

## Restoration 'Payoff': Purvis! Wright!

### RICHARD PURVIS PLAYS REDEDICATION CONCERT ON ELKS' MORTON RESTORED BY CHAPTER MEMBERS

LOS ANGELES.—There were two reasons for rejoicing on December 5, for ATOErs: completion of the restoration project started during the summer of 1967 on the either 58 or 61-rank Robert Morton concert organ in the Los Angeles Elks Temple, and choice of the right artist to play the rededication concert—Richard Purvis.

The evening concert was introduced by Chapter Chairman Bob Carson who provided some background on the organ and the time invested in restoring it—1,500 man-hours!

Mr. Purvis is a very "hip" classical organist who doesn't demean the theatre organ or its music. He brings a light touch to the classics and manages to inject good humor into his introductions. For example, one of his Bach selections was entitled, "I Stand on the Threshold of Immortality," which in German, he stated, comes out, "I'm at Death's Door." It turned out to be rather jolly Bach for such a somber occasion. Another selection was from Henry Purcell's "Westminster Abbey Royalty Suite"—"The Trumpet Tune," for which Mr. Purvis managed to produce a sharp "trumpet" voice from the great selection available—music fit for a king. Next, several centuries were spanned for a tune by the very modern-sounding Karg Elert, his rarely heard "Claire de Lune," an approach quite different from the familiar Debussy brand of moonlight but no less intriguing. There is a mystic quality in all of Karg Elert's music and his moody description of moonlight was done in delicate pastels.

"Caprice on the Notes of the Cuckoo" called for some skillful weaving of musical structure or "body" around the oft-repeated cuckoo call, which varied between a minor and major third, a bit of whimsy written by the organist. Then came "Greensleeves" in an Elmore setting of quiet grandeur which made use of many of the theatrical voices of the Morton.

As is usual of a Purvis concert, the post-intermission period consisted of the organist's compositions. First was his slightly irreverent tone-picture of a pompous but portly bishop, puffing while marching in a church procession, aptly named "March Grotesque." One of his tunes which gets through to the T.O. crowd is "Night in Monterey," an atmospheric and ethereal wisp of music, this time dedicated to Ruth Carson. Other

Purvis compositions heard were "Idyll," "Les Petites Cloches" ("Li'l Bells") and "Toccata Festiva." An appreciative audience wanted more.



RICHARD PURVIS put on an impressive concert for the Angelenos at Elks Temple Morton rededication concert.

Purvis' encore included a confession; he admitted that he had once played the theatre organ on the radio under the name "Don Irvine." He then proceeded to play Mr. Irvine's radio signature, an up-tempo "I'll Take An Option On You," which gave the until then suppressed Kinura a chance to cackle atop a theatrical combination. This one taste of theatrical fare left no doubt that Dick Purvis can cut the T.O. mustard with ease.

The maintenance crew stood by with "cipher eradicators" at ready during the entire evening but only one cipher started up (in the Echo chamber) and that took care of itself in a few seconds, without any assistance from the crew. In general, it can be said of the instrument that it leans more to the concert tonalities than theatrical sounds, despite the presence of percussions and a full "toy counter." And unification is sparse. Yet, it's a welcome addition to the realm of playable organs in the California southland.

If the ability to attract other organists to his concerts is indicative of an organist's appeal, Purvis sure rates with his colleagues; Ann Leaf, Gordon Kibbee, Gaylord Carter and Dick Schrum were in his audience. Mr. Schrum, ATOE National's hard-working prexy, flew in from Seattle to attend the rededication concert.

—Peg Nielsen

### L. A. CHAPTER SPOTLIGHTS . . . .



### . . . . AT ELECTION MEETING CONCERT

Los Angeles, Dec. 10.—Retiring L.A. Chapter Chairman Bob Carson today turned the reins of office over to former Vice Chairman Dick Simonton (succession is automatic) with an expression of satisfaction on the chapter's response to the projects undertaken in 1967.

It happened at the annual election meeting of the L.A. chapter held at the Elks Lodge, where a chapter work crew has refurbished the long-neglected 4-61 (counting mixture ranks separately) Robert Morton concert organ.

Prior to the business meeting, organist Helen Dell played a short but well-received concert on the big Morton. When a couple of the maintenance crew men started resetting combination pistons in full view of the audience during the business meeting, anticipation started to rise. Not many organists rate that special treatment.

Carson reviewed the year's accomplishments briefly then called on Dr. Phil Olson to greet and swear-in the new officers after they had been elected. The

oath included a promise to "neglect your business" in behalf of the organ hobby. All agreed readily. In addition to Chairman Simonton, Ray Bonner was switched from treasurer to vice chairman, Ruth Skovmand accepted a second term as secretary, while the treasurer and program director slots went to Keith Woodard and Neil Kissel, respectively. Dick Simonton took over the podium and told of plans for the future. There was a brief exposition of plans for the 1968 ATOE convention which will be held in L.A. He closed with a fine compliment to retiring Chairman Carson.

