totalling twenty-five in our area. Please look forward to more about some of these in another article.

BEA ROSSIN

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