

Schober Organ Notes No. 83

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

IN MEMORIAM

Laura Ramsey : December 20, 2003

Our friend Laura Ramsey passed away on Saturday, December 20, 2003. She was the wife of our very good friend James Ramsey, Schober's public relations person. James had helped Schober owners before and after Schober's demise. With his help, the help of Ray L. Devault and Fred Henn (the founder of the Schober Orphan's Group), many an incomplete Schober kit was completed. After Jim Ramsey's death Laura Ramsey helped our group whenever she could.

I was trying to get in touch with her to get some input and approval of an article I was going to do about her husband, but due to her illness she was not able to respond. I received the sad news from Mrs. Lillian Mele, wife of one of our former members. I am in touch with Laura Ramsey's executor who said he will send me a copy of her obituary. I will publish it when I get it. Again I will have to postpone the article about Jim Ramsey.

OVERTURE

There are several Schober Organs available for free. Please spread the news!!! We want to save the products of hard long loving assembly hours and keep Schobers in service. They still sound great when properly maintained!

I hope you are all looking forward to a great spring. The winter has been tough!

AIRBAGS FOR THE "PUFF OF AIR" THEATRE SCHOBERS PRESET SYSTEM

Our member Warren Jones has been working on several Schober projects. In the last issue we had an article about and a photo of his continuous loop Reverbatape conversion. In other issues we had information on construction of the air bags that operate the stop switches in the "puff of air" system. He has made tremendous progress, and now anyone who wants to put some work into a failed "puff of air" system can fix it because of Warren's work and research. (Thanks also David Bruce.) Here are two of his letters:

Hello Alex, *January 8, 2004:*

This seems like a long winter already and it's only Jan. 8th, so I've finally done some work on installing air bags on the stop tablets for the Combination Action. I revamped the fixture to provide better speed control and pressure of a wider sealing probe and now have a repeatable process using Polydon. To insure the edge seal is strong enough, I use fairly high heat which results in some very minor leakage right at the edge seal. I paint the sealed area with PVC glue (Plastic Glue #320 from Player Piano Co.) and dust it with talcum powder to reduce the tack. This eliminates the leaks and should make the joint stronger.

I sent vinyl bags to David Bruce; Alice Springs, Australia back in May and he discovered the way to install them. He also had several blowouts at the seal. The original design used a heat probe width of .090 on a 5/8 inch square grid. I now use a probe width of .120 on same 5/8 inch grid for both vinyl and Polydon. This allows for more error in cutting them apart and still have

enough sealing width for strength. Sent David a set of Polydon air bags last week but he said the Schober project (had all of the pedal division and some of the accompaniment working) would take a back seat to getting work done on his three manual organ. As I said before, David found the secret to installing the air bags as stated in his 11 June 03 email.

"I originally tried with gluing the pouches to two stops, and had 100% success rate using superglue. However, I have since discovered that the pouches, originally, were not glued in place at all. If you look closely at the area where the pouch attaches you will see that there are two concentric rings. The inner ring with the air hole in it will pull out or lever out. I have found that a small jeweler's screwdriver works well. Once that is pulled out, you will see the original pouch material either on the sides of the ring, or the sides of the hole in the stop assembly. So, I have been putting the ring inside the pouches you supplied and then pressing them into place.

When you look at the size of the ring and the size of the hole in the pouches, you will think it is not possible, but so far I have had 100% success on 8 stops (16 pouches). I first insert a small flat blade screwdriver into the pouch (through the hole) and run it around the inside of the pouch to allow a little bit of air in to separate the layers. Then with a pair of circlip pliers, I gently ease the hole into an oval shape running diagonally across the pouch. Then, with the ring placed onto the tip of the same jeweler's screwdriver used to remove it, the ring can be slipped quickly into the pouch. Within seconds to minutes the elasticity of the pouch material will have returned the hole to its original shape and size. Then it is a simple matter of centering the ring in the pouch and pressing the pouch into the stop assembly. I use a block of wood to press the pouch in, and so far have had 100% success. I had one pouch blow out at the seam during testing, and it was a very easy process to remove the pouch and install a new one."

I now have installed Polydon air bags on all my stop tablets using this procedure except I use the shank end of a 1/16 inch drill bit instead of the screwdriver and put PVC glue (with fine size Microbrush found in hobby and model stores) in the inside diameter of the tablet hole before pressing the air bag and washer in place with a round nylon rod. I have also removed and reinstalled air bags this way.

I haven't reinstalled any stop tablets yet, still checking each one individually with a two ounce oval plastic air bottle (squeezed quickly) to actuate tablet and a 12 volt battery charger (little low on voltage) for cancel.

Have found lots of external air leakage at the plastic cap joint and cross leakage between the passages at spacer joint. Sometimes have a little leakage around the solenoid core. I separate each joint carefully, polish with very fine abrasive paper and glue with general plastic solvent cement 'Plastruc' found in hobby and model stores. The biggest problem has been at the metal slug (controlled by the solenoid) in the top cap not sealing off the cancel passageway, resulting in both air bags expanding and tablet not moving. This also requires removing the top cap, polishing both the plastic sealing surface and the metal slug, again with very fine abrasive paper. A time consuming operation but results in outstanding actuation. I probably will take the time to repair some stop tablets that act sluggish which have small leaks.

I would estimate that the removal of stop tablets, disassembly and cleaning of bits, installing of air bags, reassembly and installation of stop tablets not counting the wiring and system air plumbing will be between 16 to 20 hours. This could be a little less or more depending upon how many leaking or malfunctioning stop tablets are found. I will get some of the remaining work done and maybe the organ back together before we leave end of January for our southern escape. I'll let you know how things work out if there is time before we leave. I do have two sets of Polydon air bags made up if you know of any takers. Cheers and Happy New Year, Warren

* * *

Hello Alex, *January 21, 2004*:

I guess I'm getting old. The installation of the stop tablets and wiring seemed to be a lot more work and time than the original effort. The big problem was getting all the tablets to function not the airbag. Had only one airbag leak after installation on the tablets and it was at the plastic washer not the bag. Time will tell but do think the Polylon airbag is a winner.

As I said, the problem was air leakage at the metal slug resulting in activate airbag expanding and blocking tablet cancel action (both airbags expanded at same time). I lost count but think over half of the tablets required the top cap to be removed, metal slug and mating surface smoothed with very fine abrasive cloth and cap reglued. Two or three had leakage between the passages in the plastic block for the solenoid. All the tablets are now functioning although a few are lazy because of air leakage at the metal slug. They move part way past center but then need for the activate airbag to deflate to seat.

Installed the stop board and tried to cancel all the stops at once with the solenoid air cylinder and found the overall leakage was too high. Only the first 10 to 12 stops moved. Checked and glued the air tubes some more but in the end, had to remove most of the lazy tablets and smooth the metal slug which means the total tablet repair count was over 30. This is not easy but can be done. Moral is to do it right the first time and pay attention to even small leakage. The system is functional but cannot cancel the entire 48 tablets on the first actuation. Still needs some leak reduction since I've increased the piston stroke to maximum.

I had several problems in getting the organ back to playing which took a lot of troubleshooting time and effort. Still have two switches on the Combination Action that are not functioning correctly and the Vibrato is dead. I have traced the Vibrato problem to bad lamp in the LDR. Reread Organ Notes where you noted having never found bad lamp. I'll send this one to you if you want or will try to open it up myself. I measured the other three LDR at 100 ohms and this one is open. All four are of the hard molded plastic. Contacted All Electronics to obtain the lamp and photoresistor you listed in ON 51. They have the lamp #LP-8099 but not the #PRE-13 photoresistor. The other source at Hosfelt for 24-136 had no listing for it. Local Radio Shack has a 12 volt 50 ma lamp and multi pack of photoresistors but thought I would check with you first. This work will wait until we return in March. Regards, Warren

A LITTLE MORE ABOUT REVERBATAPES

Our Member John Mondrosh writes:

In the last news letters, I see a lot of info on the Reverbatape units and the short continuous loop. I no longer have my Reverbatape unit having traded it in for the Rezounder. When I used the Reverbatape unit I was disappointed with the Schober tape loops with the bump as the weld went through the heads so I simply used regular 1.5 mil tape which lasted just as long as the Schober stuff. I simply made a regular 45 degree bias splice using regular splicing tape and the tape performed as well and if not better. I tried 1.0 mil tape and .5 mil tape but the bump became more pronounced so I found that thicker recording tape and the thinnest splicing tape worked the best. Also I would recommend experimenting with the length of splicing tape to smooth the bump. It never eliminated the bump but was a slight improvement. If any folks have a Reverbatape unit I would recommend this method. The Rezounder works well but I find that on certain notes there is a cancellation of the tone causing drop outs. It is most pronounced on the pedal notes. The organ is still performing like new since all those transistors burned in. There were a lot of replacements in the first few years. I built the Recital in 1969. WOW, what a relic. I recently was party to acquiring an organ for our church and the organist and I selected a 4 manual Renaissance Allen electronic organ. I played it several times and my heart was eaten out as it is in a 35,000 sq ft church with 90 ft ceiling. It has 12 channels, 1200 watts of power and an antiphonal speaker system in addition to the multitude of speakers up front. It has a blast of stops and sounds like a pipe organ. The reverb system enhanced the effect of a larger church. Lowest pedal is a 64 ft C. We had to secure some rattling doors during installation. Also it has a

disk recording and playback system that allows the organist to program the music before hand. It ONLY cost \$120,000. Oh well back to reality. Now if I ever win the lottery.....
HMMMM..... John

A LETTER FROM NEW MEMBER CRAIG BROWNING

One thing that might be of interest to some people, If someone has the original tuning record Schober put out have this as an audio download (make sure it is recorded at exactly A=440Hz). I tune pianos so I basically don't need it.

