

An International Magazine of Mechanical Music

Volume 16 Number 6

Summer 1994

# The Music Box



## Inside

Pyke Clock at Burton Constable

A Look at the History of Mechanical Musical Instruments

An Arranger's Manuscript Scale

Toxophilites' Reunion?

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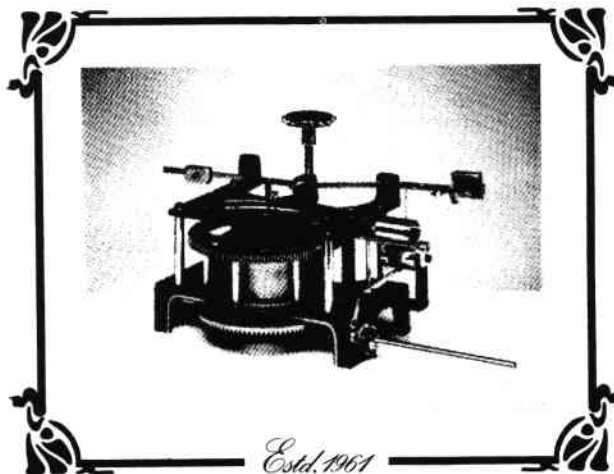
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# The Music Box

An International Magazine  
of Mechanical Music

The Journal of the  
Musical Box Society  
of Great Britain.

Volume 16  
Number 6  
Summer 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:

The Organ Grinder from a members collection, artist unknown.

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## Editor's Notes

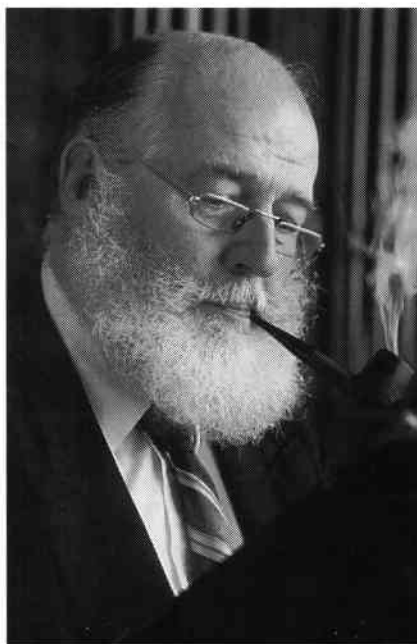
In presenting my annual report to the Society's AGM on the 26th March, I invited comments and questions from the floor on the last twelve months issues of Music Box. Two comments came forward; the first was that all letters to the Editor should be published and the other was regarding delays in publication of Music Box.

The letters column is available in which members can exchange ideas, comment on society matters and to debate points of interest in matters past and present relating to the subject of mechanical music. Opinions expressed on mechanical music of the past can hardly offend its manufacturer. Opinions expressed on currently manufactured items or topics can cause embarrassment and I have to consider whether the comments refer to the product or the person or indeed both. Joseph Schumacher, a long standing member of MBSGB has recently pointed out to me that some letters allowed for publication already go too far, which he sees as potentially a personal affront against another member and likely to cause dissension within the Society. It can be difficult to know where to draw the line otherwise no one could say anything about anything but if the reader has sent a letter which has not been published the chances are that it is in this category.

On the matter of publication, the distribution dates are printed on the classified page of each edition. So too are the copy dates. The production of Music Box is not dependent on the editor alone. Many other contributors, not just the writers of articles but the writers of reports, meeting information and the compilers of advertisements must in turn forward all of their material before production can commence. Many of these people have jobs or other commitments and can only compile what they have when they have the time to do so. It must be remembered that all this work is done completely voluntarily and I can only ask those involved to try and observe the copy dates, I cannot insist that they do. I am very dependent on contributors and advertisers and reluctantly take the view of "better late than never." These comments however emanated from a very "minor minority," I think. Most members I feel would rather have a complete magazine a little late than important information and advertisements missing, yet published on time. If I am wrong, please let me know as I would prefer to deliver to the majority of members just what they want. ■

## SOCIETY TOPICS

### Message from the New President



Arthur W J G Ord-Hume

I am honoured to have been elected your President for a second term: I last held this office from Spring 1976 until Autumn 1979 at which time I handed over to Jon Gresham.

My own involvement with mechanical musical instruments goes back many, many years but suffice to say I had to learn the hard way in my then workshop on the Isle of Wight. Nobody did any serious musical box repairs in those days and musical boxes were cheap to the point of being disposable. At this time, repairs to combs seemed to demand cutting up a better comb and soldering it into place.

After much trial and error I got to the stage when after I had worked on a musical box it still played and after a bit longer I finally got to the stage where I learned how to improve them. I found out how to make comb teeth and fit them and eventually how to do the job so that the new teeth did not look like an accident in a solder factory.

Soon I was doing repair work for people like Sunley in London's George Street and then, together with Gerry Planus, helping John E T Clark (whose sight was rapidly failing him) with his repair workload.

All this brought me into contact with several other people who were interested in musical boxes and then I met Cyril de Vere Green. The upshot was that we contacted a number of people during the summer of 1962 and held a couple of informal meetings at which people like Murtogh Guinness and Stanley Farmiloe gave their support to a proposition to form a society.

On December 1st, 1962, the first-ever meeting of the MBSGB was held at the Mandeville Hotel in London. There were some thirty people at that event which marked the birth of our society, a birth which was the culmination of a long period of gestation for it was almost a year earlier that the idea of a society was first mooted.

There were 20 founder members. John Clark (membership number 1) was first president and Cyril de Vere Green first secretary. And, with membership number 4, I was first editor.

Looking at that gallant battalion of 20 names, I am saddened to have to say that at least 14 have already been gathered in to that great musical box shop in the sky.

That leaves six names of which, to the best of my knowledge, only two remain in the Society. I am proud to be one of them.

When first we started, the literature available for our education was limited to works by Clark, Buchner, Mosoriak, Chapuis, Hoke and Jacot, works which, with the exception of three, were in a popular vein.

We set about compiling our own reference source as we went along. It was called "The Music Box."

Our goal in those pre-Christmas days 32 years ago was to band together all those with an interest in mechanical music so that we could learn one from the other.

I believe we did that astonishingly well. We did it through friendship, through comparing notes and research, and by talking, studying and observing.

Today I am proud to inherit leadership of this society for the second time in two decades. What I find is that the Society has changed a lot and I am somewhat saddened to find that the high cost of musical boxes seems to deter the introduction of vital young blood into our organisation.

I find also that the emphasis of the society has changed over the years with rather less overall

activity in research and history. This I feel is a pity for it is in this field that we, the MBSGB, led the world.

Our skills in research inspired others to follow. I well remember the late Hughes Ryder, then our Vice President, talking to me about the American society journal. He said how much he wished it could be like the journal we published.

Then came the president of the now-moribund French society, Claude Marchal, who said that they would seek to copy us in every way they could - and I knew that this was the sincerest form of flattery.

Finally came Dr Jurgan Hocker, founder of the German society. He stood in my then West London home and said that what he dreamed of was a German magazine which set the same high standard of research and reference as *The Music Box*, and, as many of us know, he has achieved that with admirable results.

It is, however, no fault of an editor if he cannot maintain a magazine standard. The fault lies with those who do not write, research and remit.

Our present editor is starved of good material and I am amazed he still manages to produce a magazine at regular intervals.

You have entrusted me as your new leader. I hope that my period of office will see the expansion and fulfilment of the objects of the Society. I do want to see more inter-collaboration, more research and more good original writing.

Traditionally, when an editor has to resort to using pictures of smiling people posing with their instruments, you know that there's not much going on under the hat!

Let's see that we don't become an also-ran in a field which, despite the fact that we are a mere 32 years old, we pioneered. We have at least one writer who continually comes up with interesting material for the *Music Box*. I am sure he would enjoy competition and this means that we must work together to pool knowledge and resources.

One of my first tasks is to find out just what you, the members, want from your society and from your *Music Box* magazine. I am already receiving fulsome advice from certain members but I want to hear from you all in due course.

It would be unthinkable to end without reference to our immediate past-president, Alan Wyatt, who has done so much to advance the interests of the society during his four years of office. He has brought the society through a period of world recession and difficult financial times. He steps down on a high note but I know I shall be relying heavily on his experience and knowledge during the coming months.

For the meanwhile, then, change is invariably a time of concern yet change and progress are inevitable. I would like to see more people taking an active interest in history and research. That way we can help each other and along the road keep producing a fine magazine. I do not forget that for many of you who for one reason or another cannot attend meetings, "*The Music Box*" is your lifeline and your only contact with the society you support.

**Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume**  
*President* ■

## From our Past President

Having retired as President of the Musical Box Society after 4 years and having been a committee member for 12 I reflect as to why one takes on these commitments. It is in my case a strong feeling of gratitude and indebtedness to all those involved in forming and running the Society for so many years. Meetings are held, the *Journal* continues to be published, the business of the Society is managed and conducted quite voluntarily by so many for the benefit of us all.

Our longest serving committee member must surely be Reg Waylett. I cannot recall a time when Reg was not involved with the running of the Society. His knowledge of all aspects from early to present day matters has been vital to the success we now have. In recognition of his valuable contributions the committee at their last meeting took the unusual step of making Reg an ex-officio member of the committee. We are so pleased he has made a good recovery from major illnesses and having retired (if he ever could!) from his business spends more time abroad. We welcome him to

committee meetings when he is able to attend. I am sorry this was not made clear at the A.G.M.

I would like to thank Bob Holden for his many years looking after the financial affairs as Treasurer. He kept us solvent through these difficult times of recession and can hand over the books to the new Treasurer complete and up to date showing a reasonably safe position at the Bank.

I wonder how we will manage without Reg Mayes as a committee member. Reg took great trouble and care to report the contents of our meetings in the *Journal*, taking photographs, jotting in his note book all for the readers benefit. Thank you Reg for this valuable service.

I wish the new President, Arthur Ord-Hume every success during his term of office. I am sure he will receive, as I have, every support and backing of the officers of the Society and the membership as a whole.

I recall the late Frank Holland MBE often saying of the 32 society memberships he held the M.B.S.G.B. was the one he enjoyed most of all. He cherished the many friends he had made and the way we all so enjoyed the many aspects of our interest in mechanical music - it was fun! Surely this is what a hobby should be and let us ensure we retain the happy and enjoyable pleasures that music brings to us all.

With best wishes

**Alan Wyatt** ■

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

### Trip to Amsterdam May 15th - 20th

To include visits to National Museum, Utrecht, Benekom music museum, private collection plus other interesting excursions. A few places still available, contact Roy Ison **at once** if interested. Cost £270 including all coach travel, ferry crossing and half board accommodation in 3 star hotels - 1 night in Brugge, 4 nights in Amsterdam.

### Pick up points

Kendal, Birmingham International British Rail station and Landbeach (Cambridge) before crossing from Dover. ■

**Day Meeting**  
**18th June at St. Albans**  
**Organ Museum**  
**320 Camp Road, St. Albans**  
**(approx. 2 miles from City**  
**Centre)**

**Morning**

Registration £10, to include sandwich lunch, tea/coffee, morning coffee, followed by conducted tour of museum.

**Afternoon**

Society Auction. ■

**Autumn Meeting**  
**2nd - 4th September, 1994**  
**The Old Swan Hotel,**  
**Harrogate, North Yorkshire**  
**Tel: 0423 500055**  
**Fax: 0423 501154**

The Hotel has been operating for over 200 years in 5 acres of garden near the centre of the town. The atmosphere within is ideal for our Society gatherings with a cuisine to revive the most jaded palate and to delight the most fastidious. The hotel alone promises a weekend not to be missed.

**Hotel Package**

Dinner, bed and breakfast, Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd September will be £102 including the Saturday Society Dinner. Additional places at the dinner will be charged at £16.50 and additional days at the hotel before and after will be charged at £51 per day.

**Programme**

Agatha Christie used the hotel to "disappear" to in 1923 and more recently it was used for the filming of "Agatha." An after dinner event on this theme has been promised by one of the hotel's management.

Continuing the mystery theme, Arthur Ord-Hume will be revealing features of single comb piano forte instruments and local organiser John Powell will try to explain some of the tuning features of "Sublime Harmonie" and at the same time to entertain with the help of barrel organ, set of bells, cylinder and disc machines. Saturday afternoon we will be going to York to include a visit to the Automata Museum and intend to have a Sunday morning session in the hotel before our mid-day close.

**Assistance required**

The local organiser would like to hear from any members, particularly those who have more recently joined us, who would be

prepared to give a 5-10 minute talk about a particular or favourite item in their collection. This revives a feature which, I believe, was first organised by Jon Gresham in York in the Spring of 1977 which encouraged me with fear and trembling to stand up and face the Society for the first time.

I would be very grateful to hear from anyone who has a single comb piano forte box who would be prepared to bring it to the meeting to assist Arthur Ord-Hume with his presentation on the subject.

**Notes**

Whilst the Automata Museum has suffered some financial difficulty, it is still fully operational and open to the public.

I hope to have a list of local places to see and things to do for early comers and late stayers at the meeting. If you want a copy before the meeting, an S.A.E. will get you one.

Contrary to rumour, it will not be a condition of attending the meeting that the pump room waters must be taken!

John Powell

Tel: 0532 663341 ■

**REPORT ON PAST**  
**MEETINGS**

**Annual General Meeting**  
**at Brandon Hall Hotel,**  
**Brandon, Warwickshire,**  
**Saturday, 26th March 1994**

At the commencement of the 1994 A.G.M. Jim Hall raised two objections to the Minutes of the previous A.G.M. The meeting did not seem to consider these as serious as Jim Hall but it was decided that a correction to the petition presented by Jim Hall inserted by the Recording Secretary should not appear in brackets following the error but as a footnote at the end of the Minutes.

Under Matters Arising from the Minutes Jim Hall asked why the A.G.M. was being held on a Saturday, which he actual preferred, when a proposal at the last A.G.M. had unanimously been carried for it to be held on a Friday night. The Meetings Secretary reported the circumstances that had caused him to hold the A.G.M. on a Saturday and it was pointed out that the proposal passed at the last A.G.M. did not alter the Constitution, as notice of it had not been given six weeks prior to

the meeting. The current A.G.M. was constitutionally correct.

The meeting being allowed to continue the President referred to the death of David Heeley. He also recorded his gratitude to the former Archivist, Peter Howard, for the way he had kept the archives. Having decided to stand down after four years the President thanked the Committee, Lynn Wright, those who wrote articles for the Journal, attended meetings and ran meetings. He was sure the Society would be in good hands with his successor, Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume.

A vote of thanks from Mr. Bellamy was enthusiastically endorsed by those present.

The Subscription Secretary, Bob Haiselden, reported a current nominal membership of 615, 185 of whom had not paid, an actual membership of 430.

The Membership/Correspondence Secretary reported enrolling 50 new members in 1993 and already 22 in 1994. In answer to a question it was explained that subscription income did not match the membership as some paid five years at once and there were several other distorting factors.

