

Schober Organ Notes No. 62

OVERTURE

This month we have a big issue. Several Portraits which I think will make great summer reading and a few ads and other matters of interest to our group. Hope you all have a great summer. If this issue is a little late, it's because I just moved to Vermont for a while and my computer here is giving me trouble. Lost all my e-mail files while updating to the latest version of Juno. Consequently I had to scramble to find the material for this issue which was in my e-mail files. I hope I found it all.

PORTRAIT

A Schober Saga by Terry Jones.

I would imagine Schober aficionados are a lot alike. Let me tell you a story about one that might be just a little different - my mother, Helen Jones. Mama was born in 1920 and grew up in the little central Minnesota village of Henning, population about 700. There wasn't much money in the family and when the depression came it became scarcer so music lessons were a do-it-yourself affair. Mama's mother, my grandmother, was a self-taught piano player who as a teenager played in a local dance band and also in the silent movie houses so it was pretty natural for mama to learn to play too. When mama was about six, grandma showed her where middle C was on the old upright player piano and what it looked like on sheet music. This instruction and a "Theodore Dresser Home Piano Course" completed her formal music education. The long dark Minnesota winters provided plenty of time for mama to progress up to Fur Elise and onward to more challenging music.

Then mama was introduced to the organ. My uncle John, her older brother, was also self taught on the keyboard with a particular love for Bach. When he became a teen, the old rosewood pump organ in the family church became surplus and grandma bought it for him for \$3. It had only one manual and so little sister Helen would perch on the edge of the organ bench and play the pedal parts while uncle John handled the other voices farther up the keyboard. Neighbors got used to hearing Bach's Prelude and Fugue in A Minor moaning and wheezing out of the open windows of the little bungalow by the park on hot summer evenings over the buzz of cicadas and chirping of happy crickets.

Mama graduated high school in Henning, attended beautician school in Minneapolis and then on to the University of Minnesota where she met and later married a handsome young medical student, my daddy. The war came and so did I and my sister. All during these years mamma didn't have anything to play except diapers and dishpans but all that would change. About 1948 the young housewife scraped up a few hard-to-come-by dollars and rented a spinet piano. A few years later we moved to Beloit, Wisconsin where my daddy set up his medical practice. The first profits didn't go to curtains or wallpaper - but the purchase of an inexpensive piano. Mama took some formal piano lessons during this time but then a big event. In 1955 mama purchased a brand new Hammond Concert Model organ with 32 note pedal board! Wow! We had arrived! It was like moving up from an old stripped down Chevrolet to a fully-loaded Cadillac. Mama loved this instrument and played it day and night. She also widened her musical tastes by studying pop and jazz with local instructors as well as continuing her classical studies. Some of these classical lessons were taken on the local college's pipe organ - and slowly, imperceptibly, the patina wore off the Hammond. It just didn't produce a pipe organ sound!

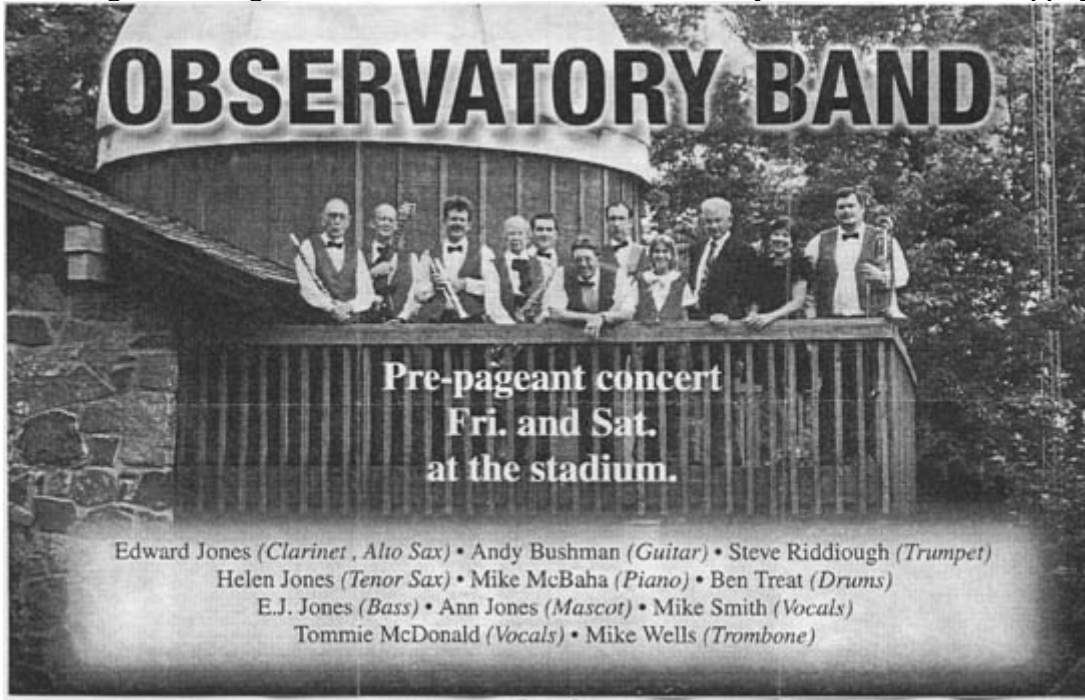
By then she and daddy had moved to Batesville, Arkansas and mama had a little more spare

