



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 Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.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. 93902

Dear Mr. Thompson:

I'd like to comment on a few items that appeared in the February/March issue of THEATRE ORGAN.

1) In "For the Records," Don Knight was quoted as saying, essentially, that "elegant, refined playing with tasteful registration" is *passé*, with his hefty record sales being evidence of this. I guess that means it's time for George Wright to retire, for his playing fits that description beautifully! There is certainly a place for Mr. Knight's music, but I wish he'd drop his superior attitude over those of us who strive to attain true musical artistry. A hundred years ago there were any number of painters who made a lot more money than Van Gogh, but how many of them are remembered today?

2) I share the view of Mr. Nellis (Letters to the Editor), regarding taping concerts at conventions. One sad aspect is that the ban in Los Angeles was lifted, so Mr. Nellis missed a fine convention unnecessarily. Taping is not a sacred right, and some people *are* irritating with their popping cassettes and mike stands. However, Mr. Nellis has

offered a good compromise: segregate the tapers, perhaps in the rear of the theatre.

3) In his column, John Muri said that "An American in Paris" is "1924 music," so it's okay to accompany a 1927 movie with it. Actually, Gershwin started working on it during a 1926 trip to Paris, and the first performance wasn't until December 13, 1928. A small matter, but I'm sure Mr. Muri wants to keep his facts straight.

Sincerely,
Gary Konas
Davis, Calif.

Dear Mr. Klos:

Recently, having joined ATOS, I received my first copy of THEATRE ORGAN. I think it is the most interesting magazine which I have ever seen!

I was interested to know that the organ I played for *Amos 'n Andy* was moved to Missouri. We used it for about three years and then NBC installed an organ in their studios in the Merchandise Mart which I played from then on. However, it never sounded as well as the first one because it was stuck in a relatively small studio which had very little reverberation.

I was also interested about the demise of the Roosevelt Theatre in Chicago. It had a beautiful Kimball and I loved playing it. The organ had a stop labeled "Oboe," which didn't sound like an oboe, but more like a gorgeous *vox humana* which melted your heart.

The Chicago Theatre organ was the most beautiful Wurlitzer I ever played. It had a majesty which none of the rest had. The Tivoli organ had the most beautiful tibia of all. They tried to imitate it elsewhere, but were never successful. It must have been due partly to the acoustics of the theatre.

Sincerely,
Dean Fossler

Dear George:

ATOS has long depended upon and can be thankful for volunteers like your staff, Vi Thompson, Betty Mason and your February letter writer, Bert Atwood, for their service. Likewise, ChicagoLandMarks has depended upon volunteers in its

efforts to preserve the Chicago Theatre and its Wurlitzer organ. We will soon be able to release the results of a consultant study with regard to our future role as a preservation/development organization for the Chicago, the oldest existing movie palace in the world.

Until then, ATOS members can help keep the last remaining original installation which Crawford played intact in these ways. Join CLM. I realize that inflation has cut into our abilities to give, but even a small membership contribution can help buy stamps, pay for printing or allow us to attract further press and media attention. Contributions are tax deductible so Uncle Sam can help our efforts. Write ChicagoLandMarks, Inc., 3051 N. Clark St., Chicago, Ill. 60657, for information.

ATOSers might also like to write a letter to Mayor Jane Byrne asking that the Chicago be named a city landmark. Her address is 121 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, Ill. 60602. CLM Volunteer Peter Miller is monitoring the slow progress of this important landmark designation process.

Historically and architecturally, there is probably no other movie palace as important as the Chicago. Its pipe organ may be the most important original installation left in the world. CATOE has brought that instrument into the 1980s. We hope to make the future secure for it and its home.

Theatre organ has taught many of us to listen, not just to hear. Preservation is now teaching many more of us to see, not just to look. We appreciate the help of ATOS in making the Chicago Theatre more than just memories.

Yours very truly,
Richard J. Sklenar
President
ChicagoLandMarks, Inc.

Dear Mr. Thompson:

Relative to the letter from Lyman Nellis of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in which he complains about the ban on the taping of concerts, don't blame ATOS or the convention committees. That ban is a rule of the American Federation of Musicians, and any of your concert artists who belong to that union, must adhere to the rules. This places the persons who hold the concerts in the position

of having to publish such rules.

It is true that the copyright laws only prohibit recordings that might be made for commercial purposes — but those union rules have *not* been changed.

