



Administration Building, Pasadena City College. Sexson Auditorium is in the center of this building.

# DREAMS BECOME A REALITY

by Ralph Beaudry

## WHERE DID THE DREAMS BEGIN?

This is the brief story of four dreams  
and how they intermingled to become a reality.

### DREAM #1

When he was but ten years old Ross Reed took his first pipe organ lesson in a Pasadena church. The volume and variety of sound made a life-long impression on him though it wasn't until he was almost seventy before he bought his very own pipe organ.

### DREAM #2

Following the devastating 1933 Long Beach earthquake a new auditorium was built for Pasadena City College and in its plans were chambers to house a pipe organ. Sexson Auditorium is a 2,000 seat, fully equipped theatre — but its organ would not arrive for another fifty some years!



*Ross Reed playing the organ in his LaMirada warehouse.*

### DREAM #3

In the early nineteen seventies Ken Crome (whose family-owned organ business was established in 1898) decided to start assembling pipes and chests for the "ultimate" theatre instrument which he could install in his home.

### DREAM #4

During the seventies Marian Miner Cook's love of theatre organ resulted in her making a substantial donation to the Los Angeles Theatre Organ Society so we could one day purchase and install our own Wurlitzer pipe organ.

*continued ...*



## Now the dreams begin to merge

Ron Walls, fresh from his success with the organ-equipped Roaring 20s (now Good Time Charley's) pizzeria in Grand Rapids, Michigan, approached Ken Crome to locate another organ for his proposed Lansing restaurant.

Ken sold him the parts he had been assembling for his home organ and installed them for Walls — Lyn Larsen played the first program on the new instrument in November 1979. (As installed in Lansing the organ was 27 ranks — including a 4' Principal, three-rank mixture and Trumpet-en-Chamade which are no longer part of the instrument).

Unfortunately, the restaurant in Lansing was never successful, went bankrupt in 1983, and all its assets were put up for auction on January 26, 1984.

Learning of the impending sale, LATOS President Ralph Sargent, having received the approval of Marian Cook and the LATOS Board of Directors, flew to Lansing and submitted the winning bid of \$43,000 for the organ.

A few months later Ken Crome and LATOS members Peter Crotty and Gene Davis went to Lansing and removed the organ for shipping to Los Angeles. Rather than have to pay to store the organ, LATOS member Ross Reed generously offered to house the organ in his company's large warehouse in LaMirada (along with the former Wiltern Kimball organ which LATOS had been given by Pacific Theatres).

In his enthusiasm, Ross offered to allow LATOS to erect the organ in the warehouse and work started on chamber construction under the guidance of Gene Davis and Peter Crotty. Many other LATOS volunteers helped. To speed the installation, Ross was paying the bills for materials and some outside labor out of his own pocket. Knowing a volunteer installation would take several years, he then proposed that he purchase the organ from LATOS, pay all the costs of erecting it and make it just as available to LATOS and its members as if they owned it!

The sale was consummated in October 1985, and the organ was first heard during the December Membership Meeting when John Brown and Bob Mitchell played mini-concerts. The gala premiere was planned for March 16, 1986, with Lyn Larsen playing the organ's second dedication program.

Ross was finally enjoying the thrill of playing his own pipe organ. But he did not live to hear the dedication program for he suffered a fatal heart attack on January 3, just a week before his 71st birthday.



The organ was installed in the warehouse exactly as it had been in Lansing. Ross Reed at the console.



Ken Crome moving the console into his shop.



The organ was completely assembled in the Crome shop (except for pipework) so everything fit perfectly in the Sexson chambers.



In keeping with his wishes, the organ was finished and the dedication concert went on but with an announcement at the end of the program by the Reed family that they were donating the organ back to LATOS with the hope it could be installed at Pasadena City College which Ross (and all of his seven children) had attended.

A fund-raising farewell program was played on the organ July 20 when Dan Bellomy, Gaylord Carter, Chris Elliott, Stan Kann, John Ledwon and Bill Wright performed. \$4,000 was raised. (Subsequently the Wiltern Kimball was donated to the Faith Evangelical Church. When their plans for a suitable building did not materialize, the organ was returned to LATOS who then sold it to Jim Walgreen. The sale of the Kimball thus brought LATOS the additional money we needed to have the Wurlitzer professionally rebuilt and reinstalled.)

