

the organ console was spared. The damage has since been repaired.

Within the past year, great strides have been made toward "polishing" the treasure. The chambers have been cleaned and painted. All pipes have been cleaned. The console lift has been rewired and on the console proper, the second touch action has been adjusted, toe studs connected and push buttons tied in. So now that everything works "all we have to do is to use it," says Rice.

The group, which is considering the formation of an ATOE chapter, has noted the efforts of ATOE to make the theatre organ come alive throughout the country. They would like to try a silent movie show, with a "singalong" session played by a famous organist whom they would "import." That's for the future. Meanwhile, the group is happy to sit around the console and call out requests to George Rice, who seems to know all the tunes asked for. But if things should get dull, there's a 3-19 Kimball in storage which might fit the denuded chambers of the Omaha theatre down the street. Now—let's see! . . .



READY FOR A BLAST!—The prize Brass Trumpet gets a check by George Rice. The rank in the foreground is the Oboe.



## CHILEAN TO PANAMA HILTON

Panama City After shopping extensively (including in the USA), Charles Aron, General Manager of the El Panama Hilton Hotel, announced on March 17 that Bill Coffman's successor at the 3-27 Wurlitzer in the "El Bombarde" room will be Pepe Bustamante of Santiago, Chile.



*The BOMBARDE reviews organ recordings for official ATOE publications. Manufacturers, distributors or individuals sponsoring or merchandising theatre pipe organ records are encouraged to send copies (Monaural, if possible) to the BOMBARDE, Box 5013, Bendix Station, N. Hollywood, Calif. 91605. Be sure to include purchasing information, if applicable.*

Frank Olsen at the Hilsdon Theatre pipe organ, Picture House, Paisley, Scotland, Concert Recording CR-0011; regular release of the Organ of the Month Club, \$4.50 postpaid ("Stereoflex" only). Also available on 7½ ips tape at \$7.50. Order from Concert Recording, Box 531, Lynwood, Calif.

This 3-10 instrument, survivor of two unit theatre organs made by Hilsdon, is an original installation which opened with the Picture House in 1930. It was used until 1954 and has been maintained ever since. The tone is somewhat strident, lacking the lushness usually associated with theatre instruments, but the originality and ingenuity of the artist more than offsets any reservations we may have regarding the seeming emphasis on high-middle frequencies.

Mr. Olsen offers 16 selections, most with novel arrangements. There's a lot going on during *Moon River* in the accompaniment while an intriguing combination carries the melody, solo style. *Dream* gets lots of assist from the Marimba-Xylophone which accents the accompaniment while the second chorus offers a "whistling" counter theme.

The first chorus of *Autumn Leaves* features a mellow reed solo combination plus the "4-to-the-bar" pedal beat which Olsen favors for rhythm tunes. *Solitude* makes good use of the Tuba Clarion both as a melody carrier and as a vehicle for melodic variations. The intro to *Edelweiss* is "big cathedral" while the reedy Vox gets a workout later. The rarely heard *Wedding Processional* by Richard Rodgers gets dignified treatment by this often churchy instrument but its just as much at home playing *When You Wore a Tulip*.

*Never on Sunday* gets a lively playing with a conversation between strings and

brass. There are several additional less familiar tunes, plus the Olsen treatment of the old Scotch tune which he has re-labelled *Tripping Through the Rye*—which it does in jazz tempo. All are a delight from the arrangement viewpoint. The instrument is different; well worth adding to the collection.

The jacket offers notes on the instrument and artist as well as photos of both.

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101 Plus Strings - T. Mortier (Antwerp), 101 Key Dance Organ (played mechanically). Available on "Stereoflex" disc only. Concert Recording CR-0012. Released by Organ of the Month Club. Purchasing information same as for previous record reviewed.

Here is a recording which reproduces faithfully the music of the biggest hurdy-gurdy we've ever seen (18½ feet tall, 26 feet wide, and presumably loaded with pipes and traps). Now reposing in an English museum, it once supplied dance music at European fairs and carnivals.

