

An International Magazine of Mechanical Music

Volume 18 Number 7

Autumn 1998

Edited by Alan Pratt

# The Music Box



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**Inside**

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**M**y thanks to those members who took the time to contact me by letter or telephone with their views on my first issue as Editor of *The Music Box*.

Part way through the preparation of that issue I felt like someone trying to find his way home in a thick fog! I thought I was going the right way - I hoped I was going the right way - but there was an element of luck in the whole exercise.

In the event, the comments I received were all encouraging. Some included constructive suggestions, which have all been noted and in some cases already acted upon, and one or two included a mild rebuke for the few errors that did creep in!

In all cases they were most welcome whether they were simply good wishes or more detailed suggestions and comments. Thank you all for helping to clear the fog.

On the subject of letters to the Editor, I am a little surprised at how few members feel they have views which they would like to air in the columns of *The Music Box*. Whenever members get together there is a constant exchange of views, ideas and thoughts on our hobby. But for those who cannot get to meetings, or who choose not to, the pages of our magazine should be an active alternative to these face-to-face exchanges. Whatever the subject matter, let's hear from you.

Whilst I am up on my soapbox I might as well raise one final question. It concerns our Classified Ads page.

In this issue the number of ads has shrunk to almost zero. Isn't anyone buying and selling any longer? I have heard it said that some members are concerned that in advertising they may compromise the security of their collection, making themselves a potential target. This is easily overcome by having replies sent via the Editorial Office and thus remaining anonymous to all except those with whom you finally do business.

Well, that's enough preaching for this issue. I have raised these points in the hope that we can increase everyone's enjoyment of their particular area of mechanical music. Even if you have never written to *The Music Box* before, I say to you - come on in - the water's fine!

Alan Pratt



Alan Pratt

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain Volume 18 Number 7 Autumn 1998

## contents

Society news and topics	175
The largest organette works in the world <i>Selling Your Product</i>	180
Musical Reviews	182
Duo Art 'Robot' Revisited <i>A new series of digital recordings</i>	184
Kalliston - A Strange Family of Organettes <i>A sideways look at organettes</i>	186
Musical Box Oddments no. 78 <i>Anthony Bulleid continues his series</i>	188
The Restorer's Workshop <i>Methods and materials for the restorer</i>	194
Regsiter News	195
Saleroom Report	195
Crown Devon - A Novelty Musical Miscellany <i>Collecting mechanical music on a budget</i>	196
Projects and Wants	197
The Street Organ Scene	198
Letters to the Editor	199
Classified Adverts	200

The Editor welcomes articles, letters and other contributions for publication in the Journal. The Editor expressly reserves the right to amend or refuse any of the foregoing.

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### Front Cover

Pedal electric Steck Duo-Art Piano in Black-ground chinoiserie lacquered case, with matching duet stool. Sold 24 July 1997, £4,600.

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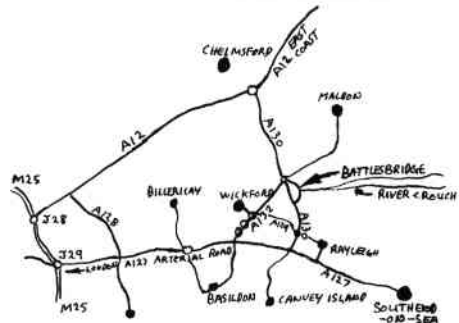
*Illustrated: An exceptional 24 1/2" Polyphon. Circa 1880.*

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**President's Message**

I have completed my first year as President. It wasn't totally uneventful, but then as my mentor, the late John Mansfield of Sussex, used to say "but that's the fun of it". We have an extremely good committee which means that my job is made easier. We are looking financially much healthier and just need to push our membership numbers up. We need to catch them first, then pop them in the keep net. I've only had one answer to my request of details from museums. This was from Cotton Mechanical Music Museum, near Stowmarket. Having been a 'guide' there for several years I can assure you it should not be missed. So if you want exposure of your museum you will have to put pen to paper, remembering to state your special rates for members, where applicable.

We are producing a new 'Membership introduction' that will be sent out to the dealers and Museums that are amongst our membership. There is already an arrangement with several of the Auction Houses. The Chanctonbury Ring has brought in five members in the last five meetings, so every little helps. It's up to you to tell people how good we are, and once they have joined we will try to prove it. At our Autumn Meeting in Ashford we are having an Organ Grind on the Saturday morning. This was put on because of the popular demand by members who pointed out that we hadn't had the organs out for several years. Now Paul Bellamy has arranged it some of them seem to have bad arms. Several members are prepared to allow budding "itinerates" to borrow organettes for the morning. These are light and come with a card table and selection of music, and I know they will be treated with due respect and reverence. Just get your frock, old scarf and trilby (not necessarily in that order) and put in a request to Paul so that he can organise it. It is only for a couple of hours, and all monies raised will go to the Mayor's charity.

Remember, as one of you more northerly members said when hitting the nail on the head "how can people join us if they don't know

**New Life Member**

Anthony Bulleid, well known to Music Box readers for his 'Musical Box Oddments' series, has been made a Life Member of the Society. He is only the fifth person in the history of the MBSGB to be honoured in this way, and it is in recognition of the enormous contribution which he has made in researching and dating in minute detail across the whole spectrum of musical box manufacturers.

His books "Cylinder Musical Box Technology" and "Cylinder Musical Box Design and Repair" are standard reference works to be found in the library of every serious collector.

His work on tune sheets, now being published in the MBSI journal, is expected to be published in conjunction with The Music Box in the near future.

Pictured below: Anthony Bulleid receives life membership of the Society from President Ted Brown.



we are here!" We must tell them. I look forward to seeing you at Ashford, and as we have so many members in the South East it should be well supported. For new (and not so new) members, there are several videos and a recent Shire book about mechanical music on the market and once purchased I'm sure they would be an ideal medium to loan out to prospective members, before they buy their own copies.

As an aside, the photograph of me on page 147 in the last journal reminded me of my days of giving evidence in the dock at Greenwich Court. Mind you, my hair was tidier (and darker) then!

**Chanctonbury Ring**

Organettes, the topic of our last get-together, attracted over 30 members and because of the variety that were there (organettes that is, not members) we only covered British and

American makers. These of course are mainly suction models that are mostly un-keyed.

The next get-together is on the 30th August at 10.30 a.m. Bring your own packed lunch and we will treat you to a strawberries and cream tea.

The main subject 'European Organettes', and the morning spot on Cylinder Boxes 'Fact or Fiction!' with Anthony Bulleid, our almost resident speaker.

**1999 Society Fair**

John Young and Roy Ison are examining the possibility of organising a mechanical music fair at Lincoln next year - possibly along the lines of the one held at Ilkley.

More news later, but to make it a success we would need the support of the professional dealer. If you are interested a call to Roy will be appreciated (telephone number in the Society Officers panel).

*"..how can people join us if they don't know we are here"*

### AGM & Society Auction

More than 60 members gathered at Ashorne Hall on June 6th for the Annual General Meeting and auction.

We were pleased to see several new members present and to welcome Mr. & Mrs. Hall, MBSGB members from Australia for, although the formal part of the day may be regarded by some as rather dull, there is ample opportunity to renew old friendships and exchange news and views on mechanical music. Our AGMs are real social occasions!

Auction viewing finished at 1.30 at which time Kevin McElhone gave a short recital on the Aeolian Pipe Organ (No.1508 - built 1908), one of several new instruments which Graham Whitehead has recently installed at Ashorne Hall. Kevin always brings out the best in these organs and his selection of rolls was an enjoyable interlude before the auction.

The auction attracted over 100 lots ranging through cylinder and disc boxes, a Hicks piano, three accordions and the usual mix of smaller items. Christopher Proudfoot (courtesy of Christie's) conducted the auction with his usual zeal and there was lively bidding for most items.

Graham Whitehead had invited members to stay on after the meeting to see and hear some of the latest additions to his collection. These include an Ampico grand piano and a fascinating Banjo Orchestrion made by David Ramey of USA. (A feature on this instrument will appear in *The Music Box* soon).

By the time we had played, and replayed, many of the instruments it was after 7 p.m. before the last of us left Ashorne Hall. Our thanks go to Graham and Janet Whitehead for their hospitality. A thoroughly enjoyable day. A precis of the AGM minutes is included with this issue.

### Italian trip

Taking a group to visit mechanical music collections as far away as Italy is a daunting task, but with his usual efficiency Alan Wyatt put together a tour which must surely be a benchmark against which others are measured.

Good weather was the order of the day for the crossing from Dover to Calais and from there it was to our first overnight stop in Reims. This charming cathedral city has many attractions of its own, but an early start was needed in order to reach Mirecourt where we were to visit our first collection.

The Maison de la Musique Mécanique de Mirecourt is a very well presented collection covering most aspects of mechanical music. Housed in a restored building in the centre of the town, the instruments were brought to Mirecourt from Brittany by Madame Françoise Dussour because of the history of serinette and organ manufacture in the town during the nineteenth century. A report on the opening of this museum appeared in *The Music Box Vol. 18 No. 2*.

Madame Dussour played most of the instruments for us, interspersed with humorous asides about the history of the items or their makers. The delicate serinettes contrasted with the powerful sound of the Concert Militaire by Charles Anceaume. This 58 note organ is fronted by 24 trombones and trumpets and would be a match for any military band.

A salon organ with intricate animated monkey 'band' and a very attractive street organ originally made in Mirecourt by Remi-Crobert provided further contrasts. This latter item provoked many envious comments and even the suggestion that we might smuggle it onto the coach!

Accompanied by a 35 note Limonaire we were persuaded to sing (in French) a ballad of the period entitled Frou Frou. Somehow we all managed to finish together and our mutilation of the French language was quickly forgiven.

The larger room of the Museum houses a range of orchestrions, pianolas, a Decap dance organ and a rare roll playing piano with violin-effect pipes by Fratinola dating from around 1900.



Viewing prior to the Society auction

Kevin McElhone plays the Aeolian Pipe Organ at Ashorne Hall



Our AGMs  
are real social  
occasions



Left: Madame Dussour demonstrates one of the Serinettes



Concert Militaire  
by Charles Anciaume, at Mirecourt.

This is an excellent collection, well presented and certainly worth a visit if you are in the area.

For us it was travel time again. Firstly to Lausanne, Switzerland, for an overnight stay and then on to Longiano in Italy for our next two collections. Our route took in some quite spectacular scenery as we climbed towards the snow-capped mountains for the passage through the Mount Blanc tunnel.

As we approached Longiano we were met by Franco Severi in his vintage car to guide us to our hotel. For car enthusiasts among our readers, this is a 1924 Flint - a rare American roadster, typical of the period and powered by a 5 litre engine. Franco is a recently joined member of MBSGB and had put in a great deal of effort in organising the Italian section of our tour. He and his wife, Sylvia, invited to us to their beautiful home built on a wooded hillside just outside the town of Longiano. Franco has two very fine barrel pianos together with over 20 cylinder boxes and organettes, but his greatest enthusiasm is for Racca pianos.

He has done a great deal of research into the life and work of Giovanni Racca and has a fine collection of prints, catalogues and Racca memorabilia in addition to what must be the finest collection of Racca anywhere. From the earliest black-cased model to the larger 72 note walnut-veneered example and beyond that to a rare coin-operated piano. Many of us were surprised to see one of the Raccas set up to play

rolls rather than books, but it seems that at one period music was available in both forms. Last of the line

was the Verdi electric version which, like so many of its contemporary instruments, disappeared

### Alan Wyatt, MBE

Alan Wyatt, a past President of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain, was awarded the MBE in the recent Honours List. The citation reads "for service to the community, especially in foster care and music conservation."

Alan has been active in local politics for many years, and is currently Vice-Chairman of South Cambridge District Council. However, the work which he and Daphne have done in fostering may not be so well known to Members.

Alan continues to be one of the most active members of the MBSGB committee as Membership & Correspondence Secretary, and

his efforts in organising the annual trip to museums and collections in mainland Europe are a continuing source of pleasure for many members. He and Daphne can be seen with their Tomasso street piano at many locations throughout the year, introducing the delights of mechanical music to a wider public and encouraging membership of the Society.

