

Air is supplied by a 5-hp. Spencer Or-goblo, housed in a small, patio-type metal building shed in the back yard. The wind is channeled from the blower into the chests through a steel underground pipe. The blower did present a power problem. It required a 440-volt, three-phase supply; only 220-volt, single-phase was available. We got around this bottleneck with a Withey Phase Converter which will permit operation of this blower plus several more wherever 220-volt power is available.

I consider this installation a temporary one. Eventually, the whole instrument will be moved into a roomy A-frame structure, where theatre acoustics can be approximated. Here I will have all the pipes, including the 16-foot Ophicleide, mounted upright. Afterwards, when all ranks are restored and are operative, I plan to add controllable electronic reverberation, electric guitars playable from the console, along with kinura, harmonica, and other appropriate instruments.

The specifications of this particular instrument are as follows:

WURLITZER STYLE E SPECIAL:

RANKS:

Vox humana	61	pipes
Tibia Clausa	73	pipes
Trumpet	61	pipes
Open Diapason	61	pipes
Viol Celeste	73	pipes
Salicional	73	pipes
Stopped Flute	97	pipes
Ophicleide	12	pipes (16')

TRAPS:

Xylophone	37	notes
Glockenspiel	30	notes
Chimes	18	notes

Complete Wurlitzer toy counter.

The Mighty Wurlitzer, like a mighty oak, had a small beginning. While attending grade school in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, I had to wait in one of the hallways for my ride home after the afternoon classes. My only companion during this wait was a decrepit Baldwin piano, whose chipped and yellowed ivories attracted my fingers like a battery of powerful magnets. Soon I was "two fingering" popular songs quite creditably. My mother noted this accomplishment and showed her approval by buying me a brand new Baldwin Acrosonic. A year later we moved to Owosso, Michigan and the most interesting neighbor we had as far as I was concerned was a young man who was assembling a small pipe organ in his basement. This project fascinated me, and he kindly allowed me to help him put the various assemblies together. When one day, he allowed me to play it, I knew that, some day I would have to have a genuine pipe organ of my own.

In the meantime, I listened to all the organ recordings I could get hold of. I was especially charged-up on those by E. Power Biggs and Ray Bohr. I played each of these over and over, and each

playing honed one shade sharper my determination to search out and secure a genuine theatre pipe organ. My drive to listen to live pipe organ music led me to Flint, Mich., to hear Mr. Arthur Donelson in Flint with the Capitol Theatre's 3/11 Barton organ at a matinee.

This organ, long unused and allowed to deteriorate, had been restored to mint condition by Mr. Donelson and his vivacious and gracious wife, Ruth. I talked to Mr. Donelson after the matinee and he used his good offices in persuading the theatre manager, Mr. Earl Berry, to let me try out the Barton. After discussing the different stops of the instrument, I proceeded to practice on the Mighty Barton. I usually play it every Saturday before the noon matinee.

Now, the manager allows me to use it also for recording. Along with this practical first-hand experience with the organ itself, I did a considerable amount of homework at the Flint Public Library, where I learned the principles underlying the art of organ building, including the techniques of pneumatic control, wind pressure adjustment, voicing, re-leathering, and the proper way to lay out the organ components for best acoustics and space utilization.

At this point I apparently convinced my mentor, Mr. Donelson, of my genuine interest in organ engineering, for now he told me about the dismantled and all but buried Wurlitzer at the Jackson State Prison. And that is how it has come about that—in our overwhelmed basement—old drums are saucily snapping and rambunctiously rolling, bellows are inflating, and reservoirs are jumping, marimbas are chattering, glockenspiels are clicking, and a xylophone is singing while a bank of tremolos are making wavy the whole din.

