

DINNY'S COLYUM

as
transcribed
by
Del Castillo



I been takin some organ lessons lately and I think its about time for me to show off on what I know. I couldn't afford to go to a top teacher, but I found a woman who was a piano player and way back when they had the silent pitchers she had a job in a little move theyter, so you can see she had experience, and so I thought well if she could do that she ought to know enough to teach me about playin pitchers on the organ, on acct. it couldnt be such an awful lot difrent, espeshally at 3.50 a lesson. So when I went to her studio for the first lesson I told her what I wanted and she said sure she could teach me the organ and how to play for the pitchers.

She had a cute little organ she had bought from Sears or Montgomery Ward or one of them places and it had a couple of keyboards only they wasn't lined up with each other and about a dozen pedal keys, and then it had a gadget where you could press a key that said Tango or Rumba or March and it would start to beat out the sounds that go with them kinds of music. So she said can you read music and I says yes I can read the right hand part so long as they is only one note at a time and she says allright play me somethin and so I sat down and played Long Long Ago and I thought I played it pretty good except where it goes up an extry note where I always have to put my fourth finger over my little finger and when I got through she says where did you get them cords and I says why I just thunk them up and she says well I can see I got my work cut out for me.

So then she says playin cords is easy if you know where the letters is on the keyboards and I say O yes I know them allright I know how to find C because it is just to the left of

the two black keys and then I can count up on the alphabet to find the other ones and she says OK then all you have to do is put your indes finger on the letter it says for the cord and then if you put your thum and your little pinkie down at the same time you got your cord and so I tried it and sure rnough it was a good soundin cord. And so then she showed me how I could play an F cord and a G cord and then she says now play Long Long Ago again and I will tell you which cord to hit, and so I did and it come out fine.

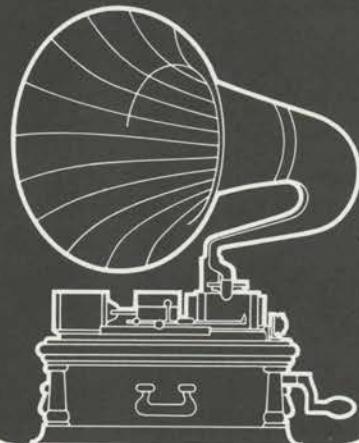
And so then I says can I play anything that way and she says yes just about anything you can play a B diminish and a D miner and a E miner and a A miner. So then I says how about the pedals are you goin to show me them too and she says I dont have to show you them because you just put your foot on the same note as the name of the cord and I says yes but will I know if I hit the right note and she say why just look down and you can see if your foot is in the right place because the pedals is made up with black keys just like the hands.

So then I says well how about the black keys what are they for, do I get to play them too and she says well not for awhile yet. And I says O I bet I know those are what they call sharps and flats but how do you know which is which and she says well to play a flat you play the black key just to the left. And so I tried a few and I could see that seemed to work OK except when I got to F they wasn't any black key to go to and I says how do I play F flat and she says O you dont have to bother with them you only play a flat when you got a black key to the left of it and you only play a sharp when you got a black key to the right of it, \$3.50 please.

So she sold me a book for \$2.50 and I thought to myself if she's goin to do that very often I'll have to quit because that meant I had to shell out six bucks for the lesson, but anyways I took the book home and I got along pretty good. So I thought well they is some peaces I wanted to learn that aint in this book like Close To You and We Only Just Begun, so I went into a music store and shot a couple more bucks gettin them two peaces and took em home and was I in a peck of trouble. They was full of cords like Bb maj7 and Cbmai7 — that was the one she said you dont have to bother

with. So I threw away one peace and tried the next one which was all full of Ebs and Bbs and I went rite to the telephone and I told her what a mess I was in and she says well you cant learn everything in one lesson, so when you come back next week I'll show you how to play the cords that has black notes. So I guess maybe there is still some things I dont know about the organ and how to play for pitchers. □

For The Records



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.

FACES OF THE FUTURE, three youthful British organists playing the Wurlitzer organs in the Manchester (England) Odeon and Gaumont theatres. Indigo label, No. IRL 5213 (stereo). Available at \$6.49 postpaid (check or money order) by airmail from the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust. Send order to Mr. Tom Herd, Amsel Cottage, 19 Coupe Green, Hoghton, Preston, Lancs., England.

Like all worthy theatre organ hobby clubs, the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust is interested in encouraging young talent. This recording is a showcase for three promising young musicians. 22-year-old Peter Jebson has been heard to good advantage on an L.T.O.T. disc, "Side by Side," pre-



Michael Thomson



Peter Jebson



Nigel Ogden

viously reviewed in this column. Peter's one-third of the total grooves provides a welcome encore. His musicianship is tops, his registration varied, and his program has enough offbeat material mixed with the familiar to maintain interest. He gets into a little registration trouble during the first part of his "Merry Widow" medley (the mutations seem to "solo"), one of those flaws a microphone will seek out while the balance seems okay at the console. However, this runs for only a few measures. "Over the Rainbow" is given a novel treatment. A pop medley includes "When You're Smiling," "For Me and My Gal," "You Made Me Love You" and "Keep Right on to the End of the Road," all performed with youthful intensity and a skill which belies Peter's years. He opens and closes his program with his lively broadcast theme, "Theatreland." The most interesting tune for this reviewer is "Calling All Workers," a striking war-time march by that neglected dean of British light music composers, Eric Coates. In brief, it's a thriller, especially for World War II radio listeners who tuned in to the BBC during the dark days of that conflict. There's something of the British will to win in the composition and Peter Jebson brings it out — even though he was born long after the meaningful days of the tune. Coates is much better known for his "Knightsbridge March," but the defiance evident in his "Dam Busters March" is worth remembering.

Peter Jebson's selections are played on the Gaumont 4/14 Wurlitzer. Top Drawer!

Michael Thomson is 24, and it might be said he has the most "USA-oriented" style of the trio. Not that he's in the least imitative; his musical ideas are individual, but one gets the impression that he has listened to

many organ records from the "colonies." His tunes are played on the Odeon 4/20 Wurlitzer. Michael is a smooth player whose specialty is variety in registration. Solo voices and attractive mixes are especially standout in "Begin the Beguine." After opening with his broadcast theme, "Music in May," Michael sails into a lively "Buttons and Bows." Lehar's "Oh Maiden, My Maiden" is played more formally but as attractively, and Michael's "Snake Charmer" alternates between a sinuous belly dance and a swingband blast; the oboe'd "bum-tiddly, bum tiddy" contrasted with the extroverted beat of big band brass. He goes to the '20s for his lively closing medley, a bouncing "Charleston" (complete with solo "rides"), "I Wonder Where My Baby is Tonight," and "Black Bottom" — all played as one might remember them from the '20s records of say, Irving Aronson's Commanders, Ted Weems orchestra or (early) Waring's Pennsylvanians. It's a very professionally played set, and most enjoyable.

Nigel Ogden was 18 when he recorded these selections on the Manchester 4/14 Wurlitzer. He's the only one of the three who explores brief "trem off" effects. His radio theme (all three broadcast from Radio Manchester) is "Those Were the Days," then into a lively "Manhattan Beach March." A novelty tune, "Grasshoppers' Dance," delves into the organ's percussives and sounds the most like silent film music of all the music on the disc. Nigel's "Rhythm Medley" includes a brightly-played "I've Got Rhythm," the "Lady is a Tramp," and "Five Foot Two," all done with much registration expertise and up-tempo zeal. The closer is an emotional "Last Waltz."

It would be difficult to pick a

"favorite" from these three; they all have different ways of saying things musically, and all are worth the listening. The T.O. heritage is safe in the hands of such "comers."

We would like to offer a suggestion concerning the liner notes to L.T.O.T. For some reason the selections are listed along with their publishers, rather than the composers or song writers. Who, among auditioners, is curious about publishers? And, in view of the fact that the records are intended also for export, some background on selections apt to be new to overseas ears would enhance the value of the music. Take "Calling All Workers," for example. During the unpleasantness with our now staunch allies, the Germans, the writer's unit, stationed in Italy, had an elaborate radio setup. We were often visited by groups of tense British troops from nearby units, asking us to tune in "the bloody BBC" at 1000 hours, usually on mornings after the "jerries" had bombed London. Promptly at 10:00 A.M. came the censored news with no mention of the air raids, followed by the daily "Music While You Work" program, with its cheerful theme, "Calling All Workers," a direct broadcast played either by the BBC studio orchestra or by an organist. The minute the music started there was a sigh of relief audible from the Britons: "The BBC is still perking. It's old Sandy MacPherson, bless 'im. I figures we've still got an England if Sandy can still play like that for us blokes over 'ere." So, there's a story behind "Calling All Workers."

It would seem that such liner note color would help enhance the "export" tunes, smoothing their way toward acceptance by the uninitiated. So, this is a plea for more informative liner notes, beyond promoting the

artists, the Trust and Radio Manchester. We "furriners" want to know more about your music, Britain.

