

## For The Records



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**BY A WATERFALL: FRANK OLSEN** playing the Wurlitzer organ in the Gillette home, Niagara Falls, Canada. No. WRCl-806. \$8.00 post-paid from: (a) Frank Olsen, RR No. 1, Vimy Rd., Port Colborne, Ontario, L3K 5V3 Canada, or (b) Laura Thomas, 3534 Bowen Rd., Lancaster, N.Y. 14086.

It would seem that more organists are seeking out smaller but tonally good organs to record. First it was Rex Koury with his highly-successful album played on the Rahway (New Jersey) Theatre 2/7 Wurlitzer. Now it's Canada's Frank Olsen. Best known in the Northeast and in Great Britain (he divides his time between Canada and the U.K.), although he played a recent West Coast concert, Frank Olsen first came to our attention years ago with a release entitled *Paisley*, played on an organ in a Scottish theatre, a 3/10 Hilsdon organ. In the late '60s Frank moved to Canada and has several more record releases to his credit. All have interest value, including this one.

In fact, this one has the most pizzazz of the Olsen groovings to date.

To the best of our knowledge this is the first nationally-distributed album made on the 2/7 Wurlitzer in its present location, the home of Gordon and Thelma Gillette in Niagara Falls, Canada. But, listeners to radio's *The Lutheran Hour* may have heard it when it was in the Ionia, Michigan, church where that program originated. Its original home was the Downer Theatre, Milwaukee.

One pleasant aspect of the current installation is that it rarely sounds like a small organ, nor does the recorded sound show evidence of a small speaking area so common to home installations. The sound is large and uninhibited. The tonal resources are first rate, much more attractive than we are accustomed to hearing from relatively small residence organs. For that we are probably indebted to William Hatzenbuehler, whose tonal work on, and regulation of the North Tonawanda Riviera's Wurlitzer years ago are still remembered. He did the regulating. The Tibia is especially satisfying, but so are the other stops. A large-scale Diapason sound is heard untem'd during the hymns, and a fine-sounding Trumpet is soloed during some tunes. The one non-Wurlitzer voice is the Vox Humana. A Kimball rank was substituted for the original pipes somewhere along the line. It complements the Tibia perfectly. It all adds up to a fine



By a Waterfall? Frank Olsen and visiting organist Ron Curtis illustrate the album title by going over Niagara in a barrel, in this gag photo.

recording organ, and one does not tire of the combinations Frank coaxes from the seven ranks (plus percussions). If there is a complaint it may be that the pedal voices do not blend well, but that may be in the way they are used.

A Debussy fragment blends into "By a Waterfall," a cheerful opener from an early Dick Powell-Ruby Keeler musical film. There are four medleys on the disc, each containing one chorus of three or four selections. The first includes upbeat (but not "quick-step") renditions of



Frank Olsen. He worked wonders on a residence two-decker.

(John D. Sharp Photo)

"When My Dreamboat Comes In," "Jeepers Creepers," "Bei Mir Bist Du Schön," and "Thank Heaven for Little Girls." "The Peanut Vendor" provides a Latin change of pace, then it's 3:19 minutes of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" played in a vaguely rhythmic style. Pretty, but it's neither fish nor fowl. The second medley includes "Are You Lonesome Tonight?," "Springtime in the Rockies" and "Girl of My Dreams." One chorus each, but with key and registration changes. Frank seems to prefer a somewhat "thumpy" pedal bass and this fits well during the "Blaze of Glory" march, which he has fitted with a Piccolo obligato.

Side 2 fun starts with a fast "Bye Bye Blackbird," a purposely corny and "rip-tip-tippy" representation of the oldie. Somehow we get the impression Frank is kidding some of his colleagues. In complete contrast is a delicately played "Poinciana," featuring the fine Tibia and Vox, with counter melodies on a horn combination and on strings. This one is a high point.

The third medley features Crawford stylings of "I'm Sorry I Made You Cry" and "Together" plus "True Love" soloing the Trumpet. Frank must have had some reason for including "Eriskay Love Lilt" but it isn't immediately fathomable. During the final medley Frank takes some impertinent, but interesting liberties with "Did You Ever See a Dream Walking?" making the melody with mind-boggling keyboard trickery. "Near You" is given a "clip

clop" treatment, but the tune remains recognizable. The medley closer is "Happiness."

The finale items are a couple of hymns, "Praise My Soul" and "Duke Street," for which the little Wurlitzer becomes a very presentable church organ at times, a sound which will appeal to the Dean McNichols — Lorin Whitney — Fred Bock fans.

Recording is good. The jacket includes a photo of Frank (at another console) and some information about the organ and some Olsen biography. Frank Olsen again proves he's an able entertainer at the console, one with a solid and authoritative musical foundation, but with a lilt.

**TONY FENELON, INTERVAL AT THE REGENT, featuring the Melbourne (Australia) Regent Theatre Wurlitzer organ. Harlequin L 25186 (stereo). \$7.95 postpaid from Ken's Organ Loft, 41 Gawaine Lane, Rochester, N.Y. 14623.**

Tony Fenelon has been a fleeting commodity on the U.S. scene for several years, always making a fast and favorable impression but dallying never long enough to become firmly established among U.S. organophiles. We recall his late '60s bid, starting with a memorable concert at the then Hoberg's-based Home Organ Festival. There were several more tours, but they provided minimum exposure so most audiences never had a chance to hear the considerable Fenelon talents at the con-



Tony Fenelon. He should come "up over" more often. (Dick Harold Photo)

sole (he's probably better known as a concert pianist "down under").

