



Mildred Alexander (center) bares her heart while surrounded by beauty: Ann Tanner (left) and Carol Jones. — (Stufoto)



Organ Festival Electrifies Asilomar

by Hal Steiner



Jeanette and Marvin Bellis, Festival 'regulars' for years, try out a new model in the Hammond showroom. — (Stufoto)



Carol Jones acknowledges applause following a smashing reading of score highlights from the movie, "Around the World in 80 Days," played on the Rodgers model 340. (Stufoto)

The Annual Home Organ Festival chalked up its second successful run at its new Asilomar Calif. home (near Monterey), for five brisk and sunny September days (19-24) with attendance up twenty percent over last year. The locale is the Pacific Grove Conference Grounds, a sandy, sprawling park bounded on one side by the Pacific Ocean and the little town of Pacific Grove on the other. The park, with its widely separated showrooms and auditoriums, and its woodsy, country atmosphere, provides an ideal setting for organ aficionados to combine their musical interest with the desire for a vacation.

The schedule for the 13th stanza was much like that of previous years with mornings reserved for classes, workshops and a light breakfast, afternoons with one or two concerts scheduled, then free time for swimming (pool or ocean), tennis, visiting showrooms or just loafing. After dinner the

concerts started, as many as five in an evening. These ran about 55 minutes with 10 minute breaks between. All concerts were held in Merrill Hall, a large wooden structure with excellent acoustics. For the first time in several years the Festival accommodated a "full house" of exhibitors, ranging from factory participation to nearby music stores and organ retailers. Each of the twelve organ or auxiliary gadget exhibitors was scheduled for three concerts, at least one of them the coveted evening spot. These shows were usually (but not always) over by midnight, then the action was taken over by the exhibitors' showrooms where organists attending the Festival as guests and amateurs with various degrees of skill often played through the night. On the last night the local police called twice to report that organ music at 3:00 a.m. was disturbing the sleep of Pacific Grove denizens, and issued orders to "pipe down."



THEY STAGED THE FESTIVAL. Directors Gene Pofert and Ken Skooneberg present a Festival photo album to Chairman Tiny James (right) in appreciation of Tiny's skill in running a smooth show. The grin on Ken's face might be due to his marriage a week earlier. (Stufoto)



'Romeo' of the Festival was ATOS 1972 'Hall of Fame' choice, Lloyd del Castillo, shown clutching a not unwilling Ann Tanner. 'Del' caught little sleep during the five days but he made a solid hit in the showrooms, day and night. — (Stufoto)



Ex-silent movie organist Marguerite Johnson of Anchorage, Alaska, models her sixteenth note sunglasses during a Festival break. — (Stufoto)



Rex Koury, playing a 'one transistor tone generator' Allen computer model, rated spontaneous applause as he marched 'the saints' in. — (Stufoto)

A handful of ex-theatre organists was on hand as guests to liven the after hour showroom sessions, among them one-time Broadwayite Arlo Hults, Dunstedter protege Eloise Rowan (who opened the Denver Paramount), Marguerite Johnson who mused in from Anchorage, Alaska, and southern California's Lloyd del Castillo, ATOS' 1972 Hall of Fame selectee. The latter was easily the most energetic of all, with many an all night playing stint to his credit.

Of course there were a number of theatre veterans on either the Festival staff or on the exhibitors' payrolls as concert artists, among them Tiny James (Festival Chairman), Eddie Osborn (Baldwin), Mildred Alexander (Hammond), Everett Nourse (Doric Records), Byron Melcher (Thomas), Porter Heaps (City Music Co., Walnut Creek), Rex Koury (Allen) and Tom Hazleton (Conn) who opened the San Francisco Avenue theatre as a silent movie house a few years ago playing the 3/14 Wurlitzer.

Other exhibitor-sponsored artists were: Alden Skinner (Allen), Tom Sheen (Gulbransen), Jack Doll Jr. (Baldwin), Paul Quarino (Wurlitzer), Bud Iverson (Conn), Hal Randall (Baldwin), Ralph Wolf (Thomas), Dave Fredericks (ARP Synthesizer), Jonas Nordwall (Rodgers), Ann Tanner (Yamaha), Donn Clayton (Gulbransen & Concert Co.) Bill Irwin (Yamaha), Hal Vincent (Baldwin), Gus Pearson (Wurlitzer), Carol Jones (Rodgers), Wally Brown (Conn), Bill Thomson (Rodgers), and Hammond's inter-woven pair, Axel Alexander and Shay Torrent. Doric Records' artists Everett Nourse (organ) and Frank Denke (piano), played a duet concert, recreating a portion of their current release, "Who?" Editor Bill Worrall was there, representing his publication, *THE ORGANIST*.

