

CLYDE DERBY and his "ROSEMARY"

Our story starts on an overcast morning. The scene is Lick Pier at Santa Monica, California, at the stage door of the ancient Rosemary theatre. Workmen, directed by organ maintenance man "Buster" Rosser, pile parts of the Rosemary's Wurlitzer organ outside, ready for loading. At fifteen minutes before seven a huge moving van arrives and backs up to the load. It is followed by a station wagon driven by a man wearing hornrimmed glasses with heavy lenses. He parks, gets out and surveys the scene. Good Lord, the organ is so much larger when disassembled for moving! This was the first time that the full impact of the project he had undertaken came home to Clyde Derby.

He had always been interested in organs and music. He even recalls hearing the Rosemary organ played for silent movies when he was a small boy. Clyde didn't actually take up organ playing until 1948, starting with a Hammond. But the Hammond only whetted his appetite for the real thing he remembered from the distant past. So he decided to do something about it. He started the search from his home in Sacramento and luck was with him. The very organ he remembered was available.

But on this drab morning in 1956 the full enormity of the task became apparent and Clyde wondered. But not for long. After wrangling with the movers about loading procedures (naturally they wanted to put the pipes under the chests), Clyde, Buster and the crew started packing. They did it very carefully and it took the remainder of the day, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 in



Closeup of Clydes's console. It's a standard Wurlitzer style 210 with nine ranks of pipes and the usual percussions and noise makers.



Clyde gazes up at some of the tall boomers (8' pedal Diapason) in his large Main Chamber. He has been "on the air" over a Sacramento FM station for over three years, first on "Rosemary" then on the Greer Morton for the past year.

the evening to get it all tucked in. Just for safety's sake, Clyde loaded most of the smaller pipes into his station wagon. He knew what could happen to pipes in the hands of even the tenderest professional movers.

Then the two vehicles set out on the 400 mile trip to Carmichael (near Sacramento), driving all night. Then, after the movers got a few hours sleep, the van was unloaded and Clyde found himself alone with a lawful—later a houseful—of organ: nine ranks, to be exact, a style 210.

Using rooms of cement block (which he added to his house) for chambers, Clyde went to work with a vengeance. Luckily, his wife was interested and she helped. Clyde had the Wurli perking in three months from the day the van pulled away. During this period he had lots of help from his friends, Irving Thorley, Irwin Stranahan and Dave Schutt. It is installed just as it came from the theatre with no effort made to voice it down. Clyde is especially proud of the full complement of noisemakers in the "toy counter" department, even to the tuned sleighbells. The one voice change Clyde made was to substitute a crisp-sounding Kinura for the original Clarinet. His Solo chamber houses the Tibia, Tuba and Vox; the remaining six ranks (see the stop list) constitute the Main.

If the name "Clyde Derby" has a familiar ring it may be due to its association with a famous organ, the 4-16 Robert Morton in the Carl Greer Inn at Sacramento, where Clyde is the featured organist. In fact, the Greer installation itself was the culmination of a long term dream of Clyde's. Several years

ago he was approached by a man who had been favorably impressed during a visit to the Beefeater's Inn at Phoenix which then featured a Large Marr & Colton organ played by Bob Read. The man, Carl Greer, was planning a similar installation and one night he happened to drop into the Falcon Room, a Carmichael bistro, and heard Clyde playing a Hammond. He liked what he heard and later broached his plan to Clyde. He couldn't have approached a more cooperative guy where pipes are concerned. Greer told Clyde to line up an organ. Clyde, after much searching, landed the Morton from Seattle's Music Hall theatre. He supervised the entire project, even to designing the underground chambers from which the Morton speaks through chutes. It's an installation which even such a critical ear as Eddie Dunstedter can't resist. He's played it during several visits. And the Theatre Organ Enthusiasts of

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Clyde and Ruby stand before the 20-foot tall concrete block chamber addition which dominates their home.



Clyde livens up his act by wearing his trademark—a Bowler. Although music is his profession his interests are wide. Long a radio "ham," he's now a student flyer, nearly ready to try for his private pilot's license.

Sacramento have made a focal point of the Inn. All of which speaks well of Clyde Derby for doing a difficult job well.

