

nies of their contempt for our use of the tremulant, the Vox, and the Tibia, and our use of transcriptions of every kind of music, vocal or instrumental. Maybe everybody needs to feel superior once in a while, but we ought not to be haughty with organists who are making a living providing wholesome entertainment in social rooms that we had no chance of performing in long ago. A fine player can make any instrument sound good. I have listened to dozens of dreadfully bad church organists; I have heard some exceptionally good electronic organists. We can afford to be gracious to the electronics people; basically they are on our side.

As one grows older, values change and worldly aims become less imperative. Meanings get more elusive. One questions the worthwhileness of keeping up repertory and technique, of engaging in the competition for excellence and acclaim. There is ample justification for physical and psychic slow-down in one's later years. A little melancholy nostalgia might even be good for the nerves, but for a musician to give way to apathy or defeat at the loss of vitality or youth is to insult one's life-forces. We have often been told of people who retire and quickly decline; so our fourth wish is that all living organists of seasoned experience have continuing health and desire to pursue musical excellence, with opportunities to demonstrate that excellence.

Getting back to the theatre entrepreneurs, our (fifth) New Year's wish for them is more brains, less greed, better taste, cleaner minds, better showmanship, less TV competition, safer streets, better transportation and parking, and better-behaved customers. Then they might have a chance to assume a respectable place in American society and help keep us together as a nation. □



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.

A slap on the wrist to our printer for deleted words and typos in the October column. On page 25, first column, line 10, the second sentence should start "While this is a quite different application." Same page, second column, line 19 should read "if the Post Horn were used less." That "less" makes a world of difference in meaning. Same column, line 34, the line should start "a tremendous clam" (which is a musician's term for a clinker, sour note or dissonance, and hardly represented by the printed "calm.")

HOMECOMING – DON BAKER RETURNS TO THE BROOKLYN PARAMOUNT. No. CR 0113, stereo. Available at \$5.00 postpaid from Concert Recording, Box 531, Lynwood, Calif. 90262.

Much compressed air has passed through the regulators and chests since Don Baker's last previous pipe discs, "Sound Showcase" and "The Paramount Comes Down". After several years of concertizing for Conn (plus an occasional pipe date), the ex-N.Y. Paramount organist permitted the release of portions of a tape made during his concert at Long Island University gymnasium, which, as all aficionados know, is the former Brooklyn Paramount, complete with 4/26 Wurlitzer.

Don Baker is one organist who can make a large organ in live acoustics both swing and sing. His arrangements offer much variety in registration,



Don Baker is off the three-weeks-on-and-one-week-off concert circuit and is now the chief of the organ department at Music City, San Jose, Calif. Shown here in his main showroom, Don says, "I'm a happy man!" The instrument shown is a Conn 651. — (Stufoto)



Seasons Greetings


to all our friends
from

CRATOS

Cedar Rapids Area Theatre Organ Society

**Season's
Greetings**

TO ALL OUR
ATOS FRIENDS



Jason and the Old Prospector

tempo, dynamic levels and even in melodic embellishment. Most have been heard during his electronic organ tours, because Don's arrangements, once worked out, remain fairly constant (he writes them out in full detail, then memorizes them). Some have been recorded previously e.g. Theme from *The Apartment* and "The Continental," but never with more brilliance, drama, and verve. What a thrill to hear them played on a fine pipe organ by this master of theatre organ stylings!

The playing was done before an audience and we are all familiar with Don's preference for 3-tune (or more) medleys. Both conditions can pose technical problems.

Fortunately, the only noise from the humans is applause, which is quickly faded out. Fading into medleys between tunes is accomplished neatly, and there is no fading out before the end chord. Of course a recorded public performance does not permit the luxury of retakes and the resulting polish. Yet there's a certain live show vitality which balances the few rough spots.

