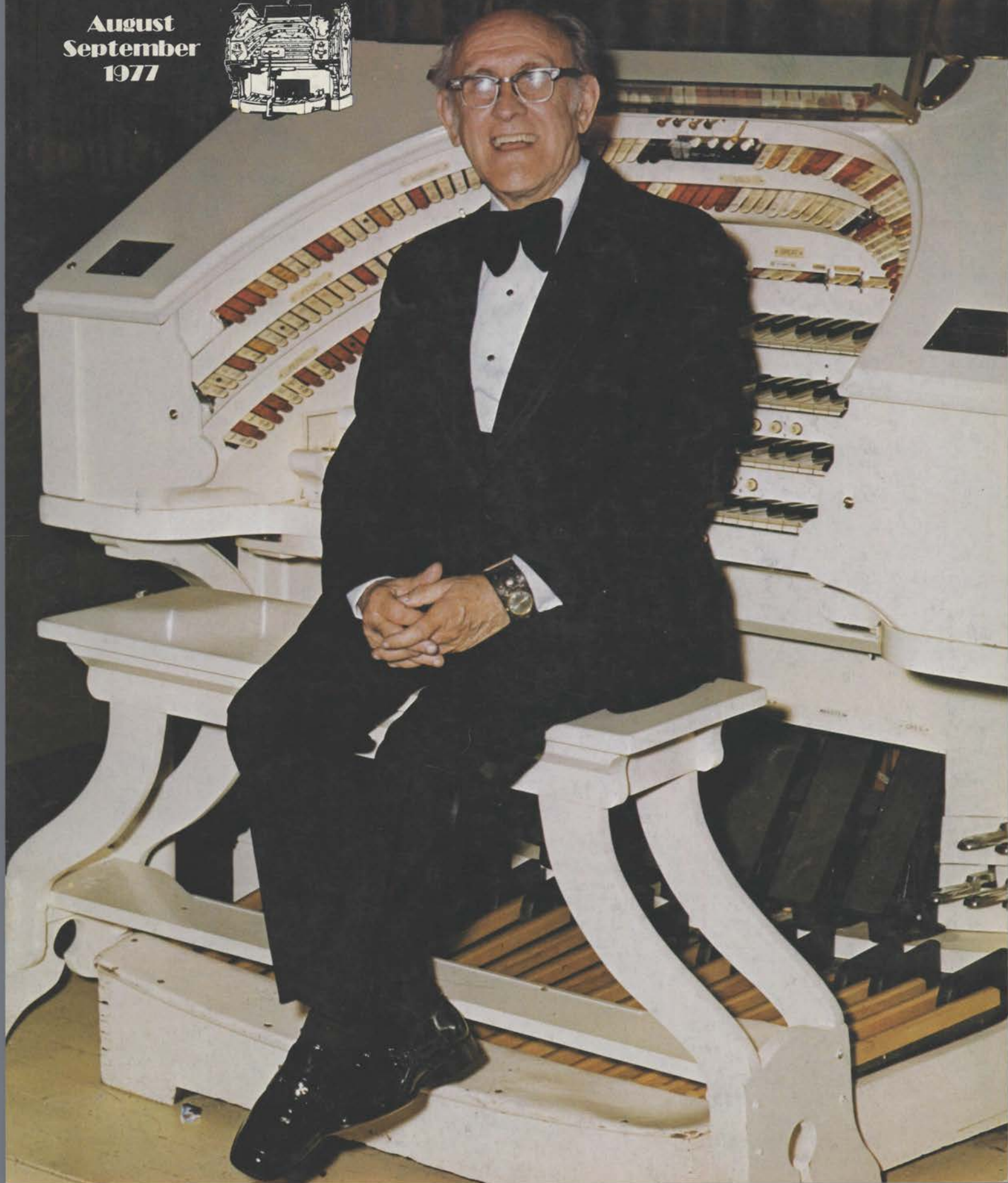


# THEATRE ORGAN

August  
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1977



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# THEATRE ORGAN

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AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1977

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## Cover Photo

Newly elected "Organist of the Year," John Muri, at the 4/29 Wurlitzer in the Chicago Theatre. At this year's ATOS Convention, he recreated a Sunday morning program such as Jesse Crawford might have played in 1924. See the story of the complete convention starting on page five. (Bill Lamb Photo)

## PAST PRESIDENTS

- Richard Simonton  
Feb. 1955 — Oct. 1958
- Judd Walton  
Oct. 1958 — July 1961
- Tiny James  
July 1961 — July 1964
- Carl Norvell  
July 1964 — July 1966
- Richard Schrum  
July 1966 — July 1968
- Al Mason  
July 1968 — July 1970
- Stillman Rice  
July 1970 — July 1972
- Erwin A. Young  
July 1972 — July 1974
- Paul M. Abernethy  
July 1974 — July 1976

## HONORARY MEMBERS

- 1959 — Jesse Crawford
- 1960 — Fanny Wurlitzer
- 1961 — Mel Doner
- 1962 — Leonard MacClain
- 1963 — Eddie Dunstedter
- 1964 — Reginald Foort
- 1965 — Dan Barton
- 1966 — W. "Tiny" James
- 1967 — Erwin A. Young
- 1968 — Richard C. Simonton
- 1969 — Judd Walton
- 1970 — Bill Lamb
- 1971 — George and Vi Thompson
- 1972 — Stu Green
- 1973 — Al and Betty Mason
- 1974 — Lloyd E. Klos
- 1975 — Joe Patten
- 1976 — Floyd and Doris Mumm
- 1977 — Les and Edith Rawle

## President's Message

*Another milestone was reached in the annals of ATOS history a few weeks ago when "CHICAGO 77" surpassed all past convention records. It was the largest in registrations and the smooth running convention was proof that the convention committee and the host chapter, CATOE, prepared well for this gigantic task. The Chicago chapter is to be congratulated on a "job well done."*



*The meeting of the chapter representatives with the national board of directors was another success with 80% of the active chapters in attendance. The dialogue and comments that were made at this 2½ hour meeting was most enlightening, interesting and encouraging. The mailing problem of the THEATRE ORGAN magazine was one of the subjects discussed. A conscientious magazine staff delivers the properly addressed copies to the Livonia post office on time. From then it is a mystery what happens. It was suggested that the members receiving their copies late write or contact their local or regional post office and voice their dissatisfaction with the mail delivery service. Hopefully, it will be remedied soon.*

*I have been honored in receiving a vote of confidence from your board of directors and have been re-elected to serve you for another term. This past year has been very educational for me. A considerable amount of correspondence was received, both pro and con on many subjects. With the fine cooperation of the officers, directors, staff and other ATOS members — I have survived the trials and tribulations of being a first year president.*

*ATOS has been fortunate in having knowledgeable, dedicated and capable individuals serve as officers and board members in the past. Again, this coming year we have another fine group to set the course of action for our society. I am proud to have them working with me and with their help I will endeavor to serve you to the best of my ability the year ahead.*

Sincerely,

*Ray F. Snitil*  
RAY F. SNITIL



**The 22nd ATOS  
National Convention  
CHICAGO '77**

by Stu Green, Lloyd Klos, Don Lockwood and others.

Photos by Bill Lamb and Stu Green except where otherwise noted.





Doug Christensen was on hand to emcee this year's convention programs.



Ron Bogda at the Chicago Stadium 6/62 Barton.

The huge Chicago Stadium seemed empty even with our crowd of ATOSers.



The 1977 ATOS convention, headquartered at Chicago's resplendent and historic Palmer House, got underway, as always, with personal reunions in the hotel lobby after registration on Tuesday. The conventioners descended on Chicago from the usual "four corners of the world" — including Great Britain and Australia, not to mention the "50."

### Wednesday, June 29

On Wednesday morning, 20 buses transported 1100 registrants to the Chicago Stadium. The weather was gorgeous — sunny, but neither too warm nor too chilly. It was "shirt-sleeves" weather.

This would be the first official event. The conventioners filed into the cavernous Chicago Stadium, some to the main floor where the area was covered with rows of folding chairs facing a stage set for a rock concert — facing away from the console! Of course, the conventioners turned their chairs around to get a better look at the console and organist. Old hands took seats high on the sides of the tiered sports arena where experience had taught them the reflected sound of the 6/62 Barton is most listenable.

Doug Christensen, the official MC, introduced organist Ron Bogda, who has taken over retired Al Melgard's duties at the stadium. Ron didn't talk much; he let the music do the communicating. For a starter he played a bit of "Mexican Hat Dance" and the audience responded with the customary hand clapping. The huge

vari-hued console perched on a balcony at one end of the hall, and the sound from the overhead chambers is indeed an experience.

One of the problems with the auditorium is the natural reverb. This makes the playing of ballads, and similar "slow music," rather than fast tunes, more effective to an audience which fills only part of the house. Therefore such tunes as "Spanish Eyes," and "Indian Love Call" came through with more definition than "76 Trombones" and "Java." Ron simplified some of the more intricate passages of such tunes as "Chicago" and the fast parts of "Granada," apparently to avert the mashing together of tone clusters in "harmonic hangover" dissonance. But other times he keyed every 16th note and let the huge echo chamber mix 'em up, and mix 'em it did.

Neither Doug nor Ron did much talking but one brief speech about former auditorium organist Al Melgard was most appropriate. Some background on Melgard's long service as official organist jibed with organ builder Dan Barton's high esteem for Al as a person and as a musician. The late Dan once told the writer that he considered Melgard the finest organist the theatre organ era produced, and that Al's demonstrations sold many a Barton instrument. The conventioners were urged to drop Al a card at his Las Vegas address.

Ron Bogda's program closed with "The Party's Over," applicable only to his portion because the party was just starting.

Next stop was at the Patio Theatre with its 3/17 Barton, for an early afternoon session with Hector Olivera. Those who have experienced an Olivera concert know they can expect good music plus Hector's floor show while MCing and playing. Hector is a firm believer in "visual accompaniment."

His opener was a much embellished "That's Entertainment," during which he threw in a pedal portamento. He literally "toed" a smooth chromatic roll.

So compelling is the "eye appeal" of an Olivera performance that one doesn't want to look away and possibly miss a trick.

He left his audience with some vivid memories: the Clarinet solo of the smooth middle part of "Canadian

Capers" which Hector right-footed on the pedals; the soft, sustained Vox choir which carried the ball during "Body and Soul" while percussions added the ornamentation; the somewhat garish "Buddy Coleisms" which marked "Secret Heart;" the utter beauty in every nuance of Hector's "Jeannine;" the clarity and precision of the Bach "Toccat and Fugue in C Major." We list but a few highlights; they went on continually.

At one point, he thanked the hard-working crew which had made his performance possible, in accents of pre-Lucy Desi Arnez. Indeed, they had the organ in excellent shape and those electronic bells in the pit that were played from the console supplied an extra palette of musical color.

Hector's encore was his controversial "kitchen sink" attack on "Flight of the Bumblebee." If composer Rimsky-Korsakoff might do a few turns in his sarcophagus over the Olivera circus-band approach to his diminutive piano piece, it didn't matter. Here was showmanship and musical vaudeville. One could visualize the yellow striped varmint buzzing around Hector's lightning-fast tootsies, as the entertainer pedaled the melody line which has numbed the digits of many a piano student. Then it was over and the audience clapped and howled approval. Hector Olivera had won another round pitted against that monster with the many electrical circuits and a searing breath of high wind pressure. His audience loved him, and let him know it. They filed out with a hero on their shoulders figuratively speaking. They had experienced music they could see as well as hear.

The next bus stop was the Pickwick, a theatre whose auditorium decorative scheme is best described as "modernistic Mayan" — all sorts of angles decorated in bright colors and lights. Pure geometry! The asbestos curtain has the most fantastic and brightly colored design of all, representations of beautifully plumed birds in various states of repose and flight.

The organ is a 3/10 Wurlitzer to which a Post Horn has been added. Tom Cotner is a somewhat new name in the theatre organ world but Tom's interest goes back to boyhood.

One of his recent projects was developing a theatre-style instrument for a builder of electronics. His initial offering was a medley from *Gold Diggers of 1937*. Tom displayed some tasteful registration on an immaculately maintained organ. Lots of variety and there is no sound quite like the Wurlitzer sound, a point driven home by ATOS charter member Judd Walton, who is also the permanent president of the "Wurlitzers Are Wonderful" club. Judd beamed throughout the well-played program — until his idolized brand developed a cipher. His face fell with a resounding "thud." But that tiny squeal was evident only briefly in the final selection. Fred Kruse's pipe organ retained the good manners expected of it by its overseer.

Tom Cotner displayed an easy manner as MC and quickly developed rapport with his willing audience. His medley from *The King and I* proved Tom to be an accomplished orchestrator. His registration and phrasing of "Poor Butterfly" was especially rich in old-fashioned appeal and *Myrt and Marge* nostalgia.

Next came "Anything Goes" time with tunes dedicated to two West Coast friends: "Goofus" for Tiny James and continuing with an extension of the 50-year search for that swampland wraith, "Chlo-e," for Stu Green, who's still looking for her. Both tunes got good-humored burlesque treatments, but poor "Chlo-e" suffered most, with auto horn and train whistle "riffs" plus surf noises (surf — in a swamp?).

Silent movie time starred droopy-moustached Snub Pollard in *It's a*



Hector Olivera at the Patio Theatre 3/17 Barton.



The elaborate asbestos curtain at the Pickwick reflects the Art Deco theme found throughout the theatre.

Although the Pickwick console is now a dignified white, the organ grilles still show the original geometric designs.





Tom Cotner at the Pickwick Theatre 3/11 Wurlitzer.



John Innes (left) at the 88 and Bill Fasig at the 3/50 E.M. Skinner at the Civic Opera House.

*Gift*, a story about an inventor who, appropriately for these times, develops a substitute for gasoline. Tom cued this fast-moving bit of mid-'20s slapstick with appropriate action music to underscore the many laughs as Snub's dependence on gadgets to maintain his lazy life style are revealed. Tom Cotner modestly pointed out that Snub Pollard deserved the credit for the enjoyable moments of that two-reeler. But Tom's music offered solid support. And the theme, energy conservation, is currently appropriate.

The "community sing" was notable in several ways. The colorfully illustrated slides had to be left-overs from the "golden age" when

each illustrated slide contained no more than a couple of lines. Besides the oldies (e.g. "Bye Bye Blackbird") there was a "Welcome ATOS" song sung to "Hello Dolly." It was performed in the best tradition of the slide novelties of the mid-'20s, and the slides had the appearance of authenticity.

Tom's closer was his own musical patchwork of themes from Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." We can welcome Tom Cotner as a valued member of the younger coterie of entertainment organists who have made a special study of the styles and programs of the '20s.

On a warm Wednesday evening, conventioners walked several blocks from the hotel to the beautiful, moderne, Civic Opera House. This 3000-plus seat auditorium is the home of the Chicago Lyric Opera.

As the contour drape rose revealing the 3/10 Skinner console, we saw the console flanked by the grand piano and an elaborate stage set for *Idomeneo*, an early Mozart opera, to be premiered at the Opera House in the fall. The massive set, dominated by a giant head of Neptune, was erected just for our program, and later disassembled to await the fall production.

Organist Bill Fasig and pianist John Innes opened with "America the Beautiful" followed by a musical duet of Moskowski's "Bolero." They continued with a Gershwin medley that included selections from *Porgy and Bess*.

Bill Fasig then did a bravura spotlight solo with Bach's "Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor."

Returning to the 88, John joined Bill, playing Hadyn's hymn, "Austria."

At this point, the pianist went to the 3/50 and performed a powerful rendition of Widor's *Fifth Symphony* "Tocatta." We now learned that John originally studied organ while Bill's forte was the piano. With the duet formation years back, the two decided to swap instruments.

They eventually returned to their duet instruments to perform the finale, "Cornish Rhapsody." For the encore, the two returned with, "Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul."

The conventioners left the plush surroundings and the fine concert organ for a well-deserved nights rest.



Edna Sellers, retired Chicago organist, one of the four 1977 entrants into the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame.

The Neptunish stage setting was erected just for our enjoyment at the Opera House.





Thursday, June 30

Conventioners were awakened early Thursday morning by the sound of thunder rolling down the narrow air shafts between sections of the hotel. If they looked up the shafts they might see flashes of lightning, because Mother Nature had stepped out of that TV commercial to welcome ATOSers to Chicago in the way she knows best. It was no small and fleeting storm. The thunder and lightning rumbled and flashed for more than an hour and the rain came down in ever-drenching patterns well into the afternoon.

Meanwhile "wagonmaster" Alden Stockebrand was having problems with his fleet of chartered buses; the storm had dampened the promptness of their arrival, due mostly to traffic jams caused by heavy rain. The conventioners lined up four deep in a block long column, in the shopping arcade of the hotel. It was still raining heavily an hour later when the last in the line boarded the buses for Joliet and the Rialto Theatre. It was a long 45-mile trip slowed by intermittent bursts of heavy rain. It was still raining when the buses disgorged their cargoes in front of the Rialto Theatre around 10:15 a.m., 15 minutes after the scheduled start of the Don Baker concert.

Entering the lobby of the Rapp and Rapp house, the viewer is impressed by the magnificence of a big town theatre in a comparatively small town. The immense marbled lobby, complete with chandelier, turned all eyes upward to wonder at the marvels of theatre decor in the '20s. The massive Barton console is on a lift at the right end of the large orchestra pit. Overhead at the

(L to R) Virginia Ferrolli, Marie Pond and Ione Tedei work on the Chicago Theatre piano action in the Palmer House late at night.



"Where were you when the lights went out?" Despite the power failure, Don Baker came through like the pro he is at the Rialto Theatre 4/21 Barton.

apex of the proscenium arch are life-sized classic figures, a most impressive example of the "golden era" theatre builder's art.

Then unfolded a chain of events which would require the patience and professionalism of a Don Baker to make it come off. Don was introduced but the PA system didn't work, so Don started the elevator upward and commenced a brassy intro. Then the house lights failed, leaving only the spotlight for illumination. The sound of the troubled organ left something to be desired. There were pedal notes sounding which Don hadn't touched, later to be identified as wiring "runs" caused by the heavy rain.

Then the spotlight, malfunctioned leaving organist and audience in total darkness. Conventioners rushed flashlights to the front and shined them on the stoprail to help Don. But Don didn't miss a note during the perhaps two minutes of blackness. At this point the power failure was resolved, and the lighting returned to normal. Don was master of the situation all the time. If the temporary blackout flustered him,



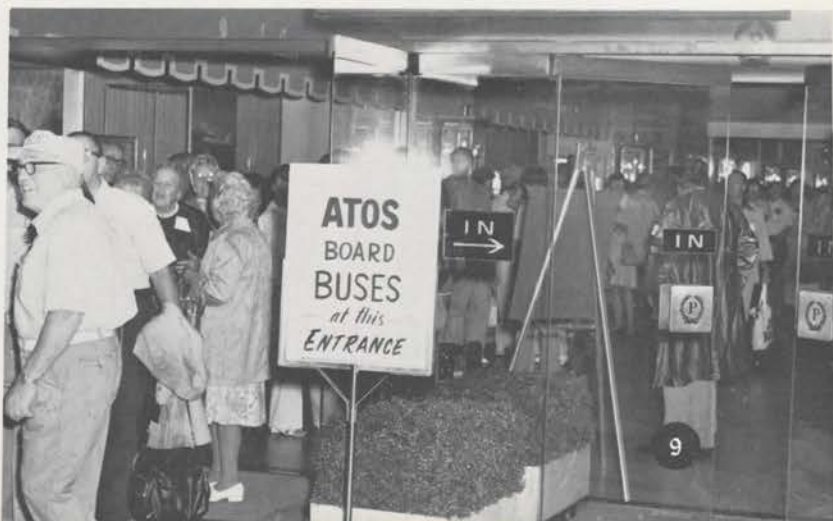
The elaborate mirrored lobby of the Rialto in Joliet.

he never let on, nor did his music reveal it. Yet, the organ was out of tune in several ranks and the unplayed bass notes continued an independent life of their own.

It was explained that the rain had gotten to the relays, which would account for the wiring "runs." The writer has never before witnessed an artist performing under such travail. A lesser musician than Don Baker would have given up, but he stuck it out and his artistry came through despite the plagued instrument.

Among his selections were two tributes to a southern state, "Georgia" and "Georgia On My Mind;" a "rhythm" medley which included "I Got Rhythm," "Crazy Rhythm" and "Fascinatin' Rhythm." "She's a Grand Old Flag" preceded an Irish medley of "How are Things in Glock-

The line for the buses to Joliet stretched the entire length of the Palmer House. Buses were delayed due to the day-long rain.





Magician De Yip Loo studied with Harry Blackstone and is known for his major stage illusions.



Bob Neller and Reggie. Edgar Bergen called him "the greatest natural ventriloquist."

Over 1100 were served at two sittings at Pheasant Run, an elaborate restaurant complex during the trip from Joliet and St. Charles.



amorra" and "MacNamara's Band," as the green spot colored the console. Don's encore was a majestic "How Great Thou Art." His audience let him know in the usual manner that they appreciated his efforts under most adverse conditions. Then Don held court at the raised console with his many friends and admirers while flash photography filled the room with lightning.

Outside, the rain had diminished as the conventioners boarded the buses for St. Charles and the Arcada Theatre with its 3/16 Geneva organ with some Marr and Colton history. The organist was Lowell Ayars, performing for his eighth ATOS convention.

Doug Christensen introduced Lowell, whose opener was *Showboat* selections. Then came a vocal solo, "The Stars Will Remember," followed by another medley featuring "Rooms" in the titles.

Then it was vaudeville time with veteran ventriloquist Bob Neller and his wooden friend Reggie. Bob's technique is amazing; not only do his lips not move but Reggie has



During his program at the Arcada Theatre, Lowell Ayars accompanied vaudevillians Bob Neller, and De Yip Loo, at the 3/16 Geneva.

more facial expressions than Charlie McCarthy and Mortimer Snerd together. Bob and Reggie engaged in banter, sang duets and even performed a whistling duet — in harmony. The audience ate it up. In the pit, Lowell accompanied the songs and hyped the routines with appropriate music (e.g. "I Don't Want to Talk Without You").

Then Lowell presented "Chanson Bohemienne," better known as the radio theme of *Vic and Sade*. His second vocal was "On a Clear Day" despite the stormy weather outside.

Once more it was vaudeville time and the act was veteran Chinese stage magician De Yip Loo — and Company. His many feats of magic included disappearances galore and even a levitation sequence wherein a girl was suspended in space while the conjurer passed hoops around her apparently "floating" body. Then Yip Loo tried a bit as a stand-up comic, and his patter was just as amusing as his magic had been puzzling.

Lowell Ayars' closer was the completely forgotten "Yeast Foamers' March," a tribute to a company on the rise in 1929.

The Ayars performances have seemed to get better and better over the years, but never have his vocal solos and well-performed organ selections been more warmly applauded than in 1977.

Back to the buses and a short trip to Pheasant Run for a chopped steak lunch that hit the spot. Or it might have been the other way around, since half the conventioners had lunch first, then went to the Arcada Theatre for the Lowell Ayars performance. Alternating groups was all part of the CATOE plan to prevent crowding.

Either way, the buses deposited the now weary organ enthusiasts at the Palmer House late in the afternoon.

### Seminars — Thursday Evening

In keeping with the ATOS educational mandate in the Articles of Incorporation and a strong desire to have something for everyone, Thursday evening was set aside for two well-chosen seminars.

Bill Hansen, organ builder, conducted the first by tracing pipe organ history from the legendary beginning

down through the history of our beloved unit (theatre) organ. He speaks with authority on the subject having learned a great deal from Harry Caruthers, whose father, Joseph, was an associate of Robert Hope-Jones. Mr. Hansen, with his historical commentary and personal anecdotes, produced an enjoyable as well as educational diversion.

The second seminar, entitled "Our Mansions for Pipe Organs," was conducted by Dr. John Landon, and Bro. Andrew Corsini. Dr. Landon, author of "Jesse Crawford Poet of the Organ," and Bro. Andy could hardly have chosen a more appropriate place to discuss movie palaces because the early movie merchants in the Windy City were the pioneers in developing the mansion for pictures concept and brought many of the innovations of movie presentation to the public with resounding success.

Dr. Landon is currently researching for another book which will deal with theatre organists. This treatise will cover a profession that began and ended within a 20 year space of time.

Bro. Andy Corsini is probably the nation's leading authority on theatres, especially movie palaces. He, together with the late Ben Hall, sparked the formation of the Theatre Historical Society. Bro. Andy, as editor of the THS journal *Marquee*, has, over the years, given detailed descriptions of many famous movie cathedrals, a great number that are now gone, leaving his accurate writings as the only history of these opulent buildings.

Chicago is fortunate in having some movie palace examples still intact making this seminar most meaningful.

### Friday, July 1

The conventioners put on their walking shoes Friday morning and strode several blocks to the still impressive Oriental Theatre on Randolph Street to hear the young artist, Walter Strony.

A highlight of the interesting program was "Variations on a Theme by Oscar Mayer" in which the well-known TV commercial was given an orchestral arrangement in several tempos. Hot dog!

Another highlight was "Granada," a good rouser for this instrument

whose sound is very bright.

As an encore, Walt thrilled the assemblage with the Glenn Miller tune "In the Mood" in which the artist demonstrated an escalator effect with a rapidly ascending-descending motion on the four manuals.

It should be pointed out that Walt had to set his registrations by hand because the combination action has been inoperative for some time. This did not seem to deter the artist from the execution of his program.



Walt Strony at the Oriental Theatre 4/20 Wurlitzer.



"Theatre Organ from Roots to Full Blossom" was the subject of the seminar conducted by William Hansen.



Brother Andrew Corsini talks to the crowd during the second seminar on Thursday.



Dr. John Landon conducts his seminar "Our Mansions for Pipe Organ" in the Palmer House.

ATOSers crowd the Red Lacquer Room for the Thursday evening seminars.





Stan Bielsk and Gus Pratt drove this Honda from New York to Chicago '77.



Henry Gottfried, from the family of pipemakers, talks with Lorin Whitney.



Australia was represented by Rob Glidden and Bill Schumacher, both members of Puget Sound.

Three Chicago rink organists, (L to R) Paul Swiderski, Fred Arnish and Leon Berry.



Friday turned out to be a lovely summer day, with no remnants of the previous day's storm visible (although there were floodings and power interruptions elsewhere). This time the buses made a leisurely journey to the Elm Skating Rink, where one of the loudest organs we have experienced, so far, occupies two overhead swell chambers plus a console balcony loaded with percussers and bass offsets.

The makeup of the Elm organ almost defies classification. It boasts pipework and parts from a number of brands, including Moller, Gottfried, Barton, Wurlitzer, Geneva, Wicks and Kimball. It has four Tibias, three Post Horns, two Clarinets and two Train Whistles. In addition to the Post Horn chorus there are eight solo reed voices. The total is 24 ranks, controlled from a four-deck Geneva console.

Rink organist Paul Swiderski opened the program with a string of pops and standards played as pop stylings rather than skating tunes with their strict tempos. At one point he demonstrated the voices of the instrument, including the Polish Post Horn, which he fabricated, probably from funnels and Halloween horns. But we jest. It was nearly as raucous as the two other Post Horns which give the organ lots of blast power. And there is volume to spare. The conventioners perambulated around the skating floor, trying to locate a "node" where sound cancellation might reduce ear strain, but in vain. Not that the music was too loud all the time. It was just plain loud, but the registration changes offered some respite. We perched on a bench just beneath an imposing row of metal mitered 16' Tubas. It was like being in the middle of the Oompah section of a German band.

Paul Swiderski at the Elm Rink 4/24 Geneva hybrid.



At one point one of the bus drivers stuck his head in the door and listened briefly. Back in the fresh air outside, he was heard to remark, "I'll bet they've got a thousand watts of amplification going in there!"

Organist Jerry Glenn took over for a subsequent serenade, and demonstrated a style closer to the ideal established by Leon Berry, the "Chicago Thrump-Boom" style, so described by a West Coast journalist when the first Chicago rink records hit the market.

The trip to Hinsdale allowed sensitive ears to once more normalize to no more strain than the cacophony of traffic. It was a picturesque journey through a countryside which seemed abnormally green to denizens of the parched Far West. It was not until we discovered that the bus windows were tinted a greenish hue that the truth hit — we had been filtered into thinking green!

Hinsdale is a small town with a business district comprised of a couple of streets with wide-lawned residences fanning out from that center. Practically in the middle is the Hinsdale Theatre, a well kept movie house of somewhat ancient vintage, judging from the 1925 architecture. It's a long, rather narrow house with gently curving contours. The walls have been shrouded with sound absorbent hangings, probably to reduce liveness in connection with sound films. We soon learned the padding also helped contain the roars of a beast confined in chambers on each side of the proscenium.

There has to be one remarkable man of vision connected with this theatre. There are two large consoles in the pit, a four-deck Wurlitzer and a Kimball. Both are mounted on four-poster elevators. To date, the Kimball is in command of 24 ranks of mostly Kimball pipes.

The organist was the well-known Kay McAbee, whose legendary arrangements and recordings have established his good reputation for tasteful and absorbing organ music.

True, we weren't quite prepared for the volume of this particular Kimball. But first, there was an announcement on the PA system by Jim Glass, the man who, in recent years, has sparked the organ project, by establishing The Owl Cinema Organ Guild, a local society dedicated to keeping the theatre or-

gan alive and well in Hinsdale and environs. Mr. Glass provided some insight regarding his organ project, then introduced Kay McAbee. We never saw Mr. Glass in person.

Kay started the motor which operates the lift and at the same moment opened a broadside — "Luck Be My Lady Tonight." It was obvious from the applause that Kay's efforts were much appreciated, and the applause competed with the volume of the Kimball, which sounded smooth and loud in the acoustically excellent house.



Kay McAbee at the 3/21 Hinsdale Cinema Organ. Counting both consoles, there are 7 manuals and 32 ranks in the theatre.



Jim Benzmiller at the Downers Grove North High School 3/10 Wurlitzer.

Bob Ralston with his singer/secretary Mimi during his program at Downers Grove North High School.



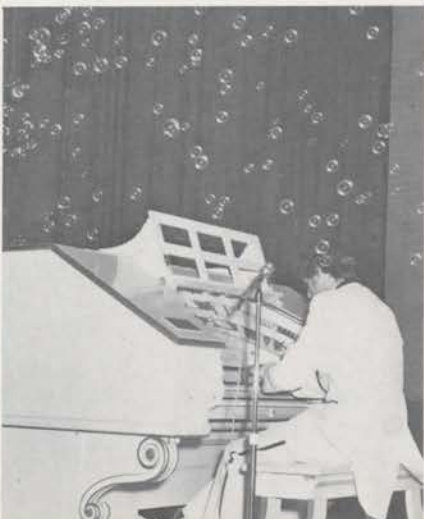
Kay's selections included "Summer of '42," "Temptation Rag," and "Stay As Sweet as You Are." The qualities of the Kimball pipe-work were demonstrated with good effect. Kay did a nice job at the microphone regarding the music, but no one explained why there was an extra console in the pit. His audience demanded an encore, and Kay played a thunderous "Everything's Coming Up Roses." Then back to the buses and on to Downers Grove.

