

he drew an audience of 1800 at the Rochester Auditorium Theatre for RTOS.

Karl is representative of the young talent which Essential Records is intent on promoting, just as the firm did for such artists as Lyn Larsen in the past. This platter indicates Essential has another budding winner. Other selections are "Charade," "I Got Rhythm," "Things I Love," "Love Me or Leave Me," "Lida Rose" and "Somebody Loves Me."

Tom Anderson's miking catches the full glory of a beloved instrument. There's often a wide variation in the volume level between tracks which probably occurred during dubbing but that doesn't mar the music.

**THE PHANTOM OF THE ORGAN, ERIK AT THE MONSTER CATACOMBS ORGAN.** Available at \$6.50 (plus 5% sales tax for Californians) postpaid from Electric Lemon Record Co., 7001 Franklin Ave., Hollywood, Calif. 90028.

This one defies description. Played by a "mystery" organist on a huge but unidentified instrument, it tries for the mood of the unmasking scene from the classic *Phantom of the Opera*. The jacket notes by horror movie chronicler Forrest J. Ackerman add to the puzzlement by giving off a suspiciously fictitious odor.



Erik

"They're a lot of malarkey" stated Electric Lemon's "Veep," Verne Langdon, when we asked for a clarification. He added, "The Phantom (Erik) is still alive. He's 103 years old and we flew him to Hollywood to make this

recording. He is staying at Grauman's Chinese and does his shopping in broad daylight at the Hollywood Ranch Market where no one seems to notice him." Big help!

But we can believe the organist is pushing 104 when he plays such compositions as "The Devil's Love," "Depression," and "Dementia Macabre," all of which (plus three others) just happen to be originals by Verne Langdon who also produced the record. The music is for the silent movie enthusiast who likes to either prolong a horror scene or repeat it over and over. Most of the music consists of lengthy slow-moving dirges, "misereres" and "threnodies." Registration is usually on the bombastic side with a thunderous pedal — just what one would expect a well-schooled phantom to be playing on a musty old tracker deep in the Paris catacombs (winded, no doubt, by power from a water-wheel in an adjacent sewer). But how long can that mood be sustained? For maybe 28:00 minutes? If one is a dyed-in-the-gore horror film music fan, yes.

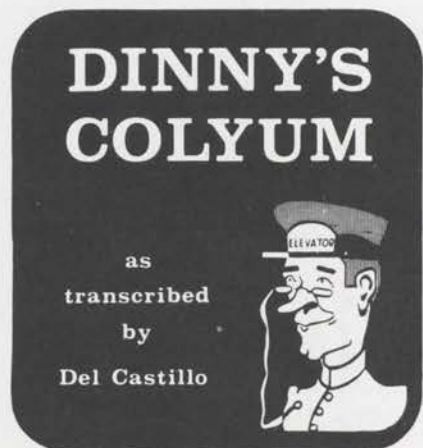
One 8:14 minute track breaks the music pattern by taking us on a sound effect trip to and under the Paris opera. We arrive in a horse-drawn carriage, then the buzz of voices in the lobby and the orchestra tuning up — then the chase: rapid footsteps in an echo chamber, dripping water, maniacal laughter, shots, splashes (catacombs always seem to have faulty plumbing) police whistles, a fist fight, splintering wood, creaking door opening, several uninspired screams and so on. Just improvise your own scenario.

Involved in the spoof is Electric Lemon's production chief, Milt Larsen, remembered for his still available "Smash Flops" album containing congratulatory songs for jobs well done to General Custer, Neville Chamberlain, Thomas Dewey, the Titanic and a Confederate victory song, among others. So this disc of elegiac trivia comes as no surprise. We can conceive an image of Milt and Verne with silly grins on their pans, conjuring up this 28:00 minute gag.

Trouble is, it's very apt to grow on one (like the "Blob"); for the second run through we turned up the volume of our reconverted Edison, installed a newly sharpened bamboo stylus, and allowed Erik's artistry, unhampered by polyphony, to crumple our asthmatic "woofers" and masticate the protesting

"tweeter." The mass of untrem'd minor chords piled up on one another to roof-raising climaxes. Yeeeeeay!!!!

When it was over and the last thunderous pedal grunt had died away we reached the conclusion that Erik's "style" was pretty much limited to what is in these grooves and we couldn't help but picture the consternation which might appear on that cadaverous visage should he find perhaps "Zing went the Strings of my Heart" on the rack of his cellar-bound 4-decker. But who cares? It's all in dirty, super-natural fun.



They is certainly a lot of different kinds of sounds comin out of organs than they was when I was a boy. The chief reason I remember about it is that I was a boy soprano in Boston in them days, and if they had ever been anything like a Pianny or Drums or Bells comin out of the organ in Emanuel Church where I sung the congregashun would of dropped dead of shock. I remember Mr. Hyde who was the quiremaster would oncet in a great wile cut loose with a couple chimes notes but mostly they was just that big full sound that I always got a kick out of in a church organ. I guess maybe they was a harp on the organ too, but I disremember ever a-hearin of it. I remember mostly how Mr. Hyde used to put on a pair of patent leather pumps to play the pedals better, and thats about as far as I ever got to knowin about a pump organ. Or about patent leather pumps, for that matter. I dont suppose you could even find a pair any more.

