

May we introduce . . . TONY O'BRIEN

For the past nine years, Motor City chapter members have watched and listened with pride as Tony O'Brien has developed into an accomplished and polished young performer. Now, at 22, Tony plays for many special events at the Redford Theatre and is one of the regular organists for their bi-weekly movie series.

When Tony was seven, he saw Virgil Fox with the Boston Pops on TV and was so impressed that he asked his parents for an organ, which he received that Christmas. His initial exposure to theatre organ, at age 13, was a Lyn Larsen concert, and this experience so affected Tony that he and his father became members of the Motor City Theatre Organ Society, and Tony has been playing theatre organ ever since. He is currently on a four-year scholarship at Wayne State University where he studies organ with Ray Ferguson, Detroit Symphony Orchestra organist.

Tony's ability to play classical as well as popular and rock music enables him to entertain a mixed audience, giving each listener something to remember. He feels that synthesizers add a dimension to today's music and can be used in "the most musical way (not just weird sound-effects) as an orchestral tool." He says that he agrees with a statement by Rex Koury (THEATRE ORGAN, Nov/Dec '84) that the use of the synthesizer with the pipes can "open up a whole new horizon in the rendition of today's popular music."

In addition to his appearances for theatre organ groups, Tony has performed for the annual Navy Day Salute program, Lions International, the International Brotherhood of Magicians and the "Great Escape Weekend" featuring silent films of the '20s at Greenfield Village in Dearborn. One of his dreams will be fulfilled next year when he appears in concert with a full symphony orchestra.

Tony is truly dedicated to his music, studies hard and faces every challenge. He believes that his is a God-given talent needing to be perfected and that this takes constant work and strong faith. He also believes that the "primary



Tony O'Brien

purpose of a theatre organist is *to entertain*." This young artist continually strives to justify the pride his chapter feels in his music, and to live up to their faith in him. It would appear that he is succeeding.

Tony's address is 9919 Fairfield, Livonia, Michigan 48150.

GRACE E. McGINNIS □

(Material for this introduction was furnished by Dorothy Van Steenkiste of Motor City Chapter.)

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