

More Hollywood Cavalcade

the report Hollywood researcher Jon Virzi makes on Florence Vidor. She lives at 350 Bellino Drive, Pacific Palisades, California. She has declined all offers to appear at film functions or to be interviewed.

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RAMON NAVARRO was adding final touches to his biography just before his death October 31. Friends expect it to be offered to publishers in 1969-70.

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WHO IS WHERE—Ralph Graves was last reported living in Pismo Beach, California—Mary Astor enjoys life in the Laguna Hills Leisure World Community but refuses all invites to socialize —Gloria Hope (Mrs. Lloyd Hughes) lives in San Gabriel, California.—Remember the 1926 Universal *Collegians 2* reel comedy series? Dorothy Gulliver was one of the stars and a 1928 WAMPUS selection. Now she come out of Hollywood retirement and appears in the production, *Faces Says* she loved making the movie with actors using the *method* approach.

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HOLLYWOOD has a new and worthy movie attraction. It is the Home Savings and Loan Association cinema display at Sunset and Vine in the heart of Never-Never land. One feature is a stained glass window, 24' x 22' which depicts the film *Chase*. A giant mural, 67' x 12' with some figures 9' high, shows scenes from the original *Squaw Man*, which was filmed on this site in 1913. The location is considered one of the more authentic spots where film history began.

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NELL Shipman, who lives near her biography of the 1919 Vitagraph era. She has a son working in the film industry.

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QUESTION of the month: *My Uncle says movies titles of the silent days were more explicit than things*



The former Syracuse (N.Y.) Keith's 3-11 Wurlitzer, now installed at the New York State Fair Grounds, is doing yeoman service in perpetuating the cause of the theatre organ in the Salt City area.

The instrument's guardians and champions, members of the Empire State Theatre and Musical Instrument Museum, featured a silent

like *Bikini Paradise*, *Chuka*, *Mondobikins*, *Let No Man Write My Epitaph*, *Midnight Lace*, *Pepe*, *Arabesque*, *Bang-Bang*, *You're Dead*. Can you name some old silent titles that had more meaning?—Florence W., Washington.

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WHEN your Uncle went to the films between 1910 and 1930 he faced such titles as *The Curse of Eve*, *Kissing in a Tunnel*, *She Won't Pay Her Rent*, *Neighbors Who Borrow*, the *Romance of Cocaine*, *Fast and Lose*, *Half Shot at Sunrise*, *One Embassassing Night*, *Sin Takes a Holiday*, *The Girls in the Barracks* and *Traffic in Souls*. Perhaps these give you some idea of the titles of long ago. Endless intrigue was found in films like *My Husband's Other Wife* and the *Crooked Banker*. To me the tops in titles of all times was *Sight-Seeing Through Whiskey*.

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YOU may write to Bronko Billy Anderson, Braewood Sanitarium, 1625 Maridian Road, South Pasadena, California, 91030.

SHORT SHOTS FROM EVEYWHERE

Readers are encouraged to submit interesting sidelights on the organ hobby (exclusive of chapter news items), material they believe will be of general interest about local organ activities and installations and the people who work at the hobby. We know *there's VOX POPS in them there chapters* and it only requires a 5c postcard to get it to The BOMBARDE, Box 5013 Bendix Station, North Hollywood, Calif. 91605.

movie program on November 17 last, played by Eddie Baker (Doc Bebeo of Oleans, NY). Included were two cartoons, a sing-along, and two vintage silent movies, *The Great Train Robbery*, which was made by the Thomas Edison studio in 1903; and *Tillie's Punctured Romance*, featuring Charlie Chaplin, Marie Dressler, Mabel Normand and Chester Conklin.

The Wurlitzer is installed in a 400-seat auditorium with complete projection equipment. The organ has been meticulously restored and maintained by a crew headed by Charles Schubert.

The artistry of Eddie Baker was enthusiastically received by the 350 present.

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ATOE'r John Roblin advises us that the Museum has undertaken an ambitious program built around the former Keith's theatre organ.

Programs are given about once a month, varying from organ concerts to silent movies. When Roblin visited the New York Fair last fall, he found the organ being used for two daily programs, featuring veteran organist Carleton A. James. James, who played Syracuse theatres in the twenties, provided music for a sing-along, then accompanied two two silents: *Teddy at the Throttle*, a 1916 comedy railroad epic with Wallace Berry and Gloria Swanson; and *Angora Love* with Laurel and Hardy and Edgar Kennedy. A packed house enjoyed the show thoroughly, according to Roblin.

