

ATLANTIC
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CONVENTION
HALL
ORGAN
SOCIETY
INC.
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the GRAND OPHICLEIDE

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

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the **GRAND OPHICLEIDE**

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

1009 Bay Ridge Avenue, PMB 108, Annapolis, Maryland 21403
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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.

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On The Cover — The Grand Ophicleide stop on the left jamb of the 7-Manual Midmer-Losh console. This world famous stop is voiced on 100" of wind pressure and was listed for decades in the Guinness Book of World Records as "the loudest organ stop" in the world. It can be heard on The Auditorium Organ CD on Track 13, and on Bach on the Biggest/Boardwalk Pipes CD on track 12. *Photo by Antoni Scott*

Good News!

Here are some of the recent developments at Boardwalk Hall.

On March 29, 2006 Board Members Jack Clotworthy and Harry Bellangy visited Boardwalk Hall and found the following:

All of the chambers have been carefully cleaned. The massive dust and dirt accumulation in the chambers is gone. This came as quite a pleasant surprise!

The fire suppression system has been completed in a thoughtful and very professional manner. The sprinkler heads in the chambers are covered with heavy metal baskets to prevent accidental triggering, and an extensive moisture detection system has been installed throughout all chambers.

All of the old chamber entrance doors have been replaced with state-of-the-art fireproof doors with common keying. Gone are the old hasps and padlocks from yesteryear.

The multitude of old incandescent light bulbs in the chambers has been replaced with modern high-brightness fluorescent bulbs. The results are amazing and now the view from the hall into the Right Stage chamber is quite remarkable. You can see all four levels of pipework more clearly than ever before. We will be taking some new high-resolution photos of this lighting effect and other changes that will be published in the summer issue of *The Grand Ophicleide*.

A remarkable long-forgotten animated scale model of Boardwalk Hall facade was recently discovered and restored by Dave Preston, NJSEA representative at Boardwalk Hall. Strollers moved along the famous Boardwalk in the glow of real street lights. This was built prior to the hall's construction. Photos will appear in the summer issue of the newsletter.

The Historic Organ Restoration Committee recently approved the phase I restoration of the Ballroom Kimball. The console will be removed and sent to a restorer. It will not be returned to its current location in the gallery. Instead, it will be mounted on a moveable platform and placed on the main floor level near the stage. It can then be moved around as needed, and the organist will hear the sound with better balance.

The position of Organ Curator has been funded for an initial two-year period and requests will be sent out for serious candidates to apply for the position.

Also approved is restoration of the Midmer-Losh 5-manual console. It will be fitted with a solid state relay system and remain on a movable platform for placement flexibility in the main auditorium. Rather than connection to the organ via the original huge multi-wire cable, it will now need only an AC power cord and a small multiplex cable.

New applications are being made for a Save America's Treasures grant along with a request for a large grant from the New Jersey Historical Trust.

We're delighted to salute the New Jersey Sports & Exposition Authority for their thoughtful attention to the concerns raised by the society when code mandated installation of sprinklers in chambers became a major issue.



Example of one of the moisture system alarm panels installed throughout both organs in Boardwalk Hall. Photo by Harry Bellangy.



Recently discovered model of the façade presumably built by the architect prior to construction of the building. Note the different name of the hall on the model. Photo by Harry Bellangy.



Side panel of one of the original seats in the main auditorium. It has been restored to its original color and seat covering. It is a good example of the fine detail that went into the original design. Photo by Harry Bellangy.

An Impassioned Plea

Editor's Note: Back in 1998, ACCHOS received the following via email from a gentleman in Scotland referring to an article published by The New York Times on December 27, 1998.

Friends in America copied page four of The New York Times of Sunday, December 27th 1998 and sent it to me. I have only just received it. I feel so passionately about the apparent disinterest by so many in this unique instrument and its future I had to write down my feelings on the matter. At the very least, my remarks might cause an increased interest and spark some debate. Perhaps you also care?

The problem has been, for me, anyway, a total lack of PUBLICITY about the state of affairs in Atlantic City. I only became aware of them when I visited the Convention Hall with my uncle (and passionate organist), Bob Leys from Scotland and his friend Bob Martin of the Garden State Theatre Organ Society.

Let me say at the start that the following are my own personal views about the organs in Convention Hall, Atlantic City and not those of anyone else.

It is just that, like a few others, I have been there. I met Dennis McGurk, who obviously was passionately devoted to the care of the organs in his charge and

frustrated that his advancing years prevented him doing the work he desperately wanted to do on the organs. I have seen the sad state the 7 manual 33,000 odd pipe Midmer-Losh (and the Ballroom Kimball) is in. I heard and played what was obviously once the most stunning musical instrument the world will ever see or hear. It is still a stunning instrument — the scale of the auditorium, the scale of the console, the scale of the organ layout — EIGHT pipe chambers round the auditorium, another TWELVE rooms to contain the mechanisms — and the scale of volume of the sounds defy description. Even now I can't believe what I saw and heard there.

