

# Los Angeles Fans Enjoy Four Organ

LOS ANGELES — The "City of the Angels" had an organ-spiced 50 hours in mid-November when four musical "happenings" took place within that time, giving Angelinos some practice for the 1968 ATOE Convention scheduled here. Three of the events took place on the same day—Sunday. All of them are worthy of far more detailed coverage than we provide here, but the events straddled our deadline.

The first session started at 9:30 a.m. Sunday (Nov. 12) with Tom Hazleton playing a return engagement for the LA Chapter of ATOE, at the Wiltern Theatre. Tom drew more than 550 pipe fans, a good score, all things considered. He came thundering up from the pit just past the appointed hour, astride the white charger that is the king-size Kimball console, to the "balloon" tune, "Up, Up and Away," which invites the listener to "flyyyyyy!" The listeners soared with Tom. Among the highlights were the "Jumping Bean" theme used on TV by the "Captain Kangaroo" program, a sort of updated "Irish Washerwoman," a "Guys and Dolls" potpourri; Ketelby's "In a Chinese Temple Garden" (which Tom introduced tongue-in-cheek); a big patriotic medley of "America the Beautiful" and the tune we borrowed from Britain and call "America" (Tom got a tremendous hand for this); "Georgy Girl" and the Beatles' "When I'm 64."

But it was generally conceded that the most lasting impression was made by Tom's reading of the extremely difficult and equally beautiful "Love Death" from Wagner's opera, "Tristan and Isolde." There's no "love theme" like it anywhere in the world of music and Tom's sensitive reading would easily cause a panic if played at a "love-in"—it's that explicit. Tom has become identified with "Love Death" through his frequent scheduling of it, and it isn't likely that he'll have much competition, it's that tough to manipulate (the only other theatre organist who performs it frequently is Eddie Dunstedter). A surprise element in Tom's program was the introduction of his attractive better half, Zoe (like "Chloe"), who made the "boys in the baldhead row" thankful for the Howard seat as the lady jazzed out a delightful "Willow Weep for Me."

It was top performance all the way. Tom Hazleton has carved a special niche for himself in LA organ circles, one which reflects the excellence of his musicianship and insures a "welcome back, Tom" whenever he feels the urge.

There was only a short time to shake Tom's hand, ogle his lovely wife and hit

the road for West Covina for an early afternoon bash incongruously called "The 11th Benefit Breakfast of the Los Angeles Organists Breakfast Club." The club is the organization of the working film, TV studio, restaurant and cocktail bar organists in the LA area. They meet monthly for a practically all-day party which is not only social but also a showcase for organists to display their wares. Prospective employers often join in the fun and come away with the artist they want for their beanery. The program consists of a parade of fine organists playing various models of electronic. There's always the ubiquitous Hammond, plus one or more other brands and models which members haul to the host establishment. The breakfasts are normally held at a spot where organ music is the rule and restaurateurs are only too happy



TOM ACKNOWLEDGES the waves of applause which followed his interpretation of the 'Tristan and Isolde' Love Music.

to host the event because it means an all-day jingle in the cash register for food and drink required to keep the performers happy. The drive from LA to West Covina consumed the best part of an hour and led through herds of Sunday drivers. The location for this, the big event of the LAOBC year, was the local Elks Lodge, in order to accommodate the multitudes. It was a well-attended event and more than 50 organists were heard throughout the day, each doing his thing and relinquishing the console to the next artist. In brief it was LAOBC's annual fund-raising show, complete with door prizes and a raffle. And all for \$1.00, same as the earlier ATOE concert.

Those who planned on attending the Jack Loren concert at the Morgan theatre in Santa Monica had to start retracing their tire tracks toward LA long before the festivities in West Covina had even started to simmer down. They drove back the same route, passed the

## LOS ANGELES ORGANISTS' BREAKFAST CLUB



Wiltern and headed for the sea. The Morgan theatre is a modern house, built for theatrical presentations. The acoustic properties of the hall are excellent even though the seating is limited to 201. Jack Loren was scheduled to play a Conn plug-in, a "de luxe theatre" model, it said on the whimsical program that was most attendees' introduction to pixie-ish Jack. Admission: a whopping \$2.50!

Jack's stock in trade is subtlety and understatement, and he applies these qualities equally well to humor and music. Humor, because he is a frustrated comedian; music because he can't help himself. Jack sauntered out on the stage to the applause of a full house just after the appointed hour, a tall balding man with Jack Benny features (and occasional Benny mannerisms). He sat down at the Conn and fiddled with the stops for a long while, then broke into a brief fanfare thing that hardly justified all the setup time. Then he read the titles of all the tunes he threatened to play straight from the printed program, muffed some and garbled others, then decided to play "Ay, Ay, Ay" "because I know it best."

Next was a truly marvelous recreation of the Jesse Crawford style for "Laura." One of Jack's running gags was his "not all together" Hawaiian medley, which



TOM HELPS ZOE escape from the console after her solo.

