

1955



1975

The Evolution of our Official Journal

ATOS (then ATOE) began functioning after the charter meeting in February of 1955 with the first issue of the official journal appearing in the fall of that year.

The time lapse was due to the necessity of setting up the mechanics for such a publication and the raising of necessary funds to complete the first issue. The publication was turned over to Radio Magazine, Inc. for make-up, printing and distribution under a contract arrangement. The magazine was called TIBIA with Dr. Mel Doner as editor. In order to finance this first issue, each charter member contributed ten dollars to the cause.

The TIBIA magazine was produced from the Fall of 1955 to Summer of 1958. The schedule of publication was rather erratic because of limited funds and geographic distances between ATOE officers, the editor and the publisher. The arrangement with Radio Magazines worked, to a degree, but our group was unable to meet a fixed deadline. Our timing made it difficult for the magazine firm, since they were trying to fit our publication into their busy schedule.

The National Board of Directors decided it would be more satisfactory for ATOE to publish the magazine within our own organization. At that time it was felt the production should be near the home of the incumbent president so that he, with volunteer help, could better control the publication.

Since the title "TIBIA" was copyrighted by Radio Magazine, Inc., it was necessary to change the title of the journal. After considerable discussion

by the national board, THEATRE ORGAN was selected. The first issue appeared in the Spring of 1959 with a drawing of Gordon Kibbee on the cover, and featured the 1958 Annual ATOE Meeting. Dr. Ralph Bell was listed as editor, Judd Walton, national president. The first issue of THEATRE ORGAN contained sixteen pages and was distributed to 505 paid members.

Dr. Bell continued as editor until the Summer of 1961. Because of business and professional demands, he found it impossible to devote the time needed to continue as editor. President Tiny James, with the approval of the board, selected George Thompson, who had been assisting in the production of the magazine, as editor. During this period, THEATRE ORGAN was issued four times a year.

In the Winter issue 1963, it was announced that Tom B'Hend would take over editorial duties in 1964 and W. Stu Green would join the staff to produce the BOMBARDE. The schedule called for four issues of THEATRE ORGAN and four issues of BOMBARDE, which would supply the growing membership with eight magazines per year.

After publication of the Spring of 1964 issue of THEATRE ORGAN, Mr. B'Hend resigned. George Thompson was asked to resume his activity as editor, the position he still holds.

The BOMBARDE, edited by Stu Green, continued until the Spring of 1966, for a total of nine issues. The national board, in review — costs of printing and mailing of eight magazines a year, decided the budget would not permit continuing this arrangement. A compromise was worked out



with THEATRE ORGAN and BOMBARDE combined into one magazine and six issues per year were promised to the membership.

THEATRE ORGAN-BOMBARDE became the official title of the journal until the end of 1969. At the national board meeting in Chicago, in July of 1969, it was decided to drop the combined titles, in the interest of simplicity, and the change was effective with the first issue of 1970. The official name of the organization was also changed, from American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts, to American Theatre Organ Society at the same meeting.

Over the years the printing process of the magazine was moved from place to place dependent upon the residence of the ATOS president. Printing plants in San Francisco, Vallejo, Portland, Seattle and Livonia (Detroit) have all been used to put out the publication. The printing has been stabilized, since 1970, in Livonia, Mich. The office of publication moved to Livonia shortly after the late Al Mason became ATOS president. Don Lockwood became publications director and, along with Betty Mason, did the layout of the magazine. In October of 1971, Floyd and Doris Mumm took over the artwork, layout and typesetting and have been responsible for this department since that time.

Having the physical publication permanently established in one location has proved to be of great help in improving the quality of the magazine as well as adhering to schedules, and more prompt placement of paid advertising gathered by Advertising Manager Len Clarke of Chicago.

At the conclusion of Al Mason's term as president, he was named magazine publisher. After Al's untimely death, his wife, Betty, was asked to take over these duties. She accepted the job of overseeing the production of THEATRE ORGAN, the position she currently holds.

The issuing of THEATRE ORGAN every two months would be impossible if it weren't for the devoted staff of volunteers including Stu Green, Lloyd Klos, John Muri, Lloyd del Castillo, Lyle Nash, Ray Brubacher, the many contributors of feature articles and the chapter correspondents. A special thank you is in order for Peg Nielsen and Don Lockwood for their behind the scenes contributions. □



Working on a piston coupler are (l. to r.) James Sanford, Carl S. Parker, J.D. Unruh and David J. Bernstorf. All are volunteers from Wichita Theatre Organ, Inc.

(The Wichita Eagle and The Wichita Beacon Photo)

COMPUTERIZED COMBINATION ACTION

by Celia Cohen

A new computer combination capture system of advanced design has been installed in the Wurlitzer theatre organ of Century II, Wichita, Kansas, according to Michael Coup, president of Wichita Theatre Organ, Inc. It was custom built by the electronics division of Damon Corporation, Westwood, Mass. under the direction of John Kellner, formerly with Aeolian-Skinner Organ Co. The new system will affect the six operational areas of the organ's console: four manuals, pedal and center board panel controls.

In the past, the musician would need to prepare his tonal combinations at a setterboard in the building's basement. In the future, changes can be made far more easily by electronic means as he sits at the console on

stage.

In providing greater playing convenience, the computer system literally makes it possible to "capture" instantly any desired sound color on any of the pistons under each manual. While sitting at the console, the player now can set quickly any combination of stoptabs when a particular piston is pushed. During a performance, changes can be made as often and as swiftly as the music demands.

Less than a half dozen theatre pipe organs internationally have been equipped to date with a similar system. Of these, the Century II instrument is the largest by far with 37 ranks of pipes. The Wichita Wurlitzer is presented in concert regularly by Wichita Theatre Organ, Inc. □

ATOS LIBRARY REPORT

The newly located ATOS Library at Elon College, North Carolina is now in the process of listing its resources by computer. This will enable the staff to publish a catalogue of materials soon. Copies of sheet music, cue sheets, scores, etc., will be made available to ATOS members at very moderate cost. The library cannot allow loan of original material from the premises. Rare items cannot be risked in this fashion.

What is now desired are donations

of books, magazines, pictures, articles — any memorabilia relative to the theatre pipe organ. Those desirous of donating this kind of material are asked to send it to:

Barry Simmons, Curator
ATOS Library, Campus Box 2213
Elon College, N. Carolina 27244

The college cannot declare value of items received for income tax purposes. However, a letter of receipt will be sent any donor of material. □