While negotiations proceeded between LATOS and PCC to install the organ in Sexson Auditorium's organ chambers, the school stored the organ in their warehouse.

Negotiations were concluded January 7, 1987. Under the agreement LATOS retained ownership of the organ and access to it, and the school would expend about \$140,000 to alter the chamber areas. LATOS has suitable access time to the organ for maintenance, practice time and concerts and the school has a valuable musical instrument available to its music department. (ATOS President John Ledwon teaches two of the organ courses currently being offered at PCC.)

In its new and final home LATOS planned to make the organ as up-to-date as possible and also as versatile as possible in a concert hall situation. Lyn Larsen redesigned the organ specifications, a Devtronix system replaces the mechanical relays, unsuitable ranks were sold and new ranks purchased.

Ken Crome, the man who knows the organ best, was selected to do the rebuilding and installation. Working with Ken were organ technicians Peter Crotty, Tom DeLay, Dick Schroeder and Mike Seeley along with Tim Rickman of Devtronix.



*THE MOVE: Dick Obert, Ken Crome and Paul Gaddis wheel a chest up to the stage entrance (the stage is 16' above street level).*

LATOS volunteers, under the leadership of Wurlitzer Liaison Director Stephen Ross, labored almost daily for six months. Our sincere thanks to Frank Way (LATOS Board member and Sexson Auditorium Manager), Dick Obert, Paul Gaddis, and Ralph Beaudry for their devotion from the beginning. Along the way John Dandurand and former LATOS President Sam Dickerson joined the crew. PCC stage technicians Tim Berreth and Paul Jacobs contributed their muscle and skill.

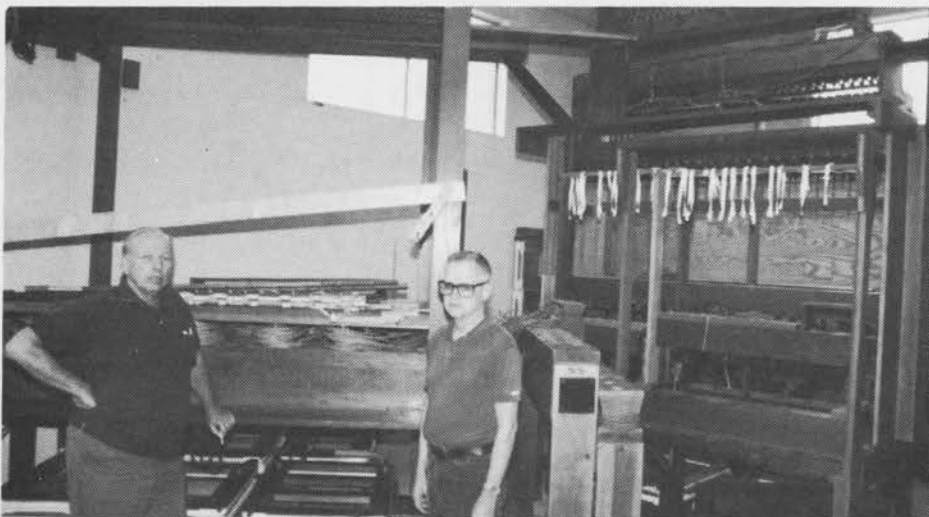
As the dedication date drew near, invaluable help was provided by Hal Sanguinetti, Phil McKenzie, Dave Adams, Shirley Obert, Walt Blanchard and LATOS President Donn Linton. Ross Reed's daughters Bonnie Armstrong and Betty Barnett worked alongside our crews, too!

On October 14, 1989, Lyn Larsen stepped into the spotlight for his *third* and *FINAL* dedication of this organ in a program titled "A Dream Come True!" This long-awaited event was a benefit for PCC to enable the school to establish the J. Ross Reed Memorial Scholarship Fund for deserving music students.

