

NUGGETS
from the
GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by Lloyd E. Klos



Not long ago, we received some undated nuggets, culled from *Variety*. However, these items, probably from the 1927-1931 period, are still interesting enough to see how theatre organists and their presentations were received then.

ALBERT F. BROWN'S organ bit was again original and novel. Had two characters working behind the scrim, one at either end of the stage: a man sitting, listening to the radio, with a woman on the other side, singing thru a mike. Both joined in for a chorus, with woman's voice still coming thru the mike, giving a pleasant and realistic effect. And to hold up the production end of this new style organ work, Brown knows his stops.

CARL COLEMAN, Buffalo organist, failed to enthrall his audience to the point of congregational work. Four numbers played to the accompaniment of publishers' slides were not arranged in a way novel enough to cause singing. But one slide gathered a laugh.

Mr. & Mrs. JESSE CRAWFORD's presentations (at the N.Y. Paramount) took their usual turn, and romped home with the novelty of masking masculine and feminine voices among the organ pipes.

DEL CASTILLO (in Boston) used *Organists Prefer Blondes*, and the film bits included the exploited prize baby contest, a newsreel, and a theatre film showing the stage crews and glimpses of house operation.

A novel stunt to the program called *The Phantom Organ* was played by CYRIL I. GUTHOERL, Pittsburgh organist. The curtain went up on an attractive set with a spotlight on the organ console. The organist was seen behind a scrim on the stage, and with the light playing on the manuals, an air of mystery was created. Over the playerless console appeared a huge question mark. The stunt scored heavily.

DORIS GUTOW's organ and slide stunt made a pleasing bit. A plugger, undercover, joined in for a chorus, and the number fared well with the customers.

Organist JOHN HAMMOND, who has a habit of bowing ahead of his applause, did not get heavy hands at the end of his *How Do You Like Your Opera?* The idea was corking, but Hammond failed to make the most of his opportunities. The excerpts employed were not of the sort which appeal universally. He has been doing much better, and is a master of the instrument.

SYMPHONIC HAWLEY, formerly of the Covent Garden Theatre in Chicago, almost threw away the novelty of a good and originally composed welcome verse by following with song plugging, but helped the latter with a vocal selection by himself. Hawley can write, and play the organ with the best around this burg, and with the added attraction of a nice singing voice, may create a steady patronage out here as others of no more ability are doing elsewhere.

ART HAYES at the organ made 'em sit up and take notice with a novelty, telling of the picture house he would like to build and the artists he would show. It was good.

EDWARD K. HOUSE's organ solo (in Chicago) is dedicated to the late Ernest R. Ball, and is a medley of the composer's melodies. It lacks the usual congregational appeal, but is well conceived and played.

HENRI A. KEATES, solo organist (in Chicago), billed his offering as *Static*. The idea as presented on slides was to convert the theatre into a broadcasting station and have the audience present a program. The erstwhile broadcasters got the drift and went at it loudly. They liked it so well they made him play an encore which is no novelty here.

ALBERT HAY MALOTTE offered a repertory of songs of the sea, wearing a slicker and rain hat to lend color. His organ selections always register with the customers, with his current program scoring well.

The Poet and Peasant Overture was the number assigned to Boston's ARTHUR MARTEL at the organ, but *The Glow Worm* was the number he played. Soft lights and blending color combinations were played over the curtain during his number, a welcome relief from the song slides of the past few weeks. Through the final chorus, little electric lights blinked in all sections of the stage area in an excellent simulation of the glow worms. The old favorite clicked.

ED MEIKEL, Chicago solo organist, had a relapse this week. Usually, his original Organ Club program rates as a feature portion of the bill, but Meikel tried to interest the gang in old American folk numbers, and the way they shied from it is a lesson for any solo organist.

HENRY B. MURTAGH at the organ slipped over an especially effective comedy songfest with slides. The idea is to encourage rivalry between the two halves of the audience. "Last week", says a title, "we had a song contest between the blondes and the brunettes. This week, let's see if the slim girls are better than the plump ones." On that basis, he worked up a barrel of laughs and had them all singing *Baby Face* at the finish.

MILTON SLOSSER had the house with him in his organ solo, *Where'd You Get Those Eyes?*, a singing school number.

Hope you have an idea how the organists presented their specialty numbers. Most were successful, some were not. See you in October, so long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector □

MOVING?



Send your change of address to . . .

VI THOMPSON
THEATRE ORGAN
P.O. BOX 1314
SALINAS
CALIF. 93901