

Los Angeles, April 30 — ATOE's President, Richard Schrum, was in town today on club business and to present a concert at the Wiltern Theatre for the Los Angeles Chapter of ATOE. It was the usual Sunday presentation time of 9:30 A.M. and circa 450 faithful appeared to see just how good this president would be at the 4-manual Kimball.

by ELMER FUBB

ATOE's NATIONAL PRESIDENT SCORES AT LA CHAPTER CONCERT



IN PERSON! The "Prez" greets his audience. Dick enjoyed the warmth of his Southland reception.

The show started promptly at 9:30 with a big and broad *You* issuing from the chambers as the console and Dick Schrum inched skyward into the white spotlight. He greeted his applauding auditioners, thanked them for coming and started his concert with a tongue-in-cheek *Mame* which was interspersed with wolf whistles, bells and sirens. The final chorus had *Mame* doing a bump and grind routine. *Strangers in the Night* was provided a subtle framework with mutation-studded strings carrying the melody atop full chords while a solitary Tuba wailed a baritone obligato. Like most of the selections heard during the program, the harmony was usually unusual and continually moving in smooth progressions around the melody notes. *Falling in Love With Love* started on a soft Tibia-Vox combination and gradually developed into a large-scale, fast waltz of almost Viennese dimensions.

After a kinura-spiked *April Showers*, Dick opened the gag title "corn crib" with, "... the frustrated shepherd's song—'How about ewe?' It was peppered with some brassy riffs best described as "far out." *Blue Moon* was played much as it sounds on Dick's Seattle Paramount record, with a slight variation on the melody which opens the door to some tantalizing harmonic treatment. *Winchester Cathedral* had a slight regurgitational air about it but after the "croaking chorus" was over it got really "dirty." In complete

contrast was Sousa's rousing *Nobles of the Mystic Shrine*. Then there was time out for some announcements and some jokes by Chairman Bob Carson which no one could catch because of a hand microphone afflicted with feedback. It soon became apparent that Mr. Carson was stalling. Had something gone wrong? It sure had—and a moment later the proof came up with the console—none other than "Bensie" Hall's flame—Martha Lake, in all her bovine glory.

Trying to describe Martha's command of the organ is rather frustrating to any reviewer who hasn't a couple of dozen



MARTHA BOOTS ONE — Shy Martha Lake, just after shedding an enormous shoe (lower right). She fooled some of the people some of the time.

synonyms for "lousy" in his vocabulary. She would start out very nicely on a tune such as *Fly Me To The Moon* and then something horrible would happen to the melody. It would somehow go sharp a half-tone or the bottom would fall out of the harmonic structure. These effects, coupled with the natural groans of a tortured instrument add up to a "happening" not soon forgotten.

Martha was her usual retiring, clumsy, inept, vapid self. She hadn't played a dozen measures before the spiked heel of one of her No. 13's caught between two pedals. Unlike Millie Alexander before her, she reached down and grabbed the canal-boat-sized pump and heaved it toward a photographer who was getting too close. He retreated as it thumped to a landing on the stage apron. This she did with great

finesse—while murdering whatever tune she was trying to play. Martha is very shy, in a flamboyant sort of way, and she was particularly coy about a new hairdo she was sporting.

Of course, Martha's *piece de resistance* (if any) is the organ stop she—well, captured—long ago in Africa, actually the only new voice developed for the pipe organ since the days of Hope-Jones—the "Abyssinian Stringed Oboe." It must have been rather hurriedly installed in the big Kimball because Martha had to beat the console side jamba to get it going. It would have been better if she hadn't. The off-pitch wail that wafted from the chambers was a travesty of the old silent movie theme, *Fascination*. In a way the "oboe" is useful for avant garde "counterpoint" because it sniffs all around a melody without ever getting on the beam for a "point." It would be difficult to find words to describe its aimless wandering but if there is one word which fits perfectly it's "rotten."

Readers will have to excuse further coverage of Miss Lake's portion of the program because we couldn't take it any longer. What was that word we used in connection with *Winchester Cathedral*?

After a too brief "recovery period"—or intermission—it was a pleasure to once again hear the firm touch of Dick Schrum giving out with a march version of *Isn't*

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FROM THE BALCONY — With a minimum of 'exploration' time, Dick managed to ferret out some rarely-heard combinations in the 'sea of stops.' He later reported that he had acquired a genuine affection for the oversized beast.



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Concert Time, with Dick Smith at the 3-13 Wurlitzer in Loew's theatre, Richmond, Va. Regular offering of the *Organ of the Month Club*, Box 541, Lynwood, Calif. No. CR-0013, in *Stereoflex*, \$4.50 postpaid.

This Could Be the Start of Something Good provides an appropriate curtain raiser on a platter that contains some surprises. This tune, played with lots of moxie on full combinations, is reminiscent of John Seng during his *Beyond the Blue Horizon* period. *Autumn in New York* runs for 5 minutes and 47 seconds, every one a delight. Dick is a master of the *slow build-up* technique, wherein a slow crescendo continues throughout the tune. Treatment is generally subtle. *The More I Want You* is rhythmic but restrained, with lots of percussion coloring. Good contemporary organ jazz.

Teddy Bears' Picnic, an oldie from pre-talkie days, is intended as a cute, innocuous intermezzo. In Dick's hands it's often a bit grotesque, more like Halloween music, with one *spook* doing a ghostly Kinura solo while the Tuba grunts a threatening bass.

