

JUDD WALTON REPORTS . . .

With nearly everyone making a trip to England and the continent to explore organs and indulge in some "hands-across-the-sea" technique, this roving reporter has some experiences which may serve as a guide to other travelers. Wherever an organ enthusiast goes he is sure to find a bond with others of his ilk.

ALTHOUGH WE HAD previously tried to establish contact with English Theatre Organ Enthusiasts, we left for London without completing arrangements. The loss of additional time due to a late plane arrival just about ended our chances of making any contacts after getting there. So, from the point of view of a Theatre

Last April, Mr. Walton was selected by his organization to direct a sight-seeing tour of Europe. He was accompanied by his wife, Verle. Their 23rd wedding anniversary was celebrated in Paris, if you please! We can visualize Judd's taking in the Folies Bergere, but meditating on his forthcoming meeting with Gilbert LeRoy at the Gaumont Palace.

Organ Enthusiast, this part of the trip was all but a complete loss.

While in Amsterdam, I made it a point to check out the theaters and ended up meeting Rene d'Rooy, organist at the City Theatre. He plays a 19-rank *Standaard* theatre organ. His playing is very much in the style of Reginald Dixon, and he explained that Amsterdam

theatre patrons liked a fast rhythm, many combination changes, and a big build-up at the finis. He accompanied a vaudeville act while I was there, and did a fifteen minute fill-in solo between the act and the movie. He has been there a number of years and followed Cor Steyn. I just barely had time to play a few numbers and copy the stop list before the show started. The organ

itself has three tibias and is quite theatrical, admittedly built to copy the famous Wurlitzer tone, (which is quite expensive to copy, I was told). I did not have time to check the Tuchinsky Theatre, which is reputed to have a 4m-14r Wurlitzer. My information on this came as a complete surprise to d'Rooy who was under the impression that it had an electronic organ. On my next trip over, I will pin this one down for our own information. Finding d'Rooy was quite a surprise to me, as no one here or in England seemed to know that he even existed. He is a delightful chap, and was most hospitable. He even took me to the only organ factory in the Netherlands, just a short block from the theatre, on the fifth floor of a building. This is the firm of Fontein and Gaal, located on Korte Leidsche, Swarsstraat, Amsterdam. In their warehouse there



Rene d'Rooy at the 19 rank *Standaard* City Theatre organ, Amsterdam, Holland. (Photo by J.W.)



Rene d'Rooy in front of City Theatre holding a gift copy of *THE TIBIA* from Judd



Mr. Gaal of Fontein & Gaal in his organ factory workshop holding African mahogany pipes he makes. Amsterdam.

(Photo J. W.)



Gaal and his reservoirs

were set up two old theatre organs of Dutch make, complete with Tibias. These, they offered to me cheap — even wrapped up — but how to get them home on the plane?

In Frankfurt-on-Main, as Bonn, there are apparently no theatre organs left, although my search in each case was hasty. Also none in Zurich or Lucerne, Switzerland. None in Florence, Rome, Pisa, or Genoa, Italy. Also checked Nice, France, and Monaco without results.

In Paris, however, it was my distinct pleasure to meet Gilbert LeRoy, who is a very charming young man, and a fine organist. His English, though hesitant, was ample enough to find us getting along famously. Our first stop was the Olympia Theatre where we took turns playing a Cavaille-Coll Theatre Organ, the only one built by this company to the best of his knowledge. Except for the flute-like metal Tibia, this two manual organ had a terrific punch for fast numbers, and the reed section was lovely to hear. Gilbert did a terrific rendition of *Teddy Bear's Picnic* and other numbers made famous by Sidney Torch.

Upon leaving the theater at 3:00 a.m. we drove to Place Pigalle for an orangeade and Perrier. As we sat at the sidewalk cafe, we witnessed a street fight started, apparently, by Algerians who have been causing trouble

throughout their own country and in France.

The second day after this, Verle and I met Gilbert at the famous Gaumont Palace at Place Clichy in Paris where we listened to him prepare his solo for the coming week's show on the 19-rank Christie organ. Unfortunately, I was a bit under the weather with an attack of flu, with all the aches and pains that went with it; but I would not be denied this experience for anything. After playing the organ, which has the typical Christie sound as heard on the many records issued in England and recorded on these organs, we drove to Gilbert's apartment where it was our pleasure to meet his parents, two of the most charming people in all of Paris.

Mrs. LeRoy had prepared a very lovely five-course luncheon, complete with wine courses to match, and capped off with a fruit salad and a bottle of the best Champagne made in France. Although they spoke only a word or two of English, we had a very happy time around the table, which was followed by a fine cigar for Mr. LeRoy and myself. Gilbert and I had a real picnic playing piano duets. While I just managed to drum out the bass, he did a beautiful job of improvising many of our pop tunes.

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Gilbert LeRoy at the 4/19 Christie, Gaumont Palace, Paris.

(Photo by J. W.)



Gilbert LeRoy at Olympia Theatre, Cavaille-Cole organ, Paris, where he first played the organ. (Photo J.W.) (Since removed to a church).

they won't rust. Pipes with leathered lips or wooden rollers will have to be kept out of the water — brushes and dry rags must suffice for them.

