

Reed Organs in Movies and TV

The Ghost and Mr. Chicken – with Don Knots - the Ghost played the organ.

Disney's *Swiss Family Robinson*: The organ is retrieved from the ship before it's sunk. Later in the movie Mrs. Robinson plays *The Swisskapolka* on the organ for the other family members and new arrivals to dance to. If you go to Disney World and go through the Swiss Family Robinson tree house, there's only a mockup of an organ with *The Swisskapolka* playing.

Support Your Local Sheriff: When the town mayor (Harry Morgan) takes the new sheriff (James Garner) to his home, he points out the little organ that was shipped all the way from, I think, St. Louis.

From Ron Manzow

I was watching a Hallmark movie "The Magic of Ordinary Days" set in a Colorado farming community in 1944 and one of the first scenes included a wedding in a little clapboard church. And there was an old reed organ playing "Bless be the Tie that Binds" by the minister's wife! It got me thinking. How many other movies and TV shows over the years have had reed organs in them?

To get the ball rolling, I would volunteer "Petticoat Junction", a TV show with Kate and Uncle Joe at the Shady Rest Hotel. They have an organ in their lobby/parlor and Kate can be seen playing it in several episodes.

Also the early TV show "Lassie" with Jeff, his mother Ellen and Gramps. Although the show usually shows the kitchen, one or two episodes show the parlor with an old reed organ!

Your article in the latest newsletter about reed organs featured in misc. TV/movies got me to remembering:

Tom Waits (musician, composer, poet, actor, etc.) uses reed organs/harmoniums in some of his compositions. Three of his albums (which we own) "Raindogs", "The Black Rider" and "Orphans." use them as part of his instrumentation. He has many more albums, but I don't know how many feature reed organs.

You can google: "Tom Waits reed organs" and you will find several links.

Jeff Thomsen
Nevada City, CA

On Sun, Feb 18, 2018 at 6:06 PM Kevin Ruschhaupt <kevruschhaupt@comcast.net> wrote:
The Waltons had one in the church.

Ron:

Didn't "Cousin Pearl" have a pump organ in her parlor back in the "hills" on the early issues of the Beverly Hillbillies? They always talked about how she played "pie-anny"

----- Forwarded message -----

From: wayne riddlehoover <wayneaugustus@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, Feb 21, 2018 at 8:14 PM

Subject: Re: Beverly Hillbillies?
To: Ron Manzow <rmanzow0849@gmail.com>

I think you are correct. It was Jetherene, as she was Jethro's sister.

On Wednesday, February 21, 2018, 10:17:12 AM EST, Ron Manzow <rmanzow0849@gmail.com> wrote:

Wayne,

I just watched the Beverly Hillbillies awhile back and in that episode, Pearl was playing the piano at the theater for the silent films. But, I think that there is an episode where Pearl's daughter, Jeffrene(?) plays the organ to try and capture the attention of a suitor. With the episodes on DVD, I can pause and zoom in and try to see who the manufacturer is. You can tell, I'm hooked on organs! Thanks for the info.
Ron

On Sun, Feb 18, 2018 at 7:54 PM wayne riddlehoover <wayneaugustus@yahoo.com> wrote:
Ron:

Didn't "Cousin Pearl" have a pump organ in her parlor back in the "hills" on the early issues of the Beverly Hillbillies? They always talked about how she played "pie-anny"

Wayne Riddlehoover
Greenwood, SC

Check Laurel and Hardy's "Below Zero" (1930) and watch for the scene about halfway through, when Stan's portable field organ is sacrificed beneath the wheels of a taxi. Criminal, just criminal.

Cheers -

- Ron Burch (ROS member)

I checked out the "Ghost and Mrs. Chicken" and it DOES have an organ in it, but no reed organ stops, just tabs, so that organ is not a reed organ. Of course the sound is dubbed. It does have blood on the keys, as they repeat several times in the movie. AND it is a perfect addition to the movie.

Swiss Family Robinson also has an organ. It has "fake" pipes on the top and in the movie it is played in the tree house after being rescued from the shipwreck. In the "bonus features" it explains that that section of the movie was filmed on a sound stage and all the sounds were dubbed, so the organ sounds more like a calliope. They had a clip of the opening of the Swiss Family Robinson exhibit at Disneyland in the 60's and that organ had stops and knee pedals, so I'm wondering if that one actually plays. Anyone in California want to check it out and see?

That's about all on this end. I picked up an 1881 J. Estey organ this past weekend for \$40. It has foot pedals and is walnut. It has the side handle to push up and down for someone to operate the bellows when the player is using the foot peddles. I didn't have anything like that in my collection, so I had to get it, right? Right now it's in my garage and is too cold to do much investigating, but it should be an interesting project to see if I can get it to play.

I also got an Wilcox & White which I didn't have. I always like finding something I don't have to see how it compares to the other ones I have.

Ron Manzow

A PBS program, Globe Trekker, had a story about a road trip down the western side of Argentina and the person made a stop in a small town which had been settled by Welch immigrants'. The town had a small church and in it was a reed organ still in use. The local church organist played the organ for the traveler. No name of the organ was mentioned.