No award can be more richly deserved, and I am sure that all members will join with me in congratulating Alan on his award.

*Editor*

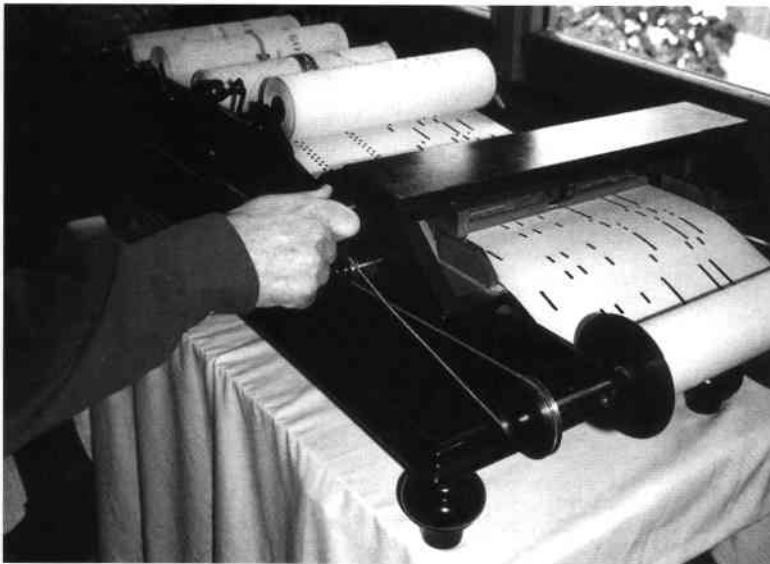
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*No award can  
be more richly  
deserved*

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Below: Alan Wyatt, MBE pictured with his wife, Daphne.





Left: A rare roll-playing Racca piano

with the introduction of the phonograph and gramophone.

Franco Severi's enthusiasm for Racca instruments is contagious and his pleasure in demonstrating the collection is matched only by the warmth and welcome extended to us by him and Sylvia. A truly memorable visit.

By comparison the visit to the Marino Marini collection was a much more low-key event. Although there are some fine instruments in the collection, not all are in good repair and many are not working at all. After a hurried 'official' tour we were able to go around again with Franco as our unofficial guide. This revealed some excellent music and made the visit well worthwhile. But what remains is a sadness at seeing so many instruments lying unre-

stored when they could have given so much pleasure. In one room alone some 40 or 50 barrel pianos stood closely packed together in unbroken lines - more a warehouse than a museum. Let us hope something can be done to bring what is potentially a fine collection to life.

Between these two visits Franco had arranged lunch for us at a hill-top restaurant at Bertinoro. The following day we visited the Principality of San Marino, perched on a hilltop about 45 minutes drive from the Adriatic coast.

After dinner at the hotel on the final day in Longiano, Franco had arranged a display of regional dancing by a local dance group. This proved highly professional and, at times, spectacular and was a fitting finale to our visit to Italy.

Below: Franco demonstrates one of his Racca pianos



Our route home took us through the Dolomites and the Brenner Pass to Garmisch overnight, and finally to France with an overnight stop at Metz.

The music was good, the hospitality overwhelming, and with good weather all the way the scenery was a constant delight. Who could ask for more? ■



Above: A coin-operated piano in the collection of Franco Severi

Left: An unusual barrel piano by Giovanni Racca.

## Forthcoming Meetings

### Autumn Meeting

**September 18th - 20th, Ashford, Kent.** Local Organiser - Paul Bellamy (01634 252079).

The Master Spearpoint Hotel, which is the venue for this meeting situated about one mile from Ashford, is now almost fully booked but arrangements have been made for anyone making a late booking to have accommodation locally and taking meals in the main hotel. If you have lost or mislaid the booking form, the hotel number is 01233 636863. A non-refundable deposit of £20 per person is required. And don't forget to tell Paul Bellamy or Roy Ison, our Meetings Secretary, that you have booked.

We still need more participants for the Organ Grind in Canterbury on the Saturday morning. We have plenty of willing handle turners but some further instruments would be welcome. Contact Paul if you can help.

Paul has set the theme of this meeting as "My Favourite Things" and you are invited to bring along any mechanical music item, either to demonstrate, talk about or just to show. Talk to Paul if you want to discuss your participation.

There is a full and varied programme for this meeting, details of which were in the last Music Box, so come along and make this a memorable meeting.

### Christmas Meetings

As reported in the last issue of Music Box, we have local meetings planned for the end of the year, where members have generously offered to open up their collections for one-day events. Locations and dates are:-

**November 28th:** Ted Brown at The Old School, Bucks Green, for members in the South East. Please advise Ted by 14th November on 01403 823533 if you intend to attend.

**December 5th:** Nicholas Simons in Derby will use this meeting to mark the opening of his new 'organ' room. Highlights will be the Ruth organ which we saw last year, but now with fully painted and lettered front, and the Arburo dance organ which Nicholas has been restoring over the last five years. Plus, I

### OFFICERS OF THE M.B.S.G.B. AND THEIR DUTIES

President: **Ted Brown**

The Old School, Guildford Road, Bucks Green, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 3JP  
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**Robert Hough**  
Aeolian Court, Chudleigh, Devon, TQ13 0EE  
Tel: 01626 853502

expect some interesting sounds from other items in Nicholas's wide ranging collection. Please advise by 21st November on 01332 760576.

**Also on December 5th:** John Turner of Wakefield is 'at home' to members. Call him on 01924 272418 by 21st November

Refreshments will be available at all venues during the day.

### Spring 1999 Meeting

Our Spring meeting will be in Wakefield next year, April 9th-11th. John Turner is the local organiser so we can look forward to a lively meeting. Make a note in the diary. ■

*The theme for the Ashford meeting is "my favourite things"*

### NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members to the Society:-

2637	A.J. Clements	Northants
2638	A. C. Gapper	Hants
2639	P.D. Phillips (Mrs)	Hants
2640	Franco Severi	Italy
2641	Mechanical Music Museum	Mirecourt, France
2642	D. Webber	Avon
2643	Lee Chun Kit Keith	Hong Kong
2644	R. Williams	Cheshire
2645	T.J. Hodson	Cornwall
2646	J.S. Anderson	Sussex

2647	J.E. Bence	Scotland
2648	J. Andrews (Mrs)	Norfolk
2649	S. Allen	London
2650	R. Metcalf	Scotland
2651	C. Houghton	Surrey
2652	J.J. Ling	Norfolk
2653	J.A. Lucas	Derbyshire
2654	D. Stephenson	Bucks
2655	E.J. Maddocks	Merseyside
2656	R.L. Edwards	S. Wales

We look forward to welcoming you personally at one of our meetings.

# The Largest Organette Works in the World

Part Two: Selling Your Product by Roger Booty

**P**art One of "The Largest Organette Works in the World", when first published in "Music & Automata", was complemented by pages from a Draper catalogue from late 1901, from Arthur Ord-Hume's personal library. Readers will be interested to learn there is a copy of that catalogue in the Musical Box Society archives. The finer details of it prove quite interesting. By October 1901 the number of tunes available had reached no.941 "Won't you be my Sweetheart". At that time the music was offered 'at the very low price of ONE PENNY PER FOOT', Therefore tune prices were from no.103 "Rock of Ages", 3 feet long, cost 3d. to no.515 "Caledonian Quadrille, Scotch Airs" which, at 120 feet long, made it half the price of the 'Victoria' organette, then offered at 20s, or £1.00. Additions had been made regularly to the list and it is probable further tunes were added after the supplementary list of October 1901.

The catalogue also contained an interesting list of reasons. 'Why J.M. Draper's noted organettes are the best in the world.' It starts, 'Because they are made by Competent British Workmen', and elsewhere it states, 'Remember, these Organettes are made in my own workshops by English workmen (not made in Germany), best material only being used.' The list continues, 'We have the Largest Organette Works in the World fitted up with the latest machinery, which enables us to turn out both quality and quantity. Every one of our Organettes is made from the finest selected material, and the timber is perfectly seasoned. In some cases our timber is stored for two or three years in order that the timber may be in perfect condition.' Which all

*There seems to be a preponderance of Friday or late afternoon organs, where the glue would be watered down to make the mix last to the end of the day*

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**J. M. DRAPER, Organette Works, BLACKBURN.**

Fig.1. From "Boys Own Paper", Saturday 1st September 1894.

infers the best product of its type available. Maybe, but my own experience of Draper's machines shows they are often lacking in one respect which perhaps has only become apparent with time, that is the poor strength of the glue used. There seems to be a preponderance of Friday or late afternoon organs, when the glue pot would be watered down to make the mix last to the end of the day!

From an early 1900 catalogue it can be seen that the list of items, other than organettes on offer, is quite long, and there seem to be a number of own label articles. I would imagine that organettes were the only item that was actually manufactured by Draper, everything else being bought in and stencilled with the company name where relevant. (see note on Draper phonograph in Part One). Musical boxes were also sold as can be reasoned from the following testimonial from Belfast in April 1899: "Dear

Sir, Your note and Musical Box are both to hand, and I am very well pleased with the Musical Box.....'. The question to be asked now is, does anyone have a cylinder box carrying Draper's name?

The 1894 advertisement, Fig.1, is rather unusual as it declares, '84/- organette for 35/- cash'. Normally the 84/- is written 4 guineas. It illustrates the Organette in its early form with the reed block assembly fitting into a flat bottomed 'V' on the case top, as shown in the patent in Part One. A later style Organette can be seen in the 1901 advertisement in Fig.2. Here pins on the reed block assembly fit into two small cast 'Y's to hold everything in line. The July 1898 advertisement in Fig.3 is notable in that it is for music only, and uses a sales gimmick popular still in supermarkets. 'A Special Offer. 25 per cent reduction. For one month only'.

"The Largest Organette Works

in the World", a fine claim, but untrue. To think only of Ehrlich in Germany or the Autophone Co. in the States is to show the falsehood in the statement. Even largest works in Britain could have been challenged by Maxfield & Sons in London. They produced at least six organette styles, including the popular Seraphone. But this was early days in hard selling and hire purchase was in its infancy. Draper was a man who had a product he was determined to sell and he used, or maybe even introduced, many sales devices which are still in vigorous use today. ■

My thanks to David Harrold and Ted Brown for their help. Part Three of this short series will illustrate the organettes themselves.

Due to the pressure of space, the pages from the 1900 catalogue will appear in the next issue.

Silver Watches, from 12/6.

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Fig.2 (Right)  
Advertisement from 1901.

Fig.3 (Below)  
Advertisement from July 1898.

**SPECIAL OFFER good up to JULY 31st, 1898.**

## A Special Offer.

**WATCH THE DATE! Special Offer no good after JULY 31st, 1898.**

**25 PER CENT REDUCTION. FOR ONE MONTH ONLY.**

**A CHANCE OF A LIFETIME.**

Owing to trade having been so quiet, and money very scarce, we have decided to give our customers a special opportunity of getting a good selection of Organette Music before our busy season commences, at a **REDUCTION OF 25 PER CENT.** This is an extraordinary reduction, and should encourage you to obtain a good selection before this offer closes. **THIS SPECIAL OFFER** is only available up to the end of July, 1898. Order early to avoid delay.

ALL MUSIC DELIVERED TO YOU CARRIAGE PAID.

Prices, 120 Feet Music, Ordinary Price 10/-, Special Offer Price 7/6; Saving of 2/6.
" 180 " " " " 15/-, " " " 11/-; " 4/-.
" 240 " " " " 20/-, " " " 14/-; " 6/-.
" 360 " " " " 30/-, " " " 21/-; " 9/-.

No Reduction on Orders under 120 feet.

Just think for a minute! The very best Organette Music that can be made, at the extraordinary low price of **Three Farthings per Foot, Carriage Paid.**

The trade is astounded, and say we are mad, as it cannot be sold for the money. We don't mind what they say. Our customers are getting the benefit, and we hope they will take advantage of this **Special Offer**, and get a good stock while they have the chance.

**SPECIAL NOTICE**—This Offer will not be repeated and only stands good up to July 31st, 1898. All orders after that date charged ordinary price, penny per foot.

Order by number from enclosed List of Tunes, early as possible, to avoid delay. Remember Ordinary Price after July, 31st, 1898.

Ordinary Prices after July 31st, 1898.

**ADDRESS:—J. M. DRAPER,**  
**ORGANETTE WORKS, BLACKBURN.**

**SPECIAL OFFER cancelled after July 31st, 1898.**

**Audio Cassette review***by Robert Hough*

From Keith Harding's World of Mechanical Music comes a much welcome cassette recording of 'The Aeolian Orchestrelle'. To my knowledge this recording is unique as it is solely devoted to music played on the orchestrelle.

These instruments which produce their music using reeds rather than pipes flourished in the late Victoria/Edwardian era. A model 'V' is used for this recording which when new cost £350 - a huge sum of money at that time. The Aeolian Company produced quality products but at high prices. Most expensive in the range was a model 'F' costing £1000. In comparison a Silver Ghost Rolls Royce cost £980!

Only the wealthy could afford such instruments and the Aeolian Company were skilful in exploiting this lucrative market to the full using endorsements from the aristocracy, nouveau riche and music world.

The music chosen for this recording is varied and interesting. Side 1 offers nine rolls, a personal favourite being 'Cavalleria Rusticana', followed by 'In a Monastery Garden' and Edward Grieg's 'Daybreak' to name just three.

Side 2 offers ten rolls from which I would highlight 'To a Wild Rose', 'Londonderry Air' and 'Whistling Rufus' as highly enjoyable.

Playing the orchestrelle requires skill, physical fitness and patience. The performer here is Kevin McElhone, a well known doyen of orchestrelle operators. Playing the orchestrelle for the first time can be similar to taking your driving test, lots of things to do and remember. Having some knowledge of these quite under-rated instruments, one can acknowledge the excellence of the performer here - an enviable skill indeed.

This tape fills a gap in the range of mechanical music recordings available today. The cassette sleeve shows an attractive picture of the orchestrelle used for this recording. However, an opportunity has been missed to tell the uninformed about the orchestrelle and, in particular, of the instrument used.

The sound quality is good and the instrument used is obviously in excellent condition. Once described

as the "great sleepers" in the world of mechanical music collecting, perhaps this tape will help to heighten awareness of these wonderful instruments and the music they can create with or without skilled hands and feet.

Notwithstanding their educational value in musical terms (a selling point exploited by the Aeolian Company) you can actually perform, i.e. play and interpret the music. In my opinion the orchestrelle will in time become of age and much sought after. Sadly, many have been lost through neglect, destruction and a basic lack of appreciation. However, as the opportunity to create one's own music in this format is rare today I anticipate that current interest in these instruments will grow significantly, especially on listening to this kind of recording.

*The cassette is available from Keith Harding's World of Mechanical Music, Northleach, Nr. Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL54 3ET, England. Tel: 01451 860181; Fax: 01451 861133, priced at £6.99, or £7.99 inc. postage.*

**Video Review***by Alan Pratt*

From Rallyscene, best known for their productions of Steam Rallies and the larger organs, come two new videos featuring mechanical music collections which will be known to many members.

**Musical Boxes, Automata and other Interesting things**

This is a guided tour around the highlights of Keith Harding's World of Mechanical Music at Northleach.

Keith takes us through his collection in relaxed style interspersing the music with anecdotes and background information on the instruments played.

Both sound and picture quality is excellent and it is a relief to find that each instrument is allowed to play the selected tune fully. So often producers of videos allow just a few seconds of a tune before moving onto the next instrument. This is extremely annoying, and Rallyscene are to be congratulated on understanding the needs of the mechanical music enthusiast.

As a reminder of a visit to Keith Harding's or simply a record of some interesting instruments, this video is good value at £12.45 including postage and packing. Running time is 40 minutes.

**The Beautiful World of Mechanical Music**

This video features two collections of mechanical music. Part one was shot at Ted Brown's collection, and with his usual enthusiasm he takes us through a selection of cylinder disc boxes, organettes and a few of the more unusual items finishing with a fine performance on the Triola. His enjoyment of the subject is clear, and this video is for the serious collector or would make an ideal present for someone who, at present, has only a passing interest in musical boxes, for who could fail to be swept along by his enthusiasm?

The second half was shot at the Rye Treasury where Mick Doswell and Mike Boyd demonstrate some of the larger items which most of us would find impossible to include in a private collection - an 84 key Mortier and a Mills Violano Virtuoso among them. This latter instrument is probably the best sounding Mills I have heard.

Mike Boyd plays some of the collection's roll-playing organs and the presentation finishes with a fine Steinway Duo-Art grand piano.

One silly error where a Polyphon is shown playing Washington Post March whilst the soundtrack plays Honeysuckle and the Bee is irritating but does not detract from the overall enjoyment of this video. This is a tape that can be played many times over without losing its appeal. It would make an excellent addition to any collection. Running time 60 minutes. Price £14.95 including packing and postage. ■

*Both tapes can be obtained from Rallyscene at P.O. Box 171, Rotherham S65 1YP (Tel: 0114 2573451), or from Keith Harding's World of Mechanical Music, Northleach, Nr. Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL54 3EU (tel: 01451 860181).*

*A full list of Rallyscene videos is available free on request from the address above.*

*Playing the orchestrelle for the first time can be similar to taking your driving test, lots of things to do and remember.*

## Wintzenheim Festival

The Festival International de Musique Mechanique took place in the beautiful French canton de Wintzenheim from 26-28 June. I was the only English person attending amongst 55 groups of 'tourneurs' from seven countries. Through the meticulous organisation and warm welcome of its president Claude Monfrini and his staff, our wonderful world of mechanical music bridged all the gaps of language and culture. A full programme of activities included recitals by young musicians, choristers, and a visit to the mountain-top Chateau du Hohlandsberg overlooking Wintzenheim and the Rhine valley.

Personal highlights were: the church parade of 'tourneurs' at which Pierre Charial played his extraordinary Orgue de Barbarie and the Ave Maria sung by Marie-Paule Vernizeau accompanied by Bernard Couillet on street organ; organ duets and organ accompaniment to singing groups of men and women, including the typical French songs sung by charismatic Clementine Duguet. *Paul Bellamy.*

## Church Barrel Organ Research

Christopher Turner, a Senior Lecturer in the School of Music and Performance Arts at Colchester Institute (A Regional College of Anglia Polytechnic University) is currently engaged in a project to photograph, record and document all extant barrel organs which are still in working order and in situ in Anglican churches or chapels. He would be grateful to hear of any instruments which are in working order and would be very pleased to receive any information and particularly copies of any prints, old photographs or documents relating to any church barrel organ. A complete set of CD recordings will be available and a book will be pub-

lished containing full details and photographs of each instrument together with a sampler CD of the main repertoire. He can be reached at Colchester Institute, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3LL (01206 718000).

## From W.H. Kelders in Holland

On the 27th of August last year we started with a new Organ Society in the Netherlands. Our Society, the VDDL (Vereniging voor draai-en dansorgelliefhebbers), which means: Society for Fair and Dance Hall Organ

Enthusiasts have got approximately 400 members since the start. This number increases every week.

We bring out a quarterly magazine/newsletter about street organs, fairground organs, dance hall organs, hand-turned organs, fairgrounds and showmen, musical boxes and automatic playing musical instruments.

If you are interested we would like to swap a membership with your Society. We will send you our magazine, free of charge, and we will receive yours on the same conditions. Your Society will be mentioned under the list of Automatic Music Societies.

Please let us know if you can accept this offer. We wish you all the best with your Society and your magazine. Thanks you very much.

W.M. Kelders  
Chairman VDDL  
St. Genovevstraat 24  
5694 AG Breugel  
Netherlands.

*A reciprocal arrangement has been made as suggested. We wish the new VDDL every success and hope to hear more of their activities. Ed.*

## Mechanical Music Robbery

As we go to press we learn from Phillipe Rouille of a major robbery at Les Gets Museum, France.

Two of the items reported stolen from Musee de la Musique Mecanique des Gets.

Pictures taken from the web site at: [www.stella-galaxy.com/vol/](http://www.stella-galaxy.com/vol/)



The robbery occurred in the "Musee de la Musique Mecanique des Gets" (Savoie, France, about 50 km east of Geneva) during the night of June 5th to 6th 1998. About 30 pieces were stolen, representing a total value certainly exceeding \$100,000. The robbery was accomplished by "professional" people, probably on order, but it is possible that some pieces will appear on the market.

*You may have a look at some of the stolen pieces on the following web site: [www.stella-galaxy.com/vol/](http://www.stella-galaxy.com/vol/) For any additional information, you may e-mail at:*

*musee@stella-galaxy.com  
or call the following numbers  
(do not dial (0) if calling from  
outside France):  
+33 (0)4 50 79 85 75 (Museum)  
+33 (0)4 50 79 74 06 (Les Gets city  
hall)  
or fax to: +33 (0)4 50 79 85 67*

We hope this will help in the recovery of the stolen pieces. ■

*Items for inclusion in Newsdesk are always welcome, especially with pictures. Send items for inclusion to the Editor marked 'Newsdesk'.*

## MBSGB on the Net

In our last issue we reported that we are now on the web.

A reminder of our address:

<http://www.antique-dealers-directory.co.uk/mbsgb/>

We also now have an e-mail address for the benefit of those members who are connected:

[mbsgb@kreedman.globalnet.co.uk](mailto:mbsgb@kreedman.globalnet.co.uk)

# Duo Art 'Robot' Revisited

See page 199  
for details of our  
competition to  
win a CD.

By Alan Pratt

**T**he publication of a new series of CDs by Nimbus Records once again focuses attention on the qualities of the Reproducing Piano.

First introduced in 1904 by Welte-Mignon, their producing piano was a dramatic improvement on the pianolas and player pianos which preceded it. But Welte-Mignon did not have the market to themselves for long and in 1912 and 1913 the Ampico and Aeolian Duo-Art systems appeared in America. During a period of under twenty years the Reproducing Piano came and went. During its peak year of 1925 more than 192,000 instruments were manufactured by the Aeolian Company in the USA with a total sales value in excess of \$59 million. With revenues like this the Aeolian Company was able to refine and perfect its recording technique and also record some of the greatest pianists of the time. So what went wrong?

Between 1927-1928 the roof collapsed on Aeolian and all the other piano and player piano manufacturers as a result of three things. Firstly, the advent of radio networks shifted the whole emphasis of domestic entertainment especially with regard to music making. Secondly, the gramophone made significant strides in both disc quality and sound quality. Electrical recording was a massive improvement upon the old acoustic process. Thirdly, Al Jolson sang! The talkies hit the public and people flocked to the picture houses as the golden age of the cinema began.

As if this was not enough, the following year saw the stock market crash of 1929 which just about finished off the Reproducing Piano. Rolls were issued in smaller and smaller numbers, prices plummeted and the last Duo-Art roll was issued in England in 1939.

After a space of more than 60 years it is now possible to hear again



Gerald Stonehill, whose piano-roll collection containing approximately 99% of all the rolls ever issued by the Aeolian Company - classical and popular, is being used for the Grand Piano project.

on compact disc such great pianists as Godowsky, Paderewski, Busoni, Hofmann and Bauer as they sounded when they were at the height of their performing powers. Many significant artists never made gramophone records or, in the case of Busoni, made very few and hated doing so! But they did make reproducing piano rolls.

There was never any problem about recording the activation of keys and pedals via electric contacts on the recording piano. The clue to recording expression, or "touch", lies in the hammer speeds. Because the piano has an escapement action, once the key is struck, the hammer moves irresistibly to its destination. There were four methods in use to ensure dynamic accuracy.

- Electric contacts at two points of the travel of each hammer measured its speed.
- A gramophone record was kept for reference.
- The recording engineer, sitting beside the pianist, entered his own notation into a console linked to the perforator.
- After two editions of the piano roll had been made at the factory,

the pianist had to check all details before the third edition was published. Correspondence survives, which shows how seriously pianists approached this task.

