

# The Tibia Tremolo Syndrome

by Everard S. (Tote) Pratt, Jr.  
Director — Organ Restoration and  
Development, Ohio Valley Chapter

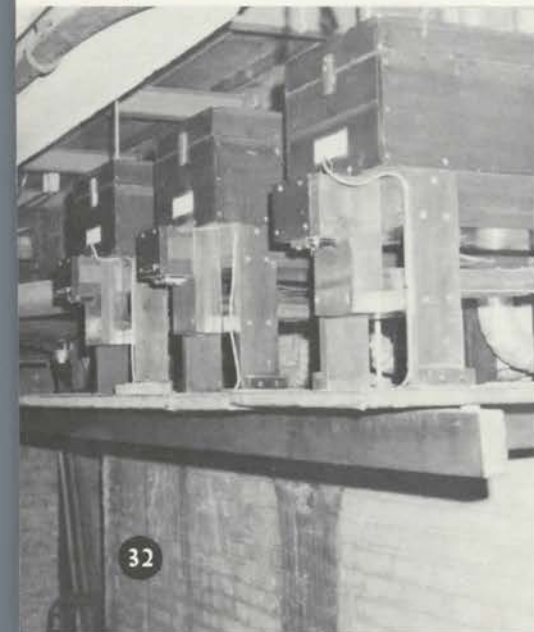


Located just above the trem stop tabs is the selector toggle switch (center of photo) for the Solo Tibia tremos.



Wye behind the Solo Tibia tremos.

The solo tremos are mounted on a platform under the solo chamber. The two Tibia tremos are in the foreground.



Most lovers of theatre organs that are involved in their restoration, tonal regulation and maintenance, whether installed in theatres, public buildings, or homes, have been faced with the age-old problem of Tibia trem adjustment. The spectrum of adjustment from fast to slow, deep to light, degrees of breathiness or overblow, etc. are as varied as the individual organist's tastes dictate.

In the Ohio Valley Chapter's Emery Theatre 3/23 Wurlitzer installation, this friendly difference in ideology is no stranger to the writer and his talented and dedicated organ crew. The Emery has two Tibias, one on 15" wind in the solo chamber about which this article is written, and one on 11" wind in the main which is deliberately slightly underblown to provide a hollow breathiness so dear to the hearts of Tibia lovers. This trem is set medium-fast and deep permanently.

As covered in a previous article in *THEATRE ORGAN*, this instrument has all nine tremos mounted in the basement on platforms under the chambers with 20'-30' of solid windline, and 6-8 elbows to each trem. This gives great flexibility to the tremolo wind so no weights are needed on regulators, but weights are used on the tremos themselves to provide depth and beat.

While it is desirable and necessary in some installations to use weights on regulators, resulting in their faster collapse and slower rebound when tremmed, it has presently been considered unnecessary in this installation. Heavier trem weights have been substituted with great effect. All three Solo Tibia offsets, 16' and 8' (26 pipes) are on an untremmed regulator so the manual

chest wind is easily shaken with no robbing when heavy bass notes are played which can break the beat rhythm. An additional benefit is extremely steady wind for untremmed passages. In my opinion some theatre organs have wind unsteadiness due to the use of weights on the regulators.

Although it is not too difficult to change the trem beat, because no weight balance between regulator and tremolo is required, it has become a "game of chess" to change these to meet the tastes of the different organists.

We had a large spare Wurlitzer tremolo which we rebuilt and the writer decided to try *two* tremos for the Solo Tibia mounted side by side using the same 3-inch, 24-foot line. We fabricated and installed a wye at the trem end with a line to each one.

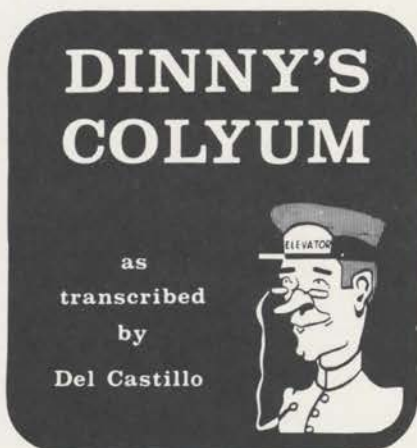
I was expecting a possible "bubble" or feedback to the regulator due to the wye, but none developed. By adjusting the slides and weights on the two Tibia tremos, we now have a slow deep beat on one (very lush) and a fast deep beat on the other, both easily adjustable for required variations within their beat pattern at the tremos themselves. The tonality between the two is quite pronounced — almost like two different ranks.

