

## The Mouse That Roars

continued

Although Tom purchased this organ primarily to have a true theatre organ to play for his own amusement and to preserve a unique product of Wurlitzer's pipe organ days, some other benefits have been realized. On a trip through Fresno, Bob Vaughn (the Bay Area's renowned genuine silent movie organist) stopped by to play the 109 and found it to be a very similar experience to playing some of the smaller organs in the Southern California houses he worked in the '20s. Although it is much smaller than the mid-size Wurlitzer he had played for years at the late Avenue Theatre in San Francisco, Bob spent a good deal of time playing it and obviously had a great time "getting back to the basic tool of the trade." He reminded us that "not every organist had a marvelous three or four-manual instrument with everything on it" to work with, and that the true test of a silent picture organist is "not what he can do with two-dozen ranks, but with six . . . or less." And what he did with only three ranks that afternoon illustrated his point beautifully.

After the final event of the 1984 Fresno mini-convention, Candi Carley and Larry Vanucci dropped in for a go at the Wurlitzer, and it proved to be an event that rivaled what had been heard by the general public a few hours earlier on much larger instruments. Candi and Larry took turns at the bench, then teamed up for an extended jam session that will not be forgotten by those who were present. Larry, in particular, seemed extremely pleased with what he got from the organ. The "Vanooch" doesn't need an array of crackly reeds and a Post Horn to get down and get funky. He treated us to a liberal dose of his special brand of "improvised conglomeration of blues/barrel-house/jazz," sometimes laughing out loud when he turned out a really juicy riff. When he returned home to the Bay Area, Larry proclaimed to his friends and colleagues that he had found "the ultimate bar instrument."

Tom walked out to his music room the next morning, stared at the console, and mentally replayed as much as he could remember from the night before. Two thoughts were running through his mind. One was a feeling of disbelief that so much variety could be pulled out of three ranks of pipework. The other was the realization that he felt no temptation to succumb to "expansionitis." Let's all tip our hats to the handful of theatre organ owners who have remained faithful to the principle of authenticity. It has been their strong sense of history that has saved a rare bird from extinction.

# CLOSING CHORD



## ANNIE OLIVE

On October 24 theatre organ's most devoted and fun-loving fan passed away peacefully following a brief illness and coma.

Annie Olive is survived by several nieces, a nephew, and all the members of LATOS and the American Theatre Organ Society, as she was, without doubt, the best known and most loved person in our organ world. Annie enjoyed every concert, convention and social she attended — and she enjoyed them to the fullest!

Her 79th birthday was just a week before her death. She was born Anna Lees in England. As she and her husband "Mugsy" Olive had no children of their own, Annie "adopted" organists and organ buffs as her "family."

For years she drove her ancient Plymouth Valiant to every Southern California organ event. This prompted the late organist Bill Thomson to compose one of his most delightful and descriptive compositions, "Valiant Annie."

In memory of this well-loved lady, the Los Angeles Theatre Organ Society has established the Annie Olive Memorial Scholarship Fund. Her enthusiasm, happiness and love of life will continue with us always. And now, as Annie would say, "Let's party!"

## Organist Esther DuBoff, 87, Dies; Played for Silent Films, Recitals

Esther Leaf DuBoff, organist and one of Omaha's first and last accompanists for silent movies, died Friday, September 30, at a local hospital, where she was being treated for post-surgical complications.

The widow of violinist-turned-business man Harry DuBoff, she was 87.

Mrs. DuBoff was 12 when she got her first job as an accompanist, playing piano for a "picture show" at the Parlor Theatre.

Eventually she played massive pipe organs at some of the finest film palaces in the country, including the world's largest, the Paramount in Los Angeles. She also played at New York's Paramount Studio organ over the CBS radio network.

She gave numerous organ recitals through the years after the demise of silent films and in recent years accompanied several presentations of silent film classics.

Dr. Eugene DuBoff, a Denver psychiatrist, said his mother remained "very active, very dynamic" until recently and had continued to play for weddings and funerals.

Mrs. DuBoff's sister, Ann Leaf, also was a widely known organist and silent-film accompanist who also played for radio soap operas. She lives in Los Angeles.

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*Music is the medicine  
of a  
troubled mind.*

WALKER HADDON c. 1567  
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