
Subject: Organ Scandal

Posted by [DRCope](#) on Fri, 01 Apr 2005 11:55:14 GMT

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He hee heeee! Bet that draws a lot of hits! Weds night at choir practice I finally confirmed what I had thought for a while: The pipes above the choir loft in my church are fake. The pipe organ is a digital instrument with transistor amps and good sized BR speakers behind the scrim behind the pipes. There had been a pipe organ in that space a verrrry long time ago, judging by a picture I was shown, but alas, it is no more. I'm sooooo bummed. Having looked up the specs on the organ co's speakers, I'm convinced that subbing AN E's would do a better job using the sand amps that are in place, and that Hi Eff E's or horns and tube amps would take the sound quality to a whole 'nother level. I've even thought of putting two auto tubas under the pulpit/choir loft area instead of having one lonely 15" BR sub floating 15' off the ground with no wall behind it. Can you say "duh!" I knew that you could! To prove my point, I'm going to buy a couple of the organ co's CD's, transfer them to an iPod and play them through the Kit 4 and a pair of E's up on the platform the organ speaks are on. I'd much rather do a real pipe organ, or the intriguing mix of digital samples and real pipes, but I'd have to create a family fortune first

Subject: Re: Organ Scandal

Posted by [Bill Wassilak](#) on Fri, 01 Apr 2005 16:04:28 GMT

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Sounds like a plan, most organs around the US are electronic anymore. The last I heard years ago, is that there's only like a half dozen or (maybe less) so organs that are true pipe organs anymore. But they still use the fake pipes for show, that makes people think it's a pipe organ. This has been going on for years.

Subject: A True Organ

Posted by [wunhuanglo](#) on Fri, 01 Apr 2005 17:38:56 GMT

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Something to behold.
BU Symphonic Organ

Subject: Re: Organ Scandal

Posted by [DRCope](#) on Fri, 01 Apr 2005 20:13:20 GMT

Yes, another sad case of practical reality biting the head off of beauty . . . There are more than you would think, though. I've discovered that there are 6+ pipe organ companies in CT alone. For the most part I expect they are maintaining and rebuilding older organs, and in some cases augmenting them with digital ranks to expand their capabilities, but I was surprised at how many there still are. I may have to create a checklist and go on a New England listening tour. I remember going to a Messiah sing about 30 years ago in Boston in a big ole church in Copley Sq and the BIG pipes were teeth/filling and gut rattling. Nearly a subliminal effect, but what POWER. In the '70's I shopped for speakers with a copy of Also Sprach Zarathustra. If the speakers couldn't do a decent job on the opening rumble, I wasn't interested. Plus ca change, plus cest la meme chose!

Subject: Re: Organ Scandal

Posted by [Bill Wassilak](#) on Fri, 01 Apr 2005 21:32:28 GMT

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That's good to know, my old church back in Mi. had a real pipe organ and back around '75-76 they were having problems finding somebody to service it. I think they found some company in Germany that still serviced them and had to call them over to work on it. I loved the sound of that thing and when you hit the very low notes the whole church just shook. I'm glad theres companies out there that will still service them because they are an insturment of sound and art in my book.

Subject: Typical Digital Organ Subwoofer

Posted by [FredT](#) on Fri, 01 Apr 2005 22:01:14 GMT

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Here's the kind you find in some of the better digital organs - a 15" driver with four passive radiators. It's down 3dB at 14.8hz. This extreme bass extension is needed because the lowest note in a 32' pedal stop speaks at 16hz and moves a lot of air. This one is made by Allen Organ Co, who also own Legacy Speakers.

SR1 Seismic Radiator Subwoofer

Subject: Re: Typical Digital Organ Subwoofer

Posted by [FredT](#) on Sat, 02 Apr 2005 11:55:06 GMT

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This has led me to ask some questions about their other speakers, which I would expect are not inexpensive: 1) How do they get 98dB sensitivity out of the midrange and dome tweeter combination in the HC-14/15? 2) What are their "Trumpeteer R-200 and R-100 Wave Projectors" in the HR-200 and HR-100 cabinets? Does anyone recognize these drivers? 3) Is that a Selenium driver in their He2 high efficiency cabinet? These don't look like the best quality drivers to me. I would expect a Pi 4 Premium or Professional system to be more suitable for the continuous high output required for an organ speaker.

