

A T O E

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by

Judd Walton



The mailing of THEATRE ORGAN, Vol I., Nos. 3 & 4 at Vallejo, California on May 5, 1960 marked the culmination of an extremely frustrating period of several months in the lives of those who care about A.T.O.E. and its Official Journal. This period was punctuated by many letters from members, some offering help, others demanding their money back, and still others just wondering what was causing the delay which by now seemed to be the rule, not the exception. Near the last, there also were received letters from several of our members of long-standing who questioned even the existence of A.T.O.E., and who wondered if perhaps since all seemed lost the Chapters should just go their own separate ways.

To state that these questions and doubts were not justified would be both untrue and grossly unfair. Members not only do have this right, but something would have been seriously wrong if such inquiries were not forthcoming. It would have indicated a lack of interest that would have been fatal to A.T.O.E. under the circumstances!

That the magazine has been delayed, is without question. WHY??? An explanation is in order.

At the time A.T.O.E. decided to produce its own Journal, to be named THEATRE ORGAN, many enthusiastic members had indicated their earnest desire to be of assistance in such an activity. Based on these intentions, and on other factors such as costs, proposed schedules, past records of performance, etc., the decision was made. To make a long story short, we have discovered that such an arrangement just doesn't work. We have also learned that many, many other organizations have made the same unhappy discovery - - - some too late to recover, and others in time to rescue their projects from complete oblivion. We believe that A.T.O.E. falls into the latter category.

When your officers finally realized that an immediate offensive had to be launched, if all was not to be lost, it took exactly three weeks to reassemble the material, produce and mail the issue in question. These materials had been prepared and ready since before Christmas, 1959. Suffice it to say, it is out, and changes have been made which we believe will finally result in some semblance of a quarterly schedule.

We have turned to a paid staff. Mr. Phil Lockwood, a veteran newspaper man on the West coast, has been engaged as our Production Manager. We have also contracted with Wheeler Printing to make-up, print, and mail the magazine. Further, we have put the secretary-treasurer on a paid basis. Dr. Ralph M. Bell will continue to serve as our editor, and Bob Jacobus as our Assistant Editor.

In the opinion of those who have been keenly aware of our problems and acted to rectify them, this is the only possible solution to a problem that has plagued A.T.O.E. from the beginning. The costs involved can be met easily by a membership of 1000 for 1960. We purposely avoided a dues increase feeling that it was not justified on the basis of A.T.O.E.'s past performance. Either we will succeed or fail on the results of our efforts during 1960 at \$4.00 per member.

This is by no means to be construed as an excuse for the unfortunate situation which has resulted in the delays,....simply an explanation. Your president is fully aware of his responsibility for the success or failure of the organization, and is prepared to accept this responsibility without quarter. Thus, we again embark with the ship refitted....this time we either shall make port and deliver the cargo... or we will founder and sink. All aboard!

This issue of THEATRE ORGAN has been mailed to all 1960 members, to all 1959 members who have not yet renewed their dues for 1960, and also to all former members. Assuming that all of our 1959 members will renew their membership for 1960, mailing this issue in advance of receipt of the four dollar dues will save the staff many hours of clerical work. In the event that dues for 1960 are not received prior to the mailing of the next issue, (Vol. II, No. 2) it will, of course, be necessary to remove your name from the mailing list. To those former members, this is an invitation to again join A.T.O.E. This issue is the first of four that 1960 members will receive, and if you should decline our invitation to join, please consider this issue a gift from all of us in A.T.O.E.. Let's not only achieve a goal of 1,000 members, but a Chapter organized in every section of the country!