The Meetings Secretary, Roy Ison, mentioned the Dutch trip leaving on the 15th May, the St. Albans Meeting and Society Auction on the 18th June and the Harrogate Meeting, which John Powell was organising, on the 2nd September.

It was hoped Robert Hough would organise a meeting in Spring 1995 but nothing was yet planned for Christmas nor September 1995.

The Hon. Treasurer was unable to be present but his Financial Report was circulated which showed a loss for 1993 of £208.07. Questions were answered by the President who said the Hon. Treasurer wished to thank Stephen Cockburn for auditing the books.

Following a brief report by the Editor criticism was made of late publication of the Journal by John Miller, Richmond Mason and Jim Hall.

It was said by the President that this had given the Committee considerable cause for concern but it was not always the Editor's fault, he was kept waiting for reports,



details of future meetings, inserts and advertisement copy.

Alan Pratt said he thought the Journal represented excellent value for money and he did not care if it was a few days late, which statement was applauded.

The Committee's recommendation to maintain the subscription of £18.00 for 1995 for the sixth year running provoked a long, lively but good-natured discussion.

The many members counselling an increase (at least £20.00, £24.00 and £25.00 were all suggested) said the Society was hovering on insolvency, obviously needed more income, musical box collectors must of necessity be reasonably wealthy and what one got from the Society was excellent value for money, worth substantially more.

The Committee were worried about losing members, every time the subscription was raised no immediate extra income was generated because of the loss of members. Not all members were wealthy and each time the subscription was raised the Subscription Secretary had a terrible task. They favoured infrequent increases but substantial ones and were contemplating next year recommending a subscription of £24.00 for 1996.

Joint subscriptions for married couples to increase income and membership, reduced subscriptions for those under 25 or 30 were other suggestions mentioned.

A compromise proposal by Arthur Cunliffe, seconded by John Powell, was that the subscription for 1995 be set at £18.00 with a strong plea that those able and willing to pay more should be encouraged to do so, which was overwhelmingly carried. Should anything untoward happen during the ensuing nine months, such as the introduction of VAT on publications, the Committee would respond as needed.

Bob Holden, having elected not to stand again as Hon. Treasurer, Richard Kerridge was nominated for that position and five names having been nominated for the three Committee vacancies, a ballot was held, as a result of which the following appointments were approved:-

President:	Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume
Vice President:	Ralph Heintz
Treasurer:	Richard Kerridge
Editor:	Graham Whitehead
Subscription Secretary:	Bob Haiselden
Membership/ Correspondence Secretary:	Alan Wyatt
Meetings Secretary:	Roy Ison
Recording Secretary:	John Miller
Archivist:	Kevin McElhone
Auction Organiser:	David Walch
Committee Members:	Arthur Cunliffe Jon Gresham Christopher Proudfoot

The Committee had appointed Stephen Cockburn as Hon. Auditor and Ted Brown as Advertisement Manager.

The proposal that the A.G.M. be held at the Summer meetings always in the Midlands, together with the Auction, was passed with the deletion of the word "always" in the proposal after considerable debate.

The two proposals that the number of Vice-Presidents be increased to two, or three, were also debated. The majority elected to have two - one American, one British. It was stressed that this in no way diluted the importance of the American Vice-President, it is just that there were several good reasons for also having one in Britain

Under Any Other Business Alan Wyatt mentioned he had been asked to initiate a debate at this meeting on a four page paper concerning the direction in which the Society should be heading. He thought there was insufficient time and a questionnaire would be circulated with the Journal to solicit input from all the members.

Immediately prior to the meeting closing at 12.39p.m., Ken Dickens thanked Daphne Wyatt for all her support of Alan during his Presidency, which was warmly applauded.

Copies of the full Minutes of this A.G.M. are obtainable from the Recording Secretary on application.

## Reg Waylett

It will be noted that the Committee did not nominate Reg Waylett as a Committee Member.

The reasons for this are twofold, illness and visits abroad had prevented him attending some Committee Meetings and it was decided to create an opening for another Committee Member.

Reg Waylett is already an Honorary Member of the Society and it was decided to make him an Honorary Member of the Committee with an open invitation to attend any and every Committee Meeting.

This is a unique action without precedent, but then Reg Waylett is a unique member without precedent. ■

## URGENT REMINDER

Your 1994 Subscriptions are now due, please send your remittance now to:-

Mr. R. Haiselden,  
Martlets,  
High Orchard,  
Pencombe,  
Bromyard,  
Herefordshire  
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## Society Auction

The Society's annual auction will be held on Saturday, 18th June at the St. Albans Organ Museum, 320 Camp Road, (next to Camp JMI School). Auctioneer Christopher Proudfoot (by kind permission of Christie's, South Kensington). A great chance to sell and buy. Commission rates - Buyer's premium 7.5%, Selling commission 7.5%.

# Register News

Some members are finding long lists of numbers in every issue of the magazine rather too much of a good thing. I quite understand it is not of interest to everyone to look through line after line of serial numbers, so I propose to print the Register in alternate issues of the bulletin.

In the other editions, I hope to note points of interest that have been brought to light by the Register returns. Hopefully, I will receive constructive comments from other members on these jottings, so that eventually the final conclusions will be definitive.

To commence, I thought a look at musical box agents would be an interesting exercise as part of the overall history and development of the industry and of the Victorian period.

The Swiss musical box industry must have devised a way of distributing their products all over the world at quite an early stage. Agencies must have been set up in various countries and a distribution system established. Finished boxes were probably sent from the factory by horse and cart to the nearest railway station to be sent to destinations in large towns and cities.

Those boxes bound for England or America must have been suitably prepared for transportation by sea. Presumably, the majority of boxes arrived safely, though some must have been returned marked "Damaged in transit."

Junod certainly sent out directions with one of their boxes

giving the following instructions:-

*"Take out the pieces of cork placed at each end of the cylinder and the pieces of cardboard placed between the teeth of the comb."*

The packing and distribution of musical boxes must have presented many problems. Even today with modern materials and specialist firms, breakages are not uncommon.

Examination of the Agents' labels found on surviving boxes, show that many had their businesses established in the major trading ports such as London, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester and Southampton. Those boxes destined for Germany often have Agents established in Hambourg and other ports. These important agents would no doubt sell on boxes to smaller shops and businesses throughout the land. Some agents were in such a powerful trading position as to have their own design of tune card fitted to the boxes on arrival at their premises. Others chose to add their trade labels. Many of these are still to be seen today.

Names like Keith Prowse are well known and are relatively commonplace. Other lesser known agents occasionally feature on boxes and their advertising can be fascinating.

T. S. Beswick of Liverpool was established in 1845. They had at least two addresses in that city and were sufficiently well established to have their own design of tune card printed. To date 4 lever wind boxes have been listed with their tune card. They

had a monogram with T.S.B. intertwined within a diamond shape.

An early dealer was H. Carter-Bowles of Cheltenham who described his business as being "Watch Clock and Instrument Maker." Obviously selling musical boxes was a natural extension to his clock making.

Less obvious dealers seem to have sold musical boxes from time to time. S. Massey of Fenton was a Chemist whilst Joseph Scales of Dublin proclaimed himself as being "A manufacturer & Professor of the concertina."

Hurt & Wray of Geneva went to great lengths to establish the fact they distributed Nicole musical boxes. They took off governor brackets and had them beautifully engraved in copperplate writing with their name and address. These boxes are all very good quality.

Joseph Riley of Birmingham has his trade label on many Mermod boxes and one wonders if he had sole rights to sell that make in the Birmingham area at that time. Along the same line, Fred Wertel of Paris was a distributor for L'Epee boxes.

Finally spare a thought for Mr Whiteley who traded from Westbourne Grove, London for many years but finished up by being murdered. Let's hope the idea doesn't catch on!

Listed below are various names of agents and distributors of boxes. If you can add to these names or give missing addresses, please contact the Registrar.

## Musical Box Agents

Name	Address
Asser and Sherwin	Strand, London
T. S. Beswick	9, Berry Street, Liverpool
T. S. Beswick	71, Great George Street, Liverpool
Bissen	a Paris
T. H. Briese	Vormals U Eckhardt, Frankfurt /M
A Brugger & Co.	18, Hampstead Road, London
H. Carter-Bowles	Cheltenham
City/Musical Repository	Unknown

M. Cohen	132, Kirkgate, Leeds
Richard Cook & Co.	Fenchurch Street, London
J. Ch. Detmering	21 Wexstrasse 21, Hamburg
C. H. Dick	Vevey
Duck Son and Pinter	1-6, Putney Bridge, London
H. M. Emanuel and Sons	Ordnance Row, Portsea
W. Gingham	Brazier, Hereford
H. W. Glaze	Pershore
Goldsmiths Alliance Ltd.	Cornhill, London
W. M. Harris	?
F. L. Hausberg	Liverpool
Alfred Hays	4 Royal Exchange Buildings & 82, Cornhill, London
Charles Henry	18, Market Street, Manchester. Later:- 22, King Street
Hickie and Hickie	Piano and Organ Merchants, Reading
T. Higham & Son	Musical Instrument Warehouse. 35, Ranelagh Street, Liverpool
Hows and Son	Leicester Square, London
Hurt & Wray	Geneve
Imhof & Muckle	Oxford Street, London
Jacot Music Box Co.	39, Union Square, New York, U.S.A.
Jones & Co.	22, Bridge Street and 42, Castle Street, Bristol
A Kuss	Newcastle
Paul van Leeuwen	Amsterdam
S. Massey	Chemist, Fenton
Metzler & Co.	London
Metzler & Co.	37, 38 & 35, Great Marlborough Street, London
Millikin & Lawley	161, Strand, London
Misquith	India & Burma
Morath Brothers	Liverpool
Muller et Thum	?
Nathan & Co.	Union Passage, Birmingham
J. G. Needham	36, College Street, Rotherham
Parkins & Gotto	24-28, Oxford Street, London
Perrin-Chopard	?
Keith Prowse	48, Cheapside, London
Joseph Riley	25, Constitution Hill, Birmingham
A. B. Savory	11 & 12, Cornhill, London
Sawtell	Bristol
Joseph Scales	26, College Green, Dublin
C. Scotcher & Son	36, Bull Street, Birmingham
W. S. Scotcher	10, Hope Street, Wrexham
H Scott's	John Bright Street, Birmingham
L. Soane	1, Old Bond Street, Bath
J. Teleman	Market Place, Colyton
Wales & McCulloch	23, Ludgate Hill, London
William Whiteley	Westbourne Grove, London (?)
Ferd. Wurtel	Galerie Pioienne. 38 & 42, Paris

# — Pyke Clock at Burton Constable —

Members might be interested in the Table Barrel Organ shown on the photographs below and made by G. Pyke. It is part of the collection at Burton Constable Hall.

It has a 21 key movement built into a mahogany cabinet decorated with fine ormolu gilt mounts. The ormolu work done by G. Pyke was mentioned by Nicolas Goodison in his book "Ormolu the Work of Matthew Bolton."

Unfortunately only one barrel survives from the original total of six, but the complete tune list is still fixed to the lid.

The tunes may all be pre 1770 and I think the organ was made between 1760-1770. There are five stops, 3 ranks of metal pipes, 2 ranks of wood pipes.

The trade label reads as follows, *"Geo. Pyke at the Bird Organ in May's Buildings, St. Martins Lane, London make all sorts of musical boxes for birds, for country dances, minuets and to play concertos all in the neatest manner."*

## Barrel No. 1

1. Pettycoat Loose
2. Bonny Kate
3. Lets Lose No Time
4. Ash Wednesday
5. Hart Hall
6. Galliant Blakeney
7. Topsy Turvy
8. Barley Sugar
9. Soldier Laddie
10. Luckey Bids Me

## Barrel 2

1. Felton Minuet
2. Dragon Pour Boir
3. Bath Minuet
4. Stanley's Minuet
5. Birthday Minuet
6. Scotch Minuet

by Roy Ison

7. French Horn Minuet
8. Lord Cathcart's Minuet
9. Lord Brook's Minuet
10. Miss Fox's Minuet

## Barrel 3

1. Jubals Lyre
2. Charms of Peggy
3. Lass of Patties Milt
4. Fair Kitty
5. Air by Handel
6. Handel Water Piece
7. Gavot by Felton
8. Jigg by Handel
9. Gavot by Mantel
10. Lesson by Handel

## Barrel 4

1. Tanthe the Lovely
2. The Comes He Comes
3. Come Come My Govo
4. Blow Blow the Wind
5. Smiling Dawn
6. Highland Laddie

7. Fill Every Glass
8. God Save The King
9. German March
10. Prince Eugen's March

## Barrel 5

1. Marshall Saxes Minuet
2. Lady Gauntry
3. The German
4. Wediman
5. Musette in Alcina
6. Minuet in D
7. Musette in Amorou
8. Minuet in D
9. Jigg by Arne
10. Jigg in Rinalod

## Barrel 6

1. Charles Hornpipe
2. Hornpipe
3. March in G
4. Granoes March
5. Joy to Great Caesar
6. Gavot by Gladwin
7. Gavol in Otho
8. Air by Kelway
9. Air by Arne
10. Air by Mantel



Address on the barrel.



Barrel organ by G. Pyke.

# A Look at the History of MECHANICAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

When we talk of 'mechanical musical instruments' we refer to that type of instrument which operates or can be operated automatically. Other expressions in common usage at various times describe these as 'self-acting' or 'going by themselves.' The term has come to refer almost generically to this category of instrument whether they are operated strictly by genuine 'mechanical' means (meaning clockwork with springs or weights) or by some other method such as pneumatic (the player piano) or electromagnetic (the Mills Violano-Virtuoso type of mechanism).

There are indeed very many types of instrument which have either been built or otherwise adapted for automatic playing. Of these, the number conceived solely for mechanical operation and without a manually-playable counterpart is small indeed. Amongst these, though, the musical box, wherein a set of tuned steel teeth is made to vibrate via a mechanically-arranged programme, reigns supreme. There is no 'keyboard musical-box' although at least one patent exists for such a device.

## DISCOVERY

We can trace the earliest mechanical musical instruments back into pre-history. It may seem remarkable to us today - perhaps even naïve, but all available evidence points to the fact that primitive instruments of music were conceived of not solely for playing by a human, but also for automatic operation. That this practice was slow to die is demonstrated by the discovery of horological manuscripts dating from as late as the 13th century which describe how to make an automaton player for an organ<sup>1</sup>. Much earlier, in the eighth century to be more precise, there is an illustrated text which describes how to use a series of pinned discs to play a tune on a pipe organ automatically<sup>2</sup>.

by  
Arthur W J G Ord-Hume

This creation of a mechanical performer to play an instrument is a concept which survived into more modern times and the Jaquet-Droz, Vaucanson and Kintzing all successfully created mechanical instruments which were played by mechanical figures. This is where the dividing line between mechanical music and automata becomes less well-defined and when we look at Vaucanson's mechanical flute-player, the Jaquet-Droz's clavecin-player and the cymbalum-player of Peter Kintzing we are looking at what today's lexicographer would define as 'mixed-media' mechanics.

## PINNED BARREL

Throughout these pieces, however, it is the pinned barrel which forms the programme. It controls not just the music but, through the medium of a series of cams and levers, it operates the player as well.

In itself, the pinned barrel is not a 'recording' of actual sound, but represents a programme which has the sole purpose of causing tuned elements to sound in a predetermined sequence. It thus attempts to replace the printed score for the human performer who is told from that score when and where to sound which note. The printed score, though, uses an intermediary which means there is a 'time delay' - the human eye and brain. The barrel is as immediate in action as the linking mechanism can be made.

From this comes a useful analogy first expressed by my late friend Philip Coole of the British Museum who, in determining the difference between a mechanical musical instrument and a gramophone, asserted that:

*In any form the true musical box should be capable of producing music without its*

*programming device because it contains tuned elements. With a little practice, it is possible to play the comb from a musical box: I have yet to find an ordinary person who can get a tune out of a pick-up<sup>3</sup>.*

Mechanical music therefore needs two components in order to happen: tuned elements and a programme. Any random form of sound production is ruled out. Our Middle Ages polymaths - men such as Kircher, Schott and Fludd - understood this and although Gaspar Schott seems mostly to have been a copyist (and a rather poor one at that), Fludd thought up ideas for automatic music which perhaps only the technology of the age prevented from becoming reality. As we have seen earlier, Kircher had a lot to go on. He at least was able to draw from life, taking his themes from mechanisms which he had actually seen working.

For at least six centuries, mechanical music has depended upon the bell. Organs, which appeared sporadically at odd moments since pre-Christian times, only really appeared in practical mechanical form a little after the 15th century while the musical box, at a mere two hundred and fifty years, is a virtual neophyte.

## EARLIEST METHOD

The earliest method of publicly indicating the time of day was the striking of a bell in a tower. This required the services of a minion to ascend the tower at intervals during the day and physically strike the bell with a hammer. As late as 1721, Lewes in Sussex paid one James Pearce or Pierce of that town for 'ringing the bell' to indicate the time<sup>4</sup>.

By the latter half of the 14th century, developments in the design and making of the weight-driven clock had reached the stage where it became feasible to use them in towers. Small wonder,

then, that when mechanical time-indication became possible, an automaton figure was provided to emulate the "Town Johnny" whose job it displaced. This was necessary to indicate the time since dials and hands had yet to be adopted for use on this form of large public clock. The solution was the sounding of the hours on one or more bells struck by androids - artificial humanoid figures who stood endlessly and patiently beside the bell until the hour when they would turn and strike the bell. These androids were called Jacks - short for jaquemarts. These jaquemarts are still to be seen on many clocks to this day, probably the best-known example being those on the ancient Clock House in the Piazza San Marco, Venice. Created in 1497, the hour is sounded by a pair of bronze jaquemarts standing 2.7 metres high and representing two captive Moors, thus glorifying the naval prowess of Venice in the 15th century<sup>5</sup>. Today, though, they do not actually hit the 152 cm diameter bell, their task being completed by a pair of hidden chain-operated hammers. This clock, incidentally, is not unique: in the small town of Pordenone to the North of Venice there is a contemporary replica of the Clock House complete with bell and jaquemarts<sup>6</sup>. And Britain has its renowned 16th century Jack Blandiver who sits sullenly before his solitary bell in a high niche at Wells Cathedral armed with a hammer in each hand. An extended history of the bell-man and the clock-jack is given in Percival Price<sup>7</sup> while the birth of the tower carillon is detailed by Lehr<sup>8</sup>.

### CARILLON MECHANISM

The carillon mechanism was thus a developed form of the ancient pinned-wheel sandwich described by the Banu Musa. That now gave way to a metal drum, the earliest of which were fabricated from pierced iron strips. By the middle of the 17th century, though, these were cast in bell-metal and lathe-turned. The surface of the barrel was divided up circumferentially into as many lines as there were hammers to the bells. It was then divided up along its surface by a number of lines. Holes, usually square, were bored at the intersection of each line so as to create a grid-like frame into which iron pegs could be inserted. As the

cylinder rotated, these pegs engaged in the mechanism of a keyframe and, by means of linkages, struck the bells.

The grid-like surface of the barrel or drum produced what is known as a 'metrically-marked' cylinder, also termed a framework of 'rigid notation.' This dividing of a cylinder surface by radial and circumferential lines is also found on some early musical boxes: these, too, are referred to as 'rigid notation'. Because of the discovery that some people do not understand what this means (in particular, a small-minded contributor to one of the musical-box societies' journals who thought that 'rigid notation' was synonymous with musical inflexibility), let me explain that the transfer of marking of this sort to a cylinder is neither more nor less than the operating of a wheel-cutting dividing-head or the principles of Engramelle's tonotechnie of the 18th century. Just because there is a grid of fixed marks (in the case of the carillon barrel, of holes) does not mean there is no opportunity to vary musical intervals. Very early on in the history of the carillon, tune pegs were made which had offset points so that you could achieve total freedom of pinning. The musical score was transferred very accurately to the carillon drum with the aid of a spanner and the skill of the barrel-pinner lay in this matter of choosing the right pins.

### MECHLIN CATHEDRAL

These carillon drums were frequently extremely large. That of Mechlin Cathedral, for example, was made in 1736 and has a diameter of 15 feet and a length in excess of 6 feet. It operates on 90 levers connected to 90 hammers and plays eight times during the hour, each tune calling for only a small fraction of its full revolution. Each tune was arranged sequentially, one full turn of the drum representing all eight melodies. The Mechlin cylinder can play a maximum of 108 bars or measures of music and has 180 radial rows of holes around its circumference. With 90 holes in each row, this means there is a total of 16,200 holes for tune-setting. Since there are eight different types of peg plus three combination pegs as shown in the illustration, this produces a possible combination of 176,000 note-peg positions. In

terms of automatically-played carillon, the largest drum is that of Châlons-sur-Marne with about 34,000 holes. But the drum with the largest diameter is that in Salzburg.

The automatic carillon is still with us today. Gone, though, is the expensive and space-hungry pierced drum with its cumbersome linkages of wires and levers. Perforated rolls of music, punched in plastic sheet and read electrically, were in use in the 1950s and the revival of the Dutch carillon, almost entirely through the masterly efforts of Dr André Lehr and the Eijsbouts bell-foundry in Holland, has produced some outstanding instruments. The largest in Holland is that built at Eindhoven by Philips, the Dutch multinational electronics group.

### FIRST CARILLON CLOCK

In 1985 I was involved in the specification, design and construction of London's first public carillon clock since the 1939-45 war. This was erected on the front of the Swiss Centre in Leicester Square. Unveiled on November 20th, it comprises 25 bells, extended the following year by the addition to two more to provide a complete compass of C, D-d (chromatic), e. Erected at the behest of the Swiss National Tourist Board and presented as a gift to the City of London, the bells for the carillon were scaled to a Flanders formula and made by Rüetschi of Aarau in Switzerland. They are struck by solenoid-operated bell hammers and play from a large library of tunes programmed into an electronic memory musical playback system offering very rapid and infinitely-variable selection choice. At the same time, the Swiss authorities invited me to produce design studies for modern carillons in both Australia and Canada.

Most carillons of all ages are playable by both mechanical means as well as by hand: even my Leicester Square one has a tiny keyboard used either for direct playing or for 'recording' music into the solid-state memory banks. However, it is worth pointing out that the number played exclusively by mechanical means is almost as great as the number played only from a keyboard. Small carillons, namely those with a compass between 1½ and 2½ octaves are

played solely by mechanical means.

The mechanical organ, then, can be traced back to pre-Christian times although the first definitive reference was not written down until the ninth century AD. This was found in the ancient manuscripts prepared by the Banu Musa<sup>9</sup>. The earliest surviving mechanical organ which is still in playing condition is that which is built into the high walls of Salzburg Castle. Built in the year 1502 and known to Mozart (whose father wrote music for it), it still performs regularly having gone through a number of restorations across the years<sup>10</sup>.

### QUIRINAL PALACE

During the 1980s I was also a consultant on a magnificent project to restore the hydraulically-operated mechanical organ at the Quirinal Palace in Rome which dates from the early 17th century. Hydraulic organs such as this were illustrated by the earlier polymaths such as Kircher who actually had a hand in reconstructing it from a yet earlier age.

To revert to my subject, though, it is readily accepted that means for making music automatically have been known to Man for a very long time - in excess of 2,000 years in fact. It was not until the rapid progress made in perfecting rotating musical programmes for the carillon in the 14th century that the culture began to take off in a big way.

The great era of mechanical music was alloyed with the decorative arts by the second half of the 16th Century with the start of an age during which increasingly complex and beautiful musical automata were created in Augsburg in Germany. This was the age of patronage and wealthy merchants who could commission such works from the finest craftsmen. The organ was generally the most popular instrument to include in these but there were also clockwork spinets and miniature carillons. Besides those with flue pipes, organs were also made with regals - the coarse beating reed descended from the ancient Egyptian zamr and shawm family.

This fortunate age of patronage, which has thankfully left so many treasures from its brief existence, ground to an untimely halt with

the start of the Thirty Years War and Augsburg and its artisans entered the Dark Ages. Schiller wrote that this terrible conflict "put out the spark of culture in Germany" and while this may be an over-statement, the burden of evidence as to what is missing from those years supports the conclusion that music and automata, along with almost every other art form, lay fallow for several generations<sup>11</sup>. The rich pickings of patronage, then, came to an abrupt conclusion for a good hundred years.

The 'golden century' of mechanical music began in 1720 and was to continue until the time of Beethoven. This century saw the flourishing of mechanical music in Central Europe which spread throughout Europe.

It had all begun when London was pre-eminent in the field of clock and watchmaking. This brought the centre of European musical mechanics first to London and by the first half of the 18th Century craftsmen such as Charles Clay, James Cox, John Joseph Merlin and Thomas Weeks were at work there. They assembled around them a group of talented fellow artisans which included painters, sculptors, carvers and musicians (among these latter was Handel) to further their collective talent.

### NEW-AGE PATRONAGE

London's role in this mechanical-music connection was, however, usurped first by Berlin where Frederick the Great found time between his other and more public activities and war-mongering to set up a musical-clock factory with craftsmen brought together from all over Europe, and then by the 'new-age' patronage created first by the French emperor Louis XV and enlarged by Louis XVI. Because European Royal families tended to intermarry and thus to get to know one another, what was good for one was clearly advantageous to another. The new-age patronage spread like wildfire through Europe into Hungary, Austria and Sweden. Not to be outdone, the Russian tsars also diverted money from their peasant workers' pockets into patronage on a grand scale. In those 50 short years from 1760 to the opening decade of the 19th century, there was a flourishing of art and craft the likes of which the world may never see again.

Mechanical music had a field day. The Swiss and the French assumed much of London's mantle as clock and watchmaking aspired to ever greater heights in the hands of great horological workers such as the Jaquet-Droz, Maillardet, Leschot and Rochat. Still Europe looked to Britain for many of its materials, but the rococo era never caught on in London.

### FASHIONABLE

Thus it was that from the end of the 17th century forwards, mechanical musical instruments attained a fashionable position in life and culture. Music was everywhere, and yet nowhere. The home was a silent place unless there was somebody who could play a keyboard. On the one hand, the makers of harpsichords and virginals could scarce meet the demands of their more aristocratic customers, let alone cater for the rest of the market. The piano, then, was greeted as an invention from Heaven for it was cheaper and easier to make. But still people had to learn to play.

Automatic music in the home was an inspiration and gradually the merchants and landowners, newly-rich entrepreneurs spun off from the Industrial Revolution and its key products such as coal, wool and cloth - these became the new patrons for whom instruments were made. They may not in general have been so aesthetically orientated as the now-headless Louis and his young but naive bride Marie Antoinette, but they had the money and knew how to spend it to impress friends and visitors. Culture may have been bought by the shovelful, but it was a valuable incentive to boost a revival in musical mechanisms. Certainly Gustavus III, before his fatal encounter with the murderous Count Ankerström, learned from the predilections of Frederick the Great in Prussia and the Court of Louis XVI, high-tailing it back to his Stockholm palace to pour money into his own musical-clock business.

The makers of these instruments tended to coalesce in certain areas. A small area of the Black Forest close to the Swiss border, for example, became the cradle of the organ-playing wooden clock - the so-called Black Forest clock often embellished with rich carving, moving figures and decoration, all skillfully created

out of simple materials. Mirecourt in France became the cradle of the French barrel-organ industry while the English barrel organ was almost exclusively the chief product of a remarkably small area of London - part of what is now called Soho.

Meanwhile, there were strange goings-on in the mountains and valleys of the Swiss Jura. Switzerland was about to establish itself as the world's first producer of the musical box. It also claimed the invention of the tuned steel tooth, a claim which may not entirely have been true, particularly since a French watchmaker had built a pocket-watch playing 'an air in two parts' as early as 1770, but soon it became a product which was synonymous with that country's watchmaking industry.

#### WELL ESTABLISHED

The piano, mechanised as early as the closing years of the 18th Century by application of the pinned wooden barrel, was now a well-established product and more and more makers were producing instruments which could be played mechanically. From Debain's Antiphonal planchette-playing piano-player of 1850 to the treadle-powered barrel-playing instruments of Lacape in the early 1880s, the instrument had now become widely accepted. It was not until 1870, though, that somebody had the idea of making a machine to push up against a piano keyboard on which a musical programme could be placed for playing. Both Grob and Ehrlich's mechanical piano-players provided their music from perforated cardboard discs and worked by turning a handle on the side of a push-up cabinet from which wooden fingers operated the piano keys.

The discovery of pneumatic action - I hesitate to call a principle an 'invention' - came about in Europe and America at about the same time. It was in America, though, that the greatest progress was made in the shortest time and when McTammany devised his roll-playing pneumatic organette, the stage was set for the first pneumatic piano-player to the development of which Edwin Votey can lay claim to having refined.

Votey was, however, neither the first nor by any means the only person to apply air pressure - in this instance at a negative level - to playing the piano.

The life-span of the large and cumbersome piano-player was short-lived - a maximum of fifteen years at the most - but it developed most of the technology needed to place the piano-playing mechanics actually inside the piano case. The piano-player gave way to the player-piano which, as a single, self-contained instrument, had been around since the clockwork barrel pianos of John Longman, Longman and Broderip, and Clementi in the early years of the 19th century.

