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# PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

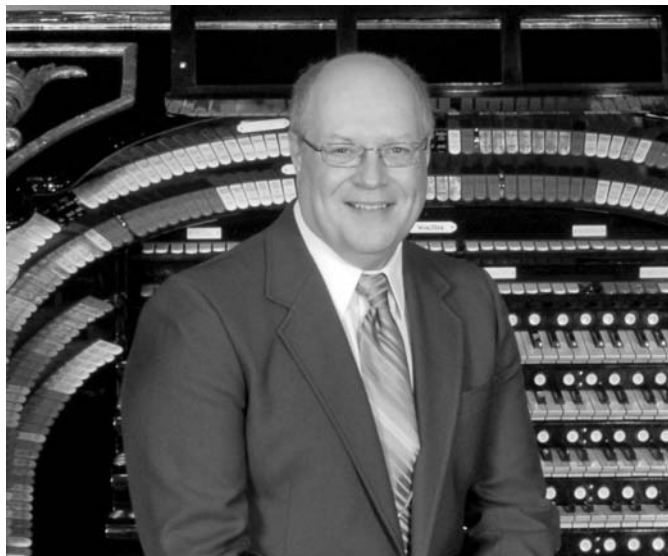
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Volume 19 No. 9

September 2008

A Chapter of American Theatre Organ Society

*Direct from* **ORGAN STOP PIZZA** *in Mesa, Arizona...*



## CHARLIE BALOGH

**Plays at Gig Harbor's  
Wurlitzer Manor  
Sunday, October 12, 2:00 PM**

*If you have never been to spectacular Wurlitzer Manor, visit the website below to see photos and learn the fascinating story of this unique home and world class theatre organ installation.*

<http://www.pstos.org/instruments/wa/gig-harbor/wurlitzer-manor.htm>

**CHARLIE BALOGH'S** interest in music began at age 11 at which time he started organ instruction. He studied classical organ at Trenton State College while performing in supper clubs throughout the area. For a short time, he also studied with Lee Erwin in New York.

From those beginnings, he has emerged as an exciting and dynamic performer at the theatre pipe organ. Charlie worked as a staff organist at *Organ Stop Pizza* in Phoenix from 1973 until 1976. In 1977 he moved to Grand Rapids, MI to become organist at the *Roaring '20s Restaurant*. In 1986 he purchased the business, renaming it *Good Time Charley's*.

After 14 years at the console of the Wurlitzer, he decided to close the restaurant in September of 1991. His monumental following of fans during his tenure in Michigan led to a highly successful community relocation of the restaurant organ to the Grand Rapids Public Museum.

After closing *Good Time Charley's*, Charlie moved back to Arizona to play for *Organ Stop Pizza*, this time in Mesa, at their magnificent new restaurant featuring one of the largest Wurlitzer theatre organs in the world. He has recorded a number of albums on this fabulous instrument, winning the praise of reviewers

for being innovative and setting new standards of performance and repertoire. Charlie was voted ATOS Organist of the Year in 2000.

Charlie's style stems from a love of jazz and the music of the '30s and '40s along with classical influences and a broad background in traditional theatre organ techniques. He is, and continues to be, one of this country's finest artists. In 2002, he celebrated 30 years of professional performance at the console.

Charlie lives in Gold Canyon, AZ with his wife Carrie. He also enjoys composing electronic music, amateur astronomy, and hiking in the Arizona wilderness.

***Seating limited to 90. Admission by donation. Suggested minimum \$40 per person.***

*Age 16 and under free when accompanied by adult. Use enclosed Reservation Form to reserve.*

*Questions? Phone Ray Harris at Prosser Piano, 206-546-8959 or email [ray@pstos.org](mailto:ray@pstos.org)*

*To check for other members in your area interested in carpooling, send an email to [discuss@pstos.org](mailto:discuss@pstos.org)*

The Lavines again invite PSTOS members and their friends to a private benefit concert at their beautiful home. Their generosity and enthusiasm for musical causes is so much appreciated! Proceeds from this special concert will be dedicated to the 2010 Convention Organ Maintenance Fund. Several instruments will require professional work to ready them for the convention and this event provides the opportunity to begin building the necessary funding for this work. Once again, many many thanks to Barbara and Raymond for their generous support!



## PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

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Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is a non-profit organization furthering the appreciation, restoration, and use of the historic Theatre Pipe Organs of the 1920s, through education.