Weights found most effective for this purpose and easily adjusted, are made from flat cold-rolled steel bar  $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 2" x 4". Two holes are drilled in each and they are attached at the head end of the tremolo top board on *both* sides of the valve ear for balance (we also have the  $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 2" x 2" weights for lesser changes). They are stacked to obtain the trem beat desired — i.e., the fast Tibia has four  $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 2" x 4" weights on each side of

the valve ear, with the top slide closed down to about 2". The weights also provide total reliability on starts when stop keys are depressed.

These two tremms are wired to a SPDT toggle switch with name plate indicating "slow" and "fast," installed on the backboard of the console above the trem stop keys, allowing an immediate change from one trem to the other.

The OVC-ATOS Thursday organ crew accomplished this entire job: Joe Deifel, our capable "tin man," fabricated the windlines and the wye and made all windline connections; Art Kessler, Charlie Wilhelm, and Henry Arleth rebuilt the trem, installed it on the platform and worked on the weight/adjustment with the writer; and Don Campbell wired them and installed the switch. □



Durn it, Mr. Thompson he sez I have to mail him this here stuff by Nov. 1, and the elecktions for President is Nov. 4, and I thought here is my oppaturnity to be a politickle writer, and I miss it by four days. OK, I'm a-goin to do it anyways and you have to pertend it was rit on Elecktion Day. So here is the way it stacks up in the Dinny Timmins Pole.

Just as I perdicted, the best man won. The other man he talked a lot but he dint say nuthin. My man he talked a lot and dint say nuthin too, but he done it better. You could tell by the look on his face that he knew he was the best man. You could tell by the look on the other man that he was a foney and he was just tryin to pull the wool over your eyes as the sayin goes. When my man told the

publick that the other feller wasnt tellin the truth why you could see the other feller he wasnt to be trusted. So when the other feller come rite back and says my man was misrepersentin why it was just as plane as the nose on your face that he was just sayin that to get even. So now come Jan. we got the best man for the job runnin the country, so by next year the cost of livin will go down and they will be more people at work and we wont have no taxes to upset the people.

Sometimes I think we would all be better off if we dint have no politicks. Mostly all it does it gets people mad with each other. I seen it happen in The Elevater Operaters Club I belong to, and I seen it even in the A.T.O.S. when they even get mad at people all the ways acrost the country, and like we got candidates for the L.A. Bored of Education here they get so mad they call each other names that I would have to put my hands over my ears if I was there. But the funny thing is that when the shootin is over they pertend it never happened. Like mr. Kennedy when he quit runnin for office and he and Mr. Carter why they is just buddies again. Did you see where they had that debate and the two of the candidates they had to shake hands with each other? Did you see the looks on there faces? Ever see two dogs just before they start fitin? See what I mean?

I dont think its good for people. They probily get indigestion and high blood preshure and the first thing you know they aint happy any more. I got over that a long time ago when I was runnin the elevater and when a woman would say she been waitin five minnits for the elevater I would just say Im sorry mam I come as fast as I could. I think they is a lot of trubble in the world just because people cant say Im sorry. They say you dont have to be rite to be President. Well you dont have to be rite all the time whoever you are. Gosh, when I sit down to try to play the organ I aint rite most all the time and I aint agoin to pertend that I am.

This little organ club they let me belong to everybody gets up and plays in turn and if everbody had to say they are sorry every time they make a mistake nobody would ever finish playin there peace. But they all know that all of them make mistakes

so they dont have to apologize. At least I think they know it. They always say why I played that perfect at home. So I spose that is there way of sayin they dint play it so good when they played it for people. I know how it is because I do the same thing when I take a lesson from Mr. Castillo. So then he says to me well how do you know you played it perfect at home, and I guess hes got me there. So I says well I thought I did and he says well all I know is that every time you was suppose to play a G on the peddle why you played a F, and of course I cant prove that I always played a G at home. I guess you cant win.

He give me a peace awhile back that was called Bye Bye Blues and he sez now I want you to play the cords in the rite hand and I sez how can I do that when I cant even play the cords rite in the left hand. But anyways we tried it for 15 minutes and then he finely sez well I guess you better just play one note in the rite hand and we will just hope for the best. So I went home and practiced that and when I went back the nex month on acct the way he charges I can only take one lesson a month he stopped me in a couple of seconds and he says you got to use the black keys when you get to that third measure and I sez nobody ever told me before about the black keys on acct the only cords I know are C, F and G and they is all on the white keys. So I guess I still got a lot to learn and to apologize for when I play except that now they wont let me play at the club meetins any more. □

