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INC.  
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# *the* GRAND OPHICLEIDE

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

Issue 40

Summer, 2008



# 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.*

*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.*

*Design & Layout*  
**Dunlap Design Studio, Inc.**  
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**Basic \$28 • Basic Overseas \$38 • Regular \$48 • Contributor \$75 • Sponsor \$100**  
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**On The Cover** — Charles Seibert Losh's great-grandson, Felix Horan, holds a treble pipe from the Grand Ophicleide (notice the round mouth) during a recent visit to Boardwalk Hall and tour of the organ, 77 years after his great-grandfather finished the Midmer-Losh organ installation in Boardwalk Hall. *Photo by Harry Bellangy.* See full story of the Losh family visit in this issue on page 4.

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## Curator's Report



**Carl Loeser**

Part of the process of designing a new pipe organ is determining how to produce sounds of certain tonal character and volume in the space in which the organ will be heard. Since the size and acoustics of each space, be it a church, concert hall, theatre, etc., is different, this is no simple matter.

Often sample pipes are constructed to help with the process. Based on past experience, the builder voices a small number of pipes representative of the proposed instrument, and takes them and plays them in the space where they will be heard. It can then be determined what changes, if any, need to be made to achieve the intended result.

Considering the size of the Main Hall in the Convention Hall building, it is no surprise that Midmer-Losh apparently constructed a great number of sample pipes. While it is unknown exactly how many were built, at least a handful have survived. Some have been on display here in Atlantic City, and recently two more came to light.

Following an estate settlement, we were asked if we had any interest in two pipes in a wooden box labeled "Sample Pipes" with the Midmer-Losh name and Merrick, LI. address. Upon further inquiry, it was learned that there were numbers and rank names stamped on the pipes. When compared to the stop list for the organ it became clear that these were indeed sample pipes from this organ, specifically the Great 4' Harmonic Clarion, and the Swell 8' Flugel Horn! What a great surprise and wonderful addition to the organ artifacts we have here at Boardwalk Hall. One has to wonder how many other souvenirs are out there that will eventually find their way "home".

Moving from samples to as built, restoration work and planning continue as we move through the bidding process for contractual work, and reactivate more and more of our shop here. The investigation of replacement magnets is ongoing with several sources being considered. The pattern of investigation and then implementation continues.

## Docent Tours

The monthly Docent Tour program has met with considerable success. Most visitors have asked if there is a charge or could they donate to the cause. Accordingly, there will now be a \$20 donation per person for tours, payable by cash or check at the start of the tour. Children under 12, with their parents, will be admitted free.

Reservations and tour dates are available at: [acchostour@gmail.com](mailto:acchostour@gmail.com)

Also, ACCHOS books, CDs and the DVD will be available in the workshop. Proceeds from the tour events will go into a special account and used exclusively for repair and restoration purposes.



## Visitors From Italy

Pipe organ enthusiast from Italy, Paolo Corini and his wife, Claudia, and children Cristiana and Cecilia, had a tour of the Boardwalk Hall organs in 2007.

Hello, Mr. Carl,

We had your name from Mr. Curt of Wanamaker Organ in Philadelphia during our last visit to US to see big organs.

We have been to Atlantic City as well to see the Midmer Losh organ in Main Auditorium, but you were not available in that period.

We will be there again the 26th of December, we would like to know if you will be so polite to open main auditorium just for us to see the organ. For me it will be enough to see the main seven keyboards console and have a picture with it.

It's a dream that I have from when I was a child.

Thanks from now. Awaiting your kind reply,

best regards  
Paolo Corini

## Tours: A Bit of History in the Making

March 24, 2008 was an auspicious occasion at Boardwalk Hall, and a bit of history-making, with the visit by the Losh family headed by Sam Losh, the son of Charles Seibert Losh who built and installed the Midmer-Losh organ from 1929-1931. Seibert Losh was born on November 8, 1880 and died on January 9, 1934 at age 53. The Midmer-Losh Organ Company was incorporated on March 15, 1924 with Seibert Losh as President. The creation and fabrication of the Midmer-Losh organ in Boardwalk Hall is testimony to his genius and innovative skills. Here is a list of the attendees:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Relationship to Charles Seibert Losh</i>
Samuel Losh	Son
Gail Losh	Wife of Samuel Losh
Liz Losh	Granddaughter
Mel Horan	Husband of Liz Losh
Tycho Horan	Great-Grandson
Felix Horan	Great-Grandson
Stephen Losh	Grandson
Lily Cao	Fiancee of Stephen Losh
Miriam Miedzinski	Great-Granddaughter
Ava Miedzinski	Mother of Miriam Miedzinski