Dick's at his best during *Cape Cod*, offering it as a sweeping ballad in gentle rhythm with beaucoup appeal and highly spiced registration, although the use of full organ for a whole chorus and a tacked on, dissonant, unrelated *coda* may seem like too much to some listeners.

Six minutes during which the variety is chiefly in tempo and volume just about saturates our ethnic interest, although the final frenzied measures sound a lot like silent movie *run-away train* music. The title is *Zorba, the Greek*.

The *Doll Dance* suffers from a repeatedly inaccurate melody line although the treatment is interesting and skillful use

is made of Glockenspiel and Triangle spice.

The first part of *Hard Hearted Hannah* is played in real theatre organ style, providing some of the best moments on the record but then an overlong preoccupation with percussions alone bog things down until the final chorus where they pick up for a low-down denouement.

Dick's own *Green Apples* is a pleasant exercise in big organ period jazz. Lots of novelty, including a bit of melody-on-chimes, lots of surprise accents and gag effects, add up to solid entertainment value. A show stopper.

The closer is a sweet and sentimental *Where You Are Concerned*, a lovely tune by organist Leonard MacClain (for wife Dottie). Dick exploits some beautiful combinations during the first part of this moving rendition. The last chorus gets heavy with full organ but it's the closer and time for Dick to take his musical bow. An encouraging first try by a talented young comer.

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The Grand One, Cecil Cranfield at the 5-127 Concert Organ in the Sydney (Australia) Town Hall, Concert Recording CR-C014, same price and purchasing information as the previous record listed.

Comment on this recording is perhaps out of place in a theatre organ magazine except for the fact that Mr. Cranfield is a fine theatre organist. However, he displays only his classical side on this record, with skillfully played concert pieces and transcriptions by composers such as Karg-Elert, Rachmaninoff, Mozart, Mendelsohn, Verdi and *traditional*.

The sound is majestic and ponderous, the general effect, dolorous. To those curious about the sound of the world's only 64-foot open reed, it sounds on our player like deep-throated thunder hovering above the music without being a part of it. Mr. Cranfield does a fine job of making pneumatic action articulate and we look forward to hearing him play a theatre instrument.

This record is of interest mainly to collectors of concert organ music; there's nothing *T. O.* about it.

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Music For Theater Organ - No. 2, Frederick Bayco at the Gaumont State, Kilburn, Wurlitzer. His Master's Voice No. CLP 3505 (mono). Released by E. M. I. Records, Hayes-Middlesex, England.

Outside of the *Parade of the Wooden Soldiers* (misprinted *tin soldiers* on the jacket), Nevin's *Narcissus* and Offenbach's *Barcarolle*, these are mostly tunes unfamiliar to American ears. Most are pleasant *intermezzi* of the type one might have heard during unexciting portions of silent films. The playing is competent but uninspired. The recording is good and the organ sounds good. Jacket notes are by the artist.

Medleys From Musicals, Jan Mekkes playing the 4-14 Wurlitzer in the Tuschinski theatre, Amsterdam, Holland. Artone PDR-122 (mono). For purchasing information write to Duyvene & Remmers, N. V., Damrak 25, Amsterdam, Holland (Netherlands).

Since the recent article in this publication about the Tuschinski theatre organ, there has been considerable interest in the instrument. This recording is a delightful surprise. Although the Wurlitzer has been given a typical European voicing, the sound is interesting and the artist is excellent. Jan Mekkes plays 5 and 6 tune medleys of the music from *Rose Marie*, *Oklahoma*, *Carousel*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, and *Showboat*. They are played in a jingling show biz style which exploits the facilities of the instrument fully.

Mr. Mekkes' approach to show tunes will have a special appeal for U. S. listeners. His medleys are carefully worked out, yet sound spontaneous. His bridges between tunes are skillfully conceived. Lots of variety in tempo and registration. This disc is worth the effort required to import.

LA CHAPTER CONCERT, cont. *it Romantic*, as once played by Sidney Torch at the Marble Arch Christie 4-37, he explained.

After a smooth rendition of the Jobim tune, *Meditation*, (lots of marimba plus serpent riffs), Dick played a current juke box hit, *Something Stupid*, then did a medley of standards which included such all-time favorites as *Dancing in the Dark*, *As Time Goes By*, a toe-tapping *Out of Nowhere* and *Paradise*.

Organ jazz was well represented by *Call Me* and the Anthony Newley set included *As Long as She Needs Me*. Next it was boogie-woogie time for a Bill Doggett-style *Honky-Tonk Train*. It was wild.

Dick Schrum's closer was appropriately dedicated to the ATOE National Secretary (to whom he happens to be wed); *I Hadn't Anyone 'til You*, performed in top ballad style for Marilyn, who was present. After receiving a generous hand, Dick made motions toward returning for an encore. Just as he got seated, a foghorn voice from the audience roared, "TEMP-TATION RAG!" Dick looked a little startled for a moment, then sat down and produced a thoroughly nineteen-fifteen quick-step rendition of *Tempation Rag* with all the cliché fillers and corn-fed between-phrase razzamatazz. It turned out to be one of his best numbers. Then the console decended back into the pit and the show was over. Later, Dick showed up in the lobby to meet his public and autograph programs or records. It had been a good program and the ATOE Prexy had maintained a high level of interest throughout. Fortunately, Martha Lake was nowhere in evidence—and just as well.