circuit. Her arrangement of "Musetta's Waltz" from Puccini's opera La Boheme seems on first glance to be simple to the point of no individual styling at all. The notes are easy to play with no fancy chords, exotic harmonies or flashy trills and glissandos. But the style, charm and individuality of Doreen are definitely there if you pay close attention to her constantly changing registrations. It's a good, solid lesson in orchestration. Follow the suggestions above and between the staves and you'll be rewarded with a lovely surprise.

For this reviewer the most welcome bonus in the entire collection is - at long last - Gaylord Carter's definitive version of "The Perfect Song." It is surprisingly easy to play if you ignore the opening scale run and the chromatic run involving both hands near the climax. The catch is that you simply can't ignore these two technical challenges without committing sacrilege. Better you should ignore the opening clarinet cadenza in Rhapsody in Blue! The first chorus or so is in G with the final half chorus in B-Flat. It's all big lush chords and bold counter melodies and precisely the way one remembers it from Amos 'n Andy days or a recent Carter concert. Of course, Amos 'n Andy are out of favor and fashion. So much for changing times. But any theatre organ fan who snears at "The Perfect Song" deserves exile to Cuba or Iran, or maybe a quiet cell with padded walls. Let's face it, gang, we put the wrong Carter in the White House!

Now it can be told: Del Castillo has an "Eleventh Finger" and you can have one too! Complete directions for manufacturing same are included with Del's delightful version of "Peanut Vender." Fun is fun, of course, but there is no nonsense involved among the other ten fingers. It's a good, bouncy arrangement of a grand novelty tune.

As a dyed-in-the-wood Eddie Dunstedter fan the reviewer was disappointed with "Open Your Eyes." It's a big, flashy treatment of a nothing tune. Coordinating the rhythmic piano left hand with the pedal notes takes some fancy timing. Better leave this one for the pros who do Dunstedter impressions.

Lee Erwin's "Sherlock Junior" is a charming, happy little song that was meant to create a mood for one of the silent classics. On its own as listenable music, it ranks among Erwin's best. Lee Erwin's writing is flawless and has an inevitability about it that is tremendously satisfying. Try, for example, the last four measures on page 101. You'll hear a warmth of sound from the organ — there's no other way of describing it — which no one else does quite as well. Lee also does nice things with manual changes which add whimsy and delight.

The biggest surprise in the collection comes from the youngest contributor, Lance Luce. If the lyrics of the Gershwin song "Summertime" declare that "the livin' is easy," the same does not apply to this prize winning arrangement for organ. It is complex, tense, and exciting. The chord progressions go about as far as you can get and still remain in this galaxy. Lance suggests the use of an auto-rhythm jazz waltz along with a third chorus piano solo (both hands, yet). Yes, folks, the mechanical marvel known as the theatre organ of the '20s has come a long way; and with Lance Luce and his generation testing the limits we can expect a bright, creative future.

In summation, the batting average of *Theatre Organ Greats* is fantastic, something for just about everybody — and then some more! Even if you don't play a note, you'll enjoy the biographies and pictures of the fifteen artists. It's handsome international sampling of outstanding musicians and their music. Don't miss this one!

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the letters to the editors

Letters to the Editor concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are encouraged. Send them to the editor concerned. Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.

Address:

George Thompson Editor P.O. Box 1314 Salinas, Calif. 93902

Dear President Haight:

Through the good offices of our mutual friend Judd Walton, I have just received the plaque commemorating your award of an Honorary Membership to your great society.

I very much hope you will believe me when I say that I am quite overwhelmed by this great professional compliment to me. I feel that my small efforts do not deserve such an honour, particularly in view of the fact that anything for which I may be remembered dates back to the nineteen thirties.

May I hope that you will express my deep gratitude to all members of your Board and assure them that I shall treasure your award always.

With my warmest appreciation and good wishes.

Sincerely yours, Sidney Torch August 23, 1980

Dear George,

Although I have seldom been lost for words, words did fail me when it was announced at the banquet in London that I had been named the "Theatre Organist of the Year 1980." It was an honor which was totally unexpected.

Somehow, upon reflection, it still seems unreal but appropriate that a charter member should be selected on the 25th Anniversary and that being the acknowledged Anglophile that I am, it should be announced in London.

I am grateful to all of my friends, young and old, that have made membership in the ATOS so much a part of my life.

