



Headquarters
100 WEST 54th Street
New York City

To raise the standard of organ playing in the theatre and to establish a recognized standard in the profession.

To encourage and assist in the construction of adequate theatre organs.

To secure for the theatre organist recognition commensurate with the knowledge and proficiency required in his profession.

To promote mutual acquaintance and social intercourse amongst theatre organists and to derive benefit from exchange of ideas.

HISTORY

In the early Spring of the year 1921, a group of twelve prominent theatre organists of Greater New York met at the Magna Chordia studios, 10 East 44th Street, New York, to discuss plans for an organization exclusively for organists in motion picture and other theatres. It was felt that the phenomenal growth of the picture industry and its musical possibilities both as to quality and quantity, also the clearly defined tendency towards the creation of a new style of organ playing, made it imperative to form an organization where the picture organist would be able to progress to a worthy position in the realm of good organ music unhampered by the traditions of organ playing in a field entirely separated from the theatrical. There is even greater need for such an organization than in the case of the church and concert organist, as the theatre organist has little opportunity for publicity, or to present his cause to the public, the world at large knowing little of the preparation required to become a successful picture player. After carefully canvassing the field nearly twenty-five organists known to be presenting a style of work sufficiently artistic to conform to the standard desired were asked as charter members to assist in founding the S. T. O., and in the month of May, 1921, the Society was organized with Mr. John Hammond as its first President. Enthusiastic meetings were held each month, aims and objects were clearly defined, Com-

mittees put to work, a Constitution and By-Laws, allowing for the forming of Chapters in other cities were adopted. Of course, mistakes were made and difficulties encountered, yet the S. T. O. begins the year 1923 with a New York membership of more than 60.

AIMS AND OBJECTS

It is earnestly to be desired that the S. T. O. may act as a clearing-house for the ideas of the theatre organist, and to that end the Society will further every idea which will improve his status as an organist, enlarge his sphere of usefulness, increase his own desire and that of his audience for better music, and contribute to the greater knowledge and appreciation of his efforts. The Society desires to combine within itself for the theatre organist, the aims of the two contemporary national bodies of organists, one of which is academic, the other educational and social.

The Society will seek to overcome the difficulties caused by the theatre organists' present isolated position, and will, through mutual acquaintance and the opportunity for the exchange of ideas, resulting from business meetings and social affairs, assist the member to develop his individuality in order that he may more forcibly impress others. The cumulative effect of any worthy idea submitted which may be acted upon collectively must undoubtedly react to the benefit of each member individually.

EXAMINATION

Since picture accompaniment is a new phase of organ playing with no traditions or literature, the examination presents in concrete and practical form an actual test of the daily requirements of good theatre playing and of the course of training which should be pursued, at the same time setting a standard or criterion by which the ability of the player should be judged. A theatre organist needs a sound musical training under all conditions; if he improvises it is essential to avoid the aimless wanderings so often heard; if he plays a score he must do a great deal of transcribing, especially of orchestral music, which requires not only organ technique but knowledge of sight reading, transposition, harmony and orchestration. The Board of Five Examiners is made up of theatre organists conspicuous not only for their performances in the leading theatres in New York City, but also for their theoretical knowledge as proven by academic standing in other musical organizations. The S. T. O. is greatly indebted to the first Examining Board with Professor Firmin Swinnen as Chairman for the preparation of the present examination. In order that a large academic body of theatre organists may be created examinations are held three times yearly in New York City.

**ACADEMIC MEMBERSHIP
SOCIETY OF THEATRE ORGANISTS**

100 West 54th Street
New York City

*I, _____, hereby
declare my intention to appear for the next
examination of the Society of Theatre
Organists and enclose \$10.00 for examina-
tion fee. In case of failure to pass said ex-
amination the fee of \$10.00 will not be
returned to me, but I will be permitted
without further expense to appear at subse-
quent examinations during one year.*

EXAMINATION

AND

RECORD OF MARKS

PART 1.

1. Organ Solo

- A. Organ Solo by J. S. Bach
(with Pedal Obligato).....10.....
- B. Choice of any number
suitable for organ solo
use in Theatre10.....

**2. Improvise upon given
Theme20.....**

3. Sight Reading

- A. Organ Trio 5.....
- B. Condensed 3-line Orches-
tral Score 5.....
- C. Harmonize a given mel-
ody 5.....

Total

55

PART 2. (Play suitable numbers for:—)

- 1. Scenic 5.....
- 2. Review
 - A. 5.....
 - B. 5.....
- 3. Feature Picture
 - A. 4.....
 - B. 4.....
 - C. 4.....
 - D. 4.....
 - E. 4.....
- 4. Comedy
 - A. 5.....
 - B. 5.....

Total

45.....

In order to pass, the award must be a total
of not less than 40 points for the first part
and 30 points for part two.

