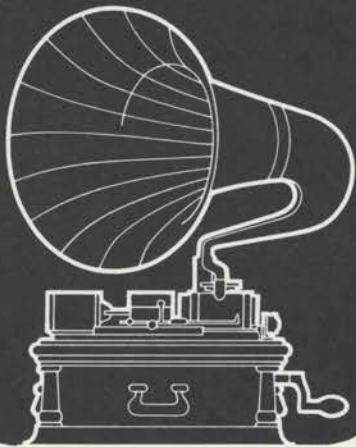


For The Records



Manufacturers, distributors or individuals sponsoring or merchandising theatre pipe organ records are encouraged to send pressings to the Record Reviewer, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. Be sure to include purchasing information (postpaid price, ordering address,) if applicable, and a black and white photo of the artist which need not be returned.

BUDDY COLE REMEMBERED. Buddy Cole playing the 3/26 Wurlitzer-Morton in his North Hollywood studio. DO 1421 (stereo). \$6.95, plus \$1.00 per order, postpaid from Doric Records, Box 282, Monterey, Calif. 93940.

It has been 16 years since we lost Buddy Cole. His reputation then as a pipe organist was only starting to get to the mainstream of organ hobbyists due mainly to two Warner Bros. record releases played on his "Wurlitzer-Morton" (two thirds Rudolph, one third Robert). There had been previous records on other organs but they were not widely distributed. Buddy didn't play concerts and most of his professional work was as a pianist in studio orchestras. Came the Warner Bros. releases and organ fans knew they had a winner. But it was too late. Shortly after the release of Warners "Autumn Nocturne," Buddy died. He was 47.

Few organists have been awarded the continually rising affirmative which organ aficionados have tendered the memory of Buddy Cole over the years since his death, based chiefly on the appeal of the few re-

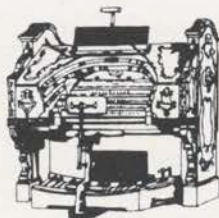
cordings he left us. All but this one are no longer available.

There were two pipe organs owned by Buddy Cole. The first was a 3/9 Robert Morton installed in his garage and laundry room. Later he acquired the style 260 Special Wurlitzer from the L.A. United Artists Theatre. He combined the two instruments in a special studio built on the grounds of a larger residence he bought in North Hollywood. When the organ installation had been completed, Buddy delighted in coming home after a day's work in a studio, and relaxing by playing his instrument. Recording was almost second nature to Buddy; he turned on his trusty Ampex nearly every time he relaxed at the organ. There was a reason; as his own severest critic Buddy studied everything he recorded. He was rarely satisfied. He could never have afforded commercial studio rental because of his method of recording take after take until he heard what he wanted to hear. Once he played a tune he had taped for some visitors and they were surprised to hear his voice ahead of the music calling "take 127."

Buddy became expert at handling tape. Record auditioners were quick to note the absence of the usual "thump" when a combination button was pressed on the console. Buddy simply stopped playing, pressed the button, then started playing on the new registration. Later he cut out the bits of thump-bearing tape and spliced the music-bearing lengths together. Rarely are his splices noticeable.

Season's Greetings

See You All in Seattle
in 1981



PUGET SOUND
CHAPTER

Buddy was always conscious of his lack of formal musical training which stopped after 1½ years of piano lessons as a boy. Yet it may be that very condition which led to his distinctive style of playing. Unfettered by age-old formalities, he let his imagination soar, just as the young Jesse Crawford did in the absence of formal training. Buddy liked to group his organ voices orchestrally — all the strings, all the brass, all the Vox Humana ranks together — for the contrast such groupings render. And that on-and-off tremulant was controlled by a spring-loaded lever he operated with his right knee. Pressure against the lever turned off the tremors it controlled when no hands were available which was most of the time during Buddy's demanding arrangements.

