

# The Mighty Christie Theatre Organ

OPUS 2861



## *Grand Opening Concert* Souvenir Brochure

Sunday September 27th 1987



at

Gordon Craig Theatre

STEVENAGE



# Gordon Craig Theatre

at the

## STEVENAGE LEISURE CENTRE

---



### GENERAL INFORMATION



#### THE BACKGROUND

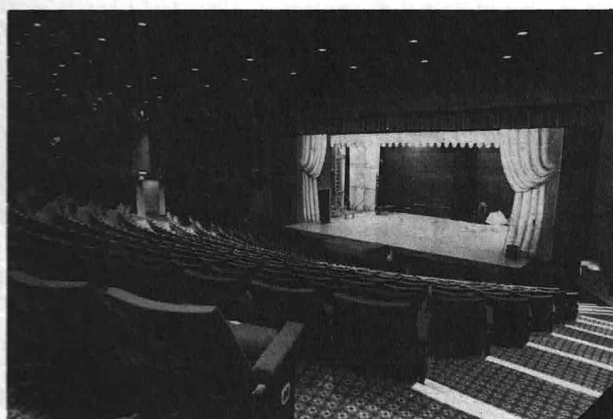
The need for an Arts Centre in Stevenage was first identified more than twenty years ago by the Stevenage Development Corporation, who prepared an outline scheme in association with the local Arts Guild; but despite the active encouragement of the Chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain, Lord Goodman, lack of capital finance repeatedly delayed the start of any building operation.

Following consideration of the Sweeting/Molyneux Report local Arts and Sports Trusts were established to act as steering committees, and the Council appointed Leonard Vincent, Raymond Gorbing and Partners as Consultant Architects. The necessary finance was eventually secured through a "lease-back" system with a merchant bank, the contract was let to Messrs. Marples Ridgeway and work began on site in mid-1973. A foundation stone was unveiled on 14th June 1974 by Baroness Lee of Asheridge – formerly Jennie Lee, Minister responsible for the Arts at the time when the scheme was first mooted – and the contract was completed in time for the planned opening in early November 1975.



#### THE LOCATION

The Leisure Centre is within one minute's walk from Stevenage Railway Station, and only five minutes from the A1(M). Linking with any section of the main B.R. Inter-City network and major motorway network is therefore ideally achieved. Ample parking facilities surround the centre.



#### THE GORDON CRAIG THEATRE

Named to commemorate the local birth, in 1872, of Britain's most famous stage designer and theatrical pundit – accommodates the fullest variety of professional plays and musicals, opera and ballet, classical, folk, jazz and popular concerts, variety and pantomime, films and entertainments of every kind.

Presentations by local amateur groups form an important part of the programme, and the theatre is an ideal setting for daytime conferences.

#### EXHIBITION AREAS

Adjoining the theatre foyer which has considerable exhibition space itself is a 1200sq. ft. purpose designed Exhibition Area equipped accordingly. It is a pleasant carpeted area which receives natural as well as specialist lighting. The Box office foyer which forms the main entrance to the venue, has two areas available for the mounting of exhibitions.

---

Stevenage Borough Council  
Department of Leisure and Community Services  
Director of Leisure and Community Services  
and Licensee of the Gordon Craig Theatre: E.L. Harris  
Arts Administrator: Bob Bustance  
Theatre and Publicity Officer: Jenny Taylor





Mayor of Stevenage  
Councillor A G Campbell, DMS., F Inst., AM., MBIM.

On behalf of the Borough of Stevenage I am pleased to welcome you all to this, the inaugural concert of the recently restored and refurbished Christie Theatre Organ.

Formerly built for the Carlton Cinema, Tuebrook, Liverpool in 1937 this mighty instrument was, until its installation at the Gordon Craig Theatre, to be found at the Stotfold Social Club, Bedfordshire. Through the efforts of the enthusiastic organ society who looked after the instrument at Stotfold, the plight of the organ and its future, due to the impending demolition of the social club, were brought to the attention of the Stevenage Borough Council. Whilst the preservation of this rare object of theatre and cinema history seemed to be an undoubted worthy cause, the question remained as to where and how the instrument could be housed. Fortunately Stevenage Borough Council owns within its leisure facilities the Gordon Craig Theatre. A feasibility study soon proved that the modern auditorium could not only house the working chambers of the organ with the absolute minimum of structural change but also the console itself could be played from the hydraulic orchestra pit-lift of the theatre stage, thus allowing the organ a true rise to its former glorious playing tradition!

I feel sure that this evenings concert will be a fitting climax to the tremendous efforts of all those who have been in any way involved with the installation of the organ and to the faith of those who made the original concept possible. In adding to the scope and versatility of the theatre and leisure centre complex the first presentation of the Christie organ, and all that stems from it, will, I am certain vindicate not only their individual contributions but the earnestness of the Borough in bringing the best in musical entertainment to Stevenage.

It is therefore with great pride that I invite you to enjoy the first sounds of what I am confident will immediately become an attractive asset to our town.

