



# AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

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**Chairperson, Young Theatre Organist Competition**

## 2009 YOUNG THEATRE ORGANIST COMPETITION RULES AND GUIDELINES (Revised September 2008)

The American Theatre Organ Society is pleased to announce its Young Theatre Organist Competition for 2009. This competition began in 1985 and has helped launch the careers of many of the professional theatre organists who perform on the international circuit today. The great success of the Competition makes it one of the flagship programs that ATOS sponsors.

The competition is open to amateur young organists between the ages of 13 and 24. Successful competitors can win up to \$1,500.00 in prizes and will be given the opportunity to perform live before national ATOS convention audiences. Many important changes to the competition have been introduced in the last two years, so **please read these rules and guidelines carefully.**

## COMPETITION RULES

### **Competition Eligibility**

1. The Young Theatre Organist Competition ("Competition") is open to amateur young organists between the ages of 13 and 24 as of July 1, 2009. This is a contest for amateur theatre organists only. For the purposes of the Competition, an entrant will be considered an amateur unless he/she has done any of the following:

- (a) Appeared as a featured organist at any ATOS convention other than in connection with a competition or contest sponsored by ATOS;
- (b) Received compensation in the aggregate for any organ performance(s) in a total amount greater than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) during any one calendar year, excluding any prize money received from organ competitions and/or scholarships. Playing the organ for services in a liturgical setting does not constitute an "organ performance" under these rules;
- (c) Sold or offered for sale to the general public organ recordings of his or her playing for the organist's financial benefit; OR
- (d) Performed or performs regularly on the theatre organ for pay before the general public in any restaurant, pizza parlor, theatre, or other public entertainment venue.

If your particular situation requires clarification, please contact the Competition Committee Chairperson.

2. Entrants who are ATOS members and affiliated with an ATOS chapter may be sponsored by their local chapter. There is no limit to the number of entrants an ATOS chapter may sponsor. Some ATOS chapters have held local competitions as a way of bringing publicity to the chapter's activities, but this is by no means a prerequisite to sponsoring an entrant in the Young Theatre Organist Competition. Each chapter is encouraged to sponsor as many entrants as possible.

3. Entrants who are not members of ATOS, or who are ATOS members but unaffiliated with an ATOS chapter may enter the competition as entrants "at large."

4. Any previous Overall Winner of the Competition is ineligible to re-enter the Competition again. However, any entrant who was previously selected as a winner of the Junior, Intermediate, or Senior division under the rules in effect prior to 2007 remains eligible to compete.

5. All Competition materials must be sent to the Competition Chairperson and postmarked no later than **Wednesday, April 1, 2009**. It is the sole responsibility of the entrant to ensure and verify that all materials are received by the Competition Chairperson by the deadline.

### **Competition Entry Requirements**

6. The Competition takes place in two stages. In the first stage, each entrant submits a recording of his/her performance as outlined below. Assuming there are sufficient entries to allow for a fair competition, up to three (3) finalists will be selected from among all entrants, and those finalists will compete in the second stage of the Competition. The second stage of the competition entails a live public performance during the next scheduled annual ATOS convention. An Overall Winner will be selected from the three finalists based on that live performance.

7. Entry recordings for the first stage of the Competition must be submitted on compact disc (CD), mini-disc (MD-80), DVD, or analog cassette tape. Submission of the entrant's recording on digital media is preferred, but not required. The entrant's name and recording date must be clearly written or printed on the face of the recording or on the recording label. Each selection may be placed in a separate track if using digital media. If using analog tape or other continuous media, the entrant should leave a 30-second break between selections to assist in the reproduction of the entry for distribution to the judges.

8. The materials submitted to the Competition Committee must contain the certification found in the Young Theatre Organist Competition Application & Certification Form. In the case of an entrant sponsored by an ATOS chapter, the recording must be certified by the chapter President or other officer (e.g., Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer). In the case of an entrant "at large", the recording must be certified by an ATOS member at least 18 years of age who is not related to the entrant and who does not live in the same household as the entrant.

