

THEATRE ORGAN



VOLUME 17, NO. 3

MAY - JUNE, 1975



Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society

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THEATRE ORGAN

Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society

Volume 17, No. 3 May-June 1975

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cover photo...

George Allen's "4/28 Merger" Wurlitzer console anticipates the USA's Bi-Centennial Celebration with a display of patriotic bunting. Part I of this composite organ's history begins on page 5.

GEORGE TIMANUS PHOTO

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president's message...



After considerable ground work by the Library Committee, curator and officials of Elon College, our library is in a position now to serve all of our members. All properties housed at Elon College remain the property of ATOS. The rules governing the use of library materials as well as cost are outlined in a feature article in this issue. The library is now in an excellent position to receive, acknowledge and catalog any donations of theatre organ memorabilia such as scores, cue sheets, tape recordings of music or interviews of historical interest, pictures, books, etc.

I encourage all of our members to contribute anything that they believe of interest and value to perpetuate our reason for existing as a society. Any member who possesses any worthwhile material, should make sure that the library inherits this material by so stating same in his or her will.

I call on everyone to help in every way possible so that our library may grow and be the success that we know it can be.

Sincerely,
Paul M. Abernethy

A black and white photograph of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. The bridge's massive towers and suspension cables are the central focus, extending from the left side of the frame towards the right. In the background, rolling hills and a body of water are visible. A large ship is docked at a pier in the water below the bridge. The overall scene is captured in a classic, historical style.

ATOS
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(San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau Photo.)

4/28 MERGER

It climaxes 5 years of work involving the Chicago Tower Theatre, the Pittsburgh Stanley and the New York Hippodrome Wurlitzers.

Story by George Allen
Photos by George Timanus

George Timanus steadies Diaphone pipe as George Allen works end into shape with length of iron pipe.

PART I

Knowledgeable organ enthusiasts know that although Jesse Crawford played the big Chicago Theatre and the New York Paramount organs, he laid out the specifications for just one style of Wurlitzer — the 4-manual, 20-rank Publix No. 1. Only 25 of these superb “\$100,000 Mighty Wurlitzers” were built over a short 6-year span, the most famous one probably being that in the Oriental Theatre in Chicago. Others would include the Balaban & Katz Tower Theatre at 63rd and Blackstone in the same city and the organ in the fabulous New York Hippodrome. Both were shipped in 1926 and both eventually played an important part in the organ this article is concerned with. Then there was that 27 ranker out in Pittsburgh — but let’s start at the beginning.

It all began back in the late 60’s when I pulled the plug on my Hammond and put it up for sale. Having been bitten — *attacked* is a better word — by the theatre organ bug I

set forth in search of a Wurlitzer. Many shadowy figures were seen during those days in organ lofts around Manhattan and Brooklyn, scurrying up and down iron ladders, and I was astonished to discover that the majority of these buyers came from California. To this day I swear most of the organs in New York wound up in the San Fernando Valley. I never did find a package deal. That's where you simply unhook an organ, move it to its new home, give it a face-lift and hook it up again. In fact, I spent the next few years just buying and selling components. Yet it was an important step in the right direction because I was able to collect many unusual pipe ranks and percussions, many of which are virtually unavailable today.

Then, finally, a series of events took place starting in August of 1967, when I heard about a fellow who had a hand in the removal of the New York Hippodrome Wurlitzer. I was to follow many false leads (a story in itself) before I eventually drove up that long driveway to the owner's home. After weeks of negotiating I finally made a deal. The organ wasn't complete and he wouldn't part with the console or relay because he planned to use them in an electronic setup. But what I did get became an integral part of the present organ.

My next break came in Chicago. The Tower Theatre, originally a big neighborhood house seating 2,995*, was deteriorating and slated to come down. It housed a 4/20 Publix No. 1 "Crawford Special" which was to be broken up and sold, first come first served. By the time I arrived some parts had been sold but I was able to get the console and the balance of ranks I needed to complete my planned 4/20 organ. The console still lay in the pit under a heavy coat of dirty cream paint. Underneath the paint was the highly desirable paneled mahogany case with no ormolu ornamentation. And most important, it had not been vandalized. To continue with this Tom Swift story we now go to Pittsburgh, a great city that once boasted many movie palaces. One of these, the Stanley, housed a 3/27 Wurlitzer that was a sister to the one that was

in the Panama Hilton hotel (out of the Warner theatre in Atlantic City) until recently, as well as the Stanley Theatre in Jersey City. These three 27-rankers were the largest 3-manual organs Wurlitzer built. Eventually, I obtained the relay and a selection of pipe ranks and percussions from the Pittsburgh organ which was being dismantled. All the foregoing required a lot of time, travel and money, but the rewards were great.

Although the Publix No. 1 console was designed for 20 ranks there was ample space on the horseshoe for extra stops. I wanted to increase the number of ranks in order to broaden the organ's range of tone colors, and this was accomplished by eliminating a few of the original ranks and adding those from my collection. Non-theatre low pressure pipes have been avoided. For concert work such as ours, I believe anything more than 28 ranks begins to get top-heavy and unwieldy. This is the

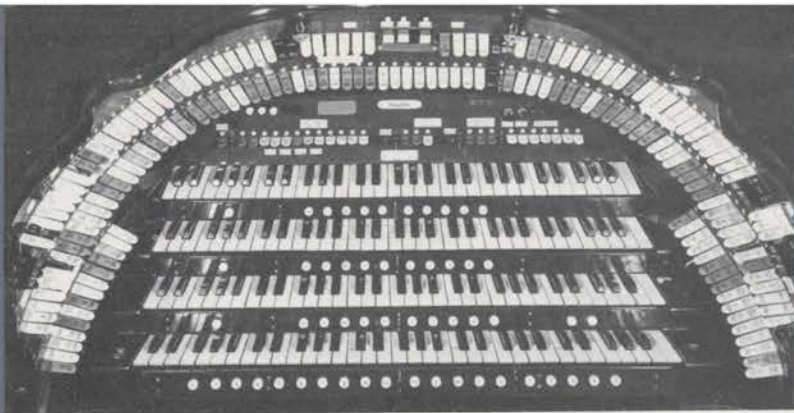
ultimate size and nothing more will be added. At this point let's compare the old and new stoplists.

Note that Crawford's specification called for two matched Tibias, two Voxes and two Solo Strings ("matched" means voiced together and usually in different scales) but no Posthorn. "To protect the patrons", he once explained. I sold the Dulciana and the overpowering Tuba Mirabilis, which might be fine for a theatre but not for a studio. The Main Chamber Solo String was joined by the Solo String from the Solo Chamber. The later has been revoiced as a Celeste. These ranks were then extended down to 16-foot CCC with a lovely large-scale Kimball Gamba octave. A very rare high pressure Wurlitzer Doppel Flute was added. The Orchestral Oboe was brought over to the Main from the Solo division and a Skinner French Horn on 10" wind, from the notable Trenton Cathedral, was in-

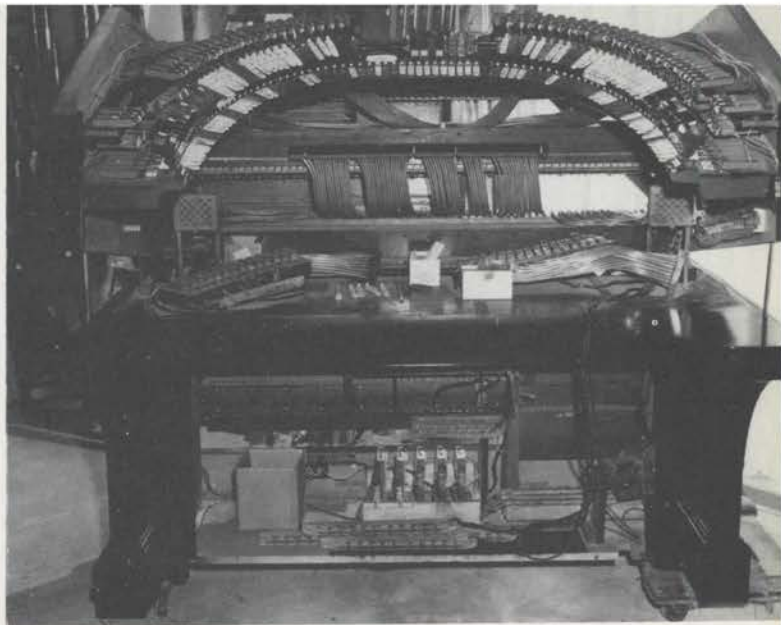
COMPARISON

Original Publix No. 1, 20 Ranks		Revised Wurlitzer, 28 Ranks	
MAIN		MAIN	
1 Tuba	16-4	1 Open Diapason	16-4
2 Concert Flute	16-2	2 Concert Flute	16-2
3 Open Diapason	16-4	3 Tibia Clausa I	8-4
4 Tibia Clausa I	8-4	4 Solo String	16-4
5 Solo String	8	5 Solo String Celeste	8-4
6 Viol d'Orchestre	8-4	6 Viol d'Orchestre	8-4
7 Viol Celeste	8-4	7 Viol Celeste	8-4
8 Clarinet	8	8 Clarinet (Gottfried)	8
9 Dulciana	8	9 French Horn (Skinner)	8
10 Vox Humana I	8	10 Vox Humana I	8
		11 Horn Diapason	8
		12 Orchestral Oboe	8
		13 Quintadena	8
		14 Doppel Flute	8
SOLO		SOLO	
11 Tuba Mirabilis	8-4	15 Harmonic Tuba	16-4
12 Brass Trumpet	8	16 Brass Trumpet	8
13 Tibia Clausa II	16-2	17 Tibia Clausa II	16-2
14 Oboe Horn	8	18 Tibia Plena	8
15 Solo String	8	19 Oboe Horn	16-8
16 Orchestral Oboe	8	20 Kinura	8
17 Kinura	8	21 Saxophone	8
18 Saxophone	8	22 Vox Humana II	8-4
19 Quintadena	8	23 Post Horn	8
20 Vox Humana II	8	24 French Trumpet (Gottfried)	8
		25 Violin	16-2
		26 Violin Celeste	8
		27 Cello	8
		28 Musette	8

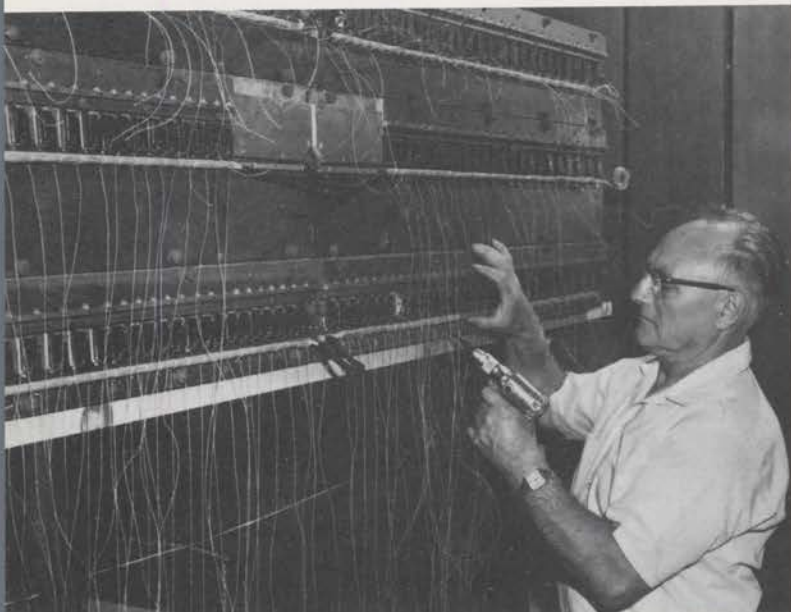
*By comparison the Chicago originally seated 3,869 and the Tivoli 3,414.



The Publix No. 1 console originally contained 173 stop keys and 44 were added to accommodate new ranks, making a total of 217. A distinctive Crawford touch: 20 pistons on bottom rail and 10 pistons each on top three rails, others are cancels. A new top was made of 1 1/4" solid mahogany with unusual cut-out traced from Chicago Oriental Theatre console.



Console in rebuilding stage after being completely torn down. New stop keys are being installed after re-engraving and polishing. Combination action setter boards at rear contain 2,210 switches. On lower bottom board is five electric cancel switches. Console is on wheels to facilitate work.



Countless hours of time were saved in wiring with the use of this professional wire wrap machine operated by Bob Lent. Nearly all cables for entire organ were made on a home made cable machine with #28 DCC wire and wrapped with friction tape.

Relay room in basement was scene of hectic activity for many months. 1st and 2nd touch relays in rear, surmounted by small Tibia mutation switch (note blower starter switch). Four switch stacks at right, pizzicato relay at left. Behind camera is special relay (1st and 2nd) for fourth manual. Left to right: George Denham, Ron Oberholtzer, Bob Lent and Ed (Tonawanda) Dornfeld.

Standard 99-wire organ cable was used in underground ducts from blower room to relay room, above. George Allen leans over 2nd touch relay as Bob Lent separates wires for junction boards. Ed Dornfeld, foreground, at one time worked for Wurlitzer in the 40's.



stalled. This rank was developed and patented by organ innovator Ernest Skinner and comes closer to that hollow "bubble" French Horn sound than any other make. One of Skinner's early employees was another genius, Robert Hope-Jones.

Next, a throaty Tibia Plena went into the Solo Chamber. The Oboe Horn was extended downward with a 16-foot Fagotto Octave and these ranks were added: a Harmonic Tuba and a Post Horn on 15" wind (most are on 10" and lack that famous bite). Then to strengthen the string division a Violin with a huge 16-foot Contra Bass was installed in the Solo Chamber, as well as a Violin Celeste

and a mellow Cello. And my favorite, the plaintive little Musette. All of these ranks are Wurlitzer. Finally, I added a brilliant Gottfried French Trumpet and a Gottfried "bell" Clarinet replaced the Wurlitzer. Gottfried Clarinets are outstanding and sound their finest when not on trem.

The net result is a well-balanced organ in which either chamber can be used for solo work with sufficient bass in each. In the 16-foot pedal section there are 3 reed and 4 flue ranks, an unusual number for a 28-rank organ. I attribute much of our big theatre organ sound primarily to the foundation of these seven

16-foot ranks — two of which are strings — plus the authority of three Tibias, with the Tibia Plena tuned to Celeste with the Tibia Clausa II in the Solo Chamber.

Caroline and I moved from the crowded New York suburbs to Haddonfield, New Jersey, in 1968 and part of the organ was stored in our basement with the overflow going into a warehouse. After listening to many installations I became more and more aware that the size of the room and acoustics of the environment make or break the kind of sound produced. But the volume of a big organ should not impair the quality of sound. An organ, even

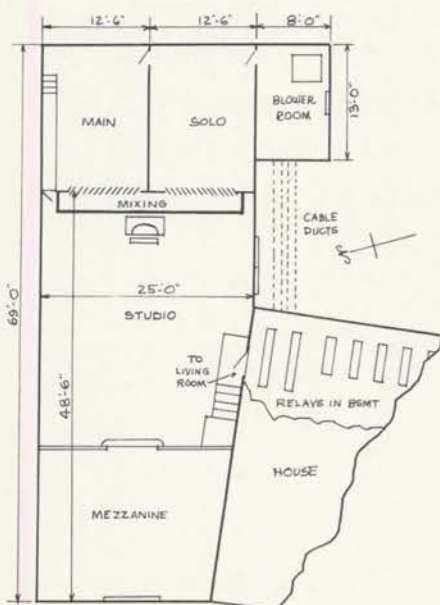
Studio view. Mounted on platform over mixing chamber at rear are Deagan Celeste and numerous percussions. Chamber is open at top to allow sound escape from shutters below. Console rests upon 4" platform. Hardman piano behind Dornfeld, at right. At left are James and Allen. Behind railing and covered, at left, is the Aeolian Duo-Art reproducing piano.



when played wide open, need not be deafening. Therefore, much attention has been given to the design and construction of the studio.

The vault-like chambers are 12" cement block walls and the ceiling is constructed of 8" precast concrete slabs which give a hard, highly reflective surface. The Solo and Main chambers are 13' wide x 17'6" deep and 13'2" high, the latter being determined by the 16-foot Contra Bass pipes on their chest. The blower and cable room is 8' x 13' and the studio itself is 25' wide x 48' long and 18' high at the ceiling peak. The cathedral-type roof is supported on open wood trusses which help break up standing waves, that acoustical bugaboo caused by parallel reflecting surfaces. The organ does not speak directly into the studio but into a mixing chamber, a wall lined with tempered Masonite erected in front of the shutters (the full width and height of the chamber openings) and the ends closed off with access doors. The sound pours over the top of the shutter-height wall. It has proved amazingly effective. Altogether, the studio is "live" but not harsh.

Inasmuch as I have nearby neighbors I had to find a way to dampen the bass frequencies. All exterior walls are 12" cement block and filled with 17 tons of sand. Dick Loderhose said this worked for his studio although one of his neighbors said he could feel the big Ophecleides



through the floor in his basement, the sound waves having traveled via the ground.

I've always been partial to what Johnny Seng calls the "factory new" syndrome, which he isn't, because, he says, a dingy-looking pipe plays just as well as a shiny one. He's right. But I like to see shiny pipes. In fact, there's nothing more soul-inspiring to me than to look into an organ chamber and see a host of golden trumpets and silvery strings under sparkling lights. Going a step further, I wanted the complete organ to look as if it just came out of the factory.

Which brings up the subject of the work involved to achieve that objective. I needed help. Fortunately, our Delaware Valley Chapter's Esther Higgins came to my rescue. She gave me a few leads, which led to others, and soon we had a sizeable crew Joe James, Bob Lent Sr. and Ron Oberholtzer were RCA engineers. George Denham specialized in electronic organ design. Dave Miller was a piano tuner with Steinway, George Timanus an expert photographer hobbyist and Ed Dornfeld at one time worked for Wurlitzer in North Tonawanda. I must also mention young Bob Lent; he knew his way around theatre organs but finally left to join the Marines. Our nightly routine reminds me of the time I worked with Bon Smith and his able crew on the Beacon Theatre Wurlitzer in Manhattan. Late hours, organ talk and lots of coffee. The only thing I missed was the nostalgic atmosphere of the big Broadway house, with its huge drapes rising above the stage into the mysterious indigo gloom. This, one cannot recapture at home.

Organ rebuilding is a never-ending grind. Many have passed through this phase before so I will skip over the usual chores and touch upon those that might interest the reader. For instance, it was Wurlitzer's practice to equip many of their chests with only one tremolo. This meant all ranks on the chest shook in unison. They'd all go "wa-wa-wa" together. By boring new intake and exhaust holes in certain chests, installing wood separators between each rank compartment and adding extra tremos and regulators for each rank, we were able to get random shaking. More

tremolos mean more random sound, a theatre organ rich, vibrant and shimmering. Another factory practice was the 12" to 14" clearance between the regulators and bottoms of the chests in theatre installations. It was sheer murder to squeeze under a chest to replace a magnet with valve rods boring through one's back. Our chest support frames were set to give all chests 54" clearance from the floor. This was done by dropping the chamber floor 4 ft. below the studio floor. Now we can sit upright and work in comfort.

And we made mistakes, too. Such as the time both sets of swell shutters were installed to open inward to the studio center instead of out. We had to remove every nut, bolt and screw, down to the shutter frames, and then put everything back again, reversed. Another time I forgot to move the Marimba into the chamber before the narrow door was installed. Again, it was disassemble on the outside and reassemble on the inside.

I always told the crew that when everything was finished and we pressed the starter button and nothing happened I would dump everything into the river. But the time came when we pressed the button and something *did* happen. It seemed to be raining hailstones in both chambers and the sound rose to a persistent windy crescendo. It took us three minutes to locate the trouble and the following summer to correct it. It was our first big boner.

(To be continued)

In the next installment, the "hail-storm" sound is analyzed and corrected, the organ gets a brand new custom blower, another colossal "goof" transpires, best-sounding locations are sought for the percussions, an electronic string bass is added, also a piano — and finally the "4/28 Merger" is finished.

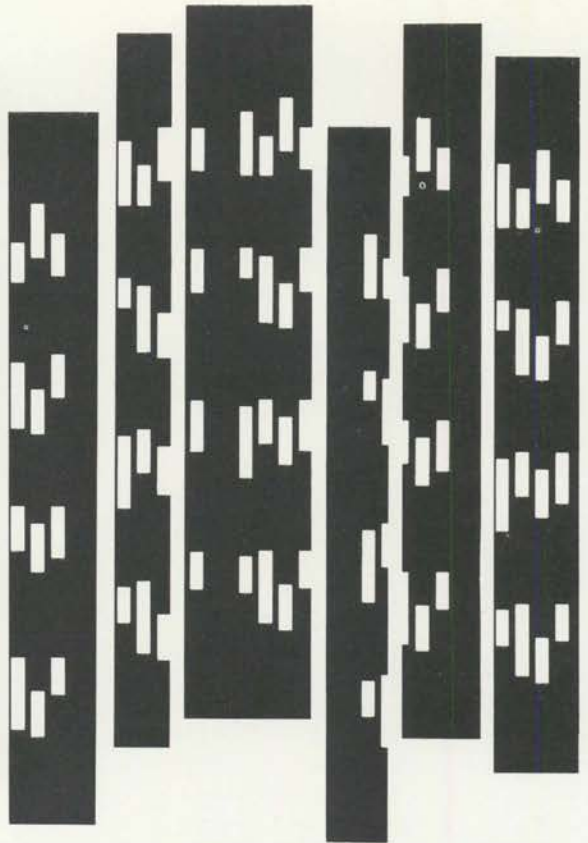
Correction to the April, 1975 list of Chapter Officers:

GARDEN STATE

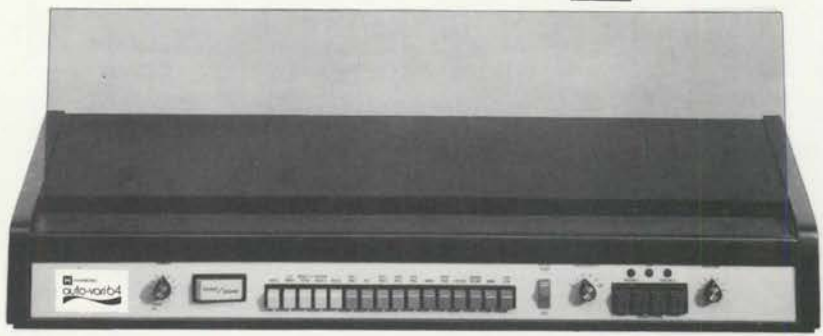
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Elon College library building.

ATOS National Library

by Lloyd E. Klos

In August 1974, a new era in American Theatre Organ Society history was inaugurated by the transfer of ATOS material to the library of 86-year-old Elon College in North Carolina. Thus, a permanent repository for music, scores, cue sheets, pictures and other memorabilia relative to the theatre pipe organ is assured, besides facilities for making this material available to ATOS members at nominal cost.

The Physical Plant

The ATOS couldn't ask for finer facilities to house its archives. The Iris Holt McEwen Library, named for a member of the Board of Trustees, and long-time benefactor of Elon College, was completed in 1968.

The building is air-conditioned and carpeted on the first two floors, with open shelves located on the three floors, containing nearly 100,000 volumes. Designed to offer excellent library service, this facility will seat 610, has multiple reading areas, an art exhibit area, 236 study spaces, an historical documents room and a variety of audio-visual equipment.

The book, periodical and news-

paper collection is designed to support the liberal curriculum of the college. Books, microfilm and other materials are made available thru inter-library loan.

Further proof of the prestigious nature of the Elon Library is that, in 1971, it was designated a United States Government Document Depository, and since then, 8,000 government documents have been added to the collection.

The ATOS material is being housed in the Presidents' Room, which is approximately 15' x 25', fully air-conditioned and climate controlled.

The Library Staff

The staff includes four professionally trained librarians, four assistants, and from 20 to 25 student assistants. The curator for the ATOS National Library is Barry Simmons, who has had considerable experience in the library field, as well as training as a computer programmer.

The ATOS-Elon Agreement

Under terms of an agreement, signed by representatives of ATOS and Elon College:

1. The College will furnish the necessary space for the ATOS Library, rent free.
2. Elon College will incur no ex-



Doc Abernethy in the ATOS library section at Elon. Two file cabinets, when transferred from New Jersey, will also be used to store scores, cue sheets and music.

pense in establishing and maintaining the ATOS Library, other than maintenance and operation of the plant itself.

3. All donated materials to the ATOS Library shall at all times remain the property of ATOS.
4. ATOS will supply all furnishings, stationery and materials necessary for the operation of its library.

Material to be Acquired

There is an earnest desire of the ATOS Board of Directors, the Historical Committee and Curator Simmons to make the ATOS National Library a workable, viable asset for all ATOS members. In the future, it is planned to add the following items relative to the theatre pipe organ, to the resources:

1. All ATOS publications from 1955 onward. As complete volumes are acquired, it is planned to bind them permanently by years.
2. ATOS records of operations.
3. Articles from newspapers and magazines.
4. Books
5. Catalogues
6. Concert and theatre programs.
7. Convention brochures.
8. Cue sheets
9. Glass slides. These will be copied onto 35 MM slides, the originals remaining in the ATOS library permanently.
10. Incidental music.
11. Old magazines such as *Diapason*, *Melody*, *American Organist*, *Jacobs Orchestral*, *Metronome* etc.
12. Pictures
13. Phonograph recordings
14. Silent movie scores
15. Scrapbooks
16. Tapes

In short, any material on the history of, or the renaissance of, the theatre pipe organ will be welcomed. Neither the library, nor ATOS, can appraise donations, due to legalities involved, but a letter from the curator will be sent each donor in acknowledgement.

We urge everyone with any material of historical interest not to discard it when it is of no further use to you. If you have material, and are desirous that it be preserved for all to share, please make sure

there is a definite provision for this in your will. Though this may be a hard-headed approach to a delicate subject, experience has shown, in many instances, that much valuable material has been destroyed by survivors, simply because there were no instructions available for its retention. **REMEMBER! ONCE THE MATERIAL IS GONE, IT IS LOST TO POSTERITY FOREVER!**

Basic Library Rules

1. No original material is to be loaned to any individual. In the case of books, portions may be copied and sent. If the book is loaned, a deposit of \$50 is required, plus proper insurance. Any damage will result in a fine up to \$150.
2. In cases of institutional loans, proper locked display cases must be provided and credit given ATOS National Library, Elon College. Loans are for 30 days, and proper insurance must be provided.
3. Tape recordings may be loaned out for one month. A signed waiver must be returned, stating that the tape will not be broadcast or used for commercial purposes.
4. The minimum copy charge is \$1 for one page of anything. Above that, the fee will be 25 cents per page. For 50 or more pages, the fee will be approximately 12 cents. Prices are subject to change because of economic factors.

5. A catalogue will be available to members at cost. It will be updated periodically via computer printout.
6. An annual report of the library's operations will be given at the annual meeting of the ATOS Board of Directors.
7. The library will present a detailed accounting of receipts and expenditures to the ATOS treasurer once a year. A yearly budget will be set up by ATOS, but it is hoped to make the library operation self-supporting in due course.

As major acquisitions are received by the ATOS Library, there will be other announcements in these pages, and it is hoped that a progress report will be forthcoming once a year. Meanwhile, members, get that material rolling to the permanent repository, so it will be beneficial to all. It's your facility, supported by your dues. What we put into it, we will get out of it.