There *is* the possibility that use of these hand-held cassette type recorders could cut down the sales of the record albums or tape albums presented for sale by the artist.

As a union member and concert artist, the collector of organ tapes, I sympathize with those who want to tape a concert. I personally don't feel that the type recorder they use could compete with a commercial recording. When I present a concert or concert and movie, I advise the sponsor of the union rule and tell them that I, personally, do not want to *see* such recorders in use. There may have been some in use at my concerts, but I have never seen them. Keep coming to the conventions Mr. Nellis.

Yours sincerely,
Harry J. Jenkins
San Diego, Calif.

Dear George:

Whilst reading THEATRE ORGAN over the years I have often wondered if I would encounter a reference to a theatre organist I heard in my youth. It turned up in a poster illustration in April/May 1980 THEATRE ORGAN, namely — Max Bruce.

In my teens, circa 1930, I would spend sixpence (10 cents) for any seat in the house at the Regent Cinema, Portsmouth, England; after 3 p.m. the regular prices would be charged. I often saw the film again just to hear the 20-minute organ interlude, and the organist was Max Bruce. My memory tells me he was a competent performer, I only know he gave me much pleasure. He was probably in that location for a year or two. The organ was a two-manual Christie.

That experience had a lasting effect. I already had some organ tuition, mostly Bach I think, but enjoyed theatre organ music. Now living in your country, I can and do hear the "greats" in person besides attending a couple of conventions.

What happened to Max Bruce?

Yours sincerely,
Tom Wornell
St. Petersburg, Fla. □



**Let us know what's
happening in YOUR Chapter!**

Send Photos and News to:

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Deadlines

Jan. 1st. for Feb./Mar.
Mar. 1st. for Apr./May
May 1st. for June/July
July 1st. for Aug./Sept.
Sept. 1st. for Oct./Nov.
Nov. 1st. for Dec./Jan.

CENTRAL INDIANA

Our chapter has really been doing things. On February 29th, Rob Calcaterra played a concert at Manual High School at the 3/16 Louisville Uniphone pipe organ. Mr. Calcaterra, a high ranking young organist in Indiana, gave an excellent performance. He played a number of familiar selections, accompanied a Harold Lloyd silent, *Haunted Spooks*, played a sing-along and returned to the console for a well-deserved encore.

March 9th found the chapter at the Wurlitzer warehouse with 100 members and guests present. Following the usual order of business, host Sam Eberwein introduced artists Nancy Seneff and Jerry Downs, who both performed at the electronic "Mighty" Wurlitzer 950. Sam Eberwein then played a medley of songs and his own special arrangement of "Tea for Two." The final artist of the day was Sue Downs. Following these artists, Mr. Eberwein introduced a seven-year-old organist, Brian Holland. This young man has been taking lessons for a year-and-a-half. He is a natural and has an extremely promising future as a theatre organist. Brian has become a member of the chapter.

Three busloads (105 people) left Indianapolis on the morning of April 12th for a trip to Lansing, Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo, Michigan. Arriving in Lansing, we went directly to the Roaring 20s Pizza Parlor, where we were entertained by David Russell at the 3/25 mostly-Wurlitzer pipe organ, a great instrument, equipped with all the sound effects you would ever want.

From Lansing, the buses traveled on to Grand Rapids where all 105 in the group settled in a motel for the night. That evening, we visited the Grand Rapids Roaring 20s Pizza Parlor to be enthralled by music from a 3/33 Wurlitzer organ.

The buses left Grand Rapids on a beautiful, but cool Sunday morning for the trip to Kalamazoo, with a stop on the way at a delightful restaurant, Lee's Quay, for a delicious brunch and musical entertainment by James Lauck at their Marr & Colton 10-rank organ. Afterwards, the group was joined by a busload of 47 from the Motor City Chapter for the trip into downtown Kalamazoo to the State Theatre, a well-preserved old theatre with the original 3/11 Barton, for an organ concert by Donna Parker, Indianapolis Paramount Pizza organist. She presented numbers from the 20s and 30s as well as accompanying the Charlie Chaplin silent movie, *Behind the Screen*.

A tired, but satisfied, group boarded buses for home, with one more stop in Fort Wayne, Indiana, for more organ and pizza at the Village Inn Pizza Restaurant.

Sunday, April 20th, saw most of our chapter at a sold-out public concert at the Paramount Pizza Parlor featuring Lyn Larsen. His performance, as always, was superb.

Due to all of the exciting things happening in the month of April,