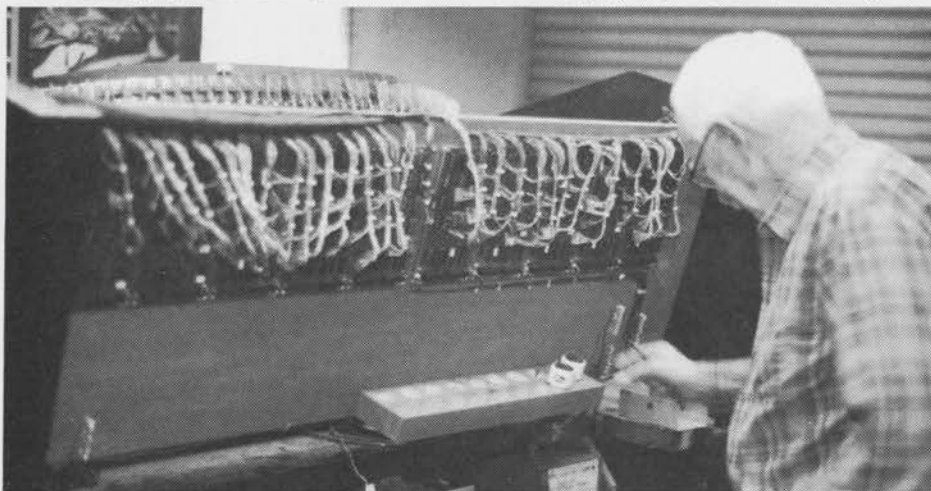
With the wholehearted support of PCC President Dr. Jack Scott, Dr. Bill Goldman and Dr. Grover Goynes and the special assistance of Shirley Burt and all the PCC staff, over \$15,000 was raised for the Scholarship Fund. AND everyone's dreams have now come true!

*(Thanks to photographers Stephen Ross, John Ledwon and Bonnie Armstrong.)*

*continued ...*



*Ralph Beaudry (left) and LATOS President Donn Linton check the progress of the Solo Chamber layout.*



*Dick Schroeder wiring the back of the console.*



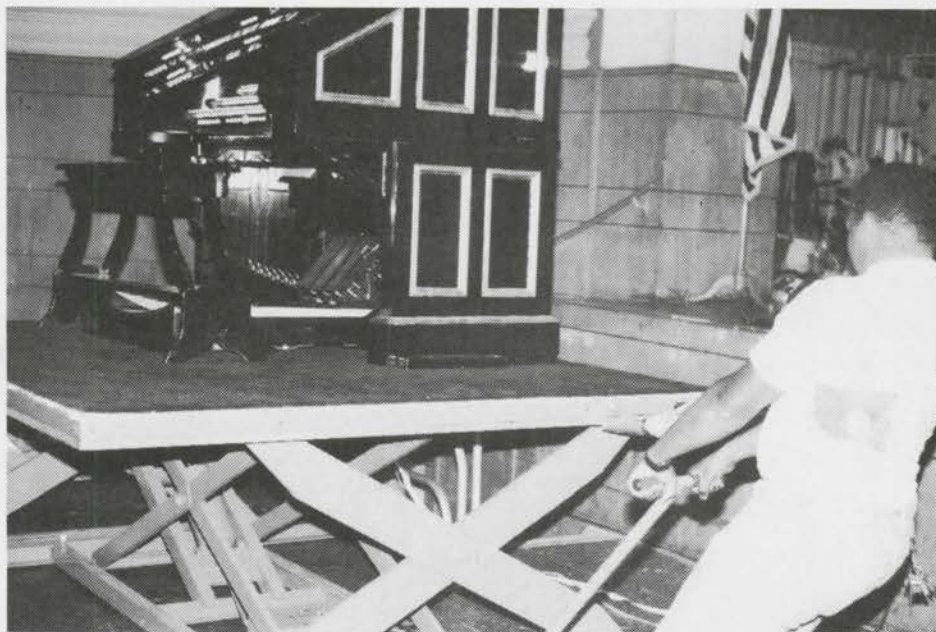
Crates of pipes laid out on the stage ready to go into chambers.



