

## Questions and Answers on the Technical Side

by Lance Johnson



### Do you have any questions?

Send them direct to:

QUIZMASTER  
and Organbuilder  
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**Q.** In your symposium on theatre organ tremulants last summer you mentioned that your wind gauge was far more accurate and responsive than gauges available from other sources. Could you please mention again where to obtain this instrument and the cost?

**A.** The Magnehelic gauge can be ordered from Tracker Tool Supply, 799 West Water Street, Taunton, Massachusetts 02780. The cost is \$40.00. This gauge is precision-built, and comes with a case and tubing. I have checked it against a water gauge and find it absolutely accurate.

**Q.** Our chapter maintains a large four-manual theatre organ installed in a theatre, and we often hold concerts, etc. The problem is that our maintenance crew can't make up their minds whether to keep the organ in good tune or go after dead notes. Can you break the deadlock?

**A.** I wish all the questions were this easy. It is far more important to keep the instrument in tune than to worry about dead notes. Certainly there must be a way to schedule your maintenance activities to accomplish both. There is no excuse for presenting an out-of-tune organ, whether it be for

concerts or movie crowds. Much discredit can come to the theatre organ by forcing people to listen to an out-of-tune instrument. You can always play around the stops that contain too many dead notes.

**Q.** We have a Style E, seven-rank Wurlitzer which is being prepared for installation in our home. What would you recommend as the optimum size for the pipe chambers? I don't want crowded chambers, yet I also don't want wasted space. I also plan to add a 16' reed. How about minimum ceiling height?

**A.** You have not told me whether you are adding on to your home or making organ chambers out of existing space. It would be far more helpful to me if you would send your house plans drawn to scale, with your ideas sketched in. Then I can recommend the proper space to be allocated for the organ. □

## About Theatre Organ Competition

by Eleanor D. Weaver, *Chairman,  
Young Organist's Award Committee*



Eleanor D. Weaver.

Chapters that have never held competitions may wonder how to go about starting one. Many decisions have to be made at the outset. My best advice, based on seven years as chairman of the successful competition program of the Connecticut Valley Chapter, is that the first step is to establish a special committee to plan and administer a competition. For the job to be done properly (at least properly as we saw it) will require the thinking and actual assistance of several people.

Among the basic decisions which must be made at the outset are: The age and any other qualifications of entrants; the music to be played; access to the competition organ; date and place of competition; number of judges and their qualifications; method of judging; number and amount of prizes; time, date and place of prize awards.

If your chapter operates on a budget, costs must be estimated to cover prize money and administrative ex-

penses for written and telephone communication, and then the necessary appropriation must be obtained.

Next, you must prepare an information and rules sheet, complete with entry blank, and distribute these to organ teachers, who are generally your best source for entrants, and to chapter members who know promising young organists. After entries are received, a practice schedule for the competition organ must be established for each contestant. Judges have to be decided upon and asked to participate. A rating sheet for use by the judges must be prepared and ready by the competition date, as well as a schedule established for order of appearance of the candidates.

Like any such endeavor, all these things will involve considerable effort, planning and execution. But, speaking again as an individual who lived with this for seven years, my contact with the students who participated was, generally speaking, one of the most rewarding experiences of my