Councillor A G Campbell  
Mayor of Stevenage



## THE CHRISTIE THEATRE ORGAN

### THE HISTORY OF THE ORGAN FROM 1932 TO 1987



The Christie Theatre Organ, Opus 2861, was built by Hill Norman & Beard and installed, on a lift, in the Carlton Cinema, Tuebrook, Liverpool. The cinema opened on 11th June 1932 with Edward O'Henry at the console. He was succeeded by James Bell, who played when the BBC broadcast the organ and who was followed in turn by Vincent Parker, Trevor Willets, Clifford Birchall, Joseph Storer and Reginald New. Reginald New made an LP record of the organ in 1955; which is believed to be the only recording ever made of the Christie in its original home, and a copy of the record is in the custody of the Stotfold and District Organ Society (recently renamed the North Herts Organ Society). The Carlton opened during the hey-day of the cinema, when every week-end there were queues for seats, the era when the proprietors of the major chains vied with each other to provide the most impressive and elaborate buildings, the furnishings and decor of which helped to transport their patrons to a make-believe world peopled with dashing heroes and elegant, beautiful heroines. Performances were continuous then ("This is where we came in") and at the end of each part of the programme the curtains would glide across the screen, the spot lights came on and to the strains of his signature tune the resident organist rose on his impressive console to entertain the audience.

No cinema which sought to impress was without an organ and few people at that time could have foreseen that they were living through an era which was to be curtailed all too soon. The reasons for the demise of the cinema are well-known and by the early 1960's the Carlton Christie had been sold to Charles Smith of Maidenhead.

So how did the Christie find its way to Stotfold? In 1937 the privately-owned Regent Cinema, built by a Mr H. Smith opened its doors to the public and began a period of successful operation which lasted until after the end of World War II. This success was due in no small part to the fact that the cinema boasted an organ on a lift – another Christie in fact. Inevitably, the Regent was affected by the general decline in the fortunes of the cinema, it was closed and the organ was sold. Subsequently the building was bought by Stotfold Social Club for use as the Club's premises and it was the ambition of a club member, Bob Simpkins to install a pipe organ in the building once again. Bob was a popular local figure, a bachelor and businessman who devoted most of his leisure time to playing organs, notably at the Plough, Great Munden and the Granada, Bedford. In 1963 he bought the Carlton Christie from Charles Smith and it was delivered to the Club in May of that year. The installation was entrusted to Phil Burbeck, assisted by Rupert Kettle and work commenced in mid-June. Whereas the organ had originally been in two chambers (Solo and Main) at the Carlton, both the pipe-work and the traps had to be fitted into one chamber under the stage at Stotfold and this involved a considerable amount of re-arrangement. At this time an octave coupler (Solo Super to Great) was added. By the beginning of August work was well advanced and the Christie re-opened on 13th September 1963 with William Davies and Jackie Brown at the console.

In 1964, Bob Simpkins acquired additional pipe-work, notably 49 notes of the Connacher (Nottingham) English Horn and Krumet. Unfortunately, Bob Simpkins was now in poor health and in particular his eye-sight was failing, nevertheless, he had an additional chamber built so that the traps could be removed from the main chamber to make room for the new pipe-work. The new ranks were installed but before the traps, which had been stored, were moved to the new chamber, Bob's eyesight failed completely and not long afterwards he died.

Stotfold Social Club purchased the organ which was now in a poor condition, being incomplete and also having been extensively damaged by ground water which had risen, on more than one occasion, into the chambers. This flooding was eventually controlled, with the generous assistance of Greene King Ltd., the Brewers, by excavating a sump outside the chambers and installing pumps which controlled the water level automatically. The Club also sought the advice of Bruce Makepeace, who recommended that a survey should be made by a professional organ builder to determine the extent of the damage to the organ and to advise on its proper completion. The survey was made by David Pawlyn who found that some of the original pipe-work which had been temporarily dis-mounted during the alterations undertaken for Bob Simpkins had not been replaced, but had been removed from the premises. David Pawlyn did a great deal to restore the Christie – he found, and acquired, some of the original parts at a sale and the bottom octaves of the String Bass, Flute and Diapason which had been taken away were replaced; the String Bass with a Haskell octave from the Gaumont Leighton, the Flute by an octave from the Adelphi, Slough (Christie, re-built by Compton) and the Diapason by an octave the origin of which is not known, but which is compatible. One of the two ranks of the Celeste was also missing, but fortunately a compatible rank was found. The Krumet pipes had been irrevocably damaged by bad storage and were removed, thus the organ was returned to its original specification with the addition of the English Horn

rank. David also repaired or replaced the damaged trunking and chests and re-arranged the disposition of the pipework in the chamber. In 1979, the Stotfold and District Organ Society had been formed, which, in association with the Social Club, would maintain the organ and present it in concert. The fitting up of the percussions and the final stages of the restoration were undertaken by the Technical Team of this Society, comprising John Abson, Keith Chambers, Clive Hawes, Bruce Makepeace and George Williams. They were well qualified to do so, since Clive Hawes, and Bruce Makepeace had previously been responsible for the maintenance of the Wurlitzer organ in the Ritz, Luton and the other members of the team were also experienced in pipe organ work. The team acknowledge with gratitude the help of several firms in finding suitable parts or materials and in particular that of Les Rawle of the American Theatre Organ Society and Frank Fowler, the latter, of course, being the Managing Director of Hill Norman & Beard, who originally built the instrument. At this time the illuminated Holophone surround was fitted, this having been acquired from the Maidstone Compton by Bob Simpkins.

