

# 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.

Address: Editor, THEATRE ORGAN  
4633 SE Brookside Drive #58  
Milwaukie, Oregon 97222

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 Unless clearly marked "not for publication" letters may be published in whole or in part.

Dear Editor:

I recently moved to Florida from Elgin, Illinois, where I was a member of Chicago Area ATOS for many years. Now that I am relocated, I haven't been able to find an organ organization to join and enjoy the good music.

Perhaps you can help. My location is on the West Coast about 30 miles north of St. Petersburg and 50 miles from Tampa.

Yours Truly,  
William P. Miller  
3216 Lighthouse Way, Windward Village  
Springhill, Florida 33526

(Perhaps our members in Florida will respond. Ed.)

Dear Editor:

Now that the ATOS has matured and diversified in its mission as far as it has over the last three decades, I think it is time to start a Research and Development Department. There may be lucrative prospects here. Toward that end, I have two ideas for products we could develop right away for wide application.

The first is cough drops. If we could make one that really works, just think what we would do for the enjoyment of organ concertgoers everywhere. We'd distribute them at the doors as people entered, and the auditorium noise level would drop so much that organists would find themselves rediscovering the softer stops. While practical considerations sometimes necessitate giving up on the same subtleties in registration during a live performance as are possible when recording in an empty hall, still, something not altogether soothing happens to "When You Wish Upon A Star" rendered on a Post Horn with Trumpet accompaniment.

I'll bet we could make a tidy bundle for the Society's projects by selling them at other concert events also. Quiet chamber music, piano, harpsichord and even orchestral performances would probably endorse our product heartily. Of course, the market would seem low at rock concerts, but with good engineering design of the cough drop shape, we could suggest that people stick them in their ears should they want to actually hear what is happening. It's possible we just might have all the markets covered.

Another product would be seat belts. People would have to fasten them at least five minutes before any performance begins —

and sit still! No more aimless wandering around. No more bending over others and gabbing with the people three rows back. No more hanging over the stage skirt as the house lights are dimming to gush at Mr. Wright or Mr. Carter when they come out of the basement door to the console. Performers need those precious few moments to check over the stops and compose themselves before bringing the console up to start the program.

That's all the ideas I have for now. But with some help from others, I'm sure we could get the ATOS Research and Development Department off the ground.

Respectfully,  
Dr. Edwin M. Young  
MIT Lincoln Laboratory

Dear Editor:

I feel it is important to note with more than a Closing Chord the death of a truly fine musician, Basel Cristol. By their nature, obituaries are brief and omit many important facets of a career long in years, productive in quality and abundant in class.

Basel Cristol was a musician first, then an organist and pianist of the foremost order. Her musicianship spoke of study which began very early, with a solid foundation on piano. As a teenager, she continued her formal studies at Chicago Musical College where she began her study of organ. Her knowledge and skills broadened to the extent that she became equally adept at either piano or organ and adding yet another skill, that of accompaniment. Accompanying is frequently a thankless task, but for some musicians it becomes an art form — it was thus with Basel.

Most of Basel's career was in theatre organ, then electric organ — first in theatres, then on radio stations in the area. The list of her important positions begins with her Sunday morning concerts at the Chicago Theatre, but these have been cited before (THEATRE ORGAN, March/April, 1985). She retired in the late 1950s.

In 1962 my mother, Edna, began an engagement at Math Iglers' German Casino in Chicago where there were singing waiters with piano and organ accompaniment seven nights a week. When it became apparent that a new "sub" would be needed for Mother's nights off, Basel, at Mother's request, came out of retirement, and the two of them continued at Iglers' until 1977 when Mother retired. Basel continued at Iglers', playing organ full time.

Iglers' was famous for their singing waiters who had their own folios of songs ranging from opera to operetta, musical comedy, art songs and current favorites, and in every imaginable key. Needless to say, it was a liberal musical education to spend an evening at Iglers' in those days, and musicians tell me even now that a visit to Chicago HAD to include at least one evening at Iglers'. These two old ladies, well into their seventies, playing two shows each night with four or five waiters, each with four or five solos, each with his own style — need I say more?

In a profession rampant with mediocrity, we salute and applaud Basel Cristol for a long, creative and full musical life. Shalom, my friend!

Kindest regards,  
Barbara Sellers Matranga  
Palatine, Illinois

Dear Editor:

Anent Mr. Brownell's query about the film musicals as performed by Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy, none of them would have been published in book form "as is now done with Broadway/movie musicals." *Bittersweet*, for instance, is available in full vocal score with the dialogue. *Maytime* and other musicals, including those of Sigmund Romberg, are still under the company's control and have never been published. Full scores and their books are available for rent from that organization. Vocal scores are available

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Trust that this will be of some help.

Cordially,  
James McMillan  
San Francisco, California

Dear Editor:

I enjoyed "Jesse Crawford in England," by Dr. John Landon, in the November/December THEATRE ORGAN. Enclosed is a copy of an advertisement from the Archives of the Jesse Crawford chapter. It is from "Ideal Kinema," supplement to the June 15, 1933, edition of *Kinematograph Weekly* a cinema trade paper published in England. It was promoting an exhibition being held in London at that time and ties in with Dr. Landon's story.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Edward J. Mullins  
San Francisco, California

opment to KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY

IDEAL KINEMA

## JESSE CRAWFORD

"the poet  
of  
the organ"

IS  
100 %

## WURLITZER



Recently featured the  
Mighty Wurlitzer  
Organ at the Empire,  
Leicester Square. Is  
continuing at the Para-  
mount, Manchester,  
June 12th; Paramount,  
Newcastle, June 19th;  
Paramount, Leeds,  
June 26th.

