

NUGGETS from the GOLDEN DAYS



Prospected by Lloyd E. Klos

With Chicago the host for the ATOE's Eleventh Annual Convention, Jason and I salute the Windy City with choice material taken from American Organist (AO), Diapason (D), Jacobs (J) and Melody (M).

Sept. 1915 (D) The Wurlitzer Co. has been awarded the contract for one of the largest theatre organs in the country for the Covent Garden Theatre in Chicago. It will contain all the latest improvements such as second, pizzicato and sforzando touches. Console will have 4 manuals. Pipes will be in 5 chambers, with an echo organ placed in the balcony area. Wind pressure will be from 6 to 25 inches.

May 1919 (M) AXEL W. CHRIS- TENSEN has begun a 17-week engage- ment at the Cort Theatre, playing the Wurlitzer Hope-Jones orchestral organ.

Aug. 1920 (D) Chicago Theatre Organists went on strike July 5. They demand a 75% increase in pay, re- jecting an offer by the theatre man- agers of 50%. A similar walkout was averted in New York by an agree- ment providing for a 5% increase.

Oct. 1920 (J) *The 2460-seat Stratford Theatre, one of the city's newest, will have a 40-piece symphony orchestra, a jazz orchestra, and a Moller pipe organ which it is claimed, will be the largest in Chicago.*

Apr. 1921 (J) The new Roosevelt Theatre opened on April 23. Playing a daily program on the Kimball organ is EDWARD FITCH.

Jan. 1922 (J) *Sunday afternoon con- certs are being given at the Drake Hotel. David Rosensweet is conductor of the orchestra and FREDERICK MEINKEN is organist.*

Dec. 1922 (D) HERBERT F. SPRAGUE, who played two years in Chicago's Elentee, Pantheon, Senate

and West End theatres, recently has been doing substitute work in the Brighton, Douglas, Evanston, Howard, Hoyborn, Hyde Park, Michigan, Pas- time and Regent theatres.

Feb. 1923 (D) FRANK VAN DU- SEN is operator of the "School For Theatre Organists," located in Kimball Hall. More than 50 of his students are playing in Chicago theatres.

Mar. 1923 (D) Balaban & Katz ran ads in the newspapers last month, call- ing attention to their organs and organ- ists, and the high quality of music they offer in the Central Park, Chicago, Riviera, Roosevelt, and Tivoli theatres. In 1922, 18 million patrons attended, B & K attributing this, in part, to their belief that "Music in its finest form is an element of popularity. Thousands come from miles around for the inspi- ration and mental recreation it (organ music) affords."

Apr. 1923 (D) HAZEL HIRSH of the State Lake Theatre, played a spring program at Kimball Hall on April 21. Many letters were received on the cali- bre of the performance as well as the orchestral quality of some numbers.

Dec. 1923 (AO) Eugene Stinson, writing in the Chicago Daily Journal, says: "JESSE CRAWFORD's playing is distinctly aimed at giving the listener a good time, whatever the music he plays. He is never at a loss for a register of peculiar color. His imagination in the bizarre and startling in tone and quality is tireless."

Mar. 1924 (D) *The Wurlitzer Co. is adding a second console to the Chicago Theatre organ. The theatre will engage a second organist to star with JESSE CRAWFORD, and performances will be given by the two organists simul- taneously. Helen Anderson is being considered for the second console spot.*

May 1924 (D) Things are humming in Chicago. Mr. & Mrs. JESSE CRAW- FORD recently introduced duets on the twin-consoled Wurlitzer at the Chicago Theatre and were given a basket of flowers at their first performance. MIL- TON CHARLES at the Tivoli, features his new song "Hula Lou." W. REM- INGTON WELCH broadcasts over KYM on the McVicker's Theatre Wur- litzer. EDWARD FITCH broadcasts on the new Stratford Theatre Kimball over WTAS, and LEO TERRY, author of 9 songs, broadcasts from the new Tiffin Theatre.

Dec. 1925 (J) *A feature of Chicago's new Ambassador Theatre is the revol- ving pipe organ console lift. Colored lights play upon the instrument while it is in motion.*

GOLD DUST Name-dropping the Chicago theatre organists: May 1918; CARMENZA VON DE LEZZ, star organist for Wurlitzer, has returned to the Chicago office after a Boston en- gagement . . . Nov. 1918, FRANCIS ROBERTS is head of the organ depart- ment of the Chicago School of Popular Music . . . Jan. 1923, D. KENNETH WIDENOR at the Roosevelt; Associate organist is HELEN ANDERSON (later Mrs. Jesse Crawford) . . . Mar. 1923, EDWARD EIGENSCHENK at the 3- manual Kimball in the Woodlawn while HELEN SEARLES plays the 3-manual Moller in the Portage Park . . . July 1923, GERTRUDE BAILY at the Michigan; EDWARD BENEDICT at the Capitol . . . Oct. 1923, NORMA HEUER at the Star . . . Jan. 1924, Mrs. CANE at the Harding . . . Feb. 1924, HAROLD M. ANDERSON at the Chatham; MERLE J. ISAAC at the Wilson . . . Apr. 1924, EDWARD FITCH at the Stratford . . . Nov. 1924, GERTRUDE BAILEY at Orchestra Hall Theatre . . . Dec. 1924, THEO- DORE CAMPBELL at the Prairie . . . Jan. 1925, EDWARD HOUSE at the Riviera . . . Nov. 1925, HENRI A. KEATES at McVicker's . . . Feb. 1926, RAYMOND C. GRINS at the Wallace . . . Mar. 1926, CLAUDE P. BALL at the 3-manual Kimball in the Iris . . . Apr. 1926, C. V. REAVLEY at the Barton in the Windsor Park . . . Aug. 1926, HENRI A. KEATES at the 4- manual Wurlitzer in the new Balaban & Katz Oriental. Console is in red lac- quer with oriental figures emblazoned on it . . . Sep. 1926, MILTON CHAR- LES at the Chicago; HENRY FRAN- CIS PARKS at the Hollywood . . . Oct. 1926, CLAUDE BALL teaching in the Kimball Bldg; EDWARD FITCH opened the new Colony Theatre and is well-liked on the South Side . . . Nov. 1926, RUTH GORMAN FARLEY at the deluxe south side Capitol and also broadcasting over WGN and WLIB. Her teacher is AMBROSE LARSEN; ARSENE F. SIEGEL recently ap- peared as soloist at the Sunday noon Grand Organ recital at the Chicago Theatre. On the same bill were Eddie Cantor and Clara Bow plugging Zieg- feld's "Kid Boots;" ESTHER HILBERT associate organist at the Terminal; KENNETH CUTLER in the Michigan; HENRY HENKINS, Academy; WILL- IAM HENNEBRY, Orpheum; HARRY WEINER, Chateau; ALVINA MI- CHALS, Buckingham; AGNES Mc- MORROW, Clermont.

If we can find quarters for Jason, we'll see you in the land of Capone and Daley in July. So long, sourdoughs!

— Lloyd and Jason