9. The following selections must be recorded by the entrant in the order given. In all cases, the titles and composers of the selections played must be provided. In addition, the arrangement source (i.e. the artist, another organist/musician, an instructor's arrangement or printed arrangement) must be indicated.

- A. **UP-TEMPO** – an up-tempo number or rhythmic selection that could be used as an opening number in a program. These works are also often referred to as "console-risers." The up-tempo selection may not exceed five (5) minutes in length.
- B. **BALLAD** – a lyric composition by composers such as George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Richard Rodgers, Irving Berlin, or from other composers of ballads suitable to be performed on the theatre organ. The ballad may not exceed seven (7) minutes in length.
- C. **MEDLEY** – a medley containing at least three, but no more than five songs based on a common theme or musical thread such as music from a single (1) musical, (2) movie, (3)

major musical work, or (4) composer. The medley may not be less than five (5) minutes and may not exceed ten (10) minutes in length.

- D. **CLASSICAL WORK or TRANSCRIPTION** - a selection from classical organ literature or a transcription of an orchestral or classical piano work. The classical work or transcription may not exceed seven (7) minutes in length.

10. The entrant's performance for the Competition must be played on a theatre pipe organ. The organ, however, need not be in a theatre.

11. The entrant's recording may **not** (a) feature automatic rhythm units, such as those found on some pizza parlor organs; (b) make use of features such as overdubbing and/or multi-tracking; OR (c) be edited, spliced, or digitally enhanced or altered in any way.

12. A picture of each entrant and a résumé of his/her background should be sent with the competition entry materials to the Competition Chairperson. The résumé should not exceed 300 words. This material will be used to feature all entrants in a forthcoming article in the ATOS Theatre Organ Journal and will be published on the ATOS website.

13. The entrant's recording will be sent to the ATOS Archives as a permanent record of the entrant's program and entry in the Competition.

14. Submission of recordings, printed material, photographs, and any other material to ATOS in connection with the Competition constitutes an irrevocable worldwide license for ATOS to distribute, copy, and/or otherwise use that material in connection with the activities of ATOS.

### **Adjudication Criteria**

15. Each entrant's recording will be duplicated and distributed to several judges knowledgeable in the art of theatre organ playing and performance. The judges will not know who submitted the recording or who the entrant is. The judges, however, will be notified of the size of the organ and the selections played. Recordings will also be identified by a unique anonymous number assigned by the Competition Committee.

16. The judges will review each of the entries and will evaluate the entrant's performance based on the following criteria:

**Accuracy and clarity** – how cleanly and accurately the entrant plays each of the works

**Registrations** – the appropriateness and variety the entrant achieves in his/her choice of registrations for each of the works

**Phrasing and dynamics** – how well the entrant pays attention to the phrasing of each work, and how well the entrant utilizes the dynamic range of the instrument

**Use Of Theatre Organ Stylings And Resources** – how well the entrant incorporates theatre organ stylings and utilizes the resources of the instrument. This category also includes the extent to which the entrant shows originality in his or her arrangements.

**Musicality** – the overall musical sensitivity to each of the works the entrant performs.

17. The judges will select up to three finalists from among all the entrants. In the event that there are insufficient entries in the Competition to allow for a fair competition, the Competition Committee shall have the discretion to determine the number of finalists for that year's Competition. The Competition Committee reserves the right to determine if an entry is of a high enough standard to win the Competition in a given year.

18. The judges' decisions will be final. The identity of the judges will not be disclosed until after the Competition has ended.

### **Competition Prizes**

19. Each of the finalists will receive an honorarium of five hundred dollars (USD \$500.00). ATOS will also pay for the finalists to attend the next annual ATOS convention, where they will perform in the Young Theatre Organist Competition concert. Any finalist who is under the age of 18 as of the beginning date of the annual convention must be accompanied by an adult.

20. Any ATOS chapter that sponsors an entrant in the Competition who is selected to be a finalist shall receive an honorarium of \$250.00. Any ATOS chapter that sponsors the finalist who is selected as the Overall Winner shall receive an additional honorarium of \$250.00.

