

An International Magazine of Mechanical Music

Volume 17 Number 1

Spring 1995

Edited by Graham Whitehead

The Music Box



Inside

The Dulcimer-player (part 2)

Sublime Harmonie and Paillard's Patent

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain



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Mechanical Music

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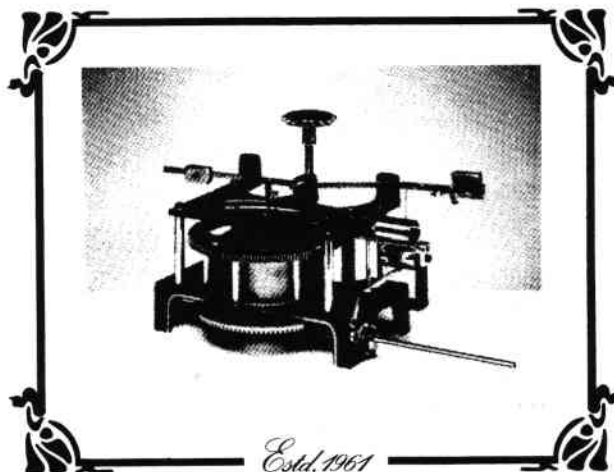
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The Music Box

An International Magazine
of Mechanical Music

The Journal of the
Musical Box Society
of Great Britain.

Volume 17
Number 1
Spring 1995

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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.

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Front Cover:

1856 - The Quiet Street - A Sketch from a Study Window

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President's Message

Since my last message to you, I have been heartened by the response from Members, both as regards their promptness in renewing their membership and at their words of encouragement.

On top of that, several members have made extremely generous donations to the society. One of our most enthusiastic German members instantly made a considerable cash gift to the Society funds while a second, who wishes to remain anonymous, wrote as follows:

Although my 1995 Subscription is fully paid, I have pleasure to enclose a further cheque as a donation to the MBS of GB, after reading the Urgent message from the President regarding the finances of the Society. Having received so much from Mechanical Music and the journal in particular, it's my way of giving a small amount back. I am amazed that collectors and in particular dealers will willingly spend thousands of pounds on a machine in auction and then quibble when the subscription is raised to £24. I will do all I can to forward another donation later in the coming year. Thank you for all you give.

This letter, reproduced here with the sender's permission, convinces me that we are on the right course and contrasts with the sentiments of three members who have written in resigning their memberships.

It is always hurtful to see members leave and the question must inevitably be as to why and is it because of anything which can - and perhaps should - be altered.

One who resigns writes that he is more interested in street and fairground organs and laments the fact that the Journal has reverted to "the previously seen focus on articles about music[sic] box combs etc which is not of interest to me." He adds that he is not prepared to continue as a member when the only benefit to him is a magazine which is 'not particularly interesting to me - dull even!'

The fiat of both the Society and its Journal was established back in 1962 when it was promulgated that the burgeoning Musical Box Society

of Great Britain would be devoted to mechanical music and mechanical musical instruments 'of all types'. This meant that player pianos, orchestrions, barrel organs, organettes, musical boxes - even musical automata - could rub shoulders one with the other.

Our fiat was our strength. It was in the first issue of Volume 4 of THE MUSIC BOX that the strap-line "a magazine of mechanical music" appeared for the first time. By the first issue of Volume 7 this had been changed to read "an International Magazine of Mechanical Music." It has remained so ever since.

As a Society we have always tended to concentrate on the history and the technology behind our instruments. We never intended to go down the road of being a chat magazine. Indeed, the late lamented Alex Duman (whose obituary appeared in the last issue) understood this when he launched his friendly rival publication *The Haggis Bashers* as just the sort of publication which THE MUSIC BOX could not be.

It is difficult when somebody tells you that your publication is 'dull' but it is perhaps even more difficult to please everybody all the while.

Judging by the many warming comments passed over the past months, I believe we are doing the right thing. Which does not soften the blow of losing good members who, by their own admission, have changed interests and objectives.

It is with the deepest sadness that I must report the sudden death of my American counterpart - President 'Bud' Bronson of the Musical Box Society International.

This tragedy elevates to that office former Vice-President Frank Metzger. While the manner by which he has assumed this high position can only be lamented, Frank will most certainly steer our sister society through this management crisis. His sound judgment, practical commonsense and, above all, his good humour will surely all play a part in the months to come. I am sure that every member will unite with me and my Committee in wishing him both strength and success.

Japan's terrible earthquake, coming exactly a year after the Los Angeles tragedy, reminds one of the immense risks involved in bringing together valuable collections of priceless mechanical musical

instruments in high-risk areas of the world.

It also serves to show that Man with all his science and wisdom can't outwit the forces of Nature.

Once more I must mention the Musical Box Register which is co-ordinated by the Society as a free service to all Members. This is a fully security-protected register kept on computer. Its original goal was to try to list details of every musical box in every collection in the country. Thanks to the enthusiastic co-operation of many collectors in America, Europe and elsewhere, it is on target to becoming a world-wide register.

A few days ago I received a call from a Midlands CID officer advising that the police had just raided a suspect's premises and had been confronted with a musical box. They had a serial number and an agent's name. Could we identify it as stolen property?

Unfortunately this particular box (described as looking unrestored and therefore probably not the property of a MBSOGB member) was not on the Register and was therefore one we could not trace. The story had a somewhat mischievous twist to it because when the detective-inspector called me back he confessed that between raiding the premises and clearing them (presumably of stolen property), the musical box had 'disappeared'... I was then able to assure him that it now *was* probably stolen property...

The Register now comprises details of a huge number of musical boxes world-wide and besides offering an excellent way in which stolen property can be traced, it is also large enough to begin throwing up information in its own right. For example, it has been possible to identify hitherto unknown makes of box though the similarity of features with known marked boxes. It has also been possible to start dating boxes with surprising accuracy.

It is all down to data collection and verification. It is the greatest project anywhere in the world of musical boxes and their collectors.

If you have not already registered your boxes, write now to The Registrar, c/o The Musical Box Society of Great Britain.

Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume
January 19, 1995

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.

Nicholas Simons is willing to do a show and tell about a 28 note Tanzbar and perhaps other members would be prepared to consider a similar idea for this and future meetings. ■

Society A.G.M. and Auction

3rd June 1995 at
Fairfield Village Hall

Location - Leave M5 at Junction 4, take A491 (Stourbridge), after 1 mile bear left at roundabout for Fairfield. Village Hall is on the left next to church in 1/2 mile. Large car park.

Lunch facilities - Public houses within 15 minutes by car which could do pub lunches. 'Happy Eater' half a mile down the road, Bromsgrove 2 miles away. I will produce maps on the day. If the weather is good it would also be very suitable for a picnic lunch.

Doors open at 9.15 a.m. and acceptance of items for sale.

10.00 a.m. - Coffee.

10.30 a.m. - A.G.M.

Lunch break.

2.00 p.m. - Auction.

Tea and biscuits.

Any queries regarding the Auction please contact David Walch on 0117 968 4701. ■

Autumn Meeting

15th - 17th September 1995
The Elms Hotel, Bare,
Morecambe, Lancs.

The Elms Hotel is a well established hotel, owned by Mitchells' of Lancaster. They provide the ideal base for holidays or short breaks in the North West.

The hotel has 40 en-suite bedrooms, complete with colour television, radio, tea and coffee making facilities, hairdryer and trouser press. ■

Continental Meeting
Destination Switzerland
4th - 12th June

Here is the ideal opportunity for any member who has never visited Switzerland to enjoy a holiday in breathtaking scenery with picturesque chalets in a country where the musical box was not

only born but is still manufactured alongside the country's now more popular souvenir product, the cuckoo clock.

Our coach will be leaving Cambridge on 4th June to spend the first night in Reims. This will be followed by three nights in Interlaken at a Best Western hotel followed by a further three nights in the Black Forest at Freiburg an area once famous for its clock and mechanical music manufacture.

The cost is £355 per person with hotel accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis. A £50 deposit is required and there are still around 8 places remaining. If you would like more information or would like to take advantage of this organised trip, please contact Alan Wyatt quickly on 01223 860332. ■

MBSGB at the NEC

The Musical Box Society will again be exhibiting at the National Vintage Communications Fair at the National Exhibition Centre on Sunday, 14th May 1995.

For those of you who have not been to these Fairs in previous years the format is very informal with most exhibitors having simple table displays. The range of items on sale covers vintage radios, juke boxes, telephones, records from 78s to CDs, phonographs and gramophones, and of course, mechanical music.

Our purpose for being at the Fair is to recruit new members. There are hundreds of people "out there" with an interest in musical boxes and mechanical music who

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain will take place on Saturday, 3rd June at the Fairfield Village Hall. The AGM will commence at 10.30a.m. and will be followed at 2.00p.m. by the Society Auction.

Society Auction

The Society's annual auction will be held at 2.00p.m. on Saturday, 3rd June at the Fairfield Village Hall. Auctioneer Christopher Proudfoot (by kind permission of Christie's, South Kensington). A great chance to sell and buy. Commission rates - Buyer's premium 7.5%, Selling commission 7.5%. Entries will be welcome during the morning, with viewing after the A.G.M.

either do not know that the MBSGB exists, or have simply "not got around" to joining.

Although the direct costs of exhibiting are quite modest, it is a further drain upon our rather stretched resources, and it occurs to me that we might be able to make the event self-financing, and help members to sell surplus items. The Fair attracts thousands of enthusiasts and from the MBSGB stand we could sell books, magazines, small disc or cylinder boxes etc. with a small percentage of the price (10%?) going to the Society. Here is a chance to clear out some of those things which you no longer require and assist the Society at the same time. Because of the wide range of interests covered at the Fair there should be prospective buyers for most items.

Small items could be sent to me at the address below, or could be given to me at the Dawlish meeting. Please make sure that everything carries your name and address and the asking price. If in doubt about the suitability of any item please phone me. For obvious reasons we must restrict this operation to small items but your participation could be of great help to the Society.

Alan Pratt, 6 Kingscote Road, Dorridge, Solihull, West Midlands B93 8RA. Telephone: 01564 775000. ■

Membership Cards

For those of you who have requested and obtained membership cards, some good news. So far we have obtained concessions in various forms, provided you produce your membership card, at the following museums.

Keith Harding's World of Mechanical Music, High Street, Northleach, Glos. Tel: 01451-860181 – Two visitors for the price of one. Open 7 days a week 10am - 6pm.

Penny Arcadia, Market Place, Pocklington, York – Two visitors for the price of one. Open 7 days a week May and September, 12.30pm - 5pm. June, July and August 10am - 5pm.

The Mechanical Music Collection, Church Road, Portfield, Chichester. Tel: 01243-785421 and 01243-372646 – 25% discount on museum shop sou-

venirs. Open Easter to September, not Saturdays 1pm - 5pm. October to Easter, Sunday 1pm - 5pm.

Ashorne Hall, Ashorne Hill, Near Warwick. Tel: 01926 651444 – Two visitors for the price of one. Open Sunday afternoons, March to December. Saturdays, July and August. Fridays, July. Also Mighty Cinema Organ Show most Wednesdays and Thursdays. Closed 1-16 June.

Several other museums have expressed an interest to give us reductions and we await the results of their Trustee's meetings.

If any members who supply services or sell musical boxes are prepared to give a discount on production of a Musical Box Society membership card, please contact me (Ted Brown) and I can put your details in the next Journal. A list will be issued annually of all places that give discounts. Inform me of any changes. ■

Increase in robberies

You cannot have failed to notice the increase in the number of robberies taking place recently and I am sure it is time to take stock again and outline how the Register can help.

Once a box has been Registered, it is a simple matter to have all the information about that box, excluding the name and address of the owner, sent out to the police, auction houses and members who will be on the lookout for them in their particular neighbourhood.

In the case of a theft, all that is necessary is **to phone me (Ted Brown, address at front of Journal) with the Register number of the box, the name and the serial number**. Please also report the **crime book number** that will have been given to the theft when it was reported to the police.

Having done this, within a short space of time, details of the stolen item will be circulated nationwide and also abroad. The chances of recovery are significantly increased. Eventually, it will also assist the police to discover the routes and methods the criminals are using to dispose of their ill-gotten gains. Even if the box is subsequently found abroad and there is little chance of getting it

back, the route and method used can still be located and closed off.

Very recently, the police in Gloucestershire used the Register to check on a musical box they had recovered after a raid on the house of a suspect. Although not of immediate use in this case, the police were impressed by the information available and were quick to point out this type of material would be of great use to them. They indicated that such information would be of enormous help to the police all over the country and help educate their own officers as to what they were looking for.

If you feel that you could be of use in this work by becoming one of the neighbourhood watch volunteers constantly looking in your local sale rooms and antique shops, please contact me and arrangements will be made. You know it makes sense. ■

Newsflash

Spring Meeting Reminder

Don't forget to book early for the Spring Meeting on 31st March - 2nd April at the Langstone Cliff Hotel, Dawlish, South Devon. Telephone: 01626 865155.

For more information ring the local organiser Robert Hough on 01626 853502 (Home), or 01392 384610 (Business). ■

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

Will all members who have not yet paid, please send their 1995 subscription to me, the Subscription Secretary, as soon as possible, in accordance with the revised rates as enclosed with the 1994 edition of the "Music Box" journal.

Many thanks,
Bob Haiselden
"Martlets"
High Orchard
Pencombe
Bromyard
Herefordshire
HR7 4RS

NEWSDESK

Norwich Castle Museum 'Your Favourite Things'

October 23rd 1994 marked the exact day 100 years ago when the former gaol first opened its doors as a museum. Since then Norwich Castle Museum has continued to collect objects which reflect the strengths and individuality of the region.

To mark the centenary year local collectors were asked to provide information about their collections. From over ninety submissions, 56 collections were selected to be shown in the exhibition. Each collector revealed what drives their passion for collecting. 'Your Favourite Things' was East Anglia's contribution to a Nationwide festival of similar collectors shows featuring collections and collectors of all kinds and all ages. The photos show myself and my wife Shirley with our collection of Musical Boxes in the Castle Museum on Thursday, October 27th, 1994 when I was asked to give a demonstration and lecture, this proved so successful that I was invited to repeat this on two more occasions, public interest

was tremendous, 19⁵/₈" Polyphon Autochange, 27" Regina Folding Top, Rococo Symphonion, Olympia, Stella, Nicole Frere Overture and many more cylinder boxes were seen working, and for the first time in many years I was able to show off my collection.

The whole programme was sponsored by Bonhams Auction-

eers, founded in 1793 and is the only one of the four surviving Georgian Auction houses in London with any remaining family connections, there are two main sales rooms in London's prime residential areas of Kensington and Chelsea and other sales rooms in the West Country which combine to provide a national and international auction service. In addition they have 22 offices throughout the country, including the new local office at Morton-on-the-Hill near Norwich. Bonhams said they were delighted to be associated with Norwich Castle Museum in its centenary year. The exhibition ran from 8th October to 13th November.

Richard J. Blythe-Bartram ■



Register News

Over 3,600 boxes have now been registered and a substantial number of records have been updated and corrected. In particular the Nicole register is beginning to show how that company arranged their production and used their marketing skills to produce boxes that would be popular.

The Nicole gamme number file now has 1,194 numbers recorded. 978 of these numbers have the tunes listed leaving just 216 gamme numbers without details. There is now a reasonable chance that any Nicole without a tune card but, having a gamme number, can have its programme identified. The only remaining problem arises in the case of boxes that have alternative programmes for the same gamme number. Even then, the majority of the tunes will match correctly with maybe just one out of place.

I am still waiting for more information to come in on H.L.M.G. boxes, especially from those members who have examined such boxes in detail and who may have records of markings. Please assist if you can. Regretfully, I have to admit

that having named these boxes as H.L.M.G., I may well have been mistaken. Now I believe them to be H.M.G. boxes and that the mark thought to be the bottom stalk of the L is really an underscore mark or a separator device. More on this at a later date.

It has been reported to me that some members are still not fully convinced of the value of the Register, so in an attempt to emphasise the case, I will outline the objects again.

- The prime use is for historical research.
- To help increase our skills in identifying the makers of boxes.
- To help in the accurate dating of boxes.
- To provide a list of the minimum number of surviving boxes.
- Assisting members in finding the names of tunes of those boxes without tune cards.
- To facilitate in the recovery of stolen boxes.

Regretfully point (f) seems to be

more and more necessary these days. At least in the case of one robbery, the advice to keep winding keys and discs in a separate place was followed and the thieves left without these accessories. That at the very least will be an inconvenience to the crooks! Very recently, the police have been in contact with the Society wishing to know if a box they had recovered was on the stolen list. In this particular case the box was not listed, but had the box been on the Register and reported as being stolen, that would have been sufficient evidence for the police to bring a prosecution. The police have to give back any goods to a suspected criminal if an owner cannot be found. Then it becomes their undisputed property. None of us wish that to happen.

I understand that Ted Brown will be putting pen to paper on this subject before long and setting out some guidelines that should be followed in the case of a theft. Please consider again if you have not sent in details of your boxes. It is time to close ranks, protect our hobby and further our interests.

The Musical Box Register

RUDOLF KARRER & SAMUEL KARRER

The Karrers worked in Teufenthal during the last quarter of the 19th century. Rudolf is credited with in-

venting and producing an improved type of mainspring for musical boxes. Samuel either made or distributed musical boxes right up to the year 1905. His output has been quoted as

being substantial, but few of his boxes seem to have survived. Certainly more research is needed into the activities of the Karrers.

01/95. v. 1.

S/No.	T/C * = Yes	G/No.	Comments	Reg/No.
4559	—	?	? air. Hidden drum and 8 bell box.	R1326
5692	—	?	6 air.	R-281

L'EPEE

In 1839, Auguste L'Epee took over P. H. Paur's business in Sainte-Suzanne and launched what was to become the most successful musical box industry in France. By the year 1845, he had expanded his business so well he had over thirty workers. His two sons had joined the business by 1845, and Edouard and Henry were destined to continue the business until it finally closed.

L'Epee suffered greatly in the

Franco-Prussian war of 1870. His factory was taken over and used as a hospital. Then the invading troops sacked the place and destroyed most of the stock. All this must have contributed to Auguste L'Epee's death in 1875, although he did reach the age of 77.

L'Epee is credited with the invention of the manivelle or the hand turned novelty musical box. Certainly the majority of these items did come from L'Epee's workshops.

Production expanded and by 1861 new workshops were required to make all types of musical boxes both large and small. Later, links were made with Thibouville-Lamy who acted as agents for many L'Epee boxes.

Production continued until 1914 when the start of the Great War finally finished off the company. L'Epee boxes can often be identified by their well recorded and distinctive features.

01/95. v. 1.

S/No.	T/C * = Yes	G/No.	Comments	Reg/No.
280	—	?	? air. Interchangeable. Lever wind.	R-3035
427	—	?	? air. Interchangeable Sublime-Harmonie.	R-1486
522	—	?	8 air. Hidden drum & bell box.	R-1388
567	—	?	6 air. Hidden drum & bell box. Keywind.	R-2159
982	—	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-3198
1216	*	?	6 air. Drum & bell box. Lever wind.	R-282
1524	—	?	6 air. Forte piano. Lever wind.	R-2103
1558	—	?	6 air. Mandolin.	R-283
1877	—	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-3592

2249	—	?	6 air.	R-284
2309	—	?	? air.	R-1670
2435	*	401	8 air. Lever wind.	R-285
3169	—	323	8 air. Drum & 3 bell box. Lever wind.	R-1068
3715	—	?	? air. Clockbase movement. Keywind.	R-2160
3890	—	?	? air.	R-1671
4112	*	112	4 air. Keywind.	R-2150
4295	—	?	? air. Keywind.	R-3473
4321	*	967	8 air. Lever wind.	R-286
4349	—	?	? air. Lever wind.	R-2114
4902	—	?	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-3688
4955	—	?	6 air. Keywind.	R-2373
5390	—	?	? air.	R-1672
6000	—	?	? air. Clockbase movement.	R-3493
6182	—	?	6 air. Keywind.	R-1430
6590	—	?	4 air. Clockbase. Keywind.	R-3689
6873	—	?	4 air. Keywind.	R-2374
7421	*	1217	6 air. Mandolin. Lever wind.	R-2969
7795	—	?	4 air. Lever wind.	R-2295
8267	—	?	? air.	R-1352
8500	—	?	8 air. Keywind.	R-3624
8537	—	?	? air. Keywind.	R-3474
8871	—	?	? air. Keywind.	R-3690
8968	—	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-3593
9391	—	?	? air. Orchestral drum, bells + 17 key organ.	R-1487
9730	—	?	6 air. Drum & 3 bell box. Lever wind.	R-1488
10136	—	?	8 air. Keywind.	R-1353
10349	—	?	6 air. Lever wind.	R-1389
10766	—	?	12 air. 2 per turn. Lever wind.	R-1489
10911	—	?	6 air. 7 bell box.	R-1729
11443	—	?	12 air. 2 per turn. Early lever wind.	R-1354
11797	—	247	6 air. Keywind.	R-1759
12439	—	2708	6 air. Hidden drum & 10 bell, castanet. Lever wind.	R-1760
12942	—	?	? air.	R-1390
13206	—	?	8 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-1391
13512	—	?	? air. Drum & bell box.	R-1355
13712	—	?	? air. Keywind.	R-287
14575	—	?	4 air. Bevel gear winding.	R-1163
14943	*	2506	6 air. Keywind.	R-1392
15148	—	?	12 air. 2 per turn. Bevel gear winding.	R-96
16295	—	?	6 air. Lever wind.	R-1393
16309	—	?	4 air. Lever wind.	R-3630
16379	—	?	4 air. Mandoline. Lever wind.	R-3631
16752	—	?	12 air. 2 per turn. Lever wind.	R-2149
17101	—	?	? air. Lever wind.	R-1394
17338	—	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-1357
18537	*	148	8 air. Lever wind.	R-2560
18754	—	?	8 (?) air. Lever wind.	R-3653
19259	—	?	6 air. Lever wind.	R-288
19714	*	141	6 air. Concert Piccolo. Lever wind.	R-1920
19754	—	2201	8 air. Lever wind.	R-1431
20057	—	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-1432
20130	*	184	8 air. Lever wind.	R-3056
20327	*	186	10 air. Harp Piccolo. Lever wind.	R-1740
20497	*	1087	6 air.	R-289
22025	—	?	10 air. Lever wind.	R-1490
22326	—	?	10 air. Lever wind.	R-1709
23249	—	1444	10 air. Lever wind.	R-290
23271	—	?	? air.	R-1673
24056	—	?	6 air. Drum & 3 bell box.	R-1433
24070	—	?	? air.	R-1674
24111	—	?	12 air. Hidden drum & bell box.	R-1395
24256	*	439	8 air.	R-291
24361	—	?	? air. Drum & 6 bells.	R-292
24686	—	?	? air.	R-1317
24829	—	?	4 air. Lever wind.	R-3594
25262	—	?	? air. Lever wind.	R-3646
25617	—	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-3525
25661	—	?	6 air.	R-1434
25873	—	?	? air.	R-1675
26000	—	?	? air. Lever wind.	R-1435
26085	—	?	8 air. 6 bell + drum box.	R-1356
26236	—	?	6 air. Drum & 3 bell box.	R-1491
26499	*	3327	8 air. Lever wind.	R-1918
26519	—	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-3595
26734	—	?	12 air. Lever wind.	R-2506
26779	—	?	6 air. Drum + 3 bells in view.	R-1396
26925	*	623	12 air. Lever wind.	R-293
27658	—	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-1436
27984	*	?	6 air. Lever wind.	R-294

28212	-	?	? air.	R-1676
28294	-	?	? air.	R-1677
28956	-	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-3596
29321	-	?	? air. Sublime-Harmonie.	R-1492
29993	*	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-295
30353	-	?	4 air. Lever wind.	R-1437
31624	-	?	? air.	R-1678
31730	-	?	6 air. Lever wind.	R-1882
31959	-	?	? air. Lever wind.	R-3136
32322	-	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-1438
33077	-	?	8 air. Drum & 6 bell box. Lever wind.	R-3691
33390	-	?	10 air. Drum & 5 bell box. Lever wind.	R-1439
34061	*	1141	12 air. Citare Harmonique. Lever wind.	R-2561
34363	*	?	8 air. Drum & 6 bell box. Lever wind.	R-2127
34416	*	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-1493
34711	-	?	4 air. Lever wind.	R-297
34905	*	548	8 air. Lever wind.	R-2079
35634	-	?	6 air. Mandoline. Lever wind.	R-3526
36338	-	?	12 air. Drum, 7 bell. Lever wind.	R-3268
36345	*	1141	12 air "Cithare." Lever wind.	R-2184
36350	-	?	12 air. Mandolin. Lever wind.	R-1440
36469	-	634	6 air. Lever wind.	R-298
36587	-	632	6 air. Lever wind.	R-1441
37489	-	?	? air. 5 bell box. Lever wind.	R-1442
37795	-	?	4 air. Lever wind.	R-3057
38323	-	?	? air.	R-299
38482	-	?	? air. 6 bell box. Lever wind.	R-1443
38487	-	?	6 air. 7 bell box. Lever wind.	R-1444
39210	*	538	4 air. Lever wind.	R-300
39829	*	3565	4 air. Lever wind.	R-301
40387	*	1237	8 air. Lever wind.	R-302
40804	*	?	6 air. 7 bell box. Lever wind.	R-303
41658	-	?	6 air. Lever wind.	R-2375
41897	-	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-304
42759	-	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-305
43388	*	?	12 air. Lever wind.	R-306
43492	-	?	8 air. Drum & bell box. Lever wind.	R-1897
43581	-	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-307
43645	-	?	4 air. Lever wind.	R-1445
44542	*	?	6 air. Lever wind.	R-308
44570	-	?	6 air. Lever wind.	R-3494
44588	*	697	6 air. Lever wind.	R-309
44625	*	3045	6 air. Lever wind.	R-2505
45268	-	?	? air.	R-1679
45654	-	?	? air. Lever wind.	R-310
45905	-	?	6 air. Lever wind.	R-3597
46711	*	1146	8 air. Lever wind.	R-311
46802	-	?	8 air. Hidden drum & bell box.	R-1397
47658	*	?	8 air. Hidden drum & 5 bell box. Lever wind.	R-3036
48068	*	731	8 air. Lever wind.	R-2030
48192	-	?	8 air. Drum & 6 bell box. Lever wind.	R-1446
48484	-	?	12 air. Drum & bell. Lever wind.	R-3495
48878	-	?	? air. Lever wind.	R-3647
49109	*	1946	4 air. Lever wind.	R-312
49470	-	?	4 air. Mandolin. Lever wind.	R-2113
51294	-	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-313
51319	-	?	? air.	R-1358
51347	-	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-3475
52080	-	4404	4 air. Lever wind.	R-314
52221	-	834	4 air. Lever wind.	R-315
52235	-	?	6 air. Lever wind.	R-316
52261	-	?	10 air. Lever wind.	R-3598
52642	-	?	? air. 6 bells. Lever wind.	R-2164
52710	*	?	6 air. Lever wind.	R-3576
52711	-	?	8 air. Drum, bell & castanet. Lever wind.	R-2158
53411	-	?	? air. Lever wind.	R-1447
53624	-	?	4 air. Lever wind.	R-2296
53802	-	?	? air. Lever wind.	R-3201
53940	-	?	6 air. Drum & 6 bell box. Lever wind.	R-317
58588	-	?	6 air. Drum & bell box. Lever wind.	R-3599
59158	-	?	4 air. Lever wind.	R-3527
61369	-	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-3600
69701	-	?	6 (?) air.	R-1730
72304	-	?	12 air. Lever wind.	R-3601
72953	*	429	6 air. Ratchet lever wind.	R-2251
78554	*	?	8 air. Lever wind.	R-1731
79475	-	?	4 air. Clockbase movement. Keywind.	R-3602
80465	-	?	10 air. Lever wind.	R-3603
98906	-	?	12 air. 6 bell, drum & castanet. Lever wind.	R-2297