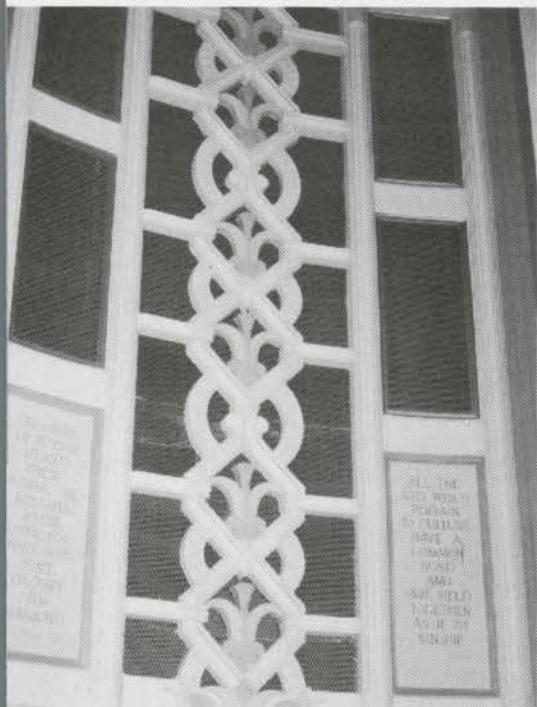
PCC organ crew members (L to R): Dick Obert, Frank Way, Donn Linton, Ralph Beaudry, Paul Gaddis, Stephen Ross.



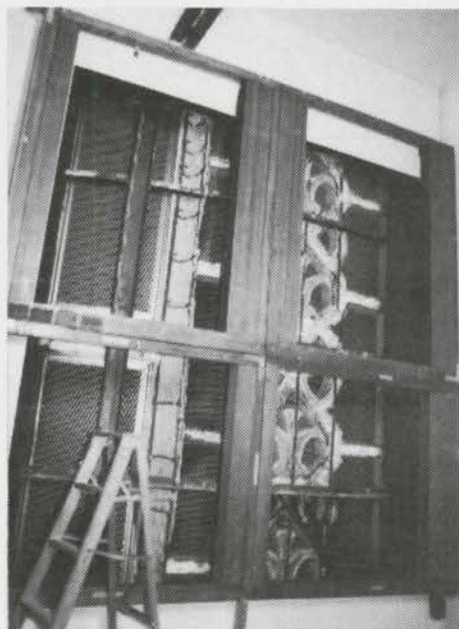
Crew members Stephen Ross, Dick Obert and Sam Dickenson waiting their "call to duty" in the chambers.



Sexson Auditorium does not have an orchestra pit, so the console lift is moveable and can be wheeled to either side of the auditorium. Here stage technician Paul Jacobs pulls the lift back to center.



Grille openings were rebuilt so the organ speaks out with no structural interference.



Framing for the four sets of shutters in the Main chamber. The Solo is identical.

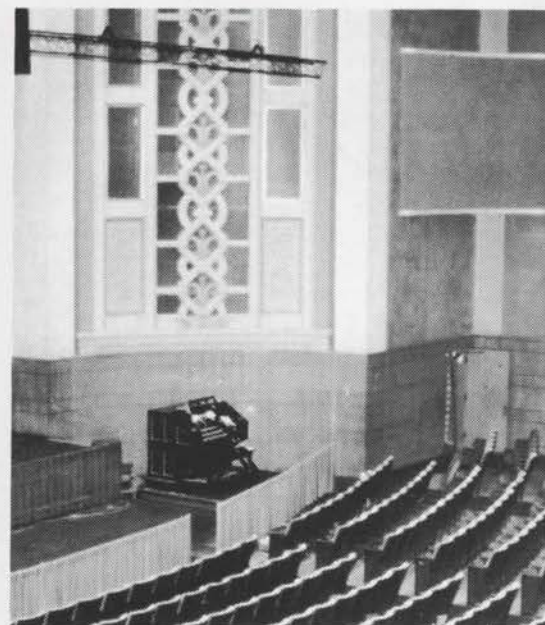


Frank Way supervising the hoisting of the 16' extension pipes up through the chamber access — a 3' x 4' trap door. (Even the seven-rank chest went through [!] with an inch to spare!





Stage manager Frank Way and Stephen Ross (at console) think they hear a cypher.



The lowered lift at house right. Note the "wings" which mask both the P.A. system and "percussion" swell shades.

## The LATOS J. Ross Reed Wurlitzer Sexson Auditorium — Pasadena City College

View of Sexson stage with Ross Reed Wurlitzer in concert position.

(diagrams of Main and Solo chambers on next pages).

