



THE ROSE THEATRE PIPE ORGAN

The Rose Theatre Pipe Organ is a product of ***The Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ Factory*** produced in 1927. It has three manuals (keyboards) and 17 ranks of pipes (sets) plus all the percussion instruments used to simulate a full orchestra in addition to some sound effects to accompany the silent movies of the times.

During the early silent film era, motion picture theatres throughout the country engaged pit orchestras and pianists to provide the background music for their stage shows and silent movies. With escalating costs of musician labor, not every performance could afford the expense of an orchestra. This monetary constraint was the inspiration for the concept of a 'unit orchestra', also known as the theatre pipe organ, where one musician could do the work of many. During the teens and early twenties, nearly every theatre, large or small, installed a theatre pipe organ. The '***Mighty Wurlitzer***' enjoyed familiarity with such names as Frigidaire, Victrola and Kodak.

In the last 70+ years, ***The Rose Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ*** has had several homes including a pizza restaurant in Gulf Port. This instrument was acquired from Vancouver, BC, where it was installed in a private residence.

Electronic relays have been replaced by electronic computer control which will allow the organist much more freedom for musical expression. Another added benefit to the computerization is that a performance can be captured and replayed later as if the organist was actually replaying the performance.

This instrument was made possible through the Ahmanson Foundation who furnished the finances to obtain it and have it installed at the refurbished Rose Theatre. The actual installation was performed by the Century Pipe Organ Company of Minneapolis, MN, with assistance from The River City Theatre Organ Society of Omaha, NE handling as much of the initial installation work as possible.