

NUGGETS

from the
GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by Lloyd E. Klos



This time we include some amusing, some unusual items which we have found in our searches. References were *Etude (E)*, *Local Press (LP)*, *Motion Picture Herald (MPH)* and *Variety (V)*.

February 25, 1925 (LP) A special 12-car train, containing the mammoth Wurlitzer Unit Organ for the Roosevelt Memorial Park in Los Angeles, has started on its transcontinental journey from North Tonawanda. H. C. Wittler, representing the Roosevelt Memorial Park Association, will accompany the organ. At each stop, he plans to give a short talk on the project, including the organ's part of the plan.

It is said that President Roosevelt on hearing the strains of "The Rosary," played on a Wurlitzer organ, declared that if everybody could hear such music each day, the world would be a better place in which to live. Consequently, the association is installing the organ in an outdoor shell so that each evening at sunset, the strains of "The Rosary" will peal out with volume enough to be heard over a radius of five miles. It will also be broadcast.

The cost of the organ, the largest ever built, is \$150,000; 300 miles of wiring are used and 150,000 electrical connections enter the console. The largest pipe is 32 feet long, 40 inches square at the top and weighs half a ton; the smallest is 3/4" in length and weighs a half ounce.

November 12, 1926 (LP) A new art has developed with the introduction of the pipe organ in broadcasting studios — the radio organist. Playing for radio requires a very special technique. Much time must be spent in acquiring a knowledge of the requirements of broadcasting; special arrangements of stops must be made, and combinations worked out so as to produce the best, harmonious effects for the listeners.

The greatest organists may be total failures in broadcasting concerts for radio audiences if they have not worked out the new form of playing before microphones, according to ERWIN E. SCHEUH, who plays for WLW audiences in Cincinnati on Wednesday and Friday noons. Much effort must be placed in special positions in the studio to get the very best results, and the control operator must be alert to

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properly modulate the amplifier through which the music passes into the transmitting station.

October 29, 1927 (LP) Not until you have seen and enjoyed its multitude of sounds — the Rochester Theatre's vast capacity to seat comfortably 4000 persons in a single performance — the marvelous and melodic tones of the great 5/24 Marr & Colton pipe organ, sixth largest in the U.S. (with master showman C. SHARPE MINOR at the console) — can you conceive the unforgettable thrill which will be yours to enjoy, not only at the premiere, but in years to come. The theatre opens November 7.

Circa 1930 (V) As the picture is concluded, a console rises from the pit with a long-haired individual seated before it. He is HENRI A. KEATES, reputed the champ among organists who have the ability to make audiences read song slides and shout the words printed thereon.

This time, the audience is supposed to be composed of little birds, and they are to sing and make merry. The first number is gone through with little results, but as others follow, each more familiar to the customers, the little birds suddenly change into dodos, or auks, singing loudly and unharmoniously, but with a wealth of spirit. Keates is satisfied. As he repeats the last chorus, the console slowly descends and the spotlight fades. But the jellies and shebas aren't satisfied. Having been awakened from their somnolence, they desire to continue the singing, and loudly applaud. Sometimes, Keates obliges.

February 13, 1932 (MPH) BERNIE COWHAM is back on the job at New York's Keith Flushing Theatre after a week's illness. His future at this house certainly seems assured, since he has been here over three years, and the applause during his entire solo is far greater than most acts on the bill. His own signature slide, bearing merely the word "Bernie," drew down heavy applause. Then he opened his act with "Blue Again" for which he composed special lyrics about his illness. After this, Bernie turned toward them and gave them his own inimitable salute with a little intimate talk which earned him another great hand. Then into the playing of "Sleepy Time Down South," a Chinese version of "The Stein Song," "Time On My Hands," "Wouldn't Change You for the World" and his usual closing of "events of the day" with special lyrics, written to a popular tune. And how that audience loves to sing!

August 1934 (E) Question: Just recently, I lost the sale of a pipe organ because a rival salesman promised the church that the organ he had for sale, a second-hand theatre instrument, would broadcast 100% better because of its violent tremolos and unusual number of 16' manual stops. The instrument has seven sets of pipes, three of which are extended to 16'. I have never had reason to think that the violent vibrations of a theatre instrument broadcast better than the straight church pipe organ. I feel that is the greatest mistake that a church can make to purchase a theatre organ. What say you?

Answer: We have never heard of the argument set forth by your rival and do not think there is any foundation for it. We should think excessive 16' tone would be an objection, and violent tremolos are very undesirable and inartistic. We also do not approve of the average theatre organ for church use.

Hope the above have amused and entertained you. See you next time.

Jason & The Old Prospector □