There was much emphasis this year on "now sound" producers, either as additions to existing organs (ARP and Concert Co.) or as integral features of standard organs (Wurlitzer and Baldwin), ARP offers auxilliary sound benders which warp and generally "reshape" sounds in a number of ways at between \$1000 and \$2000, depending on the number of effects desired. Concert Company (an offshoot of Concert Recording) offers something similar but as separate units to add, some of which can be used to augment a pipe organ, for example, Tuned Kettledrums and plucked String



The Festival's 'Carrie Nation', Jean Marolich of Seattle, takes her saloon busting seriously. She showed up at Festival Cocktail parties in a black and severe 'Carrie' costume, armed with a bible and axe, urging imbibers of the dangers of 'Demon Rum.' And without visible success. One old soak presented her with the autographed bottle he had drained during the week. — (Stufoto)



Porter Heaps, remembered for his Chicago radiocasts, played for a west coast music store on a Saville organ. — (Stufoto)



Conn's Wally Brown entertained with unusual harmonizations of pop tunes, equally unusual bar room ballads and homespun 'pomes.' — (Stufoto)

Bass. In addition to a number of organ voices (all available individually), Concert has a complete electronic pedal bass which could add much bottom zing to a pipe organ.

Aside from sound benders, with the exception of Rodgers the trend toward jamming console stoprails, side jambs and backboards with flashy gimmicks which chop, distort, repeat and emphasize continues as it has for the past several years. These "sales pushers" are probably most useful to the salesman closing a deal and to the cocktail lounge organist, but the average Festival-goer seemed much more interested in advances in organ tonalities toward the pipe organ ideal. In this area no sharp breakthroughs were noted but most agreed that the majority of organs have been tonally refined, even since last year's Festival.

Although the Festival is considered mainly a good public relations show and future sales stimulant by ex-



Byron Melcher did his stuff on the Thomas company's popular 3-deck spinet. Note the deep-cut Robert Morton-style horseshoe. (Stufoto)

hibitors, a considerable number of organs were sold on the spot this year. The opportunity prospects have to compare many brands of instruments at the Festival is duplicated only at the Chicago NAMM show. Six of the exhibitors contacted during the final day reported they had sold some organs. The number ranged between three and fourteen. It can be assumed that these and the remainder of this year's exhibitors were quite satisfied with the effectiveness of the Festival as a merchandiser because every one of them has signed up for the 1973 Festival. They were aware that two prospective exhibitors had to be turned



Ann Tanner is amused by a photographer seeking 'leg art.' Ann concertized for Yamaha. — (Stufoto)

down this year for a lack of additional showroom facilities. With additional buildings going up on the park grounds, more accommodations can be anticipated.

This year's Festival assumed a leisurely pace which gave the visitor enough time to appreciate the perfect weather, the heavily wooded park (deer can be seen feeding at night), and the camaraderie of many minds with similar interests, whether they were merchants, music lovers, sales prospects, organ buffs or just musically-minded vacationers. More than eleven hundred of them attended this year. □



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Dear Sirs:

Many thanks for publishing my story "Nostalgic Memories" in the October issue of THEATRE ORGAN. It is unfortunate that two printing errors have been noted which may confuse some readers:

The organs both at the Imperial and at the St. Denis Theatres did not have two (2) three manual consoles at each theatre (note page 33). Both of these theatres had "two and three fifth (2-3/5) manual consoles. Great and accompaniment were 61 notes each, while the short top solo manual had only 37 notes, hence we called it 2-3/5 manuals. These unique consoles must have been Hope-Jones specials, and perhaps that's where the electronic manufacturers got the idea for their sawed-off keyboards.

The second printing error is on page 33. The article says "I did not go to the Capitol to see the organ, but to hear the organ". It should read "I did not go to the Capitol to see the picture, but rather to hear the organ" etc.

Thanking you, and with kind regards,

Charles Wright
2865 Notre Dame St.
Lachine 600, Quebec, Canada

Dear Sir:

I am continually amazed at the amount of information Lloyd Klos digs up for his "Nuggets from the Golden Days."

In the August 1972 issue he men-