



## GEORGE PLAYS WELL-WRAPPED "SECRET" CONCERT AT THE "RIALTO"

**BOMBARDE** reporter at large . . .

Pasadena, Calif.—October 25—Organist George Wright returned to his tried and true formula of lots of music, a little chatter and no sidemen tonight for a first rate concert played before an audience of 700. With organs going in two Pasadena theaters George can alternate and for this concert he chose the greater intimacy of the smaller (1200 seat) Rialto with its 2 manual 10 rank Wurlitzer. As usual there was a crowd under the marquee from 7 p.m. and the parking problem doesn't improve. As always there was a sprinkling of fans who had come from afar—Fresno, San Francisco, Sacramento, San Diego, even Los Angeles—to hear George. It was generally conceded that the news of this concert was a well-kept secret; it was definitely deficient in promotion.

The maestro appeared promptly at the advertised hour (8:30), bowed to his applauding audience and went right to work on a showtime style "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans." Once the overture was over George took on the task of proving to his listeners that there is more variety in a 10 rank organ than most would believe possible. The ebony console was decked with a contrasting flower arrangement of light colored blossoms and sprays. George was dapper in his black tuxedo and he was in an expansive mood, a happy mood.

He started "Heat Wave" with a mysterious intro based on the melody, then took off on a medium tempo, pedal-cymballed thermometer buster, inserting some unexpected harmonic changes and a couple of "bumps" just to make sure all present were paying attention. The titters indicated there were no dozers—couldn't afford to be at three simoleons per head.

A beautiful slow ballad, Dave Rose's "One Love," played with many, many registration changes contrasted with the rattling "Tijuana Taxi" and its sick Klaxon honks followed by the siren of a Mexican paddy wagon.

Next an autumn medley with a Hollywood "Indian" intro for "Indian Summer," "Autumn Leaves" (with the familiar Roger Williams descending chromatic "wind" effect), a tune George applied to himself, "The Last Rose of Summer," and a soft shoe "Shine On Harvest Moon," "Call Me" was presented at a good clip with solid syncopation, lots of intriguing

PLUMBING PIPES GIVE OUT—BUT NOT THE WURLI'S



**INTERMISSION TIME**—George partakes of one of the house's "Organ Zombies" (coke on the rocks), as admirers look on while keeping their distance.

counter melodies and a surprise ending; the 'phone' (doorbell) rang and there was a brief 'conversation' between a very feminine Vox (left chamber) and husky string and twelfth (right side) with some 'words' quite recognizable. The listeners ate it up. In contrast George next offered Grieg's "Song of Solveig" and "Wedding Day at Troldhaugen," the former sweet and mournful while the latter built in volume and interest like a passing procession.

About this time, George decided to cheat a little and took to reading notation for his playing of Robert Elmore's melancholy "Pavanne," a sort of classical, minor "Laura."

After a bouncing "Organ Grinders Swing." ("One of my newer tunes from 30 years ago!"), George tackled "Midnight Sun," which was equipped with an intro and coda like nothing heard on this instrument previously. Deep, brooding, intra-terrestrial — a mass of untrem'd strings ripple to the vibrations of a downward Clarinet passage as it wends its way across a harmonic desert pursued by a faraway, sweet-voiced 4'Tibia with an irresistible proposition to offer. George later told Gordon Kibbee that he'd lifted the passage from a Kibbee arrangement about 1938, knowing that Kibbee had borrowed it from Stravinsky. The tune proper was played in more earthly colors although a green spot played on the console. The Coda returned to the Kibbee-Stravinsky coloration, perhaps picturing a Salva-

dor Dali landscape dotted with independent torsos and soft watches.

After that pre-Halloween excursion into the supernal supernatural, it was time for some comedy relief and it came in the form of a written message "from the desk of Dox Boxwell," the Rialto manager. Reading it broke George up completely and for a moment, while he recovered his composure, he kept his audience in the dark and enjoyed the joke alone in the light of the white spot. Finally he managed to get it out. It read: "KEEP PLAYING—RESTROOMS OUT OF ORDER—PLUMBER WORKING"

After wondering aloud what would be a good "plumber" tune (someone down front suggested "Pipe Dreams"), George decided to play a tune for a gal present, Olive Pepiot, and went into "Fly Me to the Moon."

