

BLACKOUT AT CLAPHAM JUNCTION but the Organ played on!

by Lee Haggart

The effect of the recent electrical power shortage in Great Britain on organ enthusiasts is revealed in this communique from across the "pond."

A new high in devotion to the art of theatre organ must have been set recently by the members of the Theatre Organ Club of England. On Sunday February 13, 1972 the concert at the Granada Theatre, Clapham Junction, London, presented three favorite theatre organists under the most difficult of conditions. The coal miners' strike and the resulting shortage of electrical power made the concert date doubtful due to the rotation shutdown of electrical power in the various sections of Metropolitan London.

A good attendance, most unexpected in view of the chance of blackout with only a five minute warning, encouraged the general secretary and the organists to put the program on as announced. After a hasty consultation with the theatre manager and his staff the program was allowed to proceed.

The theatre auditorium lights were not used. All seating of the large audience was done using two "work lights," 500 watt "clear" bulbs mounted on top of a seven foot standard.

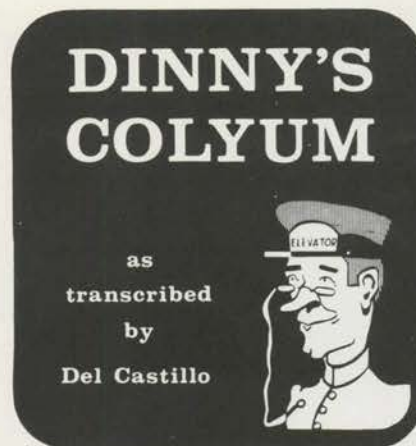
With the audience seated the work

lights were cut off and a spotlight was centered on the console position. The organ lift brought David Sheppard and the three-manual Wurlitzer up. When the lift attained solo position and stopped, the organ blower was started, not before.

Ralph Bartlett, acting master of ceremonies, using the public address system explained the house lighting arrangement in one word: "none!" The spotlight and public address were turned off and the program proceeded with nothing but the fire exit lights glowing. John Mann and Ray Bains were each introduced by momentary use of the spotlight and the P.A. Organists exchanged position with the lift in solo position. The program closed with a spotlight on the last organist as the lift went down. Then the work lights came on to allow the audience to depart. In the words of Ralph Bartlett as he made the first introduction "you came to *hear* the organ and the management is making that possible — but no lights."

Most of the audience seemed to like the opportunity of hearing the organ alone without the trimmings, giving each artist excellent support.

As we said: Surely this must be a record of some kind for devotion to the theatre organ. □



They's somethin kinda interestin goin on lately that takes me way back pratically to The Berth of a Nation. What I mean is they've started to show the old silent pictures all over again, and then they get the organ players to play the music for them just like they used to back in the twenties. I can remember back to them old silent movie theyters when all they had at first was a piano player and sometimes a drummer to put in all the sound effects. Then pretty soon they started puttin in them theayter organs which they called Unit Orkestras on acct. they had all kinds of different sounds on them which was suppose to sound like a orkestra. So then the piano players had to rassel with these organs. Sometimes they tried usin church organ players but that didnt work so good on acct. the church organ players wasnt hep to the kind of music they needed for pictures. So the piano players got in with both feet as you might say, except they just used there left feet for the pedals so they got to be called left-footed organ players.

Not havin a tin ear they say I got so I could tell whether the organ players was good at there jobs or not. A lot of them would just kinda dribble through a picture without usin any music. Some feller in the know about harmonics I guess you call them said that a organ player could play a whole adventure picture just usin what I think he called diminishin sevenths whatever they are. They had little tunes they used for different kinds of scenes. One of them was called misteriosos and it was in the miner and it went dum, dum, dum, dum, da-a-a-a, dum. Then they was another one for edgitatos and that was in miner too only it went faster like this — daddladdlum, daddladdlum. I guess they was



THE HOOSIER Auditorium Theatre

Whiting, Indiana

— presents exclusively —

DICK SMITH

Featured Artist at the forthcoming
1972 Theatre Organ Convention in Washington, D.C.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3RD — 8:00 P.M.

The Finest Selection of Your Popular Music at the Mighty Wurlitzer

other ones too but that's all the ones I remember.

