

Strand Theatre Shelbyville, Inc.

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Theatre Pipe Organ Work continues

Written by David on March, 10 2010

The Strand Theatre Pipe Organ, endowed by the Shelby County Historical Society, has taken another step closer to rebuilding. The Strand's organ was manufactured by the Louisville Pipe Organ Company (LPO) in 1928. It was one of a handful of instruments the firm made specifically for theatre use.

Our organ, Opus 531, was built in Terre Haute Indiana after LPO moved from Louisville. It was originally built for the Sipe Theatre in Kokomo, Indiana. The theatre never took the instrument, so it was installed in the Uptown Theatre in Louisville, Kentucky. This organ was removed from the theatre and installed in a church in Tell City Indiana. In 1977 it was removed from the church and placed in storage. It remained in storage until acquired for the Strand project in 2004.

Throughout the years several pieces have been lost from Opus 531. Since LPO built so few instruments, finding replacements has been difficult. There are only 4 LPO's built for theatres known to be in existence.

This past week Strand Board Member David Finkel was successful in locating and purchasing the final "Uniphone", the LPO Brand name theatre instrument. This organ, Opus 519, was built in 1926 for the Oak Theatre in Louisville Kentucky. With the purchase of this instrument, all the remaining LPO theatre organs are now in Shelbyville.

The other two include Opus 536 from the Dream Theatre, Indianapolis built in 1928. It is complete and located in a private residence. The final organ is Opus 512 from the Oriental Theatre in Indianapolis. It is in storage and will be used to augment the Strand organ.

It is quite incredible that the legacy of this manufacture would be tied to the Strand Theatre in Shelbyville. Through the vision of the SCHS and the Strand, our organ will be the only fully restored Uniphone in a public venue.

Below is the parade of Louisville Pipe Organ consoles. The first picture shows the three organ consoles in storage. From left to right they are Opus 531, destined for the Strand; Opus 519 from the Oak Theatre and Opus 512 from the Oriental Theatre.

Below is Opus 519, built in 1926 from the Oak Theatre in Louisville, KY:

Below is Opus 536 from the Dream Theatre in Indianapolis. This organ has played continuously since it was built in 1928.

Images on this post:



