

the floor caved in one week before the event when the blower shaft began slipping. This began a short period of the "doldrums" for Joe, who after suffering colossal disappointment and months of exhaustive labor, almost threw his hat in the ring.

Since that moment two years ago, the organ has been completely rebuilt. The straight chests were converted to unit chests for more versatility. At the start of summer 1974, permission was granted to install the Tellers permanently on the second floor of Gannon's former library in "The Commons", a cultural room dedicated to the arts. With the desire to have a genuine theatre organ, Joe retired the original three-manual Tellers, and bought a two-manual Marr and Colton horseshoe console, once painted fire-engine red and from a theatre in Wyandotte, Michigan.

The two-manual standard unified Marr and Colton console has six tremolos, five presets on each manual, main and solo swell shoes and a crescendo pedal. Nine of the 24 original Tellers ranks are split up into two separate pipe chambers, each 12 feet wide, 10 feet wide and 16 feet tall. Within the chambers the pipes are elevated on a floor four feet above the ground to leave a section underneath for the noisier switchstacks and relays. Each chamber is insulated with fiberglass and has masonite walls. The swell openings are each six by eight feet and employ the original Shea's shades, each with 12 shutters.

The main chamber contains the Salicional, VDO, Celeste and Flute. The solo chamber has the Tibia, Clarinet, Diapason, Vox Humana and Tuba. Joe plans to add the Cornopian, Gamba, Gamba Celeste, Open Diapason and Oboe Horn at a later date. Wind at five and six inches is supplied by Bobco blowers.

Joe's five year relationship with the Shea's Theatre organ will come officially into function early this winter. His one man persistence over the years vis-à-vis the Tellers, will bring pleasure to Gannon College students (an organ club is already in the offing) and to Erie citizens wanting a renaissance in theatre organ. Joe envisions his organ being used for background music for campus mass, weddings, parties, silent movies and for concerts by theatre organ musicians on circuit tour. The Gannon College officials are overwhelmingly pleased. After all, it is rare

of a man, even a maintenance man, to devote his time, energy and meager salary to an organ — and then give it away. Joe's generosity is based on the saying he mutters daily, "Even the little guy can do his share." □



*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.*

**ROSEBUD**, Lee Erwin playing the "Fox-Capitol Wurlitzer Pipe Organ." Angel No. S-36075 (also on cartridge and cassette tape). Available at music stores.

Ever since Burt Bacharach won an Academy Award with the most achronistically inept movie score we've

ever heard (modern jazz to background "Butch Cassidy & the Sundance Kid" — in the 1870's!), this reviewer has been suspicious of the whole "Oscar" nonsense, particularly when the excellent and descriptive Elmer Bernstein score for "True Grit" was largely ignored at that time. The Academy did it again this year by awarding arranger Marvin Hamlisch an "Oscar" for cueing "The Sting" with someone else's music. Yet we can be thankful to Hamlisch for rediscovering the talents of Scott Joplin, whose musical contributions to Musical Americana go far beyond the "rag".

Because the demand set by the popular film emphasizes "ragtime," the more mature works of Joplin (a ballet and two operas) must wait until the reborn "rag" craze subsides; for the moment the rags lead the popularity parade. Yet producer Patti Laursen has avoided a parade of rags, realizing their limited range and construction could produce an undesired monotony. So only six of the ten tracks are Joplin tunes, and these are not all rags. Lee has wisely drawn from the empathetic works of Kerry Mills, Eubie Blake and Harry Guy for variety and contrast. Joplin's tunes are *Rosebud* (a two-step), a group of *Original Rags*, *Solace* (a Mexican serenade), *Chrysanthemum* (an intermezzo), *Stop-Time Rag* and *Eugenia* (a slow march). Sandwiched between these gems are Mills' march, *Whistling Rufus*, Eubie Blake's *Chevy Chase*, Guy's *Echoes From the Snowball Club* and the familiar sounding *At a Georgia Camp Meeting*, a delightful two-step by Kerry Mills which sounds as though it should have been one of Stephen Foster's upbeat tunes.

Lee Erwin's performance of the tunes is most expressive. He avoids any



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hint of the "mechanical reproduction" style so often evident when ragtime is heard, and is generous with applications of expression. His choice of combinations does much to enhance the old tunes, which have both nostalgic and contemporary values. Miss Laursen advises us that *Rosebud* is developing into the more popular of the two platters Lee cut on Dick Kline's 4/28 composite Wurlitzer (the Washington DC Fox Capitol plus the Greenburg (Pa.) Manos theatre organs, and then some) at the same time he recorded *Sound of Silents* reviewed in the August issue. If one must make a choice, we prefer *Sound of Silents*, mainly because the film music contained is more our cup of julep than is ragtime; yet we must admit that Lee has done a masterful job of adapting piano-oriented ragtime stylings to the theatre organ.

Recording, as might be expected of quality-conscious Angel, is excellent and our review pressing has an extremely quiet surface. Jacket notes reveal much information about the composers and re-iterate Lee's bio. Good show, Angel!



Lee Erwin at Dick Kline's 4/28. 'Lee in rags.'  
(Angel Photo)



Jonas Nordwall.

(Nakaharapic)

**JONAS IN AUSTRALIA.** Jonas Nordwall playing the 4/21 Wurlitzer in Moorabbin Town Hall, Moorabbin, Victoria. Released by Gamba Records, No. JN-103 (stereo) Available at \$6.00 postpaid (add \$1.50 foreign) from Bill Peterson, 4993 S.E. 30th Ave. Apt. 98, Portland, Oregon 97202.

Jonas Nordwall is a fast-rising young organist, known to enthusiasts through his previous recordings, concerts, west coast Home Organ Festival appearances (for Rodgers) and stints at the Portland "Organ Grinder pizzeria." During a 15-concert 1974 Australian concert tour, Jonas somehow found time to record this album.

The instrument was moved from its original installation in the Melbourne State theatre to its permanent home in nearby Moorabbin Town Hall by the Theatre Organ Society of Australia in 1969, and, if this recording is exemplary, the group has done a remarkably good job. In its new home the 4/21 sounds massive in full ensemble and delicate in low-volume closeup perspective. The hall appears to have considerable natural reverb (unless echo was added later).

Jonas opens with an up-tempo *Music, Music, Music* which includes some beautifully executed fingered glissandos; continues with a somber and lovely *The Way We Were*, then to the tune of the hour, Joplin's *The Entertainer*. Next it's a somewhat simply played *In My Solitude* with a lively *Cracklin Rose* to close side I.

Side II opens with Dinicu's fast, furious and Roumanian *Hora Staccato* (sic) then goes into a *Jesus Christ Superstar* medley of four selections.

We've heard *Superstar* damned as sacrilege and praised as a worshipful masterpiece since it first appeared on US stages a few years ago. There's no denying the music is interesting even when divorced from its context, and some of Jonas' most enticing orchestration is reserved for the medley. *Herod's Song* gives the villain a burlesque comic's musical portrait. The arrangement and registration of *I Don't Know How To Love Him* are especially lovely. *Everything's All Right* and *Superstar* round out the selection.

Jonas' performances are topnotch throughout. The organ sounds good as recorded. Surface hiss is audible and there are a few more surface pops during soft passages than we've come to expect. There is one other "pressing" problem; on side I the inside cut comes extremely close to the record center. This so compresses the modulation that needle tracking (and distortion) may become a problem. In the case of our review pressing, there was a tendency for the stylus to jump grooves until we weighted the pickup head with a penny. Distortion remained minimum. Higher compliance pickups may not encounter this problem. All of this affects perhaps two minutes of one selection (*Cracklin' Rose*), so our complaint is a small one. In all, it's a well-done recording, with the playing quality being somewhat ahead of technical considerations.

**OPENING NIGHT,** Frank Rossi playing the Barton 3/10 plus in the Royal Oak (Michigan) theatre. No. MVX-1015 (stereo). Available postpaid at \$5.99 (add sales tax where applicable) from Multivox Productions, Box 2060, Fort Dearborn, Michigan 48123.

Although Frank Rossi is a new name on the national horizon, he is well known in his home area (Detroit) as a teacher and concert artist. He got interested in theatre organ by one of those lucky twists of fate; as a boy he mowed famed Don Miller's lawn and heard the maestro practicing. This album is dedicated to the memory of Don Miller.

The instrument is a 3/10 with some ranks added during the restoration by Motor City Chapter members. 1974 ATOS conventioners heard it played





Frank Rossi. Good first try.

by Rex Koury to accompany College.

Frank opens his program with an energetic and individual styling of Walter Donaldson's *You*, then changes to a reflective mood for an understated *Haunted Heart* with especially lovely strings featured. He takes a novel approach to Gershwin's *S'Wonderful*, too. After an intriguing and offbeat intro he plays the first chorus in ballad style, then the rhythmic chorus with a somewhat raucous Kinura dominating the registration. Side I closes with a Deep South medley full of the magnolias and moonlight which might cause a Millie Alexander to wave her confederate flag. Frank revitalizes such ancient chestnuts as *My Old Kentucky Home*, *Carry Me Back to Old Virginia* and *Beautiful Dreamer* with sometimes overlong but lovely harmonic treatments (get that pedal line during *Dreamer*). For some unexplained reason, this set is prefaced with an unrelated intro which is very reminiscent of Debussy's *Girl With the Flaxen Hair* (which probably accounts for our thought of Millie Alexander). Show tunes are represented by Cole Porter's *From This Moment On* and Richard Rodgers' *Blue Room*, played with imagination but no key changes. A best forgotten Irving Berlin tune entitled *Araby* (with frequency-pitch problems) is linked with *Blue Skies* which comes off better, then to a novel setting for *Dancing Tambourine* which brings in most of the pitched percussors. The closer is a slambang *Ritual Fire Dance*. For this one Frank plays all the notes but he doesn't seem to be as much at home in this idiom as he is while weaving tone clusters of rich harmony around ballad melodies. This recording indicates that Frank Rossi is a young man to watch; his initial recording reveals much promise, especially in arranging skills.

The organ sounds best when Frank is playing on solo, medium or light combinations. There is a certain harshness apparent during heavy registration which is not the fault of the recorders. We noticed it also "in person" during the convention show, a middle range roughness which an experienced voicer could make right.

The recording is well miked, but in dubbing some tracks came through in the grooves stronger than others. There is also a decided surface hiss on the review pressing throughout. These are not major faults and the opportunity to hear the fresh and different Rossi approach to the instrument minimizes them even more.

**50 SONGS OF RALPH CARMICHAEL**, played by Fred Bock on the Whitney Studio 4/34 Wurlitzer Morton. Two-record stereo set R3191 available from Heart-Warming Records, 1625 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn. 37202 (Box 2307, Vancouver, B.C. for Canadians). \$5.98 postpaid (2-record set).

It's been some time since we've received a recording played on Lorin Whitney's Glendale, Calif., studio organ, an instrument recorded by such greats as Don Baker, Ann Leaf, George Wright, Eddie Dunstetter, Jesse Crawford and Buddy Cole (in ensemble), to name a few.

Composer Ralph Carmichael has been a Hollywood studio pop arranger-conductor for many years,



Fred Bock. Holy but understandable.

having worked with many of the top recording stars, among them Nat "King" Cole, a cooperation which produced some of Cole's best sellers. There's another side to Ralph Carmichael; he's a deeply religious man. It comes quite naturally; he's the son and grandson of men of the cloth. During his lifetime he has composed scores of hymns, many of them touched by the pop music which is his profession.

Organist Fred Bock has collected and arranged fifty of Carmichael's hymns for mainly theatre organ style presentation. Although Bock is a church organist, there's nothing missing from his pop touch. Those who enjoy the Brad Braley-Irma Glen-Lorin Whitney-Paul Mickelson style of playing sacred music with theatre organ registration and phrasing will enjoy the playing of Fred Bock; his variety of registration is a joy. Because the tunes are totally unfamiliar (unless one is a Carmichael addict), there is little in the music or its presentation to identify it as sacred music. So, listeners who can't stand hymn tunes played pop style, or who don't like hymns period, can listen to this two-record set simply as theatre organ music. The selections are uncomplicated (although Fred's harmony is often complex) and Fred makes full use of the 4/34's array of voices. To get all 50 tunes on four sides, Fred had to keep selections short. His editing has been done with taste; he gives the most time to the most interesting tunes. Those who think this type of thing may add up to Dullsville underestimate the quality of Carmichael's compositions and Bock's talent for making them interesting. While some may prefer to think of them as silent film cues (which many of them could be), for listeners who like hymns, here are 50 new and different ones. The words for every tune are printed on the jacket.

