

An International Magazine of Mechanical Music

Volume 16 Number 8

Winter 1994

Edited by Graham Whitehead

The Music Box



Inside

The Dulcimer-player

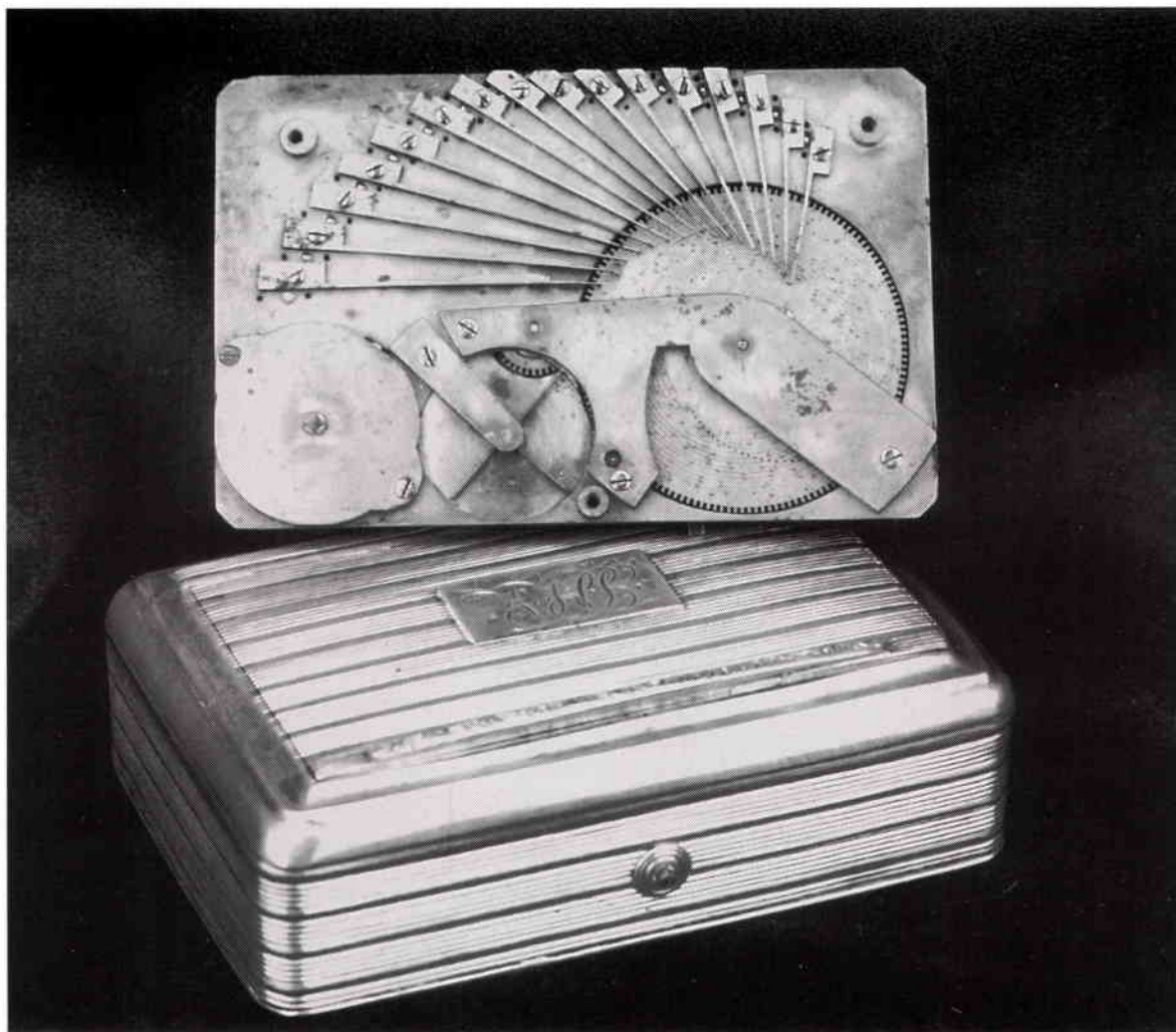
How Musical Boxes Were Made

Where Polyphons Still Play for a Penny

The Man who preferred Pasta to Barrel Pianos

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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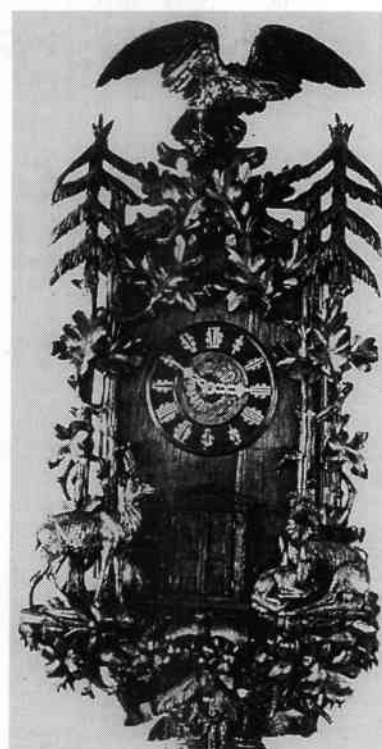
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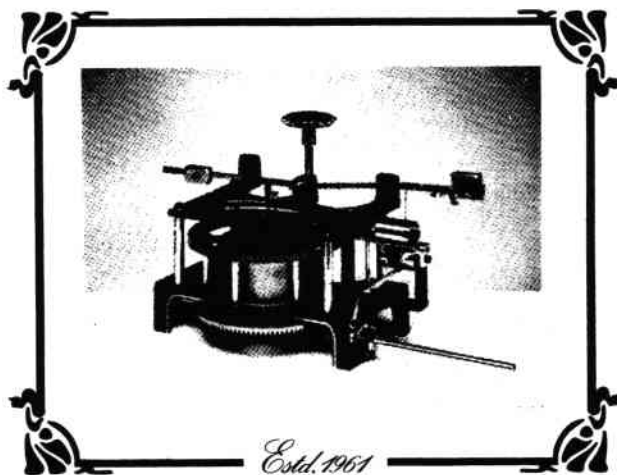
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The Music Box

An International Magazine
of Mechanical Music

The Journal of the
Musical Box Society
of Great Britain.

Volume 16
Number 8
Winter 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:

Libelion musical box sold at Sothebys London Sale, 7 October, 1994.

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SOCIETY TOPICS

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Spring Meeting
31st March - 2nd April 1995
Langstone Cliff Hotel
Dawlish, Devon

Friday 31 March

Evening - After Dinner. Informal get-together to view other members' boxes etc.

Saturday 1st April

Morning - Illustrated talk by William Drake, local specialist organ builder, on organ construction. Visit Bygones museum in Torquay.

Lunch - Buckfast Abbey, a living Benedictine monastery.

Afternoon - Visit Pip Corin's Mechanical Music Museum by train from Liskeard (optional trip by train from Museum to Looe - an old Cornish fishing town).

Tea - Possibly at Craft Centre near Saltash en route to Dawlish.

Evening - Society Dinner with musical entertainment and talk afterwards.

Sunday 2nd April

Morning - Visit to Chudleigh to see Robert Hough's collection with some other local members' items and also a visit to the Wheel Craft Centre at Chudleigh located in an old mill building complete with working water wheel.

Lunch - Optional at Powderham Castle, Starcross (close to the Langstone Cliff Hotel, Dawlish). Home of the Earls of Devon.

Afternoon - Tour of the Castle and grounds.

Local organiser: Robert Hough.

Summer Meeting, June 3rd, 1995

Location near Birmingham - still to be finalised.

Programme: Morning - registration, A.G.M.

Afternoon: Society Auction.

Autumn Meeting, 1995

Lancaster area, mid September. Further details of both meetings in next magazine. ■

REPORT ON PAST MEETINGS

Autumn Meeting at The Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate, North Yorkshire on 2nd-4th September 1994

Musical Box Society members planning to visit Harrogate for the Autumn meeting in early September may have been disheartened by the weather on the Thursday, but we arrived on Friday to sunshine and blue skies.

The Old Swan Hotel is typical of many buildings in this Yorkshire spa town, presenting a substantial ivy-clad stone facade across green lawns and flower-decked traffic islands. The Hotel claims a long association with Agatha Christie but no-one found a body in the bathroom whilst we were there!

The formal part of the programme started on the Saturday morning, after an informal dinner on Friday evening, after which small groups gathered to discuss things "mechanical and musical." The first presentation was by John Powell, who was responsible for the organisation of the meeting. John drew interesting comparisons between different musical box sounds using a large Paillard twin comb 51 tooth and a Langdorff sublime harmonie box.

After coffee, Arthur Ord-Hume spoke on single comb Piano-Forte musical boxes, highlighting the difficulties in restoration of these instruments. With clarity and humour he also covered some of the history of musical box manufacture with interesting insights into the people and manufacture methods used in pre-mechanisation days.

At lunchtime, our meeting was featured in a short item on Radio York. Interviews with Roy Ison and Arthur Ord-Hume gave a brief insight into the world of musical boxes - but ten minutes was all too short. However, all publicity is good if it helps to tell

people about the Musical Box Society.

The afternoon was taken up with a visit to the Museum of Automata in nearby York. Exhibits range from the very earliest automata through to some present day items. In this collection there is surely something for everyone, and it was regrettable to learn that the future of the Museum is in doubt.

On Saturday evening members gathered for a formal dinner followed by a presentation by one of the Hotel staff on their links with Agatha Christie. It seems the lady lived a life of mystery and intrigue as well as writing about them.

The morning session on Sunday kicked off with David Snelling recalling some of his American experiences. His presentation was liberally interspersed with slides of American Society meetings and some of the more unusual items from David's collection. His mixture of humorous anecdotes and precise technical detail ended with a very detailed account of his Mills Violano.

John and Joyce Turner of Wakefield told how they got hooked on musical boxes, and rounded off their short presentation by playing their Hofbauer Harmonipan.

Finally, John Knott from Salford showed a rare Roepke musical box from around 1890. From being in very poor condition this box has been fully restored and plays very sweetly. It uses a perforated card music strip operating directly on the star wheels, and with the assistance of his son, John has been able to produce new music to enable this rare box to be heard again.

The meeting concluded with thanks to John Powell for producing such a full and varied programme. By the time we left Harrogate rain was threatening, but we were already looking forward to the Spring Meeting!

Alan Pratt ■



The Old Swan Hotel



Not the United Nations Summit Meeting just the MBSGB President and new member John Turner making gentler points with good use of the index finger.



John Knott demonstrates the Roepke box.



An English box!

Above:

A musical box actually made in England? This is the rare Roepke box which plays from perforated card music.

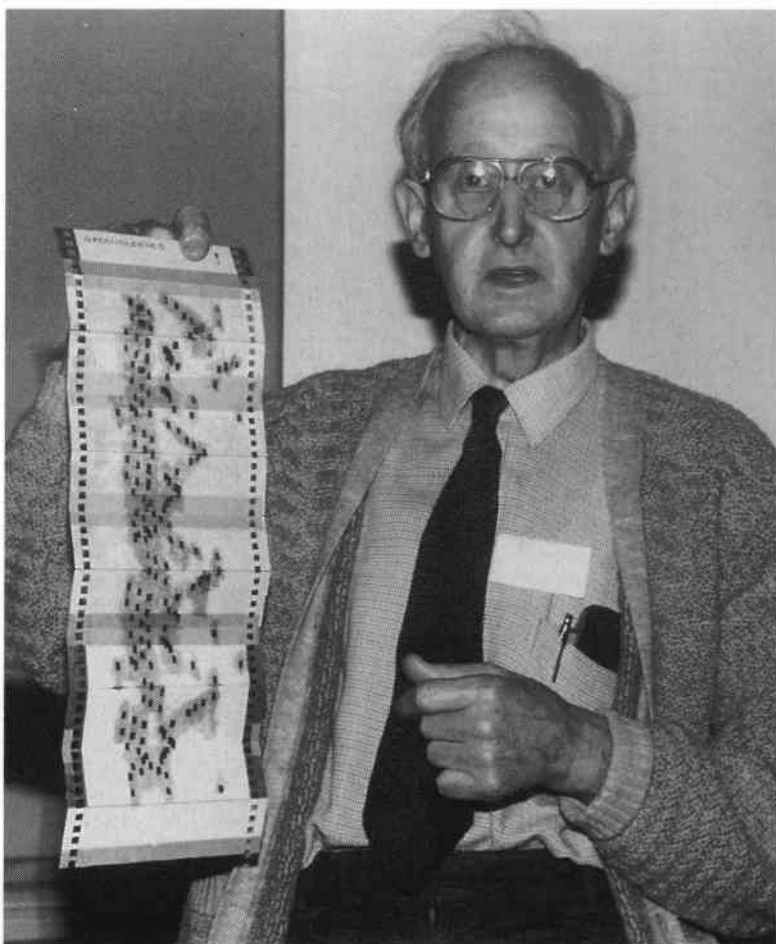
Below:

Instruction sheet bearing makers name, Roepke & Co. Ltd., Salford, England.





Members at the Harrogate meeting.



Above:
"And the Newsreel cameras were there."
Member Doug Pell, also a lifetime cine enthusiast trys his new technology, a handycam 8mm video camera, he tells me squinting just right improves the picture quality.

Left:
John Knott shows the perforated card music strip, his arrangement of "Greensleeves," for his Roepke musical box.



"Oh help, what's gone wrong" bleats David Snelling as the Hotels slide projector goes into 'auto-jam' mode during his lecture.



"That's better" quips David as Alan Pratt un-jams his slides.



"It's gone wrong again, but what about this for an encore" as David plays his Rollmonica mouth organ.

— The Three Johns —



The intenseness of the meeting over and relaxed smiles all around. Left: John Knott, Centre: John Powell, Right: John Turner.

We have a problem...

An Urgent Message from the President

SINCE I took over the office of President at the Annual General Meeting in March this year, I have devoted some considerable while examining the Society and, in particular, its finances and funding.

The results of this investigation reveal a picture which is somewhat at variance with that presented to me when I accepted the office of President.

It is obvious that over the past decade or more the resources of the Society have been depended on more and more to make up the increasing shortfall in capital due entirely to declining numbers of members.

On top of this, subscriptions have not been increased for something in the order of six years.

The point has now been reached where we have to take some drastic measures in order to survive for not only do we face the normal lean time of the year when resources are depleted against the pending income from membership fees, but there is also no question that the anticipated income at the present rate will be sufficient to see the Society through its coming year.

Failure to take drastic measures immediately can only press the Society deeply into debt.

Part of the problem is that this situation was not recognised early enough. Had the full import of the evidence been appreciated several years ago, then remedial steps could have been taken which would have largely avoided what is now a crisis of some proportions.

Let me remind you all that those who serve this Society on the Committee offer their services free of all remuneration. Nobody draws a fee in any way and, while members of the Committee include professional people in many walks of life, their time and services are given free.

As your President, I do not believe that any good will accrue from further investigation of the causes of our present predicament. All effort must now go into a salvage

situation before we can rebuild our vital reserves.

To accomplish this, steps have to be taken which will I am sure be received with dismay in the short term. However, I repeat that these steps are vital because nothing has been done to secure an increase in Society income for half a dozen years.

The Committee has accordingly approved the following measures which will be implemented as of January 1st 1995:

1. Membership fees/subscriptions: An immediate increase to £25 per annum.

2. "The Music Box" advertising rates are to be increased by sufficient to ensure that the journal remains an asset to the Society rather than a burden to members and a charity to some of our advertisers who at present receive what is best described as subsidised promotion.

The changes for our advertisers are notified and take effect from the next issue. They do not, however, relate to contract advertisements for the remaining duration of such contracts. These will be re-negotiated at the new rates on expiry.

I know that at the AGM it was proclaimed that the Society did not need a subscription rise and I know that at that time I endorsed this in my opening address. I confirmed this in my first President's Message to you all. At that time I had still to receive a full report from our newly-appointed Treasurer and consequently full details of the financial position of the Society were not available to me.

I also know that the subscription rise which has been agreed is of considerable proportions and this is a matter for great concern. Nevertheless, I urge you to accept that this is due to the extraordinary position in which I now find the Society. For far too long we have tried to fly in the face of inflation and maintain subscriptions at archaic levels.

I also urge you that if you value your Society you will support the Society in not just accepting this rise but in helping me in my task by paying your new subscriptions promptly.

Nothing dismays me more than having to write a message to you which contains so little cheer. And nothing is more embarrassing than

having to reveal a problem which has almost got out of hand because it was not spotted early enough.

I will not see the quality of the Society Journal *THE MUSIC BOX* compromised: in fact the way in which most of you benefit from Society membership is via the Journal and therefore to over-economise on the magazine would be both counter-productive and unpopular.

THE MUSIC BOX, then, will be expanded as regards content and presentation. The Editor tells me he has numerous plans for the future and these we will see implemented.

If we are all to continue appreciating to the full the delights of mechanical music and the pleasures and benefits which membership of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain brings, we have to face now the outcome, however unwholesome it may at first appear, of having had several stable years during which membership fees have not been increased.

The measures which are set out here and which naturally have the unanimous backing of the Committee will be consolidated by other possible steps which I am currently exploring. My target is to turn what is at this moment a financially insolvent organisation into a thriving society which is not just able to keep its head above water but once again has a small but healthy reserve of funds with which to face any future difficult times.

I have given myself two years in which to fulfil this objective.

Each one of you has a part to play in resolving the present catastrophic situation. Your individual part is two-fold: please renew your subscription on time and please do your utmost to recruit new members. Those of you disposed to make donations to the Society are accordingly urged to do so.

Old and threadbare pleas about pulling together may sound a little hackneyed but the truth is that if we really do all pull together, not just as a Society but as a team, we can get ourselves out of this mess and get on with the work we know and do best - appreciating mechanical music.

I am personally counting on your help!

Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume
President

Obituary

ALEX DUMAN - Haggis basher



Alex Duman collecting for charity outside his shop earlier this year.

Alex Duman died in Glasgow on the 31st August 1994 aged 72, apparently of a heart attack. He had suffered from angina and diabetes.

Born in Falkirk, near Glasgow of a Jewish family he emigrated to America in 1945, where he lived for 18 years in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles, working in Hollywood for the MGM studios on promotion, at which he excelled. He had an unsuccessful marriage, being divorced in Reno after only six months and thereafter remained a bachelor. He was particularly proud of being an American citizen, holding dual nationality.

Upon his return to Scotland in April 1963 he created the Krazy House, at Glasgow Cross, a gentlemen's outfitters like no other. The three floors were packed with gimmicks, mechanical organs, distorting mirrors, a model fairground, a doll collection, model engineering and go-go dancers performed on platforms above the changing rooms. Anything that appealed to Alex he secured for his beloved Krazy House. Admission had to be restricted to people making a purchase and every boy in the Glasgow area would insist on being outfitted there to get inside this veritable Aladdin's cave.

One semi-private room was devoted to the special mechanical music pieces of Alex's, which tended to be large and spectacular but not of top quality. Unfortunately some dealers, knowing what would appeal to him and of his generosity, took advantage of him.

He threw himself into the affairs of the Musical Box Society with great enthusiasm, one time serving on the Committee, regularly travelling down from Glasgow for Committee Meetings in London. He had several ambitions for the Society, his main one being to increase the membership but also that all our meetings should include a dance on the Saturday night and another that the Society should acquire a house just outside London as a museum, library and guest house for members. Such a proposal might seem wildly impractical but Alex's dynamism often made the impossible happen.

He published a series of newsletters which were posted to all members, entirely at his expense. Fellow Glaswegian Norman Brown was his collaborator in this venture and they called themselves the Haggis Bashers, these light-hearted newsletters forming a contrast to the sober and scholarly Journal.

He dearly wanted to hold a regional meeting at the Krazy House, of which he was so proud, but was told that Scotland was too isolated, although the Society subsequently had a highly successful meeting in Aberdeen.

He did organise a northern meeting in Manchester, and what a meeting that was: held at the excellent Midland Hotel with an auction, speakers included Bruce Angrave, Arthur Cunliffe, Claes Frieberg, John Hammond, Arthur Ord-Hume, Christopher Proudfoot and Geoff Worrall. We had a dance, of course, each table boasting a bottle of whisky, cour-

tesy of Alex, and a cabaret with a rising comedienne, a fire-eater and a belly dancer.

Those who attended Society meetings in the 70's will certainly remember him, short, portly and jolly he was a whirlwind of energy and utterly devoted to promoting the Musical Box Society. He was usually exhorting members to buy raffle tickets, he himself having donated the prize, or blowing a whistle to marshal members. He enthusiastically supported the auctions, sometimes entering things one wished he had not, also the Journal with regular full page advertisements.

His exuberance was not appreciated by everyone, some of the more elite of the membership, or those who considered themselves elite, tended to dismiss him without appreciating what a wonderful, warm and kindly man he was. No-one worked harder for the Society nor gave more than Alex.

The Scotsman and the Jew are both incorrectly renowned in popular legend as being frugal but Alex, a mixture of both, was one of the warmest and most generous men I have ever met. Visiting the Krazy House with my family, who loved both it and Uncle Alex, was something of an embarrassment as he heaped presents upon us and I know that we were not alone in receiving this treatment. More than once I tried to take him for a meal, only to find that he had somehow paid the bill before I could ask for it.

When his business failed it must have been tragic for him to see his possessions and what he had created sold off. His health deteriorated but he ran until his death another more modest gentleman's outfitters, 'Jolly Big', specialising in outsize.

In later years he became more interested in his organs than in musical boxes. His health curtailed his travelling but he devoted himself to raising money for charities, particularly children's charities, with his organs, working like a Trojan and shaking his collection box until the end.

Although physically no Adonis his goodness, kindness, warmth, generosity and enthusiasm shone like a beacon making him a very dear and loveable man. He believed above all that our hobby should be fun, towards which he contributed so much.

Jon Gresham

OBITUARY



Robert Finbow 1930 - 1994

I first met Robert Finbow on a rally field in the early 1970's. I have no precise memory of where, but I can well imagine him and his team of Ray and Phyllis Keeble entertaining the crowds with one of his organs, having travelled from his home village of Cotton, 6 miles north of Stowmarket, Suffolk. In 1975 he organised the first 'Exhibition' at Cotton, this being effectively a traction engine rally, where the organs and other exhibits outnumbered the engines.

The year I got to know Bob better was 1977, as that was the year I took an interest in his 62 key Gavioli Trumpet Barrel Organ, with the intention of writing an article on it for 'The Music Box'.

The meetings I had with him, in the building which was later to house his museum, were always quiet affairs. Bob was not one for making a lot of fuss. I went to see and photograph the Gavioli and ended up being given a concert of his favourite tunes on the other organs.

In the following years I invariably attended the Exhibition, and usually managed to find and pin down Bob for a chat. This was often more difficult than it seemed, as he was a hard man to find, here one minute, chatting, and quickly gone the next. I would usually come across him beavering about behind one of his own organs, or perhaps heading purposefully across the show field, head down with a sombre face which soon opened to a wry smile and comment, when someone managed to catch his eye.

October 1982 saw the end of the Exhibition and the official opening of what will perhaps become Bob's most fitting memorial, The Mechanical Music Museum. It would now be summer

Sundays that Bob would spend beavering about in the backs of his organs. David Ivory took on the job of tour guide for the first few years. Bob had asked me if I would be willing to help at the museum, I agreed, thinking it would be pleasant entertaining the crowds turning a few handles, but no, when he called on my help, he wanted me to relieve David of some Sundays by performing the full tour, a task I still carry out.

Now, I found out more about this quiet man who, by assembling the Museum at Cotton, has given so much pleasure to so many. As the guide, people would ask me about the owner of the collection and I always thought best to say as little as possible, as Bob was not a man to blow his own trumpet. In more recent years, as museum Sundays settled into an easy running routine, he would be found in a corner in an old armchair chatting to one of the locals who came in regularly to hear the Wurlitzer played.

In September 1992 Bob opened the museum to the M.B.S.G.B. for a second time, having first welcomed the Society in 1981 to a visit, held before the museum was even open to the public. The list of clubs, societies, womens' institutes etc., which have had special tours, is very long.

I knew Bob for over 20 years, but hardly knew him at all. People who, like Bob, had lived in the Cotton area all their lives would tell me how they remembered him delivering milk, or how Finbows of Bacton could supply all those little things others could not. He was the man who supplied much of the funds for the kitchen extension of Cotton Village Hall with profits from the Exhibition, some of which also went to the village church where he is now buried. He was the man who always had time for a chat with old friends in Cotton, he was the man who was always willing to allow amateur organists a chance to 'have a go', on the Wurlitzer at the museum, and he was the man who enjoyed auctions. I well remember him buying the first lot in the large Claes Friberg Collection auction at Christies in 1981.

His son Brian had the most fitting words for his father on the card accompanying his flowers at the funeral, 'Gone to the Highest Bidder. A hard act to follow'. He will be missed by his family, his many friends, and the many people who were drawn into his enthusiasm for mechanical music.

Roger Booty

NEWSDesk

The Musical Clock

Hardback with jacket: 0 9523270 0 7.
Price: £39.99

Just released, a new book by Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume.

Despite the fact that musical clocks always attract a great deal of interest, there has never before been a book devoted exclusively to the subject. This book, by a leading authority on mechanical music of all kinds, details the history of the musical clock, not only in Britain and Continental Europe but also in the USA.

It deals with the various types of musical clocks, their style and mechanisms, differentiating them from chiming clocks, as well as discussing the tunes played and the composers who wrote pieces specially for these clocks. Automaton clocks, which are often associated with musical work, are also included, as are those masterpieces of miniaturisation - musical and automaton watches.

There is an extensive list of clockmakers worldwide who are known to have made musical clocks, and in many instances far more biographical information is given than has appeared in print before.

New research into the development of musical clocks and their makers is presented, as well as much useful information relating to the use of music in clocks. This should become the definitive book on the subject.

This book is extensively illustrated with numerous diagrams and many photographs, both in colour and black and white. Many of these are of important clocks which have never been illustrated before. ■

Subscription Renewals 1995

It's so easy to put it off until tomorrow, but **please** do it **now**.

Please send your cheque payable to "M.B.S.G.B." with the completed renewal application to me, your Subscription Secretary at "Martlets," High Orchard, Pencombe, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4RS.

Membership cards are being introduced with the 1995 subscription. If you would like to receive one, please enclose a S.A.E. with your renewal. Overseas members please send a reply paid coupon.

In the New Year, it is hoped to make benefits available in the UK to membership card holders and details will be published in the "Music Box" Journal.

Meanwhile, as the festive season approaches, it is my sincere pleasure to wish you all "A Very Merry Christmas and Good Health and Happiness for the New Year.

Bob Haiselden. ■

Register News

Missing from the last edition of the Register was information on Junod. Thanks to research by Roland Fisher and Anthony Bulleid, I now have the latest findings. The following should be included in the Junod data:-

"Arthur Junod was born in 1864 the son of Felix Junod and Rosa Cuendet. He was one of a large family. Arthur started the firm of Junod, Aubert & Cie around the year 1888 when he was 24 years old. The registered J.A.C. trade mark can sometimes be found incorporated in a transfer design on the front of cases. It was always used on their catalogues.

Arthur Junod patented many of his ideas including the helicoidal cylinder and a rechange system. This was all done within the 16 short years of his working life. He died in 1904 at the age of 40."

These findings are important in that they add to our knowledge of makers and enable corrections to be made. In the Music Box Volume 15, No. 5 on page 157, Alfred is a misprint for Arthur. In Arthur Ord-Hume's book Musical Box on page 310, the entry concerning Alfred Junod and Andre Junod should now both read Arthur Junod.

The information given in the Music Box Volume 15, No. 8 on page 242, note 2 has been proved to be incorrect. Two tune cards of the type in figure 1 have been found with serial numbers below 19,000. It is likely that both Bremond and/or Greiner used them for a time before Rivenc took over. The importance of sending in details on tune cards and photographs cannot be over emphasised. Gradually as more and more information comes in, the pieces fall into place and an accurate history can be built up.

May I appeal to members to make a special effort to send in full details of any H.L.M.G. boxes they may have. Those which have H.M.G. stamped on the comb are by the same maker. Notes of any other marks on combs or movements are especially welcome as I feel a breakthrough as to who made these movements is not far away. It would be excellent to headline "Another Maker Found!"

If more willing helpers could be found to check boxes on sale in the London salerooms, the Register would make even more progress. To keep on asking a few willing helpers to record boxes for every auction is hardly fair as it does entail a great deal of hard work. Ideally, no member should be asked to record more than four or five boxes. May I appeal for a few more volunteers to ease the workload. If you are able to help, please contact me via George Worswick.

In the remainder of this article, I propose to list some thoughts which may provoke members to put pen to paper. If nothing else, any response will encourage regular contributors to either continue with their efforts or to modify their work to suit readers' requirements.

Has History Stopped?

We go to great lengths to find out who made our boxes and when, having arrived at some sort of an answer, nothing after that gets recorded. I think most members have placed their collection in a time capsule that is firmly placed in the last century. Clearly remaining boxes have survived the ninety years of this century, yet we know little about who owned them or where they have been in this period.

I firmly believe this modern history should be recorded whenever possible and left in the boxes for future generations to make what they will of it. Here are some examples of what I mean:-

R-2879. Written in ink on the tune card, "To Bill, from Mrs Bax. Oct. 5th, 1930. Same day as R-101 met her fate causing 48 deaths."

Both Bill and Mrs Bax must have looked after that box well and the fate of the R-101 certainly made an impression.

R-146. My Great Aunt Ruth was given this box by one of B. A. Bremond's daughters after Ruth's prolonged visit to Geneva in 1885. I inherited the box in 1932.

R-3209. Two labels stuck either side of the tune card note that "This musical box was bought from Holyland by my mother when she married my father about 1840. She had known it all her life. "The note was written in the writing of an aged person and dated 1937."

I find the addition of the "human" side to these boxes very interesting and in a strange way it makes them less of an inanimate object.

Technical Types

A number of cylinders that were repinned about a decade or so ago are now displaying signs of the cement either sagging, cracking or coming away from the cylinder wall. Of course this happened to the old original cylinder filling, but it did not seem to happen for very many years. Not all cylinders that have been repinned display this phenomena, but some do, posing the question as to why?

1. Has there been a chemical change in the cement during the second and third session of heating?

2. Can the cement only stand one heating process?

3. If the cement has been over heated during the repinning process, would that alter the bonding ability of the material?

4. Would chemicals used to dissolve pins and clean cylinders make the internal cylinder walls less likely to provide a suitable "key" for the cement?

Wear and Tear

Every time a musical box is played, it is one tune nearer the end of its useful working life. It would be pointless to dismantle the mechanism, wrap it up in oiled paper and lock it away, so what is the best compromise?

I believe the following to be good advice, but would welcome the views of others.

1. Play the box when the time is proper and people are ready to listen to it almost reverently. If a background noise is all that is required, then play a tape recording.

2. A box wears out because of friction, therefore reducing that to a minimum is an absolute must. If a comb is set too far in, then both pins and teeth will wear out quickly. **However - The greatest cause of wear to teeth and pins is due to lack of correct alignment.** It is essential to have any box in correct register. Correct lubrication of pins is not just a fad but helps to reduce friction.

3. The use of modern and greatly improved lubricants is perfectly acceptable. I have found the use of a lubricant containing Teflon to be highly desirable. Teflon put on cylinder pins reduces the friction significantly below that of normal clock oil. An added bonus is that Teflon resists being rubbed off and does not dry out.

