



Loretta

"effects," notably a choo-choo train for "Orange Blossom Special," a whistling chorus for "Colonel Bogey" and his POW bridge builders, an almost convincing violin and marimba for "Melody of Love," tower chimes for "Get Me to the Church on Time," the surging sea and birds for "Ebb Tide," Glockenspiel and calliope for "Billboard March" and a grotesque, reedy "wah-wah" for "Getting to Know You." The effects are well integrated with the music and do not detract. Other tunes are "Do-Re-Mi," "Wonderbar," "Java," "Moonlight in Vermont," "Only You" (Viola with Harp accompaniment) and "Hey, Look Me Over." "Only You" is reminiscent of the beauty pageant theme, "Here She Is, Miss America."

Playing is clean, arrangements well conceived and considerable registration variety is in evidence. Ear-catching easy listening. □

ATOS LIBRARY MOVED

Lloyd Klos, chairman of the ATOS Historical Committee, announces that the ATOS Library has been moved to its permanent home in North Carolina. It is ready to serve the needs of the membership through the short-time loan of copies of material at moderate cost to ATOS chapters. Donations of music, cue sheets, scores, tapes, pictures, negatives, memorabilia may be made to:

Barry Simmons, Curator ATOS Library, Box 1021 Elon College, N. Carolina 27244.

Weekend of Music Coming in November

The Rochester Theatre Organ Society reminds all ATOS members of its "Weekend With the Wurlitzer," in observance of its Tenth Anniversary, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, November 1-3.

Festivities will begin on Friday evening with a 3-organist affair at the Auditorium Theatre, 875 Main St. E. David Peckham, 13-year-old Breesport, N.Y. organist, will present a half hour of music. He will be followed by Carleton James, Syracuse veteran theatre organist, who will accompany a silent newsreel and a short silent comedy. Luella Wickham, another veteran Syracuse organist, will wind up the evening with a half-hour of music.

On Saturday, Dennis James and the Singing Hoosiers will be featured in two concerts at the Auditorium at 2:30 and 8:15 P.M.

Sunday will feature Lawrence Welk's organist, Bob Ralston, in two concerts at the Auditorium Wurlitzer at 2:30 and 8:15 P.M.

There will be exhibits, socials and open console sessions on Saturday in locations within two miles of the Auditorium Theatre.

For those coming from out of town, the nearest hotel is the Colony East Inn at East Avenue and Alexander St. and is within 15 minutes' walking distance of the Auditorium. Within a two-mile radius are the Holiday Inn Downtown at 120 Main St. E., and the Nathaniel Rochester Motor Inn at 155 Broad St. E. All have parking facilities.

Additional information is obtainable by writing RTOS Weekend, Box 8114, Rochester, N.Y. 14617. □



Letters to the Editor concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are encouraged. Send them to the editor concerned. Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.

*Address: P.O. Box 1314
Salinas, Calif. 93901*

Your article in February 1974 THEATRE ORGAN concerning Shea's Hippodrome (see A Man - A Castle and A Wurlitzer) seems to have created some confusion as to my activities while in Toronto. I have received a number of letters from readers, especially in Canada, regarding this article.

Here are the facts:

In 1948 while organist of the Paramount, London, I accepted an offer to become Musical Director of Odeon Theatres Canada and to open the new Odeon Theatre in Toronto.

I had a Steinway grand in my home and an Ebhart grand in my dressing room at the Paramount. We sold the home but were unable to sell the grands so that the J. Arthur Rank organization shipped them along with my wife, two kids and a German shepherd dog to Toronto.

On arriving there I discovered that the Odeon had turned down a fine offer of a 4/22 Wurlitzer from Boston for \$2,000.00 (they were not about to have a used organ in a brand new theatre) so they paid \$33,000.00 for a rather limited Hillgreen-Lane.

I also found that the Musician's



Union was trying to prevent me from playing, but after negotiations they allowed me to open the theatre for three months providing that on completion the Odeon would give a twelve month contract at \$250.00 per week to a local organist.

Three organists without any theatre or pipe experience were auditioned and turned down. The irate union president announced that I would never be allowed to join the union and the Odeon organ remained silent for more than twelve months.

Actually the Hillgreen-Lane was not ready for the opening so I used a Hammond with four big speakers for the first two weeks.

