

LEIBERT IN LIGHTS — The big letters in the Wiltern marquee proclaim the musical event.

## LEIBERT TAKES LOS ANGELES

by G. BANDINI

Los Angeles, March 21—Richard Leibert's long overdue concert in Los Angeles won the hearts and applause of the more than 1500 who attended the LA Chapter's first night-time public concert since the Ann Leaf show on Nov. 1 last.

The Radio City Music Hall organist rose on a brassy fanfare made unintelligible by the volume of applause which followed the console's spotlighted rise. After his greeting to his audience he announced Kreisler's *Liebesfreud*. Leibert quickly established an easy and informal relationship with his listeners by noting the similarity of the tune title with the pronunciation of his own name and posing the question as to whether it should be pronounced *Lee-ber*t or *Lye-ber*t. (The latter is correct if it's a German name, same as in *Kreisler*.)

*Liebesfreud* came through cleanly and with animation. There were great and



LEIBERT TALKS TO HIS AUDIENCE — Unlike Radio City, Dick can speak to his LA audience, even divulge problems: "My son in college—sometimes it seems he's studying anarchy!"

immediate changes of volume to mark the phrasing. *Kammenoi Ostrow*, the selection used behind the traditional RCMH Easter presentation, was properly majestic in mainly church-style registrations and a welcome contrast was provided by the spritely march from Beethoven's *Ruins of Athens*.

Leibert excused his unfamiliarity with the Kimball method of arranging voices around a stop rail (all unifications of a voice side by side—16-8-4-2- etc.) with

"It takes a little time to find all these hoot-enannies!" No one minded. The next selection on the classical portion of the Leibert program was a medley of themes from Puccini's opera, *Madame Butterfly*, which soared.

*The Pilgrim's Chorus* was a thriller, too, although the familiar descending embellishment in the final statement of the powerful theme was inaudible, probably covered up in the thunder of full organ. Or it may have been Leibert's own arrangement. For example he announced *The Hall of the Mountain King* as a number by Grieg plus a little desecration by Leibert. The desecration amounted to a bit of syncopation in spots and the interpolation of some TV commercial jingle themes—plus a *cha-cha-cha* closing. With that, the organist walked off stage and it was intermission.

When he reappeared he had exchanged his dull gold blazer for a pure white one. His pop-portion opener was a rousing version of his always moving *Radio City March* which he has recorded twice, and composed 478 years ago.

Leibert played his popular selections in groups, mainly by composer. For example, his Mancini medley was dominated by *Charade* and *Moon River* while the Richard Rodgers group included the early *Mountain Greenery* and more recent *March of the Siamese Children* and *Climb Every Mountain*, the latter in the biggest of huge screen dimensions. Jerome Kern was well represented by *Old Man River* and Dick Leibert's *Come Dance With Me* spoke well for the organist.

Next it was the color of Bizet's ever-popular opera *Carmen* with its spirited *Habanera*, *Smugglers' March* and *Beat Out That Rhythm on a Drum!* (As it's known in *Carmen Jones*, the contemporary version.)

Leibert was successful in projecting a simulation of the *Radio City Sound* although the differences were marked and



all who have heard Leibert on both instruments would agree that a Kimball and a Wurlitzer were miles apart from the tonal viewpoint.

Leibert called for requests and was visibly surprised by the results—a great volume of shouted tune titles—which ranged from *Hello Dolly* to *Beethoven's 5th Symphony*. He mixed a few of the bellowed requests into the medley which followed but played chiefly what he'd intended to all along.—*Liebestraum* (not *Lye-bestraum*), *My Favorite Things* (featuring the Kimball woodpile), *The Sound of Music*, medley from *Rhapsody in Blue*, and *Hello Dolly* (which generated applause).

Then came an unannounced *springtime* medley with *Easter Parade* and interpolated *Hallelujahs* by Handel (more applause), Mendelsohn's *Spring Song*, *It Might as Well Be Spring*, *Spring is Here* and a return to *Easter Parade* capped by a mighty *Hallelujah* at full crescendo.

After the show the organist held court in the lobby and signed autographs. It must have been a satisfying evening for Leibert who undoubtedly recalls a former concert a couple of years ago at the Lindy Opera House he played on a plug-in. Due to the apparent 99% absence of promotion it attracted about 100. Tonight's turnout was much more representative.



SOCIAL SESSION — Dick mingles with his audience in the lobby after the concert.