

# THEATRE ORGAN



VOLUME 17, NO. 5

OCTOBER—NOVEMBER, 1975



**Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society**



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# THEATRE ORGAN

Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society

Volume 17, No. 5 Oct. - Nov., 1975

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## COVER PHOTO

Since 1968, the Eastern Massachusetts Chapter has owned this 3/13 Wurlitzer, Opus 1349, now at Babson College in Wellesley, Mass.

A history of the first ATOS chapter begins on page 5. Cover photo by Dick Linder.

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## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Whenever an issue of THEATRE ORGAN is undeliverable, because a member has moved, and has not notified our circulation office of the new address, it costs ATOS from 36¢ to 46¢ per copy just to have the Postal Service return the magazine to us. It costs ATOS a *minimum* of from 36¢ to 46¢ to remail the same magazine, in addition to costs of any correspondence necessary to determine the new address. When multiplied by the number of magazines that are returned six times a year, the expense in time and money to ATOS is phenomenal. And this is at current postal rates. After the first of the year, it will cost even more!

The solution is a simple one. If you are changing your address, notify your chapter secretary-treasurer as soon as possible. If you are a chapter secretary or treasurer, please don't accumulate address changes, "until you have enough to send." Send every address correction in promptly, even if you only have one. If you are not a member of a chapter, send your new address directly to the ATOS Circulation Dept., P.O. Box 1314, Salinas, Calif. 93901.

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George Thompson, Editor

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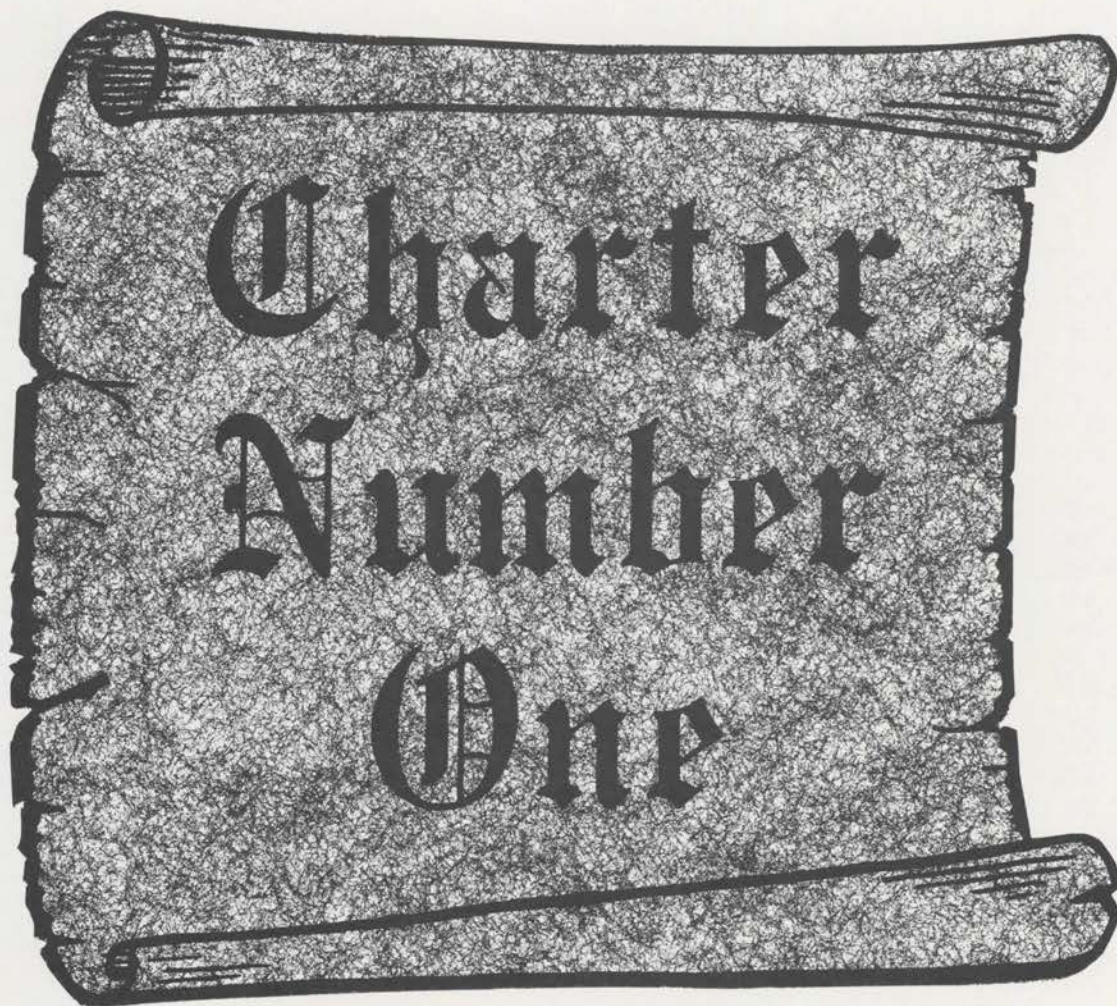
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# Eastern Massachusetts

by J. Paul Chavanne, Stuart Hinchliffe and Richard Linder

Photos by Richard Linder

Next year, along with the Bi-Centennial observances, the Eastern Massachusetts Chapter will be celebrating its 20th birthday. A lot of wind has passed through the Tibias since 1956! We'll try to give you the Eastern Mass. story and hope that in reading our tale you will feel that you have come to know us as friends, and as fellow sufferers and celebrants of the travails and the joys

which we share as victims and lovers of the magnificent theatre organ!

Surely everyone has heard of Bill Bunch, of Balcom & Vaughn, builders of (among many other things) the replacement console for the New York Paramount/Witchita Wurlitzer. Back in the spring of 1956 Bill, along with Don Phipps, Dave Garbarino and Brent Tyler, were sharing their common enthusiasm

for the Mighty Wurlitzer here in eastern Massachusetts. They held their first formal meeting around the 2/7 Wurlitzer in Don's family home in Milton, Mass. Bill Bunch entertained at the console. By August of that year, the group having increased to ten, the natural course of action was to inquire of the newly developing AATOE "out on the Coast" as to the requirements for association

and a charter. Judd Walton supplied the answers and the local group, now grown to 23, agreed at their September meeting at Don's to apply for a charter. The late Ralph Woodworth, former theatre organist for the B & K and Warner chains, was featured artist on this occasion. Bill Bunch was probably the most active member of the group, but was too deeply involved with organs in his professional capacity to enable him to take chapter office. There was no shortage of ability and interest, however, and four willing enthusiasts assumed their posts: Don Phipps, president; Howard Silva, vice president; Dave Garbarino, treasurer; and Brent Tyler secretary.

In October, 1956, then president of AATOE Richard Simonton authorized the issuance of Charter Certificate #1 to the Eastern Massachusetts Chapter. A November meeting was held at the Phipps home, at which former Metropolitan Theatre soloist Stan Cahoon provided the beautiful sounds. And plans were begun for what was to be a continuing series of annual concerts, to be played on the 2/14 Special Wurlitzer which is still in the Stoneham, Mass. Town Hall. This unusual instrument, made up of two theatre organs plus added ranks, had been presented to the people of the town in 1942 by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Patch, after having been played for many years over Boston radio station WNAC by the late Francis J. Cronin. Chapter concerts were presented on this organ at least once, and often twice a year until the spring of 1974.

The Eastern Mass. Chapter went "big time" in May of 1968, being incorporated as an educational and charitable chapter in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. There were now seventy members on our roster. The growing chapter's concerts at Stoneham were guaranteed success by the performances of such theatre organ celebrities as Reginal Foort, Eddie Weaver, Don Baker, Leonard MacClain, Ann Leaf, Ashley Miller, Lowell Ayars, Allen Mills and John Seng. Many of these artists returned a second and third time by popular demand.

In addition to public concerts at Stoneham, many fine home installations were enjoyed as a regular part of our monthly meetings. At the same time the Wurlitzers in the Lynn

and Salem (Mass.) Paramount theatres received a lot of attention from chapter members in an effort to restore and maintain them. But the all too common fate of such endeavors marked the end of these efforts. Both organs were unexpectedly sold and the theatres demolished. These losses served to illustrate the futility of such arrangements and sparked the search for a chapter instrument and a location for its installation.

Under the leadership of our then president, Jim Rockett, the chapter organ committee was diligently searching for an instrument.

In the Spring of 1968 we became the delighted owners of Opus 1349, a Style 235 Special 3/13 Wurlitzer. This instrument was sitting in nearly complete retirement in the former Loew's State Theatre on Massachusetts Ave. in Boston right behind Boston's famed Symphony Hall. The organ had, through some miracle, been spared the ravages of vandals, and everything was there just where you'd expect to find it. The State, once a fine 3400 seat house, was sold to the Archdiocese of Boston and was subsequently renamed the Donnelly Memorial. Again the theatre was sold, to the Christian Science Church which named it the Back Bay. All this shuffling around did not avoid the ultimate fate of the theatre — demolition.

In 1968 the Back Bay closed its

doors for the last time, and the Eastern Mass. Chapter took possession of the 235 Special.

After a brief, emotional farewell concert (attended by about 35 stalwarts), what was to become 28 unbroken hours of organ removal began. The removal crew started its work on a Friday evening, and the building wreckers were on the spot the next Monday. The deed was done, and the already beloved EMC-ATOS Wurlitzer was stacked away neatly (?) in a member's warehouse, while the search for a suitable home would be undertaken. Like all such removal projects, this one had its high spots; and the shared experiences of such a venture make for lifelong friendships between those fortunate enough to have been part of them. Of perhaps no other endeavor can it be more truly said, that one's benefits are in direct proportion to one's contributions.

The next chapter of our saga concerns itself with the search for, and the locating of, a home for our lonesome Wurlitzer. President Rockett appointed Carl Getz chairman of the "search committee." Several unfruitful leads were pursued, one of them (in a shopping mall) even progressing as far as the blueprint stage. But like Goldilocks, we were unable to find a home that was "just right" until Babson College in Wellesley, Mass. came into our lives. Several thoughtful men with insight and an

Richard Knight Auditorium, at Babson College, is now the home of the Eastern Mass. Wurlitzer.



appreciation for the past as well as the future sought and reached agreement to bring our Wurlitzer (and our growing chapter) into its ultimate home, Babson College. For the chapter, Carl Getz joined with our organ committee to achieve agreement with the Babson counterparts headed by Mr. Jesse Putney, treasurer and vice president in charge of business and financial affairs.

Babson's Richard Knight Auditorium is a Colonial-style brick building of about the same vintage as our Wurlitzer — circa 1925. The building is fronted by six graceful columns, its concert-hall interior has side and rear balconies, and a shallow stage. The hall accommodates 1100 persons, mainly in comfortably cushioned seats. A large motor-operated screen, projection booth and considerable theatrical lighting equipment are available for movies, concerts, etc. Best of all, tentative provision had been made, when the hall was designed, to accommodate a pipe organ! Since the two chambers were too small for the 3/13, these areas had to be enlarged and re-enclosed. They now have become our main and solo chambers, left and right stage wings respectively.

The agreement between the parties may be of interest (and perhaps help) to other chapters who may be searching for a home. In its simplest terms, the college provides the auditorium, including utilities and security (plus excellent parking areas); Eastern Mass. Chapter provides (but retains title to) the organ, and maintains it. We are allowed regular monthly meetings, work sessions and private practice sessions for individual members. (We are scrupulous to avoid conflict with College activities.) We essentially come and go as we please via a side entrance set up for Eastern Mass. Chapter key holders. It's not unusual for two or three members to meet there around 9 p.m., and the music usually goes on and on and on! A specified number of public concerts are also provided for each year. We enjoy the most cordial relations with our hosts; they are as pleased with the splendid theatre pipe organ which now calls Babson its home as are we, and the secure and prestigious surroundings to which we have entrusted our prize have been a great source of gratification to the



Console of Wurlitzer, Opus 1349, in concert position in Knight Auditorium.

chapter.

The console is moveable from center to left side, its usual resting place. Each chamber enjoys the advantage of having two openings, two facing each other obliquely across the stage, and two facing their respective balconies. More than adequate swell shade openings provide what has been praised as an unusually broad dynamic range. When fully opened the organ really "gets out."

Opus 1349 is designated a 235 Special by reason of its added Horn Diapason and Brass Trumpet. It also boasts a total of six tuned percussions. During the planning stages, the membership empowered the organ committee to provide for expansion of the 3/13 to 18 ranks. Some of this pipework is already on hand, but the expansion program appears to be some distance in the future as yet. Full size doors allow easy entrance to the chambers, although space becomes scarcer once one is inside. There just wasn't a great deal of space available. The understage electrical area is accessible from either the auditorium or the adjoining rear annex to the building.

The console is made mobile by means of a splendid wheeled, elevating dolly. Former theatre organist and club officer Al Winslow designed the platform; member Arnold

Smith, a machine shop owner (and a fine organist) did the construction — and then donated the platform to his chapter. Large rubber wheels make it easily moveable; and four 3' jackscrews, when cranks are attached, easily raise the platform to "concert height." When in place, and with steel legs and steps attached, the dolly is as solid as a church.

The three-decked console, itself, is probably our chapter's most admired showpiece. As could be expected, the poor old thing was a disaster when salvaged from its orchestra pit home. Countless layers of hideously-colored paint had been thrown at it during its long life, and general neglect had done the rest. What a dismal picture it made, sitting in the warehouse, with its still intact cable dumpily coiled atop it!

The console was moved directly from the theatre to Pat Fucci's home in Waltham, and it was there that a phenomenon called "console fission" took place. The bottom part remained with Pat who took charge of stripping and patching the lower shell and disassembling and re-assembling the manuals and pedalboard. The manuals were sent out to be recovered with new ivory and ebony. (The naturals of all three manuals were taken from a single tusk, to ensure uniformity.) Pedals



Solo Chamber and Toy Counter in Knight Auditorium. The chambers had always been there, but had never housed an organ.

were rebuilt with new maple naturals.

Console chief Dick Linder adopted the top part of the console as his own, and it soon sat solidly atop four cement blocks in the Linder basement, where it would live for two whole years.

While the console crew labored to restore the most visible part of the instrument, every stick and screw in the venerable keydesk was removed, restored or replaced. Stop tabs and pneumatics were re-spaced to include enough extras to handle the planned additional ranks. It was completely releathered. Every stop contact was replaced, and all lead

tubing removed, and in its place, new "Tygon" was installed. A third swell shoe was added (for future chamber space); and the original twenty step crescendo pedal was rebuilt to provide eighty steps of increment, fully programmable, making for a fine, smooth crescendo. All electrical connections in the console, as well as most of those in the chambers and relay room, are of the present-day plug type, making service much simpler.

But the console's exterior finish is what really catches the eye. After all the accumulated layers of gunk were removed, it became apparent that the old veneer was beyond resto-

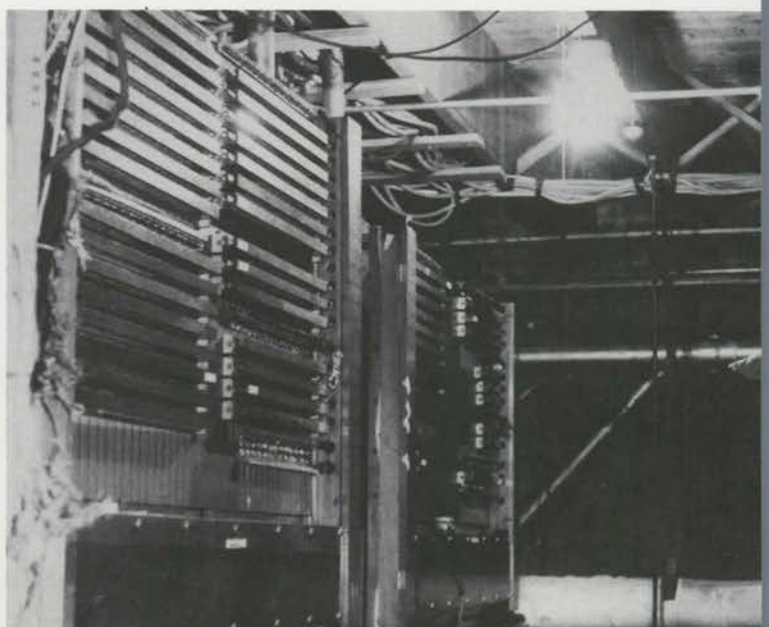
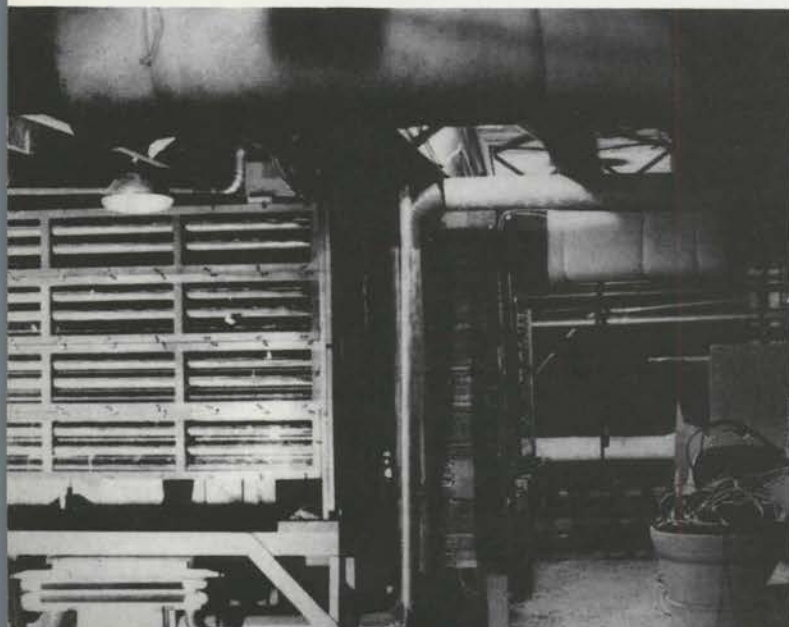
ration. So, fillers were applied, and reams of fine sandpaper were worn out (along with Dick Linder's right arm); before the pristine veneer was smooth as glass and ready for lacquer. After much debate, black had won out over white as most practical, if less showy. This proved to be a wise choice. Then came the seemingly endless task of spraying on lacquer, then rubbing most of it off; on again, off again, and on and on and on. After about fifteen such coats, the once neglected surface had acquired a sheen and depth that appeared almost three-dimensional. Occasional rubdowns with pure lemon oil are all that is needed to maintain a real showroom glow.

Once restored, the console completed its own journey to Wellesley to be reassembled, and to rejoin its pipework and wiring, and for the first time to assume its now permanent position on its elevator dolly.

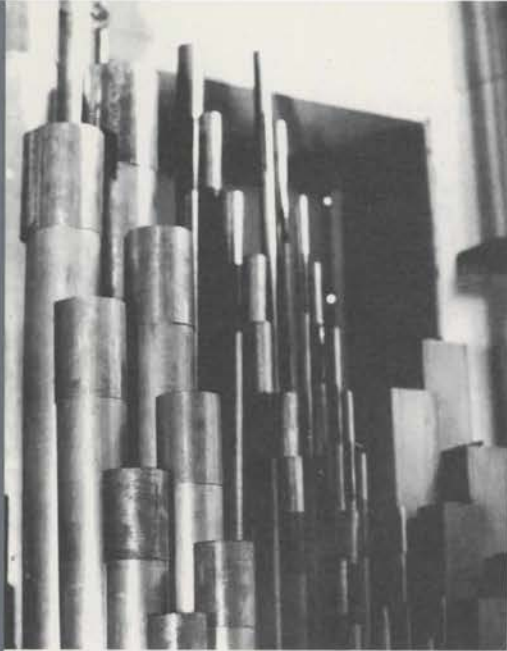
During this time, of course, the organ crews, under current President Arthur Goggin's leadership, were completing the rest of the installation. Such major feats as walling-in the two chambers, and cutting open the two direct-facing swell-openings had to be dealt with.

As we have said, all of EMC's public concerts in times past had been played on the Stoneham Town Hall/Patch Memorial Wurlitzer. With our 1973 fall concert, we could no longer ignore what had been disturbing us for some time — the Stoneham organ was beginning to show the effects of age and insufficient maintenance. Much as we

Under the stage are the relays, switches, capture combination system and two 5 hp 3-phase blowers.







Diapasons, Flutes and Strings in the main chamber.



Strings on offset chest in the main chamber "just make it."



Tuba and Trumpet ranks in the Solo chamber.

had come to love the old girl, we realized that the time had come to sink or swim with our own State/Babson Wurlitzer. Art Goggin's crew went into high gear, the debugging team of Clayt Stone and Ed Stanley shouldered their Flit guns, Erle and Mark Renwick applied tweezers and probes to the eye-crossing job of key contact adjustment. And then came the big one — our tireless wire men tied in a solid-state capture combination action — in time for our spring concert! Our organ's original Wurlitzer combination action, considering that the planned expansion would require major additions to it, was deemed to be hopeless. We just didn't have years enough to do the job. We had heard of a solid state action being marketed by Damon Corp. of Westwood, Mass. Consultation and research determined our course, We bought the "black box," and a "super crew" made up of Dick Linder, Elbert Drazy, Walt Wilson, Ed Stanley, Clayt Stone and others wired it in. Bugs we had, but our whiz kids spotted them all and banished them. Did it work? Ask any one of the three artists who have played it in concert! If the much larger Damon system now in use in the famed Paramount-Witchita Wurlitzer is as successful as ours, the artists who will play the "Dowager Empress" will surely love it.

Practically all our regular monthly meetings are held at Babson. Aside from the obvious benefits of having plenty of comfortable space, there is

the endless delight of playing and listening to our very own Wurlitzer. Meetings usually provide some sort of planned entertainment (Eastern Mass. Chapter includes several professionals, and a good number of very talented non-pros); following business meetings and during refreshments, open console always brings forth unexpected pleasures for both players and listeners. Heaven must be something like this!

Our organ has seen us successfully through three public concerts so far. In the spring of 1974, as we have explained, we had decided to launch our prize into the concert field (though it had actually been heard already by a few limited audiences at college functions). Fearless Larry Ferrari (Bless him!) agreed to fly our as yet untried organ in its concert debut. The cheerful grin on Larry's face as the evening progressed assured us all was well. And the waves of enthusiastic applause that followed his program confirmed the feeling! Only those who have sweated and suffered and worried over a theatre organ could know the pride and the joy that filled our hearts that night!

The fall of '74 saw the organ considerably more honed down and tightened up than it had been six months before. Though still not tonally "finished," it was greatly improved. A fortunate bit of scheduling put Hector Olivera on the bench for this concert. What happened? Another Olivera Experience! The cheering audience left no doubt

as to their approval of both the organ and the artist. And Hector? Bowing in acknowledgment after his encores, he turned and planted a fervent kiss square on the console's Hope-Jones nameplate! (Endorsement enough!)

And last spring, Ashley Miller came up from New York and made it all happen again. Ashley's formidable technique can put severe demands on an organ, but the Babson Wurlitzer met the test. Ashley especially enjoyed the facility of our Damon capture system. It showed in his playing; and his performance was, as always, outstanding.

What lies ahead? Formal dedication, scheduled for November 8, 1975. The end of a long, hard road. By this date, organ builder Ray Whalen and Art Goggin should have completed the tonal finishing and regulating of our present thirteen ranks. And our bug-chasers will have exterminated every last cotton-pickin' bug. A committee headed by ex-chapter presidents Carl Getz and Dick Linder plans a program worthy of the occasion. The artist has already been engaged. By general agreement, Hector will return to our bench for this momentous event.

Most ATOS chapters publish newsletters. Eastern Mass. Chapter had for several years come up with sporadic bulletins, mostly authored by Al Winslow, some by Jim Rockett, and others. Vice President Erle



Knight at night.

Renwick started the first regularly published paper in 1969; it acquired a name (by balloting) and in 1970 the paper, now the "Eastern PIPES," enmeshed itself in the hitherto casual life of its present editor, Stu Hinchliffe. Published monthly ten times a year, the paper has been reaching a widening readership outside eastern Mass., as well as being read(?) by the chapter's present 120-odd members. Several publishing aides have introduced various printing methods. The PIPES is presently mimeographed on a brand-new club-owned duplicator. The PIPES' purpose is, simply — inform and unify; its content tries to achieve this by printing of bulletins, coverage of chapter events, exchange of views, the publishing of historical articles,

technical pieces, etc. Though its staff has seen numerous changes and has included many able contributors, Paul Chavanne and Dick Linder (both ex-presidents) have been Stu's most constant partners and counsels. This tale has been jointly authored by this same trio, with much of the earlier background material contributed by long-time member and officer Jim Rankin.

For all of us, the members of Eastern Mass. Chapter, in our organ-restoring activities we have not only fulfilled the purposes of the ATOS, while providing ourselves much pleasure (along with some discomforts); but most importantly, our shared experiences have brought the priceless gift of friendships with some truly fine people. □

## FOURTH SEASON FOR WURLITZER POPS

Season ticket sales for Wurlitzer Pops have very nearly doubled from the number sold at this time last year. The three-concert series which began Sept. 20 is going into its fourth year following its premiere concert in December of 1972.

Michael Coup, president of Wichita Theatre Organ, Inc., sponsors of the series said, "We are gratified by the response and want to continue to bring the additional culture and unique entertainment to the Wichita area. We have also kept the cost the same as last season, even though our expenses have risen. Our thought is to make these concerts available for the enjoyment of as many people as possible."

This year's series will be launched by Bill Thomson, a previous guest artist in 1973. The initial concert was set for Sept. 20 at Century II Exhibition Hall. Recently Thomson was named best overall organist and winner of the best new organ album in a readership poll by *The Organist Magazine*.

Thomson is a composer who has acquired the title "jet set" organist. He concertizes with classics and popular music.

The other two events on the Wurlitzer Pops series schedule includes the popular-with-the-fans Silent Movie Night with Gaylord Carter. The crowd pleasing composer/arranger has appeared here before to sold-out houses. His performance is scheduled for March 20, 1976.

Here's Hector Olivera, booked for May 8, 1976, will be a new musician to Wichita area audiences. The 29-year-old native of Buenos Aires has played Carnegie Hall and had the pleasure of performing before the Pope during a visit to the Vatican Pavillion at the World's Fair in New York.

Not a part of the regular series but an option for series ticket holders at a reduced rate is a new concept, Billy Nalle's Concert/Dance on June 5, 1976. *The New York Times* called Nalle "notable, imaginative, lively."

The three-concert series is priced at \$12.50 at Central Ticket Agency. Billy Nalle's Concert/Dance is \$5.00 to series ticket holders. Ticket holders are entitled to reserved table seating and complimentary refreshments. □

REMEMBER



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# ENGLAND TOUR DIARY

by Dennis and Heidi James

The early morning sun glinted on the tiny jewel-sized cars far below us. We grinned sleepily at each other while waking up under the steaming cloths our stewardess gave us. After a year of letters and anticipation we were finally in "this island, this kingdom, this England."

Landing and customs passed by quickly, and soon we were riding in organist Len Rawle's Peugeot for a quick look at his magnificent Wurlitzer home installation before toddling off to be at the home of our hosts, Les and Edith Rawle.

That evening we were treated to a ride on London's famed "tube" subway system, where everything is as circular as J.R.R. Tolkien's hobbit holes. The purpose of the tube trip was to attend the Cinema Organ Society's monthly meeting at the Magic Circle (London Headquarters of the famous magician's club). C.O.S. members prepare programs from record and slide collections for a pleasant evening of entertainment. Tonight's program was special in that it was a memorial to noted English organists Jackie Brown, Vic Hammett and Gerald Shaw, all popular artists who are deeply missed.

Dennis was invited to show his

slide presentation of the Ohio Theatre. As a number of beautiful theatres are closing or are about to close in England, much interest was generated in how Columbus was able to save and restore her theatre and organ.

The next morning, April 10, saw us speeding up to the northwest part of England with Len Rawle, who was to present a demonstration concert for Yamaha in Kendal. While talking shop with Len, we couldn't help remarking occasionally over the beautiful rolling hills laced with networks of brooks and stone walls.

That night we relished the thick northern accents of the hotel waiters. Len, in return, regaled us with his imitation of a broad American accent. These contrasts were to provide all of us with a constant source of amusement throughout our tour.

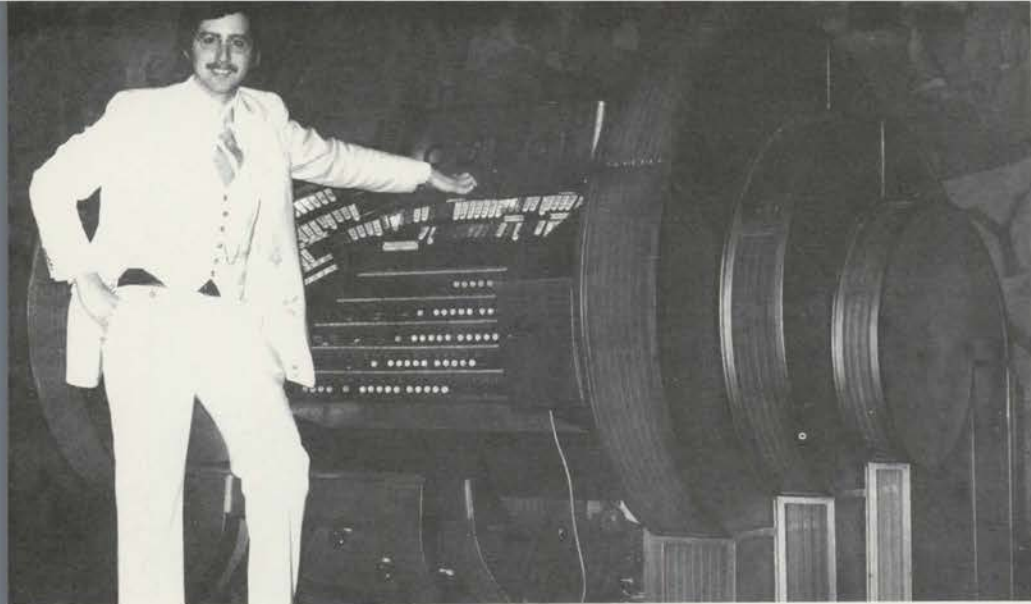
The next day Len treated us to a grand backroads tour of the beautiful Midlands Lakes country. Thousands of pie-faced sheep dotted the tarns and thwaites (lakes and meadows). Lake Windermere reminded us of a miniature Switzerland with white-capped mountains in the distance and wildflowers blooming



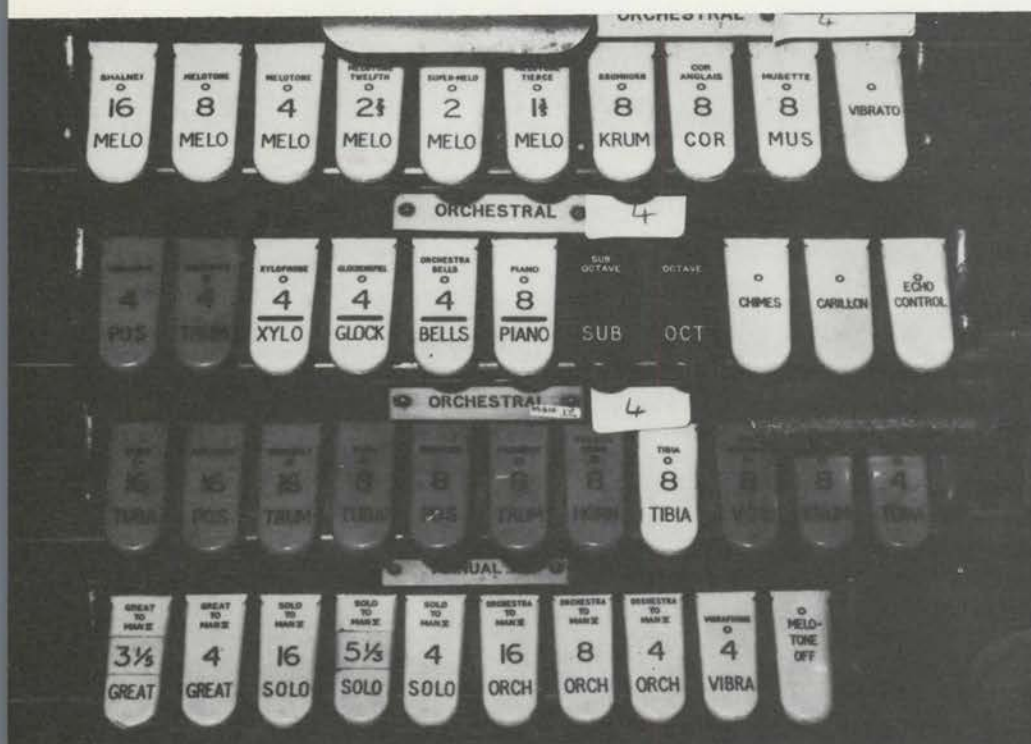
An English Beefeater.

everywhere. A stop at a pub in Beetham provided a classic English meal, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, along with a quick game of darts.

