



SHORT SHOTS FROM EVERYWHERE

Organist Ray Bohr rolled out the red carpet at Radio City Music Hall for visiting Californian Bob Hanselman in September. Bob got the grand tour and describes Ray as a "most hospitable guy — besides being a terrific musician." . . . Ray Ledwon was observed hawking son John's records in the hotel lobby during the Richmond Regional ATOE meet but not later in the theatres. Reason: his supply "went like hotcakes" and he was soon sold out. Ray got the idea from noting the fast rate of sales racked up by Barnes Peckinpaugh whose card table loaded with Virg Howard's "Now is the Hour" popped up at practically every event during the Portland National Convention. He did a brisk business at \$5 and \$6 a throw . . . Organist Lyn Larsen recalls, with no great fondness, his 1964 stint playing for a dog show. The Los Angeles affair exhibited 3,000 pooches representing 114 makes and poor Lyn had to come up with a representative tune complimentary to each entry. The difficulty was caused by owners, many of whom insisted on "You Musta Been a Beautiful Baby," "Beautiful Lady," or even "Baby Face" for their mutt's parade before the judges. Lyn was tempted to slip in "You Dirty Dawg" just once but preferred to live awhile longer. Wonder what pandemonium "Alley Cat" would have caused? . . . Carl Koerbel, Randsburg, Calif., just discovered ATOE after having been an organ enthusiast for years. Carl has a collection of old 78's including many Crawfords, Lew Whites, Velascos, etc. plus "every record ever made by George Wright" — his all-time favorite . . . The Motor City Chapter had a midnight to 3 ayem meeting at the Detroit Redford theatre to open its fall round of activities on Sat. Sept. 17. The instrument is a 3-10 Barton which the group hopes to restore and include in future activities . . . Note on a fellow editor: Jim Brown, editor of the Detroit Theater Organ Club News (whew!) is busy hooking up an additional trem to his home-based 2-6 Marr & Colton . . .

A note from Niagara Frontier's new secretary, Fred Kucera, announced a concert for October 17 featuring Dean Robinson at the 3-15 Wurlitzer in the Skatehaven Roller Rink at Lackawanna, N.Y. (originally installed in the Seneca theatre, Buffalo). Fred replaces Laura Thomas, who resigned after several years of "sec-cing." Laura will continue producing the chapter's SILENT NEWSREEL publication. . . . Ian Sutherland's COS Newsletter reveals that Muscovites have recently learned that there's such a thing as a "pipeless organ." Cinema Oregon Society (of Britain) member Keith Bechingham played an RT3 Hammond at the British Industrial Exhibition in Moscow in July. The first British "pop" organist to play in Russia states, "The public reaction was quite wonderful and very touching." (Wonder if they ever had theatre pipe organs in Russia?) . . . The "Motor City Blower" (Detroit Chapter) brought news of an alluring CATOE event set for a September Sunday afternoon, a concert and stage show at the Indiana theatre in East Chicago with John Muri playing a silent movie and a "singalong." All that in addition to a concert by the top drawer former silent movie cuer. (Chicago's still a wonderful town!) . . .

Don Baker's work schedule is demanding, but rewarding. He concertizes for Conn for three weeks each month, then goes home to Las Vegas and wife Queenie for the fourth week. What does he do in Vegas? Catches a few shows at the tourist traps, plays with his grandchildren (when available) but mostly enjoys his collection of classical records.

A devotee of Tchaikowsky, Wagner, Ravel, Debussy, Borodin, and Rinsky-Korsakoff, Don's current favorite is the Rome Symphony Orchestra's reading of Gliere's 3rd Symphony; actually a tone poem describing the knightly adventures of the Russian Galahad, "Illy Murometz." From Hartford, Conn. (no plug!), Phil Stock reports on a meeting with Lester Smith, president of Spencer Turbines ("Orgoblo"). He learned that the famous Link (aircraft pilot) trainer was powered pneumatically by Spencer blowers. In fact, the trainer design was an outgrowth of the Link theatre organ, Phil learned. Ed Link remembered Spencer from theatre organ days and came to them for fans when World War II upped the demand for pilot trainers. Incidentally, Phil is the "mysterious Phil Stock" rumored in a previous issue to be the owner of a 3-31 Wurlitzer. It's true. Mike Foley, Roger Davis and assorted helpers already have 19 ranks wired and winded in Phil's West Hartford home. He's promised us a story when the whole works starts perking . . .

