

# Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor,

I would like to suggest a once or twice each year list of all our great old-timers, giving their current addresses, phone numbers and birthdates. The last ATOS directory came out in 1984 and there are probably many changes. An up-to-date listing would be helpful to those wishing to correspond or send greeting cards to old favorites such as Don Baker, Del Castillo, Gordon Kibbee, Ann Leaf, George Wright, Rex Koury, Lowell Ayars, Ashley Miller, Gaylord Carter, Lee Irwin — and others while they are still with us.

Sincerely,

Al Hermanns

Clearwater, Florida

*(Send us the information, Old Timers, and we will be happy to publish it. Ed.)*

Dear Editor:

Though it has been months since my review of the Buffalo Regional appeared in these pages, I have only recently been made aware of some errors which demand correction.

By nature a review is an opinion piece, open to disagreement and debate. In taking the point of view of an educated consumer (i.e. a conventioneer) who has paid good money and come some distance and who has certain expectations of the event, a reviewer is bound to step on a few toes and provoke outcry. That goes with the territory. But to do this with an abrasive and dismissive tone, however unintentional, is simply bad manners and it is unfortunate that I did not take time to polish that tone out of the final piece.

Facts, on the other hand, are not subject to opinion — they simply are. And when one finds out he got them wrong, they must be put right.

Evidently an apology for the buses was made at the beginning of the Strony concert when my hearing was apparently aimed somewhere else. The only announcement I heard and noted was during the Rhode concert, prompting me to unfairly berate the emcee for not doing it much "much sooner".

My comment that "neither emcee bothered to tell us who he was" in fact described not a case of bother but a case of choice — it was their decision not to tell us.

And my accusation that we were in the Hilton because the Hyatt was unavailable "when the committee got around to calling" implied laziness on their part. In fact, the chapter tried to book the Hyatt almost a year ahead and it was already booked solid making it necessary to look elsewhere. Not simply checking my source was regrettable laziness for which

I must take full responsibility.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to set the record straight.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Paterson

Toronto, Ontario

Dear Editor,

Few decades ago, there was often presented fine organists in the earlier Hammond Times — the fine magazine which edited by Hammond Organ Company in Chicago between 1937 and some years into the eighties.

I remember some of them as concert organists, and also with records both with the Hammond and pipe organs. In this connection, I wonder if somebody knows anything about some of them (and if there are available records still) — by Hal Shutz, Mario Salvador, Porter Heaps, Eddie Layton, Ethel Smith, Ted Branin, Orville Foster, Jerry Burke, Rosa Rio, and many more.

It should have been of very interest to hear comments by readers — and I should also like to have copied old records by these, and in general know if they still are playing in the States?

If somebody would like to write to me direct, please send some words to: Wilfred Hostelnd, Welhavens Gate 12, N-5006 Bergen, Norway.

Yours sincerely,

Wilfred Hostelnd

Bergen, Norway

Dear Editor,

I would like to respond to Craig Whitley's letter concerning concert and convention reviews. I disagree with Mr. Whitley. I feel that criticism from within our own organization can help to strengthen and improve the quality of product we are trying to promote to the general public.

For far too long we have had to put up with bad timing, lousy phrasing, and butchered melody lines from our performers — not to mention tasteless registrations and sloppy technique. Our builders have been giving us unregulated, screechy, squawking instruments that are barely being held together with bailing wire. These things are a detriment to our cause, not an asset, and when they occur they need to be pointed out.

It is time to stop hiding in dark little theatres, and to get over being grateful for any little tidbit of genius that is tossed our way. We need to join the rest of the musical world in demanding the best from ourselves, our artists and our builders.

If the musical world and the general public are ever to take us seriously, we

must provide them with something to take seriously. We must be able to tolerate criticism from within, because surely it will be more harsh and objective when it comes from the outside.

Sincerely,

Bob Shafter

Portland, Oregon

To the Editor:

For several years a number of things have been extremely annoying to me and to other ATOS members I have talked to concerning ATOS thinking, most notably conventions.

1. Must conventions be so long? And so frantic? Given the *pacing* of conventions I've attended in more recent years, we hardly need to stretch them out for close to a week to boot. Neither should we continue to apparently have a contest with the previous year's convention planners to see how many concerts can be crammed into each day. MORE is *not* BETTER! The traveling to a convention city, having one's normal daily routine and work disrupted, having to stay in a hotel and such things, all contribute to fatigue and the need to relax more. Cramping as many concerts into each day as so often has been done detracts from the enjoyment of the artists and instruments and from the convention experience overall. When things get so out of hand with the breakneck scheduling that there isn't time to announce the artist before he starts playing, it's time to stop and take a serious look at what we are doing.

2. Just because there are X-number of artists in a locale or currently on the "hot list" and there are X-number of pipe organs in the convention area does not mean we have to hear each one. I hate to detract from the dedicated work and sweat many chapter workers have put out, often up to the last second, to get some of these instruments playing but I've attended a fair number of convention concerts where either the artist or the organ or both were not worthy of being presented to discerning listeners. Trimming mediocre artists and instruments would shorten the conventions to reasonable length and improve the professional image of the organizations concerned. "If you ain't proud of it, don't serve it." *(continued on next page...)*

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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.

