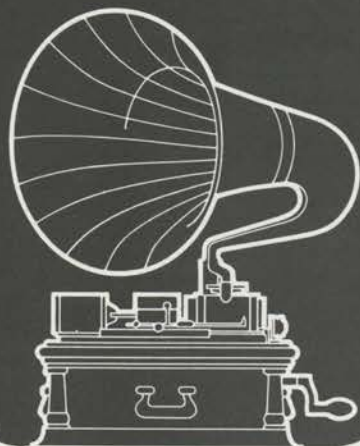


For The Records



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 (post-paid price, ordering address,) if applicable, and a black and white photo of the artist which need not be returned.

THE MAGNIFICENT SAN SYLMAR WURLITZER. AGAIN PLAYED BY REX KOURY. HMR 1274 (stereo). \$7.95 plus \$1.00 shipping (1 or 2 pressings) postpaid from Rex Koury Productions, 5370 Happy Pines Drive, Foresthill, California 95631.

Rex Koury needs no detailed biography here. From RKO's "boy wonder" to mature musical artist, his life experiences have covered many phases of music dear to the hearts of theatre organ and "cue music" fans. His concerts have made him known and appreciated from coast to coast. What he does, he does well.

The instrument started as a 3/17 Wurlitzer in an Atlanta theatre. When it was purchased for installation in the Merle Norman Tower of Beauty in Sylmar, California, enlargement was anticipated and provided for; it now boasts a four-manual console and 35 ranks of carefully selected, and in many cases reworked, pipes (not 25 ranks as stated in the jacket notes). It is one of the best-maintained instruments heard on records. Rex Koury has made a

number of records on various organs, ranging from a 2/7 to the 4/36 Wichita Wurlitzer, but the San Sylmar organ seems to provide the facilities which make the most of his pronounced orchestral thinking as applied to organ arranging. It can be both intimate and majestic, plus many gradations between, and Rex knows how to use them all to the best advantage of the music being presented.

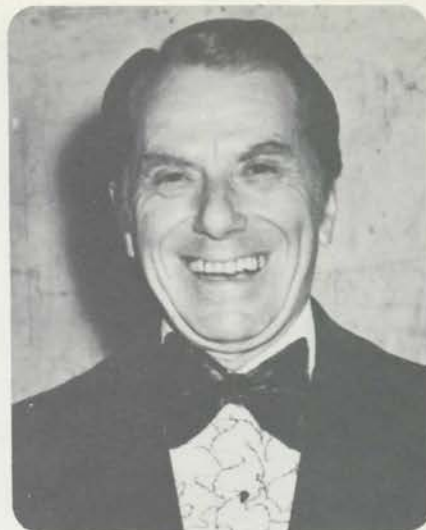
In preparing his tune list, Rex has avoided the oft-recorded pot boiler in favor of the offbeat musical adventure.

Selections from *The Music Man*, are a 9-minute, 30-second potpourri of the well-known and lesser-known tunes from the rich score of a beloved American musical. Meredith Willson's music has rarely been afforded a more loving presentation. Of course "76 Trombones" and "Goodnight My Someone" (did you note that they have the same melody line?) are there. So are "Till There Was You," "Lida Rose," "It's You" and "Gary Indiana," all treated in styles which present them at their best. There's no trouble in River City with Rex at the helm.

"Beautiful Lady in Blue" is pure theatre organ. Note the engaging Tibia counter melody and open harmony which add lustre to this memorable oldie. "You Needed Me" is provided a mostly understated treatment, which does well by this contemporary tune. Note the "cascade" closing touch.

A well-phrased "I'll Take Romance" illustrates the Koury way with colorful registration, while "The Little Shoemaker" subtly pictures the making of a pair of brogans (or dancing slippers) right before our ears. A novelty tune complete with tapping and a lilting tempo.

Fritz Kreisler wrote "Liebesfreud" (Love's Joy) as a violin solo, but organists have noted that its rich melody and impassioned phrases are excellent organ material. Rex Koury lets the composer shine while he supplies the engaging instrumentation. It's entirely different during "What is There to Say?" which is an exercise in Rex's arranging abilities, and they are considerable. It's a ballad treatment with plenty of opportunities for colorful harmonic invention and Rex doesn't miss one of them. Get those 9th chord progressions near



Rex Koury.

the close. There's something "Brahmsian" about "One More Walk Around the Garden" (from the show, *Carmelina*). It's subtle, melancholy and entrancing when presented in theatre organ style. Once more the emphasis is on ballad phrasing and registration to bring out the beauty of a simple melody.

