

NUGGETS
from the
GOLDEN
DAYS



Prospected by Lloyd E. Klos

For the third time, Chicago will host the ATOS Convention next month. As a salute, Jason and I have found nuggets from that city and the surrounding area. References were American Organist (AO), Diapason (D), Exhibitor's Herald (EH), Metro-nome (Met.), Motion Picture Herald (MPH) and Local Press (LP).

Apr. 1916 (D) *The Rudolph Wurlitzer Co. is building a monster unit orchestra for Chicago, and on March 3, there were shown by the American Steel & Wire Co., films taken at the Wurlitzer factory in N. Tonawanda, N.Y. of the organ to be installed in the new Covent Garden Theatre on N. Clark St. near Diversey Blvd. These films were taken by the Essanay Co. and show the tremendous interior works of the instrument, with its masses of electric wires, and the great 4-manual console. The organist displays how one of these great orchestral units is handled.*

The Wurlitzer Co. has just opened a new pipe organ demonstration room at 615 S. Wabash Ave. in Chicago with Mr. JOHN HOWARD in charge. Mr. Howard is a fine organist and proposes to give demonstration recitals every day from 12 to 12:30. The room is handsomely fitted as a facsimile of a moving picture room.

May 1916 (D) The organ in the new Regent Theatre on S. Halsted near 68th St. in Chicago was dedicated by EMMET ROBERT GADERE on April 28. Mr. Gaderer played overture to "Tancredi" by Rossini; aria from "Mignon"; "The Rosary" by Ethelbert Nevin; prelude to third act and "Pilgrim's Chorus"

from "Tannhauser" by Wagner; and "The Chocolate Soldier" by Oscar Strauss.

Oct. 1926 (J) *In introducing to our readers the solo organist of Ascher Brothers' Terminal Theatre, staff organist of radio stations WGN and WLIB, Chicago's AMBROSE LARSEN, we have told you only half. Ambrose has been for years the official demonstrator of the Rudolph Wurlitzer Co.'s Chicago branch, which is quite an honor. Many an instrument would never have seen the light of day had Larsen continued as a professional pianist, for all he has to do is to put on the sobbing tibia on a ballad or do one of the many effects he has originated when, presto! The factory remains 90 days behind with its orders.*

The secret of Larsen's success is in his comic complex, for, like most really fat men, he is always laughing or telling some funny anecdote. Such hilarity is contagious and reflects itself in his music. He is one of the best jazz men in the business, although his marches are equally well played, being marked by a severity in regularity of tempo and brass band-like orchestration.

A group of the "professionals" was gathered around Larsen the other day, discussing musical fits or cynchronism. Finally, Ambrose turned to the crowd with the question, "What would you fellows play if you were to see on the screen a head floating down a river? Nothing else — just the head." One suggested "Floating Along Rag." Another "By the River," and there were two or three who seemed to hit near the idea. Larsen let out a big grin, and said, "No, you're all wet! I'd play 'I Ain't Got Nobody.' During the riot which ensued, one would be convinced of the humor of Ambrose Larsen.

Jan. 1927 (J) RALPH MASON HIX replaced JOHNNY DEVINE at the Biograph Theatre in Chicago when the latter left for his new job at the Mid-West Theatre.

Feb. 1927 (Met.) HENRY B. MURTAGH gave an organ concert on Sunday, January 16 at Balaban & Katz' Chicago Theatre. Hazel Eden, soprano and Mildred Waldman, pianist, also participated.

Feb. 12, 1927 (LP) HERBERT FITCH at the 4-manual Wurlitzer,

and Walter Blaufuss conducts the orchestra as Chicago's Sheridan Theatre opens.

Jan. 7, 1928 (EH) DON ISHAM, "The Flying Organist," is featured at Marks Brothers' Embassy Theatre in Chicago. He was formerly with Jensen Von Herberg, John Hamrick and other west coast circuits.

Jan. 7, 1928 (EH) RAMON BERRY is featured organist at the Alamo Theatre in Chicago. Photoplays and solos are his specialties.

June 1928 (LP) FRANCIS KROMAR is solo organist and PAUL ESTERLY is assistant organist at Chicago's Diversey Theatre.

Oct. 1928 (AO) ETWELL HANSEN is alternating as solo organist in Chicago's Tivoli and Uptown theatres.

Jan. 17, 1931 (MPH) *Ill less than a week with pneumonia, AL CARNEY, well known radio organist of Chicago, died in the Columbus Hospital there at the age of 33. Funeral services were held at St. Patrick's Church in Dubuque, the home of Carney's parents, who survive him.*

GOLD DUST: 11/27 RALPH H. BRINGHAM at Coronado's Barton in Rockford, Ill... 2/28 ARSENE SEIGAL broadcasting over WEBH from Chicago's Uptown... 4/28 BENNIE KREUGER, Uptown; HAROLD COBB, United Artists; LAWRENCE T. MANNING, Lexington in Chicago; FRED ROSLYN, Strand in Robinson, Ill... Joe Duci Bella provides us with names of organists playing Chicago houses in 1928: L. EARL ABEL, Congress; M. AXELROD, McVickers; GEORGE BAXTER, Harper; FRED BECK, Roosevelt; M. BERKENSTADT, Norshore; ALBERT F. BROWN, Granada & Marbro; FRED V. BROWN, Pantheon; J. CASSIDY, State-Lake; MILTON CHARLES, Oriental; DON GORDON, Lawndale; JOHNNY DEVINE, Patio; EDWARD EIGENSCHENK, Roosevelt; PAUL ESTERLY, Diversey; EARL ESTES, Tower; EDDIE FITCH, Sheridan; DEAN FOSSLER, Chicago; R. GEHRING, McVickers; CHAUNCEY HAINES, Norshore.

That should do it until we see you all in Chicago. So long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector □