



COLUMBIA RIVER CLARION

Columbia River Theatre Organ Society

Columbia River Clarion | April 2012 | Volume 19 | Issue 4 | www.crtos.org

Building the Rodgers/Intel 3/32 (Part 2)

I remember sitting on the couch, waiting for another 10 ranks of pipes to download, and thinking, things really have changed. Back in 1973 we filled an 18' truck with pipes, chests, regulators, etc. and then came home and emptied it all into our garage and family room. Total chaos. Now here I am watching TV as the "pipes" come down my driveway through a fiber optic cable then wirelessly transfer to the computer through thin air. There was no mess, no lifting, no packing, no anything. It takes about an hour to get 10 ranks (about 1GB) through a high speed internet connection. I installed the pipes into the Hauptwerk Organ software and they were ready to be played. At that point I could only play them using the mouse on the virtual console (a doctored photo of the Akron Civic Theatre Wurlitzer in this case).

In the other room was my Rodgers console with the Midi electronics installed. I tested the Midi electronics along the way using my netbook laptop computer and Miditzer software. It might have sounded OK except for the laptop speakers being only an inch in diameter. Let's just say it doesn't exactly give you goose-bumps. But this was only for functional testing. As with real pipe organs you do things one piece at a time and test everything as much as possible along the way.



Yes, there are a lot of wires but just connect one at a time. The small boards are the actual midi boards and the larger ones my matrix boards. I did it the hard way - you would not do it this way.

The computer was still in the family room where I was going over the menus seeing what needed to be set up. First you tell Hauptwerk (HW) which Midi channel is what and then more specifics like note numbers. Next you tell Paramount (the organ sample set used in my case) which keyboards connect to which HW functions. So things sort of hand off down the line. Not so different from connecting flights on different airlines. The newly released HW 4.0 has a thing called "learn mode" which eliminates most this work. You just click on the virtual piston (for example) and

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

4/18/12

Open Console, 10:15 am - noon
Hollywood Theatre

4/21/12

Theatre Organ Workshop: Session 1
10:00 am - noon

4/24/12

CRTOS Board Meeting
7:00 pm, Izzy's at Gateway

4/28/12

Westside Virtual Organ Crawl
10:00 am - 5:00 pm

5/4/12

Donnie Rankin & Hannah Feely
7:00 pm, Cleveland High School

5/5/12

Theatre Organ Workshop: Session 2
10 am - noon

5/16/12

Open Console, 10:15 am - noon
Hollywood Theatre

5/19/12

Theatre Organ Workshop: Session 3
10 am - noon

5/22/12

CRTOS Board Meeting, 7pm
Izzy's at Gateway

5/22/12-5/24/12

Youth Silent Film Festival
Hollywood Theatre (check listings)

IN THIS ISSUE...

Rodgers/Intel VTPO.....	1
Upcoming Events	1
Business Meeting Minutes.....	2
Board Election Results	2
Wind Supply	2
Theatre Organ Workshops	4
Westside Organ Crawl.....	6
Obituary.....	7

Directors (Current Term)

President

Jack Powers (2013)
president@crtos.org

Vice-President

Richard Lawson (2011)
vicepresident@crtos.org

Treasurer

Ron Deamer (2012)
treasurer@crtos.org

Secretary

Mike Bryant (2011)
secretary@crtos.org

Directors

Gary Nelson (2012)
Rob Kingdom (2013)
Paul Tichy (2013)
Max Brown (2014)

Activities

Shirley Clausen
Terry Robson

Communications

Carol Brown
carolmaxb@comcast.net

Webmaster

Paul Tichy
webmaster@crtos.org

Newsletter Ed.

Steve Jarvis
newsletter@crtos.org

CRTOS Business Meeting Minutes

March 24, 2012

President Jack Powers called the meeting to order at 11:03am.

Regular members present: Carol Brown, Max Brown, Mike Bryant, Ron Deamer, Bob MacNeur, Matt Neil, Jonas Nordwall, Lou Paff, Jack Powers. Associate members present: Motoko Henry.

Guests present: Gidget Trippett

A quorum was declared.