time because we three children had all grown up and left home. Mama got interested in building electronic kits. She built some ham radio equipment for my brother and then a Heathkit color television for herself. One day she saw a Schober ad and sent for a demo record. I remember when the record arrived because she got so excited about the sound she called me up at my home in St. Paul, Minnesota and played the record over the telephone. Daddy bought her a complete Recital Organ kit as a Christmas present in 1975. It cost about \$4000 and the boxes filled up a lot of the basement in their new mountain top home. The first sounds came out of it on Mother's day but during the construction mama said that she got very well acquainted with James Ramsey of the Schober Company who patiently answered many questions. "The instructions were very good which was important because although I have good hands I know nothing about electronics", mama relates. Since that time the organ has received new Devtronics tone generators, a new power supply and two different amplifiers -- and is played quite regularly.

And where is the organ now? About 5 years ago mama's interests in music moved to new directions and she gave the organ to someone who had coveted it for years - me. It lives happily in

Monroe, Louisiana residing in a place of honor in my living room.

And what of mama? She's 80 years old now. Is her musical life over? Hardly! She took up the



bass guitar about ten years ago and played in several bands. About five years ago she switched to the tenor sax and is an active member of a popular local group, The Observatory Band. After she and the band played a three hour evening gig recently, I asked if she missed keyboards. "Oh, no", she replied. She reminded me that her living room was dominated by a grand piano that she still plays. "If I could find another organ to build I'd get started right now. I really miss the organ." I hope this doesn't mean she's going to ask for the Schober back. (see photo 1)

STORY

Schober and Devtronix Organs, Their Builders and Resurrections by Dean Peden

I met Steve Pavitt of Coos Bay, Oregon several years ago through the Devtronix Newsletter. He had built a Schober Theatre console and was engaged in building a Devtronix Paramount when I met him and his sweet wife Susie. A few years after he finished the organ, Susie died and he asked me to find a home for the organ. The Columbia River Organ Club helped me place and install the organ in the Hollywood Theatre in Portland, Oregon. We installed the electronic

boards and amps in one of the old storage rooms just left of the screen. The electronics cover 20' by 8' of the room. We have added eleven 100 watt amps and the large 400 lb. Rodgers P2 bass speaker cabinet and several other tone cabinets for a total of 24 tone cabinets, most with new Electrovoice speakers. I added the Keyboard systems MIDI interface with 300+ voices to all keyboards and pedals. Then last month we removed the Pratt-Read keyboards and installed wooden Wurlitzer keyboards. Donna Parker did the dedication honors for us and has accompanied a silent movie or two on it.

Of course, "Susie" is what we affectionately call the Devtronix. Steve Pavitt is now living with his family in Texas. Then I heard through the club that there was a 'BIG' Devtronix in Eugene, Oregon and went to investigate and found a Wurlitzer 235 console copy by Ken Chrome with a large generator box 3'X4'X7' full of Devtronix Paramount boards! The project was started by Charles Sutton of Canoga Park, Cal. and he developed Alzheimer's syndrome before he could complete it. His sister and Brother-in-law moved him and the organ to Eugene. My company bought it and it is being installed and completed in my home by me and other good technicians who worked on "Susie". Everything looks the same except for the console. It has rebuilt Robert Morton wooden keyboards with second touch on the Accompaniment manual. All stops are Wurlitzer copies on Syndyne electric actions with Devtronix combination boards. The toe studs and levers are Wurlitzer copies. The only percussions that came on the organ are the Devtronix Harp and Chrysoglott. I need to get me a Keyboard Systems MIDI unit and some other units for the drums to complete the installation with the Organ console in my music room and the generator box in the garage. Someone planned and made cables for 24 channels of sound. I am using only 15 at the time being and will divide or add more generators, amps and speakers. I have several generators that I have saved over the 39 years of my organ Tech work and plan on getting my Devtronix/Wurlitzer to sound like it was designed, using analog and digital systems. The organ has many problems that will take plenty of time to hunt down and fix. I plan on a "Dedication" later this year.

PORTRAIT

Our fellow Schober Orphan Steven M. Baer grew up in New York City. He was curious about electricity when he was a kid and when he was nine or ten years old, on a trip to the country, he became too curious about an electric fence that was keeping in some cows. He was knocked off his feet, but it did not damage his interest in electricity. He went to PS 187 in Manhattan then Junior High and then the Bronx High School of Science. His family had an old Emerson radio in their apartment. "It used an 80 as a rectifier and a dynamic speaker, I recall. We used to sit around it and listen to the Lone Ranger and the Shadow on it pre 1951 when we got a TV. My dad had also rigged a way that we could connect a microphone to the audio and I would play radio announcer. My folks were from Germany and Dad was into radio building there. After WWII he started reading ham radio books and we built crystal sets and later a 2 tube receiver. That (around 1949) was a pivotal event that probably led to my career choices later on. By 1953 I was building simple transistor sets using the CK722 transistor which set me back \$4.50 (probably three months of savings from my allowance and chores money). I think what I really miss is Saturday visits to the old Radio Row* in NYC which included rummaging in the musty old shops (e.g. Leeds, Blan) and the magic you could coax out of a few bucks of surplus junk. I also recall the old Hudson Terminal buildings. There was a great restaurant in the ground floor of one of them that had great pickles on the table. I think it was called Suerkins. Whenever I see the movie 'Once Upon a Time in America' it reminds me of that restaurant. Many of my friends and work associates also used to visit there regularly in the 50's and we speak of the good old days from time to time."

During this time Steve recalls "accidentally giving myself some 110volt shocks (by being stupid and careless) and never forgot them. I also once got a 2000 volt shock from an oscilloscope power supply I was working on (even more careless). I enjoyed repairing the old 'All American 5' radios back when I was in High School and early College. I worked at a TV store called

Werner's Heights TV in Washington Heights. Most of the problems were tubes, but a fair number were electrolytic capacitors in the power supply, IF cans and occasionally small capacitors in the audio coupling or AVC filtering areas. I also enjoyed working on the old 630 type TV's and their derivatives. Modern electronics unfortunately is not designed for repair."

After College and Grad School he joined Bell Telephone Laboratories in Holmdel NJ as and Electrical Engineer and spent 36 years there and in various other parts of the Bell System, including AT&T and Bellcore after the Bell System was broken up.

"Back in 1974 or so I got interested in the organ and over a period of two years built a Schober Recital. The reason it took so long is that I was commuting to Tehran at the time since AT&T was involved in helping the Iranian Phone Co. with a large modernization project at the time. I recall reading the Schober manuals on the long plane rides back and forth and doing the building between trips when I returned. Back in 1976 or '77 some issue of the Schober Organ News had a cartoon of a mad scientist on the organ with a caption 'I made it'. Since mine took so long to complete, I cut out that cartoon and still have it on the organ. Incidentally, I do not read music, so I just dab at making music. Learning to read and updating the organ are on my list of post retirement things."

Steve retired in 1999 and is now a consultant. His work has included cordless telephones, paging, ISDN, information gateways, computer telephone integration and most recently research into various types of wireless things and how they could make money. His hobbies are radio, Amateur Radio, organ, movie collecting/ watching and tinkering. ak

*Radio Row was an old New York neighborhood that was home to dozens of radio related stores. There were some beautiful old buildings (including high rises), which were all destroyed for some politician's ego so that the World Trade Towers could be built. Those are state owned so NYC gets no taxes and they are only half occupied. ak

LIBRARY OF STOPS SYSTEM

By Doug Steeves

This organ voicing system was developed for the Schober Recital organ and provided an opportunity for individual voicing of every stop on the organ. Each organ voice was constructed on an individual circuit board, about 3.5" by 1.25", complete with gold-plated edge connectors that plugged into matching hardware mounted on the large circuit boards housing the bus amplifiers and other circuitry including such things as the 'woodwind' circuits at various pitches.