ATOS Curator . . .

Barry W. Simmons, national curator of the American Theatre Organ Society since August, 1974, received his introduction to organs at the knee of about as knowledgeable a hand as there is: Dr. Paul Abernethy, president of the American Theatre Organ Society.

Several years ago, Dr. Abernethy and his son talked Simmons into helping them pull their Robert

Section of Elon College library.





Barry Simmons, ATOS Library Curator.

Morton theatre organ into shape. Simmons has been hooked ever since on restoring and refurbishing those tabernacles of sound which, in another time, embellished Rudolf Valentino and Buck Jones' silent deeds-of-derring-do.

Dr. Abernethy, like Simmons, is a resident of Elon College, North Carolina.

I consider it an honor and an opportunity to be the national curator," Simmons said last month in his office at Elon College where he has been Director of Financial Aid for two years. "Already I've been working with Dr. Abernethy to enlarge the holdings of cue sheets — both originals and reprints — pictures, and tapes. I just hope we can improve the collection and make more people aware of what an experience one of these old organs can be."

Simmons is a native of Chase City, Virginia. He was graduated from Elon College in 1973 with a degree in political science. After some graduate work at Middle Tennessee State University, Simmons returned to his alma mater as an administrative assistant and eventually moved into his present position.

He is married to the former Janie McCulley of Tenby Chase, Delran, New Jersey. They have no children. The 25 year old Simmons is also secretary-treasurer of the Piedmont Organ Society, Inc.

As if keeping his eye on the ATOS Library isn't enough, Simmons is working with Mac Abernethy, Dr. Paul Abernethy's son, installing a 3/11 Wurlitzer in the 5,000-seat gymnasium at the college. This project is about half completed and lacks only a little more money and elbow grease. □

Tape Recording . . .

PRIVILEGE or PESTILENCE?

by Allen R. Miller

We have heard from both sides on the question of recording live performances. It would be unusual to find a theatre organ concert not being recorded by someone on quality equipment for historical purposes. Often, these recordings are made available for limited copying, with the permission of the artist, for personal use only. Such recordings have enhanced my own enjoyment of theatre organ beyond the selection of artists and instruments available on disc.

Although we went through a period when tape recording was not permitted during concerts, the miniaturization and improvement of recording equipment in the battery-operated, hand-held category, has led to an acceptance of such devices at concerts. Before such devices were allowed, they showed up at concerts under heavy overcoats, in handbags or otherwise smuggled into the auditorium. Due to fear of being caught, the underground recordists went to great lengths to keep their activities as inconspicuous as possible. It was possible to sit next to someone who was recording a performance, and never realize that a recording was being made.

With the present acceptance of hand-held recorders at concerts, the use of these devices is becoming a plague. If you own or operate a cassette recorder or other battery-portable recorder, you should give some serious thought to the privilege you are enjoying, and what steps you can take to ensure continued allowance of these devices.

At the 1974 ATOS national convention, I couldn't believe how inconsiderate some members were to their fellow-listeners by what I will call obnoxious fiddling with recording apparatus. In at least two instances, fistfights nearly broke out over the abuse of the recording privilege. ATOS is a fun organization, with most of its members deriving pleasure from listening to theatre organ. It is possible to record without distracting those who are sitting near you. Here are some general tips to follow:

First, know your equipment. Theatres are usually dark during performances. Darkness is no place to become acquainted with a new recorder. If you can't operate it blindfolded, then leave it home.

Do not stop and start your recorder during the performance. This rule above all should be emphatic. In almost every case, a C-90 or C-120 cassette will get you through a section of a concert without stopping. Start recording before the organist begins to play, and let the recorder run. Sit back and enjoy the concert yourself. If the tape runs out during a selection, do not turn the tape over or otherwise fiddle with the recorder until the applause between selections. If you are a bit clever, you will note the time when you start your recorder, and can pick a proper time to turn the tape over before the tape runs out.

Try to operate your machine as quietly as possible. This takes practice at home. You can eject a tape silently by placing your hand lightly on the cassette and pressing the EJECT button slowly. All operating buttons click loudly when the recorder shuts off or if STOP is pressed. You can keep the buttons from clicking by holding a finger on the depressed button and releasing it gently when the recorder shuts off or when you simultaneously depress STOP. If you think the tape may run out during a selection (according to your timing from the start of the program) hold your fingers on the PLAY and RECORD buttons. When the recorder shuts off, the buttons will be released against your fingers, and you may then gently release the buttons silently. Try this at home to get the feel of your particular recorder.

If you experience difficulty, either forget it, or leave the room until you have solved the problem. I know of one person who inserted a fresh cassette backwards . . . so that the tape was already at the end of side two. Every time this person pressed RECORD, the recorder waited a moment, then shut off because the tape was not moving. Not realizing what

the trouble was, the person kept trying to record for several minutes to the distress of everyone within several seats.

Don't be a balcony spotlihter. If you need a small flashlight to see what you are doing, use the miniature penlight type and fix it so the light is subdued. Giving the bulb several coats of fingernail polish will do a good job or you can make a paper diffuser for the bulb. Remember that nobody wants to see your flashlight blinking on and off like a firefly.

Resist the urge to play back the last selection at the end of the concert. Nobody wants to hear your long-lost echo, and it is too late to do anything if your machine didn't record. Please wait until you are at home or in the privacy of your own car to play your tape.

If your recorder is the type which bleats when the tape runs out, don't even think of taking it with you. That end signal sounds like a Clarinet cipher, and if the organist doesn't stop playing altogether, five men may run for the organ chamber. Also, if your machine is capable of playing or monitoring through speakers while recording, be doubly certain that the speaker is off or the volume turned all the way down before you start recording. Otherwise the sound from the speaker will be picked up by the microphone and cause feedback... a howling which also sounds like a cipher and will cause nasty glances from your neighbors and more scurrying for the chambers.

Don't rewind or fast-forward a tape during a performance, as this also causes disturbing noises. If you record the entire performance without stopping, and know how to operate your machine, you will have no reason for advancing the tape in either direction.

These suggestions will help you operate your tape recorder as inconspicuously as possible. The following suggestions will help you get as good a recording as possible.

1. Use a good quality tape of the "High-Output/Low-Noise" type. Having recorded several hundred cassettes myself, I have found MAXELL UD to be "the best," and this seems to be backed up by leading audio magazines using it as a standard



Sponge Microphone Holder.

by which other tapes are tested. TDK and MEMOREX are also excellent. I have never had a MAXELL cassette jam, not even a C-120, and I have heard this same report from other enthusiasts. This is not meant to "push" certain brands, but rather to pass along my own personal experience.

2. Do not hold the microphone in your hand. Movement of your

fingers will create all sorts of extraneous noise in your tape. Instead, fasten the microphone to your clothing at the shoulder or make a holder by cutting a hole in a cellulose sponge (the soft foam type) and insert the microphone through the hole. You can now hold the sponge, or even set it on a convenient surface or wedge it between two seat backs. The soft sponge will isolate the microphone from the noise you would otherwise introduce by handling it.

3. Allow the recorder to rest quietly in your lap or on a stationary flat surface. Moving the machine while it is recording will tend to introduce speed variations.
4. Insert fresh batteries before the concert. With some recorders, a fresh set of batteries will just last through one concert.

Where tape recorders are allowed, let's be as unobtrusive as possible with them so that we may all retain the privilege of using them. □

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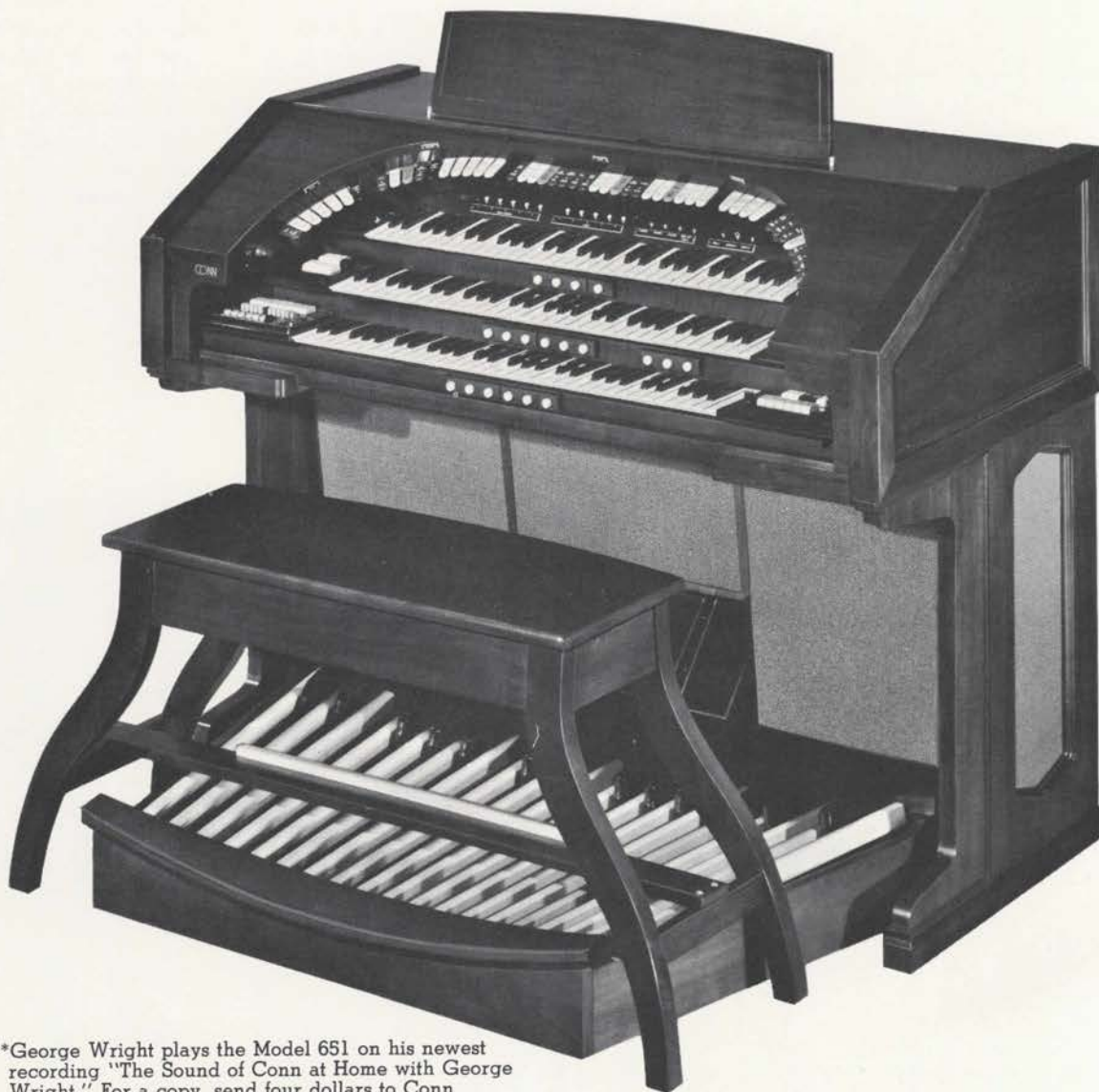
November 28, 29 and 30, 1975

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*George Wright plays the Model 651 on his newest recording "The Sound of Conn at Home with George Wright." For a copy, send four dollars to Conn Organ, Dept. AT, 616 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook, Ill. 60521.

The opening concert for the 1974-1975 season, in November, 1974, brought three stars to the Ohio Theatre in Columbus, Ohio. One was the resident star of all concerts, the 4/21 Robert Morton; the second was our organist for the evening, Roger Garrett; the third was a newly installed combination action controlled by a computer. The Robert Morton and Mr. Garrett were in excellent form that evening, and the combination action was in good shape, considering it had been completed at 7 a.m. that Saturday morning. By the middle of December, less than six months after the start of the total project, all the functions of the computer were fully functional.

The project to change the combination action in the Morton from the old setter switch system to the computer system started in late May with some discussion about the feasibility (and probable cost) of such a system. Since the pneumatic action on the tablets was to be replaced with electric action tablets during the summer closing of the Ohio Theatre, the computerization of the action seemed to be much more reasonable. The removal of all pneumatics at one time would make room available for the racks needed to hold the computer electronics and all rewiring could be done at one time. As it turned out this was no small job, and took many more hours than first anticipated.

The specifications of the computer system are the following:

1. Ten pistons per division in each of the five divisions.
2. Six general pistons.
3. Cancels for each division.
4. General cancel.
5. Tremulant cancel.
6. Five interdivisional combination couplers, general, pedal to accompaniment, pedal to great, pedal to orchestral, pedal to solo.
7. All electronic action.
8. Stuck piston will not lock tablets.
9. Capability to add or modify features.

The electronics for the computer are contained on 25 printed circuit cards, of which 20 are used to get information to and from the stop tablets. The remaining 5 are the computer functions; 1 card for mem-

OHIO ROBERT MORTON GOES MODERN WITH COMPUTER

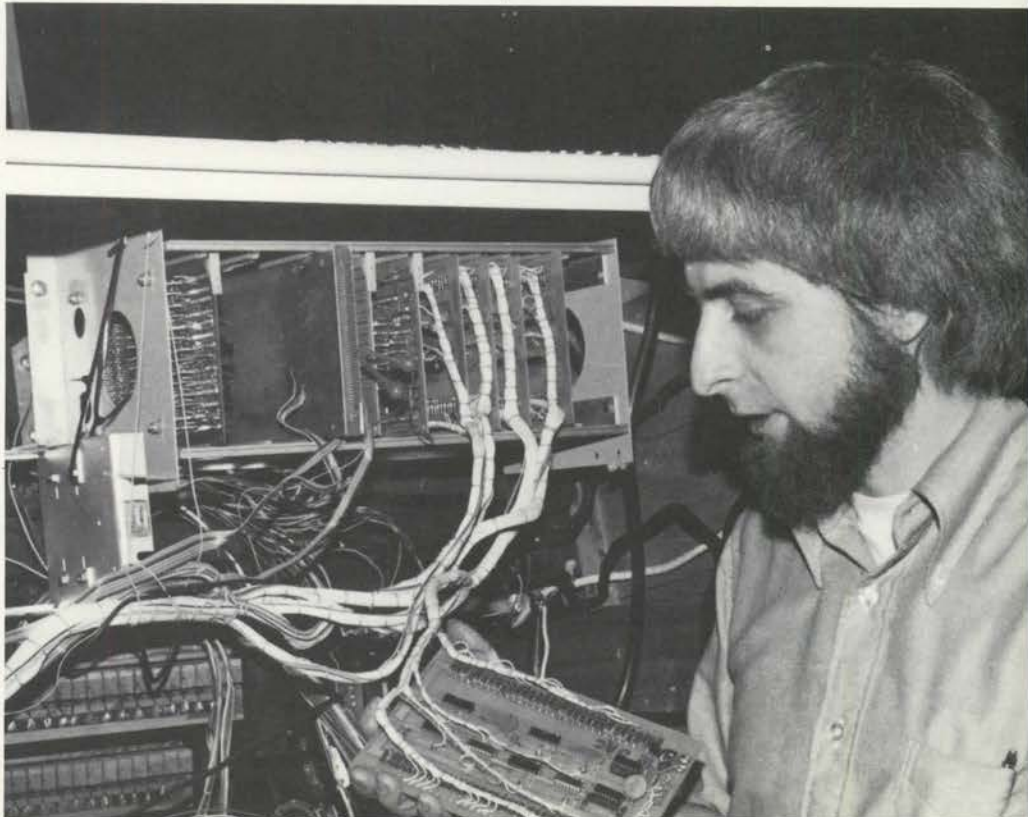
by Gary Harris

Photos by
Gary Harris and Tom Hamilton

ory, both control and piston information; 1 card for the computer and its supporting circuitry, 2 cards for miscellaneous control functions, and 1 card for all piston and coupler switch functions. All this circuitry comprises about 3000 to 4000 parts, all of which were assembled in less than 1½ months. The electronics are all mounted in two 19" x 9" x 6" card racks attached to a cross brace at the rear of the console where the old pneumatic valves of the setter system used to be. The computer used in this design is an INTEL 8008 MICROPROCESSOR, which is a computer in a single integrated circuit that measures only .3" x 1.0". This device was chosen because of its great versatility, ready availability and low cost. The 8008 performs all its operations 8 bits at a time. Think of a bit the same as one pole on a relay. This number 8 is the basis for almost all other card functions, all multiples of 8.

The computer card contains 26 integrated circuits including the 8008. This card takes information from the control memory and performs the necessary operations to determine which of the functions for the combination action will be performed. It is interesting to note that only a few years ago the electronics needed to perform the functions of this one card could not have been

The designer of the system — Gary Harris — with one of the input cards — in the background are the electronics for the computer and the other input cards.



housed in an enclosure much smaller than the Morton console itself.

The card which handles the piston pushbuttons utilizes an integrated circuit which scans the buttons as a matrix of 11 lines by 8 lines. This reduces the wiring for the 63 buttons from 64 wires to 19. Each button is monitored about 1000 times a second. When one is pressed the scan stops and the card supplies the computer with a digital language "word" which is unique to the pressed button. This "word" remains as long as the button is held, however, the computer ignores the word if it finds it still to be present after it executes the operation associated with that button. This feature allows for a button to stick but not lock the stop tablets so that they cannot be changed manually.

The memory card contains both the control programming and the data storage (stop tablet information). The control program is contained in 4 integrated circuits called "Erasable Reprogrammable Read Only Memories." This means that the program may be written into these circuits by means of a special piece of electronic equipment but cannot be altered by the computer in any way. Because they are erasable the program may be changed to modify features or add new ones. A note of interest is that a program to load the stop tab memory from magnetic tape is to be added later this year.

The data storage section of the memory is contained in 8 integrated circuits which have the capacity to store over 8000 bits (equivalent of 8000 setter switches). The Morton requires only about half of this capacity but the additional is there and available for any future additions of ranks, stops, or computer functions.

There are five identical cards used

TOP PHOTO:

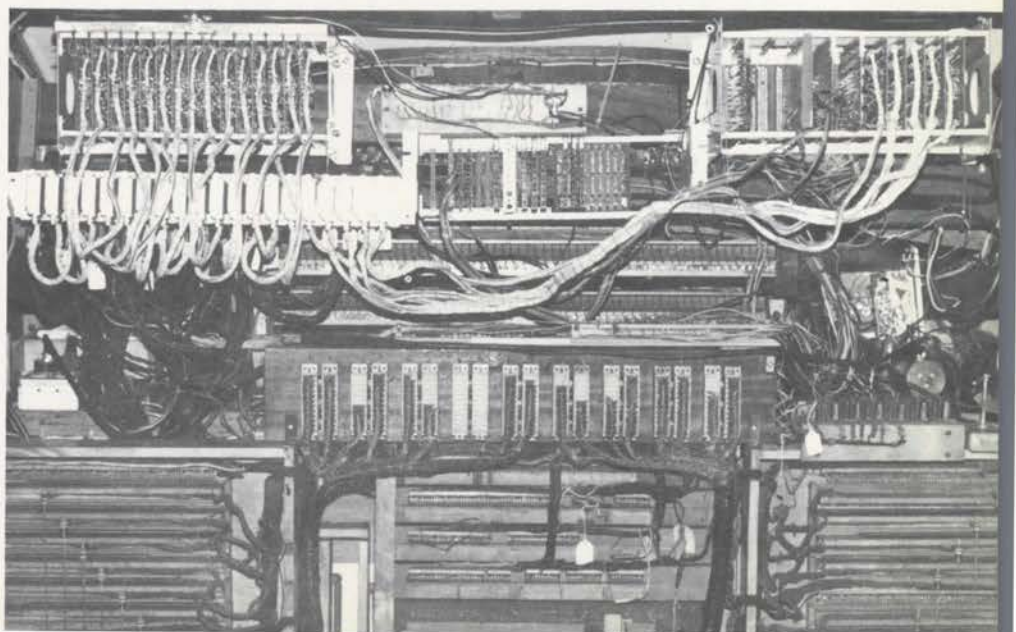
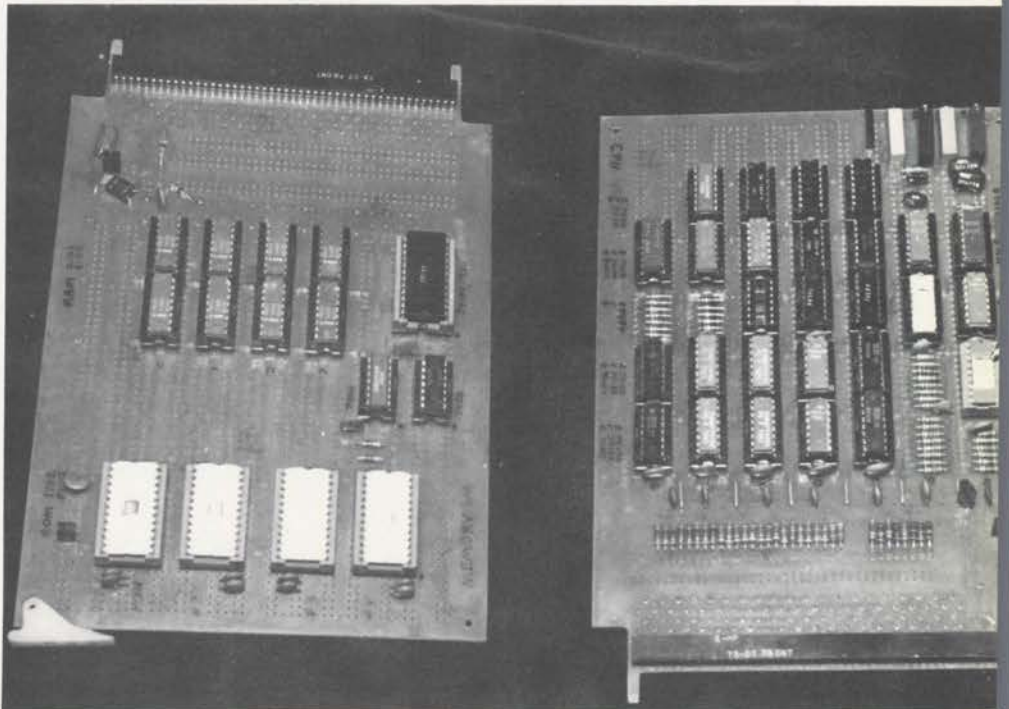
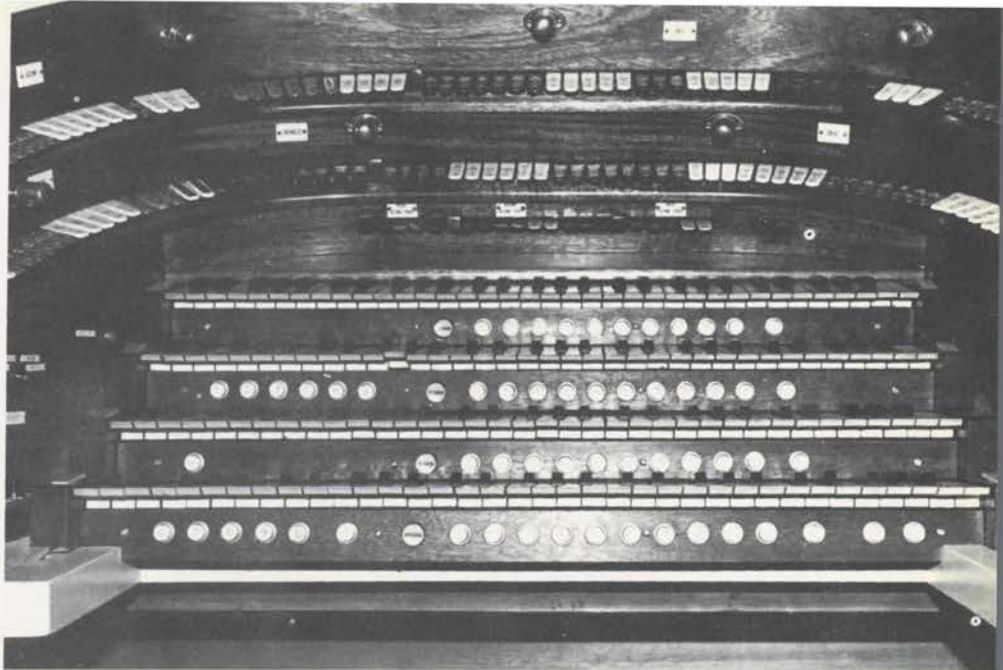
View of the console shows the pistons as they are in the new system — square name plates above the tablets also function as alternate cancels.

MIDDLE PHOTO:

The memory card and the computer card — pen indicates the integrated circuit which is the computer.

BOTTOM PHOTO:

Rear view of the console — upper left shows the card rack containing the output cards, upper right shows the rack containing the computer, the memory, the input and other cards.



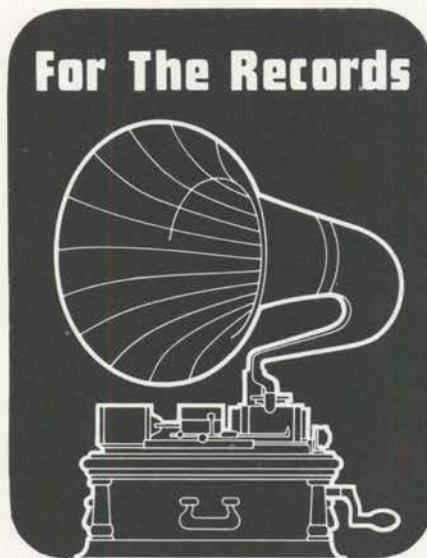
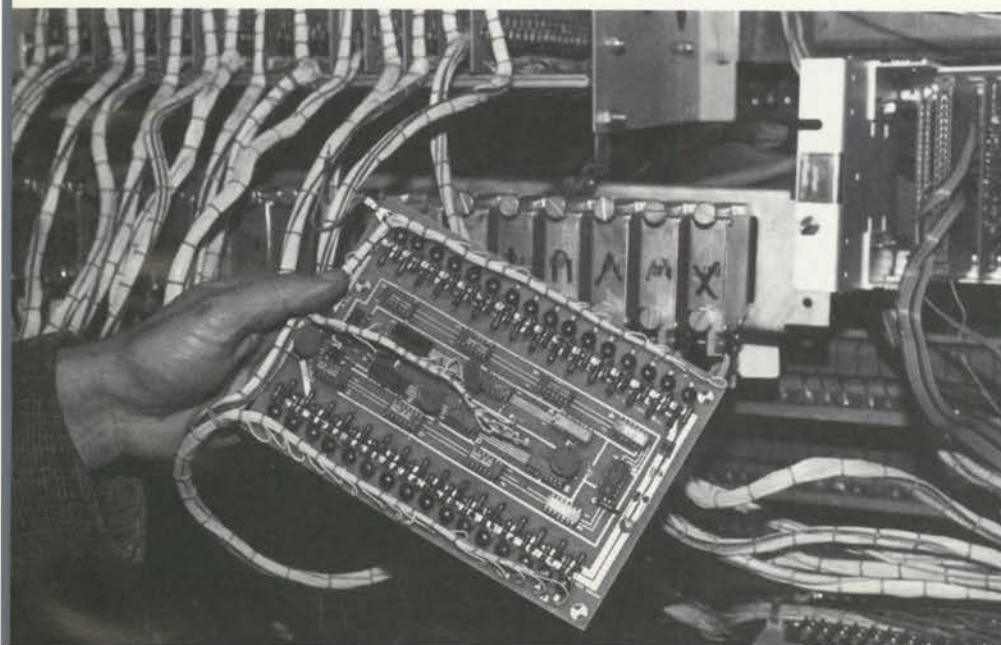
to get the information from the stop tablets to the computer. Each card handles one of the five divisions with 64 tablets being the maximum per division (this is not exceeded by any division). The pedal division card is also used to get the tremulant tabs to the computer. This gives an effective 6th division.

