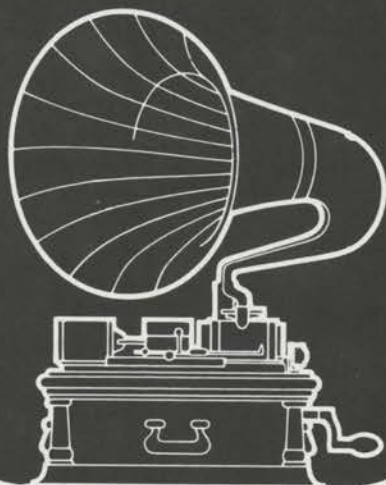


For The Records



Manufacturers, distributors or individuals sponsoring or merchandising organ recordings are encouraged to send review copies to the **Record Reviewer, THEATRE ORGAN, 3448 Cowper Court, Palo Alto, California 94306.** Be sure to include purchasing information (post-paid price, ordering address) and a photo of the artist which need not be returned.

A PARAMOUNT CONCERT, with Peter Mintun at the piano and Jim Roseveare at the organ. Dolby stereo cassette tape, Cue Records, 472 Tehama Street, San Francisco, California 94103. Price \$10.00 postpaid.

Peter Mintun and Jim Roseveare have assembled a Happy Hour of piano and organ solos and duets. The pre-production copy available to the reviewer arrived in a "black box" with no indication as to the ultimate title, cover photo, or program notes. There isn't too much one can do with a cassette box anyway unless one enjoys contemplating "How many angels can you get on the head of a pin?" Whatever the producers decide will eventually need the services of a magnifying glass. But it's what's inside that counts!

Both Mintun and Roseveare admit to being avid collectors of records and sheet music of the "Golden Age," that decade of popular music beginning in 1926. Their playing styles are decidedly pre-swing and remarkably consistent with the period pieces featured. The program as assembled on both sides of the 60-minute tape is nicely balanced. Selections for review purposes will be grouped according to piano solos, organ solos, and piano-organ duets.

Peter Mintun adopts a very full — almost player-roll style — piano when he is remembering the Gershwin tunes from *Shall We Dance?* Even without the visual magic of Fred 'n Ginger, "They Can't Take That Away From Me" remains among the finest from George and Ira. Peter also does a wonderful

job of re-creating Fats Waller's playing of his own "Viper's Drag." The Waller ebullience is very much present and accounted for.

This reviewer particularly welcomed the personal nostalgia of "In A Mist," a piano solo by cornetist Bix Beiderbecke. In spite of his fame as a horn player, Bix had a life-long love affair with the piano. Biographers tell us that arranger Bill Challis actually wrote down the notes for Bix as he developed and perfected his music over a six-month period. Paul Whiteman at a posh Carnegie Hall concert presented Bix at the piano playing "In A Mist" immediately following Ferde Grofe's "Metropolis." The original 1928 sheet music carries the testimonial "Paul Whiteman presents A Modern Composition for Piano." Peter Mintun's interpretation of "In A Mist" is perfection, although it must be noted that the "daring modernity" of the piece hasn't weathered the intervening years gracefully. Those hearing it for the first time in the '80s may well find it trivial and banal. But this was heady, challenging sheet music back in the '30s, and Mintun brings back the thrill.

An equally welcome old friend is Rube Bloom's piano solo, "Soliloquy." Bloom is perhaps remembered for his more commercial pop tunes ("Fools Rush In") and the novelty solos such as "Sapphire." What fun to hear this one again after so many years! A fifth solo by Mintun opens an Irving Berlin medley. "I Love A Piano" is impeccably played in the full piano-roll style of the rag-time era.

Jim Roseveare is presently staff organist at the Oakland Paramount and obviously knows the 4/27 Wurlitzer Special inside-and-out. He gets exactly what he wants every time. This reviewer particularly liked Jim's treatment of "Spring Will Be A Little Late This Year." The lush Paramount strings purr and the Vibraharp shimmers. Movie buffs may remember that this song was wholesome Deanna Durbin's first adult attempt to be sultry in *Christmas Holiday*.

