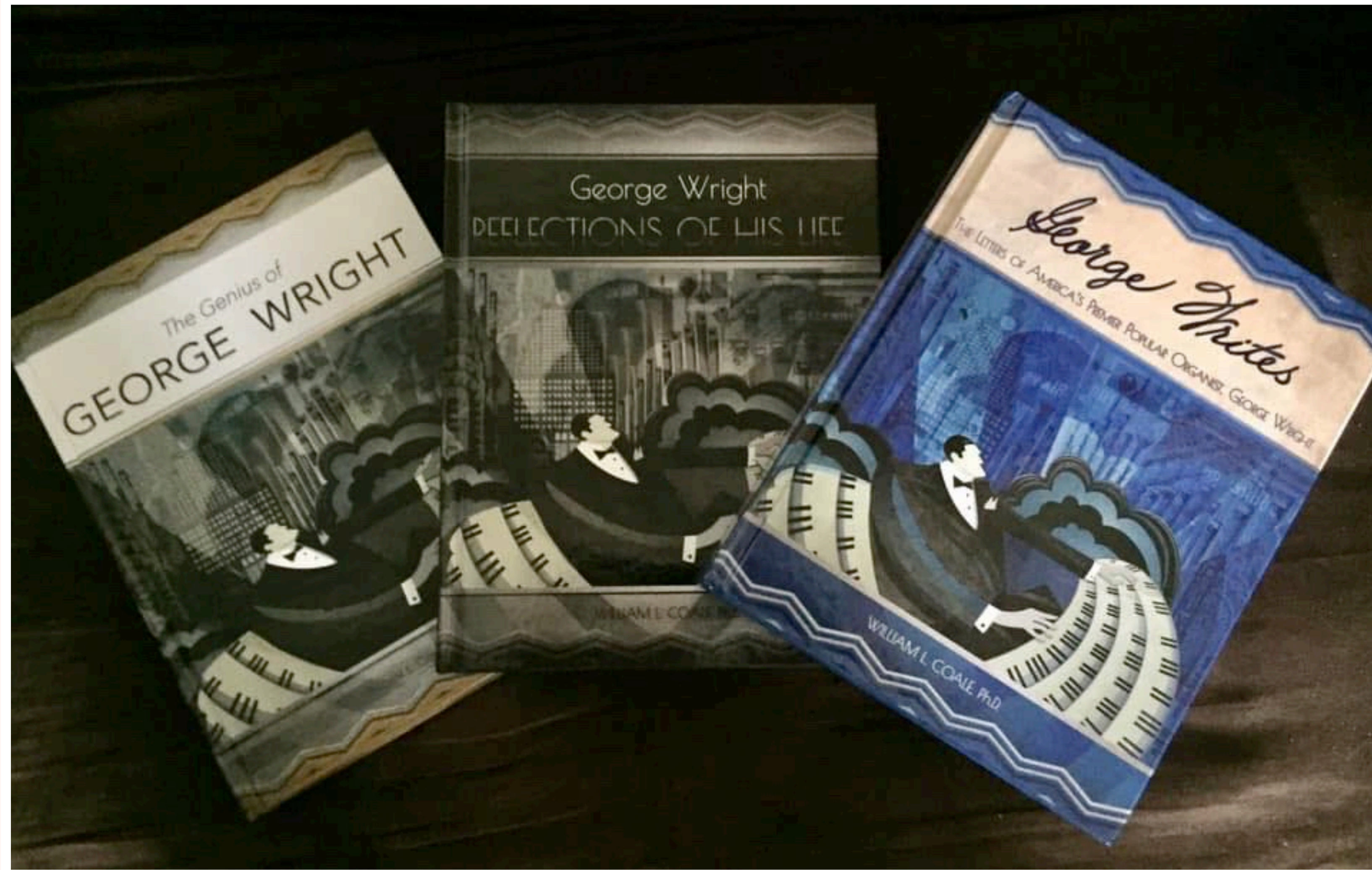

2023 American Theatre Organ Society National Convention

LET'S GET...DIGITAL!