The 15 identical cards used to get information from the memory to the tabs each control 16 tabs. These cards also contain the driver circuits to energize the coils used on the stop rail magnets. The design of this card was the most troublesome in the whole project and major revisions to it were responsible for the all night session to get the action working for the Garrett Concert.

The end result of all this electronic madness is a much more versatile combination action which can be set in a matter of minutes. It is much quieter than the old system, no hissing pneumatics and no "whoosh" when combinations are changed. The console has been freed of its air line. But best of all, the basic organ is musically as it has always been. The addition of the computer has not altered any of the basic operations of the Morton, it is only a more versatile instrument.

The author wishes to thank Carlos Parker and Ed Smith for the marvelous job they did on the console wiring — not a single error, Tom Hamilton for building the input and output cards and wiring the card nest, and to John Winter a special thank you for helping to get the system running. □

One of the output cards — in the background the rack which holds them is visible along with the cable connectors.



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.

REX KOURY PLAYS THE FAMOUS SCOTTY'S CASTLE THEATRE ORGAN. MCR 1130 (stereo). \$5.95 postpaid from Rex Koury Enterprises, Box 197, Steamboat, Nevada 89436.

The instrument is a 3/15 (plus piano) Welte installed in 1929 in Scotty's Castle, Death Valley, Calif. "Scotty" was a desert rat/pro prospector

who struck pay dirt in his association with a Chicago financier, Albert M. Johnson, who grubstaked the promotion-conscious Scotty through most of his mature years. Scotty supervised the construction of Johnson's desert residence and it became known as "Scotty's Castle." Johnson wasn't there very much. The Welte organ was purchased and installed by James H. Nuttall (once Hope-Jones' chief voicer). The castle and organ underwent many ups and downs over the years. The Welte is currently maintained by ATOSer Fred Beeks of Reno. It has a solid "round" tone, with stress on ensemble sound, plus a few solo reeds which Rex uses sparingly, notably a fat Tuba. The Tibia has a curious adolescent "teenage" quality as though it hadn't yet developed the sexy huskiness of maturity. It is prominent throughout the program.



Rex Koury. A first recording on an historic Welte. (Harold Photo)

Rex Koury needs no introduction. He's a veteran theatre organist at home both in pops or classics, as this set of grooves will prove. He's known all over the land as a top-rank concert artist and film accompanist (his score for *King of Kings* is an annual Easter treat for lucky viewers). One of his good traits is his respect for the intent of the composer, as illustrated on this record by Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Song of India* and Liszt's *Second Hungarian Rhapsody*. They are played mostly as the composers wrote them and there is no effort made to "jazz them up." All to the good; *Song* and *Rhapsody*, as played add up to silent movie music, the first to picture an oriental garden, perhaps, and the

second perfect, in places, for a movie chariot race.

The other trend in selections is toward the western motif, with such tunes as *Wagon Wheels*, *Streets of Laredo*, *La Cumparsita* and *Release Me*. Unclassifiable but well performed are *More*, *Little Bird*, *Man of La Mancha*, *The Entertainer* (in deference to its current popularity) and that World War (II) horse, *Jingle Jangle Jingle*, which is also vaguely "western."

This is a recording "first," the initial recording by a live organist on the Scotty's Castle Welte (it also plays automatically). The recording is good; not too much "stereo separation" to keep one glued to an apex location: There are jacket notes about artist and organ plus a brochure outlining the history of Scotty's Castle. A worthwhile first.

SNAZZY RHYTHM, FEATURING TERRY CHARLES at the Long Island University Theatre Organ. CR-0147, stereo. \$6.50 postpaid from EM-CEE Productions Limited, 2285 Lagoon Circle North, Clearwater, Florida 33515.

The instrument, of course, is the 4/26 Brooklyn Paramount Wurlitzer, still sounding forth in its original location, even though the theatre has been transformed into a college gym. The artist, Terry Charles, is perhaps best known as the driving force behind the theatre organ he assembled, maintains and manages at the Kirk of Dunedin, Clearwater, Florida. Terry has become well known as the impresario for the Kirk, where he has brought in top artists for concerts on a regular basis since 1968. These are in addition to his own Kirk concerts, heard several times each year.

Terry's records are few, and we think this to be his best to date. His apparent aim is to satisfy rather than astound and in this he succeeds very well. His instrument is in top shape, thanks to the LIU organ's protector, Bob Walker, and Terry plays a mostly relaxing program of pops and standards. He makes effective use of non-obtrusive tonal percussions (e.g. Chrysoglott, Glockenspiel) and his performances include a variety of rhythms, from his fast console riser, *Snazzy Rhythm* (with echoes of



Terry Charles, shown at the console he designed for the Kirk of Dunedin organ.

Nola), through the ragtime of *The Entertainer*, to the tango time of *Hernando's Hideway*. A peppy high-kick *Charleston* gives way to an equally moving but unlisted *Limehouse Blues*. Terry likes big solid registration and uses solo brass occasionally for counter melodies. And he solos a mellow brass combination during *Serenade* by Romberg. His rhythm tunes have a carefree lilt, for example, *Red Roses for a Blue Lady* and *Dansero*. There are some pleasant harmony "cascades" in *Never on Sunday*. *The Little Shoemaker* is a vaguely familiar charmer.

Arrangements are simple, not flamboyant, and there are few key changes within a tune unless the notation demands it. This procedure works for most of the selections but some tunes call for more elaborate treatments. For example, *Chloe*. This reviewer has been "roamin' through the dismal swampland" tracking down the mystique of *Chloe* for nearly 45 years and each time he managed to catch up with her, she proved to be an irresistible, sexy huzzy. Yet, Terry pictures *Chloe* as a plain-Jane, right out of the church choir — probably wearing horn-rim bifocals. But that's merely

a subjective opinion probably born of too long an intimacy with the image of the swampland wraith. New victims of *Chloe* may find her as inflammatory in plain garb as did the writer in 1927 when she sprang full-grown from the imagination of song writer Neil Moret.

The jacket notes make us familiar with the organist, instrument and some of the tunes.

GERALD SHAW AT THE ODEON, LEICESTER SQUARE, LONDON. Deroy ("studio stereo") No. 929. \$6.50 postpaid from Deroy Records, P.O. Box 3, Carnforth, Lancs, England. Checks on US banks are accepted.

The late Gerald Shaw was undoubtedly one of Britain's organ greats and the instrument he plays here is one of the finest examples of the Compton organ, Britain's answer to Wurlitzer. This disc was obviously not recorded professionally, yet its technical flaws are small ones (mostly occasional overload distortion). But by the same token, the organist also isn't playing as though he was aware of open microphones. He performs informally as

though for a group of friends. While most of his playing is topnotch, he occasionally reverts to the level of "schlamperei" which an organist might insert to amuse his friends but would avoid during a performance before an audience.

This recording reveals Gerald Shaw as a very forceful organist, with much emphasis on the attack and lots of brassy riffs during his rhythm numbers. That hard-to-classify voice is most likely the Melotone, that early electronic "synthesizer/solo-vox" Compton sometimes used as an excuse for an extra manual. Some of its voices are very attractive.

The Compton heard here is a 5-manual 17-rank instrument with one manual devoted entirely to the Melotone. It's a real beauty, with plenty of solo voices as well as a fine ensemble sound. Shaw became a British institution at the Odeon, the last organist playing regularly in a London theatre, until his death last year.

The selections are *Try a Little Tenderness*, *Edelma*, *Cole Porter medley*, *Sweden in Springtime*, *I Know Why, Summertime* (gorgeous Vox chorus) and *Nice Work If You Can Get It* (interesting jazz variations). Side 2 offers *Carioca*, *Gold Dust*, *Parade of the Wooden Soldiers*, *Solitude*, *Somewhere a Voice is Calling* (with Crawford overtones and one colossal clinker), *Small Hotel* and *I'll String Along With You*.

Shaw's arrangements add much interest value, he doesn't relish repeating normally repeated pop tune phrases exactly the same each time. An example is the somewhat cut and dried melody line of *Parade of the Wooden Soldiers* (mis-labeled *Tin Soldiers* here). Instead of the continued repeats Shaw offers jazz variations of repeated phrases which tend to forestall any possible monotony. And he knows just how much percussion to throw in for variety. In places his masses of brass, and occasional schmears, become overwhelming, but over-all, Gerald Shaw, as presented here, is a one-of-a-kind experience.

To those who collect "typical" performances, this platter may not be the answer. We recall a much tidier and interesting performance presented by Gerald Shaw on the same instrument on a Concert re-

lease a few years ago (and still available) entitled *Fanfare*, with the organist giving a fine account of his best efforts, and they are considerable by any standards. To those who have *Fanfare*, this disc makes a worthy companion piece.

COLLEGE DAYS, Rupert Otto playing the 3/13 Barton organ in the Michigan Theatre, Ann Arbor, Mich. In stereo, No. STD-1002. \$7.00 (\$7.26 in Mich.) postpaid from Liberty Music Shop, 417 East Liberty Street, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48108.

Frankly, this reviewer had never heard of Rupert Otto before this biscuit arrived in the post. Our loss; one hearing of the record content establishes Mr. Otto as an able performer on the theatre organ. He has the ability to "sell" unfamiliar music by dressing the tunes in enticing arrangements. Of course, those who have attended the University of Michigan will recognize some of the tunes (some date back to 1878), because all of them are associated with that school. There are 14 selections and they present plenty of musical variety as treated by Mr. Otto. True there are a few heavy-handed "I'd Die for Dear Old Siwash" hymns present but there are also plenty of sentimental ballads and campus marches, too. One of the latter, *The Victors*, was once praised by Sousa according to the jacket notes.

The other selections are *Flight*, *Men of Michigan*; *The Bum Army*, *Michigan Memories*, *We Will not Forget Our Alma Mater*, *Back Again at Michigan*, *College Days*, *Varsity*, *When Night Falls*, *Dear*; *Goddess of the Inland Sea*, *Ann Arbor Days*, *I Want to Go Back to Michigan*, *Take Me Back to College* and *The Yellow and the Blue* — all tunes to quicken the heartbeat of a Michigan alumnus. Most were written in the teen years of the century or before.

The record has possible faults from the organ buff's viewpoint. The great range in recording levels may bother those who are used to having levels kept constant (and dull). But Mr. Otto's approach to the music requires a great range. And the use of full organ for stretches doesn't allow for as much registration variety as some auditioners may desire. Yet, most tunes are treated to ample stop changes.

The 3/13 Barton, which was restored and is maintained by the Motor City T.O. Society, sounds great. It meets all the demands of Mr. Otto, from marching band to sentimental ballad, from pop tune registration to cathedral effect.

While this is a specialized platter, aimed at Michigan students and grads, it holds interest also for organ buffs. The tunes are, in turn, jolly, majestic, sentimental, pop and ballady — same as the usual array of T.O. selections, and this one is guaranteed to be free of such overcooked items as *Alley Cat*, *Lara's Theme* — and it's about time we added *The Entertainer* to the "list unexpurgatorius."

ORGAN POWER, Don Thompson playing the Preston ("Sandy") Fleet residence Wurlitzer organ. Organ Power label No. OP-001 (stereo). \$5.95 postpaid from Don Thompson, 903 Pacific Tower, 4944 Cass Street, Pacific Beach Calif. 92109.

Another "first" recording, on two counts. It's the first record cut on Sandy Fleet's residence organ and according to the jacket notes it's also the first "quadraphonic" T.O. record released in the west, in case any readers are concerned with that 4-speaker reproducing system. It also plays on 2-channel playbacks. The organ was the subject of a previous article in this publication, so we won't repeat.

Since that article was published,



Don Thompson. First recording on a new installation.

the first Organ Power pizzeria has opened in San Diego with Don Thompson at the console. Don is one of those musicians who is a gifted music notation reader and his repertoire is one of the most comprehensive and expansive we've encountered. Of course, that's a far cry from what is known as "pizza music" but the management of Organ Power No. 1 told us that the place went "in the black" just eleven days after it opened. Since pizza doesn't vary in fabrication much, it had to be the music and the novelty of hearing an organ that continues to draw the crowds. So much for background.

We mentioned Don's expansive tune list. A good example is march master E.T. Paull's *Napoleon's Last Charge*, a dramatic descriptive piece much performed by pianists during the early years of this century. Don revives it with much relish, marching the Emperor's troops into battle in steady cadence, and covering their retreat in the same patient beat, but with drums! — enough to cause "Nap" to turn in his charge card!

The remainder of Side 1 is devoted to a tribute to Judy Garland — *Trolley Song*, *The Boy Next Door*, *Meet Me in St. Louis* (merry-go-round style), *While We're Young*, *Singin' in the Rain* (complete with that jingly counter melody), *You Made Me Love You* and of course, *Over the Rainbow*. The latter has a most offbeat harmonic pattern. Lots of registration variety here.

We might re-iterate that the Fleet residence installation consists of a style 260 Wurlitzer (3/15) in three chambers. A Post Horn and piano have been added. It's a well balanced organ which dominates the music room built to accommodate it. The Tibia is especially mellow, although it needs some trem adjustment for a sexier sound. Don uses it in most all of his combinations.

Side 2 is a variety program of *The Continental*, *The Carioca*, *Breezin' Along with the Breeze*, *Spring is Here*, (very nice Tibia work), *Puttin' on the Ritz*, *Bill Bailey* and *As Time Goes By*, all played in a variety of styles bound to please Don's legion of fans.

Recording is good. The jacket has oodles of notes about Don (including a genuine "Stufoto"), the organ and the selections.

It should be mentioned that the recording was made before all the "bugs" were removed from the new installation, but Don managed to surmount any technical difficulties with a generous application of enthusiasm.

THE BLUE-LL RECORDS

MUSIC FROM 'SONG OF NORWAY' played by Maria Kumagai on the Rodgers model 340 organ, SR-1002 (stereo). \$6.00 postpaid from Sunrise Records, Box 559, Camarillo, Calif. 93010.



Maria Kumagai. "Woodshedding" paid off.

Maria Kumagai has got to be something of a prodigy. The diminutive Japanese arrived in the USA five years ago, speaking no English, but with one burning desire — to learn U.S. styles of playing the organ. Maria ruled out all activities except organ studies. She was accepted by teachers Bill Thomson

(pops) and Richard Purvis (classical). Within two years of her arrival Mr. Purvis felt she was ready for her classical debut and arranged a concert in San Francisco's cavernous Grace Cathedral. Playing works by Bach and Franck on the 100-rank Skinner, Maria was awarded a standing ovation.

But her first love has always been the entertainment organ, and on this disc she veritably shines. It is difficult to imagine such a polite and almost retiring person as possessing all the fire, authority, command and general pizzazz heard on this recording. But a lot of both woman and musician are evident, plus a proof that 8 to 13 hours "woodshedding" each day pays off.

Side 1 is devoted entirely to nine selections from *Song of Norway*, which means music by Edvard Grieg. By now it's music familiar to all, but rarely have we heard it played with such passion as here. Maria gets excellent cooperation from the Rodgers model 340, an instrument with the potential to come as close to theatre organ sounds as the state of the art permits — provided a proper voicer is on hand to hone the beast to its finest playing condition. Apparently, Maria located such a voicer. The result takes one's mind off the fact that he isn't hearing pipes.

Side 2 is especially interesting from the variety standpoint. There are only four titles, all minor classics: Debussy's *Claire de Lune*, the Strauss' *Tritsch-Tratsch Polka*, *Valse Triste* by Sibelius (remember "I Love a Mystery?") and Karg-Elert's *Soul of the Lake*, all proper descriptive entries, and all played to the hilt. However, it's the final selection which intrigues us most. *Soul* is pure fantasyland, a musical picture of the mysteries of a lake, slightly distorted as though seen and heard from the reflections of the lake's shimmering surface. It waxes from stormy/dramatic to serene and it is solid theatre organ — easily the best organ interpretation we've yet heard of this unorthodox minor work by a major straight organ composer.

This is not Maria's first recording. Her first, *The Musical Magic of Maria Kumagai*, has been around for over a year and we have an idea we'll be giving it the once over in an upcoming column.

DINNY'S COLYUM

as
transcribed
by
Del Castillo



I always get a big kick out of listenin to a organ concert on a big theayter organ in places like when the lites go down and the organ player starts playin with a whoop and a holler down to the bottom of the elyvater where you cant see him, and then he starts up and when he gets into the spotlight and you can see him the audience they always burst into applause. And then I got to wonderin do they know all the things he has to go through. And so I thought I would rite a little peace about The Dangers of Bein a Theayter Organist. I been a theayter organ nut for so long I got pally with a lot of these fellers and they tell me about some of the things that happen to them.

Like the feller who helps me rite this colyum and he had a experyense on a big organ in a bran new theayter where they was a new stage show every week that come in on the road of this chain he was workin for. And this week they was a operatick show that starts with a church seen from one of the operas with the organ playin the church music. So this feller he gets a sifer on the organ, that is where a pipe wont stop playin, so when the orkestra come back in to play the last ten minutes before the stage show went on he figgered he could run up to where the pipes was at the top of the theayter and yank the pipe out so it wouldnt play and get back in time for the organ church music. Well, like I said it was a bran noo theayter and the plaster wasnt scarcely dry but anyways he gets the pipe out and starts out of the organ chamber and jest then a draft blows the door shut and the latch breaks and he's in there and cant get out and he jest stews in there and he hears the stage show start up and in-

sted of the organ music they is jest a tinklin little piano and he can jest about imagin how mad the conductor is, and he dont dare to make a racket and nobody would of heard him anyways and he has a little flashlight in his pocket and he keeps pokin it through the grill and try to catch the eye of a usher but no soap and he dont get out until he drops a note out of the grill and a guy in a box seat picks it up and gives it to the usher and he gets out in time to play the pitcher. But he's rite about the conductor who seems to think he done it on purpose, and the only laff he gets out of it is when the owner of the theayter says well, if it had been some organ players he knows he could have flew down.

I guess because I was a elyvater operater myself I got a feller feelin of simpathy about the organ elyvaters. They was a organ player I knew who got to hittin the bottle as they say and he was jest a bad luck kid. He come down on the elyvater after a solo oncet and this was in a theayter where they was jest some iron railins to seperate him from the front row and a kid was sittin with his leg over the railin and the elyvater come down and broke his leg. And then another time this organ player was in a big theayter where they had a organ duet for a solo and the other organ player was at the other side of the orkestry pit on what they call a slave organ. But when it come time for the solo this guy was woozy from drinkin and he didnt come out of his dressin room so the other organ player he run over to the big organ and brung it up on the elyvater to play the solo alone, but by then the other guy come to enough to stagger over to where the door to the pit was and for some reason it didnt lock and he opens the door and falls into the pit and it was summer and he had on a wite soot and he got all smeared over with black grease and of course he got fired but he got his job back a few weeks later because the mgr. said he would rather have him drunk than most other organ players sober.

They has been several organ players that fell off of a organ elyvater and got hurt. That is on acct they isnt generally much room around the edges and so they put up a kind of a peace of wood around the edge which is easy to trip over and

even if you dont they isnt much room to stand up and I would rather have one in a cage that I can run up and down in a office building. Which is why most organ players they dont try to stand up to make there announcements but they jest swivel around on the bench and wear out the seat of there pants.

But I guess the thing the organ players hate the most is these sifers. Mostly they is someone standin around to dash up and fix a sifer in a concert but until it gets fixed the organ player can either bang at the note to try to get it off or he can jest keep agoin and not to notice it or he can jest quit playin which is maybe the best way because that way he can show the audience that it aint his fault. I always remember one feller and he didnt get a sifer until he got to the end of his concert and he was playin a encore and he couldnt get the sifer off so finely he stopped and leaned over and patted the organ and says, That's all rite, dear, youre tired, and walks off the stage. □

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AN OUTLINE FOR A COURSE IN THEATRE ORGAN - 2

The Nature of the Instrument

by John Muri

The theatre organ of the nineteen-twenties was an accommodation to a demand for relatively low-cost music, to scarcity of space in organ chambers, and to the taste of theatre-goers. Initial costs, ranging up to one thousand dollars for a rank of pipes, were high; but the instrument required only one musician who could provide music of any kind, even percussions and sound-effects. One player could effectively substitute for the work of several musicians.

Even though early mechanical instruments incorporated bells, drums, etc., Dan Barton must be given much of the credit for making percussions playable from a console. On his Bartola, a pianist could play an organ melody with his right hand and piano accompaniment with his left.

As theatres became larger, chambered pipe organs were installed. The unit system was readily accepted because of its economy. With increased wind-pressures, ten inches and higher, a small organ could sound as formidable as larger low-pressured church installations. A ten-rank unit organ can be impressive in a large room with good reverberation.

The weakness of the unit organ is its use of a single rank to perform several jobs. Single ranks do not have much variety in their several registers; the upper ranges of a flute do not take on the nature of piccolo tone. Trumpets or tubas in the four-foot registers are almost invariably shrill; they certainly do not produce clarion tone. Saxophones are unsatisfactory most of the time, changing disagreeably in voicing as they move up octave by octave. Kinuras are quite variable; they are either too loud, too soft, too nasal, or too thin. Kimball made uniformly good snarly Kinuras; Wurlitzer's were almost always thin and stringy. Strings are usually the weakest ranks in theatre

organs; seemingly not enough care was put into their voicing. Tibias have been variable, even though they are the most characteristic stop of theatre organs. Organists sought primarily to have a full, round, airy tone; some wanted a warbling sound. Good theatre organ stops were rare and chancy things; one envied the organist who had well-voiced and scaled pipes to play on.

As for tremulants, theatre organs usually didn't have enough of them. The ordinary six or seven-stop instrument had two tremulants, one for the vox and the other for everything else, including the 16-foot pedal Bourdon, an extension of the flute rank. Too often a tremulant would work well on one rank but perform badly on the rest of the organ. Most attempts at finding a shake that would work satisfactorily for most — if not all — of the stops would fail. The argument about how fast Tibia tremulants should be set have been unceasing. Tremulants usually covered up bad voicing and unmatched ranks. Most of the smaller organs (less than ten ranks) had ugly ensembles when played without tremulant. Furthermore, good, full crescendos could not be built up by imperceptibly increasing degrees. Small theatre organs had great gaps in their dynamic ranges. Clarinets and Oboe Horns might be as loud as the Diapason; there might be no intermediate stop between the Flute and a Diaphonic Diapason.

Not much writing has appeared on the subjects of tonality, voicing, and balance in theatre organs. We shall get improvements in small unit-organ building when theorists and engineers pay more attention to

Mr. Muri's opinions expressed herein are his own and do not necessarily reflect the policies of ATOS or THEATRE ORGAN Magazine.

those matters. Why does a good Wurlitzer, Morton, or Kimball ensemble sound different from that of any other? Some of the answers lie in the mechanics of construction. Complete answers will require measurement of the blending of timbres or overtones produced normally and by overblowing, and of the relative loudness of individual ranks of pipes. Little has been published since Herman Helmholtz wrote his "On the Sensations of Tone as a Physiological Basis for the Theory of Music" in 1863. George A. Audsley's chapter on voicing in his "The Art of Organ Building" (1905) testifies to the author's inability to describe what he calls the art (not the craft) of voicing. He criticized the engineers of his time for neglecting the study of pipe-organ acoustics. He could say the same thing today.

One cannot fail to notice the deceptions that theatre-organ designers practiced in their desire to produce impressive consoles. One builder made big three-manual consoles for six and seven-rank organs. Sometimes the third manual was not even hooked up. One builder made a console with two full stopbolsters on which none of the tabs in the top bolster operated anything. Although the extra tabs were labeled with an array of tonal resources, none of them existed in the organ.

Builders never agreed on a uniform system of stop-tab and division layout. Wurlitzer seemed to have reached an ideal layout for their Publix 4/20's (you can find what you want on them very easily), but serious deviations from the pattern exist on at least one of their largest instruments. Most builders put the pedal stop-tabs on the left side of the bolsters; a few put them on the right. Some put solo tablets to the right of the accompaniment; others did the reverse.

Music racks were often placed much too high for comfortable use, just so a horseshoe design of tablets could be unbroken. The racks were usually much too thin to hold enough music for a full feature-film. To a considerable degree, organists were driven to faking their music because of the inconvenience that poor rack-design caused in actual performance.

Little thought was given to the placing of consoles for organist-

convenience. The Chicago Theatre and Radio City Music Hall provide examples of consoles placed on a side so close to one chamber that one can barely hear the other a block away across the auditorium. The placing of organ chambers was also something to howl at; they might be found anywhere. One big one in New York City was placed underneath the stage, where water from an ice show might leak into the chests, and where the sound was choked off from the auditorium when the orchestra elevator rose in front of the swell-shades. Another big one had to have tone-chutes and electronic amplification so that the audience could hear it. Many were placed in small crowded chambers, where attempts by servicemen to get at parts of the organ would necessitate tearing out other parts of the instrument. Percussion and soft stops were placed so far back in chambers as to become all but inaudible, while the loudest stops might be placed right up against the shutters.

Theatre organs are generally unsuited to the performance of works by classical organ composers. There is not enough choice among tonalities to create proper effects and balances. An organ with only one or two sixteen-foot pedal stops cannot deal with the pedal requirements of Bach. The pedal will be either too loud or too soft for the rest of the registration. An organ with only one Diapason must use whatever is available to match the Diapason tone, usually a lone Tuba. Some "legitimate" organ works may be satisfactorily played on theatre organs. The finale to Reubke's *Ninety-fourth Psalm* is quite suggestive of movie music, and pieces like Will MacFarlane's *Scotch Fantasia*, Hollins' *Concert Overture*, and R.S. Stoughton's esoteric pieces will go rather well, but as for items like Deszo d'Antalfy's *Drifting Clouds* (a beautiful composition) — forget it unless you have about twenty ranks. Small organs can't cut it.

As for the present scene, most of our large instruments are only in partial working order. Inoperative piston mechanisms are strewn across the land. Consoles with stop-tabs that do not bring on what they say they will (for example, an Oboe-Horn tablet that brings on a Post Horn) require special care and create

pitfalls for visiting players.

In 1931, a Mr. Elliot B. Spaulding wrote an article, "The Bumbulums", in which he had nothing good to say for the theatre organ. He condemned audience taste more than he excoriated the organists' performances, all in a vehement and

patronizing tone. The article has recently been reprinted in a couple of ATOS chapter bulletins. Confronted by these severe criticisms, what does one say? In our next article, "Function in Theatres", we shall attempt a reply and a defense of the theatre organ.



Heading in the right direction... Destination, San Francisco!

This snapshot, taken in January, 1975, illustrates once again the mutual interest in railroading, which many organ enthusiasts share. The 1½ inch scale, coal burning, steam locomotive, "Cyclops," one of the largest of the several scales including (½ and ¾ inch) which are operated at the Golden Gate Live Steamers, Inc., club loop in Tilden Park, Oakland, Calif., is shown being driven by Ray Weaver, a retired locomotive fireman. Following Ray, Carsten Henningsen, in turn followed by Bill Langford.

