

WURLITZER BUILDS THE MIGHTIEST

by Jerry Kenney
The Wurlitzer Co.

Plans to build Wurlitzer's last theatre organ began when the Company acquired a new corporate headquarters facility. A large auditorium, Wurlitzer Hall, was planned for these facilities as a showplace to highlight the more than 12 decades of Wurlitzer musical history. In order to accurately represent the best of theatre organs, it was necessary to design an instrument that would occupy most of one wall, measuring 40' by 72'.

Like any job that is done with infinite care and patience, the task of building the last and mightiest of the Mighty Wurlitzers has taken a great

deal of time. Progress has been painstakingly slow.

There is still much work to be done. The Mightiest is nearing completion now, but before long, the sounds of those mighty giant Tibias will reverberate through Wurlitzer Hall, as the Mightiest of all Wurlitzer pipe organs claims its permanent home and place in the theatre organ history.

First, as a representative of the quality Wurlitzer sound, the organ had to be 100 percent Wurlitzer. This meant the Mightiest had to be built with only Wurlitzer parts which had to be located and acquired. If

the original parts could not be located, Wurlitzer then fabricated the parts to factory specifications. The parts then had to be restored to their original condition. This meant replacing worn leather in the relays, checking miles and miles of cable, replacing broken wires and refurbishing and repairing pipes and traps. Expression chambers had to be built and the cables layed before installation finally began on the Mightiest Wurlitzer.

In the past, Wurlitzer had built only three five-manual consoles, and none of these were available for use in the new organ. So, after a four-manual console had been located and modified to accept five keyboards, the console was then shipped to the Wurlitzer organ plant in Corinth, MS, where the Company's finest craftsmen gave the console its finishing touches.

A symbol of all Mighty Wurlitzer theatre organs, representing the best of their unmistakable sounds, this new organ will be assigned the final Wurlitzer opus number to mark the historic significance of this installation. When completed, the organ will have five manuals, 65 ranks, 341 stops and over 7,200 pipes. The Mightiest will also boast a duplicate percussion section.

After more than a year of planning, Wurlitzer's last and mightiest pipe organ is in its final stages of installation at Wurlitzer Corporate Headquarters in DeKalb, IL. The largest Wurlitzer theatre organ ever built, this instrument even surpasses in specifications the 4/58 Mighty Wurlitzer in Radio City Music Hall. □

Work progresses slowly as relays on the Mightiest are rebuilt.

