

THE MUSIC BOX

an international magazine of mechanical music

THE JOURNAL OF THE MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Volume 12 Number 2 Summer 1985



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THE MUSIC BOX

an international magazine of mechanical music

THE JOURNAL OF THE MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

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FRONT COVER

Another pictorial reminder of our visit to Aberdeen. Looking at the picture we can see why they sing **Scotland The Brave**. I thought only an Irishman would stand in front of a cannon in that position! Subtle tribute to Aberdeen F.C., I suppose, in that one of the cannon balls is a football. But even that would hurt!

Auction Affairs

Once more your Auction Secretary is writing to remind members of the forthcoming June meeting Auction. As many of you already know, this is the only fund raising activity the Society holds to boost the *Music Box* money box. To help new members, who after all need some sort of encouragement, I am calling upon all our more senior active collectors to delve into their collections and extract some of their less coveted complete and working boxes for inclusion in the Auction with sensible reserve prices. For the last few years many new members have asked me how it is possible to start a collection on limited funds and sometimes even housekeeping money! I am sure there must be many articles hidden away that would dearly wish to be bought by an eager new member.

People arriving on Friday, May 31 for the Annual General Meeting are reminded that our Editor, Mr Bob Leach, will be happy to arrange secure overnight storage for their auction contributions. There will also be willing hands on Saturday, June 1 to heave and haul the larger items up to the first floor. We draw the line at fair organs and pianolas! Last year we raised the sum of £420. I hope, with your help, to improve on that figure this year. There will be lunchtime viewing of the entries for the Auction until 2.00 p.m.

The Auction, conducted as usual by Christopher Proudfoot, will commence at approximately 3.00 p.m.

Roger Kempson.

Chanctonbury Ring

During the summer of 1984 a musical box evening was presented to the Rustington Gramophone Society. The delights of cylinder boxes, disc boxes, and the street organ were introduced to the



OH, YOU BEAUTIFUL DOLL.

Sent in by: Joe Schumacher, 2623 Turnstone Drive, Brookmeade, Wilmington, DE 19808, U.S.A.

Gramophoneers by John Mansfield, Peter Howard and Cyril Hess. Appropriately the programme began with the street organ playing *Sussex by the Sea*, and then the quite large audience was pleasantly surprised by the wide variety of music which followed; Opera, Music Hall, Gilbert and Sullivan, Sacred Music, you name it, we played it! The Rustington music lovers were then highly delighted to examine the musical automata at closer inspection.

In the autumn there was a meeting at Longbury House, hosted by John and Kay Mansfield. Ted Brown demonstrated the working of several organettes, and his talk guided the members of the Chanctonbury Ring through the perils and hazards involved when buying one of these instruments. Mr. Cooper, of Shoreham, presented several music boxes and these, along with others brought by members of the Ring, made a very interesting and comprehensive collection. The meeting ended with an excellent buffet lunch, and thanks were given to John and Kay for their hospitality.

(This report should have appeared in the last bulletin, and the Editor apologises for the delay. Entirely his oversight. Cyril is not to blame this time. Ed.)

Cyril Hess.

Spring Meeting, Oxford

This took place during the weekend of March 8-10, 1985, with the excellent Linton Lodge Hotel as the H.Q.

On Saturday morning, after Registration, ably managed by Daphne Wyatt, there was a talk on the Racca Piano by Bob Holden, who called his lecture "The Piano Melodici". This was absolutely fascinating, the more so because Bob kept telling us he "knew nothing" about the instrument and then proceeded to make us realise that he knew quite a lot about it. It appears that it is a 48-note 4 octave instrument and played by folded cards being drawn over the mechanism. Once upon a time it seems that there were 10,000 in Italy, in four main types of instrument, but they are very rare now, probably not more than half a dozen in the whole of the U.K. There is a 73 note 6 octave instrument in Frank Holland's Musical Museum at Brentford, and during Bob's lecture Frank was able to supplement the lecturer's knowledge of these rare and quite beautiful instruments.

Then the experienced lecturer Bob Minney (he was giving THREE lectures that day) gave a delightful talk on "Restoring and Appreciating Disc Musical Boxes". He used a whole battery of instruments and a very sophisticated electronic amplification system which showed, among other things, how lovely the tone of disc music could be. The 70-plus audience was very excited by the music of a 48-key Imhof Street Barrel Organ with 90 pipes. There is a record which can be purchased and the whole of one side is given to the music of this Imhof instrument.

In the afternoon there were several visits and the party was split into groups for convenience sake.

One visit was to the Pitt Rivers collection of musical boxes, by kind permission of Dr. La Rue.

There was also a visit to the History of Science Museum, Oxford, by kind permission of Dr. Hackman. Here the visitors saw the renowned collection of clocks, and watches, with a special and most illuminating talk in the hall where Survey equipment was kept, early telescopes, theodolites, Arabic navigating systems, star gazing, plus an exhibition

of dental and photographic equipment. Max Hobbs, a local member, played an important part in helping Alan Wyatt make the overall arrangements for the visit to the museum.

The members had to rise early on Sunday morning and be on parade for a very interesting talk by the irrepressible Ted Brown on "The very Acme of Invention", as an advertisement in 1887 put it. This was a talk and demonstration on organettes.

Max Hobbs offered Open House and those who attended were invited to inspect his upstairs workshop. Max is a dab hand at making fine small boxes from exotic timber, and fitting them with delicately adjusted modern movements.

Reg Mayes.

Editorial Secretary

We are delighted to announce that **Reg Mayes**, of 171 Barnett Wood Lane, Ashstead, Surrey KT21 2LP, England, has agreed to take on the busy post of Editorial Secretary.

Reg has already given a great deal of practical help in the running of *The Music Box* journal. This latest task he has undertaken will be of tremendous help to the Editor. A determined effort will now be made to diminish the size of the MBSGB "mail mountain".

Please continue to send articles direct to the Editorial office, and, if you have something of a technical nature to say, write it down. We will have it typed, edited and made ready for presentation to the printers. Please **DO** mark all photos and diagrams with your name and address on the back. Script and pictures are, of necessity, separated at the printers. Once separated it is sometimes difficult to identify unmarked material.

For those of you who can get your script typed, remember that it has to be double-spaced. It saves the editor hours of work if material is correctly typed — but — if you do have to write by hand, don't let that deter you from sending us your pearls of wisdom.

Have we a typist in the London area who could do some typing for us?

Complaints

Whenever I write about the activities of our professional members I get complaints — from other professional members! Invariably the ones who complain do not advertise in *The Music Box*, nor do they contribute to the journal, nor do they contribute to the Society Meetings by giving lectures.

On page six of the last journal I gave a brief account of Judith Howard's attempt to start her own business. To me, as a journalist, this was the sort of news our members ought to have. I also believe that those who take a chance like this deserve encouragement, and I tell you that if anyone is in business and wants to describe what they are doing I will be only too pleased to write a report on the information they send me.

Many of you will find it hard to believe that I received a complaint about my one-page article on Judith Howard and her partnership with Mr Page, forming **Page and Howard, 277 Belinda Road, London SW14 7DT**.

The member who complained was, true to form, one who was a professional, did not advertise in *The Music Box*, and did not offer his/her services to Alan Wyatt as a speaker at any of our meetings.

"Did Judith Howard pay for the write-up?" — "why did I give free advertisement to . . . ?" — the usual sour professional jealousy.

What is so annoying about complaints like this is that the fact that we are all **members** is ignored. I suppose we could divide our membership into three groups; (i) Professionals, (ii) Semi-professionals, (iii) Amateur collectors.

But we don't do this.

Our Society is open to all people who are interested in mechanical music. They all share one common title — **member**.

We have, say, one thousand members. As editor I cannot be expected to know what category each member falls into. Nor do I need to know. To me, they are all members. If any member has something newsworthy, then I write about it, and I do not need to know whether that member is professional, semi-professional, or amateur.

Another complaint I receive is the sort which demands "technical" articles.

This sort of moaner is invariably a disgruntled "professional" — the very person who should be sending in his dearly beloved "technical" article. He fails to acknowledge that an editor cannot publish what he does not receive.

Why am I on about complaints?

Because on page 74 you are going to see an article about **Keith Harding**.

Whenever I publish anything about Keith Harding I receive a few complaints — from whom? — you've guessed it; fellow professionals who have contributed little or nothing to the Society in the way of advertising revenue or in giving talks at our Meetings.

Keith Harding has done both.

No member has paid more to the Society in advertising revenue than Keith Harding. (Our other two main supporters in this respect are, of course, those world-famous houses, Sotheby's and Christie's — and how glad we are to have their much-appreciated custom. We could not produce the journal if we did not have the regular support of such loyal members as Robert Kane Trender, Belle Vue Box Repairs, Norfolk Polyphon Centre, Retonio Gallery, Jim Weir, Lesley Evans, Brian Clegg, Kenneth Goldman, Joe Pettitt, Nancy Fratti, veteran Jack Donovan, Monkton House (Michael Bennett-Levy), Michael Savins, Graham Whitehead, W. Baus — who all advertised in our last issue — plus, Peter Schuhknecht, who is very generous to us.)

Not one of those members ever complains when a fellow-professional receives some coverage in the journal.

I cordially invite all our "professional" members to design an advertisement and send it to our advertising manager John Powell. I also invite these esteemed members to contact Alan Wyatt and offer their services as speaker at our meetings.

This is constructive — helpful — positive — and essentially valuable to our Society.

When you write to me — don't write a complaint — write an article!
Bob Leach.

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Lyon, France. Unknown organ-grinder. Can anyone identify the gentleman?



Thun, Switzerland. Alan Wyatt, Peter Schuhknecht.

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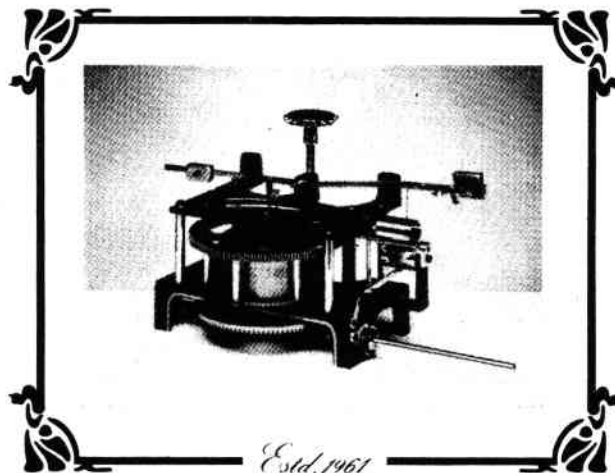
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COLLECTING AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (East Germany)

by Hubert Moeller

(Part 1)

WITH the following article I want to introduce myself as a collector of automatic musical instruments, as one of the few serious collectors in my country. There are, of course, a lot of collectors and lovers of these instruments here. This is understandable, for collecting antiques is popular everywhere, automatic musical instruments are no exception. In addition, a great number of manufacturers of such instruments had their factories on the present territory of the GDR, so that there was a wide supply of such instruments in the past and, although heavily reduced in number, still is.

Those who own perhaps two, three or four musical boxes and occasionally enjoy their tunes but do not deal with the subject any further, these people can hardly be regarded as serious collectors, and there are a good many of these. Their collecting activities are usually not directed to a special kind of antiques, but include other items as well.

If we regard collecting as studying the history of these instruments, as dealing with their historical development and their former importance, the group of such collectors becomes smaller. If you also include the restoration and conservation of instruments among the criteria of collecting, the number of serious collectors will again decrease. If you further include the studying special literature, expert exchange with other collectors at home and abroad, organizing and attending exhibitions etc. then only about twenty-five people in the GDR will answer the description of a real collector. Certainly these are very few on an international scale.

But the fact that there are people at all who concern themselves with such items shows that, despite all difficulties, there is a personal initiative devoted to maintaining and paying tribute to this chapter of cultural and musical history.

What are the reasons that only few people collect automatic musical instruments?

Historically, Germany was a centre of automatic musical instrument making. The range included disc musical boxes, pianolas, orchestrions and organettes. It follows that many instruments were also sold and used in Germany. At that time, such instruments hardly were collector's items; they were made for musical entertainment and, in the vast majority of cases, for everyday use. That is why these instruments did not enjoy any special protection during World War II so that many of them were destroyed or left to decay.

After the war, understandably, there were more important things to worry about than the care of such instruments, which meant further losses. As the political conditions consolidated and the social situation of the people improved, the interest in antiques revived. But automatic musical instruments still played a minor role; in part they still served for everyday entertainment if we think of pianolas in pubs, or of the barrel organs of merry-go-rounds. More and more this traditional use of some of the existing instruments lost importance. They came to be regarded as old-fashioned, defective ones were put out of operation, and others ended up as firewood or rubbish. Only a few pieces found their way into museums or into the hands of private collectors, and usually at no more than a token price.

It was not before the early sixties that the interest began to grow. Unfortunately, very few people then were able to appreciate the cultural history value of these musical instruments and to build up a collection. At first, collecting them was neither carried out systematically nor ranked as a collection field in its own right. The first collectors were often mocked at as eccentrics, and these collectors dared not appear in public

with their collections. Therefore, the items continued to remain in oblivion, so that the present generation has next to no definite idea what an orchestrion or musical box is. This very oblivion, however, eventually made an increasing number of people curious to know how these instruments were designed, what they looked like, and how they really worked.

Given the growing interest in antiques, it was inevitable that automatic musical instruments appeared on the market in increasing numbers, entailing a slow but steady development of demand, until at the end of the sixties they had acquired equal rank with other antiques. No sooner had they become so established as marketable items when they shared all the fluctuations of trade, especially the continuous price increases since the mid-seventies. A full-scale automatic musical instrument market has not yet come into being, though, the overall supply being too little.

Privately collecting automatic musical instruments today depends on quite a number of objective and subjective factors, which all have to concur favourably if the collector is to be successful.

Among the subjective conditions, doubtlessly the most important one is the pleasure the collector takes in preserving a form of musical entertainment of the past, combined with his appreciation of a broad scope of artistically perfected craftsmanship. A collector who does not put his heart and soul into his hobby, who lacks affection for his pieces or who acquires them merely for trading or as profitable investments, will soon lose interest in his collection.

Successful collecting further depends on the collector's skill and cleverness in ferretting out and purchasing instruments. He should have enough space for setting them up, be able to manage the transport-

tation of large pieces, and consider his financial possibilities, since some items may be rather expensive.

Moreover, he needs the understanding of his family and his friends, and he may have to spend much time on care and restoration. This again requires that he should have a sound knowledge of the subject.

Finally, he should entertain continuous contacts with fellow collectors and exchange with them collected items, repair materials, relevant literature and new information.

Personal initiative is a must, as there is no form of association of instrument collectors in the GDR.

All these factors taken together, it is no wonder that few persons meet all the requirements in the making of a serious collector.

An objective factor is the influence of the Public Sector. Naturally the competent departments of the Ministry of Culture have a justifiable interest in exploring the cultural past and to make its heritage accessible to the public. Quite understandably this is conducted on a global scale, with an emphasis on decisive developments, milestones and highlights, and practised in diverse ways in state-owned museums and art collections. Automatic musical devices are no exception. Compared with the traditions of musical instrument making, watchmaking and cabinet making, automatic musical devices cannot look back on many centuries of masterful craftsmanship. Having existed for a historically short period of about 150 years, they cannot claim to play a prime role. That does not exclude that there are unique works of art among them, but from the museums' viewpoint these instruments first of all were devices for musical entertainment and were not considered as having museum value.

A certain inventory of automatic musical instruments may have survived the removal of works of art from the museums during World War II, but these frequently remained in the magazines or storerooms, because in state-owned museums, too, few people had the opportunity to devote their efforts to this field and to obtain new pieces for their museums by donation or cheap purchase.

The increased interest in antiques in the sixties aroused the attention of another public institution – the state-owned Fine Art Trade Organization. Its activity primarily directed at providing antiques both for the national property and for sales abroad, has not left the home market of automatic musical devices uninfluenced, since art dealers had long realized how well these instruments sell up on Western markets.

How, now, can a collector who has all the subjective qualifications mentioned and who tolerates the objective influences of the public sector succeed in setting up a collection?

From what I have set forth above it follows that such a collection can be founded mainly by acquiring items from private owners. Therefore the collector must use every opportunity that promises a purchase. The simplest way is to visit antique and second-hand shops regularly and look for new items. Thus the collector saves himself the trouble of finding out items at their original owners, but he is seldom lucky to find a fine or rare object that way.

