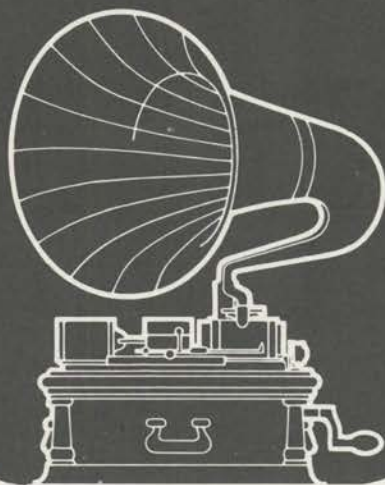


For The Records



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FILMTRAX: Lyn Larsen at the Wichita Century II Convention Center. Pro-Arte Compact Disc CDD 280. Available in record stores or from Pro-Arte, 14025 23rd Avenue North, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441. CDs are \$15.98; cassettes are \$10.98. Playing time 46:53.

Selections: from *2001*, a somewhat ponderous opening of Richard Strauss' "Also Sprach Zarathustra," and Johann Strauss II's "On the Beautiful Blue Danube," perhaps a little too fast in spots; from *Fantasia*, Ponchielli's "Dance of the Hours," certainly, as played here, this composition was heard many times when Pearl White put the back of her hand to her forehead — thoughtful solo and ensemble registrations, excellent dynamic range — this reviewer's pick of the disc; from *Words and Music*, Richard Rodger's "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue," we've heard it before, but this was a fairly comfortable reading; from *The Wizard of Oz*, Harold Arlen's "Over the Rainbow," the phrasing in both the verse and chorus shows that Lyn had the lyrics in mind — great, lush sounds; from *E.T.*, John Williams' "Prologue," "Elliott and E.T." and "Flying Theme," with a delightfully relentless accom-

paniment; from *Star Wars*, John Williams' "Main Title," "Cantina Music," "Princess Leia's Theme" and "Main Title Reprise."

UP & AWAY, same artist, venue and vendor, CDD281. Playing time 55:13.

Rest assured the opening will test and/or tax your audio system. Selections: "Armed Forces Medley;" "National Emblem," sounds like Lyn's hands were more than busy toward the end; "Under the Double Eagle," you will experience natural reverberation in this one; "Princeton Loyalty," yes, it was written by the late, great Virgil Fox while attending high school in Princeton, Illinois, and I believe Lyn enjoyed bringing this to us as much as I enjoyed hearing it; "March of the Siamese Children," quite orchestral; "Radesky March," Lyn again seems to enjoy performing this work — notable snare and bass drum work, but difficult to imagine them projecting this well from the chambers; "March of the Toreadors," a tad shaky in the beginning; "Knightsbridge March," "American Patrol," might be called "Americana Patrol;" "Variations on Mice on Parade," very listenable update from an earlier LP release; "Washington Post," "76 Trombones," "Orb and Sceptre," one can imagine an organ much larger than the instrument at hand; and "Stars and Stripes Forever."

Perhaps Lyn will have a "drape" for the console on his next recording sessions.

The above selections were mastered in one two-day session, along with PIPES OF CHRISTMAS, previously reviewed. The liner notes spell Lyn's last name correctly most of the time. The liner notes appear to be identical on all three releases except for the program listings. The chamber appointments, however, do not support the stop list.

We finally are hearing the theatre organ and its attendant noise without the masking effect of tape hiss or surface noise with pops and ticks. This might lead some listeners to be critical of the background noise, but, finally, we can hear the actual sounds experienced during the performance. I believe the liner notes regarding the avoidance of limiting or artificial ambience effects. In this case, you are hearing a performance on an instrument in a public setting, not one which is conditioned for intimate studio listening with all the extraneous noises carefully subdued or eliminated. The sonic integrity and long life delivered by the compact disc should encourage more releases in the medium, and should result in the upgrading of many audio systems to include this medium.

We should congratulate Lyn and others who have gone through, or will go through, the frustrations of mastering and the hassles of production of this medium.