The high school at Downers Grove, Illinois, houses a prime condition 3/10 Wurlitzer, thanks to CATOE members who removed it from a theatre in Lima, Ohio, trucked it to the high school and installed it. The small town of Downers Grove is justifiably proud of its organ, which was a gift from the Glen Alden Corporation.

On this particular Friday afternoon, the first player was Bob Ralston, known for his appearances with a popular TV orchestra. Unfortunately, the session got off to a late start; there was a 40-minute delay while Mr. Ralston's combinations were set.

The opening medley included such diverse items as "Somewhere My Love" and "Tijuana Taxi," the latter rattling with toy counter sound effects. The American Medley was interesting in that it presented tunes popular in the USA's distant past, but not the over-played ones. For "Deep Purple," Bob went to the piano on the stage for an arrangement of the tune which illustrated how he played it at 15 years of age. He continued with a comic version of "The Merry-Go-Round Broke Down." He turned the blower off for a moment to obtain the effect of music disintegrating during "Merry-go-round," (shades of Sidney Torch).

Bubbles "a la Welk."



Bob's "Ebb Tide" featured not only surf sounds but Orchestral Bells. His "How Great Thou Art" was properly "straight" in its registration.

Some pleasurable minutes were provided by Bob's secretary, Mimi Boyer, whose kaleidoscoped vocal selections proved to be audience pleasers. Mimi can belt them (e.g. "Sunny Side of the Street") or fill the house with her well practiced and cultivated voice (e.g. "Jalousie").

Bob scored with "I Get a Kick Out of You" then amused his audience with his playing on the manuals while lying on his back, thus doing some upside down and backwards digital work on "12th Street Rag." His encore was a ballad rendition of "Stardust."

Bob Ralston presented an often frenetically paced show, well laced with visual humor which obviously pleased many in the audience.

After the annual membership meeting, it was Jim Benzmiller's turn at the 3/10 Wurlitzer. It's a bright-sounding two-chamber installation with plenty of presence and fast response.

Jim presented a program which contrasted sharply with the Ralston performance, in style and content. He confesses to growing up as the "only Kraut" in a largely Polish area of Wisconsin. He is unable to explain his expertise at playing Dixieland jazz, rather than Polkas, yet that's what developed.

But before the jazz came a particularly attractive ballad treatment of "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows." Jim's version was completely independent of any allusions to Chopin's "Fantasie Impromptu." His "12th Street Rag" was lively, loud and with jazz "rides" plus interest-bearing key changes.

One might assume "Five Foot Two" to be a suitable vehicle for jazz variations, but not that ancient George Jessel tearjerker, "My Mother's Eyes." Jim played them both in Dixieland style with good effect.

His prowess in the light classics was illustrated by a rousing "Malaguena." Jim puts his all into such standards, as proven later by his encore, "Zampa Overture." We couldn't leave Jim without some kind words for his treacly, tearful and terrific "I'll Be Seeing You." All of which leads to the question, where has this talented organist been hiding for so

long? It is hoped Jim Benzmilller will not retreat to the wilds of Wisconsin to spend his life trying to convert the polka-loving Polonians to an appreciation of Dixieland organ jazz.

### Saturday, July 2

On Saturday morning the buses took off on a comparatively short journey to the Montclare Theatre and its 3/10 Barton, an organ which



Ron Rhode at the Montclare 3/10 Barton.



Fred Arnish and his "Arnishlitzer," the 3/13 Wur-litzer at the Axle (Hub) Rink.

Conventioneers listen to the organ at the Axle (Hub) Rink.

is remembered fondly from previous ATOS conventions. It's a two-chamber installation with console on a four-poster lift at the right end of the small orchestra pit.

The organist was Ron Rhode, a young man who has distinguished himself in both the concert and pizza parlor fields (he's the chief organist at Organ Stop No. 2 at Mesa, Arizona).

Ron brought the spotlighted console up with "Whispering," a tune which set the pattern for stylings and titles bound to appeal to the aficionados. This included one Crawford styling, "Hiawatha's Melody of Love;" "a Wayne King novelty tune, "Corn silk" (which is reminiscent of "Josephine"); Victor Herbert's romantic "Thine Alone;" some burlesque bumps with "Beale Street Mama;" a fast-moving "Fiddle Faddle;" "Teasin'" and a fast flowing "Blue Danube."

Ron's easy speaking style and his smoothly contemplative arrangements (and that includes registration) added up to a solid hit with his audience. And the goodly number of young people who crowded around the console after Ron's encore, indicates he has aroused the interest of the young.

The buses then ferried the conventioneers to the Axle Skating Rink, where Fred Arnish "at the Mighty Arnishlitzer" entertained. This instrument has a long history. As a 3/10 it first came to prominence via the late Bill Huck's Replica record label, with house organist Leon Berry doing the honors. And Eddie Osborn cut his "Fabulous Eddie" album for the Replica label on it just 22 years ago. It was Berry, however, who established the so-called

"thrupp-boom" Chicago rink style. Fred Arnish couldn't be classed as an exponent of the pure "Chicago style" because his "thrumps" were not necessarily automatically followed by "booms." His is a freer style, with more attention to phrasing, although "ol' debbil" bombast is still the order of the day. The rink organist's instrument is quite different in stoplist and wind pressure. The Axle (formerly Hub) Rink's organ operates on 22 inches pressure. It is now a 3/13.

Fred entertained with such tunes as "Lida Rose," "Boo Hoo," "Green Eyes," "Valencia" a spectacular "Patricia" and a roaring "Quiet Village." His audience reconnoitered about the skating floor, some trying to again locate a lower volume area, but in vain. The rink organist's problem is to produce sufficient volume to overcome the noise of a floor full of undulating skaters, but still not pass the Excedrin zone. It's a fine line, and the "doppler effect" caused by hundreds of speeding, screaming, clattering bodies may still affect the musician even when they aren't there. There was plenty of toe-tapping, twisting and dancing by conventioneers. It's a happy moment when the desire to dance can bring together such generation gap extremes as sexogenarian Anna Olive and youthful organist Lew Williams for a few minutes of the light fantastic, and it happened. Repeat a few dozen times and it's catching. There's a lot of charm in those super-powered rink organs and the specialist musicians who have learned to make them a permanent part of life in Chicago. We won't say "more power to them" because they already have plenty.

The trip to the WGN Continental Broadcast Center was fraught with memories for many a veteran radio listener who sat fascinated in front of his Model 70 Philco (the dome job) and heard the announcer proclaim, "From the organ studio in Chicago's Drake Hotel, it's Leonard Salvo at the Mighty Wurlitzer," although it was then only a 2/7. Now in its third home, it is a 3/11. Three Kimball ranks have been added, plus an Aeolian Nachthorn. Kimball also built the present console.

Byron Melcher first came to hobby notice through the Replica release of a record recorded on the label's





President Ray Snitil presents the charter to William Tunstel for the new South Texas Chapter.



Stan Whittington accepts the charter for the new London and the South of England Chapter — our first in Great Britain.



(L to R) Ione Tedei, banquet chairman, Bill Rieger, convention chairman, and Charlotte Rieger, registration chairman. These three, like many other CATOE members, put in countless man hours to make Chicago '77 a success.

Crowd gathers for admittance to the Chicago Theatre on Wabash at Lake streets, scene of a recent elevated railway tragedy.



studio Wurlitzer and entitled *The Gorilla in the Garden*, an event which has haunted Byron since the record's release in the late '50s. Now the Director of Product Development for the Thomas Organ Co., he has done much toward giving theatrical qualities to that firm's recent output.

Byron was introduced by Al Field, one time WLW *Moon River* poetry reader, now a wheel at WGN. Al reminisced a little, "down the valley of a thousand yesterdays," then brought on Byron Melcher whose program included "Blue Skies," "Little Orphan Annie," "Lady Be Good," and a rather different reading of the *Amos 'n Andy* radio theme. His personable anecdotes and informality put the audience in the mood of "use to be" radio quickly, although the present installation is in a TV studio with the usual overhead clutter of lights and dead acoustics. The two chambers are side by side at the right side of the studio (facing the console), and volume is controlled by 40 swell shutters installed horizontally.

At one point Byron mentioned the



Byron Melcher at the 3/11 Kimball-Wurlitzer at the WGN broadcasting studios.

dead acoustics, but it's certain the studio can add the necessary reverb before the organ tones hit the megahertz.

The Melcher stylings brought out much variety in registration. The solo voices blend into an attractive ensemble sound, and the pitched percussions add sparkle. However, the organ has no toy counter. It is maintained by CATOE.

After the too brief WGN sojourn, CATOE Chairman Dick Sklenar led his "flock" to the departing buses, then greeted those stepping from the arriving people-carriers. Dick seemed to be everywhere at once. He walked calmly about without an apparent worry in the world, completely placid and unruffled. His peaceful demeanor was quite in contrast with the excited concern of some past chairmen. One witness commented, "Dick either has everything under control — or he just doesn't give a darn (expletive diminished)!"

Scheduled at the same time Saturday afternoon as the visit to WGN, was the home tour to see and hear the 3/16 Wicks from Oral Roberts University and now in the home of Faye and Bob Wheeler, the 2/5 Estey in the Bolingbrook home of Art and Carol Todesco and the 3/8 Wurlitzer/Kimball in the home of Jack Gustafson's parents in Elmhurst.

Back to the Palmer House to store up the energy required for the banquet in the evening.

The banquet was held in the Palmer House Grand-State ballroom, a spacious T-shaped combination of high-ceilinged rooms with huge chandeliers and plenty of gold paint. Nearly 1000 attended the banquet, of a total of 1152 conventioners registered.

After the dressing-rolled-in-chicken meal had been consumed, there were speeches and announcements by ATOS President Ray F. Snitil, Convention Chairman William Rieger, and Judd Walton awarded the Honorary Member signs to Mr. and Mrs. Les Rawle.

Lloyd E. Klos, chairman of the Hall of Fame Selection Committee, gave the results of his committee's 1977 choice.

Eloquent John Muri, organist of the year, spoke to the conventioners and his words were pointed; while he reveres the past, even if he had the



Frank Pellico's music provided a nightclub atmosphere following the banquet.



Lloyd Klos, committee chairman of the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame, announces the 1977 entrants.



Peter Miller, the very cooperative manager of the Chicago Theatre, helped make it possible for John Muri to fulfill his life long ambition.



"No, I'm not standing in a hole," says Judd Walton who followed a much taller speaker. He announced the 1977 Honorary Members came from "east of New York."



Harry Koenig played the grand in the Chicago Theatre lobby before and after John Muri's program.

Richard Sklener (L), CATOE chairman, with John Muri and Alden Stockebrand, transportation coordinator, at the Chicago console after John's program.



capability he would not return to it. John looks with confidence to the future.

George Wright was awarded a lifetime membership in CATOE, which means CATOE also must pay his national dues from now on. George said a few words from the podium, echoing John Muri's thoughts, then choked up and quit.

Then came the roll call of chapters, which revealed that 47 of 51 chapters were represented at the banquet.

Those who had served ATOS in a number of capacities over the past year were asked to stand so they could be seen and acclaimed.

Results of the popular election of ATOS national directors were announced.

It has been explained that computerization can be a money-saving route for many ATOS functions, making possible, up-to-date membership rosters at more frequent intervals, and mailing labels which will void the necessity of mailing packets of empty envelopes to the dispatch location.

After the usual banquet "business," Frank Pellico and his combo, with his X-66 on a turntable, provided music for dancing and listening in the night club atmosphere created in the ballroom.

### Sunday, July 3

On Sunday morning at 10:15 a human line three and four abreast stretched from the Chicago Theatre doors, around the corner, and nearly to the stage door. An ATOS concert was open to the public and tickets were on sale at the box office. On entering the lushly appointed theatre lobby, one heard the sound of a grand piano. On a balcony, above the entrance, Harry Koenig was playing semi-classics and operetta tunes on the 88. The sound of the piano faded slowly as the conventioneer climbed many flights of carpeted stairs to that good listening spot, the huge balcony.

Inside the auditorium there was a silent film in progress, *The Big Parade*, King Vidor's 1925 war film. This presentation was really silent; no music of any kind. As René Adoree and John Gilbert went into their final clinch, the magnificent sound of the 4/29 (style 285) Wurli-tizer was heard. The spotlight fo-



cussed on the left end of the orchestra pit and in a moment the white console, with John Muri piloting, rose up into the beam of white light.

The idea was to present a Sunday morning organ program as Jesse Crawford would have done it in 1924. Titles included Schubert's "March Militaire," a medley of six Richard Whiting compositions; songs by tenor Cory Winter — "Only a Rose" and "Rose Marie;" and compositions by theatre organists — "Blue Prelude" (Crawford), "Where Are You Tonight?" (Mrs. Crawford), "Cinderella (Albert Hay Malotte), "Under Christmas Mistletoe" (R. Liebert), "Around the Sundial" (Lloyd del Castillo) and "Waltz in E" (Preston Sellers). There were excerpts from the score for the silent classic *Wings* and Delibes' "Entrance and Procession of Bacchus."

After John Muri took his bows to generous applause, he played Jesse Crawford's radio theme "Forgotten Melody" as the console sank into the pit. Those taking photos noticed Mr. Muri wiping something from his eyes as he played the historic trademark.

On Sunday afternoon, there was a choice. One could visit the Temple Sholom and hear Devon Hollingsworth play the 4/32 Wurlitzer church organ or go on a tour of organ-equipped homes.

The Temple is a huge Synagogue facing Lake Michigan. The Wurlitzer organ, which has some theatrical voices, was installed when the Temple was built in 1929. The sound is more church-like than theatrical. It can sound both big and intimate. Hollingsworth, playing from the choir loft, opened with "Washington Post March" and followed with Bach's "Little Fugue in G Minor." His presentation of Ives' "Variations on America" indicated he had cleaned up the original considerably; it was not nearly as dissonant as, say the Biggs recorded rendition. His pop selections included "What I Did For Love" and "Nevertheless." But the organ is best suited to items such as "Pomp and Circumstance No. 1" and "William Tell Overture." We noted that in the Temple no one shouted "Hi-Yo, Silver" at the "Finale" fanfare.

Devon Hollingsworth gave a good account of his varied talents and the organ is proof that Wurlitzer could

### A Word of Thanks

The Board of Directors of CATOE wishes to thank all of its members and friends who worked so hard to make "Chicago '77" a success.

Thanks also to all the ATOS members who came to visit us and hear our organs. Without you, there would have been no convention.

build church instruments with the best of them.

The home tour included visits to Leon Berry's now 2/8 "Beast in the Basement" Wurlitzer in Park Ridge, Bob Schmitt's 2/7 Wurlitzer-Kimball in Barrington, and the 4/20 Barton in the Deerfield home of Stan and Vi Lechowicz. Visitors returned from the tour full of praise for instruments and the hospitality of the owners.

The final official concert involved a lengthy bus trip to Maine Township High School North, with its excellent 3/10 Wurlitzer. Everything about school and instrument give the impression that they are immaculate in all respects.

The auditorium is steeply inclined. Chambers are on both sides of the proscenium. The white console is on a dolly so it can be rolled off-stage when not in use.

Tom Hazleton is a well-known concert artist who does some playing in California pizzerias and regularly in church. He's one of few organists equally adept in both pop and classical fields.

He opened with "Abba Dabba Honeymoon" then to *Showboat* selections. "I Write the Songs" and a Crawford style "Just a Birdseye

Students at Maine North High School built this musical backdrop for the Tom Hazleton program.



Devon Hollingsworth at the Temple Sholom 4/32 Wurlitzer.

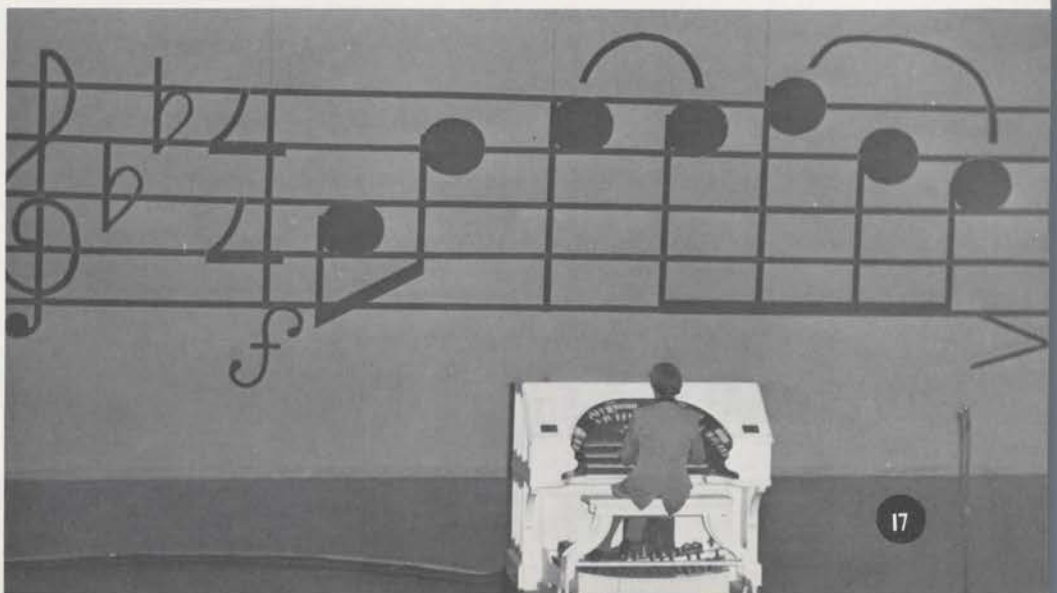


Dick Glover played the piano at the Chicago Theatre both before and after George Wright's performance. (Margerie Allen Photo)

View of My Old Kentucky Home" illustrate the wide contrasts in just the pop portions of a Hazleton program.

The organ sounds crisp and bright. It is just right for the 800-seat auditorium of this fortunate high school.

Tom continued with a Gershwin set and then announced "Nadia's Theme." While he played, a cloud projection appeared on the white backdrop; then the stage went slowly dark while the music continued. When the lights came up, the player





Tom Hazleton at the 3/10 Wurlitzer at Maine North High School.

looked very much like Jonas Nordwall from the rear. Then it happened again, and this time the man at the console could have been Dennis James. The last blackout brought Tom Hazleton back. Just as a gag, the three had pulled a triple switch — without missing a note.

For an imposing closer, Tom improvised a concert piece around the Alka Seltzer TV commercial. Yes, he “flip-flop-fizz-fizzed” his way into the hearts of all present.

Then there were goodbyes from CATOE reps to the conventioners until Atlanta next year. □

The Palmer House, Convention headquarters in 1977. (Photo courtesy of the Palmer House)



Jonas Nordwall (L) and Dennis James (R) helped Tom Hazleton pull a triple switch.

# The Chapter Reps Meeting

Tuesday, June 28

The annual meeting of the board of directors and the chapter representatives convened at 8:15 p.m. in the Palmer House in Chicago, Illinois on June 28, 1977.

There were 40 of the 51 chapters represented. An interim five month financial report was given. A report from the THEATRE ORGAN staff was given and a few suggestions for future issues.

A report by Marvin Lautzenheiser, of the Anagram Corporation on com-

puterization of the membership records.

A record number of 1987 ballots were cast, with 6 invalid, making a total of 1981 valid ballots. Our computer service, the Anagram Corporation of Springfield, Virginia, was delegated to count the ballots and certify the election.

The ballots were to be postmarked no later than June 10, 1977, to be valid. To make certain that all qualified ballots were received, due to the

During the get-acquainted cocktail party on Tuesday, the chapter representatives met with the elected board.



slow mail delivery, a waiting period of five days was allowed. As the ballots were received at national headquarters, they were forwarded to the computer service for verification. Each ballot was individually verified for its validity, keypunched by two disinterested employees and finally counted and proved by the computer.

The voting was as follows:

W. "Tiny" James . . . . .	1321
Richard Simonton . . . . .	1295
George Thompson . . . . .	1283
Betty Mason . . . . .	1268
Orrill Dunn . . . . .	848
Don Thompson . . . . .	689
John Ledwon . . . . .	607
Timothy Needler . . . . .	391

In addition to the above ballots there were also 89 votes for write-in candidates. The four candidates receiving the highest number of votes were elected for a two-year term.

A certified copy of the print-out and the ballots will remain at National Headquarters for one year.

We had 5783 members just prior to convention.

Each chapter was asked to make a report of their activities, suggestions and comments to the Board.

Delaware Valley chapter representative discussed the problems concerning the Philadelphia Convention Hall organ.

Western Reserve Chapter announced their upcoming Regional Convention for November, 1977. LA Chapter suggested that a change be made in our dues period.

Potomac Valley indicated that they had had school children through the Virginia Theatre which fortified their tax-exempt status as an educational nonprofit organization. Erwin Young then urged other chapters to be sure and engage in educational activities to assure the continuance of their tax-exempt status.

The Rocky Mountain Chapter representative suggested an instructional handbook on operating a chapter; requested additional technical articles and requested more communication between national office and the chapters.

Central Indiana Chapter recommended that the bylaws be changed to allow for the counting of the ballots by an outside source.

There being no further business, the meeting with the chapter representatives was adjourned. □

# The National Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 28

Immediately following the meeting with the chapter representatives, the National Board convened in executive session. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

1. Communications were read from the Kiwi Chapter and the Niagara Frontier Chapter.

2. Interim five-month financial report was reviewed and discussed.

3. Dr. Paul Abernethy, chairman of the ATOS Library, gave a status report.

4. Report received on 1978 convention in Atlanta, Ga.

5. Tentative future conventions sites are:

1979 San Diego Chapter — Los Angeles Chapter.

1980 Open.

1981 Puget Sound Chapter — Seattle, Wash.

6. Report received from Hall of Fame committee and their recommendations approved.

7. Board selected Les and Edith Rawles as the honorary members.

8. Requests made by Central Indiana Chapter and Los Angeles Chapter were discussed and tabled until a full study of the possibilities of our computer service has been explored.

9. Passed a resolution commending Mr. J.B. Nethercutt of San Sylmar, Calif., for his philanthropic activities by which many organs have been saved and/or relocated furthering the objectives of ATOS in preserving the theatre organ.

10. The following officers were elected: Pres. — Ray Snitil; Vice Pres./Treas. — Erwin Young Jr.; Sec'y. — Miss Riedel West.

11. The existing staffs of THEATRE ORGAN and the membership office were reappointed.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:30 a.m. June 29, 1977. □

The 1977-78 ATOS National Board of Directors: (back row, L to R): Ray Snitil, president; Reidel West, secretary; Tommy Landrum, Bob VanCamp, Tiny James, and Dick Simonton. (Front row): Paul Abernethy, past president; Erwin Young, vice president/treasurer, and Betty Mason.



# The New Hall of Famers

Four entrants were enshrined in the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame during the convention in Chicago. They are:

## BERNIE COWHAM

A demonstrator for the Barton Organ Co. for seven years, he opened theatres in Milwaukee, then was circuit organist for the Keith-Albee chain in the New York area.

## JOHN GART

Former New York area theatre organist on the Loew's circuit, he was also a composer and conductor with an extensive background of radio and television work.

## EDNA S. SELLERS

A well-known Chicago artist, she played many theatres for the Ascher and Balaban & Katz chains, and had considerable radio and club experience.



John Muri

## Theatre Organist of the Year

### JOHN T. MURI

Named Theatre Organist of the Year 1977, he played theatres in the Indiana area and was a radio artist and educator. A favorite of organ clubs and ATOS chapters, his column in THEATRE ORGAN has been widely read since its inception in 1969.

# HALL OF FAME

Donald H. Baker  
Stuart Barrie  
Dessa Byrd  
Gaylord B. Carter  
Edwin L. "Buddy" Cole  
Bernie Cowham  
Helen A. Crawford  
Jesse J. Crawford  
Lloyd G. Del Castillo  
Reginald Dixon  
Edward J. Dunstedter  
Lee O. Erwin, Jr.  
Francis "Gus" Farney  
Frederick Feibel  
Mildred M. Fitzpatrick  
Reginald Foort  
Paul H. Forster  
John Gart  
Betty Gould  
Arthur Gutow  
John F. Hammond  
Henri A. Keates  
Frederick Kinsley  
Sigmund Krungold  
Edith Lang  
Ambrose Larsen  
Richard Leibert  
Leonard MacClain  
Quentin M. Maclean  
Rodwell "Sandy" McPherson  
Albert Hay Malotte  
Dr. Melchiorre Mauro-Cottone  
Al Melgard  
F. Donald Miller  
Charles Sharpe Minor  
Henry B. Murtagh  
Dr. Milton Page  
Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier  
Edna S. Sellers  
Preston Sellers  
Gerald Shaw  
Raymond Shelley  
Arsene Siegel  
Milton Slosser  
Kathleen O. Stokes  
Firmin Swinnen  
Sidney Torch  
Emil Velazco  
Deszo Von d'Antalfy  
Oliver Wallace  
Jack Ward  
Edward J. Weaver  
Lew White

1977

Theatre Organist of the Year

John T. Muri

Three of the electronics that were represented at the Palmer House . . . the scene of many hours of enjoyment for ATOS conventioners.



# The Prelude

Tuesday, June 28

It was a merry group of close to 500 ATOS members who climbed into 10 air-conditioned buses at the State Street entrance to the Palmer House at 1 p.m. Their destination was the attractive, well preserved Coronado Theatre in Rockford, Ill., 95 miles away. At the outskirts of that town, the caravan picked up a police escort which guided it to its destination.

Sharing the auditorium with a large group of senior citizens, the

members settled in air-conditioned comfort to hear two artists. The first was Chad Weirick, a youngster who was introduced by MC Bob Schmoock. Chad presented a half-hour cameo including music encompassing all moods from a quiet number made famous by Judy Holiday, "God Bless the Child;" to the knuckle-breaker "Dizzy Fingers;" and an ending rouser, Widor's "Toccata."

Next came the artist of the day, the one and only Rosa Rio. One of

her decided assets is her ability to project her personality by using the device of announcing her selections.

Rosa played a multi-faceted program drawing on her vast repertoire. Of special interest was a southern medley that brought memories of Rosa's tenure at the New Orleans Saenger Theatre: "Basin Street," "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans," and "When It's Sleepy Time Down South." A number which was mostly a two-foot pedal solo, "Footsie," followed. Rosa had enlisted the aid of friends Clealan Blakely and

The Coronado Theatre is still beautiful and very clean after 50 years.

Rosa Rio and Chad Weirick shared the Coronado Theatre 4/17 Barton at the Prelude in Rockford.



The Old Prospector for a list of suggestions, and she presented a half-dozen dreamy tunes with primarily a love theme. She concluded with Brahm's "Hungarian Dance No. 5."

The show was covered by a TV cameraman from a local station, and thru propitious timing, Lloyd Klos was able to furnish some background to the TV representative, and appear on a segment of a three-minute film, briefly making a statement of the convention and its kick-off program at the Coronado. □

## The Honorary Members 1977

Mr. and Mrs. Theatre Organ of the London, England area, Les and Edith Rawle well deserve the honor bestowed upon them that they received at the banquet.

They both have worked very hard for the theatre pipe organ hobby for many years, have a Wurlitzer in their home (which incidentally is called Wurlitzer Lodge) and were the driving force in forming one of our newest chapters, London and the South of England.

They have attended many conventions in the states and in 1976, hosted the organ Safari in southern England with lots of help from fellow workers and enthusiasts.

Congratulations, Les and Edith Rawle. □

Unsuspecting Les and Edith Rawle, from London, were chosen Honorary Members for 1977.



# The Afterglow

Monday, July 4

In the past the "Afterglow" events have covered a wide range — a visit to an organ-equipped winery in northern California, a moonlight river cruise in Detroit or a journey to examine the "world's largest pipe organ" in Atlantic City. However, there has never been an Afterglow with more general appeal than the one CATOE arranged for conventioners and it involved only a short walk to the Chicago Theatre where George Wright was scheduled to play a July 4 concert on "Jesse's organ." The restoration of that 4/29 Wurlitzer has been chronicled in these pages for the past several years, and it amounts to a triumph over adversity. Much credit must go to the enlightened manager of the Chicago Theatre, Peter Miller, but the bulk of the credit must go to CATOE work crews which spent so many hours replacing what time and neglect had frayed, unvoiced or worn out.

Again, the line snaked around the corner and disappeared behind the theatre on July 4 morning. At 9:30 a.m. the doors were opened and ticket sales to the public started. Slowly the theatre filled to about three-fourths of capacity. Once more there was piano music in the lobby, this time played by Dick Glover. There was an electric atmosphere, a presence, perhaps the shade of the former master hovering near the scene of one of his great triumphs. Whatever it was, the spell continued throughout the morning. At the ap-

pointed time, a voice on the PA system announced "George Wright, the living legend of the theatre organ," and George came out on stage. His black blazer was striking as he warmed up to his audience. He seemed to be deeply impressed by the huge numbers who had started their holiday by coming to hear him at the Chicago Theatre.

From the stage he hopped down to the orchestra lift, then to the con-



George Wright after his program at the Chicago Theatre.

"On State Street, that Great Street" — It was great to see people lined up around the corner waiting to get into State Street's most famous theatre, the Chicago.



sole, which started its slow upward thrust. His opener was a brassy "Valencia." Between tunes he had a few comments about the organ lift, which doesn't raise the console very high, explaining it was a hydraulic type powered by city water. "If anyone flushes — " kerplunk! Noel Coward's "Zigeuner" (Gypsy) followed, then a tune dedicated to Chicago organist Edna Sellers, Friml's "Veil Dance," once played by Ralph Ginsburg's salon group at the Palmer House. During this selection, the morning's only cipher (a high-pitched pipe) developed. It was gone in thirty seconds. It was a proper time, and George thanked Bill Hansen and Bill Rieger who had worked on organ preparation with George through the wee hours of July 4.

George's program included many memory tunes, Cole Porter's "All Through the Night;" a clacking samba, "Brazilian Holiday," a re-

collection of Grace Moore with "One Night of Love," a tribute to radio's *A and P Gypsies* with "Two Guitars," "American Bolero" and one of his Crawford recreations, "Confessin'." After a brief intermission it was Helen Crawford's "So Blue." Other Crawford recreations included "Moonlight on the River" and an arrangement of a current hit, "Wonderful Baby," as Crawford might have played it in the '20s.

Other selections included a particularly dirty "Basin Street Blues," "My Romance" and a patriotic closer which whistled "Dixie" and offered a broad and sweeping "Home Sweet Home."