One thing I might be interested in is a download to CDR file of Equal Temperament and historic unequal temperaments and the like arranged for the Schober oscillator setup. This might be very useful and interesting. Another topic, I might have mentioned this before: Plug-In replacement boards for the Recital organ to turn it into a Digital instrument. Using at least some of the old analog keying and voicing signal paths to run digital keying data and plug-in logic boards into the old oscillator and voicing board sockets, MIDI into an Ahlborn Archive module, Allen Expander and/or two or Artisan Ranks in a Box and "Boom" you got a digital organ for less money than a new complete one.

My background is that of a Hammond/Jazz player who was introduced to organ playing via a Wurlitzer equipped Pizza Parlor.

Nobody who plays a Hammond/Leslie setup in modern times expects it to sound like anything other than what it is.

The only other electronic "Organs" that can make this claim are the 1960s Vox and Farfisa, etc., combo organs used in rock bands such as the Doors "Light My Fire," and Question mark and the Mysterions "96 Tears," etc. Usually in these contexts it's do you want a "Clean" or "Dirty" signal or more Bass, Mods or Treble? Reverb or not?

The Flute Reed or String quality of the Drawbar settings or Combo Organ tabs are now considered vague guidelines. Nobody expects these instruments to sound like anything other than what they are (in spite of the old Hammond Times articles). The voice names hint at their textures and are no longer expected to sound like organ pipes or their orchestral counterparts.

But in the case of the Recital organ I acquired and an analog Rodgers Trio I bought they are always compared to their "authentic" counterparts, and their vintage is part of that.

Basically these instruments are most believable when played by Stylistic Purists, which means in the case of the Rodgers I am playing a bit closer to Jesse Crawford or George Wright type ideas than I would on an actual theater pipe organ. Which in a way is good to have the theater organ sound down better as a frame of reference.

My theater organ concept is more Fats Waller (who made most of his pipe organ records on an Estey church organ), Buddy Cole, Billy Nalle and Johnny Seng, in addition to what I know about Hammond playing and what I've learned about orchestral arranging (most notably the late Henry Mancini's book which is tied to various arrangements he did on LP's mainly Mr. Lucky [w/Buddy Cole on Hammond] and Peter Gunn).

My best time with a classical organ was due to a former music teacher who was a Mormon and was involved in their Interstake Center's music program which included a 4 manual Swain & Kates pipe organ.

Basically I found assortments of small stop combinations sounded best to my tastes and playing. Sounds with "Cornet" characteristics made better lead voices, most of the Swell and Choir

divisions did better Accompaniment and Ensemble.

The one thing that I've never been able to get the rationale for is why the best chorus reeds are in the Swell along with the best accompaniment sounds.

The Recital organ is set up the same way. I intend to leave it like that to concur with what I encounter in the field. But for my tastes it's too bad classical organs didn't have a stop that transferred just the Swell chorus reeds to the Great leaving the rest of the Swell for accompaniment.

[Comments and replies to Craig can be made to e-mail address: b3bopjazz@mailstation.com]

ADS

DISCLAIMER: Any deals, making of payments, receipt of payments or verifications are strictly your responsibility.

Consolette II Schober

Free: For anyone willing to pick it up. A Consolette II in a walnut veneer console with Reverbatape, Percussion, LSS10 speaker, Organ Tester, Autotuner, TR-3M amplifier, complete instructions and some extra parts. In Longmeadow, MA. Contact George D. Becher, 413 567-6106, gebech@earthlink.net

Recital Schober

Free: For anyone who can pick it up. A Recital with speaker in the Athens Georgia area. Contact Bobby Howington, Email: kc4dog@joimail.com

Recital Schober

Free: A Recital is available in Santa Rosa, CA. Jim Redding says he is willing to even deliver it to someone within two hours driving time of San Francisco. The organ is in decent shape but has some noise, when the volume is turned up high. Contact Jim at 707-586-9098, or Email Jeredding@aol.com

Recital Schober

Free: Bruce Johnson writes that he has a Recital that he built in 1978. The console, keyboards and pedal board are immaculate. The electronics need some work. It has a combination action and Reverbatape. There is no amplifier or speaker as it always spoke through a stereo system. Contact Bruce Johnson Tulsa, OK. Phone: 918-481-5849, Email: celesteorgan@juno.com

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ORGAN NOTES FOR SCHOBOR ORPHANS AND FRIENDS Issue 83

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February 2004

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