

# Loyola College Given Organ

by Bert Brouillon

A new organ installation, available for public and private concerts on a rental basis, was unveiled in mid-November at Loyola College in Los Angeles, with J. Edward Himes (formerly known as Jay Himes) playing the kickoff concert. The instrument is the 3/10 Wurlitzer which was for many years in the home of "Bud" Wittenberg, one of the pioneer organ hobbyists. The instrument had been in Bud's home for well over a dozen years, and was recorded long ago by a then budding organist named Bill Thomson. When Bud decided to move to smaller quarters he had to find a home for the organ which had served him so well for so long. He found a willing collaborator in Father Richard Trame at Loyola. In fact, an auditorium was in the planning stage and plans were changed to accommodate the two chambers and auditorium acoustics required to best accommodate a pipe organ.

First nighters entered the auditorium of St. Roberts Hall, a room about 80' x 80' with an 18' ceiling. Jagged wall projections on the upper portions of the side walls insure against the "standing waves" so injurious to organ sound.

The Solo Division has been installed in a backstage chamber which dis-

perses sound through swell shutters well above audience level on the right side of the hall (facing the stage) while the Main is in a similar "upper story" chamber on the left side of the hall. The ebony console is on a dolly on the stage. Camp chairs arranged in rows on the level floor provided seating.

J. Edward Himes gave a creditable performance of pops and standards, and a Tchaikowsky-studded accompaniment of film highlights from Chaney's Phantom of the Opera. Himes was laboring against the handicap of an unfinished installation which might be summed up as an instrument voiced too loud for the room and with tremors very much in need of fine adjustment, which will be done, the audience was assured.

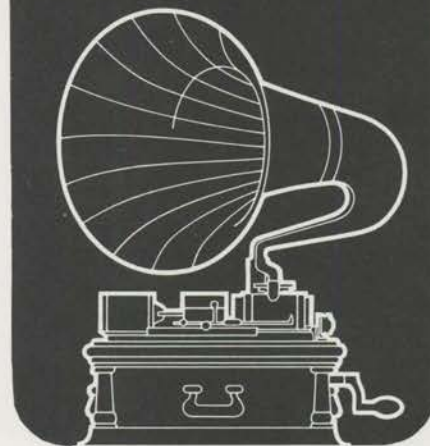
Such critical niceties cast no gloom over the premiere audience; here was another organ in the Los Angeles area, a reason for rejoicing. Commentary was handled effectively by Dick Martin who supervised the installation. He revealed that plans include a 5-manual replacement console, a synthesizer to accommodate "mod" music and perhaps ten more ranks of pipes. Expansion depends entirely on the income from concerts and auditorium rentals, so Fr. Trame welcomes all inquiries. □

J. Edward Himes at the Loyola 3/10 Wurlitzer console.

(Stufoto)



## 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.*

**JIMMIE BOYCE PLAYS THE WOODY WISE GRANDE BARTON.** Mark label No. MC 8494 (stereo). \$5.98 postpaid from JBP Recording Associates, 6516 Haystack Rd., Alexandria, Va. 22310.

All who attended the 1972 ATOS convention will remember the 3/11 Barton in the Virginia theatre, Alexandria, Va., with either joy or misgivings, depending on the ambient temperature. The Barton was kind to some organists, brutal to others. A very temperamental organ, especially in the heat of summer and with no air conditioning. But at that time we never did hear the 3/11 in the hands of Jimmy Boyce (the uncredited staffer). Of course, at that convention he did his stuff on the unenclosed 4/34 Wurlitzer in the Alexandria roller rink (it was originally in the Center theatre, the sister theatre to RCMH in New York).

This Barton has one advantage Jimmy's huge Wurlitzer lacks — expression. Even so, Jimmy is so in the habit of getting along with no swell shutters, he uses them very sparingly, but well. In fact, this is a better opportunity to get acquainted with the Boyce musical charisma than when

he plays the big beast. More intimate.

The Barton is almost the same as it was when removed from the Newport News Paramount in 1968 by Woody Wise. A Posthorn has been added, and the pedal has been fortified with added Grosse Flute and Tuba Mirabilis.

Jimmy tackles the program with the assurance of the old pro that he is. He opens with an appropriate console raiser of the *Dizzy Fingers* variety, an original named *On Broadway*. Kurt Weill's *My Ship* is enhanced by the color reeds plus mutations. Another Boyce original, which was composed to cue silent comedies, is the loping *Charlie's Walk*. The color reeds are again in the spotlight during Jimmy's *Waltz* and the Wood Block, Castanets, Glock and Kinura sprint a little during *Quanto le Gusto*. It's brass time for a dirty, lowdown *Hard Hearted Hannah* and the Side 1 closer is a lilting *Bluesette* with some melodic embellishment and beaucoup spirit.

