

theatre organ

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF THEATRE ORGAN ENTHUSIASTS

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR . . .

Dear Readers:

Please accept my sincere thanks for having contributed so much in such a short time. Your many letters help us to know what you would like in your magazine—and what you don't want, too!

And a typewriter, or a pen, is like an organ in the sense that it tends to express the character of its player . . . the one who manipulates the keys, anyway. And organ keys are scarcely less expressive than the typewriter keys as manifested to us. From some letters we take happy excerpts. From others, we take refuge. But most important is the contact we experience with you, the people for whom the magazine is written. And like music, too, some of the chatter is happy—about the world you helped make that way. Others punch out a report in much the way a machine might.

From our office here on the edge of San Francisco Bay, we see the sun set on the water each night. Every sunset is a beautiful one, and none is like any other. The theatre Organ that we all love is like the sunset, too, in that even though there are many with the same stop-lists, still each is an individual with its own personality. Further than that, organists do somehow or other manage to make each organ respond to and identify the personality of the performer.

These gorgeous instruments possess personalities, too; personalities that were built into them by the skilled and loving care that went into their many parts. The soul that we all know and insist on talking about in our pet organs is really the personification of the maker—again, an expression of beauty from his Maker. Indeed, one would have to go far to find a group whose hobby took it into closer contact with the infinite.

In organ playing, we call the individual variations "interpretation," and in our letters, we call it expression of opinion. When there is no rush, no fleeting moment to capture, when the routine of life is at its undisturbed normal, we manage to spread out opinions over wide

scales. To some, life is never exciting except when lived vicariously. Others find the rainbow is their very roof.

As a product of a manufacturer, a theatre organ is a truly magnificent work. It expresses the soul of its maker in qualities which challenge time. And yet the result of a theatre organ is a transient disturbance in the air which is quickly gone—and often as quickly forgotten. But when the personality of the organist has the capacity and skill to match itself with those who designed the instrument, each performance is a thrill to the listeners. Machines are being replaced by better machines . . . machines even replace ordinary men by the thousands! But no other musical instrument has appeared to challenge a theatre organ . . . and the only replacement for a great organist is another great organist.

When we reveal our personality in writing, or in playing, must we not remember our great heritage? Many of us have witnessed in the first half of this century, from lineage as old as the first lullaby, the emergence, maturation, and the decline of the Theatre Organ. Forgive those who lived with but missed this bit of history. And let us all continue to strive to acquaint our fellow men with the soul of the organ through the soul of the organist.

PAUL PEASE has resigned as Treasurer of A.T.O.E. His work has been more than adequate to absorb his full time, and it is with a feeling of appreciation and full understanding that the Board has accepted his decision. Paul, you have done a wonderful and tedious job for your hobby and fellow hobbyists. We thank you for having done far more than your share of the work.

To carry on this necessary chore, Tiny James has taken over the books. Tiny, as you know, is an auditor for the County of Alameda, California, and he is a tireless worker for A.T.O.E.

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