Jim does an excellent Crawford seance with the tune "I Love to Hear You Singing." "Two Cigarettes" and "Call Me Darling" are additional atmospheric ballads which remind us of the sort of thing the organists in movie theatres did best. "It's Delovely" follows close on the heels of the George Wright version and, therefore, invites comparison. Actually, there is enough Moxie in this rendition to thoroughly confuse the results of a blind Coke/Pepsi test.

The remainder of the tape consists of seven piano-organ duets with the pooled talents of Mintun and Roseveare, and it's a marriage made in Oakland — if not in heaven. For one thing, the recording balance between piano and organ is less than ideal. Sometimes the piano is too obtrusive for what it is contributing to the arrangements. Sometimes the organ is pushed to center stage with too little to say. The "Duet Encore: The Cop on The Beat, The Man in The Moon and Me" seemed a gallant attempt to rescue a nothing tune from obscurity, but the results were more humanitarian than artistic. The tune suddenly ends (as it begins) for no reason.

"Zing Went The Strings of My Heart" is the most impressive of the duets with plenty of showboating on the piano and expert organ interweavings at high speed. "Moonlight on The Ganges" is equally spectacular as a slightly over-arranged ballad. The two artists are very much together; so close, in fact, that the music lacks the freedom to flow. Consequently, the solo playing of each artist is superior to his ensemble playing. With so much individual talent present, both can afford to relax a bit.

"Blue Moonlight" gives much tender loving care to preserving a '30s arrangement of a tune by Adolph Deutsch for the Paul Whiteman Orchestra. This sort of dedication is most commendable, but the tune itself hardly seems worth it. "Drifting," "My Love Song" and "Sweet Nothings" also get more than equal time and attention.

A correspondent recently asked, "Why is it that theatre organists always play the same tunes?" The plaintiff should be overjoyed with this album. Both Peter and Jim have tried their best to give us plenty of musical surprises from an era when Wurlitzers still played in the larger movie palaces, when upright pianos graced most parlors, and good pop tunes were a dime a dozen.

WALTER J. BEAUPRE

JOURNEY INTO MELODY, Simon Gledhill plays the Christie in the Granada Walthamstow. COS Dolby stereo cassette tape, available from Cinema Organ Society Tapes, 23 Aveling Park Road, London E17 4NS. Price \$8.00 postpaid.

Young Simon Gledhill has been collecting kudos (Northern Young Theatre Organist of the Year, Ian Sutherland Award) since the tender age of 16, and he is not about to break his winning streak with this release. Even the organ, a 3/12 Christie sadly neglected in the London suburbs for two generations, now shines brightly as one of the U.K.'s sweetest installations. The Theatre Organ Club also deserves a special award for its magnificent restoration efforts.

Don't be misled for an instant by Gledhill's youthfulness. This is one very wise artist who knows precisely how to please those of his "elders" who get nervous if any musical ideas beyond the '30s are introduced. There is nothing to set dentures on edge in this lad's playing.

Simon opens his program with Robert Farnon's "Journey into Melody." The organ is lush, breathy, and beautifully registered. There is no overstatement of counter melodies. Some riding of expression shades is easily overlooked because there is so much else to hear: super phrasing skills, clever registration changes, and an understated Vibraharp accent at the end. This is as nice a theatre organ rendition of the Farnon theme as we'll hear for a while at least.

One guesses that the "Harlem" referred to in the second selection is the area which once included 125th Street and Lennox Avenue (plus surroundings) in New York. Bright mix-

tures and a penetrating Xylophone keep the mood peppy and cheerful. Much more memorable is Simon's romantic serving of the Marlene Dietrich classic "Falling In Love Again." The Vox-Tibia treatment is panting and sensual. The medley continues with a squeaky clean reading of "Love Is Just Around The Corner," which is just what Mrs. Tick's son Ricky ordered! Whoever prepared the program notes listed the final tune as Gershwin's "The Man I Love" (and then crossed it out). Actually, it is Jerome Kern's "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," but the sentiment is the same. Gledhill's insistent four-beat blues treatment works well, sultry but controlled good taste all the way.

How does church-type music work on the Christie? Gart's "Scherzo" is most authentic, and when the sparks begin to fly, Simon's virtuosity is impressive. "I Know Him So Well" is a new one for this reviewer. It's a pensive ballad with enough registration changes to keep it interesting as well as romantic. Before a reviewer can complain that things are getting too sticky-sweet, the artist goes Sidney Torch-y with "Bats In The Belfry." Good-natured program variety reigns always.

This reviewer was happily surprised with Gledhill's pruning of Gershwin's "An American In Paris." The organ gets stretched out in grand style, and the artist mercifully cuts away all the Gershwin polysaturates and cholesterol. No one should ever have to listen to "An American In Paris" as written — unless it is underscoring a Walt Disney animated ballet or Gene Kelly skipping around fountains with Leslie Caron.

More Sidney Torch-ery opens the second half of the taped program. "On A Spring Note" is a happily hectic novelty, pleasantly spriteful. Simon works his special magic with the Rodgers and Hart tune "Bewitched," which turns out to be breathy and funky rather than bothered and bewildered. It's a splendid arrangement. Gledhill's endings for tunes are discretely simple but always effective and unerringly professional. Artists twice and three times his age could well take lessons in good musical manners and modesty from Simon.

Debussy's "Arabesque" gets an expert reading. It works surprisingly well on the Christie, thanks to Gledhill's sensitive and sensible playing. "Summertime" is a prime example of Simon's approach to a popular song. The introduction is straight off the sheet music, but registration and skillful phrasing make it sound newly minted. Here is an organist who knows when not to use the-atre tremors for dramatic effect.

No one has played "You Are My Lucky Star" with such joyous authority since Dick Liebert. This great movie musical tune serves as a frame for "Can't Give You Anything But Love" (nice pizzicato touches), "Would You" (a lovely waltz with Tibias dripping all over the place), "Fascinatin' Rhythm" (perky Xylophone accents), and "Singin' In The Rain" (not a Gene Kelly imitation).

The final offering is the seldom played "London By Night" by Carroll Coates. This gorgeous waltz will be featured on many more

organ programs once this tape gets around. This reviewer can only reiterate what U.K. fans have already discovered: Simon Gledhill has what it takes to be a star of the first magnitude. His style appeals to mainstream theatre organ fans, he makes the Christie sound wonderful, he polishes every tune to gem luster, and his modest, well-mannered playing is always pleasant. We'll be waiting for more of the same whenever he is ready.

WALTER J. BEAUPRE

WELTE PHILHARMONIC ORGAN, Various Artists (1910-1930) on Welte Organ Rolls, Church of the Covenant, Boston. WPO 101 Dolby stereo cassette tape. Available from Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, Massachusetts 02184. Price: \$10.00 plus \$2.00 postage per order.

This latest of the Welte Organ Rolls recreations on the Welte-Tripp organ in the Church of the Covenant, Boston, Massachusetts, is primarily for the hard-core AGO fan or the serious collector of such things. The original paper rolls were cut between 1910 and 1930 by virtuoso organists, most of whom escaped the ken of this reviewer the first time around. Eugene Gigout and Clarence Eddy are the notable exceptions. Actually, since the two Lemare tapes reviewed in these pages, the recording techniques are much better. Far less ambient noise in the quiet sections. Fidelity is superb. Registrations throughout are more "straight organ" oriented rather than concert

or theatrically oriented.

The "Concert Overture" by Hollins (sorry, we're not on a first name basis!) opens Side I. The artist is H. Goss Custard. The piece bursts upon us with a full organ fanfare, then a quick switch to soft, untremmed flutes. The style is that of the early 1900s, pleasantly romantic with changing moods. The "live performance" ambience of the recording is uncanny.

