

So, with a warm feeling in our pipe-happy heart for the pros who make a living playing organ, we left the St. Francis and made for the big church on the hill. It's a huge and imposing structure of stone, stained glass, buttresses and all the massive majesty required to state its function as "a mighty fortress." As special guests the ATOers were permitted to sit in the seats ordinarily occupied by the choir. As we passed between the two rows of facing choir seats, someone in the front row stage-whispered, "Hello, y'ol goat!"

We turned -- somewhat surprised -- and blurted "George -- where have you been?" It was the only Hi-Jinx event at which George Wright was seen. His "salt 'n pepper" hair added a mark of distinction under the fluorescent lighting as he greeted the BB editor.

The 4-manual console of the more than 100-rank organ is in a raised position across from the Great Choir area (a long extension of the Nave behind the altar) of this Episcopal edifice. The right side of the console is practically against the left side of the Choir area. Two facades of decorative pipework about 20 feet above the console on either side of the Choir area mark the chamber openings. On the music rack we noted a sign in large letters proclaiming "WURLITZERS FOREVER!" which had evidently been placed there by some wag. We later learned that the wag was none other than Mr. Purvis.

At the appointed time Mr. Richard Purvis strode briskly to the console, picked up a hand microphone and greeted the Hi-Jinxers in a warm style which put them at ease; this was definitely not going to be a stiffly formal affair. Mr. Purvis mentioned that he didn't usually require a PA system for his weekly concerts but that this was something special for him. It must be remembered that several hundred parishoners and the general public were sitting out in the Nave of the church, Mr. Purvis' regular audience. It must have sounded strange to them to hear the voice of their favorite Sunday afternoon artist talking informally to a special group up front and describing the tune he was about to play as "a gasser."

Then came the enchantment. The big instrument has a majesty and fullness, a brightness and shimmer, which couldn't help but stir the short hairs on the neck of the most dedicated theatre organ fan. There was much variety in the program which ranged from a Bach Fugue to some of the organists' originals. We heard Purcell's "Tune in D", "Psalm 19" by Marcello and Purvis' own arrangement of "Greensleeves." Of special interest to TO enthusiasts was Krag-Elert's "Soul of the Lake," a low-keyed descriptive work which pictures an enchanted lake. "Seen" through a mist, the lake's ripples, swirls, pastel colors and life were sheer music magic in Pur-

vis' able hands.

Mr. Purvis warned that the second half of the program would consist entirely of his own compositions and that anyone who couldn't take it could hit the road before he started. The only response was a sea of smiles from the choir seats and the organist offered his "Four Dubious Conceits" which he describes as "a chuckle for the King of Instruments." Failing completely to live up to its title the quartet demonstrated the degree of charm a huge instrument can turn on in the hands of a skilled master. Lighter voices cavorted gaily even chatted and chuckled some -- the bigness and grandeur of the instrument for the moment forgotten in softly fluted tunes (some with Trems on full!) designed to beguile, and beguile they did. But not for long. The big "feature selection" was Purvis' "Fanfare." One might picture in his mind a nearly endless line of mediaeval Trumpeters standing on a great wall, blasting out contrasting fanfares for a festive occasion, maestoso flourishes passing down the line of horns with a new call bursting forth while the previous ones are still echoing; sharp brass, alto brass and baritone brass fighting for attention against a deep pedal of Roman Tubas. A magnificent display of big organ tone color, as theatrical as a Max Steiner adventure film score, played to the hilt in thunderous tone clusters by its composer. The final mighty note echoed up and down the nave of the huge church for several seconds before the transfixed listeners could gather wits enough to applaud--yes, in church, too. The transcendent moments of the past hour could find expression in no other way. But Purvis had warned it would be "a gasser".

The applause got the desired encore from Mr. Purvis then little knots of organ fans started toward the great doors, still in the grip of the past hour's magic. Near one door stood Tom Hazleton, listening for comments. A solid Purvis rooter, Tom seemed to like what he overheard. We couldn't help thinking of the instrument's tonal designer, G. Donald Harrison, and how right his conception of concert organ tone had been, especially when one considers the current inroads made against tonal beauty by the regressive "back to the Hydraulus" school of baroquery.

