

Schober Organ Notes No. 80

OVERTURE

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

OVERTURE

I hope that this newsletter finds you all well and enjoying your Summer. I made my Summer move to Vermont from New York and unfortunately cannot publish the photos of the endless loop cartridge in this issue due to some computer difficulties here. I hope to do so in the next one.

The Demise of Schober

The following are excerpts from a 1994 letter sent by Ray L. DeVault in response to questions asked by a Schober owner:

"Here are the answers to your questions asking about Schober's history. Schober did not "fold" on any specific date, but in general it was the Spring of 1981. They did not go bankrupt, but just ceased operation because of poor cash flow and they could not pay their bills.

"Technology was passing Schober by and Richard Dorf was afraid to go into things he didn't know anything about so sales diminished. Also, companies like Devtronix were much advanced in technology. This left a great number of customers "holding the bag" with partially finished organ kits.

"Richard Dorf phoned me one day around this time and asked if Devtronix could help the customers complete their Schober kits. I said we could probably help most of them as far as the electronics went. I was sent their mailing lists and a couple of boxes with about 500 letters from customers asking for parts, assistance and what happened to Schober Organs as the phone was disconnected.

"[As to] Schober stock [of parts, etc.], I understand there was not a lot of stuff, but what was left was sold at an auction at the company offices.

"For your information - Jim Ramsey (Schober's public relations person), played almost all of his demo records (except the classical side of one LP) and answered all customers' letters and phone calls. Jim went to work for Rodgers Organ in N.Y. after Schober closed. One evening around 1984 as he was going home on the bus, he had a massive heart attack and died. He was a very nice person. We had many phone calls regarding Schober's closing and how to help the customers.

"Richard Dorf, president of Schober Organs, originally formed the company with a technical writer/publisher by the name of Henry Schober. As the company got started, Dick Dorf bought out Schober's interest and Dorf kept the name as they had already written magazine articles about it. Dick Dorf died June 27, 1989 of lung cancer at age 68.

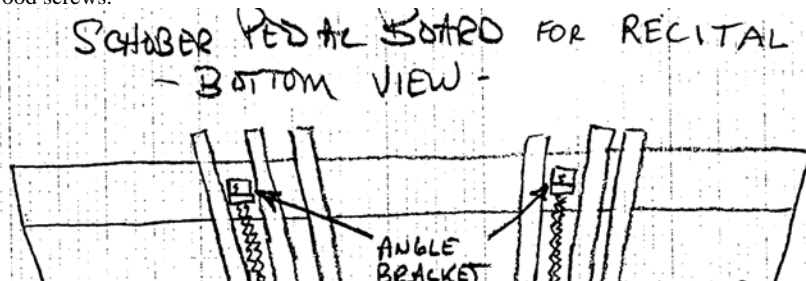
"Bob Avedon, the long time chief engineer is still around and active, but not in the organ field. He left Schober a year or two before they closed because Schober wouldn't let him improve the designs. Near the time when things were getting tight with finances, a fast talking con man convinced Dorf he could save the company by designing a modern technology three manual classical and theatre organ. Bob Avedon had started a three manual classical model on his own, but Dorf wouldn't let him finish it, so the con man did a little work on it and got it running. He then wrote all the customers to send in \$8,000 for this new wonderful organ all built up and running. Because of Schober's good name, many people sent in the money and the con man put the money in his own bank account. Of course, there were no organs to ship and all the customers got were excuses and after a while realized they were "taken". Dorf didn't really realize what was happening until then but eventually fired the guy. Dorf's brother was a local attorney and was able to attach the con man's bank account and return most all of the money as they were closing the company. There were no three manual theater organs ever started."

