

the Latin "feel" by simply sustaining your left hand chord and using one of these pedal variations.

1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&
P				P		P	
R				5		5	
1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&
P		P		P		P	
R		R		5		5	

Most of all, don't become discouraged when approaching these new rhythms. Remember, always practice slowly and steadily, one idea at a time. Have fun experimenting with these new rhythms, as well as new styles, new registrations, and new arrangements! □



*Manufacturers, distributors or individuals sponsoring or merchandising organ recordings are encouraged to send review copies to the **Record Reviewer, THEATRE ORGAN, 3448 Cowper Court, Palo Alto, California 94306.** Be sure to include purchasing information (post-paid price, ordering address) and a photo of the artist which need not be returned.*

**BILLY LIVE AT WICHITA POPS, Billy Nalle at the Wichita Wurlitzer, WTO Label. Available from Billy Nalle Music, Suite 2205, 400 West Central Avenue, Wichita, Kansas 67203. \$11.00 postpaid USA.**

If we re-spelled the French term *originale* to read "originalle," we'd

have a capsule description of Billy. What separates him from the other great theatre organists is his restless inventiveness. He has few imitators because his "style" precludes allowing musical ideas to become comfortable clichés. Consequently every record release is a whole new show. In this instance the show is not to be missed. It is a fascinating revitalization of tired old tunes so that they are once again vibrant and fresh. All selections were recorded "live" at a Pops concert on May 21, 1983.

Most would agree that nothing short of the Heimlich maneuver could restore life to the much-abused Gershwin classic "Strike Up the Band." Billy has it alive and kicking in two minutes flat with masterful modulations, an abrupt tempo change to a walking strut, and registrations which build to an exciting climax. There is never any doubt who's boss at the console.

Hints of "Ol' Man River" echo untremmed as Billy sets the mood for the ultimate interpretation of "Shenandoah." Tremmed Vox's supported by gently celesting strings usher in the main theme. An untremmed horn picks up the gauntlet and then passes it to masses of strings in ascending harmonic patterns. Gorgeous. We never know until Billy gets there where his inventions will take us. There's a new vista around every bend in the river. All organ voices are crystal clear and perfectly balanced. Now and then a hint of percussions, and then back to the moody, peaceful flow of the melody.

Billy roars into "Jalousie" as though it had never been played before on theatre organ — and gets away with it. The main tango theme is clean and impelling. A four-beat interlude provides a blast of fresh air before returning to tango land. Thanks to Billy Nalle, "Jalousie" is an old friend in a very stylish new outfit who sounds 20 years younger!

Quiet, mysterious organ voices introduce "The Summer Knows," a Michel Legrand movie theme. The haunting melody hides the fact that the harmony is a treacherous swamp of key changes and unusual modulations. Billy seems to relish the challenge and glides through the progressions with lovely lush sounds. His economy of pipe voices is brilliant. He explores the hidden recesses of the melody and counterpoint with the

panache of an Indiana Jones.

The smart album cover has pictures of Century II Center at night (mit fireworks yet!) and the Pops audience at Billy's concert. There are no jacket notes, probably because tune introductions are in the record grooves. During one of these intros homage is paid to Lena Horne with the declaration that she "knows precisely how and when to twirl her tassles." No slouch in that department himself, Nalle swings easily into "It's All Right With Me." Opening registrations are deliberately understated to give the tune plenty of room to build. And build it does, unhurriedly, with an incisive rhythmic pulse. The figures Billy uses to fill out the lines always surprise and delight; so do his unconventional harmonic progressions. The "big band" sound takes over as excitement builds to a fine jazz climax. Deftly, Billy backs off just before the big finish to add punch. You can catch your breath while you flip over the record.

"I'm Just Wild About Eubie (Harry)" disarms with a wonderful piano-plus-percussions first chorus. It's vintage honkeytonk all the way, but the second chorus sneaks in a few 2' pipes, followed by more percussions and ranks in the lower registers. There are more knockout choruses before Billy even begins to strut his stuff. Fresh and fun. Let the Tuba with Harp "Send In the Clowns" so that the strings and lighter reeds can take over: that's the Nalle strategy. Subtle changes in tempo add to the mood of the Sondheim standard. Billy isn't afraid to let an untremmed solo reed



Billy Nalle



carry the melody line for long stretches. This tune supplies proof positive that, for shades of playing and sound colors in registrations, Billy Nalle is the Rembrandt among theatre organists.