But it must not be too terribly discordant and lusty. On their 23rd wedding anniversary last Valentine's Day, I was genuinely surprised when Dad asked me if I would play some old-time favorites with all the skill and effect I was capable of. The last thing I played, just before the party broke up, was one I had been practicing on because it sounded so beautiful on the tibias. It was "Because." When I had finished it I looked up at Dad. I guess he did not know I had finished. His eyes had a faraway look about them—real far away, like 23 years. He finally came back and he grinned at me and said, "Now Tommy, that was very fine music, very fine." And he turned and went up the basement steps. Mom followed him, but halfway up she stopped and turned around and looked down at me. She smiled and she said, "Dad is right, Tommy. It is *very fine* music, very fine." And then she followed Dad upstairs.

"QUITTING QUSSING & QUING..."

by Lloyd G. del Castillo

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article appeared in the April 1927 issue of "Jacobs' Magazine," and was submitted by Lloyd E. Klos. Mr. del Castillo, who was well known at that time, was amply qualified to discuss any phase of the movie organ and the playing thereof. Mr. del Castillo has earned the distinction of authority by his training, experience and unquestioned success as organist in the leading motion picture theaters in this country, among them the Rialto in New York, Shea's Buffalo which he opened, and, until the opening of his organ school, the magnificent Metropolitan in Boston.

This is probably the last article which I shall write on photoplay music while still actively engaged therein, so I feel constrained to make an event of it. If my present plans prove successful, the spotlight will know me no more, save on future special occasions now only to be conjectured. Or, as my swan song at the Metropolitan Theatre (Boston) proclaimed to the tune of "Silver Threads Among the Gold":

*Now that I am growing old and gray,
I am going to quit this strife;
Just teach other birds to play like this,
While I lead the simple life.
When I come into this place again,
I'll be down there, folks, with you;
Oiling up my rusty vocal chords,
Trying to sing the way you do.*

I must admit that in giving up the theater for the studio, I have no illusions and no false regrets. When I consider some of the terrible poetry I have written, of which the above is an average sample, I am moved to wonder how I have survived to retire to the noble profession of pedagogy. It is true that I have always enjoyed the job of translating pictures into music; enjoyed it, I confess, a good deal more than the soloizing which went with it.

A theater audience is a monstrous tyrant. There it sits, implacable and ominous, waiting to devour you with silence if you have guessed wrong and failed to please it. You have got to tickle its fickle fancy every week, and the longer you feed it, the less you know what its appetites are. When you throw it a tid-bit it likes, it rewards you vociferously, but never because it remembers that you have pleased it in the past. It takes nothing on faith. In the parlance of the profession, you've got to "ring the bell" every week.



LLOYD G. DEL CASTILLO, one of Boston's most famous theatre organists, featured at the Metropolitan Theatre, artist over WEEI, and founder of the theatre organ school which bore his name, in a December, 1942, picture.

—PHOTO: Boston Herald-Traveler Coll.

As I say, the greatest pleasure in the work to me is the actual fitting of pictures. There is a job which stimulates all the musical ability you have. It calls on your technique, your imagination, your versatility, your creative skill. It demands alertness, enthusiasm, judgment, and cultural background. It develops your musical repertoire in every direction and stimulates your musical growth. That is, if you go at it right. If you are content to play the routine called for on the cue sheet, and let it go at that, we are not talking about the same thing at all. But, more of that later.

I suppose many feature organists bask and thrive on the sunshine of the calcium and the wind of applause. I have never been of them. Still, I grant that in its way there is just as much stimulus to the task of creating and performing solos which please audiences as in the less spectacular work of picture-cuing. It is a matter of temperament, and no doubt, it is generally true that the soloist who likes his audiences and likes to play to them, will establish sympathetic contact with them more easily than one who considers it a bore.

It is seldom true that organists are equally good at solos and picture-playing. I presume the reason is that the essential quality of the soloist is showmanship, in distinction to the picture player, whose essential is musicianship. I can think of but two men whom I have heard in whom a fusion of these two elements is noticeable: Henry B. Murtagh and John Hammond. The ideal solution, on the other hand, is represented at the Paramount Theater in New York, where Jesse Crawford plays the solos and Sigmund Krungold the pictures, each supremely competent in his own field.

