

Your Letters... Your Opinions... Your Column...



# Reader's Review

**Editor Grant Neal**  
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Thank you for the September issue of O & KC as usual always on time with my regular mail. Having read Graham Hardings initial letter (August) and also having read the two replies from readers, Jim Porter, Margate and Bill (Yahoo) Simpson, I thought I would add my contribution to the 'plight' of Graham Harding. So here goes:-

Graham, it is now twenty-one years since I began learning to play the electronic organ. 1985 to be precise. Like yourself, I was unable to read music never mind able to play the instrument that has given me an enormous amount of pleasure for the past twenty-one years. At that time (1985) I didn't know middle C from the top C or the names of the other notes. As for the black notes, I didn't have a clue as to what they were, all I knew at that time is that these black notes were to be played as they were obviously part of the keyboard. But how were they to fit into my learning to play since I was learning the white (natural) notes at first. Although I did dabble with the black notes, they simply did not sound right to my ear. My interest in learning to play was not thwarted by those seemingly awkward black notes. So I carried on learning to read music and trying to play my lovely instrument. I would not be put off by my inability (at that time) to read music and trying to play the organ. It was all daily practice, day after day, week after week, month after month. At that time it was all an uphill grind, with me moaning and groaning (literally).

Then I came across a copy of Keyboard Cavalcade in 1987 (my playing was improving slightly) and on scanning the pages I was aware of the wealth of musical knowledge within it's pages, thanks to those that share their knowledge of music with us novice types, the ever faithful Peter Hayward (thanks to Peter 'Happy Music' Hayward for all those years) spring to mind. I could write twenty more pages on the subject, but to finalise my point to you, I say this, by giving up O & KC because you are unable to read music, you will be missing out on a most enjoyable and therapeutic hobby. I still do not play well but I have improved a great deal over the years. For the past nine years I have had the pleasure of owning a nice 1982 Elka E49 from which I derive an enormous amount of pleasure. So Graham, change your mind. Press on with learning to read music. It pays dividends in the end.

*Robin Casey, W Sussex*



When I read in the August magazine that Graham Harding was not renewing his membership, I was not surprised because I agree with him that there is never anything in the magazine to get people started.

The average age of the members must be seventy, and most of them have been playing for years and do not require more and more scales and theory explanations. They want information about new products even though many of them are happy with what they have got, and interesting articles from not only professionals but ordi-

nary members who have interesting stories to tell how they started and give encouragement to non players to have a go.

At the festivals, it would also be a good idea, to ask for volunteers to go on stage and talk about how they started and the problems they had instead of Masterclasses.

When we started to go to festivals about twenty years ago, they were bursting at the seams and you could go to a large number of festivals. Now we only have a few and K.C's is still going, but for how long?

Something has to be done to encourage the younger generation to get interested in playing music or in a few years time there will be no festivals and no point in being a professional artist because there will not only be no festivals but no organ societies.

Technics were so convinced that the organ era has gone that they have stopped making instruments. Yamaha continue with their keyboards, but I for one, am not interested in keyboards and I have tried them nearly all and unless you use the rhythm unit and extra amplification they cannot compete with the organs.

When I explained my Digital Method to learn music at Blackpool, I was surprised at the interest there was. People could not believe it was possible to play in a very short time the Top Line of every piece of music ever written by using numbers and then adding simple chords, and you didn't have to know anything about conventional music.

I've had my say, but something different has to be tried to get more people playing. Please pass on the enclosed envelope to Graham Harding it contains a set of instructions on how to start to play digital music and several starter books, let's see how he gets on.

*Len Steele, Stockport.*



I read Colin Gaskells letter in the October issue and do agree with quite a few issues he raises.

Our local society, Nene Valley Organ Club, prepares a concert report after each show and this is printed in the next available newsletter. Looking back over several years' reports it is easy to pick out that the repertoire of quite a lot of organists which does not seem to have changed from show to show. The tunes and arrangements are the same and there is very little in the way of 'new material' with which to captivate the interests of listeners like me for instance.

I used to give regular organ concerts myself, so perhaps I am much more critical (as well as remembering what they played the last time), but one thing was clear: you can only get the audiences attention by learning and playing something completely different and pieces of music which no other performer plays.

I used to go to all the monthly concerts but became bored with the same old tunes being performed time after time. I don't have too much respect for organists who play the entire show with music always in front of them. Organists take note .... learn something different and memorise it.

*Andrew Mackay, Northampton.*



Fred Colbert (Oct issue) could do no better than follow some of the greats for his piano bass line. Chopin for example, places the 'F' for example under the bottom line of the staff followed by the triad F A C twice in 3/4 time and as Fred gets more daring the third beat could become the first inversion and son on.

Similarly in 4/4 time the first beat of the bar, say 'F' followed by F A C - 3rd beat the 5th 'C' followed by the first inversion A C F. I think that should keep him busy for the next month or two.

*Eric Cornfield, e-mail*



Is there anyone in the Newcastle Upon Tyne area who owns a KN7000 that can contact me to discuss playing the instrument. I'm interested in what the instrument can do and getting the best out of it. If anyone's interested please contact me.

*Mr Ince on 0191 292 1548.*



As the owner of an excellent Roland G70, I would like to share experiences with other G70 owners, and in so doing increase my enjoyment. I would like to set up a 'user group' within which members could both contribute and receive information over a wide range of use of the machine. Exchanging recordings, setups, user programs etc, could be provided for both by post and e-mail. If anyone is interested please contact me on Tel: 01803 390717.

*Ron Morris, Devon*



I was pleased to see another article by Trevor Brown in the November issue of K.C., and I like 'Enchanted Island. These music articles are what I, personally, need in the magazine, something challenging and to inspire me to practice more often. Can I ask, though, if the correct fingering could be included, especially for the left hand?

*Sue King, Milton Keynes.*



Thankyou very much for a wonderful week at Pakefield. We enjoyed every concert, some we wish had more time to play and it was lovely to see Tony Pegler and Martin Orbidans. The stage looked good each day and the lighting given top marks. We were very happy with our chalet and the afternoon at Cotton Museum was very interesting - I would have missed my lunch to have had more time there and Brian gave a lovely concert.

The weather was lovely and the food very good with so much choice and every one so friendly.

*Hilda Wright & Jeanette Adams, Doncaster*



A Verse To Keyboards  
Organs are Dead, the salesman said  
A keyboard is what you need instead

So my organ sadly went, along with many a pound and I'm now in a world where intros an endings abound

I've got auto this and auto that  
But musical feeling has fallen flat

My keyboards lost its value in the twinkling of an eye  
My hope of automatic pleasure was just pie in the sky  
So what's the moral of all this strife?

Well, keyboards are for Christmas, organs are for life!

*Ken Litherland, Lancs*



I have a friend living in Brightlingsea who has a lovely pianola with some music rolls. It is about 100 years old and in excellent condition and working order.

My friend is 84 years old, it was his mother who used to play it and he is interested in finding a suitable music museum which would like to have the instrument.

I would therefore be very grateful if you could advise me about finding a museum which I could contact, with a view to finding a worthy home for this historical instrument.

*R Hook, Wivenhoe.*

**ED.** There are a few museums around the country Cotton in Lowestoft, St Albans Mechanical museum spring to mind, but if there's a Cavalcadian out there who can provide an answer contact Mr Hook at Tideways, Harvey Road, Wivenhoe, Essex, CO7 9LH

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