About a year ago we received a clipping from a correspondent heralding the im-

pending re-installation of an organ in the Hinsdale theatre, Hinsdale, Illinois (near Chicago) by a local group. The writer suggested we stand by for further poop. It finally came — in disastrous terminology. The group had gone to work and in laying out the parts the stage behind the screen had become cluttered. As told to us, the manager took one look at the mess and decided that it constituted a fire hazard. He then cancelled the whole project, says our informant.

. . . Angelenos could breath more freely as to the immediate future of the Robert Morton in the LA Elks Temple (just off Wilshire Blvd.). Long in financial difficulties over the upkeep of the large building, the Elks sold it recently, including the 61 rank behemoth. Then they rented back the portion of the building which includes the organ for a period of three years. The 4-decker should be safe for that period, at least reports Col. Harry Jenkins . . .

Tired of going to work with "holey" socks, ATOE ex-Pres. Judd Walton anxiously awaited the arrival of LA organfan "Doc" Olson whose calling is that of veterinarian. It seems that Judd has an organ-lovin' Siamese cat by the name of "Norman," a most remarkable beast with an I. Q. that sometimes scares Judd. Norman's one failing is an appetite for socks, know why. Doc was going to drop in at Judd's Vallejo home to examine the ex-Prexy's 2-8 Wurli and Judd figured on a little professional advice concerning his cat's strange taste. When Doc arrived he took Norman aside and the two had a long private confab, apparently conducted in Siamese. Norman emerged from the examination room with a Cheshire grin on his feline pan and even Doc Olson was smiling. The Verdict: "Norman says he's just hungry." . . . Hope for "by ear" players; Randy Sauls has finally done what most teachers have avoided for so long. He's written a book entitled "How to Read Keyboard Music" and it's from scratch. Up to now he's concerned himself more with musical embellishment, teaching players who know three chords how to get that modern sound by adding what he calls "demented 13ths" . . .

Organist Virg Howard saved the day for the Detroit Theatre Organ Club when the planned Buddy Nolan October concert fell through. Virg, who was instrumental in the restoration of the Toledo Paramount 4-21 Wurlitzer back in '61, came through with a fine concert for the Detroiters on October 16th. . . . While organist Clyde Derby was whooping it up along with 1200 other attendees at the annual Home (plug-in) Organ Fes-

(Continued Next Page)

tival held late in September at Hoberg's resort (100 miles North of Frisco), guess who was sitting in for him back at the Carl Green Inn in Sacramento (his regular job); none other than that oriental ace of the ivories, Korla Pandit, turban, jewel and all his "mysterious East" accoutrements. Our man in the state capitol describes the audible results as "terrific." . . . Allen Hughes, New York Times staffer, gave Billy Nalle's AGO-sponsored Atlanta Fox bash a friendly boost in his Sunday article following the concert, especially Billy's contrapuntal imitation of Bach's trio-sonata style during "All the Things You Are."

. . . Lee Haggart's letter (LETTERS, October 1966) about the little known Hope-Jones inventor, James H. Nuttall, has resulted in numerous requests for more information about this remarkable innovator. Jim Nuttall was one of the nucleus of British craftsmen which Wurlitzer inherited when it bought out the financially flat Hope-Jones Elmira company. As chief voicer at Elmira he was assured a good position with the No. Tonawanda giant which was in the process of switching from merry-go-round hurdy-gurdies to theatre organs. But seeing Robert Hope-Jones isolated from the operation, and kept away from the organ building he loved, so angered Nuttall that he quit after a few months—and thereby hangs a tale. It has often been asked why the Gottfried theatre pipe scales so closely resemble the original Hope-Jones (and later, Wurlitzer) scales. The answer is most likely found in the fact that Nuttall went to work for Gottfried after leaving Wurlitzer. It would have been no trick for him to lay out the scales he had developed at Elmira (which went to North Tonawanda) for Gottfried. . . From Newark, N.Y., Jeff Barker, recently returned from a West Coast visit, writes that Peter Schable, in



ATOE ex-Pres. Tiny James and visitor Jeff Barker at the Home Organ Festival. Tiny later took Jeff on the "Grand Pipe Tour" of the Bay Area.