More about the wonderful Jim Ramsey and his efforts to help Schober customers (at his own expense and time) after Schober's demise in the next issue of Organ Notes. [AK]

Recital Pedal Board Fix

The original factory built pedal boards for the Recital were troublesome because of the tension springs which were located at the toe end of each pedal. These springs were flimsy and would break. Schober came up with a kit that replaced these springs with coil tension springs and issued Information Bulletin BN-39 in November 1969. The pre-assembled pedals were replaced with a pedal kit which used torsion springs at the pivot end of the pedals. These had no problems as far as I know. Back in 1999 I found some material that indicated Phillip Becker had designed a great fix for the problem some years ago. I asked him if he could send me the information and he kindly did. In Organ Notes 59 I offered to send anyone who was interested Phillip's plans and/or BN-39. Many of you sent for them. Now some of our members seem to have difficulties with broken springs again, so I'm publishing his plans, etc., in this issue. Here in parts is what Phillip wrote. See his diagrams at the end of this issue:

"I will try to relate the concept of the pedal spring modification, which I did to two instruments, successfully. There was some variation in Schober pedals over the years. This modification is for the version where there is very little space between the heavy, curved plywood board in the frame and the floor. The concept is to replace the tension springs at the toe of each pedal note with a torsion spring at the pivot point of each pedal key. Since this will put the pedal board frame under significant torsion to oppose the combined torsion of each pedal key, you would start by reinforcing the pedal frame. The two units I worked on both had weak glue joints on all four corners and even some fractured plywood. So, first add corner blocks to all four corners of the frame, securing with glue and wood screws.



"The next step is to add two 1/4" x 20" threaded rods, which resist the tendency

of the large curved plywood block to deform in the middle under the load of the springs. The rods are anchored to the large curved plywood block between the centers of adjacent E and F notes. Since the clearance to the floor is small, it may be necessary to cut a groove into the plywood for the rod and its clamp with a chisel. I used a half of a cable clamp that was curved and had two holes in either end to clamp the end of the threaded rod to the large curved plywood block and secured it with wood screws. Perhaps a clamp from an electrical conduit fitting would work. Use a nut on the end of each threaded rod. The console end of the threaded rod is attached to the transverse frame member with a metal bracket screwed to the wood and drilled to clear the threaded rod. I used two pieces of steel angle iron that I cut and drilled. Add a nut and lock washer to the end of the threaded rod as it passes through the bracket. Snub the nuts initially. As the springs are tensioned later, it will be necessary to increase the tension in the threaded rod by tightening the nuts so that the large curved plywood piece is not pulled downward toward the floor.

"The next step is to fabricate 32 springs. I used hardware store flat galvanized steel strips - in the same part of the store as the angle iron and the steel rod. I would guess the thickness was 1/8" or 3/16". The idea is to get something with some give to it, but not too weak. The deflection of the spring as the pedal is depressed is quite small, so a heavy spring is needed. I recall that the width of the flat galvanized strip was a little more than the width of the pedal key, something like 1/2" or 1". The length of each spring was about 4". Cut 32 pieces with square ends out of the strips with a hacksaw. Drill a clearance hole for a 3/16" bolt at about 1/2" from the end. Both holes are on the centerline of the strip. File off sharp edges.

"Purchase some boxes of 3/16" X about 1-1/4" stove bolts, washers and lockwashers at the hardware store. I'm not sure of the length. 32 of the bolts need to pass through the pedal pivot, the new spring and the large curved plywood piece. 32 of the bolts need to have a jam nut threaded most of the way up the bolt before it is threaded through the spring. This screw bears on the underside of each pedal key. I believe the original Schober design for the pedal key pivot was one or two wood screws into the large curved plywood piece. That is not sufficient to withstand the force of the new spring, so it will be necessary to drill a hole straight through the large curved plywood piece, one for each key. Make sure the drill hole is perpendicular to the surface as it goes through the block. Since there is little clearance to the floor in the center, I counter-bored the hole to take screw head and washer. This bolt has to be tightened to the point where the plywood starts to deform as a small amount of looseness here will lessen the spring action considerably. Thread a screw with the jam nut through the tapped hole in the other end of the new spring and tighten until it bears on the underside of the pedal key. The force is adjusted by simply tightening the screw. The screw is kept from loosening by tightening the jam nut against the spring. Tighten each spring slightly and then tension the threaded rods to compensate. Then tighten each spring until you obtain a satisfactory amount of pedal force. Re-tension the threaded rods once again. You will find that this system can produce a fairly crisp pedal feel. The spring tensioning screws may need occasional readjustment and the treaded rods may need to be tightened as the pedal frame flexes and the springs seat into the plywood. Maybe once a year would be enough.

