

# ATOS



## How It All Began

The official birthday of ATOS (then ATOE) was February 8, 1955 when the Charter Meeting was held at Richard Simonton's Toluca Lake home in California.

However, the idea of ATOS had been proposed sometime previous to this by subscribers of Alden Miller's "round robin" letter. Alden Miller of Minneapolis, a railroader, had, over the years, amassed a considerable amount of theatre organ memorabilia. From this source of material Alden would send a letter to a fellow enthusiast who in turn would mail it on to the next. Each reader would add notes on the margin enlarging on Miller's original statement, often making corrections. The letter, in traveling over the country, became a source for locating theatre organs, parts, and places where the instruments could be heard.

This little newsletter had obvious limitations since the first recipient would only receive the basic information furnished by Miller while the last reader would reap the benefit of all the additions inserted during the letter's travels over the country.

To correct this, Alden Miller changed his newsletter to a mimeographed paper of which a copy was mailed to each subscriber. Alden changed the name of the newsletter several times eventually settling on KINURA THEATRE ORGAN DIGEST. This improved the dissemination of theatre organ news but since his railroad work was on an uneven schedule the publication dates were casual and unpredictable.

Miller spent many hours putting out each issue and was quite successful in keeping theatre organ enthusiasts informed. Miller's efforts had considerable influence in establishing ATOS as his readers began to realize that a more formal organization was needed and gradually the idea of a national society was formulated.

In 1954 several informal meetings were held to explore the possibility of forming a group large enough to be in the position to publish a magazine for the purpose of documenting theatre organ history, providing technical information and keeping the members informed on the current events in the field.

These meetings brought into focus the feasibility of such an organization. From this, the groundwork for setting up a national group was carried out by Richard Simonton, Judd Walton, Dr. Mel Doner, Roy Gorish, and a number of others.

The charter meeting saw the by-laws adopted and publication plans finalized. The officers elected were R.C. Simonton, president; Judd Walton, vice-president; Paul Pease, secretary-treasurer. The executive committee included Buddy Cole, Orrin Hostetter, Gordon Kibbee, Richard Vaughn and Bud Wittenburg. The magazine editor selected was Dr. Mel Doner and Roy Gorish was chosen as assistant editor.

The first issue of TIBIA, the official journal, was mailed in the fall of 1955, after enough funds had been derived from Charter Memberships to finance the first issue.

At the time the first issue of Volume One was in the mail there were considerably less than 200 members. Of these the following are still active:

# ATOS CHARTER MEMBERS

Fred Abbott, Washington  
 "Bud" E.H. Abel, Oregon  
 Dr. Wally Acton, California  
 Mark Andrews, Illinois  
 Lowell C. Ayars, New Jersey  
 William P. Bartlow, Illinois  
 Alden E. Baunsgard, Washington  
 Edward M. Baxter, California  
 Frank A. Bindt, California  
 H. Clealan Blakely, Canada  
 John W. "Bill" Blunk, Oregon  
 Raymond Bohr, New Jersey  
 Al Bollington, California  
 Lawrence D. Brandstedt, California  
 William P. Brown, Arizona  
 William J. Bunch, Washington  
 Hugh E. Burdick, Wisconsin  
 Othedus Campbell, Ohio  
 William D. Campbell, Wisconsin  
 R.M. Castle, Colorado  
 Richard R. Chmelik, North Carolina  
 Fred D. Clapp, California  
 Hal Davison, Maryland  
 Rose Diamond, California  
 Dr. Mel Doner, Minnesota  
 Ron Downer, California  
 Dr. Alfred Ehrhardt, California  
 Howard B. Elder, Missouri  
 George J. Elles, Michigan  
 Lee Erwin, New York  
 Dr. Newell N. Flynn, Jr., Massachusetts  
 Reginald Foort, Florida  
 Stanley C. Garniss, Massachusetts  
 Roy W. Gorish, Colorado  
 G. Ed Gress, New Jersey  
 Daniel F. Haworth, California  
 Harvey Heck, California  
 Fredrick P. Hermes, Wisconsin  
 Bill Holleman, Michigan  
 Robert C. Jacobus, California  
 W. "Tiny" James, California  
 Lyle O. Jevons, New Jersey  
 Robert C. Jones, Washington

Dave Kelly, California  
 Gordon Kibbee, California  
 Frank R. Killinger, California  
 John Klacik, Ohio  
 Robert A. Koch, New York  
 Fred J. Kruse, Illinois  
 Bill Lamb, Illinois  
 Richard E. Loderhose, New York  
 Charles A. Lyall, California  
 E.D. McDonald, Texas  
 Al Melgard, Nevada — Illinois  
 George T. Merriken, Maryland  
 Alden E. Miller, Minnesota  
 Malcolm L. Murrill, Virginia  
 Billy Nalle, New York  
 Everett Nourse, California  
 Edward F. Osborn, Ohio  
 E.J. Quinby, New Jersey  
 Eric M. Reeve, North Dakota  
 Bertram S. Rhodes, Massachusetts  
 Floyd J. Roberts, California  
 Howard Silva, Massachusetts  
 Richard C. Simonton, California  
 Arnold E. Smith, Massachusetts  
 Arli W. Southerland, Georgia  
 Dr. Howard O. Stocker, California  
 M.H. Strickland, Jr., Washington  
 Ramona G. Sutton, California  
 James Sweet, New Jersey  
 Bud Taylor, California  
 George F. Thompson, California  
 Malcolm D. Thompson, California  
 David R. Thurman, Jr., Florida  
 Irving J. Toner, New York  
 Dr. E. Bruce Tovee, Canada  
 Brenton E. Tyler, Jr., Massachusetts  
 Robert Vaughn, California  
 Leonard G. Vernon, Oregon  
 Richard S. Villemain, California  
 Anton Waldin, Jr., Florida  
 Judd Walton, California  
 Lorin J. Whitney, California

The list of charter members, now active, to best of our knowledge is based on national membership records.

If anyone's name has been omitted who rightfully belongs on this list, we sincerely apologize.