

Les Deutsch's Transcriptions for Organ

Les plays the standard organ literature – but he also has a special passion for transcriptions. He prefers to make his own arrangements even if there are ones already available. He researches the original published scores and multiple reference recordings (if available) to achieve the most accuracy and completeness. This also allows him to take advantage of various skills that are not always assumed in published arrangements. Such skills include cross-manual lines and multiple pedaling. All of his transcriptions that are not covered under others' copyrights are available on his web site for other organists to use freely:

http://www.nightbloomingjazzmen.com/Les_Sheet_Music.html

All of the selections Les will play today adhere to the stated desire to be “less frequently heard.” Also, since all of these were arranged in the last 30 years we can consider them “contemporary.”

Today's Program – Organ Transcriptions by Les Deutsch

Orfeo Suite (1607) – Claudio Monteverdi, Arranged by Les Deutsch

Overture

Ritornello

Choro: La Sciate

Choro: Vieni Imeneo

Reprease Choro: La Sciate

Moresca

While not the first opera ever written, Monteverdi's L'Orfeo is often credited as the earliest opera still being performed on a regular basis. The score calls for tons of instruments: brass, violins, harpsichords, harps, and even two pipe organs. Unlike his religious compositions, L'Orfeo is full of daring harmonies and interesting tone colors.

Inspired by the 1969 Walter Carlos recording on Moog Synthesizer, Les went back to the original score and added some sections to create this unique arrangement that shows off many colors on the organ. You can almost hear the cornetti and sackbuts in the overture!

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (~1716) – J. S. Bach, Arranged by Les Deutsch

No organ recital is complete without something by J. S. Bach. Here is one everyone will recognize. Les adheres to the advice given by the great Turk Murphy: “Play 'em one they want to hear, then play 'em one they ought to hear.” This is one they “want to hear.”

There are lots of transcriptions of this excerpt from Cantata BWV 147. Les has created his own that is very slightly different from the rest.

Pizzicati (1876) – Léo Delibes, Arranged by Les Deutsch

Although himself quite an accomplished organist, the Frenchman Léo Delibes is best known today as a composer of ballet and opera music.

This piece, from the ballet “Sylvia” is one of this composer’s most popular. It is a natural for the American symphonic organ, using several of the colorful solo ranks – if available!

The Peanut Vendor (1930) – Moises Simons, Arranged by Les Deutsch

Les also plays theater organ – and this piece used to be a staple in such concerts. The composition was the first authentic Cuban tune published in the United States, setting off a craze for Latin music. Listen, it has a real 2-3 clave, the rhythmic heart of many Latin American compositions!

Les revives an old theater organist’s gimmick of placing a pencil under a high key to represent the peanut whistle that would have been used to announce the presence of the vendor’s cart. However, unlike most theater organ settings, Les went back to the original published sheet music, adding only the a few key changes and dissonant shout choruses to the “pure” version. This one is a wild ride.

Overture to “Pique Dame” (1864) – Franz von Suppé, Arranged by Les Deutsch

Although the Austrian Franz von Suppé composed about 50 operas, he is mostly remembered for their overtures – stirring orchestral works in their own right that contain countless waltzes, polkas, and gallops – always ending with a preponderance of speed and volume. Some of the more popular of these include “Poet and Peasant” and “Light Cavalry.”

This is Les’ fifth transcription of Suppé’s overtures and today is the premier performance of this arrangement. Pique Dame, or “Queen of Spades” is one of the lesser known of these overtures, but well worth a go on the organ.