By the efforts of all concerned the Christie was restored and the Stotfold and District Organ Society presented its opening concert on Sunday, 27th April 1980. Again, William Davies was at the console, this time in the company of George Blackmore, the Patron of the new Society. For the next six years the Society regularly presented Sunday afternoon concerts at monthly intervals on the Christie until 1986, when the Social Club announced that it was their intention to re-develop the Club's premises in a manner which precluded the retention of the organ. Faced with this situation, the Organ Society made enquiries in the locality with the object of finding new premises in which the organ could be installed, having negotiated with the Social Club an option to buy the organ if they were successful in their quest. In July of 1986 the Society approached the management of the Gordon Craig Theatre, part of a Leisure Complex operated by Stevenage Borough Council for the residents of Stevenage. Having seen and heard the Christie, played for them by Bob Freeman, a Society member, it was decided to make a feasibility study to determine whether the Christie could be accommodated in the Theatre. It quickly became apparent that there was an area adjacent the right-hand wall of the auditorium which was not only ideally situated but which was also available for the pipe chambers. The approval of Stevenage Borough Council was sought and, in due course, received although in the interim it had transpired that whereas the Organ Society had initially wished to effect the re-location of the organ itself, using volunteer workers under professional direction, this would not be practicable in a working theatre since the theatre would be in use at the times when the volunteers would be available. The Society had also determined that it would be advantageous to replace the electro-pneumatic control gear which connects the console to the actual pipe-work, by state-of-the-art electronic control gear since this would remove from the instrument those components which were deemed, by virtue of their age, to have reached the stage where their continued reliability was uncertain. In addition, this change would also enable the facilities provided for organists to be enhanced. In the event the Council decided that in order to enable the installation to be completed quickly and with the minimum disruption to the Theatre, it preferred to have the organ installed by professional organ builders. Happily, the contract was secured by Hill Norman & Beard and work started in early March 1987 to remove the organ from Stotfold Social Club's premises. Within a week the whole of the organ had been delivered to the Theatre, with the exception of those parts which were taken to H.N.B.'s factory for repair. The console was amongst these items and although externally it appears unchanged, it has been substantially re-built internally, only the visible parts now being original — this follows the Council's decision to approve the recommendation that the control gear should be updated. Four of the base note chests have been extensively refurbished and the English Horn chest, (which met with universal disapproval!) has been replaced by an entirely new chest. The tremulants have been re-leathered, some pipes which were too tall for the new chamber have been mitred, all the cables have been replaced and the wind trunking has been re-designed and renewed to suit the changed relative locations of the pipe chests. The illuminated surround which had been fitted to the console at Stotfold will not, at least for the present be used and since the surround included the organist's bench it has been necessary to make a new wooden stool to match the console. Many of the original documents relating to the Christie organs were lost when H.N.B.'s factory was bombed during World War II but Hill Norman & Beard were able to borrow an original Christie stool as a pattern and the Company provided the material for a new stool which was made by John Chivers, a member of the North Herts Organ Society.

In the course of the re-installation of the Christie the opportunity has been taken to revert to the original design in which the pipes were located in two chambers, a Solo chamber and a Main chamber, since this enables the organist to exercise greater control over the balance of his music. The Christie Music Transmission System, apart from enabling extra couplers and stops to be fitted also includes a memory which enables a piece played on the organ to be immediately re-played automatically. This is not an audio recording system but a device which records the digital signals sent to the pipe chambers from the console when the organist plays and which is able to reproduce those signals on demand. Thus the sounds which are heard are produced by the pipes themselves as in the first instance. This memory is volatile so that it persists only until the organ is switched off but the contents of the memory can be transferred to a magnetic recording medium for permanent storage.

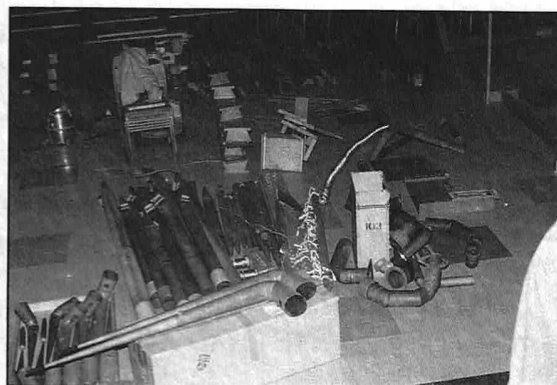
Thus, with its new partnership with Stevenage Borough Council the Christie enters a new phase,



