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**AUSTRALIAN STYLE** — Ian Davies at the Mighty Capitol Wurlitzer (Sydney, Australia), regular release of the Organ of the Month Club (Concert Recording), Box 531, Lynwood, Calif. In "Stereoflex" ("compatible" for mono or stereo players), CR-0015, \$4.50 by mail, anywhere (not available in stores). Also available in 7½ ips tape at \$7.50.

The first Australian disc we have reviewed is an enjoyable one. Ian Davies opens with a 22 minute and 15 second tribute to "Fats" Waller (entire side 1) which indicates that the organist has a strong affection for, and has been deeply influenced by, the late great Harlem theatre organist, probably via the handfull of organ records "Fats" left us, although some titles reflect tunes recorded years after Waller had left the organ and formed groups around his inventive piano work, tunes such as *Flat Foot Floogie* and *A Tisket a Tasket*. But whatever the source, Mr. Davies jingles along in an entertaining style which employs lots of Waller's harmonies, riffs and variations. Reflecting the Waller way with spirituals are *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* and *I Got a Robe*. But it's tunes such as *Aint Misbehavin'* and *St. Louis Blues* that hit the mark most squarely. Other titles in the medley are *You Meet the Nicest People*, *Honey Hush* and *Don't Try Your Jive on Me*. Playing is best when the organist is engrossed in the Waller idiom; the bridges between are pedestrian and predictable. The pedal technique reveals classical training, which means Mr. Davies is much more than a "left foot" artist.

Side 2 is entirely different. It starts with a 10 minute and 43 second medley of traditional Australian songs, all played

in a "pop" style and all most palatable to U.S. ears.

Mr. Davies is an exponent of the full combination, although the Wurlit's big Tuba Horn gets solo billing now and then. Much credit must go to the Theatre Organ Society of Australia for making this recording possible. TOSA repaired and maintained the instrument in the long-dark Capitol theatre for many years (since TV reared its antennas down under). The jacket notes are by John Clancy who is probably the most potent driving force behind the theatre organ hobby in Australia.

Mr. Davies fills out the side with rhythmic playings of *It's a Good Day*, *It's a Most Unusual Day*, *I Got Rhythm* and *Gotta Travel On*. He presents a solid theatre organ sound very much akin to that played by a host of organists who presented fondly recalled intermission music in U.S. theatres not so long ago.

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**BUCKINGHAM CONCERT**—Ena Baga playing the 3-10 Wurlitzer in Buckingham Town Hall (England) and a model C3 Hammond. Concert Recording No. CR-E016. Price and purchasing information same as for the previous disc reviewed.

As for the previous recording, we are obliged to a small group of organ fanatics who made the pipe portion of this recording possible, the Theatre Organ Preservation Society whose members assembled the instrument from several Wurlitzers removed from British cinemas and located their treasure in a quaint 18th-century town hall. The result is a balanced, tonally excellent instrument. And the organist, making her groove debut for U.S. listeners, proves a capable and demanding mistress of the instrument.

Her treatment of ballads, especially, is harmonically rich and inventive despite an occasional tendency toward "hand smears." Outside of that, the arrangements are varied and imaginative.

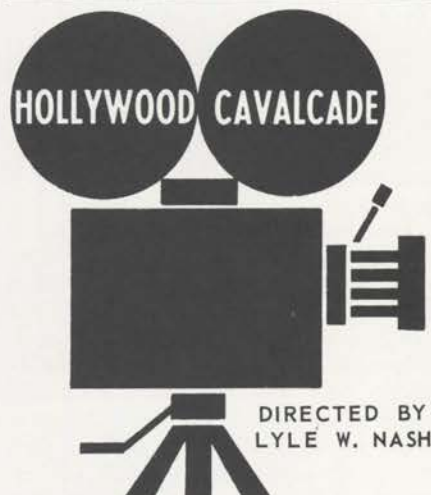
Miss Baga starts off the show with a fast Strauss *Perpetual Motion* ("horse box" music!), cleanly performed with lots of combination changes, followed by a bit of silent movie style music called *Samun*, perhaps best described as a "dramatic agitato" (get that long, fingered roll!). A solo Tibia carries the ball during the first measures of *Over the Rainbow*, then come the juicy counter melodies and ornamentation. The intro to *St. Louis Blues March* is straight out of Glenn Miller, snare drums included, then many variations, concluding with that rarely heard "without a shirt" coda.

Currently popular *Somewhere My Love* is somewhat lacklustre but 1 minute and 52 seconds of a rare piece of organ jazz built around *That's a-Plenty* just isn't enough. Marvellous!

The side closes with a sweet and humorous *Lingering Lovers*.

Side two opens with a sprightly, rhythmic tune composed by Miss Baga, *Champanagne for Two*, with lots of entertainment value. The remainder of the selections are played on a model C3 Hammond and include *Cuckoo Waltz*, *Fiddle Faddle*, *Laura*, *Misty* and others, none of which wouldn't have sounded better if played on the pipe organ just a few feet away. No explanation is given for the switch in John Foskett's otherwise informative jacket notes. On pipes, Miss Baga is exceptional, on the electric job she exhibits many of the qualities of the typical "Hammond organist."

Recording is excellent for both instruments. The selections are varied, skillfully performed and the record is worth the price just for the pipe organ selections.



READER Dick Simonton (the George Washington of ATOE history) reports on silent screen star Lila Lee. "She lives in Key West, Florida and is active in social and artistic life there," Dick says. Newspaper clips showed Miss Lee looking as charming as when she played with Valentino generations ago. Former film star Jacqueline Logan visited the area while Dick was there, too. Simonton Street, in Key West and one of the oldest streets in America, is named for Dick's great grandfather who owned the Island of Key West in 1821-1853.

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EVELYN BRENT told us recently about her favorite role. "Oh . . . probably *The Last Command*. I think I'd like to be remembered for that part."

\* \* \*

NOW THERE is a book out called *Whatever Became of?* . . . . The whereabouts of silent film players is the subject of a

(Continued on Page 24)

Lee Haggart observes very deceptive organ-orchestra coloration.

# I WAS THERE

by Lee Haggart, Burbank

It was the usual exciting Sunday evening in 1921 at Miller's California Theatre in Los Angeles\*. The grand orchestra, the stage presentation, in keeping with the theme of the (silent) feature picture, had been thoroughly entertaining. For weekends the 35 man orchestra was augmented to 75. The aggregation gave powerful musical underscoring to the main titles of the feature film—after which the organ took over.

As the final curtain of the stage show closed, Carli Elinor, the dynamic director of the "augmented 75 member California Theatre Orchestra" motioned for a quick decrescendo. The grand curtain paused momentarily and opened again, revealing the thin screen curtain, or "scrim", over the great glassbead screen. The trademark of MGM studios, "Leo" the lion, appeared on the curtain and Carli Elinor signaled for full "forte" as the scrim pulled away and the feature picture title appeared.

We were watching this evening, fully determined to catch the great master

\*at 9th and Main Streets; long gone

organist, Arthur G. Shaw, in a "fade-in" from orchestra to organ. Many times before we had tried to pin-point this elusive trick, the moment of crossover, which had been worked out by Carli Elinor and Mr. Shaw shortly after Mr. Shaw had been appointed "top" or solo organist at the California Theatre.

The "fade" from orchestra to organ was, of course, done in many "presentation" theatres and was often well done. But if complete illusion is a criterion, the Elinor /Shaw crossover would be the far-in-front winner.

We looked to the center of the orchestra pit where the three manual Robert Morton console was located. Mr. Shaw was not visible, and because the house was quite dark and the console in total blackness we could not be sure. Well, it just made the test more difficult anyway.

