

**NUGGETS
from the
GOLDEN
DAYS**



Nuggets prospected by Lloyd E. Klos

This time, we have found some nuggets pertaining to the schools which had, and organists who taught, courses for theatre organists. References were American Organist (AO), Diapason (D), Jacobs (J), Melody (M) magazines and local press (LP).

Mar. 1926 (AO) FREDERICK KINSLEY, teacher, and organist at New York's Hippodrome, performed for the New York Society of Theatre Organists recently, giving a demonstration of various organ styles, starting with organ repertoire and ending with a slide feature.

Oct. 1926 (J) CLAUDE V. BALL, who was demonstrator at the Cincinnati and Chicago offices of Wurlitzer for over nine years, is engaged in private teaching in the Kimball Building in Chicago. He has specialized in the theatre organ and is doing very well.

Oct. 1926 (J) HENRY FRANCIS PARKS, formerly of the Pacific Coast, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Louisville etc., has signed a five-year contract to head classes in modern theatre organ playing at the Chicago Musical College. CHARLES H. DEMOREST, who will

also teach theatre organ at the school, is organist at the Vitagraph, a north side house.

Oct. 1926 (J) F. LOUIS FRETTE plays a mean Wurlitzer at the La Petite Theatre in Kankakee, Ill. He has just completed a course in advanced organ with FRANK VAN DUSEN in Chicago.

Jan. 1927 (J) FRANK MELGARDE of the Barton Organ School is kept busy with a large class of students. He is also broadcasting from the Barton Studio at Wabash & Madison streets in Chicago.

Jan. 1927 (M) RALPH WALDO EMERSON, who conducts the largest motion picture organ school in the country (15 available organs), reports a very good business outlook for the season and seems to have all the students he can handle.

Jan. 1927 (J) HAROLD J. LYON is solo organist at the Legion Theatre's Robert Morton in Marshalltown, Iowa. His teachers were FRANK VAN DUSEN, EDWARD BENEDICT and AMBROSE LARSEN of Chicago. Harold recently opened the new Hilgreen-Lane organ in the Capitol Theatre in Ottumwa, Iowa.

Dec. 1927 (D) ELWYN OWEN, formerly the organist at the Garden Theatre in Milwaukee, has opened a school for movie organists and reports good enrollment.

Mar. 1928 (J) The Emil Velazco Organ Studios at 1658 Broadway in New York are being advertised as "America's most modern theatre organ school." "Interviews and komedy cartoons" are studied as part of the course. EMIL VELAZCO is currently a Columbia recording artist and broadcasts on "The Witching Hour" on WOR.

June 1928 (LP) LLOYD DEL CASTILLO broadcasts from his organ school each evening at 7:30 over

WNAC, Boston on 650 Kilocycles.

Aug. 1928 (D) At the Vermont Knauss School of Theatre Organ Playing at Allentown, Pa., a 2-manual and a 3-manual Kimball and a Wurlitzer are used. The school was established in 1924, and contains all facilities for turning out players ready for theatre organ work.

Apr. 1929 (D) LEW WHITE has returned to the Roxy Theatre in New York as head of its organ department. He had been granted a leave of absence to found his organ school, the White Institute. He broadcasts each Saturday and Monday evening over WJZ.

Apr. 1929 (AO) The \$85,000 studio of C. SHARPE MINOR has been closed through legal proceedings, and the 2-manual and 3-manual Robert Mortons installed there are reported for sale. Mr. Minor is now playing at the United Artists Theatre in Los Angeles.

GOLD DUST The graduates of theatre organ instruction played all over — in the big cities and the small towns, as this memory-twitching list will show: 10/20 HOWARD Z. LONG, Lyric Theatre in Reading, Pa. . . . 7/20 OLIVER WALLACE, Liberty's Wurlitzer, Seattle . . . 12/20 LOVE DAVIS, "The Dixie Girl", in Liberty Seattle . . . 12/23 EDWARD A. HANCHETT, Victory Theatre, Fayetteville, Ark. . . . 12/24 EDWIN LYLES TAYLOR, Chattanooga's Tivoli . . . 1/25 ARTHUR GUTOW, Chicago (Ill.) Theatre; MILTON CHARLES, Chicago's Tivoli . . . 2/25 GEORGE LEE HAMRICK, Birmingham's Strand; CLAUDE HARTZELL, Memphis' Loew's Palace . . . 3/25 FRANK RATH, JR., Denver's Rivoli; MILTON SLOSSER, St. Louis' Missouri Theatre . . . 4/25 ALBERT F. BROWN, Forest Hills, N.Y. Theatre . . . 5/25 OTTO F. BECK, Washington's Tivoli . . . 6/25



