

THEATRE ORGAN



VOLUME 17, NO. 6

DEC., 1975 — JAN., 1976





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THEATRE ORGAN

Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society

Volume 17, No. 6

Dec. 1975 - Jan. 1976

ATOS National Membership is \$10.00 per calendar year, which includes a subscription to THEATRE ORGAN, the official publication of the American Theatre Organ Society. Single copies \$1.25. Make check or money order payable to ATOS, and mail to P.O. Box 1314, Salinas, California 93901.

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POSTMASTER: Second Class postage paid at Livonia, Michigan. IF UNDELIVERABLE, send form 3579 to ATOS Circulation Department, Box 1314, Salinas, California 93901.

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COVER PHOTO

Interior view of the Fox Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia. See page four for the story about the campaign to save the Fox.

This photo was taken by Henry Groskinsky for *Life* magazine, whom we thank for letting us use it.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Our request for a renewed effort to obtain members has met with success. Our membership now exceeds 5700 and we have two more new chapters since convention time, giving us a total of 52 chapters.

Plans are now being put in final shape for our ATOS Organ Safari to England. Please join us if you possibly can for the experience of your life.

Sincerely,

Season's Greetings

FROM THE ENTIRE THEATRE ORGAN MAGAZINE STAFF

THEATRE ORGAN

ATOS
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SAFE...For a While

by John Clark McCall, Jr.

On January 2, 1975, the Atlanta Fox Theatre, home of the famous 4/42 Moller organ, formally ended its career as a motion picture house. After the 9:25 showing of *The Klansman*, the last movie patrons listened

to a brief narrative from manager Mike Spirtous and took the last public tours to be conducted in the house before the padlocks were placed on the doors.

What was to follow after the mar-

Fox marquee proclaims an optimistic attitude on the theatre's last night of operation as a motion picture house, January 2, 1975.

(Bill Mahan Photo)



STILL THE GREATEST SHOW
ON EARTH
THE FOX THEATRE

quee letters came down is the story of a dedicated group of citizens, allied with all Atlantans, representing Atlanta Landmarks, Inc. — the emerging savior of an extremely important and useful entertainment complex.

Atlanta Landmarks was incorporated in the summer of 1974 through the leadership of Arnall T. "Pat" Connell, ATOS members Joe Patten, Bob Van Camp, and Robert Foreman, Jr.; and others. Connell, a professor of architecture at the Georgia Institute of Technology, was chosen president. The formation of the organization came after an interesting and rapid chain of events: lists of names petitioning to save the Fox began to multiply, and Helen Hayes, Mitzi Gaynor, and Liberace came forth with public pleas to Atlantans for saving the theatre.

Though the Fox was named as the immediate target of the organization's efforts, Atlanta Landmarks was chartered not only to save the Fox, but "to preserve, restore, and maintain landmarks, buildings, and other structures in the city of Atlanta or elsewhere in the State of Georgia which have historical or cultural value."

In early August, 1974, Atlanta Landmarks assisted in securing approximately \$11,000 in state funds to underwrite a feasibility study for the Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Section, on the Fox. The report would be placed in the hands of interested corporate heads and private citizens. On September 4, 1974, the well-known economic consulting firm of Hammer, Siler, George Associates was retained with a projected date of early December, 1974, for completion of the exhaustive report on the Fox's reuse potentials. Joe Tanner, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and ATOS member Joe Patten, chairman of the Fox Theatre Advisory Committee, received the completed 129-page report around December 10.

The report concluded, "The proposed reuse of the Fox Theatre would serve as a hallmark for Atlanta — symbol of Atlanta's recognition of its past to complement its growth and spirit as a national and international city." Within the

report an extensive survey of existing Atlanta auditoria was made, and a detailed proposed "operating model" including financial statistics was graphed — underscoring the need for the Fox and its feasibility for reuse as a live entertainment center. With a background of data from other movie palaces that have been re-adapted as live entertainment centers, the report showed how the Fox's rental revenue would help the theatre to "carry its own weight" even in the initial years of new management.

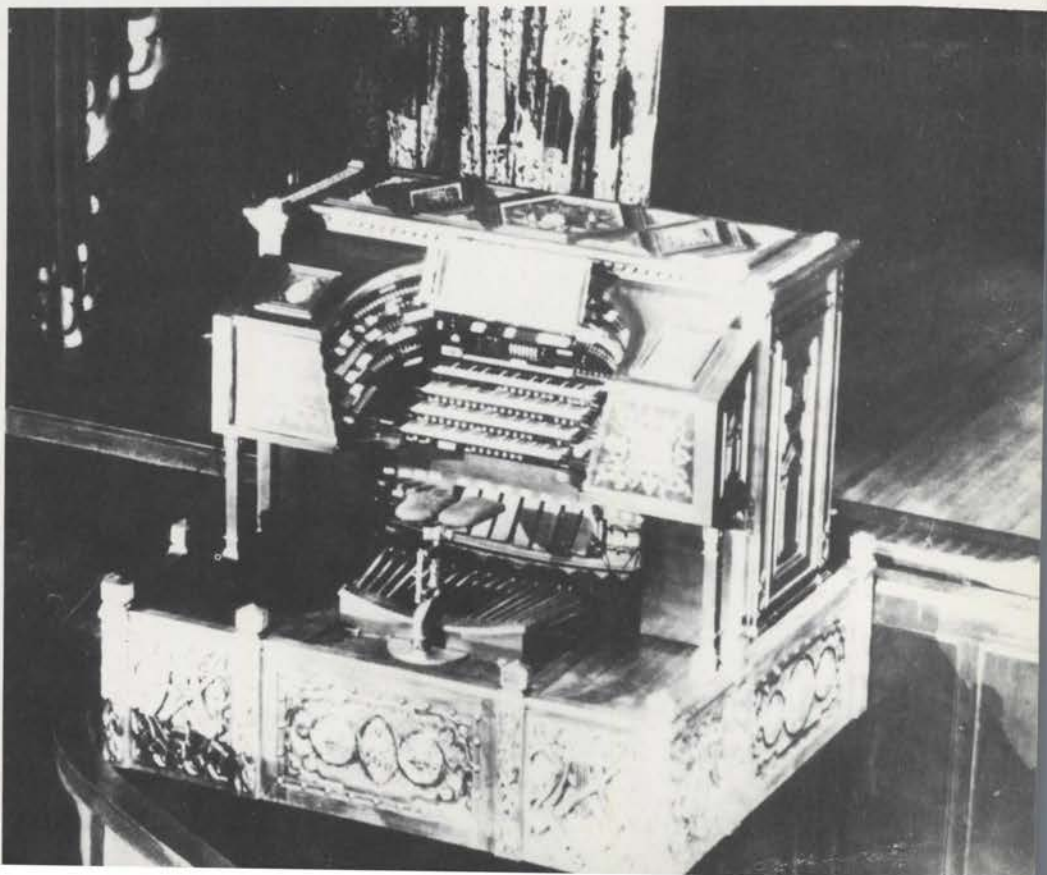
Following Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company's securing an option to buy the Fox and adjoining properties to construct an office complex, Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson and the parties to the option announced an eight-month moratorium, on September 10, 1974. The moratorium was issued to allow time for any interested party who could meet the \$4,250,000 purchase price of the Fox and who had a viable plan of saving it to come forward and take Southern Bell's place in the deal. The Fox owners, Mosque, Inc., and Southern Bell, saw this as a gracious way of disengaging from the situation, and they encouraged the moratorium.

The final arrangements, involving lengthy and complex negotiations, permitted Atlanta Landmarks, Inc., to acquire ownership of the Fox, and Southern Bell to acquire the balance of the land on the block for its future building needs. First, Landmarks persuaded Southern Bell to separate the Fox itself from the larger land package, which included some adjacent parking lots. The price for the Fox alone was \$1,800,000. Then Landmarks, working through a major realty firm, and using money loaned from the five major Atlanta banks, acquired the rest of the land on the "Fox block" which Southern Bell had not itself acquired. Landmarks was then able to swap this land for the Fox. The banks agreed to lend Landmarks the money for these transactions provided that the shareholders of Mosque, Inc., would guarantee the loan. The exchange of property was consummated June 25, 1975, and Landmarks became the new owner of the Fox.

Although newspaper headlines and radio/TV announcements at the time tended to depict the situation as fully resolved, THE FOX IS NOT SAVED YET. It is, however, enjoying a stay of execution as it garners new purpose.

Thus the campaign to "save

Mighty 'Mo.' The 4/42 Moller organ — a musical triumph. Console is viewed here in original 1929 dress and rarely seen ornamental lift apron. (Edgar Orr Photo)



Mecca" has only begun. Should Atlanta Landmarks default on any payment (the principal of the loan is to be paid in June, 1978), the property automatically returns to the previous owners, Mosque, Inc. The first interest payment must be made in June, 1976, and in quarterly installments thereafter. Mosque shareholders have already secured a contract for demolishing the theatre and should Mosque repossess the property, the *Fox will be destroyed*. Additionally, the basic \$1,800,000 purchase price does not include closing expenses, interest on the loan over the three year period, or funds for a systematic renovation/restoration program for the theatre.

To really save the Fox, a total of \$2,400,000 must be raised.* The salvation call falls precisely at the feet of Atlanta's citizens and all concerned ATOS members. Only through contributions (fully tax deductible) will the Fox remain Atlanta's entertainment center, complete with its great Moller organ . . . the true "Mecca."

It is important that ATOS members and Atlanta citizens alike realize the long-range benefits of making a firm commitment to save the Fox. For ATOS, the commitment means the continued preservation of one of the country's finest and most original theatre organ installations extant. For Atlanta, the Fox is even more, and citizens are showing their unwillingness to let the Fox go the way of so many other useful landmarks representing Atlanta's architectural heritage.

On May 17, 1974, the Fox was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Fox's election to the register accords immense status and recognition to the house (structures less than 50-years-old are not normally considered except under certain conditions — one of those being the Fox qualifier: "outstanding architectural merit").

Undoubtedly the Fox is outstanding architecturally . . . but what about its *usefulness*?

Here the reasons for saving the

*\$1,800,000 to retire the principal of the loan; \$64,000 closing costs; \$436,000 estimated prime rate interest over the three years; and \$100,000 for immediate renovation needs and operating expenses. Total: \$2,400,000.



Pianist Liberace, one of many who made a plea to the public, with organist Bob Van Camp, and the Fox Moller organ (January, 1975). (Bob Connell Photo)

Fox become even more convincing. The Fox is a serviceable, in fact, superior hall for the performance of a wide scope of entertainment, convention, and business functions. The Fox's inherent good design runs the gamut — from decorative merit to functionality. The Fox was designed for people. Its acoustics and sight lines are outstanding and are far better than other halls similar in size. The Fox is flexible in its service features, and most importantly, the theatre can host an audience in complete comfort with the added (and often lacking in other structures) ability to delight the eye.

Aside from the aforementioned facts, the Fox is *needed*. As Atlanta grows, so does its demand for space and facilities. The 4,600-seat Civic Center auditorium, the only other

modern Atlanta facility of similar size, is booked to capacity on weekend nights. In 1974, for example, the Civic Center auditorium was in use 208 nights. This figure represents virtual capacity in scheduling during prime time. Many nationally-known touring shows bypass Atlanta when they are unable to book the Civic Center on appropriate nights.

In fact, the Fox is the only Atlanta auditorium that can do justice to certain specialized events. Silent movie presentations and organ concerts, are two events that immediately come to the minds of those in the theatre organ perspective.

With Southern Bell's announced intention of locating an automobile parking facility for about 1,600 cars adjacent to the Fox, and with a Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit

Authority (MARTA) station also on the block, the Fox's future transportation situation should be excellent.

To further support its cause, the Fox represents a bargain to Atlanta in these hard-pressed financial times. With about 200,000 square feet of usable space, the purchase price of the Fox is roughly nine dollars a square foot. Consultants have estimated that to reproduce any structure of similar size, design, and service capability, the cost would run well over fifty dollars a square



The Fox Theatre officially reopened Thursday, November 6, 1975 with the appearance of the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra. The Atlanta Music Club, celebrating its sixtieth anniversary, has moved its entire concert series to the theatre — as it once did in the years 1935-1938. Future concerts at the Fox include an appearance by the Vienna Choir Boys (January 31, 1976), Philippe Entremont, virtuoso pianist (March 1, 1976), and the Fox stage again becomes alive with people for the engagement of the Mazowsze Polish Song and Dance Company (March 13, 1976). Organ programs and other benefit and special events are coming to the theatre, as well as a rock music series which began October 29, 1975 with a concert by Linda Ronstadt.



foot. Furthermore, recent restoration/renovations of similar theatre "palaces" have proven that not only does a city gain a superior auditorium, but a structure whose cost is conservative and whose worth is seen both in an historic and contemporary perspective. For example, Pittsburgh's Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts, formerly Loew's Penn Theatre, was renovated beginning April, 1970, at a cost of \$10,000,000 . . . \$9,000,000 below the cost to build a new complex of similar design. In contrast, the condition of the Fox is relatively good, and its most extensive renovation would run only into the thousands of dollars, and not into the millions. Today's economics do not permit the sensitive and elaborate design originally reflected and preserved in

Heinz Hall or the Atlanta Fox.

Similar success has been realized in the renovation and re-adaptation of theatres including the Paramount in Oakland, Ca. (scene for an ATOS-sponsored event during the last annual convention); the Brooklyn Paramount, now a part of Long Island University and still boasting its mighty four-manual Wurlitzer; the Olympia Theatre, now Gussman Hall, in Miami, Fla.; the St. Louis Theatre, renamed Powell Hall, in St. Louis, Mo.; and the Ohio Theatre, in Columbus — complete with its original Robert Morton installation. This is by no means a complete listing. So it is inexcusable that the dynamic city, Atlanta, would let its opportunity expire in a mass of rubble.

To avoid this civic embarrassment, and moreover, to avoid a tragic blow to the health of the inner city and to the preservation of the theatre organ in its original and intended environment, we must all demonstrate our convictions through participation and pocketbooks.

As Atlanta Landmark's president, Pat Connell, has so aptly put it . . . "Public opinion saved the Fox temporarily; public support will save it permanently."

How can ATOS members help? All contributions of \$10.00 or more to save the Fox will become members of Atlanta Landmarks. Members will be kept abreast of the organization's progress and will receive advance notification of all special events to be held in the Fox Theatre Building. Sponsoring and Charter Members will receive a copy of the color and black and white brochure, *Atlanta Fox Album* by ATOS member John McCall. The *Album* is a pictorial and historical presentation of the Fabulous Fox with special attention to its greatest asset, the mighty Moller organ.

For tax deduction, please make checks payable to:

*Atlanta Landmarks, Inc.
Fox Theatre Building
Atlanta, Georgia 30308*

*Memberships are as follows:
\$10.00 — General membership;
\$25.00 — Sustaining Membership;
\$50.00 — Sponsoring Membership;
\$100.00 — Charter Membership; or
a contribution in the amount of your choosing.* □

NEW SCHOLARSHIPS FOR ORGAN STUDY ANNOUNCED

by Lloyd E. Klos

Mr. and Mrs. John J. Strader of Cincinnati, possessors of a 3/18 Wurlitzer from the Paramount Theatre in Peebles' Corners, Ohio, firmly believe that to play popular music correctly, one must learn to play the classics first. In 1970, the Straders presented the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music a Balcom & Vaughn organ which was installed in the school's recital hall.

In the same year, they established and promoted the Strader Organ Series, recitals by such great artists as Gaylord Carter and Virgil Fox, and members of the CCM organ faculty. The series is still going strong with three or four internationally known organists presenting concerts, seminars and master classes this season.

In September, it was announced that Mr. and Mrs. Strader are establishing two Strader Competitive Scholarships in organ at CCM, beginning in the 1975-76 academic year. The first is a full-tuition scholarship for an incoming undergraduate; the second is a \$500 prize to an incoming graduate student, plus an assistantship which covers full tuition and a living stipend. Applications are available from Dr. Thomas G. Owen, Asst. Dean of CCM, university of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio 45221. Deadline for application is February 16, 1976; audition tapes are due March 1, with final competition on April 10. □

CORRECTION DEPARTMENT:

In the October-November Vox Pops column, we inferred that the 3/11 Wurlitzer in the Newark Casa Italiana had been superseded by an electronic while the 4/28 Wurlitzer from the Paterson Fabian Theatre is being installed. We are happy to report that the 3/11 is played each Sunday by Bill Gage. Our apologies to Bill and to Walter Froehlich, who not only heads the installation crew, but also maintains the smaller instrument. □

MALONE'S MUSIC CO.

P. O. BOX 1025
TURLOCK, CA., U.S.A. 95380

Telephone (209) 632-5784

November 3, 1975

Dear Customers:

On August 6, 1975, we sold out to Play-Rite Music Rolls, Inc., a name new in the industry but one we believe you will soon come to know and trust. Play-Rite is owned by Elwood L. Hansen, prominent San Francisco Bay Area Financier and chairman of the Board of Bay View Federal Savings and Loan Association, San Francisco, California.

Since it was founded in 1963, Malone's Music and Q.R.S. Music Rolls, Inc., Buffalo, New York, were the major commercial manufacturers of music rolls in the United States. Malone's Music specialized in rolls for Ampico, Duo-Arts, and Welte systems; we sold the majority of our rolls in bulk for packaging and resale by our distributors.

Also, until we canceled the service in mid-1974, Malone's Music supplied the Superior Quality music rolls sold by H. L. Powell, No. Hollywood, California.

Although we were relatively new in the industry we were credited with making several improvements in the production of music rolls. A major achievement was the perfecting of the one-to-one reading system instead of relying on the obsolete two-to-one and three-to-one master systems for the production of music rolls. As a further step to obtaining quality superior to the two- and three-to-one systems, we turned to digital electronic processing of the necessary music information.

Any playable music roll can be used as a master on our one-to-one system. In addition, it has an advantage that the other systems cannot approach. It is in checking the reproduced rolls for accuracy. Our one-to-one system provides for direct, positive comparison of master and duplicate rolls by inspection. This is not possible with the two-to-one and three-to-one systems!

Incidentally, some of our music roll equipment is shown on Page 288, *Player Piano Treasury* by Harvey Roehl, Second Edition, 1973, The Vestal Press.

A major reason for selling Malone's Music to Play-Rite Music Rolls was to be able to complete development and manufacture of more efficient precision machinery for cutting new music rolls and copying old ones. Both the musical and mechanical qualities will be improved with the new equipment, and with more units we will be able to produce more rolls to meet the steadily increasing demand.

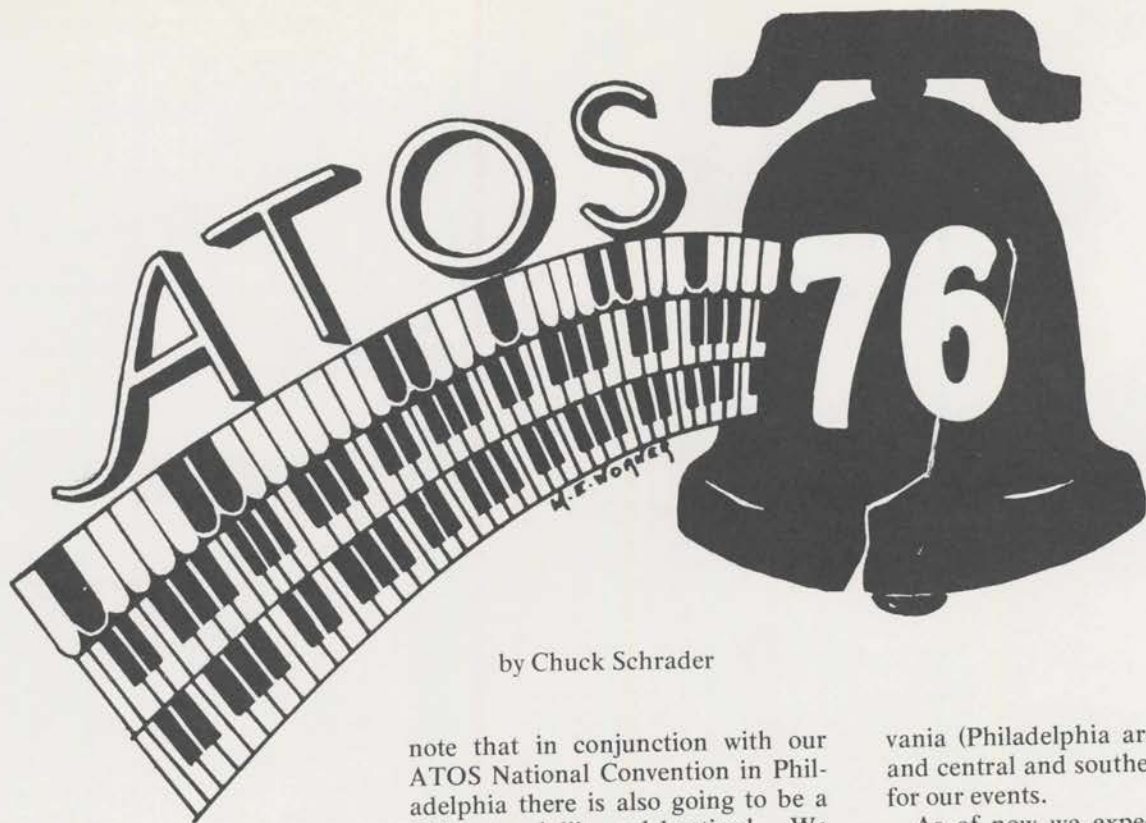
Play-Rite Music Rolls is distributing rolls for Ampico, Duo-Art, and Welte systems through Frank Adams, P.O. Box 3194 International Station, Seattle, Washington. Orchestrian Styles A and G; Coinola Styles O, OS and NOS series; and Wurlitzer Styles 125, 150 and 165 Band Organ Rolls are distributed by Ray Siou, 1612 E. 14th Street, Oakland, California. All interested dealers please contact these distributors.

Yours for more and better music rolls,



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General Manager,
Play-Rite Music Rolls, Inc.

MANUFACTURERS OF THE WORLD'S FINEST MUSIC ROLLS



by Chuck Schrader

The "Spirit of '76 — 1976 that is! That's our slogan! The Delaware Valley Chapter is forging ahead with plans for the 21st National Convention in the Philadelphia area. (We could say that ATOS has "come of age" now that we are twenty-one — but we won't.) It is interesting to

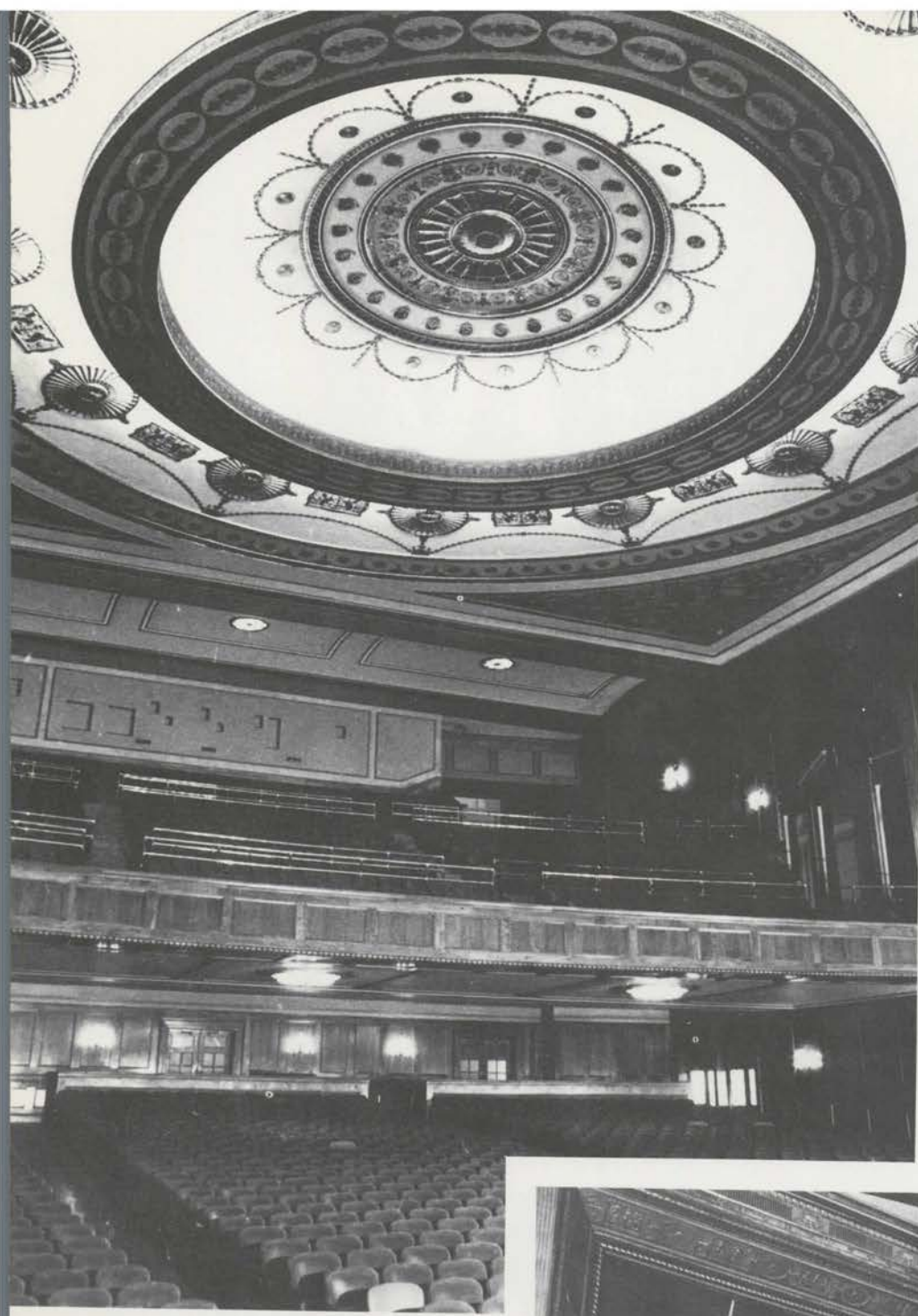
note that in conjunction with our ATOS National Convention in Philadelphia there is also going to be a "Bicentennial" celebration! We certainly shouldn't be lacking for "general public" for those concerts that can handle the crowds. Our national president, Dr. Paul Abernethy, has been here, seen our headquarters, the Cherry Hill Inn, in Cherry Hill, N.J., and was truly impressed. Since we are a tri-state chapter, we'll be covering Pennsyl-

vania (Philadelphia area), Delaware and central and southern New Jersey for our events.

As of now we expect to have — would you believe — twenty-three (23) organists! Approximately *fourteen* instruments, eight of which are truly theatre organs (Wurlitzer, Moller, Kimball), six in a theatre, one in a large auditorium and one in a hotel! Then there are outstand-

The Trenton War Memorial houses a Moller that will be featured in '76. (Wayne C. Zimmerman Photo)





Illuminated dome in the 2000-seat auditorium.
(Wayne C. Zimmerman Photo)

ing "concert" organs with percussion to be presented; one of which is in a gigantic auditorium that is really a superb theatre! Another is in a huge ballroom surrounded by exquisite gardens. (If this gets you to guessing which organ is where, etc. — *good* — be sure to register early!!) This does not include home installations or the electronics on exhibit. So come prepared to enjoy, enjoy, enjoy!

We also expect to have a couple of "firsts" this time. Our friend and

neighbor, the recently chartered Garden State Chapter (northern New Jersey) has most generously come forth with a fabulous surprise installation. It is so unbelievably appropriate to a National ATOS Convention that it will be a major feature. It is the Trenton War Memorial, also called the Trenton Opera House, in Trenton, N.J. (the state capitol).

Also unique, here in the Delaware Valley area, is actually the "World's Largest" organ(s). The John Wanamaker Store Grand Court concert instrument — 6 manual, 469 rank and 9 percussions — and the Atlantic City Convention Hall Auditorium concert instrument — a Midmer-Losh, 7 manual, 455 rank plus 14 percussions behemoth!

A concert has been scheduled on the Wanamaker organ, but we have not been able to finalize arrangements for the Atlantic City organ yet. We'll keep you informed in later releases. Here are the dates — Friday, July 16 thru Wednesday, July 21, with an "afterglow" even more interesting and complete on Thursday, July 22, all in 1976! Whatever else you may do next year, don't miss this "gathering of the clan" — the "Spirit of '76" — hosted by the Delaware Valley Chapter. □

See the Trenton article on the next page.

The 3/16 Moller from the Lincoln Theatre (Trenton) was installed in the War Memorial in 1974 — some 42 years after the building was dedicated.

(Wayne C. Zimmerman Photo)



**THE
TRENTON
WAR
MEMORIAL
MOLLER**

Pinch me, I must be dreaming!!

If you were to ask any ATOS Chapter "what wish would you like to come true?" it would probably be something as follows:

1. obtaining a big theatre organ
2. finding a beautiful well maintained and permanent place to house it
3. having assistance of special men and equipment to move the organ
4. working in easy accessible pipe chambers
5. receiving special grants and donations to maintain the organ and to give special free concerts.

Believe it or not, *this dream is a reality* at the Trenton War Memorial in Trenton, New Jersey.

Can you visualize a small group of theatre organ devotees, dressed in formal clothes ascending a beautiful marble staircase walking thru an open door into a pipe chamber? What a pipe chamber? Yes, a sparkling clean chamber filled with ranks of a newly installed Moller theatre pipe organ. All of us have

experienced dark, grimy back stages and chambers with steep ladders designed for only the brave, nimble and thin technicians. This beautiful spanking clean building must be a dream — just too good to be true! But now, here's the whole wonderful story about the merger of an organ and auditorium.

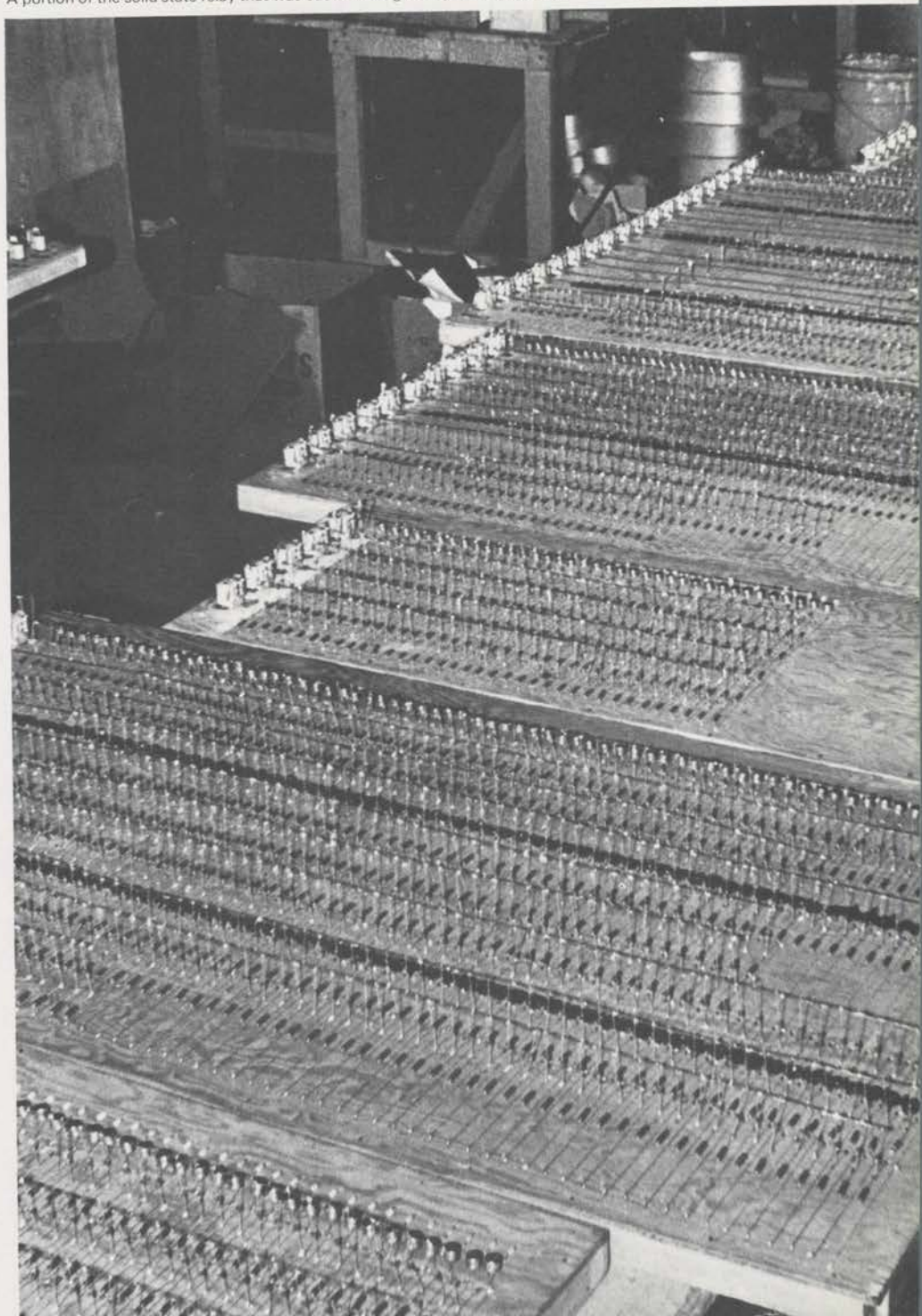
History of Trenton Soldiers & Sailors War Memorial.

