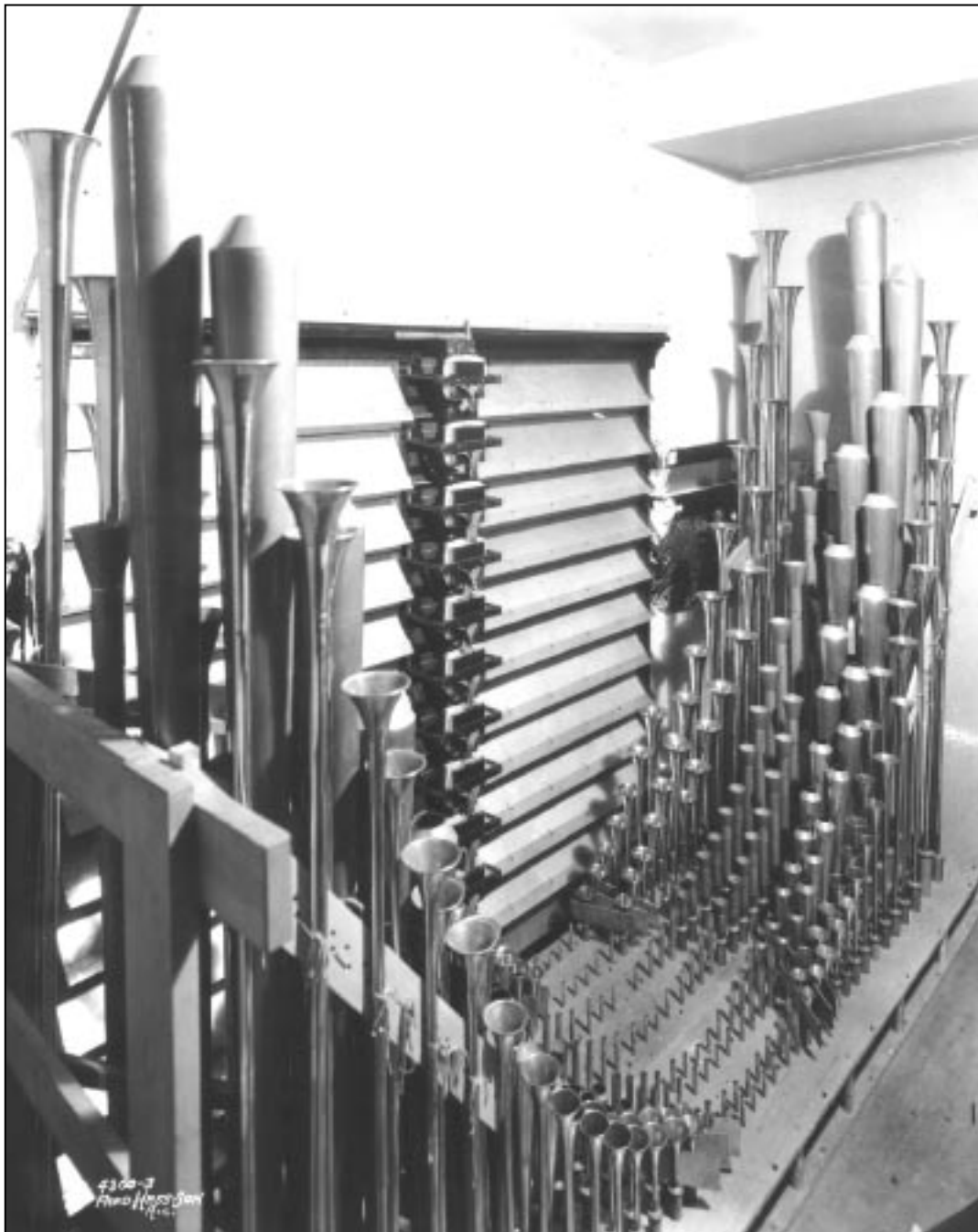


the GRAND OPHICLEIDE

Journal of the Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc.

Issue 6

Winter, 1999-2000



e-mail: info@acchos.org Website: <http://www.acchos.org>

ATLANTIC
CITY
CONVENTION
HALL
ORGAN
SOCIETY
INC.

