

A
MUSICAL
SALUTE
TO
RAY
BOHR

The Occasion: The 27th Anniversary of the chief organist of New York's renown Radio City Music Hall — Ray Bohr.

The Artists: LeRoy Norman Lewis, organist of the Light House Inn, Long Beach Island, New Jersey, and Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier, who was at the console of the Music Hall's great 4/56 twin-consoled Wurlitzer when the "Showplace of the Nation" opened in 1932.

The Sponsors: The New York Theatre Organ Society (N.Y. Chapter, ATOS).

The Audience: One Thousand Seven Hundred twelve devotees of the theatre pipe organ music and admirers of Ray Bohr, who lined sidewalks around the Music Hall as in days of old, patiently awaiting the opening of the theatre's doors at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, November 10.

The Program: A sparkling array of popular and classical music performed by LeRoy Lewis and "Cas" Parmentier with both consoles in full operation — LeRoy's portion being performed on the "regular" (stage right) console and Dr. Parmentier performing on the seldom-used stage left console. Both artists' musical tributes to Ray Bohr were enthusiastically received by the audience — and by Mr. Bohr himself who subsequently took over the "regular console" for a short program of his own in thanks to them and to the wonderful audience.

Those who attended came from half-way around the nation with so many ATOS chapters represented in the audience that time, and the sheer size of the audience, simply precluded the "chapter roll call" that tradi-

tionally marks NYTOS events at the Music Hall. However, several veteran ATOS'ers remarked to the chapter's officers that it may have been the largest attendance for any one-chapter function in the history of ATOS!

Wherever it may stand in the book of records, the event was truly a delight for the audience and performers alike. As an added feature, RCMH vice president and director of stage operations, John Jackson, took part personally in the program, demonstrating some of the Music Hall's remarkable mechanical facilities, reminiscing about highly amusing incidents in the Music Hall's past and, most importantly, paying his personal respects to Ray Bohr, a fellow veteran of the staff for the better part of three decades.

Jackson also revealed his gratitude and that of the Music Hall's staff for the highly constructive interest which the New York Chapter and all members of ATOS have in the great theatre and its matchless Wurlitzer. He said that the decision to extensively renovate and restore the instrument several years ago was a direct result of the new focus which the chapter and ATOS functions had placed upon the instrument in recent years.

Claud Beckham, who will be remembered by ATOS'ers throughout the country for having headed the "Fabulous Fifteenth" convention committee in New York in 1970, presided over the morning's program

with an assist from NYTOS chairman, Bill Warner.

After three hours of listening to three top-notch artists perform on the truly "Mighty Wurlitzer," the huge audience was still ready for more. And as the theatre's doors were opened to the general public, they were rewarded with a scintillating performance by yet a fourth top-notch musician, Jimmy Paulin, who took over the usual "organ overture" spot when the public began to file in and hunt for seats. He, too, received warm and enthusiastic responses from the audience and ATOS'ers present recalled his brilliant 1970 convention performance at the United Palace, Broadway and 175th Street — the former (and still luxurious) Loew's 175th St. theatre.

And to top off this exceptional day, the audience took in the brilliant new Christmas stage show — Rockettes and all, plus the New York premier of the noted new motion picture "The Little Prince."

As someone said afterwards to Chairman Bill Warner: "How will you ever top this?"

At the moment, neither Bill nor the members of his board quite have the answer. But they do have verbal orchids to bestow upon LeRoy Lewis and "Cas" Parmentier for developing such a splendid program.

And to Ray Bohr they offer "very best wishes for another, equally happy, successful and memorable 27 years at the RCMH console!" □

RAY BOHR

