

Now you test — are the two C's in unison? Chances are good that they are not. It takes a pretty keen organ tuner to hit a temperament the first time through. If the higher C is flat to the low C you have flatted the semitones too much. If the upper C is sharp you have not flatted the semitones enough. Start over again, increasing or decreasing the flattening in accordance with what the unison test of the two C's has shown. It may be necessary to go over the tempering several times to secure a good unison of the two C's. You are not through when you secure the unison. You may have flatted one semitone too much and another not enough. These will average out to give a correct unison, but the temperament will be off. Go through once more to make sure the beats are the same for all the semitones.

Tune the string pipes in octaves with the temperament octave in exact unison. Continue throughout the organ always in unison, except the Celeste stop, which is tuned slightly sharp. On pedal stops tune in unison the 16' register in octaves with the 8' register of the pedal stop. Take time to make sure the temperament is correct. If you have errors in the temperament you will distribute these errors throughout the entire organ.

Tune all stops to the String, never tune Flute to String, then Flute to Tibia, then Tibia to Tuba. If you made an error in tuning, this method will usually multiply the error. Tune every stop to the String and if there is an error it will be in only one rank of pipes.

If the organ is in two lofts, set a temperament in each loft. Never attempt to tune from one loft to the other.

Never blow into a reed pipe or on the reed after the boot has been removed. The moisture from your breath will corrode the reed.

Flue pipes — Strings or Open Diapasons — are tuned by rolling the metal which has been cut from the slot. Some pipe makers cut off the roll of metal and use a metal cylinder fitted over the pipe that can be moved up or down to shorten or lengthen the slot. Open wood pipes of large scale have a wooden slide. Open wood pipes of small scale have a metal flap on the top of the pipe that can be moved up or down like a trap door to change the pitch. Some small-scale

wood pipes have a slot with a roll tuner. Stopped wood pipes are tuned by moving the stopper up or down.

Reed pipes have a tuning wire which rests on the reed and is moved up or down to shorten or lengthen the part of the reed which vibrates to produce the tone. Some reed pipes have slots at the top of the pipes and some have a slide or collar at the top of the pipe. These are not used for tuning, but to regulate the power of the pipe.

No musical talent or ability is used in tuning. A fellow who has a tin ear and cannot whistle a tune or sing a simple song can become an expert organ tuner. It is simply training the ear to recognize the beat. □



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**AN AMERICAN IN PARIS.** John Seng playing three theatre pipe organs in concert. Available at \$8.95 post-paid from Pipe Organ Presentations, Box 20704, Castro Valley, California 94546.

John Seng is a perfectionist, whether playing neatly arranged standards, or, as displayed here, music usually played by a symphony orchestra. John is versatile. His talents range

from playing in restaurants to ensemble keyboard work in such large and small screen films as *Magnum PI*, the new *Buck Rogers*, *Superman* and *The Empire Strikes Back*. He also pursues a now-and-then concert career (as time allows), plus a continuing association with a major builder of electronic keyboard instruments.

We have always admired the recordings of John Seng, starting with his initial "Beyond the Blue Horizon," and there is absolutely no truth to the oft-repeated story he told over the years that his mother took over a paper route to pay for its processing. It became something of a private joke with his fans. Trouble is, John has not recorded often enough. Most of his previous discs are no longer available. His ability deserves wider exposure. There are not too many organists whose talents range from standards to symphonic music.

This recording provides ample proof. First, the pops, although titles listed here are not in playing order.

"On A Clear Day" is beautifully phrased and registered. John starts one chorus on a mellow set of Tibias, much more fluid than ones usually associated with Seng. He likes his Tibias sharp and articulate. There is a wide degree of expressiveness here, and interesting rhythm changes.

"Big Bells and Little Bells" is a rhythmic novelty tune on the "Holiday for Strings" pattern. The old "shave and a haircut" device marks many phrase endings. Lots of "little bells" (Glockenspiel, etc.) but we're still waiting for the "big bells." Nary a bong nor peal.

There are echoes of Crawford in John's conception of "The Song Is Ended," but no imitation. Again, expert phrasing comes into play, with many registration changes.

For "Flight of the Bumble Bee" John uses a high-pitched melody combination against accompaniment on mellow brass, a novel concept.

"Cuban Cutie" is reminiscent of those "the natives are whooping it up tonight" exotic tunes of the '50s, when the "Sacre du Sauvage" music, exploited then by the Martin Denny instrumental quartet, was in vogue. George Wright joined the band wagon with a "Quiet Village" sync'd with erotic bird calls. Enough time has passed for a review of the genre. Emphasis is on an engaging rhythmic pattern which persists throughout, even

where there are rests. The attractive melody is exploited on many changes of registration. One untrem'd combo sounds for all the world like a tone-wheel Hammond! The selection ends on one booming pedal note.