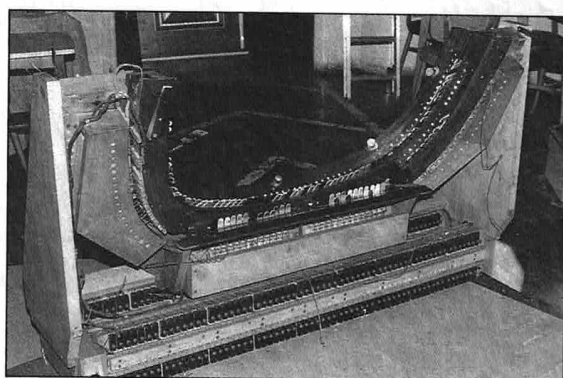
# ON THE MOVE . . .



1



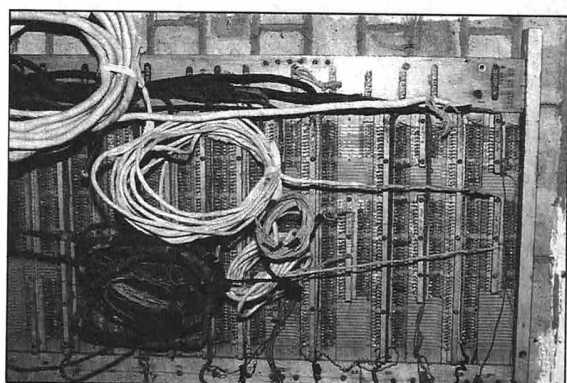
2



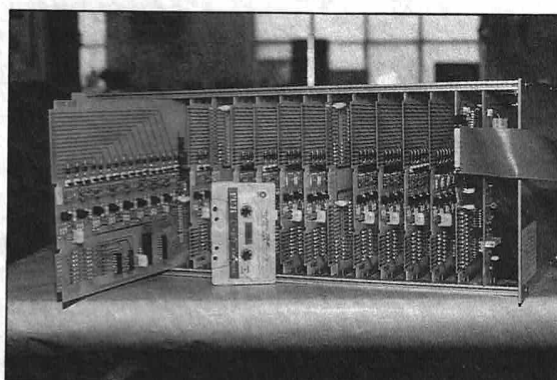
3



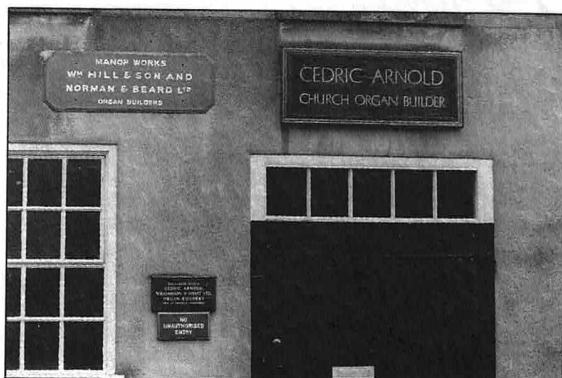
4



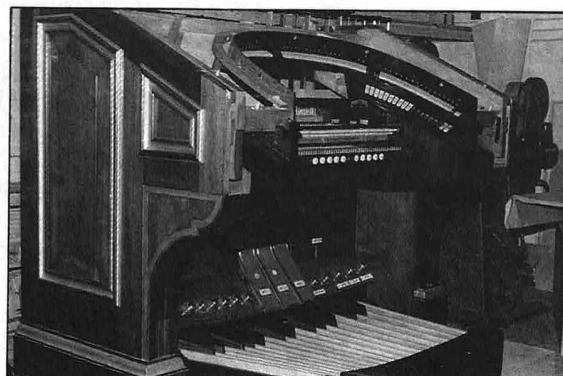
5



6



7



8

THE CHRISTIE PREMIERE



Music Programme



FRANK FOWLER  
WASHINGTON POST  
AN EARFULL OF MUSIC

*Best with George Blackmore*

GEORGE BLACKMORE  
MARCH of the BOWMEN  
MUSIC BY FRANZ LEHAR  
BEATING UP THE CLASSICS  
IF I HAD A TALKING PICTURE OF YOU  
IN A CLOCK STORE

JOANNA FRASER  
TOCCATA and FUGUE IN D MINOR: BACH  
NOLA: FELIX ARNDT  
SORTIE IN E FLAT: LEFEBURE-WELY



INTERVAL



*With very best wishes Janet Dowsett*

JANET DOWSETT  
LADY OF SPAIN  
PLINK, PLANK, PLUNK  
I MADE IT THROUGH THE RAIN  
THEME FROM MINDER  
SELECTION: MY FAIR LADY  
COLONEL BOGEY

*Simon Submitter*

WILLIAM DAVIES  
DOWN THE MALL: JOHN BELTON  
A MEDLEY OF IRVING BERLIN MUSIC  
made famous by the late Fred Astaire.  
LIEBESLIED and LEIBESFREUD: KREISLER  
FARANDOLE: BIZET  
POOR BUTTERFLY and  
BUTTERFLIES IN THE RAIN  
A CHILDREN'S OVERTURE: ROGER QUILTER

Will patrons please note that **SMOKING AND THE TAKING OF PHOTOGRAPHS**  
**ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE AUDITORIUM**

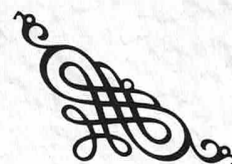
**DURING THE INTERVAL**

Ice-creams, coffee, confectionery and a wide range of beers, wines and spirits are  
on sale in the foyer.

