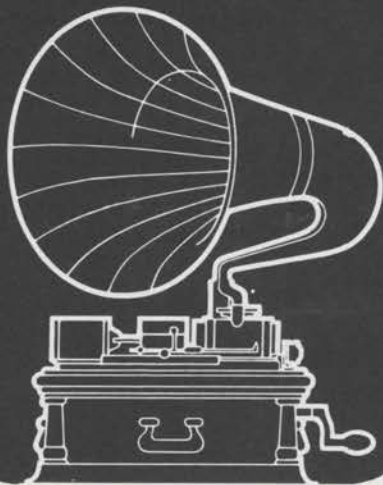


## For The Records



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**REAL RHYTHM!** Jim Riggs playing the Grand Lake Theatre Wurlitzer in Oakland, California. \$9.95 postpaid from Jim Riggs, Box 228, 484 Lake Park Avenue, Oakland, California 94610.

This release by Don Thompson's Pipe Organ Presentations Ltd. is a double premiere. It's a first for both organist and the assembled 13-rank organ which replaced the long gone Style 235 (11-rank) original Wurlitzer installed in the theatre. According to Jim's jacket notes, it's not pure Wurlitzer. He states that owner Ernest Wilson assembled it from Barton, Kimball, Robert-Morton and United States Organ Co. parts, although Wurlitzer voices dominate. Jim informs us that the Tuba, Clarinet and Diapason pipework is Kimball, while the Trumpet pipes were made by United States Organ Co., although he suspects the brassy rank was actually made by Gottfried. The Post Horn is a revoiced Oboe Horn, the work of New England pipe expert Allen Miller. The Vox Humana, Concert Flute, Tibia and the four ranks of Strings are Wurlitzer. All of the voices have been equalized, as necessary, to provide a fine sounding ensemble. Also, there are some attractive solo voices. It's a good sounding organ.

Jim Riggs is a new name to this reviewer, but if this biscuit is fair evidence of his musical abilities we'll be hearing a lot more from him. Those who heard him during the 1983 ATOS convention confirm our feelings.

Jim Riggs has played in a number of eateries in the southwest and has made favorable

impressions during appearances at San Francisco's fabled Avenue Theatre. He is strongly attracted to the music of the '20s and '30s, which puts him in good stead with listeners with long memories, those who recall the music made by Fats Waller, Jesse Crawford and Paul Whiteman. They are among his idols. If we may offer a suggestion we would advise Jim to strive for more variety in his registration, especially among the colorful soft voices (color reeds, for example). As things now stand he has a strong attraction to full combinations for extended playing time. Some listeners may find such registration a bit heavy. But let's examine the selections.

"Nobles of the Mystic Shrine" is a majestic, fast march dedicated to the men of that fez-hatted organization which performs great public services (like financing children's hospitals) while masquerading as benevolent Arabs (back when those pseudo-orientals, such as Valentino and Gallagher & Shean could be thought of as colorful and romantic characters — long before Khadafy). Here the Nobles pass in review to the strains of a scintillating march brought to life by the talent of Jim Riggs and the skill of march composer John Philip Sousa. It's big and brassy.

"Blue Moon" is somewhat marred in its first chorus by the slightly out-of-tune solo 4' Tuba. If one can overlook this and enjoy the reed mix of the second chorus, it adds up to an enjoyable arrangement. The "calumph-boom" accompaniment is intriguing and the brassy middle part is interesting. But it's the reedy combination of Kinura, Vox and other mixing reeds that carries this one.

"On A Little Balcony in Spain" is a long forgotten "Spanish" foxtrot from circa 1930. It's pleasant and inconsequential music with a touch of tango rhythm, and Jim's jacket notes mention that it was recorded by Leonard Joy and his all-string orchestra. The only reason we recall "Balcony" is because it was a favorite of our first steady. Remember it, Connie Kelly? Jim plays it pretty, in good dance tempos.