On the one hand, antique or second-hand shops offer relatively few automatic musical instruments, because the majority of private owners have come to realize that they can gain a far higher price if they sell directly to collectors. Therefore it is mainly old people or those unacquainted with the subject

who offer such items to the public trade.

On the other hand, the antique dealers and shop owners have their regular customers and will not put a particularly fine piece on display for the chance customer.

Under such conditions it is difficult for a young collector to extend his collection that way. Private purchases from individuals require greater efforts. There are several possibilities: The collector may try his luck in sales connected with the winding up of private undertakings or households. Moreover, he may advertise his interest in dailies or weeklies. Past experience has shown that very often there are favourable offers among the replies received. If the collector has already organized one or more exhibitions and published some articles, visitors or readers will spontaneously make offers or give hints about where such objects may be found, so that he can trace them out more or less successfully.

Finally, there is the possibility to add new pieces to one's collection by exchange with other collectors. Eligible partners are not only collectors of automatic musical instruments but also collectors of other antiques that sometimes contain musical movements, such as certain clocks and toys.

An extension of a collection by items available abroad must be ruled out, because customs regulations do not allow the private export or import of such objects.

I have tried in this report to outline the conditions, possibilities and limits for a private collector to follow his passion. These conditions are not ideal but sufficient to allow an insight in the wide variety of mechanical musical instruments of the past. The private collectors in my country are unassumingly contributing to this.

(August, 1984).

MECHANICAL PIANOS

by Roger Booty

"THE Music Trades Diary and Year Book" was a large sized business diary produced from about 1900. At first it was published in conjunction with "The London and Provincial Music Trades Review". By the time of the pieces shown here, from 1920-1925, it was being published by the monthly, "Music Trades Review".

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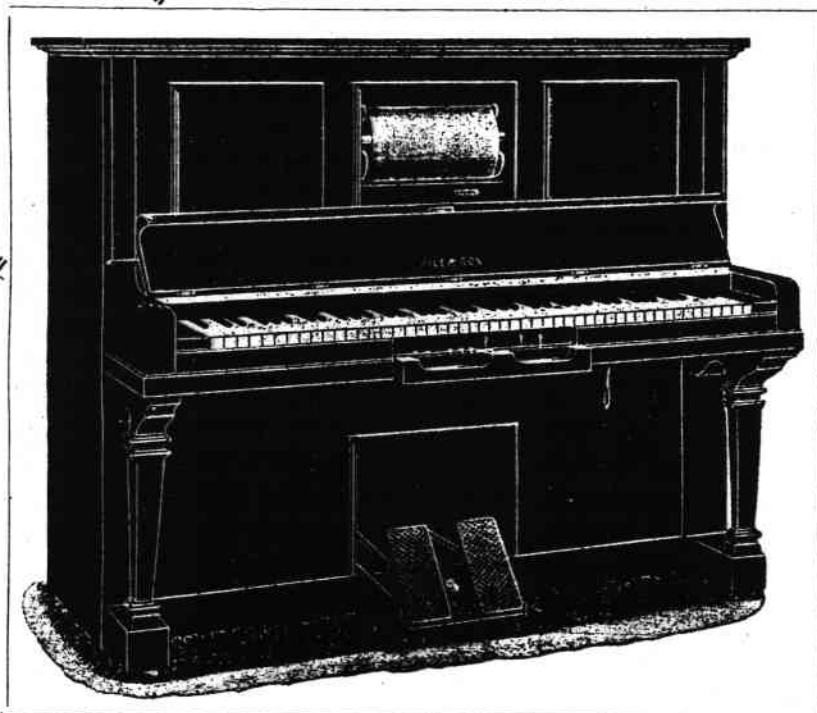


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Blüthner & Co., Ltd., 17, 19, 21, 23 Wigmore Street W. 1*

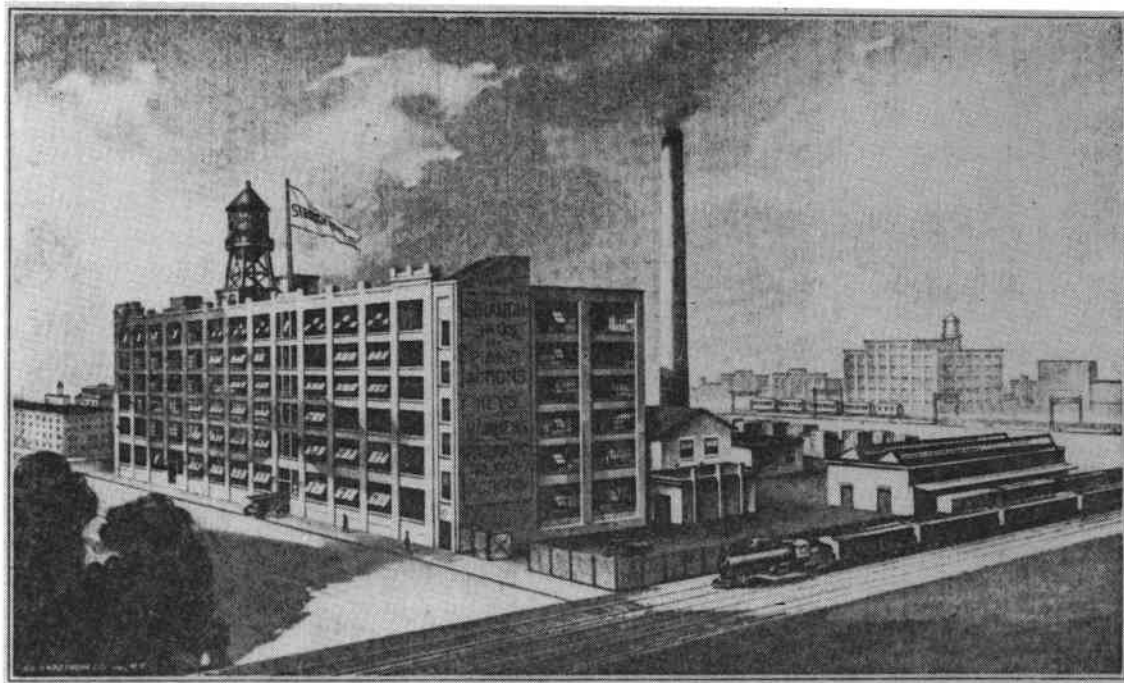
N.B.—This is a British Company and there are no foreign shareholders.

6. The Carola, fitted to Blüthner pianos, was apparently only supplied for a short while as it offered no advantages over better quality imported actions. This advertisement was in the 1925 edition of the Music Trades Diary.

Strauch Bros.

PNEUMATIC PLAYER ACTIONS

Sent in by Roger Booty



The Extensive Plant of Strauch Bros., Inc., 327-347 Walnut Ave., New York

The Strauch Bros. Factory

THE steady growth of Strauch Bros., Inc., has naturally been accompanied by the steady enlargement of the factory which is today, the largest factory in the world where the complete interior mechanism for pianos is built for trade consumption. From the small beginning in 1867 of fifteen hundred square feet, Strauch Bros., Inc., now occupy a modern, reenforced, concrete plant, aggregating a floor space of over one hundred thousand square feet, equipped with every convenience and modern appliance necessary for the careful but speedy production of the modern day.

So well is this wonderful plant arranged, that artificial light is seldom necessary even in the very center of the great floor areas. Working conditions are of the best. A large, well contented, painstaking organization, many of whom have been with this house the greater part of their lifetimes, is the result which guarantees to the users of Strauch Products, a uniform standard of workmanship of the highest quality and merit.

SUBLIME HARMONY IN WALNUT CASE

They say that a man-of-war is never in such good order as on the day she is paid off. All possible teething troubles have been ironed out at last, twenty years' spit and polish stand at their climax, and tomorrow the flag is run down and the vessel prepared for the ship-breakers. It is often the same with art collections: Whitehall Palace was never more densely hung with Titians and Raphaels than on the day when King Charles's head fell. The great sale at Mentmore, with strawberries in the marquee and buyers' helicopters alighting on the lawn, was like a last crowning expression of the *fin de siècle* vulgarity that created it.

Another collection passes under the hammer today, and it can never have made such an effect as it does now, with all its 506 lots on display together for the first time, filling the iron-framed Big Top where Christies auction their most unwieldy white elephants. The saleroom gloom is riven by a cacophony of ragtime, Chinese bells, martial fanfares, thunderous sonatas and automatic birdsong as Mr

Claes Friberg's Copenhagen collection of musical machines plays its own Last Post over and over again for the benefit of calculating buyers.

The collection has its own entourage of fair-haired Danish children who demonstrate the levers expertly and feverishly, as if they had grown up with them. The lots range from repeating watches to ebonized Bechstein and Steinway grands fitted up for piano-rolls (the catalogue does not vulgarly call the latter pianolas but "reproducing pianos", as if the auctioneer was guaranteeing them ready to stand at stud). There are ranked shelves of record players with bindweed-flower speakers, silver, brass or japanned, and rows of family-sized musical boxes like hand-cranked commodes in the Chippendale or Tyrolean style. For larger versions, the iron cylinders embossed with tunes are as massive as yule-logs.

There is a chicken which squawks and lays a faded gilt egg once filled with sweets, if fed with a pre-Hitler ten-pfennig piece. An item resembling Sherlock Holmes's

tobacco pipe emits music if you blow while unrolling a perforated paper-roll. The verbal exuberance matches the mechanical ingenuity: Gramophone and Graphophone, Phonograph and Phonola are here together, and the Weber Maestro Orchestrion without a Dulcephone Crescendo Major sound-box stands beside the upright Symphonion still fitted with its Sublime Harmony combs in walnut case.

But the virtuosity reaches its supreme pitch with the Model C Phonoliszt-Violina, a player-piano eight feet tall with a small torture-chamber at the top where three violins are pinioned by contrivances reminiscent of American orthodontics. A catgut hoop spins round them and as the violins are raised in turn to touch it they combine to strike out *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* with a terrible brio that seems to threaten the whole future of live performance. If one quarter of the ingenuity lavished on these lost arts had been available to NASA, the space shuttle would surely not now be blinking round its orbit with a dud fuel-cell.

Guarantee

The Strauch Pneumatic Player Action is guaranteed absolutely for five years against any defects in materials and workmanship. Should any parts deteriorate or become imperfect through use or climatic conditions they will be replaced at our own expense.

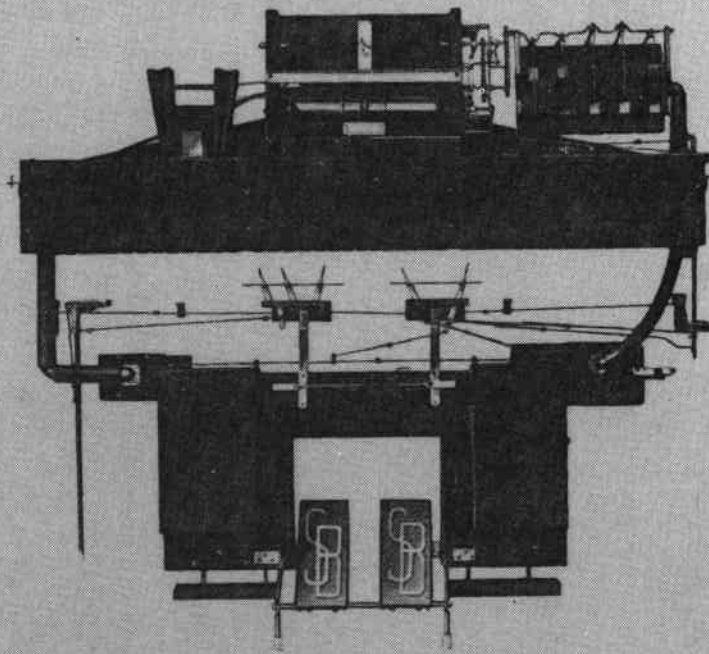


Strauch Bros., Inc.
321-347 Walnut Ave., New York

W. H. Strauch
100 PRUDENTIAL BLDG
NEW YORK, N. Y.

The Strauch Pneumatic Player Action

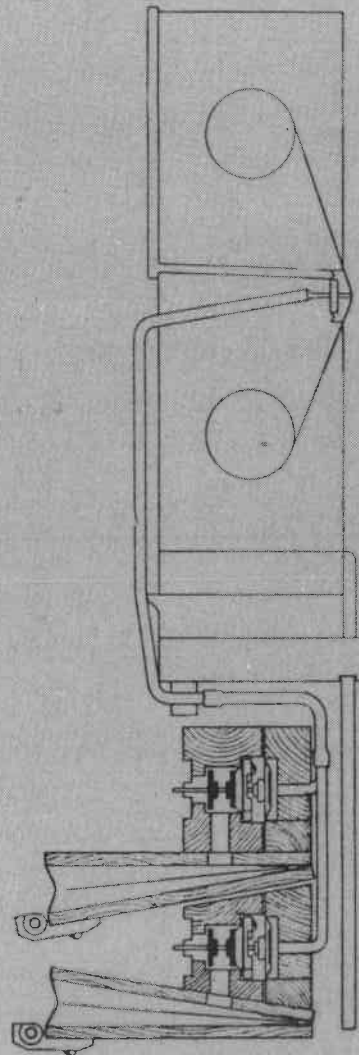
The Strauch Pneumatic Player Action has been simplified in construction to a point where as few parts are used as are practical without impairing in the least, its durability and



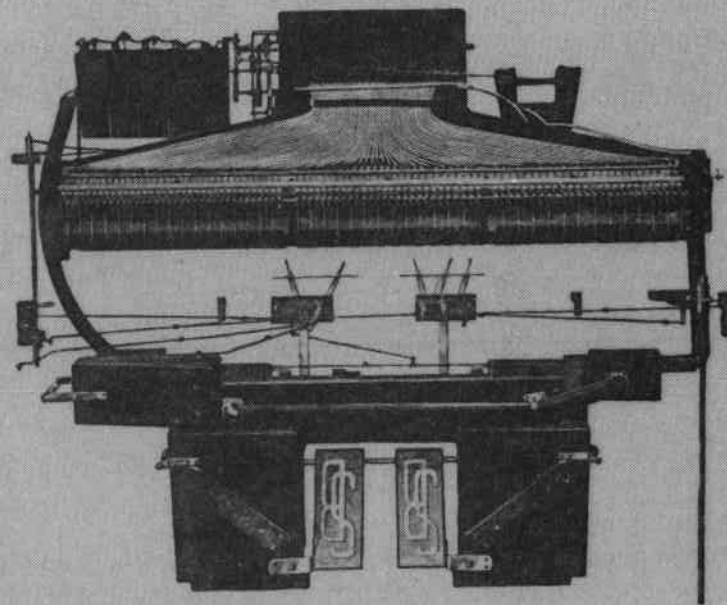
FRONT VIEW—STRAUCH PNEUMATIC PLAYER ACTION

efficiency. It has been built upon the principle that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. This is manifested by the fact that there is a direct air passage from the tracker bar to the pouch, permitting at all times an unobstructed flow of air under all conditions.

SECTIONAL
VIEW OF THE
PNEUMATIC
STACK OF THE
STRAUCH PNEUMATIC
PLAYER ACTION



There are but two packed joints throughout the entire top action and no channels are bored. The action is also equipped with a fool proof pneumatic tracking device which is as simple and durable in construction as the rest of the action, guaranteeing perfect alignment of the music roll as it passes

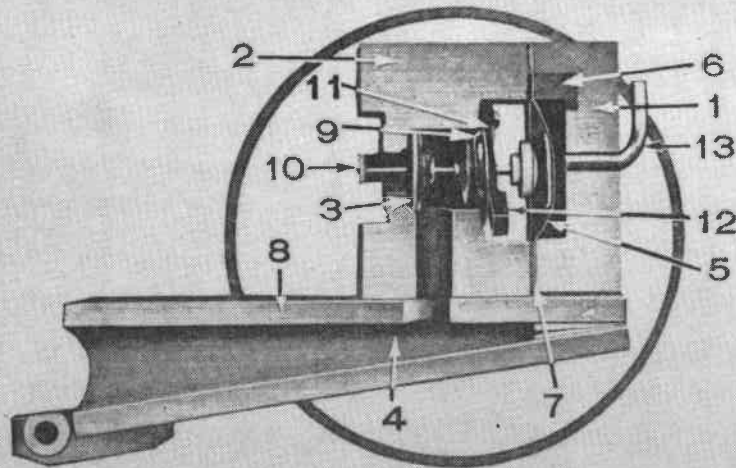


REAR VIEW—STRAUCH PNEUMATIC PLAYER ACTION

over the tracker bar and which does not have to be taken apart when cleaning is necessary. For this purpose, it is equipped with dust arresters located in the tubing which may be disconnected and blown out in a few seconds. (See Page 12.)

The bellows are of unit construction attached to which are the governor, gate box and shut off box in most accessible

positions. At the front of the bottom action is an exclusive accenting device found only on Strauch Player Actions (patent applied for). This combined with the light sensitive pumping, permits the most remarkable shadings and interpretations at the will of the operator.



CROSS SECTION OF PNEUMATIC STACK

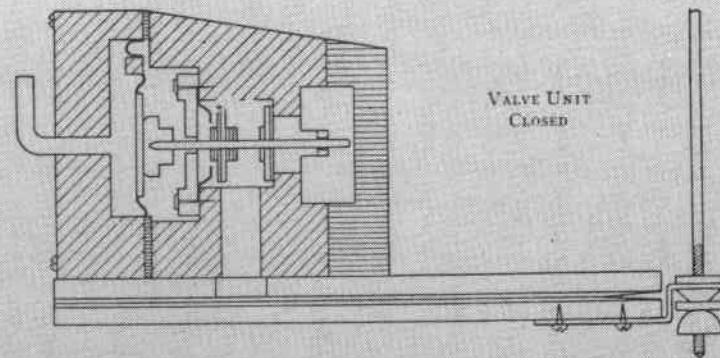
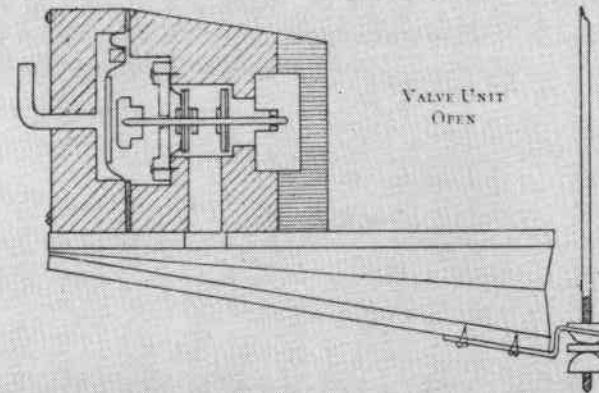
1, Pouch Board of Maple; 2, Valve Board of Maple; 3, Palette Valve, Non-Corrosive and Air Tight; 4, Pneumatic; 5, Oblong Pouch, extra large; 6, Bleed. Can Be Cleaned by Unscrewing Pouch Board "1"; 7, Packed Joint; 8, Pneumatic, Glued to Valve Chest. No Packed Joints Between Valve Chest and Pneumatic; 9, Valve Cup, Shellaced and Air Tight; 10, Valve Guide, Molded in Valve Board; 11, Bridge Which Holds Down Cup and Guide Valve.

The highest grade materials are used throughout the entire action and the finish is permanent, applied by a special process and will not scratch, mar or become blurred or checked by atmospheric conditions.

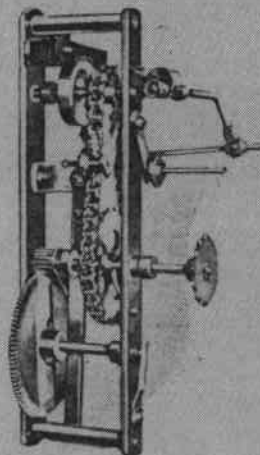
Operation of the Player

When the treadles are operated, Chamber "12," is under the vacuum tension. When the tracker bar is opened, air is drawn through nipple "13," into pouch "5," which causes

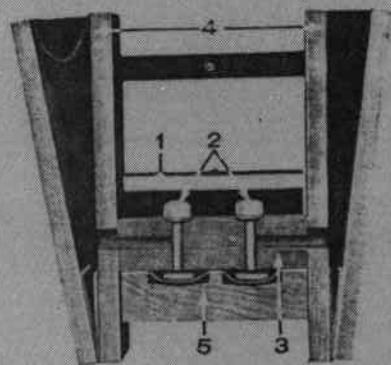
the pouch to inflate. This opens valve "3," and shuts off the outside air, which causes pneumatic to collapse. This is the motive power that operates the individual note.



When hole in tracker bar is closed, surplus air is drawn through bleed "6," which deflates pouch "5," and closes valve "3," opening outside port which releases tension from pneumatic restoring it to its normal position.



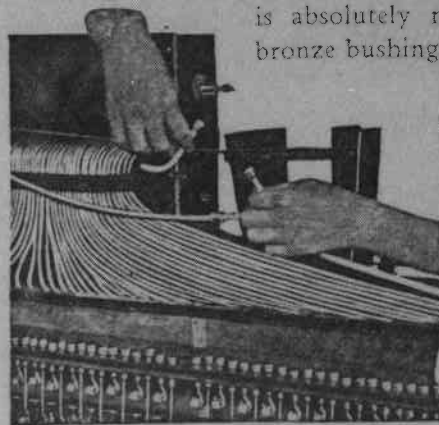
TRANSMISSION



PNEUMATIC TRACKER

Spool Box and Transmission

The spool box is rigidly constructed and finished with a specially applied indestructible art finish. The transmission is absolutely noiseless, equipped with bronze bushings and jeweller rod shaft.



DUST ARRESTERS IN TUBE TO TRACKING DEVICE

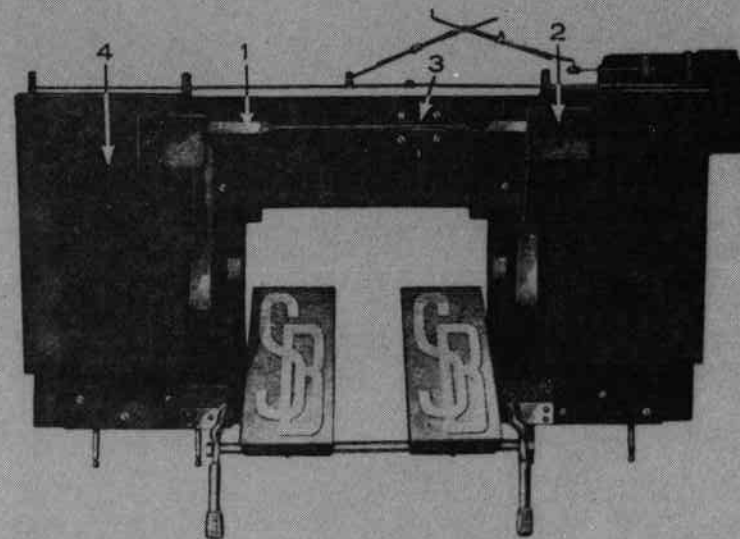
Pneumatic Tracking Device

This device requires little attention due to the fact that it is equipped with dust arresters placed in the tubing leading to it. To disconnect this connection and blow out the dust is a

simple operation. If it ever becomes necessary to take out the valves, unscrew cover "1," take out valves "2" and clean. "3" is the valve block to which pneumatics "4" are glued. "5" is a pouch block.

Accenting Device

The Strauch accenting device is one of the most advanced inventions yet incorporated in a player action. It is so sen-



BOTTOM ACTION SHOWING ACCENTING DEVICE

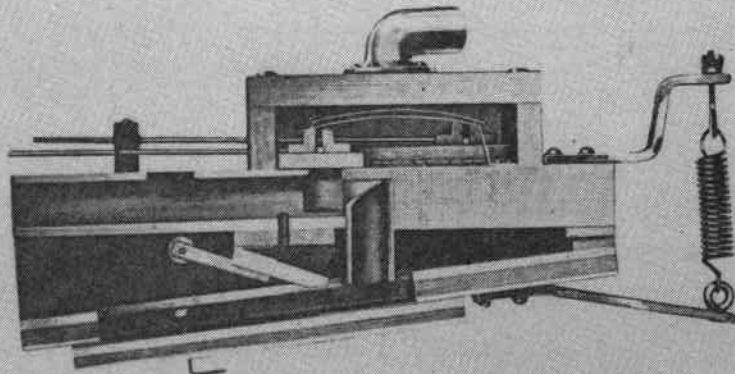
sitive that it gives an immediate accent with the slightest additional pressure to the treadles.

The vacuum which is created when operating the treadles collapses "2," the low tension reservoir which presses down on accentedor "1," which is pivoted at "3," and causes accentedor

to rise on the opposite side. When the vacuum is increased to deflate the high tension reserve "4," this meets the accentor and stops the reservoir from collapsing, thus raising the air tension from the action resulting in an immediate accent.

Governor and Tempo Box

The object of a governor is to control the air passing through the slide tempo slide from the motor regardless of how much or how little vacuum (pressure) is in the main

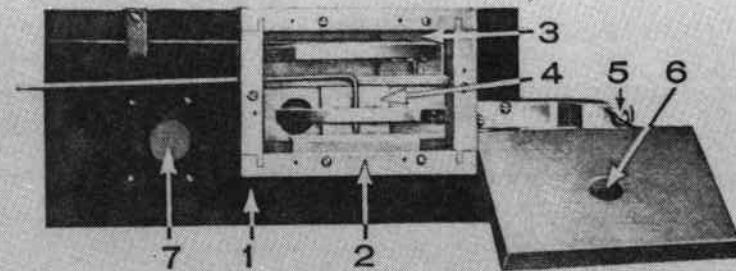


SECTIONAL VIEW—GOVERNOR AND GATE BOX

bellows of the player. The amount of air permitted to flow through the governor to vary the speed of the motor is controlled by the tempo valve attached to the tempo lever.

The Strauch governor will play an even tempo regardless of hard or soft treading at any tempo.

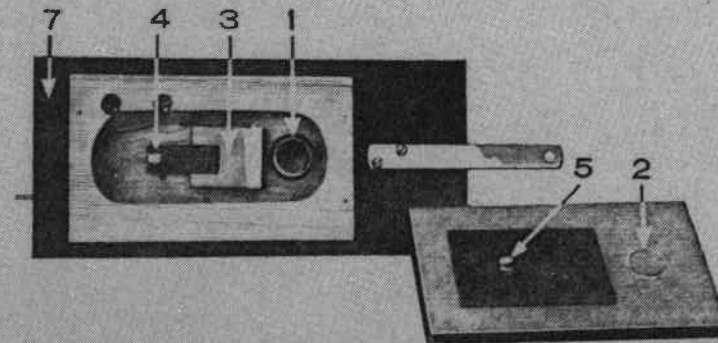
The air flows from port "7," which is glued and screwed to the bellows. The air is drawn through tube "1," (see Back View) which draws movable leaf of the governor up



GOVERNOR AND TEMPO BOX—FRONT VIEW

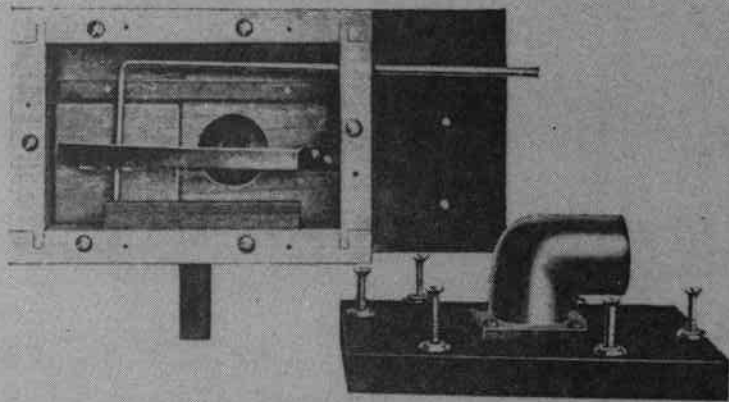
1, top leaf of governor; 2, gate box frame; 3, tempo slide valve; 4, re-roll slide valve; 5, governor regulating screw; 6, outlet to motor; 7, channel connection to bellows.

so that leather "2," on cover closes the opening of tube "1." In doing this, the spring tension "5" is always trying to pull the governor leaf away from tube "1." Thus with these two forces, the leaf will stay close enough to the end of the tube to maintain a pressure in the governor equal to the pull of the spring. The regulating screw "5," (see Back View)



GOVERNOR AND TEMPO BOX—BACK VIEW

1, Governor valve tube; 2, Governor valve seat; 3, Tension rod; 4, Tension pneumatic roller; 5, Regulating Screw; 7, Back leaf of Governor.

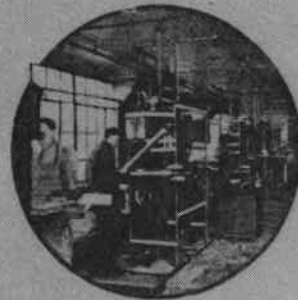


FRONT VIEW—GATE BOX

and pneumatic "3" are to prevent a complete collapse of governor leaf under excess foot pressure. This tension pneumatic "3" when pumping normal does not operate true. When excess pressure is brought to bear pneumatic closes and holds governor leaf away from tube "1".



MILL ROOM



BORING MACHINES

The Strauch Piano Action

THE Strauch Piano Action was first created in 1867 by the late Peter D. Strauch, founder of Strauch Bros., whose reputation as a manufacturer of piano actions of the highest quality soon became world wide. Since the founding of the business nearly sixty years ago, the manufacturing of these actions has been constantly under the supervision of a member of the Strauch family.

For this reason, the high ideals of Strauch craftsmanship are maintained today as always and Strauch piano actions, both for upright and grand pianos, represent the highest in quality plus years of experience and development. The manufacturing is at present under the supervision of William E. Strauch, who took this responsibility on his shoulders at the time of the retirement of the late Peter D. Strauch in 1906, after he had spent many years learning the many details of the business.

Since that time many improvements have been incor-



ACTION FINISHING

porated in the construction of the Strauch actions, exclusively patented devices, singular in character, which give these actions a distinctiveness both as to efficiency, durability and appearance.

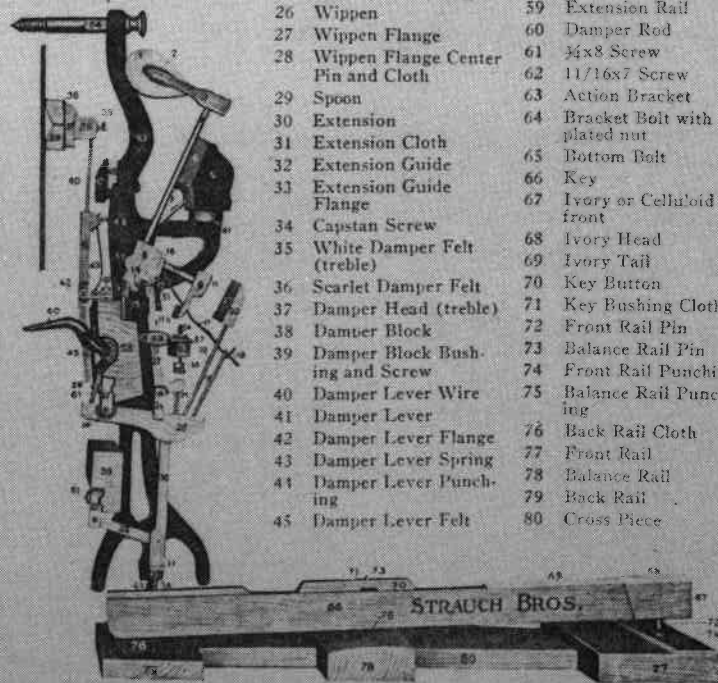
Not only have Strauch Bros. Inc. become famous for piano actions but also for the manufacture of high grade piano keys and piano hammers. Combined with the manufacture of the Strauch Pneumatic Player Action, this places this long established house in the unique position of being the only institution in the world manufacturing for trade consumption, the entire interior mechanism of a piano or player piano. A manufacturer of pianos may therefore purchase the Strauch combination complete, and add to the prestige of his own product, the long established reputation of the House of Strauch.

