

NUGGETS
from the
GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by
Lloyd
E.
Klos



Sources were *Diapason* (D) and *Jacobs* (J).

January 1923 (D) by Henry Francis Parks

The Society of Theatre Organists recently held a banquet at the National Vaudeville Association in New York, following a demonstration at Wanamaker's that afternoon. Fifty members and friends were present, including several distinguished guests whose remarks were of interest and value. President ROBERT J. BERENTSEN spoke with pride of the growth of the Society to 65 members, and its achievements in presenting the Wanamaker demonstration and the earlier Capitol Theatre recital to crowds of interested listeners. He then introduced S.L. Rothapel (Roxy), director of the Capitol Theatre, who gave a valuable and helpful talk on showmanship.

He declared it was not necessary for the organist to debase his art and that dignity and good taste should always prevail. Great strides have been made in accompanying pictures, but scores for the orchestra were still incomplete, perhaps more so than for the organ. Music for pictures is sometimes too complex and elaborate, distracting attention from the story. A pastoral scene could be accompanied by the tinkling of bells, a train whistle far off, chimes from a distant tower, a few moment's silence, then a simple andante, all very quiet and subdued. The organ should suggest a picture, letting the audience fill in the details. Moving pictures are unique in that they awaken the imagination and are the nucleus for an extended mental panorama created by the audience.

Asked about jazz on the organ, he replied that it was allowable to interpret any emotion on the organ, if the instrument were adapted for it and the player capable of expressing it. The theatre organist, Roxy said, must be experienced in transcribing and improvising, especially on the themes of the score.

Reginald L. McAll of the National Association of Organists, said the association was glad to co-operate with the Society in furthering its aims, and spoke of the theatre session to be presented by the STO at the NAO convention next summer at Rochester's Eastman School of Music. He

said the Society was working for an ideal, a definite principle, and other organists' groups should uphold them in every way.

JOHN HAMMOND, Organist at Rochester's Eastman Theatre, was introduced. He said the Eastman School's department of moving-picture-playing is aimed at taking the young music student at the beginning of his study and training him to be a theatre organist and nothing else. He spoke of the school's facilities for study and practice and the great possibilities of this instruction. He also stated that the Eastman Theatre was run as a moving picture theatre, not as an opera house or concert hall.

January 1927 (J)

HAROLD J. LYON, solo organist at the Legion Theatre's large Robert-Morton in Marshalltown, Iowa, is quite a versatile chap. He is the proud possessor of a fine musical education which began with piano at five and continued with clarinet, cello and most orchestral instruments. It was only natural that his next step should lead him to the theatre organ and with his excellent musical background, success came soon. His organ training was procured from noted organists Frank Van Dusen, Edward Benedict and Ambrose Larsen of Chicago.

Mr. Lyon has some very sensible ideas about his profession. He believes that the organist should always use his most conscientious efforts to elevate the taste of audiences, instead of catering to the plebeian desires of the few, a good standard to follow, unquestionably. He has a large class of students, and they find him an able and brilliant instructor. He lists nine points which he thinks every organist should understand and use in his work.

They are pep, good judgement, atmosphere, anticipating the screen story, rhythm, practice, memorizing, improvising, novelties and tricks. Under the latter heading, he puts a few questions to you. Can you write patter, formulate slide material, invent ingenious ideas for organ solos? Can you intrigue your audience with imitations, catch renditions of popular songs, and grotesque and amusing effects? Have you a winning stage presence?

Mr. Lyon's chief hobby is writing articles for magazines about the theatre organ in all its phases. His latest in *The Exhibitor's Herald* described how he played the mysterious and creepy film *The Bat*. Every small detail was covered with the greatest care.

Mr. Lyon will soon open the large Hill-green-Lane organ at the Capitol Theatre in Ottumwa, Iowa, for the Strand Amusement Co. The instrument compares favorably with any photoplay organ in the state and Mr. Lyon is to be congratulated upon having secured one of the most desirable organist positions in Iowa.

October 1927 (J) by Henry Francis Parks

One need not be the product of a metropolitan center to win personal fame. On

the contrary, the majority of names which are household words in all fields of human activity have usually started from the smaller towns, unhampered by things found in a city, to interfere with a successful career. This is as true in art as it is in business.

TED STANDORD, though he has played in some of the largest mid-west cities has made his organist reputation in Wisconsin towns, and this small-city popularity is rapidly eclipsing that of the so-called "big-towners."

Before going to Wisconsin, Stanford was just a small fish in a big sea, practically immersed in oblivion. Leaving the metropolis to go it alone, he played at Racine's State Theatre for a few weeks, then left for Madison and Janesville to fill short engagements. His work in Racine had been so thorough that immediately after the writer opened the Barton there last fall, the Saxe interests sent a telegram to Ted to assume the house organist position.

Since then, it has been one successful week after another, and this in one of the least erudite cities in America, considering the showman's or musician's standpoint. Anybody who could make good so decidedly as Ted, in spite of the low saturation point of appreciation in Racine, seemed made to order for the million-dollar picture palace the Universal Film interests opened September 1 at Kenosha.

The beautiful Kenosha Theatre opened its doors with Ted Stanford as solo organist, and he went over enthusiastically with the audience. Today, he is as well known in Chicago as he is in Wisconsin, which, for a little over a year and a half of work is astounding. His forte is hand-made, hand-picked novelties, he writing the lyrics and furnishing the fundamental ideas. That's why his material shows individuality and freshness.

