



## the letters to the editors

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 Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.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:  
George Thompson  
Editor  
P.O. Box 1314  
Salinas, Calif. 93901

Dear George:

Congratulations on another excellent issue (April 75)! Your color covers get better all the time, and the expense is well worth it. I read with interest the "Letters" column (column?). It was most provocative, and if I may be so bold I would like to comment on a few comments.

Anna May Wyeth's letter brings up an interesting point. Half the fun of going to a concert is, to be sure, watching the organist do his or her

thing. Most organists do feel the music with their bodies. But one must be careful not to let the visual part of a concert overshadow the aural part. I have seen too many organists leaping around consoles with arms swooping and feet flying, but not producing any MUSIC. Too many organists use flamboyant body English to cover up poor playing. A lot of organists are highly disappointing on record because there is nothing to watch; the music, or lack of it, is there in its naked state. A good organist, when playing, does not sit "stiff as a ramrod," but neither does he waste any movement. He does not try to impress the audience with console calisthenics as if to say, "Look at me! I can thrash about like this and still hit the right notes!" A good organist can get his musical message across without having to resort to gymnastics for effect.

The controversy over Jesse Crawford appears to be in full swing again and the opinions expressed seem to lean toward either of the two extremes. As one who has never heard Crawford live and in color, my opinions on his playing are based only on his recordings (of which I have most in my collection). Crawford's playing was definitely much better in his Victor days than in later years; his formal lessons in the thirties took away the spontaneity and carefree feeling so evident in his twenties output. While I become bored very easily with his over-use of *portamento* and ballad after syrupy ballad on his records, there is no doubt that Crawford had strict ideals and a

sense of musical integrity which, throughout his career, he would never compromise for the sake of commercialism. (I often wonder at the small paradox in the fact that he left the Posthorn out of his design for the Publix Wurlitzers so the organist would not be tempted to use it to excess, yet he used the *portamento* trick he so finely developed to the point of overkill.)

His playing is flawless, correct, innocently inspired and always sensitive, and in the context of the time when his records soared to popularity he was right in the musical mainstream. However, one must realize that since 1930 the music world has changed to a phenomenal degree, and in the context of today's music and tastes he has been left far behind. Crawford was the theatre organ innovator of his time; he dared to try things other organists would not, he was a first-rate showman, and he knew how to give the public what it wanted. The unfortunate thing is that he did not develop his style with the rest of the music world, but stayed in the twenties.

John S. Carroll states that Lew White was better. More lively and interesting, certainly, but not "better." Crawford's forte was the sensitive ballad and White's was the novelty. They both had a reasonably predictable style, at least on record, and each was a product of the time. Personally, I like Dick Leibert's playing more. Whether or not "George Wright can play rings around either of them" is totally irrelevant because Wright is operating in a completely

### Ennui

*Ennui, ennui, meinui, mo,  
Cone a flauto at the toe,  
If it shirps, let it go.  
Ennui, ennui, meinui, mo.*

For our last, we quote a poem rescued from the waste basket of the late Viola d'Orchestra. Miss d'Orchestra came to a tragic end recently in a blind-fold test. She reached for a flute instead of a sweet tibia and the ragged organ builder shot her where she sat.

### Angelus

*Tinkle, tinkle little chime,  
How I wonder \*\*\*\*\**

And, with that, we say, So long, Sourdoughs!  
Jason and The Old Prospector

## Whatever happened to July?

*A plausible explanation of the May-June and August-September issues of THEATRE ORGAN.*

**Nothing has changed, but it may seem like it has.**

Since THEATRE ORGAN is a bi-monthly publication, published every even numbered month, we thought we should account somehow for the missing months of Jan., March, May etc., so members would know they had not missed an issue of the magazine. Following publication of the June issue (called the May-June issue) it was decided by the editorial office that the actual month of publication should appear first. Thus, this is the August-September issue. The June issue should have been the June-July issue.

different time frame. He has been able to learn and borrow from a lot of organists before him, Crawford included, and has developed his own style to try and meet the musical tastes of the day. What about Ashley Miller, Billy Nalle and a few others? You certainly can't compare THEM to Crawford and expect to find him better. The fact still remains that Crawford originated the "Crawford Style," and his imitators are simply that. In the context of the seventies he is old hat, but in the twenties he

was the original hat.

The thing that bothers me more than anything else is not the ultimate result of the controversy over whether Crawford was good, bad or whatever. People's opinions are always diverse and with a subject such as this, one's emotions, memories and musical background more or less determine one's position. What I do find incredible, though, is the way in which Jesse Crawford has been raised so high on a pedestal by his various fans that his memory has taken on the quality of

deification. There are those who will be tolerant of other organists only if he can do a passable Crawford imitation. They will defend him to the end but will not open up to another organist's playing to an even remotely similar extent, or they will like another organist's playing but his style is so different that he is put on a lower level of worship. It sometimes sounds as if Crawford was the *ne plus ultra* of theatre organists, now and forever more, amen. The argument that "you should have heard him at the Paramount in person" holds no water in 1970, and THIS is where the emperor starts running around naked.