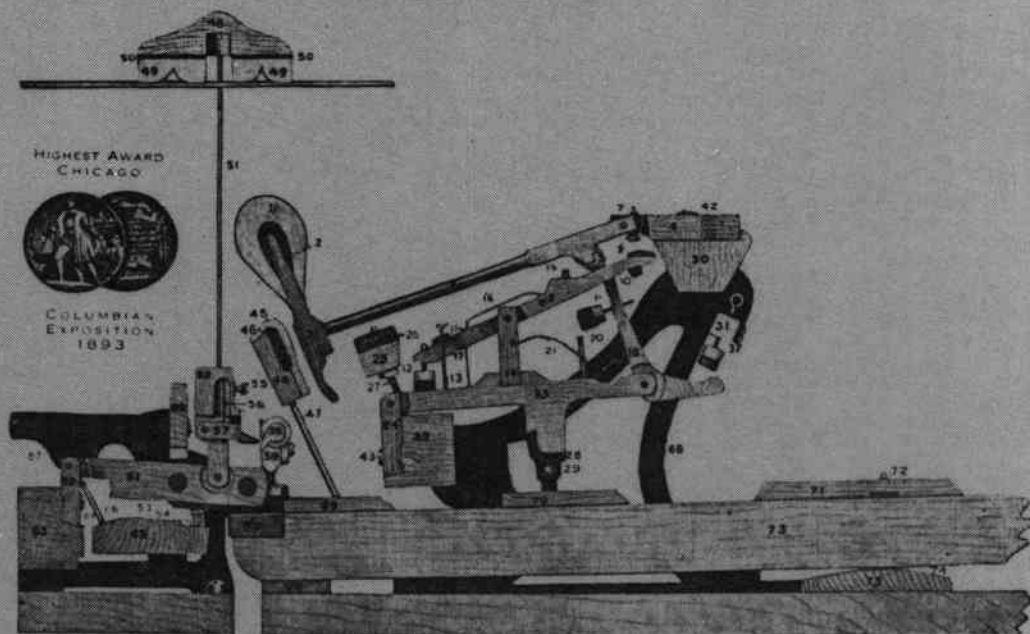


BORING PNEUMATICS

The Strauch Upright Piano Action

1 Hammer Felt	12 Butt Leather	46 Spring Rail
2 Under Felt	13 Butt Cloths	47 Spring Rail Felt
3 Hammer Head	14 Butt Felt	48 Spring Rail Spring
4 Hammer Shank	15 Brass Butt Flange	49 Butt Punching
5 Hammer Rail	16 Brass Flange Plate and Screw	51 Jack Felt
6 Hammer Rail Cloth	17 Bridle	53 Regulating Rail
7 Hammer Rail Hook	18 Bridle Tip	54 Regulating Rail Screw
8 Butt	19 Bridle Wire	55 Regulating Rail Button
9 Catcher	20 Backcheck	56 Regulating Rail Punching
10 Catcher Shank	21 Backcheck Felt	57 Regulating Rail Bracket
11 Catcher Leather	22 Backcheck Wire	58 Action Rail
11½ Catcher Felt	23 Jack	59 Extension Rail
	24 Jack Flange	60 Damper Rod
	25 Spiral Jack Spring	61 ¼x8 Screw
	26 Wippen	62 11/16x7 Screw
	27 Wippen Flange	63 Action Bracket
	28 Wippen Flange Center Pin and Cloth	64 Bracket Bolt with plated nut
	29 Spoon	65 Bottom Bolt
	30 Extension	66 Key
	31 Extension Cloth	67 Ivory or Celluloid front
	32 Extension Guide	68 Ivory Head
	33 Extension Guide Flange	69 Ivory Tail
	34 Capstan Screw	70 Key Button
	35 White Damper Felt (treble)	71 Key Bushing Cloth
	36 Scarlet Damper Felt	72 Front Rail Pin
	37 Damper Head (treble)	73 Balance Rail Pin
	38 Damper Block	74 Front Rail Punching
	39 Damper Block Bushing and Screw	75 Balance Rail Punching
	40 Damper Lever Wire	76 Back Rail Cloth
	41 Damper Lever	77 Front Rail
	42 Damper Lever Flange	78 Balance Rail
	43 Damper Lever Spring	79 Back Rail
	44 Damper Lever Punching	80 Cross Piece
	45 Damper Lever Felt	





THE STRAUCH GRAND PIANO ACTION

List of Strauch Grand Piano Action Parts

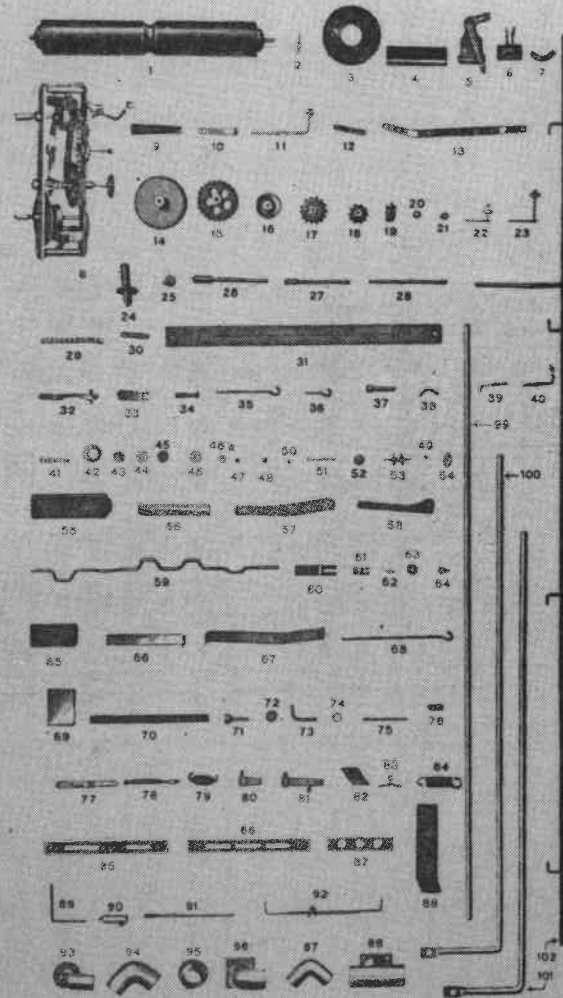
1 Hammer Felt	17 Repetition Lever Spring Loop	43 Support Flange Screw, $\frac{1}{4}$ x8 Fill. Head	61 Damper Lever
2 Under Felt	18 Jack	44 Backcheck	62 Damper Lever Flange
3 Hammer Head	19 Jack Regulating Screw, Button and Punching	45 Backcheck Leather	63 Damper Lever Rail
4 Hammer Shank	20 Jack Spring Loop	46 Backcheck Felt	64 Damper Lever Screw, $\frac{1}{4}$ x8 Fill. Head
5 Hammer Butt	21 Jack Spring	47 Backcheck Wire	65 Damper Lever Lifting Rail
6 Hammer Shank Flange	22 Jack Stop	48 Damper Head	66 Damper Lever Lifting Rail Hook
7 Hammer Shank Flange Regulating Screw	23 Support	49 Bass Wedges and Treble Damper Felt	67 Damper Lever Brackets
8 Repetition Lever	24 Support Flange	50 Scarlet Damper Cloth	68 Action Brackets
9 Repetition Lever Cloth	25 Hammer Rail	51 Damper Wire	69 Key Blocking for Backcheck
10 Repetition Lever Felt	26 Hammer Rail Cloth	52 Damper Lever Top Flange	70 Key Blocking for Capstan Screw
11 Repetition Lever Cushion Felt	27 Hammer Rail Regulating Screw and Nut	53 Lever Cloth	71 Key Button
12 Repetition Lever Regulating Screw, Button and Punching	28 Bottom Cloth	54 Regulating Screw	72 Balance Rail Pin
13 Repetition Lever Hook	29 Capstan Screw	55 Top Flange Tube and Screw	73 Key
14 Support for Flange	30 Hammer Flange Rail	56 Sustaining Tongue Spring	74 Balance Rail Punching
15 Regulating Screw for Repetition Lever Spring	31 Regulating Rail	57 Sustaining Tongue	75 Key Balance Rail
16 Repetition Lever Spring	32 Regulating Rail Screw, Button and Punching	58 Sustaining Rod	76 Back Rail Key Cloth
	33 Support Rail	59 Sustaining Rod Support	77 Under Lever Felt for Keys
	42 Hammer Flange Screw, $\frac{1}{4}$ x9 Fill. Head	60 Damper Lever Stop Rail	

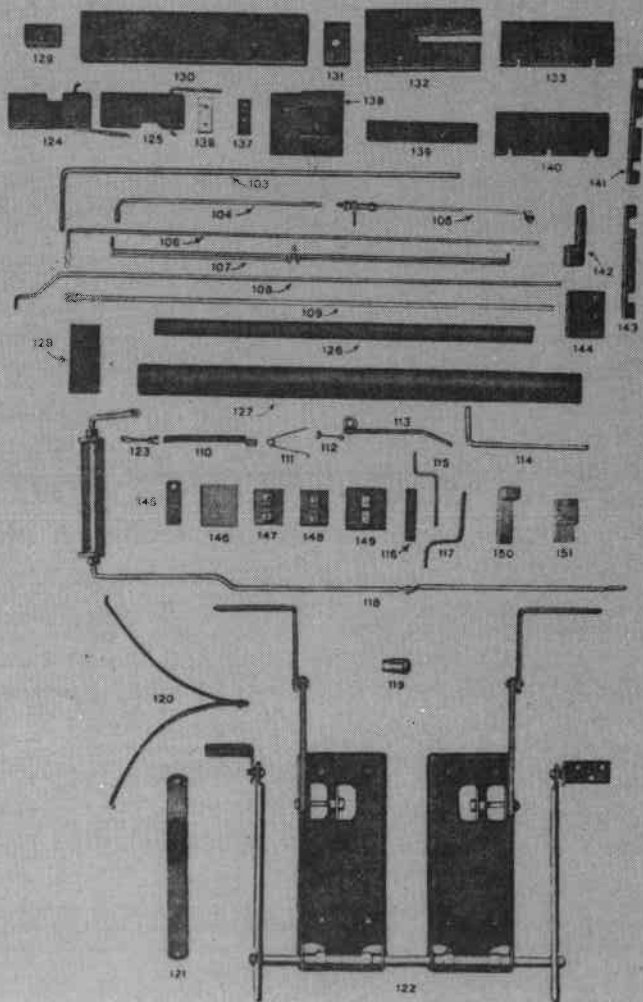
List of Pneumatic Action Parts

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Take up spool. | 32 Flange finger. |
| 2 Take up spool hook. | 33 Metal pneumatic arms. |
| 3 Spool flange. | 34 Wooden pneumatic arms. |
| 4 Indicator plate. | 35 Long striking wire. |
| 5 Lever for transposer. | 36 Short striking wire. |
| 6 Loud pedal cut-off plate, on and off valve. | 37 Wooden dowel. |
| 7 On and off valve plate. | 38 9/64 nipple. |
| 8 Transmission. | 39 Transposing connecting bar. |
| 9 Wooden brake. | 40 Transposing connecting bar. |
| 10 Brake spring. | 41 Bridge. |
| 11 Idler spool shaft. | 42 Cup. |
| 12 Lower brake spring. | 43 Pallet fibre. |
| 13 Transmission throw lever. | 44 Leather punching (velvet valve) |
| 14 Large gear wheel. | 45 Leather punching (patent calf skin) |
| 15 Large sprocket wheel. | 46 Large disc. |
| 16 Brake wheel. | 47 Green punching. |
| 17 14 tooth sprocket wheel. | 48 Small leather punching. |
| 18 Small sprocket wheel. | 49 Bleed. |
| 19 Pinion gear wheel. | 50 Burr. |
| 20 Collar. | 51 Valve stem. |
| 21 Small collar. | 52 Wooden base. |
| 22 Idler spool shaft. | 53 Complete valve. |
| 23 Idler spool shaft. | 54 Oval paper punching. |
| 24 Spool clutch. | 55 Motor guide block. |
| 25 Shifter cam. | 56 Motor guide block (small) |
| 26 Upper spool shaft. | 57 Motor crank shaft support. |
| 27 Lower spool shaft. | 58 Motor connecting arms. |
| 28 Gear shaft. | 59 Motor crank shaft |
| 29 Chain. | 60 Motor pneumatic arms. |
| 30 Take-up spool bushing. | 61 Motor slide arms. |
| 31 Tracker bar. | 62 Motor plug and screw. |
| | 63 Motor crank punchings. |
| | 64 Motor crank collar. |
| | 65 Motor slide valve. |
| | 66 Motor small support. |
| | 67 Motor large support. |
| | 68 Motor wire. |
| | 69 Shifter support. |
| | 70 Shifter connecting block. |
| | 71 Shifter valve stem. |
| | 72 Shifter valve button. |



TUBING





List of Pneumatic Action Parts—Continued

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|-------------------------------|
| 73 | 3/16" bent brass nipple. | 114 | Loud pedal lever. |
| 74 | Divided action collar. | 115 | Bellows spring brace. |
| 75 | Divided action wire. | 116 | Bellows spring brace. |
| 76 | Divided action button. | 117 | Governor spring brace front. |
| 77 | Divided action valve spring and nipple. | 118 | Door opener lever. |
| 78 | Lever handle. | 119 | Pedal pumps. |
| 79 | Coil spring for bellows. | 120 | Bellow spring. |
| 80 | Small throw lever. | 121 | Bellow support. |
| 81 | Large throw lever. | 122 | Pumping pedal. |
| 82 | Bottom panel guide. | 123 | Spring tension regulator. |
| 83 | Nipple support. | 124 | Roller blocks (right). |
| 84 | Governor spring. | 125 | Roller blocks (left). |
| 85 | Tempo lever spring. | 126 | 1/2" covered rubber tubing. |
| 86 | Expression lever plate. | 127 | 7/8" covered rubber tubing. |
| 87 | Expression button plate. | 128 | 1-1/8" covered rubber tubing. |
| 88 | Name plate. | 129 | Bottom door support block. |
| 89 | Divided action angle. | 130 | Bellow support block. |
| 90 | Lever rod head. | 131 | Pedal rod block. |
| 91 | Lever rod head. | 132 | Key locker cover. |
| 92 | Connecting wire. | 133 | Lever support blocks. |
| 93 | 7/8" flange elbow. | 136 | Small action block. |
| 94 | 1-1/8" elbow. | 137 | Key locker support block. |
| 95 | 1-1/8" flange nipple. | 138 | Loud pedal block. |
| 96 | 1-1/8" flange elbow. | 139 | Lever block. |
| 97 | Elbow (small). | 140 | Lever support block. |
| 98 | Flange tee (1-1/8"). | 141 | Lever support block (front). |
| 99 | Support rod. | 142 | Bottom panel slide block. |
| 100 | Pedal rod (long). | 143 | Lever support block (front). |
| 101 | Pedal rod (short). | 144 | Two hole guide block. |
| 102 | Key locker rod. | 145 | Governor pneumatic tail. |
| 103 | Tempo and reroll vertical rod. | 146 | Governor pneumatic tail. |
| 104 | Tracker bar support. | 147 | Gate box slide valve. |
| 105 | Loud pedal wire. | 148 | Gate box slide valve. |
| 106 | Tempo indicator rod. | 149 | Gate box slide valve. |
| 107 | Connecting wire and coupler. | 150 | Wire support block. |
| 108 | Top reroll wire. | 151 | Door stop block. |
| 109 | Straight lever rod. | | |
| 110 | Inside gate box spring. | | |
| 111 | Governor tension pneumatic spring. | | |
| 112 | Governor tension pneumatic spring regulating screw. | | |
| 113 | Spring bracket for back of governor. | | |



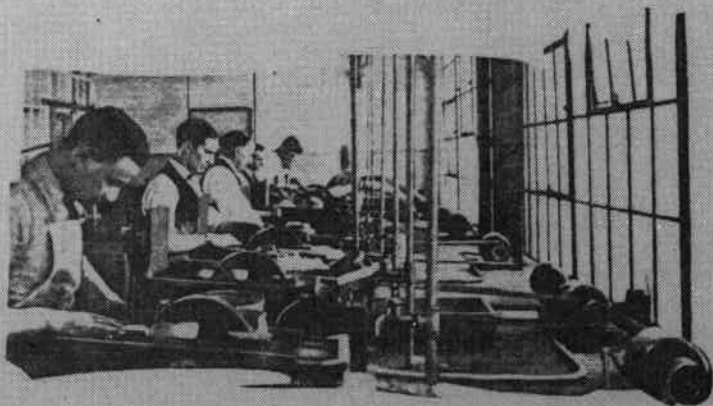
PNEUMATIC
BELLOW
DEPARTMENT

Strauch Piano Keys

The most important factors in the manufacturing of ivory piano keys are the purchasing, cutting and bleaching of the ivory. Strauch piano keys are manufactured from first-grade ivory which is purchased by an ivory expert, a member of the Strauch organization, who attends the ivory sales in England three times each year. Each ivory tusk is carefully selected.

