

RALPH CHARLES'



"CHARLIE ROBERT MORTON"

by BOB HEIL

Retirement's not so bad when one has a Robert Morton as a plaything.

A dream came true to Ralph Charles of Columbus, Ohio, but not until it was nearly time for him to start receiving Uncle Sam's monthly pay check! Ralph had always loved the pipe organ and remembers going to the theatre just to listen to the organ.

He has been building, designing and flying airplanes for over 40 years and when he finally got his feet back on the ground he decided that he wasn't happy

sitting in the rocking chair, so the story that the Lincoln theatre 2-7 Robert Morton organ was up for sale interested him. He bought the organ, even though it was minus a console, and began the task of installing it in a large, well-built concrete

block building behind his house. It used to be Ralph's machine shop.

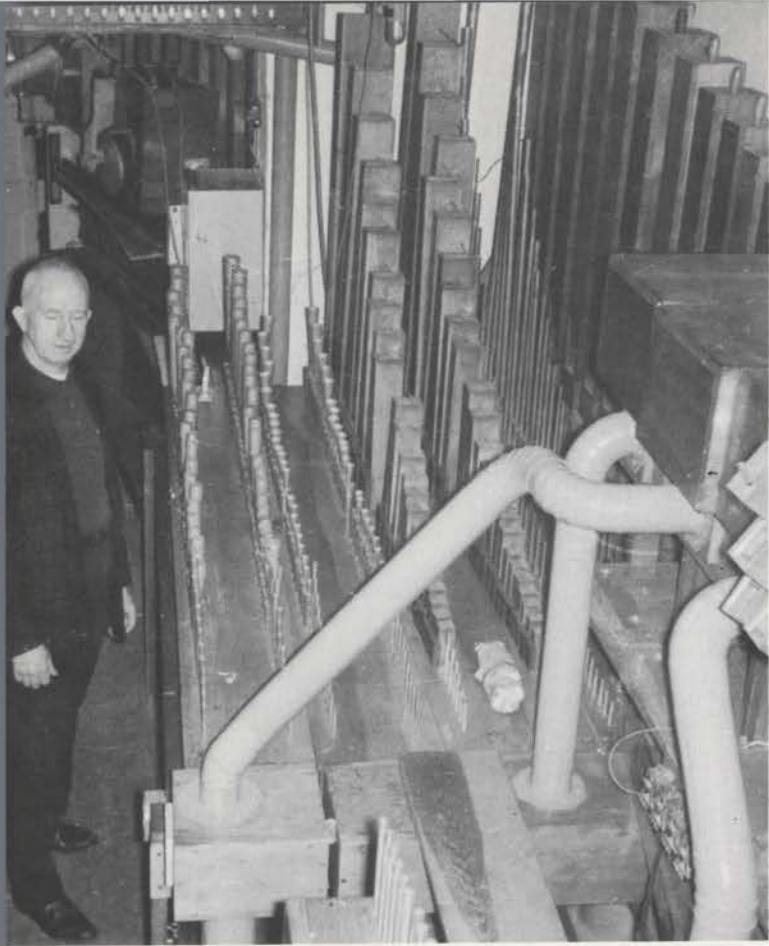
Through sheer necessity he was forced to construct a console and a relay system for the organ. This he did with beautiful results. The console is custom built by Ralph except for the manuals, pedal clavier, and the bench which he obtained from the local area Wicks representative. The relay was completely designed and built from scratch, from winding the springs to manufacturing the coils! An interesting note with regard to the relay system is that for 7 ranks it is only approximately 2½' x 1' x 10"! Besides being extremely small it is very quiet. Its action is as fast as the regular pneumatic relays although it is direct-electric activated.

The organ was ready to play about a year or so after the project began back in 1961. Ralph, who describes himself as a "do it yourselfer," then proceeded to enlarge the organ by adding a third manual. Still not completely happy, he undertook the huge task of manufacturing new chestwork for 10 more ranks as well as more relays—long before he had pipework to match. This didn't seem to bother Ralph; he now has the 3-17 stocked with pipes, playing and sounding marvelous. Friends call the independent Solo (top) manual "Charlie."

The additional pipework to fill those 10



THE CONSOLE RALPH BUILT — Pictured at left. He did all the wood work that holds the manuals, stop keys and pedalboard.



The Main Chamber houses the original 7-rank Morton pipe-work.

ranks of new chests he built came from local area churches and theatre buffs. His latest rank was made from an ancient Vox Humana. By replacing the old resonators with new copper tubing, Charles produced a beautiful new Krummhorn. It is a very rare and interesting Solo voice for the instrument.

The organ is now in two chambers with the original Robert Morton 7 ranks in the Main and the 10 ranks of "Charles" in the Solo. The console is situated approximately 10 feet in front of the two chambers and allows the organist to hear the entire ensemble very well. Overhead, above the console, is mounted a very interesting metal harp. It was originally built by the Austin Organ company. The bars are very small in size and are mounted each on a stopped flute pipe, which has a small opening in its side for the bar. It is a 61 note harp and is mounted on a regular chest. As the air is blown into the foot of the pipe, it comes up through the resonator and inflates the leather pouch under the bar to which the hammer is attached. This hits the bar and the pipe then sustains that sound much longer than the usual harp would sustain.

