



Carol and Mat. A pleasant visit 'up over.'
(Stufoto)

Southward owns the 260 Special (3/16 with Posthorn) removed from the Auckland Civic theatre and is prepping it for installation in a Vintage Car Museum in Wellington. And the former Kosy theatre 6-rank Wurlitzer roll player, which for so many years was John Holden's home installation, has been sold to Len Southward. Finally, the Auckland Town Hall organ, once with 52 ranks, now boasts 97 ranks. Mat promised to return next year with more goodies — and probably another load of raw tuna.

A self-addressed, stamped (8¢) large envelope mailed to Junchen Organ Co., 401 First Street, Sherrard, Illinois, 61281, will get parts seekers a list of available chests, actions, toy counters, percussions, tremors, consoles, regulators, relays and both complete sets and single pipes. Great browsing.

In Los Angeles, the Wiltern 4/37 Kimball maintenance crew arrived the after New Years to give the old giant its regular rubdown. The blower switch was pushed and in a moment there was a cacophony of ciphers. The crew traced the trouble to the relays in a chamber damaged by the February 1971 earthquake. Several days of rain around Christmas had seeped through the damaged roof and soaked 74 pneumatics to soggy uselessness. Mold was all over the ruined leather. "It looked like a penicillin factory" said LA chapter program director Bob Carson as he reached for a phone to inform Tom Hazleton that his January concert would have to be postponed — probably until May.

From Long Beach, Calif., motorcycle merchant Joe Koons reports that his new console "may not be the

best but I'll bet it's the prettiest 3-manual Wurlitzer around". He has it mounted on the remodeled platform and figures wiring it in will take about a month of spare time between cycle sales. It's a hybrid, of circa 19 ranks and Joe plans to add a piano, 16' pedal Tibia and Posthorn to round it out tonally. It's a well balanced instrument. Sounded good on the Don Thompson record.

As if he didn't already have enough to keep him ridiculously busy, Ashley Miller seems to have taken a liking to basketball. In November he spent a

couple of weeks rehearsing and taping the 4/26 Wurlitzer in Long Island University's gymnasium (the former Brooklyn Paramount) for his new Reader's Digest album, and now he has gone all the way. Every Tuesday and Saturday night, as well as the odd Thursday night, New York area organ fans will find Ashley perched high above the basketball court in Madison Square Garden getting some marvelous sounds of the Rodgers Special theatre organ as the Knicks and their opponents dribble around on the floor below. Two hours of Ashley Miller's music is a bargain for the price of any basketball game.

Closing Chord

F. Donald Miller, member of our Hall of Fame, passed away December 2, 1971. Perhaps the epitome of Theatre organists, in all of his distinguished career, no appearance could equal his performance at the Detroit Convention in 1967. See article in THE-ATRE ORGAN BOMBARDE, June 1968, for an interview taped by Claude Sheridan.

Don Miller's passing is especially moving because he was one of the few remaining theatre organists of long experience who kept in touch with the theatre organ world until the end. His 1967 concert for the ATOE National Convention showed that he had not retired in spirit and practice although the passing of time had taken opportunities for public performance. He was one of the few who kept up with the times. He was a religious man, deeply concerned with our moral decline, so much so that he often wrote to government officials exhorting them to help make our country decent and beautiful again. He was a modest man, gentle in his criticism of other players and never vaunting his own performances. He was not guilty of the sin of pride. He loved beautiful things — the lovely ceramics his wife created, and the beautiful organ solos he played in Detroit. He was especially happy about a solo called "Blossoms" that he played at the Broadway Strand Theatre. Using lighting effects and actors and singers he presented "Apple Blossoms" (the music of spring), "Cherry Blossoms" (the loveliness of Japan), and "Orange Blossoms" (the flowers of weddings) in one lovely specialty. It was this kind of beauty that he stood for. His

passing brings sharply to our minds the values of art, style, and dignity that we shall have to try to foster without his presence.

John Muri

I met Don shortly after he came here from Saginaw, Michigan in the mid Twenties. He played at the Broadway Capitol and I played on the opposite shift from him. I was thrilled with his ultra modern arrangements of songs of those days. He was a handsome man and very kind and considerate. I remember a little incident that stays with me. My mother had given me a small hand mirror which I took with me to all the theatres in the dressing rooms. When I left the Broadway Capitol and went to the Palms State, I left the mirror by mistake in Don's dressing room. When I went to get it, Don said "Oh Marge can't you leave it with me? It has brought me such good luck."

Don went down South to play after that and later returned to the Fisher Theatre where he performed for quite a long time. After the termination of that job he went to the Dearborn Inn and was there for several years. To my knowledge that was Don's last professional engagement. He was an Honorary member of D.T.O.C. and gave several concerts which were magnificent.

I did not see Don for quite a while before his death but corresponded with him and was greatly grieved at his passing as I know the whole music world is.

Marge Nivens