

NUGGETS

from the

GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by
Lloyd
E.
Klos



Organ presentations became the big thing after silent films bowed to the talkies. Here we present reviews of some. Sources were *Exhibitors World Herald* (EWH) and *Variety* (V).

Circa 1930 (V) ...

Variety is reviewing this act by request. In all probability, EDWIN MEIKEL, Chicago's Harding Theatre organist, originated the stunt. If so, he must be given

credit for turning his allotted minutes into a highly entertaining box office attraction. His idea deserves serious consideration by other organists who are searching for something other than the conventional.

It must be remembered that the Harding is a neighborhood theatre and that portions of his stunt would not work in downtown or "transient" houses.

Meikel started with a list of names of those who had sent requests during the week. The box office value of this in a neighborhood house is evident, and to cinch it, there were exclamations of recognition from all portions of the house. Another list of names followed, this time of neighborhood brides and grooms classed as members of Meikel's organ club, and the audience was asked to join in on a chorus of well-wishes. Then Meikel presented a comedy ditty for each newlywed couple to the tune of "Gallagher and Shean." This is worth a theatre party in itself for the couples mentioned, and the rest of the audience drew plenty of laughs from it.

A slide announced that Meikel was seriously considering matrimony himself and that he needed advice from the club members. All those who believed that he should be married were to sing a special song dealing with its advantages, while all those who believed otherwise were to sing another special set of lyrics dealing humorously with its darker side. He would accept as his decision that chorus which was sung the louder. As a bang-up finish, after completion of the choruses, a slide stated: "I will be married in October" and as a portion of the audience applauded, another slide carrying "1982" in large figures was projected. This brought forth a howl.

Meikel closed with a couple of pop numbers which were sung by the customers. So much good feeling had been worked up by this time that the choruses were practically shouted. At times Meikel quit playing, leaned on the console and grinned at the customers.

Circa 1930 (V) ...

The JESSE CRAWFORD portion of the New York Paramount's program included the playing of "Put Your Arms Around Me, Honey," "In a Little Spanish Town," "Moonlight on the Ganges," and "Tonight You Belong to Me." Prior to the introduction of his wife, Helen, at the finish, there was a double playing of "Blue Skies," a big kick. Eight minutes.

March 15, 1930 (EWH) ...

ADOLPH GOEBEL at Yonkers, New York's Loew's entitled his week's solo "What Do I Care" and opened his spot with this tune. At the finish, an usher presented the organist with a package from which he extracted a string of frankfurters and a message which said that the operators refused to project the slides on the screen and bet Goebel \$100 that he could not put over a solo without them. He took the bet and won it by telling the audience to sing "Let Me Call You Sweetheart," "Singin' In the Rain" and "Ain't Cha" which they did and proved conclusively to the operators that Goebel did not need them for the solos. Mr. Goebel then announced that his music teacher was in the house and asked if they'd like to hear her play. They did, and Goebel introduced Miss Frances Ann Ginding, a four-year-old girl (daughter of the house's music director). Miss Ginding pleasingly played a chorus of "Pagan Love Song" to a good reception, and then Goebel closed this pleasing solo with a chorus of the same song to which the audience sang with fervor.

Circa 1930 (V) ...

EDWARD K. HOUSE, solo organist in Chicago, had a singing class stunt, introduced by Ed Meikel, another Lubner & Trinz organist. House billed it as lesson

1988 ATOS Young Organist Competition

The fourth annual Young Organist Competition brought forth entries from 10 talented young artists. Their names and qualifications were known only to ATOS President Jack Moelmann, who duplicated the tapes for the judges, and to Lois Segur, Chairman of the Competition Committee. The tapes were numbered in sequence as they arrived, and the judges knew only the age of the contestant and the size of the pipe organ used.

The entrants and their sponsoring Chapters were:

Junior Division (Ages 13-15)

Jelani Eddington (13)	Central Indiana
Christopher Hegarty (13)	River City
Elenor Nardy (13)	Mid-Florida
Jason Slade (13)	CATOE
Faith Sunman (14)	Southwest Michigan

Intermediate Division (Ages 16-18)

Robert Cejka (17)	Eastern Massachusetts
Martin Harris (17)	London & South of England
Anthony Milligan (18)	San Diego

Senior Division (Ages 19-21)

Jennifer Candea (20)	Wolverine
Norine Castine (19)	Motor City

Jelani Eddington, age 13, was the competition winner, as well as placing first in the Junior Division. **Martin Harris** was the winner in the Intermediate Division and **Norine Castine** won in the Senior Division. Each winner received a cash award of \$250 and Jelani Eddington received an additional \$250 as competition winner. The exciting part of their prizes this year was being brought to the National Convention so they could play for us in a cameo performance. Melissa Ambrose, winner of the 1987 competition, shared a concert with them and had the pleasure of introducing them. Their checks and award certificates were presented to them at the banquet. Our sincere congratulations to these winners and our thanks to all who participated.

The judges this year were Gaylord Carter, Lin Lunde, Candi Carley-Roth, Judd Walton and Lew Williams. Only Gaylord Carter was identified at the outset; the names of the other four were announced after the final grading. Special thanks to them for so willingly giving their time for this important project.