JOSEPH STOVES, Birmingham's Temple . . . 7/25 GEORGE ALBERT BOUCHARD, Shea's Hippodrome, Buffalo; JOHN HAMMOND, New York's Piccadilly; HAROLD RAMSBOTTOM and FRANK STEWART ADAMS, New York's Rivoli . . . 10/25 FRED C. VOSS, Newark's Branford . . . 12/25 FRANK RATH, Jr., Denver's Isis . . . 4/26 HENRY B. MURTAGH, Buffalo's Lafayette . . . 7/26 HENRY B. MURTAGH, New York's Rivoli; J. MILLER SMITH, Newark's Mosque Theatre . . . 8/26 FRANK E. WOODHOUSE Jr., Colonial in Gillespie, Ill.; LEO HEIR, Rialto's Barton Grande, Kankakee, Ill.; ROBERT WILSON ROSS, Liberty Theatre in Carnegie, Pa.; LEONARD LEIGH, Capitol in St. Paul, Minn.; FREDERICK SMITH and WALTER WILD, Brooklyn's Mark Strand . . . 9/26 FRED MC MULLEN, Grand Opera House, Pembroke, Ontario, Canada; MELVIN OGDEN, MISS WHITEHEAD and MRS. PERKINS, alternating at Atlanta's Howard; H. B. HARPER, Troy (N.Y.) Theatre; ELSIE THOMPSON, St. Paul's Capitol; ROBERT J. BERENTSEN, Rochester's Eastman; C. SHARPE MINOR, Newark's Mosque . . . 10/26 HARRY WILSON, Castle in Bloomington, Ill.; TOM GRIERSON, Shea's Buffalo . . . 11/26 L. V. TANGEMAN, Coldwater (Ohio) Theatre; QUENTIN KINGSBACK, Palace in Petersburg, Va. . . . 12/26 RICHARD TWEEDY, Troy (N.Y.) Theatre; MARGARET WATKINS, Washington's Colony . . . 1/27 CHARLES KUSSEROW, Racine, Wisc. State Theatre; ROBERT K. HALE, Varsity's 3-manual Reuter in Lawrence, Kansas; STUART BARRIE, St. Louis' Ambassador . . . 9/27 CEDIL TEAGUE, St. Louis Theatre . . . 10/27 MARTHA LEE, Strand in Cumberland, Md. . . . 12/27 URBAN DEGER, Cincinnati's State; JOHNNY BERTRAND, Montreal's Verdun Park Theatre; H. B. HARPER, Rochester's State.

That should do it for now. So long, sourdoughs!

*MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR!*

Jason and The Old Prospector



The 3/7 Wurlitzer at the State Cinema in Springfield is alive and well.

WURLITZER GETS NEW LEASE ON LIFE

For many years, the Wurlitzer pipe organ at the State Cinema in Springfield, Ohio has been silent.

When Bob Cowley and his family moved to Dayton, Ohio, Bob remembered the Wurlitzer and decided to investigate to see if it was still in its original home.

Upon contacting Mr. Mike Chakers, owner of the theatre, Bob found out that the organ was still there, but due to the death of Mr. Nickals, organist and manager from 1923 to 1970, the organ had not been played very much. Time and neglect had taken its toll on the Wurlitzer and after Bob had played it for about a half-hour, he knew there was only one thing to do: Rebuild the organ. As Bob found out, the last time any major work had been done was around 1963, when the solo chamber had been worked on due to water damage from a leaky roof. No work had been performed on the main chamber or the console during this time. After the water damage occurred in the Solo Chamber, the plaster had turned to powder and continued to drop on the chests and relay.

Bob contacted the Cincinnati Chapter for help, but they were already involved with a rebuilding project and would not be completed with it until early '74". Bob, being a member of the Motor City Chapter in Michigan, knew that he could not gain help from them since a five hour drive was out of the question.

Not wanting to wait until a later date, Bob and his wife, Linda, started the major overhaul on the Wurlitzer organ.

As many know, Wurlitzer made a lot of modifications on their different styles as some theatres needed some

things that other theatres didn't. The organ, Opus 1754, is a Special Style "E", 3 manuals and 7 ranks. Instead of just being 2 manuals, they added another to make it a 3 manual.

The first portion of the project involved the console. After three layers of paint were removed and hours of sanding were done, the console was ready for a new finish, antique white with gold trim. Full credit must go to Bob's wife for without her help on this project, the console would not be nearly finished. She re-leathered the stop tab pneumatics and helped replace broken contact blocks with new ones. After the console was completed, she recovered the bench with a foam rubber padding and covered that with red velvet.

Next came the chambers and after burning a lot of "midnight oil", they were finally back in shape. All the dead notes came back to life after burned out magnets were replaced. After several tunings, the Wurlitzer sounds and performs just as good as when it was first installed 50 years ago.

The theatre organ is coming back to life in Springfield and several silent films and shows are being planned by the theatre. So that the public will realize that the organ is still there, every Friday night the organ is used before and after shows. During the holidays, it will be used three nights out of the week, just to provide that silent era, "live theatre organ music." Without the help of Mr. Chakers, Mr. Chuck McBee, manager, and the theatre staff, all of this would not have become possible and a real theatre organ might have been lost from the public and the music world forever. □