

ORGAN CONCERTS

SHRINE AUDITORIUM, LOS ANGELES — George Wright

On May 10, two events in the theatre organ world occurred that should cause every organ lover to rejoice and, like one we know who was there, to utter, "The Theater Organ is not dead, it isn't even sick."

Event No. 1 Over 4,500 people paid to hear a concert of popular organ music. How about that?

Event No. 2 The organist was George Wright. Enough said? Well, not quite.

Which of these events should be named first is like arguing which came first, the chicken or the egg. There can be no doubt that George Wright's fame as an organist was largely responsible for the terrific turnout. The concert was sponsored by Rich Vaughn of High Fidelity Recordings, Inc. in the Shrine Auditorium which is 50 percent bigger than the S. F. Fox and with a stage opening more than twice as large.

After an introduction by his good friend Ben Hunter (former honorary mayor of Hollywood and known as "Mr. Disc Jockey" of Los Angeles and heard nightly on his "Night Owl" program over KFI), George proceeded to the 76-rank Moller TO and performed like the master that he is. The program, which follows, included several selections which he recorded for High Fidelity Recordings.

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| 1. Anything Goes | Porter |
| 2. And This Is My Beloved, from "Kismet"..... | Wright-Forrest |
| 3. Nochecita | Huesca |
| 4. Prelude II | Gershwin |
| 5. The Jitterbug Waltz | Waller |
| 6. Quiet Village | Baxter |
| 7. Pavanne | Gould |
| 8. Pavanne | Elmore |
| 9. Roller Coaster | Busch |
| 10. Ebb Tide | Maxwell |
| 11. The Birth Of The Blues | Henderson |
| 12. Edelma | Tucca |
| 13. I Got Rhythm | Gershwin |
| Intermission, 15 minutes | |
| 14. Back Bay Shuffle | Shaw |
| 15. The Nightingale And The Rose | Rimsky-Korsakoff |
| 16. Love For Sale | Kern |
| 17. The Boy Next Door | Martin |
| 18. Jalousie | Gade |
| 19. Silent Movies Are Back | |
| 20. That's All | Haymes |
| 21. South Pacific Scenario | Rodgers |
| 22. Sunday in Seville | George Wright |

For item 19 in the program, George played the musical accompaniment, in a most nostalgic and beautifully done manner to two single reel silent movies, a drama and a comedy.

As his encore, George appropriately chose Irving Berlin's beautiful *The Song Is Ended But The Melody Lingers On*. He concluded the program with a fitting climax, played in perfect legitimate style, Bach's famous *Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor*. The audience, nearly 5000, shouted, whistled, stomped and yelled for more, but George Wright had concluded his program. He left the stage. The concert was over, but not to the thousands who thrilled to the artistry of a great musician and organist.

The program stated that George Wright will also appear and play in the Auditorium of the Union High School, Sacramento, Friday evening, May 31, and Sunday afternoon, June 2. This must have been like a home-coming to George and we refer you to a previous issue of THE TIBIA in which George recalls the many hours spent at this console.

ATOE and THE TIBIA take this opportunity to express their gratitude to Rich Vaughn for arranging this concert.

THE TIBIA — Summer, 1957

STONEHAM TOWN HALL — Ralph Woodworth, Jr.

On Saturday evening, April 27, the Eastern Massachusetts Chapter and the Rotary Club of Stoneham, Mass., presented a "Paramount Pot-Pourri" featuring Ralph Woodworth, Jr., at the Stoneham Town Hall Wurlitzer. The concert was "terrific," writes "Brent" Tyler, Secretary of the Chapter. "It went off with but one minor incident. We had a rented carbon arc spot, and after a short fit of fuse-blowing at the very start of the concert, with resulting blackouts, the situation was corrected. The attendance exceeded 800 people, and although a final financial tabulation is yet to come, it would appear that the Stoneham Rotary Club will net over \$500 for their Little League fund.

For several weeks prior to the event, Woodie practiced each Saturday night to familiarize himself with the organ, and to ferret out any small difficulties. We had some real organ "jam sessions" on those nights, and also had a great time in getting the organ into perfect shape. It was in moderately good condition as it is used quite often for local events, but it was working to perfection the night of the concert. Don Phipps and Bill Bunch spent the whole previous Saturday in tuning it, and Bill also made a half-hour tape for Station WCRB which we used as publicity for the concert. Bill, incidentally, recorded under the stage name "William Waters."

The organ was rebuilt by the Wurlitzer in 1934 and installed in Station WNAC where it became famous through the artistry of Francis J. Cronin, popular radio and theatre organist.

Ralph Woodworth, Jr., has had an enviable career as an organist as the following, taken from the printed program, testifies: . . . "a native and life-long resident of Weston, (he) began playing the piano when three years old and the organ at nine. He started to play in churches when he was fourteen; his serious work starting with a European tour when he was sixteen, with recitals at Cologne, Antwerp, Milan, Venice and Durham. Returning home, he continued studying with the late Dr. Raymond C. Robinson at King's Chapel and the New England Conservatory, also pursuing a full musical course.

His first theater appearance was at Roxy's playing for "Seventh Heaven." Further appearances found him in the leading theatres of New York City, Buffalo, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, Denver and Boston.

In England he appeared as "The Mighty Yank at the Wurlitzer" for an R.A.F. Benefit at the British Gaumont Theatre, Newcastle-On-Tyne. He was also featured on the B. B. C. and the Armed Forces Network.

At the same time, Mr. Woodworth embarked on a series of radio broadcasts which finally totalled 6,782 separate programs over fifty stations across the country. While in the Upper Peninsula on vacation — playing a Wurlitzer Theater Organ—he was engaged by the Warner Bros. Circuit and was featured as spotlight soloist in their theaters, eventually "moth balling" one organ after another.

During the thirties he returned to Weston to teach. In 1941 he volunteered a year's service with the British Middle East Armies, returning to America via R.A.F. just in time to be drafted into the 8th U. S. A. A. F.

Emerging from World War II, he once again started teaching piano and organ, and last year he added a spacious music studio to his home, scientifically planned and constructed for perfect acoustics.

He is organist and choir director of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Weston, President of the Weston-Metropolitan Chapter of the Hammond Organ Society which meets weekly at his music studio, Associate Member of the Society of Organists, Westminster Abbey, and an accomplished concert pianist.