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### Listing of non-PSTOS events in the Pipeline

PSTOS, upon request, will list non-conflicting non-PSTOS theatre organ events in the "Other Events" column of the two Pipelines immediately preceding the event, providing Pipeline editors receive sufficient prior written notification. Venue, artist, type of event, date, and contact information will comprise the included information.

### Advertising in the Pipeline

Classified-type ads for member-owned electronic, electric, or pipe organs, and/or pipe organ parts, will be published at no charge. Please limit copy to include brief description, contact name and phone number. Prices will not be listed. Ads may be edited for content and length. Mail ad copy to address above. Other advertising is not accepted.

**Joining Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is quick and easy!** For a one year membership, send a \$20 check payable to PSTOS together with your name(s) as you would like them to appear on your name badges, your address with complete 9-digit ZIP code, and your email address (optional) to:

Bill Keller, Treasurer, 9914 Hampshire Ct. SE,  
Olympia, WA 98513-4241.

## PSTOS Coming Events

◆ **CHARLIE BALOGH will present the spectacular Wurlitzer Manor 4/48 pipe organ in an afternoon of favorite rhythmic tunes as only he plays them.**

**SAVE THE DATE and reserve now!**

**Sunday, October 12, 2:00 PM**

◆ **Christmas Pipes and Hand Bells**

Keep the afternoon of Sunday, December 21st, open for a terrific Holiday Concert at Calvary Christian Assembly! Seattle theatre organist Mark Andersen teams with colleague Lynn Andersen on bells to present a wonderful concert featuring the rarely heard Calvary theatre pipe organ.

**Sunday, December 21**

## Other NW Theatre Organ Events

◆ **Kenyon Hall in West Seattle**

Latest news can be found on the web at [www.kenyonhall.org](http://www.kenyonhall.org) or by email at [kenyonhall@earthlink.net](mailto:kenyonhall@earthlink.net)

◆ **Bellingham Organ Spectacular**

Wade Dingman, St. Paul's organist and Corey Anderson, high school student, will perform classical selections, and on the lighter side, music by Dorothy Watson-Hal Logan [piano & organ] and Vernon Greenstreet. Presented by Mount Baker Theatre Organ Society and St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Admission - food donation.

**Sun., Oct. 19th, 3 PM**

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church,  
2117 Walnut St., Bellingham**

## FOR SALE Organ Stuff

Custom Piano Orchestrion/Pipe Organ setup. Nickelodeon Piano setup with pneumatic-to-electrical pouch boards. Plays two pianos. Automated accordion, many ranks of organ pipes and dozens of theatre organ percussions. Hoping to sell at a bargain price to a local enthusiast who can de-install and remove the entire setup due to my own lack of spare time. Bill Masterman, 253-565-9470, [spoolframe@aol.com](mailto:spoolframe@aol.com)

## From The MAILBOX

A letter of appreciation from our PSTOS scholarship student, Kat Brightwell



August 4th, 2008

I am writing to say a "thank you" to everyone who helped fund my trip to ATOS camp, and to tell you about my experiences.

First stop was the Van Der Molen's "Wheaton-Fox

Studio," where most of our instruction took place during the first three days. Lots of fun was to be had there: getting to know everybody, and receiving instructions on how to do everything from playing for silent films to finger substitution to making a pipe organ sound like a Hammond. This also happened to be the first Robert Morton organ I have played.

Tuesday and Wednesday we went to the Steinway and Allen dealership, where we formed a small "band" on all the different keyboards, with each one representing a different instrument or instrument group. More instruction was provided, this time in 3 smaller groups, wherein we got to try out a great GW4. Short films of famous organists were also shown, which was very entertaining.

On Thursday we went to the Sanfilippo house. All I can say is "WOW!" Between the many band organs, phonographs, and the 80-rank Wurlitzer (as well as everything else), Sanfilippo's was without doubt one of the most astounding places I have ever been. Although I did get an opportunity to play the organ, the size of it was more than a little intimidating. We were also treated to a mini-concert by our instructors.

After the Sanfilippo's we went to an organ-building shop by the name of Berghaus. There we learned about the parts of a pipe, and how to do voicings. It was a valuable experience, especially to get a look at the "non-theatre" side of the organ world. From Berghaus we went to the Rialto Square theatre in Joliet. This was a beautiful theatre with a Barton organ (again, the first one of that make I have played). The organ was on a lift, and I even got to "play the console up!"