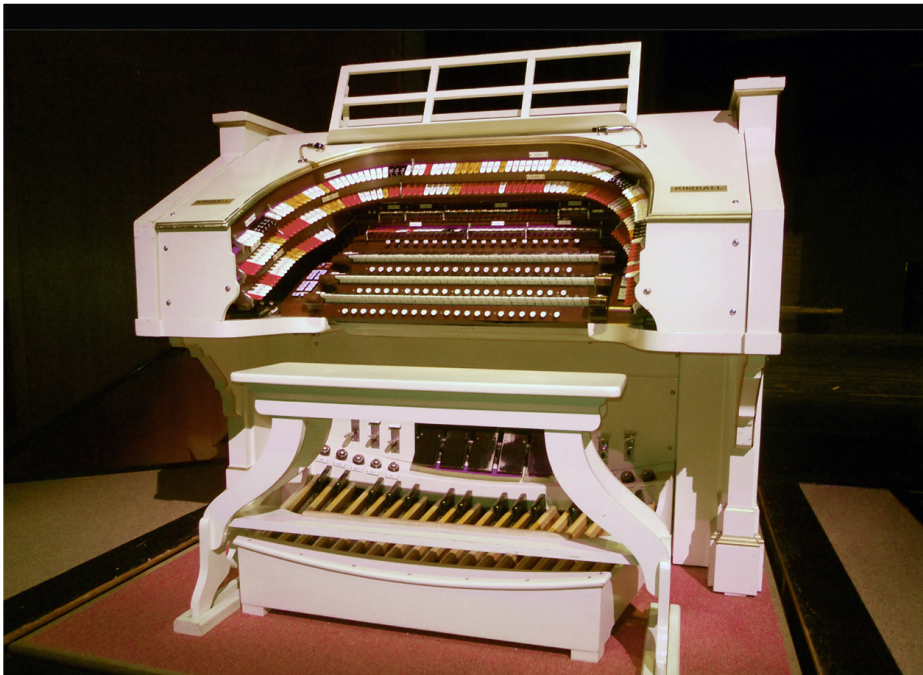
SESSION PRESENTATION

William L. Coale, Ph.D.

JULY 5, 2023



Author of the three volume, 1500+ page biography of George Wright



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CONTENT

CREDITS:
CD Editing and Mastering: **Steve Ashley**
Digital Transfers/Concert Review courtesy of **Robert Dilworth**
Artwork and Producer: **Bill Coale**
Additional thanks to: **Mark Renwick** and **Richard Rogers**
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the full selection of available George Wright CDs!



4/28/79
George Wright
@
Dickinson H.S.

George Wright Concert Review by Grant Whitcomb (excerpted)

Showers on the evening of April 28, 1979, did in no way dampen the spirits of George Wright or his enthusiastic audience gathered to enjoy his second encounter with the Dickinson Kimball. Mr. Wright brought up the white and gold console to the strains of "Singing In The Rain" with an obbligato of orchestra bell raindrops.

This was followed by a Wright arrangement of "What Is This Thing Called Love?," employing very imaginative harmonic content and a grand-slam ending. Richard Rodger's "Spring Is Here" sprang with bells and bird calls underlying a tibia-dominated melody line and massive portamento (the "Crawford Roll") as only the nimble fingers of George Wright can recreate with such authenticity. Victor Herbert's "Badinage" was reproduced with all the interpretive nuances of this type of music.

A medley of tunes announced as a "Nostalgia Hit Parade" commenced with an impressive "This Is My Lucky Day." A mix of "Is It True What They Say About Dixie?" and "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter" were sufficiently authentic to summon up images of Al Jolson and Fats Waller. The medley concluded in the swinging Wright style "I'll Never Say Never Again."

"Valse Triste," for instance, was the theme for "I Love A Mystery," but George Wright played it in the slower tempo as Sibelius intended, and not hurried as in the days of radio. Another item from the 30s was a torch song plaintively wailed by such personalities as Helen Morgan and Libby Holman. The latter was always identified with "Moanin' Low" for which GW has created a lowdown arrangement alternatively plaintive and strident.

George Wright featured his dexterity with Chopin's "Waltz in C# Minor." Exhibiting the theatre organ's ability to imitate orchestral voices—GW reproduced Harry

James' "Trumpet Rhapsody" utilizing the Dickinson Kimball's beautiful solo trumpet.

