

It was on July 10th, however, opening day of the convention, that Dan became the "man of the hour", for everyone who attended the concert held the 11th at the Tivoli. At 10:30 a.m. on the 10th, the damage done to the organ blower motor by heavy rains three weeks before, the likes of which had completely flooded the blower room in the basement to a depth of ten feet, caused the motor to catch fire and burn, destroying bearings and windings. A heroic effort was made to secure a replacement motor from Marvin Lautzenheiser of Springfield, Virginia, but when the motor was delivered it proved to be the wrong specification and could not be used. The author of this narrative had visions of eight hundred convention goers with nothing to do on the afternoon of the eleventh.

When informed of the disaster, Mr. Weinberg literally took over the operations. The heavy motor was loaded into the trunk of his car and was taken to the M.&M. Motor Service Shop in Frederick. On entering the premises it was apparent that we were not the only ones with a problem. The rains had created havoc with about three hundred other motors of the industrial type. However, undaunted by the "are you nuts or somethin'" look given us by the service manager, Dan insisted that the motor be completely rebuilt and in our hands by 9 o'clock the following morning on an "expense be hooted" basis.

What occurred after this is now ATOS history. By ten o'clock the following morning the Tivoli Wurlitzer's lungs were in better shape than ever for guest artist Hector Olivera and for the cheering throngs of conventioners.

Certainly everyone who attended the convention and heard this magnificent small Wurlitzer must credit Dan Weinberg for saving it and taking the intense personal interest in the welfare of the organ and of the Potomac Valley Chapter.

As a closing note, Mr. Weinberg has decided to retire from the theatre business and has leased his holdings in this field to the RC Corporation in Baltimore. Officials of the corporation are to be credited in making the Tivoli available to us on the same basis and for their cooperation with the chapter on the convention. □



Manufacturers, distributors or individuals sponsoring or merchandising theatre pipe organ records are encouraged to send pressings to the Record Reviewer, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. Be sure to include purchasing information, if applicable, and if possible a black and white photo which need not be returned.

REFLECTIONS OF A GOLDEN ERA, Ray Frazier playing the Grant Union High School 4/21 Kilgen/Wurlitzer, Sacramento, Calif. Stereo No. CR-0116. Available postpaid at \$4.89 from Concert Recording, Box 531, Lynwood, Calif. 90262.

An organ new to records makes its debut along with the recording debut of the organist. Ray Frazier, a student of the late great Floyd Wright, is well known in the San Francisco area as a teacher. He has played concerts at the Home Organ Festival and is currently president of the Bay Area Professional Organists Club. His style at the console is easy-going in the manner of the oft-lamented late night radio organists of the past. He aims to satisfy the listener rather than dazzle him. On this disc he is quite successful, with only a few spots we'll question. His harmony is mostly conventional and he applies it with skill to lush combinations that carry the slow rhythmic ballads which prevail in these grooves.

The organ is truly a hybrid, having been assembled in the late '30s from three theatre organs. It is played from an especially-built Kilgen console and it is living proof that a fine sounding instrument can be assembled from "parts" (mostly Wurlitzer) if done

by skilled hands such as those of organbuilder Fred Wood of Oakland. His work crew included several students then attending the school, one being a lad named George Wright who participated in the opening concert on Dec. 8, 1939.

Ray Frazier's console style is mostly his own, with perhaps a touch of his teacher, Floyd Wright, plus a hint of Crawford. He leans to Tibia-rich registration (the organ has three, separately "shaken") and his lagorous tempos make for dreamy listening through such ballads (some with a gentle beat) as "It's Never Too Late"; "Am I Blue" featuring solo reeds, "Why Don't You Behave?" on color reeds and Tibia/Glockenspiel, Ray's own melodic "Serenade," "Diane" (as lushly performed as we've ever heard it), "Whispering", surprisingly played as a slow ballad, and "Just a Kiss Apart."

Three selections in up-tempo add contrast interspersed among the ballads: "Love is Sweeping the Country", "I'll Get Along Somehow" and "Me and the Man in the Moon." There is only one selection we can find much fault with, the familiar "Perfect Song." Ray plays it tempo rubato with far too much rubato, not unlike Gaylord Carter's "all quarter note" version he uses when in a hurry. This, plus some melodic inaccuracies, may mar enjoyment among those who know the tune.

Ray is partial to the big organ sound, which compliments both his style and what he's trying to say in his music. The instrument has such a lush sound in full combinations one doesn't miss the variety of solo voices available. Arrangements are generally uncomplicated and there are no key changes within arrangements, which in no way diminishes their enjoyment in the "late night broadcast" parameters.

Summary: Good "easy listening".

LEON AND THE LION, Leon Berry playing his 2/7 studio Wurlitzer. Custom Fidelity stereo, No. CFS-2953. Available postpaid at \$5.50 from Leon Berry, Box 493, Park Ridge, Illinois 60068.

Leon Berry is back, riding his "Beast in the Basement" Wurlitzer which now roars from 7 ranks of pipes (it started life as a 4-rank style B). It's been a long time, nearly 20 years, since Replica released the original "Beast" LP. It caused quite a furore



Leon Berry and his 'Beast' do it again — but better.

among audio enthusiasts at a mid-'50s NAMM show in Chicago. Never before had organ, and particularly organ percussion sounds, been recorded in such exasperating closeup perspective. The microphone must have been strapped to the beast's adenoids. The recorded tonal range was exceptionally wide and many a woofer and tweeter were titillated by Leon's cymbals, orchestra bells, booming bass drum, rasping Posthorn, castanets and tambourine. Leon has recorded 13 albums, most of them on the Hub and Trianon rink organs, since the original "Beast," but that one remains the most memorable.

Now the same dragon is back on records in an acoustical setting more favorable to the recording of ensemble sound. Geannie Nachtwey's liner notes reveal that Niagara Frontiersman were in the crew which moved the articulate monster from Leon's Gunnison street house in Norwood Park to his new home and prepared chambers in Park Ridge.

It's the same Leon Berry as of yore; all the percussive excitement of the Chicago rink style Leon originated is displayed on this recording. He's as "trap happy" as ever and he sometimes takes sly delight in making the organ sound like a merry-go-round. Yet, the years have brought a maturity to Leon's playing; he no longer plays only in the "thump-boom" style so effective in setting pace for skaters. This record includes some creditable ballad work.

The opener is a rousing march

from the Sousa era, "Napoleon's Last Charge" by Edward Ellis, exponent of the descriptive march style. It's loaded with very consonant bugle calls, the suggested tread of troops marching to the front, cavalry and the rolling caissons, then more bugles during the attack. It's all over in a moment and the defeated French retreat with the same precise, heavy-footed tread without once getting out of step — all in four minutes.

"Yellow Bird" is played in Leon's new, more subdued style, a tropical paradise with some canaries left over from that long ago birdseed broadcast and ending with a Quintadena'd "cuckoo."

"Swinging Shepherd Blues" is presented in the "traditional" Berry style with lots of the organ's noisemakers thrown in. Note the use of pizzicato Posthorn, a feature Leon added when he rebuilt the organ and added pipe-work.

"Aphrodite" introduces a new Berry style on records. It's played as a ballad on the pipes, almost without embellishment, the mature Leon. The melody was once the signature of a radio soap opera which originated in Chicago. It's well done.

It's a tongue-in-check Leon playing "What's New Pussy Cat?" in his best merry-go-round style. Lots of traps, an overwhelming pedal and often "simplified" harmony.

The same Tuba pedal marks a nice rhythmic exercise during "Never Tease Tigers" and the Orchestra Bells and Xylophone make their presence known.

An understated (for Leon) "Yours" is marked by an interesting pedal pattern, restrained use of noisemakers and a Bells-plus-Xylophone chorus.

"Wheels" is a quickstep which makes effective use of the pizzicato Posthorn. It leans toward the orchestration style of the early 1900s.

Much of "Bells of St. Mary's" is restrained Leon, with Chimes and Harp much in evidence.

"Sorcerers' Tango" gets the full percussion treatment, as does "Blue Skirt Waltz." "The Impossible Dream" is given a sensitive ballad reading on mostly soft combinations with interesting Harp patterns. The same is true of "I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls" which Leon plays without embellishment.

Summary: This one will please the army of Leon Berry fans everywhere. It's fun music.

GENE ROBERSON RIDES THE MIGHTY WURLITZER, played on Joe Koons' Motorcycle Shop 3/22 mostly Wurlitzer. Stereo, DBP-150. Available at \$5.00 postpaid from Gene Roberson, Box 333, Dana Point, Calif. 92629.

We reviewed Gene Roberson's church music album "O Happy Day" quite a few issues back and found it to have much merit. Now youthful Gene, an organ teacher, has turned his hand to pops.

The organ is no newcomer to records, having been recorded by Don Thompson and Lloyd del Castillo. It's an organ assembled from parts and it's a remarkably fine sounding instrument. Joe Koons has spent much money, time and effort to select just the right ranks of pipes and the resulting sound is a delight.

Gene opens with a lively "The Most Beautiful Girl in the World" and then goes into the "Summer of '42" theme for an effective ballad treatment, played on combinations spiked by much treble brilliance.

It's hand clapping revival time during "Put Your Hand in the Hand" etc., as Gene is joined by a drummer for a rhythmic venture into "pop gospel." "Liza" reveals a few harmonic devices Gene probably picked up during his stint as a teacher of the Mildred Alexander style; it's played in gentle swing tempo after a ballad-like first chorus. Next — yipe! — "Somewhere My Love", dedicated to Gene's friends at Leisure World where he teaches organ to 50 oldsters. "Close to You" closes side one.

Pitched percussions (Xylophone and Glockenspiel) brighten a lively ode to "Maria" followed by a long and well-phrased wail, "Here's That Rainy Day", which is somewhat reminiscent of Lyn Larsen's and played on full combinations with maybe too much 2' Piccolo, Fifteenth and similar squealers. The drummer is back for a percussion-flecked "One Note Samba", which features a solo reed. An over-application of harmonic sophistication mars "Only a Rose" which features a choppy Tibia. Gene misses the point of the venerable standard because of a few measures of jarring harmony. The closer is 5:26 minutes of a well performed "Cry Me a River", played against a Tibia/Vox "chorale."

Arrangements are straightforward, mostly harmonized, but lacking key

changes. Phrasing and technique are good throughout. There may be some criticism of registration, which is mostly full combinations with perhaps over use of the very prominent 2' stops and not enough use of the instrument's solo voices.

For all that, it's a generally satisfying performance in the "easy listening" class.

DOUBLE TOUCH, Charles Smitton and Trevor Willetts at the Manchester Odeon Wurlitzer, with Enid Powell, soprano. Acorn label CF-210, stereo. Available postpaid from Mr. Cyril Castle, 61 Athlone Avenue, Astley Bridge, Bolton, Lancs., England at \$5.00 (US) by sea mail or \$5.63 by airmail. Checks drawn on US banks are accepted and should be made out to The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust.



Messrs Willetts (left) and Smitton pose for their 'Double Touch' album cover. Their record sales profits will help preserve TO's in Britain.

This is the first in a series of organ recordings planned by the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust, a British non-profit organization (called a "registered charity" in Britain) dedicated to the rescue and preservation of England's TO's. Profits realized from records will be used for this work.

Another US debut for both organists and the instrument, a 4/20 Publix No. 1, the largest theatre organ remaining in a European theatre. Smitton was the last regular Odeon organist (to 1948) and has many BBC broadcasts to his credit. Willetts played the Ritz, Barnsley, Wurlitzer for 18 years. Soprano Enid Powell, who sings only three selections here, is known for her appearances in the shows which are so much a part of the summer entertain-

ment in English beach towns. She adds feminine charm and a fairly wide vibrato to the total result.

There are a few tunes on the disc familiar to US ears, those being "Mood Indigo", "Under the Double Eagle", "The Very Thought of You", "Lucky Old Sun", a twenties medley and a US "down South" medley. So here's a chance to enjoy something different, a selection one might hear at a British theatre organ club meeting.

Side 1 is played by Charles Smitton with vocals by Miss Powell. After his signature, "Estrellita", he goes into a selection from the lively evergreen English musical, "Chu Chin Chow". Then it's Miss Powell's turn with "Love's Last Word is Spoken" a tune so familiar, but under another title ("Tell Me That You Love Me Tonight," perhaps?) Back to the organ for an agreeable "Girls Were Made to Love and Kiss" which solos the Clarion briefly. Then it's Miss Powell again with "Don't Be Cross", an overlong but polite put-down song followed by the organ and a waltz, "Lights of Vienna." Miss Powell closes her participation with "Always" (not the Irving Berlin tune), a love song performed in her sweet legitimate soprano which would seem to be more at home doing a Jeanette MacDonald operetta from a summer theatre stage.

Side 2 opens with Trevor Willetts' radio theme, "We'll All Go Riding on a Rainbow", then into that old circus favorite, "Under the Double Eagle" march. A well played Opera Medley includes a snatch of "Vesti la Giubba" from *Pagliacci*, highlights from *Carmen* and closes with a few majestic measures of Verdian grandeur. "Transatlantic Lullabye" is played in "stop time" and "Mood Indigo" gets a somewhat 1930's "intermission" style rhythmic going over with the tamborine doing some syncopating. Willetts' Twenties Medley includes "Wait 'til the Sun Shines Nellie", "In the Good Old Summer Time", and "I Want a Girl" played with Sidney Torch gusto and style of variations. Nice ballad work shows up on "Lucky Old Sun", one of Willetts' best tunes. Don't let a title such as "Debroy Sumers Medley" turn you off; as unlightening as it may be, it's a collection of US folk songs with a southern accent. Included are peppy renditions of "Dixie," "Camp-town Races," "Old Black Joe," "Swanee River" and - Ulp! - "Marching Through Georgia"! (Magnolialand

organists Randy Sauls, Millie Alexander and Bob Van Camp are hereby commissioned to pour an icy mint julep over Mr. Willetts' unhirsuted pate the first time he shows up in Richmond or Atlanta; meanwhile, we wish him a "Happy Guy Fawkes Day").

The organ sounds magnificent. It has been recorded in big hall "center of the balcony" perspective with no apparent loss of detail. Both organists lean to full combinations but there are some solo voices heard. Both men provide equally good entertainment, and there is nothing pedantic in their styles.

The novel jacket shows a representation of the Wurlitzer's stop rail with each stop key on the horseshoe clearly indicated.

Summary: A representative sample of the current British theatre organ scene.

- THE PLUG-IN CORNER -

THE SOUND OF RON WALLS, played on the Hammond X66 Ronson label No. RR-100, stereo. Available postpaid at \$5.50 from Hammond Organ Studios, 216 East Rowland, Covina, Calif. 91722.

Those who think they have heard everything a Hammond can do are in for a surprise. This is Ron Walls' first recording. We predict it will be one of many, and that somewhere along the line he will graduate to pipes. He has made the very versatile X66 his very own orchestra, with simulations of French Horn, Trombone, Oboe, Harp, Glockenspiel, Saxophone and many other instruments. He may not be aware of it but his arrangements cry for the richness and variety a pipe organ affords. Until then, there is much musical substance in this fine performance. His rhythm style is a



Ron Walls. He makes an X66 sound mighty attractive.

liting one, with varied and unpeated fillers, many changes of registration and some neatly fingered rolls. We never before heard an X66 sound so good and if Hammond doesn't hire him and put him on their circuit as a concert artist/demonstrator, they are missing a sure-fire opportunity.

Selections include "It's All Right With Me," "For Once in My Life," "By the Time I Get to Phoenix," "Gentle on my Mind," "Guantanamo," "Chattanooga Choo Choo", 5-tune medley from *Oliver* and "More."

