

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE

by Lance Johnson

Do you have any questions?

Send them direct to:

QUIZMASTER
and Organbuilder
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Q. I am in the process of realigning my Wurlitzer keyboards. Would you please give me the specifications for the key travel and contact distance?

A. (a) Distance to first touch = 3/8"; (b) Distance to second touch = 1/2"; (c) Distance to first key contact = 3/32"; (d) Distance to second key contact = 7/16".

These dimensions will vary with different organ installers depending on what their organists prefer.

Q. Our Chrysoglott and Glockenspiel have a dull sound. We believe it is due to the deterioration of the rubber grommets that support the bars. Where can new grommets be purchased and how can the mounting be removed without breaking off the heads?

A. I use player piano tubing which can be obtained from the Schaff Piano Supply in Lake Zurich, Ill. The nails can be removed by using vise-grip pliers with tape around the nibs. Lock the pliers and twist outward. Be patient because it is not an easy job. Be sure to remount bars

with clearance from the nail heads so you do not have metal to metal contact with the bars; 1/8" should be sufficient.

Q. We are considering adding a Posthorn to our Publix No. 1 4/20 Wurlitzer. On which manuals should it appear and at what pitches? Is the usefulness of the 16' octave worth the cost?

A. Here are my recommendations for your Posthorn arrangement. Pedal 8', Accompaniment 8', Great 16' to 8', Bombarde 8', Solo 16', 8'. As for the 16' octave with respect to usefulness versus cost, it would depend on how accomplished the organist is. There is very little music that would be enhanced with a 16' Posthorn, therefore it would seldom be used.

Q. I have now stripped my motor pneumatics on my orchestra bell action (Wurlitzer) not knowing the tremendous amount of work required just removing those strips of wood on each side! I have ruined about one-quarter of them because they break when pried off. Is it all that necessary to have these back on after I have recovered the pneumatics? Also, if I must put them back on, what kind of wood is used?

A. The battens must be put on again if you expect your power pneumatics to last. This holds the rubber cloth from peeling. The battens are made of hard maple.

Q. I have a problem with a clicking sound coming from our Wurlitzer chrysoglott in the bass end. I thought at first the bell bar was rest-

ing on bare metal. This is not the case. I also checked for hardening of the hammer head tips but these seem fine. What shall I look for next?

A. It sounds to me as though the lead weights on the tops of the hammer heads (since you say it is in the bass only) have worked loose. All it takes is a quarter of a turn, to loosen the screws holding the weights, and the hammers will produce clicks.

Q. Our ATOS chapter is rebuilding a Wurlitzer theatre organ. We've found the organ suppliers seem to have confused the price of leather with gold, so we are looking for less expensive substitutes. What about plastic materials? What types of glue are used? How about rubber cloth? What material should be used for the console combination action?

A. Yes, I would agree there seems to be a high price for "leather bullion" today. It would be wise to keep leather supplies in a safe. As for your Wurlitzer, I believe that most organ enthusiasts, as well as organ builders will agree that theatre organs, especially Wurlitzers, should be restored in a historic manner as much as possible. As for plastic substitutes, I have commented on this in previous issues of THEATRE ORGAN. I would not recommend rubber cloth except for blown pneumatics on percussions. Chest primaries and secondaries, as well as combination actions, should be of medium thickness tan pneumatic leather. I have used Franklin Titebond glue with excellent results and I think it is faster to work with. Others will swear by hot glue only. □

Make Plans . . .

Chicago Weekender

REGIONAL '80

**Friday, Saturday and Sunday
November 28, 29 and 30, 1980**

Headquarters: BISMARCK HOTEL