the GRAND OPHICLEIDE

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

Issue 8 *Summer, 2000*

ATLANTIC CITY CONVENTION HALL ORGAN SOCIETY INC.

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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

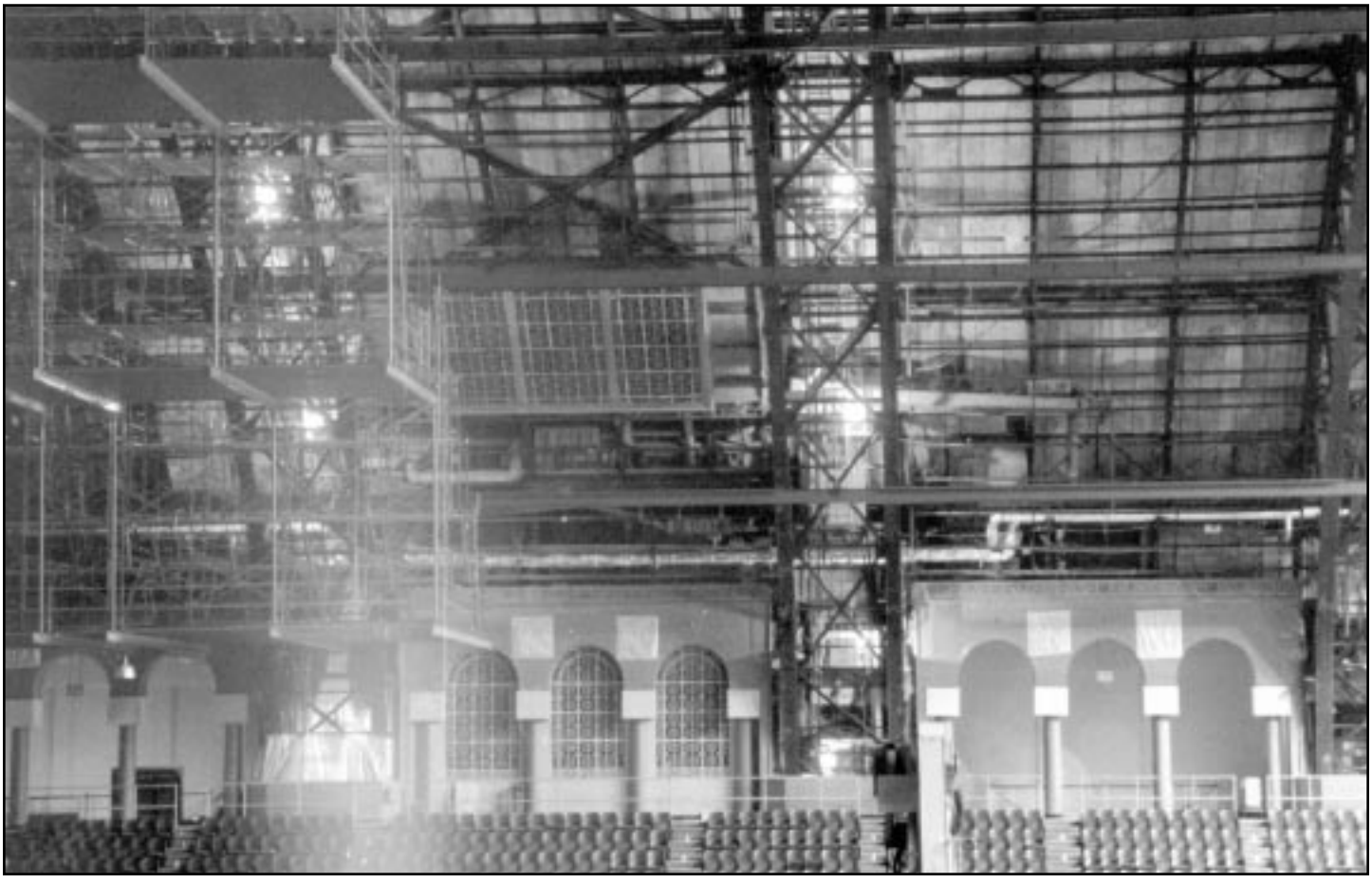
The Fanfare organ showing the horizontal Major Clarion with other 50-inch stops arrayed behind it. The large diapason pipes seen here are the bottom octave of the Stentor Mixture's 8-foot rank. This photograph was snapped before the decision was taken to enclose the Fanfare organ — thus the lack of shades on the grille (bottom left) through which sound passes into the auditorium.

