



Floyd Wright at the Grand Lake console, circa 1930.

(Photo courtesy of Allen Michaan)

As the latest house in Oakland, the theatre enjoyed great popularity for several years until the new downtown Fox Oakland Theatre opened, followed later by the Oakland Paramount.

The standard Style 235 had the following ranks available:

MAIN (left)  
 Viol d'Orchestra  
 Viol Celeste  
 Salicional  
 Flute - extends to 16' Bourdon  
 Diapason - extends to 16' Diaphone  
 Clarinet  
 Vox Humana  
 SOLO (right)  
 Tuba - extends to 16' Ophecleide  
 Tibia  
 Orchestral Oboe  
 Kinura

A piano was located in the orchestra pit near the console. It was arranged to play louder on second touch, giving something of the dynamic "feel" of a real piano. A full complement of traps and toy counter, Harp, Xylophone, Sleigh Bells, Glockenspiel and Chrysoglott com-

pleted the roster. A number of changes had been made in the console wiring over the years, providing a 16' coupler on the Great manual, a 2' and 2½' pitch on the Tibia, along with several intermanual couplers.

The organ was removed from the theatre about 1959 by Dr. Ralph Bell of ATOS, and has recently been installed in the Band Organ Restaurant in Mishawaka, Indiana, not far from South Bend.

Of course a number of other persons besides the authors were involved in the rehabilitation work. In particular, Gordon Walker spent many weekend mornings helping with the relay and other electrical repair work. Famed Bay Area organist Larry Vannucci spent many hours playing beautiful music, making us aware that the efforts we put forth were worth it all. Others too numerous to mention helped in various ways in bringing this beautiful instrument back to life. We thank you all.

Now a new organ is being installed which will fill the auditorium with our favorite music by Convention Time, 1983. □

## FROM THE WORK- BENCH

by Allen Miller



### The Problem of Stripped Screws

One very common problem encountered in all makes of pipe organs is the stripped, or overturned, screw. It is indeed a sinking feeling one gets when a bung, cover, or bottom board is leaking and you attempt to tighten the screws and find that one or more turn freely and never tighten. There are a number of quick, temporary "fixes," but here I will cover the most acceptable, permanent repairs.

The usual temporary repairs consist of either stuffing foreign material into the screw hole, with or without glue, to give the screw something to grip, or resorting to longer or larger screws. The best hole stuffing method is probably to fill the screw hole with wooden toothpicks dipped in glue. Unfortunately, the amount of wood-to-wood contact between the toothpicks and the torn threaded area of the hole results in a poor bond, and the toothpicks eventually work loose. Totally unacceptable materials to fill the hole include bits of paper, plastic, or pieces of wire. Usually these objects fall out the first time the screw is removed, if, in fact, they ever hold at all.

Replacing the original screws with longer or larger screws usually works to some extent, depending upon how badly damaged the wood threads are. Unfortunately, it is easy to mix up screws when you later remove a cover, and you find yourself in trouble all over again.

#### The Proper Fix

The best repair is to replace the damaged wood, retaining the original screw. There are three methods of do-



ing this, none of which are difficult, and in some cases, the repaired screw hole will be stronger than the original. All three methods involve boring the hole large enough so that a piece of dowel can be glued in to replace the original wood. The pilot hole for the screw is then re-bored, and you start off with a "better-than-ever" screw hole.

The most common method is to use a piece of hardwood dowel. The diameter should be at least three times the required hole size. 3/8" dowel is a good size for most situations where #8 to #10 screws are involved, and 1/2" is appropriate for #12 or larger screws. For best results, the dowel should not be larger than half the thickness of the wood being repaired. The length should be at least 1/2" longer than the screw being used.

Carefully bore out the bad screw hole to a size to fit the dowel. The fit must allow space for glue, but not be too sloppy. The outside of the dowel can be roughed up with a file to give a better grip for the glue. Bore out the hole deep enough to get to the bottom of the original screw hole, and allow a slightly longer length for the dowel so that it will protrude from the hole when inserted all the way.

