

NUGGETS from the GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by
Lloyd
E.
Klos



Once again, we salute the lady organists. Sources were *Melody (M)*, *Jacobs (J)*, *Exhibitor's Herald (EH)*, *Radio Guide (RG)* and *Local Press (LP)*.

August 1915 (LP) New York's Vitagraph Theatre at Broadway and 44th Street is running *Battlecry of Peace*. Organists are WILLIAM E. MACCLYMOUNT and MISS M. THEODORA FRAIN.

December 1924 (RG) Station WOC in Davenport, Iowa has installed a \$180,000 pipe organ. MRS. FRANK W. ELLIOTT is featured organist. In Cincinnati, CARRIE DOTZAUER is aired on WMH.

May 1, 1926 (LP) BASEL CRISTOL, girl organist, is soloist tomorrow at the Chicago Theatre's noon-day concert. Doris Morell, soprano, and soloists of the Chicago Theatre Concert Ensemble will also appear. Miss Cristol will be at the Tivoli next week.

May 1926 (M) MRS. IDA CLARKE is associate organist in Crandall's Tivoli Theatre in Washington, D.C., a young, talented woman who has played for the Crandall Company so long she is considered a part of the firm's standard equipment.

A native of Washington for years, her family and that of Harry M. Crandall lived side by side. Her family is also in show business and her brother-in-law owns a chain of movie theatres in the area.

What started her playing organ for movies? "I fell and broke my leg. I think mine was a fortunate fall, although I didn't think so the first few days after the accident. I was forced to keep quiet for weeks, and that was the hardest thing for me to do."

One evening the Crandalls were over, and Mr. Crandall suggested that she learn to play the organ which he was having installed in one of his theatres as an experiment. She started and has been playing ever since. Never too busy to play, she can be depended upon, outside her regular work, to fill in during an emergency. She is a fiend for learning, always trying something new and spends much time listening and absorbing valuable knowledge.

She has had much experience in playing organ with orchestra for movies, and for many seasons was organist at Crandall's Savoy, which housed an orchestra under the direction of Daniel Breeskin, supervisor of music for Crandall's. She has played in every Crandall theatre, but thinks the three-manual

Wurlitzer at the Tivoli the best of any. She builds a complete score for every picture, although she is able to improvise and weave the melodies in a most pleasing way.

At the time of the Knickerbocker Theatre disaster in 1922, Mrs. Clark was the organist and was eye witness to the tragedy which snuffed out many lives. She had finished playing her shift and, after turning off the organ, walked to the back of house. Hearing an awful roar, she looked back in time to see the organ bench and the entire orchestra buried beneath falling debris. It was many months before she recovered from the shock.

Ida, who has a small son, recently played a season of Saturday morning shows for children at the Tivoli. Harriet Locher, who conducted the shows, believes their success was due to Mrs. Clarke's cooperation, and both regretted when the season ended for them.

Ida has a magnificent gem-studded accordion which is now silent, unless she and her husband can be prevailed upon to entertain at one of the exclusive clubs after theatre hours. "I don't know what to do with my feet, and I can't get any counter melody on it, so playing the accordion isn't as interesting to me as it once was."

Mr. Edward Clarke is actively engaged in the theatrical business, while young Billy is following in the wake of his talented parents, being an accomplished drummer.

February 1927 (J) MARIBEL LINDSEY's personality is as great as her ability, and with that combination, any organist should be a top-notch.

Her musical career started when she was a little one. Her father was a bandmaster and started her on the cornet, paying her five cents for each 15 minutes of practice. Her mother was an organist and pianist; her sister a singer and pianist; a brother plays baritone horn, and Maribel plays French horn very well.

At school and college she played the clarinet and has done solo work with concert orchestras. She has played piano with theatre orchestras, led orchestras for road-show work and played piano for the movies.

