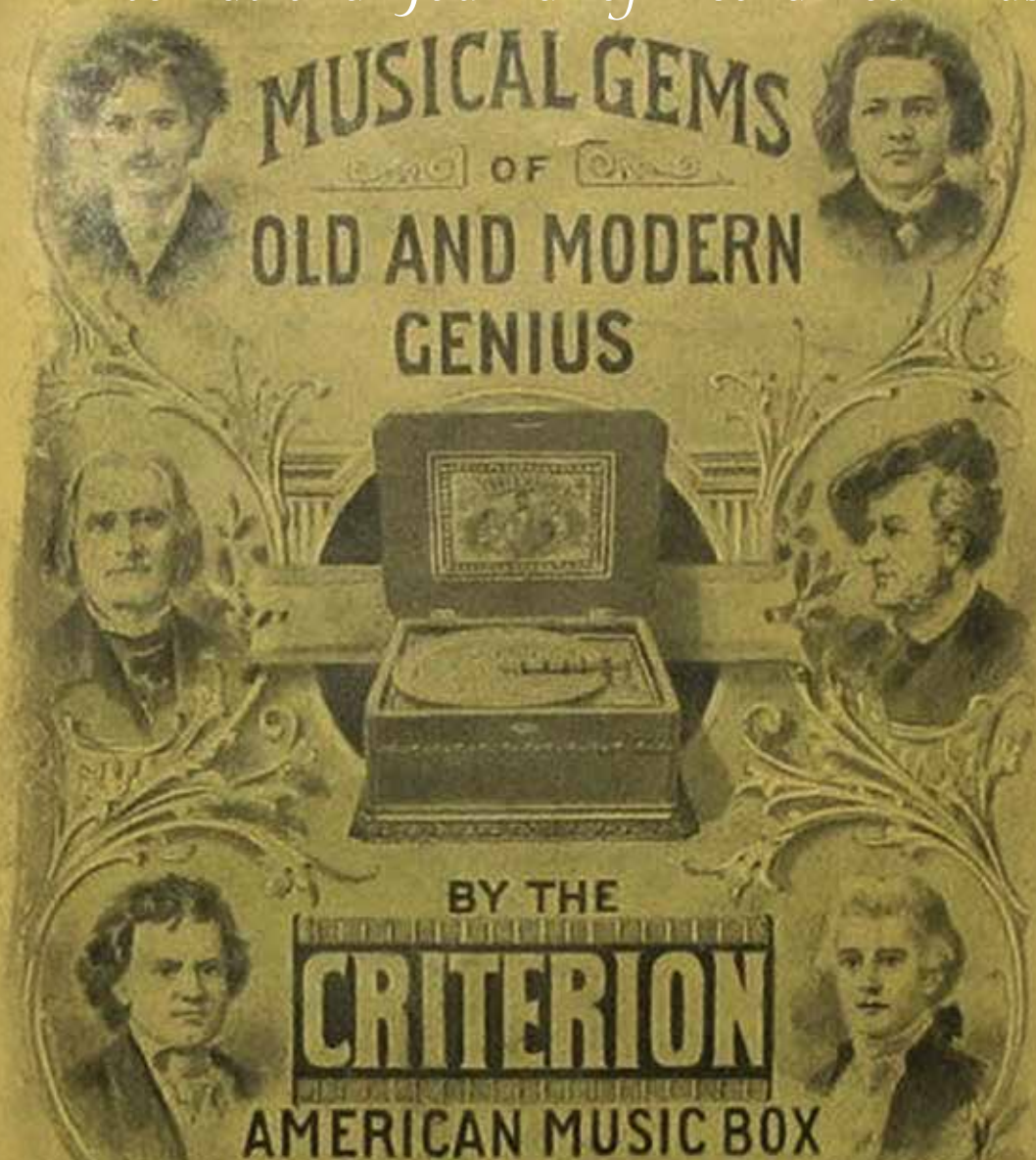


# The **Music Box**

*An International Journal of Mechanical Music*



## *In this issue*

*The Empire Organette*

*New Disc Box*

*Spotlight on ...*

*A Mason & Hamlin /*

*Material*

*James Dundon*

*Ampico B Concert*

*A Learning Adventure*

*... plus some 'Scraps' ...*

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



# NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM MBSGB

The Musical Box Society of Great Britain announces the publication of two new books  
Published in September 2018



## Supplement to The Disc Musical Box

Compiled and Edited by Kevin McElhone

ISBN 978-0-9557869-6-9

100pp Hard Back ISO A4 format [8.27" × 11.70"]; Profusely illustrated in colour throughout with

Additional Illustrations of Models, 89 Additional Lid Pictures;  
Additions to Lists of Models, Patents, Tune Lists & Serial Numbers;  
Combined Index of Images in the original book and its Supplement.

Originally published in 2012 and still available, see below for details,

**The Disc Musical Box** is a compendium of information about Disc Musical Boxes, their Makers and their Music; profusely illustrated throughout with Illustrations of each Disk Musical Box Model, and with Catalogue Scans, Lists of Models, Patents & Tune Lists.

Cost: £25.00 to members; £30.00 to Non-members; plus P&P at cost

## Supplement to The Organette Book

Compiled and Edited by Kevin McElhone

ISBN 978-0-9557869-5-2

100pp Hard Back ISO A4 format [8.27" × 11.70"]; Profusely illustrated in colour throughout; Additional Illustrations of Models; Additions to Lists of Patents, Tune Lists & Tuning Scales; A New Section on Trade Cards; Combined Index of Images in the original book and its Supplement.

**The Organette Book** is a compendium of information about Organettes, their Makers and their Music. Originally published in 2002 but now out of print although 2<sup>nd</sup> Hand copies are occasionally available in on-line auctions.

Cost: £20.00 to members; £25.00 to Non-members; plus P&P at cost.



## Other MBSGB PUBLICATIONS

Limited stocks remain available of the following MBSGB publications:



### The Disc Musical Box

Compiled and Edited by Kevin McElhone

A compendium of information about the Disc Musical Boxes, their Makers and their Music. Profusely illustrated in colour throughout; complete with a supporting DVD of Catalogue Scans, Lists of Models Patents & Tune Lists & Additional Illustrations

Published in February 2012

Book - ISBN 978-0-9557869-4-5 DVD - ISBN 978-0-9557869-7-6

Cost: £40.00; plus P&P at cost

\*\*\*\*\*

### Musical Box TUNE SHEETS

and Supplements 1 to 4

by the late Anthony Bulleid and by his successor Tim Reed

including the accompanying

**SEARCH ENGINE Version 3**

Devised and compiled by the late Luuk Goldhoorn

Over 500 Cylinder Musical Box Tune Sheets Illustrated, Identified & Described  
Invaluable aids to identifying the maker of a cylinder musical box.

Published in October 2000 ISBN 978-0-9505657-7-4

Cost: £10.00; plus P&P at cost

\*\*\*\*\*



### The Nicole Factor in Mechanical Music

by P Bellamy, A D Cunliffe and R Ison

A concise history of the Nicole family's involvement in and influence on the development of the Cylinder Musical Box industry during the 19th century.

Published in August 2006 ISBN 978-0-9505657-3-6

Cost: £40.00; plus P&P at cost

\*\*\*\*\*

For all MBSGB Publications, please refer to the Musical Box Society of Great Britain website for further details including latest availability, discounted prices and information on how to order. - [www.mbsgb.org.uk](http://www.mbsgb.org.uk)



# Contents



## Society Business

<i>Society Officers and contact details</i>	42
<i>Editor's Column</i>	43
<i>News &amp; Society Topics</i>	43
<i>Dates for Your Diary</i>	83

## Features

<i>An Invitation to Listen and Learn</i>	46
<i>Review of Player Piano Group Concert, 2018</i>	47
<i>The Empire Organette</i>	50
<i>The Criterion Disc Musical Box</i>	53
<i>New Disc Musical Box Material</i>	58
<i>A Learning Adventure</i>	63
<i>Scraps</i>	69
<i>A Musical What?</i>	74
<i>Oddments</i>	80

*'I have never before heard such a technicolour performance from a reproducing piano ...' Rowland Lee on a Hamlin & Mason with Ampico B system,*  
**p 47**



*'preserving a piece of history is no doubt a good thing': new member Deimantas Cepe describes the development of his interest,*  
**p 63**



## Regulars

<i>Spotlight On ... James Dundon</i>	76
<i>In Memoriam</i>	79
<i>News From Other Societies</i>	82
<i>Letters</i>	83
<i>Classified Advertisements</i>	84

*'The male Geneva stop was made in two parts ...' Richard Gregory,*  
**p 66**



*'It was like being transported back to the 1960s and '70s ...' Roger Booty, Scraps,*  
**p 69**

*Front Cover:* the cover of an original catalogue for the Criterion Disc Musical Box. See pages 53 – 57 for the rest of the catalogue.  
With thanks to Tim Reed for the photographs.

