

down" counter melodies and harp plinks on manuals 1 and 3. Otherwise its a low key rendition of a recent pop. The "Ave Maria" effect closes the tune.

"The Continental" briefly solos a bright untrem'd brass voice. It's a fast, flashy and rhythmic interpretation of the forgotten dance made briefly popular by Fred and Ginger back in the '30s.

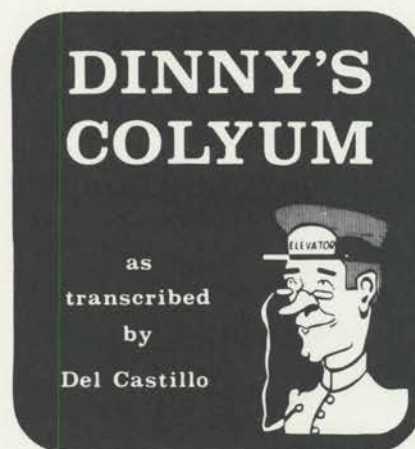
There's always one goodie in an album which seems to shine more brightly than the others. Such a selection is Hoagy ("Stardust") Carmichael's "One Morning in May," an exquisite tune to start with. A few titles back, we weren't overly enthusiastic about Hector's application of Buddy Cole effects. He more than makes up for any previous shortcomings with this selection, which is admittedly inspired by a Cole recording. Hector has expertly recreated the mood, nuance, registration and phrasing of the original. As for registration, Hector does it with 15 ranks (Cole had 26). The musical acumen with which Hector reproduces the elements of this arrangement, with its unique harmonies and offbeat tonal structures, suggests the possibility of an *Olivera Plays Cole* album.

"Exodus" is the title music of the remembered film. It's played mostly in bravura style with lots of untrem'd full organ. There are quieter moments of exposition which build interest but the main emphasis seems to be on the crescendo pedal. Yet, it provides an appropriate *grande finale*.

This recording has a wide dynamic range to accommodate Hector's penchant for alternating a very soft combination with full organ. We caught just a smidgeon of distortion on some of the loud passages, but not enough to mar the music. Jacket notes include a brief history of the theatre and some biography of the organist. Hector wrote the notes about the music. There are a few minor printing typos, but no meanings are affected. The jacket bears a striking color photo of the Embassy auditorium with the console up and spotlighted. Profits realized from the sale of this album are spent on organ maintenance and improvement. Imaginative playing and a fine instrument, well-recorded, add up to a worthwhile package. □

## Doric Discontinues Discs

THEATRE ORGAN has received confirmation from Dick Penberthy, of Doric Records, that the firm has discontinued production of records. The stock on hand has been turned over to the Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, Massachusetts 02184. Doric will continue to offer recordings in the open reel and cassette formats, but there will be no new pressings of current discs. Doric's address is P.O. Box 877, Vacaville, California 95696. □



Musta been back in the '20s when I begun to pay attenshun to the organ playin in the movies. Thats a dead givaway on account of that was over fitty years ago and that makes me a pretty old geezer. But anyways nobody could halp noticin the organ player because plum in the middle of the show up they come on a elyvator to play a solo in the spotlight and then when they finish they go back down into the seller slick as grease and maybe that is why I notice them on account of I am a elyvator man myself. And of course that aint really nothin for them days because they was these De Looks theayters with big simpany orchestras and the whole kit and kaboodle of all 80 of them would come up on a elyvator that took up the whole orchestra pit.

Of course they was all kinds of organists that did different kinds of solos. They was Jessie Crawford who they called the Poet of the organ who did mostly classical songs and ballads like and then they was organists like Henry Murtagh or C Sharp Minor who rote up there own jingles like and put them on steryoptican slides, and then they was singin organists like Milton Charles who give out with the pipes and I dont mean

the organ pipes. They all had to think up ideas that would go over good with the audience and they was helped out by companies that made up Original Slide Novelties that they sold to the organists and then they was the pop music publishers from Tin Pan Alley who saw theirselves a chance to get into the act by puttin out illustrated slides with the words of the pop hits they wanted to sell. So of course that led up to the Songalog as they called it when the audience was suppose to join in.

So then somebody gets the idea that if one organ is goin to be popular why two organs is goin to be twicet as popular and pretty soon they get three organs goin at the new Roxy Theayter in New York City but that was too much so mostly they cut down to two organs at both ends of the orchetry pit. I remember they was one time in a theayter in Boston durin the summer when a organ duet was announce on the screen and the number one organist dint show up so the number two organist run acrost the pit and punches the button to take the organ up into the spotlight on account the organ he was on dint have any elevator and while he was playin the number one organ player staggers in late and opens the door into the pit but the organ had already gone up and he falls into the pit in his white summer suit and gets all covered over with black grease to say nothin of gettin fired but two weeks later he gets his job back because the manager says he would rather have him drunk than any other organist sober. Now dont get to thinkin that was Mr. Crawford who not only dint drink but had his wife playin the second organ and besides like I said he dint go in for the trick stuff so much.