Next, organist Lynwood Farnum mercifully avoids the much-abused "Toccat" from the Charles Widor organ *Symphony No. 5* and plays instead the "Meditation and Intermezzo." It's a "Greensleeves"-type of slow, somber melody, in case someone asks. One understands why most artists opt for the "Toccat."

The "Grand Fantasie in E Minor" by Lemmens completes Side I, and it is organist H. Goss Custard's last stand. The long selection opens as a sort of "Flight of The Bungled Bee." Then nothing much happens until "The Storm" breaks. It's a brief downpour with lightning striking in very few places. Lemmens has been listening to too much William Tell along the way and has strung together too many hymn tunes. This reviewer nodded off the first time through. Obviously this is not riveting fare.

Side II opens with Welte himself doing an organ transcription of "Poet and Peasant Overture." Unless you are so fond of this instrumental warhorse that any interpretation will suffice, better skip this one. The registra-

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tion is strictly church postlude genre, and the early theme which always reminds this reviewer of the immortal "I've Been Workin' On The R.R." is tediously mechanical. Later the "chase" music is flawlessly fingered but lacks any fire. It's about as exciting as wet burning hay. If anyone comes out on top it must be the Peasant.

But then, organist Eugene Gigout takes over with a sparkling rendition of Schumann's "Etude, Op. 56, No. 5." Don't let the title keep you away. It's delicate, pizzicato, and works as well as any performance on the tape. Lynwood Farnum encores with the French composer's Vierne's "Allegro Vivace" from his *Symphony No. 1*. Expect no tremos and no celeste ranks, because this is all most respectable sanctuary music.

The final selection is one which may hold most interest for TO fans. Clarence Eddy has a wonderful time with the Franz Liszt "Fantasy and Fugue on a Theme of Four Tones, B.A.C.H." There are touches of Johann Sebastian, but it's mostly big and spooky. Just the music for a "Phantom of The Opera" performance. Eddy handles the breathtaking cadenzas with relish and perfect control.

This is a generous tape with over 53 minutes of music. For those classical organ lovers who long to hear flawless reproductions of artists who would otherwise be stilled forever, this tape is a must. For the rest of us, a maybe — perhaps.

WALTER J. BEAUPRE

TREASURY OF FAVORITES and MELLODIES OF LOVE (two record set). Lenny Dee at the Hammond with instrumental and vocal group embellishment. \$12.98 postpaid (check or money order) from Suffolk Marketing, 155 East Main Street, Smithtown, New York 11787.

Readers may have seen and heard this two-record package advertised via a colorful television plug recently. It features organ entertainer Lenny Dee, a veteran of over a dozen commercially successful electronic organ LPs over the years. This is an especially deluxe offer because this time Lenny includes many extras — additional orchestral musicians and a vocal group which adds much color to the ensemble but never dominates. We noted a string bass, guitar, a violin section, both tonal and rhythm percussions, an occasional brass section and the vocal group which sometimes comes close mike for a solo but mostly provides background color harmony ("ooh-hoos").

This set isn't aimed at organ enthusiasts looking for off-beat effects and arresting arrangements. Rather, it's intended for the average person who enjoys easy listening and perhaps some romantic (mostly slow) dance music. In these areas it succeeds admirably.

Lenny's contribution is straightforward and uncomplicated. He works well with the instrumentalists and gets many registration changes from his Hammond. Lots of instrumental variety, too.

There are 24 selections on the two discs: Les

Bicyclettes de Belsize, Harbor Lights, Misty Blue, The Last Waltz, Goodnight Sweetheart, Aint It Funny How Time Slips Away?, Cheryl Moana Marie, My Elusive Dreams, Snow Bird, Tennessee Waltz, Can't Help Falling in Love, Moon River.

