

## 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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ATOS member Ken Ladner passes on this tip: Wurlitzer swell shade ball bearings are still available from the Nice Bearing Company. Specify No. 602; cost is about \$2.50 each. (Check your local bearings dealer, but don't ask for closed precision bearings or you will spend about \$7.00 each instead! — Editor)

**Q.** Can you explain how Wurlitzer wired their couplers so there would be no back feed?

**A.** Your key contacts are divided so that each contact has a function. One contact could fire the relay primary but others must be used in order to have couplers. In other words, one contact per coupler of any kind. Others would be used for second touch, etc.

**Q.** Do I understand correctly that the valve increments on a Wurlitzer regulator are to be such that the small valve has 1/2" of play and the large valve 1" play? In other words, the regulator top must fall 1" before the large valve is to open?

**A.** The first valve is the cone which breaks the seal. The second is the small book valve which opens 1/2" farther down as the top falls. The

third valve, the large book valve, opens 1/2" later, so that it actually will not open until the top falls 1 1/2".

**Q.** I was interested in your answer to the question concerning chamber sizes (THEATRE ORGAN May/June '83) that the swell opening could occupy the full size of the listening room wall. I am sure you will agree that it would be unwise for most amateur enthusiasts to attempt revoicing of theatre-oriented pipes, so would not such an opening in a domestic environment make listening, with all but minimal registration, a dreadful, ear-splitting experience? An approach to this problem adopted in several instances here in England is to mount the swell shade assemblies on sub-frames within the chamber and allow only a restricted opening of about 1'x4' into the listening room, at a height of six or seven feet above floor level, with up to one opening for each swell shade frame. Such an approach means that listeners are not blown out of their seats in the listening room. Perhaps you would agree with me that some theatre organs, when reinstalled in domestic or even restaurant surroundings, produce a sound which can be just too coarse and loud for enjoyment. I appreciate that we cannot all have the luxury of extensive basements and living rooms with cathedral ceilings. But the artifice described above will help a lot toward establishing a reasonable listening level, even though the domestic sound is still deficient in the auditorium acoustic.

**A.** No two organ builders will agree as to the exact size of tone opening a given organ should have. I prefer to have a maximum opening, so that when the family is out of the house I can just cut loose and not worry about

offending anyone. This also allows the *maximum* differential between loud and soft, which I desire. When you are playing for guests you will naturally keep most of the shades closed to save their ears. I can well remember a few years ago when we had an ATOS jam session at my house with piano, accordion and what not, and I had to open the shades on the organ completely to compete! I have heard residence theatre organs with the small tone opening you have recommended and found them to be anemic and lackluster. To each his own, I guess. □

## Closing Chord

**Ann C. Reiling**, widely known musician and ATOS member, was born in Kansas City, Kansas, in 1904 and began piano lessons at age five. There was a neighborhood nickelodeon at 13th and Quindaro in Kansas City, where little Annie watched, listened, and became acquainted with the lady who accompanied films on piano. The lady showed her the tricks of the trade on cueing the silent pictures. By 1915 she was relief pianist once or twice a week, and chose movie accompaniment as her career.

She studied piano with Wiktor Labunski and Esther Shaw Gibson, and organ at the Kansas City Conservatory of Music with such great Kansas City organists as Edna Scotten Billings and Powell Weaver. After her graduation from high school, she worked briefly for Jenkins Music Co. playing and selling sheet music.

Her first organ job was in 1928 at the New Center Theatre at 15th and Troost (now Truman Road) in Kansas City, Missouri, playing a two-manual Style D Wurlitzer accompanying *Wild Oats* with Colleen Moore. The job lasted one year.

In 1929 she became a radio organist, having her own "Little Organ Annie" program over KMBC, Kansas City's CBS outlet, playing a three-manual Robert-Morton. Miss Reiling also played solos and with ensembles over the Kansas City Star station WDAF and over WHB during the thirties.

Ann moved to Chicago in the 1940's and accompanied silents once again at the Nickelodeon in the Museum of