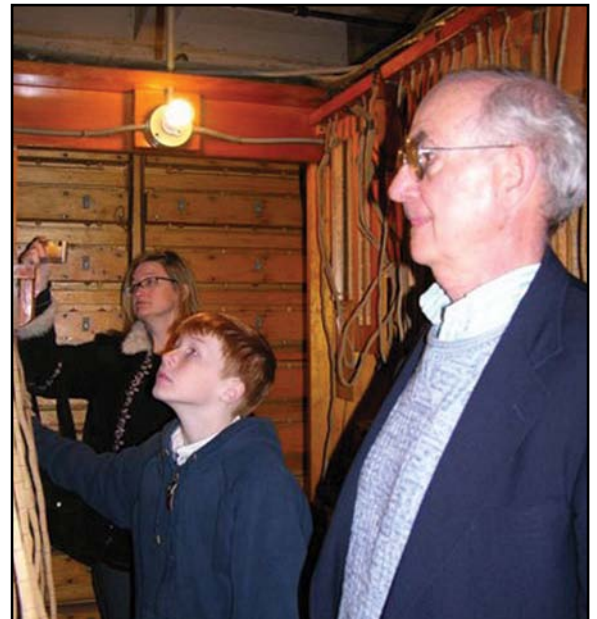
Sam Losh recalls seeing the organ years ago as a "little tyke," but none of the rest of the family had been there before. Two other great-grandsons, Myles Goodman and Russel Goodman were unable to attend. Harry Bellangy and Carl Loeser were hosts for the occasion.



**Charles Seibert Losh, 1880-1934**



**The Seibert Losh Family & Friends visiting Boardwalk Hall. From left to right: Mel Horan, Elizabeth Losh (Seibert Losh's granddaughter), Harry Bellangy (ACCHOS Board member and Docent), Felix Horan (Seibert Losh's great-grandson [below]), Tycho Horan (Seibert Losh's great-grandson [above]), Franco Faia, Ava Miedzinski, Miriam Miedzinski (Seibert Losh's great-granddaughter), Gail Losh, Samuel Losh (Seibert Losh's son)**



