

Sources for this column were *Diapason* (D), *Jacobs* (J), *Local Press* (LP) and *Variety* (V).

July 1923 (D) . . .

FRANK VAN DUSEN, Director of the School of Theatre Organ Playing at the American Conservatory in Chicago, and his associate EDWARD EIGENSCHENK of the Michigan Theatre, have engaged the Fulco Sales Co. which equips teaching studios and theatres for the projection of motion pictures. Fulco's product, the "Fulco Little Model Theatre," gives inexperienced organ pupils an opportunity to practice under the same conditions which they will meet in any theatre. The pupil may play with auditors as in a theatre or may arrange for private practice. It gives the school an opportunity to conduct classes as well.

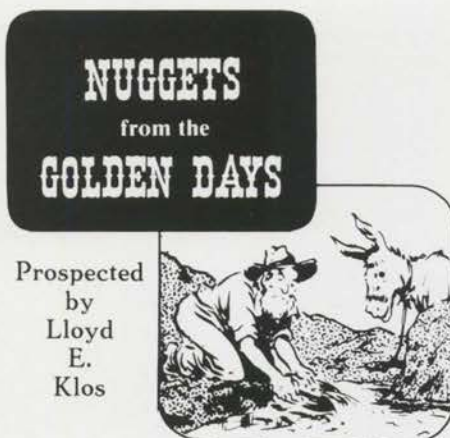
The Little Model Theatre is at 24 East Eighth Street. It is complete in every detail, having a small stage with an attractively painted drop curtain, beautiful plush drape curtains and an automatic screen curtain, back of which is a good-size screen. In front of the stage is a small pit containing the console of the newly installed organ. The little auditorium has leather-cushioned chairs which will seat approximately 100. The theatre is tastefully decorated, nothing being spared to secure artistic and harmonious effect, including colored lighting changes.

In this little theatre, Messrs. Van Dusen and Eigenschenk have installed a two-manual Kimball with registration to meet the demands of theatre playing of the highest order. In addition to the regular 16, 8, 4 and 2-foot strings, flutes and diapasons, it contains a vox humana, oboe, horn, clarinet, kinura, orchestra bells, glockenspiel, nazard and tierce, and is equipped with all the couplers, pistons and accessories of the modern theatre organ.

Classes opened early in May. Besides Mr. Eigenschenk, Mr. Van Dusen has added four assistants, all organists of his training: HELEN SEARLES of the Portage Park Theatre, Mrs. GERTRUDE BAILEY of the Michigan; EMILY ROBERTS, teacher at the American Conservatory; and EDWARD BENEDICT, Capitol Theatre organist, who will give special courses along practical lines.

July 1927 by Avelyn M. Kerr (J) . . .

Milwaukee movie fans have had many treats recently with the opening of several new theatres, including the Venetian on March 15. This house is owned by the Universal Company which recently bought out the Silliman Corp. controlling the Milwaukee Theatre Circuit. The Venetian is one of the largest and most beautiful theatres in this section of the country, being patterned after the Capitol in Chicago, with the same atmospheric effects.



Prospected
by
Lloyd
E.
Klos

When the music is in accord with the environment, one can imagine himself in an old Venetian garden. The house is a credit to Milwaukee, and if management would employ as many musicians as ushers, they'd have a symphony orchestra. Judging by the wage scale, it wouldn't cost them much more. The writer was very disappointed that the Laemmle Co. could conceive so beautiful a theatre, involving so large an expenditure, and not give music proper consideration. The pit musician is almost passé in Milwaukee, and no wonder, when the union allows a theatre of this size to operate without an orchestra.

Much credit should be given OMAR SMITH who presides at the Venetian's mighty Wurlitzer console. He is assisted by his daughter, Bernice, and Omar has made such a pronounced success of her training that it is difficult to tell when one leaves off and the other begins. Omar has had years of experience in nearly every theatre in the city, doing song-slide novelties, recitals and accompanying stage presentations. His wonderful Wurlitzer and the beauty of his surroundings are the envy of many an aspiring organist. But, if seniority holds in music as it does in railroading, Omar Smith is entitled to his success because he was among the first Milwaukee musicians to take up theatre organ work. He has climbed to the top of his merits through hard work. Bernice will follow in her father's footsteps, and her road to a brilliant future will not be nearly so difficult, because she has the advantage of more preliminary training, and her father's experience will smooth the way for her. Her father is as proud of her as when he passed around the cigars and sang "Somebody's Coming To My House."

June 7, 1927 (LP) . . .

Rochester's WHAM is sponsoring a request hour of organ music tonite by J. GORDON BALDWIN. A good measure of the popularity attached to Mr. Baldwin's work is due to his keen interest in giving his listeners the best tonal effects possessed by the organ for the numbers requested. From the beginning to the end

of the program, not once do his fingers leave the manuals. The announcer whispers the requests as they come in over the telephone and Baldwin modulates from one to the next in a most pleasing manner.

April 1928 (J) by J.D. Barnard . . .

