



Music Review

by Walter J. Beaupre, Ph.D.

LYN LARSEN THEATRE ORGAN COLLECTION: Transcriptions by Ken Rosen, Gentry Publications, 1980 (available in music stores or from Hinshaw Music, Inc., P.O. Box 470, Chapel Hill, NC 27514; \$4.95 plus postage).

The *Lyn Larsen Theatre Organ Collection* contains seven original compositions by the popular organist which have been transcribed by Ken Rosen. "Stanley," the first of the seven, was formerly reviewed in *THEATRE ORGAN* (Vol. 19: No. 2, April/May, 1977, pg. 21) after its initial publication as a separate theatre organ solo. It remains one of the delights of the present collection.

"Lullaby" relies heavily on a lush tibia/vox registration to keep things smooth and dreamy in 3/4 time. The main theme in A minor is a pleasantly romantic tune with a much more intriguing counter melody. The second theme modulates to A major with "lotus land" chords in the left hand. Right hand chords don't go any place special, but the total effect is satisfying. Back once again to the A minor theme which resolves happily into an A major coda. The simple Crawford rolls are judiciously introduced but may be a bit too predictable the fourth time around. Actual-

ly, there's not a thing wrong with this piece which couldn't be improved with more careful editing. There is a mistake in the first measure on page 8 (the C in the left hand chord should be C#). The same error occurs in the first measure of the bottom staff on page 9, and in the fourth measure from the end: all the C notes for the left and right hands should be sharped.

Lyn Larsen's "Sorrento" bears no resemblance to "Come Back to . . ." except that both are in waltz time. Lyn becomes more demanding with his portamento embellishments including a three-note chord roll that will take considerable practice to execute smoothly. The first theme is written in F, the second in A-flat. The restated primary theme builds to a stirring climax which should please the many fans who long to sound like the fabulous Larsen. As a whole, the arrangement is solid as a rock — just what you'd expect from a first rank performer and arranger. Is it a tune you'll whistle all the way home? One or two blocks, maybe, before you switch to the other "Sorrento."

"Sounds of Wonder" is a sprightly console raiser in the "I'm Just Wild About Show Biz" tradition. As such it is a welcome relief from its overworked forebears. The oom-pah accompaniment is both solid and in-

ventive. The big right hand chords are rich and syncopated. Choruses strut confidently back and forth between E-flat and C. Registration changes also make excellent sense. Playing "Sounds of Wonder" up to tempo is going to take plenty of practice, but it should be a crowd pleaser.

"The First Day of Spring" is another waltz, this time strongly influenced by the late Richard Rogers. It has the feel — if certainly not the melody line — of "Carousel Waltz." Lyn's tune is mostly in the key of C with brief sorties into E and G (sharp haters beware). The only real technical challenge is a G 7th chord glissando.

"I Just Don't Understand" turns out to be a ballad with a gentle rock beat in the pedal line. Again, Lyn is generous with very specific and very good registration ideas. If your organ is blessed with second touch, you'll know right where to add the tuba. The final ballad in the set is seriously romantic with a modern religious fervor built in. One can almost hear Debbie Boone singing it. It modulates to D-flat for the second chorus and to D for the big finish.

Reviewing original tunes always poses a problem. Has Lyn Larsen written seven smash hits which will stand the test of time? That would be expecting too much even from an artist whose special talent is pleasing audiences by giving them what they want to hear. Let's just say that these are faithful transcriptions of fine theatre organ arrangements of new tunes. The occasional mention of other well-known works in this review was not meant to imply deliberate imitation or borrowings. This is a collection of grand Larsen — not "petty larceny!" Whether we have Lyn to thank or transcriber Ken Rosen, the registration ideas for tab organs alone are well worth the asking price.

As for the three pages of photos, there is nothing — including an unswaddled Lyn on a baby blanket — which would in any way limit the sale of this book to adults over 21. The pictures may be suitable for blackmail, perhaps, but not for framing. All joshing aside, the thirty pages of beautifully printed theatre organ music are really where it's at. Intermediate-to-advanced players will have a fine time with this collection. □

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