"Honeysuckle Rose" gets several treatments here. Composer Fats Waller was content with an unchanging steady beat with his jazz variations providing the interest. Jim prefers mood and tempo changes, although his own variety of jazz improvisation is evident. It's a new and different version of this old favorite.

Jim's "Folk Song Fantasy" includes such goodies as "What Do We Do With A Drunken Sailor," "Red River Valley," "A Rovin'," "Tell Me Why" and "Shenandoah." Each is provided with registration and mood changes as called for by the music (even some gorgeous open harmony on Tibia/Vox voices).

Jim's "Warner Bros. Potpourri" includes a touch of Crawford during "Sittin' On A Backyard Fence" (good use of pitched percussions) and a well-phrased "Shadow Waltz." The set also includes a jazzy "Pettin' In the Park," a verse and chorus of "I'm Like A Fish Out of Water," and a Post Horny, full organ "Forty-second Street." It's a pleasant and often exciting retrospective from the Bus-

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by Berkeley era of cinema choreography.

"The Girlfriend of the Whirling Dervish" is good fun from the late '30s. It's another fond pseudo-oriental remembrance when Arabs could be funny rather than deadly. Jim says he first heard it in a Porky Pig cartoon. It fits. The dervish actually whirls in chromatic flourishes during one chorus and the next to closing is played as the '30s swingbands performed it — wildly. Good jazz on pipes ain't easy but Jim manages it.

A "South of the Border" set consists of the title tune with the inevitable Mexican percussors. The second chorus is an intriguing Tuba solo plus what Jim describes as "mariachi marimba." Mood music.

"Dance of the Blue Marionettes," by a fictitious "Leslie Clair," sounds very much like a tune lifted from a Marx Bros. comedy. The bell-toned percussions get an energetic workout in this arrangement which Jim says he borrowed from Sidney Torch.

"Medley from *Top Hat*" (Irving Berlin) brings us four tunes from the movie classic danced by Fred and Ginger. The tunes are "Cheek to Cheek," "Isn't This A Lovely Day," "Top Hat" and "The Piccolino." There's something here which disturbs us; Jim seems to be trying too hard. The music is all there, played with skill, but often at a frenetic pace on too heavy registration. "Lovely Day" is an exception. It's played at moderate tempo on attractive and varied registration. Then into several minutes of wonderful bombast for "Top Hat" (get that bass figure!) and a wild "Piccolino." For these ears the rather long passages with heavy volume and frenzied tempos are a bit much (the set covers seven minutes and 15 seconds). Those are the only faults (if they are faults) we can find with an otherwise fine recording, one with a tune list which spans a great era in popular music. Besides, who can fault an organist who in his jacket notes acknowledgements adds "special thanks to . . . Mom and Dad"?

Jim Riggs at the 3/13 Grand Lake Theatre organ.



Scott S. Smith

Recording is topnotch. The surface of the review pressing is faultless. The jacket displays photos of the three-manual, double stoprail console and a long shot of the theatre exterior. The back of the jacket has a photo of Jim Riggs and his own notes. The clarity is somewhat diffused by superimposed artwork which makes the notes sometimes difficult to read.

Don't be misled by the title of the record. The emphasis is on skillfully produced organ music, not just on "rhythm." It's a fine musical presentation.

(Stich photo)

**MEMORIES OF THE MICHIGAN, Scott Smith at the 3/11 Barton. Stereo cassette only, available from Lansing Theatre Organ, Inc., P.O. box 26154, Lansing, Michigan 48909; price \$7.00 plus \$1.50 postage and handling.**

It's an all too familiar story. Theatre closes its doors on Labor Day, 1980, and a dedicated crew records the organ while owners of the house strip the auditorium of salvageable items. Then organ suffers extensive water damage before a disastrous move into storage. Theatre auditorium becomes another memorial parking lot. We've heard that dirge before.

