



# Letters to the Editors

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.

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 Unless clearly marked "not for publication" letters may be published in whole or in part.

Address:  
Editor, THEATRE ORGAN  
3448 Cowper Court  
Palo Alto, CA 94306

*Quite a few letters have been received concerning Geoff Paterson's articles on the 1982 Convention in Detroit, published in the September/October 1982 issue. The "pros" and "cons" are nearly equal in number. The total, however, precludes publishing all of them, and it would be unfair to select only a few.*

Gentlemen:

Inasmuch as I am (I think) the one who stirred up the controversy re taping at concerts, I feel it is time for me to respond to some of the comments. My original intent was to stimulate some discussion, which I succeeded in doing, but some of the "points" by others are questionable.

Compromise has been suggested, but none made. So that is now my purpose in writing again.

First, though, I feel I must comment on some of the suggestions.

1. Get permission from the artist? How many of us have access to the artist to ask ahead of time if he cares if we record? Obviously, none of us do, and obviously, a foolish suggestion for that reason.

2. A remote facility? Who's kidding who? How and who would provide such a thing? An enclosed booth where the audience wouldn't be disturbed? What chance? Another obviously foolish suggestion.

3. And in almost the same breath, "the majority come to concerts to listen." Well, if so why do they talk and make other disturbing noise? The truth is that we are *all* so accustomed to talking in our homes while watching television that we have gotten into the habit of carrying over our bad manners to any public gathering. So, the majority *do* talk and do not al-

ways listen. Granted, recorders create a little disturbance. So do non-recorders; both minor. Neither worse than the other!

4. What authority does the Musicians Union have over the audience? If recording is not going to be permitted, maybe we shouldn't attend the concerts. Would the artists prefer that?

5. Now some comments regarding "piracy." It's not a good law because it can't be enforced. I can't imagine anyone buying a copy of a recording not done professionally, anyway. You would be further ahead by buying a record and transcribing it on tape yourself. If cassettes or 8-tracks are available you're wasting your time. Usually they aren't, so your only alternative is to do it yourself. Sure, making tapes for all your friends is unethical, and selling them illegal, but there is not much chance

of enforcing the law. If you wanted to "pirate" you'd still do better by transcribing a record than a recording of a live concert. Then, what about records no longer available? Is this a no-no?

In conclusion, I restate my original suggestion (compromise). Permit the use of hand-held (only) tape recorders. Use 90-minute tapes, set recorder up to record the first half of the concert (usually about 45 minutes if you eliminate the talk and applause with your "pause" control). At intermission fast forward your tape if not used up (and if it was what difference does it make, you got most of the performance), flip the tape and record the second half of the concert. Whatever you get is a reminder of the experience you had at the performance and that is the real object of recording it. Besides, getting it on tape could stimulate the purchase of records, rather than cutting into the sale as some suggest.

What if there is a little distraction to the audience? There is a little distraction *from* the audience, too. (Of course, no flashlight should ever be used, and no checking of the recorder to see if it is working right, or whether the tape has run out.)

My personal irritation is the curiosity on the part of people who should be paying attention to the performance, instead of minding what you are doing. If they were really listening to the concert they wouldn't know you were recording.

Yours truly,  
Charles F. Harrison □

## Challenge Grant Received by ATOS

The Board of Directors of ATOS is pleased to announce the receipt of a \$1,000 challenge grant from the Fleet Foundation of San Diego, California, for the Archives/Library and Young Artists Competitions programs. This amount **must be matched** by donations from our members. It is an excellent way for us to build for the future.

Here is our opportunity to improve the Archives/Library situation and to expand our recognition of talented young artists. The appointed committees for both of these programs have proposed workable plans which **require funding to pursue**. For example, awards for the Young Artists Competitions, and the much-needed reorganization and cataloging of our present library.

Your contributions will assist these programs, and may be given as gifts of \$1, \$5, \$10, \$25, \$100 or more. **Any amount will be most welcome and is tax-deductible**. All donors names will be inscribed in a presentation book to be kept in our library.

Help us meet this challenge. Send your tax-free donation today to:

**ATOS Treasurer, Robert E. McGillivray**  
P.O. Box 3487, Irving, Texas 75061



Dear Sir:

I noticed the letter from Donald Steadman in which he called the showing of *Robin Hood* "unrelated" to the purpose and activities of the ATOS.

