

Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor:

While I enjoyed Dorothy E. Elliot's story on the Providence Performing Arts Center (Loew's State), I'd like to point out that there was no such person as "E. Marcus Loew." There were two showmen named Loew who were not related and not even friendly: Marcus Loew and Elias Moses ("E.M.") Loew.

Marcus was born in 1870 on Manhattan's Lower East Side. At an early age, Marcus began working in a print shop, peddling newspapers, and doing odd jobs. Eventually, he became a fur salesman. After he had saved some money, he acquired equity in a Harlem apartment house. Comedian David Warfield bought into an apartment house next door and Loew talked his way into becoming Warfield's real estate manager. Thus began a life-long association which made both millionaires. Another Harlem neighbor was Adolph Zukor who, like Loew, had been in the fur business but was now running penny arcades. Loew and Warfield joined Zukor in his arcade ventures but eventually pulled out and operated four arcades of their own. Loew became aware of motion pictures and installed a projector in his Cincinnati arcade. Six months later, Loew and Warfield were operating 40 highly profitable nickelodeons. They also featured live acts along with films. In 1920, to assure film product for his theatres, Loew bought out Metro Pictures which evolved into Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

In September of 1927, Marcus Loew died at the age of 57. He was widely mourned and left an estate of \$35,000,000.

The E.M. Loew story is another rags-to-riches saga. Born in Czernowitz, Austria, in 1897, the son of a public school teacher, E.M. received basic education there until the age of 13 when a family friend in Brooklyn persuaded the parents of E.M. to send him to the United States. His first job in Brooklyn was as an assembler of iron beds. After seeing his first Western film, E.M. became a confirmed movie fan. He quit night school to become an usher at the Delancy St. Theatre. Rather than seeking his fortune in New York City, he moved to Boston. There he survived by working as a meat cutter, usher, busboy, and bellhop.

In 1917, E.M. and a friend put up \$1,000 each to take control of the Crystal Theatre in Worcester, Massachusetts. They eschewed living quarters and slept in the ladies' room of the theatre. Despite their sacrifices, the venture failed.

Undaunted, E.M. acquired the Dreamland in Lynn, Massachusetts, and this turned out to be a success. Soon, E.M. had quite a chain of theatres and started putting his name on them. This attracted the attention of Marcus Loew who took E.M. to court. There was a long and bloody litigation. E.M. insisted he had the

right to use his own name on a theatre. Marcus contended that his good will was being infringed upon. The court finally ruled that Elias Moses Loew might use his name on a theatre provided that he prefixed it with his initials, "E.M." Thus, "Loew's Capitol" meant that the house was operated by the long-established Marcus while "E.M. Loew's Capitol" meant that the theatre was run by Elias Moses-Come Lately. Of course, few were able to make the subtle distinction and confusion reigns to this day.

Sincerely,
Paul Chavanne
Wakefield, Massachusetts

Dear Editor:

Please allow me one final word in regard to the responses to my lengthy letter in the July/August issue which stirred up a bit of a hornet's nest apparently. I thank you for printing it in its entirety.

First I appreciate the dedicated work done by Tim Needler and others. I would, however, have to still take issue with Tim or whoever set up hotel arrangements at some conventions in recent years and ditto some regional conventions. True, the room rates obtained by ATOS planners may have been "attractive" FOR THAT HOTEL, compared to their normal rate but still awfully expensive for what many members are used to paying or can afford to pay. I wonder if arrangements couldn't be made with 3 or so hotels with varying rates and still supply enough bookings at a particular hotel to get preferred rates on rooms, banquet facilities, etc.

As for classical music, I certainly have no complaint with it being played and I have the utmost respect for Tom Hazleton, Jonas Nordwall, et al in their presentation of it on theatre organs — and occasionally vice versa. (Jonas's concert on the big Rodgers at the Portland Paramount was as delightful and impressive as any concert I have ever heard.) But I stand by my point, which, incidentally, Harry Anderson summed up beautifully in his letter, we are members of the Theatre Organ Society and should not be ashamed to present theatre organ music.