#### FIRST TOWN

Electricity was the new-age source of power. When the streets of the small town of Godalming in Surrey were illuminated by electricity in September 1881 it was the first town in the world to have electric light. Three years later, it reverted to gaslight. The main problem was that electricity was only considered suitable for domestic lighting and even electric pianos were made to run off a wet-cell accumulator. As late as 1912, Wolverhampton's electricity exhibition showed a battery-powered electric player piano<sup>12</sup>. But already instruments had been made which could be run off 'the electric-lighting supply'. It is a sobering thought today that in those times so little was understood about current that owners of powerful electric motors, not to mention domestic appliances, were entreated to plug them into the wood-and-brass lighting socket or into the nearest table lamp! Few homes had the luxury of electricity, and those which did were generally restricted to those of the wealthy. And thus a high proportion of these homes and their contents were destroyed by fires attributable to electrical causes.

Electricity was, of course, a practical proposition and both German and American inventors worked to make electrically-played musical instruments. Orchestrion organs, concert organs and cafe orchestras were built in Germany to work by electricity. And America, despite having so many different types of electricity supply<sup>13</sup>, managed to develop and market many electric instruments culminating in the DC-powered electric Mills Violano-Virtuoso, arguably one of the most astonishing instruments ever made. This played a violin and a piano together and was housed in

a piano-sized cabinet. Even Hupfeld's grand but delicate electrically-powered but pneumatically-operated Phonoliszt-Violina with its superstructure containing three violins and a rotating bow, paled into second place behind the all-electric Mills machine. The origins of this went back to the Middle Ages, for it was developed by a Swedish engineer, Henry Sandell, who applied to its design the principles of the Nyckelharpa, Sweden's historic folk instrument<sup>14</sup>.

Putting tonal variation into player-pianos began with the German expression pianos, some of which were extremely good. These were the poor man's version of the reproducing pianos which were promoted as offering the buyer an actual recorded performance by a notable artist. Around this magical touchstone of pianolaism was woven cunning, myth, mystery and some downright deceit all in the interests of promoting the reproducing piano - and making money for the shareholders.

#### SUSPICIONS

While everybody had had their suspicions for a long time, it was only within the past decade that evidence has come to light which proves that the goal of total fidelity to the original artist(e)'s performance was a chimera only solved by the gramophone, that non-musical mechanical machine which played so big a part in killing off real mechanical music.

The contemporary reproducing piano, then, was pretty good in its way, but it was only as good as the roll editor. Some of these editors were outstanding, others less so. These were the men who were the final link between mass-market pianola-ism at its worst and concert-performance authenticity at its acceptable. They listened carefully to the artist playing and made copious marks and notes on the master roll. Then, secreted in some back room, they would use their not inconsiderable skills to add various perforations to the master roll which would give a fairly good approximation of the way the pianist had played. Depending how good they were was how well-pleased the artist was when he heard the paper-roll playback. The artist frequently had a hand in this procedure<sup>15</sup>.



That success at this work was not impossible is proved by the words of Rachmaninov in 1923 who, having just heard the finished master roll of his G-minor Prelude, puffed a cloud of cigar smoke into the air and calmly uttered the most valuable words ever spoken in Ampico's New York headquarters. 'Gentlemen,' he said. 'I have just heard myself play!' This one remark, instantly communicated to the media, caused a sensational rise of Ampico stock on Wall Street.

Despite the gramophone (which the instrument had, by 1910, learned to live with), the hey-day of the player-piano was the decade up to 1929 and the depression. Although subsequently there were many devoted attempts at revival, it was over by the early 1930s having fallen victim to three surprisingly different consumer distractions. First was the expansion of the cinema and the onset of talking pictures. Second with the wide availability of wireless which brought 'live' dance music into the home, and finally was the immense attraction of the cheap motor-car which for the first time gave mobility to the masses. A car could be bought for £100 or even less. It was far more important now to get out and journey rather than sit and pedal away at music. And for a growing minority, private flying was affordable with aeroplanes costing no more than two or three times the price of a family car.

#### **JAPANESE BUILT**

Mechanical music lay fallow for the second time in its life. The occasional muscular twitch produced one or two things like the key-top piano-players made in America during the 1950s. The Swiss still made small musical box movements for novelties but with a few exceptions these were no longer musical interpreters, merely jingling trinkets. And not to be outdone, the Japanese built a brand new musical-movement market to supply 90 percent of the world's needs for musical novelties.

Home tape-recording, first possible (at high cost and with considerable bulk) in 1947, re-kindled an interest in recording and playing music and sound in general and by the 1970s the first computerised, solid-state recording media was being developed. Superscope Marantz evolved the digital-playback action for pianos

which used a tape cassette and solenoids. The process has actually gathered momentum to the point where today you can buy the Yamaha player grand piano which will perform digitally-encoded music. The Compact Disc, the CD-ROM and optical storage of digital information has made possible things of which the mechanists and pneumatists of old could never have dreamed. It is now possible to have the performances of the finest pianists in the world playing all the keyboard music in the repertoire - and carry this priceless collection around in a small briefcase. And, with digitally-operated piano-playing actions, you could perform all of this vast repertoire on your own piano in your own home.

So much of the history of musical instruments, mechanical and otherwise, is lost that all we generally have are vague references, maybe faded pictures from old newspapers. But there is another source of information and that is the rich treasure-store of the Patent Office.

#### **ABUNDANT PERIOD**

The 1890s marked the start of a particularly abundant period for inventions of all types, not the least in the field of musical instruments. While few of the inventions produced at this time may be considered today as having been possessed of distinctive and on-going merit, novelty was certainly the name of the game. There has always been an element of the unusual or bizarre in the world of inventions and their creators, but the end of the 19th century seems to have encouraged a greater intensity of the bizarre than any other age. Man was master of technology. The Victorian era had seen great strides in engineering. The science of pneumatics, practised since the ancient Arabic times two thousand years earlier, was now rediscovered and being applied to the benefit of Mankind just as was the associated science of hydraulics. Electricity was the tremendous discovery of the age although, as now, nobody understood what it was.

Fired with the enthusiasm spurred by such an age, small wonder that the patent offices in Germany, France, Britain and America were deluged with a veritable tidal-wave of appli-

cations. The belief that perpetual motion was almost a reality sired many, many inventions, although fewer and fewer made it through to the patent stage once the futility of its quest was understood (particularly by the American patent office)<sup>16</sup>. There were patents for flying machines, motor carriages and a host of similar devices. But there were also the odd ones.

It was, perhaps, in the world of musical instruments that the inventive mind went overboard. The two great challenges were to be able to make music without the sheer slog of learning how to play an instrument the proper way. Then there was the associated, if somewhat more esoteric, challenge of being able to somehow record or write down music as it was played. This was still an age when competent performers extemporised and many were moved to wish they could preserve the creative talent of the performer and so keep that fleeting moment of sound. This 'recording-as-it-is-played' technique had been sought after for many many years but it took its name - melography - from a device invented almost at the end of the history of the quest. It reached a high degree of perfection during the player-piano and reproducing piano era, only to be killed off by the faultless play-back skill of the phonograph and later gramophone.

#### **ASPECT OF THE AGE**

Combined pianos and reed organs were another aspect of the age, although their protagonists soon discovered that even if reeds didn't go out of tune, pianos did and even a fraction of variation between the two produced a sound which even their worst enemy ought to be protected from.

Henry Müller of London and William York Wright of Baldock in Hertfordshire decided that the harp was too difficult to play in its proper manner, so in 1896 they patented a harp fitted with a quadrant-shaped piano-style keyboard which, since it was pivoted radially, could transpose and so do away with all that complex footwork and double-declutching which harpists perform with that array of Erard foot pedals which make even Grand Prix driving look easy.

If this was the sort of thing which could be got away with in

the field of ordinary instruments, then one can imagine that the self-acting musical-instrument brigade had a field day. It seems hard to believe that one could actually patent a disc musical box built into a china cabinet or bookcase, or patent a gramophone built into a piano, yet they were just two of the vast selection of oddities which appeared.

Today, the need for mechanical musical instruments no longer survives. Why bother with machines to make music when the portable compact-disc player will live in your pocket and give you all the music you want! There is, then, a sadness that at a time when we have the technology and the ability to achieve those goals which were beyond the reach of the historic makers of the past, the very need for the instruments has not just departed: it's been left far, far behind. Mechanical music is now a curiosity: an amusing glimpse of life in grandfather's day when potted plants and draught-screens formed essential furnishings for the houses of gentlefolk.

### EMERGENCE

But if music has changed, so have people and their individual abilities. The 17th and 18th centuries, for example, saw the emergence of a number of visionaries and theorists who were products of that rich Middle Ages period of polymaths - men whose scientific knowledge spanned medicine, the arts, architecture, astronomy, botany and all of the known sciences.

These men, generically styled as philosophers, possessed a plane of knowledge far and away above those of the ordinary man. They published great works which embraced every facet of learning in science and mechanics. How different from today's 'learned men' who so often are supreme specialists in just one very narrow field, but whose general plateau of knowledge and experience in life and 'philosophical science' falls so far short of that of most thinking men! This is why farmers often make the best meteorologists - and motorists the best judges of character purely through observation or what astute academics choose to define as the empirical learning process.

If mechanical music and its instruments have gone the full

circle, it has to be said that the modern age leaves something missing. Is it, perhaps, the wonderment of watching mechanics? Who, for example, could fail to be stimulated to excitement by the sight, sound and smell of a working steam engine in a paddle-steamer? By comparison, the modern computer is a myriad times more clever and so much faster - but there is not so much as one wheel to be seen going around inside, nor a chain, a crank, a fan or bellows. It is a sterile grey box with a faint hum. Have we, perhaps, sterilised our environment to the point where we have subdued the stimulation of machines with a visual appeal? After all, it was the 1851 Great Exhibition which brought technology to the masses - and they all loved it even if they could not understand it.

The Industrial Revolution generated wealth and excitement. The Electronic Revolution, on the other hand, has given us the video game and TV chat-show.

### Notes:

1. See Philip Coole: *Early Mechanical Music* [article in] *The Music Box*, Vol 3, No 3, Autumn 1967, pp.191-202 which refers to a manuscript in the Yale Medical Library and a copy found in Cracow both of which date from about 1380 and are thought to stem from an original of about 1350.
2. See Ord-Hume, A W J G: *Barrel Organ*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1978.
3. See Philip Coole, *op.cit.*
4. See Tyler, E J: *The Clock-makers of Sussex*, Watch & Clock Book Society, n.d., p.26.
5. Price, Percival: *Bells & Man*, Oxford, England, 1983, pp.173-175.
6. According to verbal information (October 14th, 1992) from Stefano Belli of the magazine *Orologi* in Rome, about 1990 this clock was replaced with a quartz movement and he describes seeing the ancient mechanism covered in dust in a storeroom in the tower.
7. Price, *op. cit.*
8. Lehr, André: *Van Paardebel tot Speelklok*, Europese Bibliotheek, Zaltbommel, The Netherlands, 1967.
9. See Farmer, H G: *The Organ of the Ancients*, Reeves, London, 1931; also Ord-Hume, A W J

G: *Barrel Organ*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1978.

10. The music played by this instrument is contained in a fine if unfortunately now-rare work by the town's official archivist and secretary of the Mozarteum, Johann Evangelist Engl. It is a detailed and technical work called *Das Hornwerk auf Hohensalzburg: dessen Geschichte und Musikstücke* published in Salzburg in 1909. A copy can be found in the British Library within the Hirsch Collection, shelf-mark Hirsch 1405. A facsimile exists in the Ord-Hume Library, Guildford.
11. Langer, Herbert: *The Thirty Years War*, Blandford Press, Dorset, 1978, pp.187-226.
12. This was the Hopkinson 'Electrelle', a British design the maker of which entered Receivership the following April. For an illustration of this instrument taken at the Wolverhampton exhibition at West Park, see Ord-Hume, A W J G: *Pianola*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1984, plate 82.
13. Power was supplied by a separate utility authority for every township and besides variations in voltages, there were mixtures of DC and AC current, the latter at a variety of cycles. And in some places, the power supply changed daily from one voltage/number-of-cycles to another.
14. See Ord-Hume, Arthur W J G: *The Violano-Virtuoso and its Swedish origins*, [article in] "Music & Automata", Vol 1, No 3, March 1984, pp.134-142.
15. See Roehl, H: *Player Piano Treasury*, Vestel Press, New York, USA, 2nd ed, 1961. On p.71 is an article and illustration showing pianist Rudolph Ganz supervising the editing of expression holes in his Duo-Art roll. Charles Stoddard, inventor of the Ampico system, spoke in 1927 of the work needed to complete Lhévinne's recording of the *Blue Danube Waltz* saying that it took over five weeks to complete and represented over 100,000 operations. 'This piece contains 7,915 notes and every note required thirteen or more operations before the record was ready for publication,' he said (*op.cit.* p.95.)
16. See Ord-Hume, Arthur W J G: *Perpetual Motion*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1977. ■



# Risen From The Dead

"What am I bid?, I have £10 at the front, who will give me £15? 15 I have. I have 20 on the right, at the back of the room I have 30, all finished? On the right at 40, and 50 at the front. Any advance on 50? I'm selling at 50, 60 at the back of the room, any more? Make no mistake gentlemen, I shall sell at 60, no more? CLUNK! Sold to the gent at the back of the room for £60."

Oh dear! What had I bought? I could vaguely remember a cardboard box with a rather sad looking movement from an Organette, together with approximately 20 discs. I remember when viewing the sale that the discs were in quite good condition so maybe it wasn't such a bad buy after all.

