

Europe Calling America

... By Ralph Bartlett

MAY I COMMENCE by saying how much I appreciate the honour your Editors have given me, in asking me to contribute an article to the very first edition of *THE TIBIA*. I control, as some of you will already know, The Robinson Cleaver Theatre Organ Club, and its subsidiary publication *Theatre Organ Review*. My committee join me in wishing your enterprise every success, as I know that the theatre organ has a lure to the old and young alike—and at heart we are all youngsters!

Coming to organ topics, during 1954 I personally covered eighty-eight theatre organ shows in England and Scotland, from as far afield as Aberdeen in the extreme North, to Bournemouth in the sunny South. This grand total of organ solos covered the three main types of organs used in the British Isles, namely Compton, Christie, and Wurlitzer. The three main cinema circuits (Associated British Cinemas, Odeon Theatres, and Granada Theatres) were included in my visits, as well as several independent concerns.

During 1954, the position of theatre organists here in the British Isles was as follows: Associated British Cinemas have an excellent team of fifteen who tour the country, and whose welfare is controlled by a Musical Director who is himself a well known broadcasting organist. Odeon Theatres have but three organists in England, all of whom are based in the West

End of London. They also have another organist in Eire, who is extremely popular in Dublin. In the latter part of the year, Granada Theatres reduced their organ staff by three, leaving only four to tour the circuit. However, 1955 sees the three displaced organists playing on Sundays for the company, so it is now a case of "organ-ising" on Sundays as well as weekdays at several Granada houses. The number of organists employed by independent concerns is but small.

On the Continent there are numerous electronic jobs to be heard, but too few pipe organs. In Holland, however, the position is reversed, for the two main broadcasting systems have theatre organs in their studios. Germany (Hamburg) and France (Paris) also use theatre organs, but less frequently than Holland. Denmark gives occasional Wurlitzer broadcasts, but not to the extent of pre 1939. The remainder of Europe is lost as far as theatre organ music goes, so it appears that the British Isles are still the last hope in the field.

I hope you will forgive me for not mentioning one solitary organist's name, but like your organization, one must commence from the roots, and then branch forth into blossom, so that all being well, the organists will come in due time. Nevertheless, to mention all the organists over here would complete one copy of your publication, so be content, and wait for the next issue.

to 3rd Act of "Lohengrin," "In a Monastery Garden," "Light Cavalry Overture," "Wine, Women and Song," "Anvil Chorus." #1057—"Foort Pops"—"Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," "The Continental," "My Heart Stood Still," "I'll See You Again," "Night and Day," "All the Things You Are," "Blue Tango," "Lover," "My Heart Stood Still."

Two discs featuring **TRUMAN WELSH** on the Amphitheatre unit organ in Paramount, California, were released under the **Broadcast** label: #608—"La Rosita," "Pizzicato Polka," "La Cumparsita," "Someday," "Romance," "Frasquita's Serenade," Drigo's "Serenade," "Vilia"; #612—"I Love You," "Kiss Me Again," "Ramona," "Blue Tango," "I'll Always be in Love With You," "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," "Mexicali Rose," "La Golondrina."

To those who are interested in hymns and sacred selections played on the "theatre" organ, the recordings of **PAUL MICKELSON** and **LORIN WHITNEY** will be of interest. A variety of discs are available from **Christian Faith Records** (4705 Elmwood Ave., Los Angeles, Cal.), and **International Sacred Records** (6404 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, Cal.). Most of these recordings are available from dealers in religious articles, many of whom carry good stocks of sacred recordings.

The Replica Record Company, as its first new offerings for 1955, brings more of the "stunning tonal combinations" of **LEON BERRY** on Rep. 33X505—Vol. III of "Glockenspiels, Traps, and Plenty of Pipes." Rep. 33X504 (12-in.) features **AL MELGARD**, a pioneer radio organist of Chicago at the "World's Largest Unit Organ"—the 7m Barton at the Chicago Stadium: "My Vision," "Whistling Farmer," "Drifting and Dreaming," "Barn Dance Medley," "Naughty Waltz," "Invercargill March," "Dream Train," "International Medley," "Pennsylvania Polka," "Chop Suey" and "Glide Waltz."

The organ stylings of **PAUL GARSON**, well known as organist on the popular radio serial drama "One Man's Family" and whose organ transcriptions have been widely used in radio broadcasts, are available on sixteen 12-in. **Hi-Fi** recordings from Century Studios, 5864 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, California.

"**GORDON KIBBEE** plays the Mighty Wurlitzer Organ" is the title of Album #7002 by **Starlite Records**, 858 Vine Street, Hollywood 38, California. Selections are: "I Could Write a

Book," "Bewitched," "Do it the Hard Way," "You Mustn't Kick it Around," "Circus on Parade," "My Romance," "Over and Over Again," "Little Girl Blue," "The Most Beautiful Girl in the World," and special arrangements of "The Continental," and "Louise." The organ is the Wurlitzer 5m/22r residence organ of Richard Vaughn.

Any of our readers who are familiar with the unique organ stylings of **GEORGE WRIGHT** on **Regent** and **King** labels are in for an unusual treat (see ad elsewhere in this issue). Comments Mr. Wright:

"I signed up with **High Fidelity** instead of a major for two good reasons. I'm allowed to choose the selections I record and they are perfectionists in the field of reproducing sound with startling realism. In short, I want to record things I like to play and I want them to sound right."

Another 12-in. disc and several 45's are being readied for release. Of the latter, R-501 is now available with the following selections: "Melody—of Love?" (Medley)—"Melody of Love," "Waltz of the Bells"; Davy was Crooked!—"The Ballad of Davy Crockett," "Yankee Doodle," "Girl I Left Behind," "Hearts and Flowers."

Five discs by **TRUMAN WELSH**, Broadcast 100 to 104 inclusive, were released.

Additional sacred recordings by **HERMAN VOSS**, are available from **Singspiration Records**, P. O. Box 1, Wheaton, Ill.

Recorded Tapes

It was inevitable that the next step for the hi-fi organ enthusiast would be tape recordings. Already several recorded tapes are available. **Omegatape** 7009 features **GORDON KIBBEE** at the Vaughn 5m/22r Wurlitzer (selections cited above). It may be procured from the International Pacific Recording Corp., at either 520 Fifth Ave., New York 36, New York, or 858 Vine St., Hollywood 38, California.

The **A-V Tape Libraries, Inc.**, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N.Y., has issued an "Organ Reveries" series: #601, 602, 603, 604 by an unidentified organist.

From **High Fidelity Recordings, Inc.**, 6087 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood 28, California, recorded tapes by **GEORGE WRIGHT** on either 15 or 7½ ips dual or single track **Hi-Fi** tape, are available, the selections as previously cited.