He had a few trademarks besides the tremors off bit, unusual and very contrasty registration, for example. Who ever heard of using a fat Diaphonic Diapason without trem for rhythmic pop music! And he developed the pedal glissando to a high degree of effectiveness. His playing of one tonality against a very contrasting one is another characteristic, sometimes as a stereo ping-pong effect, but then only for fun. In the same lighthearted vein he here inserts a couple of short palm glissandos in one arrangement. But these tunes were never intended for his public to hear.

What we have discussed is bound to raise a question; considering the very special conditions under which Buddy recorded, the neatly tailored instrument which fit him like a glove, his repeated "takes" and doing his own engineering, could he have made it without these special aids? The unlimited practice time and the repeated tapings were certainly factors, but they are results of his musical demands on himself and the discipline he applied to all his work, not to mention his mechanical ability; when he didn't have enough hands free to turn the tremors off and on, he rigged the knee-powered lever. That's at least a partial answer.

In the years since Buddy's death, a small group of his admirers and friends have sought to keep his memory alive, first by trying to get Warner Bros. and others who recorded him to reissue his records, or to re-



Buddy Cole. His music was ahead of its time.

lease the master tapes for reissue by another company. The pleas were barely heard; all the majors cared about was rock music profits. So then a search was made for unreleased music on tape. Buddy's widow, Clare, was most cooperative in digging out what was left.

So what we have here are twelve examples of the way Buddy relaxed at the organ. They are just as carefully executed and recorded as his selections for the big labels, his facetious moments notwithstanding.

Six of the selections are Cole originals and they are beauties. We'll never know whether he named them because only the music on tape exists. No titles nor notation. Ken Rosen, who was instrumental in helping realize the project, provided the names — except for one; the tune labelled "Soliloquy" reveals that Buddy had to be thinking of "When the Leaves are Turning" (in the *Autumn Nocturne* album) when he recorded it. In fact it's something like "Leaves" played sideways. Ken

wanted to call it "When the Terns are Leaving" but Doric would have none of it and renamed it "Soliloquy," although the "Terns" are mentioned obliquely in the jacket notes.

Buddy's compositions are named "Morning Panorama," "Winter Nocturne," "Waltz in G," "Rhapsody Moderne," "Clare" and "When the Terns" — er — "Soliloquy." The standards are: "They Can't Take That Away From Me," "The Moon Was Yellow," "When Your Lover Has Gone," "Beyond the Reef," "Willow Weep for Me" and a devastating "I'll Be Seeing You" which trails off to two notes on the Dulciana plus a light pedal root.

There is quite a difference between planning a record from scratch and putting one together from available tapes. There was no way to intersperse fast, slow, Latin and Beguine tempos to provide variety. Doric has accomplished this task with interest-bearing skill, both in the succession of selections and with a frequency response that goes lower and higher than on Buddy's previous records. Then there's the matter of dynamic range. Because Buddy was playing for his own pleasure he didn't have to worry about overloading record grooves. So he "let the organ out" during several tunes. The thunderous sound is reproduced with almost no distortion in these grooves. In fact, Doric Records is to be congratulated for simply undertaking the release of 18-year-old organ music with a market consisting mainly of a few thousand organ fans. The Doric people saw the value in Buddy's recreational music and decided to share it with all of us.

Buddy's stereo recording is excellent and it has been transferred to disc with exceptional care. The grooves are smooth. The disc is housed in a deluxe book album which opens to photos of Buddy and his studio (12 total), a detailed biography of the organist by Stu Green, information about the organ, comments about the musical stylings heard and Ken Rosen's notes about each selection, with much emphasis on registration analysis which he does expertly.

A vote of thanks to Doric Records and all who shared in the task of making this album a reality.

THE PARAMOUNT MUSIC PALACE PROUDLY PRESENTS DONNA PARKER AND BILL VLASAK, playing the Mighty (4/42) Wurlitzer Pipe Organ. Available from the Paramount Music Palace, 7560 Old Trail Road, Indianapolis, Indiana 46219. \$7.75 postpaid.

