

Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor:

When I was a member of the Cinema Organ Society of Great Britain, I was able to buy a blazer-badge of the Society's logo. I note that ATOS does not offer this item and I, therefore, tried to get one made locally. Firms which make emblems have said that they can copy the red, white, black and gold ATOS decal, but it will cost \$100 or more. This would be to have the logo computerized for the embroidery machines. From then on we could get blazer-badges for a very low price.

My question is: are there any members interested in an attractive blazer-badge? If there are twenty, the badges would cost \$5 each — if there are forty, the cost would be \$2.50 each. I wish to stress that I am only interested in getting a badge for myself at a reasonable price. If you write me, do not send money, just confirm that you are interested and I will let you know if I am successful and how much the badges will cost.

Sincerely,
George Howard
45 Larkspur Crescent
St. Albert, T8N 2M4
Alberta, Canada

Dear Editor:

I have been attending theatre organ concerts since 1970. I, myself, cannot play, and I have the greatest admiration for concert artists I have heard since the revival of the theatre organ.

I admire the ability of Bob Shafter to critique theatre organ recording for THEATRE ORGAN, but I must take issue with one of his statements: "As is often the case with British recordings, there are too many medleys." The most enthusiastic audiences, I believe, have been those for Arnold Loxam, Robert Wolfe, Robin Richmond and, before his tragic leg accident, Ernest Broadbent. The only American artist I am aware of who uses medleys is Larry Ferrari of Philadelphia TV fame, and I have not been able to go to one of his concerts for many years (Does he still give them?).

I dragged my two high-schoolers to many concerts in the '70s, and their reactions ranged from "dull" to "boring." I believe that a major reason for this was the American system of announce-play-announce-play-announce-play. Why should a concert artist have to talk for three minutes before playing "Over The Rainbow?" Is it because the artist is lazy? or just feels he must conform to the "system."

So much for the question of medleys, but I have another issue with American

concerts as opposed to those of the British — that is the program selections. First, there are too many Broadway selections, and many are not very beautiful, like "Puttin' on The Ritz" or "Fascinating Rhythm." I have more than 45 LPs of theatre organ music, and not one of them contains "Beyond The Blue Horizon" or Jack Benny's beautiful theme, "Love in Bloom." Yet I found both of these lovely melodies on an Ernest Broadbent record that I ordered from Holland several years ago.

My second problem with programming is that there is a total, with the exception of Glenn Miller, disregard of the dance orchestras of the thirties and forties. Not one of my American LPs contains Russ Morgan's "So Tired," yet I found it recently on a Robert Wolfe LP. At the Chicago Convention in 1985, at the Aragon Ballroom, Hal Pearl played a medley of dance band themes and was roundly criticized for his pains. It was the best program I've heard in years! By the way, none of these themes appear on my American LPs or cassettes.

My final problem is with the fact that CW music, the older tunes, is omitted from the programs. "Beautiful Brown Eyes," "For The Good Times" and "You've Never Heard Me Cry" may not be "cool," yet Willie Nelson is not exactly penniless.

Again, I have the greatest admiration for all theatre organ artists. I tried once to learn to play the piano, but the penny kept falling off the back of my hand. Perhaps I should not criticize, but I want the theatre organ scene to keep going strong, and I believe the factors I have mentioned would increase the audiences. Yes, the young artists are there, but are they American or British? And will they, too, fall victim to the American system of talking almost as much as playing in a concert.

No, Mr. Shafter, there is no such thing as "too many medleys."

Sincerely,
Frederick W. Schamu
Liverpool, New York

Dear Editor:

I would like to thank all of the kind people who wrote to me and sent photos and information of Candi Carley-Roth. I really do appreciate your kindness and am very grateful. Thank you, all. Best wishes to all ATOS members.

Laurie Morley
North Yorkshire, England

Dear Editor:

The July/August "Nuggets" featured a 1925 column on Ralph Hibbard Brigham

which brought back memories worth sharing. If it weren't for Dr. Brigham's semi-annual playing of the four-manual Barton in Rockford's Coronado Theatre, its founder/owner Willard VanMeter would have sold the instrument as useless. If it weren't for his kind intervention, Mr. VanMeter would not have allowed me to have pre-opening weekend practice hours on it (paying only for the electricity used) so that I had a place to prepare for his lessons. In turn, I brought my high school friend, Roger Nyquist, down to play. We spent most of our weekends cleaning console and combination contacts and unloading debris from the chambers in order to have more ranks playable. We also discovered that some of the pipework had been stolen by local repairmen.