Address:  
Editor, THEATRE ORGAN  
4633 S.E. Brookside Drive, #58  
Milwaukie, Oregon 97222  
Phone: 503/654-5823

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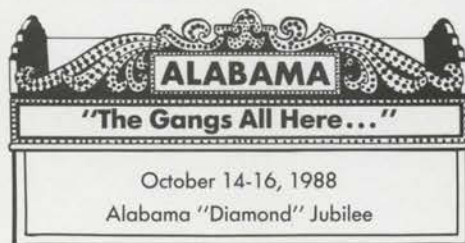
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3. Classical organs. We are ATOS, not AGO. Have we forgotten what the "T" in our club's initials is for? Classical organs and artists are neither rare or endangered and they have their own organization for furthering their goals. Even in this reputed dusty "hick cow town" where I live there is rarely a week goes by that reputable classical organists do not present concerts somewhere around town. ATOS should not spend its time, money, and energies promoting what is in the domain of AGO. One classical concert per ATOS convention ought to be it. After all, that's about the quota for theatre organ programs at AGO conventions.

4. Costs/Accommodations: Some attendees have big bucks and are used to paying princely sums for fancy hotel rooms we scarcely have time to enjoy, but a lot of us don't. Conventions should be set up and priced to attract as many ATOS members as possible. Why not make arrangements with several hotels located close to the main headquarters hotel so members can select from a wide variety of accommodations and room prices.

5. Jam Sessions: This is undoubtedly our worst convention weakness and this goes for regional conventions as well. These used to be one of the best, most enjoyable parts of conventions for the artists and the listeners both. In recent years they have turned into more mini-concerts without the "you cattle hurry up and get on them buses" aspect. Having an artist play at these jam sessions who is going to do a concert, or who has already given one, is both tacky and dumb. The purpose of these jam sessions years ago was to give attendees a chance to hear artists from other areas whom they would not otherwise hear during the convention, and to give younger lesser known talent a chance to showcase their talent. The only kind thing I can say about our jam sessions in recent years is that as a result of hearing certain much ballyhoo'd organists at the jam sessions I didn't bother wasting my time and money when they came around on concert tours. And could we have a jam session at some place other than a pizza parlor sometime — please??

Yours for a better ATOS,  
Dan Story  
Valley of the Sun Chapter



## THEATRE ORGAN NEWS

### FROM AUSTRALIA

The long weekend of April 22-25 saw the Australian TOSA National Convention held in the nation's capital, Canberra. It was a "first" for them. The main activities centered around the delightful old Albert Hall where the Canberra ACT division's 3/9 Compton is installed.

Friday evening saw the Convention off to a flying star with the registration, dinner and Cabaret Capers. This embraced a series of musical items by the Canberra Repertory and finished with Melbourne organist David Johnson accompanying the 1927 Australian classic silent *Kid Stakes*.

The next morning, conventioners embarked on a Sight and Sound tour with a recital at the Duntroon Military College Chapel and another on the magnificent Carrillon which is situated on a small island in the very picturesque Lake Burley Griffin. In the evening it was time for the main event — Tony O'Brien from Detroit to play the Compton. Tony used a synthesizer and rhythm unit plus visual effects. He presented a range of items from "Ave Maria," with the Viol Celeste carrying the melody on the pedals, to a rousing presentation of "America" with organ, synthesizer and rhythm unit. It was meant to be a concert with a difference — and it was.

The following day, well-known Sydney organist Cliff Bingham, with pianist John Crawford on Rodgers organ and grand piano, provided excellent entertainment. They were joined by the Woden Valley Youth Choir (Woden is a Canberra suburb) in an interesting range of songs. Opinion was that this event was the highlight of this year's Convention.

The final day, Monday, was also Anzac Day. This is the day when Australia remembers and honours its sons and daughters who made the supreme sacrifice in both World Wars, Korea and Vietnam. Following this there was an Accent on Youth programme for young organists from various parts of Australia. Tony O'Brien conducted a workshop and answered questions on the use of the synthesizer with the organ. Open console followed allowing the brave conventioners to try their hands (and feet) on the Campton. Although the Convention had officially finished, Tony O'Brien treated about 150 remaining conventioners to an hour of classical delight on the local Uniting Church 3/42 pipe organ.

### The Dendy in Brighton

The re-opening of the 3/15 Style 260 Wurlitzer on April 17 was the climax following four years of renovation by a dedicated group guided by Bruce Hester. The former Dendy in Brighton (now excitingly titled Brighton Twin Cinema) where the organ has been re-installed has been greatly reduced in size to about 450 seats. The former stalls area is gone, and the old circle area now extends down to the screen. In keeping with current cheap and soul-less styling, there are bare, brick walls covered with curtains, no proscenium or stage and a flat, acoustical tile ceiling. The console is sitting on a moveable platform which rides out from behind curtains at the right hand

(continued on page 31 ...)



BRUCE ARDLEY



A peek at the pipes in the renovated Wurlitzer at the Brighton Twin Cinema Melbourne.