

# Questions and Answers

**Q.** How much space is required to install a six rank, two manual Wurlitzer Theatre Organ?

**A.** Without major alteration to the organ or any of its parts or pipes, this size organ can be installed in a space six feet deep, nine and one-half feet long, and ten feet high. Only the console and the blower, obviously, will not fit into this space. However, with some mitering, and excluding the relay, this same organ can be installed in a room of slightly less floor space and with an eight foot ceiling. Generally speaking, the same information applies to almost any other make theatre organ.

**Q.** What is the best way to attach flexible duct to a metal fitting?

**A.** There are several methods used. One way is to slip the flexible duct onto the metal fitting and clamp it into place with a metal band clamp with a piece of soft felt fitted between the clamp and the duct to take up the uneven places. A second method is to coat the metal fitting with black furnace cement, and simply slip the flexible duct into place. The cement seals the joint, and hardens, securing the duct tightly to the flange without using a clamp.

**Q.** Can organ chests be mounted in any position, such as on end when the need arises to lay pipes on their sides when there is lack of overhead?

**A.** Most organ parts will operate in any position, and this would include off-set chests—the small chests used to hold the pipes that are too large to be installed on the main chest. Valves or pallets should be examined to be sure that the change of position will not "unseat" them due to looseness in the mounting mechanism. If so, they should be adjusted.

**Q.** Can white keys that have turned yellow or brown with age be re-whitened?

**A.** In some cases they can be bleached out by submitting them for a prolonged period to bright sunlight. In others, such treatment does not seem to help. Recovering the thirty-six white keys is really the only way to make them look like new and can be done for about twenty dollars per manual.

**Q.** My wife says a pipe organ will be too loud for our house. Assuming that she might be right once in a while, is there any way to soften an organ down?

**A.** Some organs of a given size are louder than others of the same size, and could possibly be too loud for a small room. This seems to be matter of personal taste as some home installations that seemed loud were criticized by the owner as not being loud enough. Where an organ seems too loud, there are several ways to make it sound softer. One way is to use fewer stops. If still too loud hang a drape in front of, or just behind the swell shutters. This will tend to reduce the volume of the highs and still permit the lower notes to come through. As a practical matter, the amount of sound-proofing required to reduce the volume of the low notes is almost prohibitive as these longer wave-lengths are very difficult to dampen out. A drape, however, will give the effect of softening the organ as it is usually the high notes and overtones or harmonics that make the organ sound too loud to some individuals. A much more complicated method of reducing the volume level is to re-voice the pipes. This is not recommended to the amateur, and is, you might say, a last resort used to avoid a separation or divorce. Generally speaking, the more direct access there is between the listener and the swell shutters the louder the organ will sound. Therefore, any obstacles in between the shutters and the listening area will materially help in reducing volume, and the reverse is true where volume seems restricted. The more angles, corners, wall areas, etc., there are, the less directional the sound will be. This question can only be answered in generalization, each case being a question unto itself. Of course, you don't always have to play with all the stops down!

**Q.** What causes magnets to go dead and can they be repaired?

**A.** Usually the magnet winding opens up because of corrosion eating away a small section of the wire. Some of the magnets can be salvaged without rewinding. First, remove the varnish with which they are usually coated with a solvent such as acetone (careful—it also dissolves fingernails!). Then with a meter or buzzer, check each coil to see which one is open. Do this by putting one test lead on the splice between the coils, and the other test lead on first one magnet lead, thus checking that side, and then the other magnet lead. After thus determining which coil does not have continuity, or is open, first check the splice to see if one of the wires is broken. If the wire is broken at the splice, re-solder. If it is O.K., then remove the small paper band at the top end of the open coil, under which the starting wire is inserted when the coil is wound. It is usually under this paper band that the corrosion occurs which results in an in-operative magnet. After removing the band and discovering the broken wire (it can usually be spotted by a bright green corrosion spot), gently pull off a turn or two of wire from the coil to get enough slack wire so that it can be spliced on to the other broken end. This is the delicate part of the operation and will determine whether or not you can successfully repair the coil. After getting the slack out far enough to scrape off the enamel on the wire, twist the two ends together and solder the joint. Check it out again, and if you are lucky it will be as good as new. Incidentally, the removal of several turns of wire on the coils will not seriously affect their operation.

**Q.** Are new replacement parts available for theatre organs?

**A.** Most parts can be purchased from organ parts supply houses which will operate satisfactorily although they might not exactly match original equipment. These firms usually advertise in organ publications.

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David V. Picker, executive vice president of United Artists Records has announced the signing of an exclusive contract with producers Dick Loderhose and Irving Falk for a series of albums recorded on the world-famous Paramount Studio Wurlitzer Pipe Organ and featuring organists Reginald Foort, Dick Scott, Don De Witt and Johnny Seng. Loderhose and Falk are recording fifteen albums for United Artists, three of which are scheduled for release in October. All of the albums recorded on the Mighty Wurlitzer will be available in Monaural and Stereo.

Mr. Loderhose acquired the Giant Wurlitzer Pipe Organ from Paramount Studios and moved it to his private estate on Long Island. A building, the first of its kind, was constructed to provide the special conditions necessary to record the organ.