Once it was the greatest, head and shoulders above all the rest (at least in SCALE). But now it is but a decayed, dying, unloved and apparently unwanted relic.

I feel it criminally negligent that such a state of affairs is allowed to exist. Why is it that we humans in general despise and abhor greatness wherever we find it, and do our utmost to bring all such to

ruin. Why is it that we spend so much of our resources saving the RELICS of the PAST but nothing on preserving whatever greatness we have left?

Believe me, the seven manual Midmer-Losh organ in the auditorium of the Convention Hall in Atlantic City is the greatest musical instrument of all time. History has not its equal; the future would not, could not, (need not, if truth be told) provide an instrument of such vision and glory, of such gigantic SCALE.

This unique instrument has been sorely neglected, ignored, ABANDONED today. No doubt its guardians will plead that the scale of the maintenance costs are as gigantic as the sole of the instrument, if not greater. No doubt this is true. Yep, this in a country where people are served such gigantic portions of food in restaurants that their boast is the customer CAN NOT clear his plate. Only today I heard on BBC Radio a broadcaster talking about a meal he had ordered in Carnegies, New York. I have also eaten there and agreed with his comments about the obscene size of the food portions.



He went on to speak of the unbelievable national WASTE of such policies. Before the lawyers start gunning for me let me say I have nothing but admiration for the quality of food at Carnegies — it was superb. It was the quantity I was concerned about. But there is, or ought to be, more to human life than food and drink. I am only drawing attention to one example out of dozens where I feel we need to re-evaluate our priorities.

So what is it to be? Bigger and bigger portions — of everything, not just food, but salaries, houses, swimming pools, profits, companies, conglomerates, you name it — to appease a hunger that is unappeasable because it is a SPIRITUAL hunger, not a physical hunger. Anyway, one person can only eat so much in a lifetime, spend so much, occupy one place at a time, and what of that enriches the human race or inspires the following generations?

We need to feast on greatness, wherever and whatever it is. We need visionaries, artists, craftsmen, and skilled workers of every kind who take pride in achieving the greatest results they can. (Like the visionary who conceived and the artists and craftsmen who gave life and breath to the Midmer-Losh.)

As well as building for the future we need also to preserve what is left to us from previous generations. We need to touch, taste, hear and see what they

have given of themselves to lift humanity just a little higher than the brute beasts. The great forests, cathedrals, castles, estates, treasures, nations left for our present enrichment all demonstrate that among past generations there were some (not many) who lived for a Vision and, spent themselves and their possessions on building for a future they would not personally see.

Sadly, not many are visionaries and of those that were, many did not have the determination to pursue it. Nevertheless, we have an inheritance of great things which have been handed on to us and that demands our attention, for nothing can exist without committed input from those responsible.

When there is only ONE of its kind left, where there has only ever BEEN one of its kind, surely our human souls and spirits DEMAND that it is treated with the greatest reverence and respect, because 1) it is irreplaceable and 2) it is not ours to destroy. Whatever we have from the past is only entrusted to us as a STEWARDSHIP. Coming generations need to be taught about these treasures and our purpose in preserving them, so that they in turn might assume stewardship of them and give to them the honour that is their due. And, in due course, and having trained the generations following them, hand on the trust. Surely the survival of civilization demands such a course!

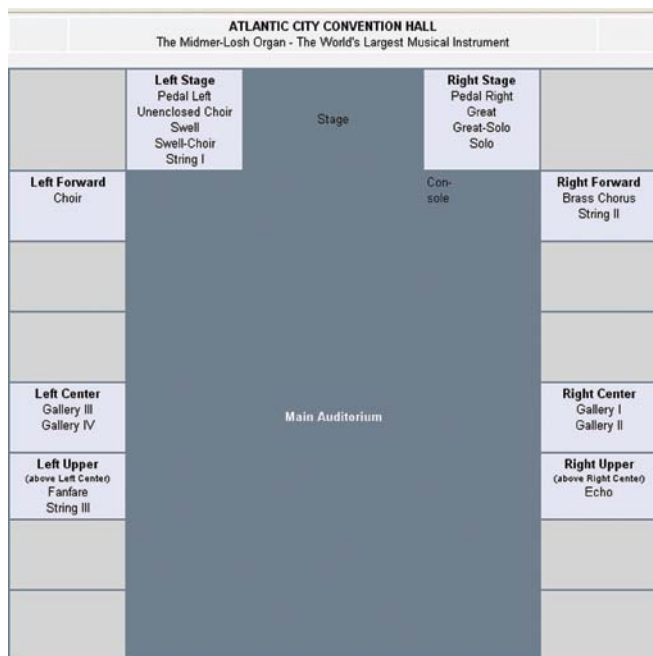
Sadly, I personally don't hold out much hope for this generation, never mind future generations. If history proves one thing, it proves that the greatest destroyer on earth is man. Consider the treasures he has destroyed, not just treasures of craftsmanship in gold and silver and precious metals and stones (the Spaniards and the Incas come to mind as only one of hundreds of similar examples) but think of the knowledge forever lost in the looting and burning of the great libraries, the cities, the countries of past civilisations (Alexandria). And now the boffins tell us for sure that mankind has finally exceeded all (his past destructive endeavours and has so polluted and plundered our beautiful, bountiful planet that they only give us a meager handful of years of existence before all is rubble and rust.