The Fanfare Organ

by Stephen D. Smith

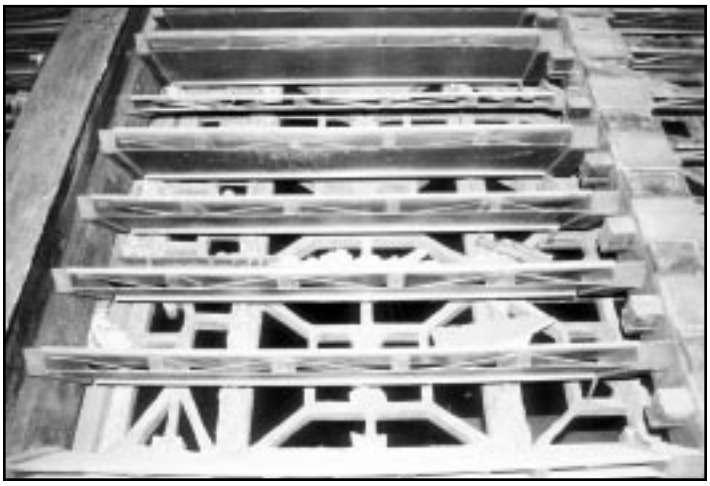
The Fanfare organ, with its blaze of mixtures and reeds, is intended to be a "super" swell department and was originally to be positioned in the Left Stage chamber, alongside the Swell organ. However, from its current location — some 90 feet above floor level and half way along the Hall's left side — its stentorian diapasons, 18 ranks of mixtures, and barrage of reeds (four of them voiced on 50-inches of wind!) provide a stunning and formidable antiphonal opponent to the Main organ in the Stage chambers.

The Fanfare was reputed to be Emerson Richards' favorite department, and one can well imagine the majesty of its sound pouring into the center of the Hall, filling the room. Indeed, the Fanfare is probably one of the instrument's most audible departments, for not only is it loud but its sound has only to travel some 250 feet to reach the front and back of the hall, whereas the Stage departments at the front have to project their tones almost 500 feet to reach the rear of the room. However, with its shades closed, the Fanfare might also provide a distant but menacing power — just waiting to be unleashed at the whim of the player's foot on the swell pedal. Having said that, it should be noted that the shades here are made of aluminum and even though each shade consists of two slats, one has to wonder how effective they are. Certainly they would do almost nothing to quell the roar of the *Trombone* rank's 32 and 16-foot octaves, the pipes of which are outside the chamber installed horizontally on girders in the space between the ceiling and the roof. Although the 32-foot pipe speaks almost directly into the chamber via a crudely-made opening in the wall, most of the other



The Fanfare chamber and, to its right, the *Trombone* seen from the opposite side of the auditorium.

Fanfare Organ *Continued*



Some of the Fanfare's aluminum swell shades.

pipes are some distance from it. This crude opening, together with numerous holes in the chamber's ceiling, must again call into question the effectiveness of the shades.

As originally built, the Fanfare was unenclosed while the String III — also in the Upper Left chamber — was enclosed. However, Richards specified in the contract that provision should be made for enclosing the Fanfare "should conditions...admit" and he later evoked this clause — causing no small amount of inconvenience for Midmer-Losh, the instrument's builders, who had to realign chests and modify some pipes in order to make room for the shades and their windlines, etc. To do this, it was almost certainly necessary to remove a great number of pipes, taking them down the ladder that leads to/from the chamber to be stored on the gallery or returned to the organ shop. No wonder the Midmer-Losh staff weren't pleased at this development!