The 12th brought Heidi's birthday celebrated with gifts from our new-found English friends. The entire Rawle family spared no effort to make us feel as welcome as long time friends, though we had only met just briefly the year before in Detroit. Later that day it was on to a practice session at the Kingston

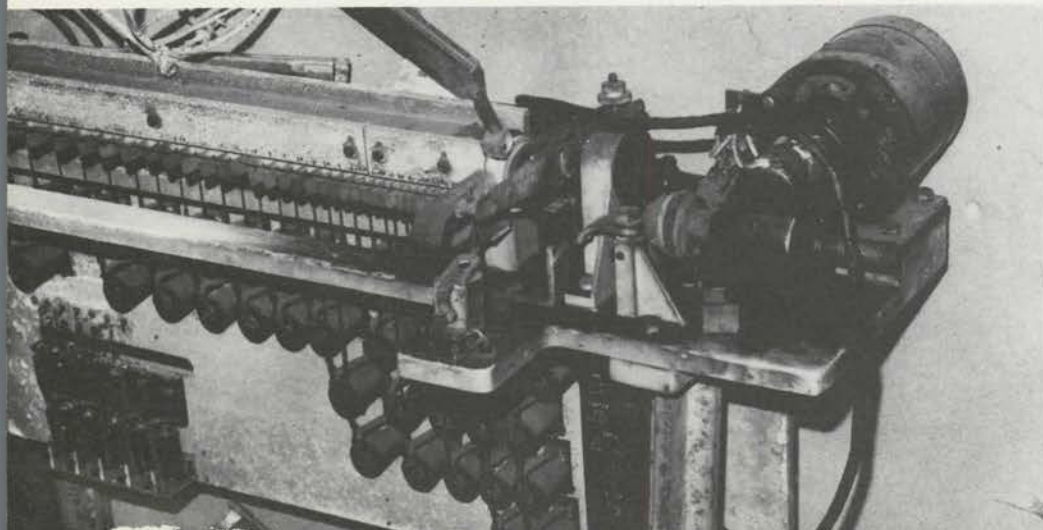


The famous 5/15 Compton at the Leicester Square Odeon.



Top row of stop tabs on the Odeon Compton console controls the Melotone and its derivatives, the Krumhorn and Cor Anglais.

A Compton "Solo Cello"



Granada, site of our first concert.

The Kingston organ is a 3/10 Wurlitzer installed entirely on the left side of the hall, as was the custom on a large number of English instruments. Although the organ piano served as an accessory instrument quite well, it was not suited for solo use, so arrangements were made to bring in a Steinway grand for the concert.

Then on to Hampton Court, former residence of the likes of Henry VIII and William and Mary. Les Rawle, who helps maintain the chapel organ there, showed us the beautiful formal gardens in full spring bloom. He also pointed out that every one of the several dozen chimneys was bricked in its own unique pattern, a fact that intrigued another American visitor — Lowell Ayars.

That evening we sat in on the initial meeting of the group planning next year's England Organ Safari. Officials from each of the organ clubs in England were present to discuss which of the many instruments available would be included in the 10-day planned organ tour for the American ATOS visitors.

The Leicester Square Odeon and its huge 5/15 Compton with "jelly" surround attracted us the next morning. The appearance of the console with colored lights flashing away is quite a sight on first viewing. The curved glass additions provide an interesting visual effect for the audience to watch while the organist plays his solos.

The overall sound and playing "feel" of the instrument was quite similar to the Atlanta Fox Moller. Powerful reeds and concert organ voicing in the Diapasons and Strings gave the organ a brilliant ensemble. The pipework, unfortunately, is located under the stage, so the organ sounded at its best in the pit. Sadly, much of the brilliance and power is lost only a few rows back in the theatre, and even the organist has a rough time when the console is in up position.

Comptons are equipped with a number of devices not found on the American theatre organs. For instance, capture combination action for ease of piston setting and 2nd touch cancel on the stop tabs enable entire divisions to be cancelled and changed with ease. Ventil controls

enable the organist to turn off the air in individual chests, should ciphers occur during a performance. Last, but not least, the electronic Melotone units, unique to the Compton, provide a very interesting added tone color with a result not unlike attaching a Hammond organ to each manual.

Organist David Shephard, who was preparing for his portion of the then upcoming Gerald Shaw memorial concert at the Odeon, provided us with a detailed tour of the entire instrument and a demonstration of its unique sounds. David proved to be very adept at handling the large console and he was able to provide a good representation of the many playing styles heard in the Odeon over the years.

The Rawles then gave us the Jaguar Coach Tourlines view of London, complete with a stop at Trafalgar Square. Under the watchful eyes of giant black lions and Admiral Nelson, the Trafalgar pigeons waxed so friendly that one even began to nest in Dennis' hair!

We tried a number of "American" restaurants in London during our visit. It got to be a stand-off as to who was more amused by whom. The waiters were horrified when we requested catsup, mustard, pickles, onions tomatoes, lettuce and cheese on our hamburgers. The compromise became a plain burger topped with a slice of cucumber and a separate plate of cold cheese slices. The "American" pizza turned out to be sans herbs, spices or seasoning of any kind. We imagined what British visitors must think of our "English" fish and chips back home.

Edith Rawle took us to the resort city Brighton on the southern coast on April 15. We went by tube, train, bus and foot, enjoying the whole gamut of English public transport. Of interest to visiting organ buffs is the Brighton Dome, a converted horse stables-to-auditorium that was once a part of the Persian-styled Royal compound. The building houses a 4/40 Christie concert-theatre organ. The instrument is of the "straight" variety with a few theatre organ amenities such as Bass Drum and Cymbals, which house organist Douglas Reeve uses to great effect. In addition to his organist duties Mr. Reeve also produces the "Tuesday Evening at the Dome" enter-

tainments — presentations straight out of the Vaudeville tradition with black-face singers, comedy acts, soloists, amateur bands and, of course, the organ solo.

Vaudeville-type entertainment appears to never have died in England, which may be an explanation for the general lack of real public concern and interest in the gradual disappearance of the theatre organ from their musical scene. In the States theatre organ is so far removed from the current musical entertainment trends that there is now a definite revival of a part of the past for another look. This especially applies to the organ and silent film presentations. In England there was little, if any, silent film use of the organs. The heyday for them was the period from 1930 to 1945 with many hold-overs all the way to recent years in such places as the Odeon Leicester Square and the Blackpool Tower. The theatre organ is just too recent a phenomenon and is still a part of the public consciousness. This fact was brought home to us while watching a T.V. variety program when we heard the host crack a joke about theatre organists — the audience laughed uproariously, for they knew exactly what a theatre organist is.

We were fortunate to be able to sample three excellent London theatrical productions: "Jeeves" with David Hemmings, "Hans Christian Anderson" with Tommy Steele and a revival of the classic "Harvey" with Jimmy Stewart. All were performed in beautiful, very intimate theatres dating back to the 1800's.

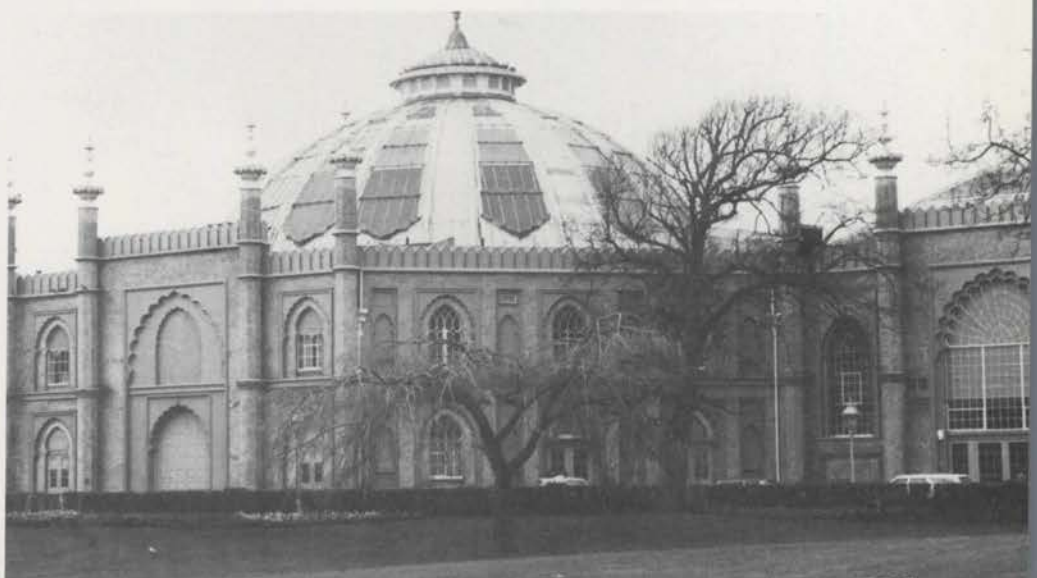
The Brighton Dome houses a 4/40 Christie. It was once a horse stable, part of the Persian-styled Royal compound.



Heidi finds that Trafalgar Square is for the birds.

On the evening of the 18th we were invited as special guests for the Premier showing of Barbara Streisand's "Funny Lady" at the Henley-upon-Thames Regal Theatre. At the interval (intermission) we were introduced on stage by an actor from the popular BBC series "Upstairs/Downstairs." Several other prominent English actors were present, including Ian Carmichael (of Lord Peter Whimsey fame). Music for the occasion was played on the theatre's 3/7 Compton, the first organ in England to be reinstalled in a theatre.

Saturday morning Les Rawle took





Dennis and Heidi at the Granada Theatre, Kingston-upon-Thames.

us to Harrow where Dennis played the 3/8 Wurlitzer in the Granada Theatre. This organ proved to be a feisty little instrument. The original factory specifications featured three bright reeds (Post Horn, Brass Saxophone and Tuba) for this small instrument. The console is really a glorified two manual with additional woodwork on the ends to make it appear much larger. The added third manual has only two speaking stops and a few couplers. The Tibia is unified through 2' and Sub and

Super Octave couplers are included, so the end result is a very versatile instrument — ideal for an American pizza parlor installation.

Sunday afternoon, April 20, we performed a duet concert at the Granada Kingston-upon-Thames. The organ was in fine shape and well tuned. The Steinway arrived and was placed onstage after the management graciously surmounted the technical problem of getting past the anchored cinerama screen by dismantling a portion of it.

Dennis and Heidi were interviewed by Robin Richmond on BBC radio.



The audience sat in the balcony, for the Kingston Granada is one of the newly "tripled" theatres. The downstairs area has been walled in under the balcony and split into two separate theatres leaving only the balcony, orchestra and stage areas intact to form the third theatre. We found the audience here, and everywhere we went, extraordinarily warm, friendly and enthusiastic. It was a real joy to perform for such responsive people.

The next week or so we spent as tourists and loved it. We saw many of the famous attractions in London and surrounding areas. One interesting occurrence was Heidi's impromptu performance on an 1851 Klein giraffe piano we chanced upon while investigating antique shops in Eton.

We visited a number of familiar faces from the British delegations to our ATOS Conventions. Michael Candy happens to be an amateur magician, and we were invited by him to return to the Magic Circle for a highly entertaining evening of magic.

We also visited Father Kerr who has recently completed winding on the 3/7 Compton he is installing in his church, St. Mary's Mother of God. This is the second theatre organ in a church installation for this very active theatre organ buff.

Another couple who frequent our conventions own the Horse and Groom pub in Ascot where we spent an evening entertaining the troupes on the Baldwin electronic and a strange little piano that lost an octave of keys somewhere along the line.

Out in the very middle of nowhere among the hay and cows stands the Plough, an English pub housing a 3/11 Compton theatre organ. David Shephard currently plays there between his teaching duties. The Compton has all of the special devices including a rather unique effect called the "Solo Cello." This stop is literally a metal cello string played by spinning discs and steel fingers much in the manner of a Violano-Virtuoso machine. The device is situated in the chamber and is run through electronic amplification resulting in an eerie sound similar to the humming of a thousand giant bees (all in tune).

That evening we listened to the

BBC broadcast of our visit to the "Organist Entertains" radio show. Organist Robin Richmond hosts this very popular program listened to weekly by an estimated fifteen million people. Excerpts from our "Puttin' On The Ritz" album were played as we discussed the tour and the American organ scene in general. At the end of the program we announced the upcoming theatre organ concerts in the general London area and were surprised to note there were so many.

Les Rawle next took us to Blenheim Palace, home of the Duke of Marlborough and birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill. It is a truly magnificent structure currently open for public tours. Les arranged for Dennis to play the beautiful and richly ornamented 4/60 Willis pipe organ installed in one of the great halls. Warned ahead of time to perform only classical organ works Dennis played works of Buxtehude, Bach and Guilman for the Palace visitors.

At the end of this session the palace caretaker came to the console and asked, "You are an American organist, yes? Can you play any boogie-woogie?" Taken aback but happy to oblige Dennis played his arrangement of the "Bumble Bee Boogie." With trackers clacking away Dennis performed the next request from the household staff for "Colonel Bogey March." Ragtime was requested, a piano was uncovered halfway down the hall and Heidi joined in for a spirited Joplin duet. This performance was only slightly marred by the individual tunings of the instrument — a half-step apart!

The Sunday before leaving England we played our second public concert for a near-sell out crowd at Tony Manning's studio in Farnborough. Dennis found the 3/9 Christie well suited to the room and in good shape for the concert. Heidi tackled the newly installed Hupfeld Solophonola upright piano with gusto and won. Again the audience was enthusiastic and quite demonstrative of their pleasure.

Other organ crawls took us to the Style F Wurlitzer in the New Gallery Theatre and to the Gaumont State Kilburn 4/16 Wurlitzer opened by noted organist Sidney Torch. Of course we mustn't forget the lovely



Dennis at Sidney Torch's favorite, the Kilburn 4/16 Wurlitzer.



Heidi listens to Len Rawle, at his 4/20 Wurlitzer.

Not one, but two! A private concert in Les Rawle's home.



instruments in Les and son Len Rawles' homes. As mentioned before Len is a professional organist who has already had some American concert exposure. His concerts in Rochester, New York and on the West Coast recently had audiences charmed by his fine playing style.

After playing his 4/20 Wurlitzer (from the Empire Theatre on Leicester Square) one wonders why Len would even leave his living room. The organ is without a doubt one of the finest home installations anywhere. Ideally matched to the room by clever mixing chambers and swell shade placements the organ has a sound which caused Dennis to start thinking about acquiring his own some day.

Les Rawle has not one but two 3 manual Wurlitzer consoles in his living room, a startling sight indeed at first viewing. The main console controls some 19 ranks of Wurlitzer pipe work gathered from here and there over the years. The sound is quite potent and should be even better yet when Les finishes his new addition onto the living quarters which will allow for even more tonal expansion. It was quite a treat to know that at the end of the day's journeys there was always a Wurlitzer ready for practice.

After staying with them for over a month, Les and Edith Rawle seemed more like our parents than the gracious hosts they were, and it was really like leaving home when the time came at last to go. We had a truly unforgettable time and are looking forward with great anticipation for our return trip next year. □

Cheerio 'til next year!



The CATOE booth became a busy spot at the Home Organists Adventure.

(Photo courtesy Conn Organ Corp.)

## Rapport Maturing in Organ Groups

by Almer Brostrom

The difference between pipe organs and electronics is personal, cash and space. Since pipes are available only to the few, electronics are filling the desire for the many. The interest of ATOS, as we know, is in pipes. But we note the evolution of a closer relationship between the two factions which is good!

The Chicago Home Organist Adventure in August of 1975, demonstrated the mutual interest of both groups. There were many pipe people among those present, and most of them have an electronic instrument.

The affair was the third one at which ATOS was given a booth by Bill Worrall, publisher of *The Organist Magazine* which sponsors these conventions. CATOE members managed the Chicago booth and the interest and response was surprising. The first day they were unprepared for signing up new members — didn't expect that in August! And CATOE's large mailing list grew larger with the bright interest shown in theatre organs.

Thus, let us not slight nor neglect the electronic gang. Their interest is music and particularly organ music. Let's nurture this interest

and get them into our organization.

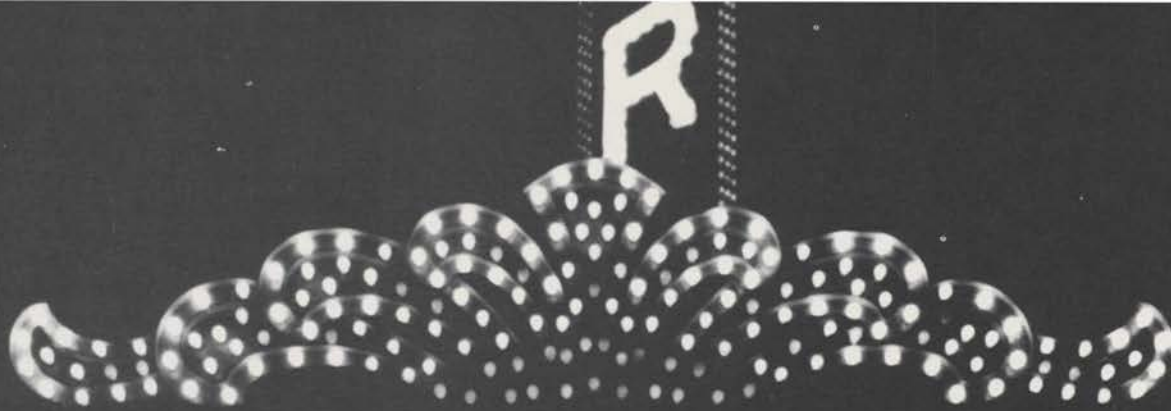
These Home Organist Adventures are a great opportunity for furthering organ interest. The general format is: instructional classes (workshops), six each day which are conducted by very knowledgeable people, for example: Richard Bradley, Johnny Kemm, Rosemary Bailey, Stan Zimmermann, Marion Ritchie, Stan Hertz, Val St. Regis, Carol Jones, Danny Brown, Dan Bellomy, Paul Renard and Al Hermanns.

Of course, you don't know all of them. But, why not? You should, because they are all active and furthering interest in organ music.

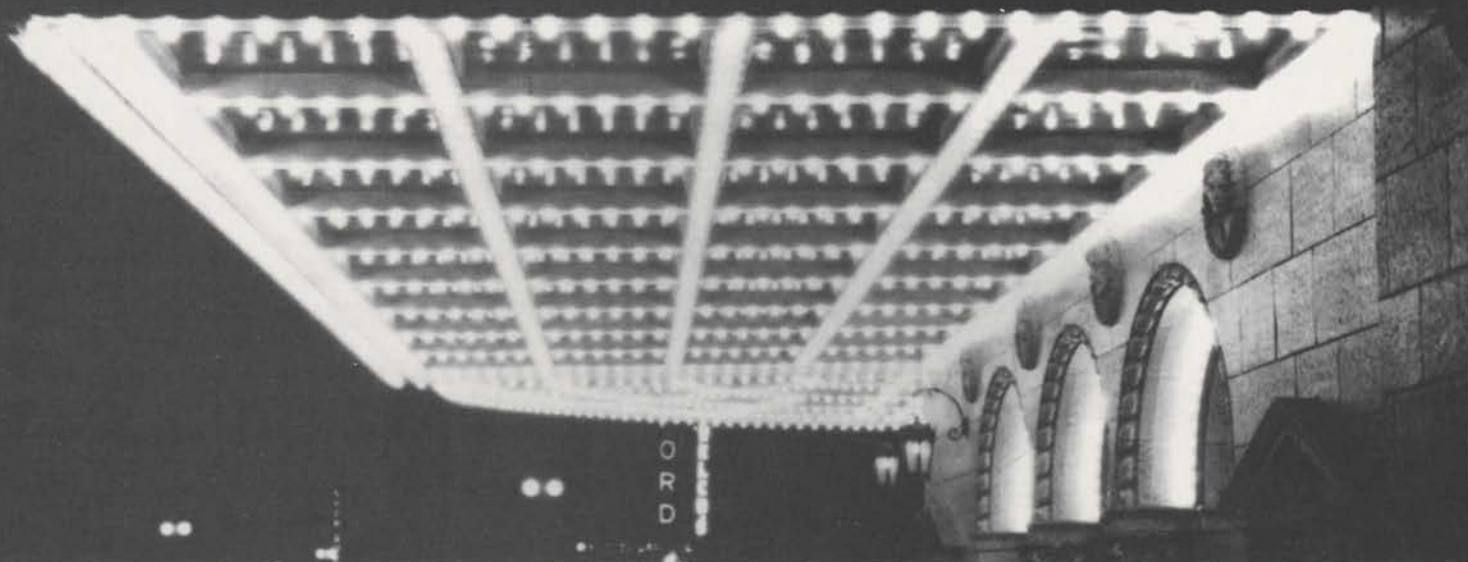
Then in addition to the classes, there is a concert each day featuring two or more good artists on instruments from the various manufacturers. The banquets and social opportunities are a plus, as we know. Also each session has special workshops for teachers through NAOT.

Bill Worrall is scheduling these Adventures for many areas of our United States. The next one will be in St. Petersburg, Fla., in February 1976. For information write to *The Organist Magazine*, Box 4399, Downey, Calif. 90241. It is a worthwhile experience and reasonable! □





## GEORGE JOHNSON OMAHA'S PREMIER ORGANIST



by Lloyd E. Klos

Mr. Johnson received top billing on the marquee of Omaha's 3000-seat Riviera (now Paramount) Theatre. (Johnson collection)

When we first met Potomac Valley Chapter's George R. Johnson in Seattle in 1971, we wondered if he were related to the George A. Johnson who was supposed to have opened the Brooklyn Paramount in November 1928. We were informed that there is no relation between organ enthusiast and organist.

About a year later, Byron Melcher, Thomas Organ Co. representative and personal friend of the organist, suggested a feature story on Mr. Johnson. The latter was agreeable to furnishing details and pictures "of my checkered career, the only real feature being I have been in music all my life."

George A. Johnson was born in 1904 in a Lutheran parsonage in Warren, Pa. He was educated in the Warren public schools and Bellefonte Academy in Bellefonte, Pa. At the age of 12, he was assistant organist at First Lutheran Church in Warren. "I practiced movie music on the church instrument — between Bach and Franck." He credits his first public appearance at the console to a snowstorm. One wintry Sunday morning, the regular organist was snowbound at home, so George, proud and happy, played his first service. He had been studying organ for only four weeks!

When 14, he joined the Musicians'

Union and played piano, saxophone, clarinet and xylophone with a number of bands. At 16, he was organist at the Liberty Theatre in Herkimer, N.Y., playing a 3/16 Moller. Next came a two-year stint at Shea's Buffalo 4/28 Wurlitzer. Later, he was featured for two sessions at the Virginia Theatre's 3/24 Moller in Charleston, W. Va. There were also engagements in Shea's theatres in Jamestown, N.Y., and Bradford, Pa.

Becoming more ambitious to rise in the musical world, Mr. Johnson went to Chicago where he enrolled in the Chicago Music College (now Roosevelt University). Eventually, he

did special study at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., and the University of Omaha.

His piano teachers were Dr. LeRoy Campbell, R.O. Suter and Cecil Berryman. Organ instructors were Dr. Louis Potter, C. Gordon Wedertz, William R. Boone and Louise Zabriskie. His studies eventually earned him the A.A.G.O. award in 1942.

"While attending CMC, I played evenings at many suburban theatres, among them the Auditorium Theatre in Berwyn, Ill., which had a 4/10 Robert Morton. Early in 1927, I got a call from Jack Kalver, my "patron saint," of Leo Fiest Inc., about a three-week guest appearance at Chicago's Harding Theatre in Logan Square. This was a large deluxe house with stage band, second-run top features from downtown and a 3/15 Wurlitzer.

"I accepted the position, and on my first day, stopped the show cold, using a solo which Henri A. Keates had used downtown at the Oriental Theatre. The real reason for the success of my stint was that the headliners were Freeman J. Gosden and Charles Correll, then known as 'Sam and Henry,' broadcasting over WGN, but later to be known as 'Amos 'n' Andy.' Each show had a packed house which was the perfect dream of every organist in Chicago.

"That appearance led to an audition at the Chicago Theatre on Jesse Crawford's splendid Wurlitzer in March 1927. I was offered the solo organist spot at the new 3,000-seat Riviera Theatre to be

opened in Omaha. Henry B. Murtagh, who was organist at the Chicago, advised me to take the job as I would last longer in a smaller city where the publicity was better. He re-wrote one of my solos and showed me how comedy was of value in slide presentations. A wonderful man, Henry B. Murtagh, and a great showman."

A faded clipping from VARIETY, dated March 26, 1927, describes the opening of the Publix Riviera Theatre: "The newest link, and a big, bright, shinning one in the Publix theatre chain, was added today when the beautiful Riviera at 20th and Farnum opened.

"Its premiere was held last evening . . . Those present included the elite of Omaha and Nebraska society, state and county officials and a large party of Publix and Paramount officials . . . The new amusement palace seats 3,000 and represents an investment of 2½ million. Designed by John Ebersson, it is the very latest thing in atmospheric thought . . .

"Adolph Menjou's 'Evening Clothes' was the feature, but the first picture to hit the sheet was a news shot (Kinograms). The stage show consisted of 'An Indian Legend' with special scenery and a ballet of 10 . . . Another stage turn was 'The Inaugural Banquet.' House orchestra of 20 was conducted by Nathaniel W. Finston, but regularly will be under the direction of Frederick Schmidt.

"At the console of the organ, George A. Johnson scored the individual hit of the evening with 'Organs I Have Played.' It was the Jesse

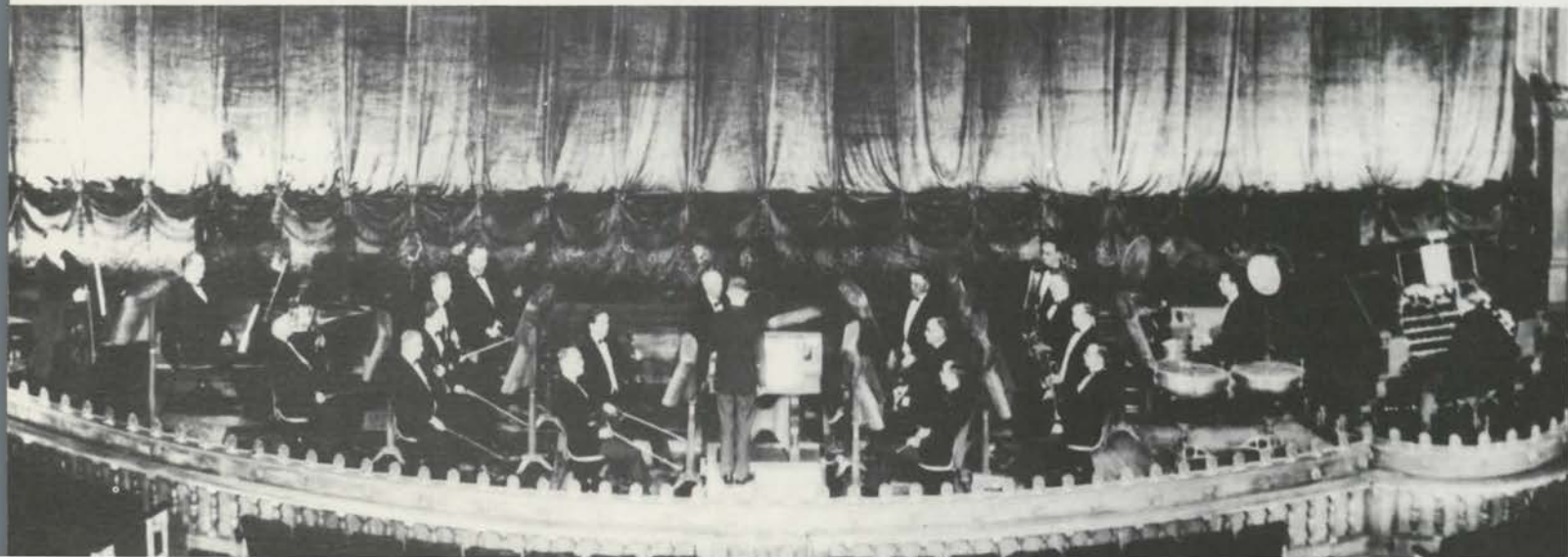
Crawford novelty and stopped things for a few minutes. Another innovation was the perfect Publix Service rendered by the corps of snappy appearing ushers and attendants, strictly a la Paramount, New York."

A feature of Mr. Johnson's playing at the Riviera was the classical program he did each Sunday noon and attended by most appreciative audiences. These were broadcast over WOW, Omaha. He was considered one of the most popular radio artists in the middle west, and one of the first concert organists to play on the major networks.

"I worked up a stunt with George Getsey which created a great deal of comment. It was written up in the theatre organ column in THE METRONOME in July 1928. I quote: 'After 75 consecutive weeks, during which time he has not missed a single performance (four a day), George Johnson has been at the Riviera since it was opened. Johnson has been hitting from all angles lately, using community singing, comedy, audience plants and straight solos. George Getsey (Leo Fiest man) and he worked out a very good stunt in which Johnson starts out with a classical solo, only to be annoyed by Getsey who was blowing his nose and making sarcastic remarks to those about him. Getsey was in the second row behind the organ console. Much burned up, Johnson jumped to his feet and argued. The result was that Getsey came up and sang with the organ. It went over very big and was the talk of the circuit.'"

The music department of the Riviera Theatre in Omaha, with organist Johnson at the Wurlitzer console, in the days when the organ was used with the orchestra in certain presentations.

(Johnson collection)



While at the Riviera, he learned that the son of a prominent piano teacher, Cecil Berryman, was greatly interested in the organ. The boy, seven-year-old Edward played piano so well that Mr. Johnson had him play a Bach prelude and a Beethoven minuet as a special matinee attraction. His performance was a success and the young musician was hooked on pipe organ. Today, he is organist and music director at one of the largest churches in Minneapolis.

As was often the case in the days of the theatre organ, if the house organist featured a song, his picture appeared on the sheet music. In 1927, George Johnson's picture appeared on the front cover of *When You Play With the Heart of a Girl*, music by Thomas Bruce and lyrics by Earl Haubrich.

In November 1928, the Brooklyn Paramount opened. Mr. Johnson now corrects a long-held misconception. "I never opened the Brooklyn Paramount. How the story got into Ben Hall's writings and record jacket notes, I don't know. I do not remember twin consoles at the Brooklyn Paramount. The organ was impressive, but nothing in comparison to Jesse Crawford's 4/36 Wurlitzer in the New York Paramount. In some early publicity for the theatre, however, I was slated to be associate organist with Henry B. Murtagh, and was even on the local 802 roster. But, at that moment, Paramount-Publix took over Fox West Coast Theatres, and they offered me the Portland Paramount. My wife was terrified of Brooklyn, but we both liked the West Coast."

So, George Johnson was sent to Portland, Oregon, to open the 4/20 Wurlitzer in the 3,000-seat Paramount. "I did straight solos, solos with pit orchestra, slide solos, but very little community singing. Henry 'Hot Lips' Busse was master of ceremonies, and Harry Linden directed the pit orchestra. Portland is a musical town, and I think I could have gotten away with a Bach fugue there.

