

Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor:

I read the letter from Donald Wood, and President John Ledwon's comments, with great interest. Both contain much food for thought.

However, lest your readers should think otherwise, having read Donald Wood's letter, I would like to reassure them that the Cinema Organ Society is in good health, membership is increasing, and our District and General Committees are largely composed of "new blood" recruited during the last few years.

Four of our Districts have their own organs. A prime consideration when a venue is being sought for an instrument is the accessibility factor; the members should be able to enjoy their instruments in various ways: concerts, social, private practice sessions, dancing, and so on. We also rate teaching, especially of young players, to be of paramount importance. I am glad to say that all our venues provide these facilities, and are fine halls, not falling into the dreaded "museums, dark old church halls, and musty schools" categories as described by Donald Wood. In fairness, our new venues for the Midlands Compton, and the Yorkshire Wurlitzer are, respectively, a school hall, and a converted chapel; but we do believe that they are fine locations, the first being a prestige girls' private school, and the second having been converted very imaginatively into an Arts Centre.

I cannot, of course, speak with authority on the other theatre organ groups in the U.K. However, I am not aware that they are "struggling along." Although Britain is a much smaller country than USA we are very densely populated. The British tend not to travel, and so people often support a local organ society which will probably be centred on a particular organ. Our local groups are rather akin to the ATOS American Chapters, except that COS or TOC support may be less formalised. There is, of course, something to be said for one national British Society, and this has been examined in the past. On a personal note, I would like to see some kind of International Theatre Organ Society, to which ATOS, COS, TOC, TOSA and other similar groups could federate perhaps.

As Chairman of the Cinema Organ Society, may I extend the warmest good wishes to all our ATOS friends, worldwide.

Sincerely,
David Lowe
London, England

Dear Editor:

I wholeheartedly agree with President Ledwon's scenario concerning what needs to be done. I feel we should preserve the music of the 20s and 30s, but also be open to adapting music of today to pipe organ, thus arousing interest among the new generations.

I have enjoyed theatre organ from the first time I heard Stan Kann bring the Wurlitzer out of the pit at the Fox Theatre in St. Louis. I was just a kid then, but I would even go to shows I didn't like just so I could hear the organ.

As a youngster, the most we could afford was an accordion, but that has kept my interest in theatre organ alive over the years. When I was 17, I bought a Yamaha E-3, and was disappointed at the instruction I received through the music store. I agree with Al Hermanns that more and better teachers are needed.

Luckily, I found a contact who got me into St. Louis Chapter about 15 months ago, and this has opened doors for me which has put me on clouds for months at a time. I even mustered the courage to play at an open console, and they didn't throw me out! Last time I even got applause. I took advantage of a trip to Dayton, Ohio, last fall and got to play the Emery Theatre organ and the Wurlitzer at the Shady Nook.

Loving organs as I do, I rebuilt a reed organ last year that is over 100 years old. I helped tune a pipe installation, and I learned a lot from both experiences.

I am concerned that many instructors may feel that it is a waste of time to try and teach a 43-year-old to play properly. What if we had a competition for new students of theatre organ regardless of their age? I would jump at the opportunity.

Sincerely,
George Nitchman
St. Louis, Missouri

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*"The very name
'Wurlitzer',
with its telescoping of
'waltz' and 'whirl',
conveys the idea
of vertigo."*

MARSHALL McLUHAN, 1951
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Dear Editor:

I read the President's Message in the January/February issue of THEATRE ORGAN, and want to let the ATOS know that we at the Carpenter Center for The Performing Arts are trying to do the things he listed.

We have purchased the original Wurlitzer Style 235 that was in the old Loew's Theatre here in Richmond. Loew's is now the site of the Carpenter Center. When Loew's was closed in the late seventies, the organ was donated to the American Film Institute at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. where it was dismantled and placed in storage. The organ is now back in Richmond and is being refurbished by a talented group of organ enthusiasts. It is scheduled to be re-installed in the fall of 1990.

The Carpenter Center is a non-profit performance hall and depends on funding from the private sector. Our cost for purchasing and re-installing the Wurlitzer is \$112,000. We are hopeful that the ATOS will help in our endeavor. Any publicity would be appreciated.

Sincerely,
Russell H. Chambliss
600 East Grace Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Editor:

Can you or any ATOS reader tell me where I might obtain the following cassette tape: "Romancing The Organ," Don Allen - PBX 804. This tape was produced in Canada.

I wrote to the distributor (Mapact, Inc., Quebec) about 6 weeks ago, but never received a reply. Someone must know about the tape! Perhaps the recording artist, Don Allen knows where the tape may be obtained. Thanks.

Very truly yours,
Jack Kalman
45-53 204 Street
Bayside, NY 11361

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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