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dering if the fact that so many theatres are installing organs would suggest an unexplored avenue to many excellent organists who have contented themselves with giving desultory recitals in churches.

I feel, of course, that the biggest thing about the movement is the absolute psychological need for music in motion picture houses. The best talent among authors and artists is gradually being drawn into the service of the movies. The talent, to find its complete expression, is bound to demand the best there is in music or there has got to be something to take the place of the human voice—and even from a purely commercial aspect it behooves the enterprising musician to assemble his forces and say, "Here, I've been studying up on this proposition and I know just what you need."

There is of course a deep seated aversion among managers to anything "high brow," but that difficulty can be pleasantly sugar coated. Indeed I have found from my newspaper experience that men really prefer a woman with brains providing she is willing to powder her nose and fluff up her hair a bit. And it is the same with art.

I shall be glad to receive any further communications concerning the proposed conference, will make any investigation you might desire and will use any propaganda that I can in our paper.—Josephine Van Degrift—The Beacon Journal, Akron, Ohio.

My Dear Mr. Isaacson:

I am heartily in accord with your idea of making the moving picture house a center for music distributions as well.

If the musical accompaniments, which now are generally only an annoyance, can be made to really fit the picture and chosen from the best sources, the result should certainly be an artistic whole, and no doubt the better class of people might be attracted to these theatres. Personally I believe that if even in small centers and raw new towns, such as some of our western cities could be given a gradual diet of some better class singer or cellist or fiddler, even—that eventually we might create a music public that would support the artists when putting on concerts and recitals of the legitimate kind.

I am wondering if the small town movie house couldn't be made the place of giving local talent, of the better art, a chance. Must we necessarily have the Galli-Curcis for consumption at once? Where then is the smaller talent ever going to get its opportunity? I rather hope the conference may take that up favorably—and lend a helping hand to the struggling lesser ones in their final decisions as to whom they shall have as "attraction" for their movies.

Sincerely wish I might attend the conference; it would be very interesting, but away off out here one attends nothing very interesting but just tries to keep up with the everlasting H. C. of L.

Your work for music is wonderful and I follow it all with the greatest of interest. Sorry you were not operating the free concerts when I was a "Manhattanite."

Here's to your success, long and continuous. I'll be interested always in these good movements.—Louise Valdora Kelly, Academy School of Music, Great Falls, Mont.

Making Special Organ Attachments

•**N**O, those are not coffin cases, for, believe you me, they're just plumb full of action."

So William Wood, organ specialist who cares daily for the five huge unit organs in each of the Portland theatres operated under the banner of Jensen and Von Herberg, stoutly defended his youngest "child." William, or "Billie" as he is more generally known, is sometimes described as the organ nursemaid, for it is his duty to see that each of these five organs, constantly in use 12 hours a day, is at all times in perfect order. And not having



William Wood, organ specialist for the Jensen Von-Herberg theatres at work in his shop

enough regular work to keep him busy, William set about to build a pipe organ attachment which in Chicago "F. O. B." to Portland, Ore., would cost in the neighborhood of \$1,500. But his latest charge, over which he has toiled constantly—sometimes 18 hours out of the 24—will represent less than \$800.

Mr. Wood has just completed a marimba-xylophone attachment. It represents four octaves with 49 notes and the accompanying sharps and flats and is equipped with a reiterator that makes possible a second manner of playing each note. To be properly impressed one must see the two coffin-appearing cases which inclose the notes and the sharps and flats and one must be told of the 1,500 yards of magnet wire, the four dozen hard rubber "toss" balls, the four sheepskins and the 12 fishskins that are neatly fitted about each key. One cannot fail to be impressed by this knowledge, but to the uninitiated musician one may still remain hopelessly ignorant of what it is all about.

"Them things with pipes underneath" is one description that has been given of a marimba-xylophone which real musicians will tell you is only a glorified xylophone with longer and larger metal pipes giving greater resonance and beauty of sound. It is used in connection with unit orchestral

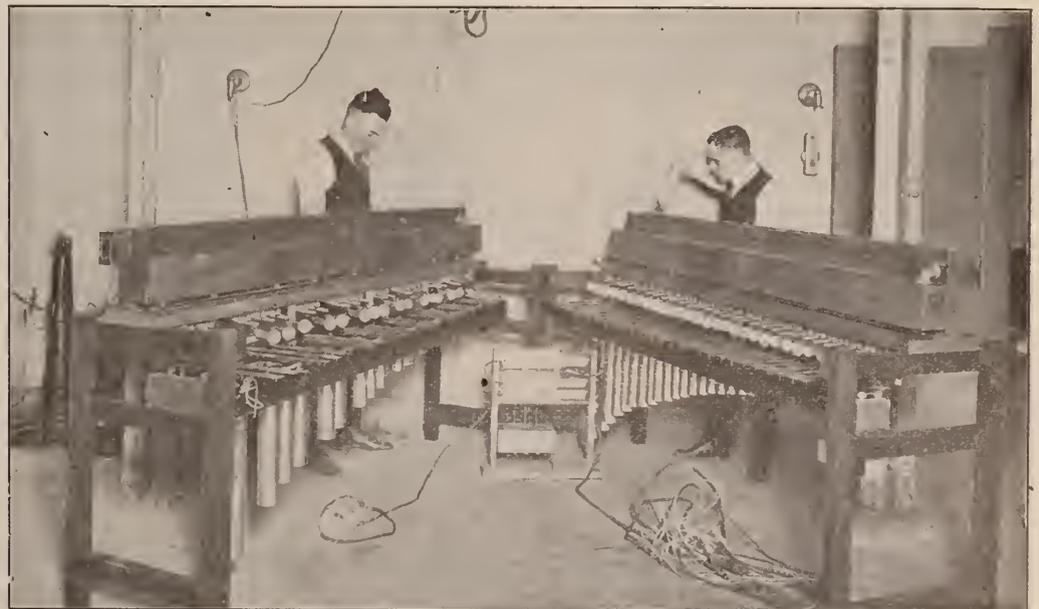
organ because the nearest imitation of the harp possible to attain with an organ connection is to be obtained through their flat, wooden keys. Electrical connection readily may be made by elaborate wiring so that certain pressure of the organ keys will play the instrument at the same time notes from the pipe organ proper are sounding.