The Rosemary organ was not Clyde's first experience in moving and handling a pipe organ. Just before that adventure he purchased a style D (six rank) Wurlitzer which had been wasting away playing hymns in a church, shorn of all its color and its pipework revoiced for weddings, hymn sings and funerals. Clyde finally decided that it was too far gone to reclaim as an entertainment organ and sold it to a man in San Francisco named "Rod." He can't recall the last name but hopes the man gave the poor little violated Wurlit a good home. The experience gained was helpful when the job of installing the Rosemary organ loomed.



Clyde Derby at the console of the 4-16 Robert Morton organ when it was in the Seattle Music Hall theatre. This tryout led to the purchase of the organ for the Carl Greer Inn. He broadcasts over a local FM station a half hour each week.

Clyde says, "I made all the mistakes one can make in removing the style D from the church. I cut wires and cables, took things out in the wrong order—but I sure learned a lot, and fast." One thing Clyde learned is that distance (from neighbors) lends enchantment. His home is in the center of a one-acre lot.

Clyde, who is a self-taught musician, estimates that he has about \$6,000 invested in his home Wurlit, and adds, "I've got something a heck of a lot better than six grand would buy in the electronic organ field." He came to pipes in the reverse order most organists experienced when "talkies" took over theatres. Those who had always played on pipes often found a new career in honking a Hammond in a watering hole. Clyde started out with the Hammond and graduated to Pipes, all within the walls of the aforementioned oasis.

Since he's become an organ owner Clyde's home has become something of a Mecca for organ-oriented visitors and he and his wife of 27 years don't seem to mind at all. The family consists of Clyde, his wife Ruby and a kitchen full of "ham" radio gear—plus the organ, with the last occupying a major portion of the Derby pad.

After ten years of sharing her home with a roaring beast, Ruby Derby is still an organ enthusiast. When Clyde is asked if she could be classed as a "Wurlitzer Widow" he replies, "No—she's a Wurlitzer Wife. She fixes ciphers!"

But there's one angle about owning a pipe organ often used to justify the time and space they demand from their master which doesn't apply in Clyde's case. It can't be said, "Well—the

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Clyde at the console of the Grant Union High School theatre organ designed by George Wright when he was a Sacramento school boy. Clyde has played concerts on it.



Ruby Derby stands before one of the two sets of swell shutters which control the organ's volume. Chambers are each 12' x 12', 20' high.

CLYDE DERBY and his "ROSEMARY" *Continued*

organ at least keeps him out of saloons."

Saloons are where Clyde works.

—Hal Steiner

STOP LIST

PEDAL

16' Tuba Profunda
16' Diaphone
16' Bourdon
8' Harmonic Tuba
8' Diaphonic Diapason
8' Tibia Clausa
8' Clarinet
8' Cello
8' Flute
4' Octave

PEDAL 2nd TOUCH

Bass Drum
Kettle Drum
Crash Cymbal

ACCOMPANIMENT

16' Contra Violin
16' Vox Humana
8' Harmonic Tuba
8' Diaphonic Diapason
8' Tibia Clausa
8' Clarinet
8' Oboe
8' Violin
8' Violin Celeste
8' Concert Flute
8' Vox Humana
4' Piccolo
4' Violin
4' Octave Celeste
4' Flute
4' Vox Humana
2-2/3 Twelfth
2' Piccolo

Chrysoglott
Snare Drum
Tambourine
Castanets
Chinese Blocks
Tom Tom
ACC. 2nd TOUCH

8' Harmonic Tuba
8' Clarinet
Cathedral Chimes
Xylophone
Triangle
SOLO

16' Tuba Profunda
16' Diaphonic Diapason
16' Bourdon
16' Contra Violin
8' Tuba
8' Diaphonic Diapason
8' Tibia Clausa
8' Clarinet
8' Oboe
8' Violin
8' Violin Celeste
8' Concert Flute
8' Vox Humana
4' Clarion
4' Octave
4' Piccolo
4' Violin
4' Octave Celeste
4' Flute
2-2/3 Twelfth

2' Fifteenth
2' Piccolo
1-3/5' Tierce
Cathedral Chimes
Sleigh Bells
Xylophone
Glockenspiel
Bells
Chrysoglott
SOLO 2nd TOUCH

TOE STUDS

Bass Presets
Wind
Auto Horn
Train Whistle
Horse Clops
Bird Whistle
Train/Streetcar Bell
Snare Drum Roll, 1st Touch
Bass Drum / Cymbal, 2nd Touch
Sforzando, 1st Touch all
Sforzando, 2nd Touch all,
with percussion

PISTONS

10 for each manual

TREMULANTS

Main
Solo
Vox Humana
Tuba

EXPRESSION PEDALS

Solo
Main

Vox - String combinations are used with tremendous effect. Even noise inherent in the pressing doesn't detract from the beauty of *Ruby*.