But we DO have a few years — what are our priorities to be? Do we pander to base physical appetite, or do we make provision for the spirit that makes us human?

There is only one seven manual 33,000 odd pipe Midmer-Losh in the whole wide world as far as I know in the whole of this immense universe. There has only ever been one seven manual 33,000 odd pipe Midmer-Losh in the whole wide world.

What are we going to do with it?

Alan L Taylor, Scotland



A Collective Effort

By Stephen D. Smith

It takes two to Tango, but a lot more to build the Midmer-Losh organ. This photograph shows many of the firm's workers, together with some of their spouses and a few city officials. City Organist Arthur Brook is seated front left and Seibert Losh is on the right of the picture.

1. Arthur Brook

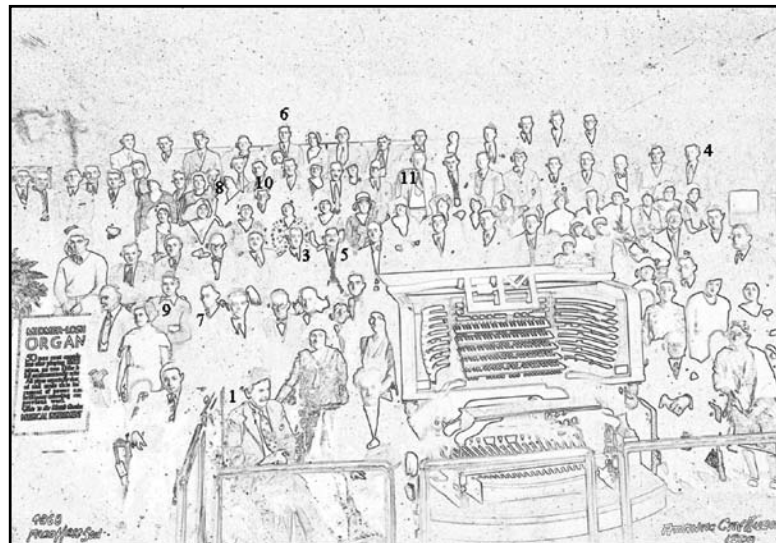
As Organ Inspector at the Convention Hall, he was charged with the task of ensuring that every detail was carried out according to specification and on schedule. A native of New Zealand, he had enjoyed a distinguished organ career in the United States and held the post of Atlantic City's Municipal Organist, for which he was reputedly paid \$5,000 per annum. Previously, he had been an associate of George Ashdown Audsley and, as organist at the World's Fair in 1904, he presided over the 10,000-pipe instrument designed by Audsley that, some years later, went on to form the core of the gigantic Wanamaker organ.