Photo, K. Lynch

Rosedale, N.Y., expects to have the pipe-work from the Valencia theatre installed in his home setup by Christmas. Jeff cut quite a swath in California with some smooth and swinging organ stylings whenever he managed to land on an organ bench, which was frequently. Arriving not long ago from England ("born of frugal parents"), Jeff was somewhat horrified to see gamblers literally shovelling money away during his Las Vegas visit. Jeff quit the "one armed bandits" after losing three bucks. . . Another Britisher, Don Knights, stopped in to say "hello" to the organ fans and artists he found assembled en masse at the annual Home Organ Festival in California. Finding no organists, fans or pipe owners in or near San Francisco during his September visit, Don traced them all to Hoberg's resort where the transistors were sizzling in late September. His visit was brief, only two hours, then he was gone. Interesting chap; hope he comes our way again. . .

. . . The Rochester Theatre Organ has adopted a novel way of raising cash for its RKO Palace 4-21 Wurlitzer reinstallation project. In addition to the revenue from sales of the Don Scott record played on the instrument (which includes a 24 page booklet about the gone Palace), RTOS is issuing "stock certificates" at \$1.00 a share. Dividends are in the form of satisfaction in helping with the club's project of preserving the venerable giant. Prospective stockholders may apply for stock certificates by writing to RTOS, Box 53, Fishers, N.Y.—and don't forget the investment. . . George Wright informs us that the Pasadena Crown 3-11 Wurl "is being further revamped and repaired, with no completion date set." We suspect that it'll be done come February because George will be hankering for another concert there about that time. . . In Los Angeles, LA Chapterite John Levy was exuberant; at last he had a real pipe organ after several he's bid on "escaped." It's a 2-6 Robert Morton with a Wurlitzer Tibia replacing the original. It once graced the Gateway theatre in Glendale but had been moldering in a church in recent years. Friends helped John stash the treasure in his garage while he went looking for just the right house. . . Organist Dick Ellsasser has some "extra income" to list on his 1060 form for this year. He landed two cash awards, one from ASCAP for his compositions, another from the Hays Foundation. These should keep him in pocket money while he plays seven December concerts here (Santa Barbara, Tulsa & Houston) then he goes overseas to play four concerts for Hamburgers and Amsterdammers in January. . .

. . . George Wright's 3-30 Special has been undergoing many gradual changes.

The studio has been air-conditioned and George has taken his Main chamber Strings off the Main tremulant because they were being shaken too violently by a trem adjusted for other flue stops, mainly Flutes. Now his Main Strings sport their very own reservoir and trem. And, although he liked the flute Celeste it turned out to be too soft for general use. It has been changed to a Horn Diapason Celeste which, in combinations, sounds something like a Viola Pomposa and Celeste as heard on classical organs. . . David Bowers writes from Kettering, Ohio, that he is the proud owner of the style 260 Wurli from the Howard theatre, Atlanta, Ga., and has it in knocked down condition pending the construction of an addition to his home. Since he doesn't play he plans to activate it by means of several roll players and a goodly supply of rolls. He's the guy who's contemplating a history of the theatre organ to be published by Vestal Press. . . The knock on Chris Feiereisen's door was brisk and when he opened it he knew why. There stood Dan Barton who had driven all the way from Oshkosh, where he lives, to visit Chris at Manitowoc, Wisconsin, and had brought his wife and sister-in-law along for the one-day 100 mile round trip. Nothing could have pleased Chris more; he has long venerated the 82-year old organ innovator. "I was most honored by the unexpected visit" was all he could muster for the moment. . . The term "midnight organ supply," commonly used in the hobby to describe organ parts snatchers who raid chambers in the dead of night, is credited to Howard Lane, of the Trio Roller Rink, Milan, Illinois. . . Speaking of the organ hobby, "it's lots of fun and at the same time it's not illegal, immoral or fattening" writes a mid-western correspondent. Yet the light-fingered "midnight supply" practitioners can reduce that boast by two-thirds, so all that's left is the "no fat" angle.

Remember radio's "Gospel Singer" who brightened the morning hours in the early '40s? By then the Hammond was well established and had crowded out most music which would have been played normally on pipe organs. Yet, the "Gospel Singer" always sang his ballads and hymns to the accompaniment of pipes, a small Skinner located in the NBC studios in New York. The organist was Rosa Rio. The program, organ and vocalist are long gone and like all organ enthusiasts we can't help wonder about the fate of the Skinner.

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