### CHAMBER ANALYSIS

Rank Name	Compass Pipes	
<b>MAIN CHAMBER</b>		
Tuba Horn	32-8	85*
Open Diapason	16-4	85
Tibia	8-2	85
Clarinet	8	61
Viol D'Orchestra	8-2	85
Viol Celeste	8-4	73
Salicional	8-4	73
Voix Celeste	8-4	73
Oboe Horn	8	61
Quintadena	8	61
Concert Flute	16-2	97
Vox Humana	8	61
<b>SOLO CHAMBER</b>		
Tuba Mirabilis	8	61
English Horn	16-8	73
Trumpet	8	61
Horn Diapason	16-8	73
Tibia Clausa	16-2	97
Kinura	8	61
Orchestral Oboe	8	61
Saxophone	8	61
Gamba	16-4	85
Gamba Celeste	8-4	73
Vox Humana	8	61
*bottom octave Peterson electronic		



### Chamber Notes

All chamber dimensions are approximate (the Solo chamber is slightly smaller than the Main chamber.)

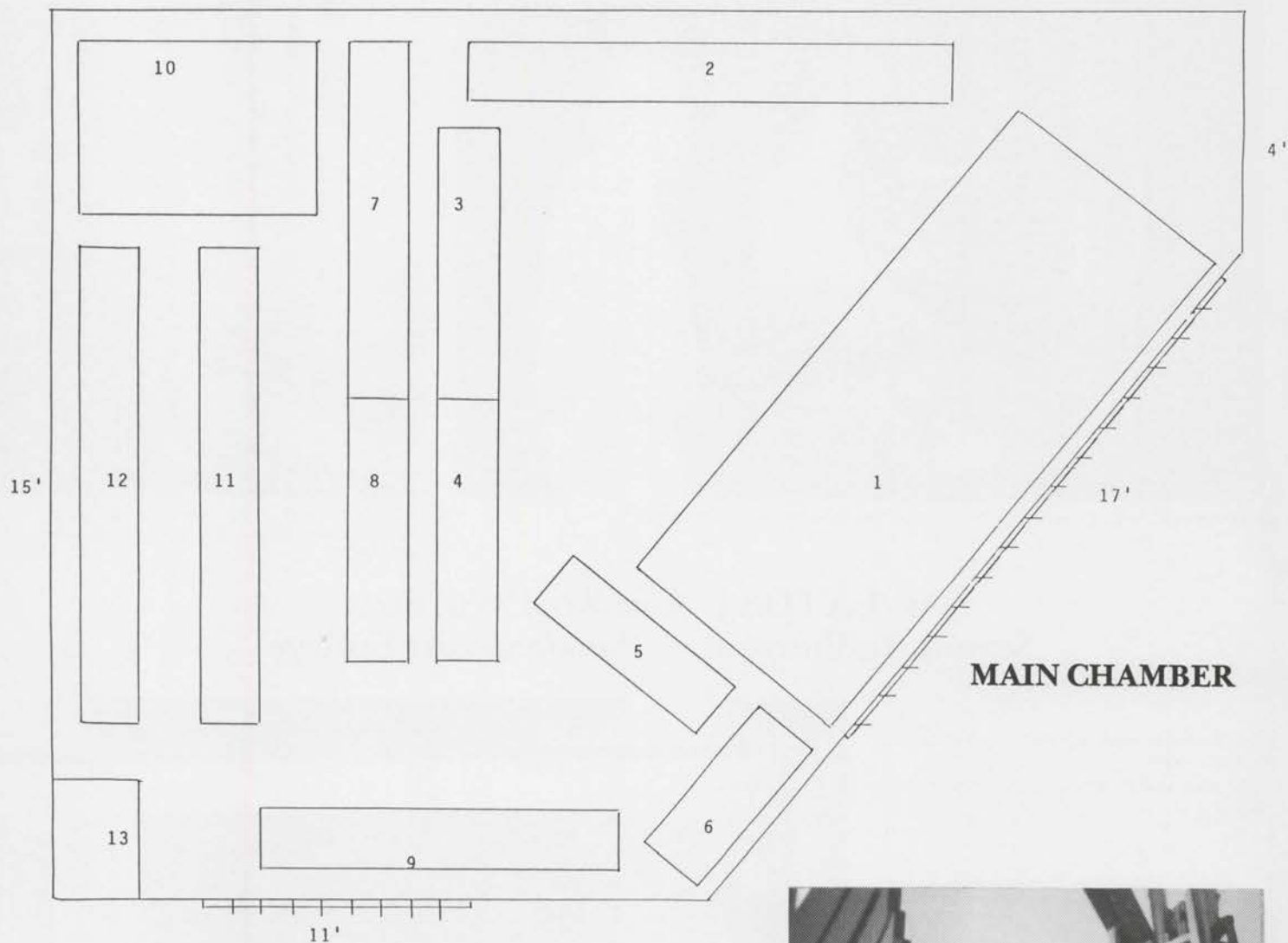
The ceiling height in both chambers is just under 17'.