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## THE MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN

An incorporated private company limited by guarantee  
Reg. no. 10766572, reg. address:

Southgate Chambers, 37-39 Southgate Street,  
Winchester, Hants., SO23 9EH.

### Officers of the Society and their duties

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**NB: All correspondence to the Society and/or its  
Officers should be addressed to:**

**The Musical Box Society of Great Britain,  
c/o The Grange Musical Collection,  
Palgrave, DISS, Norfolk, IP22 1AZ.**

Please support your Society by volunteering to help run it – most ‘jobs’ do not require being a Member of the Board (Committee.) We cannot stress too highly that although membership remains buoyant, the MBSGB cannot continue to operate at its current level of offering two national meetings, an AGM/Auction and four quality magazines per year without more organisational assistance. In particular it would be helpful to have a ‘local’ organiser for each potential national meeting. This need not be onerous, but just someone ‘on the ground’ who could vet potential venues and suggest activities. (Legitimately ‘inspecting’ hotels can be fun!) Also, we think we can exponentially raise the Society’s profile with more ‘expert’ exploitation of social media. Any ‘techies’ out there?

Please continue to submit your items and photographs, preferably as Word documents and JPEGs by electronic means to: editor@mbsgb.org.uk. (Alternatively hard copy may be sent via the Society’s correspondence address: MBSGB, c/o The Grange Musical Collection, Old Bury Road, Palgrave, DISS, Norfolk, IP22 1AZ.)

Articles, letters and other contributions relating to the study and appreciation of musical boxes and other mechanical musical instruments for publication in the Journal are welcome. The (Acting) 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.

Please note that the deadline for next edition is  
1st July, 2019.

Copy deadlines are normally:

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

Publication dates:

1st March; 1st May; 1st August; 1st November.

We reserve the right to amend these dates as  
circumstances dictate.

# Editor's Column

This edition is somewhat of a *pot pourri*, with hopefully something of interest for everyone. We feature disc musical boxes, organettes, player pianos, curiosities, 'personalities' and dip our toes into restoration. Although for once there is no overarching theme to this edition, a number of articles demonstrate the passion of the enthusiast, and describe a journey, whether literal or metaphoric.

For example, I am delighted to have received contributions from two relatively new members, Richard Gregory and Deimantas Cepe relating their progress in venturing into the world of musical boxes, and how unexpectedly more absorbing our interest can become. Both items demonstrate the unquantifiable benefit of membership of the MBSGB, and an awakening passion. Meanwhile, Roger Booty, a long-standing member and periodic contributor, shares with us an eclectic mix of entertaining mechanical music reminiscences from his many travels, and you can discover why we have so many images of Norwegian foghorns in this edition.

A year ago, after its AGM in April 2018, our sister organisation, the Player Piano Group, was treated to an outstanding concert, courtesy of PPG - *and* MBSGB – member, Paul Salmon. Not only was the concert itself worthy of feature, but also the 'story' behind it as another example of an enthusiast's passion. PPG has kindly shared its own review of the concert which was an inspiring event.

We are also indebted to our friends in AMICA for providing the material for the second in our new series 'Spotlight on ...' 1<sup>st</sup> April (today, the time of writing) marks the first anniversary of Mechanical Music Radio, the fruit of James Dundon's on-going labour of love.

I make no apology for reprinting items previously published elsewhere, as both these deserve to be shared to a wider readership amongst mechanical music enthusiasts. I also make no apology for reprinting the very first of Anthony Bulleid's 'Oddments' from Volume 8, No 7, of *The Music Box*, on this, the tenth anniversary of his death (5<sup>th</sup> May – about the time you will be reading this.) In recent correspondence, an overseas member opined, 'the magazine lost ... some of its former glory since there are no oddments anymore.' Whilst the first 'Oddments' should be a fitting reminder of the scholarship Anthony shared with us which we all enjoy, it is reprinted especially for those who were not members at the time, and otherwise have no means of reading it. Enjoy ...

---

## News and Society Topics

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

You are reminded that the 2019 Annual General Meeting of the Musical Boxes Society of Great Britain will take place on

Saturday, 1st June, 2019, at Roade Village Hall,  
Bailey Brooks Lane, Roade, Northants., NN7  
2LS., followed by the Society Auction.

Doors open/registration & refreshments  
10.30 a.m. Meeting starts 11.00 a.m. prompt.

For full details of agenda and programme, please see enclosed flyer. Guests of bona fide members may attend, but only fully paid-up members may vote at the meeting. You also need to be a Society member to participate in the Society auction.

### REMINDER *for* ALL MEMBERS

A reminder for all members who use bank transfer as a means of making payments to The Society that they must change the Society's bank details on their payment instructions as follows by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019:

**Bank:** The National Westminster Bank plc

**Sort Code:** 60-17-21

**Account No:** 99256940

**Account Title:** The Musical Box Society of Great Britain

**BIC or Swift:** NWBKGB2L

**IBAN:** GB39NWBK60172199256940

Payments made by cheque or through PayPal are not affected by this change.

The Executive Committee April 2019



## Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting of The Musical Box Society of Great Britain, held on 2nd June, 2018 at Roade Village Hall, Northamptonshire

*(Copies of a more detailed record of the meeting will be available at the 2019 AGM, or may be obtained in advance on request from the Business Secretary.)*

The meeting was opened by the Chair, Alison Biden, at 11.01, with 41 members and 3 guests present. Apologies for absence were received from 18 members. No proxies were registered. The minutes of the 2017 AGM were approved unanimously, with no amendments, as a true and accurate record. There were few matters arising.

In her report the **President/Chair** spoke inter alia about membership numbers, events at which MBSGB had had a presence and promoted the Society and mechanical music, a children's educational magazine in which the Society featured, and the photo competition the Society is running. She also praised the hard work of the Committee, and asked Society members to consider volunteering to help run things.

Reports were also received from the **Membership Secretary, Correspondence Secretary, Meetings Secretary, Archivist, Auction Organiser, Advertising Secretary, and Web Master**. The **Treasurer** reported a surplus on the year overall, although there was a downward trend in advertising revenue while in his role as **Subscription Secretary**, now incorporated into the Treasurer's job, he reported that there had been a decline in membership, largely due to deaths and infirmity. As he was standing down, the Chair presented Treasurer John Farmer with a voucher as a token of the Society's appreciation of his many years of exceptional service.

The **Registrar** reported, via an intermediary, that there were 11,840 boxes now on the register, over 3,800 of them Nicoles. And over 3,000 tunes listed. The Register was primarily for the benefit and use of the MBSGB, and a suitable successor had been identified to take over from Arthur Cunliffe when he ceased to act as Registrar. Most information and enquiries to the Register now came from the USA.

A general report about the Editing and printing of the journal was delivered by Alison Biden in the absence of a report from the retiring Editor, Richard Mendelsohn. All the reports were accepted, with few questions.

There were reports from **three ad hoc groups** dealing with different matters:

- a) **Data Protection & GDPR**: this had been researched and MBSGB was now compliant with the new law, the details of which had been published in the Summer edition of The Music Box.
- b) It had been agreed that the MBSGB would offer a donation to the Austrian Academy of Sciences as an encouragement to get the book by Dr Kowar about musical boxes from Vienna & Prague published in English. Points made during the ensuing discussion were: that the market for the book was likely to be small; that the general feeling of the meeting seemed to be that MBSGB need not concern itself with proportionality; whether MBSGB should make a donation at all; would MBSGB get any free copies of the book for its own use; also, the members at the meeting were reminded that it was their money which was being discussed. **Finally a proposal was passed that if MBSI could be persuaded to increase its offer by \$500 to \$2500, the MBSGB would match it with £2500 (or equivalents to the sum in euros.)**
- c. A further proposal that MBSGB should publish two books by Kevin McElhone, one a supplement to the Organette Book, and one a supplement to the Disc Musical Box Book was adopted.

The following changes to the Articles of Association (7.4) were approved:



- a) The appointment of **Recording Secretary** be changed to **Business Secretary** to better reflect the duties and responsibilities now undertaken on behalf of The Society;
- b) The advance notice in writing to members regarding nominations for Officer posts be reduced from four weeks to three.

### Election of Officers for the forthcoming year

Alison Biden stood down as President/Chair after five years in Office, and the following were elected by unanimous vote: **Joint Vice Presidents:** Alison Biden & Nicholas Simons; **Treasurer:** David Worrall; **Membership Secretary:** Kevin McElhone; **Correspondence Secretary:** Nicholas Simons; **Archivist:** Alison Biden; **Auction Organiser:** John Ward; **Advertising Secretary:** Mark Singleton; **Webmaster:** Kath Turner; **Meetings Organiser:** David O Connor; **without portfolio:** Keith Reedman & Thomas Macey. Vacant appointments: President/Chair; Business Secretary; Editor. [After the meeting Alison Biden was appointed as Acting Business Secretary.]

A motion to retain the **subscription rates** for 2019 the same as 2018 was passed, and a new rate of £15 per year for under 30s was to be trialled for 18 months. Also, for a trial period, an introductory rate of £15 for the first year only for any new joiners.

The meeting agreed without division that the **2019 Annual General Meeting of The Musical Box Society of Great Britain should take place on Saturday 1st June, 2019, at 11 a.m. at Village Hall, Roade.**

**Any Other Business** consisted of various notifications and expressions of thanks, plus one query relating to indexing more editions of The Music Box to go on the website, which was dealt with at the meeting. The meeting closed at 12.46.

The Richard Bartram Collection of Mechanical Music  
Friday 17 May 1pm

twgaze



A large selection from a private life of collecting: polyphons including Symphonion and Stella and a rare self-changing model; cylinder and table top music boxes, single comb and sublime harmony; camera 'phones; HMV gramophones, incl. Red and Black Gems; two barrel pianos, one with automata figures; musical clocks; discs, cylinders, 88-note piano rolls, needle tins, books and manuals.

Viewing Thursday 16 May 2 – 8pm  
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www.twgaze.co.uk

# *An Invitation to Listen and Learn*

*An exceptional concert involving a 1935 Mason & Hamlin Grand Piano with Ampico B system is not merely a delight to the ear, but is also an instructive experience*

The invitation to the 2018 Player Piano Group AGM whetted one's appetite with the following:

'Thanks to the generous efforts of member Paul Salmon, we will enjoy his lovely Mason and Hamlin Grand Piano with rare Ampico B system, both freshly restored and in transit from America, in a two-part concert curated to suit all tastes ...' Unlike reviewer Rowland Lee, the current Acting Editor of *The Music Box* had had the joy of hearing a few examples of Mason and Hamlin instruments before, and knew this was another opportunity not to be missed. Even so, as Rowland reveals, expectations were exceeded.

This exceptional concert did not owe its success to the instrument and musicians alone, but also the sheer determination and perseverance of the piano's owner, and the numerous hurdles he overcame in order to present his new acquisition to the audience. This is a tale of dedication and passion which ably illustrates what it is to be an enthusiast.

Having acquired the instrument and then arranged its meticulous restoration which owner Paul Salmon describes as 'five years of very slow progress,' Paul's trials were only just beginning.

'Getting one of these pianos accepted by the US customs for permanent export to the UK (or any other country) is difficult and frustrating and it is essential to prove that there are no CITES problems from endangered species e.g. ivory and rare endangered woods or veneers.' (This

is a matter which preoccupies many a reed organ enthusiast in the USA, where transporting an instrument simply from one state to another can become a nightmare.) Satisfying that requirement, one is then faced with yet more bureaucracy. Proof is also necessary that the item is of collectors' interest, and that all bills have been paid. So much for the exporting end of things; the next obstacle is going through the importing process. As Paul explains, it is essential to have good forwarding agents who will pre-warn HMRC (customs officers at the final country gateway) that the piano is a vintage item of collectors' and historic interest and give the correct Tariff Code. It will come as no surprise to a number of members who have suffered frustration when trying to import an item from overseas, that many Customs Officers at the terminal are not fully briefed concerning the correct Tariff Code. It is essential, therefore, to make sure also that the forwarding agent repeats the correct Tariff Code and tells the customs officials to discuss with the "Binding Tariff Office of HMRC" to confirm that the piano should be classified as duty free (no import duty) and only charged 5% VAT on valuation by HMRC. 'If this not achieved,' Paul warns, '20% VAT will be charged on valuation and this can only be reversed by a long process of appeal.' (Don't we know!) Meanwhile the owner must pay the full VAT and any duty to have the item released by Customs.

Despite the delays and tribulations, the piano was thankfully on stage in the nick of time, one week before the

concert, although originally it was hoped that it would have been there a lot earlier, ideally six weeks or so, to enable settling, etc.

Paul is offering his fine piano as a gift/long term loan to the Faculty of Music, University of Oxford. He reasons that the time has come for enthusiasts who world-wide have clearly prevented the extinction of many very fine reproducing pianos - to name just one type of mechanical musical instrument - should now involve Academic Music Departments. These can often spend resources and time to study and benefit from the priceless music archives that such pianos offer through their piano rolls. He cites the example of Stanford University, California, which took the initiative in 2014, opening a new department dedicated to the care and maintenance of player pianos and related instruments, and purchased the Condon collection in Australia. In his opening remarks to the concert Paul alluded to a statement contained in a President's message from a (then recent) edition of *The Music Box* as to the value and importance of preserving and exploiting mechanical instruments for research purposes. As Paul concludes, 'The value of these musical archives are just immense.'

For further details of the Player Piano Group and future events, see [www.playerpianogroup.org.uk](http://www.playerpianogroup.org.uk)





# *Player Piano Group 2018 AGM: Concert Review*



We knew in advance that this was to be a very special concert indeed. All the elements were exceptional: a very late (1935) Ampico B installation in a Mason & Hamlin model RA grand, freshly arrived by plane from America, having received an absolutely exhaustive restoration at the expert hand of Craig Brougner and under the watchful eye of its owner, Paul Salmon, a gentleman who combines in his interests both passion and an infallible eye for detail. We were not disappointed! We do of course have wonderful restorers here in the UK, but – and please forgive me gentlemen – this was something else altogether. All the elements combined here along with the warm acoustic of the Jacqueline du Pre recital hall to create an experience which was probably as close as possible to being transported back in time to the Ampico showroom in 1935 to listen to a perfectly regulated, brand-new instrument. I have never before heard such a technicolour performance from a reproducing piano, ranging from the merest whisper (and believe me when I say that not one single pianissimo note was missed during the entire performance) to

the warmest, most golden forte. Forgive the hyperbole: it really was that good!

This was the first time I had heard a Mason & Hamlin piano, and boy, was I impressed! Such warmth and clarity, like the best-ever Bluthner, but warmer

and with a brilliance when called for. Even the finest piano tone usually begins to pall for me, after listening to it closely for a couple of hours, but not this piano: I could have listened to it all night.



*Rowland Lee and Paul Salmon discussing the Mason & Hamlin*



*The stage is set for the concert...!*

Not only did this boudoir grand have a warm tone, but it held its own in presence and brilliance against the hall's resident Steinway model D which we heard in the opening number, performed live by the excellent pianist Gwenneth Pryor, a friend of Paul Salmon's, playing the Chopin Etude op. 25 no.1. In emulation of the concert at which the Ampico reproducing system was launched, this was followed by a performance of the same piece on roll, played on the Mason and Hamlin by E. Robert Schmitz. This made for a very interesting comparison, as both the live and roll performances were equally convincing, though differing in details as one would expect.

Gwenneth Pryor was not the only live musician to be featured in this recital;

the Violinist Neta Rudich played August Wilhelmj's arrangement of Schubert's 'Ave Maria', accompanied by Mishel Piastro's 1921 Ampico accompaniment roll. This was a superb performance. Paul was fortunate to have found a violinist who was not

only an excellent soloist but who was happy to follow the tempo and rubato of the accompaniment roll. The applause in the room showed this to have been a popular choice. (I would love to see this performance on YouTube!)



*The start of the show!*





*Paul Salmon provided commentary to the programme*



*And combined thanks for Mason & Hamlin and Ampico...!*

Paul had devised an excellent programme for this recital, featuring a representative cross-section of many different types of roll, styles of music and noted Ampico performers, and introduced each roll with carefully-researched musical information and personal anecdotes. Outstanding items included Chopin's 'Andante Spianato and Polonaise Brillante' op. 22 played by Tina Lerner, Rubinstein's 'Boat Song' played by Rachmaninoff and, my personal favourite, a transcription of Reynaldo Hahn's song 'Could My Songs This Way Be Winging' played by Milton Susskind – it was just sublime! We also heard several excellent dance rolls, including Gershwin's 'Do It Again' by the Original piano Trio and, to finish, an extremely late roll, Glenn Miller's 'Moonlight Serenade', recorded in 1939 by Jeremy Lawrence. Even at this late date, the standard of arrangement and performance had not diminished.

Paul is to be congratulated for having found such a wonderful instrument and for having had it restored so immaculately. He is also to be thanked by the PPG for having given us the opportunity to hear this instrument under such ideal circumstances. As with so many previous AGM recitals, this concert will stay in my memory for many years to come.

Rowland Lee

*Many thanks to Rowland Lee & PPG for sharing this review and the images.*



# *The Empire Organette – Two tunes for the price of one?*

by Kevin McElhone

As most of you will know I am always trying to search out examples of previously unseen disc musical box models and organettes. This time we take a look at an 'Empire' organette which is thought to have been made in Leipzig, Germany, although only one original advertisement has been found – see page 91, image No.190 of *The Organette Book*. This claims that the organ, made in 'handsome polished Chippendale mahogany-colour case' was new for 1907 and cost £3 2/- (three pounds and two shillings) including delivery.

Although the advertisement does not give the maker's name, it is thought by one person in Germany that the Empire was made by Wellner and Prager Music Works in Leipzig Germany, who are best known for the upright Victoria organette. However, the nearest patent number, No.15374, granted 15th February, 1906, shows the maker as Gustav Adolph Buff-Hedinger, with the instrument a 26 note machine with periphery edge drive on the disc.