1009 BAY RIDGE AVENUE, SUITE 108, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21403, U.S.A.

the GRAND OPHICLEIDE

Journal of the Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc.

1009 Bay Ridge Avenue, PMB 108, Annapolis, Maryland 21403
<http://www.acchos.org> info@acchos.org

Stephen D. Smith, *President*
Charles F. Swisher, *Vice-President*
John H. Clotworthy, *Secretary-Treasurer*
Harry C. Bellangy
David C. Scribner, *Communications Director*

PATRONS

Jonathan Ambrosino
Organ Historian
President, Organ Historical Society

Nelson Barden
Restorer-in-Residence, Boston University

Michael Barone
Producer, "Pipedreams"

Jack Bethards
President, Schoenstein & Co. Organ Builders

Jean-Louis Coignet
Organ Advisor to the City of Paris
Tonal Director, Casavant Frères

Carlo Curley
Concert Organist

Orpha Ochse
Professor Emerita, Whittier College

Ian Tracey
Organist, Liverpool Cathedral, U.K.

William T. Van Pelt III
Executive Director, Organ Historical Society

Jeff Weiler
Independent Voicer/Consultant
Secretary, American Institute of Organ Builders

Peter Wright
Organist, Southwark Cathedral, U.K.



The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) corporation founded in 1997 and dedicated to the use, preservation and restoration of the organs in the Atlantic City Boardwalk Convention Hall.

the Grand Ophicleide is published quarterly for its members by The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc. Opinions expressed are those of individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Society.

On the Cover

One of two chests in the Gallery IV organ. The ranks, from left to right, are Brass Trumpet, Major Clarinet, Euphone, and Egyptian Horn. These stops, except the clarinet, were made by Anton Gottfried of Erie, Pennsylvania.

Atlantic City Update

by Charles Swisher
Vice-President

The Boardwalk Hall is a gigantic construction zone at present. It remains closed to the public and the organs cannot be turned on while the work is in progress. The massive renovation program is well underway and the scale of work involved in this huge space is awesome. Last year the old ceiling (tiles made of compressed sugar cane) was removed along with all of the asbestos in the ceiling area. The new ceiling structure is now being put in place along with the new computer-controlled variable color ceiling lighting system. About one-third of the new ceiling has now been installed, and it is too early to determine what the new acoustical characteristics of the space will be.

All of the original concrete balconies are being cut out with jackhammers to make way for an entirely new seating design. A series of new concrete floating balcony seating areas is now under construction. The steel-reinforced concrete columns in the garage beneath the main hall have been cut to the steel and re-poured in a more substantial

format to handle the weight of the new balcony seating in the main hall. There is concrete dust everywhere. Although all the organ chambers have been covered with plastic sheeting, additional particulate matter intrusion into the right main chamber has been observed. A general cleaning will be required in all chambers before the organ can be turned on again.

The construction company hopes to have work completed by Fall, 2001, a little over a year from now. At that time, work on the organ can begin.

The building's restoration Architects, Watson & Henry Associates, report that the original color scheme for the hall has been discovered by removing old layers of paint that have covered the original colors. The main left and right organ grills were originally painted with colors to accent their existence, and these colors will be restored.

When inspecting the Ballroom Kimball organ it was a shock to see that the cables to the relay room had been cut and the relay dismantled in order to make way for an elevator shaft serving the upper floors of the building. The relay stacks have been removed and stored in the organ work room along with the high pressure blower for the big reeds on the Kimball. A study is underway to determine if the old relay will be restored

or if a solid state system will be put in place instead. A solid state system might make it possible to store and recreate organ performances, plus permit interconnection of a computer-driven auto-player so that a wide variety of early roll recordings could be 'performed' on the organ.

An application for **Save America's Treasures** designation for the organs has been prepared for submission to the National Trust for Historic Preservation and is pending approval by the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, the building's owners.