Regular readers will remember Carsten as the owner of Ye Olde Pizza Joynt in Hayward, Calif., the

originator of pizza house organ installations over ten years ago. Carsten also owns the "Cyclops!" Bill Langford, veteran of numerous regular broadcasts, the ABC Paramount radio staff, and his own show "Portraits in Black and White," uses his imagination and talent bringing out the best in the "Mighty Warfield Wurlitzer," at the Joynt. In so doing, he has become an institution in the Bay Area. To hear Bill and the many other artists and installations in the Bay Area, get on the right track and make your reservations for the 1975 ATOS National Convention, July 15th to 20th in San Francisco, — where hot air is put to many uses! □

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HOWARD BURTON

Theatre Organist and Technician

by Lloyd E. Klos

There is an old adage which reads: "Build a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door." Howard Burton of Marion, Iowa must believe in this somewhat. However, he doesn't employ a mousetrap as a magnet for his friends; for about ten years, he has maintained and played theatre organs in his home. And this hobby has lead directly into a thriving business which produces solid-state relay systems for pipe organs.

Mr. Burton is a former theatre organist, and so, came into the theatre organ hobby quite naturally. Born in Clark County, Iowa, in 1901, he began four years of serious piano study at the age of 17, followed by several years of dance band work in the area.

Beginning in November 1923, he played, in succession, piano, Photo-

player and organ in the 1000-seat Strand Theatre in Creston, Iowa. He accompanied the silents and vaudeville there until the winter of 1926-27, when he played a four-month engagement at the 600-seat Rex Theatre in Geneseo, N.Y. He then returned to the Creston Strand where he played until August, 1929.

Desiring to improve his technique, he entered the Knauss School of Theatre Organ Playing at Allentown, Pa. "My instructor was Mr. Raymond E. Horlacher, first assistant instructor. My study began on a 2/4 straight-console Kimball, and after the first month, I advanced to a 3/11 theatre Kimball, on which I completed the course. I also had some instruction on a 3/11 Wurlitzer."

He branched a bit into radio, playing on KMA in Shenandoah, Iowa, and on KSIB in Creston.

By this time, the talkies had arrived and from December, 1929, until his retirement, Mr. Burton was employed as a projectionist, in a radio and music business, as an electronic inspector for the Federal Government and, for 11 years, worked at Collins Radio Co. in Cedar Rapids, retiring in 1968. "During my years with the government in several locations, I always managed to find a theatre pipe organ which was made available to me for practice and enjoyment. These included instruments in the Granada in Kansas City, Kan.; the Lincoln in Lincoln, Nebraska; and the Orpheum in Sioux City, Iowa.

"Upon moving to Marion, I discovered the 3/13 Barton in the Iowa Theatre in Cedar Rapids and later was engaged to play Sunday solo spots at the Paramount for three years. I have enjoyed helping with the restoring of the Paramount Wurlitzer, which has made a comeback via concerts."

Following his retirement, he has devoted much of his time to building solid-state relay systems for pipe organs. Before this, however, Mr. Burton in the early sixties installed his first pipe organ in his home, a 2/7 Geneva with harp, chimes and piano, controlled by a straight console. "It is my understanding that this organ was originally installed in a small theatre unknown to me, then returned to the factory, and about 1930 was installed in the Fairbank Funeral Home in Muscatine, Iowa. It was removed from the home in 1961, rebuilt, and after a friend informed me of its impending sale, I bought it."

By 1970, Mr. Burton convinced himself that he wanted a better instrument. "I wanted an organ with

Howard Burton at the 3/11 Wurlitzer in the Cedar Rapids Paramount. He played Sunday solos from 1958 to 1961. (Burton Coll.)





The maestro at his Wurlitzer Opus 778 console. The organ has been enlarged to ten ranks with a harp added. (Burton Coll.)

all the goodies on it — the accoutrements of a theatre organ, such as drums, bells, xylophone etc.” So, he dismantled the Geneva, selling some parts.

A friend, and former student at the Knauss School, Kenneth W. Smith, was instrumental in Mr. Burton’s acquiring a Style E Wurlitzer, Opus 778, shipped in January, 1924, to the 960-seat Paramount Theatre on Chicago’s Milwaukee Avenue. The theatre later became the Logan. The organ was the first of 14 Style E’s to be installed in the Windy City. Used until 1937, it was removed and placed in storage in the Chicago area until 1967, when it was purchased by Smith whose home was in Evergreen Park, Ill.

“Ken did much reconditioning, and was in the process of installing the organ in his home when ill health forced him to take things easy. I bought the organ in July, 1970, and with the wonderful assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Steiner of Cedar Rapids, we made three round trips to Evergreen Park to bring it here.”

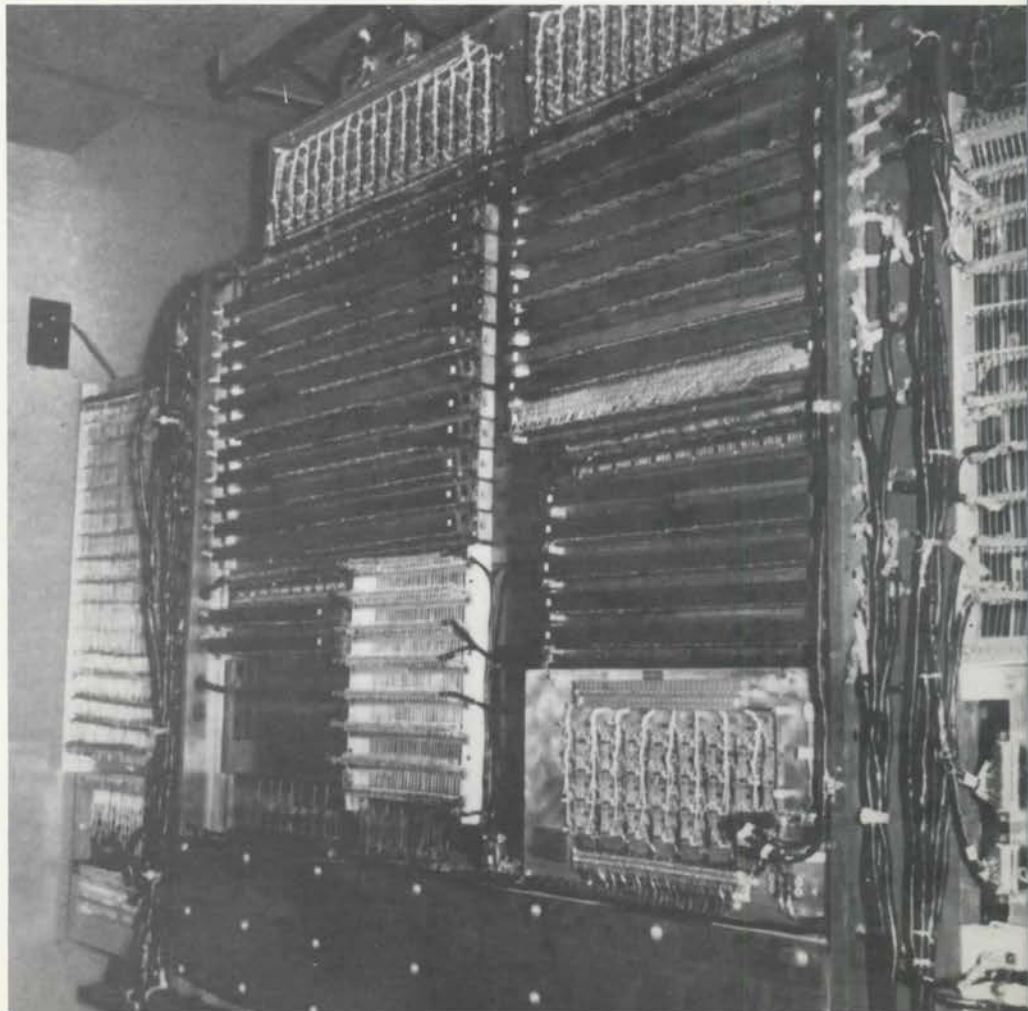
The organ originally had seven ranks: Diaphonic Diapason, Concert Flute, Tibia, Violin, Violin Celeste, Vox Humana and Trumpet. An Oboe Horn, Salicional and another

Vox have been added. Percussions include Glockenspiel, Chrysoglott, Xylophone and Chimes. Traps include Horses’ Hoofs Surf, Bird and Train Whistle, Auto Horn, Fire Gong, Doorbell, Siren, Sleighbells, Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Cymbal, Crash Cymbal, Triangle, Chinese Block, Tambourine and Castanets. It looks as if Mr. Burton’s quest for an organ “with all the goodies” has been rewarded.

Power is supplied by a 3 hp, single-phase 220-volt motor, and a Spencer blower provides 15” of wind pressure. All leather has been replaced with new leather, or modern materials. The console, originally painted white, now has seven coats of varnish. The studio in which the console is housed, measures 13’ x 27’ and seats 25. The console is placed at the opposite end of the studio from the pipe chamber. A Chickering 5½’ grand piano is located directly in front of the swell shades.

One innovation has been the placing of all chests and relays on casters to facilitate maintenance and cleaning. All electric connections are

The switch stack and the solid-state relay system. The arrangement allows for additional ranks and the entire unit is movable to facilitate cleaning and maintenance. (Cedar Rapids Gazette Photo)



equipped with plugs for the same reasons. Another nuance is that the original electro-pneumatic systems of relays has been replaced by the Burton Solid-State Relay System. There are a total of 276 power transistors and 3051 series diodes in the system.

The pipe room temperature is kept at 68 degrees in winter. A dehumidifier is run during the summer months. The temperature approximates that of a church or theatre.

Although Mr. Burton plans for additional ranks and percussions, symbolic of many theatre organ owners, the organ is now 90% playable. He is equipped to show silent movies, and has started a movie library, which already includes films of Chaplin, Laurel & Hardy, Lloyd, Arbuckle and Semon. He is equally proficient at accompanying the silents on organ or piano. □



Console of Howard Burton's first organ, a 2/7 Geneva, installed in his home in 1961. The console was completely rebuilt. (Burton Coll.)

Closing Chord

Ira Swett, a former member of the L.A. Chapter, who gave several midnight concerts at the Wiltern Theatre many years ago, and recorded two LP record albums there, passed away March 12, 1975. Born in L.A. on May 18, 1913, Ira lived there most of his life, attending Polytechnic ("Poly") High School, where he played the pipe organ in the auditorium with the late Phil Olson and the late Truman Welch, both of whom were well known to theatre organ buffs in Southern California.

Ira later attended USC, where he continued his studies in music, then worked for many years for the Salvation Army as its program director. He was also a radio organist for several years, and played over different radio stations in the area, including a regular Saturday morning broadcast over KFVB, using the 3-manual Wurlitzer which subsequently became the property of the late Joe Kearns.

Ira was best known nation-wide by the electric railway buffs for his well-documented histories of various streetcar and interurban lines. He owned perhaps the largest collection

of photos of Pacific Electric Railway cars in existence. During World War II, he published a monthly newsletter for electric railway buffs serving in the armed forces, keeping them informed of what was happening on the various electric railways. This newsletter later evolved into periodic treatises on specific railway systems which were so thoroughly detailed that the editor of TRAINS magazine coined the phrase, "Ira Swett-thoroughness."

Roderick Hallowell "Sandy" Macpherson, a member of the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame, died on March 3, 1975 on his 78th birthday.

Born in Paris, Ontario, Canada, he became a musician after holding several assorted jobs. He played theatres in Hamilton, Ont., Buffalo (Shea's Hippodrome), and Syracuse (Empire), before going to England where he was featured organist at the Empire, Leicester Square in London. He then succeeded Reginald Foort as staff organist of the BBC, a position he was to hold over 25 years.

During World War II, he played numerous radio programs for both the home audience, and soldier audience overseas, "Sandy's Mailbag," "Sandy's Half-Hour" and "A Message From Sandy" being among the popular shows.

After the war, he continued in broadcasting, though on a smaller scale, and also served as a church organist. He retired a few years ago.

(His complete biography appeared in the Winter '64-'65 THEATRE ORGAN).

Dr. Arthur J. Movius, Jr., prominent surgeon in Billings, Montana, had two hobbies — ham radio and theatre organ. Movius was destined to be a medic; his father, also a physician, founded the clinic where his son practiced the healing art. The son loved to converse with far-away places via his ham rig with about the same zeal he had for playing the organ. He was an accomplished musician and his residence was pipe-equipped.

At 1:00 a.m. on an April morning, Dr. Movius was found unconscious in his ham radio room. Taken to St. Vincent's hospital, he was pronounced dead on arrival. Burns on his body indicated accidental electrication. He was 64. His wife Evelyn, survives.

Organist **Bea Bailey (Sheehan)**, who teamed with pianist/organist Ramona Gerhard for "Twenty Flying Fingers" radiocasts over WCCO, Minneapolis, during the '30s, died at her Minneapolis home in mid-April, reports Alden Miller. □



Hollywood Cavalcade

Directed by Lyle W. Nash

WHO IS WHERE . . . Reginald Gardiner lives quietly in Westwood, Calif. . . Cecilia Parker, away from films since 1958, lives in Ventura, Calif., with her husband, three children and two grandchildren . . . John Agar, Jr., recently lived at 32003 Viewlake Lane, Westlake Village, Calif., 91361 . . . King Vidor Willow Creek Ranch, R.R. #1, Box 97, Paso Robles, Calif., 93446, is the new address for the famed director . . . Mona Freeman, who was a Paramount prettie for many years, is now an accomplished artist and recently had a big showing of her work. She commands up to \$2,500. for a portrait. Still lives in the Hollywood area.

SELECTED SHORTS . . . Gene Tierney, 54, wants to return to films if she can trim down to 130 pounds. The Houston society figure still has lots of fans who will welcome her back . . . Our Gang member Chester Morrison died in Portland, Oregon, this year . . . Agnes Moorehead left an estate of around \$400,000. Only yesterday Bonita Granville (Wrather) was playing tough juveniles and today she's a dignified trustee of Loyla Marymount College in L.A. . . . Irene Dunne told Audiences recently: "I never wanted to be a character actress."

FINAL CALL . . . Gertrude Niesen . . . Marjorie Main . . . Frederic March . . . Larry Parks . . . Richard Conte . . . Bob Custer . . . Susan Hayward . . . Ben Blue and George Stevens.

IN THE 1926 MGM silent film *The Temptress* with Greta Garbo, directors Mauritz Stiller and Fred Niblo staged a Spanish duel with bull whips. Antonio Moreno and Roy d'Arcy used whips about 15 feet long and lashed away at each other in a ground ring outline some 60 feet across. The skill the actors (or doubles?) used was electrifying and much more satisfying than the gory violence of today. This film and about a dozen others from early MGM days is part of a series seen on educational TV Stations or on Public Broadcasting outlets. Very worthwhile.

IT SEEMS TO ME: Use of the world "super star." is out of hand. I think we have had only three super stars in 75 years. Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy were recognized in every part of the world. Modern day flash in the pop artists who hang on TV for a couple of years think they are super stars. But quickly now can you name a super star of TV of 1955 or 1965?

FOR YOUR INFORMATION . . . This is the 100th anniversary of birth of Zane Grey and D.W. Griffith . . .

America's beloved artist Thomas Hart Benton painted background scenes for Vitagraph films in 1914 . . . Jesse L. Lasky Jr., gives a masterful portrayal of the tyranny, egoism and intolerance of Cecil B. DeMille in his new book *Whatever Happend to Hollywood*. He notes, also, that CBD was a creative genius.

THE WORLD famous Hollywood Club, founded in 1916, has closed. There was little demand for its services in recent years. The building grew old and badly needed updating. Once upon a time young starlets like Marilyn Monroe, Zasu Pitts, Marie Windsor and others used it as a home before star status came their way.

ELEANOR POWELL will be honored this coming Labor Day weekend in Hollywood by members of a group called CINECON. This group, composed of fans, collectors of films, historians and writers, has met annually for the last 11 years. They come from all over the nation. They enjoy meeting guest stars (Esther Ralston, Patsy Ruth Miller, Lois Wilson, Leatrice Joy, etc.), showing old films and making awards. Details about the event may be had from Bill Mooney, 2835 N. 61st Place, Scottsdale, Arizona, 85257.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS: Matty Kemp, the 1928 collegiate type, has been and still is an executive of Mary Pickford Corp. He has done great work in preserving, collecting and making available many of Pickford's films . . . "Away" from Hollywood seems to be the fashion for Hollywood previews. Popular cities include San Francisco, Seattle and especially Denver. The Colorado city audiences are presumed to be a good cross section of all America . . . Jean Arthur has lived in Carmel, Calif., for 37 years . . . Inventor Lee deForest showed his first sound on film movie at New York's Rivoli theatre in April 1923. The movie industry leaders looked and yawned.

NEWSREEL . . . Memorial services for Tyrone Power who died in 1958 are growing larger each year at his tomb in Hollywood Memorial Park . . . There may not be such a thing as an old bold stunt airplane pilot but there are old, bold and expert movie stuntmen. Harvey Parry, now 74, is still working harder than ever. He began tumbling for the movie makers in 1919 . . . Minta Durfee Arbuckle, 85, was a smash hit last Christmas in Edenburg, Texas where she appeared for a big city event honoring women.

COMMENTS, contributions and questions about HC are ever welcome at P.O. Box 113, Pasadena, Ca., 91102. □

Curtain going up again... with Baldwin's *Cinema II* the theatre organ of the 70's



Back in the Roaring Twenties, the theatre organ was the "voice" of the silent movies . . . a mighty instrument famous for orchestral versatility, incredible novelty effects, an overwhelmingly big ensemble sound. Baldwin brings all of this musical razzle-dazzle back to life with CINEMA II . . . and adds the musical magic of *FantomFingers*, the amazing product of space age electronics.

If you're looking for totally new musical excitement . . . a totally new world of musical experimentation . . . you're looking for Baldwin CINEMA II . . . theatre organ at its best . . . today! For a colorful brochure, write Baldwin, P.O. Box 2525, Department TO6, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45201.



We're in the Orpheum!

Mindful readers will recall, from April's issue, our leaving the Orpheum Theatre in a state of clouded availability; for the house is usually opened only for extended stage engagements, of which several had to be firmly scheduled before the ATOS dates could be confirmed. With that done, the clouds have lifted, the contract is in hand, and a most unique Robert Morton is being readied for three memorable events featuring England's George Blackmore; Paul Quarino; and the Bay Area's own "Velvet Thrill," Jim Roseveare.

This is most fortunate, for the Orpheum's is the last Market Street organ still in its original setting and the theatre itself is one of only two major city palaces neither demolished nor twinned. Despite an ill-conceived redecoration two decades

ago, the theatre still has many attractive features, and retains much of its era's flavor.

Opened February 20, 1926, as the Pantages, the 2500 (now 1865) seat theatre was the third to last built in the extensive vaudeville chain of that most remarkable of entrepreneurs, Pericles Alexander Pantages, a Greek by birth, but the sort of man for whom fin-de-siecle America was the pluperfect time and place. Leaving home at age nine, Pantages, after several years at sea and in Panama, jumped ship in Seattle then roused about the West Coast, as a promoter and sometimes fighter, until the event which was to destine his life — the Alaska Gold Rush.

Much in the manner of Scrooge McDuck, Pantages adventured to the Yukon in 1897, there making and losing three separate fortunes extracting the precious metal — not from the frozen earth directly, but from other, less resourceful, prospectors, who were found to yield up the shiny stuff far more readily. An earlier experience in theatre management, in San Francisco, encouraged Pantages to ply that trade in the North, but when the auric bonanza turned borasca, he salvaged only enough money from this last venture to join the exodus.

Settling in Seattle, Pantages opened a theatre there in 1902. Endowed with a keen head for figures,

The cathedrals of Mexico inspired architect B. Marcus Priteca to create one of his most intricately detailed theatres, described by decorator Tony Heinsbergen as a "drip castle." The grills above the altar-like construction blended perfectly with the upper walls before the redecoration.

(Steve Levin Photo)



and the blessed sense of knowing what the public will pay money to see, he parlayed this house into an empire of nearly 70 theatres, about half of which he owned personally. Second in power and prestige to Orpheum (R-K-O) among the vaudeville circuits, the Pantages chain was acquired by the premier organization in 1929 for some \$24,000,000. At that time, the San Francisco theatre took the name of its new owner. Pantages himself died in 1936.

In Seattle, Pantages met the two young men who were to be the arbiters of luxury during his circuit's greatest period of growth: architect B. Marcus Priteca, and decorator Anthony Heinsbergen. Seldom have two craftsmen enjoyed as symbiotic a relationship, with Priteca's love of ornament and detail — a perfect complement to Heinsbergen's fine eye for color and texture.

The early Pantages theatres were almost always elaborations on Priteca's first effort, the slightly boxy, classically adorned San Francisco house of 1911; in a style dubbed "Pantages Greek" by its architect, and "Louis-Pantages" by a latter-day wag. Heinsbergen came aboard in 1916, and later exposed Priteca to the Spanish and Italian Renaissance designs the architect was to use to great effect in the San Diego, (new) San Francisco, and Fresno Pantages Theatres, of 1924, 1926, and 1928.

The San Francisco theatre was by far the most ambitious of these very similar later houses, and was, until 1930, the largest Pantages built. To maximize seating on a smallish, irregular site, Priteca opted for two shallow balconies — something of a rarity in 1926, but most effective in creating an intimate feeling in a capacious space. The intricate ornamental plastering was contrived to suggest elaborate stonework, with dressed blocks on the walls and massive carvings about the proscenium, organ screens and ceiling.

As always, Heinsbergen's decorations provided the ideal adornment: the proscenium, organ screen "altars," and the sidewalls up to the second balcony were a light, variegated, travertine; the upper walls a medium mottled green with applied designs and the latticework ceiling a darker green with poly-

chrome highlights. This was all brought out by Priteca's masterful use of light: three tiers of illuminated coves around the ceiling and within a great sunburst fixture, combined with subtle effects about the organ screens, bathed the whole space with a warm glow perfectly matched to the colorfully painted details and simulated tapestry hangings.

When Cinerama redecorated in 1953, the walls were painted out in that chalky pink peculiar to theatre renovations, and all decorative lighting was eliminated in favor of rose-colored downlights. Similar atrocities were committed in the lobby and other public spaces, but the major ceilings and the ravishing balcony soffits were left untouched to suggest what this theatre once was. Yet, despite what is gone, much remains to surround suitably the big sound of the Robert Morton organ.

One of the first vaudeville magnates to realize that movies posed a genuine threat to variety entertainment, Pantages made pictures a

significant part of his presentations earlier than most. Beginning with the Los Angeles Pantages of 1919, every house he built was supplied with an organ — always a Robert Morton — almost always installed underneath the stage.

With 22 well-unified ranks, the San Francisco instrument was not only the largest in the Pantages chain, but stands among the most substantial yet of California's only major organ builder. Eschewing total placement beneath the stage, the architect allotted four distinct areas for pipe chambers: both sides of the proscenium, a space above the projection booth and the traditional pit.

Very similar to a large Wurlitzer "main chamber", the pit, or "center," chamber at the Orpheum contains no radical voices, but rather sets which might blend with and support an orchestra. A small second chamber in the pit once contained the traps, which have since been moved into the "left" chamber. To

A product of Robert Morton's "dreadnaught" period, the Orpheum console, with 221 stops, is as large as it looks. Now located outside the pit, it will be returned to its elevator when the stage apron is removed — perhaps by convention time. (Steve Levin Photo)



THEY DON'T BUILD THEATRE ORGANS LIKE THIS ANYMORE

support the now-removed Cinerama screen, the pit was covered in 1953, mandating amplification of the chamber there, but better-than-even chances are quoted for having the apron stripped away by Convention time.

The sets in the normally placed "left" and "right" chambers comprise what alone would make a plausible eleven-rank specification, needing little color or foundational support from the pit. The grills through which these high-set chambers speak once blended perfectly with the dark finish of the upper walls, but since the redecoration, this effect has been lost.

The "echo" chamber sits directly atop the old projection room and speaks through the lighting coves and open ceiling. It is a complete, autonomous division; playable on the Pedal, Orchestral and Solo registers. Despite the great separation of the divisions, the organ's sound is coherent, a characteristic due largely to the well-planned independence of its major parts.

The massive four-manual console — at which presided the likes of Buss McClelland, Henri LeBel and Eddie Horton during its heyday — originally sat at pit-center on a combined elevator and turntable. Inaccessible from below since the stage apron was built, the console was moved out of the pit three years ago to permit its use in a stage show, with its return pending the opening of the pit.

In recent years, this unusual machine has been concertized upon by Gaylord Carter and George Wright in addition to its occasional use by ATOS and various short-term lessees of the facility; and has been recorded for Doric Records by Tiny James. Always playable, the organ has been kept, since 1953, by veteran organ buff and ATOE charter member Ron Downer.

As the Orpheum organ is seldom heard by the public, and the house's capacity is far in excess of Convention needs, tickets to Jim Roseveare's program are to be offered for general sale, as are those for John Seng's at the Paramount. Pre-register by July 1, or simply stop by the Hilton on July 15 between noon and nine. We'll be happy to see you, and you'll be glad you came! □

This article appeared in the August 1974 issue of the BROADCASTER, published by and for employees of Delco Electronics Division, General Motors Corporations, Kokomo, Indiana, and is printed here by special permission.

Words are simply not adequate to describe the music that pulses forth from the magnificent theatre organ that Delco retiree Frank May has reconstructed in his home. So we will have to settle for lesser things like how and why he built it.

This is not the modern kind of organ you might see advertised on TV, guaranteed to belt out *Home on the Range* after three days of finger exercises. Rather, what Frank has built is an instrument of the type that once filled with music the great, palatial movie houses of the 1920s and 30s.

Frank and Frances May, members of Central Indiana Chapter, at the console of the 4/19 Barton.

Giant, ornate theatres like the Indiana in Indianapolis or the Fox or Michigan in Detroit all had elaborate organs that simulated orchestrated music for the silent films of that period. A relatively elite group of talented and well-paid organists traveled the country playing them.

With the advent of talking pictures, theatre organ popularity began to wane though the instruments remained for several years providing music between movies and during interludes. Nearly obsolete in the modern cinemas of today, the tradition of the theatre organ and its music is now being preserved by hobbyists like Frank and his wife who have taken great pains to



restore and reconstruct the instruments in their homes.

A long-time theatre organ buff, Frank began the meticulous work of restoring and building one in his home in 1966 when he retired from Delco after 20 years in the engineering and quality control departments.

"I suppose I first became fascinated with theatre organs as a boy when I used to hear them in theatres in Elkhart (Ind.) and Chicago," says Frank. "I can remember seeing the movies twice just to listen to the thrilling music.

"When I retired, I viewed building an organ as a project that would both keep me active and call on my experience in the field of electronics."

Working with knowledge accumulated from a life-long study of theatre organs, Frank purchased several of the old instruments, one of which had been transplanted from a theatre to a Muncie Church where it had been used for 25 years. He obtained another fine Barton organ from Chicago radio station WLS.

He has added a sizable room to his home west of Kokomo to accommodate the more than 1,400 organ pipes. The same room houses the maze of electronics he substituted for pneumatic devices used to convert finger pressure on the console's four keyboards to music escaping from the pipes.