The people of Trenton and Mercer County desired to build a memorial to their citizens who served during

the first World War. However, they did not want to erect a soon-to-be forgotten function-less statue. In 1928, a commission was formed to build a civic auditorium as a lasting memorial. Work started and the corner stone was laid in 1930. In January 1932 the Soldiers and Sailors War Memorial was dedicated. This unusual building contains a 2,000 seat auditorium with a fully operational stage, projection facility, orchestra and organ elevators. Also included is a large ballroom with complete kitchen facilities. The

A portion of the solid state relay that was custom designed by Bill Mc Kissock.

(Wayne Zimmerman Photo)



original plans for this building also called for a pipe organ. Funds were short in these hard times and this phase of the building was left incomplete.

Organ History

During the same time, only a few blocks away, the Lincoln Theatre was built in downtown Trenton. The theatre opened in 1928 featuring Stanley Rhodes at an impressive 3 manual 16 rank Moller. "From Lincoln's opening in 1928 until radio broadcasts of organ music ended with the closing of the theatre in 1969, the Moller Organ was an important part of Trenton's musical and theatrical history" states *Bolton Holmes* — featured organist at the Lincoln for many years.

In 1973, the Lincoln theatre and all its contents was purchased by the National State Bank, whose Chairman, *Mary P. Roebing*, has developed more than a passing interest in theatre organ. In the spring of 1974, *Walter Froehlich* and Garden State Chairman *Bob Balfour* helped to arrange the donation of the organ from the National Bank to the Trenton War Memorial. At the same time an agreement was reached between the War Memorial Commission under the leadership of Chairman *John E. Curry* and *Bill McKissock* representing Garden State Theatre Organ Society, in which *Bill McKissock* would design and direct the rebuilding and reinstallation.

On Memorial Day weekend in

1974, approximately 15 members of GSTOS from all over the state came to Trenton to help dismantle the organ and prepare it for the move. This in itself is no small task considering there are over 1,200 pipes, Xylophone, Marimba, Celeste Harp, Bells, Chimes and toy counter, along with the required motorblower reservoirs and chests. The following Tuesday approximately 20 employees of the Mercer County Highway Department Shade Tree Division arrived on the scene with several trucks and made the move to the War Memorial building.

Rebuilding began immediately. Each component was taken apart, cleaned and rebuilt. The large 10 horsepower blower was first. The electrical hook-up required for this unit was done by county electricians. All leather was replaced, many with new synthetic material designed to last longer. The original electro-pneumatic relay system was water damaged and *Bill McKissock* designed a solid state diode switching unit built by members of GSTOS and War Memorial Building staff. The console required a complete overhaul. A new solid state (computer-type) capture combination system was installed to assist the organist in playing the instrument.

At this present point, which is an unbelievably short time, (16 months to be exact), we find the console on the elevator with one-third of the pipes playing. Especially exciting is a new rank, a Post Horn, purchased from Moller to replace the ones that

were stolen.

Now the GSTOS-War Memorial dream is realized, but it did not come easy. All the credit is given to our dynamic crew chief *Bill McKissock* for his countless hours of meetings, plannings, arrangements and plain hard work that made this project so successful. His enthusiasm and magnetic drive attracted an outstanding crew who gave their all, averaging a 48 hour work week. Number one assistant is *Marianne McKissock*, Bill's very attractive and capable wife. Other crew members are *Jay Taylor*, *Rowe Beale*, *Harry* and *Thyra Ray*, *Bob Harris*, *Fred LeCompt*, *Bill Hartig*, *Judy Ginder* and *Gilbert Milbrand*.

One of the stated goals of ATOS is to perpetuate theatre organ use in public showplaces, and this is uppermost in the mind of *Bill McKissock* and crew. They are determined to insure, once the organ is completed, that it become an active part of the local community. To this end, they have sought sponsors for and have planned a series of free inaugural concerts.

The dedicatory program is planned for Sunday afternoon, February 29, 1976 with *Ashley Miller* the artist and sponsored by *Mary G. Robling* and National State Bank. The second concert is scheduled for Sunday, April 4, 1976 and will feature Trenton Festival Orchestra, Mercer County Chorus with *Ashley Miller* at the organ.

Here's to many more pleasant dreams! □

Crew chief Bill Mc Kissock at the console.

(Robert B. Little Photo)



The Trenton work crew: (L to R) Bill Hartig, Bill McKissock, Marianne McKissock, Thyra Ray and Bob Harris. Second row: Harry Ray and Jay Taylor.



More About The Wurlitzer That Would Not Die

by Richard J. Sklenar

(You have read in prior issues of THEATRE ORGAN about "The Wurlitzer That Would Not Die." Another chapter of that story was written on October 2.)

The Chicago Theatre Wurlitzer is the last major theatre instrument to be restored to public use. Anticipation grew in CATOE during the five years necessary for the dedicated crew to complete the work it did on the instrument. When Walter Strony previewed the organ last New Year's Eve it became clear to most concerned that this was indeed a special instrument which needed a special show.

Most important to that show would be the choice of artists. Last June a number of organists in town for the National Music Merchants Show were invited to try the organ. Through unfortunate scheduling conflicts, other individuals in town were not able to be accommodated at that time, nor were all those who wished to listen, able to do so. These sessions were closed at the request of the CATOE Board of Directors since the organ was not yet ready for widespread public hearing and the artists invited to play would be at a disadvantage with an "audience" there.

With the information from these sessions, the CATOE Board selected Lyn Larsen to play the concert and to accompany Charlie Chaplin in *Easy Street*. Hal Pearl was selected to do the sing-along in recognition of his cooperation with crew leader Bill Rieger regarding the organ.

Lyn announces his next number to the nearly 3000 people in the audience. (Bill Lamb Photo)





The original four members of the organ crew. From left to right, Val Escobar, Frank Pokorny, George Smith, and crew chief Bill Rieger. (Bill Lamb Photo)



Chicago Theatre Manager Peter Miller (left) chats with Hal Pearl and Lyn Larsen in the lobby after the show. (Bill Lamb Photo)

In addition to the work done by the regular Chicago crew which you have read about previously, others were called on to help. Frank and Al Eshbach, Tony Tahlman, Paul Swiderski and Gary Bergmark helped tune. John Peters and I spent many all night sessions chasing dead notes. John also assisted in returning wind pressures to their original levels, wired the crescendo pedal and found all sorts of useful switches in the relay room which had not been connected to tabs. Tom Hardman fabricated a bench using the Oriental Wurlitzer bench as a pattern.

While that work was going on, relamping of much of the house was

accomplished. Coves, domes, niches, grilles and portals which had not lit for thirty years glowed again. The management was convinced that a stage extension over ten feet of the pit should come down. It did and the console was at last fully visible — a welcome addition since it sits on its original water hydraulic lift and only travels up a few feet. The theatre staff was excited enough to do more than routine maintenance in cleaning carpets, washing marble, touching up walls and repainting the orchestra pit floor, rails and wall.

CATOE and other volunteers were also busy. Gordon Doane created the direct mail flyer from original Wurlitzer ads about the Chicago

which are now in the archives of the Theatre Historical Society. Gordon also supervised preparation of the special programs with embossed tissue overlay covers tied with ribbon.

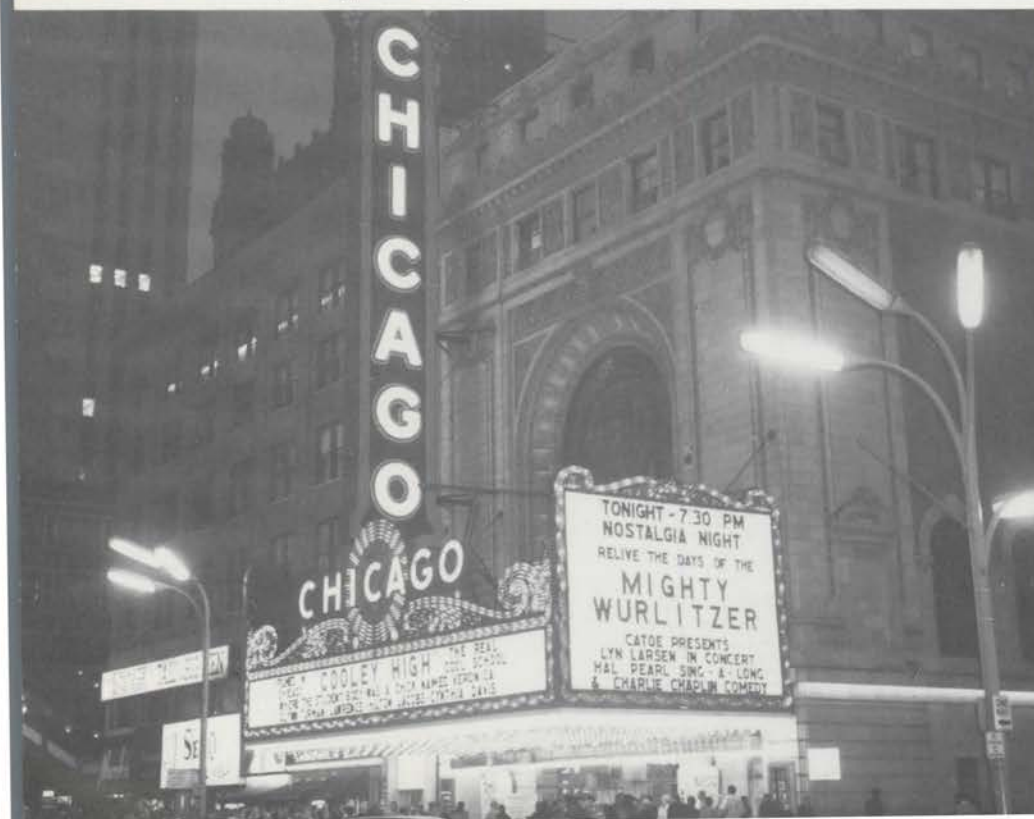
As showtime approached, organ builder Bill Hansen and assistant Al Erickson were hired on a professional basis to do the final tuning and regulation. They spent over sixty hours in the chambers, working on the reeds particularly. The twenty-nine ranks include two Brass Saxes, Brass Trumpets, Krumet, two English Post Horns, and two Tuba Mirabilises (Mirabili?). At 5:30 a.m. on the morning of the show, Bill started emergency repairs on a regulator which had just blown. It was in good working order by late afternoon.

By that time it was clear that a large turnout was to be expected. Publicity Chairwoman Cathy Koenig had secured numerous mentions in the daily press plus spots on three TV stations.

As the 2875 paid patrons gathered on show night, they saw the south face of the huge Chicago marquee proclaiming the "Mighty Wurlitzer" — quite a contrast from *Cooley High*, the then current feature film. Those in need of tickets noticed a red rose in a bud vase in the box office. When the great-coated and capped doorman opened the doors to admit the patrons they heard Harry Koenig playing the Steinway grand piano moved in for the event on the lobby promenade. And they saw greenery everywhere. Three truckloads of potted palms and plants turned the lobbies and foyers into a garden setting. And there at

Enthusiasts line up waiting for the Chicago Theatre's doors to open. (Bill Lamb Photo)

(Bill Lamb Photo)



the foot of the grand staircase was Managing Director Peter Miller, resplendent in tuxedo.

First nighters included visitors from across the country. THEATRE ORGAN publisher Betty Mason was there from Detroit as was *Console* publisher Tom B'hend from Los Angeles. Dennis and Heidi James greeted Dr. William H. Barnes. At least six ATOS chapter chairmen were present including Russ Joseph, CATOE; John Hill, Dairyland; Dave Knudtsen, Red River; Milton George, JATOE; Orrill Dunn, Land of Lincoln (with a whole bus load); and Ross Kirkpatrick, Central Indiana.

When they and the other guests entered the auditorium they saw the pit filled with music racks and a huge conductors desk, all courtesy of the Theatre Historical Society and in the far left corner was the black shrouded console. Anticipation was high as the black stain drape came off the console and Lyn Larsen opened with "Chicago." "Ohs" and "ahs" of recognition greeted a slide of the Chicago marquee at night years ago and local street scenes. Joe DuciBella was in the booth with operator John Smith coordinating films, slides and lighting. A few selections later the curtains parted again and instead of the screen, the well draped stage was revealed. Alden Stockebrand cued a lighting technician, borrowed from the Lyric Opera, to coordinate lighting as Lyn played. The next time the curtains opened the screen was back and Hal Pearl was at the console to do his "Hal Pearl Novelty" sing-along with slides from his collection.

Two hours after the show began a well satisfied, happy audience left the Chicago Theatre, participants in the most important theatre organ re-premiere in recent years. It was here, after all, that Jesse Crawford rose to fame. No small part of that ascent was the Chicago organ. Dr. Barnes pronounced the organ one of the finest theatre organs he has heard. Rumors that the organ was "buried" are not true. Every stop speaks out and is clearly heard. Volume levels are more than sufficient, even with a near capacity house. The organ has character. The sound is broad, lush, and full —



Console as it is today — completely done over from top to bottom.

(Bill Lamb Photo)

not bright or strident as, say, the Chicago Oriental Wurlitzer. The two Tibias, the two Voxes, the six strings plus all those solo and chorus reeds under the fingers and feet of Lyn Larsen brought forth some incredibly beautiful sounds, especially in the ballads. Larsen's style fit the instrument and the instrument fit the room. As the program that night stated: "The sound you will hear tonight — lush, varied, and full — is the kind of sound that theatre

owners, artists, and the public everywhere knew as the sound of the Mighty Wurlitzer."

Encouraged by the response on October 2, Plitt Theatres hope to do some type of Christmas show using the organ. CATOE and the Chicago crew are encouraged. The Chicago Wurlitzer will not die — not according to the response given Lyn Larsen, Hal Pearl, and CATOE on the eventful night of October 2, 1975. □

Photo from old Wurlitzer catalog. The interior of the Chicago Theatre showing two organs.



FIFTEENTH ANNUAL HOME ORGAN FESTIVAL

DOES IT AGAIN

by Hal Steiner

Each year it seems like the same old story — "Home Organ Festival Huge Success." We must make that report again. Seventeen makers of electronic organs, publications and accessories displayed their wares and artists this year to the greatest Festival attendance so far — more than 1500.

The 5-day session (Sept. 9-15) of organ music presented in a woodland setting was again held at Asilomar Park near Monterey, Calif., a rustic area with buildings designed mainly to accommodate religious conferences. The Festival is in danger of outgrowing the accommodations, considering the attendance growth rate in recent years. A study is now underway toward overcoming the threat of overcrowding, one solution being two performances of each concert in the park's one auditorium, Merrill Hall, which seats about 1100 comfortably.

The exhibitor/participants for 1975 were Allen, Baldwin, Conn, Farfisa, Hammond, Gulbransen, Lowrey, Rodgers, Thomas, Wurplitzer and Yamaha, plus *Organist Magazine*, *Hansen Publications*, *Concert Company*, *Hal Leonard Publications*, *Doric Records*, plus several other related industries.

The large list of organists included Debbie Lynn (16), Hal Randall, Del Castillo, Arlo Hulst, Bob Dove, Richard Purvis, Bud Iverson, Fran Linhart, Dave Kelsey, O'Lyn Callahan, Bob Ralston, Frank Renaut, Tommy Stark, Johnny Kemm, Byron Melcher, Glenn Derriinger, Jonas Nordwall, Bill Thom-



The long chow line moved fast, and the food was tops.

Merrill Hall at full capacity. All Festival concerts are held here.





Richard Purvis (left) stops to chat with admirers Doris Henderson (PCOC Pres.), longtime Festival stalwart Della Hedburg and — well, George Thompson, our esteemed editor, seems more interested in Festival Registrar Jan James, who worries about "where to put 'em all."



Free champagne parties are a daily 5:00 p.m. Festival event. Bill Johnson (Concert Co.) and Conn dealer Reta Rogers serve as volunteer refill dispensers.

Still sporting his lei, Hawaii returnee Dave Kelsey smiles for the 'birdie' after his well-received concert for Baldwin.



son, Larry Embury, Ralph Wolfe, Bob Walls, Dennis Hinman, Eddie Vodicka, Gus Pearson, Larry Vannucci, Don Lee Ellis and Tom Hazleton. All were exhibitor employees.

In examining the list of artists, one notes a paucity of the "blockbuster" names heard in previous years. Perhaps a handful of those listed rate the "big time" label, and they, for the most part, provided the most highly applauded music. We don't downgrade the newcomers; Debbie Lynn was a delight, but there was also that guy who whammed out a whole "concert" without changing his registration noticeably. There was also a seeming slackening of playing standards in some cases, with notably younger organists reverting to the "cocktail lounge" style of the '40s when anything went. One veteran and usually excellent concert artist tried to play his concert in the teen mode — much to the despair of his students present. But the professional and imaginative playing of such stalwarts as Richard Purvis, Del Castillo, Arlo Hults, Byron Melcher, Bud Iverson, Larry Vannucci, Tom Hazleton, Jonas Nordwall, Frank Renaut, Bob Dove, Dave Kelsey and others more than atoned for the sins of the few. So did the stand-up-comedy antics of a last minute shoo-in — Danny Brown.

With few exceptions, there seems to be little progress on the part of builders toward getting nearer pipe tonal values. Rodgers displayed a very good church organ from the tonal viewpoint, although it is controlled by a medieval drawknob console. Another exception is Allen, which frankly had quite a way to go to catch up in the TO area. We're glad to report they are getting there with a new two-stoprail theatre model, despite computer circuitry (which would seem to discourage tonal scaling). This model manages to provide tonal qualities never before heard on that brand of instrument. Rodgers has come out with an \$8,000 2-manual "home model" which should be of special interest to the professional who plays club dates. Most of the rest remain very much as they have been for the past several years; pleasant sounding instruments with emphasis on sales-promoting gimmicks and a continuing love affair with the synthe-

THEATRE ORGAN



We couldn't run photos of all the fine artists who played during Festival week, so we selected a handsome one to represent the unpictured majority. Besides, Byron Melcher (Thomas) has a fine little Robert Morton in his home.



Del Castillo and Arlo Hults closed their Concert Co. show with an Al Jolson medley, with Stu Green belting out a raucous vocal of "Mammy" in grotesque period blackface.

We were trying to get a shot of Johnny Kemm (Lowrey) seen over some shoulders, but events in the foreground were distracting. Reta Rogers is amused by organ dealer John Nelson who dresses as his own billboard. Sorry, Johnny!





Bob Ralston brought along a fine vocalist, Mimi Boyer (right). Here Bob with 'bunny' Betty Pofert (left) who changed the stage billing signs between concerts.



Tiny James (right) introduces a glowering King Kong, still carrying a rumped Fay Wray, during the Costume Parade. Inside the monkey suit is a perspiring Stu Green.

Billed as the 'Worthless-Slow Duo,' Jonas Nordwall and Tom Hazleton sat in for the Worth-Crow Duo (Rodgers) who couldn't appear due to illness. Their encore was a triumphant 'Hallelujah Chorus' which somehow ran afoul of 'Yes, We Have No Bananas.'



sizer.

Yet, there is one very encouraging trend. Those who despair at the ever-increasing proliferation of gimmick switches in console side jams, and even across the front board under the bottom manual, may take heart in the trend set by two brand new models. Both the Rodgers "Topper" and the new Allen theatre organ have eliminated this slopover by placing all switches and voice controls on the stoprail directly in front of the player where they belong. Allen had to go to a double stoprail in order to evacuate the side jamb area, something knowing designers have encouraged "majors" to do for several years.

Weather for the Festival days was gray but dry, cool, crisp and definitely autumn, although the 1975 Festival dates (Sept. 9-15) were the earliest yet. As always, the meals supplied by the Park kitchens were tops, three times each day.

Part of the fun of any Home Organ Festival is the unscheduled events which take place in the showrooms, often through the wee hours. For example, where else could an organ buff enjoy the informal music of artists of the caliber of, say, Ann Leaf, John Seng or Del Castillo — for free!? Such happenings were transpiring in all of the showrooms at any given hour.

In addition to the concerts and showroom events, there were the usual diversions — swimming (ocean or pool), and Lorraine Cagle's well-presented "Clubs on Parade" (brief concerts by chosen reps of the clubs which make up the Pacific Council for Organ Clubs, the Festival's sponsor). Then there was the costume Parade, which plays to the "ham" in all of us — a chance to dress up as something weird and entertain the other Festivaleers. This year the variety was especially rich, with witches, ballerinas, be-wigged Mozartian court musicians, a team of perambulating Jello boxes, a walking golf ball, a gorilla and clowns galore.

Chairman Tiny James was well pleased with attendance and the general enthusiasm shown. He held a November dinner and post mortem for his crew of volunteers who staged the Festival, and plans were laid to make the '76 Festival even bigger and better. □



BOOK REVIEW

THE CHICAGO THEATRE, a commemorative brochure. Theatre Historical Society Production Review by Francis Hibbard.

The Chicago Theatre opened in 1921 as one of the earliest motion picture palaces and was the flagship house of the rapidly expanding Balaban & Katz Circuit.

The Chicago is unique in that in 1975 it is still a flagship. The Plitt Theatre Corp., present owners of the Chicago, have maintained the house as one of the few remaining deluxe theatres in the U.S.

This 24 page Theatre Historical Society Brochure presents the Chicago's history pictorially with an excellent selection of some thirty photos, four representative B & K institutional-type advertisements, and a reproduction of a program for one of the famous Chicago Theatre Sunday Noonday Concerts.

An interesting story on the 4/29 Wurlitzer is also presented with high quality photos to match.

Among the pictures in the brochure are six photos of stage settings used for specific programs. Of special interest is the use of an organ console onstage as part of the set.

The photos showing publicity displays or "fronts" are memory joggling examples of nostalgia which eloquently tell how it was in the "Golden Era" of the super picture/

moving?

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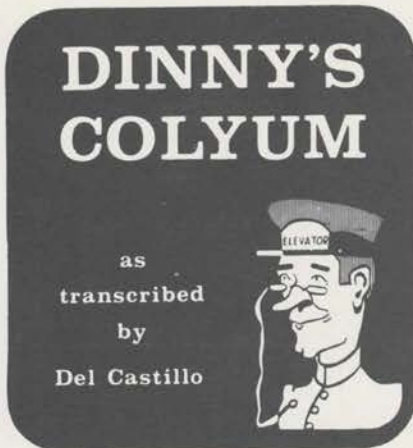
VI THOMPSON
THEATRE ORGAN
P.O. BOX 1314
SALINAS, CALIFORNIA 93901

stage show theatre.

A full time art department was kept busy designing new material for every change of program and coming up with new combinations of superlatives to convince the passer-by that he should spend his money to see the greatest show ever.

The Theatre Historical Society is to be congratulated for putting this little document together. With few words and many pictures they have successfully presented a trip down memory lane for the over 45 generation and given those who don't remember an insight on why their elders get misty eyed in describing the halcyon days.

This Theatre Historical Society brochure is well worth the \$2.00 asking price. It may be obtained post-paid from Fredrick Beall, P.O. Box 2416, Alameda, Ca. 94501 or from *MARQUEE* Editor, B. Andrew Corsini, P.O. Box 101, Notre Dame, Ind. 46556. □



I got to lookin over some of the back copies of Theayter Organ the other day, on account I get a bang the way Mr. Thompson puts the paper together, and I dont say that jest because I work for him neither. Well, not entirely. But it seems like the magazine gets to lookin better all the time, with lots of good pitchers and with real interestin articles. And the of course they is all those regulars like Mr. John Muri who rites with a lot of good common sense, and Mr. Stew Green who gets off some pretty good stuff besides havin good pitchers and bein able to spell Mr. Henry Murtagh's name rite, and Mr. Lyle Nash who gives us old timers a kick out of diggin up stuff about the old stars we use to

see way back to the silent pitcher days, and of course The Old Perspexer Mr. Lloyd Klos who digs up all that stuff about the silent pitcher organ players, and that aint all because they is always peaces about the organs that is bein put back into shape and facks about all the prominent organ players that played them.

I wasnt goin to say anythin about me, on account I dont put me down as a professional riter like these other guys. But I got a start when I was lookin back to fine out I been ritin this column for four years now, and all I can say is Im sure glad to only comes out oncet every two months. I spose that's really why the magazine dont go broke, because if all the riters get paid the same as me they got to keep there books real careful to stay out of the red, as us riters say. Anyways, when I looked back to the one of December of last year I see I rit a lot about Xmas and Xmas musick and the Xmas sperit, so this year I decided I would let everybody else rite about Xmas if they wanted to and I would jest clear up some miscelonymus odds and ends, you might say. So here goes.

Did you know they is a town in Missouri name of Peculiar. You notice I dont say anythin about the town name of Santa Claus. Anyhow, this town has painted on the sides of the police car — they's only one — CITY OF PECULIAR POLICE. Somebody collected some of the headlines of the papers in the other towns around there when they is a weddin to one of the local gals, like Peculiar Girl Marries Young Man from Archie, or like Lone Jack Man Marries Peculiar Girl. Archie and Lone Jack are the closest towns jest down the road. All three of them is jest south of Kansas City, and the town aint very big but its got a Peculiar Post Office, a Peculiar City Hall, a Peculiar Bank and two Peculiar Churches. I wont say as to whether the churches got Peculiar organs, but I spose they have.

And while were on the letter P, they is the Performer, which is a kind of a combination synthesizer and a telyvision screen that makes zigzag pitchers of the music, and was invented by the Ionic company in New Jersey and the got a music man name of Alfred Mayer out of the Jowilyard School to take around the

country on account they get the teachers interested because they can hook the kids with it. Well, I dunno. Costs 2000 bucks, and teachers nowadays dont have no 2000 bucks to spend on gadgets that cost 2000 bucks.

So now I got another P for you. Mr. Lukas Foss, who is a good composer and conductor and likes to fool aroun with what he calls Aleatorick music which really means you can play any old thing that comes into your head and you dont have to stick to the music, he made up a piece that way by foolin aroun with a peace by Mr. J.S. Bach, and he called it Phorion which he says is a Greek word that means Stolen Goods. Pretty neat, huh?

And then they is the old argyment about Pipes and Plug-ins, and Mr. Martin Bernheimer who is the Music Critick on the Los Angeles Times, he dont think much of the Plug-ins, and when Mr. Andre Previn was the conductor at the Hollywood Bowl and he had to use a Plug-in organ for the beginnin of the peace by Mr. Richard Strauss called Zarathustra which is the theme song for a movie called 2001, only it turned out the orchestra had to play it alone because somebody, I dont think it was Mr. Bernheimer, had disconnected the organ, and Mr. Bernheimer rote, and I copied it down so I would spell all the words rit, he wrote — Someone accidentally pulled out the plug which powers the electric monstrocity on the Bowl stage." So you can see what Mr. Bernheimer thinks of Plug-ins.

And that's about all, except that a couple years ago the PCOC up in North California, which means Pacific Coast Organ Club, they wanted to throw a doggy Party for Lee Lees new Pooch Schatzi, so they had a big Party for Schatzi and Lee and they called it Schatzi's Piddle Poodle Party and it was a big success. And sometime if I am let I will copy down what one of this magazines regular colyumists said about that. □

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RON RHODE

Young Man With A Pipe-Studded Future

by Bert Brouillon

Ron does his stint at the Phoenix Organ Stop No. 1. It's a fine 4/28 built up from a 3/14 by Harvey Heck who removed it from the Hollywood Egyptian theatre circa 20 years ago. The console is from the St. Louis Missouri Theatre. (Al Ruland Photo)

There's an organist waiting in Phoenix, Arizona — waiting for the opening of a pizza parlor equipped with pipes where he will preside at the console in the town's second such pasta emporium.

Actually, he isn't just waiting. He keeps busy playing the electronic at Organ Stop #2 when he isn't travelling to out-of-town concerts at perhaps the Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo, Calif., as he did in February, or the Auditorium Theatre in Rochester, N.Y., as he did in May.

Ron Rhode was born in Moline, Illinois, 23 years ago. He first showed interest in music at the age of four and was therefore given piano lessons. He was often seen at local entertainments as a "child wonder" at the 88. Inevitably, the organ came to the lad's attention and he was drawn to it, an electronic, of course. Much later he discovered the source of the sounds he heard synthesized in the electronic organ — pipes. Ron re-arranged his goals; he just had to play on pipes. He heard about the 4/30 Wurlitzer-equipped Organ Stop in Phoenix and went there to audition for Bill Brown, the builder/owner of the town's first pipe-equipped

pizzeria. He was hired as a counterpart of the silent film era's "relief organist." He and Charlie Balogh played when Lyn Larsen was ill, on a concert tour, or just had a night off. A lad of Ron's talent and ability wouldn't be satisfied with a number two spot unless it had promise of better things to come. Luckily, Bill Brown's plans called for more Organ Stops. One such project was outlined very well by *Phoenix Gazette* staffer Jim Newton in a Spring issue of the daily (updated in October).

Spread out over two levels of a Northwest Phoenix warehouse are hundreds of pipes, electrical switching devices and other parts that, by late Fall, once more will be a theatre pipe organ capable of sending shivers down the back of the growing number of fans.

The organ being refurbished now will be the center of attraction in the Valley's second Organ Stop pizza restaurant, located in Mesa.

It's one of four theatre pipe organs stored in the warehouse, which Organ Stop owner William P. Brown built for the purpose.

Brown, an organ buff since he was a teenager, opened the first Organ

Stop as a place to house another organ he had acquired "and to make some money with it."

Brown believes he will spend some \$32,000 in refurbishing the organ designated for the Mesa facility. The organ itself came from the Old Denver Fox Theatre, and cost him approximately \$8,000.

He and nine assistants have been working on the organ, with some parts being sent elsewhere for work. For instance the keyboards were sent away for repairs and new coverings on the keys. Organ hobbyists are repairing other parts. The worn-out leather is being replaced with special organ plastic.

"Leather just isn't tanned like it used to be," Brown admitted. "The organs get a lot of use. At Organ Stop No. 1 it's played more than 50 hours a week for lunches, evenings and rehearsals."

Although the Mesa organ resembles the presently used No. 1 unit in appearance, Brown has used a different arrangement of its parts for better visual display — a big part of the fun of an evening of listening to the organs.

"The console will be in a pit and

will rise six feet during performance so you can watch the footwork easily," he said.

Also to make viewing easier, the restaurant floor is sloped as in a theatre, according to Tom Rousseau, Organ Stop manager. That means tables and benches had to be built especially for the room, "so your pizza and beer don't slide off."

A variety of special attachments, such as the "toy box" with drums and other percussion instruments, are spread across the wall in front of each chamber to make viewing easier.

Brown is considering the addition of short silent movies, since the organs originally were designed to provide accompaniment for silent films. The Organ Stop No. 1 currently has sing-along slide presentations like theatres used to offer between films.

Assisting Brown in the restoration are Wendall Shultz, Charles Balogh and John Ferguson, two of five organists on the restaurant's staff, Randy Gooddard, Greg Bailey, Charlie Patterson, Alan Tury, Donna Parker MacNeur and Jonna Ueber.

Shultz has a vast background in such work.

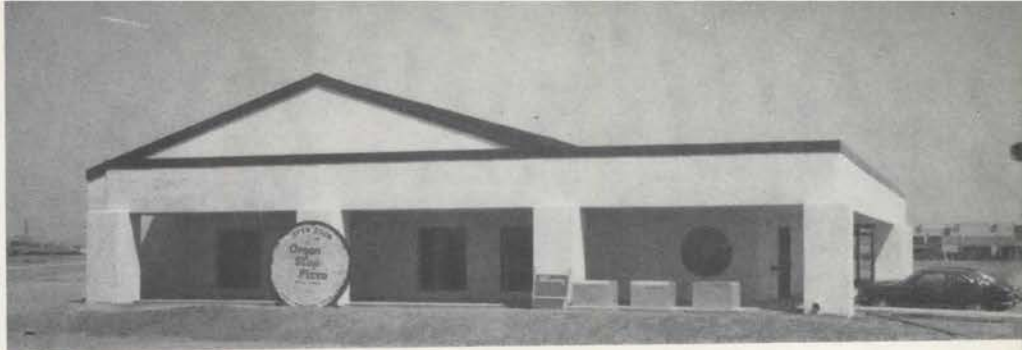
"I started out as an organ technician and mechanic, but when the depression hit I went to work for the Weather Bureau," he explained.

He's now retired, and spending "more time than I like to think about" working on the myriad delicate parts.

The Organ Stop No. 2 opened on June 20, but without the 3/23 Wurlitzer. Located near the intersection of Dobson at 2250 W. Southern in Mesa (a "stone's throw" from Phoenix), the pizza emporium is using an electronic until the Wurlitzer has been installed. Ron Rhode doesn't mind the substitution at all — because if all goes according to plan there will be a grand opening of the pipe organ in November — with Ron at the console.

Meanwhile, as our photos indicate, Ron has been watching the rebuilding of the instrument he will play with keen interest. He has visited the warehouse often to observe progress made by bossman Brown and able assistants.

The organ-playing future of Ron Rhode looks bright, indeed. □



Organ Stop No. 2 — under construction.



Owner Bill Brown, Tom Rousseau and Ron Rhode at the groundbreaking for Organ Stop No. 2, December 6, 1974.