A mechanical organ is comparable to a computer in that it may be programmed via perforated tape to obtain the desired result. The program offered here ranges from Strauss to sambas; the waltzes it performs well but it seems rather uncomfortable when the tape specifies "boogie." Yet, it all comes through (mostly in one key) and sustains enough interest to fill both sides of this LP without becoming tedious. If there's one sound which stands out, it's a set of stopped pipes which produce a "whooping" effect, something of a burlesque of the Tibia sound. It's overblown and "chop-trem'd," yet it adds a certain contrast when played against a mass of unrefined pipework ("strings" and open "flutes" plus a lot of percussions which are never too loud).

Among the selections (18, in all!) are *Jezebel*, *Papa loves Mabo*, *Perez Prado's Patricia*, *Botch-a-Me*, *Persian Market*, *Skater's Waltz*, a samba medley, a swing medley and others. This one is for a special audience and is a gem of its kind. Not for all organ enthusiasts but for those who enjoy the old-fashioned "corn" associated with long ago country fairs. There's nostalgia here—and whoever gets the brassing gets a free ride!

\* \* \* \* \*

**First Annual Christmas and Pop Concert**, Jim Orcutt at the 3-10 Robert Morton theatre organ in the Cathedral of the Christian Crusade, Tulsa, Oklahoma. On one 7½ ips stereo tape, \$5.00 postpaid from Jim Orcutt, Box 145, Coweta, Oklahoma, 44429.

This is the first recording made on the recently installed Morton theatre organ in the Tulsa church (Lorin Whitney was instrumental in the project). It was made during a public concert played by the

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## FOR THE RECORDS (Starts on page 39)

staff organist, Jim Orcutt, on December 17 last. It's the first recording, too, of Jim Orcutt's playing we've heard, an or-



Jim Orcutt

ganist whose name is something of a legend in the Southwest. After hearing the tape we can appreciate the legend. Mr. Orcutt maintains a high level of interest throughout the entire program, which ranges from show tunes to a Hawaiian medley, from a patriotic group to a "roaring '20s" set, plus some Christmas tunes.

It should be kept in mind that these tunes were all recorded in one "take," a procedure which is a test of the mettle of any organist, especially with an audience present. Mr. Orcutt's approach is theatrical although he kicks off the tremas and "makes like church" for a few tunes, mainly the Christmas music.

His program is an ambitious one. His two show tune medleys are selections from *Sound of Music* and *My Fair Lady*. His "roaring '20s" group includes *Charleston*, *So Beats My Heart for You*, *Laugh Clown Laugh* (these two with beautifully performed "rolls" on the Tibia), *I Wanna Be Loved by You*, and *Toot Toot Tootsie*. The Christmas tunes are the expected ones, but performed with lots of imagination and variety of registration. Also heard are *Chicago* (jazzy), *You Are Too Beautiful* and *Granada*.

The organ sounds big and full. The acoustics are "big hall" but not at any loss of intimacy. The Tibia trem needs some adjustment to get it out of the stopped flute class—but that was the reason for the concert and for the sale of tapes—to start an organ fund for further refinement and, perhaps, some additions.

Jim Orcutt impresses most favorably in this first recording of the Tusla church theatre Morton. Of course, as in all "one take" recordings there are a few rough spots but these are infrequent and are

# THE PAUL FORSTER STORY

by HIS FRIEND W. S. ("Stu") GREEN

*In the first installment we learned about the showmanship of Paul H. Forster in the Central New York state area where he became "King of the Singalong" in the mid-'20s. How did he reach this prominence? In this installment we'll trace some history of his early years, then continue the story of the great years, how "Vitaphone" spurred him to ever greater efforts—the whole story, right to the present.*

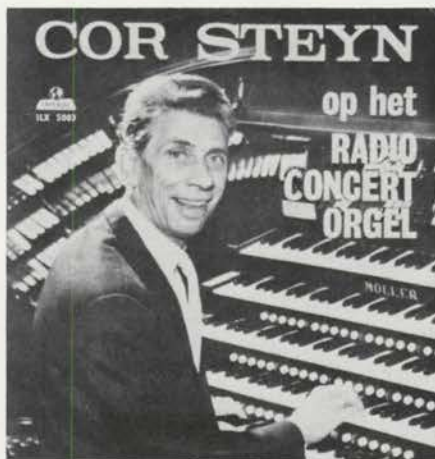
CONCLUDING INSTALLMENT

## For The Record,

more than offset by Jim's over-all artistry, and especially those smooth fingered glissandos. The audience present is very quiet except to show appreciation through applause (plus an occasional cough). A copy of the program handed to attendees is included. Here's \$5.00 well invested in tape (stereo unless specified half track. No disc is available).

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(Cor Steyn at the Radio Concert Organ). Imperial ILX-5003 (mono), available by import from Duyvene & Remmers, N. V.,



Damrak 25, Amsterdam, Holland. Write for purchasing information.

This record marks another chapter in the long history of the 5-28 Moller which Reg Foort once moved around Great Britain in a train of lorries. During World War II it became the BBC studio organ (replacing one bombed out). It was purchased by the government-controlled Netherland Radio Corporation in 1963 and moved into temporary quarters in Holland, where this recording was made. The record marks the final chapter for Dutch organist Cor Steyn; he died shortly after it was released.

The disc was evidently produced with the export trade in mind. One entire side is devoted to medleys from the American musicals, *Porgy and Bess* and *Annie Get Your Gun*. The sound of the Moller has changed considerably since its British days. In its present installation the organ

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Paul H. Forster was born in Utica, New York, in 1892 and started taking piano lessons at 8. At 15 he was engaged as pianist at the Theatorium in Utica, a genuine 5 cent admission "nickelodeon" which showed two reels of movies and offered an illustrated song, usually sung by the manager. One year later he was lured away to the local Hippodrome where he not only played piano for movies but also conducted the small pit band for four acts of vaudeville. He first hit the "big time" when he was engaged by the Utica State theatre to play piano for vaudeville and also for movies using a large and very "straight" organ built in the local Barnes and Buhl factory. It was his first encounter with the instrument which was to dominate his life. But he was not happy with the sound of the miscast church organ and he soon discovered something better for movies—a short organ manual attached to a piano which gave forth pleasant sounds appropriate to the theatrical atmosphere. This embryo theatre organ had been added to the piano in the Utica Majestic theatre and the nameplate on it read "Marr and Colton"—another name soon to loom large on the Forster horizon.

His first meeting with a Wurlitzer was at the Avon theatre in Utica where he was engaged to play feature films on a two manual instrument. It was during this period in the early '20s that an organist named C. Sharpe Minor was rumored to be "knocking them dead" with organ novelties using illustrated song slides at the Lafayette theatre in Buffalo. And there seemed to be some fellow named Jesse Crawford doing likewise at the Chicago theatre in the "windy city."

About this time the recently founded Marr and Colton firm of Warsaw, New York (both men being refugees from the Hope-Jones Elmira factory failure) had installed a 10 rank theatre instrument in the Palace theatre in Jamestown, New York. They needed a good man to open it and that man was found pumping musical life into "flickers" at the Utica Avon. The Jamestown sojourn gave Forster an opportunity to become familiar with the uses of song slides and to gauge their possibilities, which proved to be considerable.

Forster remained at the Palace for sev-



In the 1940s Mr. Forster became active in church music once more (he had always played for Sunday services at a Syracuse church during the silent movie era). Here he is seen at the Zion Lutheran church Hammond circa 1950.

neighborhood house not far from the Forster home, we heard unmistakable organ sounds. We knew the Harvard theatre well, having "broken in" on the tiny Wurlitzer style B (4 ranks) years earlier. Our curiosity aroused by these old familiar sounds in a new organless era, we investigated. Inside were Paul Forster and David Marr. They were trying to get the miserable little instrument in good enough shape for use after the console had been inundated by several summer floods. Paul had sold the manager of the 350 seat house on the idea of organologues to bolster his sagging business. It worked, too, for a time. Paul filled the house the first night. Forster fans flocked to the small house from all over town and kept coming.

