

The BIG MOVE

by Dennis Hedberg
Photos by Claude Neuffer

Now it is official, and the full story can be told. The 3/24 Kimball pipe organ in Portland's Benson High School is being moved to Cleveland High School, and Oregon Chapter ATOS is playing a big part. Cleveland is, incidentally, the only other high school in Portland built with organ chambers in its auditorium. However, no organ was ever installed at Cleveland . . . until now.

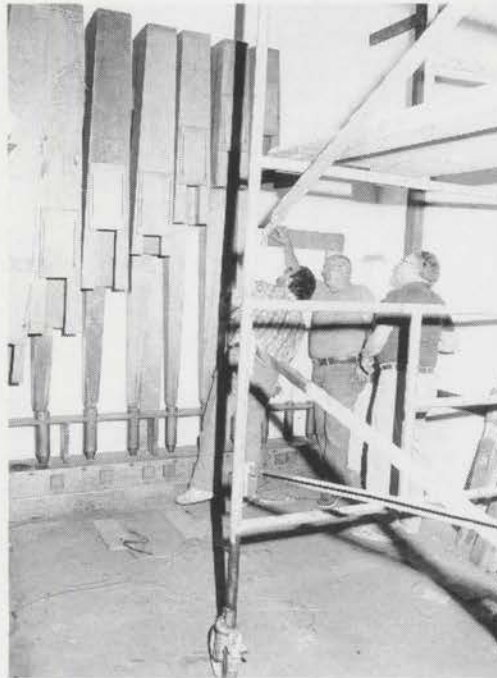
Oregon Chapter board member Loren Minear has had the maintenance contract for the Kimball for many years. It was he who first learned that a new building was to be constructed adjacent to the Benson auditorium and a connecting corridor would run through the south chamber. Horrors! The organ was in grave jeopardy. When Loren reported this news to the board of directors of Oregon Chapter, Dennis Hedberg suggested that we investigate the possibility of moving the organ to Cleveland rather than see it junked.

Dennis contacted Jonas Nordwall, who is a Cleveland alumnus, and Jonas, in turn, contacted Bill Covert. Bill is not an ATOS member, but he is a friend of both Dennis and Jonas and is Director of Music at First United Methodist Church; he was also in charge of the music curriculum for Portland Public Schools. I say "was" because Bill retired on June 30 of last year. The significance of this will become clear as you read on.

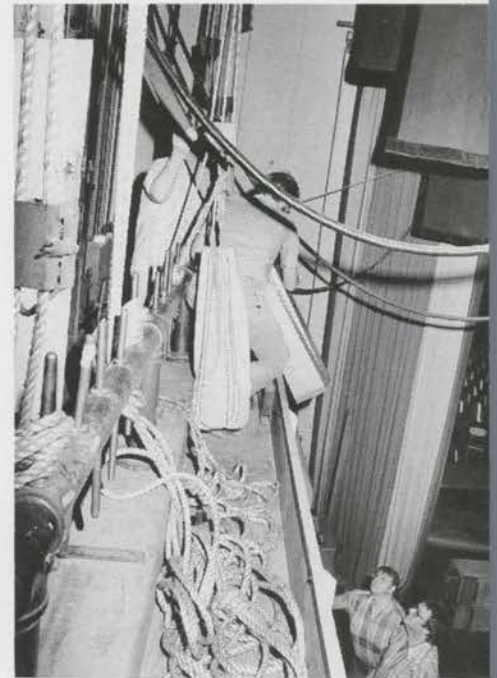
We knew that simply moving the organ from one repository to another would not be considered sufficient reason to justify the cost involved. Schools are in the education business, and we felt that by incorporating the Devtronix/Wilcox computer relay the organ could function more effectively as an educational tool as well as a superior recital instrument. Further, it was suggested that some interested students might be able to assist either directly or indirectly by manufacturing some wood components in shop classes. Using education first and preservation of the instrument second, Bill Covert found tremendous enthusiasm among the principal and faculty at Cleveland. Remarkably, no one within the administration of the Portland Public Schools was opposed. They were either neutral or very much in favor of the move.