Side 2 is equally interesting. *Sweet Georgia Brown* acquires an unladylike baritone voice with Posthorn topping and the Barton's "Oogah" horn, all to a peppy beat. Then the haunting *Laura - Laura?* Why it seems only yesterday that the late Ben Hall was contemplating a "Society for the Prevention of Organ Recordings of *Laura* and *Tenderly* - but a whole new generation has arrived since her too frequent recording and the lady (played to the hilt, perhaps by Jean Lautzenheiser) is as tasty as ever when exercising the Barton's delicious Tibia and later the 16' Tuba played against a web of harmony on ethereal Strings. It's downright unearthly! But we recovered from Fantasyland about halfway through *The Entertainer*, a cheery organ adaptation which uses the Glock, Bells and Xylophone as effective standins for the piano.

*Andalucia* includes three of the supporting themes to the melody which will be recognized by its popular name, *The Breeze and I*. Well done. And it's a delight to hear *Stormy Weather* without the manual hand-wipe storm sound effects. This time it's just the music with a wide range of dynamics and registration variety. The closer is a rocking *Boogie Woogie* which leaves the auditioner wanting more.

This may be the only chance to hear the Woody Wise Barton under theatrical conditions because its record

debut is probably also its swansong, so far as the Virginia theatre is concerned. The organ has been sold. Regardless of sentiment, this is a well-recorded and well-played album, one well worth owning.

**COAST TO COAST, Don Thompson playing ten pipe organs. Amberlee (stereo) No. AML 307. \$5.98 postpaid from Doric Records, Box 282, Monterey, Calif. 93940.**



Don Thompson

This British release is being distributed by Doric in the USA. This material is drawn mainly from Don Thompson's concert performances, judging from the applause following the selections, although some has been obviously dubbed in. The organs heard are the LA Wiltern 4/37 Kimball, the Redwood City, Calif. Cap'n's Galley 4/18 Wurlitzer, Joe Koons' motorcycle shop (then) 2/19 Wurlitzer-Welte-Page, The Old Town Music Hall 4/24 Wurlitzer in El Segundo, Calif., The Elks' Bldg. 4/61 Robert Morton in LA, the N.Y. United Palace 4/24 Morton, the No. Tonawanda Riviera theatre's 3/12 Wurlitzer, the 3/11 ESTMIM Wurlitzer in Syracuse, N.Y., the 3/26 (Buddy Cole) Wurlitzer-Morton in the Campbell (Calif.) Cap'n's Galley and the 4/22 RTOS Wurlitzer in the Auditorium theatre, Rochester, N.Y. All of which must add up to a monumental job of disbursing earned royalties to the various organ owners who agreed to the use of their instruments on the record.

One would assume that this record would provide material for comparison of the ten organs. Not so. The rough technical edges have been attenuated and artificial reverb has been added where natural liveness was missing to

the extent that a level of sameness has been achieved. Even so, a couple of the organs manage to retain a degree of individuality despite the doctoring, notably the United Palace Morton and the Buddy Cole Wurlitzer-Morton (the latter also in spite of the hackneyed vehicle - *Lara's Theme* - again!)

With that one exception, the tune-list reflects the wide range and variety in Don's repertoire, one of his strong points. Playing quality ranges from mostly good to a small touch of bad, the latter perhaps resulting from the nature of releasing a concert performance; there's no chance to correct small flubs without retakes. Overall, it's Don's best recorded work to date. Arrangements, all by Don, maintain a high degree of interest value; he makes good use of the best solo reeds on each instrument. Technical quality varies according to the skills of the various tapers and the quality of equipment used. Yet the miking catches all the music with good effect.

The selections are; Purvis' *Fanfare*, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*, *The Phantom Brigade*, Lehar's *Villia* (sic), *While We're Young*, *Tell Me Little Gypsy*, *The Phantom Regiment*, *Shadow Waltz*, *Speakeasy*, *What Kind of Fool Am I?*, *Lara's Theme*, *Rosalie* and *I Double Dare You*. Four of these selections are tops in all respects - Purvis' brassy *Fanfare*, *Phantom Regiment*, *Shadow Waltz* and *Speakeasy*. *Rosalie* and *I Double Dare You*, a tribute to organist Reginald Dixon, are played in that British star's "rum-te-tum" quick-step ballroom style.

This recording is representative of Don Thompson's various playing styles, his broad repertoire, his inventive arrangements and varied registration on 10 organs. It is certain to please his many fans.