One of the stunts the organists use to do was to put a singer or a violin or a sax player up in the organ chambers and pretend it was a organ stop. But mostly they would have singers or players or like that there come out and perform on the stage or at the side of the organ. One organ player did a solo on School Days and had three little girl singers perched on the top of the organ. Then they was a gal organ player who had a organ record hid up in the organ chambers that she could start, so when it started she got up and left the organ and it went on playin like she was still adoin it. Oncet Mr. Murtagh fell into the

orchestra pit and broke his arm, so he had a little portable keyboard hitched up so as he could keep on playin with his arm in a sling. I even see a organ player oncet who finish his solo by lyin on top of the organ and playin upside down.

Mr. Crawford he was called the Poet of the Organ but the real poets was the boys who could make up there own jingles and rite parodies to popular songs. Mr. Murtagh was one of them like that there, and I still got a copy of some slides he made that started out Hello Jim and Bob and Molly, Ignatz, Patsy, Ruth and May, Hello, Mrs. Schmit, by golly, youre all lookin fine today. Well, it aint Shaksear but it made him a good livin and he wound up by managin the theayter in Buffalo where he was playin. Of course thais aint to say that the best organ players dint play straight solos too. Mr. Crawford wasnt the only one. Most of the big time boys could knock off a big overture or a concert peace just as good, and sometimes they would even rig up a arrangement where they would have the orchestra join in. And in them days it was a novelty to do demonstrations like that showed off the different stops and effects that people wasnt use to on organs.

Them was the great days for the organ players, and it was too bad when the sound pictures come in and they wasnt in demand any more. The good ones hung on because they was popular, but they was a awful lot of unemployed organists in the 30s. And we still got a lot of good ones doin concerts and comin up in the elyvatours like in the good old days. I just heard Mr. Rex Koury do one and he was rite in there doin Original Novelties like My Life As A Organist with parodies on pop songs that fit in with the story. And the audience still givin him a hand when he come up in the spotlight just like the Good Old Days. So I guess the Original Organ Novelty aint dead yet by a long shot. □

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## THE ACOUSTICAL CONSULTANT

# The Effects of Distance and Relative Humidity on Acoustics

by R. J. Weisenberger

We all know the effect distance has on the overall sound level. According to the classical rule, the sound level will fall off by 6 db every time the distance from the source is doubled, provided there are no obstructions. This is known as the Inverse Square Law.

We also know that in a reverberant environment a point will be reached (known as the critical distance) where a further increase in the distance from a sound source will have little effect on the overall sound level. In most rooms the critical distance will be found to be approximately one-third the length of the room from the sound source.

We should also know that most rooms have natural resonant frequencies, usually at the bottom end of the audible spectrum. Such resonances will be minimal in rooms with non-parallel surfaces; this is one of the reasons for good acoustics in some of the older, ornately decorated theatres.

Reverberation time is a function of the reflectivity to sound of various surfaces, and will always be greatest in rooms with hard, reflective surfaces. Plush surfaces tend to absorb sound. For every second of reverberation time, the sound has been reflected around the room approximately 1100 feet.

So far we have been assuming that the laws of acoustics which apply to sounds of low to middle frequencies would naturally also apply to high frequencies. Tests have shown that this is not the case. Air itself tends to absorb high frequencies to a greater degree than low frequencies, and this degree of absorption is a function of relative humidity. For this effect to become noticeable at the highest audible frequencies, sound need only travel a distance of forty feet or so from the source. At a frequency of

16 kHz (the highest audible harmonic of the top note of a 2' stop) and at a distance of 120 feet from a source, the sound level will be approximately 15 db less than that predicted by the inverse square law alone.

Such severe high frequency attenuation would result with a relative humidity of 20% and a temperature of 20° C (68° F). However, these are about the worst possible conditions, acoustically speaking. At the same temperature and a relative humidity of 40%, conditions are improved considerably.

Because most of the output in musical material occurs at frequencies below 2 kHz, we would sense such natural high frequency rolloff as a "mellowness," rather than a loss of fundamental tone itself.

Large rooms will tend to be less reverberant to high frequencies than to low or middle frequencies, because of the distances involved. As the ear is generally more sensitive to middle and high frequencies than to low frequencies, a sound that would appear well balanced or bright at close range will seem dull or even "mushy" at a great distance.

It is for reasons such as those mentioned above that more attention needs to be paid to the study of pipe acoustics, and to the factors relating pipe design to actual performance capability. Installations which today's organ builder would simply write off as technically or economically unfeasible may become commonplace with the understanding gained through a continued program of acoustical research.

Readers may send questions to Mr. Weisenberger in care of THEATRE ORGAN. Mail should be addressed to 3448 Cowper Court, Palo Alto, California 94306. Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. □