

# Closing Chord

**Lawrence Schwartz**, 23, son of John and Ann Schwartz of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, died on Sunday, September 3, 1972 as a result of an accident incurred while pursuing his hobby near the Arden Trolley Museum located North of Washington, Pennsylvania.



Larry Schwartz

Larry was well known for his total dedication to both organ and trolley restorations. He will be best remembered for his unselfish love for his friends and his eagerness to help them in their work by giving of his time and materials.

At the time of his death, Larry was serving as Vice President of the West Penn Chapter of the ATOS. He recently had been appointed chairman of the West Penn Theatre Organ Educational Workshop. A memorial fund has been established by the Chapter in Larry's name. Proceeds from this fund will go to a local charity for blind children.

Larry Schwartz will not be forgotten by the many friends he made during his short life-time. □

**Louis Weir**, a popular radio, theatre and night club organist in the Boston area for nearly 40 years, passed away August 27, 1972 at his home. Mr. Weir was a widower and lived many years near downtown Boston, on picturesque "Beacon Hill."

He was born in Boston and began his career at the age of 15 as assistant organist in Dorchester's Codman Square Theatre. He was staff organist at WBZ for many years and was also a featured organist at several downtown theatres during the 1930s and 1940s when vaudeville and stage shows were presented. During the years when Blinstrub's nightclub at West Broadway and D street in South Boston presented many of the top show business attractions, he was the house organist. He had played at Blinstrub's the night the club burned down, in 1968.

He also composed many songs and made arrangements for many musicians. As an electronics specialist, he developed the first cordless microphone to be used by performers, such as singer Patti Page. He played the organ at conventions and sportsmen's shows held at old Mechanics Building in Back Bay.

He leaves two brothers, David of Brookline and Charles, of New York, and a sister, Miss Ruth Weir of Miami Beach. □

**Richard Ellsasser**, renowned concert organist and composer, died recently in New York City at the age of 45. Mr. Ellsasser, who made his home in Los Angeles, Boston and New York, was in partial retirement from concertizing following a stroke in 1968.

Ellsasser's musical career began as a pianist when he made his debut at the age of 7. His interest in the organ began two years later shortly after he joined the boy's choir at Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland, where he was born. Less than a year later, he was presenting all-Bach organ recitals in the East. After studies with Joseph Bonnet, Winslow Cheney, and Albert Reimenschneider, he made his New York organ debut and began a career as concert organist. An academic prodigy as well as musical, he graduated from high school at 14 and received a BA in music at 17. He studied at Boston University of Theology and the University of Southern California.



Richard Ellsasser - (Stufoto)

Ellsasser was the youngest person in history to memorize and perform the 250 organ works of Bach. His work as head of the organ department at the National Music Camp, Interlochen, Michigan, and other scholarly activities won him the high honor of election as life-fellow in the International Institute of Arts and Letters in 1961.

Many of his compositions for organ have become standards of the modern repertoire. His ballet "Greenwich Village" won the Henry Levitt award. His recordings have consistently been the top selling organ albums of the world, and his brilliant improvisations, were a highlight of many Ellsasser concerts. □

**John Morie**, one of West Penn Chapter's staunchest supporters, died on October 16, 1972. At the age of 84, he was an active participant in all chapter activities, and his passing will be a great loss to the chapter. Making "caravans" to points of theatre organ interest, John was always

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John Morie

present, doing his best to make each and every event a success. He was a professional photographer with many blue ribbons to his credit. His camera was always in position, ready to capture any situation on film which he thought would benefit the chapter's pictorial archives, or delight his many friends. West Penn will greatly miss this humble, kind and unassuming man. However, his love for his fellowman will be the legacy he leaves behind for all to remember and cherish. □

**John F. Hammond**, 78, veteran theatre and church organist, died in Bogalusa, Louisiana on October 16 after an illness of two months.

Following his musical education, he was organist at Brooklyn's Strand Theatre, and while there, served as president of the New York Society of Theatre Organists. In 1922, he was appointed to the faculty of the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. In 1924, he became organist at New York's Piccadilly Theatre, and about a year later, was featured in Warner's Theatre in that city.

When the \$2 million Saenger Theatre in New Orleans opened in 1927, Mr. Hammond was at the console of the Moller, playing for three years. Following the demise of the theatre organ, he turned to the stage for awhile. Bogalusa, where he was organist and choir director of a church, was his home for 28 years. He is survived by his wife. □

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