

## TOM HAZLETON AND BETTER HALF A HIT AT LOS ANGELES CHAPTER CONCERT AT THE WILTERN



Zoe Hazleton insists she's solely a classical organist but her brief performance at the Kimball indicated that much of husband Tom's showmanship and theatre organ technique had rubbed off on her.

Los Angeles, June 26—Tom Hazleton's opener was different, to say the least. The 450 ATOers and friends gathered on this Sunday morning were somewhat astounded to hear something a bit ghostly, even before the console swung into sight. From the background of pre-concert chatter to a full throated "I'll Follow My Secret Heart" exactly as played by Buddy Cole on his "Modern Pipe Organ" album was as unnerving as it was wonderful. But the sight of Tom riding the console skyward put the audience at ease and they could wonder at the ear-filling accuracy of Tom's musical acumen. The house was hushed as he continued to the end of the tune, the audience feeling the tribute to the great departed organist.

At the close of "Heart" Tom announced what the cognoscenti knew. It was his way of keeping alive the wonderful free spirit of Buddy Cole's music.

That pleasant chore completed, the San Francisco organist got down to business with a "show biz" opener, "A Wonderful Day Like Today," during which he exploited the "stereo" possibilities of interplay between chambers by punctuating a rich Main combination with Serpent "hisses" from the powerhouse Solo chamber of the 4-37 Kimball. "Spanish Eyes" was given a tender ballad treatment in slow tempo on a Tibia-topped regis-

tration with Castenet accents. A memorable moment from the Rodgers & Hart group was the "Blusette" treatment during the first chorus of "Falling in Love with Love" which was then reprised as a swinging Strauss waltz with a Tuba counter melody and Serpent riffs (for those unfamiliar with the Serpent, it's a super-honed Posthorn—less fundamentals and more ripping upper partials).

"I Could Write a Book" rated some glamorous "rolls" and subtle use of the Glockenspiel for now-and-then "plinks." "Small Hotel" was presented in emotion-charged slow tempo with titillating sworls on the low-keyed Tibia while a wildly rhythmic "Thou Swell" changed to half tempo during the final chorus and Tom performed a practically impossible feat—a long, fingered roll with the rhythm continuing behind it. "Once in a Dream" was afforded a rich Spanish treatment, much of it in tango tempo, with the Tamborine and Castenets spicing the beat, which was maintained throughout.

In deference to the church truants present Tom came through with some soul music, a group of spirituals played in up tempo. Thus "Swing Low" got its swing from a boogie-woogie treatment while "Deep River" depended on cascading harmonic masses kaleidoscoping slowly on what sounded like a straight organ. But when "Joshua Fit De Battle of Jericho" he did so with jazzy evasive action more than a little on the wild side, with stunning interplay between manuals and chambers. A gasser! At the close Tom wiped the perspiration from his brow and said, "Sounds like an organ, doesn't it?" It did.

In complete contrast was Tom's treatment of his teacher, Richard Purvis', "Night in Monterey," a selection that has become something of a standard in Tom's repertoire. It's moody and atmospheric and he underplayed it to emphasize the silvery moonlight and the subtlety of night shadows.

Tom loves to clown and sometimes it turns to satire. He announced some "church music" (he couldn't seem to get the church-skipping audience out of his mind). Then he spread-eagled himself across the horseshoe, arms outstretched in the manner of certain recitalists, and went to work on some solo pedal work. The big, booming pedal soon took on a familiar theme, then Tom abandoned his supine stance and put his digits back to work with what seemed to be the well-worn "5th Symphony Tocatta" by Widor. It was for a moment, then the melody of "Tea for Two" insinuated itself against the

background of the classical piece and the two disparate compositions rode the pipes together, the Widor played on classic sounding pipes (not difficult to whomp up on this Kimball) and the pop melody coming through on a theatrical series of combinations—except when Tom was thundering the melody on the pedals. At the conclusion of this "church music" and after the furor in the audience had died down, Tom summed up with, "I hope somebody up there isn't listening!"

Shortly thereafter Tom announced that he had to have "a moment to light up a cigarette and change my wig." So, intermission.

When the console rose again following intermission it was evident that Tom had changed more than his wig. In fact, he'd changed organists. The music started before the console started upward and it was a jazzy, swingin' tune of the type Tom does so well. But when the console rose to meet the spotlight a lovely head of blonde feminine hair was followed by other accoutrements that send a wonderful word crashing into our consciousness—"g-i-r-l!" Tom would spell it differently—"w-i-f-e." Indeed, it was none other than Tom's beautiful wife, Zoe (say it like "Chloee"), a gal who is know to favor the straight organ, putting the big Kimball through its paces in a style that would have tickled Fats Waller. No one knew she could do it but at the finish Tom came out to introduce her and share the tremendous round of applause she got. He was all smiles and proud as a new papa—which he's been for some time.

Alas, we can't comment on all of Tom's selections but here are a few highlights. Tom saluted current pops with "King of the Road" and "Yesterday" then pointed out the similarity between the Kimball's French Horn and the rare Tibia Plena during "The Sound of Music." Tom conjured up a reed organ effect (with chimes) for "Surrey With That Stuff Up There" while cueing the horse trot rhythm with the Xylophone. "Merry Oldsmobile" turned out to be a concerto for antiphonal auto horns which ended with a siren pulling up alongside. The audience really dug the amazing train effects Tom used to add old-time reality to "Chattanooga Choo Choo" with much ritardando and accelerando chugging, assorted whistles and bells. For some it was certainly the first steam train effects they had ever heard.

At this point, Ann Leaf, sitting in front of us, turned and asked if we heard anything strange—like escap-



Tom announced his selections to a large and appreciative audience.

ing air. Yes, we did. More than usual, it seemed. Ann crossed her fingers and whispered, "Hope the leather holds through the end of the concert. Tom's doing such a beautiful job."

"Bidin' My Time" ran the registration and rhythmic gamut, even to including the "regurgitational" effect we thought George Wright had a patent on. Tom built "Streets of Laredo"

from its beginnings (on a soft celeste) to a big, brawling Western town, but always with a certain haunting quality in deference to its legendary bad men long gone. There was also a modernistic waltz by Dave Brubeck, a swinging waltz during "Try to Remember" and Tom walked his baby back home to a 4' Tibia and Glockenspiel melody. Then he paid tribute to the "Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines."

Before closing Tom thanked the Los Angeles Chapter members who had made the concert possible, especially Bob and Ruth Carson (Bob's the Chapter program chairman) for allowing him to practice on the Wurlitzer in their home. The rest of us should be that lucky.

Tom took the console down to "The Song is Ended" and waves of enthusiastic applause. It was a cinch that he and Zoe would return again for more of same in the near future.

Oh yes — the leather held.  
— WSG, Hollywood

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Tom puts over a point with digital assistance.

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