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An International Journal of Mechanical Music

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In this issue

*Austrian Style Musical
Box Movements*

Three of a Kind

Wish Upon a Star

Early Polyphon Design

*Re-used Cylinder
Movements*

*&
New Disc Project*

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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Cover photo: A Regina self-changing disc machine with a new copy of an original Polyphon disc. Read special announcement about the Society's New Disc Project on page 158.

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David Worrall writes:

'The recent publication of *Spielwerke aus Prag und Wien* (Musical Boxes from Prague and Vienna) by Dr Helmut Kowar has attracted the attention of enthusiasts, who see it as a valuable contribution to the history of cylinder musical boxes.



P127

I wish I had a pound for every time over the past six years or so that I have heard someone or other express the desire for more modern or popular music to be available on musical box discs ... writes Alison Biden



P154

Calling all Members ... The Committee is considering a project to commission new musical arrangements for 15.5" Polyphon/Regina discs. The cost of the arrangements and all necessary licences will be met by the Society ...

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or recommendation of that advertiser and his services by the Editor or the MBSGB.

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Editorial

There are a number of ideas floating around the mechanical music world about 'spreading the word', engaging 'younger' people, and experimenting with mechanical musical instruments, both as they exist now, or adapting and creating new ones. Inevitably, these topics overlap. In the case of the new instruments, for example, one such is the 'marble machine' created by someone whose passion is to spread the word about mechanical instruments, and whose dynamic approach is sure to find favour with younger people. Alongside this is the challenge of producing more modern music for disc musical boxes. There is an assumption that in this day and age of modern technology when anything and everything is possible it ought to be fairly simple to produce discs of brand new compositions, and modern popular favourites. And, in this edition we do indeed announce such a special project (see p 158). We would also like to see your articles where you the members showcase your instruments, preferably something unusual. We would like to see more about mechanical music venues to visit – especially those of which not everyone is aware. One that springs to mind is the NT Overbecks, where there is a working disc machine which is regularly demonstrated and maintained by one of our members. Please keep sending in your articles.

Richard Mendelsohn

Please submit all material to the Editor for publication in the form of Word documents, JPEGs or PDF files, at richardmendelsohn@btinternet.com
Material in the form of hard copy is equally acceptable, in which case please post it to me at my address at left.

The Editor welcomes articles, letters and other contributions for publication in the Journal which relate to the study and appreciation of musical boxes and other mechanical musical instruments. The Editor reserves the right to amend or refuse any submissions. Any contribution is accepted for publication on the understanding that the author is solely responsible for the correctness of the facts stated therein, and also for any opinions expressed within. Its publication in the Journal does not necessarily imply that the Society, its officers or the Editor agree with those opinions. The Society, its officers and the Editor do not accept, and hereby disclaim any liability for the consequences of any inaccuracies, errors or omissions in contributions which are published in the Journal. The Music Box is published by the MBSGB quarterly.

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Austrian Style Musical Box Movements

David Worrall writes:

The recent publication of *Spielwerke aus Prag und Wien (Musical Boxes from Prague and Vienna)* by Dr Helmut Kowar has attracted the attention of enthusiasts who see it as a valuable contribution to the history of cylinder musical boxes, and one that should reach the widest possible readership.

The Executive Committee of the MBSGB upholds this view and as Dr Kowar's text is in German considers that an English version would help it achieve that. The Committee has therefore agreed the MBSGB should offer £500 towards the costs of translating and publishing an English version of the book. We also understand that the MBSI (Musical Box Society International) has also offered financial support for this reason.

In advance of finalising the arrangements Dr Kowar has kindly furnished us with a resumé of his extensive research into the subject of Austrian Style Musical Box Movements. With his permission and minimally edited where absolutely necessary into English idiom it is published here below.

Some Remarks on Austrian Style Musical Box Movements by Dr Helmut Kowar

There have been a number of widely available books published on famous Swiss musical boxes. This is quite natural as Switzerland is the origin of the musical box, and the products of its manufacturers have been sold worldwide in huge quantities. As well as the Swiss there were also makers active in



Dr Helmut Kowar. He studied Musicology & Art History at the University of Vienna, and the violin at the Academy of Music Vienna 1978 Doctorate, 2002 Habilitation (Musicology). Since 1979 he has been employed by the Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

Prague and Vienna, but only a few publications and some scattered articles cover this specialist topic. Since 1980, a project to research and document musical automata has been carried out at the Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences [http://www.phonogrammarchiv.at/Mechanical_Music/]. Within this project the most extensive part pertains to Austrian musical box movements as, needless to say, these are to be found with clockmakers, antique dealers, auction houses and private collectors in Austria and neighbouring countries in considerable numbers and comparatively more frequently than anywhere else. Thus the movements could be viewed and studied fairly extensively. The research led to data of around 1400 movements being collected, of which more than 1000 were found in playing condition, and sound recordings were

made. Additionally, almost 3000 photographs of the instruments were taken. From this extensive information, a short outline of the characteristics of the Austrian movements is presented here.

Altogether approximately 110,000, but certainly not more than 120,000, movements were made in Prague and Vienna. Of these the makers in Prague made a slightly larger number than their colleagues in Vienna. Yet it is justifiable to speak of Austrian instruments, as Prague is in Bohemia, which was part of the Austrian empire at that time and so contemporary sources made use of that terminology.

It was in about 1820 that Anton Olbrich in Vienna (he came from the Prussian part of Silesia) and Franz Rzebitschek started to make movements in a small village near Teplitz. Some years later he set up his business in Prague together with Alois Willenbacher. As neither law nor patents existed at that time in many countries to protect the Swiss developments, there was no need to create something different so they simply copied the construction of the Swiss movements. At that time the Swiss movements had their bass teeth on the right-hand side of their combs, although some did have combs with the treble to the right, and the movements of Olbrich and Rzebitschek also had the bass teeth on the right. Very soon however, both makers created a special design for the start/stop mechanism. They were clockmakers, and one gets the impression that from the beginning the movements were intended to be built into clocks. Hence, for the automatic release of the music they constructed a mechanism different from that used by the Swiss¹.

What finally made the Austrian movements so different from the Swiss instruments is that their structure remained unchanged, whereas the Swiss reversed the comb, placing the treble teeth to the right, introduced steel wire for the dampers (the Austrian makers stayed with vellum and quills), and introduced many other developments. Regarding the positioning of the comb one can only repeat what Luuk Goldhoorn has already pointed out: it is not a question of ‘Why do the Austrian movements have the comb with the bass on the right?’, it is rather the question of ‘Why did the Swiss reverse the comb arrangement in the 1820s?’²

With regard to the earliest days of the Austrian movements, it is interesting that from about 1806 some Viennese clockmakers are credited with having replicated Swiss movements³. Except for a few movements made by Peter Götz however, and they too, seem to be from later times, no such specimens have yet come to light. From all the investigations it appears that these early works did not have any impact on the layout and development of the movements created by Olbrich and Rzebitschek, and all Czech and Viennese makers who followed⁴.

As already mentioned, the construction of the Austrian movements did not change once Olbrich and Rzebitschek, the two initial makers, had produced a

standard model. After making movements with sectional combs, of which we found only signed specimens by Olbrich, although some unsigned examples could possibly be attributed to Franz Rzebitschek, both makers produced movements with combs in one piece, first with a cylinder approximately 90mm long, then changing to the slightly larger model with a 100mm cylinder. This model became the two-tune standard movement. It was adopted by all other makers who appeared in Prague and Vienna, and it constitutes the majority within the entire output. Deviations specific to various makers are discernible, but are limited to details, and whilst measurements may differ they do so by not more than a few millimetres. Movements with more tunes reveal the same technical structure. With the three-tune movements we find the greatest diversity in dimensions, whilst the four- and six-tune movements display quite a consistency in this respect, whereas eight- and twelve-tune movements are so rare that they cannot be classified. Towards the end of the 19th century some makers introduced cast iron bedplates and also made movements with fat cylinders playing two tunes per turn. Only a few such items have come to light, and occasionally a few bells were added. One written source hints at that, but only one movement with additional bells has been found. No other developments occurred.

Most striking is the conformity of the two-tune standard model and its general layout of construction by Olbrich and Rzebitschek, but by what process did they achieve this? When did they decide to work along the same principles, to produce movements of similar, almost identical construction? Or, who copied the model produced by the other maker? What was the reason for it? Did they meet in order to discuss technical details or the benefits of such a policy? Or did they exchange letters on these issues? Until now, no information has surfaced which answers these questions. In one aspect, however they differed: the sound quality. Rzebitschek achieved a very soft but clean sound by filling the cylinders with cement, whereas Olbrich’s movements are often louder with a high, clear and sometimes sharp or clanking sound, obviously coming from the fact that in most cases he left his cylinders empty except for a thin layer of shellac and a piece of bottle cork, but was not consistent in this respect. The other makers in Prague followed Rzebitschek’s practice. With the Viennese makers we find different sound characteristics, and soft-sounding Olbrich movements turned up too. The comb will also influence the sound quality, but no investigations have so far followed up this matter, and it is also not known from where Olbrich, Rzebitschek and the others obtained their steel, and whether or not it came from different manufacturers.

¹ The final design is explained and discussed in detail in an unsigned article (probably by Arthur W J G Ord-Hume): Czech and Viennese musical movements, in *The Music Box* Vol 3 No 8 (1968), p 540–543.

² Luuk Goldhoorn: *Die Österreichische Spielwerkmanufaktur* (Utrecht 1999), p 47.

³ Stephan von Keesß: *Beschreibung der Fabricate, welche in den Fabriken, Manufacturen und Gewerben des Österreichischen Kaiserstaates erzeugt werden*, 2. Band, Wien 1823, p 207.

⁴ I will give details in a special article: *Die Anfänge der Spielwerkerzeugung in Wien*, to be published in *International Forum on audio-visual research*. Jahrbuch des Phonogrammarchivs 8, Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 2017 (in preparation).

Taking a look at the movements documented, it goes without saying that the Austrian movements were made primarily for installation into clocks. The typical Austrian mantel clocks, frame clocks and, the at that time very fashionable picture clocks, all served as housings and perfect resonators for the movements. Some movements were also fitted into cases, mostly plain wooden cases without any decorations, but for special orders and for larger movements discreetly ornate cases were made. Hence, as it was not the box for which the movements were made, the term for the instruments became different from that used for the Swiss instruments. The Austrian movements were denoted as 'Spielwerke' or 'Spieluhren', literally 'playing works' or 'playing clocks', whilst the Swiss products became known as 'Spieldosen' or 'Musikdosen', i.e. musical boxes.

The Austrian movements reveal a clear, structured musical repertoire, and this structure remained astonishingly constant over the time of their production. Export of movements seems to have occurred only in the first decades – Gustav Řebíček remarked on it but there exists no further information about this. This means that the



The cover of Dr Kowar's book to be translated and published in English – Musical Boxes from Prague and Vienna

musical output served mainly, or almost exclusively, the needs and taste of the peoples of the Austrian monarchy and of east European countries. Thus the repertoire is very different from Swiss musical boxes, which offer every genre from Scottish airs to overtures and oratorios or popular music⁵.

The two main music genres to be found are 1) local dance music (ländler, waltzes, polkas, marches, czardas, etc.), by composers well known at the time, although some

of them are relatively obscure today, and 2) operatic melodies, arias, cavatinas, choruses, finales etc., which were popular then in Vienna, Prague, Budapest, etc. We also find all the well-liked national anthems and songs, as well as some local folk tunes and dances of Austria and the eastern and south-eastern European countries. Religious songs, art songs, piano music or salon music appear rarely. This repertoire offers a unique picture of the music that was fancied, and it shows the development of the musical genres and the taste of the public at that time in Austria. One has to point out that the repertoire's structure is the same with both Prague and Viennese movements, although it is

noteworthy that Olbrich obviously served the Hungarian market in particular with many Hungarian tunes on his movements. He also ran some kind of outlet for his movements with the help of a branch of a Viennese firm for metal goods in Pest and Debrecen⁶.

Just as with the technical construction also with the musical arrangements of all Austrian makers followed the same guidelines concerning their formal

⁵ See e.g. 'Musique de Genève. Höhepunkte Schweizer Spieldosenfertigung. Ouvertüren, Oratorien, Variationen und Fantasien auf Spieldosen von Falconet, Lecoultré, F. Nicole und Nicole Frères' (Orbis musicarum 87), CD, Göttingen: Cuvillier 2010

⁶ See the advertisements of the company of Franz Frank (Vienna) in: Pesther Handlungszeitung, Kommerzial- und Industrie-Anzeiger 14 (1841) p 51, numerous ads also published in the following years.

⁷ Amtlicher Bericht über die Industrie-Ausstellung aller Völker zu London im Jahre 1851, von der Berichterstattung-Kommission der Deutschen Zollvereins-Regierungen, 1. Teil, Berlin 1852, p 896

arrangement in the layout of the melodic line and the structure of the accompaniment. Most remarkably, these unwritten rules were maintained until the end of the production period, whereas with the Swiss makers we can observe the greatest of changes in the style of arranging musical pieces over time. The quality of the sound and of the musical arrangements became a recognised and highly praised feature of the Austrian movements. In 1851 an official report from the Great Exhibition of London that year commented: 'From Austria was to be found a firm F. Rzebitschek from Prague with four movements of that kind, playing two up to six pieces. In concern of pureness of the musical performance and sound this deserved the prize before all others.'⁷

Later the general evaluation of the musical boxes at world fairs emphasised the Swiss products as having achieved the highest rank regarding technical perfection as well as diversity and elegance of the products. But the commentaries, notably by Swiss authors, did not conceal their discontent with their musical performance⁸. From this what we read in a report about the Vienna World Fair of 1873 is convincing and quite reasonable. The lengthy review praising the Swiss musical boxes presented at the exhibition ends with the remark 'From a mere musical viewpoint, concerning the correct and tasteful arrangement of the musical pieces,

the best Prague and Viennese movements appeared superior to the Swiss. They are made more artistically, but nevertheless are more expensive on average.'⁹

This outline might give some idea on the scope of Austrian movements, their technical concepts, their use and distribution and their music. Looking at these aspects we can see that there were in fact certain limitations that contributed to the format of the typical Austrian movement. Its use was determined by its assembly with clocks, whilst its distribution, more or less confined regionally to the Austrian Empire and adjacent eastern countries, together with the musical taste and demand of the public there, formed the musical content. This rather restricted market certainly was the reason that the making of Austrian movements did not develop into mass production. Obviously these stable conditions were also critical for the maintenance of the quality of sound and musical arrangements.

Little is known about the end of their production. Gustav Řebiček closed his company in 1897. Maybe Alois Maly made movements up to the beginning of the 20th century. A few makers were active in Vienna until the early 20th century, but it is unclear how long they actually made movements or whether they resorted to repair work and the selling of clocks and movements.

*The MBSGB is grateful to André Ginesta and the Swiss Society for permission to use his review of **Spielwerke aus Prag und Wien** (Musical boxes from Prague and Vienna), which is published in German. We hope that an English version will eventually be forthcoming.*

A recent work published by Dr Helmut Kowar, Head of the Phonogram Archive at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, has come to our notice highlighting the second most important centres of production in relation to cylinder musical boxes of distinction.

Dr Kowar is already the author of various articles on *Spielwerke*, as musical boxes are called in Austria, and can undoubtedly be considered a pioneer and leading expert not only in the study of musical boxes originating in Prague and Vienna, but also of Viennese musical clocks.

While the Swiss delighted the world with their musical boxes, constantly inventing newer variations and distributing them far and wide across the globe, the manufacturers in Prague and Vienna were principally focused on supplying the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. By and large, production remained in the form of traditional musical boxes without any embellishments, with particular care and attention paid to musical quality. This can probably be attributed to the fact that purchasers in Prague and Vienna were, even then, very

⁸ See e.g. Valeria Legena: Beteiligung der Musikdosenproduzenten an Ausstellungen, in: KlangKunst. 200 Jahre Musikdosen. Sonderausstellung des Schweizerischen Landesmuseums, catalogue edited by Eduard Saluz, (Basel) 1996, p 67–78. A harsh criticism appeared on occasion of the Paris World Fair 1878: Internationale Weltausstellung 1878 in Paris. Schweiz. Musikalische Instrumente, Classe 13. Bericht von Oscar Hegar, Mitglied der Internationalen Jury 1878, Zürich 1879, p 5

⁹ Internationale Ausstellungszeitung, supplement to 'Neue Freie Presse', 21. August 1873, p 3



Example of a musical score in Chapter 4

musical – reflected by their exacting demands, in terms both of the music itself and its arrangement.

As only a handful of craftsmen were of any real significance, the author was accordingly able to compile a comprehensive tome showcasing all the major manufacturers.

Many musical boxes are shown in detailed, highest quality colour pictures. The first three chapters concentrate on the makers and the various types and sizes of boxes. Not only does it become apparent that characteristically the bass teeth are positioned at the right-hand end of the comb, but also that there are frequently only two to four melodies, arranged on much slimmer cylinders than commonly found in Swiss boxes.

Despite this, there is still space for a tune of approximately the same length over a single revolution as in Swiss boxes, because the cylinders rotate at a much slower rate. This demanded precision of the highest order on the part of the craftsman.

The fourth chapter deals with the arrangements themselves and is, quite simply, astonishing. At long last someone has pointed out the overriding importance of the arranger for the quality of mechanical music. Hardly anyone realises just how much of an art it is to distil a melody – an operatic aria, for example – into the musical confines of a cylinder music box without diminishing its unique identity and quality.

Barely a single arranger is known to us today. For reasons that remain unclear even manufacturers in Switzerland also routinely sidelined them – despite the fact that an exceptionally gifted arranger would have given them a distinct marketing edge.

For anyone who can read a score, chapter four must be as gripping as any thriller. The author uses numerous examples to illustrate which bars of a score were used for the actual musical box or, respectively, omitted; also, which

individual notes were adjusted in tone, as well as any notes that were added.

We can only hope that this book, addressing the question of the arrangers, true artists in the realm of mechanical music, throws the spotlight on them. Their opus, whether good or bad, endures forever unaltered, and cannot be changed.

The last chapter concludes by setting out all the musical boxes known to have been produced in Prague and Vienna, together with their technical details such as maker's marks and so forth.

Available at €79.00 under ISBN 978-3-7001-8024-1 in bookshops or directly from the Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaft (Austrian Academy of Sciences Press), Dr Ignaz Seipel-Platz 2, A-1010 Wien, Austria
email: verlag@eaw.ac.at

Re-used Cylinder Movements

by Niko Wiegman

Cylinder musical box movements look all very much alike. You have a springbarrel, cylinder, governor and comb, all fitted on to a bedplate.

In the 19th century it must have been easy for musical box makers to re-use older movements and then fit a newly programmed cylinder and a new comb. Yet this was not done. Swiss makers did not use older scrapped movements to make new ones. But two Czech examples are known in which a Swiss movement was used to make a new musical box. A possible third one is also described by Larry Karp in *MBSI 2007 Mechanical Music Vol 53 No 4*, but he did not identify it as a re-used Swiss movement.

Whether Swiss movements were trade-ins with old fashioned tunes, or damaged beyond economical repair, is not clear.

The first example was an early (c 1820) Four-air Swiss movement (No 2065)

which had a sectional comb fixed to the bedplate from below with three screws or square headed bolts. (See Fig 1.) Some time in the 1850s Rzebitschek re-used it by fitting a new comb and re-programming the cylinder. (See Fig 2.)

Although he stamped the comb with his name he did not place his numbering on the movement. Since the original comb also had the bass on the right, as is normal in Czech movements, there was no need for a new cut-out in the bedplate. He did not bother to make a new cylinder but simply used the old one by grinding the Swiss pins flush with the cylinder surface and re-drilling it for three new tunes, although only a new three-step snail was fitted.



Fig 1 An early Swiss bedplate. The three large holes are for the Swiss comb screws.



Fig 2 Swiss movement with Rzebitschek comb

In the picture of the cylinder you can see the comb registration dots for the original four airs, and the ones for the later three airs intermingled. (See Fig 3.)

Rzebitschek must have had a pretty good set-up for drilling cylinders, because many of the holes for his pins were partly drilled in the steel of the old Swiss ones and the softer brass.

For restoration the cylinder needed a re-pin, and that turned out to be a bit of a challenge. The original idea was to pull out the pins that were still standing and then hammer through the

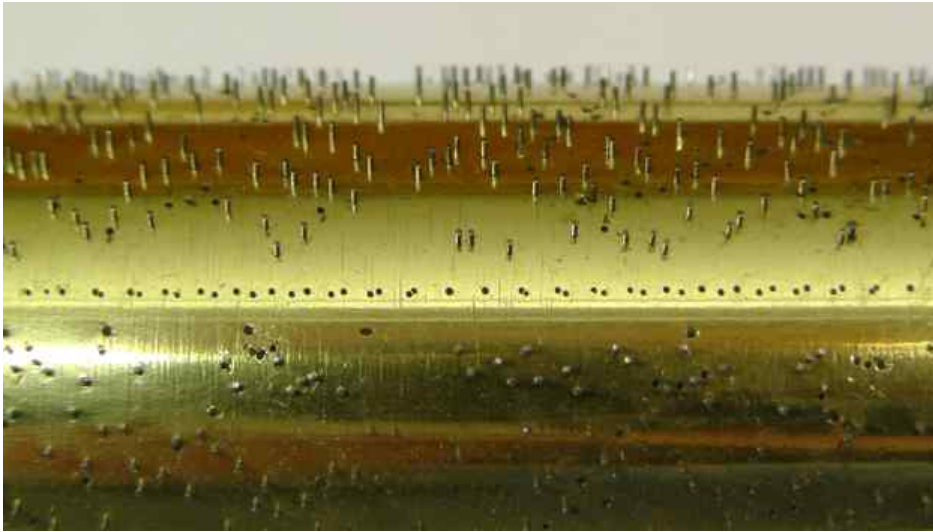


Fig 3 Swiss and Czech register dots intermingled, with three large Czech steps being almost equal to four small Swiss ones.

broken ones, but that did not work due to the very tight fit of the Czech pins.

It was easy to see the difference between the original Swiss and the broken Czech pins, so the Swiss pins were marked on the cylinder, after which the acid did its work.

Originally it was probably housed in a clock base, but Rzebitschek gave it an elegant case with a pull-push start-stop on the right-hand side. (See Figs 4 and 5.)



Fig 4 The elegant case of Rzebitschek movement

The second one is of a later date. The Swiss movement (No 809530/10809) is from around 1870, and it must have had its makeover somewhere in the 1890s. To accommodate the right hand bass tuning weights a second cut-out in the cast iron bedplate was made. (See Fig 6.)

The movement is not signed by either its original or Czech maker, but it must have been Alois Maly who gave it a new lease of life. It is numbered 7550/1908 by him on the winding lever and tunesheet. This time not only a new comb has been fitted, but also a new cylinder of slightly smaller diameter than the original Swiss one. (See Fig 7.)



Fig 5 The elegant case of Rzebitschek movement with the lid closed

Since it has the same number of tunes as the original version only the four steps of the snail had to be changed to the larger Czech step. The movement is fitted with three woodscrews from above in a luxury veneered case with an art nouveau style tunesheet. (See Figs 8 and 9.)

They made a mess of the order of play of the tunes, and then tried to correct it. But it still is wrong. (See Fig 10.)



Fig 6 Cast iron Swiss bedplate with both Swiss and Czech holes, and right-hand cut-out for Czech tuning weights



Fig 7 Swiss movement with Maly comb and cylinder



Fig 8 Luxury case for the Maly movement with the lid open

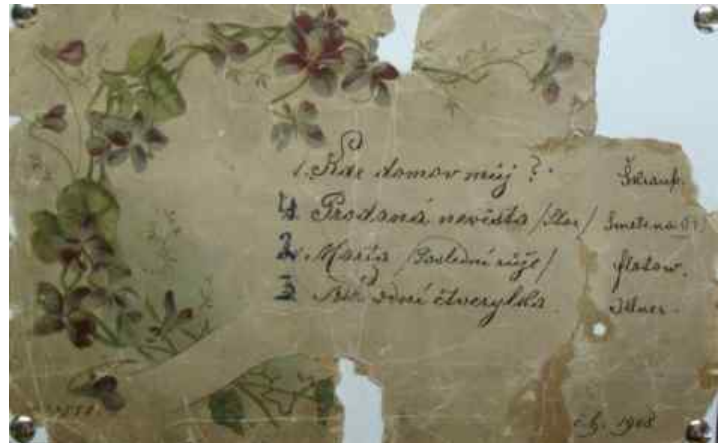


Fig 10 Art Nouveau style tunesheet



Fig 9 The luxury case for the Maly movement

It should be:

- 1) *Národní čtverylka* – Josef Illnerová.
Square dance / Quadrille
- 2) *Prodaná nevěsta* (sbor) – Bedřich Smetana
The Bartered Bride, chorus
- 3) *Kde domov můj* – František Škroup
Where is My Home, Czech National Anthem since 1918
- 4) *Marta* (*Poslední růže*) – Friedrich von Flotow
Martha, *Last Rose of Summer*.

Thankfully this re-use of movements was not normal practice for the Czech makers, otherwise many fine boxes could have been lost for ever.

Thanks to Patrik Pařízek for help with the Czech written tunesheet.

Early Polyphon Duplex Design

by Roy and Dennis Evett

Recently a strange-looking movement was offered on eBay. See Fig 1. On careful inspection of the photographs we decided it was some sort of marriage. The bedplate and combs were clearly from an early Polyphon 15½" duplex. The arm containing the pressure bar appeared to be from a changer, although we did not recognise it as anything we had seen before. It had what appears to be a crocodile's head cast into the end. See Fig 2.



Fig 1

Music Boxes by David Bowers. It is difficult to see, but we found a *Radio Times* picture showing such a machine which had been restored by the imaginary Walter Gabriel in *The Archers* radio programme. It was in Volume 1, Journal 5, pages 7 and 17. Both pictures show this crocodile head casting. The only thing is that the pictures are of a 22½" changer, and no reference can be found for a 15½" version.

and an attempt had been made to adapt it to a 15½" bedplate. Although a reasonable effort had been made, it is unlikely to have been very successful.

That was as far as we mechanical marriage councillors were prepared to go. The movement was relegated to the spares pile, and the arm put on a shelf as a curiosity.

Some weeks later a felt damper system was needed for the existing project, and this movement had the necessary piece. Little attention had been paid to the movement itself, as it appeared to be just an early duplex used in various machines at that time. However, even before the damper cover plate was removed, we were amazed to see there were two star wheels in each slot of the gantry, except the ten lowest bass wheels which had one. See Fig 4.

The wheels were all the same standard thickness. See Fig 5.



Fig 2

There was a machine, apparently with the same movement, in the workshop awaiting restoration so we decided this might be a useful source of spares, and a successful bid was made. Upon receipt of the movement we removed and inspected the cast iron arm and the pressure bar.

After much research a picture of an early Polyphon Style 2 changer advertisement was found on page 363 of the *Encyclopedia of Disc*

Further investigation revealed that the cast iron arm had been sawn through and modified in two places. See Fig 3.

This suggests that the arm was probably from a 22½" machine,



Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5

The tips of the combs were ground to precisely the width of a single star wheel, with the exception of the ten bass teeth which were not ground at all, and instead were left at their full width.

We further observed that the right-hand wheel of a pair was used just to pluck the upper comb, and the left for the lower comb. The ten single bass wheels each pluck both combs. See Fig 6.

What on earth were Polyphon trying to do? Have we found something hitherto undiscovered?



Fig 6

Of course not, as Kevin McElhone already mentions this arrangement on page 60 of his book *The Disc Musical Box*. Despite extensive research nothing more could be found.

It has been suggested that this arrangement would permit piano forte and mandolin arrangements to be played with the use of special discs. On the face of it this would appear quite feasible, but when considered carefully it is most unlikely.

First, none of these special discs seem to have survived, nor is there any original literature relating to their existence.

Second, projections would need to be half their normal width, and as there would be zero 'land' between the left- and right-hand projection tracks, the disc rigidity would be compromised by punching for any mandolin-type effect.

Third, due to the lack of any type of independent braking system for the right-hand star wheels, those wheels would be moved into a position where they would jam the movement.

Fourth, such a system would give little or no manufacturing tolerance and would require extreme set-up accuracy.

After much theorising we came to the conclusion that the theory of special discs with mandolin and piano forte effects must be incorrect. It is more likely that this style of movement was Polyphon's early attempt at building a duplex machine.

Design engineers would have realised, quite correctly, that two teeth plucked by a single star wheel would result in the wheel wearing twice as quickly. With two star wheels in one slot, a normal projection turns both wheels at the same time. With the comb teeth ground to the width of a single wheel, and the upper and lower combs positioned to be operated by the left-hand and right-hand wheels respectively, the double wear problem is eliminated.

Two wheels were not really necessary and were possibly used because they were readily available. On later versions they were replaced by a single, wider wheel.

Judging by the rarity of this type of movement, the two-wheel arrangement was quite quickly replaced by the single, thicker wheel that we normally see. Unfortunately this does not answer the question why there are single star wheels at the bass end, and re-introduces the double wear problem.

The reason for this system, if we are correct, is not quite so obvious and means the design engineers had to accept the wear on these ten wheels. The path of a projection as it turns a star wheel is not a straight line.

Because the disc is rotating the path of any projection is an arc. The radius of this arc is determined by the distance of the projection from the centre spindle. It follows that the contact of the star wheel must move slightly to and fro across the projection. The amount of this movement is determined by the radius of the arc, and will be at its greatest towards the centre of the disc. On some discs the contact by bass wheels can be from one side of the projection to the other and back again as the wheel is turned. If two wheels were used it can be

seen that contact at some point would be on just one of the wheels. If either of these wheels were to move independently of the other, then that wheel would prevent the projection from traversing back again, thus jamming the movement. By star wheel eleven the arc is large enough in radius not to cause the problem, provided the gantry tracking is set accurately.

These are simply our own theories and may of course be wrong. If you know differently or have a different theory, please write to the Editor.

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Three of a Kind

by Luuk Goldhoorn

Three musical sewing boxes, all made of light tortoiseshell, are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3.



Fig 1

Uncommon, sure, but the fact that they were all made by the same maker makes this trio extraordinary.



Fig 2

I would like to tell you the maker's name, but alas that is impossible because he didn't sign his works. But in any case he was a Dutchman. And that is exceptional, because the Netherlands were not a big market for (at least) the small early musical boxes. How did I jump to the conclusion that the maker was a Dutchman?

I'll tell you; in my younger years I was fascinated by detective stories, and one of my favourite writers was a person nicknamed Ivans, who created a detective called Geoffrey Gill, who solved all the mysteries he encountered. And how did he do this? By combination and dedication. At the end of each story he told his audience that he solved the problem while sitting in his chair. It was not necessary to go out. Just combination and dedication of all the facts brought him to the solution.

Back to the boxes; the first (Fig 1) was in a Sotheby's sale in Amsterdam where the housing was described as

Dutch. Why Dutch, I asked the auctioneer? The expert informed me that ribbed tortoiseshell was a technique used only in the Netherlands.

The second sewing box (Fig 2) is also housed in light tortoiseshell, but the lid is not ribbed. The implements however have Dutch gold-marks. It was not offered in a Dutch sale but in an English auction.

The last one (Fig 3) has a ribbed lid, which indicates a Dutch origin. The feet and the handles are similar to box number two, so we may assume that all three came from the same house. Also, this box travelled from the Netherlands to an English

family, and was eventually sold in London.

There is no similarity among the instruments. They differ in appearance and in material. This is understandable, for the maker has to sell his products in a small market. So variety was a necessity.



Fig 3

The musical works housed in these three boxes are all different and not signed. All three have the bass-teeth at the right-hand side. The cylinders have no cement, and the teeth have no dampers, so they can be dated to around 1820. None of the springs are dated, so a more accurate date of manufacture is impossible.

The man who assembled the different parts was obviously not experienced. In box two he forgot to make a handle to change the melodies. Access to the change handle is only possible by lifting the tray. Besides, the start/stop handle

has no spring or any other provision to stop the music playing. The work has a comb of 19 sections, each containing three teeth. The two melodies are unknown. An extensive report about this box was published in the journal of the MBSI, Vol. 62/3.

In box 3 another peculiarity indicates that our maker was not experienced. He didn't use handles and bolts to activate the start/stop mechanism, or the change handle, but he let these handles operate directly. (See Fig 4.)

The musical work has an early start/stop construction. Normally the start/stop handle is activated by a slide at the rear of the box. But here the handle is screwed to the regulator, as was done in later years. This handle is activated at the front of the box. It has not, however, got a hook which can enter a hole in the great wheel on the cylinder.

Another peculiarity of the musical work is the number of teeth: 25 sections each of three teeth. Therefore the cylinder has a length of 82mm instead of the normal 60.

As can be expected for such an early box one of the tunes is the *Ranz des Vaches*; the other is Paisello's *Nel Cor Piu Non Mi Sente*. Only the work in box one is of normal early construction. The Geneva stop is the early version. The comb has 18 sections each of three teeth. So far nothing exceptional, but the start/stop handle has a solid projection instead of a springy one. The two tunes are unknown to me.



Fig 4

So: three sewing boxes without any similarity regarding the contents and the musical works, but definitely assembled by one and the same Dutch maker.

Sacred Music on Cylinder Musical Boxes – Part 3

by David Worrall

Some thoughts and background notes

Parts 1 and 2 of this article, published in previous editions of The Music Box, gave the background to the article entitled Sacred Music. They gave statistical details of the extent of Sacred Music on cylinder musical boxes and discussed results from the detailed analysis of Classical Sacred Music. Part 3 now discusses the results obtained from the similar analysis of the second group of Sacred Music – Hymns.

Hymns

These may be defined as words of metrical composition, i.e. in verse, with poetical rhythm and set to music in order to be sung by congregations of ordinary people as part of religious services in churches and chapels.

Although, following the Reformation in the 16th century, hymn singing quickly became part of church services in parts of continental Europe that followed the Lutheran practice, it came late to Britain, where metrical versions of the Psalms and other verses from the Bible remained the only singing permitted in church services. Not until the middle of the 18th century did hymns as we know them begin to form a part of religious services, and then only in non-conformist churches, notably the Methodists. The introduction to the 1933 edition of the Methodist Hymn Book opens with the words ‘Methodism was born in song ...’ The verses of many hymns that were sung by Methodists and subsequently other denominations were written by Charles Wesley, the founding father of Methodism during the 18th century, with over 6,000 hymns to his credit.

By the beginning of the 19th century, however, hymn singing was finding a degree of favour within more forward-thinking elements of the established church, the Church of England. Thus, in 1816 a Prayer book was published that included around a dozen hymns. Amongst these are two hymns, the words of which became associated with the tunes *Morning Hymn* and *Evening Hymn*, two tune titles frequently seen on musical box tune sheets.

However, although official sanction by the established church followed

shortly afterwards in the 1820s, hymn singing in Church of England services spread only gradually during the next two decades. Other denominations were even slower, not taking up the practice until well into the latter part of the 19th century. The first edition of Hymns Ancient & Modern did not appear until March 1861, but then became the model for others to follow in two ways: the setting of each hymn to a particular tune, and publishing both the words and their associated tune together rather than in separate collections, which hitherto had been the practice.

Nevertheless, such official tardiness on the part of the established church did not prevent the practice of singing hymns becoming a part of the domestic scene, where it was believed to have become a common and indeed popular pastime in many homes.

The main point here however, is that the singing of hymns, whether by church congregations or by people in their homes, became widespread and popular over the same period that the cylinder musical box was developed, and reached its zenith – the second, third and fourth quarters of the 19th century. It is therefore unsurprising that these social and cultural developments were reflected by musical box makers in providing some sacred music in the form of hymn tunes in their otherwise mainly secular repertoire.

The detailed results of the researches into hymn tunes on cylinder musical boxes are set out in Tables 8A and 8B. In Table 8A are found those hymns that have been identified by the name of the hymn tune, whilst in Table 8B are found those identified by the text of the first line of the words of the hymn found written on the tune sheet.

TUNE NAME	INCIDENCE	NOTES	TUNE NAME	INCIDENCE	NOTES
Old Hundredth [Old 100 th]	93	See Note 1	Dismissal Lord Dismiss Us	2	Probably to the words <i>Lord Dismiss us with Thy Blessing</i>
The Evening Hymn	79	See Note 2	Majestic - Psalm 104	2	
The Morning Hymn	67	See Note 3	Abridge	1	Probably for the words of the hymn <i>O for a Heart to Praise My God</i>
Adeste Fidelis	45	See Note 4	Advent - Hymn	1	
Sicilian Mariners	44	See Note 5	Angel Voices - Sullivan	1	
Helmle	38	Set to the words of the hymn <i>Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending</i> by Charles Wesley	Beautiful River	1	
O Paradise - Lancaster.	27		Berwick	1	
Luther's Chorale	22	See Note 6	Bolton	1	
Devises - Hymn	15		Bradley Church	1	
Easter Hymn	14	Various references to <i>Easter Hymn</i> - All as the same tune <i>Easter Morn</i> from <i>Lyra Davidica</i>	Brightest and Best	1	
Rock of Ages	14	Set to the hymn <i>Rock of Ages, Clef for Me</i>	Christ Church - C.M.	1	
German - Hymn.	13	Written by I Pleyel; probably set to the words <i>Children of the Heavenly King</i> . Sometimes seen as <i>Pleyel's Hymn</i> .	Cranbrook	1	Written on the tune sheet as <i>Cranbrook</i>
Luther's - Hymn	12	<i>Great God what do I See?</i>	Creation - Hymn	1	
Austria - Hymn	10	See Note 7	Elland	1	
Missionary. Hymn.	9	Words to this tune almost certainly <i>From Greenland's Icy Mountains</i>	Foundling- Hymn	1	
Mount Ephraim	9		French - (Dundee; Scottish Psalter)	1	Words almost certainly <i>God Moves in a Mysterious Way</i>
Cambridge SM	8		Georgia	1	
St Alphege	8	Associated with <i>Brief Life is Our Portion Here</i>	Greenwich	1	
Doxology. Hymn.	7	<i>Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow</i>	Haxton Chapel. LM	1	
Hallelujah	7	This could be anything from the <i>Hallelujah Chorus</i> to any of several hymn tunes bearing this name.	Heavenly Breezes	1	
New Sabbath - Hymn	7		Israel - Psalm	1	
All Saints - Hymn	6		Just as I Am	1	
Bedford - Hymn	6		London	1	
Hanover - Hymn	6	Usually set to <i>O Worship the King</i>	Macedonia	1	
Hotham	6	References to <i>Flotham</i> not recognised as a hymn tune. Could be a misread of the tune <i>Hotham</i> .	Magdalen - Hymn	1	
Lyons - Hymn	6		Mary Magdalen - (St Mary Magdalene; J B Dykes)	1	
Abington	5	Also seen on tune sheets as <i>Abingdon</i> . This town in England is not recognised as a tune name, whereas <i>Abington</i> , a small village in Scotland is. These taken to be the same tune.	Monmouth	1	
Houghton - Hymn	5	Most probably for the words <i>Oh Heavenly King, Look Down From Above</i>	Newport - Ciyens	1	
Vital Spark - Hymn	5	To the words <i>Vital Spark of Heavenly Flame</i>	Oswestry	1	
Brattle Street. Hymn	4		Portugal - Hymn	1	
Bridport - Hymn	4		Queenboro	1	
Cambridge New	4		Refuge	1	
Evening Prayer 'This Night' - Costa	4		Saint Ann's - Hymn 15 th	1	For the words <i>O God Our Help in Ages Past</i>
Falmouth - Hymn	4		St Matthew	1	
Oxford	4		Sawley	1	
Pembroke - Hymn	4		Silent Night	1	
Arabia - Hymn	3		Ste. Stephens - Hymn (St Stephen)	1	
Austrian Evening Hymn - Hermans	3		University	1	Probably for the words of the hymn <i>The God of Love My Shepherd Is</i>
Eaton - Hymn	3		Vienna - Haydn	1	
Justification	3		Wells	1	
Lonsdale - Hymn	3		Wem in Leidenstagen	1	
Identified Hymn Tunes	82		Total Incidence	679	

Table 8A Hymns identified by tune name

Notes for Table 8A

- Found on tune sheets in the following variations: *Old Hundred*; *Old Hundredth*; *Old Hundredth Psalm*; *Old Hundredeth* [sic] *psalm*, *Old Hundredth Hymn*; *Old 100th*; *Old 100 LM*; *Old 100th Psalm*; and even *Old Room* [sic]. [*Old 100th*]. Tune is usually set to the words *All People that on Earth do Dwell*.
- Found on tune sheets in the following variations: *Evening*; *The Evening*; *Evening Hymn*; *The Evening Hymn*.
- Titles on tune sheets vary: *Morning*; *Morning Hymn*; *The Morning Hymn*; *The Morning*.
- Found on tune sheets as *Adeste Fidelis*, *Portuguese Hymn*, *Portuguese*. All have been taken as the tune *Adeste Fideles*. The tune to which we sing the carol *O Come All Ye Faithful* today. *Adeste Fideles* was often referred to as *Portuguese Hymn*. Its origins are unknown and it has been attributed to various composers, including King John IV of Portugal, the musical king, hence *Portuguese Hymn*.
- This tune is usually associated with the words *Lord Dismiss us with Thy Blessing* and is variously referred to on tune sheets as: *Sicilian*, *Mariners*, *Sicilian Mariners*, *Sicilian [Mariners]* and *O Sanctissima*. The tune *Sicilian Mariners* is traditionally used for the Roman Catholic Marian hymn *O Sanctissima*. According to tradition, Sicilian seamen ended each day on their ships by singing this hymn in unison.
- Found on tune sheets as *Luther's Choral*, *Luther's Chorale*, *Luther's Chorus* [*Luther's Chorale*], *Chorale de Luther*, *Choral Luther*. *Amous* [sic - probably chorus], *Choral de Luther*, *Seigneur Rampant*, *Choral de Luther*. Meyerbeer, *Choral de Luther*. *Les Huguenots*, *Ein Feste Burg*. *Luther*. All are taken to refer to the tune *Ein' Feste Burg* (*A Mighty Fortress*) composed by Martin Luther. Meyerbeer, as well as other composers used this chorale as a basis for some of their choral and organ work, both secular and sacred - hence the reference to Meyerbeer's opera *Les Hugenots*.
- Found on tune sheets as *Austrian Hymn*, *Austrian National Hymn* [*Austria*], *Austrian National Hymn-Haydn*, *Austrian Emperor's Hymn*, *Emporer[sic] Hymn*, [*Austria*], *The Emperor's Hymn*. [*Austria*], all assumed to refer to *Austria* composed by Haydn, said now to have been based on a Croatian folk tune.

Sacred Music on Cylinder Musical Boxes - Part 3

WORDS OF THE HYMN	INCIDENCE	NOTES	WORDS OF THE HYMN	INCIDENCE	NOTES
Before Jehovah's Awful Throne	73	Almost certainly another setting of <i>Old Hundredth</i>	Brightly Gleams Our Banner - Haydght (?)	1	The hieroglyphics probably resolve to Haydn and so the Tune is St Alban, sometimes used for this hymn
Abide with me	59	The tune pinned is most probably <i>Eventide</i> by W H Monk	Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing	1	The tune is possibly <i>Normandy</i> by Bost
Nearer My God - Hymn 200	51	The tune pinned could be any one of several: <i>Horbury</i> by J B Dykes; xxxxx by Oakeley	Come Ye Thankful People Come	1	Probably the tune pinned is St Georges (Windsor)
Onward Christian Soldiers - Haydn.	34	See Note 1	Come Ye That Love The Lord	1	Tune pinned not identified
Sound the Loud Tymbrel	34	The tune pinned on these boxes is probably <i>Avison</i>	Glory Be to God on High	1	Tune pinned not identified
Sun of My Soul Thou Saviour Dear	32	Tune pinned could be either: <i>Abends</i> by Oakeley, or Hursley by Keble	Grace and Strength	1	Tune pinned not identified
Hark the Herald Angels	28	Most probably the tune pinned in <i>Berlin</i> , by Mendelssohn	Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah	1	See Note 2
Pilgrims of the Night - Bowling	28	Tune not identified	I Know that My Redeemer Lives	1	Tune pinned not identified
Jerusalem the Golden - Ewing.	26	The tune pinned is <i>Ewing</i> by A Ewing	I Need Thee Every Hour	1	Almost certainly the tune is <i>I need Thee</i> by R Lowry
Hark the Vesper Hymn is Sounding	23	A variety of titles seen; Vesper Hymn, Vespers, Vesper, Vespa	In The Valley of Blessing	1	Tune pinned not identified
All Hail the Power of Jesus	20	See Note 3	Jerusalem on High	1	The tune pinned will be <i>Lux Benigna</i> by J B Dykes
Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty	14	Almost certainly the tune pinned is <i>Nicea</i> by J B Dykes	Just As I Am	1	Tune pinned not identified
As with Gladness Men of Old - Koches	13	The tune pinned is most probably <i>Dix</i> by C Kocher	Let Us Adore	1	Tune pinned not identified
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross	13	The tune probably <i>Rockingham</i>	Like a River Glorious	1	The tune pinned is <i>Christchurch</i> by Stegall
Jesus Lover of My Soul	10	See Note 4	Lord Jesus Come	1	Tune pinned not identified
Eternal Father Strong to Save	8	Almost certainly the tune pinned is <i>Melita</i> by J B Dykes	Lord Remember David	1	Tune pinned not identified
Let the Bright Seraphins – Hymn Carnaby	8	Tune pinned <i>Carnaby</i> ?	Mighty God We Praise Thy Name	1	Tune pinned not identified
We Love thy House O God	8	The tune pinned is probably <i>Quam Dilecta</i> by Jenner	Oh Sacred Head Sore Wounded	1	Tune pinned not identified
Lord of all Power - Hymn	7	Tune pinned not identified.	One Thing Needful	1	Tune pinned not identified
Angels Ever bright - Hymn	5	Tune pinned not identified.	Our Lord Is Risen from the Dead	1	Possibly the tune is <i>Duke Street</i> by Hatton
Lord of the Worlds above	5	Tuned pinned most probably <i>Darwall 148</i>	Stand up, Stand up for Jesus	1	The tune could be either <i>St Theodulph</i> or <i>Morning Light</i>
How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds	4	Probably the tune pinned is <i>St Peter</i> by Reinagle	Tarry with Us Blessed Saviour	1	Tune pinned not identified
I Will Arise - Hymn.	4	Tune pinned not identified	The Church's One Foundation	1	The tune pinned is probably <i>Aurelia</i> by SS Wesley
Sweet Saviour Bless Us	4	Tune pinned not identified.	The Day Thou Gavest	1	The tune pinned will be <i>Radford</i> by S S Wesley
Hark, Hark my Soul	3	Most probably the tune pinned is <i>Swiss Air</i> by Goule.	The Gloomy Night	1	Tune pinned not identified
Let the Hills Resound	3	Tune pinned not identified	The Lord's Prayer	1	Tune pinned not identified
Glory to God - Hymn	2	Also seen in French - <i>Gloire a Dieu (Glory to God)</i>	The Turf shall be my Fragrant Shrine	1	Tune pinned not identified
God Moves in a Mysterious Way	2	Tune pinned is possibly <i>Irish</i>	There is a Fountain	1	Tune pinned not identified
Our Blest Redeemer	2	Most probably the tune pinned for these words is <i>St Cuthbert</i> by J B Dykes	There is a Happy Land	1	Tune pinned not identified
Shepherd of Israel	2	Tune pinned not identified	There is a Land of Pure Delight	1	Tune pinned not identified
Sing to the Lord - Psalm 96	2	Tune pinned not identified	Thou Shalt O Lord	1	Tune pinned not identified
The Lord My Pasture	2	Tune pinned not identified	We Plough the Fields and Scatter	1	Most probably the tune pinned is <i>Wir Pflugen</i> by Schulz
Angel of Charity	1	Tune pinned not identified	When Christ The Lord	1	Tune pinned not identified
Art Thou Weary	1	Tune pinned not identified	Where Hast Thou Gleaned today	1	Tune pinned not identified
Awake and Sing the Song	1	Tune pinned not identified			
Identified Hymn Texts	68		Total Incidence	566	

Table 8B Hymns identified by first line of text

Notes for Table 8B

1. The words for this hymn were written in 1864. *St Gertrude* the tune specially composed by Sullivan for these words and now most popularly associated with them, was not published until 1872; however, based on the Dating Charts in H A V Bulleid's work *Musical Box Tune Sheets*, at least 15 of the 34 musical boxes identified with these words on their tune sheets were made by Nicole Frères before the latter date. Therefore another tune(s) must have been pinned for this hymn on boxes produced before say 1873; thereafter, it could be *St Gertrude*.
2. Unless this box had been re-pinned in the 20th century, the tune pinned will certainly not be *Cwm Rhondda*, now universally associated with the words of this hymn. This tune was not composed until 1903, far too late to be pinned on a cylinder musical box made in the 19th century.
3. This hymn was sung to any of several tunes. However the tune pinned here is most probably *Miles Lane* by Shrubsoles.
4. The tune pinned on these boxes for the words of this hymn could be one of several: *Aberystwyth* by Parry; *Hollingside* by J B Dykes; or *Hotham* from *Sacred Melody* of 1765.

Compiling Tables 8A and 8B has proved the most difficult and frustrating aspect of the research undertaken for this article. The results of any research are only as good as the data upon which they are based, and no more so than with this study. The Register has been compiled most assiduously by the Registrar during the last 40 years and it contains the information on well over 11,000 cylinder musical boxes as advised by their owners. Unfortunately the latter are a source with three inherent weaknesses, any or all of which can have an impact on this type of detailed research:

- Old, damaged and weary tune sheets, with missing information, or fading ink and indecipherable script from which tune titles can be determined only with difficulty;
- Even if that weakness is not present, some of the titles were reduced originally to such few words as to be meaningless or misleading, e.g. 'I know that' – is that the aria from *Messiah*, or the first line of a standard hymn that begins with those three words?
- Finally, the ability of the owner to determine accurately and then transmit to the Registrar without further human error the information on a tune sheet, whatever its condition.

These examples, together with others referred to later, illustrate how difficult and frustrating it has been for the Registrar over the years, and we are fortunate indeed that so much has been achieved in spite of these difficulties. Nevertheless, however accurate the information provided by the owner, the overall caveat must remain, that unless each box has been listened to, a degree of uncertainty remains about exactly which hymn tunes were pinned on many of the cylinder musical boxes identified in this group. All that can be said for certain in the following discussion is that the music was most probably a hymn tune.

The information in Table 8A has

been compiled on the basis of hymn tune names. Most hymn tunes, either composed or in use during the period that cylinder musical boxes were made, have an identifying name, very often chosen because of associations with the composer or the words. Where the information on the tune sheet includes such a tune name then in many instances we can be reasonably certain as to the music pinned on the cylinder. However, there are many examples throughout hymnody of the same name having been given to more than one tune. As found during this research, the name *Oxford* was found given to at least six, and *Hallelujah* to nine different hymn tunes. Although some of these tunes can be ruled out because they were composed after the musical box was made, a degree of uncertainty nevertheless remains.

Finally, different denominations and individual churches within a denomination would sing quite different words to the same hymn tune even though it did have the same name. So even though the hymn tune pinned on a musical box can be positively identified, we cannot be sure as to the words that would have been sung to that tune by the owners.

The information in Table 8B has been compiled following a different approach, using the words of the first line of a hymn. Whether all or just some of these words appear on the tune sheet, then we cannot be at all sure as to the tune pinned on the musical box concerned. Notwithstanding the model practice set by the Church of England's *Hymns Ancient & Modern* referred to above, other denominations, splinter groups, dissenting factions and such like often preferred different tunes. Furthermore musical tastes change with the passage of time and tune/word relationships established during the 1850/1860 period may well have changed by the 1880/1890s, particularly with the

advent of new, perhaps more catchy and rhythmic tunes.

The earliest examples of musical boxes with hymn tunes found during this research were possibly:

- The three-air Tabatière, serial no 1898 by Capt. H. already listed in Table 7, the programme for which included the hymn tune *Rousseau’s Dream*. (See Part 2 of this article for this and its relevant caveat.)
- A six-air cartel box, serial no 104, by Lecoultre, pinned with the *Portuguese Hymn (Adeste Fideles)*.

However, dating these accurately has not been possible so the earliest boxes pinned with hymn tunes that can be reliably dated were made by Nicole Frères. The earliest, serial no 19110 circa 1840, is a four-air box tuned to Gamme 376, the programme for which includes a single hymn, *The Evening Hymn*. The earliest example found of a musical box with a complete programme of hymn tunes came from the same maker, Nicole Frères, serial no 19616 dating circa 1840/1841. Its programme, arranged for a comb tuned to Gamme No 411,

SACRED AIR TITLE	NOTES
1. Vesper Hymn	Probably <i>Vesper Hymn</i> arr. Stevenson in 1818 for the words - <i>Hark! The Vesper Hymn is Stealing</i> by Thomas Moore. See the Notes to Tune 2 in Table 11 below for further information.
2. All People Hymn	Probably an arrangement of the <i>Old Hundredth</i> for the words - <i>All People that on Earth do Dwell</i>
3. German Hymn	Probably an arrangement of a hymn tune written by Ignaz Pleyel in 1790. See the Notes to Tune 4 in Table 11 below for further information concerning Pleyel
4. I Know That Hymn	Not the aria from <i>Messiah</i> , but more probably an arrangement of a tune to which the words of Samuel Medley’s hymn of 1775 were sung - <i>I Know That My Redeemer Lives, What Joy the Blest Assurance Gives</i> - but which tune is pinned here has not been determined
5. Sicilian Hymn	An arrangement of the popular tune known also as <i>Mariners</i> or <i>Sicilian Mariners</i> . See the Notes to Tune 3 in Table 11 below for further information
6. The Evening Hymn	An arrangement of <i>Evening Hymn</i> . See the Notes to Tune 1 in Table 11 below for further information

Table 9 Tunes pinned on Nicole Frères serial no 19616 Gamme no 411

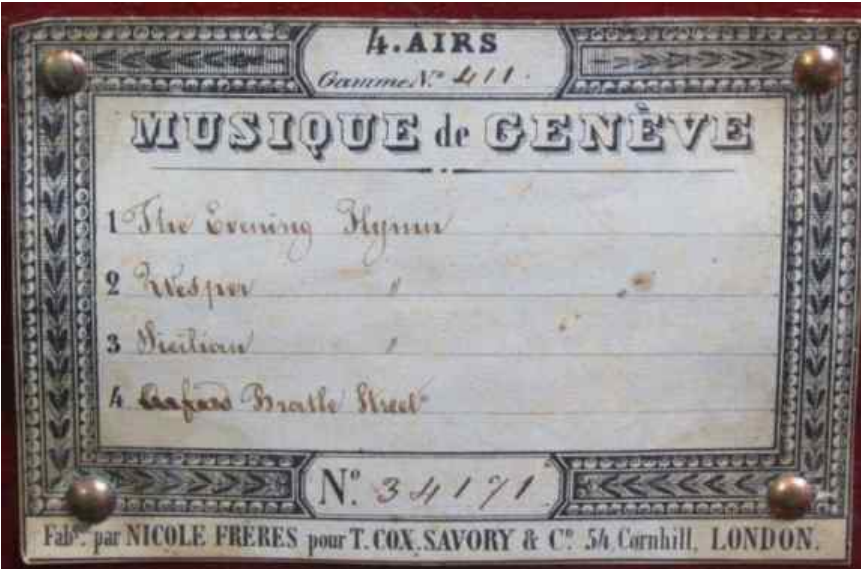


Fig 4 Nicole Frères 34171 tune sheet with fourth hymn tune name altered

consists of the hymns shown in Table 9. Interestingly this Gamme number was noted as having been used later for three four-air boxes, serial nos 28524 (circa 1850-51), 34140 (circa 1856/7) and 36715 (circa 1860). All three are registered as being pinned with the programme of four hymns listed in Table 10 below.

However as this article was closing for press, a fourth musical box by Nicole Frères, tuned to this Gamme, serial no 34171, appeared for sale on eBay. Seen in Fig 4, its tune sheet shows that the title of the fourth tune has been carefully altered from *Oxford* to *Brattle* (sic) probably

SACRED AIR TITLE	NOTES
1. Evening Hymn	See the Notes to Tune 1 in Table 11 below for further information
2. Vespers	Probably the hymn tune <i>Vesper</i> . See the Notes to Tune 2 in Table 11 below for further information
3. Sicilian	See the Notes to Tune 3 in Table 11 below for further information
4. Oxford	There are several hymn tunes with the name <i>Oxford</i> . It has not been possible to identify which of these is arranged on these three boxes, but now see Fig 4 and the Notes to Tune 4 in Table 11 below for further information

Table 10 Tunes pinned on Nicole Frères serial nos 28524, 34140 and 36715

Brattle Street. The handwriting of the words appears to be the same, and so the change is original and not a correction made a later owner.

As has been commented on earlier in this article, the naming of hymn tunes was not a precise or disciplined practice, and so the sudden appearance of this musical box and its subsequent purchase gave an opportunity to listen to and identify more specifically the hymn tunes with which it had been pinned. The results are set out here in Table 11.

During the analysis work for Tables 8A and 8B some intuitive interpretation had to be made at times to resolve anomalies and inconsistencies provided by owners to the Registrar and some examples of this necessity follow:

- In two instances the tune sheet, as advised to the Registrar, for two Nicole Frères boxes serial nos 46269 and 46270 included the word 'Haydn' after the hymn tune title. Although the well-known Austrian composer did write some hymn tunes, he had nothing

TUNE NO	HYMN TUNE NAME	NOTES
1	The Evening Hymn	Using the 1904 edition of <i>The Methodist Hymn Book - With Tunes</i> the tune pinned on serial no 34171 has been identified as an old arrangement of one composed in 1560 by Dr Thomas Tallis, the 16 th century English composer, and published in Matthew Parker's Psalter as a musical setting for Psalm 67. It became known as <i>Tallis' Canon</i> and was subsequently adapted and arranged to be used with the hymn <i>All Praise to Thee, My God, this Night</i> (sometimes seen as <i>Glory to Thee, My God, this Night</i>). As a result of its widespread use for this hymn in church services, it has become Tallis' best known composition. The arrangement on serial no 34171 is enlivened by several runs and trills and so makes for attractive listening.
2	Vesper Hymn	The tune pinned on serial no 34171 has been identified as one that first appeared in Stevenson's <i>Selection of Popular National Airs</i> (1818) as a setting for Thomas Moore's <i>Hark! The Vesper Hymn Is Stealing</i> . Whilst some have attributed the tune to Dimitri Bortniansky, the 18 th century Ukrainian composer, Stevenson is more generally recognized now as being the arranger if not also the composer, not least because he is known to have used parts of a Russian folk song in this hymn tune.
3	Sicilian Hymn	This is an arrangement of an anonymous European folksong tune. According to tradition Sicilian seamen finished each day on their ships by singing this in unison, hence the variety of names by which this tune is now known and seen on musical box tune sheets and in hymn books - <i>Sicilian, Mariners, Sicilian Mariners</i> or <i>Sicilian (Mariners)</i> . The tune, first published in England circa 1792, is thought have come to England via Germany where it was associated with the German Christmas carol <i>O du Fröhliche, O du Selige [O (you) joyful, O (you) Blessed]</i> . The Roman Catholic Marian hymn <i>O Sanctissima</i> is traditionally set to <i>Sicilian Mariners</i> .
4	Bratle (sic) - Brattle Street	The hymn tune pinned on serial no 34171 and given the name <i>Brattle Street</i> on the tune sheet has been identified as one composed by Ignaz Pleyel (1757-1831). He was an Austrian musician and composer quite famous in his day, with his fame even reaching fledgling America where a Pleyel Society existed on Nantucket Island, and hymn tunes by him made their way into contemporary American hymnals. There are two Brattle Streets in America: one is in Boston and was the site of a Congregational, later Unitarian church; the second is in Cambridge, Massachusetts and is the site of many buildings of historic interest, including No 42, whose Loyalist owner was William Brattle and whose name gave cause for these two streets to be so named. Although either of these American connections could explain how the tune came to have the name <i>Brattle Street</i> , several questions remain: did the tune have another name beforehand, e.g. <i>Oxford</i> , and if so, why and when did the change occur and then filter back to the UK and on to Nicole Frères in time to change the name on the tune sheet for an 1856/7 hymn box? Next, is it correct to assume that <i>Brattle Street</i> is pinned on the other Gamme 411 musical boxes, although their tune sheets presumably still read <i>Oxford</i> ? Or was 34171 singled out for a re-pin? Finally, the hymn tune <i>Brattle Street</i> also appears again on three 12-air two-per turn boxes made a little later in 1862/1863 - serial nos 39711/2 and 49 all tuned to Gamme No 1213.

Table 11 Tunes pinned on Nicole Frères serial no 34171

And one final thought on this particular aspect: although the sudden appearance of serial no 34171 has enabled positive identification of the music used for these four hymn tunes, as arranged for this particular gamme on this particular musical box, can we be sure that the same arrangements were used for others that have tune sheets bearing these titles? Until these musical boxes are heard, this question will remain unanswered.

whatsoever to do with the tune for the hymn in question, *Sun of my Soul*. 'Haydn' has been taken, therefore, as a misreading of the word hymn as written in script on the tune sheet.

- On Weil & Harburg serial no 2069 the tune titles submitted included at Tune 5, *The Lord My Pastime*, which should read *The Lord My Pasture*, and at Tune 8, *Glory to Me My God*, which should be *Glory to Thee My God*.

Part 4 of this Article will continue with details of the research into the third group of Sacred Music – Evangelical and Gospel Songs.

- The tunes submitted for serial no 39763 by Ami-Rivenc included two examples of a different nature:
 - Tune no 4 *Miles Janes* undoubtedly is *Miles Lane*, to which the hymn *All Hail the Power of Jesu's Name* is sung;
 - Tune no 6 *Cranbrook*, unrecognised either as a place or a tune should most probably be *Cranbrook*, the tune to which many contemporary congregations probably sang the words of the Christmas carol, *While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night*.

These are examples of how the script on a tune sheet can be misread or misinformed, but fortunately examples such as this have been relatively few. As an aside, although the tune *Cranbrook* originated in the early 19th century as a hymn tune, many people today would be more familiar with it being sung to the secular words *On Ilkley Moor Bar T'at*, words not written until the very end of the 19th or even the early 20th century – no one seems to be sure.

Still on the Christmas theme, hymns or carols as we know them for this festival seem rather thinly represented overall. *Adeste Fideles* is there and in quantity with 45 instances, as is *Hark The Herald Angels Sing* with 28 instances. However, apart from a single instance of *Silent Night*, and also the single instance of *Cranbrook* referred to above, there is little else. This is rather surprising as there was a wealth of other Christmas hymns and carols available at that time.

Just over half of the hymns in Tables 8A & 8B have only a single example, and so as noted earlier the hymn tunes in these cases were most likely to have been arranged and pinned at the specific request of a customer. Indeed, some of them are very obscure, and both their words and tunes must then have had very limited appeal and use. Just how expensive it was then to have a particular

hymn tune arranged on request for what appears to have been a one-off use is, unfortunately, not recorded.

Sometimes on the tune sheet the title of the hymn tune may be followed by any one of the following letters: SM, CM or LM. These are abbreviations for Short Metre, Common Metre and Long Metre respectively, and refer to the metre, or poetic rhythm of each of the four lines of the verse of the hymn, and therefore that of the tune to which it can be sung. Put simply it is the number of syllables in each of the four lines of the verse that have to be provided for in the melody to which those words are to be sung. Thus Short Metre (SM) is 6.6.8.6. syllables, Common Metre (CM) 8.6.8.6. and Long Metre (LM) 8.8.8.8. Additionally, Short means unstressed syllables, Long that stressed syllables are included and Common that syllables could be either.