The Music Box Vol 2, page 155 shows a Gamages advertisement for 1908 which lists the instrument and six discs at 41/6 (41 shillings and sixpence, just over £2) with extra discs priced at 1/8 (1 shilling and eightpence) each. These are clearly discounted from the prices mentioned in the above advertisement.

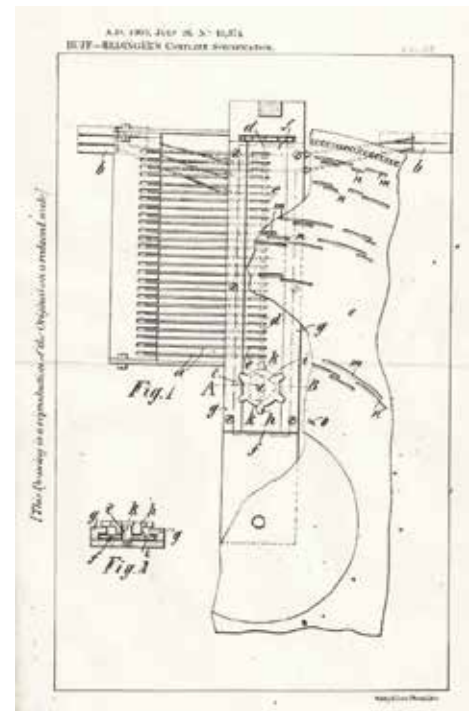
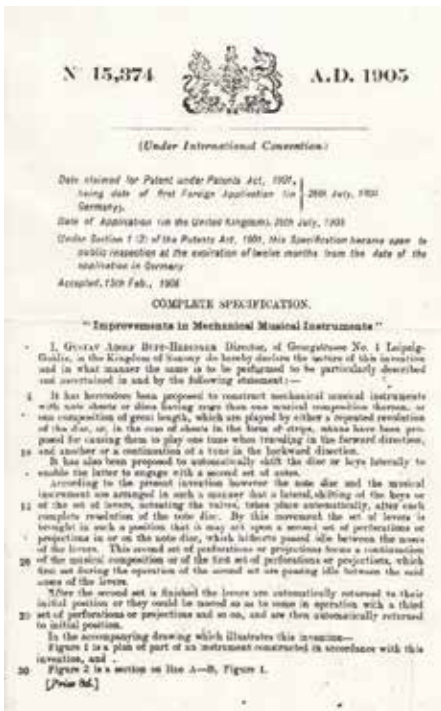
At first glance this looks like a standard 24-note Ariston organette made by Paul Ehrlich in hundreds of thousands playing thousands of titles of pressspahn cardboard discs using metal keys to read the card discs in the same way as a fairground organ. On closer examination it can be seen that the keys are rather



*The Empire Organette, full view*

narrow and once the discs are examined it becomes clear that there are either two different tunes or one tune played over two revolutions of the disc, so this is a 'long-play' organette taking about one minutes fifteen seconds to revolve twice. The Empire organette is a 24-note organette and has one major difference from Ariston in that it plays metal discs and is in fact the only known disc-shifting organette. It plays two revolutions from each metal disc rather like certain models of New Century, Sirion and Tannhauser Disc Musical Boxes.

Harold Draper, in the USA (see <https://www.organetterepair.com/index.html>) has recently restored this instrument and sent these photographs. He says that the fingers that read the disc are about half the thickness of a standard Ariston, otherwise it is identical in construction as far as the main mechanism. The shifting mechanism was quite a challenge. The original pin on the centre drive disc which had sheared off, no longer shifted the hold-down mechanism at the correct time, and it would not shift until the second song had already started. He calculated the spacing and added



Patent for the Empire organette

a new pin in the correct position so you will see two pins on the top of the drive disc, one to fill the existing hole and a new one in the correct position. The off-timing in shifting is due to wear to the bottom side of the star shaped brass gear. He fabricated a new shoulder screw for the brass shifting gear as well and it now spins freely. There is only about 2.5 mm clearance for the pin to connect with the brass gear. If the pin is too long it hits the cast iron frame. There is very little room for error. The case top was quite warped above the key frame pivot area so the linkage was hitting the bottom of the case top when the valves would open. He had to glue and clamp a thin piece of veneer to the underside of the warped area so now it is straight and clearing the linkage.

I am trying to collect tune titles for these rare discs, from two sources. So far I have the tunes below, mostly

one tune on two revolutions, although 30036 and 30125 each have two different tunes on them. The advertisement from 1907 lists these six immediately following tunes as being included with the instrument when purchased, with more available for 2/- (two shillings) each:

<i>The Bluebells of Scotland</i>	<i>Rainbow</i>
<i>My Irish Molly O</i>	<i>Killarney</i>
<i>Navaho</i>	<i>Hiawatha</i>

These tunes listed above from the advertisement of 1907 are not on the list of surviving discs below, as the list of surviving discs (below) are a compilation of information received in 2018 from two different sources, one in the USA and one in Germany. Can any reader help with more titles from their own instrument or perhaps know of one in a museum, please?

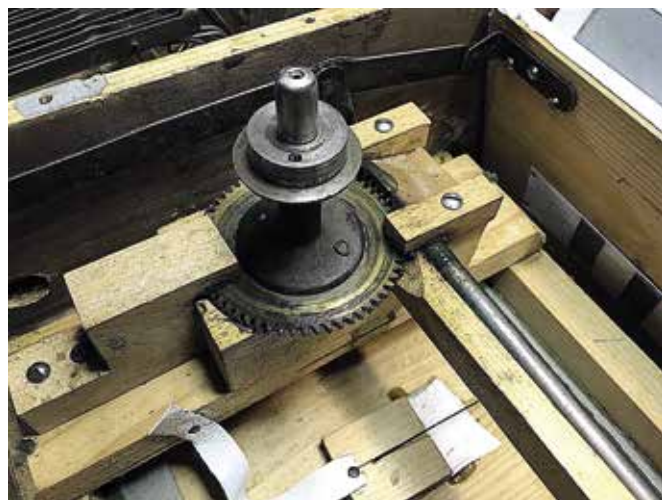
30000	<i>Hänsel &amp; Gretel</i>	Tanz Duett	
30005	<i>First Dream of Love</i>	(Don Cesar) R.Dellinger	
30006	<i>Martha</i>	Potpourri	
30024	<i>Lustige Bruder</i>	(Jolly Fellows Waltz)	Vollstedt
30029	<i>Der Freischütz</i>	(Potpourri)	
30036	<i>Glühwurmchen Idyll [Glow-worm] &amp; Stephanie Gavotte</i>		
30062	<i>Der Feldprediger</i>	<i>Traumwalzer</i>	
30063	<i>Operette Nanon</i>	Annen Walzer	
30078	<i>Der Vogelhändler</i>	Adam Walzer	
30086	<i>My Queen Waltz / Ma Reine Valse / Meine Königin Walzer</i>		
30097	<i>Das Spitzentuch der Königin &amp; Roses from the South</i>		Waltz Strauss
30125	<i>Bis früh um fünf Marsch &amp; Nimm mich mit</i>		Polka-Lied



*The Empire Organette – Two tunes for the price of one?*



*Drive disc. You can see the new pin towards the righthand side.  
(Note the enlarged scale of this photograph)*



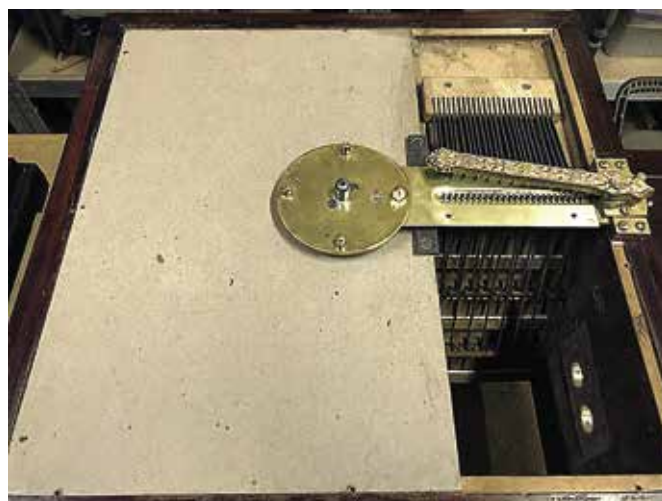
*The centre pivot post which the disc goes over,  
with the drive gear wheel below*



*Detail of tune change cam wheel, in situ and removed*



*The assembled tune change mechanism showing the tune  
change cam wheel to the right of the 24 keys*



*Looking from above; the 24 keys are visible,  
with the tune table that the disc sits on with  
three round and one square drive pin*

If you would like to listen to this instrument please refer to these two links which were kindly supplied by Harold Draper, the organette restorer in USA who re-built this instrument for the current owner:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9J118W9Ipw&feature=youtu.be>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zmr\\_xjUSVPk&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zmr_xjUSVPk&feature=youtu.be)

Kevin McElhone, with thanks to Roger Booty for finding the patent.