Very minute magnetic wiring is necessitated because of the 1,500 yards which are used on this comparatively small attachment. Mr. Wood found a large size darning needle the proper tool to use in boring some of the wee chambers for the magnetic wiring.

Four sizes of hard rubber balls, "the kind little girls play jacks with," as Mr. Wood identifies them, will play this instrument, one ball for every note. The balls vary in size, as the higher notes naturally call for a smaller, more delicate touch. The electrical connection will cause these balls to fall on the instrument as the organist touches the keys.

To build organ and organ attachments one must qualify to be a first class dressmaker. Therefore Mr. Wood, already referred to as organ nursemaid, purchased four skins of "Alam-Lamb" sheepskin and carefully cut out the 49 sockets for the 49 keys. Each socket is as nice and particular a piece of dressmaking as any fastidious woman could demand, for edges are all carefully turned in, with no seams showing and with a perfect fit obtained in each of the 49 cases. Inside of the key cases even more discriminating work was done by Mr. Wood, who fitted each of the valves with fish zephyr, which he declares is nothing else than nicely cured fishskin. Incidentally one of the gravest problems Mr. Wood faces in keeping the Jensen and Von Herberg organs perfect is making this zephyr a little less appetizing to mice patrons of the theatres. A part of every organ equipment, he contends, is a mouse trap well baited with cheese.

Three weeks of "extra time" have been put in by Mr. Wood. During the latter



This is the combination marimba and xylophone attachment for an electric organ built by William Wood

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Making Special Organ Attachments

(Continued from page 303)

part of the time he was assisted by J. Green. Their workshop has been one of the small dressing rooms of the Liberty theatre, although the apparatus over-crowds out into the hall and the xylophone itself remained in aloof dignity of an entirely separate dressing room. The marimba-xylophone, itself, was not built by Mr. Wood, who has confined his work to the electrical attachment with which its connection to the big organ may be made possible. The instrument was purchased at the cost of \$375, which amounts to just about half of the entire cost of the product when ready for the super-organ. Many self-made instruments are to be noted in the dressing-room-work-shop, all of them designed primarily to save time. A sand paper polisher, crudely made of wooden spools to which a small motor may be attached, has been one of the great time savers. "We use that polisher for everything—even for manicures," Mr. Wood solemnly asserts. The same motor used for the sand paper machine is sometimes attached to "just a common garden variety" drill and has saved many moments in that capacity.

Still Another Ascher House Opens

ASCHER BROTHERS' Portage Park theatre was formally opened last Saturday evening. With a seating capacity of 2,500 the Portage Park takes its place as the largest theatre on the northwest side of Chicago, and it was taxed to capacity at its premier performance. Jack Pickford in "Just Out of College" was the opening feature.

In keeping with the chain of representative theatres now operated by this well known organization, the newest link conforms in every way to the high standard set by Ascher Brothers.

Erected at a cost in excess of \$500,000, the new structure is one of the finest and best equipped photoplay theatre buildings

in the country. Besides the theatre, the building contains eight stores, thirty-four apartments and a beautiful ball room immediately above the lobby and foyers.

The large entrance lobby has the walls finished in marble and paneling in artistic effects, the arched ceiling in white and cream blends in harmony. The decorative scheme of the amphitheatre is blue and salmon trimmed in gold. The seats, which are all located on the main floor, are spacious and designed to assure the comfort of the patrons. An innovation in motion picture theatres is the placing of loges in the rear of the orchestra floor.

Concealed throughout the entire auditorium are thousands of light bulbs of all hues. These lights are controlled by a mammoth remote switchboard. Innovations have been installed in the lighting system which will permit, through the use of an automatic dimmer, soft or brilliant colored lighting effects, which are so used as to synchronize with moonlight, water, and other scenes, as the subject is unfolded on the screen.

Special attention was given to the question of ventilation and careful survey was made of the several systems in vogue before the acceptance and installation of the washed air system in use in this theatre. Great fans drive the air through water, purifying it before it is delivered into the auditorium. The temperature of the washed air is regulated to fit the season, by passing over heated coils in the winter and iced coils in the summer months. For every person in the theatre, thirty cubic feet of purified tempered air will be supplied every minute.

Joe Koppel, one of the ablest and most popular theatre men in Chicago, is house manager and George Koehler and his famous orchestra, formerly associated with D. W. Griffith, will furnish the music for the pictures and will also render overtures from jazz to grand opera. The latest type of Moeller pipe organ has been installed to supplement the special orchestra which will interpret the picture plays.

Rest rooms have been provided with every convenience and an attendant in charge to look after the comfort of the patrons.

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