We next hear that the Wiz of Wichita plans to mix the old "New York, New York" ("the Bronx is up but the Battery's down!") with the 1977 tune of the same name. In this reviewer's opinion the wedding doesn't quite come off. It isn't in Billy's nature to invoke the "high sleeze" hokum necessary to sell NYC's official anthem. The Wichita Pops audience applauds it ecstatically — but those good folks are not writing this review. Percussionist J.C. Combs joins the former Paramount Wurlitzer for a virtuoso finale. "That's Entertainment" is lots of pyrotechnics and a few slipped beats between drums and organ. But, let's face it, the old "tassle twirler" Billy Nalle has a long way to fall before he becomes just another pretty face.

For a live recording the sound is very good, the organ close to perfection, and the playing flawless. With Billy Nalle in residence, it might be wise to book all foreign and domestic travel these days via Wichita, Kansas. His latest recording is recommended for all critters with one or more ears!

WALTER J. BEAUPRE

**POWER PIPES.** Dan Bellomy playing the (Portland) Organ Grinder restaurant Wurlitzer organ. \$11.00 post-paid from Dan Bellomy, Box 66392, Portland, Oregon 97266.

This is not the first recording by Dan Bellomy we have reviewed. Besides some electronic organ sides, he turned out a memorable biscuit on the Fort Worth Casa Manana Wurlitzer a few years back. We first became acquainted with Dan after he wrote us from his Texas home. He had a thirst for pipes and figured that the Los Angeles area was a hotbed of pipe organs. We invited him to check out his beliefs. He showed up, fresh from Texas and loaded with enthusiasm. We took him on an organ crawl involving the major instruments in the area; the Whitney Studio Robert-Morton, the Wiltern Theatre Kimball and the Wurlitzer in the Bob Carson home, to name a few. He was enchanted. So were we — with the unquestioned talent and ability of the



Dan Bellomy

young man. We have followed his career ever since, with never diminishing wonder.

A native of Houston, Texas, Dan started organ studies at 9, made his TV debut at 11, started playing professionally at 12. He did a stint at the aforementioned Casa Manana and later was lead organist at the Denver Organ Grinder. He also did a stretch at the Los Angeles Great American Wind Machine pizzeria for Mike Ohman. Dan has also done considerable demo work for electronic organ companies, jobs which have taken him to faraway places with strange-sounding names. And always his music-making ability has grown and grown.

He is especially adept at playing jazz. Jazz on pipes is a very special art and not many organists attempt it. Very few names come to mind in the field of pipe jazz — Helen Crawford did it well, and who could forget "Fats" Waller? But not too many others. Yet, Dan is tops. He's equally satisfying with a ballad. The subtle and complex harmonizations he presents here are just as great as his jazz improvisations. Let's examine the tunes in detail.

"Show Business" (Billy Nalle) is an appropriate brassy and rhythmic curtain raiser, the type that promises goodies to come. And come they will.

Dan takes wonderful care of "When I Fall in Love," which we recall as an early TV series signature tune (was it *Life With Father*?). The ballad facilities of this truly mighty Wurlitzer are brought into play, lovingly, from the scene-setting atmos-

pheric intro. The first chorus initially features a high-pitched brass reed with great effectiveness. The second chorus is played against a Dunstedter-style rhythmic pattern. Dan's harmonic sophistication make this ballad a joy to hear.

"Will You Still Be Mine" is the next vehicle and there are no dull moments. It's played at breakneck speed and the jazz melodic variations leave one a bit breathless.

When one hears the title "You Are My Sunshine" one conjures visions of "gittars" and country-style pickin' and pluckin'. Not Dan. It's his dad's favorite tune and Dan has arranged it as a slow ballad, rich in an acquired harmonization of unexpected attractiveness.

A Fats Waller medley of "Honeysuckle Rose" and "Aint Misbehavin'" brings us back to the jazz idiom. They are played in strict tempo with pedal cymbal accompaniment, drums and some wonderful brass "sneers."

Fast tempo marks Dan's arrangement of "You," a tune that pictures a row of high-stepping chorus girls giving their leggy all. An atmosphere of theatre and show biz is rampant, even though Dan's notes indicate that he hears it only as music to sink the console into the pit after the organ presentation. Either way, it's a gasser.

Side II opens with a wild "Just You, Just Me," an ancient ballad, so hoary that we recall it as the theme of an early talkie starring Marian Davies! Back then it was played with much schmaltz and sentiment. But times change. Dan discovered that it makes a fine jazz vehicle.

In complete contrast is the ballad treatment of "Don't Take Your Love from Me." The subtle harmony played on gorgeous instrumentations is abetted by accompaniment tonal percussions and expert use of the expression devices.