2. Seibert Losh

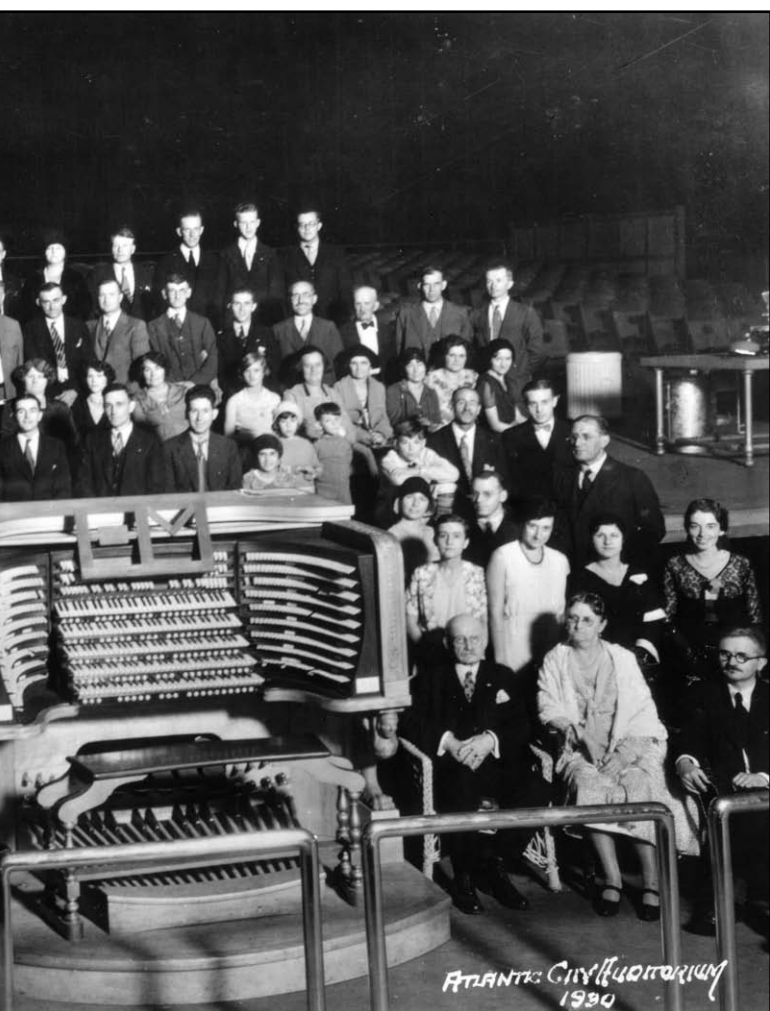
Born November 8, 1880, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. His father was also called Charles, so the younger Losh became known by his middle name. Seibert was educated at Hagerstown, Maryland, where he learned Latin and German and taught himself to play a number of musical instruments. He also formed and conducted a small orchestra that played for local dances, etc. and at the Sunday School he and his siblings attended. In the summer months, he and the orchestra went to Seaside Park, New Jersey, and gave evening performances at one of the larger hotels there. After graduating, Losh's first job was at one of the local music stores owned by M. P. Möller. [Seibert's father managed the Möller Piano Company in Hagerstown.] In 1905, Seibert joined Möller as an organ salesman. He seemed to possess a natural flair for his profession and had a number of ideas for adding to the resources of the organ. He was a pioneer in the sale of organs to theaters/cinemas and was responsible for selling instruments to the Loew circuit and the Fox chain. In 1909, he moved to Brooklyn, New York, as Möller's Eastern Sales Manager and, in this capacity, was responsible for the first instrument to be installed in the Cadet Chapel of West Point Military Academy (now one of the largest pipe organs in the world). As an employee, Losh felt constrained but he remained with the Möller firm until December 1918. For a couple of years thereafter, he sold instruments that he erected himself from parts purchased from various organ builders. In 1920, Seibert and his brother, George, purchased the firm of Midmer & Son.

3. 'Harry' Willis

Known as Harry. He was born on June 22, 1890, and emigrated to the U.S. in 1929, becoming a citizen in 1938. He joined



Midmer-Losh when the Welte company, with which he had been involved, collapsed. He was responsible for producing the first two 100-inch stops and, according to George Losh's history of the firm, helped to construct and voice "the Diaphone pipes" — probably a reference to the 64-foot stop. His wife, Marjorie, was employed at the Auditorium to provide secretarial services for Richards, Brook, Van Wart, and anyone else who required



them in connection with the instrument. Harry's cousin, Henry Willis III, privately referred to the Auditorium organ as "the world's largest collection of pipes." When his work in Atlantic City was finished, Harry was employed by Geo. Kilgen & Sons in St. Louis, but he later moved to the Wicks Organ Company. During World War II, he was an Ordnance Inspector for the United States Government, after which he returned to what had then become known as the Kilgen Organ Company. He retired to Florida in 1960 and died on January 21, 1973. He was survived by his wife and their son, Henry.

4. John Zidlick

An immigrant from Austria who was principal metal pipe maker at the Auditorium shop and, formerly, had been with the Odell Organ Co. He was brought to work on the Auditorium instrument because of his experience of building large façade pipes for European organs. The 32-foot metal Diapason pipes for the Pedal Left were made by him.

5. William Allen

Having started his working life as an apprentice tile setter, he changed his mind and went into organ building.

6. Walter Brook

Son of Arthur Brook. His organ building qualifications, if any, are unknown.

7. Earl G. Watson

"Watsy", as he was called, previously worked for Möller as a "factory man" — which meant that he made one particular item all the time. Fellow employee Sam Hovsepian said Watson was not terribly popular among the Midmer-Losh staff and claimed that, during a disagreement one lunch time, he told Watson "If it weren't for your age, I'd beat the hell out of you" — for which he says he received a round of applause.

8. Christopher Dargis

A Lithuanian who largely, if not solely, made all the wood-work sections of the seven-manual console.

9. Hubert Lamb

A teenage apprentice. His father was an organist in Canton, Ohio, and the State's Midmer-Losh representative. During some of his time working in Atlantic City, Hubert lived at Arthur Brook's house, where he shared a room with Brook's winemaking equipment, which bubbled and gurgled throughout the night!

