

NUGGETS

from the
GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by Lloyd E. Klos



This month, we include some humorous and unusual items, but all interesting nonetheless. Sources were *Motion Picture World (MPW)*, *Local Press (LP)*, *Diapason (D)*, *Motion Picture Almanac (MPA)*, and *Motion Picture Herald (MPH)*.

February 5, 1927 (MPW) The Kimball organ, designed for the Roxy Theatre in New York, will be installed in special sound-proof chambers under the stage, the sound coming directly from the orchestra pit. This instrument, it is said, will have the properties of a symphony orchestra. Three consoles, to be played by three organists at the same time, will be in the center of the pit on elevators.

The main console has five manuals, with two three-manual key desks controlling the brass and woodwind divisions. This allows a range of musical production, it is claimed, never before attempted on any organ. A 3-manual Kimball will also be played in the rotunda for waiting patrons.

For Roxy's Gang in the broadcasting room, there will be a special organ, and a Kimball concert grand piano, playable from the organ console.

The ground covered by the Roxy Theatre fronts 290 feet on the north side of West 50th Street, and 190 feet on the south side of West 51st Street with an irregular depth of approximately 200 feet. The theatre is built of Bedford Stone and covers an area of 52,250 square feet.

August 6, 1927 (MPW Editorial) The organ, let it be said, is an instrument capable of finer shades of expression than one would imagine. It is equipped with mechanical means for producing every tone quality evoked only by persons adequately skilled — and that means, as well, ambitious.

That, probably, is the answer to a large proportion of theatre owners who might assert that having installed a modern instrument, they failed to see any increase in ticket sales.

These folks might well question the capability of the hands and fingers to which they have entrusted the return of this somewhat large investment of money.

In some cases, it may pay to go further than local talent for the organist, and then insist on quality and pay for it, as one does in buying the organ. Local talent may be worth fostering and encouraging, but after all, the theatre is conducted for profit, and if the music the home talent is rendering is not at least comparable to what can be heard at some nearby theatre, the fostering of that talent is being done at the expense of the box office.

It would pay an exhibitor in any theatre, no matter what its seating capacity, to experiment a little with his organ music. See to it that the organists you have chosen are not only able and willing to secure from the organ the finest it is able to produce, but also anxious and ready to build repertoire and libraries which will make the music always

fresh and entertaining.

The specialty on the organ is also worth building up. Instead of the standard overture, sometimes a charming sequence such as a McDowell composition could be used. And if you could project a harmonizing scene on your screen, using a slide, and blending it into the music, you would find the audience responding very effectively at the ticket window next week.

May 6, 1928 (LP) MERLE CLARK "says it with organ notes" every day when he takes part in the musical matinee, heard over WJR, Detroit's "Goodwill Station," between 12:45 and 2 p.m. Clark is organist at the Grand Riviera Theatre.

August 25, 1928 (LP) The great new 3/13 Wurlitzer organ which is being installed in Rochester's Piccadilly Theatre, is expected to be ready for its first public performance next week. It has two consoles and a piano attachment as well as many other features which are the exclusive possessions of the Piccadilly instrument. Every effect which can be obtained through a symphony orchestra is possible of duplication on the new organ, according to its builder, and Piccadilly patrons are due for some pleasant musical surprises when the installation is completed. HUGH J. DODGE and J. GORDON BALDWIN will preside at the twin consoles.

March 1930 (D) Station KQV, Pittsburgh, recently opened a new studio in the Wurlitzer Building, equipped with a Wurlitzer residence organ. HOMER C. WICKLINE, JR. plays each Sunday afternoon.

September 1930 (MPA) WILL GILROY is organist at RKO Proctor's 58th Street Theatre in New York, "building good will with songs they sing." The 230-pound musician has played the Cameo, Broadway, Park Lane and Proctor's theatres in New York; the Strand in White Plains, N.Y.; the Capitol in Miami; the Hollywood Hotel in Hollywood, Florida, and the Florida Theatre in St. Petersburg.

November 7, 1931 (MPH) GEORGE LATCH is now the staff organist in the new Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York. He plays two hours a day at the big Moller in the broadcasting room, and his playing is heard in nearly every room in the hotel. Even the chefs can listen to the strains of beautiful melodies as they go about their culinary art work.

April 1936 (LP) The Syracuse University-sponsored Civic Theatre will present a revival of Valentino's first hit movie *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* next week. Again, the musical accompaniment will be played by Fine Arts Junior, W. STUART GREEN, this time on one of the new pipeless electric organs installed for the occasion.

GOLD DUST: 2/31 HERBIE KOCH at New Orleans' Saenger's Robert Morton . . . 9/31 EDDIE SCHWARTZ, RKO Bushwick, Brooklyn; OSCAR ROED, Brooklyn's Fortway; JOHN GART, Brooklyn's Loew's 46th St. Theatre . . . 11/31 COLIN DRIGGS, Publix Allyn in Hartford, Conn.; W. LYNN McREYNOLDS, Egyptian in Scotts Bluff, Neb.; GRAY BURT, Westwood (N.J.) Theatre . . . 12/31 EDMUND C. FITCH, Regent in Melbourne, Australia . . . 9/32 RALPH JONES, Paramount in N. Platte, Neb.

That should do it for now. So long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector □