

# The Music Box

An International Magazine of Mechanical Music

Volume 16 Number 5

Spring 1994

Edited by Graham Whitehead



**Inside**

**Register News**

**Viennese Style Musical Boxes**

**Identical Polyphon/Regina Advertisements**

**The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain**

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 10 March, 9 am - 12 noon

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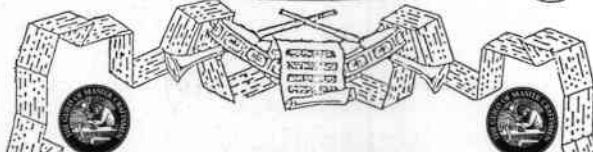
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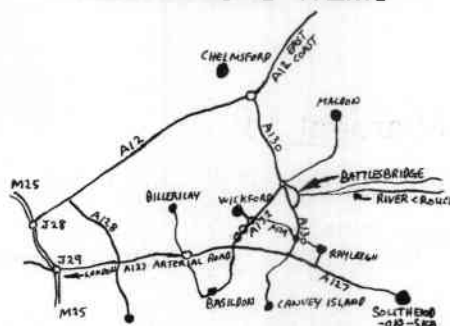
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Cylinder repinning, due to workshop expansion I can offer a complete cylinder repinning service in a realistic time with no limitations on cylinder size, anything from snuff box to Plerodienique, including orchestral and organ cylinders. Organ cylinders can be repinned with or without partial bridge repairs or full re-bridging.

**Cylinder pins are finished straight or raked as required.**

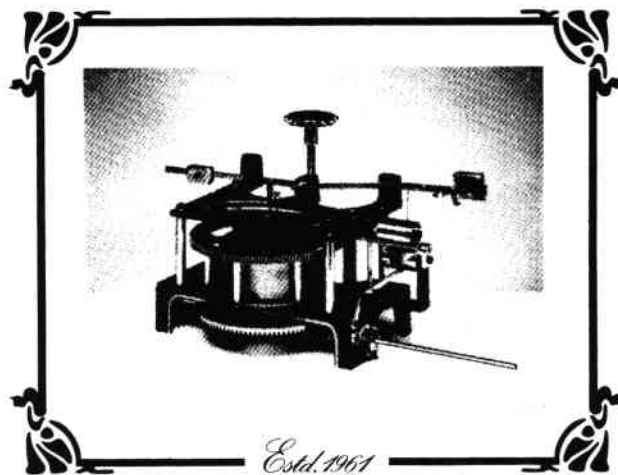
Single cylinders from interchangeable sets can be repinned without surcharge. All repins are charged at the same basic price of length x diameter x 85p plus £85. With an additional charge for raking if required of length x diameter x 20p. All measurements to the nearest half centimetre.

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# The Music Box

An International Magazine  
of Mechanical Music

The Journal of the  
Musical Box Society  
of Great Britain.

Volume 16  
Number 5  
Spring 1994

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

Any contribution is accepted on the understanding that its author is solely responsible for the opinions expressed in it and the publication of such contributions does not necessarily imply that any such opinions therein are those of the Society or its Editor.

The Society and its Editor are unable to accept and hereby disclaim any liability for the consequences of any inaccuracies, errors or omissions in such contributions. No representations, warranties or endorsements of any product or information contained herein are given or intended and full verification of all products and information appearing in this Journal must be sought from the appropriate contributor.

### Front Cover:

Seated at the organ, from an old print by E. Eichinger, Vienna.

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## SOCIETY TOPICS

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of The Musical Box Society of Great Britain will be held at Brandon Hall Hotel on Saturday, 26th March, 1994. Nominations for officers and committee have been received as follows:-

President – Arthur Ord-Hume.  
Vice President – Ralph M. Heintz.  
Subscriptions Secretary – Bob Haiselden.  
Membership and Correspondence Secretary – Alan Wyatt.  
Meeting Secretary – Roy Ison.  
Treasurer – Bob Holden.  
Recordings Secretary – John Miller.  
Auditor – Steven Cockburn.  
Editor – Graham Whitehead.  
Archivist – Kevin McElhone.  
Auction Organiser – David Walch.  
Advertising Manager – Ted Brown.  
Committee Members – Arthur Cunliffe, Jon Gresham, Richmond Mason, Reg Mayes, Christopher Proudfoot (a maximum of 3 Committee members may be elected at an A.G.M.).

A proposal has been received that "the Annual General Meeting shall be held at the summer meeting in a midland town." If this proposal is carried, the bye-laws article 1, section 1 will be amended to read as per the words of the proposal.

A proposal has been received that "the Society elects two Vice Presidents." This proposal if carried will require the following changes to the constitution:-

Article 4, Section 1 – Change words "Vice President" to "Two Vice Presidents."

Article 5, Section 1 – Change "the Vice President" to "a Vice President." ■

#### 1993 A.G.M. Minutes

A complaint has been received from a member regarding the comment in the minutes of the last A.G.M. held at the Musical Museum, Brentford High Street, in June 1993.

The Recordings Secretary report referred to a petition objecting to the holding of the Annual General Meetings in London on the grounds

of difficulties in getting to London and their losing money. In order that the membership should not be misled into believing that the London A.G.M.'s were a drain on the Society's funds, Jon Gresham inserted "(which they do not)." Jon has pointed out that his comments were justified as the records show that only one London A.G.M. in the last twelve years has lost money, £35.42 against profits over the period of £1,406.64, excluding profits from the auction. ■

### FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

**Spring Meeting**  
**25th - 27th March, 1994**  
**The Brandon Hall Hotel,**  
**Brandon, Warwickshire.**  
**Tel: 0203 542571**

The Brandon Hall is a 17th century shooting lodge and country house set in 17 acres of garden and woodland close to Coventry and is easily accessible via the motorway network.

#### Hotel Package

Dinner, bed and breakfast, Friday 25th and Saturday 26th March, £90 per person. Society dinner only, £15 (approx.).

#### Programme

*Saturday morning* - Registration, coffee. 10.30am A.G.M.

*Saturday afternoon* - Due to illness the trip to a private collection has been postponed but may be possible as a one day event later in the year.

Talk by Christopher Proudfoot.

"Musical Box Restoration - A Comedy of Errors" by Keith Harding.

*Saturday evening* - Society dinner, followed by demonstration and talk by Nicholas Simons.

*Sunday a.m.* - Visit to Heritage Motor Museum, Gaydon.

It would be appreciated if as many members as possible would bring at least one interesting piece from their own collection to show and discuss with other members. ■

**Summer One Day Meeting,**  
**18th June at St. Alban's**  
**Organ Museum,**  
**320 Camp Road, (next to**  
**Camp JMI School).**

This will include Society Auction, viewing of the museum which houses a permanent working exhibition of mechanical musical

instruments including organs by Mortier, Decap and Bursens, reproducing pianos by Steinway and Weber, musical boxes etc. Registration fee of £10 includes morning coffee, sandwiches and tea/coffee at lunchtime and afternoon tea. ■

**Proposed trip to Holland,**  
**15th - 20th May, 1994.**  
**(now using Regency Travel of**  
**Kendal)**

Please note this is a change of date and also of travel agent.

The coach will start from Kendal on 15th May at 06.30 picking up at the N.E.C. Birmingham car park at 09.00, Landbeach (Alan Wyatt's) 11.30am and Dover 14.00.

Dover to Calais at 15.00 arriving at Brugge at 17.30 for an overnight stay.

Monday morning free to explore Brugge departing approximately 13.00 for Amsterdam. Half board accommodation.

The cost will be £270 per person **including insurance.** Coach travel during our stay is included.

We plan to visit Museum Van Speeldoos tot Utrecht on Tuesday 17th plus other trips to private collections later in the week. There will be free time to explore Amsterdam. A full, finalised programme will be sent to all members going on the trip nearer the date.

Please reserve your place before April 10th by sending a deposit of £30 per person, payable to Regency Travel.

I hope that by starting the trip from Kendal it will enable more members to take advantage of this interesting trip.

Roy Ison,  
Meetings Secretary. ■

### A message from the Archivist

I would like to appeal for additions to the collection and archives by way of:-

1. Original or photo-copies of instrument on disc/roll catalogues.
2. Any books on the subject (which we don't already have).
3. Auction catalogue back issues from all houses in GB and USA (except Christies which we have a set of).
4. Photographs or slides of interesting items.
5. Videos of collections (must be in European VHS/PAL format).



6. Guidebooks to museums (we have very few of these), and short-term exhibitions run locally.

7. Lists of discs, rolls and instruments being made NEW today.

You may donate anonymously, in memory of a collector friend or place items on permanent or long term loan.

Please consider what will happen to any of the above items which you may have in the long term, it would be unfortunate if the information is lost to future collectors and researches.

Items in the archives can be of benefit to us all and will also be used to prepare articles for future issues of our magazine.

Also, as I don't actually have a budget to purchase new books, of which there are many not in the archives perhaps members might consider making a donation in order that new publications may be acquired. I can provide a list of new publications which we do not have a copy of should you wish to donate an item on a specific subject.

### **Suggestion to attract new members**

I recently went to an auction house which had 12 music boxes included in the sale. I had taken a supply of leaflets outlining MBSGB – what we do and how to join etc with me (available from Alan Wyatt) and got permission for a copy to be put with each musical box in the sale.

Whilst I realise that some may have been purchased by members, some may have gone to potential new members.

Would any member/s be willing to hold a supply of these forms to be used in a similar way at auction houses, in shops and at any talks which you may give?

Maybe any restorers who are members could put one in any instrument they restore. ■

### **HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 1994 SUBSCRIPTION YET?**

I shall be most grateful if all members who have not yet paid their 1994 subscriptions will send them to me as soon as possible. This will help reduce the Society's postage charges incurred by sending out reminders. Thank you.

Mr. R. H. Haiselden  
*Subscription Secretary*

## **Obituary**

### **David M. Heeley**

It is my unpleasant duty to report on the death of a collector/ neighbour, David Heeley.

David had been a member of the society since 1968. I first met him at my first meeting held at the Falcon Hotel, Stratford in 1973? The meeting programme included a visit to the Church of England Children's Society Staff Training Centre at Alveston near Stratford where David and his wife Sheila were joint wardens. It was there that I saw my first display (which seemed enormous) of musical boxes and Organettes which had been brought in by other local collectors to add to David's modestly expanding collection.

He was for a short time a committee member of the Society and also once gave a talk on the Seraphone Organette at a meeting in Birmingham.

David was extremely quiet, an unassuming person and a true gentleman. Although he had many friends in the Society, he may best be remembered by his distinctive oak-cased Pell organ that he brought to many Society organ grinds. He will also be remembered as a shy man, for while he would rarely start a conversation he would soon accelerate it in to a higher gear once prompted to talk about his hobby in mechanical music. When he heard that my collection was moving from Napton to Ashorne, close to where he lived and worked, he was delighted. He and his wife Sheila were regular visitors and their help was invaluable on the opening night in May 1991.

David was a devout Christian and had, apart from a 2 year break while living away from this area, been organist and choir master at St. Peter's Church, Barford since 1977. His dignified gentleness provided him with just the right attributes for his later career in crematorium administration at Oakley Wood, near Ashorne, where his ashes now rest. David was an accomplished musician and all of the recordings used at the Crematorium for committals, including his own, were recorded by David on his organ at home.

David became ill last December and our sympathy goes to Sheila for David's untimely passing.

*Graham Whitehead.*

## **NEWSDESK**

### **Stolen Bacigalupo Street Organ**

Kurt Niemuth reports the loss of a 26 key G. Bacigalupo barrel organ. One of his rental organs, it was obtained by someone using a false name and address. The barrel contains the following tunes:

1. Berliner Luft
2. Lieber Leierkastenmann
3. Es war in Schoeneberg
4. Mariechen sass Weinend
5. Sportpalastwalzer
6. Untern Linden
7. In Rixdorf ist Musike
8. Macky Messer (Mac the Knife)

A substantial reward is offered by the owner:

DM500 for information regarding the organ's whereabouts.

DM2,000 for the return of the organ.

Information to ORGELVERLEIH KURT NIEMUTH, Claszeile 78, D-14165 Berlin.

The organ appears to be one of a number built around the seventies in collaboration with the famous builder and bears the typical floral cum stringed instrument decoration plus the words 'G. Bacigalupo Berlin'. ■

### **The Third National Vintage Communications Fair**

The 3rd National Vintage Communications Fair will be held at the NEC Birmingham on 15th May 1994 from 10.30am - 5.00pm.

Over 250 stalls will be selling vintage radios, 405-line TVs, mechanical music, records, gramophones, telephones, vintage audio/hi-fi, jukeboxes, film/cinema etc., plus collectors clubs and specialist magazines.

Anyone who wishes to have a stall at the Fair should contact: J. Hill, NVCF'94, 2-4 Brook Street, Bampton, Devon. ■

# Register News

The number count for boxes listed on the Register is now over 2,900 and rising steadily. Members still seem to be finding it tedious to list their boxes and send in details. Many I am sure are full of good intentions but never get round to doing anything. Please try to make the effort so that research can continue. Two items of news in the last issue of the magazine illustrate only too well the other need to register boxes.