"The Federal Grants to Save America's Treasures Program is part of a multi-year effort planned by the White House Millennium Council in cooperation with the National Park Service and private partners to mark the beginning of the new millennium. Designed to celebrate American creativity, innovation and discovery, the program recognizes and supports projects that will convey our nation's rich heritage to future generations of Americans. The Federal Grants to Save America's Treasures will provide opportunities to preserve and learn about our shared history, preserve our tangible heritage and give permanent gifts to the future." — from the Heritage Preservation Services of the National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

Ocean One Mall Exhibit

The ACCHOS exhibit at Ocean One Mall on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City has proved a success and has attracted a great deal of attention. The exhibit, titled BOARDWALK PIPES, has had thousands of visitors since its opening October 13, 1999. The short descriptive brochure, available for the taking from wall pockets, contains information about the Midmer-Losh organ, a Society membership application and a CD order form. Each week we gain new members and CD sales we might

otherwise have missed completely. Our thanks to Ocean One Mall for contributing this marvelous exhibit space.

The numerous photo enlargements, text, and display of a dozen sample organ pipes commissioned for the Auditorium Organ combine to tell an excellent story about the Midmer-Losh and Kimball organs in the Boardwalk Hall. Visitors marvel at the clarity and quality of the giant enlargements of the Fred Hess & Son black and white negatives taken in 1929-1932, now in the ACCHOS archives.

On the rear wall of the exhibit is a case containing the Auditorium Organ CD and many merchandise items displaying the organ such as T-shirts, mouse pads, a clock, etc. These items are manufactured by *Cre8iviTee* and may be purchased from a cooperating merchant, "Picture This", on the first floor of the Mall at the foot of the stairs leading down from the exhibit.

Special thanks goes to ACCHOS members Dennis Cook and Dr. Larry Fuerman of Atlantic City who regularly check the exhibit, supply the brochures, and make sure all is in order.

From the Editor

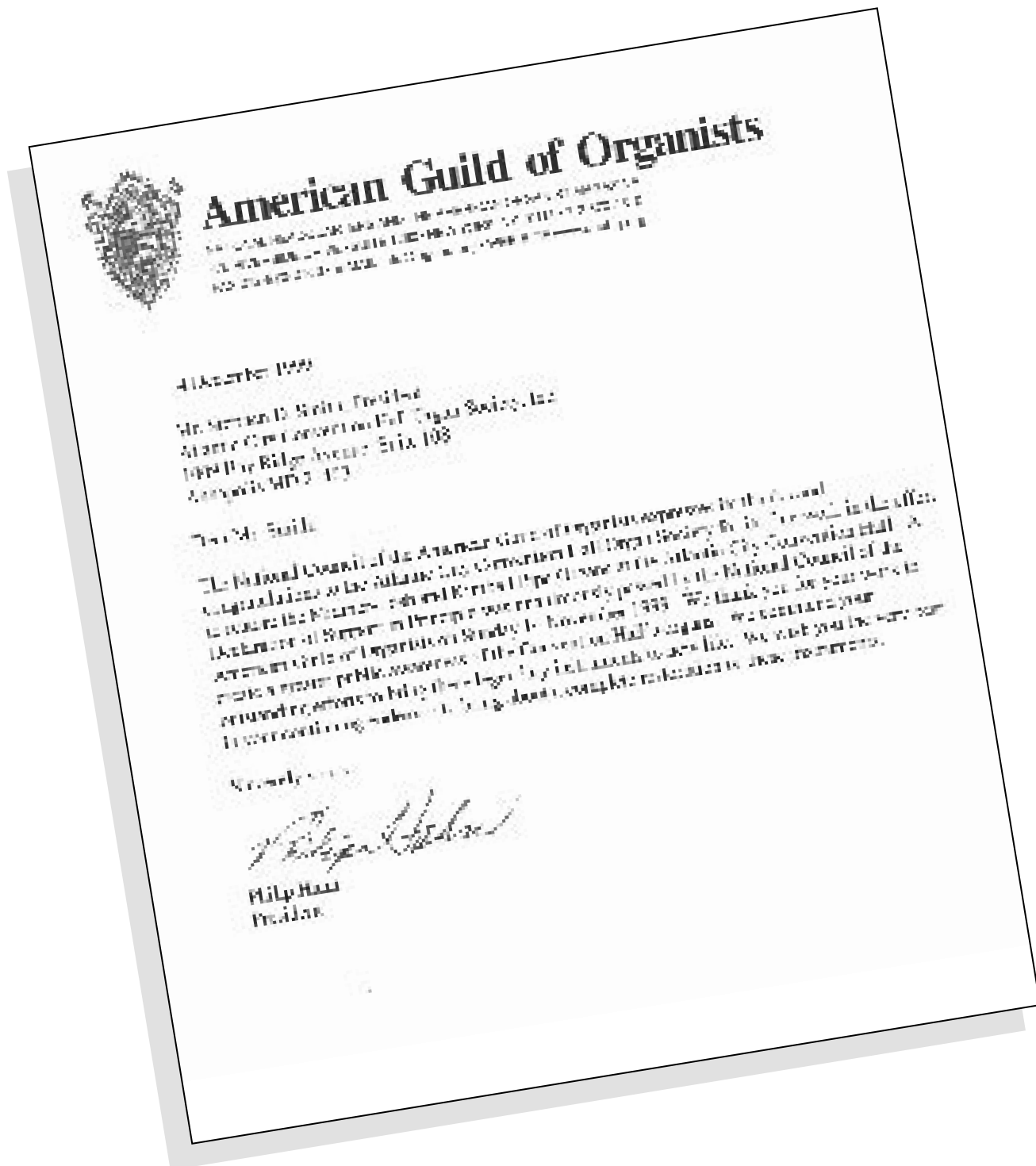
Are you ready for this?

