



APOBA Principles Concerning the Use of Electronically Generated Sounds
adopted March 2000

The pipe organ is a musical instrument with a long and distinguished history. It has had many design styles, actions, and wind systems; it has always used organ pipes as its basic sound source. The sound of the organ pipe distinguishes it from all other musical instruments. Beginning in 1935, there have been designed and marketed a succession of inexpensive substitutes for the pipe organ using varied forms of electronic technology. Pipe organ builders, true to their craft and to their history, clearly distanced themselves from these substitutes. The American Guild of Organists both officially and in practice has supported this position.

As an organization of pipe organ builders, we hold to the following principles regarding electronic sounds in pipe organs carrying an APOBA member's nameplate:

1. The members of APOBA do not favor the practice of replacing organ pipes with electronic substitute sounds. We do not find the substitution of electronic sounds for true pipe sounds to be an improvement of the pipe organ.
2. APOBA recognizes and accepts, however, the occasional use of the following electronic sounds in a pipe organ:
 - A. 32' and 16' Pedal Stops.
 - B. Percussion Effects. Non-pipe sounds in the organ such as chimes, harp, celesta, and others were popular for effects in orchestral and theatre organs. They are occasionally requested by churches or their agents. They have infrequent use in the literature for organ and have little or no effect on the basic pipe organ.
 - C. MIDI Interface. The MIDI interface makes non-pipe sounds from electronic sound sources playable on the pipe organ keyboard. It has a utility in those churches that use music composed for synthesizers and sound modules in addition to the traditional music for pipe organs.
3. APOBA considers use of electronic sounds beyond those specifically listed in Item 2 to be in violation of the principles set forth in this position paper.
4. APOBA considers it a dishonest practice to fail to identify which sound sources are electronically generated and which are pipes. Therefore, electronically generated sounds should be identified in all stop lists in both promotion and in contracts.
5. It is the intention of APOBA to limit our membership to firms that devote their work to pipe organ building. It is the intention of APOBA to continue to be an association of pipe organ builders. APOBA does not welcome membership of firms that build electronic organs, combination electronic/pipe organs, or who do not follow the principles set forth in this position paper.