

# The Editor Notes . . .

**A**ND the night shall be filled with music . . .

Throughout the ages, the most beautiful words always sought musical accompaniment. Truly a language of the universe, music adds romance, sets the mood as to tempo as well as emotion. A thousand persons listen to the same notes and hear a thousand different stories. Such is this most moving power in human listening experience. To him, who hears, there is music in the whispering pines, the babbling brooks, and the pounding surf, even in the clash of steel upon steel. If the human mind can comprehend the thought or contain the idea, it can also express it in music.

The great composers of the past and those of the present have been great improvisers. The small-town musician or country fiddler, too, were expert at this. It calls for something in addition to knowing the notes . . . it requires a certain creative effort. The composer must hear the music first in his mind. He then may record it on paper or produce it instrumentally. If he merely approximates a familiar tune, he is *playing it by ear*. If he takes a familiar melody or theme, and arranges it more or less elaborately he is producing variations on a theme or "giving his impression." Indeed, some of the arrangements become so elaborate that the themes from which they come are relegated to oblivion. Then, there is the group of performers who finds it possible to stick to the words and at the same time to avoid all the music originally supplied.

Perhaps it does not require explanation to accept the fact that the technique of Chopin is worth an effort at accurate imitation. And few of us have escaped the urge to compose, even though our efforts might not have been crowned with national recognition. And most of us will have taken our turn at entertaining a group. Many have proven quite entertaining at times when it was least of all expected . . . especially by ourselves.

The Father of the organ, Bach, surely has given all of us much for which to be thankful. These men, whom we remember so fondly, all gave to the world. They had a great gift which they shared with us. And the music they created still thrills and gladdens the heart, quickens the pulse, and lets our minds enter a thousand secret places of beauty. Nor could these men live without appreciating the joy they brought to the world. Some were so free from pride that they were scarcely aware of the high positions they occupied in the public mind. They were gracious. They understood that they were recipients of a gift they themselves had done nothing to acquire. For we may considerably affect the degree to which a talent is developed without acquiring any talent in the process. These are gifts from our God. They are loaned to us for use on this earth. How well we use them and how much happiness we bring to others is a direct measure of our own application.

The urge to entertain is latent in most of us. Usually the ratio of audience to performer is very high, but we've all been at meetings where a master of ceremonies

sat in every chair. There is a great tendency for the crowd to sing along with the stage performer at times. And on other occasions it is impossible to coax a single voice to join in. To perform for the entertainment of others requires the ability to act and warmth of character to achieve audience sympathy.

In our recent past, the great names in the theatre, in the organ world as well as on the stage, are remembered as much for the graciousness of their performances as for the excellence of their techniques. The voice of the organ, like that of the vocalist, can express as much or more than the words convey. In addition, there is that intangible link that connects the performer with those who listen and enjoy. If he really enjoys entertaining, then his audience will enjoy being entertained. These are the occasions in which mutual appreciation is demonstrated by repeated encores, curtain calls, and ovations. When the final curtain falls, everyone goes his way well satisfied. Each has taken something from the artist, incorporated it into his own and preserved it for all time.

Evaluated as a lifetime, the same score becomes a biography. Measured in lesser times, it can be a career, an episode, an event, or a moment. But each has its giving and its receiving. Each must bring joy to the performer and spectator alike. Each must unite those present in the mutual satisfaction of the entertainment. A performer who merely goes through a routine does not entertain. And the applause is equally routine.

We in A.T.O.E. are heirs to a tradition that was mostly giving. It was a sharing of talent in a common expression . . . the organist gave the music, the listener received it. Both enjoyed in proportion to his capacity to appreciate. Many great names in theatre organ history have disappeared behind the final curtain. Some have gone into the wings and may return at a later date. Some have continued right through the years to remind us of the glorious past and the wonderful present. Beauty, as expressed in music, is one of the great luxuries that our Maker gave us. Music has upheld the lofty ideals of each age, has not bowed to the baser impulses. Let none of us forget that the priceless wonders that we take for granted today are products of those who went ahead. All we know was taught to us by those who learned it first. Our ability to appreciate the wonderful organ music of yesterday and today was developed by the musicians of the past who left us this heritage. It is up to us, now, to take these precious gifts humbly, to enjoy their priceless beauty, and then to pass them on, as they were passed to us. None of us got where we are now by his own efforts alone; all of us had much help. So let us each, in his turn, do what we can to share this gift with others, to further our hobby, to please our listeners, and to bring that inner serenity that comes only from giving. In this, a thousand hands reach back toward us from all eternity, giving to us, that we might give to others. ●