So that the String III organ wouldn't become a swell box within a swell box, its shades were removed and it is now unenclosed. This means that its volume is controlled by the Fanfare's shades and that the stop-keys for switching the String III's shutters onto the various swell pedals are obsolete.

Details of the Fanfare organ's stops are given below. "DL" indicates double languid construction and all voices speak on 20" wind unless otherwise stated. Stop numbers are given on the left.

197 *Major Flute* 16', 4'
(wood DL, 16"x20" scale, 85 pipes)
198 *Stentor Flute* 8'
(wood DL, 10"x12" scale, 35" wind, 61 pipes)
199 *Stentorphone* 8'
(metal DL, #40 scale, 61 pipes)
200 *Pileata Magna* 8'
(stopped wood, 8.5"x10.5" scale, 61 pipes)
201 *Flute Octaviante* 4'
(metal DL, #46 scale, 61 pipes)
202 *Recorder* 2-2/3'
(metal, #58 scale, 61 pipes)
203 *Fife* 2'
(metal, scale unknown, 61 pipes)
204 *Cymbal* 19-22-26-29-33
(metal, based on scale #40, 305 pipes)
205 *Posaune* 16', 8', 4'
(metal, 8" scale, 50" wind, 85 pipes)
206 *Bombardon* 16', 8', 4', 2'
(metal, 11" scale, 35" wind, 97 pipes)
207 *Harmonic Tuba* 8', 4'
(metal, 7.5" scale, 50" wind, 73 pipes)
208 *Ophicleide* 8'
(metal, 6.5" scale, 50" wind, 61 pipes)
209 *Tromba Quint* 10-2/3', 8', 5-1/3', 2-2/3'
(metal, 6.5" scale at 8' C, 85 pipes)
210 *Tromba Tierce* 6-2/5, 3-1/5
(metal, 7" scale, 73 pipes)
211 *Major Clarion* 4'
(metal, 6" scale, 50" wind, 61 pipes)
212 *Stentor Mixture* 1-5-8-12-15-18-22
(metal DL, based on #41 scale, 35" wind, 427 pipes)
299 *Trombone* 32', 16', 8', 4'
(wood-metal, 19.25"x19.25" scale, 35" wind, 97 pipes)
304 *Gamba Tuba* 8'
(wood, 3.5"x3.5" scale, 61 pipes).
305 *Gamba Tuba Celeste* 8'
(wood, 3.5"x3.5" scale, 61 pipes)
306 *Gamba Clarion* 4'
(wood, 2.625"x2.625" scale, 61 pipes)
307 *Harmonic Mixture* 17-21-22-23-26-29
(metal, based on #42 scale, 366 pipes)

In total, there are 21 stops, 36 ranks, and 2,364 pipes.

The *Stentor Flute* and seven-rank *Stentor Mixture* are the instrument's loudest flue stops; both being voiced on 35 inches of wind. It is probable that the *Stentor Flute* was designed to serve as a rival voice to the famous

Trebles of the massively-scaled *Stentor Flute*.

Clear Flute in the Wanamaker organ, as both stops speak on the same pressure and are located high up in their respective buildings. The *Stentor Mixture* is devastatingly powerful and is thought to be the loudest mixture stop in the world — its pipes are of double languid construction and are flared to be four notes bigger at the open end than at the mouth. Its unison and octave ranks can be played independently from their own *Stentor Diapason* and *Stentor Octave* stop-keys.

The flue section also includes the rather curiously named *Gamba Tuba* 8', *Gamba Tuba Celeste* 8', and *Gamba Clarion* 4'. These stops were designed

This rotted chest contains the basses of the unison *Gamba Tubas*. Thankfully, the pipes on top of it are undamaged.

by Harry Van Wart, the organ's superintendent, and are based on the labial (flue) *Tuba Mirabilis* stops made by William Haskell. The Gamba Tubas are of flared wooden construction and their low-cut mouths are fitted with harmonic bridges. They have a cutting timbre that is somewhat reminiscent of string tone and some builders of "reedless reeds" allude to this tone by adding a string suffix to the stop's name, e.g. "Oboe Gamba" but a string *prefix* is used in the case of the Fanfare organ.