A couple of days later I emptied the box and viewed the contents. Assembled on the bench I found I had 21 Amorett discs in quite good condition, one 24 note

by John Young

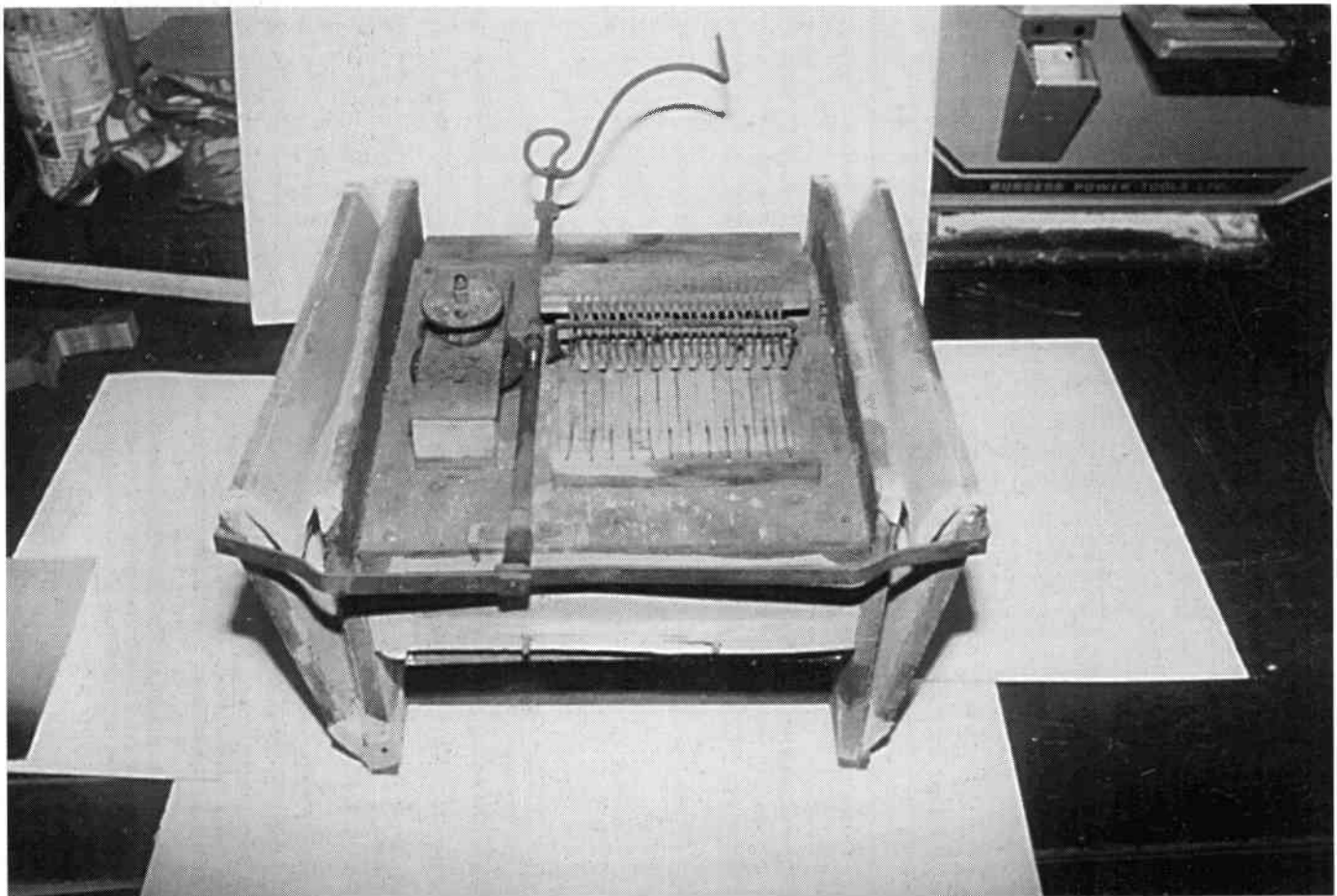
Amorett movement complete with crank and an actuator guide plate with a 2" x 2" section removed with tin snips, obviously the removed section was required for another restoration job by the previous owner!

At this point I was thinking, "O.K. keep a few of the discs and stick it back in another auction. But then again all I was short of was a guide plate, pressure bar, disc guide, and a case! Put it all together, get it to work and I could be the proud owner of another Organette."

First things first, strip the movement and see how much is still usable. Much to my surprise no wormholes! In fact the only parts that needed replacing were the Pallet springs, bellows and valves. New pallet springs were made from the correct grade of

Piano wire then using the old bellows as a pattern, new ones were made from card and leather and assembled as the original construction. New valves were also fitted as the old ones had gone hard and didn't seal very well. No problems so far, so I thought, the time had come to crank the handle, depress the pallet actuators and see if we could produce some notes! The handle was cranked and it did produce some notes, in fact it produced all the notes I expected, and a few I didn't expect.

It took me a few moments to figure out that the valves were making funny noises, the originals had small cardboard strips placed transversely along the length of the leather, having fitted new valves and bellows to other organette's without the addition of the cardboard strips I decided not to bother with them. That was a big mistake. The card-



Before restoration.

board strips act as dampers without reducing the flexibility of the valve. In fact what was happening was that the valve was fluttering like a reed producing some definitely unwanted noises.

At this point in the rebuild I was somewhat disappointed at the thought of removing my nice new bellows to replace the valves correctly as this meant making new ones because the bellows are glued directly onto the woodwork and it is practically impossible to remove them without damage.

Two days later, first set of bellows removed, valves replaced and a second set of bellows fitted, crank the handle and 'Voila!' sweet tones and no obnoxious noises. So now I have a movement in good working order that is totally incapable of playing a disc. What I need is a case to house it.

I was very fortunate in that a

friend had an identical instrument complete with case! All I needed to do was copy it!

I already had a nice shiny black "Ariston" so I thought maybe something a bit more upmarket would be nice.

The style and dimensions of the original were copied exactly and a new case was constructed with a walnut veneered finish; assembly was as the original. To increase the upmarket effect, Brass Ferules were machined, polished and fitted to the sound holes in the side of the case, the crank hole was treated in the same fashion. The actuator plate and pressure bar were copied from the originals using black nylon bar for the wheels on the pressure bar.

A little more tricky was the engraving on the top of the case, I first took a rubbing of the original, then using carbon paper, transferred the design to the top

of the new case. Using a sharpened scriber traced the design at the same time cutting the fibres of the veneer. For this job one has to take it slowly and try not to slip. Then using a scriber with a blunt polished tip approximately 1mm diameter impressed the scribed line into the veneer. The indentation was then lined in with liquid gold leaf and when dry the whole case given a couple of coats of Shellac, cut back with steel wool and wax polished.

I did have ideas about giving it a name like "Phoenix" as in Risen from the Dead, but being as the discs had Amorett printed on them I decided maybe not.

I don't think I will ever part with it but you never know with collectors, so if you ever see one, maybe at Auction, or in a shop and the Auctioneer or shopkeeper tells you it was a special, one of a kind and probably made for Royalty, you'll be able to put him right. ■



After restoration.

# Toxophilites' Reunion?

It is nearly twenty years since David Secrett introduced his first Archer, a handmade automaton loosely based on a nineteenth century Japanese original. Since then he has made several Archers to commission and developed other ideas, notably the barrel spinets with lute players one of which is in the York Museum of Automata, albeit out of tune!

Now David has again turned his attentions to the archer concept and produced an Archer firing arrows at a moving target. As the photographs show, a bell is mounted on a swinging arm about 18" from the Archer who sits on a fretted chair beside a quiver holding four arrows. Lines threaded up the front chair leg enable him to turn to pick up an arrow in his right hand, place it in the bow which he raises in his left hand, draw the bow and fire the arrow at the bell. At this moment a tune is played on the 3/72 musical movement. In the meantime he has craned forward to aim whilst closing one eye, blinked, stuck out his tongue and stamped both feet. This



**Archer in case.**



**Archer sighting up target and about to release arrow.**

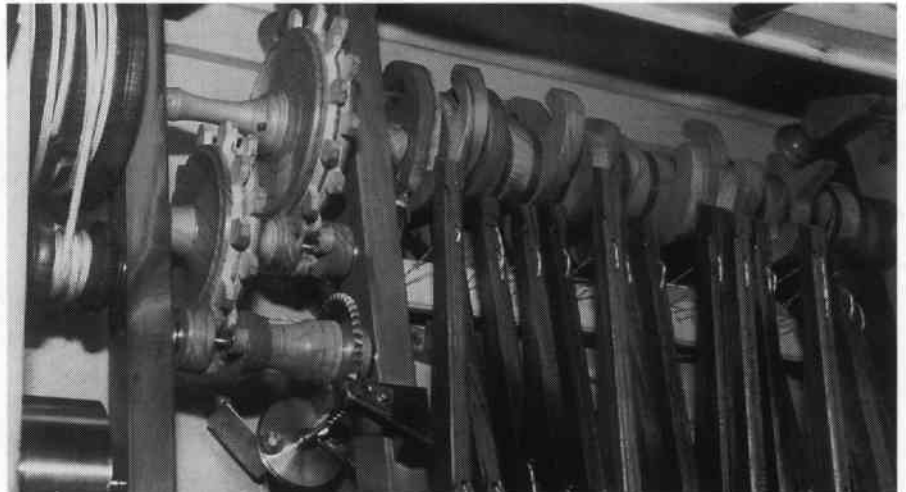


### Shot!

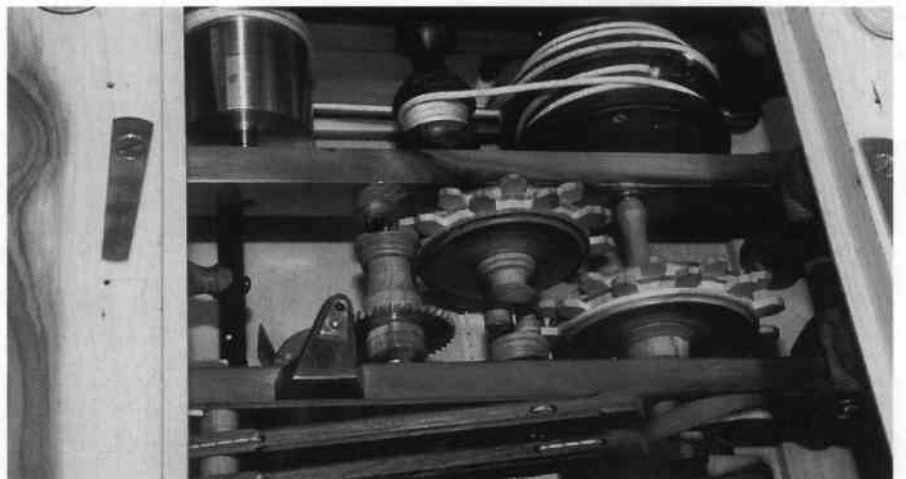
performance is repeated for the remaining three arrows when the clockwork motor shuts off.

As with all David's work, there is as much emphasis placed on quality of workmanship and detail design as on actual movement. The marquetry "floor," for instance, is an Islamic design comprising some 960 pieces of rosewood and sycamore and the chair is a scale model of a baroque original. The figure is dressed by David with silk and fine leather.

An accomplished cabinet maker and turner (he once took the "Best in Show" award at an annual Wembley Conference Centre Woodworker Show, David has chosen to plan the mechanism as a fully visible structure. Constructed mainly of walnut and yew, the large fusee engages a wooden gear train comprising 24 and 20 staggered tooth wheels meshing with 4 tooth roller pinions; a unique design used by Sutton in his clock of 1800 in the Usher Gallery, Lincoln. A driven worm and fan governor are fitted and sixteen cams with followers provide the necessary movements. A mirror lays in the base frame to reflect the view of the mechanics. For static display a glazed wooden case is fitted giving o.a. dimensions of 21" x 14" x 19" with the target folded in and a weight of 30lbs. ■



View from underneath showing gearing and cams.



# Musical Box Oddments

by H. A. V. Bulleid

Number 61

Look at this list of 24 tunes in Fig. 1. All were very popular in 1890 and I think about half are popular today. Most of the others would be, if they suddenly re-surfaced; some have, after "borrowing." They all keep turning up on 1890 and later cylinders (and discs) so they surely merit a brief recall, with dates. I have added suffix "a" to the second column tune numbers.

Tune 1 is credited to *Coralie* which appeared in 1885 and involved three composers, but it may be an arrangement of *Lily Bell* composed in 1855 by Carl Müller; 1a is singer Sinclair's arrangement of Bishop's 1823 tune.

Tune 2 is by Handel, 1720; 2a is by the catchily-named composer Popsie Rowe, 1885.

Tune 3 is a loyalty piece by Stephen Glover, 1868; 3a is an old tune, first noted about 1827.

Tune 4 is the one Stephen Foster composed in 1851 and allowed producer Christy to claim as his; 4a is a ballad by J. J. Davy, 1814.

Tunes 5 and 5a are respectively 1881 and 1888 Sullivans.

Tune 6 is one of those enthralling cases where the girl writing the tune sheet ran out of space and, unable to spill into the margin, solved her problem by omitting the last word – which is "fifteen" . . . the tune was composed in 1863 by T. Linley the elder; 6a is by F. Budik, 1872.

Tune 7 is easy, 1885 Sullivan; 7a is by W. J. Scanlan, 1883.

Tune 8 is by Banks Winter, 1884; 8a was composed by

F. P. Tosti in 1874 but this arrangement is by H. W. de Camors, 1885.

Tunes 9 and 9a are both pre- 1790; 10 is by Dan Godfrey, 1865; 10a, 1731.

Tune 11 is by A. Cellier, 1886; 11a was composed in 1750 but is probably heard here in the 1860 arrangement by Dan Godfrey.

Tune 12 and its excellent words both originated in 1712; 12a is by G. Lamothe, 1881.

Some of these lesser composers are said to be forgotten. Not by PVF serial 67805.

## Late 2-per-turn boxes

These late boxes, sometimes even 3-per-turn and not always with fat cylinders, proliferated from Ste. Croix and L'Auberson makers towards the end of the 1880s. The market then demanded a far cheaper version of the classic 2-per-turn Nicoles with 12 by 3¼" (30 by 8cm) cylinders which played twelve airs lasting up to 54 seconds each, with 120 comb teeth.

Tune lengths were reduced, sometimes to even less than 30 seconds, and some combs had as few as 36 teeth. At the bottom end for quality, these reductions were combined; for example Cuendet model 43BB with 7" (18cm) cylinder played 20 tunes each lasting just under 30 seconds on 38 comb teeth. It was a straight adaptation of their 10-air model 43B.

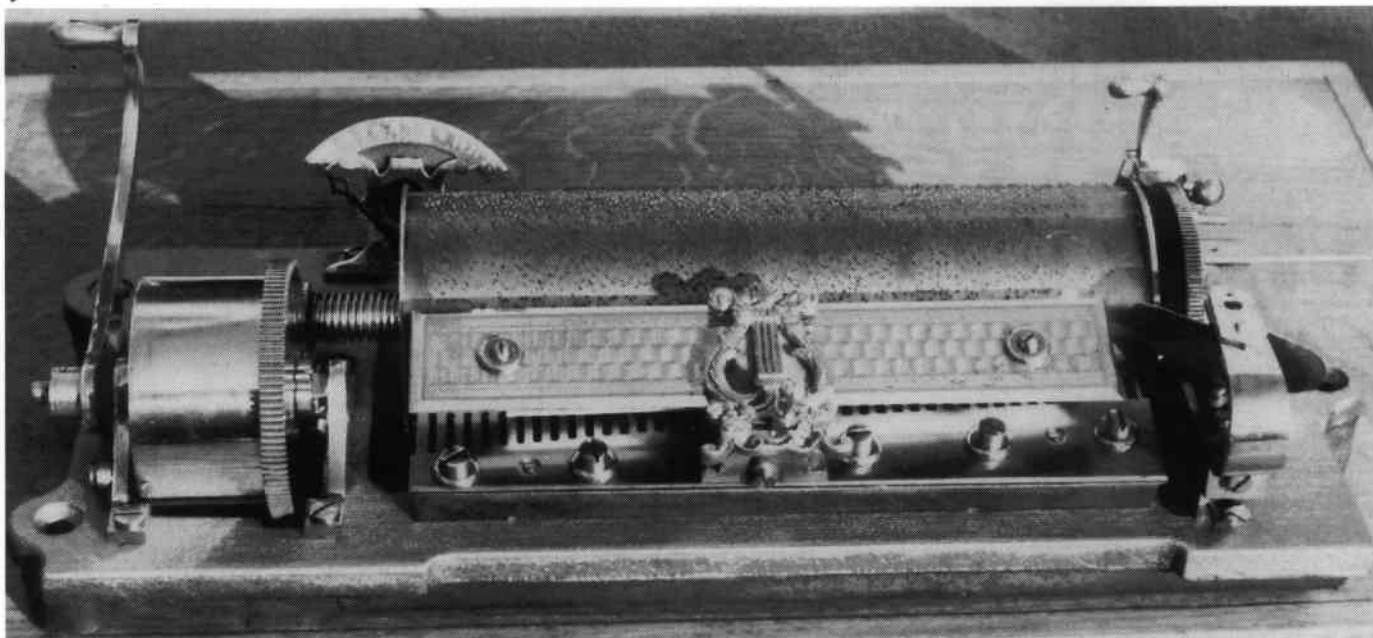
Admittedly 30 seconds is adequate for tunes which merely repeat themselves in 60 seconds, though with 2-per-turn it is impossible to get a direct repeat.