"April Showers" provided another opportunity for bells, dancing chrysoglott with tibia overlay and many key shifts accomplished with great ease and accuracy. George Wright then closed this first portion of the concert with a salute to the Carmen Miranda era performed in the fast-paced South American beat.

Bringing the nostalgia a bit more up-to-date, George Wright began the second half of his concert with the famed march of earlier TV years—M*I*C*K*E*Y M*O*U*S*E. This of course lent itself to a percussion-loaded interpretation. In contrast, a low-down version of "Frankie and Johnnie" featuring snappy reeds and a cymbal beat on the pedal-board. "Sophisticated Lady" with modern harmonies would have pleased the Duke himself.

"Will 'O The Wisp" was an excellent sample of Wright's uncanny registration and technique. [Next were] Victor Herbert tunes "Sweethearts" and "Jeanette and Her Wooden Shoes." In the unusual novelty department (in honor of a member of the audience visiting from Japan) [he] performed an American version of "Japanese" music—"Lady Picking Mulberries." Franz Lizst's "Liebestraum" was played with great feeling, complete accuracy and impeccable registration. "Chimes of Springtime" ended this portion of the program but the music continued for some time and George Wright returned to the console many times for multiple encores demanded by his most enthusiastic audience.

Encores included "If, Honky Tonk Train," a medley of "I Didn't Know What Time It Was," "Oh How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning," and "Three O'Clock In The Morning." Next came "What Are You Waiting For, Mary?," followed by "Just The Way You Look Tonight." The number of encores can only be attributed to the fact that the organist, the organ, and the audience were in such complete rapport that parting company was difficult.

-Disc One-		9) 2:31 Deep Henderson	
2) 2:20 Singin' In The Rain	4) 3:29 What Is This Thing Called Love?	11) 6:48 Selections From "Sweethearts": On Parade/Every Lover Must Meet His Fate/Jeanette And Her Wooden Shoes/ Sweethearts	
6) 3:42 Spring Is Here	8) 4:29 Badinage	13) 2:20 The Lady Picking Mulberries	
10) 3:05 Is It True What They Say About Dixie?/I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter/I'll Never Say Never Again Again	12) 4:45 Valse Triste (Sibelius)	15) 5:28 Liebestraum, No. 3	
14) 3:44 Moanin' Low	16) 1:47 Cracked Ice (Cornflakes)	17) 4:11 Chimes Of Spring	
18) 3:37 Waltz In C# Minor (Chopin)	20) 5:20 Trumpet Rhapsody (Harry James)	19) 2:33 ENCORE 1: Spring Fever	
22) 3:08 April Showers	24) 2:48 Selections from Carmen (Miranda)	21) 3:49 ENCORE 2: If	
-Disc Two-		23) 4:27 ENCORE 3: Honky Tonk Train	
1) 1:35 Mickey Mouse Club March	3) 2:42 Frankie And Johnny	25) 4:34 ENCORE 4: Time Medley: I Didn't Know What Time It Was/Three O'Clock In The Morning/ Oh, How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning	
5) 5:05 Sophisticated Lady	7) 1:32 Will 'O The Wisp (Impromptu)	27) 3:29 ENCORE 5: Mary (What Are You Waiting For?)	
		29) 3:57 ENCORE 6: The Way You Look Tonight	
		(UNLISTED TRACKS ARE CONCERT ANNOUNCEMENTS)	
		TOTAL RUNNING TIME: 2:03:35	



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CREDITS:
Source tape: **John Nelson**
CD Editing and Mastering: **Steve Ashley**
Tape Digitizing: **Terry Cutshall**
Artwork and Producer: **Bill Coale**
Additional thanks to **Richard Rogers** and **Mark Renwick**
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BANDA



GEORGE WRIGHT IN CONCERT: JULY 4, 1977

This recording of part of George's 1977 concert at the Chicago Theatre exists only due to John Nelson, GW's manager, confiscating a cassette tape from an audience member attempting to surreptitiously record the program. Sometimes misbehavior is beneficial!

