

The Haughawout Ruth

Terry Haughawout and Ron Bopp

A Model 38 Ruth fairground organ is a rarity in the band and fairground world. Rare because about ten original specimens are known to exist and rare because of its inherent physical and musical beauty. Manufactured by Andreas Ruth & Sohn of Waldkirch, Germany, the Ruth organs are exceptional in their tonal qualities. An original Style 38 Ruth is present (free standing in its own building, adjacent to the carousel) at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and another Ruth organ with a Voigt façade (not Voigt-built but obtained from Voigt) is present in the United States. One can imagine the excitement amongst organ lovers when the late Dan Slack purchased a Style 38 (sans façade) in 1986. Unfortunately Dan’s early demise robbed him of realizing the benefits of restoration of the Ruth, either musically or artistically.

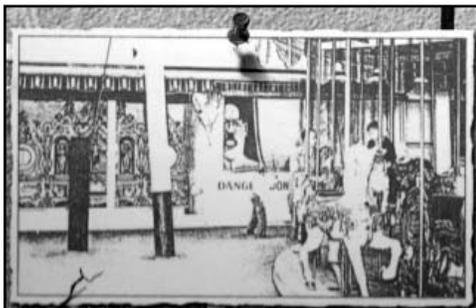


Figure 1. The earliest existing photo of the Style Ruth organ while on location, in a shelter, adjacent to a small carousel at Long Beach, CA.

Enter organ friend Terry Haughawout. Through Terry’s efforts and foresight this Model 38 Ruth is now complete with façade and music capability.

This particular Ruth organ was imported circa 1912 when the Redondo Beach resort complex also purchased a Loeff carousel (built in 1911 at the Loeff factory in Long Beach, CA). It played there until about 1920 when the entire

carousel and organ was placed in storage. In 1943 the Ruth was used at Long Beach (in a small shelter house,) adjacent to a small carousel which replaced a larger Loeff carousel which burned in July of 1943 (Figure 1).

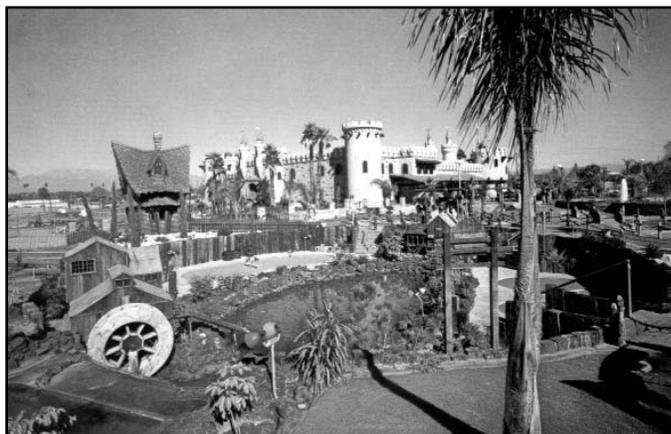


Figure 3. Castle Park boasted of “a wonderland of fascinating displays of theme attractions, special music, sound effects, fountains and waterfalls.”

In 1950 the Ruth was playing on a midway area called “The Pike” (Figure 2). This was the last time it was altogether and playing for the public. In 1970 the Ruth organ was sold to Bud Hurlbut.

Apparently Dan had known about the Ruth organ, which was in the possession of Wendell “Bud” R Hurlbut, for some five years. The organ had been stored in a trailer because it was non-functional but the ornate façade had been displayed on an elevated stage or mezzanine at Hurlbut’s Castle Park with a smaller, American-made organ (Wurlitzer Style 105 or 125) playing behind (Figure 3). The organ had been converted to play Wurlitzer Style 165 rolls sometime during the previous years but that was the only modification made.

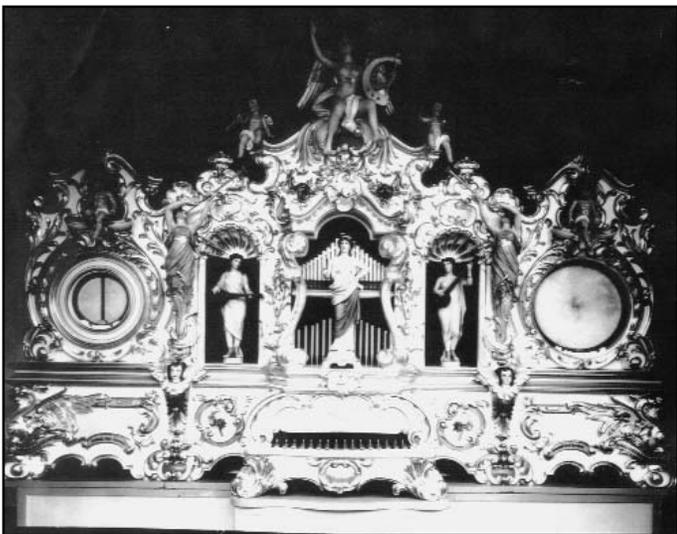


Figure 2. The Ruth organ at “The Pike.”