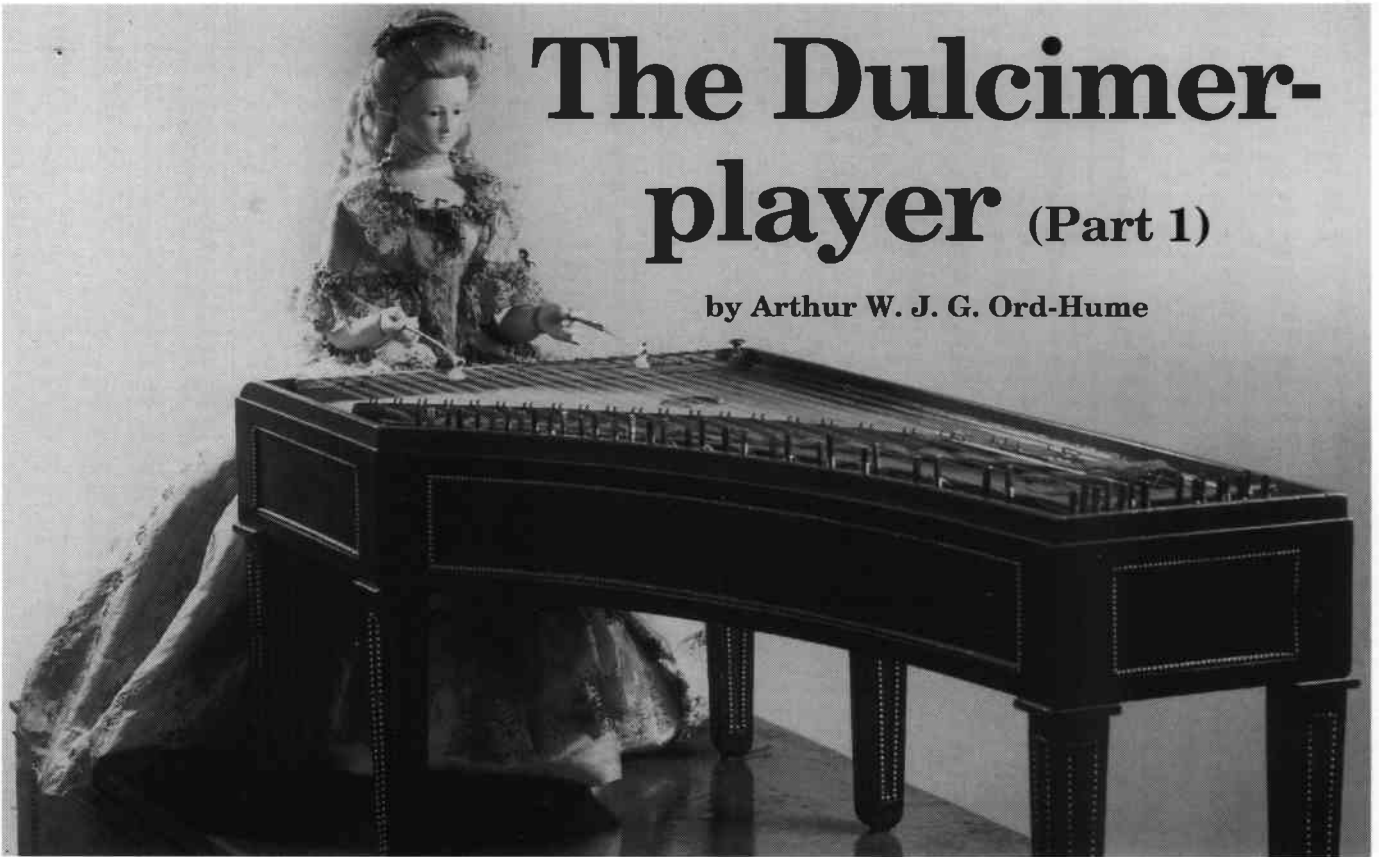
4. Musical boxes that are left on a shelf for long periods of time seem to develop a sort of "arthritis." They eventually start, often after flicking the governor wing. Then they run slowly for a time, gradually working up to the correct speed. Oil has dried up, the bearings have settled and the spring has stuck a little. I feel all musical boxes should be played at least three times in a year with the maximum number of people present to enjoy the experience.

Finally, I hope these writings have inspired, outraged, or cajoled you into penning a letter to the Editor for publication in the next magazine. We all have something to offer, so come on "Disgusted" of Tunbridge Wells. If you do not wish your name to go forward, I am sure a county name and initials would be acceptable.

The Registrar.

The Dulcimer-player (Part 1)

by Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume



Introduction

In the Musée National des Techniques, part of the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers in Paris, there rests what is probably the most impressive and subtle musical automaton of all time. Upon a nicely-shaped and inlaid table there rests a dulcimer shaped like a miniature harpsichord. At this is seated the figure of a young girl who holds in her hands two small hammers. She uses these hammers to play one of eight melodies on her instrument. Unlike other automata of this form, though, she actually moves her hands and plays upon her instrument as would a live player. Made in 1784 by the renowned German clockmaker and mechanic, Peter Kintzing and his equally renowned cabinetmaker David Roentgen, the piece once belonged to Marie Antoinette who most probably commissioned it. It is called *La joueuse de tympanon* and now, for the first time in living memory, we can hear her music. And there lies some surprises!

THE world of musical automata experienced its "golden age" during the era of wonder and excitement which characterised the middle decades of the eighteenth century.

The Industrial Revolution in Europe coincided with the arrival of a few craftsmen who could build on the art begun a century earlier in Augsburg. Men such as Vaucanson, the Jaquet-Droz and a handful of other philosophical inventors extending from Christopher Pinchbeck at one end of the scale through to Robert-Houdin at the other created artificial life forms which captivated the minds of the public.

Not surprisingly, their makers (as well as less-talented entrepreneurs) capitalised on this popular adulation and took their

handiwork on tour. Pieces of automata such as Vaucanson's automaton flute-player and Jaquet-Droz's talented androids which wrote, drew and played music attracted profitable crowds wherever they went.

Exhibitions were not limited to the locality of their creation, though. Pieces travelled the northern hemisphere with exhibitions in places such as London, Paris, Vienna, New York and Philadelphia.

These tours provide us with a rich source of information for besides pin-pointing dates when exhibitions took place, they provide us with contemporary newspaper and magazine reports while at the same time they inspired the profligate diarists to pen words,

some of which are actually quite revealing.

It was just such an exhibition in Paris which led to the construction of the extraordinary piece, the Dulcimer-Player (*La Joueuse de tympanon*) which is today displayed in the National Museum in Paris.

Jaquet-Droz sows the seed

The story began way back in January of 1775 when the three Jaquet-Droz automata - *The Writer*, *The Draughtsman* and *The Musician* - arrived in Paris as part of their builders' "grand tour". They were exhibited there on and off until 1783. Contrary to popular legend, though, Louis XV never saw these automata¹ for they arrived in Paris after his death. However, the Draughtsman was 'adjusted' so that it produced a portrait of the dead monarch.

France's new queen, the precocious 20-year-old Marie Antoinette, together with her court of associates, visited the exhibit. Here they watched, wondered and admired the pieces² created by the Swiss genius. It appears that she was quite fascinated by these ingenious lifelike automata, none more so than the clever figure of *The Musician*, an android female which actually performed upon a real pipe organ playing a keyboard with its articulated fingers.



One may postulate that upon seeing and appreciating the exhibits, Marie Antoinette probably suggested to her 21-year-old husband - the equally new king - that she would like to have such an automaton. The Jaquet-Droz pieces, however, were not for sale, not even to the King of France and his queen.

It may be that the queen, also possibly even the king, was peeved to be denied the chance to buy such works of art. One may imagine his declaring that if the Swiss would not sell, then he would have a bigger, better and cleverer automaton of his very own. From what we know of Louis XVI this would not have been out of keeping with his character.

The story now shifts to Prussian Germany.

Peter Kintzing and David Roentgen

Peter Kintzing, whose name is also found spelled as Kinzing or Kitzing, was born in Neuwied in 1746. In the seventy years which elapsed until his death in 1816, he established for himself a premier reputation as not just a clockmaker and talented mechanic but as a maker of compound musical clocks

uniting organ and dulcimerwork.

Kintzing's instruments were always of the highest order. Their presentation was, however, heightened by the quality and magnificence of their cases. These were no ordinary pieces of furniture but were the work of the master cabinetmaker and fellow resident of Neuwied, David Roentgen. He had followed in the footsteps of his equally illustrious father, Abraham Roentgen.

If Augsburg had been the early seat of mechanical excellence in the Holy Roman Empire, then the significance of Neuwied lies in its tolerance of sects at a time when Europe was rife with religious persecution. This small Prussian town had been set up in 1649 by one Prince Neuwied who invited settlers of all religious persuasions to take up residence there free from interference. That must indeed have been an attractive proposition and it quickly established cheek-by-jowl Protestant, Catholic and Moravian Brethren churches.

The new town was radical in more ways than just its religious tolerance. It was conceived along novel lines which, for its time, were nothing if not radical. Built provocatively on a square grid

pattern and planned with many open spaces, the new town grew but slowly and its population remained barely 6,000 right up into the nineteenth century.

Neuwied, situated on the Rhine some seven miles from Koblenz, thus became something of a mecca for artists and craftsmen who sought the necessary peaceful environment to enable them to pursue their craft.

Just such a craftsman was Abraham Roentgen. He was born of Moravian descent in 1711 and had hitherto lived in Wettergau where his son David was born August 11th, 1743. Thus it came about that the family moved to Neuwied in 1750.

David, whose life spanned sixty years, ending on February 12th 1807 in Wiesbaden, grew up under the strong influence of his father's already-renowned skills in cabinetwork. Abraham, who died in 1793, produced furniture which was commissioned by the Russian royal family and noblemen across Europe³.

It was thus in Neuwied that Peter Kintzing came into contact with David Roentgen and by the late 1770s the two were collaborating in the making of furniture with musical clocks. Some pieces bear their joint signatures, in particular their clocks.

Both Kintzing and Roentgen visited (and may have worked in) Paris around 1780 although subsequent pieces still showed the place of manufacture as Neuwied.

Kintzing and the French King

The youthful Louis XVI is known to have been numbered among Roentgen's customers and during his reign as king of France (1774-1793) he appears to have purchased a number of pieces from him. One compound musical clock signed by Roentgen and Kintzing, is said to have belonged to Marie Antoinette (1755-1793) and is now awaiting restoration in a private collection in America⁴.

It seems to have been in 1784 that Kintzing and Roentgen were working to complete their *chef d'oeuvre* in Germany. The work was of a novel form. The figure of a young girl, 53cm high, sat before a dulcimer which she actually played by moving her arms and striking the correct sequence of strings with small hammers. Like the keyboard-

player of Pierre Jaquet-Droz (made in the early 1770s), each performance was an original one produced by the android.

While legend has it that they then sold this in March of 1785 to Marie Antoinette, it is unthinkable that such a complex and costly creation could have been contemplated, let alone undertaken, were there not already a customer lined up for it. The supposition must therefore be that this creation was specifically ordered by the young queen and had been inspired by the exhibition of the Jaquet-Droz Musician ten years earlier.

Louis throws out a challenge

Since Louis XVI must have known or otherwise been aware of Kintzing⁵, it is more than likely that the French king suggested that perhaps he, Kintzing, could make something for the queen which would compensate for her inability to acquire the Jaquet-Droz piece.

One may equally imagine Kintzing "going away and having a think about it." Whatever transpired, the extraordinary piece which is the subject of this article was the outcome.

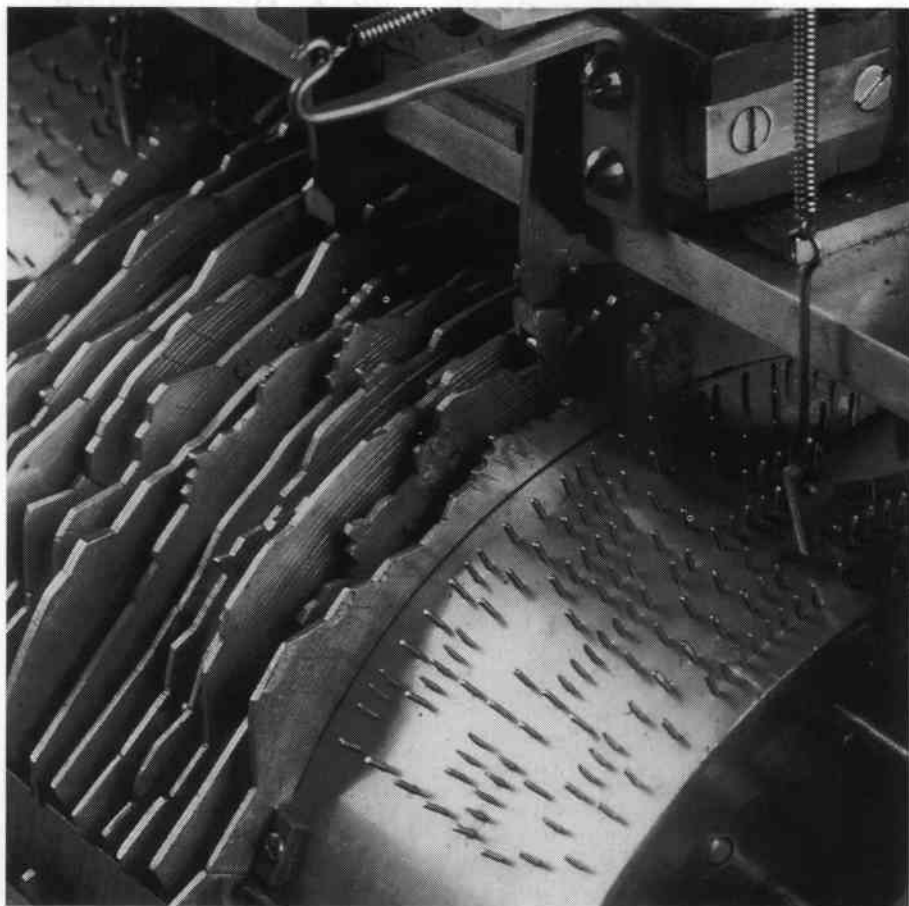
The decade between Marie Antoinette's captivation with the Jaquet-Droz automaton in Paris and the delivery of Roentgen and Kintzing's masterpiece may well have been one of personal development and changing tastes. Whatever it was, she seems quickly to have tired of this novelty for almost immediately afterwards, her doctor, a man named Lassone, was in the position where he could present the piece to the Académie des Sciences in 1785. The queen had already passed it on.

Dr Lassone described the piece at the time of its presentation in the following words⁶:

A small female figurine plays and executes different pieces of music very well on a sort of dulcimer, resembling a small harpsichord. This figurine whose features, proportions and fittings are very elegant, strikes with accuracy and precision the strings of the instrument with two small metal hammers that she holds in her hands."

Robert-Houdin lends an arthritic hand

In 1864, the administration of the old Academy of Sciences placed



a value of 3,000 francs on the piece. Two years later it was transferred to the Conservatoire des arts et métiers. In that year the celebrated illusionist and inventor Robert-Houdin was apparently involved in carrying out a restoration. The history of the piece was described, rather colourfully and not a little confusingly as regards dates, together with details of what he found when he came to restore it in the following terms⁷:

Cet automate, écrivait-il, a appartenu à Louis XVI. Il représente, dit-on, les charmes physiques et le talent musical de Marie-Antoinette. Abandonné depuis la Révolution dans un réduit de l'Institut où il eut à subir plus que les injures du temps, il fut un jour offert au Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers. M. Le Général Morin, directeur de cet établissement, me chargea de remettre en état la précieuse machine. L'état de délabrement de l'automate, ses mouvements saccadés, bruyants et peu naturels, ont rendu, je dois le dire, ma tâche longue et pénible. J'ai tenu, surtout, à ne pas sortir de mon rôle de réparateur, et tout en corrigeant les défauts de la machine, je me suis attaché à lui conserver, quant au fond, son organisation

primitive afin qu'elle restât l'oeuvre de ses auteurs.

There is, quite probably, some small measure of self-aggrandisement in this writing which almost suggests that he had to put something down on paper to justify his account! This is all the more significant when one wonders how Robert-Houdin found time to carry out any serious work on the automaton. He was, after all, still involved with the Théâtre Robert-Houdin, writing books on conjuring and sleight of hand and vociferously arguing with one Mon. Robin (Henri Dunkell) who, he alleged, had stolen one of his best illusions⁸.

On top of that, Robert-Houdin was not enjoying the best of health: he writes in January of 1864 that "severe rheumatism" in his joints confines him to his lodgings⁹.

Robert-Houdin's work on Kintzing's automaton was unlikely to involve any serious study as to how the piece operated and it was doubtful if it extended to anything like a perfect restoration.

What is certain, however, is that after 1866 a number of people, ostensibly experts in various fields, interfered with the piece and it was accorded scant respect. Quickly, then, it was out of order once more.

What survives after two centuries?

And so the story comes up to date with the decision in 1990 by the director of the Musée des Techniques, Madame Dominique Ferriot, to bring together a team of experts in the various fields to explore the possibilities of restoring the piece to playing condition.

The problem facing this type of restoration is that of preservation and quickly it became apparent that it would, in the long term, be destructive to attempt a full performing restoration given the present state of the mechanism. A further consideration was that, despite 140 years of abuse in the museum, *La Joueuse de tympanon* remained in substantially original, if delicate and distressed, condition.

The restoration team is formed ...

The head of the Museum's restoration department in Paris, Jean Marie Broussard, first assessed the potential success of any such restoration. It was quickly determined that while all the mechanism survived in a rather worn condition, the most important features - the musical barrel and the cams which controlled the movement of the arms - were intact.

The other members of the team - musicologist Jean Haury and sound engineer Denis Mercier - got down to the problem of assessing what could be done.

First it must be explained that, due to the unusual operation of the android, there was nothing on the musical barrel which was directly translatable into musical notation. Being a percussion instrument, the notes on the tympanon were purely represented by pins in the cylinder. But since it was the arm-moving cams which effectively specified which note was to be sounded, the cylinder was merely a brass drum of protruding pins and quite devoid of any indications as to the pitch of the notes played. In short, the barrel pinning could only indicate rhythm.

A moment's thought will reveal the immense obstacles which had to be overcome. With a normal mechanical musical instrument, all the music is represented by the arrangement of the cylinder pins. Crack the tuning scale and the music emerges relatively easily. With the Kintzing mechanism,

however, the music was the end product of two separate mechanisms - a system to move the hammer to the proper string - and then a system to cause the hammer to strike that string. In effect, then, the mechanism was like a three-dimensional game of chess!

... and breaks new ground in technology

It was at this stage that modern technology came to the rescue for it was decided to plot the music using a computer and a piece of software known as MIDI - Musical Instrument Digital Interface.

Thus began a fascinating programme of musical creation which was so unusual that it attracted attention far beyond the normal realms of museums and mechanical music.

The result of this unique application enabled Messrs

Mercier, Haury and Broussard to break totally fresh ground and present a fascinating paper to the Audio Engineering Society in Berlin¹⁰ entitled "The Musical Restoration of the 'Joueuse de Tympanon'". The valued contribution which the authors' research has made is outlined in the Abstract of their paper which reads as follows:

A new concept for restoring antique musical instruments: having recorded the original sound and noted the static and dynamic readings of pitch and rhythm, an audio-M.I.D.I. processing system enabled the virtual reconstruction by computer of the musical performance of the 'Joueuse de Tympanon' (mechanical musician from the XVIII century). This studio editing work is recommended as a guide for the restoration of this mechanical instrument.



An analytical look at working principles

The exceptional character of the piece determined the slow and methodical approach which the team adopted to their task. The first part of the study consisted of a precise analysis of the musical execution of the automaton, whilst the second part involved the virtual reconstruction of the correct interpretation of the eight melodies represented on the barrel.

The restorers commented that the unique nature of this musical android required a preliminary study taking into account the aesthetics of the musical interpretation.

The automaton figure plays on the dulcimer with two metal hammers. This particular dulcimer is designed in the shape of a harpsichord with the strings perpendicular to the figurine. It has twenty-three pairs of strings arranged in a conventional way

with the bass on the left and the treble on the right.

The operation of playing can be divided into two interrelated movements: a horizontal sweep of the arms in order to select the strings to be played, and a vertical movement of the hammers striking the strings.

Because the wrists are inflexible and in order to provide a clean "strike" to the strings, the hammer is hinged half way along its length and provided with a leaf-spring beneath. During the striking action, the arm drops and stops a few millimetres above the strings. The articulation of the hammer shaft then allows the hammer to continue its course to hit the strings. After impact, the leaf spring returns the hammer head to its normal position.

In order to operate the automaton, a heavy-duty clock-work motor is provided which provides the power to rotate a brass cylinder.

The speed of the mechanism is adjustable by means of the usual clockwork air-brake.

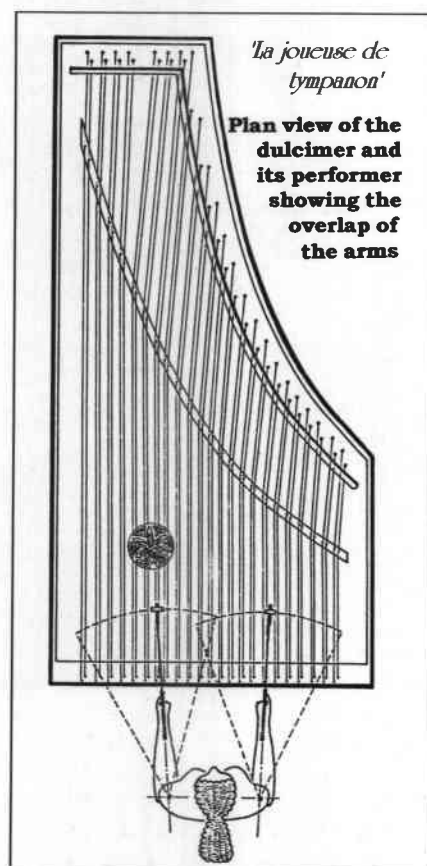
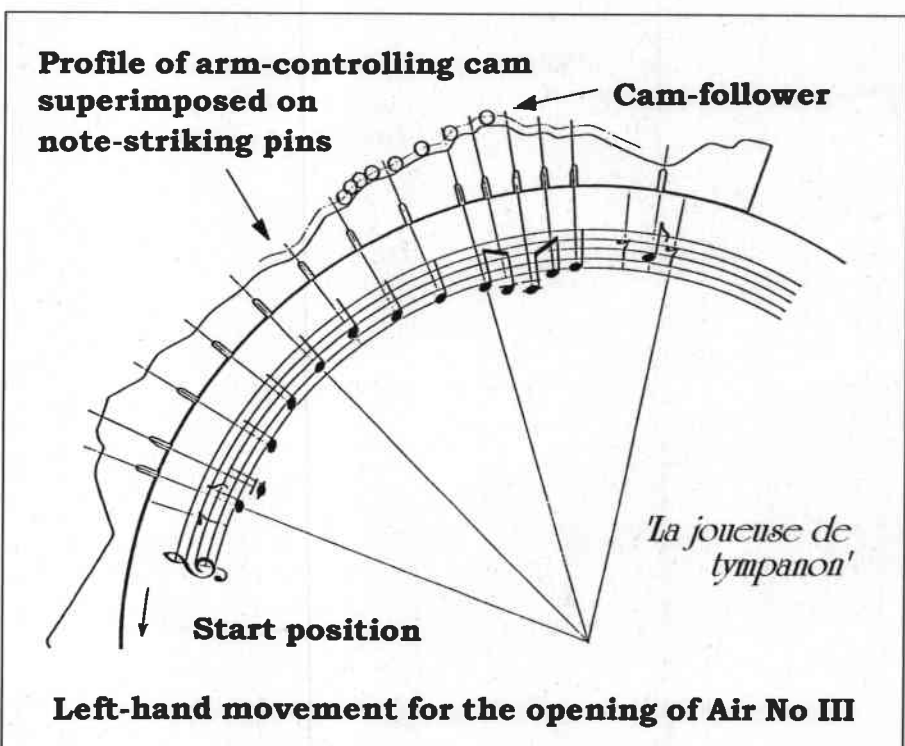
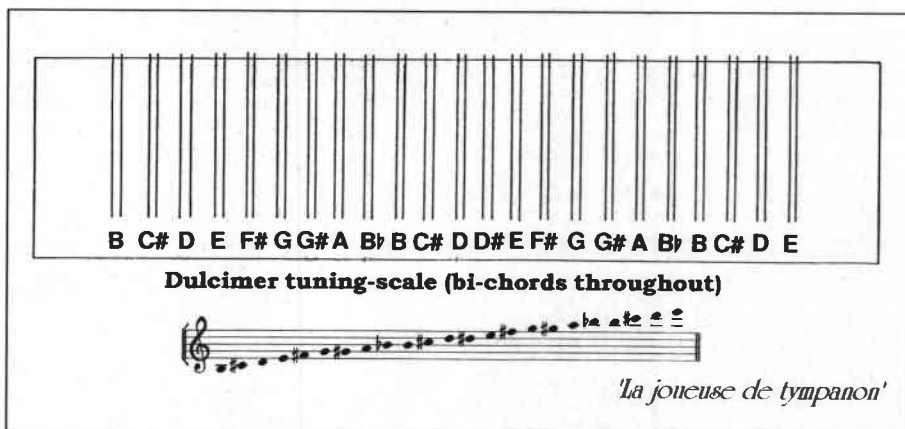
To provide the musical programme, in place of the familiar form of pinned barrel there is a cylindrical-like co-axial assembly. This comprises two separate divisions which rotate as one.

The first of these is a sandwich of irregularly-shaped brass cams placed side by side. These constitute the movement memory for the arms and sets, through a system of levers and a cam follower, the radial position of the arm for each note in each of the melodies played. The ratio of movement of the arm is such that for a change in the cam of one millimetre, there is a change in the lateral movement of the arm and hammer of one centimetre, i.e. 10:1.

The second division is a pinned section of the barrel which serves only to move the arm so that the hammer is operated. This portion of the musical-programme barrel operates just one single key. This combination is repeated for each arm.

Tune-changing is achieved in a conventional manner, this co-axial assembly being shifted laterally to bring a fresh set of cams under the cam-followers, and a fresh set of striking pins under the solitary key.

Continued in next edition



Collector's Showcase

A Swiss gold and enamel musical fortune-telling box, circa 1810

The lid is decorated with a young Turkish couple consulting a sorcerer, in polychrome enamel, within a frame of pearl-set foliage on a blue enamel ground. It opens to reveal an enamelled riverside scene with a magician seated on a rock under two trees, all executed in coloured gold. A drawer at the side of the box contains six double-sided gold and enamel tablets on which are written English riddles. These are placed in a second drawer and the mechanism set in motion by means of a slide. The magician inclines his head to consult his book and then raises his right arm to point out the answer to the question, which is revealed by an aperture in the foliage.

This box was recently acquired by Kenneth Goldman. An extensive article about it and the mechanism was recently published in the bulletin of "The Music Box Society International" in the USA.

Mr. Goldman is very interested in hearing from other members who have similar musical and automated "Objects of Vertu." He can be reached at P.O. Box 404, Needham, MA. 02192, USA. ■



HOW MUSICAL BOXES WERE MADE

by Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume

Introduction:

The music trade's monthly magazine *Musical Opinion* occasionally published pseudo-technical material, usually devoted to a description of how certain products were made and clearly following from a visit to the factory. Instrument makers obviously understood the value to 'PR' in those far-off days and, obviously, the editor understood that there was no such thing as a free lunch.

Towards the end of 1884, the magazine turned its attention to the musical box and presented an article which, from its heading, sounds as if it should have described in the minutist detail exactly how musical boxes were made.

Sadly, it hardly lives up to its grand title and is thus typical of many other articles published around this time in that it gives but sketchy details of the process it purports to describe in detail.

MYSTIQUE

However sketchy, though, it does shed a little more light (even if only a *different* one) on the mystique which has increased over the years concerning how musical boxes were made. It confirms, for example, that a comb with broken teeth may have been as a result of an intentional factory repair made during construction - and this is something we have all seen many times over the years.

In re-presenting this brief article, it has to be viewed today as a piece of space-filling prose rather than as a well-informed observation. It begins, for example, with two unrelated subjects, the first being a statement concerning long-playing musical movements and the second on the processes employed in manufacturing boxes requiring a good deal of spring power. It is almost as if the article was very much longer but an editorial blue pencil has elided large sections leaving, like the movie presented on TV, a story which hardly flows but reads as if you have continually turned over two pages at once.

For those who may be too young to know what a 'counting house' is,

this is the old name for the 'accounting' department - in other words 'accounts'. It is a pity that the correspondent didn't give us a bit more of an idea about the difference between factory-gate prices and those charged by retailers.

D.I.Y. REPAIRS

One may blench at the thought of encouraging do-it-yourself repairs as hinted at in the closing sentences. The Jacot repair manual, a product of this philosophy, was probably responsible for more damaged or ruined musical boxes than successful repairs.

Anyway, here is a transcript of the article which appeared on page 98 of the issue of *Musical Opinion & Music Trade Review* for November 1st, 1884. Punctuation, spelling and paragraphing are intentionally unaltered.

Musical Boxes, and How they are Made

The mechanical combination employed for playing long pieces of music without intermission consists of a duplex cylinder operating upon two separate combs. It appears that the first idea occurred to Mr. Amédée Paillard, in 1873, whilst employed in constructing a musical box for the Philadelphia exhibition, valued at £1200. But the method he suggested was perfected and simplified by a St. Croix workman, who sold his invention to Messrs. Paillard & Co., of Holborn Viaduct, where these boxes may be seen by those interested.

SMALL PROFIT MARGIN

At Messrs. Paillard's factory at St. Croix every facility is given for inspecting the various processes of manufacture and plans of construction, and on leaving the factory and going into the counting house and noting the cost at the factory and the prices charged in London, the small margin of profit is to some extent due to our English free trade notions.

The enormous power required in their boxes, is obtained from four

large barrels operating in one pinion; the diameter of each barrel is 5½ inches and the width 3¼ inches. The advantage of this combination is this: the main springs are all broad and thin, and on this account are not likely to break. It is estimated that their combined force is four hundred pounds, and although the power is so great, yet, by the combination of levers attached to the barrels they may all be wound at once by a child.

PLAN OF KEYBOARD

Space does not permit of our describing all the various processes of manufacture in detail, but the plan of making a key-board or comb will be an interested detail. Mild cast steel is used, not however so highly carbonized as that used for gravers and cutters. After most minute testing of the piece of metal selected, it is then planished and annealed, being made red hot - a dark red only - and covered up in sawdust to exclude the air. The teeth are then cut with great rapidity and exactness in an elaborate dividing engine. In the tuning of the key-board it is sometimes found that, notwithstanding the care in the commencement, that one or two of the keys will show feebleness, and want of power in utterance; such keys are taken out and new ones replaced by the following process. A key is made of the same shape and temper as the defective one, but on the under part a foot is formed. A slot is then filed out of the steel block of the key-board the exact size of the foot. The new key is then gently hammered into its place, care being taken to fix it in a line with the other keys. It is then soldered in its place with the ordinary soft solder used by tinmen. In this operation it is necessary to use a very large soldering copper bit, weighing about seven or eight pounds: a smaller one will not retain sufficient heat to penetrate the key-board. When the key is well fixed, it is filed up perfectly level with the others, and tuned by filing it underneath. If it has been executed by a good workman no one can detect it. A premium is put upon workmen who show great cleverness in this kind of work as they are generally drafted away to the London or New York dépôts for repairs, an extensive business of this kind being carried on at each of these houses in difficult repairs that the proprietors would be glad to get rid of, and they contemplate publishing an exhaustive treatise on this subject for the use of their customers. ■

Where Polyphons Still Play for a Penny (2p to be exact!)

Dr. Coulson Conn was over from America this summer with his son, Kevin. On this occasion the attraction was not a Musical Box Society event but the first 12-day Gilbert & Sullivan Festival at the elegant Opera House in Buxton, in the Derbyshire Peak District.

