French Trumpet. As recorded, one of the ensemble registrations is a trifle shrill, and the "reverb" seems to be limited to electronic sounds. A rubato treatment of "The Willow Waltz" keeps it fluid and interesting. The Glock is lovely and the final Vibraphone touch elegantly dramatic. Combination pistons are rackety, and pipe voices don't always blend too well. Microphones as "ears" in a home installation can be ruthless.

"My Heart Stood Still" is typical of Shepherd's creative care in putting together an arrangement. The Chime accents in the first chorus are delightful. Key changes add sophistication and class. We get a little too close to the Chrysoglott for comfort. David's lush and lovely treatment of "A Star Is Born" cries out for the acoustics of a big theatre. The more familiar Jerome Kern ballad "Long Ago and Far Away" is another gorgeous arrangement with full chords and grand sweep. "Horse Box" gets dashed off as though it were duck soup to play. It's a charming novelty and a welcome relief from the overplayed staples. David Shepherd likes to take us off the beaten path for musical enjoyment, and he does it through rediscovery of music which has been waiting in the files. Cases in point are "I Have Eyes to See With" and "You're A Sweet Little Headache." Played by David as a '30s medley, one muses "Yes, I remember those tunes. Wonder why they heaven't been played more recently!"

"Fenland Frolic" turns out to be an angular cakewalk with solo voices of the organ featured. "Always" is not the one by Irving Berlin, but well worth remembering, even if the registration tends to overwhelm. Side I ends with a grand flourish of what might be superb "chase music" or tea time fare for ravenous piranhas. "Satyr Dance" is the title.

David Shepherd holding down the pedals of his residence organ (mostly Compton). *(John Leeming photo)*

Side II begins with the lovely waltz "Haunted Ballroom," very much in the Dave Rose/Robert Farnon School of lush string confections. The high notes shriek occasionally as miked. "Whistling in The Dark" from the late '20s gets an early '30s treatment with tasty Vibrophone solo. This reviewer could have waited another 40 years for "Rip Van Twinkle." It's a novelty number faintly reminiscent of "Dixie." You may want to duck the last crashing note. However, David's respectful treatment is, as always, thoroughly professional.

Another dreamy waltz "Dusk" soars convincingly. This is followed by "Harlem Nocturne" done as a beguine with a bigger-than-life Oboe solo. The tempo switches to swing at the bridge with well-placed horn "stings" to add excitement. This and "Moonlight Madonna" which follows are perhaps the high points in a long program where playing is always Grade A. David Shepherd can interpret romantic semi-classics on theatre organ as well as anyone, anywhere, anytime.

"June Night on Marlow Reach" may never make our Top 40's list, but at least we haven't been subjected to another recording of "Memory." This one is just as dramatic and equally deserving of a hearing. David bows out with "Spectre On A Spree," a skeleton-in-de-closet type of tune featuring the Xylophone and Vibraphone in opening choruses. The musical romp eventually becomes a gut-bucket boogie-woogie (untremmed) suitable for jitterbuggery and other terpsichorean indulgences.

David Shepherd recordings are for those who dislike sloppy playing and are a bit weary of paying for the same old tunes over and over again. Everything he does is beautifully crafted. Performances are flawless. However, the residence organ in its present state — as captured on tape — is at times unworthy of the artist. If the reviewer must rate "The Two Of Us," the answer is "ONE of you is terrific!" □

Letters to the Editors

Opinions expressed in this column are those of the correspondents, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors or the policies of ATOS or THEATRE ORGAN.

Letters concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are welcome. Unless clearly marked "not for publication" letters may be published in whole or in part.

Address: Editor, THEATRE ORGAN
3448 Cowper Court
Palo Alto, CA 94306

American Theatre Organ Society:

Thank you for the two issues of THEATRE ORGAN with the article on Edward Swan. When I saw the picture of Ed sitting at the organ it really threw me for a few minutes. He passed away January 6, 1982, after a bout with cancer, ending a beautiful marriage of over 62 years. Our son lives in Jacksonville and I'm sending him one of the magazines.

I deeply appreciate and treasure your gift.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Edward Swan
Homestead, Florida

Dear Bob:

In the recent THEATRE ORGAN (January/February 1986) reference is made to the "White" organ in the Rialto Theatre, Butte, Montana. The organ here was a four-manual job but not built by a firm known as White. This instrument was built by the relatively unknown firm of American Master Organ Company, of Paterson, New Jersey. For any further information, one will have to read Dave Junchen's excellent work, *Encyclopedia of the American Theatre Organ, Vol. I.*

There are reports that the organ sported up to 32 ranks, but this is probably a bit exaggerated. The console of this organ still exists, and for the present is on display at Pizza & Pipes, Fresno, California. One interesting bit about this organ is that the combination action was "blind." Lights above the two stop rails were energized when a stop or series of stops were brought into play. As a result, the actual stops did not move, as in a more expensive and traditional system. The instrument must have seen much use, as the lower 13 notes of the pedals are noticeably worn — the maple caps by as much as 3/4" where the organist's feet would strike.

In the same issue, a Mr. James Weber makes the point of drawing more public attention to the theatre organ. He mentions television exposure and so on. It should be mentioned most strongly that the theatre organ recently has been getting some valuable exposure.

In most metro areas with a Public Radio outlet, Garrison Keillor's highly popular *A Prairie Home Companion* is broadcast live each Saturday from Saint Paul, Minnesota's recently renovated World Theatre. It is my understanding that a 3/21 Wurlitzer is to be installed. If this comes to pass, live theatre organ could well return to weekly "live" radio. This past summer his program "went on the road" with programs coming from the Sheldon Auditorium, Red Wing, Minnesota, utilizing the 2/8 Kilgen for two broadcasts. The Wurlitzer of the Milwaukee Riverside Theatre was featured a week or two later. Others have been featured. Author Keillor deserves support from theatre and organ fans for the ex-

posure he has been giving to both. He obviously has a "soft spot" for treasures of the past — theatres, theatre organs, live radio and that of superb storyteller. It is a fine broadcast melding folk music, country and western, classical, even an occasional ragtime band. Information on the time of the broadcast (which begins at Minnesota Public Radio) probably can be obtained from the local Public Radio station.

Sincerely,
Tom DeLay
Fresno, California

Dear Sir:

The excellent article ("The Theatre Organ . . . Wherein Lies Its Future?" by John Ledwon, THEATRE ORGAN, January/February 1986) sums up what I have been thinking for a decade and says it eloquently. I think that the day of the sobbing Tibias and fixed-position tremolos has long passed. I leave most theatre organ concerts finding that I was moved by only one or two of the selections played. I shall take a walk outside the auditorium the next time the "artist" perpetrates "Diane" or some other '20s hearts-and-flowers warhorse on me.

We need the younger generation and whatever of its music is properly adaptable to theatre organ. Light, color, movement and some innovative theatricality is now needed.

Ledwon's thoughts are like fresh air in a long-sealed tomb. His approach is even more impressive coming from an educator, professional musician and theatre organist who knows of the glory days.

Sincerely,
Irvin R. Glazer
Springfield, Pennsylvania

Dear Sir:

The highly commendable review of the Australian recording, "Five Alive," made in TOSA South Australia's Capri Theatre, incorrectly described Ray Thornley as "a relative newcomer to theatre pipes." In fact, Ray's introduction to organ playing was on a theatre pipe organ in his early teens, before he had touched an electronic. This was more than 20 years ago, when what is now the Capri organ was installed in the Sydney, NSW, home of the late Jack Penn Hughes.

At 16 he was appointed resident organist, on pipes, at the Victory (now Mecca) Theatre, Kogarah, leaving at the end of 1975 to become national concert artist for Lowrey organs. In January and February 1974 Ray visited the U.S.A. and played many organs, including some of the pizza restaurant installations.