"At any given time, an average of six fingers are touching keys on the

console," says Frank. "When this happens, music is coming from literally hundreds of pipes, all controlled in computer-type fashion by the electronics."

With most of the components of the eight-ton instrument having been collected from other old organs, Frank pegs the average age of his organ at 50 years — not including the space age electronics.

Frank and his wife, Frances, are members of the 5,000-member American Theatre Organ Society (800 of the members have built theatre organs in their homes) and spend much of their time traveling throughout the country attending concerts and meetings of theatre organ enthusiasts.

Frank modestly asserts that he is a technician and not a performer, yet by way of lessons taken since his retirement he has sharpened his skills at the keyboard. He now plays the likes of *Lady of Spain* and *Fascination* with ease and smoothness.

Are there any problems associated with having the volume of sound in one's home that was originally intended to fill a theatre or arena? Not at all. And to make sure the neighbors don't get blown out, the May house is triple insulated.

Frank and his wife extend a welcome to Delco friends interested in pipe organs to listen to or play their unique instrument. □

Frank is dwarfed by some of the 1,400 organ pipes housed in a special room he built onto his home.



VOX POPS



Conducted by Stu Green

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

Dr. Roger Elser reports from Charleston, West Virginia, that the 3/17 Uniphone organ, removed from the Rivoli theatre in Indianapolis, is now in storage, is for sale, and that owner Tom Ferree told him that he (Tom) and his crew would be glad to help the purchaser install the beloved instrument in a new home. Reading between the lines, there's a tinge of sadness apparent. Tom and his crew worked very hard to make the Rivoli installation a paying proposition.



Speaking of the Rivoli theatre, at least the future of its Barton lift is assured. The Central Indiana Chapter's April NEWSLETTER reports that it has been purchased by Phillip Hedback to raise and lower the console in the local Hedback Community theatre after the 2/10 Page organ has been installed, with chapter help. Mr. Hedback's hobby is classic autos.



But what was it that caused the Indianapolis Rivoli organ project to founder despite the great investment of money, time and TLC? A report from Edward Becco (Doc's son), stationed at Ft. Benjamin Harrison, says the 1200-seat theatre was the victim of diminishing business, a run-down neighborhood, vandalism, high operating costs and inability to obtain enough good films (Tom is reported to have nixed X-rated films). The final attraction was Disney's *Fantasia*, according to Becco. The last hope was the valiant but futile effort of the Central Indiana Chapter to raise funds to buy theatre and organ. Now it looks like a date with the wrecking ball.



It looks as if the Seattle area will be graced with still another pizza parlor with theatre organ, according to Puget Sounder, Margaret Sabo. Bob Koons, who owns Big Bob's Pizza at Federal Way, is planning to open one in the Burien area near the Seattle-Tacoma airport. He owns the ex-Coliseum Theatre's 4-manual Wurlitzer, and plans to use this organ as a basis of his installation which he hopes will have 45 ranks. If Koons' plans are realized, it will be the largest organ in a pizza parlor in the country.



We have a goodie from Karl Cole, who normally plies his organ-playing trade in the Central New York area. Karl landed an April concert en-

gagement at the famed Suburban restaurant, Wanaque, New Jersey, but didn't take into consideration the risk to his youthful waistline. House organist Frank Cimmino and owner Jim Provesserio were happy with Cole's music and they showed their appreciation by stuffing Karl full of wonderful food. Stepping on his scale back in Syracuse, Karl remarked, "The Suburban was the only place I ever played a concert where I gained five pounds the same evening — before I could even get out of the door."



John Muri. He's courteous. (Stufoto)

Add Rosa Rio to the list of those who think John Muri is tops. John was received most warmly at the time of his Connecticut concert early in February. "His background music to *Pacific 231* was very, very good,"



Karl Cole. Music with avoirdupois. Left: Frank Cimmino; Right: Jim Provesserio.

says Rosa. I have made it a "must" to have a letter of welcome for each visiting organist who gives a concert at Thomaston, and John Muri is the only one who ever wrote me and offered 'thanks for helping to make my visit memorable.'" Evidently, John follows his own advice, "Care and Feeding of Organists" which appeared in *THEATRE ORGAN* awhile back.



When Bill Glasson and Terry Lloyd left their native Australia for a visit to the land "up over," they didn't anticipate fixing a balky organ. But that's what happened. They are known "down under" as reliable organ fans and fixers, and here they were, guests of Doric Records' Frank Killinger and Dick Penberthy at the grand daddy of pizzerys, "Ye Olde Pizza Joynt" in Hayward, Calif., and organist Bill Langford was being pestered by strange noises issuing from the 3/12 Wurlitzer. So, Bill Glasson did what comes naturally; he rolled up his sleeves and dove into the Wurl's innards. In a few minutes the world's first "pizza organ" was perking perfectly. Declared Bill, "I didn't have to come 10,000 miles. There are plenty of balky organs at home. But this one was no trouble."



Harold Jolles, former theatre organist, now farming in Cattaraugus, N.Y., contributes this gem from his fertile memory. "C. Sharpe Minor once told me his real name was Charles Minor, and he added his mother's name of Sharpe."



John W. Landon, author of the current Jesse Crawford biog, has relocated all his theatre organ artifacts and memorabilia in a large house near the Lexington campus of the University of Kentucky, where he teaches. In addition to a mass of research material, Dr. Landon must also store circa 8,000 78 rpm recordings. Once settled, John will start work on his second book, this one to deal with the history, including the "golden era" of the theatre organ. Despite the attention the Crawford book has focussed on Landon, rank and file ATOSers know him only through the slide lecture he pre-



John Landon. Two new projects upcoming — lectures and a new book. (Stufoto)

sented so ably during the 1974 ATOS convention. They'll soon have a chance to know him better; John is going on the lecture circuit. Armed with countless slides, recordings and a wealth of theatre organ information amassed since childhood, John's illustrated talk should gain wide acceptance. It also isn't generally known he's a fine organist, with two albums released.

Billed as "the world's oldest performing theatre organist", Lloyd Del Castillo presented a most memorable concert for RTOS on May 11. On the first leg of a four-stop eastern tour, Del had the Auditorium The-



The Lloyds, Del Castillo and Klos, interview one another at the RTOS console. Both are organ publication editors. (Dick Harold Photo)

atre audience in stitches from his opening "exit march" to his "search" for the switch which lowered the console. The 1205 concert goes gave the 82-year-old Hall of Famer a standing ovation in appreciation of his musicianship and talent as an entertainer.

Airline Captain Duane Searle, on one of his Philadelphia-Rochester, N.Y. flights for United, reports that the ex-Rochester Piccadilly 3/13 Wurlitzer, Opus 1928, now has its fifth owner. A pizza parlor will be opened in Salt Lake City and the organ installed therein. "The new owner is going to do the job right; he is meticulous and patient. A good installation is assured," said the former ATOS "Veep."

Just before the first of his two presentations of *Kings of Kings*, at the Coronado theatre in Rockford, Illinois on March 20, organist Rex Koury expressed admiration for the well-kept theatre, its organ and the Land of Lincoln Chapter's thoroughness in promoting the event (see cut). Then he discussed his score for *King of Kings*, a film which has become a pre-Easter tradition. What he told the interviewer should be of interest to every young organist who wants to learn the art of accompanying silent films. "The original score was composed as a 'book score,' tailored to follow the movie. However, it is

LAND OF LINCOLN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY
PROUDLY PRESENTS

"KING OF KINGS"
CECIL B. DEMILLE'S 1927 CLASSIC
PRODUCTION OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

CORONADO
312 N. MAIN ST.
ROCKFORD, ILL.
THURSDAY
MARCH 20, 1975
5:30 P.M. & 8:30 P.M.
MUSICAL SCORE
PLAYED BY
REX KOURY
AT THE BARTON PIPE ORGAN

GENERAL ADMISSION

5:30 Performance	8:30 Performance
Adults (Advance).....\$3.00	All Seats (Advance).....\$3.00
Day of Show.....\$3.50	Day of Show.....\$3.50
Students.....\$2.00	

pretty bad for this day and age. My score uses the 'thematic system.' I wrote distinct, recognizable original themes for all the main characters. Then, I improvise on these themes to weave the music together.

"The audience should never be aware of the organist. If they are, he's not doing his job. I don't even know the audience is there, as I lose myself in the music and the film. An organist should heighten the receptiveness of the audience. Both film and music should blend as one. In comedy, we 'close cue' the music, matching it closely to the action. The music can actually make the film funnier."

Peter DeYoung of Cassapolis, Mich. is spearheading a crew of four which is rehabilitating the 2/11 Kimball in the Elco (formerly Lerner) Theatre in Elkhart, Indiana. Working since May 1974, DeYoung reports that the blower was in perfect shape, and most of the leaks in the wind lines have been stopped. The big task is in the console which is in bad shape.

Kimball, now a part of the Jasper Corp., is located in Jasper, Indiana.

Enroute to Denver to see his new grandson, Todd, Doc Bebko stopped off at Rockford, Illinois on March 25 to see his old friend from New York radio days, West Willcox, who was observing his 81st birthday. Then at the Coronado Theatre, Doc performed a special 1½-hour program of "seasonal music and a batch of marches," the latter at the request of Coronado's manager, Mr. Stephen-

son. Rex Koury had played two performances of *King of Kings* the previous week, and Orrill Dunn and his crew had the 4/17 Barton in perfect condition. The audience numbered about 150 and most came down to the console afterwards to shake Doc's hand and talk with the maestro.

Organist Virgil Fox heads a five-member trusteeship which recently took possession of famed Hammond Castle in Gloucester, Mass. Fox will organize and direct an international school of the concert organ, complete with library and museum facilities. Concerts, featuring the castle's 10,000-pipe organ, will be held. Fox came up with the required \$250,000 and set up the trusteeship.

The castle was built in the mid-twenties by inventor John Hays Hammond (no kin to the electronic organ developer) and it was acquired in 1965 by the Catholic Archdiocese of Boston following the inventor's death. The owners have operated it as a museum as Hammond's will directed. Money has become short recently, hence the new ownership. This explains why popular concerts featuring the organ, planned in the coming months have been cancelled. The series had been well received in recent years and artists included Gaylord Carter, Rex Koury, Dennis James, Lee Erwin, Kenneth Wilson and Al Winslow.

ATOSer Harold E. Reynolds of Jackson Heights, NY, says that the Nuggets item in the December THEATRE ORGAN, relative to Egon Dougherty's playing at Loew's Triboro Theatre in 1931, was timely. The theatre was in the process of being razed for an office building. Progress!

On March 15, Carol May presented her dad, former theatre organist Eddie May, with a new 3-deck Rodgers organ. She had been saving it for his 75th birthday in June but Eddie had been ill and needed cheering up. It worked, aided and abetted by the arrival of about 40 friends, including former Central New York theatre organist Betty Lee



Daughter Carol and Eddie May enjoy the new arrival.

(Acme Foto)

Taylor, at the May home in Miami. The 3-hour celebration kept the bar-maid hopping, as well as the special cop assigned to keeping traffic untangled out front. It was just the thing for Eddie's ulcer.

"This Rodgers is so close to pipes, it's unbelievable," chortled an overjoyed Eddie May.

Not much point in reporting on an event more ably covered in Chapter



Chamber shot. Verne Langdon pursues the 'Phantom' through a very old theatre. (Stufoto)

News, but we got to nosing around the catwalks of the Mayfair Music Hall in Santa Monica, Calif., during its initial silent movie night and discovered that the areas once used as chamber space for the long gone 2-chamber Robert Morton are now little balconies often used by the live performers to make contact with their audiences. The movie was the ever-chilling *Phantom of the Opera*, with Verne Langdon accompanying on a borrowed Conn 651 horseshoe job. The shot of the console from the location of the former right chamber was a natural.

Trumpeter Vic Hyde (remember those four harmonizing bugles at the Detroit ATOS convention last year?) adds a footnote on the new land of opportunity, Alaska. Vic did a two-week stint at Anchorage in March and reports that thanks to the big pipeline project, truck drivers are making \$1100 a week and even a salad chef can pull down at least a grand a week. Vic hasn't turned down an October engagement offer for a 21-show deal at \$2,000 a week plus transportation, lodging and meals. Who says show biz is dead?

The production departments of the Wurlitzer Co. in North Tona-wanda, N.Y. are being phased out. The closing, which will eliminate

200-plus production and maintenance jobs, was dictated by economic considerations, according to plant manager, Howard F. Mower. Engineering and research operations will be continued at the plant however. Juke box production closed down in April, 1974, after 40 years and 750,000 units. Since then, 80 electronic organs a day have been fabricated. Future organ manufacturing will be done in Corinth, Miss., and Logan, Utah.



Col. Harry Jenkins (right) and friend. (Stufoto)

Colonel Harry Jenkins, well-known circus organist and ATOS member, is planning a tour next winter. It will involve a silent picture, sing-along, vaudeville playing and organ concert. Harry discovered many theatre organs in good condition during his '74 circus tour and would like to return for some more exposure. Lucky will be the audiences of the silent movie era veteran.

In Toronto, Kay Stokes has become quite a theatre organ enthusiast again, now that the Casa Loma installation is presented in concert monthly. According to Clealan Blakely, the Hall of Famer attends every concert and "her eyes fairly sparkle when talking about the concerts; I am of the opinion that the theatre organ will help her maintain her health and vigor." Kay's good friend, Lillian Brookes, has contributed much background information for a future feature story about Kay.

Our friend Irma — Glen, that is — played a stint for the Unity Vil-

lage, Missouri, "Rose Festival" (May 31 - June 6). She appeared in concert in the Activities Center, playing the religious foundation's new Rodgers style 340.

"Somehow it seems just like having Jess with us again," — that was the reaction of lifetime Jesse Crawford enthusiast Clealan Blakely on hearing the current Doric recordings of Crawford's perforated roll recordings. Writing from his home in Picton, Canada, Blakely also expressed interest in the jacket notes which are part of the package; "I have often felt frustrated in trying to convey to friends the feeling of the '20s in New York. That sense of well-being and feeling of freedom — they were very hard to put into words. (The jacket notes) phrase 'those wonderful innocent days' effectively summarizes the feeling of that era. How sad that the present generation can never know it."

In Celina, Texas, Rodney Yarbrough made comparisons of Doric's *Jesse Crawford Poet of the Organ at His Ballad Best* selections with the same selections recorded by Crawford on Victor 78s and later on radio transcriptions. Rodney reports, "It has been fun making the comparisons. The 'new' recordings are most interesting and enjoyable, actually much better than I anticipated. I believe the old recordings win on phrasing and general feeling in the music. However, the selections never before released on records were really welcome."

Jim Stemke, reporting from Chicago, fortifies our solid belief that the younger generation of organists has the same ingenuity often displayed by silent movie era organists caught in a bind. When Tom Gnaster agreed to play a concert on the 4/32 Wurlitzer in the Temple Sholom, he didn't realize the designation was misleading. Wurlitzer it was, but the layout was rather straight, by divisions, with lots of couplers and little unification. There were very few stops available on more than one manual, real oddball for Wurlitzer.

Tom's presentation was supposed

to include both popular and classical selections, but part way through his performance, the neither-fish-nor-fowl instrument got through to him and he announced an unprogrammed selection, which would be rather lengthy, an Italian composition called *Alba* (Dawn). he provided comments on what to listen for e.g., the quiet sounds of early morning, then went into *Alba*. It earned him a substantial hand but inquiries about the composer and availability of the notation forced him to admit he had improvised it on the spot.

Thus did Tom Gnaster match off-the-cuff improvisation to the expressive capabilities of his instrument.



Hector Olivera. Bach was never far away. (Dick Harold Foto)

A crowd of 1849 was at the Auditorium Theatre in Rochester, N.Y. on February 22 when RTOS presented Hector Olivera at the 4/22 Wurlitzer. He entertained with some flamboyant playing, some show tunes, the ever-present Bach, some truly remarkable interpretations of two Debussy works, a modern jazz treatment of *Little Red Monkey* and a rousing finale, *Cumona*.

Jim Ford's big hopes for a long run at the Red Vest pizzeria in Monterey, Calif., collapsed when he was terminated after playing the 2/8 Wicks for only three weeks. The abrupt end of a continuing pipe or-

gan music policy was given as the reason for Jim's departure; the dismissal was in no way to be considered Jim's fault according to an insider. Jim departed for his home area, Detroit, and the future of the \$40,000 (plus) Wicks organ would seem to be in doubt.

If you read in a local chapter newsletter around April first that the ATOS San Francisco July convention had been cancelled, and the item was credited to "A. Prill Phoul," would you immediately cancel your convention reservation in abject disappointment? As incredible as it must seem, such a thing happened. When National ATOS officials started getting long distance phone calls inquiring about the "cancelled" convention, they were more than mystified. But soon the pattern was traced to second and third-hand reports quoting a handful of those who claimed to have seen the cancellation report "in print." Sure enough, a chapter newsletter had published such a report as an April Fool joke. The joke backfired when a few readers without either a sense of humor or the ability to digest what they had read, spread the alarm at a number of chapter gatherings.

So, before this item starts another unfounded rumor — there *will* be an ATOS convention in San Francisco in July — else chairman Judd Walton is a monkey's uncle. (get ready for the calls from the zoo, Judd).

Central New Yorks' long-lived radio program, The Organ Loft, celebrated its 14th anniversary on April 20 with the opener of a 4-part series highlighting the 20th year of ATOS. The former Utica-based weekly broadcast is now heard over WLFH, Little Falls, which, according to originator-announcer-scripter-producer Don Robinson, provides better listener coverage of the Mohawk Valley. Each of the weekly shows covered a significant event in ATOS history and the accompanying recorded theatre organ music was selected from releases of the period of the event depicted. The final program presented a taped message from ATOS Prexy, Dr. Paul Aber-

nethy who commented on goals and challenges that lie ahead for ATOS. With a few more supporters with the untiring zeal of Don Robinson, that future would have an even brighter assurance.



Virginia Byrd tries out Harold Darringer's Hammond.

For many years, Harold Darringer has been a fan of a pair of musical sisters from the Indianapolis area, Virginia and Dessa Byrd. In fact he has accumulated a collection of photos of them over the years. A long-time resident of San Diego, Harold hit the jackpot in April when Virginia Byrd Rechteris, Musical Director of WISH-TV in Indianapolis, and her sister, Dessa Byrd Rappaport, arrived in southern California for a brief vacation in La Jolla. Naturally, Harold threw out the red carpet. Besides a visit to Harold's San Diego home, the guests enjoyed a session at the Fox theatre where they played the 4/32 Robert Morton. It was a good week for Harold Darringer, with a promise of a return by ATOSer Virginia, who was asked to play a Fox concert in the Fall for the San Diego Theatre Organ Group, the local businessmen who refurbished the organ a few years ago.

The Chicago Area Theatre Organ Enthusiasts (CATOE) did a nice thing for two veteran Chicago or-

ganists on May 19. During Tony Tahlman's silent movie show and concert at the Patio theatre, the ATOS Chapter bestowed Honorary Membership on Pearl White and Leon Berry. Both responded with cameo performances. The show was aptly named, *It's a Great Day*.

Organist Lee Erwin advises us that New York City will soon have a small midtown theatre devoted solely to silent films — and it will have a pipe organ. There he stopped, before dropping the other shoe. Lee had quite a silent film experience in March and April when he accompanied eleven classic feature films by D.W. Griffith during the Bleecker Street Cinema's tribute to that film maker. Lee reports that his audiences were 99-percent current generation. But, Lee — please drop the other shoe.



Pres. Abernethy. A stranger among friends. (Stufoto)

LA Chapter members thought the stranger at the April John Seng concert at the Wiltern theatre looked familiar. Sure enough, it was ATOS Pres. Dr. Paul Abernethy who had planned in from his North Carolina home to attend a medical symposium on new eye-care techniques at a Santa Monica hospital. The symposium was a time eater but Paul did manage to get down to San Diego to present the new chapter there with its ATOS charter.

What do Helen Dell, Dennis James and Lloyd "Panamint" Klos have in common? All are ATOS members, true. But, surprisingly, all three got

their starts in the world of music by studying the accordion. Yes, Helen's first instrument was an "abdominal Steinway" until she "got religion" and progressed to the organ. Dennis began his study of the accordion at the age of seven before going to bigger things. Lloyd was a latecomer to music study, starting accordion lessons at the old Wurlitzer School of Music in Rochester at age 15. What a setup for banquet entertainment at the '75 ATOS convention! "I'm ready to walk the plank for a trio - if my two friends are", says Lloyd.



Hall of Famer Fred Feibel expresses a wonderful philosophy about his musical life. "You may not be able to take it with you when you leave this world; therefore it is essential that you make good use of such gifts while able to do so here on earth." Furthermore, he says that his playing of the organ today is more pleasurable than in the days he performed under pressure in theatres, on radio, in television, and in recording sessions. Since 1963, Mr. Feibel, assisted by his wife and business manager, Lenore, has given 20 fund-raising concerts in the Vero Beach, Florida area. Included in these activities is the Feibel Scholarship Fund at Indian River Community College, which provides tuition for an eligible music student each year. ATOS attendees to the San Francisco Convention will have a chance to meet this fine musician, as he and his wife plan to be present.



ATOS members who have visited the Radio City Music Hall recently probably have wondered what happened to the Hall's symphony orchestra conductor, Paul Lavalle, since Will Irwin replaced him in the program credits. Lavalle resigned several months ago to play a series of concerts and to work with the All-American Band, sponsored by the McDonald food chain. He had been musical director and principal conductor at the Music Hall since 1968. Old-timers remember his stirring "Band of America" radio programs sponsored by Cities Services Oil Co. before television. Remember Raphael Mendez, the band's triple-tonguing trumpeter?



Laurel, Lee and dog, CIPHER, pose for portrait with completely rebuilt console. The Brass Trumpet bell is an ashtray. (Stufoto)

An early morning delivery brought cheer to Laurel and Lee Haggart. It was the completely rebuilt console of their now 3/11 composite theatre organ which had been upped from a Smith 2-decker by their friend Dick Schroder. Dick invested about six months of spare time to add a manual, saw out a new stoprail and - well, in brief, only the side panels of the old Smith console remain. The restructured console is fabricated from parts of four consoles but it looks brand new. Laurel is already planning its eventual decoration. The bare studs in the photo are in front of the vertical swell shutters in the Haggart's Granada Hills, Calif., home.



Dick Schroder (Stufoto)



According to Frank W. Pratt, ATOS member in Kingston, Ontario, organist Ron Padgett is installing an historic Legge organ in his suburban Toronto home. This instrument began its playing life in Casa Loma in the early twenties. Then it went to CKNC radio, then for a long spell to CBC radio where it was played by Quentin Maclean, Al Bollington and Roland Todd, among others. It had a "straight" console and was not quite a theatre organ, but knowing Ronnie Padgett's talents as a theatre organist, it soon will be.



The brief item in an early 1974 THEATRE ORGAN about Frederick Kinsley, who played the Midmer-Losh organ in the New York Hippodrome theatre (before it was replaced with a Wurlitzer), reminded ATOSer Buck Strickland (Bellingham, Wash.) that he had a couple of Edison acoustical recordings played by Kinsley on a Midmer-Losh (probably a New York salesroom installation). The titles are *Poor Butterfly*, *The World is Waiting for the Sunrise*, *The Palms* and *Silent Night*. Buck reports that the sound is exceptionally good for acoustical recordings.

What some readers may not know is that the sound modulation on an Edison recording is along the bottom of the groove, rather than on the sides of the groove like all current recordings. The Edison (vertical) system is far superior to the lateral grooving system but Edison patents never permitted it to become widely used. This factor accounts for some of the better sound quality of even the mechanical recordings, which preceded the electrical system (circa 1925). Buck dug a little deeper in his record stack and came up with another Edison "biscuit" (they're nearly 1/4-inch thick), this one featuring Rollo Maitland, one of the big names of the Golden Era, also playing a Midmer-Losh: *Down the Lane* (probably preceded by *Swinging*) and *At Sundown*. Unique relics of the playing of two '20s "name" organists and the rarely recorded Midmer-Losh "straight" organ.

NOW IS THE TIME TO SEND YOUR RESERVATIONS TO SAN FRANCISCO!

**NUGGETS
from the
GOLDEN
DAYS**



Prospected by Lloyd E. Klos

Next month, northern California will be the scene of the 20th annual ATOS Convention. As a salute, Jason and I have found some choice nuggets from the Golden State. References were American Organist (AO), Jacobs (J), Melody (M), Metronome (Met.) and Motion Picture Herald (MPH) magazines.

Aug. 1926 (M) *The El Capitan Theatre in Hollywood* opened May 3. Opening night prices were \$15 top and \$5 for lowest priced seats.

Oct. 12, 1926 (Met.) ELBERT LA CHELLE and ELMER VINCENT opened the Peninsula Theatre's Robert Morton in Burlingame.

Sep. 1927 (J) J. WESLEY LORD is doing novel solos at the Figueroa Theatre in Los Angeles.

Sep. 1927 (J) LEONARD CLARK is heavily featured at the California Theatre in Anaheim.

Sep. 1927 (J) Mexico City's premiere organist, C. ROY CARTER is at the Highland Theatre in Los Angeles.

Sep. 1927 (J) EFFIE DIEDERICH has been a fixture at the San Carlos Theatre in Los Angeles for two years.

June 1928 (AO) PAUL CARSON and FRANK LANTERMAN directed an ensemble of 15 portable organs and Celestes in the Forum Theatre for the Los Angeles Theatre Organists' Club. Others participating included HARRY QUINN MILLS, CHARLES MURRAY, CLAUDE REIMER and ROY L. MEDCALFE.

March 1929 (AO) Publix Theatres has changed the name of Grauman's Metropolitan in Los Angeles to "Paramount", and installed MILTON CHARLES in a daily program of organ novelties.

Jan. 1930 (AO) JOHN JENSEN, treasurer of the Los Angeles Theatre Organists' Club, had two of his compositions purchased by Fox Film Company, and has several others to be released soon.

Jan. 17, 1931 (MPH) "CON" MAFFIE, formerly of the Paramount in Portland, Oregon, is taking EARL ABEL'S position at the Paramount in Los Angeles, and Abel is taking LEO WEBER'S place at the Texas Theatre in San Antonio.

Dec. 26, 1931 (MPH) ALBERT HAY MALOTTE of the Los Angeles Western Theatre, offered a very pleasing, though unpretentious solo, built around the Waltz hit, "Pagan Moon". His work is, at all times, that of the true artist. His registration is perfect, so that one may sit back and forget that it is merely another waltz which he is playing, and imagine that those same strains come from some old master. His 15-minute recital (submerged in the pit) was also a treat, though played in rather a haphazard and undignified fashion. And in this reviewer's opinion, a straight, consistent program of three or four numbers, played with the organ console raised, would be more entertaining and appreciative.

Dec. 26, 1931 (MPH) TED CRAWFORD of the Granada Theatre in Santa Barbara, offered one of the cleverest community sings of his engagement here. The title was "Local Boy Makes Good". The solo was conceived and used as a prologue to the feature picture of the same title. The theme was nothing like the picture, but was a boost for local personages who have made good. Cleverly written special lyrics were used for this, and Crawford naively brought out the fact that the audience's singing would be instrumental in helping him "to make good."

They helped as much as they could, and that was by singing all the popular melodies he had chosen. Applause was tremendous. This type of solo which this organist is offering is helping him greatly and will assist in making the local papers carry items about another "local boy who makes good" if he continues to give them this fine entertainment.

