

Record Reviews

ORGAN FAVORITES ON THE WURLITZER PIPE ORGAN SEQUOIA LABEL, No. MLP 101. Larry Vannucci at the GOLDEN GATE THEATRE, S.F., WURLITZER.

While this record's jacket notes explain primarily the history of the bill at the Golden Gate Theatre from its early days through more recent times, little is said about the theatre's physical characteristics. Because they have a direct bearing on this recording, some comment is in order. The theatre appears to be not quite square, with the greatest dimension its width. This places the organ chambers quite far apart to the listener. The chambers were covered by very heavy velour drapes when the A.T.O.E. Chapter met in the theatre some months ago, and our guess is that the drapes were in place when the recording was made -- a guess made as a result of the sound of the recording. Nevertheless, Vannucci has something to offer and is not a Bay Area favorite without cause. The organ, a Style 240, has obviously had some changes made in its original pipe work (i.e., English Horn, etc.) and this adds interest to the combinations used throughout the recording. We look forward to more releases of Vannucci with pleasure, and recommend this record as an immediate addition to your collection.

THE ECHOING ANTIQUE SHOP, DULCET LABEL, No. ME6001. JIM MELANDER AT JIM GAINES 3 MANUAL WURLITZER.

Your enthusiasm will grow with this recording as it is given repeated hearings. The recording itself is probably quite natural and seems to lack any trace of artificial echo. At first this makes it sound flat, as one ear tends to become used to this addition (?) to most of the recordings released of late. The record jacket notes are most certainly to the point, for herein you will find some excellent arrangements well executed by the organist. The first number is a real slam-bang way-out introduction to the rest of the numbers which vary tastefully as each itself seems to require. You will find good piano rhythm, a Chopin selection, a March, lots of percussions including tuned sleigh bells and genuine enjoyment in this recent release...and what a setting for a console!!!!

GUS FARNEY AT THE FIVE MANUAL WURLITZER WARNER BROS. LABEL No. WS 1409. LARRY BRAY 5 MANUAL WURLITZER.

Here you will find an unusual collection of old tunes well played in Gus Farney's second release for Warner Bros. Side one starts off with *SOMETIMES I'M HAPPY* and sets the pace

for most of the numbers on the record. *DOLL DANCE* is a chance to hear the English Horn and Tibia and *BABY, OH WHERE CAN YOU BE* is a real genuine Theatre Organ number if one could be so classified. Nice Piano in *PEG O' MY HEART* and hearty strings in *MELANCHOLY BABY*. You'll like *DILL PICKLE RAG* which is bright and jazzy whereas *NAUGHTY WALTZ* is noteworthy for the tasteful use of percussions. The ending number really caught the reviewer's fancy. *NATIONAL EMBLEM MARCH* is not the usual race to get to the end with full organ all the way, but is done in a real march tempo. The effect is majestic, and nobel with clean, crisp playing. The review copy, is stereo, is worthy of every collectors attention! Recording is clean and clear with a natural "feel" to it.

OPERETTA FOR THEATRE ORGAN EPIC LABEL, No. LN 3372. At the TOWER THEATRE, Phila, Pa. WURLITZER, LEONARD MACCLAIN

This review might well be entitled, "Better Late Than Never" or, "Its Never Too Late To Learn". This recording, issued some several years ago, was inadvertently included in our records to be reviewed, and it was with amazement that we sat through its two sides. A monaural recording, it stood up well with the stereo releases that were included in the same review session. But most important, the opinion was unanimous that herein is undoubtedly one of the truly fine recordings to be released in the past decade. The true theatre sound is so obvious as to need no mention, and is almost exquisite in what it does to the sounds of the organ! "Melody Mac" has on this record put down a group of numbers which to our knowledge appear nowhere else together. In this series you will find MacClain's many years of theatre organ playing shining through the combinations, phrasing, expression and sheer musicianship. If this record is not on your shelves, it should be, and you should make every effort to find it, to be sure you don't miss one of the really great organ music experiences possible to the hi-fi listener.

INTRODUCING THE FANTASTIC RAYMOND SHELLEY, recorded on the Giant Wurlitzer Theatre Organ-Fox Theatre, Detroit. COLUMBIA CS8393 CL1593.

This is a recording to make even the staunchest, most antistereo record collector have a complete breakdown into buying stereo equipment. Columbia's engineers deserve medals of honor for their recording of the great Wurlitzer in the Fox. Raymond Shelley was recommended for recording on the theatre organ by none other than E. Power Biggs who contributes generously to the rec-

ord jacket notes. The selections are for the most part standard, but Shelley lends his reknowned technical ability and wraps up this big Wurlitzer in a fashion that will have you playing this disc at least three times in succession. The stereophonic edition should be a must for anyone owning, or even contemplating stereo. The notes on the jacket are informative, giving a list of ranks and percussions and traps, rounding it up with a list of all those who helped restore the Fox Wurlitzer to perfect shape so that the recording could be made. If you want real Wurlitzer quality, and the spaciousness of the Fox reproduced in your living room, this deserves your consideration!

R.B.

LETTERS

(continued)

sity Theatre in Evanston, Ill. The organ was designed by Barnes, the famous organ designer and author of the many editions of the Contemporary American Organ.

This was a real gone job. I understand all the pipe work was Gottfried, so you can imagine what that Post Horn and French Horn sounded like! It had a floating Brass organ and a floating String organ . . . with two (!) 16' strings . . . at least, according to the stop list.

The most heartbreaking thing to report about all this is that last year the organ was put up for sale \$5,000, had no takers, and was torn out for junk. I never heard this instrument, but maybe you can come up with some readers who did. At any rate I'm sure those of your readers who are interested in odd stop lists and truly "different" installations will find this right down their alley!! To me it looks as though it were a real honey. Certainly well unified with plenty of couplers . . . plus the floating sections which could be had anywhere on the organ.

Also a note about the Gordon Kibbee Style List for Wurlitzer. I know of two Style 260-Specials which were 4 manual jobs, the Belmont and the Sheridan, both in Chicago, and listed as 260-Specials. Both had TWO tibias and TWO voxes plus the Brass Trumpet and a Brass Sax. Both had Piano. The Sheridan was 17 ranks, and I believe the Belmont was also. I have the specs on the Belmont if anyone might be interested.

As ever,

Bro. Andy
5000 N. Willamette Blvd.
Portland, Oregon

Sir:

The Librarian of Congress has requested me to acknowledge the gift (of THEATRE ORGAN, Spring, Summer, and Fall, 1960) which you have so generously made to the Library. We look forward to receiving future issues.

Sincerely yours,
Jennings Wood, Chief
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The Library of Congress
Washington 25, D.C.