The back of the studio now has an 8 rank classic instrument playing from a 3 manual console and three of the small

The Austin Harp pictured at right, with the tunable Stopped Flute resonators.



Ralph admires the pipework in his independent Solo Chamber.

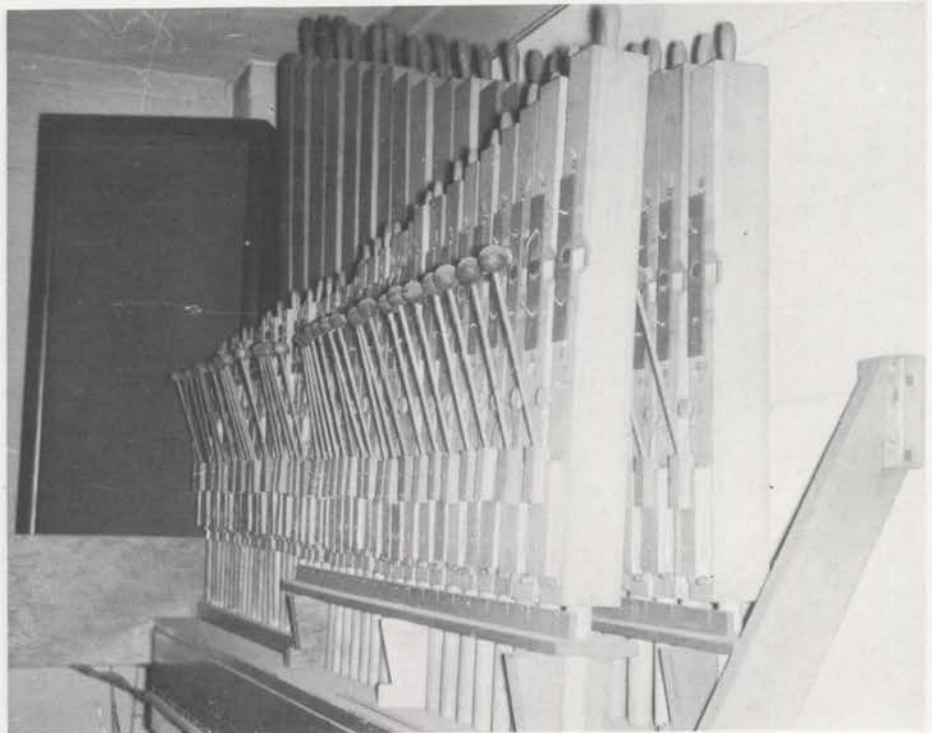
relays that Ralph has put together in his "spare time," all from the left-over parts that he had from the 3-17 project. Again, the classic organ has the "Charlie Robert Morton" chests that Ralph built very much like the original chests Morton built in the '20s.

It's doubtful that the instrument will ever be finished, because Ralph is a very ingenious organ buff and will always

have new ideas and innovations to manufacture for his "Charlie Robert Morton."

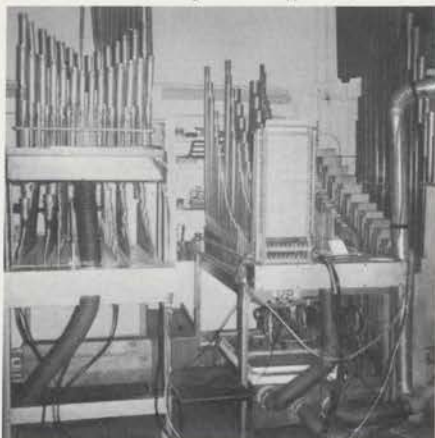
Besides, he's going to move the instrument to a farm he purchased recently in Southern, Ohio. What an opportunity to make a few additions!

(Continued on Page 35)

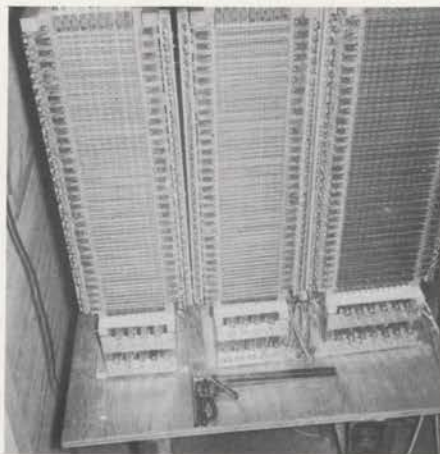


RALPH CHARLES, continued

(Continued from Page 33)



What appears to be an upright washboard is Ralph's self-designed and executed relay for the pipework behind it.



Just completed relay for the Morton. Ralph's aircraft experience in miniaturization was most useful. The square in the foreground provides a yardstick to estimate the size of unit, which is normally a monster.

