



DWIGHT THOMAS AT THE WURLITZER PIPE ORGAN. Dwight Thomas plays the Paramount Music Palace 4/42 Wurlitzer. Available from: Klarion Productions c/o Dwight Thomas, RR2, Box 208-A, Fairland, IN 46126. Price \$18.00 postpaid. CD.

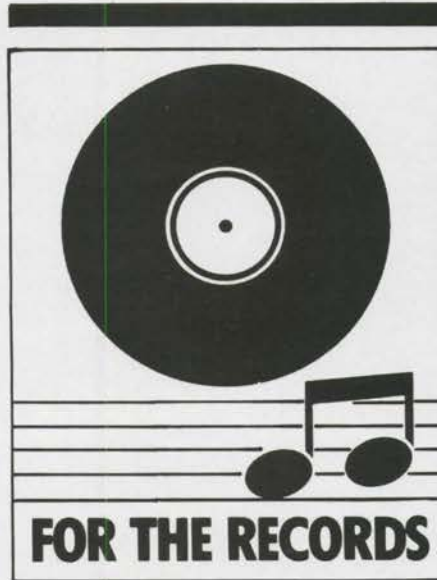
Here we have a first recording from the 1986 winner of the ATOS Young Organist Competition. Clean, crisp, even stunning keyboard and pedalboard technique are the most outstanding elements of this recording. The other side of the coin is that his playing is sometimes choppy, and phrasing sometimes suffers. Shutter work is occasionally overdone. In the "Fugue a La Gigue," Mr. Thomas' incredible technique is displayed to best advantage. This selection is flawless and brilliant. "Broken Rosary" is quite authentic Jesse Crawford and is very well played. "Joy," the modern (per)version of "Jesu Joy of Mans Desiring," is based on a Jonas Nordwall arrangement and is quite accurately rendered. I could do without the auto rhythm in "Careless Whisper," the innaccurate phrasing in "The Man I Love," and the circus quality of "Vienna Forever." Other tunes are "Takin' A Chance On Love," "Tuxedo Junction," "Dodging a Divorcee," "Somewhere Out There," "One," "Medley from *Annie*," "South American Way," "My Romance."

The Paramount Music Palace organ functions better as a concert instrument when the tremors are off. It actually sounds pretty good in the "Fugue a La Gigue," other than that I do not particularly care for the way this organ is tonally finished.

The recording job itself is, unfortunately the worst part of this CD. It sounds muffled, as if it were recorded under water. For a digital recording this was quite a disappointment to me.

In spite of some disappointments in this CD, it is, nevertheless, noteworthy as a first recording, and deserves some attention. Dwight Thomas is going places and I, for one, will be watching.

Bob Shaffer



CINCINNATI FATS: Dick Hyman plays the music of Fats Waller on the Emery Theatre Wurlitzer. Available from: The Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, MA 02184. LP \$9.00, Cassette \$9.00, CD \$17.00. Add \$2.00 postage per order.

Fats Waller fans may well rejoice at this album. Smooth, polished arrangements are the order of the day. Dick Hyman is so well known that any comments about him would be superfluous, except to say that this album is thoroughly professional. Tunes are as follows: "Messin' Around with the Blues," "Jitterbug Waltz," "Honeysuckle Rose," "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Viper's Drag," "Yacht Club Swing," "What Did I Do to Be So Black and Blue," "Hog Maw Stomp," "I've Got a Feeling I'm Falling," "Bond Street," "Squeeze Me," "Keepin' Out of Mischief Now."

The organ at the Emery Theatre is a little out of control in the upper registers; both tuning and voicing are sometimes offensive. It is, however, in a huge barn and these fairly minor problems might not be noticeable to many.

The recording itself is wonderful. The recording engineer captured the acoustics very well. The review copy was on vinyl and was extremely clear and clean. I was quite impressed with the quality of this vinyl recording.

A fine addition to any collection.

Bob Shaffer

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BITS, BYTES & PIPES, VOL. II. Jonas Nordwall plays the Organ Grinder 4/47 Wurlitzer. Available from: Organ Grinder Recordings, 5015 S.E. 82nd Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97266. Cost is \$11.00 postpaid. \$13.00 overseas orders.

Jonas Nordwall always delivers the goods. Those who already know Jonas won't be disappointed with this latest offering. Those who don't, won't be disappointed either. I still can't quite get over the infectious fun of "Española Cani," a duet with Jonas at the organ, and Judy Hedberg on the accordion. I might have hoped for at least one other duet, as this is brilliantly played by both Jonas and Judy.

There were only a couple of wrinkles in this recording and they both occurred in the "Grand March" from *Tannhauser*. One place the organ is a little out of tune, and early on there is a rather noticeable flipping of a page of music. This provided some comic relief in what is an overlong and tedious piece.

"Don't Get Around Much Anymore" is a ballad that is played small. The treatment is very sensitive and very interesting. It is like a breath of fresh air coming right after the pomposity of the "Grand March." Oh, no, not another "Memory." Jonas, however, manages to breathe new life into what has already become a tired old warhorse. Other selections are "Bamboula," "Phantom's Theme," "Poupee Valsette," "Pinball Wizard," "Toccatto," "My Baby Grand," "Music of the Night," "Warsaw Concerto," "Dance of the Comedians," and "It Don't Mean a Thing." Quite an impressive lineup. One comment, though, is that Jonas' phrasing isn't always as perfect as his keyboard technique.

The Wurlitzer organ at the Organ Grinder is a well done example of the "George Wright" school of tonal finishing. That comes across quite well in this recording. The recording itself is very well done. It is clean and clear. Even though this is a studio-type installation, the intimate acoustics are captured quite well.

Jonas Nordwall's amazing technique is always a treat. This tape should please most everyone.

Bob Shaffer