After all is said and done, it is the pocketbook which rules our destinies. Pianists are looking with avid eyes at theater organists, and are turning their attention that way simply because the work is so confoundedly profitable. They all naturally see themselves as potential Crawfords with incomes of ten to forty thousand a year. Or, no doubt it is sufficient inducement to realize that if they can climb halfway up the ladder, they are sure of from four to ten thousand. And who am I to scoff? My native honesty compels the admission that, inclinations or no inclinations, I am now able to give up active playing, simply because I find myself able to capitalize on that active playing in another way. As much as I have longed for evenings and weekends by the home fireside, I doubt if I would take them at the expense of some modest occupation which carried with it the sacrifice of the major part of my income.

Just as long as theater organists are highly paid, the attendant inconveniences of the work will be no barrier to a rush of applicants. And if this popularity will make the process of selection sufficiently operative to mean that the elect are better qualified and better trained instead of the haphazard and poorly equipped job-holders of the past, the result will be worthwhile. To me, anyway!

I mentioned above the matter of using cue sheets as is. I have spoken of this subject before, and if I eventually wear it threadbare, it will be because it continues to be a sore spot, if you will forgive the mixed simile. Let me emphasize again that cue sheets are prepared for the convenience of orchestra leaders, and do not pretend to utilize the resources of the lone player. A rotation of numbers is provided which are easily assembled, and the cues for which are easily spotted by the leader who is obliged to play and direct simultaneously.

Three Cuing Elements

If the organist employs the same tactics, he is working at one-third efficiency. I specify one-third, because I conceive of good organ cuing as a combination of three elements. First, a routine of musical numbers of appropriate mood. Second, the inclusion and interpolation of direct and suggested imitations and effects. And, third, the inclusion of descriptive improvisation, both to action where necessary, and to link two dramatic or atmospheric numbers together with appropriate improvisations rather than blatant and meaningless modulation. Let us consider these three elements, one by one in more detail.

The first element, the rotation of musical numbers, is obviously the one contributed by the cue sheet. But do not mistake me as inferring that the suggestions of the cue sheets should be accepted religiously. No matter how able the feller who prepares them, he falls into a rut through sheer overwork. He plays favorites, and at times he appears to select his numbers almost at random. Personally, I think the ideal way to cue a picture is to do it absolutely independently of the published cue sheet, and then look it over to see if it improves on your own in any particular. I don't say I do it that way; I simply say that's the best way. I suppose there are two kinds of lazy organists: those who cue entirely from the cue sheet, and those who, like me, cue entirely on their own and are then too lazy to check up by the published sheet.

There is one tendency which seems to be always cropping out in cue sheets which I believe should be guarded against. It appears most prominently in comedy pictures, and consists of a multitude of popular and semi-popular numbers inserted because of the appropriateness of their titles. On the cue sheet, they read excellently, but to the audience, in nine cases out of ten, they mean nothing. I defy the average listener to be able to name instantly the title of even a majority of last year's popular songs, particularly as played to him while his attention is more or less focused on something else. I daresay there are not more than four popular songs a year, of the "Bananas" or "Collegiate" class, which dig in so deeply that they immediately suggest their titles when played a year after their popularity.

And yet, you need only pick up any cue sheet of a comedy picture like "The Potters," for instance, to see cues of this nature in profusion. They are not justified. I consider it far better to substitute light intermezzos or musical comedy selections cut to fit, and eliminate at least half of these semi-direct cues which to the audience simply give the impression of a succession of anonymous and monotonous fox-trots.

Then, there is the matter of themes. In the cue sheets, these are cut down to a minimum on the quite logical assumption that the simpler the score, the better the performance. It is quite true that a profusion of themes is anathema to an orchestra, whereas for the organist, all which is needed is a tolerable memory.

(To Be Continued Next Issue)