This particular Ruth organ was imported circa 1912 when the Redondo Beach resort purchased a Loeff carousel (built in 1911 at the Loeff factory in Long Beach, CA).

Dan received photographs of the Ruth in the trailer (and the façade on the stage) in late February 1986 and by March 14, 1986 had purchased the Model 38 Ruth (sans

March, 1986
Ken Smith

38 Ruth Restoration

1. Strip organ completely out of case.
2. Farmed out work shipped off for rebuilding, etc. Wind bellows pump; hardware such as bells, case handles, display violin rack, etc. for plating.
3. Lay case down; restore bottom pipes, re-leathering stoppers, etc; re-install pipes after cleaning and sanding case bottom.
4. Stand case upright; repair as needed: fill holes, sand and repaint. Make new center front bottom case support.
5. Install rebuilt bellows pump.
6. Make new crankshaft, pump sticks and bearing blocks, and install
7. Build new keyframe (or buy used one to restore) and install on case, including muting linkage.
8. Rebuild windchest, replacing pallet leather, and pallet springs (if needed) and all leather on register chest pallets.
9. Install windchest in case. Connect wind trunk to bellows pump.
10. Build new valve chest and puffboard and muting valve. Install on wind chest. Connect all tubing to keyframe and register mechanisms.
11. Build register control box and install
12. Repair and restore all pipework and re-install in windchest.
13. Rebuild bell mechanism and install.
14. Rebuild drum mechanisms. Restore drums, if used. Tune pipes.

Restoration complete

Figure 5 (above). Ken Smith's step by step suggestions for restoration of the Ruth organ.

Figure 6 (right). Ken Smith's notes taken from photos from "Bud" Hurlbut prior to the purchase of the Ruth organ.

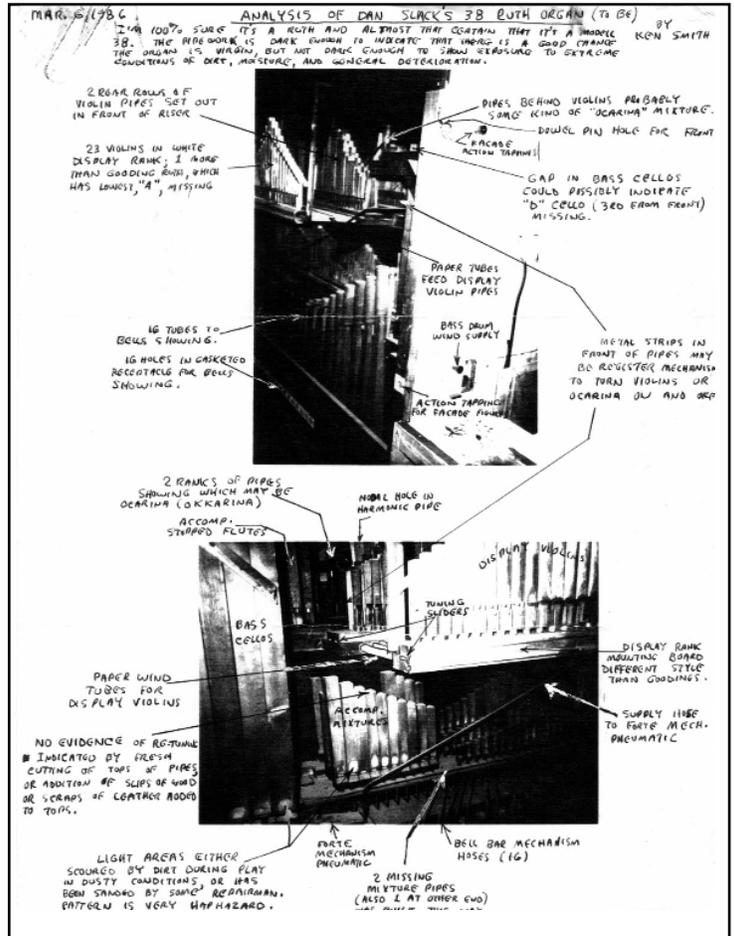


Figure 4. The Ruth's original facade where it stood, displayed for the Castle Park public to see at the time of the sale of the organ.

façade). Dan had tried without success to buy the Ruth's façade as well (Figure 4). He was told that if the Ruth was "returned to original condition and playing the original book music" that the façade would be sold to him, but that never happened. Successive attempts by Dan's wife, Marilyn, and the Ruth's current owner were also unsuccessful in re-uniting the original façade with the organ.

