



MICROPHONES are completely hidden behind gold front Diaphones—built to order by Lauhauff in Germany. All mike cables are in conduit which runs under the floor from the organ chambers to the back of the console.

Dean Herrick early declared his affections for his life-long love—the theatre pipe organ.

Born in Chicago, Ill., he moved with his family to DeKalb, Ill., after World War I. At the age of twelve he asked the committee of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which his family attended in DeKalb, if he could practice on the organ. They refused permission, saying that he would wear out the organ. The old janitor of the church proved to be a great friend, however, as young Dean helped him with his daily chores: dusting the pews, sweeping floors, washing the stained-glass windows and stoking the furnace. For many years the janitor had heard and watched the regular organists at the church, and it was this old man who defied the church committee and let Dean practice on the organ. In fact, it was he who taught Dean how to play his first hymns on the organ.

A couple of years later Dean started studying with a local church organist. When he could afford to buy records—which was seldom—he bought only organ records. When he got his first record of the famous Jesse Crawford playing the Wurlitzer, he knew that he must set his goal to meet and, if possible, study the organ with this man!

At the age of seventeen he went with a group of musicians from the University of Illinois to the Orient. They played as the ship's orchestra on the way over and back. While in the Orient they played in Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Manila. But upon returning to DeKalb he decided to make way for Chicago. Playing the piano was not for him; he must learn to play the Wurlitzer.

He got himself a job as an usher in the Lido Theatre in Maywood, Ill. (a suburb of Chicago). This enabled him to hear the organ while it was being played for continuous performances of the silent movies. At a salary of fifteen dollars a week he managed to put himself through college and work in the movie theatre at night. Finally he managed to sum up enough courage to ask the organist, Walter Flandorf, if he would accept him as a pupil. Dean studied with him for a year, then joined the Chicago Musicians' Union and acted as relief organist to Walter Flandorf. When Flandorf left the Lido to open the new four-manual Kilgen at the Piccadilly Theatre on the South Side of Chicago, Dean became featured organist at the Lido. He then started studying with Jean Anthony Grief, who was organist in the 5,000-seat Marbro Theatre on the West Side of Chicago. Dean also became relief organist at the Marbro in a few months' time. However, he finally met Jesse Crawford and after studying with him for a few months, was introduced by Jesse to Balaban and Katz, who employed him on their Chicago circuit. Dean continued studying with Crawford until he left Chicago to play in New York.

However, Dean's career as a theatre organist came to a sudden end with the advent of sound pictures, and he met the fate of all theatre organists. He was fortunate in knowing Farny Wurlitzer, who gave him a job in the Wurlitzer store on Wabash Avenue where he worked as a salesman in the musical instrument department.

"Alas! Poor Herrick!

The Saga of Dean Herrick

It was at the Earle Theatre in Washington, D. C., where Dean was "spotted" by an M-G-M talent scout and was asked to come to New York City to be interviewed at M-G-M headquarters there. To his surprise, it was an offer to play the Wurlitzer. The decision to break up his vaudeville act with the "Hammond" was difficult. In this act he knew he had something worthwhile so he decided to go over to the Roxy Theatre building where his friend, Jesse Crawford, had his organ studios. Crawford was adamant about Dean's not accepting the offer from M-G-M to go to South Africa. He told Dean that he (Jesse) had only recently returned from England where he had played at the Empire, Leicester Square. He said that the English people in South Africa were no different to those in London. They didn't want to hear the organ played . . . they only considered it something to sing to. Why should Dean give up a successful career in the States to go to South Africa to play "singies"? Dean's love for the pipe organ . . . the Wurlitzer organ, was too strong. He went back to M-G-M and signed a one-year contract to play at the Metro Theatre in Johannesburg. When Jesse and his wife, Helen, saw Dean off for South Africa, Jesse said: "Alas, poor Herrick, we knew him well!"



WIFE WYNNE turns pages for Herrick during one of his regular broadcasts on South African National hook-up. An Ampex 440 is used to record the organ via four Neuman mikes—one directly behind the front-pipes in front of shutters of each chamber; one inside accompaniment chamber to pick up Piano, Chrysoglott and added Vibraphone; the other mike is used for Glock and Xylophone in Solo chamber.

We Knew Him Well!"—Jesse Crawford.



DEAN HERRICK, in this recent photo, smiles from the console of the same ex-Metro Theatre Wurlitzer—now beautifully installed in his Johannesburg, South Africa, home—he has been playing since 1937.

Sometime later, in 1934, Dean met Laurens Hammond, who asked him to come to the Hammond Clock factory where the first electric organ was being assembled. Laurens Hammond kept his promise to Dean, and in 1935, at the Bismarck Hotel, Chicago, he introduced the "Hammond organ" to the public for the first time. This organ was installed in the lobby of the hotel and thousands of people came from far and wide to hear the first organ "without any pipes."

Of course, there were many pros and cons as to the merit of this new electrical wonder. He remembers his friend and tutor, Jesse Crawford, who came to listen to Dean at the Bismarck, telling him that this wasn't an organ at all and that he, personally, would never endorse or play it. Not quite a year later, when he was playing the Hammond in his vaudeville act at the Earle Theatre in Washington, D. C., he was surprised to find Jesse and his wife, Helen, playing at the opposition Paramount Theatre . . . and on two Hammonds.

Jesse's words rang in Dean's ears after his first performance at the Metro Theatre in Johannesburg in September, 1937! Dean played *Rhapsody in Blue* and the audience "sat on their hands." They wanted to sing! Musically, Johannesburg was just growing up then and Dean, although it made him very unhappy, found himself playing *I Do Like To Be Beside the Seaside* and *Land of Hope and Glory*. But not for long. He would gradually fit in a light classic as an encore. After two years he found that he no longer needed to put words on the screen for "singies." The audiences had grown accustomed to hearing the Wurlitzer played as an organ . . . and Dean was no longer unhappy in South Africa. As he says: "One of my salvations was the South African Broadcasting Corporation." He had several broadcasts every week on both the English and Afrikaans transmissions and was allowed to choose his own programs at all times. Radio audiences found that they



DEAN HERRICK at the console, Metro Theatre, Johannesburg, South Africa. Photo was taken on the first day Herrick worked the theatre in 1937.

liked to hear the same music played in the theatre that they heard on the air. Dean had regular Sunday evening broadcasts from the Metro Theatre. These were of a classical nature and featured operatic and oratorio singers of note. Often the harp and violin were combined with the organ.

In 1951, Dean decided to open a radio production house. It was the year that commercial radio (Springbok Radio) came into existence. It wasn't a far cry from the musical and theatrical world and he installed an electronic organ in his studios. He continued his regular broadcasts on the South African Broadcasting Corporation, playing an electronic organ. However, after sixteen years his love for the Wurlitzer hadn't lessened.

In May, 1967, he made the Metro Theatre a generous offer for the Wurlitzer he was originally hired to play. The offer was accepted and within the same week he had sold his house and bought another which was ideally suited to take the Metro Wurlitzer. Of course, organ chambers, relay room and blower room had to be built onto the house and the main entrance hall where the organ stands was acoustically treated. The room is perfectly suited to the magnitude of the organ. The organ pipes have in no way been "doctored," nor has any part of the original organ been discarded. In fact, it is a larger organ now than it was. Dean has added a piano and is in the process of adding 122 more pipes. It is really "a dream come true" for Dean and now radio audiences are once again hearing the "Mighty Wurlitzer" in his regular broadcasts, "Dean Herrick's At Home To You."