What could be more related to the use of the theatre pipe organ and its past glory than that presentation of *Robin Hood*, as it would have been presented back in those days of organ accompanying a silent film?

I have done the same thing back in the '20s, as did Harry Rodgers, Lloyd Del Castillo, Leo Weber, Francis Cronin and Edith Lane, just to mention the Boston area theatre organists.

That Mr. Steadman did not notice the organ accompaniment to that silent film — the transitions so smoothly accomplished from organ to orchestra and back to organ — or the

brilliant work of the organist, is in reality a tribute to his playing for the picture. If the theatre organist did his job correctly, the audience was never supposed to be really conscious of the organist and what he was doing. The blend between the organ/orchestra music and the picture should have made the combination as of one, the presentation of the story perfectly welded, so nothing stood out from the other.

I can only guess that Mr. Steadman is a young man and did not realize how completely related that presentation really was.

Dropping attendance, I believe, is more attributable to skyrocketing hotel/motel room prices, transportation costs, and the inflated economy in general.

Yours sincerely,  
Col. Harry J. Jenkins

years), Gaylord pleased the devotees of this idiom by providing spirited music for a newsreel-type sequence, which showed personalities at the turn of the century; a chase sequence with W. C. Fields; clips from *Ben Hur* and *Intolerance*; and a zany episode, *One Week*, with the master silent comedian, Buster Keaton.

What surprised Carter followers were his delightful renditions of some Irving Berlin melodies, three themes from *Gone With the Wind*, and selections from *Chariots of Fire*, *For Your Eyes Only* and *Evita*. In all these the master organist employed the full resources of the organ, and for the quiet numbers, the beautiful Harp, Chrysoglott and strings. Simply breathtakingly beautiful!

A special plaque was presented to the organist at intermission, a salute from RTOS for his longevity as a professional entertainer, with the hope of another plaque on occasion of his 70th year in show business. Knowing the effervescence of his man, he will have no trouble in achieving this goal.

LLOYDE E. KLOS

*News from the*

---

*Unaffiliated*

---

*Groups*

*Lloyd E. Klos*



*Lockport  
Theatre  
Organ  
Society*

(LTOS) — Lockport, New York  
716/439-6643

The Society's fourth concert of the season was held at the Senior Citizens Center on December 12. The artist was Greg Curtner from Amherst, New York. He is quite familiar with the 2/6 Wurlitzer, having contributed many weekends as part of the work party which installed the organ. His program included works by Romberg and Debussy, plus singable-danceable numbers. A sing-along of Christmas music was a part of the well-received

event before a full house.

The Society, according to its energetic president, Harold Le Valley, reports that the search for a larger blower was successful, and once a bad bearing has been replaced, two ranks as called for in the original specs will be added. When this has been accomplished the organ will be officially dedicated early in the year.

LLOYDE E. KLOS

## RTOS



*Dedicated to preserving the sound of the  
"King of Instruments"*

**Rochester Theater Organ Society  
(RTOS) — Rochester, New York  
716/ 266-8251**

Gaylord Carter and rare vintage wines have one great thing in common — they improve with age. This was most evident during his fifth RTOS appearance on October 23. The 77-year-old organist, who looks younger than 60 and acts as a fellow of 20, was in rare form as he put the 4/22 Wurlitzer through its paces at the Auditorium Theatre. Noted for his expertise in accompanying silent films (he's been at it for over 60

## Empire State

*theatre and musical instrument museum*

(ESTMIM) — Syracuse, New York  
315/492-0465

Our own Craig Stevens returned from Toronto to play the November concert. Once on our organ crew, he became a member of the organ staff of Toronto's "Organ Grinder" in January 1980. We had a full house, the first in some time. Craig played a very fine program, including some novelty numbers with puppet Kermit the Frog singing from Craig's shoulder, "Sugar Blues" arranged for kazoo and pipe organ, "Cocktails for Two" with the assistance of a young man from the audience, and dancer Tammy Trach in "All That Jazz" as Craig played and sang. It was a very entertaining program and enjoyed by everyone.

Frank Olsen from Canada and Scotland was at our console for the December program. A great musician, he has appeared here four times. In addition to a Christmas sing-along, he played some numbers which had never been aired here, and some which hadn't been heard in some time. He always gives a great performance, and he received a standing ovation.