Special Unit Organ
- Installed
March 1937
By
BALCOM and VAUGHAN
J. AMICK
L. WELLS } Assts.
Mr. Cleveland
Benson's Buy
Technical Advisor

Inscription on chamber wall at Benson High



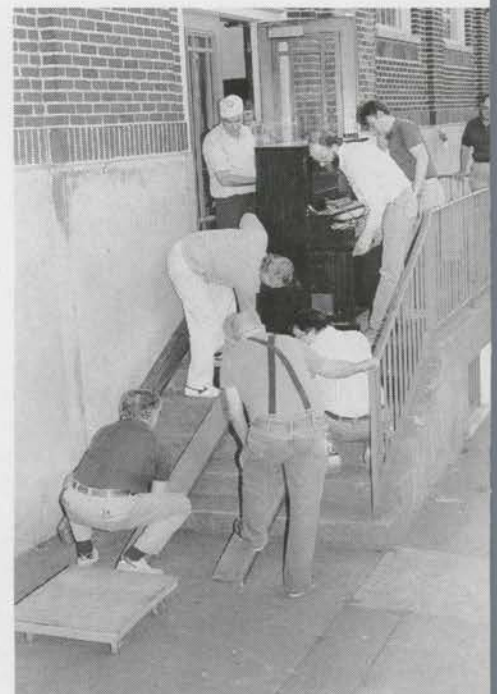
Workers Paul Quarino, Loren Minear and Ray Hughey removing pipes.



Terry Robson and Bob Shafter lowering pipe to Karen Minear and Paul Quarino.



Don James (above) steadies chest for Alva James and Karen Minear. Loren Minear stands by.



Here comes the Kimball piano.



Ray Hughey (left) stands by while Bob Shafter and Terry Robson guide the console out the door.

Quarino, Hughey, Robson and Clayton Parks steer the console onto the porch.



Down she comes ...

And into the truck ...



Because of his impending retirement, Bill mounted a "full-court press" with school district officials to obtain approval and, most important, funding. If a commitment could not be assured by June 30, Bill's replacement might not champion our cause, and the district budget might not allow it even if he did.

Bill arranged several meetings with district administrators, Cleveland staff and Oregon Chapter members, Chairman Paul Quarino, Dennis Hedberg, Loren Minear and Jonas Nordwall. The outcome of these meetings is that Jonas is tonal consultant, Dennis is engineering consultant, Paul is coordinator of Oregon Chapter volunteer assistance, and Loren Minear is the official contractor in charge of the entire project.

In addition to the considerable cost of site preparation, Portland Public Schools allocated some \$43,000 to cover the estimated costs of new windline, wiring, electric stop actions, moving materials, computer relay and Loren's labor. Can you believe it? Oregon Chapter pledged \$5000 to be added to this amount.

Because Loren estimated his labor cost based on no volunteer ATOS help, the real success of this project would depend on ATOS involvement. When the call for help goes out, our members respond, and this will enable us to purchase a few additions to the organ, i.e. a chryso-glott and a Wurlitzer Tibia. To date our members have personally contributed nearly \$3000 for special items and improvements.

Early last fall, Dennis made a digital recording of Paul Quarino, Gerry Gregorius and Bob Shafter playing the Kimball for the Archives. The next day the work crew started packing pipes and the chambers were soon emptied. The console went to the workroom in the Organ Grinder where Dennis will install the relay components, and the rest of the organ is stored in empty classrooms at Cleveland.

Work on the installation is now well underway, and our volunteers stand by to carry chests and pipes and whatever into the chambers. This crew deserves the gratitude of all who will enjoy the new sound from an old instrument: Don and Alva James, Ray Hughey, Steve Durham, Bob Shafter, Paul Quarino, Terry Robson, Harold Schwanke, Clay Parks and sons Rick and Jeff, Dennis Hedberg, Fred and Jon Bish and Karen Minear.

This week we learned that our request for a grant from the Collins Foundation was approved and we have received a check for \$7500 which will enable us to further enhance the Kimball. We are anticipating a fall dedication, and many years of public concerts on what will be one of the finest installations in the city.