It was still a bright summer afternoon outside the church. Many gathered on the stone steps to discuss the concert; noted were Bill Brown huddled with George Wright. They were discussing something which looms huge in both their lives, the former Chicago Paradise theatre 5-21 Wurlitzer which George rode to prominence via records when it was installed in the Vaughn Los Angeles residence -- and which Bill is currently building a home around in Phoenix.

After walking several blocks, a look

back revealed the sidewalk outside the church filled with those who had emerged from the church and were trying to get their feet back on the ground. There is little doubt that many a theatre organ purist came away from Grace Church with a new respect for the "straight," or concert organ. As for Mr. Purvis, he's always been on "our side" -- even to "moonlighting" light music played on a radio studio organ years back. George Wright refers to Mr. Purvis as "a swingin' cat." He certainly made the 100-ranker purr!

Making our way toward Route 101 to pitch for a hitch back to "Angeltown" we alternated toward exercising our "hiking thumb" and recapping the events of the fast-paced weekend. -- All the experiences and adventures were recapped in a kaleidoscope of sound and sight memories, as we stood at the roadside, bundle over our shoulder, thumb extended in the direction of Los Angeles traffic flow -- Hey, lady ---- how far South ya driving?

--Stu Green, Hollywood



BAY AREA (AND PHOENIX) ORGAN VIP'S WING TO LOS ANGELES FOR MILLIE ALEXANDER WILTERN PIPE CONCERT

Northerners Give an Ear To Southern Talent

Hollywood - The concert staged by the Los Angeles Chapter of ATOE starring Mildred Alexander at the Wiltern Theatre 37-rank Kimball organ provided the impetus for an invasion by Northern Californians prominent in sponsorship of organ concerts in the Bay Area. Ostensibly here to take in the October 24 Sunday morning organ session played by the former belle of the Radio City Music Hall console, the group, which included such prospective hiring talent as Kay Chenoweth and Dewey Cagle (Home Organ Festival); Tiny and Ida James, Fred and Jan Clapp, John and



Laurel Ruby and Ruth Carson admire the highly decorated console of Jim Gaines' "Echoing Antiqu Shop" Wurlitzer during the marathon organ hop.

Lena Gallagher (ATOE), arrived two days early and proceeded to visit a number of theatre organ home installations and niteries with plug-ins. Among the latter were visits to Johnny Duffy (The Chapparal, Panorama City) and Bud Taylor (Skytrails, Van Nuys), both of whom play Gulbrandsen "Rialtos".

Also in the visiting group was Laurel Ruby, unofficially representing the Valley of the Sun ATOE Chapter (Phoenix, Arizona).

The organ hopping in the pipe organ area involved some widely separated installations, including Jim Gaines' "Echoing Antique Shop" 3-manual 10-rank Wurlitzer, the Buddy Cole 3-manual 26-Rank "Wurlimorton," Harvey Heck's 4-manual 27-rank mostly Wurlitzer and the 3-manual 27-rank Wurlitzer in the Robert Carson (formerly Joe Kearns) home. This itinerary, planned and carried out by the "Bombarde" magazine's assistant editor, Peg Nielsen, called for transportation for fourteen visitors between West Hollywood, the San Fernando Valley, Tarzana, Hollywood and Los Angeles. To meet the strict time schedule many of the distances were paced off ahead of time because some of the installations were up to 25 miles apart through medium traffic. The group, which included spouses where applicable, was billeted in a centrally-located Valley motel by journalist Stu Green who served as "Transportation and Barracks officer" as well as "your friendly guide in this forest of Southern California pipes." Even so, Bob Carson's bus provided most of the transportation for the three day "organ weekend."