ELECTRIFYING MISS JONES, Carol Jones playing the Rodgers model 340 in the Bill Thomson Studio, Woodland Hills, Calif. "Lift" label No. YA-3402, stereo. Available postpaid at \$5.50 from Young America Records, Box 84, Covina, Calif. 91703.

Carol Jones' first recording, "Have You Met Miss Jones?", played on a 2/12 WurliMorton was released three years ago. It was a real zinger, a fun record which did much to establish the then fledgling organist. Since then Carol has played pipe concerts in Detroit, Portland, Los Angeles and El Segundo (Calif.) on instruments never smaller than 20 ranks. The fine pipe technique she has developed has been carried over to the most pipe-like electronic, the Rodgers model 340. Her musical acumen and technique have grown considerably since her first record, as the arrangements on this release indicate. She can sound subtle, raucous, bouncy, jazzy, ballady or sexy with good control. She has mastered the Posthorn emphasis technique and uses the 340's Piano effectively. Her bi-peddalling was a sensation at the 1972 Home Organ Festival and some is evident here. It's a fine job of orchestral playing and some listeners just might be lulled into forgetting it's an electronic organ.

The only fault we can find is in the succession of tunes on side 2: three somber ones ("Summer of '42", "Speak Softly Love," and "Strange") in a row, although interestingly performed, are a bit depressing. But that's a picayune complaint. Recording is technically tops and the jacket boasts two photos of Miss Jones, who incidentally, is quite a dish.

Remaining tunes are "Together," "Venus", Bill Thomson's "Cool Pipes," "Mad About the Boy," "Quando Quando," and "Cabaret".



Carol Jones. Her pipe technique is applied effectively to the Rodgers model 340 for her current recording.

THE SOUND OF CONN, George Wright at the Conn 2-manual "Theatre" (643) and 3-manual "Theatrette" (580). Organized Sound label. No. 7-17,424-OSI, stereo. Available at Conn dealers. Price not quoted.

The old maestro is back, playing a concert on two fine plug-ins, an offshoot of his current association with Conn. This is, first of all, a



George Wright. — (Stufoto)

demonstration record, intended to show off the various attributes of the instruments. In this it succeeds admirably. But demo records have their limitations and the required merchandising of effects can't possibly leave the artist complete freedom of choice. Yet George comes off quite well in the dilemma. There's a lot of music in these grooves; even the Wright humor surfaces occasionally.

In his jacket notes George states, "It's a refreshing experience to step out of the murky cobwebs and dust of the theatre organ world and to enter the realistic sunshiny atmosphere of the 1970's." Does that mean that the man who, more than anyone else, through his recordings made current generations aware of the theatre pipe organ, has forsaken pipes? True, he avoids typical theatre organ registration on this record, resorting to Tibia choruses for only two selections, and instead emphasizing the offbeat novelty registration — which is the purpose of a demo record. Yet, somewhere along the line George makes it quite apparent that the Conn is one of the most theatrical of electronics.

He opens with a novelty tune written by Conn VP Bob Zadel, "Bridgin' the Gap," then a sentimental "She's Leaving Home" with lots of tinkly percussions; followed by a GW original in the best Keystone Kops tradition "Hurry Momma, the Cartoon's On." Next a serious "Pavanne" by Faure on Piano and Strings, then Bacharach's energetic "Bond Street" with much pitch warping and tinkles.

Side 2 opens with "My Music is Just for You" which includes a couple of Neanderthal grunts not on the Conn's stop complement, then an almost theatre organ version of "Misty" on Chrysoglott effect and finally some Tibia. George takes some discordant liberties with a hurdy-gurdied "La Spagnola", then a mod Bach interpretation of "Sleeper Awake". Beautiful Accordion/String and Tibia sounds on Jobim's "Meditation" and a grotesque interpretation of "Spinning Wheel" which somehow gets cross-faded into a carousel orchestration playing something else.

This set of tunes will hardly satisfy those who want only to hear T.O. stylings, but it's a fine example of George's versatility; he's a complex musician and this recording shows off another side of his musicality.