"An amusing thing happened to me in Portland. I had a large, white English bulldog, named Chauncey, who was the pride of my eye. He used to rest in my dressing room and I would walk him between shows. One day, as I was doing my solo,

someone let him out of my dressing room. When he heard the organ, he started to look for me. Imagine my surprise when I saw Chauncey in the spotlight! He got more applause than I did!"

Following the Portland tenure, Mr. Johnson played several theatres in the middle west: Capitol in Des Moines (3/12 Wurlitzer); Paramount in Cedar Rapids (3/12 Wurlitzer); Paramount in Waterloo, Iowa (3/10 Barton); Orpheum in Omaha (3/12 Wurlitzer); and the Military in Omaha (2/6 Wurlitzer). He played the last named theatre in 1932, and in 1941, he returned to the Riviera in Omaha which had been renamed the Paramount.

He was affiliated with radio stations in Omaha as staff organist, including WOW, KOIL, KFAB, and KOWH.

Earlier, we mentioned Henry B. Murtagh's advice to George to take the position as organist in a smaller city because the publicity was much greater. Looking through yellowing newspaper ads, we see such super-

latives as "George Johnson, Master Organist at the Golden-Voiced Riviera Wonder Organ . . . A Tribute to Lindbergh by George Johnson, Omaha's Prince of Music . . . Extra today: Organ Recital, starting at 12:30 P.M. . . . George Johnson at our mighty organ and Omaha's Hit Parade Community Sing . . . Hear this great organist, entertainer and humorist of organ novelty presentation."

When Publix was a big factor in theatre entertainment, it handed out weekly program booklets to the patrons called "Publix News." In the June 1, 1928 Omaha issue, is a column entitled "The Music Box," in which our subject served as writer. These are some excerpts:

*"Whew! Excuse me, folks, if I seem all dusty and tired. But, it does keep me burrowing into my library to keep up with music for these nationalistic concerts we've been giving at the Riviera Theatre every Sunday noon. Italian, German, Bohemian, Irish, Swedish, Jewish. I've had to hunt up music to suit*

George Johnson instructs talented seven-year-old Edward Berryman at the Riviera organ. Today, Berryman is organist and musical director of one of the largest churches in Minneapolis.

(Johnson collection)



them all, and I've Polish, Scottish, Russian, Spanish, and I don't know what, yet to contend with. But, none of them has stumped me so far, so I guess we'll hit it off to the end. (We had guest soloists, choral organizations, and various other mid-west talent, most of whom appeared for free).

"One of the nice things about being a theatre organist is that you get copies of all the brand-new song hits. All of you folks soon will be singing 'My Bouquet of Memories,' a new ballad, and two new fox trots, 'Without You, Sweetheart' and 'Coquette.' Gene Austin has just released a record 'Without You, Sweetheart.'

"Now that Paul Spor (Riviera orchestra conductor) has started his 'Whoopee Club,' I expect even better results than usual when I ask you folks to sing. We'll organize some sort of 'vocal athletics' division to the club. And then watch out when we get to singing!

"By the way, folks, I'll need some help on this column. If there's anything you'd like to know about the organ, music in general or about the theatre, drop me a line. I'll answer it.

"Guess I'll go horseback riding. I play golf, too, but I like horseback better. I figure out most of my solos while riding along the trails north of Florence. The other day, a friend asked me why I like riding better. I told him it was because the horse never stops to ask, 'What did you take on the last hole?'

"Gee, there goes my buzzer, signaling that I must get onto the organ bench. See you all next week."

George

When he joined Omaha's Military Theatre, the daily press ran this item, surrounded by a smiling picture of our subject:

"George says it's a sweet-toned organ, all newly rebuilt. That's the one he is to play at the Military Theatre. Remember George Johnson? But of course you do. Even if he were to put on a disguise, he'd be sure to betray himself. For he can't get rid of that good-natured smile.

"He begins his engagement at the Military, doing a novelty presentation to illustrate what diversity of effects the pipe organ can produce. Every evening, he will play, and each Sunday.



When the Riviera Theatre in Omaha became the Paramount, the organ console was given a coat of light-colored paint. (Johnson collection)

"One thing I plan to do," he was saying, "is to revive the singing bee. Once people get into the way of community singing, they like it. What's more, it's good for them."

You can readily see from the above that Henry B. Murtagh knew what he was talking about. Publicity in the small towns was much better than in the cities, advertising

George Johnson at the Paramount 4/20 Wurlitzer in Portland, Oregon, in 1929. Notice the carbon microphone at left. This organ was featured at two ATOS conventions; in 1966 and in 1973. (Johnson collection)



in the latter being more sophisticated, and the artists being taken for granted.

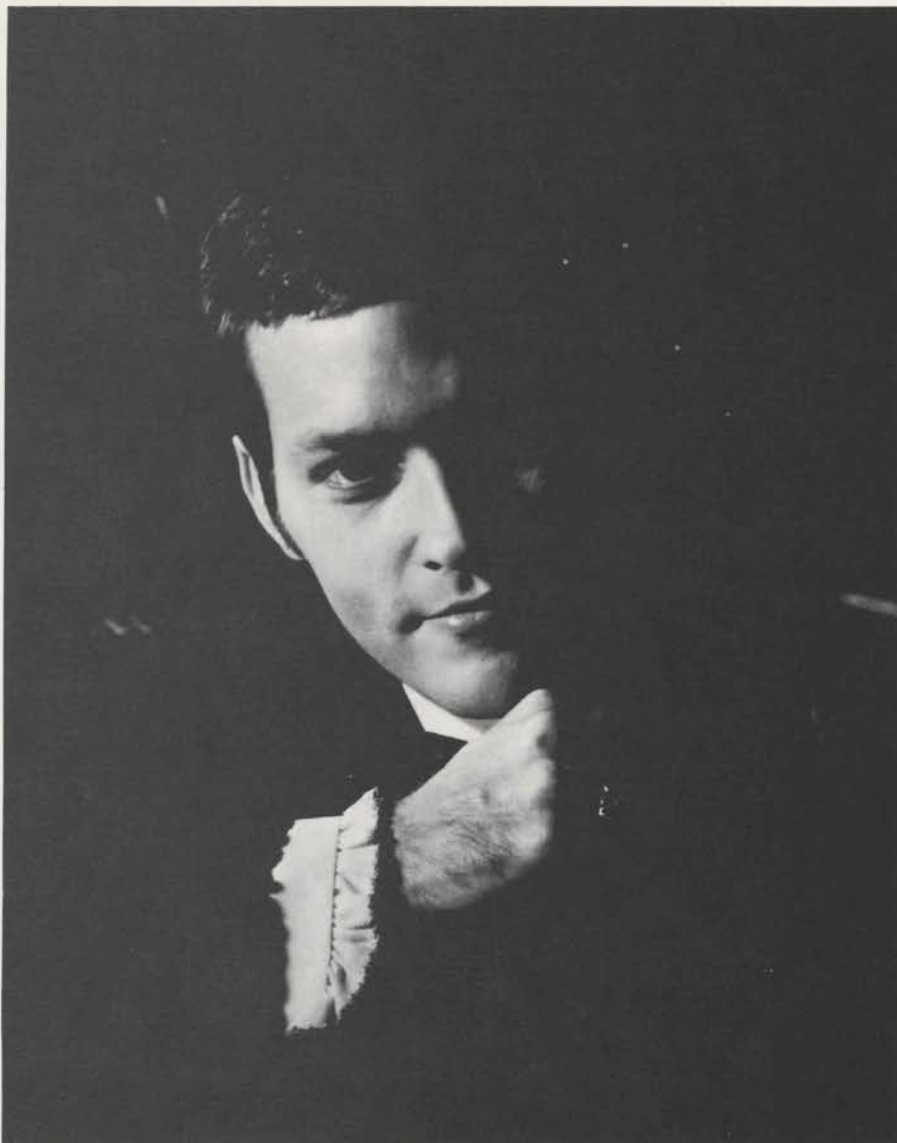
Through the years, George Johnson has also been a church musician. He was with the First Baptist Church in Omaha for 13 years, playing a 4/26 Austin. He played at the First Methodist Church in Warren, Pa., on a 4/29 Austin and at the First Lutheran Church in Jamestown, N.Y., for 10 years on a 4/49 Casavant in a large cathedral-type auditorium. Virgil Fox gave two concerts there during his tenure. At present, George plays an Allen in the United Presbyterian Church in North Warren, Pa.

We mentioned earlier that one of the instruments George played, a 3/12 Wurlitzer, was in Omaha's 2900-seat Orpheum Theatre. This instrument was restored several years ago by local ATOS members, and recently, according to Johnson, "I have had correspondence with friends in Omaha who tell me that interests are trying to take over the theatre and make it into a concert hall. This would be similar to Loew's Penn in Pittsburgh, and in St. Louis where the former St. Louis Theatre was transformed into Powell Symphony Hall with the perfect acoustics retained."

For five years, George Johnson toured 40 states for the Humorous Music Appreciation Program. He has been a teacher for over 35 years. From 1935-1954, he owned and operated the Modern Music Studios in Omaha. In June 1954, he opened the George Johnson studios in Warren, Pa.

He serves as musical director of Warren State Hospital wherein are housed three electronics and a real collector's item — a Hook and Hastings tracker-action organ. Music therapy is done here, using closed circuit television. "I use a lot of my old material and the patients love it. For our new Faith Chapel, we have a computer-type Allen that was installed in this ultra modern building." He gives recitals and concerts, and has lectured at schools and colleges, discussing modern music.

A pleasant and informal man, George A. Johnson looks a good deal younger than his 68 years. He and Mrs. Johnson have a son, George, Jr. and four grandchildren. □



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# EMBASSY SAVED!

by Lloyd E. Klos

One of the most beautiful motion picture palaces in the middle west, built in the twenties for symphony orchestras, silent movies, and stage shows, was the 2763-seat Emboyd (now Embassy) Theatre in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The recent effort to save this magnificent structure is a story unto itself. However, its past history and salient features are of importance as well.

The theatre is part of a complex which includes the adjoining Indiana Hotel. It was designed by architects A. M. Strauss and Charles Ebersson, and their efforts were rewarded by a theatre of sheer beauty. Construction was begun in 1926 and completed two years later. The theatre's cost

was in excess of \$1.5 million. A consortium of individuals was responsible: Oscar Fox, Robert Fox, C. M. Niezer and W. C. Quimby. The Emboyd was built to be the largest theatre in the Quimby Theatre chain, and Mr. Quimby, the first operator, named the house for his mother, Emma Boyd Quimby. Manny Marcus was the first manager.

The grand opening was on May 14, 1928 at 1 p.m. The vertical sign above the colorful marquee, proclaiming *Emboyd*, was the largest in the state. It weighed 5½ tons, contained 3500 light bulbs and cost \$15,000.

As one purchased his ticket in the outer lobby (which was faced

with a rare French marble), he glanced down to the floor which was also inlaid with a very rare French marble. Continuing into the main lobby, our patron noted its Italian architectural design which featured a black-and-white marble floor. Next came the Grand Foyer of breathtaking magnificence. This 80-foot room has a barrel-arched ceiling with plaster design. (All designs were first drawn to full scale, then given to an ornamental modeler who made the molds). The grand staircase at the end of the foyer is made of imported marble, and the mirror on the back wall is over 20 feet high.

The auditorium is 140 feet by 110

Theatre interior, with the Page console at stage level. (G. Delobbe Photo)



feet, the ceiling more than 80 feet high and the main dome is over 60 feet wide. The ceiling is a false one, with catwalks above, which enable maintenance personnel to service the dome, the arches on each side of the auditorium, and the proscenium arch.

The projection booth is a separate structure, not a part of the auditorium.

The main balcony truss is 110 feet long, and weighs over 200 tons. It was designed with a plus-four safety factor, meaning that it is capable of holding four times the seated audience without collapsing.

A few other facts are impressive. The stage is 100 feet wide, 32 feet deep, and the area 55 feet high. Each of several chandeliers weighs 500 pounds, is 10 feet high and has 40 lights. Together they use 4,000 watts of electricity.

Yes, there is a pipe organ — a 4/15 Page. *The Fort Wayne Journal* in a feature on the instrument, a few days before the opening, said: "It will, in its superb effects and purity of tone, equal that of any other organ in any playhouse in the country.

"It uses a 10 horsepower blower with wind pressures from 10 to 30 inches. The console has four manuals, 260 stops and is decorated in rainbow gold (complete stoplist THEATRE ORGAN, Vol. VI, #3, Fall 1964, Page 8-9).

The opening program in 1928 was described as "one of the most lavish ever seen in Fort Wayne at popular prices." There was a special inaugural bill of Keith-Orpheum vaudeville, selected from among "the best available." It included The Honorable Mr. Wu, a musical revue; Tony and Norman, a comedy routine; Charles Bennington, harmonica revue; and Frank Richardson, the Joy Boy of Song.

On the screen was a romantic farce, *Easy Come, Easy Go*, starring Richard Dix. The dedication overture was played by the 20-piece Emboyd Symphonic Orchestra, directed by Wilber Pickett. The "Mighty Page Grande Organ" was played by Percy Robbins who subsequently had a long engagement at the theatre. Admission was 60 cents.

The Emboyd Theatre was the largest in Fort Wayne, exceeding the next largest, the Paramount, by 800 seats. Certainly, the Emboyd

has always been the most beautiful in the city.

And, it attracted some really big names who trod its boards and provided entertainment. Olsen and Johnson brought their zany antics

to the Emboyd in 1928, and Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll (*Amos 'n' Andy*) appeared in 1933. Others were Fred Allen, Portland Hoffa, Our Gang Kids, Ryan and Noelette (Irene Ryan of *Beverly Hill-*

The Grand Foyer, with its decorative barrel-arch ceiling, is 80-feet high.

(G. Delobbe Photo)



billies), Bob Hope, Chester Lauck and Norris Goff (Lum & Abner), Dick Powell, Betty Hutton, the Mills Brothers, Vic Hyde, Martha Raye, and Donald O'Connor with his family.

Most of the big bands played the Emboyd in those days, too: Henry Busse, Ted Weems (with vocalists Perry Como and home-towner Marilyn Maxwell), Horace Heidt and His Musical Knights, the Champagne Music of Lawrence Welk, and the Waltz King, Wayne King. This was during the Big Band Era of the Thirties and Forties. The last one to play the Emboyd was Orrin Tucker with Wee Bonnie Baker in 1952.

In 1952, the Alliance Corp. took over the Emboyd and renamed it the Embassy.

The present house organist, Buddy Nolan, has supplied us with some information and anecdotes concerning the Page organ and those who played it. We are most thankful for his contributions.

"Percy Robbins was the first organist. He told me that on opening day, Wilbur Pickett was bringing up the pit orchestra for the first overture. He was quite nervous about finding the foot switch to stop the ascent at the proper level. Controls

for the orchestra elevator were on the conductor's desk and duplicated on the elevator floor. He bent over to check its location and as the spotlight hit him, the audience was treated to a view of his posterior in a pink spotlight! A real grand entrance!

"Marguerite Hitzman was Robbins' assistant, later becoming house organist. Jeanne Brown broadcast over WOWO for a time, using the Emboyd organ.

"I did a couple special programs during these years over radio, but no regular broadcasts. When Alliance took over the theatre, I became house organist, and was featured before every showing of the main picture, five times a day, seven days a week. The management was very pro-organ and budgeted \$300 for special effects and production for every other feature change. For alternate pictures, the organist did shows with the house equipment.

"Extensive use of costuming and even black-light effects were used to enhance organ numbers. When I went to California, this was continued for a time by my successor, Evelyn Osborn, who has a most unusual experience.

"When the lift switching system was being overhauled, and with

Evelyn aboard one day, the console passed the upper limit! It tilted toward the deep pit on her right, and she hurriedly crawled off on her hands and knees to the stage. I assumed she got a big hand for her bravery, but her answer was, 'Hell, it was a super show and there was a small crowd, darn it!'"

The organ became silent for most of the time Nolan was away, except for occasional use, or each year when he spent vacations in Ft. Wayne. He would have the organ tuned, and play during his entire vacation. Buddy sure liked this instrument!

"The original organ maintenance man was Ed Bohn. When I came in, Al Buzby took over, and in due time, he taught an electronics expert, Bob Nickerson, the arts of tuning and maintenance. Bob has been the main reason the organ plays today, and in many ways, has improved the original installation. He is still the key man on maintenance of the Page, and in later years, has been assisted by ATOS members Ellsworth Smith and Bill Zabel. Major restoration work on the instrument is planned by these men.

"There were some funny things which happened over the years, of course. One unintentional marquee billing was:

Tab Hunter  
"The Girl He Left Behind"  
Buddy Nolan at the Organ

"One introduction slide we used was done in script printing, and projected on the silver curtain. The D's projected on the curtain, and because of the folds, reversed and Buddy Nolan came out as *Buggy Nolan!*"

Nolan returned to Ft. Wayne in 1962, mainly for the desire to play the Page, and went back on the payroll for weekends only. He continued after Cinecom purchased the property and remained until two months prior to the theatre's closing. It was during this time, Buddy did the famous series of 10 *Theatre Organ At Midnight* concerts. In some of these, Dyne Pfeffenberger, using the original white grand piano which rose from the orchestra pit, played organ-piano duets with Nolan.

Buddy has recorded the Embassy's Page in two albums. One was heard not long ago on an FM show in Man-

Percy Robbins in 1928. Newspaper accounts of the opening program reported him as playing the "Page Grande Organ."  
(Buddy Nolan coll.)





chester, England. In recent times, two visiting British organists have stopped to see the organ. So, it has become famous to some degree.

With motion picture palaces being demolished right and left throughout the country, serious interest in preserving the Embassy Theatre manifested itself in 1960 when a group of 20 formed a committee. Generally, they saw to the organ's maintenance and kept the theatre usable with a degree of cleanliness.

In 1972, the Embassy Theatre Foundation was chartered as a non-profit, self-perpetuating organization. The affairs of the Foundation are managed by a Board of Directors and its elected officers. Membership is open to all, with a fee of \$10, and the address is: Embassy Theatre Foundation, Box, 1266, Fort Wayne, Ind. 46802.

Robert Goldstine, ATOS member and amateur organist, has been the spearhead in the efforts to save the theatre, and is in good position to explain the complicated ramifications, legal and otherwise, of this project.

"At the time the Foundation was created, the property (including the Indiana Hotel) was owned by Cinecom Corp. which had become bankrupt, and the disposition of its assets was to be made by the Bankruptcy Court in New York City. It was this court which authorized our use of the building on a month-to-month basis for \$1 a month, cancellable on 30 days' notice.

"On March 4, 1974, the Court awarded the property (subject to tax liens, mortgage indebtedness, and our lease) to Solarsystems Inc., one of the largest creditors. Solarsystems subsequently gave us our 30 days' notice to vacate the property on April 30, 1974, which we did. The mortgage holder on the property was Montgomery Ward & Co., whose payments from Cinecom were approximately one year delinquent.

"Therefore, Montgomery Ward filed a foreclosure suit against Sport-service Co., the new title holders, to obtain the property to satisfy their mortgage in the Allen County Court, as the mortgage pertained to the Embassy Theatre. A receiver for the court, Fred Hunter, of Fort Wayne, was appointed to see that the property remained intact and that no damage occurred. He enlisted the aid

of the Embassy Foundation to aid him in this endeavor."

In the meantime, the Foundation was faced with the task of raising \$500,000 — half for purchasing the theatre and hotel, and half for refurbishing both properties. By October 28, 1974, which was the deadline for raising the money, the group had raised only \$10,000, which was far short. An extension was granted until June 1, 1975. The Ketchum Corp. had been called in for a feasibility study which indicated that given added time, the money could be raised.

Another firm, James Associates, comprising architects and engineers, issued a most favorable restoration report. The first three pages were a brilliantly written chapter, "A Future For the Past." Briefly, it decried the attitude that if money couldn't be obtained from a higher governmental authority, "tear it down!"

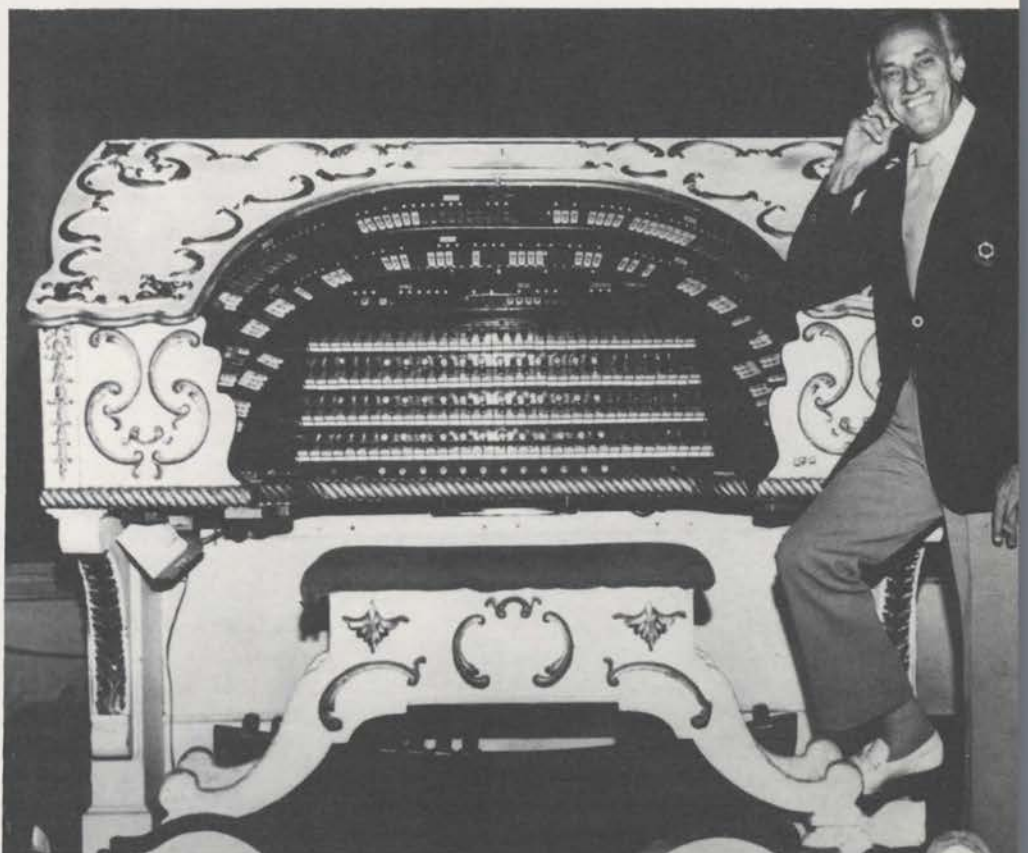
As to the project's utilization, the report further stated: "An operational Embassy Theatre would complement and be non-competitive with other auditoria within the community. With regard to the Scottish Rite Auditorium, the Embassy would permit scheduling of additional cultural events and would

offer greater flexibility in seasonal planning for civic attractions and functions. With regard to the Civic Theatre Auditorium, which seats 700, the Embassy provides additional space, both in the house and in supporting facilities, creating the potential for a greater diversity of community activities. Because the Embassy Foundation is chartered as a fine arts corporation, money-making activities and programs may be scheduled, thereby providing self-sustaining funds for operation, maintenance and support for other cultural activities. A restored Embassy could serve every segment within our city with the singular restriction that users respect the value of the property.

"Whereas the Embassy is primarily a restorative project, it is envisioned that the companion Indiana Hotel be preserved thru adaptive use technique as an adjunct to the Proposed Convention Center across Washington St.

The Foundation realized that memorabilia and artifacts were most important, and every effort to collect anything pertaining to the property was made. Pictures, clippings, programs and other items were earnestly sought. Former employees were asked to talk about their ex-

A smiling Buddy Nolan at the refurbished Embassy console. Nolan played this organ in the thirties, and when it was restored, became famous for his midnight concerts. (G. Delobbe Photo)



periences into a tape recorder. A souvenir booklet was promoted, once sufficient material was gathered.

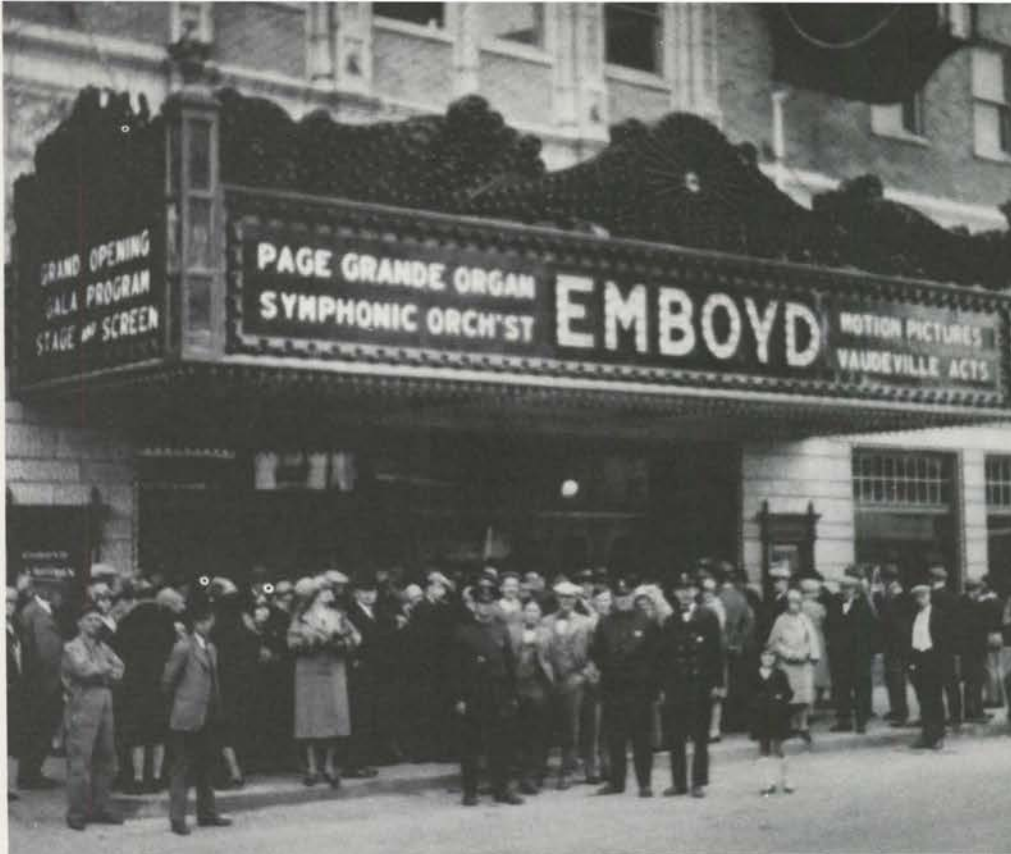
The walls and ceiling of the auditorium were in the original decor, but other areas were changed. A sample of original carpeting was found, to be used in authentic replacement. Above the outer lobby, the original lounge is to be restored, and the old player piano placed there. The seats will be repainted and reupholstered in the deep wine shade. The original marquee and vertical sign will be duplicated. A new roof and heating system will be the first order of business. In brief, every facet of the theatre will be restored.

Even the name will be changed — back to its original *Emboyd*. This will be done after the theatre has become a community enterprise.

The cost of acquiring and renovating the property was placed at \$500,000. To construct a theatre, comparable to the Embassy in size, would cost over \$8 million today. Indeed, a real bargain!

After the foundation got a six-month extension to raise the necessary funds, a meeting was held of those interested on December 9, 1974, with over 100 in attendance. The Foundation's Board of Directors was enlarged from 8 to 21, and plans were formulated for one, big, all-out, last-ditch fund drive to raise \$500,000, which included the \$250,000 purchase price and the remainder for refurbishing, including a new heating plant which was badly needed.

While the drive was in progress,



The crowd begins to gather at the theatre before its grand opening, May 14, 1928. Above the marquee was the state's largest sign, weighing 5½ tons. If present plans materialize, "Emboyd" will again grace the marquee of the Embassy. (Roberta Photo)

nationwide attention to the project was attained by an unusual source. Cartoonist, Dick Moores, who draws *Gasoline Alley*, heard about the drive from a Fort Wayne resident, started asking questions and making long-distance calls. This resulted in a nine-week sequence in the strip, in which the theatre was prominently featured by name and the climax was that the house was saved through clever promotion and the giving of \$498,522 by "Boone Farledge" of the XBC Network, to the cause.

Moores' interest was quite natural.

He was the first doorman when the theatre opened in 1928. He later was promoted to assistant manager in charge of the 5 to 7 p.m. shift "when nothing happened."

By June, 1975, it was apparent that the fund drive was successful enough to guarantee the saving of the theatre. Though the drive was \$7,000 short, and \$40,000 more was needed for immediate repairs when this was written, that money was available thru borrowing.

At the risk of leaving out some names of the many persons whose

"Gasoline Alley" character Walt tries to explain to aging vaudevillian Papo why the beautiful Embody Theatre must be torn down in the comic-strip version of the story by real Emboyd's first doorman, Dick Moores.



ardent contributions to the saving of the Embassy were immeasurable, those connected with the radio and television media were exceptionally noteworthy in arousing the public to the cause.

Ed Metcalfe and Burt Sherwood are station managers who were especially helpful in enlisting public response. "Their efforts were nothing short of phenomenal," says Bob Goldstine. "Every local radio, television and press facility has featured the project, figured in every promotion of it, and in doing so, their work was measured by thousands of dollars of time and space to the fund-raising effort.

"The results were evidenced by contributions from financially hard-pressed, senior citizens, grade school music classes, junior and senior high schools, church groups, service clubs and people from every segment of the population."

Fund-raising was co-ordinated by Gretchen Wiegel, Dyne Pfeffenberger, Bob Cordell and others. Legal services were contributed by several attorneys.

Ellsworth Smith, Robert Martin, Fred Hitzeman and Gene Witte have put in countless hours of work as house committee members, often supervising the efforts of volunteers.

Bob Mickerson, Bill Zabel, Ellsworth Smith and Byron Fogt have been the leading lights of the organ maintenance crew.

People with names of Hicho, Reynolds, Fox, Cayot, Miller, Sumpter, Lotz, Purvis and Danford will be remembered for the countless hours they contributed to this effort. Especially helpful were some of the city's leading businessmen and women who contributed time and money.

Thus, another beautiful theatre has been saved from the maws of the wreckers. Its future is indeed bright if the plans of its "angels" are realized. The place is sure to be a part of the theatre organ circuit, and in that connection, THEATRE ORGAN will be carrying the news of this activity. In the meantime, the American Theatre Organ Society extends its congratulations and best wishes to Bob Goldstine, the Embassy Theatre Foundation, and to each and every person responsible for the successful culmination of this excellent project. □

## American Film Institute Acquires Wurlitzer Pipe Organ From Loew's Inc.

The American Film Institute headquartered in the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., has recently been given the 3/13 Wurlitzer organ from the Loew's Theatre, Richmond, Virginia. This is truly an outstanding donation from one of this country's largest and oldest theatre corporations.

Acting on a tip from Potomac Valley Chapter member Dick Kline that the organ would be available, A.F.I. staff organist Ray Brubacher lost no time in contacting Loew's eastern division manager Fred Erling who, as a theatre organ fan and the last manager of the now gone Loew's Capitol in Washington, D.C., was interested in seeing the Richmond organ preserved intact in a place

where it could be heard. Negotiations were completed for acceptance of the instrument and utilizing experienced help drawn from the membership of the chapter, Brubacher removed the instrument and brought it to the Kennedy Center where it will undergo complete refurbishment before installation.

At this time several prospects are good for the future of the organ, among those being the possible installation to the to-be-completed third floor experimental theatre at the Kennedy Center which would be used for various A.F.I. functions. The present theatre houses a fine Rodgers three manual theatre organ and due to space limitations the Wurlitzer will not go into the present theatre. □

Ray Brubacher at the ex-Loew's Theatre (Richmond) console.



