

# TWO MAMOTH PROJECTS COMPLETED

*A Wurlitzer Installed And A Complete Schematic Drawn*



A recent shot of Roy Emison of Kansas City, Kansas who has completely refurbished model 260 Wurlitzer Opus 1173.

Readers of *The Tibia* and "Theatre Organ" have on many occasions written to the question and answer column requesting a print or wiring diagram of a Wurlitzer theater organ. While it might be the intent of someone interested in performing this task, the enormity of the project almost insures that it will not be done under ordinary circumstances, time alone being a major factor to prevent it. So far as is known, a schematic wiring diagram of any of the models of Wurlitzer organs has never been turned up. If they did exist, they were probably destroyed when the Wurlitzer plant was cleared of all material pertaining to theater organs in the 1940's, when it was all removed to the rear of the factory and burned.

This task has remained for some avid theatre organ enthusiast to perform. In a

**View of blower room with 10 horsepower single-phase motor showing the direct drive generator.**



recent issue of *Theatre Organ* there appeared a for sale ad of schematic wiring diagrams of a 260 Wurlitzer. Roy Emison of Kansas City, Kansas, has accomplished a remarkable piece of work in that he has made up a complete wiring schematic of his 260 Wurlitzer. The diagram includes a representative schematic of each of the components in the organ including main chests, offsets, prop pneumatics, trap actions, percussion actions, relays, and other units down to the last detail.

Roy's interest in theater organs was sparked when he first heard one as a child and has continued and increased ever since. When a student attending junior college in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1925, the large Austin in the Newman (later Paramount) Theater was replaced by a Wurlitzer. The showroom, about two blocks from the college, displayed the console of the new organ in all its glory. To him it was at once the most desirable and unattainable object in the world and he is sure that his noseprint is still firmly embedded in the glass of the showroom window.

In 1936 Roy could wait no longer and purchased a two-manual, four-rank Robert Morton from the local "Vista" theater. The organ had been dismantled and piled at the back of the stage to allow air conditioning ducts to be installed in the chambers. He had never seen it intact but was able to erect it from marks on the framing. Roy states "feminine acceptance of such a monstrosity was at a very low ebb in those days at my house. In fact the organ was not mentioned in any but very tolerant company. No part of it must be in the house." The problem was settled by building an addition in the back of the

**View of the solo chamber showing, from left to right, brass trumpet, orchestral oboe, quintadena oboe horn and brass saxophone.**



house and the console wound up in a little room that it fit like a glove. The pipes were heard through a door opening into the rest of the house and a removable panel was cut on the outside wall at the organist's back in the event it was necessary to get into the back of the console as the panel could be removed and the console pulled out.

The organ was successful although a little loud and lacking in variety and soft effects. So—it was not much longer until a two-manual, seven-rank Wurlitzer was purchased from the local "Linwood" theater and it was added to the four-rank Morton. The console was enlarged to three-manual with two stop key bolsters and an addition was built to the chamber and the eleven ranks were soon playing.

The chamber was built from the basement level up and a tight seal was not secured between the old and the new concrete walls. During wet weather, water would seep into the chamber. Fortunately, the organ was well up from the floor and no damage was incurred. There being no drain from the chamber, the water had to be bailed out and Roy's daughter, Barbara, fitted the small space better than larger members of the family so she was drafted to go in barefoot and bail out the water. Thus probably being the only individual entitled to the rank of "organ bailer."

In 1950 it was decided that limits had been reached in this residence and an acreage some miles from the city was purchased. A new home was built in which the chamber, blower room and console niche were carefully planned for. The organ was dismantled and moved into the new house by a regular household goods

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**Grille behind which chrysoglott and piano are located with console to the right.**





"Opus #1" reed organ slave console, one manual and five pistons only.



General view of console area in living room.



View of organ shutter area behind dining room table.

mover. When he first saw the "household goods" that he was about to move, he almost walked off the job but after tackling the console together with some hand holding on the part of Roy, he finally realized that it would be possible. One of the movers was quite positive that the console cable would easily reach the local TV station several miles away. Thus with much weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, the organ was transplanted to the new residence—but it was never installed.

In 1954 Roy was able to purchase the Wurlitzer model #260, Opus 1173, shipped 10/12/25 to the Paramount Theater. It has now been installed with the exception of the bottom twelve notes of the 32 foot Diaphone which were omitted for the obvious reason of space requirements. The console has been restored to the original finish.

The organ speaks directly into a "L" shaped living and dining room from a chamber 16 feet high which extends from the basement floor to the first floor ceiling. Wind is provided at 15 inch pressure by a 10 horse power blower which has a new single phase ten horsepower blower which replace the original DC motor. Relay switches and so forth are located in the attic. The piano and chrysoglott are located in a shallow chamber with a grill but no shutters and speak directly into the livingroom.

A small reed organ, Opus #1 so far as Roy is concerned, has been converted into a one-manual slave console and has five pistons wired into the Great manual. It has no stop keys or expression pedals.

A floor to ceiling curtain has been provided which can be drawn thus completely obscuring the console from view. Roy states, "this is a throw-back from the old days when an organ in the house was enough to cause raised eyebrows. Fortunately those days are gone and the curtain is never drawn leaving the console proudly displayed to all comers."

Roy has a tape recorder built into the wall which is used for making tapes and also to provide additional reverberation. He does not play but is fortunate in that his wife is a musician.

When the Paramount Organ was purchased, the main cable consisting of 1,340 wires, had been cut to allow the console to be moved clear of a new wide screen. Very extensive tracing was necessary to reconnect it and this gave Roy the idea to make up the wiring schematic. He is now retired and thus finally found time to complete this very meticulous and arduous task. Incidentally, for the record, the two original organs are no more, having to be used for parts.

These prints are highly recommended to any enthusiast who desires to acquire accurate knowledge as to the electrical layout of the Wurlitzer organ. The information on the print can be applied to almost any size model as nearly every component included on a Wurlitzer organ of any size has been shown on the print. The prints are clear, well identified and show concise detail of each of the components. In addition to the one large print, there are about ten smaller prints which give additional fine detail on certain of the units. Roy is to be commended for the excellent job he has performed which should be of interest to every true theater organ enthusiast. Of such will the theater organ hobby be promoted for years to come.



Console corner showing drawn draperies to obscure console.



Roy's daughter Barbara, picture taken some years ago, the world's only official "organ bailer."

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