In 1952, Marilyn Monroe was Grand Marshall of the Miss America Pageant and got a tour of the Midmer-Losh organ from Roscoe Evans. That same year, Mimi Smith, "Miss Pennsylvania," did her talent act on the Midmer-Losh playing *Tico-Tico*. (That *must* have been a gas!)

ACCHOS Receives More Official Support

The letter reproduced below dated 14 December, 1999 represents yet another national organ-related organization which has given their support-in-principle to the ACCHOS. Your Board of Directors is very pleased and honored to have the support of the American Guild of Organists. A similar recognition was received from the American Institute of Organbuilders in a letter

dated March 27, 1999, which was reproduced on the cover of Volume 1, No. 4, the Summer, 1999 issue of *the Grand Ophicleide*. These great organs in their respective splendid acoustic spaces within the Boardwalk Convention Hall now have an even better opportunity for restoration and preservation for the enjoyment of future generations.



Some Observations on “The Auditorium Organ”

I just received my copy of “The Auditorium Organ” and it is breathtaking. Even with my sound system turned down, the 64' register was awesome.

I've been an organist for over thirty years and have had the opportunity to hear and play some of the finest pipe organs in the United States. I toured the Atlantic City Convention Hall in the late 1960s, but was unable to hear or tour the Auditorium Organ at that time.

In my humble opinion, what makes this recording so breathtaking is it's totally natural quality, complete with “clinkers” and tuning problems. Unfortunately, most organ recordings are so heavily edited that they lose their spontaneity. Fortunately for us listeners, that is not the case here.

As a purist who heartily dislikes anything other than an actual pipe organ, I am saddened by the years of neglect of this magnificent instrument, as is all too often the case. Time after time, I have witnessed the removal of noteworthy pipe organs in favor of the ‘digital’ organ, due to soaring maintenance costs. I have the extremely good fortune to have a tracker organ available, and would have nothing other.

In closing, I applaud your work, and hope to someday soon return to Atlantic City and be able to see and hear the fully restored instrument.

Just one final comment: the warning about extreme range is accurate: I darn near blew out my subwoofer on tracks 11-14. Oh well... I was looking for an excuse to upgrade my sound system!

—Pat Howard



Pipes from each of the 10 unison Diapason ranks on the Great organ.

I & II are voiced on 30 inches of wind, III is on 20 inches, IV-VI are on 15, and VII-IX are on 10. Note the distinctive spotted metal of Diapason X, a Schulze-type voice speaking on only 4 inches. Diapasons 1-III are double languid ranks.

the GRAND OPHICLEIDE

A College Kid's Dream

Playing the Atlantic City Auditorium Organ!

I was a first-year graduate student at the School of Sacred Music of Union Theological Seminary in 1945 in New York City. Having grown up in a small town in Michigan and graduated from a small Presbyterian college in that state, the wonderment of New York and all its great music, its great pipe organs, and its superb instruction in my chosen field were awesome.

