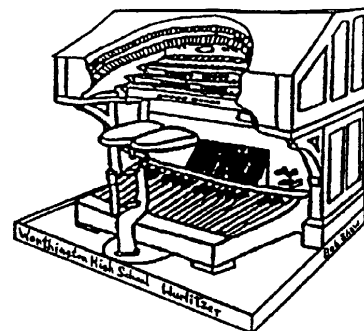


THE STOPTAB

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
**CENTRAL OHIO THEATRE ORGAN
SOCIETY**



August 2005

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August 21st Meeting at Betty Polsley's, Urbana, Ohio

COTOS will meet at the home of Betty Polsley on Sunday August 21st at 3:00 PM. This will be our annual "potluck" dinner. Everyone should bring their favorite dishes and be ready for an entertaining afternoon.

Directions: From North Columbus take State Route 161 due west to Mutual, Ohio, turn right onto State Route 29 and proceed to the city limits of Urbana. Turn left on the second street within the city limits (directly opposite the Scioto Square/Kroger Save-On entry) and proceed down New Haven Drive to 146 (4th house on right). If lost, call (937)-652-1775. From other points south, take I-70 west to Route 29. Go northwest on Route 29 through Mechanicsburg and Mutual, Ohio to the city limits of Urbana, then follow the above directions. Plan on about 45 to 50 minutes drive time from Worthington.

Guests at COTOS Meetings

Just a reminder about the new policy of guests at our COTOS meetings. If a member brings a guest who is a potential member, that member gets to choose a CD from among those the club has available. Then if that guest joins COTOS, the guest also gets to pick out a CD.

UPCOMING MEETINGS....

September 18th – Ohio Theatre, Columbus, Ohio
October – Home of Dr. Karl Saunders, Zanesville, Ohio

A Brief History of the Pipe Organ

Submitted by John Adams, your foreign correspondent

It is generally agreed that a pipe organ was first conceived and built by a Greek engineer, Ctesibus by name, (some say he was a barber) around 2200 years ago, give or take. As an engineer he was supposedly working on the design for some other unrelated project. What he discovered was the present concept of multiple selectable pipes (flutes no doubt) sounding with a wind source other than ones lungs with a method to play the pipes. In the barber's or (engineer's) instrument it was air pressure created by a column of water and hence called a Hydraulis. Since the keyboard was developed much later in time, selecting the pipes to sound had to be creative if nothing else.

Organ progress from that day forward was VERY SLOW. Some of the very early organs became known as Portatives or Portatifs and are shown in very old paintings and frescos. They were as the name implies, portable or at least movable. Some were called Regals which were less portable, but mobile. They were usually but not always, constructed so that they required two operatives; an air pumper and the artist and hence were labor intensive. Picture an accordion with pipes. In fact some of the early paintings showed a Portatif remarkable like present day accordion. Of course with the accordion construction the pipes would have to be *really* fastened down. Until the use of water power, the Hydraulis, and much, much later, the electric motor driven fan, there was always the need for two or more people to supply the wind. Sometimes these were by a hand crank and sometimes by foot power treading on big bellows. Either must have been tiring and unsteady, at least until the regulating bellows was perfected.

Between the end of the Roman Empire and the 8th century, almost all details of organ construction and use was lost as well as were the organs. There are reports that the Roman army would take a pipe organ into battle and scare the Togas off of the enemy. Some organs will do that. I have a book entitled "On Divers Arts" written by the Monk, Theophilus in the 1120's and that was long ago. Theophilus was not only literate but knowledgeable in many of the skills and crafts of the time. Normally the craftsman was not literate hence the scarcity of documentation. In one chapter there are pretty complete instructions, with drawings, on building a very small pipe organ. The entire book is interesting if you have any interest in ancient skills of this type like painting, glassmaking, and metalwork.

By the time of Bach, the organ had developed basically in to its present form, but this was a long time in coming. The organ Bach played is still extant in Leipzig Germany, the local Kirk. Once pipes were refined into the two types of flue and reed, a method to supply and steady the wind, and a usable keyboard, there seemed to be little else to do until the enlightenment of the 18th century. Early keyboards were so hard to use the early organists were called "organ pounders."

The two types of pipes, the flue and reed haven't changed much and no matter how many ranks an organ has, there are still just those two types with of course thousands of shapes, sizes and voicing. Within the flue category are the flutes, strings, etc. and within the reeds are any of the ones with fluttering brass reeds. The Diaphone, one of Jones' creations has a wooden reed but is not called a Reed pipe. Strangely, some pipes which are reeds, don't have reeds, and visa versa. Also strangely, or not, the various parts of a pipe took on anatomical names, to, ears, mouth, throat, toe, boot (clothing) and some of the pipe ranks also had similar anatomical references like the Vox Humana or "Human Voice." The pipes sit upon a "chest" (Talk about a heavy feeling!!!). Also in describing the organ, it speaks and sometimes there is a chorus division. Using that kind of terminology is not so unusual though since with the modern day computer we have the mouse, crowbar, and other clever names.

To be continued....

JUST A REMINDER...

Help with COTOS finances and earn free CD's

Expenses associated with the installation of the Z-tronics system are running more than expected. The system requires a number of pistons which are up to us to order. In addition, the sequencer, which allows us to record the organist's finger motions, is now obsolete, with an entirely new system being designed. This in itself will require roughly \$700 in unexpected expenses.

To meet these requirements, COTOS is encouraging members and friends to donate to this cause. As appreciation for the donations, COTOS will allow each donor to pick CD's from the COTOS collection of organ concerts. One CD for each gift of \$125, or ten CDs for a gift of \$1,000. These CD's are not available from anywhere else and include many concerts at the Ohio Theatre from 1967 on, including concerts by Bill Dalton, Roger Garrett and many more. At the moment there are about twenty to choose from, but the list is growing as more concerts are converted from reel-to-reel tapes to CD's.

Tom Hamilton is organizing this operation and has the CD's for your selection. You may contact him by phone at 614-486-6043, or by e-mail at TOMKH@EARTHLINK.NET. He will not be at the July meeting as he will be on vacation from July 16-31.

Tom K. Hamilton

Editor on vacation in September...

The editor will be on vacation mid September. Normal publication is expected for September and October Stoptabs. Submit articles for October by the 25th of September.

It's time to start thinking about...

Candidates for the board of directors. Directors with terms ending this year should notify Duane King if running again. Interested individuals in serving on the board should also let Duane know.

THE STOPTAB
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FIRST CLASS

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