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Too Much Sound Converts to Noise

HAIL TO John P.S. Wilson, director of Guthrie's Capitol City Orchestra. He is a musician who has publicly recognized what over-amplification can do to music.

A recent feature story in *The Oklahoman* said he does not care much for amplification or musical instruments attached to electric cords. "We like to sound authentic," Wilson said.

Probably all musicians and singers would like to "sound authentic" but they may seldom hear their music as the audience hears it and might not know how "un-real" it can be. Most leave sound controls to others.

The tinny sound added by over-amplification may affect all types of

music, but it seems to come through strong from vocalists, many of whom swing onto mikes like they were crutches.

Recently I visited a new church on a social occasion. It has a relatively small sanctuary in which a speaker with a normal voice could be heard anywhere. Prominently displayed was an elaborate sound system that must have cost thousands of dollars. Maybe it is needed. The psalmist wrote: "Be still and know that I am God." A dozen loudspeakers weren't suggested.

Great orators of the past, including Daniel Webster, Abraham Lincoln and William Jennings Bryan, spoke to thousands without microphones. Great singers like Caruso and Jenny Lind were heard without

electronic devices.

There seems to be no avoiding loudspeakers. I was standing near one in a store a few days ago when an unseen announcer almost blasted me over a counter urging customers to look for bargains. I looked for an exit.

Sound so loud that it distracts listeners may become mere noise. We tend to regard noise as only a nuisance but medical scientists say that prolonged exposure may cause health and learning disorders.

The Environmental Protection Agency has issued regulations to require quieter trucks and limit noises made by home appliances. EPA doesn't seem to have done anything to hold down overamplification of speakers, singers and musicians.