**HORACE FINCH ON THE WURLITZER ORGAN IN THE EMPRESS BALLROOM, BLACKPOOL. Deroy No. 949, Volume 16. \$6.50 postpaid (checks on US banks accepted) from Deroy Records, Box 3, Carnforth, Lancs., England.**

Deroy is a new source to this column, although long known for organ records in Britain and on the continent. The Deroy catalogue includes over 50 organ records, many of them being re-issues hypoed by "studio stereo," a process which is supposed to enhance originally mon-

aural recordings. This set of tunes was recorded during the mid-50s by Derrick Marsh, Deroy's moving force. There will be no later recordings by Mr. Finch because he retired in 1962 after losing a finger in an accident (perhaps he should have taken heart from now retired Chicago Stadium organist Al Melgard who played the greater part of his career with nine fingers).

The instrument is a 3/13 Wurlitzer installed in the Blackpool Empress Ballroom in 1935 and used regularly thereafter for dancing, usually piloted by Horace Finch. This accounts for the two strict tempo "quickstep" medleys of mostly US hits of the '20s (e.g. *Yessir, That's My Baby, You'r Driving Me Crazy, My Blue Heaven* etc) and '30s (e.g. *Young and Foolish, Lullabye of Broadway, We're in the Money* etc). Other tunes familiar to US ears are *Smiling Through, Londonderry Air*, a medley from South Pacific and a very different *Roses of Picardy* (one unblessed by sentimental values). Less familiar are selections from *The Arcadians*, an operetta, *Toy Town Fusiliers* and *Tonight's the Night*.

The best playing is heard during the single selections; the medleys, while always interesting, tend to get less care than the individual titles, and some suffer from efforts to be flashy in the 1950's plug-in sense. Too often the noodling becomes louder than the melody line. Yet the playing is accurate and the arrangements well thought out. One of Mr. Finch's strong points is registration; his is always changing and he has a leaning toward untrem'd brass, in combination and in solo. He seems to get a large variety of brass voices from not more than three reeds.

The technical quality of the cuts is good and we could hear no difference in the sounds of the "studio stereo" left and right channels, which is okay with this "studio stereophobe."

Deroy records include jackets with photos and liner notes. The records are dispatched by air mail.

**A MILLION HAPPY SOUNDS.** Bill Million playing the John Ledwon 3/25 studio Wurlitzer Stereo record \$6.50 postpaid from Million Productions, Box 1362, Ventura, Calif. 93001.

Here's another first — the first released recording played on John



Bill Million, down among the footnotes. (Shown at Reseda, Cal., PIPE & PIZZA 2/10 Wurlitzer console) (Stufoto)

Ledwon's Wurlitzer located in his roomy studio in Agoura, Calif. It's an "assembled" instrument with the basic ten ranks from the "Treasure Island" Wurlitzer which entertained San Franciscans during a pre-World WarII Exposition, a three-deck console from a Plattsburg, New York, theatre plus carefully selected additions to attain the current 25-rank pipe complement. The additions have been carefully selected over a 10-year period to reach a well balanced ensemble. One of the last ranks completed was a 16' Pedal Posthorn, voiced to a ripping, staccato snarl by that veteran master of the beating reed, Lee Haggart. The floor of the two spacious chambers starts at the chest tops to mask out mechanical noise from tremors and regulators beneath. The listening area is a spacious room under an A-frame roof, an area generous enough to seat more than the 150 ATOSers who suffered through the "Stu Green Humiliation Concert" held there in 1971.

Bill Million may be a new name on the national scene but he is well known in Southern California. The past president of the Los Angeles Professional Organists' Club studied with Ann Leaf after emigrating from his native Lafayette, Indiana. He has

three previous record releases to his credit, all played on theatrical plug-ins. This is Bill's first on pipes.

The program is a mix of old and new "happy" music: *Cabaret, Maybe This Time, Tie a Yellow Ribbon, Happy Heart, My Happiness, For Once in My Life, Put on a Happy Face, I Want to be Happy, Happy Wanderer, Sometimes I'm Happy, Get Happy and Happiness is a Thing Called Joe* (a happy torch song?)

Playing is well done throughout and the arrangements add up to easy listening. The registration is less impressive; most of the playing is done on the flue pipes and tonal percussions to the neglect of the many exotic reed solo and color voices on the Ledwon organ. Bill was contacted and explained that the taping was done during a summer heat wave which threw the reeds badly out of tune, so he had no alternative but to use the ranks which remained reasonably in tune.

So we must view Bill Million's pipe debut with mixed feelings. He certainly makes his point with his "happy music" format, but the full tonal range of the Ledwon organ remains to be recorded. Next time, we hope Bill will choose a cool day to record.