

It Happened Last Night—

Electric Organ Gets New Spark

Ethel Smith Makes It High Voltage Instrument

By Earl Wilson

NEW YORK, Apr. 2—My, my, if you could see the old church organ now.

It's showing its legs. No, no, I mean it's showing the organist's legs.

Miss Ethel Smith, the electrical organist—perhaps I had better say "the girl who plays the electrical organ" because Miss Smith might not like me calling her electrical—has the nicest pair of legs this side of Detroit.

So they cut one of the legs off of the organ she plays in order to let one and all see her gams. "She's the only woman alive," they say, "who plays a three-legged organ."

Thanks to her leglessness, Miss Smith has worked up from \$12 a week in Miami and \$60 a week in Trenton to \$4000 a week in the London Palladium where she opens Apr. 11.

"When did you discover you had legs?" I asked the ex-Pittsburgh redhead recently. "Did somebody have to find them for you?"

"Yes, I never thought much of my legs until I went to Hollywood," replied Miss Smith candidly.

"I was playing the organ in a picture, and suddenly I saw 10 guys spread out on the floor taking pictures of my gams. They said, 'Is it possible for you to put your foot on the pedal nearest the camera?'"

"I told them, 'Heck, no, that's a B-flat pedal, and I'm playing an A-major.'"

AND SO, BECAUSE she used to study ballet in Pittsburgh, and almost dances on the pedal keyboard, they went daffy about the sex appeal she could get into an electrical organ. With her playing it, an electrical organ gets to a very high voltage.

Instead of the old-fashioned, flat-heeled, heel-and-toe method

A Coed Yet

MISS SMITH was going to Carnegie Tech studying piano, and all about Bach and fugues and such in 1933 when fate walked in.

He didn't look like fate, but he was a pianist with a traveling theater orchestra. He was leaving the band and the band needed a replacement. She got the job, quit school in her junior year, played eventually in pit orchestras in New York, and wound up one day in Hollywood where she met fate again—this time an electrical organ.

I WON'T mention the name of the organ, but it's made in Chicago, which is near Hammond, Ind.

"I'd never seen one before," she said. "I put my hand on it and ran right into destiny."

"It was like a guy running into a woman who changes his whole life."

"To master it, I took a job in a hofbrau in Miami at \$12 a week, because it had an organ."

"The chef was crazy about 'Tales from the Vienna Woods.' I played it for him for hours, and he cooked me \$12 lunches. He admired my organ music and I admired his food."

Overstayed Visit

NEXT SHE WENT to the Hildebrecht Hotel in Trenton where she got board and room besides her 50 bucks a week.

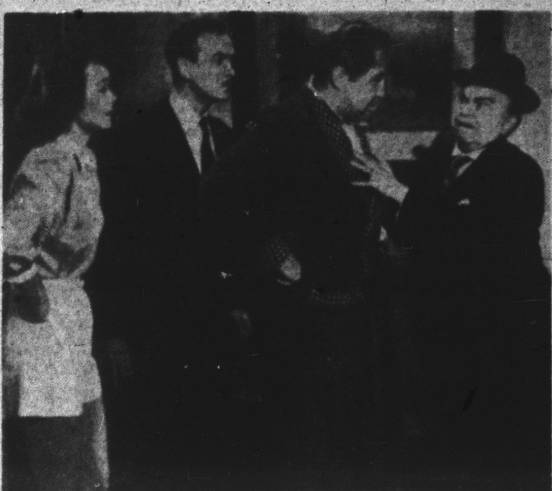
"I went there for two weeks and stayed 52," she said.

Chance then took her to South America where she started giving her organ music the Brazilian treatment. "That did it... that and the gams."

"I played the same for \$50 a week in Trenton as I'm playing now for fabulous money," she said.

Well, maybe, but we imagine she has improved some in 10 years. She now invests in Broad-

Movie Preview: New Comedy Revolves About Pianist, Model, Policy



"A Kiss in the Dark," coming to the Circle Theater Thursday, has Jane Wyman cast in her first comedy role in recent years. Eric Phillips (David Niven), timid concert pianist, acquires an apartment house, the Cleopatra Arms, as an investment. He comes in contact with Horace Willoughby (Victor Moore), ex-owner of the building, and Polly Haines (Jane Wyman), a model.



When Bruce calls at Polly's apartment, Polly learns the truth about the insurance deal. She is disappointed in Eric's lack of faith in her, and denounces Bruce and the crafty manager for interfering in her love life, then breaks down at the thought of losing Eric because of them.



With the exception of Mr. Botts (Broderick Crawford), everyone in the house is just one happy family. Botts works nights and constantly complains of the noise made by the other tenants in the daytime. Eric moves a piano into Polly's apartment and drives Botts away with his playing.



Polly's boy friend, Bruce Arnold (Wayne Morris), offers Eric's crafty manager (Joseph Buloff) half the commission to help him sell Eric an insurance policy on his hands. Eric learns of the deal. Buloff tells him that Polly is also in on it. Disillusioned, Eric decides to go to the West Coast.



Eric returns to Polly's apartment to get some music he left behind. Willoughby locks Eric in where Polly discovers him when she steps out of her bath. Words fly and Eric learns the truth about the insurance deal. He convinces her of his love and they rush off to catch the train.



Bruce and Buloff are waiting at the station with the policy. Eric signs, then making sure his hands are insured, wallops both of the connivers. They say goodbye to their friend Willoughby, and climb aboard the train. Eric takes out his practice keyboard which he uses to occupy himself while traveling. Polly's answer is to throw the keyboard out the vestibule door as the train pulls away.

Sir Cedric Gets 1st Film Comedy Role

Hardwicke Clowns, Sings as King Arthur In New Crosby Opus

NEW YORK, Apr. 2 (UP)—Movie-goers will be in for a surprise when they soon see Sir Cedric Hardwicke in Paramount's new version of "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," tailored to the measure of crooner Bing Crosby. Hardwicke will be playing a comedy role.

Persons familiar with Sir Cedric's stage work, especially those in his native England, know that he can kick up his heels with the best of the comedy players, but this is the first picture in the more than 20 he has made in Hollywood since 1935 in which he has played anything but a heavy dramatic part.

"It was pleasant being allowed to cut loose with a comic portrayal of King Arthur," the actor commented. "They even let me sing a bit. If that turns out to have been a mistake, the picture still has Crosby. However, if I should prove to be a great singing discovery, I will try to be gracious about it. After all, Crosby has a large family to support."

Sir Cedric is free-lancing in movies right now and heartily enjoys the position because it enables him to pick his spots and do whatever stage work he desires here or in London. He's just back here after spending last fall and winter as a star of the Old Vic company in London.

He is now considering stage acting and direction offers for next fall.

Sculptor Added To Art Awards Jury

Ronald Kraus, contemporary sculptor, has been added to the jury composed of Louis Bouche and Julian Levi which will award \$1225 in prizes in the coming 42d Indiana Artists Exhibition at Herron Art Museum. Entry cards are due Apr. 11 and the jury meets Apr. 15.

All three artists have been educated in both America and Europe, are regular contributors to national shows, and are at present teachers.

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