# AN OUTLINE FOR A COURSE IN THEATRE ORGAN - 4

## *The Musical Knowledge Required*

by John Muri

Facility at the keyboard is obviously essential in theatre work. One cannot be concerned with finger-technique while watching for cues in a movie or a live act on-stage, manipulating stop-tabs and pistons, reading music-script, and thinking about what to do next — all at once. It ought to be self-evident that the best musical training a theatre organist can absorb should be the object of his efforts, despite the opinions of those who say that his work should be unobtrusive, simple, and subdued. It is almost as hard to play slowly and simply with artistry (by which I mean the ability to perform in a manner notably superior to the average with taste and elegance) as it is to display flashy technique. Whatever we perform in music, be it simple or complex, needs to be done with concentration and calculation, unhampered by technical difficulty.

Technical competence that permits the organist to observe whatever is going on about him on-stage or in the audience is required. If he must play for vaudeville or other stage events, he will be called upon to do one of two things: either (1) play music he knows, the only specification being that it be appropriate, or (2) play from a manuscript brought by the variety artist on the day of the performance, perhaps an hour before the performance begins. There is no time to go home and practice. The manuscripts are usually mutilated by scribbled cues, scratched-out passages, and other near-illegibilities. One is expected to pick the desired music out of the mess and play it correctly. That it can be done has been proved consistently by organists and orchestras, but it has been accomplished only by musicians who trained themselves to read music with ease and speed. Reading facility came in the old days, as now, only with diligent practice.

In the beginning, then, there will be a rigorous course of finger-training, basically piano technique. The

player will work through at least a book of Czerny, Hanon, or something like it and will learn to play music through the level of Grieg's "To Spring." Piano technique must be developed to the degree that common musical figures can be performed correctly up to tempo. Complete proficiency is perhaps an impossible goal, but one can work a long way toward it.

A second essential will be a course in harmony: intervals, triads, altered chords, suspensions, and key-relations to the degree that the student can modulate readily and interestingly from one key into any of its five related keys. An occasional gifted student may be able to modulate intuitively, but a knowledge of what is going on in music won't hurt him. If he isn't aware that he should not play successive 6/4 chords or jump to or from the basses of 6/4 and 4/2 chords, he has some studying to do. He will acquire some facility with the "modern" harmony of 9th, 11th, and 13th chords. He will learn the importance of keeping all the voices speaking, which means that if one begins playing in four-part or four-voice harmony, he will not introduce intervals or chords with only two or three voices except at the ends of phrases or when it is necessary that two voices resolve momentarily upon the same note.

The organist will develop a ready feeling for rhythms and their applications. He will know the properties of common rhythms, namely 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, and 6/8. His work demands knowledge of continental dance patterns, such as the polka, laendler, and the hora. In this group, Offenbach's "Apache Dance" is an essential part of the repertory. He

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

will be familiar with Latin-American rhythms (tango, samba, etc.) and with oriental scales, differentiating between the musical styles of China, Japan, and India. He will understand syncopation, recognizing it when he encounters it, even in the works of J.S. Bach. He will be grounded in the popular-music styles of the United States, understanding the kinds of harmony that were current at different periods.

During practice sessions he will guard against wasting time. Practice is not a matter of "so-much-time-a-day." He must be in the mood for it. One should not practice when bored. Sustained concentration is essential to progress. One cannot let the mind wander. Some students daydream while practicing and keep repeating what has been mastered because it sounds good. Intense concentration on difficult passages for short periods of time gets better results than long stretches of desultory practice.

Practicing should be done slowly. One should never go so fast as to play wrong notes. The playing should always be correct, no matter how slowly one needs to play in order to be correct. Some teachers will dispute this as a working-principle; therefore the student should experiment to see which will get the best results: deliberate, correct playing, or playing up to tempo regardless of mistakes. In any event, the practice should always be done in strict rhythm, slow or fast. In the study of very complicated passages, one should try to play only a part of the passage at first. If it is a difficult sequence of chords, one may play only one or two of the notes of each chord until it can be played up to tempo; then the other notes may be added as skill grows.

One of the most difficult problems in organ-playing is the accurate execution of dotted-eighth and dotted-quarter notes. The slowness of organ response can prevent the actual sound from being the intended one. A dotted quarter can be too long or too short as it comes out of the pipe. Successions of clipped or protracted notes produce a ragged effect, particularly if the player is careless. He should try to make all his dotted notes come out equal in value; the effect is smooth and pleasing.

As study progresses, experiments

will be made with portamentos and rubatos, with observations of how good organists use them with restraint. Embellishment, involving the use of grace notes, turns, etc., is a complicated topic worthy of study. The large section devoted to it in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* indicates its importance. Prominent theatre organists have used embellishments frequently and with singular devotion.

Sight-reading should be practiced regularly. Piano duets at sight from the very beginning of training are excellent media for the purpose. They will be increased in difficulty until one can sight-read duets of the difficulty of Chabrier's "Espana Rhapsody" or Rimsky-Korsakow's "Dance of the Tumblers." Memorizing will also be a regular part of the study-program.

Improvisation and composition need considerable attention as early as possible. Movies are rarely made to fit musical scores, and silent films are run at varying speeds; so advance

planning and timing can never be more than tentative, if not impossible. There is often need for "filler music" to bridge gaps between specifically cured passages. A small field for organists exists in the making of sound-tracks for silent films issued by commercial filmmakers. Since royalties must be paid for the use of copyrighted music, producers usually insist that non-copyrighted (which is to say improvised or specially written) music be used. To do good work of this sort, the organist needs to know harmony, improvisational theory, and form. While computers and incompetent organists can devise musical patterns, only an inspired human can create music that works artistically upon emotions. Good scores are the results of talents and sensitivities that are largely innate and rarely transmittable by teachers.

The program briefly sketched here is long and hard, but tedium may be relieved by changing from one kind of study to another during work-

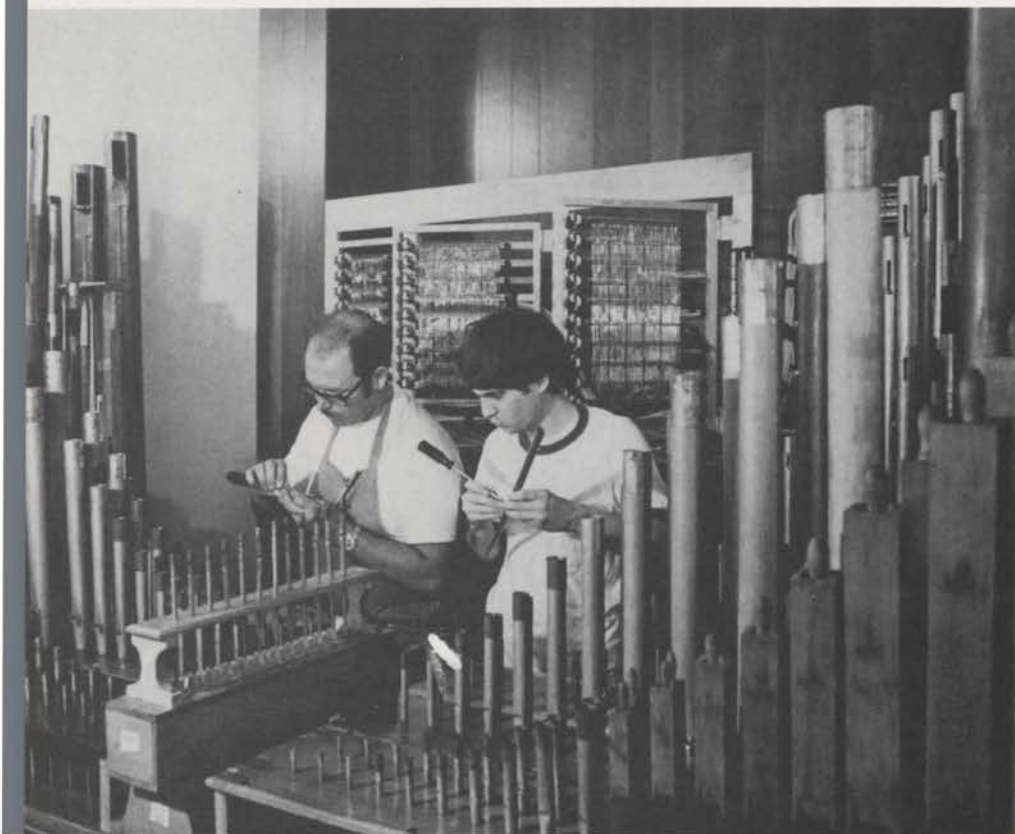
sessions. One will practice finger exercises for a while, then study some harmony, then try a little improvisation, then work some rhythm and syncopation studies. One may devote a little time to a new popular tune, being sure to *read* the music. The hours will fly, and suddenly the learner will discover that his progress has been very swift.

Actually, the many hours will have been none the shorter as time and nature produce their changes for good or ill. We note, with a smile, one of the occasionally unexpected and undesired results — organ-sprawl. This is a growth particularly disagreeable to ladies whose concern for their figures is only slightly more intense than that of men. It doesn't matter much to most of us; we didn't have too much badly-distributed avoirdupois when we were young. If the prospect is bothersome, you might consider that we pay for everything we get in one way or another; so it's a matter of deciding what we want to get out of life. □

## AIR FORCE INSTALLS SECOND NEWPORT

The organs in armed forces chapels have been noted for their poor quality and limited size. Only a half dozen have pipe organs and these are giants like West Point and Colorado Springs. The Air Force is doing something to improve this by adding Newport pipe attachments. Already they have installed two at Patrick in Florida. These are connected to existing electronic consoles, adding a variety of genuine pipe tones as well as doubling the power.

Robert Eby, owner of Newport Organs, was one of the first to mix oscillators with pipes. Installations range from one to eight ranks dating back to the 40's; many of these are still playing. Harry Ingling, head voicer, is shown on the left in front of the diode coupler panels.



## PLANNED OVERSEAS TREK WINS PRELIMINARY APPROVAL

ATOS conventioneer reaction to the planned First ATOS European Organ Safari, tentatively set to follow the 1976 convention in Philadelphia, is one of overwhelming approval according to the questionnaires filled out and returned to the "Crawl Headquarters," says Dick Simonton who is helping organize the expedition to visit English and French organ installations. Of the brochures handed out during the 1975 convention, more than 100 questionnaires were returned. Ninety-eight percent fully approved the plan and stated they would participate. Individual answers to the six questions were still being tabulated at press time, but one trend is definite; those planning to go want more time for sightseeing.

A copy of the brochure/questionnaire was inserted in each copy of the August-September issue of *THE ATRE ORGAN* and Dick anticipates a flood of questionnaires from this source. He is encouraged by the first 100 "joining up." It's a good start, and the more who sign up, the lower the over-all cost to each voyager. □

# 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.*

Organ buffs tend to be sneaky and devious when it comes to landing converts to the hobby. Take, for example, CATOE's Arthur Tedesco. He started working on the Sykora family about four years ago by taking them to CATOE concerts. When they responded favorably he made the supreme bid; he married daughter Carol. Now thoroughly hooked, mama and papa Sykora thought it would be nice to learn to play a little. Arthur was right there with the solution; he sold them his plug-in. He didn't need it anymore because he and bride Carol had acquired an old Estey pipe job and were embarked on a restoration and enlargement project. If this sounds like a soap opera plot, blame mama, Lillian Sykora, who reported as to how the world turns.



The Allen model 620 electronic console is certainly a step in the right direction. For some time there have been rumors of an Allen theatre

organ in the air and the first photo of the horseshoe console is most encouraging. It's a two manual, double stoprail job with lots of between-manual combo buttons. But the best thing is the avoidance of all those confusing little rocker switches on the side jambs as practiced by so many electronic organ builders. The 620's voices and other controls are located on the double stoprail and switching is accomplished by means of stopkeys — as it should be. We sincerely hope the instrument sounds as good as it looks.



Another organist who played the New York Paramount in the days of Jesse Crawford has made himself known, Jack Skelly of Rye, N.Y. He was associate organist, mainly spelling Fred Feibel. Egon Putz was also on the staff, but Sigmund Krungold had gone to Paramount's Hollywood Studios. Skelly also played at the Rialto, substituted at the Brooklyn Paramount, and played on the "Paramount on Parade" CBS Monday radio show. He says that most of his pipe organ playing is now done on the 4-manual Aeolian at the Westchester County Center in White Plains, N.Y.



Here's a case where a pipe installation brought together a couple of musicians who found out their music meshed for duets. When pianist Tony Galtera heard that the 4/28 Wurlitzer from the Paterson, New Jersey, Fabian Theatre was being installed in the Casa Italiano, it brought back memories of the days when he was the pianist with the Fabian Theatre orchestra. He dropped in to the Casa to see the organ played in the theatre by Warren Yates so long ago. In the process he met Bill Gage, current house organist at the Casa, who plays a plug-in until the pipe installation is complete. Tony and Bill tried out a few organ/piano duets and learned their music pleased listeners, reports Bill.



As readers already know, we love to include pictures of pretty girls in this column, and we don't need much of an excuse. But this time we are on solid ground; one of our fa-



Donna Parker. She'll combine matrimony with music. (Stufoto)

vorite photo subjects announced her engagement. Donna Parker had been going to school in Phoenix, Arizona, and naturally gravitated toward that incubator of romance and aromatic pasta with pipe organ flavoring, the Organ Stop pizzeria. There she met Bob MacNeur. Both being organists, they had something in common from the start. Under the spell of that Mighty Wurlitzer, the die was cast. Although this item went to press weeks before the announced Sept. 20 wedding, we trust the knot was tied without anyone in the back of the church yelling "Stop!" when the preacher asked the usual question. Our overriding wish is for the best of fortune to the newlyweds.



Eddie May, Miami Beach's favorite organist, is "back to my usual disagreeable self," after recuperation following medical treatment for an ulcer which almost caused his "cashing in." To prove it, Eddie offers the following comment: "We have plenty of topless and bottomless attractions in Miami, not to mention the empty heads who run

them and patronize them. You may place writers and players of 'modern' music in the same category as far as I'm concerned; this includes the so-called 'serious new music' with nothing but incongruous chord accompaniments. The finest of food-stuffs, given enough time, turns to garbage and must be recycled via Mother Earth. So it is with the tastes of the average human. My preferences are the old musical comedy tunes and lighter classics. If that dates me, so be it, but there seems to be quite a few listeners willing to pay good money to hear same."

Jim Leaffe, the 27-year-old house organist of Long Island University (ex-Brooklyn Paramount), describes the 4/26 Wurlitzer he plays in the converted theatre as producing the "original quadraphonic sound," due to the four chambers in which the pipes and effects are stacked, surrounding the proscenium arch. In an interview for the New York Times not long ago, he continued: "But it is not used as a nostalgia machine. The main problem with theatre organs anyplace else but LIU is they are used as nostalgia instruments of the twenties and thirties. It never caught on with young people because it was never presented as a 'today' sound." Which leaves us to wonder why so many young people attend ATOS conventions and chapter concerts. There are a lot of them who are enthusiastic over the big sound, nostalgia or not, including those who buy nostalgia recorded by others on the LIU organ.

Virgil Fox is fast becoming the Leonard Bernstein of the pipe organ. One of a consortium of four, but the principal financier of the project to develop the Hammond Castle in Gloucester, Mass. as a school for concert organists, the 62-year-old musician is entertaining his audiences with his concerts and demonstrations there. Tours of the pipe chambers are a part of the act.

Doc and Mrs. Bebko attended one of these affairs in July. A \$2.00 admission was charged but "this superb musician outdid himself in one of the finest concert organ recitals I have ever heard. He has about \$300,

000 invested in this venture, indeed putting his money where his mouth is. He plans to add the 8,000-pipe Harvard organ to the Castle's instrument, making it the largest private organ in the world. One must be there to appreciate it because it staggers the imagination. He is doing alone exactly what the ATOS is doing collectively."

Frank Lyboldt, Norfolk, Va. organist who performed at the 1972 ATOS Convention, reports that not long ago he and two companions visited some theatres on Long Island, N.Y. At the 1600-seat Cove Theatre in Glen Cove, he asked the manager if the house has a pipe organ. "Oh yes, the console is backstage. I'll show you." So, the quartet walked to the stage, the lights were turned on, and lo — the console was gone! The manager was speechless, and when it was suggested an examination of the chambers was on order, they did just that. The vandalism there was disheartening. Practically every pipe was broken, bent, or pulled from its chest. Only the big diaphones along the wall weren't touched. The vandals probably thought they were a part of the structure. The only encouraging angle here is that perhaps "Midnight Organ Supply" latched onto

the console and maybe it's having an illicit affair with some pipes somewhere.

Anyone in the St. Paul, Minn. area interested in a theatre organ rehabilitation project? In a recent New York Times, an item mentioned the visit to a theatre by Norman Foss, in which he installed a 7,000-(sic) pipe organ in 1922. Visiting the Twin Cities with his wife who attended a teachers' meeting, Foss took the opportunity to visit the old organ in a St. Paul theatre.

It has been silent for 15 years because the motor is inoperative. Mr. Foss, owner of an organ company in Edgewater, N.J., estimated that installing an organ of similar size would cost \$800,000 today. Although the make and model of the instrument were not given in the writeup, here is a chance for talented, responsible enthusiasts in the area to investigate and perhaps bring the organ back to playing condition.

Bob Boettcher reports that Oklahoma City is proud of its "new baby," a 3/11 Wurlitzer installed in the Showplace Restaurant, located in Aeromerdian Plaza, the first theatre organ in a public place since Ken Wright played the 4/14 Kilgen formerly in the WKY-TV studios



The Showplace console



Ken Wright. Back in the limelight again.

and now lying neglected in a civic hall.

The Wurli is a 1926 model removed from Loew's Palace theatre in Memphis, Tenn. Bob reports that it's a "visual" installation, where visitors can ogle the pipes, traps and other parts while the organist plays. The organist? Ken Wright, naturally. He opened it on June 23.



Harold Jolles, teacher and ex-theatre organist, having seen a number of the great organists perform in the twenties (Crawford, Murtagh, Malotte, Gutow, Keates etc), has become quite philosophical about today's scene. "It's just not the same now when you go to a theatre organ concert. In the golden days, the house was packed, there was a hush in expectation as lights played on the curtain, a spot hit the console, and a most glorious sound filled the place. There was something you just don't get today. And, the organist never talked — he let his musicianship do this for him."



New Yorker Dick Loderhose reveals that he is in the process of purchasing the 650-seat Bay Theatre in Seal Beach, Calif. (near Los Angeles). For the past three years Dick has been conducting an intensive search for a west-coast home for the circa 42-rank monster now housed in his Jamaica Estates, Long Island studio. The instrument is an enlargement of the original 4/21 recording and broadcasting Wurlitzer in-

stalled in the New York Paramount building organ studio for Jesse Crawford in the late '20s. To accommodate the huge instrument, Dick plans to enlarge the stage of the 1933 movie house by removing a couple of rows of front seats (the



Dick Loderhose. California, here he comes!  
(Stufoto)

present stage is only 12 feet deep and there are no chamber provisions). Dick and wife Jane plan to move to the area shortly. The Bay Theatre has one big advantage; it's only three blocks from the sea, which is important to Dick. The nearby Marina will provide a place to dock his yacht, a converted WW II rescue vessel. Current plans call for a continuation of the house's film policy with organ concerts and a rental policy for concert stagers in the offing. No completion date has been set for the installation pending finality of the purchase.



George Stucker, who edits the North Texas ATOS Chapter's newsletter, the *Keraulophone*, was somewhat shaken when we pointed out to him that the name "Keraulophone" has connotations he may not have considered when it was selected. For example, an ancient copy of Wedgwood's *Dictionary of Organ Stops*, describes the sound: "The Keraulophone emits a peculiar soft and muffled tone. It is one of the few stops legitimately 'horney' in character."

And we always figured it was the Tibias!



Billy Nalle likes to get there first, and he's at it again. One of his

"firsts" was convincing the AGO it should include theatre organ programs as part of its otherwise "straight" organ conventions a few years back. He seems to enjoy getting classical organ music consumers to listen to TO music, especially as concerns radio shows. Two eastern radio outlets have violated their classical organ program formats to spotlight music from Billy's TO albums. Last year, WTIC, Hartford did it on their normally solemn



Billy Nalle. More 'firsts'.

*Organ Showcase* series, Now WGMS, Washington DC, has scheduled a similar pop session on the usually baroque-heavy *Royal Instrument* program, using tunes from Billy's albums as well as a couple of selections he taped on the 4/37 "Dowager Empress" Wurlitzer in Wichita's Century II civic hall, now one of the Nalle bases of operations. With that same ex-NY Paramount lovely involved, Billy has plans for another "first" next June when he will play a "concert/dance" on the Wichita Wurlitzer.



With the exception of 1974, the School of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, Mo. has held a series of Sunday concerts in July, featuring Bert Buhrman at the 3/15 Wurlitzer, using vocalists and others. This year, a new approach, a benefit series for the scholarship fund, was held on July 13 and 20. A \$5.00 admission was charged and with Denise Buhrman handling tickets to forestall "freebies," TV and radio media giving much publicity, the series was again a success, and receipts



exceeded school officials' fondest dreams. A Laurel & Hardy short, *Criminals At Large*, was included in the first program, and an Arbuckle-Keaton short, *Coney Island* was in the second. The Buhrmans were then off to England for a couple of weeks in London and Yorkshire.

The Rochester Theater Organ Society sponsored a July 12 concert as an experiment, but it is exceedingly doubtful that it will do so again during the summer off season. George Blackmore, enroute to the ATOS San Francisco Convention, was the organist and did a most creditable job at the console as soloist, and as accompanist for his wife, a talented vocalist. The



George Blackmore

(Stufoto)

organ had to be tuned several times the preceding week due to muggy temperatures (86° in the chambers at concert time). The Auditorium Theatre Wurlitzer ciphered five times during the concert, and a comparatively sparse crowd of 550 manned handkerchiefs in the sweaty atmosphere. A tip of the fedora to the cipher chasers who really got a workout!

Ralph O. Hookway of 4960 Lakeshore Drive in Littleton, Colorado, 80123, is eager to gather information concerning Herbert Sisson, an organist who played the Mark Strand Theatre in New York City, and the Alhambra Theatre in Cleveland. Sisson, who studied with Alexander Guilmont in France, shared the or-

gan bench with Mr. Hookway's father in Cleveland. Any information on Mr. Sisson would be much appreciated by Mr. Hookway.

Looking up from his intense concentration on the playing of the LA Dodgers in Dodgers' Stadium, visitor Lloyd "Panamint" Klos, couldn't believe his eyes. There in huge letters on the message board was:

DODGER WELCOME TO LLOYD KLOS,  
AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY,  
ROCHESTER, N.Y.

"Old Prospector" Klos was visiting southern California and being organ and baseball oriented, gravitated to Chavez Ravine where he could sample both. At the Conn 651 was Dodgers' darling Helen Dell who had met Lloyd at the airport and presumably arranged for the screened greeting. Helen also played the tune Klos wrote to encourage his favorite team during the game, "Let's Go, Dodgers!"

"I was stupefied with all that attention," admitted a delighted Klos, "Too bad the Dodgers lost."



Helen Dell. She's Lily Tomlin's organ prowess.

(Stufoto)

The saloon organ music which listeners heard on the "Lilly Tomlin Special" on the ABC TV network on July 25, was played by offstage Helen Dell. There had been some talk during the show's preparation that piano music be used instead of organ music for her final scene, but wiser heads prevailed and Helen's name was listed in the credits afterward as organist. She played about a half dozen numbers to sync Lily as the bar organ philosopher, including

"As Time Goes By," "Raindrops" and "Colonel Bogey March," and also wrote a script for the sequence. Helen recently put out a book on polka arrangements, including her own composition, "Polka Dot."

Don't tell the Internal Revenue people, please, but Dr. Walter Beaupre reports that business trips, Rhode Island to Columbus, Ohio, can become pure pleasure if one is lucky enough to catch Dennis James at the Ohio Theatre. One hot day in late July the Ohio happened to be dark, but a call to Dennis and Heidi resulted in a flashlight tour of the magnificent movie palace and a private concert. Heidi (now it can be told) was not about to relax in her favorite loge seat until she had figured out a way to rescue a baby bird that had toppled from its nest high up on a theatre fire escape. Those who know Heidi won't doubt for a moment that she succeeded! She returned in triumph from what must have been a hair-raising climb just in time to hear Dennis play his incredible organ transcription of "Victory At Sea." After hearing the mini-concert on the 4/20 Robert Morton, Beaupre observed, "On the organ bench Dennis James impressed me as a major talent in many directions. Besides being a first class performer, he celebrates while playing. During the simplest improvisation on a pop tune Dennis explores counter melodies on many



Heidi and Dennis. From bird rescuing to an amphibious victory.

(Stufoto)

levels. For the moment you can almost believe that the tune being played has a life and personality of its own. Dennis also has an uncanny ear for perceiving the essence of an orchestral arrangement and then translating it to pipes and percussions. Off the bench Dennis James has a keen intelligence and a boundless enthusiasm for other musicians — a rare quality.!"

In brief, Doc Beaupre appreciates Dennis.



Dennis James reports a new phenomenon; people approaching him after concerts with the gall to ask him to autograph their pirated cassettes of the James recordings! Some people!



Stann Kann

(Stufoto)

Following his MC chores at the ATOS Convention, Stan Kann made another of his many appearances on the Johnny Carson TV show on July 21. On the same bill were two performers who were scheduled for an Oakland Paramount appearance (remember that session, conventioners?) Subbing for Carson was Joey Bishop, and Stan exhibited and demonstrated such hand-operated gadgets as an orange-juice squeezer-outer, a grapefruit-core remover, an egg-top remover and a "drink deliverer" which rolled the leopard sweat container from bar to recipient. Following this fun sequence, Stan mentioned that he was an organist, "the kind who plays the instruments which were developed for movie accompaniment," and men-

tioned that he had just come back from "a big organ convention." A sequence on the Mike Douglas show is in the offing.



Rex Koury. Old 'oaters' and their theme tunes never die. (Stufoto)

Organist Rex Koury was happy to learn that his royalties for the *Gunsmoke* TV series theme will not cease when the 20-year-old oater leaves the small screen shortly. Independent stations have indulged in such a scramble for re-run rights that the years of TV episodes are being syndicated for showing wherever they are wanted. That means that Rex will be collecting royalty checks on the distinctive theme for years to come. Columbus mini-convention attendees will hear him play the Ohio Theatre Robert Morton in late November.



Being a hard working advocate of theatre pipes does have its fringe benefits as Dr. Alan Goodnow, a Warren, Rhode Island dentist, can testify. Twenty-five Southeastern New England TOS fans showed up for Alan's August birthday party (complete with cake and assorted goodies) beneath the stage work light in the Columbus Theatre, Providence. There was just enough light to see the beautiful Italian Opera House decor, but not enough to recognize who was getting the lush

sounds from the six rank, two manual Wurlitzer. It turned out to be Harry Jacques, a fine local organist and long time friend. All this was a prelude to the arrival of vacationing Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier who had promised an impromptu concert. With ATOS Hall-of Fame Parmentier testing the limits of the little Wurli (which held up nobly under the pyrotechnics), those present agreed that young Doc Goodnow could well afford to ignore the calendar and have birthdays more often.

Incidentally, if birthdays of theatre organ buffs can be way out, so can the vacation activities of great organists. The story goes that "Cass" and "Topsy" Parmentier planned one day at the seashore only to stop off at the University of Rhode Island to explore the 44-rank Austin-Moller. The organ proved to be in top shape, thanks to Art Fraites, and it was a rare vintage Parmentier who put the four manuals through the paces of "Finlandia," "Nell Gwynne Suite," "S'wonderful" and "Improvisation on Nursery Tunes." In no time he found the elegant reeds, strings and horns which give this four chamber concert organ its unique "spaced out" sound. The far too exclusive audience privileged to witness this fabulous "summit meeting" (Parmentier vs. Austin-Moller) began plotting a "public confrontation" for '76.



Youthful Chicago organist Walter Strony had a great time playing for the Tommy Bartlett Water Show in Okinawa over the summer months. The island, whose name will perhaps strike a minor chord in the minds of WW II vets on both sides, is being promoted as a vacation resort by the Japanese, who hate to see Hawaii getting all those yen. Walt reports that the place is beautiful but he misses USA-style "Johns" which are scarce where he is. He added that the instrument he plays to accompany the swan dives is a Yamaha GX-1, "the same instrument John Seng played at the ATOS convention."

He says, "Although chopsticks are hard to eat with, I'm learning fast." Should we mail him a knife and fork? Or a portable John? □

affettuoso

*D.C. al Fine*

by George Aston

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
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| E | T | E | W | S | R | E | B | M | A | H | C | R | F | E |
| L | L | S | U | R | E | W | O | L | B | A | C | C | L | S |
| O | A | T | R | M | A | I | N | A | A | U | H | E | U | E |
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| A | I | B | I | T | T | O | L | G | O | S | Y | R | H | C |

Locate all of the words below in the puzzle, and the remaining letters will spell the magic answer below.

- |                 |           |               |
|-----------------|-----------|---------------|
| ✓ ACC (ACCOMP.) | ✓ FELT    | ✓ PERCUSSION  |
| ✓ BARTON        | ✓ FLUTE   | ✓ PIANO       |
| ✓ BASS          | ✓ GLOCK   | ✓ PICCOLO     |
| ✓ BENCH         | ✓ GONG    | ✓ POST HORN   |
| ✓ CABLES        | ✓ KINURA  | ✓ PNEUMATICS  |
| ✓ CHAMBERS      | ✓ LEAD    | ✓ PRESETS     |
| ✓ CHESTS        | ✓ LEATHER | ✓ SET (STOPS) |
| ✓ CHIMES        | ✓ LOWER   | ✓ SIREN       |
| ✓ CHRYSOGLOTT   | ✓ MAIN    | ✓ SOLO        |
| ✓ CLARINET      | ✓ MANUAL  | ✓ TEMPO       |
| ✓ CONSOLE       | ✓ MUSIC   | ✓ TIBIA       |
| ✓ COUPLER       | ✓ NOTES   | ✓ WOOD        |
| ✓ CYMBAL        | ✓ OBOE    | ✓ WURLITZER   |
| ✓ DIAPASON      | ✓ ORGAN   |               |

E T E R U H E T E R P I P E

# I NEVER KNEW I HAD HEART.

I never had a Yamaha Electone Organ before.

My husband recently bought one for himself.

He said, "In times like these, I'm investing in the only sure thing I know of.

"Myself."

Now I know what he meant.

A Yamaha Electone is a control center for your soul, for all your feelings and moods.

It gives you a huge choice of musical colors, textures, rhythms, and effects.

And it makes it simple to do not so simple things.

One of my favorite things is called ABC — which stands for Automatic Bass Chord.

It automatically gives you a whole rhythm and chordal and bass accompaniment just by using one finger.

I also like using Yamaha Auto Rhythms, which give you a bunch of beats to play with.

I only have a small Yamaha, but it does all of what I mentioned and other things too.

Obviously, I'm no budding virtuoso at my age.

But I do have heart.

 **YAMAHA**

Yamaha International Corporation  
Box 6600, Buena Park, Calif. 90620





by Allen Miller

# become a registration gourmet chef

To a great majority of those who play the theatre organ, particularly those who only have occasional access to a theatre organ, selecting the right stop combinations is a real problem. This is obvious not only during chapter open console sessions, but also during programs, and even in some cases, during concerts. The problem of selecting proper registration does not take care of itself in time, but rather, tends to be compounded with time for several reasons. Hearing poor registration sets a bad example and does not tend to instill a sense of proper registration in the listener. Asking someone else to register for you may result in satisfactory sounds, but will not result in appropriate choice of stops unless the person selecting the stops is familiar with the EXACT arrangement you are going to play. It does nothing to help you learn unless you find you like what you are hearing, and take note of which stops are on so you can duplicate the sound the next time you play.

The writer doesn't pretend to know the last word on registration, but has spent the past 15 years trying to find out how to get the right

sounds out of the theatre organ, and continues to do so. He has had a long appreciation of orchestral music, and knowledge of the tonal aspects of pipes, and in which ranges or octaves certain stops sound best for certain uses. He will try to convey in tangible terms, several pointers to assist you in learning how to register, and will set out certain specific stop combinations as examples which you may try for yourself, and use as stepping-stones to further combinations.