The organist was at ease with his audience, talking to those down front. At one point, he grabbed a photographer who was aiming his Brownie and proclaimed "Meet Stu Green — a dirty old man!"

All too soon it was time for the daily movie to start. George lowered

the console to "Chicago" played in various styles which included a waltz arrangement. The reluctant audience filed out with the sound of the big Wurlitzer and George Wright's ability to draw magic from it still buoying their spirits. They gathered in little knots in the lobby to discuss the wonder of it all. They knew they had been present at an historic event, one which the organ aficionado hoped would be repeated with delightful regularity.

Thus, the 22nd ATOS year ended, on a note of triumph. It had been a fruitful year. As conventioners dispersed to their many home areas, there was much to think about. And ATOSers would do much evaluating in the months to come, as reflected in Board of Directors' meeting reports. But the favorite memories would concern the music and organs heard during the short days of the convention. They would indeed be pleasant memories. □

## The Home Installations

Saturday and Sunday, July 2 and 3



Leon Berry's  
2/8 Wurlitzer



Art and Carol Todesco's  
2/5 Estey



Bob Schmitt's  
2/7 Wurlitzer



Vi and Stan Lechowicz's  
4/20 Barton



Faye and Bob Wheeler's  
3/16 Wicks

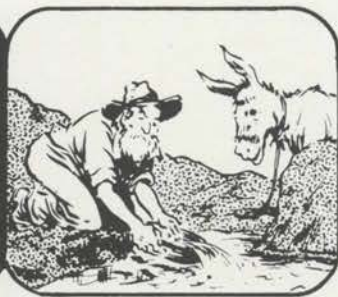


Jack Gustafson's  
3/8 Wurlitzer/Kimball

# NUGGETS

from the  
**GOLDEN DAYS**

Prospected  
by Lloyd E. Klos



This column marks our Tenth Anniversary. Would you believe that Jason and I have been searching the theatre organ lodes as long as this? Yes, our first effort appeared in August 1967. It has been a wonderful ten years, and we take this means to thank all our reader friends for their kind words of encouragement. As we've said so many times: "You read 'em and we'll write 'em."

So let's start our next ten years with some humorous items to ease you over the dog days of August. The first two items were found in the December 1920 and September 1925 issues, respectively, of *Melody Magazine*.

### Moe V. Dope says:

"Watta life you movie organists have to lead! Ain't you tired of seeing Theda vamp the poor, innocent man 'steen times in three days? And when Charlie Chaplin skids and slips on his nut 15 feet from the end of the picher not once, but four times, for a week! And when at the end of a perfect night, you're fast bound in the arms of Morpheus, it's tough to have that mole on Clara Kimball Young's neck haunt you in your dreams, and the next day lamp that mole 14 times in the same place. I sure am sorry for you guys who play the pictures! You betcha! You want a change! Like the guy who after paying the price to see the same program six times without a break, was asked by one of the ushers to tell 'em the wherefore. And his lamps lit all up as he explained: 'You know that scene when them girls are undressing to go in bathing, and that darn train goes by just when it gets most interesting. Well, some day that train is going to be late, and I want to be here when it is.'"

**ORGANISTS!** How do you appear to others when you play? How many types of organists are there? Have you ever thought of yourself as you play? Visiting a few theatres in the city we find: One young fellow who made his appearance by leaping onto the console and then to the bench from some dark opening on the stage. (It was a morning show). After a little while, he stuck a small stick or match between two keys, which held them down, did a few notes with his feet while he lighted a cigarette, took a couple puffs, put it out, removed the match once more, some tunes came forth.

A visit to another theatre disclosed an organist who popped up from the pit, put on the light, tilted the mirror so he could see all the front row seats, adjusted his grin, and then go up and down the keys, turning page after page of music, but his eyes never left the front seats, either via the mirror or directly.

It's a wonder one organist who used to play downtown didn't get a cramp in his neck! He kept his head crooked around so he wouldn't miss a trick in the house, and the bigger the house, the more he turned. He didn't miss a thing until one day, the management decided it wanted an

organist to play the picture and not the audience.

Have you ever noticed the one who plays with elbows crooked out, using all sorts of motions, including shaking his finger on the key? Wonder if that is supposed to increase the tremolo. And haven't you just been worn out watching the hard-working fellow with lights all over the organ pedals. He just works himself to death; tears the stops up and down, and kicks his feet around so that you can't spend time to watch the picture.

Then, how quiet and restful the fellow who slips onto the bench, turns on a soft light and plays with the picture. The one who knows one pretty stop at a time, once in a while, and depends on quality not quantity in an organ, is appreciated.

One organist must have opened swell shades and crescendo and pumped our everything in the organ in one theatre I was in, for it gave such a crash, I actually jumped right out of my seat! Then, with no warning, he dropped to a soft stop, and to my chargin, I heard myself shouting at my companion, trying to tell her what it was all about! Organists who jump from fff to ppp should have warning signals and not embarrass the patrons by sudden changes.

And the girls — God bless 'em! Who hasn't seen the cutie who puts down a stop, glances at the picture, then at the side mirror and fluffs up her permanent wave; and the candy eaters who play with one hand and eat with the other, and rattle the paper for accompaniment.

The organists are very much in the public eye and are all yelping for salaries in the \$100-zone, but until they see themselves as others see them, they will fall short. It's the worker, not the one who just plays or shows off, who gets the good job.

*Mar. 1930 (Roxy News)* Chief organist at New York's Roxy Theatre is **Lew White**, with **Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier** as assistant organist. On the screen is *Such Men Are Dangerous*, Eleanor Glyn's first talking picture. Stars are Warner Baxter, Hedda Hopper and Bela Lugosi. (Quite a trio!)

*Mar. 1936 (Syracuse Daily Orange)* It was like old times for Syracuse University Junior, **W. Stuart Green** last week when he was called on to accompany a revival of a silent film, *Monsieur Beaucaire*, starring Rudolph Valentino, at the Syracuse University-leasé Civic Theatre. "I used to do this for a living," said Green. The only sour note was that the Civic's long-neglected 10-rank Marr & Colton organ refused to work, so Green plinked out the score on a tinny pit piano for six shows.

*Gold Dust: 4/27* **George Lee Hamrick** at Keith's Georgia Wurlitzer, Atlanta . . . 7/27 **Jesse Crawford** at New York's Paramount, features Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" for a full week . . . 9/27 **W.A. Dalton**, Boulevard in Los Angeles . . . 3/28 **Horace Weber**, Capitol in Melbourne, Australia; **Paul Knarr & Dr. E.H. Kanzelmyer** at State's 3-manual Marr & Colton, Schenectady, N.Y.; **Bob West**, Denver (Colo.) Theatre; **Stanley Bentley**, Carthay Circle, Long Beach; **Glenn Shelley**, Oriental in Portland, Ore . . . 4/28 **Michael Slowitzky**, Victoria in Mahanoy, Pa. . . 1/29 **Harold Ramsay**, Baltimore's Century . . . 1/40 **Dr. Edward Eigenschenk**, Chicago's Kimball Hall.

That should do it until October when we will feature some broadcasting organists. So long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector





# George Epstein

## A Roxy Organist

by Lloyd E. Klos

Remembering the organists who played New York's great Roxy Theatre, one immediately recalls Chauncey Haines, Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier, Lew White, Emil Velazco, Dezso Von D'Antalfy and Frank White. Another organist who possessed the credentials to preside at the Roxy Kimball was George J. Epstein, who played it in its final days.

Mr. Epstein was born in New York City in 1900, started piano lessons at six, and in his words, "wasted eight years on piano until the teacher told my father he was throwing away his money. 'This kid will never play,' was his remark. It took eight years to reach this conclusion?"

"My brother, who was seven years my senior, started organ study with John Hammond, who was teaching for Wurlitzer in a studio on 42nd Street in New York. I went with him for his lesson each Saturday morning. Six months later, Hammond turned to me and asked when I would be ready to study organ. I went to the console and played everything he taught my brother. That was the beginning of my marriage to show business."

Mr. Epstein studied piano, organ and theory at the Damrosch Music Institute, then followed with a course in theatre organ presentation under John Hammond.

In 1916, George began playing organ and piano in vaudeville and silent movie houses. Through the twenties, he was organist at several of the presentation theatres in Brooklyn and on Broadway: the Cameo, Carleton, Capitol, Criterion, Rialto and Rivoli. "I was really



hooked by now, and Wurlitzer sent me out on jobs in silent movie theatres. I played most of the Broadway presentation houses on all types of pipe organs. I also demonstrated for Robert Morton, Kilgen and Kimball during the twenties."

In October 1927, Mr. Epstein served as organist at the new Fortway Theatre in Brooklyn, playing a Kilgen "Wonder Organ." Later on, he was to team up with Frederick M. Smith to operate the Kilgen Wonder Organ School at 1560 Broadway in New York. According to an advertising card, pupils received instruction on the Kilgen Wonder Organ, "a completely equipped, advanced unit type theatre organ." Special attention was given to theatre repertoire,

including classical, popular and jazz music. There was coaching for advanced players, and broadcasts over station WSOM on Mondays and Thursdays at 9 p.m.

"My last theatre position was as associate organist for 5½ years at the Roxy Theatre. One thing which was most important to Roxy was synchronization by the organist for silent films. My reputation for "playing pictures," as we called it, was good. Roxy had plenty of organ soloists, but he needed someone who knew the art of synchronization.

"I had done a thing with Erno Rapee for Vitaphone while he was scoring a film. He remembered this, and when Roxy was screaming for someone to play pictures, Rapee

called me. I was then playing at the Carlton Theatre for Bill Brandt. Roxy took Parmentier out of the same theatre previously.

"Brandt was so proud that he allowed me to leave without notice. He also came on stage and made a speech, stating that he was 'proud that Roxy had to come to Brooklyn for Parmentier and myself.' That's how I got the job; no audition. In fact, I never auditioned for any position during my whole career. Just lucky.

"There was no greater showman than Roxy. Although he ran his staff like a general of the marines (he was in the Marines in World War I), he was a pushover for any one of his people who needed help of any kind. No one was ever turned away. We were 800 employees, and Roxy was like a father to all of us. My 5½ year stay at the Roxy was the happiest period of my life. To all of us, the Roxy was home.

"I played until 1933, when they cut the cable and yanked the console from under me."

One of the items in Mr. Epstein's scrapbook is a menu card for a bonvoyage party, honoring Roxy composer-conductor, Erno Rapee. The event was held in the Mecca Temple in New York on May 6, 1929 for the benefit of the Roxy Orchestra Relief Fund. The card is autographed "To Georgie" and signed by Rapee in a

very strident hand, the same hand which composed the lovely "Char-maine" and "Diane."

Another scrapbook item is an ad which promoted the appearance of Alexander Schreiner, who was billed as the "featured organist" at Salt Lake City's Capitol Theatre, and "concert organist" at the Mormon Tabernacle there. Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier was the Roxy chief organist and Epstein assistant organist, alternating at the rotunda and auditorium instruments.

During his tenure at the Roxy, Mr. Epstein frequently made guest appearances at other theatres. In February 1932, *Motion Picture Herald* described his appearance at the Bay-side West's Victory Theatre:

"George Epstein, with the able assistance of Mr. Fred Weiler, manager of the house and a former organist, presented an unusual organ-piano duet this past week. *Eppy*, as he is popularly known in the neighborhood, is in the habit of offering community songfests. To many in the audience, the idea of Eppy and Mr. Weiler being accomplished pianists, comes as a distinct surprise. Their concert opened with a piano duet of "Poet and Peasant," beautifully played and very well received.

"Mr. Weiler further surprised them by playing, on the organ, "Intermezzo" from *Cavalleria Rusticana* as Mr. Epstein accompanied at

the grand piano. Very good applause greeted them at the finish of this exciting presentation."

When the Victory Theatre celebrated its first anniversary, "a special stage show was presented which included three solos, played by George Epstein of the Roxy Theatre, after which, prizes were awarded to members of the audience."

Mr. Epstein also served as president of the Victory-Eppy Birthday Club, and each member was saluted at a party in the theatre when his birthday was observed. The celebrant was notified by a fancy card, signed by "Eppy." Going to the theatre was fun in those days!

Ads urged the public to "come in every day to join our songfest with Eppy and give the blues the gate." The organ was a 3-manual Skinner, and the organists, besides Epstein, were Fred Weiler and Miss N.M. Jay.

When he was featured at the Flushing (N.Y.) Theatre, the reviewer stated: "Mr. Epstein played his first show Monday and was greeted with great applause. Mr. Epstein has a knack which is brought out by his wonderful art of utilizing organ effects almost unheard of, but altogether very natural. His renditions are sweet and inspiring and his distinct playing adds great luster to the occasion."

In April 1932, Mr. Epstein was featured for a week at the Beacon Theatre's Wurlitzer. He was billed as "Eppy at the Organ," and played selections from the Victor Herbert repertoire.

When the Hammond electronic came on the scene in 1935, John Hammond demonstrated the instrument. (He was not related to the electronic's inventor). Through John, George Epstein was given a "second start in show business." He became affiliated with the Broadway legitimate theatre.

The shows with which he was connected were:

- 1935 — *Jumbo* with Paul Whiteman.
- 1937 — *Julius Caesar* with Orson Welles and the Mercury Theatre cast. George was musical director of this organization, the same group which scared many Americans the evening of October 30, 1938 when the 23-year-old Welles presented H.G. Welles' *War of the Worlds*.

Prior to his retirement, George Epstein demonstrated and toured for the Thomas Organ Co. He is pictured here at a Thomas theatre organ. (Epstein Coll.)



- 1938 — Shakespeare Repertoire with Maurice Evans. Epstein served as musical director.
- 1939 — *Knickerbocker Holiday* with Walter Huston.
- 1940 — *Charley's Aunt*, revival with Jose Ferrer.
- 1941 — *Lady in the Dark* with Gertrude Lawrence. A coast-to-coast show, in which Epstein served as accompanist for the star.
- 1944 — *Cyrano DeBergerac* with Jose Ferrer.
- 1945 — *Glass Menagerie*. Served as musical director.

For a period of several years following World War II, Mr. Epstein had a trio, working hotels and clubs until about 1955, when he began selling electronic organs. First he managed a Hammond showroom in Brooklyn, then worked for Thomas for 11 years, demonstrating and touring, until he retired. □

## DINNY'S COLYUM

as  
transcribed  
by  
Del Castillo



I gotta thank Mr. Costello for givin me the jack to go to the Convenshun. Was that sumpin. I thought L.A. was quite a town, but that Chicago is somethin else. They got skyscrapers that really is Skyscrapers. They got two of them that must be a couple miles high. You walk in the front door in the rain, and when you get out at the top you got sunshine with the clouds down below. And bein down below is like bein in the Grand Canyon. The people is scurryin around like ants, and another difference with L.A. is they dont wait for red lites. If we did like that to home, we'd get a \$10 ticket and I aint kiddin.

And them theayters with the big organs takes me way back to the 20s when I use to go to the big theayters

with the big orchestras and the big organs and the big stage shows. Everythin big. Nowadays things is different. We was to so many organ concerts all week that I got organ music comin out of my ears instead of goin in. They should of called it From Fifteen to Fifty on acct. they started off with a 15 year old young feller kid on Tuesday PM. and wound up six days later with Mr. Geo. Rite who is maybe the best known organ player that most people know about. And in between they was all kinds and sizes from the Stadium that they can get 20,000 people into and they is so much ekko that the organ music meets itself coming back, down to the WGN TV studio that only got room for 100 so Mr. Melcher had to do his stuff three times while they hustled people in and out like they was in a subway jam. Bein a old ely-vator man myself I got a kick out of the theayters where the organs was on a elyvator. Of course the organ players they aint really elyvator men, and I was kinda (sic!) humiliated at the Chicago Theayter where the elyvator went up and down so slow you wasnt sure whether it was movin at all. I felt kinda sorry for Mr. Muri who played a hole peace and when he finished the elyvator still wasnt all the way up, and when he finished his last peace the elyvator went down so slow people thought he was all done before he started in on Mr. Jesse Crawford's theme song The Forgotten Melody. Of course when the organs was in skatin rinks the only trouble was they was so loud they needed to have people skatin so you didnt get deaf lissenin, and I would of like to get a skate on myself about then.

Of course we was took everywhere on busses, and we musta gone over 500 miles to say the least. Get up early for a quick cup of coffee, onto a bus, joggle along, off the bus, into a concert, out and onto a bus, joggle into another concert, onto the bus and like that all day. I was joggled on busses so much I got saddle sores. If I had been a girl I would of been bussed to death. And them bus drivers move them big busses around like they was kiddy cars. They squeezed past cars so close I just shut my eyes and scrinched, but they always made it. You would think they always knew where they was goin, but you would of thunk rong. Every time

we had a long way to go, some bus would get lost and then we all had to wait for them to back track, one bus went too far for over 30 miles and wound up in another state. State of Confushun I guess. But they was all nice fellers and they was doin the best they could.

The worst day was on Thursday which I called a Bad Day at Black Rock. Nobody got strung up like in the picture but everythin else happened. First off we got woke up to thunder and litenin and dont you think that in them walls that go around the Palmer House you didnt think you was in a artillery barradge in the World War. So then it started in to rain and the first stop that day was to the theayter in Juliette where the rain had got into the theayter and I sure felt sorry for Mr. Don Baker where all the lites go out on the organ and he has to play with two fellers holdin flashlites for him to see by and when they finally come on the audience gives them a big hand but Mr. Bakers troubles aint over they is somethin rong and he winds up givin the concert on the Posthorn and the Bells to cover up the stuff that aint workin, and he is so mad he takes off after the con-

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**COMING EVENTS**

The LOLTOS program for the 1977-78 season is complete:  
Oct. 9, 1977 - Coronado Golden Anniversary Show.  
Dec. 11, 1977 - LOLTOS Gala Christmas Show.  
April 20, 1978 - Lyn Larsen, one of the greatest of the new generation of theatre organists.  
June 15, 1978 - Return of the remarkable Rosa Rio in her first appearance at the Coronado as a LOLTOS artist.  
Watch for ticket announcements!

cert and goes home. So then out into the rain again and off to another concert and a big lunch we take turns at and I am so empty that when I find out Im goin to get lunch on the second shift as you mite say I go out and buy me a sandwich. Mr. Lowell Ayars he apologises to the folks on acct. he has picked out On A Clear Day You Can See Forever and they give him a big hand on acct. they are glad to be out of the rain and besides he puts on a good show with a couple of good acts which is a Charley McCarthy dummy who can sneeze and burp and yodle and even whistle a duet and sing a song which is more than I ever see Mr. Bergen do. And then they is a very comical Chinese magician and he can do everythin excepting make the rain stop. Well I guess maybe he does that too because after we leave the theayter the rain stops and we joggle back to the hotel where the people who want to be educated go to a couple meetins in the evenin where they find out about how you can build and take care of a pipe organ.

Ofcourse the big shebang is the Sat. nite banquet and after the speeches is over they is a dance with the loudest music you ever heard with a guy name of Frank Bellico who is a pretty funny feller who makes pretty funny

noises. So on acct. the next day is Sunday we dont get goin to the last two concerts at the Chicago Theayter until ten oclock so they is a slambang finish first off with Mr. John Muri and last off with Mr. Geo. Rite and everybody is ready to go home happy with enough organ music to last them all the rest of the month.

I suppose you gotta have busses to get people around and you gotta stick to places where you can get in a lot of people but I wish I could stick around to the year 2000. The way the ATOS is growin they will be at lease 2000 people at the Convenshun, so they will have life size TV in 3-D for everybody to look at just like they was in the room and they dont have to worry about the size of the room where the organ is at. What the organs will be like I dont wanna think about. The way things is goin they will be so many gimmicks you can play anythin just by pushin buttons and probily you can get anywhere without a bus by strappin one of them inventions on your back so you can jump anywhere you want to go.

One thing is for sure. I'm goin to the Convenshun in Atlanta next year to hear that big organ at the Fox Theayter. That is, if the whole world aint blown up first. These days a feller cant think too far ahead. □

## STAN KANN AT ST. LOUIS

On Friday evening, September 2, 1977, Stan Kann will present a concert and also accompany *The Phantom of the Opera* at the St. Louis Fox Theatre. □

## NOTICE!

The deadline for the Pipe Piper (list of installations) has been permanently advanced to December 15. Please send any additions, corrections or deletions to Lloyd E. Klos, 104 Long Acre Rd., Rochester, N.Y. by that date. □

## MISSING MAGAZINES

The Circulation Department receives many post cards and letters regarding magazines not received by members.

This is a perennial problem, complicated by members changing address without sufficient notification, address and/or zip stated improperly on membership chapter list and a host of other reasons, including the lack of interest by the postal service.

We have tried by all means available to reduce this problem with very little success. In discussing the matter with postal authorities, we find that second class mail matter is not forwardable, therefore, if your address is changed, it is necessary to notify correspondents and publishers with sufficient time allowed to make the changes.

If you receive a magazine and the address is not completely correct, please notify us immediately!

Our publication is normally mailed on the tenth of the month of publication. (Except for this Convention Issue which will be mailed about August 24). If you do not receive it within ten days to two weeks, **an inquiry should be made at your local post office.** We are informed that inquiries and complaints concerning postal delivery should be initiated by the member/suscriber and not the mailer of the material.

We have worked with this problem over a great length of time and the accuracy of your address together with ample advance notice of changes seems to be the only practical answer. □

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER, 1977

Amy Reimer, Miss Muskegon County (second from left) is strictly in winners' company after she won the talent competition by playing the organ in the Miss Michigan Scholarship Pageant at Muskegon in June. With her are (from left) Diane Hansen, Miss Michigan of 1976; Darla Burnett, Miss St. Clair Shores and Dorothy Benham, the reigning Miss America.

(Dane Carlson Photo — Courtesy The Muskegon Chronicle)





# CHAUNCEY HAINES

## at the console

As told to Stu Green. Photos are from the Haines Collection.

### PART I

His grandfather had played first trumpet in the Abraham Lincoln Union band back in 1863. His dad did long stints as an arranger and trombonist in both the Arthur Pryor and Sousa bands around the turn of the century. There had always been music, as far back as he could remember. Music is in his blood.

As a lad, still in his teens, he cued the *Birth of a Nation* on its initial run. In Los Angeles he played at the DeLuxe, the Kinema, Loew's and the Forum. There were side trips to the California theatres in Bakersfield and Santa Barbara, to the Strand in

San Diego and the Egyptian in Long Beach. And he made his mark with Balaban and Katz in Chicago with stints at most of their famous presentation houses. Charlie Chaplin was with him in the pit at the L.A. preem of *The Gold Rush*, feeding him cues. He played the premiere LA showings of *Hunchback of Notre*

*Dame* in 1923 and the *Thief of Bagdad* in 1924. During the sound era he was usually a member of the studio orchestras which played soundtrack musical scores for such famous Hollywood composers as Erich Korngold, Max Steiner, Franz Waxman, John Green, Dimitri Tiomkin, David Rose and Alfred Newman. Chances are he'll be cueing a silent film revival tonight. He does 40 such shows a year, often on a 73-rank pipe organ.

But who is Chauncey Haines? You won't find his name in the ATOS Hall of Fame but he played opposite

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Above photo: This is the earliest photo of a young man about to start a rewarding career as a theatre organist taken in 1917. About this time, Chauncey landed his first playing job. Haines recalls that Morton's young installer and maintenance man, Lee Haggart, was present when this photo was taken.

*We first met Chauncey Haines in these pages in a 1971 issue. Since then he has continued with his silent film series, usually in connection with film study courses sponsored by universities. Today, the veteran organist is still "good copy," so we decided on this followup. While Part 1 covers some of the ground we did six years ago, this study of the man reveals some of the more intimate details of his years as a theatre organist. With great frankness he discusses the organs, his many jobs, how he managed to lose them and his multiple marriages. Mr. Haines promises that the next installment will be even more revealing.*

Helen Crawford, who ghosted portions of the scores for *Duel in the Sun* and *Saratoga Trunk*. He was an intimate of comedian Harold Lloyd, orchestra conductor for the Sonya Henie ice show and has been playing silent film revivals for the past 15 years, often for the college cinema classes.

Chauncey Haines is one of the most active and creative organists on the music scene continuously since 1917, when he played his first stint in a Los Angeles theatre, the DeLuxe (at Alvarado and Wilshire), one of two LA houses then equipped with Hope-Jones styled 8-rank Wurlitzers. Small organs were all that were available during the war years.

The first time this writer met Chauncey Haines was when he played a concert for the Theatre Organ Club of Los Angeles in the late '50s at the Lorin Whitney studio in Glendale, Calif. That was before auxiliary studios encroached on the speaking area of Whitney's 4/34 WurliMorton and there was room for an audience of 200. Haines arrived after an all night session of performing a Bernard Herrmann score for some subterranean sci-fic epic sound track at the 20th Century Fox studio. Yet he was able to come up with exemplary readings of the "Bagpiper" from *Schwanda* and Wagner's "Liebestod," in crisp organ arrangements. His orthodox approach and offbeat tunelist might have been over the heads of many fans in the late '50s audience. The hobby was new to many in those fledgling days but his audience sensed they were in the presence of greatness, and received him well. Chauncey included some material by Steiner, Herrmann and Tiomkin, and these more familiar soundtrack tunes hit the spot.

After that one concert, we somehow lost track of Chauncey Haines,

but occasionally saw his name mentioned in the trade journals in connection with various motion picture scores.

The next time we heard his name it was in connection with motion picture courses at UCLA; he was scoring the silent classics for the students. Then the university cut back on its motion picture classics and we heard no more of Chauncey Haines. Then, the seat of learning did an about face, and came on strong with its movie series. And Chauncey Haines was once again at the console of the 73-rank Aeolian-Skinner in UCLA's Royce Hall. That was 10 years ago, and Chauncey has since been cueing up to 40 movies a year, some in Royce Hall for UCLA, some for "Filmex," some for UC in Santa Barbara (Campbell Hall), some in Beckman Hall for Pasadena's California Institute of Technology, and some for the Motion

Chauncey Haines in 1920. By this time he was both in demand for the quality of his music and getting fired for being too often AWOL. He was also thinking about getting married for the first time. There would be four more.



Picture Academy in Hollywood.

Let's go back to the beginnings of the Haines career. Music was in the cards for him from the beginning. His grandfather, Jahn, played trumpet during the Civil War, in the Abraham Lincoln Union band. His father, Chauncey Sr., played brass in both the Sousa and Arthur Pryor bands. Then dad decided it was time to settle down with his family in one place and stop the constant travel of "one night stands."

Dad settled for the directorship of the Detroit opera, and by the time he was ten Chauncey had met many of the notables who appeared at the opera house, including William S. Hart, John and Lionel Barrymore. Among the opera orchestra members he found a ready supply of gratis teachers. In no time he became proficient on the piano. But the piano wasn't his only interest; he also played drums, sometimes on horseback in his dad's band for the Pendleton Roundup, a wild west show in the northwest (later called a "rodeo"). The Haines family lived in Walla Walla, Washington for a time.

Then he discovered a new phenomenon springing up everywhere — movies. They needed music and young Chauncey was ready to accompany the "flickers" on the piano. About this time the Haines family moved to southern California's dry climate for his mother's continued health. Movie houses in 1913 were being improvised from Los Angeles stores at an alarming rate. Chauncey heard his first organ in a theatre, a rather dull sounding church organ, but hearing it changed the rest of his life. When he was about 16, another event took place which would further tie him to the theatre organ; two Los Angeles houses installed small but prophetic Hope-Jones Wurlitzer organs, the Million Dollar and the DeLuxe. The DeLuxe organ was a "style 185" (8 ranks) to which a Tibia had been added. The vastly different sound of an organ tailored to film accompaniment needs had a strong appeal to the young man, whose practice was done on church organs.

Another significant event which inspired Haines was the arrival at the LA Million Dollar Theatre in 1917 of a young man named Jesse Crawford, fresh from triumphs in the northwest

(where he was born) and in Grauman theatres in northern California. Haines had never heard anything like the combination of Crawford and the style 185 Wurlitzer organ. He went to the Million Dollar every night he had the price of admission and sat as near to the console as possible, watching Crawford's every move as he produced that gorgeous music. Chauncey was firmly "hooked."

Crawford noticed it, too. One night the great man turned to his faithful fan and asked:

"Interested in organs, kid?" Haines was petrified at being noticed by his idol but managed to mumble an affirmative answer.

"Then come on over and sit on the bench with me," said Crawford, who didn't know then that the youth had already landed a job playing the only other Wurlitzer in town as "relief" (the 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. stint) to the exceptional British organist, Arthur Shaw, at the DeLuxe theatre. Crawford arranged for Haines to be admitted anytime at the Million Dollar's stage door, and shortly thereafter asked Chauncey to take over the console for a brief interval during the final evening show. But the interval was long enough to tell Jesse what he wanted to know; the largely self-taught Chauncey Haines had talent. Chauncey recalls Crawford's stern analysis of his efforts. The man pulled no punches. But he recom-

mended a teacher, and Arthur Shaw marvelled how rapidly Chauncey improved.

When Shaw left the DeLuxe, the obvious replacement was Haines. He was on his way.

Of Shaw, Chauncey says "He was one of the greatest musical technicians I've ever known. I had great respect for his faultless musical taste and his ability to cue silent films. He was second only to Oliver Wallace, the greatest of all time."

In a recent interview, we asked Chauncey about other Los Angeles theatre organists of the 'teens period.

"I don't think ATOSers will recall them," said Haines, "But here are a few — Albert Tufts, Herb Burland, Claude Riemer, Johnny Hill, Reginald Martin, Fred Burr Scholl, Clifford Demarest, and Ollie Wallace. They'd better know Ollie. He greatly influenced the well-established style of Jesse Crawford. But Ollie's forte was film cueing. There was no one like him — as proved in later years when he did orchestral scores for Walt Disney movies and organized Disney's music department under his brilliant leadership."

Let's examine some of Chauncey Haines' engagements during the late teens and early '20s.

"I got fired at the DeLuxe. One afternoon the slide came on the screen for my solo — 'Chauncey Haines at the Organ' — and nothing happened. I was across the street in



A promotional photo of Haines at the original Chicago Theatre 4/29 console. He was delighted to learn that it has been put in working shape by CATOE members.

When the golden era of the theatre organ passed into history, Chauncey Haines organized a concert orchestra which was heard during the early '30s on Los Angeles airwaves.



the park (now McArthur Park) paddling a canoe on the pond — and not alone. The manager came running to the edge of the lake to tell me I'd missed a solo. I answered, 'How am I doing?' He said, 'you're fired.' I lost more jobs because of the arrogance of youth. I was making \$150.00 a week in 1919. That was very high pay then — for anyone, especially a teenager. It went to my head.