My father was a Presbyterian minister and was a delegate to the General Conference of the Presbyterian Church being held that year in Atlantic City, where a fellow minister had a church. He and Dad were friends and my folks stayed with him during the Conference. His name has long since been forgotten, but when he heard I was studying organ at Union, he told Dad that he had access through an acquaintance to the great organ in the Atlantic City Auditorium, and that if I could get down there, he would get me in to play it!

In college, I took lessons on a little 2-manual Estey organ. In New York, I practiced on the fine 4-manual Skinner in James Chapel at UTS, and took lessons with Dr. Hugh Porter, then President of the School of Sacred Music, on a large 4-manual Austin at a church in central Manhattan where Dr. Porter was the organist. Prior to that, as a high-schooler I held keys for the organ technician who serviced the 2-manual Pilcher where I took my first organ lessons during summers in Northern Michigan. I became intensely interested in organ technology and eagerly soaked up much information from this technician, Paul Sauter, from Albion, Michigan.

Upon matriculation for Graduate School at UTS, I immediately learned that I would be writing a thesis as a requirement for graduation in two years. My chosen topic was organ construction, which meant contacting a number of organ builders and getting information for my paper. My "Bible" during those years was **The Contemporary American Organ**, authored by Dr. William Barnes, with its many detailed chapters on organ construction and excellent illustrations related thereto. I drooled over the pictures of the many great churches and organs in the book, but none made such an impression on me as did the picture of the world's only *seven-manual* console in the Atlantic City Auditorium. I was absolutely awestruck by the dimensions and scope of what I saw in that picture.

It is highly understandable then, when I got the word I would be privileged to not only see but play that instrument, that I would skip classes or whatever was necessary to get down there from New York to have this experience.

That was 54 years ago and I still have the most vivid recollections of the event. My parents went with me over to the famed Auditorium, the size of which (40,000 seat capacity) was overwhelming. My host introduced me to the technician with whom we had an appointment, and don't I wish I could remember his name! He was most gracious and unhurriedly gave me access to the console, to some of the chambers,

and to considerable information. He would go out and turn on various of the seven blowers so I could play different divisions of the organ, although at no time were they all on simultaneously. The organ had 33,000 pipes, after all! Sitting at that console with its 1200 stop tabs and seven keyboards is an image of awe and disbelief still etched in my mind. There were row after row after row of tabs, some almost out of reach because they were so high up on the stop jambs on each side. I was used to one or two diapasons; here an entire row would be diapasons, or salicional, or celestes, or percussion stops, etc.. The bottom two manuals each had 85 keys, the 3rd manual had 73, and the other four manuals had the conventional 61 keys. The music rack unfolded down over the 6th and 7th manuals so one could read the music on it. The keyboards went from flat level on the lower manuals to gradually more tilt toward the upper manuals, and I remember the 7th manual being almost vertical, head high.

The array of combination pistons went all the way across under each manual. Where I studied organ, mine all worked. This man kindly informed me that the piston action for the entire organ was in the basement of the Auditorium and it had all been flooded out by water from the hurricane of the previous year, and I had the privilege of "operating" all 1200 stop tabs by hand.

All of the organ itself, however, was in working order at that time, the piston action being the only part of it that was inoperative. I never did get to "open it up," and I would have been too intimidated at that point in my life to do so anyway, but I did light it up pretty good, getting some small idea of its power. The technician informed me that the organ had 2 reeds on 100-inch wind pressure at the front of the principal chambers at each side of the stage and that they had to be bolted into the chest to keep them in place when drawn. He also told me that the entire organ could be playing full blast, and either one of those reeds would cut right through it. I remember so many of his comments as if it were yesterday. Especially when he took me back into the main chamber at stage left and showed me the *bottom* of the actual 64' low C pipe. It flares out as it goes up and I couldn't even see the top. The man's description was that "the top of it looked like the Queen Mary's smokestack."

My recollection is that I had no music with me, which was not important because I was in Seventh (manual) Heaven just sitting there improvising, experimenting, hearing what came out, even in the smallest exploratory way on that vast instrument. This truly was a college kid's dream fulfilled! We all should be very excited and pleased that the Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc. was formed in 1997 with the mission of restoring this, perhaps the most historic pipe organ in the world.