# *The Criterion Disc Musical Box*

*— photographs of an original catalogue supplied by Tim Reed*

**I**N every age the ennobling and elevating power of music has made itself felt and appreciated. From the sage to the savage none are exempt from its fascinating charms. Indeed, so important a place does it occupy as an accomplishment, that no education can be considered complete without it. But how much time and money must be sacrificed before a person becomes proficient in playing a musical instrument *in an acceptable manner!* In this busy age comparatively few are willing to devote the time necessary to that end.

Recognizing this, men of genius have labored to produce mechanical instruments that will furnish refined music for the home, and wonderful results have been achieved. But as long as the Music Box, under the skilled hands of the Swiss has been a work of art, the delights which the finer grades of instruments brought into the family circle remained the privilege of a favored few. But now the American mechanic and his marvelous skill have entered this hitherto exclusive precinct of art and with the aid of American machinery have brought the fascinating charm and the refining influence of the Music Box so easily within reach, that there is hardly any excuse for depriving even the humblest home of its beneficial influence. Nor has the average novice ever taken so much interest as just now in the development of these instruments, which become more and more interesting as one familiarizes himself with them.



## The "Criterion."

Our new American Music Box with Interchangeable Tune Sheets.  
Musically, mechanically and in appearance superior to anything of its kind.

Is an automatic or self-operating and self-playing instrument, with a highly tempered steel comb, the teeth of which never get out of tune and are sounded by revolving spur-wheels, which in their turn are driven by projections stamped on revolving circular sheets. The mechanism is driven by a spring motor which is simplicity itself, and consequently not apt to be troublesome. Mainsprings are wound with detachable outside cranks, and are supplied with noiseless clicks.

The "Criterion" is, of course, interchangeable in all its working parts, as well as in music. We use a note projection which is practically indestructible. Tune Sheets are very strong. Tunes may be had in endless variety, which will be continually and rapidly increased. They can be readily changed by anyone, no skill or experience being required for the purpose.

Any skilled mechanic will be able to attend to any repairs that may become necessary.

We use a self-regulating fly wheel, insuring uniform speed. Our damper system is the most perfect known and very durable.

Our cases are made in the most careful and substantial manner, attractive in design and handsome in finish.

Our arrangement of music is as near perfection as is possible in any mechanical instrument, and the work is done by artists of the greatest skill and experience.

*The instruments are made under our own patents, or under license, as regards parts that could possibly come in dispute.*



THE CRITERION.


**Style I.**

44 notes in comb; Mahogany or Oak case.


Size of case: Length, 12½ inches; Width, 10 inches; Height, 8 inches.

Diameter of Tune Sheets, 8½ inches.

Style I, \$14.00. Tunes, 25c. each.



THE CRITERION.



The sound of Fiddle scraped by bow,  
In "auld lang syne" was deemed entrancing,  
Gay lads and lassies tripped the toe  
Till morning light oft found them dancing.

**Style II.**

58 notes in comb; Mahogany or Oak case.

Size of case: Length, 15½ inches; Width, 14½ inches; Height, 9 inches.

Diameter of Tune Sheets, 11½ inches.

Style II, \$25.00. Tunes, 40c. each.

**Style III.**


**Sublimette Forte Duplex.**

116 notes in comb; Mahogany or Oak case, handsomely panelled.

Size of case: Length, 16½ inches; Width, 15½ inches; Height, 9 inches.


Diameter of Tune Sheets, 11½ inches.

Style III, \$90.00. Tunes, 40c. each.



THE CRITERION.

**Style IV.**




77 notes in comb; Mahogany or Oak case, handsomely carved and panelled.


Size of case: Length, 22 inches; Width, 20 inches; Height, 10 inches.

Diameter of Tune Sheets, 10½ inches.

Style IV, \$45.00. Tunes 60c. each.



THE CRITERION.



And when the Spinet came to blend  
The quaint charm of its simple stringing;  
The zeal of dancers knew no end,  
While waltz and minuet were ringing.



THE CRITERION.

Style V.

Sublime Harmonic Fortissimo Duplex.



154 notes in comb; handsomely panelled and carved case, in Mahogany or Oak.  
 Size of case: Length, 22 inches; Width, 30 inches;  
 Height, 10 inches.  
 Diameter of Tune Sheets, 15 1/2 inches.  
 Style V. \$70.00. Tunes, 60c. each.

THE CRITERION.



The Harpsichord with stately grace,  
 In plaintive strains the ear delighting,  
 Next in the ball-room took its place,  
 To joyous revelry inviting.

THE CRITERION.

Style VI.

Sublime Harmonic Fortissimo Duplex.



Same as Style V.


154 notes in comb; but with extra richly carved case in Mahogany or Oak.  
 Size of case: Length, 23 inches; Width, 20 1/2 inches;  
 Height, 11 1/2 inches.  
 Diameter of Tune Sheets, 15 1/2 inches.  
 Style VI. \$85.00. Tunes, 60c. each.

THE CRITERION.




And then the brilliant Concert Grand,  
 Far richer harmonies revealing,  
 Under the touch of master hand  
 Sent merry dancers madly reeling.

12 THE CRITERION.




**Cabinet and Stand  
for Criteria, Styles IV,  
V, and VI.**  
In Mahogany or Oak.  
Size: Height, without box,  
34 inches;  
Length, 23½ inches;  
Width, 21 inches.  
Plain Cabinet, \$18.00.

THE CRITERION. 13



The Band with military dash  
Kept time while tireless feet were gliding:  
The cymbal's and the bass drum's crash  
In strident tones the laggards chiding.

Cabinet and Stand  
for Criteria, Styles IV,  
V, and VI.  
In Mahogany or Oak,  
handsomely trimmed with  
fancy mouldings, pan-  
elled, etc.  
Size: Height, without box,  
34 inches;  
Length, 23½ inches;  
Width, 21 inches.  
Fancy Cabinet, \$35.00.



14 THE CRITERION.

**Criterion "Grand."**  
Style X.  
"Sublimette."

92 notes in comb; Mahogany or Oak case, handsomely carved and  
panelled.  
Size of case: Length, 28 inches; Width, 35 inches;  
Height, 13 inches.  
Diameter of Tune Sheets, 20½ inches.  
Style X, \$75.00. Tunes, \$1.40 each.



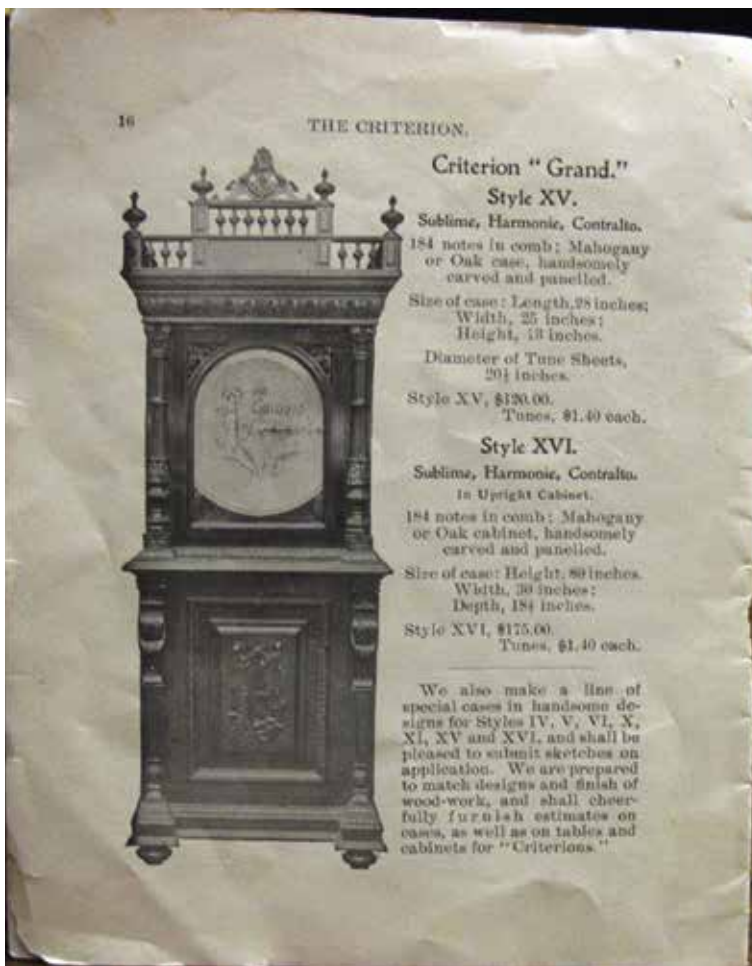
Style XL  
"Sublimette" in Upright Cabinet.  
92 notes in comb; Mahogany or Oak cabinet, handsomely carved  
and panelled.  
Size of case: Height, 80 inches; Width, 30 inches;  
Depth, 18½ inches.  
Style XL, \$110.00. Tunes, \$1.40 each.