To close the first half it was a rousing "Hora Staccato" after which the mob adjourned to the restrooms to see how the



**POOPED POSTHORN**—Tired standby organ helper Peter Crotty sits down after concert while George looks on happily. The pipe is from George's own 3-30. He must bring it to replace one missing from the Rialto's Posthorn for each concert.

plumber was making out. It was no gag. Stoppage was rampant in both HIS and HERS.

The intermission was a smoke-drenched 15 minutes of struggling to get near the 15 cent cokes which sold for 35 cents in the lobby, not for the soft drink, but for a hard look at the beauties which al-

*(Continued Next Page)*



**A METHOD IN HIS MADNESS**—George invites Olive Pepiot up to the console for a flirt. Oh yes—Olive is a skilled organ maintenance technician in addition to being a doll.

ways adorn the refreshment stand at the Rialto. One lovely was doing a brisk business selling George's latest platter, the one recorded on this very same instrument. A burst of applause smashed our reverie and it was time to get back into the auditorium to hear George wade into "Dizzy Fingers" which he played at the expected tempo except for the middle part. This got a slow and sensuous treatment.

For his usual tribute to Jesse Crawford he announced, "'How Am I To Know'—a piece Mr. Crawford arranged for a four-manual organ. I'll play what's left on two manuals." As always, George's "Jesse" was performed impeccably, with every bit of the shading and nuance of the late master turned out perfectly, despite the two missing manuals.

"Let's Fall in Love," was provided with an offbeat setting rich in thuds and cymbal punctuation with a somewhat "oriental" bridge to boot. He followed with a highly charged "Shadow of Your Smile," which

also got some delicate treatment on celestated Strings. Then, from the vulnerable Richard Rodgers score for the TV show "Victory at Sea," he offered the "Beneath the Southern Cross" sequence.

Speaking of his very hip maternal parent, George confided that "Mother said to play something dirty tonight." He complied with a rhythmically filthy "Up the Lazy River," which even had the priest in the first row tapping his foot. It featured what might be described as a "re-gurgitational Vox" passage. Next to last, George revived an almost forgotten Irving Berlin tune which he gave a largely Crawford style setting—"Seal it With a Kiss." The closer was a satisfying medley of "Showboat" tunes which followed his closing speech. It was a long medley but it seemed to be over in no time.

George took his bows to a most enthusiastic demonstration of appreciation performed in the usual manner then disappeared through the pit door.

Then, a most unusual occurrence took place. George reappeared and played an encore—"Goodnight Sweetheart." After graciously acknowledging his applause he again disappeared through the pit door and chomped on a box of homemade fudge sent via Larry by Claire Vannucci. A few minutes later he reappeared to meet fans who lingered in the theatre and to pose for

photos at the console, several of which appear with this article—a BOMBARDE exclusive. No one could deny that George is mellowing. It was obvious through the entire show that he was having a grand time and that feeling spread easily to his 700 friends "out front."

The plumber was seen leaving just as George stepped toward his Thunderbird with the 1920 Pierce-Arrow flower vase inside. Neither recognized the other, but to those who had seen them in action it was quite obvious that both had had a high satisfying evening with pipes.



**OLD FRIENDS**—Organist Gordon Kibbee stops by during intermission for a chat with pop-guzzling George.



## meet the Celebrity— new **Thomas** all-transistor organ with the fabulous Band Box at no extra cost

Like its looks? You'll also like the magnificent sound of this new Thomas all-transistor organ with the Band Box that adds 10 percussion instruments including cymbals, bongoes, castanets, claves and drums. Meet the "Celebrity" at your local Thomas organ dealer's—soon.

"Celebrity" offers you:

- Two 61-note keyboards
- 8 thumb pistons
- Band Box
- 30 voices
- keyboard sustain
- pedal sustain
- 25-note detachable pedalboard
- 2-speed Leslie speaker
- Color-Tone percussion
- Vibra Magic
- all-transistor 150-watt peak power stereo amplifier

Every Thomas Organ comes with a 5-year warranty on tone generator boards—heart of the Thomas.

Thomas Organ Co., Dept. 113, 8345 Hayvenhurst Ave., Sepulveda, California. Subsidiary of Warwick Electronics, Inc.