

and admirers. It was a beautiful sunny, spring-like day for such a sad occasion.

Besides wife Helen, Bob leaves a brother (Bill) and a sister (Barbara), both back in Indiana.

Stu Green □



Safari Survey Response Very Positive!

If all those who say they want to go to England for the Organ Safari follow through we will have two airplanes full. Actually that's okay, although we were originally planning just one planeload of about 200 people.

The surveys are still coming in so if you or your friends haven't sent in your advance reservation and survey form, please do so immediately.

The Safari survey indicates that the timing is right — 71% say this is the best time for them to go. The 15 day tour length meets with 85% approval. Only a few think it's too long, even fewer want to lengthen it.

About 50% of the respondents want more sight-seeing and we'll adjust our schedule accordingly. In fact, we'll probably offer some options between regular sight-seeing and extra organ visits.

Everyone seems to be agreed on our air travel plans. Over 93% want to fly on a fixed itinerary and keep the airfare cost to a minimum. We are now negotiating for the best possible deal.

On hotel accommodations, first class won 64% approval but about 30% of the membership responding preferred economy. Since we may find it difficult to get everyone bunked down in the same hotel we will probably offer some price variation depending on the accommodations you finally select.

On total cost, the majority want the middle bracket of \$850 - \$1,000, though about 25% would prefer to keep the cost lower. Perhaps we can accommodate that need with a

choice of hotel accommodations and make more of the sight-seeing optional.

Altogether the positive responses at this time number nearly 400 persons. Depending on the type of aircraft, a full plane load runs about 200. Consequently we recommend that you immediately send in your firm reservation and deposit so that you are assured of space.

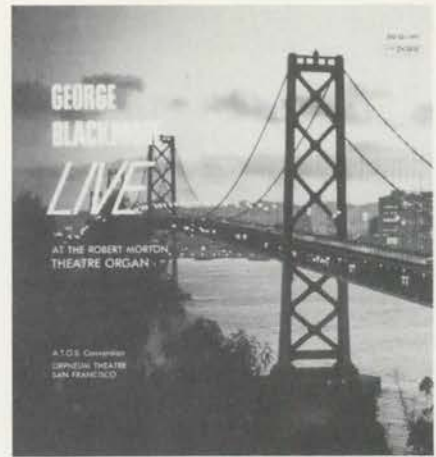
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GEORGE BLACKMORE 'LIVE' AT THE ROBERT MORTON THEATRE ORGAN, in Quadrophonic/stereo. No. DOC(Q) 1501. \$5.95 postpaid from Doric Records, Box 282, Monterey, Calif. 93940.

Two things about this album will be familiar to 1975 ATOS conventioners. First, the album cover photo, which shows part of the San Francisco Bay Bridge scene which adorned the jacket of the convention souvenir record. Next, the Blackmore selections will seem familiar because they are the same ones heard during that memorable final



convention concert, which was also broadcast "live" by a San Francisco FM station.

Organists always take their chances when they permit a commercial record to be made from tapes of a live concert. George Blackmore comes off remarkably well in this respect. Very few "flubs" are heard.

The selections are varied, ranging from the "Zampa Overture" to a tribute to San Francisco ("San Francisco" and "I Left My Heart in SF"). There's a lively operetta medley of Franz Lehár selections: "Merry Widow Waltz," "Vilia" and "Girls, Girls, Girls." The Spanish medley includes "Granada," "Jalousie," "Spanish Eyes" and "España Cani." Memories of England during the "blitz" are evoked by "The White Cliffs of Dover" and a defiant "Dam Busters' March," Eric Coates' musical tribute to England's answer to the blitz — The Royal Air Force, in which Blackmore served. A lengthy "Raggedy Rag" potpourri includes such titles as "Doin' the Raccoon," "Don't Bring Lulu," "Pasadena," "Get Out and Get Under," "Yessir, That's My Baby," "12th Street Rag" and four other tunes from the 1911-1928 period. All are played in the British "quickstep" style, with emphasis on a fast dance tempo which leaves little time for registration variety or expression. Wisely, Blackmore chose titles which wouldn't suffer from such summary treatment. Yet, this medley is the weakest link in a fine performance.

This record is also another step toward establishing the Robert Morton as an excellent recording organ. The brand is a late bloomer, due partially to the shortage of recording quality Mortons (unadulterated, that

is) and the still potent super promotion of Morton's chief competitor of yore. The ensemble and solo voices as used by George Blackmore are indeed satisfying.