Finally, to answer the question posed on MMD, only musical boxes with programmes of hymns and tunes such as those in Tables 8A and 8B or similar should attract the sobriquet or generic term *Hymn Box* – if used at all.

Credits and Further Reading:

1. *Most of the statistical information in this article has been obtained from the Arthur D Cunliffe Register of Cylinder Musical Boxes (The Register), and is used with his kind permission. It illustrates how powerful and useful the Register is now as a source of information when writing articles of this nature. Those readers who own cylinder musical boxes who have not registered them with the Registrar are encouraged to do so and thereby extend the value of this powerful research tool.*
2. *'Musical Box Tune Sheets' by H A V Bulleid and its four Supplements published in 2000 by MBSGB.*
3. *'The Musical Box' by Arthur W J G Orde-Hume, published in 1995 by Schiffer Publishing Ltd. of Atglen, Pennsylvania USA.*
4. *The internet web sites Hymnary.Org and Wikipaedia have been used to cross-check and verify tune titles and words appearing on musical box tune sheets and the brief biographic notes and anecdotes on Evangelical and Gospel Songs and their composers and authors.*

Erratum

In Volume 28 No 3 of *The Music Box* published in July 2017, the wrong Table 5 was printed on page 91. The first page of Part 2 of David Worrall's article on Sacred Music on Cylinder Musical Boxes is reproduced again here with the correct Table 5.

The editor regrets this mistake and apologises unreservedly for this editorial error.

Sacred Music on Cylinder Musical Boxes – Part 2

by David Worrall

Some thoughts and background notes

Part 1 of this article, published in the previous edition of The Music Box, gave the background to this series of articles, defined Sacred Music, and gave overall statistical details of the extent to which each of the three groups of Sacred Music it identified was to be found on cylinder musical boxes. Here, Part 2 discusses the results of a more detailed analysis of the first group: Classical Sacred Music.

Classical Sacred Music – from Oratorios, Operas and Masses

A dictionary definition of the word oratorio is 'a large-scale musical composition, usually on a sacred theme, performed by soloists, chorus and orchestra without action, scenery or costume'; of the word opera, 'a large-scale musical composition designed

around a theme, sacred or secular, but to be performed with action, scenery and costume'; and of the word Mass, 'the celebration of the Eucharist or Holy Communion and sometimes found set to music'. Thus, arias and choruses from these major works were written to be performed in the main by those with skills in instrumental and vocal performance in public.

WORK	COMPOSER	TYPE	INCIDENCE
The Creation	HAYDN	Oratorio	272
Messiah	HANDEL	Oratorio	265
Elijah	MENDELSSOHN	Oratorio	192
Judas Maccabeus	HANDEL	Oratorio	70
Israel in Egypt	HANDEL	Oratorio	45
Saul	HANDEL	Oratorio	25
Theodora	HANDEL	Oratorio	19
Athalia	MENDELSSOHN	Oratorio	17
Saint Paul	MENDELSSOHN	Oratorio	8
Samson	HANDEL	Oratorio	7
Jeptha	HANDEL	Oratorio	7
Joshua	HANDEL	Oratorio	3
Le Devin du Village	ROUSSEAU	Opera	34
Moses in Egypt	ROSSINI	Opera	31
Faust	GOUNOD	Opera	17
Stabat Mater	ROSSINI	Major Sacred Work	61
Grande Masse in C Minor	MOZART	Mass	32
Requiem Masse in D Minor	MOZART	Mass	2
Missa Solemnis Mass in D, op 123	BEETHOVEN	Mass	2
The Lost Chord	SULLIVAN	Individual Sacred Air	31
Ave Maria - Méditation sur 1 ^{re} Prélude de Bach	GOUNOD	Individual Sacred Air	13
He Layeth the Beams	HANDEL	Individual Sacred Air	7
Psalm 132 - Setting	HANDEL	Individual Sacred Air	7
The Holy City	MAYBICK	Individual Sacred Air	5
Cantique de Noel	ADAM	Individual Sacred Air	4
Te Deum Jubilate	HANDEL	Individual Sacred Air	4
Jesus of Nazareth	GOUNOD	Individual Sacred Air	3
The Silver Trumpets	VIVIANI	Individual Sacred Air	3
Motetto Splendente te Deus	MOZART	Individual Sacred Air	3
Laudi Spirituali	Mediaeval Italian Melody	Individual Sacred Air	2
Hymn of Praise	MENDELSSOHN	Individual Sacred Air	2
The Dettingen Te Deum	HANDEL	Individual Sacred Air	2
Hear My Prayer (Oh For the Wings of a Dove)	MENDELSSOHN	Individual Sacred Air	2
March of The Israelites	VERDI	Not recognised	2
Ave Maria	SCHUBERT	Individual Sacred Air	1
3 rd Movement of Piano Sonata No 2 in B Flat Minor - Funeral March or Marche Funèbre	CHOPIN		4
Unspecified Classical Sacred Classical Airs			44
Total: 35 Major and individual works of Sacred Music			Total Incidence 1248

Table 5 Incidence of items from classical works pinned on musical boxes

This, That and t'Other No 21

by Arthur Cunliffe

I never cease to be amazed by the ways in which some people in the past have tried to cure problems they have encountered with a cylinder box.

One person realised that a large crack in the soundboard was spoiling the performance of his box so he or she decided to stick paper tape over the crack, presumably in the hope that the sound quality would be improved. No one in the intervening sixty years or so had bothered to do the job properly. This Nicole, once owned by a very early member of the Society, had suffered further tribulations in that it is now fitted into a case intended for Nicole 42039. One presumes that the original had succumbed to a woodworm attack and, as cases were plentiful in those early days, someone just used another case. All this makes life very difficult for the serious researcher.

My impression now is that there are just as many empty cases around as there used to be. I can remember the days when nearly every small antique shop had a musical box of some sort plus an empty case or two. In hot weather the door of these shops was frequently held open by a black Victorian marble clock. Many years ago in a local auction I once bought two by accident. They were part of another lot and I had not realised they were included in my winning bid. Try as I might, I cannot remember what became of them. However that is another story which I will not repeat today.

Looking back I now wonder how anyone manages without a computer. They seem to be essential for nearly everything these days, but I still find that they have their drawbacks. The problem with technology is that every time you turn on a computer you seem to have to address a problem you didn't know you had or install an update you didn't really want. The curse of constant updates as far as I can work out is that they never seem to do anything to improve the running of the machine or generally make life easier for the user.

Boxes playing Music Hall songs and popular airs of the day seem to have been made predominantly in the mid 1880s and through to the end of the 1890s. After 1905 there is a sharp decline in cylinder musical boxes being made anyway, having been overtaken by the disc box. However, there are some tunes written about this time which have very unusual titles, and which are probably never heard of today. Look at the following, and if you have time see if you can find any trace of them or their music on the internet:

The Tale of a Bumble Bee, by Saunders.

Janice Meredith Waltz, by Justin.

Hello Central, give me Heaven, by Harris.

Birds in Dreamland Sleep.

The Man with an Elephant, by Morse.

I have just found a box with a most unusual title which I believe also sums up our rather complex lives today. It is *In the House of too much Trouble*, which was composed by William A Heelan in 1900 and first published in America. The song outlined the unfairness of life as far as a little boy was concerned. It looks as though even in those far-off times living threw up the kind of problems that are still with us today.

Only two boxes are on the Register playing this tune. Both were made by Paillard and had serial numbers 12219 and 12919. This will give you an indication of where Paillard had reached in their serial numbering system up to the year 1900. Personally I would have thought that the date would have been slightly earlier, but one cannot have a box playing a tune before it was written.

Another song of the 1900 period plays the melody *The Tale of the Bumble Bee*. I have not been able find out much about this song at all. I hope someone might have more luck than I when looking for it on the internet.



Tune sheet from P.V.F. No 433704



Lid inlay from P.V.F. No 433704

Pictures reproduced by kind permission of Batemans Auctioneers of Stamford, Lincolnshire

The two pictures reproduced herewith are of a PVF box that has a late period tune sheet. The tune sheet is not all that common, and it was used on their later boxes. The lid inlay is good quality and comes from a time when many boxes had only transfer decorations on their lid.

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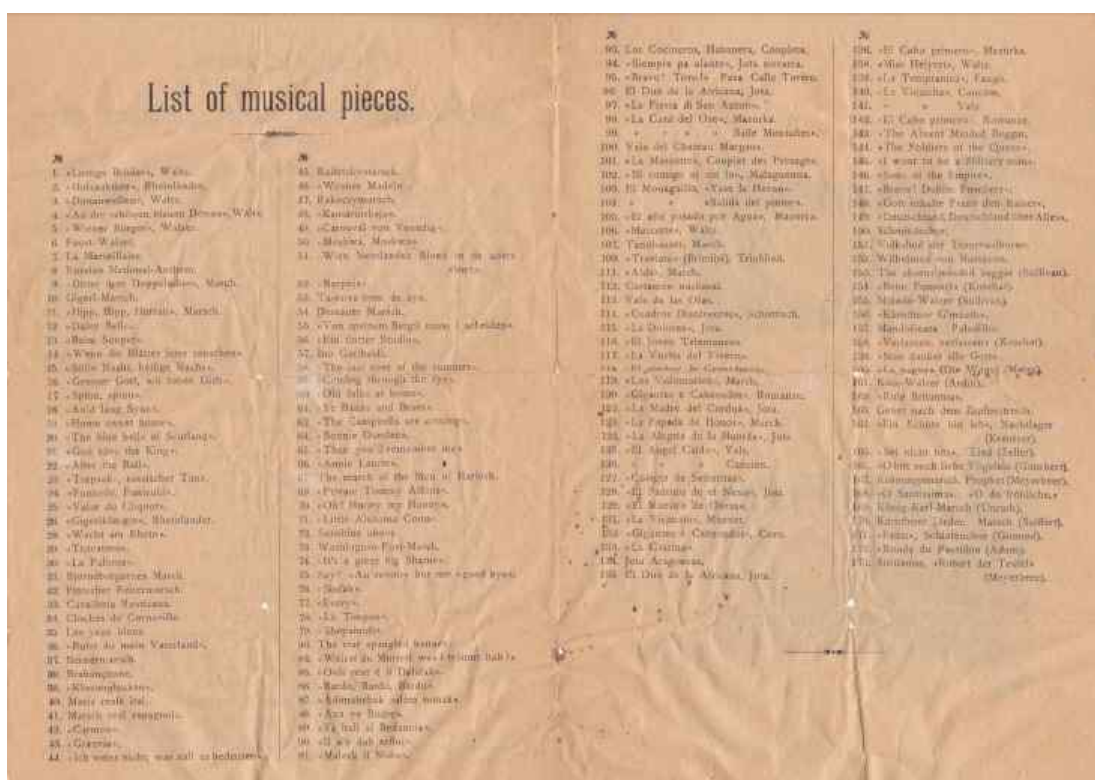
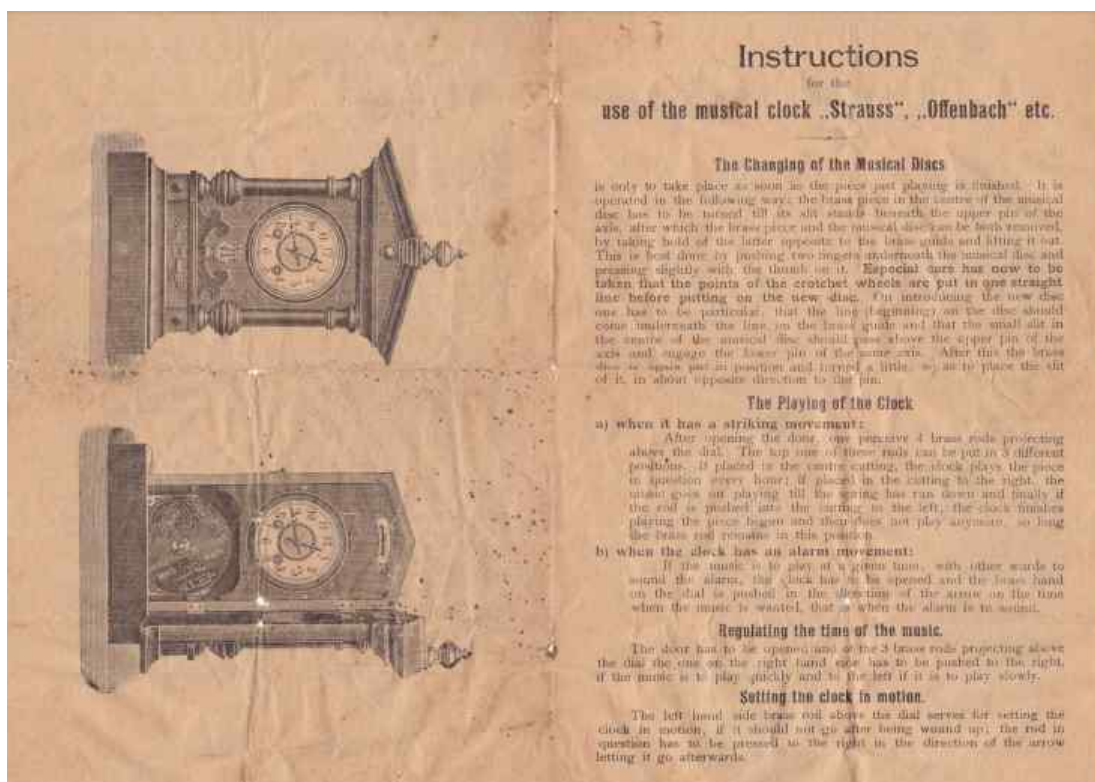
!!!for my private collection : allways looking for early cylinder musical boxes, singing bird boxes!!!

by Kevin McElhone

As many of you will know I am now doing a lot of musical probate work which involves valuation, cataloguing and photographing sometimes large collections of mechanical musical instruments.

I have been saddened recently to find that one collector's partner had already disposed of all magazines and paperwork for recycling as I knew that collector had some ephemera which to me was priceless, but is now lost. I used to buy instruments just to get the ephemera, which I hope you will agree with me needs to be preserved in the MBSGB Archives, and elsewhere, for the benefit of future research.

I hope any reader who has some old original paperwork from musical box makers, or from the original retailer, will consider making this available to the MBSGB Archives rather than risk seeing it destroyed in the way described above. Please share it with all of us.



I did manage to contact the seller of a Symphonion displaying clock recently, and he has so far agreed to scan this, (well to me in the last 35 years),

unique instruction list and list of disc tunes.

I hope you find it interesting,
particularly if you also own one.

Phil Rose Cabinet Maker Extraordinaire

by Mark Singleton

Over the years I have seen many examples of replacement Polyphon cases, store-bins, galleries, etc. Good, bad and indifferent.

However only a handful have achieved factory quality. The owners of these pieces always told me with some pride 'Phil Rose made that'. On one such occasion a friend and I bought a pair of 19.5/8 store-bin bases, which the owner, a retired dealer, had Phil build for him in the 1980s. Just the job!

The years and many another restoration rolled along, and despite all I never made Phil's acquaintance. Either no one had his number, or they weren't telling me. Earlier this year that changed, and

to cut a long story short, it soon became apparent that Phil is not a restorer as such, but a master cabinet maker. Take a look at his website at www.lignae.co.uk and you will be astounded.

The quality of his work is on a par with the workshop of David Roentgen.

My initial feeling of being overwhelmed soon dissipated when



Phil and his son Adam in their workshop

piece of veneer that matched the grain patterns on my near 200-year-old box. Happy Days. We were in business!

The piece had numerous other little chips and a rather sorry looking past repair to the fine periphery moulding on the lid. The turn-around time was as acceptable as his reasonable quotation. On collection, I found my box was literally stunning: every last bit of damage had been expertly and invisibly repaired. The subsequent polishing that was arranged on my behalf was nothing short of sympathetically perfect to an exacting standard.