The Dulcimer-player

Part 2

by Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume

Continued from last edition

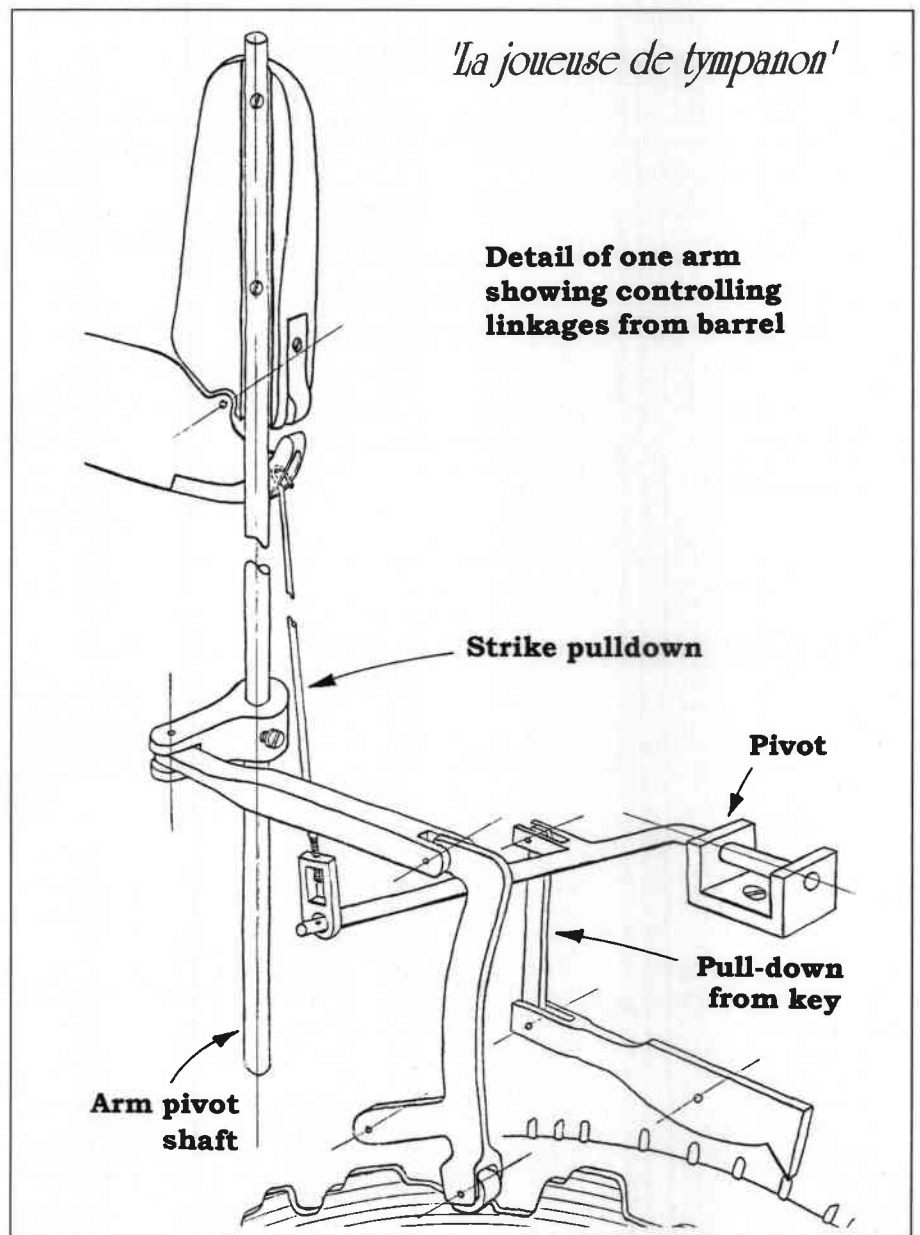
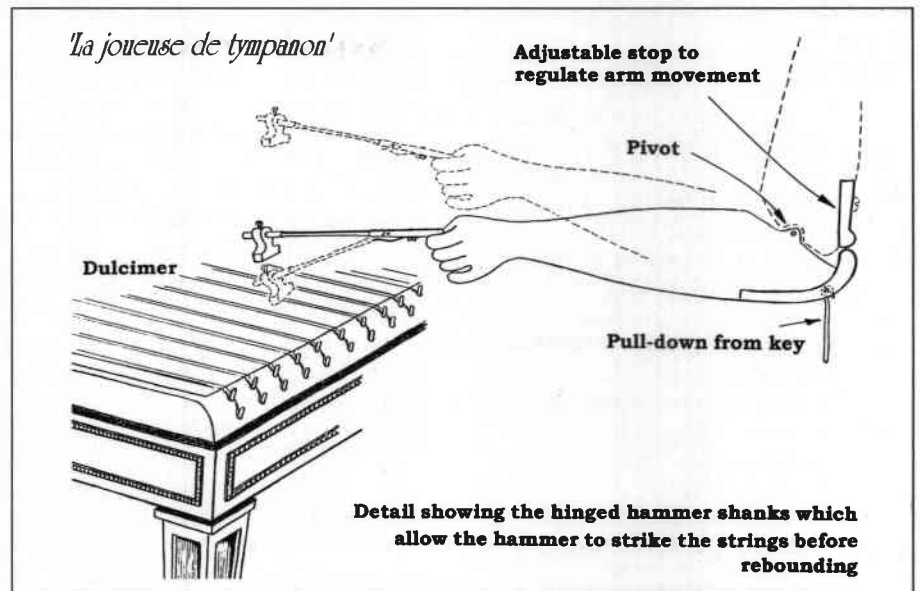
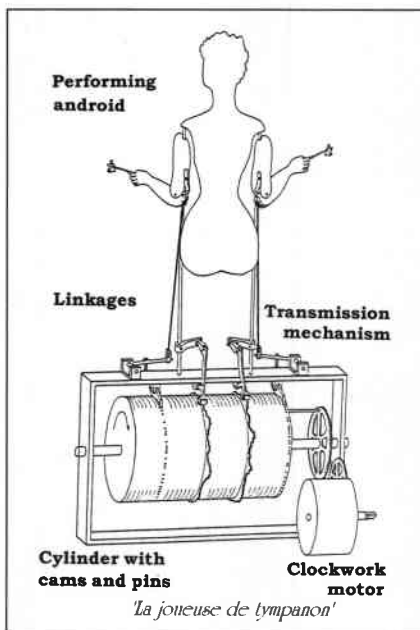
Limitations and constraints on progress

Work began on the detailed analysis of the mechanism bearing in mind that since there was no separate musical part nor separate mechanical portion, both these portions being united and interrelated, no dismantling could be countenanced before a complete understanding of the resulting music could be prepared. The process was long and painstaking.

First it was necessary to determine the strings of the dulcimer to which the hammer was moved and the order in which that set of movements occurred. Interestingly, the left hand can play the first 12 notes of the scale. The right hand, however, can play 13 notes forming the treble end of the scale, the two hands offering a two-note overlap. Next the pitch of each of the 23 pairs of strings was measured.

At this stage it was decided that, pending the major decision on whether a full mechanical restoration was either advisable or even possible, a musical restoration should be undertaken.

This highly novel approach involved the computer analysis of the sound of every string. This information was then stored in a digital sampler. A programme was then written to recreate artificially the succession of the sounds.



Assigning each sound to a key of the sampler, it became possible to play the sound of the tympanon with a keyboard. With the computer playing automatically the score on the sampler, it became possible to listen to the pieces of music with the sound of the tympanon but devoid of all faults.

However, a computer-keyboard performance was too perfect and it was clear that the performance had eradicated the soul and spirit of the mechanical playing. The mechanism would have produced minor inaccuracies in tempo which, however imperceptible individually, together represented that vital difference between the 'live performance' of electronics alone and the actual clockwork mechanism. What was important was to determine those natural inequalities in the music as interpreted by the mechanism.

Preserving the spirit of mechanical music

Getting away from a musically perfect performance and reverting to the way in which a clockwork mechanism would perform was considered crucial to the successful outcome of the operation.

To achieve this, it was decided to remove the actual dulcimer and

to disconnect the mechanism which moved the android's arms radially. This meant that with the arms remaining in one position, the only movement was that of the hammers. A pair of piezo-electric microphones now replaced the dulcimer in such a manner that the hammers now contacted the microphone pick-up points. The purpose of this was to establish rhythm of the mechanical noise produced. This rhythm information could then be overlaid with the musical information to replicate precisely the rhythm imparted by the clockwork mechanism.

The audio information was converted to digital data using the MIDI converter. The MIDI signals were then divided into two channels, one for each arm and the different forces of percussion transmitted with the velocity code recorded by the microphones. Since the microphones were placed at precisely the same position as the plane of the strings, the velocity of each hammer blow could be determined very accurately.

What resulted from this complex interpretation was an intriguing proof of the style of playing, the existence of *notes inégales*, an intentional 'delay' between the two hands and, of course, imperfections

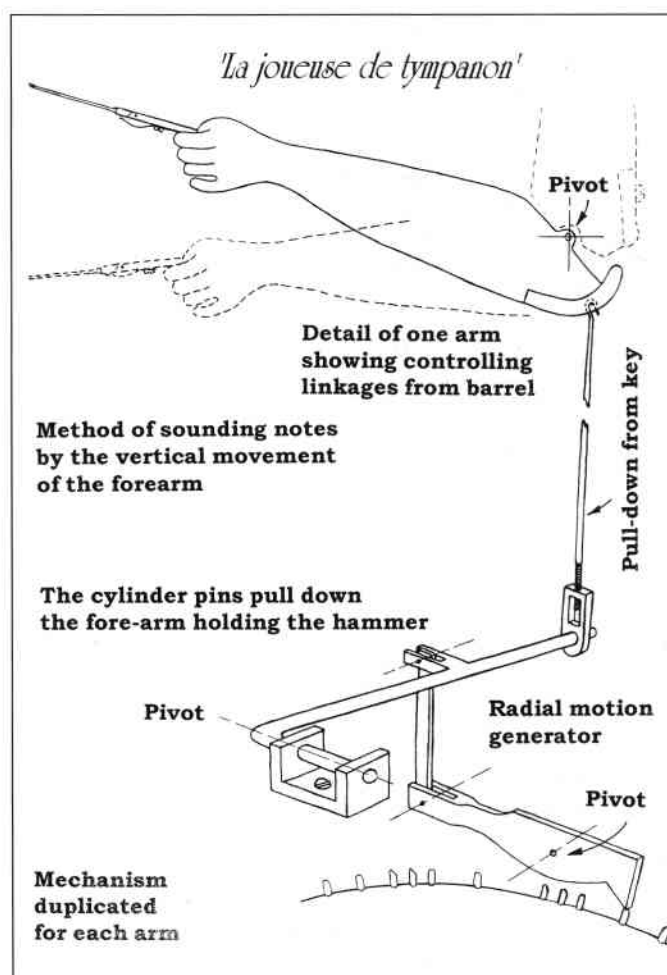
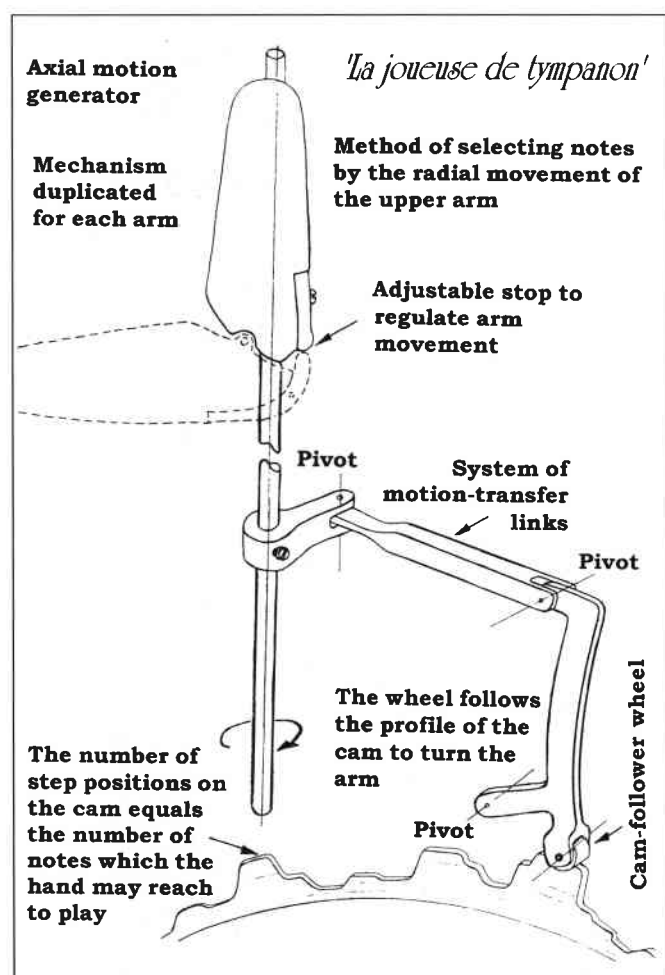
which have been introduced over the years due to wear and tear.

The musical programme performed

The music played by *La Joueuse de tympanon* comprises eight melodies which embrace several different musical styles.

If we return to Robert-Houdin's statement, quoted earlier, he suggests that the piece reflects the musical talent of Marie Antoinette. There appear scant grounds for such a comment although it would have made good commercial sense, as well as a tactful approach, for Kintzing to have enquired as to the musical tastes of his royal client before he began selecting music.

The final choice of music would then have been governed by two very different parameters: first the tastes of the queen and second the admittedly restricted abilities of a clockwork mechanism which undertook to emulate the characteristics of a human player. It would, for example, have been far easier - and musically infinitely more enterprising - had the instrument played formally from a conventional pinned barrel and keyframe. The need to emulate real life must thus have posed severe constraints on musical choice.



As explained earlier, the determination of pitch and the sounding of a note in Kintzing's instrument is a complex procedure requiring two pieces of separate yet interrelated information: the position of a cam and a pin in the barrel surface.

From the programme of pieces, then, it could suggest that Marie Antoinette had simple tastes with simple yet not unattractive little pieces of music.

The first piece is a gentle minuet in D expressed in 2/4 time. The second, in E, is a lilting dance with a delightful interplay between left and right hand.

The third reverts to D in 3/4, is a regal air extending to the upper registers of the instrument. Melody Number 4 is a dance in E, once more in 3/4 time.

Number 5 in D is again in 3/4 time and displays simple but effective left-hand harmonies. Number 6 is an unusual melody in D, a funereal pavan in a stately 3/4 time.

Number 7, once more in D and in 3/4 time, is an elegant minuet-like piece displaying an effective interplay between left and right hands. Finally tune number 8 is again in the key of D, and is an air in 4/4 time.

All of this music must have been familiar to Marie Antoinette and can therefore be considered to have been in the musical domain of her age. For sources, then, one must examine the rich corpus of pre-1780 French music and in particular the popular music for it was not only the court music from which a repertoire would have been selected.

Tracing origins and making identification

An examination of contemporary composers immediately throws up a royal connection for we find that Marie Antoinette, who was originally an Austrian archduchess, was a pupil of none other than Christoph Willibald Ritter von Gluck (1714-1787), the German composer of Bohemian stock who produced a rich corpus of opera in the second half of the eighteenth century. Originally his style had leaned towards the Italian but following pressure from a perceptive attaché to the French embassy in Vienna, François du Roulet, Gluck was induced to turn his attention to 'serious' opera as cultivated by French composers from Lully to Rameau.

That French attaché was even thoughtful enough to provide Gluck with the libretto for his first French-style opera - "Iphigénie en Aulide".

Gluck then went to Paris in 1773 - a year before Marie Antoinette became queen. It is believed that it was she who paved the way for his meteoric career in Paris which

began with "Iphigénie en Aulide" and ended seven operas later with "Écho et Narcisse" in 1779. On September 23rd, 1777, Marie Antoinette attended the premiere at the Paris Opéra of Gluck's then latest work, the opera "Armide" to a libretto by Philippe Quinault.

The fifth piece of music played by *La Joueuse de tympanon* turns

Eight Airs for Marie Antoinette's Automatic Dulcimer-Playing Android *'La joueuse de tympanon'* built by Peter Kintzing and David Röntgen *in 1784 - 5*

Air I

Air II

out to be the *aria de la bergère* from Act 2, Scene 6 of "Armide".

This discovery is interesting and the question is whether or not it is the key to unlocking the mystery of the other and so far unidentified tunes. Some of the pieces have the character of contemporary French keyboard music of the era.

The contemporary musical scene

If one takes the period of "Armide" as a starting point, what other music was popular at the time? For a start, 1776 saw the performances in Paris of Pergolèse's "Stabat Mater", Méreaux's oratorio "Esther", Langlé's "De Profundis" and "Pater Noster", Cambini's "La Sacrifice d'Isaac" and others in a similar vein.

In the 18 years to the apparent delivery of Kintzing's handiwork to Versailles, the French queen had attended performances of music as far apart as Gervais' "Hypermestre" and a symphony (unidentified) by Pleyel. On the way there was music from "Dardenus", "Iphigénie en Tauride" and "Oedipe". The renowned and talented violinist Jarnowick the elder had also entertained her with a concerto of his own. She also heard the Trio from a long-forgotten work by the Italian composer Nicola Piccini¹¹.

The Piccini story is an odd one for the Parisian opera scene of the time was sharply divided on Gluck's idea of dramatic music. An intellectual battle broke out in the Paris press and among musicians in general. It reached an unprecedented degree of acrimony when Piccini was engaged by the French court to write operas with French texts in open competition with Gluck. Even so, Marie Antoinette never wavered in her admiration for Gluck who taught her singing and harpsichord playing¹². It was, however, Gluck who eventually triumphed, the music of "Tauride" far and away eclipsing Piccini's now-forgotten efforts and vindicating Marie Antoinette's confidence in her mentor.

The scope of music available to the queen was not just of a serious nature and one should remember that the French nobility possessed a perverse delight in performing country or peasant music in the highest places.

But it is to this rich corpus of music that one must go in order to identify the remainder of the

Air III



Air IV



Air V - Aria de la bergère, Act 2, Scene 6, "Armide" by Christoph Willibald Gluck



pieces. A passing resemblance, for example, of one of the pieces of music to a keyboard sonata by Clérambault, has not stood up to positive identification.

However, there is another intriguing possibility. François Couperin "Le Grand" enjoyed a close relationship with Louis XIV and in 1694 was appointed *Maître de Clavecin des Enfants de France* and in due course taught the future Duke of Burgundy as well as most of the royal children. Couperin composed much music, albeit mostly motets and elevations, for the royal household. Also there were quantities of other music, either now lost or still to be published and performed. Some of his music was penned to teach the little princess who was to become the wife of Louis XV. He left several volumes of clavecin pieces.

What is significant about Couperin's contribution to French music and, in particular, the music for the French court, is that so much of it was written and performed for the royal family.

More to the point, after his death in 1733 a major proportion of his vast musical output was lost and, apart from the works published during his lifetime, French music remains the poorer. Couperin himself tells us that six of his finest church works, the "Leçons de Ténèbres", were lost in his lifetime.

Couperin's high position in the French court and the legacy of his music which long outlived both he and the old king Louis XV, might suggest that his music remained the recommended performing repertoire long after his death. Here, then, is a strong probability and a line of investigation largely denied to those musicologists outside France.

Much, then, still has to be done to identify the rest of the music but it is a challenge which the musicologists can now address.

The future for La joueuse de tympanon

The restoration team, lead by Jean Marie Broussard, sum up their work in the following statement¹³:

We want to leave a fool-proof method able to provide a reference for the correct settings and to evaluate the tolerance relative to the mechanical wear. The goal of this method [has been] to eliminate the tempering of the mechanics and to discourage hasty manipulations

Air VI

Air VII

Air VIII

in order to leave the *Joueuse de tympanon* to posterity.

The success of this project is a truly extraordinary achievement which has been marked by the production of a singularly valuable compact-disc recording published by the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers in Paris.

Called "*La restauration musicale de la Joueuse de tympanon: ou comment une technologie du vingtième siècle est mise au service d'un chef-d'oeuvre du dix-huitième*", this is clearly one of the most important recordings to have been produced to date.

It is, however, a recording which is not without its drawbacks but for the serious enthusiast and researcher in mechanical music its shortcomings will readily be forgiven as the positive aspects far and away exceed its quirkish production.

The disc offers a detailed descriptive commentary on the restoration and takes the listener audibly through the stages of making this 'musical restoration'. We hear the clockwork, we listen to the hammers beating out their rhythms on the piezo-electric microphones, we hear the sampling of the sounds. We also hear the actual sound, warts and all, of the instrument itself. And then we have the delight of listening to the reconstituted music in the 'voice' of the automaton.

Illuminating descriptive commentaries are presented first in French, then in English and finally in German. The record sleeve provides a detailed set of track number instructions so that you can listen, uninterrupted, to the language of your choice.

The downside of this disc is that, together with the music common to each of the 'language' versions, you get just a shade over thirty-seven and a half minutes of sound of which just seven and a half minutes is of the music.

And, given that despite its brilliant production it is but a synthetic rendition of the yet-to-be-restored original instrument, why is it necessary to separate some of the tunes with an artificially-injected recording of the winding-up of clockwork?

But the really dreadful part of the disc is that for some inexplicable reason the commentaries in each language are spoken by small children! And the ones chosen to try their luck at speaking English possess little understanding of what they are

saying. Incorrectly-stressed and mis-pronounced words such as 'auto-may-ton' (which also turns up as 'auto-matton') are one thing, but surely no self-respecting French person could tolerate Marie Antoinette's teacher and the composer of some of their best-known operas being named as 'Glue-k' - even if he was a German.

One is also reminded of the dangers of simplistic translations when confronted with the different meanings of the word 'mechanic' in French, German and English. To describe Kintzing merely as a 'mechanic' suggests that he was more at home with an old Citroen *deux-chevaux* than in practicing a mastercraft! 'Mechanician' is probably our nearest word having a comparable interpretation.

The English rendition of the text is, accordingly, unsympathetic to the French original yet even that is not free from occasional banality and over-simplification.

However, the saving grace of this technically excellent recording is the provision of an absolutely superb 48-page booklet in three languages which presents plenty of illustrations, both photographic and line-drawings, as well as the complete musical scores. With the aid of this, and a suitably-programmed compact-disc player, you can revel in this magnificent disc's delights without hearing those dreadful voices!

On balance, as a musical document I cannot recommend this odd disc highly enough.

I wish to record my grateful acknowledgement for the help and assistance I have received in preparing the foregoing paper from Jean Marie Broussard, who is responsible for the restoration department in the Musée des Techniques. M Broussard, who undertook the musical restorative work described here, has provided valuable information and enthusiastic assistance not to mention extensive documentation. The line drawings within this article are based on originals prepared by Jean Marie Broussard himself. All the photographs have been provided through the courtesy of the Musée National des Techniques, CNAM/Pascal Faligot, Seventh Square. The Musée National des Techniques is part of the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers and is situated at 292 rue Saint Martin, 75003 Paris (from which address the Compact Disc is available). A not inconsiderable debt of gratitude is also due to my good friend Philippe Rouillé for it was he who first drew my attention to both the existence of this recording and to the project as a whole. It was entirely due to his initial contact that this article was conceived.

1. Carrera, Roland [and others]: *Androids, the Jaquet-Droz automatons*, Scriptar, 1979, p.19.

2. *Op. cit.*, p.20.

3. For an excellent description of the works of the Roentgens, see Josef Maria Greber: *Abraham und David Roentgen: Möbel für Europa* [published by the Internationalen Akademie für Kulturwissenschaften e.V], Josef Keller Verlag, Starnberg, 1980, two volumes.

4. One compound musical clock playing a 27-note under-strike dulcimer and a 19-note pipe organ bearing his name and date 1780 is preserved in the Museum of Arts and Crafts, Paris. This has three interchangeable brass barrels. An almost identical example exists in a private collection in Wilmington, Delaware, USA, only this one, said to have belonged to Marie Antoinette, has lost its dulcimer and three of its original repertoire of six four-tune brass barrels. There is another example in the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, and one was shown at a Moscow exhibition of horology in the 1960s. A further compound clock exists in the Royal Palace collection, Madrid. This has a repair label from Bourdier inside the base. The cabinet, attributed to Roentgen, is very different from the 'Marie Antoinette' style clock cases. A large number of Peter Kintzing's Roentgen-cased organ-clocks are illustrated in Vol 2 of Maurice: *Die deutsche Räderuhr* including one which is dulcimer-playing. This is similar to the example in Paris and bears a joint signature and was sold in Monaco by Sotheby's in 1971. A further compound with non-original face and case is in the Utrecht museum.

5. After visiting Paris, Kintzing's partner David Roentgen returned to Neuwied to complete an important commission for Prince Charles of Lorraine, an uncle of Marie Antoinette. This obligation discharged, Roentgen returned to Paris in March of 1779 in the company of Peter Kintzing. Through the influence of the Austrian ambassador to Versailles, they received an introduction to the king. See "Les Arts Mécaniques, Métiers d'Art", No.52-53, Mars-Juin 1994, p.60.

6. Quoted in the paper "The Musical Restoration of the '*Joueuse de Tympanon*'" presented at the 94th Convention of the Audio Engineering Society 1993 Convention held in Berlin, March 16th-19th, pp1-2.

7. "Les Arts Mécaniques", *loc. cit.* p.60, 62.

8. See Sam H. Sharpe: *Salutations to Robert-Houdin*, Calgary, Canada, A Micky Hades, 1983, p.38.

9. Sharpe, *loc. cit.*

10. See Note 5 above. The paper is "Preprint 3537 (F1-5)".

11. For details of the ruling musical scene and, in particular, as a valuable source of performance records, see Edouard G J Gregoir: *Bibliothèque Musicale Populaire*, Schott Frères, Paris, 1877 (in three volumes), expressly references in volumes 1 and 2.

12. See Slonimsky, Nicolas: *The Concise Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Composer and Musicians*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1988, p.460.

13. "The Musical Restoration of the '*Joueuse de Tympanon*'" *loc.cit.* ■

Collector's Showcase

J. H. Heller musical box

Serial No. 8543, 4-air, 4" cylinder.
Comb has 86 teeth set in mandoline
fashion in groups up to 8.

Case carved with foliage on
sides. Lid has group of two birds in
clump of reeds.

Dimensions:

Internal $5\frac{3}{4}$ " x $2\frac{3}{4}$ " x
 $2\frac{1}{2}$ " deep.

External overall 8" x
5" x $5\frac{1}{2}$ " high.

It has a repair date inside the
case "14/5/74 A.B."

The tune sheet is as follows:

Extra MANDOLINE *Extra*

1. *Norma me protege, Bellini*
2. *Voici le sabre de mon père*
3. *Erinnerung an Peterhof, Valse*
4. *Marche de la muette, Auber*

J. H. Heller a Berne ■



Sublime Harmonie and Paillard's Patent

The question 'Why do some musical boxes sound so well and others not so?' has been asked in the MBSGB journal on many occasions over a long period. Many aspects have been noted such as defects in manufacture, the case the movement is housed in, features of tuning, comb steel used and it is true that all these have an effect on the end result. There is, however, evidence that the most significant contribution to the musical box sound could be the skilful selection, by the manufacturer, of the tooth proportions in the comb and I take the opportunity of this article to show why this conclusion has been reached. I bent the ears of those present at the Autumn '94 meeting at Harrogate to the sound aspects of this study, as sound is not easy to describe on paper. Three musical boxes were played to demonstrate particular features, a Paillard Sublime harmonie, a Langdorff concerto tremolo and a 15½" upright Polyphon. A tape recording of vibrating strips of metal was played together with sounds of a tone generator.

The Machines and Background

The Sublime Harmonie movement has interested me from the early days of my collecting having come across my first somewhere in Norfolk during 1975. It wasn't worth very much at that time due to its dilapidated condition but what was left of the combs produced a sound unlike any other box I had heard up until then and it also had two of the largest spring barrels I had seen. Its purchase was, therefore, inevitable.

This machine plays 6 tunes on a 14¾" x 2½" diameter cylinder and has two combs of 51 teeth each. 44 different notes are used covering six octaves and playing time is approximately ¾ hour on one winding. It is universally interchangeable allowing extra cylinders to be purchased and the same cylinder can be used on similar machines. Features of interest are that the case bottom is used as a sound board through a connection from the cast iron base and the tune track width is a departure from standard. The tune track width has been shown by Anthony Bulleid pages 126 and 127 of "Cylinder

by J. M. Powell

Musical Box Design and Repair" to be remarkably constant at approximately 0.017". The format of this machine adopts a width of approximately 0.022" whilst using the same diameter of pinning wire being approximately 0.012". This means that the gap between adjacent pins on the cylinder is increased from approximately 0.005" to 0.010" allowing a wider comb tooth to be used if required.

An early Saydisc record identified a similar machine in the Roy Mickleburgh collection at Bristol and our Society visit there in December 1979 confirmed this. At a later date, Roy generously allowed me to take frequency measurements of its combs and details of other bits and pieces missing from my machine. The third machine, which was the one shown at the Harrogate meeting, was acquired at a Christie's sale during July '91. The combs were unbroken although all the leads were severely corroded. These three apparently identical machines, allowed a rare opportunity to compare tuning frequencies and establish common features even though damage and lead corrosion limited this comparison.

The machine serial numbers are 57909, 63611 and 71994 and 57909 has a date underneath the baseboard of 22.3.89. Paillard's patent 3679 sealed 22.4.1875 indicates 57909 was produced 15 years later. Two interesting modifications were noted between 57909 and 63611. The instant safety stop was substantially increased in size although the style was retained and the pitch of the combs was raised by approximately one semitone which still allowed all cylinders to be used. These three were supplemented by tuning patterns obtained from a smaller unidentified sublime harmonie machine No. 16630 with a 13" cylinder playing two combs of 61 teeth each kindly lent by another trusting member during February 1981.

The Theory of Vibration

An early Society member Alfred Thompson of Knaresborough recognised that a vibrating strip produces

additional frequencies to its principal or fundamental. One authority for this was an established and respected engineering text book "Vibration and Sound" by P. M. Morse. Mr. Thompson's article page 315, Vol. 6, No. 5 of "The Music Box" published in 1974 highlighted the non harmonious character of these overtones and posed several interesting thoughts and possibilities on the subject.

A feature of the mathematics of solving the equations of internal forces acting in a rectangular bar to determine its natural frequencies is that one can choose different dimensions for two bars say, to produce the same calculated frequency. This does however produce a different set of overtones for each bar. A tapered bar can be set to the same fundamental frequency as a parallel bar and a further different set of overtones are produced.

It should be noted that the solution of a wire in tension is quite different to that of a vibrating bar fixed at one end. Whilst some overtones of a vibrating wire may be harmonic, this is not necessarily the case with the bar.

Whether the foregoing theory, or a chance discovery by the manufacturer, determined that teeth of different dimensions having the same fundamental frequency would produce different sounds, I know not, but that does appear to be the basis for the sublime harmonie arrangement.

The Sublime Harmonie Format

Paillard's patent includes three paragraphs of significance to this study which are reproduced here.

1) The said invention consists in combining with the rotating cylinder or cylinders two or more separate combs, or two or more series of prongs or teeth on one comb plate; and its object is to obtain by the use of shorter prongs than heretofore, producing vibrations of comparatively short duration, which will not produce that confusion and indistinctness in the melody and in the harmonie (sic) accompaniments which are always observed in musical boxes hitherto manufactured and especially those wherein prongs or teeth are used.

2) In this Drawing I have shown three combs D, D, D, each forming a complete and independent scale. If I simply wish to obtain a more powerful and harmonious tone than that of other musical boxes, I have only to let the same air be played completely by two or more of these combs, but if I wish to produce the different shades of musical expression, such as the pianos, the crescendos, the fortes, the decrescendos, I let one comb play, or two or more combs play together, according to the effect I wish to introduce.

3) The musical theory of this Invention is as follows:—I introduce a very slight dissonance in the tuning of the prongs of the various combs belonging to the same tone, and the said prongs of the same sound being separated and having a slight dissonance, produce an infinitely more powerful and more harmonious sound than the old style of musical boxes, where prongs of the same tone are placed side by side and tuned in unison, so that the vibrations of two or more prongs sounding together have a tendency to destroy one another instead of augmenting in volume as in the case with my invention.

In summary then, he says he does two things:—

- a) Stiffens the tooth to shorten the duration of the sound.
- b) Introduces a dissonance between teeth of the same tone.

Firstly tooth stiffness. A stiffer tooth obviously requires a greater force to bend it and therefore a greater energy input. If the duration of vibration is shorter, then one would expect the volume of sound to be greater. On his machines, there are no more than two teeth tuned to the same pitch on either comb and the principle seems quite understandable.

Secondly, his expression dissonance appears to be a little confusing. Is it a difference in frequency or a difference in sound? If he is referring to fundamental frequencies, then he is trying to patent a feature that has been common to most combs since the beginning of musical box history. This is the stretched tuning feature that I believe, most people are now familiar with. An example would be to take A=440 and the next higher A would be say 890 or 10 beats per second higher than 2 x 440 which one would normally expect. To suggest that Paillard's expression dissonance meant small differences in fundamental frequencies would, therefore be wrong

as this feature is inherent in most, if not all, combs by way of their tuning patterns. This then suggests that his dissonance may well be the different overtones in his teeth of different proportions although, interestingly, he does not refer to this feature in the wording of his patent. Did he omit this deliberately to maintain an advantage? — that could be a possibility. However, he did say in the last paragraph reproduced, that two or more teeth of near identical shape and of the same tone can 'destroy' each other implying that he uses some other means of avoiding this cancellation effect.

A Simple Experiment

The results of this experiment were played from a tape recording at the Harrogate meeting mainly as a means of amplification of the sound produced. Take a strip of reasonably stiff metal (steel or brass are equally effective), clamp in a vice so that a reasonably audible tone is produced when the end is plucked as in a comb tooth. Cut off the bar an inch or two longer on the other end and taper it both sides to a near point. Re-adjust bar in a vice or clamp so that each end produces the same fundamental frequency and listen to the difference in sound, pluck both together and a further different sound is heard. The demonstration at the meeting compared the same frequency from a tone generator (no overtones) which again sounded quite different. There does therefore appear to be some agreement between theory and practice.

Taking the experiment one stage further, when releading the teeth of 57909, I tuned the corresponding teeth on both combs to exactly the same frequencies and followed the mean stretched tuning curve of all three machines whilst leaving the unleaded teeth as found. I think that the resulting sound exhibits all the expected characteristics of the sublime harmonie arrangement and the consensus of opinion from members at the meeting at Harrogate appeared to be in agreement.

Comparison of Tuning Patterns

Not all investigations produce the hoped for results and unfortunately the comparison of frequencies from the three similar machines was inconclusive. It could not confirm that teeth tuned to the same pitch on both combs had the same fundamental frequency. Conversely, there was no evidence that indicated a

common variation in frequency to show that the expression dissonance implied a small difference in principal frequency. A total of six notes having between seven and nine teeth in each group showed variations between 0.8% and 4.6%. The only consolation one can get from this jumble is that the comb tuners were not that particular and that the accuracy we look for was not, at that time, considered necessary.

The unidentified sublime harmonie No. 16630 referred to earlier showed a very close alignment between the two combs which first raised my doubts about the commonly held belief at that time, that differential tuning between the two combs constituted the basis of this effect.

Associated Sound Features

If one has now accepted that a fixed ended bar produces a number of higher frequencies than its principal which can change with variation in shape, this could provide an explanation to several features of comb or tooth vibration. It is well known in the structural profession that the natural vibration of both suspension bridge and power transmission cables can be cancelled by adding a secondary vibration from those weighted dumbbells attached adjacent to the anchor points of these cables. If secondary vibration can cancel a primary frequency then it should follow that one can also amplify it. (The Tacoma suspension bridge disaster must be the most vivid example of that).

Having, so far, measured and recorded the frequency of fifty or sixty combs, I can confirm that most of them exhibit a marked variation in period of vibration along their length. With some teeth, the period of vibration is so short that it is difficult to get a reading from them. Some teeth sound a distinctive "plink or tink" on release and then go on to a sustained note. This variation in response along the comb length could, understandably, be the result of internal frequencies working with or against the principal frequency of the tooth.

An example of the "plink-plink" phenomenon was demonstrated using the 15½" Polyphon. Four adjacent tracks were highlighted on disc No. 1024 — "In the Gloaming." These played teeth numbers 13 and 14 on each comb being notes b, c', c', and d. These four teeth produce a distinct "plink" when released but the tone is maintained for a short while after. This, I thought, was a

defect and I spent many hours trying to correct it but without success. Having acquired Bruce Angrave's record "Story of a Polyphon," which played "In the Gloaming" on a 15½" Polyphon, I heard the same "plink plink" sounds in the same places as in my machine. It seems to be too much of a coincidence to get identical defects in the same places on two different machines.

Another example which sustains this hypothesis, is experienced when tuning replacement leads or teeth. The gradual reduction of material can significantly change the period of vibration. It can go from resonant to dead and back to resonant – hopefully before the desired pitch is

achieved. I have made one attempt to awaken a 'dead' tooth by removing a small amount of lead from its weight which raised its pitch and made it more resonant. I then lowered the pitch by removing material from the heel of the tooth but by the time the original pitch had been reinstated, the original 'deadness' had returned. These changes in sound can only be credited to changing geometry as no other feature of the tooth or comb had changed during this operation.

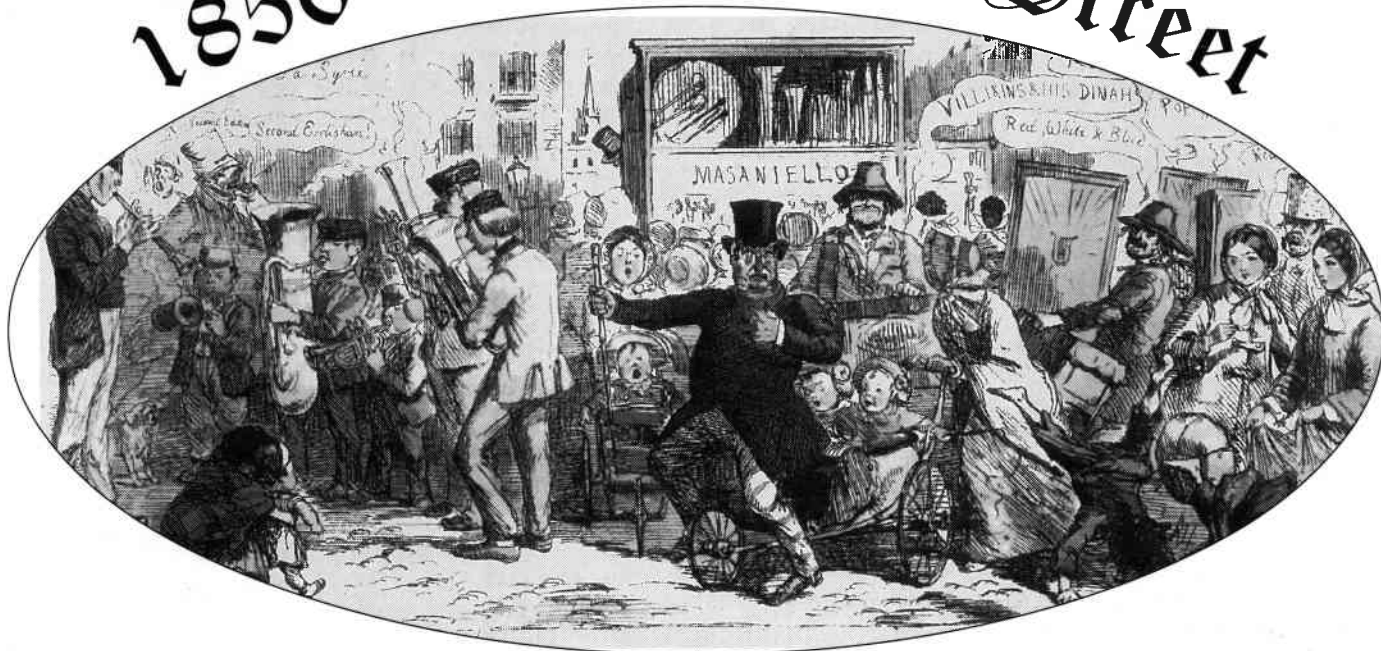
Conclusion

My interest in vibrations in materials commenced long before I bought my first musical box

although my efforts then went towards reducing their damaging effect in welded steel structures. The present application of this experience however, is much more enjoyable and rewarding. I have based most of what has been written on observation and appreciate that some conclusions drawn from these observations may well be open to further welcome discussion.

Finally, one regret that I still have is that I have not been able to record an alternate tipped movement and compared the results to Paillard's patent. The two principles appear to be completely opposite but this, I'm sure, may well be another story. ■

1856 – The Quiet Street



The Quiet Street – A Sketch from a Study Window

That's a subject on which I shall get no sympathy. You young ladies are very merciless in this respect, and you send out sixpences to those brown, grinning, insolent fellows, and encourage them to annoy quiet folks. I can't help being warm about it, I feel it a grievance. If you only knew what bad fellows they are – many of them spies – you would not give them money. Haven't you got your own pianofortes, and can't you go to the opera almost when you like? Let them go and play in the courts and alleys, but they ought not to be allowed to grind out the nerves of people who hate them. I am better, thank you. This year, 1856, we had the Peace Fireworks, and though they were miserably inferior to those in Paris, some of the grand flights were fine. The officers all came home, with their Crimean beards, and ever since it has been the fashion for every snob to let his face be covered all over with hair – I hate the fashion, for it makes everybody look like everybody else. Covent Garden Theatre was burned down, after a low masquerade, and the sight of the ruins made me melancholy for about ten minutes, I remember. We shall never look

again upon such – never mind. This year crinoline fully asserted itself as the regular national costume, and it has held its own ever since, because the dress is the most expensive that can be devised, and we are all the slaves of trades-persons whose interest it is to sell dear things. Why don't you ladies adopt a simple black, as we do, and wear it always, then there would be no fear of going out twice in the same garment, and you would save hundreds, which you could spend in travelling or sea-side sojourns? Not you. Let me see, *Ellington* won the Derby. *Hiawatha* came out this year, and the novelty of the rhythm made it talked about, to say nothing of the beauty of much of the poetry. But the great poets of the year were the makers of American ballads, which were sung by actresses. Do any of you recollect them at the Adelphi? Mrs. Barney Williams was most brilliant in this line.

"The lobster in the lobster pot.
The blue fish wriggling on the hook,
May suffer *some*, but O no not
The pangs I feel for my Mary Anne!
Bobbing all around." ■

Musical boxes for left-handed owners

Did you ever realise that the winding of a musical box from the mid 19th century is not at all an easy task? Of course, you have to wind your boxes a great number of times and you will continue with that task as long as you are a musical box lover, and that handling doesn't present any problem at all. But why for heaven's sake do you have to use your left hand to turn the key or to ratch the handle? Nowadays we know that about 10 per cent of the European population is left-handed and that figure wouldn't alter much if we went back in time about a century. So the makers certainly had no intention to please the left handed buyer. Nevertheless the practice lasted until about Mermod.

It was about 1890 that the makers came up with a totally new approach in assembling musical boxes: A cylinder-arbor and spring barrel were put in line and the spring barrel was moved from the left to the right-side of the box. From that time the winding of a musical box was a lot easier than in previous decades. You may wonder why it took about sixty years before this alteration was "discovered" and I am sorry that I can't give you the answer. But of course the conservatism of the Swiss workers had something to do with it.

It is not only in cartels that one finds the spring barrel at the left-hand side, tabatières also have the spring at the left-hand side of the box when it would have been easier if it had been situated at the right-hand side. It may be true that with Mermod a more efficient winding was born, but not all manufacturers followed this new approach and on snuff boxes even nowadays, spring barrels are on the left-hand side of the bedplate. Engrained habits!

But to return to our starting

by **Luuk Goldhoorn**
(Netherlands)

point: why left-handed musical boxes?

The reason is clear when you take into consideration the earliest appearance of a musical box. It was not in the form of a cartel box, but as a clockbase with a musical work inside.

If you put the box in the right position in front of you, the spring barrel will be at the right-hand side. The start-stop handle and the tune change arm will be on the left-hand side and the cylinder and not the comb will be in front of you. That art of assembling can be seen even better if you take into consideration a very early clock base, in which the handles are not on the left-hand side but at the front, and of course that is the front and not the back, for it is hardly possible to handle these if you turn the box. There is also more proof, and that is in the form of the clockbase. In later years they were in two ways symmetrical, but in the earlier years you will find symmetry only between the left and the right part, not between the front and the back. So an early clockbase with its right side in front of the observer shows its musical work with the cylinder near to him.

In this respect it is worthwhile to mention the "instant stop". From all the books and articles written on the subject of musical boxes you may learn that it was only for the use of the man who finally adjusted the movement before it left the factory. May be, it could also be helpful in the case of a repair, but the main reason why it was not ejected before the clockbase was sent to the dealer was of course its extra function of stopping the music during the night (and may be part of the day); the spring power

was not at all sufficient to turn the cylinder for more than about 20 times, so beside the reason of silence during the night there was another reason not to let the box play for over 24 hours. Why it remains on musical boxes not being clockbases is not known but I suppose that in this case conservatism also had something to do with it.

As clockbases were normally closed, it was not important how the musical work was inserted. Nevertheless it seems rather strange that all the manufacturers of cartel boxes followed the "clock-base-manner" by the assembling of their works. But we have to bear in mind, that although there were many manufacturers of musical boxes, in the beginning there were only a few bedplate makers and they all had machines and tools for making bedplates with the spring barrel at the left. Nevertheless there exists a number of very early musical boxes fusee-driven, which have the spring-arbor and barrel at the right-hand side, but that practice doesn't hold. Why? May be one of our members knows the answer.

It seems, the question posed at the beginning of these afterthoughts is sufficiently answered, but that's not so. Clockbases may be one of the first kind of boxes in which musical works were inserted, the fabrication of snuff boxes is of an earlier date. If we abstract from the "sur-plateau-movement," which is of a different form from a cylinder snuff box, it is obvious that these tabatières all had their spring barrels at the top left. At least snuff boxes with the spring barrel at the right are not known (at least to me). So an ultimate answer to the question, "why did the makers insist in making musical boxes most suitable for left-handed owners?" is not yet given. ■

ERCOLE BOTTRIGARI AND AUTOMATA

by Antonio Latanza, Rome

Ercole Bottrigari was born in 1533, and lived in his native Bologna until 1612. He represented the Renaissance ideal of the "universal man." Friend of poets and musicians, he had a vast culture and assembled a library which was famous in his time and still survives in Bologna (Museo Civico). He defended the *avantgarde* musical theories of Claudio Monteverdi. In 1594 he published "Il desiderio, overo de' concerti di varij strumenti musicali." This is a theoretical work and is considered the most important among his writings (some of which are still unpublished). This work was published three times: in 1594 in Venice, in 1599 and in 1601 in Bologna. The text, in the Italian language of its time, now obsolete, mentions some German musical automata.

This is the text in Italian. The fragment appears on pages 47 and 48.

"Non vi struggete di gratia per questo . . . e se poi vi affligete solo per voler indiuniare qual concerto sia questo, come vi struggereste uoi uedendolo primieramente componere et concertare insieme, con tanta venustà, con tanta gratia et con tanto silentio, onde mi parrebbe certo ò di sognarvi, ò di ueder qualche uno di quegli imaginati incanti della maga Alcina, ouero altrettanto di quelle bambine tedesche; le quali per forza di fascie di acciaio tamperate, unanno sù per le tauole sonando quegli strumenti, che sono stati loro accomodati da suoi ingegnosi fabbricatori."

It is the emotional description of a court concert. My translation underlines the argument we selected.

"The listener is captured by the beauty of the music, presented with beauty and grace ("venusta" and "gratia"), to the point that he feels he is having a dream, or watching one of the enchantments of "maga Alcina" (Ariosto's magician) or in the spectacle offered by several German dolls or puppets (literally "little girls"), who, through "rods of tempered steel" walk on "boards" or "tables," playing "those instruments built by their ingenious makers."

The text therefore describes the awe and bewilderment felt in a deep emotion, comparing it to the one felt before German automata which walk and play instruments. Such awe belongs entirely to the poetic conception of a late, though obvious, mannerism; such sensitivity had begun with Giovanni Battisti Marino at the end of the sixteenth century.

Such a sensibility was mostly awakened by the astonishing, the wonderful, the bizarre. Marino's motto was "the poets aim is Wonder."

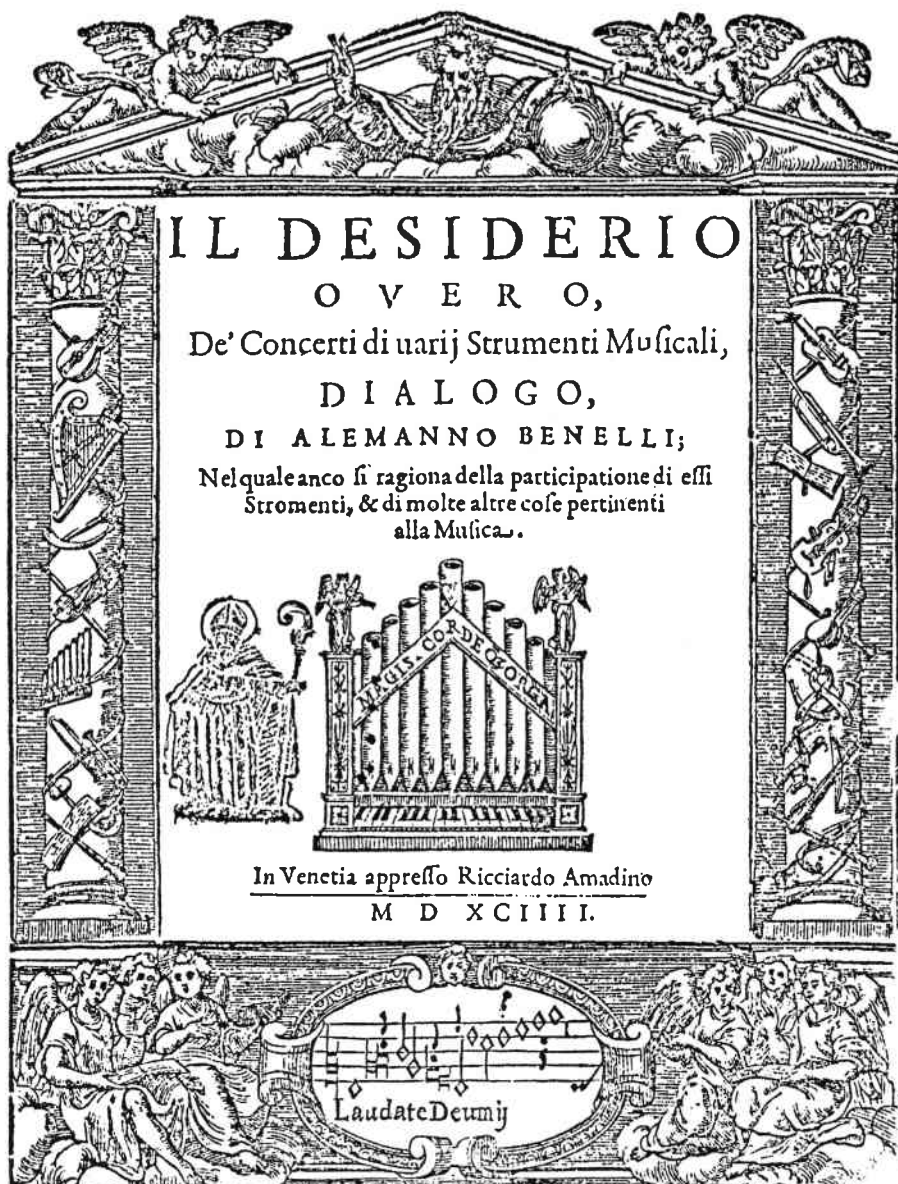
On the other hand, Bottrigari's text is important from a historical point of view: he states that towards the end of the 16th century automata built in Germany were well known already ("quelle bambine tedesche," "those little German girls") in Northern Italy. That they played musical instruments while walking is a precise technical datum.

For about a century the cultural atmosphere had been expressing itself in the "Wunderkammer," which had been started by Francesco I of the Medici (mid-16th century). In the 17th century this was followed by the most famous "Wunder-

kammer" in all western culture, the one which Jesuit Father Athanasius Kircher had assembled in Rome.

In the second half of the 17th century another "Wunderkammer" was formed in Rome by Michele Todini, who had found a way to connect seven instruments (one harpsichord, three spinets, one organ, one violin and one "lira ad arco") to one keyboard.

The Kircher collection was scattered through various Roman museums soon after the unification of Italy (1861), Todini's is completely lost; jealousy about his own invention had prompted him to write a book, "La Galleria Armonica," Rome 1670, to confuse the ideas of those who might have shown a too zealous interest in his own Wunderkammer. ■



Musical Box Oddments

by H. A. V. Bulleid

Number 64

Early tune sheets, devoted to songs which were already old, are seldom of much use in dating. I have only managed to trace two of the six in Fig. 1. *The Time I've lost in Wooing*, words by T. Moore about 1815, may be an old folk tune. *I'll gang nae mair to yon town* dates from before 1800; it was well known around 1810 as the Prince Regent's favourite Scottish tune. Both had several revivals in different arrangements – tune 1 well into the 1900s. They come over very attractively from the 80 teeth of a box by (so far) unknown maker, serial 8458, shown in Fig. 2.

Alliez and Berguer

Despite Fig. 3, I have not seen a jot (or for that matter a tittle) of evidence that these good people were makers of cartel musical boxes. True, a pre-1863 key-wind with brass tune plate engraved Berguer & Fils, Genève was noted in Vol. 8, page 78; and true also that Fig. 3 shows the pair stamped on a bedplate and Fig. 4 shows A B on its tune sheet. But what of it? Far more agents than makers got their names on bedplates; and claims on tune sheets, even if supporting the bedplate marks, are notoriously unreliable. Besides, they are not mentioned by Chapuis and it is incredible that he could have overlooked a Geneva maker with over 8,000 boxes to his name or names.

Both boxes are typical of the later key-wind period, about 1855, and they show many similarities. Both have their serial numbers, in the characters shown in Fig. 3, also on cylinder, great wheel and spring cover. Their bass leads are scribed with serial and gamme numbers: 8329/1894 and 8458/97. Both have K stamped on bass edge of bedplate and a blank number on the front edge. Both have iron control levers and their cases have slide-in glass lids and a peg on the case lid to engage a hole in the top of the end flap. Serial 8329 with the longer cylinder has a marquetry lid and case lock, 8458 is in a plain case with side-hooks for the lid.

Both movements have tune 1 on the cylinder dots, making them rather more likely to be from Ste. Croix region than Geneva – which in turn makes it likely that the blanks came from Karrer, who may also have supplied the combs, which have cast iron bases and damper pin anvils clear of the lead weights.

I think it is perfectly safe to say that both these boxes came from the same maker, and that the low gamme number on serial 8458 is a late use of a programme of very early but well remembered tunes. So who made them? Serials over 8,000 suggest someone who started around 1840. I anxiously await a few more clues. Even the placing of the tune sheet might be significant.

Louis Jaccard's catalogue

Junod's 1889 catalogue was described on page 156 of Vol. 15, and I expect the agent in Berlin, Louis Jaccard, issued his a year or two later. It is an impressive 32-page affair, size about 10¾" by 8" (27cm x 20cm), with fancy-bordered cover again listing the four Junod patent numbers and adding, under Jaccard's name and address . . .

Representative and stockist for the Musical-box

Maker Junod & Aubert of Ste. Croix.

Exports to all Countries.

Quality Repairs on the Premises.

Unlike the Junod catalogue which only lists cartel boxes though offering spare parts for tabatieres, Jaccard has small movements up to and including page 19. They include manivelles, photo albums, necessaires, sundry boxes and flasks, numerous terra cotta figures and beer tankards. Taking the rates of exchange in 1890 as 1 Mark = £0.05 = \$0.24, some typical prices were . . . photo albums from 10 to 16 Marks = £0.50 to £0.82, \$2.40 to \$4.

Beer tankards from 9 to 23 Marks = £0.45 to £1.15, \$2.20 to \$5.50. There was also a Christmas-tree holder, illustrated with a tree as tall as the adjacent doting parents and incorporating up to four small movements, priced up to 60 Marks = £3, \$14. Small tabatiere movements without cases cost from 3.70 to 18.80 Marks; a typical 2-air, 41-tooth with either manual or auto tune change cost M5.60 = £0.28, \$1.34.

The catalogue then deals with Junod's three types in logical order, Musique Ordinaire, Jurassien, and Helvetia the interchangeable. They are all offered in different types and with choice of double springs, nickel plating and more elaborate cases. Examples . .

Music Ordinaire with nickel plating, zither and tune indicator, 13" cylinder 8-air Sublime Harmonie 114 Marks = £5.70, \$27.36. This is preceded by a note stating: Musique Symphonique - superior substitute for Sublime Harmonie.

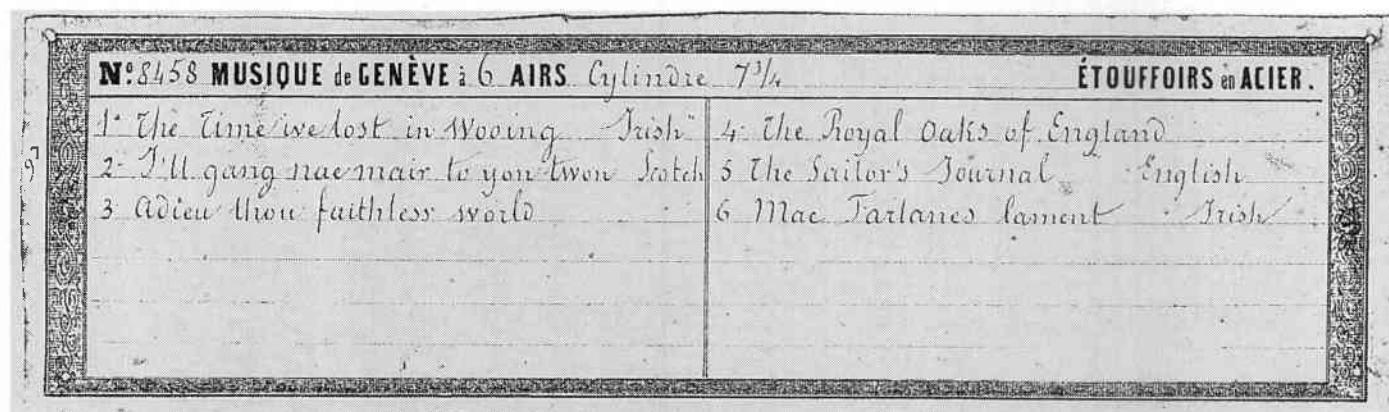


Fig. 1. Typical early tune sheet on flimsy paper, describing the type of music and emphasising steel dampers, Gamme 97 noted in left margin, 8¼" x 2½" (21cm x 6cm).

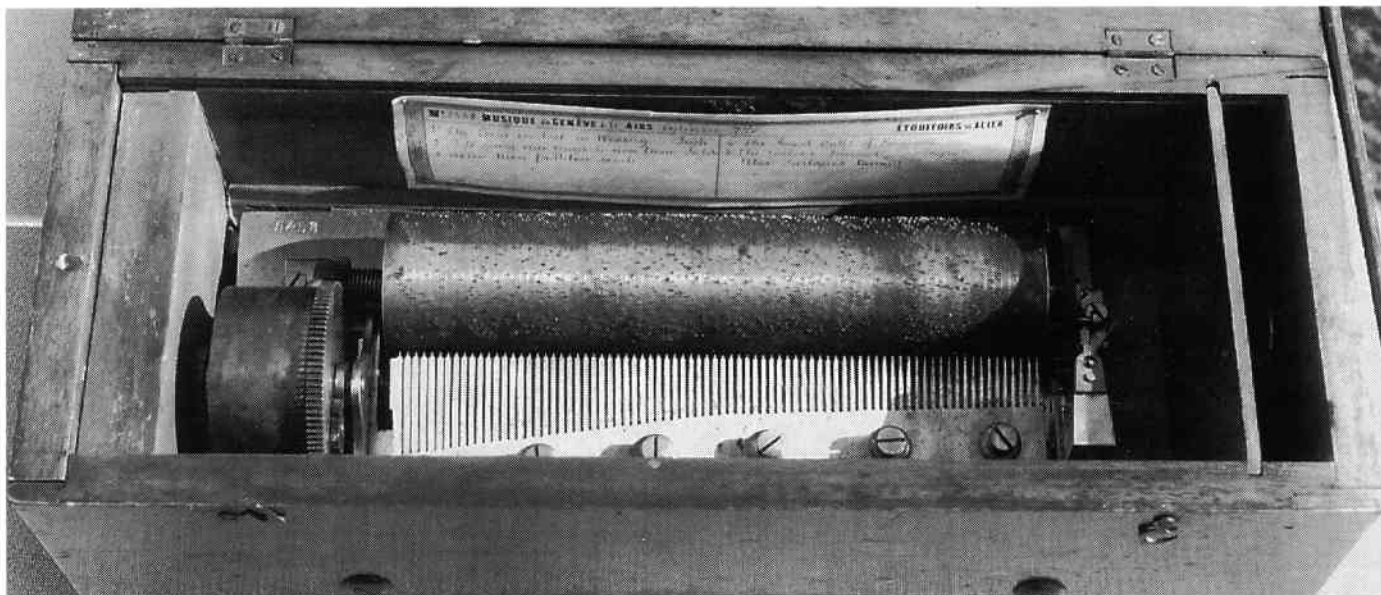


Fig. 2. Serial 8458, cylinder 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (21cm x 4.8cm), 80 comb teeth.

Jurassienne (side-wound) 13" 8-air Mandolin Expressive without case M111.50 = £5.50, \$26.50. Normal inlaid case M7 extra. This model has double springs and tune indicator; zither is extra, M4 and nickel plating, M3.

The Helvetia 13" 6-air Mandoline Expressive Zither in standard case cost M157 = £7.85, \$32.70. Extra for long play, 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ hours, M64.50 = £3.22, \$15.48. Extra cylinders cost M41.50 = £2, \$10.

Cylinder lengths are given in pouces and centimetres, the former referred to as "Pariser Zoll." Several types of slot machines are listed with cylinders up to 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (42cm) and including drum, bells and castanet. The heading explains that, at 10 pfennig a time, you could play one or several tunes. A rather pointed cautionary note added: "Not to be confused with Symphoniums, where for another tune a disc has to be changed."

The final cartel offered, "the largest movement in the field of this art," is coin-operated Sublime Oktavo Flute Heavenly Voices Bells in sight tune indicator two dancers four 6-air cylinders each 75cm (29 $\frac{1}{2}$ ") long. It has 198 music teeth, 2 zithers, 10 bells, case 1.29m wide (51") cost 3400 Marks = £170, \$816.

Then comes a page on repairs, followed by two listing spares. They are very similar to those in the Junod and other catalogues. Prices include 5 pence for an endless and 3 pence for its butterfly assembly.

The final page offers a few less common spares, including a pair of control lever escutcheons (in German) for 2 pence and a pair of folding case handles for 18 pence - £0.18 in case anyone is getting muddled with 1890 pennies. Also, of course, a zither of First Quality is offered at 4.10 Marks, £0.20. Prices in Swiss Francs would have been slightly higher because in 1890 one mark equalled 1.24 Swiss francs.

This agency closed suddenly in 1896.

Ste Croix to Yverdon by rail

Every item in that Jaccard catalogue was dispatched from Ste. Croix by horse power until the railway arrived in November 1893 - in good time, one hoped, for the Inauguration Fête held on November 17. Next day the new College was opened, a fine 5-storey building

with separate gymnasium, and both events were covered in a 24-page Souvenir. It listed the Railway Co. officers and the local authorities and Fête committees and offered succinct notes on the Railway, the College and relevant local history - followed by lengthy texts and music from the College celebrations.

It concluded with the 1893-94 Winter timetable - three trains each way daily except Sundays, leaving Ste. Croix 6.58 and 11am and 4.40pm and reaching Yverdon 80 minutes later, calling at five stations en route. The uphill journey from Yverdon took 100 minutes. Trains arrived at Ste. Croix at 10.42, 4.27 and 8.18. I have no doubt they were invariably on time. Tickets cost 2.50 single, 4.00 return. The three steam engines were named Davel, Olivier and Reine Berthe. They were 0-4-4-0 Mallet type compound side tank engines.

The opening ceremonies included gun salvos at 7am, reunion of all committees at 10.30, reception of inaugural train then banquet followed later by torchlight processions with fireworks and evening parties.



Fig. 3. Comparison of bedplate stamping. Serial 8329 has the larger bedplate.



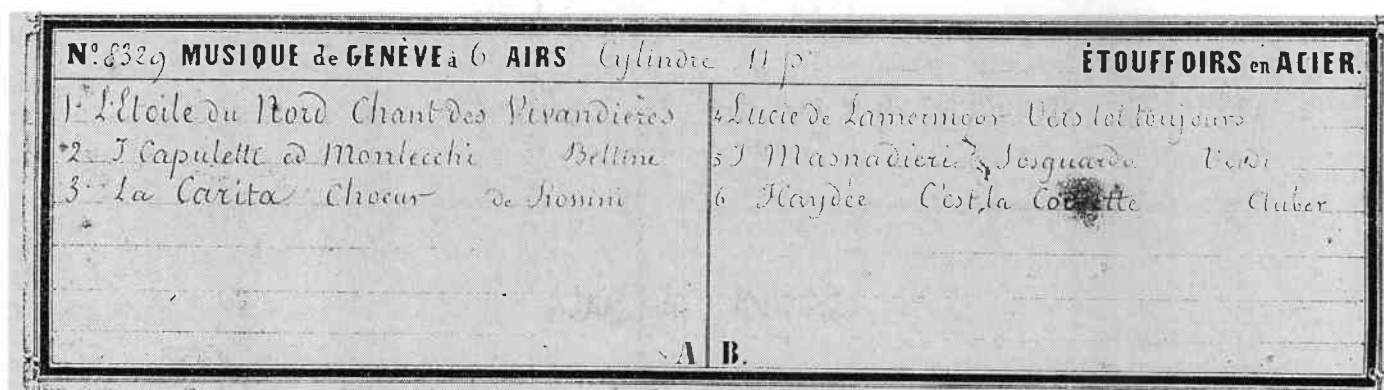


Fig. 4. Similar tune sheet of serial 8329, but slightly smaller, with plain borders and AB at bottom centre. Cylinder is $11\frac{3}{4}'' \times 2\frac{1}{8}''$ (30cm x 5.4cm) playing 104 comb teeth. Latest tune No. 1 by Auber, 1854.

Yverdon was and is Ste. Croix's nearest important town, with main line direct railway access to Neuchâtel, Geneva and Lausanne. Aside from shipping musical boxes, the railway must have been a huge help on shopping trips, not to mention the thermal waters and the 13th Century castle with a round tower at each corner; two of them can be seen in Fig. 5. With its many tourist and health attractions it is now known as Yverdon-les-Bains.

Early Mermod

Mention of a Mermod box brings to mind their standard layout with combined tune selector and indicator at the bass end, and parachute opposite the governor at treble, spring-drive end – and largely nickel-plated. It is not known when they standardised this design,

probably about 1884; the first of the patents was in 1885. Before then, Mermod boxes were of the usual Swiss design, even including the usual dimension of 0.017" for the snail cam steps.

Mermod Frères were noted watch makers since 1816, and their exhibits in the London 1851 Great Exhibition would certainly have included musical boxes if they had been making them at that time. So they probably started in the mid 1850s. Simple clues like the date they extended their factory seem to have been lost in the Ste. Croix fires. It would help if more boxes turned up with serial numbers between 10,000 and 20,000.

Mermod certainly made some impressive early boxes, and a good example is shown in Fig. 6. Its $17\frac{1}{4}'' \times 2\frac{3}{8}''$ (44cm x 6cm) cylinder plays eight airs on four combs



Fig. 5. Yverdon, 1899. The busy days of the canal, with its direct access to Neuchâtel lake, are over. Timber yard and tannery at left, open loading doors on 3rd floor at right, towing path each side and AD1226 castle in background.

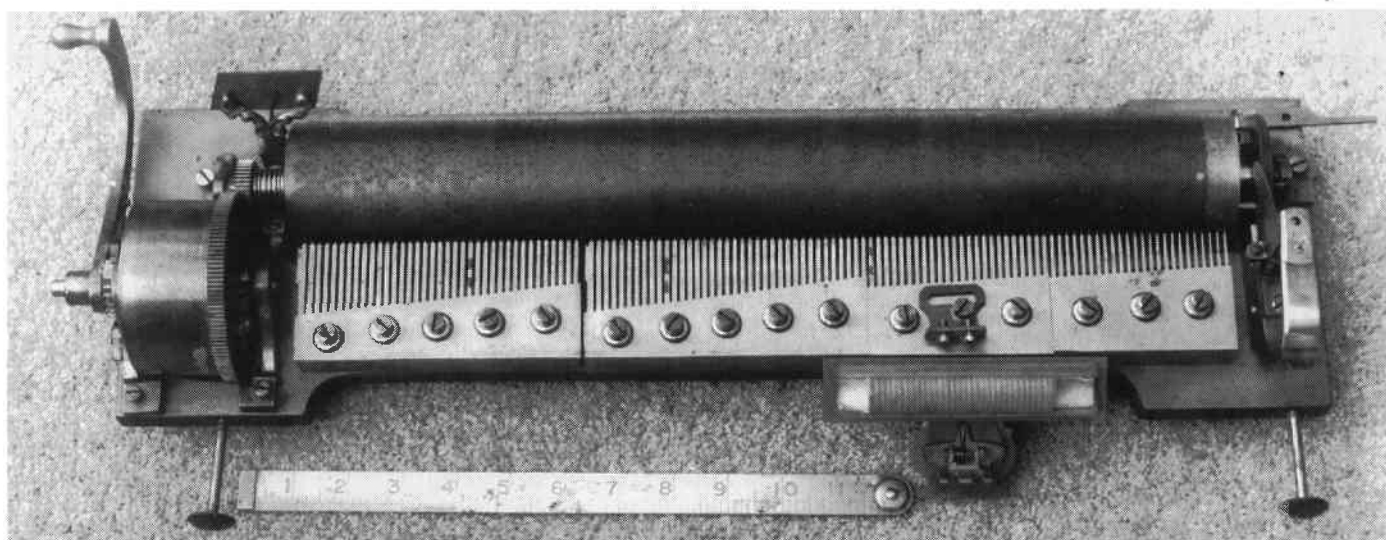


Fig. 6. Mermod serial 9629 with unusual tune indicator and zither tissue covered with striped silk and matched to the tremolo comb. Teeth nearest to 440Hz are marked, their relative stiffnesses are 400 on main combs and 200 on tremolo. As usual the bass end sublime harmonie comb has the lowest bass notes. The bass leads are scribed 1/148 and 2/148 so perhaps 148 is the gamme number.

with a total of 122 teeth. The first two combs from the bass end have 37 teeth each, sublime harmonie type. The third comb has 24 teeth, with several pairs and one trio of teeth tuned to the same pitch, and it uses teeth of the same pitch in the sublime harmonie combs to produce effective tremolo effects and trills. All its teeth are exactly covered by the zither tissue. The fourth comb covers the piccolo range.

I would describe this excellent movement as "Sublime Harmonie Tremolo Piccolo," but as can be seen in Fig. 7, Mermod had other ideas, emphasising QUATUOR (a contemporary craze) and perhaps avoiding any annoyance to their neighbours the Paillards by using

the description Forte Piano. I must say they achieve this effect very competently throughout, especially in tune no. 7.

The 27 lignes diameter cylinder has circumference 7.5"; pinned at 0.11" per second, one rev. of the cylinder lasts 68 seconds. The tune gap is wider than normal at 1/2" and the tunes play briskly at 63 seconds. Tune 1 is on the cylinder dots as usual with Mermod. The tune arranger has taken good advantage of the crescendos available with sublime harmonie, and the tremolo and, luckily not overdone, piccolo effects.

A good design point about the tune indicator is that the pointer works directly from the cylinder end cap;



Fig. 7. Standard Mermod tune sheet, this one size 11 1/4" x 7" (28cm x 18cm).



Fig. 8. Mermod Frères markings on zither and governor cock.

but a bad point is that the magnification is meagre, so the tune numbers stamped on the rather odd-looking brass parallelogram are bunched into less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch.

The only nickel plating is on the zither with M.F. cast in its supporting lyre, see Fig. 8 which also shows the Mermod trade mark stamped on the governor cock.

The front, sides and domed lid of the 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (75cm) case have fine figured veneers with ebony surrounds and multiple stringing. Written confidently underneath in blue crayon is no. 9623, a not uncommon miss-match of case and contents.

In addition to blank numbers 3 and 40 there are several other code numbers on the governor, cylinder bearings, tune indicator and zither. Also, all four brass comb bases carry the crossed-hammers mark, about $\frac{5}{16}$ " (8mm) square as seen in Fig. 9. Whose mark this is I cannot say, but hope for enlightenment. Interestingly, Fig. 9 also shows Emile Cuendet's signature and date – April 1885 – on the piccolo comb. He also signed the second sublime harmonie comb and added "N. York."

Both C. H. Jacot and his friend Emile Cuendet went to New York about 1882, partly to establish Mermod in the USA. L. G. Jaccard in his autobiography states that in the Spring of 1883 he was working on his own but mostly for Mermod Frères who had just begun to manufacture on a big scale the larger type of Swiss musical box. So it is not surprising to find Emile Cuendet doing some repair work for Mermod in New York, in April 1885.

This also means that serial 9629 was made before 1885; and it was probably made after 1879 because the premiere of its latest tune, No. 6, was on December 13th, 1879. I suppose some of the songs could have been leaked earlier. A contemporary and similar Quatuor box by Baker-Troll made in 1878 was described in Vol. 14, page 140 and my second book page 130. Incidentally, the Mermod chart on page 81 of that book may be one year adrift as it puts serial 9629 at 1879. Oh dear.