First of all, we should consider the theatre organ as an orchestral instrument. After all, it was originally supposed to take the place of a small orchestra. Robert Hope-Jones, inventor of the theatre organ, originally built his organs in sections like those of an orchestra . . . Strings, Woodwinds, Brass, Percussion, and Foundation (which included more traditional pipe organ sounds like the Diapason). Hope-Jones envisioned playing the organ like an orchestra, but this is not practical, even with second touch, unless you have several hands and a brain capable of keeping multiple lines of music going in different directions at the same time. Only a

couple organists even approach this type of ability with two hands . . . the rest of us must be content to compromise.

Although the theatre organ can imitate many sounds of orchestral instruments, the orchestra has the advantage of being able to make individual instruments or even a given note in a chord louder or softer independently of the overall loudness. The theatre organist also has no control over the depth and speed of tremulant on each note, as do orchestral instrumentalists. Such factors will influence an attempt to register orchestrally.

To be able to register properly, one must first have a musical sense of sounds . . . a sort of musical taste to know which sounds are good and bad. Organ stops are like foods. There are the staples, the bland and rich stops, sweet and sour stops, and condiments. Within stop families and even specific names, we may have different flavors according to the whim of the organ builder. A good cook can build a fine meal by selecting the main foods according to type and color, combine and prepare them in the proportions and order that will make each com-

pliment the other, and serve them at just the right time. A good organist will use his registration in exactly the same manner. If you really think about it, you can draw many parallels between food and stops . . . something to keep in mind as you study registration.

There are as many variations in musical taste as there are in taste for foods. We are entitled to our own opinions, but there are certain sensible guidelines. We all know when food is over or undercooked, over or under seasoned, or plainly unbalanced, allowing for slight differences in taste. I know someone who puts catsup on everything he eats. The organist who puts the Xylophone on with every combination has the same kind of hangup.

The first basic rule is not to overdo anything, whether a single stop, or a whole combination. Too much of the same thing is just plain tiring. Too much also depends upon WHAT. A very little salt or pepper can be way too much. More than a hint of garlic can be pure murder! Learn which stops are the spices and condiments and use them for flavor only.

Then learn which sounds go together, and in what proportions, and what effect they create in the mind of the listener. I recall an ad used extensively by an organ manufacturer several years ago, proclaiming that, "Over 10,000 combinations are possible!" Maybe so, but are they all good?

As already stated, first you must learn what sounds good. Like foods, there are some sounds we may like almost instinctively, but real taste is learned or acquired through exposure. The obvious method is to listen. Listen to organ records by the organists who have gained outstanding reputation for their registrational ability. Specifically, records by George Wright, Buddy Cole, Lyn Larsen, Ashley Miller, Lee Erwin, and Tom Hazleton will get you started on the right track. Also listen carefully to orchestras, especially the ones which at times sound like a theatre organ. Henry Mancini, Ray Conniff, Percy Faith, The Boston Pops and even some Mantovani records are good references. Listen to any symphony orchestra. If you are really serious, go to live orchestra performances

and get a seat where you can see the instruments . . . close enough so you can get an idea of which instrument is making which sound. This can be general. You must be able to identify the following instruments by sound: Strings . . . violins, violas, violoncellos, bass; Woodwinds . . . flute and piccolo, clarinet, oboe, bassoon; Reeds . . . Trumpet, Trombone, French horn, Tuba. The percussion instruments are known to most of us, and you can see what they are when they are played.

Take particular note of what part of the music each instrument or family takes. Does the Xylophone or Glockenspiel play harmony or accompaniment, as we call it? How



are the strings used, and in what pitch ranges? What part does the trumpet and trombone section play? The French horns? Listen for the clarinet and oboe and flutes. When do they play the melody, and what else is playing at the same time? How do the woodwinds fit into the harmony?

Not only will this give you something to do during a symphony concert, but it will certainly give you insight into the use of these same sounds in a theatre organ.

You may note that trumpets DO sometimes play the accompaniment. When they do, which instruments are carrying the melody, and how loud are the trumpets playing? It will be a great help to take notes on which instruments are taking which part at the same time, and what effect it makes upon the music. Relate this to the type of music. Are ballads treated the same as marches by the orchestra?

Go back and listen to those theatre organ records again. Which

ones still sound musical after listening to a real orchestra? Which ones sound almost like the real thing? Listen to John Seng's arrangement of *Porgy and Bess*, then listen to an orchestra playing the same selections.

Now, just when you think you're getting somewhere, you run into the real problem. OK, so you know what the music should sound like, but what the heck stops are making that sound!?

There is only one way to find that out. Become familiar with the stops in a theatre organ. You have to try them yourself, listen to the sounds, and try to visualize an orchestra, perhaps. Does a certain stop sound like part of the string, woodwind or brass section? Could it depend upon whether you play single notes or a chord?

Identifying some of the sounds you will hear on the suggested records will not be easy, and for a very good reason. The organs recorded are essentially large Wurlitzers, either built or modified after Wurlitzer was influenced by Jesse Crawford's ideas on registration, typically Wurlitzers built later than 1927. Crawford's playing influenced Wurlitzer to the extent that they modified their tonal scheme to suit his type of playing, and most early Wurlitzers will not produce the sounds Crawford so often used . . . the same sounds used extensively by George Wright, Lyn Larsen, Buddy Cole, etc.

Many of the registrations you hear on the larger Wurlitzers simply cannot be duplicated on smaller instruments or on other brands. Many of the solo combinations used by the aforementioned organists are typified by the inclusion of the Saxophone, Krumet, Musette, and other "rare" stops. In the case of the Saxophone, some of those which have been recorded extensively have been modified to produce a lush sound, and bear no resemblance to either original Wurlitzer sets, or the real instrument. It would be beyond the scope of this article to cover the myriad possible combinations available on a large organ. However, many of the principles set forth in the description of stops can be applied to other stops in the same family.

We will, concentrate on the basic

orchestral combinations within the limits of the smaller instruments we have at our disposal. I will attempt to identify some of the more common stops with types of food to help clarify their useage as far as weight and balance are concerned, and then will build up some groups of combinations which you may try for yourself.

As you play, think as if you are conducting your own orchestra, and listen to what you are playing. Beware of the tendency to try to make the theatre organ sound like the electronic you practice on at home . . . it can't (thank God!) I often find I can tell what kind of organ a player is used to by the way he registers the pipe organ. Hammond owners always tend to use gobs of Flute and Tibia, often at all available pitches, to the point where those stops have so many pipes playing at once that they literally gasp or even run out of air! Owners of organs in which the stops act as filters and typically sound strident and reedy tend to overuse strings and reeds, and tend to use too many stops at a time. Then there is the tendency we all have to be overwhelmed by the sheer power at our disposal, and pour it all on. How often does the entire orchestra play at the same time? How often could you stand a Thanksgiving dinner?

Also bear in mind that the instruments in the orchestra and those named on organ stops don't necessarily sound alike, and that a stop of a different name may create the effect of a certain orchestral sound when played in a given manner.

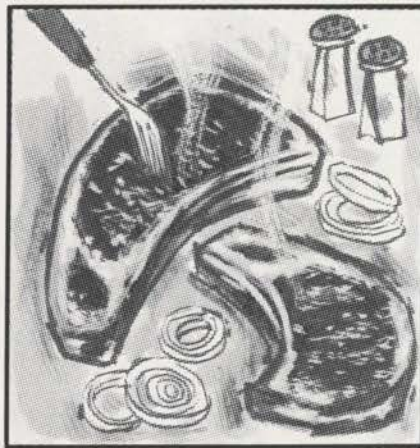
As you learn how to select and to balance stop combinations to create specific sounds, you will find that through listening, you will also have acquired a sense of when to use certain sounds. No matter how accurately you press the keys, the registration you choose will either make or break your arrangement.

Let's examine some of the basic theatre organ stops and their orchestral counterparts.

**STRINGS:** The basic instrument of the orchestra, which covers the normal range of hearing from the lowest to the highest pitch . . . 16' C to the top note of the manual at 4' pitch. Think of the strings as green vegetables.

**DIAPASON:** The basic tone of the church organ, not found in the orchestra. This stop covers the greatest range of any instrument . . . 32'C to the top note of the manual at 2' pitch, and has been known to go even higher. In some cases it can be used in the manner of a French horn on the theatre organ. Think of this stop as you would potato.

**TIBIA CLAUSA:** The basic flute tone of the theatre organ, not found in the orchestra. This stop can cover the range from 32'C to the top manual note at 2' pitch. Having a characteristic mellow sobbing effect, this stop can be treated as if it were a



human singing voice, and is most useful from 4' C up. The lower part of the Tibia is often used to give solidity to the Pedal, and used at 8' pitch in the Pedal, can sometimes sound like a plucked string bass. Think of this stop as meat.

**TRUMPET:** A brass instrument used for solos, chorus effects and loud or snappy accompaniment. Ranges from tenor E-flat to the top note on the manual at 8' pitch. Except for lack of variations in tremolo, this organ stop sometimes sounds like the real thing. Think of this stop as you would salad. (It can either blend in with the rest of the food or stand by itself.)

**TUBA:** This stop in the organ is usually not as bright as a real tuba, although in some cases, it may sound more like a trumpet or trombone. The orchestral instrument covers the range from 16' F to about middle E-flat. The Tuba Horn often has a muted sound more like the French horn. Think of this stop as you would a rich, fancy bread.

**CLARINET:** The organ stop most closely resembling the orchestral instrument it is supposed to imitate. The range is from tenor E-flat to the top manual note at 2' pitch, although both the instrument and the organ stop begin to sound flute-like above middle G. Usually the tenor and lower-middle octave have the most character, and are usually most realistic when used without tremulant. Think of this stop as gravy.

**ORCHESTRAL OBOE:** A solo and "color" reed actually classed as a Woodwind along with the Clarinet and Flute-Piccolo. The normal range is middle D to the top manual G at 4' pitch, although the Bassoon carries the same tone quality down to B-flat below the lowest manual C at 8' pitch. The organ stop is most useful in the middle two octaves starting at middle C. Think of this stop as a fruit.

**FLUTE-PICCOLO:** Both a solo and accompanimental or foundational instrument covering the range from middle D to the top manual note at 2' pitch. The Concert Flute can often sound like the real thing, but as found in the theatre organ, is usually much softer than a real flute. The Piccolo derived from the Tibia may sound very much like the real thing when played fast, or in trilled notes without tremulant, but is usually not used in this manner on the theatre organ except perhaps as a solo obligato to a march. Think of this stop as a bread or pastry.

**KINURA:** A stop peculiar to the theatre organ, although its sound is very similar to the Regal family of stops found on baroque organs. This is a reed having very little fundamental tone, and gives a splash of firey color to the full ensemble, adding brilliance much as the Mixture stops add brilliance in a church organ. As a solo stop, the Kinura is hardly ever used by itself except for comic effect because its lack of fundamental tone makes the pitch of the note difficult to recognize. When used in combination with the Tibia, the extreme contrast makes a delightful novelty effect. The best range is the middle three octaves at 8' pitch. Most emphatically a condiment, and should be treated like garlic.

**POST HORN:** The organ counterpart of "English Post Horns" or festival trumpets used for fanfares. Typically labelled "ENGLISH HORN", it is not at all like a real English horn, which is a Woodwind sounding much like an Oboe. The Post Horn is used for Brass Chorus effects or "riffs" and in isolated cases, may carry a short countermelody. It should NEVER be used with tremulant, and should always be used sparingly. Think of this stop as pepper.

**OBOE HORN:** A solo voice having a quality more like a real English horn usually soft enough to be used as a foundation stop, useful in accompaniment. The bass is more like the Bassoon than the bass of the Orchestral Oboe, and is a very good Pedal stop, especially at 16' pitch. The normal range is 16' C to the top manual note at 8' pitch. Think of this stop as meat.

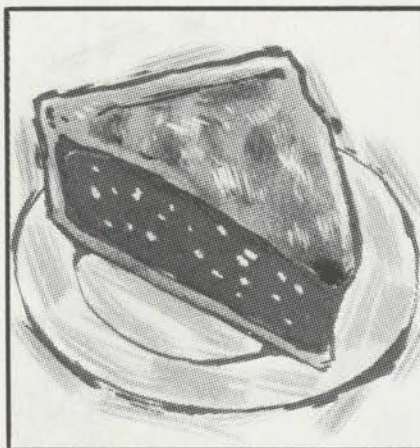
**VOX HUMANA:** Translated, "Human Voice," this stop can have the same effect as a humming human voice (not a singing voice), and is most effective from tenor C, to C above middle C, above which it begins to take on a nondescript "falsetto" quality. When played in chords by itself with the swell shades closed, it takes on an angelic quality. Treat as a sweet relish.

**PITCH:** Since the unification in a theatre organ enables the organist to combine the different voices at several pitches, you should know what the pitch numbers mean. On the organ, the pitch of a stop sounded from middle C on the keyboard will match middle C on the piano when the natural open length of the bottom manual C pipe of that stop is 8' long. Such a stop is thus designated 8' pitch. In other words, the bottom manual pipe of any stop will have a "speaking length" at about the footage given with the stop. The actual length of stoppered pipes is about half the "speaking length" and certain reed pipes may have lengths much shorter and not at all related to pitch. Each halving of the length produces a note sounding an octave higher. Thus a 16' stop sounds an octave lower than an 8' stop . . . a 4' twice as high or an octave higher than the 8', and so on. Fractional pitches, such as 2- $\frac{2}{3}$ ' are called "mutations" (not mixtures) and in a unit organ, actually

play a note other than an octave interval of the key pressed. The 2- $\frac{2}{3}$ ', for example, is the closest note on the keyboard to the twelfth harmonic of the 8' C, and is G two octaves above 8' C. The note actually played when a mutation is used on a theatre organ is slightly out of tune with the natural harmonic, and may sound harsh. This is overcome in the church organ by using separate ranks of pipes for the mutations, and tuning them to the harmonics of the 8' and 4' stops.

The pitch of the pedalboard is an octave lower than the manuals, so that bottom C is designated as 16' pitch.

**COUPLERS:** These are devices



which enable you to play the stops registered on the manual from another, either at the same pitch, or at other pitches. Couplers can also be used to duplicate the registration on a given manual an octave higher or lower. If the Solo to Accompaniment 8' coupler is on, all stops registered on the Solo will play at the same pitch on the Accompaniment as if the two keyboards were physically "coupled" together. This coupler will not make Accompaniment stops play on the Solo, however. A 16' coupler plays ALL STOPS registered an octave lower; the 4' an octave higher.

Use the couplers with care because they affect every stop at every pitch. If, for example, you registered the Tibia at 16' and 4', and the Vox at 8', you would have a pretty solo combination. Adding the 16' coupler would cause the Tibia to play at 32', 16', 8', and 4', and the Vox would play at 16' and 8' . . . an instant transformation to "pretty ugly!"

Only use the couplers when you

cannot get the desired sound from the available stops. Use the 4' coupler when you cannot get enough brilliance using the 4' and 2' stops. Avoid playing in the top two octaves when you use the 4' coupler. Use the 16' coupler for a full ensemble effect when you are playing in the top octaves. Never play below middle C with the 16' coupler on, and never register BOTH 16' stops and the 16' coupler unless you intend to play in the top octave and a half.

**LOCATION OF STOPS:** There is no universal rule governing the location of stops on a theatre organ, although in some cases, stop order may vaguely follow the pitch-power rule common to church organs. The pitch-power order merely places the stops of a given pitch in order according to loudness, with the pitches arranged from lowest to highest. This rule is often modified to place stops, which are often used together, adjacent when possible. Sometimes stops of a family are placed together.

Wurlitzer used a stop arrangement which seems to fall into none of these categories, yet, as it turns out, it is a type of pitch-power arrangement. With only a few exceptions, Wurlitzer grouped the stops so that if all stops of a given pitch were on, removing those at the left of the group make the greatest difference, and removing those at the right of the group make the least difference. While I have never grasped the complete logic behind this arrangement, I have tested this theory on several instruments, and on a well-balanced Wurlitzer, the system seems to work.

The only point of assistance here is that if you are playing an unfamiliar Wurlitzer, and find that a particular combination is too loud, try taking off stops at the left of the pitch group first . . . otherwise you will remove all the soft stops, and when you finally get to the loud stop there may be nothing left on at all.

**PERCUSSIONS AND TRAPS:** These stops can easily become the most misused in the organ, especially when there is an attempt to create a "band organ" effect. Use the Xylophone and Glockenspiel on single-stroke only, avoiding big chords or couplers. Never use the Orchestra Bells or Sleigh Bells with chords unless you want your audi-



ence to quickly depart! Play only melody or short countermelody on any of these percussions . . . NEVER accompaniment! Save the Chryso-glott, Marimba Harp or Piano for the accompaniment.

Be careful using traps, especially if they reiterate. You MUST keep the rhythm going as long as these effects are used. As soon as you attempt holding even one legato note in your left hand, the shakers and rattlers will jangle incessantly and immediately wipe out any effect you may have created by using them in the first place. Personally, I view all reiterating percussions and traps as un-musical, and would prefer to see all such instruments connected to strike once each time the key were struck. Then if the organist wants repeated notes, he can very well play them that way, as would a real percussionist.

Use the percussions and traps with a bit of judgement. Here again, let the orchestra be your example.

#### COMMON SENSE RECIPES:

Every good chef or gourmet cook works from recipes of some sort. They may be only a bare outline, but are never taken lightly. Just as one can learn to cook by following recipes, one can learn a great deal about registration by following suggested combinations. Unfortunately, we see few recipes for good theatre organ registration. The average sheet music or collection gives vague combinations which may fit a certain brand of electronic organ. Suggested registration for pipe organ, however, often looks like a collection of names read off the local church organ, and is of no real assistance.

Let's look at some basic combinations. For accompaniment, start with the Concert Flute or Strings (Viola d'Orchestre, Celeste, Salicional) at 8'. For a warmer sound, lean towards the flute and less strings. To make the flute sound warmer or lusher, add the Vox Humana 8' or a flute celeste (if there is one). Curiously enough, adding the Vox Humana 8' to strings will create a bigger, more shimmering string sound, or an effect much like a string section backing a humming chorus (Ray Conniff effect). Combining the Flute 8' and string at 8' gives a broader, fuller effect. If you need to build the accompaniment,

add the Flute 4' or strings at 4', or a Woodwind reed at 8', such as the Oboe horn or clarinet. The Diapason 8' will add solidity, but be aware that the accompaniment may also become heavy or "woofy" with some Diapasons. Avoid using the Tibia 8' as an accompanimental stop, as it will create a bloated sound lacking clarity. Never use the Tibia in the left hand when you are playing a rhythmic accompaniment as the wide excursion of the Tibia tremulant will create a gasping laugh effect. Instead, try adding a reed such as the Trumpet or Tuba. If you do, don't suddenly insert a series of legato chords, as the left hand will then completely take over. The Tibia



4' can often fill in a legato accompaniment without being muddy.

In general, you should select Pedal stops from the same families you have chosen for the accompaniment, remembering that 16' is the basic pitch. If you are playing a ballad, stick with a soft 16' stop such as the Bourdon or String (if there is one at 16') and the Flute or Cello at 8'. The 8' Diapason and Tibia will add force to the Pedal, and make the pitch of the bass line easier to follow, especially on fast pieces. Remember that the Diaphone and Ophecleide 16' will "speak" faster than the Bourdon or Tibia 16', and use them on fast pieces when you need more "oomph" in the Pedal.

When registering for a single note solo, think back to the orchestra. Keep the registration simple. Individual solo reeds are a safe bet at 8'. If you want a fuller sound, add the Diapason or Tibia at 8'. If you want a more colorful sound, add the Flute or Tibia at 4'. An Oboe, Trumpet or Tuba at 8' and Tibia 4' is one

of the nicest solo combinations, yet there are "concert" artists who haven't discovered this yet, judging by their programs and recordings.

Having selected a reed for solo, say you want more reed sound . . . for instance, something between the Oboe and Trumpet in loudness. Add the 2-2/3'. The "twelfth" will reinforce the reed harmonics noticeably. For variety or buildup, try adding a string a 8' or 4', or the Vox Humana 8' or even 16'.

When playing block chords, base your registration on strings, Flute and Tibia at 8' and 4' (any combination of these) and Vox Humana 8' or Oboe 8' and 4'. To build on this base, add higher pitches of Flutes and lower pitches of strings and reeds. Avoid using the Tibia at several adjacent pitches as this will create a muddy sound. Instead try "open" pitch intervals such as 16' and 4', 16' and 2', 8' and 2-2/3', etc.

When registering "Full Organ", DON'T! Leave the Vox Humana out of the ensemble when you register "brass". Leave the Kinura or Post Horn off until you have set up a good orchestral ensemble. If you need a bit of "sass" or color, add these stops at the lowest pitch you have included in the registration. If you must use the 4' coupler, DON'T register any reeds at 4'!

The Tibia is most effective when used at two, or at the most, three pitches . . . no more. One "typical" Crawford combination combines Tibia 16' and 4' with Vox Humana 16' and 8'. Play a single note melody in the octave just above middle C. Note the open Tibia interval with the Vox in the bass line and filling in the hole in the middle. Try 16' Vox and 8' Tibia alone, or register 8' Vox and 4' Tibia and play an octave lower than usual. Tibia, Flute and Vox 8' with Flute 4' is effective. Add Tibia 4', then Vox 16' or 4'.

For the lush string sound, play both hands on strings and Vox at all available pitches.

When playing anything fast, register reeds or a percussion to carry the melody and avoid the Tibia. The excursion of the Tibia tremulant is such that the pitch of a given Tibia note may vary up and down a quarter tone. A succession of short notes may catch one Tibia note all the way flat, and the next all the way sharp. The result is confusing and

sounds like a schoolgirl with the giggles.

As any good cook must ultimately rely upon taste to determine the success of his meal, so must the organist rely upon taste to determine the success of his registration. In the latter case, "taste" must be the judgement gained by listening to good examples. "Good" examples of theatre organ registration have become rare enough to warrant digging out the records made by the real masters of the instrument or turning to the sounds created by popular and movie orchestras as guidelines.

When you are about to play a selection, don't just sit down and play the notes. Think about the overall effect you want to convey. Ask yourself how a certain orchestra might play the piece. Think in terms of an arrangement . . . a sort of musical meal. Then come up with a recipe for that meal. Try cooking and serving the foods in different manners and proportions. Ask which menu best serves the music as you feel it. If you find a recipe you like, stick to it. After awhile you will know it well enough to make slight variations without ruining the meal.

Develop some sort of plan or recipe for each piece you play. These recipes will become a file upon which you will draw for ideas on registration for future pieces. Like an accomplished chef, you may someday be able to serve a musical meal with registrations fit for a gourmet.

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## ORGAN CATALOG FREE!

The Organ Literature Foundation has just released their latest catalog of books, music, pamphlets and recordings dealing exclusively in organ oriented subjects.

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□

# Carter Wurlitzer Finds New Home

by Grant Whitcomb

It is heartening to report that the 3/19 Wurlitzer installed in the home of the late James O. Carter of Cinnaminson, New Jersey, will ultimately benefit this community where he lived for many years.

Jim Carter, who died quite suddenly last December, was as meticulous in his plans for the future of his beloved instrument as he had been in its reconstruction in his home. It was always Jim's intention to leave the organ and its ultimate disposition to his close friend, Larry Ferrari. He felt that Philadelphia's "Mr. Music" would find a way to locate this instrument so that it would be seen, heard, and enjoyed.

Since Larry is also a longtime resident of Cinnaminson, it was logical that the instrument should remain in this area if a suitable location could be found. The Cinnaminson High School complex includes the Richard Serfling Memorial Auditorium — a 900-seat hall where space availability and acoustics would be adaptable to a theatre organ installation. With many years of experience performing in auditoriums, Larry was in a good position to evaluate this potential. In addition, the local effective transplant of a theatre organ to the auditorium of the John Dickinson High School in suburban Wilmington, Delaware, has been most successful from both a technical and musical point of view.

This proposal was enthusiastically received by the Cinnaminson Township Board of Education which has passed a resolution expressing ". . . its intentions to accept the gift of the organ with thanks to the estate of Mr. James Carter and to Mr. Larry Ferrari for their interest in the Township." Larry has specified that this installation will be known as *The James O. Carter Memorial Organ*.

In order to properly organize this effort and raise the necessary funds required for construction of chambers, moving, and reinstallation of the organ, community leaders have

formed the Cinnaminson Arts Council with appropriate long-range objectives. The primary and immediate goal, of course, is to get the organ installed in the high school auditorium. For the future, it is anticipated that this installation can be the basis for development of all related arts. The Arts Council format will therefore embrace a wide area of community interest and participation.

Effective action has already been taken to raise initial funds to finance the costs of communications and the formation of a non-profit tax exempt corporation by the sale of Charter Memberships in the Cinnaminson Arts Council at \$5.00. The initial response indicates a very healthy community interest. Members of the council and the Board of Education have paid a visit to the John Dickinson High School installation to observe first hand how well such a project can be handled.

Under the leadership of William G. Hemphill, chairperson for the council, and with the help of Bob Fischer, an experienced publicist and member of ATOS, there is every expectation that growth of interest and enthusiasm will continue at a rapid pace. Friends of Larry Ferrari, members of the New Jersey and Delaware Valley Chapters of ATOS and the John Dickinson Theatre Organ Society will offer their support and help in this project.

It will not be long before the Carter Wurlitzer will again be heard. It is fitting that Jim Carter, who devoted so much of his life to the furtherance of theatre organ activities, should leave us the legacy of a living musical memorial for the benefit of all for countless years to come.

□

### SORRY

*We regret that Bill Rieger's name was inadvertently omitted from the caption of the Board of Directors' picture on page 22 of the August - September, 1975 issue of THEATRE ORGAN.*

Ladies and Gentlemen . . .

# Webley L. Webster

. . . at the console.

by Bob Atkins and Ken Ladner

Readers of this publication have noted occasional items describing radio programs devoted to the theatre organ and its music. The New York metropolitan area, with one notable exception, has no such program appearing on a regular basis. This exception is *The Bob and Ray Show* which is aired Monday through Friday from 3:15 p.m. to 7 p.m. on

WOR-AM. This is an afternoon variety program featuring music, both current hits and standards; helicopter traffic reports and transit bulletins; newscasts and weather reports; and, of course, commercials. So far, the format may sound like other programs originating in various cities, but the Bob and Ray show has additional features which make

it unique. In addition to organist Webley Webster (more about him later) the frequent dramatic presentations during the show are eagerly awaited by regular listeners. *Mary Backstayge*, *Noble Wife* is a continuing story about the struggles of a husband and wife acting team against the concrete heart of Broadway. Others appearing regularly are

Webley L. Webster at the console of WOR's huge 4-manual pipe organ.





Ray Goulding (left) and Bob Elliott broadcasting *The Bob and Ray show* from WOR's Studio 2 in New York.

*Wing Po*, about a Chinese philosopher in the old west; *The Pittmans*, family life during the Great Depression; and *Squad Car 119*, about two low-key detectives. If these are vaguely reminiscent of *Kung Fu*, *The Waltons* and *Dragnet*, it isn't pure coincidence. Also high in listener popularity are *The Gathering Dusk*, *Anxiety*, *Widen Your Horizons* and, for the kids, the *Charlie Chipmunk Club* and *Mr. Science*.

The Bob and Ray regular who is the subject of this article plays the organ almost daily. Webley L. Webster currently appears exclusively on the Bob and Ray show and, to date, has made no personal appearances in the area. A versatile artist, he also shows up on some of the dramatic portions of the show where his distinctive speech pattern makes him instantly recognizable. Webley, a native New Englander, has been Bob and Ray's musical director almost since they first teamed up in 1946 in Boston. However, their move to WOR in 1973 finally brought him together with an instrument worthy of his skill. The WOR studio organ, a 4/38 Gallagher & Shean, was installed when WOR moved to New York from Newark. Unused since the

days at the soap operas, it was restored by the authors working under Webley's skilled direction.

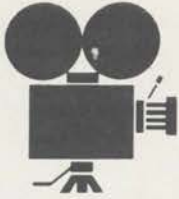
Knowledgeable organ buffs never cease to be amazed by Webley's ability to make the organ's sound duplicate that of a Wurlitzer, a Morton or other classic makes. Most of the arrangements he plays are those of George Wright or Dick Leibert. He also supplies background music for some of the dramatic offerings; needless to say, he is not cast in a speaking role during those portions of the show.

Of course, Bob and Ray fans who have seen them on television, in the movies, or in their stage presentation *The Two and Only* have realized that the foregoing is a blend of fact and fantasy. Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding and their radio show, do, indeed, exist, as does WOR. All of the characters on the show, however, (Webley Webster included) are played by Bob and Ray themselves. In spite of what you hear on the show, WOR's studio 2 has no picture window, no buffet table, no studio audience — all these are conjured up in the minds of the audience by Bob and Ray. The same is true of WOR's beautiful 4-manual pipe organ. The organ music is all

taken from recordings (which is why it sounds like Wright or Leibert playing instruments by different makers in different accoustical settings).

Ray (who is the voice of Webley on the show) and Bob both grew up and got their start in radio in Massachusetts. Bob Elliott was born in Boston and grew up in the suburb of Winchester. After high school he went to drama school in New York, supporting himself by working nights as an usher at Radio City Music Hall, certainly a good place to become familiar with the Mighty Wurlitzer's sound. Upon his return Boston, he got a job at WHDH, and returned there in 1946 after his three year stint in the Army. Artistic ability runs in Bob's family; his hobbies include painting and constructing furniture, and his son, Bob Elliott Jr., drew the portrait of Webley which accompanies this article.

Ray Goulding was born and raised in Lowell, Massachusetts. He got his start on a local radio station in Lowell, moved up to WEEI in Boston, and then he, too, went into the Army. Incidentally, WEEI's program director at that time was ATOS's own Del Castillo whose knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, the theatre pipe organ is well known to THEATRE ORGAN readers. Like Bob, Ray was discharged in 1946 and got a job at WHDH. Thus, their mutual employment at the same radio station was the catalyst that began their long association. They worked together on a morning music and news show where their ability to improvise humorous material led to the formation of the team. In the early 1950's they moved their base of operations to New York where they proceeded to become a fixture on local and network radio, TV (including the very successful "Bert and Harry" commercials for Piel's beer) and movies. The aforementioned *The Two and Only* ran for six months in New York and then toured the country. Their afternoon show on WOR-AM, produced by genial and efficient Bob Theile, gives residents of the New York Metropolitan area their only regular exposure to the theatre pipe organ. If you live or visit within range of WOR (710 on the AM dial), tune in. It's a most entertaining and informative show. □



# Hollywood Cavalcade

Directed by Lyle W. Nash

FOR YOUR INFORMATION . . . Film historian DeWitt Bodeen and George Wilbern have finished Clara Bow — The It Girl biography . . . Tony Bell, Clara's son, told me a few years back he hoped his mother's life would be written and produced as a film . . . The widows' of Laurel & Hardy won a long court battle to share in the profits from merchandising income involving the names and likenesses of their deceased husbands . . . The just victory means more than \$10,000, a year to each of them . . . Carmel Myers, who has been around the film world for 60 years, is the life of the party at many 1975 social functions.

★ ★ ★

*ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS: The Paramount News musical signature probably came from the 1930 revue Paramount on Parade . . . MGM had 253 contract players (including the big stars) during the 1935-39 era . . . greatest of any studio before or since . . . Garbo's first two films made little if any money . . . TV personality Renee Taylor says her mother named her for silent screen star Renee Adoree.*

★ ★ ★

NOSTALGIA fans will hit the jackpot in 1976. The life story (or some versions of it) of Rudolph Valentino will be produced four times for TV and films. Work is now under way on the contributions to films that Rin-Tin-Tin made. In the months ahead film biographies of W.C. Fields, Clark Gable and Carole Lombard and Errol Flynn are expected to be entertaining new generations of film fans. TV producers are working on a documentary on the tragedies of the Charles A. Lindbergh family.