Subject: Re: Typical Digital Organ Subwoofer
Posted by [DRCope](#) on Sat, 02 Apr 2005 14:17:59 GMT
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Now you see why I'm quizzing this. Our organ is an Allen Organ Co. system. I couldn't see which of their speakers are involved while crawling around in the dark up behind the pipes. There are two pairs of large cabs flanking a single large cab lying down. I don't believe it's of the contra bombarde pipe variety, though. What I'd REALLY love to do is install a pair of Lynn Olson's Pipe-Ola's in their. 15" drivers with a 12 or 15' cement form tube rising above. THAT would get us some real pipe sound!!! Might embarrass some borderline incontinent congregants, though. Achieving 98dB wouldn't be all that hard, but I'm not overwhelmed by the look of their speakers, either. What's really driving me on this is that the organist frequently uses a reed voice that really sounds like crap, and I'm tired of standing right in front of it with my eyes crossing over when he plays. I'm hoping the lousy sound is the result of mediocre sand amps and mediocre xo's and drivers, not crappy reed samples, which I can't fix.

Subject: Organ Reed Stops - Love Them or Hate Them
Posted by [FredT](#) on Wed, 06 Apr 2005 12:20:41 GMT
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The two manual Allen organs typically have two speaker cabinets for each manual plus a subwoofer. The principals and reeds for each manual play through one cabinet and the flute stops through the other. The pedal stops are divided between the two flute cabinets, whose lowest two octaves (16-64hz) are augmented by the separately amplified subwoofer. There might be one of two problems with the reed stop that causes your eyes to cross - if it sounds distorted it's turned too loud and overdriving the midrange and high frequency drivers into nonlinear excursions. This is a very common problem with the smaller digital organs - the folks who install them turn them as loud as the equivalent pipe organ would sound (100+dB at 10-20 ft distance), which is too loud for the speakers to handle, and you get a noticable amount of harmonic and intermodulation distortion when the loud reed stops and/or the full organ are played. Only an audiophile would notice anything is wrong because everyone else believes it's normal for loud music to be distorted. The larger Allen organs solve this problem by using many speaker cabinets including high efficiency cabinets for the more powerful solo reed stops. The new four manual Allen organ at 1st Methodist

in Houston has 160 speaker cabinets. That may sound like overkill, but it's the equivalent of a pipe organ that would have more than 5,000 pipes. With all the stops drawn this organ really does sound glorious, but if it has been designed with too few independent signal paths (separate DAC's, amps and speaker cabinets) it would sound really crappy. If the reed stop isn't distorted but sounds thin and strident it's probably intended to sound that way. One popular solo reed stop on pipe organs is a trompette en chamade (horizontal trumpet) voiced on high wind pressure and often used to play the solo trumpet line of a fanfare like the ones Purcell, Handel, and Clarke wrote in the 18th century. The Royal Trumpet stops in the organ at St Pauls Cathedral in London are voiced on very high wind pressure and sound to me like a tuned diesel locomotive whistle. It's thrilling when the organist plays a fanfare on them with antiphonal responses from the full main organ (10,000+ pipes) which is located about two football fields away at the other end of the sanctuary. But it's one of those things you either love or you hate; everyone who hears it is moved, either to ecstasy or to the nearest exit. For a sample of a Trompette en Chamade go to track four on the link below. It's Michael Murray playing the Purcell Trumpet Tune, with the trumpet part played on the State Trumpet Stop of the 143 rank E.M. Skinner organ at the Cathedral of St John the Divine.

Purcell Trumpet Tune - Track 4

Subject: Re: Organ Scandal

Posted by [Mike.e](#) on Thu, 07 Apr 2005 01:10:22 GMT

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I've only heard an organ once for about 30min, it was cool! Just wish they had it turned up a little more and I could hear it for longer! I'd never heard non organ sounds appearing from behind the huge pipes it was wierd!

NORMA IN DUNEDIN