Speaking of Carleton James, his name is permanently entwined with the former Keith's Wurlitzer. He played it from 1928 through 1932, for silent movies, overtures (with Ken Sparnon's pit orchestra) sing-alongs and radio broadcasts. Still, he was deeply touched when the Museum group recently presented him with a key to the instrument in its permanent home. It was the recognition he has long deserved. Carleton joined ATOE in 1968.

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Paul H. Forester, the undisputed *King of the Sing-along* in upper New York States during the Golden Era, is in the midst of his 13th year as organist and choirmaster at the Church by the Sea in St. Petersburg, Florida. He's happy to report that both his sons, always musically inclined, have been bitten by the theatre organ bug. Both Bob and Paul Jr. live in the Syracuse, N.Y. area and after a few sessions with the former Keith's Wurlitzer installed in its State Fair building home, they bought large theatre plug-ins. Bob even joined ATOE and is looking for some pipes to install in his home.

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While we're talking of bugs, another type immobilized both Dick Leiberts over the recent holidays, father and son alike. Although down with the flu in his Connecticut home, organist Dick was looking forward to two special events, the release of the Readers Digest albums (to which he contributed music played on his Radio City Music Hall 4-58 Wurli and the RTOS 4-22 Wurli in Rochester, N.Y.) and also a concert to be played on that famous RTOS instrument for its champions, the Rochester Theatre Organ Society. When a guy gets into a rut like playing the Radio City Music Hall organ almost daily for 37 years, he needs some variety - er - doesn't he? Well - doesn't he?

The RTOS organ seems to cast a spell over organists who play it. After her concert in the Rochester N.Y. Auditorium theatre for RTOS, Shirley Hannum was exuberant as

only youth can be: *It was a thrill to play that mighty Wurlitzer. It was in excellent shape. And what fine acoustical conditions in the theatre.* Pressed for time during the concert, she decided on some surgery in an area where excision isn't usually performed - right in the midriff of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Asked later why she deleted the very familiar *E Major Theme*, she replied that other parts of the *Rhapsody* were more effective in presenting the 4-22's versatility. So, she played those parts.

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The ever increasing price of organ concert tickets may be partly responsible for a widely-experienced fall off in concert attendance if a somewhat parallel situation in the classical music field can be applied. In reply to a questionnaire recently circulated in the New York area, a majority of the 8,324 music lovers who answered (7,497) felt that the combined price of travel, dinner and concert tickets was *distressing*. The quiz was conducted in behalf of the Pro Arte Symphony Orchestra of New York according to a release by the Alix B. Williamson Agency, flack for such concert toppers as Virgil Fox. While there is a great difference in the type of music heard and the makeup of audiences, theatre organ and serious music buffs share the burden of the combined costs of travel, (perhaps) dinner in town, and the steady climb in the price of admissions, especially in the larger centers of population.

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One of Spokane's oldest theatres, the Empress, has been torn down for a parking lot. It was built at the turn of the century, and passed through four owners. Once known as the Washington Theatre, it presented films and stage shows, the latter having such performers as Will Rogers, Al Jolson, Charlie Chaplin and De Wolf Hopper. The building fell into disuse in the late 1940's and thereafter became a religious meeting hall until 1961. Its bricks were shipped to California.

The passing of New York City's famed Capitol Theatre, which dimmed its lights for the last time on September 16, last, stirs memories.

A landmark since its opening in 1919, the showhouse first became nationally famous as the Broadway theatre where *Roxy* made his name, originating Sunday evening variety programs on radio which resulted in the formation of the first network linking Providence and Washington.

The Capitol once had an Estey organ, and Dr. Mauro-Cottone was the featured organist for years. Dr. C. A. J. Parmentier was also featured in the early '20s.

The Capitol was razed to clear space for a 50-story office building.

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There's a *headless* residence organ in a huge mansion in San Francisco waiting to be hooked to a console and play again. It's a hang-over from the '20s when no mansion was complete without its roll-playing Estey or Welte. The story of how it lost its console is somewhat typical of the times. With the generation which installed and played the organ long gone, a more recent scion, hearing a friend needed a console (perhaps to install tone generators in), simply let the friend haul the console away.

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SCAB ORGAN! During the strike of the Musicians' Union against the television network late last year, the variety shows were hardest hit because their artists required musical accompaniments. Some programs resorted to the use of vocal groups to hum backgrounds but the producers of the Johnny Carson show decided to be different; they dug up a complete roll-playing Foto-player, hauled it into the Burbank, California studio, and used it for musical interludes. A studio technician described it as a two-swell-box affair with the console between, which indicates that it was a fairly complex unit. Striking musicians snorted, *scab organ*.