Warning bells will be rung (in the foyer only) at five, three and two minutes  
before curtain-up.



SPECIFICATION OF THE  
CHRISTIE 3/10 THEATRE ORGAN  
OPUS 2861



PEDAL	
1. Acoustic Bass	32
2. Ophicleide	16
3. Diaphone	16
4. Tibia Bass	16
5. Tuba	8
6. Open Diapason	8
7. Tibia	8
8. Bass Flute	8
9. Bassoon (Clarinet)	8
10. Cello	8
11. Clarion	4
12. Octave Diapason	4
13. Octave Tibia	4
14. Octave Flute	4

ACCOMPANIMENT	
15. Bourdon (Flute)	T.C. 16
16. Vox Humana	T.C. 16
17. Contra Viol	T.C. 16
18. Tuba	8
19. English Horn	8
20. Open Diapason	8
21. Tibia	8
22. Flute	8
23. Vox Humana	8
24. Clarinet	8
25. Orchestral Oboe	8
26. Viola	8
27. Celestes	8
28. Tibia	4
29. Octave Flute	4
30. Vox Humana	4
31. Celestes	4
32. Violin	4
33. Twelfth (Flute)	2.2/3
34. Piccolo (Flute)	2
35. Chrysoglott	37 Notes 8

GREAT	
36. Trombone	16
37. Double Diapason	16
38. Contra Tibia	16
39. Tuba	8
40. English Horn	8
41. Diapason	8
42. Tibia	8
43. Flute	8
44. Viola	8
45. Clarion	4
46. Tibia	4
47. Octave Diapason	4
48. Octave Flute	4
49. Tibia Twelfth	2.2/3
50. Fifteenth (Diap)	2
51. Piccolo (Flute)	2
52. Tierce (Flute)	1.3/5
53. Chrysoglott	8
54. Chrysoglott	4
55. Xylophone	37 Notes 8
56. Glockenspiel	37 Notes 8

SOLO — Upper Row	
57. Ophicleide	16
58. Double Diapason	16
59. Tibia Bass	16
60. Contra Flute	T.C. 16
61. Cello	T.C. 16
62. Tuba	8
63. English Horn	8
64. Diapason	8
65. Tibia	8
66. Flute	8
67. Vox Humana	8
68. Orchestral Oboe	8
69. Clarion	8
70. Viola	8
71. Celestes	8
72. Tibia	5.1/3
73. Clarion	4
74. Octave Diapason	4

SOLO — Lower Row	
120. Orch. Flute (Tibia)	4
121. Flautina	4
122. Violin	4
123. Octave Celestes	4
124. Tibia Twelfth	2.2/3
125. Flute Twelfth	2.2/3
126. Ocarina (Tibia)	2
127. Piccolo (Flute)	2
128. Flute Tierce	1.3/5
129. Tibia Tierce	1.3/5
130. Chimes M.C.	17 Notes
131. Chimes Mute	
132. Xylophone	MC-C 37 Notes 8
133. Blockenspiel	MC-G 32 Notes 8
134. Orch. Bells	MC-G 32 Notes 8
135. Chrysoglott	TC-C 37 Notes 8
136. Carillon	MC-C 25 Notes
137. Snare Drum Roll	
138. Chinese Block	

EFFECTS & PEDAL LOWER ROW	
76. Surf	
77. Syren	(Sprung Off)
78. Boat Whistle	(Sprung Off)
79. Telephone Bell	(Sprung Off)
80. ACCOMPANIMENT to PEDAL	
81. GREAT to PEDAL	
82. SOLO to PEDAL	
83. Bass Drum Tap P	2nd
84. Bass Drum Tap F	2nd
85. Bass Drum Roll	2nd
86. Cymbal Crash	2nd
87. Cymbal Stroke	2nd
88. Snare Drum Roll	2nd
89. Triangle	
90. PEDAL TRAPS to FIRST TOUCH	

ACCOMPANIMENT, TRAPS & 2nd TOUCH	
91. Snare Drum Roll	
92. Tambourine	
93. Castanets	
94. Sleigh Bells	
95. ACCOMP. TRAPS to 2nd TOUCH	
96. Tuba	8 2nd (Acc)
97. English Horn	8 2nd (Acc)
98. Tibia	8 2nd (Acc)
99. Tibia	4 2nd (Acc)
100. Cymbal	2nd (Acc)
101. Glockenspiel	2nd (Acc)
102. Chimes	2nd (Acc)
103. SOLO to ACCOMPANIMENT	
104. ACCOMPANIMENT OCTAVE	
105. Vibraphone Starter	