When things are slow Ron visits the big Brown warehouse chock-full of organs in various stages of repair. Here he examines the keys he'll be playing in Organ Stop No. 2 — if they can only line up the keys on the bottom manual. (Al Ruland Photo)





Hollywood Cavalcade

Directed by Lyle W. Nash

THE PLAYERS . . . John Conte directs his TV-radio-hotel interests from his home in Palm Springs . . . Last I heard was that Ella Raines was living in happy retirement in a small Colorado city . . . Joel McCrea will be on screen by the time you read this. He never retired; just refused all the trashy scripts offered him . . . Contact Harry Watson, 4111-B, W. Olive Ave., Burbank, Calif., 91505, if you want to know about the six Watson brothers who once were in films . . . Julie Benson, the nurse, friend, companion and confidant of Mabel Normand, still lives in Southern California . . . LeRoy Prinz, 80, dance director and choreographer for over 100 films, is active today in the world of advertising . . . Unconfirmed address: Anna Sten (Frenks) was reported as living in New York City at 166 E. 61st. Street.

★ ★ ★

ROSE R. of Texas writes: "I called on Lew Ayres this summer at his home at 231 Rockingham Road, Los Angeles, 90049, and found him more cordial than ever. He was pleased and happy to meet me. He seems to like the fans. He has not retired from acting. Will do any good script or part but is not much pleased with a lot of today's film making."

★ ★ ★

STU GREEN, a wonderful friend who started me in TO (via his great Bombarde years ago) writes: "About Paramount News . . . Boris Morros, former Paramount Studio music chief, said the one mark he left was the Paramount News theme . . . He said it was not original with him as he had lifted it as one of main themes from Puccini's Tosca and put in it in march tempo . . . Later I paid particular attention to the PN theme and lo, right in the middle was the tune that once heralded the start of a news-reel . . . Boris told me about this when we were in Vienna in the early '50s. Best wishes."

★ ★ ★

PURELY PERSONAL: Election of Gaylord Carter to the Hall of Fame as Theatre Organist of the Year was wonderful. To me it is sorta like including Wagner, Verdi, Lehar, Bizet, Mozart, Offenbach, Strauss, Bach, Liszt and Brahms as among the top ten musical talents of all time. I'm biased but Gaylord's theatre organ artistry is the greatest. All in the Hall of Fame merit their selection but this memo is because I have been fortunate to know GC for many years. Among the young artists of today there's sure to be another Carter or Crawford or Leibert

or Lew White. Only thing is that most of them will never enjoy living in the Roaring 20's and Throbbing 30's.

★ ★ ★

SELECTED SHORTS . . . Court records valued the Harold Lloyd estate at \$5.4 million . . . Eddie Quillan has been in films for 50 years and is ready for more action any time . . . In 1970 a Hollywood producer said he would remake *Greed* the 1924 epic but nothing came of his plans . . . Horace Heidt said Guy Lombardo gave him his desire to have a musical career . . . Louis Armstrong, also, said his favorite musical makers were the Lombardos . . . A recent feature story said Ronald Colman never played a drunk on the screen. Don't believe it. Colman played several parts in which he was slightly drunk.

★ ★ ★

IN 10 years the readership of TO is constantly changing and growing. I can tell by the questions that come to HC. Readership is by no means restricted to the Geritol army. Recent questions include such as: "Tell me where Natacha Rambova, Valentino's second wife, is." She passed on in June in 1966 . . . "Tell me it is untrue that Katharine Hepburn once made a film with Bob Hope." Sorry, but in 1956 MGM released the Iron Petticoat with Katie and Bob . . . "Was there ever a silent player who portrayed himself much like John Wayne does today?" The first name what comes to mind is Wallace Beery. Fellow actors (some of whom did not love him) said he was playing himself all the time. But remember Beery had a great (or greater) career after sound.

★ ★ ★

MOST fan magazines in the 20's and into the 30's used artist portraits for covers. Now a reader wants to know if any such artists are around. He had in mind Earl Christie, Don Reed, Georgia Warren, Frederick Duncan, Hal Phylfe, Tempest Inman, Charles Sheldon, Livingston Geer, W. Haskell Coffin, A. Cheney Johnston, Rolf Armstrong, Marland Stone and Leo Seilke, Jr. Any information will be shared.

★ ★ ★

THE END . . . Actual filming on The Last Tycoon has started. The F. Scott Fitzgerald novel is presumed to have been inspired by MGM genius Irving Thalberg . . . Before Paramount bought the studios on Marathon/Melrose, etc., they were called the Brunton Studios . . . Questions, contributions, etc. are welcome at Box 113, Pasadena, Calif. 91102. □

Historic Event in San Diego



ORGANPOWER

REGINALD FOORT RE-UNITED WITH HIS 1938 5/27 "PORTATIV"

by Stu Green

To the average citizen it probably looked like just another pizza parlor opening — one equipped with one of those strange organs which have been becoming increasingly popular. But to the informed organ buff the announcement of the opening of ORGAN POWER No. 2 at Pacific Beach, Calif., was a unique event — one which actually started over 38 years ago.

It was then that popular British

organist Reginald Foort made a firm decision. He would chuck that nice safe job as a British Broadcasting Corp. organist and strike out on his own, with a large "portable" pipe organ. The story of Reg. Foort's 5/27 "portativ" has been told and retold many times since the 1938 debut of the huge-scaled Moller in a British cinema. (See THEATRE ORGAN, Oct., 1973, p. 5, Winter Issue, 1963, p. 14).

Mr. Foort had taken a bold step in purchasing his own cinema organ. He had gambled on the ability of the Moller Co. over the "pond" in Hagerstown, Maryland, to build a large but transportable pipe organ, one which literally came apart at the end of an engagement, to be transported in sections to the next stop in five trucks. This had never been done on such a grand scale. In fact the idea of a transportable

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pipe organ had remained fallow since the Ringling Bros. Barnum and Bailey circus had abandoned its circus wagon Kilgen in favor of the louder calliope in the very early years of this century. It was a gamble but Foort won.

The organ was a hit with British theatre audiences wherever it was installed and played by Foort. War clouds put an end to the familiar sight of the five van loads of organ being transported about the English countryside. Then, a disaster opened up a new career for the Moller. The Luftwaffe scored a direct hit on a BBC studio, reducing the BBC's

Organ Power No. 2 is housed in a former bowling alley. The hardwood alleys are now part of the pizzeria floor. The building is located in the business district of Pacific Beach. The tower was erected by a former tenant.



Compton organ to rubble. Another organ was needed quickly. British troops serving overseas listened to their requests being played on organcasts from home. It was a matter of troop morale. Reg's Foort's organ was idle and he offered it. Thus the erstwhile gypsy Moller became the stationary BBC studio organ in 1941 — the last time Reg. Foort played it until Oct. 2, 1975 — 34 years later!

In the early '60s the organ was purchased by the Netherlands Broadcasting Co. and moved across the English Channel where it was heard occasionally on broadcasts from the Hilversum studio. But of late it had been neglected.

Enter Preston M. ("Sandy") Fleet, San Diego businessman and theatre organ enthusiast. We have described in these pages Sandy's home installation in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., and also "Organ Power No. 1" pizzeria in San Diego, of which he is one of the backers. In addition, Sandy was instrumental in organizing the San Diego Chapter of ATOS. He is the present owner of the former BBC Moller.

Enroute from Holland to San Diego, the Moller underwent some refurbishing at the Hagerstown Moller plant. Then, little was heard about it until invitations went out announcing the debut of ORGAN POWER No. 2, at which Reginald Foort would be re-united with his beloved Moller for the opening.

The building is a former bowling alley in the downtown section of Pacific Beach, an extension of San Diego. Arriving early in the afternoon on the appointed day, we were fortunate enough to find Mr. Foort practicing on the Moller. He practices much as did Eddie Dunstetter, going over certain passages until they are well polished, but rarely playing a selection straight through. During a break we interviewed Mr. Foort, who was obviously overjoyed to find his favorite organ well installed in a permanent home. The organ is now rigged as a two-chamber installation with two sets of percussions, one enclosed, one "baroqued." On the left wall hangs a rare set of Wurlitzer tuned tympani (from the Brooklyn Fox) in plain view.

"The big Tibia is over there" said Foort, with an expansive gesture toward an immense, unenclosed set



Reginald Foort at 1938 Moller premiere.

of symmetrical wooden pedal pipes to the right of the chambers. We couldn't help but note how kindly the years have been to Reginald Foort. Except for some grey in his thinning locks, he looks very much the same as in the photo made at the Moller's London premiere in 1938. And the sounds he made during the practice session indicated that he had lost none of the musical acumen which earned him the most applause ever heard for an organist in the N.Y. Times Square Paramount during a post-Crawford engagement there.

Meeting his long cherished instrument was obviously an emotional experience for Reginald Foort. Several times during the practice session he was heard to mutter: "after 34 years — still okay."

Leaving Foort to his rehearsal we sought out Ed Barr, the manager of the Organ Power projects. Ed, at that moment, was no busier than a one-armed paper hanger, supervising the last-minute installation of kitchen gear, carpets, lights and the multi-bulb sign that tells the customer his order is ready.

"It's quite a sign," said Ed, "we can even spell out words on it." He flipped some switches and the lights flashed a huge "WOW!"

Ed revealed that the room, exclusive of chambers, is 68 feet across

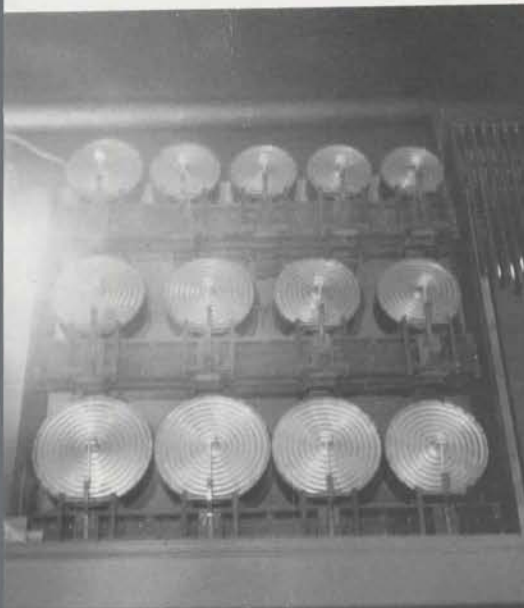


Staff organist Tommy Stark sits at the 5/27 console for this photo which shows the PA system control board (right, foreground). A portion of the stage lighting control panel can be seen at the left.



"Presenting Reginald Foort!" Sandy Fleet (left) introduces the veteran organist (right) while manager Ed Barr (center) looks on. The Moller console dominates the background while a cake replica can be seen just above Ed's head.

Rare tuned tympani mounted high on left wall (unenclosed). They were originally on the Brooklyn Fox Wurlitzer.



and 75 feet deep, with a 30 foot, arched roof. The chamber floor has been excavated to lower the floor two feet in order to accommodate all of the pipes without mitering. Careful attention has been given to the acoustic properties of the room. All of the existing acoustic tile was removed during remodelling, but a small amount had to be returned to the back wall when the room proved too "live."

"We now have a reverb of 3.5 seconds empty, and 2.1 seconds full" said Barr. The rounded ceiling/roof and the diffusing effects of the many fixtures and protuberances on the walls tend to discourage the formation of that acoustical syndrome known as "standing waves."

Leaving Ed Barr to his task of getting the room finished in time for the press preview that evening, we started to leave and did a double take; we had passed by a pipe chamber in the back of the room, nestled up against the kitchen. "Aha, an echo division," we mumbled loud enough to be heard by staff organist Tommy Stark who, until then, had been aurally mainlining the Foort rehearsal.

"No, it's an entirely separate installation — a Wurlitzer Style D, a 6-ranker. See the console on the stage?"

The stage, a two-foot elevation a few feet in front of the huge swell shutters, raises to view a choice selection of music makers. At the left is the grand piano (playable from the Moller console), the imposing five-manual console at center stage and a 2-manual horseshoe console at the right. Quite a sight under the colored lighting!

"The little Wurlitzer was something of an afterthought. Anyway, it isn't playable yet. It won't be heard tonight," said Stark, his "handle-bar" moustache drooping a little.

At the doorway we looked back on the scene: colored lights playing on a stage loaded with music makers. Foort rehearsing, the sound of hammering, the shouts of the electricians, workmen scurrying up and down ladders and Ed Barr acting as a general information center and overseer. Confusion!

When we returned three hours later, it was a different scene. Gone were the workmen and quiet had been restored. Camp chairs had

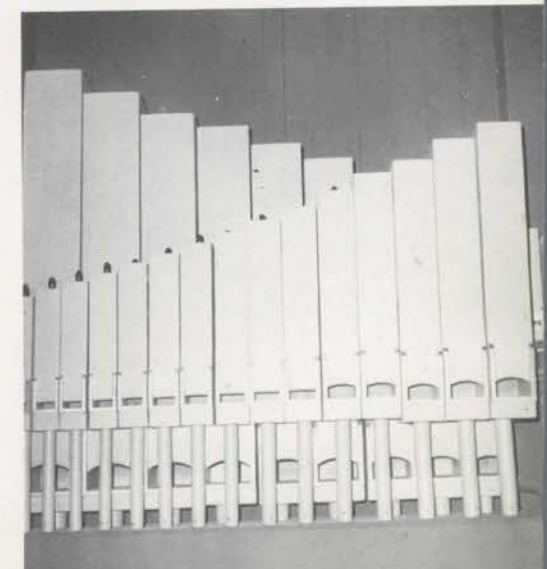


Reg. Foort at rehearsal. Meeting his Moller after 34 years was an emotional experience. Here he had just finished a portion of his famous improvisation, "Dust Storm."



Looking across the stage. Staffers Cheryl Creel and Wayne Seppala pose at the piano and Moller. The Style D Wurlitzer console is in the background.

Unenclosed Pedal Tibia. Scaling is truly colossal.



formed several rows of seats in front of the low stage. Overhead lighting still highlighted the instruments on the stage.

Soon the invited guests started to arrive in twos, threes and fours. Soon thereafter the gratis wine and beer started to flow, and this would later affect the program.

Some guests came great distances (President W. Riley Daniels of the Moller Organ Co. from Maryland, for example). Mike Ohman came from Provo, Utah; Bill Brown from Phoenix; Judd Walton from Vallejo, Calif.; Jerry Nagano, Joe & Ida Mae Koons and Russ Nelson from the LA area. New Seal Beach residents Dick and Jane Loderhose were on hand, as was organist Gaylord Carter, from San Pedro, plus the San Diego majority of organ music buffs, among them Bill Barker whose home boasts a 3/10 Wurlitzer. There were many, many more. By 8:00 p.m. the room was full of chattering organ enthusiasts.

Style D chamber at rear of room provides a vantage point for spotlight operator while partially attentive first night audience talks it up.

Then Ed Barr stepped to the microphone at the console and welcomed the invited guests, who continued to chatter. Ed played a record of a 1938 BBC Foort broadcast, then down came a screen and we saw part of a Pathetone newsreel about the "wonder organ" with Foort demonstrating the effects possible e.g. a steam train taking off. Using a split screen, Foort supplied the "choo-choos" and whistle while the other half of the screen concentrated on the moving wheels of a locomotive.

The filmed Foort then started the "William Tell Overture." This was picked up by the "in person" Foort playing the Moller. It was a well planned intro but wasted on an inattentive crowd. To further complicate matters, the very complex PA system went into a tantrum and distorted the voices of all who used it to sound like Donald Duck.

Despite the annoyances and display of audience bad manners, Foort went through his planned program with all the skill a lifetime of devotion to the organ has developed. It was possible to hear the music by

getting as close to the massive glass swell shutters as possible. During the program Reg. Foort played his radio theme "When You're Smiling," "Slavonic Rhapsody," "You're the Cream in My Coffee," "Lover, Lullabye of Broadway," a nautical medley with "Sailors' Hornpipe," "Anchors Aweigh," a bit of Mendelssohn's "Fingals Cave Overture" with storm effects, then Grieg's "Morning," "Show Me the Way to Go Home," "California Here I Come" and "Home Sweet Home," a complete adventure in music. The surprise was a version of Sousa's "Stars & Stripes Forever" quite unlike anyone else's. He treated it more as an Eric Coates concert piece than a military march. His harmonization and continual key changes were offbeat from the start and he moved the various sections around to accommodate his radically different treatment but left the trio's piccolo ornamentation intact. He ended on a roof-raising full organ chord which drowned out the incessant gab long enough to alert the audience that it was a cue for applause. Perhaps a "pizza parlor" audience is less inter-



ested in the music than the munchables, but this was a selected audience which had been invited to a special pre-opening concert. Apparently many present failed to grasp the historical significance of the event nor were they touched by the magnificence of Reginald Foort's music — all of this prior to the serving of the first pizza. Several pleas were made for the audience to "pipe down," one by Foort himself: "If you aren't quiet, you won't hear it at all, so, to all who came here to talk — please stop." The gab level continued. Of course it was "old home day" for many who had not seen fellow buffs for ages, and a pizza parlor isn't exactly the same as a concert hall. Yet, Reg. Foort deserved more respect than he got. The free flowing beverages contributed to the decibel level of "vox populi."

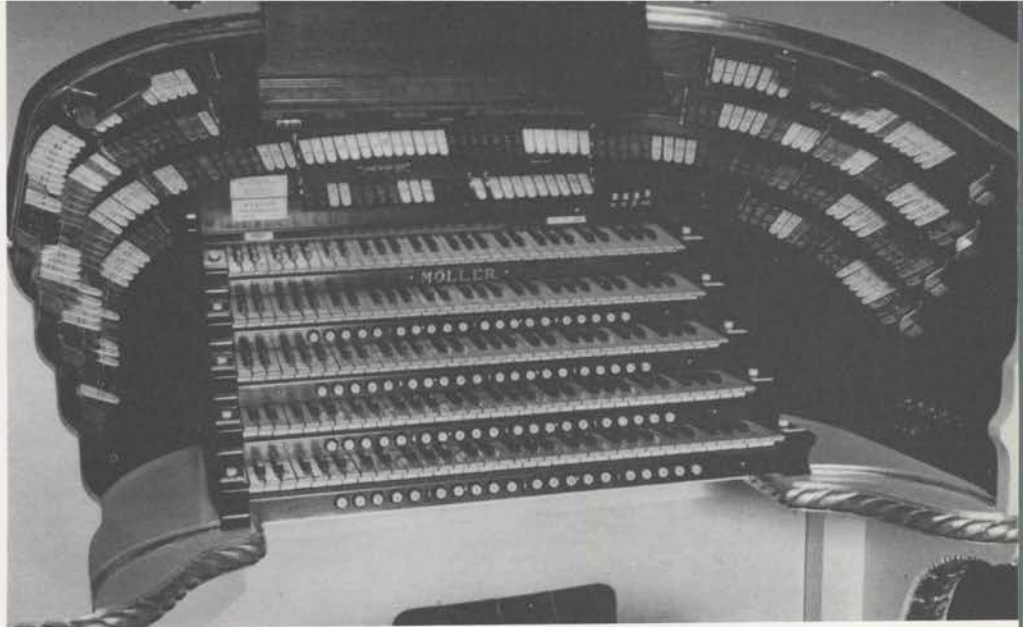
A story describing the building of ORGAN POWER No. 2, sketches about the installers, organ technicians and the staff organists will appear in an upcoming issue of THEATRE ORGAN.

Despite the distractions, we were able to arrive at several conclusions:

- 1) Reg. Foort still "has it."
- 2) His 5/27 Moller is more concert than theatre organ, comparable in tonal makeup to the LA Elks Temple 4/61 Robert Morton.
- 3) The instrument is ideal for its present location; the many solo voices available give it an edge on smaller instruments in similar set-ups.
- 4) Moller was rarely, if ever, able to produce the schmaltzy theatrical Tibia voice. But Moller's Reeds are outstanding. So is their ensemble sound.
- 5) The Moller's new home is acoustically ideal.
- 6) ORGAN POWER pizza is tasty.

The press preview ended around 11:00 p.m. after a number of ORGAN POWER'S staffers had given samples of their artistic endeavors. They were all good, and we hope subsequent pizza munchers will give them more attention than the preview crowd did.

As the last of the first night audience left, Ed Barr took out his list of things that had to be done before the public would be admitted on the following evening. High on the list were the words "PA system." □



Console Closeup. 300 stopkeys, 100 pistons, quadruple stoprail, 5 manuals, plus control of Style D Wurlitzer ranks — a total of 34 ranks. Total weight (all parts) — 60,000 pounds.



Lots of 'Organ Power' in this group of Press Preview guests. Left to right: Bill Brown (three theatre organs), Dick Loderhose (five theatre organs), Bill Barker (one 3/10 Wurlitzer), and Wayne Gilbert (one 10-rank Robert Morton). The guy at the right end (holding 'Stufoto Brownie') just happened to wander onto the scene as the photo was snapped. He says he toots a lung-powered 'one-rank Conn Songflute.'

Photo made on opening night (to the public) shows staffer Chris Gorsuch entertaining at the Moller. The grand piano is at his left and the Style D console at the right. Double-decked glass swell shutters control the volume. The four at the left are for the Main Chamber. The Solo (right) has a similar set of four but only two are shown in this photo. Plate glass windows between shutter sets, from floor to ceiling, help the visual aspects.



**NUGGETS
from the
GOLDEN
DAYS**



Prospected by Lloyd E. Klos

With Christmas upon us, let's turn back the clock and see what was happening in December during those glorious years of the theatre organ. Sources were Diapason (D), Jacobs (J), Metronome (Met.), Motion Picture Hearld (MPH) and local press (LP).

1924 (LP) *At the Liberty Theatre in Seattle*, OLIVER WALLACE, the World's premier organist, was in concert, introducing his latest ballad success "Roll Along." The film feature is "Hot Water" with Harold Lloyd.

1926 (J) FRANK ANDERSON has been organist at the Iris Theatre in Los Angeles since 1924.

1927 (J) *One of the most deservedly popular of New York's many photoplay organists is FREDERICK KINSLEY of Keith's Hippodrome. Mr. Kinsley, a pupil of Jepson, is a Yale graduate. He first came to the Hippodrome some six years ago when the big shows which delighted New York kiddies and their parents were in full sway. He played with the orchestra and also gave short recitals during the intermissions.*

The instrument at that time was an antiquated Midmer and, in common with many of the older theatre organs, completely buried behind the stage. When Keith took over the house for vaudeville, Mr. Kinsley was retained because of the excellent impression his work had created. It is the impression that he was the first organist to introduce feature solos on a vaudeville program. He then engaged in a brief period of playing at other theatres, meeting

with excellent success at the Cameo, the Strand, the Rialto and Warner's, where he followed John Hammond at the really beautiful Marr & Colton. This excellent organ is now going to waste, as the policy of features with Vitaphone accompaniment seems to have come to stay at this house.

Kinsley is also a pioneer in the field of recorded organ music, making the First Edison organ records. He has made over 60 of these, and each month sees two or three new releases. He is again back at the Hippodrome, playing a splendid four-manual Wurlitzer, assisted by JOHN C. PFEIFFER, and has also been doing some successful radio work in the Welte Mignon recitals, using their beautiful organ.

A large part of Mr. Kinsley's success is due to the attractive and genial personality reflected in his solo work; a personality which is exceptionally alive, original and charming.

1927 (J) EDWARD EIGENSCHENCK and MARION SETARO gave a joint recital at Kimball Hall in Chicago recently.

1927 (J) FRANK KLOTZ had to leave his position at the Liberty Theatre in Enumclaw, Wash. because of illness. (Any relation to Stu Green's friend, Effie?)

1927 (J) HERBERT H. JOHNSON, formerly with the Jayhawk Theatre in Topeka, Kansas, is the organist in Rochester's new Webster Theatre, playing the 2/7 Wurlitzer.

1927 (J) C. SHARPE MINOR is chief organist at the new Rochester Theatre. HARRY SULLIVAN is associate organist.

1927 (Met.) ARTHUR STRENG, Columbus, Ohio organist, is visiting Chicago because of a musicians' strike back home.

1927 (Met.) MILTON CHARLES has left Chicago, presumably for New York. KENNETH WIDENOR has succeeded Charles, alternating between the Uptown and Tivoli theatres with EDDIE HANSON.

1927 (Met.) LEONARD SALVO, popular organist in Chicago's Colony Theatre, has been transferred to the Highland Theatre.

1928 (MPH) TOM GRIERSON opens Rochester's Keith's Palace 4/21 Wurlitzer Special on Christmas Eve.

1930 (D) EDWARD BENEDICT and son, GARDNER BENEDICT

are a piano-organ team at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago, playing classical and popular music. A far western hook-up of stations carries the 15-minute program of this duo from Wednesday to Saturday.

1931 (MPH) JOSEPH STOVES, organist at the Valencia Theatre in Jamaica, N.Y., presented a community singing novelty which was both entertaining and topical. It is called "Football Fancies" and it incorporates a number of specially written versions together with some good, singable tunes. The solo opens with a special chorus to the tune, "Collegiate," which is about the audience's being the players and the organist, the coach. This is followed by regular singing choruses of "You Try Somebody Else," "Love Letters" and a special to "Roll on Mississippi," "River Stay 'way From My Door," special to "Gang's All Here," and a final chorus, backed up with scenes of football games on film as the organist plays "Anchor's Aweigh." A good solo, well presented and thoroughly enjoyed.

GOLD DUST: 12/27 DICK LEIBERT opens 5-manual Robert Morton at Loew's Penn, Pittsburgh; GEORGE A. JOHNSON, Omaha's Riviera; HENRI A. KEATES, Chicago's Oriental; RUTH GORMAN FARLEY, Cooney's Capitol Wurlitzer, Chicago, ARTHUR HAYES, Midland in Kansas City, Mo.; HERBERT (Herbie) LEE KOCH, Des Moines' Capitol; GEORGE LANTSCH, Plaza in Englewood, N. Jersey. . . 12/28 HENRY B. MURTAGH and GEORGE A. JOHNSON at the twin-console Wurlitzer in Brooklyn's Paramount.

The Old Prospector can remember those Christmases of long ago. Invariably we came down with what was called the grippe, around the Yuletide season, just like clockwork, too. However, Santa Claus never failed to bring a present. Remember the pressed steel toys known as "Buddy L's"? One was always under the big tree on Christmas morning. And, you couldn't break them the first hour. They lasted!

A Very Merry Christmas and a most prosperous New Year from . . .

Jason and The Old Prospector. □

"In most issues of THEATRE ORGAN magazine, I read fascinating biographies of former theatre organists, and very often, mention is made of someone with whom I have worked or been associated. During the 1972 ATOS Convention in the Potomac Valley area, there were many of my friends and former associates there, and some whom I had not met previously but who approached me and said, 'Well, Billy Barnes! I've often wondered whatever happened to you! What have you been doing all these years? You look just as you always did.'

"Of course, that was the remark which impressed me most. After a lot of explanation, many of them said, 'Why don't you write up all of this for the ATOS magazine?' So, having given it a lot of thought and with a lot of urging from my friend and ATOS member Wallace W. Baumann, a native of Knoxville, Ten., I'm going to tell you in my own way what a wonderful life I've had as an organist for over 50 years. I've had opportunities thrown my way (and a few eggs, I may add!), have met people and visited places I would never have enjoyed had I not been an organist.

"There is no better place to start than my home town of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where I landed into the world on September 11, 1906 in a most unmusical family. However, after I had gained some modicum of success, my mother claimed that my talent came from *her* side of the family, while my father insisted it came from *his* side! Be that as it may, I'm glad I received it from one side or the other!

"When my sister was nine, my father bought her a piano. I was five then and from the beginning, I was obsessed with the idea of learning to play it. After my sister had lessons for about a year, her teacher decided to give me a try. It was no time at all before the teacher realized I had some talent and, although my father discouraged the idea, I was allowed to continue the lessons.

"Never will I forget my first recital, a duet with my sister which was held in a small schoolhouse in Hanestown, 12 miles from Winston-Salem. The preparation for, and the transportation to, the recital still are the basis of great merriment in our family. I was six then.

HARK! Ten Thousand Vox Humanas

THE BILLY BARNES STORY

Transcribed
and edited
by
Lloyd E. Klos



In the fifties, Billy spent several years touring the Sheraton Hotel circuit. (Barnes coll.)

"My sister wore her hair in flats around her head with a huge dog-ear bow of ribbon, fastened at the back. She wore an especially-made pink dress, made of the latest material, decorated in pink rosebuds. She wore high-top, black buttoned shoes. Today, she wouldn't be caught dead in such an outfit! I wore a dark blue suit with knee pants, white shirt, and a large bow tie which stuck out so far I could hardly see the piano keys!

"To get to Hanestown, we went in a Model T Ford, owned by my teacher's daughter, and replete with isinglass curtains. We were cramped like sardines as there were others who went along. To top it off, it poured rain! There weren't too many paved roads, and the car was covered with mud by the time we arrived at the recital hall.

"The program included other students in the area, and the teacher thought the event would boost her reputation, but after hearing us, I have my doubts! My sister and I played 'Pure As Snow,' the teacher sitting beside the piano, counting time with a stick. However, that recital was my undoing, for that night, I realized I was a ham, and come what may, vowed to be a musician. The taste of the applause was too great and it was like a shot in the arm.

"It wasn't long after this that my teacher turned me over to her son who had returned home to live. He was an excellent pianist and organist, having studied with a fine English organist — strictly classical and church. But he soon found that I was not one to confine myself to one type of music.

"Meanwhile, we moved to a house which was on a corner where the streetcars stopped to unload the local baseball players, and I soon found I could work a gimmick. Our parlor, which housed the piano, had a window, almost at ground level. As the ball players walked past this window enroute to and from the ball park, I timed my practice periods, playing loud when they came by. They stopped to listen, and eventually I got free passes to the ball games.

"Some of the players would come into the house so I could play their favorite numbers. One was an expert on the harmonica, and we played

duets. This was a lot of fun! How we used to go to town on some of those old-time tunes!

"I began hanging around the sheet music counters in the five-and-ten-cent stores, and listened to the girl pianists demonstrate the latest songs. I guess they felt sorry for me, looking so longingly at the piano, for eventually they let me sit in.

"My first job in music was at Woolworth's behind the music counter. I'd go there after school and play until 6 p.m., and all day on Saturday. The pay was \$3.50 a week which was a huge amount to me then. With my first week's pay, I bought my mother a dozen red roses, and spent the rest of it on chocolate-covered cherries, on which I became ill. I never have looked at another chocolate-covered cherry since!

"None of the motion picture houses in Winston-Salem had an organ then, but used a feature piano player and an assistant. After my success at Woolworth's, I decided to get into the movie-playing business. I used to go to the Saturday evening shows at one theatre which had occasional stage reviews, and sit behind the woman who played, doing this before the Woolworth job, but when working, spent my lunch hours and Saturday supper breaks at the theatre. I became acquainted with the pianist, remembering her name well, but for reasons coming up, prefer to keep it to myself. Let me digress a moment.

"When I was a youngster, the movies were in their infancy, and I do mean 'infancy.' The first movie I remember was presented in a place with no roof, but had an enclosure on three sides with the screen in front, no doubt a forerunner of the drive-in movie. We sat on rough, backless benches to watch the flickers thrown onto the white screen. And they were really flickers! The characters jumped around as if they were on a hot stove. The entire presentation was such an apparition that it scared me to death and I had to be taken from the theatre, (If it could be called that!). I sure wish I knew what that movie was. It's probably being shown today as a classic.

"Later, the movie theatres began using player pianos, in some places as a relief for the feature pianists, and how well I remember the piano

roll, playing the 'Barcarolle' from *The Tales of Hoffman* for every scene, over and over and over! But hearing the pianists was an inspiration for me to practice. I felt sure that is what I wanted to do, having visions of the kids' envy at school because I'd get to see all the movies free.

"So after meeting the aforementioned pianist, she allowed me to sub for her. She had one room fixed up backstage where she could relax during her breaks. I found out that when I'd relieve her, she'd go to her room and instead of taking a nap, she'd take a nip — or two. Many times, I'd have to get her back on the job when my stint was over. Ironically, the management found out what was happening, fired her, and gave me the job. He would have found out earlier if there hadn't been a long curtain between pianist and audience.

"If memory serves correctly, some of the pictures I played were *Polly of the Circus* with Mae Marsh (1917); *Orphans of the Storm* with Dorothy and Lillian Gish (1922); *Way Down East* with Richard Barthelmess and Lillian Gish (1920), and vamp pictures with Louise Glaum and Theda Bara. *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) was presented as a road show with its traveling orchestra, but later releases were played by the pit pianist. I have often wondered if they realized what they had started by using 'The Perfect Song' in this picture as a love theme, which everyone in later years credited to *Amos 'n' Andy*. (Organists Dean Fossler and Gaylord Carter played it on radio.)

"Few persons realize the excellent music which was used in the scores of many of the movies in those days. The Tschaiikowsky 'Humoresque' was used as a theme in *Way Down East* for the two old women's gossiping scene. Incidentally, when in Richmond, Va., recently, I was in a music store and heard a recording of this fine piece of music being played on a high-fi, which I hadn't heard since I played it for the picture. 'The Raindrop Prelude' and the overture to the third act of *Lohengrin* were used in the *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, starring Rudolph Valentino.

"One of the first things a pianist did after being hired for a movie house was to purchase the Belwin

Picture Library which consisted of hurries, agitados, misteriosos, love themes — something for every mood. The names of Zamecnik; Berge; Savino (who also wrote under the name of Onivas — Savino spelled backward); Lutz, whose son is still carrying on in the music business; Gabrielle Marie, a French Composer; plus others, were on every cue sheet.

"When this music was being used, I was playing piano during the last year of grammar school, and the first two years of high school, and all this time, continuing with piano lessons. It wasn't long after taking over for my nipping friend, I got a better job at a vaudeville theatre in town which ran five acts on a three-day run. There was a small orchestra which played the vaudeville and part of the picture, and then I'd relieve them. The music was put in front of me and I *had* to play it — wonderful sight-reading experience. Again, I had to sit in many times for the orchestra pianist who was also a nipper!

