

LARRY EVRITT'S MAGNIFICENT 3/18 THEATRE PIPE ORGAN

by Bill Yaney

In the heartland of northwestern Ohio, some 40 miles south of Toledo, lies the small, but thriving, city of Defiance, population 16,000. Steeped in agriculture and industry, this quiet community is home to a magnificent residence installation, a 3/18 theatre organ owned by Larry and Janet Evritt.

Installed in a 15-room house built in 1887, the organ has transformed the house and the lives of its owners. As one approaches the home on Hopkins Street, the only indication of what lies within is a small calliope in the side window, one of two working calliopes on the organ. The polished black console sits in a parlor to the left of the front entrance foyer. The large chamber, complete with a very quiet shutter linkage, is situated down a narrow hallway in another parlor converted for this purpose. At the end of the hall is the piano, splendidly rebuilt and speaking at 16', 8' and 4' levels. As the organ is played, the entire house seems to take on the acoustical properties of one large chamber. Two Spencer blowers (5 hp and 3 hp) are located in the



Larry and Janet Evritt at their console.

basement and power the organ at 19 (static) inches of wind. A second phase of the organ — the second half of the Accompaniment division — is completed in the upstairs portion of the house and is ready to be wired. Also upstairs is a parts room and relay room.

An interesting addition to the organ is a player mechanism which Larry proudly states was salvaged from scrap. When he puts on a QRS march roll, the organ becomes a giant marching band. Larry's ability to turn scrap into a finished product is a tribute to his exceptional ingenuity.

Theatre organs are no passing fancy with Larry; he has harbored a lifelong love for them. From 1966 to 1970, Larry and Janet were Gulbransen organ dealers in Defiance, and Larry's background as an aircraft mechanic for 25 years proved invaluable in the logistics of theatre organ installation. Larry currently manages the truck garage for Dinner Bell Foods, Inc., in Defiance.

In 1974, after an exhaustive search, the Evritts obtained the console, which had been

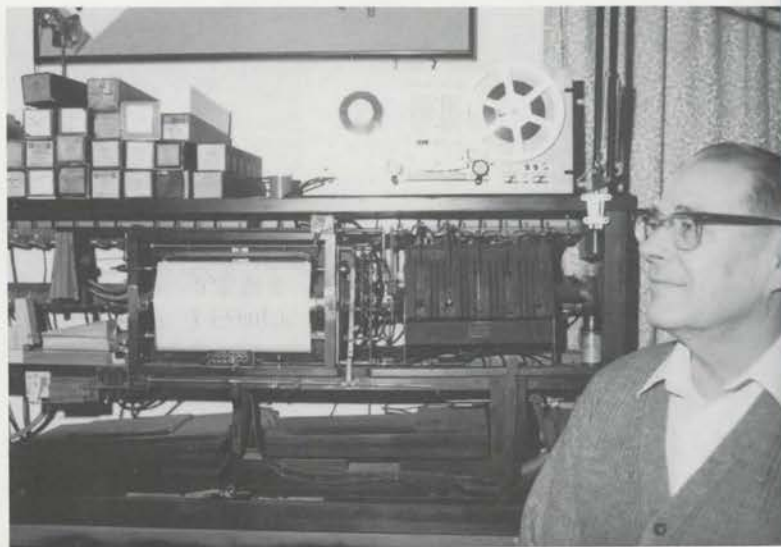
modified to a four-manual straight organ, from Defiance High School. Larry converted the console to a three-manual, enlarged the organ to 18 ranks and installed electronic relays. The original console and accompaniment had been installed in the Alhambra Theatre in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1917 and 1921. The console, Diapason, Concert Flute and Vox Humana are all Wurlitzer; the Strings and high pressure Tibia are Estey, and there is a Marr & Colton xylophone, Page carillon harp and Robert-Morton horses hooves. The more than 40 toys on the toy counter are all operable along with two electronic rhythm units and an extensive coupler system. An obvious rarity is the fact that every voice and function works perfectly, including the combination action. A finishing touch is a beautiful Chinese gong hanging in the stairwell opposite the chamber.

Needless to say, the organ will never be completed if Larry has his way. He is a member of the Toledo Area chapter of ATOS, and his expertise has been invaluable

Bill Yaney, resident organist at Toledo's Ohio Theatre, at the console of the Evritt organ.