THE CRITERION. 15



But now a magic key unlocks  
A burst of melody enchanting.  
The new Criterion Music Box,  
All former instruments supplanting





## New Disc Box Material

from Kevin McElhone

Here is a selection of new discoveries made since the Supplement to the Disc Musical Box Book was published in September 2018.

Included are lid pictures, two new disc sizes and some unusual case designs.

If this has whetted your appetite the original book is still available at £45. The supplement, copies of which are still available, is £25. If purchased both together, there is a £5 discount, i.e. total cost for the two together is £65, plus p&p.



Princess 11" (28cm) the only example seen so far



Stella machine 25 ¾" machine





*Kalliope 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (19.6cm) with bells*



*Kalliope 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (19.6cm)*



*Imperator 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (14cm) Model 27*



*Imperator 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (14cm) Model 27*



*Kalliope 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (19.6cm) No.577245*



*Kalliope 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (34.0cm)*



*Kalliope 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (34.0cm)*



*Mira 9  $\frac{5}{16}$ " (23.7cm) No.71842*



*Mira 9"*



*Monopol 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (25cm) notice the lid of the same as the Lochman of similar size*



*Lochmann 6 15/16" (18.0cm)*



*Orphenion sold in Dublin, Eire*



*Regina 8 1/8" (20.6cm) with a rather colourful lid picture*



*Junghans 11 3/4" (30cm) disc*



*Mira 18" No.8463*



*Regina 11" (28cm) with a factory-painted finish*



*Libellion Instructions*



*Polyphon 8 1/8" (20.6cm)*



*Polyphon 11" (28cm)*





*Olympia 10 1/2" (26.5cm) was the size insisted on by the seller, previously an unknown disc size*



*Regina 15 1/2" (39.5cm) duplex serial No.53758*



*Regina 15 1/2" (39.5cm) coin-operated*



*Regina 15 1/2" (39.5cm) coin-operated*



*Regina 15 1/2" h (39.5cm) lid instructions of a slightly different design from the previous example found*



*Regina 15 1/2" (39.5cm) originally sold by Murray Spink*



*Regina metal advertising sign*





Regina used a picture like this which was found online in a German 19<sup>th</sup> Century Book



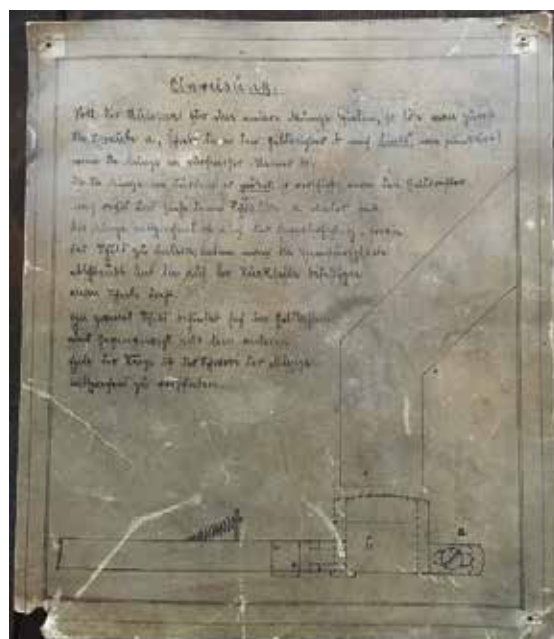
Regina used this image on a 15½" (39.5cm) but they are usually found on the Autochange models compare to the german book picture



Symphonion 4½" (11.5cm) No.755788



Troubadour 7 ¼" (18cm)



Sirion German Instruction sheet



# *A Learning Adventure ... a New Member Writes (1)*

Deimantas Cepe

My involvement in antiques started since I was in my teens, throughout the years one member of my family kept involving me in various aspects of antique restoration and trading. He has been a collector for as long as I can remember, therefore I must mention my uncle Klementas Sakalauskas. Without him, I have never got in to musical boxes.

Since I moved to UK from Lithuania in 2004, I have bought a number of items for my uncle. On one occasion he asked me to sell a cylinder box. We were not sure of the value, so I emailed number of auctioneers. Estimates were not high enough to consider bringing the box over to UK. Then I remembered Kevin McElhone. I had met Kevin few years before and I knew he was dealing in musical boxes. He replied with an explanation of what it might cost to restore the box and how long it might take.

I thought if that is true, there must be a need for a newcomer in the business of musical box restoration. It wasn't the first time I thought about it, but it was my first strong consideration of learning this craft. I am one of those guys who likes to spend time in the garage, and doing such work would finally give me a reason to have my own workshop, something I always wanted to have. Based on my previous experience, I knew I could do it, if only there was someone willing to show me how.

Then I looked at the other aspects as well. Like most people, I enjoy music, but I was not sure if I really

enjoyed the sound of a musical box. Some of them sound beautiful, others not so much, but it is a different story for me when it comes to the engineering side of it. I am amazed by the complexity and the amount of thinking that it took to create a musical box. I was also aware that gained knowledge will not go to waste, simply because there are not many people in the world who can do such work, and preserving a piece of history is no doubt a good thing.

After some consideration, I decided that I was going to learn how to repair musical boxes. I joined the Musical Box Society of Great Britain and signed up for a meeting in December 2018 at Teme Valley Winders.

At the meeting I received a very warm welcome from the host, John Phillips, and other members. As soon as I walked in, I was amazed to see such a large collection. After talking to a number of people, someone pointed out Roy Evett. Roy had contacted me previously via email, offering his support. At the time I had no idea how important this person would become to me.

Roy kindly agreed for me to spend a day at his workshop and this is how it started...

By now I have visited Roy a number of times, each time learning different aspects of restoration. As per Roy's advice and my own preference, my focus is on cylinder musical boxes with the intention



*The author, Deimantas Cepe*

to progress to disc boxes at some stage in the future. It is surprising that the more I learn, the more interesting it gets.

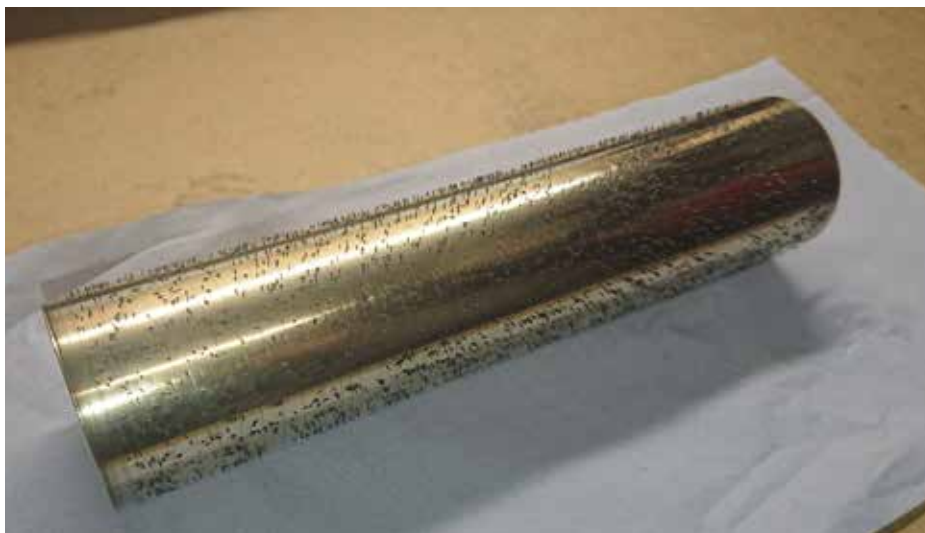
My first visit to Roy's was too much information for my brain; we spent all day in his workshop and at the end he showed me his collection.

I already had one box which I had previously bought at auction, so back at home I dismantled and re-assembled my box a few times, just to get familiar with the components and the arrangement. I bought this box to practise, then I was going to restore and sell it. Now I am not sure; maybe I will keep it for myself. I guess this is how you get attached to these boxes!

Once I was familiar with the movement, I then used spares that Roy gave me to practise cleaning and polishing (Figs. 1 & 2.) After that, I tried straightening bent pins. In his book, Graham Webb says that ~20% of the pins are expected to break. In my experience, the percentage can be even less, on condition that the pins are not bent too far down. However, if the pins are bent down flat, the chances of straightening them will be close to 10%. Obviously it also depends on the general condition of the cylinder, such as cleanliness and corrosion level.



*Fig 1: Before polishing the cylinder*



*Fig 2: After polishing the cylinder*



*Fig 3: Jig*

Then I tried fitting dampers; this job can be separated in to three parts. Fitting the dampers, shaping them and adjusting. At first, it was awkward to keep control of the comb and other elements whilst fitting dampers, so I made myself a jig (Fig. 3.) This made the job much easier and faster. Soon I realised that shaping takes just as long as fitting new dampers. I have not yet fully explored checking and adjusting the dampers to the point where they function as expected.