A plaque was presented to Bob MacNeur in recognition and appreciation of his continued support of CRTOS.

Ron Deamer presented the treasurer's report.

OLD BUSINESS

As required by the bylaws, ballots for the election of new directors were opened and counted by Secretary Mike Bryant, and Election Tellers Carol Brown and Bob MacNeur. The results of the voting were:

Serving three-year terms, expiring in 2015, are Jonas Nordwall, Stuart Hall, and Bo Vernier.

Serving two-year terms, expiring in 2014, are Lou Paff and Bob Hinson.

New directors will be seated at the April board meeting on April 24. As always, members and guests are encouraged to attend.

NEW BUSINESS

An announcement about work parties at the MacNeur warehouse was made. An e-mail blast announcement will be sent to the membership.

There being no further business to come before the membership, the meeting was adjourned at 11:36am.

Mike Bryant
Secretary

Election Results

A total of five new directors were elected by the membership to serve on the CRTOS board. Jonas Nordwall, Stuart Hall, and Bo Vernier will serve three-year terms, ending in 2015. Lou Paff and Bob Hinson will serve two-year terms, ending in 2014.

As noted in the election materials, the staggered expirations will realign the terms so that one third of the directors will be elected each year.

The current CRTOS leadership congratulates and welcomes the five new directors.

donations. The bulk of the Haskin donation has yet to be inventoried, and as part of the donation terms we are required to provide the estate with an inventory and independent appraisal.

We'll also be sorting and selecting components that will be set aside for use in the Hollywood project, preparing the remainder for eventual sale, and stripping usable items (magnets, switches, and other hardware) from relays and other components that will be disposed of.

If you can come to Aurora and help out, we'll be starting at 10:00am. We'd love to have you, and anyone else you can bring along. We'd like to have around 10 people tops; more than that, and we'll quickly run out of space to work in.

Please confirm by e-mail to crew chief Mike Bryant, or leave a voice message on his phone at 206 619-6645.

Work Parties

Beginning on Saturday, March 31, and continuing for three or four weeks (whatever it takes!) we will hold work parties at the MacNeur warehouse to inventory, organize, and consolidate pipes and parts received through

Wind Supply

As the signs of winter fade away, we plan to do more meeting and greeting this year. Kicking off our social activities, led by Carol Brown and Terry Robson, is a Virtual Organ Crawl described elsewhere in this issue). And planning for the Summer Party, to be held at the Plunkett residence, has already started (date TBD).

Our next public musical event will be a special CRTOS night during the International Youth Silent Film Festival at the Hollywood

on Wednesday evening, May 23. We hope that members will turn out in force to support this project and hear our Beverly Ruth Nelson Memorial Organ. Nathan Avakian will accompany several short silents scripted to fit musical scores prepared in advance. Ron Deamer is coordinating the CRTOS part of this show, which will have special treats for organ fans. Please mark your calendar for the evening May 23, and I hope to see you there!

Jack Powers
President

Monthly CRTOS Board Meeting

4th Tuesday of the month

Izzy's Restaurant at
the Gateway Shopping Center
1307 NE 102nd. Ave., PDX
7 PM (no-host dinner at 6:30)

All members are encouraged to attend.

The Columbia River Theatre Organ Society is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to the preservation of the theatre organ and its music.



Find us on
Facebook

Building the Rodgers/Intel 3/32 (Continued)

