

# LEIBERT Takes L.A. "Again"!

by G. Bandini



Los Angeles -- Radio City Music Hall's Richard Leibert returned to LA for his second concert under the auspices of the Los Angeles chapter of ATOE on November 19 (his previous concert here was on March 21, 1967). Dick brought up the console of the 4-37 Wiltern Kimball with a thunderous *Strike Up the Band* in solid "Radio City" style and greeted his audience when the applause quieted down.

His next selection was an original called *Bacchanale*, a pompous, often bombastic "spectacle" piece with often sensuous undertones which seemed to draw on most of the Kimball's resources at once. Then a more subtle Richard Rodgers medley with such memorable froth as the oldie, *Dancing on the Ceiling* and a massive closer, *Climb Every Mountain*. A well-orchestrated Henry Mancini medley provided a number of pop highlights and the infectuous and insistent rhythms of Ravel's *Bolera*, with the melody at first passed around among the solo reeds, built toward a mighty and dissonant climax. A thriller!

The pre-intermission novelty was something of a "mystery tune" -- for awhile. Dick started out with a good representation of a Bach-like fugue. The melody, started and restarted several measures apart, harmonized itself in the best classical tradition.

Then Dick started throwing in hints of the melody on which the fugue had been built. After playing "cat and mouse" with his tantalized listeners, Dick finally dropped all the classical embellishment and laid it on the line -- *Georgie Girl*. In Dick's hands she's a Renaissance lady.

After intermission, the console came back up to Dick's own, spirited *Radio City March*, a tune he has recorded at least twice. The first moments of the second stanza were well larded with Leibert originals and welcome they were. The gentleman from the land of the Rockettes is no slouch as a composer. His best known tune, *Come Dance With Me*, was played as a slow waltz on sweet registration for a chorus, then broke into a massive Viennese sequence which would have pleased Strauss. It was punctuated with titillating high-pitched ornamentation which raced across, over and under the broadly played melody line. Next came Leibert's *In a Clock Shop* which was what might be called "traditional"; it added up to tick-tock music. What else?

## LEIBERT HUMOR

Dick Leibert likes to kid himself during his concert MCing, a side of his warm personality with which his concert audiences across the land are familiar but not his RCMH audiences -- where he's allowed only to



IN THE SPOTLIGHT—Dick Shuffles the stops keys to provide color for the repeated melody during Ravel's "Bolero".



A portion of Dick Leibert's appreciative audience during the first half of the show. Note how the Kimball console dominates the scene. It's a "Whopper". — Stufoto



Westerners had a sample of what Radio City Music Hall audiences are denied—the warm Leibert humor. Dick loves to tell jokes on himself.

play, not talk. He told about how he sold a "Christmas" tune by renaming one of his compositions on the spot when a producer wanted something "Christmassy." It's his *Under the Christmas Mistletoe* which until that moment, had bore a far different name. During one of his intros he admitted, "... Yes, I wanted to move to California -- but too many good organists beat me to it!" When he came to his Mancini potpourri he said, "Thanks to song writers like Henry Mancini we still may be saved from the records our kids bring home, songs like *Light My Fire and Blow it Out*."

*Under the Christmas Mistletoe* was an adventure in high-powered wassailing which seemed more like a vigorous dance accompaniment.

The Jerome Kern medley opened with *Why Do I Love You?* and closed with *Old Man River* at full flood tide, a roaring, raucous stream on a rampage, which quieted down to soft Tibias a few moments before a smear glissando brought us back into the main stream of rapids for a big ending. The audience, a little over 750 strong, loved every note of it.