"Next, I went to San Diego and got a job at the Strand at \$200.00 a week. I played a very sweet Robert Morton and I lasted about three months. It was the same story. The managers liked my music but not my lack of dependability. The dames, booze and cars aspect was very tempting to a 20-year-old. So, I got fired — and once again I was broke.

"Luckily, organists who could cue silent movies were in demand, so I had no trouble lining up a job at the California theatre in Bakersfield (north of LA). There I played an 8-rank Robert Morton for \$200.00 a week. Still, those exotic cars beckoned. I went through a Chandler and a Chalmers before I was fired. But I was improving; this time I lasted 8 months!

"My next engagement was back in the big time in Los Angeles. The downtown theatres were then making much of their organs, a style set in 1913 when Talley's theatre became a trend setter by installing a huge Murray-Harris straight organ. This marked the start of the 'movie palace' era in LA and the end of the converted store theatre. From this time on, luxury would be a factor. I recall seeing Chaplin's 'Shoulder Arms' at Talley's. That thunderous Murray-Harris was a thriller.

"My engagement was at the Los Angeles Kinema theatre, which later became the Criterion. It was equipped with a 5-manual Robert Morton organ which was a pleasure to play — except for that hard-to-reach top manual. Later, organist Eddie Horton quipped that the top manual was a good place to store one's brown bag lunch.

"My next job was at Loew's State which had a very slow Moller, but that engagement put me in contact with Claude Riemer, a very talented conductor/organist. I learned much from Claude. He was very effective conducting pit orchestras as well as

cueing movies on the Moller.

"Then I connected with the Egyptian theatre in Long Beach (near LA). There I played a circa 12-rank Smith organ known as 'the gutless wonder.' It left much to be desired.

"While I was playing for silent films and vaudeville at the Long Beach Egyptian, I heard the Forum theatre in LA was looking for an organist to spell Julius Johnson, an organist with a problem.

"I had heard about the fabulous Kimball in the Forum. It must have had 43 or 44 ranks of pipes, and it was absolutely the most gorgeous organ I ever played. It had everything a film cuer or recitalist would want. Later most of it was moved to the LA Wiltern theatre.

"My next move was to Chicago — still a haven for theatre organs. The Balaban and Katz chain ran the theatre business in Chicago in 1925, and I started at the famed McVickers theatre — opposite a gal named Helen Anderson, who would soon become Helen Crawford.

"Balaban and Katz kept me moving among many theatres between 1925 and 1929 — the Norshore, Paradise, Marbro, Granada, Avalon, Tivoli, Harding, Congress — and the Chicago. Most, if not all, of these houses had Wurlitzers or Kimballs.

"I don't think I qualify as a member of the 'Wurlitzer only' cult. One of the most perfectly voiced theatre organs I ever played was in the St. Louis Orpheum. It was a Kimball. But I was a Chicago organist in St. Louis. After six months I was escorted politely but firmly by two local AFM "business agents" to the RR station to catch the train back to Chicago. They have a very tough union in St. Louis.

"Back in Chicago I saw a film demonstration. It must have been early in 1927, a film with John Barrymore, named 'Don Juan.' It had a closely synchronized recorded score played through loudspeakers by a symphony orchestra. Vitaphone had arrived.

"I remember attending a club meeting of Chicago organists where I warned that Vitaphone would soon put musicians among the unemployed. I was greeted by laughter. At that time there were 150 organists employed in Chicago theatres. A year later, there were three working.

"I heard about a fabulous theatre



In the early '30s Haines looks to the future, unaware that a great career as a studio musician and film composer is just around the corner. We'll cover that period in a future installment.

being built in Los Angeles, so I returned to the west coast in the hope I might connect with that much heralded house, the Los Angeles theatre. The house was equipped with a 10-rank Wurlitzer and impresario Albert Short hired a 50-man orchestra. It looked like a first class operation with movies, music and stage presentations. I was overjoyed when Short hired me to play the Wurlitzer. Everything went well — for four weeks. Then, all the musicians were fired, and the Los Angeles theatre became a "grind" movie house. That was about my last venture as a theatre organist except for a nine-month stint at the United Artists theatre where I played the Wurlitzer later to become part of Buddy Cole's studio organ. Then I organized a concert orchestra for radio broadcasts."

How about the personal life during those adventurous years? Chauncey was married briefly to showgirl Ethel Stoddard in 1920, for about eight months. He's reluctant to say anything about a brief but disastrous second marriage but he talks with great warmth about his third marriage to coloratura soprano Caltana Christoph. This marriage endured for three years, but by the early '30s, Chauncey was again single and a fourth marriage to Willow Wray, sister of King Kong's "bride" Fay Wray, lasted for 17 years. But we are



ahead of our story. We have seen Chauncey Haines through the silent movie era as a very successful theatre organist. In our next installment, he will meet Hollywood composer/conductor Max Steiner and his life will change again. The best is yet to come. □

## Closing Chord

**John Victor Stango**, 72, a Philadelphia organist, died on February 26.

He served at Philadelphia's Mastbaum and Upper Darby's 69th Street theatres. He later moved to New York and was a concert performer in that city and in Europe. He is survived by a brother and a sister.

**Alfred M. "Al" Melgard**, dean of Chicago theatre organists, died on July 8 in a Las Vegas nursing home following a prolonged illness. He had retired to that city in 1973 after a tenure of almost forty-five years as head organist at the Chicago Stadium.



Al Melgard, 1890-1977

Born in Denmark on Oct. 4, 1890, Melgard came to America at age seven. Soon after he started organ lessons in a south side Chicago church which led to positions in theatres, as a demonstrator and teacher for the Barton Organ Co., and as organist at the world's largest unit organ, the 6/62 Barton in the stadium. It was he who suggested "Happy Days Are Here again" when F.D. Roosevelt was nominated there in 1932. Mr.

Melgard also operated a teaching studio for many years, training a number of professionals.

A fitting tribute was paid to Mr. Melgard during the "Chicago '77" convention. Ron Bogda played "My Vision," composed by Al for Sonja Henie when she skated on stadium ice during the 1930's.

Mr. Melgard was a member of the ATOS Hall of Fame, an honorary life member of CATOE, a charter member of ASCAP, life member of Local 10, American Federation of Musicians, a Pilgrim in the Moose, a Mason, and a Shriner. He is survived by his wife of more than fifty-five years, Ruth, three children, six grandchildren, twelve great grandchildren and two brothers. Entombment was at Rosehill Mausoleum, Chicago on July 12.

Richard Sklenar

**Dessa Byrd Rappaport**, elected to our Hall of Fame in 1976, died in her home in Indianapolis May 18, 1977. She was 79. Services were held in the Meridian Street United Methodist Church, where she was a member.

Dessa, a native of Robinson, Illinois, was born March 7, 1898. She was a 1918 graduate of the Indianapolis Conservatory of Music and immediately embarked upon a fabulous musical career.

Dessa was pianist at the former Alhambra and Rialto Theatres before moving to the Circle Theatre in 1919, where she played a church type organ behind the screen for silent movies. A year later the Circle Theatre formed a 35-piece pit orchestra and Dessa played the overture with it.

In 1921 the Circle Theatre purchased a "Mighty Wurlitzer." It was necessary for Dessa to take a crash course to prepare for opening night. This opportunity brought her instant success and the coveted title of "Indianapolis' Theatre Pipe Organ Queen." She continued there until 1928 when she joined the Indiana Theatre for the next three years. Meanwhile, she also played in a dinner music ensemble at the Claypool Hotel.

She was appreciated by her audiences, not only for her ability to play, but for her elegant and colorful satin gowns, usually sleeveless, and her perfectly marcelled hair.



Dessa Byrd, 1898-1977.

In 1923 she married Ed Resener, concertmaster of the Circle Theatre. When the Circle Theatre orchestra was disbanded in 1928, he joined the Indiana Theatre musical staff. He directed the orchestra and she performed organ solos. One week, they stepped out of their regular roles and tap danced together to the delight of the audience.

Dessa married Leo M. Rappaport, a Circle theatre Company officer and Indianapolis attorney in 1942. After his death in 1959, she resumed her musical career. She continued to be known professionally as Dessa Byrd.

With the advent of "talking" or sound motion pictures, she turned to radio and television, working at WIRE and WFMS radio stations and WISH-TV. At one time Mutual Radio Network carried coast to coast her taped organ programs.

She gave her farewell performance in 1971 at the Rivoli Theatre, playing to a standing-room-only crowd.

In 1975 she was awarded the first lifetime membership in the Central Indiana Chapter of ATOS.

As a final tribute to a colorful and charming personality, "she will forever remain the Indianapolis theatre pipe organ queen, a legend to commemorate the dearest memories of the theatre era and an inspiration to all who are dedicated to rejuvenating and preserving the remains of the 'king of instruments' from the most glorious era of the 20th century."

Ruth D. Ward

# "SINS, NEGLIGENCES, AND IGNORANCES"

by John Muri

The pipe organ is generally a mystery to non-musicians, but such people have not let their ignorance deter them from making strong comments about the instrument. What can we charitably say about an individual who persists in referring to "the suppression pedal?" What was Jean Shepherd thinking when he wrote in his book *In God We Trust* of "some monster, manic pipe organ?" Who can seriously contemplate what horror-story writer H.P. Lovecraft meant when he wrote about "the croaking of a cracked bass organ," a "blasphemous organ" and "a demon organ" in his story *The Horror at Red Hook*? It is tonic and bracing to turn to Robert Browning, who speaks with some musical knowledge of "the C-major of this life."

We have to be tolerant of those who can't abide theatre organ music. It was Edith Sitwell, the English poetic genius, who wrote to a friend in December 1939: "I can't think what I am doing at the moment, as Mr. Sandy Macpherson is making that horrid cow-like noise on the BBC organ." Five years later, when her radio had broken down, she complained that "It never breaks down when . . . Mr. Sandy Macpherson is oozing out warm treacle." Basil Wright, in his book *The Long View* speaks belittlingly of "Wurlitzer-saturated picture palaces."

What can we say when a prospective student asks to be taught at reduced rates because he wants to learn only how to use "the floor-board" or when one asks what "those slats on the floor" are for? How do you talk to someone who believes that one of our famous classical organists plays with such virtuosity that attendants have to water down the hot chests and pipes with hoses after one of his performances?

Some years ago, the Carthay Circle people in Los Angeles retained a

lease on a vacant theatre by having the janitor sing one piece, accompanied by an organist, to a stooge-audience of one, who paid a dime to get in once every thirteen days. At the first show, the janitor quit singing half-way through his number saying that he was a good janitor and a better singer, but that the organist was lousy on "the groan box." He refused to sing again unless a better organist was supplied. Like him, everybody thinks that one's own criticism is important.

That being the case, I'll do a little risky criticking of my own. I have always found it necessary to study the meanings of song-lyrics, particularly modern ones, whose double-meanings could get me in trouble if I used them on song-slides. I bristle at the stupidity and grammatical ignorance of the kind of guy who would sing the words of "I Don't Know Why I Love You Like I Do; I Don't Know Why, I Just Do." He is implying that there's nothing attractive that he can see in the girl. Is it any wonder that she "never seems to want my romancing" — romancing made up of insults? That boy is lucky if she ever gives one dance to a character like him.

Then there is the musical incongruity of a tune like "Somebody Stole My Gal." It is a song of grief and lament. But how is it written, and how do we play it? Full speed ahead. Singers usually belt out the words. Its melody line demands that it be performed lustily and happily, even though the words are those of a grief-stricken lover. It is schizophrenic.

One has only to give a little thought to the tunes "Old Man River," "Tea for Two," "The Impossible Dream," "I Believe," and "I

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

Want To Be Happy" to realize that every one of them consists of monotonously repeated musical figures. "Old Man River" is famous for its lyrics, not its music.

You don't agree? Then read Alec Wilder's book *American Popular Song*, pages 55 and 56. "I Believe" is nothing but an ascending major scale, with a little shake here and there. Its lyrics can't offend anybody, but is there anything to believe in them when they don't make sense? Is it really true that for every drop that falls, a flower grows? What kind of science is this? The song commits itself to no transcendental or earthly faith. "The Impossible Dream" is full of contradictions and paradoxes. You simply can't beat an unbeatable foe. The irresistible can never be resisted.

Then there is the matter of taste. Ben Hecht reports that the first session of the United Nations at San Francisco was not permitted to open with music by any composer like Tchaikovski, Sibelius, Chopin, or Beethoven — too nationalistic. You know what the music was? Hold on now: it was "Lover, Come Back to Me." For more rubbish, listen to the PBS TV networks theme music for that excellent show *Washington Week in Review*. It is a mess of electronic gibbering, wind-whistling, and woodpecker-tapping, suggesting that the fine commentators on the show are no more than wooden-headed windbags, if you'll pardon the mixed metaphor. On an October 13th a few years ago (on *The Philadelphia Report*, TV Channel 3) I witnessed with hilarity a group of politicians sitting high in a bank of electronically-created clouds. The idea was pretty good, but I'm sure it was accidental.

I am quite suspicious of the large amounts of ineptness and double-talk in our media. Among other things, somebody must have a very low regard for the brains of American audiences. Mick Jagger summed it up nicely when he allegedly said in 1964: "Dumb American birds digging dirty rock stars. That's what they wanted and that's what we gave them . . . we're giving the stupid birds what they want so why shouldn't they pay for it?"

We hear a lot about the necessity to clean up physical pollution, but

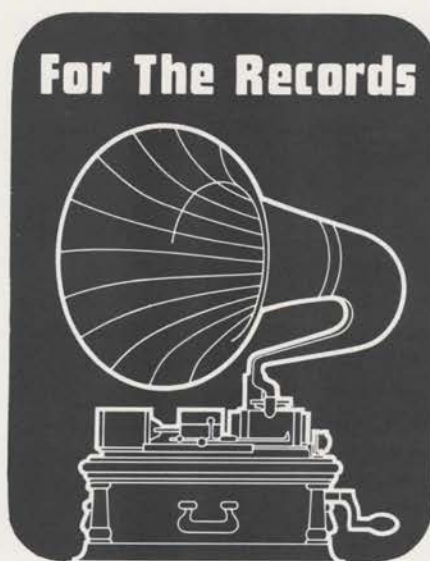
we hear very little about mental pollution of the kind detailed above. The evil shows itself in at least eight ways:

1. Mental laziness that fosters vagueness, cuteness, and half-truths.
2. Willingness to take less than the best. This is at its worst when people get cynical enough to accept inferiority without complaint.
3. Unwillingness to express displeasure with inferiority because of timidity and an over-developed idea of good manners.
4. Ignorance of the values of self-control.
5. Obsession with bigness and money, even though efficiency and quality drop.
6. Willingness to hurt one's self rather than give up a vicious practice.
7. Indifference to the spiritual needs of others.
8. Vulgarity and exhibitionism producing "Superstars" in an entertainment world without real stars.

The title of this piece is a quotation from the Litany of "The Common Book of Prayer." I thought of it in my reactions to stories told me by friends and to books I have read. The German poet Schiller once wrote, "With stupidity the gods themselves struggle in vain." Can we whip it? I wonder.

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**SPECTACULAR SOUNDS: ASHLEY MILLER AT THE ORGAN OF THE RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL. Allen GA-1090 (stereo). Available by mail from Milco Music, Box 32, Closter, New Jersey 07624. \$6.50 postpaid.**

Here's a treasure which escaped us during its initial distribution. Released by a small label circa 1960, its distribution was limited. This re-release is a multiple plus, one because it has been remastered to include its full frequency range. Says Ashley Miller: "I'm very happy with the results of the remastering, as well as the musical content." He has considerable reason to rejoice.

First, the technical end is exceptional, especially the miking. The RCMH organ is not an easy one to record. Besides being located in a block-wide "barn," there are four chambers to pick up, plus some unenclosed percussions. It would be very easy to settle for an "average" pickup, but luckily the uncredited original recorder was adept at taping the quiet, intimate passages as well as the massive ones. Therefore the

*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.*

subtleties are retained, a point very important to the Miller arrangements and interpretations. There have been other recordings of this 4-manual, 58-rank instrument, but we believe the miking here is far better than even Ashley's Columbia label releases.

The program consists of: "Slaughter on 10th Avenue," "Blue Moon," "Masquerade," "La Vie en Rose," "Granada," "It's De-Lovely," "September Song," "Vanessa," "Reflections in the Water," and "Ritual Fire Dance" (DeFalla).

True, "Fire Dance," "Granada" and "Slaughter" have perhaps been added to the "overdone" list since this recording was made, but the freshly different Miller interpretations maintain interest throughout. Or, strike these selections and it's still a topnotch program.

The arrangements, abetted by fine shading and skilful instrumentation, often seem to soar.



Ashley Miller

A few highlights: the telling use of "emphasis" brass during "Slaughter"; the color reeds and counter melodies of "Blue Moon"; the "Chopinesque" interpolations heard during "Masquerade," as well as the "opposing" harmonic ornamentation; the bull fight music superimposed on "Granada"; the old RCMH intermission "one-two" applied to "De-Lovely"; the reflective and nostalgic inferences which make the mostly understated "September Song" so dramatically meaningful (those Tibias never sounded sweeter); the chromatic opposites countering the melody of "Reflections," as well

as the arresting registration and level changes; the bravado and drama of "Fire Dance." If we could choose a favorite, it would be a toss-up between "Reflections" and "September Song" with "Masquerade" a close second, perhaps because of its familiarity (the melody was excerpted from Cesar Franck's "Symphony in D Minor," a favorite).

The jacket notes by well-informed Geoffrey Paterson offer much enlightenment on the music, musician and instrument. A rare stop analysis of the RCMH organ is included, and it is most revealing. In fact, the reader may do a double take on encountering some of the non-Wurlitzer TO rank names such as Bassett Horn, Cor Anglais, Spitzflute, Waldhorn etc. But then we recollect that "Roxy" wanted a Kimball organ, same as he had at the Roxy theatre, and Kimball drew up the specification. But by 1932, Kimball had lost so many artisans due to the non-demand for theatre organs, that the contract went to Wurlitzer. The miracle is that the North Tonawanda firm could inject so much of the Wurlitzer sound into an alien specification. On this recording, that sound is brought out with distinction.

**REGINALD FOORT, MASTER OF THE MAGNIFICENT MOLLER! DO(Q) 1506 ("quad" stereo). \$5.98 postpaid from Doric Recording, Box 282, Monterey, Calif. 93940.**

So much has been written about this instrument in recent issues, we won't have to recap. Two previous releases have been recorded by Doric, using this instrument in its current location, but this one is different — its original designer and master is back in the saddle. This is the first time Reginald Foort has recorded his brainchild since the '78s made before World War II in Britain (remember that 10" Master's Voice or Victor label blackseal with "Finlandia" covering both sides?). In fact it's Foort's first new recording on pipes of any kind, his most recent being *Say It With Music*, recorded years ago on Dick Loderhose's then 4/38 studio Wurlitzer for the Renwick label (still a formidable Foort *tour de force*) plus some sides done on the now gone Carson-Kearns 3/26

studio Wurlitzer in Hollywood for *Readers' Digest* release.

The tunelist is a mix of the familiar and offbeat. All are Foort arrangements or transcriptions, and some treatments, notably "The Stars and Stripes Forever" are more than a little "far out."

Several of the selections have been recorded by Foort previously. Compared with the pop-oriented tunelist of the Renwick release ("Tiger Rag," "Blue Tango," "Lover" etc), this is a conservative choice, more like his "Michael Cheshire" records for the Cook label in the early '50s. Foort was given a free hand by Doric's prexy, Frank Killinger, so the selections amount to a testament to more than 55 years devoted to music and the organ, a small slice from each era. For example, from Foort's continued interest in church music, there's "Trumpet Voluntary." Besides, it's a fine vehicle for the Moller's newest addition — a *Trompette en Chamade*. He goes the gamut of the European gypsy's ever-changing tempi with "Slavonic Rhapsody." The two Fritz Kreisler selections have long been Foort favorites, and come off well in Reggie's loving care — "Caprice Viennois" and "Liebesleid." The "Hot Canary" is comically portrayed as a self-assured and snobbish fowl, mostly on the Piccolo. And "The Old Sailor's Tale" is, as the jacket notes say, "a silent movie without film." It employs eleven descriptive titles and tunes to document a sea voyage which includes a raging storm. It's a nautical thriller. The program also includes two Foort originals, his broadcast theme, "Keep Smiling" and "Sitting Pretty." Both are innocuous but pretty melodies which serve to underscore the meatier fare around them, for example, the four selections which comprise the "William Tell Overture." Foort puts his all into these musical scenes which describe such contrasts as calm, storm (a brief one this time), morning and the galloping Lone Ranger "Finale." The *piece-de-resistance* is Foort's very individual styling of "The Stars and Stripes Forever." There are frequent key changes and the chromatic harmony Foort wraps around the Sousa melody in the final trio section provides coloration which alters the whole aura of the familiar tune. It's done with chromatically moving



Reginald Foort proves he still 'has it.

ninth chords and the suspense, as Foort paints himself into one harmonic cul-de-sac after another, escaping by resolution just in time to face the next, is almost exhausting. Fortunately, it's the final selection so there's time for recovery before playing it again.

How does Foort's performance compare with those on previous records? While this release contains more concert music than the Renwick record, the organist displays the same originality and fire in the two examples where like material makes comparison possible. For example, his current "Hot Canary" is played in the same bright style as his Renwick "Lady of Spain." One title is common to both releases, "Anchors Aweigh" (which is now part of "the Old Sailor's Story"). He counterpoints it with a lively "Sailors' Hornpipe," and it comes off well both times. If there are criticisms its mainly in the tunelist. We would have preferred more pops and standards in those unique Foort settings rather than such items as "Trumpet Voluntary" and the "Slavonic Rhapsody," both of which sound as though they were played by the book. After all, Foort's arrangements of light tunes are half the fun.

But generally speaking, the Doric release does much to prove that the veteran maestro still plays with the magic which once made him Britain's most popular organist-entertainer.

The 5/28 Moller is understandably putty in Foort's hands. The fact that

he knows the instrument so well makes possible the registration variety which marks his work.

Tonally, the Moller, at the time of recording, still sounded more like a romantic orthodox organ than a theatre instrument, which may explain why it's so adaptable to the purely concert pieces, and less effective in providing the registration associated with ballads. But if the Tibia sound isn't up to snuff, the Reeds and Strings are tops, as are the Diapasons. One can become sufficiently absorbed in the wizardry of the organist to ignore the TO shortcomings (we understand that the organ has since been altered to improve the TO output).

Packaging is first class. The disc is housed in a deluxe book jacket which bears three pages of notes and six photos telling the remarkable story of the one-time "traveling organ" and its creator. There is a stop analysis and additional notes about the wide variety of music offered. Recording is up to the usual high Doric standard. We managed to note a few tape splices but one must be listening for them.

This is the musical testament of one of the great theatre organists playing the instrument he loves the most. It's well worth owning.

**DENNIS AND HEIDI IN ENGLAND. DJP — 105 (stereo). \$6.75 postpaid from Dennis James Productions, c/o Ohio Theatre, 29 East State Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215.**

The "wedding cake couple" have turned out another topnotch biscuit. For those who dig the combination of piano and organ, this one will be considered a winner. For those purists who buy records for their organ content, be forewarned that this album is about one-third piano solos or piano-dominated duets.

We note that a solo piano (we assume) record is scheduled for Heidi later in 1977. That is good news because it will afford her an opportunity to escape from the sometimes rinky-tink piano mode which fits so well with the era of the theatre organ stylings of her husband. We have long considered Heidi James too good a pianist to be concerned with such novelty tunes as Zez Confrey's



Dennis and Heidi. They did it in Britain with much distinction.

"Kitten on the Keys." Yet, the one solo worthy of her considerable skills on this record, Moszkowski's "Etingelles" ("Sparks"), seems strangely out of place on a mainly pop/standards program. So we'll look forward to her solo piano debut where she will be free to delve into the purely piano music of, say, Gershwin, Billy Strayhorn, Dana Suesse, Lou Alter and the more exotic efforts of perhaps Scott, Griffes and even Debussy. With that formality past, we can luxuriate in the skills and charm of these exceptional artists.

The James duo has here produced an album designed mainly for the nostalgia buffs. They have developed an amazing ability to recreate the sound and mood of tunes heard on old '78s. An example is Dennis' organ solo of "Pale Moon" which is close enough to Crawford's original Victor 78 to satisfy most of the JC

cult. An even more remarkable recreation is Zamecnik's "Polly." Somewhere in some collector's set, is a pressing of "When You're With Somebody Else" played by Jack Shilkret's Rhythm-Melodists, or perhaps a shellac Victor pressing of "Fashionette." Either one would provide a very sharp clue to the sound obtained by Dennis and Heidi for their duet of "Polly," right down to the style of the organist who played Victor's studio straight organ. There was also a recording by Zez Confrey's orchestra of "Polly," but whatever the inspiration, this recreation provides an accurate "feel" of the time when the tune was new.

"America's leading concert piano/theatre organ duo" (say the jacket notes) have chosen, in this album, "not to knock the listener off his feet with sheer musical force." They have succeeded. The Len Rawle home installation is the most "USA-sounding" Wurlitzer we've yet heard from Britain, with tremos set for US tastes. It's the former Empire Leicester Square 4/20 Wurlitzer and it sounds gorgeous in its present home. Voicing and regulation are immaculate. Len personally did the taping.

Thus we have "The Continental" on piano, thinly orchestrated with organ accompaniment, a relief from the bombast often afforded this classic. Another interesting duet is "Little Rock Getaway," with echoes of the Crosby Bobcats. Heidi's piano solo of "Chelsea" is a very musical rendition of the "Fats" Waller composition. The composer's version was not nearly so refined.

The overworked "Whistler and His Dog" occupies a scant 1.55 minutes of grooves, and Dennis seems to

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be enjoying an inside joke. Yes, the dog barks are there.

One facet of the James effort is presenting the offbeat (despite the "Whistler"). Thus, the Gershwin medley includes "Looking For a Boy," Gershwin's one effort to "go Viennese" with "By Strauss" and an understandably corny "Nashville Nightingale," which proves Gershwin was thinking ahead to the "Bluegrass" present. It adds up to 6:17 minutes of compelling organ music.

To us, the most attractive selection is a medley from *Dames at Sea*, a stage musical in the Busby Berkeley manner with music in the Harry Warren style. The interesting point is that just about every tune in the 8:36, minute organ presentation sounds enough like another tune stored far back in the memory to make the medley interesting. Dennis makes the most of each derivation. Solid entertainment.

Len Rawle's miking, in fairly close perspective, underscores the intimate stylings, and a good (stereo) balance between piano and organ is maintained during the duets. The jacket bears a few notes concerning the music, also fine color photos of the interwoven pair in London. To borrow a line from the jacket notes, this album adds up to an "enjoyable blend of technical artistry and light-hearted fun."

**DON THOMPSON: THE BIG SOUND DEROY-1342 (stereo). \$5.50 postpaid from Stanley C. Garniss, 35 Union St., North Easton, Mass. 02356.**

The Toronto based organist Don Thompson has chosen to go the recorded-before-live-audience route on his latest release for the Dero British label, bringing highlights from four US concerts back to the UK. The featured organs lend themselves nicely to the "big sound" concept: namely the Brooklyn Paramount and the Detroit Senate Theatre Wurlitzers, the Los Angeles Wiltern Kimball and the 60-rank Skinner in St. Paul's church, San Diego. Although the album notes claim that Don Thompson has declared his independence from "the English orchestral sound," the selections are typically British with heavy emphasis on transcriptions of orchestral classics.



Don Thompson. 'Salvation Army flophouse' in the pedal line. (Stufoto)

There is also a dash of church organ virtuosity, a novelty solo, two up-tempo oldies and a sentimental ballad. This program formula — if not Don's avowed "modern virtuoso style" — has pleased Sunday afternoon UK audiences for years.

Thompson's individuality as a "modern virtuoso" and creative arranger is best demonstrated in the ballad "When Your Lover Has Gone." Playing is tasteful, restrained and cerebral. It takes repeated listening to catch all the good things Don does with the tune. Modulation is not D.T.'s strong suit, however, and there are "holes" between choruses. "Bill Bailey" and "Puttin' On The Ritz" are pleasantly bouncy but frankly, what Don does to the pedal line of "Ritz" is pure Salvation Army flophouse. "Butterflies In The Rain" like most novelty solos gets its charm from clever registrations and a lilt, rather than from slavish adherence to the original melody line.

This reviewer found "Von Himmel Hoch" the most successful offering on *The Big Sound*. If your German is no better than mine, be reminded that this is a doxology-type church tune with mind-boggling variations. Thompson plays the melody on pedals for stretches while his hands do incredible things at speeds that break the sound barrier. This record will probably be banned within fifty miles of JFK airport!

Now for the orchestral classics. The most delightful surprise for Americans will be the "Overture — Raymond." It's a minor work with a lovely theme you'll recognize as a recently recycled pop ballad. The finale is pure "William Tell" — plus

Tonto. Don makes good use of the Brooklyn Wurlitzer reeds. The pipe voices are clear with sufficient reverb to give accents a shimmer and tingle. "Crown Imperial" gets a sympathetic and spirited reading. Something — perhaps it's my culture gap — makes me wonder why he bothered in the first place.

"Finlandia" exemplifies both what is right and not-so-right about Don Thompson's "recorded live" performances. Some portions of "Finlandia" are brilliant, but there are obvious lapses from genius. That loud, wrong pedal note at the end of the first eight bars — Ouch! And cranking open the swell shades quickly in the middle of a soft, lovely passage! Tempo goes haywire as the minor theme builds. Accuracy is sacrificed to speed time and time again. Hopefully this "Finlandia" will be a promise of better things down the pike.

As one who has marched to "Pomp and Circumstance" for more years than I care to mention, I honestly think it's good music and well worth another recording. Don Thompson parades Elgar's warhorse with youthful zest and obvious affection. Let's not be picky about the mistakes in the "verse" melody line. With four different versions — one of them must be correct! Don has a tendency to vamp an extra beat here and there while he's setting up registrations, but these are minor flaws.