(Continued on Page 28)

VOX POPS (Continued)

When Billy Nalle went to Hartford, Connecticut, to play his annual series of Christmas concerts in a bank foyer on an Allen plug-in, he spent his *off time* exploring among the area's pipes. On Dec. 22 (Sunday), he played an *opener* on the just-completed 2-6 Wurlitzer in the Irving Twomey home in Manchester. That was just 24 hours after he had visited the Phil Stock home in West Hartford for a session on the Stock's 3-29 home installation. Afterwards he had kind words for Mike Foley who did much of the polishing on both instruments.

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NITSUA to you! Ever hear of an organ stop called a *Nitsua*? We have seen the stop key on a number of disconnected Austin consoles but the fact that it was *Austin* spelled backwards gave the impression that it was some kind of tongue-in-cheek company label for a blank stop key. Of course, we were being influenced by the ancient story about a drawknob console somewhere in Germany which is rigged with a gag drawknob labeled *Fuchs Schwanz* just to bug foreign recitalists. When the knob was pulled it comes all the way out and the unfamiliar organist finds himself with a fuzzy fox tail in his hands. Disconcerting, especially if someone is looking. The supposed non-existence of the *Nitsua* seems to point in that direction, especially because it is not listed in the major organ stop dictionaries. Then one fine day, a friend called and said he'd just purchased a set of pipes which he couldn't classify, although they seemed to be strings. The only identification was the word *nitsua* stamped on the middle-C pipe. That had to be one for the experts so we consulted with our favorite organ stop lexicographer, Stevens Irwin. Yes, he wrote, the *Nitsua* is for real, but unfortunately very rare—unfortunately, because it's designed as a purely accompaniment stop, and these are lacking on most organs. It's long, thin and slightly conical

in shape, which gives it a muted sound — an accompaniment string. But it's fortunate that the idea of naming organ stops for brand names spelled backwards never caught on or we might be experiencing stop keys which read *Notrab*, *Knil*, *Egap*, *Reztiruw*, or *Notromtrebor* — or even, perhaps, a genuine *Notlocdnarram*.

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It would seem that English organ fans are fated to encounter more of the same style of *bitter pills* which accompanied the removal of a Compton from Britain and shipment to Australia last year. Australian buffs, increasing in number and hungry for the sound of pipes in their homes, are reaching out beyond the shores of Australia in their search for suitable instruments — even to the USA. They are soon discouraged by the high prices prevalent in the USA (where one

owner offered a 4-20 for 20-grand recently) so they turn to England where the going price is around \$200 a rank for Comptons and Wurlitzers, most with five to eight ranks. One complete 3-8 Compton was offered for a shade over \$500. However, packing and freight charges between Britain and *down under* push costs much higher.

In Australia it isn't only individuals who want to acquire pipe organs. Organ clubs are springing up, everywhere. They often start as plug-in clubs. Then they hear pipes and—pow!—they're hooked. While the Victoria and New South Wales divisions of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia have secured suitable Wurlitzers, Queensland and lookout for theatre pipes. And now ia. Three clubs on the march and perhaps two local in-theatre Wurlitzers available (a 2-12 and a 4-21). Man the battlements, Britain.

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When youthful (25) Dwight Beacham (1968 ATOE conventioners heard him play the Wurli at the *Haven of Rest*) moved away from Los Angeles to accept a teaching job 300 miles north at Paso Robles, local fans figured that he wouldn't have much time to do anything about the little two-deck Wurli he left behind, neatly installed in his parents' home. With the move and fatherhood fast overtaking him, chances of moving the organ seemed remote. But, the doubters figured without taking into consideration the great zeal for theatre pipes which must haunt Dwight. With newborn Holly safe in the crib, wife Ginny back in the kitchen and the teaching job (music, naturally) going well, Dwight began to thirst for the sound of his own pipes. The way Ginny puts it, "we have become one of the main supporters of the U-Haul Trailer Company." Three months after their departure the Beachams have moved more than half of the 8-ranker from LA to Paso Robles, and that task wasn't even started until Dwight had built a suitable chamber, so it shouldn't be long before Dwight will be able to do something about the vacuum he ran into when he got nothing but *what's that?* upon mentioning theatre organ in the Paso Robles area. In case there's still any doubt, Dwight declares, "... theatre organ? I love it — almost as much as I love my spouse — and Holly."

