

NUGGETS from the GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by
Lloyd
E.
Klos



Sources were: *Diapason* (D), *Jacobs* (J) and *Local Press* (LP).

January 1925 (D)

The Marr & Colton Co. was organized in Warsaw, New York, in 1915 by David Marr & John J. Colton. Starting in an old brick building (still standing) not much larger than a garage, the company has developed an organization of craftsmen recognized for the high quality of their instruments. The firm has grown purely on the strength of the merits of the organs produced.

David Marr started with the Hope-Jones Electric Organ Co. in Birkenhead, England, in 1892. After a number of years, he was associated with Norman Bros. & Beard of Norwich, England, builders of several famous cathedral organs. Mr. Marr came to the United States, joined Hope-Jones & Harrison of Watessing, New Jersey, later was connected with the Ernest M. Skinner firm of Boston and was Pacific Coast representative for the Hope-Jones Organ Co. of Elmira, New York. In 1910, Mr. Marr joined the Wurlitzer organization with Hope-Jones and upon the death of the latter in 1914, he and John Colton left the firm and formed the M & C partnership.

During Mr. Marr's association with Hope-Jones, he assisted in many of the inventor's experiments. John Colton started with the Hope-Jones Co. in 1908, specializing in voicing under H-J. He joined Wurlitzer in 1910.

As business increased for M&C, a new structure was built in 1916. A second was added in 1920 and in 1921, factory size was doubled. Still another addition was made. The plant has every modern convenience and labor-saving device. Each instrument is made under the personal supervision of the partners. The company has offices in New York, Buffalo, Rochester, Philadelphia, Detroit, Indianapolis; Portland, Oregon; Pittsburgh and Los Angeles.

October 1926 (J)

Chicago's RALPH WALDO EMERSON is sittin' on top of the world. A few years ago, he came to Chicago, practically unknown. It wasn't long, however until the folks in the Windy City were sitting up and taking serious notice of this energetic young man. He became affiliated with the Barton Organ Co. as their official organist, and

soon after, became organist for WLS. For several years, through his brilliant radio concerts, he enjoyed possibly the most widespread popularity an organist can ever hope to attain.

During this time, he conducted classes in Motion Picture Playing, with which he was very successful. His classes were always filled, backed by a waiting list. You can see that Mr. Emerson was about the busiest organist in the city, being a glutton for work with plenty to do.

From all this, evolved the thing which was to make the name of Ralph Waldo Emerson popular in the world of organ playing. With his valuable knowledge of the public's demands, gleaned through many thousands of requests, and his experience as a motion picture organist, it is no wonder that he was more than qualified to become the founder of a very unique institution, the world's largest theatre organ school. That sounds big, and it certainly is.

Imagine walking into an area 16 stories above the din and roar of Chicago's famous Loop, where there are 14 sound-proofed, specially ventilated studios, each with one of the latest Estey unit organs installed. Every organ has all the traps, second touches, percussions and everything indigenous to a good theatre organ. Mr. Emerson is justified in being very proud of possessing such excellent teaching facilities.

Newcomers who wish to become theatre organists are given thorough training. There is an Extension Course, which enables the organist in the small town to not only improve his position, but keeps him from getting into a rut. Mr. Emerson also features a Beginner's Extension Course which helps to qualify the pianist in the smaller community who is not adequately trained for theatre organ work.

Ralph Emerson has personality, too, and lots of it. His students are always his best boosters and his finest references. He's a bear at remembering names and faces; he would certainly have to be, with scores of pupils to look after. A composer of many popular songs, he is constantly in demand as guest organist for dedications and civic music activities.

1915-1929 (LP)

Sacramento, California, had a wealth of organists during the golden days of the theatre organ. Following are the names of some, the theatres played and the years: 1915 Prof. F.C. BASSET, Orpheum; Prof. ANTON ROUBICEK, Strand ... 1917 GEORGE WELSH, T&D Theatre's Wurlitzer ... 1918 MAURICE SMITH, T&D; HENRY SPILLER and CECIL TEAGUE, Goddard's 2/7 Wurlitzer ... 1919 CLARENCE REYNOLDS, Godard's ... 1920 DANTES BALLEAU & LIELA ELLERY, T&D; E. FLATT BENT, Hippodrome's 2/6 Wurlitzer; FREDERICK BURR SCHOLL, Godard's ... 1921 JAMES L. MITCHELL, T&D; MAURICE SMITH, State; ROBERT E. SPENCER, Liberty's Robert-Morton; G.S. HERALD & ARTHUR POWER, Sequoias's Wurlitzer ...

1923 Prof. RAYMOND BEDELL, Godard; EDWIN GRANDIN, T&D; JAMES L. MITCHELL, Liberty ... 1924 ALLEN LANE, ARTHUR POWER & CHARLES WILSON, Capitol's 2/14 Wurlitzer ... 1925 ETHA BOWMAN, Capitol; CY GRAVES, Godard; GENE HOWARD & EDWIN WALTON, California's 2/6 Wurlitzer; BOB WIDENER, Liberty ... 1927 Miss DALTON, Capitol; CY GRAVES, Sequoia; E.Y. HEGBON, Alhambra; GENE HOWARD, Liberty ... 1928 ISABELLE HARRIS, Hippodrome; ALLEN LANE & HENRI LE BEL, Senator; EDDIE SELLEN, Godard ... 1929 CY GRAVES, Alhambra; Mr. MAINARD, Hippodrome.

1986 by Margaret Dilling, University of California

From the age of nine through high school, ELOISE ROWAN studied classical piano at the Dakota Conservatory of Music in Fargo, North Dakota, under its director, Ernest Boehmer. She continued studies in piano, theory and accompanying from 1922-23 at Northwestern University and from 1923-26 at the University of Minnesota, beginning classical organ with George Fairclough. While in college, she turned to theatre organ, took lessons privately with Eddie Dunstedter and accompanied silent films at the Loring, Strand and Garrick theatres in Minneapolis.

In 1926, she succeeded Dunstedter as featured organist at the State, and in 1928 at the Minnesota. At the latter, she played spotlight solos, provided background music for the weekly feature film and accompanied stage shows for celebrities including Ted Lewis, Ray Bolger, Burns & Allen and the Mills Brothers. From 1930-31, she played the dual-console Wurlitzer in Denver's Paramount as "Jean" of the duet of "Jackie & Jean."

Between 1931 and 1944, she taught theatre organ at the MacPhail School of Music in Minneapolis, served as NBC staff organist on KSTP and as organist at the Minneapolis Auditorium for special events from international bicycle races to war bond tours of Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Dennis Morgan. In Chicago, 1944-45 she was employed by NBC station WBBM.

After moving to San Francisco in 1945, she played for local and network shows on NBC's KPO and ABC's KGO. A pioneer in local San Francisco television from 1950, she appeared on KGO, KPIX and KRON. After her retirement in 1975, she continued to teach and to be active in the American Theatre Organ Society in southern California.

GOLD DUST:

7/38 Organist HAROLD TURNER playing piano on the Mutual Network from Chicago; LEW WHITE, CBS from NY; ARTHUR CHANDLER, Jr., Cincinnati's WLW; FRED FEIBEL over WABC, NY; CHARLES PAUL, CBS Network; FLORANCE DUNHAM, WMMN, Fairmont, W.Va.

That does it for now. So long, sourdoughs!
Jason & The Old Prospector