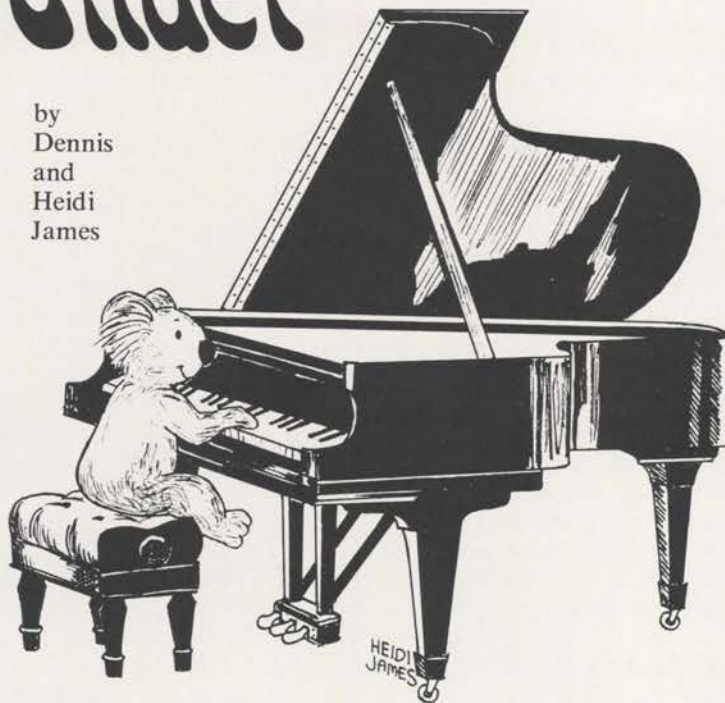
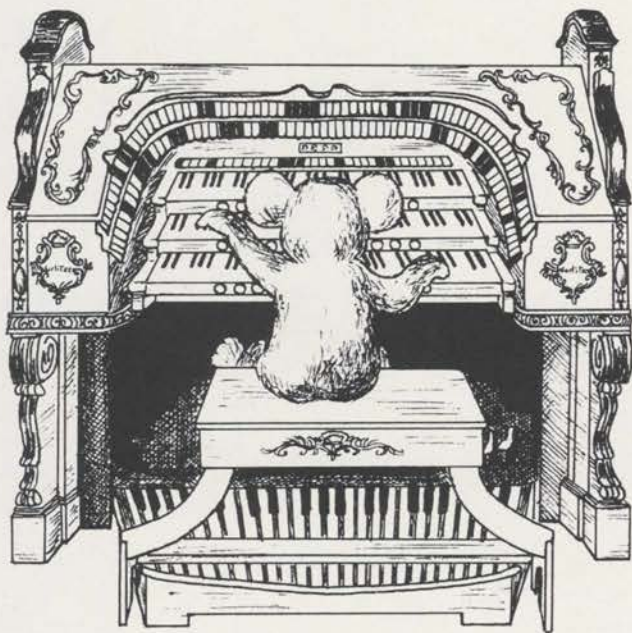
In my opinion the chief disaster on the disc is Don's rendition of "Ride Of The Valkyries." This hyperkinetic horse opera version on the Detroit Wurlitzer doesn't even have the decency to be funny. There ought to be a law against presenting Wagner's tragic Brunnehilde as though she and her sisters were the "Mesquiteers in drag." This one should definitely go back to Detroit for repairs.

Record surfaces were quiet throughout the review pressing, and the grooves hold the Big Sound with comfortable clarity. If you are a bit bored with those technically perfect studio performances of Tibia-Vox favorites and are willing to risk both the joys and the anguish of Don Thompson LIVE, try it. I predict this Don Thompson lp will be argued about for some time to come. I can't predict who will come out on top.

(The above review was prepared by Walter J. Beaupre) □

# Dennis and Heidi Down Under

by  
Dennis  
and  
Heidi  
James



A few flakes of snow drifted past the window as our jet took off from Columbus on November 11. Hours later we stepped off the plane into 80 degree weather to be greeted by an equally warm reception from lei-laden ATOSers Claire and Al Watson and Dan Engelhard. Hawaii proved to be one of those few places that is as beautiful as the travel ads promise. The Watsons provided our lovely suite in the Ilikai Hotel with a balcony overlooking Waikiki Beach.

The next few days we were tourists by day turning into musicians at midnight practice sessions in the Hawaii Theatre. The 4/16 Robert Morton was installed in 1922 in the downtown Honolulu Theatre. It is basically a 2/11 with an added two coupler manuals and a 5-rank division on a ventel chest. The instrument features outstanding percussion and a beautifully restored console with ornate Hawaiian-motif carvings added by a local enthusiast. The crew works hard and the instrument was in tip-top shape for the concert. The piano, fresh from Dan

Englehard's store, was the top-of-the-line Bladwin SD-10 nine footer.

We rented Honda motor bikes and tore around the southern tip of Oahu taking in the local attractions. One evening Claire and Al Watson took us to the Polynesian Cultural Center for a performance of authentic Pacific Island dancing. Thirty foot waves had smashed a few houses in the area the day before but the surfers were out in force anyway, being tossed about like pebbles.

November 14 was our Sunday morning concert date at the Hawaii Theatre. We met the celebrated theatre organist Johnny DeMello at the buffet-style get-together afterwards. He regaled us with many stories from the Hawaiian organ scene.

Monday morning we flew to the "Garden Island" Kauai where we saw the Pacific Grand Canyon and took a river cruise to the hanging fern grotto. In the very center of the island is Mt. Waialeale (why-a-lal-lay), the wettest spot on earth with over 400 inches of rain annually, though it was bone dry the day we

visited. The Sea Flite hydrofoil made a pleasant return trip through the rainbows back to Honolulu.

John and Grace Jenkins saw us off at the airport (more leis!), and we were off to Australia.

Two days later our plane landed in Sydney, having lost 24 hours somewhere along the way. We had just enough time to grab a quick flight up to Brisbane where we were greatly surprised to find ourselves back in tropical splendor.

We'll give the TOSA Queensland group five stars for great hospitality. Various members went to great lengths to arrange well-planned excursions. Dot Herd took us to Bunya Park where we petted and fed the wallabies, kangaroos and various other native animals. A particularly aggressive emu grabbed Dennis and ate his bag of corn, paper and all. At one point we were alarmed by a terrible rumbling noise which turned out to be the resident koalas snoring in their sleep!

Ted Badger took us to the beautiful Gold Coast beaches and over

the border to New South Wales to try our luck on the slot machines (we lost!).

Ken Wherrett found Heidi enamored with Queensland pineapple so it was off to the Glass House Mountains to a tropical fruit plantation. We particularly enjoyed a stop at the excellent movie museum in nearby Buderim where we learned about the early days of Australian film.

The instruments for our concert at the Kelvin Grove High School were in excellent condition. Dennis enjoyed the 3/8 Christie which has been assembled from many sources. The pipework came via England and the console was originally a 2-manual Christie from New Zealand. The crew skillfully converted it to 3 manuals with an all-new electric combination system that was a joy to work with. The piano brought in for Heidi was a Yamaha G3 grand which handled like a trim sports car.

Out stay ended with a get-together with the members of the new ATOS Chapter at the Wherreys' where everyone seemed more like old friends than newly made acquaintances.

Coming from the tropical north, Melbourne's Summer seemed a little cool but we had to remember that even in the middle of Winter (July) it snows there only in the Mountains.

We were intrigued by the trolleys, (trams to the Aussies) that still run up and down the center of the Melbourne streets.

Bill and Margaret Glasson's home became our refuge for R and R. There are so many people who made our down-under tour a success, but most of all we are indebted to Bill Glasson whose tireless managing of the myriad details made it all possible. Heidi took advantage of the time on Bill's home instruments to write a duet version of "Waltzing Matilda." Bill's pipe organ is a rare 2-manual French scroll Wurlitzer console from England to which he is assembling various pipes and chests acquired during his many travels.

We had three concerts in Melbourne. The first was on Thanksgiving Day at Moorabbin Town Hall where we performed in an elaborate stage setting featuring mountain back drop, picket fence and real trees. The organ was a 4/21 Wurlitzer with added Post Horn and 32' Diaphones intact. The chambers are installed over the back of the stage area and speak via carved openings into the auditorium proper. The room features gymnasium-like acoustics and the organ becomes a bit muffled at times. It is, however, a very thrilling sound.

We visited Cinema North where club members are installing a 2/8



Buderim Movie Museum.

Christie. Already the organ features a bright and bouncy English sound with effective exposed percussions. Sidney Torch would have approved, we're sure!

Our second and third concerts were literally back-to-back on Sunday, December 5 at the Dendy Theatre. The theatre is decorated in an Art Deco motif with giant geometric flowers lit by colored lights on the ceiling. The famous Dendy Wurlitzer deserves its fine reputation. It has been heard often on records with Lyn Larsen, Vic Hammett, Tony Fenelon and many others at the console. It has a crisp, clean and bold sound which emanates from chambers installed directly behind the screen. Bill Glasson generously brought in a new Danemann grand from his music store for Heidi.

With barely enough time to sign autographs we plunged into the second performance: a screening of the Fritz Lang 1926 science fiction classic *Metropolis*. We premiered our duet score for the film last May in London, England, and added a synthesizer during the Dendy show. The joint-improvisation included various effects for the city and robots by Heidi on the piano and synthesizer while Dennis provided the continuous score.

We were invited to take part in a two segment history of film music documentary for Australian television which led to our own half hour special on the ABC Network.

The Hawaii Theatre marquee. The first "R" rated concert?





Dennis was fitted for various costume changes by the wardrobe department, including a 1920's outfit and formal Phantom of the Opera garb. The program included a tour through the chambers, music to illustrate the history of theatre organ and a closing segment with piano and organ in duet.

We spent some time visiting Aussie organist Tony Fenelon as well as meeting John Atwell, upcoming young concert artist. John Pearson showed us through the enormous Melbourne Regent Theatre which closed in 1969 and was completely stripped by auction in early 1970. With a recent \$2½ million grant the theatre is scheduled to be completely refurbished with restoration work in progress while we visited. It is hoped the original Wurlitzer can again be installed for the re-opening. The Regent had a small theatre underneath, the Plaza, whose 2/10 Wurlitzer ended up in Adelaide where we headed next.

The South Australia group is one of the most enthusiastic clubs we've ever run across. The average age is younger than most and their spirit highly infectious. Our receptions at Ted Lloyd's and Gary Vanderwerp's were among the most hilarious evenings we've had in a long time. Many local musicians were present and we all joined in various parodies of American tunes and other festivities.

A magnificent 9-foot Steinway destined for Festival Hall somehow found its way to the Pultenay Grammar School for our concert and Heidi thoroughly enjoyed its responsiveness and well-voiced tone. The Wurlitzer was equally fine in an excellent installation behind the stage wall speaking directly into the seating area. The chests and tremors were sub-floored and the blower detached in a separate room. Careful alterations of the existing unification and added couplers made the console a joy to play and the full-house audience couldn't have been nicer.

Much remains of the Adelaide Victorian architecture with the wide streets and long porches with hitching posts remindful of a Western set. The city was well laid out in the 1800's in a grid pattern with four squares and a surrounding park belt. Hosts Helen and Ted Lloyd took us touring throughout the area including a drive up to the Barossa vine-

yard country for a picnic at the Sepeltsfield winery.

The city-of-the-black-swan, Perth, was next on the tour. The atmosphere had a newly minted air about it that is refreshing. We saw the Indian Ocean for the first time and drove into the bush country with host Ray Clements. Perth was a lot like the best of Southern California without the rampant commercialism spoiling the landscapes.

The area has no working theatre organs as yet, so Ray arranged for a Conn 651 for the concert at Subiaco Town Hall and Heidi found an elderly Bechstein grand.

Getting to our own show turned out to be somewhat of a problem. The taxi driver got lost and when we finally recognized a street near the hall, it had no outlet. We ended up walking over a small stream through a wooded area in full concert dress, arriving just in time to play.

Ray took us to a community hall under construction where he will soon install a 2-manual Wurlitzer. The hall will be a multi-purpose facility with the console on tracks, a la Radio City. The high chambers and overall design foretell an exciting sound in years to come.

We were anxious to see three things in Sydney: the Opera House, the Town Hall organ and the State Theatre. All three were tremendous.

Bill Schumacher, Mark Gabriel and host Rob Glidden took us to a



Dennis and native.

stirring performance of *The Messiah* in the Opera House concert hall. The auditorium acoustics were very natural and pleasing. The organ case is in place but the instrument not finished and may never be if news accounts are to be believed. Over \$1½ million has been invested to date with no completion date set.

Dennis was allowed an hour on the famous Town Hall organ with its 64' open reed. The 5/128 Willis dates back to the nineteenth century and is undergoing a complete restoration.

Bill Schumacher, Heidi and Mark Gabriel at Sydney Harbor.





Dennis and Heidi with Tony Fenelon at Moorabbin Town Hall.

It is a very exciting instrument with powerful reeds and an incredible Tuba which brought to mind the Tuba in the Blenheim Palace Willis in England. With cathedral-like sound, the organ proved to be as good as its reputation.

Our third treat was provided by Jack Lawson and his wife who escorted us on a tour of the magnificent Sydney State Theatre. The 4-manual Wurlitzer is rarely available for playing but happened to be up on the lift during our visit. It is one of the very last remaining Australian organs in its original location. Unfortunately the tone is somewhat muffled with the chambers high in the proscenium arch.

The State is one of the last remaining movie palaces with all of its original statuary, paintings and furniture intact. A large clock sunken into the foyer floor catches one's eye when entering the lobby. We were quite unprepared for the vision of Versailles when we enter the theatre proper. The immense main crystal chan-

delier with its twelve flanking chandeliers were turned on for us. The galleries are filled with paintings by leading artists of the day especially commissioned for the opening of the theatre. The State has survived partly due to several unique construction details: it's unusual 45 degree angle into the surrounding block makes high rise plans difficult and the double balconies preclude division into smaller theatres.

Our concert in Sydney was at the Marrickville Town Hall where a fine Yamaha C3 grand was brought in for Heidi. Dennis unfortunately did not fare as well. A unique feature (now being corrected) of the 2/11 Wurlitzer was the windline from the blower ducted up an outside wall, over the roof and into the chambers. The concert day was a very sunny and dry 97 degrees and super-heated air entered the organ. A drastic drop in wind pressure and various ciphers marked the concert.

Mark and Bill treated us to a day-on-the-town with ferry and hydrofoil rides on the sail boat studded Sydney Harbor. Rob Glidden took us to a beautiful State Park where we toiled about in a rented launch. After an interview by Les Flannegan for the Australian editions of *Organist Magazine*, we were off to New Zealand for the conclusion of the tour.

The New Zealand scenery is first class and the "natives" are friendly. Resident ATOSer Norman Dawe showed us around Auckland where we met Mollie and Jack Granwal who have worked with Norm to form

the Kiwi Chapter. They proudly showed us the chapter charter and gave us official organ pins to add to those received from the Australians.

Norman drove us down through pastureland and steep, rolling hills to Tauranga where we were the guests of June and Rex White. Their house has a commanding view of the harbor at Otumoetai. Rex is the retiring Chief Engineer at the Tauranga Electric Company and the guiding force behind the restoration of the 2/10 Wurlitzer in the Tauranga Town Hall. The rest of the crew are engineers at the telephone company so you can imagine the quality of the workmanship in the circuitry.

Despite Christmas and summer vacations so near, a large crowd came to our December 19 concert. A bus load of enthusiasts made the 3½ hour trip from Auckland with other devotees flying in from Wellington and Chrichchurch. The organ behaved beautifully and its sound ideally matches the hall size. Heidi thoroughly enjoyed the 9' Yamaha grand.

The Mayor of Tauranga welcomed us and Heidi received a huge floral bouquet from the Mayoress. We closed with the singing of the beautiful Maori farewell song "Now Is The Hour" with the audience all joining in.

The next morning, before leaving for Auckland, we were pleased to see glowing reviews in the national New Zealand papers... theatre organ concerts are a rare thing with only one theatre organ playing in the entire country.

Norman was once again our tour captain and outdid himself on our return trip to Auckland. We drove along the Firth of Thames, coastline to the right and pastures to the left. Occasionally we were forced to stop for herds of sheep and cattle crossing the roads.

The lushly carpeted green hills contrasted constantly with exotic jungle-like foothills covered with tree ferns. Through it all our little two-laned road wound about like a corkscrew. As we neared Auckland, a rainbow shimmered through the drops that were beginning to fall. Like the rainbow, a symbol of promise, we were leaving this part of the world with hopes of returning again soon. □

Kiwi Chapter members after their program in Auckland.



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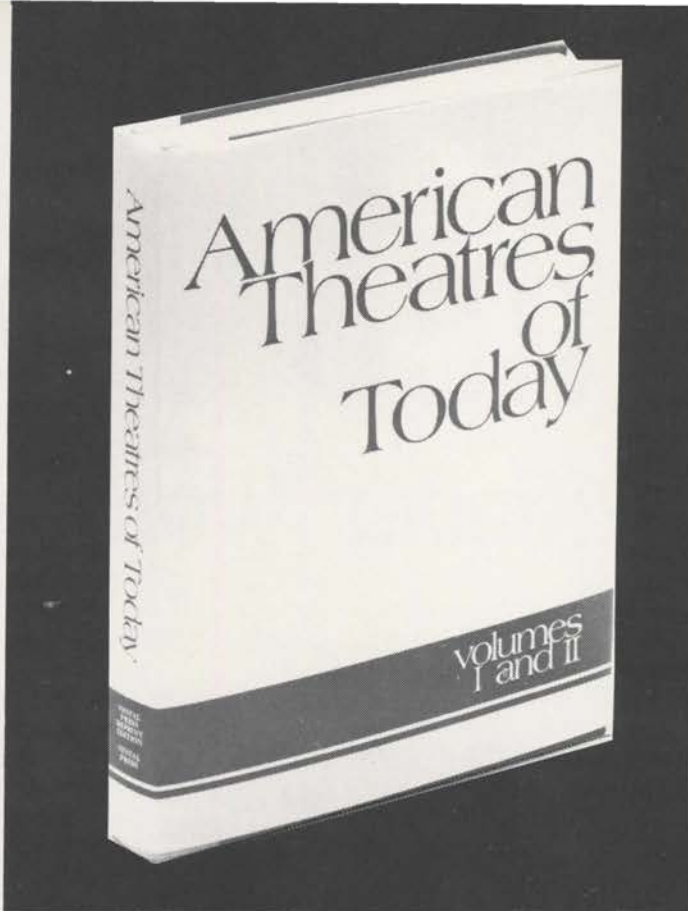
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# RED WING'S Kinder Wonder Organ

Oscar Wintervold, stage manager, with organ raised on its Southworth lift in T.B. Sheldon Munciple Auditorium.  
*(Jim Welch Photo — Courtesy of Red Wing Republican Eagle)*



What even a small community can accomplish by way of reviving interest in organ music is evidenced by the experience of Red Wing, Minnesota, where a 51-year-old instrument has been restored and repaired and put into active use in the T.B. Sheldon Municipal Auditorium to the delight of increasing numbers of townspeople and tourists.

Red Wing is a very small town with great civic pride. Its total population is little more than 12,000 and its county market area involves only 32,000. Nonetheless it has eight industries, employs 8,000 men and women, has an arts association, historical society, an opera club, a community chorus and now a renewed theatre organ.

Thanks partly to a brisk local chamber of commerce, Red Wing has become a tourist center for both winter and summer recreational activity. Included among attractions is a small river steamboat which carries passengers several times a day up and down the Upper Mississippi.

The Sheldon Auditorium, built in 1905, is the oldest municipally owned auditorium in the United States and is on the National Register of Historic Buildings. In 1926 a Kinder Wonder Organ was installed and, until the advent of talkies, it was played daily for silent movies. During this time Rose Morley, still active, was the player.

As happened so often throughout the United States, the Kinder pipe organ at Red Wing was played infrequently once the movies found their new voice. Gradually the attrition of time caught up with this fine instrument and it was used less and less. The day even came when there was talk of junking the organ because of the cost to repair it.

At this point, in 1976, two prominent citizens of Red Wing, interested in organ music, came to the rescue; E. Hawley Foot, president of S.B. Foot Tanning Company and William Sweasey, chairman of the Red Wing Shoe Company. Foot also was chairman of the Bicentennial Commission. Between them, they decided that something must be done to save the Kinder Wonder Organ. In particular, both felt that, in addition to accompanying choruses and soloists, the organ could be used to play for

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER, 1977

silent movies as it had in other decades.

Although the organ console had been stationary when installed, Foot felt that it could rise in much the same way as organs used to in big city theatres. Foot was convinced that a hydraulic lift, built by Southworth Machine Company of Portland, Maine, for his own plant, would work as well to raise the organ at the theatre.

In the meantime, the organ was removed from the auditorium by

Arndt Organ Supply Company at Ankeney, Iowa, for cleaning and repair.

Foot had expected that the organ would be returned in time for a Bicentennial celebration but he underestimated the work which had to be done.

It took nearly a year to get the Red Wing organ in shape for reinstallation in the auditorium. Finally the day came when Oscar Wintervold, who had been stage manager since the organ was first installed, could



Rose Morley, former organist at the auditorium, at the electronic in her home.

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oversee Arndt's workmen.

To the writer's knowledge, the use of a Southworth dock lift to raise the organ is the first instance of its kind. Where lift devices were used in theatres in other years they usually were installed as elevators. But an installation of this kind is uneconomical today because of initial and operating expense and the lift purchased was more than adequate for the job. It comprises a scissors device actuated by hydraulic action and controlled by electric push button.

"The organ looks like a piece of wedding cake when it comes up," Bob Arndt explains.

The grand reopening of the Sheldon Auditorium with its renewed Kinder Wonder Organ in place occurred on February 9 with the celebrated Lee Erwin of New York at the console. According to the *Red Wing Republican Eagle*, cheers went up from the capacity house when they saw the spot-lighted organ and Lee Erwin rise from the pit. Practically the entire population of Red Wing has been in the house since and they cheer the heroes and hiss the villains during the silent films.

The reopening was, of course, but the first step in a revived use of the Sheldon Auditorium for silent films. Sponsored by the chamber of commerce the house periodically shows silent films for townfolk and its reputation has spread far and wide and is increasing tourist business in Red Wing. □

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE

by Lance Johnson

1. I am looking for information in wind pressures for a 3/10 Kimball theatre organ owned by the Potomac Valley Chapter ATOS to be installed at the University of Maryland. There is a noticeable absence of regulators especially for the 8' and 16'. There are five 16' ranks we intend to put winker regulators on the offsets during installation. What should be the correct pressures for the console, relays, traps, percussions tuned and non-tuned? There is an English Horn on the Tuba action leading me to believe this was swapped for some reason. We are thinking of moving the Tuba back to the solo at a later date.

Ans. Regarding your 16' ranks, I would most certainly have full-sized regulators on these as they consume tremendous amounts of wind volume. As they are played, the static air supply will decrease and there will be noticeable turbulence. You will first notice problems in your tremulants. Here are the suggested wind pressures: All but the console — 12". Use 15" or higher on the console.

Do you have any questions?

Send them direct to:

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Kimball's combo action has a bad reputation for being unreliable and difficult to maintain. Regulate the console pressure to only as high as needed for swift acting combinations. The English Horn should be on its own untremulated action and the Tuba placed on its original action. This stop is extremely important to the solo chamber. Also keep in mind that Kimball regulators are extremely fast and therefore difficult to tremulate.

2. There are five ranks of strings on my 18 rank Kimball organ, Violin I Violin II, Gamba Celeste and Viola. How is the Violin II tuned, dead on pitch or celested? I couldn't be sure whether or not Kimball intended both violins to be tuned identically for a big solo string effect or if they intend them to be celested like the Gambas. Violin I has a 16' bass. The stop tabs do not mention the Violin II as being celested.

Ans. Kimball organs usually meant stops called Violin II to be celestes. There is no rule-of-thumb for tuning beats. I would suggest two beats per second starting at tenor C and increasing one beat additional per octave with a gradual increase. Tune the 8' octave without beats for pedal Cello response.

2. (A) The Vox Humanas have a total of 122 pipes and are on a pitman chest, both ranks coming on as a unit similar to the Gamba Celeste II. Should the slightly smaller scaled second Vox be celested or in dead tune?

Ans. With a pitman chest, any time any Vox II stop is drawn, all Vox II stops would play on the Vox I stops, since a pitman chest is essentially a straight chest. It sounds to me like this set was added in later years in order not to have to wire in additional switches and wiring to the relay. I don't know whether or not Kimball wanted these stops celested. Perhaps one of our readers could advise you. I can see no harm in celesting it if you like the results.



## Hollywood Cavalcade

Hollywood Cavalcade is missing from this issue because its director, Lyle Nash, is suffering from a serious illness. He hopes to meet us again in the next issue. Those wishing to send cards can mail them to: Lyle W. Nash, Box 113, Pasadena, California 91102.

2. (B) In the pedal division there is a 16' Bass Viol, an 8' Cello, and 4' Violins. Is the 8' Cello the same as 8' Violin or both Violin I and II or could it also include the Viola? The relay was destroyed making it impossible to determine what was wired on the 8' Cello.

Ans. Very likely the Pedal Violins 8' and Violin 4' was double switched so that both ranks played on the pedal for more power. The Viola would likely not be wired into this stop.

2. (C) What is the quality of the Kimball Echo Horn in this organ? Is it true Oboe, a muted Oboe or some other tone quality?

Ans. The word "Echo" on a stop usually means that it is voiced soft. On reeds, instead of the tops being open, they are fitted with lift-up covers for regulating volume.

2. (D) How will the Claribella compare with the Concert Flute?

Ans. The two ranks are very similar. Claribellas are more often found in church organs and are scaled about the same as a Melodia.

3. We are presently in the final stages of installing our 3/11 Wurplitzer Opus 1725 in my parents' home. Since it is a standard 235 Special, I know that the wind pressures are 10" for the bulk of the instrument and the Vox is on 6". What are the wind pressures for the Solo Scale Tibia, Harmonic Tuba, the console and swell shades?

Ans. Solo Tibia and Tuba — 15".  
Console 15 — 18". Shades — 12".  
Some 235 Tibias were smaller  
scaled and on 10" wind.

3. (A) **On the specifications for the "Fox specials" and other large Wurlitzers they have a stop called Diaphonic Horn. What type of stop is this?**

Ans. The Diaphonic Horn is a Diapason but smaller scaled than the standard Phonon Diapason. The Diapason name was omitted to save tablet space.

3. (B) **Do you have any experience in converting a Wurlitzer Chryso-glott into a Vibraphone? Can you install dampers out in front of the resonators or must they be installed right at the mouth of the resonator?**

Ans. You will have to purchase four pillow-block bearing units and mount them on the ends of the two rows of resonators. The motor can be a gear type and drive the pulsator rods with a double pulley at the motor and belted to the rods with vacuum cleaner belts. The rotating discs can be made by a machine shop with a punch press out of 18 gauge sheet metal and soldered to a brass rod 1/4" in diameter. You will need one or two guides for the rod along the center of the resonator mouths to keep the discs from rubbing against the tubes. It is not necessary that the pulsator discs fit snugly in the resonator mouth as they will operate very well kept loose and will be more maintenance free. You may have to remount the bars away from the pulsators so they can rotate freely.

4. **Could you furnish me with a block diagram showing how to wire a home built Wurlitzer styled console showing me how to wire the key contacts to the wind chest magnets?**

Ans. If you want a strictly Wurlitzer wiring style, here it is: The under key contacts are fed with a positive buss bar and run directly to the chamber to a junction board (spreader). From here they go to the relay primaries. The con-

sole stops, swell pedals, stops and toe studs are wired to a junction in back of the console and from there go to a junction in the chamber. From here they go to the shade motors, relay and traps. All console feed circuits are positive and all chamber mains are negative. If you have all stop switches in the console and don't use a relay, the under keys contacts will each represent one stop and be wired directly to the switches and will not pass through a relay. Stop wires will go directly to the stop action primary behind the switches. If your console has a combination action, the pistons will be wired to the combination action relay magnets. It would be more help to me if you would send me the stop list, number of pipes in each ranks, chest layout, relay, etc.

5. **I have a problem with my Wang-erin four-rank straight chest. Whenever I engage the Salicional rank, D above middle C continues to sound until either I shut off the**

**stop or add the Celeste or other stops. If I lift the D pipe and re-set it, the cipher ceases until I play that note again.**

Ans. I call this an "easy" cipher, as it is not a full blown cipher. There is a leak somewhere between the primary valve and the Salicional pouch. I would first check to make sure the primary shifter seats absolutely air-tight. While the note is chipping, take a needle nose pliers and grab the valve wire and force it to close more tightly. If the note stops chipping, loosen the leather nut on the valve wire or clean the valve so it will seat more tightly. The cause would then be a weak spring in that Salicional pouch. If this does not remedy it, then check for leaks along the note channel between the pouch and primary shifter valve. Tighten screws and check for leaking gasket. (Problems like these are difficult to solve for organ men, too.) You may have to substitute a heavier spring in the pouch. □



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# VOX POPS



Conducted by Stu Green

*Readers are encouraged to submit interesting sidelights on the organ hobby (exclusive of chapter news items) material they believe will be of general interest about local organ activities and installations and the people who work at the hobby. We know "there's VOX POPS in them there chapters" and it only requires a 9c postcard to get it to VOX POPS Editor, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. If the contributor can afford a 13c stamp, why not include a black and white photo which need not be returned.*

During the renaissance of the theatre pipe organ, the refurbished instruments have wound up in sometimes strange places. They are in homes, pizza parlors, a bicycle shop, a motorcycle shop, recreation halls, restaurants, recording studios, a museum, high schools and fraternal order buildings. But in Healdsburg, California, there is a 2/7 Marr & Colton in Johnson's Winery on State Highway 28. When a new bottling is completed, the staff hosts an open house during which Bud Kurz plays the organ. This could be called "Music to Guzzle By."

Not much escapes sharp-eyed Billy Nalle. He sent in a clipping from the ARAMCO Oil Company's slick publication, an article dealing with the great variety of US goods now reaching the Saudi Arabian capital, Jiddah. Photos show piled-up packing cases of air-conditioning units, refrigerators, washers, tires and tur-

bines unloaded from ships and awaiting delivery. And there, broiling in the sun is one packing case clearly labeled "Wurlitzer Organ." On top of it is a smaller case marked "Wurlitzer Bench."

We hope the gals in the harem enjoy their electronic music maker — one doubtlessly equipped with automatic rhythm.

Billy Nalle informs us that most of the tunes for his two record releases played on the 4/36 Dowager Empress Wurlitzer in Wichita's Century II auditorium are "in the can," with only four more to tape. Billy is shooting for an early fall release date.

As readers know, we are always in search of a love story for this column. Here's one from Carol Palmer, mother of the bride.

"Members of the Western Reserve Chapter of ATOS were treated to a different kind of 'organ happening' as two members, Carolyn Palmer and Fred Carson were married, May 14, 1977, in Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Cleveland, Ohio.

"The difference became apparent when Hector Olivera appeared, not as organist but as best man for his friend, Fred 'Frenchy' Carson. Fred maintains the 3/11 Kimball at the Lamplighter Inn in Olmsted Falls.

"When Carolyn joined WRTOS four years ago, Fred was one of the first members she met. They saw each other at meetings and socials, discovered that they had mutual interests, began to date regularly and to repair old pump organs together. Fred slipped the diamond on Carolyn's finger during the Larry Ferrari concert at Gray's Armory in Cleveland last spring.