It is these short tunes and scanty combs which, though always well made, give late 2-per-turn boxes such a poor reputation; but there were plenty of good ones, as described below.



Fig. 1. Tune sheet 11¼ by 7½" (29 by 19cm) of PVF serial 67805, with twelve numbers for 24 tunes. Litho by J. Bognard Jne, Paris. The "registered" Trade Mark claimed in French and English probably refers to the PVF device on the central cartouche. Errors and omissions are corrected in the text but I do not know if all the tune titles fit the tunes.





**Fig. 2. PVF 67805 with "fat" cylinder, nickel plating on winding lever and accessories.**

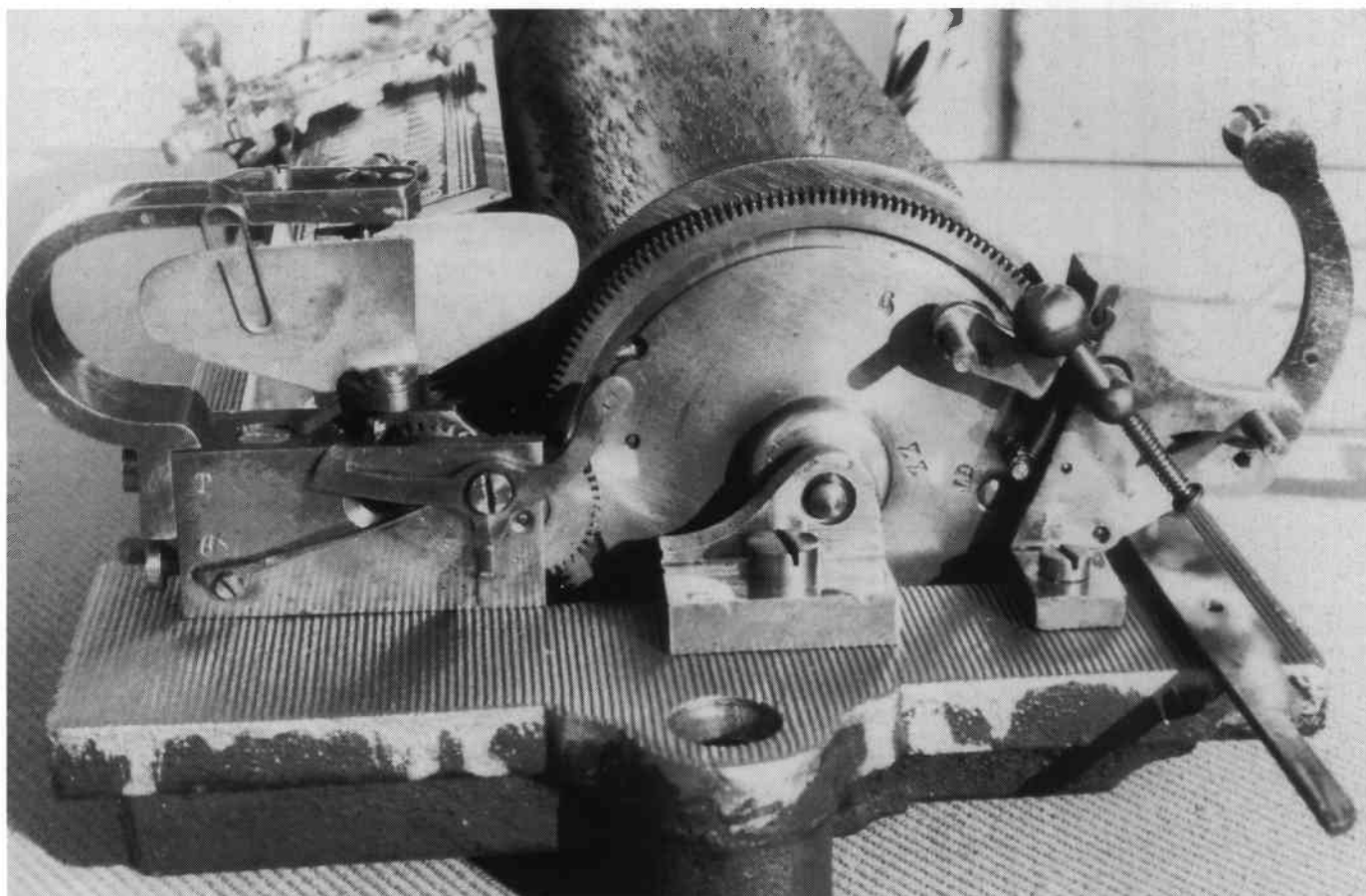
Tune indicators always managed to pose a problem on 2-per-turn boxes. It was sometimes solved, simply enough, by making the pointer indicate each pair of tunes. Of course this meant stamping twice as many numbers on the indicator, which seemed to baffle some makers, so they simply wrote the tunes in two columns and hoped for the best. There it is, in Fig. 1.

### **PVF 24 air 2-per-turn**

The mechanism of PVF serial 67805 is shown in Fig. 2. It

includes a tune selector and safety check as well as the expected tune indicator and zither. The latest tune is 1888 but this box was probably made and exported in 1892 – its tune sheet shows the purple "Made in Switzerland" rubber stamp.

The cylinder is  $9\frac{1}{4}$ " by  $3\frac{1}{8}$ " diameter (230 by 79mm) and has Rivenc-style knurled end caps  $3\frac{3}{8}$ " (86mm) diameter. A rod fixed in the treble end cap strikes the great wheel on the return to tune one, to reduce the blow on the snail. Ideal playing time per tune is a shade over



**Fig. 3. The robust governor; great wheel with chamfered stop slots, and stamped blank number 6 and ZZ and CT; and PVF standard combined safety check and tune selector. Sorry about the paper-clip, but I had to get the stop slot in sight.**



Fig. 4. The two Exhibition medals sometimes featured by Paillard. The first Swiss International Exhibition was held at Zurich in 1883 and marked the opening of the 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> mile St. Gotthard tunnel in 1882. The dated side shows Helvetia and the reverse states the award "For the delicate and perfect performance of his boxes, the accurate reproduction of the pieces of music." The Paris 1867 Exhibition medal shows Napoleon III, as on the 1862 issue of French postage stamps; but some tune sheets omit his name and title, and turn him to face right. The reverse shows two winged figures holding what could be a musical box but has also served as a panel for the recipient - e.g. with J.H.H. for Heller. Sometimes this reverse is reproduced with its circular inscription "Exposition Universelle de MDCCCLXVII à Paris."

40 seconds, the surface speed of 0.11" (2.8mm) per second giving 89 seconds per cylinder revolution. The cylinder dots are on tune one, as usual with Paillard. The endless of the large size governor makes 1500 revs per cylinder rev.

The comb, with cast iron base, is stamped with Paillard's horn-and-cross trade mark and has 42 teeth. The 440 and 880 *a* teeth are numbers 11 and 19 from the bass end. Relative stiffness is 340, fairly common on large boxes in the 1890s. The bass lead is scribed 224 and initials which seem to be CHZZ. The cast iron bedplate is heavier than usual and has foundry marks 53 and CPC which surely indicates Charles Paillard.

Blank number 6 (or possibly 9) is on cylinder, spring and governor details. Serial 67805 is on winder, spring cover, comb base, cylinder, great wheel and tune selector bracket. The great wheel is also stamped GT and ZZ, see Fig. 3.

The zither operates on teeth 8 to 39 and is fixed by the third comb screw. It misses the fan blades by just a millimetre.

The mechanism is secured to blocks in the case by three massive countersunk steel screws, 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" long - 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cms! The case is 21" by 10" by 8" high (53 x 25 x 20cm) with transfer on front and fine large floral inlay on lid. This compares with the 21<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> by 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> by 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inch (54 x 27



Fig. 5. Multi-coloured 8 by 5" (20 by 13cm) tune sheet which I think can be safely attributed to the Paillards.



Fig. 6. Paillard's explanations.

x 25cm) cases for PVF's "Amobean" interchangeable which included drawers for the six 6-air 6½" (16½cm) cylinders. These were contemporary PVF boxes, the strangely-named "Amobean" offering the same tune length but 50 comb teeth plus the chance (very rarely taken) of buying extra cylinders; while the 24-air 2-per-turn box afforded easy choice of tune and was decidedly more impressive. "Amobean" serial 117835, latest tune 1882 but probably made about 1890, has tune sheet identical with Fig. 1.

Serial 67805 puts over its tunes very satisfactorily in the 41 seconds allowed. It sounds grand if you have just heard a 36-tooth tabatiere or a 6" 10-air cartel, but very modest after hearing the same tune on a 70-tooth comb. It certainly boasts the impressive ability to call up any one of 24 tunes in, at the very worst, 90 seconds. I wonder if PVF made a 13" cylinder version which could have 65 teeth. Incidentally, the 9¼" cylinder on 67805 with its obtruding end caps is only pinned over 8¾".

### Exhibition medals on tune sheets

Rivenc boxes sold by Thibouville Lamy have the finest array of tune sheet medals, boasting Exhibition successes not achieved with musical boxes. They were up-dated as new medals were acquired.

Boxes by J. H. Heller often used the "garlanded columns" tune sheets generally associated with Geneva makers, but one has been reported with the centre of the top border replaced by the four sides of two medals won by Heller at the 1867 Paris and 1873 Vienna Exhibitions – not necessarily for musical boxes. This is in the Ord-Hume book, page 359, item 26.

PVF were keen adders of medals to tune sheets, in particular from the 1867 Paris Exhibition as shown in Figs. 1 and 4. On boxes exported to the USA they also sometimes added, in the centre of the bottom border, the medal they won at the 1876 Philadelphia Exhibition – for example on serial 10854, a 12¾" six air box with "shield

held by figure at right" tune sheet and C P & C on governor cock.

According to Chapuis, PVF exhibited at Paris in 1867 and C. Paillard at Zurich in 1883. Being the leading Ste. Croix makers they would expect to be among the winners of the medals shown in Fig. 4. So can we safely attribute the multi-coloured tune sheet of Fig. 5 to the Paillards? It is the only tune sheet I have seen with medals from both Exhibitions. Here it belongs to serial 19656, 13" (33cm) 10-air, latest tune No. 7, 1891. At bottom right it has Helvetia holding a red shield with white cross. This same design of tune sheet on serial 22476 (latest tune 1880) has a script ET monogram covering the white cross with "Marque de fabrique Déposée" on the space below; it could refer to an agent or even, slight possibility, to Eugène Thorens, Paillard's Works Manager. Chapuis lists all the Ste. Croix exhibitors at these two Exhibitions on pages 180 and 188; the only ones likely to have gained a medal at both are the Paillards and Mermod – who always used his own trade-marked tune sheet. So I am hoping that more data will soon turn up and prove Paillard's probably exclusive use of this distinctive Fig. 5 tune sheet.

### Paillard's Musical Boxes

Though impossible to be quite certain after a hundred years, it is extremely probable that Paillard's instructions shown in Fig. 6 accompanied serial 67805 when first bought in about 1892. It is printed in black and red on a card 5½ by 4 inches (14 by 10cm). The instructions are illustrated with a drum and bell box sporting the tune sheet of Fig. 1, but without the 1867 medal in top border. Strict attention, printed in red, is called to the rule of stopping the box only at tune end. On the back, also printed in red, is a useful warning about tinkering with fully-wound boxes, Fig. 7.

It is a bit strange, but perhaps just a measure of their rarity, that no instruction was given about the tune selector; many an innocent must have been baffled by

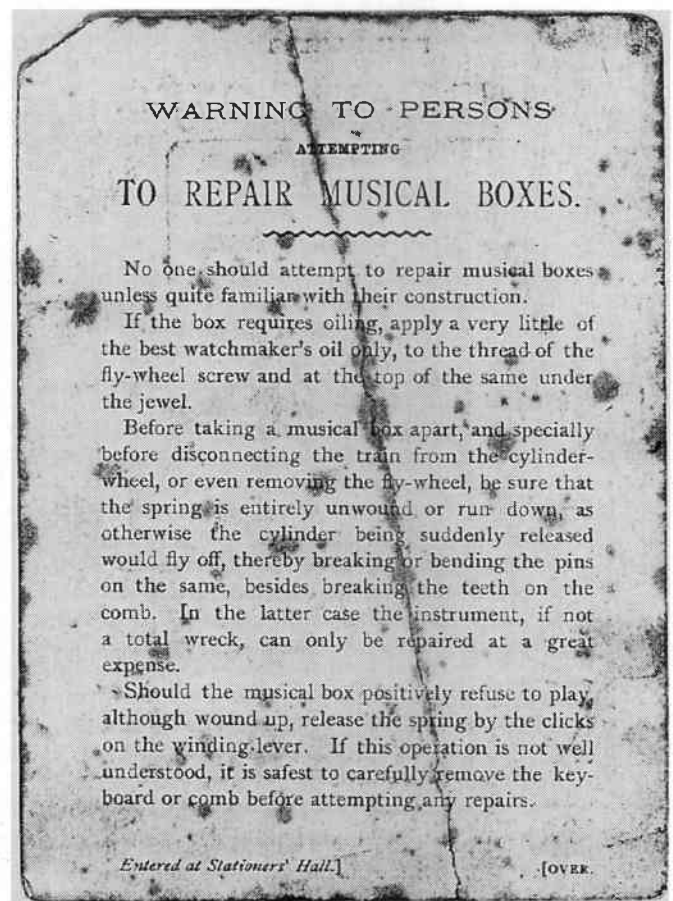
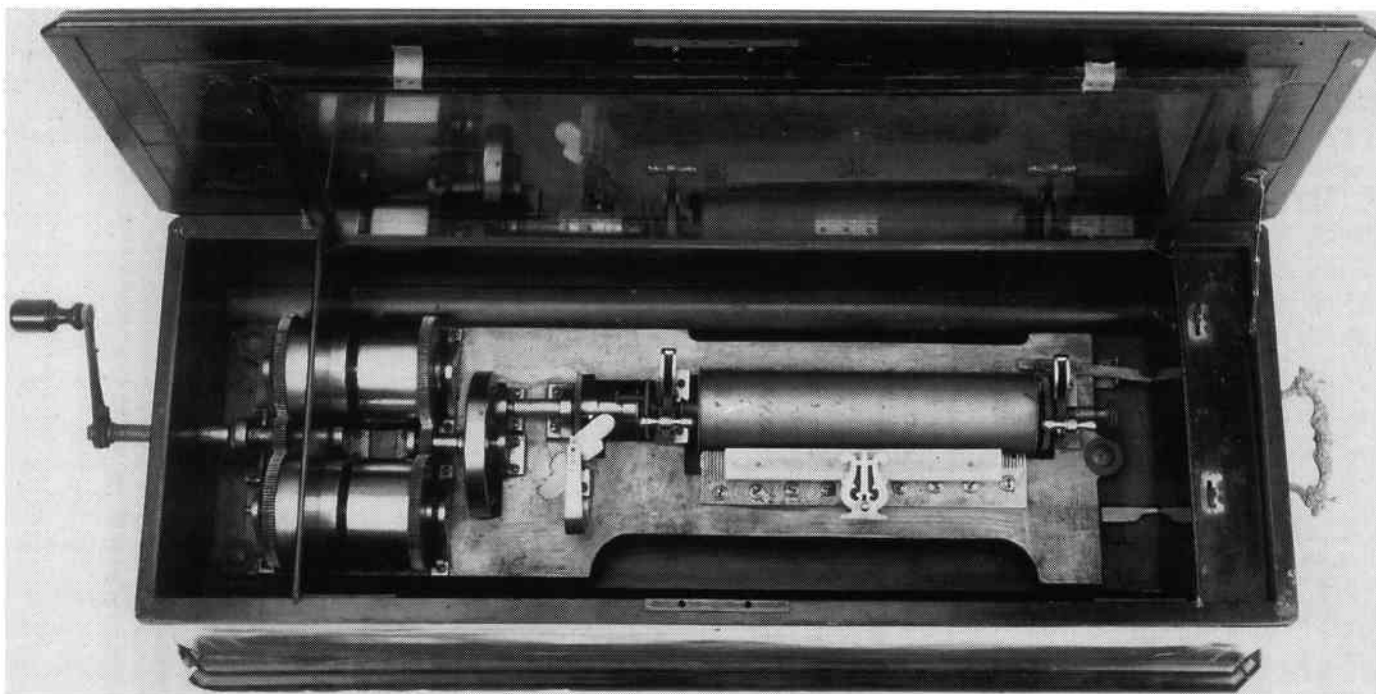