"I made many friends who were in vaudeville and who have become famous names on radio, TV and records. The vaudeville in this part of the country was booked out of the Keith office in New York by Jules Delmar. Hence, tours were called The Delmar Time. Delmar was married to a performer, Jeanette Hackett, and in the late twenties, the two produced a marvelous Broadway show called *Delmar's Revels* which starred Patsy Kelly, Bert Lahr and others on their way to success.

"The Lincoln Theatre had been built in Winston-Salem in which was installed a one-manual Wurlitzer player organ with traps and pedals. I used to walk three miles to this theatre in the early morning before school, two or three times a week, to learn all I could about this instrument. I thought it just great — the living end!

"During my summer vacation, after my second year in high school, when I had an offer to play the organ in the Strand Theatre in Ashville, N. Car., I at least knew how to turn one on and had a pretty good idea of how to cue a movie. Also, the 450-seat Broadway Theatre in Winston-Salem had installed a Wurlitzer 105 on which I practiced before ac-

cepting the Ashville job.

"When the organ was installed in the Broadway Theatre, an organist, Mrs. Grant E. Lynn, was brought in from Washington. She and her husband were organists in the Earle Theatre in the nation's capital, and Mrs. Lynn played the opening of this fine theatre organ. I learned a lot from her in the short time she was in Winston-Salem. A short time later, a theatre in Salisbury, N. Car., installed a larger organ and Mr. and Mrs. Lynn went to live there permanently.

"In mentioning Washington's Earle Theatre, I am reminded of the 1922 disaster, five blocks away, at the Knickerbocker Theatre, one of the finest theatres in the country, with a large orchestra and a tremendous organ. There was a big snowfall which deposited tons of the white stuff on the roof. The organist came in to relieve the orchestra, and the vibration of the rumbling bass notes caused the roof to collapse. There were 98 killed, 133 injured and both architect and owner took their lives.

"Upon my arrival in Ashville, I rented a room in the home of a prominent family who somewhat took me under their wing, and a good thing, too, because, three weeks later, I came down with the mumps, which gives you a good idea how young I was to be traveling and considering myself a full-fledged theatre organist. But, I had some good fortune, also. After a week at the Strand, I was transferred to the Imperial Theatre where there was a two-manual Robert Morton, built by Wicks. I worked with a very fine English organist by the name of Alderson, who was also the organist at the Grove Park Inn which had a big four-manual concert organ. This I never got a chance to play, because Alderson guarded it with his life. But, the organ in the Imperial had the slowest action I ever experienced. We often joked that we could play a piece, walk to the back of the theatre and hear it!

"One of the pictures which stands out in my mind during that engagement was *The Painted Lady* (1924) with Dorothy MacKail and George O'Brien. I understand Dorothy is retired and lives in Honolulu. Also, I remember Betty Compson, Anna Q. Nielsen and Mahlon Hamilton in

The Rustle of Silk (1923). (About 1953 while playing the Sheraton Hotel chain, I met Betty Compson and told her of my playing this picture. She laughed heartily and said 'You must have been a babe in arms!' I mentioned the coat, trimmed with fox fur which she wore in the movie, and she explained that it was her's, not the wardrobe department's. Betty was connected with the House of Hollywood Cosmetics and she looked wonderful. She was very kind and invited me to spend some time in Hollywood with her mother and her).

"Before going to my next job, I had a few days free during which I visited a very fine pianist whom I knew, Joe King, of Terre Haute, Ind. Joe in later years became a theatre organist, but at that time, was playing piano in the Indiana Theatre in Terre Haute. Also, I visited two movie theatres having organs which increased my desire to be a theatre organist.

"About the end of my summer vacation in Ashville, I had an offer from the Mason-Stallings Theatre Co. in Kinston, N. Car. The salary was better — \$35 a week, which looked wonderful to me, so I took it. The picture I opened at the fine two-manual Robert Morton was *Peter Pan* (1925) with Betty Bronson and Ernest Torrence. (I understand that Betty married and lives in Ashville). During my one-month tenure in Kinston, I helped produce and act in a local stage show for one whom I'll never forget — Marie Davenport.

"School days were imminent when I received an offer from Richmond, Va., at more pay, which was a major inducement. My boss in Kinston was so reluctant to see me leave that he refused to pay my last two weeks' salary. In those days, one could not appeal to the union for there was none in small towns. I borrowed the money for train fare from a friend, promised to send the board money to the lady where I stayed, and was on my way. The money was soon paid to both persons.

"The theatres in which I were to play in Richmond were owned by Jake Wells who also owned the local baseball team, and his general manager was Harry Bernstein. It took a lot of persuading to get my parents' permission to continue playing in the theatre, and to continue my

schooling in Richmond. One factor was the opportunity to study with a fine organist, Flaxington Harker of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. He is still remembered for his fine composition 'How Beautiful Upon the Mountains' which is from one of his Christmas contatas.

"Harker was interested in running an academic school as well as an organ school and that was just what I was looking for. I could learn and play at the same time. He was a very fine man and I learned a lot from him, but unfortunately, his academic school was not successful.

"After a week at the Class B Isis Theatre in Richmond, I was sent to the beautiful 1500-seat Colonial Theatre, a very plush movie house. Marion Davies, Buddy Rogers, Richard Arlen, Louise Brooks and all the wonderful stars from the Paramount Acting School paraded across the screen in those days to my accompaniment. We had an orchestra and a two-manual Robert Morton, made by Wicks.

"Richmond was a unique theatre town. Within two blocks on one side of Broad Street, there were seven movie houses, including the Colonial and the 1500-seat National. Across the street, there were two others, a legitimate house, the Academy, and a vaudeville theatre, the Lyric, which went to pictures and installed a Marr & Colton organ. I was at the Colonial a short time when Bernstein sent me to the National. To me, so impressionable at that age, this was the greatest! There was an orchestra with Bert Hollowell as conductor and a very fine two-manual Robert Morton with an echo division. I can honestly say that this was one of the most beautifully voiced organs I ever heard.

"Greta Garbo and John Gilbert were making movies in those days. The National also had stage attractions and one of the popular groups booked was Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians. This was real entertainment. The orchestra played the overture, the organist a solo. People came in evening clothes, the show started at a special time, and no one was seated during the performance. Popcorn, chewing gum and candy were not sold.

"There were a couple of intimate, family-owned theatres in Richmond. One of them, the 600-seat Brook-

land, a neighborhood house, had a fine three-manual Wurlitzer. This was the envy of all us downtown organists, for not only was the organ tops, but it was played by a splendid organist who became a favorite in that area, Carl Rond. He has long since passed on.

"It was in the middle twenties that the 750-seat Capitol Theatre was built in Richmond, a beautiful neighborhood house with a two-manual Robert Morton. I was offered the job there at more money and again abetted myself financially. I recall playing *The Scarlet Letter* (1926) with Lillian Gish and Lars Hanson. Later, I would live in the same house, Woodlodge, in Mamaroneck, N.Y., where the Gish sisters had lived when they were making *Orphans of the Storm* for D.W. Griffith at his studio on Travers Island.

"When I was playing in Richmond, there was in another theatre there a fine organist, exceptional in accompanying movies, but very eccentric. (In this field, one met the unusual and eccentric as well as some very fine people). A friend of Francis X. Bushman, he had started years before when Vitagraph's studios were in Jacksonville, Fla. When a coming movie was announced, he'd ask for the stills from the picture and would practice for weeks, studying the makeup of the leading lady! When he played the movie (and this is the truth!), he never sat at the console unless he was made up as near as possible to the leading lady!

"In later years, this organist did an act, using hats and wigs similar to the leading ladies in the movies he played: Mary Pickford with the curls, Norma Talmadge and her extensive makeup, etc. He'd play the themes from the movies and reach over to don wigs or hats!

"Every organist's dream was to get to New York. We all read the writings about the glorious Paramount with the Crawford, Milton Charles in Chicago and countless others. But New York beckoned to me. I had met a woman who lived there and who was a great encouragement to me. So it was arranged that I should give up my position in Richmond and visit her, pending my landing an engagement. The young people nowadays can't imagine the glamour in New York in those years!

What stage shows! What nightclubs! What speakeasies! What theatres! And what theatre organs!

"Before arriving in New York, I had planned a certain strategy. After a couple days in my friend's home in Mamaroneck, I ventured into the big city. The Wurlitzer Organ Company's building on 42nd Street had a small theatre with a two-manual organ in it. They held auditions, and the man in charge of this was named Hunnekus. I forgot his first name, but years later, entertained him and his bride in Berlin on their honeymoon. With fear and trembling, I went to see him. He was most kind and asked me to return the next day to play for the man who was in charge of hiring organists for a large chain of theatres. I had no idea who he could be.

"However, the next day, I returned and met Morris Press who auditioned organists for Paramount-Publix. After hearing me, he asked if I ever played the organ 'across the street,' as he put it. I questioned him about it and he said he was referring to the organ in the Paramount, the Queen Mother of all Wurlitzers! This was almost unbelievable! I was to go to the theatre and practice a few days to acquaint myself with the instrument.

"During this period, I played silent movies at the Rialto Theatre at the corner of 42nd Street and Broadway. The 1960-seat Rialto was still a fine movie house in spite of the competition with the Paramount, Roxy and Capitol. The orchestra there was directed by Joseph Littau and the organ was a 3/15 Wurlitzer. One of the ushers was Robert Weitman who is now one of the biggest names in the motion picture industry, having his own production company on the West Coast. A fellow organist was Tom Borsa who was a fine musician and whose name I've never seen mentioned in the magazines.

"After the last show at the Rialto, I would go to the Paramount for a midnight practice period. Several times, Mr. Crawford would be practicing, which meant I'd get up early the next morning for my sessions. There were Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Crawford as featured organists; Sigmund Krungold, an excellent organist and musician, played the movies; and Egon Putz. I suppose

if our names were listed in order of importance, I'd be at the bottom of the above list. It was usually my duty to play the last show after I was given the job as assistant organist.

"While I was at the Paramount, Mr. and Mrs. Crawford vacationed in Florida and Sigmund Krungold took over the solo spot. He featured a remarkable organ transcription of Mendelsohn's "Rondo Capriccioso." This was a novel experience for the Paramount audiences, and to prove how much it was enjoyed, Variety gave Krungold a sensational write-up, and he deserved it! Soon after, Mr. Krungold was no longer at the Paramount.

"One of the most impressive things Mr. and Mrs. Crawford did while I was there was a tribute to the Metropolitan Opera. Slides were shown, giving brief descriptions of an Opera while they played excerpts from the score, ending it with "The Pilgrims' Chorus" from *Tannhaeuser*, with Mrs. Crawford doing the rhythmic work on her console and Mr. Crawford playing the tremendous melody line on the main console. It was just the greatest!

"John Murray Anderson produced the glorious stage presentations in those years which were nothing short of sensational. How one man could think of so many ideas for each week's show, I'll never understand. Not only was there an orchestra in the pit, but there was a stage band, directed by Lou Kosloff until Paul Ash came from Chicago to lead it. Those were the days of real theatre.

"Pauline Alpert, the wonderful pianist (heard on so many player piano rolls) was featured in a stage presentation at the Paramount which was called *The Phantom Piano*. The instrument was suspended by cables and covered with aluminum paint. With all the house lights out, the effect was just fantastic! Pauline wore gloves, covered with the same material. Once, a tragedy almost occurred when a cable broke! Fortunately, the others held.

"I should make mention of the fabulous 4/21 Wurlitzer which was installed on the ninth floor of the Paramount Building for practice, recording and broadcasting. It was

an unusual installation. The two consoles were strictly skeletons; there was no wood work around the manuals, and you could see all the innards. But, it was a fabulous and wonderful experience to hear this organ. Mr. and Mrs. Crawford practiced their duets there.

"By the end of the twenties, the talkies were making inroads in the movie business and great changes were taking place. Orchestras were being let out, and organists were either good enough to be soloists, or were called only when the theatre needed background music for short subjects. Luckily for me, I was offered the soloist spot at the 3327-seat Loew's State Theatre, a top vaudeville and picture house on Broadway. This was in 1928.

"Before I went into the State, Loew's had an emergency in Harrisburg, Pa., and I was sent with great ballyhoo to the 1600-seat Regent Theatre. I played a 2/7 Wurlitzer for a 3-week special showing of *Ramona* with Dolores Del Rio, and I'll never forget the party the stage manager gave me the night before I left. There was everything possible to eat and too much to drink. But the thing which stands out at this banquet (and that's what it should be called) was the limburger cheese and German rye bread they have in Pennsylvania. It was really wonderful!

"Loew's State in New York had a four-manual Moller which wasn't bad. Very few people realize that Moller, Kimball and several of the present church organ manufacturers had built very good theatre organs. In turn, Wurlitzer made some good church organs. There was a pit orchestra for vaudeville in the State, conducted by a fine musician, Ruby Zwerling. The organ was played for the solo spots and with the orchestra for the overtures.

"During those years, Remick Music Co. employed Cliff Hess, who was a master of writing special material. (I wish I had some of the clever slide solos he made for me, but they were all smashed in shipping). Cliff did a lot for organists, had time to listen to our complaints etc. When the movie producers started making 2-reel shorts and most of the musicals, more and more of Cliff's time was taken by this work. If I'm not mistaken, he wrote

the first musical Bing Crosby was in. Many of the first talking pictures were produced in the Paramount Studios in Astoria, Long Island.

"While at the State Theatre, I broadcast on WPAP and WHN. On Sundays, deviating from the popular music, I usually had a guest artist. One broadcast I remember had Beatrice Posamanick, a concert pianist, and we did the Grieg *A-Minor Concerto*. I played the orchestra score on the organ while she did the piano solo part. A very popular composition then was 'Rhapsody in Blue.' *Variety* was very kind to me, saying that 'the organ in the State Theatre has seen a lot of usage, but this fellow, Billy Barnes, is certainly something of a pip, and we all enjoy him.'

"About this time, rumor was that Earl Carroll was going to produce a *Vanities* show with seven organ consoles in a spectacular scene on the stage. If this had been in the days of the electronic instruments, this rumor might have had more foundation. However, every organist on Broadway had visions of appearing in Carroll's *Vanities* at one of these consoles. Maybe that well-known over-the-door slogan might have been changed to 'Thru These Portals Pass the Most Wonderful Organists in the World,' instead of 'Thru These Portals Pass the Most Beautiful Girls in the World.' But like so many Broadway rumors, this was only a dream. There were plenty of organists who applied, including myself.

"At this point, I believe credit should be given to several organists who did so much for the silent movie and theatre business in New York who have rarely been mentioned in these pages. At Loew's Lexington was the excellent Marsh McCurdy. He came from Chicago, eventually returning there and has passed away. George H. Latsch had a fine reputation in the New York area. At one of the small uptown theatres, there was Bess Shugart, a fine musician who in later years became a good church organist. Fred Feibel was at the Rivoli, Arlo Hults at a theatre in Long Island and John Gart, an excellent musician and arranger, was playing in Loew's Metropolitan.

"It is very interesting to me that many of the big theatres are being 'modernized' and made into double

theatres — one downstairs and one upstairs. When I played Loew's State, there was a theatre building like this between 44th and 45th streets called Loew's New Yorker. Upstairs, Mr. Ernest Lutz and his assistant, Carl Von Lawrence cued all the music for the pictures run in Loew's theatres. There was also a conference room for meetings with the chain's organists. One can't envision the acres and acres of music which were stored in stacks in Mr. Lutz's department, requiring a ladder to reach some of it. But it was so wonderfully arranged and indexed that they could get any piece within a couple minutes. I've often wondered what happened to this immense collection of music. It astounded the imagination!"

In the December 1928 copy of *Around the Town*, published in New York and Chicago, appeared the following: "Bill Barnes, one of the youngest organists in the country, is featured at the Loew's State Theatre in New York. Barnes plays only restricted, high-class numbers, has personality and is a great artist. He and 'Skeet' Haithcox have recently composed a number titled 'Drifting Along.' The piece is handled by the Clarence Williams Publishing Co. and will soon be released."

"In those days, pipe organs in the homes of the wealthy were status symbols. Through one of the Rialto musicians, I made contact with William K. Vanderbilt who had a three-manual Aeolian player organ in his Mediterranean-style villa in Greenlawn, Long Island. He agreed to let me synchronize my theatre work with playing in his home, but sometimes I had to engage a substitute for the theatre. I'd take the Long Island Railroad to Greenlawn, where a chauffeur drove me to the home. I'd play, then the process was reversed. This was wonderful experience, and made possible only because of my theatre work and a great love of what I was doing. The home is now a museum and the lawns and gardens are a public park.

"In 1929, a friend who had great success in Australia as a singer, invited me to visit his family in England. I arranged a leave of absence from the State Theatre to make the trip. Rose Diamond followed me into the State, being a

friend of Ruby Zwering, the musical director. Since I was an employee of Loew's, I had access to their office in London. The personnel there saw that I had a wonderful time, and I was invited to play the famous Empire Theatre's four-manual Wurlitzer in Leicester Square.

("At the 1972 ATOS Convention, many of us went to Miller & Rhodes' Tea Room in Richmond to hear Eddie Weaver play. There was a party of about 14, seated near us, who were from England. I made myself known to them, and learned that the Leicester Square Wurlitzer I had played 43 years previously is now in the home of Len Rawle, son of one of the English couples present.)

"Being in England was just great. My friend had a place adjoining the estate of the Duke of Northumberland. It was June, and the beauty of those English gardens is impossible to describe. While in London, I had an offer to work for B. Feldman and his music publishing house because of my showing him some of my compositions. I have often wondered what the years would have brought had I accepted the position.

"Subsequently, I went to Paris. There was some talk of my playing the organ in the Gaumont Palace Theatre, but this didn't materialize.

It was in Berlin where I found the pot at the end of the rainbow. Walter Pierce, who had the Wurlitzer franchise for all Europe, I'd hoped to meet in London, but luckily met in Berlin. He made me an offer to remain in Berlin which was too good to turn down. On the Unter den Linden, between the famous Adlon and Bristol hotels, was a small, unique, but beautiful cinema, Die Kamera, which Wurlitzer used as a showcase. Installed was a two-manual Wurlitzer, Opus 2015, and everything about it was excellent. This was still a silent movie house which we'd call a 'classic cinema.' Pierce sold a number of organs as the result of Die Kamera's installation.

"During these years, Berlin was a glorious city. It was full of entertainers from every country, and there were many innovations introduced into the night clubs and theatres at that time. The Femina Restaurant and Nightclub was the first to have telephones from table to table. The 'ladies of the evening' could all be identified by their white fox fur pieces; that is, the *better breed* ladies of the evening. Know what I mean?

"I was in Berlin awhile before returning to the United States to play for my sister's wedding. Then, I got a cable to return to Berlin to open

the two-manual Wurlitzer, Opus 2019, in the Ufa Palast Am Zoo. The Ufa was Berlin's leading moving picture palace with an orchestra, organ, stage shows, etc. When the organ was installed, the theatre gave a series of Sunday concerts, featuring the organ (or 'orgel' as it is called in Germany), the orchestra and great artists. For one concert, the entire program was turned over to a fine pianist, Adam Gelbrunk, and myself at the organ. We did the 'Hungarian Fantasia' by Liszt, the Greig 'A-Minor Concerto' and 'Rhapsody in Blue,' among others. The program was well received.

("Moving to Paris during those fatal years in Germany, Adam changed his name to Adam Garner, where he organized the First Piano Quartet which came to the United States and was featured on radio, records and tours for more than 30 years. Adam and I remained close friends until his death in 1970).

"When I first went to Berlin, Walter Pierce was in the process of installing a four-manual Wurlitzer in the home of a very fine gentleman, Werner Von Siemens, one of Germany's leading industrialists. The Siemens family were very charming, entertained lavishly, and at their home, I seem to have met everyone of importance who visited Europe. I played there often for teas, musicales and all types of events. The hall in which the organ was located was an addition which Siemens had built to his already spacious mansion. I asked his 16-year-old son how large the house was. His reply was, 'We live in only 30 rooms unless we're entertaining.'

"The organ console sat on a platform at the rear wall of the concert hall. On either side of the console were four concert grand pianos, one a Steinway and one a Beckstein with single keyboards and the others a Steinway and a Beckstein, both with multiple keyboards, a Moore invention. Having an organ in one's home is a luxury, but imagine having two! In the drawing room, there was a two-manual Christie, and I rather looked down my nose at that!

"The pipes for the Wurlitzer were housed in four rooms, two on either side of the console and rising two stories. This organ was severely damaged by fire in July 1962 and was rebuilt by Pfc. Marvin Merchant, a

Billy Barnes and Adam Gelbrunk (L) check score for concert in the Ufa-Palast Am Zoo in Berlin. Gelbrunk later changed his name to "Garner" and organized the First Piano Quartet which acquired nationwide fame through tours, records etc. The organ here was a Wurlitzer style 200 special. (Barnes coll.)



G.I. stationed in Germany. (See THEATRE ORGAN, Summer 1964) If Mr. Merchant reads this, he will be interested to know I was the first person to play the organ after installation.

"Herr von Siemens was a fine conductor and on occasion would lead the Berlin Philharmonic. There were many times when he would have the entire orchestra from Die Stadt Opera at his home and conduct a private concert for his friends.

"As all good things come to an end, and the German Government would not extend my stay, I was invited by a friend in Austria, who wrote for the movies, to visit him as he thought I'd have an opportunity there. Through him, I secured an offer to play the Apollo Cinema in Vienna which had a two-manual Christie organ on an elevator. This was strictly a solo position as the theatre showed sound films, one of them a German version of *The King of Jazz* with Paul Whiteman. There was a stage band under Karl Kroll to accompany vaudeville acts, mildly resembling those at the New York Paramount.

"While in Vienna, the Kiba Film Co. decided to convert the Johann Strauss Theatre into a plush cinema, and I was chosen to play its Kilgen organ. The three-manual console was installed *under* the stage, and as it rose, the stage sections parted and the organist sat on a level with the stage band. After a month, the authorities would not permit me to ascend with the console for fear that the stage mechanism would fail and I'd be crushed to death. Having no desire to be called 'HAMBURGER Barnes,' I made my entrance from the wings. The refurbished theatre opened with Lillian Harvey, Willy Frisch, Conrad Veidt and a host of stars in *Die Kongress Tanzt* which was a great success and the organ brought much favorable comment. One magazine ran a story saying I came 'from the land of the tobacco plants in North Carolina!'

"The thirties were precarious times to be in Germany or Austria and eventually I thought it wise to return to America. Upon arriving in New York, I found things very bad, musically. However, a new face had sprung up, working in the offices of Shapiro-Bernstein, Harry Blair. Harry and his wife, Adele,

God rest their souls, were great friends of the organists. Harry and a group of us organists formed the Noonday Club, signing a charter which hung in his office.

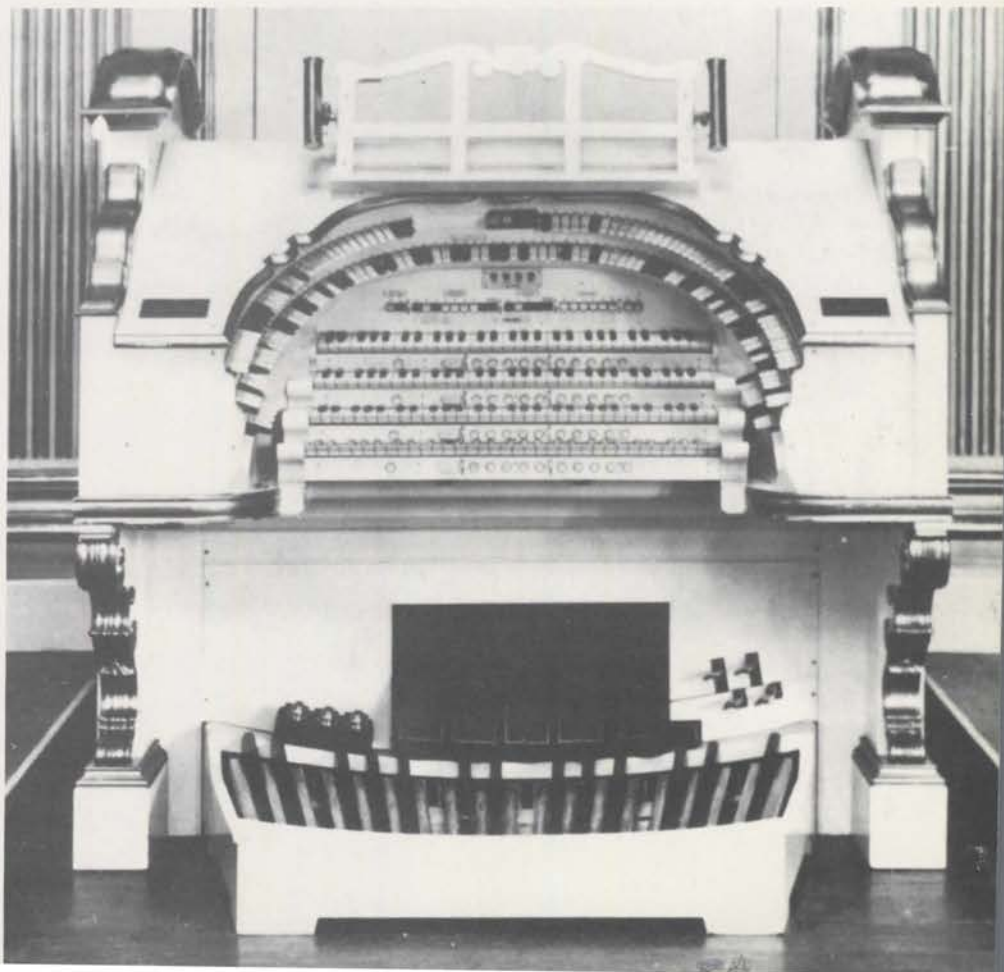
"Harry made a specialty of collecting musical material and news, and acting as a clearing house for those organists seeking employment. If you were out of a job or needed music or slides, you could wire Harry. Ask him for 'Sand In My Shoes,' and he'd know you'd mean 'Love Letters in the Sand.' One day, Harry told me he had a call from a Frank Boucher in Winchester, Va., who wanted an organist for the Capitol Theatre during the Lenten Season. I had no desire to stay in New York and spend the money earned in Europe, so I went to Winchester to see the organ.

"The 1000-seat theatre, operated by Warner Bros., and a dream of a showplace, had a two-manual Robert Morton in excellent condition. (The theatre has been replaced by a bank, and the beautiful hand painted mural which graces its back wall once covered the proscenium arch of the theatre. When the Capitol was being razed, there was a great

complaint from neighbors about the dust. Also, the demolition crew was asked to save the mural. After climbing into the rafters and probing with a chisel, the wrecker said that the mural could not be saved because it was 'painted on the plaster.' However, when the ruins were sprinkled to control the dust, the mural dropped to the ground, having been painted on canvas instead. It was sent to an outstanding artist in Washington who reconditioned it. So the valuable and beautiful painting, depicting the people of Winchester appealing to George Washington for food, was saved and is now a tourist attraction of the Shenandoah Valley. Thus, a part of a once-beautiful theatre lives on.)

"While in Europe, I had continued my classical organ training under several fine teachers in Germany and Austria, so in Winchester my classical training was put to good use. I accepted a church job as organist and choir director, opened my own music store, and had a class of pupils at the Berryville High School. There was no depression for me! However, theatre business in the thirties was very bad and every

Billy Barnes was the first organist to play this Wurlitzer 250 special in the Von Siemens home in Berlin. Later extensively damaged by fire, the console was restored by a G.I. stationed in Germany. (Barnes coll.)



avenue of approach was tried to improve conditions.

"Warner Brothers had a man working out of their Washington office, John Fernkoess. He, with Tom Baldrige, the manager of the Winchester Capitol, and I began producing small stage presentations which toured the Warner theatres in the Shenandoah Valley. Tom and I would go to Reading, Pa., and other cities where there were noted dancing schools, and also to Baltimore and Washington, talking to booking agents who might supply talent. It was remarkable the big names we hired for a 'song' in those days. Among them were De Carlos and Granada, the dance team who created the Carioca in the movie *Flying Down to Rio* with Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire; Frank Bernard and Marion Rich who had just returned from an engagement at the Folies Bergiere in Paris. (I worked with Frank and Marion when I went to Hamburg, Germany, to open the Wurlitzer installed in the UFA Theatre).

"Our little stage shows were assembled and rehearsed in the Academy Theatre in Hagerstown, which had a three-manual Moller. Then, we'd open the revue at the Tivoli Theatre in Frederick, Md., having a 2/8 Wurlitzer. (This organ was given a real workout in 1972 during the ATOS Convention with Hector Olivera knocking us all for a loop with his tremendous renditions. Fabulous!). I MC'd our stage shows from the organ console. When the revue hit the road after the Tivoli, I would leave it and Tom and I would start building another. John Fernkoess' help plus our idea saved the day. The theatres began running in the black for a change.

"Eventually, the minister of the church where I was playing, got a call to go to Knoxville, Ten., and he asked me to go along as his organist and choir director. A few months later, I joined him and as luck would have it, they needed an organist across the street in the 1984-seat Tennessee Theatre which had a 3/11 Wurlitzer on a lift. It was possible for me to start a church service or prayer meeting, run to the theatre, do my stint, and get back to the church before they could say 'Amen'. It took some minute timing!

"I broadcast from the theatre on

WROL, made some radio transcriptions and did background music for a number of silent movie shorts for a man in Knoxville who had his own studio and did a lot of film work for the Hollywood companies.

"When I arrived in Knoxville, the Hotel Andrew Johnson was having money troubles and had been taken over by a New York bonding company, Prudence Bonds. Luckily for me, they sent Harold Archer, a trouble shooter, to manage the hotel. I had lived in the New York hotel this man managed when I played Loew's State. He, his wife and I became great friends. One night, my telephone rang and it was Archer, saying that Leslie Sefton, president of Prudence Bonds, was in town and they wanted me to come to the hotel for a talk.

"They told me of tentative plans to open a new dining room, the project to evolve around my playing. The idea was that I entertain as if I were in my own home, informally greeting the guests, and in other words, doing a musical public relations job. Out of this idea grew the famous Johnson Hall dining room which was a success from the start, not only for its beautiful decor,

the music, service, and excellent food, but also because of the hotel's proximity to the Great Smoky Mountains.

("When I was playing at the Hotel Sheraton in Chicago in the fifties, I was approached three times by a later manager of the hotel, Esmond Braswell, strongly urging my returning with the admonition that if I didn't the Johnson Hotel would be closed. I was under contract to Sheraton and couldn't oblige Braswell. To my sorrow, it was closed, and I always felt it my fault. Attempts have been made to refurbish the hotel to its former grandeur but to no avail).

"In March 1942, I enlisted in the Air Force, saying nothing in my enlistment papers about being a musician. But my first morning at the induction center, I was sent for by the captain whose girl friend had been writing the scripts for a radio program I had been doing. He assigned me to a Special Services group where I did the Easter Services in post chapel, cooperated in two broadcasts for the induction center, and helped produce a show for the boys. After ten days, I was sent to Shepard Field, Texas, for

Billy Barnes at the 3/14 Wurlitzer in the Tennessee Theatre, Knoxville. He played here before and after his army service in World War II. (Barnes coll.)



basic training.

"I was there three days when they started casting for the first army show *Three Dots With a Dash*. Jeanne Madden, formerly of the movies, sang in the show. We used two pianos, one on either side of the Service Club stage, played by Jimmy Rogers Kelley (of Paul Whiteman fame) and myself. There was a large orchestra, many of whom later joined the Glenn Miller Air Force Band, and a line of chorus girls. The show was written by A.E. Hotchner, known as Eric to us, but later became famous for his book on Ernest Hemingway. Eric was aided and abetted by a most capable GI, Bud Bankson. The show was a great success, touring Texas, Oklahoma and other points in the Southwest. Much of the talent later went into Broadway productions. It was great fun except when having to make an all-night jump from one city to another in a GI truck which was more than a little rough.

"In Muskogee, Okla., we had a novel experience. Arriving late one Sunday evening, most of the troupe attended the Methodist Church service. With the arrival of so many soldiers, plus other members of the cast, the minister was a little 'shook up,' anxious to know just who we were, etc. After identifying ourselves, he turned the entire service over to us. We had a method in our madness for we realized that after service, the calibre of food in their homes would far exceed Army chow. We did this in several cities and are still grateful to those kind folk.

"Returning to Sheppard Field, I was there only a short time before being sent to New York for six weeks to work with the Moss Hart production *Winged Victory*. My principal duty was playing for rehearsals. This was a great experience and we were treated like kings. Returning to Sheppard, I entertained the GI's using Hammonds and playing piano in the Service Club. (Lloyd Klos and I discovered while working on this article that we were there at the same time but didn't know each other.) The Service Club entertainment was first-rate with such people as Tony Martin, Jeanette Mc Donald and tennis star Don Budge and others.

"Then I was sent to Randolph Field where it was my duty to set up the office procedure for a Chaplain's

Transition School which was eventually sent to the Aviation Cadet Center in San Antonio where I remained until discharged.