**Samuel Losh, Felix Horan, and Liz Losh**

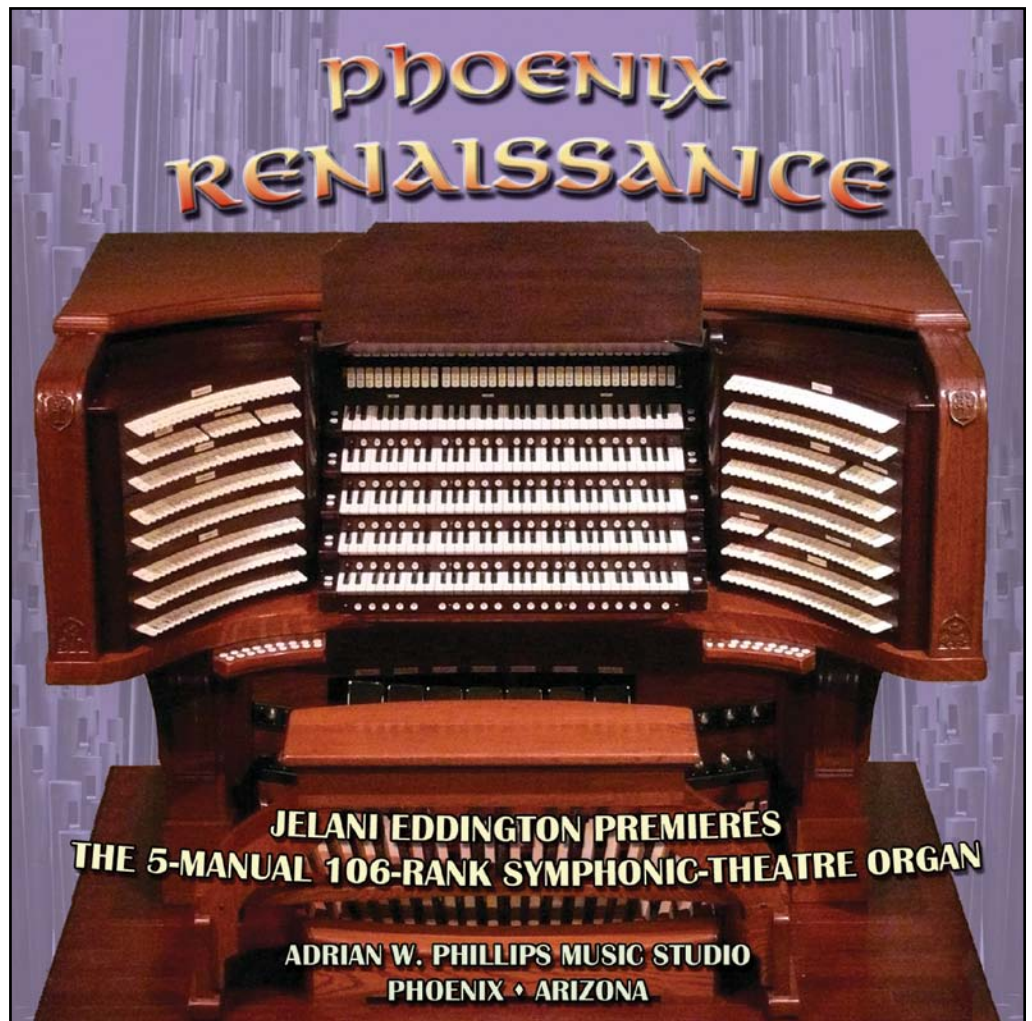
***A Taste Things To Come***

## ***The Rebirth of the Atlantic City High School Organ***

A new CD recording of the Atlantic City High School Organ is now available. It is titled *Phoenix Renaissance*, and is available per the details on the back page of this issue. The recording is by Jelani Eddington and provides a remarkably clear picture of the Emerson Richards/Midmer-Losh sound that offers a precursor to some of what will be heard in Boardwalk Hall once the Midmer-Losh organ there is restored. It is highly recommended, especially for a real tour-de-force, the Rachmaninoff piano concerto that reveals the remarkable symphonic quality of the organ.

This organ was originally built by the Midmer-Losh organ company between 1923 and 1925 as Opus 4920 for the Atlantic City High School in Atlantic City, New Jersey. New Jersey Senator and Atlantic City native, Emerson L. Richards, for whom pipe organs were a great passion, designed the high school instrument.

The original instrument totaled 75 ranks, and became the largest pipe organ ever installed in an American public school. The instrument was housed in



six chambers with the following divisions: Great Unenclosed, Great Enclosed, Solo, Orchestral, Floating, Choir Division I, Choir Division II (borrowed from the Floating division), Antiphonal, and Pedal Unenclosed, Pedal (enclosed in Solo).

Over the course of the next several years, various changes and additions were made to the instrument, bringing the organ to a total of 125 ranks. Throughout the years that the organ played in the auditorium, many public concerts were given, including by resident city organist, Arthur Scott Brook. After the high school project was completed, Senator Richards went on to design and build the world's largest pipe organ: the 7-manual, 455-rank Midmer-Losh at the Atlantic City Convention Hall.

Unfortunately, the high school organ along with the building itself fell into

such a state of disrepair that much of the original pipework was beyond salvage. In December 1974, Adrian W. Phillips, Jr. (who himself had been a student at Atlantic City High School and was class organist of 1941) was visiting his relatives in the area for the holidays and learned that the high school organ was scheduled to be removed and discarded. Adrian and his son, Adrian W. Phillips III, went to the school to investigate the instrument and decided to purchase it on the spot. The organ was removed from the school, placed in storage in New Jersey, and gradually transported to Phoenix over the next six years.

In late 1980, Adrian and his family found a new site for a home located in the Doubletree Canyon area of greater Phoenix. In 1981, a new home was built on a lot with space for a music studio to be constructed at a later date.

## The Municipal Pipe Organ and Its Music

Both Boardwalk Hall organs are best classified as Municipal Pipe Organs. This type of pipe organ had its beginnings in England in the 1800s when it became fashion to install pipe organs in civic auditoriums around the country. The practice spread to America and a look at Will Scarborough's new website: <http://www.municipalorgans.net> will give a glimpse about how widespread this practice was in America. Both Boardwalk Hall organs are listed.

These municipal pipe organs were most popular in the days before radio, TV, sound movies, and when many cities in America did not have their own symphony orchestras. Today, many have vanished, but the more significant ones are still in use and/or are in process of being restored around the country.

