

Midwest Organ Open House

Experience a Theatre Pipe Organ!

A Do-It-Yourself Musical Experience

The organ is a late model (1928)
Robert Morton opus 2401 Model 23N.

The original ranks are flute, clarinet, vox,
violins I, II, III, french horn in the main.

Tuba, diapason, tibia, saxophone,
kinura in the solo.

Six ranks of tuned percussion.

ADDITIONAL RANKS

David Billmire added several ranks to
the original 11:

Posthorn, french trumpet, orch oboe,
musette and flute celeste.

The organ is now a 3/17.

MAIN CHAMBER

Flute 32'-2'
Violin I 16'-2'
Celeste Violin II 8'-4'
Celeste Violin III 8'-4'
Clarinet 16'-4'
French Horn 8'-4'
Vox Humana 8'-4'
Flute Celeste 4'
addition R-M
Musette 8'
addition Wurli Schopp's copy

SOLO CHAMBER

Tibia 16'-2'
Diapason 16'-4'
Tuba 16'-4'
Saxophone 8'-4'
Kinura 8'-4'
Orch Oboe 8' addition R-M
French Trumpet 8'
addition Dennison-Schopps
English Posthorn 8'
addition Wicks (modern)

*The bottom extensions for the Flute,
Tibia, Tuba, Diaphone, Violin and
Clarinet are Walker.*

You're invited to
Experience the organ
that received the 1999
ATOS Restoration Award

The 3 manual, 17-rank Robert Morton
theatre pipe organ is ready to sing for you!

Most Theatre Pipe Organs are gone
today ... mere reminders of the thrilling
sounds of a past generation that filled the
theatres and auditoriums to accompany
flickering films and provide concerts.

Quite frankly, there are not many left.

Occasional organs exist today, but few
are actually accessible. They require a
large space and maintenance expense.

Serving the King of Instruments

David and Elaine Billmire had opportunity
to adopt and restore one of their own.

However, as they read of the plight
of others who haven't had a chance to
enjoy such an experience, performing on
a real live theatre organ, they became
inspired to provide an event featuring their
instrument to provide that opportunity.

They decided to invite the world to their
instrument. Although major conventions
with structured programming are staged
in major cities, excessive costs to attend a
week-long event, plus convention hotel
rates, prevent many who are interested
but may lack resources or time to attend.

Major conventions are performance-
oriented to big name performers, so any
hope for average organists to actually
play one of these instruments is bleak.

Their solution? ... to open the doors to
welcome others to share their song.

David Billmire, doing his part, says,
"I am trying to stir up some interest.
We have not had a lot of organ activity in
my area for some time. We are installing
the Emery Wurli in the local Music Hall
ballroom, but that is being done totally by
professionals."

Paul E. Kealy <StentorVox> Editor - Publisher

NOON TIL MIDNITE

July 19, 2008

Come one ~ Come all
Sign up for your "Open Console"
opportunity to enjoy and perform
on a genuine theatre pipe organ.

For out-of-towners, restaurants
and overnight accommodations
are available within a few miles.

Feel free to bring your video or
recording equipment to document
yourself performing on a real, live
Theatre Pipe Organ!

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*What began as an opportunity to provide
people the thrill of performing on a live
theatre pipe organ has become the Midwest
Organ Open House at the Billmire House in
Cincinnati, Ohio.*

ABOUT THE INSTRUMENT:

*Originally installed as a 3 manual, 11 rank
organ in the Empress Theatre in Columbus,
Ohio, this organ has an exciting history.*

*The interesting Empress theatre, featuring a
seating capacity of 500 to 600 seats, primarily
served the African American community.*

*When in the 'fifties the building was razed,
as was the fate of so many similar theatres,
the organ was removed from the structure
and moved to the theatre owner's house.*

*Following this, it was sold to a farmer in
southeastern Ohio who didn't complete its
restoration, but eventually sold it to a person
in the 'seventies who installed it in his house.*

*Before its completion, however, the new
owner was killed in an auto accident, and the
organ was adopted by a friend of his, David
Billmire, the present owner, who completely
rebuilt it over the next 6 years.*

*All the pipe work, professionally restored
and finished by Wilson and Duddy, has been
returned to its original voicing.*