

Report of Chapter Meetings

L. A. CHAPTER MARCH MEETING

Monday evening, March 11, 1957, was another gala evening for organ enthusiasts in the Los Angeles area. A capacity audience gathered at Lorin Whitney's Recording Studio in Glendale to be thrilled by the mighty 4-manual 24-rank Morton-Wurlitzer. On hand to provide the adept fingers and toes for a terrific evening's entertainment were Ramona Gerhard Sutton and Jim Melander. Ramona



Ramona is caught showing pleasure over the audience reaction to her performance.

is indeed well known throughout the musical world for radio and concert appearances in and around the Minnesota twin cities, and more recently at CBS in Los Angeles. Ramona held her audience spellbound with her mastery of the instrument and a particularly stirring ovation followed her colorful rendition of "Clair De Lune." Jim Melander, who is considered to be a phenomenal young protege of Gordon Kibbee's, entertained with several well known stylings representative of his richly harmonious technique. The climax of the evening undoubtedly was piano-organ duets that closed the program on a new high of musical enjoyment. Ramona played the concert Steinway that had been moved alongside the Robert Morton console and Jim joined in at the organ. The rendition of *Rhapsody in Blue* gave rise to shouts for encores from the audience. The pro-



Jim Melander strikes a chord and a pose following his performance at the March meeting.

gram was presided over by Chapter President, Doctor Stocker, with Dave Kelly handling the introduction of personalities. The Chapter owes a considerable debt of gratitude to Lorin Whitney for providing a meeting place for the Los Angeles Chapter and maintaining the organ in such excellent condition. Incidentally, watch for new record releases on this organ by Gordon Kibbee, Richard Ellsasser, and others.

—BOB NICHOLAS, Secretary

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

An organizational meeting was held February 5, 1957, at the home of Frank Killinger, a local hi-fi enthusiast and theatre pipe organ lover. There were sixteen present from around the San Francisco Bay area (all ATOE members). Judd Walton, ATOE Vice-President, outlined the purpose of the meeting and everyone present enthusiastically supported the idea of organizing a local chapter. Bud Abel was elected the first President; Bob Jacobus, Vice-President; and Tiny James, Secretary-Treasurer. Yearly dues were voted, a donation was taken for application for a charter, and the general rules governing the chapter were discussed.

It was decided to hold the first concert meeting at Urban Braitto's "615 Club" in Benicia, located about 35 miles north of Oakland



Jim Melander and Ramona Gerhard Sutton congratulate each other as Eddie Dunstedter smiles approvingly. Eddie has promised to play for a Chapter meeting.



Dave Quinlan salutes his audience.



Northern California Chapter listens to Dave Quinlan at the Wurlitzer.

which has the distinction of being one of the two clubs in the Bay Area possessing a "Mighty Wurlitzer."

The meeting was called for February 25th and notices were sent to all known ATOE members in the area, plus many other pipe organ enthusiasts. Urban Braito had graciously closed his regular business for the evening, allowing admittance only to ATOE members and their guests.

After the opening remarks by ATOE Vice-President Judd Walton, Dave Quinlan, a terrific organist and regular organist at the "615 Club," was introduced. Dave proceeded to prove his ability and mastery of the Wurlitzer. The organ, a very late model 2m 6r Style D had been removed from the theatre in Antioch, California, and installed in the club by Judd Walton and Bob Jacobus who are to be commended for its excellent installation and maintenance.

Midway through the program, following a short intermission, President Bud Abel welcomed all present, explained the purpose of ATOE and the local chapter and invited all ATOE members to join in the activities that a local chapter would afford.

Following the brief intermission, organist Dave Quinlan again entertained the group until 10:00 p. m. when refreshments were served and members of the audience permitted to try their hand at the Wurlitzer. The meeting formally adjourned on this note. As a result of this meeting we can now boast 29 chapter members. We also picked up 10 new ATOE members.