One of the real masters of organ music in these heydays was Edwin H. Lemare from England – concert organist, composer, and transcriber. Lemare was the organist for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915, and became the San Francisco Municipal Organist in 1917 when the PPIE organ (Austin Opus 500) was moved from Exposition Hall in the San Francisco Marina to Exposition Auditorium in Civic Center near City Hall and the Opera House.



*Edwin H. Lemare.*

Lemare was paid \$10,000 a year for his services, and was thus the highest paid musician in the world at the time. His \$10,000 salary then would be equivalent to well over \$100,000 a year today!

Lemare was famous for his orchestral transcriptions, especially those of Richard Wagner that were worked out around the turn of the century. They are very complex to play, requiring thumbing and unusual dexterity. (George Bernard Shaw wrote that the only thing worth hearing at organ recitals was Bach and Wagner.)



San Francisco Municipal Auditorium Organ opus 500



St. George's Hall Organ, Liverpool, England



The 5-Manual Midmer-Losh Portable Console and the 7-Manual Midmer-Losh



Sydney Town Hall Organ, Sydney Australia



console. Placed next to each other, the duet possibilities are awesome.

A notable example of these transcriptions is found on the now out-of-print Columbia recordings M33268 and MQ33268 (the quadraphonic version) from 1975. The album was *Organ Orgy* and played by Anthony Newman on the great Aeolian Skinner Organ of St. John the Divine in New York City. To get it right, he had two assistant registrants for the left and right stop jambs, with a third person who added lines that could not be played with two hands and two feet. A fourth assistant crawled inside the console to manipulate some of the swell pedals.

The use of both consoles in Boardwalk Hall for such transcriptions is a tempting thought and a hope for the future. For example, one could let the 5-manual get the swell and galleries and two of the 100-inch voices. The 7-manual could get the great and ceiling and two of the 100-inch voices or whatever.

Former hall organist, John Goodman, recalls the earlier days when he used to play duets with Lois Miller. Lois played the 7-manual and John played the 5-manual — then permanently located on the left side of the proscenium arch opposite the 7-manual.

## ***“Is this organ any good?”***

*Vic Ferrer writes:*

My trailer for *The Senator's Masterpiece* DVD received this posting; could you or someone you know possibly answer this person's inquiry publicly on YouTube regarding the M-L?

It's noticeable [that] everyone talks about the organ's size, loudness, wind pressure, etc. – in other words, the irrelevancies. Can anyone tell us instead whether this organ is or ever was any good?

*Stephen D. Smith responds:*

The organ's "size, loudness, wind pressure" are not really "irrelevancies." They are what pipe organ fans enjoy talking about, in the same way as computer geeks discuss processor speeds, hard drive size, pixels-per-inch, etc.

In the case of the Atlantic City Convention Hall (ACCH) organ, these statistics are all the more mind-boggling because they exceed anything else in the field, either before or after the instrument's construction. However, I agree they do not contribute much, if anything, to the general impression of whether or not the organ is actually any good.

Therefore, let me assure anyone who's interested that the instrument is "good" in every respect. The tonal scheme itself is not just a rag-bag collection of stops. It's a clever plan that pays respect to the past and, also, looks to the future. The detail paid to the instrument's physical construction is astonishing. Few pipe organs have had this much attention paid to their design, layout, materials, etc. The individual stops, too, are deserving of both praise and note. Not one of them is a standard, run-of-the-mill rank. They were all built with the hall's vast acoustics in mind. Again, considerable attention was given to their voicing. "Refined," "beautiful," "majestic," and "thrilling" are all terms that could be – and have been – applied.

Of course, I would say this, as I'm the president of the society that advises on the instrument's upkeep, etc. However, I wouldn't write this sort of stuff if I didn't believe it to be true! I accept, however, that it's largely a matter of personal taste (e.g. some people just loathe anything and everything about large pipe organs, because they prefer smaller instruments of a different organ-building school). The only way to make up your own mind is to hear the instrument for yourself!

*Best wishes,*

*Stephen D. Smith*

*Webmaster - [www.organrecitals.com](http://www.organrecitals.com)*

*President - [www.acchos.org](http://www.acchos.org)*

[The noted organist, Robert Elmore said this pipe organ could "move men's souls as no other organ anywhere." –Ed.]