The type of musical legerdemain we were to try unravelling requires a consummate musicianship and an accurate balancing of tonal and sound level values. A real challenge to an organist!

We checked the "wing" drapes on stage right to see if they had been drawn back for the organ to sound clearly. (the great Robert Morton was installed on stage right in a double-decked set of chambers) Good! The drapes were clear.

We returned our gaze to the orchestra.

The sleight-of-hand magic in music was starting! Musicians from the percussion and brass sections of the orchestra were silently making their way toward the "green room" door under the stage.

The music-rack lights were now out and the remaining orchestra members were playing without visible notes.

The hard listening was now at hand. We closed our eyes and concentrated on the beautiful sounds. Violins, clarinets, flutes, an oboe, 'cello and double-bass, all playing softly now. We sneaked a look at the podium; Carli Elinor was still there directing; more intense listening—now just the double-bass, violins, 'cello and flute could be identified. We concentrated—the supreme test! Were these the sounds of orchestral instruments or those of their organ counterparts? No-still the orchestra, we decided! Carli Elinor would be furious, we were sure, with the organist this late!

Better check the podium; we opened our eyes. The podium was empty! The organ console stop-rail lights were very dim, but enough light outlined the master organist to prove that he had fooled us completely once more.

What a wonderful musical experience! Two decades later we still clearly remember the amazing artistry of the Australian Master of the Theatre Organ, Arthur G. Shaw.

-Lee Haggart, Burbank

## HOLLYWOOD CAVALCADE

(Continued from Page 19)

book by Richard Lamparski (Crown). Hollywood's youngest and best silent era researcher, John Virzi, contributed photographs to the interesting book . . . Howard C. Shaiffer who played "Butch" in the *Our Gang* comedies passed on early this year . . . Jetta Goudal, who was a soft-sell silent screen siren, enjoys the Southern California social whirl.

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MARY CARR, now into her 90's, is reported still living in the North Hollywood area. Mary, who made famous the role of mother in *Over the Hill* (1920), was the most self-effacing, frail, homey actress ever to play a tragic mother role.

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HAPPINESS is giving part of yourself to others. Few of the great film personalities have learned this secret better than Harold Lloyd. He practices this philosophy in daily living. He travels 15,000 miles a year for his beloved Shrine charities which bring health and happiness to youngsters in Shrine hospitals. He's active in his own film activities. He has high hopes that this autumn will

find a new generation enjoying his silent classics when they are shown to American college students.

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BUSTER KEATON'S widow, Eleanor, recently said that in 25 years of marriage to the kind man she never heard him tell a joke around the house.

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THE FIRST great screenplay writer of them all, Frances Marion, is putting the finishing touches on a book about Hollywood. Miss Marion won the first Oscar for screenplay writing . . . Reader Don Caye points out that Gloria Swanson, Lillian Gish, Stuart Holmes and Henry King have been active in films for 50 years.

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WHOSE WERE—Mary Miles Minter, whose petite china-doll like charm fascinated fans of the '20s, shuns most former film friends, refuses interviews and finds comfort in religion in her Santa Monica home . . . Louise Glaum lives in quiet retirement in Hollywood and recalls her 50 years in Hollywood. . . A reader in Las Vegas asks us the whereabouts of Greta Nissen. Does any reader know? Please advise.

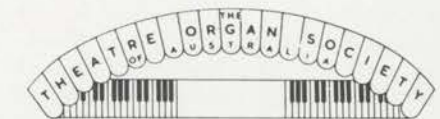
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CLAUDETTE Colbert made at least one silent film (and probably more) when she appeared with Ben Lyon in *For the Love of Mike* in 1927 for First National.

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COLLEEN MOORE, who brightened the silver shadow stage in the '20s, is ready to publisher her cinema adventures under the unglamorous title of *Silent Star Colleen Moore Shoots Off Her Mouth* (Doubleday).

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