"Finger Fling" sounds like a fastie by Leroy Anderson, but it was actually written by the late organist Milton Page. It moves with "Holiday for Strings" speed and is truly a "finger buster."

Eddie Dunstedter has long been an idol of Dan Bellomy. To honor the memory of Eddie, Dan offers the maestro's radio theme, "Open Your Eyes," a deceptively simple slow ballad which many organists have attempted but rarely hit squarely. Dan



does, with this accurate recreation of the Dunstedter style. The tempo, registration, phrasing, and mood — they would win Eddie's approval.

"Lullaby of the Leaves" is another ballad which Dan has discovered makes an ideal takeoff point for up-tempo jazz variations. The tonal and non-pitched percussions get a workout.

There's a magic moment during *The King and I*, when Madame Thiang declares her love for the King. It's one of those ballads which build and build, and this huge instrument has the capacity to express the power of that declaration. Dan sees to it that the King gets the idea.

The Portland Organ Grinder restaurant organ is now a 44-ranker, having been enlarged from the 3/13 Wurlitzer originally in the local Oriental Theatre by organ-builder Dennis Hedburg, a man who knows how to match and mix pipe ranks. This organ is one of the finest recording instruments. It has some automatic rhythm gadgets that purists may object to but which Dan Bellomy uses with great skill.

The selection and treatment of tunes in no way reflects the pizza parlor locale. Recording is excellent. The review pressing was glassy smooth. Jacket notes about Dan were written by the noted organist Billy Nalle. Dan wrote the notes about the music and the instrument. It's a first class package.

**AMERICA, THE BEAUTIFUL, Ruby Braff and Dick Hyman, Concord Jazz GW-3003 (also available from PATOS, 126 Orin Street, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15235; send \$10.00 to cover record, postage and handling).**

Whenever a theatre pipe organ makes its debut on a highly respected jazz label (Concord), that's headline stuff! Much of the credit for this debut goes to the Pittsburgh Area Theatre Organ Society for its restoration of the 2/10 Wurlitzer originally installed in the Brooklyn Prospect Theatre (1927) but now the pride and joy of Keystone Oaks High School in Dormont, Pennsylvania. PATOS also sponsored the concert by Ruby Braff and Dick Hyman which became the basis for this album.

Ruby Braff may be an unfamiliar name to T.O. fans who haven't been

around much mainstream jazz. The superb cornet player has never enjoyed the popular notoriety of a Satchmo, Bobby Hackett or Roy Eldrich, and that's a pity. Ruby's gutsy tone is rich and mellow with a knife edge to cut through the sweetness. He plays with emotion which is utterly sincere and straightforward — never cute and coy. His improvisations are breathtakingly original: the melody is always there, but Braff's cornet makes additional statements about the melody which consistently sur-

prise and delight.

Like a Sidney Torch or a Rex Koury, Dick Hyman is one of those rare mega-talents who does everything well. He's a very successful composer, arranger, orchestrator, band leader, pianist, electronic organist and theatre pipe organist. Many of the unique sounds Hyman gets from the PATOS Wurlitzer are well worth close study by students of theatre organ technique. But one must listen carefully for Dick Hyman on this record because Ruby Braff

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Ruby Braff



Dick Hyman

dominates the duo every time he cuts in with his horn. Hyman is definitely "second fiddle" on pipes. Some of this uneven match may be due to recording technique. The cornet is miked to perfection: incredible presence, just the right reverb, the ultimate horn recording. In contrast the Wurlitzer pipes are clear and clean, but very weak and distant much of the time. Poor mixing or poor microphone placement has given the pipes and (especially) the percussions an unfair handicap.

Assuming that the reader's interest is primarily theatre organ, the reviewer will avoid where possible extended rave notices for Ruby Braff solos. Let it simply be acknowledged that Winton Marsalis (the more contemporary and cerebral) and Ruby Braff (the more melodic and emotional) are the two greatest living horn players, and get on with the business at hand.

Dick Hyman's best Wurlitzer work is in "I Ain't Got Nobody" while Braff takes a breather. Dick plays in an elegant '20s style with a langorous lilt and lots of variety in registrations. The 4' and 2' voices add a nice brilliance, and the organ sounds like it should — great! The chromatic chord progression at the climax is a bit hokey, but the first five minutes and fifteen seconds have been sheer magic.

The next best Hyman is on the title tune "America, The Beautiful." Dick begins with an untremmed big church sound and later in the arrangement goes French modern. Braff's lightly swinging horn is joyous and always reverent. This may well be the finest instrumental recording of this inspiring hymn ever conceived. It is so lovely it will bring tears to your eyes.