These large circuit boards noted above, called 'voicing boards' by Schober, were mounted on the rear of the stop rail and each voice stop tablet connected to a gold spring (Schober used these for many things in their instruments) which simply grounded out the tone for the stop when the stop was 'off' and lifted the ground connection when the stop was 'on', thus allowing the stop to sound.

Because each voice on the Recital organ was 'self-contained' on it's own circuit board, there was no sharing of voicing components between the various stops on the organ. This meant that the volume as well as the timbre of each stop could be changed simply by changing the components on the voice circuit card. Of course one could even build completely new voices and simply plug the voice card into the voicing board for even more flexibility! The instructions that Schober sent with the "Library of Stops" kit provided some electronic theory on how to construct stops of the various types: flutes, reeds, strings and Diapasons. Some components were included with a construction kit.

The voice card circuit boards, of course, are no longer available new, only used. If sufficient interest were expressed in having a number of these made on a 'custom order basis', we could explore that possibility. Please let Alexander Kruedener know.

LIBRARY OF STOPS CIRCUIT CARD 11231

Doug Steeves is a Canadian member of our group. In Canada they could be made for about U.S. \$3.50 each if more than 100 were ordered. Anyone interested? Does anyone know of a firm in the U.S. that could do this kind of work? If there is interest Doug and I will explore the possibilities further. ak

TRANSISTORS

We have found good replacements for the Schober 046127 transistor, both in the original Germanium and also a quieter Silicone. However no one had ever found a record of what the original actually was. Usually Schober would place an "04" in front of a standard part number and make that the Schober number. For instance a 12AX7 tube became Schober part number 0412AX7 and a 2N2147 transistor became Schober part number 042147. This connection was never found for the 046127 transistor as far as I know. Well, now that I have some of the original Schober specification sheets, here is what I found. Of several sheets dated 3/4/63, describing this transistor, one had the following notation on it (crossed out): "Same as Philco type T-6127". On another sheet with the same date, this notation is gone and another one states that branding the transistor 046127 is mandatory 1/20/69. I cannot find a T-6127 listed in any transistor book that I have. (However, I found plenty of transistors marked T-6127 on Schober circuit boards.) Possibly Philco had a very short run of these? I would speculate that Schober turned to another manufacturer, as I found one, and only one Schober transistor marked 046127 around the body and 2N404 on top! The 2N404 was a replacement recommended by several members, they were right. ak

INFORMATION BULLETINS

Several more Information Bulletins are added to the list of available ones in ON 60. They are:

BN 022, RV-1 Hum Elimination;
BN 033 Synchronization of Tube Type Tone Generators;
BN 047 Percussion Hum Reduction Procedure;
BN 048, RV3A Oscillator Modification.

A SASE will get you any Information Bulletin on the list. Only BN 46 requires a two stamp SASE and two extra stamps. ak

BUFFALO CHAPTER OF ATOS

Eugene W. Wallmeyer writes: "You may be interested in passing along information on the Buffalo Chapter of A.T.O.S. The president is Norma Marciniak, 716-694-9158. We are always interested in new members @ \$35.00, which includes the National Organ Magazine for the year and a chance to play the mighty Wurlitzer organ at the Shea's Theatre in Buffalo. We have some members from Rochester, NY, Erie PA and Canada.

DEVTRONIX

Connie de Kam writes that Mark Voorhees, Classical Organs Inc. 602-973-1395 took over

Devtronix and will soon have a list of Devtronix and Schober parts.

ADS

Free Recital with Rezounder and documentation

Contact: Jim Evans 32 Valleybrook Dr. Bradford, PA 16701 814-362-6428 kje2@imap.pitt.edu

Needed

A Recital preamp board (11407A) and a great voicing board (11233A). Please contact: Doug Steeves 11 Heather Drive Moncton, N.B. E1E 1C6, Canada 506-382-7463 steevda@nbnet.nb.ca

Wanted

A Optigon Organ, made by Mattel in the 70's Contact: Luke Perry Doidy34@juno.com

Wanted

The assembly instructions, etc., for the LSS 100 speaker system. Please contact me. Alexander Kruedener, 73 N Lamphear Road, Jamaica, VT 05343, 802-874-4894, Kruedener@Juno.com