But our carping about liner notes in no way diminishes the excellence of the three performances. This one's a "goodie."

NEW ENGLAND RAGTIME, Don Thompson playing the 3/10 Marr & Colton organ in the Thomaston Opera House (Connecticut). No. CR-0129 (stereo). Available postpaid at \$5.00 from Concert Recording, Box 531, Lynwood, Calif. 90262.

This recording represents a triumph of men over adversity, the latter including a 100° F temperature, 85 percent humidity and a thunderstorm, according to Don Thompson, who writes, "There was no air conditioning and it was a losing battle to keep everything in tune. Allen Miller was recording engineer, tuner and voicer. At times he became just a blur as he dashed between recorder and chambers."

Little of these travails are evident in the finished product, except where the pipework is somewhat out of tune with the fixed pitch percussions and even the piano, which isn't all bad in a honky tonk piano. Don romps through over two dozen hits of yesterday, giving most of the rhythm tunes a breezy ragtime treatment. Included are "No No Nanette" medley, "Jeepers Creepers," "Lullabye of Broadway," "Lulu's Back in Town," "Cecilia," "Sometimes I'm Happy," "Hard Hearted Hannah," "Singin' in the Rain" (complete with counter melody), "Broadway Melody," "I Double Dare You," an "Ooh-hoo Tibia'd" "Shadow Waltz," "Margie," "Avalon" and a score more of mostly toe-tappers from the past. There's the expected Thompson exuberance in Don's performance; he's obviously enjoying himself despite the rough working conditions, thusly described by one observer: "Organist and crew, stripped to their shorts, lathered in sweat and frazzled in temper, worked for thirteen hours to get one acceptable hour of tape."

This one will please Don's many fans through its bouncy drive. No attempt is made in the direction of subtlety; the jacket notes proclaim it a record "unashamedly aimed at the man in the street who likes a recog-



Don Thompson

nizable tune and a good swingy rhythm." In these areas, Don is very successful. That he neglects harmonic variety in an effort to keep things simple is excusable within the parameters he sets. The arrangements are all Don's and he sometimes toys slyly with melodic lines, just for fun. He's at his best when beating out the raunchy blues and rhythm tunes.

The recording takes advantage of the big hall sound of the revitalized opera house.

OUT OF A DREAM, Lyn Larsen playing the Thomaston Opera House 3/10 Marr and Colton organ. No. GA-1071 (stereo). Available postpaid at \$5.00 from Allen Associates, 5 South Street, Plymouth, Connecticut 06782.

Same organ, different player. Totally different result. Here the instrument provides a palette for the subtle tone colors and sophisticated arrange-



Lyn Larsen - (Stufoto)

ments associated with the Lyn Larsen style, except when he's cornhusking "Rubber Duckie" with Kinura'd honks. Where Don Thompson used the organ for the often staccato "ragtime" style, Lyn makes it soar, especially during his emotional ballads (e.g. "Sonny Boy").

The versatility of this particular Marr and Colton must be due to the TLC administered by ATOSers John Angevine, Jack Roberg and Peter Piliero and other crew members, because the M&C, as originally conceived, was not a particularly versatile organ. Most had one trem per chamber and the preponderance of solo voices often precluded a good ensemble sound. Yet, the Thomaston organ has a fine ensemble sound while solo voices remain distinctive.

Lyn opens with a driving "You," a fitting "console up" tune. His grouping of "Student Prince" melodies is pure joy. He steals a little of Don Thompson's stuff during "Old Piano Roll Blues," but even in the midst of corn his approach remains suave, if that's the correct word. His arrangements reveal a beautiful string ensemble which Lyn solos briefly several times. The pedal is particularly impressive with its four 16-footers (including a rare Violone). Particularly interesting is the way Lyn fakes a Posthorn by topping a brassy combination with that raucous M&C Kinura, the squawkiest ever. The distinctive M&C Tibia and Vox are given full reign for "Sonny Boy," during which Lyn takes some perhaps intentional liberties with the melody line, minor ones which don't interfere with the tune's tear-wrenching qualities.

In Lyn's hands, the organ shows a tremendous dynamic range which is apparent in "How Great Thou Art". It starts as a whisper and gradually swells to a full combination near the end. And Lyn uses the traps well, as during "Love Me or Leave Me" with its brush cymbal and back beat snare drum punctuation. A soaring Tuba introduces Lyn's original ballad, "There's a Place in My Heart For You," which is followed by a rhythmic "Me, Too," during which one may hear that well-worn Crawford "fill." Lyn's one bow to the "mod scene" is "Something," which features some luscious String/mutation combinations as well as brief solos on Clarion and then on Clarinet. The strings at the

end are gorgeous. The piano is used effectively to sharpen "Tarantella," played in a tempo lively enough to start any paesano toe-tapping, Italian or otherwise.

