



In an attempt to standardize the rating system I have resorted to the popular 4-star system. *Bob Shafter*

**MIGHTY MUSIC AT THE MOVIES.** Written by Fred Turley. Available from: The Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Rd., Braintree, MA 02184. Price is \$10.00 plus \$2.00 postage per order.

Here we have an 8 1/4" x 8" soft-cover book of 60 pages that details the organs and organists in Sheffield and the surrounding area. There are wonderful photographs on virtually every page. The author has gone to quite some length documenting an interesting history of a fairly small area in England.

Overall I found the book to be concise, well written and thoroughly fascinating. It is highly recommended.

**ALL IF WANT FOR CHRISTMAS.** David Johnston at the Capri Theatre 4/21 Wurlitzer. Available from: Wayne Bertram, 45 Victoria Street, Prospect 5082, South Australia. Price is \$25.00 CD, \$20.00 Cassette. All orders must be sent with an international bank cheque in Australian currency, made payable to Wayne Bertram.

Selections include: We Need a Little Christmas, The Christmas Song, Santa Claus is Coming to Town, Silent Night, Away in a Manger, Joy to the World/Hallelujah, White Christmas, Jingle Bells/O Come All Ye Faithful, We Wish You a Merry Christmas.

**ORGAN:** ★ ★ ★ ★  
**PERFORMANCE:** ★ ★  
**RECORDING:** ★ 1/2

David Johnston is a competent musician, I'm sure. Unfortunately, in this recording he seems to swing back and forth between pizza arrangements (lots of post horn, percussions, traps and fidgety playing), and tried-and-true but rather bland arrangements.

This organ has been reviewed before,

and once again I find it to be excellent.

The recording was perhaps the most disappointing aspect of this project. It sounds as if the microphones were on the shutters (there is virtually no room sound), and is not very well balanced. It is however very clean.

There isn't much here to recommend this recording, except perhaps for the subject matter and the very nice organ.

**ROUND ABOUT REGENT STREET.** David Shepherd at the New Gallery 2/8 Wurlitzer. Available from: Sales Officer, 105 Highview, Vigo Village, Meopham, Kent. DA13 OTQ. U.K. Price \$13.00 by personal U.S. check, by VISA or MasterCard £7.50p, sterling only. Cassette only.

Selections are: Petite March, Tales From the Vienna Woods, Piccadilly Playtime, Again, Fairy Ballet/Rosamunde, Serenade to Moonlight, With a Song in My Heart, Round About Regent Street, Londonderry Air, All or Nothing at All, The Match Parade, Carminetta/Shallow Waters, Tell Me I'm Forgiven, Angela Mia, Bon Soir.

**ORGAN:** ★ ★  
**PERFORMANCE:** ★ ★ ★ ★  
**RECORDING:** ★ ★ ★ ★

Here is a thoroughly delightful recording that perhaps showcases David Shepherd's formidable talent better than if he recorded a larger instrument in better condition. It's not easy to make a small instrument sound big, or get much variety, unless of course it is played by someone very skilled, and David Shepherd is very skilled.

Even though not all of the organ is playing and it is not in perfect condition, it is still well voiced and well regulated. It is quite satisfying to listen to, even though there is a persistent shutter squeak.

The recording is up to John Leeming's usual high standards. This recording is highly recommended.

**THE GREAT SIDNEY TORCH.** Sidney Torch playing various organs, recorded from 78 rpm records between 1931 and 1939. Available from: Lawrence Whitfield, 11 Horseshoe Drive, Etching Hill, Rugeley, Staffs. WS15 2RF. U.K. Price \$14.00 air mail postpaid. Cassette only.

Selections include: Beautiful Spring, Her Name is Mary, A Cuckoo in the Nest, Isn't It Heavenly, Goody-Goody, Bugle Call Rag, Love in Bloom, Lookin' Around Corners For You, The Gypsy Princess, selections, Don't Worry 'bout Me, Lords of the Air, I've Got to Sing a Torch Song.

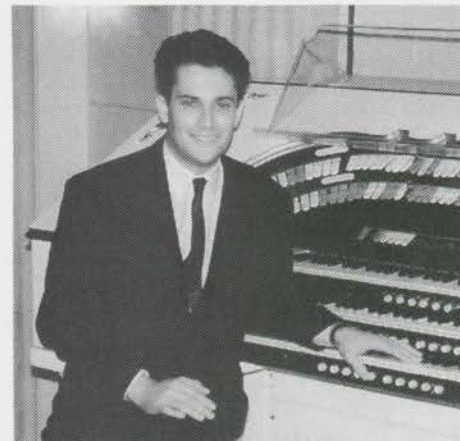
**ORGANS:** No Rating  
**PERFORMANCES:** ★ ★ ★ ★  
**RECORDINGS:** No Rating

I've been a fan of Sidney Torch ever since I first bought the Doric double album

set many years ago. It was with pure delight that I listened to these new recordings (there are only three selections that were previously issued).

The transfer from 78s to tape is done artistically correctly. The transfers were done in their pure form, without re-processing, re-channeling or otherwise screwing them up. British 78s had a better signal to noise ratio than their American counterparts, making them quite acceptable to listen to, in my opinion. Because of the historical value of these recordings, I find it very easy to forgive the less than CD perfection.

This recording is highly recommended.



*John Giacchi*

**NIGHT MOODS.** John Giacchi at the Orion Centre Wurlitzer, Sydney. Available from: John Giacchi c/o Tom B'hend, P.O. Box 40165, Pasadena, CA 91104. Price is \$14.95 Cassette only.

Selections are: Tribute to Busby Berkeley, selections, Song of Paradise, Nights of Gladness, Musical Sketch on 'Showboat,' Buffoon, Bal Masque, Phantom of the Opera fantasia, A Foggy Day in London Town/London by Night, Overture from 'Orpheus in the Underworld,' All Through The Night/All Through The Day.

**ORGAN:** ★ ★ ★ ★  
**PERFORMANCE:** ★ ★ ★ 1/2  
**RECORDING:** ★ ★ ★

A very vital and entertaining recording from a young man who is sure to become one of our finest theatre organists in just a few years. I am very impressed with Mr. Giacchi's finesse with ballads, something that doesn't often manifest in organists who are only 21 years old.

The organ is superbly finished and well regulated.

The recording engineer did a very good job in all, but there were a couple of places where it sounded to me like the tape had been edited in the middle of a piece.

This tape is highly recommended, and watch John Giacchi; he's going places.

*Bob Shafter*

MUSIC FROM ROUND LAKE. Organ and Orchestra, Glenn E. Soellner, music director, Stephen L. Pinet, Organ. Available from: Round Lake Historical Society, P.O. Box 22, Round Lake, NY 12151-0022. Prices are CD \$18.00 and Cassette \$13.00 postpaid.

Selections by composer are: Rheinberger "Meditations," "Orgeltonate Nr. 8 in E-moll." Guilment "Allegro," "Adoration." Reger "Jauchz, Erd' und Himmel, juble hell." Lefebvre "Meditation." Prout "Concerto in E minor for Organ and Orchestra."

ORGAN: ★ ★ ★

PERFORMANCES: ★ ★ ★ ★

RECORDING: ★ ★

An interesting look at an early American tracker organ built in 1846 by Richard M. Ferris and William H. Davis.

The performances are well done and the organ is quite romantic sounding, the only problem with it is the mixtures are dreadfully out of tune, causing some serious squealing from the organ.

Either the room is very odd or the recording engineer didn't place his micro-

phones correctly, or he didn't place his microphones correctly to compensate for the odd room.

In spite of a few problems with the organ and the recording, the performances are well enough done to earn this recording a recommendation as a decent addition to your classical library.

CHICAGO: GEORGE WRIGHT AT THE CHICAGO THEATRE. Available from: Banda Records, P.O. Box 392, Oxnard, CA 93032. Prices are: US & Canada - \$20 (US) postpaid First Class, England - \$22 (US) postpaid Air Mail, Australia - \$23 (US) postpaid Air Mail. No credit cards, UPS or COD.

Selections are: Bojangles of Harlem, Yesterdays, The Way You Look Tonight, Liza, Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day, Veradero, Paradise, Roller Coaster, Blue Twilight, Night and Day, You're Mine You, When Day is Done, In the Still of the Night, Truckin', You and the Night and the Music.



George Wright

ORGAN: BEAUTIFULLY WARM  
PERFORMANCE:

STANDARD GEORGE WRIGHT  
EXCELLENCE

RECORDING: ENVELOPING

George Wright's recordings, first, last and always, are about his music. It matters not that his latest release, "Chicago," was recorded in the fall of 1977, before the digital era. What *does* matter is that this is

(continued ...)

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some of the renowned artist's best and most life-like work. I say life-like because this material was recorded using the methodology known as "direct-to-disc."

This technique places great strain on both artist and recording/cutting engineer. The artist must think in terms of playing flawlessly and continuously for an entire LP side (about 17 minutes) not just one song at a time. Any errors must either be accepted or the entire side must be rejected and re-recorded. This is somewhat akin to a live performance in that the artist has but one chance to deliver his/her musical message. Hence, the life-like nature of direct-to-disc recording as opposed to the more common, manufactured, studio-type recordings. The recording/cutting engineer is also at risk.

Cutting lathes are heavy but fragile machines. Lacquers are delicate and must be constantly scrutinized for imperfections which can lead to ticks and pops. Pitch (number of grooves per inch) must be carefully, manually monitored and usually exaggerated to prevent over-cutting (adjacent grooves running into one another). I know this sounds quite technical but it is a very real concern when dealing with the standing waves generated by robust bass frequencies of a large pipe organ in a large auditorium. Because of time and, therefore, costs involved in producing a direct-to-disc recording, a backup tape is simultaneously made for backup and review purposes since direct cut lacquers cannot be auditioned without rendering them useless for the remainder of the LP manufacturing process. It is from the backup tapes of the 1977 recording sessions that is the genesis of "Chicago." The fact these tapes are 30 i.p.s. analogue rather than digital is of no consequence. You won't know the difference.

Three direct-to-disc releases were planned in the 1977 effort. The third direct-to-disc release never materialized because 1) the label (Century Records) went out of business, 2) technical problems associated with it could not be overlooked by the consummate perfectionist, George Wright. Fully half of "Chicago's" 16 tracks is material not previously released. The remaining tracks taken from the review/backup tapes are not necessarily the same "takes" released on the original 1977 and 1979 LPs. In all cases each track is a continuous performance with no editing.

Executive Producer Bill Lightner's liner notes indicate Murphy's Law was alive and well in Chicago in the fall of 1977. The quite audible ringing telephone in "Blue Twilight" is definitely not Wurlitzer! George Wright told this reviewer he didn't know whether to laugh or cry by the time the recording sessions were completed.

The bonus track, "Wrapup," will give you the answer.

Speaking of "Blue Twilight," Mr. Wright honors Jesse Crawford, who first rose to prominence at the Chicago Theatre. His rendition of this piece, published in 1953, reflects Mr. Crawford's style in his later years.

Most listeners are better satisfied by hearing shorter arrangements of more songs than by more elaborate arrangements of fewer songs. (We have proven this in the pizza business.) Keeping in mind the time constraints of direct-to-disc recording, Mr. Wright's arrangements are a little shorter than what we have been accustomed to hearing on his Hollywood Philharmonic Organ recordings. Also, Mr. Wright uses fewer solo stops and more ensemble registrations than he does on his studio recordings. Remember though, George Wright would not compromise his music just to use solo stops which could be obscured in the relatively noisy and vast acoustic of the Chicago Theatre.

The up-tempo selections: Bojangles of Harlem, Veradero, Roller Coaster and Liza are played with typical George Wright accuracy and at tempos commensurate with big-room acoustics. In this age where theatre organs large and small are dominated by penetrating English Post Horns (this instrument has two of them), this reviewer finds it refreshing listening to Mr. Wright romp and stomp through the up-tempo numbers at *f* and *ff* registrations and enjoy full organ — not full Post Horn. Such is the beauty of the Chicago Theatre's Wurlitzer.

It was rare in 1977, even more so in 1991. The enveloping sound of a big organ in a big theatre is truly unique — a symbiotic relationship if ever there was one. The recording engineers have definitely succeeded in preserving this sound on compact disc.

As is the norm for George Wright recordings (his concerts, too, for that matter) ballads constitute the majority of "Chicago's" program material. There are several: Yesterdays, Night and Day, When Day is Done, and In the Still of the Night, to name a few. The utter liquidity of George Wright's chromatic rolls is legend. Hearing them in the Chicago Theatre's lush ambience is sheer pleasure.

One final observation. In very small type next to the album title appears the words *volume one*. It turns out there is enough material "in the can" to release "Chicago" Volume Two. So class, here is your assignment: order "Chicago" Volume One immediately. You won't be sorry. The sooner you do the sooner we can have "Chicago" Volume Two.

Dennis Hedberg

# Journal of American Organbuilding

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This publication is devoted to the dissemination of knowledge regarding the design, construction and maintenance of pipe organs in North America. Although primarily a technical journal for the benefit of organbuilding professionals, it is also a valuable resource for architects and project consultants, church musicians, building committees, seminary and university libraries, and anyone involved with the design or renovation of contemporary worship space.

Far from being the "lost art" that the average person believes it to be organbuilding in the United States and Canada is maturing and thriving in hundreds of small and large shops throughout the continent. At the same time, serious challenges lie ahead for those promoting the pipe organ in an era of limited budgets and competing options. Readers of the *Journal of American Organbuilding* will benefit from the thoughtful exchange of information and ideas intended to advance this time-honored craft.

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