On our last day, Friday, we started off at the beautiful Tivoli in Downers Grove. They had a wonderful little Wurlitzer that was just the right size for me - finally! - and it was only a coincidence that my dress that day matched the paintings on the console. From the Tivoli we went to Jeff Weiler's shop. There we got a fascinating lesson on theatre organ history, and to see some organs that were in the

Continued next page...



## Don Feely and Bill Keller's new 5-manual Allen—the perfect combination for a perfect afternoon

Even the occasional downpour didn't dampen the spirit of about 70 members and friends who gathered recently at Bill's lovely home out of Olympia to enjoy the inaugural program on his new Allen organ. Featured artist Don Feely played an entertaining program to a very appreciative audience. His selections included a wide assortment of musical styles and genres.

The audience had a delightful surprise when Don introduced his young daughter Hannah, a fine vocalist. He accompanied her as she sang several songs. Keep up the great work, Hannah!

The organ sounds fabulous, and Don expressed his appreciation to Bill for "his gift to the organ loving community." He has indeed created another outstanding venue for theatre organ programs.

Open console found a number of members trying out this one-of-a-kind instrument.

Many thanks, Bill for opening your home and sharing this wonderful instrument. It was a great day!

**RIGHT: Don Feely, his vocalist daughter Hannah and the unique 5-manual Allen—the ingredients for a wonderful afternoon of music.**



## ATOS Adult Organ Camp at Wurlitzer Manor was a great learning experience

Nine PSTOS members took advantage of this unique opportunity. Many thanks to Ray Harris for a first-hand report.

Traveling from as far away as New England and Hawaii, nearly 20 organ enthusiasts gathered for the first ever ATOS Adult Theatre Organ Camp, held August 11th through 14th. Artists Patti Simon, Charlie Balogh and Jonas Nordwall teamed together treating us to great music and absolutely superb workshops.

The first two days were centered in the splendid surroundings of Wurlitzer Manor (with warmest thanks to Raymond and Barbara Lavine for their endless hospitality). Patti took the morning sessions leading us on a tour of the Wurlitzer, sharing information on rank analysis, relays, console layouts, stops ("tuned truck horns, how to use without scaring the squirrels!"), pistons and many other topics. Thanks to Patti, everybody now desires "legato" sostenuto systems and "push through" pistons! Additionally, we appreciated Patti taking us through her insightful process of arranging and registering several great tunes.

No post-lunch naps here! Charlie presented sessions during our first two afternoons. His topics included Jazz and Swing techniques for the theatre organ (he is the master!), walking bass lines, the blues scale, improvising, arranging and many more. Charlie explored Swing and Big Band regis-

trations, paying homage to Fats Waller, Helen Crawford, Buddy Cole, Sidney Torch, Billy Nalle and John Seng along the way. There was plenty of time for students to try these ideas on the bench with expert guidance from both Charlie and Patti.

Day three, campers converged at the Seattle Paramount. With chairs pulled up tightly around the console, Patti did a super session on the "ins and outs" of the specification, also sharing useful tips on adapting playing style and registration to better fit the acoustics of the theatre. Charlie followed with an excellent session covering the logic of setting divisional and general pistons. Many commented this was absolutely the best session on pistons

ever! Generous bench time was again available with absolutely no shortage of takers.

Our final day was jam-packed with visits to several local organs; the Morton in the home of Merlyn Johnson, the Kimball at Tacoma Presbyterian and lastly the new 5 manual Allen in the home of Bill Keller.

While not an easy task to put together a workshop like this, all three artists are to be well congratulated for their organization and interesting syllabus. Warm personalities, plentiful laughter and engaging presentations came together making ATOS Adult Summer Camp "One" a complete success.

P.S. Do NOT miss Charlie's October concert – his playing will knock your socks off!



Seated in front — instructors Jonas Nordwall, Patti Simon and Charlie Balogh.

Photo courtesy of Bob McCutchin

## Mailbox...

process of being refurbished. We even got to touch the actual handwriting of Robert Hope-Jones and Jesse Crawford! I loved Mr. Weiler's shop, and was so sad when we finally had to leave. Our final stop was the Krughoff residence, which was like a mini Sanfilippo's. Inside were many band organs, orchestrions, various automated instruments (including a

banjo), and another lovely Wurlitzer. They even had a "robot band." After a delicious dinner we received camp participation certificates, enjoyed more console time, and finally headed back to the hotel.