VanMeter was charmed with Roger's expert performances and our restorative cleaning. After weeks of discussion, Van Meter agreed to give Roger two Friday/Saturday organ interludes before the feature films during the summer of 1953. I worked as a uniformed usher, standing in the orchestra pit, making wig-wag signals for console elevation and descent. Meanwhile, my musical studies disintegrated. The very short-sighted Dr. Brigham was on the verge of discharging me as a hopeless tone-deaf pupil — all true.

My disgruntled teacher took in a Saturday movie on the third week, being thoroughly entertained by Roger's program. He emerged into the lobby and almost collided with me on his way out. "Well, Robert," he stated, "you play a lot better here than you do for me!" I didn't have the courage to correct him. Or to go back as a student.

Roger Nyquist's concert career is a busy one, and he has some new classical CDs available. I saw the proverbial "hand-writing on the wall" and have become a talented listener, record collector and ATOS member, and I have fond recall of a fine man who introduced another generation to the theatre organ.

Cordially,
Dr. A.R.L. Bell
California State University
Long Beach, California

Dear Editor:

It will soon be a year since my mother died. As people close to me are aware, she lived with me for the last 12 years of her life, the last three in declining health, mercifully from just advancing age. Consequently, I was only able to leave her for shorter and shorter periods of time, and

(continued...)

Letters To The Editor cont.

this, necessarily, played havoc with any appreciable concertizing.

(Contrary to the Welsh poet, she *did* "... go gently into that good night," and did *not* "... rage against the dying of the light." For this, I will be eternally grateful.)

Subsequently, Central Indiana invited me to participate in their 1990 Convention. Thank you, John Ferguson, Ken Double, Tim Needler and Central Indiana Chapter for welcoming me back "on the circuit."

Sincerely,
Barbara Sellers
Palatine, Illinois

(We are very pleased at the response to Tom DeLay's listing of original theatre organ installations. We are including in this issue some additions and deletions for those readers who wish to have as current a listing as possible. Ed.)

DELETE:

Missoula, Montana:

Wilma — Morton 3/10

Bound Brook, New Jersey:

Brook — Wurlitzer 2/4

Newark, New Jersey:

Casa Italiana — Wurlitzer 3/11

Indiana, Pennsylvania:

Manos — Morton 3/8

ADD:

Champaign, Illinois:

Virginia — Wurlitzer 2/7

New Bedford, Massachusetts:

New Zeiterion — Wurlitzer 2/8

Bogota, New Jersey:

Queen Anne — Marr & Colton 3/9

Newark, New Jersey:

Mosque — Griffith-Beech 4/15

(now Symphony Hall)

Wausau, Wisconsin:

Grand — Kilgen 3/6

Thanks to Bob Balfour, Wes Stilwagon & Tom Delay.

Dear ATOS Members:

The "Voice of Minneapolis" our magnificent 10,000 pipe organ needs your help now! We want to place this musical treasure in our new Minneapolis Convention Center. With the generosity of countless friends, we are within \$100,000 of making that a reality!

The Preservation project started with a goal of over \$1,000,000. We have made great progress. The City of Minneapolis pledged \$250,000 and our funds have been used to carefully dismantle the organ and provide safe storage. As additional funds were raised, we began design of the chambers in the large mezzanine area of Exhibition Hall #2. As we continued, we completed design and construction began. The organ chambers were completed in June of 1990. Now we are at our final phase — completion of restoration and reinstallation of this marvelous instrument and *we need you!* I am asking you to be part of this effort (or to give again, you who have helped before!) **PICK A PIPE AND PRESERVE IT TODAY.** Your gift of a pipe (or a set of pipes) will help bring this project to its successful conclusion.

Can we count on you? Please fill out the form below and mail it back with your check or pledge. Your gift will help preserve the best of our past for the future to enjoy!

With special thanks,
Donald M. Fraser, Mayor

PS: To finish, we only need 200 "special donors" at the \$1,000 level or more. All donors who give \$1,000 will have their names cited in appreciation in the new Center. A gift can be pledged over time and can be made in memory of a loved one or friend. Can you consider being one of our "special 200?"

Dear Mayor Fraser:

Yes, You can count on me to help preserve this magnificent musical treasure. Enclosed please find my check to preserve _____

pipe(s) at \$ _____ per pipe. I understand that I may fulfill my pledge over a three year period. Reminders will be sent.

ALL DONORS OF \$1,000 OR MORE WILL RECEIVE PERMANENT RECOGNITION IN THE NEW MINNEAPOLIS CONVENTION CENTER.

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4 ft.	2046	_____	\$ 200
2 ft.	1840	_____	\$ 150
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