**The Solo organ's battery of high-pressure reeds: Tuba Magna (top of picture) and brass Bugle (both on 50-inch wind) and the Tuba Imperial (100-inch wind). Think Wagner transcriptions by Edwin H. Lemare here! Photo by Stephen D. Smith.**

## ***Famous people said to have played the pipe organ***

Donald Knuth, The Art of Computer Programming	Gabriel Fauré
Pearl S. Buck	G. F. Handel
Albert Schweitzer	Domenico Scarlatti
David Hyde Pierce	Helmut Schmidt, former German chancellor
Billy Joel	Thomas Edison
Wm. F. Buckley	Denny McLain, Detroit Tigers Pitcher of 1960s era fame
Gustav Mahler	Werner Von Braun, German rocket scientist
Anton Bruckner	Jackie Gleason
Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's Consort	Pope Benedict
Woodrow Wilson	Fats Waller
Queen Lydia Liliuokalani	Keith Jarrett
Leopold Stokowski	Nero played the Hydraulis
Edward Elgar	Merv Griffin
Albert Ketèlbey	Rick Steves
Arthur Fiedler	Jeff Smith (The Frugal Gourmet)
Antonin Dvorak	John Marsh, a personality on BBC Radio Two
Claude Debussy	Rick Wakeman of the pop group YES
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	Max Planck
Ludwig Von Beethoven	Mister Rogers (Fred Rogers)
Edward Heath, British Prime Minister	Emanuel Swedenborg
Sir Henry Wood, of the Promenade Concerts	Dick Hyman
Sir Malcolm Sargeant	George Shearing
Andrew Davis, conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra	Lew Ayres
Dudley Moore	
Princess Anna Amalie von Preußen	
Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy	





## A Recent Sample Pipe Discovery

The original set of twelve unique sample pipes fabricated for Opus 5550 was presented to ACCHOS by Stephen Adams in 2000. He inherited them from David Junchen who purchased them from Midmer-Losh in the final years of business and held onto them for decades. These sample pipes are now stored in the organ workroom and are scheduled to become part of a planned exhibit in the workroom. The current set appeared recently via email and it is thought that other sample pipes exist in private collections.

(Above) Recent Midmer-Losh sample pipe discovery; (right) Original sample pipe exhibit at Ocean One Mall Exhibit



*"I've often heard and I've often used the word 'timeless' to describe the world of the pipe organ."*

*—John Bishop*

### Tongue-in-Cheek-Department:

## Watch Out for April 1

Date: Tue, 1 Apr 2008  
 From: "Kelzenberg, David C"  
 Subject: Microsoft acquires Macy's

UP—Sources at Microsoft have confirmed that the corporate giant has acquired the Macy's Department Store chain. Bill Gates, Microsoft's founder and CEO, has expressed particular interest in the company's large Philadelphia store, home to the largest playing pipe organ in the world. When asked about the organ, Gates reportedly said, "I love organ music, but that thing wastes an enormous amount of valuable space. I believe it can be replaced by a Windows-operated modern music system, and the space now occupied by what amounts to a warehouse of old plumbing can be used to house a server farm. Customers won't know the difference." Sources at Macy's headquarters in New York City were unavailable for comment.

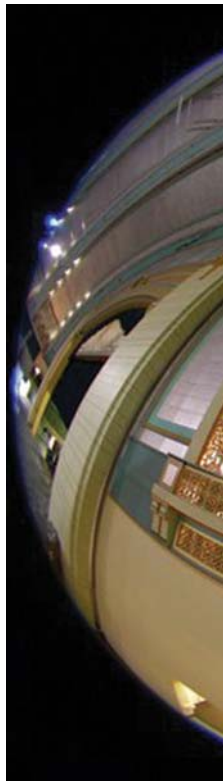
Date: Tue, 1 Apr 2008  
 From: Bob Alder  
 Subject: Trinity Wall Street

An unimpeachable source, quoted in the Papua New Guinea Post-Courier newspaper, has reported that the Vestry of Trinity Wall Street (NYC) has acknowledged the dire need to replace the newly obsolete M&O technology with a more reliable system that will serve the ever expanding musical needs of their landmark church far into the 22nd Century. In responding to this crisis, the Vestry has approved the purchase of the Atlantic City Auditorium organ for full restoration and reinstallation in Trinity Wall Street. The inclusion of the seven manual main console, along with the original five manual slave console, will assure that Trinity Wall Street accepts the dictum of all organists that "Too much is NEVER enough."