Believe me, I DID NOT want to leave. I think it hit me when we were in a van – all discussing Robert Hope-Jones – that wow, these are my people! It was so cool to hang out with people my age who share my inter-

ests. I didn't have to explain myself at all! The instructors were perfect, and they taught us useful things about playing the theatre organ that I will never forget. Going to this camp was a wonderful, valuable experience that will always stay with me. So again, thank you so much for financing my trip - I couldn't have had a better one!

With gratitude, Kat Brightwell

# Pages From The Past..

**PSTOS Member Bob Jones is a Charter Member of both ATOS and PSTOS. Now 93, Bob shared his personal theatre pipe organ experiences with Jamie Snell, who recently "interviewed" Bob and chronicled his story...**

Back in the early 1960s I was living in New York City working for the Arabian American Oil Co., having spent three years working in Arabia. During that stay in NYC I would go over to the public library and read the Diapason and other organ magazines that had classified ads. I saw an ad for a theatre organ for \$800 – no specifications, only a phone number. I called and found that I was connected to the Young Men's Hebrew Association on Park Avenue. I asked if I could inspect the organ, they said yes, and I made an appointment and went. I found that it was an 11-rank Robert Morton theatre organ with a 3-manual oak console. The YMHA had acquired it from the Flushing Theater in Flushing, Long Island. The organ was in two separate chambers on each side of a stage. When I inspected it I was overwhelmed by the large pipes and wondered if this might be too much for me to manage. And the organ was so badly damaged that there was no way for me to hear how it sounded. But I had had the dream of owning a pipe organ since I was a twelve-year-old kid, and I finally decided, I'm going to go with my dream and make it mine. So I bought it!

Then there was the tremendous problem of getting it out of there and to Seattle, where I was planning to move. I found a shipping company in New Jersey and told them I had a pipe organ that I wanted to ship to Seattle. The owner of this company didn't know anything about pipe organs and asked me whether this was household equipment. I said yes, I was planning to install it in my home. Then he asked me if I was an immigrant, and I said I had recently moved to the U.S. from Arabia. He said I was in luck because the special rate for immigrants to ship household goods to the west coast was still in force. The rate was \$4 per hundred pounds. I forget how much that added up to, but it was a reasonable amount. He wanted to know how much space the organ would take in a boxcar, and I said they should use the biggest one they could get, because in addition to the organ I had household belongings – a stove, a refrigerator, and furniture. So he used the largest boxcar available, made for shipping automobiles. I had no experience in packing organ pipes. I used large boxes 2x4x10 and 2x4x12 feet that I had obtained from a carpet company, which had assured me they were heavy duty



and anything put in them would be well protected. I went to a paper company that sold baled shredded paper, bought four bales, and packed the pipes with lots of shredded paper. They came through beautifully in the trip to Seattle.

I had just purchased a brand new Chevrolet, one of the first cars available after the war was over, and was planning to drive to Seattle. I asked the shipping agent how long it would take for the boxcar to get to Seattle, and he said probably only five days. So I decided I would have to drive ten hours a day at the fastest speed possible to get there before the boxcar. I arrived on the same day as the boxcar. It was on a siding, and they told me I had 24 hours to unload it or I would have to pay an extra charge. So I started looking for some men who needed part-time work. I was able to get three husky guys, and using a large truck we were able to get the organ moved from the boxcar in four trips. We put the organ in three different basements that my brother-in-law had arranged for me. It was stored that way for a year, during which time I searched for a place to install it. I looked at all kinds of buildings like empty warehouses, but didn't find anything suitable. I was also looking for a place to live in the Edmonds area, and told my real estate agent I needed a house that could hold a pipe organ, which would require about 10-foot ceilings. He

showed me a number of houses but nothing large enough. Then he suggested that instead of looking for a house in town I could look at farm houses, and I found my present home. This house had only 7-foot ceilings, so I figured I might have to do some mitering. How much was this house going to cost me, including a two-acre tract? \$13,000! – but that was the 1960s. I arranged to buy the house, got a mortgage, and started to remodel it to accommodate the organ. My first thought was to install it in two rooms on the main floor, with chambers opening into the living room. But I finally decided that the organ had to go in the basement and I would need to cut the floor out of one bedroom for the longest pipes. That would allow me to have all of the largest pipes in one chamber including the trumpet, tibia, and tuba. The other chamber fit within the ceiling height of the basement, and took the vox, strings, and other smaller pipes. Each chamber had its own shutters installed, and they played into a rec room that was already here, where the console was placed.