According to his contract for this concert, GW's fee was \$1800 (\$7600+ in 2020 dollars) plus a one-way first class airplane ticket from Los Angeles to Chicago. He also wore a pair of Jesse Crawford's cufflinks for his concert in "Jesse's place."

"Much credit must go to the enlightened manager of the Chicago Theatre, Peter Miller, but the bulk of the credit must go to CATOE work crews which spent so many hours replacing what time and neglect had frayed, unvoiced or worn out.

Again, the line snaked around the corner and disappeared behind the theatre on July 4 morning. At 9:30 a.m. the doors were opened and ticket sales to the public started. Slowly the theatre filled to about three-fourths capacity. There was an electric atmosphere, a presence, perhaps the shade of the former master hovering near the scene of one of his great triumphs. Whatever it was, the spell continued throughout the morning.

The organist was at ease with his audience, talking to those down front. All too soon it was time for the movie to start. George lowered the console to "Chicago" played in various styles which included a waltz arrangement. The reluctant audience filed out with the sound of the big Wurlitzer and George Wright's ability to draw magic from it still buoying their spirits. They gathered in little knots in the lobby to discuss the wonder of it all. They knew they had been present at an historic event, one which the organ aficionado hoped would be repeated with delightful regularity."

—excerpted from "Theatre Organ," August/September 1977

- 1) *Roller Coaster* 2:31
- 2) *Ziguener* 3:36
- 3) *Veil Dance* 4:21
- 4) *Spring Fever* 1:57
- 5) *All Through the Night* 4:38
- 6) *Holiday In Rio* 2:50
- 7) *Black Moonlight* 3:39
- 8) *One Night of Love* 4:08
- 9) *Two Guitars* 3:51
- 10) *American Bolero* 3:57

- 11) *I'm Confessin'* 3:40
- 12) *The Hustle* 2:05
- 13) *So Blue* 3:18
- 14) *Flying Down to Rio Medley* 4:58
- 15) *Basin Street Blues* 4:27
- 16) *Moonlight On the River* 3:47
- 17) *My Romance* 3:54
- 18) *Patriotic Medley* 6:08
- 19) *Chicago ENCORE* 2:39
- 1:10:24 TOTAL PLAYING TIME

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Producer of newly released George Wright material on CD

NEW PROJECTS:

**Sales of old CDs and “George Writes” will be discontinued,
with four new projects planned:**

- 1. 1. GW transcriptions (excerpted from Muzak and Thesaurus 16” transcription disks, including the Novatime Trio, with GW on Hammond and piano**
 - 2. GW Radio Retrospective (starting in 1936 at Grant Union HS**
 - 3. Jesse Crawford LIVE in Concert (Hammond at LA Elks Lodge in 1956)**
 - 4. Eric Reeve letters: organization/digitization/transcription/publication**
-
-
-

TODAY'S TOPICS:

HOW and WHERE to find what you're looking for online

What material is new to the Genius of George Wright website?

What research has been conducted since the GW biography was written?

How do you use the Coale/Landon Theatre Organist Database to its fullest?

Research challenges and your QUESTIONS

WHERE TO FIND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ONLINE

Sheet Music Databases:

Levy Collection: <https://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu/>

Templeton Collection: <https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/cht-sheet-music/>

Sheet Music Consortium: <https://digital.library.ucla.edu/sheetmusic/>

Temple University: <https://digital.library.temple.edu/digital/collection/p15037coll1/search/cosuppress/>

IMSLP Petrucci Library: https://imslp.org/wiki/Main_Page

Parlor Songs: <http://parlorsongs.com/catalog/a.php> x

Silent Film Sound and Music Archive: <https://www.sfsma.org/>

Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/historic-sheet-music/about-this-collection>

National Library of Australia: <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/5716370>

WHERE TO FIND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ONLINE

Music and Movie Publications and more:

Media History Digital Library: <https://mediahistoryproject.org/>

The Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/>

MELODY Magazine Collection: <https://www.sfsma.org/melody-magazine-collection/>

LANTERN: <https://lantern.mediahist.org/>

NEWSPAPERS: <https://www.newspapers.com/>

EBAY: <https://www.ebay.com/>

ATOS Journals: <https://journals.shareok.org/theatreorgan/issue/archive>

Console Magazines/ATOS Convention Booklets and more: <https://www.markhermanproductions.com/archive.html>

HOW TO FIND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ONLINE

Search Techniques:

- 1. Boolean Logic (+, -, AND, OR, NOT, " ") Think how to ELIMINATE what you do NOT want to look at**
 - 2. Alternative spellings ("Anne Page" v. "Ann Page")**
 - 3. General phrase ("new organist")**
 - 4. Date ranges/sort orders/filters (such as specific newspapers)**
-

WHAT'S NEW ON THE GW WEBSITE?