When received at the Strauch plant, these tusks are cut into the proper sizes for use as piano keys by a corps of expert cutters who have at their command, the most modern machinery for this purpose.

The bleaching of the ivory is also done by the most modern methods with the result that the Strauch piano keys have won recognition for their superior quality, high grade workmanship and finish, in keeping with the high standard of all other Strauch products.



IVORY CUTTING

The greatest care is also exercised in the preparing of the lumber which is used in the construction of both Strauch piano actions and piano keys. There are facilities for storing over 2,000,000 feet of lumber in the extensive yards which surround the Strauch plant. Here it is allowed to season for the period of one year and sometimes longer.

The keyboard is made only of the finest selected pine and basswood. After it is allowed to season in the yards, it is placed in the large drykilns with which the plant is equipped where it is left until properly dried. The key rails for the frame are made of finest selected maple and birch.

Another important factor which enters into the construction of Strauch keys is the use of imported felt bushing cloths of the finest quality. These are selected with that expertness which only comes through years of practical experience.

Strauch Piano Hammers are also manufactured with the highest grade felts either imported or domestic in accordance with the desire of the purchaser.





"Sailing the ocean . . . , Bobbing up and down like this!"

Sent in by Peter Schuhknecht.

Henri Metert. 1854 (Switzerland-England)

John E.T. Clark.(England)

Gerald Planus.(England-U.S.A.)

Dario Valenzuela. 1985.(Peru- Inca-U.S.A.)

And so the chain continues.

Each sat at the side of the other and learn't.

It gives me (Gerald Planus) great pleasure to announce that

Dario Valenzuela

Having now worked with me for the last seven years is a competent craftsman in the Art of Music Box and Disc machine restoration.

He is skilled in all the requisite branches of restoration from the inlaying, repairing and re-finishing of cases, to the designing and making of the most intricate missing parts, and restoring the mechanism itself completely. Organ work, bellows repair, reed making and re-tuning, Teeth repair and tuning. Wheel cutting and cylinder re-pinning are all only a part of his skills. He also has a unique ability for discovering and rectifying unusual tonal and tuning problems, and has the advantage of referring to the hundreds of tuning charts compiled by me of over seventy-five different makers and tuners. It gives me great pleasure to recommend to you.

Dario Valenzuela

of Antiquities Restoration.

9 Druid Lane, Ridgefield. Conn: 06877. Tel: 203-438-3756



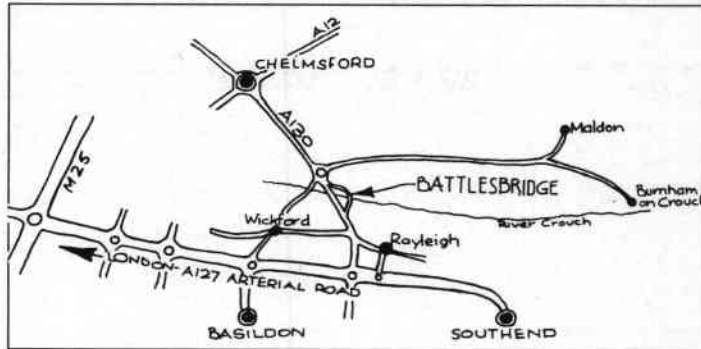
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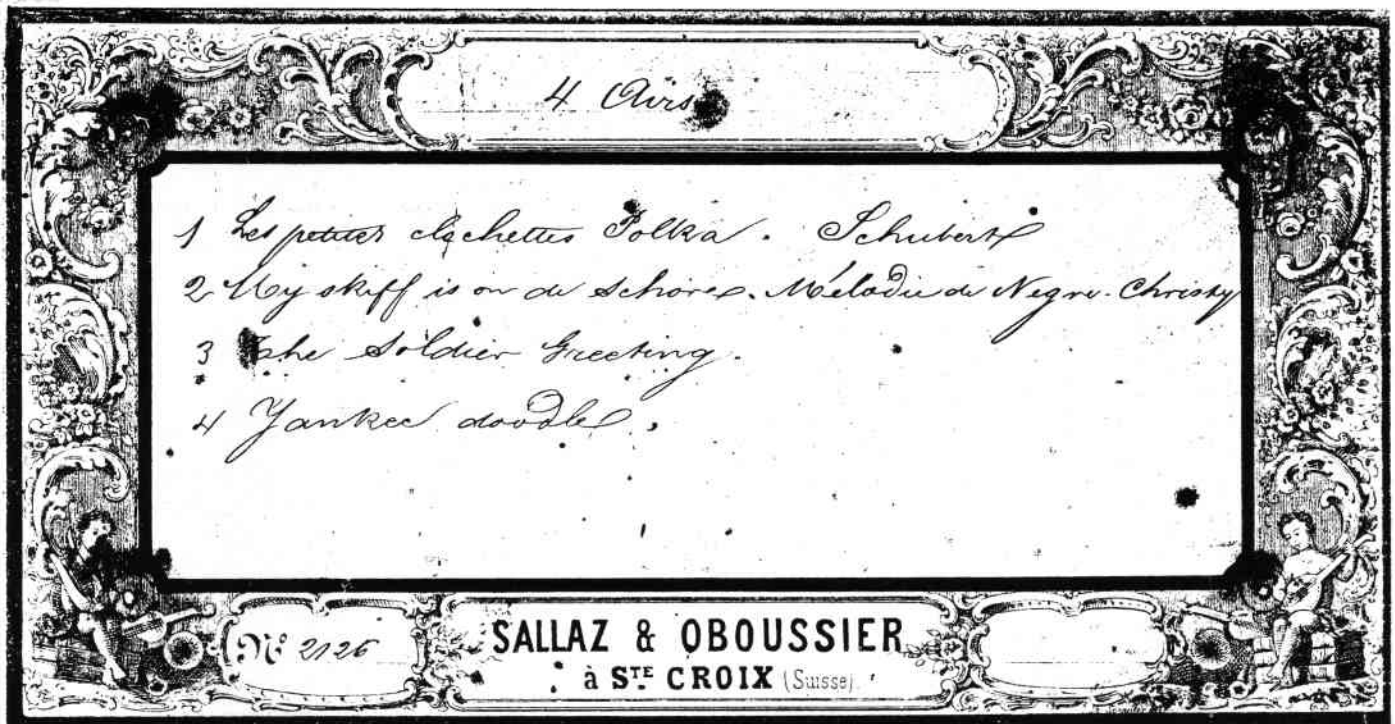
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MUSICAL BOX ODDMENTS 26

by H. A. V. Bulleid



This Sallaz & Oboussier serial no 2126 tune sheet, size 180 by 100mm, makes no mention of the hidden drum and bells. Tune 2 is wrongly credited. Tune 3 is so similar to *Yankee Doodle* that it is an idiotic choice among only four tunes.

ALMOST everyone in the U.K. and the U.S.A. has heard of the ancient and classic tune *Yankee Doodle*. Its origin is obscure, though it was published in America in 1778 and a manuscript version is known dating from 1775. Numerous theories about its origin surfaced during the 19th century, prompting the Library of Congress to undertake an exhaustive enquiry into the subject. They completed their work in 1909 and their conclusion was that the origin of *Yankee Doodle* is obscure.

It has always been a popular tune and naturally appeared on disc – 15½in Polyphon 1805, 19½in Polyphon 5567, 15½in Regina 1578. But despite being current throughout their span of life it is rare on cylinder musical boxes which adds to the interest of the tune sheet reproduced herewith where it appears as the (rousing) last tune. Also of interest is the polka credited to Schubert, whose works are surprisingly rare on musical boxes. But perhaps the most interesting bit is the maker's name.

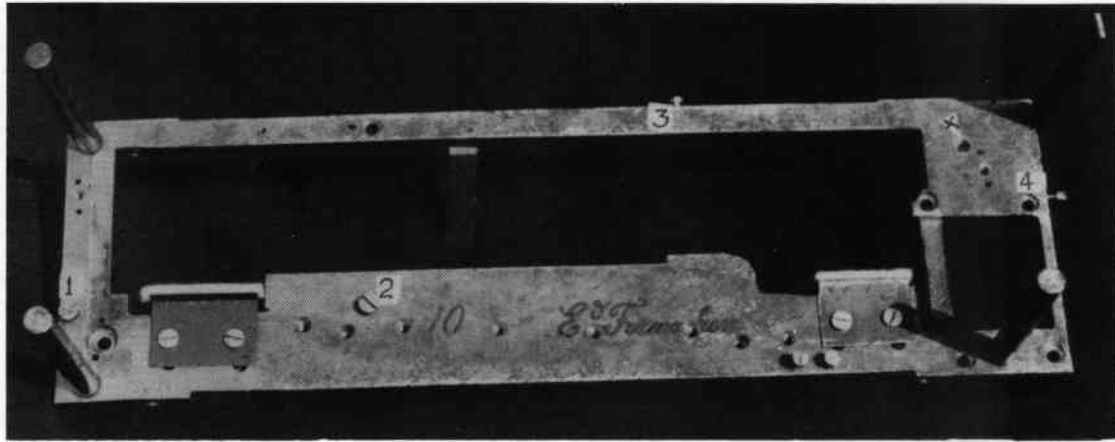
Sallaz & Oboussier

No one seems to know whether these good people were makers or agents, but I think almost certainly makers as several untraced smaller firms undoubtedly cashed in on the musical box boom of the late 1860's in Ste. Croix. They were powerfully aided by the ready availability of all types of component parts and by knowledgeable local craftsmen including tune arrangers; and anything they could not get locally could quite easily be got in Geneva.

The decidedly casual writing, spelling and spacing on this tune sheet are said to be characteristic of Sallaz & Oboussier, and here they have included the serial number but omitted to mention that this box has what we now call hidden drum and bells.

The whole movement is of good quality, with 112 teeth in the music comb, and it looks like similar Langdorff movements except for signs of uncertainty in both mechanism and case. The brass

bedplate has the foundry code and name cast in – 10 Ed Fornachon – but it was 9mm short at the treble end which was made good by a soldered and screwed extension. The left back supporting leg was positioned to go straight through the drum and was therefore replaced by an iron strip screwed to the edge of the bedplate. The serial number is stamped in the conventional left back position and R2 is stamped under the comb alongside three scratched numbers – Gme 254; 26 (end of serial number); and 2 (an assembly number). The numbers 26 and 2 are repeated on several components. The full serial number 2126 is scratched on the three combs and governor and on several drum and bell details. As usual the gamme number 254 is scratched on the bass end cylinder cap. The great wheel is stamped 2127 – an adjacent serial number! I have seen this error before, presumably caused by an accident to the correct component forcing a substitution, not uncommon in manufacturing industry.



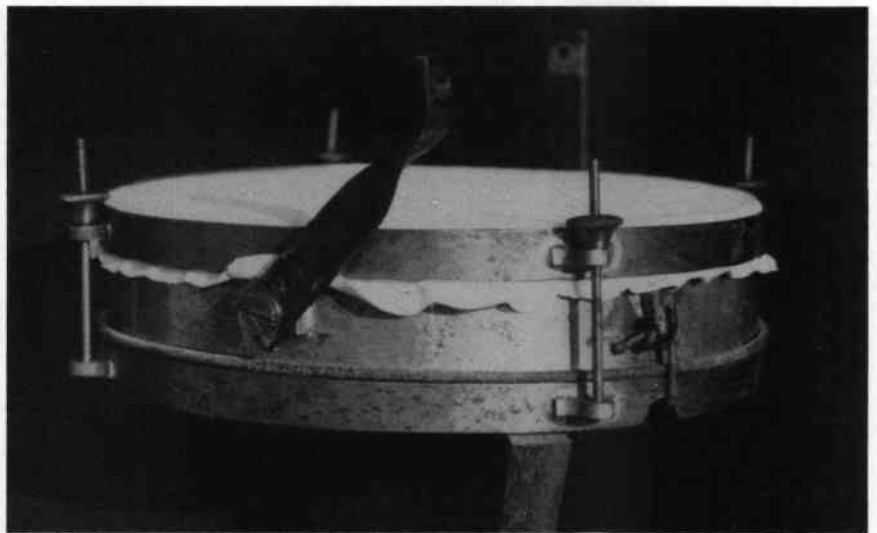
The underside of the Edmond Fornachon cast brass bedplate for Sallaz & Oboussier 2126. (1) and (2) are screws holding the bell gantry, (3) and (4) at edges are drum bracket screws, and the arrow X indicates the screwed hole for a support leg which had to be replaced by the prop in the back right corner. Screw (1) is on the extension to the undersize casting.

Everything about the music comb (stamped T near the centre) and about the 12-tooth drum comb and 15-tooth bell comb is conventional except that the tooth at the bass end of the bell comb is not only a dummy (no cylinder pins in its tracks) but has been added as an afterthought by soldering, edge-on. It overhangs the brass base of the comb and it presents an extremely neat soldering job. There is another unpinned track between the drum and music combs but no extra tooth was added to mask this so there is an unsightly gap.

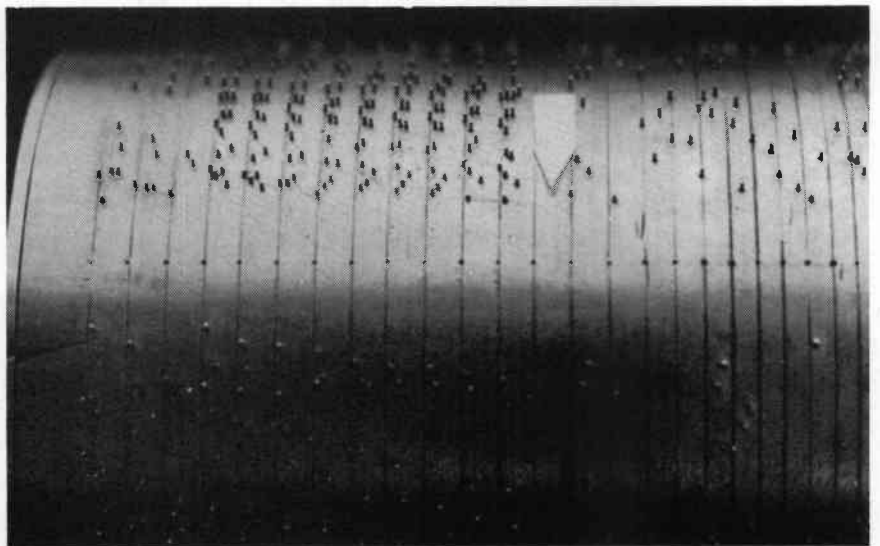
The nest of eight bells is conventional but the drum is unusual, see illustration.

Drum and bell boxes playing only four airs are very rare and the main reason for this is probably the fact that the tooth spacing of 0".068 for four airs is very close for bell and drum teeth which, with their soldered legs, are a more practical proposition at a spacing of one tenth of an inch which corresponds to six airs. In this movement there are two blank, unpinned, wasted tracks for every one of the bell and drum teeth, see illustration.

The cylinder is 11½in long and of unusual diameter 50mm (just under 2in). It has 4211 pins – music 2915, bells 453, drum 843, all conventionally raked. The large quantity of drum pins is explained by the many drum rolls, which are exuberant but not strictly either necessary or musical. They are easily turned off to suit the older listener. Several of the setting-up dots along the tune gap on the cylinder were drilled right through



The 2126 drum – fine vellum top and bottom, the latter with snare consisting of stretched catgut tied over a hook each side as shown.



Bass end of 2126 cylinder showing the twelve wide drum tracks, then an unpinned track marked by arrow, then two wide and two intermediate bass tooth tracks before the start of the normal-width 4-air tracks.

and so had to be plugged during re-pinning; and there was no trace of the usual local set of dots indicating the intermediate tunes.

There are also unusual features about the case, which is of the early lever-wind type with hinged glass lid covering the full width except for the three control levers at the treble end. Instead of the usual little wood strips to support the glass lid when closed there were simply two iron sprags, which had certainly left their mark. The lifter was fixed to the top of the glass lid frame, looking unsightly and hard to let go compared with the conventional fixing under the frame which allows the lifter to unwind clear at the end of the lift. The usual partition over the spring barrel is not provided and the brass on-off lever is bent just above the bedplate to engage directly with the stop arm tail. A final rather unusual feature is the fine brass stringing around every piece of the kingwood, enamel and mother-of-pearl central scrolling design on the lid.