These new recordings are made possible through the work of MBSGB member Gerald Stonehill and the late Gordon Iles, chief theoretician of the Aeolian Company in England. Between them they devised and built the Robot (see the Music Box Vol.7 No.2, page 75). This is a "push-up" used, on these new recordings, with a Steinway Concert Grand. Its expression decoder was constructed by Gordon Iles to take maximum advantage of special perforations on all Duo-Art rolls which can control up to 16 different intensities of hammer stroke. This, alongside the ability to vary the volume and intensity of the melody independently of the accompaniment and also independently of the sustaining and soft pedals, creates a series of tonal intensities and gradations beyond the capacity of the human ear to distinguish.

Other working parts were made between 1925 and 1936 in the UK and America, but are now adapted to the new model. A simple but signifi-

...it is now possible to hear great pianists as they sounded when they were at the height of their performing powers.

cant advantage of the Robot is in its correct application of the side-shift "una corda" pedal. Even though the action of the una corda was accurately recorded in the Duo-Art process, all built in mechanisms (built into the piano, that is) substitute an inferior "half-blow" effect. This compromise of a very basic element of tonal control was made in order to conserve function power in the domestic models. In this and all other aspects the Robot incorporates the ultimate Duo-Art technology in order to deliver historic performances exactly as heard and approved by recording artists in the Aeolian Hall in the first quarter of this century.

The piano-roll collection of Gerald Stonehill which is being used for the Grand Piano project contains approximately 99% of all the rolls ever issued by the Aeolian Company - classical and popular. As well as his huge collection of over 6,000 rolls, Gerald Stonehill has also been responsible for the publication of rolls discovered in the Company's

American and British archives following research ongoing from the 1960s. Gerald is certainly acknowledged as the premier authority on Duo-Art in England and probably in the world. Nimbus proposes to use this source and publish approximately 50 CDs over the next five years to become the ultimate reference on the Duo-Art.

As you would expect with Digital recording the sound quality is superb, for this is not a CD version of a 78 recording made in the 1920s. It is an exact reproduction of the pianist's original performance. These recordings have been praised by most of the reviewers which is in itself surprising as most are highly critical of 'mechanical' music in any form. Comments such as "... gives an uncanny feeling of the artist's presence", and "performances have fidelity, tonal glory and just that touch of individuality which should always mark a true musician" show how well the rolls have been interpreted.

If you are interested in piano performances at their best or in roll-playing instruments at all, there must surely be something in this collection to thrill and delight you.

Each CD is accompanied by comprehensive notes in booklet form.

To introduce their Grand Piano series to MBSGB members, Nimbus Records are offering a chance to win one of five CDs in our competition. The CD you may win is "The Grand Piano Era" which is by way of an introduction or 'sampler' to the series. It features artists including Friedman, Hofman, Lamond and Bauer playing the work of Liszt, Chopin, Bach and Schumann as well as Medtner, Paderewski and Grainger playing their own compositions. Playing time is 70 minutes. ■

*The recordings are available direct from Nimbus Records, Wyaston Leys, Monmouth NP5 3SR, priced at £10.99 incl. p&p. Direct sales telephone 01600 890007.*



Ignaz Jan Paderewski - Paderewski in a Duo Art piano recording session circa 1910. In the background the recording engineer enters his own notation into a console linked to the performer

*"...gives an uncanny feeling of the artist's presence"*

# Kalliston - A Strange Family of Organettes

By Kevin McElhone

When you think of organettes and how they play their music strips then it is usual to play them vertically or horizontally across a keyframe or tracker bar. The Kalliston is a strange family of organettes in that the Metal tune sheets in the form of zinc bands are played on their side so to speak around the outside of the instrument.

The only reference to who made them in any of the well known reference books is on page 320 of 'Clockwork Music' by A.Ord-Hume. He says they were being made c.1903 by Ernst Erich Liebmann of Gera, Germany. Ernst Holzweissig of Leipzig showed them in his catalogue in 1892, 1897, 1898. However, they were not advertised by 'FHW', a firm in Germany in their 1906 - 1907 book, but that does not mean they were not being sold by other retailers at this time. It is interesting to see in books written 25 years ago in English the dates that it was thought instruments were made, but with access to original German catalogues it is possible to be much more accurate. However, if members have old adverts or catalogues showing these instruments, particularly when they were introduced for the first time then please send me a copy.

They must have been newly introduced around 1892 as that catalogue says:- "The Latest Hand turning [sic - turned] Organ. The Case is elegant, the instrument easy of management, of simple and solid construction with strong melodious music of very great power when in full action.

The Kalliston with Drum or Bells is the most original, simply and solidly constructed and praiseworthy instrument of its kind. Owing to all those advantages, it is specially adapted for export to all countries in whatever zone they may be situated.

...the instrument easy of management, of simple and solid construction with strong melodious music of very great power when in full action

Ernst Holzweissig Nachf. in Leipzig. 151.

## Kalliston mit Glockenspiel.

**Drehorgel mit auflegbaren Metall-Notenscheiben und 24 Tönen.**  
Barrel-organ with exchangeable metal tunes — 24 tongues.  
Orgue à manivelle avec feuilles métalliques échangeables — 24 lames.

**Hand-organ with or without drum or bells.**  
For playing perforated metal music sheets, is fitted with tremolando piano and forte mechanism. The case is elegant, the instrument easy of management, of simple and solid construction with strong melodious music of very great power when in full action. The Kalliston with drum or bells is the most original, simply and solidly constructed and praiseworthy instrument of its kind. Owing to all these advantages, it is specially adapted for export to all countries in whatever zone they may be situated. Every instrument is carefully examined before being forwarded.



**Instrument "de musique à manivelle avec ou sans accompagnement de tambour ou de timbres."**  
Nombre illimité de airs à jouer sur feuilles métalliques sans fin, avec mécanisme de forte, piano et tremolo. Manègement facile, construction très simple et solide, musique belle et puissante d'un effet surprenant.  
Le Kalliston avec accompagnement de tambour ou de timbres est l'instrument le plus original, le plus simple, le plus solide et le meilleur marché de tous les instruments de ce genre.  
Grâce à tous ces avantages, le Kalliston est l'instrument le mieux approprié pour l'exportation pour tous les pays.  
Chaque instrument est soigneusement examiné avant l'expédition.

Gehäuse schwarz polirt.  
Black-polished case. — Boîte vernie en noir.  
size — Grösse — dimensions: 34 X 30 X 30 cm.  
weight — Gewicht — poids: netto — net abt. — ca. 6½ kg.

Zi.		Preis	Prix
No. A.G.	Kalliston mit Glockenspiel — with chimes — à carillon — 24 Töne — tongues — notes	29	50
" A.G.D.	do. — " — doubles notes — " — " — 24 Doppeltöne — double	38	—
Notenblätter zu Kalliston A.G. und A.G.D.	— music-sheets — feuilles de musique . . . . .	1	30

Tremolando — Tremolo — 1 Mark 50 Pf. extra — more — en plus.  
Price without tunes with case. — Preis ohne Noten mit Kiste. — Prix sans feuilles avec caisse.  
Bei Barzahlung innerhalb 30 Tagen 5%.  
5% discount for cash within 30 days. — Escompte de 5% pour les paiements en comptant dans le délai de 30 jours.

Early advertisement for Kalliston mit Glockenspiel

Every instrument is carefully examined before it is forwarded".

The reference to "zone" must mean that they were happy it would perform correctly in hot equatorial countries. Some portable Harmonium makers such as R.F.Stevens of London, England charged more for instruments for the 'Tropics' which were made with better woods and brass instead of steel screws.

These instruments are not easy to find these days, although I know

of 2 in U.K. & at least 3 in Germany. Two were sold at the recent Mulhous auction in Florida, but the details given of the second one did not make it possible to identify which model it was.

As usual, if anyone has one of these instruments please send me as photograph and ideally an audio tape as well for the MBSGB archives. I will gladly refund any expenses incurred or send you other photos and recordings in exchange.

Model		Notes	Reeds	High x Len x Breadth (in Cm)	Weight Kg	Price Marks
Just reeds	A	24	24	34 x 30 x 30	8.0	21.00
Just Reeds	A.D.	24	48 Double	" " "	[*1]	29.00
mit Trommel	A.T.	24	24	34 x 30 x 30	[*2] 8.0	29.50
mit Glockenspiel	A.G.	24	24	" " "		29.50
mit Trommel	A.T.D.	24	48 Double	" " "		37.50
mit Glockenspiel	A.G.D.	24	48 Double	" " "		37.50
mit Trommel und Glocken		*3	?	35 x 30 x 62	7.9 [!]	51.50

**Notes on the table**

\*1 As mentioned in other organette articles they have given the same weight here for all 6 models which can't possibly be correct, but it is in the original catalogue this way.

\*2 The net weight given in this catalogue included the six 120cm long music bands that were included in the price if the instrument.

There is no indication as to how many bells the 24 note models had, although one illustration appears to show 4 bells but 5 stickers, which is the same number as on the 24 note models which had the Drum / Trommel options.

There was a Tremolo device available on the 24 note models for 1.35 Marks extra, but it was 1.50 extra on the A. and A.D. models.

They all were listed as having "Forte & Piano Contrivances", by which I think they mean a swell flap which opens and closes to regulate loudness.

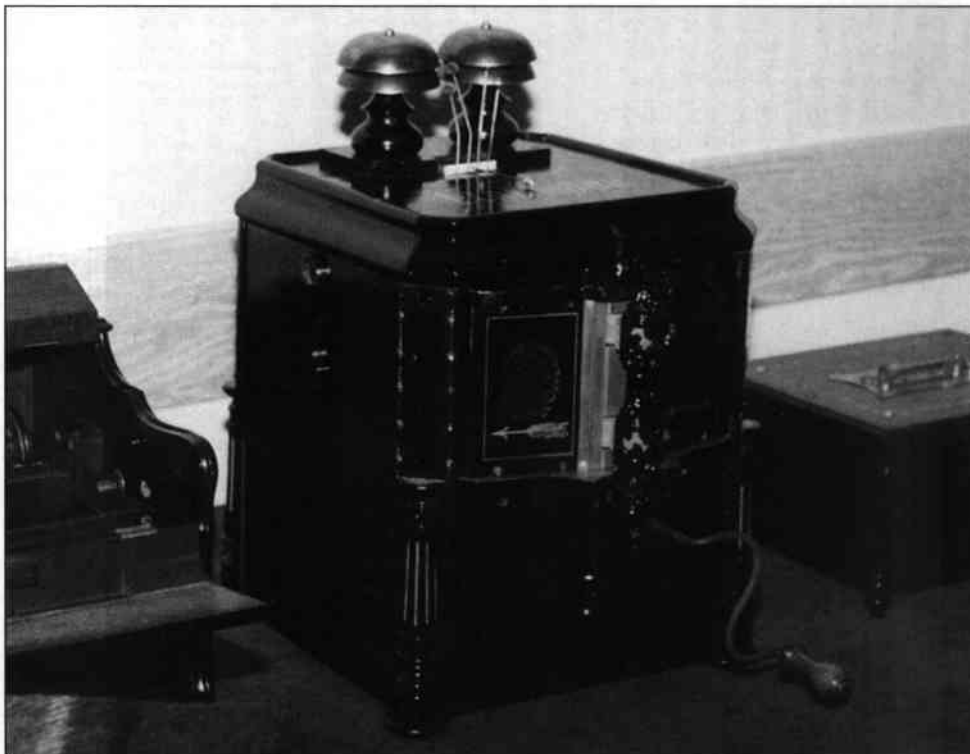
The music bands were made of Zinc and were played in a clockwise direction when placed in the instrument. There was an option "with of without adjustment for playing from music sheets with extra-long pieces". This must have been some sort

of extension to the corners of the instrument, perhaps support bars which could be extended outwards to stop the extra long bands from pulling down with gravity and straining either the mechanism of the instrument or the small drive holes in the tune sheets.

