

NOTICE!

There will be no August Meeting. Next Meeting Sunday September 14, 2008.

Congratulations Keith!

Those present for the July meeting learned about Keith Taylor purchasing the Lewiston Strand Theatre Wurlitzer from former member David Card. Opus 261 was installed in 1919, and was removed, and used in a church in S. Portland, after a trip to Massachusetts. The theatre ranks were parted out, so by the time David bought the organ in 1965, it came with only the "classical" ranks. David acquired some theatre ranks over the years to add to the organ. David fell ill in 2000, and could no longer play the instrument. The barn that housed the instrument is to be torn down, and replaced with a new house that will be more accessible for him. David's friend contacted us, in hopes that the organ could be saved. What he had fit the bill for Keith's home installation, so on August 3 a contingent of our members showed up in support of the project, and moved the Wurlitzer out of the barn, and into a truck bound for Keith's house, where it will be integrated into the ongoing home installation. We can't wait to hear it!

A dream come true for a retired Air Force Colonel.

That would be Col. Jack Moelmann who lived out his dream to play the Radio City Music Hall Wurlitzer, on August 3rd. He spent \$118,182.44 to rent the hall for the 3 hour concert. Unfortunately, like we have found with concerts, they are hard to sell, only filling up the orchestra level about 1/3 full. You can see the pictures, and full article here: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/11/nyregion/11organ.html?ex=1219118400&en=1396332618c7fbe4&ei=5070&emc=eta1>

Allen Miller's review of the event:

It was certainly an historic and monumental occasion, and friends not only played, they came from all over the country and beyond. It was also a very musical and entertaining evening. Veterans, Walt Strony, Lew Williams, and Russell Holmes handled the Music Hall Wurlitzer's idiosyncrasies and dead notes with an extreme degree of professionalism, and also gave us a decent

08/15/08

romp through the instrument's resources, at least the ones it still has to offer.

The evening belonged to Jack Moelmann, and he offered no pretense. He was simply himself, there to have a good time, realize a dream, and share it with lots of friends, 'some of whom (he) liked better than others, but all of whom (he) had known since the day (he) met them.' When things didn't go exactly as planned or perhaps desired, Jack poked fun at himself, and the audience loved it. The audience clearly wanted to be there and enjoyed every minute. And a plethora of minutes there were. The program lasted over 2-1/2 hours, plus an ample in-termission with time to refresh, buy a beverage, or Jack's wares, cassettes, wire recordings, and tee shirts, or just socialize with the who's who? and enjoy the art deco surroundings.

While duets were promised with two organists at the consoles, for the most part, one or the other say there doing nothing, the duets being the passing of the baton from 51st St to 50th St on one piece or another in a medley. Granted, playing duets a full city block apart is tricky, and may have required cell phones with long distance (or International) calls to coordinate matters. I almost expected an appearance of Russell Holmes mid-stage, at grand piano, for the finale, but that probably was yet another \$90,000.

Many of us had "choice seats" right up front and center, only feet away from the stage lip. I have no idea why the people who run these venues think the best seats for an organ concert are those right at the edge of the stage, but they do. It would even have been too close if the Rockettes had performed. (Next time, Jack.) I was right between the chambers, the percussion chamber overhead, and it was the Music Hall Organ on "headphones" perhaps with a few steroids thrown in.

Much has been said about the organ over the past years. It was still full of dead notes, causing obvious gaps in some of the music, especially when the organist was trying to solo a voice (or cluster of voices, such as full Tibias, or Tubas.) Many times, the Solo 4' Tibia, or mutations simply dropped out of the melody. Most people probably didn't notice. The Sonorous Tuba Mirabilis (and its Profunda partner) often dropped out the same note on both ranks, leaving the organist with a hole in the melody. Russell simply jumped octaves to find a note that existed. Lew and Walter seemed luckier in avoiding the gaps. What got by the best were the traditional full organ combinations we are so used to hearing at the Music Hall, with and without 2' Tibias, Glockenspiel, and Xylophone. The latter two seemed to have fewer dead notes than some of the pipe ranks.

Jack proclaimed that the organ has lots of red stops and that the tabs were very pretty. Try as I might, I never heard most of the traditionally expected reeds, Trumpets, Post Horn, and the subtleties of Clarinets, Saxophones, Oboes and Kinuras. Jack's "Rubber Duckie" had no quackers.

The Bishops have done much to quiet the organ, with extraneous wind noise nearly gone. Tuning was tolerable, and tremulants seemed to work in the traditional Music Hall fashion. Lew William's "Toccata, Symphony V" (Widor) came through with extremely "French" tuning at times. I would guess that there were fewer dead notes than last year, but for this listener, it was still like a ride on a street full of potholes.

The massed strings and voxes were as luscious as I can remember ever hearing them, and there were some moments in Walt's, Lew's, and Russell's medleys where soft combinations were showcased and were as delicious and sweet as Junior's desserts. For the first time in years, the organ is again amplified. I have mixed re-actions to that. It certainly isn't subtle, especially the Xylophone and Glock-enspiel mirabilis, nearly as loud as the rest of what is playable at this point. I was unable to detect sound from the other chambers as coming from speakers, the effect might have been different further back in the house. It was difficult to guess how much sound was hampered by the two suspended large screen TV displays right in front of the lower proscenium chamber openings. The TV screens were cleverly decorated with ruffled curtains, but the array of five huge speaker clusters was nothing sort of ugly, a blight on the sunburst. I can see the need for amplification when playing to a full house of exiting and entering patrons, but during a concert, I would rather hear the organ au naturale.