Fig. 7. Paillard's warning.



**Fig. 8. Mojon, Manger 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (336mm) interchangeable serial 31462. The control levers are conventionally placed but the play/stop lever contacts the governor by a long bar under the bedplate, pivoted near its centre. The tune change lever is pivoted near the edge of the bedplate and a slotted bar limits its travel. This reverses the normal operation of the control lever stated in Fig. 6 to *Pull to change, push back to repeat*. Photo kindly supplied by Christie's, South Kensington.**

why it would not work at the end of column one tunes.

Another instruction card, also dating from the 1880s, has no maker's name but so many similarities that it must have been issued by Paillard. The warning on the back is identical, but the front omits the note on removing packing pieces and adds instructions on the speed regulator and the tune selector – which "may be ordered with larger boxes." It also repeats the final paragraph word for word and adds this ambiguous new paragraph which I confess I do not understand: "IMPORTANT. In order to have the speed regulator work satisfactorily, it is indispensable that the right side of the wheel nearest the cylinder wheel be occasionally oiled, so as to avoid wearing by friction."

The musical box illustrating this instruction card is a standard 8-air 13" (33cm) cylinder type. It has no tune indicator or selector or speed regulator – but it has a standard PVF tune sheet, shield with cross held by figure at right.

### Continuous performance

Mojon, Manger turned out some massive long-playing machines, incorporating their patented internal-toothed gear drive from four very robust springs. They could play for 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  hours "when once fully wound up," as was noted on the tune sheet of serial 27825 which was described on page 193 of Vol. 7.

The interchangeable cylinder version was even more massive, a good example being serial 31462 made in about 1891 for the Indian market. It has six 6-air cylinders playing a mixture of Indian tunes, opera classics and Gilbert-and-Sullivan including *The Gondoliers* which had its premiere in December 1889.

The cylinders have knurled end caps, a sensible protection for interchangeables as the pins cannot get bent if a cylinder is dropped on a flat hard surface. They are 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ " by 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ " diameter (34 by 8cm) and have conventional great wheels and snails but their arbors extended each end for handling. They play 90 seconds per cylinder rev., surface speed 0.11" per sec. The comb has 93 teeth, the track widths being 0.022". The bass lead is scribed 1043. The zither is fixed by the centre comb

screw. The mechanism is all nickel-plated.

The governor cock is rather carelessly stamped MMC. The shaped fan blades are 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (4cm) long, with a small flange at the centre of their inside edge attached radially to a brass block on the endless; speed is adjusted by twisting the blades to alter their effective angle which is normally around 45° as can be seen in Fig. 8.

There are no blank numbers but the four spring bearings are numbered for correct assembly and one bearing is stamped with Swiss patent 705, presumably covering Mojon Manger's internal gear drive to the cylinder gear – a neat detail which allows a gear ratio of about 4 to 1 with both gears rotating in the same direction.

The case measures 41 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (105cm) excluding its rather ornate handles. Serial 31462 is an impressive sight and a robust performer, well able to make itself heard, although the amount of machinery does seem a bit out of proportion to a 93-tooth comb. When I made a facetious comment about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  hours being a bit gruelling, with each tune coming up twice every 18 minutes, I was shot down by the reply, "It makes ideal background music for a quiet dinner."

### Cigar boxes on film

Several makers including Nicole offered musical cigar stands, usually of upright hexagonal form and in a design used also for liqueurs and cosmetics. They are understandably rare; but how about a musical cigar box of conventional shape? The only one I have ever seen probably never existed; it appeared in the 1931 Columbia film *Platinum Blonde*, (Jean Harlow) directed by Frank Capra. An inquisitive journalist was kept waiting longer than he liked in the large study of a large house, and got attracted by a cigar box. He opened it and was very startled when music started, so closed it and looked guiltily around. All quiet, so he opened it again risking the music and pocketed a good handful of cigars.

Appropriate music was very realistically recorded and synchronized with opening and shutting the lid. But was it real? Be sure to see it when it comes on the Telly again, it is a classy movie. Who said platinum blondes were not educational. ■

## Under the Hammer



Coming up at Sotheby's, London on the 8th June.

One of the instruments that I have always wanted and ought to have bought when prices were cheaper, is the novelty which in appearance always reminded me more of mother's old cheese grater than a musical box. It is the capital cuff box, an unusual amalgamation of technology of the disc playing musical box with that of the cylinder phonograph. The instrument comprises a comb and starwheels in the normal disc playing manner, however instead of a disc, a thin-walled metal cone is revolved on a mandrel. The shape of the cone which resembled that of a cuff of a shirt led to the naming of this rare type of musical box. Capital is thought to have started production about 1895 and sold through the retailer M. J. Paillard of 608 Broadway, New York City and is believed to have ended in late 1887.

This item is expected to sell for £7,000/10,000.

Another item once on my shopping list is the Weber Grandezza, I ended up with its brother the Unika, the same thing except the Unika has a rank of violin pipes instead of a xylophone. The Grandezza is contained in a bulky yet impressive carved oak case with bevelled mirror doors to the roll playing compartment and a visible xylophone in a compartment mounted on the top.

The Grandezza is estimated at £12,000/18,000.

Ambitiously priced at a top estimate of £120,000 it is a Welte Cottage Orchestrion Style number 2. The 75 key paper roll mechanism plays seven ranks of brass and white metal pipes, being trumpet, trombone, flute and clarinet. Also with snare drum, triangle and cymbal, contained in oak 'renaissance' case, with four glass panels at the front, the movement is now electrically driven, having been converted from weight drive.

This is certainly a sale for the orchestrion lovers with a wide choice including a Poppers Happy Jazz Band operated by a paper roll

mechanism playing piano with mandolin, bass and snare drums, cymbal, wood block and triangle, contained in stained oak case with two brass electroliers, compartment at the top housing the percussion with central grill carved in the form of a dancing girl.

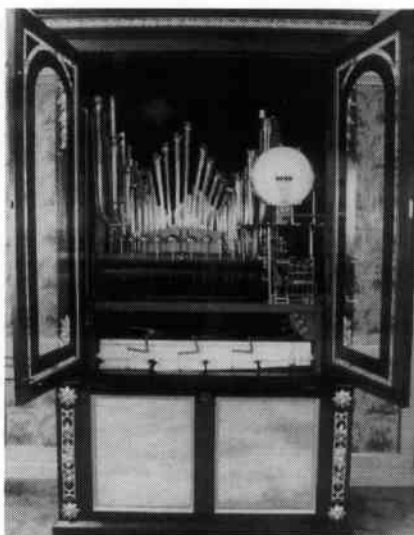
Estimated at £10,000/15,000.

A cheaper orchestrion is the Amelotti, a single accordion orchestrion playing accordion bass and snare drums, cymbal and two wood blocks. All is contained in a mahogany veneered case with instrumentation mounted above.

Estimated at £4,000/6,000.

The star of the sale will be an Imhof and Mukle trumpet orchestrion illustrated on Sotheby's advertisement. The full description from Sotheby's catalogue is shown below.

Signed on the tracker bar, *Imhof & Mukle 547 Oxford St., London International Exhibition 1862 and 1865 No. 1927*, the fully restored 58 key movement with a total of 152 pipes consisting of 48 wood pipes, 86 tin and 18 brass pipes, arranged in six rows with 12 graduated bells, a triangle and snare drum with dour sticks, the weight driven movement with weight connected via pulleys to massive, hand cranked clockwork motor which drives a bellows consisting of four feeders and a reservoir, contained in mahogany veneered cabinet with two glazed doors at the front decorated with floral engraving enhanced by gilding and holly green border, the hinged panel below mounted with two mirrors and sides and cornice decorated with carved and gilded wood acanthus leaves and decorative border, the sides with glazed panels and base with storage for



six pinned wooden barrels, each 18.5cm (7 1/4 in) diameter, each spirally-pinned with brass end indexing plates and zinc tune sheets, each with tunes in script comprising:

Barrel 1. Oh Suzanna, Cheer Up Sam, The Cottage by the Sea, Billy Patterson, The Ivy Green.

Barrel 2. The Star on India Quadrille.

Barrel 3. Beautiful Star, I'm Going Home to Dixey, The Woodman Spare, In the Strand, Bombay March.

Barrel 4. Old Bob Ridley, Tabioca, Toll the Bell, Darling Nellie Gray.

Barrel 5. The Mable Valse.

Barrel 6. The Calif of Baghdad Overture.

Estimated at £100,000/160,000.  
274 x 153 x 86cm (108 x 60 by 34 in).

For the musical box people there is a massive orchestral and automaton cylinder musical box, complete with a 49cm cylinder playing a 32 reed organ, 2 combs and zither attachment. There are 4 engine turned bells with butterfly and bee strikers, a snare drum and castanets, playing 14 Chinese tunes, the movement with twin spring barrels and with miniature garden, two automated birds flanked by dancing dolls, the case with inset mirrored lid, veneered in burr walnut, ebony and kingwood, with boxwood stringing and central brass scrolling motif.

This item is estimated at £10,000/15,000.

In the sale is another orchestral interchangeable cylinder musical box by Nicole Freres, with 4 41cm cylinders playing 8 airs and again accompanied by a reed organ of 32 notes. The orchestral effects include castanets, 6 saucer bells and a snare drum. There is a matching table stand with cylinders storage drawer at the front. £6,000/10,000 is the guide price.

Finally, included is a 1950s Arburo Dance Organ. The paper roll mechanism playing on approximately 200 wood pipes, together with accordion, bass and snare drums, side drum, three Chinese temple blocks, high hat cymbal, crash cymbal and ornamental saxophone, contained in ornately decorated oak case with gilt scroll floral designs and simulated organ pipes.

Estimated at £10,000/15,000.  
303 x 270 x 143cm (119 x 106 x 56 in).



## Projects and Wants

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

There have been only two responses from the U.K. to the Projects and Wants column in the last issue. Some members must be undertaking an interesting project which we would all enjoy hearing about!

Help is still needed for the compilation of music roll catalogues:- Gem 20 and 32 note Cobs, Wilcox and White 58 note organ, Aeolian pipe-organ 116 note and 176 note Duo-Art rolls (photo-copies of later bulletins particularly needed), Phoneon 61 note organ.

Do European members realise that many instruments are still being made new today; such as Nickelodeon pianos, Kalliope organs (voiced for 1/4 mile or 2 miles range) in the U.S.A; Music boxes - 4 1/2", 11" and cylinder in Switzerland; 15 1/2" and 20" in the U.S.A. If you have purchased any new instrument would you like to write in and tell us about it?

### QUESTIONS

Does anyone make new music box discs, particularly Polyphon 11", 15 1/2" and 19 3/8" sizes of modern arrangements and songs besides Dwight Porter in the U.S.A., preferably in Europe?

### DISC PRICE SURVEY

Would members be interested in a price survey of music box discs from the various well known dealers/sources of both old and new discs?

### NEW MUSIC BOX DISC DIRECTORY

Would members be interested in a book of all popular music box disc sizes listing all discs found? No technical information, just many listings gathered from MBSGB and MBSI journals and added to by collectors to give a handy although probably quite large reference book, including alphabetical indexes.

The same could be done for organette rolls/cobs/discs.

This column will only appear again when there are more responses and questions, wants etc. Please don't wait, write to me today.

**Kevin McElhone** (Address at front of Magazine). ■

## FOR SALE

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*Plain oak case approximately 14' x 8'.*

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Subsequent fees are \$30 annually

Non-U.S. members: \$55 (+\$15 initiation fee)  
The initiation fee is for new members only.

New members will receive a packet of MBSI mailing seals, an MBSI lapel pin and the *Directory of Members and Services*.

The following MBSI published books are available at member discounts:  
*History of the Musical Box*, \$22.50 ppd.  
*Musical Boxes and Other Musical Marvels*, \$13 ppd.

Back issues of Society magazines are available for a nominal fee.

### Membership Application

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January 1994

## Audio Cassette REVIEW

by Ian Alderman

### Twenty six melodies on a 26 inch Stella

*Cassette recording available from  
Jim Weir, 'Woodbank', Charleston,  
Glamis by Forfar, Angus DD8 1UF.*

Collectors and connoisseurs of old musical instruments already know the special properties of these devices, their innocuous narcotic ability to transport the cognoscent to another time, another place. They have the ability to transform an unpretentious melody into something extraordinarily delightful.

