

NUGGETS

from the

GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by
Lloyd
E.
Klos



This time, Jason and I send you some choice nuggets from all over the lode. References were *Local Press* (LP), *Around The Town* (ATT), *Diapason* (D), *Motion Picture Almanac* (MPA), *Motion Picture Herald* (MPH) and *Variety* (V).

August 31, 1924 (LP) . . .

Since its opening just two years ago, Rochester's Eastman Theatre has catered to almost four million patrons. For the anniversary program, *The Covered Wagon* with Lois Wilson and Ernest Torrence is the feature picture. Organist HAROLD OSBORN SMITH is playing "Songs of '49," melodies reminiscent of the California gold rush ROBERT J. BERENTSEN is the other staff organist.

November 1927 (LP) . . .

The JESSE CRAWFORD organ concert at the New York Paramount. Program for the week beginning November 5. "While I'm in Chicago on a recording trip, Mrs. Crawford is playing on the big Wurlitzer: 'Just Another Day, Wasted Away,' 'Charmaine,' and 'Blue River.'"

"For the week beginning November 12: An original novelty entitled 'Romantic Rivers,' using short excerpts from 'The Blue Danube,' 'River Shannon,' 'Banks of the Wabash,' 'On the Mississippi,' 'Muddy Waters,' 'Beautiful Ohio,' 'Swanee River,' and 'The Volga Boatman' as an atmospheric introduction to 'Blue River' with one verse, two choruses.

"Beginning November 18, 'Dancing Tambourine' without slides and 'The Song is Ended' with slides and interpolating 'Souvenir.' The week of November 26, 'Opera versus Jazz,' an entertaining novelty written for Mrs. Crawford and myself about four years ago by J. Brandon Walsh, our Irish friend in Chicago. Just as effective as ever. And for the week of December 3, 'The Storm' from *William Tell* as a prelude to 'It Was Only a Sun Shower,' followed by 'The Girl Who Lived Next Door' and 'My Blue Heaven.'"

December 1928 (ATT) . . .

CHAUNCEY HAINES is organist at the Norshore Theatre, one of the largest of the deluxe houses in Chicago. Haines

has created a following of his own who like his playing.

December 1928 (ATT) . . .

The Capitol Theatre in Boston has a radiant comet in the garb of FRANCIS J. CRONIN, who opened the theatre and has been there six years. Mr. Cronin was instrumental in drawing specifications for eight of the leading theatre organs in Boston. He has broadcast from WBET and was connected with the Olympic Theatre Corp. in opening several houses.

April 7, 1929 (LP) . . .

Rochester's TOM GRIERSON, veteran theatre organist, gave the dedicatory recital of the new Wurlitzer at Blessed Sacrament Church, a portion of which was broadcast over WHAM.

April 1929 (Roxy News) . . .

Dr. C.A.J. PARMENTIER and GEORGE EPSTEIN are alternating at the Roxy's 5-manual Kimball in New York City.

August 1930 (D) . . .

A series of daily recitals on the nearly completed Midmer-Losh organ in Atlantic City's Convention Hall was played by ROLLO MAITLAND of Philadelphia from July 17 to August 27. Mr. Maitland is a former theatre organist.

September 1930 (MPA) . . .

BERNIE COWHAM, who demonstrated for the Barton Organ Co. for seven years and opened five Saxe theatres in Milwaukee, is organist at the Keith-Albee Theatre in Flushing, N.Y., which he opened in 1928. He is a permanent feature on every bill there.

September 1930 (MPH) . . .

EDDIE HANSON, in his fourth season with Balaban & Katz in Chicago, is one of the first solo organists there. He played for Ascher Bros., Schafer Bros., and the Lubliner & Trinz organization before being engaged by B&K when M/M Jesse Crawford left for the New York Paramount. Eddie alternates among the Chicago, Tivoli, Uptown, Paradise and Tower theatres.

September 1930 (MPA) . . .

HAROLD "HAL" PEARL is organist at the Virginia Theatre in Champaign, Ill., and does novelty collegeiate numbers.

September 1930 (MPA) . . .

LEW WHITE is chief organist at New York's Roxy Theatre and is also a member of the famous Roxy Radio Gang.

September 1930 (MPA) . . .

LLOYD "WILD OSCAR" HILL has been organist for the Loew's circuit for the past four years, having led a dance orchestra previously. He has become a full-fledged theatre organist, touring the Paramount-Publix and Loew's circuits.

Circa 1930 (V) . . .

Helen Yorke warbled in Spanish costume, ending the stage show, which

paved the way for HENRY B. MURTAGH and his "singing lesson." This brought on comedy slides, kidding the house into singing a couple of numbers, and how they fell for it! It's apparent the organists in this district have to laugh the boys and girls into entertaining themselves. No laughs, no singing, the slides drawing complete silence. And a lyric with a snicker in its "catch line" is a pipe. In fact, there's no doubt that a comedy song is a console manipulator's best bet around here.