Coulson, a prominent member of our MBSGB – and of the MBSI is a frequent visitor to the UK and the European Continent. This time the occasion was very British, the first international Savoyard celebration where enthusiasts for these popular light operas could

by Jack Tempest

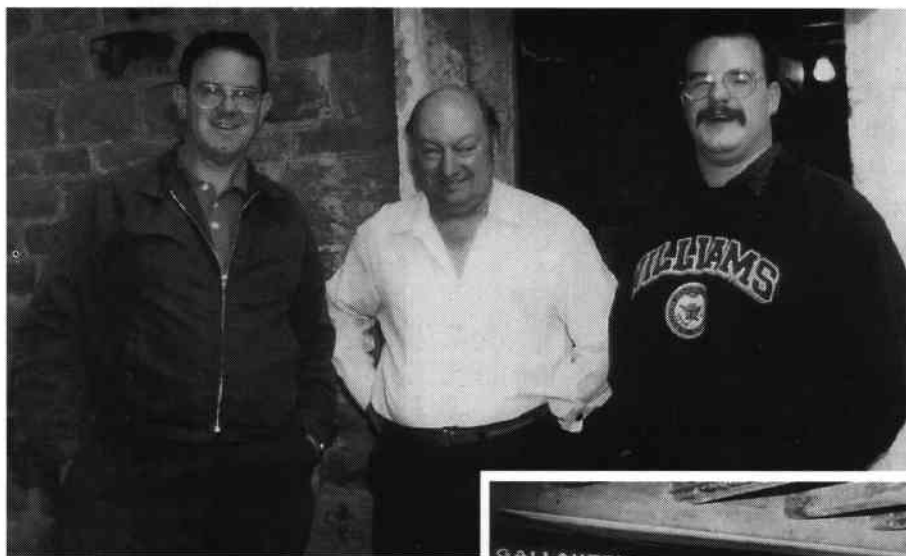
and Sullivan's music figures prominently on the mechanical music machines in his Pennsylvania collection. He was, before returning home, to pick up two "great discs" from Patch Pearce. "One of them being an arrangement of 'Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes' from 'The Gondoliers', arranged by Robin Timms for my 12 ins. Regina," he told me in a later letter from his home.

Most of the principals of D'Oyly

Carte were present, including John Reed. Coulson was down to provide the offstage voice in "Cox and Box." He was finding himself kept just as busy with rehearsals as those who do this kind of thing for a living. Kevin shares his father's love of G & S and he was playing "Pish Tush" in "The Mikado." His performance got a mention from the music critic of the "Manchester Evening News"!

Where to take the Conns for a quick run around the area was no problem. I remembered that, just over the Derbyshire border in Staffordshire there was the "Yew Tree" inn in the village of Caudon. This is a place long noted for its disc musical boxes which visitors may play to their hearts' content at the reasonable rate of 2p a time. (Prospective visitors should remember this and take plenty of 2p coins with them!)

We drove there along the Leek road from Buxton, picking out the way to the village of Waterhouses. Here one must look out for the fingerpost pointing to the hamlet of Caudon. There is a huge industrial building dominating a



Dr. Coulson Conn (left) and son Kevin outside the "Yew Tree" inn with landlord Alan East (centre). Alan is a well-known Staffordshire collector of antiques who has a penchant for disc musical boxes.

meet socially and in musical competition.

We decided to help the Conns to enjoy a break by taking them on a quick tour of the surrounding countryside.

"We never seem to have a minute to ourselves," explained Coulson over the phone as we made our arrangements, "it's all go!"

Coulson was in his element at attending such an event, of course,



Inside the "Yew Tree" are many coin operated boxes which are there for visitors to enjoy at 2p a time!



Coulson gets down to a closer study!

limestone quarry, which does nothing towards enhancing the scene, on the right. Not far ahead the "Yew Tree" is on the right.

"For an American visitor to England one pleasure is visiting British pubs. This is not just for the quality of the drinks or the often excellent pub food, but for the unique atmosphere that many of them possess," explained Coulson. "In the US the typical taproom is rather generic, 'Cheers' (the TV show) notwithstanding! The British pubs have often interesting historical reference, perhaps reflected in their names. They are ideal places for foreigners to get a good feel of Britain, both today and yesteryear."

This "Yew Tree" has not altered since I first visited the place a couple of decades ago and landlord Alan East is still pulling the pints. Some things never change, thank goodness. Alan has been a real 'magpie' in his time and his collection fills the inn's rooms.

Coulson was pleased with the inn's decor. "Strongly turn of the 19th-20th century," he reckoned, "with every room crammed with the artifacts of that era – bicycles,

tools, photographs, lamps, weapons, and – most impressively – the musical boxes!"

"A visit there for a collector of musical boxes is a rare treat," he added. "I have seen commercial musical boxes in their intended

settings, still collecting coins and still providing the public with enjoyable music at the drop of a coin. I have never before seen such a concentration of machines in a public place – and all still working!"

"Not only the number, but the variety of Polyphons is most impressive," Coulson continued, "there is a 15 ins. upright, a 19⁵/₈ ins. upright, a 22 ins. upright box with bar bells, and two 24 ins. upright machines with different case styles. Standing side by side on an upper landing are two 'Geisha' Polyphon long-case clocks that house 15¹/₂ ins. mechanisms in their bases."

"With such an array it is no wonder that in England the word 'Polyphon' is synonymous with 'disc musical box'," he remarked. "These were not the total, however. There are also a lovely 27 ins. upright Symphonion and two fine examples of perhaps the nicest of disc instruments, the 24 ins. Lochmann upright with bells. One of the boxes had saucer bells, the other tubular, offering different tones."

During our visit many two pence pieces were gobbled up by the machines as they rendered their charming tunes. Kevin, whose particular interest lies in the field of old weaponry, was torn between examining the musical boxes and scrutinising



Two 'Geisha' disc musical box long-case clocks on an upstairs landing that is not accessible to visitors.



Coulson and Kevin with more examples.

the many knives, swords, rifles, and pistols that bedecked the walls, rafters, and cabinets.

Coulson and Kevin would dearly have loved to spend more time chatting with Alan East but duty kept mine host behind the bar looking after his customers. Perhaps another time?

We had to hurry back to Buxton. This was the final evening of the 12-day event. There was a celebratory dinner and social evening ahead that no G & S fan would want to miss!

Because many MBSGB members are interested in railways I will tell you that we followed the old route of the long gone Manifold Valley railway towards Buxton. The Manifold Valley is a beautiful part of Staffordshire where once ran the "railway to nowhere." In the 1930s, when the railway had finally closed, the track was torn up and made into a public route for walkers and cyclists.

Cars are forbidden most of the way and have to follow the old winding roads around the steep valley sides. Motorists can follow a part of the track and drive through the only tunnel existing on the old narrow-gauge railway. Milk and lead, from the dairy and the ancient mines at Ecton were the railway's

main *raison d'être*. When these sources finished, the line ended up serving only tourists and Sunday school outings, finally closing altogether. Locals found the railway to be of little use as most of them lived in villages halfway up the steep hillsides. The develop-

ment of the motor vehicle presented competition the railway could well do without! Plans to extend the line to Buxton fizzled out.

Unlike the railway, we did reach Buxton, and in good time for the Conns to prepare for their party!



Unfortunately, but not for him, Alan East was kept busy with his customers.

The Man who preferred Pasta to Barrel Pianos

— a respectful remembrance of Joe Bertorelli —

IN September, Guisepppe Bertorelli died. He was 101 years of age.

Bertorelli made a name for himself in London back in the 1920s and 'thirties. And to this day the restaurant which bears his name in London's Charlotte Street (parallel with Tottenham Court Road) is renowned for its good food and its wines.

It wasn't always that way, though, for in his rich century-plus Joe Bertorelli led a full life and achieved a chequered career. He started out as an Italian citizen born on June 10th, 1893, in Bergazzi, Northern Italy. He then came to London for a while before going to New York where he worked in a fashionable restaurant where he was forced to speak nothing but French. Then he became an American citizen before finally coming back to London and becoming a naturalised British subject.

"No wonder people cannot understand what language I speak!" he used to say with a chuckle.

By Accident

But Joe Bertorelli got into the restaurant business more by accident than chance, for his father was an itinerant musician - one of those lowly mendicants about whom the high-and-mighty R. Paulucci di Calboli, one-time secretary to the Italian ambassador in London, wrote so copiously - and critically - about in his book *I Girovaghi Italiani* in 1893. These street musicians did nothing for the reputation of the Italian nation abroad, he wrote. That was his opinion.

Joe's father was one of these people. There was no work in Italy, a situation for which, in hindsight, we ought to be thankful, even if the Italians weren't exactly overjoyed with it at the time. If the long bad winters in the mountains of Central Europe were responsible for the birth of the Swiss watch and the

by Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume

Black Forest clock (not to mention the musical box), then the lack of work in Italy spread the Italian culture of street music across not just Europe but as far afield as America and Australasia.

The curiously-dressed organ-grinder and street barrel-piano player was a familiar sight in almost every temperate country of the world. They were too canny to take themselves to those parts of the globe where extremes of temperature pertain.

Looking for Work

And so Joe Bertorelli's father travelled first to Paris and then on to London looking for work. In those days there was really only one way to travel if you had no money. Old man Bertorelli walked. He walked to Paris, he walked to Boulogne and he stowed away on ships sailing to London. As did all his friends.

Of course, he didn't walk all the time. He made a precarious living playing his accordion in the streets of towns through which he passed. He did odd jobs on farms. He had money but, like those who know frugal living, he didn't waste his resources.

London's street music industry centred on that little triangle of run-down property which once occupied the area bordered by Clerkenwell Road, Roseberry Avenue and Farringdon Road. It also extended the other side of Clerkenwell Road, taking in Leather Lane, Cross Street, Charles Street and, of course, Saffron Hill. This last street was (and still is) a narrow lane winding along the back of one-time warehouses. It's all been re-built now after Hitler thoughtfully prepared most of this one-time slum for re-development.

In the last decades of the

nineteenth century, though, Saffron Hill was the veritable centre of the Italian quarter. For 'Italian quarter' read 'organ-grinding quarter'. When he wrote his book, Paulucci di Calboli found 920 of his countrymen working as street musicians in London and most of them were here living in squalor and scarcely-concealed poverty.

In the old tenement blocks, Italians lived and slept on benches lined up rather like sardines there were so many of them. During the day they would hire street pianos or organs from their fellow countrymen who made them just across Clerkenwell Road in places like Warner Street. Then they would push them to their pitches, places which experience had dictated would be good for business.

Some of these sites were literally across the other side of London. To push a street-piano in all weathers, rain or shine, from Clerkenwell to Holborn, Theatreland or Mayfair was one thing, but to go all the way out to Kensington and Shepherd's Bush was another! No wonder these men were either very fit (the young ones), very muscular (the middle-aged ones) or wheezing consumptives (the old ones who had reached their fifties). And earnings in a day could range from just a few pence to perhaps several shillings.

Native Culture

The Italian community in London was, like the other immigrant quarters, a rich source of native culture. No other language was spoken in this area - at least, not by the Italians who easily outnumbered the few other people who lived and worked there such as the watchmakers, the leather workers and the book-binders.

Old man Bertorelli came to Clerkenwell and took a job with one of his fellow countrymen making street pianos. He liked the

work and sent to Italy for his four sons to join him. Three came across on the money he had saved up and sent to them. The fourth was young Guiseppe, too young to leave home. He was then barely 12 summers of age.

Home without his brothers was lonely. At the age of 17, he set off for London. All went well until he arrived on British soil at Folkestone. He had been unwise enough not to learn any English and the immigration officers at the port were not versed in Italian. They sent him packing back to the Continent where, after all, he belonged. Some funny things went on in those days.

Meanwhile back in Clerkenwell, Bertorelli's father could not fail to notice how his fellow Italians longed for Italian food instead of the pretty dreadful stuff they were forced to eat in a country which did not cater for the tastes of foreigners. In his travels he had always preferred to cook his own food so now he started cooking home-made pasta for his friends.

Borrowed Money

The pasta-making was the start of a pretty big diversification for quickly his customers increased in numbers. Bertorelli and his three sons borrowed money and bought an old building in street-piano land which they opened as an Italian boarding house.

Success was instantaneous. A call went out to Italy with a plea for his youngest son to try again. This time he sent money and one of those letters which starts "To whom it may concern..."

It was 1911 when Guiseppe successfully confused the immigration authorities and finally arrived in London. Street pianos? Well, there was more money in cooking for his compatriots who could push their pianos around Town all day and eat convivially in the evenings.

One of his elder brothers had the wanderlust and hankered for the brighter lights of New York. Guiseppe agreed to go with him and the two worked as a waiter and a chef at a restaurant where his fellow countryman the famous singer Enrico Caruso used to eat. Once he was so flustered at meeting Caruso that he almost got the sack for addressing him in their native tongue: the Plaza restaurant had

a rule that at all times only French was to be spoken!

War in Europe meant that returning to London would be difficult. In 1916 he applied for American citizenship and spent his time working in an American munitions factory. By an odd chance he met up with an old girlfriend from Bergazzi. Her name was also Bertorelli although they were not related. They were married soon afterwards.

Booming

Back in London, however, things were booming. Despite war damage to the premises when a Zeppelin had dropped its bombs across Farringdon Road, the Bertorelli business flourished and they had now opened cafés in Shoreditch and by Waterloo Bridge catering almost exclusively for the Italian population.

It was into this environment that Guiseppe, now firmly Americanised as Joe, stepped with his young wife in 1922. They opened a small five-table café in Charlotte Street and initially served English food to commercial travellers and chauffeurs.

One day, though, the clientele requested details of what they themselves were eating. The rest is history. A whole cult of Italian food and Italian restaurants in London was the result. The Charlotte Street café expanded into a 100-table restaurant and another was opened in Kensington.

In 1936 Joe became a British citizen. He described this as one of the proudest days of his life.

"It's more expensive than in America," he recalled. "Over there it's easy and naturalisation papers cost you sixteen shillings. In Britain it's five pounds plus they want a registration fee of ten shillings!"

Abuse

Fours years later, as the Second World War raged and anti-foreign feelings in Britain ran high, he was, like many others of non-British birth, the butt of abuse from people who dubbed him a foreign Facist. Joe was deeply hurt for he loved London and the British. He put a sign up in his window. It said *I am a British citizen. My three sons are serving in the British Army.*

Peacetime brought one more great success for the genial Joe Bertorelli. Somebody had suggested that he make and market ice-cream. He bought a business and was one of the first to produce wrapped blocks of ice-cream. He was proud to be the supplier to such prestigious houses as Harrods and Fortnum & Mason. Finally he sold that part of his empire to Lyons who still market Bertorelli ice-cream to this day.

I used to eat at Bertorelli's Charlotte Street restaurant once a week when I was working in London. It was (and still is) always a friendly place and in those days the place was decorated with ancient newspaper stories and price-lists from former times. The table menus had facsimiles of the 1920's menu on one side (complete with prices) and the current one the other.

Reminisce

Joe Bertorelli was then in his respectable years and used to come in to the place once in a while. When he heard of my interest in the old days and in the street piano business in particular, he would come over, sit down and reminisce. Sometimes we sat there long after the last luncher had departed. Then he would pour us both a stiff whisky and we'd smoke one of his favourite small cigars.

I used to tax him about the street piano days and his father's work, but he would shake his head, smile and tell me "that was such a long time ago!"

Then one day in the 1960s, Bertorelli's Restaurant had a big fire. All the old records, the menus and the newspaper cuttings went. I stood outside at lunchtime with the staff, wondering what would happen next. Joe appeared from the fire-blackened interior and smiled.

"Now we get the new carpet!" was all he said.

Joe's son has run the business for about 18 years now since finally Joe decided to concentrate on gardening and listening to his beloved Italian opera.

Now another link with the past has been severed. Joe was a legacy of a time when life had a totally different pace and priorities were very different. I am proud to have known him. ■



Aeolian Pipe Organ #1150 in church in Les Gets.

On Tuesday 12th July, Owen Cooper and myself set off on an adventure which proved to be one of the most exciting and pleasant times of our lives. We had been invited to take part in the 6th International Festival of Mechanical Music to be held in the small village of Les Gets (pronounced lay jay), high up in the French Alps. We weren't quite knowing what to expect but we can now recommend these events to all our friends.

We had decided to travel by train, rather than air, and our first day's journey took us as far as Geneva. The last part of this journey, from Paris to Geneva, was on the splendid T.G.V. and we zoomed along, in virtual silence, in air-conditioned comfort.

Having made an overnight stop in Geneva, we walked across town to the French (S.N.C.F.) station and took a train as far as the small town of Cluses from where we had to complete the last 22 kilometres of our journey by taxi. We arrived in Les Gets at around midday on Wednesday 13th.

We made ourselves known at the Tourist Office and were given the details of our hotel and the four day festival timetable. I had referred in my letters to "myself and a colleague from the Musical Museum" and it was with some amusement that we found ourselves on the guest list as "Monsieur et Madame Cole"! The hotel and the village turned out to be all we had expected, with all modern comforts within the typical chalet style of alpine buildings.

Thursday 14th July was the first official day of the festival and as the day progressed the streets began to fill with barrel organs of every size, shape and description. Our lunch on that first day was set-up inside a huge marquee sited in the village square. 300 partici-

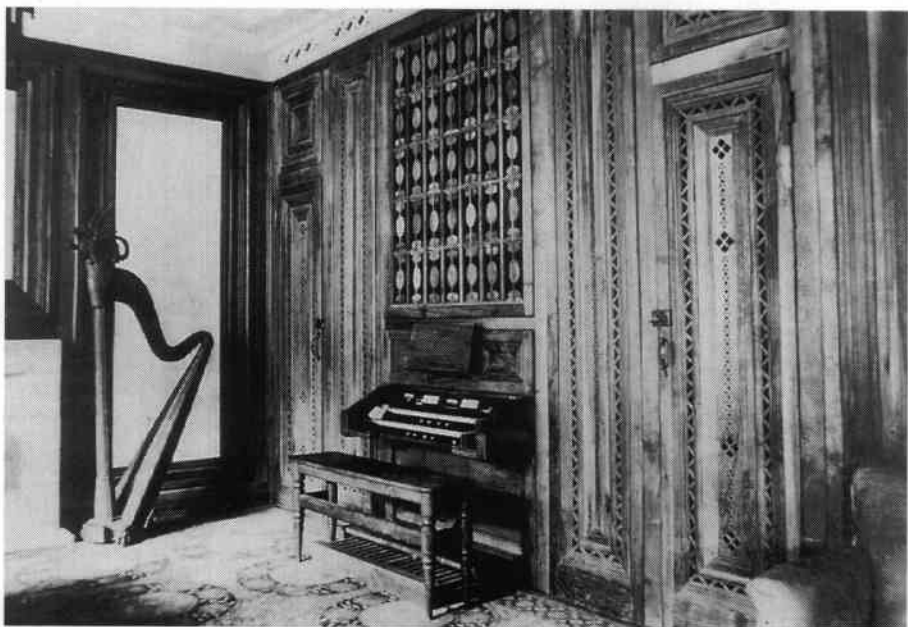
pants sat down to a lunch of cold meats, cheese, bread and fresh apricots, all washed down with plenty of the local red wine! After that first day, lunches were provided in our hotels but our evening meals were always in the marquee and consisted of simple, but wholesome food and wine – always in generous proportions.

The weather remained gloriously hot for the whole four days of the festival and we took advantage of the offer of free trips on the cable cars to the mountain tops. It was hot up there too, but the clear mountain air was a refreshing change to the polluted "fug" of London atmosphere. On the horizon we could see mountain tops covered with snow, but when we looked down we saw many small lizards scurrying around in the rough grass at our feet.

The first item on the programme on Friday morning was the official hand-over of two new exhibits in the museum. First was a Seybold

Orchestrion which consisted of an upright piano surmounted by a complete drum kit and an accordion. Secondly, was a Phonoliszt-Violina of unusual form. It is believed to be unique and was specially built for use in a cinema. Unlike the Violina in the Musical Museum, this particular specimen has the violin cabinet standing low-down, at floor level, to the left of the piano. Presumably, this enabled the whole instrument to be situated below the screen in the cinema, rather in the style of a Photoplayer.

We then made our way into the village church which is just a few metres away from the museum building. There, on a beautifully constructed balcony was the instrument which had taken us to Les Gets – Aeolian Pipe Organ #1150. This organ was originally built for George Davison, Managing Director of Kodak, and it was installed in his house in Holland Park, London in 1915.

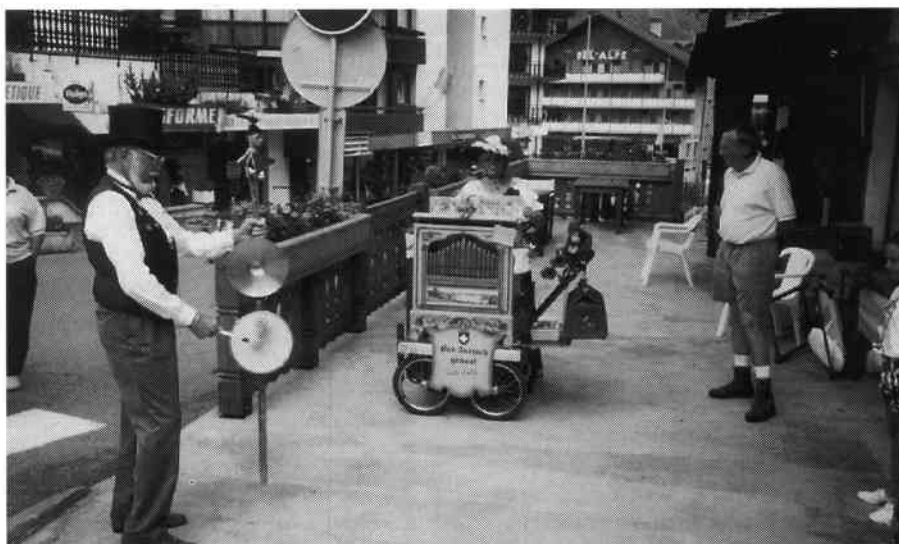


Aeolian Pipe Organ #1150 at 32 Holland Park, London, circa 1920. London home of George Davison.

Davison moved to a sumptuous new villa on the French Riviera in 1923 and the organ was dismantled and re-installed in the new house. Davison died in 1930 and the house eventually became a hotel. Finally, the proprietors decided to scrap the organ and after many adventures the organ found a new home in the church at Les Gets. Around 2,400,000 francs (£300,000) has been spent on professional restoration and the results are fantastic.

The organ is still contained within its original Ancona Walnut casework which was specially designed for Davison and it looks magnificent. The Musical Museum possesses photographs of the original music room at Holland Park and I was delighted to be able to present copies of these pictures to the museum at Les Gets. Naturally, I had taken some of my own favourite rolls with me and the next day I was invited to demonstrate the organ before an audience. I played "Selections from the Merry Widow" and was rewarded by a generous round of applause. The organ builders and enthusiasts who had rebuilt the organ, and who had already presented a formal public recital couldn't understand how I could play the thing single-handed, and they were very complimentary about my choice of registrations and the way I interpreted the music.

Each day the streets of the village were lined with street organs of all shapes and sizes. Some were barrel operated, some had paper rolls and others were fitted with the folding zig-zag cardboard books of music. One or two even



One of the many street organs to be seen at the 6eme Festival International de la Musique Mécanique, Les Gets.

had the music programmed onto computerised "floppy disc." Although these discs allow a tremendous amount of music to be stored in a tiny space, and they still operate conventional bellows-blown organ pipes, there is something about this concept which doesn't sit easily in my mind. However, they are capable of quite stunning effects, and in a number of cases the owners of two or three such organs were able to link them all together by means of an electric cable and then play all the organs, in perfect synchronisation, from the "master" organ. Each instrument would play its own designated orchestral part of the music and the total effect was out of this world.

Throughout the whole festival the weather remained absolutely glorious and rather reluctantly we finally had to say goodbye to many, many newly made friends. We left

Les Gets on the morning of Monday 18th July and made our way back to Geneva. During the afternoon we took a tram ride out to a suburb in order to visit the Collège Claparède where the Wurlitzer Organ, ex-Granada Clapham Junction has been installed. A tremendous thunderstorm passed overhead as we rode on the tram, turning the streets into rushing torrents – the tram left a bow wave! Fortunately, the storm stopped as suddenly as it began and we got off the tram in sunshine once again. I was able to play the Wurlitzer for about 20 minutes and we had a look around the immaculate organ chambers. No expense has been spared in building these two rooms but unfortunately, the organ is not in the best of condition and it was rather disappointing to play.

We had an early start next morning in order to catch the 7.45 train back to Paris where we had a couple of hours to wait for our connection onwards to Boulogne. We had planned to do a bit of sightseeing "dans les rues de Paris" but as we entered the Gare de Lyon on the T.G.V. the heavens opened once again and we were forced to spend the whole two hours in the shelter of the Gare du Nord. I have never seen such rain – the sky turned a peculiar shade of khaki-black too!

After crossing the Channel and travelling up to Victoria we finally reached home about 8.30pm, exhausted but happy. What a fantastic trip we had made. The next festival at Les Gets is in 1996 and we shall certainly return to this beautiful spot and, who knows, perhaps next time we shall take an organ with us too! ■



Pipework in main chamber of Wurlitzer organ, ex-Granada, Clapham Junction. Now in Collège Claparède, Geneva.

CD & Cassette REVIEW

by Alan Pratt

If you want the sound of musical boxes in your home but just can't find room for 21 disc boxes and one cylinder box, then two recordings from MBSGB member Arno van der Heijden in Amsterdam could be what you're looking for.

Available on both CD and cassette, each offers 74 minutes of nostalgia for musical box buffs, and a chance to enjoy the sounds of boxes you may otherwise not hear.

The first recording is devoted to Christmas music and is titled KERST Speeldoos Melodieen. It features 10 different disc musical boxes over a total of 42 tracks. It has many of the usual Christmas favourites plus a few lesser known seasonal tunes.

Quality of recording is good, with some tracks being preceded with a reassuring 'clunk' as the operating coin drops. The bass response is somewhat lacking below 200Hz, but the overall sound will please.

I found six versions of Silent Night and four of O Tannenbaun, a little repetitive—but they were on different boxes! However, one track of Holy City made up for any shortcomings.

The second recording is entitled Romantische Speeldoos Melodieen, and no less than 60 tracks recorded on 11 disc boxes and one cylinder—a Langdorff Forte-Piano.

Boxes featured cover a wide range from 13³/₈" Kalliope, Symphonion 10" and Celesta 15³/₄" right up to 24¹/₂" Lochmann Original and Polyphon.

A couple of tracks in the middle sounded as though the boxes concerned were in less than perfect tune and once again the bass response fell off at the bottom end.

But these are minor criticisms about an otherwise charming recording that you can dip into again and again.

I especially liked track 3—Hearts & Flowers—which is a pure delight.

The cassette versions contain all the same material and the recording quality is equally good. The overall sound on the cassette is not quite as 'bright' as on the CD but this is really a very personal judgement.

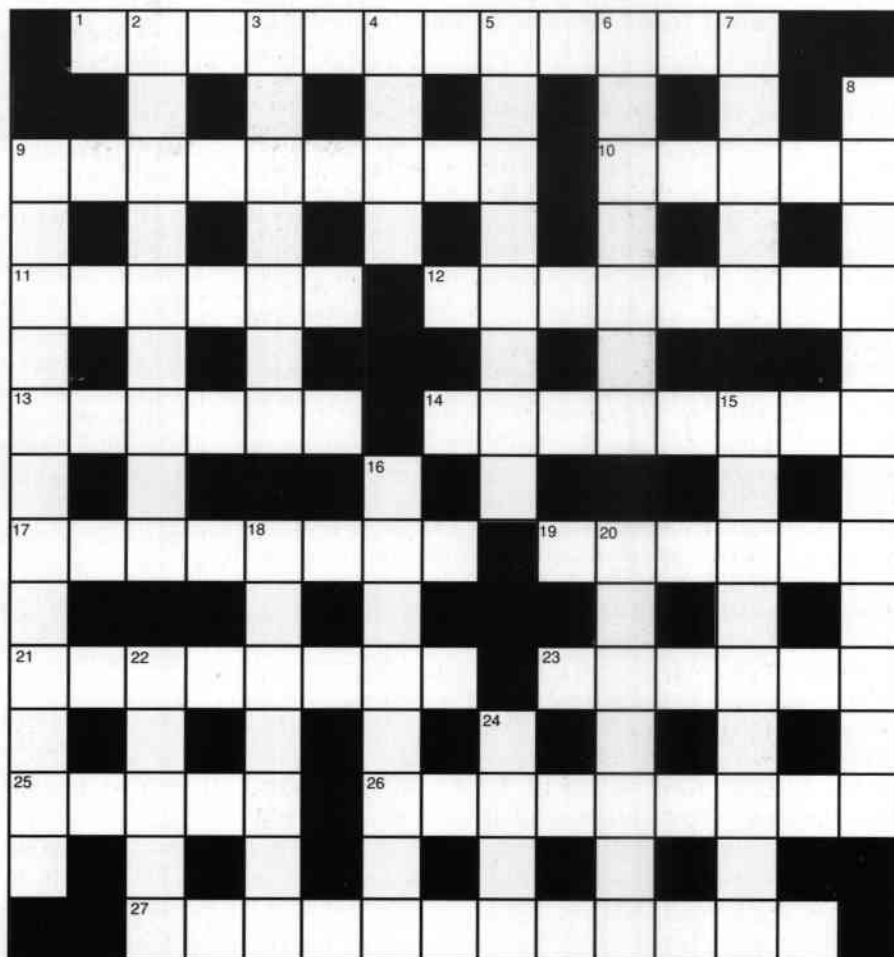
These recordings are available from:-

Arno J. M. van der Heijden
Apollolaan 70
1077 BD Amsterdam
Holland
Tel/Fax: 020-6627596

Prices: Cassette £7.00 + £1.50 p&p
CD £11.00 + £1.50 p&p
Postage for 1 or 2 items - £1.50
Postage for 3 or 4 items - £3.00
Sterling cheques can be accepted. ■

GRAND XMAS CROSSWORD 1994

by A. J. L. Wright



ACROSS

1. He turns to ring, or danger breaks out. (5, 7)
9. Noted man might even be hot! (9)
10. Musician in Crewe be requested to play? (5)
11. Looks pretty when the Navy goes South with fuss. (6)
12. You'll find it's harsher in treating gastric terrors. (8)
13. Being dressed enables you to move forward. (2, 4)
14. Supports lost Serb. (8)
17. Let the nut gleam out - it may be bronze! (8)
19. Girl gives doughboy a ring but not very quickly. (6)
21. Jump with a jumper on - it's only a game! (8)
23. A swimmer noted for opening out. (6)
25. Erica, bindweed, etc., surround a small hut. (6)
26. A tiny stamp is enough for this striker. (9)
27. Shocking supply of oceanic tension? (5, 7)

DOWN

2. Rush journal to a musical producer. (4, 5)
3. Oh! A pain can make one speechless! (7)
4. Hammer endlessly - yielded. (4)
5. In I got in case of firing. (8)
6. Was kind to a musical merchant. (7)
7. In the allegro, both see a mechanical performer. (5)
8. The bird-men need a fresh reactor, perhaps. (6, 6)
9. Arbor supporter carrying a stop. (7, 5)
15. Fine print of a ginger van. (9)
16. Five to back in the gates for dances. (8)
18. Find fee, perhaps, to achieve a foreign title. (7)
20. Five hundred or a thousand and a crawler is asleep. (7)
22. Holder of a collection, - may be musical. (5)
24. For use in sawn-off shot-guns? (4)

Answers on Page 241

Musical Box Oddments

by H. A. V. Bulleid

Number 63

Several successful and fairly eminent composers adopted pseudonyms in the latter half of the 19th century, among them Edward A. Belville. Perhaps goaded by the feeling that a Russian-sounding name was a passport to acclaim, he became Edward Jakobowski as seen on tune sheets after about 1884 though often spelt Jacobowski. He composed the music for songs and a few light operettas including *Dick* (1884), *Erminie*, and *Mynheer Jan* (1887). His outstanding success was *Erminie*, first produced in London in November 1885 and New York in May 1886 where it had an even more successful run than *The Mikado*. It was also produced in Vienna, November 1890.

The range of overseas performances is a measure of popularity, and I have added a few examples at the end of these Oddments.

Junod's Guitare Tremolo

After reading the tune sheet shown in Fig. 1, with its "Guitare Tremolo" heading, I looked in growing disbelief at the cylinder. It lacks those distinctive separate helical lines of pins one always associates with mandolin and tremolo and guitar boxes. With its modest 11" (28cm) cylinder playing ten airs there are only 62 comb teeth, surely inadequate for a box of these types. Then I remembered the 11" Mermod Guitare in Vol. 14 page 172 which did very well with only 77 teeth... On trial at an auction viewing serial 30662 was not very promising, with several missing tips and well over half the pins at the bass end missing or flattened. Also it

played too fast and was more than slightly garbled.

However it was very thickly pinned, and with patience it was possible to discern helical lines of pins. Sounding the comb revealed teeth in groups up to five of the same pitch. So I decided it had both potential and rarity interest and now, some months later, I must say it fulfills its slightly ambiguous claim of "Guitare Tremolo."

The mechanism is shown in Fig. 2, out of its rather superior case which has a plinth, and feet made from semi-circles, not the usual triangles. There is an 8" by 1" transfer on the front and fine marquetry of flowers on the domed lid, both with three lines of stringing and enclosed banding.

I had to re-pin the first 280 of the 620 tune tracks. They took 3302 pins and I estimate that the cylinder has a total of at least 6900 pins. Tune 1 is on the setting dots. Tunes sound best (to me) when played at surface speed 0.1" per second = 67 seconds per cylinder rev. = 62 seconds per tune, giving an average of 11 notes per second per tune. This is at the low end of the mandolin range and compares, for example, with 12 notes per second on the mandolin forte piano serial 186 in Vol. 16 page 104 and 11.8 on Bremond 17614. Some mandolin boxes reached as high as 18 notes per second – and even more when they were run too fast!

Serial 30662 has "uphill" pinning, that is, the first note of a trill is played by the treble end tooth of the group. Being a 10-air cylinder, the helical lines are flatter than usual. For example, in Fig. 3 lines 2 and 3 have their last, bass end pin .05" = half a second behind their first. Four sets of tracks occupy $(4 \times 10 \times .017") = .68"$ so the tangent of their angle of slope is $.05/.68 = .07$ giving the helical angle 4° for playing rate of 10 notes per second.

The tremolo or guitar rates vary widely between



Fig. 1. The Paris printing of the "lyres and stars" tune sheet, with curved frame corners and 5-point stars, here attributed to Junod serial 30662, made about 1887. Tune 1 is 1884 and tune 5 October 1885.

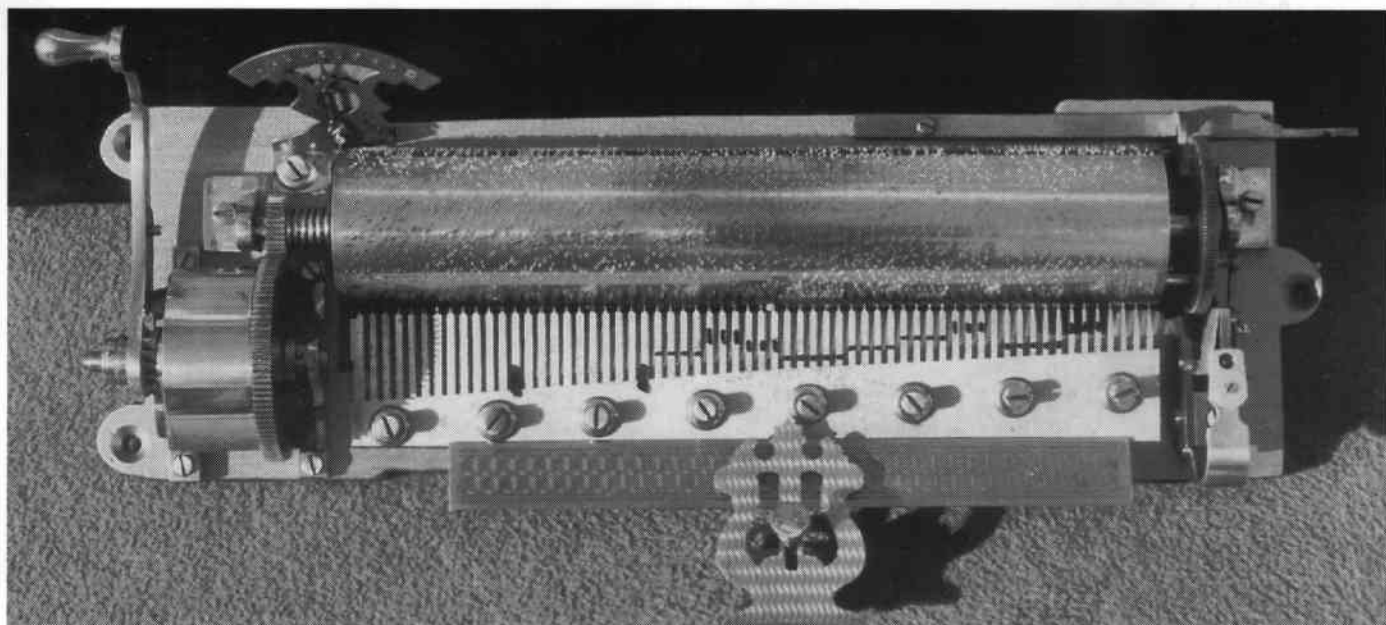


Fig. 2. Mechanism of Junod 30662, spring and governor fixed from above, nickel plating on tune indicator and zither only. Zither moved to show comb with *a* teeth nos. 13 and 23 marked, also the 34 teeth in groups of three to five.

about five and ten notes per second; the groups of teeth are comparatively short; and there is much use of individual notes among the grouped teeth: for these reasons the usual distinctive helical lines of pins are camouflaged on serial 30662.

The comb, on SBI base, has *a* tooth of relative stiffness 375, slightly on the high side but not sounding strident. The zither is fixed by the 5th comb screw with tissue covering teeth 9 to 59. Though not given to experimenting with zithers I tried limiting the tissue to the grouped teeth, 24 to 58, and found the result preferable. I think it is a waste of the aftersound in the lower frequencies to apply the tissue to teeth of pitch below about 880Hz.

Blank code 52 is on the bedplate edge and most cylinder, spring and governor components including a

blade of the fan. Gear ratio, endless to cylinder is 1820. There are no marks on the cylinder end caps and the bass lead scribings are indecipherable. Only 0662 of the serial number is stamped on the bass cylinder bearing—a reminder that corroboration is needed from cylinder or great wheel before assuming that a 3-digit or 4-digit serial number so stamped is complete.

Without doubt a top class tune arranger worked for serial 30662, not perhaps in the strictly musical sense but most certainly in achieving a very good and highly cost-effective use of comb teeth. The box has only limited mandolin or tremolo pretensions but it scores heavily with its guitar effect. I sought several opinions on it and comments included "You really can hear fingers plucking the strings of the guitar." The only criticism was that the effect would be better applied to

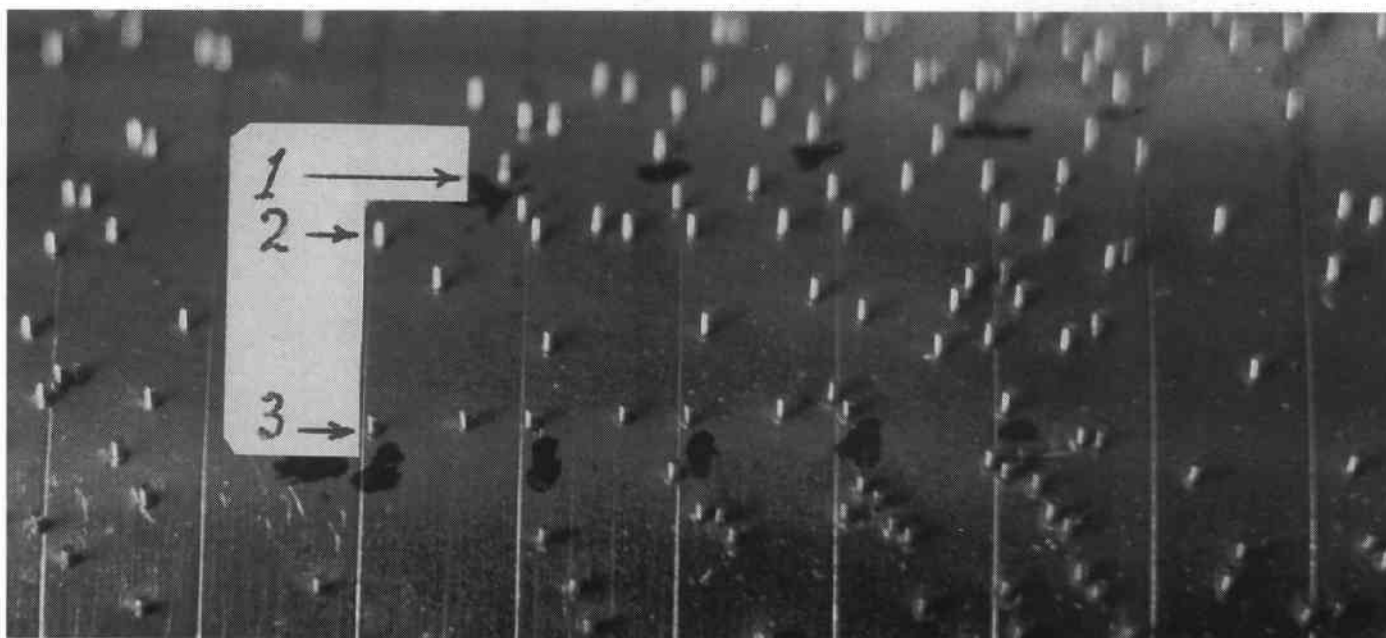
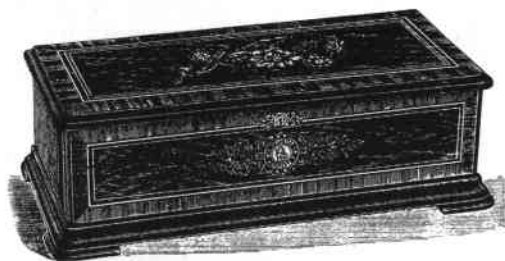


Fig. 3. This shows three examples of how five teeth of the same pitch, nos. 51 to 55, are played in sequence. In line 1 for tune 10 they are played at 5 per second, helical angle 8°. In lines 2 and 3, for tune 2, they are played at 10 per second, helical angle 4°, with a two second gap between the two 1/2-second trills. (The helical angles shown are distorted, being in a flat picture of a curved surface).



GUITARE ET TRÉMOLO

Ce genre est une très belle imitation de la voix humaine accompagnée par un instrument à cordes. Cet effet remarquable est obtenu en ayant un grand nombre de lames du clavier accordées sur le même ton et se succédant rapidement.

N° 70B. 6 airs. 5 pouces de cylindre.

» 70.	6	»	7	»	»
» 71.	8	»	10	»	»
» 72.	8	»	12	»	»
» 73.	10	»	12	»	»
» 74.	12	»	16	»	»

Es.	Cent.
52	
74	
79	
96	
77	
84	

Fig. 4. Page 7 of Jules Cuendet's catalogue offering six Guitar Tremolo boxes. I have added the approximate number of comb teeth in the vacant price column. The transfer on case front is more like Junod's Helvetia patent design than that shown in Junod's catalogue. . . Vol. 15 page 156. This adds to the suspicion that these friendly makers sometimes made for each other; Jules Cuendet was Junod's uncle.

quieter melodies than the noisy grand march from *Aida*; but that piece certainly gets an interesting new interpretation.

Guitar Tremolo boxes were not mentioned in Junod's 1889 catalogue but they appeared on page 7 of Cuendet's 1894 catalogue as shown in Fig. 4, described as follows . . .

This type is a very good imitation of the human voice accompanied by a stringed instrument. This remarkable effect is obtained by having a great number of comb teeth tuned to the same pitch and played in rapid succession.

Most makers produced a few Guitar boxes, probably all later than about 1880. Good examples are Mermod 56428 (in Vol. 14, page 172) and Rivenc 31977 (Vol. 13 page 265). A similar but earlier Rivenc, serial 28844, also with 14 inch cylinder and 84 comb teeth, has one tune in common with Junod 30662 . . . the Grand March from *Aida*. Though I think most listeners would prefer the Rivenc version, it is only fair to note that the Junod slightly upstages these three Guitar boxes by contrasting the guitar and mandolin effects – and doing so with only 62 teeth.

L.A. Grosclaude and the Geneva Exhibition

In 1880, Geneva held an important Exhibition of machines and tools used in the manufacture of Clocks, Watches, Jewellery and Musical Boxes. Its official catalogue carried, on alternate pages from 77 to 91, an article by L. A. Grosclaude simply titled LES BOITES A MUSIQUE. It runs to about 2,600 words and its three illustrations show an 1880s cartel, the comb/cylinder interface, and a sectional view of an organ box. A summary by Pierre Germain appeared in Vol. 6 page 306; but that was in 1974 so I will briefly repeat salient points – courtesy of Luuk Goldhoorn who kindly provided a reprint of the relevant catalogue pages.

Page 77: "The musical box proper dates from 1796 when Antoine Favre invented the key-board,

a steel comb which still provides the distinctive feature of this instrument. Progress was rapid and now Geneva alone produces up to 12,000 boxes a year, all large and priced from 20 to 10,000 francs, and employing, in these prosperous times, a thousand workers."

Page 81: "A refinement introduced in Geneva a few years ago allows tunes to be changed at will, so avoiding a wait until a tune comes round again in its turn."

Page 83: "Of course accurate tools are used in placing the cylinder pins, but each cylinder has to pass through the hands of twelve workers before being perfected." Depthing the pins, cement filling and filing to length in a lathe are then described, and "These operations having upset the pins, a female worker bends them uniformly one-by-one. This last operation can only be done with the help of a special justifiage tool and with the musical score to hand. The pay of these workers is certainly not in line with their knowledge of music which is only achieved after a long and testing apprenticeship." (This tool, made by Grosclaude and featured in the Exhibition, was for "uniform inclination of pins in musical boxes.")

The Fig. on page 83 is a section through cylinder, comb and bedplate. It gives a comb/cylinder interface

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Fig. 5. Page 84 of the 1880 Geneva Exhibition catalogue . . . three different Jaccards making musical boxes of all types and a fourth just making musical boxes. All four in 1880. Would you Adam-and-Eve it.