At each stop there seemed to be plenty of organists to supply music. Fred Clapp and Laurel Ruby were among those who put the Jim Gaines organ through its paces. At the Buddy Cole studio it was Tiny James and Mildred Alexander, the latter breaking loose from her concert rehearsals to join the group for a blast on the Cole instrument followed by supper at "The House of Kwong" (Tarzana) with her friends and admirers. By Saturday evening the visiting group had grown to over twenty.



Lorraine and Dewey Cagle dining with Millie Alexander at The House of Kwong.



Mildred Alexander gives the 3-27 Wurlitzer in the Bob Carson Hollywood residence an even chance. "Millie" had just come from a personal triumph at the Wiltern Theatre.

The next stop was Harvey Heck's and musically contrasting performances were played by Tiny James and Jim Melander, with the big guy making with the sprightly standards and Jim offering pops and perennials in the most modern harmony this side of "way out."

On Sunday morning it was off to the Wiltern theatre for Mildred Alexander's first concert on pipes in several years (she normally demos Hammonds). Mildred, despite her many pre-concert worries about whether she could cut the mustard on pipes after honking a Hammond for so long, came through with flying colors. Observers agreed that rarely has an artist made the Wiltern giant sound so good, an impression heightened by the excellent touchup work performed by the ATOE LA Chapter's maintenance crew headed by Bob Alder, Sr.

On Sunday afternoon it was Bob and Ruth Carson's hospitality at the studio home built by the late Joe Kearns in Hollywood. Heard at the Wurlitzer there were Johnny Duffy, Mildred Alexander (flushed with the victory of having successfully cut the mustard at the Wiltern) and young Lyn Larsen who played tunes from his current platter performed on the same organ. They even propped Stu Green up at the console while he whammed out a few ear-wrenching dissonances. Among those who gave creditable performances at the keyboards were Dewey Cagle, Fred Clapp, John Gallagher, and Laurel Ruby.

Promptly at 7:00 PM Stu Green blasted out "assembly" on his battered bugle and lined up his "troops" in the Carson driveway. After counting noses he marched them to Bob Carson's borrowed bus and sardined them all in for the long drive to International Airport and the short plane hop home.

It has been a music-loaded weekend for the tightly scheduled visitors and contacts had been made which could result in some future talent transplants and exchanges.

SAENGER THEATRE'S ROBERT MORTON IS HEARD AGAIN

TAKEN FROM THE
TIMES PICAYUNE, NEW ORLEANS

In honor of the world premiere of "The Cincinnati Kid" this Friday, the Saenger Theater will raise from its orchestra pit that sentimental old centerpiece of stage show days, the 38-year-old Saenger pipe organ.

Pipe organ fans will rejoice, for the instrument has sounded infrequently during the past 25 years. At least one member of the Saenger's administrative family considers the news on a headline par with the scheduled arrival of stars Steve McQueen, Edward G. Robinson, Karl Malden and Tuesday Weld, for the benefit premiere. This big-sound buff does not side with those purists who regard theatre pipe organs as well as barbershop quartets, as being of more recreational than musical value.

Anyway, come Friday and shortly before the 8:15 p.m. screen performance time, there it will be in all its 2,000 pipe glory, the 800-pound console raised by hydraulic lift from the pit to stage level. A theater official said the instrument is the only theatrical organ surviving in this area, and that a replacement price would be in the costly neighborhood of \$100,000.

Herbert Kauffman, an electronics engineer, and his son Carl, a senior music student at Loyola University have been supervising the restoration work on the organ for the past four years. Bringing the instrument out of retirement will be organist Bob Reid, who has planned a program to include popular songs -- "Hello Dolly!", "The Girl From Ipanema," "Java," etc.--plus the theme from "The Cincinnati Kid" and a medley plugging a future attraction in the upstairs Saenger-Orleans, "The Sound of Music."

Kauffman described the experience awaiting young audience members who have been indoctrinated in new sound techniques. "They will quickly discover", he said, "that they are seated between two enormous chambers housing the pipes located on opposite sides of the

theatre organ