

Pipes & Personalities



Lee Erwin cued *Tramp, Tramp Tramp* at the Paramount Theatre, Oakland, California. Ed Mullins Photo

Lee Erwin saluted Irving Berlin's centennial May 11 birthday during his Oakland, California, Paramount Theatre concert March 19, when he played "Remember," "Always" and "Blue Skies." Especially delightful during this silent film prelude on the Paramount's 4/27 Wurlitzer was Rudy VanHouten's "Aqua," a "Peruvian Waltz." Erwin was very professional in his accompaniment of *Tramp, Tramp, Tramp*, a silent comedy starring Harry Langdon.



Ashley Miller at 4/27 Wurlitzer console, Paramount Theatre, Oakland, California. Ed Mullins Photo

ATOS Director Ashley Miller's April 19 Oakland Paramount concert was "spooked" when the blower switch was accidentally tripped while he was piloting the orchestra lift playing "Come Fly With Me." It sounded like a deflating bagpipe. Ashley rose to the occasion, however, and it was a finger-snapping, toe-tapping evening.

An extra added attraction of violin and organ duets brought violinist Nate Rubin, Concertmaster of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra and disbanded Oakland Symphony, to the stage. Mr. Rubin had gotten a splinter in his left finger earlier in the day necessitating a last-minute change in their program. Their duets of "Czardas," "Intermezzo," "Liebesfreud," and Fritz Kreisler's "Prelude and Allegro," were climaxed with "Hot Canary" that was the "cat's meow!"

During Miller's Spring Quartet Medley of "April Love," "Spring is in My Heart Again," "April Showers" and "Mountain Greenery," he used "Rustles of Spring" while segueing between numbers. Ashley Miller is still a marvelous arranger; his flawless registrations are excellent and his wonderful harmonies are exciting.

Edward J. Mullins



Oakland Paramount house organist Jim Roseveare ties Ashley Miller's bow tie before Miller's April 19 concert. Ed Mullins Photo



A Kimble at an Aeolian-Skinner - Walter D. Kimble, mirrored in on Buster Keaton's action in *The General*.

A Kimble playing an Aeolian-Skinner for a silent film undoubtedly should elicit wiseacre comment from theatre organ enthusiasts . . .

And, this is exactly what happened last May 7 at First United Methodist Church in Orlando, Florida. Mid-Florida Chapter Vice-President Walter D. Kimble played the accompaniment for Buster Keaton's silent film classic *The General* on the classical 4/75 instrument.

A former theatre organist for a Florida theatre circuit, Kimble proved again that the organist becomes secondary to action when accompanying a silent photoplay.

"My son, 40 years of age, who arrived in this world about the time of the demise of many theatres, said that he found he was beginning to be more interested and absorbed by what was on the screen then listening to me play!" Kimble said.

My reply was that I must have done a good job, for that is what I was supposed to do. If one listened to the music and did not pay attention to the picture, then the organist was "lousy."

Because the picture sheet was back of him, out of line of his vision, he utilized a mirror in place of the music rack on the console to follow screen action.

All inquiries regarding membership matters should be addressed to . . .

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"Music is not an acquired culture, it is an active part of natural life."

ISAAC STERN

Hats Off to Del Castillo at 95!

Own own Lloyd Gould Del Castillo was 95 on April 2! His many years at the horseshoe console have brought him a niche in the American Theatre Organ Society's Hall of Fame as well as lifetime honorary memberships in both LATOS (1980) and ATOS (1982).

Del graduated from Harvard in 1914 cum laude in music. His theatre career began as pianist and conductor in Salem, Massachusetts, Bijou Theatre in 1917 and shortly afterwards he was appointed organist at Boston's Fenway Theatre. In 1926 Del opened the 4/28 Wurlitzer in Shea's Buffalo Theatre (this instrument has just recently been restored and is once again being presented in concerts.)

While playing the silents in Boston, Del decided to open an organ school in 1927. Of course, all went well for only a year until talkies were introduced. He sold his studio Welte to radio station WEEI and went along as staff organist and program director — until 1943 when he decided to move to Los Angeles.

He worked a while as a screen writer for RKO pictures and then joined CBS radio as a staff director and organist. With the advent of television he became composer-conductor for a number of CBS-TV shows.

His "alter ego," Dinny Timmins was "born" in 1924 when Del wrote an organists' column for Melody Magazine. Dinny was revived in 1967 and his humorous columns appeared in THEATRE ORGAN for many years.

Throughout the 1960s and '70s Del concertized on most of Southern California's theatre organs (and made records on several of them). In a 1970 interview Del referred to himself as "The World's Oldest Living Organist." Now, 18 years later, he still holds that title (but we must substitute the word "Playing" for "Living") for he has just played concerts at Joe Koons in Long Beach and for the Leisure Village Organ Club in Oceanside.

Thanks, Del, for your wonderful humor and unsurpassed music all these years and may we have many more years of your delightful wit and beautiful melodies!

Ralph Beaudry

(If readers would like to send Del congratulations or belated birthday cards, his address is: 2008 Preuss Road, Los Angeles, CA 90034.)



Jeff Weiler, organist, Shorey Auditorium, in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Jeff Weiler Scores Again

The Central Arkansas Chapter of the AGO sponsored Jeff Weiler, theatre organist from Chicago, in a program at the Shorey Auditorium of the University of Arkansas Medical Science College in Little Rock, Arkansas.


Mr. Weiler accompanied the Charlie Chaplin film, *Gold Rush* with an original score. This was the first public performance of a silent movie with theatre organ accompaniment in Little Rock since the 1930s.

Mr. Weiler performed on an eight-rank Morton/Wurlitzer which was installed in Shorey Auditorium during the early 1970s. The organ was a gift of Dr. James Den-

nis, a member of ATOS and retired Chancellor of the Medical Sciences College.

The organ was recently fitted with a solid-state combination action and solid-state relay by Nichols & Associates, Inc. Organbuilders of Little Rock. All of the pipework was also regulated and some reed voicing was accomplished.

The program was preceeded by a Guild meeting and dinner. The event was well attended and enthusiastically received. Because of the surprising success of this program, plans are being made to have a continuing series of theatre organ programs throughout the year.



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