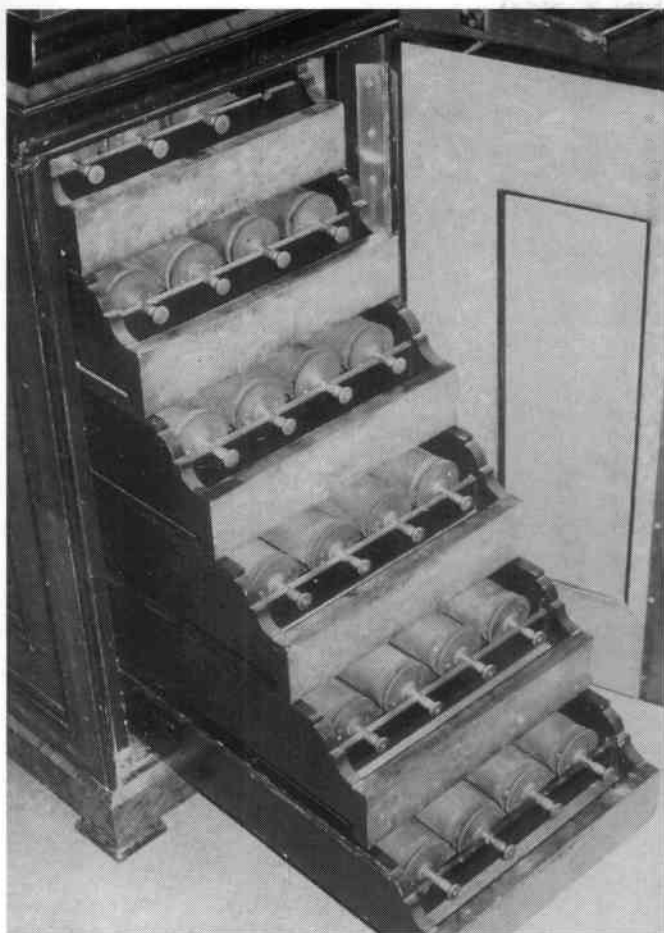


Fig. 6. Troll's storage for 24 cylinders.

angle of about 16° and shows a well-filled cylinder, – the equivalent cement thickness in a standard 2 1/8" diameter cylinder would be 7/16 of an inch, a bit over one centimetre.

Page 87, after listing a few musical box types from which Sublime Harmonie is notably absent, adds:

"One of the most important modifications, due to Messrs. Ducommun and Kimmerling, is the introduction of a reed organ which harmonises admirably with the comb teeth."

Page 89: "To end these brief notes, two improvements must be mentioned. First, extra cylinders which the owner of a musical box can easily take out and replace. This allows an unlimited number of tunes to be played, and boxes with over 100 tunes have already been made. These are called *rechange* cylinders. Second, we have said that play must stop while the cylinder moves to the next tune. So all tunes are of the same length, no more than a minute with a cylinder of average diameter. Now, uninterrupted play for the whole cylinder has become possible, allowing tunes to be of different lengths. The *William Tell* overture, which lasts ten or eleven minutes, has been played without a break. This type is called *helicoidal*, or continuous play."

Grosclaude also welcomes the value of nickel plating for improving appearance and preservation; and he concludes with praise for two special and valuable properties of comb teeth and organ reeds, "which are in fact the same thing, namely a small vibrating element which will retain its tone and pitch indefinitely, regardless of changes in temperature, humidity, etc.,



Fig. 7. Oval maker's stamp on governor cock, serial 3898.

and can span seven or eight octaves with dimensional differences of not more than one or two centimetres."

Alternating with the pages of this Grosclaude article are advertising pages, an arrangement not unknown today. They range from full page to quarter page ads., an example of the latter showing in Fig. 5. This might be a good place to mention that Louis Jaccard, who was Arthur Junod's agent in Germany, issued a comprehensive priced catalogue in German, from which I hope to quote details in a future Oddments.

An 1870s Sound Centre

Samuel Troll serial 3898 was undoubtedly made to special order. The case is fixed to the top of a matching cupboard and the rechange movement plays 13" (33cm) 6-air cylinders, mandolin pinned for the 124-tooth comb. The cupboard has six drawers each holding four cylinders as shown in Fig. 6, making a total of 24 cylinders offering 144 tunes. The cylinders are separately numbered between 55 and 120, strongly suggesting that S. Troll was able to offer at least 120 such rechange cylinders.

Troll when on his own tended to stamp his name on the block or the cock of the governor; here it is on the cock as shown in Fig. 7. The tunes are listed in a handsomely-bound book, Fig. 8, containing the necessary 24 tune sheets, all in the style shown in Fig. 9. I think the latest of the 144 tunes is no. 6 on cylinder



Fig. 8. Classy booklet of 144 tunes for S. Troll 3898.

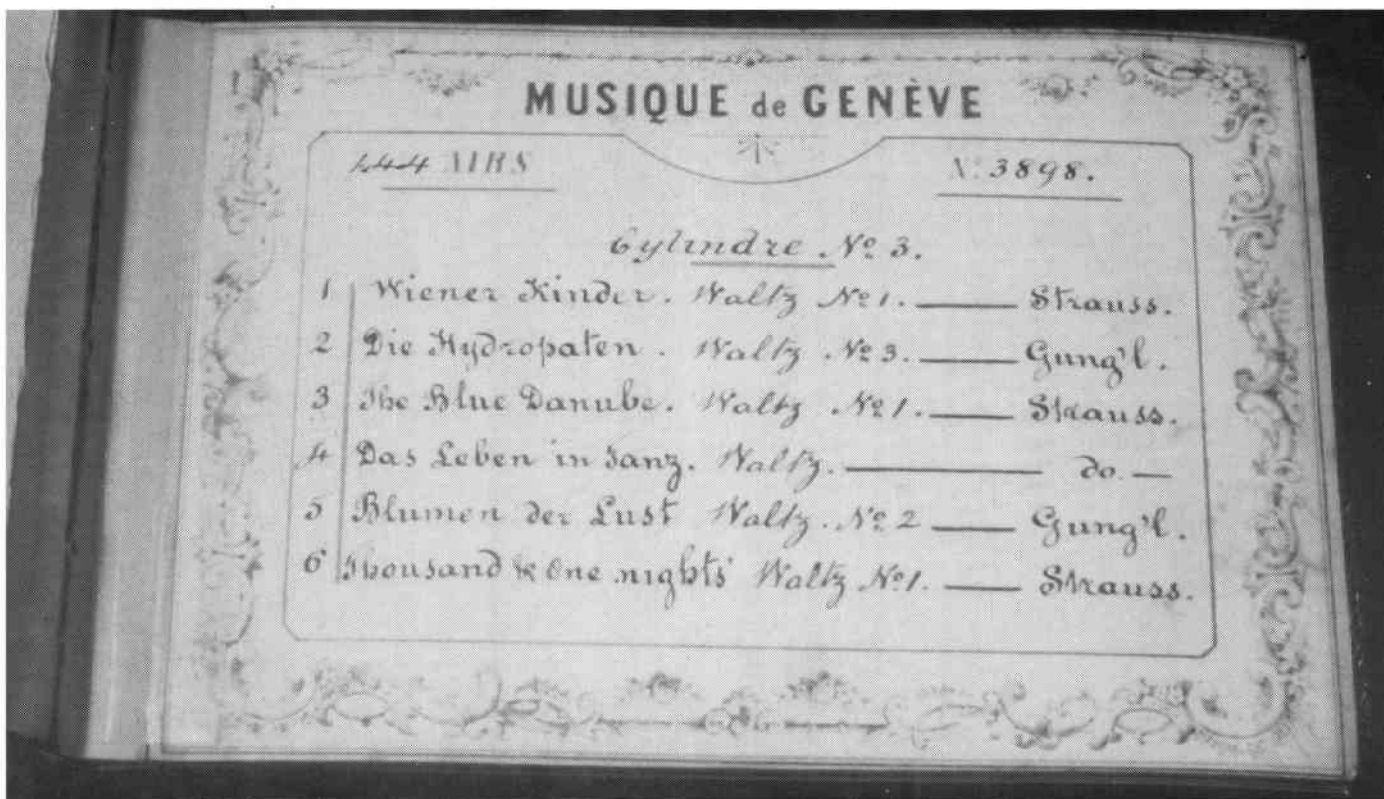


Fig. 9. In addition to the box serial number and its code number, each cylinder carries an identification number stamped on the treble end handling knob. It is referred to in each tune sheet heading – here for cylinder no. 3.

no. 3, *Thousand and One Nights* waltz from the Strauss operetta *Indigo and the forty thieves*, first performed Feb. 1871. This comprehensive box was made in 1872 (according to Fig. 2-4 in my second book) when design improvements had made the cylinder changing safe and easy.

S. Troll serial 3898 with its 124-tooth comb strengthens my belief that this is the optimum mandolin arrangement – allowing groups of up to five teeth and applicable to all types of tune without becoming florid. It can be heard with pleasure on a wide – very wide – variety of tunes and is certainly a formidable musical box.

Popular Musical Plays

Interesting descriptions of popular operettas and musical plays in the 1860 to 1900 period can be found

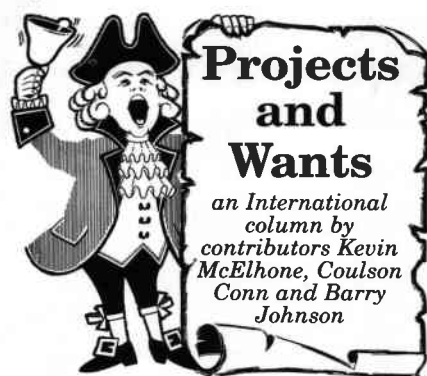
in **Gänzl's Book of the Musical Theatre** by Gänzl and Lamb, 1988, published by The Bodley Head and available on request in the Public Libraries.

Its 1350 pages give the stories of these plays from the earliest into the 1980s. About 80 are pre-1900, and they have all appeared on musical box tune sheets. The indexing is comprehensive and includes the titles of individual songs; so for example you can look up **Jack's the Boy** and find that it comes in Act I of *The Geisha*, 1896.

Each description starts with a list of first performances and revivals in Europe and America, some lists occupying nearly a page and suggesting a popularity rating. I have chosen five of the very popular titles and listed their first performances in the accompanying table.

TITLE & Composer	London	Paris	Berlin	New York	Vienna
La Fille de Mme. Angot Lecocq	May 1873	Feb 1873* (film 1935)	Nov 1873	Aug 1873	Jan 1874
La Mascotte Audran	Oct 1881	<u>Dec 1880</u> (film 1935)	Oct 1881	May 1881	Feb 1881
The Beggar Student Millöcker	Apl 1884	Jan 1889 (filmed - 4 times)	Jan 1883	Oct 1883	<u>Dec 1882</u>
The Mikado Sullivan	<u>Mar 1885</u> (film 1939)		June 1886	July 1885	Sep 1886
The Geisha Jones	<u>Apl 1896</u>	Mar 1898	May 1897	Sep 1896	Nov 1897

Table listing the first performances in each country of five outstanding successes. World premieres are underlined, excepting Mme. Angot* whose premiere was in Brussels, December 1872. ■



There have been very few letters again, but a few verbal requests as follows:-

A member is looking for the sheet music for two songs to cut rolls for an organ "Somewhere" - by Milton Wellings; "In the Valley of the Bluebirds" - composer not sure.

Is there a supplier of new organette music here in Europe for any size above 14 note? I believe someone in Germany/Switzerland has made Ariston discs but do not have a name.

I have now completed the following tune catalogues, 20 and 32 note organette cobs, 116 and 176 note Aeolian organ rolls - please write to me if you would like a copy.

I am still looking for help with Phoneon 61 note organ, Wilcox & White/Symphony 58 note organ, Cecelian 65 note, 13 inch wide piano/organ rolls, Aeolian-Hammond organ and have just started the German "Scheola" organ rolls made by Schiedmayer, who also made pianos. Please list tunes in your collection or copy catalogues - costs re-imbursed if required.

There are some ideas to register barrel pianos, complete with lists of tunes on barrels, what interest do members have in this? We would need, make, number of keys, lists of tunes, hand or clockwork powered, etc., etc.

Would members be interested in a "Directory of Automatic Music"? Containing details of museums (with phone numbers); dealers, restorers, parts makers, roll and disc makers, supplier, etc., etc. This could be really useful to all active members of MBSGB and would be sold to raise funds for the Society - maybe even to fund acquisition of new archive material!

If any of this interests you please write to Kevin McElhone who will put you in touch with the person concerned.

Lists and Catalogues

Why am I always going on about making up another list or catalogue of music rolls? Well, when I found

Letters to the Editor

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Question on the clock

A. Rigg writes from Co. Durham.

This organ clock has lost its front board and dial, what would be the correct replacement?

The clock has 46 pipes, 23 keys, an 8 tune barrel and an eight day weight driven clock.

my first Aeolian Orchestrelle I wanted to know what sort of tunes were originally available as I found it hard to believe that the tunes which came with my instrument from a funeral parlour were the only type made.

I contacted other collectors for lists of rolls in their own collection and for photo-copies of original material. This 58 note catalogue had nearly 7,000 titles in it, many more than I had thought, but I completed the list in about two years.

It is interesting to see how many tunes each composer had made into music rolls and also to find out the dates of issue, based on dates tunes were written, or shows were on the stage. The catalogues are a good guide to what music was popular at the time and indeed "popular" music was only a very small part of the repertoire made.

I next got interested in the 20 and 32 note Gem 'Cob' Organettes and started catalogues for them as well. These only took about two years and had nearly 1,100 and 200 titles in them respectively. These tunes were issued from 1885 to at least 1921 (I have one cob myself with a tune published in that late year), but the instruments were much cheaper at about \$3.25c each for the 20 note one and \$12.00 for the 32 note one compared to say an Orchestrelle at about \$400 to \$4,000 in 1905. The music issued was similar as far as some popular/traditional tunes went, but there were many tunes not issued in both formats.

The 116 note Aeolian Reed and Pipe organ catalogue has just been completed in July 1994 and has only 30 titles not found out of 1472 rolls issued. This, however, took

It is 18½" wide, the minute hand is 5" in length, the sides are veneered in 3cm thick walnut, any guess as to age? ■



nearly four years to compile as there are not so many instruments and even less interested collectors around to help with a project like this today. The Aeolian Duo-Art pipe organ roll list (176 note is currently stuck with 132 titles missing out of 600, but there is already a pattern of titles issued in all three Aeolian formats (58, 116, and 176 note), and again some titles only issued in one format.

I am currently working on Phoneon 61 note reed organ, Schiedmayer Scheola organ rolls, Wilcox & White Angelus Symphony 58 note organ or organ/Pushup combination, Cecelian 65 note Piano (13 inches wide) and Aeolian Hammond organ. Please send me a list of your rolls in your collection or copies of catalogues or lists in your possession, I will gladly pay any photo-copying costs.

I feel that if someone does not compile these lists then it will get harder as time goes on to complete them as instruments are tending to get dispersed to far eastern countries or to museums or collectors who are NOT in the various American or European societies to which most of you will obviously belong.

I hope these lists will be of use to future generations and maybe to some readers of this article. Do contact me if I can help in any way. ■

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DOWN: 2. Reed organ; 3. Aphonia; 4. Gave; 5. Ignition; 6. Dawkins; 7. Robot; 8. Freres Rochat; 9. Bearing block; 15. Engraving; 16. Gavottes; 18. Effendi; 20. Dormant; 22. Album; 24. Ammo.

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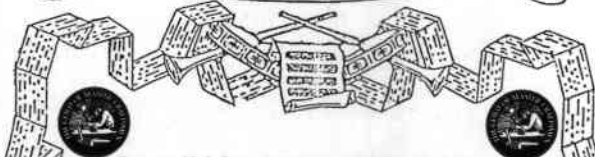
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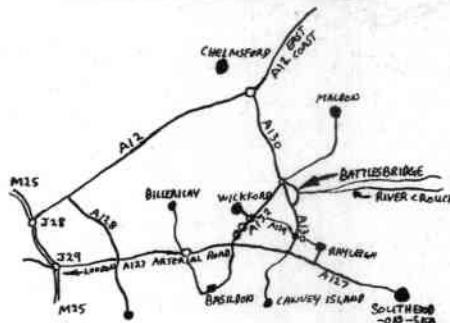
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1st April; 1st July;
1st October; 1st February

Editorial copy **must** be submitted at least

8 days prior to above dates.

Posting of magazine:

27th February; 27th April;
7th August; 7th November

Archives Wanted - If you have back issues of any Mechanical Music magazines, roll or disc catalogues (originals or copies), sales literature (originals or copies) please consider donating them to MBSGB archives where they can be of benefit to us all in the long term. Contact Kevin McElhone - address at front of magazine.

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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.



The Editor and the Committee of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain wish all its members a Happy Christmas and a Melodious New Year.



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