

Schober Organ Notes No. 86

August/September 2004

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

OVERTURE

Hope you have all had a great summer. Mine has been very busy getting my place ready for an addition. That and my computer having given me lots of problems is the reason this newsletter is late again. Unfortunately this may happen again until work is completed on my house. I have come up with a very clever way of minimizing this delay by dating Organ Notes August/September and October/November instead of just August and October.

Now to the saga of my proposed story about James Ramsey. I communicated with Mr. Jamie McKenzie who told me that Laura Ramsey's will is still in probate and that he will send me whatever he can after her estate is settled. So, again, I am postponing that article. AK

Note to e-mail subscribers: Photos and graphics are only in the printed version of Organ Notes. If you want a copy send a large SASE and an extra stamp to the editor, Alexander Kruedener

Ruminations of a Schober Organ Owner/Builder

Paul Bowen, Hermann, Missouri, writes: In the late 1950's early 1960's I became interested in 'HI-FI', the growing rage in the St. Louis area, where I lived. We had a number of hi-fi showrooms around town and I frequented them to hear the JBL horns and the Bozak and Electrovoice monsters pump out the sounds of George Wright, Reginald Foort and Dick Liebert. We had our own Stan Kahn who played the Wurlitzer at the Fox Theatre on Grand Avenue daily. I thrilled to hear those 32-foot pedal stops and to feel the building shake. Later in life I met Stan Kahn and he told us stories about plaster falling out of the ceiling at the Fox, and other interesting stuff about that Wurlitzer. (I even got to play it once, see enclosed photo.



During this period of my life I was finally limited to building Heatsinks for HI-FI equipment I built their

three tube preamp; I think it was a model wm4. I built a wm7 70 watt power amp, two 6550's in

push pull for output, and I bought the plans from JBL for the Harkness C40 horn enclosure (I still have them to this very day) and scraped together enough cash for a JBL D130 woofer and 075 tweeter. I used all of my woodworking skills to build the enclosure and my wife hated it because it was big and ugly.

It was also during this period of my life when I was going to college and raising a family and buying a house that I joined the St. Louis Theatre Organ Society. I met many interesting people, one of whom was Paul Coates of Webster Groves. Paul was a musical instrument collector extraordinaire, he had a house that was about 4000 sq feet and it was filled with every imaginable musical instrument, it was like a museum, it contained all sorts of mechanical wizard machines that played the violin or the banjo or the accordion, and it was my first introduction to a Steinway duo art Grand piano. This piano played the paper rolls like most player pianos, the difference was that those rolls made for the duo art also played with expression, they played softly, and they played loudly and everywhere in between. Paul Coates had some duo art rolls that were made by Paderewski. Paul was also installing a pipe organ in his house. He purchased a pipe organ that he removed from a theatre that was being torn down in town. Many of the tibias and other pipes were too long for the house so he folded them and installed them under the floor in the basement. The house shook when he played this instrument. He had scavenged a large console from another organ and got keyboards from several different instruments and put them all together to construct a four manual 'Coates' organ. It was spectacular to hear and feel.

It was about this time, late 60's, that I was close to getting my electrical engineering degree. I read Popular Electronics, Radio Electronics and Electronics World magazines and I spotted an ad from Schober. I ordered their catalog (I have this also) and read every word. I got Dorf's book and began understanding how Schober Organs worked. Meanwhile, a friend who was a musician bought a Thomas Organ. I was thrilled listening to him play when I ran across a Heathkit organ (cheap) that the builder couldn't get working after he built it. I straightened out his errors and tried my hand at playing. I loved the sounds and the accomplishment of learning to play. While I am not very good I loved it, and this lead me to purchasing a Schober Theatre organ. I bought the console kit as well and built and finished it before the electronics was shipped. I remember to this day Richard Dorf's admonitions about having glue on your hands as you were assembling the woodwork, 'unless you had wiped the glue from your hands you were a leper and would spoil the finish yet to come.' Hour after hour I spent assembling the circuit boards and many hours wiring the console. I did have a leg up on some kit builders. I had been working as an Electronics Technician at McDonnell-Douglas for many years so I knew how to assemble the boards and I knew how to solder. The keyboards took about two months to arrive, so I had an organ in my living room on which I could play the pedals. I had another friend that ran a metal etching shop - he made engraved brass plates for the console and a large etched brass plate with the Schober trademark and the date and my name as the builder.

I built the speaker enclosures and two power amplifiers and I built a home-made Leslie speaker; I later bought the percussion kit, but was never really happy with it. It had a lot of annoying ciphering in the background; also, the method Dorf used to make contact with the keys was not very good and I constantly had trouble with the pedal switches. I almost bought the Reverb-a-tape but I ran across a tape machine with a moveable playback head that you could create all sorts of reverb with and I thought it was more versatile. Besides, you could feed a microphone into it and make the reverb as long as a minute or two. We had a lot of fun and a lot of laughs with it when we had parties. I also bought a Hammond stand-alone rhythm box that I mounted to the front of the Schober ... what a time I had.