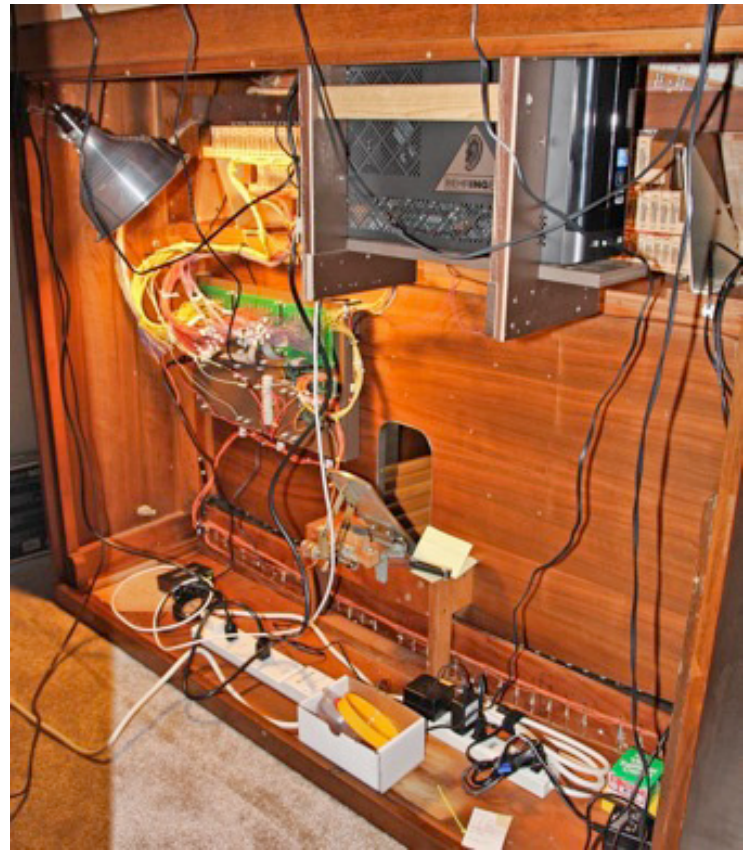
push your actual piston to show it which one it hooks to. No more typing or scrolling through long lists.

After a few hours of entering connections I had a computer believed to be properly set up and a console thought to produce the needed Midi signals - but they had never met. So I decided around 8 pm one night to plug them together. I did not install the computer at this point because I'd probably just have to move it to change something anyhow. I put the computer on a stool (so the cables would reach) and just plugged everything together sort of "free-style." It was quite a mess but that could all be cleaned up later. With everything connected it was time to fire it up. The first notes were not as impressive as I might have hoped because the audio signal was very weak. My swell shoe midi output was not working (due to a typo I'd made) so the volume was stuck at minimum. I got around this by just "mousing" the swell shoes on the screen. (Is that cheating?)

Over the next few hours the sound improved, but the signal levels were still low, I had no reverb yet, my speakers had poor tonal balance - and one other little thing - I hadn't played one of these for about 30 years. Pipe organs also wake up a bit cranky but in different ways. They are usually horribly out of tune, full of cyphers, and have some wiring mixed up. (I remember our swell pedal having been wired to the xylophone instead of the shades.) Virtual organs, on the other hand, are always in perfect tune. It's more the tone that needs work.

Over the next couple weeks I added an electronic reverb unit, a small audio mixer (for a pre-amp and headphone amp), fixed the swell shoe, and made some progress training my left foot to find notes. Then I added more midrange speakers to balance the tone and installed my 45 new pistons. It was starting to sound impressive and looked pretty good from the front but the "guts" were still recklessly strewn about behind the backless console.

I made up a "cradle" to mount the computer up and out of the way then upgraded to an external sound module. The computer's built-in sound wasn't half bad but I did experience a couple of minor "melt downs" due to data overload. As I improved my hardware and fixed various settings, I was also re-learning how to play and how to register a 20 rank, and then a 32 rank organ. (The last 12 ranks just became available recently.) Having 32 ranks, 3 manuals, and pistons galore was a revelation after growing up with a basic 2/6. This is a whole new experience.



Not much there anymore compared to the original Rodgers electronics.

Over a period of several weeks the tone has gone from barely functional to fantastic and my playing ability has come back to some degree. While I still miss notes here and there, my arrangements now sound much more like real theater organ than they ever did. I'm getting more comfortable with it every day but playing this thing for the first time in 25 years was a bit like (I would imagine) going back to your high school reunion to look up your old sweetheart. It's exciting, awkward, new, familiar, shocking, scary, weird, overwhelming, etc. At first, things were pretty awkward and I wondered if this might have been a really dumb idea. There would have been some real anxiety if this were a \$50K Allen sitting there. But having only a couple thousand tied up I could just have fun with it and not worry about anything.