"Returning to Knoxville, I resumed my position with the Tennessee Theatre, the hotel and the church. In 1949, the Sheraton Hotel Corp. took over the Park Central Hotel in New York, renaming it the Park Sheraton. Knowing Helen and Stanley Melba who were booking talent for Sheraton, I was asked to come with the first group of entertainers to the Mermaid Lounge. There were Cy Coleman of 'Hey, Look Me Over!' fame, the Dardenelle Trio and myself. After a short stint back in Knoxville, I returned to the Sheraton chain for years of happy engagements which included most of their hotels east of Chicago: Providence, Boston, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo. Some of them I played three and four times: the shortest engagement was six months and the longest two years each in the Chicago Sheraton and Cincinnati's Sheraton Gibson. The Sheraton in Worcester, Mass., I played four times and the public wanted to know why I didn't run for mayor!

"I was prepared to leave Cincinnati for another engagement when a stock broker friend talked to me about opening Hammond organ studios there. We formed a partnership called Musicana Inc., and I was named executive vice president.

I also played a year at the Hotel Alms. Just after finishing at the Alms, I was asked to sub for the organist in a very beautiful suburban eating place, just outside Cincinnati, named Martinelli's. The owner knew that his organist had something else in mind, so on that first night came to me and said: 'If you want this job, you can have it the rest of your life.'

"It almost turned out that way. I was there twelve years! During this time, I was teaching 46 organ pupils, playing every night, Sundays in a church and part-time on Sunday afternoons and evenings at a Country Club, and still had my financial interest in the organ studios. Using my tried and true musical-public relations tactics, my job at Martinelli's was a joy and again I am sad to relate that not long after leaving the place, it was sold. The owners had phoned long-distance several times, saying that if I didn't return, they'd have to close or sell. I hope this doesn't give the impression that I'm bragging, but I believe it points out that an organist, playing in a public place, can be MORE than just a musician. He can make it more than just a mere job.

"I reluctantly left Martinelli's because I wanted to spend more time with my 94-year-old father and my sister in Winston-Salem. Arriving there on July 9, 1971, I had a heart attack one week later. Upon learning of the busy schedule I had been keep-

When Billy played at the Sheraton Biltmore in Providence, R.I., his good friend, Roger Williams, stopped to listen. Rather apropos, since another Roger Williams founded Rhode Island. (Barnes coll.)



ing, my doctor was surprised that it hadn't happened sooner. After 11 days in coronary care and a month in the hospital, I came out none the worse for the experience, but wiser about taking care of myself. Fortunately, there was no permanent heart damage and I feel wonderful. Further, I believe I have a lot of good musical years ahead of me.

"Thinking back to the silent movie era, there comes to mind a movie pianist in Richmond who used to insist that the great Paderewski came often to his small theatre to hear him play the great pianist's Minuet. As I was young in those years, I believed him. However, I always felt that the silent movie player had to have a great 'understanding and feeling' between the artist in the film and the moods he was trying to portray to produce the music called for. The best movie musicians had to relive those scenes to play them effectively and no doubt reliving those characters week after week did have an effect on all of us. I trust mostly good effects.

"The greatest thing which could be said of a silent movie player by his listening public was 'he cued and played the picture so well that we forgot he was there,' which was the supreme compliment. It couldn't be too loud, timing had to be perfect, and an endless repertoire was required, most of it from memory. The silent movie player could not be a distraction from the film.

"My present-day activities? There have been numerous offers from agents and others for me to play engagements in other cities and maybe I may again take such a job. Fortunately, I invested my money wisely (annuities, bonds, etc.) and really don't have to worry unless something drastic happens to our economic system. But 'once a ham, always a ham,' so I'm sure the desire to play will always be with me.

"In 1972, I played the formal opening of a luxury eating place in Winston-Salem but on the advice of my doctor, did not extend the engagement. Later, I played for the regional convention of the AGO on a souped-up Seville organ in the lobby of the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Knoxville. It was amazing the number of church organists who said they'd like to study theatre organ with me and many of them admitted



Billy gives movie star Rod Cameron some pointers on playing an electronic. Cameron plays the piano well. (Barnes coll.)

they couldn't play a single selection without music.

"It is wonderful what the ATOS members have done to revive interest in the theatre organ. The enthusiasm I witnessed at the 1972 and 1974 ATOS conventions was just wonderful. And, more and more organists whom I know, who have never cared for theatre organ, are being won over to our side. How fortunate for those people who have these great instruments in their homes!

"The latest thing I have done was one of the greatest. The new Hyatt House Hotel in Winston-Salem had a formal opening, September 7, 1974 combined with a Symphony Ball. The event was almost indescribable in its grandeur but as one newspaper quoted me, 'It was like Solomon's Temple and a Feast of the Bacchanals'. Entertainment included the Winston-Salem Symphony, conducted by a most capable man, John Ieule; Les Elgart's Band (in the Convention Center which connects with the hotel across the street by an underground passage.); Larry Weiss, a fine pianist; Beverly Culbreath, outstanding opera and

pop singer; Clint Holmes and Company out of New York and Washington; the Symphony Chorale, directed by David Partington, and myself.

"I started the festivities in the hotel ballroom on an organ, later going to another organ on the fourth-level balcony, and then returned to the ballroom. Over 2,000 tickets were sold, many from out of the state, and there were those who came to me to say they had heard me in Chicago, Providence and Cincinnati. So, I can assure you, that there is a lot of pizzazz in the old boy yet!

"I am sure that when any member of the ATOS passes on to his just rewards, he will find in the after-life streets paved with shiny bars from Chrysoglotts, sidewalks paved with Xylophone keys, a fanfare welcome played on a hundred Post Horns and a heavenly chorus of 10,000 Vox Humanas!"

ATOS thanks Billy Barnes for this interesting and exciting account of his life. Thanks also to Captain Erwin Young, Dr. Paul Abernethy and his son for manning the tape recorder and capturing the story as it was told. □

ATOS LIBRARY ACQUIRES JOE BRITE SLIDE COLLECTION

by Lloyd E. Klos

ATOS members were saddened to learn late in 1974 that theatre organist Joe Brite had passed away, the result of injuries sustained in an attempted holdup of the Rialto Theatre in Alamosa, Colo., where he served as manager-organist for many years.

Joe had a very extensive glass slide collection and when Mrs. Brite made it available, the ATOS National Library seemed the logical repository. Tom Lockwood, vice chairman of the ATOS Historical Committee, hastily put in a bid for the slides for library use, and it was accepted.

Duane Searle, ATOS Director and United Airlines pilot who lives in Aurora, Colo., became an important part of the story. In April he made a



A young Joe Brite at a 2-manual Wurlitzer console. Theatre is unknown, but it could have been the Sterling in Greeley, Colorado, which Joe opened. (Brite family coll.)

trip to Alamosa, secured the slides and projector, and in successive trips to Rochester, he deposited them with Tom. Not one of the more than 900 slides was broken in transit, which attests to the wisdom of handling the shipment in this manner.

The slides, some colored, are mainly those used in sing-alongs, and a majority of them are still housed in the original boxes which were sent Mr. Brite by Harry Blair, the well remembered friend of theatre organists who operated in New York City in the thirties. There are

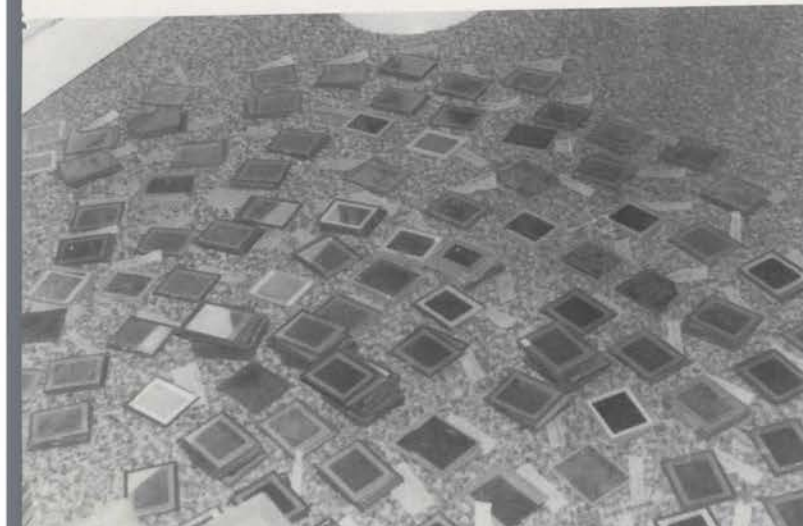
some slides which are not in boxes, and as a result, some time must be expended to collate them into complete series. Tom will soon transport the collection to Elon, where it will be catalogued and stored.

The ATOS thanks Mrs. Brite for allowing the collection to go to our library. Material like this is what will enhance the ATOS archives, and it is hoped that other people in ATOS will see the wisdom of allocating priceless memorabilia for posterity in this fashion. □

The Brite collection consists of over 900 slides.

(T. Lockwood Photo)

The projector which was acquired with Brite slide collection. (T. Lockwood Photo)



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Gee, I love to waltz like they waltzed a hundred years ago.

Then why am I rock and rolling, replete with electronic drums and a sax solo on my solo manual?

Yesterday my upstairs neighbor asked me did I have any regrets about buying my Yamaha Electone Organ?

I answered her with my latest composition based on an old Ukrainian folk song, and then she understood.



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Connecticut Valley's

Autumn Serenade

A WEEKEND OF SPECTACULAR SURPRISES

The following review was compiled from several sources, with special thanks to Wallace F. Powers, Jr., June L. Garen and William Chaloner.

Photos by P. Miller

Not wanting to miss a single moment of Connecticut Valley's Autumn Serenade, ATOS Regional Convention, we arrived at the Sheraton-Hartford Hotel early Friday. The hotel is only a few months old, part of the new Hartford Civic Center complex, and proved to be a pleasant base for the convention. We quickly found the ATOS hospitality room where we were welcomed and given a map to Thomaston, about an hours drive to the west.

Arriving at the Thomaston Opera House, we were greeted by organ music and Registrars Bea Miller and Gen Roberg. We were immediately taken by the portfolios, large enough to carry music, with a gold imprint of the Thomaston 3/13 Marr & Colton which had been adopted as the convention logo.

Open console was in full swing with Jack Roberg as host, and it appeared that everyone who was so inclined had ample opportunity to try the instrument which is the pride of the Connecticut Valley Chapter. The Marr & Colton sounds thrilling in the auditorium, surely as a result of countless hours of devotion.

The ATOS gift store, with quite a collection of musical goodies, was next door to the Registration Room which was bustling with enthusiasts. We also noticed a table promoting the Lyn Larsen Fan Club. Shortly we were off to the buses where we were handed a box lunch as we boarded. In spite of the rain we could see that Mother Nature was certainly arrayed in all her glory. The autumn foliage was at its peak. The rain seemed to intensify the reds, oranges and golds of the maples and the sumac along the route, and those on the buses were provided with nourishment for the soul as well as for the body.

The rain outside was soon for-

gotten when Lowell Ayars took his place at the console of the Mighty Wurlitzer at the Waterbury Civic Theatre, formerly the State Theatre. Like other theatres, this one has been rejuvenated for live presentations with the interior relamped and repainted. But best of all, the 2/10 Wurlitzer, kept in playing condition for the past 31 years by Everett Bassett, has been completely revived and given a new lease on life with the additions of Solo 16' and 4' couplers.

Lowell began with selections from "The Desert Song" and took us on a nostalgic trip down memory lane with selections like "Louise" and "Lady, Be Good." Some of his sensitive arrangements showed off many of the lighter voices of the Wurlitzer. As Lowell led a community-sing, it began raining so hard that water started to come through the ceiling. He played "On The Sunny Side Of The Street" as some people moved to drier seats. Rain may have dampened just about everything else, but certainly not the spirits of the over 300 organ buffs who sang their hearts out.

The waiting buses quickly whisked us to the Thomaston Opera House for the second concert of the afternoon. Ashley Miller demonstrated both the versatility of the Marr & Colton and his own musical ability. Ashley Miller's registrations showed off many colorful and exquisite sounds, using the newly added Gamba Celeste for the first time publicly. Many of the up tempo selections made use of the new snarly Post Horn, and he even used it successfully as a solo stop at times.

A buffet dinner had been arranged at the high school across the street. Miraculously, all were fed and back in their seats in plenty of time for the evening concert by

Lyn Larsen.

Lyn's concerts are always "a happening" and this was no exception. Right from the first chorus of "Great Day," we knew that Lyn meant it. Lyn had appeared at the Opera House for six previous concerts, and it was obvious that he was at home at the Marr & Colton. His program was varied and sprinkled with humor. Lyn also showed his talents as composer and arranger with his own "Lovers Belong To Sorrento," written during a recent trip to Italy. Lyn announced that he would like to "indulge in a whim" and forsaking the console for a few moments, demonstrated his prowess at the 88-note keyboard of the grand piano. The selection was Rachmaninoff's arrangement of Kreisler's "Liebeslied," performed with a technique and feeling equal to any concert pianist... a facet of Lyn's talent we hadn't heard before.

The "surprise" finale of this evening came in three parts, combin-





Dr. Paul Abernethy, national president.



Allen Miller, convention co-chairman and MC.



ATOS gift shop at the Hotel Sheraton-Hartford.



Ashley Miller, Lowell Ayars, Lyn Larsen. The surprise at Thomaston.

Head table: (L to R) Stillman Rice, Eleanor Weaver, Don Mac Cormack, Betty Mason, Don Hyde, Allen Miller, Paul Abernethy, Kathy Mac Cormack, Paul Taylor, Claire Rice, Harold Weaver.



ing the playing, vocal, and musical writing talents of all three of our artists. First, with Ashley Miller at the Yamaha grand piano and Lyn at the console, we heard Lyn's transcription of Chopin's "Minute Waltz in Thirds." The piece is spectacular played in the normal manner, but with the organ mimicking the piano melody a third lower, and the first and second themes played against each other as a duet, the result was stunning. Then to add to the surprise, Lowell Ayars joined the duet in "Vox" with a delightful presentation of "There's A Place In My Heart For You" written by Lyn Larsen, with lyrics recently added by Dave Lindsay. The arrangement was an orchestration to back Lowell's baritone voice, but also gave Lyn and Ashley brief solos. The audience leaped to its feet cheering and begging for more.

The 'icing on the cake' was a second piano-organ duet, a thrilling transcription of Charles Williams' beautiful "A Dream Of Olwyn," with Ashley taking the piano part of the concerto, and Lyn at the "Mighty Machine" (as he called it) portraying full orchestra. This finale was, all by itself, sufficient justification for long distance travel and the cost of the package ticket! Thank you Lowell Ayars, Lyn Larsen and Ashley Miller for being of such good will to give us those memorable moments of beauty. Also, upon the convention program committee is bestowed our gratefulness for having the divine inspiration to conceive such a marvelous culmination of compatible musical artistry.

Most of us gathered back at the Sheraton-Hartford for "a glass of orange juice" (to quote Lyn). It was an informal chance to meet and talk to the artists, and we found them all as friendly as they are talented... the end of a perfect day.

Sunday morning found everyone still damp, but undaunted at the

home installations of the Stocks', the Twomeys' and the Millers' who made their guests feel welcome with Bloody Marys, coffee, donuts, and organ music, despite their dripping umbrellas and wet feet. At Stocks' 3/31 Wurlitzer, we heard Phil himself as well as Duane Boise, winner of the CVTOS student scholarship competition this year. It is certainly rewarding to hear these young people carrying on the theatre organ tradition. The Stocks' organ, largest in New England, is installed under the garage and speaks into the living room through a tone chute. The console is handsome and retains its original finish.

We then visited Allen Miller's 3/11 Miller Mini-Monster. It is a new "theatre organ" built and voiced to fit the home environment. This unusual installation is on the second floor over the garage, with the organ installed in a large closet. Using solid-state relays and some electronic pedal, the sound is certainly big and beautiful. Allen and Mark Gluhosky, another student scholarship winner, demonstrated the organ and attached Knabe-Ampico grand piano, then we heard Lyn Larsen again, but this time by way of punched paper rolls he recorded on the Austin Quadruplex Player.

Our last stop was at the Twomeys, who not only have a fine 2/7 style E Wurlitzer, but an extensive collection of music boxes and reproducing player pianos. The Steinway Duo-Art was playing away as we entered and were handed refreshments. Downstairs in a charming recreation room was the nicely installed Wurlitzer. We were impressed by the brand new look of the entire instrument, which was the second we saw with an attached Ampico piano.

This one, a rare late model Mason & Hamlin, played expressively from the console, as did Allen Miller's. In both instruments, the combination was excellent. Carmen Charette demonstrated the organ, which spoke directly into the room, but wasn't overpowering. We were told that Allen Miller did revoicing and regulation to fit the Wurlitzer sound to the room. As with the other homes, visitors had a chance to play, and we heard some fine music.

Rushing back to the hotel, we



Allan Taylor played Trinity College Chapel 3/78 Austin.



Waterbury Civic Theatre marquee.



Lowell Ayars the singing organist. Waterbury Civic Theatre 2/10 Wurlitzer.



Harold La Chapelle played dinner music at the piano during the banquet.



Larry Fenner at Twomey's 2/7 Wurlitzer.

Lyn Larsen in a rare appearance at the piano at the Opera House.





Ashley Miller and Lyn Larsen after their duet at Thomaston Opera House.



Sam and Elaine Blatt sign up new members for the Lyn Larsen Fan Club.



Mark Gluhosky at the 3/11 Miller mini-monster.

Everett Bassett makes a point to (L to R) Eleanor Bassett, Bea Miller, Ida Smith, Peggy Ray, Eleanor Weaver, Marilyn and Paul Plainer during "Afterglow" party.



An unfortunate turn of events occurred as the group was leaving the Thomaston Opera House to take in the buffet dinner across the street. Thelma Douglas of CATOE lost her footing as she stepped from the Opera House steps to the sidewalk, and suffered a fractured ankle. ATOSers quickly came to her aid with umbrellas and warm coats until the local police had determined she could be moved safely. Thelma was rushed to the hospital in Waterbury, where she was quickly X-rayed and fitted with a special shoe. Her friends brought her dinner from the Thomaston buffet, and she was back at the Opera House with crutches, and in a special easy chair in time for Lyn's concert. Said Lyn, "You just can't keep a dedicated organ nut down!" Larsen later autographed Thelma's shoe.

quickly changed and went to the Cocktail Hour, then came the Grand Banquet. The meal was superb, and while we ate, we were treated to piano music for dining by Harold La Chapelle.

Allen Miller, who was MC for the entire convention, introduced the head table, which included National President Dr. Paul Abernethy, THE-ATRE ORGAN Publisher Betty Mason and CVTOS officers. Roll call showed a large number of chapters represented with visitors from Canada to Florida. After the banquet, a movie, *The Austin Story*, was shown. This touches upon the history of the organ and shows the building of a modern pipe organ in excellent detail. We were told that the film is available to ATOS chapters for showing at meetings by contacting Austin Organs in Hartford.

At this point, shuttle buses took us to Trinity College, where Dan Kehoe, Master Carillonneur, gave us a recital on the 32 bell carillon. As we took seats in the chapel, we marvelled at the English Gothic construction which could not be duplicated today, and the 3/78 "French" Austin, which fills the rear portion of the chapel. To move from theatre style of playing to classical, it was only necessary to change location, as all three of our featured organists are as comfortably at ease playing both types of music. Lowell Ayars, Ashley Miller, and Lyn Larsen were joined by Trinity Senior, Allan Taylor. Allan has only studied organ for four years, most recently with the master of French organ, Clarence Watters. He has a controlled technique, hardly moving at the console, yet his playing was expressive and full of excitement. His playing of the Dupre "Prelude and Fugue in G Minor" was thrilling.

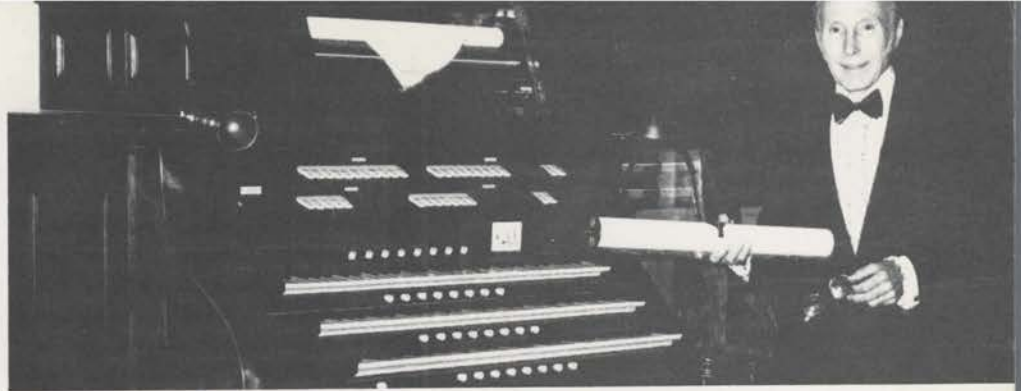
Each of the four artists provided us with a wide program variation. Outstanding selections were Lowell Ayars' playing of Sibelius' "Finlandia" which seemed to fit the Austin. The "French" reeds sounded like impending doom during the storm. Ashley Miller's playing of J. Clokey's "Ballade" brought up impressions of dark, dank castles and moats. Lyn Larsen conjured up "forest creatures" with Grieg's "Notorno" (Nocturne). Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance March" was not only exciting, but seemed to

be fitting for both the instrument and the college chapel. The accomplished performances of all the artists maintained the standards set the day before.

On the way back to the hotel, some of us took in the organ crawl to the Aetna Life home office auditorium. Hartford is, of course, the insurance city, and the Aetna Life building is the largest colonial building in the world. In the auditorium is a 3/19 Austin residence organ built in 1931 with a Premier Quadruplex Player. This player was the greatest of all paper roll players, and this is the only one still attached to its original organ. Allen Miller demonstrated rolls by Lynnwood Farnham recorded in 1931, and excerpts from the *Nutcracker Suite*, typical of organ transcriptions played in the '20s and '30s. Some recently recorded rolls were played, including Lyn's roll of the "Minute Waltz in Thirds" heard the night before, played live at Thomaston.

Monday was reserved for unwinding and travel home with stops at various home installations throughout the state. Maps and descriptions of the installations had been provided, and we were free to set up our own itineraries. The sun had finally come out, and it was a great day for viewing foliage. Open homes included the Weavers' 3/9 Marr & Colton, Stillman Rice's 3 manual custom Allen, Bassetts' 2/4 Robert Morton pit organ, John Stokes' 2/5 Wurlitzer, Robergs' 3/10 Wurlitzer with church pipes, and John Starr's "Crystal Palace" 3/13 Wurlitzer and museum. Student scholarship winners were on hand to perform at each installation.

In fact, if there was any one impression which we took home, it was the friendliness and compatibility of the entire convention group. It is our belief that the outgoing warmth of the Connecticut Valley Chapter was contagious and spread through us all. Co-Chairmen Allen Miller and Don Hyde, and their committees, obviously worked hard to bring us such an enjoyable weekend. Our appetites were well fed with friendship, food and music. If this weekend is any sampling of what Connecticut Valley has in store for us during their 1978 National Convention, we look forward to our return visit. □



Ashley Miller holds roll for Austin player, Aetna Life Home Office Auditorium, 3/19 Austin.



Open house, Phil Stock's 3/31 Wurlitzer.

CHAPTERS REPRESENTED

Connecticut Valley
 New York
 Eastern Massachusetts
 Garden State
 Delaware Valley
 Potomac Valley
 Niagara Frontier
 Wolverine
 Motor City
 Chicago Area
 Land O'Lakes
 Western Reserve
 Toledo
 Gulf Coast
 Southeastern
 Central Indiana



Thomaston registration.



(L to R) George Lewis and convention co-chairman Don Hyde discuss convention planning with Chuck and Mary Schrader, 1976 national convention chairman.

Buffet dinner at the high school in Thomaston.



OPEN CONSOLE AT THOMASTON



Bob Carangelo



Arthur Goggin



Raymond Blass



Everett Bassett



Al Yates



Joseph Puskas



Al Colton



Harold La Chapelle



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Opening of the 1974 California State Fair was a time of frustration and disappointment for the Sierra Chapter crew installing the George Seaver Memorial Organ. Construction of the Golden Bear Theatre had been delayed so it was only a week before opening day that the organ could be moved into its new chambers, and it was the last week of the fair before it was finally playing.

Opening of the 1975 California State Fair was a different story. There sat our little beauty, ready, able and willing. True, we were unhappy that the console had to be removed from its platform and placed orchestra-center because it interfered with the sight-lines of the nightly stage show. Nevertheless, at noon of the opening day, August 22, Jeff Barker, the fair's official organist, strode to the spot-lighted console and began the first of thirty-two one-hour concerts he was to play during the nineteen day run of the fair.

The organ was a "must see" at the fair and though an actual count wasn't made, hundreds of fair visitors saw and heard the Wurlitzer every day. The constant crowds around the door and small window looking into the chamber, convinced us that larger viewing facilities were a must for next year.

In addition to Jeff's many concerts, Sierra members entertained each evening from 7:00 to 7:30 while the audience for the evenings stage show were seated. A total of twenty-five concerts were played by Jim Brown, Tony Borgia, Don Croom, Diane Foster, Bob Hartzell, Sue Lang, Mary Ann Mendenhall, Martha Quinney, Chuck Shumate, Art Phelen and Milton Thorley. All did a great job, and for many it was their first try at entertaining the public.

It was decided that someone from Sierra Chapter should be present to answer questions and give out membership information, so I spent several afternoons doing just that and the questions and comments were plentiful; but for every question about the organ, there were three asking, "Can you tell me where the rest room is?"

Questions and comments about the organ ranged from the ridiculous to the sublime, and listening to visitors explain the organ's operation to

each other was a revelation in organ operation. "Well its played by steam. There's a boiler back in one of the rooms and - - - ." "Those little doors (the shutters) open and close, building up air pressure to make the pipes play." "It (the organ) probably came off a merry-go-round." (I can see Jeff at the console, riding round and round amongst the prancing horses.) "All those drums and stuff up there are the Rhythm Master." "It's an electronic organ but it doesn't use speakers." "Oh, there are speakers, but they're down where you can't see them." "There used to be lots of them, but they're so old there probably ain't more than four

or five in the whole country." And the questions: "How long did it take you to make this machine?" "Do you put this thing in for every fair?" "How can he play all those pipes when he's so far away?" (The console is about fifty feet from the chamber.) While watching a regulator: "Why does it breath so jumpy?" And shades of modern day theatre organ; "Did it come out of a pizza restaurant?" "How come some of the (mitered) horns got all bent up?" Of course there were lots of intelligent questions as well.

Senior Citizens Day (they're allowed into the fair free) was beautiful. Unlike other days when people drifted in and out of the concerts, many of the older people stayed through entire concerts and some came back for more. They were lavish with their compliments. "It reminds me so much of when I was young." "It's just like being a kid in New York again and attending the Paramount and Roxy." "What a wonderful way for a talented young man (Jeff) to make a living." Three elderly ladies stated: "I used to play the organ for silent pictures." One of them stated that she played the organ in the Del Paso Theatre (North Sacramento). "I haven't heard such beautiful music in forty years." "Why don't we have pipe organ programs on the radio anymore like we used to?" And finally, several people of varying ages asked: "Why don't you present more organ concerts here and why isn't there a little theatre drama group to present plays and make use of this fine theatre?" We agreed we also would like to see more use of the theatre and asked them to write letters to the fair board and Governor Brown.

The great interest shown in our Seaver Memorial Organ has already inspired us and we are making plans for improving and adding to the organ during the coming year. The fair board is also enthusiastic and will install permanent theatre seats to replace the present folding chairs, as well as other improvements to the theatre itself. Like all other owners of theatre organs, we are hoping that with proper care and upbringing our little 2/8 will someday grow up into a big 4/20, or even a king-size 4/36 and will be used all year around to entertain and educate the public. □



by Bob Longfield

T-67

by Judd Walton

It was July 11, 1942 that E.C. Forman of the RCA Victor Company issued a complete listing of all the 78 rpm Victor records made by Jesse Crawford. Upon receipt, a careful check was made against the Crawford records in my collection. It was discovered that #22243 "Love Me" and "I'll Close My Eyes to the Rest of the World" had been omitted!

Forman wrote that it had indeed been omitted, but assured me that it was now a complete list. Not so! My collection had been garnered from many sources. When first started, the economy during the late 1920's and early '30's effectively eliminated any possibility of buying new releases. A very kind person by the name of Mr. Army (first name Salvation) provided the means to at last complete the entire set as listed by Forman.

However, other artist's work beckoned, and the countless hours of

sorting through literally thousands of discarded records continued. As a pertinent aside, I well recall finding a small second hand shop near my new apartment. I was walking the three miles home from work that Saturday afternoon as I had spent my nickel carfare for two more "finds." Naturally I stopped in and located about 50 or 60 used 78's. I was amazed to come across a record which had been pressed from black and white material to make a picture of Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell in an embrace. It was an orchestral selection from a fairly recent (about 1933-34) movie in which they starred. I was intrigued by the record as I had never before seen one (nor have I ever since). I begged him to hold the record for me explaining I was only a few minutes from home. I promised to return within ten minutes with the ten cents he asked. I did just that only to find

he had sold it (or so he stated — I didn't believe him then nor do I now, 35 years later). But it was gone — Sob!!

I digress, so back to my story. During one of my forays, I was busily sorting through a mountain of records when I came across an orange colored label 78 rpm record. It was totally unfamiliar. The accompanying photo clearly shows the word "ORGAN" that attracted my immediate attention. The label reads:

**VICTOR
ORGAN T-67
When Mother Played the Organ
(Sanford-McConnell)
Jesse Crawford
(Played on the Wurlitzer Organ)
FOR THEATRE USE
78 RPM
Not Licensed for Radio Broadcast**

Additional facts about the record are of interest. This is a duplicate pressing with the same selection, label, etc., on both sides. Victor also issued a series of White label, same on both sides records, but they were not marked "For Theatre Use." They also issued White label records with grooves on only one side, the other side being embossed with the name "victor." The Victor Company has ignored all attempts to secure information about this record.

The following facts and questions emerge.

1. This is the one and only record with this type of label I have ever seen.
2. The domestic issue of this selection has three choruses. The second chorus has a vocal by Frances Langford. The Orange label does *not* have a Langford vocal. It is replaced by a second, more forceful organ version. The first and third

Judd Walton holding the rare Jesse Crawford 78rpm record, marked "For Theatre Use."





T-67

choruses on the two records are, for all practical purposes, identical.

3. Were there other records in this series issued?
4. If there were, where did the numbering start and end?
5. Were there other Jesse Crawford records in this series?
6. What other artists did record on this label if such do exist?
7. Does anyone recall seeing a record of this series?
8. Has anyone else seen a picture record as described above?
9. Is there a gold mine of unknown releases in this series waiting to be discovered?

Can answers be provided to any of the foregoing questions? I would be pleased to hear from anyone who can provide answers to any of these questions.

Judd Walton
227 Texas Street
Vallejo, CA 94590

Think about it ...

21st ATOS
NATIONAL CONVENTION
Philadelphia - July 16 - 21, 1975

PIPE ORGAN QUIZ

What you always
wanted to know
about pipe organs,
but were afraid to ask!



1. Lowering the wind pressure on theatre organs will make them more suitable for home installation (True or false.)
2. The Marr & Colton Registrator was only used on larger organs. (True or false.)
3. Most theatre organs used wire sizes that were too small from generator to console and organ chamber (True or false.)
4. The style D Trumpet is characterized by the following tonal description. a.) Very bright and loud, b.) mellow and medium scaled, c.) large scaled.
5. The solo scale Wurlitzer Tibia was a.) small scaled, b.) medium scaled, c.) large scaled.
6. When organs that have not been played for many years are re-installed, the tremulants are usually sluggish. Choose the correct reason a.) wiring has become worn and frayed, b.) It has been adjusted too many times, c.) The leather on the bellows has become stiff.
7. The Wurlitzer Company built only three five manual organs. Can you name where these were installed?
8. Why were many tremulants used in theatre organs and not in church organs?
9. The Wurlitzer Company manufactured three styles of magnets before chest primaries were eliminated. What were the three types and which one was the most reliable?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 62

Do you have any questions?

Send them in, we'll get the answers for you.

Address: QUIZ EDITOR
THEATRE ORGAN MAGAZINE
P.O. BOX 1314
SALINAS, CALIFORNIA 93901

AN OUTLINE FOR A COURSE IN THEATRE ORGAN - 5

Registration

by John Muri

It is impossible to give prescriptions concerning registration other than in general terms. We remember a grand lady of the organ who, when being helped to set up a combination on an unfamiliar instrument, asked the resident musician to "Give me two black ones, a red one, a yellow one, and three white ones." The reason for generality is the lack of uniformity in stop-lists, voicing, placement, and acoustics. One can only judge whether stops blend or not after one has tried them out. At worst, there are stops so badly voiced that they should remain permanently unused. There are organs in which the Tibia is louder than the Tuba, in which the Flute can barely be heard accompanying a solo stop, in which strings are virtually inaudible.

One needs to keep in mind the demands of what may be called balance. Perhaps the term ought to be dynamics, but then we might not be talking about registration. Organists have a tendency, particularly on unfamiliar large instruments, to see-saw back and forth between loud and soft playing, in the same manner as they frequently pump the swell-pedals open and shut, without having any real purpose for doing so. There is a tendency to over-register, to use too many stops in a sudden change to a crescendo, or too sudden a drop to quietness. Gradual crescendos and diminuendos are much more effective than sudden ones. They make the organ sound powerful and much less shocking. Shock values have theatrical validity, but they needn't be turned on every minute or so. Gradual changes will be effected by pistons or the crescendo pedal, of course. In any event, one will not play a ballad like "Old Man River" or "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" with full organ.

