


the organist. This recording emphasizes the gentle side.

Keith Chapman knows how to get the best from the vast array of pipes, and one of his specialties is making transcriptions of instrumental music for organ presentation. Thus we are treated to four Debussy piano pieces given the much larger palette of organ coloring. The moody aspect of the Debussy selections is bound to appeal to movie music fans: "Arabesques" No. 1 and No. 2, "Ballet" and "Cortege." All the subtle, intimate quality of the composer's music is retained in the transcription. In contrast are Arne's "Flute Tune" and Satie's "Gymnopedic No. 1." A written-for-organ

selection is J.S. Bach's "Bist du bei Mir." The closer will be familiar to long ago Larry Clinton danceband addicts. They will recall the tune as "The Lamp is Low." Here it is played as the composer, Maurice Ravel, conceived it, but in the instrumentation of the organ — "Pavane For a Dead Princess."

The brief jacket notes state that one objective of the record is to feature "the other side of the organ — a tonal world of soft pastels." It succeeds admirably. Recording is good. Our one recommendation is for Keith Chapman to smile, just once, when he poses for those promotional photos. His music is far from being deadpan. □



## Music Review

by Walter J. Beaupre, Ph.D.

**Lee Erwin, SALUTE TO THE SILENTS: MUSIC FOR THE D.W. GRIFFITH FILM CLASSICS, Edward B. Marks Music Corp. (Price \$4.50 from distributor Belwin Mills Publishing Corp., Melville, N.Y. 17746).**

In "Salute to the Silents" organist Lee Erwin has come a country mile from the routine practice of publishing theatrical arrangements of pleasant pop tunes for home organ grinding. Don't look for "Charmaine" or "Diane" in this collection. "Salute" is strictly business — the business of transposing Erwin's widely heard scores for three Griffith movies into printed music playable by the likes of us. One can almost — but not quite — check the printed scores against the Angel Records album of the same material. Notable omissions are "The Perfect Song," "War," and "Linen Clothes."

Those who have seen the Griffith epics with Lee at the organ will know how well the music works under the screen. And certainly those who have heard the Angel recording can judge for themselves which tunes are memorable and which seem to have little or no intrinsic charm. This reviewer's job is to point out the problems and pleasures of playing what has been printed.

The album contains 47 pages of music on tough stock which is easy to read and easy to manage on the music rack. Each selection (29 in all!) spans no more than two facing pages — most only one page. In general the music presupposes that the player knows his way around the organ and can adapt to spinet limitations if necessary. Suggestions for interpretation are always in plain English. Registrations are sensible. Notations for correct fingering and pedaling are nonexistent. Only "Remington Rifle" enjoys the printed luxury of a separate pedal staff.

Don't expect to sit down and breeze through this "Salute" from cover to cover unless you are a very accomplished organist. The most satisfying tunes for the resident duffer (people like myself who want their music predictable and who don't like to work too hard) are "Reconstruction Days," "Banjo," "The Reception Waltz," and the "Main Theme" from *Birth of a Nation*. The last named tune could have sprung full blown from a Doris Day movie (*Once I had a secret . . .*).

If mastering tricky rhythms is not your forte, better sit out the "Babylon Dance" with its 7/8 time. The introduction to "Intolerance" is no less of a challenge — six time changes in the first 11 measures. "Little Lap

Dog" will take careful planning and analysis of internal rhythms to keep it moving in a straight line. "The Chicken Trot" once you get used to the ragtime beat is mercifully predictable and fun to play.

Of the two Francis Hopkinson tunes from Revolutionary War days, the most satisfying to play is "My Days Have Been so Wondrous Free." When Lee Erwin gets his hands on a sweeping melody he takes off in grand style. The other George Washington favorite "Beneath a Weeping Willow's Shade" doesn't rise above the Bach/Haydn imitations which were so popular among early American composers and so supremely forgettable.

Twentieth century composer Erwin's love for Gershwin breaks through in the fanfare which introduces the "America: 1776" theme and at the climax of "Ford's Theatre." Other tunes in the collection suggest a strong influence of the French impressionists. "The President's March" although attributed to Joseph Hopkinson and Philip Phile is given the Elgar-Pomp-and-Circumstance treatment by Erwin the arranger. It works very well.

Perhaps the most revealing selections in the "Salute" are the Erwin treatments of two familiar classics "Camptown Races" and "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." The forward movement of these tunes has been directed almost as if by a magnetic force emanating from the screen. Erwin's creative talent provides the catalyst. The end result: two familiar ditties transformed into intensely dramatic, personal statements. Both are masterpieces in miniature.

To those who are serious students of silent movie playing as a worthwhile art form, Lee Erwin's point of view is nowhere better demonstrated than in this collection of pieces. The "Salute" is a necessity. To those others who have fond memories of the Griffith films as interpreted by organist Erwin and who wish to take a close-up, detailed look at the magic — why not?

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