Crescendo Pedal Indicator Light

106. Main Vib. (Flute, Diap, Viol, Celest.)		
107. Tibia Vibrato		
108. Vox Humana Vibrato (Vox, Oboe, Clar.)		
109. Tuba Vibrato (Tuba, Eng.Horn)		
110. SOLO to GREAT		
111. ACCOMPANIMENT to GREAT		
112. English Horn	8 2nd	(Great)
113. SOLO to GREAT	2nd	(Great)
114. GREAT SUB OCTAVE		
115. GREAT UNISON OFF		
116. GREAT OCTAVE		
117. SOLO SUB OCTAVE		
118. SOLO UNISON OFF		
119. SOLO OCTAVE		

Bird Whistle Thumb and Toe Piston

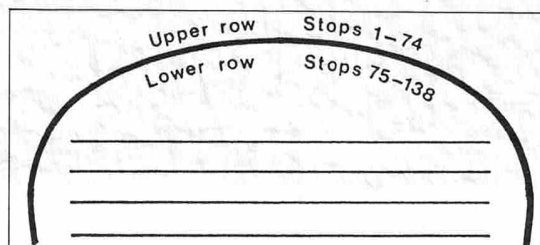
Toe Pistons:	Snare Drum Roll
	Base Drum Roll
	Auto Horn
	Klaxon
	Fire Bell

Cymbal Crash:	Slip Rocker Tab
Drum Crash :	Toe Pedal

Swell Pedal to Main Chamber  
(Diapason - Flute - Viola - Celeste 2 ranks)

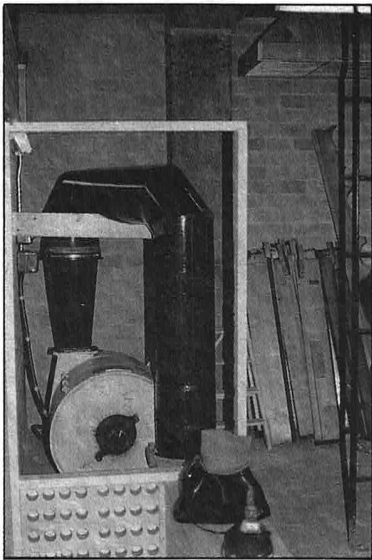
Swell Pedal to Solo Chamber  
(Tibia - Tuba - English Horn -  
Orchestral Oboe - Vox Humana -  
Clarinet)

Crescendo Pedal  
10 General Pistons  
10 Pistons to each Manual  
5 Pedal Toe Pistons  
General Cancel  
Cancel Bars to each department  
PISTON TRANSFER (Tab 75): When 'ON'  
General Pistons 1-5 can also be selected by  
pressing the corresponding Pedal Piston

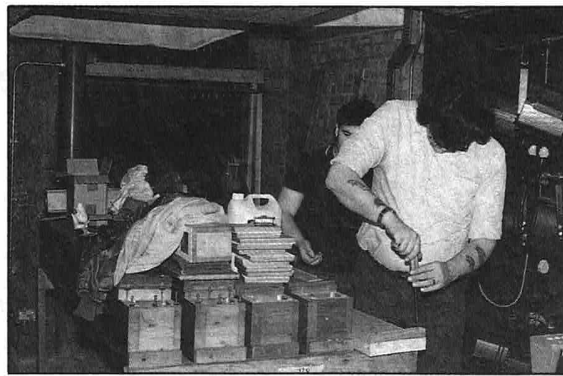


PISTON FUNCTIONS											
GENERAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Solo	pp	p	mf	f	ff	1	2	3	4	5	
Manual & Trems											
Great	pp	p	mf	f	ff	1	2	3	4	5	
Manual & Trems											
Accomp	pp	p	mf	f	ff	1	2	3	4	5	
Manual, Trems neutral											
2nd Touch - Pedal											
Pedal	1	2	3	4	5						

