

Dick Ertel at RTOS

by Lloyd E. Klos

After the superb George Wright concert, sponsored by the Rochester Theatre Organ Society on May 11, one might be led to believe that any recitalist following George might come out woe-fully second best. Such was not the case, when on June 8, personable and talented Dick Ertel from Vincennes, Indiana presided over the 4-22 WurliTzer in the Auditorium in the final membership concert of the season.

Immediately preceding the regular program, the audience arose in silent tribute to the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy, whose body at that moment was enroute to Washington for interment. The organist performed the National Anthem with tremors off, giving proof that the instrument is capable of serving as a church instrument with good effect.

Rising from the pit, the artist performed the bouncy "Everything's Coming Up Roses," in which the xylophone was featured throughout. Dick seemed to like the "woodpile" and it was used considerably during the program. He announced his program as he went along. Next was Von Suppe's "Galathea Overture", highlighted by a haunting clarinet solo. Gershwin's "Somebody Loves Me" was a sprightly tune with xylophone again.

A medley of two Irish numbers then included "Minstrel Boy" and "The Irish Washerwoman" in which strings and the pit piano played a prominent part. Both were fast-stepping.

The familiar "And Then We'd Row, Row, Row" was cleverly interwoven with snatches of other songs of a nautical bent—"Sailor's Hornpipe" etc. "That's All," which is the theme of airline-sponsored programs on TV and radio began quietly with tibias prominent, and closed with big, loud chords.

One of the highlights was Dick's rendition of "Holiday For Strings." Going to the xylophone, he showed that this can really be a knuckle-cracker, and he commented that it could easily be named "Holiday For Organ." "Sunset" from the "Grand Canyon Suite" by Grofe, was a slow, quiet piece.

Another highlight was in deference to those who enjoy the "Saturday night" brand of entertainment of Lawrence Welk. Though he confessed to not having a bubble machine, Dick showed how a theatre organ can be made a one-man imitator of an orchestra by rendering the famous "Bubbles in the Wine." He must

have had the original arrangement because it was practically letter perfect. "Ah, wonaful! Wonafulahm!"

Next came a medley from Richard Rodgers' "Victory At Sea." "No Other Love" was the prominent selection, but also included was the sprightly 6/8 "Guadalcanal March." Much of the hardware department was used in this group.

Closing out the first half of the program, Dick Ertel, the "Happy Hoosier," did a medley he called "An Indiana Hoedown," and this included "Little Brown Jug", "Chicken Reel" and "Old Zip Coon."

This reviewer had never heard of Mr. Ertel, so following the lowering of the console, managed to meet him. He was perspiring profusely, as the evening was quite warm, and the auditorium is not equipped with air-conditioning. We learned that he has a B. M. and M. M. from the Chicago Conservatory of Music, was in the Army for three years where he served as arranger for the Fifth Army Band, and also served as organist for WGN-TV and the Mutual Radio Network. After military service, he was accompanist for the Svithoid Chorus, giving several piano and organ concerts in the process. In 1961, he became Chairman of the Music Department of Vincennes University. Recently, with aid of students, he installed a 3-10 WurliTzer in the school's auditorium, the institution becoming the only Junior College with a theatre organ, it is believed. On May 5, before a sell-out audience, Dick gave the dedication concert.

He told this reporter that he is "just starting out" in the field of the theatre organ. If this "starting-out" phase is any indication, enthusiasts are in for some treats in the future.

Dick came back after intermission, playing the spirited "Jalousie." For the next selection, the console was bathed in an eerie "Kelly green" light, as "Ghost Riders in the Sky" was escorted through the air with palm glissandos accomplishing a weird effect. "Baubles, Bangles and Beads" came next.

From Grofe's "Mardi Gras" came the beautiful "Daybreak," a number we recall being in the top five on the Hit Parade in late 1942, sung by Barry Wood, and played by the Mark Warnow Lucky Strike Orchestra. Dick really brought this off with a stirring climax.

The theatre organ came in strong in the roaring twenties, so Dick did not disappoint the music devotees of that period, playing "Charleston," "Million Dollar Baby in a Five & Ten-Cent Store,"

Larri Ferrari at DTOC

by Esther Higgins
Delaware Valley Chapter

Larry Ferrari, East Coast concert, TV and radio organist, made his second appearance before the Detroit Theatre Organ Club on Saturday evening, June 22nd. Once again Larry was very much at home at the magnificent Senate Theatre-Orbits organ, and this instrument was, as always, in superb condition. The program opened with a rousing medley consisting of Broadway hit tunes, starting with "This Could Be The Start of Something Big", and indeed it was. Included was, "I Could Have Danced All Night"; here Mr. Ferrari made fine use of the brass and bells, with interesting pedal work. Berlin's "The Girl That I Marry" had delicate tibia passages to enhance the melody.

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Larry Ferrari

"Makin' Whoopee", "When I Take My Sugar to Tea", and winding up with a rousing "Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey." The hardware department of bird calls, gongs, etc., was widely used.

The slow, ominous "Foggy Day in London Town" simulated the atmosphere in that European capital, highlighted with chimes a la Big Ben. A rollicking "Casey Jones" showed off the sound effects again, interspersed with "Workin' On the Railroad." The simulation of a steam locomotive was perfect, this being done with palm work on the top manual. The artist was most grateful for ex-GI's in the audience not singing the famous World War II lyrics of the first number. Amen to that!

In view of the critical times in which the country finds itself, Dick changed the ending of his program with two numbers of a patriotic vein: "This Is My Country" with which Fred Waring quite often ends his shows, and the ponderous "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

The audience gave the usual standing ovation, hopeful of an encore or two, but by that time, the artist was really drowned in perspiration, and so were a few of the 300 patrons, some of whom waved their programs throughout.