

...David Kalmbach and the Marietta Theater (continued)

[continued from page 1]

David was doing just what he wanted to. "60% of the people in this country are dissatisfied with their jobs," he says, "because they haven't taken the time to find out what they're good at."

"I had a good business going great guns," he says, "but unfortunately, I wasn't as good a business man as an engineer — and I wasn't very good on security. One night a couple of professionals broke in and took everything." Everything in a professional studio amounts to approximately \$250,000. He didn't have insurance.

It would have taken four months to rebuild. David sold the real estate and remaining electronic gear, and took a job with a studio in Toronto. He turned

down a more attractive offer in California because of the difficulties of taking the organ that far.

"There were many top groups coming to us," he recalls. "For two reasons. First, we ran one of the best studios; and second, the Canadian government had passed a law requiring that one third of all broadcast material had to be written or performed by a Canadian, or recorded in Canada. To get air time on the border stations, whose listeners were mostly in America, the American groups came to Toronto."

David liked Toronto, but was itching to set up the organ. He scanned papers for theater properties, and one day saw one offered in

Marietta, PA, for the right price (i.e., cheap). He came down to look it over.

Sticky carpets

"It was a mess," he says. "Filthy. My shoes stuck on the carpet." But the building had excellent acoustics. After thinking it over, he bought the Marietta Theater.

The organ, so long homeless, had one final journey to make. More customs officers snickered, and the trip was laborious: 12 trips in the biggest U-Haul David could rent (a 22-footer)

The instrument's console is impressive enough, but the pipes, hidden behind the screen, are something else. The smallest are a few inches long and a fraction of an inch in diameter; the largest are 32 foot high wooden boxes several feet across, which produce notes so low in pitch (16 cycles) that they are inaudible. They are very loud, though, and can be felt.

The Marietta Theater isn't as profitable as his old recording studio in Grand Rapids, and David free-lances as an engineer these days in Baltimore, Toronto, and Harrisburg. "Working in different studios keeps me from getting stale," he adds, "and they don't work you to death. Good engineers

under hire work seven day weeks."

Besides trying to make the theater a success, David is getting ready to set up another studio of his own, in a year of two. The theater has just the right "liveness," or reverberation characteristics, for that purpose. He sees his main problem in getting a top group to record there. "They know me, but they don't know the building," he explains. "But if I get just one big group, it's all downhill." David says "downhill" for "successful."

Advice for Stereo buffs

David can clap his hands once and tell you from the sound what the acoustics are good for, if anything. He knows enough about acoustics and electronics to have taught courses at a recording school in Boston.

Based on his extensive knowledge of recording gear, he gave the *Times* some advice for the audio consumer, which sounded sound to us.

David likes to go into audio equipment stores and play dumb. Usually, he says, the salespeople don't know what they're talking about, but throw around lots of figures and specifications. "Naturally, the salesman wants to sell you the most expensive thing he has," David says. "But

[continued on page 11]

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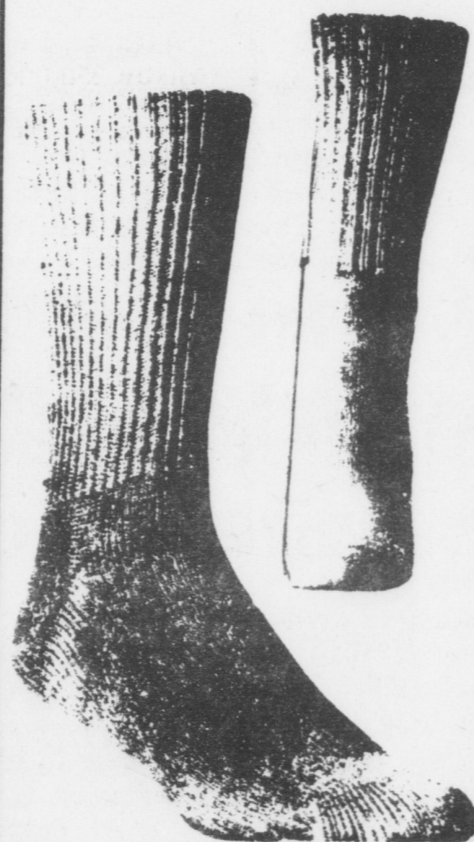


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