Lyn's closer is "You Stepped Out of a Dream," played in understated beguine rhythm on very spare and beautiful registration.

This recording marks a good start for a new organ record company, Allen Associates, backed by Glenn L. Allen and Allen R. Miller. The jacket notes are informative and provide a stoplist of the Marr and Colton. But best of all, this record was made while the organ was in tune.

THE CLASSIC ORGAN NICHE

THE GRAND COURT ORGAN, Keith Chapman playing the organ in the John Wanamaker store, Philadelphia. No. SC 1685 (stereo). Available at \$6.00 postpaid from Stentorian Records, Box 1945, Philadelphia, Penna. 19105.

Keith Chapman is the staff organist at the Wanamaker store. Judging from the content of his initial recording he has made a study of the giant instrument's facilities like no one since the late Charles M. Courboin, who played it many years ago. The recording technique is superior to that used for the Virgil Fox Command label recording of the same organ released a few years ago, where less careful mixing muddied up the ensemble sound and lost some of the music's inner voices, despite a fine performance by Mr. Fox. It's a difficult organ to record, with chambers located on seven floors around the store's court well, and a 6-manual console which is 150 feet from the most distant pipework. Paul Strickler's jacket notes claim 469 ranks; our records say 451, with 129 ranks of strings alone. "They'd cut a man standing in the string chamber in two — if all played at once," the late Leonard MacClain once told us. He knew the instrument very well.

Youthful Keith Chapman offers an ambitious program which caters most often to those who like their serious music to be dramatic. The opener is Cesar Franck's "Pièce Héroïque," a familiar "romantic" concert piece, during which there isn't a dull moment. It's turbulent music, played for full dramatic effect. In contrast, Handel's "Allegro" from his "Con-



Keith Chapman at the Wanamaker Store console.

certo No. 4" is light music in its polyphonic ornamentation. Vierne's "Andante" from his "Organ Symphony No. 1" might be classed as "contemplative" music; it features choruses of gorgeous strings in an ever-changing harmonic pattern. Jongen's "Chorale" is the big cathedral sound at its best. Ever-modulating chord clusters provide the interest. The composition builds in volume and intensity from a whisper to end in a blaze of glory. "Petite Cloches" is one of Richard Purvis' minor efforts but one with great charm. It features the organ's percussions — "little bells."

The closer is that fine old concert chestnut, Leon Boellman's "Gothic Suite." Its four movements run the emotional gamut of perhaps the "William Tell Overture," ranging from the bucolic to something resembling silent movie "hurry" music — pure drama.

The musical tasks the organist has undertaken are not light ones. Yet, he manages them all with the confidence born of practiced skill. What he has to say musically will be of interest to theatre organ enthusiasts as well as to what are called "straight organ" boosters. In fact, in the time this takes to hit print, Keith Chapman will have played two theatre organ concerts.

In checking out such a recording we always dig into our supply of Dupre, Cochereau, Widor, Schweitzer (on old '78s) and Richard Ellsasser, to find points for comparison. We found many differences and likenesses, and

as we listened we realized that no one has yet come on the scene with the special qualifications of the late Ellsasser, who was a theatre organ enthusiast (he recorded for MGM) as well as being a master of the classics. While listening to the "head 'em off at the pass" dramatic quality of the "Gothic Suite's Toccata," the idea materialized that perhaps Keith Chapman, well founded in organ classics and a lively interest in the theatre organ genre — well, time will tell.

- THE PLUG-IN CORNER -

LOVE STORY, Tommy Stark playing the Gulbransen "Premiere" model. No. USR 3177 (stereo). Available at \$5.50 postpaid from Southland Music Center, 3459 Imperial Avenue, Lemon Grove, Calif. 92045.