But then after I grew up was about the time theayter organs started to come in to play for the silent pitchers and we got to hear somethin entirely different. For one thing when the

theyater organ player opened up them swell shutters you could always hear the thumpy-thumpy-thumpy sound of them tremelents a-gooin lickerty split. And for another thing the combinashun of stops was either to pep up the emoshuns for love seens or to get you excited for chase seens or fite seens. And then lastly they had to have sounds in the organ to imitate the things that was happening in the pitcher, so we had drums and simbals and bells and thunder and cowbells and telyfone bells and auto horns and train wissels and all like that there.

So then when the electronick organs come on the market and people started buyin them to put in their homes, why of course they had to have the same things. So the electronick people they had to invent all them sounds and then they went on from them things the theyater organ players called the Toy Counter, and after they got sounds like the Wood Block and the Bongo and the Castanet and the Pianny and Mandolin and such like, they got together somethin they called a Rithm Master that you could play all kinds of rithms on so all you had to do was follow it, that is if you could keep up with it. And then finely they added this thing they call the Synthesizer which you can make all kinds of queer noises on, and by that time you could just about see old man Bach a-whirlin around in his grave.

But then they was another thing that happened. Somebody discovered that people like to eat Pizzas and hear a organ at the same time, so they started to buy the old theyater organs and put them in the Pizza Parlors. But then they decided that the people eatin the Pizzas would like to look at the organs too, so they put the pipes behind big glass windows with lites so's the folks could see where the musick was a-comin from. That wasnt so bad, but then they got the brite idea of puttin all them traps and drums and sleighbells out in the open so's the people could see them jigglin away.

So now when you go in to enjoy a Pizza you cant do it without getting your ears batted in by all these Zylo-phones and Bells and Drums slammin away so you cant scarcely hear what youre eatin. Now dont get me wrong. I've heard a lot of fine organ playing in Pizza Joints, but sometimes I kinda hanker for the good old days when a organ always sounded like a organ. □



## Hollywood Cavalcade

Directed by Lyle W. Nash

RALPH GRAVES was well and happy last month when he talked with us from his home, 474 N. Turnpike Road, in Santa Barbara, California. Film history shows that Graves was in films from about 1915 unwards and by 1918 was a contemporary of Gloria Swanson, Thomas Meighan and William S. Hart. Not too many remember that Graves had a major role in the first U.S. sound film produced by D.W. Griffith in 1921. It was called "Dream Street" and a better name might have been nightmare alley. It bombed.

LISTEN TO GRAVES: "I am feeling fine . . . Working on a play and two books . . . You know, I've been a writer all my life . . . I'd like to do a modern slam bang book on Paul Getty . . . Movies today bore the hell out of me . . . TV is not much better . . . Have lived up here nine years . . . Yes, I get fan mail now . . . More than in a long while . . . Young people write . . . They enclose non-flattering pictures for me to sign . . . I have six letters on my desk right now . . . I don't live much in the past . . . I have so much to get done . . . Come and see us when you are up this way."

GRAVES said he was 80 last birthday and sounded great.

"B MOVIES" by Don Miller (Curtis, \$15. \$1.50) is an excellent history of the golden age of the double bill when B movies pleased millions of fans. All you ever wanted to know about the B films. Choice reading.

SELECTED SHORTS — Beloved Mary Carr, 99, died in June . . . Myrna Loy, Alexis Smith, Rhonda Fleming and Kim Hunter are in the new Broadway edition of "The Women" . . . Pola Negri seemed happy when she socialized with Hollywood friends recently . . . MMMinter lost her big invasion of privacy suit against CBS . . . The Joan Blondell novel, "Center Door Fancy"

is most readable . . . Twenty-two year old Dick Powell, Jr. made his acting debut this spring in San Diego . . . Minna Gombell passed on at 81.

BOOK publishers are pondering how to "prove" that the Greta Garbo memories are from GG herself? No one wants to win the Second Clifford Irving Duplicity Award.

THEY REMEMBER — Junior Coghlan (now Commander Fran Coghlan, USNR) appeared in his first film as a baby and by 1921 had a part in the Leatrice Joy picture *Poverty of Riches*. For the next 25 years he played every role a young actor could imagine. Then he devoted 25 years to the Navy. Now he's a special events officer for the Port of Los Angeles. Frank got a big hand from a recent film fan convention in Houston. Fans recalled that Frank thrilled millions in the *Adventures of Captain Marvel* series. Friends may write him at 16036 Tupper St., Sepulveda, California, 91343.

EXPECT a very different point of view in a new film now in the making about the Assassination of President Kennedy.

MAYBE by this time next year the third version of "The Great Gatsby" will be on movie screens. First two were instantly forgettable. Fitzgerald estate got \$350,000. for screen rights — probably as much as author earned in his lifetime. Much of film about the U.S. Golden Twenties will be filmed in England.

COMMENTS and contributions are welcome. Mail to P.O. Box 113, Pasadena, California, 91102.