

Dear Editor:

Mr. Charles F. Harrison (Letters, Nov./Dec. '81) had some good points about recording at concerts, but he missed some points on which I would like to comment:

1. True, there will be background noise; also true you cannot beat a first-class professional recording. However, most of us are trying to get a complete recording of a memorable event, so that later, in the quiet of our home, we can relive it as it was. During a convention you hear so much in a short time that you find your impressions much more accurate when you can listen to it all again at home without pressure.

2. Most portable recorders, unless you are fidgeting with more elaborate equipment, are very simple to handle and need very little adjustment. True again, some are most unwise in using the wrong type of cassette. As most concerts last about 90 minutes with an intermission half way, a 90 minute cassette is the best choice. It is foolish to try to continue in the second half with a bit of tape left on side 1; it should be turned over and ready to start. It is in the interest of the amateur recorder, as he would not lose a nice part of the music, or bother those around him with noise. Above all, one can use a pen flashlight to see, using it discreetly, and unwrap all cassettes ready for use. If it is necessary to flip a tape or do something a bit noisy, do it during applause when no one will hear you.

3. As for records, some rare ones were available (once the artist died) only because someone had made an amateur recording, and thus they became precious.

Real theatre organ fans will always buy the best records. At each convention I attended I bought over \$100 worth of records. Records are collector's items because they are permanent, have pictures of the artist and console, jacket notes, etc. However, they can also be over-rehearsed and lack the spontaneity heard at concerts, mistakes or not. They can even be disappointing and not necessarily the best of an artist, as a record is only a limited sampling of his regular playing.

4. Finally, I would compare records and amateur recording to post cards and personal pictures you get during a trip. You can rarely take pic-

tures as good as the best post cards, but your own pictures are what you really saw and lived during that trip.

You may buy an excellent record done some years ago, but your own recording is what you just heard, often realizing the artist you just heard is even more versatile and lively than expected and may be even greatly improved. We will often be so pleased that we will watch eagerly for new records from the artists we enjoyed most.

5. Finally, I doubt any of us would bother to carry all the paraphernalia and record if a good copy could be made available at a reasonable price, including some profit for the artists involved.

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## SHORTCUTS TO CHORDS

There are several ways of dealing with an unfamiliar chord:

1. Skip it.
2. Substitute something that harmonizes reasonably well.
3. Take time to find the scale, and go from there.
4. Use a few shortcuts to find the chord in a hurry.

The first two alternatives are cop-outs; the third, though theoretically sound, takes too long when you need a chord *now*. That leaves us with using shortcuts.

Before using these shortcuts, you'll need two definitions: A *half step* moves from one key to the very next with no key in between (F to F#, A to Ab, B to C, F to E, for example). A *whole step* moves from one key to another with one key in between (F to G, D to C, Bb to Ab, Eb to F, for example). Now you're ready. To find any:

### Major Chord

Root (the name of the chord) plus 4

half steps higher, plus 3 half steps higher (1 + 4 + 3).

### Minor Chord

Root plus 3 half steps plus 4 half steps (1 + 3 + 4).

### Augmented Chord

Root plus 4 half steps plus 4 more half steps (1 + 4 + 4). There are only four augmented chords because both intervals are the same (major thirds). They are: F A C#; F# A# D; G B D#; and G# C E. Change the pedal, and you change the chord. For example, F A C# can be F+, A+, or C+, depending on which pedal you play.

### Diminished Chord

A true diminished chord consists of three keys — Root plus 3 plus 3 (1 + 3 + 3), but most musicians who play popular music add the sixth scale tone for body. So the chord now is 1 + 3 + 3 + 3. Again, because all the intervals are equal (minor thirds), there are only three diminished chords: F Ab B D; F# A C E; and G Bb Db E. All diminished chords are possible from these three, depending on the pedal tone.

### Dominant Seventh Chords

Add one whole step below the root.

### Major Seventh Chords

Add one half step below the root.

### Ninth Chords

Two steps here. 1. Add one whole step below the root. 2. Raise the root one whole step and play the root in the pedal. (Example: A C chord in playing position is G C E. To make a C9, add the Bb, and play D instead of C. You now have G Bb D E. Be sure to play the C in the pedal.)

### Major Ninth Chords

Same procedure as above, except add one half step below the root (instead of a whole step).

Whenever finding new chords, always remember to invert them to playing position. In other words, put the bottom note on top (or top on the bottom) until your chord fits between the two Fs around middle C. This will ensure smooth playing.

For additional drill and explanations on this chordal approach, see *Bradley's Chord Course for Organ* (Books 1 and 2) by Richard Bradley and *Organ-izing Popular Music* (Book 1) by Al Hermanns. □