



# “Our David”

Chapter II

by Rosa Rio

Since the feature article on David Scrimenti appeared in the April 1973 issue of THEATRE ORGAN, so many wonderful people expressed interest in my sightless organ student that I should like to bring you up to date on his musical progress.

I have been teaching David three years. Having been asked by his parents if I would teach him to play the organ, it was a challenge I couldn't refuse. But I found that David was no ordinary student. He has perfect pitch and can identify any chord by its pitch name. He is capable of playing most music he hears on radio and television.

During the past three years of electronic organ instruction, I have also introduced him to the sounds of the pipe organ, and once he heard the 3/13 Marr & Colton in the

Participants in the sixth annual recital for Huntington Congregational Church, April 12, 1975. From left, David Scrimenti and Rosa Rio, organ soloists; Mrs. Elmer Kellogg, co-chairman; Mrs. Nancy Ibsen, vocalist; and Bill Yeoman, director and MC for the program.

David Scrimenti stands at the Weavers' console, while judges deliberate during Connecticut Valley Chapter's Junior Scholarship competition in 1975. Judges, from left, are: Alfred Colton, Kenneth Beyer and Allen Miller.



Thomaston Opera House, he made it a must to learn to play that instrument.

David is now ten and he has never hesitated to play before an audience. I have seen that he has acquired the basic fundamentals: harmony, intervals, good fingering, etc. In other words, I wanted him to be recognized as a musician and not a sightless person. However, when he plays, everyone is overcome by his strong, emotional playing and his God-given talent.

For obvious reasons, I did not enter David in any contests until I felt him ready for competition. This year, I gave him the green light to enter the Junior Theatre Organ Scholarship competition, sponsored by the Connecticut Valley Chapter of ATOS. The contest used the 3/9 Marr & Colton in the home of Mr. & Mrs. Harold Weaver, and 18 students competed. To everyone's surprise, David Scrimenti was judged the winner over some very talented participants.

On April 12, 1975, David appeared with me at the Shelton Intermediate School in an organ concert, sponsored for the sixth year by the Huntington Congregational Church. He was sensational and well received by the audience who asked for more of his music. It was his first commercial venture where people paid to hear him.

So you see, "Our David's" musical prowess has evolved with his physical stature these past three years, and he's now preparing for a career in music. He receives normal schooling and has a special teacher for reading Braille. With a good foundation in music and his uncanny wit, the world is going to be his oyster. So watch your newspapers, magazines and television sets; Our David is on his way to stardom. □

**moving?**

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#### For The Records

**EVERY NIGHT IS MUSIC NIGHT, William Davies at the Mighty Wurlitzer of the Gaumont, Manchester Theatre. Acorn label No. CF 250 (stereo), \$9.25 (air) postpaid from Mr. Tom Herd, Amsel Cottage, 19 Coupe Green, Hoghton, Preston, PR5 0JE, Lancashire, England. (checks on US banks made out to the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust are accepted)**

William Davies might be described as a master of the frenetic; a majority of the selections on this recording are fast moving, in part or whole. This is not a criticism; in fact, all of the "fasties" are entertaining. And the moving selections are well balanced by slower ballads and standards sandwiched between them. The organ is the by now well-known 4/14 Wurlitzer formerly in the Manchester Gaumont. It is now removed, and in storage in care of the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust, a local group of British enthusiasts who depend on the income from records such as this one to relocate threatened organs in their areas to permanent homes.

Selections are *Tritsch-Tratsch Polka* (Strauss), *Butterflies in the*

*Rain, Mexican Fire Dance, Knave of Diamonds, How Beautiful is Night, Cherokee, Passepied* (De-Libes), *Scherzo* (Litloff), *Fantasy 'Up North'* (Croudson), *Selection of Gracie's (Fields) Songs, Little Serenade* (Tomlinson), *Toy Town Trumpeters* (Davies), *Selection from George Formby Memories*. Not too much here familiar by title but it's a fine opportunity to escape from the "old hat" repeats being recorded by too many US organists. The medleys contain a number of unlisted old favorites. All of the music is first rate and Mr. Davies' performances are fine except when he descends to the cheap tricks one might expect of a corner pub plug-in plunker. Luckily such backsliding is minimal although it also faulted a previous pipe recording by Mr. Davies reviewed in this column.

Recording is excellent and the organ is obviously in top shape. The jacket bears an excellent photo of the double stoprail console with Mr. Davies standing by. The console is a Wurlitzer style we've never before encountered. The keydesk is supported beneath the side jambs with ornate, wide gold-flecked double bolsters and the console endpieces above the bolsters are doubly wide. The jacket notes trace Mr. Davies distinguished career as a musician in broadcasting, theatres and with the Jack Hylton orchestra. He wrote his own jacket notes describing the music presented and Side Two is a tribute to his native Lancashire where he is a vice president in the Trust.

**GOLDEN MOMENTS with Frank Cimmino at two Wurlitzer pipe organs. HMR-932 (stereo). \$5.50 postpaid from HMR Productions Inc., 574 West Court, Scotch Plains, New Jersey 07075.**

Harry Randel and Bob Balfour have been recording theatre organ for about 15 years, mostly for release on other labels. Often dissatisfied with the final results on discs, they decided to strike out on their own and follow through in all aspects, from initial taping to licking the stamps on record mail orders. They have some ambitious plans for future releases which promise a recording by Jim Leaffe and another by Frank Cimmino.