

LEE ERWIN PLAYS FOR THE AGO

The "generation gap" between the ATOE and the AGO is not quite as wide as it was back in the early days of the theatre organ. Lee Erwin played an evening of theatre organ music on July 1st at the Beacon Theatre for the AGO regional convention in New York City; and next summer he will play two concerts during the AGO National Convention in Buffalo.

There was a time when such events would have been all but impossible to contemplate. During the golden age of the movie palace, we are told, most "serious" organists would not admit that the theatre organ was even a legitimate musical instrument. That prejudice (which probably was never as wide-spread as we have been led to believe) has certainly been diluted by many recent events sponsored by the ATOE and the AGO. Billy Nalle is still receiving compliments from people who heard his performance at the Atlanta Fox several years ago. The theatre organ can indeed be a legitimate musical instrument!

Earlier this year Lee Erwin invaded the camp of the "classical" organ field by playing a theatre organ concert on the Roosevelt - Skinner at Calvary Church, Park Ave., in New York City. *The New York Times* music critic, Allen Hughes, wrote: ". . . well, the church didn't fall down; the Victorian Gothic interior of Calvary Episcopal Church rang merrily with the cheerful strains of the great Gershwin music, arrangements of Beatles songs, selections from "Cabaret" and "The Apple Tree," "The Sound of Music," and a set of variations on the principal theme from Michel Legrand's score for "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" . . . The experiment was interesting and a credit to the imagination and enterprise of all concerned . . ."

It was an experiment, and with more than a little risk involved, but an experiment that has brought Lee more compliments than anything he has done in a good many years; and requests for similar concerts from all over the country. □

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Book Review

The Recent Revolution in Organ Building

George Laing Miller, 1913.
Reprint by Vestal Press
Vestal, N. Y. 13850 Price \$5.95

Toward the close of the 19th Century, there occurred a drastic revolution in construction of pipe organs. There were four men whose work was largely responsible for freeing the King of Instruments from centuries-old bounds of tradition. They were Charles Spachman Barker, Henry Willis, Aristide Cavaille-Coll and Robert Hope-Jones.

In reading through the Miller book, one is led to believe that Hope-Jones towered over all his contemporaries in the art of pipe organ development. The theatre organ enthusiast is greatly familiar with those innovations which led to this revolutionary instrument-unification, electric action, horseshoe console, stop tabs, slanted manuals,

new voices, to name but a few. It has even been suggested that the actual author of this book was Hope-Jones himself, writing under a pen name. His name appears in 31% of the book's pages.

Included are a biography of Hope-Jones with autographed picture, numerous drawings and specifications of representative organs of the period, including one in the Paris Theatre in Denver. Mention is made of the organs Hope-Jones installed in the days of his Elmira company. Beautifully copied as only the Vestal Press knows how, the book is highly recommended as an asset in any theatre organ enthusiast's reference library.

— Lloyd E. Klos

1970 ATOS CONVENTION
NEW YORK CITY