

## NUGGETS from the GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected  
by Lloyd E. Klos



Once again, Jason and I send our readers Season's Greetings in the form of choice nuggets from all over the lode. References were *Diapason (D)*, *Motion Picture Herald (MPH)*, *Motion Picture World (MPW)*, and *Local Press (LP)*.

*Oct. 1916 (D)* The Wurlitzer in the Covent Garden Theatre in Chicago is used every afternoon and evening, and **John Howard** presides at the console, giving audiences an excellent conception of the possibilities of the instrument with his varied programs.

*July 1923 (MPW)* The Apollo Theatre at 52nd and Thompson streets in Philadelphia is being renovated and the organ is being enlarged. Original cost of the theatre was \$200,000. Renovation will cost \$30,000.

*Aug. 1923 (MPW)* Audiences in the Mission Theatre in San Francisco enjoy movies because the projection is good. Why? Whoever laid out the theatre, placed the projection booth at the rear of the main floor, thereby reducing the angle of projection to a minimum.

*June 1925 (MPW)* At Rochester's Eastman Theatre, the featured picture is *My Son*, starring Nazimova. The overture is Richard Wagner's "Rienzi," played by the Eastman Theatre Orchestra. The organ recital with **Robert J. Berentsen** at the console, featured the overture "Mignon." Olive McCue and Thelma Biracree alternating, appear as dancers in the number "LaPaloma." Alberto Sanchez is tenor.

*Aug. 1925 (MPW)* The Stratford Theatre in Chicago features organist **Doris Gutow** in a number "The Melody Which Made You Mine."

*Sep. 1925 (MPW)* **William Klaiss** and **Lew White** at the Stanley Theatre in Philadelphia played selections from *When You Smile*.

*Oct. 1925 (MPW)* A new player pipe organ has been installed in the Gautier Theatre in Kansas City, owned by Dick Liggett.

*Oct. 1926 (MPW)* L.O. Davis of the Virginia Amusement Co. of Hazard, Ky. says: "A pipe organ! The magic words in picture music! It is truly the music for this purpose, and every exhibitor in the country must sooner or later realize this great fact.

"With an organ and a good organist, your music can be made a seat-filling asset and with little expense, you can sell both organ music and your organist to your public so that they will be one of the most valuable drawing cards you have. All the big music publishers are furnishing gratis the many fine song specialties which can be made a regular feature of your program. Any exhibitor not taking advantage of this is losing a valuable addition to his program.

"Music is the most beautiful and powerful of all arts and is absolutely necessary in the picture theatre. The Vitaphone may some day become a wonderful success, but it

is not likely to replace organ music in the picture theatre. I venture to say that should many an actor or actress speak forth as their actions show on the screen, it would be less than half as effective as the strains from the deep notes of a mighty pipe organ.

"A good organ, well played, makes 'em enjoy any picture more."

*Oct. 1926 (MPW)* **Oliver Wallace**, Seattle's Liberty Theatre organist, is playing a special presentation "Offerings From Old Madrid."

*Mar. 30, 1929 (LP)* **Eddie Clifford** and **John Mc Cartney** are at Port Angeles, Wash. Olympian Theatre. "Two of the foremost organists on the Pacific Coast in another of their big-league organ acts. Hear them play the Mighty Olympian organ from the tiny baby grand console on the stage tonight and tomorrow. On the screen: *The Flight of the Graf Zeppelin* in three reels."

*Aug. 1929 (D)* The Capital City Theatre Organists Club in Washington, D.C. has elected as its first officers: **Harry C. Manvell**, president; **Alexander Aarons**, vice president; **Irene Juno**, secretary; **Arthur Thatcher**, treasurer; and **Harold T. Pease**, sergeant-at-arms. Membership is now at 50.

*Feb. 1930 (Syracuse Daily Orange)* **W. Stuart Green**, youthful central New York organist, on a visit to Stuart, Florida has been assisting at the Robert Morton organ in the Lyric Theatre there, which is continuing a silent film policy for the present.

*June 4, 1930 (LP)* **Reginald Dixon** does his first broadcast from the Tower Ballroom in Blackpool, England. He used a 2/9 Wurlitzer. (This organ was replaced by a 3/13 Wurlitzer in 1935).

*Mar. 1931 (MPH)* On all sides, there is ample evidence of growing respect for the theatre organist, who without live talent, suffered with the introduction of sound in pictures. Not only is the organ being restored to use in the first-run houses, but there is every indication that the neighborhood places are falling in line. In Midwesco theatres in Milwaukee, great emphasis is being placed on the entertainment value of the organist. In these 6 houses, a Wisconsin Organists Club has been organized by division manager, **H.J. Fitzgerald**.

The purpose of the club is for suggestions and criticisms, with the console artists meeting once a week for the purpose of demonstrating new thoughts in solo presentations. So successful has the plan been that its general adoption by all Fox houses is suggested. Another plan, adopted in Milwaukee, is the rotation of talent, with each organist playing a theatre for a 2-week stretch. This rotation gives the managers an opportunity for added newspaper copy.

The club functions as follows: At the first meeting, each of the organists was asked to play a popular number exactly as he would play it for community singing. As each of the organists was going thru his number, the others gave constructive criticism as to how it might be improved so that the audience would find it easier to follow the melody. Each of them demonstrated his method of putting across an organ number and from these demonstrations, the others were able to get ideas and suggestions for the improvement of their own deliveries.

Until next time, so long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector

