

wherein is the ex-NY Center Theatre 4-34 Wurlitzer. Looks like the beginnings of a potential area for an ATOE convention.

A new book which will be of interest to those interested in the history of radio broadcasting is *Radio's Golden Age*, by Frank Buxton and Bill Owen. This excellent book contains references to all programs which were beamed nationwide, from the "A&P Gypsies" to the "Ziegfeld Follies of the Air." The entire casts, directors, producers, musical directors, writers, in fact, all personnel connected with the shows are listed. The organists for about 35 shows are listed, among them Rosa Rio (12 times), Dick Leibert, John Gart, Lew White, Ann Leaf, Paul Carson, Charles Paul and Skitch Henderson. Over 100 pictures are in a special section. Good nostalgia of a memorable era.



ORGANIST ANN LEAF went home to Omaha, Nebraska, in October, 1967, for visits with her many friends there and with her sister, Esther, also an organist. Naturally, word got around, and soon a group of buffs had enticed her to the Orpheum Theatre for an informal session at the 3-13 Wurlitzer restored by George Rice and his associates (see the April 1967 issue for "The Pipes Are Playing Again in Omaha").

Ann played an after-midnight session for more than 80 enchanted fans, then did a repeat Sunday a.m. performance at the 2,850-seat house for those who missed the first concert. Ann was well pleased with the instrument, and the Omaha fans were most happy with Ann's concerts. It was all part of a vacation trip Ann made with hubby Russ Butler.

More happy fans will hear Ann Leaf in concert at the 1968 ATOE National Convention in Los Angeles on July 14 at the Wiltern's 4-37 Kimball organ.

THE RENAISSANCE OF THE THEATRE ORGAN

by Billy Nalle

(The following article by organist Billy Nalle is reprinted in its entirety from the November 1967 issue of MUSIC/THE A.G.O. MAGAZINE by permission of the publisher.—Ed.)

The Theatre Organ is in renaissance and not only so in theatres. Several hundred homes, auditoria, schools and colleges have installed theatre pipe organs during the past fifteen years. Two new situations represent the increasing activity. This fall a theatre pipe organ will be opened in the Empire State Theatre and the Musical Instruments Museum, Syracuse, N. Y. In the fall of 1968 the first theatre pipe organ to be installed in a United States cultural center will be inaugurated. This will take place in the Roberson Center for the Arts and Sciences, Binghamton, N. Y.

The first golden era of the theatre organ was brought to an end much more by the depression of the 30's than by the advent of sound films in the 20's. Even in the organ world many who should have known better pronounced lavish conversational requiems. The return today of a great instrument in new situations and on new terms brings to mind the words of Mark Twain, "Reports of my death greatly have been exaggerated."

Love Required

Until about 1950 a few theatre and home installations plus a small, hard core of enthusiasts, constituted the whole picture. Then two things happened which were destined to produce the impossible. The recording companies discovered the range, brilliance and excitement of the theatre organ and it was "love required." The instrument provided sounds which could utilize and promote their new high-fidelity recordings. In the rush to titillate record buyers, there was a flow of albums running from the finest to those provoking nausea. Not long before this was the appearance on the scene of a handful of organists who were developing fresh ideas and styling. Among my colleagues whose recordings helped greatly to spark the field are George Wright, Johnny Seng and the late Buddy Cole of this country and Bryan Rodwell of England. Also the church organ field provided an outstanding contributor as

player and teacher in the person of Searle Wright.

The nationally organized American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts has regional chapters coast to coast and there are excellent independent groups such as the Rochester, N. Y., Theatre Organ Society and the Detroit Theatre Organ Club. In England there are two major groups, the Theatre Organ Club and the Cinema Organ Society. Even Australia now has the large and musically industrious Theatre Organ Society. These organizations have contagious enthusiasm for everything from buying organ parts to sponsoring public concerts.

What About the Future?

The theatre organ world now is at the crossroads. Of course there always should be available the best of the older music and the older styles of playing it. This must be true for any instrument; there is no argument there. However, what about the future? Those who are experimenting with new ideas in theatre organ construction, both pipe and electronic, and those who are playing the instruments via present-day musical language as yet are a minority. For all the versatility and tonal color of the theatre organ, if it is to build on its new popularity and make a serious contribution to the future, new players must include temporary musical vocabulary in their listening and playing. After all, we are well into the second half of the Twentieth Century. The language of popular music has grown so much in variety and sophistication in barely 35 years that no excuse remains for permitting other instrumental musicians to have a corner on the market of fresh thinking. A fossilized attitude carefully nurtured by the organist hardly is a fit companion to so marvelous an instrument. It is an anachronism today to burn vigil lights before the Howard swivel seat once used by the justly celebrated Jesse Crawford.