In this instance the cloud has a ferrous oxide lining in the form of a truly remarkable recording by Scott Smith who had been staff organist for eight years at the Michigan Theatre. Although the blurb on the J-card modestly admits to "errors in performance," the overall impact of the recording and the excitement generated by Smith's playing is the stuff of which rave reviews are born. Don't expect much from the packaging except a reasonably clear miniature of Scott at the Barton console. Microphone placement for the taping couldn't have been better.

George and Ira Gershwin's "Who Cares" from their Pulitzer prize winning musical *Of Thee I Sing* serves as a spirited introduction. One guesses from the obvious tape splices that the best of multiple takes were used, but the arrangement is inspired and the organ has gutsy sound to burn. Every note of every pipe rank and percussion is right there, including a sizzling cymbal crash at the end. "My Romance" gets the rich, warm, harmonious treatment it deserves with unhurried, gorgeous chord changes. Scott's intro to the Rodgers and Hart favorite deserves special

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mention. The chorus of strings and Glock sparkles. The Tuba is magnificent. This isn't the smoothest theatre organ playing you've ever heard, but Smith generates more musical excitement per minute than this reviewer has heard in many moons.

"Tangerine" doesn't try to be a Jimmy Dorsey imitation. It's ricky-tick and Xylophone. It's Kinura used unabashedly in a swinging chorus. It's Tibia for a spell. It's a toe tapping boogie turn. It's one of those inspired moments late at night when an organist throws caution to the winds and climbs way out on an artistic limb. This time it really works and is both fun and musically satisfying. A raw, untremmed Clarinet and big, fat pedal notes set the funky mood for "Angel Eyes," a great blues tune too seldom heard on pipes. Scott's treatment is sentimental and lowdown — just about as far away from Muzak as one can get. It's a trip! The long, drawn-out coda is so exaggerated, it works.

Side II begins with "Too Late Now." Vox and Tibias are big and breathy. The Barton as recorded under these conditions has superb presence. The dynamic range is almost as wide as one gets on the new compact discs. Pre-set pistons provide a few gunshots here and there. Unorthodox harmonies are a nice surprise.

We are told that "Nice Work If You Can Get It" was recorded on the last night when the auditorium had been stripped of its finery. The pipe sounds are extremely "live," almost "raw." Scott Smith uses all of his fire power to blow this tune out of the water. The last chord (a 13th) is held one millenium too long! If the listener is in the mood for a searing emotional experience, it's great. The reviewer liked it, but realizes that folks with different tastes may find it irritating and out of control.

"Lansing Street Carnival" is a march played with zest and a big cymbal crash ending. Civic pride was probably the best excuse for including it. Some may question the wis-

dom of preserving the final selection "Who Can I Turn To?" It snarls rather than sings, is badly conceived and haltingly played by Smith. The pedal line is more verve than marksmanship. But there is no doubt about the fact that the sound is just about as far away from electronics as one may hope to get on theatre pipes.

There is so much that is good on this tape, the Barton at its best is so glorious, Scott Smith is such an original talent, that we can only applaud the decision to preserve the Michigan Theatre pipes for posterity. Both the Barton and the artist should be heard from again — the sooner the better!

WALTER J. BEAUPRE

**CAROLYN AT THE CONSOLE, Carolyn Riddick plays the Gosport 3/13 Compton, Stereo COS 108. Available from Cinema Organ Society Sales, 23 Aveling Park Road, London E17 4NS England. Price \$8.00 airmail postage included.**

It's a marvelous idea: give an annual award (Ian Sutherland Award) to a promising theatre organist which includes sharing the concert bill with a "big name" and publication of a cassette tape on an organ of the artist's choice. The Cinema Organ Society has been doing this for years, and in 1985 chose 22-year-old Carolyn Riddick to co-star with George Blackmore and to subsequently cut this solo tape.

The apple-cheeked Carolyn, pictured at the console of the COS Southbank Wurlitzer (not the Gosport Compton), has been concertizing since 13 and released her first LP in 1981. She holds diplomas from the London College of Music. She's a seasoned pro. Her playing is mature, authoritative and accurate. She has a nice flair for programming. Very impressive on the keyboards — nothing to write home (or abroad) about on the stop tabs.