"Carolyn was a beautiful bride in the wedding gown of Chantilly lace over candlelight satin which her mother had worn as a bride 25 years ago. Fred and Hector in their ivory tuxedos, tried to outdo each other in nervousness. It was a very impressive ceremony.

"The wedding music was played on the Cathedral's Skinner organ by Kenneth Demko, former Lamplighter organist. Sad to relate, but the magnificent Skinner is being al-



Hector, Carolyn and Fred. Look what repairing old pump organs can do.

lowed to go to rack and ruin because a new Flentrop is being built for the Cathedral.

"Guests at the reception in the Cathedral Hall were entertained by Earl Reisdorf, who had trucked in his Hammond for the occasion. Hector, as his friends know, cannot be around an organ very long without trying it out so he played a few songs, to the delight of the guests.

"Fred and Carolyn had only a short honeymoon, since Fred teaches school. However their 'second honeymoon' began when they attended the back-to-back conventions of the Theatre Historical Society and ATOS in Chicago. The Carsons couldn't stay away too long because they are involved in the project to restore the Lorain (Ohio) Palace Theatre with its 3/10 Wurlitzer for use as a Civic Center, and also are involved in the WRTOS-sponsored Super 77 Regional Convention in Cleveland, November 25, 26 and 27, 1977."

Lots of newsy nuggets in these nuptials.

ATOSer Elbert Dawson reports that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Salt Lake City announced during the week of April 24, the appointment of a new (associate) organist at their famous tabernacle. Dr. John T. Longhurst, FAGO, 36, will command the 5/189 Aeolian-Skinner, mostly as accompanist for the 375 voice tabernacle choir. He will join chief organist, Dr. Alexander Schreiner and associate organists, Dr. Robert Cundick and



Roy M. Darley, MM. He will also do some solo work such as the daily noontime recitals; however, the church doesn't emphasize instrumental music and has always concentrated on choral music.

Dr. Longhurst will continue with his present positions which are Associate Professor of music and carillonist at church-operated Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. He specializes in organ instruction and music theory at the "baroque only" organ department of America's largest private university.

He is married to the former Nancy Meldrim of Syracuse, New York, and they have two children.



The Fresno (Calif.) "Bee" reports on an April silent movie and organ concert at the local Warnor's Theatre, sponsored by the University Presbyterian church in their continued effort to raise funds to restore an orthodox organ for a planned sanctuary. They tried it first last fall with a showing of *Phantom of the Opera* and this time they imported (from San Francisco's Avenue Theatre) Bob Vaughn to accompany Charlie Chaplin's *Gold Rush*. The restored 3/14 Robert Morton was in fine shape and if all the people shown waiting to get in made it, they had a very successful fund raiser. The Morton organ restoration resulted from the cooperation of enlightened theatre owner Frank Caglia and the church's choirmaster, Dick Cenci-baugh, long associated with theatre organ preservation in the Fresno area.



It's good to have George Wright back on the pipe concert circuit. Of course, by now the conventioners have heard him play at the Chicago Theatre, and reports are that he had a fine reception for his concert in Connecticut. Long-term Wright watchers have detected a different George of late; gone is the sometimes flamboyant dress of yesteryear, as well as the dramatic hair stylings. But the showmanship and humor remain. During his May 13 concert at the San Gabriel, Calif. 3/16 Wur-litzer, he bantered with friends in the audience and commented on topical



matters (for Anita Bryant he played "The Boy Next Door"). But his entry for Part II was something to remember. As the curtain was raised, George was discovered reclining on a high-flying canoe-size new moon which lowered him slowly to stage level where he "deplaned" and made for the already raised console. He explained that the moon effect had been used recently as an entry device for Ann Miller in a production of *New Moon*, but seeing George coming in on a descending moon had its own shock effect mixed with amusement.



George at San Gabriel. He entered on a phase of the Moon. (Stufoto)

George proved something else at that concert; showmanship and crowd pleasing skills aside, he still comes through with the quality of music which put him among the greats in the first place.



Charles Dailey, of Wilmington, Del., submits a clipping from the local "Evening Journal" (March 24, '77) with Al Cartwright's feature about Gordon Brinckle's hobby theatre, built in his 12' x 30' cellar.

Brinckle, a projectionist and theatre manager, says "They don't make movie houses like they used to." So he built his own "atmospheric" under his Middletown (Del.) home. Named "The Shalimar," it is completely equipped with 18 theatre seats, an army surplus 16 mm projector, carpeting, a miniature organ console (which is also a speaker enclosure) and no chewing gum under the seats. Brinckle started work 17 years ago and estimates he has about \$5,000 invested in the project.

"My kicks are in construction and sound, not showing movies," says Brinckle, which explains why the only films he has are old army training films.

He has fond boyhood memories of the Overbrook Theatre in his native Philly.

"It was so beautiful — a 1000-seater. Now it's a bakery. I miss it. When I was a kid, the manager let me hang around. I was an organ buff even then. The tuners let me push the keys. I grew up to be an usher there.

"In those days movie house people were showmen. (Now) the magic has disappeared."

But not in Brinckle's Shalimar. It has special effects lighting and a color wheel — even headphone jacks on the seats for the hard of hearing. He is especially interested in theatre sound and the Shalimar's system is one which envelops the listener, and organ music emanates directly from the little console.

"I was always more interested in the buildings and the organ music than the pictures. That's how I remember the silents."

Nearing retirement, Brinckle is the projectionist at the Middleton Everett Theatre. When he is free, he can devote full time to his mid-20's Shalimar.



The 16-acre Beverly Hills, Calif. estate of the late film comedian Harold Lloyd is up for grabs again, according to real estate magnate Stan Herman, whose specialty is the posh and costly in film land. Time was when the property was envisioned as a film museum with a theatre and pipe organ, even a permanent HQ for ATOS. But difficulty in raising money and the loud ob-



Water-spewing fountain gargoyle on the Harold Lloyd estate expresses astonishment as the late comedian's home and grounds go on the block once again. (Stufoto)

jections of neighbors killed the hope and it was sold to an individual. Now it's for sale again — for \$4.5 million.



After five consecutive monthly concert evenings with most abominable weather, RTOS concert goers were rewarded with beautiful spring-time temperatures on April 15 when 1625 showed up for the return of Ron Rhode at the Auditorium Theatre. The largest crowd since November 1974 heard a kaleidoscope of tunes ranging from popular pieces to "Pomp and Circumstance" with some nostalgic songs interspersed.



Jack Skelly informs us that old-time New York City theatre organist Will Gilroy is alive and well. Gilroy played Proctor's 86th Street and 58th Street theatres, the Beacon, the Capitol and Brooklyn's Loew's Pitkin. Jack also recalls organist Henrietta Kamern, whose father, Nat., played the violin in the pit orchestra at Loew's State in White Plains, N.Y.



In 1964, enthusiast Bob Oberland of Chevy Chase, Md., bought a 2/8 Wurlitzer for \$500 in Maine, and with an expenditure four times that, installed it in the Baronet Theatre in Bethesda, Md. Now a minicam engineer at WTOP-TV, Bob faces a crisis. The theatre is destined for the

steel ball shortly. On April 12, Rosa Rio presented probably the last concert on the instrument. She gave two shows, the first being aired on TV and radio. "The audience was terrific," she says. "Sorry the theatre has to come down for a Metro rapid transit system."



Massachusetts member Paul Chavanne, upon reading the Nuggets column in the February issue, had his memories rekindled at the mention of Evangeline "Eva" Langley, who served as assistant organist at Boston's Metropolitan Theatre. She did not play the 4/26 Wurlitzer in 1928, however, as the organ was installed in the spring of 1930 when it was opened by Jesse Crawford.

"I caught what may have been Eva's farewell organ performance at the Met in early August 1928," Paul says. "A small fire damaged the Met's 4-manual Skinner. As I arrived on the morning after the fire, the first showing of a weird film, *Forgotten Faces* with Clive Brook, Olga Baclanova and Mary Brian, was in progress. Eva's struggle with the organ made it all more weird. Arthur Martel skipped a scheduled organ solo called 'Write Your Own Lyrics' and accompanied the second showing of the film on the pit piano.

"The Skinner remained out of service until the last week in November 1928 when Martel returned for solos. The house had long been wired for sound as Richard Dix played in *Warming Up* the week before *Forgotten Faces*. When the house went on a steady diet of sound films, Eva Langley left the Met. When the 4/26 Wurlitzer was installed, Martel and Esther Newcomb played two-console presentations, while Chester Brigham played openings.

"Langley did a good job in silent movie accompaniment, while Martel's forte was showmanship to put over spotlight solos," says Paul.



Veteran film cuer Luella Wickham was honored by the Corinthian Foundation's Wagon Wheel Senior Center in Syracuse, N.Y. recently. Now 84, Luella says, "Music is the



Luella, a beloved reminder of the theatre organ's greatest days. (Stufoto)

best therapy for a long life. That's my secret."

In an interview with local press reporter Carolyn Straub, Luella recalled her first playing job in 1911 at the long gone Savoy Theatre on South Warren Street in Syracuse.

She later played at most Syracuse theatres, including the Eckel (a church Austin replaced by a 3/8 Wurlitzer), the Strand (Austin replaced by a 3/12 Wurlitzer) and the Rivoli (2/6 Marr & Colton). The published interview included a photo of Luella seated at the Wagon Wheel's plug-in.

Then on June 11, she played a concert for the local ESTMIM organ club on another old friend, the 3/11 Wurlitzer rescued from the steel-balled Syracuse Keith's Theatre by local fans and now safe in the New York State Fair Grounds building.

To fill in her "spare time," she maintains a full teaching schedule.



Lee Erwin reports many adventures before, after and during his 4500 mile (23 city) concert tour. Lee tells of a new addition to the theatres-with-organ list; the Colonial Theatre in Phoenixville, Penna. has a 3-deck Kimball which used to be in the Brookline Theatre near Philadelphia. A string of one nighters with the Rodgers Touring Organ accounted for a whole month. Rodgers' truck driver/setup man Craig Allen is a genius, insists Lee. That tour covered seven states, and included two tire blow-outs. In Pensacola, Florida, Lee noticed something peculiar about the print of *The General* unfolding on the screen. He had dif-



Lee Erwin. Always doing something.

ficulty reading the titles and subtitles. Small wonder, the distributor had delivered the Italian version of *The General* by mistake. "They loved it anyway," says Lee. Lee showed up early in June for the "1977 Science-Fiction Horror and Fantasy World Exposition" in Tucson, Arizona, where speakers such as famed director Frank Capra (*Lost Horizon*), Johnny "Tarzan" Weismuller, monster animator Ray Harryhausen, Buster "Flash Gordon" Crabbe, Mae "Betty Boop" Questral and Clarence "Donald Duck" Nash, competed with the lab set from *Frankenstein*, the Starship Enterprise bridge set from *Star Trek* and costumes and props from the *Planet of the Apes*, for attention. Sometime during the five day run, Lee provided accompaniments for such warhorse silents as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Metropolis*, *Thief of Bagdad* and *Sherlock Jr.*



When Danny Schultz was in the process of overseeing the initial restoration of Rochester's RKO Palace Theatre Wurlitzer in 1960, he was determined that the instrument would be enriched by the addition of a Post Horn rank. When the organ was re-installed in the Auditorium Theatre in 1967, he converted an Orchestral Oboe into a Post Horn, with some help from a professional voicer. That set of pipes has served its purpose these ten years, and to eliminate problems which have arisen

with it, the RTOS Board of Directors has commissioned the M.P. Moller Co. to build a new set of Post Horn pipes. Advice from Billy Nalle and George Wright was a major factor in the selection of the Moller Co. over four other firms.



One of Ashley Miller's recent ventures was as part of the band in Madison Square Garden for the *Greatest Show on Earth*. He played an electronic with the Ringling Bros. Circus band for nine weeks in the Spring. "It was rough work, doing two or three shows a day, surrounded by 25 musicians trying to make themselves heard in the cavernous Garden. But the pay was very good," he says.



The wonder of it all! Bob Van Camp explains the intricacies of Atlanta's "Mighty Mo" to visitor Debbie Lynn during the west coaster's March visit east. Debbie reports that Bob was most kind, taking lots of time to provide her with a proper briefing of the one-of-a-kind 4/42 Moller which a spirited group, Atlanta Landmarks, is determined shall remain in its original home, and that home shall remain intact. The ATOS Atlanta Chapter has recently issued a record with performances by Bob Van Camp and several other fine artists as a fund raiser.

Incidentally, Debbie finished high school in 3½ years and immediately enrolled in California's Loma Linda University. But she went back to Upland (Calif.) high school come June to graduate with her class.



Lee and Laurel Haggart, who have often been mentioned in these pages, are now residents of Twin Falls, Idaho. They were visiting fellow organ buff George Brown last September, fell in love with the area, and moved there in December. Lee's doctor strongly advised his leaving the Los Angeles area, so that was a second factor in the move. Lee has perhaps more information on organ builders, organists, and the theatre organ movement dating from the early years, than anyone alive. "He is a walking encyclopedia, and if one were to visit him for several hours with a tape recorder in motion, he'd glean some material never published heretofore," says the Old Prospector.



Author John Landon, whose devotion to the theatre organ cause is legendary, announces that a second record has been cut for early release on the 3/7 Page in Anderson, Indiana's Paramount Theatre. John



has played this instrument on week-ends for several years. Proceeds from the disc will be used to swell the organ's maintenance fund.



Cheryl Creel



Wayne Seppala

Our continuing search for romance has led us to the "Spaghetti and Pizza Pavilion" in San Diego where two young staffers who play the Reginald Foort Moller committed matrimony on July 9. Congrats to organists Wayne Seppala and the former Cheryl Creel.



In April, Edward "Doc" Bebo was presented with a gold membership card by AFM because of his 50 years as a member of New York City Local 802. At the age of 17, he became a member when he landed his first professional job at New York's Cosmo Theatre at 116th and Third Avenue. The organ was a 2/8 Kramer, assembled by a Thomas Vasientino. The regular organist, Robert

Soffer, had gone on vacation, Doc pinch-hit, and Soffer never returned. Doc was a theatre organist in the New York area for 15 years, and has remained an 802 member. Congratulations, "Doc!" Anyone know what became of Soffer?



One of the leading Buffalo radio stations is WGR and it observed its 55th anniversary on May 22, with a daylong schedule of old programs, reminiscences by veteran announcers and alumni, and excellent nostalgia. One program lead-in was from *Little Orphan Annie* which originated in Chicago. Ambrose "Larry" Larson played the theme on a studio Wurlitzer. Another program excerpt was from *The Shadow* with organ background by Rosa Rio. Veteran orchestra leader, Cliff Kaiser, remembered the days when he played Buffalo's Capitol Theatre at South Park and Triangle, as a drummer from 1912 to 1920, "before they installed an organ which ran us out."



Walter Beaupre submits a fascinating paragraph which appears in a new book titled *Phantoms of the Theater*, by British author Raymond Lamont Brown. It concerns a "ghost organist" in the Avon Theatre, Utica, N.Y.

"Some fifty years ago, it seems, a mystery woman ran down the center aisle of the Avon Theatre and shot the pipe organist dead. Gossip of the time had it that the organist was cheating on his wife, and she took the traditional way out of the situation. From that time to the theatre's demolition in 1947, the building was deemed haunted. Night porters at the Avon testified that the organ would rise from the pit at midnight and play music, without the assistance of human hands. The theatre auditorium would be filled with sinister music until someone entered. Then it stopped. During the last few years of its existence, the theatre had difficulty employing staff, so well known did the psychic happenings become."

Having lived in Central New York for many years and having at least a nodding acquaintance with the

Avon, we decided to look into the ghost story. We wrote to ATOSer Don Robinson, who conducts the weekly *Organ Loft* record broadcast in the area. He contacted Raymond Conrad, assistant organist at the Avon in 1926-1927. Conrad said he knew nothing of a ghost at the Avon. And George S. Davis, who used to broadcast the circa 8 rank Wurlitzer over WIBX radio in the '30s, just chuckled and said "It's all fiction" when Don asked him about the ghost.

If the console rose from the pit at midnight, it did so without the aid of an elevator; it was not so equipped. Don adds that even the demolition year of 1947 is in error in the British book. Don informs us that the Avon was demolished in the mid-'60s. The 3-deck Wurlitzer was long gone by that time.

Look to your sources, Mr. Brown.



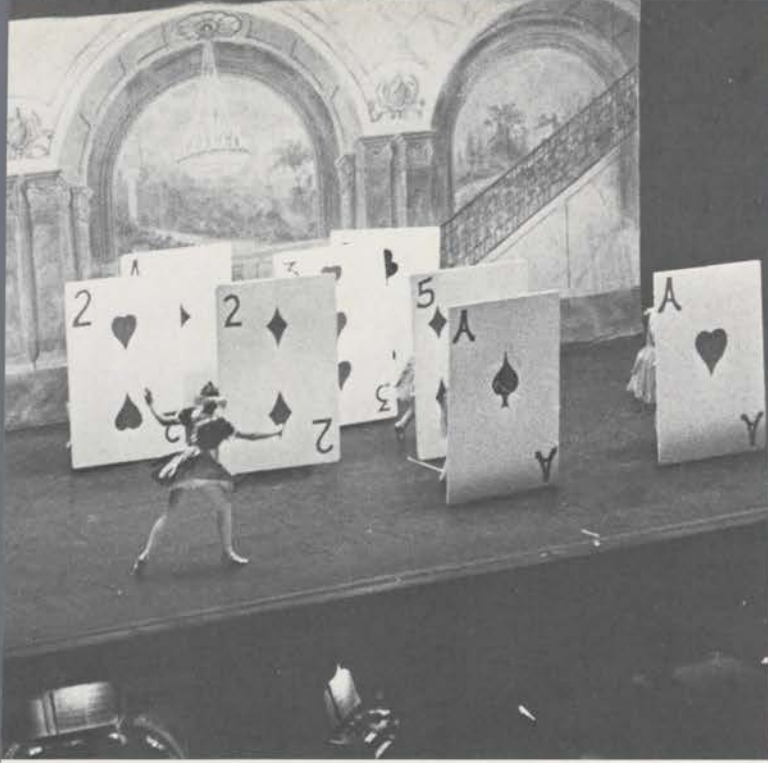
Byron Olsen sadly reports that the Capitol Theatre in Davenport, Iowa, closed on May 6. It is located in a large, well-occupied building complex, so the theatre won't be torn down.

Meanwhile, the theatre's 3/10 Moller-Wicks organ languishes in silence, its future in doubt. This instrument was the focal point of CRATO's concert activities in recent years, attracting such stars as Dennis James, Hector Olivera, Rex Koury and Lee Erwin, all playing before capacity houses. □

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# Trenton Keeps Busy

by Peter Panos

Thanks to the Garden State Theatre Organ Society, the Trenton War Memorial Auditorium has been a very busy place the last few months. The focus of the activity has been on its beautiful 3/16 Moller theatre pipe organ, formerly housed in Trenton's Lincoln Theatre. With the idea in mind of providing the community with a series of musical programs, G.S.T.O.S. Chairman Bill McKissock organized and produced a concert schedule featuring the organ in various roles.

On October 17, the series got underway with a concert and sing-along featuring past Vice-Chairman Frank Cimmino at the console. Billed as an event in the annual Trenton Folk Festival, many people attended who would not ordinarily have been aware of the organ's existence. As the afternoon rolled on, Frank had the crowd singing at the top of their lungs and enjoying every minute of his program. For some of the guests, the afternoon probably brought back fond memories of an earlier time when the instrument

was used for this very purpose in its former home.

Even before the date of the first concert, however, preparations were being arranged for the second event. In honor of Halloween Eve, a special "Fright-Nite" utilizing silent horror films was concocted. Some not-so-eager members were pressed into service as bat-makers, tombstone procurers and coffin builders. The entire orchestra lift of the War Memorial Auditorium was transformed into an abandoned graveyard complete with fallen leaves, real tombstones, dried-ice fog, an ominously open coffin and even a live broom-carrying witch! The witch, stalwart Judy Ginder, introduced the featured artist of the evening, Keith Chapman, by removing a stake from his heart. In true vampire tradition, this enabled Keith to leap from his coffin and stalk across the graveyard to

the console. And who says ATOS has no class! The audience went wild at this bit of theatre and the mood for fun was set for the rest of the evening. Attired in his vampire cape, Keith did an excellent job accompanying *The Vampire (Nosferatu)* and a Lon Chaney feature. At the conclusion of the program, an enthusiastic audience awarded the artist a standing ovation for his performance.

The most ambitious of the projects, however, would be saved for last. With a Radio City Music Hall type presentation in mind, a Christmas Spectacular was arranged featuring the 100 voice Mercer County Chorus, the Mercer Ballet Company, and former Radio City organist Ashley Miller at the Moller. Mr. Miller, a true friend of G.S.T.O.S., agreed to provide accompaniment on the pipe organ for the entire program. Many of the 1200-plus people attending the event had never heard the organ before and although they had come out of curiosity, a number would leave as true theatre pipe or-

Above photos: The Mercer Ballet Company performs "The Spell of Christmas Eve" with Ashley Miller at the Trenton Moller assisted by Patti Germain at the Allen electronic.

gan enthusiasts. As the program began, many of the young people present gaped in disbelief as the huge white and gold console came rumbling up from the pit and the theatre was filled with the joyous sounds of Leroy Anderson's "Sleigh Ride." After several holiday tunes and an enthusiastic reception by the fans, Ashley descended to orchestra level and the Mercer County Chorus was introduced. Over the next half-hour or so, they presented the "Song of Christmas" with piano and organ accompaniment. Guest soloists and a holiday sing-along rounded out the first half of the program and earned Ashley Miller a standing ovation from the highly receptive audience.

The second half consisted of Phyllis Papa and the Mercer Ballet Company performing an original program, "The Spell of Christmas Eve," based on music by Leo Delides and Peter Ilyith Tchaikofsky. Assisting Ashley Miller with the music involved were G.S.T.O.S. member Patty Germain at the Allen electronic organ and percussionist Eric Kivnick. The audience, especially its younger members, were enchanted with the ballet, and many commented afterwards that the combination of theatre pipe organ and ballet was certainly most effective. It should be pointed out here that contributing sponsors for the event were the Mercer County Park Commission, Chopin Music Company in Trenton, and the employees of the Mobil Technical Center through a Grant from the Mobil Foundation, Inc.

Thrilled with the artistic success of this trilogy of events, Bill McKissock, Jason Taylor and their crew of organ fanatics immediately began making plans for future public events utilizing the War Memorial Organ. Among them is the G.S.T.O.S.'s gift of a free "Spring Concert" to the Trenton community in April 1977. Also the organ itself is undergoing improvement including the replacement of the original 10 hp blower motor with a 20 hp one.

In conclusion, the chapter is extremely pleased to have performed a valuable artistic service to the community of Trenton, N.J. Also, what better way is available to insure the survival of our favorite instrument. The wonderful theatre pipe organ! □



## 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 Mr. Thompson,

First, may I say that I have enjoyed THEATRE ORGAN Magazine for many, many years, and I have noticed the positive approach used in very nearly all of the articles. While I know Mr. Muri's opinions are his own and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the magazine, I was particularly disappointed, almost to the point of being appalled, reading his opinion of those organists who are playing some Bach at our concerts. I am also amazed that he would put the "Jig Fugue" and the "Prelude and Fugue in D minor" in the same sentence, let alone in the same context. Any organist who has the ability to play the "Jig Fugue" and do a good job of it, I say "Hurrah" for him and "Go to it!" People *love* it, because it is obvious to anyone that it takes *talent* and a lot of hard work to do it successfully.

I think, in order to advance public interest in theatre organs, we have dire need of a large percent of *good* organists who might be first musicians and second organists. Who needs mediocrity?

Keep up the good work in producing a fine magazine.

Yours very truly,  
Joel Kremer

Dear Editor:

I wish to thank ATOS for a most thrilling week, the Chicago '77 Convention. Also, a big salute to CATOE for their flawless coordination from transportation through theatres, organs, artists and all concerned.

I have only one comment to a few theatre organ artists. Please, please forget about being a comic and concentrate on being the artist you are supposed to be. There is a difference between cheap comedy and musical humor in good taste.

Sincerely,  
Lyman Nellis

Dear Mr. Thompson:

We enjoyed last months THEATRE ORGAN very much especially the MCTOS Redford Theatre article. We here in Toledo, MCTOS's neighbor, sure wish them luck. We wish to commend Motor City on their far sightedness.

Very truly yours,  
William W. Cottle

Dear Mr. Thompson:

For some time I have been considering writing you on a couple of topics, but have not gotten around to it. However, the letter from Mr. J.B. Sherk of Toronto in the February-March issue of THEATRE ORGAN magazine gave me the needed impetus.

Mr. Sherk stated one of my own thoughts much better than I could have done myself, namely, the idea that modern compositions are completely ignored in many, if not most, of the concerts I have managed to hear, whether in Syracuse, North Tonawanda, Toronto or Rochester, and at the ATOS 1974 convention in Detroit. Only one artist had nerve enough, if that is what it takes, to include a few bars of Country-Western melody and a very beautiful one, too, "For the Good Times" and that was Dick Smith. (I can hear a certain individual saying, if he reads this, "Oh, HIM.")

A few artists have played some of the new tunes like "Feelings" and "Send in the Clowns" and "Yesterdays" but this is the exception, not the rule. I have taken my two college-age children to organ concerts, and they have expressed Mr. Sherk's

(and mine) sentiments in their comments. They are not crazy about the Broadway music but tolerate it. They feel that an entire concert of it is too much for them, anyhow. By the way, they do not share my love of some of the Country-Western ballads, either, but I think the pipe organ could make these tunes even more beautiful.

My second topic is concerned with reviews of both concerts and records in THEATRE ORGAN magazine, which, by the way, I read eagerly from cover to cover each time it arrives. (Please — Topic #3 — don't take pages of even one issue to cover financial figures.) I'm just a listener, though my two children can play the organ very well, but I know what I like. I would prefer that the reviewers let me decide what I like, and omit comments like "... a critic's dream, with none of those "Lara's Theme" type repetitions," or "... after all, how many versions of "Battle Hymn of the Republic" can one absorb?" ... as far as I'm concerned, as many different ones as I can get to hear is my answer to that question. And, incidentally, just what is "... A purely vanilla selection"? Volume criticisms also annoy me, e.g., "... an especially lovely rendition until the big mass of sound near the close." I like the mighty sound of the Wurlitzer and I feel the majority of the organists do not abuse this idea. Furthermore, if a critic adores concerts where the volume never varies either way, that is certainly his right, but let him refrain from converting me to his way of thinking.

Yours truly,  
Frederick W. Schamu

Dear Mr. Thompson:

I am hoping your readers would be delighted with a bizarre theatre organ experience told me years ago by the once famous silent movie organist Henry Murtagh.

I was hanging around in the Los Angeles branch of the Hammond Organ Studios, knowing I couldn't afford a pipe organ and wishing I could afford a Hammond, at that time the only plug-in made, when Henry, on the staff there since the advent of talkies, told me this true story.

He had been scheduled as featured soloist to "open" a vast brand-new

silent movie house in Portland, Oregon. The new paint was hardly dry, and the workers had just finished hanging a tremendous canvas star-spangled canopy over the entire ceiling of the auditorium, concealing the huge hole in the ceiling above which the organ pipes had been installed.

The opening-night crowds surged into the theatre, and the spotlight shone on Henry as he took his place at the big console and promptly burst into a full-throated, deafening overture. The wind from the pipes above the ceiling gushed out, filled the hastily and insecurely installed canopy like a great ship's sail, tore it loose all around, and down like a tremendous tent it came filtering, fluttering, settling on the heads of the astonished crowd, who wondered

"What the hell!" as they tried with no luck to fight the thing off their heads or get out from under it somehow.

The gigantic tent covered Henry's head too, and the big console, but he never missed a note! — played on magnificently as workers finally managed to crumple the tremendous tent up and drag it out through the front door. Then the silent picture flashed on the screen and Henry went right into his accompaniment just as though nothing unusual at all had happened. "Even buried under canvas," he told me, "the show must go on!"

Sincerely,  
long-time ATOE member,  
Bill Reeves

Dear Sir:

In regards to the story about the Andre Wurlitzer in Miami showing it's age, that is a lot of hooley. Bob Andre has put in a lot of hard and long hours to get that organ in the best of shape.

Recently, I made a test recording of the great Don Baker on this Wurlitzer, and Don told me that this organ is about the best he has played. In fact, I am going to record a master tape of Don in about another week. This tape will be for a record.

It just kinda tees me off to have anyone down the organ, that a wonderful person like Bob Andre has put so much hard work into. He is a perfect example as to what all ATOS members should be. He has never refused anyone who can play, to play this great Wurlitzer. My hat is off to Bob Andre and his sharing the organ with others. Lets all take a lesson from Bob, and show what ATOS really stands for.

Thanking you, I remain,  
Well Organ-ized,  
Max E. Schloss  
Recording Engineer

Dear Mr. Thompson,

In the past three issues of THEATRE ORGAN Magazine, I have read with considerable interest, the article by Mr. Richard Weisenberger, "Organ Flue Pipes"; the subsequent letter-to-the-editor by Mr. Richard Swanson; and Mr. Weisenberger's rebuttal to Mr. Swanson's letter.

As a professional independent pipe organ voicer, I agree with Mr.

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Swanson's letter completely. However, I would like to add one more point. It should be noted by all that the information given in Mr. Weisenberger's article does not prepare the reader for pipe organ voicing, as the tone of the article may imply.

The first draft of this letter was an involved critique of the article. I realized after living with my letter for a few days, that this type of input is not productive in the overall sense. Indeed, a misdirection of energy.

Like Mr. Swanson, I too am concerned that articles dealing with technical facets of the pipe organ be authored by professionals. And further, those who possess knowledge and experience in *all* forms of organ construction so as to give the articles the perspective which is essential when discussing the highly specialized field of theatre organ construction. Lance Johnson does a fine job with his "Questions & Answers" and "Pipe Organ Quiz" columns. The article, "A Layman Looks At Pipe Scales" by Mr. Ben Levy was superb. (Even though the title states he is a layman, he was quite accurate.) Scaling, and the relative mouth dimensions is perhaps the most illusive concept for the beginner to comprehend. And, it's undoubtedly the aspect of pipe organ construction which contributes the aura of Divine Mystery. Articles dealing with sound and it's illusive and evasive qualities would be a good follow-up to this article. And, it would help to guide the curiosity and enthusiasm of such people as Mr. Weisenberger in more appropriate directions.