Description	Marks	Each
Trommel und Glockenspiel model	1.35	17.5cm wide x 120cm long *3
Trommel or Glockenspiel models	1.20	12.4cm wide x 120cm long
A. or A.D. models	1.00	11.0cm wide x 120cm long

\*3 This model may also be the one known as Kalliston-Pankalon which had 72 reeds plus 3 contra bass reeds. One may have been sold at Christie's, London some years ago, although this was advertised as 42 note. This could, of course, have been 36 double reeds (and 3 contra bass within the 36) PLUS 6 beaters for the 2 bells & 1 Drum as shown in one old advert. The price, according to D.Bowers had risen to 124DM by 1904. To further add to the confusion there were 3 different kinds of strips all 12.4cm wide, but for instruments with or without percussion and therefore not interchangeable between different models. ■

*They all were listed as having "Forte & Piano Contrivances"*



Kalliston AG5 24 note + 4 bells from the collection of Nicholas Simons

**T**he Guessaz family of L'Auberson made musical movements from 1848 until 1983, and merit 41/2 pages in Piguet's 430-page book. Alix Guessaz handed over to his five sons in 1884, and they added a vigorous sales drive in the Middle East based on an office in Iran. This incidentally led to the flamboyant orchestral box sold to the Shah in 1896 and to a 20-cylinder box for his son in 1901. Their sales included products from other makers, and from 1896 they sold the disc machines made in L'Auberson by the Harmonia Company based on André Junod's patent. These machines are listed in the Guessaz catalogue shown in Fig.1, which dates it about 1897.

It has a 2-page introduction which wisely emphasises that it is musically better to have more comb teeth than more tunes for a given length of cylinder, but then foolishly makes three errors in the four instructions for using the control levers! It could be the translator. Apart from that the catalogue avoids errors and is reasonably well translated, and scores well on page 3 with a table giving the dimensions and weights of boxes with their range of cylinders, from 3 to 15 pouces. (3¼ to 16", 8 to 41cm).

Their standard boxes include a special style with Short Tunes - "The tunes will play only a half tune of those in other boxes, but are arranged to begin and end well." These are all 2-per-turn and range from 3½ to 12 pouces with 12 to 24 airs and are also listed with 3 Visible bells.

They offered the usual range of mandoline and other special types, culminating in Sublime Harmonie; the largest with 19¼" (49cm) cylinder playing 12 airs on two 46-tooth combs.

Boxes with three or six bells are listed, but the illustration shows nine bells. Drum and bell boxes extend to one with 12 airs and 21¼" (54cm) cylinder. The range with castanets is shown in Fig.2. The drum and castanet can, mercifully, be silenced. So, to be fair, can the bells.

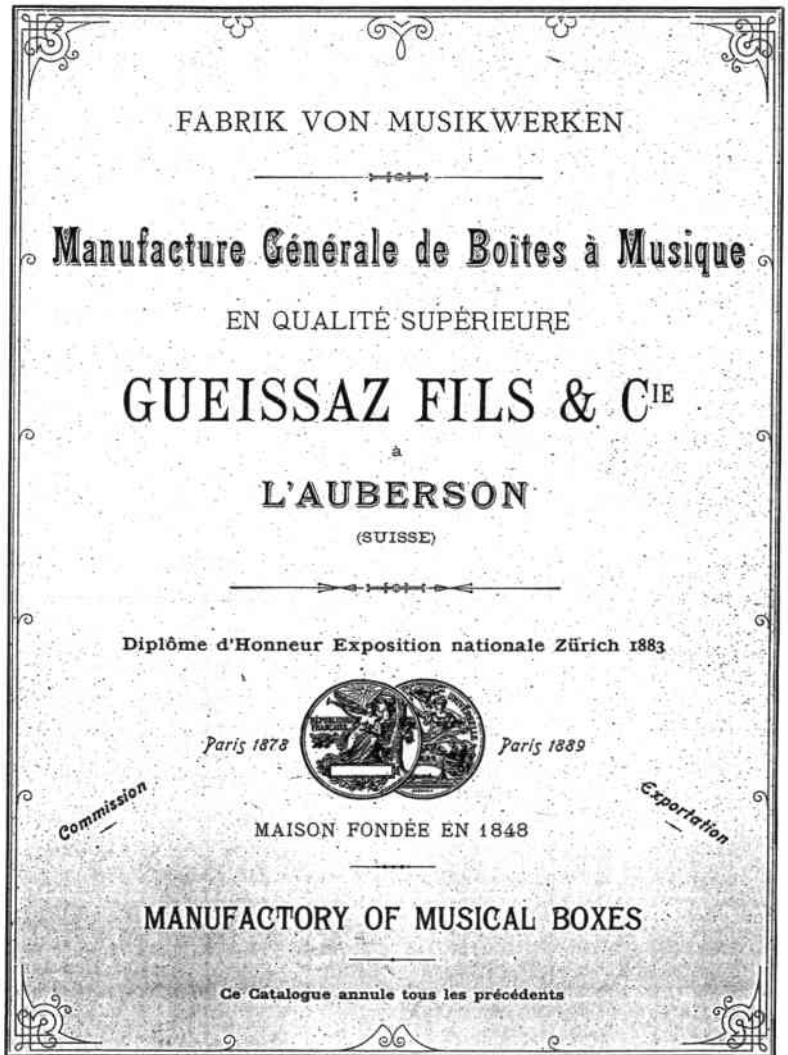


Fig. 1. The 1897 catalogue, facsimile, 40 pages about 10¼ by 8" (27 by 20cm).

Numéros	Nombre d'airs Number of tunes	Longueur du cylindre en pouces Length of the barrel in inches	Timbres Number of bells	PRIX PAR PIÈCE		Les mêmes. avec mouvement entièrement nickelés Boîte avec socle et poignées Changement d'airs à volonté. The same Fine nickel plated work case with pedestal and handles, change of tunes at pleasure.		
				L'Auberson	Paris	Numéros	L'Auberson	Paris
99	6	7½	6	Fr. 152	Fr. 167	108	Fr. 180	Fr. 196
100	8	7½	6	" 240	" 175	109	" 188	" 208
101	8	10	6	" 204	" 226	110	" 232	" 245
102	10	10	6	" 208	" 232	111	" 237	" 260
103	8	12	6	" 224	" 241	112	" 252	" 267
104	10	12	6	" 228	" 259	113	" 256	" 288
105	12	12	6	" 232	" 331	114	" 261	" 299
106	12	15	6	" 319	" 337	115	" 348	" 396
107	12	18	6	" 415	" 463	116	" 444	" 592

Fig. 2. The lower part of page 14, showing the Guessaz model numbers for both plain and superior versions of their drum, bell and castanet boxes. They always quoted prices ex works and in Paris. The exchange rate around 1897 was: 25 Swiss francs = £1 = \$4.80. To get today's (I mean to say 1998's) values, convert the quoted francs to sterling and then multiply by 70. Thus box model 112. the 13" 8-air superior version costing 252 francs = £10.20 ex works would have been £714 in 1998 money.

Pages 16 to 19 offer boxes with dancing or mechanical figures, the latter striking bells. Page 17 is in Fig.3, and is the only one with an interesting illustration; it shows a tune sheet with Mozart and a ship, left; Rossini and a railway train,

right; musicians and central touche in top border; clear rectangle for tunes; and landscape with buildings and Swiss cross below. Litho by Oswald Eisener, Zurich. You cannot get all this from the catalogue illustration, but I have it from

Thus box model 112. the 13" 8-air superior version costing 252 francs = £10.20 ex works would have been £714 in 1998 money.

TIMBRES ET AUTOMATES  
BELLS AND MECHANICAL FIGURES



N<sup>os</sup> 127 à 132.

Numéros	Nombre d'airs Number of tunes	Longueur du cylindre en pouces Length of the barrel in inches	Genre d'Automates Moving figures			PRIX PAR PIÈCE	
						L'Auberson	Paris
127	6	5 1/2	2 Danseuses et 2 Dancers and	1 Chinois tapant sur 1 Chinese striking on	2 Timbres 2 bells	Fr. 78	Fr. 96
128	8	5 1/2	2 ..	1 ..	2 ..	.. 96	.. 104
129	10	10	2 Ententes au centre	2 ..	4 ..	.. 157	.. 172
130	10	10	2 ..	2 ..	4 ..	.. 161	.. 180
131	10	12	2 ..	2 ..	4 ..	.. 180	.. 196
132	12	12	2 ..	2 ..	4 ..	.. 198	.. 206

Augmentation pour Socke et Poignées .. Fr. 12. Extra price for pedestal and handles.  
 .. Nickelage inaltérable .. 7. .. unalterable nickling.  
 .. Zither .. 7. .. Zither.

Fig. 3. Page 17 of the Gueissaz catalogue, showing a "Mozart & Rossini" tune sheet on a 3-bell box, with automatons listed but not shown. On the larger boxes the dancers are at the centre, between two pairs of bells. Tune selectors and safety checks are not offered for these boxes.

Numéros	Nombre de lames	Dimensions de la Boite cm.	Poids net kg.	Poids du disque kg.	Diam. du disque cm.	GENRE DE LA MUSIQUE	PRIX PAR PIÈCE	
							L'Auberson	Paris
42	42	42x31x16	6	0.100	25	Harmonia ..	Fr. 74	Fr. 82
54	54	45x33x18	7	0.100	25	Harmonia-Piccolo ..	.. 80	.. 90
84	84	45x33x18	7	0.100	25	Harmonia-Duplex ..	.. 95	.. 105
78	78	60x48x28	22	0.300	41	Harmonia Sublime-Harmonie-Piccolo .. Elegante boîte noyer	.. 170	.. 182
156	156	60x48x28	24	0.300	41	Harmonia-Duplex Sublime-Harmonie-Piccolo .. Elegante boîte noyer	.. 210	.. 222

Avec chaque pièce est compris six disques.

Fig. 4 Part of page 27 listing the five Harmonia models, with 10" or 16" discs. The two larger models are quoted in "elegant walnut cases".

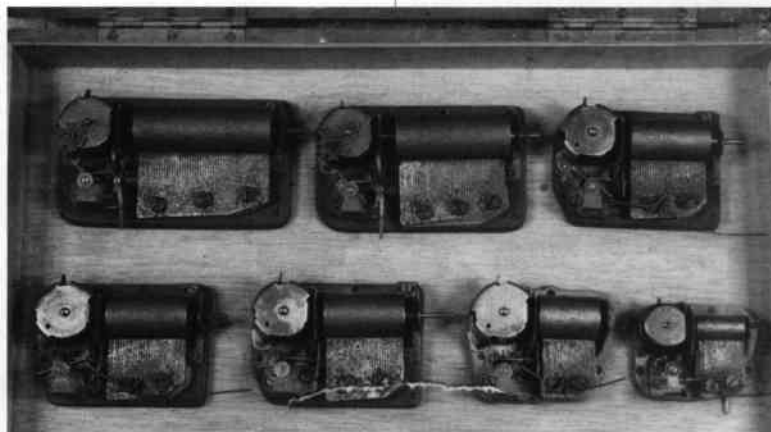


Fig. 5 Salesman's kit of seven Gueissaz petites musiques. Nos.3, 4 and 5 have 29 comb teeth; 6 has 22 and 7, 19. Nos.3 and 7 are replacements, possibly due to sales wear and tear. No.6 is certainly one of the originals (clue is the set of three fixing screws) and it plays Tea for Two from No No Nanette, 1925. This is the latest tune and probably dates the whole item fairly accurately.

a tune sheet, which I am now attributing to Gueissaz. I hope they were not silly enough to illustrate a tune sheet they never used. The design is registered, probably by the printer, so I expect it had other users.

Pages 20 to 22 offer twelve flute voix celestes and six orchestral boxes, plus three with mandarin strikers and dancing girls. Some are also offered with double springs, safety check and nickel plating.

Pages 23 to 25 offer recharge boxes on a Louis XV stand, "specially recommended for restaurants and hotels." They come in standard, sublime harmonie with or without drum and bells, and sublime harmonie piccolo. All have zithers and tune selectors and are nickel plated.