Sweet Memories, Help Me Make it Through The Night, Paper Roses, Somewhere My Love, Feelings, Only You, For The Good Times, Vaya Con Dios, I Can't Stop Loving You, Room Full of Roses, Love is Blue, Near You.

As an examination of the above tune list will indicate, Lenny's selections are an interesting mix of old standards and the more current. Recording is good and the review pressings are centered. The review pressings tended toward somewhat heavy modulation, but there was no groove jumping. There are no jacket notes.

Happy "easy listening!"

VOL. III, THEATRE ORGANISTS OF THE PAST — JESSE AND HELEN CRAWFORD. Available from Crest Cassettes, The Creegan Company, Inc., 508 Washington Street, Steubenville, Ohio 43952. \$14.95 postpaid.

At last, Jesse and Helen Crawford in the original! The Creegan Company, who have already given us Volumes I and II, "Theatre Organists of the Past," an assortment of original 78 rpm discs of the best known organists of yesteryear reproduced on cassette, have finally brought out a 60-minute cassette in their Crest series of the very best of Jesse and Helen Crawford's organ recordings. This is the first time since these recordings were first cut in the 1920s and '30s that the full-length, unaltered recordings of Crawford have been available to the public.

In the 1950s, RCA reissued some of the Crawford discs on LP, but with added reverberation and audio doctoring. An ill-fated English reissue in the 1970s gave us parts of some recordings with the vocal choruses removed — a travesty on Crawford's fine original work.

Now Creegan makes the originals available without any alteration, made from good quality 78 rpm discs with little surface noise. Wisely, they have selected a variety of organs on which to display Crawford's virtuosity: the instruments in the Chicago and New York Wurlitzer stores, the 4/20 Wurlitzer in the New Empire Cinema, London, with a plurality of selections on the famed ninth floor studio Wurlitzer at the Paramount Theatre, Times Square, New York (Crawford never made a disc on the main organ in the theatre itself).

Also included in this remarkable collection is one of the first commercially produced 33-1/3 rpm recording issued by Victor in the early 1930s, using a standard 78 rpm groove width and called a "Program Transcription." This one is entitled "Schubertiana" and includes a medley of five of Schubert's most familiar pieces. As one listens to Crawford modulating from one to another in unbroken



fashion, it is like being present for one of his exquisite organ interludes at the New York Paramount — a complete musical package carefully wrapped and delivered.

Helen Crawford is not neglected in this collection, either. First, we hear Helen and Jesse playing in tandem, a duet arrangement of "Masquerade Waltz" recorded in the Paramount Studio in 1932, and secondly, Helen is at the Hammond while Jesse wields the baton — Jesse Crawford and His Orchestra play "Dancing Under The Stars."

Included here are some of the best of Jesse's solos: "Roses of Picardy," "Somewhere A Voice Is Calling," "You're The Cream In My Coffee," "Singin' In The Rain," "A Broken Rosary," "So Beats My Heart For You," and others. We even hear Jesse with the Victor house orchestra conducted by Leonard Joy playing "I've Got A Feeling I'm Falling."

The cassette comes with matching photographs of Helen and Jesse at the New York Paramount Studio console, a biographical sketch of both artists and complete discographical information. Those who remember the great Crawford organ discs of yesteryear will want to obtain a copy of this cassette to become reacquainted. Those who have never heard Crawford owe it to themselves to listen to the original — in the opinion of this writer, the greatest theatre organist who ever lived!

DR. JOHN W. LANDON □

Lance Johnson's Troubleshooting Guide Quiz Question

You find a dead note while testing under the chest with a test wire. You suspect a dead magnet, as there is no motion in the primary valve. Because the chamber lights are bright, you cannot see if the terminal will arc. Without restoring to a voltmeter, how else can you test the magnet for continuity? □

Answer on page 54.

Questions and Answers

Lance Johnson will answer readers' technical questions by telephone. He can be reached at 701/237-0477 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time Monday through Friday, or in the evening from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at 218/287-2671. □