Having now had a chance to examine and list many of the programmes for Nicole gamme numbers, it is possible to see how relatively few tunes were ever pinned on musical boxes. By relative I mean hundreds rather than thousands. Most boxes followed the pattern of pinning well known and popular melodies and/or the popular operas of the time. Tune 1 is likely to be the latest or the "test" piece and the rest of the programme designed to be "safe" to sell the box.

Occasionally, popular songs of the day were put in a programme. During the latter part of the last century, the popular music hall songs were included. Some tunes give an indication of the period. Jullien's Exhibition Polka for example must have been composed around the opening of the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Of greater interest are the street ballads or songs of slightly earlier days. If these could be accurately dated, then it would help to pinpoint many boxes precisely.

One tune that seems to occur just around the time when most makers were changing over to lever wind was called "Nothing More," by W. Winn. This title is found

pinned on Nicole and Ducommun boxes, but when was it composed? In one particular example, it did prove to be a rather suitable title as the box had its "run" precisely on this tune!

Several members have reported difficulty in quoting a serial number for organettes. They point out quite correctly that many makers did not put serial numbers on their machines and under the present arrangements are barred from registering these items.

It would not be proper to invent a serial number, but a way through the impasse would be to allocate a Register number on the **strict** understanding that on receipt of any such number it would be marked **immediately** on the underside of the machine. The marking would have to be visual and indelible and preferably repeated in another place using an ultra violet pen marker as a back up. There would be no objection to using a post code as well.

Failure to mark any box straight away could lead to the possibility of a single box being registered two or three times. This would use up valuable computer file space on spurious items and give inaccurate survival figures.

To avoid the possibility of the capital letter O being confused with a digit, organettes will be registered with the prefix OR-. Disc machines will be prefixed by D- whilst the original R- for cylinder machines will continue. In all cases, please quote serial numbers and other marks when they are present on any instrument noting where they are positioned.

A sample computer print out for disc boxes and for organettes is

included in this edition to give some idea of the layout of the new Registers. Please list as much information as possible. Even if it cannot all be included on the computer file, it **will** be noted on the record cards. My thanks to the American members who supplied much of this early information.

I have been asked by a member to state again what material is required to register cylinder machines. Serial numbers, names, length of cylinder and the number of teeth in the comb(s) are most useful items of information. If a tune card is present, then **please do make every effort** to list the tunes. Dating of boxes can be made easier by having this information and in many cases other members benefit directly.

On the subject of security, the following points may be worth considering:-

1. Keep the winding keys of disc machines and key winders in a separate place from the movements. Tie a string label to each key noting the serial number and make of the machine to avoid possible mismatches.
2. If possible, keep discs in a separate locked storage place away from the machine.

A box that cannot be wound up because the key is missing and a disc machine with only one disc become much less attractive to any purchaser. Movements without keys and disc machines with only one disc or no discs at all should prompt any collector to ask pertinent questions. At least a thief will have to take a lower price for his ill gotten gains.

*The Registrar*

## The Disc Box Register

### A. FULL REGISTER DETAILS

#### Criterion

Serial No. 8197

Reg/No. D-1

Type: 15<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" Sublime Harmony.

Model: Table model.

Comb(s): 2 combs. 77 teeth each. Total = 154 teeth.

Comments: Fitted into an oak case with carved front. Size 21<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" x 19<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" x 11" (52 x 49.5 x 28cm). Model illustrated exactly on page 142 of Bowers Encyclopedia of Mechanical Music. Has 105 zinc discs. (1993). Reproduction Criterion picture inside of lid. Has periphery drive wheel.



**Kalliope**

Serial No. 48135

Reg/No. D-2

Type: 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" disc.

Model: No. 50.

Comb(s): 1 comb of 49 teeth.

Comments: Central post winding. Illustrated in Bowers Encyclopedia of Mechanical Music on page 108.  
Walnut case. Centre drive for discs.**B. MINI REGISTER DETAILS**

<b>Criterion</b>	Serial No. 8197	Type: 15 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " Sublime Harmony	Model: Table model	Reg/No. D-1
<b>Kalliope</b>	Serial No. 48135	Type: 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " disc	Model No. 50	Reg/No. D-2
<b>Symphonion</b>	Serial No. 95785	Type: 11 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " disc	Model: Style 25N table model	Reg/No. D-4
<b>Symphonion</b>	Serial No. 262726	Type: 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " disc	Model No. 4N table model	Reg/No. D-3

## The Organette Register

**A. FULL REGISTER DETAILS**

<b>Ariston</b>	Serial No. 318840	Reg/No. OR-2
Type:	15" card disc.	
Model:	Table.	
Reeds/pipes:	24 reeds.	
Comments:	Serial No. and "Patent Ehrlich" stencilled on black under case on the reed chest cover. Has an ivory trade label of "Horsburgh & Baliol. Mandoline Specialists. Newcastle-on-Tyne" on side on case. Also has a label "Steel reeds" stuck on underside of case. Case painted black and decorated with gold designs. Has 4 corner pillars. Size 14" x 14" x 9" (35.5 x 35.5 x 23cm). See illustration Bowers Encyclopedia on page 746.	

<b>Cabinetto</b>	Serial No. 3478	Reg/No. OR-1
Type:	13 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " Roll.	
Model:	Table model.	
Reeds/pipes:	25 reed.	
Comments:	Mahogany case size 17 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " x 13 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " x 11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " (45 x 34 x 29cm). Decorated with gold line patterns. Serial number stamped into edge of case between the lid hinges. Has original instructions printed on red paper glued to inside of lid. Has green trade label of "Hermann Loog Limited, 128 London Wall. E.C." on inside of lid. Has 6 rolls of music. (1993).	

**B. MINI REGISTER DETAILS**

<b>American Organette</b>	Serial No. 15412	Type: 7 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " continuous roll	Model: Table	Reg/No. OR-5
<b>Ariston</b>	Serial No. 318840	Type: 13" card disc	Model: Table	Reg/No. OR-2
<b>Ariston</b>	Serial No. 324880	Type: 23" card disc	Model: Table	Reg/No. OR-4
<b>Ariston</b>	Serial No. 420297	Type: 13" card disc	Model: Table model	Reg/No. OR-3
<b>Cabinetto</b>	Serial No. 3478	Type: 13 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " Roll	Model: Table model	Reg/No. OR-1
<b>Draper</b>	Serial No. 12670	Type: 7 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " continuous roll	Model: Orchestral	Reg/No. OR-6

## The Musical Box Register

**L. A. GROSCLAUDE**

Grosclaude was associated with August Perrelet between 1871 and 1874. After 1874 to around the year 1880, Grosclaude worked on his own manufacturing boxes. He also made tools for the musical box

industry. The firm is noted as having won a silver medal at the Paris Exhibition of 1878. His boxes are of good quality. The output of this firm must have been limited as production lasted for no more than nine years.

After 1880, Grosclaude retired from the musical box industry to follow a new career lecturing in mathematics and science.

12/93. v. 1.

S/No.	T/C	G/No.	Comments	Reg/No.
	* = Yes			
869	*	?	6 air. Harpe-Harmonique Piccolo. Lever wind.	R-1482
40299	*	?	10 air. Drum+7 bell box. Lever wind.	R-1419

**GUEISSAZ FILS & Co.**

An invoice dated 16 February 1901 for a box supplied to the Shah of Persia notes that the firm was founded in the year 1848 in Auberson. It also states the firm had won medals in the Paris Exhibitions of 1878 and 1889. They won a diploma in the Zurich Exhibition of 1883.

In the invoice heading, they

S/No.	T/C	G/No.
	* = Yes	
434	—	?

claimed to be general manufacturers of superior quality musical boxes, clocks and watches. The serial number quoted in the invoice was 434 which would indicate a very low production rate of only eight boxes per year. This would indicate that they were agents rather than manufacturers. Possibly, Paillard made these boxes. It is known that Gueissaz

Comments

6 air Grand Orchestral Interchangeable.

traded with Paillard and sold their boxes as part of their business dealings.

Their boxes were large and complicated having automata, bells, birds and organ work. Cases were very ornate and designed to compliment the intricate movements.

12/93. v. 1.

Reg/No.

R-2162

**HUMBERT BROLLIET**

This firm had many partnerships during its existence, but throughout it was noted for making complicated movements of the two

S/No.	T/C	G/No.
	* = Yes	
18842	—	?

or three air per turn type.

A feature of this make is the distinctive case work. Cases have circular or bun feet. Lids feature brass inlays. The front of the case

Comments

24 air. 2 per turn.

and the inside of the lid have diamond shaped designs in boxwood stringing. All Brollet boxes so far recorded have these features.

12/93. v. 1.

Reg/No.

R-244

**H.L.M.G.**

The name of this firm is unknown, but it is unlikely that they were manufacturers. They may have been agents buying movements from L'Epee. All their movements seem to have been of the snuffbox type and fitted into appropriate cases.

A distinctive feature is the stamping of the name on the brass

S/No.	T/C	G/No.
	* = Yes	

745	—	?
1992	—	352
2411	*	236
3408	—	?
5842	—	?
9283	*	?
11121	—	712/708
16410	*	?
20280	*	?
21416	*	?
29488	*	?
30253	—	?
32243	*	?
33861	—	?
37815	*	?
41847	*	?

bedplate. The H and the L are linked in that the second stroke of the H is used as the down stroke of the L. This compression of the initials would be necessary to stamp the name in the available space on the bedplate. In cases where the name has been badly stamped, it is possible to read the name as H.M.G.

A computer comparison of the

Comments

3 air. Snuffbox.
3 air. Snuffbox.
4 air. Snuffbox.
3 air. Snuffbox.
2 air. Snuffbox. In tinplate box.
4 air. Snuffbox.
2 air. Fitted into necessaire.
2 air. Snuffbox.
2 air. Snuffbox.
3 air. Snuffbox.
2 air. Snuffbox.
3 air. Snuffbox.
2 air. Snuffbox.
3 air. Snuffbox.
3 air. Snuffbox.
3 air. Snuffbox.
2 air. Snuffbox.

serial numbers of both L'Epee and H.L.M.G. show that the numbers combine without any disparity. This tentatively indicates the movements came from the same source. It must be remembered that the base sample is still not very extensive and that many more boxes need to be reported before accurate comparisons can be made.

12/93. v. 1.

Reg/No.

R-1931
R-1755
R-1626
R-1951
R-2551
R-2550
R-218
R-1984
R-1929
R-1958
R-1959
R-1936
R-1627
R-1989
R-1937
R-2076

**J. H. HELLER**

Based in Berne, Heller manufactured many types of movements. Examples of interchangeable, organ, bell, mandoline and automata boxes have all been registered. He seems to have

S/No.	T/C	G/No.
	* = Yes	

1076	*	?
1435	—	?
2468	—	?
4411	*	?
4512	—	?
4534	—	?

produced many boxes with organ work variously described as "voix-celeste" or "flutina." At the other end of the range he also produced snuff boxes.

He frequently used the type of tune card with garlanded columns

Comments

6 air. 6 bell box.
8 air. 6 bell and drum box.
6 air. Interchangeable Orchestral box+table.
8 air. Harpe. Lever wind.
6 air. Revolver box. 6 cyls. with 18 key organ. Lever wind.
16 air. 2 per turn Harp Mandoline.

either side intertwined with composers names. He sometimes put his name in the lower central cartouche.

He exhibited his boxes in the Paris and Vienna Exhibitions and was awarded medals.

1/94. v. 1.

Reg/No.

R-219
R-220
R-221
R-222
R-2740
R-223

5619	—	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-2205
6114	—	?	12 air.	R-224
6282	—	?	6 air. Lever wind.	R-1483
7872	*	?	6 air. 17 key organ box. Lever wind.	R-1130
8543	*	?	4 air. Mandoline.	R-1625
10134	*	?	6 air. Organocleide Piccolo. Lever wind.	R-2868
10135	*	?	2 air. Snuffbox.	R-225
10695	*	509	6 air. Interchangeable. (6 cyl.). Lever wind.	R-2197
11593	—	?	10 air. Harp Expression Zither. Lever wind.	R-226
11688	—	?	8 air. Movement in Swiss Cottage+clock.	R-227
12500	*	1621	6 air. Expression Harpe. Lever wind.	R-1763
17738	*	?	8 air. 16 key organ box. Lever wind.	R-231
39682	*	?	10 air. 6 bell box with automata.	R-228
44966	—	?	4 air. Lever wind.	R-229
51977	—	?	4 air. Tabatiere type.	R-1728
1165380	*	?	6 air. Forte-Piano.	R-230

## HENRIOT

Henriot is now thought to have been an agent or a distributor for musical boxes made by Badel. There is a record of Henriot being a watch maker, but there is no evidence at all that he manu-

factured musical boxes nor did he ever exhibit any.

On the other hand, Henriot boxes very closely resemble boxes made by Badel. The boxes are well made and the arrangement of tunes are distinctive and musically very

sound. Tune cards have been seen with both white and blue embossed borders.

All boxes so far reported have been keywind. Often the bedplate is stamped "Henriot a Geneva."

1/94. v. 1.