I sincerely hope that Mr. Weisenberger is not discouraged by the negative reaction he has received from his article. I'm sure that his calculations were well thought out, and that he submitted the article with only the best of intentions. However, he is unaware (through lack of exposure,) that his analysis of the pipe organ is somewhat afield of what pipe-created sound is all about. As I mentioned a moment ago, the organ industry, (and especially the fantasy world of the theatre organ,) has an aura of mystery about it. I'm sure I speak for many builders in the United States when I say that there are no devine mysteries.

Mr. Weisenberger should not con-

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cern himself with applying scientific formats to organ building, before attaining a solid education in the existing science. I think he will be fascinated by the sufficiency he finds.

My best to all who make the THEATRE ORGAN Magazine the fine journal it is!

Yours truly,  
Stephen L. Adams

Dear Mr. Thompson,

As a member of ATOS, I am writing about a continuing event which might be of interest to the Society's membership. It involves the carrying on of a very old tradition in a very new environment. In what I believe to be a first for modern movie theatres, an electronic theatre organ has been placed in a new cinema and is being played regularly between movie performances.

Through an arrangement between the Wurlitzer Music Stores, Inc., of Indianapolis and the General Cinema Corporation Theatres at Washington Square, a Wurlitzer electronic theatre organ has been

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placed in a 475 seat modern cinema showing first-run motion pictures. The association began in June, 1976, and continues to the present. Much of the credit for the continuing success of the arrangement must be given to Mr. Julian Mitford, manager of Cinema I and II. He is a most interesting and innovative person who managed theatres in England for many years before coming to the United States. Under his progressive management the organ music has become a regular feature at no increase in cost to the movie patrons.

I have been privileged to be the organist at Cinema I since the start of the program. I must say that I am firmly dedicated to the restoration, preservation and entertainment on theatre pipe organs wherever possible. They are a valuable American heritage which must be preserved. I realize, however, that there are several generations of young persons who have never experienced live theatre organ music in a theatre setting. The modern cinema structures of steel and concrete have a minimum of space, are without stages, and have only the barest of decorative enhancement. The automated facilities as well as the atmosphere seem to preclude the romantic environment of the old movie palaces. I was quite pleasantly surprised to learn that the audiences, predominately young persons, thoroughly enjoy the "live" theatre organ experience and request many old songs far removed from the present generation. Over 15,000 persons have been entertained since June, 1976, and their enthusiasm keeps the arrangement continuing.

I sincerely hope that the enthusiasm I have seen for theatre organ music in the modern audiences will continue and will motivate them to seek out and support theatre pipe organ music.

Musically,  
Donald I. Craig, Jr.

P.S. Mr. Julian Mitford is a most interesting person with many interesting experiences to relate about his English past. He may be reached at:

Mr. Julian Mitford  
Manager, Cinema I and II  
Washington Square  
10202 East Washington St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46229  
(317) 899-4100

□





## CHAPTER NOTES

### Let us know what's happening in YOUR Chapter!

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Deadline for all material is the FIRST of the month PRECEDING Publication.

Copy for Oct.-Nov. issue must be in by September 1.

### ALOHA

Activity- Chair Wahine Betty De Rosa had a hunch we'd like to see *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and arranged for San Francisco Avenue Theatre's Bob Vaughn to accompany the 1923 silent classic at the Hawaii Theatre on May 15.

Chapter members gave Bob and Francis Vaughn a warm Aloha the

Saturday preceding the movie at a noon luncheon at the famed Royal Hawaiian Hotel, the pink palace on Honolulu's Waikiki Beach. Open air dining amid palm trees at the Surf Room provided a most elegant oceanside atmosphere with a breathtaking view of Diamond Head.

Vaughn played an overture at the 4/16 Robert Morton with a medley of Spanish tunes followed by a Hawaiian medley including Honorary Life Member John De Mello's composition "Hilo After Sundown," capturing the flavor of the islands. He awakened the Sunday morning audience with "Chills and Spills," a compilation of old time thrills from the silent screen. Laurel and Hardy's *Two Tars*. Publicity in the *Honolulu Advertiser*, *Star-Bulletin*, and *Waikiki Beach Press* brought in a good crowd, as well as many tourists including the noted concert pianist Leonard Pennario.

Bob Vaughn at the console of the Robert Morton in the Hawaii Theatre in Honolulu.



Vaughn made some opening remarks concerning *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and played Maurice Baron's "The Chimes of Notre Dame" during the opening titles. This music was composed for the film and was displayed with a cue sheet in the clubroom. Col. Larry McPherson, organ maintenance crew chief, had adjusted the stroke of the hammers on the chimes so they rang out clearly. The organ had been tuned and sounded in top playing condition.

Vaughn, a charter member of National ATOS, proved he was a master at film accompaniment, holding the audiences' interest throughout the lengthy film. He made excellent use of the Morton's reed section and emphasized the action in the movie beautifully.

After putting Quasimodo through his paces, Bob received rousing applause from the audience as Hawaiian Islander's Rolly Ray Finlay placed an orchid lei around his neck with a kiss, Hawaiian style.

PAUL C. WALLEY

### CENTRAL INDIANA

Thanks to Ed Morris for presiding and Tim Needler for arranging and performing at the February meeting while our chairman was out of town.

The meeting was held at the Hedback Theatre in Indianapolis. This organ is one of only two theatre pipe organs serving the Indianapolis area. The organ is used regularly for pre-show concerts in conjunction with Footlight Musicals' productions in the theatre.

Mrs. Jan Rost, representing the Board of Directors of Footlight Musicals, was introduced and gave a short talk on the functions of the organization. It is an educational project, as well as performing a service for the public, senior citizens and various other organizations. All participants-actors, actresses, musicians — give of their time and talent on a voluntary basis. The pit orchestra is composed of between 20 and 30 dedicated men and women. The current production is the first one to use the organ throughout the entire performance.

Footlight Musicals presents approximately six shows per year and is rendering a tremendous service to the community by providing an op-

portunity for a large cast of talented performers to participate in the performing arts. CIC-ATOS also benefits by having access to the organ for practice, and meetings, and members contribute to the productions as well.

Laurel and Hardy's *Two Tars* was the feature portion of the program with Tim Needler accompanying on the 2/10 Page theatre pipe organ.

Every once in awhile CIC-ATOS deviates from the usual theatre organ oriented program and has something different. CIC-ATOS has always found a unique way to mix and blend classical and theatre organ in a manner pleasing to all.

Super fantastic at this sort of thing is Tim Needler who gave a tremendous program on the 3/34 Kilgen pipe organ at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church in Indianapolis. Tim is one of few whose classical and theatre stylings are both mastered with ease and professional ability. Tim chose a program to fully utilize the many voicings of this beautiful instrument. The console itself to the average onlooker is simple in its structure in contrast to many church and theatre organs that have so many contrivances on them to operate with both hands and feet. Its tones were rich and full bodied.

This can be explained by the fact that this organ was installed in 1928 at a time when many pipe organ companies, including Kilgen, were building numerous instruments for use in movie theatres and many of the instruments built for churches during this period were similar to theatre organs in many respects.

The members then drove to Second Presbyterian Church, also in north Indianapolis, where Ned Siebert had planned the same kind of comparative program. However, the 4/88 Aeolian Skinner did not have the same flexibility and voicing as the Kilgen. It was an interesting comparison by contrast and Ned did a beautiful job of explaining the difference between the theatre and classical organs and mastered the Aeolian Skinner superbly. Ned did a great job and we congratulate him on a most challenging and successful performance.

The business meeting was followed by open console time at the Aeolian Skinner.

RUTH D. WARD

## CENTRAL OHIO

Hosts for our May meeting were Ann and Tom Hamilton. Tom's custom Rodgers/Morton now has a fourth manual completely wired in and playing. The organ has 210 stops, 2nd touch on great, accompaniment and pedals and the 6 2/3 coupler from solo manual down to great. Closed circuit TV permits those in the family room to see the console and hear the music. After a short business meeting, when we learned Gaylord Carter would return to the Pipe Organ Ristorante, we enjoyed having Tom demonstrate all the newest features of the organ. Appropriately, his first number was "Ain't She Sweet."

In June we met at the Worthington High School. The organ work crew had tried hard for even a whisper from the Wurlitzer. Three more hours of work would have done it but that thrill is yet to come. We did enjoy an exciting program with Heidi and Dennis James on hand with slides of their tour to Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii and a bit of California. They shared the narration which was well planned even to describing the area they were in and giving a similar geographical location as if it were the United States.

The *Columbus Dispatch* recently published a feature story about Bob Verbeck, owner of a collection of over 1000 silent films. As a teenager Bob played piano accompaniment to the silents in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Working in vaudeville resulted in friendships with many of the great movie stars. He appeared at Carnegie Hall with Nita Naldi and once pinch-hit for Rudolph Valentino.

Bob came to Columbus in the 1920s to attend Ohio State University. Later, as Assistant Professor, he taught Sociology at OSU. He shared his interest in silent films, putting on many programs in the area. Word spread and he began to receive requests for his programs from schools and organizations across the country. He left OSU in 1945 to devote more time to his major interest. For his programs he either takes his custom Conn with Leslie speakers or plays piano. He uses only a theatre-sized screen to assure the magnificence of the film

and uses the original projection speed.

We called to invite him to a chapter meeting and in conversation learned of his great interest in our RKO Palace Wurlitzer. When he learned the organ was to be removed from the Palace, Bob Verbeck is the man who influenced the RKO officials to donate the organ to the Columbus Center of Science and Industry. It is unlikely COTOS would have the Wurlitzer were it not for him. He has offered us a benefit performance and the ideas he has for that performance top any program format personally witnessed or heard about in over fourteen years association with ATOS. We will tell all when it happens!

IRENE BLEGEN

## CONNECTICUT VALLEY

Along with baseball, hot dogs and Yale, the CVTOS Annual Scholarship Awards at Bethwood (the home of Eleanor and Harold Weaver) have become another Connecticut Valley institution. The 1977 presentation program held on Saturday, June 11, was the wonderfully satisfying and heart-warming culmination of all the dedication and hard work of the Scholarship Committee and the talented music students and their teachers.

There were 78 members and guests sandwiched into the living room of Scholarship Chairman Eleanor Weaver (along with the Weavers' beautiful 3/9 Marr & Colton) to meet and applaud the efforts of the prize-winning students.

The first youthful artist to be presented to the group was David Senak, an 11-year-old sixth grade student from Bristol and winner of the Junior Division Competition. Many people will remember David as the boy invited onto the stage by George Wright at the Bushnell Auditorium to play Stillman Rice's Allen organ, who proceeded to play a note-for-note imitation of George's "Take Five." At that time David was entirely self-taught but had been working seriously at it for about four years. He is now under formal instruction with Mrs. Kasha Breau of Farmington.

David's own arrangement of a medley from *Cabaret* showed real command of the console, and his "Tarantella" displayed some tricky

and flawless fingering that would do credit to a pro.

Next on the program was the winner of the Advanced Competition, William Hively of Southington, who studies organ with Ralph C. Yale, well-known teacher and former theatre organist. Bill was last year's Junior Division winner and sailed through to victory in his first year in the Advanced category at Thomaston.

A picture of sartorial splendor (these young artists have already learned to dress the part), Bill's musical program included a great medley from *Music Man*, Duke Ellington's "Take the A Train" and the very lovely theme "Too Beautiful to Last" from the movie *Nicholas and Alexandra*.

Last, but not least, on the program was Ronald Fabry, age 16, winner of our arrangement competition held for the first time this year. Dedicated to a friend who is a soap opera fan, the haunting melody "Nadia's Theme" from *The Young and the Restless* was Ron's first musical presentation. His concert program concluded with his prize-winning arrangement of that wonderful old waltz, "Lovely Lady" in real theatre organ style. Ron explained that he felt that music has many roles, and he tried to bring as many ideas as possible into his arrangement (and with great success). Judges of the arrangements submitted were Lowell Ayars, Don Baker, John Muri and Bill Irwin.

Norman Ray, our able chairman, made the formal presentation of trophies. David Scrimenti, winner of the second award in the Advanced Category, was escorted by his teacher, Rosa Rio, the Pied Piper of theatre organ (she has so many youngsters following in her footsteps). David is a former winner in the Junior Division, and his organ achievement is especially notable since he has been sightless from birth.

Jim Arsenaault, one of the winners of duplicate third place awards, was unable to be present, and his trophy was accepted by Rosa Rio with whom he studies. Rosa explained that Jim had a job playing at a local skating rink which was especially notable since she herself had been turned down for just such a job in the early days of her career.

Flory Muller (who's even prettier

than last year), in accepting her trophy for the other third place award, expressed her gratitude to Rosa Rio for her inspiration and to the Weavers who open their home to these students for practice sessions on their pipe organ. This young lady just loves to play and had no real expectations of winning when she entered the competition in the Advanced Category for the first time. Flory was third award winner in the Junior Division last year.

Since only one scholarship was awarded in the Junior Division because of the small enrollment of students in the grammar school range this year, a special Merit Award was presented to Miss Lynn Behrle for her outstanding job of playing from memory Lee Erwin's overture to *Queen Kelly*. Lynn is also a student of Rosa Rio.

Saving the first for last, Norm presented the first award trophies to David Senak (who is looking forward to competing in the Advanced Division at Thomaston next year) and to the "Music Man" himself, Bill Hively. Winning was a happy coincidence, he confided. Gaining experience and doing his best was his primary objective in entering the Advanced Competition this year.

All of these students had played only electronic instruments until they were introduced to the pipe organ in this competition. They all have found it a real joy and challenge in coming to "pipes."

George Bell, who competed in the first scholarship program in 1970, brought the evening's festivities to a close at the Marr & Colton displaying that real theatre organ style influence of his teacher, Rosa Rio, with whom he still studies.

This was a great night, and the dedication of the teachers, parents and students makes it all worth while. They will keep the theatre pipes going, and that, after all, is what ATOS is all about.

JUNE L. GAREN

## DAIRYLAND

Dairyland has just closed out its most successful spring season ever. After a few stagnant years, our membership and following has finally started to develop.

Our spring concert featured Rex Koury on Saturday, April 27, at the

Avalon. We were somewhat skeptical before the concert because we had always had Tuesday night dates in previous years. Some of our members thought that a pipe organ concert couldn't compete with the variety of entertainment available on a Saturday night in Milwaukee.

Well, they had no reason to fear. Rex and the Wurlitzer came through with flying colors. For the afternoon matinee, our first ever, and the evening performance, we drew in excess of 950 people. And considering this was our first try outside of a Tuesday night, all involved considered it a success.

Work on the Racine Theatre Guild project is proceeding slower than expected. Our two main problems in finishing this installation are working around a tight booking and rehearsal schedule and keeping a bonafide work crew together. At the present pace, we will need at least another year of Saturday mornings to complete this installation.

By luck, the author had a chance to tour what's left of Milwaukee's great movie houses. These houses include the now organless, but magnificently restored Oriental, which has been declared a city landmark; the Uptown, still in very good shape; the Centre, although twinned four years ago, still a fine Rapp and Rapp creation and the Garfield, which has been partially altered for classrooms by the O.I.C. The only remaining original installations are at the Avalon and the Riverside.

Since the Avalon has been rescued by Dairyland, our remaining duty should now be to the Riverside. This 2600-seat house is the last remaining big theatre in downtown Milwaukee.

From what was seen on tour, the 3/13 Wurlitzer is on its last legs. Because of recent rock concerts, the management has extended the stage out over the organ pit only as a *temporary* measure. With the huge stage facilities already in existence, we could not understand the reason for building the extension. Temporary or not, it looked very permanent.

As far as the organ goes, it does; but with a lot of squeeks and moans. Being a member of Dairyland, I hope my fellow members would agree with me in saying we should intercede before years end to save the once fine instrument.



The 20th Anniversary concert of the Eastern Mass. Chapter featured Hector. (Paul Callahan Photo)



Hector Olivera at the 3/13 Wurlitzer at Babson. (Paul Callahan Photo)

Our tour ended at the Performing Arts Center of Milwaukee and the Pabst Theatre. These two buildings, while only one block away from each other, are 80 years apart in design and offer a very interesting contrast to those who tour both of them.

At the PAC, we saw the latest in architectural styling, while the Pabst showed us the most beautiful theatre ever built in the nineteenth century.

The Pabst's new organ, a 4/20 Moller, completes the elegance of this magnificent house. According to our guide, this was the first public showing of the organ. It was well worth the public's wait. Bill Klinger and his crew have done a fine job.

WILLIAM CAMPBELL

## EASTERN MASS.

EMCATOS had its own early Fourth of July with the "Argentine Firecracker," Hector Olivera, concertizing on May 21 at Babson at the club's 235 Special Wurlitzer. His third visit displayed the expected exciting Olivera style with lightening-fast registration changes, amazing console dexterity and imaginative arrangements as he quickly established a rapport with his audience. Hector demands the nearly impossible of himself and the organ as he programs the best of both worlds — popular and classical. His fine classical training emerges throughout his playing to win new adherents for both schools.

Chairman Pete Hoagland welcomed the large audience, thanked all that had labored so hard on con-

cert details and acknowledged Babson College for their patience and kindness in giving us a "home." Indefatigable Craig Johnson, M.C. and chapter vice president concert chairman, followed with remarks including how our chapter was formed and became Number One of ATOS, its purposes and activities. This being our twentieth anniversary year, Craig's wife, Patti, created a large sign "Happy 20th" which was spotlighted and lowered on the movie screen during the concert. The occasion was further noted by a colorful floral arrangement on the console, courtesy of our hard working Rosalie and Pat Fucci, and a fine booklet with console illustrated cover, the work of Carl Getz.

The following Saturday our regular monthly Babson meeting had "Tribute to Jesse Crawford" as its theme inasmuch as he died 15 years ago (May 29, 1962). The tribute was read by Craig Johnson which began as an interesting capsule biography and traced how this organist without peer had developed a style of theatre organ playing to become known as the "Poet of the Organ."

Featured artist of the evening was Mark Renwick, who played in the Crawford style. Mark played a creditable performance with effective registration.

Rosalie and Pat Fucci graciously invited the club for another field trip cookout with all the fixings at their Waltham residence on June 12. Many took advantage of their hospitality, and the opportunity to leisurely visit, followed by an interest-

ing slide show of their Robert Morton pipe organ and the former Loew's State Theatre, Providence, R.I., from whence it came. Included were blowups of opening day publicity as well as more recent rebuilding shots. The organ itself was then heard as several playing members took turns on the bench. A fine afternoon soon drew to a close, but Bob Legon announced that any who cared to could hear and try the nearby 3/9 Kilgen unit organ being installed in the Lakeview Congregational Church. About 20 were most pleasantly surprised as Bob and others demonstrated the beauty and power of the ex-Embassy Theatre, Waltham organ.

On June 25 our Babson meeting opened with Chairman Pete Hoagland who soon turned the mike over to Craig Johnson. Several rounds of applause followed the naming of various members for their contributions to our concerts, the organs and the club welfare. Stu Hinchliffe was called to the podium amid the realistic sounds of a steam locomotive and presented a framed picture of himself stepping down from the cab of a B.&M. R.R. Buddliner in his Engineer's uniform. Stu is retiring in September and this small tribute from the board of directors was for his untiring efforts as editor of our monthly newsletter, *Eastern Pipes*.

It was announced that Ray Bohr, chief Organist of Radio City Music Hall, NYC, was selected as our Fall concert artist.

Held over from last month's Jesse

Crawford tribute was a fine recording of his playing "In the Monastery Garden" on the Dick Simonton Wurlitzer, which sounded very special on the new Babson audio system.

Our Happy 20th gala wrap-up artist was unable to be present, but our always accommodating and talented ex-theatre organist, Al Winslow, gave us some real live theatre organ music, once he removed his shoes! His announced theme was "Bye, Bye Bach Beer for Two" which unfolded as a Bach Toccata modulated into "Bye, Bye Blues" and back again in variations, "Tea for Two," etc. Second artist was Phil Bordeleau of Bedford, N.H. who played a carefully registered and appropriate "June is Bustin' Out all Over." With the console in the raised concert position in the darkened hall and spotlighted in varying colors, complete with floral bouquet, it was most effective.

Dick Linder, who was in the audio/visual booth manning the system, came out momentarily to speak of what was to follow, which included a taped portion of our first 1974 Hector Olivera concert played as background to colored slides of work progress on our Wurlitzer, our 20th Babson concert, Hector at the 115-rank organ in Trinity Church, Boston, and at the large Hammond Castle, Gloucester organ. Dick took many of the slides and did the church taping in addition to the coordination of these for his presentation — a very professional show of his own which was justly applauded. Customary open console pleasantly brought to a close the season's last meeting.

STANLEY C. GARNISS

## LAND OF LINCOLN

The Rockford (Ill.) Symphony Orchestra plays its regular monthly concerts in the Coronado Theatre during the season. Last fall the Symphony sought permission of LOLTOS to use the Coronado 4/17 Barton in connection with their February 24 concert featuring Dr. Alexander Schreiner, well-known organist of the Mormon Tabernacle.

As the concert day approached, the organ got such loving care as is lavished on few theatre organs. Crewman Duane Austin brought the con-



Dr. Alexander Schreiner at the Coronado Theatre where he performed with the Rockford Symphony.  
(C. Albin Anderson Photo)

sole to a functional 100%. Tuner Bob Tuttle got rid of every little waver, even in the 2' octaves, while Crew Chief Gene Wolf hovered over all like a loving mother hen.

Dr. Schreiner arrived to get acquainted with the organ and the crew. Of all of the organ virtuosi who have played concerts at the Coronado, none has been kinder, more thoughtful, and more of a gentleman in the true sense of the word than Dr. Schreiner. There was an amusing moment when Duane Austin produced an ancient piece of sheet music showing Dr. Schreiner at a 4-manual Wurlitzer, presumably in the Capitol Theatre, Salt Lake City. Dr. Schreiner was delighted at this memento of his theatre organ days and was pleased to autograph the music for Crewman Austin.

For the concert, Dr. Schreiner played the Handel "Organ Concerto No. 10" and a "Concerto in B Minor" of his own composition as a requirement for his Ph.D. in Music, both with the Rockford Symphony, Dr. Crawford Gates, conducting. The performance was a tonal and technical triumph with a standing ovation for Dr. Schreiner. Next day press reviews congratulated the organ as well as the organist.

A technical note: An important part of the "classical" sound which can be produced on this organ is contributed by the Diapason, which is a true open, not a leathered lip Phonon of the type generally found

in the theatre organs. The Diapason pipes were made for Barton by Jerome B. Meyer and Sons of Milwaukee, Wis., in 1926, and have their own regulator at 15" pressure.

Patrons of LOLTOS shows expected a great treat in the appearance of Hector Olivera at the Rockford Coronado Theatre on May 19, and were not disappointed. This time it was a straight organ concert without the diversions of silent film and sing-along.

The program opened with "That's Entertainment" after an introduction by Chairman Bob Schmoock, and continued with recent popular music successes with a detour into the classical "Fugue in D Minor" of J.S. Bach. This last was amazingly well received, showing that an expertly performed "heavy" organ work can please an audience which generally prefers lighter music.

In the course of the second part of the program, Hector gave forth with the Widor "Toccata" which revealed the fine job of tuning that Assistant Crew Chief Bob Tuttle had done. The program closed with an improvisation on a theme handed Hector by this writer. There were demands for two encores expressed by standing ovations, and, finally, the well-known "Flight of the Bumble Bee."

Following the concert, members of the chapter and guests had an afterglow on the stage, enabling members to meet Hector and the affable Walt Molt, manager of the remarkable organist.

BOB COE

## LAND O' LAKES

A great big unanimous thank you to Dr. Roland and Marilyn Matson, of Spring Valley, Minn. for entertaining 159 L.O.L. members at their fabulous "Enchanted Barn" in April. It was one of the most friendly and fun afternoons we've had. Not many members were aware of the unexpected surprise in store for them until Chairman Alan Gerber introduced the artist of the day — Paul Quarino, from Portland, Oregon, one time member of L.O.L. who had come "home" to pick up a newly acquired pipe organ. How fortunate we were to have him, even for so short a time. We had two hours of superb music from the oldies (in new sounds



Paul Quarino, former L.O.L. member, was artist of the day in the home of Dr. Roland and Marilyn Matson. (C.J. Newman Photo)



Alan Gerber at Byron Carlson's 5/21 Wurlitzer. It took two concerts to accommodate the growing membership. (C.J. Newman Photo)

and composition), to the newer tunes. Claude Newman, for the fun of it, suggested Paul try "Chop Sticks!" Well, no one has heard it played like that (right in the middle, I detected a touch of Bach) and at the tricky ending — a standing ovation, which Paul truly deserved. Matson's mighty 8-rank Wurlitzer pipe organ proved itself worthy of unanimous praise!

Mother Nature had the introduction for Alan Gerber's concert at the Byron Carlson home, Sunday, May 15. Just as he sat at the console and "registered" his opener, a loud clap of thunder started him off. A cooling rain and "Yours Is My Heart Alone" began a delightful, informal and relaxing afternoon. The Carlsons greeted their guests at the door with their inimitable friendliness, and as one walked into the spacious, beautifully decorated living room, there, in the corner, stood the gorgeous white and gold 5/21 Wurlitzer pipe organ. Alan mastered the console and we heard medleys of tunes we recognized and thoroughly enjoyed. Because our chapter has grown so fast, we had two concerts, and both of Alan's performances were superb, and enthusiastically received by the audiences.

What better way could Minnesotans start a concert day than with a picnic? We did, on June 4 at Red Wing, Minnesota. Then to the Sheldon Auditorium Theatre for the concert at 2 p.m. We were especially honored by the presence of ATOS president, Ray Snitil and his lovely wife, Dorothy. Mr. Snitil spoke to us from the stage, with reassuring words of our progress as a chapter, and we

appreciated his comments and their presence.

Our chairman introduced the first lady of this theatre, Mrs. Rose Morley, who played the scores for silent movies from 1926. At the age of 89 years, she delighted the audience with a mini-concert of tunes she played many years ago. One could feel the love she still had for her "baby."

Our artist for the afternoon was our own member Karl Eilers, who grew up in Alexandria, Minn.; attended the University of Minn., studying engineering; then switched to music. He studied organ under Fleicher at the University. His well-chosen selections of classical and contemporary tunes delighted everyone and made us appreciate the fact that we had such a talented artist among us; also the difficult task of restoring the beautiful 2/8 Kilgen and the historical auditorium to its



Karl Eilers at the 2/8 Kilgen in the Sheldon Auditorium Theatre. (Bea Englund Photo)

original condition. We are sincerely grateful to the people of Red Wing for giving us this opportunity to hold our meeting at the Sheldon Auditorium Theatre. We left with the feeling "Everything is Beautiful."

BEA ENGLUND

## LONDON AND THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND

From the outstanding success of the ATOS Safari in England, last year has emerged the newest and 50th ATOS Chapter: 'London and the South of England'.

So enjoyable was the organization as well as the Safari itself, that the committee (Board of Directors) has since established the new chapter to extend not only their own friendships, but take the British theatre organ scene into a new dimension through a more direct interchange with Stateside activities and ATOS friends everywhere.

Moreover, it is also providing the medium for mobilising enthusiasm and funds for much-needed organ restoration work — all directly in accord with basic ATOS aims.

Formal launching of the new chapter was on Sunday, May 22, when Lyn Larsen presented and played an immaculate and exciting inaugural concert at the famous 4/16 'Torch' Wurlitzer at the huge Gaumont State Theatre at Kilburn in North London. Just 40 years old this year, this unique Wurlitzer has never sounded better — and happily is soon to return to the air again.

Attacking the unusual specification (only two strings) with great



Lyn Larsen and Ernest Broadbent converse in the Spanish Hall after Lyn's concert at the 3/13 Wurlitzer in the Opera House, Blackpool. (Henry Hunt Photo)



The Gaumont State Theatre at Kilburn in North London, during Lyn's program. (John D. Sharp Photo)

verve and imagination, Lyn had his first concert ride on a turntable lift and delighted the 600-odd audience way beyond their expectations with his scintillating technique and superb programme.

Smooth organisation by many of the now 60-plus chapter members was carried through to post-concert cocktails in the theatre, by courtesy of good friend and manager, Mr. Bill Weir. Then came a superb buffet supper at 'Wurlitzer Lodge,' home of Edith and Les Rawle at nearby Northolt — whence numerous members entertained at the beautiful 3/19 Wurlitzer there.

The great success of this truly memorable day was augmented by around a dozen members travelling to hear Lyn's second British concert at the 3/14 Wurlitzer in the Opera House at Blackpool the following Sunday.

The next chapter concert was given by chapter member Stan Whittington on Monday, June 6 at the beautifully and fully-preserved 1927 vintage ex-cinema Compton 'Kinestra' now installed in St. Mary's Catholic Church at Hornchurch in Essex. This organ was inaugurated in its new home during the 1976 Safari



London and the South of England Chapter members after the inaugural concert at the 4/16 'Torch' Wurlitzer in Kilburn, North London. (John D. Sharp Photo)

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and is in the very capable care of members Fr. Gerard Kerr and George Harrison, the chairman of the new London Chapter.

First supporting role of the chapter is with the Windsor and District Theatre Organ Trust and their preservation of another British-built Compton organ in the Memorial Hall, Old Windsor (also visited during the Safari). Their next presentation in October will feature the newly-revoiced Tuba rank and a number of other improvements.

After 14 members return from the Chicago Convention, a regular monthly club evening is to be started at Northolt at the end of August — the first being an open console session.

Beyond this, more big-name special concerts are being planned — as well as other restoration projects.

ATOS London is thus already a well-established and flourishing team — greeting and conjoining with American friends in the mutual joy of all that is best in theatre pipe organ music and proud to be one of the newest of the chapters throughout the world.

EDITH RAWLE

## LOS ANGELES

John Ledwon, chairman of the Los Angeles Chapter, played for the local buffs at the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium in April.

A former concert artist who has spent the last few years in public school choral work, John showed he had not forgotten what all those buttons and stopkeys on the 3/16 Wurlitzer are for as he played to the largest audience of the season. From his "Rondo in G" to his *My Fair Lady*, he was acclaimed by the fans, for whom he served up an encore of "Mame," the title tune of the mu-



John Ledwon

sical he had just directed at Newberry Park High School.

Following pleasant visits by both the Valley of the Sun and San Diego chapters, the Los Angeles Chapter itself decided it was time for a little trip. Calling on the genius of Past Chairman Chick Lander to manage the event, 123 members of the chapter made an Amtrak run to San Diego for such treats as a harbor cruise, the Reuben H. Fleet Space Theatre, a session at the Kearney Mesa's Organ Power No. 1's 3/16 Wurlitzer with staff organist Wayne Seppala and our own program director, Dean McNichols. Then the group bused to the mighty Reginald Foort 5/27 Moller at the beautifully renovated Pavilion Restaurant in Pacific Beach for dinner and music — the latter by our chapter chairman, John Ledwon. Following a tour and movie presentation of the restoration of the 4/33 Robert Morton at the former Fox Theatre, soon to become a private presentation



George Blackmore

house, the group was taken to the Solano Beach Organ Power No. 3 restaurant. Here organist Earl McCandless of the local staff previewed one of the lushest of Mortons — a 4/21 rescued from the Midland Theatre in Kansas City.

