



Del Castillo ramrodded the 'Kompleat Silent Movie Show' to fruition with the cooperation of less than one-third of LAPOC membership. Sound familiar? (Bob Hill Photo)

THE KOMPLEAT SILENT MOVIE SHOW

A THREE-AND-A-HALF-HOUR ROMP WITH SIX VETERAN MOVIE ORGANISTS

by Elmer Fubb

Southern California theatre organ aficionados were afforded a unique opportunity to sample the console expertise of no less than six veteran theatre organists on Sunday afternoon, October 9, 1977.

The "sextuplet" affair, sponsored by the exclusive Los Angeles Professional Organists Club, was held at San Gabriel Civic auditorium. The instrument was the ATOS 3/16 Wurlitzer.

The all-star cast consisted of tried and true console veterans: Chauncey Haines, Milton Charles, Arlo Hults, Del Castillo, Randy Sauls and Gaylord Carter. The program, arranged by Del Castillo, included a sing-along, silent films and spotlight solos.

Del did the kickoff stint, with a truncated "Carmen Overture" followed by accompanying a compilation of silent newsreels, then performed the movie organist's standby — a trip through the organ, spotlighting the orchestral imitative combinations and effects which once made movie attendance both a delight and a surprise. Del spoke not a word, depending on slides, as the pre-microphone organists did, for the visual illustrations and explanations.

The program was knit together by a well-written commentary voiced by film actor Marvin Miller, remembered from his TV appearances as *The Millionaire's* bag man, but giving, not collecting.

Next came Randy Sauls, a true son of the south with silent film cueing credits in Alabama, Louisiana and Florida, and who admits to being "raised in Georgia — but the rope

broke." Randy's first offering was an atmospheric accompaniment for a Hawaiian travelogue, shot in a very early color process. Then it was Pearl White time and Randy supplied a campy and often frenetic background for the "Watery Doom" episode. Randy gagged it up, as there wasn't much else he could do with the preposterous 1915 episode. Played for "laffs" it was entertaining and Randy did just that. Example: as the flood inundated Pearl's prison cell, Randy played "River Stay Away From My Door."

Arlo Hults' offering was brief, he was recovering from a hand injury which limited his playing time, but not his playing quality. Arlo recreated three memorable Jesse Crawford record arrangements. After the "Forgotten Melody" console riser, he played "Falling in Love," "At Sundown" (an arrangement rarely heard since the 1971 "Stu Green

Humiliation Concert"), and "Russian Lullabye." It came off well despite the mangled mitt.

Milton Charles came out of semi-retirement to participate. Known on both west and east coasts during the silent movie heyday, Milton provided music for a showing of the first animated cartoon, Winsor McKay's *Gertie the Dinosaur*, which the cartoonist produced to win a bet. Milton supplied a close-fitting score which enhanced the clumsy but kindly reptile's humorous image. Next it was sing-along time and Milton led his great untrained chorus through such tunes as "Ballin' the Jack," "I Could Have Danced All Night" and "Elmer's Tune." The large audience (1000) ate it up.

Gaylord Carter, wearing the loudest sport shirt imaginable, closed Part I with his console riser, "The Perfect Song." Then a "Hooray for Hollywood" medley, followed by his fa-

In-Kompleat lineup of artists. L to R: Arlo Hults, Randy Sauls, LAPOC Pres. Doryce Talbot, Milton Charles and narrator Marvin Miller. (Pegpic)





Chauncey Haines meets his newfound fans in the lobby after his impressive scoring of 'The Beloved Rogue.' Chauncey has been the subject of a three-part biography, the final installment being in this issue. (Pegpic)

mous "chase" music, illustrated on screen by W.C. Fields speeding full tilt in an auto sequence which is tops in its genre — a suicidal, split second rampage through traffic. Gaylord left them panting, and it required the intermission which followed for the audience to recover.

Chauncey Haines came on the scene as what might be considered an unknown quality. True he's been cueing silent films at west coast universities for the past twenty years, following a distinguished career playing and composing film scores during Hollywood's "big studio" days. But he's never played an ATOS concert nor a public concert on a theatre organ in the area, not since the advent of "talkies," at least.

The silent film selected was John

Barrymore's *The Beloved Rogue*, in which "the great profile" does a Doug Fairbanks Sr. style romantic romp as Francois Villon, the long ago Parisian poet and rogue.

The moment Haines started playing, it was with an air of authority, a sure-footed approach to scoring which avoided recognizable tunes in favor of creating appropriate moods. His score was one long improvisation, which fitted the film's mood and action closely at any given moment. He quickly established a rapport with audience members and held them spellbound for the remainder of the one hour-plus movie.