"Flapperette" is a fast-action novelty of the "Nola" type. It is performed on an organ with a wealth of tonal percussions which John plays "up front" with such fast precision that it sounds mechanically "speeded up." It isn't.

"People" is that soulful tune which, during its initial popularity, was the bane of too many radio stations with over plugging. In retrospect, and divorced from Barbra, it's not a bad ballad. John Seng squeezes every last ounce of sentiment from its measures with expert handling of expression and orchestration. Hearing it again played by Seng can't help but remind us of the long ago concert he played on the big Robert-Morton in the San Francisco Orpheum — the night the bench had been raised on blocks to accommodate the long-legged player. If our memory is accurate, during the climactic "Pee-pul" the blocks gave way and the bench fell a few inches, enough to rattle the organist. But he never let on. It was only later that he admitted to us a moment of terror.

"Honky Tonk Train" has long been a Seng favorite, even before he started adding musical lustre to cooked pasta. Yes, it's authentic pizza parlor "corn" and its obviousness is far beneath the subtle John Seng we have known for 20 years. Trouble is — he likes it. So here it is, complete with boogie-woogie rhythm, train whistles and manual-slapping "choo-choos." We can only observe that he has never done it with more audience-grabbing precision. We must also admit that the insistent rhythm is infectious, darn it! And pipe that Guy Lombardo ending!

Now to the real "meat" of this recording — two extraordinary selections for theatre organ presentation. Eleven minutes and 35 seconds of Ravel's "La Valse" and nearly 17 minutes of "An American in Paris."

One can easily visualize Gene Kelly dancing his fascinating quasi-ballet steps during the latter, a spirited and faithful rendition of one of George Gershwin's symphonic immortals. Seng's skill in split-second combina-



John Seng

tion changes is little short of amazing. He presents the tone picture on a rich variety of instrumentation which often comes very close to orchestral versions. Music critic Oscar Levant once stated that all music depicting moving city traffic was patterned after the opening segment, with or without the continental auto horns. And there's a bluesy-blues section which hits the depths of human despair. Our favorite theme is the one which melodically resembles the old pop, "A Sunday Kind of Love." Seng must have analyzed several orchestral recordings in order to formulate the fine orchestral coloring he offers. It was pioneer work; to the best of our knowledge, it's the first effort to transcribe this Gershwin orchestral work for theatre organ presentation. The end result should satisfy the most finicky critic. And John plays it all; no cuts.

The closer is a thrilling presentation of "La Valse." There are various ways to satirize a piece of music or its style. One is to lace it with auto horns, cow bells, slide-whistle schmears, etc., to amuse the listener as Spike

Jones did. The subtle Maurice Ravel took another route. He genuinely disliked Strauss waltzes with their steady "boom trap trap" accompaniments. But to burlesque them he wrote a piece far more complex than anything attempted by Strauss, and often with more ear-pleasing themes. In brief, it's a thing of beauty in many places, yet Ravel never lets the listener forget he's having some outrageous fun with the Viennese waltz style. He's especially brutal with the rhythm when he seems to allow the "trap-trap" afterbeats to overtake and pass the "boom." He works in short phrases and his climaxes usually sound like trouble in the orchestra. In brief, it's something like the distortion of viewing a work of art as reflected by gently rippling water.

It was not easy to adapt "La Valse" for theatre organ presentation. It required a musician with Seng's imagination and skills to make it come off properly. We have compared it with several orchestral versions and the end result is a solid plus, but leaving us wondering where John found enough fingers and feet to cram in all the counter melodies, not to mention frequent registration changes. The contrasting simultaneous rhythms are tricky. As all the music on this disc was recorded during live concerts, there could be no resorting to the on-and-off of multiple track taping.

This many-hued treatment of "La Valse" has great dynamics and very satisfying instrumentation throughout.

This recording represents the first effort of a new tack taken by Don Thompson's Pipe Organ Presentations, the management and recordings of several notable organists. It's a good starter. While roughly 24 minutes have been pressed on either side of the disc, the sound quality of the inner cuts hasn't seemed to have suffered (18 to 20 minutes is more usual). The surfaces are smooth and perfectly centered.

These cuts were all made during John's concerts over the past few years and that runs the risk of audience noise. Not to worry. There is no

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applause audible. If one listens closely he might note a couple of coughs but such noise is never intrusive. Jacket notes by John and tape editor Don Thompson are informative and intelligently written. There is a recent photo of John at a four-decker, but no hints regarding the identity of the three instruments heard. They sound like large installations and well maintained. We understand that information about them is enclosed in the package sent to purchasers.

Don't miss this one; it's one of John Seng's best to date.

**ALLEN MILLS PLAYS PROCTOR'S.** Record or cassette available from Proctor's Theatre, 432 State Street, Schenectady, New York 12305. \$13.00 postpaid.