Don takes all the time he needs to make his musical points (e.g. "Days of Wine and Roses" - 5:02 min.) except in the case of tunes arranged back in 78 rpm days; these run about 2:30 minutes to fit a 10 inch disc running about 3:00 minutes top. Yet Don invests 7:43 minutes in "Dancing in the Dark" coupled with "Buckle Down Winssocki," the latter with that curious intro and surround featuring ethereal fanfares Don often uses for big production numbers such as "Great Day" and "I Love a Parade." His Indian Medley ("Totem Tom-Tom," "Indian Summer," "Indian Love Call" and his gasser "Cherokee") runs 10:43 minutes. Other inclusions are a bright-eyed and bushy-tailed "Lover," a fast-paced "Chicago" and a strangely subdued "Little Orphan Annie," which leads us to believe Don was thinking more of the late Ben Hall than the redhaired cartoon moppet at the time he played the tune. Ben delighted in amusing ATOS audiences with his version of "Annie," and this just might be an unannounced tribute to him.

There are a few rough spots but recording is generally good. The organ, in its current basketball court acoustics, sounds wild and wonderful.

Welcome back to pipe recordings, Don!



Dick Smith. A mature performance.

THE VELVET SOUNDS OF DICK SMITH; played on the 3/10 Wurlitzer in Downers Grove High School (near Chicago) CFS-3249, stereo. Available at \$5.50 postpaid from Doug Christensen, 301 West Goebel Drive, Lombard, Illinois 60148.

Last time we witnessed a Dick Smith performance (several years ago) his console deportment tended to detract from the quality of his music. Dick seemed to be suffering from a case of adolescent diaper rash and his body english (which he then staunchly defended) while playing may have tended to draw attention away from his music. A previous so-so recording didn't help matters. So much for past impressions.

With this recording we must forget growing pains and acknowledge a much more mature musician. The jacket notes describe Dick as an entertainer. The evidence produced by this recording reinforces the claim. Besides being an entertainer Dick is emerging as an organist whose recorded work is to be taken seriously. Except for perhaps a little over use of the Crawford idiom, Dick's arrangements show much originality. Especially interesting are Dick's intros; they are subtle and generally set the mood for the selection.

Although the Harry James orchestra is credited with the inspiration for "Velvet Moon," Dick Smith's arrangement is pretty much his own. Vintage soap opera fans will enjoy the *One Man's Family* theme, "Patricia," and Crawford fans will approve Dick's treatment of "June Night."

The medium-size Wurlitzer responds beautifully and CATOE members are to be congratulated for their excellent transfer of the former Lima, Ohio

theatre organ to the high school auditorium.

"I Should Care" and a Crawfordesque "Kentucky Lullabye" continue the "late night broadcast" aura but the Side 1 closer is an upbeat "So Rare" on full combinations. Side 2 opens with another tune with strong "JC" overtones, "This is Heaven," and continues with a purely Dick Smith version of "Getting Sentimental Over You." "Wonderful One" seems slightly flawed because of melodic inaccuracies, which may actually be embellishment, of another treatment strongly influenced by Crawford.

Lush Tibias carry much of Dick's original "At Dawn", a striking composition in the theatre organ idiom. Less effective is Dick's closer, "In the Mood," mostly because it's a reminder of the less subtle Dick Smith of yesteryear - surface values played on usually full organ.

But that's a small point and is by far overshadowed by the dominant entertainment and musical values presented by a mature Dick Smith. The sound of a well-maintained Wurlitzer with excellent tonal qualities has been effectively captured. Our review pressing was pocked by some clicks in close proximity but that's most likely a one-pressing fault (we invariably get the noisy one). Packaging provides some notes on the instrument and organist. For some time we've wanted to say something nice about Dick Smith and this record provides the opportunity: we enjoyed it thoroughly. In these grooves he's quite a guy.



We have received many requests for information concerning the availability of the recording made by Eddie Dunstedter on the then Carl Greer Inn 4/15 Robert Morton organ in Sacramento. It was released several years ago and it is Eddie's most recent release. We have learned that there are a limited number of pressings available of "Eddie Dunstedter Plays Requests" and copies may be ordered postpaid at \$5.50 from Eddie Dunstedter, Box 1314, Salinas, Calif. 93901.