This annual competition is a most worthwhile endeavor of our society, and I am hoping that all the Chapters will be searching for youngsters to enter next year.

Lois Segur, Chairman, Young Organist Competition

#1, indicating that the theme will be followed several times more. Slides on the screen, printed in rhyme, encourage the customers to join in on all "Singing Lessons." A psychological arrangement of the popular numbers is so worked that after each of the earlier songs, the "students" are bawled out for not singing and are edged on to a loud finale. To pull this off right, songs must be selected in consideration of their popularity, the best-known numbers being placed last and the newer ones put at the start.

Circa 1930 (v) ...

HENRY B. MURTAGH had an especially clever arrangement for his illustrated song sheet, one of the trickiest schemes disclosed. In titles he relates that the doctor has told him he's going deaf. On this basis, he uses the singing of the audience as a test of the diagnosis. He tries to get them to sing a number and, faking in that first trial, reveals his sorrow at finding the doctor right about his hearing. Then he swings into a better known song. When they all fall for that, he switches back to the first one and everybody goes for it with a laugh. Neat bit of audience jockeying.

Circa 1930 (V) ...

EARL McNAUGHTON, substitute for Eddie Dunstedter, presented an organ number. Words and illustrations were flashed onto a scrim behind which Madame Betty, in a huge gilded cage-like contraption, sang the chorus. The cage was later swung out over the heads of the front-row patrons with its occupant warbling popular melodies.

Circa 1930 (V) ...

HENRY A. KEATES' doodad this week is called "Let's Have Some Harmony." He doesn't get it, but he gets enough extra noise to take care of the next time. Harvard plays Princeton. Starting off by testing the various voices individually in order to get basses and tenors wise to their status, Keates brings 'em together on "Sweet Adeline." It's murder but vigorous. Other attempts prove similarly inharmonious, but the pep increases and when he's finished by having them go thru a familiar topical number, the customers are shouting so loudly, Mr. Keates lets them go through a chorus without accompaniment.

Circa 1930 (V) ...

The bill opened with an overture contest between house organist HAROLD RAMSAY and conductor George Wild, titled on a screen slide as "A Friendly Tilt." Ramsay leads off, his console rising from the pit as the screen displays doggerel to organ accompaniment. At conclusion of this comic introduction, Wild steps to the conductor's stand, the house having no orchestra elevator.

Ramsay opens the contest with the aria from "Sampson and Delilah," a screen being used for color effects, interpreting moods of music. Wild and orchestra reply with "Indian Love Call." Organ comes back with "I'm Her Boy Friend" (lyrics on the screen for this one). Wild then does "Dew, Dew, Dewy Day." Ramsay grows sentimental and does the ballad "Are You Really Happy Now?" Wild mellows and shows what he can do with same number. Following this, orchestra and organ get together with an ensemble repeat of the same ballad.

GOLD DUST:

11/29 HARRY G. SULLIVAN at Loew's Rochester over WHAM . . . 12/34 WILLIAM MEEDER, New York's WJZ; JESSE CRAWFORD, New York's WEAF; GORDON JOHNSON, Buffalo's WBEN . . . 9/35 FRANCIS CRONIN, Boston's WAAB; FRED FEIBEL, New York's WABC.

That's it for this time.
So long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector



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TRY THIS ...

Anyone who has done, or is doing, pipe organ service work, will probably agree that one of the most irritating things is to be suddenly faced with a reed pipe which decides that it has a mind of its own. You may have serviced that particular organ many times before, with absolutely no difficulty. But then the gremlin sneaks in. That pipe does not want to stay in tune.

By alternately moving the tuning wire up and down, you finally get it to sound in perfect unison with the other pipes and proceed with your tuning. Then when you check back you find that it has once again jumped out. So you check the shallot and tongue for foreign material. (That sounds better than dirt doesn't it). We re-tune the pipe and go on to other stops. Again we check back, and sure enough, it is sounding its own pitch.

Against all the previous advice of your reed voicer, you next move the roll tuner slightly and then bring the pipe back in unison with the tuning wire. But then you find that you have changed the quality or volume level and are forced to return the roll to its original position. At this point you are debating whether to go to lunch and hope it cures itself, or remove and polish the shallot and reed.

But wait! Before getting into more trouble, let's try something else.

I always carried a soft lead pencil in my tool box for specific cases such as this. Remove the boot from the pipe and move the tuning wire away from the reed. Now take the lead pencil and very lightly rub it over the face of the reed tongue where the tuning wire contacts it. An almost unseen amount of graphite will remain on the surface. Do the same thing across the contact area of the tuning wire itself. I also would apply a small amount of the pencil graphite to the wire where it passes through the reed block. Put the boot on the pipe and re-tune it.

Over the years, I found that ninety nine percent of the time this simple action took care of the problem. What happens is that an almost invisible tarnish can prevent the tuning wire from moving smoothly on the face of the reed, the same distance we move the top of the wire. In other words, it bends slightly. So in a sense it becomes spring loaded in one direction and will, perhaps a few seconds later, center itself throwing the pipe out of tune. The application of that small amount of pencil graphite does encourage the tuning wire to remain in its original configuration and help prevent this.

*Earl J. Beilharz
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