Sentimental songs should not sound like a boiler factory in operation.

Since the foundation stop of the theatre organ has come to be the Tibia and not the Diapason, one must be careful not to over-use the Tibia. The combination of 16 and 8-foot Tibias with Voxes played as single-note melody can easily become too heavy or thick in texture. Ordinarily one will not need to use 8-foot Tibia in left-hand accompaniments; it can over-ride and blur the melody line.

In determining accompaniment registration, one may begin with a quiet 8-foot Flute. If that is not enough, add a 4-foot coupler. For more volume, a soft Diapason may be added, followed by strings, a heavier Diapason, and reeds: Clarinet, Oboe Horn, Tuba, and Trumpet, in that sequence. Many Diapasons and Clarinets on small organs are too loud to be used for accompaniments. One may use an Oboe Horn in desperation, but they are more often too loud than not. The orchestral Oboe is ordinarily useless for the purpose. Soft Diapasons are satisfactory as part of an accompaniment set-up, provided the upper manual registration is not overwhelmed by them.

A serious problem exists when one is called upon to play on small organs made up of ranks that are hideously out of tonal balance. No amount of registrational ingenuity can make an ugly Tuba or a gargling Oboe-Horn attractive. One can try

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

to improve matters by playing counter-melodies and variations against the melodic line, the object being to distract attention from the tonal defects.

In playing larger instruments, one should give attention to using single stops for solo melodies. They can be charming and they make ensuing ensembles and crescendos impressive by contrast.

Twelfths, particularly the Tibia twelfths, used in the solo line call for taste and judgement. Many organists over-use them. One wonders if this tendency is a carry-over from electronic organ experience, in which tonal intensity can be as strong in twelfths as it is in fundamental tones. Perhaps not; even in the twenties (before electronics) many organists doted on the twelfths. To generalize, one may say that any Nasard or Tierce is at its best when used to brighten up, not to thicken a tone. It is most useful in creating sounds appropriate to oriental music, or (without tremulant) in establishing a mood of horror or threat. A Quintadena, if present, will do the job very well. At issue here is the theory of what constitutes "theatre sound." Imitators of the playing styles of the twenties would not emphasize twelfths, particularly in ballad work.

If one likes to use traps with organ pipes, additional flexibility may be secured by registering the melody or solo stops on the accompaniment manual, where traps like the Chinese Block, Tambourine, etc. may usually be found and added to perform in time with the melody notes. A suitable accompaniment for this set-up may be put on a piston for the great or solo manual. Thus, a piece like "Dancing Tambourine" can be played with a truly dancing tambourine, one that leaps along with the melody.

Nothing is more annoying and less useful than badly-wired crescendo pedals. The pedal should bring on the 8-foot stops first, then the soft 4's, followed by the *mf*'s and louder 4's, after which come the 8-foot reeds, 4-foot reeds, and finally the *ff* reeds. Couplers should be wired into the pedal only in the very last stages. Manual-to-manual couplers should never be wired in; they might bring in a solo manual percussion that has no place in the ensemble.

If the organist has no control over the wiring of the crescendo pedal, he will have to be wary of what's set up on the manuals. A chime on the solo manual brought down to the great by a crescendo pedal can produce a horrible clanging.

We can learn registration from other organists. George Wright has shown us the tartness of a good 8-foot Krumet, Kinura, or Oboe when used with a 4-foot Piccolo of about equal volume. Leon Berry has shown us the merit of a heavy reed pedal for roller-rink work. Numerous organists have created ethereal effects by using Voxes with Strings in close harmony, creating an effect of a choir of voices. We can also learn from them what not to do. The old trick of ending a quiet ballad with a single-stroke chime is now too *deja vu*. Meaningless sudden shifts from big loud combinations to small quiet ones in ballad-work are unimpressive, if not stupid. This is not to deny that theatricality demands contrast. Indeed, monotony in the theatre is unforgiveable; what is necessary to hold audience-attention is frequent (but not frenetic) changes of registration, remembering that we can weary an audience with stop-tab flipping every few bars as much as we can by playing a whole program on one or two combinations.

Organists who use very small instruments can make imitations of a few stops they do not have. We can suggest a Clarinet by putting an 8-foot Vox together with an 8-foot Flute and a 2 2/3-foot Nasard, provided the Vox is not too fluttery. An English Horn may be approximated by adding a string that will give body or weight to the tone of the Orchestral Oboe. The standard synthetic Orchestral Oboe is made up of a string plus a Flute Nasard. A Saxophone may be approximated by using the above English Horn combination and adding a Vox Humana, again one that is not too fluttery. The Quintadena may be suggested by taking the synthetic Orchestral Oboe combination and adding a Flute-Piccolo to it, with perhaps a string that is not too prominent, to give it body.

Care should be taken not to make the pedal section too heavy. Visiting organists have a tendency to use too many heavy pedal stops when playing the larger instruments. Big Dia-

phones and Tibias can send unpleasant vibrations through an auditorium. Pedal parts in theatre organ work should usually include the 8-foot Tibia, unless it is too heavy for the hand-work. It often obviates the need for 16-foot pipes and creates a nice clean bass.

Before committing one's self to any registration, one ought to listen to what it sounds like in the auditorium. When in doubt, have someone play it for you as you listen in different parts of the building. Watch out for oppressive vibrations, for bad voicing, for poor tonal balance — for too much or too little of anything. The test of all registration lies in the ears of sensitive and perceptive auditors. □

Closing Chord



D.E. (Woody) Wood

D.E. (Woody) Wood, organist, owner of a Wholesale Sporting Goods Company in Saginaw, Michigan, died suddenly at the age of 67. Woody was a Charter Member of the Temple Theatre Organ Club of Saginaw, long time member of Wolverine Chapter, also the Saginaw Local 57 of AFM.

He is survived by his wife Helen. His loss will be greatly felt by his many friends.

On October 4, tragedy struck the Lance Johnson family of Red River Chapter.

Their daughter, **Nichole**, was struck and killed by an auto in front of the family home.

Nichole, although only 2½ years old, had already shown consider-



Nichole

able interest in Theatre Organ. She would listen attentively when Lance practiced and would seat herself at the residence Robert Morton, playing the keys as if she were an organist.

Lance Johnson has been most active over many years in his area for the ATOS cause. All ATOS members and friends extend heart felt condolences to the Johnson family.

George W. Baylor, pianist, organist, composer and teacher, died recently in Chicago at the age of 83. He was a graduate of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, and studied at the American Conservatory of Music and Northwestern University. In Indianapolis, he played piano and organ for many years, performing for silent movies, comedy shows and hotel audiences.

Moving to Chicago, Mr. Baylor played organ at the Hollywood Roller Rink and the North Avenue Rollaway for 18 years. A private music teacher, he was organist for several churches, and wrote a number of organ compositions.

Tony Little (Anthony Malecki), one of Pittsburgh's most celebrated and popular organists, died on July 18. During his career, he played and arranged for some of the leading bands in the country. He was staff arranger for Pittsburgh's WCAE, and performed at the Ankara, a night club, for 7½ years. He was appearing in Fort Meyers, Florida when he died.

Harold W. Luebke, chairman of the Rocky Mountain Chapter in Denver for the past year, suffered a heart attack and passed away in his sleep September 4, 1975. He was

born in Milwaukee, Dec. 22, 1912 and had lived there until 1956. He attended Marquette University there, and it was while there that his interest in owning an organ began. He then operated a boat business in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. In 1956 he moved to Denver.



Harold Luebke

Previous to his year as chairman, he had held other offices in the chapter. Harold was instrumental in successfully obtaining the non-profit corporation status of the chapter. He had been very devoted to the chapter's current work program of the past three years — renovation of a 2/7 Wurlitzer at Fred Riser's organ building in a suburban area of Denver. He had been employed by Mine and Smelter Supply whose operations are worldwide and had done considerable travelling for the firm. He was in charge of the music program at St. Stephens Lutheran Church and was an active member of the choir.

He owned a Conn 650 theatre organ, complete with Leslie and Conn pipes, and had graciously hosted many chapter meetings.

He is survived by a brother, Robert, in Milwaukee, and two nephews.

Harold will be greatly missed.

Carl "Charlie" Weiner died at St. Ann's Home, Techny, Ill., on September 19 at the age of 84 according to information provided by Brother Norbert of the Divine Word Seminary, Techny. Mr. Weiner was a Chicago area organ builder who had emigrated to this country from Germany with his father, Bartholomew Weiner, who was also an organ builder. Following their resignation from Kimball about 1920, the Weiners built, installed, and main-

tained pipe organs in the area. One of the largest is in the chapel at the Divine Word Seminary and is played and maintained by Brother Norbert. The Brothers, including Brother Norbert, fabricated the entire organ under the supervision of the Weiners. It features a unique four manual console with three rails of colored tabs in a horseshoe, plus drawknobs and tilting tablets. Mr. Weiner was responsible for the maintenance of the Chicago Stadium Barton for many years. He is survived by a sister.



Bob Rhodes

Well known Chicago organist, **Bob Rhodes** died suddenly Sept. 10th, 1975 of a heart attack on a visit to Phoenix, Arizona. Bob played for many years in Chicago in various clubs as well as the Trianon and Aragon ballrooms. He later moved to Ft. Lauderdale where he played for several years at Dania Jai Alai Palace. He will also be remembered for his Sunday afternoon concerts at Victor's in Ft. Lauderdale. An excellent musician he will be missed by all who knew him. He is buried in Zanesville Memorial Park in the family plot, Zanesville, Ohio.

The following item appeared in *The Diapason* in August 1975:

George Losh, organ builder, died March 30, 1975. Mr. Losh was the former owner of Midmer-Losh Inc., having retired from the organ building firm in June 1973.

Midmer-Losh was best known for the construction of two very large organs: the Atlantic City High School organ and the Atlantic City Municipal Auditorium organ. Both were built in the early 1920's and 1930's

respectively and from that time on, they overshadowed all other work done by the firm. Coming from a family of monument builders, both George Losh and his older brother, Siebert, were destined to build what was hailed as the world's largest organ.

Born in Perry County, Pa., in 1892, George Losh obtained his technical organ expertise early in life. He spent summers working in the Moller factory, gaining experience in the construction of wood pipes and chests. After graduation from Pratt Institute in 1912 with a degree in mechanical engineering, he worked full time for the Moller Co. He assisted in the erection of many small and large organs, and it was at that time that he learned tuning and voicing techniques. In 1914, he was given full charge of the maintenance of the Moller organs in his area. When the first World War began, George enlisted, and was sent to France, serving 17 months.

In the meantime, Siebert Losh was also working for Moller and was becoming successful in his job as eastern sales manager. He had many radical ideas which led him to feel restrained, working for someone else. When in 1920, the opportunity to purchase the prestigious Reuben Midmer & Son Organ Co. came, the Losh Brothers wasted no time in buying it. Deciding to take advantage of the famous Midmer name, they called it the Midmer-Losh Co. With the purchase came a well equipped factory in Merrick, Long Island. Many of the original Midmer craftsmen stayed on. Business was booming, and three years later after building about 43 two and three-manual organs, the firm was awarded the contract for the 150-stop Atlantic City High School organ. New features, never before used in this country, were introduced, among them the Schulze Diapason, the Grand Diapason Section and the Double Harmonic Tuba. At first, a 4-manual console was constructed, but a year later, a fifth manual was added.

A contract was awarded to the company for the construction of an organ for the new Municipal Auditorium in Atlantic City in May 1929. The successful bid was for \$347,200. According to the contract, the organ was to have two consoles, one of six

manuals and the other of five. Both consoles controlled the organ of 297 stops. Several subsequent contracts increased the size and cost of the organ by increasing the number of ranks and adding a seventh manual. George Losh spent most of his time supervising the installation. Many of the organ's features were his ideas. He developed a novel right-angle miter assembly for the chorus reeds which gave a more accurate degree of tuning. He also worked on the stop tablet mounting design of the large 7-manual console. The internal reservoir pressure tremulant, new efficient chest designs and the use of plywood in chest work were a few of his contributions.

Unfortunately, the Atlantic City organ project met with many difficulties, both political and financial. There were claims of missing equipment, organ breakdowns, substitution of used parts, uncompleted work etc. All of which were disputed and proven untrue in the courts. In fact, much extra work not called for by the contracts but requested by the original architect, or dictated by the specific requirements of the situation during the installation, was never reimbursed.

The organ was completed in March 1932. After months of suits, hearings and litigation, the organ was finally accepted in September 1933. But final payment was delayed until much later. Meanwhile, several judgements by creditors were made against the firm's ability to handle large contracts. When the Atlantic City organ was finally paid for in full, all the creditors were paid. Yet, in the end, the Atlantic City Municipal Organ was considered a financial and emotional disaster for the firm. The Midmer-Losh Co. was never able to return to its original prosperity and reputation.

George Losh took over the firm after Seibert's death in January 1924. He went into partnership with James Campagnone in 1958, and sold all of his interests to his partner upon retiring in 1973.

His family and friends knew George to be an easy-going and respectable man. He was well liked by all who knew him and although he never married, did have close family ties. He was always ready to help those in his family who needed it, especially during times of hardship.



Bob Carson

(Stufoto)

Robert S. Carson first came to the attention of west coast organ enthusiasts when he and wife Ruth moved into the vacant Joe Kearns residence, where the late movie/TV actor had installed the famous Hollywood CBS 3/26 Wurlitzer. They had recently (1961) moved from Chicago to Los Angeles. Their studio became a Mecca for local and visiting organ buffs for the next 10 years. In this time period Bob Carson was a supporter of the organ hobby in demonstrable ways. He served as Chairman of the Los Angeles Chapter of ATOS. He was also chairman of the 1968 ATOS convention in Los Angeles. During this period Bob established his Malar record label and discovered the talent of Lyn Larsen, whom he and Ruth promoted through records and concerts until Lyn was thoroughly established. In the same manner he helped further the careers of a number of organists through the Malar and Essential record lines, among them Tom Hazleton, Bud Taylor, Shirley Hannum, George Wright, Karl Cole, Gaylord Carter and Helen Dell.

Bob was a man of courage. He moved to California from Chicago with the confidence of one whose future was assured. He tackled the LA job market cold, and his confidence was justified; he soon landed an accounting job with a Glendale vitamin manufacturer. In a few years he had risen to a vice presidency.

Bob lost Ruth about four years ago to embolism. He was desolate during the memorial service to her, held at the Kearns studio, during which notable west coast organists played their tributes to Ruth. Among them was Helen Dell, a longtime friend of the Carsons and already

a Malar recording star. Bob and Helen were later married and continued the Malar record line of quality organ recordings.

During this time, Bob applied his talent to promoting Helen Dell's concert career, and many audiences were the richer. Yet, he maintained his identity; he was rarely addressed as "Mr. Dell."

Perhaps it was the "open house" Bob maintained at the Kearns studio which endeared him most to organ buffs. He was well aware of the historic value of the former CBS Wurlitzer. It was always a stop during conventions, organ crawls and a natural gathering place for "visiting firemen" of the TO persuasion. It was a blow to Bob and Helen when the studio rent was raised to an unreasonable figure. They moved to new quarters and sought another pipe organ, finally acquiring the former Phoenix "Beefeater" restaurant Marr & Colton from Bob Read. A lot was bought in Granada Hills, Calif., and plans were made for a new home which would also house the organ. Bob's death vetoed the project.

Bob never blew his own horn. Although it was known that he grew up in a small town Monticello, Indiana, very few knew of his days at Wabash College, and fewer yet knew about his World War II record in both the European and Asiatic theatres. Tech. Sergeant Robert Carson was awarded the Bronze Star. His specialty was radar installation and maintenance.

Bob suffered several heart attacks a few years ago, and had heeded the medical advice to "go easy." He followed the advice, but it wasn't easy for the normally active Carson. The final attack caught Bob in his sleep on Nov. 11.

It was a bright Saturday afternoon when Bob's friends and dear ones gathered at the Church of the Hills in Forest Lawn for a brief memorial service. It was conducted by the same pastor, William Hornaday, who had married Bob and Helen. Bob's friend, Robert Power presented a resume of Bob's life and stressed the characteristics which endeared him to so many. Gaylord Carter made a wheezy little pipe organ sound good as he played some of Bob's favorite tunes. The little chapel was filled with Bob's friends

and admirers. It was a beautiful sunny, spring-like day for such a sad occasion.

Besides wife Helen, Bob leaves a brother (Bill) and a sister (Barbara), both back in Indiana.

Stu Green □



Safari Survey Response Very Positive!

If all those who say they want to go to England for the Organ Safari follow through we will have two airplanes full. Actually that's okay, although we were originally planning just one planeload of about 200 people.

The surveys are still coming in so if you or your friends haven't sent in your advance reservation and survey form, please do so immediately.

The Safari survey indicates that the timing is right — 71% say this is the best time for them to go. The 15 day tour length meets with 85% approval. Only a few think it's too long, even fewer want to lengthen it.

About 50% of the respondents want more sight-seeing and we'll adjust our schedule accordingly. In fact, we'll probably offer some options between regular sight-seeing and extra organ visits.

Everyone seems to be agreed on our air travel plans. Over 93% want to fly on a fixed itinerary and keep the airfare cost to a minimum. We are now negotiating for the best possible deal.

On hotel accommodations, first class won 64% approval but about 30% of the membership responding preferred economy. Since we may find it difficult to get everyone bunked down in the same hotel we will probably offer some price variation depending on the accommodations you finally select.

On total cost, the majority want the middle bracket of \$850 - \$1,000, though about 25% would prefer to keep the cost lower. Perhaps we can accommodate that need with a

choice of hotel accommodations and make more of the sight-seeing optional.

Altogether the positive responses at this time number nearly 400 persons. Depending on the type of aircraft, a full plane load runs about 200. Consequently we recommend that you immediately send in your firm reservation and deposit so that you are assured of space.

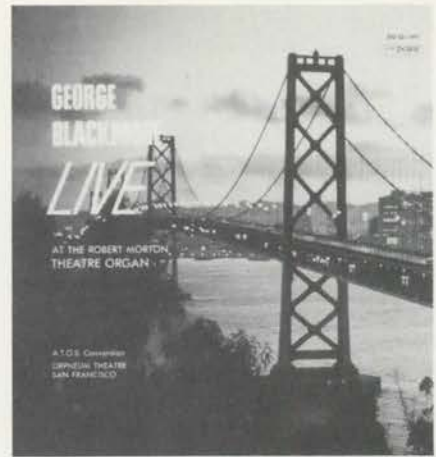
ATOS Organ Safari
6900 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, Ca. 90038 □



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.

GEORGE BLACKMORE 'LIVE' AT THE ROBERT MORTON THEATRE ORGAN, in Quadrophonic/stereo. No. DOC(Q) 1501. \$5.95 postpaid from Doric Records, Box 282, Monterey, Calif. 93940.

Two things about this album will be familiar to 1975 ATOS conventioners. First, the album cover photo, which shows part of the San Francisco Bay Bridge scene which adorned the jacket of the convention souvenir record. Next, the Blackmore selections will seem familiar because they are the same ones heard during that memorable final



convention concert, which was also broadcast "live" by a San Francisco FM station.

Organists always take their chances when they permit a commercial record to be made from tapes of a live concert. George Blackmore comes off remarkably well in this respect. Very few "flubs" are heard.

The selections are varied, ranging from the "Zampa Overture" to a tribute to San Francisco ("San Francisco" and "I Left My Heart in SF"). There's a lively operetta medley of Franz Lehar selections: "Merry Widow Waltz," "Vilia" and "Girls, Girls, Girls." The Spanish medley includes "Granada," "Jalousie," "Spanish Eyes" and "Espana Cani." Memories of England during the "blitz" are evoked by "The White Cliffs of Dover" and a defiant "Dam Busters' March," Eric Coates' musical tribute to England's answer to the blitz — The Royal Air Force, in which Blackmore served. A lengthy "Raggedy Rag" potpourri includes such titles as "Doin' the Raccoon," "Don't Bring Lulu," "Pasadena," "Get Out and Get Under," "Yessir, That's My Baby," "12th Street Rag" and four other tunes from the 1911-1928 period. All are played in the British "quickstep" style, with emphasis on a fast dance tempo which leaves little time for registration variety or expression. Wisely, Blackmore chose titles which wouldn't suffer from such summary treatment. Yet, this medley is the weakest link in a fine performance.

This record is also another step toward establishing the Robert Morton as an excellent recording organ. The brand is a late bloomer, due partially to the shortage of recording quality Mortons (unadulterated, that

is) and the still potent super promotion of Morton's chief competitor of yore. The ensemble and solo voices as used by George Blackmore are indeed satisfying.

This, despite miking which was arranged by the radio station rather than by the recording crew. While quite satisfactory, it can't compare with the quality of Doric's engineer Frank Killinger's sound pickups in the same theatre. This may be splitting hairs but try to find the melody line as George starts "Toot, Toot Tootsie." Unless George lost his place, the pickup caused the melodic fuzziness. But no matter, he never missed a beat.

This recording will bring pleasurable recollections to those who were present at the concert-recording sessions. To others it will show what they missed. It's an album well worth having.



Jonas Nordwall

JONAS, Jonas Nordwall Plays the Wurlitzer Pipe Organ in the Organ Grinder Restaurant, Portland, Oregon, JN-104, stereo. \$6.50 post-paid from Gamba Records, 4993 East 30th Ave. Apt. 98, Portland, Oregon 97202.

The first time we heard Jonas was during an early ATOS convention in Portland. He was playing a plug-in while all the other scheduled organists played magnificent pipe organs. The teenager held his own then, and a decade later he is better than ever. This is Jonas' fourth album and the first recording made on the Portland Organ Grinder 40-rank mostly Wurlitzer. The organ literally "has everything" and the organist uses the Hope-Jones developed facilities to the hilt — second touch, sostenuto, pizzicato

coupler, three very different Tibias and a four-rank Vox Humana chorus. The organ's most noticeable assets are a wealth of color reeds — two Brass Trumpets, a Brass Sax, Krumet, Posthorn, Oboe Horn, Tuba Mirabilis, Fagot Horn, and style D Trumpet, to name the principal ones. They all get a workout in the music on this recording. Probably more obvious to the less organ-hip listener are the prominent percussions. Jonas uses them lavishly but always in good taste. The most subtle is a re-iterating cymbal which colors several selections with its "white noise" tintinnabulation.

The list of selections is a record reviewer's dream, far from the all too frequent "Alley Cat" mentality. The tunes are mostly pop standards with a touch of gypsy and film soundtrack tunes. But titles are only half the story. What the artist does with them is what counts, and Jonas' treatments are distinctive. Those who revere the early George Wright, when he set the style for the exhumed theatre organ in the '50s and '60s' will enjoy these arrangements. Jonas employs GW harmonic effects, but he is not an arrangement copyist. It's more a matter of reminiscence; now where did I hear that "fill" before?

The arrangements display a vast amount of energy on the part of the organist. He opens with a devastating "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans" which may sound over-orchestrated to some listeners. Jonas has loaded every held note with a variety of harmonic and rhythmic devices reminiscent of that classic vocal chorus of "Shanty Town." It's guaranteed to keep the auditioner wide awake. In direct contrast, "Dream a Little Dream of Me" explores the more subtle voices of the organ for a most satisfying treatment of a resurged ballad of the early '30s.

The *Lawrence of Arabia* music almost defies description, but we'll try. Conceived as a somewhat tumultuous parallel to "In a Persian Market," *Lawrence* reflects the various moods of every Hollywood oriental extravaganza ever screened, starting with the *Thief of Bagdad* and continuing thru the Sabu pseudo-orientals of the '40s and '50s. Musically pictured are the ancient market places, processions, fanfares, belly dances, and chases with Jon Hall a

step ahead of the pursuing renegades. We'd love to witness the undulating bare midribs which must have flashed through Jonas' mind as he choreographed the rhythmic parts of this colorful spectacle.

"More Than You Know" may start audiophiles manipulating the high and low controls of their playback systems; a somewhat too-prominent mutation seems to take over the true pitch sometimes to the point of confusion. This lasts only a short time. The ballad is well played.

"The Sheik of Araby" is usually played as a sentimental ballad (as the composer intended) or as a basis for jazz variations. Jonas does neither; he plays it as rhythmic intermission music. Only the rather good verse is missing.

John Denver's "Country Boy" is played as something of a slambang hoedown. Jonas milks lots of sentiment from the '30s ballad, "Home" (note the untrem'd counter melody) and the registration is exquisite. The same can be said for the ballad in beguine tempo, "I've Got You Under My Skin." Brilliant is the word for Jonas' arrangement and performance of Monti's "Czardas." Percussions are used effectively but the gypsy spirit of the composition remains intact. The closer is a honey-smooth "Dream," satisfying right to its GW end phrase.

Recording is excellent. There is a

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high frequency emphasis which some listeners may want to attenuate some. We prefer to hear it with all the highs audible. Stereo separation is not overdone.

For a change, here's an album with jacket notes presented in the language of the organ enthusiast. Many of the voices and combinations used are pinpointed by selection, and the complete stoplist is provided. This is a highly recommended album.

BARNARD PLAYS THE ABC ALABAMA THEATRE ORGAN. LP-A-2883 (no label given). \$6.00 postpaid from Barnard Franklin, Box 4457, Birmingham, Alabama 35206.

Barnard Franklin is a new name to this reviewer, but he comes to us with lots of recommendation. According to the jacket notes he is an Indiana U. grad (music) who later studied in Tel Aviv. He has done some gigs as a trans-Atlantic ocean liner musician and he's a member of ATOS. It has been reported that he is the current staffer of the Alabama theatre.

The organ is a 4/20 Wurlitzer we've known about since Randy Sauls tickled its ivories in the '30s. In recent years it has been restored and is currently maintained by Alabama Chapter ATOSers.

Side 1 was miked during a concert and there's a spoken intro by theatre manager Cecil Brown after which Barnard plays an energetic "Lover" with plenty of digital ornamentation. There's intermittent mid-tune applause when the organist does something the listeners heartily approve. Next it's "Tara's Theme" from *Gone With the Wind*, followed by "Born Free," "On a Clear Day" and "I Want to Be Happy," each followed and/or interrupted by applause. Obviously, Barnard is an audience pleaser.

Side 2 is recorded without an audience. Two of the selections, "C'est Magnifique" and "Half a Sixpence," include vocals by the organist. Results, possibly due to faulty microphone placement, sound rather sibillant and squawky. They add little to the program.

A lively "It's All Right With Me" is the console riser for side 2. One of Barnard's best numbers is the "Blue

Skirt Waltz," which might be a spin-off from Liszt's "Les Preludes." Inclusion of "Somewhere My Love" marks Barnard as a guy who must expect to sell pressings over the cocktail lounge plug-in; it has replaced "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" and "How Dry I am" as the drunk's delight.

"A Wonderful Guy" (from *South Pacific*) and *Guys and Dolls* come off well.

All selections are competently played by an obviously experienced musician. Arrangements are mostly uncomplicated and if there is a weakness it is in the registration; perhaps the solo voices on the 4/20 Wurlitzer aren't yet in playing shape. Whatever the reason, Barnard seems to prefer big combinations and there isn't much change from one tune to the next.

Yet, it adds up to pleasant listening. Miking is big hall perspective and occasionally strident. The overall result is a plus for this new name on the theatre organ horizon.

Jacket notes are the "gee whiz" variety, aimed obviously at the uninitiated. In all, it's a good first try by an organist with more on the ball than shows in this first grooving.

ROY BINGHAM AT THE 'M' RANCH WURLITZER, SUTTON IN ASHFIELD (ENGLAND). Dero Cinema Organ Series No. 1070 (stereo). \$5.50 postpaid from Stanley C. Garniss, 35 Union Street, North Easton, Mass. 02356.

Note that the British Dero label now has a stateside distributor. This

gives the purchaser a circa one dollar saving over the old import price.

This recording will be chiefly of interest to home installation enthusiasts. The instrument is a 3/8 Wurlitzer moved from its original home (the gone Granada Cinema, Greenford, Middlesex) to the Dennis Matthews home called 'M' Ranch, where it speaks into a music room built in a large floored-over swimming pool. It's a single chamber installation with unenclosed percussions, including an upright piano (added) and an apparently original Vibraphone. The stoplist is also unorthodox, by US standards. The 8-ranker has no Vox, but it has a Saxophone and an English Horn (Posthorn). The remaining voices are Diapason, Gamba, Gamba Celeste, Flute, Tuba Horn and Tibia Clausa. The resulting ensemble sound is usually lush, although sometimes a little out of tune with the fixed-pitch percussions. The jacket notes state that the owner, Mr. Matthews, has installed several individual tremos. This is very much in evidence in the Tibia sound, one of the best-adjusted Tibias we've heard in a home installation, and one of the most tonally appealing. Yet the Saxophone suffers from a bad case of choppy "tremulitus." Fortunately it is used sparingly. The piano, as recorded, is a typical organ piano. The Vibraphone is gorgeous.

Mr. Bingham's style of playing is heavy on expression, sometimes at the expense of the rhythm. His left hand seems to favor full chords,



Roy Bingham at the 'M Ranch' 3/8 Wurlitzer. Note wide decorative end columns and fluted, double bolsters supporting side jambs. This is apparently a British design which marks a number of England's Wurlitzers.

held down continually, even when the tune calls for a beat. In fact he plays mostly a single note melody with lower manual accompaniment. He uses the prominent tonal percussions sparingly, possibly because they are somewhat overpowering. His melody lines sometimes stray and harmonic treatment is unsophisticated but pleasing.

The selections offer plenty of variety, including marches, a tango, US pop standards, a concert piece, and an appealing Viennese folk song. The titles are "Echoing Pipes" (march), "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You," "Vienna, City of My Dreams," "Exactly Like You" (ballad treatment!), "Don't Be Cross," "La Vie En Rose," "Julian" (tango), "Lonely Ballarina" (intermezzo), "Granada" and a medley which

covers half of side 2 and includes "Java," "Manhattan," "By the Fireside," "Wonderful One," "I'm Just Wild About Harry," "When You're Smiling" and "the World is Waiting for the Sunrise." Each is given individual treatment, not the "quick-step" bit.

At best, it's difficult for an 8-ranker to compete successfully with the normally much larger recording organs we review. Such comparison is not the purpose of this recording. Rather, it's a testament as to how one buff treated his instrument as a home installation. No artificial reverb has been added to give it a "big hall" sound. Hearing the record is probably much like sitting in the Matthews music room and enjoying an informal concert by an able demonstrator. As such it succeeds. □



by Walter J. Beaupre, Ph.D.

THE MIGHTY THEATRE ORGAN, edited by Lee Erwin, Edward B. Marks Music Corporation, 136 West 52nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. Price \$2.50 retail.

Five years back a collection of ten "organ solos in theatre organ stylings" was launched under the editorial surveillance of Lee Erwin and according to the cover blurb "published in cooperation with the American Theatre Organ Society." *The Mighty Theatre Organ* was advertised shortly after publication in this journal. I picked up a copy somewhere along the way, said "Amen!" to Ben Hall's beautifully written introduction, dabbled at a few of the easier-to-sight-read selections — and promptly forgot all about it. Not until recently, while hunting through some unfiled music did I pull out *The Mighty Theatre Organ* and resolve to take a second and more critical look. So here goes.

This Erwin-ATOS labor of love purports to be a collection of new music "expressly for the organ" —

and that it is. No one can quarrel with the fact that the contributors are all very talented performing artists with individual organ styles. The cast is a veritable "Who's Who" or, if you prefer, "Pipes' Peak." Selections promise both balance and variety: five ballad-type and five novelty-type solos with plenty of variety within each category. Playing difficulty also varies from quite easy to required virtuosity. The easiest ballads are by Rosa Rio, Jody Weaver, and Eddie Layton; more demanding are the ballads of Lee Erwin and Ann Leaf. The easier novelty solos are those by Al Bollington, Allen Mills, and Jeff Barker; the most difficult by Don Baker and Ashley Miller. Other home organists may question these rankings by playing difficulty, depending upon their personal skills and prior experience. For example, this reviewer doesn't mind reading music written in six flats, but high speed passages and cadenzas are always a major hurdle.

The first solo printed in the book, Editor Erwin's "My Best Girl," was

not new to me. I had heard a live performance of same under a silent film as well as Lee's Angel recording. Incidentally, I consider the recorded arrangement an improvement over the printed score (sustained pedal notes under the fanfare, extended counter-melodies, more sophisticated key modulations, etc.) so don't expect to sound exactly like the Master. The written arrangement still carries the lush, warm moods which make this pretty tune a joy to play. Lee's suggested registration warns us to stay away from 16' stops when playing big chords to close to the lower end of the manual. The opening fanfare generated anticipation with an abrupt modulation from E flat to G major. The main theme, boldly stated with both hands in unison, quickly gives way to a descending counter melody on the lower manual. The counter melody of the main theme becomes a boldly descending chromatic melody in the bridge. A key change to F keeps the tune from becoming repetitive while establishing deeper familiarity. Always the expert craftsman, Lee Erwin knows that we like to meet the same damsel again and again — but not wearing the same dress. He obliges with some stylish quick changes and a tasteful coda. Although hardly more than just another pretty tune, the fascination of "My Best Girl" lies in the stylish arrangement for organ. Harmonic patterns are interesting and satisfying without becoming too far out. The G9 and D13 add the right touch of esoteric.

