



BILLY NALLE—The determined face of a young man in a hurry.

QUOTE: Billy Nalle has been engaged to play the fall concert in September of 1968 at the Roberson Center for the Arts and Sciences, Binghamton, New York. This complex of buildings has been designed by the renowned architect Richard Neutra. In the completed auditorium is being installed the first theatre pipe organ to be placed in a cultural center in this country. In the late spring of next year this organ will be opened by former Binghamton native Searle Wright of Columbia University. The Link theatre organ, totally rebuilt and revoiced, is a gift to this cultural center from the original builder, Edward Link. Mr. Link also gained fame as inventor and builder of the Link pilot trainer during World War II.

Following his Roberson Center concert, Billy Nalle will make the first recording of this organ. In the near future he also is to record the program he played last year for the National Convention of the American Guild of Organists. Both albums will be released on the Concert Recording label. **UNQUOTE.**

The above lines are from a release mailed out by Billy Nalle's "flack" and they tell an encouraging story for theatre organ enthusiasts everywhere: their favorite instrument has finally broken the "culture barrier." But there's lots it doesn't tell—especially about the amaz-

ORGANIST

Billy!

NALLE

Energy Personified!

ing activities of one Billy Nalle. It comes as no surprise that Billy has been engaged to play a concert at the new center; he's a very logical choice. But that's a year off. What will the "renegade Floridian" be doing meanwhile?—after he finishes those two recordings, that is? To find out we put "our man in the East" on the case and he turned up some amazing items, most of which can be verified.

One caper which can be verified is his engagement by a well known Hartford (Conn.) bank to play on an Allen theatre electronic for shoppers and bank visitors for several days before Christmas, and this will include some broadcasts. But that's old hat; he does it every year.

Billy doesn't overblow his own horn but will admit to a caper when cornered with a reasonable facsimile of the truth.

For one thing, Billy is going to visit Florida. Remember the 3-16 Wurlitzer which had been installed in the Ritz theatre at Clearwater for awhile and has since been sold? It's to be installed in an auditorium now being built, and when it's in and perking, Billy Nalle will play a concert on it. "Our man" tracked down the story in Florida and in New York, Billy looked wise and replied, "Could be."

But he'll be back in Florida long before next fall. He gets homesick for the sand in his shoes, the drooping palms, the sand flies and the skittering lizards from time to time, so he finds some excuse to return to the home town, Fort Myers. What better excuse than a concert in the home town? Oops, no pipes—yet! Okay, he tells his manager, rig it for an electronic—a good one. So, there's an early 1968 plug-in concert being lined up for Billy where he first played as a youngster.

While he's there, Billy will make a discovery: someone in his home town is installing a 3-10 Wurlitzer in a special studio; a bank official named Draughon. To own a theatre organ has been Draughon's dream for many years. Now it's nearing fruition. And what better choice to play the opening concert than the home town boy who made such a ripply splash "up Nawth?"

Then there's those ConnValChaps. They've completed the restoration of the New Haven Paramount 2-10 Wurlitzer and they're looking around for artists of the caliber of those who played it in the old days—Eddie Ford (who opened it) and later, Eddie Weaver. Now they've focused on Billy Nalle. He's willing.

Most readers know by this time that Billy is involved in TV and recording high on the cliffs of Manhattan. These, plus frequent concerts, should keep him out of mischief. But—no! He's become a contributor to the AGO's new publishing effort, called *Music*. And his first assignment was an article about the comeback of the theatre organ. So, Billy Nalle has become the champion of the theatre organ in what used to be (but is no more) the "enemy's camp"—the American Guild of Organists, whose mission is to champion the "straight" organ. The appearance of Billy's article about the renaissance of the theatre organ in the AGO's November issue should be proof enough of the AGO's change of heart.

We can't help wondering what would happen if Billy should find it necessary to give up all this activity—even temporarily, something like a case of measles or a broken gamba, for example. Well, something just about as compelling took him over as we went to press: Billy got called for jury duty in New York. Everything stops for justice!

Asked what he did to pass the long periods of inactivity in the jury "ready room" (or even during those lulls in the weighing of justice), Billy had a ready answer. "Mostly, I work out arrangements in my head—just make mental musical notes between the 'guilties' and 'not guilties'—and write 'em down later. These are for concerts and recordings I have coming up—the Senate Theatre concert in Detroit next February 3rd, for example.

"What did you say your name was? . . . Fubb? . . . Fubb?"

"Our man" left it at that, because it became quite obvious that the story could have no end. Billy's energy just knows no limits. All that can be done is to add new episodes as they occur.

—Elmer Fubb, New York