

five hours of sleep a night and no days off. Many a night I lowered five or six seats in the front row of the theatre in order to get a few winks, only to awaken just in time to slide onto the bench at midnight to begin the program. I also did a lot of sleeping on the all-night street car, the operator arousing me at my destination.

"Some nights when I wasn't too sleepy and needed practice, I'd become engrossed in my work only to find out that my monitor was telling me that I'd been on the air for almost a minute, playing pedal scales!

"In 1953 I resigned from the Church of the Holy Nativity, where I'd been playing for ten years, and accepted a similar position at St. Timothy's Church in Catonsville, Maryland. In 1963 I felt it was time to slow

up some. I resigned the St. Timothy's position and, for the first time in years, had weekends to myself. I didn't play a note until August 1976.

"Then, through the courtesy of the Rector of Grace and St. Peter's Church and with the consent of the regular organist, I received permission to practice on its magnificent 3/53 Austin. The organ had been completely refurbished and revoiced, and had many changes in its speaking registers. It is now one of the largest and finest instruments in the city. In this way, I kept my hands and feet limber, while the responsibility for regular duties and boy-choir training were the domain of the regular parish organist. And so I was back where it all started for me, 54 years ago."

Mr. Nutrell died in 1980. □

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. Recently I built a tremolo using the same dimensions as a Wurlitzer tremolo. I cannot even get it to beat with the use of small weights, helper springs or through the adjustment of the slide. What could be wrong? (I made the slot larger in the wind box in order to get a deeper beat.)

A. You must make the wind box slot the exact same size in area as your Wurlitzer model in order for it to operate. The ratio of slot size to plate size is critical. When the slot is too

large air escapes too quickly, so that the plate will jump to the top and stay in the upward position.

Q. I have just purchased a two-manual, ten-rank Wurlitzer and would like to know if the chests should be rewired. It is evident that the wiring was done over by the previous owner and, even though I am not an expert on wiring, it looks very crude. Cables are not strapped down and the soldering looks amateurish. Would you recommend that it be rewired?

A. If the wiring looks amateurish, chances are it was done by an amateur. Your wiring should most certainly be re-done unless you want endless trouble.

Q. I own a large steak house and gambling casino and would like to know if I could install a theatre pipe organ in the dance area, even though the ceiling height is only ten feet. Would there be room for the taller

pipes, etc.? Could I use it for dancing, sing-alongs or just plain entertainment like the pizza parlors? (I want to dump the rock bands.)

A. Unless you want soft dinner music, I would suggest installing it in a room with at least a two-story ceiling with the swell shades on the second floor level. You should visit some of the better pizza parlor installations to ascertain what is involved with a pipe organ installation. It also helps to begin with a large base of working capital, in case it doesn't pan out.

Q. I have a Robert-Morton theatre organ with an annoying problem. When I turn the blower on one note in my 16' Bourdon chest ciphers until the reservoirs are filled. I first suspected that the valve spring had broken or the valve was misaligned. I opened the chest and found neither to be the case. Where do I look next?

A. It seems to me that you have an obstruction in the chest magnet which prevents the armature from seating until full pressure is in the chest. Clean out the magnet recess and try it again.

Lance Johnson, owner of Johnson Organ Company since 1954, builds, repairs and maintains both theatre and classical organs. He also is an accomplished artist on both types, and holds a bachelor of music degree in organ. He is a founding member of the American Institute of Organbuilders, and is chairman of the Red River Chapter of ATOS. □

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