For boring out the hole, I find the flat blade Speedbits made by Irwin or Stanley work best. Do not use the cheap foreign copies. The tapered point will center the hole perfectly, and this type of bit will enlarge a hole to perfect size without chattering or digging up the grain of the wood.

When you glue the dowel in place use a yellow carpenter's or wood glue such as Franklin Titebond or Elmer's Carpenter's Glue, and be prepared to have to tap the dowel into the hole with a small hammer until it bottoms. After the glue is dry, saw or file off the protruding end of the dowel, then sand flush carefully to keep from damaging the flat surface.

You will have to establish a new center for the screw. One method is to replace the cover, put the screw in the hole and turn it counter-clockwise while tapping it lightly with a small hammer. A center punch will work well if properly used. Bore a proper size hole for the screw (pilot hole), bearing in mind that you are now putting the screw into hardwood end-grain.

The second method is basically the same except that you make or obtain

plugs cut cross-grain from the same type of wood as that you are repairing. Special plug boring or plug cutting bits are made for this. If the plug is inserted with the grain going the same way as the original wood, it is possible to make an almost invisible repair which will have nearly identical holding properties to that of the original wood. Of the two methods, the hardwood dowel probably gives slightly greater holding power.

The third method is somewhat different. It is sometimes used in new construction in softwood where maximum holding power is required. It involves inserting a hardwood dowel CROSSWISE through the wood so that the screw goes through the side of the dowel and thus into edge grain. Bear in mind that the end of the dowel will show in the side of the wood you are repairing. In some cases, the extra holding strength may justify the slight blemish, but purists will want to use this method as a last resort. Placement of the dowel is important. Maximum holding power will be at the point where roughly 1/4" of the screw point protrudes through the dowel. Care must also be taken to mark the center for boring the dowel so that it lines up with the center of the original screw hole.

Screw Size	Drill For Shank	Drill For Thread	
		Hardwood	Softwood
6	#28	#42	#44
8	#17	#35	#40
10	#9	#28	#32
12	#1	#20	#25

A related, and also common, problem concerns repair of metal machine screw inserts of the type often used in bottom boards (Wurlitzer chests, for example). These are best repaired by applying epoxy to the exterior threads of the insert. To keep the epoxy from filling the machine screw threads, lightly oil the machine screw threads and thread the screw through the metal insert before applying the epoxy. The screw becomes a convenient handle and simplifies the whole operation. If you are in a hurry, five-minute epoxy works fine, but if you have many to do, slow setting epoxy will give you more time to work, and ultimately holds better.

If the original insert has become lost, avoid using replacement inserts

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which have coarser inside threads than the originals, as introducing a screw with a different thread in the middle of a bottom board spells trouble. Instead, consider "stealing" inserts from both ends of the bottom board and replacing them with "tee nuts," which will work on the ends of a Wurlitzer chest bottom board where there is access to the backside of the hole. It is a bit easier to keep track of special screws if they are at the center end of a bottom board, for example. It would be a good idea to paint the head of the different screw and dab a dot of matching color next to the hole.

While the repairs described will take a bit longer than the usual quick, emergency repairs usually used on stripped screws, these methods will reward you in time and aggravation saved later on.

Other solutions and reader comments are welcome. □

### Oakland Paramount Schedules Wright, Carter, Larsen for 1983-84 Organ Series

George Wright will return to the Paramount Wurlitzer for his third visit on Saturday, November 19, to open the Pops Series.

On March 24 Gaylord Carter will appear on the series for the first time, accompanying Harold Lloyd silent films.

Continuing the Mother's Day matinee tradition at the Paramount, Lyn Larsen will be at the Wurlitzer on Sunday, May 13. As an added feature of the program, he will be joined by Jack Bethards and the Paramount Orchestra in musical arrangements from the '20s, '30s and '40s, including a re-creation of an organ/orchestra recording made by Jesse Crawford.

Season subscriptions to the Paramount Organ Pops Series are available now from \$11.00 to \$30.00. For further information, call the Paramount Box Office at 415/465-6400. □