



Letters to the Editors

Letters concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are welcome. Unless clearly marked "not for publication" letters may be published in whole or in part.

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Opinions expressed in this column are those of the correspondents, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors or the policies of ATOS or THEATRE ORGAN magazine.

Greetings, Lloyd:

I do appreciate so much your continued interest and the appearance of my letter in the May/June issue, saluting my late friend, Jay Quinby. I hope that my book, "Flashbacks," can be finished. It is something I want to pass on, especially with the world going as it is. The problems we had during the Great Depression and World War II cannot compare with what has happened to the entertainment world and the world-at-large, in the need for profanity, explicitness and drugs. I have to be thankful for

my memories.

I am rebuilding a 1909 Moller in Richmond's Fourth Baptist Church, but I never expected the turmoil. It is a lovely black congregation who have been so harassed that the church is wired to police headquarters. With a white man (I) to do the task threats abound as racism is on the increase, and work in the church is done with police stand-bys. Much of the work is done in the shop and at home whenever possible.

The church is an historical landmark, a few blocks from famed St. John's (Patrick Henry's church). Despite threats on our lives, work continues. We're installing direct-electric magnets in the chests, solid-state relays, a new console combination system, modern electric draw-knobs, new manuals and pedals. The voicing of this instrument is most lush and so superior to that of today's church organs. We've added mixtures and 32' in the pedals to brighten things up.

The Richmond Organ Enthusiasts Club (ROEC) is in the process of changing its name to identify solely with the theatre pipe organ. As I'm the local rep for Conn, I've decided to reactivate the old ROC as a chapter of Amateur Organist Association International. I shall remain with both organizations because of my lifelong interest in T.O. We must continue activity for those multitudes who own electronics, and there is a crying need for a club to sponsor training sessions for those pianists playing in their little country churches. With two production interruptions at Conn (reorganization and factory moving), I have installed six full-size AGO organs. All of this I totally enjoy.

The Virginia Center for the Performing Arts (ex-Loew's Richmond) Wurlitzer will be propelled by solid-state and a memory system. The wind will have been there in mid-July as the blower is wired in. We are hopeful of a new ebony console, not unlike those in Radio City Music Hall. A new scissors lift is on order. The specs stand at 23 ranks (six strings, two Tibias, two Voxes, two Trumpets, one Tuba, two Diapasons, mixtures, the usual compliment of orchestral reeds, one Flute Celeste). I believe Austin will build a new Post Horn.

As I've done three funerals during the writing of this letter, I've had it for today!

Regards,
Bill Floyd Sr.
Richmond, Virginia

Dear Bob:

Apparently, a few people have misread the article I authored last year for THEATRE ORGAN which dealt with tape machines. I refer to two letters which appeared recently in the magazine. If both Mr. Harrison and Mr. Nellis will go back to the Aug./Sept./Oct. 1981 issue and carefully reread that article, much of their misunderstanding of it should be cleared up.

As to Mr. Nellis' errant assumption that the article contradicted itself by discussing "which cassette recorders are the best buy for 'good theatre tapes'" (sic) after stating that cassette tape recorders should not be permitted at theatre organ concerts, he is omitting several essential statements made in the article which would dissolve his confusion.

First of all, I did not make a blanket statement saying "no tape recorders should ever be allowed at any concert." Concerning taping a formal concert, the key phrase that seems to have been overlooked was "Prior arrangements should be made" (with the artist concerned). And let's not kid ourselves, if the concert is being professionally recorded for an album release, individual non-authorized recording of that event is outright piracy. And those who think nothing of doing so will, and have, often made several copies for friends, which kills several more record sales to which the artist is entitled. After all, who owns his talent?

Secondly, the recording of formal,

Closing Chord

Arnold S. Briggs, 73, died suddenly on May 1. Arnold was a charter member and past president of Syracuse's ESTMIM.

He was an acoustical engineer for sonar engineering at GE, retiring in 1974. After retirement, he was a consultant for GE in Italy and Brazil. Arnold helped move the Wurlitzer from RKO Keith's Theatre to the Fairgrounds in 1967, and refinished the console and piano. He helped relamp the Landmark Theatre (ex-Loew's State), supervised the moving and installing of a large chandelier in the main lobby of the theatre, and was engaged in many other Landmark and ESTMIM projects. Always willing to help, Arnold was a member of the ESTMIM Board and the organ committee of his church.

CHARLIE RICH □

paid-admission concerts was *not* encouraged. A recorder can be put to many other uses besides taping "name" concerts, and these were mentioned in the article: Local chapter get-togethers (often involving a short performance by a non-professional who doesn't make records and doesn't mind being recorded at random), informal open-console events, and the recording of home and church installations. In addition, many of us like to collect samples of instruments in theatres when played by various "visiting firemen," or doing the same thing at a local organ-equipped pizza parlor. Not to mention dozens of other uses unrelated to an interest in pipe organs.