The second meeting of the Northern California Chapter was called for Saturday morning, April 27th, at the beautiful Fox-Oakland Theatre wherein reposes an outstanding 3m 14r Wurlitzer, complete with English Horn, Brass Saxophone and Dulciana.

The meeting was called for 9:00 a. m. with members and guests invited to try their hand at this outstanding instrument. At 10:00 a. m. our guest artist, theatre and radio organist Floyd Wright, took over at the console and held the audience of over 100 spellbound until 11:30 when the meeting had to be closed in order for the theatre to open for regular operation. We certainly owe a vote of thanks to the Fox West Coast Theatre management for allowing us the use of the theatre and facilities. The results of this meeting from a membership angle have yet to be completely tabulated but a remittance was mailed to ATOE headquarters in Los Angeles for an additional 17 ATOE subscribers.

—(WINFRED "TINY" JAMES, Secretary-Treasurer)

DELAWARE VALLEY CHAPTER

SUNDAY, MARCH, 24, 1957, ASBURY PARK, N. J. — The Spring meeting of the Delaware Valley Chapter was held here at Convention Hall with 38 people present. The 3m/7r Kilgen was in good voice and well played by Bill Floyd (of the New York Paramount). Leonard MacClain (currently on Epic Records with the Tower Theater organ, Phila.), Dorothy MacClain, Lillian Hillis, George MacNeal, and Warren Clark. Some sort of precedent was probably set with a pedal solo by "Champion" MacClain, first collie to perform on a theater organ.

With the exception of Program Chairman, the current officers were re-elected for another year. Mr. James Sweet of Rumson, N. J. was elected to the office of Program Chairman. Mr. Sweet announced that arrangements had been made to hold the Summer meeting on



Lillian Hillis at Asbury Park Convention Hall on the 3m Kilgen.

June 9th at the Atlantic City Convention Hall where we will be able to use both the 7m Midmer-Losch and the 4m Kimball. Since it will be necessary for us to pay for the use of these organs, it was decided to charge \$1.00 per person for this meeting.

We wish all theater organ fans could have joined us for this meeting. There was a talk by Senator Emerson Richards, designer of both organs, a half hour concert on each organ, a tour of some of the chambers (including the 64' Diaphone and 32' metal Diapason) and, of course, the usual informal concerts by members.

REPORT OF SIXTH QUARTERLY MEETING, JUNE 9, 1957 — The sixth quarterly meeting of the Delaware Valley Chapter was held June 9, 1957 at Convention Hall, Atlantic City, N.J. Suitably, for the world's largest organ in the largest auditorium, we had the largest crowd in our chapter history—148 people. Theater organ fans arrived from as far distant as Chicago, Detroit, Boston and Washington, D.C. Three groups, including our feature organist, Bill Floyd, flew in by private planes.

Bill opened the meeting at 1:00 with a recital on the Ballroom



Bill Floyd of the Paramount Theatre, N. Y., at Asbury Park, N. J.



Senator Emerson Richards demonstrating the 7-455 Midmer-Losh in Atlantic City, N. J.

organ—a 4m/42r Kimball. The pipework is installed in two chambers on either side of the stage and the console is mounted on a special balcony halfway down one side of the room. After Bill's typically excellent performance, Senator Emerson Richards, designer of the Convention Hall organs, spoke to us on the history and design of both instruments. With the help of the maintenance man, Bill Roesser, he demonstrated each of the 42 voices.

Though somewhat reluctant to leave this beautiful instrument, yet eager to get on to see the *BIG ONE*, we moved down to the main auditorium. Here in this huge cavern capable of seating 41,000 people, even a console as large as this great 7-manual job seems dwarfed. Again Senator Richards spoke to us briefly, pointing out how the 22 divisions are arranged in the eight chambers. He demonstrated some of the more spectacular of the 455 ranks including the 64' Diaphone Profunda and the Ophicleide on 100" wind. It was even a thrill just to hear the eight blowers getting wound up to their full 395 horsepower.