Mature Musicianship

The best organists I know make time
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\$12.50 FOR REGISTRATION? MURDER!—Not really, because never before has the initial registration fee bought so much. Included is bus transportation to all events, and considering the distances between organ installations, that amounts to a bus tour of Southern California thrown in. The fee also includes admission to the ATOE special Universal City film studio tour, the Thomas Organ Factory tour, seminars and workshops, all concerts and crawls, the silent movie presentation—plus a souvenir booklet.



BILLY NALLE is a busy professional organist (shown here at his annual pre-Christmas concert series for the Connecticut Bank and Trust Co., Hartford, on a specially voiced Allen theatre model) who also finds time to promote theatre organ in other ways, viz., the accompanying article.

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for exposing themselves to a comprehensive musical diet and to all the arts, both ancient and modern. The mature musicianship which results shows in the music they make. They have something to say and their contributions put us all in their debt. The demands of the finest popular music in performance are the equal today of those in any other category of music. Successful performance requires the theatre organist to subject himself to the same musical standards as any other musician. Happily for the growing theatre organ field there are players who are growing musically along with it.

The future offers an increasing challenge, a great opportunity and an equally great adventure that no alert theatre organist will ignore. Here's a toast to the *second* golden era.

A BOMBARDE Profile . . .

EDDIE DUNSTEDTER GETS AROUND

Since his return to his Southern California home from his stanza at the Carl Greer Inn (covered elsewhere in this issue), Eddie Dunstedter has been especially active. We caught him just as he returned from a two-night concert engagement at Lou DuMoulin's Granada Organ Loft in Seattle. He reported that the big Wurlitzer (reportedly a 4-34) is impressive but that he had to do a lot of touch-up work to get it in shape for some of his specialties. (Eddie got his technical training as an apprentice at Kilgen in St. Louis.) While in Seattle he got together with ATOE President Dick Schrum for a sampling of the Paramount's Wurlli (Publix) and a whirlwind go at a few of the twenty home installations in the area.

As soon as he and Vee got back to Los Angeles, he was asked to play for the ATOE convention. He accepted, then decided that he'd better find out what the local roster of convention organs would sound like. That was one of the reasons he showed at the Jim Roseveare concert on March 24th; the other reason, he explained, was "because Jim came to hear me at the Greer Inn." It was Eddie's first visit to an LA Chapter concert and he created quite a stir among the concert-goers, and he got a "mighty hand" when Program Chairman Neal Kissel introduced him and the spotlight found him sitting in the second row. After the Roseveare concert he waited until the crowd left and then returned to the auditorium to examine the console of the Kimball 4-37. Although the blower was spinning, Eddie declined to play. "This is Jim Roseveare's day," he explained. Neal and Dick Stoney answered Eddie's questions about the Kimball and Eddie stated that Roseveare had made it sound good.

After some lunch at "Sandy's" (where the concert-goers congregate to discuss the Sunday morning concerts over a plate of flapjacks), Eddie expressed a desire to examine the Elks Temple Morton. Word got around the beanery that "Eddie's gonna check out the Elks organ" and after a few hurried arrangements between Neal Kissel and Virgil Purdue, Virgil motored Eddie to the Temple, which isn't far from Sandy's and the Wiltern.

About a dozen eager Dunstedter fans were there, waiting for Eddie, and they weren't disappointed. Eddie sat down at the huge console and just noodled, but his noodling was gorgeous! During the hour that he invested in checking out the various ranks, he interspersed his noodling with several of his trademark arrangements, including *On the Trail*, *The Pilgrims' Chorus*, a generous portion of the *Tristan and Isolde* love music, and his famous arrangement of that venerable swampjuice ballad, *Chloe* (during which the Bombarde editor nearly went into shock). But there was more to come. Eddie was coaxed into playing the lobby organ, which consists of a two-deck console that controls the Echo division of the big Morton, but pours the music through a separate set of swell shutters into the high-ceilinged lobby and grand staircase. It's a sweet-sounding instrument and Eddie found it effective for light classics, such as transcriptions of the short piano pieces of Debussy. Another hour passed as Eddie enriched his little group of admirers with the musical subtleties which makes "the Dunstedter sound" quite unlike anything else in music. Then it was over and the listeners departed, walking well above ground. Asked what he was going to do next, Eddie replied, "I'm going home and practice on my Thomas."

—Peg Nielsen



GETTING AROUND—Eddie Dunstedter (reading from left to right) examines—but doesn't touch!—the Wiltern Kimball console ("What's on second touch? I've got to have second touch on the accompaniment!"); Eddie next tries out the deep pedal bass on the Elks Temple Morton ("I'll bet Dick Purvis likes this one!"); Eddie captivates Newshen Peg Nielsen with his improvisation on the Elks Temple lobby organ; and (far right) at the Seattle Paramount Wurlitzer during a recent visit to Northwest.