Vibrating teeth

From the earliest days of musical boxes the makers undoubtedly realized the importance of adding richness to their music by achieving the longest possible life of vibrations each time a tooth was played. They found that this depends, for a given lift, mainly on using tempered spring steel for the tooth and having it very firmly anchored. It also depends slightly on the accuracy of the lift, the ambient conditions, and the tooth geometry.

It is therefore reasonable to narrow the problem by saying that in a well set-up musical box all these desiderata are met; and therefore the outstanding question for spring steel experts is "What type of spring steel and what hardening and tempering procedure should be used to achieve maximum life of tooth vibrations?"

For some months I have taken this question around Libraries, Research Associations, manufacturing experts and Universities, and I think it is fair to say that nobody knew the answer. The reasons given were that the problem "has no practical application" and that it "is not met in manufacturing industry". Indeed the research people of a well-known engineering consultancy firm said that they always sought the very opposite,

trying to minimise vibration. Also the problem is clouded by obscure and complex but very minor factors which might possibly affect the results, such as magneto-electric effects and what were described to me as "the many micro-mechanisms which cause non-elastic behaviour".

However, persistence pays and I eventually exposed this lucana in metallurgical knowledge to a Lecturer in Metallurgy at the University of Surrey, Guildford, - Dr. John Britton. He took a kindly interest, sounded the opinions of colleagues, and helped me with the difficult parts of the following notes...

The two criteria for sustained vibrations are (1) the application of adequate elastic energy and (2) the tooth material having minimum internal damping.

(1) The applied energy is the force exerted on the tooth multiplied by the distance lifted. This force depends on the modulus of elasticity (Young's modulus) of the tooth steel which should be as high as possible. To allow a good lift without any possibility of a permanent set in the tooth a steel with high elastic limit (yield stress) is also needed.

(2) Internal damping is caused by sub-microscopic defects, known as dislocations, in the crystal structure of the metal. These absorb energy by internal friction and, though impossible to eliminate, should be at a minimum.

These two criteria are wholly met in spring steel which has been quenched from red heat and then tempered to about purple colour (275°C) by re-heating to that temperature and again quenching. The microstructure of spring steel in this state is extremely uniform, and this same desirable uniformity persists in alloy steels such as silver steel and gauge plate, both of which are commonly and correctly used for replacement teeth. One can see this uniform crystal structure on specimens examined under an electron microscope, and there is no doubt that this uniformity plus the physical properties mentioned above are what give long life to the vibrations.

Going one stage further, after achieving sustained vibrations, what of the resulting musical note? It depends for its tuning or pitch solely on the number of vibrations per

second, and for loudness solely on the amplitude of the vibrations. The number of vibrations per second and therefore the pitch depends solely on the geometry of the tooth, though of course the same pitch can be generated by an infinite number of variations of tooth size and shape and tuning weight. It is these variations which add a quality of "tone" to the bare facts of pitch and loudness.

Then why does one sometimes find a comb tooth vibrating for a shorter time than its neighbours? Assuming it is clean and not partly cracked nor with loose damper or weight, the reason must be either a local lack of homogeneity in the steel (not unreasonable in 1850) or a local error in hardening or tempering. Most likely the last; and sometimes the colours of subsequent re-tempering can be seen on the undersides of a few teeth.

Despite contrary opinions, I am bound to report that there is no evidence whatever that the "tone" is in any way affected by the type of spring steel used for the teeth. Any spring steel of any analysis made to the same dimensions and appropriate temper will sound exactly the same and will differ only, if at all, in the time vibrations take to decay. For most musical boxes the audible range of decay time in the middle range of notes is about five to six seconds. The necessity for rigid anchorage to a mass of metal increases in importance as tooth weight increases towards the bass end.

Cinema fiction

Films of fiction became established in the cinema about the same time as the gramophone became established, and well before the 1920's it was a commonplace device of film directors to portray time lapses and journeys by mixing from shots of rotating gramophone records to shots of vehicles on the move.

What was not commonplace was to see this device used in a period picture whose action took place before the coming of the gramophone; but an interesting example occurs in the Mary Pickford and Leslie Howard film *Secrets*, directed for United Artists in 1932 by Frank Borzage. Here the action to be covered was from the end of a

wedding through a train journey to the start of a trek by covered wagon, – all happening in the 1870's. The following shots were used, mixed from one to the next by ordinary lap-dissolves...

1. Regina musical box playing, with oval picture in the lid showing train hauled by typical American 4-4-0 locomotive.

2. the train picture filling the screen.

3. the same train in action, approaching the screen.

4. speeding along railway track.

5. close view of Regina disc playing.

6. wagon wheel rolling.

The sound track changed appropriately from "musical box music" to fast train music then ponderous wagon wheel music. The 1870 period of the story was well before disc musical boxes, but who would grumble at a minor anachronism when seeing a nice Regina – even with an unusual picture in its lid.

HAVB, December 1984.



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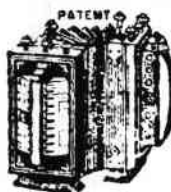
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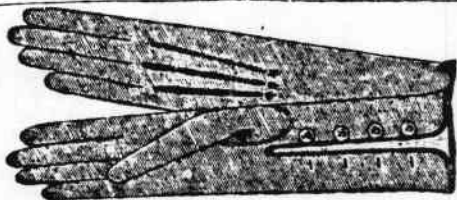
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This one describes a MELODEON and gives four models with their prices. Found in 'The Strand' magazine of February 1897 it is yet another instrument that 'No home should be without. With the legend 'No knowledge of music required' perhaps a member could assist with the method of operation of this inexpensive but impressive looking instrument, with its 'Celestial Tone and Sweet Ball Accompaniments', or is it yet another of the cheap manually operated instruments of the era?



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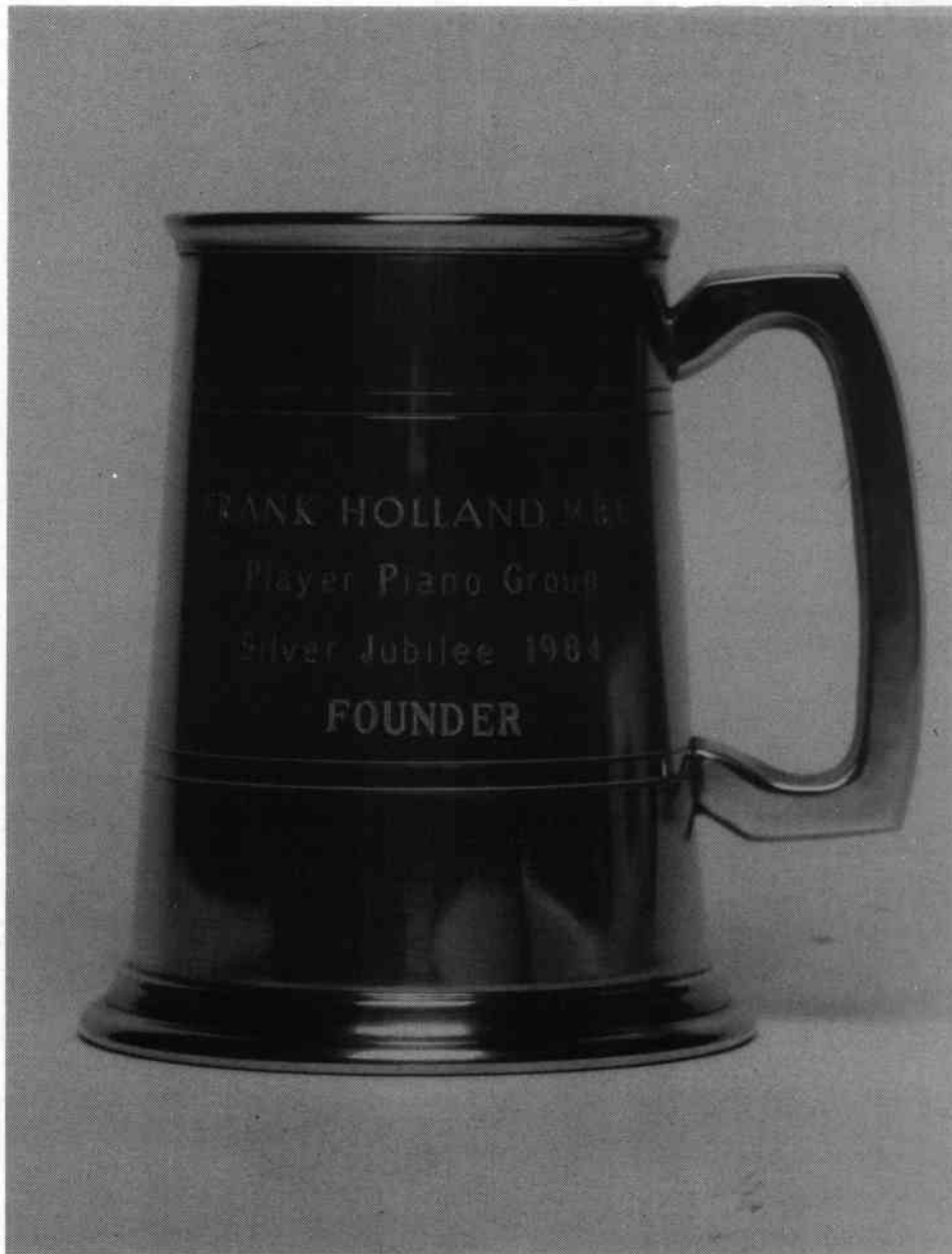
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Commemorative Tankard presented at the Silver Jubilee Dinner of the Player Piano Group on Saturday, October 13, 1984 to its Founder, Frank Holland MBE.

Frank started the PPG in 1959 to see whether there was any interest in the Player Piano in the UK. He brought back with him from Vancouver, B.C. a fine Steinway Duo-Art Upright, and such was the interest that in 1963 he started the now famous Musical Museum currently in Brentford near Kew Bridge, London.

Some may remember that with the piano came 16 cases of Duo-Art rolls marked "Holland, London", and they found him without going via Rotterdam!

Book Reviews

SALUTATIONS TO ROBERT-HOUDIN, by Sam H. Sharpe. A Micky Hades Publication. Box 476, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Sam Sharpe has a few copies for sale at £35, cloth bound, £25 paperback, postage paid. Sam states, "The demand is chiefly for cloth bound, as it will stand up better to frequent handling".

Sam Sharpe, 24 Harewood Avenue, Bridlington, Yorkshire YO16 5PY.

The book is in seven sections:

- ONE: Houdini versus Robert-Houdin.
- TWO: Robert-Houdin: The arch-conjuror.
- THREE: Passages omitted from the English translation of "The Confidences".
- FOUR: Appendix to "The Confidences".
- FIVE: Inner secrets of Robert-Houdin's Theatre.
- SIX: Magical automata.
- SEVEN: Magical or mystery clocks.

There are two hundred illustrated and closely-packed pages, American quarto size, and this book is a classic in its own field.

Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin was born in France on December 6, 1805, and he died in 1871. Many consider him to be the master conjuror of all time. In a foreword to the book John Braun claims that Robert-Houdin was "one of the most romantic figures in the annals of natural magic. He was a psychologist, a man of science, an actor, an author and a prestidigitator (conjuror)".

Robert-Houdin's use of electricity made him well in advance of his time. His name will be kept alive not only by his magic tricks which present-day students will find set out lucidly but also by the publication of his autobiography. The secrets he reveals make Sam Sharpe's version of the book one of the most fascinating works extant.

Robert-Houdin's father, incidentally, was a watchmaker, and his son was apprenticed to this delicate trade. However, the boy came across the *Dictionnaire des Amusements des*

Sciences, Mathematiques et Physiques (1792), and he saw the secrets of an art "for which I was unconsciously predestined".

There and then he began the study of sleight of hand.

He married young and took his wife to Paris (from Blois) in 1830. Here he repaired several well-known automata, including Vaucanson's "Duck" and Koppen's "Mechanical Orchestra".

By 1845 he had his own theatre in Paris and produced the first of his "Fantastic Soiries". In 1853 he appeared before Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace.

The French Government sent him to Algeria to prove to the Arabs that French magic was more powerful than the Arabic (the "Marabouts" or "Dervishes", as the "GalliGalli" men were called as they paced the dusty sharias of Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Barbaria and Egypt).

Robert-Houdin's name was adopted by HOUDINI who, despite picking Robert-Houdin's brain and using his name, produced "evidence" in an attempt to prove that Robert was a fake. Houdini's research was far from impartial and his *Unmasking of Robert-Houdin* can be dismissed as publicity-seeking sour grapes.

Although MBSGB members will be fascinated by every page of the book, there are items of special interest for our Society, for example, the description of "Singing Birds", pages 134/135.

Singing Birds

The earliest known descriptions of automata representing singing birds are those given by Philon of Byzance about 200 B.C. These appear to have formed the basis of the remarkably ingenious pieces described by Hero of Alexandria in his book *Spiritualia*, first published in the reign of Ptolemy Energetes 11 (Ptolemy VII) about 150 B.C.

One of the simplest consisted of an airtight tank on top of which stood a bowl and a little artificial tree with a bird perched on one of the branches. When water was allowed to pour into the bowl from the mouth of a sculptured face, it passed down the funnel B, which reached nearly to the bottom of the tank, and forced the air out of the smaller tube

A which led through the tree-trunk and branch to a whistle, the end of which hung in a little bird-bowl of water C, thus causing a gurgling whistle or trill similar to that made by a bird.

Heron described several other very delightful and ingenious elaborations of this automation. In one of them the water flowed into a top-heavy cup A, Fig. 2, weighted at the bottom to keep it mouth upwards until it was full, when it tipped over and discharged the water into the bowl, righting itself again until it was refilled once more. By this means intermittent whistling was obtained, since the bowl emptied into the tank much quicker than the cup was filled. The syphon B automatically emptied the tank as soon as the water-level rose above the top of the bend in the tube.

A further elaboration was to let this syphon discharge into a little bucket A, Fig. 3, which caused the upright, on the top of which perched an owl, to turn as the tank emptied. The effect was that the birds stopped singing whenever the owl turned to watch them; but no sooner did it look the other way than they began singing again.

As the bucket A filled, it out-balanced the counterweight B, causing the upright to turn by means of the cord wound round it and led over the two pulleys. When the bucket was nearly full, however, it was emptied by the syphon C, which allowed the counterweight to pull the bucket back to its former position. Of course the birds stopped singing as the tank emptied, owing to lack of air-pressure. The various rates of flow were regulated to produce the effect mentioned.

In yet another variation, the bird alternately whistled and drank water presented to it in a bowl. This was managed by arranging the flow of water to be intermittent — either by means of the tip-over supply-cup, or another syphoned cup as shown in Fig. 4. A, and by fixing a discharge syphon to the tank too, as at B. When the tank was emptying, a vacuum was caused which resulted in air being sucked through the bird's beak. By holding a saucer of water to the bird it would therefore suck it up and appear to be drinking.

An alternative arrangement with this system was to have two whistles

Record Review

SYMPHONION MUSIC BOX: THE "EROICA" THREE-DISC RCB-7 (Stereo).

All records on 8-Track Tapes and Cassettes.

Bornand Music Box Company,
139 Fourth Avenue, Pelham, N.Y.
10803 (914) Pelham 8-1506.