The modern restoration process now began. Earlier in March of 1986 organ enthusiast and good friend, Ken Smith, and Dan traveled to California to look at the Ruth. Ken summarized the work necessary as well as made detailed drawings (Figures 5 & 6). See Ken Smith's description of the acquisition detailed separately in the accompanying text box.

The restoration process took over three years and the Ruth made its musical debut for the 1990 Mid-Am Organ Rally.



Figure 7. Dan slack with the Ruth organ (sans facade) in Fremont, Ohio, circa 1986.

Dan's 38 Ruth Ken Smith

Dan asked me to go with him to California as his "technical expert" to look at the organ to determine if it was indeed an authentic 38 Ruth (96-keyless); if it was all there; and what its condition was. It was a 38 Ruth, in good restorable condition, and nearly complete except for one missing melody violin pipe (for which I later built a replacement). Dan purchased the organ on the spot, at Buena Park, CA.

After receiving the organ in Fremont Dan asked me if I would take on the job of restoring it, but I had to decline. Since I was still working at the time it would have been a spare time project stretched out-besides, I had a Ruth replica project of my own in progress.

So, Dan found a mutual friend, Mike Kitner, to do the job. Mike was an outstanding restorer, but admitted he had little experience in building all new work, and asked me for technical assistance in building a new pressure valve chest and a keyless frame for the organ.

For the valve chest, I had designed one for my own Ruth replica which turned out well, so I gave Mike copies of my drawings. From that he built a new valve chest for Dan's Ruth, which preformed flawlessly.

For the keyless frame I designed an all-new one to replace the original frame which was missing (probably thrown away when the organ was converted to Wurlitzer 165 rolls). My frame design had a Ruth appearance and also was an enlarged version of the one I had built for my replica. Mike did an outstanding job of creating the new frame for the big Ruth (**Figure 10**). In a small way, I had a hand in the construction. I laid out the tracker bar for Mike to 3.85-mm spacing. From that, indexing bars for book punching machines were made to insure correct spacing.

I cut the very first book for Dan's Ruth, since there was no book music for it. The tune was Teddy Bears Picnic. Dan had an obsession for a certain arrangement of this tune as played on a 78-key organ of another make. Dan journeyed to Louisiana to personally copy this tune by hand. He then turned it over to me to be transposed to the 38 Ruth scale, which I did, and subsequently cut into book music. Unfortunately, Dan never got to hear the tune. It was dedicated to his memory—the first tune played when the organ was presented at the 1990 MBSI organ rally.

During the restoration process, it was decided to change the way the registration mechanism worked from the original Ruth design. In the beginning, when A. Ruth & Sohn developed the Style 38, they basically took the 37-style scale and added four keys onto the edge of the book (changing it from a 92 to 96-keyless organ). Some 38 Ruths were built new with this arrangement, and some 37s were converted to the 38 format so that the piano-forte (turns the various mixtures on and off) mechanism didn't have to be altered, they used continuous perforations in the book to operate two of the new keys, ocarina and bells. When these were on, there were two lines of continuous perforations next to each other, creating a serious weakness in the book. The book was easily crimped at the point, which frequently happened. Once cardboard is crimped, it can't be straightened out. So, a lock and cancel mechanism for all the registers in Dan's organ was designed to eliminate the flawed continuous perforation feature, and all the books were cut for it had short registration holes (**Figure 11**).



Figure 8. Mike Kitner disassembling the Ruth organ at the Slack home.



Figure 9. The Ruth organ disassembled before shipment to Mike Kitner's workshop.

In April 1986, the Ruth was delivered to the Slack home in Fremont, Ohio (**Figure 7**). Mike Kitner was asked to restore the organ and came to Dan's home to help in the disassembly process

(**Figures 8 & 9**). The organ was then moved to Carlisle, PA, sometime after May 1986 for restoration. The restoration process took over three years and the Ruth made its musical debut for the 1990 Mid-Am Organ Rally (it was the largest band organ at the largest ever American band organ rally) in Fremont, Ohio. Ken Smith and Fred Dahlinger cut 140 meters of new book music—the rally attendees were not disappointed.

