

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. We have a 3/8 Robert-Morton with a small toy counter in our local theatre, which our ATOS chapter maintains. Some of our reeds look like someone worked on them with a pipe wrench. Is it possible to recurve the reeds with a reed curving tool and a burnishing iron? Also, is there available a schematic diagram of the circuit for this organ?

A. You had best leave any reed voicing to a professional. Contact organ builders in your own area for help. If an amateur from your group were to tackle this type of work, the reeds would probably come out looking like a pipe wrench were used again. I know of no schematic diagrams for the Robert-Morton organ. If you can relate a specific problem, I will try to help you solve it.

Q. I am installing a Wurlitzer theatre organ in a residence where I would like to locate all the regulators, except those for the bass, roughly 25 to 30 feet from the chests. I would like to install the tremulants near the chests in the chamber. Is this possible and have you ever heard of this being done? Won't this reduce noise and vibration throughout the house?

A. Your regulators will not function properly if placed over four feet from the chests. The additional friction in the wind trunk resulting from the longer distance between chest and regulator will slow down the response of the wind surge needed when the organ is played. Even worse, you will encounter great turbulence in the trunk with trem turned off.

Why do you want to place your trem in the chamber when you have already decided that the noise would be reduced by having the regulators away from the chambers? Certainly your greatest source of noise will be the trem. Why not move them away from the chambers? Remember if you do, you cannot install them with the original 2½" diameter conductor, but must increase it to 3" because of the increase in trem conductor length. If you have a height problem, you can mount your regulators to one side of the chests so that the chests can be placed as close as 18" to the floor.

Q. I maintain the Hinners organ in our church, and I have a problem that is getting worse. With regard to the four-rank ventil chest, when the Oboe stop is off, air leaks out through the ventil action and causes some Oboe pipes to play while the organist is playing other ranks. If I open the ventil more, more air leaks out but the Oboe then quits playing. Any advice will be appreciated.

A. High pressure air is leaking across the stop channels, most likely because of bad gaskets. This would be especially true if the Hinners gasket material is cork or blotting paper. These gaskets are known for a short life, because they cannot take up the slack with seasonal expansion and

contraction of the chest members. If it is possible, you had better remove all the pipes, disconnect the wind and cables, and turn the chest over to replace gaskets. I would suggest using horsehide packing leather for best results. You will need some arch punches to make new holes for exhaust channels, which should be done before gluing the new gaskets to the chest. Watch for stripped screws as you disassemble.

Q. We have a tremulant problem with our Wurlitzer. The large regulator (34" x 36") simply will not tremulant like the others, as it has a very shallow beat. It is wound with 15 feet of 2½" conductor and the regulator is not weighted. I have not added any weight to the regulator because I heard you say that weights are not correct for obtaining good heavy tremulants.

A. If you are referring to my Detroit seminar on tremulants, I believe you may have misunderstood. Any regulator larger than 20" x 30" will need some weight to get it to bounce in resonance. I would suggest starting with 20 pounds and trying it. If this doesn't give you enough beat, then you should increase the diameter of your trem conductor. Adding more weight will take your regulator out of tune and decrease its ability to regulate quickly. I have been able to get 20" x 30" regulators to beat to the point where the action almost stops and all by not using weights. Then, when the trem is off the regulator can do its job and maintain an even and responsive regulation. □

Closing Chord

Lenore Feibel, widow of Fred Feibel, New York Paramount and radio organist, died on December 4.

When the Feibels moved to Vero Beach, Florida, in the early sixties Fred continued as a church organist and choir director. Lenore helped found the local chapter of the American Association of University Women, and served as its president for a period. One of the couple's projects was the raising of thousands of dollars for a nearby college. Fred performed a yearly concert and Lenore