This, despite miking which was arranged by the radio station rather than by the recording crew. While quite satisfactory, it can't compare with the quality of Doric's engineer Frank Killinger's sound pickups in the same theatre. This may be splitting hairs but try to find the melody line as George starts "Toot, Toot Tootsie." Unless George lost his place, the pickup caused the melodic fuzziness. But no matter, he never missed a beat.

This recording will bring pleasurable recollections to those who were present at the concert-recording sessions. To others it will show what they missed. It's an album well worth having.



Jonas Nordwall

JONAS, Jonas Nordwall Plays the Wurlitzer Pipe Organ in the Organ Grinder Restaurant, Portland, Oregon, JN-104, stereo. \$6.50 post-paid from Gamba Records, 4993 East 30th Ave. Apt. 98, Portland, Oregon 97202.

The first time we heard Jonas was during an early ATOS convention in Portland. He was playing a plug-in while all the other scheduled organists played magnificent pipe organs. The teenager held his own then, and a decade later he is better than ever. This is Jonas' fourth album and the first recording made on the Portland Organ Grinder 40-rank mostly Wurlitzer. The organ literally "has everything" and the organist uses the Hope-Jones developed facilities to the hilt — second touch, sostenuto, pizzicato

coupler, three very different Tibias and a four-rank Vox Humana chorus. The organ's most noticeable assets are a wealth of color reeds — two Brass Trumpets, a Brass Sax, Krumet, Posthorn, Oboe Horn, Tuba Mirabilis, Fagot Horn, and style D Trumpet, to name the principal ones. They all get a workout in the music on this recording. Probably more obvious to the less organ-hip listener are the prominent percussions. Jonas uses them lavishly but always in good taste. The most subtle is a re-iterating cymbal which colors several selections with its "white noise" tintinnabulation.

The list of selections is a record reviewer's dream, far from the all too frequent "Alley Cat" mentality. The tunes are mostly pop standards with a touch of gypsy and film soundtrack tunes. But titles are only half the story. What the artist does with them is what counts, and Jonas' treatments are distinctive. Those who revere the early George Wright, when he set the style for the exhumed theatre organ in the '50s and '60s' will enjoy these arrangements. Jonas employs GW harmonic effects, but he is not an arrangement copyist. It's more a matter of reminiscence; now where did I hear that "fill" before?

The arrangements display a vast amount of energy on the part of the organist. He opens with a devastating "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans" which may sound over-orchestrated to some listeners. Jonas has loaded every held note with a variety of harmonic and rhythmic devices reminiscent of that classic vocal chorus of "Shanty Town." It's guaranteed to keep the auditioner wide awake. In direct contrast, "Dream a Little Dream of Me" explores the more subtle voices of the organ for a most satisfying treatment of a resuscitated ballad of the early '30s.

The *Lawrence of Arabia* music almost defies description, but we'll try. Conceived as a somewhat tumultuous parallel to "In a Persian Market," *Lawrence* reflects the various moods of every Hollywood oriental extravaganza ever screened, starting with the *Thief of Bagdad* and continuing thru the Sabu pseudo-orientals of the '40s and '50s. Musically pictured are the ancient market places, processions, fanfares, belly dances, and chases with Jon Hall a

step ahead of the pursuing renegades. We'd love to witness the undulating bare midribs which must have flashed through Jonas' mind as he choreographed the rhythmic parts of this colorful spectacle.

"More Than You Know" may start audiophiles manipulating the high and low controls of their playback systems; a somewhat too-prominent mutation seems to take over the true pitch sometimes to the point of confusion. This lasts only a short time. The ballad is well played.

"The Sheik of Araby" is usually played as a sentimental ballad (as the composer intended) or as a basis for jazz variations. Jonas does neither; he plays it as rhythmic intermission music. Only the rather good verse is missing.

John Denver's "Country Boy" is played as something of a slambang hoedown. Jonas milks lots of sentiment from the '30s ballad, "Home" (note the untrem'd counter melody) and the registration is exquisite. The same can be said for the ballad in beguine tempo, "I've Got You Under My Skin." Brilliant is the word for Jonas' arrangement and performance of Monti's "Czardas." Percussions are used effectively but the gypsy spirit of the composition remains intact. The closer is a honey-smooth "Dream," satisfying right to its GW end phrase.

Recording is excellent. There is a

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high frequency emphasis which some listeners may want to attenuate some. We prefer to hear it with all the highs audible. Stereo separation is not overdone.

For a change, here's an album with jacket notes presented in the language of the organ enthusiast. Many of the voices and combinations used are pinpointed by selection, and the complete stoplist is provided. This is a highly recommended album.