S/No.	T/C * = Yes	G/No.	Comments	Reg/No.
10463	—	?	8 air. Keywind.	R-1420
11314	—	?	3 Overture. Keywind.	R-1421
11435	*	?	4 Overture. Keywind.	R-1422
11544	*	?	6 air. Keywind.	R-233
11780	—	?	4 air. Keywind.	R-1423
11913	—	?	8 air. Keywind.	R-1424
12132	—	?	8 air. Keywind.	R-1425
12140	*	6	8 air. Keywind.	R-234
12145	*	6	8 air. Keywind.	R-235
12239	—	?	6 air. Keywind.	R-236
12242	*	?	6 air. Keywind.	R-237
12273	*	?	4 air. Keywind.	R-238
12324	—	972	6 air. Keywind.	R-239
12493	—	?	6 air. Keywind.	R-1426
12683	—	?	6 air. Keywind.	R-1427
12743	—	?	4 air. Keywind.	R-1428
14595	—	23	4 air. Keywind.	R-240
14614	—	?	? air.	R-241
14670	—	?	12 air. 2 per turn.	R-242
14677	—	?	8 air. Keywind.	R-1429
15505	—	?	? air.	R-243

## Nicole Ratchet Winding

My thanks to the members who sent me examples and photographs of the ratchet winding handles used by Nicole Freres.

They appear to have been made in two sizes, no doubt designed to fit comfortably into the key compartment of both large and small boxes. The smaller key, which is by far the less common, may have been used for standard four airs boxes, whilst the larger one was for overture, six air and above movements.

Very early keys have minor differences in manufacture to the later pattern in that the wooden winding knob was larger. The keys illustrated here are of the later type and the design seems to have

been used without change right through the production period.

There can be no guarantee that these keys have remained with the same box over the years, but a look at the computer listing supports the argument that the keys were issued with "special" or "quality" boxes. They could also have been supplied with boxes made to order, but there is no evidence to suggest they were exclusive to such boxes.

They may have been supplied by special order as an alternative to the key. No doubt it would have been possible to order one of these keys when purchasing a movement. One Nicole is listed as having two keys, the ratchet type being a

secondary item.

Less effort is required to wind a box using a ratchet wind mechanism. Victorian ladies would no doubt appreciate this and regard it as being much more genteel. Those suffering from arthritis would also benefit.

The idea that these keys were produced only during the transitional period between key and lever winding is not really supported by the facts. They were produced over a long time commencing before the start of the lever wind and not finishing until well into the lever period. It would be interesting to discover more examples at the beginning and the end of this listing.



Finally, a summary of the salient points revealed by the computer:—

Number of boxes: 33  
Grand Format boxes: 9  
Overture boxes: 13  
Forte piano boxes (including overture): 13

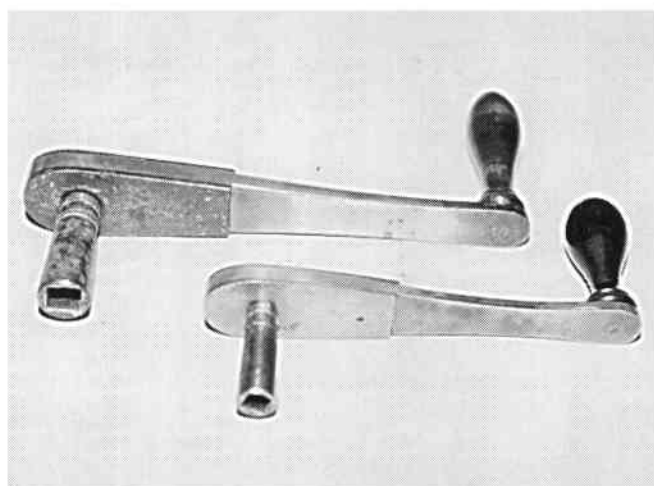
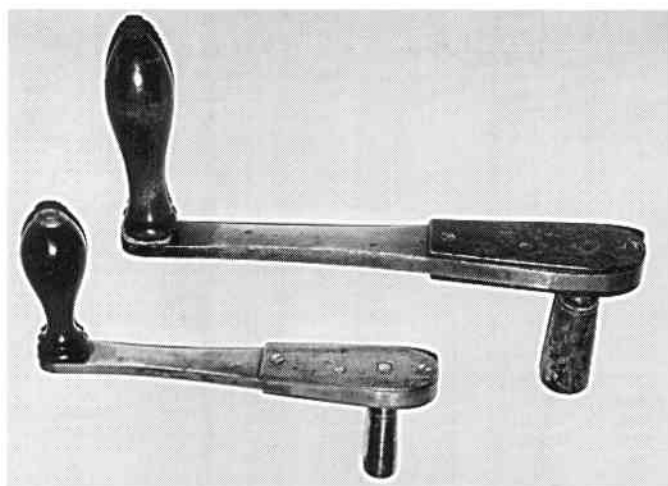
Metal tune cards: 8  
Green tune cards: 1  
Blue tune cards: 2  
White tune cards: 1  
Unspecified: 21

Summary of boxes according to the number of airs played:—  
3 airs: 2 boxes

4 airs: 12 boxes  
6 airs: 5 boxes  
8 airs: 5 boxes  
12 airs: 9 boxes (all 2 per turn)

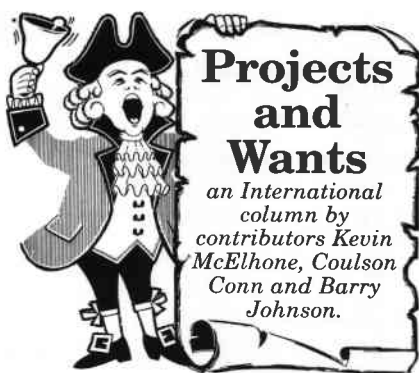
Note: One extra 6 air forte piano box s/n 34515. Details to hand but not yet on Register.

*The Registrar*



### Nicoles with Ratchet Winding

Nicole Freres	23782	—	781	6 air. Ratchet wind.	R-490
Nicole Freres	25224	*	931	4 Overture. Forte-piano Grand Format. Ratchet wind.	R-2157
Nicole Freres	25226	*	?	4 Overture. Ratchet wind.	R-513
Nicole Freres	27679	*	971	3 Overture. Forte-piano. Ratchet wind.	R-2151
Nicole Freres	27801	*	1235	4 Overture. Ratchet wind.	R-540
Nicole Freres	27806	*	1394	4 Overture Mandolin Forte-piano Grand Format. Ratchet wind.	R-541
Nicole Freres	31021	*	1396	4 Overture. Grand Format. Ratchet wind.	R-577
Nicole Freres	31023	*	1404	4 Overture. Grand Format. Ratchet wind.	R-578
Nicole Freres	31611	—	?	4 Overture Forte-piano. Ratchet wind.	R-1404
Nicole Freres	32029	*	1396	4 Overture. Grand Format. Ratchet wind.	R-589
Nicole Freres	32071	*	1367	4 Overture. Ratchet wind.	R-591
Nicole Freres	33513	—	1316	12 air. 1 per turn. Ratchet wind.	R-618
Nicole Freres	34409	—	*	12 air. 1 per turn Forte-piano. Ratchet wind.	R-625
Nicole Freres	35157	—	?	12 air. 2 per turn. Ratchet wind.	R-639
Nicole Freres	35484	*	1551	6 air. Ratchet wind.	R-643
Nicole Freres	36216	*	1642	8 air. Ratchet wind.	R-2170
Nicole Freres	36249	*	1630	3 Overture Forte-piano. Ratchet wind.	R-2124
Nicole Freres	36360	—	1403	12 air. 2 per turn Forte-piano. Ratchet wind.	R-649
Nicole Freres	36680	*	1348	8 air. Forte-piano. Ratchet wind.	R-652
Nicole Freres	36790	*	1712	4 Overture. Forte-piano Grand Format. Ratchet wind.	R-654
Nicole Freres	36793	*	1713	4 Overture Forte-piano. Ratchet wind.	R-2570
Nicole Freres	36796	—	?	12 air. 2 per turn Forte-piano. Ratchet wind.	R-655
Nicole Freres	37440	*	1382	12 air. 2 per turn. Ratchet wind.	R-1917
Nicole Freres	37872	—	?	6 air. Ratchet wind. (Has also normal key)	R-672
Nicole Freres	37960	—	1516	12 air. 2 per turn Ratchet wind.	R-678
Nicole Freres	38558	*	1826	8 air. Ratchet wind.	R-694
Nicole Freres	38783	*	1986	4 air. Variations. Grand Format. Ratchet wind.	R-2156
Nicole Freres	39394	—	?	12 air. 2 per turn. Forte-piano. Ratchet wind.	R-716
Nicole Freres	39800	—	1982	12 air. 2 per turn. Ratchet wind.	R-1559
Nicole Freres	39825	—	?	6 air. Forte-piano. Ratchet wind.	R-723
Nicole Freres	40991	*	1326	8 air. Ratchet wind.	R-2471
Nicole Freres	43985	*	2129	6 air. Hymn box. Ratchet wind.	R-2259
Nicole Freres	50628	*	5087	8 air. Ratchet wind.	R-2262



## Projects and Wants

an International column by contributors Kevin McElhone, Coulson Conn and Barry Johnson.

Let us first start off with a request for more reader input—it's frequent that a fellow enthusiast will tell one of us over the phone or at a meeting how much they like the column, then go on to tell us what they want, or are doing. But they never bother to write to us! But the rewards to us all make it worthwhile!

We start with a note from our colleague in The Netherlands, Niko Wiegman, that the Utrecht Museum is having an exhibition entirely devoted to musical boxes, with many rare boxes being shown. This will run from May until September 1994, so include it in your plans if visiting the continent (or living there). The thought of the Utrecht Museum also brings to mind the project of reproducing Libellion books that Coulson was trying to co-ordinate, because that museum has a Libellion and agreed to make its books available to copy. They turned out to be the 42 note (3000) series rather than the 54 note (4000) series I was seeking. In fact, I heard about 100 note Libellions, 42 note Libellions, and even found an article in a back issue of the American Journal about a smaller, (2000 series) Libellion, but the only other 54 note box had no books at all! I offered to have mine copied for him if he bore the costs, but he shied off. So there we stand. I sent one of my books to Glynn and Ron Keisler in Lexington, SC, USA, and they determined that they could copy these books if we could get a punch made for the centre holes, and Barry Johnson was considering making such a punch, but then the project sat for lack of more interest.

I did receive a nice letter and photos from Frank Trigueiro, Box 95, Willamina, OR 97396. Frank has had a nice looking 42 note Libellion for some years, but has never had any music for it. Could anyone spare a book, or make some

of this size available for copying?

I received a letter from Ron Schmuck in Ontario, (RR4 Mount Forrest CDN) who says that he has recently finished an Arbour (*I think you mean an "ARBUR"*). Ed.) dance organ, a street organ, and some "O" Nickelodeons. His next project is to be the Wurlitzer Harp, A or B, and asks for any good information, especially about the pickers. He also asks about people cutting 125, 150, or 165 Wurlitzer Music beside Playrite. Finally he is working on a "Repo" Encore Banjo, and would appreciate information about pickers and music rolls.

Bill Jelen of Bam-Bam Piano Rolls, 787 Dayton St. Akron, OH 44310-2242 has started producing 88 note player piano rolls of Rock and Roll tunes, and has a small catalogue available to those interested.

Kevin also renews his requests for listings of the following: Aeolian 116 pipe organ rolls, Aeolian 176 note pipe organ rolls, Wilcox and White 58 note organ titles, and the Gem cob organettes - 20 and 32 notes, so if you have any tunes could you please forward them to Kevin. Also, Kevin has a 10 tune tremelo barrel piano made by E. Bartoldi, 810-812 Laconia St., Philadelphia RA. and he asks if anyone knows anything about this maker. Coulson should, but doesn't, so can anyone help?

Jim Brady, 2725 E. 56th St., Indianapolis, IN 46220 has made a 19<sup>5/8</sup>" Polyphon case, has made the gallery for a 15<sup>1/2</sup>" Polyphon and can duplicate any pediment or gallery. He has also rebuilt 3 cylinder organ boxes where the pine wood has dried and cracked. He has recently made a base cabinet for a 26" Monopol box, and also the pediment for the same. He can supply any of the above.

Also should be mentioned Dr. A. Kochar, 460 Wexford Rd., Valparaiso, IN 46383, who advertised in the News Bulletin showing 2 style of bases, but has done a very nice job at reasonable prices of copying other bases. Both Coulson and Rick Cooley were pleased with the bases received, and Coulson has ordered 3 others, all for rare boxes.

That's it for now – please send Project and Wants correspondence to me, Kevin McElhone, 159 Beatrice Road, Kettering, North-

ants, NN16 9QR. As you will see, the column has attracted much overseas interest, now let's have some input from the English collectors for the next edition. I am still searching for Aeolian 116 note pipe organ titles and Aeolian duo-art pipe organ roll titles, the numbers are listed below.

### **Aeolian 116 note pipe organ titles required for catalogue:**

1st Series: 51610, 51644, 51646, 51693.

2nd Series: 1000, 1069, 1156, 1220, 1225, 1308, 1310, 1328, 1333, 1361, 1370, 1371, 1376, 1386, 1408, 1409, 1410, 1411, 1420, 1421, 1422, 1428, 1429, 1431, 1437, 1440, 1443, 1444, 1455, 1456, 1457, 1458, 1459, 1460, 1461, 1462.