★ ★ ★

*A NEW YORK court recently ruled that Birth of a Nation (copyright 1914) is now in public domain. This could mean most anything — that it could be remade, revised and a showing of the 61-year-old classic by anyone who has a print.*

★ ★ ★

AFTER 50 years of reading about Rin-Tin-Tin and enjoying his heroic actions (anything a dog does when you are 12 years old is pleasing) I found a man who played in some of the dog films. He told me: "He was a mean dog. I never liked him. He'd bite you at any provocation. I was no fan of the beast."

★ ★ ★

*REAL NEWS . . . Evelyn Ankers lives in Maui, Hawaii with husband Richard Denning . . . One time Our Gang member Jackie Lynn Taylor was reported hosting TV showings of Our Gang films in Los Angeles . . . Montie Montana is celebrating 50 years in show business this summer. The great trick rope artist thinks that interest in roping is dying out . . . Madge Bellamy's 1923 feature Soul of the Beast got a big review when revived in Los Angeles recently. Critic liked parts of it but said rest was corny . . . Baby Peggy, a reader reports, is now Mrs. Robert Cary and lives in Majorica, Spain . . . Jesse James III is reported living in Porterville, California.*

★ ★ ★

FOR 58 years Tarzan movies have been thrilling millions around the world in theatres and on TV. Now a new Tarzan thriller is on its way to movie screens and also for TV. Recently four of the nine living actors who played Tarzan and three of the Janes appeared at a Los Angeles reunion marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of Edgar Rice Burroughs. They included Jack Mahoney (1963), Johnny Weismuller (1932-1948), Buster Crabbe (1933) and Jim Pierce (1927). They all looked in excellent health. The Janes included Louise Lorraine (1921), Eve Brent (1958) and Joyce Mackenzie (1953). The new Jane was noted as a Miss Sasha.

★ ★ ★

*FESTIVITIES were part of the North American Science Fiction Convention. Out of all of this comes a new Lord of the Jungles — series, serial, feature and what-not. Most historians agree that 16 men have played Tarzan while there have been 13 women appearing as Jane. Ms. Lorraine is reported living in Burbank, California while Jim Pierce is reported living in, or near, Apple Valley. There is a Jim Pierce listed in the phone book of Lynnwood at 25527 Eaton St., (714) 253-3207. For contact, one might try the Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., 18354 Ventura Blvd., Tarzana, California.*

★ ★ ★

STATISTIC: Some 791 colleges and universities now offer 8,225 courses on film and television. That means some 80,000 people are learning new things about film making. There is hope for good movies, yet.

★ ★ ★

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

# Pipe Dreams Do Come True!

Paul Abernethy, Jr.

Ten years ago, stacked behind a wall of bolts of cloth, cardboard and tissue paper, I first saw the dirt covered remains of what once was a Mighty Wurlitzer. The organ had been purchased by a local businessman and removed from the Paramount Theatre, Charlottesville, Virginia. The proposed building of an auditorium in a local shopping center was the intended future home for the organ, but the rising costs in construction eliminated the chance of the structure ever being built.

So the past ten years has seen this fine instrument strewn among crates and cardboard boxes, each day wasting away a little bit more. Each month brought another accident — another crate thrown carelessly on a keyboard or a heavy box rolled over a group of pipes. All I could do was look and do whatever would minimize the chance of further damage. By shifting the parts of the organ into a better arrangement,

members of Piedmont Chapter were able to keep the organ at a safe distance from the rest of the stored items which were constantly being shipped out for distribution among remnant shops. It is amazing sometimes how many people cannot understand how fragile a pipe organ is!

While we performed some of this "Red Cross" work, we were surprised to find a three manual Kimball console in storage with the rest of the Wurlitzer. After further investigation, we learned the original console was accidentally burned when the proscenium curtain fell during a stage fire. To date, the time of the fire and where the Kimball console came from is unknown. Fortunately, the Kimball console only lacks nine stop keys from matching the Wurlitzer's style Balaban 1A specifications. These missing stop keys will be put on the console so the organ's eleven ranks can be taken full advantage of by the or-

ganist.

In 1970, additional warehouse space was built adjacent to the existing storage facility which prompted the owner to move the organ into this new area. Unknown to me or any chapter member, the organ was moved without proper supervision and out of ignorance, the moving crew unintentionally damaged a large portion of three ranks of strings. So severe was the damage, the bass end on the Solo String must now be totally replaced and/or rebuilt. With cries of anguish and despair, we began to reorganize, pack and restack the pieces all over again, this time in a much smaller space which hampered progress considerably. To make things worse, the added responsibility of surveying and cataloging the new damage for future reference was necessary while we shuffled the organ around.

The years passed and the future of the Wurlitzer seemed very dim in the ownership of her new patron. If an auditorium would ever be built, it did not seem likely the organ could survive such constant abuse during the interim. In order to save her, it was obvious that we find another storage area or an immediate home. Although a new storage area was the easiest of the two choices, I felt she had faced storage long enough and a new home for the organ was our best bet for complete restoration. After all, the organ (or any organ for that matter) was of more value to everyone in a playing state. From my experience, I have learned that pipe organs can turn to so much junk if stored too long, particularly if it is not stored properly.

Finding a new site for installing a pipe organ is not an easy task as anyone who has tried will tell you. To make it more difficult, we placed several strict provisions on possible locations.

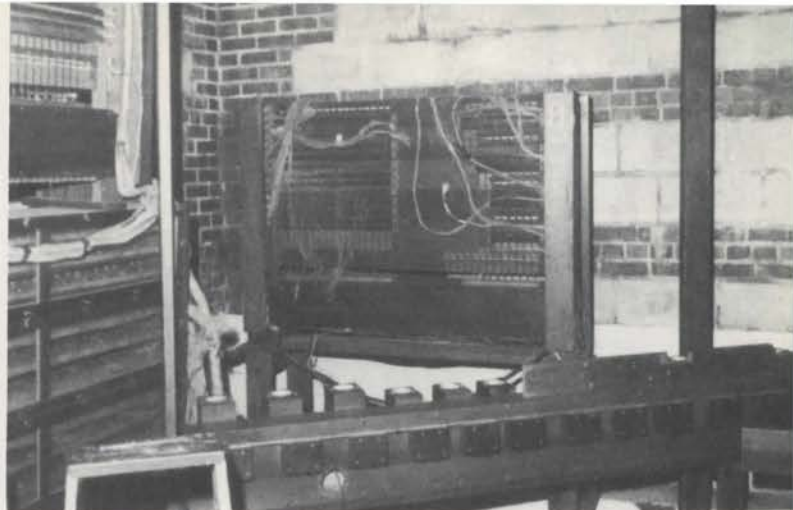
1. The site must have the capacity to seat at least 600 people without violating fire and safety laws. (a home installation was not desirable)
2. The building proposed must have live acoustics; We did not want the organ to sound like it was being played in a paper bag, but rather that it should sound as much like it did in its original setting, this being another reason for our wanting to leave it

The organ begins to take shape in the solo chamber.





Moving the relay proves to be a difficult job.



Relay, remote switching, and Diaphone in place. Main chamber.

out of a home.

3. The site must have constant environmental control during the winter and be under some form of supervision or protection against vandalism, abuse, etc.

But every idea the chapter produced, however, seemed to have a flaw in it. Idea after idea was another dream dashed away.

In October of 1973, another possibility occurred to me. It was so simple and obvious, I was annoyed with myself for not having thought of it sooner. Ten miles from the storage area is Elon College, a four year liberal arts college. Why not put the organ in the gymnasium? The gym exceeded all the minimal requirements we had specified. It was a natural! For basketball games and graduation exercises, the organ would be an invaluable tool. In addition, all manner of public events are held in the building thus giving Piedmont Chapter a chance to give the general public some exposure to what theatre organs and our club are all about.

Immediately the owner of the organ was contacted and after several delays, a meeting was arranged between Piedmont Chapter, the owner and Elon College officials. An agreement was signed between the three parties. The *basic* terms of our agreement were as follows. In exchange for renovation, installing and maintaining the organ:

1. Elon College will accept the organ as a gift.
2. Elon College will provide ample housing for the organ which meets Piedmont's exact specifications.
3. Four times a year, Elon College will allow Piedmont Chapter to

use the facility for its use so long as it does not conflict or interfere with other school activities.

When the final agreement was signed, we began to sift through the storage area taking inventory to insure all the parts were there and to make a complete and accurate list of all the damage the organ had sustained. Among the many dents, scratches and abrasions, we discovered the relay had sustained water damage when the lower level of the theatre weathered a flood. Although the relay itself remained dry, the cable linking the remote switch stack to the relay had been totally immersed. All the double cotton covering on the wire had separated leaving too many wires without insulation, except for the usual lacquered layer characteristic of Wurlitzer cables. It was decided, therefore, to replace the cable linking the remote switch stack to the re-

lay. It was a big job, but we were thankful that the smaller portion of the cable comprising the relay was all that had to be replaced. Many tedious hours have gone into the rewiring along with a sea of coffee, many expletives deleted and a great *deal* of patience. With the biggest portion of the job completed, however, I can say having a reliable relay is well worth the effort.

The two chambers were finally completed in two corners of the north balcony one year after the agreement was signed. The installation is now progressing as rapidly as time and money permits. The first concert is scheduled for the first of October, 1975, two years after preliminary steps were taken to move the organ to Elon College and over eleven years after she was removed from her first home. It all just goes to show you, with time, lots of work and a little luck, your "pipe dream" can come true! □

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**NUGGETS**  
from the  
**GOLDEN**  
**DAYS**



Prospected by Lloyd E. Klos

This time, we include some ads to round out this collection of nuggets. Sources were American Organist (AO), Diapason (D), Jacobs (J), Metronome (Met.), Motion Picture Herald (MPH) and local press (LP).

May 1924 (LP) Adv. Again the unusual! Another gigantic musical triumph! A feat never before attempted in a theatre. Two grand organs in one, played by two organists at the same time. You have marveled at the wonderful music of the Wurlitzer organ in the Chicago Theatre, but wait until you hear the twin organs. You'll gasp in amazement! Mr. & Mrs. JESSE CRAWFORD are the organists. Attend the opening concert this morning at 11:45. The Chicago Theatre twin organ will be featured at every performance from today on with Mr. & Mrs. Crawford at the consoles. These organs were especially built and designed by Wurlitzer for the Chicago Theatre, and are the only ones of this kind in the world. You can always depend on Balaban & Katz to do something different, something unusual in the world of entertainment.

Mar. 1, 1926 (Met.) Adv. Organist at liberty. Prefer Wurlitzer organ in town not smaller than 30,000. Experienced picture player. Can tune and repair. Young man, union. Box 205 Cooper Square, New York City.

May 1, 1926 (Met.) Adv. At Liberty. Reliable, experienced organist. Desires offer; large, complete library. Best references. Union. Go anywhere. Box 213, 62 Cooper Square, New York City.

June 1, 1926 (Met.) Gilda Gray in person, ushered in the first presentation of her picture "Aloma of the South Seas" at New York's Rialto Theatre on May 16. LLOYD DEL CASTILLO at the organ, served as the musical spice of the program.

Nov. 1926 (Met.) Adv. At Liberty. Organist-pianist wishes permanent position. Ten years' experience in pictures and vaudeville. Large library. References. Congenial and reliable. Box 480, Riverhead, N. Y.

Feb. 1, 1927 (Met.) HENRI A. KEATES, solo organist at Chicago's Oriental Theatre, has the world's biggest chorus singing in his support. During 15 performances, the ushers clocked an average of 2,000 singing during the organ solo. "I love to play the tunes audiences like to sing, Mr. Keates says. "I get many requests for the classics, but I can't resist the urge to swing into a "singing bee" melody so my chorus can get a workout."

Dec. 1927 (J) DICK LEIBERT is doing wonderfully well in Pittsburgh. The house went wild opening night with Dick's rendition of "Nola."

Mar. 27, 1929 (MPH) HAROLD REIDER, organist of Jersey City's Stanley Theatre, played an original musical novelty, which he calls "My Adventures With a Tune." In this clever stunt, Reider conveys the idea that the melody of "Yes, We Have No Bananas" has been so impressed on his mind that he has difficulty in playing a number without inserting bits of the banana song. "Spring Song," "Minutet in G," "Blue Danube Waltz," "Funeral March," "Tannhauser" and a Sousa march each have bits of "Yes, We Have No Bananas" interpolated.

Sept. 1929 (AO) PAUL H. FORSTER is keeping the patrons at the Eckel Theatre in Syracuse interested by the use of request cards. Available in the lobby, each card is personally answered by mail, indicating the date when the request will be answered.

Nov. 1929 (D) A strike of St. Louis musicians of several weeks has no promise of settlement. Movie organists are suffering from "longa pausa."

Jan. 17, 1931 (MPH) Remick Music Corp. of New York announces for organists, now ready for delivery, "Baking a Song Cake" — another slide presentation embracing sure

hits, sure fire!

Jan. 17, 1931 (MPH) LLOYD "WILD OSCAR" HILL, formerly at Loew's Penn in Pittsburgh, is now at the Fox Great Lakes Theatre in Buffalo.

Jan. 17, 1931 (MPH) C. SHARPE MINOR, organist, began an indefinite engagement at Warner's Beacon, New York City on January 16, having come from Nashville's Paramount. Minor is noted as a "trick" organist.

Feb. 21, 1931 (MPH) HERBIE KOCH is at the organ of New Orleans' Saenger Theatre. Rudy Vallee made his New Orleans' debut with an impersonation of Maurice Chevalier.

June 1934 (Syracuse Univ. "Daily Orange") Former silent film organist W. STUART GREEN, took three days off from his summer road gang job to pursue a former calling — playing organ for silent movies. The Avon Theatre manager (where he played in Syracuse three years ago), remembered the SU student when he had a silent film booked, but no one to play the long silent organ. (Wonder if they repaired and retuned the organ. Also, why a silent in 1934?)

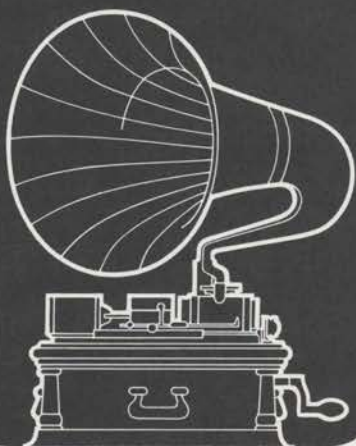
GOLD DUST: 10/27 H.B. HARPER, Liberty & EDWARD C. MAY, State in Rochester; ALBERT F. BROWN alternating at Marbro and Granada in Chicago... 12/27 CARLTON A. JAMES, Syracuse's Keith's Wurlitzer; GEORGE CROOK, Brooklyn Strand's new Kimball; HENRIETTA JORDAN, Chicago's Covent Garden; WESLEY RAY BURROUGHS, Lyndhurst's Kohl organ in Rochester... 3/28 JOHNNIE SHAW at the "Baby Wurlitzer" in Strand Theatre, Auckland, N. Zealand; EARL SEE, Capitol's Wurlitzer in Hquiam, Wash.; GEORGE WERNER, Society Theatre's Kimball in Seattle... 4/28 RICHARD ELLSWORTH, St. Helen's Theatre in Chekalic, Wash.; EDWARD MC CANN, Weir in Aberdeen, Wash... 6/28 ROY DEVANEY, Regent's Wurlitzer in Sydney, Australia... 9/28 EDDIE WEAVER, Loew's Richmond... 3/29 JUDSON W. MATHER using his 2-manual studio organ over KGA, Spokane.

That's it for this time. So long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector



## For The Records



*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.*

**COLUMBUS DISCOVERS HECTOR, Hector Olivera playing the Ohio Theatre Robert Morton. EAR-10254 (stereo). \$6.50 postpaid from HBG Enterprises, 5567 Crawford Drive, Columbus, Ohio 43229.**

Let us start by stating that, in our humble opinion, this is the South American's finest recorded effort to date. One reason is that he's discovered Buddy Cole's style. Cole's distinctive harmony, registration, phrasings, fillers and pedal glissandos permeate several numbers, notably "Secret Love" and "Have You Met Miss Jones," which are uncanny copies of even the registration Cole used when he recorded those numbers. Another reason for the excellence encountered here is the well-maintained 4/20 Morton organ. It provides all the voices and mechanical facilities (touch responsiveness and swell) to enhance the phrasing, nuance and feeling exhibited on this record by Mr. Olivera. From the overall spirit reflected by the varied program, Hector holds the instrument in high regard. Recording engineer Paul Engle confirms this and adds that there are no spliced-together lengths of tape

represented here; Hector does each selection in its entirety. If he is satisfied, fine. If not, he requests a re-take. Much care was taken to obtain the best possible microphone positions, says Engle. Phasing problems were finally overcome on the sixth try in setting up the four microphones. Results are excellent, the best recorded sound yet from the Ohio Theatre.

The selection of tunes is good, with the exception of a couple of over-recorded standards. But in Hector's case, it isn't so much the title as what he does with the music. Here he manages a high interest value throughout. His opener is a pleasant bit of Joplin, "Pineapple Rag." Next it's the two Cole arrangements already noted, then a spectacular "I Love Paris" which can only be described as "wild." It's no longer the bland ballad but more like a trip through the French capital on a fire engine (in fact, the sound of a European emergency vehicle horn is heard briefly). One of the most captivating selections is Debussy's "Arabesque No. 1." Originally a piano piece, Hector carries portions of it on the Morton's percussions with great subtlety and understatement.

Side Two opens with "Tico-Tico." Hector wasn't here for three decades of bombardment by that tune or he would have shown us some pity.



Hector Olivera at the Ohio Theatre Robert Morton. (Paul Engle Photo)

Those of us who suffered through all that Ethel Smith plug-in chop-chop and fanny wiggling can't see the tune as a fit vehicle for pipes. Hector plays it well on sometimes ponderous registration. "People" is another example of a good ballad marred by over-exploitation. To his credit, Hector's very tender version is far different from that of the actress whose screamed "pee-pul" issued from radios for months when her record was released a few years back.

One of the catchiest tunes is a rhythmic "All I Need is You," an exercise in restrained jazz variations and understated registration. There's more than a hint of the Buddy Cole style of arrangement in "Someone to Watch Over Me," which speaks well for the results. The closer is a bolero version of "What Now My Love." Maurice Ravel would approve. Catch the two-octave toe and heel pedal glissando near the end.

Performances are tops all the way and the microphones caught it all flawlessly. Lots of jacket notes. The writing, especially about the music, reflects a good understanding of the material and the instrument. Recommended.

**AMERICA, I LOVE YOU, Lyn Larsen playing the Kimball organ in John Dickinson High School. DTOS-1002 (stereo). \$6.50 postpaid from Robert E. Wilhelm, Jr., 2507 Limestone Rd., Wilmington, Delaware 19808.**

Lyn Larsen seems to be recording a variety of organs these days and this circa 25-ranker is worthy of his prowess.

The organ has been described many times in organ journals. Originally, it was a 3/19 in Philadelphia's Boyd Theatre. It was moved to the school in 1969-70 under the guidance of faculty member Bob Dilworth. Shirley Hannum played the opening concert in February 1970. Plans call for an ultimate 31 ranks, plus a 4-rank stage organ played from a separate console. The sound is typical Kimball — hard, bright and orchestral. Kimball had a different concept of tonal makeup for a theatre organ and softpedaled the Tibia sound so dear to the hearts of TO fans. For example, to get a theatre organ sound from the LA Wiltern

4/37 Kimball, chapter members added a large scale Wurlitzer Tibia, after which everything fell into place. Please forgive the diversion but it's an idea.

With a master of the orchestral organ such as Lyn Larsen, the Tibia is hardly a factor. The organ has what he needs for the program undertaken — plenty of brass. And that brass is a delight.

It's inconceivable that anyone hip to the TO scene wouldn't know all about Lyn Larsen. But for the few neophytes, a few notes. Lyn played his first TO concert on the 2/6 Wicks in the Orange Theatre, Orange, Calif., in 1964. He made rapid strides in the concert field as a protégé of Bob and Ruth Carson after the release of his first Malar label recording. It was played on the 3/26 studio Wurlitzer in the Carson home in Hollywood, as were most of his Malar releases on the Carson's label for the next few years. Lyn has played very successful concerts throughout the country and overseas (two Australian tours) and is now resident organist at the Organ Stop pizzeria in Phoenix, Arizona. So much for history.

Lyn has addressed himself here to the somewhat limited field of patriotic music. The problem: to make the old chestnuts interesting via colorful arrangements. He succeeds admirably. The tunes are "America the Beautiful," "You're a Grand Old Flag," "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "Dixie," "God Bless America," "America I Love You," "Your Land and My Land," "Let There Be Peace," "This is My Country," "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" and "Stars and Stripes Forever." The school band carries the load during the last selection, and with highly professional results.

Lyn uses full combinations effectively for much of the heavy work, the nature of the music being what it is. He inserts an occasional solo voice here and there. He's especially adept in the phrasing and use of the swell pedal. There doesn't seem to be as much registration contrast as in previous records by Lyn. Yet, there are moments, such as the banjo/washboard effect during "Dixie" and the piccolo ornamentation heard during "Grand Old Flag" and "Battle Hymn." The high-pitched frippery is so realistic that he just might have borrowed the piccolo



Lyn Larsen

(Stufoto)

player from the school band.

Lyn certainly overcomes the limitations imposed by the type of selections and whether or not the listener enjoys the overall program depends on his degree of acceptance of that category. Lyn certainly did his part.

The packaging is most attractive. The disc comes in a red, white and blue double envelope which opens to notes about and photos of the school, organ, band, Lyn and the Dickinson Theatre Organ Society. Also included is a stolist. Although it isn't stated, this album is a tribute to the guy who, more than anyone else, made the Dickinson organ project come true — Bob Dilworth. Long may he wave!

**PACK UP YOUR TROUBLES, Douglas Reeve at the Mighty Wurlitzer Organ of the Gaumont, Manchester. Acorn label No. CF 255 (stereo). \$9.25 postpaid (airmail) from Mr. Tom Herd, Amsel Cottage, 19 Coupe Green, Hoghton, Preston, PRS OJR, Lancashire, England. Checks made out to the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust accepted.**

Readers who purchase records from the Lancastrian group will note a price increase. The non-profit club's Export Sales Officer explains it had to be done because they were

simply losing money at the old prices. Sign of the time.

We've had the wrong slant on the music of Douglas Reeve for several years due to a previous record released as *Brighton Brassy*. It was played on what to us sounded like a lacklustre instrument. On checking the jacket notes it turned out to be one of those dual-purpose organs, supposedly as effective for classics as for pops. As recorded for *Brighton Brassy*, it was all strings, flutes and too loud brass. The playing was clean and according to the notation. Not much imagination involved.

Now along comes *Pack Up Your Troubles* and we meet an entirely different Douglas Reeve. All he needed to get through to us was the 4/14 Wurlitzer late of the Manchester Gaumont Theatre. Gone is the reliance on rum-te-tum "quick-steps" and Mr. Reeve "ooh-hoos" the Tibias ballad style to compare with the best artists heard on the two Trust organs. To make sure we were hearing the same organist we dusted off *Brighton Brassy* and listened to a little of it. Same thin registration, but Mr. Reeve's playing sounded more attractive. To prove we were off the beam all along, the record releaser informs us *Brighton Brassy* was a best seller.

If true, the *Pack Up Your Troubles* should do even better if only for the more appropriate (to his style) organ. Also, *Troubles* is beautifully recorded.

Side One is light classics: "March Lorraine," Rossini's "Tancredi Overture," Martin's "Evensong," Gra-



Douglas Reeve

(John D. Sharp Photo)

inger's "Country Gardens," Massenet's "Meditation" (mis-labeled *Thais*, the parent opera) and Monti's "Czardas."

Side Two is standards played in the lighthearted style which appears to be a Reeve trademark: "Ding Dong Samba," "Canadian Capers," a "blues" medley without one real blues tune — "Where the Blue of the Night," "Blue Skies," "My Blue Heaven" and "Goodbye Blues" — but all well worth their grooves, "Elephant's Tango," "Comedian's Gallop" and a medley of eight British Music Hall favorites including old standbys as "Till We Meet Again" and "If You Were the Only Girl in the World." This varied selection is a relief from the too often repeated tunes of temporary interest heard on far too many platters grooved on this side of the pond. As always the playing is clean and accurate but this time there are more ingredients — warmth (possibly due to the instrument) and imagination applied to the selections which invite variations. Registration is tops all the way — lush for ballads and piquant for rhythm tunes. In all, it's a delightful package. Recording is excellent and the organ sounds gorgeous. Jacket notes document the career of Mr. Reeve (it's an illustrious one) and two color photos of the organ are included, one showing the organist fondling a small pipe in a garden of Solo Chamber ranks.

The only sour notes are in the Reeve broadcast theme. On both the *Brighton Brassy* and *Troubles* albums, which must be about 10 years apart, Mr. Reeve includes in his theme, "Pack Up Your Troubles," two ugly smear glissandos. Perhaps someone should inform him that serious pipe organists just don't do that.

## The Classic Corner

**ORGAN ORGY, a Wagner Sound Spectacular. Anthony Newman on the great Aeolian Skinner Organ of St. John the Divine, New York City. Columbia stereo M 33268. Available through music dealers. Price ranges from \$4.95 to \$5.98.**

In the early days of this century there lived a remarkable concert organist named Edwin H. Lemare.

He was known throughout the land because he had developed a technique which could grind a listenable concert from any organ, large or small, which had at least a suitable Diapason chorus. Lemare is remembered today mainly because a theme he composed as "Andantino" was Bowdlerized by Tin Pan Alley into the hit, "Moonlight and Roses," despite Lemare's disapproval. Lemare was strictly a classical organist and his antagonism toward the theatre instrument was often stated in the strongest of terms. Yet there was one type of theatre music which appealed to him — opera. He was fascinated by the dramatic orchestral music which thundered forth from the operas of Richard Wagner. He



Wagner

prepared what are termed "orchestral transcriptions" — the process of extracting from the many-voiced orchestral scores something playable with two hands and two feet which still retains the flavor of the original — of several concert selections from the Wagner operas. More than half a century passed before another organist with Lemare's technique and determination arrived on the scene — Anthony Newman, who is known as a harpsichordist! He has recorded four of the Lemare Wagner transcriptions plus one by a Mr. Parkhurst.

The selections are "Ride of the Valkyries," Overture to *Die Meistersinger*, "Wotan's Farewell" and "Magic Fire Music" (from *Die Walkure*) and "The Entrance of the Gods into Valhalla" (from *Das Rheingold*), all arranged by Lemare,

plus Prelude to *Parsifal*, arranged by H.E. Parkhurst.

Most of the music is exemplary of the almost carnal excitement inherent in witnessing a Wagner opera performance. The transitions from orchestra to organ are most successful. All the essential lines are maintained — but not by Mr. Newman alone. He employed four helpers to clue in musical lines for which he hadn't enough hands and/or feet, and to manipulate stops and swell shutters.

Results from the performance viewpoint are excellent. The full majesty of Wagner's music soars from the 141-rank romantic organ. It isn't all bombast and action adventure; there is the tender mountain top scene where chief god Wotan, incensed over his daughter's dalliance with a mere human male puts her to sleep on a bier surrounded by a ring of fire, to remain so until a hero shall awaken her. It's a real touching scene. Perhaps centuries later professional hero Siegfried shows up and it's the Sleeping Beauty awakening scene all over again. Siegfried's claim to heroism rests partially on his penchant for knocking off fire-breathing dragons, some of which wander onto the stage to challenge Sig. His trusty "Excalibur"-type sword makes short work of one particularly nasty flame thrower named Fafnir, a former human fink whose foul deeds have transformed him into the huge, lumbering reptile. What a field day for the special effects boys!

We relate this bit of plot because some background in the Wagnerian epics help with the understanding and enjoyment of the music. Listened to with no preparation, it's still exotic music but it's better to know the names of the players to fully enjoy the game.

While performance of Mr. Newman and his helpers is most effective on the huge organ, the recording technique leaves something to be desired. Being unfamiliar with the instrument, we sought out one who has played it — Dr. Fred Tulan (remember his concert on that same organ during the New York convention!). Fred fully approves the Newman performance but feels the Columbia engineers have not done right by the organ. True, many of the dramatic volume changes have been dulled by a "limiter" and the

bass "rolloff" (diminution) sometimes makes those 32' pedal stops and resultants seem two octaves higher. Also, some of the solo voices seem to lack contrast with one another. This is typical of what happens when the "majors" attempt to record an organ; their experience with organ recording is so limited at the present time. They should take some miking lessons from those who record for the British Lanchastrian Theatre Organ Trust!

But, despite flaws in the recording techniques, the overall effect is one of magnificence. The magic of Wagner and Mr. Newman's interpretation of the almost forgotten Lemare transcriptions transcends minor complaints. It's truly an "organ orgy," one this reviewer has awaited for over half a century. Best of all it's dramatic theatre music which will appeal to the silent movie cuers among us. Be sure to hear this one.

## THE PLUG-IN CORNER

**'MY WAY,' WITH LOVE.** Don Lee Ellis playing the Hammond Concorde. DLP-1505 stereo. \$5.50 postpaid from Don Lee Ellis Productions, Box EH, Garden Grove, Calif. 92642. Also available as a cassette (\$7.50) and 8-track cartridge (\$10.00).

To our knowledge, this is the organist's fourth recording. All have been good sellers and this one should also do well. We have listed Don Lee's previous records in this col-



Don Lee Ellis

(Chuck Craig Photo)

umn, so it will suffice to say he's a concert artist for Hammond (a recent tour took him to Tokyo). He's appeared for that brand at the California Home Organ Festival. He's an accomplished baritone, singing to his own accompaniments.

The organ selections are "Manhattan," "Penthouse Serenade," "Fly Me to the Moon," "Pearly Shells," Bach's "Air for a G String," "Blue Prelude" and "Lullabye of Birdland." These tunes feature the traditional Hammond sound plus some intriguing percussions e.g. "Pearly Shells" features the Concorde's bell-like Chrysoglott Harp while "G-String" is played on a Harpsichord effect. The Concorde's piano effect is heard during "Prelude." Side Two is all well-done vocals with Concorde accompaniment: "My Way," "I Love You So," "Easy to Love," "Yellow Ribbon," "You Don't Know Me" and "Life is Just a Bowl of Cherries." Small wonder that Don Lee is considered to be one of southern California's top cocktail lounge entertainers. He gets the most from an electronic instrument.

**MARK RENWICK PLAYS RHYTHM AND SCHMALTZ** on the (Gulbransen) "Rialto" theatre organ. MMC-0001 stereo. \$6.00 postpaid from Multi-Media Communications, 267 Mossman Rd., Sudbury, Mass. 01776.

Here's a new approach. While most organists try for a "big theatre" sound Mark Renwick pitches his effort to the majority who get their kicks from playing instruments in their parlors. Therefore, the miking here is designed to show off one of the finest efforts of the electronic builders, the "Rialto," as it might sound in the hearer's living room — no artificial "echo." The results are novel.

Mark Renwick is a youthful Eastern Massachusetts Chapter ATOS member, with a sharp ear for mimicry but also much originality. His instrument is listed as a "custom" job, which perhaps explains the voices we never before heard issue from a "Rialto" — especially a brassy solo reed. Of course, the Rialto's strong point is a Tibia that won't quit, and Mark makes excellent use of it during his carefully-



Mark Renwick. He makes the oldies shine, on the best of a discontinued line of plug-ins.

phrased arrangements of the standards which comprise his program.

Every record has one high point and on this one it's Mark's recreation of Fats Waller's "Sugar." He catches the mood of the circa 1928 recording with great accuracy, even to Waller's jazz variations on the tune. Mark dedicates this recording to his idol, George Wright, and some of George's trademarks show up now and then but not in imitative succession. In fact, he includes a GW original, "Sanctuary." He credits the arrangements of also "Swanee" and "Bugler's Holiday" to others, but the rest are his — "Bidin' My Time" (with interesting ninth chord progressions), a schmaltzy "Laura," "Nightingale," "One Night of Love" (with good trumpet sound), "I Married an Angel" (with brassy accents), "Ivy" (with an Oboe melody line), "She's Not Worth Your Tears" and "Rosetta."

Occasionally, we can state that the auditioning of an electronic effort is pure delight. Mark's *Rhythm and Schmaltz* is such a record.

