

Organ Recital Thrills Crowd At Auditorium

Virgil Fox, presented by Worcester Chapter, American Guild of Organists, in a recital on the Worcester Memorial Auditorium organ. The program:

By Johann Sebastian Bach: "Now Thank We All Our God," "Adagio Cantabile," "Fugue a la Gigue," "Have Mercy Upon Me, O God," "Toccatina and Fugue in D minor."

Edmundson: "Elfin Dance," Durufle, "Suite," Op. 5, Prelude, Sicilienne, Toccatina.

"Scherzo" from Symphony II, Vierne; "Greensleeves," Vaughan Williams; Fantasy and Fugue on the Chorale: "How Brightly Shines the Morning Star," Reger.

By JOHN F. KYES

Capitalizing on the great success of the recital given by Virgil Fox at the Auditorium in December 1955, the local A. G. O. chapter made history last night with a return engagement. While the hall was not filled, I feel sure that this was by far the largest audience in the entire history of Worcester to ever come out for the single purpose of hearing organ music.

As devotees of Fox know so well, the reward of the audience is threefold. There is splendid sound, also the visual pleasure of seeing the most formidable tasks performed gracefully, and the rare personal charm of what Mr. Fox says.

Last night, there was an added thrill, as the huge instrument left the organist suspended several times in the midst of a piece, with no sound when the keys were pressed. This happened at times of great stress, when the soloist was calling on the organ for climaxes of power. Mr. Fox handled the situation with whimsical skill, pointing out that we have one of the finest instruments in the world, but that it needs use in order to avoid "gumming up" of vital parts or delicate controls.

Generator Trouble

Frank Kronoff, Auditorium manager, confirmed Mr. Fox's statement that the trouble was in the generator associated

with the organ, and that brushes of the generator were failing to function at critical times.

Virgil Fox is unique in the truest sense, and you would not want anyone else to play just that way, for his style is peculiarly his own. He can take music apart and reveal things without actually disjoining the structure. Much as Fox worships Bach, and worships through the music of Bach, he does not play the music "straight," but devises all sorts of special effects.

The genius of Fox shone perhaps at its best in the challenging modern work by Maurice Durufle. The audience relished the chatty but eloquent description of how Fox played this work in the Cathedral of Notre Dame. It seemed unlike boasting, but rather a sharing of a treasured experience.

In the formidable Toccatina which concluded this work, even Fox seemed at times to meet his match, not technically but in the realm of making the music coherent. The whole suite constituted a triumph for the artist and for modern music, proving in this case at least that unusual approaches to the mystic, the dainty and the immense can all be palatable.

Fine Taste

Fox showed fine taste after the "Adagio Cantabile" and "Have Mercy Upon Me, O God," so handling himself that the audience was aware that he did not desire applause.

Footwork, which was not only skillful but also exceedingly neat to watch, was featured in the Bach Fugue "where the organist dances a jig," and even more strongly in the final encore, scored entirely for the pedals.

Daintiness of the sort which employs a charming variety of registrations was found in the "Elfin Dance," in the Vierne "Scherzo," and in an encore about a little French clock.

Vaughan Williams' setting of the traditional "Greensleeves" was softly voiced also, with its tragic story softened through the eyes of memory.

The Auditorium organ spoke out with fine fullness of power (such as very few players can achieve with good taste) in the initial and final Bach offerings and in the Reger work. This was one of the rare and thrilling evenings when one could glory in sound and delight in every new climax which brought more of the golden flood.