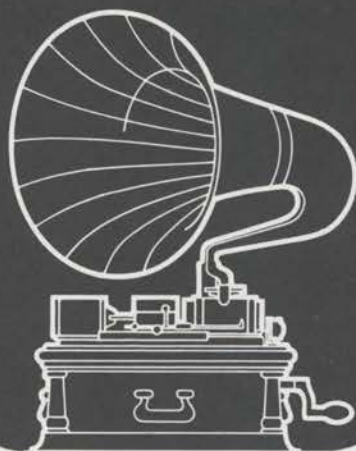


For The Records



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.

DEAN HERRICK: THANKS FOR THE MEMORY. Played on the Herrick studio 3/17 Wurlitzer organ in Parktown, Johannesburg. Two-record set No. MFPD 1. \$11.00 postpaid by international money order made out to Dr. A. J. Hovis, 60 Cotswold Drive, Saxonwold, Johannesburg, 2196 Transvaal, South Africa.

He was playing the 5-deck Wurlitzer in the Chicago Marbro Theatre at 17. He was the first organist to risk a hotel engagement playing the brand new and unproved Hammond organ at Chicago's Bismark Hotel in 1935. Then he demonstrated the Hammond at Radio City Music Hall. One of his notable acquaintances was the late pipe organ expert Lee Haggart, who was then supervising Hammond installations. Times were tough for pipe people in 1935.

Dean Herrick was born in Dixon, Illinois, where he was the boyhood friend of a youth with a strong desire to become a radio announcer — Ronald Reagan. Like most musically gifted people, he started playing very early and was attracted to the theatre organ

in the twilight of its show business reign. But with theatres dropping organ music and the electronic organ replacing pipes on records and in radio, Dean Herrick made a decision which would change his life; he would go some place where pipes were still in vogue. He selected the Republic of South Africa, a country which boasted seven Wurlitzers and one Möller. There just had to be something there for young Dean Herrick. Indeed there was. Arriving in 1936, by 1937 he had started broadcasting via SABC radio, a Sunday program which established a longevity record — 40 years!

The Herrick approach to the theatre organ was new and different to Johannesburgers. The instrument had been chiefly an accompaniment for silent films but Herrick soon established himself as a personality, entertainer and showman when he presided at the console of the Metro Theatre's Wurlitzer, and later at the 20th Century Theatre. He involved the organ in the popular stage presentations and was instrumental in locating and developing new talent.

When the Metro Theatre discontinued stage presentations, Dean Herrick bought the Wurlitzer and had it installed in his Parktown home where he continued his Sunday broadcasts. There seems to be some question as to the original size of the organ; it is referred to both as a 3/13 and a 3/15,

but no matter. In his home studio, Herrick built it up to a 3/17, and that's the organ heard here. Full of years and honors, Dean Herrick died in 1981, South Africa's most beloved theatre organist.

The selections appear to be a representative grouping of tunes which Dean Herrick found attractive. His broadcast theme was "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You," then "Thanks for the Memory," "On a Clear Day," "Lady of Spain," "September in the Rain" (erroneously listed as "September Song"), a memory of WWI — "Keep the Home Fires Burning," "Summertime" (*Porgy & Bess*), "Blue Skies," "All the Things You Are," "When I Look in Your Eyes," "When Day is Done," "Some Enchanted Evening," "High Noon," "Alfie," two recollections of WWII — "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square" and "Bless 'em All," "Granada" (the sole concert piece), "Misty," "The Way We Were," "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," "Over the Rainbow," "The Sound of Music," and "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You" (reprise).

There are no surprises in the selections so far as special arrangements are concerned. Herrick plays most of the tunes as though reading from the sheet music, with the standard harmony and counter melodies intact. He plays cleanly and with good phrasing, although he doesn't use the swell



Dean Herrick at the console of his ex-Johannesburg Metro 3/17 Wurlitzer. He broadcast its music for many years from his Parktown studio.

pedals much; most of the tunes are played at the same level.

He leans toward full registration with changes every few measures. His favorite solo voice is a very good Trumpet or sharp Tuba, which he uses in both the baritone and high treble ranges. He also makes good use of Tibia and Vox. There is an especially good acoustical mix between the flues and reeds. Apparently Dean Herrick was not too keen on percussions, although his instrument surely had the standard layout. He very tastefully employs the Chrysoglott Harp and an occasional chime, but sparingly. Many of the pop and standard selections are played in an attractive "slow fox" tempo. And he does very well with such ballads as "When Day is Done." Dean includes one hymn, "I'll Walk Beside You," played both on church-like voices then on Tibia/Vox registration.

