

tween the croaking "bee in a bottle" range of the Kinura and the "whistling" range of the Tibia. It was a triumph of arranging and registration over lack of material, and the audience loved it. But the real Vannucci art shone brightly throughout *The Shadow of Your Smile*



"THE VANOOCHI!" Larry Vannucci waits for the crowd to simmer down after his grotesque 'Wind-chester Cathedral'.

and the theme from the film, *A Man and a Woman*. When Larry announced *As Long as She Needs Me* with that "gone" look on his craggy visage, no one present could possibly doubt who he was playing it for; Claire was sitting directly behind the console, radiant as always.

Larry's "feature selection" was a finely registered *Blusette* which made good use of the organ's Brass Trumpet, Tibia, Clarinet, Kinura and Chrysoglott Harp.

The next artist was straight out of silent movies—wonderful Alice Blue. Alice is more than a personality, she's a character, and a top-flight entertainer. She made frequent comments about what she was up to over the PA system and generally made light of her efforts. However,



Facing a phalanx of soles, Alice Blue turns on the charm while introducing her next tune.

as a measure of her abilities, she selected Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Hymn To The Sun* for her initial selection, and did it proud. Next came a "Blues Hodgepodge" as she called it, a potpourri featuring bits and pieces of many tunes, most of them dealing with the continual war she wages against the Russian River which she in-

sists has evil designs on her Guerneville home, dog ("Faux Pas"), Volkswagen and herself—such damp items as *River Stay Away From My Door*. At one point she took off on what sounded like a silent movie chase. And leave it to the old showman to save a gasp for the very end; as she took her bow she stepped off the organ platform into thin air—and very nearly took a dive into the nether regions of the pit. A huge gasp went up from the listeners but Alice reappeared in the spotlight and indicated that nothing more than her dignity had suffered. With a happy wave she was gone, one of the most beloved and most interesting of the old-timers.

Alice Blue is hard to follow at any time and with the drama of her near "dive" still fluttering in the audience, she was doubly difficult to follow. It takes talent like that of Emory Stevenson to cope with such a situation and it just happened that Emory was scheduled next, the final act in an afternoon of wonderful musical adventures. Meanwhile the show had run far beyond the estimated time and six PM was looming. So, Emory cut it short with an able version of *Manhattan*, *Put Your Dreams Away*, and a Crawford-like *She's Funny That Way*. His encore was a delicious *It Happened in Monterey*. There the show ended.

Gene Pofelr, who had performed ably as the MC, bid the audience goodbye and invited all to return as soon as possible. Actually, there had been no "hard-sell" during the entire afternoon. Several times Messrs. Gregory and Stout had stepped to the stage to provide some history of the



THIS IS MY GOOD SIDE! Ed Stout and Vern Gregory clown for the multitudes. The Avenue is their dream come true.

project and to make themselves known to the audience. Stout gave a brief talk on organ "bird whistles" and demonstrated some special ones which will become a part of the organ, notably the raucous "Albatross call." Gregory turned out to be a comedian, mugging for the photographer who kept shooting Vern's "bad side," much to the Gregorian discomfolt.

In all it was an afternoon that won't soon be forgotten in Bay Area organ circles. Where else could you be served free intermission coffee by a couple of dolls like organists Lee Lees and June Melen- dy?

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For the benefit of those contemplating a visit to San Francisco, the Avenue theatre is located at 2650 San Bruno Street (take the Silver Avenue turn-off from Route 101).

## BOB RALSTON POPULAR ON PIPES

by G. BANDINI

California music lovers were recently treated to four days of delightful theatre pipe organ music at the Carl Greer Inn in Sacramento, played by Bob Ralston of the Lawrence Welk organization. Although featured on a "plug in" on the Welk show as well as during personal appearances, he did a creditable performance on pipes. This was appreciated, particularly, by those familiar with the complex Morton multiple stop key, 4-manual configuration. Ralston worked up pleasing combinations and was well in control of the 4-16 Morton. During certain numbers, obviously Welk type arrangements, "champagne" bubbles floated out of the organ. Welk's borrowed bubble machine, with a control on the console, produced the effect. Although he is a very accomplished pianist and organist, he demonstrated showmanship versatility through conversational patter and a form of gymnastics. The gymnastics consisted of laying on his back, crossing his arms with his head un-

der the console and playing *12th Street Rag* on the Accompaniment manual!



HOWDY, FOLKS — I'M BOB RALSTON. —Encompassed by the giant maw of the Morton, and surrounded by eaters, Bob announces requests. (Photo by Bob Churchill).