10. George Losh

Born in Perry County, Pennsylvania, on February 27, 1892. He gained experience of building chests and wooden pipes when working in the Möller factory during summer vacations. After leaving high school, he worked for a year in another factory, then, at Seibert's suggestion, he attended a two-year degree course in mechanical engineering at the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, graduating in 1912. Having joined Möller as a full-time member of staff, he assisted in the erection of many instruments and learned tuning and voicing techniques. In 1914, he became responsible for the maintenance and tuning of Möller organs in his area, but he enlisted in the army when the U.S. entered the Great War and served in France for 17 months. Upon returning home, probably in 1918, he again worked for Möller in New York during Seibert's last months with the firm. In 1920, George and Seibert purchased the firm of Midmer & Son.

11. Henry Van Wart

Known as "Mr. Van." Draughtsman. He worked with Ernest Skinner at the Hutchins Organ Co. and the pair formed their own organ building business. Van Wart later left the partnership and joined the Steere Organ Company, where he became Superintendent. He was managing some half-a-dozen cinemas in Trenton, New Jersey, when — at the suggestion of Arthur Brook — he was employed for \$75 per week as Superintendent of the Auditorium job. His man-management and organ building skills were invaluable. Sam Hovsepian, when interviewed by Nelson Barden, said Van Wart "was an all-round organ man. He knew tonal work...he was what you'd call a straightforward, down-to-earth organ builder, and this is why the men respected him. Nobody ever tried to show him up. He was the right man for the experiment. He was a man's man — he would come and work with the men. He would spend time with everybody in the place. A lot of times he would do the work himself or he'd work right along with you. There was none of that "I am the superintendent and you're the laborer." There was never that feeling from him." When the Convention Hall organ was completed, Van Wart returned to his theaters in Trenton and spent the remainder of his life in the area.

A THOUSAND THANKS

Stephen D. Smith, President of the Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, writes:

With the 10th anniversary of the ACCHOS not far off the horizon (i.e. next year), I should like to say “a thousand thanks” to our members for their seemingly unswerving support in the face of delays and other problems that have beset the proposals to restore the ACCH organs. Those problems are, to some extent, offset by the immense publicity generated by the books, CDs, and DVD produced by the ACCHOS. Even so, it sometimes feels like we’re taking two steps back for every one step forward! Prior to 1999, the Ballroom organ was playable and the Right Stage chamber of the Main Auditorium organ was working. Now, both instruments are silent because of, ironically, the work that was undertaken to refurbish the building and improve its facilities. No one doubts the splendid work that has been done in this regard but, during it, the subject of the organs was put on hold, with no movement whatsoever for a number of years. In fact, it could even be said that the organ project went into reverse, since both instruments suffered during that time. Although money

has already been allocated to return the instruments to their 1998 conditions, the fact is that this will put years on the overall project of getting both instruments fully operational again. Our hopes for some quick movement, re. the organs, now that the building project is out of the way have been dashed somewhat, in that there seems to be some minor heal-dragging on the part of certain agencies. The ACCHOS is, of course, pursuing this matter with a view to moving things on. We have learned, over the years, that the “softly-softly” approach usually works best in the long term, even though it may be frustrating in the short term. I remain firmly convinced that we can say “when” the organs are rebuilt, not “if” the organs are rebuilt. The current plan, as you may know, is to get the Ballroom’s Kimball organ back to full working order and, then, to devote all time and resources to doing likewise for the Midmer-Losh in the Main Auditorium, with the Right Stage chamber being the starting point. In the meanwhile, it is only through the sustained support of our members that we are able to demonstrate, to the authorities, the international interest that exists in “the king of the king of instruments.” I find it very humbling to know that so many people around the world share a common interest in these two fabulous pipe organs. So, I say once more “a thousand thanks” to all of you.



Cover photo reference: Left stop jamb showing 8' & 16' Grand Ophicleide stops

i have just received my cds of the organs and i want to congratulate you on making such wonderful recordings and the making of “the senators masterpiece” as it contains a wealth of information about the organs and now i can only look forward to visiting in the future. I am 16 years old and live in Scotland and i was completely fascinated with the organs, it’s not just a treasure to the United States of America, it’s a treasure to the world and i think everyone should at least pay some attention to the instruments and get them back on there feet. If i ever one the lottery i would donate all my winnings to the renovation of these magnificent organs.

PS: i thought of way for you guys to raise more cash for the organ’s restoration. Add \$2 to the prices of tickets for the events in boardwalk hall e.g., say grease is on, and the hall is fully booked, sold out, there is \$30,000 raised in one night!!!

Ross McNellie
Scotland
February 21, 2006

For The Audiophile's Ears Only...

The World's First Hi-Fi Stereo Surround Sound System?

When Senator Emerson Richards was asked to design a pipe organ to fill what would be one of the most cavernous public assembly rooms in the world, his genius extended to creating a precursor to today's modern motion picture theater and home theatre stereophonic surround sound systems.