<http://www.GeniusOfGeorgeWright.com>

- **MANY additional GW music tracks (including GW's 1985 convention concert at Hinsdale)**
 - **GW playing a silent movie!**
 - **Gaylord Carter Collection, courtesy Chris Elliott (NOTE: This is material retained by Chris and represents a tiny fraction of the overall material, most of which went to OU and now presumably resides in Pennsylvania out of reach of researchers or TO aficionados)**
 - **Al Melgard Collection, courtesy Walt Strony**
 - **Bud Taylor Collection, courtesy Craig Peterson**
 - **Eduard and Marguerite Werner scrapbook (Detroit conductor and organist)**
-

WHAT'S NEW ON THE GW WEBSITE?

<http://www.GeniusOfGeorgeWright.com>

- **Crawfords Duet Music courtesy Jeff Weiler**
 - **Video tour of the Hollywood Philharmonic Organ**
 - **Audio of Joyce Clifford's lessons with GW**
 - **GW's Colorado Summit audio (from 2 years)**
 - **Newly-discovered GW research material**
 - **Robert Hope-Jones organ patents**
-

WHAT'S NEW ON THE GW WEBSITE? (NEW RESEARCH SINCE THE GW BIOGRAPHY)

<http://www.GeniusOfGeorgeWright.com>

- **The Coale/Landon 8000+ record database of theatre organists and the theatres they played, 1915-1935**
 - **Database of sheet music composed by and/or featuring a theatre organist on the cover (in collaboration with Joe Marsh)**
 - **“Music and the Movies”—perhaps the world’s largest collection of material directly related to music for the silent movies**
-

THE COALE/LANDON DATABASE

Theatre Organists and the Theatres They Played 1915-1935

<https://www.geniusofgeorgewright.com>

HOW TO USE THE COALE/LANDON THEATRE ORGANIST DATABASE

<https://airtable.com/shre6PxqbgYPv3vBq/tblp2ouwB17YpdQzU?backgroundColor=red&viewControls=on>

- **User notes**
 - **Expanded view**
 - **Download CSV**
 - **SEARCH**
 - **FILTER**
 - **GROUP**
 - **SORT**
-

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

DIGITAL COLLECTIONS such as those on the GW website are available to all to enjoy, at a reasonable cost for me (database and website fees around \$1000 per year) and take up **ZERO** physical space.

Currently, the GW website has more theatre organ history available to the general public than does **ATOS**, whose archives are basically inaccessible. I've waited over **TWO YEARS** to be able to get into the storage bunker in Pennsylvania to do research (that **ATOS** helped fund), and I'm still waiting. **PLEASE** encourage **ATOS** leadership to make resolving this untenable situation a high priority.

The archives are the very **LEGACY** of the organization! Items need to be **CATALOGUED** (OU did a great job on some), **DIGITIZED** (print and audio holdings), and **AVAILABLE** to the membership. Ideally, the archives should be **ENDOWED** so that an archivist can continue the work started by the University of Oklahoma. Appropriate storage sites should be solicited, where the archives can be accessible to members.

QUESTIONS???

IF YOU HAVE ORGANIST INFO...

(from 1915-1935 that's not already in the Coale/Landon database)

Please send to me at:

wmcoale@gmail.com

Please include documentation if at all possible

**Newspaper articles, photographs, sheet music/covers, reviews,
bios, and theatre advertisements are all welcomed!**

THANKS FOR ATTENDING!!

I'll be putting this presentation up on the GW website with active links so you can easily visit any of the sites discussed today:

www.GeniusOfGeorgeWright.com

Comments/questions/donations ;-) to:

wmcoale@gmail.com
