



John Seng at Radio City Music Hall. — (P. Miller Photo)

NEW YORK CHAPTER HOSTS

JOHN SENG AT RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

by Allan Day

On Sunday morning February 13 Radio City Music Hall saw an audience collected of New York chapter faithfuls plus organ-minded out of towners. Certainly, for anyone who is familiar with the brilliant musicianship of John Seng and the fame of the Music Hall Organ this was one attraction worth traveling for.

Following a warm greeting from Claud Beckham, John began his program with "Tonight" from *West Side Story* using registration most characteristic of the Music Hall Wurlitzer. Next was an interesting arrangement of LeRoy Anderson's "Sleigh Ride" boasting Sengian harmonic treatment that lent an effective spirit to this standard. The three numbers which followed; namely "Summer of 42'", "Wachet Auf" by J.S. Bach and the suite from "The Nutcracker", made use of the organ in a manner that was most colorful and orchestral. Here

John brought out beautiful solo voices that are too often rendered undistinguishable in fuller registration.

During the intermission the Good Will Ambassador of the Music Hall stage, RCMH Vice President, John H. Jackson, revealed much of the magic of the "behind-the-scenes" mechanisms that make each show a wonder of entertainment even to 1972's sophisticated audiences.

John Jackson has been a good friend of ATOS through association with prominent members such as Richard Simonton and the late Ben M. Hall, whose memory the audience reflected upon in silent tribute as requested by Mr. Jackson. Arthur Cox, New York Chapter Chairman, presented on behalf of the N.Y.T.O.S. Board of Directors an honor to Mr. Jackson in the form of an Honorary Membership in ATOS and the chapter.

Our ears were then filled with the

sound of Chopin's Fantasy-Impromptu. But was it John Seng or Ashley Miller? Nevertheless, the audience was treated to an admirable tribute from one great musician to another. (John graciously acknowledged that he was inspired by Ashley's famous arrangement.) With the right hand console sitting in its twin performance perch we just about guessed what John had up his sleeve as he respectfully introduced Lee Erwin who joined him in an effective dialogue of "It's Been A Long Time."

Each of John's numbers had something special to offer the audience. This writer, however, finds it difficult to resist revisiting each one in detail, as would be fitting in a review. Instead of a lengthy commentary of each piece as to the stylistic and musical approach I would say this. To all his numbers John exercised good judgement in handling the organ as much as an orchestral musical instrument as possible.

At the time John was using individual ranks to achieve orchestral realism, the organ seemed quite faint in that large room. I feel that this, however, is the essence of the organ and was well worth throwing my ears for. I think this treatment revealed to New Yorkers, and to us, that this instrument is more than just an intermission filler. With John Seng and John Jackson, The New York Chapter will do well to repeat this one. □

LEN CLARKE TO HEAD ATOS ADVERTISING

Leonard R. Clarke, former manager for organist Arsene Siegal, has been appointed advertising manager for THEATRE ORGAN magazine, effective March 1, 1972. A member of the Chicago Area chapter, Len will assume the duties of Dick Schrum who asked to be released as advertising manager, a position he has held since 1970.

A purchasing agent for The Schwinn Bicycle Company, Len Clarke wrote *Pipe Dreams, Chicago, U.S.A.*, a feature article about radio station pipe organs, for the June, 1969 issue of THEATRE ORGAN.

Advertising correspondence for THEATRE ORGAN magazine should be directed to: ATOS Advertising, 2231 North Burling Street, Chicago, Illinois 60614. □