Don Allured
Pensacola Chapter, A.G.O.

Cre8iviTee



ACCHO Gift Items Available Online!

Cre8iviTee and ACCHOS Member Brian Tricoli have produced a line of gift items to benefit the restoration of the Convention Hall Organs. Among the assortment of items available are colorful T shirts and sweatshirts, tote bags, mouse pads, and a series of coffee mugs — all bearing images of the ACCH Organ. Cre8iviTee has pledged to donate 20 percent of the profits from sales of these items directly to ACCHOS.

Cre8iviTee maintains an online store, which can be found at:

www.cre8ivitee.com/worldslargestpipeorgan.htm

The merchandise is also available at **Picture This...** at the Ocean One Mall in Atlantic City, where a display of the items is featured in the new Boardwalk Pipes Exhibit, pictured at left.

ACCHOS is working with Cre8iviTee to produce a continuing series of limited-edition coffee mugs which will feature a number of the historic Fred Hess and Son Photographs of the Midmer-Losh Organ. Information about these is also available at the Cre8iviTee Website.

New Booklet Available!

A new 60-page booklet is available entitled

The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ

It contains four essays by Stephen D. Smith:

- An introduction to **The World's Largest Pipe Organ**
- **The World's Largest Pipe Organ**
- Index Of Stops On The Main Auditorium Organ In The Convention Hall, Atlantic City, New Jersey, USA
- The Five Manual Console Of The Main Auditorium In The Convention Hall, Atlantic City, New Jersey, USA

This booklet replaces all the previously issued separate pamphlets which are no longer available. It provides a comprehensive overview of the Midmer-Losh organ with complete stop lists, illustrations, and photographs. The booklet sells for \$15 postpaid in the U.S. or \$17 overseas.

ORDER FORM

Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc.
1009 Bay Ridge Avenue, PMB 108, Annapolis, Maryland 21403

- Please send me _____ copies of "The Auditorium Organ" at \$15.00 each. \$ _____
Shipping and Handling: \$2.50 in the U.S. or \$4 overseas regular/
\$7.50 global priority per CD. \$ _____
- Please send me _____ sets of "The Auditorium Organ" Special Gift Packs
(5 CDs) at \$72.00 per set, postpaid. \$ _____
- Please send me _____ sets of the Limited Edition series of Fred Hess Photo
Reprints at \$125.00 per set, postpaid. \$ _____
- Please send me _____ copies of the booklet
The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ - Four Essays at \$15 postpaid
in the U.S. or \$17 overseas. \$ _____

Maryland Residents must include 5% sales tax. \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State/Province _____ ZIP/Postal Code _____ Country _____
Phone _____ Email _____

All funds received from the sale of these items are used in furtherance of ACCHOS goals.

G06

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc.
1009 Bay Ridge Avenue, PMB 108, Annapolis, Maryland 21403

Please copy and pass this form along to your friends!

Statement of Purpose

The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc. was formed in 1997 and exists to:

- Create a greater public awareness of and interest in the Convention Hall's organs, especially in terms of their future use.
- Promote both instruments through newsletters, magazine articles, and recordings; both audio and video.
- Arrange periodic organ recitals, and organize regular meetings of ACCHOS members.
- Encourage ongoing maintenance of the instruments, and seek funding for crucial restoration at local, state, federal, and international levels.

Membership benefits include: **the Grand Ophicleide**, published four times a year containing the latest news and developments concerning both the great Auditorium Midmer-Losh and the Kimball in the Ballroom, and the chance to help support the efforts of the Society in fulfilling the Statement of Purpose printed above.

Yearly ACCHOS membership dues are:

Regular - \$20	Seniors & Students \$15
Contributor - \$40	Donor - \$75
Supporter - \$100	Benefactor - \$250
Sponsor - \$500	LIFE MEMBERSHIP - \$1,000

Enclosed is \$ _____ for membership in the ACCHOS.

Date _____
Only checks or money orders in U.S. funds can be processed
at this time.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State/Province _____ ZIP/Postal Code _____ Country _____
Phone _____ Email _____

The ACCHOS is a 501 (c)(3) organization incorporated in the State of Maryland.

G06