

NUGGETS

from the

GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by
Lloyd
E.
Klos



Review of organ presentations after the silents bowed out are always interesting. We include a few here. Sources were *Variety* (V), *Motion Picture Herald* (MPH), *Local Press* LP) and *Radio Guide* (RG).

Circa 1930 (V) . . .

"The Radio Lung Tester" was how EDDIE DUNSTEDTER billed his novelty. As he dispensed old-time tunes, slides told how the invention measures the actual weight of air waves.

The spotlight was shone on the tester, which resembled a huge thermometer and stood in the left corner near the footlights. The tester registered the volume of sound made by the singers, thermometer-like by degrees. On the device's one side were the figures, in the center a red light bulb, controlled backstage and moved up and down as the audience's singing increased or decreased in volume.

Below-zero figures were "low pressure," "sore throat," and "not so good." From zero to 100 were such terms as "fair," "good," and "fine."

Dunstedter played through a repertory of such numbers as "Just Like a Butterfly," "Ain't She Sweet" and "Rain," with the words flashed on amusingly illustrated slides. The audience was enjoined to sing in its entirety, and sang louder and louder in order to see the bulb rise. Then there were competitive sings between women and children on one side and the men on the other; then the lower floor and the balcony. Dunstedter got a big laugh when "Old Black Joe" was flashed on for the men's song. All the way through, there were heavy laughter and applause.

March 28, 1931 (MPH) . . .

TED MEYN at Loew's Jersey City, presented a most pleasing novelty, "Melody Land Limited." This is one of Meyn's original novelties, and the audience proved its enjoyment at the finish by giving him a fine reception. The solo opened with a train effect (heard through the big horns) as Meyn played an accompaniment on the organ. He followed this with an announcement that he was taking the audience on a vacation tour of the country. As each locale was reached, he played a song reminiscent of the vicinity.

Each of the songs had a definite place in the program and it was worked out in such a manner that the audience enjoyed singing with the playing. The songs were "When It's Springtime In the Rockies," "Miss a Kiss," "Carolina Moon," "Alone Because I Love You," an extremely funny tongue-twister, and a final chorus of "I'm Happy When You're Happy." Just before the final number, a comical bit between Meyn and an usher with a bill of expense got a lot of laughs. The organ console was decorated to represent the rear of a train.

November 7, 1931 (MPH) . . .

JOSEPH STOVES (Stobles) at Jamaica's Valencia, presented a comedy organ solo entitled "Hats," and did very well with it. Hats of every description are worn by Stoves as he introduces the numbers. This proves very laughable and assists greatly in getting the audience quickly into a mood to sing. Solo opens with "Where Did You Get That Hat?"; then goes into a special on "Smiles," with the title, "There Are Hats," and so on.

Stoves orally says each hat he wears suggests a song to him, and the audience are to sing them: an old brown derby, "Sidewalks of New York;" Baby Bonnet, a special lyric to "Here Comes the Sun;" an old silver-lined top hat, "Smile, Darn Ya, Smile;" an old bonnet, "Old Fashioned Girl;" a cap, "That Old Gang of Mine;" a sailor's top-piece, "Anchors Aweigh;" and the old tin pot of war days, "Pack Up Your Troubles." For this number, a war film of soldiers marching is shown. The solo was well presented and proved very entertaining to this audience.

November 21, 1931 (MPH) . . .

WALTER ANDERSON, at Brooklyn's Madison Theatre, recently presented a songfest entitled "Sense & Nonsense" which proved enjoyable to the audience and had them singing throughout. Opening with a special arrangement of "Many Happy Returns," which one of the boys in the orchestra sang very well, Andy played "Sweet and Lovely" with special lyrics taken from sayings on radio programs, "Through With Love" and in closing, "In My Arms." Andy is a personable and likeable chap.

November 28, 1931 (MPH) . . .

DICK HARTIGAN at Schenectady's RKO Plaza, entertained his audience the first half of the week with an interesting community sing entitled "Sweetheart Novelty." All sweetheart songs were used, including "Let Me Call You Sweetheart," "Sweethearts on Parade," "Can't Stop Me from Loving You," "You're My Only Sweetheart," and "Good Night, Sweetheart." The novelty went over so well that Dick had the audience pick the song they liked best and he repeated it for an encore. For the second half of the week, he put a piano onto the stage, opened with "Dizzy Fingers," his own arrangement of "Indian Love Call," and

sang a few popular songs. Having recently sung over the radio in Albany, Dick's fine voice is even better known than he is in these parts and his radio personality has made him a big draw in this house. He closed the act with a hot arrangement of "Kitten on the Keys." Dick has made many friends during his guest engagement here.

November 28, 1931 (MPH) . . .

WALTER SEIFERT, at the Hartford Strand presented an entertaining community songfest which incorporated a number of popular tunes. He built a continuity with "dreams" as the subject and carried the theme throughout the solo. And how the audience did sing! Numbers were "I Apologize," "Little Old Church in the Vale," "To be Worthy of You," and "Good Night, Sweetheart." Seifert is a good organist, a pleasing talker, and enhances the program with a singing usher, who, with a little more training, would be a good singer. The organist has been in Hartford for the past six years and is very popular.

June 1932 (LP) . . .

At South Bend, Indiana's 2100-seat Balaban & Katz-operated Colfax Theatre, Frederick March and Sylvia Sidney are appearing in *Merrily We Go to Hell*, while JESSE CRAWFORD is presenting an organ novelty. The house is advertised "As Cool as a Mountain Cave," at 70 degrees.

July 28, 1935 (RG) . . .