All that glitters is definitely "Goldie" in this recording by Allen Mills out of Proctor's Theatre. "Goldie" is the Golub 3/18 Wurlitzer originally (1931) in the Paramount Theatre, Aurora, Illinois. The present organ transplant is a resounding success. Even the jacket photo of Proctor's auditorium deserves honorable mention.

"Goldie" is blessed with very responsive percussions which Allen uses to season the rousing opener, "I Ain't Down Yet," a Meredith Willson march for *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*. The repetitiveness of this simple ditty is nicely camouflaged under deft registrations and key changes. Although the Harp accompaniment for the first chorus of "Memory" seems halting and incomplete, Mills quickly woos us with a great Vox and Strings ensemble. The piano is in tune but rather lifeless. The untremmed Trumpet is great. A quiet Glock finish for this oft-played hit from *Cats* suggests that Allen has listened to the original cast album of the show.

"My Buddy" is perfect theatre organ sound. Sweet, lush Tibias and Strings are just what the doctor ordered. An authoritative final chorus with Crawford rolls ends with a modest Glock statement. "Cecilia" bounces gracefully in silken ranks sequined with tuned percussions, Kinura and untremmed Trumpet. A very stylish Mills-designed ensemble!

"Only a Rose" is suitably Frimly in most pleasant meanderings... "down by the old Mills' dream."



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(Sorry, couldn't resist!) There's a brief, lovely Tuba solo, some Oboe-plus-Tibia magic, and the reiterating Kettle Drum adds a skillful touch of drama and portent. Allen builds to a climax worthy of Jeanette and Nelson.

Side II begins with "Washington Post March." Snare drums and reeds dominate (as they should!) with Glock accents. The Tibia Fife has its shrill moments. Again, Allen Mills shows us how percussions should be used in theatre organ playing. Returning twice to the seldom heard verse saves "They Say It's Wonderful" from being just another pretty Irving Berlin song. It's tremmed to the hilt. The reviewer found the chord changes a might weak and prosaic, but the tune happens to be a personal favorite.

The Klaxon horn, Bird Whistles, Fire Gong — and whatever else is on the toe studs — gives Mills an excuse

to have fun with "Good News." The big chromatic finish falters just before it hits the top. Who knows? Perhaps British organist Len Rawle, the master of this virtuoso flourish, has put the hex on anyone else who tries it. Seriously, Mills has his own potent supply of keyboard witchcraft. He does justice to all the melodies in "Gold and Silver," a Franz Lehar waltz. In the midst of all this musical "loot" a reiterating percussion may well signify a "gangland holdup." A clever heist — what with Jesse Crawford bank-rolls all over the place!

"My Romance" is boldly sentimental rather than the usual plaintive rendering. We get to hear "Goldie's" untremmed Clarinet briefly. The Rodgers and Hart tune has a "love conquers all" slam-bang finale.

In this album Allen Mills' playing is Olympic Gold quality by any standard, and "Goldie" is a magnificent Wurlitzer installation in a theatre. But transmitting all of this wonderful music to vinyl grooves may have posed some technical problems. The reviewer heard the organ as through heavy gauze layers. Cranking up the volume added considerable recording noise. This may have been true only for the review pressing, but be forewarned in case your copy has the same characteristics.

WALTER J. BEAUPRE



Allen Mills

**IN HOLIDAY MOOD, Brian Sharp, Grosvenor Records, Birmingham, England (available from The Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, Massachusetts 02184; \$9.00 plus \$1.50 postage per order).**

The jacket notes coyly inform us that "For this LP Brian Sharp has

collected his bucket and spade and set off for the seaside!" Add to that itinerant one tuned kitchen sink, and we're right on target. Seriously, the only things about this remarkable album which could be taken to task are the jacket notes — and perhaps the front cover poolside photo which features a foreground insert of Brian along with what appears to be a happily drowning child of ten. Holiday mood? Bah! Humbug!

True, Brian Sharp has assembled quite an array of keyboard instruments for this recording at the Sanford Park Resort, Dorset, England. These instruments include a Christie theatre organ, electronic Technics Pro 90 and Technics E 66, Kawai Grand piano, an assorted collection of synthesizers, and "live" percussions. Honest injun!

The sober fact of the matter is that Brian has what it takes to make this melange work wonderfully well. He's a first rate musician, a superb arranger, and has the technical skills to put the bits and pieces together. The end result is most enjoyable. Those whose ears are tuned to theatre pipes only should note that the Christie is featured (never exclusively) in "Comedians Gallop," "Stardust," "Glamorous Night," "Radetsky March" and "The Lost Chord." Incidentally, Brian's arrangement of Michel Parri's "Stardust" (Hoagie claims he only wrote the tune!) is as creative and original as you'll ever hear. "Glamorous Night" has a lovely piano/Christie duet along with a host of other orchestral effects. It's a rhapsodic mood piece on the order of "Dream of Olwen."