Recording is very good, in close-up (studio) perspective. The pressings are flawless. The well-conceived double jacket opens to photos of Dean Herrick made at various times in his career, from the handsome youth at the Marbro console to the still handsome oldster. Here's a record showing an approach to the organ in another part of the world, yet it's so much like ours. The two-record set was sponsored by Dean Herrick's widow. The price is right and don't be thrown by the necessary international money order.

WURLITZER MAGIC: DON THOMPSON PLAYS YOUR REQUESTS on the 3/12 Wurlitzer organ in Toronto's Organ Grinder Restaurant. Available only in cassette form. \$7.50 postpaid from Pipe Organ Presentations, 3678 Arcadian Way, Castro Valley, California 94546.

This may be a last chance to hear Don Thompson at the Toronto Organ Grinder Wurlitzer (we believe organ-builder Dave Junchen can take credit for the good organ sound). Don has resigned and moved to Northern California where he is currently playing at the granddaddy of all organ-equipped pizzerias — Carsten Henningsen's Ye Olde Pizza Joynt in San Lorenzo.

Don Thompson is so well known to organ aficionados through his concerts and many records that no biographical notes are required here. This recording was originally released



Don Thompson. Back in California.

as a disc. Don informs us that the 2000-record batch was quickly sold out, but to accommodate those who have been unable to obtain the disc he is ready to take orders for cassettes.

This program consists of selections often requested in the Toronto Organ Grinder during his seven years there. Let's examine the requests.

"Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines" is typical "kiddie's night" pizzery music, a concerto for organ and auto horn, all at a fast tempo with plenty of noisemakers. *The Sound of Music* medley includes six favorites from the venerable pot boiler. There's some provocative harmony in the title tune. "My Favorite Things" is spiced with Glockenspiel plinks and other percussions. "Edelweiss" is charmingly played on lush registration, while "The Lonely Goatherd" may be classed as "Austrian hillbilly," a fast waltz in the Lederhosen/Volksmusik vein. And Don milks it. "Climb Every Mountain" is majestic. "Sleighride" (a troika from *Lt. Kije*) rivals Delius' "Winter Night" for lively horseplay. "National Emblem" (Sousa) gets the full brass band treatment (it's the one where "the monkey wraps his tail around the flagpole"). "Tico-Tico" somehow caught the public fancy when Ethel Smith wiggled through it in a '40s Esther Williams MGM musical, playing a Hammond. Actually, the speedy tune is best adapted to the B-3 Hammond, but Don does a far better registration job without losing the fast tempo. "Homecoming" features the somewhat choppy piano, but Don's treatment is on the tender side. Fans of New Orleans Dixieland

will appreciate especially Don's second chorus of "When the Saints Go Marching In" with its Satchmo-like jazz trumpet rides.

The pitched percussions get a workout during "Music Box Dancer," a bit of 18th century-style musical fluff. "If" is perhaps the most appealing ballad on the cassette. It is well phrased and registered. Don and the music achieve a delightful oneness of expression. The organ's fine Tibia and Vox help.

"The Midnight Flyer" is a good example of the non-Sousa descriptive marches popular in the early years of this century. This one depicts a steam-powered train speeding along the gleaming rails at night with the clickety-clack of the metallic wheels bridging the rail linkages with even cadence, the glow from the open firebox door reflecting fiery streamers on the trail of smoke above the cars, its chime whistle moaning that mournful call so dear to the hearts of the legion of organ fans who are also train buffs. Don lets the tempo and drive of the music through meadows, woodlands and jagged "rock cuts" tell the story without sound effects, leaving it to the hearer's imagination. It's a goody.

"The Rainbow Connection" is a most engaging ballad from *The Muppet Movie*. Don resists the temptation to Kinura solo a frog voice (Hi, Kermit!) in favor of playing it pretty. "Teddy Bears' Picnic" is good natured cartoon music with a perennial appeal to small children and organists (from the earliest days of organ recording). Don's rendition is rhythmic but smooth. Don's closer is a sweet "Hawaiian Wedding Song" with implied sandy beaches, swaying palms, mai-tais and colorful costumes. It's a gentle and appropriate ending for one of Don Thompson's better recording efforts.

Recording is good.

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