

AIO

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Blower Bag Connections

by Joseph Chapline

Some years ago I revived an old 19th century tracker organ. It was in a large Catholic church in Philadelphia. The organ was in a rear gallery high above the congregation.

The instrument was not playable when I got there. The main problem had been that some painters had scraped off the paint above the organ in the course of repainting and had not properly protected the pipes from the falling paint chips. There were also some broken trackers. We repaired the trackers, cleaned the pipes out and tuned the instrument. The timing was such that we finished the work by early December. The Rector, especially, looked forward to using the organ Christmas Eve. When I left the organ everything seemed set for fine performance.

Christmas Eve about 8 PM the Rector called to tell me that the organ wouldn't play. I asked about fuses but they were all in place and working. I had to play a service myself and there wasn't time for me to perform this service call and keep the appointment to play at my church. So, they had no organ that Christmas Eve.

I went there the day after Christmas and began to search for the trouble. I found it in the basement where the large Orgoblo sat. What happened was that the blower bag which connected the 12" outlet of the blower to the main 12" windline had fallen off the windline just above the blower. There was no apparent reason. The clamping collar was seemingly untouched; it had just gotten tired after so many years of connection and chose that night to fall off.

The next day I called the Rector and told him what had happened. He promptly laid me out. "I thought you had checked everything about the organ." I thought I had, too. But I had never thought to test the blower bag connection to see if it was still tight after all of those years.

So, don't forget to check blower bags and their connection to conductors; you can never tell when one of them is not tight and will fall off at the most inopportune time.