
OPUS 1833

by Judd Walton

Ominous black clouds were gathering in the distance ahead as we drove toward home. Behind us glided our trailer loaded with the relay, main chest and last of the miscellaneous parts of my newly acquired Style E Wurlitzer. A feeling of deep satisfaction had been mine since we pulled away from the Senator Theatre in Chico, California — at last I fully realized that the organ was mine — ALL MINE!! This was the third and last load of organ parts dismantled in as many weekends, and it represented the beginnings of a dream come true. The black storm clouds ahead brought me out of my reverie, and apprehension mounted as it became apparent that we were in for heavy weather — every passing second now made this painfully clear. The fact that our tarpaulin had been forgotten at home didn't ease our minds a bit, as our well balanced load was rocking along behind us completely unprotected from the elements!

Alarmed, we could now actually see the deluge some miles ahead, and knew that it was too late to turn back. We frantically increased our speed in a desperate search for a barn, garage, or ANYTHING into which we could get the trailer. But in the wide reaches of the northern Sacramento River valley it seemed that every possible shelter had vanished! Finally some miles and precious minutes ahead, almost obscured by the approaching downfall, loomed the tower of a rice dehydrator. We literally tore down the highway in a last-minute frenzy to reach it before the storm. There simply HAD to be some sort of shelter — it was our only hope. As the first few drops spattered on the windshield, we wheeled into the yard, and found a long equipment shed with about 10 or 12 stalls, every one of which seemed filled with farm field machinery. By now the wind was whipping a pall of dust from

the yard in a prelude to the ruin that was about to descend. Suddenly out of the cloud of dust appeared the figure of a man running and pointing to the far end of the long shed. I slammed into low gear, spun the wheels in the gravel, and swung around to the end of the shed where we found one lone, lovely, dry, lovely, EMPTY, LOVELY, stall! Never before has a fully loaded trailer been backed into such a tight spot as was done in the next 30 seconds. There was time for just ONE try at it before the full impact of the gale hit with all its mighty force. The wind howled, the day was as black as night, the lightning flashed and the thunder seemed to come from the ground itself, when WHAM!!!! The deluge hit!

But the trailer was safely backed into the stall as far as it would go; far enough so that even the back end of the station wagon with its projecting organ parts was also under cover. It was DRY! Quickly we dashed across the yard at the heels of the caretaker to his cottage. From the doorway, soaked to the skin, we watched the beautiful rain come down. What a torrent it was. It had been a close call — much TOO close. Bob Jacobus, for many years my friend and associate in the organ avocation, was strangely silent. I am sure that he had simply lost his power of speech in the excitement. As a matter of fact, he still just shakes his head silently whenever the incident is mentioned, muttering something about "stupid" and "lucky".

By now, the little two manual Style E is installed in our home, with four of the five planned-for additions completed. But not without a great amount of hard work, sweat, despair, some money and a full measure of intense satisfaction and enjoyment!

In past issues of THEATRE ORGAN many beautiful and outstanding home in-



Interior view from console. Shutters are behind drapes in dining room. Mitzu, our cat, is unperturbed by organ music.

stallations have been featured. Without a doubt, these superb four and five manual instruments, meticulously installed, are the glittering stars in the theatre organ enthusiasts' heavens. There do exist, however, many wonderful theatre organs in homes throughout the world which, though they cannot possibly match for size, do stand well by comparison for beauty of tone, neatness of installation, and gratification to their owners. These are the two and smaller three manual organs which in sheer numbers greatly outmatched their larger brethren. They were the organs installed in most of the neighborhood houses, and oddly enough, even in some of the larger deluxe first-run theatres. It naturally follows that more of these smaller organs are to be found in homes. Many an ATOE member spends his evenings and weekends in a six by ten chamber laboring over his six or eight ranks, while friend wife lovingly (?) supplies hot coffee and sweets for hubby and his drooling friends!