My wife took lessons for a while and I stumbled along using the 'think' method, I actually became a pretty good player despite the shortcomings of having no talent. The organ had some wonderful sounds and voices, the tibias were particularly beautiful and the Vox Humana was a favorite, the one foot fife and the two foot piccolo were too shrill so I experimented with the resistor values in those voices and toned them down, the strings had a wonderful 'stringy' quality and the reeds were sharp and bright. I played that organ an hour every day for ten years - then

along came my first home computer and I never played the organ again. It got moved to the garage for 10 or 15 years and when I retired from McDonnell Douglas. I gave it away so I wouldn't have to move it to our new home. When I look back at that project I have to say I loved every minute of it, not only the playing but also the accomplishment of building a pretty complex project. Thank you Richard H. Dorf and James Ramsey. We also made some good friends through the organ, Schober gave our name to another amateur player that was interested in Schober organs and we invited them to our house to see and play the Schober - we became fast friends and enjoyed their company for many years.

So, for about 20 years I did not touch a keyboard, then my wife's aunt passed away. She lived in Phoenix and when we arrived, there in her living room was a \$20,000 Lowery model LX400 organ. My wife's aunt had willed the organ to us. We rented a truck and brought it back to Missouri, we put it in our living room, and after a few weeks of reading and fiddling and experimenting I began to play again. That was 4 years ago - now I play about an hour a day every day and love it. This organ is of a newer technology, it has many many rhythms, it plays beginnings and endings, it has hundreds of voices and sound effects, it has a really good sounding piano and harpsichord, it also has some really good theatre organ stops, and it is a real joy in our lives.

Robert F. Carbaugh's Organ

(This is most of a letter that Robert F. Carbaugh sent to me quite some time ago with the SASE's for renewing his Organ Notes subscription.)

I thought I'd take this opportunity to share a few snapshots and a brief history of our organ. During my high school years in the early '60's, I discovered an article in one of my father's woodworking magazines describing Schober, Artisan and Musicraft kit built organs. I thought this might be a great way to get some hands-on experience with electronic circuitry, which I was beginning to identify as a possible career. My dad agreed and we assembled a Schober Spinet along with a 61 note rank of Artisan 12AU7 oscillators in the same home made console, i.e., two 44 note manuals, a 61 note manual, and a 25 note home made pedal board which played all 25 bass notes from the spinet generators with some minor modifications.

I subsequently obtained an associate degree in electrical technology and, just after high school, found a 'dream' summer job with a local pipe organ builder in Harrisburg [PA] and also took some organ lessons along the way with a local church organist. (In 1996, 32 years later, I began a year and a half period of substituting on that same 3m Moller organ). A subsequent army hitch in communications exposed me to the highest standards I had yet seen in the packaging of electronic circuitry. I had plenty of time to think and plan how I might make some physical improvements on the Schober/Artisan I had assembled.

After the army, I enrolled in Penn State's electrical engineering program on the GI bill and resumed summer work at the same organ shop. A used three manual console shell and pedal board were available as a result of a pipe organ upgrade we had done, and I repackaged the original Schober in its own spinet console and offered it to my newly married cousin as a wedding gift. She still cherishes it to this day. I then built a Schober Recital, and installed it in the pipe organ console forming a Swell, Great and Pedal division, with the Artisan generators serving the Choir.

The workmanship and musical results were much better this second time around. By the early 90's I had found an old farmhouse, a supportive wife, and an opportunity to build a music room onto the house to contain not only the original organ but also 9 ranks of used pipes, percussions and wind chests obtained years earlier at the organ shop. These ranks are playable on the two upper manuals and pedals via rocker tabs installed at either ends of the manuals near the so-called 'key cheeks'. Also, I went the route of many Schober owners and supplemented the Schober generators with Devtronix generators on the Swell and Pedal Divisions. Contrary to Ray DeVault's intentions, I left the original Swell contacts functional so that the Devtronix generators

can 'celeste' with the Schober generators simultaneously, creating the pipe-like effect often produced by a slow moving Leslie.

The final Schober/ Artisan/ Devtronix/ pipe combination has a warmth and depth of sound, when coupled together, that I'd put up against any new Allen or Rodgers, at least in richness of ensemble if not in authentic voicing. I feel that I have the ultimate home organ that hopefully lasts the rest of my life. It is enjoyable not only for home entertainment and occasional electronic experimenting, but useful as a practice organ for the church substituting and nursing home playing which I've been doing in recent years.