GOLD DUST: California was a big center of theatre organ activity in the old days, a situation which is prevalent today, as these dust particles will attest: 2/25 ROY L. MED-

CALFE at the Raymond Theatre, Pasadena . . . 4/25 CLAUDE L. REIMER, Loew's State, Los Angeles . . . 5/25 CHAUNCEY HAINES Jr., Egyptian in Long Beach . . . 6/25 JULIUS K. JOHNSON, Forum Theatre, and HERBERT KERN, Criterion in Los Angeles . . . 11/25 FRANK LANTERMAN, Glendale's Alexander . . . The following members of the Los Angeles Theatre Organists' Club were playing west coast theatres in 1925: R.E. BECKER, Grauman's Egyptian, Hollywood; L. BEAUMONT CONKEY, theatre & Masonic organist; PRICE DUNLAVY, Jr., Hollywood Theatres Inc.; EDWARD C. HOPKINS in Pasadena; FRANK LANTERMAN, Alexander's 3/10 Wurlitzer, Glendale; JOHN E. HILL, 2/10 Wurlitzer, Beverly Theatre; F. QUENTIN LANDWEHR, Grauman's Million Dollar; JULIUS K. JOHNSON, GEOFFRY GLEDHILL, Los Angeles theatres; GEORGE TURNER, West Coast's Walker Theatre in Santa Ana . . . 9/26 FREDERICK BURR SCHOLL, Los Angeles' Carthay Circle . . . 1/27 FLORENCE K. REESE, Selma (Cal.) Theatre; IRIS VINING, San Francisco's Granada . . . 3/27 ARTHUR B. FRITZ, Parisienne, and J. WESLEY LORD at 3-manual Wurlitzer in United Artists Theatre, Los Angeles . . . 9/27 ROY L. MEDCALFE & GEORGE W. BROADBENT, Long Beach's Imperial; WALTER DANZIGER, Chotiner's Roosevelt and J. WESLEY LORD, Figueroa in Los Angeles; HAROLD CURTIS, Pasadena's Colorado Theatre; HENRI C. LEBEL, Pantages in San Francisco; SAM NELSON ROPER, Sunbeam, WILLIAM FITZPATRICK, Strand and CHESTER GILLETTE, Circle in Los Angeles; LARRY CANILO, Oakland's Grand Lake; HARRY QUINN MILLS, Loew's State; ALBERT HAY MALOTTE, Hollywood Chinese; FREDERICK BURR SCHOLL, Grauman's Egyptian Wurlitzer; ALEXANDER SCHREINER, Metropolitan and ARTHUR B. FRITZ, Rialto in Los Angeles . . . 11/29 The broadcasting scene: Prof. RUDOLPH SCHRAEGER on Fox Boulevard Wurlitzer over KPLA; ROY L. MEDCALFE on his studio Robert Morton over KFOX, Long Beach.

That's it for this time. See y'all in California. So long, sourdoughs!

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Music Review

by Walter J. Beaupre, Ph.D.

Lee Prater and Bill McMains, A PRIMER OF CINEMA ORGAN STYLING (Parts 1 & 2: Bass Clef Edition), Frank Music Affiliates, 166 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116. Price \$2.95 each.

Lives there a home organist who wouldn't secretly give his (or her) right Tibia to sould like George, Rosa, Don, Millie, Jesse or Ethel? Of course, when we get right down to the ranks and manuals, it's really the theatre style we covet, not the specific talents of any one (ahem) organperson. Just what is theatre style and why does it turn us on?

Lee Prater and Bill McMains in their *Primer of Cinema Organ Styling* have come along way towards showing and telling us both the *what* and the *why*. There are, as you probably guessed, two primers, and whoever buys one should get both to take advantage of the continuity of ideas which Lee and Bill develop.

Who should invest in these Primers? I would say anyone who can play comfortably from those typical "Pop Hits for All Organ" collections; anyone who has a two manual organ of sorts with at least an octave of pedal notes; and anyone who can truthfully say NO to the question "Wouldn't you really rather have a Dutch tracker positif?"

Having said "Yea" to all of the above conditions, I sat down at the console with Primer #1 and followed instructions. Prater and McMains waste no time getting down to essentials: "lush legato chords" with correct fingering for smooth movement of voices. Nothing is superfluous. The exercises become an intro for the piece *Barcarolle*. Registrations are specific and good. I did find that I had to play *Barcarolle* at a rather fast clip to keep the sustained voices from becoming an awkward bore. *Aura Lee* is next introduced to show on this and subsequent visits how an arrangement is built from scratch.

Finger substitutions and phrasing

tips get us ready for *Liebstraum* in duet-style harmony. Incidentally, your *Dream of Love* will be rudely shattered in the 8th measure if you don't repair the misprint (it should be the same A-seventh chord as in measure 7). All fixed? OK. Back to *Barcarolle* and *Aura Lee* to see how sustained chords with moving melody notes really work. They work well except that the inner voices in the *Barcarolle* still fight back at a slow tempo.

Onward and upward to open harmony. Here is where Lee and Bill do a beautiful job. The rewarding theatre sound during your playing of *Chouchoune* is a genuine thrill. More good stuff on pages 18-23 as they take you to basic Crawford glissandos. By the end of Part 1 you understand the Chicago style four beat accompaniment, right hand chords and open harmony. Except where noted, the trip was painless and never a drag. The advice on registering is a bit skimpy but certainly correct and solid as far as it goes.

The pictures and "titles" interspersed throughout the Primers are sly, witty, and in good adult taste. "How to..." books are rarely, if ever, this much fun.

On to Primer #2 where chords are broken down to form arpeggios. Again, the exercises are not wasted. You are being set up for a Prater, McMains, and Allen original called *Whistlin' The Blues Away* — a catchy tune with Chicago style bass which doesn't fall apart until the last two measures. Now if you can transfer what you've learned to *Swingin' Shepherd Blues* you'll have it made!

More good stuff in Primer 2 on glissandos, more good humor, — and it's on to block chords where the left hand duplicates the melody. And that, we learn, is where theatre styliness is at!

By this time *Barcarolle* and *Aura Lee* are really beginning to take shape. Two delightful encores,

Andantino and *Toyland*, bring it all together and show you how far you've come. The last "grim" page of advice in book two is as genuinely practical as it is hilarious. You'll have to take my word for it. I wouldn't dream of spoiling their fun.

Seriously, the content of these two Primers is very, very good instruction: clear, breezy and gutsy. You also have a right to know in advance what's missing. Nothing is said about the expression pedal and phrasing (the stuff Don Baker did so well in his workshops for Conn). Who knows? Maybe Lee and Bill did write all this on a Dutch baroque organ minus swell shades, but I don't really think so. I strongly suspect that the authors and their talented designer Robert Allen have a Part 3 in mind for a future project. If that's the case, you guys, then please say something about basic jazz harmonic theory, the swell pedal, more about registrations and something about playing for slide sing-alongs... and something about modulations... and something about movie cue-ing and...

Put another way, if Lee Prater and Bill McMains get all the "Bravos" they deserve for *A Primer of Cinema Organ Styling*, they just might get that other welcome message — which is "Encore!"

THE ACCORDAFOLO DOUBLE FEATURE SELECTIONS OF JIMMY BOYCE, Frank Music Affiliates, 166 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116. Price: \$1.95 per dual selection.

Organ fans who are lucky enough to catch Jimmy Boyce either at his magnificent unenclosed Wurlitzer at the Alexandria Roller Rink, at the skater's ancient plug-in, at the Virginia Theatre during an intermission, or at the Filene organ at the Kennedy Center in D.C., know why Jimmy is an area attraction second only to Mount Vernon and the White House. Organist Boyce is a great entertainer, a solid musician, and a most gracious and patient host to visiting buffs. So when Jimmy publishes three original compositions and three arrangements of pop standards in theatre style, potential consumers should know what gives.

All six selections have been printed as "two siders" in the Accordafolo Double Feature format out of Writers Equity, Ltd. Two arrangements are back-to-back in the same folder for a package price of \$1.95. Accordafolo has advantages and limitations when compared to other printed music. On the plus side, the folo lets you see the entire selection without any page turning. This is a boon to the organist who doesn't memorize music and who has registrations and such on the brain. The music rack on my own electronic (a Rodgers Marquee) handled the four-page Accordafolo beautifully. But when some of the folo arrangements run longer than four pages — and some do — the convenience disappears. Of course you get the flip-side selection whether you want it or not. Now back to the contents.

Hernando's Hideaway and Yellow Bird

Hernando's Hideaway was originally a bouncy and slightly "camp" tango featured in the Broadway musical Pajama Game. Jimmy's arrangement is still very much tongue-in-cheek and should be played at a "bright tango tempo" or the fun gets a bit heavy handed. Jimmy uses block chords in both hands and some judicious manual changes for dramatic contrasts. Melody shifts from the left hand to the right hand to add variety and interest. If tricky rhythm patterns are not your cup of espresso, then you may prefer to sit this one out — or get your organ teacher to help you. On the other hand, the pedal notes are easy to play and the suggestions for fingering are generous and helpful. Perhaps you should try the registrations suggested by Jimmy while you are learning the piece, then branch out on your own. Be forewarned; the Accordafolo stretches across your music rack for five big pages. If you need a tango in your repertoire that hasn't been done to death in recent years, *Hernando's Hideaway* via Jimmy Boyce will be most welcome.

Personally I liked the flip-side *Yellow Bird* best of all the Boyce arrangements. It combines a variety of T.O. styles with a comfortable latin beat. The first chorus is open harmony style on the Tibias while

the release is a clever use of cumulative chords. An interlude with percussions switches to a single note solo with a lovely counter melody in the left hand. A key shift (F to G) takes you into the second chorus written in block chord style. The pedal work is interesting without being too demanding. A final short chorus is played right-hand duet style in the key of A-flat. Jimmy's *Yellow Bird* is not for the beginner who has just graduated from chords that light up under the fingers. It is more for the advanced amateur who enjoys trying the organ transcriptions by Crawford and Leibert.

Charlie's Walk and On Broadway

There are two Jimmy Boyce originals in the Accordafolo format that are welcome mainly because they are definitely theatre program material. *Charlie's Walk* is the better of the duo and may have been created by Jimmy to use with a Chaplin two-reeler. It could work well under the screen. As a novelty solo — minus Chaplin — it is pretty light weight stuff, "cute" rather than a subtle blend of comedy and pathos. The left hand accompaniment is reminiscent of the things done by the pro's to underscore Chaplin's meanderings. The right hand melody seldom rises above the level of cliches. *Charlie's Walk* is easy to play and is mostly in D major with a sixteen bar digression into G major. Keep percussions handy at all times!

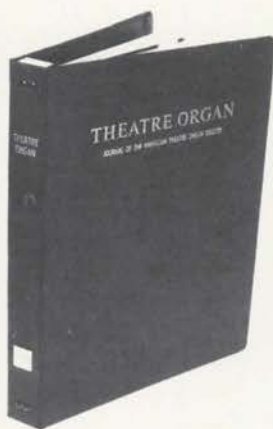
The flip-side *On Broadway* is a good humored caricature of every

hotshot who ever came up on the lift blasting out *Great Day* or *No Biz Like Show Biz*. Simple finger exercises, easy arpeggios and block chords get the show on the road — first in C, then in F, and finally in E-flat. *On Broadway* is fun to play if you see it as a put-on. You might just try it on some veteran ATOS fans sometime if only to hear them mutter "I know I've heard that before, but what the heck is it?"

Under the Double Eagle and Alexandria March

Jimmy Boyce's third Accordafolo entry combines an arrangement and an original. Both are rousing marches, and good organ transcriptions of marches (rousing or otherwise) are hard to find. Look no further. Jimmy's *Double Eagle* is a winner with skillful use of block chords, single note and duet melody lines. The lovely counter melodies provided by Boyce give this old war-horse some welcome musical surprises. You may like the *Double Eagle* with a face lift better than you thought you would. I certainly did. If you've always wanted to try a pedal solo for 16 bars, Jimmy gives you a relatively easy one to master. But those who are not hep to alternate foot, toe-heel gymnastics should get help from a local organ teacher or enlightened buddy. It takes a bit of technique to make this pedal melody sing the way it should. The march is 2/4 time and mostly in E-flat with a Trio in A-flat. How well this arrangement suits you as a

New!



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band-bash may depend upon the tonal and percussion resources of your own organ. If you have pipes and traps or one of the more lavish plug-ins, no sweat.

Turn over the fole for Jimmy's original in 6/8 time, the *Alexandria March*. Jimmy Boyce suggests that his composition is reminiscent of Sousa (I hear additional touches of Eric Coates). It's probably risky business to venture an opinion as to the "hit" qualities of an original tune. Tastes, as the saying goes, do vary. But from my organ bench, Jimmy's *Alexandria March* sings up a storm and could become a standard favorite with audiences far from the Virginia suburb. It has that elusive ingredient which makes us say, "Play it again, Sam." The march is easy to play with no pedal melody this time. You'll want to spend some concentration on the Coda which is loaded with right hand triplets while the melody sings in the left. Follow Jimmy's suggestions for fingering carefully. Registrations call for full organ whether tabs or drawbars. Oh yes, this time the Accordafolo is a distinct blessing. □

Organ Safari to England in 1976

Tentative plans call for ATOS visits to...

London
Manchester
Liverpool
Blackpool



More details soon!

LETTERS

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

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

Dear George:

I am writing with regard to the letter of Anna May Wyeth (April 1975 LETTERS). I would like to express some of my own feelings covering her two basic points; after all, she asked if anyone agreed with her.

With regard to "the OLD style, palm glissing, body English and the sort, I feel Ms. Wyeth might benefit from reading John Muri's *"The Typical Versus the Top"* (THEATRE ORGAN, October 1970). Mr. Muri brings forth many valuable points, but especially worthy of notice is paragraph #5 regarding "... the flying and flourishing of the hands ...".

She mentions Hector Olivera as doing his body English at his convention concert. Hector Olivera is, in my opinion, a fine organist and musician and this body English acts as a distraction from the already fine music he produces. Don't get me wrong, I don't wish to single out Mr. Olivera. I feel this should go for any and all organists, theatre and classical. The impression I get from the magazine critiques is; the ATOS writing staff is trying to better the professional organ field. That is, degrading body English, thrump-boom Hammond style, and palm schmears. How much easier and more beautiful it is to hear a well-fingered glissando than a skid across the ivories! If this is "OLD HAT" then so be it. At my age (21), I would

much rather be impressed by what I hear and not what I am supposed to see in terms of body English etc. Having not lived in the first theatre organ era, I can go only on what I see and hear today.

With regards to the record reviews, I have generally felt your reviewer does a good job in this highly subjective area. Again I feel he is trying to bring certain points to the attention of the recording artist as well as the potential customer. Having not heard O'Lyn Callahan's current recording, I do not feel I have the right to bark PRO or Con with regards to either Ms. Wyeth's objection to inconsistency (?) or the reviewers feeling. I can only go on my own impressions of hearing O'Lyn Callahan in concert, and that is good.

Your record critic has been doing a good job in his reviews, and I feel he is always improving his critiques. However, the only thing I wish might be accomplished in addition is: if the artist hits a clinker or plays a phrase inaccurately, it be said so — frankly and kindly in the critique. Thank you Mr. Record Reviewer.

Thank you for putting out a top notch magazine. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Tom De Lay

Dear Sir:

I have enjoyed John Muri's articles on organists, committees and audiences, and would like to comment on a subject which he missed — namely, the Prologue Stop Arranger. As an illustration: Several weeks ago we had a talented and well-known theatre organist play a concert for us. Due to his rumored excellence the house was filled and expectancy ran high. Promptly on time, the M.C. introduced the organist and there was thunderous applause — for a few seconds — until the artist failed to appear at the console, then everyone started to look around and there was our concert artist casually ending a conversation at the back of the room. He strolled down the aisle, climbed onto the bench and spent half a minute or more, adjusting his stops. He then swung around, stood up and announced his first number. By the time he had played his first note, there was a noticeable let down of the audience.

This is only one instance of poor showmanship but I've seen dozens of stop adjusters spoil their openings in the very same way. Any good showman knows that a fast opening is very important to his act. Why then do so many organists wait until their introduction to get their stops set? They should prepare so that when they are introduced they can sit down and go *immediately* into their first number. I realize that with no two consoles alike, the visiting organist is not always "at home," but except for rare occasions, he does have enough time to set stops before concert time, and that can help to make the difference between an ordinary concert and an excellent one.

Another annoyance at concerts, is the repetitious use of numbers, especially those that the organists have recorded. I suppose they can't be blamed for wanting to advertise, but it does become very tiresome to not only *hear* these repeated numbers, but to read in chapter, reviews that the organist played them again and again. Surely any organist talented enough to travel the country playing concerts must know enough numbers to keep his program from becoming monotonous.

Sincerely,
Bob Longfield
Sierra Chapter

Dear Sir,

Of the many fascinating features I find in your delightful magazine, one which I enjoy most is to be found always on the back cover. I refer, of course, to the advertisement of the Rodgers Organ Company. To me their Great Stars of the Silent Era series is a personal joy and a splendid way of advertising their fine instrument.

The ad for the issue of April 1975 (Vol. 17, #2) is, however, incorrectly identified. The scene is indeed from "Romeo and Juliet," but the players shown are not those indicated.

This may well have been inadvertent due to the fact that in 1916, Hollywood presented us with not one, but two, productions of "Romeo and Juliet," both released the same year. From Metro came the version with Francis X. Bushman and Beverly Bayne. William Fox gave us his production with Theda Bara and Henry Hilliard. It is from the Fox Production we see the scene given in

the Rodgers' ad. The players, therefore, should be identified as Theda Bara and Harry Hilliard.

Contrary to what most film historians would like to have us believe, the much maligned Miss Bara did not always play "the heavy vamp." Her Juliet was subtle and deeply moving. Miss Bayne gave us a youthful and winsome Juliet. Harry Hilliard was a more convincing Romeo than Bushman, who was a bit mature and hefty to be ideal. Both productions were handsomely staged and costumed.

Now that "this ancient" has straightened out these minor matters, who could care?

Sincerely,
Earle T. Cann

Dear Sir:

Having a deep interest in the application of solid-state circuitry to organ building I was interested in the drawing of a trap relay on page 34 of the December issue. After studying this drawing it is apparent its artist knows little of solid state devices. As drawn the magnets are not even part of the circuit. I have had in operation at the Schnitzelhaus restaurant in Milwaukee for the past 1½ years the following electronic trap relay. It is simple, uses a minimum of parts and if getting pounding 6 nights a week for a year

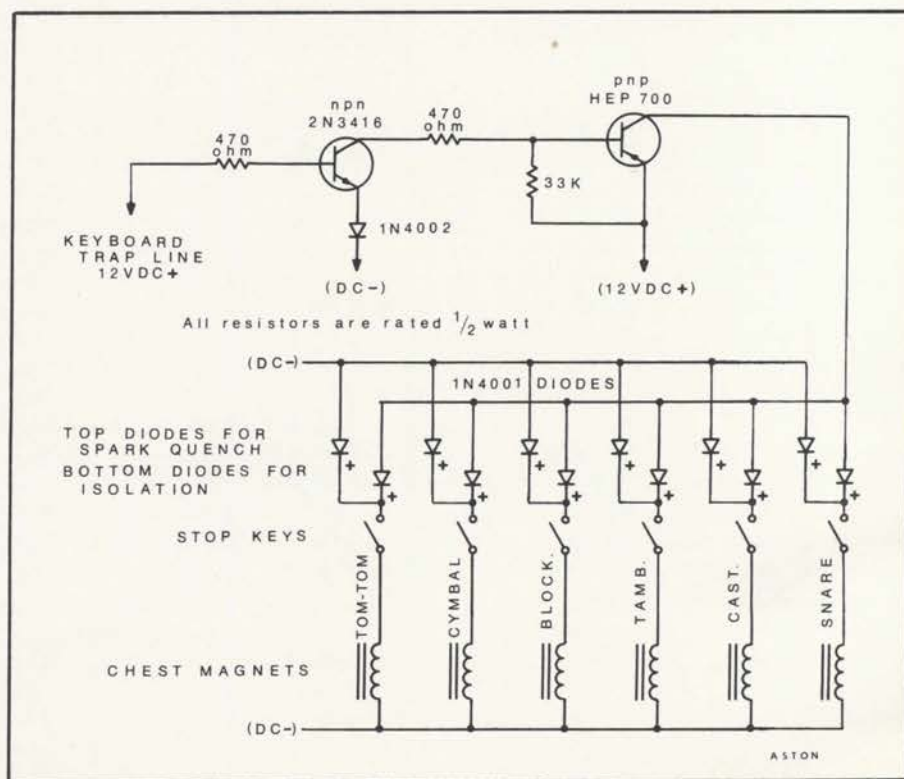
and a half is any sign of reliability, need I say more? This will drive about ten Wurlitzer magnets (150 ohm) or 6, 90 ohm magnets. A driver is needed for each keyboard and a simple switch on the input can change it from first to second touch. A separate driver would be needed if there are separate first and second touch traps.

Sincerely yours,
William Klinger, Jr.
Owner
Klinger Organ Service

Dear George:

I probably really don't belong on your list (February issue) of ATOS charter members who are *active*, because I've been a most passive member all these years. But I must admit to having sent in my membership back in 1955, in time to receive the first issue of THE TIBIA with great enthusiasm.

I was living in Wisconsin at the time and was turned on to the fledgling organization by Bill and Margaret Huck of Replica Records — remember them? I designed the record jacket for one of their early Leon Berry recordings, "Glockenspiels, Traps and Plenty of Pipes," and at the time, a self-conscious 24-year-old, I was thrilled at the opportunity to break into the big time. Alas, it was the first and last record



jacket I designed.

My 3/10 Barton, from the Colonial Theatre in Milwaukee, is suffering from dust and acute cable severitis. With the console and Duo-Art player in Marin County, California, and the remainder still in Milwaukee, the sound time lag would be horrendous even with the cable intact — but I continue to hope and plan for the eventual installation in California.

THEATRE ORGAN continues excellent in content and appearance. Many thanks to you and your staff for producing a fine magazine.

Sincerely,
David Strassman

Dear Mr. Thompson:

1. I guess that I do not qualify as a charter member altho' I have all the magazines from the first issue of TIBIA. My check, for \$3.00, went to RADIO magazines on 2/8/56. Shouldn't the list of charter members be: ATOE?

2. I am surprised that an experienced organist such as Dennis James should use the term: "Foot Pedal" (Page 8).

3. The article; "Tibia, Vox and Pepperoni" left out at least two organs; Bella Roma, Martinex 3/15, and the Morton at Marin Pizza Pub and Rudy's 2/6 in Vallejo, not a pizza joint, but neither is Carl Greer's.

Bob F. McDonald

Dear Mr. Thompson,

I understand that years ago there were many technical articles in the THEATRE ORGAN magazine and in the magazines that preceeded it.

What has happened? I have been a member of ATOS for over three years now and in that time there have been very few technical articles written about the theatre organ.

I agree with Mr. Judd Walton and his letter to you prompted me to write this, which I hope you will print in the next issue.

I am new and relatively uninformed about the theatre organ and would like to learn more about its construction, operation, and maintenance and I believe many new members perhaps feel the same way I do.

Since ATOS now has so many new members like myself that have never read any of those previous published

articles, I suggest why not reprint some of the better and more informative ones? The TV industry has its reruns, you know.

I am not being critical of the THEATRE ORGAN magazine as it is a fine magazine and I look forward to receiving each issue. But I think to further the interest in the theatre organ more information should be told about its workings as well as Mr. Walton says, "the social aspects of ATOS."

My compliments and many thanks for a very fine magazine.

Sincerely yours,
George I. Steele

To The Editor,

I would like to share with your readers the letter I received from the Mayor of Atlanta, in answer to my inquiry about the fate of the Atlanta Fox.

Sincerely,
Lester J. Hamilton
Union Lake, Michigan

Dear Mr. Hamilton:

Thank you very much for your letter regarding the preservation of the Fox Theatre. You will be happy to know that you are among a growing number of concerned individuals who also feel strongly about preserving this Atlanta architectural landmark.

I am personally committed to doing everything possible to save The Fox. My staff is coordinating efforts with all interested groups. It is our sincere hope that a viable solution can be found to this complex problem. It must be our job to inform others about the tremendous potential of The Fox Theatre, its capacity for accommodating large gatherings, the various meeting rooms that can be put to public use, its magnificent organ, and its excellent facilities for theatre, concerts and other artistic performances, as well as its potential for becoming an anchor for the redevelopment of the surrounding area.

It is indeed gratifying to have you join the many thousands who want to save the "Fabulous Fox."

Yours for Atlanta,
Maynard Jackson, Mayor

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Featuring This Week Ray McNamara
Starts 12:30 P.M. No Reserved Seats Admission \$1.00

Dear Mr. Thompson:

You may be aware of this already, however the advertisement attached, clipped from the Sunday March 15th issue of the "TIMES PICAYUNE" New Orleans. These to be regular Saturday 12:30 noon one hour recital using rotating artists.

Yours truly,
Wm. Storer

Dear Sir,

I would be grateful for any information concerning Mr. Leslie V. Harvey, who was at one time a very popular theatre organist and very capable instrumentalist and entertainer in Sydney. In the late twenties and early thirties of this century, he performed on at least two organs in this city, one being in the Prince Edward Theatre, since demolished. The organ, however was purchased by the Theatre Organ Society of Australia, Sydney chapter, and is not only alive and well, but is used frequently. It was, I believe, the first Wurlitzer organ to be installed in Sydney. Another organ I knew Mr. Harvey to play for some period of several years was the 2/10 Christie at the Victory Theatre in the Sydney suburb of Kogarah. This theatre has been re-christened the Mecca, and is still one of the very few remaining movie theatres in the Sydney metropolitan area. The organ, after surviving a disastrous fire, was dismantled and is, at present, in store.

The Sydney TOSA would be most interested to hear any news of Mr. Harvey which may be available and, if possible, to hear from Mr. Harvey.

Many thanks in advance for any trouble you may take on my account.

Yours faithfully,
Frank T. Walker
30, Park Road, Sans Souci,
New South Wales, Australia



CHAPTER NOTES

ALABAMA

The first four months of 1975 have been busy months for members of the chapter organ work crew. Our monthly meetings have treated members to a variety of programs and artists.

Presiding at the console of the Alabama Theatre Wurlitzer have been Jay Mitchell, Norville Hall and Miss Cathy Hoffman.

The January meeting and the new year started with Jay Mitchell at the console. Jay's musical ability and his command of the Wurlitzer always provide enjoyable listening for our members.

February was the month of our chapter's birthday. The membership was provided a number of activities to help celebrate the occasion. Mrs. Don Cole, program chairman, arranged an informal meeting complete with a mini concert and technique demonstration by Norville Hall, open console and refreshments. Members had the opportunity to get to know one another and/or get introduced to the Wurlitzer. What better birthday could one ask for?

Featured in a return engagement in March, was 16 year-old Cathy Hoffman, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Hoffman of Largo, Florida. She has been studying with several fine teachers including Don Baker. Cathy played several Baker arrangements and rounded out her program with a beautiful patriotic set. At the end of her program, she was called back by the audience to play two encores.