Soldering new tips for the comb was not too difficult; however soldering new teeth was the hardest thing to learn so far. At the beginning there was an issue of finding a solder, then I could not get the right temperature. After that I tried different soldering techniques, and finally quality. Even if I am not yet 100% happy with the visual appearance of my newly soldered teeth, my tests show that the joint is strong, and a tooth will break elsewhere before the joint gives out. I am hoping that by the time this article is published I will be reasonably good at soldering new teeth.

I also had a chance to visit member Ian Barnes. It was very interesting to see his approach to certain aspects of restoration. Knowing what others do gives me a wider view and it opens my mind for new ideas.

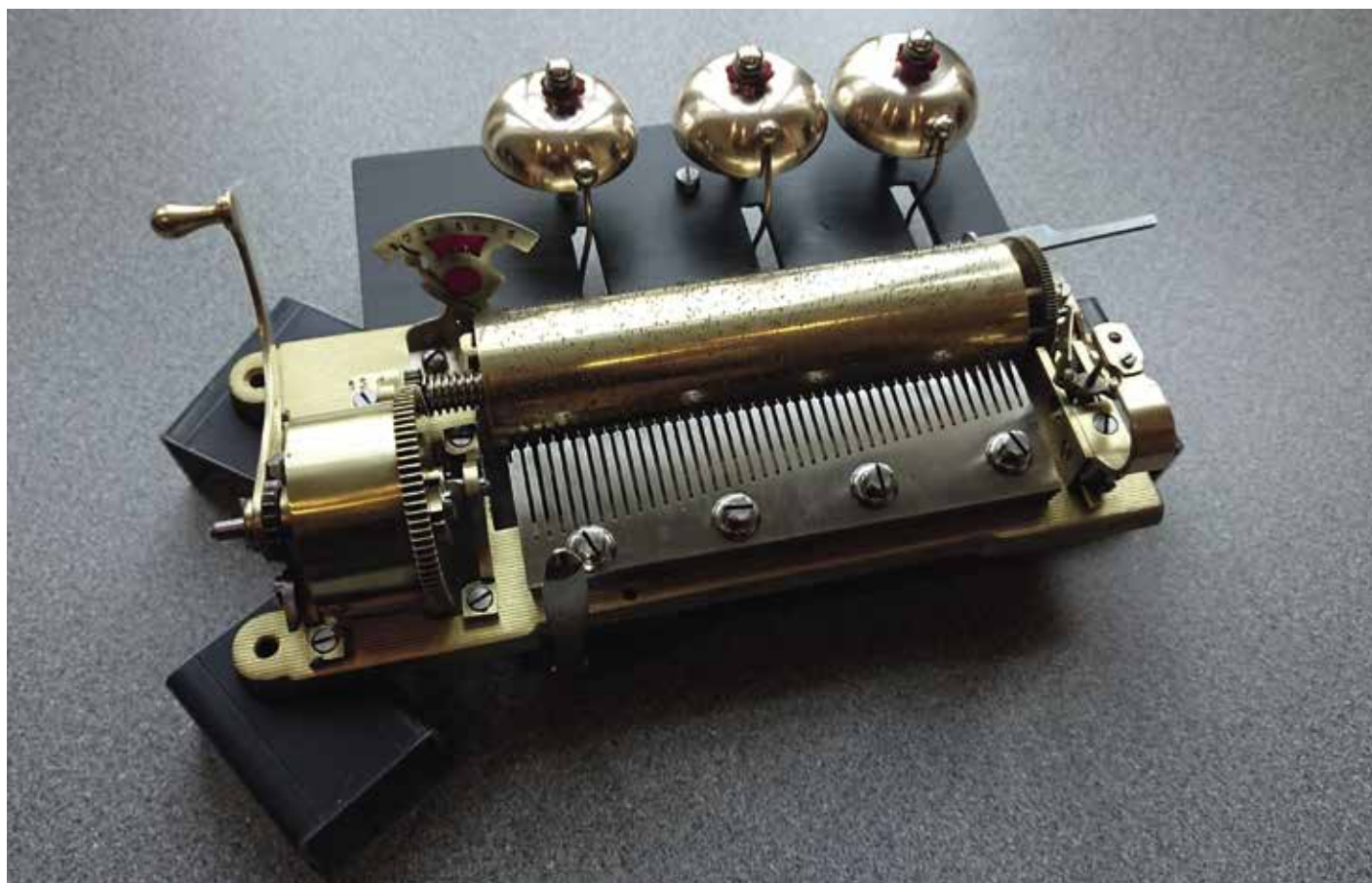
I am pleased with my decision to learn the restoration of musical boxes (see Figs. 4 & 5 for the results), and I am very thankful to Roy Evett for coaching me. My intention is to continue learning and I look forward to what the future will bring.





*Fig 4*

The complete movement before (above) and after (below) Deimantas's work.



*Fig 5*



*The author, Richard Gregory, with mentor Roy Evett at the latter's workshop*

Over the years, my wife Karen and I have come across the odd Polyphon on our travels and always enjoyed watching and listening to them. Most recently at Overbecks near Salcombe, we kept turning up on the hour all day to hear the large upright machine filling the entrance hall with wonderful sound.

With Christmas approaching, I started to wonder whether I could possibly buy Karen a box of some sort and inevitably ended up looking on ebay. No shortage of nice-looking machines, some cheap, some expensive and I quickly realised it would be foolish to buy such a machine in this way.

That's when I discovered the MBSGB so Karen's Christmas present became a year's membership and a copy of Kevin's disc box book. We decided to try and increase our knowledge so we could, in time, make a sensible purchase.

We started meeting members at the 2018 AGM and then again at the Autumn meeting in Birmingham which was great fun. Everyone was very friendly and we received several offers to view collections. We decided that a 15 ½" Polyphon would be a good first machine, given the good availability of machines and discs. We got talking to Roy Evett who told us

# *A Learning Adventure ... a New Member Writes (2)*

Richard Gregory

that a friend of his may have a duplex machine for disposal after buying two at auction.

After a couple of months, Roy had assessed both machines at his workshop and the better of the two, needing a bit of work, became ours in November. This was ideal as I wanted to take on a light restoration to find out about how disc boxes work. Roy's friend was not looking for a project so bought a restored machine instead.

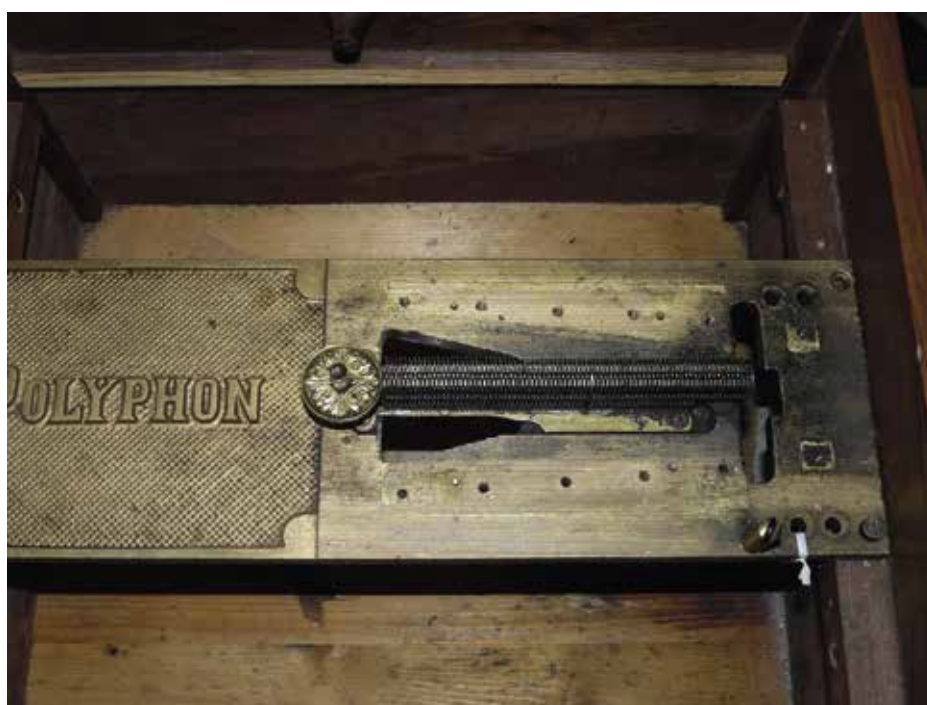
The box looked to be very original, with little wear and the case was in largely good condition. The mechanism was filthy but thanks to Roy freeing off the seized star wheels, it already played reasonably well, albeit with some unwanted noises.

I actually started by cleaning and waxing the case. I was nervous at first, not wanting to cause damage to the original finish. In the end it needed

nothing more aggressive than white spirit and various size brushes to dislodge the dirt and cloths to soak it up. I finished off with a coat of wax, the honey coloured case then had a pleasant sheen – not the high gloss of a restored box but very period.