Highest number seen so far is 1472. 40 missing titles.

### **Aeolian Duo-Art pipe organ rolls. Numbers missing from catalogue:**

3057, 3059, 3120, 3121, 3128, 3130, 3133, 3135, 3138, 3139, 3140, 3141, 3142, 3144, 3145, 3146, 3147, 3178, 3196, 3205, 3209, 3217, 3225, 3227, 3231, 3237, 3240, 3241, 3242, 3244, 3245, 3246, 3248, 3250, 3267, 3282, 3323, 3332, 3334, 3335, 3336, 3338, 3341, 3343, 3344, 3345, 3347, 3349, 3350, 3351, 3352, 3354, 3355, 3360, 3361, 3367, 3372, 3373, 3395, 3411, 3412, 3413, 3414, 3418, 3422, 3426, 3428, 3434, 3435, 3441, 3442, 3455, 3456, 3459, 3460, 3463, 3470, 3483, 3485, 3490, 3493, 3495, 3499, 3500, 3502, 3504, 3505, 3506, 3518, 3519, 3520, 3523, 3527, 3529, 3531, 3532, 3533, 3542, 3544, 3546, 3547, 3548, 3549, 3553, 3568, 3569, 3580, 3590, 3592, 3593, 3595, 3597, 3609, 3621, 3642, 3650, 3652, 3653, 3654, 3655, 3657, 3658, 3659, 3660, 3663, 3665, 3666, 3667, 3668, 3669, 3670, and above.

**Note:** "Players" needed for many of the other rolls as well.

**Wanted:** Photo-copies of Duo-Art Bulletins Nos. 4 and 6. ■

## Have you paid your 1994 subscription yet?

Have you paid the correct amount of subscription for 1994. If not please send to Subscription Secretary:

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# VIENNESE-STYLE MUSICAL BOXES

— Why are they so different? —

by  
Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume

The world of mechanical musical instruments is redolent with unsolved mysteries, inexplicable events and facts for which reason seems to play little if any part.

A clear example of this concerns musical boxes which were made in the Austrian and Hungarian empires.

For many years I have been puzzled by the so-called Viennese-style of cylinder musical box. Although neighbours across the mountains, the Austrian and Hungarian musical box makers produced musical boxes which were very different in style from those made in Switzerland.

The first and most obvious difference was that the combs were arranged with the treble on the left and the bass on the right. The style of governor was also different, driven downwards instead of upwards by the interposing of an extra wheel, of large, fixed diameter, meaning that the speed of the movement was determined by the maker and, unlike the Swiss and French products, was un-alterable. Then the cylinder pins are longer and stiffer.

## IDIOSYNCRASIES

Nobody has ever explained *why* the Austrian industry was so devoted to being different because in the past collectors have tended to view these differences as mere national idiosyncrasies. There was, however, a very real purpose and the fact of the matter is that it wasn't just because the Austrians wanted to be different. More to the point was that they *had* to be different.

The Austrian musical box

industry was founded in or around 1815. It followed a very specific historical event, so one can be absolutely certain of the date of the circumstances which led up to its formation.

At least two men appear to have been prime movers in its formation. They were Anton Olbrich and Frantisek Rzebitschek. These were the first of a small band of craftsmen who all made products to the same overall pattern. So far, the names of only eight of these craftsmen have come to light, the most recent being during the early spring of 1993 when, characteristically, I was researching something else. The names are the names of those who signed their work and as such they so far represent the entire known industry.

## SIMILAR STYLE

Here I was struck with a rather perplexing situation. Besides appearing idiosyncratic, these Viennese movements demonstrated an illogical existence unless there was a far greater, hidden influence behind their work. There was sufficient evidence to suggest that these Viennese makers were working separately, presumably as competitors, yet their musical boxes were all of similar style and that was a style completely different from that of the Swiss.

It was, on all counts, an illogical situation.

One might understand this if, say, Vienna was the other side of the world from the Jura mountains. But, of course, it isn't: it's a mere 740 or so kilometres as the crow flies. It was as if somebody had sat in a cafe over a

cup of coffee and explained to an engineer briefly how a Swiss cylinder musical box worked. The engineer then went and made his own version from the verbal description – and sold copies of the drawings to a handful of rival makers.

That didn't seem to be a valid explanation and I felt sure that there had to be a far more plausible if not logical explanation. As it turned out, there was.

To set the picture, however, we must look at that country which today is called Switzerland and focus on that portion which was about to become the celebrated *cradle of the musical box* – the valleys of the Jura mountains.

## FRENCH INFLUENCE

The musical box industry was sired in a land which was torn by conflict. It found strength to mature during a period of sharp religious divisions and strong French influence which continued until as late as 1814.

To view in perspective the turbulent times in which craftsmen worked and made a living we must briefly outline the history of a nation which really did not come into being until after the first musical boxes appeared.

The territory was previously known as the Swiss Confederation with the word 'Swiss' deriving from *Schwyz*, one of the oldest seats of the confederation. It was created from portions of each of the imperial kingdoms of Germany, Italy and Burgundy for united defence against a common foe – the Hapsburgs. Sandwiched between the Holy Roman Empire to the North, the East and the South, it also had the warring French to the North and West. It was thus in the uncomfortable position of being at the hub of almost continual conflict in central Europe.

Geneva had become the capital of Burgundy in 426. It was allied to the Swiss cantons in 1584 and returned to France in 1798, being once more admitted to the Swiss Confederation on December 30th 1813. But this is ahead of the story.



\* The involved relationship between the Confederation and France was such that the outbreak of the French Revolution could not fail to affect the Swiss. This came to a head with a bloody war which culminated in the fall of the nation to the French in 1797.

Several years earlier in Paris, a group of notable Swiss had formed what they called the Helvetia Club and, after the fall of the Confederation, this was expanded and, with peace and unity foremost in mind, led to the formation of the Helvetic Republic in April, 1798. The respite was, though, short-lived and by 1799 war again ravaged the Swiss territory for three long years until France again restored control.

During this time, some of the valleys of the Jura fell to the French. It was an extremely difficult time for the nation and the workers in the watch and musical box crafts must have been perpetually fearing that battle would break out in their midst.

### UNDER THREAT

Bonaparte was partially responsible, in his capacity as mediator, in forming a proposal for peace in 1803 at which time the name 'Switzerland' appeared for the first time.

For the ten years which followed, Switzerland enjoyed peace and prosperity under the new constitution with France. However, as Napoleon's influence began to wane, so Switzerland found itself increasingly under threat from marauders. Worst fears came true when, in December 1813, the Austrians boldly crossed into Switzerland, challenging the 1803 abolition of the constitution which, like Swiss neutrality, had been guaranteed by Napoleon.

The conflicts continued with increasing frequency into 1814. The strife and the uncertainty of life had, though, taken its toll. Switzerland wanted permanent exclusion from being a battleground and being seen as a land to be reclaimed by too many sides. It chose to negotiate for its freedom and neutrality.

On August 7, 1815 the new constitution was sworn by all cantons with the exception of one (Nidwald) which later agreed after armed force had been applied. This constitution formed what came to be known in history as the Treaty of Vienna which, in effect, guaranteed Switzerland both the independence and neutrality it so fervently sought.

### NEUTRALITY

The Swiss people now planned a new and democratic federation within which the government would shift every two years between Bern, Zurich and Lucerne. These formed the three *Vororte* or central administrative offices. Not until 1846 did Geneva begin to play a leading part in the nation's affairs.

This neutrality did not, however, bring peace to the new Switzerland. There were further battles, invasions and uprisings at places like Neuchâtel. There was religious conflict and there was also tension between the German, Italian and French-speaking factions.

In the years up to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Switzerland was probably the most democratic country in the world. It was a small republic formed of a confederation of 22 cantons, three of which were divided so that in reality there were 19 cantons and six half-cantons. This confederation had been created almost subliminally as a means of protection during the preceding centuries. The confederation as a whole was not homogeneous in its population, however. Of its inhabitants in 1914, some 65 percent were German, 23 percent French and 12 percent Italian<sup>2</sup>.

### CRUCIAL REASON

The historical ability of these diverse groups to get to live together contentedly was the result, at least in part, of several reasons, the most crucial of which was that the cantonal governments had extensive powers, for in the confederation only certain delegated powers belonged to the national government. Extensive local government, therefore, made it possible for each canton

to manage its own local affairs as it chose.

But there were other inherent difficulties which the Swiss had to confront. Inaccessibility was one of the main problems. The Jura Valley could not be in a worse place as far as transportation went. Most goods had to be brought overland via tortuous mountain routes in the pre-railway days. As for sea access, the Mediterranean and Adriatic free ports were as difficult to reach as Paris and Le Havre. The river Rhone was of little help to the musical box makers of Ste. Croix.

### RAILWAY LINK

Raw materials had to come in by difficult and arduous routes, and manufactured goods had to follow the same path out. As regards travel across Europe, there were geographical limitations. The first important event which improved matters was the building of the narrow-gauge railway to link Ste. Croix with Yverdon on the main Neuchâtel-Lausanne railway line. Then followed the building of the St. Gothard Tunnel<sup>3</sup>, opened in 1880, and, to the south, the Simplon Tunnel in 1906. These events made a major contribution to opening up Switzerland's trading opportunities with Europe and the rest of the world.

Even so, as late as 1898, an enterprising traveller was able to claim a record for succeeding in journeying the 960-odd kilometres between Basle and London in a mere 14 hours and 35 minutes.

### POPULACE

Although a polyglot nation by the very seeds of its founding, it was not until 1803 that Switzerland started to admit its French and Italian subjects as additional to its predominantly German populace. And in 1848 the capital city was fixed at Bern.

In terms of trading overseas, while Britain had long-established connections through the watch, wood and cloth trades, America was, in trading terms, a difficult territory and it was not until 1898 that Switzerland was

accepted by the United States as a 'favoured nation'.

So much for the state of the nation. Our investigation into how this political situation overlaid the historical development of the musical box means we must return to 1815 and the peace negotiations. Although as outlined above there were repeated instances of invasion, they were of a diminishing nature and the peace developed into a lasting one.

But that Treaty of Vienna had been bought at a hard price.

### DENIED ACCESS

The Treaty enforced strict trading embargoes and clearly stated that the products of the Swiss were to be denied access to the Austrian market. This meant that as from the signing of the Treaty, Swiss clocks, watches and musical boxes were prohibited from being imported. The preservation of Switzerland's independence and neutrality would then be at cost to its industry<sup>4</sup>.

One can imagine that musical boxes were not unknown in Austria prior to the signing of the Treaty in 1815. After all, Switzerland had been exporting to Austria for many generations. In fact, so strong had been the Swiss presence in Austria that watch and clock-makers had seen no point in making musical boxes because of this competitive strength. Now, though, with that product withdrawn, Austrian makers could consider confronting that opportunity and set about filling the void. And, although it had been hard to consider previously, the starting-point for that industry was the Swiss musical box mechanism.

### HEAVY PENALTIES

While French and Swiss-made musical boxes are so similar as often to pose an identification problem today, the Austrian makers knew that if their musical movements even so much as *looked* like the Swiss ones (or, come to that, the French ones), then they could be suspected of importing the parts or even the whole movements. And that would be illegal and could result in heavy penalties.

There was only one clear way out, then. The Austrians must go to quite extraordinary lengths to make musical movements which were visibly different. One can imagine that the Swiss movement was systematically evaluated and a different solution found to almost every part. It must have been like trying to get around a patent!

There was, however, considerable economic incentive to undertake this re-design since the Austrian makers now had a virtual guarantee that their market would be free from competition. So it was for something like 75 years until the German makers entered the foray with products from Leipzig and Berlin.

If the Austrian makers were forced to develop a different way of making cylinder musical boxes, they also encountered problems which they had to solve as best they could without recourse to Swiss expertise. One of these problems seems to have concerned the cylinder cement.

### DIFFERENT CEMENT

Once the Swiss discovered the benefits of partially filling the pinned cylinder with this substance, the beneficial effects were such that nobody could ever again hope to market a musical movement which produced the thin, tinny sound of the very early unfilled cylinder movements. Makers such as Einsidl and Anton Olbrich had to develop their own cement without, presumably, knowledge of how the Swiss made theirs. The Austrian cement is thus quite different in substance and behaviour from that used across the mountains in the Jura. It is almost entirely formed of shellac with little or no filler substance. This means that unlike the glutinous consistency of Swiss cement, the Austrian cement would have been very much thinner and far less thixotropic. And in filling the cylinders there was clearly a problem with the cement tending to get onto the cylinder arbor where it would stick and restrict the movement of the cylinder along the arbor for tune-changing.

To reduce the effect of this problem, the Austrian makers wrapped strips of paper around their cylinder arbors before fitting their cylinder end-caps and cement filling – a very different procedure from the Swiss practice. These strips of paper are interesting since they would tend to use whatever material was on hand. Papers have been seen taken from manuscript music and even lists of trade suppliers from the 1840-50 period<sup>5</sup>.

### DOUBLE PINNING

Also, the Austrians used very low-melting-point solder for the cylinder end-caps.

But they did develop to a high standard the musical aspects of the musical box, in particular the masterful creation of the single-comb *forte-piano* movement (better described as the *expression* musical box) through the skilful process of double-pinning.