Circa 1930 (V) . . .

The program provided considerable entertainment. EDDIE DUNSTEDTER, organist par excellence, again was responsible for the stage offering which followed the lines of his "In a Spanish Garden" of two weeks ago. This time he used the song "Holland" to work out a simple and inextensive, but pretty concert. Dunstedter played it first, then a male singer in a Dutch boy's costume came out before the curtain and sang the words. Then came a full-stage set, depicting a scene in Holland, with a windmill in the center and two Dutch maidens sitting in tree branches on each side. Four girls, attired as Dutch kiddies, trotted out and were joined by the maidens in a pleasing Dutch dance number to the melody of "Holland." With the words flashed on the scrim, the male singer repeated the song. The setting and costumes were colorful and the stage ballet of eight girls better than usual. Dunstedter furnished the musical accompaniment on the organ throughout. This idea of animating songs in this fashion impresses as a clever one and a good way to utilize the permanent ballet.

September 26, 1931 (MPH) . . .

"The Crooning Prince of the Organ," JOHNNY WINTERS, is at the Warner Bros'. Beacon Theatre in New York. The lad has personality, youth and showmanship.

November 7, 1931 (MPH) . . .

MILTON CHARLES at Jersey City's Stanley Theatre, presented a short and snappy organ solo this week, using but one number. According to Charles' announcement, the song requested by the patrons was "Guilty," and he sang and played two choruses of it. His singing is very good, but apparently he did his best to blast the audience out of their seats with his introductory music before he got down to singing. (continued)

ATOS Archives/Library

Vernon P. Bickel, Curator
1393 Don Carlos Court
Chula Vista, CA 92010
619/421-9629

November 7, 1931 (MPH) . . .

Shapiro, Bernstein & Co. and the aide to all theatre organists, HARRY BLAIR, are now installed in their spacious new offices in the Capitol Theatre Bldg. in New York. Incidentally, you Noonday Lunch Club Members, the honor roll was the first thing Harry hung on the wall of his office. He says that so many out-of-town organists have been in New York looking for new assignments, that it is absolutely inconceivable an organist is in town on vacation.

November 21, 1931 (MPH) . . .

REX KOURY, at RKO Proctor's Fourth Street Theatre in Troy, N.Y., offered a composite vaudeville show in one of his recent organ solos and did exceptionally well with it, stopping the show at several performances. He called the novelty "Vaudeville a la Rex Koury" and opened an introductory slide as he played "The Voice of the RKO." After this, an imitation of the orchestra's playing its overture was offered and then takeoffs on four vaudeville acts. The solo was smartly presented. Many of the audience voiced their opinions that this was one of the best solos this organist has offered.

September 7, 1935 (Radio News) . . .

Organist CARL COLEMAN is featured with contralto Florence Ann Reid over Buffalo's WGR at 11:00 p.m.

That does it for this time. A happy Holiday Season to you all!

Jason & The Old Prospector



Melody . . .

belongs to the noblest gifts which an invisible godhead has made to humanity . . .

The melodic idea, coming straight out of the ether, which suddenly overtakes me, which appears without any stimulus or psychic emotion . . . emerges from the imagination, immediate unconsciousness, without benefit of the intelligence . . . it is the greatest of the divine gifts, not to be compared with any other.

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949)



ORGAN-IZING POPULAR MUSIC

by
AL HERMANN'S

By combining a series of altered and substitute 7th chords, following the Circle of 5th, you can play a chromatically descending accompaniment which produces a distinctive sound. The left hand plays only the 3rd and 7th of each chord, while the pedal base notes alternate flat fifth and root. The following examples show how it works in the Key of C and E_b:

In F, the chords would be A⁷-5 • D⁷ • G⁷-5 • C⁷ • F

In G, we would use B⁷-5 • E⁷ • A⁷-5 • D⁷ • G

You figure it out in the Key of B_b (Consult the chart presented in Sept./Oct. THEATRE ORGAN.) As long as you have to read the notes, you haven't learned the procedure. It is necessary to be able to find the 3rd, 7th and flat 5th of each 7th chord and then move downward to the next 7th chord in the circle of 5th.

This style of accompaniment can be applied in many popular songs. In the bridge of "Heart and Soul" you can play B_b • A⁷-5 / D⁷ • G⁷-5 / C⁷ • F⁷-5 / E⁷-5 • A⁷. In "Sweet Lorraine" you can continue for six measures. Opportunities can be found in many Christmas popular songs. In "White Christmas" you can play this three times: C • E⁷-5 / A⁷ • D⁷-5 / G⁷ starting in the first measure and again later in the song. In "Winter Wonderland" play G⁷-5 • C⁷ • F⁷-5 • B_b⁷ in the 7th measure.

Once you learn the system, you will find opportunities to apply it in many songs and in improvising introductions to songs.

For additional examples, see Lessons 58 and 59 in ORGAN-izing Popular Music.

It's Music Time in '89 See you in Detroit!!