Ray has been a regular concert artist on the Australian theatre pipe organ circuit for the past ten years or so. It will be seen Ray Thornley cannot be described realistically as "a relative newcomer" to theatre pipes.

Incidentally, buying "Five Alive" has been made easier for North American readers. It is available in either disc or cassette form for $10.50 postpaid from Pipe Organ Presentations, P.O. Box 20704, Castro Valley, California 94546.

Eric Wicks
Ivanhoe, Victoria, Australia□

ELECTRONIC TUNING AIDS FOR PIPE ORGANS

by John L. Little

In recent years there have become available the equivalent of precision electronic "tuning forks" for each of the notes in a rank of pipes or the strings in a piano. Each pipe or string can readily be tuned in unison with the sound from the electronic device and tuning is thus simplified. There is, however, a controversy over the superiority of the human ear sensing beats vs. electronic aids in setting pitch. Some elderly tuners are deaf or hard of hearing in the upper ranges and must rely on visual aids for the higher notes.

A piano tuned note-by-note precisely to the equal temperament theoretical pitches sounds rather lifeless. This is because of "inharmonicity" in pianos, varying from piano to piano, resulting because the unison or fundamental note of a string or group of strings is accompanied by something closely akin to, but not exactly, harmonics, also called partials. These higher tones which are nearly twice the fundamental, three times, etc., are actually slightly higher than twice, three times, etc. A "well-tuned" piano sounds better if an "octave up" is not exactly twice the unison pitch, but is slightly higher throughout the 88 notes.

Organ pipes have somewhat related characteristics, but to a much lesser degree. Two pipes sounding at once will "pull" one another off pitch perceptively to a trained ear. This is a minor complication in procedures using two pipes sounding at once with reliance on the human ear to detect beats. Setting the pitch of pipes one at a time with an electronic aid overcomes that particular problem. Resonances in organ pipes are somewhat related to inharmonicity in pianos, and one can make a lifetime study of these effects, as some piano technicians have done with piano tuning.

One recognized tuning procedure for organ pipes involves aural tuning with an electronic aid. Some pipe tuners prefer to use an electronic tuning aid that can:

1. Provide for easy selection of any note in any of seven or more octaves.
2. Produce an audible tone for the target pitch of each pipe.
3. Provide volume control to accommodate small and large pipes.
4. Provide calibrated adjustment of A = 440 Hertz over a range of several Hertz, or up to ± 15 Hertz if old temperaments are required.
5. Provide calibration adjustment for at least ± 1/2 semitone (also called ± 50 cents) to accommodate temperature deviations during tuning compared to the normal playing temperature, especially for metal pipes.
6. Provide visual indication to aid tuning and to accommodate hearing impairment in the high ranges.

If a technician embarked on the design of a visual indicator to aid an organ pipe tuner, the most obvious choice for an indicator would be a cathode-ray tube (CRT) oscilloscope as found in every electronics laboratory. The Japanese Yamaha PT-3 and PT-4 tuning aids used CRT techniques, but these devices have been withdrawn from manufacture because they required a connection to an electrical power source, and they have been superseded by other indicators that are practical to operate from batteries, making them more portable and convenient.

Some of the tuning aids are either battery and/or power-line operated. Their accuracy and stability, based upon quartz control, is phenomenal, especially those in the higher price ranges. Some have built-in computers to simplify the operation while providing extensive feats to aid the tuning technician.

These tuning aids typically have selector switches so that the technician can select the octave and one of its twelve notes. They also have either a built-in loudspeaker or a connection to an external amplifier so that the tuning technician can hear the target pitch. Some of them allow A = 440 Hertz to be adjusted, in a calibrated way, over a range of several Hertz, and also allow a calibrated flat or sharp adjustment of about ± 50 cents to accommodate temperature variations between the tuning environment and the performing environment. They also have a built-in microphone and/or a connection to an external microphone to pick up the pitch of the pipe being tuned.

Devices with "strobe or strobo" in their name have spinning disks with sectors containing black and white segments, illuminated by an internal flashing stroboscope light, triggered by the tone from the pipe being tuned.