

Konsole Kapets

by Shirley Hannum Keiter



CREATIVE LISTENING

With the start of the new concert season, concertgoers again will attend programs played by organists from around the world. And again, they will emerge after each program with an assortment of reactions. What causes one person to feel bored while another feels exhilarated? Everyone reacts differently to the same artist and program. A lot depends on creative listening. Below is a checklist of ten points to help on the road to listening creatively.

1. Variety of types of music. Has the artist programmed current music as well as nostalgic and, perhaps, classical throughout the concert? Or vocals amid organ music? Or a piano piece, if a quality piano is available?

2. Variety in the speed of the music. Have there been too many ballads, or too many "Ritual Fire Dance"-type pieces in a row?

3. Variety of keys. Modulation within a song, provided it's done well, always adds excitement and an uplift to the arrangement. Has the artist used this technique without overdoing it? Also, a more subtle road to boredom is the use of only one or two keys. A concertgoer can usually pick up what key the artist is playing in by watching the pedals. Has the artist programmed too many pieces in a row of the same key?

4. Variety in volume. Has the artist demonstrated the capabilities of the instrument, from quiet to ear-splitting, without too much emphasis on either end of the spectrum?

5. Variety in registration. Has the artist used a good balance between ensemble (combinations of strings, Flutes, Tibias, etc.) and solo (Tuba, Trumpet, etc.) registration? Has one rank or the toy counter stood out predominantly throughout the program, or was there a refreshing change from one selection to the next? Or did the artist frustrate the listeners by making too many tonal changes?

6. Phrasing and touch. Does the music "breathe," as a singer would? Is each phrase "contoured" in shad-

ings of volume? Is there variety between smooth, detached, and short keyboard attack?

7. "Console" presence. Has the artist displayed an engaging personality from the console while also displaying musical acumen with a good balance between history-giving and music?

8. Harmonic structure. Have the harmonies been generally aesthetically pleasing? Is there a feeling of "completeness" as the artist finishes a harmonic thought, or is there frustration while the unresolved harmonic question is never quite answered within each phrase?

9. Notes or music? Is the artist making music or playing notes? Whether the artist uses sheet music or not, it is possible to play a selection without any concept of the piece as a whole. Is the arrangement cohesive?

10. Is the artist playing from the heart or head? Too much emotion or too much mechanical playing can destroy an otherwise perfect program. Did the artist display a happy mix of the two in the selections on the program, in the phrasing, in the use of the swell shades, in registration?

This checklist should help all concertgoers to be able to evaluate what made the overall performance what it was to you, the individual. Happy listening!

Erratum:

In "Shortcuts to Chords" in the July/August issue, under "Diminished Chord," the three chords should read: F Ab B D; F# A C Eb; and G Bb Db E.

We Hope Y'all Have
An Extra Nice
Holiday Season



NORTH
TEXAS
CHAPTER

Shirley Keiter made her theatre organ debut as a cameo artist during the 1967 ATOS convention, has toured as a theatre organist and served as house organist at the Lansdowne (Pennsylvania) Theatre. She was minister of music for two churches for 14 years. Shirley composes organ, choral and handbell music and teaches for a piano and organ dealer in suburban Philadelphia.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

from
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