Each chamber has four sets of swell shutters behind the grillework (two on top of two).

Each side wall projecting out from the auditorium wall has one set of swell shades (usually referred to as "front" or "percussion" shades).

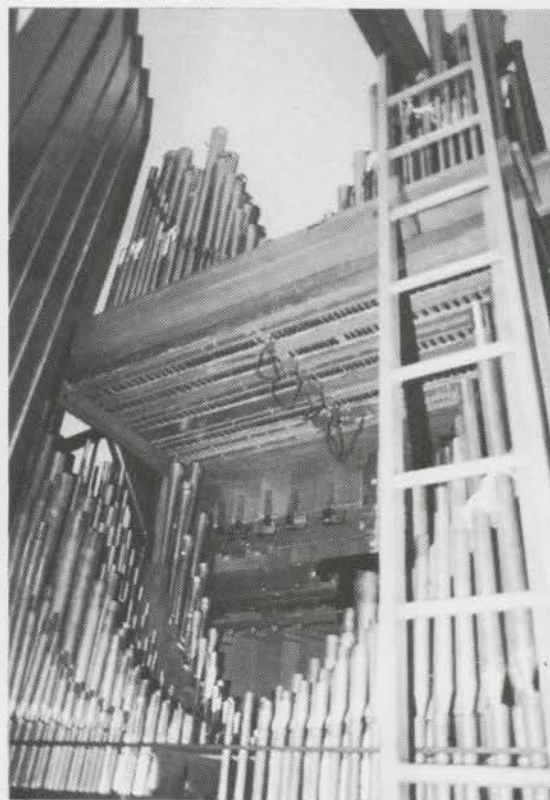
The auditorium's PA system speakers are mounted in the curved "wings" which also mask the "front" swell shades.

20'