I trust that this casts a fresh light on the Viennese-style musical movements which, in my opinion, are all of a very high quality.

Notes:

1. Ord-Hume, A. W. J. G: *Joseph Haydn and the Mechanical Organ*, University College Cardiff Press, 1982.
2. Bennis: F. Lees: *European History since 1870*, Crofts, New York, 1938, p.202.
3. Interestingly, it was another man named Favre who engineered the St. Gothard tunnel which was begun in 1872.
4. For an account of the contemporary scene, see Bowring: *Report on the Commerce and Manufactures of Switzerland*, a government paper presented to the House of Commons in mid-1836. Dr. Bowring's paper was prepared from a report sent to him by one M. Houriet, described as 'an intelligent manufacture' and dated January 1836. Extracts from this can be found in *The Penny Magazine*, Vol. 5, August 20th, 1836, pp. 322-24.
5. My thanks to Jim Colley of Clonmel, Irish Republic, for sending me one of the papers he has found.

Here follows an up-to-date list of Austrian makers of musical boxes and movements. This like the foregoing, includes material never before in print and is an extract from the author's forthcoming new book on Musical Boxes and their Technical and Musical Development which is to be published in 1994 by Schiffer Publishing of Atglen, Pennsylvania, USA.

## VIENNESE MAKERS OF MUSICAL BOX MOVEMENTS

**Bartel (Bartl), August:** Schmalzhofgasse 16, Mariahilf, Vienna, Austria. Listed in 1867 as a spring-maker but by 1874 as a maker of musicwork. Produced very good quality Viennese-style cylinder musical movements. By 1881 at this same address is listed Edmund Bartl as a spring-maker and maker of musicwork. The relationship is unknown.

**Einsidl (Einsiedl), Franz:** Vienna, Austria. In business in 1847 as a maker of Viennese-style musical movements. Combs are stamped 'F. Einsidl in Wien'. He died in 1879.

**Olbrich, Anton:** Vienna, Austria. Clockmaker who is considered to be one of the founders of the Austrian school of musical box manufacture and who, with Rzebitschek, pioneered the so-called 'Viennese-style' of musicwork with a comb having the bass teeth on the right, treble on the left. There were two makers of this name, father and son. The father worked between 1820 and 1847 and Anton junior is known to have been in business between 1843 and at least 1858. It is likely that it is the work of Anton junior which concerns us here. Maker of very good class musicwork and single-comb *fortepiano* movements created by the double-pinning technique. Movements mainly intended for automata, clocks and pictures and thus seldom found cased although some were sourced as complete musical boxes. Made use of unusually long cylinder pins on a small cylinder. Combs were always finely tuned and deeply resonant.

**Olbrich, Josef:** Mariahilferstrasse 103, Vienna, Austria. Maker of very fine quality musical movements who was at work from 1846 until at least 1868. Probably related to Anton Olbrich and possibly his brother. Produced very similar work. At the Dublin International Exhibition of 1865 he showed 'musical boxes, playing Irish, Scotch, English, German, and Italian melodies.' Sometime around 1870 it seems his business was taken over by one Josef Wyskocil. See also under Wyskocil, Josef. At the Exposition Universelle held in Paris in 1855, 'A Olbrich of Vienna' was awarded honourable mention for the quality of his musical boxes as was Jaccard Frères and Lecoultré-Sublet, both of Ste. Croix.

**Rzebitschek, Frantisek:** Prague, Bohemia. Began work in 1813 as a watchmaker in Josephan, Bohemia, and became one of the founders of the Austrian musical box industry which produced the Viennese-style musical boxes. He and Anton Olbrich separately pioneered the cylinder musical box in Austria after the ban on Swiss imports contained in the Treaty of Vienna in 1815. At the Great Exhibition in London in 1851 he won first prize for musical boxes – four were displayed playing two, three, four and six tunes. He made small movements for use in clocks, pictures, sewing baskets, goblets and other domestic articles. His movements were imported into Britain by Brugger & Straub.

**Rzebitschek, Gustav:** Prague, Bohemia. Son of Frantisek Rzebitschek, he produced musical movements similar to those of his father. At the Exposition Universelle held in Paris in 1855, was awarded 2nd class medal. No doubt to assist his marketing outside his home country, he adopted the spelling of his name as Gustav Rebeck which name appears on many of his combs. Gustav took over the running of the workshops in Prague in 1870 and the business finally closed in 1897.

**Schidlo, G:** Vienna, Austria. This name stamped into the comb of a Viennese-style musical

movement in the Ryder Collection, New Jersey. Not found in directories.

**Willenbacher, Alois:** See:

**Willenbacher & Rzebitschek:** Prague, Bohemia. Makers of high quality Viennese-style musical movements for use in clocks, musical pictures, animated scenes and so on. Alois Willenbacher was born around 1796 and learned the craft of watch and clockmaking. He married on February 4th, 1834, the same year in which he entered into partnership with Rzebitschek who was probably his master. See Rzebitschek; also Rebeck.

**Wyskocil, Josef:** Vienna, Austria. Referred to in Heinrich Lunardi: *Alte Wiener Uhren und ihr Museum*, (p.50) as a musical clock maker, also produced musical movements. One musical box seen (in the Ryder Collection, New Jersey) has printed on the tune sheet 'Josef Wyskocil (vormals Josef Olbrich) Wien.' Since it has long proved very hard to date the works of the Olbrichs, this one movement is important since it means that it was produced after Josef had ceased business. A key lies in the programme. Six tunes are played (Musik Nr. 6330; Zahl-Nr 23443445) starting with the 'Radetzke March' (Strauss snr, composed 1848), 'Piece aus der Ouverture zur Oper: Wilhelm Tell' (Rossini, 1829), 'Zigeuner-Leid aus ser Oper: Trovatore' (Verdi, 1853); 'Priester-Chor aus der Oper: Norma' (Bellini, 1832), 'An den Schönen blauen Donau Walzer' (Strauss, 1867) and 'Der Wacht am Rhein Leid' (Karl Wilhelm). This last piece was composed in 1854 by the German conductor Karl Wilhelm and it became a national song during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. The high *Zahl* might suggest that Wyskocil continued Olbrich's numbering system. The probability is that this box was made around 1870-75. As late as 1909, the music industry directory shows a Barbara Wyskocil, described as 'formerly Jos. Olbrich', in business at VII, Zieglergasse 36, Vienna, as a manufacturer of small reed instruments, organs and harmonicas. ■



# Identical Polyphon/Regina Advertisements

As far as we know now the Symphonion factory, "Fabrik Lochmannscher Musikwerke A.G." Braustrasse 13-19, Leipzig-Gohlis, Germany was the first maker of disc musical boxes, established in 1885 by Oscar Paul Lochmann with two partners. Gustave Brachhausen and Paul Riessner, the two senior employees of Lochmann's factory left and established the Polyphon factory in 1890. The first Polyphon had been exhibited for a short time at the fall-fair at Leipzig in 1890. On the 21st July 1892 the factory at Wahren was formally opened. In September 1892 Gustave Brachhausen went to America to establish a branch factory for Polyphon. At first the firm sold music boxes, imported from Polyphon. By the Autumn of 1894 Regina was producing its own instruments in Rahway, New Jersey. The Regina Music Box Company became the dominant factor in the American market for disc-type boxes. So we can assume that the two related factories were as a matter of fact no real competitors. Another proof of this remarkable relationship is the interchangeability of some sizes of Polyphon/Regina discs, f.e. 15½" (=39,5cm).

The unsurpassed John Ernest Thomas Clark (born April 17th, 1884 - died October 14th, 1965) describes in his book "Musical Boxes, a history and an appreciation" (3 editions, 1948, 1952, 1961) the connections between the

by Hendrik H. Strengers

Polyphon Music Works and Great Britain: "... the first London agent was Bender and Co., of Wilson Street, EC London. A Mr. Starlacker was head of this concern. They were supplied with Polyphons - only the small table patterns at first - by the Leipzig agent, Peters and Co., who afterwards supplied Henry Klein and Co., of Oxford Street, W. The next Leipzig agents appointed by the Polyphon Music Works were Ezolt and Poppitts (real names "Etzold and Popitz"!!), who, in due course, supplied Nicole Frères when this

latter firm took the agency for the sale of Polyphon in 1890 ... " The address was 21, Ely Place, Holborn, London for some years. It is curious that the magnificent drawing by an unknown artist was used by both Polyphon and Regina:

- 1) The Cosmopolitan, 1897: The Regina Music Box (original size 14½ x 10cm = 5¾ x 4⅛") and
- 2) The illustrated sporting and dramatic news, January 8th, 1898: Nicole Frères' Polyphon Musical Box (original size 25 x 9cm = 9⅞ x 3½").

Has anyone seen other identical advertisements? ■

*THE COSMOPOLITAN.*



**THE REGINA MUSIC BOX**

—THE QUEEN OF MUSIC BOXES.—

**A MOST ACCEPTABLE HOLIDAY PRESENT.**

Plays Thousands of Tunes.

Not a reed instrument, but rendering on a steel comb the most exquisite music with a brilliance and richness of tone peculiar to itself, and never found in any other box. These boxes run from 10 to 25 minutes with one winding, have nothing about them to get out of order, and furnish delightful music for dancing, or for entertainment in the parlor and dining-room, or to soothe the baby in the nursery.

**ALL THE LATEST MUSIC:** Selections from Robin Hood, Rob Roy, Sousa's Marches, Popular Songs, Grand and Comic Operas, Waltzes, Etc.

Not like other music boxes, but stronger and better made, richer and more brilliant in tone, made with handsome cases in all kinds of wood to match any room. So simple that a child can operate them, and the tune discs being of metal are indestructible. The prices of these boxes place them within reach of everybody, and they are a source of continual pleasure to every household where introduced. **Boxes from \$12 to \$100. Send for handsome illustrated catalogue.**

**REGINA MUSIC BOX CO., Rahway, N. J.**

JANUARY 8, 1898

THE ILLUSTRATED SPORTING AND DRAMATIC NEWS

787

## NICOLE FRÈRES' POLYPHON MUSICAL BOX

Plays any Number of Tunes,  
including  
all the Latest Music, and is  
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Moderate Charges.

**NICOLE FRÈRES, LTD.,** Manufacturers & Importers of all kinds of Musical Boxes, **21, ELY PLACE, HOLBORN, LONDON, E.C.**  
Established 1815. LEIPZIG. GENEVA. NEW YORK. Established 1815.

# Collector's Showcase

## Ami Geneux cylinder box

I recently (2 years ago) was asked to repair a fairly distressed musical box. The owner had been advised that it was a rare item, and the charges involved were agreed.

Most of the restoration work was done by George Worswick, who had considerable difficulty owing to the condition.

However, as Arthur Ord-Hume states that he has seen only one Ami Geneux cylinder box, there is some possibility that it is indeed a rare item.

Unfortunately, circumstances did not permit me to photograph the finished product, so what I have enclosed are photos taken of the mechanism "Aux Naturelle."

Some idea of the level of rust can be seen from photo 1.

The serial number is 16991, below a small 8 – photo 2.

Photos 3 and 4 show the letters "G" and "J" stamped into the bedplate. The "G" is between the third and fourth comb screws from the governor end. The "J" is below the first screw from the governor end, and can be seen in photo 1.

Photos 5 and 6 show governor and winding arrangements.

Photo 7 shows (unclearly) the name "AMI GENEUX" in raised letters on the comb casting on the underside of the comb. ■



Figure 2.

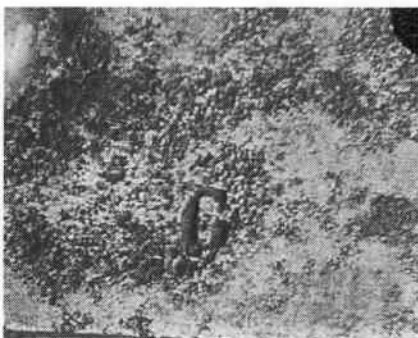


Figure 3.



Figure 4.

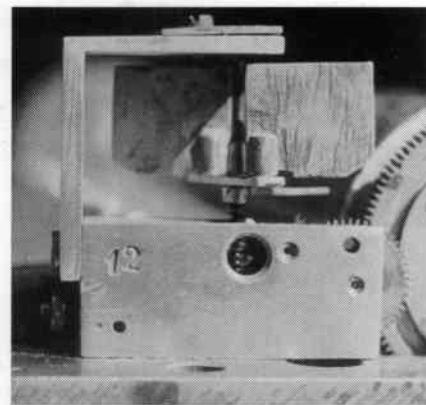


Figure 5.

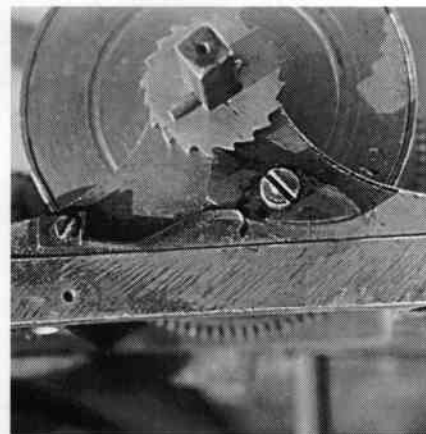


Figure 6.