Universal Films is delighted with his work, and he stands in line to open their next new house at his old stamping grounds in Racine next January in competition with the house where he made his start.

So you organists can be highly satisfied if you are going over well in smaller towns. There are really more opportunities in the cities of 100,000 than in those of the million population class, and Ted Stanford wisely knows it.

GOLD DUST:

12/34 WILLIAM MEEDER, New York's WJZ ... 2/35 HARRY E. RODGERS, Boston's WAAB; CARL COLEMAN, Buffalo's WGR ... 7/35 HAL BECKETT, Newark's WOR; FRED FEIBEL, CBS Network ... 8/35 EDDIE WEAVER, Bridgeport's WICC; ALBERT DOWLING on

(continued on page 51)

OPENING OF NOMINATIONS for 1991 ELECTION OF DIRECTORS



Note: Deadline is February 1, 1991

It is time to nominate candidates for the National ATOS Board of Directors for the three-year term from July 1991 through June 1994. All regular ATOS members are eligible for nomination and may nominate themselves or be nominated by another member, in which case written consent of the nominee is mandatory and must be received before the nominee's name can be placed on the ballot.

A nominee need have no special talent or experience in pipe organ technology or musicianship; however, nominees should have a demonstrated interest in ATOS and the time to work toward the goals and the growth of the society. While there are certain benefits enjoyed by directors, one of which is the reimbursement of certain meeting-related expenses, there are also responsibilities. Along with a willingness to participate in the administrative affairs of the society, it is most important that Board members faithfully attend both Board and Committee meetings.

The Board usually meets only once a year during Convention, so attendance of all Directors is necessary if the decisions and actions of the Board are to be truly responsive to the membership. In addition, Directors serve on one or more committees providing valuable input to the Board. The chairmen of the committees are responsible for submitting a written report of their activities and recommendations prior to the annual meeting of the Board.

The Board is currently taking action on several exciting programs which should increase public awareness of ATOS and set a course for the future. This is a great time to become involved in the national level of ATOS.

Procedure to be observed in the nomination process is as follows:

- 1 ■ Each nominee shall furnish a small black and white photo, together with a statement, not to exceed 100 words, including personal data, work and theatre organ experience, and a short platform statement. Statements exceeding the 100-word limit will disqualify the candidate.
- 2 ■ All candidates must have their statements and photos mailed to the ATOS Secretary, P.O. Box 902, Lake Arrowhead, California 92352, no later than February 1, 1991.
- 3 ■ This year we are again using the separate mailing of the ballots and resumes of the candidates. While this method is much more costly than placing the ballots in THEATRE ORGAN, we hope that it will encourage many more of you to vote for the candidate of your choice, thus demonstrating your interest in and support of ATOS objectives.

If you have any questions, write or call: Nominating Committee Chairman Tom DeLay, 162 West Roberts, Fresno, CA 93705, or phone 209/431-4305.

"If qualifications of the nominees may not be widely known to the membership, it is permissible to allow each nominee to furnish for enclosure a brief factual statement of his service and qualifications, provided that all nominees are accorded equal opportunity and space."

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised

COUNTING WORDS

1. Name and state do not count.
2. Hyphenated words count as one. (Vice-president, two-term ...)
3. Articles and prepositions count. (the organ caretaker = three words; an avid lover of theatre organ = six words)
4. ATOS = one word. RCTOS = one word.
American Theatre Organ Society = four words
5. Abbreviations count as a word. (Asst., Mrs.)
6. Numbers count as a word. (26 = one word, 5 = one word)

FOR THE RECORDS cont.



MUSICAL PRISMS. Dwight Beacham at the Allen MDS-Theatre III. Selections include: Riff Song, I Don't Need Anything But You, True Love, On the Sunny Side of the Street, Calvary, Stars and Stripes Forever, Tarantella, Dancing in the Dark, Prelude in Classic Style, I Would Be True. Cassette tape available from: Allen Organ Co., Macungie, PA 18062. Price \$6.00 postpaid.

**PERFORMANCE: VERY GOOD
ORGAN: GOOD ELECTRONIC
RECORDING: GOOD**

Dwight Beacham turns in a well-played and varied program. Since this recording is clearly advertising, there is some indication that Dwight Beacham might be demonstrating the organ, but the arrangements are enjoyable.

This electronic organ bears a remarkable resemblance to pipes, but it is not a dead ringer. Its biggest fault is that the top is brittle. The recording Dwight Beacham made on the ADC 4600 fooled me several times. I don't think this one would.

This tape is normal EQ and no Dolby, but is quieter than many high bias tapes with Dolby. The review copy was recorded a little hot in a couple of places.

It occurred to me to go back and check on the ADC 4600 recording, and I noticed that it was apparently recorded in a different room at the Allen Organ Co. While I would say that both recordings were well done, that may have something to do with this recording sounding more electronic.

DWIGHT BEACHAM AT THE ADC 4600 is still available for \$5.00.

This recording is recommended.

Bob Shafter

NUGGETS cont.

Buffalo's WBEN "Slumber Hour;" FRANCIS J. CRONIN, Boston's WAAB; Mrs. HELEN CRAWFORD, New York's WEAJ; J. GORDON BALDWIN on Rochester's WHEC ... 9/35 DICK LEIBERT and JESSE CRAWFORD, New York's WEAJ ... 3/37 LEN SALVO, Chicago's WGN; MARY FOUNTAIN, Harrisburg's WHP; BOB HENKE's "Organlogue," WEEU in Reading, PA.

That will do it for this time. So long sourdoughs!

Jason & the Old Prospector