Fig. 10 shows a hand-written consignment label stuck under the case of serial 9629 and, exasperatingly, not dated. It is from someone in nearby Baulmes, who could be a haulier, to the well-known foundry of Jules Jaccard. How they became involved with this musical box, presumably before it got to America, is very difficult to guess. This Jules Jaccard with C. Paillard and L. P. Mermod (one of the three brothers and undoubtedly a live wire) were the leading lights on the 1884 Committee set up in Ste. Croix to improve production efficiency in the musical box industry, as reported in the Chapuis book, page 189. ■

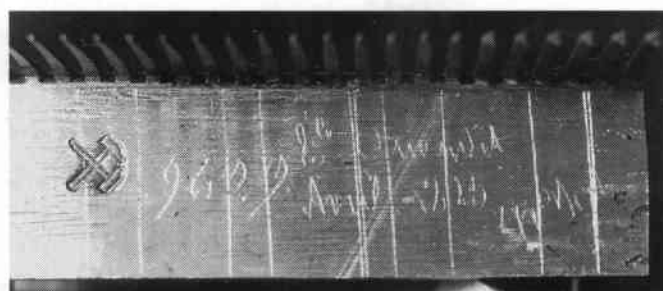


Fig. 9. Piccolo comb of serial 9629 with the crossed hammers mark; serial number; E. Cuendet's inscription; and diagonal lines indicating the last tooth needing a damper.

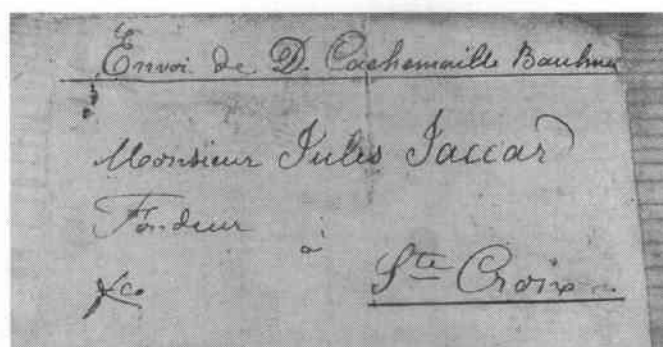


Fig. 10. Dispatch note firmly glued under Mermod serial 9629.

Book REVIEW

by Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume

CYLINDER MUSICAL BOX TECHNOLOGY: INCLUDING MAKERS, TYPES, DATING, AND MUSIC.

by H A V Bulleid. Published 1994 by Almar Press, 4105 Marietta Drive, Vestal, New York 13850. 290pp 5½ins x 8½ins (140mm x 215mm). Price £14.00 plus £2.00 postage. Illustrated with photographs, line drawings and numerous reproductions of original tune-sheets. Paper covers. ISBN 0-930256-22-0.

THIS is a follow-up to the author's earlier book, "Cylinder Musical Box Design and Repair" of 1987. In fact it might better be described as Volume 2 of the duology for there is a tacit assumption that the reader is aware of all that went before and, indeed, the author refers back to this earlier work in a number of places and there is even an appendix of corrections.

Anthony Bulleid gets off to a cracking start with the sort of statement which makes historians blanch. *Geneva was the birthplace of the cylinder musical box and by 1815 the industry was fully established.* And that's only the very first line!

I think there is little doubt now that it is generally understood the Swiss (in the shape of Favre) gave us the musical watch with tuned-steel teeth in 1796. From this the same Swiss subsequently produced comb-playing musical boxes. However, the cylinder musical box was almost certainly pretty well established in Paris half a century earlier - even if the widespread market was not ready for it. 1796 is purely a token date in the Swiss history and while twenty years ago we all believed it to be the gospel according to Switzerland, it has since become clear that this Swiss folklore does not stand up to historical examination.

This new book is nevertheless a major and scholarly contribution to the literature of the musical box. The author has carried out extensive research into the styles of movement made. From this he has been able to form some interesting conclusions.

For example, he raises the interesting point that musical boxes by Allard are rare and asks why. Similar questions are raised about a number of makers including Grosclaude (were many of his musical boxes sold unmarked?),

Henriot and Badel. He questions whether in fact the former was even a maker, suggesting that they were made for him by someone else (Badel?).

On the music, there is no great discussion of the musical content. He describes as 'an effective trick not often used by tune arrangers' of 'a slight reduction in tempo to emphasize the finale.' Call it *rallantando* if you like, or even *ritenuto* - it exists quite widely in arrangements from the earliest times and I have heard this on early examples by F Nicole, middle-period pieces by Brémont - and a splendid example from much later by Regina which I suspect was put in because they mis-calculated the length of the tune on the disc!

There are many valuable discoveries cited here - the fact that the Lecoultries in Geneva and Le Brassus worked closely together, that there was some hitherto undiscovered link between Conchon and L'Épée, and that Henri Vidoudez made large interchangeable.

On mysterious movement markings, the author sums up the problem of the 'stray initials', saying "I am sure they should be dismissed as the whim of some agent, however strikingly presented." One tends to agree with this, particularly in the case of tune-sheets where ornateness and ornament were frequently added in the hope that a good tune-sheet would carry a mediocre musical box.

There is plenty of evidence of what might be termed deception. A Langdorff-style bedplate stamped with the name of H Metert, this carefully obliterated and the stamp of Lion Freres[sic] of Hamburg overplaced is one example; a Nicole of the early epoch stamped Keith, Prowse & Co with the Cheapside address is another.

The author has made a study of dates and serial numbers of different makers and from this has come some interesting revelations. The work of Langdorff and Metert is well charted revealing that their boxes were sold by others who put their names on them. These included Moulinié Ainé, F H Bourquin, Lion Frères, Malignon and Lee et Fils.

Chapter 3 of this splendid book gives a history of Ste-Croix as it was in 1905. Old adverts and picture postcards illustrate sections dealing with the problems of communication and transportation in this somewhat remote area of the Jura region. There is also a description of the museum of CIMA (the International Centre of Mechanical Art) set up

several years ago in the old 1900 factory of Paillard.

The fourth chapter describes various styles of musical box with excellent illustrations showing, in particular, pinning patterns for some key styles such as *tremolo* and *mandoline*.

Makers and tune-sheets come in for scrutiny and extensive illustration.

A brief chapter on case restoration offers a few guidelines to repairs without going into too much detail.

Chapter 9 is headed simply 'Music' and provides an alphabetical list of 40 of the popular and lesser-known composers whose work features on musical boxes together with the dates of some of the melodies they wrote. This list, probably intentionally, excludes those names which everybody knows such as Mozart, Handel, Haydn, Puccini, Sullivan, Meyerbeer and so on.

Chapter 10 is called "Musical boxes in film and print" and is probably by far the least important section in an otherwise commendable book.

Mr Bulleid's style of writing is direct. He never uses one word if none will suffice. Sometimes the directness tends to direct the reader to re-read a section before the meaning becomes clear. For example:

The musical performance of Serial No. 28441 is very good, and the bells are not over-used. With the well-fitting partitions and glass lid, the sound of the bells is muted, and opening the glass lid brings a remarkable change. So it is surprising that no provision was made, as in hidden bell boxes, for a perforated panel adjoining the glass lid. There was plenty of room for this...

The impression is that the whole book is presented rather as a technical and general notebook of valuable discoveries - the 'lab notebook', if you like, of the technician. It contains a great deal of material which makes it all the more regrettable that the index, although occupying no fewer than ten pages of widely-spaced type, comprises nothing more than head-words and thus displays every indication of having been prepared by a third party (the publisher, perhaps) using a computer. References to comb stiffness, for example, together with pitch appear on page 15, yet both subjects are denied an entry in the index. The

use of multiple hammers on a hidden bell box (something I have never seen before) is also denied an index reference.

This, though, is no serious criticism of a book which the enthusiast will find a valuable asset to his library. If you do not already own Volume 1, then buy the two together: you will not be disappointed.

January 19, 1995

Compact Disc REVIEW

by Kevin McElhone

*The Aeolian Pipe Organ at
Dinmore Manor, Herefordshire.*

This is the first compact disc I have seen of automatic music of any kind, here in England. It contains an 8 page illustrated booklet showing Dinmore Manor, the console, the pipe chamber and the harp unit. There is a history of the organ, description of the specification—774 pipes in 13 ranks and a brief overview of 116 note rolls.

There are 14 rolls played, lasting 76 minutes and are the most popular of the audio cassettes produced in 1992 & 1993 and still available. The tunes range from classical, such as two tunes from Nutcracker ballet, Elgar's Pomp & Circumstance March No. 4, Lohengrin prelude to lighter pieces such as Merry Widow selection, In The Shadows Dance, Drink To Me Only With Your Eyes and a 58 note novelty roll (not identified as 58 note on the sleeve) of 'Teddy Bears' Picnic (also the only re-cut new roll used).

The location of the organ is in an enormous "Music Room" the size of many church sanctuaries with good acoustics. The chimes are quite loud probably owing to hardened hammer covering but the overall rendition is a good introduction to an instrument which is worthy of a much wider audience.

They are available from: Paul Arden-Taylor, Dinmore Records, 11 Romsley Hill Grange, Farley Lane, Romsley, Near Halesowen, West Midlands B62 0LN, England.

Price is: U.K. £9 CD £7 Tape
(postage included).

U.S.A. £11 CD £9 Tape
(postage included). ■



Please send replies to the corresponding secretary where members' names are given or to myself for other requests.

Ralph Smolne wants to know if anyone makes new "strips" of music for the 22 note Autophone or does anyone have just one original strip so he can test it out following repair.

Francis Cozzarelli, a new member in the USA is researching C H & J Ullman of St. Croix and would like any information, pictures of tune sheets, or back issues of any book or magazine about this maker.

Richard Dunmur of Buckinghamshire, UK, another new member has just made a workable Singing Bird which "speaks," but he still needs details of the automatic cam mechanisms, diagrams, dimensions, and photographs which would greatly help him.

I have had two addresses supplied and hope to receive lists soon of new Ariston organette discs being made in Germany.

There has been no response to the idea of a barrel piano register plus tune list.

I have accumulated such a large amount of Orchestrelle spares that I'm going to take a couple of car loads to the tip, if anyone wants them they should contact me quickly.

I am still hoping to compile a guide of museums, restorers, suppliers, research libraries and collectors' societies for mechanical music, so if you have any leaflets or guidebooks (particularly on European museums) please contact me.

I have found a supplier of boxes for the following, so please contact me if you are interested; Gem 20 note cobs, Gem 32 note grand cobs, 58 note organ rolls, 65 and 88 note pianola rolls, Duo-art and Ampico.

If you know of any supplier of a useful storage container for other musical rolls, discs, etc., please let us all benefit.

Help still needed on compilation of roll catalogues as mentioned in last Projects and Wants column. ■

Letters to the Editor

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

Directory

Alan Pratt writes from West Midlands:-

In the last issue of Music Box, Kevin McElhone floated the idea for a Directory, to be published by the Society, bringing together all the information of interest to musical box/mechanical music enthusiasts.

I would certainly find such a book of great interest, and feel that demand could well justify the effort which would be required for its production.

As well as the obvious listings of dealers and restorers, it could carry information on museums and collections in the UK and abroad; lists of books and other publications; addresses of allied interest groups (e.g. player pianos etc.); recordings of mechanical music (and dealers in such material); even fringe items such as sources for those difficult-to-match veneers for case restorations. I am sure there are other categories which could be included, for the combined knowledge of our membership must be prodigious!

If the book contained some general information on collecting musical boxes and the like, it could be of interest to non-members and be a means of recruiting for the Society.

What do other members think?

IIA

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

Will all members who have not yet paid, please send their 1995 subscription to me, the Subscription Secretary, as soon as possible, in accordance with the revised rates as enclosed with the 1994 edition of the "Music Box" journal.

Many thanks,

Bob Haiselden

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New Book !!

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By H. A. V. Bulleid

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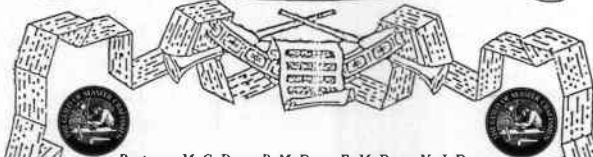
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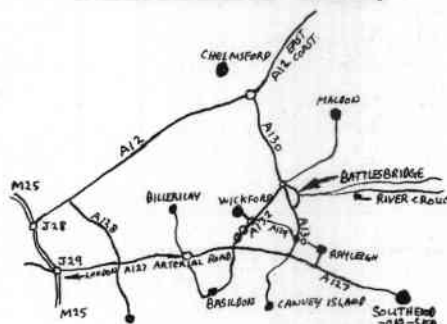
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The attention of members is drawn to the fact that the appearance in *The Music Box* of an advertiser's announcement does not in any way imply endorsement, approval or recommendation of that advertiser and his services by the editor of the journal 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.

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73 Key Piano Melodico (Grand Piano Shape). A hand turned mechanical piano and several books of music, playing a fully chromatic scale. Would consider a part exchange. Tel: 01822-855694.

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WANTED

Organette music wanted. Any **Dolcine** card music any condition. 14 note **Melodia** and **Clariona** music (on spools). All other organette music, bands, spools, discs, any condition considered. Contact Ted Brown 0181-300-6535.

Fortuna Style 370 Wanted, Help. Has anyone any information or spares for above to help with restoration. Telephone: 0181 686 7615.

Won't someone please respond to my classified ad. in the last Journal, **Please!** I need some 'easy-binders' as previously sold by the MBSGB, in good condition, with wires. State price including P & P. Also some discs for my only disc machine, 8 1/4" Symphonion. Telephone: 01526-398352, anytime.

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.

Deadline Dates for Display Advertising Copy

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

Editorial copy **must** be submitted at least

8 days prior to above dates.

Posting of magazine:

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

Symphonion Eroica Discs. Need B for "The Old Hundred," A for "Jacks the Sailor," C for "Sweet Marie," A and C for "Strolling Round the World," B and C for "Tommy Atkins," B and C for "Caliph of Baghdad." Sidney Mahtz Box KH, Scarsdale, NY 10583 USA.

BLACK FOREST COLLECTOR

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

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

WANTED

Barrel Pianos/Organs,

working or not, parts and carts.

Please telephone:

Alan Wyatt on (01223) 860332.

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

Society Auction

The Society's annual auction will be held at 2.00p.m. on Saturday, 3rd June at the Fairfield Village Hall. Auctioneer Christopher Proudfoot (by kind permission of Christie's, South Kensington). A great chance to sell and buy. Commission rates - Buyer's premium 7.5%, Selling commission 7.5%. Entries will be welcome during the morning, with viewing after the A.G.M.

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MECHANICAL MUSIC

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