My tabs are still just decorations. I want to play a couple months before deciding which voices will have tabs (because there aren't nearly enough for everything). Certainly percussions, tremors, couplers, and accent/solo reeds are at the top of the list. These are things you want to change quickly - where one tab makes a noticeable difference.

- PLAY THIS ORGAN -
See page 6 for details



The reverb (on top) will go inside once I'm done fiddling with it. The music rack has been re-installed since this photo. I also want to dress it up with name plates etc. There will be many additions and improvements over the next year but basically we're there.

While all of this new technology sounds great (pun intended) some of you may be apprehensive about gutting your trusty old Rodgers and giving it a dose of 21st century electronics. Organs of any kind are very large and complicated systems which can be daunting. So what do you do? Well, there are ways to dabble in this technology without diving in all the way. You can download the free version of Hauptwerk and Paramount 310 sample set without spending a dime. You could hook these up to a Casio type keyboard and see how you fare. You can assign some notes as pistons, some as stops, etc. just to test your ability to make these connections.

On the Midi hardware side, you could buy just one input board (and the minimum support hardware) then, as with the above scenario, program it for a variety of functions. Just

wire up a few Radio Shack switches or even just poke a wire at the terminals... just to see if things are working. Work with this until you have the confidence to move forward. Next you could find an old spinet organ and try wiring it up. These can be had for peanuts on Craig list.

I used Midi CPU boards from www.highlyliquid.com which are only \$45ea. They are more "technical" than the Artisan system but very powerful. They can be a very good choice for Allens with diode matrixed keyboards. Only 17 wires per keyboard and you're done. They are also great for pistons and pedal boards that are easily matrixed (more about this another time). For many of you though, the Artisan system is probably the better choice. These will work with any keyboards (one wire per note) and they support actuated stop tabs etc. They can even co-exist with your organ's original electronics in most cases. If you plan ahead carefully you can have Artisan pre program your boards so all you do is wire it up. You can download their manuals at www.artisanorgans.com so you don't have to spend a penny to check it out.

Without virtual organ technology I probably would never have played a theatre organ again. I would never have put up the \$30K+ for a decent commercial instrument without even knowing if I could still play (and anything cheaper would have been too uninspiring). This virtual organ is pretty much as good as my speakers. I can dial in reverb to make it sound like a big theatre or a small studio. The voices are so amazingly accurate I can work up exact registrations to use when I get the chance to play one of the local pipe organs. The 21st century has made good theatre organ accessible to just about anyone.

Vince Kurpan

Theatre Organ Workshop Series

Presented by Jonas Nordwall & Donna Parker

What: These workshops are not to take the place of private instruction, but rather to enhance it. This will be group instruction, question/answer sessions, lots of great tips, tricks and information, but not one-on-one instruction as you would receive in private lessons.

When: Saturdays from 10:00am to Noon, April 21, May 5 & 19, and June 2 & 23.

Where: The MacNeur Studio in Oregon City. We will use the Allen digital 4-manual GW-4 theatre organ.

Instructors: Jonas Nordwall and Donna Parker for each session.

Cost: \$20 per person per session, or \$75 for all 5 sessions.

If you have any questions, please let me know: donna_parker@comcast.net

Reservations must be confirmed by April 6th. We hope to see you there. Watch for more details in the newsletters for Columbia River Theatre Organ Society and the Oregon Chapter of ATOS!

Spring 2012 Theatre Organ Workshop Series

Jonas Nordwall and Donna Parker

Registration Form

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE(S) _____

E-MAIL _____

What organ do you practice on? _____

Playing experience _____

What particular topics of interest you would like us to cover? _____

I would like to attend the complete workshop series for \$75: _____yes

I would like to attend the following individual sessions for \$20 per session:

_____ April 21 _____ May 5 _____ May 19 _____ June 2 _____ June 23

Please include payment with your registration form and mail to:

Donna Parker Productions
Post Office Box 6103
Aloha, Oregon 97007-0103

Checks should be made out to Donna Parker Productions. **Registration is due by Saturday, April 14.**

The workshops will be held at The MacNeur Studio - 16790 South Kraeft Road, Oregon City 97045. Sessions are from 10:00am to Noon. Plan to arrive by 9:45am, as we will begin promptly at 10:00am.