Unfortunately these, and other, people who are living with their memories are missing a lot. They are content to relegate theatre organ and the playing of it to history, as long as there are organists around who can re-create the golden years. The sad thing is that because of this the theatre organ has become an antique by default. There seems to be a discouraging tendency among fans to dwell on the past and, while I am all for that to a degree, let's not lose sight of the fact that the theatre organ is the most advanced and versatile musical instrument ever designed for solo work. But in terms of today's music and the real world outside of the movie theatre, theatre organ in North America is virtually unknown as anything but a relic. It is most disheartening to note that with an organization the size of ATOS it has taken an independent group in Kansas to have the faith in the instrument and the farsightedness to get it out into a space-age environment where it will be free from the trappings of the past and the memories of a diminishing few.

Sincerely,  
Geoffrey Paterson  
501-1833 Riverside Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Greetings Editor:

I'm a bit late on the following, but here goes. In the April issue, John Muri, in the article "Outline for a course in Theatre Organ," in column one, began with a brief history of the theatre organ in the United States.

Mention was made of "Tally's Electric Theatre" opening in Los Angeles in 1902. As I can remember years ago from my older relatives

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who are now gone, (I'm 69) Tally went a bit further south later from the then center of town to Broadway between 8th & 9th Sts., about opposite the present Orpheum Theatre, about 1910 and built his Tally's Broadway Theatre (Motion Pictures, of course), which I attended in the late teens occasionally.

The space it occupied is not an extension of the May Co. dept. store, which at the time was Hamburger's dept. store. They too had left the then center of town, as was told to me. Their store was called "The Peoples Store" before the move.

Tally's Broadway organ pipes were visible on both of the upper walls from front to about 25 ft. to rear. The console was stage level on the right side. The organist wore a very formal coat. In front of the theatre, rear of box office, was a permanent sign on gold sort of background about 15" high stating "The Worlds finest Theatre Pipe Organ."

One must remember the motion picture theatres on Broadway at the time, (middle teens), were about the same size as the Main St. and neighborhood houses in Los Angeles, seating capacity about 5 to 800.

Hoping this will be of interest to our readers.

Very Sincerely,  
Gaston Garneau  
P.O. Box 38661

Los Angeles, California 90038

Dear Sir:

Having been a member of ATOS for almost a year now, I have received the Journal regularly. In general, all articles are of high interest to me, however, I do feel that you missed the boat entirely by not having any construction articles that relate to how 1) an organ works 2) its electrical connection and 3) possible electronic substitute for sections of organs.

For instance, in your article on page 16 of the May-June 1975 issue, you show marvelous photographs of the computerization of an organ, but, again, no technical information as to how it was implemented and interconnected at all.

In short, I had hoped to learn from your excellent magazine, some of the technical background in the construction of pipe organs (and let's not forget electronic organs), but, so far I am disappointed that you have

not covered this area at all. I am sure that there must be other readers with similar technical interest such as mine.

In reference to William Klinger, Jr.'s letter about solid state circuitry on page 47, also in the May-June 1975 issue, I wish to offer the following comment. The circuit as drawn in the magazine, if used, has two problems in it that I think could become major problems in time if installed in an organ exactly as shown. Suppose you are holding down a chord and while listening to the sounds, you operate the stop keys. I believe Bill will find that his stop keys will get pitted contacts and wear out in a very short time due to arcing, because his spark quenching diodes in his diagram are incorrectly connected.

These diodes should be connected directly across each chest magnet coil and not on the stop key switch as shown on the diagram.

It is generally advisable that these chest magnets be connected in the collector circuit of an NPN transistor rather than a PNP transistor for the following reasons: If a short circuit should occur in the wire to the chest magnet in a PNP transistor circuit as shown, the transistor (if turned on) would be destroyed. If an NPN tran-

sistor was used instead, and a short to ground occurred to the chest magnet connecting wire, the only possible thing that could happen is that its respective voice would sound with no damage to the driving transistor.

Enclosed you will find a diagram which essentially duplicates Bill's circuit using, however, the latest integrated circuits available and eliminates the necessity of switching inductive loads in the organ console. Note also that any input or output can be grounded for trouble shooting purposes with no possible damage to the solid state circuitry. There are only two points in the entire circuit that cannot be grounded and these are 1) the plus side of the chest magnet and 2) the two #8 pins of the integrated circuits.

I hope that his information will be helpful to some other constructioner in their projects.

Harry Kaemmerer  
6 Patton Drive  
Somerset, New Jersey 08873

*Editor's Note:*

*Due to limited space, we are unable to print a diagram enclosed with this letter. If you would like a copy, send a self addressed, stamped envelope to Theatre Organ, Box 1314, Salinas, Calif. 93901.* □

## "Bud" Taylor Recovering

Want to do a good deed, and at the same time boost the morale of a veteran theatre organist? Frank "Bud" Taylor, whose most recent pipe engagement was a two-year stint playing the new 2/8 Wicks organ in the Red Vest pizzeria in Monterey, Calif., underwent a serious operation the same week as the ATOS convention. Bud had been experiencing circulatory problems in his legs for some time and the medics decided that his leg arteries needed a flushing out and, in some areas, replacement with plastic tubing. It was the same operation performed on organist Eddie Dunstedter many years ago. After the operation, Eddie had no further problems with circulation, although he complained that "the darn tubes itch occasionally." Apparently, Bud's problem was more serious. For several days following surgery

his life was in balance, then he started to rally. He's recovering, but slowly. An avalanche of "get well" cards could work wonders. Send yours to: Bud Taylor c/o Robert Applegate, 3015 Kennedy Court, Marina, Calif. 93933. □

Bud Taylor

(Stufoto)

