

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE

by Lance Johnson

Do you have any questions?

Send them direct to:

QUIZ MASTER
And Organ Builder

LANCE JOHNSON
Box 1228
Fargo, ND 58102

1. **I have a two manual Wurlitzer console with several panels missing. I plan to make new panels. I have tried making samples of the finish but cannot get even a close match to the dark Wurlitzer finish on the mahogany. Do you know of any commercial stains that will darken the wood to a deep wine color?**

Ans. The color you are looking for simply does not exist on the market. Back in the twenties, the stains used were a water base stain with a very heavy concentration of dyes. In the early thirties, it was discovered that methol alcohol instead of water was superior as it didn't raise the grain. Since this saved factory labor, it revolutionized the stain industry over night. During the forties, stain manufacturers used less and less dye and went to pigment instead. With the blond era in the late forties and fifties, stains became lighter and the dyes were discarded for the most part. Find-

ing a penetrating stain today is extremely rare since most paint manufacturers no longer make it.

I would suggest you apply your stain in two setps; First, mix Sherwin-Williams African Mahogany and heavy concentration of colors in oil, namely fast red and black. (You may also use Pratt & Lambert Ebony instead of the black.) Apply stain with a brush and wipe lightly. Then, as a second step, mix two parts of African Mahogany and one part of natural paste filler and apply with brush spreading about three square feet at a time. After the filler mixture begins to dull, wipe it with clean burlap and follow up with cotton rags. Now, if your finish is not quite dark enough, you may tint your clear coat with Mahogany stain to darken it more. If you use varnish stain, thin the stain one part of turpentine to two parts of varnish for the first coat. This will help you to spread the tinting color evenly. Be sure to use a very soft brush so brush marks will disappear. Be sure your finish color block sample is at least a square foot in size so you will get a good representation of your project. After your color block has been stained and filled, let a few drops of varnish or lacquer drops on it to see the change in the color the stain takes on with the clear coat. Since these drops will be thick, they will tell you immediately if your stain is dark enough.

2. **We have a 3/10 Welte and a 2/10 Wurlitzer we are trying to combine as one 3/13 organ to install in our 30 x 60 studio. Recently an expert arrived on the scene and was distressed at the sight of the great wooden diaphones extending across the cross trusses. "Too large for the building . . ." says the expert. What is your opinion?**

Ans. I would have to agree 100% with your expert friend. The tremendous power would simply overpower the whole organ and would be useless. I would suggest selling them and obtaining the metal diaphone. It was quite a different matter when these huge diaphones were needed in large theatres with their heavy carpeting, drapes and large interior areas.

3. **Is it all right to combine ranks from various theatre organ makes and still obtain a good sound? I have been told I can't do this with my hybrid organ.**

Ans. This question has been around theatre organ circles for a long time. Some will say that non-Wurlitzer pipes should never be in a Wurlitzer organ. I disagree very strongly with this school of thought. I am sure many of our subscribers who are organ experts could write volumes on theatre organ tonal design and the correct combining of ranks. I would suggest that you send me the scaling of all your pipework, the wind pressure and manufacturer and I will try to advise how to combine them for best musical results. The scaling would consist of the outside diameters of the lowest pipes in metal cylindrical type, the top diameters of the reeds, and the inside width and depth of the wood pipes at the lowest C only. Also, I would like to know how large the listening room will be and how the organ will be used. □



BOOK REVIEW

by Francis Hibbard

INDIANAPOLIS THEATRES FROM A TO Z, by Gene Gladson, available from Mr. Gladson at 1106 G Westfield Court West, Indianapolis, Ind. 46220. Price \$6.95 post-paid.

This effort is difficult for us to review as it is slanted to theatres and not to theatre organs. However, a section is devoted to organ installations which will be of particular interest to our members in the Indianapolis area or those who claim that midwestern city as their home town.

The author has researched carefully and it would seem from this