Representing a much smaller investment and requiring much less room to stand in and speak into, it had been my hope that some day one of these smaller jobs might be mine, impractical as it seemed. One rainy day in February, 1954, I chanced by Chico's Senator Theatre and stopped in to see if the organ might still be there. What a sight to see it didn't even have dust on it! One month later to a day, the organ was mine. Safely stashed away in the basement, as well as in those of several of my neighbors (mine was crowded with a lot of other junk), I was ready to start work on a pipe chamber.

We had purchased our home a couple of years before with the idea of installing an organ in it. Real-estate agents are still talking about the screwballs who didn't like the houses they were

shown because there was no room to install a pipe organ! Be that as it may, one of the places we were shown was being sold because it was too small to encompass hubby's hobby. In the garage sat a nearly completed helicopter, but there was not enough room to install the rotor blades. After that we didn't feel quite so lonely. Our house is a typical California "elevated" with the living rooms on the upper or second story. Underneath is basement space at ground level, and on the west side was an open concrete-slab-floor porch.

No problem really; just remove the porch and there would be the place for the chamber. A rented 90 lb. jack hammer should make quick work of the concrete, I thought, but it almost made quick work of me instead! At that point I was ready to call the whole dings off! You haven't LIVED if you have not had a go at one of those babies! But I lived through it (barely) and presently had a bare ground site for the chamber. With a neighbor's help, footings were poured followed by a six inch slab floor, poured over a waterproof membrane. Cast into the floor is a wooden wind duct, 6" deep, 30" wide, and 8' long. Its top is flush with the floor, and it eliminates the need for a large wind line running through the chamber from blower to organ.

Next came the walls, roof, and then the finish work. Wall construction from the "outside-in" is stucco, 30 lb. felt, 3/4" wood sheathing, grey building felt, 3" rock wool batts, grey building felt, and 1/2" sheetrock textured and painted. The roof is similar except for aluminum foil insulation and mineral surface shingles. The entire project, including the organ layout, was first drawn up in detail and to scale, a practice heartily recommended. The entire project was a do-it-yourself-with-the-help-of-anyone-and-everyone-I-could-find, even to the installation of the 3 phase 220 volt power service for the blower.

The Chamber is 9'1" deep, 12'9" wide, and 14' high at the rear sloping up to 16' high at the front. The blower room is adjacent to the chamber and at the rear.

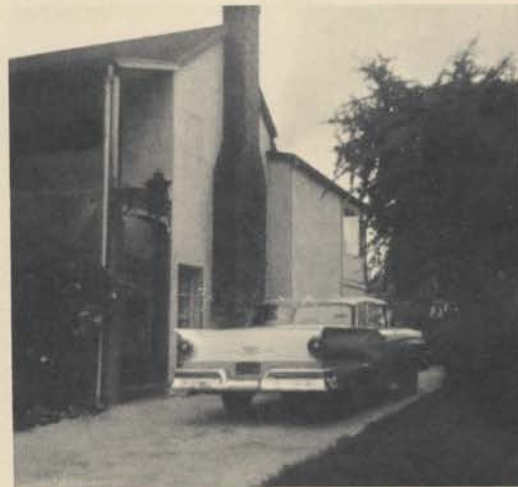
After two and a half years, working in spare time only, the chamber was done, I was done in, and a hitherto friendly and solicitous wife was unconvinced about the whole idea. We still had the installation ahead of us, and it was to be exactly four years, nine months and 11 days from that February in 1954 before we heard the first note.....still more than two years away! However, working away at it whenever time allowed, gradually the organ took shape. The duct work took the longest, it seemed, and it appeared at times as if the "plumbing" would never get finished! The wiring was a breeze, and all of a sudden one day, (I remember it was a Saturday) I tore up the back stairs, hollered to my wife, and hit a chord.....it PLAYED!!!!

That evening we blew out the chests, vacuumed the chamber, planted the pipes, set temper and tuned, and away it went. What a glorious sound it was! The four

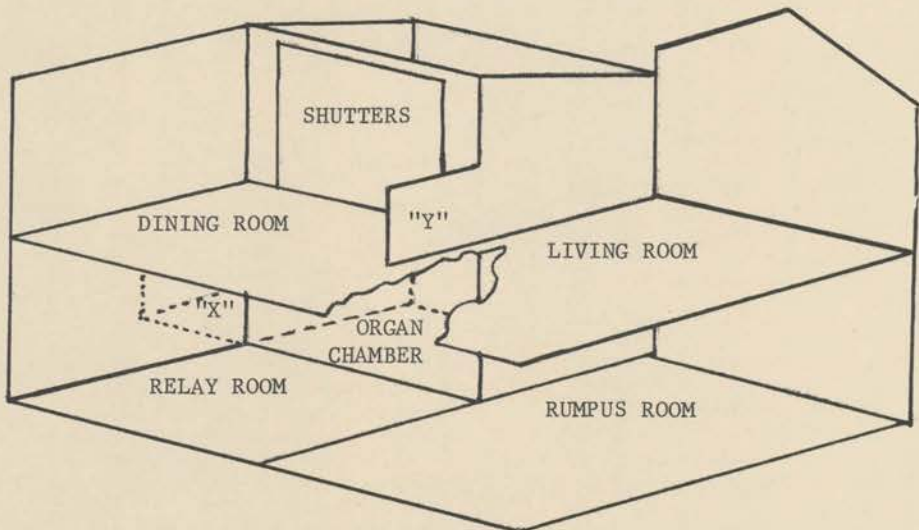
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The author raising the 2nd section of framing on the newly poured floor slab, standing in the blower room - chamber at the rear.



View showing chamber exterior behind fireplace. Blower room is under back porch. Neighbors house at right corner of picture



Schematic diagram of Opus 1833 installation. Room marked "X" is blower room at the rear of and adjacent to the organ chamber.* Console is located at the end of the living room in the space "cut out" to show detail of organ chamber. Front of house is to the right. Neighbor nearest to the chamber is 16 feet away, but does not hear organ unless it is played loudly (which is infrequent) and their windows are open or T.V. is on.

* "Y" is a room divider between the living room and dining room to provide more wall space.

SPECIFICATIONS OF THE JUDD WALTON RESIDENCE
WURLITZER THEATRE ORGAN

OPUS 1833
(Continued from page 5)

- PEDAL**
32' Holzem Fromm Floppen
16' Diaphone
16' Tibia Clausa
16' Double String
16' Bourdon
8' English Horn
8' Trumpet
8' Diaphonic Diapason
8' Tibia Clausa
8' Flute
8' Cello

- BACK RAIL STOPS**
Bass Drum
Tympani
Cymbal
Crash Cymbal
Triangle
Pedal Pizzicata

- ACCOMPANIMENT**
8' English Horn
8' Trumpet
8' Diaphonic Diapason
8' Tibia Clausa
8' Saxophone
8' Musette
8' Concert Flute
8' Violin
8' Vox Humana
8' Dulciana
4' Octave
4' Piccolo (Tibia)
4' Flute
4' Viol
4' Vox Humana
4' Dulcet
Snare Drum
Tambourine
Castanet -
Tom Tom
Chinese Block
Sleigh Bell
Sand Block Pizzicata

- BACK RAIL STOPS**
Chrysoglott
Vibraharp
Chrysoglott Dampers
Octave Coupler
8' Diaphonic Diapason 2nd T.
8' Tibia Clausa "
Cathedral Chimes "
Glockenspiel "
Solo Octave Coupler "

- SOLO**
16' English Horn (tc)
16' Tibia Clausa
16' Vox Humana (tc)
8' English Horn
8' Trumpet
8' Diaphonic Diapason
8' Tibia Clausa
8' Saxophone
8' Musette
8' Concert Flute
8' Violin
8' Vox Humana
8' Dulciana

- 4' Octave
4' Piccolo (Tibia)
4' Flute
4' Viol
4' Dulcet
2-2/3' Tibia Twelfth
2' Tibia Piccolo
1-3/5' Tibia Tierce
1' Fife (flute)
III Rk. Dulciana Mixture

- BACK RAIL STOPS**
4' Piccolo (2nd Tibia)
Cathedral Chimes
Xylophone
Glockenspiel
Chrysoglott
Violin Celeste On
Sub-Octave Coupler
Unison Off Coupler
Octave Coupler
16' English Horn Pizzicata

- TREMULANTS**
MAIN - Diap., Strings, Flute,
Trumpet
SOLO - Dulciana, Musette, Sax
ENGLISH HORN
TIBIA CLAUSA - (2)
VOX HUMANA

PEDAL 1st and 2nd Touch Switch on Bolster

Balanced Swell Pedal
Balanced Crescendo Pedal

TOE STUDS
Horses Hooves
Wind Machine
Birds (2)

Snare Drum Roll
Auto Horn
Gong (single stroke)

Gong (re-iterating)
Steamboat Whistle
Siren

PUSH-BUTTON ON LEFT ACCOMP KEY CHEEK

Door Bell

PISTONS
5 on Solo
5 on Accompaniment

(To be installed later are 10 for each manual and 3 for pedal)
NOTE: Pedal Pizzicata is a stop that is connected to the pedal trap line. When on, a pedal note when played will cause the English Horn 8' to play Pizzicata on the Solo manual on any notes being held at the time. It is also under control of the pedal 1st and 2nd touch switch, and thus if on 2nd touch, the Pizzicata effect can be controlled for any selective beat desired.

Sand Block is on a special Pizzicata Trap Relay (converted from a regular trap relay). A chord can thus be held with Sand Block on, without it continuing to sound.

of us, Bob and Lucille, Verle and I, toasted the organ and ourselves with a bottle of the finest champagne saved for the occasion.

Now that the original seven ranks were in and playing, the next task was to add the four rank chest and pipes. This took about one more year and all that now remains unfinished is the installation of the second Tibia Chest, and a few odds and ends. We have done some revoicing, and there is always something that needs doing, so it's not easy to get "lonesome". The 12 ranks were not chosen haphazardly, but were carefully planned in advance. Starting with the basic six tone colors of the minimum complete theatre organ, (example - Style D), plus the string celeste, five additional ranks were chosen to get the maximum tone color and shadings with only 12 ranks. The original ranks were (1) Diaphonic Diapason (2) Tibia Clausa (3) Concert Flute - Bourdon (4) Violin (5) Violin Celeste (6) Trumpet - Style D (7) Vox Humana. The added ranks are (8) Dulciana (9) Brass Saxophone (10) Musette (11) English Horn and (12) the still to be installed Solo Scale Tibia Clausa. The entire organ including pipe work is Wurlitzer, with one exception. Extensions added are (a) 16' Tibia Clausa, (b) 16' String (the one exception), (c) 2' Dulciana, (d) 2' Tibia Clausa. The two manual console has been refinished in maple, and although it is limited in its versatility, it is compatible with the size of the living-room. The nearest neighbor is fifteen feet from the chamber, but except for rattling their furnace, and occasionally shaking some of their canned goods off the cupboard shelves, they are not bothered by it.

The organ project has been a real lively experience and the culmination of many things. It has made me many new friends and no enemies that I know of. It's fun to share with fellow enthusiasts and dubious wives, and I keep thinking that it can't be any worse than that helicopter that crazy, mixed-up guy was building in his garage!

Would I do it again? Lord Henry, I almost thought I'd have to when I heard they were planning on putting a freeway right through our lot. But we were saved by the politicians who owned some land they couldn't sell (you guessed it... they sold it to the state for the freeway "at a sacrifice"). Saved by the taxpayers! Hey, that's ME!