Think about it: The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ has huge main left and right chambers flanking the proscenium of the stage — a fair comparison to the left and right channels of contemporary high fidelity stereophonic sound systems. Although not a separate system, per se, the ten ranks of 32' stops plus the 64' Diaphone easily provide the bass effects of today's separate subwoofer systems used in motion picture and home theatre systems. (And then some!)

The four Gallery chambers of the

Midmer-Losh organ are located in the side walls of the auditorium in much the same way as surround sound speakers are located in motion picture and home systems. Granted, they each create separate and distinct signals, but the concept of surrounding and enveloping listeners with music in such a manner is definitely pause for thought and a tribute to Richard's creative thinking at the time.

To cap things off, Richards added overhead sound sources in the ceiling of the auditorium with the beautiful Fanfare and Echo organs, high above the listener's heads. These were again placed out in the Hall and away from the main left and right chambers. This places the organ far ahead of current theatre surround sound systems. Experimental motion picture sound systems are only now beginning to experiment with sound

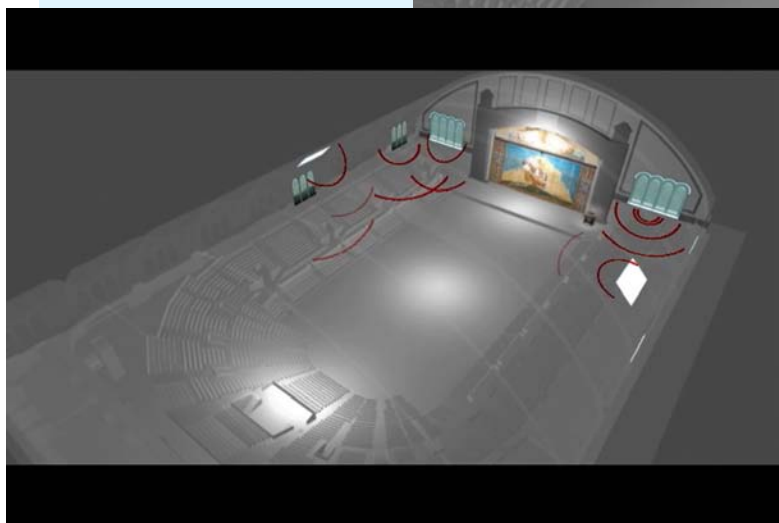
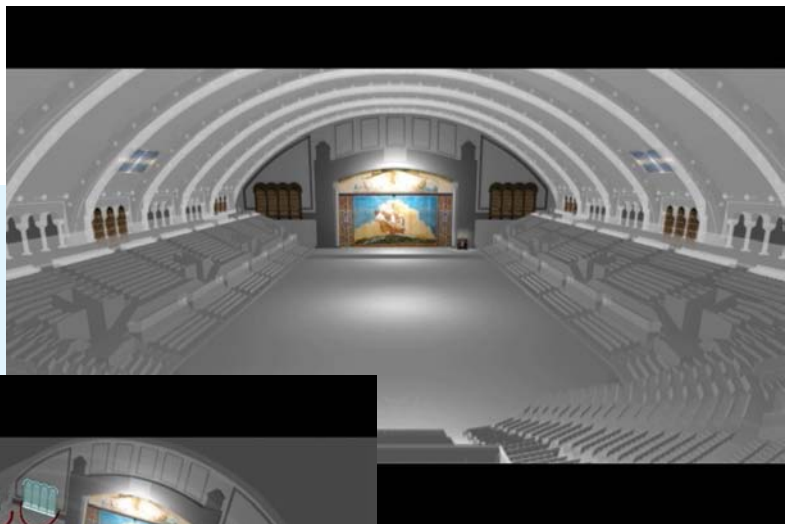
sourced from above and below the seated audiences — made possible with today's multi-channel digital sound storage/replication capabilities for motion picture presentations.

When this extraordinary organ is restored and one can again hear it in its entirety, it should have audience-pulling power like nothing else in the world.

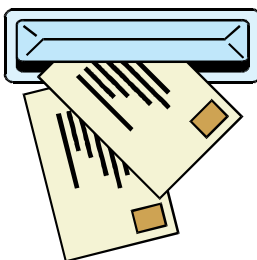
Perhaps the foregoing comparison to modern technology will help inspire some potential investors and casino developers to realize more fully the wisdom of making this national musical treasure once again available as a vital, powerful, and spectacular Atlantic City attraction for the enjoyment and pleasure of future generations.