It was an electric moment when the name of the featured artist was revealed by Bob Carson—none other than George Wright! George came on like "Gang Busters" to a roar of applause which reflected the surprise and delight of the members. George went straight to the console and announced a tune that's making a comeback—"The Glory of Love." (". . . Comeback tunes are wel-

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San Francisco's Wurlitzer-equipped Avenue theatre closed down in October 1967 and for awhile things looked bad. Business had fallen off but the overhead went on, regardless. Things seemed to hit bottom when removal of the Wurlitzer was started. Then, after the Ed Stout-Vern Gregory partnership had been dissolved, some backing appeared on the horizon and the organ was put back in shape. As soon as a workable format has been evolved, the house will be opened under the direction of Vern Gregory who has a considerable investment in it. Gregory hopes to open early in the year. So far, he has no organist in mind to follow the patterns of excellence set by Tom Hazleton and Lyn Larsen in the past.

Niagara Frontier Chapter's always interesting SILENT NEWREEL is once again putting on some flesh after being slowed down temporarily by a somewhat sudden personnel change. Now being edited by member Beverly Ann Reilly, it has taken on a homey, informal tone — warm and friendly. And it tells of thrilling things in store for the Frontiersmen — wonderful Syracuse organist Luella Wickham on February 25th and the inimitable Don Baker on March 27th, both to play on the 3-11 Wurlitzer at the Riviera Theatre in North Tonawanda. Reviewed were fine concerts by Carlo Annibale (Dec. 17th last) and by veteran consoleman Art Melgier (Jan. 28th), both played at the Riviera. The edition reflects the fine concerts and stimulating meetings enjoyed by the Frontiersmen effectively. Good job, Editor!

*Our man in the East, Lloyd Klos, caught a Western item for VOX POPS. He reports that longtime ATOEer Gene Gaynor of San Francisco has returned to the USA after a long sojourn in the Marshall Islands. While in Manila, Gene discovered a playable 4-19 theatre organ, Standaard (made in Holland) in the Savoy Theatre, said to be the only one of that brand installed in the Far East. As might be expected, it is in need of attention, but Gene said he had fun coaxing sounds from it.*

The Detroit Theatre Organ Club maintains the high standards it started with. Diane Schall's reviews in the DTOC News of the December concerts by John Muri and Don Baker reflect the degree of excellence vividly, and the lineup of things to come was encouraging — Allen Mills, Mark Koldys, Billy Nalle and Dick Liebert.

*George Wright has informed the BOMBARDE that he will present a concert on Monday, March 4th, 8:30 pm, at the console of the 2-10 Wurlitzer in the Rialto Theatre, South Pasadena, and he hopes readers who will be in Southern California at the time will "come over." Tickets are \$3.00 (\$3.50 for the "bald head row"), and may be purchased by mail after February 18th from the Rialto Theatre, 1023 Fair Oaks, South Pasadena, or at the box office. Tickets will also be available at the all-day Academy Theatre, 1003 East Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, and other Fox West Coast theatres. Rialto manager Boxwell states that "This will be the best George Wright concert ever!"*

The DTOCers pulled a heart-warming stunt for organist Don Miller over the holidays, according to the DTOC News (now produced by Ben Levy and C. A. Case). They assembled a tape loaded with vocal greetings and tunes played by clubbers on anything from a Gulbransen plug-in to the mighty Fox 4-36, plus a slew of home installations. The Miller reaction: "It's a knockout — and I love it!"

And "Flickerfingers," too long absent from the Southwest scene, will play Lytton Center of the Visual Arts twice in February — on the 19th and 26th. The silent film will be William S. Hart's last movie, "Tumbleweeds," an excellent print dug up by Jim Day. Because the Center, which is located at 8150 Sunset Blvd., in Hollywood, has no pipe organ, a souped-up Rodgers will be installed for the occasion for Gaylord Carter to play. The program will include what is claimed to be the first "Bouncing Ball" silent song cartoon in the "Out of the Inkwell" series, released originally in 1924, which raises a question. In "The Life and Times of Gaylord Carter," which appeared in our October, 1968 issue, Mr. Carter stated (on page 38, column 3): "The bouncing ball was actually a movie technique, and came with pre-recorded organs. The bouncing ball didn't come along until sound..." Gaylord — elucidate!

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## LA SPOTLIGHTS WRIGHT

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come, because then I don't have to learn so many new ones!") All of the first-rate artistry one expects from this master was there, even on an unfamiliar organ.

One could hear a pin drop during the soft passages of George's classical selection, Bach's "In Dulce Jubilo" in the Marcel Dupré setting, followed by a Wright improvisation on the theme. While the semi-concert instrument can't be claimed ideal for the Wright style of playing, George was able to get a reasonably close approximation of the required combinations for his medley of "Mame" and the new swooner, "If He Walked Into My Life."

At the conclusion of the medley George spotted a friend down front and exclaimed (as he has at past concerts), "If it isn't that dirty old Stu Green!"



GEORGE INDULGES in a little "audience participation" with a "dirty, old" friend.

He grabbed the rotund one by the scruff of the neck and suspended him before the PA microphone while demanding that the victim speak. The poor unfortunate uttered some incomprehensible mumblings while the crowd chuckled. Then George released him and he scuttled back under the grand piano.

Last was a group of Christmas carols which included a sexy "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" and a corned-up "Jingle Bells," during which George displayed his sharp musical humor with calliope effects and a splatter of sleighbells. That the dignified concert Morton was equipped with such a theatrical trapping came as a surprise to many. George received a thunderous hand which even reversed his usual practice of "no encores." He returned to the console and

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