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Colin Corbett still plays the 3-19 Hillgreen-Lane Theatre Pipe Organ in the Odeon-Carlton Theatre (on Carlton St., near the corner of Yonge St.) in Toronto, Ontario every Saturday night at about 9 p.m. for 15 minutes. The console rises on a lift out of the center of the large covered-over orchestra pit of the theatre which is advertised on television as *The Showplace Of The Nation*, advises Niagara Frontiersman, Dave Vuckson.

- CLASSIFIED ADS -

FOR SALE—BOOKS: Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra \$3.95; Wurlitzer Unit Organs \$4.50; Wurlitzer Fact Book \$2.00; Whitworth's CINEMA & THEATRE ORGANS \$15.00; Williams' European Organ \$20.00; Wurlitzer Church Organs \$2.00; Audsley's ART OF ORGAN BUILDING \$15.00; Norman's Organ Today \$7.50; Sears' The Reed Organ \$2.00. ORGAN LITERATURE FOUNDATION, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, Massachusetts 02184.

FOR SALE—Three-manual Fourteen-rank playing WURLITZER with 3400 square foot house attached, private area, no noise trouble, San Fernando Valley view included. All for \$115,000. Write: Box D, 3291 Guido Street, Oakland, California 94602.

SILENTS ARE GOLDEN but they are better with music. If you have piano or organ music for silent film accompaniment please contact: SILENTS ARE GOLDEN, P.O. Box 2345, North Hollywood, Calif. 91603.

WANTED—Bench and Music-rack for Wurlitzer—185 console. ED RANEY, 6211 Temple Hill Drive, Los Angeles, Calif. 90028. Telephone: HO 9-9181.

FOR SALE—WURLITZER Style D complete, rebuilt entirely with relays for 16 ranks. Console has been enlarged and rebuilt to control eleven unified ranks. Two three-horsepower Spencer blowers equipped for single-phase. Available immediately. Contact: ROBERT B. FRAY, JR., 3917 West 68th Street, Prairie Village, Kansas 66208, or call after 6:00 P.M. daily, (913) 262-5464 (A Kansas City suburb).

FOR SALE—Make an offer. Two large reservoirs; one swell shade action eleven feet long, twelve magnets and bellows; about twenty-five metal dummy pipes from a Kimball church organ. GEORGE R. JOHNSON, 6516 Haystack Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22310.

FOR SALE—4m/20r Wurlitzer Publix with two English Horns. Mostly all re-leathered. Console natural cherry mahogany. Condition generally good. Instrument being dismantled prior to moving. Best price of \$7,500 or over takes. BILL HOLLEMAN, 3470 Iroquois, Detroit, Michigan 48214. (313) 923-0428.

Southern California "Pizza Organ"

(Continued from Page 29)

ished. Some large-scale pitched percussions have been distributed around the ceiling of the restaurant, a very large Marimba, Xylophone, Glockenspiel and a full toy counter.

There's one additional goodie in the wind, a real, honest-to-goodness Wurlitzer Brass Trumpet which will replace the Tuba to provide more brassy tightness.

What Shirley didn't install, of the original 5 ranks, Steve did. Organ technician Don Kohles was hired to do the finishing and vocal touchup. Then organist Bud Taylor signed on as resident organist and he pitched in to help get the Tibia going. By the time this hits print, Steve, Shirley and Bud will surely have the Clarinet in, perhaps even the Brass Trumpet, and the major bugs removed. Except for the still silent Clarinet, the trio had it all going and in good playing shape chomp, guzzle and kibbitz during the recent holidays.

So you travelers who make a point of taking in the pipe organs at each stopover, add the name *Monk's Musical Pizza* to the agenda. It's at 644 South Barranca Avenue, Covina, California. Get off the San Bernadino Freeway at Barranca and

drive North for a half mile to the Barranca Center (right side of street). The menu is Pizza, soft drinks, beer and the long-popular music of Bud Taylor on the pipes.

— G. Bandini

Record Review

(Continued from Page 35)

by Ben Hall, about the score and Wurlitzer restoration project, accompanies the recording.

Side II of the disc presents some songs from the Valentino years in very special arrangements: *Remember* in a 4/4 hurry-up tempo before the sweet chorus; *Sleepy Time Gal* (which rides initially on some solo stops); *Someone To Watch Over Me, Always, Romberg's One Alone* (in part played in Ravel's *Bolero* tempo), and a satisfying 5-minute version of *When Day Is Done*, played as a ballad and sometimes in rhythm.

The Beacon organ has the big of a Wurlitzer Vox/Tibia mix we've theatre sound and the best example heard on records in some time. Favorite is Erwin's *Love Theme* from the *Eagle* score. It has the same kind of langorous appeal as the String-rich David Rose compositions (e.g. *Our Waltz, Deserted City, California Melodies*).