



It is time to place names in nomination for the National ATOS Board of Directors for the two-year period from July, 1980 through June, 1982.

All those who wish to run in this election are asked to send a photo and short resume.

Written consent of the nominee is mandatory and must be received before the nominee's name can be placed on the ballot.

Mail to . . . Office of the President  
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**MUST BE POSTMARKED BY APRIL 16, 1980**



## Families of Tone

Since the organ is usually considered an orchestra-at-the-fingertips instrument (Wurlitzer called it the "Unit Orchestra"), it follows that, just as there are sections of instruments in an orchestra, there are sections of instruments in a theatre organ. On the organ, this is called "families of tone." There are four — string, diapason, flute and reed.

The string section is usually noted by yellow stops (Ed. Note: The color of tablets as given here can be considered as a general rule. Color of stops, particularly strings, differed amongst organ builders.) but look for them also in the white ones. These are the stops with such names as viol, cello, violina, viola, gamba

and salicional. On a pipe organ with multiple string ranks, one is tuned on pitch, the other ranks are tuned either sharp or flat (celeste). When they are played together, they produce a warm, shimmering effect.

The diapason family (pronounced dye-ah-PAY-sun), also called principal, is the foundation of the church organ tone. If you've visited a church where there is a vertical pipe facade, these are diapason pipes, and not usually playable. The tonality of a diapason is mellow and round, but with character. Some make super solo stops, and usually are good combining stops for the accompaniment instead of the breathy tibia. The 4' diapason is often called the octave.

The flute family consists of just that — flutes. You may also find gedackt, clarabella, bourdon and melodia, each one with a different voicing. The orchestral flute and the organ flute have a very similar tonality, although the organ flute lends itself more to accompanying. Check out the piccolo stop — that may be a tibia or a flute; it's handy to know which it is.

Included in this family is the tibia, the "foundation stop" of theatre organ, although some folks put the tibia in a fifth family. However, quoting from Lloyd del Castillo's

*Alphabetical Primer of Organ Stops* which quotes here from Webster's dictionary, the tibia is defined as "an ancient type of flute, originally made from an animal's tibia" (which is a leg bone). The tibia, with lots of tremulant, produces the throbbing, lush, meltingly sensual tone we've grown to love. It's common to include a tibia in a theatre organ combination. But, please remember, dear readers, that, although the rich lustrous tibia may be unified from 32' to 1', it isn't the only stop on the organ.

The reed section includes all the red stops. Yes, *all* of them. In this, the orchestra and organ differ. Where the orchestra adds a fifth family — brass — organ lumps brass and reeds into one category. This is because the pipes used to produce these tones employ reeds. Trumpet, French horn, trombone, tuba, English horn, oboe, clarinet — all these are reeds on the organ. Also included are vox humana, posthorn and kinura. Unlike stops of other families, each reed has a personality all its own, ranging from the mellow French horn to the nasal kinura and the biting posthorn.

As you've read this, you may have wondered how to apply this new knowledge to your organ playing and how it will make you sound better. In combining stops from each of the four families, remember that you are conducting an orchestra. Listen to a good easy-listening FM station and orchestral records (as well as organ records of theatre organ masters) and get a feel for the orchestral tonality. The score registers the orchestra just as you will the organ.

Within the ATOS membership, we are blessed with many professional touring musicians as well as those who play as a hobby and those who don't play but just love to tinker. Among the organists are the hobbyists who play theatre pipe organs or their own theatre-sounding electronics. Some take lessons and some play by ear. It's these folks we're attempting to aid. The professional, we trust, has reached the stage where the ideas in this column are second nature. For the amateur just having fun, however, the ideas expressed here will hopefully be of some help in advancing from one plateau to the next.

Enjoy your Units Orchestrae. all!□