I decided I would have to put the blower in a shed attached to the house, well insulated so that the vibrations would not intrude into the house. The blower was originally 25" static pressure, with 15" going to the chests. I had to make some adjustments to reduce the pressure to 10" and even lower for some ranks. Also I had a power problem: The mo-



# Pages From The Past...continued

tor on the blower was DC. My brother-in-law worked for an electrical company, and said he thought his shop could redo the motor windings to work on 3-phase AC. So I went to the power company to ask about getting 3-phase. The guy there asked me what I needed it for, and when I told him it was for a pipe organ he thought I was an absolute nut. But finally they brought in a 3-phase line, and they made a deal with me. They said: It's going to cost you \$750 to bring in that line, but we'll give you a 50% reduction on

the power usage initially. The electrical shop rewound the motor and I built the shed to house the blower. There was a lot of work to get the wind pipes installed, but in about two years I got everything set up and did some tests to prove that the pipes would speak. It was another three years before all eleven ranks were installed and playing.

I was not entirely satisfied with the original ranks, so I again looked in the Diapason and other magazines advertising organ pipes for sale. I was able to get a Wurlitzer post horn for \$75. Then I found a trumpet rank from a large Kimball installation on the east coast. I didn't know how it would sound, but I found it sounded quite like a brass trumpet. I bought some other ranks, including an oboe. Then I found a small 4-rank Wurlitzer organ that had been in a mortuary in Hoquiam, WA, an installation by Balcom & Vaughan originally from some unknown theater. They had removed one of the original ranks and put a dulciana in place of it, and had added a diapason. The mortuary had decided a pipe organ was too expensive to maintain, and they had made a deal with a music store in Tacoma to buy an electronic organ and give them the pipe organ as a trade-in. I bought the organ and put these four ranks into a third chamber, which was my workshop. Now I had 20 ranks! These included three tibias – one original, one from the mortuary, and the third from two different organs that had been exposed to fires, one residential and one from

a radio station in Yakima. Between the two fire-damaged tibias I managed to put together one rank that had all pipes working.

I then decided I needed a fourth manual, so I added a manual below the Accompaniment. With all these additions, I needed more relays and more switch decks, which I bought from an organ company that had stripped some usable ones from an unknown organ and was glad to sell them to me quite cheaply. I spent well over a year rewiring these relays and switch decks to accommodate the added ranks. I needed additional stopkeys to match the Morton ones, and I acquired these from Hesco. I also needed more console space for them, so I had Balcom & Vaughan take the measurements of my horseshoe console and build a stoprail to place on top of the original one. They had a draftsman named Homer Toombs, and he designed this new stoprail in the same manner as Wurlitzer, using thin wood strips formed into a curve. The new stopkey switches had to be wired in, as well as the fourth manual. All these additions required other changes in the console, which never got completely finished.

Finally all the pipes were playing. But after a while I began to get tired of all the work and maintenance, so I decided to put the organ up for sale. I finally sold it to someone, who in turn sold it to someone else, who sold it to other people in parts. I was sad to see it go, but I still have many fond memories.

*As told to Jamie Snell by Bob Jones, 8/2008*



FALL 1955

Vol. I No. 1

## *The TIBIA* JOURNAL OF THE A.T.O.E.

The article below is reprinted from the very first issue of *The TIBIA*, Volume I, Number I, Fall of 1955. Bob Jones is pictured front row, third from left.



Pictured at left is a group of theatre organ enthusiasts in the Seattle, Washington area which—even before the birth of A.T.O.E.—has been assembling from time to time at the residence theatre organ consoles of the various individuals for happy hours of theatre organ music and the exchange of organ lore.

When these people learned that Dr. Mel Doner was coming to Seattle last February, they cancelled all other social plans and assembled at the basement studio of Bob Jones to greet Mel and learn more about the organization of A.T.O.E. As usual, when these theatre organ lovers get together, an extremely interesting session is enjoyed by all. Nine of these fourteen people are fortunate in having their own theatre pipe organs set up at home. Undoubtedly, this is one of the first groups to assemble a chapter of organ enthusiasts in the United States.