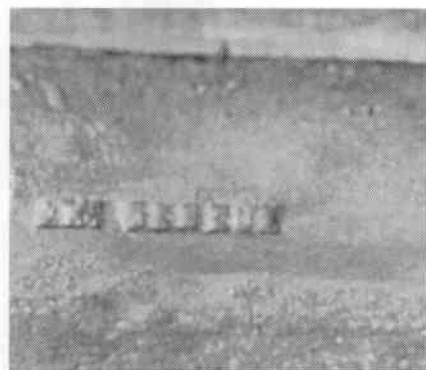


Figure 7.

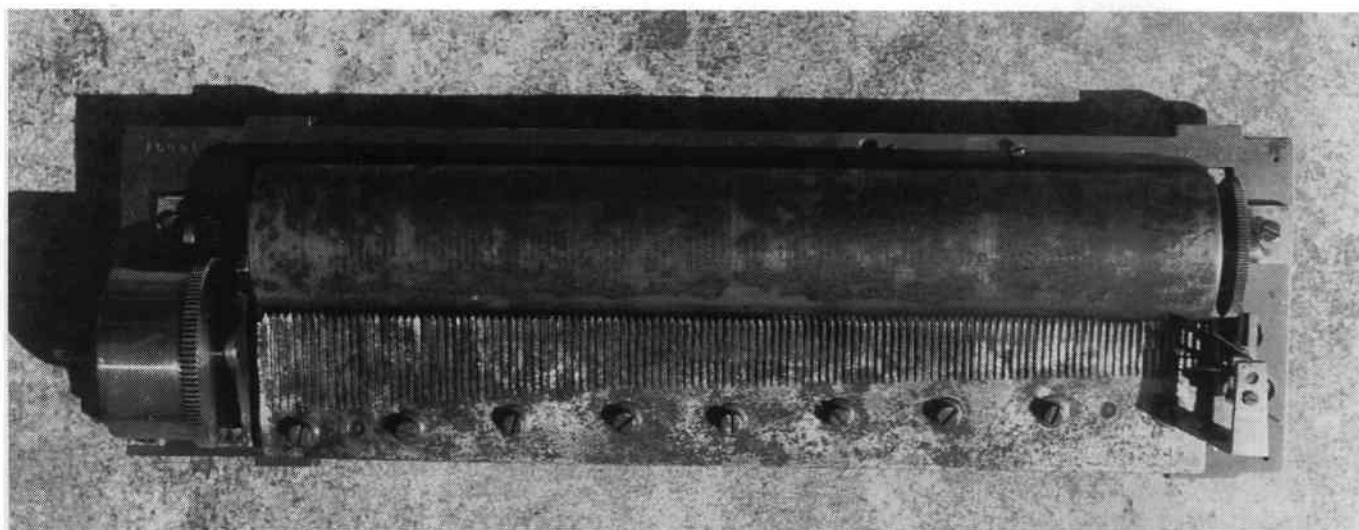


Figure 1.

# Musical Box Oddments

by H. A. V. Bulleid

Number 60

Richard Genée (1823-1895) was a German composer and conductor who also wrote successful librettos for Strauss, Suppé and Millöcker and translated some of the Lecocq, Offenbach and Sullivan (or, rather, Gilbert) librettos into German. He studied music in Berlin, was Kapellmeister in several cities including Riga, Cologne and Prague, and was conductor at the Theater an der Wien, Vienna, from 1868 until he retired in 1878. Of his many operettas and part songs the only ones likely to appear on tune sheets are the part song *Italienischer Salat* (*Italian Salad*, a send-up of old style opera) and two operettas . . .

Der Seekadett (Naval cadet) 1876

Nanon, landlady of the Golden Lamb 1877

The *Anna* Waltz and the mazurka from *Nanon* are on Polyphon 1047 and 1121.

## Bremond 759

This 9-bell box, illustrated with tune sheet in Oddments 59, has 5733 cylinder pins of which 589 play the nine bells. The cylinder is very accurately drilled and no pin adjustments were needed after re-pinning and raking. So probably all pricking errors were noticed and marked – including the big

one on tune 5 where the bell pins were first pricked about 1½mm late, as shown in Fig. 1. The 13 by 2.13 inch (33 by 5.4cm) cylinder has two iron dividers and weighs 420 grams empty and 1290 grams (2lb 14oz) with a full load of cement – that is, almost masking the 1" dia. holes in the dividers. The tunes sound best at one minute, cylinder surface speed .11" (2.8mm) per second. Governor to cylinder gear ratio is 1540.

A large G is cast in the brass of the music comb which has 83 teeth. The eight tunes are played by 5144 pins, averaging 643 per tune, 11.5 notes per second. The bells average 74 pins per tune and 1.3 bell strikes per second. The *a* teeth are nos. 25 and 26, relative stiffness 230.

Counting from the bass end, and in order of increasing pitch, bells 1 to 5 are in the lower tier and 6 to 9 in the upper, see Fig. 2. As usual the bell comb teeth are in pitch order so the order of the strikers is . . .

1 6 2 7 3 8 4 9 5

Lovers of symmetry tend to dislike the bell array becoming comparatively thin towards the treble end. Many later bell boxes adopted a roughly symmetrical arrangement which incidentally baffled some restorers resulting in misplaced bells and musical mayhem.

It is a pity the bells on Bremond 759 cannot be silenced because on some tunes they tend to mask the attractive decorative trills provided by 83

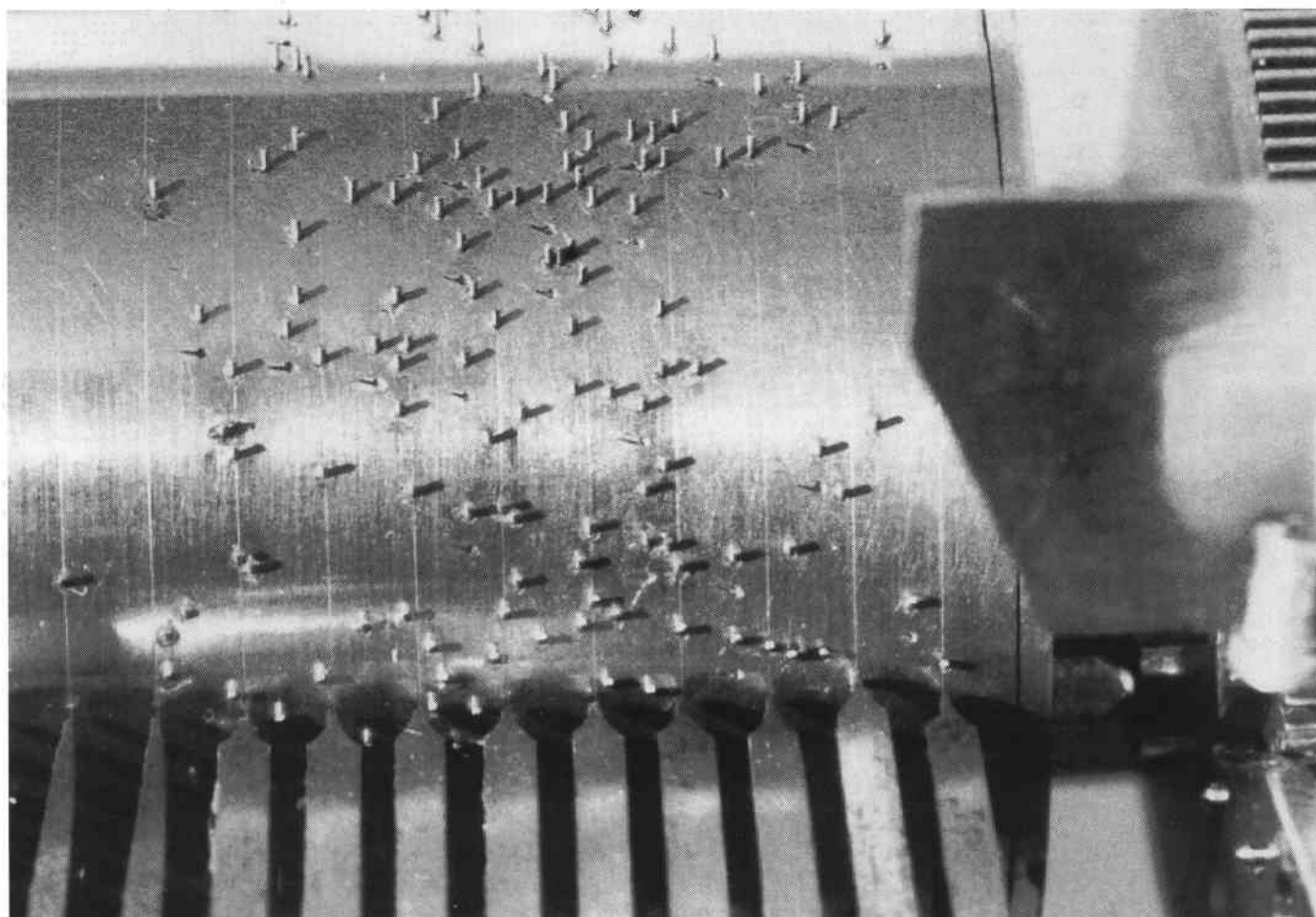
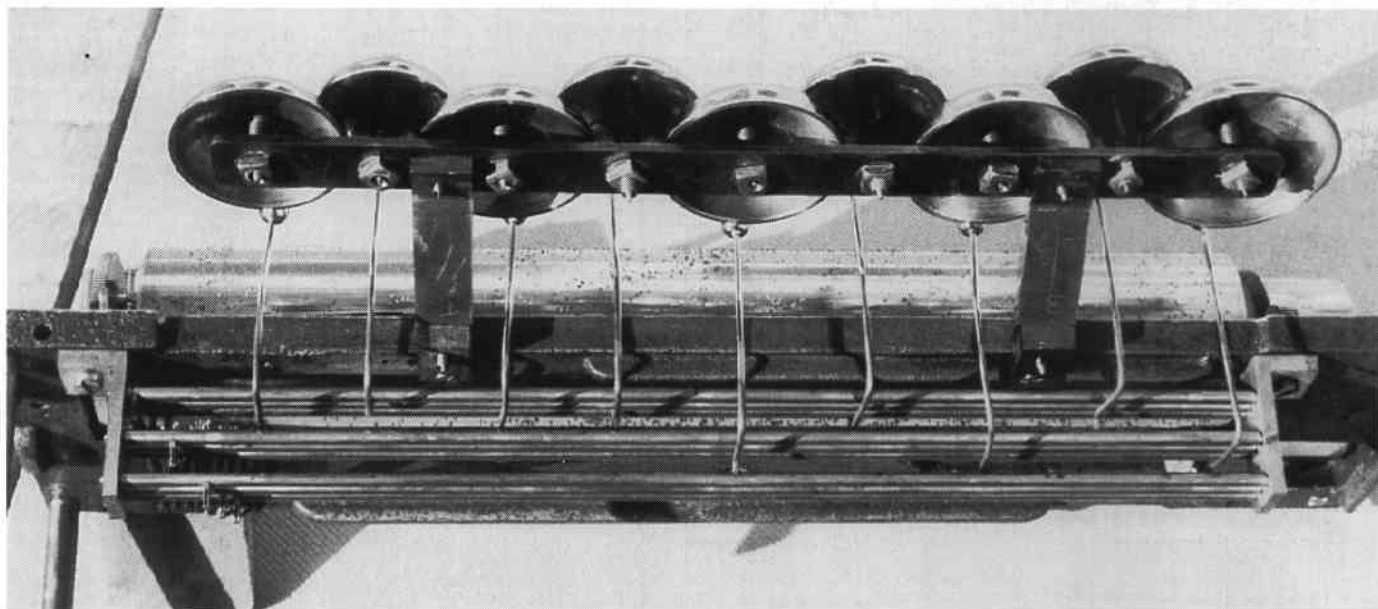


Fig. 1. Treble end of Bremond serial 759 cylinder, showing cancelled pricking marks on tune 5. Tune 8 is on the track lines.





**Fig. 2.** The bass end is at the right in this view of serial 759 bells seen from the back. Bell 9, of highest pitch, is at the left end of the top row.

comb teeth. No provision was made for an on/off lever, though the necessary notches were cut in the brass bars on the bell teeth.

Blank number 39 is stamped on the bedplate edge and on most cylinder and spring components and the governor. Gamme 577 and serial 759 are scribed on cylinder end cap and bass tooth lead. It seems extremely unlikely that any maker could get to gamme 577 at a serial number as low as 759. The latest tunes are 1865 making 1866 a probable manufacturing date for the box. So it is tempting to suggest that the real serial number is 10759, which would nicely fit the Bremond dating chart; but I think this is unlikely, with several Bremonds reported with serial numbers ranging from 10019 to 10988, written in full.

