

Closing Chord

Chauncey Haines, famed theatre organist, died at Santa Monica Hospital on June 25th. He was 81. Haines had been re-admitted to the hospital for a second operation, following major cancer surgery performed in April.

Haines' career as a theatre organist began during his teens when he played for the Los Angeles premiere of *Birth of a Nation*. Following that he performed for the initial viewing of *The Gold Rush*, during which Charlie Chaplin threw him his music cues from the orchestra pit. Haines also played for the openings of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in 1923 and *The Thief of Bagdad* in 1924.

When talking pictures were introduced, Haines predicted the demise of theatre organists. He directed his

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Chauncey Haines in 1977, with the Hammond organ he donated to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. (Long Photography)

talent toward orchestration and became a Los Angeles bandleader during the '30s. He continued as such until World War II when he entered the Navy and became bandmaster aboard the flagship Pensacola.

Besides being known for his appearances at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Haines had become a familiar sight to cinema students at southland campuses, particularly at UCLA for his accompaniments of classic film series in Royce Hall. He was also recognized by contemporary audiences for his frequent stints at the organ during Filmex screenings. But his primary labor of love had been, for many years, the annual Christmas gift from the City of Los Angeles to its citizens, held at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion of the Music Center. The concert, free to

the public, has been enjoyed by millions who have attended in person, or by those who have viewed the all-day event over PBS outlet, KCET. Haines had been referred to as "the glue that holds the concert together."

In 1977 Haines donated one of the Hammond organs in his collection to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. His last appearance there was in August, 1980, when he accompanied film segments dedicated to silent serial queens. He had often been called upon to perform in that capacity as many of the pictures, for which he provided live music, were familiar to him from their original versions.

Haines is survived by Constance McCauley, one son, Clark McCauley, and two sisters, Sylvia Van De Den and Louise Salowich. □