

## Pipe Organs Versus Electronic Organs

The time will come when your Music and Worship Committee is face to face with the responsibility of acquiring a new musical instrument for your institution. With that responsibility, will come the choice between acquiring an electronic organ or a fine pipe organ with centuries of tradition behind it. At first glance, the case for an electronic organ may seem strong; but after some informed investigation, it will become clear that it is no long-term competitor for the pipe organ.

(The following points are worth consideration):

### "Unification "

Electronic organs make use of the principle of unification, carrying it, however, much too far. In a dollar for dollar comparison, the electronics have fewer independent tone sources than equivalent pipe organs. This deficiency becomes painfully obvious when comparing the musical effect of various stop combinations with those of a Milnar pipe organ. While some electronic stops may not be objectionable, the "chorus" effect result when several appropriate stops are combined is noticeably deficient. This chorus effect in pipe organs is a matter of natural acoustic synthesis and blending of sounds. This effect is necessary to adequately support congregational singing, accompany choirs and soloists and to produce the clarity and breadth of tone needed for the works of the great organ composers.

### "A Sound Reason "

The sound of an electronic organ is "synthetic", clashing with the "natural" sound of the human voice. Of necessity, electronically generated tones must be amplified and broadcast through loudspeakers, which tends to make the resulting sound blatant and the projection highly directional rather than naturally diffusing throughout a building. This situation may be improved by adding numerous speakers, but this adds to the cost of the electronic and is infrequently done. The pipe organ solves this by having a separate pipe for each pitch, making possible a degree of diffusion and blend that just does not occur with an electronic.

### "Individual Design "

While the electronic organ for a certain church is a production line model with few variables, each pipe organ built by Milnar is an individual instrument custom designed and built for a particular place, tailored to the acoustical situation and music program of that particular church.

### "A Sound Investment "

Any fine pipe organ, regardless of size, should be considered as a permanent investment which a church can look forward to enjoying from one generation to the next. With a Milnar pipe organ, the only

servicing involved is an annual or semi-annual tuning visit. Because of the use of electro-mechanical note valves, instead of membrane leather valves. Only a nominal amount of service should be required for many decades. On the other hand, electronics seem to require little tuning, but experience shows that after a few years of use, deterioration begins and service calls become more frequent, more expensive and more complex. In fact, a point is frequently reached after a number of years at which some parts are no longer available. The electronic organ becomes a victim of planned obsolescence at a time that the pipe organ is merely mellowing into maturity.