The young man who presides at the organ in the Imperial Theatre in Long Beach, California, responds to the name of ROY MEDCALFE. That he is unusually reticent may be gleaned from the fact that when approached with the stock questions as to when, where, why, where born, color of eyes and his favorite shade of pajamas, Medcalfe is apt to retort, "That's nobody's business." However, the writer managed to extract the following details:

He began playing theatre organs when they first were installed in Missoula, Montana; Portland, Oregon; and Spokane, Washington, respectively. California theatre advertisements proved too alluring to withstand, however, so in search of the fickle goddess of fortune, he wandered to Los Angeles where he stayed for 11 years. At the Million Dollar, he was associated with Jesse Crawford and Henry B. Murtagh, later becoming solo organist at the California Theatre.

Following these notable engagements, Medcalfe was solo organist with dramatic stock at the Raymond Theatre in Pasadena. In 1926, he was transferred by West Coast Inc. to the Imperial in Long Beach where he features original solos built around local happenings. He also has introduced some very original organ and piano duets which have won him fame.

Roy Medcalfe organized the Society of Theatre Organists at Long Beach, the second organization of its kind in the country. He is also a member of the Los Angeles Club and the Pacific Coast Club at Long Beach. In addition to his extensive club work and picture-playing, he has a large class of pupils, using five organs for teaching purposes. His weekly income is purported to exceed \$600.

Roy gratuitously offers the information that he drives his own car, smokes Philadelphia cigars (when they're offered him), and lives in Pasadena where he has 50 rose bushes, a persimmon tree and a bougainvillea vine.

Circa 1930 (V) . . .

ALBERT F. BROWN, who uses a scrimmed stage with his organ solo, has a clever conception of a popular number. Behind the screen are a boy and girl at either side of the stage who apparently are estranged and don't know how to make up. After each goes through a bit of vocalization, they meet at center stage before a depot prop labelled "Halfway"

(continued on page 38)

LETTERS (cont. from page 6)

we, as an organization, should pursue this as a specific reference to the theatre pipe organ so when that favorite theatre, auditorium or pizza parlor is gone the sound would be saved.

Here, let me demonstrate this 8' Musette from the San Francisco Fox . . .

Sincerely,
Tom W. Yannitell
Marion, Ohio

Dear Editor:

I wonder if Gerry Gregorius was reviewing the same Steve Milo book that I have (October/November 1989). Having played the organ for 30 years, I found *Steve Milo's Easy Ladder of Progression and Dictionary of Chords for Organ/Piano* to be very valuable and easy to use for both beginners and seasoned organists.

I think Gregorius was nit-picking on some of the criticism of this well laid out manual. The finger numbering is completely logical and makes more sense. The purpose of this excellent reference is, after all, to simplify the understanding of chord progression, not substitute for a complete teaching method. All keyboard players will find it very helpful and teachers should make use of this method in teaching their students chord progression.

Sincerely,
Wally Dow
Naples, Florida

Dear Editor:

I have had a copy of Steve Milo's book for some time and I like it. His theory is innovative, interesting and EASY to comprehend. Gerry should have contacted Steve Milo before writing his critique.

All chords must be understood and played on root position before they can be converted to an inversion. Steve's theory on root position is very helpful.

The piano scale is written from Middle C down with thumb on Middle C being finger #1 for left hand accompaniment, but I understand that Mr. Milo's theory by chords are built on 1, 3, 5 fingering — with small finger left hand being #1. My reasoning shows if you put hand over hand with palms down, right hand thumb finger #1 goes over left hand #1 small finger to build chords only.

I find the size of this book easy to work with on my music rack or my theatre organ. With the Table of Contents it is easy to refer to any particular chord you may need.

Sincerely,
Marion E. Traa
Naples, Florida

Opinions expressed in this column are those of the correspondents, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors or the policies of ATOS or THEATRE ORGAN. Letters concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are welcome. Unless clearly marked "not for publication" letters may be published in whole or in part.

NUGGETS (cont. from page 26)

and proceed to reunite in harmony. Throughout this picturization, words of the song are flashed onto the scrim and Brown accompanies at the console. A nice little number and the presentation angle put it over.

GOLD DUST:

12/34 WILLIAM MEEDER, New York's WJZ; RICHARD LEIBERT, New York's WEAF ... 2/35 ARTHUR CHANDLER, JR., Cincinnati's WLW; JOHNNY WINTERS, Newark's WOR; HARRY E. RODGERS, Boston's WAAB ... 5/35 EDDIE DUNSTEDTER, CBS Network; HAL BECKETT, Newark's WOR; GORDON JOHNSON, Buffalo's WBEN ... 7/35 FRANCIS J. CRONIN, Boston's WAAB; FRED FEIBEL, CBS Network ... 9/35 JESSE CRAWFORD, NBC Network; CARL COLEMAN'S "Nocturne" on Buffalo's WGR.

As seen above, radio came along in time to effect the change from the theatre to the "Opiate of the Masses" for many of the great theatre organists.

That's all for this time. So long, sourdoughs! Jason & The Old Prospector

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