Her opener, "Oxford Street" by Eric Coates is a lively, theatrical two-step played

Carolyn Riddick at the 3/12 Christie, Granada Theatre, Walthamstow, London.

(John Sharp photo)



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with perfect control of notes and tempo. Unfortunately, the organ Carolyn chose is installed in a ballroom where the reverberation gets in the way of her spritely attack. Every rank of pipes seems to sound like every other rank so that each registered ensemble is the musical equivalent of brown Jello. Compton pipes aren't usually this neutral, and she does manage a good "churchy" sound for one selection. This may be Carolyn's idea of how theatre pipes should sound and no reflection on the instrument itself.

None of this seems to daunt the artist who next turns out a skillful arrangement of "What I Did For Love." What she does is a slow ballad at mostly full blast ensemble sound. Tuned percussions get a tasteful workout. "Parade of the Tin Soldiers" complete with Xylophone gets a slightly slower treatment than usual, but this is a refreshing change of pace. Carolyn balances counter melodies skillfully. She tosses in a few bars of "Soldier on the Shelf" for variety, then returns to an even slower paced "Parade." Expertly done!

Next on the varied menu are excerpts from the BBC series *All Creatures Great and Small* plus snippets from Mozart. If the "Sonata in C" is more Raymond Scott than Amadeus, it's probably intentional. The extraction from "Symphony No. 40" gets the same good humored treatment. Themes from the TV miniseries *The Thornbirds* give us a foretaste of what it might be like if those Golden Arches started serving Mac-Music along with Mac-Nuggets. Carolyn pays Mancini's "junk food" much more respect than it deserves.

The fact that the organist can get all the way through "Bugler's Holiday" by Leroy Anderson without a HINT of solo trumpet sound will give the reader some idea of registration resources. Again, her playing is immaculate. The last selection on Side I, "Sortie in E Flat," is one of those up-beat church pieces designed to clear the sanctuary after services. This time the registration IS interesting, and the Compton sounds like a good church organ.

Side II introduces us to another of those stirring marches the British use as programme openers. This one, "A Bridge Too Far," was aptly named. Few others will be motivated to cross it. "Through the Eyes of Love," on the other hand, is a recent movie theme well worth remembering. Carolyn's registration begins with full organ and builds. "Nola" is beautifully played with drive, bounce, and clarity. There is a delightful bell-like set of tuned percussions on this Compton, and Carolyn uses it well. "Tell Me On A Sunday" is further evidence that tunes by Andrew Lloyd Webber achieve popularity these days on merits other than their melodies.

"Tambourin" is a sparkling novelty featuring the fastest tremors west of the Prime Meridian. Carolyn's generous program closes with yet another collection of musical moments from *Mack and Mabel*. This version seems complete and unabridged. *Mack and Mabel* was a Broadway turkey where the music deserved to survive — if not the show.

To this reviewer "Carolyn at the Console"

is one of those rare operations where the organist is brilliantly successful — but the organ dies! It would only be fair to hear someone else calling the ranks of the Compton at Gosport before writing it off.

