

A. R. Deane Nesbitt:*He doesn't read music, but he's made two albums*

*Ocean Rain. A. R. Deane Nesbitt on grand piano, honky-tonk piano, polyphonic synthesizer, organ and tambourine, with Philip G. Baker and Claude Allard. Essay Records of Canada, 1980.*

Would you believe that a pianist and player of assorted keyboard instruments could put out a record without being able to read a single note of music?

A. R. Deane Nesbitt, 71 Belmont crescent, has done exactly that and the results are astonishingly good. In fact, he has made two albums. Mr. Nesbitt plays completely by ear and claims to be able to pick up almost any piece of music he hears. He also plays only on the black keys to simplify matters.

His first record, which he produced himself, was actually called "On the Black Keys and By Ear" and proceeds of its sale went to the Montreal Association for the Blind. His second album, out just in time for Christmas, is called "Ocean Rain."

Both contain similar music: favorite movie themes, a few pop classics and some old standard tunes, but the latest record also includes five of his own compositions, including the title song and other moody pieces such as "Kluane," "As it Was," "Song Unsung" and "Ask Me Tomorrow." The album might sell well, if only for the inclusion of such favorites as "Nadia's theme" and "You Light Up My Life."

Mr. Nesbitt plays synthesizer, honky-tonk and grand pianos, and organ and is accompanied occasionally by bassist Claude Allard and drummer Phillip G. Baker. He plays with a style that ranges from simple to grandiose. The cover photograph, taken by Mr. Nesbitt, and evoking a dramatic and expansive mood, is indicative of the music within.

#### Testing the market

A lawyer by profession, Mr. Nesbitt works on his own in order to have the time to in-

dulge in his music. He felt it wasn't fair to the law firm he was with to spend so much time on such projects. "Ocean Rain" is testing the market to see just how many persons enjoy his style of playing.

"The people to whom I've played enjoyed my music," says Mr. Nesbitt, "and I thought maybe they can't get this kind of music."

The first pressing was of 2,000 copies and is apparently selling well. Printing of the album cover and pressing of the record, however, posed some problems when the original firms contracted to do the job weren't able to meet his demands of time or quality. Mr. Nesbitt was particularly concerned that the photograph be faithfully reproduced for the cover. "I really worked to get a first class product," he says.

When asked if not being able to read music places any limitations on him, Mr. Nesbitt says, "If there is something that I like I can pick it out," although he admits that the first notes of

"Nadia's Theme" gave him some difficulty. He did take music lessons when he was a youngster, but he never bothered to learn the notation because he could play by ear. His parents didn't press him to continue the lessons and he credits this with maintaining his love of music.

"Ocean Rain" was recorded sporadically since the summer of 1979 and was on the market by the end of November. Other albums will probably follow.

"I really enjoy it," he says, "I'll be itching to make another."

—RICK KERRIGAN