I soon returned with another such job and noticed a 19.5/8 Pediment in the production line, complete and ready for polishing, along with a Mikado case that surprisingly was for a friend. But then again, ours is a small world.

So whether your job be little or large you won't regret using Phil and Adam Rose.

I asked Phil for advice on some extremely loose veneer and a missing end flap on a rather early cylinder box. This was no problem, and I was invited to bring it along. Phil operates his obviously well-equipped workshop with his son Adam, who shares his father's skills and love of their craft. Within three seconds Phil declared it was veneered in burr elm. Within a minute he had found a choice

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Register News No 96

By Arthur Cunliffe

Every now and then two boxes turn up with consecutive serial numbers, and often you find that they play the same tunes. Knowing the gamme numbers is essential here especially in the case of Nicole boxes. However, few people know what gamme numbers are or where on the movement they are to be found, which makes the work of a researcher so much more difficult. Try looking for numbers scratched on the end of the cylinder or marked somewhere on the tune sheet that are not the same as the serial number. That is always a good place to start looking.

Two twelve-air C Ullmann boxes have turned up on the market with consecutive serial numbers, and they appeared to be identical. The first box was first registered 62 years ago while the other was in mid 2017. The size of cylinders, number of teeth in the comb and the general layout matched perfectly, so one would expect both boxes to play the same tunes. In this instance it was not the case. What was even more astounding is that the programmes for the boxes are musically so different that one wondered if they could have come from the same source.

One played tunes like *The Future Mrs Awkins* whilst the other selected *The Farewell on the Cross* and other sacred melodies. It is indeed strange how or why the manufacturer chose such different programmes on boxes so close together. It reinforces how one can never take anything for granted, as often something will turn up that throws a spanner in the works.

The tune *Never Take the Horse*

Shoe from the Door has recently turned up on fewer than five boxes. The words are attributed to Edward Harrigan and the music was composed by David Braham around the year 1880. In the song an Irishman lists the misfortunes that befell him when he did take the shoe from the door. They included a great number of his wife's relations coming to stay with him.

Boxes playing music hall songs and popular airs of the day were mainly made in the 1880s and 1890s, and reflected the fact that more and more people were becoming financially able to purchase musical boxes. At the present time I am unsure just how many of this type of musical box were made, but I would guess that boxes playing classical airs were in decline during those years. From around 1898 to about 1905 there is a sharp decline in the number of cylinder boxes being made. At least that is what the Register is currently indicating.

The most likely cause is the rising popularity of the disc box. There are only three boxes on the Register that play melodies from Wagner's *Rienzi*. The opera had its first performance on the 20th October 1842 and after an initial success it soon fell out of favour. It is not surprising then that so few boxes were made with airs from the opera. The three boxes were made by C Paillard, Brémond, and the last one coming from an unknown maker. All the boxes seem to have been made around 1884 which is 32 years after the initial composition and I cannot explain why there is such a gap. I am wondering if these three were special orders. We will

never know.

There is no doubt that the advent of the internet and digital photography has enabled me to find many more boxes to put on the Register. What disappoints me is that so many people, in spite of self-focusing cameras, still manage to produce poor blurred photographs. I believe the problem is not with the modern camera but with camera shake. So few people realise or understand this and they never think of using a tripod. I know it entails much more work to set up that sort of equipment, but the difference between the two can be very marked especially when enlarging the prints.

It is difficult to categorise one type of musical box and that is the one that play hymns and perhaps other airs. If the whole programme consists of hymns there is no problem, but I find Oratorio boxes much harder to fit into a category when they have a 'rogue' tune or tunes that do not sit happily with a description of hymn. A Brémond box turned up with the following programme:

1. *Gloire a Sien!* Hymn by Beethoven.
2. *Adeste Fideles*. Hymn
3. *The Monastery Bells*.
4. *Messiah*. *He shall feed his flock*.

I don't really think the *Monastery Bells* qualifies as a hymn or an oratorio.

An Ami-Rivenc box serial number 43599 turned up with a list of hymns that suffered from language problems. The tune *Only a Step to Jesus* was written as *Only a Step of Jesus*, whilst another came out as

Stand up to Jesus instead of *Stand up for Jesus*. Not really in the true spirit a religious offering.

Batemans Auctioneers have kindly given their permission to use their pictures. A PVF box they sold recently has all the usual features associated with a later box, namely a zither and tune indicator. A picture of the box is shown here.

The tune sheet is like number 42 in the Tune Sheet book. It is not the most commonly used by PVF, and this instance does not give any obvious indication that they made it. The inlay on the faded rosewood lid is undamaged, and once fully restored I have little doubt it will be appreciated very much by someone as it has an appealing programme.



PVF Box. (Picture reproduced by kind permission of Batemans Auctioneers of Stamford, Lincolnshire)

East Anglian Music Museum to Relocate

by Roger Booty

After 35 years in its building at Cotton, six miles north of Stowmarket in Suffolk, *The Museum of Mechanical Music and Bygones* is on the move. It is being taken eight miles north to combine with Jonny Ling's collection at *The Grange* in Palgrave. Jonny has long been connected with the Cotton Museum and is one of its trustees, along with Phylis and Ray Keble and members of the Finbow family.

It was the late Bob Finbow who started collecting in 1957, and in 1983 saw his collecting efforts opened to the paying public in a building often described as an Aladin's Cave. If you never took the opportunity to visit you

will have missed seeing its walls plastered with sheet music and its rafters adorned with 78 RPM records and horn gramophones. cinema ephemera, postcards, pictures, model farm machinery, oil lamps and 200 teapots filled every available corner, and all of them in addition to the mechanical music. Because of all these different items they were obliged a few years ago to change the name of the museum. Originally The Museum of Mechanical Music, it gathered an appendage to become The Museum of Mechanical Music and Bygones.

The MBSGB has visited the Museum a number of times, most recently in September 2013. During that meeting we also visited Jonny's

collection. Now they will merge. Visiting times at the new setting will be different, now becoming one Sunday a month only from May to December. Private tours will still be available by arrangement at other times. The address of the new venue is The Grange, Palgrave, Diss, Norfolk IP22 1AZ. We hope to publish fuller details in the next edition of the Journal.

For those of you who have never visited Cotton you can glimpse what you have missed by looking in *The Music Box* Vol 13 page 164 where I wrote a review of the museum in 1987. Please put our museum on your list of places to visit next year.

Wish upon a Star (Wheel)

by Alison Biden

With thanks to Lester Jones and Jack Perron for help in writing this article

I wish I had a pound for every time over the past six years or so that I have heard someone or other express the desire for more modern or popular music to be available on musical box discs. It is often justified by the opinion that were such an animal available, it would attract young members of the public to take more interest in mechanical instruments. Surely in this day and age, I hear you say, when anything and everything is possible, it should be relatively easy, shouldn't it?

The simple answer is no, which is why there is so little music of this nature available for your 15½" or 19⅝" machine. As I have heard this lament so often, and since Mark Singleton is spearheading a project to address this very issue, I thought I would delve deeper into why it still presents so many challenges in this day and age.

Leaving aside the manufacturing aspect for the moment, let us consider the music. As Lester Jones of Renaissance Discs says of all discs, 'the clever bit is the arrangement.' Whilst theoretically any music of a certain length can be arranged to go on a disc, some music is more suitable and makes for a more satisfying result than others. A pleasing melody is a good start. But it is only the start. Musical box combs are not scaled chromatically, and what might sound pleasing when played according to its original



composition, may sound less so when adapted to fit the fixed scale on a disc machine. This is where the skill of the arranger comes in; someone with the knowledge and experience of what works and how to achieve the right effect. In addition to its melody a tune needs an accompaniment, which in turn needs to take into account the notes available on the comb. There is a delicate balance to be struck between an unadorned melody and an over-wrought accompaniment.

As most people are probably aware, notes produced on musical boxes, unlike other instruments, cannot be sustained. Only the illusion of a note's length can be created by varying the interval between it and the following note. If the original composition has many sustained notes, but without silent pauses,

the trend is to fill that interval with a trill and/or run up or down the scale. However, this is not always satisfactory, and presents the arranger with yet another challenge.

Any single disc of a particular size will play for a period equivalent to the time it takes for the disc to make one revolution of the disc. Typically a 15½" diameter disc will revolve for approximately 55 seconds, give or take, according to its speed, whereas one revolution of a 24" disc will take approximately two minutes. Tunes, as we are all aware, are of varying length, and few come ready-sized for

discs. In the case of shorter tunes, the arranger will most likely opt to extend the length by adding either an introduction and/or a finale. In the case of a song or hymn, he or she might add an additional verse, or part thereof. If the tune in question is too long to fit one revolution, the arranger has to decide which parts to keep and which to discard, and will often select the more familiar main theme for exploitation. And in some cases the arranger will give in to temptation to squeeze in the complete piece of music by reducing the length of intervals. This results in a complete piece of music as written, but performed at a tempo faster than that intended by the composer.

We are talking about mechanical music, but it is music nevertheless

and doesn't need to sound robotic. When we listen to an accomplished live performer he or she will give the written music their own interpretation and expression. Not all of this can be conveyed by a disc, but one feature which can is the retard or slowing down of the music, usually at the end of the piece. A performing musician will know by intuition when and how to do this. For a disc arranger, it is yet another feature to calculate, where experience and experimentation come into play, although nowadays working with a computer helps cut down on the latter.

Let's move on to the next stage, and suppose the composition in question has been arranged more or less satisfactorily, transposing it into the available key, and devising a complementary accompaniment. The next challenge is to be aware of and to accommodate the geometry of the disc. We are used to seeing music written in linear fashion on the staves of a manuscript. By definition, the disc is circular. The speed at which the outside edge of the disc revolves is faster than that of the centre. Although the notes around the circumference may look further apart, this is an illusion, as the interval between the notes is speeded up. The beats in each bar of music have to be carefully plotted, taking into account the variation in speed of the different location of each note of the scale. The space between one note and



another which are located close to the centre of the disc will not be the same as that

between notes located further out. Nowadays the arranger's job can be simplified by the use of computers. It is interesting to note that there are incredibly few people doing this these days; maybe because there is not a standard software programme for it.

Another limitation to be considered is that a note on a musical comb cannot be repeated within a certain minimum lapse of time. Rapid repetitions of the same note present another challenge, as in this instance the shortness of the note cannot be conveyed by too short an interval between it and the next repetition.

This is somewhat of a simplification of the challenges involved in arranging music for the disc, but

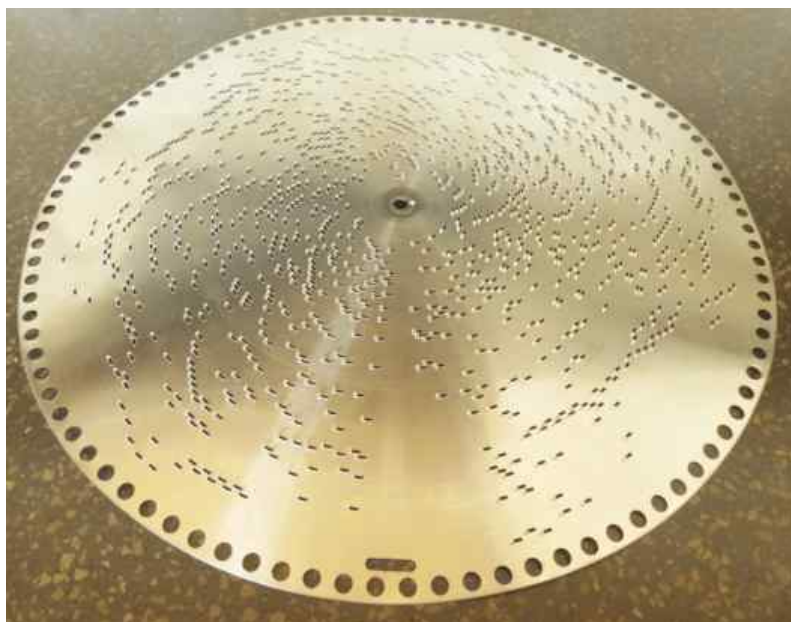
already you can see how complicated and time consuming the mere arranging of a piece of music can be, even in this day and age, and why it is not a trivial or cheap exercise. Experience also counts for a lot.

Moving on to producing the actual physical disc: as far as the writer is aware, only a handful of people in the world are punching discs, some using an automated system, others still laboriously operating

their punch by hand. Even for those methods controlled by computer, the musical file still needs to be written, either by writing directly in the software itself, or by making a master which is then digitally copied and stored as a file.

Each manufacturer of discs from the era of major disc machines had their particular drive projection, or hole and, with the exception of machines such as Stella, note projection. As far as is known modern disc producers all use the standard Polyphon/Regina projection profile, although the drives may have to be more machine specific, as well as the dimensions of the projections, in both height and width.

So, now you have your finished disc ... But that is not quite the end of the matter. There is the labelling of the disc to be done. Some modern producers emulate



the historic originals, seeing the labelling as an integral important part of the exercise, while others opt for a more convenient solution. And last but not least, and probably what needs addressing before you start, unless you are wanting a copy of an existing disc, or a disc of an old piece of music, or a composition of your own, you are going to need to address the thorny issue of copyright. More expert opinion should be sought if you are thinking of commissioning a new disc of music which is still in copyright. Here is a taste of the complexities: we are not talking here about Performing Rights for which a licence is needed if you are playing copyrighted music in

public, but a separate issue. Here we are talking about the copyright of the composition itself, which usually belongs to the composer, or his/her music publisher, and the copyright of the arrangement, which is often retained by the arranger. Thus a licence needs to be purchased or permission sought, which itself will probably have to be paid for, from all the parties concerned if a disc of modern music is to be produced.

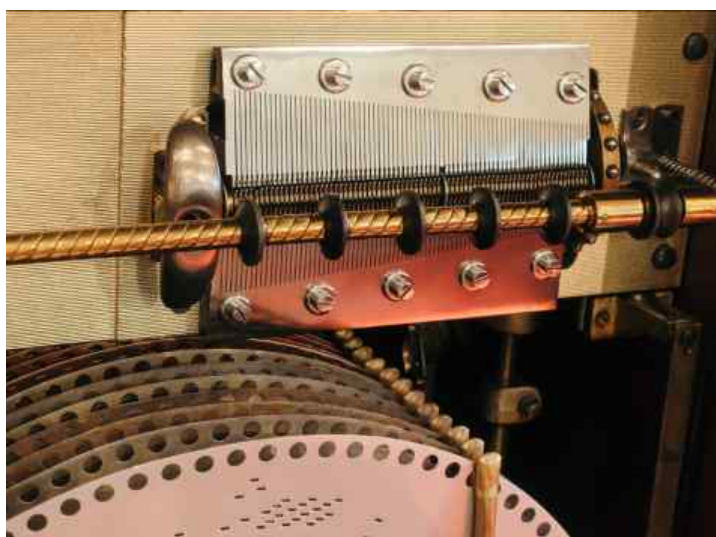
So, there you have it: why modern technology is only part of, and not the wholly automatic solution to the challenges posed in producing a new disc for a

disc-playing machine, why there are consequently so few new music discs available, and why new music on discs costs so much.

Current disc producers

Renaissance Discs (Lester Jones), of Chichester in the UK. Renaissance have been producing discs since the late 1980s, and carry approximately 140 different disc templates reflecting the huge range of makes and sizes they can produce. Originally disc production was developed out of necessity, as perfect discs were needed to accompany the restored boxes they sold. Old and possibly damaged original discs are often responsible for all sorts of problems, which is why Lester favours playing his new copies. Initially, as disc machine owners replaced and added to their disc collections with new copies, Renaissance were making over 1,000 discs a year – even now, averaging 800.

For further information see the display advertisements.