Jeff Barker's "El Samba Chico" serves as a novelty latin contrast. The rhythmic introduction establishes the underlying beat rather than any melodic pattern to follow. Once the melody begins the burden of the samba rhythm stays with the right hand theme in 3rds while the accompaniment is straight 4/4 oom-pah, oom-pah. This pattern changes when both hands descend to the lower manual for an open chord melody/rhythm interlude. "Chico's" trio introduces an extended right hand, single note solo in the lower registers. It's fun and adds variety when the repeat chorus is played still an octave lower. By contrast a final samba theme is played in the treble register. As you may have guessed, the right hand does all the

work in "El Samba Chico." This should please those home organists who avoid intricate pedal and accompaniment demands. The total effect of the solo is honest theatricality without a hint of "showboating." Granted it will never drive "Tico Tico" off the charts but, like Jeff Barker's playing, it is bright, clean, spirited and fun.

In my opinion Jody Weaver's "Arlene" could easily stand on its own merits as a tuneful waltz, but father Eddie's gorgeously simple arrangement makes "Arlene" one of the best in the book. Be sure to follow the suggestions concerning tempo which keep the waltz from becoming a syrupy lullabye. It needs to soar freely on the lower manual Tibias at times. The second chorus with its left hand melody and right hand cascading Tibias (remember those Mantovani orchestrations?) presents a nice contrast to the counter-melodies of the first chorus. As a theatre style arrangement for the home organist with limited technical abilities, "Arlene" is well-nigh perfect. You'll find yourself humming Jody's tune long after you've shut down the console for the night.

Al Bollington's "Pipe Organ Blues" is not a novelty solo in the strict sense, but it does contribute to the general spirit of variety among the ten selections. Al suggests that his "Blues" is for a three manual instrument (playable on two, of course) and his registration ideas are elaborate and creative — also necessary. More about that later. I was first intrigued by the funky, gut-bucket theme, suitable one would think for conjuring up visions of Anne Corio or Rose Hovick's first-born. The home organist will have fun playing the frequent gliss "schmears," but family and friends should not be subjected to the multiple repetitions of the same theme idea unless the performer can vary the registrations as Bollington suggests. The main charm of the arrangements lies in the skillful use of a jazz solo horn line. Al has written out his jazz horn solos wonderfully well, so study them carefully. The solid accompaniment reminds one of Artie Shaw's "Nightmare."

Don Baker's "Acapulco" gives us a modest sample of his unbelievable virtuosity. It wouldn't be fair to dwell upon the fact that the tune isn't

much. Don could earn a standing ovation playing "Chopsticks" (and for all I know probably has). It is enough that "Acapulco" lets us see on the printed staves the chromatic thirds and skipping triads, the big block chords beating against each other in climax after climax. One should struggle through a Baker transcription — if only to sharpen one's appreciation of this great performing artist. Did I forget to tell you that "Acapulco" is rumba to be played *moderato*? It is, and Mr. Baker reminds us in parentheses that *moderato* means "on the slow side." That man leaves nothing to chance!

I've never had the pleasure of meeting Rosa Rio, but as a teenager I dashed home from school regularly to hear her on the radio. Thanks to her inspired improvisations Rosa made a poetry reading gentleman named Ted Malone (remember *Between the Bookends*?) sound much more profound than he probably deserved. I mention this because Rosa's solo "Dreaming" reminds me of the heady mood stuff she used to play for Ted. Now I ask you, could any piece with the subtitle *En Rêvant* be written in any key other than G flat? No, but the reason for six flats is more practical than romantic — it makes the pedal cadenzas much easier to play. Thanks, Rosa. Here's another "in depth" observation: nine of the ten

solos in the collection provide chord cues above the music staves so that you can fudge your own accompaniment if you wish. In "Dreaming" the fake cues are missing, and wisely so. You play the chords and passing tones as Rosa Rio wrote them — or not at all! Is the reviewer suggesting a paradoxical "put down"? Not at all. The home organist should have a whole book of these Rosa Rio mood pieces. They are just what the doctor ordered for unwinding the cares of the day at the console.

The Allen Mills novelty "Rickshaw Ride" is both very pleasant and very predictable. Move Raymond Scott's "Siberian Sleighride" or Leroy Anderson's "Sleighride" a few degrees south and east, add a dash of "Dancing Tamborine" and some figures from something I vaguely remember called "Futuristic Rag" — and there is nothing new under the sun. But, hold on. Stark originality has never been essential in the novelty solo genre. No one bothers to complain that "Nola," "Flapperette" and "Sapphire" are similar to each other. Mills' "Rickshaw Ride" has all the essential ingredients of a good novelty tune: it's clever, catchy and filled with happy piccolos, chinese blocks and gongs. Mills was certainly not the first, but I hope he is the *last* composer to use that gawdauful, phoney Chinese intro that has been kicking around since "Limehouse Blues."

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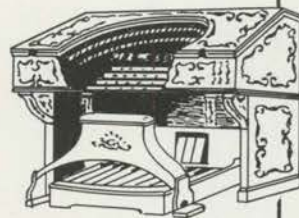
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Who knows? The time may come when our Chinese brothers will lose their sense of humor and protest our occidental caricatures of what we think is oriental music.

Ashley Miller's "Jet Stream" is still another novelty solo which, after the ultra modern intro with its thirteenth chords and assorted flatted fifths and ninths, takes off like a bat out of a solo chamber with Post Horn blasts calculated to bring out the Environmental Noise Protection League. The home organist may run into a bit of turbulence when trying to play the half note triplets against a four-four rhythmic accompaniment, but at supersonic speeds no one will notice much. The solo ends in a blaze of big chords and palm glissandos. "Jet Stream" is an admirable *tour de force*. It is not for the faint hearted amateur, but it does give the player an inside view of Ashley Miller's great talent as a performer. "Jet Stream" is worth the trip even at ground speed.

The fourth ballad in the collection "Tango By Candlelight" I found the most difficult to play. Interesting that Ms. Ann Leaf should be the one composer to separate the men from the boys! The tune is simple enough, but the counter-melodies are stacked up three deep in places. It is an organ orchestration in the true sense of the word. The pedal line is essential not only to the rhythm of the "Tango" but also to the harmony and

counterpoint. The accompaniment is solid and never quite predictable — you can't go wool-gathering for a measure without coming to grief. Chords are modern with progressions that make musical sense, and registrations are original and tricky. Will you enjoy playing "Tango By Candlelight"? Let's put it this way: careful study of this piece would probably teach you more about playing the theatre organ *well* than any other selection in the book; but if your pleasure is a "funky trip" rather than organ "push-ups," better save it for some other time.

If full organ sound at its romantic best is your bag, then you may well find Eddie Layton's "Portrait in Sound" the most satisfying solo in the collection. It comes closest to showing off the Mighty Theatre Organ in all its power and glory. The Layton "theme" follows the structure of tunes such as "Deep Purple" rather than the usual pop ballad with a bridge. Eddie stays with the key of G throughout. Variety comes with accompaniment changes and harmonic surprises. The modern chords are skillfully distributed to give the piece a rich, lush sound which builds slowly and dramatically to a spine tingling finale. Good show!

While we're on the subject of music expressly written for theatre organ, I have a *wish list* of great arrangements I'd very much like to see in print for present and future ATOS fans. Wouldn't this *Table of Contents* make one whale of a collection?

"Dancing Tamborine" Don Baker

"The Perfect Song" Gaylord Carter

"Autumn in New York" Buddy Cole

"Stardust" Lee Erwin

"Sentimental Journey" Dennis James

"You'll Never Walk Alone" Leroy Lewis

"Serenade in Blue" Bill McCoy

"All The Things You Are" baroque version by Billy Nalle

"Londonderry Air" Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier

"Twelfth Street Rag" Sidney Torch

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 George:

May I bring to your attention, a misspelled word that completely changed the meaning of a sentence, in my letter to your "The letters to the Editor" section, in the August-September issue of "THEATRE ORGAN."

The error was in the FIRST sentence of the THIRD paragraph concerning old Tally's Broadway Theatre. It SHOULD have read, "The space it occupied is NOW an extension of the May Co. Dept. Store, etc., NOT, not.

My best to you and your Staff.

Very Sincerely
Gaston Garneau

Dear George:

When reading the August-September issue of THEATRE ORGAN I read Geoff Paterson's letter with interest and recalled a quotation from a book which is part of my library. The quotation is indeed a pregnant one and does much to support the argument that calisthenics at the console are unnecessary. The opera world more elegantly uses the term "histrionics" which one prominent dictionary defines as as "theatrical affectations."

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION		POST OFFICE PERMIT NO. 1000 MIDDLEBURG, VA.	
1. TITLE OF PUBLICATION Theatre Organ	2. NUMBER OF ISSUES 12	3. DATE OF FILING 12/1/75	4. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION PRICE \$8.50
5. OWNER B. E. Mason	6. OWNER'S ADDRESS 1574 Edgewood Dr., Livonia, MI. 48154	7. LOCATION OF THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE PUBLISHER (Not printer)	
8. PUBLISHER (Name and address) Betty M. Mason 1574 Edgewood Dr., Livonia, MI. 48154	9. PUBLISHER'S ADDRESS George Thompson 793 Echo Valley Rd., Salinas, Calif., 93901	10. CIRCULATION (Number and address of each distributor)	
11. EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION			
A. TOTAL NO. COPIES PRINTED (Net Press Run)	5000	6190	
B. PAID CIRCULATION 1. SALES THROUGH DEALERS AND CARRIERS 2. MAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS	0 5000	0 5557	
C. TOTAL PAID CIRCULATION	5000	5557	
D. FREE DISTRIBUTION BY MAIL, CARRIER OR OTHER MAIL SERVICE (Include newspaper, second-class matter, and other classes)	140	155	
E. TOTAL DISTRIBUTION (Sum of B, C, and D)	5140	5712	
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The following quotation is from an advanced textbook on the pedagogy of voice and was written by Van A. Christy.

"Unfortunately, stage appearance is more convincing than the sound of fine singing to many; i.e., more people still depend on sight rather than the evidence of their ears for musical judgement. The student can at least learn to act like an experienced artist, even if he does not yet sound like one to the discriminating ear."

Expressive Singing

Volume II

p. 113, col. 1, para. 4.

One does not go to the concert hall to see Horowitz or Rubenstein play the piano but rather to hear them play. Certainly some performers can command an entire audience by their mere presence but I suggest that audiences should judge a performer by what they hear rather than what they see because, after all, the instrument — ANY instrument — was conceived to make MUSIC.

Respectfully,
Tom Gnaster

Dear Sir:

I have just received the August issue of THEATRE ORGAN magazine, and see that it is full as ever of absorbing reading and pictures. Every time one comes in the mail, I'm lost for the next two days as far as normal activity is concerned!

Best regards,
Frank Pratt
Kingston, Ontario
Canada

Dear Editor:

In response to comments on the solid state trap relay in Mr. Kaemmerer's letter published in August-September issue of THEATRE ORGAN Magazine, he is correct in all points but he seems to have missed the basis of my design. First, it is simple and is a direct, wire in, replacement for a Barton or Wurlitzer electropneumatic trap relay as most organs were supplied with. Second, it does not require reversing the polarity of the feed and return to the magnets on the trap chest as would be required with an NPN driver. Third, the parts are easily obtained at any good parts store, inexpensively.

If Mr. Kaemmerer were to play

the organ from the stop tabs as he suggests, yes, there will be arcing. This is the same arcing that has been going on in organs for over 50 years! The diodes are on the circuit board to protect the transistor, not the contacts. If a direct short were to occur the diode would act as a fuse and blow, only if the stop were on.

I restate that this circuit has been in daily, commercial service, since the spring of 1973, without ANY problems.

Sincerely yours,
William Klinger, Jr.
(Owner)

Dear George:

Congratulations on the fine October-November issue of THEATRE ORGAN . . . one of the finest issues yet! Dennis and Heidi James' "England Tour Diary" was thoroughly delightful and all they said is absolutely true.

Joyce and I have recently returned from a six-week holiday in England where we were given a preview of the tour planned for ATOS members next July. This great tour shouldn't be missed by anyone who can possibly find the time to go. Our British cousins have arranged a magnificent experience for us and those who have not signed up for the trip should do so without delay. Not only will we enjoy the well-maintained "in-theatre" and home installations, but the other attractions scheduled are alone worth the price of admission. To top it off, the unequalled British hospitality must be experienced to be believed.

Anyone undecided should re-read Dennis and Heidi's account, particularly the last paragraph where they close with a fine tribute to Les and Edith Rawle who did so much to make our visit memorable also. I had always thought "southern hospitality" referred to an area south of the Mason-Dixon line but we found it to mean southern Great Britain. I guarantee all who go to England next July will agree.

Very truly yours,
Fred D. Mitchell, Jr.

Dear Mr. Thompson:

In reply to Mr. Wambolt's letter to THEATRE ORGAN, Oct.-Nov. issue may I present some comments regarding rink organs.

While there are some theatre pipe

organs which have been transplanted to roller rinks, there are at least several that I know of which were built by Wurlitzer specifically for rinks, and were therefore of different tonal design. The organ built for Madison Gardens (1931) was one of these. The unusual features of this 2/8 instrument were: most of the ranks were of extra-large scale. The Clarinet was 4" in diameter at 8'; likewise, the String and String Celeste, which were the quietest ranks in the organ. The Diapason was, or rather is, since it's still in existence, 10" in diameter at 8'. These pipes were a constant source of trouble because the languids presented a large surface to the 20" wind pressure and would bend out of shape, or, in some cases, break at the solder joint. The Flute was really a large scale Tibia Plena, open from tenor F#, and extended downward with stopped pipes through 16'. The Trumpet was like the usual Harmonic Tuba, except that it became double length at middle C instead of F#. The crowning glory was an English Horn (they didn't use the term *Post*) voiced more brilliantly than any I've ever heard. There was a sub and super octave coupler for each manual, and a coupler for each manual to pedal, unusual for a 2m console. The nomenclature on the stop keys was different too. The 16' of the Flute was called "Double Flute" instead of "Bourdon," and the 16' Trumpet "Double Trumpet." There were two reservoirs, therefore two tremulants which were wired together to just one stop key. This organ was moved to the Hub Rink and has undergone many alterations. Another instrument was built for Riverview Rink in Milwaukee. It had the same pipe specification, but a three manual console and a player roll attachment.

Rinks were not the only special customers of Wurlitzer. One was built for a very large and fancy horse riding arena. It was a three manual, and I think about 17 ranks. It had a Military Flageolet, Military Trumpet, and an extra set of oversized Bass and Snare Drums also termed "Military." This building was converted into an ice rink, and Mildred Fitzpatrick was the organist for many years. Eventually the building was acquired by CBS and made

into TV studios. The organ was sold at auction. The new owner innocently arranged for a piano mover to transfer it to his out-door rink where he planned to use it. At this point, he began to be educated on the finer points of pipe organ design, and found he had a tiger by the tail when CBS became impatient and threatened to charge \$100 for every day the organ remained on the premises. Ultimately, the late Herb Shriner got him off the hook by taking possession and moving the organ to his home in Larchmont, N.Y., where, I was told, the Solo String sounded like a Post Horn, with every thing else in proportion to that comparison.

As for fitting into the picture, when the Hub Rink came into being twenty-five years ago, many people heard a Wurlitzer for the first time; became, and remained devotees. Not only the skaters, but also hi-fi fans, because of the recordings produced on this organ. Incidentally, some of these recordings are still being produced and sold in record shops both here and abroad.

I am no longer organist at the Hub; however, I am playing an electronic in another new rink for the new owners, who built a chain of rinks around Chicago-land and changed the name to the "Axle Roller Rinks."

Sincerely,
Leon Berry

Dear Mr. Klos:

Imagine my surprise when I opened the October issue of THEATRE ORGAN to see your endeavors in print. It was beautifully organized and very good reading. My biography was like living those wonderful days again. The pictures came out very vividly and clearly. Many thanks for your interest and kind help.

I have retired as musical director of the Warren State Hospital but still make an occasional visit, especially to the new chapel. Now that I have more free time, I hope to attend some of the ATOS meetings and programs.

With best personal wishes, and hoping to meet you some time in the near future, I am

Most gratefully,
George Johnson

To the Editor:

I was the organist at the large downtown First Congregational Church in Washington, D.C., for 18 years. The church seated 1,200, and while it was built in the 1860's, it was still one of the largest churches in the District of Columbia. Calvin Coolidge attended this church while I was organist.

In 1927 some plaster fell on the head of a lady seated in the church. When the church was inspected for safety, they found the great beam supporting the roof of the church was only in the side wall a quarter of an inch. Just imagine the vibration of the powerful organ — a four manual Ernest Skinner. It is a miracle that the roof did not cave in.

While the church was being repaired, the congregation met in the Metropolitan Theatre, one block south of the church. This organ was a two-manual Wurlitzer. We worshipped at this theatre for about one year, while the church was being strengthened with steel girders.

Dr. Jason Noble Pierce was the pastor of the church, and he was interested in showing moving pictures in the church at the Sunday evening services. He had a large moving picture screen installed just in front of the organ pipes, with the organ console facing the screen. There was a large picture booth with two professional projectors in the balcony of the Sunday School Room. When not in use, the screen was raised with a counter weight into the ceiling of the church and could not be seen during the regular morning church service.

The first film shown was the silent religious version of The King of Kings, which ran for four weeks, every night of the week and twice on Sunday. Yours truly played a special score which I arranged for the picture on the four manual Skinner.

Thereafter every Sunday evening Dr. Pierce would feature a movie at the Evening Service and I was responsible for the music to fit the picture. I was aided by "cue sheets" which indicated music necessary to fit the action. Frequently we reviewed the picture before it was shown so I could get a better idea for the music. The movies on Sunday evenings went on for three years and we had large audiences to see them, free, with only their gift in the collection plate.

One Sunday evening the picture was being shown in the church, which was very dark, when suddenly there was a spurt of flame from the projection booth in the Sunday School Room balcony. Such pandemonium you have never heard! I thought the balcony of the church had fallen. I put full organ on and even though it was very powerful, you could not hear it over the din. Thank God, Thomas, the custodian, was near the switchboard and put on the lights, thus avoiding a panic.

I had played the organ at Keiths, Rialto, Metropolitan and Savoy Theatres in Washington, D.C. so was fully prepared to play the organ for the movies as well as the regular church services.

Sincerely
Paul D. Gable □

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Pipe Organ Quiz Answers

(from Quiz on Page 49)

1. False. Lowering the pressure will result in slower action response, slow speech, and reduced harmonic development on almost all pipe work.
2. False. The Symphonic Registrator was used on small instruments only to aid marginally trained organists in registration.
3. True. Wire sizes ranged from # 8 through #12 stranded and were too small to take care of surges in power. Since oscilloscopes were not available to theatre organ manufacturers, this sudden drop in voltage was not noticeable since recovery took place in a fraction of a second. The result is a sluggish key action on full organ registration and pronounced arcing at the key and relay contacts. Even small theatre organs should have at least a #6 stranded wire and larger ones #4. For more information write to Reisner, Inc. Box 71, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740 and ask for "Rectifier Wiring Data."
4. The Wurlitzer style D Trumpet is soft and mellow compared to other full length chorus reeds on theatre organs. It was an ideal reed blending stop on small organs which never dominated the ensemble.
5. The solo scale Tibia on the Wurlitzer was large scaled and built for organs placed in larger auditoriums.
6. Organs that have not been played for many years will have sluggish tremulants due to the fact the bellows cloth or leather becomes stiff. The bellows cloth must be very soft and pliable in order to have an easily adjusted tremulant.
7. The three five-manual Wurlitzers were installed at the Michigan Theatre in Detroit and the Paradise and Marbro Theatres in Chicago.
8. Multiple tremulants were used in theatre organs because of the

The following literary effort was contributed to THEATRE ORGAN Magazine by organist Lowell C. Ayars. Author of the piece is unknown.

The Movie Organist

A latter-day Athenaeum
With classical proscenium and
Chastely-chisled columns of Carrara marble white,
Devotes its vast mosaical
Confines to such prosaic
Use as showing photoplays from noon 'til twelve at night.

And there a soulful organist
Contentedly keeps daily tryst:
Sonatas and contatas now no longer test his skill
No hymnals old does he persue
As criminals bold and ingenues
In sexy views the hordes enthuse and blase flappers thrill.

He plays for screen Lotharios,
Arranges for scenarios
Melodies in motif keys, while fittingly he schemes
Tremolos funereal,
Pompous paeans imperial
Or fantasies ethereal, depending on his themes.

Once his fingers classical
Played ecclesiastical
Anthems in an ancient church, but oft in mournful mood,
"Why should I", he'd sadly muse,
"Waste my art on empty pews
When my songs could hearten throngs and cheer a multitude?"

Allof, alone in shrouded gloom,
He makes his mighty organ boom
Stirring strains and soft refrains or dirges of defeat
Works by Verdi or Bizet,
Hurdy-gurdy jingles gay,
And thousands hear him every day at fifty cents a seat.

- variation in wind pressures used. Most installations were two chambers or more, and the manufacturers discovered a new sound by the use of multiple tremulants which helped set the theatre organ apart from the church organ.
9. The three types of magnets were:
 1. Half moon style, made until about 1916. Proved unreliable on higher pressures.
 2. Die cast lead base used until late twenties. Because four little pins served as a guide for

the armatures, the magnet was very prone to ciphering. The armature could hang up on the pins with or without dirt getting into the armature seat.

3. Bakelite cap. This one proved the most reliable due to the fact that the recess for the armature was machined out and the four pins were eliminated. The bakelite held its shape and did not warp like die cast metal.

Submitted by Organ Builder,
Lance E. Johnson □



CHAPTER NOTES

ALABAMA

The September meeting of the Alabama Chapter featured Jim Ferguson, vocalist, accompanied by Alleen Cole at the Wurlitzer. His program was made up of pop tunes which everyone enjoyed thoroughly. The October meeting featured

guest artist Tiny James at the console. The special weekend we had with Tiny began with an open console — jam session at the home of Lee and Joan Aured on Saturday night. Capt. Erwin Young was along with Tiny and shared a lot of his knowledge in club leadership with



At the October twelfth meeting Alabama Chapter dignitaries pose for camera. (L to R), Jay Mitchell, Alleen Cole, Reidel West, Tiny James, Lillian Truss, Bernard Franklin, Erwin Young and Larry Donaldson. Please note the conservative attire on Tiny James. The trousers came from Tahiti via Minsky's burlesque.

our officers. The next morning Tiny rode our Mighty Wurlitzer up into the spotlight showing his expertise at managing countless combinations of stops on the organ. His program featured the tunes of the theatre organ era and some South Sea island music complemented by his Hawaiian shirt and trousers.

Prior to Tiny's concert, the crew worked hard at correcting several problems in the organ. Due to increased hours of operation in the



Tiny James, at the 4/20 Wurlitzer, was guest at the October meeting. (Thomas Hatter Photo)

theatre it has been difficult for the work crew to keep our Wurlitzer in tip top shape. Whenever time permits they are there faithfully to work on the organ.

Joan Aured has cleared the way for us to gain access to another theatre organ in Birmingham. It is the 3/9 Kimball originally installed at the broadcasting studio of WAPI radio. In more recent years this organ changed hands and was moved to the recreation facilities of South Side Baptist Church. The organ is flawlessly maintained by the church but suffers from lack of regular use. We look forward with great enthusiasm to the opportunity to expand our interests in the theatre organ.

JAY MITCHELL

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CENTRAL OHIO

Bob and Betsy Richards hosted our September meeting which is always our annual meeting and election of officers. President Frank Babbitt reported on what we have

accomplished during the past year and our plans for the year to come. Of course discussion of our Regional Convention was the highlight.

Little did we know we were to be introduced to another of the many faces of Dennis James. This time, slave-driver. He arrived with boxes of convention brochures which needed an insert, stapling and arranging in zip code order for each state. Imagine the surprise of Nan and Don Ebner attending their first meeting with us to be put to work doing Nan's specialty. She spends her days monitoring zip code mailings and it was to our advantage to have a pro on hand. Crews were hard at work to the accompaniment of the Richards' Conn 651. Perhaps to mellow us before we left, Dennis gave a delightful concert and didn't skimp on time.

With the weather *not* cooperating for our annual pilgrimage to Ralph and Leona Charles' home in Somerset, there was an exceptionally good turn-out to hear their Morton organ and partake of the potluck dinner. We've always reported something new with the organ and this time was no exception. The old upright piano was retired to a wall location and reigning with the Morton organ is a newly refinished small grand piano. Another new addition is a large clock




Left to right — Lois Hayes at grand piano, Bill Bendler at calliope, Kenny Winland at Morton console, Ralph Schluttenhofer and Ruth Shaw at upright piano. COTOS meeting, October 1975, at the Charles' home.

(Photo courtesy of Bob Shaw)


which, for our meeting, read "Ralph and Leona Charles Welcome COTOS and Friends." After a short business meeting conducted by Board Member Neil Grover, it was time for Music, Music, Music! Kenny Winland, along with his guest Neil Shivers, presented piano duets using the new grand piano and the older upright. Lois Hayes was on hand to present a concert at the Morton organ and Kenny reappeared at the console of the organ. Open console got underway with Tom Hobson. Hope Decker honored the Charles'

with a vocal selection "Bless This House" accompanied by her husband Gene at the organ console. The evening ended with laughter and applause for entertainment with Bill Bendler at the calliope, Lois Hayes at the baby grand, Kenny Winland at the console of the Morton and Ralph Schluttenhofer at the upright piano — later joined by Ruth Shaw at the upright. Then, playing musical chairs, we had John Shivers at the grand, Lois and Ruth at the upright — a great climax for a great evening.



Merry
Christmas

ALABAMA CHAPTER




A
MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO THE THEATRE ORGAN
WORLD AND FRIENDS
from
NEW YORK
THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY


Happy Holidays

FLOYD AND DORIS MUMM

Designers and Typesetters of
"THEATRE ORGAN"



Season's Greetings
and a Merry Christmas
to your group from ours...



Toledo Chapter ATOS



Hosts Leona and Ralph Charles.

(Photo courtesy of Bob Shaw)

For organists who have seldom, or never, played the Ohio Morton, Bob Shaw, chapter photographer, has been at work for many months attempting to photograph the stop rails, pistons and toe pistons. His goal has been to have these reduced to the smallest but still readable size. His efforts to date make available a series of five 8 by 10 photographs which permit organists to acquaint themselves with the Morton prior to playing. We mention his age again, twenty, as a salute to our growing number of youthful members.

IRENE BLEGEN

CHICAGO AREA

CATOE's 1975-76 concert season opened on October 2 with a true "Splendor in Sound" at the Chicago Theatre! The magnificent sound of this famous Wurlitzer was well worth waiting for. A complete story of the event appears elsewhere in this issue.

On September 14, about 100 CATOE members and guests were entertained at a social at Downers Grove North High School. Featured

artist was Gregory Konold, who was once featured at the Chicago Theatre in the 1920's as "Boy Organist." Greg now plays at a suburban restaurant (on an electronic) and is organist-choirmaster at a suburban church. He brought out some beautiful sounds from the 3/10 Wurlitzer which CATOE members installed in the school several years ago. Twenty-two members then added to our entertainment during open console.

The October Board of Directors meeting was held in the completely redecorated dressing room at the Chicago Theatre that was once occupied by Jesse Crawford. A crew led by Ione Tedei painted the walls and ceiling, installed wall to wall carpeting, new drapes and furniture in time for the October 2 show.

Member Walter Strony was the organist of the day for the social and business meeting at the WGN studios on November 2. Chicago was once the scene of several pipe organs in broadcasting studios, and WGN has always maintained theirs in fine condition, although it's been moved a number of times through the years. (The only other broadcast

pipe organ remaining is at Moody Bible Institute's WMBI.)

JIM TAGGART

DELAWARE VALLEY

Sunday afternoon, September 14, about 70 members of TOSDV met at the King Theatre in Gloucester City, New Jersey, to hear a spur-of-the-moment recital played by Viola Klaiss at the 2/7 Wurlitzer being installed there. What was special about this recital? That very day was her eighty-fourth birthday!

Miss Klaiss, now living (and teaching!) in West Palm Beach, Florida, was, in the heyday of the silent films, one of the best-known theatre organists in the Philadelphia area. Indeed, she played throughout the United States and, as a member of a USO unit during World War II, toured Europe, and even performed in Greenland.

Miss Klaiss comes from a family steeped in music. Her father Martin, had a symphony orchestra of his own in which she performed when she was a mere twelve-years-old. Her older brother, Bill, for many years was organist at the Mastbaum and Stanley theatres in Philadelphia.

She had a solid musical training in piano, harmony, and theory and at an early age she was pressed into service as a substitute organist. Not knowing much, if anything, about the organ, she relied on using the pistons set by her brother or other house organists. She did not realize that what was set for one organ would not be the same on any other organ. She told this writer that sometimes the results were disastrous. The dire experience persuaded her to find out what organ playing was all about. In time she became a feature theatre organist with the "Stanley Circuit."

Season's Greetings

FOREMOST RECORDINGS

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SEASON'S GREETINGS
Len Clarke
ATOS Advertising

For this occasion she played a varied, well rounded program.

Following the program, open console time was available to those present.

Sunday, September 22, members again met with New York and Garden State Chapters at the Surf City Hotel in New Jersey for an informal get-together. The attraction: the 3/16 Wurlitzer installed behind plate glass with the console right in the middle of the hotel's elongated horseshoe bar.

The day dawned dark and dreary and, from time to time, heavy rain fell. But, by the time the action began, the rain had stopped and the sun occasionally peeked through the heavy clouds. Walking on the sandy beach was a pleasant interlude if and when one tired of the din inside.

Members from the three chapters had signed up with our own Ruth Matt, for the controlled open console. The list was long but the performers were varied and interesting. Most of the organists were old hands at it; others were young and unfamiliar with the console and its tabs. Always at hand to assist them in "drawing stops" was Tommy Wayne, the house organist. It was reassuring to realize that the young are interested in theatre organ and find the opportunities to practice their techniques.

A highlight of the afternoon was the performance of James Paulin, Jr., who is a staff organist at Radio City Music Hall.

Twenty-one members of our chapter traveled to Hartford to attend the Connecticut Valley's Autumn Serenade during the weekend of October 11-13.

In the last issue of THEATRE ORGAN Grant Whitcomb wrote about the James O. Carter Memorial Organ and the Cinnaminson (New

Jersey) Arts Council, organized to raise the funds required to install the organ in the Cinnaminson High School Complex.

On Wednesday, October 22, Larry Ferrari played a benefit concert at the school for the council. Since the Carter Wurlitzer has not yet been installed, he performed on a Conn Theatre Organ.

EASTERN MASS.

The best laid plans sometimes are shattered by "circumstances beyond our control." The September meeting was to feature the life and sounds of Jesse Crawford, but our console artist, noted as a Jesse Crawford stylist, was caught by the flu the day before meeting night. And so, for this meeting we entertained ourselves, after an unprecedented-in-recent-times two-hour business meeting. It was amazing to hear so many of our membership actually play the sounds of Jesse Crawford.

At the October meeting the "Sentimental Gentleman of the Organ" himself, Harry Jacques, recovered from the flu, did play for us in the Crawford style after program Chairman Erle Renwick presented recorded samples of what *is* and what *is not* the Crawford sound, all from records labelled with the Jesse Crawford name. The 80 members and guests seemed to enjoy this type of program, and especially enjoyed Harry's artistry, which included an emotion-packed original composition about a young newspaper boy who regularly appeared daily on a certain street corner selling his newspapers. One day his customers missed him. Harry's music told the rest.

A comment might be made concerning the changing complexion

of our membership. Early in the life of this chapter the membership was comprised almost entirely of so-called "true theatre organ buffs" — those who were involved heavily in theatre organ in some way. They were salvaging organs from theatres, installing them in their homes or were assisting in this type effort. They were theatre organists. They were long-standing theatre organ listeners — record collectors with a cultivated ear for theatre organ sound. All members were educated, to a degree, to theatre organ, and each had his own strongly held ideas as to proper theatre organ sound and methods to achieve it.

It was, and is now, the purpose of this chapter to carry the knowledge and enthusiasm of the early members to the public at large, acquainting them with the wonderful world of theatre pipe organ sound and methods to attain it. By means of two theatre pipe organ concerts annually and concerted efforts to provide monthly programs of interest to the potential theatre organ buff as well as to ourselves, new members with latent theatre organ interest have joined the chapter.

The present complexion of the membership as compared to that of the early years is heavily weighted in favor of the relatively recent arrival upon the theatre organ scene, which could be interpreted as an indication that the early members have done their jobs well and that the chapter is on the right course in perpetuating the tradition of the theatre organ.

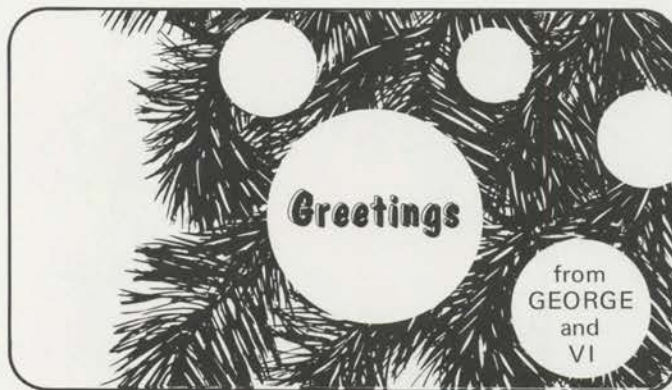
ERLE RENWICK

GULF COAST

It's been a busy season for Gulf Coast. So busy, in fact, that we

Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year
from all of us in
"THE ACTION CHAPTER"

POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER



missed the deadline for the last issue, leaving us with some catching-up to do, report-wise. July found the rest of the chapter wondering if we'd ever see our president, secretary, and treasurer again, after they departed for that Great Theatre Organ Mecca in the West at convention time. But return they did, dreamy-eyed, to share with us tall tales of pipes and pizzas and rotating console lifts! Due to convention and vacation schedules, it was decided to forego a July concert and direct our efforts towards August. For several weeks "Lola," our Saenger Theatre Robert Morton, rested quietly without pedalboard or main regulator while these were being rebuilt in the "ATOS" workshop of Dr. D.B. Rhea, one of our key members.