### **Winding levers**

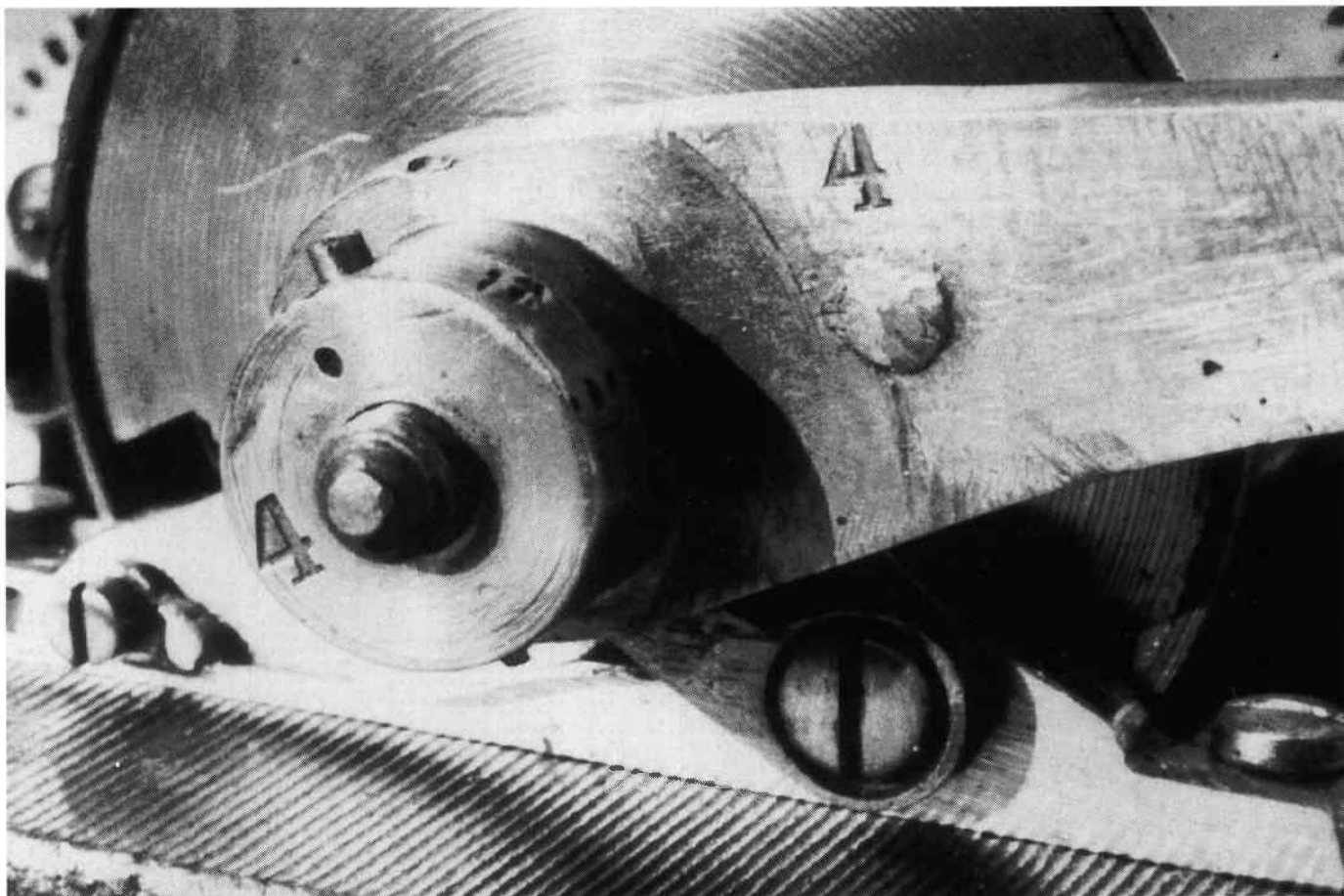
The winding lever of Bremond 759 had been reversed by a previous restorer, as shown in Fig. 3.

Besides looking horrible and ousting the spring partition, it reduced the winding provided by the correctly curved lever by a third, from about 135 degrees of arc to 100. The lever was also very loosely mounted, as is common on many boxes seen at auctions including some restored movements.

A loose winding lever is a source of two evils: it can cause unwanted noises and it is liable to get so much looser that it falls off. There are several different designs of winding lever assemblies but they all depend on correct fixing by a steel pin through the spring arbor. This pin should be a tight fit in the arbor *and* hold the brass washer tight against the lever. If the pin is jammed against the brass washer while loose in the arbor it will ultimately work loose and meanwhile will probably cause uneven stiffness of the lever. In a better design, commonly seen on Rivenc boxes, the pin passes through a separate collar, see Fig. 4. Then



**Fig. 3.** Serviceable but clumsy replacement steel click spring made for serial 759 but fitted to the wrong side of the winding lever.



**Fig. 4. The technically superior winding assembly design with pin securing a separate collar, here seen on Rivenc serial 38618.**

using a taper reamer a perfect fit of the pin can be achieved and the collar presents uniform support for the lever, tightened as necessary by inserting a suitable shim or washer.

### **Cylinder end caps and dividers**

I admit being momentarily surprised, on cleaning

the end caps from Bremond 759, to find, cast in small capitals on their unseen inside faces, DUCOMMUN GIROD. Then I realised it simply meant that Ducommun G. supplied certain details to the Blank makers, see Fig. 5. But it was the first time I had seen a "personalised" end cap so I enquired around and collected useful data from



**Fig. 5. Cylinder end cap of Bremond serial 759, outside diameter 24 lignes.**



**Fig. 6. Cylinder end cap from a movement of unknown make, with cast-in Adre. SOUALLE and code 19.**

George Worswick. He has seen several with Ducommun, and occasionally others, all unconnected with the maker of the box and thereby confirmed as suppliers to the blank makers. One name I cannot trace is ALEXANDRE GIORCELLY. The other was very unexpected, – ADRESOUALLE which is the accepted abbreviation for Alexandre Soualle, reported as a maker in the 1860 period, working near St. Denis, about six miles north of Paris, see Fig. 6. So he probably had a brass foundry and supplied castings to the blank makers.

These end caps also had code numbers and letters: P.12 on Giorcelly, T and 19 on Soualle, and 24 on Ducommun. I think they are simply the maker's code numbers, though the 24 on Ducommun Girod happens to be its cylinder diameter in lignes.

More baffling is the cylinder divider shown in Fig. 7 marked BARILLEY 14. I assume the Y is merely a substitute for a missing T and since barillet = spring barrel it may have started life as a spring cover and then suffered damage or redundancy. Nothing was ever wasted so it could easily be turned to cylinder size with bore enlarged to serve as a cylinder divider. These dividers came in all sorts . . . from specially made zinc castings to

quite tatty bits of mill-finish sheet iron, accurately finished, of course, on outside diameter.

### Bells

Bells below the bedplate were first added to musical boxes in the late 1840s, sometimes to top class boxes such as Langdorff and Metert serial 5011 made in 1849 with 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ " cylinder, Forte Piano, six airs, 11 bells.

Everyone agrees that the bells surfaced, so to speak, in the middle 1860s. They were certainly widespread in and after the 1870s, but the earliest date and the earliest maker of bells in view are proving very difficult to fix. I have traced one by L'Epée in 1865 and one by Ducommun Girod in 1864 but I feel sure there are many earlier examples. The Bremond serial 759 was probably made in 1866.

The last boxes with hidden bells were probably made in the mid 1880s, so the two types were both in demand for a period of at least twenty years – proving that the greater versatility of hidden bells was more appreciated then than now. It is a bit strange that most of them also had a drum, luckily fitted with a silencer. Much to my surprise some of them even had "Hidden Bells" as their tune sheet





**Fig. 7.** Barillet means a keg or, horologically, a spring housing. Here it appears cast in a cylinder divider. A pity they are always called dividers – they are in fact rings to keep the cylinder in shape and they are always so called by George Worswick who kindly supplied Figs. 6 and 7.

heading, an example being serial 7774 playing ten airs with  $10\frac{3}{4}$ " cylinder, six bells, make unknown but with an "Isle Rousseau" tune sheet headed "Mit Verborgenen Glocken" (concealed bells). It has two 1883 tunes including the Strauss operetta *Eine nacht in Venedig* whose premiere was in October 1883. As usual with hidden bells boxes the bells are more part of the tune and there is no means of turning them off; the separate bell comb has six teeth, only one striker per bell as usual on later boxes; and, comparatively unusual, no drum.

### **E. and A. Paillard**

At last three early Paillard boxes have turned up, all having the tune sheet type shown in Fig. 8, printed in blue and inscribed modestly at the right side of the lower border E & A P f. I assume this stands for E and A Paillard fecit – I think they would have put a capital F if they had meant Frères. The Fig. 8 tune sheet belongs to serial 1600, key wind, with  $9\frac{1}{4}$ " (23cm) cylinder playing six airs, in plain case, the serial number stamped in small figures at the bass end back corner of the brass bedplate.

Serial 4233 has a similar key wind movement but the case lid is inlaid.

Serial 5867 is an early lever wind type with 11" (28cm) cylinder playing eight airs. Cast iron bedplate. The latest tune so far traced is *Oh Susanna*, 1848; but tunes 1 and 8 are *Star Spangled Banner* and *Hail Columbia*. Surprisingly these

both date from the 1790s. Periodic new arrangements helped to sustain their great popularity, making accurate dating almost impossible, but I am sure it is safe to assume there were popular arrangements in vogue and available at Ste. Croix in 1860.

E and A Paillard were always forward-looking makers, so I think they would be among the earliest to change from key to lever wind, probably during the period 1859 to 1861. Therefore serial 5867 was made before 1862 and so the Paillards must have reached serial 5000 by 1860.

This involves a change to the Paillard dating chart on page 22 of Vol. 16, Fig. 4 where point 1 must be in a second set of serial numbers, the first set starting before 1840 and reaching 5000 in 1860.

### **D. Allard**

I hope we are safe in assuming that when Allard and Sandoz provided tune sheets bearing their names and their AS monogram endorsed Fabricants (makers) they were telling the truth. If so, they made serial 1157 whose rare tune sheet type is shown in Fig 9. It is an eight air sublime harmonie movement with 13" (33cm) cylinder. The bass lead is scribed 1157/46, the comb base is from SBI, and the great wheel has the mysterious asterisk (Vol. 16, page 21) under blank code number 90. The latest tune is no. 2, 1877, so the box was probably made in 1881 or 1882; Allard started up in 1880. This must rate as an early Allard.



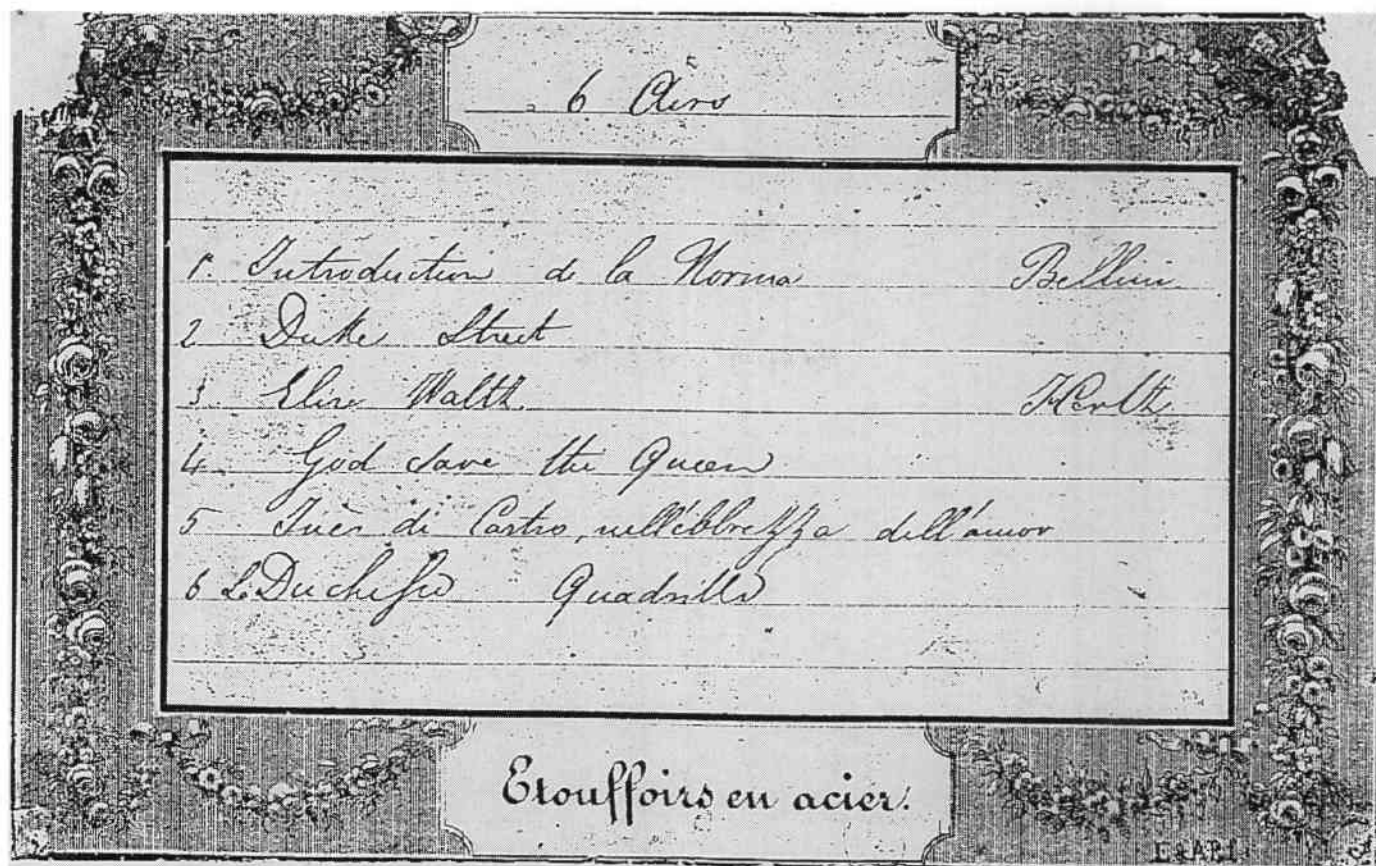


Fig. 8. E. & A. Paillard tune sheet, 6¼ by 4" (16 by 10cm) for serial 1600 probably made about 1845. Tunes 2, 3 and 6 not yet traced. The latest of the others is *Inès di Castro* by Persiani, 1835.