The closing ten minutes are devoted to something very close to Rex Koury's heart, his durable "Gun-smoke Suite." As most readers know, Koury was the original musical director of the long-running radio and TV "oater," and the royalties are still coming in for the syndicated reruns. Rex has tested the suite on concert audiences over the years and has experienced much enthusiasm among listeners. This, then, is the definitive version of the tunes, which are entitled "Dodge City" (title music), "The Kansas Prairie" and "Kitty's Saloon." The "Prairie" is a musical representation of wide open spaces which conjures imagery of "prairie schooners," their white canvas "sails" contrasting with limitless blue skies as they traverse seas of grass. Poetry!

The "Saloon" scene starts with the inevitable barroom piano sequence, followed by "hurry" music which may picture the usual Saturday night saloon brawl, or it could picture good old Matt Dillon pursuing them dirty rats in the black stesons. Your pictorial reactions may be quite different, but the thing is that the music is imaginative, many cuts above what was afforded comparable westerns of the period. It's all good movie music and there is not

a dull moment in the ten minutes and 40 seconds.

Harold Powell's recording and tape editing add enhancement and HMR's review pressing is pop-free, quiet and unwarped. Jacket notes are adequate, if a little on the brief side. In all it's a package which we feel will delight the theatre organ enthusiast.

SWEET CITY WOMAN. Candi Carley playing the 3/16 Wurlitzer organ. Minx No. 2003. \$8.95 postpaid from the Minx Record Co., Box 737 Dept. 3C, Norwalk, California 90650.

This is Candi Carley's third theatre organ record and we are happy to note that she maintains the high standards she set for herself with the previous releases. Charlotte Olson's jacket notes sum it up: "Candi has that special quality . . . It is possible that her blindness is partly responsible, for Candi uses music and the organ as a means of communication."

The instrument is once more the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium 3/16 Wurlitzer, with each stopkey on the console labelled in Braille with a temporary sticker for Candi's convenience. The excellence of the instrument in its fine acoustical environment has been noted in many previous reviews, so let's get to the music.

The list of selections ranges from the middle of the last century (the hoedowns) to the present, and all receive treatments in accordance with their popular periods. Candi can play "mod," contemporary, theatre organ, cornball — whatever the era and mood of the music suggests.

The album title selection is a mod-style presentation with the identifying "rum-te-tum" rhythmic pattern. It is played in the upbeat manner so typical of Candi, the exposition of a happy person. A good opener to set the scene for what follows. "Can You Read My Mind" is based on a phrase from the Richard Strauss tone poem "Tod und Verklärung," actually the "transfiguration" theme. It has been expertly adapted to the pop medium, a dignified and impressive theme for Candi's orchestral skills. Incidentally, this theme was apparently excerpted by composer John Williams as a sorta love theme for the new *Superman* movie, but without credit to the original

composer (as he must have lifted the *Star Wars* theme from "Born Free"). No matter; its listenability is tops.

Back to the "rum-te-tum" for Dolly Parton's rhythmic theme, "Nine to Five," written for a movie which deals with the machinations of three "office girls" with hectic verve. Viva les dames!

"Willow Weep for Me" is a mostly theatre organ styling with some accompaniment rhythmic effects thrown into the ballad presentation. Candi's thoughts are rarely away from the blues, and some seeps through with good grace and skilled harmonic structuring. When the tune's composer, Ann Ronell, heard Candi's arrangement, she phoned her congratulations.

Side One closes with a welcome Fats Waller medley. Waller's organ work has been largely neglected by organ fans; he deserves better. To us, Fats could do no wrong in composing and playing pop jazz. His timeless renditions of his own and other pop tunes continue to interest scholars of his era, as well as of the present one. Candi is always true to the spirit and intentions of Waller but she is not slavishly imitative. What results is a most enjoyable visit

with Fats as seen through the sensitive musicality of Candi Carley. The tunes are "Keepin' Out of Mischief," "Aint Misbehavin'" and "Honeysuckle Rose." They are a joy!

Side Two opens with a well-thought-out arrangement of the old rhythm ballad "Sweet and Lovely," which is far superior to the one on the old Lew White 78, the only one handy for comparison. Of course Candi has a far superior organ to work with; Lew's record was probably made on that boxed-in Kimball in the Roxy Theatre broadcast room, where he made many 78s and electrical transcriptions. Even so, Candi's conception is sexier.

Next it's "all aboard" for a little corn labelled "Hoedown" which includes lively country-style renditions of "Orange Blossom Special," "Wabash Cannonball," "Turkey in the Straw," "Chicken Reel," "Oh Susanna," "Old Folks at Home" and "Dixie." The last two are played simultaneously, in that familiar counterpoint so long dear to keyboard players. Candi pits the Xylophone ("Dixie") against the Tuba ("Swanee River") with ear-tickling results.