Third Saturday (August) came, and so did a crowd of nearly one thousand eager listeners! With pedals sparkling and regulator holding steady wind, "Lola" was in fine form. So, too, our talented soloist/president Tom Helms, who thoroughly delighted his audience with a well-chosen concert characterized by variety in registration and music, including a terrific "Tour of Cities" medley accompanied by beautiful color slides of San Francisco taken by our secretary, Bob Sidebottom. Closing out the first half of the program, everyone joined in a sing-along and had a ball! Then Tom played a silent film, *Race For Life*, with Max Sennet and Mabel Norman, and the audience really got involved! Tom did a masterful job of cueing and showing off the latest additions to "Lola's" toy counter: ahoogah horn, bull horn, fire gong, siren, telephone bell, and buzzer, all thanks to our Dr. Rhea. It was a super Saturday for chapter and audience alike!



Tom and Kathy Helms at September 'Save the Saenger' concert.

It was amazing how quickly the time flew between August and September, and time for another in our "Save the Saenger" concert series approached rapidly. But "Lola" was ready, and so was Tom. For the smaller, but just as appreciative, audience, Tom again concertized the first half, winning the hearts of the youngsters (of all ages!) with his Children's Medley. Then a special treat as he was joined by his sister, Kathy Helms, whose vocal talent is right up there with her brother's keyboard prowess. She, too, enraptured the audience, and we can only say "Streisand, look out!" Next a slide show and demonstration took everyone on the "three-dollar tour" of the organ. For many, it was the first look inside a pipe organ chamber, and many favorable comments were overheard afterwards.

The program was completed with Tom accompanying Laurel and Hardy in *The Second Hundred Years*. Score another Saturday victory for Gulf Coast!

The coup d'main of the season came in October. The final concert to bring awareness to the Pensacola public and save the Saenger Theatre for posterity was the culmination of many weeks of hard work in preparing the organ, advertising, selling tickets and the other hundred tasks that must be done in readiness for a major undertaking. In days and sleepless nights following a chapter business meeting and social, everyone was busy, for we were to sponsor a special Halloween Week concert featuring Don Thompson. And *The Phantom of the Opera!* Since all our previous concerts had been free, there was some trepidation about charging admission necessary to cover expenses of artist and theatre, fears concerning the size of the audience we would draw. Would all our efforts, and Don's, be for naught?



Don Thompson thrills audience on October 30, and makes the 'Save the Saenger' effort a success!

SEASON'S
GREETINGS

from
All The Members Of
WEST PENN



We Hope Y'all Have
An Extra Nice
Holiday Season

NORTH TEXAS CHAPTER

As the house lights dimmed, it was on a near-capacity crowd!! We were ecstatic!! Those who missed it missed a real "happening." Don's score for "Phantom" was superb, and his technique was absolutely thrilling to see and hear. What an exciting evening for all involved! And to cap it off, we were able to announce that ABC Theatres was donating the Saenger to the City of Pensacola. The Saenger was **SAVED!**

For his considerable effort and time in our behalf, our thanks to Don, as fine a gentleman and organist as one could ever hope to meet. We wish him continued success in the future, and we wish him back to the Gulf Coast soon!

CURT GOLDHILL

JOLIET AREA

This will serve as progress report on the 4/21 Barton in the Rialto Theatre, Joliet, Illinois.

The present crew of dedicated men, numbering eight, decided in January of this year that we could no longer tolerate patching up patches to keep the organ going in a semi-playable condition, therefore it was necessary to embark on a general re-leathering and rebuilding program.

Dan Barton built his organs to

last but could not control wear and tear, leaky roofs, and abuse. All these elements combined created a monumental task for our crew. For example, an inventory of dead notes covered four sheets of paper!!

A great number of the original ranks were missing, having been replaced with substitute pipework. The entire pre set action was missing and is being replaced. Luckily, the missing Tuba boots and the chimes were located and returned. A Spring and Fall concert had been planned, but realizing the work necessary these events had to be put off.

The Rialto Barton will be fifty years old on May 24, 1976 and we are hoping to have our "Lady Barton" in dependable condition to commemorate this anniversary, besides we would like to show her off in 1977 when Chicago hosts the National ATOS.

We are determined to have her ready and she is a great organ, this writer knows because she played it when new.

FRANCES IRVING

MIAMI VALLEY (OHIO)

Holding our eighth meeting since organized as a new chapter, we realized that nobody had been delegated to send notes of activities to THE-

ATRE ORGAN. So sorry. This fledgling chapter draws its embryo membership from Springfield, Dayton, and one hearty member from Cincinnati. We include several with dual memberships; drawing upon the Central Ohio and Ohio Valley chapters.

Focal point of most meetings is the State Theatre, Springfield, Ohio, which houses a spritely 3/7 Wurlitzer that is available to members before the regular show. The theatre is the flagship headquarters of the Chakeres Theatres, Inc. which operates a 45-theatre chain in Ohio and Kentucky.

Chapter Chairman Chris Gorsuch and Vice-Chairman Bob Cowley were the original volunteers for maintenance of the organ, and other chapter members have since helped. Right after rendering a stellar mini-concert and film accompaniment last January, Gorsuch left town to join the staff of Sandy Fleet in the San Diego area, and Cowley took over executive chairmanship.

Other significant gatherings have included a potluck dinner at the home of member Dennis Werkmeister who has an outstanding 2/16 Wurlitzer installation, and a concert played by member Chris Phillips at the home of Fred and Kay



Christmas
Greetings

LAND OF LINCOLN CHAPTER

Season's Greetings




Garden State Theatre Organ Society, Inc.



GARDEN STATE THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY INC.
A.T.O.S.

Season's Greetings & Best Wishes in '75

from



CRATOS

Cedar Rapids Area Theatre Organ Society

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

members of J.A.T.O.E.

and the Rialto Theatre Joliet, Ill.



Rieger of Waynesville. Fred owns a particularly interesting 3/42 Estey with parts from various manufacturers. As usual, open console serves to reinforce every member's humility, but it is good fun.

JOHN M. GOGLE

MOTOR CITY

We were notified by the District Director of the Internal Revenue Service on October 1 that we had been granted exemption from Federal income tax under Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. There are many advantages to this classification, one being, as a result of this ruling, our qualification for the lower nonprofit postal rate.

Our Second Sunday artist at the Michigan Theatre (Ann Arbor) in September was member Rupert Otto who played to an audience numbering close to 100. Member Gus Borman took control of the Barton for the October Second Sunday, also in Ann Arbor. Open console tempts the curious and is always an interesting part of these events.

In September, member Greg Smith performed at the Royal Oak Barton for the monthly Fourth Sunday membership event. Lance Luce, also a chapter member, played the October Fourth Sunday program at the Royal Oak. Open console always closes these Sunday morning programs.

Our extended summer Hollywood Film Musical Series at the Redford Theatre ran into mid-September with two more Busby Berkley all-singing, all-dancing hits from the 1930's, *Gold Diggers of 1937* and *Hollywood Hotel*. Chapter artists Jim Boutell and John Lauter played short programs at the Redford Barton during these very successful

Friday and Saturday night events.

The feature film, *Moby Dick*, starring Gregory Peck, was offered one Friday and Saturday night in early October with Greg Smith offering a short pop concert at the Barton.

Dennis and Heidi James performed at the Barton organ and grand piano in the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor on October 1. The largely college-age audience was spirited in their appreciation of the two performers and of Dennis' accompaniment to the Lon Chaney silent film, *The Monster*.

October 24-25 saw Gaylord Carter return once again to the Redford to be greeted by two nearly-capacity houses. The audience was entranced by Gaylord's verbal banter, musical stimulation and "The Golden Age of Comedy," which was short films of some of the screens funniest comedians interspersed throughout the evening.

DON LOCKWOOD

NIAGARA FRONTIER

On September 7 our Board of Directors held their monthly meeting at the home of Thelma and Gordon Gillet, Niagara Falls, Ont. After the meeting, Roy Simon, Greg Gurtner, Colin Cousin, along with several non-professionals, took turns entertaining the group at the 2/7 Wurlitzer. This was my second opportunity to hear this organ; a magnificent sound for a small home installation.

On September 16 Hector Olivera made his first appearance at the Riviera. He won the heart of the audience when, after bringing the console up with his first number, he turned to the crowd and said, "I have been warned to go easy on the classical and I will confine my clas-

sical music to one number and that will take only about five minutes." After two hours, two standing ovations and two encores Hector said, "Wait till I come back next year, I know now what you like and you will hear a real program." But how could he top the one he had just played?

A large delegation of chapter members from both sides of the border attended the "Connecticut Valley's Autumn Serenade."

On October 15, 1965 Dick Smith played his first pipe concert for the chapter. October 15, 1975, ten years to the day he made his latest appearance. The TV, even with the "World Series," could not keep the crowd away. Dick has played more concerts for the chapter than any other artist. He always has the theatre filled to capacity long before curtain time. He started promptly at 8 p.m. and played until midnight with only one ten minute intermission. Standing ovation after standing ovation showed the crowd's pleasure with this great artist.

On November 19, Rick Shindell will have made his first appearance at the Riviera.

December 17 will have seen another great favorite, our own member, Frank Olsen (an organist's organist). It has become a tradition that Frank play our holiday program. As he books more and more concerts throughout the East, other organ fans are becoming aware of this artist's great talent; something our members have known for the past seven years, ever since he left England and settled in Port Colborne, Ont.

There is a lot of work connected with putting on monthly concerts year after year and there are many members involved. To name a few: Thelma Gillet, Doris Martin, Jane

happy
holidays

from
NIAGARA
FRONTIER CHAPTER
and
RIVIERA THEATRE



VanBrocklin who man the box office. (Or should I say the people who sell the tickets?) Also Ken Martin, who attends the doors and takes the tickets. Ken, a retired Canadian Customs Inspector at the Niagara Falls Bridges, is well trained for this role.

Our schedule for the first half of '76 is as follows: Jan., Greg Gurtner; Feb., Don Kinner and Jack Doll; March, Winifrea Armistead; April, Ron Rhodes; May, Don Thompson and June, Larry Ferrari.

Our entire chapter membership extends our best wishes to all ATOS members for the holiday season.

STEVE CROWLEY

NORTH TEXAS

Major activity these days in the North Texas area centers around the November Lyn Larsen Concert and preparation of the Casa Manana Wurlitzer for that event. Under Jim Petersen's guidance, anywhere from as many as 15 members have been working on Wednesday and Thursday nights and Sunday afternoons on the project. That's a few man-hours of re-leathering, removal and clean-up of various ranks of pipes, repairs to all components as necessary, and a complete new winding system, except for the blower. A Post Horn is also being added.

When you get a gang like that working, you'd be surprised at the talent that shows up in the group. Grace Johnson has become an excellent leather worker, as well as a good pipe washer and cleaner. Edie Reatz, Arline Sturm, Doris Garrett, Jo Koski, Sandra Vaden and the rest of the gals are in there pitchin' too. They've all had their share of various organ building and refurbishing chores, including everything from the wood and metal pipes

to the toy counter. One even made the comment that she had been in the chapter for four years, and now she could finally say that she could actually work on a real, honest-to-goodness theatre organ. They're all learning the craft, and enjoying every minute despite the dust, elbow grease and various chores involved. They're all also realizing what a truly complex piece of equipment a theatre organ is.

Meanwhile, up in the lofts, the men are also involved in everything from the plumbing (ducts) and electrical wiring to the final voicing and tuning. Of course, Jim Petersen has full responsibility including the delicate art of voicing, but he has plenty of help. The chambers are located above the floor of the "theatre-in-the-round" which is Casa Manana, and involve considerable balancing, climbing, hanging by your toes and squeezing into tight spaces without upsetting anything. John Vaden, John Scott, Fred Sturm, Fred Garrett, Cliff Brown, and several others have demonstrated their acrobatic and primate abilities, as well as their craftsmanship in the many fields of artistry involved. That's what makes organ work so interesting. You've got to be a plumber, electrician, leather worker, cabinet maker, tinsmith, mechanic, and a few other crafts, besides the Alpinist techniques involved in getting to the various ranks, chests, tremulants and other hardware involved in such an installation.

Access to the lofts is by one of two ways: through the lighting and sound booths, and around the periphery of the whole building through an obstacle course of spotlight platforms, cables, plumbing and airconditioning ducts, or by means of a 16-foot ladder through

one of the shutter openings. A lot of the guys, especially those over 40, found they had muscles they hadn't used in a long time. So you see, you also get involved in some physical therapy and calisthenics climbing around amongst the pipe organ pieces.

Jack Riley was the featured organist at the October meeting. Jack played a Jesse Crawford program on the organ at Organ World. The pipe organ there is slowly but surely taking shape in the new quarters and should have several ranks playable in short order. Jack did a great job with his true theatre-organ type Crawford oldies, and couldn't get away from the console because the gang kept hollering for more.

Dino Santrizos, who signed up as a full, card carrying member of the chapter, has been busy with the Pipes and Pizza Barton in Dallas and the old St. George Theatre (Staten Island) organ which is going into another Pipes and Pizza place in Houston. Jerry Bacon is playing nightly at the Dallas installation, with Dale Flanery and Wally McDevitt filling in on his days off.

George Stucker has been circulating plenty of printed material, via every technique known, so we can have a "full house" at Casa Manana when Lyn hits that opening theme. Meanwhile, keep working on all those fine installations around the country, so we can come hear your theatre organs, and you can come hear ours.

JOE KOSKI

OREGON

The chapter met at the home of Bob and Laura Burke for the October meeting. Opening comments by Chairman Gerry Gregorius were followed by a report by Secretary-

**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS**

MOTOR CITY CHAPTER

Season's Greetings

TO
ALL
OUR
ATOS
FRIENDS

Jason and
The Old Prospector





(L to R) Bob Burke, Gerry Gregorius and Don Ingram at the Burke residence organ.
(Claude V. Neuffer Photo)



Jane Sparks at the 2/8 Robert Morton, Dr. Paul Abernethy residence.

Treasurer Arlene Ingram.

In an effort to get more non-professional members involved, the concert on Burke's 3/12 Wurlitzer was played by Don Ingram and Bob Burke. Don played several numbers, all from the twenties and thirties. Bob Burke followed with selections from *Flower Drum Song* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. They both received a nice round of applause; maybe for their bravery, as much as anything. Not really, they did very well. To close the scheduled part of the evening, Gerry Gregorius played an overture in real theatre style as a prelude to the film *Double Whoopee* with Laurel and Hardy. It is one of the better Laurel and Hardy films and Gerry does an excellent job. After the film, open console was held and refreshments served.

It is the desire of the chapter officers to feature more of our non-professionals. We really do have a lot of talent in the chapter and these people should be heard.

We are sorry to report the passing of two of our prominent and active members. Dave Newman and Ted Marks are both gone, but the many

services they performed in the interest of the theatre pipe organ will live on. There is no question that both will be missed by the Oregon Chapter.

DON INGRAM

PIEDMONT

Piedmont Chapter hasn't been heard from lately. We've been busy nonetheless.

On September 28, a meeting was held at the home of Dr. Paul Abernethy in Burlington, NC. Yours truly, Jane Sparks, a student of Eddie Weaver, presented a program on the 2/8 Robert Morton. An open console session followed, giving many of those present a chance to show off their skills.

Members are eagerly awaiting the completion of the Elon College Wurlitzer installation. Work is being done by a crew of several chapter members, headed by Mac Abernethy.



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North Carolina's only remaining in-theatre-installation, housed in the Carolina Theatre, has come alive in Greensboro. The 2/6 Robert Morton console has undergone major rebuilding in the past few years and there are plans to renovate the entire instrument. Old velvet curtains have been removed to expose the shutters for the first time. Although beautiful, the fabric completely muted the tone of the little Morton, so chapter members and the theatre management decided the curtains had to go. It sounds terrific!

The Carolina Theatre now has a staff organist. Howard Manley, a long time theatre organ buff and contemporary of Jesse Crawford and George Wright, has assumed the post, playing shows every Friday, Saturday and Sunday night.

At the present time, members are excitedly awaiting the appearance of Eddie Weaver for a November 9 concert at the Carolina.

JANE SPARKS

PINE TREE

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Season's Greetings
from
NorCal ATOS



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Richard Frank at 3/13 Wurlitzer Old Orchard Beach High School.
(Joe Williams Photo)



Old Orchard Beach, Maine 3/13 Wurlitzer. (L to R) Chairman Leon Carpenter; guest artist Luella Wickham; Old Orchard town manager Jerome Plante.
(Joe Williams Photo)

on the 3/13 Wurlitzer at Old Orchard Beach High School is now history. We are now into the fall-winter schedule of events.

In retrospect it may be said that the instrument sounded better each and every week. This is due to the untiring efforts of our chapter members, Dr. Dwight Leighton and Leon Carpenter, who gave many, many hours to the task of getting the bugs out of our installation. Indeed, everyone concerned with the concert season is to be congratulated for a fine job. No small amount of credit is due to the town and school officials of Old Orchard Beach and especially the town manager, Jerome Plante. Very special thanks are also due to our friends and good neighbors of Eastern Massachusetts Chapter. They were always ready to give us a hand, when needed, and helped to get us over many a rough spot during the summer.

Some of the artists that entertained this past summer include: Douglas Rafter, Luella Wickham, Tim Bjarby, Russell Gray, John

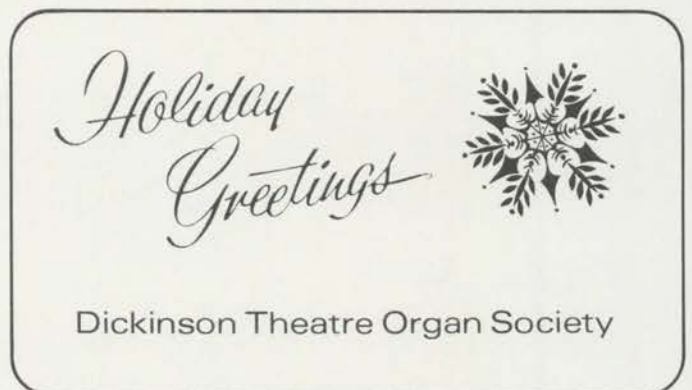
Kiley and Bob Legon. On two occasions we also had silent movies with the Mighty Wurlitzer providing the musical score. Our projection duties were ably taken care of by member Earle Fenderson. In addition to all the fine music, many lessons have been learned that should result in an even better summer next year.

At our September meeting plans were made for the fall and winter season. As an added surprise at the September meeting, Max Pulsifer treated us to a demonstration of his Band Organ. This Band, or Fair Organ, made in France about 1920, has been completely restored to a "like-new" condition by its owner. It is mounted in a trailer and has been in great demand this summer for various public out-of-doors events. Music for this organ is recorded, on order, from a firm in Belgium on a lightweight cardboard and is folded in pleats, accordion style. A very enjoyable impromptu concert was given on this unique instrument at the rear of the high school build-

ing.

At present we plan to have a monthly concert on the third Sunday of each month at 3 p.m. The October festivities planned will feature a dinner-dance at Old Orchard Beach High School, with music supplied by, what else, our 3/13 Wurlitzer with member, Richard Frank, at the console. The evening is to include the official dedication of the instrument.

The concert held on October 19 featured Richard Frank performing at the console of the 3/13 Wurlitzer at Old Orchard Beach High School. It was a small but very enthusiastic crowd that heard a tremendous display of what this organ is capable of doing. To say that Mr. Frank "pulled out all the stops" is an understatement. Just about every type of song and tempo was played to the delight of the crowd. Mr. Frank played this instrument at its first public showing on June 12 for the graduation of the high school seniors. He expressed his pleasure about how much better the organ sounds and works now, and we all agree with that.





A French Fair Organ, (L to R): Leon Carpenter, Dr. Dwight Leighton, Max Pulsifer, Paul True, Jr., Maurice Pope. Old Orchard Beach, Maine. (Joe Williams Photo)

Improvements to the installation continue. Dr. Dwight Leighton and Leon Carpenter have just completed construction of a wind baffle for the blower which was resulted in much less wind and blower noise. A job well done, gentlemen.

During the past month Mrs. Betty Mason, publisher of the THEATRE ORGAN was in the area. While she was here she had a chance to visit and play the Old Orchard Beach Wurlitzer. She was delighted with this instrument and expressed her pleasure to find that the Pine Tree Chapter was active again.

Our next concert will be Sunday, November 23. Russell Gray, of Portland, will be the artist. We will keep you posted on doings from this corner of the country.

JOE WILLIAMS

PUGET SOUND

In September, our chapter at last realized a long-deferred dream



Elaine and Eddie Lippert at their Wurlitzer console, Spokane, Wa.

to visit our Spokane members. A forty-nine passenger busload plus several car-pools from the Puget Sound area journeyed over the Cascades to the eastern border of the state, arriving in time for an early evening Longhorn barbecue in the garden of Eddie and Elaine Lippert. From there it was a quick step to the Lippert studio, erected at the back of the lot, for the purpose of housing and hearing the 3/10 Style H Special Wurlitzer originally installed (1925) in the McDonald Fox Theatre, Eugene, Oregon. The Lipperts obtained this organ in 1969 from Willamette University in Salem, and have spent the intervening years in a painstaking and meticulous installation which is beautiful to see and hear. Eddie's playing reveals the same care, and being a Crawford — Dunstedter — Wright fan, he produced a concert for us which incorporated many flawless renditions of favorite arrangements by those masters. The finale, Dunstedter's arrangement of the "Pilgrim's Chorus" by Tannhauser, brought the audience surging to its feet. Open console followed.

Sunday noon we visited the new First Nazarene Church, which has installed the historic old Seattle Liberty Theatre Wurlitzer. This 3/20 was first installed in 1914 under Opus 3164, which dates back before the official Wurlitzer opus listing started. The tuned percussions alone would make any pizza parlor entrepreneur drool: two sets of Chimes, three 49-note Harps (two wood, one aluminum), two Xylos (one 40-note, one 37-note), tuned Sleigh Bells, Saucer Bells and Piano, plus two sets of traps. The original Kinetic DC blower operated off the street car lines, and the final note had to be played by midnight, when the

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lines were turned off. This organ was a showpiece, prospective purchasers being brought from all over the U.S. by train to Seattle to hear it. The first organist was Henry Murtagh, who was followed by such men as Oliver C. Wallace, 1920-26, Reginald Watts, Ernest Russel, Frank A. Leon, Albert A. Malotte, Eddy Clifford, Ron Baggett and Don Moore (Ron and Don).

This organ also spent some time at school, going to Pacific Lutheran College in Tacoma in 1955, where it was installed in the gym — the 32' wooden Diaphones being suspended across the ceiling. When our chapter visited and played it in this location a few years ago, a large white "pill" made its appearance at the upper opening of one of these huge pipes, paused there momentarily, and then dropped to the floor and bounced away, thus identifying itself as a (long-lost?) basketball.

In April, 1973, the membership of the Nazarene Church bought the organ and moved it to their newly built church in Spokane, where restoration began. The console has been rebuilt and beautifully refinished to suit the decor of the sanctuary. Some ranks and percussions are by now playing, and it is used regularly in the services. The

resident organist made a brief appearance, together with his wife, who accompanied him at the grand piano. Open console followed till around 3:30 and then the long ride home. This very rewarding experience was organized by Russ Evans from the Seattle end, JoAnn Shipley, and Elaine and Eddie Lippert, our most gracious hosts in Spokane.

GENNY WHITTING

RED RIVER

The chapter is still alive and well! The lack of chapter news this past two years was because of a news blackout by the chapter caused by our concentration on affairs concerning the Fargo Theatre organ (Style E Wurlitzer). Now that the chapter has control over this organ, we feel it is time to start sharing our activities.

We will present our second Silent Movie Night on Thursday, November 6. Last year's show featured Harold Lloyd and several hundred people had to be turned away. It looks like another sell-out, as ten percent of the tickets were sold after the third day of sale. Yours truly, Lance Johnson, will be the organist again this year.

Two dressing rooms are now workshops with machines, tools, etc.

Every Friday night members gather to work on the organ.

In June, the chapter purchased the 3/8 Wurlitzer from the First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, SD. It will be enlarged and installed in the ultra modern Center for the Performing Arts Theatre on the campus of Moorhead State University in Moorhead, MN. The theatre was built with two organ chambers and stage lift. No one knows yet why organ chambers were included! Chapter members are presented with bags of pneumatics to take home and re-leather. Our goal to get the chapter organ playing is two years.

We are also negotiating to install a two-manual Wurlitzer in the new plush Cinema 70 movie theatre in Fargo. There is adequate room for organ chambers and the owners are thrilled beyond words at the prospect of having a real theatre organ available for movie intermissions and concerts.

The chapter has more than doubled in membership since acquiring usage of the Fargo Theatre Wurlitzer. Hats off to Chairman Dave Knudtson of KTHI-TV for his excellent leadership in rebuilding the chapter. Thanks also to Ted Larsen, chairman of the film department

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of MSU, for his help in establishing silent films as a viable chapter project and combining it with theatre organ activities.

Here's hoping Silent Movie Night number two will be another sell-out!

LANCE JOHNSON

SAN DIEGO

October has been a very active but a most rewarding month for the chapter. Our members were privileged to act as hosts and hostesses at the gala opening October 1 of Organ Power Pizza No. 2 in Pacific Beach. To hear Reginald Foort perform on this "Mighty-Mo," originally designed by him in 1938, was an experience. This man is truly one of the great organists of our time, and most of us returned to the restaurant the following three nights to hear him play a different concert each evening.

(Elsewhere in this issue, you can read a complete resume of this event) Now in it's new home, we hope all of you will have the opportunity of hearing it soon, and know that you share our interest and excitement in this "most traveled pipe organ in history." To add to the listener's pleasure, the restaurant also has installed a 2/6 Wurlitzer, Style D

which can be played in solo or combined with the "Mighty-Mo."

Gene Ginder, Wendell Shoberg and their staff of technicians are to be applauded for a fine installation, and most definitely, Sandy Fleet is to be commended for restoring this "Mighty-Mo" and bringing it to San Diego for the enjoyment of the general public.

Our business meeting on October 13, resulted in many plans for future programs and an excellent choice of officers elected for the coming year: Chairman, Vernon Bickel; Vice-chairman, Ray Krebs; Secretary, Marjorie Greer; Treasurer, Jan White. Our sincere thanks go to our retiring officers, George and Susie Coade and also Wendell Shoberg for all their hard work and interesting meetings.

On October 20, Organ Power Productions loaned us the restaurant and the Mighty-Mo so we could sponsor our first concert open to the public. Another great evening — listening to Gaylord Carter play to a capacity audience as he accompanied the silent film, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. In appreciation to Gaylord for making our first public venture such a success, we have asked him to accept a Life-Honorary membership in the San

Diego Chapter. Thank you, Gaylord and thank you, O.P.P.

An active and musically rewarding month, indeed.

LOIS SEGUR

SOUTHEASTERN

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Exterior, Joe Patten's East Point Theatre.

(Tom Ford Photo)

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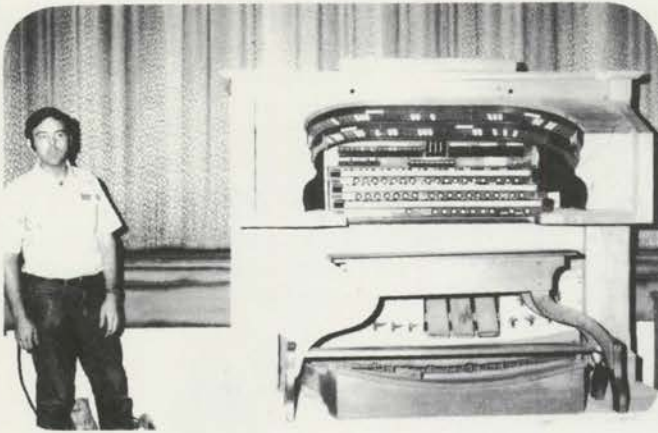
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Charles Walker demonstrates the first working part of the organ, the lift.
(Tom Ford Photo)



Joe Patten with the Moller console. Wood finish is stripped down and will be finished in gold like the Fox Theatre Moller.
(Tom Ford Photo)

Fox Theatre ready for reopening. The organ has, for the most part, been kept silent to ensure all work — no play. However, there have been other activities with the emphasis on play.

On Sunday, August 31, Joe Patten opened his East Point Theatre for a look at the redecoration program now nearing completion. The attraction for the afternoon was the 1924 silent, *The Thief of Bagdad* starring Douglas Fairbanks. Lee Erwin played his excellent score for the movie, but alas, not on the 3/8 Moller in the theatre. Lee's music was from the sound track of a print

of the film.

The Fox has claimed so much of Joe Patten's time that the organ in his own theatre has had to wait. The organ, originally installed in the Riviera Theatre in Scranton, Penna., is prepared for three more ranks and Joe is hopeful of finding Moller pipes of the original specification to complete the instrument. The new decor of the theatre is Spanish. Joe, working with theatrical designer Charles Walker of our chapter, has successfully converted the bare rectangular non-design of the original theatre into a Spanish courtyard rich in authentic detail — complete

with twinkling stars. When the organ is completed, Atlanta and South-eastern Chapter will at long last have a showcase for silents.

The October meeting was, would you believe, a work session at the Fox capped off with that gorgeous sound we'd been missing for so long — the Fox 4/42 Moller with Walter Winn at the controls. More October festivity on the 19th when we had our annual Oktoberfest at the home of Lois Russell. Charles Walker performed on partially tuned crystal stemware with accompaniment from several members on the Russell electronic.



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East Point Theatre stage, showing organ chamber locations in Spanish balconies at both sides. (Tom Ford Photo)

November will find us again guests in a home with two electronics, that of Herbert and Doris Lee. As this is being written, Southeastern Chapter is negotiating with the Fox management for an organ concert by (yours truly) Bob van Camp on Sunday, December 7 and I have been contracted for Christmas music on the Mighty-Mo during intermission of a performance of the *Messiah* by the William Noll Chorale on Sunday, December 14.

BOB VAN CAMP

SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

During August last, our chapter participated in a dinner-dance which was organized in conjunction with the commodore and officers of the Wynnum-Manly Yacht Club. On this occasion three of our leading organists played on the Baldwin electronic organ. The attendance was very good and the profit after expenditure allowed us to bank approximately \$200.00 toward our

pipe organ fund.

We held a very successful concert on Friday, 26 September, titled "September Song." This concert was held in the auditorium at the Cavendish Road High School on the southside of Brisbane. It was compered by our vice-chairman, Ken Wherrett. We had a very good attendance. The performance of the artists was of a high standard and it certainly did a lot for the chapter. A mammoth Kawai theatre organ was on stage. It was played by three of our chapter organist's; John Masson, Neil Jensen and Arthur Midgley with guest artist contralto Allison Caudell.

We have not as yet completed a reconciliation of proceeds and expenditure as it will be appreciated that money for ticket sales is still coming in from members.

There is a theatre organ group in the Sunshine coast area some 70 to 80 miles north of Brisbane. We have agreed to cooperate with this group in the presentation of an organ concert scheduled to be held in a town called Nambour on 18 October. This will be a worthwhile presentation, proceeds of which will be donated to the Doctor Moffat Memorial Fund and the monies raised will be used with other funds for the construction of a Communal Centre at the Nam-

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Dave and Dick Brewer at the residence 3/16 "Marr and Bartlitzer." (Ed Corey Photo)



Betty and Chuck Heffer with their 3/6 Morton.

(L. G. Mallett Photo)

bour Hospital.

A number of our members will be participating and a percentage of the profit will be passed on to our chapter. There will be six organs on stage. They will be played by separate organists, and in addition, certain vocalists will take part.

BERYL JENSEN

WOLVERINE

On Sunday, September 14, Chuck and Betty Heffer were in their usual form of outdoing themselves. This particular occasion was the chapter's monthly meeting at their lovely

East Detroit Home. Their 3/6 Robert Morton never sounded better, especially enhanced with the Kimball-Morton "reproducing" grand piano now playable from the organ console. Several new additions are in the planning stage for the organ currently, including that of a Gottfried Kinura.

One of the last warm days of the summer was spent in the confines of the home of the Richard Brewer family in Dearborn, with their fine 3/16 "Marr & Bartlitzer." Many of the members and guests in attendance at the October 12 meeting enjoyed playing and hearing the ex-

cellent instrument that Dave and his father Dick Brewer have built up over the past several years. Chairman Lawrie Mallett and his wife Rosemary provided the refreshments.

The 3/11 Barton in the Michigan Theatre in Lansing, Michigan narrowly escaped an electrical fire that destroyed the main switchboard in that theatre on the night of September 16. Fortunately, both the theatre and organ were out of service for only a short time. The Lansing Fire Department is thanked for quick, efficient action.

SCOTT SMITH □

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