She is a music graduate and was a supervisor in the public school music course at Ells-

worth College, Iowa. She began organ study at 16, playing for a church on Sunday and for the movies during the week.

In 1917, Maribel went to Washington and landed in the Civil Service Department. When Jesse Hietmuller was director of the Metropolitan Theatre, Maribel did all the relief work and also much entertaining at war camps, hospitals and for patriotic organizations. Then she took up organ work for the movies and played the Avenue Grand, and the Savoy when it was the "evening dress" house of upper Washington. In fact, she was in the orchestra when the well known leader, Don Rich, opened the house.

The Imperial Theatre in Asheville, North Carolina, a unit of Southern Enterprises, engaged her for two years as featured organist. After six months back in Washington at the Takoma Park Theatre, she returned to Asheville. She was one of the first to be heard on the radio in an organ recital. Carl Behr, cellist, chose her as associate artist for his Sunday night concerts at the Battery Park Hotel in Asheville.

Now back in Washington at Crandall's Ambassador Theatre, Maribel Lindsay is featured organist. People are flocking into the Ambassador to hear her play, while manager Robert Etris sits in his comfortable office and chuckles as he counts the dollars which come in so rapidly.

June 1929 (EH) BASEL CRISTOL, now at the Tower Theatre in Chicago, and for many years associate organist for Balaban & Katz, is featured here since the new policy of screen-only productions was installed. Miss Cristol is one of the few women organists who can play for pictures and hold interest throughout by her expert handling of all stops. This week she offered a solo of all popular songs, and the crowd took part in the singing. They were really good to her for her efforts.

August 1, 1936 (LP) DORIS HAVENS plays over Philadelphia's WCAU at 8 a.m.; Tenor Tommy Phelan and organist WARREN CLARK entertain at 11 p.m. over WIP, Philadelphia, while FRED FEIBEL's Organ Reveille program is piped in by WCAU at 8 a.m.

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FLORENCE CLAYTON DUNHAM, WMMN, Fairmont, West Virginia; Toronto is airing "Exciting Moments" with KATHLEEN STOKES at the organ at 7:30 p.m. . . . 8/38 LOUISE WILCHER, WOR, Newark . . . 10/38 ROSA RIO with Ted Malone on NBC's "Between the Bookends;" MARY FOUNTAIN, WHP, Harrisburg; ELSIE THOMPSON, CBS Network; EDDIE DUNSTEDTER, ANN LEAF & MILTON CHARLES on "Three Consoles" over the

CBS Network; WBEN, Buffalo airing "Twenty Fingers of Melody" with pianist Mathilda Harding and organist IRENE HARDING.

In the theatre organ's great days, lady organists were looked down upon in most areas of the country. It was a hard struggle to get to the top. Few were able to do it.

This should do it until next time. So long, folks!

JASON & THE OLD PROSPECTOR □

CINEMA ORGAN NEWS FROM BRITAIN



by
Ian
Dalglish



The final part of our year has seen some organists from your country making concert-going even more interesting than usual. Very seldom do we have the pleasure of hearing an American organist play the fabulous "Duchess" 5/19 Compton in the Odeon Cinema, Leicester Square London. Terry Charles played a concert on August 17 and got some very pleasant sounds from this beautiful organ, built in 1937 and still going strong. "Climb Every Mountain," the theme from *Summer Place* and Liebert's "Come Dance With Me" were outstanding in the first half. "Hernando's Hideaway" showed off the brassier side, while "Born Free" and the theme from *Exodus* brought out the two lovely Tibia ranks and the Melotone division.



Terry Charles at the 5/19 Compton in the Odeon Cinema. (John Sharp photo)

The late Vic Hammet at the illuminated glass console of the ex-Ritz Chatham 3/8 Wurlitzer now going to Shropshire. (John Sharp photo)



In Holland, Bernard Drukker, veteran Dutch theatre organist, plays the AVRO studio 4/21 Compton/Standaard organ. (Louis van der Stam photo)

