



**JAM SESSION** — Classical organist Dick Ellsasser tries his hand at "jamming" (with Bill McCoy and John Seng) during one of the Festival's midnight-to-three AM impromptu sessions. These often involved up to four organs and several hundred watts of audio power.

All agreed that it was the biggest and best electronic organ show in the Home Organ Festival's seven year history. The late September conclave, held among the towering pines and blue lakes of Northern California at Hoberg's resort (100 miles North of San Francisco), attracted 1,300 organ fans to the remote forest lodge for a post season exhibition and demonstration of 50 instruments shown by nine top builders. The talent came from the 70 professional organists present, some on the exhibitors' payrolls, some just vacationing. Although the emphasis is on popular music and instruments, this year, for the first time, concerts were offered by two top-ranking classical organists, Richard Purvis (for Rodgers) and Richard Ellsasser (for Conn). Their recitals and workshop sessions were well received.

In the "pop" field Don Baker was generally considered the "dean of theatre organists" of those who played concerts during the five day session.

From the theatre organ hobbyist's viewpoint the most interesting trend indicated during the Festival's 7-year history is the swing toward console styles and tonal concepts established when the theatre pipe organ was developed by Robert Hope-Jones more than half a century ago. Of the nine late entertainment models demonstrated, eight of them (Allen, Baldwin, Gulbransen, Conn, Lowrey, Rodgers, Thomas and Wurlitzer) were equipped with horseshoe consoles. Most also used Hope-Jones style stopkeys to control voices and some even sported inclined manuals. The one holdout is Hammond which is expanding in new directions with its futuristic X-66 "rocket launcher" model.

During the five day run, music lovers could absorb better than 10 hours daily

## "GREATEST ORGAN SHOW ON EARTH" Stresses Theatre Organ Influence on Electronic Builders

— Hal Steiner



PHOTOS FROM  
"TABS 'N DRAWBARS"

Pictured at left:  
**WHERE OLD FRIENDS MEET** — Towering Don Baker and diminutive Ann Leaf renew a friendship which started when they were both involved with the New York Paramount organs. They hadn't seen one another for many years. Ann was a visitor to the Festival.

of a wide range of organ stylings and instruments. Top products were demonstrated through concerts played by prominent popular and recital organists. Shoppers could examine the instruments at close range in demonstration rooms located within easy walking distance of the 900-seat auditorium in the main building where the concerts were played. That segment of the audience which could remember the theatre organ of yesterday welcomed the familiar trademark of the movie organ, the horseshoe console. The use of theatre organ voice labelling had also increased notably. Along with the now familiar Tibia there was an increase in such Hope-Jones phraseology as "Diaphone," "Kinura," "Krumet," "Diaphonic Diapason," "Vox Humana" and "Ophicleide" — to name a few. However, the use of the terminology wasn't always accompanied by the sound the dyed-in-the-leather pipe organ "in crowd" considers kosher. But all agreed that the progress made toward true theatre organ voicing is encouraging.

While some builders were still locating their upper manual stopkeys on the left curve of the stoprail and the lower manual stops to the right (a hangover from church models), most had succumbed to the lure of the standard theater organ stopkey arrangement. One holdout, Baldwin, has announced that 1967 models will have the stopkeys placed correctly on its theatre instrument.

The Festival, sponsored by the Pacific Council for Organ Clubs (an amalgamation of Bay Area dealer's clubs), faces a crisis if it continues to grow. This year's 1,300 visitors were already more than the large Hoberg accommodation could handle easily. However, no change of locale is planned because all concerned

agreed that the sylvan surroundings, absence of distractions and the opportunity to absorb clean country air more than offset any physical shortcomings.

## Closing Chord

Internationally known organist Collins Driggs, 55, died at his home in Cape Coral, Florida, on August 29, of a heart attack. He was buried in Florida. Driggs is survived by his wife, Florence, four daughters and a son.

He first came into prominence in his home town, Hartford, Conn., where he played and broadcast for Paramount theatres, billed as "The World's Youngest Featured Organist." He was then 16.

After a series of lessons in New York with famed Lew White, Driggs played for silent movies at the State theatre, Manchester, Conn., and later played at the Allyn theatre in Hartford. His broadcasts over WTIC radio made him well known throughout New England. In later years he played at the New York World's Fair (1939), did background music for radio soapers out of New York, and for 12 years was featured organist at the Rockefeller Plaza Christmas and Easter programs in Radio City. Among his students were Ethel Smith and several of the "Three Suns." He was the only musician to make a record album soloing the bizarre "Novachord." In recent years, Driggs has conducted clinics to help beginning organists, teachers and professionals. Always enthusiastic about the organ he once said that his first day with an organ was "the shortest day of my life."