This reviewer particularly liked "Root Beer Rag" and "Sweet Georgia Brown" on Side I. Mr. Sharp has an uncanny ear for lifting the most authentic sounding orchestral instruments from the various electronics and combining them skillfully into exciting performances. Be warned that in "Can Can" and "Tickled Pink" he resorts to the Alvin-and-the-Chipmunks style of electronic cuteness which is a bit much — but good fun. Who knows which transistors produced the convincing flute Brian uses for his impressive jazz solo in "Moving South," but it's worth buying the record just to hear that elegant bit. Then he turns a trumpet solo in "Georgia" which is equally impressive. "Sabre Dance" is a stunning

tour de force and almost — but not quite — as good as the definitive theatre organ recording by Dennis James. Of course Dennis was "lazy" and played it with only two hands and an equal complement of feet, while Brian's is a dubbed-over recording. The kettle drum touches at the climax of "The Lost Chord" suggest Revere Ware, but that's being picky. The Christie, when Brian chooses to feature it, is just fine.

Over-dubbing and editing of theatre organ performances to enhance listening enjoyment is not new. Even George Wright did this at one point in his recording career. Brian's elegant mixing of pipes and transistors may help to break down prejudices on both sides. The reviewer has purchased — and enjoyed — many theatre pipe organ albums which couldn't hold a candle to *In Holiday Mood* for sheer musicianship. So, as long as you know what you're getting, give it a try!

WALTER J. BEAUPRE

**WELCOME! Nicholas Martin at Turner's Musical Merry-Go-Round. Grosvenor Records, Birmingham, England. No. 1161 available from The Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, Massachusetts 02184. \$9.00 plus \$1.50 postage per order.**

The youthful Nicholas Martin is a favorite with readers of organ club publications in England. An earlier release was voted "Best Theatre Organ Album of 1983." The current LP exploits the Wurlitzer installed in the Northampton entertainment center. It's a reasonable guess that such an album would be a popular memento of a pleasant afternoon or evening among the mechanical marvels of a bygone era. The very nice packaging job includes a panoramic view of Turner's along with lists of pipes and percussions. Curiously, the piano heard frequently on the record is not mentioned — and it's in tune!

Martin's 26 selections provide a good mix of old friends ("As Time Goes By," "Fascinating Rhythm," "You Light Up My Life") and welcome strangers ("Willkommen," Theme from "Thorn Birds," "Sleepy Shores"). He plays with gusto and accuracy; high energy usually takes precedence over subtle shadings. Martin does to "Tara's Theme" what

General William Tecumseh Sherman's troops did to Atlanta. Black-pool stylings dominate up-tempo tunes. A Glockenspiel is featured in "Loveliest Night of the Year." "Loch Lomond" opens predictably with bagpipes. This reviewer liked "How Can You Buy Killarney" as a lovely substitute for the usual Irish ballads. Martin "goes for the gusto" in his version of Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady." The shrill registration is ear splitting at times, and there are holes in the harmonic progressions of the tune's difficult bridge.

The album cover proclaims "Dambusters March" as the highlight of Nicholas Martin's performance. It begins with an eerie air-raid warning which is suddenly interrupted by the jolly march. Then, for artistic reasons known only to Mr. Martin, we hear a series of what sound like semi-tractor-trailer trucks rumbling through the performance. "The Dam Busters" is a wildly popular U.K. favorite. It's safe to say that every theatre organ in England is a veritable "Dam site" at one time or another. And, frankly, the performance this reviewer heard by David Redfern last April during his "Young Theatre Organist of the Year" stint at the Granada Harrow was a "Dam site" more exciting than the one on this record.

"RAF March Past" was stirring — if raucous — with a good big finish. For "Thorn Birds" we hear the Wurlitzer's Clarinet, Oboe and English Horn. If you have forgotten the theme from the TV mini-series, don't feel guilty. It's well played by Martin but easy to mislay. In spite of the shrill registrations, the reviewer liked "Break My Stride," a quickstep which rolls with the punches. The old Andrews Sisters hit "Bei Mir Bist Du Schön" was almost unrecognizable, and just goes to prove that it doesn't necessarily mean "that you're grand!" Nicholas Martin redeems himself with a fine arrangement of "You Light Up My Life." He uses tasteful chromatic embellishments, and the performance has a lilt and lift. A playful "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" takes some of the sting out of that dreadful movie version of Ian Fleming's charming children's book.

Nicholas Martin's album will be welcome among those who prefer organ music with a carousel flavor. Other tastes may want to pass on this one.

WALTER J. BEAUPRE □