For some time we have been hearing about a fantastic organ in an Indianapolis restaurant, an instrument which started life as a 4/20 PUBLIX 1 in the Oakland, Calif., Paramount theatre. In the shuffle it has more than doubled its pipe inventory under the supervision of some of the best technical talent available, e.g., Ken Crome, Lyn Larsen, Ron Mitchell, Dick Schroder, John Ferguson, Bob MacNeur and others. Much emphasis has been placed on celestes; there are five. The enlarging includes some duplication. There are two Posthorns (well, it's a pizzeria!), two Tibias, and two Vox Humanas, one in each of the two chambers. We'll not get involved in an analysis of the organ because we have a feature story on it coming soon. But the overall tonal structure is pleasing to our ears as recorded here.

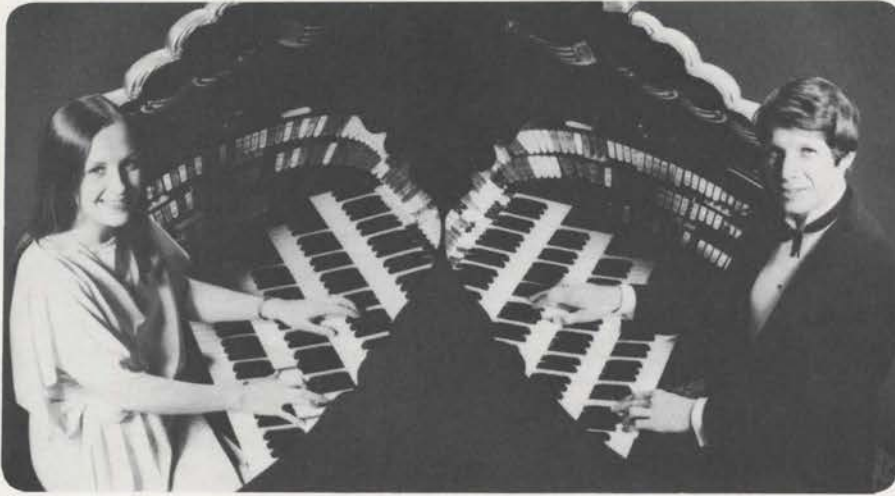
Both organists are young, yet they play with mature authority, the results of starting young. Donna was barely into her teens when she electrified attendees at an LA Chapter jam session by playing a precision "Dizzy Fingers" on the Elks bldg. 4/61 Robert Morton. Much credit for her artistry must go to her long-term teacher, Bob St. John. She demon-

Season's Greetings

from

Southern Arizona Chapter





Donna Parker and Bill Vlasak. They make "pizza music" a pleasure.

strates here that attention to detail and precision are still with her, even moreso.

We have not heard Bill Vlasak in person but if he maintains the standards demonstrated in this album, his musical future is assured.

Of course, this is a "pizza record" intended to sell over the console. As such, both organists are limited as to material and style. Yet, both manage to shine with considerable magnitude. Donna's contribution is on Side 1.

"Star Wars March" and "Cantina Theme." The "March" has an interesting pedal pattern which is probably Donna's addition as it isn't pronounced in the soundtrack album. The "Cantina Theme" is the best yet, a corny 1920's-type tune full of "rip-tip-tippy" passed off as futuristic by Hollywood.

"Dinner Music for a Pack of Hun-

gry Cannibals" misses it a mile when compared with the '30s Raymond Scott quintet rendition. Donna plays all the notes in a bravura style but the essence just is not there for those with memories of the original. Others will find it to be a repetitive pattern tune.

"Through the Eyes of Love" is a well-conceived adaptation of the theme from *Ice Castles* during which both lush mixes of color voices appear but also some solo reeds.