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Contact:

www.henstoothdiscs.com

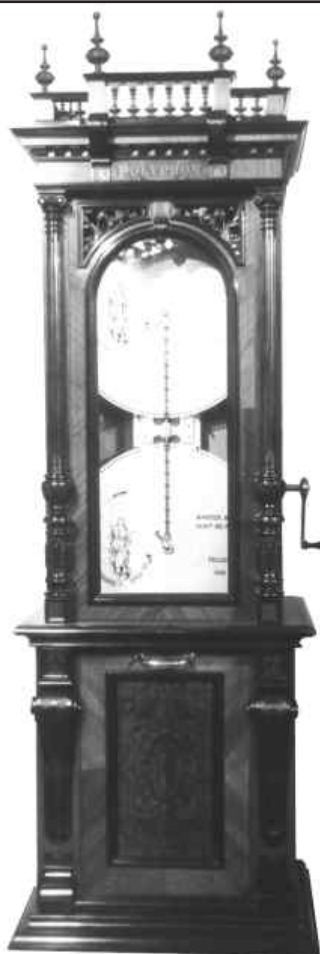
email: henstooth@myfairpoint.net

Hens Tooth Discs (Jack Perron) Peterborough, NH, USA. Jack carries a catalogue of titles for popular sized discs, and will accept commissions for new arrangements of old/new music, as well as supply finished discs if required. A talented musician, he has been in the business of arranging for a number of decades, having fallen into it as

a consequence of his desire to put traditional music on musical boxes, subsequently arranging music for Porter before branching out on his own. For further information see www.henstoothdiscs.com.

Porter Music Box Company, Randolph, VT, USA. Porter has been in existence for over 40 years making a range of new disc boxes for export worldwide, and discs, as well as undertaking restoration work. It has an extensive catalogue of tunes available on disc, including many modern popular classics, and also offers a custom service. For further information see www.portermusicbox.com.

Polyphon Musicwerke (David Corkrum) Oakland, CA, USA. Makes copies of existing discs. For further information see www.polyphonmusic.com.



Renaissance Discs

New Discs for all Musical Boxes

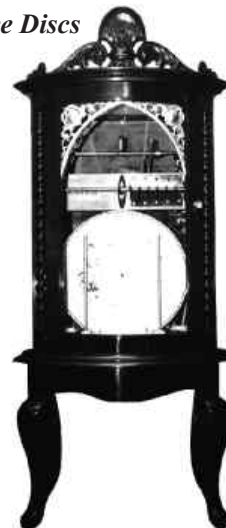
- correct quality steel & original style artwork
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Let the experts ensure your musical box looks and plays as it did when it was new!

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email: lesterjones@btconnect.com phone: +44(0) 1243 785421

New Disc Project

Special announcement – New Disc Project

Calling all Members ...

The Committee is considering a project to commission new musical arrangements for 15.5" Polyphon/Regina discs. The cost of the arrangements and all necessary licences will be met by the Society, with the actual work carried out by Jack Perron of Hens Tooth Discs.

Many of you are aware that Jack has much experience in this field, having arranged music for The Porter Music Box Co. and others.

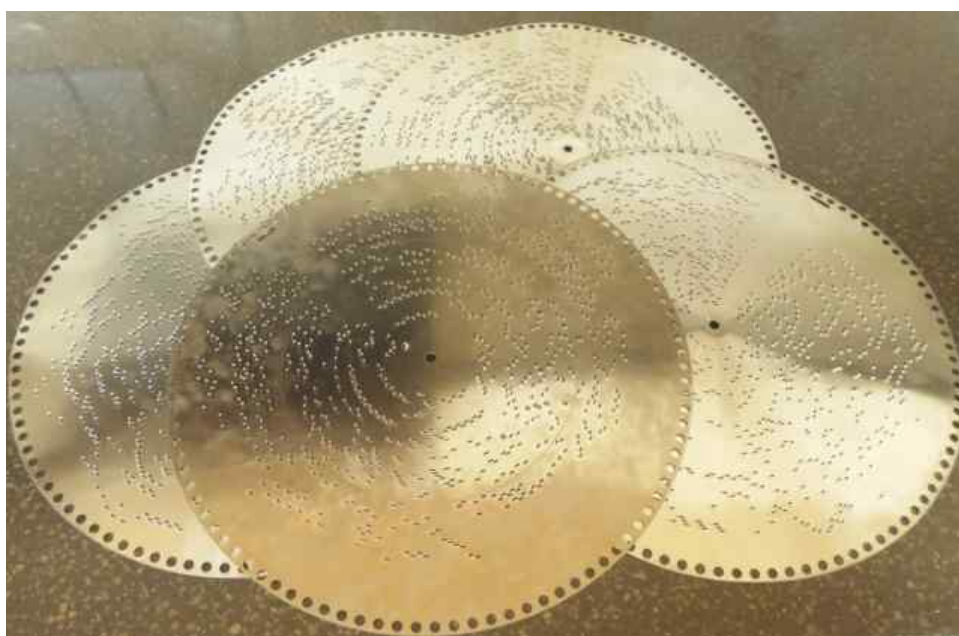
Of the arrangements themselves, the copyright will then belong exclusively to the Society, thus meaning anyone wanting a copy in future would have to obtain one via the Society, or with its permission.

The following two options are for consideration by the membership:

Option1: *Thank You for the Music* – a tribute to undoubted musical genius. This would consist of a fixed set of five discs, all of tunes composed by ABBA. The titles below have been carefully selected for both popularity and how they may best be transposed to disc:

- 1 *Thank You for the Music*
- 2 *Fernando*
- 3 *Knowing Me, Knowing You*
- 4 *Winner Takes it All*
- 5 *Mamma Mia*

The intention is to produce this as a boxed set with a specially designed sleeve.



Option 2: You, the members, may decide by way of ballot what music you want, so please feel free to put pen to paper and let us know what music you would like. The five most popular nominations would be produced and available either as singles, or with a discount for the full ensemble. If you choose this option, please let us know your choice of tunes.

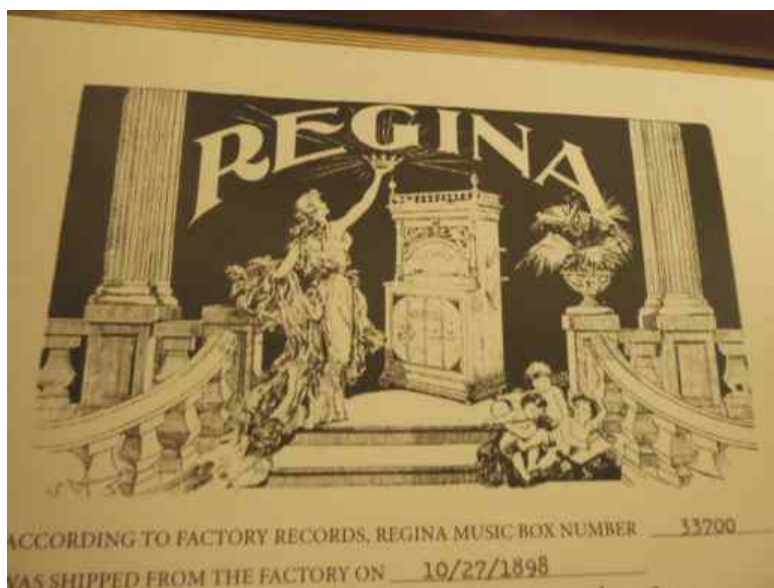
If you are interested in supporting and participating in this exciting project, please indicate which option you prefer.

If it is Option 2, send your choice/s BY THE END OF THIS YEAR either to the correspondence secretary at njasmbs@btinternet.com or write to:

MBSGB
c/o Grange Musical Collection
Old Bury Road
Palgrave, DISS
Norfolk,
IP22 1AZ

The results will be analysed, and a decision will be made on what we should produce, and further details and pricing structure will

follow in due course. The cost of the finished discs is expected to be £50 – £60 each, subject to prevailing exchange rates at time of purchase. Although there is no commitment at this stage, please do not send us any choices unless you intend to take up this offer.





The President's Message No 18

I find it hard to believe we are once again approaching the close of another year which seems to have gone in a flash. Despite that, I take satisfaction from some of the MBSGB's activities during 2017: incorporation, participating in various public events, and an overseas trip as well as our customary social activities. Elsewhere the Committee has formally offered to support the English version of a work produced in German by the Austrian scholar, Dr Helmut Kowar, entitled *Spielwerke aus Prag und Wien*, which we believe will be of interest to all cylinder musical box enthusiasts. More information about this book appears elsewhere in this edition. This was following the suggestion of Committee member, Mark Singleton, who also spearheads a new and innovative project regarding modern popular music on discs. (See the special announcement.)

By the time you read this, MBSGB will have demonstrated musical boxes at three major public events this year at least. If you are keen to raise awareness of your interest and the Society, there are a number of things you can do as local groups or individuals. With the run up to the festive season, it would seem an ideal opportunity to take advantage of Christmas Fairs, or special seasonal events at places such as church halls, garden centres and museums. Musical boxes, organettes and organs can add a magical dimension to their atmosphere. The Society has free publicity materials available, so ask a Committee member if you'd



*President of the MBSGB
Alison Biden*

like some support, or if you have any other ideas for promoting our interest. If you are undertaking something of this nature, please do let us know how you get on and send the Editor some photographs.

I keep saying that mechanical musical instruments should not be consigned to the past, regarded solely as collectors' items or curiosities, but be heard as well as seen. To avoid their demise in a world of changing fashions, I firmly believe their value as musical instruments should not be overlooked. I have said before that they need to be played to be enjoyed. Another aspect of their value as instruments is how they can be used or adapted to find a niche in an evolving musical scene. When cutting-edge experimentation arouses the interest of digital natives and those members of society who seldom raise their eyes from little screens, there is potential to stimulate a wider interest in the subject, and for people to trace back the historical origins.

A couple of years ago our Italian colleague, Flavio Pedrazzini, wrote about his 'Mobilis in Mobili' machine. Many of our members will be familiar with Patrick Mathis' rendition of Michael Jackson's *Smooth Criminal* on his hand-turned organ as seen on YouTube. Perhaps less familiar is the Wintergatan 'marble machine', which is a completely new mechanical instrument. This has captured the imagination of over 56 million viewers on YouTube. Its young creator is a devoted fan of automatic instruments, and has produced a number of excellent videos also on YouTube, promoting more traditional forms of mechanical music in a highly accessible manner. I strongly recommend you take a look. Personally, I prefer the old self-playing instruments, with their stunningly intricate arrangements and mellow tones, and hope that future generations will also appreciate them for the ingenuity of their mechanics and quality of music. But I also recognise that time, technology and tastes change, so for this reason I welcome these innovations.

Before I close I should just remind you that it is time to start thinking about who you wish to run your Society in anticipation of next year's AGM. It benefits any organisation to have a turnover of Officers, and ours is no exception. The last half decade has gone very quickly, but nonetheless it is time some of us moved on including yours truly. We wish you a very happy festive season and look forward to seeing you again in 2018.

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

Please can you help? I recently purchased a small automaton (about 7"x 13"). It is supposed to feature a lady playing a harpsichord (piano), a man sitting in a chair directing the music, and a small girl dancing. The reverse comb musical mechanism was made by Rzebitschek in Austria. Many parts are missing. The only parts I have are the wooden box and the musical mechanism itself.

I have replaced all the missing internal parts that move the figures and the main body of the harpsichord. To complete it I need measurements and/or pictures of the harpsichord/piano, the chairs and the figures. I believe a similar piece, restored by a fellow in the USA, was sold to someone in England several years ago but I have no further details.

If you, or someone you know, has a similar automaton, I'd appreciate

hearing from you. Confidentiality respected.

Craig Smith in NY State, USA
(CraigSmith@Sprintmail.com)



Subscription renewals are now due

Rates for 2017 (ROW = Rest of World)

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Full Member	£27	£32	£38	£34
Plus Joint	£33	£38	£46	£42

See enclosed form for details

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE UPDATED YOUR STANDING ORDER TO THE THESE PRICES

New Members of the MBSGB since the last journal was published

We welcome the following new members who have joined the MBSGB since the last journal was published:

3268	David Horne	Surrey
3269	Terrence McCormick	Spain
3270	Norman Mitchell	Lincs
2062	Chris Worker (joined under his late Father's number)	Ceredigion
3271	George Somerset	Kent
3272	Aad Verbunt	Netherlands
3273	Iain Salmon	Norfolk

If you would like to get in touch with members near you, please contact the Correspondence Secretary, whose contact details are on the Officers page.

You will get more value from your membership if you come along to one of our four local area groups where you can ask for advice, meet other members present and have a go at tune identification. Currently the local groups meet in London and Home Counties, the Midlands, Hampshire and Worcestershire.

<i>DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2017 – 2018</i>	
23 rd November 2017	The Dingwall-Beloe Horological Lecture. ‘The Music of the Clock 1300 – 1600.’ 5.30pm for 6pm to 7pm lecture, followed by a reception. BP Lecture Theatre, The British Museum. Free, booking essential. Details from The Horological Study Room, The British Museum, Great Russell St, London, WC1B 3DG
2 nd December 2017	MBSGB Teme Valley Winders. Eastham, Tenbury Wells, Worcs. 11am start. Contact John Phillips 01584 781118
17 th March 2018	Workshop arranged by the North West Player Piano Association. Does your Player Piano need restoring and how to do it? At ‘Pipes in the Peaks’, Dovedale Garage, Thorpe, Ashbourne, DE6 2AT. MBSGB members welcome. Details from Nicholas Simons, 01332 760576, njasmbs@btinternet.com
7 th April 2018	MBSGB London and Home Counties Group. St Albans Organ Museum. We are having an exclusive opening of the museum and we hope that as many members of MBSGB as possible will come along to St Albans Organ Museum, 320 Camp Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 5PE www.stalbansorgantheatre.org.uk/ The museum is being opened exclusively for us, so please come along and support one of the few remaining collections which has a varied selection of instruments to listen to. We will start with a drink on arrival from 10.30am and will have selected members’ talks and demonstrations of instruments until 12.45. Lunch 12.45 to 1.45pm will be included in the price of £12 a head. The Museum’s instruments will be demonstrated to us in the afternoon until about 3.45pm. We need to let the museum have numbers for catering by 7 th March, so if you intend coming please contact kevin_mcelhone@hotmail.com or telephone 01536 726759, or Bob Ducat-Brown on 01438 712585 or robert.ducat-brown@talktalk.net
13 th to 15 th April 2018	MBSGB Spring Weekend 2018 will take place at the superbly refurbished Petwood Hotel in Woodhall Spa in Lincolnshire. We begin on Friday afternoon with a special performance at the Burtey Fen collection, which is housed in a purpose-built concert hall. Starting there in Pinchbeck we then drive on to the Hotel for dinner. Saturday starts with a visit to the Bubble Car Museum before we drive to the Hagworthingham Collection, which has expanded significantly since the last MBSGB visit. Amongst many other instruments is a Red Welte Steinway Grand, Hupfeld Helios with original accordion on top, a Seybold Bistro model and 1910 Ruth Concert Fair Organ 36a, original and unrestored. The weekend concludes with talks, etc., on Sunday morning. See flyer for full details.
21 st April 2018	MOOS AGM. Cornwall. Hosted by a new private collection of organs, particularly those by David Leach. For details go to www.moos.org.uk
13 th May 2018	National Vintage Communications Fair. Warwickshire Exhibition Centre, The Fosse, Fosse Way, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV31 1XN
19 th May 2018	Grand reopening of The Grange Musical Collection, now including the Cotton Collection. The Grange, Old Bury Road, Palgrave, Diss, Norfolk IP22 1AZ. 01379 783350
20 th May 2018	Diss Organ Festival. A large festival around this picturesque town, including organs of all sizes, and featuring a presentation by the MBSGB.
2 nd June 2018	MBSGB AGM. Details to follow.

London and Home Counties Group Gathering

23rd September 2017

Our latest meeting was at the home of Richard Cole and Owen Cooper – a new venue for the society. Three members were sadly too unwell to attend, but 14 of us had a very enjoyable, late-autumn day, watching the garden railway as well as listening to musical instruments.

As usual a few members brought along some cylinder and disc musical boxes to talk about and demonstrate in the new organ studio. We were especially pleased to discover that we were the first official visitors at this venue.

There was even a cinema category board in the entrance, which had a welcome greeting in the clip-on letters used in cinemas of the day. There were also matching lighting and signs throughout the room.