Notebooks and printed materials will be provided. Bring a pencil (no pens!) and eraser.

Questions? Call Donna at 503-318-2136 or Jonas at 503-737-9463.



Westside Virtual Organ Crawl

Saturday, April 28th

By now, I'm sure most of you have heard the term "Virtual Organ." Basically, a virtual organ is a compilation of digitally recorded pipes controlled with a personal computer, running Hauptwerk or similar software, and playable from any MIDI equipped keyboard. Through the PC, the ranks of pipes can be assigned to play on any keyboard, and the pipe sounds may be modified to suit the owner. The Beverly Ruth Nelson Organ at the Hollywood Theatre is an excellent example of a virtual organ.

The popularity of virtual organs is quickly catching on around the globe because they can be made for much less money than any of the current models offered by such well-known manufacturers as Allen and Rodgers. You can re-use an older electronic organ console as Vince Kurpan has done, or use no console at all like Lou Paff and Rob Kingdom. You can have just as many output channels and speakers as you have room for, or as small as only two speakers or even just headphones. As long as you have keyboards, a pedalboard, and a PC with the appropriate software, you're on your way!

On Saturday, April 28, we will visit the homes of Rob Kingdom, Vince Kurpan and Lou Paff. Each one has created their own, unique, virtual organ using the same software, but sounding very different from one another. (Addresses, drive directions and schedule will be found at the end of this article.)

We'll begin our day at the home of Rob Kingdom in Hillsboro at 10:00am. After about 90 minutes we'll take a lunch break at one of the many restaurants or fast food establishments along the way to the home of Vince Kurpan. If you'd like to join other Organ Crawl attendees, we are suggesting an informal gathering at Izzy's Buffet. Izzy's before noon lunch cost is only \$8.99, and for Seniors, just \$7.99. At 1pm, allowing 20-30 minutes travel time between venues, we'll next meet at the home of Vince Kurpan, also in Hillsboro, and his virtual organ creation. (Read more about Vince's project elsewhere in this newsletter.)

At approximately 3pm, we'll meet our last virtual organ of the day at the home of new member, Lou Paff in Beaverton.

Drive Directions

1. Rob Kingdom at 333 NE 9th Pl, Hillsboro:

Take Hwy 26 (Sunset) to either NW Cornell Rd or Cornelius Pass Rd. If heading West, exit and cross over the freeway. If you take Cornelius Pass Rd stay on the road until you reach Cornell Rd, at which time you'd turn Right onto Cornell. Continue on Cornell past the airport and then look for Jackson St. Turn Right onto Jackson and then Right onto NE 9th Pl. 503-648-2982

2. From Rob's to Izzy's at 1071 SE TV Hwy, Hillsboro:

Turn Left on Jackson and then right on Cornell then stay left which puts you on 10th which joins/becomes Rt. 8 East. Izzy's will be at the left bend on Rt. 8 where it becomes TV Highway. Between Rob's and Vince's there are many eating establishments, so don't feel locked into Izzy's.

3. From Izzy's to Vince Kurpan at 3864 SE Bliss Ct, Hillsboro:

From Izzy's turn Left out of the parking lot and continue east on Rt. 8. Make a right on Minter Bridge Rd, which is where Home Depot is located. Go down about 3/4 mile just past the entrance of the dump and then left on Morgan. Go down Morgan to the end of the straight section (1/2 mile or less) then left on Singing Woods. Make the first right to stay on Singing Woods then keep right and that will put you on Bliss Ct. Go to the island and look left. Bliss Ct. is very short. 503-681-2446

4. From Vince to Lou Paff at 4235 SW 103rd Ct, Beaverton:

Go back to Minter Bridge Rd. Right on Minter Bridge back to TV Hwy. Right onto TV Hwy. Continue on TV Hwy until you need to keep Left to get onto Canyon Rd (Rt. 8). Remain on Canyon Rd, Rt. 8, past Hwy 217. Turn Right on SW 102nd Ave. Turn Right onto Kennedy St. Turn Right onto 103rd Ct. Just retrace your steps to get back to Canyon Rd. Turning Right on Canyon will take you to Hwy 26. Turning Left onto Canyon will allow you to access Hwy 217, and eventually I-5 North or South. 503-646-2023

Travel Schedule

Arrive at Rob's between 9:30 and 10am. Leave no later than 11:30am.