"One other thing that I did after I achieved the pedal return force I desired was to put felt pads between the sides of each pedal key and the brass guide pins on either side. The felt thickness was about 3/16". That removed the side to side sloppiness that always plagued the original design. Maybe weather strip felt would work. I had some felt pipe organ valve disks that worked very well."

[Organ Supply Industries sells Pedal springs 4" X 7/8" X 1/8". Part 0350.01. These springs have 3 holes drilled into them I don't know at which points. (Phone 814-835-2244)] AK

For members who receive Organ Notes via E-mail: If you wish to see the diagrams mentioned above and photos mentioned below, please send me a SASE and one 37 cent stamp, for a hard copy of ON 80, to my Summer address: Alexander Kruedener, 73 N Lamphear Road, Jamaica, VT 05343

ADS

ADS DISCLAIMER: ANY DEALS, MAKING OF PAYMENTS, RECEIPT OF PAYMENTS OR VERIFICATIONS ARE STRICTLY YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

WANTED

Doug Steeves is looking for a working single board Schober Tone Generator for his Recital. If you can help Doug, please contact him at: 11 Heather Dr. Moncton, N.B. E1E 1C6 CANADA Tel: 506-382-7463 Email: steevda@nbnet.nb.ca

FREE THEATRE SCHOBBER

Theatre organ with Reverbatape, Percussion, etc., in good playing order is available from Bob Markworth in Omaha, NE. Tel: 402-573-9071 Email: Markworth4@aol.com

FREE CONCERT HYBRID

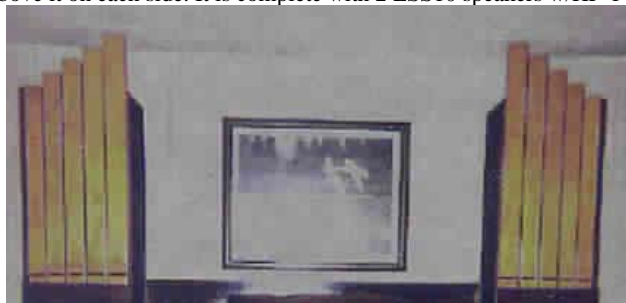
Concert Electronics in a non-Schober console. Looks somewhat like a spinet piano, but has pedals of course. In Corona New York. Contact: Letha at: Tel.: 718-335-6589 Email: Lizcomp@aol.com

RECITAL

I have a photo here of a beautiful Recital with simulated pipes above it on each side. It is complete with 2 LSS10 speakers w/HF-1 high frequency extension kit, presets, Reverbatape and Schulmerich Carillon. For the price of the Carillon alone. BEST OFFER. Organ Located in Norristown, PA. Contact: Vladimir R. Weiss New Phone: 610-728-5167 E-mail: vweiss123@Juno.com

FREE THEATRE SCHOBBER

I have another photo of an absolutely beautiful Theatre Schober built by Frank Tate who unfortunately can no longer maintain it.





It comes complete with an Autotuner.

Located in Columbus Ohio. Contact Frank at: Tel: 614-888-3003 E-mail: fjt8@columbus.rr.com

INFO WANTED

Francine Wiest Jansen is looking for the organ that her father John F. Wiest built in 1961. He was written up in the Denver Post newspaper on November 19th, 1961. It is for sentimental reasons that she wants to find this organ. It is probably a Spinet. If you have any information whatever, please contact: Francine Wiest Jansen, 6767 Vivian Street, Arvada, Colorado 80004 Tel: 303-431-4212 Email: francine@qwest.net

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Fred Henn Founder & Headmaster Emeritus

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Schober Organ Orphans' Page: <http://www.users.cloud9.net/~pastark/schober.html>