Page 26 shows two of the six coin-operated machines offered, some with dancers, drum, bells etc. Crank wound, cylinders 7 to 13" (18 to 33cm) in cabinets up to 5ft (153cm) high.

The lower part of page 27 is shown in Fig.4, detailing all the table top Harmonia disc boxes being made; each was sold with six (projectionless) discs.

The rest of the 40-page catalogue is similar to those of other makers; lists of spare parts; musical artefacts of all types; singing birds and chalets; and manivelles and tabatieres or petites musiques. One's only strong criticism of the catalogue is that the illustrations are uninspired and, perhaps mainly because they are copies of copies, of bad quality.

Gueissaz petites musiques

Page 40 lists 14 types, 28 to 50 teeth, playing up to six airs. Prices at L'Auberson range from Fr.4.70 to Fr.18.10, with a footnote: Special quotations for very large quantities.

## musical box oddments no. 78

With their comparatively powerful sales organisation, it seems that Gueissaz provided their salesmen with a sort of portfolio of these petites musiques, as shown in Fig.5. They became a large part of the business after the year 1908, when large cartel boxes faded out and the next generation of the Gueissaz family took over the business. There were probably several such salesmen's sets, neat flat plywood cases with seven movements; I think the one here shown dates from the 1920s. These are the seven movements, in order of value, best first...

Nos. 1 and 2, back left, play two tunes with 22mm dia. cylinders and combs of 51 and 41 teeth respectively. They have auto tune change by rectangular cam and auto stop by conventional stop arm. Their springs have Geneva stop-work - mainly, I think, to ensure that they are unlikely to be left stopped in mid-tune.

The other five have flat-ended comb teeth and 20mm dia. cylinders, playing two tunes per turn, except no.7 with its 11mm dia. cylinder playing one tune lasting about 20 seconds. They all have spring stop levers pivoted on a tiny bracket which slips under and is secured by one of the comb screws. It is adjustable to suit most types of music-starved fancy goods.

Tune tracks are about .023" wide. Assembly is rather casual, neither governors nor combs being dowelled. All have the Gueissaz stamp of Fig.6, but only no.2 is identical with those listed in the above catalogue; not really surprising, being at least twenty years later.

*So here in Fig.7 is this mysterious and rare find, written by an unknown (but here gratefully acknowledged) tune arranger...*

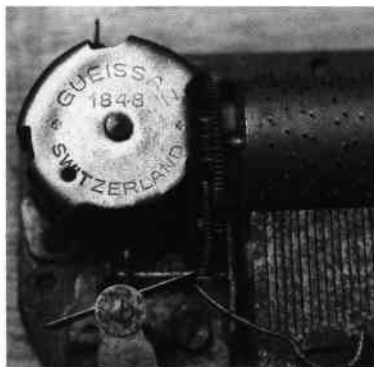


Fig. 6. Maker's stamp on no.4 movement which is in desperate need of cleaning despite which it plays well. The stop lever engaging a fan blade is curved to allow access to the comb screw that fixes its bearing bracket.

Fig. 8. The music of Fig.7 written out on two staves and an octave below the actual pitch, to make it easier to read.

### Arranging tunes

During a visit to relatives in L'Auberson, Roland Fisher found a tune arranger's MS. These are extraordinarily rare; the only example I had previously seen is that fragment of a Chinese song in Chapuis, page 265. So here in Fig.7 is this mysterious and rare find, written by an unknown (but here gratefully acknowledged) tune arranger for the L'Auberson maker Martin Frères, probably about 1880.

Robin Timms has kindly examined and explained it, and very kindly transcribed it into more conventional form as shown in Fig.8. In doing it he has lowered it one octave to avoid a vast number of treble leger lines at the cost of a few extra for the bass.

I have put some of his explanatory notes in the caption for Fig.7, and a specific example of the tune arranger's notation in Fig.9.

It seems that from Fig.8 (and even possibly from Fig.7) musicians

*Op. 670* *6 airs.* *Roue 62. 6*

Fig. 7. Tune arranger's MS for Martin Frères tune no.670, one of six airs, wheel 62 also noted.

As written on a single treble staff, a large number of leger lines are needed to extend the treble and bass. Notes lying on a leger line are shown by simply thickening the line.

The small figure above or beside a note indicates which tooth to play in a group of the same pitch.

The figure 3 under a semi-circular mark, as in bar one, means that the three semi-quavers so marked should occupy the time of only two. So instead of six steps at pricking they

will occupy only four, that is 11/3 each.

Similarly the four semi-quavers and one quaver under the figure 6 in bar two, which are equivalent to six semi-quavers, are to be played in the time of four.

Fig. 9. This shows bar 9 and part of bar 10.

Starting at the bass end of the first chord in bar 9, the note below four leger lines is c below middle c; but the adjacent figure 8 means it should be taken an octave lower, being two octaves below middle c, 64Hz.

Up the stem on the left, the second leger line is thickened to represent c two above middle c. Fig.3 beside it means that the third tooth of its group is to be used. (Teeth 1 and 2 of the same group are used in the first two chords of bar 10).

On the right of the same stem is note e on the third leger line.

Leger lines for intermediate notes are ignored, so the top treble note lies above only five lines and is therefore c, three octaves above middle c.

# musical box oddments no. 78

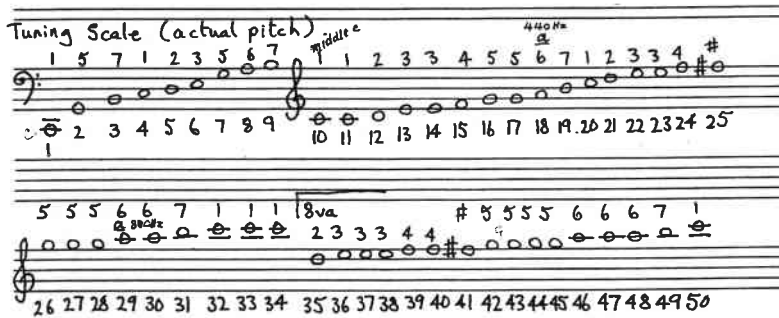


Fig. 10. Tuning scale with pitch numbers for the 50-tooth comb used by the tune arranger for Fig.7. There are four groups of three and one group of four teeth. Range is five octaves. Notes for teeth 35 to 50 are written an octave low to save leger lines.

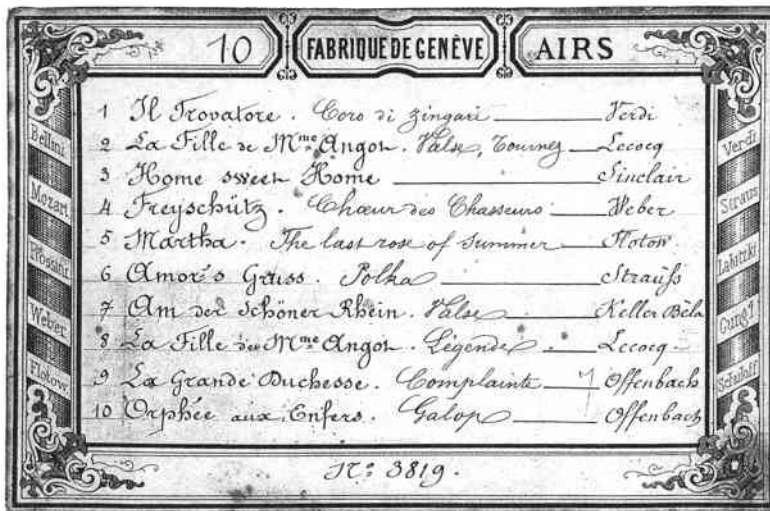


Fig.11 Black on cream tune sheet of S. Troll serial 3819. The latest tunes are nos.2. and 8, Dec. 1872 and no.6, by Edward Strauss, 1871.

...the arranger's job to know what sound will be produced when notes are played according to his specification.

can tell that the tune is in the key of C. By listing all the notes used, and adding the extra notes in groups of the same pitch (which are numbered in Fig.7, for use in the correct order) the comb scale can be written out. Robin Timms has done this, as can be seen in Fig.10. It turns out to be a conventional type of 50-tooth comb, the a 440 and 880Hz teeth being nos.18 and 29 & 30. If the comb were stamped with pitch numbers, a teeth would be number 6 and c, the key note, would be number 1.

The chord at the beginning of bar 9, shown in Fig.9, looks strangely spaced - as do many others; but the arranger knows what he is doing and has to reckon with the fact that the duration of the sound of any note is beyond his control. He knows that that very low c will go on sounding during the next chord, which would otherwise sound unsatisfactory.

Another reason that the music of Fig.7 looks odd is that it is inappropriate to indicate note lengths because the arranger has no control

over them. All that is necessary is to indicate *when* a note is to play. It is the arranger's job to know what sound will be produced when notes are played according to his specification. A few notes have been crossed out, probably because he realised it was not possible to use the note so soon after its previous use.

In bar 15, *sol* means the note g (no.5 in Fig.10) put in as a safeguard because the leger lines got a bit smudged!

At the top of the first chord in bar 28, Fig.7, the figures 2 and 3 mean that these two teeth of the

group tuned to that pitch should be played together - probably that is the meaning of the adjacent squiggle. The crossed out squiggle over the next chord probably means that the arranger wanted to duplicate the b at the top but then realised there was only one tooth available.

You see what it really means, when someone says that a tune is well arranged. And this tune? It is the polka from *La Fille de Mme Angot*, 1872.

## Pricking procedure

The pricking machine was probably a simpler and earlier version of that shown on page 233 of Vol.13 (my second book page 91). A six-step cam, and bar with notches matching the teeth of a six-air comb, would be set up on the bedplate.

A cylinder 5" by 1 3/4" diameter (12 by 4 1/2cm), appropriate for a 50-tooth comb and tunes lasting about 45 seconds, would be placed on the mandrel and rotated by the dividing head until set for the first notes of a tune after the tune gap. Wheel 62 noted in Fig.7 was probably chosen to give convenient scale readings on the dividing head. I do not know whether these readings were thought of as time or distance steps; nor do I know how such finesse as tremolo, grace notes, etc. were marked. So I have here simply taken one step as the timing of a demi-semi quaver, say one tenth of a second for this tune.

Armed with the tune arranger's MS of Fig.7, and the comb scale of Fig.10, pricking can proceed as follows...

1. prick for teeth 10, 20, 26 and 42
2. wind on one step and prick for 46
3. wind on one step and prick for 49
4. wind on one step and prick for 50
5. wind on 5 steps (for note 50



Fig.12 Mechanism of serial 3819 with the pairs of 440Hz and 880Hz a teeth marked, also the eight groups of 3 and one group of 4 teeth tuned to the same pitch.

plus one quaver rest) and prick for 7, 16, 27 and 43. (27 and 43 are the second in their groups)

6. wind on 11/3 step and prick for tooth 44 (this note and the next two will occupy 4 steps for the three semi-quavers in the space of two)
7. wind on 1½ step and prick for tooth 45 (the 4th tooth in its group)
8. wind on 5½ steps (for note 45 plus one quaver rest).

That completes the first bar, adding up to 16 steps = 16 demi-semi-quavers, and leaves the machine set for pricking the chord starting bar two.

With a mandolin box and teeth in groups numbered from the bass end, the resulting helical lines of pins slope downhill. The less common uphill lines occurred when the cylinder pricker regarded the grouped teeth as numbered from the treble end, and thus pricked for the treble end pin of each group first.

### Back to Samuel Troll

The Geneva tune sheet in Fig.11 is now reliably attributed to S. Troll. The same design for serial 217, a 13" 4-air super-mandolin box, is on p.184 of the excellent Klangkunst book. That means Sound Art and is the extremely well illustrated 250-page catalogue of the Zurich Museum's 1996 Exhibition "200 Musical Box Years."

Serial 3819 is a standard 10-air movement as shown in Fig.12, made in 1873. Typically, the interior finish has changed to black and the case width is increased, but spring bearings and governor are still bolted from under the bedplate. Blank numbers are 19 for spring and 67 for cylinder. The bass cylinder end cap and the great wheel are scribed 1444, presumably the gamme number. The serial number is stamped on several components and scribed on the bass lead.