Standing (l to r): Dan Adamson, Mrs. Glenn White, Sr., Glenn White, Jr., Bob Coombs, Dean Botteker, Ted Leamy, Glenn White, Sr. Seated on console bench: Catherine Siderius. Bottom Row (l to 4): Jim Collier, Ken Mayberry, Bob Jones, William Bunch, George Cole, Alden Bide

## An Orgabiography—Part 2

by Genevieve McMahan

In last month's Pipeline you read Part I of Mrs. McMahan's humorous recounting of the family's experiences restoring the Wurlitzer now owned by PSTOS and installed at Haller Lake Community Club.

As you learned in an earlier story, the family had moved the instrument from Ohio and began installing it in their new Seattle home. Sadly, Mr. McMahan was killed in an auto accident, and Mrs. McMahan then sold the instrument to PSTOS.

This story was published in *Theatre Organ Journal* in 1966.

By this time I had acquired a nonchalance and pride for the hobby that mystified our skeptical friends who weren't exactly hep to the rebirth of an historical culture. I didn't have to catch my breath the day my husband phoned to forewarn me he had just bought a blower, and to be prepared to write a check upon delivery of same within the hour. Nor did I bat an eye the day we received a telegram to wire money to a California friend who had just located a motor (single phase, whatever that is). And, I was johnny-on-the-spot with assorted candles for illumination when the running of the blower dimmed out the house lights.

When the installation was 85% complete, and the neighbors were blandly accepting our peculiarities, although they had no comprehension of the instrument or our goals, we faced another hurdle. A transfer back to Seattle!!! Previous assignments have always occurred with a crash decision on the part of management, so I've been left alone with the joy of moving children and household possessions.



No move is easy, in spite of the advertising, and to compound this one with the complex problem of moving a pipe organ took some extra curricular planning. I

### PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors

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scrambled atop my soap box and insisted it was my frustrated husband's duty to get the organ packed and stored in the double garage, ready for the transcontinental move after the school year ended. His remaining time was short to say the least—two days—but he accomplished it. Neighbors watched with incredible horror the delivery and stacking of ten casket crates in our front yard, so I hastened to explain we were not in the bizarre business of disposing of bodies. Traffic crawled past the flurry of activity on our property as the packers carefully wrapped and stored the pipes in these unorthodox containers. Weeks later it was necessary for the movers to employ a fork lift to move the cumbersome boxes into the van, and I was thankful I had left town before any prospective buyers viewed the deep ruts left in the blacktopping of our newly resurfaced driveway.

It was after my husband had escaped to Seattle that I was alerted to availability of a fine set of Kinuras, and a siren to complete the toy counter. The day they were delivered I couldn't contain myself and placed a long distance call to the west coast. With my faraway mate waiting patiently at the end of the line we blew the Kinuras into the phone, and ran the siren as fast and loud as we could on our son's train transformer.

Back in the northwest again I found that trying to find a house to suit a family is one thing, and trying to find a house to accommodate a theatre pipe organ is another. But trying to describe the need for unlimited empty space to a real estate salesman, who doesn't know the difference between a pipe and a mouth organ, was the insurmountable mountain. We bought a house to suit the realty agent. At first it was tempting to do some remodeling, but couldn't seem to agree, or foresee, what would produce the

ideal situation, so the organ was interred in the uphill corner of a daylight basement.

The chambers are mostly concrete and are treated with a coat of full gloss enamel. The use of a diagonal wall to divide the organ presumably discourages standing waves (my husband said that). The shutters are fashioned into two chamber doors, providing rather unique entree for any pipe organ, as well as a conversation piece for curious friends, furnace men and plumbers. The relay found its niche in the unused end of an extra long garage. By application of hinges, casters and gate hooks, it opens up like a book, exposing all its guts (if you'll pardon the expression) for trouble shooting and maintenance. The 3 HP blower, sporting a customized filter designed and built by one of our sons, resides in a concrete fruit closet—I was tired of canning anyway—and adjoins the main chamber. This gives the advantage of a very short induction run as well as muffled silence. Muffled silence???

Other husbandly innovations are the floor-mounted toy counter and Chrysoglott—on casters. The detached console dominates one end of the recreation room and is a constant source of knowledge to our teens' friends, who exclaim, when spotting it for the first time, "What is *that*?" The full organ can be played and enjoyed with the shutters wide open if you like experiencing the similarity of its performance with a vibrating ferry ride, or a king size earthquake, or are particularly entranced with the oscillation of huge view windows.

Well, this miniature version of seven years of "togetherness" has finally depleted my vocabulary. Now that I've abandoned my glue-jeans, and my fingernails have grown out, I'm ready to conquer a delayed daydream—the fifth measure of American Bolero.