Fred Bock is fairly new to the theatre organ scene but he's been associated with music all his life. More than 300 of his compositions have been published, and, like Ralph Carmichael, he arranges music for records, TV and movies. He's also president of Gentry Publications and holds offices with ASCAP and the Choral Conductors' Guild. We look forward to reviewing his first pop organ record, which hasn't been miked yet.

Recording of the Carmichael tunes is first rate. And the price is right.



## CHRISTMAS RECORD

**I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS**, Bill Langford playing the 3/13 mostly-Wurlitzer in Ye Olde Pizza Joynt, San Lorenzo, Calif. No. DO 1407, stereo. Available at \$5.95 post-paid from Doric Records, Box 282, Monterey, Calif. 93940.

This collection of nineteen Christmas tunes arrived too late for a complete review, but a single hearing makes nothing but good impressions. Bill Langford has been the staffer at the grand daddy of all pizzerias for many years and he knows his instrument cold. His musicianship is first rate. He also rates an "A" for the imagination demonstrated in the treatments of the yule tunes. Most amazing of all is the miking of an instrument with its percussions spread all over the walls and ceiling, some pipework, too. Recorder Frank Killinger has somehow made a rather tight and compact installation come through in big hall perspective. As for the selection of tunes, all the old chestnuts are there, both the popular standards and the traditional ones. However, it's not so much the material as it is Bill Langford's arrangements. He extracts a lot of variety from a well-balanced 3/13.

### — THE PLUG-IN CORNER —

**FROM THE TOP**, Don Lee Ellis playing the Hammond Concorde. Stereo DLP-1504. Available at \$5.50 postpaid from Don Lee Productions, Box EH, Garden Grove, Calif. 92642.

Those who attended the 1968 ATOS convention will recall the young man who entertained at the then new Hammond X66 during the banquet held in Cocoanut Grove of the Los Angeles Ambassador hotel. Don had the "git up and go" to face that mob of pipe lovers with a mere Hammond, and he acquitted himself well. We've learned much about Don Lee since then, particularly that he is always ready to expand his musical horizons. Perhaps that explains why he sought and got a pipe concert, playing for the LA chapter of ATOS on the 4/37 Kimball in the Wiltern theatre early this year. It was well received, as was his concert at the 1974 Home Organ Festival.



C.A.J. Parmentier, Ray Bohr and Leroy Lewis discuss the Salute to Ray Bohr held at the Radio City Music Hall November 10, celebrating Ray's 27th anniversary at the Music Hall. Ray is a Charter Member of ATOS.  
(Victor Parmentier Photo)

Here, Don Lee is right at home, entertaining on a Hammond. Because he is also a talented vocalist, one side of this disc is devoted to vocal solos with the organist accompanying himself for *Help Me Make it Through the Night*, *For the Good Times*, *Sunny*,



Don Lee Ellis

*Playground in My Mind* and *Misty*.

The other side is purely instrumental and Don Lee quickly establishes himself as able in the jazz variations dept. He makes effective use of the Concorde's battery of re-iterators without letting them dominate. Phrasing is good and he uses most all of the registration possibilities on the instrument, including realistic tonal percussion effects. Most of the time he is a very sensitive player but occasionally he lets things slip into those 1940's "Ethel Smith syndrome" effects for momentary "flash," which we predict Don Lee will outgrow.

Instrumental tunes are *Cabaret*, *Yellow Days* (with automatic rhythm), *Long Ago and Far Away*, a *Satin Doll* with intriguing melodic variations, a haunting *Stella by Starlight* and a sometimes Boogie-Woogie *St. Louis Blues* with ear-catching "rides." The pedal line has interesting patterns throughout the side. Good pop entertainment values. □