


Christmas is a time of hustle and bustle, scurrying in all directions to fulfill commitments of home, family, church and business. But, in the midst of it all, thousands of people of all ages each year set aside at least one evening to visit the Indianapolis Zoo. Since 1968, one of the highlighted events of the yule season in Indianapolis is Christmas at the Zoo. For ten days and nights in mid-December the zoo becomes a glistening wonderland that delights young and old alike.

Yule scenes are created in and around the animal areas and thousands of twinkle lights decorate the zoo grounds. A nativity scene, Noah's Ark floating on the lake, a calico-decorated barn, and a reindeer descending the ski slope in the penguin area add color, atmosphere and excitement. Candy canes here and there, a tin can tree in the goat pen, Chinese characters spelling holiday greetings in the oriental garden, and stained glass window reproductions outside the Education Building add a festive and "human" note to Christmas at the Zoo.

A train ride weaves a labyrinth of intrigue in and around the animal areas, creating a feeling of being in a land of fantasy. For a closer look at the attractions, a foot path traverses the grounds and eventually leads to

Christmas at the Zoo



the Education Building for refreshments and a festive finale of gayety, Christmas spirit and carols.

Where does the American Theatre Organ Society fit into the scheme of things? Live organ music provided by the Central Indiana Chapter vol-

unteers sets the holiday mood in the Education Building to greet visitors as they end their tour of the grounds and gather to "thaw" out and have refreshments. The organ is situated in the foyer, with holiday greenery and a five-foot tall poinsettia tree as background. Not only does the organ add appropriate background music, but also serves as accompaniment

Logo used by special permission of the Indianapolis Zoological Guild.

Thousands of twinkling lights transform Indianapolis Zoo into fantasy land.
(Photo courtesy Indianapolis Zoological Society)



for many groups — Scouts, Brownies, church and school — that find it inspiring and fun to gather around the organ and sing carols. This is an experience that ATOS organists look forward to each year, not only as a service to the zoo, but to fulfill a desire to exemplify the true meaning of Christmas through music.

The Indianapolis Zoo is privately operated and supported, receiving no federal or local tax support. It was opened to the public in 1964 after twenty years of diligent planning and a lot of hard work by a dedicated volunteer group. It is maintained wholly by revenue derived from membership dues, an annual benefit dance, and a food concession and gift shop in the Education Building which sells unusual handmade fun and useful items and decorative ornaments. Christmas at the Zoo is the Zoo Guild's primary fund raising project and the CIC-ATOS is proud and happy to contribute time and talent to help make it a success each year. There have been only two fund raising campaigns during its existence, which speaks highly for community support to an endeavor which offers so much in providing family recreation, educational programs, conservation and other services.

The Indianapolis Zoo has the distinction of being the first Zoo in the nation to decorate for the Christmas

LEE ERWIN AND ASHLEY MILLER AT RADIO CITY

Nearly 900 attended a theatre organ program sponsored by the New York Chapter and Radio City Music Hall followed by the hall's Christmas show on Sunday, November 12th. This was the first time the twin consoles had been used to play a concert where definitive arrangements were used to achieve stereophonic and antiphonal effects. And it was only the second time a silent film had ever been shown in this theatre.

Claud Beckham wrote, directed

holidays. Each year is better than the last, with a changing theme each year.

It's yuletide again, ATOS and Christmas at the Zoo! You're on! Give us a repeat performance of past years — the double feature we look forward to each year! □



A wonderful opportunity. Lance Luce also performs at the Radio City Music Hall Wurlitzer.

(Lance Luce Photo)

and emceed the program, demonstrating the stage facilities and special effects of which only this theatre can boast. Claud announced Frank Sinatra was responsible for having both consoles working. When he was there for a show a few weeks before, he wanted both the "prompt" console (audience-left) and the "opposite-prompt" console (the right side) to be used. Since parts from the right console had been used to keep the left side going, it took a bit of doing to get them both working. So, thank you, Frank Sinatra and the maintenance crew who, incidently, made operable 65 more swell shades that previously had not been working.

Lee Erwin, seated at the right console, played a brief concert then accompanied the Buster Keaton silent "Sherlock, Jr." Ashley Miller soloed at the left console. The two artists then performed together at the twin consoles.

In introducing Lance Luce, National Yamaha Competition winner from Detroit, Claud Beckham commented that young people should be given an opportunity in the theatre organ field. Lance then soloed at the left console, followed by several duets with Lee at the right console.

The grand finale was a "trio" with Lee and Lance at the twin consoles and Ashley, accomplished pianist that he is, appearing at the grand piano in the center of the orchestra lift — another first for Radio City.

It is hoped that more pipe organ programs will be possible in the future in this theatre of theatres. □

CIC-ATOS members Don Craig, Max Cole and Ruth Ward watch as Gladys Grant entertains during Preview Party for Christmas at the Zoo.

