

The Relay

More on Tremulants

TO THE EDITOR:

I am indeed flattered that someone has felt sufficiently moved by my writings to take up pen and ink in their attack. Mr. Houlden has my great respect as one of the most intelligent contributors to the British cinema organ journals.

However, in common with most of his countrymen, he refuses to approach the theatre organ as an entirely different medium from the straight church organ, unbound by straight organ registrational traditions. Undoubtedly the records of Maclean are examples of brilliant organ playing in their way. However, at Tooting, only a few miles from the hallowed "Troce," Stuart Barrie was showing what equally brilliant technique could do when combined with the inspiration of vivid imagination. Under his fingers the Wurlitzer became not something clever and impersonal, but a dramatic, vibrant, and exciting living organism. If one seeks truly orchestral results one must get at the real nature of orchestral tone—its plasticity, vibrancy and expressiveness—all directly opposed to the basic nature of the organ pipe. This Barrie succeeded in doing, and I submit that a large part of the result depended on his exceedingly free use of the tremulants.

Indeed, "a tone color without tremulant is a completely different tone color with the tremulant"—without, it is the tone of the straight church organ, which has about as much utility in theatre playing as "tremulated" tone does in church.

The theatre organ is not the church organ any more than it is a one-man orchestra. However, in its coloristic and expressive flexibility it is closely allied to the orchestral approach; the organist's task, in playing transcriptions, is to translate the score into theatre organ terms while keeping the musical meaning intact. It is best fulfilled by imaginative interpreta-

tion, not literal imitation. I submit that the work of a Barrie is without equal in catching the spirit of orchestral tone without becoming impaled on its letter.

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Take Note, Tape Collectors!

TO THE EDITOR:

Congratulations on THE TIBIA, a fine magazine that fills a long felt need.

So much of our organ music is "canned" these days, in fact most so-called organ music we hear is "canned" music from "canned organs" if one may use that expression, that what I'm about to suggest may not be too much out of line.

There must be several members of our association who own tape recorders and who have access to recording a theatre organ or a live organ program available over a local radio station. This does happen to me—not frequently enough, of course—but I have made up a small collection of tapes from these sources. In addition I have a complete collection of Jesse Crawford on 78's together with many other theatre organists on 78's. The suggestion is, would any other members like to exchange tapes with me? I have access to an Ampex duplicator, if required, and of course I can easily make up programs from the 78 rpm records, (really Hi-Fi, including scratches) and put them on tape if anyone is interested. My collection goes back over 30 years and includes some "collector's items."

So if you're interested drop me a line or let the Editor know.

—E. A. RAWLINGS
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INDEX TO VOLUME I

(Bold face numbers indicate issue; light face, page)

Articles by

Bartlett, Ralph **1**, 14; **2**, 14; **3**, 17; **4**, 14, 15, 18
Doner, M. H. **2**, 6; **3**, 8
Gorish, Roy **1**, 8
Gress, G. Edgar **1**, 11; **4**, 6, 10
Hare, Frank **3**, 15
Murrill, Mac **3**, 12
Quinby, E. J. **3**, 10
Turner, Alexander **1**, 6; **2**, 4; **3**, 5
Walton, Judd **2**, 10; **4**, 3

A.T.O.E., Constitution **3**, 4

Incorporated **4**, 19
Organization of, **1**, 4

Chapter Meetings

Delaware Valley **3**, 2
Grand Rapids, Mich. **1**, 3
Eastern **2**, 3
Los Angeles, **4**, 3
Seattle, Wash. **3**, 3

Compton, John **3**, 15

Discography **2**, 6-7; **3**, 18; **4**, 12

Hope-Jones, Robert **1**, 6-7; **2**, 4-5; **3**, 5-7

Organs

Acca Temple, Richmond **3**, 12
California The, San Francisco, **2**, 8,9
England, In **3**, 15; **4**, 6
Fox Theatre, San Francisco, **2**, 8
Fox Theatre, St. Louis, **1**, 3
Grant Union H. S., Sacramento, **2**, 9
Isis Theatre, Denver, **1**, 8-10
KFRC, San Francisco, **2**, 17
Oriental Theatre, Denver, **1**, 3
Orpheum Theatre, Denver, **1**, 3
Paramount Theatre, Des Moines, Iowa, **3**, 9
Paramount Theatre, New York **2**, 17; **3**, 10
Tabor Theatre, Denver, **1**, 3
Tivoli Theatre, San Francisco, **2**, 9
WHAS, Louisville, **3**, 9

Organists

Castle, Bob **1**, 3
Cochereau, M. **3**, 11
Foort, Reginald **3**, 13
Fox, Virgil **3**, 11
Kann, Stan **1**, 3
Koch, Herbie **3**, 8-9
Kramer, Joel **1**, 3
Lewis, LeRoy **2**, 3
Malmsten, Jack **1**, 3
McNear, Larry **1**, 3
Purvis, Richard **3**, 11

Organists (Cont'd)

Shelley, Ray **3**, 11
Thomas, Jack **1**, 15-16
Wright, George **2**, 8-9, 16
Wright, Searle **3**, 11

Photos

Bohr, Ray **3**, 11
Cole, Buddy **1**, 4
Gerhard, Ramona **1**, 4; **4**, 4
Hare, Frank **3**, 15
Hostetter, Orrin **1**, 4, 5
Kibbee, Gordon **1**, 5; **4**, 4
Koch, Herbie **3**, 8,9
Leaf, Ann **3**, 20
Leibert, Dick **3**, 21
Lewis, LeRoy **2**, 3
Madin, John **4**, 8
Pease, Paul **1**, 5
Simonton, R. C. **1**, 5
Vaughn, Rich **1**, 5
Walton, Judd **1**, 4; **4**, 4
Warner, Harold Jr. **3**, 12
Wittenburg, Bud **1**, 5
Wright, George **2**, 8, 9; **4**, 3, 5

Tonal Design **1**, 11-12

Tremulant, Misuse of **3**, 3