

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE

by Lance Johnson

- 1. I have a brass Saxophone that will not stay in tune. I can tune it and it will go out just by playing it. What can be done? The wires are very difficult to move.**

Ans. Assuming that the Sax was made about fifty years ago, you may have a combination of three problems that are contributing to your unstable Sax. The wires, if they are hard to move should be polished with steel wool or No. 400 dry sandpaper so they will move smoothly in the block. You must do this so no dust will get on the tongue or shallot. Then make sure the tongue and shallot surface is shiny clean. You can use crocus cloth to polish your tongues and shallots but be careful not to alter the curve of the tongue! Thirdly, make sure that the wire rests firmly on the tongue but does not press against it with any great force. The wire must be firm but at the same time loose enough to slide easily up and down. When you tune, make sure the pipe emits a clear sound and not one that is raspy or too bright. Start at the flat pitch and tune down on the wire.

- 2. I am not an organ builder in any sense of the word, but I would like to know why after trying to get a dead note playing with a "hot" wire that all I get is a rush of air out of the magnet.**

Ans. If you're lucky, all you have is a dirty armature. Assuming that you have checked the arm-

ature, the problem then would be a ruptured secondary motor. You will have to drop the bung and remove the pneumatic and recover it.

- 3. I have heard that shallow chambers are best for theatre organs, especially in auditoriums. How is it possible to install so much gear, such as offsets, percussions, etc. in a shallow chamber?**

Ans. Shallow chambers are very possible if length can be obtained and offset chests split up if they are too long and placed on the ends of the chambers. Bass tones do not require the one-of-sight placement to the listener's ear that the pipes of the main chests need. Ideally, if you can engineer it, have a separate chamber for all tuned percussions and relay-switch stack units. The important thing to remember in shallow chamber design is to have a reflective wall right behind the manual chests so that the smaller pipes will have their tones bounced out of the chamber directly to the listener. The organ will seem to have a faster response and the tone will not sound "buried."

- 4. I have a Wurlitzer Chrysoglott in front of my shades for maximum volume but I cannot hear them even when playing moderately soft. Is there any way to get this percussion to play louder?**

Ans. The basic design of the Chrysoglott is that it is meant to play softly with very soft combinations with it. I am sorry to say that anything you do to alter the striking mechanism will destroy the character of this percussion and will make it more like orchestra bells. My only suggestion would be to use electronic amplification.

- 5. The bass drum action and tympani action on my theatre organ have developed a rattle while playing. How can this be remedied?**

Ans. Try inserting some felt between the steel hammer shank and the wood back stop. Chances are the felt on the backstop has become hard or worn out.

Do you have any questions?

Send them direct to:

QUIZ MASTER
And Organ Builder

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- 6. We have a chronic problem with a squeaky swell pedal in our Wurlitzer. I am afraid to lubricate it for fear the swell shades will stop operating. Can you suggest a solution?**

Ans. I have tried LPS spray aerosol No. 1 with excellent results. Just point the nozzle at the friction slide right underneath the pedal. It is not necessary to pull out the pedal board because the friction slide is already exposed. If your contact points squeek, they can get the same treatment without insulating the contacts.

- 7. My Wurlitzer manual chests do not have primaries. I have some replacement magnets ready to install when coils go dead. These replacements are the older type and have smaller exhaust holes. Will they work on my chests?**

Ans. Yes, provided that the pipe hole is quite small, say less than 1/2" in diameter. If the hole is too big, the magnet will not exhaust the pneumatic. Trial and error is the only answer on this one. □

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