## A Guest Reviewer

*The following record was reviewed by Carroll F. Harris*

**PIPE DREAMS.** Organist Emil Martin, 4/20 Wurlitzer, Arden Pipes & Pizza, Sacramento, Calif.

Have you ever wondered about how duplication of a album titles is avoided? It comes from a thorough review of Phono-Log and Schwann, but it has been found that some albums don't get into those august

pages. Emil Martin found it out and now his first record bears the same title as a great Lloyd Del Castillo album — *Pipe Dreams!* There is consolation though: Lloyd did his dreaming on a beautiful Robert Morton; Emil did his on an equally beautiful Wurlitzer.

One of the things heard most at the Roaring 20th National was, "It's a shame Martin doesn't have a recording out." Now he does, and frankly it's a dream in spite the fact that three tunes have been overdone on theatre pipe organ records. The redeeming value though, is that two of them have that unique Martin arrangement. The third tune has no musical value, no matter who plays it, in this reviewer's estimation.

Emil Martin is no stranger to the theatre pipes. He was playing them before he could legally join the union. His efforts are from love for the instrument, and it shows in every note. His feel for the classics is second to none and as anyone who has had the pleasure of hearing him in person can attest, he plays every type of music well, with vim, vigor and refreshing vitality. He is not playing notes on a page.

Titles on Emil Martin's *Pipe Dreams* are:

"Granada," "The Entertainer," "Lara's Theme," "Spanish Eyes," a Beatle Medley, Overture from *Orpheus*, *Desert Song*, *Student Prince*, as well as selections from *Tosca* and *Madame Butterfly*, "Summertime in Venice," "Beautiful Blue Danube," "Al Di La," "Chatanooga Choo-Choo," Theme from *2001*, and an all too short excerpt from "Rhapsody in Blue."

The price is \$6.25 postpaid. Address requests to Emil Martin, Pipin Records, 1168 Volz Drive, Sacramento, CA 95822. Make check or money order payable to PIPIN RECORDS. Please include zip code in return addresses. □

## HOW TO CURE AN OVERBEARING CHRYSOGLOTT

by Scott Smith

Several months ago, those of us on the maintenance crew of the 3/11 Barton in the Michigan Theatre in Lansing, Michigan, became increasingly aware that our Chrysoglott-harp (so dubbed by Barton) had become "clanky" and overbearing, as so many of the Deagan harp-equipped Bartons do, and decided to do something about it.

Well, somehow, I was assigned to the project, and through trial and error (mostly error) and several long-winded discussions with many organ experts who threw up their hands, I almost gave up all hope of ever attaining my goal. However, in the midst of this entire project, I met Ben Levy, who had previously met and tackled this very problem on the 3/13 Barton in the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor.

Let me back up here for a few notes of explanation. The action and hammers used by Barton differed slightly from the Wurlitzer type. The latter had what appeared to be oversized piano hammers, almost undaunted with age. The Barton type, on the other hand, had what appeared to be a round rubber core with a felt sock over it, and when new, apparently some kind of rubber band-like material wrapped around the center. In addition to this, the bottom twelve hammers had some kind of tape wrapped directly over the rubber center, with the felt and rubber over it, to soften it further. Over the years, the rubber turned to stone, the rubber bands disintegrated and fell off, the tape turned to dust, and the hard core beat through the felt, until it started to

"clank," and many do. Couple this with the fact that most of the Bartons I've encountered were blessed with a Chrysoglott of rather small dimensions in comparison to say, that of a Wurlitzer. One almost gets a Glockenspiel effect with the worn-out hammers.

A temporary way to correct this is to turn the felt sock around so that the hole is off to the side, and only the felt strikes the bar. However, in a matter of a few months, you are left with the same problem again.

Curing the problem consists of using the silicone rubber used for bathtub caulking, found in virtually any department store. Position the felt (if not already) so that the hole faces the bar it is striking. I used a small amount of the silicone on each hammer; enough to cover part of the surrounding felt, as well as the exposed hardened rubber, which is what you are mainly concerned with covering. This serves two purposes — one, to mellow the harp, and secondly, to hold the "sock" in place when doing its thing.

The result, in our case, made a most desirable change in the harp. We've received many compliments on it. I'm sure that Barton was not the only manufacturer who used this type of small-scale harp, nor the action, but it is representative. If anyone has any questions in this matter, please write to the address below. In fact, I'd be interested in hearing from anyone who tries this method.

Scott Smith  
435 W. Hodge Ave.  
Lansing, Michigan 48910 □

after your turkey . . .

### Central Ohio Regional Convention

COLUMBUS, OHIO

FRIDAY - SATURDAY AND SUNDAY  
NOVEMBER 28, 29 and 30

# THE KURPAN 2/6 PAGE

by Vince Kurpan

Joe and Lanette Kurpan's 2/6 Page theatre organ was built in 1928 in Lima, Ohio, and originally installed in the Pastime Theatre in Berea (Ohio) where it was played until the talkies took over. It sat idle until 1939, when it was sold to a church in North Olmsted. In 1963 it was again in storage (exact dates are not available). In 1964, Mr. George Rogers did a beautiful job of installing this organ in his home in Painesville, Ohio. In April of 1973, Bob Brown took Joe and Lanette and their sons, Russ and Vince, to Painesville to the Roger's home, with the purpose of just tape recording this wonderful sounding instrument. But the Kurpan family fell in love with the Page, and subsequently bought it, hoping it would fit into their basement-less ranch home in Macedonia, Ohio.

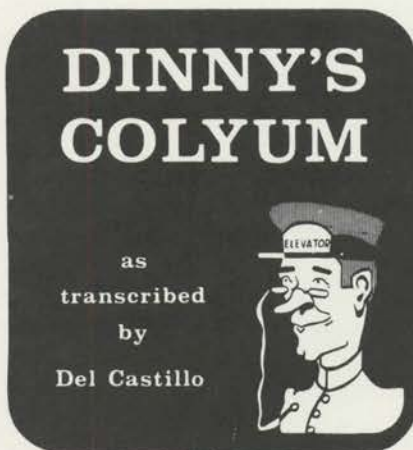
They brought it home in a rental truck on the Saturday before Easter, to the utter amazement of their family, neighbors and friends. Many bets were made by friends, unfamiliar with pipe organ "nuts," that the organ would never fit in the

house." The pipe chamber was to be in one of the bedrooms, with the swell shades opening into the adjacent living room. Joe and the boys took the ceiling out of the bedroom to accommodate the Bourdons. A portion of the attic floor was used for the Xylophone, Glockenspiel and toy counter. The space in this chamber was very limited, but utilized very well.

To help in tuning etc., Joe very cleverly put the entire shades and frame on hinges. The tremos are in the attic as are the wind lines coming from the blower and the relay racks

are in the utility room. The installation was completed in approximately seven months, with the great help of many good friends.

On October 13, 1974, WRTOS held a monthly meeting there to hear George Krejci play this wonderful instrument. George, who plays at the Lamplighter, in Olmsted Falls, and played at the Hawaii Theatre while stationed there in the service, gave us a beautiful concert. In one of his selections, he used a synthetic 32' Flute. Approximately 60 people enjoyed the installation and this "little honey of an instrument." □



take in a movie or two and wait for the Fall activities to start up again. So I wouldn't say the summer was a complete bust. I saw a dandy movie with the pianist Arthur Rubenstein tellin' all about himself and I want to tell you he is quite a pixie for a old boy and he uncorked some mighty good pianner playin. And then I see another movie with a woman conductor named Brico all about how hard it is for a woman to get to be a conductor, and all I can say is that if you can cut the mustard it aint so hard and the woman that can prove it is this Sarah Caldwell who runs the Boston Operry Company so good she jest got a honorary degree from Harvard University to say nuthin of the fact that we got a young pianner player here in L.A. name of Mona Golabek, and if they's anybody any better Id jest like to hear her.

And so far as organ playin goes they was a jim dandy here on electric organs with three organ players name of Pomping Vila and Don Lee Ellis and Skip O'Donnell and every one of them was a crackerjack and I aint talkin about boxes of candy neither. I even got to see Virgil Fox a-jumpin up and down on the organ pedals and that's jest about enough excitement to last through the summer all by itself. And then I got to readin a book by a riter whose name I forget and it was all about Ragtime so you might say my musical education was kind of spread out in all directions.

I dont think a feller ought to stick too close to one thing anyway. Its

I swear I dunno where in tunket the time goes. Maybe its because I aint been doin nuttin to speak of that the summer slid by me so fast. I didn't get to go to the S.F. Convention and I didnt get to go to the Organ Holiday for that there Nostalgick Week End at Dream-Inn-On-The-Beach which sounded like a real gasser, and I didnt get to go to the Home Organists Adventure Midwest in Chicago and I always like adventures. So it seems like I aint done nuthin and aint seen nuthin neither. Heck, I didn't even get to hear Gaylord Carter, who is one of my favorite organ players, cuttin loose on The Hunchback of Noter Dame.

Well, in a way its my own fault. I was a little short of jack this summer, so I sort of decided to jest take it easy and kind of laze thru the summer. So instead I decided I would jest kind of go to a concert if it was clost enough and maybe



Left to right: Russ Kurpan and Dad, Joe.

George Krejci at the Kurpan's 2/6 Page.



pretty good for a feller to be a musician, because he's makin' molla doin somethin he likes and mostly he's a-go in to keep on likin it no matter how old he gets. I ain't no great shakes as a musician, but sence I give up runnin eylvaters I been thankful that I took those pianner lessons last year I rote about, because I can get some fun now at the pianner even if I do have to pick out the tunes with one finger kind of. So I guess the moral is that if you aint fortunate enough to make your livin doin somethin that's fun like playin music, the next best thing is to have a hobby for when you quit work, and I guess for my money bein able to like music would be about up to the top of the list. □



## the letters to the editors

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:

George Thompson  
Editor  
P.O. Box 1314  
Salinas, Calif. 93901

Dear Sir,

This letter is an appeal to all lovers of the theatre organ and the Wur-litzer in particular. Those who know anything of the work of Robert Hope-Jones may well have read about his organ in St. John's Church in Birkenhead, England, or even have seen the famous photograph of the maestro himself sitting at the console in the graveyard playing the

organ inside the church! The instrument was complete with the very first Diaphone and Tibia to be made and originally the organ had second touch and other Hope-Jones' innovations.

The sad thing is that the church was closed some time ago and a recent visit by the technical team of this Trust revealed that not only were broken windows allowing the weather to get at the organ, but that vandals had already been active in the building, fortunately at this stage without severe damage to the organ.

As a result the Trust has bid for this famous instrument and has been told that it can have it for a nominal sum. Therefore the decision has been taken to remove it and place it in storage until it can be re-erected, or at least the Hope-Jones' parts placed on permanent display. This project will place a strain on the finances of the Trust which has to raise all money voluntarily or by selling its records. The Committee appeals to friends on the other side of the Atlantic where the Hope-Jones organ developed into the Wur-litzer, to support us by sending a donation to our Treasurer at 4 High Elm Road, Hale Barns, Altrincham, Cheshire, England. Dollar cheques are acceptable, so, buffs, get that pen out and drop us a few dollars! We shall not waste them we assure you, but we do need your help!

Many thanks from your fellow buffs in England.

Yours Sincerely,  
John Potter,  
Honorary Secretary

Dear Sir,

I have just received the May-June Issue of 'THEATRE ORGAN' and upon reading through the feature — 'For the Records,' a feature I am always anxious to read each time as I have a great interest in collecting theatre organ recordings, I noticed some incorrect information, which I feel for the sake of justice should be corrected for the records. It concerns the review of the record by my late friend Gerald Shaw. Your reviewer in mentioning about Deroy 929. Gerald Shaw at the Odeon Leicester Square' says that the Melotone unit of Compton organs was used as an excuse for an extra manual and that is likened to a Solovox and that the Odeon Compton has a manual devoted en-

tirely to the Melotone. I'm afraid this is quite incorrect and I would be more than grateful for you to point this out to your readers, as this concerns a rather important issue regarding the leading builder of theatre organs here in Europe. The Melotone unit became part of the design of all but three theatre organs delivered between 1935 and 1940. It is the invention of Leslie Bourn the brilliant inventor of the Compton electro-static pipeless organs. No Compton organ has a manual devoted entirely to the Melotone as some of its tone colours are found on the solo manual, tones like the Melotone, Krummhorn, Cor Anglais and Musette. These can be used solo or in any combination of pipe ranks, whilst other stops on the unit provide the Vibraphone, Marimba, Chimes, Carillon and these are found on the accompaniment manual and solo manuals. With the usual couplers it can be used where one likes. In fact they are not designated on the console. Nearly two thirds of the Compton organs were delivered before 1935 it stands to reason that a large proportion of organs were equipped with the unit. The early model was equipped with a "Glide" stop which the organist could use for a most realistic Hawaiian Guitar effect the first time this effect had ever been heard. Some electronic organ firms are quite incorrectly claiming today that this is something new! The volume is controlled by the usual swell pedals. The large horn speakers being sited mostly behind the grille. The Forum cinema Southampton was the first cinema organ installation in the world featuring this wonderful integrated tonal system, which is sorely missed if it should be out of order as apart from missing additional tone colours there are then no Chimes, Vibraphone or Marimba as

# moving?

Send your change of address to . . .

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

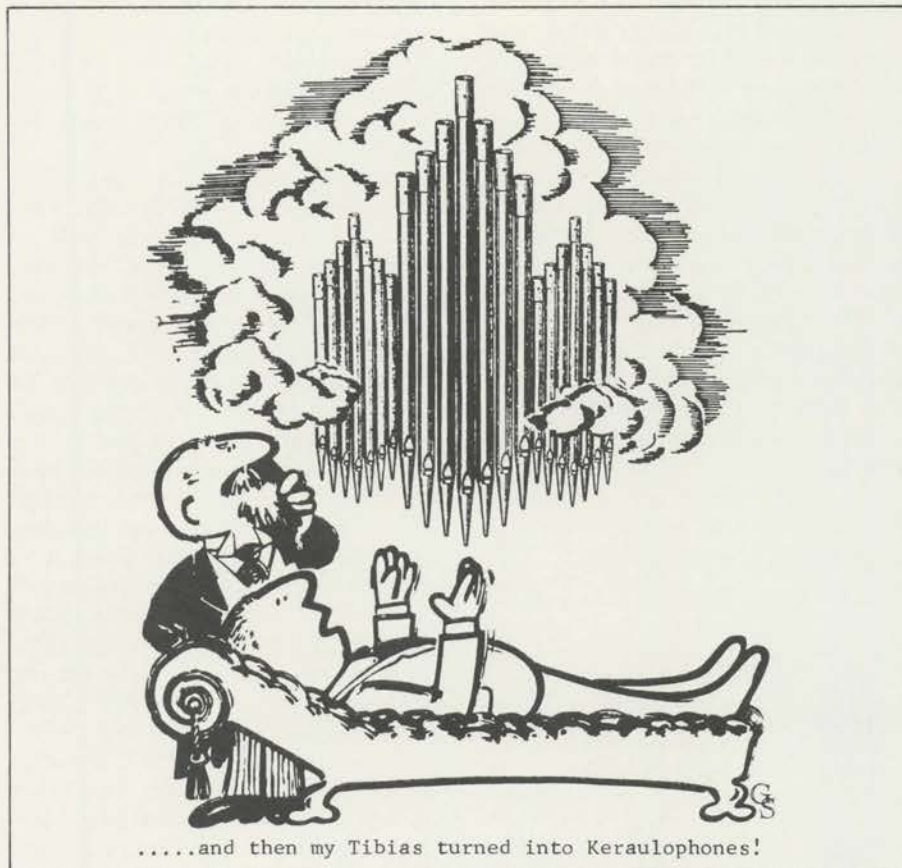
they were not of course duplicated in the chambers. Even some of the massive municipal concert organs were equipped with this wonderful invention. The Shaw LP was made from a live broadcast. It has been my pleasure to escort many of your fellow countrymen over the past several years to see the superb organ at the Odeon Leicester Square, London and they have without exception been most impressed by the Melotone unit which was specifically designed to work in conjunction and voicing with pipework. Entire electrostatic theatre organs played from normal theatre organ consoles were placed in quite a number of cinemas in Great Britain and abroad, the Rank Owned Sao Jorge cinema in Lisbon, Portugal being a famous installation. These appeared from 1935 also and were made into the 1950's and 1960's. Again Compton was the first organ builder to manufacture "Horseshoe" console electric organs 40 years ago. Other patents of John Compton included automatic piston setter devices, sustain stops and of course their second touch and cancel stop tabs. They introduced the first illuminated glass surrounds in 1932 and most organs of course feature this effect. As this is such a way of life over here I felt you should know.

Sincerely,  
 Ian. G. Dalgliesh  
 2, Ann Close  
 Birchington-on-Sea  
 Kent  
 England. CT7 9BZ.

My Dear Mr. Klos,

I realize that I should write a formal and dignified letter to thank you for the great honor bestowed upon me. However, whenever I attempt it, all I come up with is "WOW — Is this *really* for ME???" I've had many surprises in my life, but this tops them all and I am humbly grateful.

I was astounded at the space given to the article Ron Rhode and Karl Warner wrote about me (April 1975 THEATRE ORGAN), as I've never thought of myself as being particularly interesting or important. It's true that I've played many pipe organs in various parts of the country, but that was way back in what is now



The North Texas Chapter has a newsletter called "The Keraulophone." Member George Stucker, who does the printing, created this cartoon for a recent issue.

known as The Good Old Days. I'm happy to announce that I'm back on the pipes, working for that fabulous organ buff, Bill Brown, and it feels just great after more than 30 years on electronics.

Please believe that I fully appreciate this wonderful thing your Society has done for me.

Most sincerely,  
 Betty Gould  
 Phoenix, Arizona

Dear Editor:

From the 'report' I've gotten concerning Johnny Seng's disastrous synthesiser concert during our recent convention in San Francisco, my opinion would be for ATOS to stay away from that type of entertainment.

My chapter, CATOE, uses discretion concerning modern modes of musical shows which should be mostly what our hobby is built on; 'the theatre pipe organ.' Case in point; at a recent CATOE show at Chicago's Patio Theatre, Frank Pellico presented mostly Barton pipes with just a taste of synthesiser.

This did NOT send my fellow pipe

buffs home in a grumbling attitude.

Too bad this happened to such a fine artist as Seng as we CATOE members have missed his fine playing on pipes these past few years.

Let us hope that future theatre organ shows concentrate on pipes.

Sincerely,  
 Harry 'Pipes' Miller

Dear Mr. Klos:

Don't know how to say it! When my sister came into my room and handed me your wonderful, announcement (of Hall of Fame entry), she said: "I will let you read this if you promise not to cry." Which is exactly what I did before I finished reading the first paragraph. It was really timed beautifully, coming when it did. I have been out of circulation since last November when I had an accident, but it looks as though I may go home the middle of August.

When I showed the officers of Bethany Nursing Home the citation, they really were proud and had a meeting and dinner last night to tell everyone how proud they were to have such a celebrity in their midst.



Please extend my thanks to everyone for making me a member of the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame. It has made me the happiest gal in the whole world.

Mildred M. Fitzpatrick  
Gobles, Michigan

Dear Lloyd:

Thank you for the exciting letter, announcing my selection as 1975 Theatre Organist of the Year and election to the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame!

This is a tremendous honor and I am carrying my head very high. Please express my appreciation and gratitude to the members of the selection committee and to the members of the ATOS Board of Directors.

I fully realize how many others are deserving of this honor. That is why my heart is brimming over with pride and humility at being the one selected. I also know how very important the support of the chapters and all the membership of ATOS has been in keeping me going as a theatre organist. We all need all the help we can get. And let me add that it has been great fun all the way.

Again, a BIG THANK YOU to all concerned.

Very sincerely,  
Gaylord B. Carter

Dear George,

Now that this Wurlitzer Kid is in his last days as a resident in Nineveh-on-Hudson, he decided to go after facts, as opposed to fiction, and settle for his own records, once and for all, exactly how many ranks are found in the Radio City Music Hall Wurlitzer, in what chambers and divisions they are located and ask some of the right questions after hearing too many of the wrong ones for years. Armed with a preference for truth over speculation, opinion and low pedigree hogwash, I talked at length with the man who has known intimately well this organ and played it regularly for nearly thirty years, Raymond Bohr. Ray was most generous with his time and took care to give me detailed information. Given all the misinformation and assorted pontifications of self-appointed authorities who never do their homework, perhaps you may wish to share this with your readers:

What about those "tone shoots" which carry the chamber sounds

to the audience area? Add such to the lore of mythology; there *are* none. What about the number of pistons under each manual, fifteen, "of course?" Not so; there are *ten* under each manual and *above* the top manual (Solo) there are *ten general* pistons.

Number of ranks by chamber:

Great, 22 ranks  
Orchestral, 23 ranks  
Solo 1, 8 ranks  
Solo 2, 5 ranks

By either the Old Math or the New, the total is *fifty-eight*. It has not been otherwise for forty-three years as to the largest of all the Wurlitzers. As ever, lots of good wishes to you and all who share love of Hope-Jones' miracle.

Billy Nalle  
New York

Dear Sir(s):

For fifteen years or so now, I've been organist for several skating clubs in Eastern Mass. At present, the Wal-Lex in Waltham, a roller rink, and The Skating Club of Boston, an ice rink. I've always been interested in the theatre organ, but it was only recently that I became personally aware of the fantastic capabilities of the wonderful instrument, for entertainment and appreciation.

Now, my education regarding this beautiful instrument is somewhat limited (historywise that is) at present; but this I have heard, and question:

Although the theatre, or cinema organ, had its origin and destiny mated with the movie palaces, and much later in the pizza palaces, I am wondering, as the song goes, "Is That All There Is?." What about skating rinks (indoors that-is).

Don't they fit into the picture at all? After all, the organ is THE music of the rink! To my knowledge, there is only one rink using the theatre organ; which is the Hub Rink in Chicago; where Leon Berry is organist!

Aren't there any others, or is "The Skater's Waltz" destined to be pumped out of a speaker box for eternity!

Bob Wambolt,  
Organist  
Boston, Mass.

Editors Note:

There are several others, see "Pipe Piper" listing April issue. □

## Frank Olsen Thrills Pittsburgh

by Fran Verri

The night of April 22 was indeed special for the Pittsburgh Area Theatre Organ Society. Special, because of one man, Frank Olsen. Frank re-awakened something that has been asleep for too many years — the art of theatre organ styling. Not since the 1930's when Pittsburgh theatres boasted such stars as \*Irma Gut-therl, Johnny Mitchell and Dick Leibert, have they heard such true theatre organ technique.

This was the second concert held by PATOS in the South Hills Theatre, but was in fact a first since this was the first attempt by Program Chairman Shirley Flowers to bring in an artist not only from out of town but out of the country as well. When you've never done this kind of thing before you may be apprehensive and ask yourself such questions as, can we get people to come out, and if we do will they appreciate the artist etc.? But at 8 p.m. all the fears melted away, the program chairman became a part of the audience and Master of Ceremonies Randy Lafferty introduced our artist.

Mr. Olsen literally took complete command of the Mighty Wurlitzer, an instrument he is quite familiar



with, and also Dr. Jay Smith's "Little Magic Box," an independent coupling device, which he handled with equal mastery.

His repertoire proved to be one of the most varied programs ever heard in this town, ranging from a typically British classic "A Sailors Life," with its spine tingling wind and thunder effects, to a lovely Scottish medley, to the finest classical and light classic works by Lehar, Mozart, Chopin and others.

It would be impossible to review all the selections Frank Olsen played, but some of them, I feel, deserve special mention, such as the delightful Jesse Crawford tune "What Are You Waiting For Mary," as transcribed for Mr. Olsen by Mr. Harvey Elsaesser, and the George Wright classic "Dancing Tambourine," which has become somewhat of a local favorite.

But a real kick in the memory bank was Frank's good old fashioned rendition of George M. Cohan's "I'm A Yankee Doodle Dandy," which is a real sentimental favorite in Pittsburgh as it was the theme song of one of our own theatre organists, the late Johnny Mitchell.

I would be remiss to end this review without giving credit to another artist, our stage manager Bob Vuckich. His tasteful stage lighting effects made this show as enjoyable to the eyes as Frank made it for the ears.

Frank Olsen proved to be a master of the medley as he inspired one and all to sing along to the great standards, and it was quite a thrill to hear a theatre full of people singing again, for as Frank put it "When you sing you're happy," and happy they were.

After the finale the audience wanted more and Frank Olsen obliged with another great medley which began with "Nola," and ended with the appropriate "Auld Lang Syne," which was followed by a well-earned standing ovation.

PATOS now extends a real heartfelt thank you to a truly great artist, Frank Olsen, and anxiously awaits his return in the future.

*\*Irma Guthoerl Kilroy, Pittsburgh's theatre organ star of the Enright and Loew's Penn theatres, is still very active in the area as a church organist and a playing member of PATOS.* □



## ALABAMA

The chapter featured Lillian Truss as our guest artist in May. Mrs. Truss was the first picture organist for the Alabama Theatre, and in the years that have passed, obviously hasn't forgotten a note, or a stop, on our 4/20 Wurlitzer. To have heard her concert was a lesson in being young at heart, for her program spanned the music of more than sixty years, all the way from the gay nineties up to the seventies, including the music of Cowan, Romberg, Berlin and Gershwin.

In June we were treated to a program by John Anthony Scott, a West



John Anthony Scott played in June, providing a virtual storehouse of theatre and classical talent.



Lillian Truss, first organist of Alabama Theatre, played in May.



Bernard Franklin, Alabama house organist rides the Wurlitzer up for a beautiful program in August.



Richard Sandefur plays his musical envelope, accompanied by the organ.

Coast organist who showed us a versatility of theatre organ playing like we have never heard before. He did a musical set in the Virgil Fox tradition, complete with black cape. Of particular interest was Mr. Scott's authentic selection of stops for the difficult "Spinning Song," by Marcel Dupree, one of two contemporary French organ works on the program.

Open console was our treat in July, augmented with some special music from Alleen Cole on our newly operational piano. Bernard Franklin, Alabama Theatre house organist, gave our chapter a long anticipated concert in August. He accompanied Richard Sandefur, who did a great vaudeville stand up comic routine. To our surprise we learned that Richard had played vaudeville houses at one time, which explains his habitual good-natured wise cracks. Bernard's concert was a great treat, as so many of our concerts have been. Our hats are off to Program Chairman Alleen Cole.

JAY MITCHELL

## CENTRAL INDIANA

Theme song for our July meeting — "Rain." Whenever an ATOS meeting is scheduled at the home of the Rochs, you can count on rain. This year was no exception. Just slightly damp this year as compared with a "cloud burst" last year, and considerably cooler than is usual for July, but nevertheless, 50 members and guests gathered for another delightful meeting hosted by Dave and Betty Roch. One exception — there was no interest in the swimming pool this year — it was a bit too cool.

Some 22 members from CIC-ATOS attended the National Convention in San Francisco. This is quite a record, for us.

Several interesting announcements were made of coming events. A joint meeting with the American Guild of Organists is being planned for November. More details will come later from Lewis Lyon, Indianapolis Chapter AGO, who is planning this program. It will feature John Landon who will present his Jesse Crawford program of slides and biography.

Dennis James, a former member of CIC-ATOS and now Staff Organist at the Ohio Theatre in Columbus, accompanied a silent film at the Indiana University Auditorium, Bloomington, on July 30. Also, recently WIAN-FM, Indianapolis, carried an hour-long program of organ music featuring Dennis.

After the business meeting, Tom Ferree talked about the Roch's 2/5 Geneva which was removed from the Ritz Theatre in Indianapolis. It is somewhat unusual in that there are two 16' ranks, not common on a 5 ranker. Some additions of ranks from the Rivoli Theatre organ have been added — an English Post Horn and Tibia — in order to maintain overtones as a theatre organ should have and to add brilliance. Tom played a short and colorful program displaying the Geneva at its best.

Open console time and refreshments prepared and served by our

social co-chairmen, Mary Drake and Peg Roberts, rounded out a most interesting and entertaining afternoon. Our thanks as always to the Rochs for sharing their pipe organ and their lovely home with us.

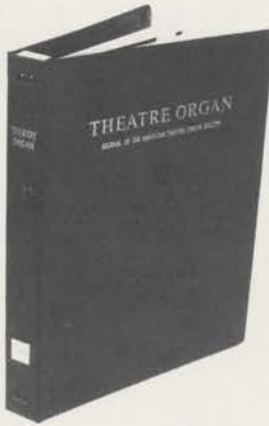
Honor and recognition have come to another of our members. We always like to share our good fortune with others. Recently at the 43rd annual Matrix Table, sponsored by the Indianapolis Professional Chapter of Women in Communications, Mrs. Stephen Rechteris (Virginia Byrd) was the honor winner for "sharing her talents on a voluntary basis with a variety of cultural and civic organizations for more than a quarter of a century. Much of the cultural development within Indianapolis is a result of the many different projects she has assisted over the years."

Virginia has had a successful musical career in radio, television and has accompanied such notables as Marian Anderson and Joan Fontaine. Through her service on the Board of Directors of the Civic Theatre, North Symphony Group, Festival of Arts, Festival Music Society, Matinee Musicale and Harmonie Club, as well as through active participation in United Fund, Red Cross, Goodwill and Footlighters. We are proud of Virginia's willingness to share her talent for the many causes in which she believes. Congratulations.

Virginia is organist, pianist and

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composer and at our June meeting presented a magnificent program on Frank May's 4/19 Barton at Kokomo. She is also musical director of WISH-TV in Indianapolis and has a sign-off program, *Meditation*, following the late movie.

The lovely home of Mike and Lil Trinkle, high on a hill overlooking a lake nestled in the beautiful hills of southern Indiana, was the scene of an all-day meeting of CIC-ATOS, August 10.

Approximately 70 members and guests from all over central and north central Indiana, and as far away as Joliet, Illinois, attended the meeting.

The Trinkles have a very nice pipe organ installation, a 2/7 Wurlitzer, a Gulbransen electronic and two pianos (a player and a conventional upright), so there was a variety of instruments for fun, song and music for everyone to enjoy.

Our sincere thanks to Mike and Lil Trinkle for having us in their beautiful home and to their co-hosts, Dottie and Clint Dempster; Noble, Elsie and Smitty Smith; and Jim Dome, his mother, Margaret, and his sister Pat Elliott, who all prepared the food for this scrumptious meeting.

Good organ music and good food! What a combination — and one you can't set on pistons!

We are always delighted when we learn of another pipe organ being played in a theatre, where the general public may be exposed to this instrument of instruments. We were especially pleased when Carlton Smith announced that the 3-manual Page in the Paramount Theatre in Anderson (Indiana) is being played for intermissions on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays each week. Another is being preserved and used in the Central Indiana area.

RUTH D. WARD

## CENTRAL OHIO

Our meeting in June, at the home of Betty and Charles Prior featured the Harold Lloyd silent movie *Haunted Spooks*. Tom Hamilton was outstanding as accompanist.

Dennis and Heidi James put in a quick appearance, between shows at the Ohio Theatre, to show us the slides of their trip to England, with commentary on organs seen and played. Their trip enhances ones

hopes of joining the Organ Safari to England and France in 1976.

*Editor's Note: See pages 11 and 29 for more about England.*

The concert of the evening was presented by Charles Prior, Jr. at his Conn 651. Charles, with assistance from his organ instructor, Lowell Enoch, prepared a score for organ using some piano music of Mendelssohn and Mary Rodgers (daughter of Richard Rodgers) for *Midsummer Night's Dream* and accompanied the presentation at the Ohio State Fairgrounds. Quite an undertaking for a 14-year old. Charles was hired as a staff organist for the State Fair, playing for style shows, awards and similar Fair activities.

Our members were invited to join the Miami River Valley Chapter for a meeting in the Dayton area with a return visit to Fred Riegers. The writer was leaving her heart in in San Francisco on July 20, but members attending report having enjoyed the day and thank Miami River Valley Chapter for the invitation.

Dennis James reports the tape program he recently made with Ohio State University radio station, featuring the Ohio Theatre and Robert Morton organ, is going into second level distribution with in the public radio stations around the country, giving our cause additional exposure. Hope some of you catch the program.