With the advent of Dan's untimely death in December 1987, Marilyn Slack developed different interests and eventually disposed of the Ruth. It was stored in Bloomdale, OH, from 1992 to 1996 at which time it was offered for sale. The organ was admired by all but no one

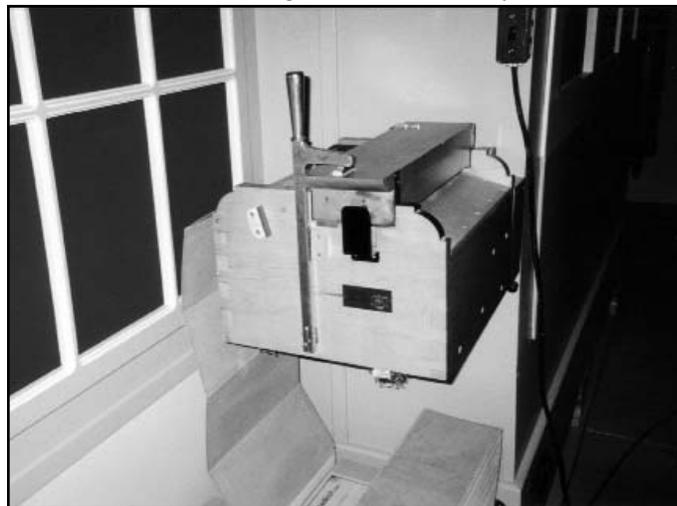


Figure 10. The new key frame assembly for the Ruth organ.



Figure 10. The new register assembly.

wanted to venture a bid on a large organ without a façade. No one except Terry and Joan Haughawout who made an offer and successfully acquired the organ in 1998. As Terry admits: “Now I own an organ without a façade.”

The first item of business was the addition of a MIDI-interface (designed by Terry with machining and assembly preformed by Kenneth Gray, a Haughawout employee) to the organ to allow it to play the large amount of 96-key music available. The MIDI was installed, leaving the ability to play books if so desired. In 1998 Terry traveled to Europe to service some Mills Violanos and told Freddie



Figure 12. Andreas Lang's son drawing sketches of the proposed façade.

Gerer that he had a Style 38 Ruth with no façade. Freddie said that he knew someone who could carve a façade—Terry remembered thinking “Yeah, right!” Freddie went on to suggest getting someone in Germany to carve the façade. Freddie asked for photos and said he would have the woodcarver send a quote. Terry mused “That was the end of the conversation and I thought that would be the end of that story.” On return to the U.S., Terry's wife, Joan, suggested that they had nothing to lose so photos were sent overseas. Six to eight weeks passed and the entire issue of making a new façade was forgotten when an envelope arrived from Andreas Lang (Germany) with

sketches and a full quote. Mr. Lang was anxious to proceed with the project because he had always wanted to carve a Ruth façade and this provided a great opportunity.

The Bumbling Bruder Tour of 1999 provided Terry with the opportunity to meet Andreas Lang in person. The Langs live very close to Waldkirch and after a short trip, introductions and inspections of other work, Andreas Lang was chosen to do the façade. Details were laid out with the help of Freddie Gerer's interpretations and the project was consummated. Work began in 1999 and finished about six months later (March 30, 2000) when it was delivered through the port of Baltimore. Two large crates contained the ornamental but unpainted façade. The crates were so large that two men had to climb on top with screw guns to take the top off—37 40-gallon bags of excelsior packing were used to carefully protect the façade. It arrived in perfect condition (Figures 12 to 15).



Figure 13. Andreas Lang with part of the Ruth façade.

Details of Andreas Lang's concern and perfection of the project can be obtained from an email dated October 2, 1999, when Andreas noted:

Mr. Haughawout, I have a question to [about] the angel's hair color. At [on] the original the angels have dark hair, but normal angels have blond hair. In which color should I paint the hair?

At [on] the original façade the faces of the angle are not so nice. At [on] other Ruth facades (for example, Hinzen or Maier/Swiss) the angel have nicer faces, they have thick cheeks.

At the first sight your façade and the Hinzen or the façade of Jens Carlson are identical. But if you look exact[-ly], you can see, that there are many little differences. No façade is identical with the other. In our opinion your new façade should be at the first sight identical, but if you look exact[-ly] there can be differences (for example, the expressions of the faces.). Each façade should be a particular façade, they are not made by a machine, they are handmade, like in earlier time by Ruth.



Figure 14. The Lang facade building team with the completed facade.



Figure 15. The building and exporting of the facade was featured in the local German town's newspaper (March 31, 2000).

Mr. Lang was anxious to proceed with the project because he had always wanted to carve a Ruth façade and this provided a great opportunity.