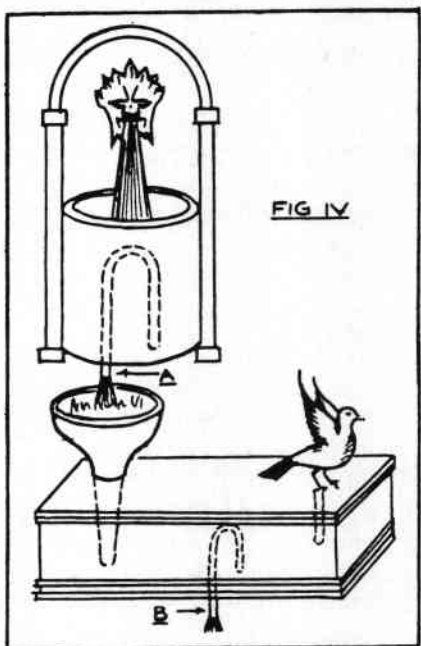
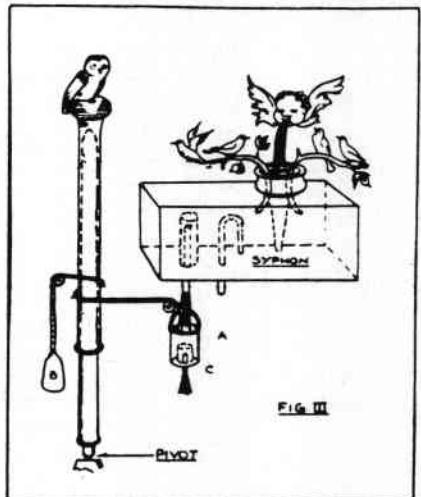
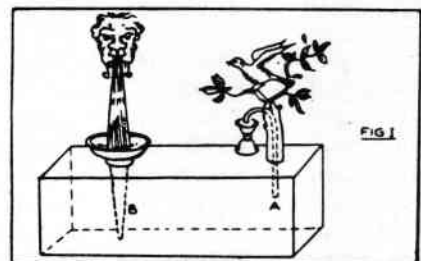
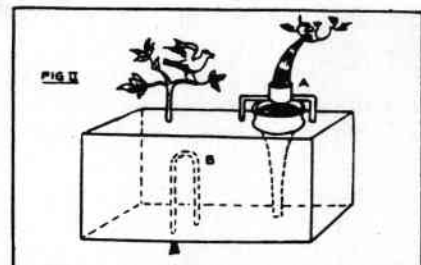
Although the Symphonion "Eroica" was apparently produced in fairly large numbers some eighty or ninety years ago, it is now considered a relatively scarce item: many collectors have never seen one; fewer still have had the pleasure of owning one. Now — thanks to the most recent recording in the Bornand Music Box Company series of "Old Music Box Melodies" — the lovely music of the "Eroica" is available to those of us who must sacrifice many dreams and ambitions to the hard realities of a shrinking market and an inflationary economy!

Many music boxes have an interesting story behind them, and such is certainly the case with the "Eroica" recorded on this release. Mrs Ruth Bornand offers this account of how she "re-acquired" this "Eroica" she initially purchased it in Brooklyn more than twenty years ago. The instrument (in a beautifully carved case with clock) was subsequently sold, with its original library of 87 3-disc sets, to a prominent collector. When the collector moved a few years later, he removed the mechanism from its original case and installed it in a two-part French provincial cabinet so that it would fit the limited space of his new home. In 1978, after the collector's death, the machine was put up for auction, and Mrs Bornand was fortunately able to re-acquire the "Eroica", changed in body but still pure in soul. The magnificent sounds and arrangements of the instrument, Mrs Bornand writes, moved her to "make this recording so others could appreciate and enjoy this rare example of the lost art of the original music box era."

The "Eroica" plays three fourteen-inch discs simultaneously. The discs (which are labelled "A," "B," and "C") each carry slightly different arrangements of the basic melody. Each disc has its own pair of fifty-note combs, which are arranged in the sublime harmonic format

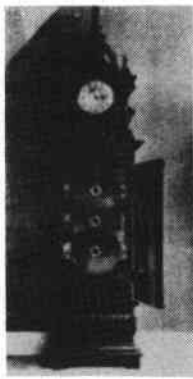
favoured by Symphonion. The term "sublime harmonic" has been used somewhat indiscriminately both by the early manufacturers and by modern collectors. In the specific case of Symphonion combs, the term refers to a slight but deliberate dissonance between two combs, especially in the treble part of the scale. If a note is tuned to correct pitch in one comb and to a pitch five to ten cycles per second higher or lower in the other comb, when the two combs are played together, the slight difference in pitch is audible as a "beating" or undulating sound, a sound which gives a rich and somewhat ethereal quality to the music. The sublime harmonic tuning and the total combination of 300 teeth were intended to give the "Eroica" greater volume and tonal capacity, features which the Symphonion Company did not hesitate to "hype" in their original advertisements for the machine: "The unexcelled capacity of modulation possessed by this instrument produces effects which never have been heard before in any mechanical music box."* Even in 1890, of course, we must make allowances for Madison Avenue hyperbole, but the exaggeration is really not extreme: as this recording reveals, the "Eroica" does have considerable volume and range of tonal effects. Over the last several years, I have seen and heard fewer than half-dozen of these machines, but in each case, I was less impressed with the musical quality of the "Eroica" than I was with its mechanical ingenuity. I must say that the "Eroica" recorded on RCB-7 seems to be, musically, several cuts above what I have heard in the past. The listener will be delighted by the bell-like tones of the treble and the deep resonance of the bass; pleasing mandoline effects abound in many of the selections played, and the piano-forte effects are most impressive: one might almost think that this is a music box with a "swell shutter".

Among the twenty-four selections on this record, you will find only "oldies" and "goodies". With the possible exception of "The Mocking Bird" — and even this is a very sprightly, pleasing arrangement — the recording presents only the best waltzes, marches, hymns, and arias of the music box repertoire. Several of the selections are among the best I have ever heard: "Symphonion March" has booming resonances,



in the bird's throat, each with a distinctive note, and placed with the reeds in opposite directions, so that one sounded as the air exhaled, and the other as the air inhaled. This caused the bird to keep changing its note as it sang.

tingling treble runs, and good modulations and counter-melodies; "Silent Night" is rendered with lyric tenderness and delicate *piano* effects; "Monastery Bells" has true, bell-like tones and a curiously and delightfully sharp, crisp, and almost syncopated measure. The melodies are admirably free of surface noises caused by poor dampers and buckling tune sheets, and the technical quality of the recordings is generally excellent. Anyone who realizes that the true beauty of the music box lies ultimately in the *music* itself will find this recording a worthy addition to his collection.



RCB-7 STEREO
Playable on stereo and
mono phonographs.

Joseph E. Roesch.

*Q. David Bowers, *Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments*, p.226.

Reprinted permission Mr Roesch and M.B.S. Int. News Bulletin March, 1980.

"Little Whistler" Pell Street Organ.

This review of Kevin Byrne's organ tape (recorded by Brian Oram) appeared in the *Mechanical Organ Owners Society Newsletter* No. 30. Cassettes can be obtained from; KEVIN BYRNE, Noteur, 44 High Street, Pewsey, Wilts. SN9 5AN. Tel: Pewsey 3417.

As one of those who like to have an instrument on which I can display my own idiosyncracies, which for practical purposes means something large with as many registers as I am able to muster, it comes with something of a shock that such can also be obtained with a small instrument so long as the Noteur knows very well what he is doing, thus I am able to recommend this new publication.

The exhaust pneumatic action is used to almost capacity, so that whoever tried to hold the tiger in Tiger Rag would be more than hard pressed. The noteur having been in a Military Band for some years and also has spent perhaps the last twelve years arranging music for bands whose composition was often more or less unknown, both in instruments and quality he allows himself freedom throughout all the music. Of particular note is

the drumming. So often I consider that the drums go on and off almost according to some unmusical formula. Here the drums are used for what they are — musical instruments and in consequence they sound as they ought, for this I am thankful.

As for the content, there are a few well known and often repeated works such as Old Comrades which would make the most dilatory soldier keep in step. The earliest music is from one of the Tylman Susato suites, with a little well known Handel, a few of the Haydn Flute clock music together with such things as a delightful arrangement of Chop Sticks and for good measure Sussex by the Sea amongst others.

Much of the music can be obtained from Alan Pell Music for those who have the same scale on their organs.

Personally, I would infinitely prefer this cassette to a number of records which one finds distributed on the Rally Field.

The cassette runs for about an hour and is priced at £3.50 plus postage and packing from Kevin Byrne, 44 High Street, Pewsey, Wilts.

END.

KEITH HARDING by Bob Leach

MANY businesses begin as one-man concerns which, if successful, grow to the stage where staff is employed.

In my own trade of publishing, my company belongs to the Independent Publishers Guild and within this Guild I belong to a consortium of about fifteen small publishing companies. We meet every two months and discuss the disasters and successes of our business projects, we exchange information and ideas, and study each others business methods. Those companies already experiencing success and growth pass on the secrets of their success.

A similar situation exists within the Music Box Society. At our regular meetings experts and the not-so-expert exchange news, views, and practical information to the

mutual benefit of all concerned in the business.

It is no small feat to create a company which actually employs people. Smaller concerns can learn much from studying and thinking about the business methods of other companies in their particular trade or profession.

What are the most productive methods of advertising? How, and to whom, can we sell our goods? Shall we remain as a trading concern or shall we become a limited company? Shall we work from home or shall we rent separate premises? Can we afford to employ staff? Under what obligations do we place ourselves if we become a limited company employing staff? Can we afford an accountant to do our income tax returns? Must we register for VAT?

The answer to questions like these usually comes from a mixture of personal trial-and-error plus a judicious discussion with fellow-travellers in the trade.

If my trade was in Music Boxes and not in publishing I know that I would look very carefully at the business methods of such fellow-members as Keith Harding.

Keith has started a business, he has expanded it to a partnership, he has enlarged it to the point where he employs staff. How has he achieved this?

With hundreds of businesses going bankrupt every week it is inspiring to learn that there are some small businesses which have survived.

Whenever I mention "bankruptcy" to any of the small publishing



Craftsmen at work at Keith Harding's establishment.

companies in my consortium they invariably reply that at such and such a time they faced bankruptcy, but, they tightened their belts, improved their efficiency, and survived.

I dare say Keith Harding's company has faced similar situations. Whether he has or he hasn't I don't know — the only thing that matters is that he is still in business. From that we can learn something.

We can also learn the same thing from our many other successful business people within our Society — those with shops, with museums, with workshops — those who restore and create. If you write to me as Keith Harding has done then I will alert our members to your work. If you have survived in business then this is good news, and "news" is the lifeblood of an editor's job.

With this in mind I am pleased to review the material Keith Harding has sent to me.

First of all we cannot help but be impressed by Keith's Spring

Catalogue of antique clocks and musical boxes which his company has for sale.

Here is a practical answer to one question all small companies have to ask, "How can I bring my goods to the notice of the public?" — in short, "How can I SELL?" The craftsman needs also to be a salesman.

Many of us know that Keith Harding was thinking of leaving London, but he has now changed his mind and the premises at 93 Hornsey Road is having "a facelift", with a new office and showroom.

Like to see it? Well, pop along. At the last committee meeting of the MBSGB Jon Gresham told us that the invitation to visit 93 Hornsey Road was there for any member who wished to accept. (Tel: 01-607-6181 or 01-607-2672).

If you are in business for yourself and if you are thinking that you can now employ a craftsman part-time, how much should you pay him? Not many business men would stick their

neck out by quoting a figure. It is, therefore, refreshing to read the following frank statement, "All work is carried out under our own supervision and quality control, and charged for at the very reasonable rate of fifteen pounds an hour, plus VAT to residents of the United Kingdom."

A free catalogue is available from Keith Harding and each item is described and priced.

I don't know about you, but if I see goods in a shop window unpriced I resent having to ask "How much?", so I walk away. If the item is priced I, personally, feel much more confident and am consequently more likely to do business.

Unpriced articles and the inevitable barter is all right in a Middle East bazaar — but in the Western World we like to have goods openly priced.

We also like to be told how to find the shop, workshop, or museum — have you ever given up the search

Continued on page 80.

The Musical Box Society of Great Britain

PLEASE REPLY TO



AUTUMN MEETING, 20th - 22nd SEPTEMBER, 1985
SKEAN DHU HOTEL, ABERDEEN, SCOTLAND.

Organised by Robbie and Joyce Gordon

Hotel Weekend Package:—

<i>Friday - Monday:</i>	3 nights dinner B & B sharing double room	£70.50 each
	3 nights dinner B & B single room	£94.50 each
<i>Friday - Sunday:</i>	2 nights dinner B & B sharing double room	£47.00 each
	2 nights dinner B & B single room	£63.00 each

Extra days less 25% accommodation only.

British Rail brochure for discounted fares will be sent to you from hotel on receipt of booking.

----- cut here -----

Hotel Reservation Form

Send direct to: Skean Dhu Hotel, Souter Head Road, Altens, Aberdeen, Scotland. AB1 4LF.
Tel: 0224 877000.

I/We are attending the Musical Box Society Autumn Meeting and require the following accommodation:—
20th - 23rd September, 1985.

Name: Address:
Tel. No.:
No. Persons:
Type of Room:
Length of stay: Deposit £10 per person encl.: £

Day visitors only - Dinner - £9.00 per person.

----- cut here -----

Aberdeen Registration Form

Please send to Alan Wyatt, The Willows, Landbeach, Cambridge.

Name: Address:
No. Persons:
Registration Fee £5.00 per person.
Cheque encl.: £.....

----- cut here -----

PLEASE BOOK THIS MEETING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THANK YOU.

MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY ABERDEEN MEETING, ALTENS SKEAN DHU HOTEL, 20-22 SEPTEMBER, 1985

PROVISIONAL ITINERARY

Friday, 20th	Dinner, informal get-together and pianola sing-a-long. Possibility of civic reception.	5.30	End of afternoon meeting.
		7.00	Dinner followed by entertainment with Cath on electronic accordion, vocalist Jean, great to listen or dance to, magic from Mr. Peter Nicol and a demonstration of Highland Dancing.
Saturday, 21st			
9 - 9.30	Registration.		
9.30	Depart Hotel for organ grinding in city, in aid of National Children's Homes, transport for all members and organs.		
10.30	First part meet Mr. R. Leith at St. Nicholas Church, for tour and demonstration of the 48 bell carillon (largest bell weighs 4½ tons).		
11.30	Second party as above.		
12.30	Transport back to Altens Skean Dhu Hotel for coffee shop or restaurant lunch. (Lunch not included in package).		
2.00	Ladies shopping, transport to and from city centre.		
2.00	Hotel Conference Room Display, demonstration, question and answer session on Scottish members cylinder music boxes. Ditto on Organs, Mr. George Cooper & Mr. Michael Bennet-Levy. Display and <i>short</i> talk on clocks, watches and horological tools, Robbie Gordon.		
3.15	Tea/Coffee break.		
3.30	Display, demonstration, question and answer session on gramophones from the collections of Rev. C.K. Junner and Mr. H. Cormack. Miniature Calliope steam organ, built and demonstrated by Mr. Mike Duguid. Display, demonstration, question and answer session on Scottish members disc musical boxes. Mr. Jim Weir. Ditto on automata.		
		Sunday, 22nd	Transport to Railway Station for any who have to leave.
		9.30	Depart hotel for 1½-2 hour conducted coach tour of city by Mrs. Yvonne Cook, including visits to St. Macnars Cathedral, Old Aberdeen and the Winter Gardens, Duthie Park.
		11.30	Depart city for Andersons Storybook Glen (approx. 5 miles) for tour, organ grinding session and cafeteria lunch (lunch not included in package).
		1.30	Depart for Grampian Transport Museum, Alford (approx. 22 miles) to hear 92 key Mortier dance organ, see museum exhibits and have organ grinding session. During the afternoon there will be vintage and classic cars on hand to transport any members who wish to visit Craigievar Castle, a charming National Trust property only 5 miles away.
		5.00	Leave Alford for Altens Skean Dhu Hotel.
		7.00	Dinner, followed by a demonstration of laser disc recording of mechanised music, Mr. Mike Carrie and a video film on musical boxes.
			Monday, 23rd Transport to Railway Station if required.

MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY ABERDEEN MEETING, — 20-22 SEPTEMBER, 1985, ALTENS SKEAN DHU HOTEL

It would be of great assistance to the local organisers if you could please fill in the following questionnaire:

Number of Persons in party

Will you be bringing an organ or

YES	NO
-----	----

Do you require a table for it Saturday morning?

YES	NO
-----	----

Friday If travelling by train, time of arrival in Aberdeen

There will be an organ playing in the station on Friday afternoon, so if arriving then, head for the music and transport will be available for members and organs to Altens Skean Dhu Hotel.

Saturday Mr. Leith, carillonneur will take two parties of 25 on a 45 minute tour of the 48 bell carillon in St. Nicholas Church (in city centre) which would you like to join?

10.30	
11.30	

Organ grinders do you wish relief grinders to enable you to visit carillon?

YES	NO
-----	----

Ladies, afternoon shopping, do you wish transport to and from city centre?

YES	NO	TIME
-----	----	------

Sunday For those who have to leave, do you wish transport to the railway station?

