

HOLLMANN RESIDENCE WURLITZER THEATRE PIPE ORGAN INSTALLATION



Wurlitzer RJ 4 Residence Pipe Organ, Opus 1985, was built in 1928 and shipped to the Wurlitzer store in Cincinnati Ohio. “RJ” signifies a Residence organ with a junior 105 note player unit. Residence Wurlitzers were small scale and were suitable and affordable for home owners that desired to have a pipe organ included in the furnishings of their home. Opus 1985 consisted of 4

ranks of small scale pipework all on 6” wp. The ranks were: Flute, Oboe Horn, Salicional and Open Diapason. The balance of the organ consisted of one regulator, one trem, one relay and switch stack, one swell shoe, one swell shade blade and blower. There were no percussions of any kind.

Opus 1985 was sold to The Gilligan Funeral Home and installed in 1930 for the purpose of providing suitable reflection music for services. In 1952, the funeral home donated the organ to All Saints Church in Cincinnati, where it was installed by a local organ man.

During this installation, the player unit was sawed off the top of the console and discarded, leaving the console badly mutilated. After 29 years of church service and no improvements of any kind, All Saints sold the organ to Ohio Valley Chapter member Herb Merritt. Herb removed the organ for it’s first residence installation in his home.





During the ensuing years at the Merritt Residence, many improvements and additions were undertaken. As previously stated, the console was damaged when the player unit was sawed off. Not wanting to destroy the originality of the console, much thought was given as to how the damage could be repaired. The top of the original console was removed and a horseshoe and top boards were added, all taken from Opus 1795. New pieces were fabricated to fill in the sides and all exposed parts received walnut veneer. The keyboards, all console parts from the waist board and below, pedal board and bench are all

original. A crescendo pedal was added from Opus 1795 and an oak music rack from Opus 1929. As in the original organ, there is no combination action.

The 2/4 was expanded to 2/9 with the additions of a Wurlitzer Tibia Clausa, Wurlitzer Vox Humana, Wurlitzer Voix Celeste, Moller Clairnet and an E.M. Skinner Orchestral Oboe. Also added were 2' extension for Flute and 2' extension for Tibia Clausa. Percussions that were added include a Wurlitzer small scale 37 note Xylophone (Opus 1823), Wurlitzer Chimes (Opus 1795), Deagen 37 note Marimba with rosewood bars, Glockenspeil, a 37 note Vibraharp, and a Wurlitzer Toy Counter and Base Drum (Opus 1643). The Vibraharp was fabricated by Herb Merritt and has an electric action. The original Wurlitzer relay and switch stack was retained for the original 4 ranks. Six Wurlitzer pull down switches were added to improve unification. Reisner switches and diodes were used to construct a switching system for the added 5 ranks. A transistorized relay to feed these switches was made by placing an emitter follower circuit in each key line on each manual, a total of 122.