# 'Happenings' Within a 50-Hour Span



FORMAL DRESS for an informal concert. Gaylord refers to his notes while introducing a classical group.

kept popping up throughout the concert. Jack has an overpowering propensity to clown, but ever so gently. For example, during "Tiny Bubbles" he couldn't resist getting involved briefly with "How Dry I Am" and "Show Me the Way to Go Home." After which, he apologized aloud.

We thought the day of the "relief organist" died with silent movies but leave it to Jack Loren to revive it. His relief man was a six-year-old Loren student, Shawn Mills. Shawn stepped up to the console, sat down (his feet didn't reach half-way to the pedals) and played up a storm with such goodies as "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Then he pushed the bench aside and played standing up so he could manage some pedal bass. He never hit one clinker. For that matter, neither did his teacher, who returned before Shawn could take over completely. Again he apologized, this time for "over-arranging" "Once in a Dream" because "how do I know what kind of dreams Stu Green has!" (the composer was in the audience). His "Manhattan Tower" themes were played as beautifully as they sound on Jack's "Organ Artistry"



WELL! Jack Loren assumes a Jack Benny pose, although he doesn't play the violin.

label recording and then he did his now standard treatment of "Indian Love Call," first as a schmaltzy ballad, then an abrupt change—a rendition which deserves a big, fat, swacked Indian's attempt to get back to the reservation. Jack even managed a few ill-concealed burps in the ensuing "massacree." He announced an intermission which would last "until all my records in the lobby are sold." His post-intermission highlights included a "Tiger Rag" which saw a tiger tail snaking from the console lid and an encore which consisted entirely of the jingle, "Barnsweeps taste good like a cigarette should." And he finally concluded the episodic "Hawaiian Medley." Jack's sly humor-musical, physical and vocal—had made it a most entertaining evening.

There was some surcease from organ activity in the form of Monday. But on



THE PEWS WERE LOADED—All ears and eyes are focused on Gaylord Carter as he plugs his own very listenable tunes.

Tuesday it was back to the highway in an effort to locate a section of the megaloptical Los Angeles sprawl called simply "Bell." Bell has a swinging church which houses a 7-rank Wurlitzer, one which once graced a Mill Valley (near Frisco) movie house. It was originally one of those super style D's, a more highly unified version known as a style 165. The artist: veteran showman Gaylord Carter. This unbeatable combination compensated for the super-highway drive from Hollywood to Bell and the search through look-alike streets for the church. We were a little late for this concert, chiefly because we missed the highway turnoff and had to go to San Diego to perform a U-turn and try again. We finally made it, barging into the full house—er—church (circa 450 pew seats) in the midst of a Carter medley. Gaylord, as always, was in an ebullient mood and his booming voice needed no artificial amplification to be heard in even the farthest corners of the edifice.

Gaylord's program was arranged in seven groupings, the first offering being show tunes by Richard Rodgers (modern theatre), the second, Victor Herbert selections (vintage theatre). The next grouping was familiar hymns as arranged by the organist. The Wurlitzer sounded as much at home among the hymns as it had a few minutes previously to the cadence of "March of the Toys" or climbing every mountain. Then Romberg melodies before the break. During intermission we saw Dean McNichols, the regular organist at the church and learned that the financial goal (\$2.00 admission) had been realized from this first commercial concert put on by the church. Dean has played two previous free-admission concerts, one a silent film accompaniment to the old DeMille epic, "King of Kings," last Easter.

Not too many of the dyed-in-the-wool organ crowd were among those who filled the lobby for smokes during intermission, which would indicate that the bulk of the audience came from the surrounding neighborhood, a most favorable indication.

Gaylord juggled the order of his printed program after intermission and placed the classics—Bach and Boellmann compositions—first, claiming his own tunes, the next group, would offer more contrast in that order. The Bach was the famed "Tocatta in D Minor" which made some brutal demands on the little Wurlitzer, which "came through" nobly. The Boellmann selections were "Gothic Minuet" and "Tocatta," the latter sounding for all the world like a silent movie "hurry," an area in which Gaylord is very much at home. Next he played three of his own tunes, "Melody in E Flat," "Nocturne" and "Scherzo." They offered a wide range of expression but each was indicative of the homey charm which Gaylord exudes; and they also went a little beneath the Carterian facade to reveal a mighty sensitive soul. The final group was "Sleepytime Music," for which Gaylord recreated moments from his long-gone CBS radio show, "Prelude to Midnight." The audience let Gaylord know in no uncertain terms that his program had been much appreciated—by the usual method of beating the palms of their hands purple. In church or not, this was still show biz.

Thus ended one of the liveliest periods in the Southern California organ aficionado's scene in some time—50 hours and four "happenings"—all worth the going despite those many miles racked up on speedometers.

—Hal Steiner