Another of the department's more exotic flue stops is the *Pileata Magna* (translation: Great Woodpecker). This too was designed by Van Wart, and is a large-scale rank that yields a penetrating tone from pipes of stopped wood construction. It is one of only a few stops in the instrument to be provided with its own tremulant.

Although the *Major Flute* is the only one of the 13 flue voices to be extended, all reeds are unified except the *Ophicleide* 8 and *Major Clarion* 4. Both of these stops, together with the *Posaune* and *Harmonic Tuba* units, speak on 50-inch wind (in the first and second schemes, the *Harmonic Tuba* was to be voiced on 100 inches). A mind-boggling array of reed mutations is derived from two *Tromba* ranks and from some of the other reed stops.

This large open space at the rear of the chamber — behind the Stentor Flute's pipes — allows the Fanfare's sound to escape into the roof space.

The Fanfare organ was originally to include a wooden 8-foot Bombard and a 4-foot tromba-type voice called *Clarion Doublette*. Also, there was to be a unison *Promet Horn* or *Krumet Horn* (depending on which version of the contract one reads) which Richards described as being "of the thin, biting quality characteristic of this stop." (This description sounds like a *Krumet* to me but if anyone has heard of a *Promet Horn*, please let me know.) Two big-toned string stops, the *Stentor Gamba* 8 and *Stentor Gambette* 4, were also deleted (being, in effect, replaced by the Gamba Tubas) when the specifications were revised. The revision also saw the inclusion of the *Trombone* stop, the three Gamba Tubas, the six-rank mixture, and the addition of a 22nd to the composition of the *Stentor Mixture*.

Continued on page 8

Overleaf:

"That The World May Know"

This remarkable photograph was taken by Fred Hess & Son, most likely in 1932, sometime after May 11 — when the Midmer-Losh organ's opening recital was given by James Scott Winter, an electrician on the Midmer-Losh staff. The photo was kindly made available to the ACCHOS by Vicki Gold Levi.

The organ is in use, and the kiosk containing the seven-manual console can be seen at stage level near the right side of the proscenium arch. A grand piano is in front of the organ kiosk. There appears to be an orchestra and chorus on stage. The temporary booths on the stage and in the balcony are probably radio broadcast control rooms.

