

NUGGETS

from the

GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by
Lloyd
E.
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December 1919 (M) . . .

Is is a blessing or curse to be versatile? Mr. EDWARD BENEDICT, the famous Wurlitzer organist says it's a curse with a capital C.

Having inherited a talent for music and a tenor voice in his younger days, Mr. Benedict started out to be a composite Caruso, Campanini and Paderewski. Commencing his music career as a church organist, he was successively (but not always successfully) a musical comedy director, composer, hotel orchestra leader, grand opera chorus man, tenor soloist in a prominent New York church, popular singer, musical director and business manager of Jesse Lasky's "Birdland," a "single" in vaudeville, combination movie-player and illustrated singer, a society entertainer, leader of a vaudeville orchestra, motion picture organist and finally a Wurlitzer player.

After hearing a Hope-Jones Wurlitzer Unit Orchestra, he lost all desire to do anything else but to master this wonderful instrument, so he wisely gave up his vocal and orchestral aspirations and devoted his entire time, talent and energy to the Wurlitzer. Opportunities for practice and instruction were sadly limited in this period, and he encountered so many obstacles that many times he was sorely tempted to resume his old calling. After six months of vicissitudes, during which he played every style Wurlitzer from the two-stop "G" to the larger four-manual units, matters commenced to change for the better and Benedict began to realize the wisdom of the step he had taken.

In the fall of 1914, he was offered the position of organist at Pittsburgh's Pitt Theatre for \$60 a week. The following season, he went to the Broadway-Strand in Detroit for \$75. After three years, he accepted a position at San Francisco's California Theatre for \$125, was raised to \$150, and came to his present position in Tacoma's Rialto for \$225 a week. These phenomenal increases were due largely to a secret which Mr. Benedict discovered early in his career, namely that an organist will get out of his job exactly what he puts into it. By putting hours of unremit-

ting practice on new numbers to add to his repertoire, and by working up the pictures, regardless of personal effort, he reaped a financial reward far beyond the dreams of the average musician.

Another reason for Benedict's success is his ability to interpret the so-called popular music. Always a lover of ragtime, he has made a special study of its latest manifestations in jazz, and the Wurlitzer, being provided with saxophone, marimba, Chinese block and piano, lends itself admirably to this form of music. The phonograph likewise is an important adjunct to this study and Mr. Benedict incorporated in his own repertoire every new "Jazzism" which came out on the records. As a teacher of the new art of Wurlitzer playing, Mr. Benedict has been very successful. He has prepared a large number of players for theatrical work on the Wurlitzer organ, one of whom is Axel Christensen.

October 1927 (LP) . . .

Rochester's J. GORDON BALDWIN, featured WHAM organist, is recovering from illness caused by overwork. Mr. Baldwin is relief organist at the Eastman and first organist at the Piccadilly. Constant playing for radio and theatre audiences for the past several months without sufficient rest is said to be the cause of illness. HERBERT H. JOHNSON of Kansas City is substituting for Mr. Baldwin at the Eastman.

August 29, 1930 (LP) . . .

KATHERINE KADERLY and ELIOSE ROWAN, billed as "Jackie and Jean, the Paramount Musical Twins," will make their bow next Friday night in Denver as the organists of the giant twin-console, 20-rank Wurlitzer in the new \$1.25 million Paramount Theatre when the new edifice of motion pictures has its gala inauguration. The musical pair arrived in Denver Tuesday and straightway tested their prowess on the giant organ. Both are "pint-size" and at the dual consoles present the illusion of two tiny dolls.

Young in years, each has had long experience at the organs in the big eastern Publix houses. Together they represent the first girl duet organists ever to appear in any theatre in the country. They will be a daily feature on the bill at the Paramount. Although not exactly alike as two peas in appearance, the girls are identical in musical genius and are accredited with being able to play anything in the realm of music from hottest, snappiest jazz pieces to the most difficult classics.

Audiences, the Paramount management promises, are due for a great treat and a series of thrills. The audience at the gala premiere will be introduced to Jackie and Jean when the musical twins play the stirring "Star-Spangled Banner." The pair will be unseen as they play this patriotic air. Then the first-nighters will get their first glimpse of them as they rise on the opposite sides of the pit on the twin lifts.

But the melodies of Jackie and Jean will not be confined to the theatre alone.

Through the magic of radio, the girls will be introduced to the entire Rocky Mountain region. Nightly at 11:30 they will stage a "Slumber Hour" over station KLZ. As far as possible, these programs will be composed of restful tunes as a proper prelude to the slumbers of the listeners.

December 1932 (LP) . . .

Winsome, charming and versatile — referring to HELEN ANKNER, of course! Helen ("blarney" to her friends) is one of WHAM's "old-timers" in Rochester, even though she is mistaken for one of Rochester's schoolgirls every day of the week.

Helen has had a most colorful musical career, ever since she left her home town, Elmira, New York, to come to Rochester and study at the Eastman School of Music. There, she learned that the stops on a pipe organ have nothing in common with those found in telegrams! And when graduation day came, Helen found herself a full-fledged pianist/organist, ready for her first position. Her exceptional talent was immediately recognized and a position as organist in a downtown Rochester theatre followed. Incidentally this was a rather complicated position for a beginner in those days when talkies were unheard of and the organist played nearly two hours at a stretch, not overlooking the hundreds of tragedy-comedy cues throughout the score. That is if he wanted to be on the payroll the following week! After working in this capacity a year and a half, a WHAM staff position was offered Miss Ankner. And that's the place she has been receiving her fan mail and friends ever since.

Helen knows the value of an amiable disposition. Her twinkly eyes and contagious smile have added in no little way to her success. And for one who has so many studio duties, Helen is a pace-setter in outside activities. Skating, swimming, riding, dancing and midnight hikes are just a few of her favorite activities. But she will never forsake a thrilling game of dominoes!

March 1937 (RG) . . .

Chicago's WMAQ is presenting over over the NBC network, Smilin' Ed Mc Connell with Palmer Clark's orchestra, a choral group, and organist IRMA GLEN, Sundays at 5:30 p.m. On Mondays, the station presents "Words & Music" with soprano Ruth Lyon, baritone Edward Davies, and AMBROSE "Larry" LARSEN, organist, at 1:30 p.m.

GOLD DUST . . .

7/35 HAL BECKETT, Newark's WOR; CARL COLEMAN, Buffalo's WGR; WILLIAM MEEDER, New York's WEAF; "EDDIE DUNSTEDTER Presents," CBS; JESSE CRAWFORD's "Musical Diary" on NBC . . . 8/35 FRED FEIBEL, CBS; HARRY E. ROGERS, Hartford's WICC; ALBERT DOWLING's "Slumber Hour" on Buffalo's WBEN; FRANCIS J. CRONIN, Boston's WAAB . . .

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