

## NUGGETS from the GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected  
by  
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This time we include some unusual but interesting items. Sources were *Diapason* (D), *American Organist* (AO), *Local Press* (LP), *Around the Town* (ATT) and *Radio Daily* (RD).

**November 1913 (D)** Pittsburgh's Pitt Theatre inaugurated its Hope-Jones unit orchestra October 25 and 26 with recitals, lectures and demonstrations by the inventor. On the evening of the 25th, Robert Hope-Jones was entertained at a banquet at the Duquesne Club by the manager and owners of the theatre.

A score of organists and other musicians, plus a gathering of literary men and financiers acclaimed the noted genius. It was a brilliant success and proved the inter-dependence of humanity. The inventor is powerless unless the art-loving Croesus affords him the opportunity, and all honor goes to the men who have made possible the installation of the most remarkable musical instrument yet produced.

Gottfried H. Federlein, secretary of the Guild of Organists, lauded the inventor and said that the city of New York had by its discontinuance of all recitals in the high schools and by its sole choice of the Ethical Culture Church, put its official seal of approval on the unit orchestra. Pittsburgh's Walter E. Hall, fellow of the Royal College of Organists, spoke on the invention and progress of musical instruments since "Jubal struck the chorded shell," and laid emphasis on the new world of music which the guest of honor had, like Columbus, not only discovered, but invented.

The claim is made for this latest Hope-Jones creation that it is the most powerful musical instrument in a theatre. It is much larger and more powerful than the well-known instrument at Ocean Grove, New Jersey, and contains several noted features. It is possible to control the swell shutters through the keys, an absolute novelty in organ construction.

The strings, flutes, clarinets, etc. are in the orchestra pit. So are the drums, cymbals, tambourines, xylophones and other percussions. The organ tones find their way into the theatre from chambers above the entrance lobby. The solo harp and the larger set of cathedral chimes are bracketed on the wall at the

back of the second lobby.

The larger of the two xylophones stands immediately below the stage apron on one side, and the glockenspiel is similarly located on the other. The majestic Diaphone is high up in the wings behind the stage curtain, and in a somewhat similar position there is a complete instrument for supplying soft music behind the scenes. This includes a piano, cello, violin, horn and pipes designed to imitate the human voice.

The artist who plays upon this complex instrument sits in full view of the audience. FRANK R. WHITE, director of the Hope-Jones Organ School, aroused tremendous enthusiasm by his playing, and the astonishment of those present at the novel and colossal musical effects was patent to all. Daily noon recitals are to commence on November 3, with incidental music at matinee and evening performances.

**December 1922 (AO)** *Dedicated to Society of Theatre Organists*

Seated one day at the unit, which was hopeless and weak in the knees,  
In spite of my frenzied efforts, it gave forth only a wheeze.  
Perhaps it was awfully rotten; the manager told me so;  
He used to make coats for a living, and certainly ought to know.

Then I sought a grand inspiration which should swell to a pulsing sob,  
Placate the irate manager and nail me to my job.  
I flooded the cinema temple with harmonies rich and rare,  
Which blotted out mundane afflictions and left me free from care.

Then I thought of a theatre position which appeals to all, through and through,  
Where double features are verboten and comedies also taboo;  
Where you go out and play up the curtain, accompany a single reel,  
Then hie to your sanctum sanctorum for a half or three-quarter spiel.

If you're late, do they raise the old Ned?  
Not a bit; pass it off with a laugh.  
Or, they realize they're darned lucky you're on the house's staff.

It may be that bosses as kindly and careless, or slipshod too,  
Are found in the movie houses across the ocean blue.

It may be that some day my rest time to work time shall be 2 to 1,  
But surely 'tis only in heaven that such things are ever done.

And then I woke up — and that unit no more was a burden or care,  
Ne'er again shall my fingers caress it — the manager gave me the air!

**March 5, 1925 (LP)** Los Angeles' West Coast Highland Theatre opened with NEW-ELL ALTON at the Wurlitzer.

**May 15, 1926 (LP)** A special attraction of the new Madison Theatre in Rochester, New

York, will be a large Wurlitzer unit organ, now being built at the North Tonawanda factory. Louis Iuppa, president, and Aaron Meisky, secretary of the theatre corporation, awarded the contract to Wurlitzer, represented by Charles S. Stewart and Millard M. Crane. Many of America's leading theatres have Wurlitzer organs.

**June 20, 1926 (LP)** JESSE CRAWFORD'S noontime Chicago Theatre concert included "El Capitan," "Angelus," "Valencia" and the "Light Cavalry Overture." Last week, ARSENE SIEGEL played here.

**September 25, 1926 (LP)** Seattle's 2420-seat Fifth Avenue Theatre opened last night. Included in the bill were Cecil B. De Mille's *Young April* with Bessie Love; Fanchon & Marco's stage review "The Night Club"; The Sunkist Beauty Revue; and Seattle's own OLIVER WALLACE at the 4/18 "ascending Wurlitzer" with his own medley of popular and original airs.

**November 1926 (LP)** After hearing Miss BASEL CRISTOL play the organ at Chicago's Uptown Theatre recently, the officers of Balaban & Katz invited her to perform at the Tivoli Theatre the following week. After that, she moves with the picture to the Senate Theatre. During that week, the Senate's organist, PRESTON SELLERS, will replace Miss Cristol at the Uptown.

**December 24, 1926 (LP)** Rochester's State Theatre opened last night, featured by the playing of EDWARD C. MAY at the two-manual orchestral organ. A novelty, "Getting Acquainted With the Organ" won especial favor. Mr. May brought in to play the entire range of orchestral instruments which this organ is capable to initiate, and then mimicked whistles, birds, trains, steamboats, storms, fire sirens and other sounds as proof of the manager's claims that the organ is one of the best in the city.

**January 6, 1928 (LP)** HERBERT H. JOHNSON, formerly of the Jayhawk Theatre in Topeka, will play at the formal opening of the Lake Theatre in Rochester, New York, this evening. Mr. Johnson has a completely indexed music library of 5,000 pieces.

**December 1928 (ATT)** MALCOLM THOMSON is making a sensational hit as feature organist at the Sedgwick Theatre in Mr. Airy, Philadelphia, which he opened. He also opened the Earle Theatre in Atlantic City and broadcast over WSPG. Very successful in his featuring of overtures, slides and novelties, he has been five years with the Stanley Co.

**January 14, 1931 (LP)** FRANK LYBOLT is playing the 2/7 Wurlitzer in Schine's Geneva (New York) Theatre. Feature film is *Call Her Savage* with Clara Bow, Gilbert Rowland, Estelle Taylor, Thelma Todd and Monroe Owsley. On the stage are five acts of 'RKO Vodvil,' backed by T. A. Ross and his RKO orchestra.

**July 29, 1942 (RD)** Long Island organist DOLPH GOEBEL is doubling at the Park Terrace Cafe in Brooklyn and playing over WWRL, Woodside.

That's it for now. So long, sourdoughs!  
JASON & THE OLD PROSPECTOR □