"The Masquerade is Over" is pre-



Candi Carley.

sented as a slow rhythm ballad. It is a particularly well-phrased effort, phrasing being one of Candi's strong points. "New York, New York" is played as boisterously as it was in the movie, a diamond-in-the-rough in the "dese, dem and dose" idiom typical of New York jargon, which is not without Gothic affection. It's "big city" music in the best tradition of Lou Alter ("Manhattan Suite") and Alfred Newman ("Street Scene") and Candi makes this boldly clear.

Candi's closer is an Irving Berlin oldie, "Remember," which the famed but then penniless songsmith wrote, if our memory is in gear, to impress and influence a millionaire's daughter he was courting. Yes, he married her! With ammo such as "Remember," how could he miss! Candi's rendition has strongly Crawfordian overtones but is not an imitation. Very listenable.

One of Candi's plus characteristics is her practice of devoting all the groove time necessary to present a tune fully, rather than stuff the vinyl with an abundance of two-minute titles. Considering the medleys as single titles she averages just over four minutes a title on Side One, and 3.45 minutes each for Side Two. Richard Simonton's recording is good. It has auditorium perspective without sacrificing intimacy. The review pressing is quiet and fault-free.

Charlotte Olson's notes about artist and organ are fine but brief. There is nothing about the music (not even tunesmith's names) to help orient the selections and much space is given to listing favorable published comments of various reviewers of Candi's previous releases. All of which has no bearing on this disc. Candi doesn't need outside puffery anyway. Her music speaks well for her. So does the album front cover which presents a striking color photo of a very attractive organist.

THE ARTISTRY OF JOHNNY KEMM, played on the Lowrey "Celebration" electronic organ. Winmill (stereo) No. 212. \$7.95 post-paid from Johnny Kemm Music Studios, Box 1101, Joplin, Missouri 64801.

Last year the organ world was shocked and saddened by the death of pop organist Johnny Kemm. He



Johnny Kemm.

was allegedly a murder victim. Kemm was a fine organist. His musical skills went far beyond the needs of the demo records backed by his long-time employer, Lowrey. Many of his records are devised to spotlight the special facilities offered by various models, yet he never compromised musicality to demonstrate an effect or sound.

Johnny Kemm was a "regular" at the various Adventures, Happenings, Festivals and Hootenannies scheduled around the country to promote electronic keyboard instruments. His friendly approach endeared him to all who came in contact with him. He was a real southern gentleman and a formidable musician/entertainer. We will miss him.

The Lowrey "Celebration" is a 2-manual (61 keys), 25-pedal instrument. It is well-equipped with the essential organ and orchestral voice simulations, plus a battery of automatic rhythms. It will be recalled that Lowrey was one of the builders which introduced other than flute voices at a time (the mid-'50s) when flute sounds had dominated the industry for twenty years. The first was a string sound in the Lincolnwood spinet. This voice was unified at 16', 8' and 4'. The firm has built on its orchestral voices ever since. Johnny Kemm here uses the tonal facilities always tastefully. The old pro, Johnny Kemm, knew how to achieve balanced registration.

A swing medley consisting of "Your Momma Won't Dance" (with nice vibraharp variations), "Gypsy Rose" and "Everybody Loves a Lover" opens the set with gusto. Automatic rhythm is used with good effect, as well as the Low-

rey's piano voice. Orchestration is uncomplicated and enjoyable. A venture into South American Samba rhythms is provided by the old favorite, "Brazil." The auto-rhythms are there for punctuation and the spirit of good times dominates. "Sleepy Shores" is an atmospheric musical sketch which makes good use of an English Horn (Cor Anglais, not Posthorn) solo voice. The accordion voice of the Celebration model is well-demonstrated by "Mona Lisa," which also features orchestral bells and a Vibraharp. "Pennsylvania Polka" has all the zip the Andrews Sisters put into it in their unforgettable World War II vintage platter, with rhythmic assists again from the automatics. An especially lovely treatment is afforded "The Sound of Music." The piano voice blends with organ voices yet gives the attack an edge.

"Honky Tonk Train" is the expected choo-choo type boogie-woogie with a little wah-wah at the close. "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes" features country piano and guitar voices, well synthesized by the Celebration. "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" first features theatre organ Flutes and later an Oboe-like reed voice. The verse includes Glockenspiel bells. A very subtle harmonization. Next, one of Johnny's favorites, "Our Private World," a nostalgic ballad from a Broadway show. Johnny goes hoe-down for "Wabash Cannonball," with happy guitar twangin' and banjo pickin'.