Charles Swisher
Spring 1999 issue of
The Grand Ophicleide

Examples of surround-sound wave trajectories from the eight chambers in the hall. Images courtesy of Vic Ferrer from the DVD, *The Senator's Masterpiece*.



we get mail



ANTONI SCOTT REPLIES TO ROSS McNELLIE (SEE PAGE 8):

I am so glad you enjoyed the CD's. My name is Antoni Scott. I was born in Edinburgh, Scotland too many years ago to tell you. As a young teen-ager I read about this organ. I always wanted to see, hear and "maybe" even play this wonderful, fantastic organ, someday. Guess what? In 1972, and again in 1998, I played this magnificent instrument. Any superlative you can use to describe this organ is true, and more. I was present when Stephen Smith (the president of ACCHOS) played the conclusion to the Franz Liszt "Ad Nos." I was blown away! As the final chords of the "Ad Nos" built to an incredible conclusion, and when you thought that it could not be possible to add any more, the 100" Ophicleide added the final crowning glory to the already incredible forte. The sound literally poured out of the organ chamber filling your lungs with sound (believe it or not, only the right chamber was operational at the time of the 1998 recording, the other seven chambers being silent!).

As Stephen lifted his hands from the keyboards at the conclusion of the piece, the tidal wave of sound rolled down the vast interior of the Convention Hall, bounced off the far wall and came rolling back. An amazing audio experience. If you really want to learn more about the organ, Stephen Smith authored a book that covers every aspect of the organ. You might also get on to www.acchos.org, and review the web site. It contains a wealth of information about the organ.

Antoni Scott



...FROM PIPORG-L...

Times have changed radically since the Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ was built in 1929, and our taste and standards have changed radically, too. In those halcyon days, people loved the sheer exhilaration of size. Consider the fame of the Empire State Building and the George Washington Bridge, to name only two contemporaneous construction projects. Modern concepts of ecology, economizing natural resources and "small is better" would have seemed ridiculous then.

Senator Emerson Richards wasn't smoking anything when he designed the ACCH organ; he merely set out to build the largest organ in the world. And he succeeded -- the instrument was a GRAND success. It all worked, it was all in tune, and it could do things in that cavernous space that no other organ (not even Wanamakers) could approach. One must remember that the Hall seats upwards of forty thousand people.

The basic layout of the instrument was strikingly advanced for its time. It was the organ equivalent of a quadraphonic stereo system with front speakers, side speakers and rear speakers, with each "speaker" being several divisions of the instrument. Shade/shoe selectors could not only couple various divisions to each shoe, but either open *or close* shades as the shoe advanced. Thus, opening a single shoe could move an immense wave of tone left to right, back to front, side to side or diagonally. Manipulating three shoes could rotate the music around the Hall in either direction. These were only a few of hundreds of special effects available on the 7-manual console.

Of course, the instrument was never

designed to play classical literature as we know it, but to accompany a range of popular events in the Hall -- political conventions, beauty pageants, football games, prize fights, auto races, ice shows. And yet, in the hands of accomplished artists like Charles Courboin, Firmen Swinnen and Arthur Scott Brook, the instrument did very well with "real" organ music.

Unfortunately, the 1939 hurricane flooded the cellars with salt water, ruining the combination action and blowers. The blowers were rebuilt, but the combination action was never restored. Without it, the organ was virtually unmanageable. During WWII, maintenance lapsed, and by the 1950s, mechanical/electrical problems outdistanced the available budget by such a wide margin that tuning was impossible. At this point, Robert Elmore's unfortunate recording "Bach on the Biggest" was made.

Years ago, I talked at length with a number of people who built the organ or subsequently maintained it. While Bill Rosser was still the curator and before some areas were closed due to asbestos, I had the opportunity to go through all the chambers and spend time examining the entire organ. It is an astonishing instrument in terms of design, scope, quality, size and grandeur. Suffice it to say that Senator Richards defined the upper -- and outer -- limits of organbuilding for all time.

Nelson Barden



Hello to all members of the ACCHOS:

I am an organist at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Rapid City, SD. I visit this site quite frequently, and am still awestruck at this instrument's immensity and beauty. It certainly makes my 1961 3m 63 Rank Casavant look like a mosquito! This instrument itself came from an Episcopal Church in Orange, NJ.

I understand that restoration efforts have begun in earnest for the ballroom Kimball as well as this Midmer-Losh instrument. I am pleased to hear this news. I am equally pleased to hear the New Jer-

sey Sports and Exhibition Authority has made the "Historic Organs Restoration Committee" to supplement the ACCHOS. It should have been done decades ago, but I am thrilled to see that they understand this instrument's importance and are doing something to help fully restore these treasures.

I am going to join the ACCHOS next month. I feel that anything I can do, even if it is very little, goes a long way in accomplishing this goal. As I am associated with and work part time for the Schlicker Organ Company (now owned by Justin and Mark Matters of Matters, Inc), I am very interested in the restoration process and would like to help in any small way that I can.

Hope this finds all of you in NJ and around the world well, and I look forward to joining the ACCHOS.

Sincerely,
Michael Bell
February 24, 2006

All:

The "We Get Mail" article in this issue of *The Grand Ophicleide* by Jack Bethards really made me think of how far we have come in organ building since 1932, or better yet how far ahead Midmer-Losh was back in 1932 to include so many examples of the double languid pipes in the large organ. If memory serves me correctly, there was only one example of this stop in the Wanamaker organ and one example in the Liverpool Cathedral organ at the time the hall organ was being built.