We were not allowed to transfer any money out of England and I had to sell the Steinway to a local music dealer for \$900.00. After persistent efforts I was eventually allowed to join the union on signing an affidavit that I would not play for any Odeon Theatre in Canada for a period of five years.

1949 was rough but 1950 made up for it, I was offered the job at the Victoria Theatre (on the same Hammond) then a sponsored radio program for A&P Food Stores (which lasted four years) then a coast to coast weekly program on CBC.

One lady listened in every week from Philadelphia and made a special trip to see it, after one look at the old Franklin Legge she said "I'll never listen to that thing again".

In 1950 Quentin Maclean retired and I took over, delighted to be back on Wurlitzer pipes again at the old Shea's Theatre. I stayed there for four years, the last organist to play there, for soon after, it was torn down to make room for a new City Hall.

The firm (Famous Player's Corp) moved me to the University Theatre... once again on the same Hammond, after a few months I decided to head for California.

Sincerely,
Al Bollington

Dear Sir:

I am vastly amused by the article in Oct. 1973 issue of THEATRE ORGAN by John Muri about the Crawford style. I wrote some remarks to the same effect in a letter to THEATRE ORGAN some years ago, and learned what Mr. Muri will learn very shortly — that some people take per-

sonally, remarks that are not directed at them at all.

I think it is pretty much time we laid all the discussion of Crawford to rest with its illustrious inspirer; he was very popular, he *had* a very characteristic style, he was *not* a very great musician, and that is that. I am old enough to remember hearing him in person at the New York Paramount, and I was not greatly impressed, then — I thought that Lew White, for one, was at least his equal, and anyone who had the time and energy to ride the subway all the way up to Harlem and hear Fats Waller would hear some organ playing that put almost all the other theatre organists in the shade.

And listening to records, today, old and scratchy as they may be, I still think that Fats Waller was the greatest of them all. Oh, he didn't play the lush "theatre style" — in fact, of all the records of his that I have heard, I know of only one that he ever used the tremos all the way through (a recording of "Sugar") and as for Tibias — well, he played a Wurlitzer on most of these records, I think, but you'd never know the instrument had a Tibia on it — he stuck to Diapasons, strings and reeds — especially the Trumpet, as far as one can tell from those old recordings — it may have been a Post Horn, but the fidelity is not good enough to prove it.

And as for pedal playing and the use of the swell — his pedal parts were a lot more than mere umpah's and he had a little trick with the swell pedal that I have spent weeks trying to master, with only partial success — a quick push of the swell at the beginning of a note, followed by immediately

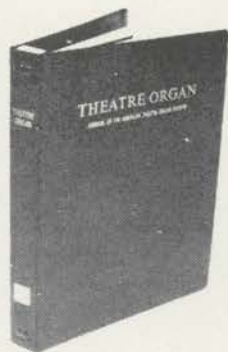
closing it again — the effect being an accent on a single note, and what Fats did with that, in the way of rhythmic accents has to be heard to be believed. It's easy enough to imitate on a Hammond with its instantaneous swell response, but on a pipe organ, those big shutters take time to get moving, and you have to learn exactly how fast, to anticipate the note by just enough to get the accent right at the beginning of it.

The fact is, it is pretty hard to tell just what kind of organ Fats made these early Victor discs on; as I said, if it had a Tibia, he never used it, and if it had any percussions, he never used them. This was just straight, *good*, professional organ playing, in a jazz idiom that was all his own. It would be just wonderful if RCA Victor could find, at least, the masters of "St. Louis Blues," "Lenox Avenue Blues," "Sloppy Water" and the "Rusty Pail," as a nucleus for a reissue of Wallers earliest and best recordings. Most of the stuff that has been reissued was taken off Army V-discs and other irregular sources, and is low in quality — though Riverside issued one disc of Fats on Hammond Organ, and that will be a huge surprise to anyone who thinks of the Hammond as thick, muddy and gummy — nobody has since gotten sounds out of the Hammond like Fats. And again, no trem.

If a few of those old masters could be found, and a good vinyl pressing made from them so it could be transferred to modern discs without excessive filtering, we might get an even better idea of what Fat's playing really sounded like.

Sincerely,
John S. Carroll

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