

Schober Organ Notes No. 100

December 2006/January 2007

Disclaimer: We accept no responsibility for any unfavorable consequences resulting from following our advice

OVERTURE

Happy Holidays to all. I hope that this year was a great one for you and that next year will be great as well. I have been hoping for an article or two from members reminiscing about their Schober experience and telling what they are doing now with their Schober and possibly a little of their life story. Unfortunately none have come in as yet. If you have some material I could publish, please send it to me. For the next few months I'll still be in a bit of turmoil and doing research for articles will be difficult, so -- my call is HELP! This issue is number 100! We are still going strong.

Devtronix

As far back as 2003, I have been getting questions from our members about Devtronix. It seems no one could reach Classical Organs, Inc./Devtronix. I had called Mr. Mark Voorhees, president of the company who took over Devtronix after Ray Devault passed away April 12, 2000, several times. I asked about a new catalog (mine dated to 2001) and he said he was just getting a new one ready and that he would send me one. After some of our members reported that they could not reach Devtronix, I called and did reach someone and reported that in ON. Well, now it seems that this was a fluke. Members again could not reach Mr. Voorhees. It seems he vanished and lately Devtronix components have been showing up on various organ sites on the web as well as eBay. Devtronix sold all its stock and no longer exists.

An Interesting Bit About Devtronix

I came across a web site exchange. The messages follow verbatim: I've known Artisans and Schobers over the years as being the two major suppliers of "kit organs" in the '50s through the '80s, but I discovered something I previously didn't know today. I'd picked up some "thrift store" LPs looking for grist for the sleasabay mill, but one was an RCA sleeve into which someone had mistakenly slipped a demo LP from National Sonics Corp. of Sunnyvale, CA demonstrating their "Musicraft Organ" kit. According to MITA, they offered kit organs along with accessories such as glock and a Leslie "knock off". It sounds like a direct keyed divider organ for certain, based on square wave derivation, although I cannot be sure. Parts of it sound suspiciously like a tube Schober. The LP is definitely mid-1950s (mono with "T-rim" and hula hoop end groove). Anyone ever experience one of these things? dB

ANSWER: It was Ray DeVault's (Devtronix) first entry into the organ business.

The following is an email reply from Barbara DeVault regarding National Sonics Corp.:

Hi: Oh my gosh! I can't believe the name is still around. Yes, that was our company. Ray really didn't know a darn thing about organs but enough to get by. We made and sold about 30 of them. To be truthful they were miserable. Especially the foot pedals. That is when Ray's heart trouble started. I finally told the two guys that were sponsoring us to close up the place because Ray was killing himself. So they did. That is when Ray went to work for Lockheed. His interest in organs never ceased however, as he bought an Artisan Kit and put it together. He talked a lot to Bob Eby and read a lot on organs. He built an organ just for us to see how well he could do.

He built the cabinet also. It was a beautiful little two manual organ. So then in 1970 he decided to try again and we started up Devtronix. We sold the little two manual organ to somebody, can't remember. Our first little catalog shows a picture of Ray sitting on the bench in front of that organ. Barbara

There you go dB. Better hang on to that demo record, it's probably the only one in existence.
Regards, TR

I knew that someone would be able to dig something up on these! Great detective work. I'd be glad to make cassette copies of the LP for anyone interested. As you'll concur, the early attempt was pretty awful indeed, but it was obviously an exploratory attempt, and really didn't sound much worse than Dick Dorf's Schobers that came later. The Leslie knock-off is quite obvious, and would seem that they just used a single driver with a rotating baffle, as there's no real phase modulation at all, only amplitude, similar to Leslie's cheapie Orpheum, the Model 25. dB

Chimeatron

We added a Schulmerich Chimeatron to the organ which had a small keyboard attached at the bottom right below the main organ keyboard. Switch contacts gave me problems, so when I switched to DEVTRONIX tone generators, four of the five busses on each manual were not used; only one is needed to key 15V DC for the generators. Since I had these unused busses I did away with the small chime keyboard and added the chime key circuits to the main organ keyboards. I now have chime notes available on both the Great and Swell manuals, controlled by a five position selector switch. The chime keys are the twenty five most right side keys on both Great and Swell manuals. I have enclosed a copy of the control circuit I built up for this modification. (From a letter to Fred Henn from Earl E. Reinhardt) A copy of the diagram is available for a SASE

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ADS

There are no ads for this issue. After a surge of Schobers available, mostly for free, things dried up. Possibly it's the holiday season. If you have anything Schober to sell, give away, or if you need anything, please place an ad. If you have non Schober items, even totally organ unrelated items, try an ad!

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