Lastly, I don't believe Tom DeLay read my original letter with very good comprehension regarding my feelings on jam sessions. Because of convention *spacing*, which I have already commented on, I decided to forego both the jam sessions in Portland. No doubt Tom Hazleton and Dan Bellomy's "duet duel" was a musical treat. And if it was a spontaneous thing, Great! But convention planners should not *schedule* an artist to "kick off" a jam session when that artist will be doing a full-fledged concert during the convention. After all, isn't a jam session supposed to be a *spontaneous* output of peoples' talents. I would strongly sug-

gest Mr. DeLay go through his back issues and find the one in which I wrote about the regional convention in Phoenix. This "fool" praised it as being the best-produced and paced one an ATOS group has put on. But even there, I did not like the way the jam sessions were handled. Nuff said.

Sincerely,
Don Story,
Tucson, Arizona

Dear Editor:

I am a new member of the ATOS, having joined after hearing Mr. Thomas Hazleton provide the people of Santa Barbara with a fine program on the newly installed Robert-Morton instrument at the Arlington Theatre. I have been a member of the American Guild of Organists for 11 years now and have enjoyed my association with the many professionals who make up that organization.

My main reason for writing is that in the two issues of THEATRE ORGAN that I have perused since joining the ATOS, I have seen many verbal barbs from various ATOS members directed against the AGO. It seems that the AGO is labeled by the ATOS as a bunch of intellectual snobs who get together at their meetings and discuss heavy academic subjects and play heavy classical music for each other.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. Five years ago, a group of AGO members who were at the time members of the Santa Barbara Chapter of the AGO, and a few other interested organists from Ventura County petitioned the national offices of the AGO for a chapter charter. We were granted that charter in September of 1983, and there began the Ventura County Chapter of the AGO. Since our beginning, we have had many members' recitals a number of them being held where we can invite the public. These members' recitals are not unlike the ATOS's Open Console sessions. Everyone is allowed a time at the organ, and nobody is afraid to play in front of the group. We always say to the shy ones, "Remember, you are among friends."

In closing, I *challenge* those who are stereotyping the AGO as "intellectual snobs" to come see the "party animals" of the Ventura County AGO in action at their annual "Pipescreams" Halloween program, and our "Old Chestnuts" programs. We, and I'm sure many other AGO members, are not afraid to shut down the mixtures, draw the tubby flutes and tremulants, and try, as frustrated theatre organists, to make our "classical" instruments sound like theatre organs, to play light toe-tapping music that delights our assembled audiences, and *have a good time doing it!!*

Sincerely yours,
G. Mark Caldwell
Santa Paula, California

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THEATRE ORGAN

Letters To The Editor

Continued from page 6

Dear Editor:

About 1928 Kinsey Theaters built a beautiful 700-seat movie palace in Lumberton, North Carolina. The walls were done in a tan paint; the molded plaster work was all gold leafed, and there was an abundance of it. The proscenium was sort of a flattened arch with much gilded plaster relief work. The ceiling was capped with a beautiful dome and a huge crystal chandelier with multi-color lighting. The seats were covered in red velvet, and the floor was carpeted in the same color. There were three floors of dressing rooms. A musicians' room and entrance into the orchestra pit, and other rest rooms and showers were below stage.

This beautiful old Palace which had stood empty and unused for many years has been restored by Lumberton Citizens and is now the Carolina Arts Center. The balcony lobby is now an art gallery.

A descriptive flyer was sent to interested persons telling of the restoration of the theatre and that a theatre must have an organ, so they had leased the 2/8 Robert-Morton that was for many years in the Art Deco Center Theatre in Durham, North Carolina, from Piedmont Chapter ATOS. The Center was the last movie palace built in North Carolina. Then followed the statement; "Wonder what happened to the original organ?"

The 2/5 Wurlitzer was removed from the theatre in the late 40s. The console had long been gone. The organ was placed in a Lumberton music store and hooked up to a pink Baldwin console where it played for years. It then passed through several owners in different cities, ending up with David Eplee in Whiteville, North Carolina. This summer, David, having sold the beautiful white and gold, 3-manual French console that he had built from scratch, to a person in California, gave the organ back to its original home. They hope to add it as an echo division to the 2/8 Center Robert-Morton.

J. Marion Martin
Whiteville, North Carolina

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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Nuggets, Gold Dust

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GOLD DUST . . .

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That should do it for this time.
So long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector

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