Tommy Stark

The organist is a promising young musician with an involvement with pipes as well as the electronics he sells in his southern California music store. The instrument sounds advantageously "doctored"; no "Premiere" we've had access to has had the big, full ensemble sound heard here, nor the fine Tibia of Gulbransen's late, lamented "Rialto" model. Tommy made a solidly plus impression during the 1973 Home Organ Festival at Asilomar, Calif., playing an instrument which sounded very much like the one heard here. The selections, mostly contemporary tunes, are aimed toward youthful listeners: "If My Friends Could See Me Now," "Cabaret," "Shadow of Your Smile," "Wave," "Love Story," "Sunny," "Night Train" (with the usual steamy "choo-choo" effects),

"Listen to the Warm," "One Less Bell to Answer," "Nana Boogie," "Look of Love," and "Here, There and Everywhere." His approach to the music is vigorous and crisp, and his arrangements indicate a style which might foretell a future pipe release, if he can only control a tendency to "schmear" occasionally. He makes the most of the Premiere's "wah-wah," reverb, banjo, repeater traps, piano and other percussions. The strings, never a Gulbransen strong point on past models, are clean and scintillating as heard here. The ensemble sound is attractive and the Tibia sound passable. Tommy knows how to use the available voices and effects to their best advantage. Recording is good; the pressing modulation is at a very high level but even so, distortion is kept to a minimum. □



Letters to the Editor concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are encouraged. Send them to the editor concerned. Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.

*Address: P.O. Box 1314
Salinas, Calif. 93901*

Dear Sir: —

In my travels as an entertainer, I have discovered a dormant Moller 4 manual pipe organ, "ripe for restoration" . . . it is installed in the Veteran's Coliseum in Evansville, Indiana, installed 1918, and not having been played in 15 years.

It appears sound, undamaged, dry, and the console covered to protect it from sports activities in the building.

The organ is not for sale, but the Veteran's are anxious to have it playing, and I feel this fine big organ would make a good project for some ambitious ATOS members in that lively city. I informed the directors that if the organ were put in playing condition, the ATOS would expect use

of it for concerts.

I was told quite a few people have made offers to buy the organ, but were refused. However, this Coliseum is quite old, eventually to be demolished, quite probable that whoever restores the Moller would have first choice in purchasing.

Vic Hyde
COZATT 4/14
Niles, Michigan

Dear Editor,

I was happy to read of the renewed interest in the State Cinema Wurlitzer of Springfield, Ohio. Mr. Cowley's efforts in the restoration of this fine instrument are to be praised and encouraged. His article sums up the history of this instrument quite well with the addition that follows. The organ did receive major work after the 1963 water damage — this was in the fall of 1971 in preparation of my four night presentation of *Phantom of the Opera*. The organ was restored to good playing condition by Mr. Tom Ferree from Indianapolis, Indiana. He located the instrument, performed extensive repairs and arranged the silent film presentation. A subsequent series featured Lee Erwin accompanying another silent film feature. Mr. Ferree's efforts should not be overlooked in the history of the State Wurlitzer.

Sincerely yours,
Dennis James

Dear Sir:

Seemingly, the biggest problem for ATOS is *communication*. This is a problem which I believe is caused not only by chapter officers and boards, but also by the individual members.

During my years as chairman of Sierra Chapter, it was necessary to correspond frequently with members all over the country. Much of said correspondence was of a nature to require prompt answers, but unfortunately relatively few letters ever received a quick response. Even letters written to those running THEATRE ORGAN classified ads frequently received slow, or no answers at all. On the other hand, there were many members and officials who were most considerate and prompt.

An organization, such as our's, that is spread across the entire country, must depend on correspondence to exist. I realize that often changes of address — especially in the case of

changing officers — are a cause of delayed mail. I also know that many people hesitate to answer mail simply because they do not want to become involved in an exchange of letters and personal correspondence; however, it is a simple matter in such cases to merely state that one does not want to become involved. A letter I wrote to one of our leading organists, brought a very prompt and cordial reply, and ended with the simple statement that he enjoyed hearing from me but did not have the time to become involved in further correspondence. I was not offended, since I too was not interested in prolonged correspondence.

It seems to me that one of the prime considerations for each chapter in the selection of officers, should be whether or not those officers will have the necessary time to devote to *prompt* correspondence with other members. As to the individual members, it takes but a few minutes to reply to most letters, and if you do not wish to correspond further, say so in a nice way. There may be a few who will feel offended, but most will understand.

Let's all start 1974 by resolving to answer all ATOS correspondence as promptly as possible. This could be the answer to many of our problems.

Bob Longfield,
past chairman,
Sierra Chapter

New Console Coming

The Grant Joint Union High School governing body accepted the bid of Balcom and Vaughn to replace the console. It is estimated 15 months will be required for the job. See "Fire" in the February, 1974 issue of "THEATRE ORGAN".

DETROIT '74

Crank up the ol' horseless,
pack the little woman and
the kids in the back, and
take that cruise to the 1974 con-
vention. This is Detroit—you can
leave the nag behind.