21. ATOS will cover the following expenses for any finalist or Overall Winner brought to an ATOS convention: (1) convention registration fee; (2) banquet; (3) jam session(s), (4) hotel costs at convention rates for the nights the convention is in session; (5) lowest economy round-trip airfare or other transportation from the entrant's residence to and from the convention. ATOS does not cover expenses relating to preglow and afterglow activities (if any), meals, personal or incidental expenses, or expenses for an adult supervisor for candidates under the age 18, or any other expense not specified above. An adult supervisor may, however, share the hotel room paid for by ATOS.

22. Each finalist will have his/her name, picture, and/or résumé published on the ATOS website and in the Journal. Digital copies of the finalists' recordings submitted for the competition may also be posted on the ATOS website.

23. If a finalist is not an ATOS member, ATOS will provide the finalist a complimentary one-year membership. If a finalist is an ATOS member, ATOS will provide the finalist a complimentary one-year extension of his/her membership.

24. An Overall Winner will be selected from among the finalists by anonymous judges who will evaluate the finalists' live performances during the Young Organist Competition concert at the convention. The result will be announced at the conclusion of the concert. The Overall Winner will receive an additional honorarium of one thousand dollars (USD \$1,000.00). ATOS will also pay for the Overall Winner to attend the following year's annual convention at which he/she will perform a concert.

### **Questions?**

25. Please feel free to contact the Competition Committee Chairperson if you have any questions or need any additional information. The Chairperson, judges, and all involved in this program want this to be a truly enjoyable experience and will do everything reasonably possible to ensure that this goal is met!

## ***ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS***

The following suggestions are not mandatory, but are offered in order to help each applicant get the most out of his/her competition experience:

1. *It has been noted in past competitions that not enough attention has been given to the task of making the recording. For example, some performances are overshadowed by noises and other distractions in the facility. These include talking, traffic or building construction noise. These should be minimized to ensure that the recording is of the highest quality achievable.*

2. *A high quality recorder, microphones, and media should be used for the recording if possible. If using cassette tape, "Metal" or "high bias" tapes have superior qualities over normal tapes and tend to result in better recordings.*

3. *If using a cassette recorder, make sure the recorder's controls are set to match the type of media being used. As an example, if using cassette tape, insure that the setting matches the tape*

type, (i.e. Normal, FeCr, Cro2, Metal, etc.) Some recorders require more complicated bias and equalization adjustments.

4. If possible, avoid battery-operated recorders, as the batteries could be weak and affect the speed and quality of the recording. If you must use batteries, use fresh ones!

5. Recording level is extremely important. Automatic level adjusting recorders should generally be avoided since they don't give the best representation of dynamic level changes. Levels for recording should be adjusted carefully. A good technique would be to set the maximum level of the recorder (below the distortion point) corresponding to the loudest sound to be played on the organ. Note this level and leave it constant throughout the program.

6. When the recording is stopped, do not abruptly stop the recording with the pause or stop button. Make sure that the sound being reverberated has ended, then decrease the recording volume to zero, advance the recording approximately 5-10 seconds, then stop the recorder.

7. Microphone placement is extremely important and is, of course, dependent upon the location of the organ in a theatre, auditorium, home, etc. As a general rule, microphones should be aimed toward the source of the sound.

8. Make sure that the microphones are not placed near air-conditioning ducts or other noise producing things in the facility. This includes activity around the recording machine. People should not be near the microphones.

9. The submitted recording need not be the original master but should be a good copy. If the original is sent in, it would be a good idea to retain a copy in case the original is lost in the mail or otherwise damaged in transit.

10. It is preferable not to include announcements, talking, and/or applause on the recording. The recording should represent only the music of the entrant.

11. Use good packaging materials when submitting your recording. The entry should be in the original plastic container. Padded mailing envelopes usually protect tapes and disks reasonably well.

12. Due to the unknown delivery time for "media mail", it is **highly recommended** that your entry be sent First Class, Priority Mail, Express Mail, etc. Tracking of your entry is **highly recommended** for verification of delivery time.

**DON'T FORGET:** All materials must be sent to the Competition Chairperson postmarked no later than **Wednesday, April 1, 2009!**

Please mail all materials to R. Jelani Eddington, 1706 W. Palamino Dr., Racine, WI 53402