Figure 16. The facade being painted by Dave PUNCHES (left) and Kelli POPOFF (right). Photo: Ron Bopp

Now, time for the great erection. Terry and one of his employees (Lee Escobedo) put the façade together for the first time. Interesting problems arose when Terry realized the carvings were done from two-dimensional photographs. Once it was erected Jake Feasel (Terry's cabinet man) was brought in to look at the needed changes necessary to make the marriage of organ and façade (details of the organ are detailed in **Figures 16 to 18**). The center

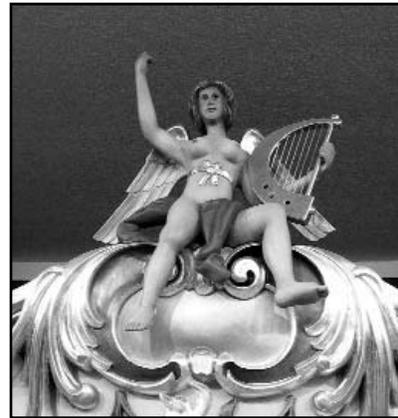


Figure 16. The completed top figure (harpist) of the organ. Photo: Ron Bopp

canopy was removed and 4 ½" was added in depth to help support the vertical columns. A frame was made for the façade in order to support it along with the existing organ chassis. At this point, the façade is freestanding—nearly eight inches away from the organ.

The next step was to find an artist to paint the exposed façade. Lee had mentioned he had a good friend that could paint the façade—just out of art school. Terry had mentioned to Lee the number of people in the states that could paint the organ could be counted on one hand but he insisted his friend should be included in that number. Terry finally gave in and had Lee's friend come over with his portfolio. Two days later Dave PUNCHES came over and we looked at his portfolio. Terry called Joan for a second opinion and she concurred with me that this should be our choice (**Figure 16**).



Figure 17. At the bottom of the facade is the Ruth name highlighting the exposed glockenspiel. Photo: Ron Bopp



Figure 18 (left). A closeup of the center section of the Haughawout Style 38 Ruth organ.

Figure 19 (above). An even closer photograph details the band mistress.

Photos: Ron Bopp

Kelli Popoff, Dave’s fiancée, an artist as well (Masters in Art at the University of North Carolina) joined the effort for a few weeks. They were very professional—several attempts were made before the final color combination had been reached. Pictures and photographs were brought in for examples to help the artists who were very naïve when it came to painting the front of fairground organs. Terry even took Dave to the Sanfilippo estate collection to acquire ideas for the project.

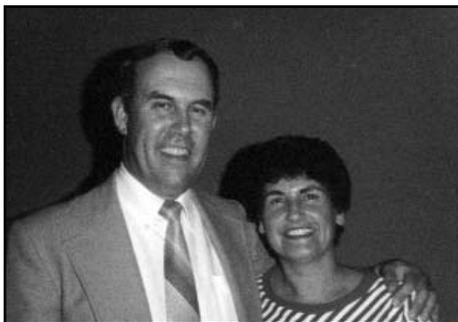


Figure 20. Terry and Joan Haughawout. Joan was the model for the band mistress.

The façade was nearly complete when Terry attended the circus celebration in Milwaukee, WI. Upon return the façade took on a totally different look—it had changed altogether! The perfectionist in our artist had set in and although what we had considered to be good, he didn’t.

So the painting started again! When asked how many facades he had painted he exclaimed “six.” Six facades? Yes, He had painted this one six times! Incidentally, Hank Stewart, another employee, painted the reverse side of the organ with color-coordinated hues, picked by the artist.

One of the special effects to be accomplished was the carving and painting of the band mistress. Photographs of Joan were made available to Andreas Lang as well as Dave to achieve a similar likeness (**Figure 19 & 20**). She does lend a pleasant aura to the robust output of Ruth fair and classical music.

Finished the day before Christmas, 2000 the organ was now ready to entertain the most discriminating organ aficionado. It is now playing using the 140 meters of book music along with over 40 MIDI files. Wayne Holton is currently arranging some music for this 96-key musical marvel and, wow, does it sound good! The completed Ruth is featured on the back cover of this issue of the *Carousel Organ*.

All photographs are from the collection of Terry Haughawout except where noted.

Terry Haughawout worked for Cummins engine for 30 years. In 1974 he became interested in mechanical music. In 1987 it became a full-time labor of love. Now he is owner of Haughawout Music Company (primarily restoration of the Mills Violano Virtuoso) and other restorations including orchestrions, coin-pianos and band organs.