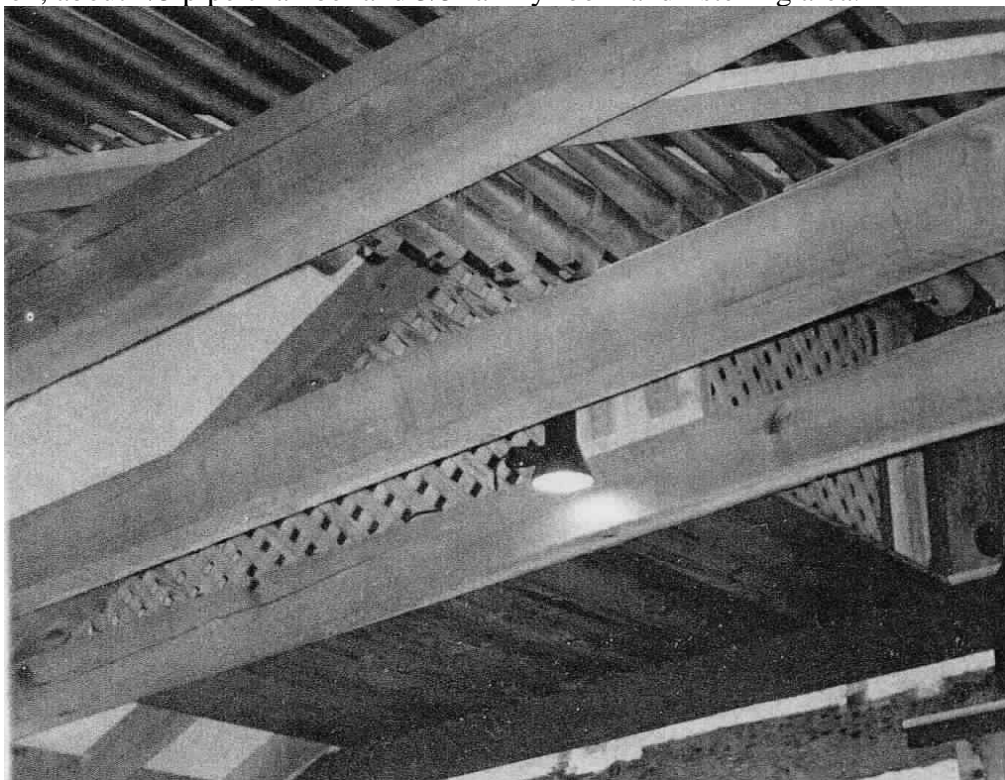
The enclosed photos are yours to keep. One of them shows my son beside the console in preparation for moving from the living room into the adjacent music room where the pipes were added. You may recognize the Schober filter cards on the elevated stop board.

The other console shot, a year or two later (with my son Jim holding the pumpkin) shows the speaker loft (also containing and old Allen gyro) enclosed in the lattice work, as well as some horizontal trumped pipes. Another photo shows the completed music room addition from the outside. It is the entire



single story addition, about 2/5 pipe chamber and 3/5 family room and listening area.

Well, this has become a lengthy letter and I hope that I haven't bored you too much. I commend you for taking over for Fred. You both deserve a great deal of credit for trying so successfully to maintain a long standing fraternity among this unique group of members. I truly appreciate the support and



comradeship we

offer each other. I'll look forward to future newsletters, and when I get around to making a tape of our organ, I'll include a copy for you. Good luck in your new position and keep in touch.

Sincerely Bob.

P.S. Are there any readers out there who have heard of a Musicraft kit organ produced by National Sonics Corporation of Sunnyvale, CA, in the late 1960's? It was one of the four that I compared when originally embarking on a kit project, with the other major suppliers being Schober, Artisan and Heathkit (in conjunction with Thomas) at that time. I still have a 33rpm LP demonstration record and sales literature for what was a very nice looking two manual spinet with a few more than the normal octave of pedals. If anyone has any stories to share about this particular Musicraft organ, I would be happy to hear from them. Robert Carbaugh, 6383 Schoolhouse Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022)

A GOOD SOURCE FOR CAPACITORS

Our member Fred Tate writes: Dear Alex, As you know, I passed my Schober Theater organ on but I still follow with interest the activities of the "orphans." I've come across a source of capacitors that may be known by everyone else but me (in the restoration of a 1946 Philco radio): JUST RADIOS in North York Ontario, Canada. They carry a large selection of fresh stock of film, electrolytic and mica capacitors, reasonably priced, and with free shipping to Canada and the U.S. Service within a week. For a retail price list, write: Dave and Babylyn Cantelon 42 Clematis Road North York, Ontario Canada M2J 4X2 E-Mail: justradios@yahoo.com Phone: (416) 502-9128 Their website also provides useful info on capacitor replacement. Hope this will be of interest to you, Regards, Frank.

ADS

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RECITAL SCHOBER

A non functioning Recital is available in San Jose, CA. Contact: Harlee Carter Phone: (408) 371-7200, Email: harleec@sbcglobal.net

TONE GENERATORS

Twelve Consolette 2 tone generators are available for the shipping costs. Contact Richard McBeth who has installed Devtronix generators in his organ. Email: RichMcBeth@aol.com, Tel: 630-466-4085

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