

theatre organ

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF THEATRE ORGAN ENTHUSIASTS

THE EDITOR NOTES . . .

As in any other happy family, ATOE has some problems occasionally. At least, some of the members express ideas that indicate their wishes to have ATOE help them solve local problems. Because we are getting more and more letters with this theme in them, we feel it may be time to review a few features of our organization, its aims and goals.

The purposes of ATOE are stated in our constitution and roughly lie in two similar phases of activity. One of these is to publish a magazine; the other and really the underlying principle of ATOE is to encourage activity in and around the enjoyment of theatre organs and their music. At the time of its inception it was clear that as a national organization, it would not be possible for ATOE to do much on a local or chapter scale. It did appear that some means of distributing news and general information would be very useful. It was clear, too, that no magazine in existence was in position to do this for us. We, then, were to publish our own. This was to be made up of contributions from members and chapters, together with special articles that told more about organs, organists, and some of the history of theatre organs and their personalities. Some of the information is purely technical and was aimed at increasing the understanding of those who had no chance to view a dismantled organ at first hand. But above all, the purposes were to have fun and increase the pleasure associated with our hobby.

Because organ music has to be enjoyed individually, no matter how many may be listening to any one moment, there are marked differences in the thought contents of the various listeners. Even when we all agree that the music was thrilling, each of us brings up his own particular image of what the thrilling feature may portray. But in every case, the thrill stems from a particular event, and that means that some particular organist is playing some particular organ at the time. So our chapters, which are the units of smaller listening publics, strive to obtain great organists and great organs for them to play. This gives apparent advantage to a

chapter that has an available organ and organist. So we get letters from other chapters asking if there is some way in which ATOE as a national organization could make such programs available to individual chapters.

The national office of ATOE has no funds nor function as to providing programs. Even when there is a particularly fine local program that is coincidentally near the national headquarters, this is purely the result of local chapter activities and is in no way the result of the national office. Even the report that may appear in THEATRE ORGAN is a local chapter activity, reported by one of the members of the chapter assigned to cover it. The thinking of the Board of Directors has been that it was their purpose to coordinate and distribute information through the magazine, but each chapter was wholly in command of its own programs and activities. This puts the responsibility on an individual basis, which is where it belongs. One can easily understand the attraction in thinking that one could sit back and wait for a wonderful program to come automatically; but the happiness that comes to a chapter is largely the result of the efforts the members exert and the satisfaction that comes from fruition.

Then, too, there are only a few members who belong to very active chapters, and there is that large group that is scattered throughout the areas not served immediately by a local chapter. The decision of the Board to let the local chapters handle their own affairs is largely a recognition of a state of affairs rather than a policy. The publication permits dissemination of information and in that way activities of one chapter come to the attention of others—if the activity is reported!

So, as in any happy family we find that problems can be solved individually. Our success depends not on the presence or absence of a problem but in how we undertake to find its solution. For the race is still run by "Ones and ones, and never by twos and twos."

A.T.O.E.

President's Column	4
Questions and Answers	15
Chapter Activities	18
Record Reviews	20
Letters	30
The Wurlitzer List	22

FAMOUS ORGAN

City Theatre - Amsterdam	27
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FEATURES

Bray-Farney Story	5
Mr. Blackpool	10
Organs of Detroit	16

ARTICLES

All Through The Night	13
Tom Grierson	12
Trip to Yesteryear	14

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