### THE MOSQUE THEATER at the console of the console of the mighty Wurlitzer

HIMIL

WHITE .

the celebrated BBC organist plays up to the minute favorites for your intermission pleasure

SMOKING IN BALCONY AND LOGES ONLY

She Didn't Sav Yes • Mood Indigo • Valencia Blue Moon Doll Dance

# "... the hero and heroine had a frightful row," Foort reminisced<sup>†</sup>

The long-silent Mosque organ is now known around the world through the recordings of Reginald Foort.

"The very name of the Mosque spells glamour to people, for it touches their imaginations," Foort commented. "People are always introducing themselves to me to say they have these records and to ask about the Mosque organ, which I consider one of the finest theater organs playing today."

The instrument, installed in the Mosque in 1928, fell into disuse after the advent of talking pictures and was almost scrapped after more than 10 years of idleness. Harold Warner, a telephone repairman and organ enthusiast, asked permission to repair it, and he and some friends gave their free time for two years to its restoration. They finished the labor of love "just at the psychological moment that Cook Laboratories was looking for a fine theater organ for these recordings," according to Foort. Warner, assisted by Tommy Landrum and Mac Murrell, put the organ into shape for the current recording sessions.

By an odd coincidence *Valencia* was included in Foort's first recording session in June 1926 when he became the first person in Europe to record on a Wurlitzer. Recalling with a shudder "all the misery of making records on hot wax," the organist explained:

"It required 3 minutes, 10 seconds of absolutely flawless playing. By the time it had been scrapped several times, you'd be so shaky with nerves that you could hardly play."

Modern methods of recording on tape make the sessions "incredibly more pleasant," according to the former staff organist for the British Broadcasting Company. "Now they just bring in a tape machine and let it run while you play. You're completely relaxed, so you can put personality into it."

The list of Foort's discs numbers more than 200, probably more than that of any other theater organist. He had no idea of the number of recordings he had made until a Minnesotan named Mel Doner, who "owns every record ever made by anyone on a theater organ, sought me out in Chicago to give me a list of them."

Foort began playing the organ 51 years ago and runs the gamut from Bach to boogie-woogie with ease.

"In the beginning theater organs provided the sound to accompany silent pictures," he explained. "Playing one was a real art form."

Although he usually saw the movie beforehand and made notes with a stop watch to know what type of music to use, he remembered one hectic time when the movie's arrival was delayed and he had to accompany it "cold."

"The hero and heroine had a frightful row," Foort reminisced, laughing. "He bought a bouquet and went to her home. As he reached for the doorbell, I rang it loudly on the organ. But he changed his mind and didn't ring it."

The theater organ now appeals to a completely new genertion, one that doesn't remember silent pictures, according to the stocky Briton with the graying mustache.

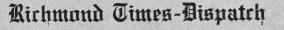
"One of my biggest thrills was at the Audio Show in New York last year, when I realized that my recordings were being used to demonstrate hi-fi equipment."

In his native England, Reginald Foort played organs from St. Paul's Cathedral to vaudeville, which is "still going strong there." He recalled that he once toured the country with a five-manual travelling organ weighing 25 tons that required a staff of 14 to set it up and dismantle it.

Four years ago, a friend who was building organs in Suffolk, Va., invited him here to demonstrate them.

"I fell in love with the United States and haven't begun to get over it," he smiled. "Already I've been in 22 of the 48 states, and I'll see all the rest before long."

*†Interview by Sue Dickinson* 





Reginald Foort at the console of the Mosque organ

-Photo by James Netherwood Jr.

#### WALTZ and BALLET #1058

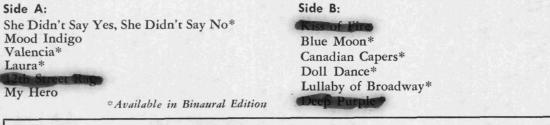
Side A: Ballet Egyptienne (Luigini) \* Coppelia Suite (Delibes)

Side B: Nutcracker Suite (Tchaikovsky) Trepak

NOTICE

Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies Dance of the Flutes Waltz of the Flowers Der Rosenkavalier Waltzes (R. Strauss) \* Tales from the Vienna Woods (J. Strauss) \*

#### **INTERMISSION** at the **MOSQUE** #1059x



In the "X" Edition frequency and dynamic ranges extend to extremes never before put on a commercial pressing. It is engineered to reproduce actual amplitudes of full organ pedal tones when played back on equipment of the highest technical excellence. No compromise has been made for "average" playback equipment and we cannot accept returns of damaged pressings due to tracking difficulties.

## COOK Laboratories

101 Second Street, Stamford, Conn.