What happened next is what they once called "one for the book." Dick fumbled with his program notes, dropped them, picked them up and dropped them again. In despair he decided to abandon his prepared program and take requests from the audience, an adventure only for the bravest of organists because it's a form of throwing oneself to the wolves. In a moment the quiet audience became a many-headed monster, roaring out titles of long forgotten flops among the standards most audiences are heartily fed up with. There was Dick, seated before the maw of the huge Kimball, calmly writing down titles when he could make one out above the horrisonant eructations issuing from hundreds of throats, . . . *Holiday for Strings!* . . . *St. Louis Blues!* . . . *Chloe!* (him, again!) . . . *Finlandia!* . . . *Tenderly!* . . . 76 Trombones!

Dick played them all as though he had just finished rehearsing them; even *Chloe*. His *Blues* was dirtier than usual for a Liebert arrangement (he knew he was among friends), and his off-the-cuff *Holiday* sparkled. *Tenderly* was a bit oddball and he marched the full brass band up and down the aisles for a stirring *Seventy-Six Trombones*, the finale.

But his audience wasn't ready to let him go. He thought a moment and asked if they'd like to hear a medley of favorite hymns. Their beating palms said "yes." So, Richard Leibert closed his program with a set of hymn tunes played in solid

## OHIO VALLEY CHAPTER

### Presents . . . GAYLORD CARTER

The team of Carter and Day (Gaylord and Jim that is) arrived in Cincinnati, Ohio the afternoon of October 18th, girded for the Ohio Valley Chapter's presentation of *SAFETY LAST*, starring Harold Lloyd, on Sunday evening October 20th, at Cincinnati's famed RKO ALBEE Theatre.

They were met at Greater Cincinnati Airport by Jack and Joan Strader. As soon as the film cartons were pried loose from Jim Day, and safely salted away, we were off to Hamilton, Ohio and dinner at Shady-Nook Steak House, owned by Stan and Virginia Todd. Both Gaylord and Jim were amazed to see the theatre-type addition to the steak house, which will soon ring with the unmistakable sounds of the mighty Wurlitzer. A former pupil of the late great Jesse Crawford, and professional organist of many years, Stan will delight the hearts of theatre organ buffs when the installation is completed — the sooner the better!

It is indeed an impressive sight to see the former Chicago Theare Wurlitzer console, mounted on a lift (just behind the large curved bar) which will rise up to stage level, and/or points in between. The Solo and Main chambers form the rear wall of the stage, with a hallway in the center, leading down to the blower, relays and chamber doors, etc. The addition to the restaurant which houses the above, is graced by a high, cathedral roof, guaranteed to

Lorin Whitney style, for the most part, with *The Church's One Foundation* standing out, also *Doxology* and the rousing *Onward Christian Soldiers* closer. Then Dick bowed to acknowledge his well-earned applause and walked away from the still raised console. He appeared moments later to meet his fans and well wishers in the lobby. Mayor Lindsay couldn't have sent a more appropriate musical ambassador to the west coast. — G. Bandini, *Hollywood*



raise "goose bumps" on all within hearing distance.

For the interim, a Baldwin theatre electronic provides the musical entertainment, and with tone cabinets located in front of the open chamber areas, the acoustical results are most impressive. Following a steak dinner, and a little encouragement, Gaylord tried his hand at the console; as could have been anticipated, the restaurant fell silent, as Gaylord offered a brief preview of the kind of music that could be expected at the ALBEE on Sunday night. His efforts were acknowledged by rounds of applause, following which Jim Day took to the console, turning out several popular selections. Thus the team of Carter and Day made their premature appearance at Shady-Nook Steak House in Hamilton, Ohio, prior to the big event in Cincinnati.

On Saturday evening, October 19th, the Straders were hosts to a party in honor of Gaylord and Jim; this was Jim Day's first visit to the Queen City it might be noted, and we doubt that he will ever forget it, what with the short nights and long hours devoted to meeting people, preparation for the show, etc. Among the guests were Chapter chairman George V. Eaglin, board member Jack E. Tarr (both of whom came well equipped to photograph the events of the evening for posterity), Spencer Avery, Albert Meyer (chairman of the silent film event), Glenn Merriam, Bill Busse and Edmund S. Wuest.

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