Bob Alder  
 Hilo, Hawaii

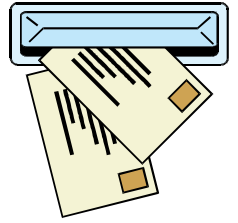
## *More Fish Eye Photos*

These photos were taken without flash by Harry Bellangy using a Nikon CoolPix 8700 digital camera with a Nikon fisheye 180 degree converter FC-E9





## we get inmail



April 23, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

After bumping into some YouTubes about the Senator's Masterpiece and watching them on my computer I found myself welling up with tears which uncontrollably ran down my face. Is this any way for a grown man to behave? At any rate I feel compelled to become a member. I am a TV broadcast engineer with Fox TV and have always been fascinated by pipe organs and electronic organs like the Hammonds I have repaired over the years.

Kenneth deGruchy, Jr.  
Ridgefield Park, New Jersey

*(from Piporg-l)*

Date: Fri, 25 Apr 2008

From: Stanley Krider

Subject: Jelani's Phoenix Renaissance CD

Greetings all:

I have just received my copy of Jelani's \*Phoenix Renaissance\* recorded on the rebuilt Atlantic City High School Midmer-Losh. I've compared its sound with the sound of the ACCH's Midmer-Losh, and find the sound similar enough to see the common parentage. In my opinion, the \*Phoenix Renaissance\* is a worthy companion CD to the historic Robert Elmore CD which includes \*Boardwalk Pipes\* performed on the ACCH's Kimball and \*Bach On The Biggest\* performed on the ACCH's 7/449 Midmer-Losh.

I highly recommend Jelani's CD to ACCHOS pipe organ aficionados.

Musically,  
Stan Krider

*(from Piporg-l)*

Date: Tue, 6 May 2008

From: Stanley Krider

Subject: ACCHOS fund raising

Becoming a member of the ACCHOS organization would help also.

The quarterly newsletter is a real gold mine in itself.

For those who remember the Robert Elmore LPs, the ACCHOS has converted these recordings to CDs, and they are totally amazing reproductions of the organ's power. I'd like to take mine to a theatre and play it on the auditorium sound system!

Perhaps those sub woofers might try to reproduce the majestic bass notes!

Stan Krider

## Phoenix Renaissance

### Jelani Eddington Premieres the 5-Manual 106-Rank Symphonic Theatre Organ

The newly restored Atlantic City High School Midmer-Losh organ heard on this outstanding CD offers evidence of Senator Emerson Richards' design concepts resulting in a distinctive tonal quality that represents a clear precursor of his major achievements to be heard in Boardwalk Hall. Savor a taste of things to come.

Price: \$17.98 (plus S & H)



## The Senator's Masterpiece:

### The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ

A dramatic DVD video documentary about The World's Largest Pipe Organ containing sights, sounds, and stories about the Midmer-Losh Pipe Organ in Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall.

Price: \$19.95 (plus S & H)

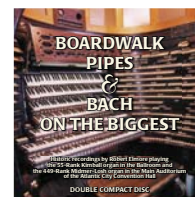


## Boardwalk Pipes & Bach on the Biggest

Compact Disc Recording

The legendary Mercury recordings digitally re-mastered in stereo featuring the Ballroom Kimball and Midmer-Losh organs, played by Robert Elmore

Price: \$15 (plus S & H)



## Atlantic City's Musical Masterpiece

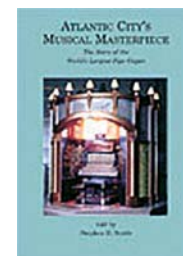
The Story of the World's Largest Pipe Organ

By Stephen D. Smith

500 pages, 7" x 10" cloth-bound volume

A complete illustrated history of the Midmer-Losh Pipe Organ

Price: \$25 (plus S & H)



## The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ

A Pictorial Essay about the World's Largest Pipe Organ

Photographs by Fred Hess & Son

Narrative by Stephen D. Smith

112 pages, 95 black and white photographs of the Midmer-Losh organ

Cloth-bound volume 11 1/2" x 13"

Price: \$25 (plus S & H)

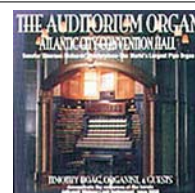


## The Auditorium Organ

Compact Disc Recording

1998 demonstration recording of the Midmer-Losh pipe organ

Price: \$15 (plus S & H)



## The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ

An Introduction to the World's Largest Pipe Organ

60-page illustrated booklet

Price: \$8 (plus S & H)

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or call the

Organ Historical Society at 804-353-9226 to place an order.