Demonstrations of Wurlitzer  
music, including Jesse  
Crawford's latest H.M.V.  
records made at the Empire,  
Leicester Square, will be  
given every day during  
the Exhibition.

DISCUSS YOUR MUSIC  
PROBLEMS WITH US  
AT STAND Number 6.

# WURLITZER

33, KING STREET, LONDON, W.C.2

This ad printed on June 15, 1933 (54 years ago).

Dear Editor:

Record reviews in recent issues of THEATRE ORGAN have certainly been a big improvement over some reviews of the past, but there's still room for much more improvement.

I recently bought "Ty Woodward Plays The Mighty Wurlitzer Organ," and it turned out to be one of my favorite records. It is the type of organ playing I especially enjoy, and the selections are an ideal mix of up-tempo, "dreamy" and light classical pieces. And the quality of the recording and pressing is superb.

In his review of this record in THEATRE ORGAN (Jan/Feb '87), Bob Shafter comments that "These performances are so reserved as to border on lifeless." What Shafter seems to have forgotten is that when a person buys a record, he buys it to listen to again and again. We have all enjoyed lively, flamboyant performances at organ concerts, but listening to those same performances repeatedly on records is entirely different. Ty Woodward is not trying to show off on this recording; he's merely making some very enjoyable music, into which he puts a lot of feeling and expression, perhaps at the expense of deviating a bit from the exact phrasing indicated on the written music.

I have a collection of more than 400 organ records which includes a number of spectacular renditions that show off the organist's ability to play a complicated piece exactly as the composer wrote it. However, these are often the records that are seldom played. The ones that I play again and again are the ones such as this performance by Ty Woodward — good, listenable music.

Sincerely,  
Deke Warner  
Escondido, California

Mr. Shafter replies:

The foremost point to remember about any reviewer is that he is offering an opinion, albeit an educated opinion. Second, he has tastes, as does any enthusiast. Regardless of whether or not a reader agrees with the reviewer's opinions and tastes, he would soon lose trust in a reviewer who submitted either all glowing or all scathing reviews.

The following are my personal criteria for evaluating a recording:

1) the instrument — French Romantic and American orchestral are the standard types, the American theatre organ being the logical pinnacle of the orchestral school. The Buddy Cole organ is the specific example of a theatre instrument by which the others are judged.

2) performance — objectively I look for technical accuracy and proficiency, phrasing, orchestration and registration; subjectively, taste, enthusiasm and feeling.

3) recording — presence, whether it's studio, theatre or live concert, does the recording make you feel as though you are there; cleanliness of recording surface, distortion in either original signal or transfer process, back-

## FLASH! ATOS ELECTION RESULTS

Our new directors are:

Ashley Miller

Vern Bickel

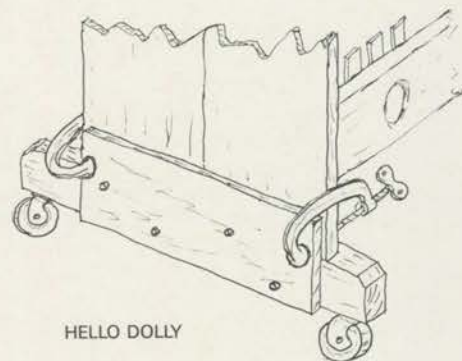
Dorothy Van Steenkiste

ground noises (anything not related to the operation of the organ).

I might add here some specific examples of recordings I own where all these factors came together: "Big, Bold and Billy" (Brooklyn Paramount), "Homecoming" (Don Baker at LIU), "Lyn Larsen at the Organ Loft," "Johnny Seng at Mundelein" and "Buddy Cole Remembered." In fact, I would include the entire body of works by Buddy Cole.

Sincerely,  
Bob Shafter

(Editor's note: Reviewer Bob Shafter has a background in theatre organ music that dates from 1969 when he acquired his first organ, a Baldwin 48H, and, at about the same time, heard Lyn Larsen at the Organ Loft in Salt Lake City. He now owns an Allen/Devtronix, three-manual digital organ and a collection of some 1000 theatre organ recordings. Bob attended the University of Utah where he majored in music and studied privately with JoAnn Harmon. He welcomes correspondence from all theatre organ buffs, whether they agree or disagree with his reviews.)



HELLO DOLLY

Dear Editor:

While I'm doing other jobs that won't wait, I find it bothersome to shift the tuned percussions (awaiting repair) to make work space. My problem was simplified with caster adapters made with a piece of 2 x 4, a scrap of plywood, some junk-box casters and clamps to hold the rig in place (see illustration).

Now the glock, chrysoglott, and harp can easily be arranged and stored until my wife and her sister start re-leathering them! Of course, if the little wheels develop squeaks, I'll apply caster oil!

Hugh Lineback  
Siloam Springs, Arkansas □