"Honky Tonk Train" is obviously an effort to please the pizza parlor denizens who prefer sound effects to music. Donna whumps up the best train sounds we've ever heard from an organ, and the "choo-choos" are realistic, in case any current record buyers ever heard a steam locomotive in action. "Music Box Dancer" sounds almost Mozartean on the pitched percussers. The current "pop" is played with theatre organ trappings.

"Hoedown" is old-time Americana in all its square dance glory. Loaded with country/corny references, it stresses the country fiddle up to here with good results for those who like the bucolic. Donna performs faultlessly.

Side 2 stars Bill Vlasak, a seasoned performer on the pizza circuit. He opens with an energetic "Under the Double Eagle March" which reveals he has been listening to the George Wright version, although he adds the whistle cues of an imaginary bandmaster with good effect.

His second entry is "New York, New York," and it is well played. The key change adds interest.

One of Vlasak's best numbers is

"As Time Goes By." This ancient Bogart/Bergman movie vehicle remains ever popular and Bill performs it with feeling and sympathy, although we felt the pedal cymbal was an intrusion. But he handles the bridge with wonderful sensitivity in a ballad style and with very colorful instrumentation.

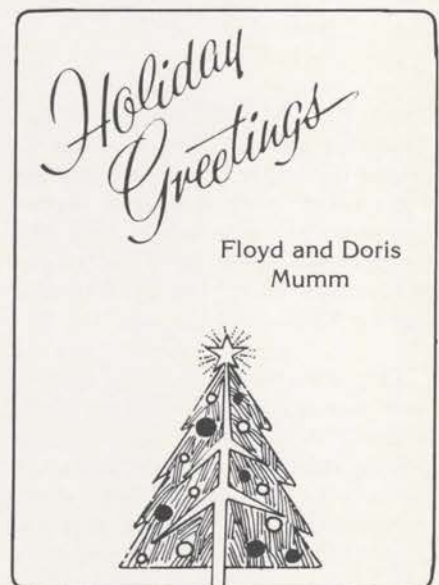
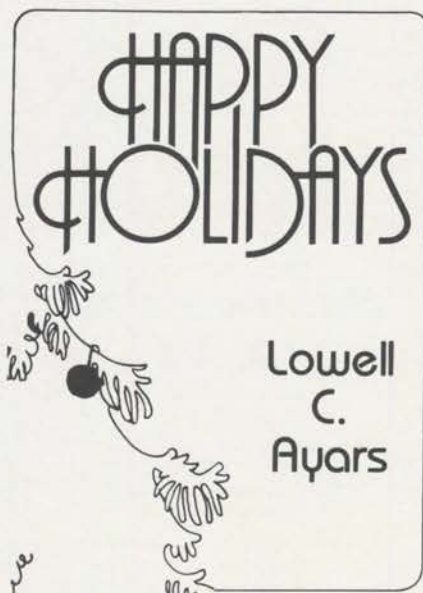
"At the Hop" is '40s big band magic as simulated by skillfull use of brassy organ facilities.

With a name like Vlasak he's got to be great with polkas and he is. "Clarinet Polka" gets the full treatment and it's a bright spot on the disc.

Perhaps Bill's most effective set is his "Civil War Medley." Such tunes as "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Dixie," and "Battle Hymn of the Republic" are elegantly mounted in a contrasting setting of brass and flute combinations, plus lots of drums. But it's the inclusion of Middleton's "Down South" which sets this grouping apart. Written many decades after the Civil War, it somehow illustrates the mood of the ante-bellum times.

If a choice must be made we would probably give the Bill Vlasak side a slight edge for its more colorful arrangements, variety of registration and the contrasty tune list. But the entire record is an attractive representation within the parameters of pizzery music.

The disc is packaged in a deluxe book album which opens to a fine color representation of what customers see on entering the room, the



entire installation. Recording is good. John Ferguson's well-written jacket notes include a stop analysis. This one is among the better pizza organ albums.

JACK LOREN PLAYS THE LOS ANGELES SHRINE MOLLER ORGAN is available by mail, \$10.00 postpaid from Artistry Records, Box 2201, Canyon Country, Calif. 91351.