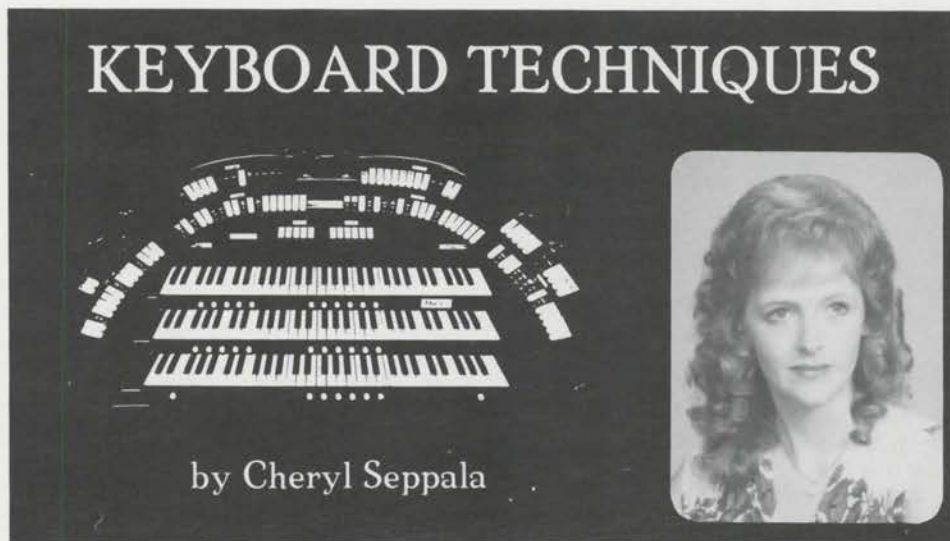
**GEORGE WRIGHT, AMERICA'S PREMIER ORGANIST** playing the **Hollywood Philharmonic Organ. Compact Disc (CD) available from Banda Records, Box 392, Oxnard, California 93032. \$20.00 in U.S.A.; \$23.00 in Australia; \$22.00 in England; all first class, postpaid.**

This isn't an entirely new release; it's actually George's "Red, Hot and Blue" album played on his recently completed 4/32 home installation which he has dubbed "The Hollywood Philharmonic Organ." We reviewed the LP stereo platter a few issues back and found it very palatable.

For the CD version tunes have been added to total nearly an hour of the same quality music. The additions are "Oodles of Noodles," Cole Porter's "I Love You," "Carrioca," "Blue Moon," "Kitten On the Keys" and "The Blue Dove."

Why the CD version? Actually, it's a premiere — "the first pops pipe organ compact laser disc." For those unfamiliar with CD, it's sound quality which is the attraction. The "stylus" is a light ray which "reads" the disc. Thus, in addition to other advantages, record wear has been eliminated. But the CD recording is not playable on existing (stylus-equipped) phonos. This recording is for the high fidelity enthusiast, while the rest of us enjoy the old familiar grooves and wonder whether CD is destined eventually to fill them.

But CD or grooves, a George Wright recording release is an event to cherish. □



## CHORDS

When you begin to study the organ, you have an immediate choice to make. Do you wish to play published three-staff organ arrangements wherein you must be able to read both treble and bass clefs? Or do you wish to learn to read treble clef only and use chord symbols for the accompaniment, instead of reading the bass clef? Students who have a very strong piano background usually choose the bass-clef method, as the ability to read two staves simultaneously has already been mastered. However, for the complete beginning organist, reading just one staff and a chord symbol often seems the lesser of evils. Both methods are certainly acceptable. Eventually, you will most likely want to do both. So, let's begin a brief study of the ten various types of chords you will find in most beginning and intermediate music.

In the last issue, we laid the foundation for our study of chords by learning and playing all 12 major scales. It is from these major scales that all types of chords are formed. For our purposes, let us define a chord as three or

more notes played simultaneously, following a particular pattern of scale notes or intervals (distances).

There are four kinds of triads (chords having just three notes). The major triad is the foundation of all other chords. It is imperative that you learn all 12 major chords by selecting the first, third and fifth notes of its respective scale, e.g. C Major = C E G, E<sub>b</sub> Major = E<sub>b</sub> G B<sub>b</sub>. The other three types of triads are formed by altering the third and/or fifth of the major chord. In the formulas that follow, the <sub>b</sub> sign indicates to lower a half-step, the # sign indicates to raise a half-step. Frequently used abbreviations are also given.

Major	=	1	3	5
Minor (m)	=	1	3 <sub>b</sub>	5
Augmented (aug or +)	=	1	3	5#
Diminished (dim or °)	=	1	3 <sub>b</sub>	5 <sub>b</sub>

However, not all chords contain only three notes. The four-note seventh chord is one of the most important types to study. It is formed by adding the seventh note of the