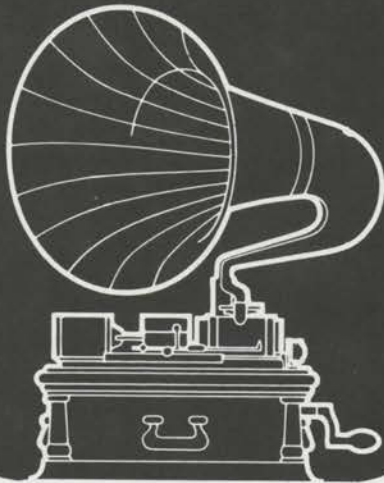


For The Records



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-

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