A few years ago organist Jack Loren cut the first hi-fi stereo record on the gigantic LA Shrine Auditorium Moller organ. He managed to get some fine theatrical tones from the 4/73 beast which was designed for both concert and theatrical work. Jack financed the entire project from his own pocket so the number of pressings had to be limited. Yet, long after Jack had sold all his pressings the demand continued. He has now made arrangements to reissue the album but as a cassette. He has anticipated the oft-given reason for avoiding cassettes by record buyers; no jacket notes. The back of the album, which bears information about the music, organ and organist, has been reproduced and is part of the package offered. The album is memorable for the big hall sound (6,600 seats) and also for the arrangements Jack dreamed up to present an off-beat selection of tunes. Included are: "Mambo Jambo," "Entrance of the Little Fauns (Pierne)," "Save it Pretty Mama," "La Rosita," "Java," "She Called Me Baby," "Edelweiss," "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" and "Mister Sandman," plus several others.

THE PLUG-IN CORNER SOUVENIRS OF MELODY HILL, played by Ashley Miller on a System 920 custom Allen electronic organ. Available by post from Melody Hill Productions, Box 306, North Haven, Connecticut 06473. Postpaid price is \$8.50

Here's an album born of friendship, that of Ashley Miller for Stillman and Claire Rice. With Ashley coming over from New York to relax with the Rices and play their custom Allen, why not make a record? This is it. The organ is a very special model. The jacket notes state that



Ashley Miller. He discovered an amazing electronic.

the sound is produced by three computer memory banks programmed with the sounds of actual pipe organ ranks. So we are actually listening to pipes via a complex recording system. The tonal results are excellent; the theatrical voices stand out in welcome contrast to some of Allen's earlier attempts at pop organ building when its collective mind was focused on building straight organs. There's no hint of Allen's former "straightness" in the Rice custom instrument; Tibias are lush, Strings sizzle nicely, color reeds do their chameleon bit and Brass is bright without being strident. And there are non-tonal percussions in evidence. It's an instrument which should have the Rodgers Co. looking to their laurels in the T.O. field.

Ashley Miller needs no biography here. His reputation as a top organist gained at Radio City Music Hall, playing sports events at Madison Square Garden and at posh New

York hotels, not to mention ATOS events, has etched his name with the great ones. He applies the same fine musical workmanship here that he put into his records made on the RCMH beast, which are still available.

With one exception, his tunelist is traditional theatre organ, but not necessarily his treatments: "On a Wonderful Day Like Today," "L'Amour Toujours L'Amour," "Valse Triste (Sibelius)," "Rock-a-bye Your Baby with a Dixie Melody," "Caribbean Holiday (original)," "Something's Gotta Give," "Melody of Love," "Can This Be Love?," "Spanish Dance No. 2 (Moszkowski)," "Body and Soul," "Dizzy Fingers."

It's difficult to pick out any one number as exceptional in performance because they are all beautifully performed, so we'll name favorites. Ashley gives a dramatic reading of "Valse Triste" played in its entirety, which never happened when its opening phrases introduced radio's *I Love a Mystery*. The bossa nova beat of "Wave" is infectious as is Miller's own "Caribbean Holiday" which reminds one of "Brazil" in its Samba/Meringue rhythms. "L'Amour" has Crawford open harmony as does "Rock-a-bye" but it's mostly Ashley. "Body and Soul" is Helen Morgan torchy. And he puts more into Zez Confrey's "Dizzy Fingers" by keeping the speed reasonable, unlike so many organists. But enough comment. It's a very fine combination of an advanced electronic organ and imaginative artistry.

Geoffrey Paterson's jacket notes are intelligently written and informative about both the instrument and music. Recording is in living room perspective and not hyped by added echo. It adds up to a step forward for the electronic organ, and it won't do Ashley Miller's reputation any harm, either. □

**Summer Fun
in '81**

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