YES	NO
-----	----

Train departure time:

9.30 a.m. Depart for 1½-2 hour guided tour of the most interesting parts of the city and Old Aberdeen, will you be joining us?

YES	NO
-----	----

11.30 a.m. Depart for a visit to Andersons Storybook Glen (5 miles away) for tour, organ grind and cafeteria lunch (lunch not included in package), then on to the Grampian Transport Museum, Alford (25 miles distance)

to hear 92 key Mortier dance organ, organ grind session, and see museum. During the afternoon there will be an opportunity to visit Craigievar Castle, a charming small National Trust property, five miles from the village. It is hoped to have vintage and classic cars for transport. Depart Transport Museum approx. 5.00 p.m., for Altens Skean Dhu Hotel.

Have we still the pleasure of your company from 11.30 a.m.?

YES	NO
-----	----

Please return this form as soon as possible, thank you, to Mr. & Mrs. R. Gordon, Rinmore, Alford, Aberdeenshire. AB3 8QD.

P.S. Remember we shall be having a pianola sing-a-long, so please bring your favourite 88 note word rolls and if possible send us a copy of the words **now** for photo-copying.

P.S. Please note there are three Skean Dhu Hotels in Aberdeen, two are at Dyce on the north side of the city, beside the airport, but it is **Altens Skean Dhu** to which we are going.

It is on the south side of Aberdeen, by the Altens Estate and Cove. We shall enclose a map for those coming by road. It is very easy to find, only a couple of minutes drive off the dual carriageway, before you reach Aberdeen.

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....

TEL. NO.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This is being written prior to our 1985 Annual General Meeting at which, I know, only a tiny number of our members will be present. This does not distress me, after all most of our members are not interested in how the society is run, the mechanics nor the financial details. Their absence from the Annual General Meetings I take as a sign of confidence in the manner in which your committee is running your society.

The only disappointment to me is that it is my opportunity to pay tribute and express my gratitude, on your behalf, to those who cheerfully and voluntarily undertake so much work and this is heard by so few.

As your President, I am probably in a better position than most to appreciate just how many hours of work are devoted to discharging some of these offices. Why do people take them on? In the majority of cases, it cannot be for any self-glorification as the very nature of the work is unseen and unappreciated. I believe it is because they know that unless someone does the work the society, your society, would cease to exist. Several have told me that this hobby, this interest of ours and the society has given them so much that they feel obliged to give something back, a laudable and welcome sentiment.

So I wish to thank our Honorary Editor for allowing some of the valuable space in our journal to record for a wider audience than that attending our Annual General Meeting, how appreciative I am of all the committee members for their unstinting efforts on your behalf, for the patience with me and above all for their ability to co-operate with one another to work harmoniously to one aim, to achieve that which we believe to be in the membership's best interests.

John Gresham.

NOTICE

The attention of members is drawn to the fact that the appearance in *The Music Box* of an advertiser's announcement does not in any way imply endorsement, approval or recommendation of that advertiser and his services by the editor of the journal or by the Musical Box Society of Great Britain. Members are reminded that they must satisfy themselves as to the ability of the advertiser to serve or supply them.

Reg Mayes invites all Australia, New Zealand and Far East members to contact him, with a view to forming a special FAR EAST SUPPLEMENT to the Journal. c/o Editorial Office.

Names of New Members,
and changes of address
will be listed in the
Christmas edition, 1985.

Lady Bliss writes:
"I have looked at the two volumes
you sent me and find them very
interesting and very well produced.
I do congratulate you on them.
It is a fascinating subject.
I am sure your journal is much
enjoyed by the experts.

MEETINGS

1985

Autumn: September 20-22
Aberdeen

Christmas: December 7

THUN - July 18-21

CALIFORNIA - Queen Mary
at Long Beach
August 30-Sept 2

1986

Easter: March

Amsterdam - April 1-6

Advertising Rates in THE MUSIC BOX

Outside back cover in 2 colours
Full page £70
Inside covers. Full page ... £55

Positions inside journal:

Full page £45
Half page £25
Quarter page £15
1/8 page £10

For Classified rates see page 80.

Advertisers and Contributors.....
make the Christmas edition a
Bumper one.

Deadline dates

Contributors:-

Jan 5
March 15
June 15 (omit in 1985)
Sept 15

Advertisers:

Jan 15
April 7
July 7 (omit in 1985)
Oct 7

Members could make better use
of the **Classified Advertisements**.
At 5p a word there is no better or
more economical means of letting
your fellow-enthusiasts know either
your requirements or what you have
to offer.

Subscriptions for 1985 -

(U.K. £8.00)

Please send to:

Ted Brown

Back Numbers

Send your orders for Back Numbers
to Roy Ison, 3 Greestone Place, Lincoln,
England. (Tel: 0522-40406).

Back numbers still available

Cost including postage:

VOL1	Numbers 2 3 6 7	£1-00
VOL2	Numbers 1 2 3 4 5 8	£1-00
VOL3	Numbers 7 8	£1-00
VOL4	Numbers 3 4 6 7 8	£1-00
VOL5	Numbers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	£1-00
VOL6	Numbers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	£1-00
VOL7	Numbers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	£1-75
VOL8	Numbers 1 2 3 4	£1-75
VOL8	Numbers 5 6 7 8	£2-25
VOL9	Numbers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	£2-25
VOL10	Numbers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	£2-25
VOL11	Numbers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	£2-25
VOL12	Number 1	£2-25

American Europe and Far East please add
the cost of postage from England. Make
cheques payable to "MBSGB".

BULLET, SWITZERLAND

Where automata is born, or, brought back to life again

by Henry (Hank) A. Waelti of Utzigen, Switzerland

BULLET is a small village less than 5km from St Croix, cradle of the Swiss Musical Box industry. It has a magnificent view over a large area of Switzerland, a panoramic vista embracing the Alps, several lakes, beautifully forested hills and picturesque villages scattered like shining jewels in a magnificent tiara.

No one can blame **Michel Bertrand** for deciding to settle down on this "balcony of the Jura mountains". His profession was creating, building and restoring automata of all kinds.

On the upper part of the village, a signboard of the kind you find in Paris (and also made there) points out the "Chemin des Pierots" which leads to the large Swiss Chalet Michel built 10 years ago. The workshop, bright and roomy, is a fairy wonder-world of mechanisms, dolls, heads and limbs, clothes and automata in different states of manufacture.

Several big rows of drawers contain the largest stock of small parts, manufactured in the 19th century, that I have ever seen. Michel has taken over all the remaining inventory of Vichy, Paris, to continue making automata and restoring them with original parts.

There are hundreds of eyes in all sizes and colours, made in Czechoslovakia more than a hundred years ago; bodies of singing birds with moving heads, beaks and tails, prefabricated metal parts like elbows, gears, screws, keys, springs, connecting rods — you name it, Michel has it.

Very impressive is his collection of old catalogues and patent-documents. He has not only original parts to continue his work in the old fashion — there is also a large documentation of technical drawings and constructions at his disposal. Michel simply refuses to use modern materials like plastic and it is very seldom that he makes use of electricity or modern inventions like a tape recorder. No shortcuts, pure

old fashioned mechanics. That also goes for the driving power of his automata, sturdy clockwork motors which are made in nearby Auberson or St Croix.

Almost all of the automata, excluding birds and whistlers, has a built-in musical mechanism. These, of course, are locally made, and it is because of the musical and clockwork drive mechanisms that Michel Bertrand finally decided to work and live in this part of Switzerland.

French of origin, Michel was born in 1928 in Lisse (Lorraine, near Verdun — a part of the world which had to suffer through three wars). His parents were farmers. As a little boy he heard from his grandfather how they had to leave their homes, driven out by the Prussians in 1870 — he heard about the war 1914-1918, his parents home destroyed, the fields useless with an average of six tons of scrap metal per square kilometre.

Then, in 1939 the whole thing all over again: The bombing unbearable, his grandparents had to leave home for the third time with the rest of their family — his father fighting in the war. The family found shelter in the Bourgogne until they were driven out again by the Germans. For three months they were on the road, his grandparents 80 years old. In 1942 they went back to their home which was occupied by the Nazis — and there was nothing left. Most of the remaining men were deported to Germany for work, and 600 women and children from Poland were forced to do the farming under the whip of a "chef de culture".

Finally, men over 60 years of age were taken with all the remaining horses and carts to move the loot to Germany. Retreating SS men murdered farmers in the fields and women in the villages — "experiences like this are apt to brand a child" says Michel.

With his parents he worked in the fields, making little models of aero-

planes, cars and ships in his spare time, just like he always did from the age of six on.

In 1947 he did his military service in occupied Germany. After this he decided to learn a profession, more or less artistic — so he was sent to Nancy to learn all about artificial painted glass. This was not to his liking, so he left and went to Paris. All he had was 600 F.Fr in his pocket, no home and no profession, but he found a small room on the seventh floor in the 8th Arrondissement, near Gare St Lazare and the red lights of Clichy.

For ten years, from 1956 to 1966, he studied and learnt his trade, making automata with the "compagnons du tour de France" — a wild bunch, but well aware of their knowledge and their skill.

Michel mentions many different skills one has to deal with in making automatons: drawings, modelling, the study of movements, mechanisms, woodmarking, decoration work, dress-making, making hats, shoes, hair-dressing, welding and soldering.

When, in 1966, it did not pay anymore to produce automata on a larger scale, Michel Bertrand continued to build some of them on his own, and started to restore and repair the old ones in order to save them from getting destroyed and forgotten. For the famous Museum of Monaco (Galéa collection) he restored about 100 automata during the years 1969 to 1973. Since 1963 Michel visited Switzerland every year to see the Baud brothers in Auberson. They worked together, getting to be close friends. From Charlie Chaplin he received an order for an automata to be used in a motion picture, representing Charley's daughter Geraldine. Again he went to Auberson and worked at this big project. It was the Baud brothers who finally convinced him to settle in their community, and they helped him to get permanent admission. Since 1974 Michel Bertrand, his wife

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instruments. For cash: Bob Price, 3 Bridle
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Continued from page 79.



Michel Bertrand received a commission from
Charlie Chaplin for a piece of automata.

Jacqueline and their two children
have become a very valuable addition
to the region of St Croix, the Mecca
of the Swiss Musical Box. Just like
the few remaining small firms still
producing musical boxes and singing
birds, like the museum of Ferdy
Baud, the home of the Bertrands at
the "chemin des Pierots" is unique
and very precious to all of us who are
interested in this almost forgotten
world of playthings.

"I managed to stay a child up to
this day" says Michel and knowing
him, and listening to him telling you
with sparkling eyes of new ideas, of a
new gag — you agree with him: There
is still a precious little part of the
child Michel in a hardworking shell.
It is only to be hoped that Michel will
be able to assure succession of his
trade, someone who will keep up the
tradition and make good use of the
knowledge and the stock of very
valuable parts Michel has to offer.
But to find an all-round man with the
right motivation, the necessary skills
and the great patience — all essential
for this profession — may be very
hard.

It took Michel 13 years to learn all
the angles of this trade. His resources

of parts, ideas and know-how go
back as far as 1820 when the firm
Thérondé was founded which later
(1840) became Vichy, then Triboulet
and finally J.A.F. (jouets et auto-
mates français). It was in 1960 when
Michel bought the remaining stock
of the firm.

Let us hope that for many years to
come Michel Bertrand may be able
to continue his activities. He still has
so many ideas and projects up his
sleeve. Let us also hope that for
many years to come we will have the
great pleasure of meeting Michel at
Organ Festivals in Switzerland or
France, when he comes along with
his organ and some of his automata.
His presence means invariably joy
and laughter because he is — what
you might call — a jolly good fellow.

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KEITH HARDING

Continued from page 75.

when lost in back alleys and no
passer-by has heard of the address
you are looking for? Keith is quite
specific, "... conveniently situated
close to Holloway Road Station on
the Piccadilly Line (direct line from
Heathrow Airport, and just ten
minutes from London's West End)."

Keith's wife, Eva, is also in on the
act, "... My wife has, over the past
several years built up a marvellous
selection of modern musical gifts to
suit every pocket."

Keith Harding, F.B.H.I. and C.A.
has Cliff Burnett, C.M.B.H.I. as his
partner.

A final note to certain of our
professional members — please do
not pick up your pen and complain
that a fellow-member is getting "free
publicity" — rather, pick up your
pen and tell us what YOU are doing.
If it is newsworthy then you, too, will
be given "free publicity".

But — to be fair to all and to
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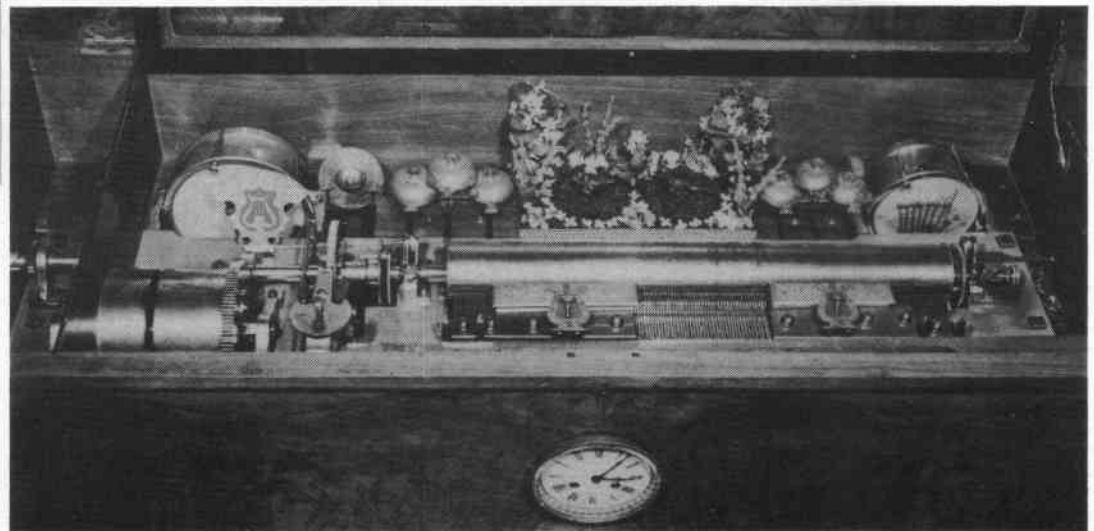
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of

GREAT BRITAIN

an international society devoted to mechanical musical instruments and their music

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

Formed in 1962, the Society today has an international membership of over 1,000 ranging from USA through Switzerland (the accredited birthplace of the cylinder musical box) to China and Australia. Almost 40% of the membership is in North America.

The aim of the Society is to further an interest in and an appreciation of all forms of mechanical music. Four meetings are held annually, two in London and two in the provinces, which give members the opportunity to meet and discuss their collections, to exchange, buy, or sell items, and, in particular, to listen to the excellent talks which are given by specialists in particular aspects of the hobby. Once a year, a major auction is held in London at which members may buy and sell mechanical items.

The Society publishes a large journal called *The Music Box* four times a year. In this you will find a large variety of interesting contents including articles on all aspects of the history, development, repair and overhaul of all types of mechanical instrument. Restoration tips and procedures are regularly published along with detailed and well-illustrated descriptions of items of particular interest.

Our lively correspondence pages bring together members and their problems from every corner of the world of mechanical music.

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- Barrel Organs & Organettes
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- Barrel Pianofortes & Street Pianos
- Player Reed and Pipe Organs

WHY NOT JOIN US?

The world of mechanical music contains a wealth of fascinating details for the collector, whether his interest be primarily musical or mechanical. To be able to repair a damaged musical box, it is true, you need to be something of a musician as well as an engineer, but many people who are neither gain immense pleasure from these fine examples of nineteenth-century craftsmanship. On the other hand, many amateurs have found that, given plenty of patience, the restoration of a pneumatic instrument such as a player piano or a player organ is by no means beyond their capability. By joining the MBSGB you will be able to make contact with specialists, both professional and amateur, who will offer help and advice on any particular problems in mechanical music. The annual subscription is £8 plus £1 joining fee (\$17 plus \$2.50 USA; \$20 plus \$3 Canadian). If overseas members would like all communications sent by airmail, US members should send \$34 plus the \$2.50 joining fee, and Canadian members \$41 plus \$3 joining fee. Far Eastern members can have airmail for £16 plus £1 joining fee. If you would like to join the Society, please complete the application form below. You will not be disappointed.

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