The musical box I've been listening to with such pleasure is something of a rarity (not least because it has been restored to pristine condition). It is a 26" Stella, a machine whose steel discs have no projections; the sophisticated mechanism was invented by the Swiss firm, Mermod Frères. This particular machine was discovered in the Far East and what damage the termites had done to the case was nearly completed when the crane driver dropped the mechanism on to the dockside. But it has all been restored, with knowledge and great skill.

The recording is generous, offering 26 melodies, including a Waltz by Schubert (not that Schubert) and a piece by Glück (not that Glück). But my favourite, lest you think I seek to be amusing at the expense of the unknown composer, is the Polonaise No. 1 by Prince M. Oginski. I have not the least idea who he was, but the recording is worth having for that alone.

The selection of music ranges judiciously from the familiar opera pieces (Soldiers' Chorus and the Bohemian Girl) to musicals of the period (The Belle of New York; Floradora) and so on. There is a surprisingly straight and very effective performance of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song".

The recording quality is good and realistic, complete with the occasional sounds of the discs flexing, which have wisely not been filtered out. Anyway, to me the

occasional mechanical sound is part of the charm. The bass notes are beautifully clear and precise and the treble bright and true.

I learn from the insert with the recording that a new museum of mechanical music is planned at Oakbank Water Mill, Blairgowrie,

which will also have the workshop facilities to continue restoration work of the quality evidenced here. The man responsible for bringing this Stella back to life is Jim Weir and the tape cassette is available from him. This recording cannot fail to give pleasure. ■

## 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.*

### Enjoyable weekend

#### Alan and Doris Pratt write from Birmingham:-

Having just returned from a most enjoyable Musical Box Society weekend at Brandon Hall, we could not let the event pass without a note of thanks to everyone who had put so much into the planning and the presentations.

Even the A.G.M. proved interesting – and Annual General Meetings are not usually noted for their entertainment value!

As comparatively new members of the MBSGB we have attended only three of the regional meetings, and on each occasion they have proved to be a wonderful balance between interesting presentations and social contact – with good food and pleasant surroundings as an additional bonus. As newcomers, we have little to bring to the meetings except our enthusiasm, but we have been welcomed by everyone and made to feel a real part of the Society.

However, it is noticeable that the same faces seem to appear at each meeting and we wonder if all those other members know what they are missing. If you haven't dipped your toes into the meetings scene yet the message from us is simple – come on in, the water's fine! ■

### New museum

#### Ian Alderman writes from Dorset:-

There is a new museum in Berlin. Kurt and Christa Niemuth invited us to the opening last month. It's a private museum and has many mechanical instruments (disc and cylinder music boxes) but the main body of the collection is a large number (40 plus) of street organs, mainly 19th century and early 20th

century barrel organs representing most makers but particularly from Berlin. Entrance is free, but a donation to charity (Food for Russia) is expected – a large china pig collects. We are asked to make arrangements **before** visiting. Refreshments are **not** free! but Christa will provide. Make arrangements by telephoning or writing. Christa's English is very good.

The address of the museum is Claszeile 78, Berlin 14165. Telephone (from England) 01049 30 8156514.

This is a good collection and worth a visit. ■

### Libellion books

#### Takao Kato writes from Japan:-

Recently, I bought a Libellion at Sotheby's London, but I am disappointed, because, unfortunately, there is only one book with it.

Since Libellion is one of the very rare items, I am afraid there are not so many of them existing and there are few collectors worldwide.

I would greatly appreciate it if anyone could find me any books matched for the movement I have, or could introduce me to any collectors who have the books. Even if anyone could supply me with only the xerox copies, it would be greatly appreciated.

The books I am looking for should be:

- 1) serial numbers 4000's,
- 2) 16.5cm wide, and
- 3) matched for 54-tooth movement.

I would like to have as many of the books as possible and do not care how long it takes to find them.

Additionally, I have four books of serial Nos. 3000's, 14.5cm wide and matched for 48-tooth movement. I have only books, but no movement.

I would be grateful to know its musical scale, so that I could study the music. ■

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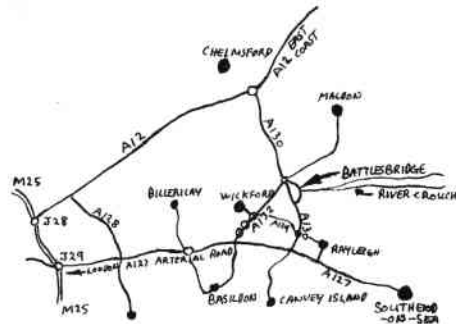
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**Tune Cards:** Fully illustrated catalog of more than 82 different types of single and multi-color cards available for cylinder musical boxes. \$3.50 airmail.

**Cassette Tapes & Compact Discs:** Offering you the BEST recordings ever produced! I have expanded my audio selection to include not only my MUSIC BOX MELODIES line of disc and cylinder box recordings, but also *Carousel, Hurdy Gurdy, Orchestrion, Street Piano, Monkey Organ, Fair Organ, Organette, Bird Box/Cage, Musical Clock* and other diverse automatic musical instruments! The list is too long to publish here . . . SEND FOR A BROCHURE . . . describing each of these 21 wonderful albums! Most of the recordings we offer are fully *digitally recorded* . . . two of our own Music Box Melodies were given a perfect 10/10 score in CD Review Magazine! One was given a 9/9! Cassette Tapes and Compact Discs make great gifts too! Dealer inquiries invited. Send \$2.00 for a brochure that fully describes each album!



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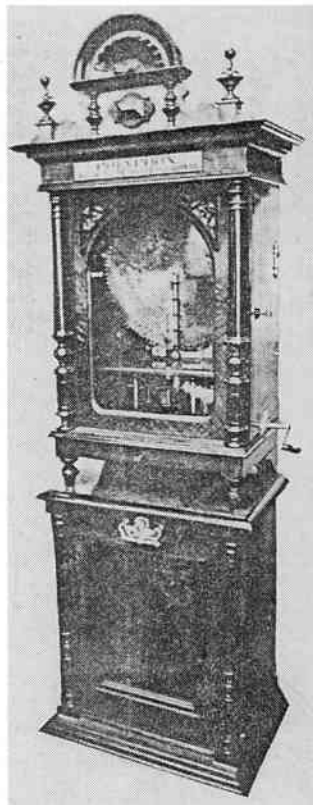
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LAST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF ADVERTISEMENTS FOR INCLUSION IN NEXT ISSUE:- 1st July 1994.

Members: 14p per word (bold type 7p per word extra).  
Minimum cost each advertisement £4.  
Non-Members: 28p per word. (bold type 14p per word extra).  
Minimum cost each advertisement £8.

### CASH WITH ORDER PLEASE TO:

Advertising Secretary,  
Ted Brown, The Old School,  
Guildford Road, Bucks Green, Horsham,  
West Sussex RH12 3JP. Tel: 0403 823533

### FOR SALE

**Ampico Grand. Duo-Art** upright, various other pianolas. Original and restored. **Nicole Freres** music box, professionally restored/repolished. Aeolian orchestrelle organ model V, restored. 041 881 1304 for detailed list. Private sale.

Good selection of **Player Pianos** plus new and second hand rolls, Duo-Art etc. Export service available. Also restoration materials. Send S.A.E. for list and wants. Laguna Rolls, Lagoon Road, Paghham, Sussex PO21 4TH, England.

**For sale, 20 Regina** discs 15½", slight surface rust on a few £8 each, plus postage. 90 **Polyphon** discs 15½", very good condition £9 each, £80 for 10 assorted plus postage. Ring for titles if necessary. 081-300-6535 eves.

### WANTED

**Musical Automata.** Enlarging collection. Top prices. 815 Moraga Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90049 (213) 471-3000 Mr. Levy.

**Organette music wanted.** Any **Dolcine** card music any condition. 14 note **Melodia** and **Clariona** music (on spools). All other organette music, bands, spools, discs, any condition considered. Contact Ted Brown 081-300-6535.

Some classified adverts to make this page more interesting. You get 27 words, (three of them in bold type) for the £4 minimum charge. Yes this many!

**Discs Wanted,** Symphonion 25.5cm/10", Symphonion 21cm/8¼", Polyphon 28.0cm/11¼", Polyphon 28.1G/11¼"-GL (Glocken). Can change for other interesting discs. Write to: C. Nitschke, 30455 Hannover 1.d. Steinbreite 55, Germany.

### BLACK FOREST COLLECTOR

Seeking unusual and ornate Cuckoo clocks, Organ clocks, Animated Black Forest clocks, Musical Black Forest clocks - trumpeters etc.

Roy Aletti, P.O. Box 757 Harrison, NY 10528, USA. Phone: 010-1-(914) 835-1930, 010-1-(914) 835-0830. Fax: 010-1-(914) 835-0828.

## Society Auction

The Society's annual auction will be held on Saturday, 18th June at the St. Albans Organ Museum, 320 Camp Road, (next to Camp JMI School). Auctioneer Christopher Proudfoot (by kind permission of Christie's, South Kensington). A great chance to sell and buy. Commission rates - Buyer's premium 7.5%, Selling commission 7.5%.

Any members wishing to write to classified advertisers can send letters direct to me and I will forward them. For security reasons addresses are only disclosed at the request of individual members. Ted Brown. (Address in front of Journal).

## Deadline Dates for Display Advertising Copy

1st April; 1st July;  
1st October; 1st February

Editorial copy must be submitted at least

**8 days** prior to above dates.

**Posting of magazine:**  
27th February; 27th April;  
7th August; 7th November

### NOTICE

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

## 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:  
**Graham Whitehead,**  
**Broadgate Printing Co. Ltd.**  
**Crondal Road, Exhall,**  
**Coventry CV7 9NH.**

## 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

Send in your  
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## RATES FOR DISPLAY ADVERTS FROM JANUARY 1994

SPECIAL POSITIONS (offered as available).

Outside back cover (tone or two colours) Full page only £192  
(full colour, one photograph to max. size of 8" x 6") £432

Inside covers: Full page £168, Half page £90 (as available)

POSITIONS INSIDE JOURNAL (as available).

Full page £125, Half page £72, Quarter page £45, Eighth page £30  
5cm box in classified area £27, 3cm box in classified area £18

These charges include typesetting but are exclusive of any artwork and camera work which may be required. Half-tone, line, and line-and-tone negs plus artwork, design and layout facilities can be provided if needed at additional cost. Squared-up half-tones £15 each. Cut-out half-tones £19 each.

### SPECIAL COLOURS

If required, advertisements can be printed in a second colour. Rates available on application.

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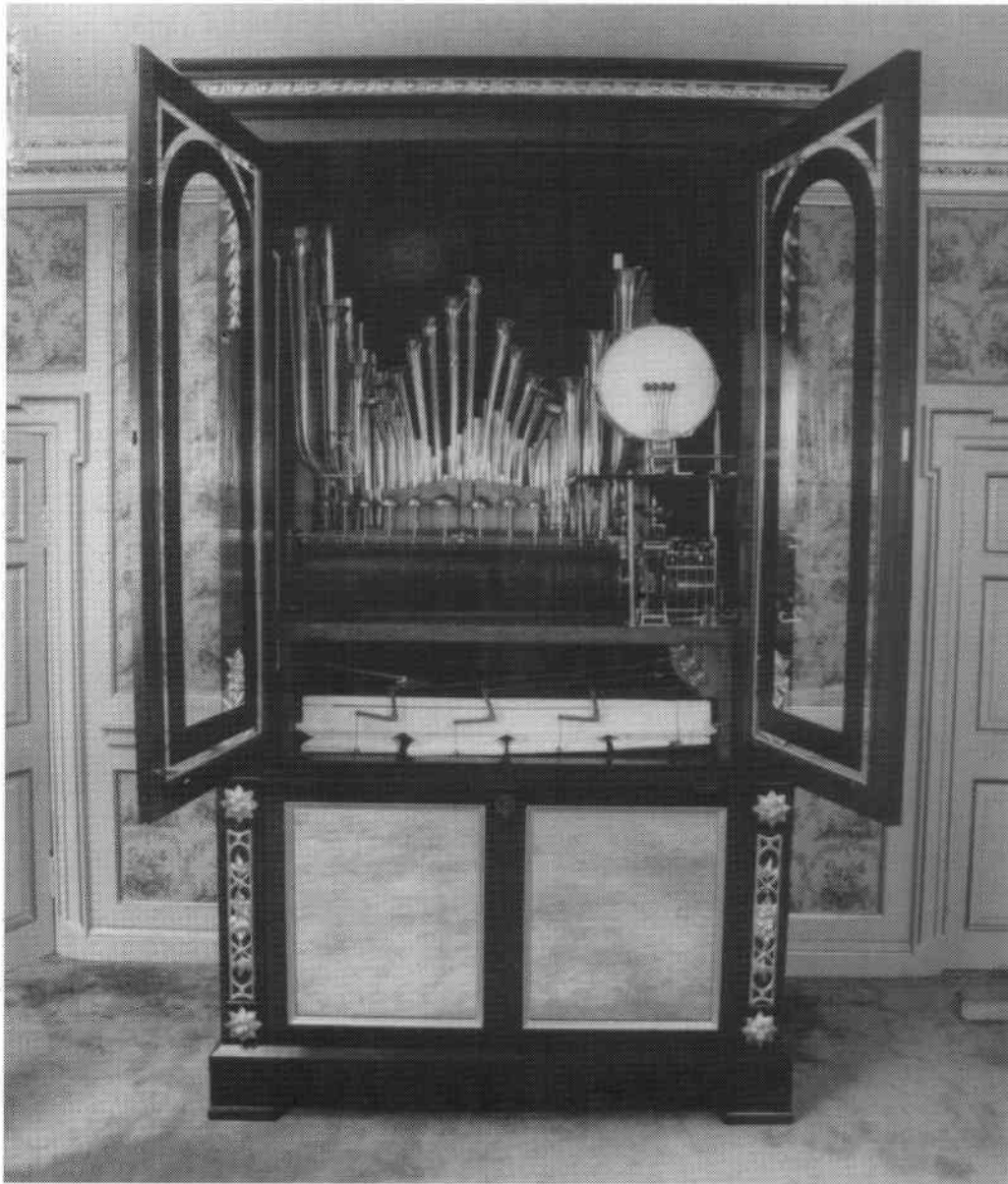
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A further 5% discount is given if payment is in advance.

### MECHANICAL DATA type area:-

Full page 10<sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" x 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" (270mm x 180mm), Half page 10<sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" x 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" (270mm x 88mm) or 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" x 5<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" (180mm x 135mm), Quarter page 5<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" x 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" (135mm x 88mm).

LONDON, 8TH JUNE 1994 A SALE OF  
IMPORTANT MECHANICAL *music* AND *automata*.



*Above:* An Imhof & Mukle Trumpet Orchestrion, German, circa 1880, purported to have been made for the Maharajah of Ambala.

Also Included in this auction are a Nicole Frères Grand Format Overture Cylinder Musical Box, a Capital Cuff-Type box, an Aeolian Orchestrelle Player Organ, a 24-inch Polyphon Changer Disc Musical Box, and an important collection of automata.

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