Both Organ Power Pizza houses and the Pavilion Restaurant are owned by organ fancier Sandy Fleet, who also boasts a 3/15 Wurlitzer in his home studio. To both Sandy and Lois Segur, the San Diego Chapter chairperson, we bow from the waist for their hospitality.

On Mother's Day the spotlight of the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium was focused on the promising young artist, Dan Semer, a local student of Bill Thomson. In making his Los Angeles debut on the 3/16 Wurlitzer, Dan presented an impressive array of imaginative arrangements indicating a great future for this young artist.

The June spot was ably filled by British organist, George Blackmore,

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(Left) The marquee tells the story of what the Motor City Chapter is trying to accomplish. (Right) Set-up day for the carnival in the Redford Theatre parking lot.



(Don Lockwood Photos)

who is always welcome in the "colonies." Playing for the first time at the Pasadena Crown Theatre, which, with its 3/11 Wurlitzer, is currently being restored, George made himself a hero indeed. With a varied program, capped with his famous series of big dance band hits and "foot stompers" out of the past, George came close to coaxing the crowd to the aisles for dancing.

Following the National Convention, our August Concert will feature the *Stars of Tomorrow*, a group of young up-and-comers from our area. This event is a repetition of a very successful program first produced in 1973 by past program director, Deke Warner, who will again handle the affair.

BOB HILL

### MOTOR CITY

Our Second Sunday program at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor in May featured Greg Yassick at the console of the 3/13 Barton. Bob Cowley was the artist for the June Second Sunday program.

Artists appearing at the 3/16 Barton at the Royal Oak Theatre Fourth Sunday were 15-year-old Ron Mor-

occo in May, and Floyd Bunt in June.

Eddie Weaver returned to the Redford Theatre on May 14 for a one-night program that featured silent comedies with Harold Lloyd and Laurel and Hardy. A near-capacity house enjoyed Eddie's organ antics and selections from his vintage song slide collection.

A two-day Open House and Garage Sale was held at the Redford Theatre in June as a fund raising effort for our Buy the Redford project. While people browsed around the many tables in the lobby, more crowded onto the stage for additional bargains. Scheduled tours of the theatre were conducted during the two days and the organ was played throughout the sale by chapter members. We realized a sizeable profit from the sale, and our neighbors had a chance to visit our "home" and learn more about us.

Over a dozen large amusement rides moved into the two Redford Theatre parking lots for our Giant Carnival, June 15-19. The five-day fund raising event included, in addition to the amusement rides, several game booths manned by chapter members. The most popular of

these seemed to be the *dunk tank* and the car smashing booth (three sledgehammer blows for a quarter). The net result was a profit for the chapter and a lot of tired chapter members.

You, too, can still help us reach our goal by sending your tax-deductible contribution to: Motor City The-



One of the popular rides, the double ferris wheel, took people above the roof of the theatre.

(Don Lockwood Photo)

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Chapter members manned game booths such as the one here in front of another popular ride.  
(Don Lockwood Photo)

atre Organ Society, P.O. Box 40716, Redford, Michigan 48240. Contributors of \$25.00, or more, will receive a "I'm An Angel — I Helped Buy the Redford" pin to wear.

John Muri appeared at the Royal Oak Theatre for a one-night show on June 18. On the silent screen we featured the Larry Semon comedy *Sawmill* (1922) and "Fatty" Arbuckle in *Waiter's Ball* (1916) with superb accompaniment by John at the 3/16 Barton. In addition, John treated the audience to a pops concert, featuring novelty solos, and a sing-along.

DON LOCKWOOD

### NOR-CAL

The scene of our May 22 meeting was the Avenue Theatre in San Francisco. In the spotlight were Dennis and Heidi James. This was the third annual appearance for this famous and talented couple. As expected the

concert portion was a well-balanced and planned program. We heard flawless solo and duo performances of marches, waltzes, standards, and classics plus several of their own compositions.

During intermission, brisk record sales attested to the interest in preserving the James mood. A nice selection of platters and sheet music produced by Dennis and Heidi provided something for everyone to enjoy after the concert.

The second half of the program featured Dennis at the Wurlitzer accompanying Gloria Swanson in *Manhandled*. Heidi scored the silent and all cues were targeted precisely. As an encore Dennis wrapped up the rapture with "At the Jazz Man's Ball."

Sunday, June 12 we enjoyed a joint meeting with the Sierra Chapter in Sacramento at their own organ in the Golden Bear Theatre at the Cal-Exposition Fairgrounds. Again, many of us enjoyed this fine instrument.

JIM DUNBAR

### NORTH TEXAS

The April meeting, held on May 1, was certainly one of our best. We were again invited to the home of the Gordon Wrights, that beautiful place in northern Dallas which they have designed around a theatre organ. Currently their music room houses the console of the Robert Morton which was originally installed in the Rialto Theatre in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1923. It was later moved to the Orpheum in the same city, with an addition of ranks bringing it up to a full nine ranks, all unified through a two-manual console. Gordon Wright acquired it in 1968 and installed it in their previous home, with the console in the

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den and the ranks housed in an adjacent room speaking through shutters built into the wall. True organ enthusiasts, the Wrights had it playing as beautifully as possible in their former home, but felt that to really get the full benefits of the instrument, it should be housed in a room as close in size as possible to its original theatre home, yet part of the family domicile. Hence the design of the new home and the installation of the organ therein, as described in previous Chapter Notes.

The main change in the instrument after it left Tulsa has been the replacement of the relay system with a modern solid-state relay assembly about 1/50th the size of the original relay racks. The solid-state switching and relay operation was designed by the Wright's son, Chuck, who used



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the project as a basis for his Master's thesis in electrical engineering.

At our April meeting, Chairman Jim Peterson very smoothly segued from the business session to the musical program by introducing Lew Williams, who entertained us with some real theatre organ music. He played several oldies, along with some modern numbers for the younger members and some French and German novelty numbers, hits of today, which Lew picked up while studying in Europe. It was a fine program, enjoyed by all.

Before Jim turned the program over to Lew, he introduced some of our visitors, one of whom was Life Member Rodney Yarborough, who was a technical advisor to Gordon on the installation in their new home. Though paralyzed from an automobile accident, he is still very much of an expert on organs, especially of the theatre variety, concentrating on the technical aspects. He is a charter member of the chapter.

Fred Mitchell, introduced none other than British organist Len Rawle and his wife, Judith, in Texas for a visit with the Mitchells before a concert tour back east. After Lew's concert, the open console session was begun by our British visitor. He mentioned the effects of "jet lag" on an organist, having just disembarked from the flight from England. One could tell just by two numbers that here was an organist who really knew his way around a theatre organ console, and had the talent and musicianship to really make an organ speak beautifully.

Open console followed with several chapter members demonstrating their capabilities at the Gordon Wrights' superb home installation.

Incidentally, being the true theatre organ buffs that they are, the

Wrights are passing the Robert Morton on to son Chuck for installation in his new home, and are planning to install a three-manual organ from the Capri Theatre in its place.

One item we should clarify relative to our 1977 slate of officers. Our Chairman is Jim Peterson. Charles Evans is in the newly-established position of chairman-elect, which means that he will be the 1978 chairman. Just when the incumbent chairman has really begun to learn his way around after a year of chairing the group, he is retired. The chairman-elect position, by watching over the chairman's shoulder, and "turning pages," so to speak, is better prepared for his term of office.

The June meeting, held at the Organ World in Garland, Texas was another good session, even if the summer afternoon and hot weather lured a lot of the members away to their favorite swimming and fishing spots. The business meeting was very constructive, with considerable discussion of the possibilities of our own theatre organ and acquiring a permanent home for it and the chapter. There was a discussion of the area's art programs and how the chapter fits into the Performing Arts phases.

Thanks to Organ World's bossman, Gene Powell, who, after suitable introduction by Program Chairman Lew Williams, entertained us with some very enjoyable organ music, a pot-pourri of theatre organ, oldies, mods and the works, including demonstrations of the really "new" techniques utilizing a synthesizer in conjunction with the organ. Open console saw Lew Williams, Jim Peterson, Danny Ray and several others playing everything from the four-manual theatre organ to the church organ, to the plug-in Conns

and the synthesizers. Music included everything from Boogie-Woogie to Bach.

JOE KOSKI

## OHIO VALLEY

On April 3, we were guests of Herb and LaVerne Merritt at their home, which is complete with a 2/8 Wurlitzer, Opus 1684. Because of space limitations, three sessions were held. Member Herb Wottle played at the first two, and the last one was open console. Those of us who can't play had fun with Herb's roll player attachment. Herb gave a brief talk on the history and development of Wurlitzer organs and his in particular. Merritts have an excellent installation, and all who attended had a good time.

Our May meeting was a special treat. We met at members Stan and Ginny Todd's Shady Nook Theatre Restaurant. Stan's four-manual Wurlitzer should be well known to readers of these columns. By the time you read this, he hopes to have the organ up to 37 ranks from its present 34. The artist for this meeting was none other than Gaylord Carter, who provided a special program for the chapter, telling us of his experiences over many years of organ playing and playing some old and new tunes as well. Needless to say, this was one of the best meetings we've had in a long time.

Gaylord was in Cincinnati in order to preside, the following day, May 23, at the official unveiling of our organ in Emery Auditorium. The press was invited, and we had a good turnout, resulting in news features on the three major TV stations and a good-sized newspaper article including a photo of Gaylord at the console. As announced in the April-May, 1977, issue of THEATRE ORGAN, the opening concerts will be



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Gaylord Carter at the Emery-Albee Wurlitzer in Emery Auditorium, Cincinnati. (Mike Detroy Photo)



Gaylord and the Wurlitzer at the Shady Nook Restaurant for the chapter meeting. (Mike Detroy Photo)

on October 21, 22, and 23, 1977. The chapter will present Gaylord Carter in a silent film and organ show on the first two nights, and the University of Cincinnati will have its own program on October 23, with a university choral group and featuring Searle Wright at the Wurlitzer. We are naturally hoping for a sellout on both our nights. For the full story on our Wurlitzer, see our article in the June-July, 1976 THEATRE ORGAN.

On June 19, we held our annual meeting and election of officers in our new home, Emery Auditorium. The business meeting was a harmonious and short 40 minutes, and the next several hours were spent listening to the glorious sounds from our newly-completed organ. Members of the work crew are now busy playing the bugs out of it, but the sound is already magnificent. The program for the afternoon featured members Tote Pratt, organ crew chief, Glenn Merriam, and Jack Tarr. Honorary member Searle Wright was present and was coaxed

up to the console. He just happened to have a list of tunes in his pocket, and provided us with some of the sweetest music maybe even on the other side of heaven. His improvisation on "Hello Dolly" was positively thrilling. Open console for the general membership was held following dinner, and capped off a perfect day. The entire incumbent slate of officers and directors was nominated and unanimously re-elected, with the exception of Florence Kipps, who was forced to resign for health reasons. She was replaced on the board by Philip Underwood. The chapter appreciates Florence Kipp's service and welcomes Phil back to the Board. Other officers are: Hubert Shearin, chairman; Carl Pratt, vice chairman; Michael Detroy, secretary; John Scott, treasurer; and board members Herbert Merritt and Edward Rose. We are investigating the possibility of retirement benefits in these positions! It was announced at the annual meeting that chapter members Mr. and Mrs. John J. Strader are giving, as a gift

to the university, funds for a new theatre-type screen and the construction of a new, modern projection booth to house the two 35mm projectors owned by the chapter. Straders are also having these professionally rebuilt as a gift to the chapter. We are very grateful to the Straders for their generous gifts, which will make Emery the finest film facility in downtown Cincinnati, capable of handling anything from silent film to CinemaScope. This adds greatly to the value of Emery Auditorium and will contribute much to the quality of shows we present there.

We are looking forward to an exciting and active year, beginning with our dedication concerts in the fall.

MIKE DETROY

### SAN DIEGO

Our May members meeting was held at Ozzie's Music Center with Cheryl Creel and Wayne Seppela as hosts. Bob Lewis presented a most interesting film showing the com-



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plete restoration of the Robert Morton in the Fox Theatre.

On May 14, our long anticipated San Sylmar trip occurred. The 60 members who participated are still thrilled by the happenings of this day. It was an excellent example of the friendliness and goodwill that exists in the world of ATOS. Special thanks must go to Program Chairman Jerry Sullivan who planned the tour; to Chick Landers, John Ledwon and Bob Hill of the L.A. Chapter who helped tremendously with advice and acted as our guides; to Sandy Fleet for driving his motor home to accommodate the overflow of bus passengers; to Dick Simonton for opening his home to us where we heard Ty Woodard play the 4/63 Aeolian-Skinner and Rod Skelding the 4/36 Wurlitzer; to Pearl and Mike Ohman of Pipes 'n Pizza for delicious food and open console on the 2/11 Wurlitzer; and last, but most definitely not least, to Gordon Belt, tour director of San Sylmar. We heard computerized tapes of several artists on that beautiful Wurlitzer and even got to hear Rex Koury in person. A memorable day.

The L.A. Chapter had their San Diego Organ Crawl on May 21 and 22 and it was a pleasure to share part of their fun. They are a good group!

In June, we held our second Dinner-Concert at the new Pavilion (formerly Organ Power) in Pacific Beach on the Mighty-Mo. No longer the pizza parlor atmosphere, but a delightful spot to dine while listening to the beautiful sound of that magnificent 5/29 Moller. Dennis and Heidi James again proved their incredible talents as musicians, performers and film accompanists. Less than a full-house attendance witnessed what many consider the es-



Lois Segur with Dennis and Heidi James at the dinner-concert at the Pavilion in Pacific Beach.

sence of theatre-organ playing a completely improvised scoring of a difficult film, *Metropolis*. Although this film may not be the ideal general public fare, it seems incredible that it could have been produced way back in 1926. The artist's cueing was absolute perfection.

Our June member meeting was held at Piano-Organ Warehouse with Billie Naillon and Bill Porter as hosts. Floyd Watson gave us a mini-concert of both classical and pops on the Conn 651 followed by open console.

Another event of interest was George Blackmore's appearance at The Pavilion on June 20. His experience as a performer and his tremendous musical ability can certainly thrill an audience. He makes it look so easy to play the Mighty-Mo. Of interest to his many friends here in the States is the news that he has been appointed promotions manager for Conn (U.D.) Ltd. as of July 4.

We are looking forward to the opening of the Solana Beach Plan-

tation in July. The sounds of the 4/20 Robert Morton installed there are mighty sweet.

LOIS SEGUR  
JERRY SULLIVAN

### SOONER STATE

It's been a long time since we in Soonerland, have been heard from but we are alive and active. Our current officers are Phil Judkins, chairman; Harry Rasmussen, vice-chairman; Joe Crutchfield, program chairman; Betty Weddle, secretary, and J.D. Ellis, treasurer.

Although there is not a single theatre pipe organ left in any theatre in the entire state of Oklahoma, we do have several pipe organs in the area to play. Many of our chapter meetings have centered around the 3/10 Robert Morton installed in Tulsa's American Christian College (formerly the Cathedral of the Christian Crusade.) Generally, our meetings have been the open-console type, with impromptu performances by our playing members. Other monthly meetings have been in homes of members, where there's at



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least a plug-in to play.

Two home pipe organs are in playing order. Phil and Laura Judkins have hosted a number of Christmas parties around his 3/7 Wicks and last Christmas we journeyed to nearby Claremore to Bruce and Martha Wilson's rural home to hear and play their 2/12 Hilgreen-Lane. Several other home instruments are in the planning stage.

Probably the most exciting thing to happen to theatre organ enthusiasts in Tulsa in the installation of a 4/21 Wurlitzer Publix No. 1 in Christ Chapel at Oral Roberts University. Originally built in 1925 for the Palms Theatre in Detroit, it was rescued from storage by ORU and the Phelps Organ Company. It is probably the most unique installation in the entire United States. First of all, the chapel is acoustically designed around the pipe organ, and is incredibly beautiful inside. Including the balcony, it seats about 3000 persons. All of the walls in the round auditorium are partially mirrored so you can see yourself out in the audience — if you look in the right mirror! In addition to the theatre organ, a Phelps tracker classical organ, with its own four-manual console and over 100 ranks of concert pipes is also being installed.

Because the original theatre console was not salvageable, Phelps built a completely new one using Wurlitzer plans. It can be moved anywhere on the stage. The control cable is about as big around as your little finger and contains only 34 wires — and four of those are ground wires! This is possible because they've made use of the latest multiplexing techniques using solid state circuitry. The back of the console is practically empty — it contains only twenty or so printed circuit boards containing integrated circuits and transistors.

The massive setter boards normally found in the rear of a Wurlitzer console are also lacking. (As the Phelps man said, "I know it works, but I don't believe it!") There's more — the tracker organ is also playable from the theatre console — two rows of stop tabs around the top of the horseshoe control the concert organ.

Members of the group and the AGO are working with the university to try to arrange a series of both classical and theatre organ public concerts on this installation. The premier solo performance on the Wurlitzer was presented to a full house in February 1976 by Ray Bohr of Radio City Music Hall fame. Our group has had several meetings around the instrument, including delightful programs on separate occasions by two of our more talented members, John Hickman and Lyle Thurman. (I've never driven anything this big before," Lyle commented.) Lyle's high-school-age student Rhonda Cornwell closed his program with "Variations on 'America'" by Charles Ives. There's a very gifted young lady we hope to hear more from!

We are also happy to report that the big 4/47 Kilgen installed in the old (Tulsa) Central High School is being moved to the new Central High, largely due to efforts of our chapter.

Not merely content with local organs, chapter members have journeyed out-of-town on various occasions. We've travelled to the College of the Ozarks in Branson, Missouri, to hear professor Burt Buhrman at their 3/15 Wurlitzer. A bus load went to Oklahoma City to hear the 3/11 Wurlitzer in the Showplace Restaurant. We've even been all the way to Wichita (Kansas) to hear the magnificent Century II 4/42 Wurlitzer.

And as a breather from all that

fabulous music, our latest meeting was our annual picnic on Harvey Young's "tropical island." Harvey owns and operates a small airport, and has built his "island" off to one side, complete with lots of trees, bamboo, a tropical lagoon, lights, barbecue — and "pipe"d-in music!

JOHN ROBERTS  
DOROTHY SMITH

## TOLEDO

The second quarter of 1977 began with the chapter work committee headed by Robert Teska preparing the Ohio Theatre organ chambers for the ultimate installation of Toledo's first theatre pipe organ restoration. The ways and means committee, headed by Donald Gwinner, is busily trying to raise money for the installation. While the remaining members were enjoying various pipe and electronic organ concerts, of particular note was — "Howards Organ Spectacular," four great days of concerts beginning with Paul Street at the Mighty Wurlitzer on June 1, Warren Squire at the "Grand



Bill Cottle at the Wurlitzer with Toledo chapter members.

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Scene of Howards "Organ Spectacular" in June featuring Karen and Virg Howard at the piano and organ. Toledo chapter members (L to R) are Harold and Ann Lewis, Harold Johnson, Karen and Virg Howard, Ruth and Sonny Renschler. (Front row) Tom Steiner, Warren Cottle and Chairman William Cottle.

200" Eminent Organ June 2, Virg Howard and Bill Yaney at the Conn & Kimball consoles June 3, and finally Karen and Virg Howard "A Piano and Organ Duet" June 4, also Larry and Lyn Wenner attended Western Reserve Chapters Super '77 Sneak Preview featuring Keith Chapman and Lowell Ayars — a great week of area organ concerts followed by TATOS'S pre-convention social event, a barbeque in the Cottle Brothers Garden attended by 45 enthusiastic organ buffs many of which entertained at open console.

WILLIAM W. COTTLE

### VALLEY OF THE SUN

I doubt that ever has so much been seen by so many in so little time. From Friday evening to Sunday evening the weekend of April 29, our chapter was on the go. We traveled by rented vans and a comfortable 12-passenger club wagon all heading

for the Alexandria Hotel in downtown Los Angeles.

We started out Saturday morning at 8:30 with our first stop at Dick Simonton's home in North Hollywood. In his living room we were greeted by a 3/61 Skinner classic organ. This beautiful instrument was played for us by our own Ty Woodward of Phoenix, who is now studying in California. Ty did a tremendous job on this organ as well as on the 4/36 Wurlitzer in the "Bijou Theatre" located in the lower level of the home. Mr. Simonton was a most gracious host and we were very grateful to visit the place where ATOS was born 22 years ago.

Next stop was John Ledwon's home at Agoura. This lovely home was built around the organ, a 3/26 Wurlitzer from the Paramount Theatre in Middletown, N.Y. John gave a terrific, but short concert that showed off the organ beautifully and then offered our members a chance

at the keyboard during open console. After several brave souls tried their hand at the console, we were off to Bob Powers' home in Camarillo. Here we saw a beautiful, custom made Rogers organ. It is a 3/14 electronic unit orchestral organ. After Mr. Powers demonstrated the organ for us, he introduced the guest artist, Maria Kumagai, of Tokyo, now studying in California. She gave a lovely performance.

Late for lunch, but loving every minute of it, we arrived at Pipes and Pizza in Reseda. While we enjoyed our pizza, Tony Wilson was our host and did a fine job demonstrating the 2/10 Wurlitzer. He very kindly invited members to open console while we all relaxed and had a chance to catch our breath. We arrived back at the hotel in time to change for dinner and then on to Joe Koons Motorcycle Shop in Long Beach.

The people there were terrific hosts and made us feel most welcome. We were treated to an evening of music that was varied, unusual and just plain beautiful. Among the local talent we heard were Chris Secrest, Gerald Magano, Dana Schmidt and John Scot. A couple of our young members, Steve Schlesing and John Sheak, took advantage of open console time.

Everyone was raring to go at 9:30 next morning as we left for the Crown Theatre in Pasadena. This project, undertaken by Bruce Barkis, was for most the highlight of the trip. It was the first time many of us had heard a theatre pipe organ in its "natural setting." We were treated to a short concert by Billy Wright and a few numbers by English artist Rod Skelding on that fantastic instrument. Our own Steve Schlesing and Bill Carr tried their hand at the keyboard. After a tour of the building and a description of the outstanding

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#2 Pacific Beach, 5/28 Moller, 1165 Garnet Ave.

#3 Solana Beach, 4/20 Robert Morton, 113 S. Acacia St.

renovation project underway there, Mr. Barkis favored us with a farewell number on the 3/11 Wurlitzer. His rendition of "Ruby" was a perfect ending to a terrific trip.

Finally, a big thank you from all of us to Bob Hill and Bob Stratton of Los Angeles for their help in making our arrangements and especially to Bob Hill for spending his weekend with us serving as our local guide, everywhere we went. We hope we can return the favor someday.

In June the chapter sponsored its second fund raising concert for the benefit of the restoration project on the Phoenix College Wurlitzer organ. The artists were well known Dennis and Heidi James. The first part of the program was a variety of old time favorites as well as something new in the form of Heidi's new compositions. For the last hour-and-one-half the audience experienced something new in modern day organ concerts. The Jameses presented the silent movie *Metropolis*, a 1926 style science fiction type story that was made in Germany. Dennis and Heidi used Heidi's composition "Gotham" as a fitting overture to the film. They did a fine job accompanying it with their original music and sound effects. Dennis accompanied on a Conn and Heidi on the



Mr. and Mrs. Keith Chapman after his concert at the 5/167 E.M. Skinner in Cleveland's Convention Center.

grand piano and the synthesizer. Dennis announced it was the first time they have presented this program in the United States since doing it on tour in England and Australia where it was well-received.

JANICE PERRY

#### WESTERN RESERVE

Our chapter is very busy getting ready for the Fall Regional we are hosting. On June 4 two of the artists who will perform gave our chapter members a preview of the type of program they are going to play.

The afternoon started out with



Lowell Ayars played the 3/14 Wurlitzer in Gray's Armory, Cleveland.

Keith Chapman playing the 5/167 E.M Skinner in Cleveland's Convention Center. The organ speaks onto the stage and then can be heard in two separate auditoriums. Keith's program was well received.

Then our group left for Grays Armory, home of a 3/14 Wurlitzer. Lowell Ayars played a pure theatre organ concert. After Lowell's program the many present enjoyed a catered dinner, and open console.

Our chapter hopes that many people can come to our city Thanksgiving weekend and join us for "Super '77" Regional Convention.

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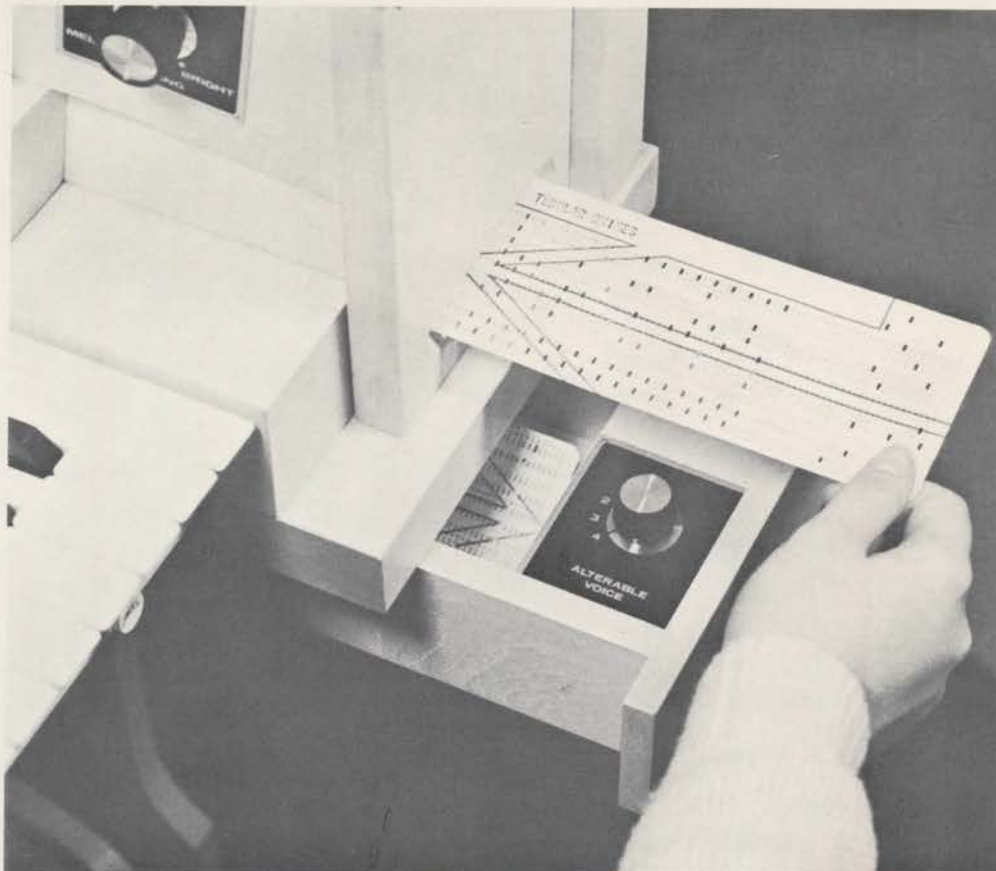
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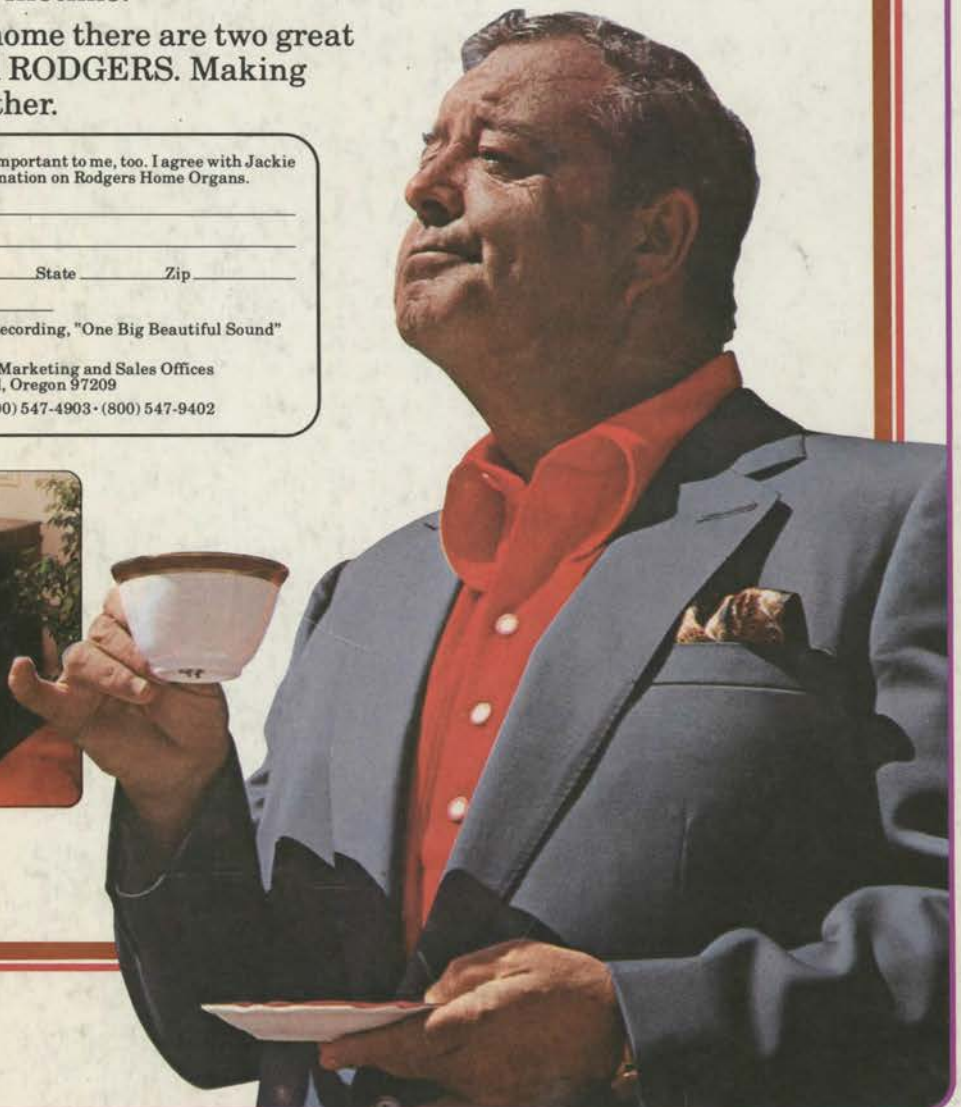
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