

SOUNDS OF THE EMPRESS WURLITZER

HORACE FINCH - REGINALD DIXON - ERNEST BROADBENT



The famous organist from the Tower Ballroom – Reginald Dixon, felt that the Wurlitzer was underpowered for playing for dancing. Therefore the Tower Company decided to replace the Tower Ballroom organ for the 1935 season and reuse the original Tower organ in the Empress Ballroom, which is in the Winter Gardens Complex. The 'new' Empress organ was very similar to the new Tower organ's specification but the mixture of older and newer pipework is thought to have given the organ a unique sound which was enhanced by the Empress Ballroom's carnivorous acoustic.

Horace Finch, who up until this time was the pianist for Bertini's Tower Ballroom Band, was appointed as the new organist. He was already aware of what a Wurlitzer could do in the hands of Reginald Dixon and Horace developed a dance style all of his own which was highly rhythmic and cheerful. Horace was as popular in the Winter Gardens as Reginald Dixon was in the Tower and he broadcast the organ many times on the BBC.

In December 1956 disaster struck as a fire destroyed the Tower Ballroom. While the ballroom was undergoing restoration Reginald Dixon had no option but to broadcast the Empress Wurlitzer, so for the 1957 season he replaced Horace for dancing and broadcasting. Late in 1962 Horace had an accident and damaged his hand - he decided to retire and he never played in public again.

Watson Holmes took over as resident organist, but this only lasted 5 years as In 1967 Watson retired. Ernest Broadbent took over before moving to the Tower Wurlitzer in 1970 when Reginald Dixon retired. In the fall of 1969 the organ was removed and sold to the BBC who installed it in their Manchester Theatre. In the mid-1980's the beloved Empress Wurlitzer was again sold but this time it was broken up for parts - using some of it in another organ.

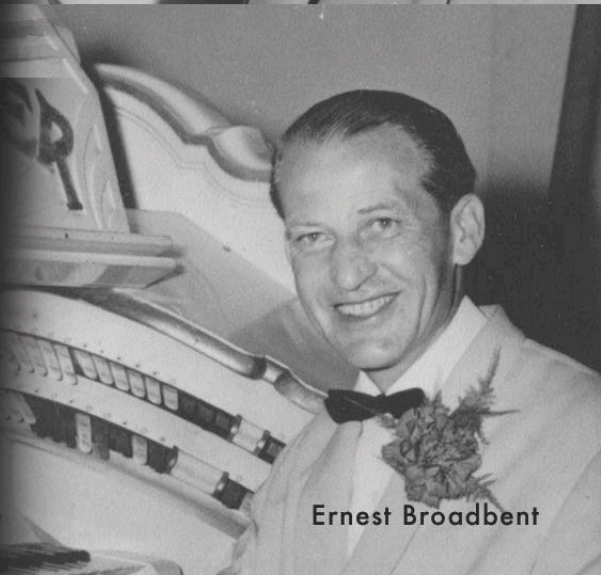
The Horace Finch recordings were taken from a 1958 broadcast - the first broadcast Horace did after Reginald Dixon returned to the tower. Reginald Dixon's material was taken from a selection of his broadcasts from the 1957 season he performed there. Although Ernest wasn't resident until 1967, his input to this CD was recorded in 1965. He later went on to play similar arrangements for the BBC's radio show The Organist Entertains in 1969. N.B these recordings are taken from reel-to-reels. The best has been done to restore the sound quality, however some hiss is inevitable.



Horace Finch



Reginald Dixon



Ernest Broadbent

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DMCD03

HORACE FINCH

- 01) On The Prom Prom Promenade
- 02) The Dambusters March
- 03) 'Singin' In The Rain' Selection:
Singin' In The Rain
All I Do Is Dream Of You
Should I?
You Are My Lucky Star
You Were Meant For Me
Would You?
Singin' In The Rain
- 04) Forgotten Dreams
- 05) Teddy Bears Picnic
- 06) Liechtensteiner Polka
Luxembourg Polka
Beer Barrel Polka
- 07) You Are My Hearts Delight
- 08) Let The People Sing
I May Never Pass This Way Again
I Could Have Danced All Night
Tulips From Amsterdam
The Bright Lights Of Brussels
Keep Your Sunny Side Up
- 09) Gay Gordons
On The Prom Prom Promenade

REGINALD DIXON

- 10) I Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside
- 11) 'Cinderella' Selection

- 12) Jolly Brothers Waltz
- 13) Happy Days Are Here Again
Jeepers Creepers
You Can't Stop Me From Dreaming
Rise And Shine
- 14) Brazil
- 15) Mood Indigo
- 16) Dance Of The Ostracised Imp
- 17) Love Letters In The Sand
In The Middle Of The Island
We Will Make Love
Last Train To San Fernando
Start Moving
I Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside

ERNEST BROADBENT

- 18) For You
- 19) Arrivederci Roma
Funiculi Funicula
- 20) Charmaine
- 21) Song Of The Fir Tree
Swedish Polka
- 22) Softly Awakes My Heart
- 23) Autumn Leaves
Autumn Concerto
- 24) 'Viva Mexico' Fantasy
- 25) For You

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