Then they was the kind of organ players who could read good and they got out a lot of music they got the names of from what they called cue sheets. All the music depts. of the movie companies would make up these cue sheets with the place in the picture they was to use called cues, like for instance Man leaps on horse, and then it would say Hurry No. 8 by Lake and then give how long it was suppose to last, and then maybe the cue sheet would have two or three main themes for the different carakters to be use all through the picture. They was composers like this Mr. Lake and Mrs. Savino and Mr. Zamecnik and a lot of other riters who didnt do nothin but rite these things they called mood music and the only trouble is that it was a kind of phony music that could start and stop most any place, so that when the organ player sees the next cue on the screen he can jump to the next piece of music and no bones broke as you might say.

And then finally they was the real good players somethin like Mr. Gaylord Carter who is now called Mr. Flicker Fingers on acct. he has been makin a lot of jack goin around the country and playin the organ for the old Harold Lloyd pictures, and fellers like him and Mr. Lew White and Mr. John Hammond and Mr. Velazco and Mr. Oliver Wallace and a lot like that could impervise real good so it sounded like good music and they had a good memory for pieces from the classick composers that would fit the action just right and it was a pleasure to hear them play. Mr. Carter he made up a meddley he calls The Chase and it goes lickety-scat and it has every fast piece you ever heard of all rolled into one long piece and whenever he plays it I can just see those crazy old autos tearing along until they go over the cliff and turn over and burst into flames. So we still got some of those guys around like Mr. Koury and Mr. Castillo and Mr. Muri and Mr. Erwin who can make them organs sit up and talk and make those old silent pictures seem about twicet as good as they are. □

something to CROW about!



**THE ATOS
NATIONAL CONVENTION
JULY 10 thru 14, 1972**



ALOHA

Since our last "Aloha", the Chapter has been keeping quite active.

Back in December, the first public concert was presented on the recently completed Hawaii Theatre installation. The former Princess Theatre 4/16 Robert Morton was given it's public debut jointly by local staff theatre organist John DeMello and fellow member George Krecji. Over 130 people were present for this premiere concert and were also witness to a little "surprise". John DeMello had just finished a musical trip across the U.S.A. and was ready for George to take over the second half of the program, when Aloha Chapter's Roger Angell walked onstage and, on behalf of the chapter, presented John with an Honorary Life Membership in the Aloha Chapter. It was in gratitude for his many years of devoted work and dedication in the promotion and preservation of the theatre organ in Hawaii. Judging by the many friends John has gained over the years while at the console in the islands, the award was well-deserved. Roger confided to the audience during the presentation how difficult it was to lure John away from chapter meetings on two occasions so the award could be discussed without his knowledge. Needless to say, John was deeply appreciative of the honor.

Following the second half of the concert, the Aloha Chapter held a reception for members and guests in our newly-decorated chapter room backstage at the theatre.

This year's activities began with an "Aloha" concert featuring member George Krecji. "Aloha" in Hawaiian can mean either "welcome" or "good-bye", and in this case it meant both; welcoming the New Year and bidding goodbye to George, who'll soon be leaving the islands.

The concert, Sunday morning, Feb-

ruary 20th at the Hawaii Theatre drew over 200 fans of the theatre organ. George played for a very receptive audience for nearly an hour, touching upon many different styles of music.

As if *one* organ concert wasn't enough for George, the following week he played a repeat performance at a meeting of one of the local *electronic* organ clubs. When queried about his preference, George said he definitely liked the pipes better . . . don't we all?

While all the details haven't been worked out yet, the chapter has scheduled its second concert of the year for Sunday, March 19th featuring frequent isle visitor and theatre organist Elbert LaChaille.

And finally, a reminder to all ATOS members to be sure and look us up when you visit the islands. Aloha!

LOWELL ANGELL

CENTRAL OHIO

Three concerts are scheduled in Columbus on the Ohio Theatre's Mighty 4/20 Morton. Longtime staff organist Roger Garrett will return for the fourth time on March 11 followed by Gaylord Carter in his third appearance on April 29 and Dennis James on May 19. Gaylord will present his special 50th anniversary show plus accompanying "The Winning of Barbara Worth". Dennis, in his first appearance at the Ohio, will be presenting a couple of silent goodies including Laurel & Hardy and Charlie Chaplin.

COTOS member Tom Hamilton and the Rodgers Organ Co. will be scoring a first with the unveiling in May of Tom's fabulous Rodgers-Morton organ in his home. Rodgers design engineers have been working closely with Tom for several months to come up with a considerably modified Rodgers 340 built into a Morton 3 manual console. The new hybrid will feature an equiv-