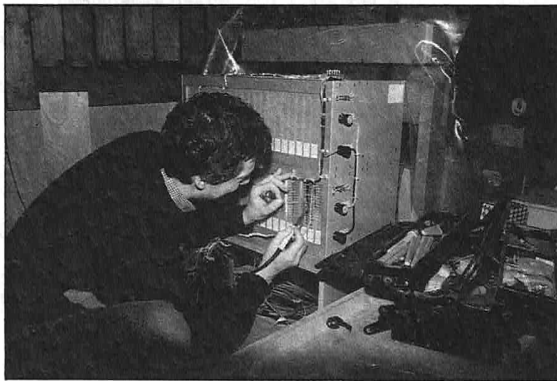




9



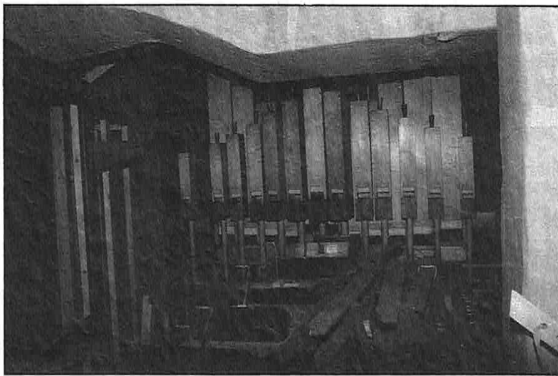
10



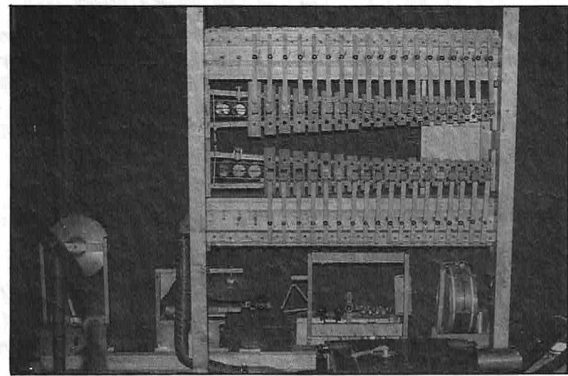
11



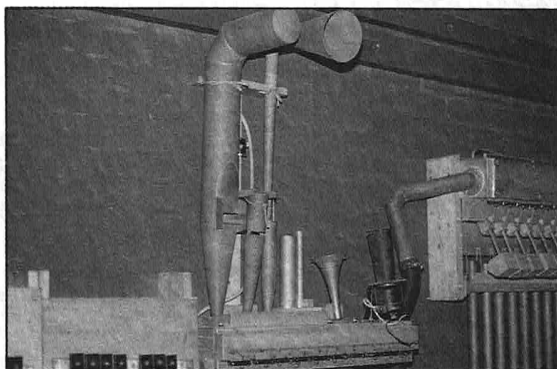
12



13



14



15

... SAFELY  
INSTALLED

re-furnished and up-dated by the company who first made it fifty-five years ago, housed in air-conditioned surroundings and professionally presented in a modern, comfortable theatre. Many people have made invaluable contributions during the re-location of the instrument. The following list of acknowledgements, arranged generally in chronological order of participation, refers to the organisations to which those individuals belong.

**The North Herts Organ Society.  
The Management and staff of the Gordon Craig Theatre.  
The Councillors and Officers of Stevenage Borough Council.  
The Directors and staff of Hill Norman & Beard.  
The Technical Committee of the Cinema Organ Society.**

The last concert to be presented at Stotfold, before the organ was removed, was played by George Blackmore who ended his concert with "We'll meet again". He told us that this same tune had proved to be lucky for the Wurlitzer at the State, Kilburn where he had also played the closing concert. Against expectations, the Wurlitzer had re-opened and he hoped that the Society's efforts to re-house the Christie would meet with the same good fortune. His good wishes have borne fruit and we are very pleased that George is playing at this, the re-opening of the Christie in the Gordon Craig Theatre, Stevenage.



### GEORGE BLACKMORE

Organist, arranger and composer, George Blackmore's long career has included all aspects of musical activities. Famous as a performer, broadcaster and recording artiste he has toured in Europe, Australia and the U.S.A.

His aptitude was recognised when he was still very young and the opportunity given to him by Peter Kilby to play the Compton at the Gaumont, Chatham led to his first appointment, at the age of seventeen, as resident organist at the Majestic, Rochester. He continued his organ studies at Rochester Cathedral, gained his Associate of the Royal College of Organists Diploma and made his first broadcast when still only nineteen years old.

After service in the RAF during World War II, George returned to the Rank Organisation and then in 1950 went to Aberdeen to join the Donald Brothers private cinema chain. It was while there



that he adopted his now-famous signature tune "Cock o' the North". Seven years later he moved to ABC, afterwards becoming chief organist in this country for Hammond and then for the Conn Organ Co. He has recently received a Fellowship of the Southern Music Training Centre, the first body in the U.K. to offer graded examinations for the electronic organ.

As a strong supporter of the organ societies, George has done much to encourage interest in the "King of Instruments".

### JANET DOWSETT

Janet has been playing keyboard instruments since she was eleven and although still only in her early twenties, has become one of the best-known and most popular figures in the organ world. A third place in the ATOS Young Organist of the Year competition at the State, Kilburn in 1979 started her on a career which led to her joining the Yamaha organisation two years later, where she was principally concerned with the Yamaha Music Schools.

At the same time she was the Younger Generation representative in the ATOS and did much to encourage youthful players, both in their music and in an understanding of the technicalities of the instruments they play. This activity has only very recently been taken over by Dena Cooper, since at the beginning of this year Janet was elevated to Promotional Manager at Yamaha.



In addition to all this, Janet has played pipe and electronic concerts all over this country as well as abroad, playing "My Kind Of Music" to audiences who have enjoyed both the charm of her personality and her choice of pieces, ranging from Stravinsky to romantic ballads (Barry Manilow!!). Janet remembers with particular pleasure the three concerts which she played on the ex-Clapham Junction Wurlitzer in Geneva and is looking forward to a trip to Holland next month to play concerts in Amsterdam and Schiedam.

