

Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor,

I just finished reading your wonderful feature article entitled "Exemplary! Renaissance for a Stately Queen" in the July/August THEATRE ORGAN. With the wanton destruction I have seen over the years concerning our beloved pipe organ, it was all I could do to hold my enthusiasm upon reading your success story.

It is true that my organization spends most of its waking hours searching for acquisitions for its archives and preparing for concert presentations of neglected works for organ and instruments. However, it must never be forgotten that, into whatever area of musical interest our taste carries us, the theatre organ, through the works of many builders and especially the great accomplishments of Wurlitzer, is now an American National Treasure—and nothing less!

All of us at the Organ Institute wish we could read a feature article such as yours in each and every issue of THEATRE ORGAN. Shea's Buffalo Wurlitzer becomes another great instrument, lovingly resurrected, to live again and give pleasure to future thousands of new ears, our progeny. Let us hope that they will recognize these magnificent music machines, which survived near-death, as the treasures they are and never allow any of them to become neglected and face ruin again.

Congratulations to all those wonderful restorers, who worked from their hearts. And thanks to THEATRE ORGAN for giving us that inspirational story of rebirth. This is a true affirmation of cultural life in America.

Sincerely,
David Elson, President
Organ Institute of America
Beverly Hills, California

Dear Editor,

I would like to comment on three items in Ralph Sargent's letter in the last issue:

1. Artist's intent
2. Brand of instrument
3. Packaging

1. I do not feel that it is a reviewer's responsibility to determine the artist's intent. Liner notes CANNOT be relied upon for this purpose. Maybe 50% will convey this information, probably less. That leaves guessing in the remainder of cases, and chances are that you'll guess wrong. Do the arrangements work? Are they played well? Do they make you feel something (other than irritation)? I believe these things to be a better measure of success than the usually risky business of second-guessing the artist.

2. While it is ultimately true that "It's the music that counts," I've made decisions to buy recordings of unknown artists based largely or wholly on the brand of instrument or on a specific instrument itself. Different manufacturers had different ideas about what a theatre organ should do and what it should sound like. Most people I know can tell the difference between brands of organs without being told. "Never underestimate the intellect and taste of the buyer," if I may quote.

3. Packaging is important, even vital, when the recording is on the dealer's shelf. The buyer's decision to investigate or to purchase could be based on the package. In a written review, however, a decision to buy will be based on whether the reader agrees or disagrees with the reviewer's opinions, not on what he may have to say about the packaging.

Sincerely,
Bob Shafter, Record Reviewer
Portland, Oregon

Dear Editor,

After reading the description of the events in Los Angeles by Paul Quarino and the account of the Care and Feeding of Pipe Organs Seminar conducted by Dave Junchen, I have the urge to write a letter.

Some of us slaves to the incessant upkeep demands of a theatre pipe organ can't get away long enough to attend a convention. How about doing an article on that seminar so that we can learn how to quell wind noise, the best ways to re-leather a regulator and solve other problems with which we constantly cope? Perhaps a tape was made of this session by some attendee that would aid in preparing such an article.

THEATRE ORGAN, except for an occasional article, has left us technicians gasping for sustenance ever since Lance Johnson writeups have been discontinued.

Sincerely,
Bill Ahlert, Crew Chief
Emery Theatre
Cincinnati, Ohio

(If any of our readers did tape this seminar, please send it to us and we will include the information in a future issue. In the meantime, see article by Dennis Hedberg in this issue. Ed.)

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. 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.

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Portland has all the fun!

We have just received a review from the June 1987 *Journal of the Music Library Association* which we would like to share with our readers: the review is of the *Encyclopedia of the American Theatre Organ*, by Dave Junchen. The following excerpts indicate reviewer Geoff Smith's opinion: "Junchen draws his readers into the drama and excitement of the organ building industry ...

"... publicity material ... calls the author a 'leading authority on theatre pipe organ design, construction, voicing and

history,' but one look at his book would be enough to make the reader come to a similar conclusion.

"Junchen succeeds in doing that rare thing: producing a reference work which is also fun and fascinating to read.

"Many others will, with me, look forward to the next volumes."

(Mr Junchen has completed writing of Volume II, and it should be ready for distribution by Showcase Publications in the near future. Ed.)



Do You Know Any Young Organists?

The rules and regulations for the 1988 Young Organist Competition have been sent to all chapter presidents. If you know of a talented youngster (age 13-20) who might be interested in entering, contact your chapter immediately so he can start preparing for the competition. If you have questions, contact Lois Segur, 1930-301 West San Marcos Blvd., San Marcos, California 92069.