PAST ACTIVITIES

The Society has met regularly at business
meetings once each month since its inception.
Open meetings where theatre organists, not
members of the Society, are invited to pre-
sent their views have been held several times
each year. Luncheons and after theatre ban-
quets with addresses by prominent speakers,
including also a reception to Monsieur Marcel
Dupré upon his arrival in New York have
been given. The Organ Committee has acted
upon several specifications presented by thea-
tre owners and is represented upon the Com-
mittee of Reference of the N. A. O. A Com-
mittee of the S. T. O. appeared before the
Theatre Owners Chamber of Commerce for

the purpose of discussing practice organs and other problems. The S. T. O. was represented at the convention of the National Association of Organists in Philadelphia by Mr. John Hammond and Mr. Frank S. Adams. A demonstration by Mr. Hammond and Mr. Needham was given before the Jersey Chapter of the N. A. O. at the Bellevue Theatre, Montclair, N. J. The movement for better organ parts for motion picture use, sponsored in various articles by Robert Berentsen, has resulted in the new SOLORCHESTRA parts arranged by Mr. G. W. Needham for the firm of Carl Fischer. A series of demonstrations of the ideal musical accompaniment to pictures was begun on the splendid Wanamaker organ Music Week 1922, in conjunction with the Organ Festival arranged under the auspices of the N. A. O.

The Society takes great pride in the achievement represented in the public demonstrations at Wanamakers, given through the kindness of Dr. Alexander Russell, Concert Director, one of the Honorary Members of the Society, presented in ideal surroundings segregated from commercial influences on a large, modern organ which has greater variety of color and dynamics than is possible with the unified system of organ. The program consists of an organ solo, a scenic and comedy picture, a feature film—an elaborate production such as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and Sherlock Holmes. Complete program notes of the musical score are printed and an address by the President gives information

regarding the program and the work of the theatre organist. The interest aroused and the success of these presentations are proven by the large number of standees at each performance.

PRESENT ACTIVITIES

Business meetings of the Board of Trustees are held once each month. All members are invited to attend and express their views. Activities this season include luncheon in September—after theatre Hallowe'en party in October—annual meeting and election in December—luncheon with address by Dr. Alexander Russell, and second Wanamaker demonstration in January—examination and after theatre Valentine party in February—third Wanamaker demonstration in March—concert and picture demonstration by Dr. M. Mauro-Cotone at the Capitol Theatre, April Fool's party and after theatre banquet and address by Mr. John Hammond in April—Fourth Wanamaker demonstration Music Week and final social affair before activities cease for the summer in May.

Stories and articles regarding the Society appear regularly in musical papers, such as the Musical Courier and Musical America; trade papers, such as the Bill Board, and the Exhibitors' Trade Review; and the organ magazines, American Organist, Diapason and New Music Review. Advance notices and write-ups appear regularly on the church page of the New York Evening Post and in other dailies in connection with the Wanamaker demonstrations. Since January, 1922, the

American Organist has been the official organ of the Society. All news of the Society and articles by members on topics of interest are published in this magazine.

MEMBERSHIP

There are four classes of members in the S. T. O.

First—Honorary Members are those other than theatre organists who have contributed conspicuously towards furthering the aims of the Society. The following have accepted honorary membership in our Society:

Monsieur Marcel Dupré

Dr. Alexander Russell

Mr. S. L. Rothapfel

Dr. Hugo Riesenfeld

Mr. Gustav F. Dohring

Second—The founders are those whose names appear upon the minutes of the meeting at which the Society of Theatre Organists was organized. They are entitled to all the privileges of the Society.

Third—Academic Members are those who having joined the Society as Associate Members have successfully passed the examination. They are entitled to all the privileges of the Society.

Fourth—Associate Members are those theatre organists who have been accepted by the society as non-academic members. They may not hold office and can only vote for representatives at large to the Board of Trustees, but have all other privileges.

Theatre organists applying for associate membership must fill out the following appli-

cation blank showing actual theatre experience and furnish the names of three members of the Society as references.

The procedure for organists outside of New York City is the same except that the references may be men of known standing not members of the S. T. O.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP SOCIETY OF THEATRE ORGANISTS

100 West 54th Street
New York City

I, _____, hereby apply for membership in the SOCIETY OF THEATRE ORGANISTS, and enclose five dollars (\$5) for annual dues which includes subscription to the official magazine, The American Organist. The \$5 to be returned to me in case I am not accepted.

Name

Address

Degree or Diploma (if any)

Other Music Activities

Studied Organ with

Other Music Studies

Theatre Experience

1.

2.

3.

Are you or have you been a member of the

A. F. of M.

References:

1.

2.

3.

ORGANIZATION

All business of the S. T. O. is conducted by a Board of nine (9) Trustees, elected by the members at the annual meeting in December and holding office for one year.

Members of the Examining Board are appointed by the Executive Board to hold office for five years, one new member being appointed each year, the senior member acting as Chairman.

All Committees are appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Board.

OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR 1923

President..... Robert Berentsen
Vice President..... Frank S. Adams
Recording Secretary..... J. Van Cleft Cooper
Corresponding Secretary.. Raymond Willever
Treasurer..... Sigmund Krumgold

Members at Large—Academic

Miss Vera Kitchener
Harold Smith

Members at Large—Associate

Dr. M. Mauro-Cottone
Fred M. Smith

EXAMINING BOARD

Edward Napier, Harold O. Smith, Walter Wild,
George C. Crook and Howard Murphy

PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

Chairman, Frank S. Adams

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chairman, Walter Wild

ORGAN COMMITTEE

Chairman, George C. Crook

ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE

Miss Ruth Barrett

LIBRARIAN

G. W. Needham