Mr. Nellis asks: "Why an article at all?" (regarding the "contradiction"). Well, I would have felt somewhat irresponsible about writing of gear that has been widely misused without making some qualifying statements. I merely wanted to make it clear that I don't endorse or encourage the use of tape recorders in certain situations.

And I stand firm on my statements regarding concert recording, even after the artist has given his approval. I'm certain that both Mr. Harrison and Mr. Nellis are very conscientious and careful not to disturb others with their recording activities at concerts, and a majority of recordists are quite unobtrusive. But for every nine or ten like this, there are always one or two inconsiderate souls who seem to be in their own little world and act as though the concert is really a recording session to capture for their personal collection. And to be impartial, you could hardly ban the disrupters while allowing the "good guys" to continue. Unfortunately, it's a case of a few ruining it for everyone else. And if recording is "allowed as long as everyone is careful not to disturb others," the situation is not going to change. It's like telling a cat to not claw at the drapes or furniture when letting it in the house. Sometimes recordists will not mar a concert, and other times, ugly and irritating incidents will occur. In the case of "talkers, seat kickers," etc., it is not as easy to control the public's personal habits, and that is a different area of concern.

Regarding Mr. Nellis' attempted comparison of the vacation area posted with "NO PHOTOGRAPHY

PERMITTED" signs with a concert where the artist has requested that no recordings be made, he is comparing apples with oranges. Vacation areas are for public use, and photographing them does not violate copyright laws. Just because something is accessible doesn't mean it's free for the taking.

As for the taping of "approved" concerts, Lloyd Klos mentions the best solution yet. If there is enough interest within a local group for setting up a remote facility for this purpose, no one could possibly object, and happily, both groups would get what they came for. But when recording a concert while seated in the general audience, Lloyd's words should be heeded: . . . "The overwhelming majority of concertgoers came to listen. It is they who should be spared the extraneous noises which are unavoidable in the recording procedure." So even if you have approval to record and are extremely careful, you are still drawing an invisible line between yourself and those who carried nothing in but their programs. You are skating on very thin ice.

Sincerely,
Ron Musselman
Fresno, California

Dear Bob:

Ron Musselman certainly started a hot debate on the pros and cons of amateur taping of organ concerts in his article in the Aug./Sept./Oct. 1981 issue. As this current discussion of an old problem has gone on for a year now, it's obviously a touchy issue.

As Harry Jenkins mentioned in his letter in the July/Aug. '82 issue, a printed request for no taping is by order of the musician's union, not generally by an artist.

It is very true that a program appeals to the eyes as well as the ears, and on further listening to a tape without the visual, more flaws are noticed when the ears are doing all the work. If an artist is insecure about his/her abilities being heard in this way, perhaps the artist's reasoning for playing concerts in the first place should be reexamined. Audiences know that we're human, just as they are. And I have never found an audience to be less than supportive and enthusiastic.

I can only hope that those folks who want to record will respect those

who came to listen to the King of Instruments — not to cassettes being flipped, beeps that indicate the end of some tapes, or comments that they're breathing too loud — or to be distracted by flashlights (penlight or not) looking for the end of the tape. The concertgoers who came to listen need to be a bit more tolerant of the tapers, too. It doesn't seem likely that they're going to evaporate any time soon.

It's really up to the individual societies to lay the ground work for this mutual respect *and stick by it*. Somewhere there must be a middle ground. In a society where we're all supposed to be unified in our goals, can't we find a compromise?

Yours truly,
Shirley Keiter
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania □

ATOS Committee Reports

GOALS COMMITTEE REPORT

The purpose of any Goals Committee is to provide the Board of Directors with ideas for future direction of the Society. Such ideas can be short-range or long-range, but all should be directed toward accomplishing most effectively the stated Purpose of the American Theatre Organ Society's Articles of Incorporation: To preserve and enhance theatre pipe organ and to further the understanding of the instrument and its music.

Members of the Goals Committee responded to the request of its chairman to bring forth ideas, and what follows is a compilation of the most agreed-upon suggestions in order of importance and urgency. The committee requests that the board consider this report and accept or reject the ideas contained herein.

I. PROFESSIONALISM. In order for the Society to achieve its stated purposes most effectively, it must gain the respect of non-members and members alike by virtue of its individual and collective actions. In short, a professional handling of every action must be stressed.

Professionalism needs to be emphasized and set forth as policy. It must start with the national board and officers, be increasingly