BARNARD PLAYS THE ABC ALABAMA THEATRE ORGAN. LP-A-2883 (no label given). \$6.00 postpaid from Barnard Franklin, Box 4457, Birmingham, Alabama 35206.

Barnard Franklin is a new name to this reviewer, but he comes to us with lots of recommendation. According to the jacket notes he is an Indiana U. grad (music) who later studied in Tel Aviv. He has done some gigs as a trans-Atlantic ocean liner musician and he's a member of ATOS. It has been reported that he is the current staffer of the Alabama theatre.

The organ is a 4/20 Wurlitzer we've known about since Randy Sauls tickled its ivories in the '30s. In recent years it has been restored and is currently maintained by Alabama Chapter ATOSers.

Side 1 was miked during a concert and there's a spoken intro by theatre manager Cecil Brown after which Barnard plays an energetic "Lover" with plenty of digital ornamentation. There's intermittent mid-tune applause when the organist does something the listeners heartily approve. Next it's "Tara's Theme" from *Gone With the Wind*, followed by "Born Free," "On a Clear Day" and "I Want to Be Happy," each followed and/or interrupted by applause. Obviously, Barnard is an audience pleaser.

Side 2 is recorded without an audience. Two of the selections, "C'est Magnifique" and "Half a Sixpence," include vocals by the organist. Results, possibly due to faulty microphone placement, sound rather sibillant and squawky. They add little to the program.

A lively "It's All Right With Me" is the console riser for side 2. One of Barnard's best numbers is the "Blue

Skirt Waltz," which might be a spin-off from Liszt's "Les Preludes." Inclusion of "Somewhere My Love" marks Barnard as a guy who must expect to sell pressings over the cocktail lounge plug-in; it has replaced "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" and "How Dry I am" as the drunk's delight.

"A Wonderful Guy" (from *South Pacific*) and *Guys and Dolls* come off well.

All selections are competently played by an obviously experienced musician. Arrangements are mostly uncomplicated and if there is a weakness it is in the registration; perhaps the solo voices on the 4/20 Wurlitzer aren't yet in playing shape. Whatever the reason, Barnard seems to prefer big combinations and there isn't much change from one tune to the next.

Yet, it adds up to pleasant listening. Miking is big hall perspective and occasionally strident. The overall result is a plus for this new name on the theatre organ horizon.

Jacket notes are the "gee whiz" variety, aimed obviously at the uninitiated. In all, it's a good first try by an organist with more on the ball than shows in this first grooving.

ROY BINGHAM AT THE 'M' RANCH WURLITZER, SUTTON IN ASHFIELD (ENGLAND). Deroey Cinema Organ Series No. 1070 (stereo). \$5.50 postpaid from Stanley C. Garniss, 35 Union Street, North Easton, Mass. 02356.

Note that the British Deroey label now has a stateside distributor. This

gives the purchaser a circa one dollar saving over the old import price.

This recording will be chiefly of interest to home installation enthusiasts. The instrument is a 3/8 Wurlitzer moved from its original home (the gone Granada Cinema, Greenford, Middlesex) to the Dennis Matthews home called 'M' Ranch, where it speaks into a music room built in a large floored-over swimming pool. It's a single chamber installation with unenclosed percussions, including an upright piano (added) and an apparently original Vibraphone. The stoplist is also unorthodox, by US standards. The 8-ranker has no Vox, but it has a Saxophone and an English Horn (Posthorn). The remaining voices are Diapason, Gamba, Gamba Celeste, Flute, Tuba Horn and Tibia Clausa. The resulting ensemble sound is usually lush, although sometimes a little out of tune with the fixed-pitch percussions. The jacket notes state that the owner, Mr. Matthews, has installed several individual tremos. This is very much in evidence in the Tibia sound, one of the best-adjusted Tibias we've heard in a home installation, and one of the most tonally appealing. Yet the Saxophone suffers from a bad case of choppy "tremulitus." Fortunately it is used sparingly. The piano, as recorded, is a typical organ piano. The Vibraphone is gorgeous.

Mr. Bingham's style of playing is heavy on expression, sometimes at the expense of the rhythm. His left hand seems to favor full chords,



Roy Bingham at the 'M Ranch' 3/8 Wurlitzer. Note wide decorative end columns and fluted, double bolsters supporting side jambs. This is apparently a British design which marks a number of England's Wurlitzers.

held down continually, even when the tune calls for a beat. In fact he plays mostly a single note melody with lower manual accompaniment. He uses the prominent tonal percussions sparingly, possibly because they are somewhat overpowering. His melody lines sometimes stray and harmonic treatment is unsophisticated but pleasing.