Lunch on your own or at Izzy's.

Leave restaurant no later 12:30pm

Arrive at Vince's by 1pm. Depart no later than 2:30pm.

Arrive at Lou's 3-3:15. Depart 4:30-5pm

Obituary: Robert (Bob) Cornish

Feb. 4, 1953 -- Feb. 25, 2012

Many of our CRTOS members are not aware that we have some members who live in Adelaide, Australia. Unfortunately we recently lost one of these with the sudden passing of Robert (Bob) Cornish. Bob and his wife, Barb, have visited us several times in recent years, and though they didn't happen to be here when we had an event that they could attend, they have visited the Hollywood Theater, plus the Elsinore in Salem, and have become acquainted with several of our members, both while here, and also at several of the ATOS conventions that they attended.

Neither Bob nor his wife were organists, but they loved the organ music, and have been very involved for years in the Australian TOSA-SA organ club. Bob has spent many, many hours at the Capri Theatre in Adelaide, where he helped in the organ maintenance, as well upkeep, cleaning, and improvements in the theatre itself, which incidentally is owned by the organ club. In addition, he recorded and videoed most of the organ concerts, often presenting a tape or DVD of the concert to the artist. He was well known, and deeply respected by members of the Theatre Organ society throughout Australia, as well as by many here in the U.S. and in England. For the last few years, Bob has served at president of the Felix chapter of TOSA - the Australian branch of the ATOS.

Even in his sudden death, he was involved in doing what he loved doing -- helping a friend with a theatre project. He

had climbed to the veranda roof of another theatre building, in order to exchange the name of the theatre when the ladder he was on collapsed, and he fell, hitting his head. He was briefly resuscitated and rushed to the hospital, but soon passed away, avoiding what his doctor said would be to live in a vegetative state for the rest of his life.

The funeral service was held at the Capri Theatre on March 5th. A crowd of nearly 400 attended the event, with many more sending regrets that they could not be there. The organ, of course, was used, and among other things, two of his granddaughters sang one of his favorite songs ("Can You Feel the Love Tonight" from The Lion King), accompanied by Rob Richards on the piano and Chris McPhee on the organ.

The Cornishes have been very special friends of ours as they welcomed us several times to stay with them in Adelaide, and we have been delighted to have them visit us here as well. We will certainly miss Bob, but are looking forward to Barb visiting us in May when she comes to participate in an organ/silent movie project with Nathan Avakian in connection with the Portland Rose Festival which will be duplicated in a similar project in Adelaide in July.

-Shirley Clausen



DUET
Donnie Rankin with Hannah Feely
on
Organ & Piano
Friday, May 4th
7:00 pm
Cleveland High School Auditorium
3400 SE 26th Ave. | Portland, OR 97202
Tickets
Adult \$12 | Student \$5
www.brownpapertickets.com



DUET
Donnie Rankin & Hannah Feely
Organ & Piano



The Oregon Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society invites you to help us celebrate the Kimball theatre organ's 21 years at Cleveland High School with special guest artists Donnie Rankin and Hannah Feely on organ and piano. Donnie Rankin, winner of the American Theatre Organ Society's 2007 Young Organist competition, brings a fresh young perspective to this instrument. Joining him is guest artist Hannah Feely, Portland's own up-and-coming pianist and vocalist.

Cleveland High School Auditorium
Friday, May 4, 2012
7:00 PM
3400 SE 26th Ave.
Portland, OR 97202
adults \$12 | students \$5
tickets can be purchase on line at
www.brownpapertickets.com or at the door