Brave Bill Floyd sat down in that wilderness of 1250 stop keys and played another short recital followed by Lois Miller. Mrs. Miller is no stranger to the Midmer-Losh console being called upon frequently to perform for conventions, ice skating shows, etc. One of the chambers was opened for inspection at the close of the meeting, after which about a third of the group adjourned to a restaurant for dinner, table-hopping and organ talk. We are very grateful to our program chairman, Jim Sweet for having arranged a thoroughly enjoyable day.

BILL MOYER, Chairman

MR. BIZIK ENTERTAINS ORGAN ENTHUSIASTS

Last night I attended a gathering of organ enthusiasts at the home of Mr. Albert Bizik, Belmont Hills, Pa. Mr. Bizik has a 10-rank Kimball (formerly from the Overbrook Theatre, Philadelphia) installed in his home. Guests were nearly all members of the ATOE, although the affair was not an official meeting. Among those present were Mr. and Mrs. Leonard MacClain, who delighted all with their virtuosity at the console. Leonard is known to his radio and TV

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audience as "Melody Mac." His magnificent rendition of the Knightsbridge March almost brought the house down. He followed with several novelty and sentimental tunes which were well received. Then Mr. Reginald Watson, the designer of the famous BBC Moller, played for twenty minutes in the best tradition of true theatre organ technique. Mr. Wainwright Schmidt followed with several delightful arrangements impressively executed. Both Mr. Watson and Mr. Schmidt made a special trip from Long Island to attend. I was fortunate enough to follow for fifteen minutes, and I must say I enjoyed the experience immensely. Al Bizik's installation is one of the finest I have ever heard. The ten ranks fill the room so beautifully that one could believe the organ was at least twice its actual size. Following my efforts, Mr. and Mrs. John Riedel entertained in the most competent manner. (Mrs. Riedel of Bethlehem, Pa., is Sec.-Treasurer of the Eastern Chapter of the ATOE). Mr. Randy Creigel was the next performer, followed by Mr. James Fisher and his mother, Mrs. Mabel Fisher. Their efforts were well received. Finally Leonard MacClain returned to the console and finished the evening performance with another half-hour of delightful music. Among some of the other guests present were Mr. Bob Jerinic of Station WCAU-TV. Mr. Mel Wexler, organ technician, helped everyone enjoy the evening by keeping the liquid refreshments flowing, attending to the ladies' wraps and recording the whole proceedings on an Ampex 600. The guests were so absorbed with this wonderful Kimball that it didn't stop playing for four hours. At 11:30 p. m. the party started to break up because several of the guests had to drive long distances home.

Now for a word about Mr. Bizik's Kimball. The ten ranks are as follows: Trumpet, Post Horn, Clarinet, Concert Flute, Diapason, Tibia Clausa, Kinura, Orchestral Oboe, Violin, Violin Celeste, and Vox Humana. The Post Horn is full and powerful, the trumpet brilliant, and the large scale tibia clausa is lush and sexy. The complete instrument is voiced, tuned and installed with incomparable skill (by Al Bizik) and when played full crescendo it has a smoothness and sonority that is amazing. It has "presence" because the pipes play almost directly into the living room, being angled toward the ceiling by specially designed louvres. A full assortment of drums, cymbals, chinese gong, complete toy counter, celesta, xylophone, glockenspiel, orchestra bells, etc., round out the organ. Most of the guests present have organs of their own (electronic) in their homes, and several lucky ones have magnificent pipe organs. Among the latter are Mr. and Mrs. Riedel of Bethlehem, Pa., Mr. Reggie Watson of Manhasset, L. I., and Mr. Wainwright Schmidt of Merrick, L. I.

All in all, the evening was a huge success and Mr. Bizik promised to repeat the festivities at a later date.

CHARLES FLECK, R.D. No. 3, Langhorne, Pa.

Members of Delaware Valley Chapter at Asbury Park Kilgen console. At the keyboards: Rev. George MacNeal.