HARRY HETH □

PIPES &

Personalities

A SALUTE TO GENNY

Long before the days of seminars at community colleges on non-traditional occupations for women, Genny Whitting was asking why women weren't working on pipe organs. Her persistent fascination with the intricacies of the paraphernalia and the sounds of organs has prevailed, and she has since accumulated a wealth of unusual experiences in the area of organ building and maintenance.

In the sixties, Genny volunteered regularly for ATOE work parties at the Seattle Paramount and Fifth Avenue Theatres, but was never called. When Puget Sound Chapter purchased its Wurlitzer, Genny volunteered again and was given the task of painting chambers and washing pipes — not at all what she had in mind. So, when a two-manual pipe organ was offered for sale, she enlisted professional organ-builder Don Myers, of Balcolm and Vaughan Organ Service, for advice on its suitability. She had, however, wanted a three-manual console, so when Bill Bunch, also of B & V, told her of a Robert-Morton console for sale, she decided to purchase it as well.

On moving day, the smaller console (from an Estey Minuet enlarged to seven ranks) turned out to be just a keydesk, stoprail and pedalboard attached to the chamber wall and strung together by cables to the relay. The next revelation came with the discovery that the third manual had been removed from the Morton console; it had been gutted and the wood bleached to a "sickly shade."

Genny quickly came to realize why she hadn't been called on work parties, as carpentry and construction experience did little to prepare one for the mysteries of magnets and pneumatics, windlines, wiring, relays and switchstacks. Don Myers, accepting her independent, pioneering nature, became her mentor, as well as her friend, and Genny learned quickly out of necessity. With additional help from friends and relatives, a ten-rank instrument was assembled and became a much-admired home installation. The Morton console was adapted and refinished a lovely honey color. The Estey console parts were reassembled into a cabinet crafted from 50-year-old ash flooring salvaged from Trinity Episcopal Church; it was later sold to another church. Genny acquired a 49-note Aeolian concert harp from the Christian Science Church in Portland, and Don devised a framework to fit in the stair landing by mounting half the resonators on a horizontal

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Genny Whitting is recognized as retiring Program Chairman by Mel Retzlaff, outgoing Chairman of Puget Sound Chapter. (Diane Whipple photo)

plane. Genny then tackled the design and construction of a needed compact, four-rank chest. She also swapped with Don for a Hope-Jones relay which needed a new junction board; she then laid out the plans and built it, drilling the hundreds of holes on the drill press in the B & V shop and wiring it herself.

Having learned her lessons well, she had combined spirit, ability as an innovator and the natural dexterity given to women and had become a qualified technician. Don recruited her to work on the Balcolm and Vaughan installations for the Seattle, Bellevue and Ta-

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coma Pizza and Pipes as well as to be his assistant on church jobs throughout the state and in the restoration of the Juneau Kimball in a Seattle warehouse prior to its installation in the three-story mall of the Juneau State Office Building.

Dancing rag dolls wired to the organ at Chicago's Elm Rink inspired the design of puppet theatres installed by Don and Genny in the Greenwood and Bellevue Pizza and Pipes and the Phoenix Organ Stop Pizza restaurants. Genny's original designs have included Dis-

ney characters, Muppets, Halloween spooks, South American dancers and a jug band.

For several years, Genny has acted as liaison between the Paramount Theatre management and the organ crew and chapter members. Also, she has worked tirelessly on this organ, refinishing and gold-leafing the console and maintaining its history and inventory. It was largely because of her efforts while program chairperson that Walt Strony was presented in a highly successful public concert in November of 1986, the fulfillment of a long-time goal.

Genny's love affair with pipe organs began in the fifties when she attended a George Wright concert, played on a Conn, in the Seattle Orpheum Theatre — the concert ended with "Jealousie" played on the nearly forgotten pipe organ, and Genny was immediately smitten by its sound. Her own home organ has since been sold to Mike Wallace and she is assisting with its installation in the Neptune Theatre where it will be used regularly for intermissions and periodically for silent films. She now reflects on having attended the Neptune while a University of Washington student, and the Paramount while in nurses' training at Harborview Hospital, long before hearing a pipe organ. Now that she has come full-circle, she is no longer totally mystified by the intricacies of the organs, but does admit to being somewhat perplexed as to the origins of her undying fascination with these remarkable instruments.

DIANE WHIPPLE □



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