STOP LIST FOR RALPH CHARLES' 3-17 PIPE ORGAN

SOLO (top manual controls independent ranks)

TIBIA 8' 4' 2 1/2' 2'
 FLUTE 8' 4' 2 1/2' 2'
 DIAPASON 8' 4'
 STRING 8' 4'
 GEMSHORN 8'
 TRUMPET 8' 4'
 OBOE 8' 4'
 CLARINET 8' 4'
 KRUMMHORN 8'
 SOLO-TO-SOLO 16'
 GLOCK
 SOLO-TO-SOLO (Trick Coupler)

GREAT (Robert Morton)

TIBIA 16' 8' 8' 2 1/2' 2' 1-3/5'
 FLUTE 8' 4' 2 1/2' 2'
 CELLO 16' 8' 4'
 DIAPASON 16' 8' 4'
 TUBA 16' 8' 4'
 VOX HUMANA 8' 4'
 KINURA 8' 4'
 GREAT-TO-GREAT 16' 4'
 GREAT-TO-GREAT (Trick Coupler)
 SOLO-TO-GREAT 16' 8'

GREAT

CHIMES
 XYLOPHONE
 ORCHESTRA BELLS
 CHRYSOGLOTT

ACCOMPANIMENT

(Robert Morton)

TIBIA 16' 8' 4' 2 1/2' 2'
 FLUTE 8' 4'
 CELLO 16' 8' 4'
 DIAPASON 16' 8' 4'
 TUBA 16' 8' 4'
 VOX HUMANA 8' 4'
 KINURA 8' 4'
 ACCOMP-TO-ACCOMP. 16'
 CHRYSOGLOTT
 METAL HARP
 CASTANETS
 TAMBOURINE
 SNARE DRUM
 WOOD BLOCK
 SLEIGHT BELLS
 TOM TOM
 CYMBAL CRASH

* GREAT & ACCOMP are original 2-7 ROBERT MORTON opus #2405, built in 1928 for Ogden (now Lincoln) theatre, Columbus, Ohio.

PEDAL

BOURDON 16' 8'
 DIAPHONE 16' 8'
 TUBA 16' 8'
 VIOL 8'
 TIBIA 8' 4'
 DIAPASON 4'
 ACCOMP-TO-PEDAL
 GREAT-TO-PEDAL
 SOLO-TO-PEDAL
 * GREAT & ACCOMP
 CYMBAL CRASH
 SNARE DRUM
 TYMPANI
 BASS DRUM

TREMOLOS

TIBIA
 SOLO CHAMBER
 VOX HUMANA
 MAIN

DISC SQUEALS

"Montalba" Rides Again! Crown Records seems to have acquired the Lee Erwin-Montalba-Ashley-Tappan etc. set originally recorded and released by Somerset Records, later (in part) by Vogue (Organ Moods-Set No. 116) and ARA (mighty Pipe Organ-Set No. 6). On Crown (Single) CLP 5526, Lee Erwin plays the part of *Montalba*. It's identical with Lee Erwin's *Oldies for Pipe Organ* (Somerset) but the label says *George Montalba*. Wonder what became of Bob Hunter, the original *Montalba*? Last we heard he was in Australia. . . . Those who wrote to Command Records concerning release of the Ashley Miller tape done with the late NY Paramount 4-36 Wurlitzer (as suggested in this column), report they received courteous replies stating that the tape was being considered for fall 1967 release. Here's hoping they follow through and thanks to Eric Reeve for the suggestion.

The many people who enjoyed the taped Christmas program played by Jim Orcutt on a 3-10 Robert Morton installed in a Tulsa, Oklahoma, church (see Record Reviews, April issue), will be pleased to learn that Jim has recorded a discfull of pops and standards on the same organ for early release. Miked by Century Recording, the disc will offer such tunes as *End of a Perfect Day*, *My Dear* (Jan Garber ork radio theme), *Lara's Theme*, and *Noche de Ronda*. Jim says this recording will be *properly edited*. His Christmas tape was a *one take* recording of an entire concert and he worried about *not being at my best on every tune*. He took plenty of time with each tune this time—then usually selected the first take for the platter.

For many years Paul Carson's *Bridge to Dreamland* NBC radio show was a staple for organ enthusiasts on the West Coast. He later recorded extensively for Alma Records but the platters were never pushed and have since disappeared from dealer's racks. We have now learned that nearly all records he recorded are still available, many of the later ones in stereo. Those interested may send for a list: Alma Records, Inc., 18108 Parthenia Street, Northridge, Calif., 91324. Prices are \$3.98 and \$4.98 for stereo, postpaid. All records listed (43) are played on pipes except for Nos. 1831 and 1832 (Hammond). The organs are the former NBC Hollywood studio part-Welte, The Warner's theatre Robert Morton in Fresno, Calif., and an unidentified organ in Salt Lake City.

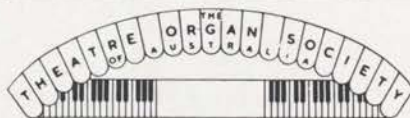
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