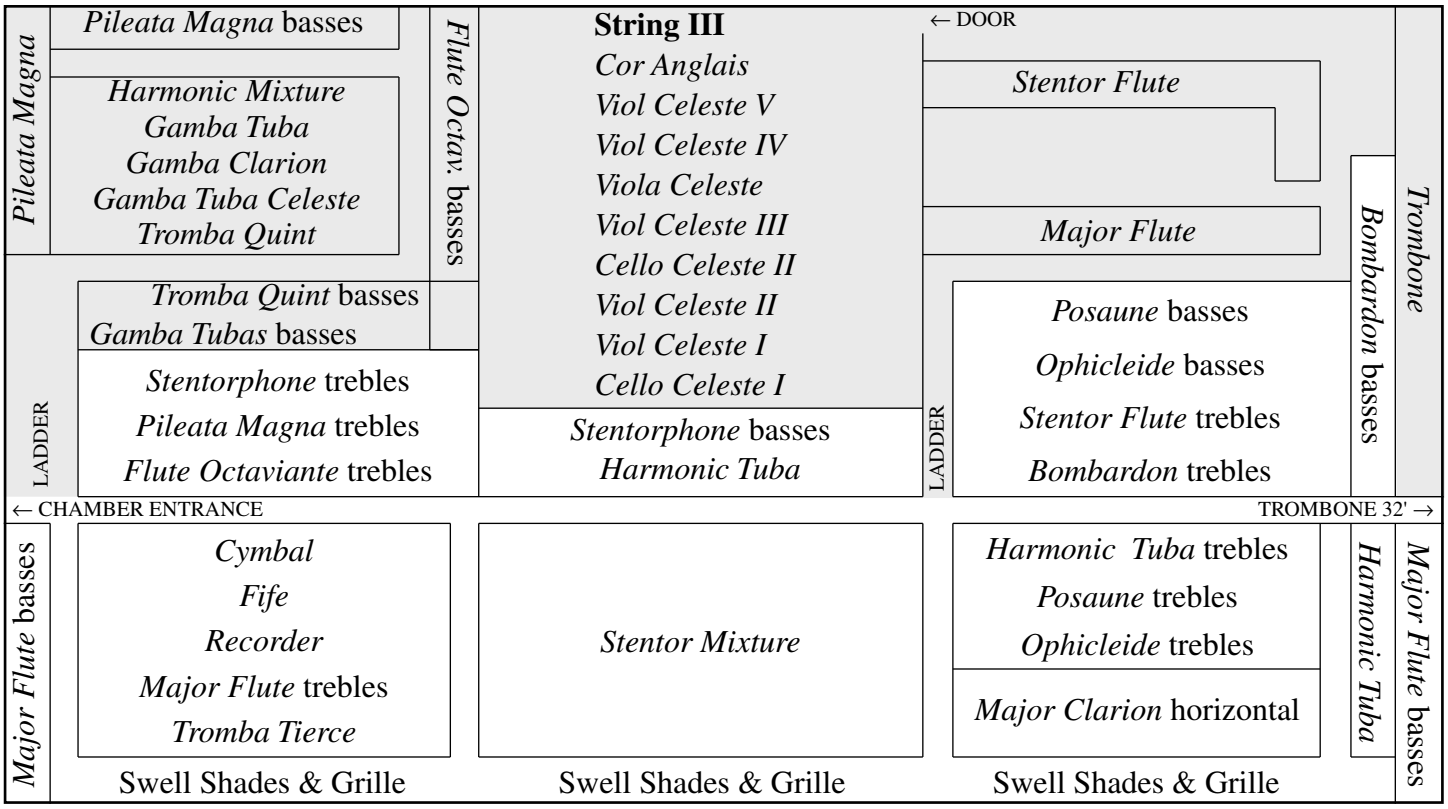
The awesome scale of the room is evident. The large Left and Right main chambers can be seen flanking the stage, with the Left Forward and Left Center chambers just above the balcony seating area in bay one and bay four respectively. The Right Forward chamber and Right Center chamber are mirrored on the other side of the hall. In the ceiling of bay four, above the Left Center chamber, are the Fanfare and String III organs, housed in the Left Upper chamber. The Echo Organ's Right Upper chamber is on the opposite side.

The banner on stage reads: ***THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW***

With this photo, we hope the world will better understand **The Hall of the Great Organ** and help foster the restoration and preservation of its great musical treasure.


B

Fanfare (Upper Left) chamber, simplified plan. The shaded area indicates the lower level.



Continued from page 5

The Fanfare chamber is, essentially, a box constructed within the roof space. It has walls at either end (against which the lowest pipes of the 16-foot *Major Flute* are installed diagonally) and its own ceiling, but its back is the sloped roof of the building. This arrangement is, of course, the same on the opposite side of the building, where the Echo organ is sited. Although these chambers undoubtedly allow some striking tonal effects, they are an organ tuner's challenge, for as the sun passes over the building in the course of a day, it hits the sloping roof which, in turn, conducts heat into the chambers and, thus, can cause the pipes therein to go out of tune. In addition to this, warm air from the interior of the building rises into the chambers through their ceiling grilles and has the same effect on tuning. Having only the roof separating these departments from the elements was not a good idea, for not only does it admit heat but it has also leaked, causing considerable water damage in some places. A new roof was installed in the late 1990's, so hopefully leaks will be a thing of the past, but even so, the question of how to maintain a near-constant temperature in the Upper chambers will need to be addressed in-depth at some stage in the future.

