

Directors' Corner

■ Laurel D. Haggart

Where Are The Home Organs?

I had a great time in Detroit. One of the highlights for me was the informal get-together with those in the process of installing a theatre pipe organ or who already are enjoying the magical music of theatre pipes in their homes.

As preservationists of the theatre pipe organ, we need a record of these home installations, whether an "original" or "hybrid." Where were your pipes, console, percussions originally installed? One of my goals as your director is to compile this list for historical purposes for our archives.

During the past year, many owners have written me and, hopefully, I will be deluged with mail this year.

Next year in Indianapolis we will have another get-together for home-installation owners where you can meet other owners from outside your area, exchange "pipe/shop talk" and just enjoy the new friends you will meet.

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■ Alden Stockebrand

Theatre Organ . . . Where Is It Going?

To keep theatre organ alive and well two issues must be addressed. First is new talent. At present we are lucky to have a supply of good, competent artists who should be with us for another 20 or 30 years. We, also, are working on developing new talent through programs like the Young Organist Competition.

This brings us to the second issue, an audience to listen to the artists who play for us. Anyone who observes the audience at a theatre organ show knows that it continues to age and does not contain many new faces. This brings up the question: are we looking in the right place? I know that some groups have been attempting to expose the theatre organ to the school-age audience through special shows and promotions aimed at that level. While I am in favor of promoting theatre organ at every level, I am not sure that is where our biggest potential audience is. For the last 30 years, our youth have been raised on electronic music with a strong beat. This is what we are competing against for an audience. During the first resurgence of the theatre organ in the 50s (through hi-fi) there also was a good market for home organs,

some with the theatre sound. This market is now dominated by keyboards that produce an electronic type of sound rather than the organ sound. How do you change an audience from listening to the electronic sound to the theatre organ? At what age are people most likely to be ready for a change?

Today's young people tend to listen to heavy rock. As they reach 25 to 30 their tastes seem to mellow. This is evidenced by the emergence of the classic oldies Rock format being used by many of the radio stations. I think this reflects the baby boomers coming of age. This also is a large potential audience of people looking for a change. Can theatre organ standing alone accomplish this? Maybe, but I doubt it.

For the theatre organ purists who think that the only way to hear theatre organ is in its original form with no changes, you can stop reading now. While I think the theatre organ can stand alone, I am also not against helping it along, especially if it will help to develop a new and larger audience. There are a number of things that can assist and enhance the theatre organ sound that were not available a few years ago. The use of rhythm units and orchestral accompaniment through electronics are some of them. When used properly, this can enhance the sound rather than diminish it. If we want to move into the 21st century I think we must keep an open mind. If not we may find our beloved theatre organ is an orphan with no audience.

Alden Stockebrand
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■ Paul Quarino

Since becoming ATOS Historian and requesting help from the membership to locate historical data and any information regarding the formation of our organization, both at the local and national levels, I have received a wealth of information. People have helped by steering me to the right places to look as well as by visiting with me at some length, sharing with me their memories. Many told of first-hand, on-the-scene experiences and others passed on what they learned from our forerunners. I received some guidance from the Board and was helped immensely by Archivist Vern Bickel as to how we will put the historical data into the ATOS Archives by years.

With the help of former Journal Editor George Thompson, I will be restoring the Charter Membership list. When this is brought up to date, it will be sent to Executive Director Doug Fisk, and the membership cards will again be stamped "Charter Member." I'm sure that will make a great many of you happy campers again. I would like to hear from you if you know of people who should be on that list or if you know of those who have passed on who should be deleted.

I am looking forward to hearing from many more of you. I am still looking for historical information such as: major accomplishments in your chapter or city; did you save that theatre? or restore an organ? or did you get one back on the radio? was your group honored by the mayor? or . . . ? You let me know whatever, etc.

Thank you for your support and contributions.

Paul J. Quarino
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RULES AND REGULATIONS AND TAPING REQUIREMENTS for the 1990 YOUNG ORGANIST COMPETITION have been completed.

They have been sent out to all chapter presidents and former contestants.

We are anxious to get the material into the hands of new contestants. *

Anyone desiring information may call:

DOROTHY VanSTEENKISTE at 313/383-0133 or by sending in a request to:
DOROTHY VanSTEENKISTE
9270 Reeck Road • Allen Park, Michigan 48101

We encourage all our members to contact their schools, music studios and teachers. Make your theatre organ available to these students early so that they will be ready for COMPETITION!

*If you are unaffiliated please call and we will arrange for a chapter to sponsor a candidate if you have one.