The writer (Jay Mitchell) played for the April program using the restored piano for the first time. A blown fuse on the power supply created a problem and shortened his practice time to about 10 minutes. The program was a hit and everyone



Armed with only twelve minutes practice on the newly operational piano, Jay Mitchell thrilled the audience with his new arrangement of Grieg's *A Minor Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*.



The faithful Alabama work crew takes a breather after installing new crescendo pedal, (Top) Larry Donaldson, Travis Cavnar (Bottom) Frank Jones, Ola Fee, Lee Aured, Bruce Rockett.

was thrilled about the piano.

The Alabama work crew has been hard at work, also. We have promised ourselves that the organ will be 100% operational by the end of this year. We have recently completed the installation of a new crescendo pedal which makes the organ (more affectionately known by our chapter as Bertha) seem a lot easier to play.

All in all, the chapter is "with it" this year, promising great surprises in theatre organ history in the not too distant future. Our meetings are every second Sunday of the month at 10:00 a.m. sharp. If any of our friends are traveling through Birmingham, they are most welcome to drop in on us. As we say in the south, "Y'all come!"

JAY MITCHELL and DANIEL E. LILES

BEEHIVE

On March 2, the chapter hosted a meeting at the Pipes and Pizza in Salt Lake City. Members of the organ club and other organ groups were invited to join the ATOS members. Calvin E. Christensen, president of the chapter and owner of the Pipes and Pizza, conducted the meeting and welcomed other organ music lovers and invited them to participate at the Wurlitzer after a short program.

The six staff organists played a short but very select program. In order of their appearance, they were: Krehl King, JoAnn Harmon, LeLund Lay, Darlene Walker, Joel Griffin and Mike Ohman.



Gaylord Carter at the Capitol Theatre 2/10 Wurlitzer, Salt Lake City. Clarence Briggs is only too happy to make a minor adjustment in the console. (Photo courtesy of Deseret News, Salt Lake City Utah)

Members and guests were very delighted with the combined meeting, the organists, the atmosphere and the refreshments. The idea for this combined meeting and perhaps further meetings was that of the president, Calvin Christensen.

Chapter members were treated to the talents of two very fine ATOS members from the West Coast. On February 15, Harvey Blanchard played for a dancing party then a dinner concert at the Organ Loft on February 19. On March 15, David Reese also played for a dancing party and a dinner concert at the Organ Loft on March 18. Members in the Salt Lake area are always delighted when these two members come into town. David is a former resident.

Easter Sunday, March 30 and Monday, March 31, the chapter, with the cooperation of Richard Theriot, manager of the Capitol Theatre, presented Gaylord Carter at the 2/10 Wurlitzer accompanying Cecille B. DeMille's original 1927 motion picture "Kings of Kings." Before the movie, Gaylord played a short program including *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Members in the area agreed this has certainly been the very best performance by Gaylord at the Capitol Theatre Wurlitzer.

MAXINE RUSSELL

NOW IS THE TIME TO SEND YOUR RESERVATIONS TO SAN FRANCISCO!

CENTRAL INDIANA

CIC-ATOS is growing by leaps and bounds, we are happy to announce. So much so that it almost takes a convention hall to house our group! Not really, but we are proud of our growth and are getting too large to meet in most of our homes. So — for our March meeting Charlie Owens came to our rescue and offered the conference room in his newly completed office building in the Northwest Plaza in suburban Indianapolis. Our thanks to Charlie and Jean Owens for hosting this meeting.

A Wurlitzer Centura 805 was loaned by Wurlitzer Stores of Indianapolis for the meeting. Our thanks to Bill Loos of Wurlitzer's Lafayette Square store for being on hand to assist and answer questions.

David Ashby from Chicago, formerly a member of CIC-ATOS, who concertizes and promotes Wurlitzers, presented a fine and entertaining program. It was so nice to have David back after a lengthy absence.

It is always a joy for us to encourage and promote promising young organists. As soon as one reaches the pinnacle of excellence and goes on to bigger things professionally, another seems to pop up for us to "adopt." Our latest discovery is Chuck Owens, son of Charlie and Jean. The Owens recently moved to the Indianapolis area from Joliet, Illinois and already

Chuck's talent has led him into a number of interesting local activities. He is substituting as organist at Indianapolis' Market Square Sports Arena for the Racers (hockey and basketball) games, for Ken Double, another of our fascinating and talented young organists we have watched with pride these past three or four years. Chuck will also be following in Ken's footsteps by playing next season for the Tommy Bartlett Water Show at the Wisconsin Dells. David was also asked to accompany a 3-day Horse Show at the Indiana State Fairgrounds in Indianapolis recently. What a schedule for a senior in high school. We wish Chuck much success in his musical career.

Following the program there was the usual open console time and an unusual refreshment table prepared by Social Co-Chairmen Peg Roberts and Mary Drake.

We especially like to praise our theatre organ performers, but also we like to recognize the performances of those who also excel in classical organ. The American Guild of Organists' meeting held in the North Meridian United Methodist Church in Indianapolis on March 11 made ATOS members very proud of three of its members, two performing, and one narrating the program. The program was entitled "The Rumbling 20's" and without a doubt Tim Needler and Vivian Arbaugh both gave superb performances. Vivian Arbaugh was one of our silent theatre organists in the late 20's and is presently organist at the Central Christian Church in Indianapolis. Vivian's performance exemplified a great deal of professional and classical artistry. The program was narrated by Bernice Fee Mozingo, a well known figure in classical music circles in Indianapolis for many years.

The organ at North Church is a 4/70 (4218 pipes) Kimball (1931), redone and enlarged by Holloway in 1965 and 1972. It is a very unique installation in that two completely separate organs are played from one console, with an entire bank of couplers across the top of the console, which in itself is a unique arrangement.

This program was well attended by CIC-ATOS members.

A beautiful warm spring day (and

a very nice pipe organ installation) attracted a large crowd of organ enthusiasts to the Anderson Music Company in Anderson, Indiana on Sunday, April 13. Bruce Thompson, our host, owns the organ which is installed in the large social room over the store.

The first portion of the program was presented by Barbara Sparks, who on this day made her debut on the pipe organ. Even though Barbara has been well known in the field of music in Anderson, she had previously played only electronic organs. She is currently appearing at one of the night spots in Anderson and has been associated with the Anderson Music Company for several years in their sheet music department. A desire to learn to play the pipe organ prompted Barbara to seek professional assistance. Under the able guidance of Jimmy Boyer, she did a masterful job on the 2/6 Wurlitzer. We now have another confirmed theatre organ enthusiast! Congratulations, Barbara.

The second part of the program was a silent Laurel and Hardy movie "Sugar Daddies," accompanied by Jimmie Boyer. Jimmie is one of our fine theatre organists from the "great era" of the silent movies with a long list of accomplishments in theatre, radio, church and teaching.

Some interesting facts about the organ — Bruce Thompson purchased and moved the 2/6 Wurlitzer from the LaPorte Theatre at LaPorte, Indiana to Anderson about six years ago and even though this organ is now 52 years old, it is performing as brilliantly as it did in the theatre so many years ago. Also of interest is the fact that Vivian Arbaugh, who performed so brilliantly at North Church was the first theatre organist at LaPorte and played the 50th anniversary program on this organ at Anderson two years ago.

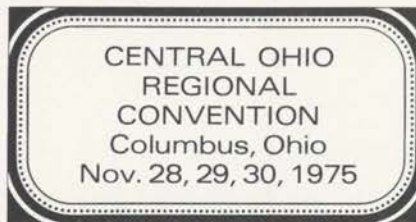
Before open console time, Jimmy favored the group with several solo numbers in his usual excellent and enthusiastic styling.

RUTH D. WARD

CENTRAL OHIO

Hosting our March meeting were Ann and Tom Hamilton. About 50 members and guests were on hand to enjoy Tom's custom built Rod-

gers/Morton which is one of our largest home installations. Nearly a third of those present took advantage of open console, with the formal concert played by Kenny Winland. As always, Kenny was in command of the instrument and played his usual outstanding concert. Tom Hamilton spent a couple of very busy months preparing the organ for our visit, for a surge of electricity, during an electrical rain-storm, put much of the organ in non-working condition.



For our April meeting we were guests of Tom Lasten, president of Williams Music Company of Worthington, Ohio. Tom projected a sound/film strip of the history of organ, and the Allen Organ, including the latest development, the digital computer organ. Following the film, Tom introduced Jerry Schwab, regional sales representative for Allen Organ Company. Jerry demonstrated both the classic and theatre computer organs. For one still struggling with the mechanics of pipe organs and electronics, here comes a whole new ball game. Jerry showed a featherweight computer board with 22 "chips," each being a quarter inch square and containing over 40,000 transistors. We suggest you see for yourself, and at the same time be sure to hear the double computerized Classic Model Allen. Jerry obligingly stood by to assist with registration while our members took advantage of open console.

The celebration of the twentieth year of ATOS gains momentum — The Roaring Twentieth in San Francisco, Autumn Serenade in Connecticut and Thanksgiving in Beautiful Ohio.

IRENE BLEGEN

CHICAGO AREA

A number of members were on the road to Milwaukee on March 16 to hear Walter Strony play a social for almost 300 people at the Avalon Theatre for Dairyland, CATOE and Land of Lincoln Chapters. The pro-

gram included a number of new songs Strony was breaking in for his April concert at the Detroit Theatre Organ Club. After the social almost 100 people travelled cross-town to the Schnitzelhaus where house organist Gary Sette and Strony both played the 3/19 Wurlitzer for their supper.

Three days later Dennis and Heidi James presented their piano/organ duo program for a CATOE concert at the Chicago Oriental Theatre. It was a small but enthusiastic Lenten crowd which gathered to hear the James. Their program has taken on new variety with the addition of some new songs including Heidi's own *Toad's Fling*. The organ was in such good form that Custom Fidelity Recording's Jim Stemke was called in a week later to record both Walter Strony and Tom Gnaster for possible album releases.

Byron Melcher made it known that the Wurlitzer/Kimball in WGN's Studio 3 is still in fine voice when he played our April 6 social programs. TV cameras, Kleig lights and 150 people jammed the studio for a rare visit. Melcher included a lot of travel songs but CATOE's travels may not be as far, nor our visits to WGN as rare, if we accept the offer of WGN Vice-President Alexander Field to maintain the organ in exchange for access to it on weekends.

Before Melcher played, a business meeting was held to nominate officers for new terms starting July 1. The membership also unanimously approved CATOE's purchase of the 3/10 Wurlitzer in the Indiana Theatre, East Chicago. Fred Kruse has maintained the organ and helped us negotiate with the owner. Wurlitzer used the organ, with Ambrose Larsen as a demonstrator, for prospective buyers. Extra care was taken in voicing it. Long-time house organist at the Indiana, John Muri played an outstanding program there during the 1969 convention. CATOE hopes to have Muri play a farewell social late in May. The organ will probably be another high school installation though no final decision has been made.

The 27 minute, 16 mm color film "When SO Few Actually Play" is available for rental at nominal cost. It tells how CATOE moved and re-installed the Downers Grove Wur-

litzer. Information is available from John Wagner, 2237 N. LaCrosse, Chicago, ILL.

Rick Shindell's concert-silent film show at the Downers Grove Wurlitzer on April 16 was a well attended benefit for the American Field Service foreign exchange student program. Most attending knew nothing of theatre organs, but Rick quickly demonstrated what they are all about, in a pleasant, up-beat and thoroughly enjoyable concert. Listen carefully to his *I'm In the Mood For Love*.

Andy Haban, long-time crew leader at the Pickwick Theatre, reports that the theatre is now in the register of National Historic Places. He escorted officials on a basement-to-booth tour of the Art Deco house.

Member Paul Schreves hosted an informal open house on April 20. His Conn 650 (from member Jim Benzmilller who sold it to buy Rick Shindell's Marr and Colton) has a real toy counter attached on which Pearl White worked her special stylings.

The 4/29 Wurlitzer in the Chicago Theatre is still receiving attention by CATOE members. Latest word is that it should be ready about the time manager Peter Miller helps the theatre celebrate its 52nd anniversary in October. It is pure coincidence that Miller now lives in the Sheridan Road building where Jesse Crawford used to reside.

Officers whose terms expire June 30 are Chairman Russell Joseph, Vice-Chairman Doug Christensen, Secretary Bill Rieger, Treasurer Bill Benedict, Membership Chairman Art Todesco, VOX CATOE Edi-

tor Richard Sklenar, and Directors Val Escobar, George Smith and Paul Swiderski.

For 30 months it has been this writer's pleasure to edit VOX CATOE. Part of my duties included writing these chapter notes. It has been an excellent chance to tell you of the pride, work and enthusiasm evident in CATOE and Chicago, "Theatre Organ Capitol of the World." I hope you've learned something about us in these past months. See you aboard the CATOE charter flight and in San Francisco for the "Roaring Twentieth."

RICHARD J. SKLENAR

CONN VALLEY

The first gathering of the Conn-ValChap and EastMassChap was held on Sunday, April 13, at Knight Auditorium, Babson College, in Wellesley, Mass. We hope that this will be only the first of many joint meetings with Connecticut Valley being the next hosts in 1976 at Thomaston Opera House.

Earl Renwick, program chairman of Eastern Mass., opened the meeting shortly after noon and officially welcomed us to Babson. He introduced the officers of his group and called upon Eleanor Weaver to do the honors for ConnVal. Twenty-seven of our members were present. We regret that more of our members were not able to make the trip. Our reception was so warm and the members so congenial that it was a most rewarding experience.

Albert Drazy, a long-time Mass. member, gave us a brief history of the organ and its acquisition by the chapter. His anecdotes relating to the

problems of removal and relocation were those common to all ATOS enthusiasts.

Lenny Beyersdorfer treated us to a tonal tour of the organ accompanied by some interesting and amusing observations of his own. The Vox Humana is supposed to resemble the human voice. If it does, Lenny commented, he'd like to meet the soprano (and once he thought he had).

Art Goggin, EastMass. president, took interested ConnVal members on a tour of the chambers.

Our own Ev Bassett was the first at open console, followed by Al Colton, Margaret Lewis, Jean Moffett, Eleanor Weaver and Stillman Rice from our group. It's always a treat to hear so many of our members play, and our hosts were most gracious in giving us the first opportunity to play their instrument.

Eleanor Weaver was asked to report to the group on the CVTOS Scholarship program which, I believe, is the only one of its kind. Our hosts were very much interested in detailed information as they are hopefully formulating plans for instigating a similar program in their area.

At two o'clock the meeting was turned over to Don MacCormack for a brief CVTOS business meeting. The motion was made and approved to appropriate a sum up to \$500 for legal consultation in formulating agreements relative to the organ at the Waterbury Civic Center and the Kilgan organ at a theatre in Stamford. The owner of the Stamford theatre has had an offer from the Midwest to purchase it. This is a very worthwhile instrument in a

John Muri at the Indiana Theatre's 3/10 Wurlitzer which has just been purchased by CATOE. A Kimball, previously owned by CATOE, was destroyed by fire while being rebuilt in 1969. (Bill Lamb Photo)

Mr. Gunson of the new Australian ATOS chapter brought four friends from "down under" to hear Dennis and Heidi James in a CATOE concert on Mar. 19. (Carl Anderson Photo)



working theatre, and we'd like very much to get it for our group as a tax donation.

Coffee and donuts were next on the agenda accompanied by background music from Lenny Beyersdorfer. This was a golden opportunity to meet individual members from Eastern Mass. I had the pleasure of exchanging ideas with Stuart Hinchliffe, editor of EASTERN PIPES.

Ev Bassett was called upon to give a brief report concerning the organs now owned by CVTOS — those presently being installed and those in storage. We have an enviable inventory, and Ev jokingly chided our hosts about trying to borrow.

The concert portion of the program was presented by four Eastern Massachusetts chapter artists, Tom O'Brien, Mark Renwick, Tim Bjareby and Bob Legon who played, altogether, a program of seventeen popular selections from a good span of years.

At the conclusion of the program, representatives of both chapters expressed their pleasure in meeting new friends and renewing acquaintances.

EASTERN MASS.

The long awaited day arrived for decommissioning the solo chamber of EMC's chapter organ at Babson College for alterations. Alas, the down period included regular meeting night, March 22, necessitating the postponement of the special program prepared by Carl Getz and Al Winslow tracing the development of silent films and the theatre organ.

However, all was not lost, as the main chamber was playable, and, as an extra attraction, the local Rodgers organ dealer came to the rescue by moving the Olympic theatre organ into the auditorium for the evening.

After the initial shock, of seeing two large horseshoe consoles up front and no movie screen, members and guests settled in their seats to enjoy Alan Goodnow concertize on the electronic. Alan, a dyed-in-the-leather (for pneumatics) pipe organ enthusiast, put on an excellent show. He was a member of this chapter until he became involved in the organization of Southeastern New England Theatre Organ Society.

April 13 marked the very first

joint meeting of the ConnValChap and EMC. Members of our neighboring chapter make enthusiastic guests and provide a wealth of keyboard talent. Among the guests was Stillman Rice, past national president. He took his turn at the console after some persuasion. Three of our own members, Tom O'Brien, Mark Renwick and Bob Legon, wound up the afternoon's festivities in cameo presentations. This was a very memorable get-together, musically and socially, which served to illustrate the very high value of joint chapter meetings.

Through Patsey Fucci's efforts, on April 26, a rare treat was provided by the local silent film club, Sons of the Desert. They provided films featuring Laurel and Hardy and Buster Keaton, and, Bob Legon provided the accompaniment on the chapter organ, which was in best-ever form. As an encore, a brief special interest film of Buster Keaton as a TV guest was shown with Tim Bjareby at the console. He volunteered to play though this was his first silent film accompaniment. Tim remarked after "the ordeal" that this was a most interesting experience. After the movies, traditional open console time featured the talents of the membership along with socializing.

ERLE RENWICK

GARDEN STATE

The March meeting was a social meeting and was held at the Suburban Restaurant, Wanaque, N.J., on Sunday, March 16. Members look forward to a gathering in this lovely dining room where congeniality is the "spirit" of the day. The main attraction, of course, is the 3/17 Wurlitzer which is one of the finest theatre pipe organs hereabouts. The large round tables, arranged about the console and glassed in pipe chambers, were filled with GSTOS members, some of whom had traveled all the way from Southern Jersey.

Frank Cimmino, house organist and a master of registration, provided the "most listenable and danceable music" from 4 to 10 p.m. Every one enjoys Frank, whether it's listening to his inimitable stylings and beautiful registrations, or just listening to him as he travels from table to table during his breaks, chatting and adding his wonderful,



Frank Cimmino, house organist, and Jimmy Provisserio, owner of the Wurlitzer and its Suburban Restaurant home.

quick humor to all conversations. Garden State is indeed fortunate to have such a fine Wurlitzer so accessible for all the members to hear. It certainly was a great day when owner Jimmy Provisserio and his family purchased the organ and built such a special home for it. The March meeting was well attended and everyone enjoyed being there.

Wednesday, April 9, was an exciting evening for the over 500 people who attended the chapter's annual fund raising silent film show at the Old Rahway Theatre, Rahway. Many famous artists have presided over the console on Rahway's Biggest, Little Wurlitzer (2/7 divided) in the past years, but this years show was something special. It featured the homecoming of one of the original house organist, Rex Koury of Reno, Nevada.

Rex actually began his career at the Rahway Wurlitzer in 1920, a month after it opened. He was 14 at the time and lived in Cranford, N.J., two towns north of Rahway. He played in many of the area theatres during his high school days.

It was a very nostalgic evening with many tales of these early days. Rex surprised the audience by introducing and paying tribute to the original house organist who was in the audience, Chester Kinsbury, now musical director with NBC-TV in New York.

The name of the game is entertainment, and Rex really put his all into showing off every facet of the organ with a great variety of music from classics to current hits. That, interspersed with two hilarious silent shorts and a super community sing, sent everyone home raving and beaming.

LAND OF LINCOLN

On March 20, 1975, LOLTOS presented Rex Koury of, "Gun-smoke" music fame, at the Golden-Voiced Barton in the Coronado Theatre, Rockford, ILL. The program was a first for LOLTOS in two respects: the emphasis was on the accompaniment of a great silent picture, and two performances were presented.



Rex Koury at the 4/17 Barton organ in the Coronado Theatre, Rockford, Ill.

The picture, Cecil DeMille's "Kings of Kings," is tremendous in theme, the adult life of Christ. For older members of the audience Mr. Koury's artistry was a reminder that a silent picture with fine organ accompaniment has an emotional appeal that sound pictures cannot rival. For the younger people it was a demonstration that a fine theatre organ in the hands of an artist, is a musical instrument to be classified with the best.

Before the film showings, Rex played a short concert. From the first chords of each concert the audience was his. To those of us to whom the sounds of the organ are somewhat familiar, it was a delight to hear voices that we did not know were there. Rex Koury is a master of registration as well as technique.

BOB COE

On April 27, 1975, we were host to 42 members of the Cedar Rapids Chapter who arrived by bus for a 10 a.m. social. They were greeted by members of LOLTOS who provided the group with coffee and donuts

in the lobby of the Coronado Theatre. A concert followed by Byron Melcher of Chicago who presented an interesting and varied program which demonstrated the fine combinations and ranks of the Golden-Voiced 4/17 Barton to the delight of all in attendance. Following his concert, members of CRATOS were given an opportunity for open console.

Concluding the Rockford stop by noon, the CRATOS bus was joined by many of the LOLTOS members who motored to Whitewater, Wisconsin, where the ladies of the First Congregational Church served a tasty brunch to the entire group.

Then Bob Coe, a LOLTOS member, proudly explained the history of the 4/26 organ of that church that was built, rank by rank, to its present size, under his guidance, by members of the congregation, over many years as a "labor of love." Bob then demonstrated, to the fascination of the audience, that this organ has the versatility of a church, concert and theatre organ, by playing numbers that ranged from the *Rosary* to the Beatles *Yesterday* to a Jesse Crawford arrangement of *Valencia*. The organ contains pipe ranks of both church and theatre organs and the tremos can be adapted to either mood by a flip of a tab.

Chad Weirich, a 14 year-old member of LOLTOS from Rockford, Ill. concluded the program by playing *Bali Hai* and *Thou Art The Rock*, further demonstrating the organs versatility and proving that there are young organists coming up who will keep ATOS alive and well in the years ahead.

A tour of the relay room displayed to all present that first-rate organist Bob Coe is also a first-rate technician.

After open console, CRATOS bid farewell to LOLTOS and extended an invitation to visit their installations in the Cedar Rapids area.

ORRILL DUNN

LOS ANGELES

On Sunday morning, March 16, the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society reversed its usual procedure with a Jam Session at the Wiltern Theatre's 4/37 Kimball and an afternoon concert at the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium.



Gene Roberson signs autograph for a fan after his concert. (Bob Hill Photo)

Local members who for years had thrilled at the sight and sound of the big Kimball were given an opportunity to have a go at the console, elevator 'n all.

That afternoon they were treated to the artistry and youthful enthusiasm of Gene Roberson, who performed for the Chapter for the first time on the 3/17 Wurlitzer in San Gabriel. From his opener, *The Sweetest Sound*, through Stu Green's *Once in a Dream* and Buddy Cole's *Sassy Brass* to his final Dunstedter *Open Your Eyes*, Gene showed interesting variety and masterful showmanship to a large house.

On Sunday morning, April 20, John Seng presented his first concert at the Wiltern. His selections were largely ballads, all the way from *Lilac Time*, through *My Fair Lady*, to *On the Trail*, with selections from the *Nutcracker Suite* and the *William Tell Overture* thrown in for good measure. The 4/37 Kimball was, John explained, admirably suited for this type of music, and his renditions showed his usual top-notch technique. John was in a "theatre organ" mood, and chapter members appreciated that. An unexpected but welcome guest was ATOS' National President, Dr. Paul Abernethy, in LA for a medical symposium. Reverting to the customary pattern, the group journeyed to the Elks Building and the Robert Morton 4/61 for an afternoon jam session.

As if this were not enough, a few hardy souls, including John Seng, ventured to the suburban hills of Agoura to the magnificent residence-

studio of Program Chairman John Ledwon to have a go at his magnificent 3/25 Wurlitzer, although Johnny Seng never got around to tickling the ivories, darnit! Others kept up a varied level of organ sound, including seldom-heard but talented Bob Power.



Ken Kukuk. His name comes out the same spelled backwards — or even starting in the middle. (Bob Hill Photo)

To complete a month of activity for Los Angeles Organ Buffs, the Chapter Board Meeting was held at the Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo, where mini-concerts were presented by artists Fernand Martel, Ken Kukuk and youthful Gerald Nagano, who doubles as coordinator of the Elks-Robert Morton members "pay, 'n play" plan.



Jerry Nagano

(Bob Hill Photo)

A non-ATOS sponsored event, but which ATOSers attended, was the initiation of a silent movie presentation experimental project at the Mayfair Music Hall in nearby Santa Monica. The former municipal opera house has been refurbished by impresario Milt Larsen (he is the Doge of the famed Hollywood "Magic Castle" where eerie things transpire) as an English music hall

with live stage presentations. On a May Monday evening it became the Regent/Bijou/Strand with a presentation of a silent Laurel & Hardy comedy, Two Tars, and the most complete print of Phantom of the Opera one could imagine. The Mayfair once housed a 2-chamber Robert Morton, long gone, so the nearby Touchberry Music Co. volunteered a Conn model 651. The organist was Verne Langdon, who has several pipe organ records to his credit. Although it was Verne's first playing of a silent feature, the concensus was that he was on top of the situation all through the show. Encouraged by the turnout, Milt Larsen considered a regular silent movie program for the seaside resort house.

BOB HILL

MOTOR CITY

On three Sunday mornings during the past two months, we have been the guests of the Wolverine Chapter. On March 9, the Wolverines presented member Scott Smith at the 3/13 Barton as the program for our Second Sunday at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor. We were again guests on March 23 at the Michigan Theatre in Lansing where Amy Reimer was the featured artist and did a fine job at the 3/13 Barton. Nice to hear you again, Amy. On Sunday, April 20, John Fischer, Motor City chairman, played the 3/10 Barton at the Redford Theatre in another joint program sponsored by Wolverine.

Our monthly Second Sunday open house at the Michigan in Ann Arbor, featured John Fischer at the Barton on April 13. A program of 'oldies' is always enjoyable listening.

On Wednesday evening, March 12, Lyn Larsen was presented in a benefit performance at the Redford Theatre. The benefit concert without his usual fee) was Lyn's own idea to enable us to thus afford some badly needed theatre equipment. A near-capacity crowd was on hand for his program which featured a pot pourri of Lyn Larsen specialties, plus accompaniment to the Laurel & Hardy two-reeler, "Bacon Grabbers." Motor City members are very appreciative of this gesture and wish to thank him again.

Saturday morning, March 15, a very full bus load of members embarked for an action-packed week-

end in Columbus, Ohio. Dennis James made time available in his busy schedule to escort us on a tour of the magnificent Ohio Theatre including a short concert at the Robert Morton. That evening we were part of a nearly full house for a public performance by Dennis. We really appreciate the time and effort he spent on our behalf.

Sunday morning we left for Hamilton, Ohio where we had dinner reservations for about 50 at Stan Todd's Shady Nook Steak House. Stan introduced us to the 4/32 Wurlitzer with a few numbers after which he turned the console over to chapter members Gary Reseigh, Jim Boutell, Greg Smith, Larry Gleason and John Fischer. Our weekend bus excursions have always been among one of the highlights of any year and this was no exception.