When JESSE CRAWFORD was rushed to the hospital two weeks ago to have his appendix removed, the NBC program executives started to hunt for someone to replace him at the console of their mighty organ. They didn't have to spend much time hunting, for Mrs. HELEN CRAWFORD reminded them that for several years, she accompanied her husband on a twin-console organ in the Chicago Theatre. She got the assignment, is doing a masterful job, and will continue filling in for her husband until he has completely recovered.

July 23, 1938 (RG) . . .

ANN LEAF, CBS' young organist, recently had to be all three organists on the regular "Three Consoles" program. Normally, it has Miss Leaf in New York, MILTON CHARLES in Chicago, and EDDIE DUNSTEDTER in St. Louis. A few days ago, Miss Leaf completed her allotted 12 minutes, and sat at her studio console, waiting for Chicago to come in. There was a long wait and then she saw someone motioning wildly to her from the control booth. There was a severe storm, something was wrong with the Chicago wires, and she'd just have to pinch-hit for the second musician. When her "Chicago stint" ended, something seemed to have gone wrong in St. Louis, too. So, the "Mighty Mite of the Mighty Wurlitzer" played the entire broadcast of "Three Consoles." *Continued on next page . . .*



FIRE THOSE PIPES. Gordon McKenzie at the 4/22 Wurlitzer. Available from Gordon McKenzie, 52 High Street, Melton 3337, Australia. Cassette \$16.99 plus 75¢ postage. CD \$24.99 plus \$1.05 postage.

A lively, spirited and ambitious recording from Australia. The 4/22 Wurlitzer originally from The Forum Theatre in Melbourne as a 4/21, is now installed at the Moorabbin Town Hall. It is nicely finished and has a generous acoustical environment. The 22nd rank was added in 1970 when the organ was moved to its present location, that being the ever popular Post Horn.

The performances are very well done, there being only three detectable fluffs in the entire recording. There is one piano medley and one organ/piano medley with Gordon McKenzie at the piano and David Johnston at the organ. The only thing I might mention is that I thought that it was

unfortunate that the piano was not equal to the organ in size or quality. However, the duet is the most "together" I have ever heard. Their timing is absolutely flawless. I was impressed with accurate timing throughout the recording. One word of caution to CD purchasers, the final selection, "The Dambusters March," has airplane engines and a cannon dubbed over the organ. Beware ruining your speakers, or having your neighbors being sure they are in the middle of a bombing run.

Tune list: "The Phantom of the Opera," (probably the best I've heard), "A Tribute to Greece; The Star of Mykonos, The White Rose of Athens, Zorbas Dance," "The Music of Richard Clayderman; Greig Piano Concerto, Three Blind Mice, Ballade Pour Adeline, Lady Di," "Czardas," *The Man From Snowy River* (duet); Main Theme, Jessica's Sonata, Tom Fool's Knot, Clancy's Theme, Rosemary Recalls, Jessica's Theme, The Chase, Waltzing Matilda," "A Comment on Afghanistan; Song of the Volga Boatman, From Russia with Love, Theme from Raw Deal, Midnight in Moscow, Moscow Moscow," (well, I guess musicians are entitled to political commentary, too), "I Just Called to Say I Love You," and (you have been warned), "Dambusters March."

Overall this recording was very professionally produced. The organ was very well recorded, and the room acoustics were well captured. *Bob Shafter*

Manufacturers, distributors or individuals sponsoring or merchandising organ recordings are encouraged to send review copies to the Record Reviewer, THEATRE ORGAN, 4633 S.E. Brookside Dr., # 58, Milwaukie, Oregon 97222. Be sure to include purchasing information (postpaid price, ordering address) and a photo of the artist which need not be returned.

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The following was written by Desmond Jenkins for London Chapter's dedication of the organ in Barry Memorial Hall. He hopes it will be used many times at organ dedications.

O Lord of Harmony and Beauty of Sound We thank thee for all organ builders and men who made the Tibias and Trumpets.

May they be blessed in all they do And grant in their work a happy harmony — a sacrifice of Praise to thee.

Help us to be thankful for those who work with head and hand to bring us enjoyment of ear and eye.

May the music we hear today remind us of heavenly harmonies that praise thee.

Tune our lives with thy Grace and love so that heavens happiness may be ours this day and always.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

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NUGGETS *continued from previous page*

GOLD DUST . . .

1/28 J. GORDON BALDWIN, Rochester's Monroe . . . 3/28 RALPH WALDO EMERSON, WLS, Chicago . . . 5/28 HERBIE KOCH, WHO Des Moines . . . 8/28 TOM GRIERSON, WMAK & WGR, Buffalo . . . 9/28 AL BARTON, KYW, Chicago . . . 1/29 C.A. SHELDON, WSB, Atlanta . . . 2/29 LEW WHITE, WJZ, New York . . . 3/29 ARTHUR S. BROOK, WPG, Atlantic City . . . 1/30 HUGH J. DODGE, WHAM, Rochester; JESSE CRAWFORD, Royal's "Poet of the Organ, WABC, New York . . . 2/30 EDWARD C. MAY, Rochester's Riviera . . . 12/30 J. GORDON BALDWIN, Loew's Rochester . . . 12/3 WILLIAM MEEDER, WJZ and DICK LEIBERT, WFAF, New York . . . 2/35 FRED FEIBEL, WABC, New York; CARL COLEMAN, WKBW, Buffalo; FRANCIS J. CROININ, WAAB, Boston; JOHNNY WINTERS, WOR, Newark; EDDIE DUNSTEDTER, CBS Network; HARRY E. RODGERS, WAAB, Boston.

That should do it for this time. So long, sourdoughs! Jason & the Old Prospector