Coming . . .

"THE NOTE-ABLE NINETEENTH"

1974

NATIONAL CONVENTION

DETROIT - JULY 11-15



Lee Erwin. He had a date with "Little Mother."

LEE ERWIN PLAYS BEN HALL'S 'LITTLE MOTHER' WURLITZER. CR-0075, stereo. Available at \$5.00 postpaid from Concert Recording, Box 531, Lynwood, Calif. 90262.

Here's audible proof that a fine artist can conjure up very listenable music from only five ranks of pipes. Lee Erwin could record on any of the big ones but this challenge was something special — to preserve the sound of the late Ben Hall's style 150 home installation, and without gimmicking the sound with added reverb or other "enhancement." The result is a small organ delight. Remember, the style 150 Wurlitzer is only a Tibia away from that colorless 4-rank Style B, Wurlitzer's predecessor to the 2-1 Hammond! (excuse us, we "broke in" long ago on a particularly crude Style B). For this recording, Lee Erwin and Randy Gilberti did considerable touching up, tonally and otherwise.

Some of the selections are very reminiscent of Lee's WLW *Moon River* broadcast style, particularly "My Ship," "Just a Memory," "These Foolish Things," "Secret Love," "My Blue Heaven" and the two themes from his original score to the final Gloria Swanson silent, *Queen Kelly*. All are nicely phrased and played in languorous tempos.

The "Little Mother" (Hall's affectionate term contrasting his little Wurlitzer with the N.Y. Paramount's "Dowager Empress" or "Queen Mother") provides a satisfactory Tibia/Vox mix and a good Tuba. These voices dominate and Lee uses them with skill. Due to the size of the instrument (and not as much unification as one might expect), variety in registration is limited. Yet Lee never allows dullness to set in. One way is by

including some upbeat tunes with tonal percussions e.g. "Flapperette," "Tootsie Oodles" (an Erwin original), an entirely non-Crawford "What Are You Waiting For Mary?" and "El Condor Pasa." In the modern mode there's "Windmills of Your Mind." Although the record isn't intended as a tribute to Ben Hall, two of his favorites are included; "Little Orphan Annie" and "Just a Memory."

Producer Claud Beckam's jacket notes go far beyond the usual in presenting history, background and anecdotes about the instrument and tunes. The overall result shows what good results may be obtained from a small organ in good shape when played by an organist of Lee Erwin's stature.

The next time "Little Mother" sings, it will be a continent away from the site of this recording. It is scheduled for installation in the planned Ben Hall theatre on the Harold Lloyd estate in Beverly Hills, Calif.

A CHRISTMAS SUGGESTION

NOEL. Robert MacDonald at the organs of the Riverside church and United Palace Theatre in New York. Mir-

rosonic No. CS 7232, stereo. Available at \$5.50 postpaid from Riverside Church Records, 490 Riverside Drive, New York, N.Y. 10027.

Here is a Christmas program ably played on two organs which will be remembered by those who attended the ATOS, "fabulous fifteenth" convention in New York, the 4/208 Aeolian-Skinner in the Riverside Church and the 23-rank "Wonder Morton" in Reverend Ike's United Palace theatre-turned-church. The church organ is majestic and massive but never at the expense of clarity. The miking is good. Selections played on it are the traditional carols which sound well registered on classical voices. One off-beat selection is Purvis' "Carol Rhapsody." MacDonald, who is Associate Organist at the church, proves his capability of spreading Christmas cheer on theatrical pipes on the flip side which bears the more popular type Christmas music e.g. Anderson's "Sleigh Ride," "Let it Snow," "Home for the Holidays," the ubiquitous "Rudolph" (still rednosed), "Silver Bells," "Winter Wonderland," "Frosty" etc. The Morton sounds great and MacDonald handles it like a pop-oriented veteran.



Robert MacDonald at the 4/208 Aeolian-Skinner brings Christmas cheer.