Sincerely, Lowell C. Ayars

Dear Sir:

I just happened to turn on my TV set at 6:55 a.m. this morning, and heard the following announcement by Jim Bakker, president of the "Praise-The-Lord Club," which originates in Charlotte, N.C.:

"... We had planned for a special blessing. The Lord has put within our ability to take hold of, a beautiful organ, a theatre organ. We bought the old NBC pipe organ; we put it on hold, anyway - we didn't actually buy it, but we just said we wanted it. And three organs, three of the great pipe organs of America, most of them in the State of California - putting the three together, making one of the largest theatre organs in the world, to just roar out the praise of God. Five ranks bigger than Radio City Music Hall organ in New York. And I just got word, a few days ago, that one lady has agreed to pay for that entire pipe organ, and donate it for the Great Auditorium. I could not — I didn't want to take the Partners' money, because the Partners are building the building . . . but praise God, I'm going to ask that lady if she won't come on the air one of these days, and present that organ. And we're going to name the organ after her, by the way, as a memory for her life, and her great works, that she's done. So, that miracle tool place . . . ".

Apparently the contributors/members of the P.T.L. Club are known as "partners." If the above sounds a little choppy grammatically, it is because Mr. Bakker made the announcement extemporaneously, not reading from any cue cards or the like, and I snapped on my tape recorder to catch the announcement, exactly as it was made. I transcribed the above account from the cassette in my recorder.

I am too new a member of ATOS to know how much of this you are already on top of, or how much has been published nationally or locally, but very likely Mac Abernethy or somebody in the Piedmont Chapter has the situation under surveillance, and/or some member in California can discover which "three organs" will be combined. Incidentally, I am much pleased with the issues of the THEATRE ORGAN which I've read, and with the highly professional quality of the articles and the editing. With best regards —

Cordially yours, John Webster Minneapolis, MN

To the Editor,

John Muri's most informative and revealing articles have been appreciated to the point where I sort of look forward to them. However, in the April-May '79 issue Mr. Muri writes about "NOISE." This article seems to infer that some applause is needless noise. Applause is also a human characteristic which a person shows when feeling exhilarated, inspired and appreciative of theatrical presentations of a human voice or a musical instrument, a phenomenon far too complicated for my comment. However, in this particular article, Mr. Muri wrote one paragraph as follows:

"Aside from applause, there is unwarranted noise in theatres. There isn't much to be done about that until larger audiences permit the employment of more supervisory personnel (all right then — more ushers)."

I hope this paragraph intended to rightfully deplore unwarranted noise at concerts only, because I'm sure John would agree that any theatre pipe organs, when played by the great artists (one of which I consider Mr. Muri), are far too grand to require enforcers of attention stationed in any audience. We need only to recall the mighty theatre pipe organ was always somewhat synonymous with noise for which it was built to overcome. If you will remember the intermission noises of thousands finding their seats or locating packages and leaving their seats, in yesterdays movie palaces, while at the same time, organists like George Wright, in the unforgettable S.F. Fox, and all across the nation to

Don Baker in the Times Square Paramount, were syncopating theatre pipe organ combinations which defy duplication to this day. These Kings of the theatre Wurlitzers and their likes, are the ones who were able to bring these thousands from intermission restlessness to quiet appreciation of the final two (and hardly ever more than three) solo presentations of the interlude — usually billed as an added attraction which finally became "box-office" as much as the feature itself.

Noise while the mighty theatre pipe organ is playing? Yes, there continues to be some noise today. These latter-day installations are usually in restaurants, clubs or other public places, which, at times, are not unlike the noisy intermissions in yesterdays movie palace. Today's organist usually attempts to captivate a clientele already astonished by the looks and the sound of this instrument which overshadows everything else in place, including the menu and decor.

Very much like the noisy theatre intermissions of yesterday, I find today's noise exemplified when hundreds of restaurant patrons are finding their places in the multi-level, many-splendored Indianapolis Paramount Music Palace, while Bill Valsak and Donna Parker receive their attention from one of the largest Wurlitzers in the U.S. With Bill's theatre combinations - very much like those which captured vesterday's theatre audience (even a little of that chromatic descending Don Baker left hand) or Donna's scintillating popularities, these organists are able to repremier this incomparable "King of Instruments" to this generation. This is not always in the quietude of its undivided attention, but slowly gaining just that, as the theatre pipe organ is enjoyed in more public places.

In the meantime, never mind a little "NOISE." Think of how many have enjoyed every note of "Sabre Dance" played by George Wright, or "Dancing In The Dark" played by Don Baker at the Mighty Wurlitzer, while contending with a conversation in the adjoining two seats about "the daily bargains in Macy's basement."...?

John Mecklenburg CICATOS Indianapolis, Indiana □