For those who were unable to attend the '75 Convention in San Francisco we are happy to report the

sound/film strip showing and describing the events planned for our 1975 Regional Convention, November 28, 29 and 30, in Columbus, was received with great interest. Numerous comments were heard about the beauty of the Ohio Theatre and the star-studded events planned. Plan to spend Thanksgiving weekend at the Ohio Theatre — you will be forever thankful you did!

IRENE BLEGEN

## CHICAGO AREA

July was an exciting month for the many CATOE members who attended the "Roaring Twentieth" Convention in San Francisco. The CATOE charter flight, arranged by our new chapter treasurer, Ione Tedei, was an unqualified success. Every one of the United DC-8's 149 seats was filled on the trip to San Francisco with several chapters represented. We apparently left more than a heart in San Francisco, though, because there was one empty seat on the return flight! A special treat for those aboard both flights was theatre pipe organ music played over the plane's music system and heard through stereo headphones at each seat. CATOE member and THEATRE ORGAN Advertising Manager Len Clarke spent many hours putting the program together from his vast collection.

After returning from the convention it was time for CATOE's Board of Directors to get right into the planning of the Fall's activities.



Convention charter flight cleared for takeoff! CATOE's lone Tedei gets a flying lesson.

(Carl Anderson Photo)

Of course the biggest event of the year is to be the reopening of the Chicago Theatre's magnificent 4/29 Wurlitzer. Hopefully, by the time you read this, it will be history, and will be fresh in the memory of some 4000 people we are hoping will fill the theatre. Lyn Larsen has been selected as the featured artist, with well known Chicago organist Hal Pearl doing a sing-along. This all takes place on October 2, and we'll have a complete report in the December issue of THEATRE ORGAN.

We are hoping to get started soon on the necessary work on CATOE's own 3/10 Wurlitzer, which will be installed in the auditorium of the brand new Maine Township North High School in Des Plaines. Our goal is to have it fully installed and playing for the 1977 Convention. Although the convention is nearly two years away, planning has begun. Those of us who were in San Francisco can truly appreciate the tremendous amount of coordination, planning and courage it takes to host a National Convention.

CATOE's organists have been busy this summer. Walt Strony has been in Okinawa since early July, with the Tommy Bartlett Water Show at EXPO 75. He's playing Yamaha's new GX-1 synthesizer. Dennis Minear did a very successful concert on the Detroit Theater Organ Club 4/34 Wurlitzer, playing all those old "trashy" songs we enthusiasts love to hear. Tom Gnaster reports he's playing at the Cedar Rapids Paramount, and spent two weeks at Cicero's Pizza Parlors in Minneapolis and St. Paul. He'll also present a concert during the Columbus Regional Convention in November, and at the Los Angeles Wiltern after that.

JIM TAGGART

### CONNECTICUT VALLEY

Our August meeting this year was held in Goshen, Ct., at member John Starr's Crystal Palace, described in this space previously. Complete with 3-manual Wurlitzer, seating for about 100, and kitchenette facilities, the Palace is an excellent meeting place.

In accordance with our usual format, open console time was 3 to 5 p.m., mealtime 5 to 7:30, business 7:30 to 8:30 and music from the

close of business until the close of the evening.

The evening's organ music was presented by students from the chapter's 1975 scholarship competition. A nice program of mostly popular tunes maintained a festive spirit.

The program for our Fall Mini-Convention, October 11-13 is now slated to include outstanding performing artists Ashley Miller, Lowell Ayars, and Lyn Larsen — impressive!

### DELAWARE VALLEY

Another theatre organ goes back where it belongs — in a theatre! Where? In the King Theatre, Gloucester City, New Jersey. On Sunday, June 15, 1975, the King Wurlitzer (2/7) was officially heard for the first time in a program for the members of the Delaware Valley Theatre Organ Society. There were several surprise cameo artists with a silent flick and then open console for anyone who wished to play.

Woody Flowers and José Fernandez played as cameo artists and Paul Loomis accompanied a silent flick *Day Dreams*. This film was pure "corn ball." Of the early movies, what else can be said but that it was an early movie, with none other than Charles Laughton and Elsa Lanchester. There was a story line of sorts: from rags to riches; and the moral, if it could be called a moral, was, "if you want to get ahead in this world, get a job carrying boxes."

The organ, originally from the Bryn Mawr Theatre in Chicago, Illinois, was purchased two years ago by four members of the Delaware Valley Theatre Organ Society: Bob Dilworth, Mary Bowles, Betty Kouba, and King Theatre owner, John Panchuk. Bob Dilworth and friends moved the organ from the previous owner's home near Ithaca, New York, to the King Theatre. Then the Emola Organ Company of Binghamton, New York (Al Emola, Paul Loomis, and help from Andy Jarosik) spent three weeks at the theatre doing the ground work in the main chamber — installing chests, reservoirs, wiring, etc. When they left, Jim Carter headed up the installation with help from Woody Flowers, Marshall Ladd, Martin Young, Wally

Smith, and Joseph James. After Jim Carter's untimely death, Woody Flowers took charge with the able assistance of Tim Timanus and John Zander. Bob Lent was appointed restoration consultant, trouble shooter, voicer and tuner. John Panchuk continues work on the organ as various problems arise. Mary Bowles releathered numerous primaries and secondaries (not again!) and rode herd on everyone involved.

This organ gives pure, sweet sounds that only a Wurlitzer can produce. It was an enjoyable afternoon and thanks again to those responsible for presenting this organ and program.

It was one of those beautiful August afternoons, the kind of sunny, pleasant day when it's such a relief to get away and out into the hinder part of civilization with lots of friendly people included in the atmosphere.

About 80 people attended the annual picnic of TOSDV, August 3. Again the home of Skip and Mary Bowles on the shores of beautiful Lost Lake, Marlton, New Jersey, provided a setting for this gala event.

Organists, too numerous to mention, took the opportunity to play the Bowles Allen theatre organ and grand piano, together and separately, while others enjoyed the bathing, beverages, food and conversation.

Many thanks to Skip and Mary Bowles for their wonderful hospitality again this year, and for making this annual event such a success.

The Convention Committee, under Chuck Schrader as chairman, is busy planning for the ATOS National Convention to be hosted by the Delaware Valley Chapter. The place: Cherry Hill Inn, Cherry Hill, New Jersey. The dates: July 16-22, 1976. A number of organists have already been engaged and organs in the greater Philadelphia area, including the states of Delaware and New Jersey, have been contracted for. We will keep you posted on how plans are shaping up.

FRANK A. MADER

### EASTERN MASS.

The summer months brought inactivity in theatre organ circles except for a field trip Aug. 10 to the



Bill and Marianne McKissock with 4/32 pipe organ.



The Trenton War Memorial crew consisted of Bill and Marianne McKissock, Harry and Tiera Ray, Rowe Beal, Jay Taylor, Bob Harris and Fred LeCompt.

Bjarebys' home. Some 60 members and friends descended upon this small Ipswich home that hot Sunday afternoon to play and to hear Tim's 2/8 Robert Morton. It never sounded better. At break time a popular topic of conversation was the recent national convention.

The Somerville Baptist Church Wurlitzer is no more. In late July a devastating fire destroyed the church including its 3/10 Wurlitzer theatre organ, which was on loan to the church from John Phipps. John, in keeping with oft repeated credo, "Forever Mighty Wurlitzer," has already set about the task of resurrecting from the ashes a new Wurlitzer to be installed in another public place not yet determined.

ERLE RENWICK

## GARDEN STATE

Super Sociability was the theme of the chapter's June "Open House" meeting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bill McKissock.

Luckily the sun shone graciously on the "Casa de musica bella" and more than 80 members filled the home of Marianne and Bill McKissock.

It was a well planned Sunday afternoon and the various events went as smooth as clockwork.

Chairman Irving Light held a short business meeting followed by a brief history and explanation of the organ by Marianne, our charming hostess, who concluded with several selections demonstrating the versatility of this large 32 rank organ.

All afternoon small groups of members were ferried by cars to the famous Trenton War Memorial, where they were guided by Crew Chief Bill McKissock thru the impressive auditorium and the recently filled pipe chamber.

They were able to see at first hand, the enormous workshop where the intricate nervous system of this large organ was being assembled. All were awed by the massive size of the Morton console awaiting paint and manuals.

As the last groups returned from the tour, they found the picnic supper ready and waiting to be enjoyed. All the goodies were shared and good friendships were renewed or begun. As the evening wore on, the members were treated to three short silent films accompanied by Patti Germaine, Jinny Vanore and the final treat of the evening, Ashley Miller.

Sunday, July 27, 1975 was selected for a family picnic. All the members who enjoy picnicking arrived at the lovely home of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Drake, who supplied a delightful cool, shaded picnic area hidden among flowering shrubs and surrounded by a rainbow array of beautiful flowers and plants. Sports equipment was available as well as an H-model Hammond.

Hating to leave such a pleasant spot but lured by theatre pipe organ, the members travelled a short distance to the unusual bicycle shop of the Mahns family at Eatontown. This 7 rank Morton, which is growing to 14 ranks, was on her best behavior and its good, mellow sounds

pleased all. The playing members provided very listenable music while coffee and delicious desserts were served. The meeting ended with a trip through the upstairs, antique bicycle museum with tour-guide Bob Mahns providing many interesting anecdotes.

## LAND OF LINCOLN

Bob and Marcia Tuttle hosted the chapter's annual picnic at their home near Poplar Grove on Sunday August 3rd. The group had not one but two pipe organs for open console time which lasted from about 1:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Located in an addition to their home is a two manual tracker pipe organ complete with exposed pipes that gives the room a cathedral like effect. Bob purchased this organ, a John Brown, from the Belvidere Baptist



Bob Tuttle in mini-theatre.



Organist Dean McNichols (left) and Chapter Chairman Dollinger Haggie during the summer Swap Meet. That sly grin on McNichols face indicates who is getting the best of the deal. (Bob Hill Photo)



George Blackmore waves his straw skimmer after a toe-stompin' series of Dixieland Jazz Favor — oops! — Favourites at the LA Elks Club 4/61 Robert Morton. (Chuck Zimmerman Photo)

Church and assembled it in his home piece by piece over a period of four years.

His latest addition in a granary, converted into a mini-theatre, is a two manual Page theatre organ complete with player action and rolls. This project was completed in record time by Bob with a little help from his friends — fellow LOLTOS members.

With beautiful weather about 50 persons enjoyed an interesting afternoon where a potluck picnic supper was held on their lawn. A business meeting was conducted in the theatre and officers for the coming year were elected with their terms to start immediately to coincide with their season of organ presentations for the general public. The officers elected are: President, Orrill Dunn; Vice-President, Robert Weirick; Secretary, Robert Schmoock; Treasurer, Roger Buck; and Board Members, Robert Tuttle, Duane Austin, Gene Wolfe, Ed Borowicz and John Van Leeuwen. In addition Bob Coe was appointed to serve as technical advisor.

## LOS ANGELES

Following the ATOS National Convention in San Francisco, famed British Organist George Blackmore performed in concert for the Los Angeles Chapter at the 4/61 Robert Morton at the Elks Building on the evening of July 23rd. With a repertoire ranging from J.S. Bach to "straw skimmer" Dixieland, George thoroughly demonstrated the artistry which has gained him fame from Australia to England.

Although not an official ATOS function, anything happening at Joe Koons Motorcycle Shop becomes quasi-official. And especially when the Dean of Local Theatre Organists, Gaylord Carter is involved. It was Gaylord's first 70th birthday, and, aided and abetted by local buff Harold Bradley and by Gaylord's performance on the 3/34 mostly Wurlitzer, it is certain to be remembered.

Not to be upstaged by pure performers, the mechanics and tinkers of the clan gathered about for the first Annual ATOS-LA Swap Meet in the parking lot of the Colton Piano and Organ Company on Sunday afternoon, August 10th. Like Oriental Rug Peddlers, they set up

their booths and proceeded to beg and barter swell shades, consoles, blowers, sheet music, albums and even plug-in parts for the rest of the afternoon. Among the most active in this endeavor was Malin Dollinger, MD., local chairman, who has succumbed to the temptation and is installing a mostly Wurlitzer in his hill-top home overlooking the Pacific in Palos Verdes Estates.

Next concert, Dwight Beacham on the 3/15 Wurlitzer at the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium on Sunday evening, September 21st.

BOB HILL

## MOTOR CITY

Our Second Sunday program at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor on July 13 featured member Jim Ford at the 3/13 Barton in a program of Leroy Anderson music. Muskegon member Amy Reimer travelled to Ann Arbor to be guest artist for the August 10 Second Sunday. Now a high school senior, Amy is already one of our favorite chapter artists.

Grace Joslin, a piano and organ teacher, and chapter member, made her debut at the Royal Oak Theatre at our Fourth Sunday program there on July 27. Her program of semi-classics and old-standards was delightful. Our Fourth Sunday event at the Royal Oak on August 24 brought member Ken Saliba to the console of the 3/13 Barton. A comparative new-comer to theatre pipe organ, Ken is an accomplished supper club organist and is associated with Musical Heritage in Royal Oak. Open console follows



Gaylord Carter (left) and Harold Bradley with Gaylord's birthday cake. It was Gaylord's first 70th birthday. (Bob Hill Photo)



Between showers at the picnic.

these monthly events at both theatres.

This summer's Roaring Twentieth ATOS Convention in San Francisco seemed to provide a good excuse for an incredible number of members to vacation on the West Coast. There were so many red Motor City badges at the S.F. Hilton, and the various events, that we finally quit counting.

On Wednesday evening, August 6, we enjoyed our second annual moonlight cruise on the chartered excursion steamer *Columbia* on the Detroit River. (Last year's cruise was the much-talked-about Afterglow of the 1974 Noteable Nineteenth ATOS Convention.) Some 435 chapter members and their friends were on board the 73-year-old *Columbia* (capacity: 2500, enough to pay for the ship (and realize a slight profit) and just the right number for everyone to enjoy themselves. In spite of a sudden drop in temperature from an August heat-wave, there was no precipitation, only cool breezes, as members and friends explored the four decks watching the shorelines of Canada and the U.S. glide by on either side.

Open console at the Gulbransen organ (courtesy of Hammell Music in Livonia) on the bar deck was a popular feature of this year's moonlight, as was dancing to music provided by chapter members at the Rodgers organ (courtesy of Musical Heritage in Royal Oak) on the dance deck. Dance organists were: Bob Birnstihl, Gus Borman, Harry Bunnell, John Fischer, Mary Harrison and Gladys Nancarrow. The three-hour cruise came to a regretful close as a happy Conga-line circled around

the dance deck. We'd like to make this an annual affair and you are invited to join us next year.

At the conclusion of our Fourth Sunday program at the Royal Oak on August 24, nearly 100 members headed a few miles north to the home of Mert and Rita Harris, in Troy, for our annual potluck picnic. Despite an early-afternoon downpour, picnickers enjoyed the large buffet table spread in the shelter of the garage. Mert's 3/11 Wurlitzer was going all afternoon long, and it was fun for those lounging in the spacious backyard to guess which member was playing.

Our Hollywood Film Musical Series at the Redford Theatre this summer brought increasing numbers of people and featured a different 1930 Busby Berkeley musical every other weekend. Chapter organists who played the 3/10 Barton during the July and August programs were: Larry Gleason, Herb Head, Jim Boutell, Lance Luce and John Fischer. Audience reaction to both the film series and our management of the Redford is enthusiastic and we plan to extend the series into the fall.

DON LOCKWOOD

## NIAGARA FRONTIER

George Blackmore, England's famous radio and recording artist, stopped off in Buffalo for a few days on his way to the ATOS Convention, and we had the privilege and pleasure of hearing him at the Riviera console. This was after the late show into the wee small hours of July 10.

Ashley Miller made his first appearance at the Riviera on July 23.

Another sold-out concert, and guest reviewer Charles G. Koester writes the following:

*A master of the keyboard graced the Riviera console July 23. Even though it was a typical western New York sultry and hot summer evening, augmented by a somewhat over-worked air conditioning system, the attention never strayed from the artist. Contrasting manual voices and a perfectionist at registration, blended with a style of his own, brought rounds of applause. Not a devotee of 16' stops and shutters wide open, his interpretation of some almost forgotten oldies was a delight to the ear. His arranging is 'top drawer' all the way.*

*It was certainly an evening with music-worth-listening-to. Ashley Miller, we all love you, so please return to us and the Riviera organ again, and soon.*

August 9 the crowd was off to Toronto to the home of Winifree Armistead who graciously offered her residence for our chapter's annual picnic. Our members thank the Armistead's for making their home available for this event.

On August 19 we attended a reception at the Thomas Studio. The occasion: to get acquainted with David Sheppard, a fine young organist from England.

On August 20 David appeared in an interview on TV, where it was brought out that he was in this country on a working vacation, and he teaches religion at home. When he plays theatre organ he does not play religious music. The interview also mentioned that his concert, to be held that evening, would not be classical.

The concert with David at the Riviera console was some program, with seldom-heard numbers from the twenties and thirties, English ragtime and pub tunes cleverly sandwiched in between many numbers that we know as standards. He is a master at the tabs; always changing. At no time was it so loud that it was necessary to turn off your hearing aid.

The silent movie was accompanied by Roy Simon. It was another great night at the Riviera, especially for those that were lucky enough to get seats.

At this time it is in order to thank Laura and Joe Thomas for the use



of their studio for the receptions held for our guest artist each month, the night before the concert. Several of our local organists and many of our non-playing members attend these get-acquainted parties, which usually end up as jam sessions. Thanks again, Laura and Joe.

The Riviera organ is now officially the property of the Niagara Frontier Chapter and a fine working agreement has been finalized with the theatre management to our mutual benefit. If we could do the impossible and increase the seating capacity of the theatre we could do away with standing-room-only and sold-out signs.

When the theatre opened in 1926 the local newspaper stated that this fine small theatre of 1400 capacity would open with Norma Shearer in *Upstage*; *The Mona Lisa*, in technicolor; *Movieland*, an unusual comedy; several acts of vaudeville and Pathe News. The paper also stated that loge seats could be reserved by phone for those who disliked waiting in line.

Those who dislike waiting in line for *our* concerts may always purchase tickets at the box office during intermission for the next concert.

Elwyn Guest, our chapter secretary, having outgrown his spinet, and not having room for a pipe, decided on an Allen theatre organ. Elwyn felt he could make some changes in this Allen, and so he did. When you enter his living room now, the only visual changes is the addition of a stop rail and many more tabs. However, in the adjacent room, you find a floor to ceiling cabinet full of power supplies, rank after rank of generators, voice changers, relays, tape reverbs, and amplifiers, all wired to appropriate speakers. Many in our chapter have had a chance to play and hear this one-of-a-kind electronic.

STEVE CROWLEY

## NORTH TEXAS

Those hot Texas summers kinda slow things down — mostly around 98 to 99 degrees, so we can't say it was real hot. Fortunately the organ installations are in air-conditioned spots. Everything usually goes "real cool" like it did at the August meeting at Dino's Pipes and Pizza. Dale Flannery was hard at it, making the ol' Barton speak beautifully, play-

ing some welcoming music, the early program and the overture to the business meeting.

Chairperson Lorena McKee called the business session to order and several items of interest were covered. Jim Peterson had added some final touches to the Barton and discussed them in detail.

Immediate Past Chairman Earl McDonald followed Jim at the business session with an account of his adventures in getting a local radio station to include a session on Theatre Organ music in its' programming. The station dedicates each Saturday to some specific nostalgia in the music world, and Mac helped them put on a day of theatre organ music which went over so well that the feeling now is "let's do it again." Only problem seems to be in getting the word to everybody when to listen for the organ sessions. Several chapter members loaned discs and tapes of music and artists of the theatre organ era for presentation. Judging from mail and comments, the program went over very well, and we're working on more for the future.

Joe Koski then gave a summary of the National at San Francisco, telling everybody what they missed by not being there. Highlights of the affair were discussed, followed by a question and answer session about the San Francisco affair and what Philadelphia might hold in store. Since chapter member Fred Mitchell had visited Stan Whittington and his wife in England, we gave them some detail on Stan's stint at the Orpheum console.

Following a few more items of business, Lorena turned the meeting over to Program Chairman Jerry Bacon, who introduced our organist for the day, Mr. C.D. Sutherland. He presented a true theatre-organ program, mostly of the theatre organ period, with some of the later pops thrown in. It was a truly enjoyable program.

The "open console" sessions, besides revealing a lot of the capabilities of the local talent, gave us the opportunity to hear Dr. Lawrence Birdsong, a chapter member from Longview. He's a professor of Speech and Drama at East Texas State University, and a real theatre organ buff. He provided Mac with a lot of the true theatre organ music played on the Saturday radio program, and

also demonstrated his own ability quite effectively on the Barton.

Following the meeting, we had some of Dino's good Pizza, followed by the great refreshments the ladies had provided. Thus we had a good meeting, good fellowship, good food with a lot of good theatre organ music thrown in.

Several items of interest for future programs and activities came up during the meeting, indicating that the North Texas Chapter is going ahead with another real active season. See y'all at the October session.

JOE KOSKI

## PUGET SOUND

Chapter events for the past quarter included a June 1 concert at Pizza and Pipes, Seattle, by Dick Schrum, who plays there regularly as relief organist two nights a week. The organ is a late model Wurlitzer Balaban 3, originally installed in the Paramount Theatre, Salem, Mass. Its original 15 ranks have been expanded to include a Moller Post Horn, a pedal string, and grand piano. Dick and the organ are well acquainted, and together produced an enjoyable program. Pizza and beverages and open console rounded out the activities.

Early summer rewarded us with a visit by Hall of Fame member Fred Feibel. This perfectly delightful gentleman visited the Balcom and Vaughan Pipe Organ Shop, met his first pizza parlor pipe organ (same cast as above) and visited and played superbly our chapter organ at Haller Lake.

Highlight of the summer was attendance at the Roaring Twentieth Convention of almost fifty chapter members.

August third, a potluck dinner and program by Dick Dickerson, who plays regularly at the Grove, took place at Haller Lake, with open console following.

Other news of the summer included both losses and gains. We lost our dear friend and chapter member Dan Adamson, who succumbed to a brain tumor. We also lost the Granada Organ Loft, in which Dan had been much involved as both crew chief and alternate weekend organist for the movies. The early Wurlitzer, originally from the Liberty Theatre in Portland, was re-

turned to its hometown by Dennis Hedburg. The club remains intact while concluding its business affairs, and the theatre is to come down and be replaced by — no, not a parking lot — a post office! Also totally lost, the Yakima Capitol Theatre, through fire. This beautiful gem-like building had been purchased and renovated by the city for a performing arts center, with organ installation contemplated.

Our gains are quite exciting: two new restaurants featuring pipe organ. The first, opening Aug. 22 in Tacoma (19th and Mildred) is related to Bill and Colleen Breuer's Pizza and Pipes, and bears that name. Its owners are Margaret and Dick Daubert (Bill's sister). The Wurlitzer, another Balaban 3, was originally installed in the (Fort Wayne) Indiana Paramount, and is just one month younger than its sister at Pizza and Pipes, Seattle. It has been augmented with a Shoppe Post Horn, and Hope-Jones Austin Pedal Diaphonic Bombarde, and upright piano. Decor is discreetly showy and rather elegant. The chambers are one huge cage of glass, visible from street and interior. Pizza, salad, sandwiches and beverages are offered.

The second, with an opening date in September, is the Pipe Dream of Bob Koons, owner of Big Bob's Pizza in Federal Way. The Burien Theatre has been modified to several terraced levels for seating, the stage area being reserved for two huge glass-fronted chambers which will hold 38 ranks. These will come from the Seattle Coliseum Wurlitzer and Tacoma Rialto Wurlitzer. Both organs have experienced multiple changes in their journeys from theatre to restaurant. The Coliseum console, rebuilt, will be used. There will be an echo organ of four ranks in the rear. Decor promises to be magnificent and showy; food will include pizza and a selection of Italian style dishes. Every effort has been made to capitalize on the visual effect of the theatre organ, and this, together with the sound, has served to acquaint countless thousands of people, especially young children, with the theatre organ as it is presented in the typical pizza restaurant.

The Paramount Theatre, which houses Seattle's last remaining pipe organ in its original theatre setting, has been placed on both State and National Historic Register. So we dare hope.

GENNY WHITTING

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN

The annual picnic this summer was held high in the Colorado Rockies on August 17 at the mountain home of Kenneth and Evelyn Tillotson in Cripple Creek, Colorado. This town, while not a ghost town, has dwindled to a population of about 400 from its mining-day peak, in the early 1900's, of over 30,000, when it was known as the World's Greatest Gold Camp. Its elevation is 9500 feet above sea level near the southwest slopes of Pikes Peak. We believe that this year's event might set an all-time high altitude record for an ATOS picnic held at this near 10,000 ft. elevation.

Some members and their families drove the 100 miles from Denver during the morning in order to visit the numerous antique shops, the mining museum, ride the narrow-gauge steam railroad, take the trip down into the 1000-foot deep gold mine, and visit other attractions.

The picnic was held on the landscaped rear lawn of the Tillotson vacation home. Open console was held in the living room of their 80-year-old home on the antique reed organ which was made in England and dates back at least 115 years.



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## SAN DIEGO

Imagine a music store with a real theatre in which to display theatre organs and pianos! Well, its name is Southland Music Center and owners Tommy Stark and Jim Hansen hosted the August meeting of the San Diego Chapter for a sing-along and silent movie. Hard working Jim was out delivering a new Rodgers

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organ to someone who wanted it in time for Labor Day, (I thought you did that for birthdays!). Tommy began the evening with a flourish and a bow to the front row that was all he could see with the spotlight shining in his eyes. Even though the group kept assembling as he played he kept referring to his five-member fan club in the front row. When we got to the songs and a mighty chorus of voices broke forth he apologized and said, "I guess there must be more of you out there."

Tommy's numbers included many favorites such as the "Twelfth Street Rag," "I'm Confessin'," "Besa Me, Mucho," etc. Swinging into the song slides, a grand collection of old time announcement slides like "Ladies will please remove their hats," "No Dogs Allowed," "Don't spit on the floor: Remember the Johnstown Flood." were interspersed with the community sing.

Business of the evening was the report of the nominating committee chaired by Lois Segur. She announced the successful filling of the official slate of officers for the coming year: chair, Vern Bickel; vice-chairman, Ray Krebs; secretary, Marjorie Greer; and treasurer, Jan White. Elections will be held at the next meeting when we will also ac-

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cept nominations from the floor. Down to the highlight of the evening for the movie fans . . . A Laurel and Hardy comedy made in 1928, the last year of the silent screen. The title was *Should Married Men Go Home*, and began with the riddle, How do you keep a married

man at home? . . . Break both his legs!! From that beginning things could only get better. Who dreamed up the comic situations, Hal Roach or Stan Laurel, may not be known, but we never seem to tire of watching their inventions. Oops . . . I almost forgot to give Tommy credit for the music that accompanied the show. It is true that you forget all about the organist when he does a grand job. No wonder the talkies were so fatal to the breed . . . no one could remember how necessary they were to the fun.

At the end of the movie several members of the group, notably Lois and Vern, mentioned what a grand time they had at the convention in San Francisco and had high praise for the sponsoring chapter and all of the hard working members who were responsible for the meeting. What more can you say when the convention has been so wonderful?

Not to be totally unmindful of the local members who played for us at the end of the meeting during open console time: Chris Gorsuch started the ball rolling on the Rodgers Marquee followed by Bob Brooks, Charlie Porter, and Ray Krebs.

Not being sated with music and getting thirstier by the minute, the

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group adjourned to Organ Power Pizza #1 and continued the evening with featured organist Cheryl Creel at the 3/13 Wurlitzer. Cheryl had not only the local ATOS'ers but also her music students acting as an active fan club. As the concert went on, Tommy Stark played a duet at the piano with Cheryl at the organ. After that, Cheryl switched to the piano and was joined by Wayne Seppela at the console for a very nice arrangement of the "Moonlight Sonata." What a grand evening!

Remember to save Monday, October 27, for the next meeting at the soon to be opened Organ Power #2 and the grand Travelling Moller organ. If the music is half as impressive as looking at the *five* manuals on the console it should be a memorable evening. Crew chief Gene Ginder is leading his crew of elves to greater glories. A sneak tour with crew member Wendell Shoberg showed me why it had to be elves, no one bigger could fit between the miles of wind trunks, supports and wires that make up this fantastic installation. All of the local organists are reading their music for a go at the organ as soon as it is finished. Should soon be worth a trip to San Diego to see it and hear it!

## SIERRA

The 20th National Convention of the American Theatre Organ Society has come and gone. We, in the chapter, enjoyed having you as our guests on July 18, and sincerely hope you had a good time, as well as enjoying our organs and artists. Some conventioners "wondered" about the nurses in attendance, and there was good reason for them, with normally high, dry Valley temperatures. July 18 we were fortunate and had a high of only 85 degrees, but oh, what happened the following week — 117 degrees and we don't think many of you could have taken the constant changes of temperature from cool buses to hot walks into cool buildings. Well, it is behind us and comes another year.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find an article about a record that many of you who attended the convention wished was available at that time — one by Emil Martin. It is done on the Arden Pizza and Pipes Wurlitzer and it is all Emil Martin.

The chapter is planning many events for the coming year. In September we are back at Grant High School with silent pictures. Emil Martin is playing the moods for Barrymore's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* along with a comedy, a sing-

along as well as pre-show concert. October 19 we get back to Arden Pizza and Pipes with a concert by one of the chapter founders, Clyde Derby; following him in November, the 16th to be exact, will be Bill Langford at the Big Top. December is party time and we return to the Robert Morton at the club's original home in the Sheraton Inn. A change in management has improved the attitude concerning the organ. Ray Anderson has the contract for maintenance and pre-convention work sessions included Dale Mendenhall (in addition to his leadership for the chapter participation in the convention, as well as his Arden Pizza and Pipes maintenance duties). George Cline was also in their company putting the 4/16 back into shape. Work continues apace after the convention.

Come 1976, plans are being made for getting together with NorCal Chapter and the Sacramento Chapter of the AGO for some joint sessions. The chapter organ — The George A. Seaver Memorial — figures prominently in these plans. This instrument was played so ably by Everett Nourse during the convention and he made it sound four times its real size. The instrument is to be featured during the California

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State Fair for solo concerts and as part of the Fair's Golden Bear Playhouse presentation. There are even plans for a few trips this coming year. Death Valley maybe?

Visitors from other chapters are always welcome to Sierra Chapter meetings. Meetings are usually held the third Sunday of each month, at 2 p.m.

You know it might help strangers to know that: The Golden Bear Playhouse is on the grounds of the California State Fair and Exposition, north of the American River; Arden Pizza and Pipes is at 2911 Arden Way in the same general area; and The Big Top Pizza is at Winding Way and Manzanita in Carmichael, also north of the American River.

CARROLL F. HARRIS



Bill Hays and his residence Wurlitzer.

(L. G. Mallett Photo)

## WOLVERINE

Bill and Annette Hays opened up their lovely Rochester home to the 30 or so members and guests on Sunday, August 17. Bill has done an excellent job of installing and maintaining a 3/11 Wurlitzer-composite organ in their home.

The basic organ started out as a 4-rank Marr & Colton and eventually grew to its present size, including parts from Barton, Austin,

Moller and Wurlitzer organs.

From the attendance it appears our chapter socials are getting to be quite a drawing card for some of Detroit's better organists.

Sympathy Dept: In Lansing, Mi., George Gephart's residence 2/7 Kilgen/Bennett has been hit twice in the last four months by some of the worst flooding in that city's history. Fortunately, the damage

was not extensive, and the organ is still going strong. Also, that city is losing some of its best residents and organs — Chairman Lawrie Mallett and family are moving to Detroit, along with their 2/8 Wicks/Hybrid.

Many thanks to the Hays family for their fine hospitality for an enjoyable summer Sunday afternoon.

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CHICAGO THEATRE Souvenir Booklet, 20 pages plus covers, 34 illustrations. From: Theatre Historical Society, P.O. Box 101, Notre Dame, Ind. 46556, (\$2 ppd).

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