

Wiegand banjo-accordion team, Bice got fair response and applause.

December 1934 (RG) ...

You will hear WILLIAM MEEDER on the new NBC organ instead of Lew White, Sundays at 8:30 p.m. and weekdays at 8:15 a.m. over the NBC Network from WJZ, New York.



SAN SYLMAR PRESENTS REX KOURY AT THE MIGHTY WURLITZER, No. KD 2025. \$10.00 postpaid from Rex Koury, 5370 Happy Pines Dr., Foresthill, California 95631.

The combination of Rex Koury and this 36 rank (or more) dream organ is a most enjoyable combination. As for Rex, he has been prominent in ATOS circles for many years. In fact he's a recent past president of the organization. His musical credits extend from 1930s theatre organ broadcasts which this then New York state reviewer picked up on his model 60 Philco from a Massachusetts radio station — "the youngest professional organist on the air." We recall (over many years) how we envied the talent he had for trumpet "rides" — the solo jazz improvisations heard in early 1930s dance orchestras. He was "with it" then and he still is. But not only as a pop player. For example, Rex was commissioned by the Sussex Theatre Organ Trust (England) for a "Concerto for Theatre Organ and Orchestra" to be premiered by the Worthing Symphony Orchestra (South Britain).

FIRST THE INSTRUMENT ...

The mostly Wurlitzer organ in the Merle Norman Musical Instrument Museum in Sylmar, California (near Los Angeles) is the brain child of J.B. Nethercutt, who heads the Merle Norman firm of beauty products. Organbuilder Richard Villemin and assistant Gordon Belt installed the original 3/17. Belt remained with the museum as organ technician and has supervised most of the additions (a 4-manual console and double the number of voices). Mr. Nethercutt is a very exacting man; he wants the many instruments in his museum in perfect condition at all times. This is to the advantage of performers. On this digital recording, the organ never sounded better.

Let's look at the selections ...

42nd Street Medley includes the title tune, "Shadow Waltz," "About a Quarter to Nine," "Shuffle Off to Buffalo,"

September 1935 (RN) ...

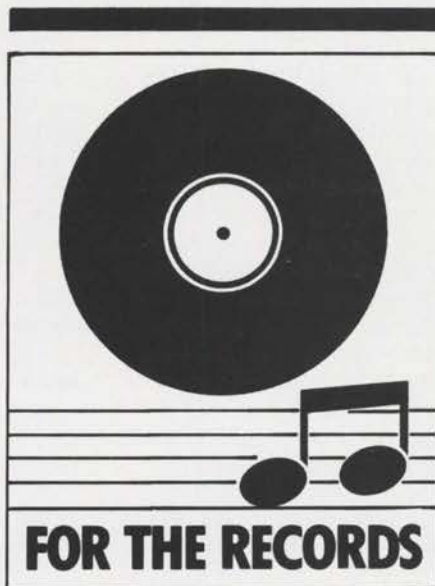
RICHARD LEIBERT, Radio City organist, will shortly inaugurate a series of organ recitals weekdays at 7 p.m. The concerts on WJZ, New York, replace the orchestra programs under Dr. Frank Black and Leo Spitalny.

September 1935 (RN) ...

FRANCIS J. CRONIN at the organ and Virginia Warren, soprano, will be heard today at 5:00 p.m. over the Yankee Network which includes WLBZ in Bangor, Maine; WANAC, Boston; and WORC, Worcester.

That should do it for this time. So long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector ■



and a somewhat surprising "Lullabye of Broadway" (was it in that film? - Nope!). Lots of instrumental and tempo variety here, and striking key changes throughout the 6:35 minutes of Harry Warren classics.

"Harbor Lights," an enduring favorite, enjoys fine expression and interesting key changes. We enjoyed the coda on the strings.

"Summer Samba" is a lighthearted, carefree tune in those catchy South American tempos. The piano is heard, also other percussers.

"Run for the Roses" is a familiar melody even if the title isn't. Fine solo Tuba and Tibia counter melody work.

Michael Landon fans will enjoy the David Rose theme which is strung throughout TV's "Highway to Heaven" with often inspiring effect. Rose's incidental music is right up there with that of Max Steiner and Eric Korngold, and Rex Koury makes the most of it with deft and sensitive interpretation.

To compare late and early David Rose, how proper to follow with "Holiday for Strings," an offbeat pop he wrote while conducting the orchestra on the *California Melodies* broadcasts in the early '40s. It was his first hit (long before "The Stripper") and its lively plucked string instrumentation and interesting key changes maintain its freshness today. Needless to say, the Koury interpretation does it full justice.

Side II opens with "Beyond the Sea," a long time favorite also known as "La

Mer." As presented by Rex, this sea is fairly calm; that is, the inevitable rolling waves are ephemeral and never overdone. We enjoyed the very different harmonies which lead up to the coda. Nice counter tunes against the opening brass melody, too.

Ellington's "Satin Doll" enjoys the bouncy treatment called for. It even has brief piano passages in the style of the Duke.

Rex's one semi-classic is Borodin's "Polovtzi Dance" which was adapted to become "Stranger in Paradise" in a popular musical, *Kismet*, in 1953. Rex injects the proper voluptuous and romantic oriental atmosphere.

A favorite "oldie" with this reviewer is "All Through the Night." Its fast-moving, downward chromatic melody is irresistible. Rex's arrangement maintains the proper tempo while adding some Posthorn punctuation, but briefly.

We have rarely heard a more introspective rendition of "Invitation" than the one Rex Koury presents here. Beautifully phrased and registered. This sensitive styling presents some deliciously impassioned moments.

Regarding 1932's "April in Paris," tunesmith E.Y. Harburg, was once asked how he could write about Paris, since he had never visited the City of Light. His sage reply was "I've never been over the rainbow, either! But I managed." So be it; "April" has a definite European atmosphere as presented in the Koury styling. There's a street organ sequence rife with percussions but mostly it's deliciously sentimental.

The digital recording (under the Klavier Audiophile label) is top quality. The review pressing was perfectly centered and the surfaces smooth and free of pops and other noise.

Jacket notes are adequate with some biography of Rex Koury (he's had an impressive career in the musical end of numerous well-known radio and TV programs) plus information about the organ and museum. It's a first class package.

Stu Green

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