Unusually, the comb base pitch lines are scribed ut, re etc; and the fronts of the leads are scribed with pitch numbers 1 to 7.

The tune tracks are the usual .017" and, as found on several Troll boxes, the last tune is on the dots and track lines.

In the 1880s many 10-air boxes were made with 13" (33cm) cylinders and 74 comb teeth; but in the early 1870s it was probably still felt that musical quality demanded 86 teeth, hence a 15" (38cm) cylinder. This in turn needed a longer case, and wider in proportion! The result was 25 by 10 inches, (63 x 25cm). With domed lid sporting fine inlay this makes an imposing box and the large sound board does justice to the comb teeth of relative stiffness 250, rather high for the period.

Performance is not outstanding but there are two above-average features: the many groups of teeth allow extra decorative trills and these are notably exploited in the two hardy-annual tunes, nos.3 and 5, with unusual arrangements. Also the extra bass power is sometimes very effective, as in Offenbach's racy gallop, tune 10... a top class finale. ■

**Musical Box Discs** - Over a thousand discs in stock for various Musical Boxes. Send 50 cents along with your specific needs for a list of those discs currently in stock....OR....send \$4.00 for a complete list of all discs in stock. All discs listed by title, number, condition and price. (overseas, \$5.00)

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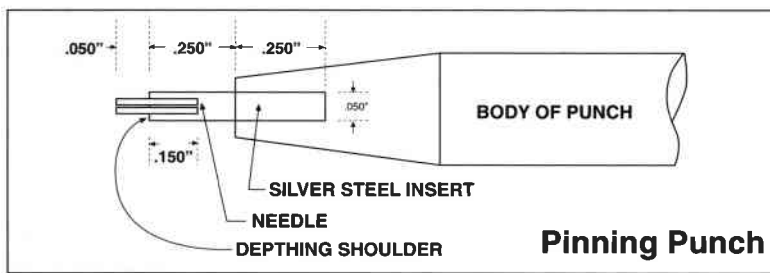
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## Making a Pinning Punch

by D.H. Snelling

When I first started to repin cylinders some years ago I tried to make different types of punch for insertion, depthing and working next to closely spaced pins. My attempts all ended in failure to a greater or lesser degree due probably to my limited home engineering experience. After giving the problem some thought I came up with the method set out below which I have been using successfully ever since.

The only materials, apart from a lathe, cutting tools and small HSS drills, which you will need are as follows:

1. An old centre punch or nail punch
2. A short piece 1/8" (.125") silver steel, and
3. Some hypodermic needles 23G x 1 1/4" (0.6mm x 30mm)

The general setup should be clear from the diagram and consists basically of setting a short length of hypodermic needle in a silver steel sleeve and inserting that sleeve in a hole in the punch. The following is a step by step summary of how to make the punch:-

1. Render the punch soft enough to work on by annealing the first inch or thereabouts of its business end in the flame of a propane gas torch. Get the tip really hot (bright red) and cool as slowly as possible so as to be able to drill it out easily when cool.
2. Insert the punch in the lathe chuck and machine the tip away until the diameter of the now stunted punch is slightly larger than .125".
3. Using a drill one size smaller (e.g. 7/64ths) for the first pass, drill the tip of the punch out to a depth of .250".
4. Finish off the hole with a .125" drill.
5. Insert a length of .125" silver

steel in the lathe chuck and drill it out to a depth .150" using a No.74 (0.225") drill.

6. Drill out again using a No.73 (.0240") drill but stop drilling out, say, a few thou. short of the hole drilled previously.
7. Carefully grind the point off a hypodermic needle so as to present a clean round end.
8. Insert the needle in the hole in the silver steel insert and cut it off slightly over finished length.
9. Tap the needle gently into its hole so that it is firmly gripped in the insert.
10. Gently grind off the excess length of the needle until .050" is left projecting from the insert.
11. Cut the insert off the silver steel stock. The finished length of the insert should be approximately half an inch.
12. Push the insert into the hole in the punch.
13. Go and make a cup of coffee and attempt to convince your wife what a clever guy you are!

The use of the punch is as follows:-

- a. Insert the end of your coil of instrument wire (.011" or thereabouts) into the end of the embedded needle and cut it off slightly over length e.g. 1mm/0.40".
- b. Insert the new pin in a cylinder hole and push it in. If it needs assistance tap it with a light jeweller's hammer.
- c. Then - the magic bit - depth the pin to .050" using the shoulder of the insert as a depthing tool. Once again either push on the punch or tap it.

If at any time the length of the needle in the insert becomes too misshapen to use, simply replace it. If it won't pull out or breaks off simply make a new insert. Happy pinning!

## Materials for the Restorer

An interesting catalogue has come into the Editor's office from Conservation Resources, a company

specialising largely in archival materials for museums and the like.

But in amongst some fascinating information on subjects such as molecular traps and enzyme degradation there are some items which restorers of mechanical music instruments might find useful.

High purity Pearl Glue (the sort you heat up in water in a glue kettle) is offered at £7.00 a kilo, which should match the glue used for woodwork in the pre-PVA days.

On the subject of PVA, Conservation Resources offers a reversible PVA adhesive. Normally, the use of PVA in mechanical music restorations is frowned upon because it cannot be removed at some future time without damaging the timber. This PVA, however, is fully reversible in water.

A liquid dressing for leather that is "dry, hard, brittle or otherwise out of condition" sounds useful even at £18.00 for 500ml. Also BIOX, a biological oxide/corrosion remover which is non-toxic but can remove rust, tarnish and verdigris from iron, copper, brass and aluminium must have a place in a restorer's workshop.

Wykamol woodworm fluid kills the insects at all stages of their life cycle and toxic deposit remains to inhibit re-infestation. For timber that has already been damaged by work or rot, the company offers Xylamon LX hardening solution. Not cheap at £21.00 for 750ml but possibly cheaper than replacing the damaged timber.

One final item which caught my eye is Epoxy disintegrator. Faced with an instrument which has been 'restored' using epoxy resin the chances of getting things apart without extensive damage are slim. However, this product causes the epoxy to soften and swell allowing safe dismantling. What a boon!

Lacquers especially for copper, brass and silver together with Renaissance Wax polish (made to a formula used by the British Museum) which is suitable for leather, wood, marble, ivory and metals can put a final gloss on your work. ■

*Details of all products from Conservation Resources (UK) Ltd., Units 1 & 2 Pony Road, Hospath Industrial Estate, Cowley, Oxfordshire OX4 2RD. Tel: 01865 747755.*

The computer file is undergoing a period of adaptation and reorganisation. Now members are sending in photographs with their Register returns, a way to locate these easily has to be found. This entails the making of two new fields for each record; one to take account of general photographs and the second to identify specific tune card prints. As there are over 5,500 records on the file, this will take some time.

The rewards for these alterations may be far reaching and informative. It should be possible to isolate individual makers and compare types and styles of tune card they used. Again it should be possible to note which type of card was used at a specific time of manufacture. This may not always work out of course, but this sort of information could be a good indicator.

Two examples can be quoted already. In the case of Ami-Rivenc, it is possible to isolate boxes that have their tune cards photographed and spot the changes that occur as serial numbers increase. Although more examples are required, it is already relatively easy to see what type of tune card they used and when they changed styles.

The second case concerns H.M.G. It was largely due to the mass of information held on the computer that led to the discovery of the makers name in the first place. Now on examining the prints of the tune

cards, it would seem Henri Margot used the same style for a long period. Again more examples are required to be absolutely sure.

I hope that all this shows just how important it is for all of us to Register boxes and send in photographs. The tune card print is especially important for research. Do not forget that Anthony Bulleid is undertaking an in depth appraisal of tune cards and makers at the moment. Possibly this is the single most important development in recent times.

Existing illustrations of tune cards, excellent as they are, do require correcting and updating. Please make that extra effort to Register your boxes and include a photograph or two. Your print may well prove to be useful and make a significant contribution to our fund of knowledge.

For those not too sure about taking sharp in focus photographs, virtually any modern 35 mm camera can cope. It does help to use a tripod and a cable release to avoid the possibility of camera shake. To prevent distortion make sure the camera lens is absolutely square on to the tune card and centred approximately in the middle of the card. Fill the frame as much as possible and focus carefully, but do please include any margin the card may have. Most automatic cameras of today take care of this focusing without operator help.

It is possible now to order an

index print when having films developed. I have found this is well worth the extra one pound charged as you are given a small combined print of all the pictures on the film. It is much easier to keep a record of the photos taken and it saves all the fuss of peering at negatives and wondering if you have chosen the right one for that all important reprint.

Remember that tune cards are all highly individual with different handwriting on each one. A photographic record of a tune card can be absolutely vital in cases of identification of stolen property. Recently I was informed that a box stolen from the London Organ Museum was later recovered but the thieves had torn out the tune card in an attempt to make it less identifiable. Fortunately the museum had kept a record of the tunes, but a photograph would have enabled an exact reproduction of the card to be made.

In the plethora of antique collecting programmes, yet another terrible mistake was made when dealing with musical boxes. The presenter noted that the box had a glass lid over the movement. He also stated that it was put there by the makers as musical boxes sometimes had accidents which resulted in the pins and other parts flying off with great force. The glass was there to protect your eyes. Now I bet none of you knew that did you? All this nonsense about trying to keep dust out! ■

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*Please make that extra effort to Register your boxes and include a photograph or two. Your print may well prove to be useful and make a significant contribution to our fund of knowledge.*

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## saleroom report

### Christie's South Kensington, April 16th

The mechanical music at this sale opened with a French fusee barrel-organ clock base in marble, bought from the Mentmore sale in 1977 by a former MBSGB member, which realised £8,000. A Bruder barrel-organ (sounding as if the pipes were in the wrong holes) raised £3,500.

A most unusual workbox with a large singing bird powered by a Bontems-type movement achieved £4,000, twice the price of a conventional Bontems bird-in-cage with some nasty gold paint on its base. A mignon 32-note organette seemed a bargain at £450, but a Concert Roller organ was on course at £600.

Singing bird boxes, none fusee and none perfect, ranged from £480 to £1200.

A 12-air snuff box movement in green tinsplate case made £580 (it was two-per-turn, or would be when the disc at the end of the cylinder had been fixed). An F. Nicole with two teeth off, brought £480, while a glorious one by H. Capt, playing three airs on a 4-inch cylinder, reached £1800 (both also in tin transit cases).

Far Eastern financial difficulties have affected the prices of large disc boxes recently; nonetheless, a 24½ inch Polyphon (without stand) made £5,000 and a glorious Mira cabinet model £7,000. A 22½ inch Polyphon with bells (which failed

at £3,500 in December) now made £4,800. Also with bells was a 14½ inch table Polyphon (£2,800).

Most splendid of the cylinder boxes was a 'Longue Marche'; with four springs,

2½ hours of playing time, superb sound and an English Sheraton-style case, it seemed good value at £3,000.

A rarity was a one-comb forte-piano mandolin box (£2,600); a more conventional, but very impressive forte-piano box, Nicole No.36791, played four overtures (£7,500). Linking the musical and 'Technical Apparatus' sections of this sale was an automated musical picture of a blacksmith's forge (£2,400). ■

# Crown Devon - A Novelty Musical Miscellany

Part Two: By Paul Bellamy

**N**ovelty items are still relatively cheap. They can provide much pleasure and interest and make a good starting point for the young collector or those with limited means. Two years ago the author and his wife obtained three of the Fieldings Crown Devon novelties. These and other manufacturers' items have now become a serious and enjoyable part of their collection. This second and last part of the article will hopefully establish these novelties in their own right as part, all be it a humble one, of the long history and wonderful world of mechanical music.

The collector must be aware of some pitfalls when collecting musical novelties such as the Fieldings 'Crown Devon' products. Some pottery ware will be damaged but skilfully repaired. Provided this is taken into account in the price, a good repair does not detract from the visual joy of possession of these jolly novelties. A repair can usually be identified in a number of ways:

- A change in temperature, detected by the lips between the repair area and the body.
- Minute scratch marks left by ultra-fine sanding of the repaired area.
- A change in the reflective surface of the glaze overlaying the repair when viewed in oblique light. (This can sometimes be detected with a sensitive finger tip or scratching with the finger nail).
- Patchy colour changes.
- Lack of crazed glazing on the repaired area compared with the body.