It was at the Harvard theatre (now Wescot) in Syracuse that we heard Forster on pipes for the last time. Several other name organists "took to the suburbs" where their skills and popularity held sway briefly, but it couldn't last. If a large first-run house in mid-town couldn't afford live organ music, it was even less feasible that a 350 seater in the suburbs could do well enough for what the establishment of "talkies" had caused to become a luxury.

But fate stepped in before the axe could fall; Paul Forster suffered a fall in his home and while his broken leg was on the mend he had plenty of time for rumination on the big picture, which he faced for the first time in all its unpleasant reality. Organs in theatres were finished, so

far as making a living was concerned. Paul considers the two months spent mending as one of the most crucial in his life—and the accident a lucky one. Long before the leg had healed Paul had a new plan. He had always been interested in insurance; why not use this time of necessary inactivity to start something new? So he studied general insurance and shortly after he threw away his crutch he passed the New York State insurance examination. He opened his own agency and thereafter never had any economic worries. That doesn't mean he gave up music. He still played on radio, TV and in church as often as possible.

During the winter of 1956, while shoveling some 150 inches of snow from his Syracuse property, Paul decided that he'd had enough of Northern winters. He'd heard about the easy living in Florida and although he'd never been there he went indoors and broached the idea to wife Arline. She thought it a great idea. With sons Bob and Paul grown up and



**PAUL FORSTER TODAY.** The active organist lives in St. Petersburg with his wife—but not in retirement. He's Minister of Music at a local church. In 1966 he made a brief return to the theatre console to play for the closing show at the Keith theatre in Syracuse, New York, his first theatrical appearance there since the early 1940s.

married, there was nothing to hold them in Syracuse. The Forsters sold their belongings and moved to the St. Petersburg area with the idea of retiring. They bought a house and settled down.

Then Paul heard about a church which needed an organist to play services and train three choirs. As might be expected, Paul H. Forster is back in the saddle, up to his ears in music as organist and Minister of Music at the Church by the Sea near St. Petersburg. He just can't help making music.

*For the photos which illustrate the Paul Forster story we are indebted to Lloyd Klos, Bill Lamb and organists Luella Wickham, Therese Johnson, Peg Kimball and Paul Forster.*

## FOR THE RECORDS, cont.

sounds much less theatrical than when Reg. Foort thundered out with *Finlandia* for the RCA Victor label in the late '30s. The reeds are still excellent but the Tibias are trem'd like straight organ flutes. Thus, what we like to call "lushness" is lacking. And the registration used on pops and show tunes is often church-like.

However, the performance is tops. Cor Steyn was a hip musician with lots of inventiveness. He handles such tunes as *Moonglow* and *Jalousie* in fine style and *Caprice Viennoise* brings out the Moller's big battery of brass in review. *Uno per Tute* is 1930s swingband jazz which sounds vaguely familiar. The side closes with a generous medley from *Gypsy* played with lots of imagination and variety in registration. Although it isn't listed with the tunes, Steyn opens and closes the record with a lilting *California Here I Come*, possibly his radio theme. A history of the organ is provided on the jacket notes—if you read Dutch.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ONES WE MISSED the first time around...

**Pipe Organ Encores**, Robert Brereton at the New York Paramount 4-36 Wurlitzer, Camden CAL-591 (Mono) \$1.98; also released in stereo at \$2.98.

When this platter was first released several years ago it was given very limited distribution. As an avid record bin explorer, this reviewer was unable to locate a copy to review on the West Coast. As the New York Paramount organ sinks ever deeper into memory, each track it recorded becomes more precious. Recently the effort to locate a pressing was redoubled. The quest led to the door of the organist who was able to provide a review



Robert Brereton has just completed his third year playing an electronic in a Santa Monica, California cocktail lounge. He's a solid pipe enthusiast and is often seen at La Chapter ATOE concerts.

copy. Pressings won't be easy to locate but it's well worth the effort, the only

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"It scared the hell out of them!!"