We are especially pleased that, in spite of all the demands on her time, Janet is able to be with us this evening to take part in our opening concert.

### WILLIAM DAVIES

Born in 1921, he began to study the church organ at the age of eleven and to practise on the Christie organ in the Lido Cinema, Bolton while still at school. When he was seventeen, his family moved to Birmingham and he played for the ABC, Odeon and independent cinemas in the area. After service in the RAF during World War II he played the Compton in the Gaumont, Wolverhampton for a year before moving in 1947 to another Compton at



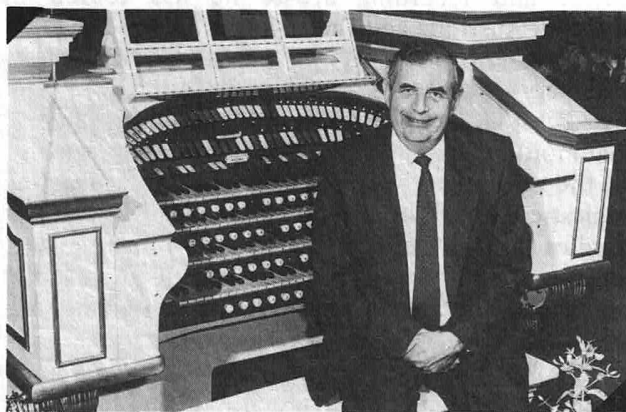
the Gaumont, Finchley and it was from here that he gave the first of his many broadcasts.

From Finchley, Bill graduated to the West End and played at the Metropole, Victoria and the Dominion, Tottenham Court Road. After a period of playing electronic organs with orchestras at the Adelphi and Victoria Palace Theatres, Bill became Musical Director at the London Hippodrome and represented theatre organists in the BBC's "Festival of Light Music" in which he played the Compton in the concert hall of Broadcasting House. He has been on the staff of the BBC for many years and most recently has been heard on radio in his Sunday afternoon series "Just William".

Well-known as a composer and arranger he is also famous for his phenomenal memory for music and his ability to play almost any request, be it popular or classical. Bill has played at two previous opening concerts of this Christie and it is fitting that he should be here to delight us tonight.

### FRANK FOWLER

Organ music has figured largely in Frank Fowler's life from an early age, at fourteen he was organist at St Mary's, Walditch and other churches in Dorset. At seventeen he began an apprenticeship with William Hill & Son and Norman & Beard Ltd and after National Service moved to another of



the famous names in organ building — J.W. Walker & Sons. Initially he worked as a Tuner, but before he left in 1973 he was managing the tuning side of their business and had received the President's Award of the Incorporated Society of Organ Builders for his thesis on "The Problems Of Temperature Changes in Organ Tuning".

When he left Walkers it was to re-join Hill Norman & Beard and in 1974 he became Managing Director of the company with which he had started his career twenty-seven years before. How successful that career has been is clear from the appointments which he holds and which are listed in full in the International Who's Who? of Organ Builders. It is appropriate here to note that for eight years he was President of the Federation of Master



Organ Builders and is currently President of the Institute of Musical Instrument Technology. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

Perhaps the accomplishment with which we are most immediately concerned tonight is that it is the company which he directs which has installed the Christie organ here in the Gordon Craig Theatre and it is Frank who will introduce the organ to you.

JOANNA FRASER

Born in Scotland but brought up and educated in London, Joanna is not only one of our leading classical organists but is also a practising Doctor of Medicine. She studied at the Trinity College of Music, where her tutor was Harry Gabb and shortly after leaving there was appointed organist at St. Stephens, Walbrook. The famous Friday recitals, many of which Joanna played herself, were the result of her talent for organisation. These recitals are shortly to be re-introduced, now that the restoration of this famous church is nearing completion.



While at St. Stephens, she qualified in Medicine at St. Mary's Hospital Medical School, married and had three children. Both her sons have served as Children of HM Chapel Royal.

Her interest in music is not limited to playing but extends to taking an active part in the development of modern organ building.

Dr Fraser and Frank Fowler have together gained a nation-wide reputation for their unique presentation of organ music in ecclesiastical buildings and at festivals throughout the country. Musical history was made when they gave the first organ concert in the Opera House at Glyndebourne.

**BOOK NOW  
FOR THE**

# GORDON CRAIG CONCERT SERIES

**Saturday 3rd October 1987  
ENGLISH SINFONIA**

**Sunday 8th November 1987  
LONDON MOZART PLAYERS**

**Sunday 24th January 1988  
PHILOMUSICA OF LONDON**

**Sunday 21st February 1988  
ORCHESTRA OF ST. JOHN SMITH SQUARE**



THE NEXT

**CHRISTIE  
ORGAN  
CONCERT**

---

WILL BE ON

**Sunday  
15th November  
1987**

at

**3.00pm**

Tickets: £2.50

(C. £2.00 Organ Society Members)