Mr. Bethards is correct in suggesting that an example of a double languid stop is only suited to an environment with a great deal of reverberation. I believe that Stephen Smith wrote that Losh or Richards believed that very loud stops, although maybe course or rough in sound up close, take on a whole new character in a spacious building.

The Ophicleide stop, too, as incredibly loud as it is, blends well with the full organ. I thought that although it stood out above the full organ (right chamber

only), it was not overpowering.

An amazing instrument.

Also, the LP Jacket notes suggest the organ has 33,000 pipes. Several other sources claim the organ has 33,112. The actual true number is not known, but is probably neither of these numbers. The 64' stop is not the only one in the world. The Australian organ (Hill?) shares the claim by having a Contra Trombone 64'. I believe that the number of miles of wiring is also incorrect.

Antoni Scott

FROM PIPORG-L

Date: Mon, 2 Jan 2006

Subject: Re: Midmer Losh organ in Atlantic City

Friends:

With new chatter about Atlantic City & "The Organ" — I pass on a unabashedly enthusiastic (and unpaid) recommendation that anyone interested — or who knows someone who is interested — or knows someone who should be interested in the mighty Midmer-Losh needs to get a copy of the new DVD release on the instrument.

The Senator's Masterpiece — The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ, a documentary presented by The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc (for those who questioned if the Society is doing anything or just sitting around).

Produced by San Francisco videographer (and organ lover) Vic Ferrer, this is a great piece of work.

It contains a brief history of the instrument, basic description of what it is, interviews with several house organists, terrific video shots of the hall, the consoles, and interior of the instrument as it was 2004.

Commentary is offered by Stephen Smith, ACCH organ historian, author and expert. Organ builder Jack Bethards provides information from a respected builder's prospective.

And lest you think this is only about the ACCH organs, this could be easily used to demonstrate just what can hap-

pen to an organ inadequately maintained. (Does your instrument need renovation or restoration and you haven't a clue how to start?)

Shots of the presentation of the Organ Historical Society Plaque of Historic Recognition are included.

And being a current DVD release — there *are* extras, such as privately done "home movies" of the Ballroom Kimball organ, and its roll player (any out there in America).

To know both these instruments were still at least partially playable within the last 5 years (the Kimball was completely playable, including roll player as far as I recall) makes their current condition all the more inexcusable.

The video is available on the OHS web-site retail for \$19.98 plus s&h. A deal!

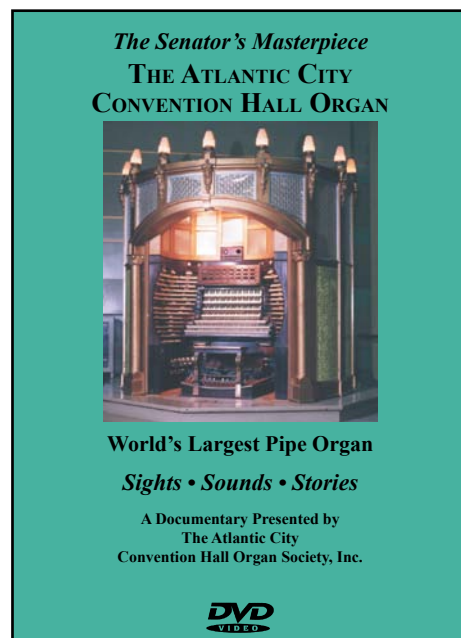
Don't wait to see if this one sells. Get it! Use it! See that other people see it!

Happy New Year.

George Nelson

Handwritten note on a member's \$75 renewal before notices went out:

P.S. "Your DVD is awesome!"



Order online at

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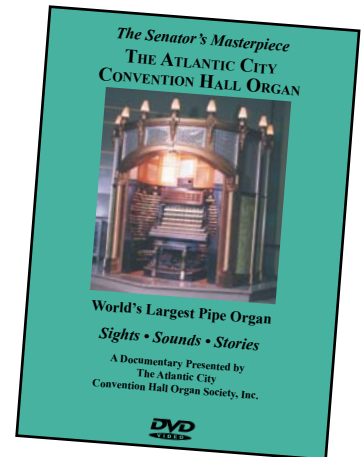
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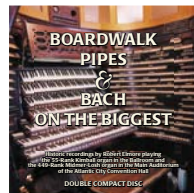


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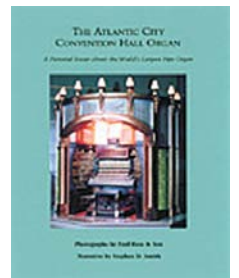
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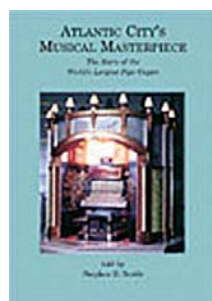
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