So what condition is the department in today? Well, frankly, it's in something of a state, with water damage, neglect, and apparent vandalism all having taken their toll. In the previous issue of *The Grand Ophicleide*, I described the Echo organ as being "quiet...perhaps like the reading room of a library" and that quietness is evident in the Fanfare organ too, but it is a different type of quietness — the sort that one associates with desolation and despair. Stoppers have fallen down inside their pipes, tuning collars have slipped over others, a few wooden pipes appear to have rotted away, and there is a mass of bent and twisted metal pipes, particularly among the trebles of the 50-inch reed ranks. On the basis that "a picture speaks a thousand words" the facing page shows some photographs of the Fanfare organ in its present condition.

All-in-all, the Fanfare organ is undoubtedly the most-damaged section of the instrument. The chests, externally, don't appear to be badly affected but who knows what they're like inside? I estimate that approximately 40 percent of the pipes will require serious attention, some will have to be replaced. Even so, I have to say that the department's condition was rather better than I had been given to expect and it is certainly *not* beyond redemption. I very much look forward to the day when it can be heard again it all its glory.


A


B

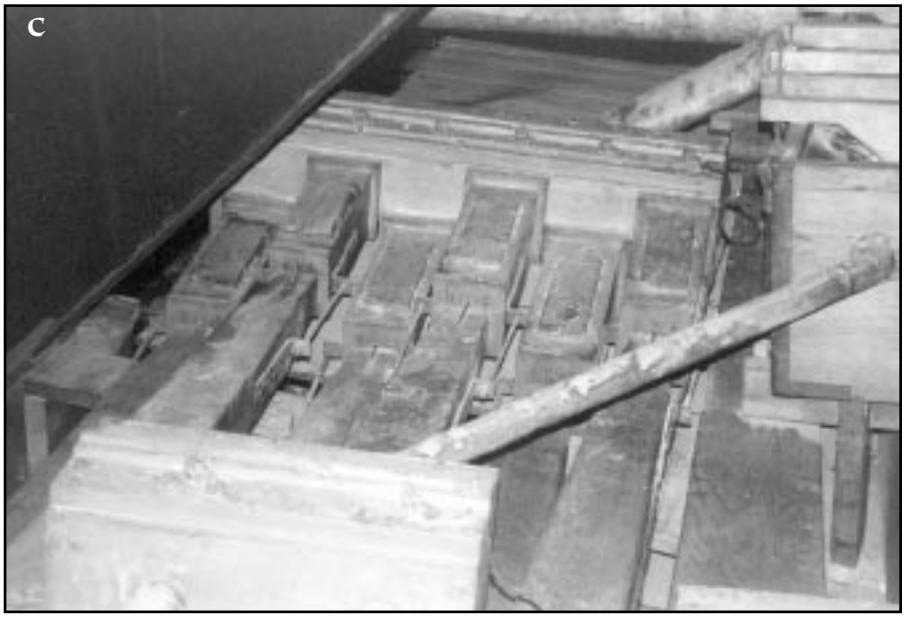
A. The block of the *Major Clarion's* 4-foot pipe — its reasonator having been broken off at some time.

B. The remains of some 50-inch ranks.

C. Water damage is evident on all sections of the horizontal *Trombone* pipes.

D. This relay room — for the Fanfare department and the Left side's Gallery organs — is also located in the roof space.

E. Damage to the chamber's ceiling.


C


E


D

(Editor's Note: This newspaper article was printed in the Pottsville (PA) Rebublican in 1950. The colorful reporting has a number of factual errors but is printed in its entirety. Jack Goodman has been contacted by the ACCHOS and has agreed to pen some stories for future issues of the Grand Ophicleide. He knew the hall organist, Lois Miller, and was present for the Mercury recordings in 1956 — and thus has a wonderful personal knowledge about the earlier days of the Midmer-Losh organ.)

