
What is a Combination Organ?

[By Arthur E. Schlueter, Jr.](#)

The term "combination organ" has been loosely used within musical circles to mean many things, which has led to some confusion. The appropriate definition of a combination organ actually comes from electronic organ manufacturers who coined the term to describe the addition of pipes to their mass-produced, digital organs. From that I have derived the following definition of a "combination organ":

Combination Organ: an electronic organ with digital sound-producing technology as it's primary sound source, that has been augmented with one or more wind-blown pipe ranks. Also referred to as a "hybrid" organ.

Prior to 1930, organ tones were produced by either reeds, as in a pump organ, or pipes, as in a pipe organ. In 1930 the Hammond "organ" was introduced that utilized a revolving "tone wheel" to produce a musical tone. In the decade to follow analog technology was also introduced to produce another variety of sounds to mimic the organ.

From the early days of Hammond and analog organs, attempts were made to interface with real pipes. In 1971 Rodgers Instrument Corporation developed and engineered the first analog organs that would interface with real pipes.

The attached diagrams are offered for further clarification.

About the Author

Arthur E. Schlueter, Jr., founder and CEO of A.E. Schlueter Pipe Organ Company, has extensive experience writing and developing standards, guidelines and codes. He was the Associate Executive Director of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools responsible for setting standards for higher education. Since 1990 he has served as a committee member of the National Electrical Code Panel 12 and was the principal submitter of Code 650 - Pipe Organs, and Code 640 which includes electronic organs. He is licensed in multiple states as a low-voltage electrician, has earned B.A., M.Ed., and Sp.Ed. degrees, and is a doctoral candidate.

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Electronic Organ



Electronic organ console



Amplifier and speakers



Combination Organ



Electronic organ console

Amplifier and speakers



Electronic pipe interface

Wind-blown pipes



Pipe Organ



Custom pipe organ console

Custom relay



Wind-blown pipes

