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Carson J. Robison Correspondence

Carson J. Robison, the Cowboy Radio Singer,
1903-1988

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Letter, 1955 August 2, from Stanley Adams to Members

Stanley Adams

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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF COMPOSERS, AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS
575 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK 22, N. Y.



August 22, 1955
No. . . . 6691

TO ALL MEMBERS:

From time to time we have inquiries about the writer and publisher distribution systems. Enclosed are statements of your respective systems (writer or publisher) which incorporate any changes since the last mailing to you.

If you are not clear in your mind about the system of distribution, will you please take the time necessary to read the enclosed memorandum. If, after you have read it, there are any specific questions that you may have, please address those questions to this office so that we may endeavor to give you the facts you wish to know about your Society.

Now, a word about the Society's voting system. As you know, the Articles of Association, which were adopted by vote of the entire membership, provide that voting rights shall be in proportion to each member's contribution to the Society's repertory as reflected by the performance of his works surveyed by the Society. No attempt is made to survey all performances because that would involve a prohibitive expense. The survey system is constantly being improved and enlarged, and we are always happy to receive suggestions as to how this can be accomplished while safeguarding the accuracy of the survey and keeping expenses down to a minimum.

To return to the voting system, as we said, the voting rights of a member are determined by the success of his catalogue. Nothing could be more democratic. No one can earn the right to vote except to the extent that his works win public acceptance. It must be remembered that the Society's primary function is its clearing-house aspect. Members receive the royalties collected through this clearing house primarily on the basis of the use of their works by those who obtain licenses through the facilities which the Society affords. The expense of maintaining this clearing house is borne in like proportion. Thus it is that a member's works determine the extent of his participation in the Society's receipts and in the management of this clearing house.

The present policy of the Society is one which provides for liberal admission to membership. With a Society of our large proportions and with the vast number of public performances of the works of our members, it is impossible for each member to conduct his own licensing. One of the main functions of the Board of Directors is to arrange for such licensing and to apportion the distributions. The members have the right to insist that their voice in the selection of those who manage their enterprise shall be in proportion to each member's contribution. If any member is dissatisfied with his participation in the Society, he can enlarge that participation only by writing or publishing more successful musical works. Some have a greater gift in that respect than others, but it is only fair that we recognize that each shall have a participation in the Society's affairs that is determined by no other factor than the member's contribution to the Society's repertory.

of musical works.

Incidentally, if the votes for the members of the Board of Directors at the last annual election had been tabulated on the basis of each member's vote counting as a unit—instead of on the weighted vote basis—the results would have been exactly the same. If there are those who would make it appear that the members of the Society who have the larger catalogues are inclined to vote for the members of the Board of Directors who do not have the support of the membership-at-large—and there will always be some among us who question everybody's motives—the results of the last election should set this matter at rest once and for all.

When I became President of the Society, I found it in a very healthy condition. The many wounds left by the Consent Decree of 1950 had been healed under the administration of Otto Harbach, and I am happy to say that during my administration I have had not only his support but the most enthusiastic cooperation of the entire membership and the directors and staff of the Society.

The President's office is open at all times to answer any questions that you may have and to hear from individual members whenever they think that a particular venture of the Society or any aspect of its operation merits either applause or censure.

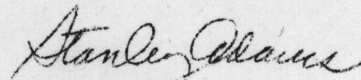
We will have a meeting of the Society on the West Coast in September and here in New York in October. You need not wait until that meeting to let us have your thoughts on the problems affecting your relationship to your Society.

From time to time there are changes in the distribution rules, or there are decisions interpreting or applying them to specific cases. A recent change relates to credits for theme songs. On May 26, the members were advised that credits for theme songs would be tabulated on a weekly basis, in five-hour segments. This would have substantially reduced the total amount apportioned to theme songs. The question has since been re-considered, and we have decided to return to the prior rule which is included under "Theme Songs" in item "II" of the respective Plans of Distribution herewith enclosed.

The attention of publisher members should be called to a recent decision of the Board of Appeals involving the allocation of availability credits in the case of change of ownership of a composition for the second term of copyright. That decision is enclosed as III hereunder.

If you have any questions as to the foregoing, kindly direct them to this office.

Sincerely,



Stanley Adams,
President

SA/fc
ENCS.