# AN OLD CALIFORNIA LEGEND

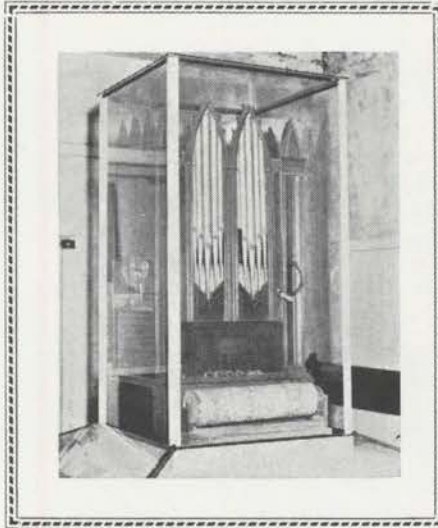
by HARRY JENKINS

"It scared the Hell out of them!" is probably the way Fr. Francisco de Lasuen described the incident later. On a sultry California summer afternoon in 1798 the Franciscan monk learned that renegades were on the way to raid his Mission San Juan Bautista. How could he discourage them? He thought a moment. Perhaps a loud noise. But how to create it? Then he recalled the huge barrel organ given to him by a friendly sea captain six years earlier. The large, spiked wooden rolls weren't programmed for church music so

the instrument hadn't been played much. But the priest recalled that its big Diapason was so loud that it had frightened the mission Indians. Knowing that the raiders would include a number of Indians, Fr. Lasuen opened the windows, and none

"raiders" as they scurried for cover. The priest waited until the horsemen stopped for a brief council of war. Then he let them have it. He pumped the bellows furiously and snapped the cylinder release. A blast of nondescript music filled the quiet afternoon (some of the pins on the rolls had come loose and had been driven back into the wood wherever there was an open space; this resulted in some "variations"). The raiders were stupefied. Nothing like this had ever before assailed their ears. It was unearthly. Besides, it was doing something to the horses. Two bolted, their riders unable to stop them. Another started to buck and threw his rider. There was a great whinnying and neighing from all the horses which provided a somewhat psychedelic obligato to the already dissonant roar of the barrel organ thundering from the windows.

Suddenly a great desire to be somewhere else descended upon the thwarted raiders and they spurred their mounts in any direction which led away from the mission. When the dust had settled and the wail of the hurdy-gurdy had ceased, the perspiring priest went to the mission chapel and knelt in prayer. His words aren't recorded but they probably went something like, "... I thank thee, Lord, for the loud noise thou hast sent me. It really scared the Hell out of thy enemies!"



THE LOUD ONE — Father Lasuen's barrel Organ might not be just the thing for church but its raucous sound once saved the entire mission.

too soon. The sound of horses' hooves loomed and the mission Indians cried

## For The Record, continued

(Continued from Page 45)

record of popular classics played on the memorable Wurlitzer.

A large portion of side one is devoted to Bizet's lively *Carmen* suite. They are the familiar Overture, Habanera, Toreador song and Gypsy dance, well played in theatre organ style and registration (only once throughout these classical and semi-classical selections does Brereton try for a "straight, organ" sound and that's for *Trumpet Voluntary*)

With the exception of Chopin's *Polonaise Militaire* (written for the piano) all of the selections are transcriptions of orchestral works, one of the best examples being von Suppe's *Poet and Peasant Overture* which gathers some new sparkle under Brereton's expert touch.

Actually the organ is Brereton's second instrument, the first being the piano. As a pianist he is well known in longhair circles, having played with such distinguished orchestras as the San Francisco symphony under Pierre Monteaux. Yet there is no hint of the pianist in such offerings as Elgar's majestic *Pomp and Circumstance No. 1*. The big finale is Khachaturian's wild *Sabre Dance*.

There's plenty of showmanship in all the selections and the "dowager Empress" has been well recorded. If there is any valid criticism of the result it may be that the Posthorn is used too frequently as a solo reed. But the miracle is that Brereton could handle the complex facilities represented by the console at all; He's been blind since birth.

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