

## History of Opus 1790 Style EX

Opus 1790 Style EX was built between 1927 and 1928, opening for the first showing at the Granada Theater in Bluefield, West Virginia in 1928.

Between 1970 and 1999 there are some discrepancies in historical documents regarding the next placements of the organ, but what is for sure is that both John Wolford of Evansville, Indiana and the Evans Theater had some presence of the Wurlitzer organ during this period.

In one account from 1970, John Wolford of Evansville, Indiana purchased the organ and installed it at his residence. Due to space constraints some of the organ remained stored and was not reassembled in its new home. The organ was then sold by John's widow to Bob Edmunds who had hopes of hearing the organ return to the Granada. However in 1980, the Granada had closed its doors permanently. The organ was then delivered to the Evans Theater in Evansville, Indiana following the death of John Wolford.

However, in other accounts John Wolford is never mentioned and the organ's history skips directly to the Evans Theater. Bob Edmunds then discovered the organ and purchased it in 1999.

Both histories pick right back up in 1999 where Bob Edmunds had discovered the organ and purchased it. It was installed at the Keith-Albee Theater in Huntington, West Virginia to replace their Wurlitzer Opus 1780.

In 2009, Bob Edmunds rediscovered the original Opus 1780 and purchased it. At this time portions of the 1780 and the 1790EX were combined at the Keith Albee Theater. The intention still remained to return the Keith Albee's original 1780 to its original form minus the portions of the 1790EX still installed.

In 2015 Bob Edmunds heard of the work being done to the Granada Theater to restore the previously abandoned space to its former glory as a modern day cinema. Their search for a theater organ timed up perfectly as Edmunds had been working on the restoration of the 1780 at the Albee theater and the 1790EX had been removed to storage at the Keith -Albee. Bob Edmunds donated the Wurlitzer Opus 1790 Style EX back to the Granada Theater allowing both the 1780 and 1790 to not only be restored, but returned to their original homes after all these years.

The 1790 was placed in storage at the Granada until work could commence on its full re-installation and renovation.

As part of the renovation, the organ's internals will receive modernization upgrades, digital systems for midi and stop control, and the addition of several new stops and ranks. To remedy the issue of missing or damaged parts, organists and others from around the nation have sent in parts as donations to help repair or replace those pieces.

The organ renovation is being overseen by Mac Abernathy (*Piedmont Theatre Organ Society*). Consulting and assisting are Bob Edmunds, Bill Webber (*House Organist - Kentucky Theatre*), Jimmy Jenks, Harry Moore, Chance Parrish, Barry Simmons, and many other volunteers from various organ societies. The [Piedmont Theatre Organ Society](#) has taken charge of the maintenance and resotation process under Mac Abernathy and his team.

Construction projects involved in the restoration and renovation are being assisted by Swope Construction, the general contractor in charge of the Granada Project which is overseeing the entire restoration and renovation of the Granada Theater.

Construction and renovation of the organ is on-going. It is expected to be complete by the end of 2022.

\*Note: Style EX refers to the fact that Opus 1790 contains two pipe chambers versus one which would have been a Style E. \*