Following the very successful format of our Second Sunday open house in Ann Arbor, we began a similar Fourth Sunday policy at the Royal Oak Theatre on April 27. Gladys Nancarrow played the 3/13 Barton and Bethel Hohner was at the piano. (Beth stepped in graciously at the last minute for Aldine Schisler who lost her mother just the day before.) Many of us will be going to San Francisco in July. After acting as hosts last year, we can really appreciate the effort that is required to coordinate and execute convention activities. This year we can relax and really enjoy ourselves.

DON LOCKWOOD

NEW YORK

Members gathered about the United Palace's 4/23 "Wonder" Robert Morton on the evening of January 21 to hear Robert MacDonald, dean of the New York Chapter, AGO, demonstrate that a classical organist can indeed play theatre pipes — and with gusto! A native of Massachusetts, Mr. MacDonald is the Associate Organist/Choir Director of New York's famed Riverside Church. For a portion of his program, he also showed his proficiency at the United Palace's second instrument, a Hammond. He explained to his audience that he had once played such an instrument in a bar!

One week later, many chapter members attended a notable "theatrical first" — the Radio City Music



CRITICAL AUDIENCE — Florida's Terry Charles (second from right) found he was playing for the experts when he performed a concert for New York Chapter on Long Island University's much-admired 4/26 Wurlitzer on April 20. Out in the house were some of the nation's foremost theatre organists (left to right) Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier, Ashley Miller, Billy Nalle and, on Terry's left, Lee Erwin. Terry has just recorded on the instrument which he considers "the greatest remaining theatre organ in an original setting in the country." The LIU gymnasium, of course, was once the famed Brooklyn Paramount.

Hall's first-ever silent film feature. The picture was the astounding Fritz Lang futuristic fantasy, *Metropolis*, produced in 1925. Our own Lee Erwin presided at the Music Hall's 4/56 Wurlitzer playing the special score he wrote for the picture. This once-only performance was not a chapter function but rather a feature of the Art Deco Exposition, an event that took over the Music Hall for a spell. Most other films featured were talkies of the 1930's. Visitors jammed the main and lower lobbies to see displays of Art Deco antique dealers, including World's Fair memorabilia and other gems from the era when movie palaces and their pipe organs were a big factor in the entertainment world. The setting offered by the Music Hall was perfectly in tune with the Art Deco theme.

Lee received a standing ovation for his score and performance. The audience of over 2000 was predominantly a young audience. Because there can be little doubt that it was, for many, their first experience with a theatre organ doing its "thing," the applause was significant — and encouraging. We hope Art Deco will return next year!

ARTHUR M. COX, JR.

NIAGARA FRONTIER

On February 19, John Muri returned to the Riviera. We have many fine young organists coming along, but you can't take anything away from the old masters. John can bring out the best of all those hidden sounds locked up in the organ chambers, just waiting for a gentle touch, to spring alive and thrill the crowd.

On March 16, Del Castillo arrived in Buffalo after an absence of many years. He was a house guest of Greg

Gurtner. Del visited the Buffalo Theatre where he opened the new 4/28 Wurlitzer in 1926, and stayed on for five months.

On March 17, he made a personal appearance on a local TV station and the next day was interviewed by the press. The following morning quite a long article on this interview appeared in the *COURIER EXPRESS*.

That evening at a reception held at Greg's home (with the house busting at the seams from an overflow crowd), Del gave Greg's 3 manual plug-in quite a going over.

The final climax, on a stormy March 19 at the Riviera, with all the additional publicity along with our regular radio and newspaper coverage, brought out the crowd and packed the house. Del did a fine job and we are grateful.

On March 22, we had our annual banquet and officers installation at the Elmwood Restaurant, with chapter chairman Randy Pizza as M.C.

Some of our notable guests, were Ed Tucholka of WBEN-FM, Buffalo; Francis Kirton of CHSC-FM, St. Catherine, Ont., and personnel from WHLD-FM Niagara Falls, N.Y. Through the generosity of these people, and their stations, all with organ programs, they keep the listeners informed of our events and have contributed much to the continued success of our monthly concerts throughout the years.

Another outstanding guest was John Sanderson, famous organist, formerly with the BBC, turned writer and now making his home in Niagara on the Lake, Ont.

Frank Olsen, whom we claim as our very own, is an internationally known recording and broadcasting artist from England, who, for the

past seven years, has lived in Port Colburn, Ont. Frank plays many concerts throughout the Northeast. He is very generous with his talent to our chapter, of which he is a member.

Roy Simon, another fine organist, has played many concerts, is equally at home at the piano or organ, and has put in hundreds of hours entertaining us through the years at many chapter functions. We must not forget Dick Birk, who plays that real old ragtime piano. What a team they make; Roy at the organ and Dick at the piano.

Our banquet committee included Doris Martin, Jane VanBrocklin and Lynn Yerger. These girls wonder why they get stuck with the banquet every year. They do one fine job, that's the reason.

Sunday morning, April 6, Winifree Armistead, formerly of England, now living in Toronto, came down to the Riviera to try out our Wurlitzer. It didn't take the crowd long to catch on that she was no stranger to the theatre organ. The crowd kept her playing until show time. Little did she know that the operator liked theatre organ, and delayed the start of the picture some fifteen minutes so that he could listen to her.

A little extra frosting on the cake, another asset to belonging to the Niagara chapter, is the extra unscheduled concerts that we have from time to time when these organists are passing through and would like to spend a couple hours at the Riviera console.

On April 16, Tom Gnaster made his first appearance at the Riviera. After standing room was sold out, many were turned away at the box office. Tom not only showed his mastery at the console, but showed great skill on the tabs, creating many pleasant combinations of voices not often heard.

Many of our middle class and social security members, the so-called shoestring budget convention goers, were genuinely disappointed when they got their April T.O. and saw what it was going to cost to attend the '75 convention. Many plans were quickly changed to attend the regional conventions now being planned east of the Mississippi. Perhaps in future years they could work out a plan so that those with a limited bankroll could attend

and enjoy all the excitement and entertainment that goes with a national convention.

We have quite a group of artists scheduled for our monthly concerts for the rest of '75, May 14, Andy Kasparian; June 18, Larry Ferrari; July 16, Ashley Miller; August 20, David Sheppard; September 16, Hector Olivera; October 15, Dick Smith; November 19, Karl Cole; December 10, Frank Olsen.

STEVE CROWLEY

NORTH TEXAS

The April meeting, held at Landmark Pipes and Pizza in Dallas through the graces of our good host, Dino Santrizzos, was a good one. The business session showed that our new officers are really working at their jobs, with technical sessions, special programs and inter-club visits in the offing. Chapter Chairperson Lorena McKee conducted a fine meeting, calling on various committee members, and others, to tell the members what's going on.

The technical committee, under Jim Peterson's leadership, promised much more in the way of both lecture and on-the-job sessions. Jim had to cut his stay at the meeting short because of the pressure of business (strictly pipe organs, and what makes 'em tick, that is) but got a lot of info across in his brief stay at the rostrum. He also announced that Casa Manana was looking for an organist to handle that Wurlitzer 235, moved from the old Worth Theatre in Fort Worth, for the upcoming summer season, which will feature name performers.

Immediate past Chairman Earl MacDonald gave reports on potential new installations and chapter activities, bringing us up-to-date on these phases of activity. Vice Chairman Jerry Bacon prefaced his comments with an announcement that our energetic young member Cliff Brown was confined to the hospital. Get better quickly, Cliff, we need your cheerful presence at the chapter sessions.

After some comments on future activities, Jerry announced the day's program featuring Garold Payne as artist. Garold really put the Landmark Barton through its' paces with great renditions covering a large spectrum of theatre organ music, from the oldies through classical and

semi-classical to the modern favorites. His performance was dazzling, and so were his costumes. (Liberace, you're runner-up now.) Thanks for a fine performance, Garold, and glad to have you in the chapter.

The Barton got a brief rest while a few other minor business items were discussed, and then we got off to the open console session. Lew Williams, again demonstrated his fine talent in the first cameo slot, followed by some of our other talents: Mark Munzell, Jr., Jerry Leggio, Wally McDevitt, 2nd Vice Chairman Gene Powell and surprise visitor Richard Ahlvin from the Magnolia Organ Club of Meridian, Mississippi. Of course, we needed Dale Flannery's opening numbers to warm up the Barton.

With supper time approaching, a lot of us were ready for pizza, and those who left missed a lot of post-meeting fun. Several members, including some we didn't think knew a Post Horn from a Kerulaphone, added further pleasure to the afternoon's fun with their performances. A gentleman from England, now living in Dallas, showed us how that Barton could really be handled, but he "snuck out" before we could find out if he was a member, and get a name to tie onto his great playing ability.

Speaking of Kerulaphone, our chapter periodical produced through the efforts of George Stuckert, Fred Garrett, et al, came out with a beautiful edition the week before the April meeting.

It looks like several members plan to be in San Francisco, come July 14. We only wish we were a big enough chapter to charter a plane, like CATOE. Anyway, a bunch of us will see you there.

JOE KOSKI

OHIO VALLEY

Although it has been some time since the Ohio Valley Chapter has been heard from in this column, we haven't been napping. Work is continuing on the renovation and reinstallation, by chapter members, of the former RKO Albee Wurlitzer (Op. 1680) in Emery Auditorium at the University of Cincinnati. We hope to have the opening concert some time in 1976.

Our first meeting of the 1974-75 year was what might be termed an

acoustical preview of the Emery Auditorium installation. For the meeting, member Jack Schooley provided a large Conn organ, whose tone cabinets were placed in the newly-constructed Wurlitzer chambers on the Emery stage. Providing the music, to give us an idea of how the completed Wurlitzer will sound, were members Herb Wettle and Tote Pratt, who are also co-chairmen of the organ reconstruction project. Tours of the chambers and work areas were given afterward for members and guests not familiar with the work that has been going on at Emery Auditorium each week.

The next meeting, and the first big snow of the year, happened to fall on the same December day, but the meeting went on as scheduled. We traveled to Dayton to visit Moraine Farm, a 50-room mansion and estate once owned by Col. E.A. Deeds and now owned by NCR and used as a conference center. The point of interest here was the 3 manual Aeolian organ, Opus 1467. The organ had become virtually unplayable over the years and was restored to playing condition by chapter members John Gogle, Dennis Werkmeister and Herb Merritt, after NCR was convinced that the effort was worthwhile. Organists for the afternoon were Dennis Werkmeister, John Gogle and Eugene R. Stanley. Open console followed, and the mansion was open for exploring.

Our third meeting this year, which many members consider to be one of the finest ever held by this chapter, was on April 6, at Stan Todd's Shadynook Steak House, near Hamilton, Ohio. As many readers may know, Shadynook houses Stan's fine 4/32 Wurlitzer. The program for this meeting was an authentic recreation of WLW's famed late night organ broadcast, "Moon River," featuring Herschel Luecke, organist on "Moon River," for many years, and Ruby Wright and Bill Myers, last vocalist and announcer, respectively. To add to the authenticity, 17 ranks of Stan's organ are from one of the WLW Wurlitzers used on the "Moon River" broadcasts. The script was an original, once used on the show. Herschel, Bill and Ruby worked together as though they had done it yesterday, and it was quite an experience to hear "Moon River" again, particularly for those who had

listened to it for many years. The afternoon's program was coordinated by Ed Dooley, former chapter chairman, who had been hoping for some time to be able to present such a program. Following the "Moon River" presentation, those who stayed on for dinner were entertained by Stan himself, the first time he has officially played for fellow chapter members as a group.

MICHAEL A. DETROY

OREGON

The March chapter meeting was an evening of open house and organ, held at Bob and Laura Burkes' in Portland. These "open house" type of meetings have proven very popular with our members. It gives us a chance to get better acquainted with each other, and gives all an opportunity at the console. The Burkes' 3/12 Wurlitzer, with Moller Post Horn and Piano, is certainly one of the best of the living room installations.

The chapter has an amazing amount of good talent, among both young and older members. We are sometimes quite surprised at the performances of some of these people who are mainly pretty modest about their abilities.

As usual, we had a couple of mini-concerts by two of our professionals. Paul Quarino, our vice-chairman, led off the parade. He is one of the soloists at the upcoming San Francisco convention. You will love him; he's great. Our chairman, Gerry Gregorius, also did his little stint.

Our April meeting was postponed until May. This was scheduled to be at Dr. and Mrs. Gordon Potters' residence. Dr. Potter has been enlarging his 3/14 Wurlitzer-Morton and just ran out of time. He promises to have 21 ranks playing for the May concert, although he is still adding.

Gerry Gregorius is to play this program.

We mentioned in our last periodical that the Portland Paramount Publix #1 would be up for public auction. We are happy to report that the Portland "Organ Grinder" bid by Jerry Forchuk won the Wurlitzer for \$52,500.00. Hopefully a new "Organ Grinder" restaurant will be built in the Beaverton area of Portland. Beaverton is a small town on the west edge of Portland, where Jesse Crawford, as a small boy, spent some time in an orphanage. What a coincidence it would be if a real "Crawford Special" should be installed in Beaverton, erroneously referred to as "Beavertown" in a recent publication on Crawford's life.

DON INGRAM

PUGET SOUND

After a lovely luncheon and business meeting at the Ebb Tide Restaurant in Kent, Washington, on Sunday, March 23, members journeyed to the home of Jack and Mary Lou Becvar, also of Kent, for the first stop on our home tour.

Miss Dianne Bloomquist, 15 year-old daughter of members Mr. and

Mrs. Conrad Bloomquist, was the selected artist. Dianne has been interested in pipe organ for several years now and we have had the pleasure of hearing her on numerous occasions. A lovely program was presented on the 2/10 Wurlitzer (Opus 362), originally installed in the Blue Mouse Theatre, Seattle. It is rewarding for our members to have the opportunity to follow this young artist in her career and we hope for her success in the future.

The members then adjourned to the home of 'Woody' and Lou Presho, in Burien, Washington, where we were greeted by Paul Davis as the featured artist at the console of the 2/6 Wurlitzer, formerly installed in the Lakeside Theatre in the Montlake District of Seattle. Paul will be remembered by many for his appearance at Queen Anne High School during the 1971 convention in Seattle. It was nice to hear him once again at the console of the organ as we usually hear him at the piano. He is tremendous in either place. He appears regularly at the piano at Walter Inn in Tacoma.

We attempt to have a home tour at least twice each year. There are



Dianne Bloomquist at Becvar's Wurlitzer.



Paul Davis at 'Presho's' Wurlitzer.

**Jimmy
Boyce**

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many beautiful installations here and the members, especially the newer ones, thoroughly enjoyed each opportunity to visit these homes. We are ever grateful to the owners for their wonderful cooperation in the support of our chapter by allowing these visits. A great big THANK YOU to all of them.

On Sunday, April 27, the chapter celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the issuing of their charter. A wonderful afternoon was planned at the Paramount Theatre, Seattle. Seven artists were featured at the console of the 4/20 Wurlitzer. Russ Evans, National ATOS vice president, acted as master of ceremonies.

The first cameo performer was Ed Zollman, veteran NW artist, followed by one of the younger organists, Terry Hochmuth. We then heard another long time favorite of this area, Mahon Tullis, followed by our sweetheart from Tacoma, Jane McKee Johnson. Next we enjoyed the artistry of Andy Kasparian, the newest star in our chapter and Don Wallin, one more of the younger set. Andy and Don then presented a lovely duet with Don at the Wurlitzer and Andy on the Steinway grand piano. To complete the afternoon program, Dick Schrum at the Wurlitzer accom-

panied the Dixieland group who regularly hold jam sessions at the Plaid Piper. Featured members of this group are Perry Dunn, drums; Wayne Torleson, trombone; Pet Carrabba, trumpet; Wayne Simon, miscellaneous instruments. Also appearing with the group were two singers, Nancy Simon and Wanda Breshear. Wanda, at one time, sang with the Count Basie orchestra.

The next scheduled event is planned for June 1 and will feature Dick Schrum at the console of the 3/17 Wurlitzer installed in Bill Breuer's Pizza and Pipes.

MARGARET SABO

SAN DIEGO

A musical "how to" program by Gaylord Carter was the featured event of our April meeting. We returned to Sandy Fleet's beautiful 3/16 Wurlitzer installation to find out how ol' Flicker Fingers works his magic on the silent screen. He explained how to choose music for silent films and how to synchronize it with the screen action. Gaylord explained, "I was there," having started his professional career at the Million Dollar Theatre in Los Angeles in 1926. The music room was packed with eager members, music teachers and guests.

The movie treats were five short features, chosen to illustrate techniques for the chase, sing-alongs, comedy, drama and spectaculars. The shorts included W.C. Fields' hilariously mad drive through Los Angeles on the end of a hook and ladder fire truck from "Never Give A Sucker An Even Break." Gaylord paused long enough during the scenes to mention which actions needed to be synchronized to the music so that we could appreciate the artistry of music heightening the screen action.

Our second short was a Ko-Ko sing-along cartoon of "Pack Up Your Troubles In Your Old Kit Bag" with the clown appropriately donning WWI helmet and boots for the romp. The next gem was Harold Lloyd in "Billy Blazes, Esq." We were fortunate to view this at the original silent speed, and Harold Lloyd's stunt of pushing an entire horse and rider over with one tap of the finger, was easily seen. Never has the silent screen been so filled with clouds of smoke from six shooters, rifles and other hardware. Being a great Harold Lloyd fan at heart, this reviewer at least wishes that all of his movies were available to us.

Drama was represented by scenes from the silent masterpiece "Ben-

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Hur" depicting the galley slave episode. Gaylord used his own copy of the music manuscript issued at the time of the movie's first release to match the dramatic scenes and original mood. Further drama was the famous unmasking scene from Lon Chaney's version of "Phantom of the Opera." Here, Gaylord played the scene twice, the first time using inappropriate music such as *Somebody Loves Me* for the awakening scene, and *Hello Dolly* for the unmasking scene. While the laughs were generously applied, the dramatic impact of more appropriate music, during the second playing, was much appreciated.

The concluding film was the isolated cabin portions of the Chaplin classic "The Gold Rush." In these scenes the stranded gold hunters spend a hungry Thanksgiving and boil Chaplin's shoe for dinner. Gaylord pointed out how the application of music at just the right time can highlight the comic masterpiece of Chaplin eating his shoelace like a piece of spaghetti. Another cabin scene, used later in the movie, when it teeters on the edge of a cliff during a storm, is probably possible only with music... and infinitely more interesting with the right music! The group's applause

was long and warm after such a grand and entertaining concert.

After the program the club had the opportunity to see Sandy Fleet's new Wurlitzer R roll player constructed by Sierra Chapter's Fred Beeks. Fred's ingenious reconstruction includes a new tracker bar, lucite and transparent plastic bellows, numerous relays, motors and switches, and a very ingenious use of the organ console itself to maintain the registers chosen. Fred has installed a similar player on his own organ in Reno and has plans to build additional players and recut the original rolls as well. The assembled club was treated to a Jesse Crawford medley, as recorded by Crawford himself in 1926. There is still no record or speaker system made that can duplicate a full organ sound as beautifully as a roll player. Again you are seeing one of this reviewer's biases, but I maintain that a well recorded roll, played on a well restored instrument, is the next best thing to having the actual artist himself playing for you.

The final portion of the meeting was an open console program during which the Wurlitzer was given a workout by members Allison Gronberg, Roy Krebs and Chris Gorsuch.

GEORGE COADE

SOUTHERN ARIZONA

El Dorado Town Houses' club room was the setting for the first meeting of our organ club year and was hosted by Rudy and Bea Kotasek in February. The format of this meeting was a bit different, in that all members were invited to bring some of their favorite numbers, either written or in their head, and play in order by drawing. Nearly all performed, after which, a "trio" played several numbers: Ray Gard on the piano, Bea Kotasek on the



Ty Woodward at Shepherd of the Hills Church where he is associate organist.



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Baldwin Fun Machine and Bob High on the 'Mighty' Baldwin Studio 11, the latter two having been furnished for use by the Tucson Baldwin dealer Roles Piano and Organ Co. Open console followed.

On April 6, our second yearly meeting was held and we were fortunate in having as our special guest artist, Ty Woodward from Phoenix, Arizona. A young man in age, 15, but not young in talent, Ty is associate organist at the Shepherd of the Hills Congregational Church in Phoenix. A student of piano at age 8, he began classical organ studies at the age of 12 and has been a student for the past year in theatre style with Lyn Larsen. Ty is a student at Central High School and gave a performance ranging from his opener *If My Friends Could See Me Now* to his finale *76 Trombones* in which he did a very good job of pedal work. Open console followed.

Guests and members numbered 102; quite a jump from our original membership in 1972 of 14 families. Our members and guests ranged from the Bremerton, Wash. Earl and Margerate Winters to our special "snow-bird" Dr. John L. Klein, M.D. of Muscatine, Iowa, who has a winter home here in Tucson.

BOB HIGH



Karl Cole, Mildred and Calvin Juriet at the console of the Juriet Kimball-Wurlitzer in Coral Gables.

SOUTHERN FLORIDA

One sunny Sunday afternoon in March, the sleepy town of Homestead, Florida, was awakened by a raucous caravan of ATOS'ers which descended upon the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Whitney Beam. The attraction was their Kilgen "Petite Ensemble" parlor organ. The instrument boasts an 8 foot Stopped Flute, and a 4 foot Violin Diapason, both extending to 2 feet. The pedal is augmented by a 12 note reed, said to be a Kilgen Vox, but looking for all the world like a Rankett. It has

two manuals and a 32 note pedal clavier. The organ is direct electric and powered by a 1/4 hp blower. While her guests amused themselves with the Kilgen, the two pianos, a Hammond or viewed the Beam's collection of antiques, Mrs. Beam was preparing a kingly spread to mesmerize the palates of those who began their diets *after* consuming everything in sight, to the delight of our beaming (pardon the pun) hostess.

Mr. Anton H. Walden, of Homestead, and a charter member of

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ATOS, provided anecdotes and noted that he had removed the Kilgen from a Lithuanian-Catholic church in Miami.

In April we were treated to a preview of coming attractions, with Karl Cole at the key desk of the Juriet organ. Karl played two hours of easy listening music and gained many new followers in South Florida. He stayed with romantic theatre styled arrangements with samples from his record. For the novice listeners, he detailed the stop registrations before each piece.

Folks in Syracuse will miss Karl, but their loss is our gain. Welcome to South Florida Karl Cole!

STEVE FITZGERALD

WOLVERINE

Both Amy Reimer and her audience of over 400 sensed that her March 23 concert at the Michigan Theatre in Lansing, Michigan, was going to be what her console-raiser on the 3/12 Barton stated — *Just One Of Those Things*. And so it was. The precocious 16-year-old's arrangements of *The Way We Were*, and *Ecstasy Tango* left her audience agog. She expertly exploited all of the organ's resources, especially in the best-orchestrated medley of the *Man Of LaMancha* selections this



An exuberant Amy Reimer after a fine concert, at the console of the 3/12 Barton in the Michigan Theatre, Lansing, Michigan. (George Gephart Photo)

writer has never heard, all without ever using full organ.

Playing works from classical literature is always a challenge, especially on a theatre organ, yet Amy scored well on Widor's *Toccata* from the Fifth Symphony.

On Sunday afternoon, following the performance at the Michigan

Theatre, Chairman Lawrie Mallett and his family opened their residence to Wolverine members and guests for an open house social. With Herb Head at the console of the 2/8 Wicks-Gottfried, we were treated to tributes to St. Patrick's Day, Easter, and even some of Herb's ever-popular calliope tunes.

Sunday, April 20, found us in the home of the Motor City Chapter — Detroit's Redford Theatre. About 75 members and guests turned out to hear Wolverine member and Motor City Chairman John Fischer at the 3/10 Barton. His console-raiser was a lively version of *On the Sunny Side of the Street*. The removal of the heavy draperies over the chambers has greatly improved the sound of the instrument. John's program consisted largely of tunes that could most simply be labeled as Old Favorites. For this writer, the highlight of the program was John's dedication of the song *Smiles* to Detroit's number one behind-the-scenes first lady of theatre organ — Betty Heffer.

We wish to thank not only John Fischer and Amy Reimer for their splendid performances, but the managements of both the Michigan and Redford theatres for their cooperation in the use of their facilities.

SCOTT SMITH



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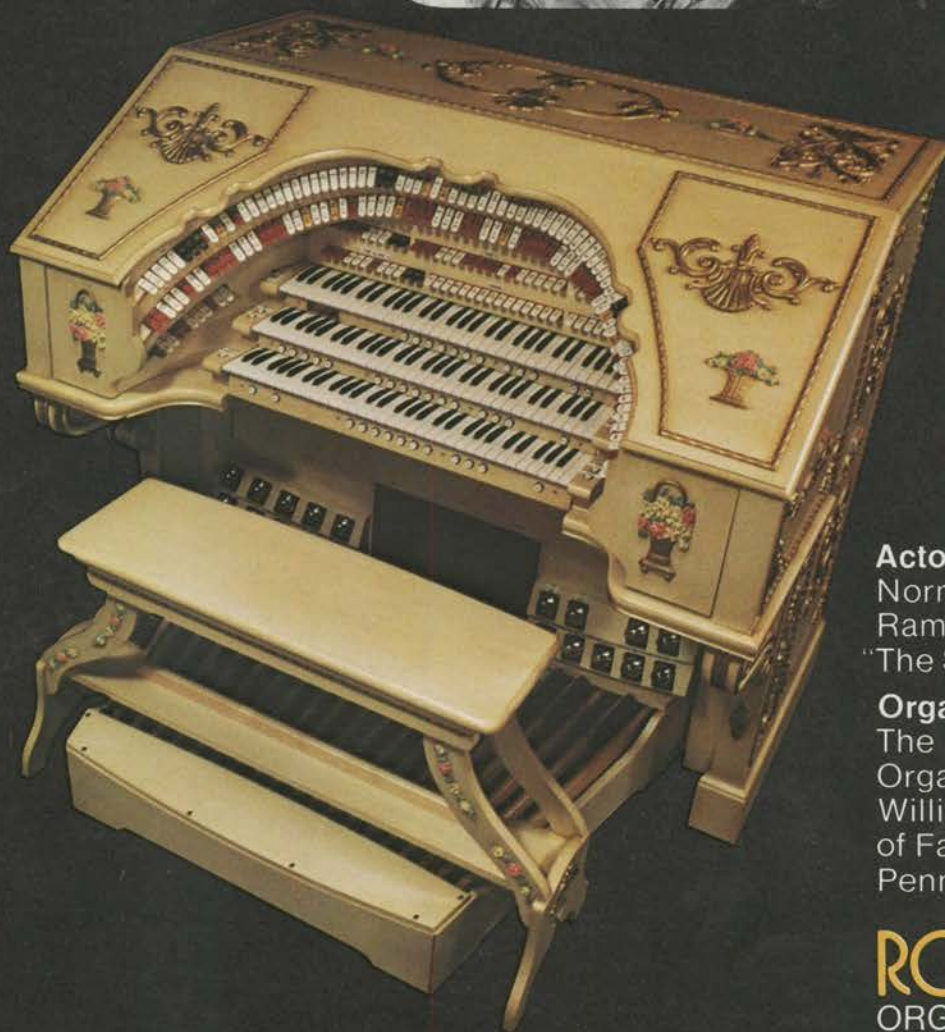
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