Johnny's big patriotic closer, labelled "Americana Medley," would certainly please George M. Cohan, the stage star-tunesmith who wrote the first tune, "Yankee Doodle Dandy," and the third, "You're a Grand Old Flag." The latter includes some tremors-off majesty. Between them comes "Dixie" counterpointed with "Yankee Doodle," then Gershwin's "Swanee" with plenty of banjo pickin'. The finale is "Stars and Stripes Forever" (Sousa), the best we've heard since George Wright's, complete with that ear-tickling piccolo icing and there is no overdubbing. The organ supplies all the brass and reeds one expects of a marching band while the relentless four-to-the-bar cymbal never misses a beat throughout. A Bull Fiddle voice provides the bass rather than the usual

Tuba, a novel switch.

Although this recording was designed to demonstrate the many orchestral and organ voices of the instrument, the musical acumen of Johnny Kemm dominates. Recording is okay. The arrangements cover a very wide range of frequencies and they are grooved faithfully. We experienced some distortion during loud passages. This may be a fault of one particular pressing, rather than the initial taping.

During his recording career, Johnny Kemm cut nine discs, most of them (if not all) on Lowrey models. While we would like to have heard him on other brands just for variety and comparison purposes, if we had to choose one to remember him by, we would select this one. □

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE

by Lance Johnson

Q. Our ATOS chapter takes care of the three-manual theatre organ in our local high school. We have a problem with tuning because of the great variation in temperatures. The school will not heat the auditorium unless there is to be an event. The heating system is tied in with the organ chambers, so we have to tune the organ with cold temperatures in winter. Do you have any suggestions as to tuning the organ with our handicap?

A. You will never have an organ that stays in tune if you tune the organ at different temperatures throughout the year. Much of your efforts will be wasted. I would suggest that you negotiate with your school to have the swell shades re-

Do you have any questions?

Send them direct to:

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Box 1228
Fargo, ND 58102**

versed if they don't already operate "normally closed." Then make arrangements for the organ chambers to have their own heating system. The least expensive would be portable electric heaters. You will have to consult with an electrician on this to make sure the electrical system can stand the extra load. If your school does not approve of this expenditure, your chapter would be much better off using some chapter funds to heat the chambers. You will reap great benefits, as you can at least tune the organ and keep it reasonably well in tune.

Q. We are about to refinish our chapter console in white and gold. We are uncertain as to the procedure for applying the white finish. Would you suggest paint, lacquer or what?

A. I am assuming that you have removed ALL the old finish down to the bare wood, and the wood has been carefully sanded, finishing with 220 grit, so all sanding scratches have been removed. Your first step is to prime it with gray lacquer primer. You can spray this generously so that it can be sanded and still have no bare spots showing through. Sand with 220 grit so that all wood grain texture has been covered over and the surface is as smooth as glass. Now you are ready for the white treatment. If you prefer an antique effect such as used by Wurlitzer, you will need to tint your white with a very small amount of lacquer yellow and lacquer brown. You should experiment by filling a small paper cup halfway with white and then just add a drop or two of the two tinting colors until you have found it to your satisfaction. Try it on a piece of wood, allowing it to dry sufficiently so you see the true color. To prepare the material for spraying, allow much more mixed material than you

think you need. The reason is obvious; if you run out, there is very little chance that you will be able to exactly match with a new batch. After you have sprayed three heavy coats (without sags) you are ready to prepare for the finish coat. Obtain some 400 grit wet-or-dry sandpaper, tear it in half along the short side and fold in thirds. Then using water with your paper, sand with the grain to remove any pock marks so that you indeed have a glassy surface. You then thoroughly clean the surface of all sanding dust and spray your finish coat. As you will be using gloss white lacquer which you have tinted, you may not want a high-gloss surface, but a semi-gloss antique look. The gloss can be reduced in one of two ways: Using powdered pumice stone and linseed oil on a rag and rubbing with the grain; or using 4-0 steel wool. The steel wool treatment will leave the surface less glossy than the pumice and oil. Whatever you do, *don't* use paint and *don't* apply your material with a brush. Good luck! □

Closing Chord

Llelyn J. (Lee) Haggart was born on June 4, 1905 in Pasadena, California. He attended grammar school in Hawthorne, and when he was ready for high school the family was living in Inglewood, California. In this third year of high school, he noticed a theatre being built. When he went around back, he found two men unloading a truck full of organ parts. "Want a job, kid?" The questioner would play a prominent part in Haggart's organ career — Frank D. Rogers. So would the other man, James H. Nuttall, a former chief reed voicer for Robert Hope-Jones in Elmira, New York. So, Lee Haggart started what would be a distinguished career, unloading Robert-Morton Bourdon pipes behind the Inglewood Theatre.

Lee had to make a decision. He was into athletics and in high school had distinguished himself in the high jump, discus, hurdles and shotput. His prowess was sufficient to rate an offer of an athletics scholarship from USC. But before he could graduate he was noticed by Morton's Leo F. Schoenstein.