## MAIN CHAMBER

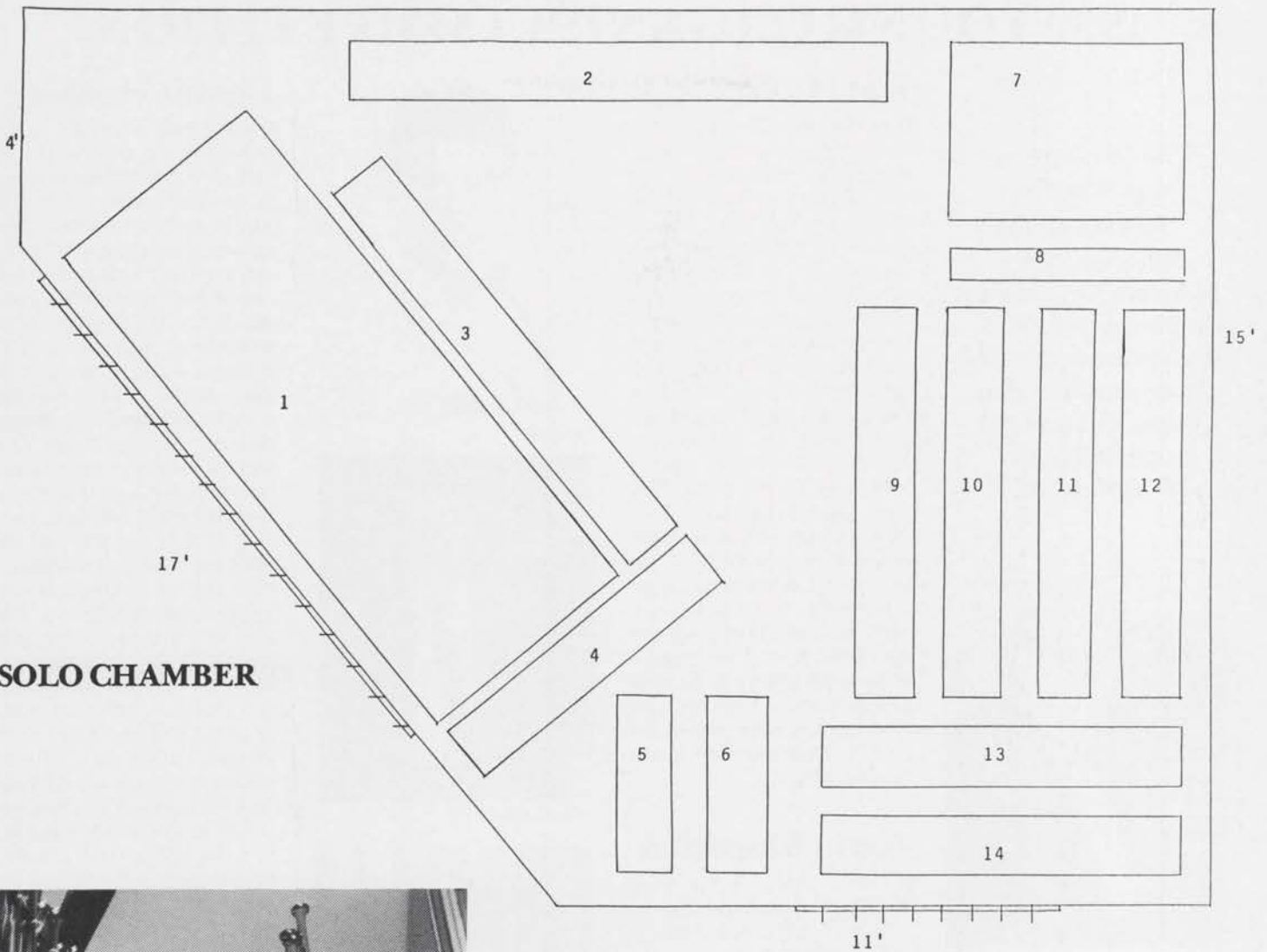
- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. MANUAL CHESTS    | 2. 16' Bourdon Offset                  |
| TOP (front to rear) | 3. Tibia Offset                        |
| Vox Humana          | 4. String Offset                       |
| Quintadena          | 5. Bourdon Offset                      |
| Tibia               | 6. Diapason Offset                     |
| Tuba Horn           | 7. 16' Tuba Offset                     |
| Voix Celeste        | 8. String Offset                       |
| BOTTOM              | 9. Chrysoglott                         |
| Oboe Horn           | 10. Access Hatch                       |
| Concert Flute       | 11. 16' Diaphone Offset                |
| VDO Celeste         | 12. 16' Diaphone Offset                |
| Salicional          | 13. 32' Peterson Bombarde (4 speakers) |
| VDO                 |  |
| Open Diapason       |  |
| Clarinet            |  |



Main chamber — note walkboard and ladder for easy access to upper chest.



20'



**SOLO CHAMBER**



*Solo chamber. The toy counter has since been erected on this side of the upper chest.*

**SOLO CHAMBER**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. MANUAL CHESTS<br>TOP (front to rear)<br>Kinura<br>Gamba Celeste<br>Gamba<br>Brass Trumpet<br>BOTTOM FRONT<br>Vox Humana<br>Saxophone<br>Tibia<br>Tuba Mirabilis<br>BOTTOM REAR<br>Orchestral Oboe<br>Horn Diapason<br>English Horn | 2. Tuba Mirabilis Offset<br>3. Toy Counter (on upper level)<br>4. Tibia Offset<br>5. Diapason Offset<br>6. String Offset<br>7. Access Hatch<br>8. Cathedral Chimes<br>9. PERCUSSIONS (top to bottom)<br>Sleigh Bells<br>Xylophone<br>Marimba<br>10. 16' Gamba Offset<br>11. 16' Horn Diapason Offset<br>12. 16' Tibia Offset<br>13. 16' English Horn Offset<br>14. 16' English Horn Offset |
|---|--|