While I was at prior NYATOS Sunday morning musicales, especially those with John Seng, Lyn Larsen, and Tom Hazleton, my memory isn't so good at making comparisons between sounds over a period of decades. Those solo organists had no advantage of a working (settable) combination action and multiple memory levels. I certainly do remember some rare soft moments back then, with solos on the Bassett Horn (Clarinet) and other choice goodies that just happen to be standard Wurlitzer ranks with fancy Kimball names. Certainly, back then, the organ had a pronounced rush of wind noise, and it was obvious when the amplification was turned on just prior to the show. I do not recall enjoying the organ quite as much as I did last night, in spite of the missing notes. If the technicians keep fixing on what doesn't work, the results should be rewarding.

It was Jack Moelmann's evening, a feather in TOSI's cap, and a great publicity event for theatre organ in general. Jack was marveling to me about the wide range of publicity that had "caught on," and news cameras were in evidence, both out-side, and during the first half of the performance, especially when the Colonel was at the console. Jack mentioned that a segment is to be expected on "60-Minutes," I would assume tonight. Even music reviewers caught on to the moment.

Thanks, Jack, you made it happen. Thanks to all in TOSI who participated and helped pull it off. Now, where do we get \$200,000 for the encore?

Allen Miller

08/15/08

From Chapter Technician Jim Martin:

Greetings All-

It would be a good idea for us to take a break for a few weeks as we have been going non-stop for quite sometime now, especially since December of 2007 when we began the re-leathering project. The stage at OOB will be very hot and stuffy, although fans will aid that discomfort, but in September the stage will be more pleasant. Therefore we will resume our work in September.

Dwight and I discussed this earlier in the summer and again last night by phone, and he too agrees with this decision. In August we typically do not have a business meeting anyhow, so the time would have been spent only in a work session.

Enjoy the time off and later I will send out another email looking for help in September for those interested in truly non-digital restoration. And again, many thanks for a great job in Harrison. Jim

The Journal of the Lloyd Installation:

FROM THE WORK JOURNALS OF ALBERT E. LLOYD

For those of you who have been following this series, here is the next installment. It is being brought to you in non-pdf format so that you don't have to do any download.

This picks up from where we left off a few months ago.

Mr. Lloyd continues work on the installation of a Hope-Jones organ in the 2nd Reformed Church, Jersey City, NJ.

On the whole, work progresses fairly well, but there is always a problem or two. (Might I point out that things like that still happen today, no matter who the builder.)

Thanks to those of you who sent emails asking that I continue this series.

Charles Schramm

* * * * *

FROM THE WORK JOURNALS OF ALBERT E. LLOYD

Jersey City - Jan. 15th 1910

Gentlemen,

Up to the present time there is no heavy current in the church. The tinsmith is still on the job but will be finished by the time the electricity is in.

08/15/08

The work on this job is satisfactory considering the difficulties, but when you do not see them you are not able to judge, so considering how near I am to New York, I think someone ought to look in oftener, so as to be in a position to judge the amount of work to be done on a finished job.

Please send me three ladders:

- 1 - 10ft. long
- 1 - 8ft. long
- 1 - 3ft. long, all 16" wide.

Send one passage board 9ft x 18-1/4 wide.

Send these quick.

Your's faithfully,
Albert E. Lloyd

Jersey City - Jan. 19th 1910

Gentlemen,

At last I have got the juice to the motor and the wind in the job. There are quite a number of leaks in the trunking as the tinsmith was one of the worst I have met. I got rid of him before he finished his job and am doing what little remains myself.

Mr. Hope-Jones was here this afternoon. I told him I expect to be ready for the voicer early next week, but will let you know exactly when, later. Mr. Hope-Jones seemed satisfied with the progress made.

The mechanical Swell Shutter Actions (3) are better than I expected considering the angles to be turned.

Neither the motor or generator are quite up to the indicated speed, but I have enough wind and too much electricity; I will send particulars later.

Mr. Hope-Jones wishes me to state that the Ped. keys are not strong enough in the springs.

Bill of Lading received for two cases, but no cases yet. Will work on Sunday.

Your's faithfully,
Albert E. Lloyd

p.s. - Please send some time sheets.

Jersey City, NJ Jan. 22nd 1910

Gentlemen,

The two cases of front pipes arrived here yesterday; one case was stoved in and several pipes badly damaged. I have written

Mr. Licome about it and suggested a claim for damage be put in.

I have to miter fourteen pipes in the Sw. base for Aeolian, four V.D.O. and five Celestes. This ought to have been seen to in the factory.

Referring to the front pipes again; the plan sent does not correspond with the case work here, but I expect you know that by now, because I understood the architect to say that he was sending you a drawing of the altered case, and the next day I get a wire from you saying the front was being shipped. Please write at once if you have anything to suggest.

Minchin is at present going on with the front as far as possible.

Your's faithfully,

Albert E. Lloyd

Quotable Quote

How do you mkae a Theatre Organ into a Church Organ?

Take out all of the good stuff!