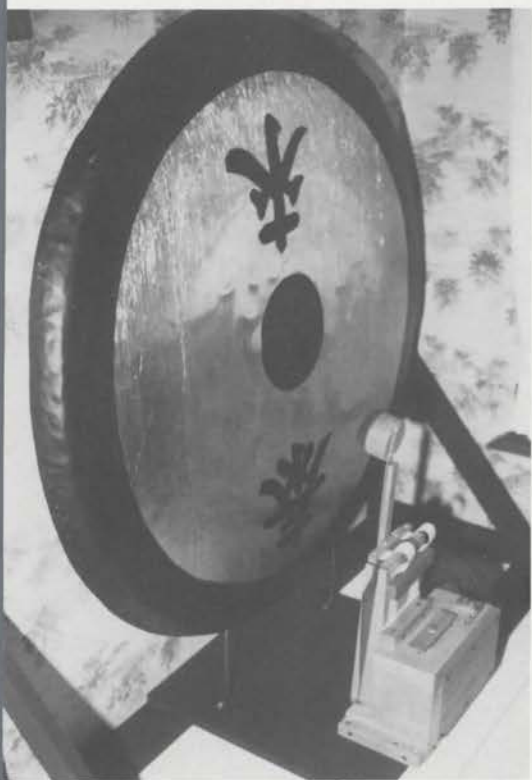


Larry Evritt contemplates the roll player connected to the console of his home installation.





Piano and Xylophone fit snugly into the hallway of the Evritt home.



Chinese gong could serve as dinner-bell.

Steam engine made from spare parts is connected to console.



in the installation of the chapter's organ, a four-manual Marr & Colton originally installed in the Toledo Rivoli Theatre.

The dream of Larry and Janet Evritt has become a reality, one which would rival many a theatre installation. Northwestern Ohio is very proud of its own "Theatre Organ Wizard."

Note: Author Bill Yaney is the resident organist at the Ohio Theatre in Toledo, Ohio. □

For The Records



*Manufacturers, distributors or individuals sponsoring or merchandising organ recordings are encouraged to send review copies to the **Record Reviewer**, THEATRE ORGAN, 4633 SE Brookside Drive 158, Milwaukie, Oregon 97222. Be sure to include purchasing information (post-paid price, ordering address) and a photo of the artist which need not be returned.*

RAWLE AT THE HALL, Len Rawle at the Wurlitzer organ of the Free Trade Hall, Manchester. Available from Mr. V.A. Drinkall, 4 High Elm Road, Hale Barns, Altrincham, England. International money order \$12.00 postpaid airmail.

BRAVO!!

Rarely does an album of this calibre appear on the organ scene. This is one of the very few that could be called a definitive theatre organ album.

The organ is both typical and not typical of British installations. It is typical in that it is well-regulated and beautifully tonally finished. It is not typical because the tremos sound more like eastern United States than England. It is hard to imagine this organ sounding so good in its original home. This reviewer is sorely tempted to call it virtually perfect. Organists will be waiting in line to record this one. The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust and their 4/20 Wurlitzer have made a most impressive mark on the theatre-organ world.

Len Rawle — unique, creative and well-ex-

ecuted performances and arrangements typify this recording. He keeps you wondering what he is going to do next, and always leaves you wanting more. Rawle is a superb, polished performer who has claimed his place as one of theatre organ's brightest stars. Selections include "Music, Music, Music," "Soft Lights and Sweet Music," "Fame," "Let's Face the Music," and more. There's not a weak one in the bunch.

Microphone placement is ideal. The recording engineer captured the sound of a big organ in a big hall perfectly. The only thing wrong with this recording was a bit of extraneous background noise. Everyone connected with the installation of this organ and the production of this album should be very proud. See THEATRE ORGAN, July/August 1986, for the complete story of this magnificent installation.

Don't miss this recording.

BOB SHAFTER

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL, Paul Quarino plays Old-Time Gospel Favorites at the 4/44 Wurlitzer, PQ 101 Dolby Stereo Tape. Available from Paul Quarino Recordings, P.O. Box 06311, Portland, Oregon 97206. Price is \$11.00 postpaid, \$13.00 outside the U.S.

"Burnout" is considered a threat in many professions these days. Could it also happen to an organist who plays five nights a week in the Portland Organ Grinder, cues for silents at the Sherwood Oriental Theatre, serves as church organist, plays ATOS chapter meetings and national conventions, keeps AGO fans happy and owns his own pipe organ service company? But perhaps "burnout" is not a word we should use around one who has still another activity closer to the Pearly Gates. Paul Quarino has been wowing fans during those slack hours in his schedule (Sunday afternoons) playing Gospel music. This tape is a fitting testament to his success.

As an opener, Quarino proceeds to warm up the devout with "Victory in Jesus." The arrangement begins harmlessly enough. But then the artist turns on a mechanically cycling rhythm section. If, as the album title says, this is to be "Gospel According to Paul," the automated Boogaloo is strictly from St. Elsewhere. Fortunately, the organist only resorts to such plastic fervor at the beginning of Sides I and II (plus one other tune). Remaining selections are "Amen!" all the way.

"In The Garden" is a wonderful evocation of what may well be the loveliest of the old Gospel ballads. Paul rolls out the Vox, Tibias, and Strings and lets them sing. This consummate artist can evoke sentiment without bathos. One of his secret ingredients is pacing — not too slow. Even the half chorus on chimes seems eminently fitting. True, what Paul does is basically theatre style, but it also has the conviction and serious commitment we expect from performances of religious music. No tongue-in-cheek in these performances. The artist genuinely respects what he plays — and it shows.