A pedal cymbal used against Post-horn riffs and "sneers" mark the entry of *Georgia* and for her second appearance she comes through as a jazz cornet solo with much joie de vivre.

I Hadn't Anyone Til You features a smooth tuba melody, flowing rhythm and mellow reed punctuation.

It's the big marching band for *Liberty Bell*, a real swinging march played with all the majesty of the M & C's complement of "brass," traps and reeds.

It's Easy to Remember is played simply but beautifully in slow ballad style. The massive ending is softened by a sentimental Tibia coda with plaintive comments by the Chrysoglott.

Dick goes to the percussions for color during *Softly, as in a Morning Sunrise*, a dramatic "Valentino" tango with the Marimba much in evidence as well as other "clackers" which never overshadow musical values.

A fast waltz tempo marks *Life is a Beautiful Thing*, even when the instrumentation switches briefly to a carousel hurdy gurdy. Mostly it's played in broad, Viennese style. A happy tune which proves Dick's competence in the 3/4 department.

Another application of Buddy Cole styling saves that overexposed dame from *Ipanema* from being just another Bikini in the crowd. Her frigid stares are softened by the rhythmic humor of a "Sassy Brass" treatment. Dick is an admitted admirer of the late maestro; the resemblance is intentional and skillfully applied, although never a direct copy.

The closer opens with a soaring Trumpet playing *Mean to Me*, followed by a Tibia / Vox mellowness broken by subtle brass comments. Dick at his colorful arranging best and with lots of registration variety.

Both Dick Schrum and the Marr and Colton come through their initial recording experience with flying colors despite some technical drawbacks, e.g. highs seem to be attenuated in a set of grooves sometimes rough and noisy. Concert Recordings advise only 25 records got out with noisy grooves before corrections were made.

Jacket notes are informative and occasionally incorrect (this is not the largest Marr and Colton built). The cover bears two color shots of Dick, one passable, the other unflattering. Other pix show the studio and some pipework.

RECORD REVIEWS

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theatre" has progressed, this will be a revelation.

We don't claim that the result comes close to pipes (to our biased ears) but if any builder gets there, Rodgers certainly has a good headstart, especially with such able assists as Bill Thomson supplies here.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT. Dick Schrum playing the 5-24 Marr and Colton organ in Bill Blunk's studio (Portland, Oregon). Concert Recording No. CR-0008, available by mail only as a compatible stereo disc (\$4.50) or 4-track 7 1/2 ips stereo tape (\$5.95), postpaid. Ordering procedure same as for the Buddy Nolan record reviewed above.

As most organ enthusiasts know, Dick Schrum is president of ATOE. At the 1966 convention he was pressed into service to play the concert John Muri couldn't because of the airline strike. Those who heard Dick at this same fine Marr and Colton were most

favorably impressed by the polished performance he gave—especially considering the impromptu aspect of his program. He quickly established his skill at playing orchestrally and that characteristic is evident on this record. It offers a variety of musical canvasses for Dick to color. This he does in combinations ranging from pastels to bold brush strokes of primary color.

That's Entertainment is Dick's "console riser." Played in fast showtime tempo, it serves as an introduction to both the big M and C sound and to the up-tempo style of the artist. Variations on the familiar melody without first hearing it played straight may seem a little disconcerting, but that's show biz.

Ruby. If there wasn't another tune on the platter this would do much to elevate Dick Schrum high among masters of organ balladry. The arrangement is exquisite in its imagery and the whole piece is dominated by phrasing, use of voices and nuance hauntingly close to sound produced by the late Buddy Cole. The Cole style pedal gliss, horn counter melody, untrem'd Diapason and ethereal