As Tony points out in the jacket notes, the music heard here comes from the last tapes made before the Regent Wurlitzer was removed. The photo shows a 2-manual, single stop-rail console, probably not larger than 10 ranks. On the record the sound is hall-filling. Miking emphasizes roominess, without loss of intimacy.

The tunelist is interesting. It includes some Australian color in two jolly traditional tunes, "We're Bound for Botany Bay" and "Wild Rover," two semi-classical selections are "Musetta's Song" from *La Boheme* by Puccini, and "Starlight Serenade" by Heyken, both previously recorded by Reginald Foort. The remaining eleven selections are imports from the U.S.A.: "This Could Be the Start of Something Big," "Try a Little Tenderness," "Wish Me a

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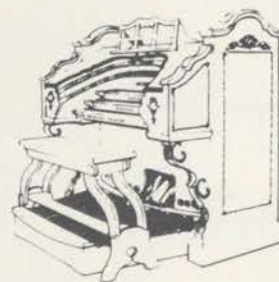
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Rainbow," "You'll Never Walk Alone," "Back Home Again in Indiana," "Carousel Waltz," "Lover," and four songs from *Showboat*.

Playing includes plenty of registration changes. Tony is especially partial to a smooth brass reed. The rhythm tunes are done in upbeat "intermission" style, with interesting key changes but without melody-changing "rides." He makes like a merry-go-round organ for "Carousel," but always with musicality given first consideration. *Showboat* has come up frequently of late on releases and re-releases. The selections provide lots of scope for an organist to exercise imagination on, no two arriving at the same musical conclusions. Tony's approach is quite different from those of Maria Kumatagai and George Wright, but the end product is both dramatic and ear catching; he caught the spirit of the operetta, and while playing a concert, as the applause reveals.

The Regent organ sounds fine. It provides plenty of tonal variety throughout. Incidentally, it now holds forth in a school auditorium in Adelaide, where it was installed by Theatre Organ Society of Australia members. Recording is good and the review pressing very smooth and pop-free. Jacket notes are minimal, the space being occupied by photos of the Regent's interior, a truly lovely house of its kind.

Yes, the album provides ample proof the theatre organ is alive and well in Australia. □

# Choosing The Proper Solid-State Rectifier

by John Persick

Having worked professionally on pipe organs and being an electronics technician, I have read with interest the technical articles in *THEATRE ORGAN* and felt that the area of DC power supplies and, more specifically, solid-state power supplies, has been generally overlooked. Here, is an easy method to determine the rectifier size that is proper for a pipe organ.

Originally, unit theatre pipe organs were equipped with blower-driven DC generators, often rated at 20-30 amperes at 12 volts. By the nature of their construction they were able to endure much overloading and abuse with relatively little, if any, permanent damage.

Today, the preferred power source is the rectifier which is extremely reliable and requires virtually no maintenance, providing it is used properly. However, rectifiers are highly sensitive units and can easily be permanently damaged or destroyed if exposed to the overloading frequently found in cases where generators were employed. Consequently, one must equip a pipe organ with a rectifier rated higher than the original generator. One can determine a proper rectifier size by considering several important items. The most important are the electrical size of the magnets used in the organ and the current draw which is determined by the maximum number of these magnets that can normally be played simultaneously.

Theatre organ magnets are normally found from about 165 to 400 ohms. Magnets of the 165-ohm variety were used in my experiments because of their high current draw as opposed to the lower current draw of the 400-ohm magnets. Using a 12 volt DC supply, the power draw of one magnet was 0.073 amperes.

Bearing this calculation in mind, it was figured that a 101-note flute rank unified at 16', 8', 4', 2-2/3', 2', 1-3/5' and 1' with sub and super couplers engaged might play as many as 32 to 36 notes under extreme demands. More practically speaking, the average unit rank would be 85 pipes or less (depending on the brand of organ) and would play 22 to 26 notes under extremes.

Using these figures, we multiply the maximum number of playing notes by the current draw (in amperes) of a single magnet to get the current draw per rank. The current draw for the 101-note flute was 2.63 amperes while for the 85-note rank the draw was 1.90 amperes. Multiplying one of these figures by the number of ranks in the organ gives one the minimum output current rating of the rectifier to be used.

Figuring the number of ranks also includes figuring tonal percussions, the relays and toy counter. Each manual relay (e.g. solo, great, accompaniment on a 3-manual) counts as a rank. For every three small (30-37 notes) tonal percussions (xylophone, glockenspiel) figure one rank and for each instrument 49 notes and over (marimba, piano, chryso-glott) figure yet another rank. Finally, for every 22-26 stop tabs (which operate relay magnets) figure one more rank. Because a maximum of three or four nontonal instruments are usually used at one time, toy counters draw minute quantities of current and need not be included as a rank. The one exception would be a fire siren or large horn which could possibly draw 20 or more amperes and the rectifier would have to be able to stand up under this momentary surge. Whatever one's final amperage figure is, another 10 amperes should be added, for extreme playing conditions, to be completely safe.

The rectifier should be located as near the organ as possible to eliminate excess line drop. Sufficient size common wires, connected to clean and tight terminals, should be used.

Console lights should be on a separate power supply to eliminate dimming when chords are played.

Remember, it is easier (and cheaper) to obtain the right size rectifier in the beginning than to have to replace an underrated one that has burned out. □

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