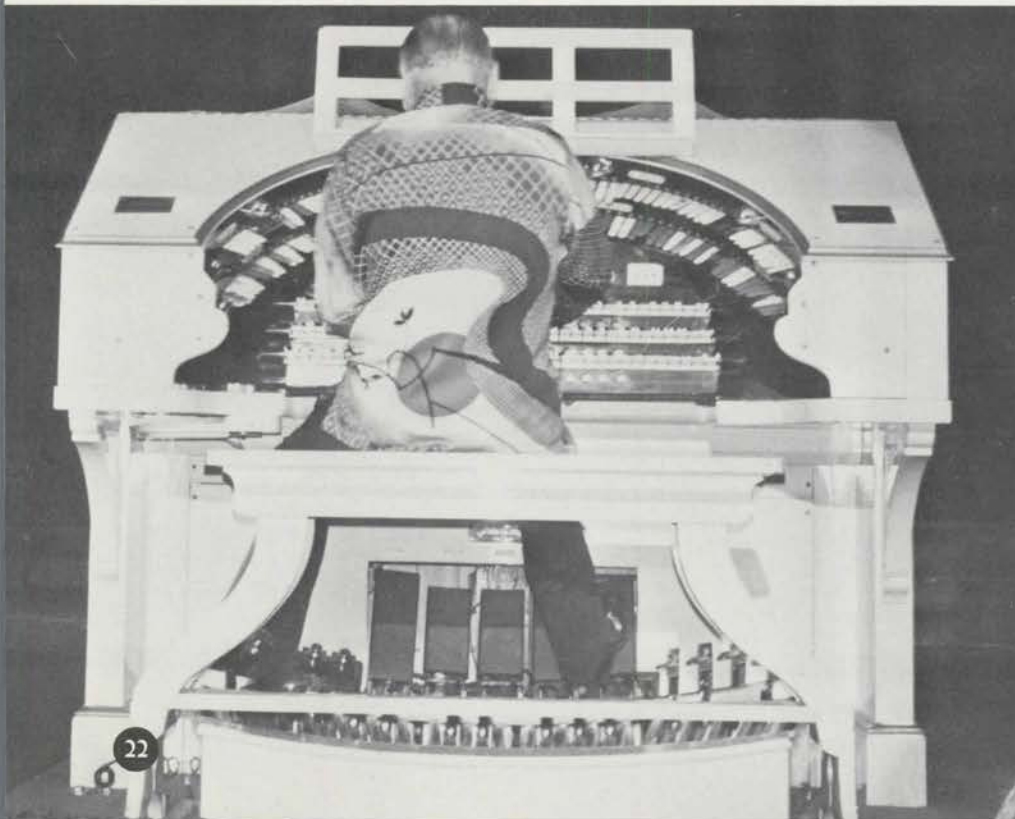
If Haines came on the scene relatively unknown to this main stream audience, he had gained an auditorium full of converts by the show's end.

Perhaps we've gone a little overboard in Haines' case but he was the "dark horse" on whose ability rested the entire post intermission show. He did an inspiring job, even for a "new-comer."

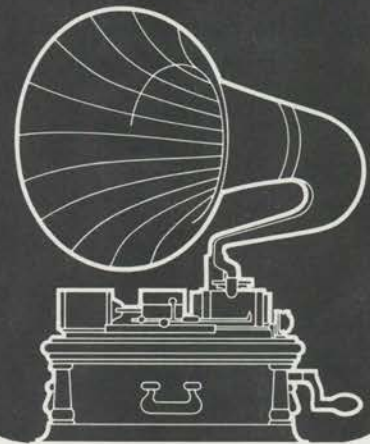
So did all the others, those familiar names who have provided so much pleasure at many a concert over the years.

"The Komplete Silent Movie Show" lasted for three and one-half entertainment-filled hours, the longest TO concert ever. And all for \$3.50! Proceeds will help support LAPOC scholarship projects. □

Gaylord's colorful shirt showed up furiously against the shining white 3/16 console. (Pegpic)



For The Records



Manufacturers, distributors or individuals sponsoring or merchandising theatre pipe organ records are encouraged to send pressings to the Record Reviewer, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. Be sure to include purchasing information, if applicable, and if possible a black and white photo which need not be returned.

ASHLEY MILLER AT THE WAR MEMORIAL, HMR 1061 (stereo). \$7.00 postpaid from Milco Music Co., Box 32, Closter, New Jersey 07624.

1976 ATOS conventioners had a whole invigorating day with the Trenton War Memorial Moller. Arriving by bus (from Philly) in the morning they heard the well-restored 4/16 played by a talented youth, a veteran organist and a guy who opened up the swell shutters at the start of his stint, shoved the crescendo pedal on full and went to ear-shattering work. In the evening it was Ashley Miller and Jim Goodleaf in a most artistic presentation. Each time, the Moller met the demands of each player. Like all theatrical Mollers, there is much classical facility in the voices, reflecting the background of the builder. Don't anticipate Morton or Wurlitzer sounds; Moller marched to a different drumbeat. But this recording adds up to a fine theatrical musical experience. In the hands of an expert such as Ashley Miller, that comes as no surprise.

Before getting into the selections,