Local Youth Plays World's Biggest Pipe Organ, Assists Expert In Maintenance Work

For several years, in fact since the lad was only 12, everyone in Tremont and Pine Grove knew and took pride in the fact that Jackie Goodman has a rare talent for music and he has been a favorite on many local programs for various events, but it remained for him to be discovered as a true artist by one of the outstanding pipe organ authorities in the world when Jack went to Atlantic City for the summer.

There, in the world's largest auditorium, Jack has had the privilege of playing the world's largest pipe organ, an organ which has never been played since it was built in 1929 by anyone except the official auditorium organist, Miss Lois Miller. Not only has Jackie been allowed to play the master organ but the organ expert who has charge of keeping the organ in perfect condition, Roscoe C. Evans, has taken him "under his wing" and has given him a salaried position as his assistant. Teaching him all the intricacies of the giant instrument and how to keep it in tune. Young Goodman works with Mr. Evans every day, Monday to Friday, from 9 to 12 and from 1:30 to 4:30, and is having the most wonderful summer of his life, working with his favorite instrument, the pipe organ.

In letters to his grandmother, Mrs. C.M. Tobias, and to his uncle, J. Ellis Tobias, Tremont, Jackie described the big organ as "the most magnificent instrument in the world." He said, "Mr. Evans turned on the high voltage for me and I really opened it up full. You should hear the volume that organ has! I surely thought it would blow the roof off convention Hall, and I bet you could hear it a block away."

In addition to playing the big organ, Jackie was also permitted to play the ballroom organ (there are two organs in Convention Hall) which he says is the biggest theatre organ ever built, being larger than the Radio City organ. He has also played the 16-foot Chickering concert grand piano in Convention Hall.

Jack will have another unique experience next week during the Miss America Pageant for he has been given a stage-side seat for all of the pageant events. Thus he will see the famous pageant free of charge while other spectators will pay as high as $15 for a seat in the auditorium. This week the stage settings are being constructed, and Jackie says it is beginning to look like a fairyland.

During his stay at the shore resort, young Goodman has had several engagements to play at the Hotel Morton and he has become acquainted with Nathan Reinhart, another noted organist who plays the big Wanamaker organ in Phila. at times. Reinhart has promised to take Jack to Phila. the next time he is to play at Wanamaker's.

Jack, who is now 18, studied voice and music with Mrs. Alvarius Kreichbaum of Pine Grove and was a pipe organ student of the late Prof. Llewwellyn Edwards of Sch. Haven. Of his talent, Prof. Edwards said that in all his years in the field of music he had never encountered anyone with the shear industry possessed by Jackie.

The young musician graduated from Pine Grove High School in June and will enter Lebanon Valley College, Annville, in September to major in music. He and his mother are staying in Atlantic City at the home of Mr. And Mrs. Chas. Fell, 139 So. North Carolina Ave. It was Mr. Fell who introduced Jackie to the Hotel Morton organist who in turn helped him get acquainted with other Atlantic City organists, in churches and at Convention Hall.

Organ Statistics

The big organ in Atlantic City's mammoth Convention Hall has 33,000 speaking pipes and it takes an expert musician and a specialist in organ-playing to master the giant 7-keyboard console, as well as a rare skill to bring forth music from the mammoth instrument without discord. There are two consoles, both on turn tables. Console No. 1 is the first and only console in organ history to have seven manuals. It has 1477 stop controls, 1250 stop tables and 933 speaking stops. Console No. 2 is portable, can be moved and placed in different parts of the main auditorium and stage and has 678 stop tablets.

The organ pipes are disposed in eight locations, all discernible from the main auditorium by reason of grill screens which form the face of each chamber housing the pipes. There are twelve other rooms in which are located the Relay Mechanism, blowers and motors. The longest pipe is 64 feet and is two octaves deeper that the lowest "C" of the piano; the smallest pipe is about one-quarter of an inch long; the diameter of any one pipe is nearly three feet. The volume of the big organ, if "opened wide" exceeds the combination volume of 25 brass bands. Electric energy used when all of the motors are turned on is a total of 395 horsepower. A total of 225,000 board feet of lumber was used in the construction of the organ. Wire used, if strung in a single line, would girdle the earth twice. Weight of the organ is approximately 150 tons.

