



KALEIDOSCOPE, George Wright, organist. Banda Records, P.O. Box 392, Oxnard, CA 93032. \$20.00 post paid U.S. and Canada. All other countries \$23.00.

George Wright's latest compact disc release, *Kaleidoscope*, is just that. A kaleidoscope. A chameleon. A "gourmet banquet" featuring all types of music for which this one-of-a-kind organist is so well known. From the surprise ending of "Do It Again," Mr. Wright announces "Spring Is Here" in a beautifully phrased offering that is equaled by "The Night Was Made For Love" and "The Song Is You." "The Song Is You" is an exercise in registration subtlety. If only more organists knew the value of leaving stops out of a registration . . . not putting them in. Something not so subtle is "The Mooche." Just as Mr. Wright has influenced so many younger organists, he too, has been influenced by his own life's experience. Time spent playing in a few saloons and listening to some talented black musicians is much in evidence in "The Mooche."

Mr. Wright's tribute to the late Fred Astaire, "A Fred Astaire Memoir" is as delightful as was the man. One can easily visualize Fred and Ginger cavorting on the dance floor as we hear generous applications of swirling, synthesized harp arpeggios. Where it is musically fitting Mr. Wright is a proponent of new technology and this reviewer wonders and looks forward to the day when he will implement digitally synthesized and/or sampled voices into his major melody and accompaniment registrations rather than restricting their use to embellishments.

On the up-tempo side of things, Mr. Wright gives us "Spring Fever" and "Cavaquinho." Both tunes are performed with the crisp, accurate fingering and controlled tempi we have come to expect from George Wright. A brilliant, chiffing

flute featured in "Cavaquinho" is the latest addition to the ever-changing Hollywood Philharmonic Organ. Finishing *Kaleidoscope* is the "Meet Me In St. Louis" medley. After setting the carnival mood in the introduction, "The Boy Next Door" affords the collector of George Wright recordings the opportunity to make comparisons between this rendition and one recorded more than 30 years earlier. One point is for certain. The phrasing of this effort is just as sensitive as the earlier one.

On the technical grounds of dynamics, clarity and incredibly low mechanical noise from the organ, *Kaleidoscope* rates a solid 10 as does Mr. Wright's performance. There is, however, one technical item that troubles this reviewer. Not having heard the Hollywood Philharmonic Organ live recently, I cannot say if this



recording is an accurate representation of the live sound. Whether it is or is not the issue but rather how it is perceived in this recording. The center of the stereo image is perceived to be shifted somewhat to the right. Recording engineers of the calibre employed by Mr. Wright just would not do something so fundamentally wrong like having the right channel record level too high. Indeed, oscilloscope observations confirm they did not. Therefore, one must consider microphone selection, placement and channel mixing. It is this reviewer's opinion that future George Wright recordings of the Hollywood Philharmonic Organ could be made more satisfying to audio buffs if a modification of recording strategy were employed that would cause the organ's recorded sound to be more evenly distributed across the stereo sound stage.

Notwithstanding a little fussing by audiophiles, *Kaleidoscope* should be included in the libraries of George Wright fans and all those folks who just plain enjoy the finest in theatre organ playing.

Dennis Hedberg

WEST COAST WURLITZER. Don Thompson at Fleet residence, Original Oakland Paramount (Melody Inn), Old Town Music Hall. Available from: Pipe Organ Presentations Ltd., 1638 136th Ave., San Leandro, CA 94578. \$9.95 postpaid. Cassette.

The recordings made at the Fleet Residence are worth the price of the tape. Well played believable arrangements, and a gorgeous organ, made me wish the entire tape had been done there. The rest of the recording doesn't hold up as well. Selections are as follows: at the Fleet residence, "South," "Breezing Along With the Breeze," "Spring is Here," "Puttin' on the Ritz," "Moonlight in Vermont," "Bill Bailey," "As Time Goes By," original Paramount (Melody Inn), "I Get a Kick out of You," "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Repsz Band March," "My Old Flame," "Russian Rag," "Love Makes the World Go Round," "Change Partners," "The Vamp," "Woodchoppers Ball;" at the Old Town Music Hall, "Fritz Kreisler Medley," "Pizzicato Polka," "Mountain Greenery," "March from *Things to Come*," "Nostalgia," "Vilia."

SAN FRANCISCO SHOWTIME. Don Thompson at the Wurlitzer. Available from: Pipe Organ Presentations Ltd., 1638 136th Ave., San Leandro, CA 94578. Cassette \$9.95 postpaid.

"San Francisco," "Vincent Youman's Medley," "Oklahoma Medley," "Fred Astaire Memories," "My Fair Lady Medley," "Oliver Medley," "Cabaret."

CALIFORNIA SHOWTIME. Don Thompson at the Wurlitzer. Available from: Pipe Organ Presentations Ltd., 1638 136th Ave., San Leandro, CA 94578. Cassette \$9.95 postpaid.

"42nd Street Medley," "Man of La Mancha Medley," "Les Miserables Medley," "The Phantom of the Opera Medley," "A Chorus Line Medley," "Chess Medley."

These two cassettes are clearly extensions of each other. Because of a lack of any production material, I do not know where they were recorded.

Don Thompson's playing is entertaining enough, it somewhat sloppy throughout. Perhaps not enough attention was paid to the final product.

The organ sounds like it is in a fairly small room, which may explain why the microphones sound like they are too close to the organ.

All in all, the things I look for in a recording aren't here.

Bob Shaffer

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DON BAKER RETURNS TO ENGLAND. Don Baker plays the Wurlitzer at The Assembly Hall, Worthing, England. Available from: Don Baker, 111 Sea Fern Court, Leesburg, Florida 32788. CrO2 dolby cassette \$12.95 postpaid.

Having been one of Don Baker's biggest fans for many years, I found this recording to be disappointing. It is still clearly Don Baker, but that "indefinable something" is missing from this recording.

The tunes are as follows: "Give My Regards to Broadway," "Theme from *The Apartment*," "It's a Small World," "Sleepy Time Gal," "The Days of Wine and Roses," "All the Things You Are," "Chicago," "Veradero," "A Foggy Day," "What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life," "Bless You for Being an Angel," "Here's That Rainy Day," "April in Paris," "Dancing in the Dark," "The High and The Mighty."

The organ at The Assembly Hall, Worthing, England, is a gorgeous instrument. Very nicely finished.

The recording job is also very well done. The tapes are digitally mastered and the finished product is on high bias CrO2.

For Don Baker, this is a so-so recording. *Bob Shafter*

Thanks to the following for contributing convention pictures for this issue:

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Steve Adams	(SA)
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CORNSILK. Ron Rhode at the 3/14 Barton, Iowa Theatre, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Available from Ron Rhode Concerts, 705 South El Dorado, Mesa, AZ 85202. Dolby Cassette \$12.00 U.S.; \$14.00 Canada, postpaid.

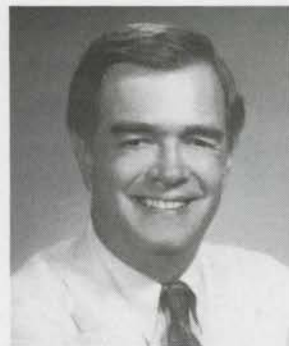
A splendid recording from one of our top-notch artists, this was a pleasure to listen to throughout. Here is a tape to share with your friends, and to listen to over and over again. Especially excellent are Mr. Rhode's orchestral transcriptions, as they are accurate and faithful to the originals. Following is the tune list; each is a winner in its own right: "I Can't Believe That You're in Love With Me," "Walkin' My Baby Back Home," "Hiawatha's Melody of Love," "Cornsilk," "Make Believe," "Hot Lips," "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You," "Tales From the Vienna Woods," "March of the Steel Men," "The Oceana Roll," "Poor Wandering One," "The Very Thought Of You," "Japanese Sandman," "The Birth of Passion," "No Man is An Island," "When Day is Done," "On Eagles' Wings," and "When Yuba Played the Rhumba On The Tuba."

Those of you who are not Barton fans should buy this tape. It is truly a beautiful and magnificent instrument. Those of you who are Barton fans will need no further encouragement. Once again, Mr. Rhode has displayed a unique talent, and that is his ability to get the best from any instrument.

As far as the recording job goes, well, without having heard the instrument live, I would hazard that this recording is the tiniest bit muffled, but it's difficult to say for sure as the presence of the room is so well captured.

This is my favorite Ron Rhode recording, and is certainly highly recommended.

Bob Shafter



Tom Hazleton Appointed Rodgers' Tonal Director

Robert Ulery, President of Rodgers Instrument Corporation, has announced the appointment of Tom Hazleton as Tonal Director. Ulery stated that Hazleton's close association with the music industry as a renowned organist, designer, and consultant for more than 30 years will be an asset to the company. "He is bringing with him a wealth of experience as both a classic and theatre organist," said Ulery.

Hazleton has consulted on the specification, design, construction, and installation of many fine organs over the past decades. Many of these were electronic organs, the base of Rodgers organ business. His balanced knowledge of both electronic and pipe organs makes him a good match for Rodgers, which builds both types of instruments. Hazleton will take charge of specifying and designing future organs for Rodgers as well as supervising their voicing. He is close to customer tastes tonally and has many innovative ideas for future Rodgers products, including theatre organs.

Hazleton was a student of and assistant to Richard Purvis at Grace Cathedral. He was the last staff organist at the San Francisco Paramount Theatre. At Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in Menlo Park, California, he was organist and associate minister of music for 14 years.

For the last 20 years, Hazleton has been a design consultant to a major organ manufacturer.

The American Theatre Organ Society named him Organist of the Year in 1986. He was formerly a professor of organ at University of Pacific in Stockton, California.

As a concert organist, Hazleton scheduled as many as 30 concerts a year worldwide. To date, he has 25 recordings, both classical and theatre and was recently a recording artist for Pro Arte.

Music, in the best sense, does not require novelty; nay, the older it is, and the more we are accustomed to it, the greater its effect.

JOHANN WOLFGANG von GOETHE (1749-1832)