The selections offer plenty of variety, including marches, a tango, US pop standards, a concert piece, and an appealing Viennese folk song. The titles are "Echoing Pipes" (march), "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You," "Vienna, City of My Dreams," "Exactly Like You" (ballad treatment!), "Don't Be Cross," "La Vie En Rose," "Julian" (tango), "Lonely Ballarina" (intermezzo), "Granada" and a medley which

covers half of side 2 and includes "Java," "Manhattan," "By the Fireside," "Wonderful One," "I'm Just Wild About Harry," "When You're Smiling" and "the World is Waiting for the Sunrise." Each is given individual treatment, not the "quick-step" bit.

At best, it's difficult for an 8-ranker to compete successfully with the normally much larger recording organs we review. Such comparison is not the purpose of this recording. Rather, it's a testament as to how one buff treated his instrument as a home installation. No artificial reverb has been added to give it a "big hall" sound. Hearing the record is probably much like sitting in the Matthews music room and enjoying an informal concert by an able demonstrator. As such it succeeds. □



by Walter J. Beaupre, Ph.D.

THE MIGHTY THEATRE ORGAN, edited by Lee Erwin, Edward B. Marks Music Corporation, 136 West 52nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. Price \$2.50 retail.

Five years back a collection of ten "organ solos in theatre organ stylings" was launched under the editorial surveillance of Lee Erwin and according to the cover blurb "published in cooperation with the American Theatre Organ Society." *The Mighty Theatre Organ* was advertised shortly after publication in this journal. I picked up a copy somewhere along the way, said "Amen!" to Ben Hall's beautifully written introduction, dabbled at a few of the easier-to-sight-read selections — and promptly forgot all about it. Not until recently, while hunting through some unfiled music did I pull out *The Mighty Theatre Organ* and resolve to take a second and more critical look. So here goes.

This Erwin-ATOS labor of love purports to be a collection of new music "expressly for the organ" —

and that it is. No one can quarrel with the fact that the contributors are all very talented performing artists with individual organ styles. The cast is a veritable "Who's Who" or, if you prefer, "Pipes' Peak." Selections promise both balance and variety: five ballad-type and five novelty-type solos with plenty of variety within each category. Playing difficulty also varies from quite easy to required virtuosity. The easiest ballads are by Rosa Rio, Jody Weaver, and Eddie Layton; more demanding are the ballads of Lee Erwin and Ann Leaf. The easier novelty solos are those by Al Bollington, Allen Mills, and Jeff Barker; the most difficult by Don Baker and Ashley Miller. Other home organists may question these rankings by playing difficulty, depending upon their personal skills and prior experience. For example, this reviewer doesn't mind reading music written in six flats, but high speed passages and cadenzas are always a major hurdle.

The first solo printed in the book, Editor Erwin's "My Best Girl," was

not new to me. I had heard a live performance of same under a silent film as well as Lee's Angel recording. Incidentally, I consider the recorded arrangement an improvement over the printed score (sustained pedal notes under the fanfare, extended counter-melodies, more sophisticated key modulations, etc.) so don't expect to sound exactly like the Master. The written arrangement still carries the lush, warm moods which make this pretty tune a joy to play. Lee's suggested registration warns us to stay away from 16' stops when playing big chords to close to the lower end of the manual. The opening fanfare generated anticipation with an abrupt modulation from E flat to G major. The main theme, boldly stated with both hands in unison, quickly gives way to a descending counter melody on the lower manual. The counter melody of the main theme becomes a boldly descending chromatic melody in the bridge. A key change to F keeps the tune from becoming repetitive while establishing deeper familiarity. Always the expert craftsman, Lee Erwin knows that we like to meet the same damsel again and again — but not wearing the same dress. He obliges with some stylish quick changes and a tasteful coda. Although hardly more than just another pretty tune, the fascination of "My Best Girl" lies in the stylish arrangement for organ. Harmonic patterns are interesting and satisfying without becoming too far out. The G9 and D13 add the right touch of esoteric.

Jeff Barker's "El Samba Chico" serves as a novelty latin contrast. The rhythmic introduction establishes the underlying beat rather than any melodic pattern to follow. Once the melody begins the burden of the samba rhythm stays with the right hand theme in 3rds while the accompaniment is straight 4/4 oom-pah, oom-pah. This pattern changes when both hands descend to the lower manual for an open chord melody/rhythm interlude. "Chico's" trio introduces an extended right hand, single note solo in the lower registers. It's fun and adds variety when the repeat chorus is played still an octave lower. By contrast a final samba theme is played in the treble register. As you may have guessed, the right hand does all the