The time required to build the organ was four years. To take a complete tour of the magnificent organ would require four and a half hours of time. Estimated cost of the mammoth instrument was between $450,000 and $500,000. The ballroom organ, the smaller of the two instruments in Convention Hall, has four manuals, 354 stops and 5,000 pipes.

Roscoe C. Evans, organ expert formerly of New York, Denver, and Portland, Ore., who is taking so much interest in young Goodman, has "babied" the giant organ since the day in 1929 when it played its first note, and, it's a wonderful experience for Jackie to be associated with him this summer. Last week Mr. Evans told him that he can consider himself assistant to Miss Miller, the Convention Hall organist, and that he would play the big instrument in the event a substitute might be needed.

A Temple of World Peace

"30,000 persons witnessed the dedication of our new Convention Hall, in June, 1929. Vice-President of the United States, Charles Curtis, was one of the principal speakers and Mayor Ruffu was the Master of Ceremonies. 'A Temple Of World Peace' ... 'The Geneva Of The Americas' ...that was the prophecy of national and world statesmen at the opening of the new $15,000,000 structure, at Georgia Avenue and the Boardwalk."

— Ed Davis, Atlantic City Diary
A Century of Memories 1880-1985

The Atlantic City Convention Hall Gets A New Name

Known as the **Atlantic City Convention Hall** since its construction in 1926, this venerable building now has an official new name: **Boardwalk Hall.**

The New Atlantic City Convention Center in downtown Atlantic City now provides a state-of-the-art setting for major conventions, exhibits, and meetings.

The **Boardwalk Hall,** following its major renovation and restoration, will serve as a facility for sports events, the annual Miss America Pageant, concerts, and other cultural activities.

The Senator

(The following is an excerpt from a speech by John Tyrrell at the closing banquet of the 1995 American Institute of Organbuilders Convention in San Jose, California. John Tyrrell (who had been the Vice-President and then President of Aeolian-Skinner) was talking about stories related to him by Joe Whiteford.)

"And the time that Joe and The Boss (G. Donald Harrison) were in Atlantic City with Senator Emerson Richards when the Senator was showing them the mammoth Midmer-Losh instrument in the Auditorium. At this age the Senator had become enormously fat, and every time he reached up to the sixth manual to play a solo, his stomach landed on the first manual, which in turn let out a deafening roar."

From a 1930 advertisement
by the Midmer-Losh Organ Company:

Rollo Maitland's series of six weeks concerts on the great Organ of the Convention Hall, playing six times daily to an average audience of 25,000 people — about a million hearers all told — adorned the first season of the American Fair.

This instrument is so far beyond the development of the ordinary organ that the programs could be adjusted perfectly to the occasion and contained very little organ music — about one number in eight selections. The organ numbers of typical rolling majesty diversified the program beautifully.

The intense orchestral color, the immense volume, the key action speed and especially the swell section speed, bring powers of expression hitherto unrealized in an organ. The articulation of the pipes, the convenience and flexibility of the console arrangements and the generally increased range open up the whole field of music to the organ in a new way.

Symphony, Opera, Violin and Piano literature, Songs, Quartets, Military Marches and the whole marvelous treasure house of music find a new and powerfully expressive medium.

Noble Diapasons and Reed choruses, masses of Strings of undreamed range and beauty, Brass effects impossible even to the brass itself, Pedal stops of a depth and sonority impossible to conceive — each contribute a new factor in organ music and with corroborating harmonics at intervals never before used, and in an intensity fully equal to unison pitch, provide a Brilliance and Cohesion of Ensemble Superbly Colossal.

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Merrick, Long Island, New York

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

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MEMBERSHIP FORM

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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**
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Enclosed is $_____ for membership in the ACCHOS.

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

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