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Editorial Grace E. McGinnis
4633 S.E. Brookside Dr., #58
Milwaukie, Oregon 97222
Phone: 503/654-5823

Advertising Terry Robson
3422 S.E. 8th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97202
Phone: 503/233-7274

Membership Douglas C. Fisk
P.O. Box 417490
Sacramento, California 95841
Phone: 916/962-1019

Back Issues & Binders Vernon P. Bickel
1393 Don Carlos Ct.
Chula Vista, California 92010
Phone: 619/421-9629

President John Ledwon
28933 Wagon Road
Agoura, California 91301
Phone: 818/889-8894

Vice-President Russ Hamnett
Box 543, Hutton Ranch Road
Flagstaff, Arizona 86004
Phone: 602/523-5628

Secretary Laurel Haggart
P.O. Box 902
Lake Arrowhead, California 92352
Phone: 714/336-2909

Treasurer Warren Dale Mendenhall
4428 Pennsylvania Avenue
Fair Oaks, California 95628
Phone: 916/967-5060

Executive Director Douglas C. Fisk
P.O. Box 417490
Sacramento, California 95841
Phone: 916/962-1019

Board of Directors
Vernon P. Bickel Laurel Haggart
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Corporate Office
American Theatre Organ Society, Inc.
1393 Don Carlos Ct.
Chula Vista, California 92010

Curator - Archival Library Vernon P. Bickel
1393 Don Carlos Ct.
Chula Vista, California 92010
Phone: 619/421-9629

Journal Staff
Editor Grace E. McGinnis
Editor Emeritus W. Stu Green
Contributing Editor Robert Gilbert
Assistant Editor Paul J. Quarino
Associate Editors Lloyd E. Klos, Robert Shafter
Stephen L. Adams
Advertising Terry Robson
Publisher Warren Dale Mendenhall

Design & Typesetting
Stanley LeMaster Typesetting & Design
Portland, Oregon

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President's Message



THAT WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR . . . but would you want to re-live it? Want to go back to carrying ice for the icebox? Replace zippers with buttons? Have scratchy 78s instead of clean compact discs? Would you trade present-day music for old music? I'll bet most of you answered NO to all but one of these questions . . . so, let us take a look at that music question.

Back in the "good olde days" music was better, you say. Possibly so, but just as likely is the fact that the music we listen to today from the twenties, thirties or forties has survived the test of time. For every *good* musical selection that has survived, many lesser ones have perished. With contemporary music, the test of time is not yet complete; there are still a lot of the *lesser* musical selections around that are used as examples to taint all contemporary music.

Today, we are forcing the younger theatre organ concert audiences to listen exclusively to music that was popular 40, 50, 60, even 70 years ago. (It's scary, isn't it? Music from the Roaring Twenties is now 70 — count 'em — 70 years old!). I am willing to bet that when you were young and full of spirit (of course, you still are today), you were probably not too excited about your parents' favorite music from their youth. For example, if you are now in your seventies, you would have been a youth in the twenties and thirties. Would your favorite songs have been such well-known hits as "I've Come Here to Stay," "Jolly Commodore" or "Love Will Find A Way?" Of course not . . . these songs were all popular in the 1890s. If you are in your sixties, Okay, did you enjoy dancing to such hits as "A Bird in A Gilded Cage?" How about "Calling to Her Boy Just Once Again?" No? "Just Because She Made Dem Goo-Goo Eyes?" No, again? Well, sure, these songs were popular in the 1900s. That would have been *old* music to you who grew up in the late thirties and forties.

While I realize that most of you may be tired of hearing me say this, but if the theatre organ is to survive beyond the next few years, current audiences must be willing to listen to and to accept good contemporary music. My definition of contemporary is that which was written after the 1960s, and even that seems to be going back a way! Our young artists need to know that if they play more current selections they will be accepted by the older audiences. Obviously these pieces need to be chosen with great care as there is much out there that is not great music. However, I do firmly believe that any one of today's artists could easily compile a program of music from the '60s-80s that would be of interest to all ages.

Please remember that contemporary music is not the MONSTER in our familiar traditional repertoire that it is often purported to be. *Old* is often more comfortable than *new*. It is far easier to be a nay-sayer than to have an open mind.

Humor me a bit longer; send me a list of music from the '60s to the present that you are particularly fond of. Maybe I'll present the titles that get the most "votes" in a future article. It is only by embracing musical change, not ignoring or rejecting it, that will allow the theatre organ to enter the twenty-first century as a viable musical instrument. Are you up to the challenge?

John Ledwon

See You in Indianapolis!

AUGUST 4-8, 1990

Come Join in the Fun!

Your Registration for Convention
and Hotel are on the Wrapper.