We listened to the quiet instruments first, and then moved to the louder ones which included an Aeolian Pipe Organ, Opus 1124, built for Mr Perrins, of Lea & Perrins sauce fame, and was originally installed in Ardross Castle in Ross-Shire. Richard told us the story of its acquisition and we looked at the restoration photo album. One member even brought along a couple of hand-cut rolls which were played on the instrument. The organ has two manuals and pedals and is able to play 58/116 note rolls on the main console and specially recorded



The glorious Barnsley cinema organ

176 note Duo-Art Organ rolls via a separate player unit, which automatically controls the stops and swell shutters. These rolls were recorded by famous organists of the period between 1915 and 1930.

We really enjoyed *The Whistler and his Dog* by Arthur Prior, which was recorded by Lew White and re-played to us via the roll. Lew White was a well-known theatre organist of the period.

We had a lovely buffet lunch which we were able to enjoy sitting outside on a warm day with plenty to discuss and stories to swap.

The final instrument of the afternoon was a three-manual Wurlitzer cinema organ of twelve ranks originally from the Ritz Cinema in Barnsley. Richard

demonstrated the various sound effects used when accompanying silent films. These instruments were originally marketed as a 'Unit Orchestra' rather than an organ, to replace the orchestral musicians playing at silent cinemas. Richard played a selection of tunes by hand, but also demonstrated a rare, fully automatic, Moller Artiste roll player unit which played *In a Monastery Garden* by Albert Ketelbey, and *When Evening Shadows Gather* by Stoughton.

A lovely day which we hope to repeat again at sometime. The next group meeting, in Spring 2018, will be at St Albans Organ Museum. Details are published on page 161 in the Dates for Your Diary section of the journal.

Kevin McElhone

Midlands Group October Meeting

The Midlands Group tries to find new venues for its regular meetings, and this time we found a museum of memorabilia well suited to our eclectic interests. New member, Ian Barnes, suggested we visit the Beamhurst Museum, which lies just outside Uttoxeter in Staffordshire. This is conveniently located, relatively close to most of the regular members of the group. The museum is a private collection of just about everything anyone could collect. John and Laura Walton have been collecting for around 20 years and have amassed so many things there will always be something that reminds you of your childhood or past. The museum is open regularly in the summer and we were permitted sole use for our visit.

Members arrived late morning and spent until lunchtime viewing the museum collections. Tea, coffee and cake were provided by our hosts. The collection includes some mechanical music such as disc and cylinder musical boxes, and the Tomasso street barrel piano and cart once owned by the late John Nixon of Biddulph Moor, just up the road.



Midlands Group at Beamhurst Museum

After lunch and more coffee it was time for our show and tell. Roy Evett was first up with the sad news that his 96-year-old mistress had recently died! The lady concerned was his Model T Ford, which he and Pam had been driving home, when a chap in a 4x4 drove round the bend on the wrong side of the road. Luckily, Roy and Pam were not badly hurt although shaken, but the car was a write-off. What a sad end to a 96-year-old lady. Roy's presentation was about an unusual

Polyphon movement which had twin star wheels in each gantry slot. Theories were discussed and Roy explained that this was to be the subject of a future article. Next up was Doug Pell, who had brought a couple of tin toys, one of which was a rare pre-war example of a Technofix Mountain Railway, where the vehicle was in the form of a pump-trolley. Amazingly this was being thrown out by Doug's neighbour.

Nicholas Simons demonstrated a rare toy Hurdy Gurdy made by Selcol, this being a ten-note card disc organette, playing paper-as-valve. This had been purchased from the estate of our late member, Mick Doswell, and doesn't appear in Kevin's Organette book. He then joined Doug in showing a couple of Technofix tinplate clockwork toys.



Dennis Evett and Eric Hartley lording it at Beamhurst

David O'Connor had just returned from the Society's European tour, and had brought with him a video recording of some of the highlights of the visits. We were shown examples from the Perlee workshop, Utrecht Museum and Ferme des Orgues. It appears that a great time was had by all.

Nicholas Simons

News from other Societies

AMICA Bulletin Vol 54 No 4 Sep/Oct 2017

See also www.amica.org

We are advised by the Editor on our opening this edition, that it harks back to the good old days when the bulletin was almost exclusively about player pianos and piano rolls. The magazine opens with the regular Nickel Notes of Matthew Jaro, this time focusing on 'The Implementation of a MIDI system for the Seeburg H Orchestrion'. After six pages on this topic we move onto a write-up of the Piano Roll Conference at Cornell University submitted by Peter Phillips. Cornell houses the Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies. The conference came about because a PhD candidate at the university met Rex Lawson at an event in Wales, and they decided upon the Cornell conference, to be entitled 'Ghosts in the Machine;' Rex gave a two-and-half hour recital with his pianola, brought all the way from London by him and Denis Hall, and pushed up against a Steinway D concert grand. The programme sounds mouth-watering, and anybody who has had the pleasure of hearing Rex perform will be duly envious. Peter relates in detail the rest of the conference's proceedings, but his conclusion is a little mixed: he was disappointed that not more time was spent on reproducing rolls, but overall he is up-beat: 'This conference showed that there is now an increased interest in piano rolls of all types, and many of those who attended will have formed valuable links with other like-minded people.' The next twelve pages are



all submitted by Frank Himpsl, although as five separate articles, all on the subject of jazz, blues and ragtime rolls, as made by different artists. This is appropriately followed by Genn Thomas' Tribute to the Piano Roll King: J Lawrence Cook. Next we have an article about the Kibbey Music Roll Manufacturing Company. There are reports from the Chicago, Founding, Lady Liberty, MidWest, Southern California, and Texas Chapters.

Mechanical Music Vol 63 No 3 May/Jun 2017

See also www.mbsi.org

Several pages at the beginning of this edition are dedicated to the minutes of the mid-



year Trustees' meeting. As Editor Russell Kaselman points out in his column, the MBSI is indebted to Recording Secretary Dave Corkrum for his skill in recording the proceedings, a statement I, as a member of MBSI, fully endorse. Three pages submitted by Matthew Jaro in his series Nickel Notes, follow, relating some more recent developments in the world of nickelodeons. Next up is an item by Michele Marinelli, Curator of the Guinness Collection in the Morris Museum, entitled 'The Music Makers', featuring instrument makers of New Jersey, which subsequently became the theme of this year's MBSI convention held in that state. A brief item by Robin Biggins describes a salesman's musical box (effectively a demonstration model), before we are launched into a full-scale article, profusely illustrated, by Durward

Center about his restoration of The Phoenix Welte. As he says, 'After 30 years and three dogs, Col. Green's Welte, like the phoenix of legend, has been reborn ... Not the most practical project to undertake ... but so rewarding once finished.' Indeed, the results in the photographs look stunning. There follow three pages about a novel entitled 'The Music in Hingston's Box', submitted by the novel's author, Decima Blake, who was helped in her research by Vincent Freeman. A shorter item by Paul Bellamy considers the subject of little known Alphonse Malignon, with the author's now characteristic reiteration of work done by the late Anthony Bulleid. This edition concludes with reports from the Southern California and Golden Gate Chapters, as well as a tribute to the late Olin Tillotson.

Mechanical Music Vol 63 No 4 Jul/Aug 2017

This edition opens with Matthew Jaro's regular Nickel Notes column, featuring The Mechanical Music Registry, the brainchild of Art Reblitz, Terry Hathaway and Q David Bowers, providing an expanding database on pianos, orchestrions and nickelodeons. I came across this by accident while researching a talk, and can confirm there are some fascinating articles in it. Henri Noubel, with whom we are familiar through his writings for the French Society, here flexes his English language muscles and tells us how he became an organ grinder. Luuk Goldhoorn writes about 'Another unusual Sur Plateau musical mechanism', whilst what appears to be a refreshingly original article on the subject of 'glitchy' governors by Paul Bellamy spans eight pages. Edward F Hattrup then explains the workings of the

Mills Violano Bow Motor, which is followed by six pages about the DeBence Antique Music World, described as 'A delight for the Senses'. There are reports from the Lake Michigan, Golden Gate, Southern California, Northwest International and National Capital Chapters, as well as one on the combined AMICA/MBSI exhibition day held at the Los Angles Railroad Museum.

Vox Humana – June 2017

See also www.moos.org.uk

The cover of this edition is graced by David O'Connor's A Ruth & Sohn Model 36A organ ... a mouth-watering appetite whetter for the next MBSG meeting in Spring 2018. David's collection is described within the pages where David Dingwall reports on the MOOS AGM. Once again Mark Jefford should be congratulated for gathering together information about so many different and interesting events taking place throughout the world this year. Michael Clark reports on the 2016 annual MOOS trip, which as ever, was packed with exceptional visits and instruments to see and hear. Daphne Holt of the Australian Mechanical Organ Society gives an update on 'Roger the Robot', featured in the June 2013 MOOS News. MBSGB member Colin Cave teams up with Jim Hall to provide some photographs from Jim's collection, along with commentary, reflecting Jim's work as an organ builder and restorer. John and Christopher Dunn provide us with a charming personal story about their 'beautiful obsession' with fairground organs. The contents of this edition



conclude with another personal story, this time by Joyce Farnese, who also appears to suffer from an obsession with organs, and further reporting on the Diss Organ Festival from David Dingwall.

Reed Organ Society Quarterly Vol XXXVI No 1 2017

See also www.reedsoc.org

The cover of this edition, and some of the pages within it, feature Umashankar 'Bala' Date and the artisans of Bala Organ and Musicals, who have now produced almost 50 reed organs in India, operating with American-style suction reeds and reed cells. The first item in this edition concerns an organ which posed a mystery about its name, as it was spelled 'Brainerd' but the only company likely to have been involved was a 'Brainard.' Author Allen C Myers details his research, and also concludes that The H M Brainard Company, not to be confused with its forerunner, simply H M Brainard, did not manufacture organs bearing its name, but merely sold them. Even greater detail is given of the restoration of the particular instrument which prompted this article, generously illustrated with informative photographs. Another two pages in this edition contribute to the series of photographs entitled 'Mission Postcard Collections' featuring images from Korea, Japan, India and China. There is a tribute to Jim Bratton, the recently deceased former President of ROS, before the magazine concludes with Bala Date's account of his personal journey to teach himself music and then to start constructing reed organs. It is an inspiring tale of determination and enterprise, and one can but admire the



perseverance of this 'village youth on his own', who, when he began his quest, lived in a village with little in the way of communication with the outside world. Bravo!

Organ Grinders' News No 102 Autumn 2017

See also www.boga.co.uk

This slim issue is packed with news and interesting items, including a report on the Diss Organ festival in May 2017, a two-day annual event in Oxford, a review of some of the intervening years since BOGS was founded 25 years ago, and a report on the 38th Berlin Organ Festival in June 2017, which coincided with organ builder Axel Stuber's 40th anniversary. Tony Dunhill writes a helpful account of the various things he had to consider when building his second midi-operated organ, whilst the Pankhursts, Terry and Margaret, tell of an intriguing assignation they had in North London one night. Finally, it is good to learn that organs still attract younger participation, as Chris Richmond describes what led him to join BOGA and build himself an organ.



Non-English Language Journals

Musiques Mécaniques Vivantes 2nd Quarter 2017

See also www.aaimm.org

As usual the magazine opens with



a column from President Jean-Pierre Arnault, who anticipates some of the forthcoming Society events. The content proper begins with Henri Noubel commenting

on some items from the satirical press in the 19th century on the subject of Orgues de Barbarie, the French term for what we would call a hand-turned street organ. This is followed by eight pages about five automatic pianos and two mechanical ones in the collection of Marcel Mino, in which the author, Philippe Beau, draws attention to the unique characteristics found in each one. There are reports of two organ festivals: one in Oingt in Beaujolais in September 2016, and one in Pavilly, Normandy a week later. The latter is complemented by homage to Claude Lemesle, the then Mayor of Pavilly, who along with his team had always been very supportive of mechanical music, and who sadly died shortly after the festival. Elsewhere Yves Strobbe writes about five examples of music composed for the piano to emulate the sound of the musical box. Well-travelled Henri Noubel writes once again, informing us about the Australian organisation AMOS. This is followed by an article about Renaissance clocks with automata on display in the Galerie J Kugel.

Musiques Mécaniques Vivantes ***3rd Quarter 2017***

The first few pages of this edition are dedicated to the report of the AAIMM's AGM, and the attendant entertainment. It's enough to make a francophone want to join to be able to participate in and enjoy the animations. In the next item, Jérôme Collomb informs us he is as passionate about Offenbach as he is mechanical music, but cannot play the piano. However, this does not deter him from arranging Offenbach's less well-known music for his instruments, and despite these inauspicious prevailing conditions, somehow managing. Philippe Beau gives us yet another

instalment of his series on Makers and Retailers of French automatic pianos. Jean-Marc Lebout then reports on the Society's visit earlier in the year to Lorraine and Rudesheim. Jean-Marc also delivers a full round-up of a number of auctions which had taken place in Britain, Europe and the USA, as well as bringing us

up to date on some items of interest on the internet in the regular column, La seriNET. Jérôme Collomb reviews a disc of Fair Organ Follies – Amusement Park favourites. The contents conclude with news of a new organ festival destined for Dison in Belgium, started by enthusiast Etienne Dewalls, and reviews of Bellamy's 'The Music Makers of Switzerland', in which the reviewer points out that this work is based primarily on Anthony Bulleid's 'Oddments', supplemented by drawing upon other works and some original research, and Bowers' 'Encyclopedia of Disc Music Boxes'.

Schweizerischer Verein der Freunde April 2017

(See also www.sfm.ch)

Vreni Hildebrand writes about the



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self-built organ which embodies her love and passion for Swiss folklore. This is followed by the third instalment of Jacqueline and Peter Both's series entitled 'Madness or Passionate Fascination', which features three different types of machine with birds: a singing bird in a cage, a Karrer cylinder musical box with a bird housed in a medallion on the front, and a 'bird box'. This is followed by six pages about Johann Gebert, described as a 'restorer, organ builder and multi-talent'. An unusual Polyphon self-changer in Peter Rohrer's collection, which was in need of much love and attention, is the subject of the next article. Another special instrument is the subject of the next article, this time a trumpet organ built by Andreas Ruth and Sohn of Waldkirch.

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The Daphne Ladell Collection of around 220 items has also recently been released for sale. Please register your interest to receive the online catalogue and details of buying or bidding for items, which will close on 22nd November 2017 at 12 noon.

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Does anyone have or know of a **Komet Style 200 24½" disc music box**? This is the model that looks a bit like a Mikado Polyphon 54. I'm looking for information, but especially photos. Contact Steve Greatrex 07774 418 706 or email spg1@hotmail.co.uk

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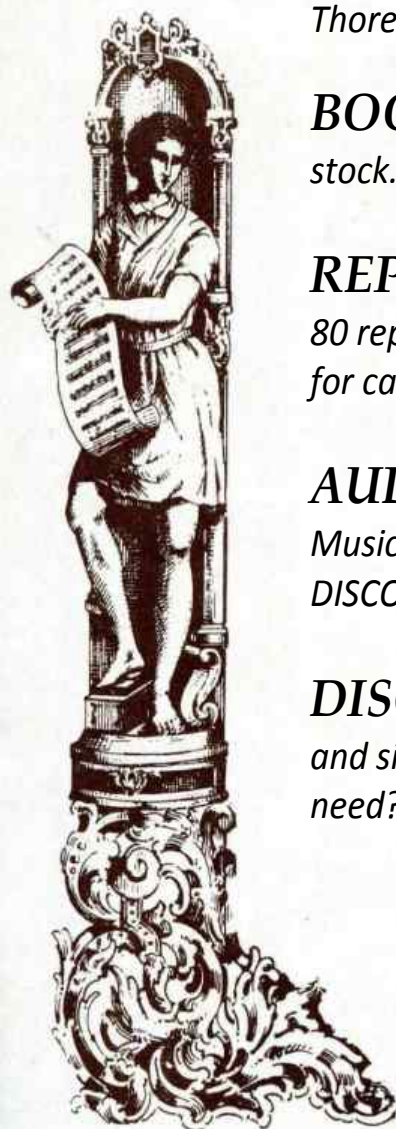
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