

landed a record contract with EMI, no less, and they put out an LP every year nationwide. European sales, BBC broadcasts and winter concert tours have brought the organ world to Phil's feet. His latest LP is in strict tempo. Titled "Party Dance Night at the Tower," it contains 16 different tempo medleys of tunes like tangos, fox-trots, quicksteps, even the Agadoo, a new dance.

Dance-type strict tempo records are the "in thing" this year in the big-time theatre organ scene. In Northampton, young ex-Tower organist Nicholas Martin's latest LP offering is "Dance Time at the Merry-Go-Round," recorded on the fabulous 3/19 BAL 4 Wurlitzer of the Merry-Go-Round, a superb organ museum in Northampton in the midlands of England. The organ came from the old Paramount theatre Newcastle-on-Tyne originally, via a stint in an auto showroom where it was played for concerts. Jesse Crawford said it was the best Wurlitzer he played when on tour over here for Paramount's British circuit. It remains so, in the opinion of many.

One of the older members of the Tower Blackpool team is Arnold Loxam. He has just issued his finest LP on Grosvenor Records label called "At Home," a recording which gets away from the dance tempo and exploits often better the tone colours of the Tower organ. He leaves the sometimes overworked Tierces and Quint stops of the Tower organ alone, and we enjoy a fresher sound from this most English of British Wurlitzers.

Mention must be made of Arnold Loxam's previous LP, also recently out on the Kinura label, made on the famous AVRO Radio station four-manual 19-rank organ in Hilversum, Holland. Dutch builder Standaart started the organ in 1935 but went bankrupt and Compton was brought in from the U.K. to finish the job. Standaart had built the console and ordered the reeds from Gottfried in the USA, something they always did. According to legend, Compton provided 15 ranks of pipes. Jacket notes on an LP by Dutch organist Bernard Drukker said it was mostly Compton, but now we are told it does not contain any Compton pipework! It does not have the strident sound of the later Standaarts (six came over to Britain in the 1930s), and AVRO Radio has always stated that it is a Comp-

ton. For a famous broadcasting organ it remains a mystery.

All in all, it's a bumper year for Arnold Loxam, and anniversaries and organ playing keeps you young, we read. It must, as veteran console star of the Gaumont-British chain's heyday is Bobby Pagan, who celebrated his 80th birthday with a concert at the splendid Worthing, Sussex, Assembly Hall Wurlitzer 3/10 in a joint concert with your talented Rob Calcaterra, who is highly popular over here. There was a "This Is Your Life" segment.

A lady called "Big Bertha" brought gasps from an audience recently when I presented a tribute to Paramount for the Cinema Organ So-

ciety in London. I showed off all their British circuit houses (now Odeon controlled) and several famous USA Paramounts, like Oakland, New York, Portland, Seattle, Aurora, Toledo, Denver, Birmingham (Big Bertha's home) and my favourite Brooklyn Paramount. Rudy Frey and others helped me locate some lovely slides.

London cinema buffs were recently sampling the delights of Paris cinemas, all organless these days, including the Paramount Paris. Its 2/10 Wurlitzer is now in a private house.

That's all for now. Time to press the down button. Keep those Voxes chuffing merrily.

IAN DALGLIESH □

BOOK REVIEW

Encore for A Worthy Performer, by Daniel M. Costigan. Published by Rahway Landmarks, Box 755-D, Rahway, New Jersey 07065. \$3.95 per copy (postpaid).

This story of the Rahway Theatre graphically reminds us that each old movie house in this country has its own history and serves to keep us in touch with a time when the pace of life was less hectic and movies were still a kind of magic. A group of concerned individuals has organized Rahway Landmarks which is dedicated to the restoration and preservation of the Rahway Theatre and its 2/7 Style E-X Wurlitzer Opus 1923, and *Encore* was published to help finance this project. Author Daniel M. Costigan states in his introductory notes that this book is intended as a "kind of tapestry of interesting facts in the life and times of a local institution." And it is.

Although Rahway, New Jersey, is not an American megalopolis, there were three opera houses there before 1900, and competition for the first movie theatres was intense during the 1920s. In 1928, when the Rahway opened, it appeared to be the winner of the "great race." Costigan tells us that the \$20,000 Wurlitzer was its real attraction, and that the "unique acoustics of the hall made the relatively small Rahway organ sound enormous."

Hard times during the '30s found theatre owners and managers devel-

oping some rather creative promotions to draw patrons, and the Rahway was no exception. In 1933, the theatre's management staged an elaborate wedding on the Rahway stage complete with "organist, vocalists and ushers from the staff." The honored couple celebrated their 51st anniversary in 1984.

The life of the Rahway during the war years and the troubled economic times that followed parallels that of hundreds of great old American theatres, but this story is special because of the determination of the Rahway citizens not to let this landmark theatre and its Wurlitzer die.

In 1967, when I was performing in New Jersey, Bob Balfour took me to see the theatre and invited me to play the organ. I was impressed with the way the sound filled the auditorium, and I agree with their claim that it is the "biggest little Wurlitzer." It feels good to know that another theatre and its organ will be preserved for future generations.

Costigan's narrative is quite readable, and the only flaw I find in the book is the poor reproduction of some of the illustrations. *Encore for A Worthy Performer* is not just an "encore;" it is, hopefully, a preview of a new life for the Rahway Theatre and its "biggest little Wurlitzer." To that end, I would recommend the book to theatre and organ lovers.

PAUL QUARINO □