Reed pipes. These are the most delicate to handle. Use extreme care not to alter the precise curvature of the tongues. Begin by removing the boots and washing them. Withdraw the wedges with a chisel, using it as a prying tool against the side of the wedge and gradually working it out. Keep the wedges strictly in order! Now remove the tongues and shallots, keeping them also in order. The resonators and blocks can now be washed. Polish the tongues and shallots on a board covered with very fine crocus-cloth, to a mirror-like surface. Be especially careful

to do as little hard rubbing as possible on the tongues! When everything is dry, reassemble each pipe. Make sure the tongue is exactly lined up with the shallot, and that the shallot fits squarely and goes into the block as far as the setting-in mark and no farther. Be certain the wedge is good and tight. Finally, replace the tuning wire and the boot. From now on, resist the temptation to blow sample toots on the reeds. Moisture — from your breath — is the worst thing that can happen to a reed pipe.

In the next installment we'll consider the planning of your layout and get started on the actual installation.

(To be continued)

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Even though I had only nibbled at the food and sipped the wine, two puffs on the cigar did the trick, and I knew that we had to leave quickly, albeit greenly. After my humble apologies to the Gilberts, and after enjoying the most beautiful view of Paris we had in our entire visit there (from their balcony) Gilbert hurried us to our hotel and plane where we left for good old U.S.A.

My new-found friends are just as avid in their love for theatre organs as are any of us. Gilbert especially asked to be remembered to the many American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts. He is a real fan of George Wright's. He hopes some day to visit the U. S., and if so, it will be my pleasure to give him a royal welcome.

The visit to his home by Verle and myself was the real high-light of our visit to Paris, and I'll never forget it.

I should have mentioned that I played the extremely old organ in the Pantheon in Rome. This was a genuine thrill and a memorable incident of our trip.



Judd Walton and Gilbert LeRoy at the Gaumont Palace, Place Clichy, Paris

DISCOGRAPHY

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Waltzing cat (*Anderson*), Sleepy lagoon (*Coates*), Alice blue gown (*Tierney*), Stella by starlight (*Washington-Young*), Don't sit under the apple tree (*Brown-Stept-Tobias*), Alleghany moon (*Hoffman-Manning*), Under Paris skies (*Gaunon-Girard-Drejac*), Via condios (*Russel-Pepper-James*), My blue heaven (*Donaldson*), Orchids in the moonlight (*Youmans*).

Palmer, C. L. (Nom de plume)

Cameo (10"-78).

499. 4028. Ruby (*Hoffman*) My song of the Nile (*Bryan-Meyer*)

Melba (10"-78. British label).

Tivoli Theatre

500. 1000. Silent night (*Gruber*) (Vocal refrain). Other side orchestra.

501. 9285. Not for a day but forever (*Heinzman-Newman*), Am I blue? (*Akst*). Vocals.

Parmentier, C. A. J.

Kimball, Studio, Roxy Theatre, N. Y.

Dominion (British label 10"-78).

502. A264. Same as Grey Gull 4284N.

Domino (Canadian label 10"-78).

503. ? Same as above.

Metropole (British label 10"-78)

504. 1264. My old fashioned home () .

Other side John Hassel, organist.

Radiex (10"-78)

505. ? Same as Grey Gull 4284N.

Grey Gull (10"-78).

506. 4282N. Silent night (*Gruber*), Adeste fidelis (*Trad.*)

507. 4284N. Tip-toe through the tulips with me (*Dubin-Burke*). My old fashioned home () .

Picadilly (British label 10"-78).

508. 445. Same as Grey Gull 4284N.

509. 473. Same as Grey Gull 4282N.

Paye, Jean De (See DePaye, Jean)

Pearl, Hal

Wurlitzer, Aragon Ballroom, Chicago, Ill.

Replica (10"-33).

510. 33x502. HAL PEARL AT THE ARAGON PIPE ORGAN: Dizzy fingers (*Confrey*), Malaguena (*Albeniz*), Canadian capers (*Cohen-White-Chandler-Burnett*), Song of India (*Rimsky Korsakov*), Satan takes a holiday (*Clinton*), Espana cani (Sp. folk song), Polly (*Zamecnik*), Flapercette (*Greer-Murray*), Concerto in A minor (*Grieg*).

Peterson, Howard

Smith, Theatre, Geneva, Illinois.

Columbia (10"-78).

511. 587-D. Always (*Berlin*), Just a cottage small (*Hanley-DeSylva*), Too many parties and too many pals (*Henderson*), Oh, how I miss you tonight (*Davis-Burke-Fisher*).

Barton, W.L.S., Chicago, Illinois

Inspiration Sacred Recordings (10"-78).

512. S-3073. The old rugged cross (*Bernard*), Sometimes I feel like a motherless child (*Trad.*) Vocalist Pruth McFarlin, tenor.

Priest, John

Skinner, Skinner Studio, N. Y.

Brunswick (10"-78).

513. 3178. Tell me you love me. (*O'Hara-King*), Reaching for the moon (*Davis-Greer*).

514. 3179. Drifting and dreaming (*Gillespie et al*), After I say I'm sorry (*Donaldson-Lymon*).

"RASTUS" (The original colored organist). Apparently U.S. origin.

Panachord (British label 10"-78).

515. 25062. Old Black Joe and My old Kentucky home (*Foster*).