The same tune sheet on serial 5867 has the E & A P f neatly crossed out with vertical strokes, suggesting a selling agent who did not want any distraction from his own name. I suggest naming this the 'E & A Paillard tune sheet.' Further examples would be very welcome, particularly with not-too-obscure tunes. (I have a growing "failed to date" list).

Two Allard and Sandoz tune sheets are known with simple geometric borders, one shown as Ord-Hume no. 3 for serial 4526. It has two 14" (35cm) six air cylinders, organocleide, all tunes before 1865. At top centre is an eagle holding a pinned cylinder, headed *Marque de Fabrique* and *Trade Mark*. The other, on serial 4267, has the same trade mark but no other writing in the top border. It is a Concerto Piccolo. Unlike Fig. 9 both these tune sheets give their cylinder lengths and diameters in pouces and lignes, and their serial numbers.

### More Agent's tune sheets

L'Epée had several selling sources in France, including Emile Mennesson of Rheims. His tune sheet, Fig. 10, is more like his trade card, with two thirds about the Company and a scant third about the musical box. St. Cecilia is the patron saint of music, feast day November 22nd. LUTHIER BREVETE means maker and supplier of patented and diploma-awarded musical instruments. The banner claims two gold medals from Portugal and he was a supplier to the main Conservatoires and to the Emperor of Brazil. Here the tune sheet is on a L'Epée box made in 1887, with tunes from operas, mainly early, latest *Carmen* 1875. (The Tapissiers are upholsterers).

Another retailer of L'Epée boxes was Ferdinand Wurtel of Paris, a name associated with automata

and tabatieres but not cartel boxes. He got hold of some Ducommun Girod tune sheets and overprinted the bottom border *Maison Wurtel, Passage Vivienne 38 et 40, Paris*. One was applied to Epée serial 37795, lever wind, 6" (15cm) cylinder playing four airs, latest from *Le premier jour de bonheur* by Auber, 1868. The box was made in 1870, according to the chart on page 229 of Vol. 15.

### Fiction

Here is author Jonathan Gash in "The Lies of Fair Ladies," 1992, revealing Lovejoy's advice about the valuation of musical boxes . . .

'Acker!' I cried, shoving him into the limelight to see. 'Great to see you! Musical box? Nicole Frères?'

'Shhh, Lovejoy, you burke!'

'Is it mint?' A musical box in mint condition's worth four times the amount you'd get if it has a tooth missing from its comb – the metal bit that plucks the tune from prongs on the revolving drum.

This box was just over two feet long, the right size. Get one with a fat cylinder, with the names of classical pieces on the lid's escutcheon, and you've found a genuine long-playing 'overture' box. Top value. They are wound by a simple key.

'Yours for a year's wages, Lovejoy.'



Fig. 9. Tune sheet 9½ by 6" (24 by 15cm) for Allard serial 1157, 13-inch Sublime Harmonie. Unlike some other Allard and Sandoz tune sheets it omits the heading, the serial number, and the cylinder dimensions.

'Eh?' I gasped at the price. We talk in fractions of the nation's average annual wage – monetary values being the shifting sands they are. I mean, King William III – of William and Mary fame – bought all Kensington Palace for 14,000 quid. See what I mean? 'That's robbery!'

Acker sniggered. 'You know it's a steal, Lovejoy.' Acker means a.k.a. – 'also known as'. He uses aliases.

(The average annual wage at April 1992 was £15,800, making that Nicole a nice little earner).



Fig. 10. Emile Mennesson tune sheet, plain black print 8¾ by 5¼" (22 by 13cm), on L'Epée serial 20130, made about 1887 with 8½ pouces = 9" cylinder.

## Under the Hammer



The highlight of the sale at Christie's South Kensington on December 9 was the collection of the late Bob Burnett, a past President of the M.B.S.G.B. (whose obituary appeared in *The Music Box* last Summer). He was known especially for his knowledge of singing bird and snuff boxes, and these formed the bulk of his collection.

There were nine cartel boxes though, while at first sight these were far from showpiece examples, each was a fine example of its type or had some unusual feature. An overture box by Nicole Freres (No. 41333, so not particularly early), with a standard 12¼ x 3½ inch cylinder played to perfection (well, almost - there was a damaged tip) and proved the most expensive item of the collection, at a hammer price of £7,500. A small organ box with a 7½ inch cylinder showed that organ boxes can sound attractive, and its unusual layout (the keys extended straight downwards, the gap normally occupied between the combs being filled by a tune indicator) doubtless helped towards its £1,600 result.

A charming little four-air mandolin box with an 8½ inch cylinder reached £1,500, and one with a two-tooth sectional comb and a watch on the front of the case achieved £2,800.

The small boxes started with the singing birds, and the very first lot proved to be the most expensive, at £7,000. This was a Rochat in a tortoiseshell case, and a note accompanied it recording an inscription inside the bellows, 'Ami Rochat Geneve 1837'. Another Rochat box, unsigned apart from the triple flowerhead mark, was knocked down at £5,000. A Bruguier was £3,800, but two others by Bruguier, in silver-gilt and enamel cases were £4,500 and £5,500, the lower price reflecting some restoration to the enamel.

Among the snuffboxes, pride of place went to two overture movements by Bordier. Each played one overture in two revolutions: the first, playing *Der Freischütz*, brought £4,500 (probably a record auction price for a plain tortoiseshell cased box). The second, musically its equal, played *The Marriage of Figaro*, and reached £2,000. It had a large piece of replacement tortoiseshell on the lid, and thus no tune sheet, which the *Freischütz* box had, but that would surely not

account for £2,500: it just goes to show that you never know what's going to happen at auction.

Other high prices were achieved by fine cases - two with micro-mosaic lids at £3,800 and £3,400, a Bordier with an enamel picture at £1,300, one with an underglass painting at £2,400 and a tortoiseshell box with glazed silver decoupage in the lid at £3,000. Conventional tortoiseshell and black composition boxes (all above average examples) were in the £400-£800 bracket. The last item in the collection was a copy of the 1958 English version of Chapuis & Droz' *Automata*. It was inscribed to "Dr. Robert Burnett, as a small appreciation of our friendship - Cyril de Vere Green, Hon. Sec., Musical Box Society of Great Britain." £90 was the price of this little piece of M.B.S.G.B. history.

There were some notable results elsewhere in the sale, as well: a Sublime Harmony piccolo box with 15-inch cylinder reached a staggering £8,500 and the Oiseau Chantant box shown in the Christie's advert in the last *'Music Box'*, in need of a full overhaul, brought £13,000. So did a Regina 27-inch disc box in upright oak case, this one having been restored.

(Prices quoted are exclusive of the Buyers Premium - still only 10% at Christie's South Kensington).

## Wanted

### Articles for publication in the "Music Box"

Let the membership as a whole benefit from the experience of individual members. Write a letter or send a complete "article." Photographs of unusual pieces are also required for "Members Showcase."

Address your correspondence to:  
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## Letters to the Editor



Letters sent to the Editor may be reproduced in part or whole, unless marked, "Not for Publication." Due to the amount of work involved in producing the "Music Box" the Editor regrets he cannot answer all letters personally.

### Street organ scales

**Ian Alderman writes from Old St. James, Chedington, Beominster, Dorset DT8 3HY:-**

A curiously bleak and ill-informed view of street organ scales was expressed by the chattering organ grinder in the last issue of Music Box. It is evident that the writer does not understand what prompts organ builders to go in for so many different scales, which he seems to regard as different languages, rather than one language, some with more extended vocabularies than others.

Modern organ builders have inherited scales from the past, and while some builders newly taking up that work invent scales of their own, these instruments have little possibility of commercial success because of the lack of music to play on them. Ideally one would like an instrument to have a chromatic compass, like a grand piano – but then you quickly discover that you have invented the Symphony Orchestra. Thus the street organs before us today are the result of many compromises, and the best of the makers have always kept musicality as the guiding principle (as opposed to sheer noise).

When an organ builder provides the performer with registers (additional ranks of pipes) he intends the player to use them, to alter the tone colour and make the performance more sensitive and musical. The assertion that registers shouldn't be changed during the course of the music is nonsense.

The 26 note scale which I use is not difficult to understand, although the writer of the chat notes singularly fails to do so. The most commonly found 20 note paper roll organs use a 110mm wide roll of paper. The 20 holes only occupy about 2/3 of this width.

Earlier issues of the Music Box have given the 20 note scale, which is, broadly speaking, a C major scale, with F#'s. The 26 scale adds accidentals to this scale, which are placed on the wide margins of the standard roll. 26 note organs can play both 20 note rolls and 26 note rolls, something which the writer of the chat column has failed to comprehend.

The 26 scale is not too dissimilar from the 31 scale, which is the "next

size up" of commercial street organs, but whose rolls cost twice as much as 20 and 26 rolls. Most importantly, the 26 scale is as musically competent as the 31, or as nearly so as makes little difference for the arranger:

(GA)CDFGAA\*BC(C\*)DEFF#  
GAA\*BCC\*DD\*EFF\*GAA\*(BC)

(the notes in brackets are within the 31 scale).

20 note rolls are available from so many suppliers, and the list of titles must run into many hundreds, probably thousands, so it was a commercial decision that prompted this workshop to produce organs which would play them. The 26 note rolls are available not only from me, but also from Melvyn Wright, who is not only a gifted arranger in his own right, but also uses the arrangements by men such as Kevin Byrne, whose music borders on the miraculous. All our arrangements are "outstanding!"



### Gakutensoku Doll

Can anyone help me with something which I have been working on for months without any success. I am a researcher for a Japanese TV production company in London, and am trying to find the whereabouts of a certain Gakutensoku, Japanese mechanical doll (see picture). It was built in September 1928 by a Japanese scientist called Mr. Nishimura, and sent to an exhibition in Germany either in the same year or in 1929. Apparently someone bought it, and sent it to a second exhibition, but by then it was not functioning anymore. No one has heard of it since then. I have contacted many museums in Germany, but was thinking of another way to locate the doll, maybe through exhibitions which were held in Germany in 1928-1929. Is there any way in which you could help me at all? Perhaps you have heard of this doll through professional contacts? Does anyone have records of exhibitions which were held at the time?

If you have any suggestions at all would you please contact: Tele-

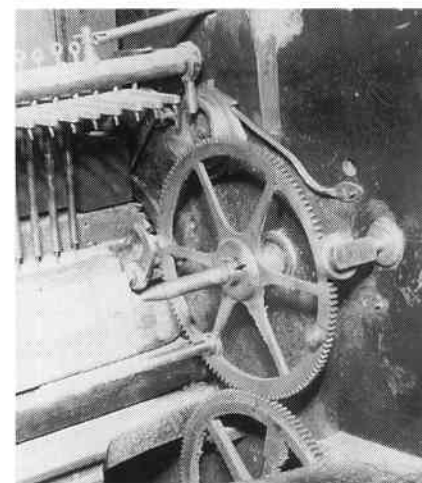
Search (Europe) Ltd., Unit 30, The Grand Union Centre, 334B Ladbroke Grove, London W10 5AH, England. Tel: 081-960 1999 Fax: 081-960 9770.

### Schoepperle organ clock

**Mr. A. Rigg writes from County Durham:-**

I enclose photographs of wheels, levers and pinions of a Black Forest barrel organ, I need information from any source that will help me bring it back as near as possible to its original condition. Some work is required on the automatic tune change but it plays well with an excellent tone on a good selection of tunes from four barrels. I need to know:- How would it have been cased originally, details of the type of clockwork motor it used to have, and whether or not it carried a clock dial?

The tune indicator disc is inscribed IGNATZ Schoepperle in Lenzkirch, he lived 1810 - 1882. In 1849 together with Edward Hauzer he established a small company making flute clocks and small orchestrions which may indicate that this organ is pre 1849. Any suggestion or indication of sources that would be useful, would be very welcome.







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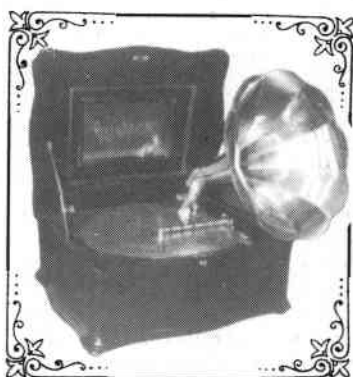
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