Some items appear to have original defects such as slight distortion, minor fine stress cracks, slight chips touched up but under the original



Fig 1. Come landlord, fill the flowing bowl

glaze. A crazed glaze is both typical and a normal characteristic of Fieldings. Maybe some were seconds but there does not appear to be any way of knowing.

Do not buy unless you can inspect the movement or by listening very carefully. Obtain a receipt to say that the purchase is subject to no missing teeth or pins. Minor damage can be put right such as feather dampers. A visual inspection will help to identify a pre- or post-war movement, the latter usually having between 12 and 20 teeth.

A summary of the product range is given in the appendix. It would be helpful if readers can fill in some of the missing information, as records were lost in the fire of 1951. Also, there may be some variations to the

patterns, particularly between the pre- and post-war designs. For example, in the case of the 'Daisy Bell' jugs there are said to be two slightly different designs on the obverse side of the jugs. Such differences can significantly affect both present and future values and is therefore of considerable interest to the collector.

All Fieldings products are clearly marked and visible, e.g. inside the foot of jugs. The legend is: CROWN DEVON underneath which is FIELDING'S and then below MADE IN ENGLAND. The fourth line is a registration number. The lettering is in the form of an arc and as thus described is pre-war. Post-war items were similarly marked but in straight lines and without the registration number.

The precise time when changes were made is not known. Other manufacturers could be mistaken for Fieldings, such as Royal Winton, where the only visible print is 'MADE IN ENGLAND'. In the case of Royal Winton the musical movement has to be removed to reveal the manufacturer's identity on the base of the mug.

The appendix gives some idea of the vast range and numbers of these musical novelties. Also, other manufacturers, both in the thirties and later, followed the Fieldings lead. Royal Winton examples are particularly attractive and of excellent quality, but Lancaster Potteries 'Sandland Ware' seemed to cater for the cheaper end of the market. Carlton Ware produced some in the '50s. What is known about these and other producers? Well, that could be another story... ■

*Due to pressure of space, the appendix will appear in the next issue, Ed.*



## Kevin McElhone

## projects and wants

I will start with thanks to people who have sent in things for various projects or the Archives. I cannot always reply directly, but ALL lists sent in are processed as quickly as possible. Thanks to P.van Marter for lists of Musical box discs which have filled in a few more blanks and to Olin Tillotson for a copy of one of the missing 1970's auction catalogues the Archives are looking for. Thanks to Hansjorg Surber from Switzerland for a useful list of Hupfeld 73 note music rolls.

Robert Wiese in USA sent in an Turkish Barrel Piano tuning scale for Mark James and I got some Triola titles from E. Vazquez in Spain. Also a big thank you to Carl Semon who sent in a large envelope of lists of his own and other friends collections of music which enabled around 150 titles to be filled in.

Kevin is involved with an interesting project to try and research the remaining old hand turned Street Barrel Reed Organs, (Meloton type) and Street Barrel Pipe organs of any make. (called Monkey Organs in U.S.A.) These were used on the streets or at small

Fairs and often had popular tunes or hymns which were different from those heard on Street Barrel Pianos. If you have one of these instruments please could you send an AUDIO tape recording, ideally with a written or spoken list of the tunes to Kevin who will also copy for the Archives. If you are interested in another recording in exchange of unidentified tunes and you are prepared to try to put titles to them then please mention this when you write in.

Herman Lokenberg has sent a reply to Robert Frey in U.S.A. about his request for some rare discs but Robert has not replied so Herman wonders if Robert has moved? Can any American members supply a new address for him?

A member in USA has recently acquired an unusual Junghans Disc Musical box without any discs at all. It appears to need discs which are centre driven with two drive holes and with a diameter of about 8 3/4". Please let me know if you can spare a suitable disc for him so he can feel it is worthwhile restoring this unusual box.

A member in U.S.A. recently purchased the rare Roepke book playing upright musical box from Sotheby's auction. Unfortunately several parts are missing and his restorer here in England would like to hear from any owner so that photos and measurements can be taken so that the missing parts may be constructed. Please contact Kevin on this one and he will pass on the to person concerned who wishes to remain private at the moment.

In connection with an article he is writing, David Snelling would like to contact the owner of a musical box which was seen and photographed in Chester in 1983 which has a spring barrel in line with the cylinder and has no teeth on the spring barrel. If you can help please telephone him on 01624 823483 or e-mail him on d.snelling@virgin.net ■

*There have been NO REPLIES at all to any of the requests for help in the last MBSGB "Music Box" so does this mean members do not value this column and it should be stopped in favour of something else in the magazine?*

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*Your chance  
to help other  
members*

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**W**hen I was writing these notes a few years ago, the use of micro-chip technology for music origination was fairly new and still very controversial. Now it has become accepted as part of progress and I agree completely with the interviewee on Mr. Gavioli's *Wonderful Contraption* (Ed. note: see last issue of *Music Box*) who said that he could see no objection to the form of origination providing the music came from pipes.

However, we have come a long way since then with the street organ that is self-playing and the one where the handle merely operates a switch. The traditionalist in me refuses to accept these, though undoubtedly the market exists. On the latter the handle appears to have a life of its own and wishes to keep turning, and I remember saying to Alan Pell that it could do with a little resistance being built in to at least give the feel that turning the handle did something! Of course, for the professional or disabled organ grinder such instruments are ideal and permit playing as long as the batteries last out. But they are not really suitable as entrants in organ events. The original Harmonist and Microbox organs are a different matter because the basic organ remains unchanged giving similar size and weight advantages as the roll has over the book.

Hereford went off very well and seemed to be enjoyed by the vast majority. Unfortunately, illness prevented De Admiral from travelling over from Uithuizermeeden for the first time, but at short notice Ken Juson and Roy Palmer brought over their attractive Verbeek from nearby Leominster to fulfil their programme. It is also good to have an outstanding German street organ. We miss the 42er Bruns and 45 Niemuth of the late Big Balbo and Kurt Niemuth respectively. But fortunately we had Heinz Rybczynski from Berlin with his 42er bruns whilst his wife looked after an attractive Bacigalupo. Fortunately, there was a very good home team this year which made up for the lack of foreign entrants and there was a good range of British and foreign instruments.



Stephen Pickford demonstrates the finger barrel Walker organ at Grosmont

I am reminded that Waldkirch is just a year away. It is a Mecca for many organ enthusiasts and rightly so, but I was a little disappointed in 1996 by the lack of any social evening as in previous years which have often been outstanding in entertainment terms. Now that the main street can be adequately by-passed its closure helps the organ location considerably. It is also an important market place for organ builders, but I was sorry that last time they were all squashed together in a small square with the different organs competing with each other - Deleika, Hofbauer, Hofmann, Raffin and Schlemmer. Of course, it was great for Jaeger and Brommer with a number of their organs on the street (being Waldkirch-built) and their works down the road open to the public with refreshments on sale and an accordion band, and plenty of room to take a well earned seat. Both partners speak English, which is useful for us, and they were busy demonstrating. They make a variety of models but I like their 20-note most. It has a pleasant sound, is easy to turn and I like the tremulant. I also approve of the distinctive stage-like fronts they fit. The organs appear well made and finished. My one criticism would be that they have yet to develop their own sound. They don't have the traditional German bright voicing or the Raffin "Dutch" sound, but have a more bland tone and they are also fairly quiet. They are far from cheap but they seem to sell well and we have at least two in Britain.

Our Western Counties Organ Group is designed to keep interest and contact alive during the quiet winter months and we meet up three times. Our current rendezvous is The White Lion at Wilton, Ross-on-Wye, and in March, after imbibing and enjoying some street organ music, we set off for the village of

Grosmont on the Welsh border where Stephen Pickford was waiting in the church to demonstrate the finger barrel Walker organ there. It is quite a delightful instrument which had had the barrel and associated equipment removed at the last restoration. However, the barrel had been just deposited in the rear of the disused nave and when Stephen Pickford saw it he decided to restore it to its proper place. The small handle is turned quite quickly but easily and some of the tunes are not familiar to more modern ears, but the Old Hundredth is included. The organ no longer has to be pumped by foot, which perhaps is just as well. Operating foot and hand simultaneously at different speeds must have been quite tricky.

The Pieckarski brothers, who own the Cuckoo Clock Museum in the Old School at Tabley, Cheshire, had their second open weekend this Spring and I was very pleased to be invited again together with a number of other organ owners. Having filled the classroom walls with cuckoo clocks from floor to ceiling, Roman and Maz have now turned their attention to mechanical organs with Ruth and Bruder barrel organs, both of which play extremely well. Of course the Ruth would sound even better out of doors, but if it is located outside the danger of vandalism would be greatly increased. How sad we live in an age where security has to take precedence. They have now sold the 45 keyless Hofbauer which they bought last year and I understand that it has gone to Switzerland. It was the only 45er Hofbauer in the country, and an early model at that, so I am sad that it has gone. Among the visiting organs was a fantastic Gavioli barrel fair organ which has recently come to light. I hope nobody decides to "improve" it by destroying its originality. ■

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*I am reminded that Waldkirch is just a year away.*

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**Magazine new look**

May I please add my congratulations to our new editor, Alan Pratt, for his outstanding first issue of our magazine under his aegis.

Whilst it would be invidious to single out any article over another, I was delighted with Arthur Cunliffe's article on mandarin boxes. However, I do question whether Heller ever made any music boxes or was simply a vendor.

**David Snelling, Isle of Man**

**Grandma's Automaton**

I was fascinated by the article on the automaton, and it occurred to me that it could have been there even longer than the sixty years Grandma had lived there.

Were there any dates on the newspapers? So often a good indication. Surely some of the family would have remembered it from childhood had it belonged to Grandma. What a lovely mystery. The head is almost certainly a French Jumeau - can you remember anything about the mark on the head?

Wish I had known about it, I would have been down like a shot. I collect automata, usually ones that need restoration as they are cheaper, and I enjoy doing the work.

I would be grateful for any further information; do you happen to know who has it? By the way where is Salmesbury Hall?

Thanks for an amusing and interesting article.

**Grace Thomson, Knaresborough**

**More on Brinsmead**

I was surprised to find a remark on my article on J & J Goddard (see The Music Box, Spring 1998, page 122, ); it reads: "the author mistake-

only confuses the 'black sheep' of the Brinsmead family with his honourable and illustrious brother, John Brinsmead, pianoforte-maker." But I think that Mr. Ord-Hume did not consult the statement of the firm itself, which one can find in Paul de Wit's Welt-Adressbuch der Musikinstrumenten-Industrie, Teil II, 1926/27, page 256. We see here that the third owner was indeed Herbert J. Brinsmead and not his brother John. I'll appreciate it if you will ask for a comment by Mr. Ord-Hume; possibly he can find contradictory sources on this matter.

**H. Strengers, Netherlands**



**From New Zealand**

Yvonne and I returned home in good health to New Zealand and are settling in again after our wonderful trip to Europe with your Music Box Club members. We felt very honoured to be offered space in the bus with you all, and didn't we all have a ball. A trip we will never forget. We wish to also say a big hi to all the members we met and the friendships we made with many of you. We also have a lovely live performance, with all the sounds etc., on a video tape kindly received from Doug Pell (good one Doug). Once again we wish to thank everyone for making our trip with you all so enjoyable. Maybe we might see you all again in New Zealand some day.

**Leon & Yvonne Clements**

*MBSGB New Zealand members*

**Your Chance to Win a CD of Duo-Art Music**

Nimbus Records have kindly offered five CDs of 'The Grand Piano Era' from their new Grand Piano Series. (See page 185 of this issue).

Entry to the competition is free - all you have to do is answer three questions.

1. *Who co-operated with Gerald Stonehill on building the Robot?*
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Winners' names will be published in the next issue of The Music Box. The Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. No one involved with the production or publication of The Music Box may enter the competition.



*Keith Harding*  
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