Another gorgeous surprise is the

Gordon Jenkins' tune "This Is All I Ask." Hyman recreates Buddy Cole and the organ shines through in spite

of the fact that Braff plays cornet the way the Greek god Apollo might have — if he'd had that much talent! It's a

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classic.

In the Louis Armstrong theme "Sleepy Time Down South" Hyman's playing is primarily supportive. The muddy registrations are designed to blend into the woodwork. Even Dick's brief solo stints are subdued, though interesting. Anything exciting is left for Ruby. "When My Sugar Walks Down the Street" is '20s fun with string stings *a la* George Wright. Most palatable, but the beat is lost in the miking strategies. "When I Fall in Love" is a memorable ballad — and all Braff — nevertheless, Hyman's lightly tremmed ensemble accompaniment is most satisfying.

Wurlitzer percussions provide a tasty intro for "Apple Blossom Time," and when Dick takes a solo, the Glock licks serve him admirably. Ruby rides along about a beat behind while the organ plays melody notes. It's heady stuff.

"Louisiana" has a nice bounce and lush Wurlitzer strings. For a while both men are swinging, but not quite together. Hyman supplies a "Nola"-type beat, and then switches to a "boogie" solo. The two wind up the proceedings sounding like a big band. "High Society" is the closest thing in the album to hot jazz. Ruby Braff's cornet rides rough-shod over Dick's

most imaginative improvisations, but the performance must have been a proverbial barn burner for the live audience in the auditorium. "As Long As I Live" may not win many converts to the theatre organ for its jazz beat. Pedal notes are completely lost. The end result is bounce without drive.

Taken as a whole, the quality of playing on this recording is exceptionally fine. Recalling the words of lyricist Katherine Lee Bates, one might say that every musical note in *America, The Beautiful* is a gem "... from C to shining C!"

WALTER J. BEAUPRE □

1985 ATOS Convention Schedule (Artists and locations subject to change.)						<i>Curtain Call</i> AFTERGLOW
	AUGUST 3 SATURDAY	AUGUST 4 SUNDAY	AUGUST 5 MONDAY	AUGUST 6 TUESDAY	AUGUST 7 WEDNESDAY	AUGUST 8 THURSDAY
<b>M O R N I N G</b>	REGISTRATION 9 AM	CIVIC OPERA HOUSE Hector Olivera  BRUNCH at BISMARCK HOTEL  MEMBERSHIP MEETING	PATIO THEATRE Leon Berry  Chuck Wlodarczyk on "RIVERVIEW"  AXLE ROLLER SKATING RINK Fred Arnish	GATEWAY THEATRE Dennis Wolkowicz & Sally Daley  PICKWICK THEATRE Tom Wibbels	Optional tour to MUSIC BOX THEATRE	ADLER PLANETARIUM Sky Show  PIPES & PIZZA Dave Wickerham  Lunch
<b>A F T E R N O O N</b>	WGN TV STUDIOS (first 200) Barbara Sellers  or MAINE N.H.S. (next 200) Jack Olander  CHAPTER REP. MEETING  COCKTAIL PARTY Red Lacquer Room PALMER HOUSE	CHICAGO STADIUM  ARAGON BALLROOM Hal Pearl & Dancers  TEMPLE SHOLOM Devon Hollingsworth	Carton Lunch  ELM ROLLER SKATING RINK Bill Kuczek  HINSDALE THEATRE Jim Riggs	SEMINAR at PALMER HOUSE Chuck Schaden "Old Time Radio Programs"  SEMINAR at PALMER HOUSE Lance Johnson "Organ Restoration"	GENESEE THEATRE Jeff Weiler  Northwestern University Orchestra, Singers,  Silent Film ST. MARY of the LAKE (Mundelein) Lew Williams  Reid Spears (Cameo)	CHICAGO TEMPLE Gary Plantinga  PATIO THEATRE George Wright
<b>E V E N I N G</b>	DOWNERS GROVE N.H.S. Tom Gnaster  Phil Silberhorn (Cameo)  Slide Show for 1986 Convention	COCKTAIL PARTY  BANQUET Grand/State Ballroom PALMER HOUSE	RIALTO SQUARE THEATRE (Joliet) Rosemary Bailey  Don Walker (Cameo)	CORONADO THEATRE (Rockford) Rob Calcaterra	CHICAGO THEATRE Grand Finale Rex Koury  Young Artist Winner (Cameo)	