



**MUSIC RINGS OUT FROM THE BASEMENT** — Clifford Beguelin, 1607 Learnard, plays the pipe organ in the basement of his home while his friend, Albert Floro, 512 Learnard Ct., listens to the vibrant sounds which

come from the instrument they have built. Seen in the background are some of the 900 pipes, which have been precisely placed on nine wind chests. (Journal-World Photo)

# Skills Combined to Build Pipe Organ

By GENEVIEVE BALLYEAT

Women's Editor

What do two men work at during their retirement after years in the business of organ-making? They construct an organ! Where? In the basement of one of their homes as a joint project of the long-time friends.

For the past 25 years, Clifford Beguelin, 1607 Learnard, has accumulated organ parts in anticipation of the time when he would build one.

He has hauled pipes, hundreds of them, keyboards, several, and many, many bits and pieces which he stored in the basement, attic and garage. "They've come from all over the country," he says.

Beguelin's leisure began in January, 1969, when he retired from the M. P. Moller Organ Co. after being in sales, installation and service for 22½ years. Before then he had worked 22½ years for Reuter Organ Co. in Lawrence.

**HIS PARTNER** is Albert Floro, 512 Learnard Ct., who retired two years ago as console foreman with Reuter Organ after working there 43 years.

Both men came from Highland, Ill., in their early 20's and went to work for the Lawrence company. Floro was first and was instrumental in bringing his friend here.

Neighbors now, each day usually finds them in the basement workshop at the Beguelin home, working on the organ or on separate projects for their families. Beguelin's wife, Cecil, leaves the basement to the men, although she says she has assisted occasionally by holding some keys. They have a daughter, Mrs. Bradshaw Smith, who lives at Cape Girardeau, Mo. Floro has a daughter, Mrs. George Plowman, of Great Bend, and a son, Jim Floro, of Ottawa, and four grandchildren. His wife died two years ago.

**THE MEN** have combined their nearly 90 years of practical knowledge about the inside mechanism of a pipe organ, their talent and ingenuity into an instrument with a handsome console of their own design and excellent tonal quality from 14 ranks of pipes set on nine wind chests.

The various parts, some new and many old, have come from six or eight organ companies and disused organs and been ingeniously fitted piece by piece along one side of the Beguelin basement and snuggled under the stairway.

"It's the same equipment as in a factory-built organ, except the console is our own design. We tried to make it a little different," the men explain.

"I had the metal frame built

in Wichita 10 years ago, just waiting for this time," says Beguelin, who started the piecemeal construction about five years ago.

**DURING THE** past several months, Floro has built the oak console, which is of new wood and has new stops and coupler controls. The two also have incorporated their own ideas into the switches in the relays, "the brains of the organ," with at least \$75 worth of ribbon silver. And they even have devised some of the tools necessary.

"The organ is complete as it is," says Floro. "But there are always things you can add." "The combinations are unlimited," Beguelin adds.

They estimate there are about 900 pipes in the present instrument and they have done lots of tonal work as well as fine tuning. Beguelin explains that the 16-foot pedal pipes had to be placed horizontally because of the ceiling height. When he hauled some of the bass pipes home, they had to be sawed off to fit into the car, and then others had to be mitered to fit into the right spot in the basement.

Located in another area is the one-horsepower blower for the wind and a 50-amp rectifier required to furnish direct current to operate the different magnets which lead to the sound.

**ALTHOUGH NEITHER** man can read a note of music, they both know the keys and the kind of tonal quality they want to hear. As Beguelin demonstrates, playing by ear, his friend stands quietly by, listening, proud of the tone.

"The organ can be played very quietly," Beguelin demonstrates, as his hands move over the keyboard, which he believes might be 60 years old. Then he pulls out more stops. "When the full organ is going there's quite a bit of racket," he says. The basement — and entire house — resounds with music.

"We're not through," says Beguelin. He hopes to add six more ranks of pipes. Then there are chimes, brought from Sioux City, Iowa, which they hope to connect sometime. Beguelin already has started work on shutters which he plans to place in front of the swell organ pipes.

They are looking forward to some old-fashioned hymn singing sessions . . . when more of the debris is cleared from the other end of the basement. Then, they'll roll the console, which is on a movable platform and has a long electric cable, away from the pipes and invite friends for the song fests.

"No rocking chairs for us. We have a lot to do," each one says.