



# LETTERS

*Letters to the Editor concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are encouraged. Send them to the editor concerned. Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.*

Address: P.O. Box 1314  
Salinas, Calif. 93901

Dear George:

Today I received the very fine August, 1974, THEATRE ORGAN magazine. Any organization would be proud to have such a professionally executed journal. The fact that it is done with largely volunteer labor makes it even more remarkable.

The attractive listing of "Hall of Fame" organists on page 43 advertises a shameful condition within the ATOS. Admittedly it is very difficult to list qualities that the "Organist of the Year" or "Hall of Fame" organists should have. However the name of an exceptionally well-known theatre organist is conspicuous by its absence from the roster.

This man's name is George Wright. Can anyone explain why another year should pass without ATOS officially recognizing his extraordinary role in the development of the theatre organ?

Your truly,  
David G. Schutt

Dear Sir:

I found the comments of your record reviewer on Lee Erwin's "Sound of Silents" disc performed on the Dick Kline 4/28 Wurlitzer quite interesting and it shows he obviously listened to the recording in considerable depth.

The discussion of the "soundtrack" for Wings, however, does prompt me to toss in my two-cents worth in defense of the Erwin score for this fine film. Wings was the first organ-accompanied silent film that I ever saw, back in 1971 when the Tivoli Theatre Wurlitzer in Frederick, Mary-

land was restored. Therefore, I had no previous films with which to compare. Was not the role of the theatre organist in the golden days to provide suitable music to set the mood of the film? The idea of including a couple of old "chestnuts" as your reviewer suggests, is admirable, but to me the musical ideas of a man who has become thoroughly immeshed with the film is a far more admirable way to put across the emotions of the story, and to be sure, this film contained much emotion! It was difficult, near the end, to suppress the lump in one's throat, a lump which was genuinely formed through the compositional genius of Lee Erwin.

I saw the film twice in one week and each time it impressed me the same way and without a note-by-note repetition of the score. Except for brief passages in film scores, I believe most of the old "chestnuts" should be reserved for a late-night sing-along or concert in a theatre. The movies are something completely different.

May Lee Erwin continue to create and I sincerely hope that more recordings like this one will soon become available.

Sincerely,  
John H. Shaum, Jr.

Dear Sir:

Before John S. Carroll collects too much flak for his lese majeste about Crawford, let me add cautiously that he may be right. A decade ago I was boasting of a 78 by Crawford, and when played before and after modern theatre organ selections the Crawford was indeed a dud. We must consider recording techniques, of course.

In 1934 as a teen, I fought parental disdain and bought a phonograph. A store had dumped its record business, turning over its pop and Red Seals to another and leaving on the shelves a lot of Victor blacks. These I could buy for 20 cents, later a dime. I got several Crawfords, as well as a couple Archer Gibsons on the Schwab instrument. I remember fondly *Valencia*, *Road to Mandalay*, *Amapola*, et al by Crawford.

Now what of White, Feibel, Dunstedter, et al? Well, Buffalo was peculiarly a Victor market. In the 1920's all the 75 cent records my parents bought were Victor, never a Columbia or Brunswick. The proximity of the Wurlitzer works may have influenced

buyers. Truth is, in Western New York, Crawford had a near monopoly in then-popular TO discs.

I heard Crawford just before WWII as I sat in the front row of Shea's Buffalo. He was indeed a showman. The Shea operation knew how to promote a showman. In memory, he was indeed a master. On shellac, his memory fades with Bohr, Foort, Wright, and many another.

These disputes can go on forever. My English correspondent was surprised at what US engineering could do with Dixon. I am content to let the legend of Crawford sleep and to buy others today.

But now Fats Waller! It is most unfortunate that the man who is known only as a pianist never got much of a hearing as to his organ records.

I have heard a mediocre musician with a beatup skating rink-and-saloon Hammond play "like Crawford." A mugging musician can fool an audience, until that audience gets home with the tapes; and then, without the personality, the sound is that of a beatup toy Hammond. Music making is not a science, but an art.

Wm. C. Kessel  
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Dear Sir:

The Toledo Chapter is extremely proud to be a close neighbor of Detroit Motor City and wish to add our sincere thanks for the wonderful time we all had at this greatest of all conventions.

We are so sorry to hear that our good friend Al Mason is not able to receive our thanks. He helped us save our chapter in one of our critical times and we will miss his advice. Watch over us Al.

Thanks again each and everyone at Motor City for inviting us into your homes and letting us hear the great artists on the proud theatre organs and the after hour pleasures of the rising stars on the electronics. The audience on the boat ride was treated to another fantastic climax of hearing continuous entertainment on the Rodgers. Each performer had something special to offer and was appreciated by all. The Notable Nineteenth is still Glowing in our hearts.

Sincerely yours,  
Helen Sherman  
Secretary of Toledo Chapter