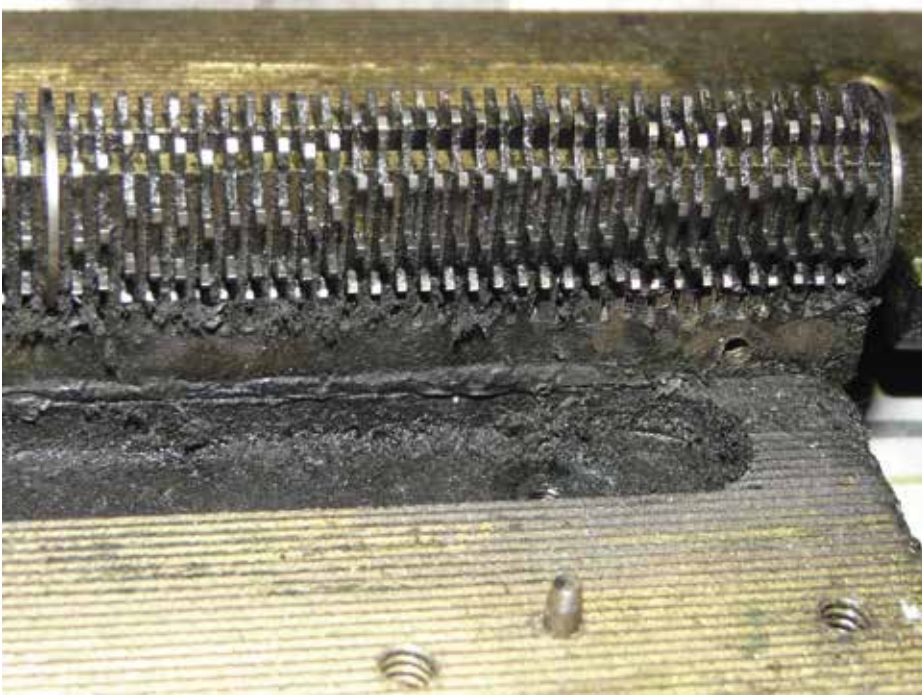
Roy had coached me on what to do and how not to wreck the box so I set about dismantling it. I'm a power electronics engineer so I'm comfortable around high voltages and currents but initially felt very uncomfortable – I was afraid of damaging it. Karen was not happy either – "I had a Polyphon for a week, now I just have an empty box!" More pressure!

I first removed the spring motor to deal with later and removed the combs. Graham Webb's disc box book put me off removing the dampers but Roy soon put me straight! Off they came after studying their action and making measurements of their position for later



*The partially dismantled Polyphon before cleaning*





*Close up of the very dirty gantry*

re-fitting. The gantry, star wheels and dampers were covered in a hard, black deposit – presumably old oil and dirt.

I didn't remove the star wheels from the gantry but cleaned them and the bed plate together in petrol. The more persistent black stuff had to be gently chipped off with a scalpel. Once all the dirt and loose paint was removed, I masked up the gantry and threaded holes and painted the bed plate with

Plastikote Brass coloured paint which was a good match for the original.

Both sets of dampers were in really good condition with a nice even rake across the whole length. I soaked them in petrol for several days to try and soften the black stuff but again, gentle scraping with a blade was necessary.

The combs were dirty and had some light corrosion in places but only needed fine wire wool to restore a

pleasing finish. Not a highly polished result but presentable and in keeping with the rest of the box. Roy had separated the leads before we bought the machine so obviously some corrosion had taken place but they still looked pretty good to my untrained eye. But had the tuning been affected? It sounded good to our ears.

I bought a cheap Korg chromatic tuner and Roy showed me how to plot the results – basically the error between the measured pitch and the reference pitch from the published tuning scale (in cents,  $\pm 50$ ) vs. tooth number. I'm sure the experts could write a whole article on the subject of tuning but in summary, the combs generally matched each other pretty well and were progressively "stretched" from tooth 56 to about  $+50$  cents at tooth 76.

The bottom end was reasonably flat and some teeth were quite mismatched between combs. Some lead had obviously been lost. Roy reckoned the tuning could be improved but I decided to leave as-is for now as it would be easy to re-visit later if required. I wanted Karen to have her Polyphon back in a reasonable time!

I built the bed plate back up, making minor adjustments to a few individual dampers. Pushing a disc around manually suggested all was well.

The spring motor and governor was in good overall condition but had an issue – the motor would stop as soon as the start lever was pushed in rather than keep going until the end of the tune. It turned out that the male Geneva stop had broken and fallen off so there was a lot of endfloat in the spring barrel. The big wheel face was therefore too far away from the stop arm to hold it clear of the sprag with the stop lever pushed in.



*Damper rails before cleaning*





*Trial fit of comb after cleaning and painting*

For some reason that we couldn't understand, the male Geneva stop is made in 2 parts, hinged at one end and joined with a pin at the other and it was the pin which had snapped. Roy had one which had already been welded which I have substituted for now until I get mine welded. The motor then stopped as it should. The governor was fine, just needing cleaning and oiling.

I visited Roy again and he was kind enough to remove the spring from its cage to allow it to be cleaned and re-greased. I was a mere helper in this but it was great to see and I'm sure there aren't many that would be so thorough. The spring, like the rest of the machine was in good condition, free of corrosion and still lightly oiled. It won't need looking at again now anyway.



*The broken male Geneva stop*



*The dismantled spring motor*

All I then had to do was reunite the motor and bedplate and put the mechanism back in the case. Big smiles as the empty box had been turned back into a Polyphon! I did this work over a couple of months when time permitted but doing it again it would probably only take a few days.

I would like to thank Roy for being so generous with his time and for mentoring me. Not just the technical aspects but the social side too. Being part of the society has been a real pleasure for Karen and I so I'm thankful that I happened upon it. Here's looking forward to the spring meeting.



*Karen Gregory with the reassembled box*



# Scraps

by Roger Booty

Embossed and highly coloured cut-out paper scraps were very popular with the Victorians. Their origins lie in Germany where bakers used them to decorate cakes. The three illustrated here in figure 1 are all of obvious interest to us. Scraps can also refer to odd pieces of information and tales, and that is what follows now.

In 2010 we partook of a short break to Amsterdam, with me hoping to see street organs. That hope never materialised. So off to the Mediterranean as a panacea, to the isle with a church for every day of the year, the George Cross island of Malta. You go to Holland, you see no street organs. You go to Malta and find a 72-nkey Carl Frei

organ of 1929 vintage being hand-turned on the streets of the capital, Valetta. This was no publicity stunt – ‘visit Holland, see tulips’ – but Dutchman Mari van Rooy, who is married to a local lady, entertaining the public and tourists alike with his music. As noted, this was in 2010. Unfortunately in 2012 a fire occurred in the garage in which the organ was kept and the instrument, along with the cars kept with it, were all considered to be write-offs. It seems though, when it comes to the organ, that this was not the case, as enough was recovered from the charred remains to allow a rebuild and it is now playing again here in the UK. But fear not if you still wish to hear music in sunny

Malta. Mr van Rooy has obtained a replacement *terramaxka*, as they are called in Maltese, a 56-key example from 1936, and is back on the streets again. The repertoire pleasingly contains a good quantity of Maltese tunes, so it is not just for the enjoyment of tourists.

While on the subject of book-playing organs, who amongst us has not seen and heard on-line some of the work of noteur, Patrick Mathis? Working with a 42 key Odin organ, his punching of Michael Jackson’s ‘Smooth Criminal’ needs seeing as often there appears to be more punching passing through the keyframe than card. The smile at the end says it all.



*Victorian scraps*



In 1988 I was driving away from the now closed Museum of Mechanical Museum and Bygones at Cotton in Suffolk, when my attention was suddenly taken by the car in front. My recollection tells me it was a Metro, but its registration was D110 ART. ART shows it to have been registered in Suffolk. So, was it pure coincidence or was this a personalised plate for a fan of reproducing pianos, especially the Duo Art, who had just visited the museum?

Still at Cotton, a tale of 'if only ...' One of the exhibits at the museum was a rare 31 note Orchestral Cabinet from the Mechanical Orguinette Company. The 8 ¼" rolls for it were in very short supply but one day a visitor arrived and possibly received free entry, because he had in his hand some rolls which he wondered if the museum would be interested in. He had been touring Northern Scotland and stopped to view a lonely church. A wander around found him in front of a pile of rubbish ready to be burnt, on its top sat a box full of rolls. He did not know enough to be aware of what they played on, but decided to take five, not having room in his car for the whole boxful, and pass them on to the museum. The rolls turned out to be the rare 31 note size. As I said, 'if only ...' he had had a bigger car.

Another visitor tale also stays with me. This time it was the find of a good original condition 14 note Mechanical Orguinette at a boot sale, for £5. For those who may not be aware, the collection of the closed museum is to be removed to

join the Grange Musical Collection at Palgrave, near Diss.

While we are with the Mechanical Orguinette Company, I will return to Malta for a question.

*The Music Box* Vol 23 page 212 has an article entitled 'Church Bell Pianola.' It illustrates a bell ringing machine operated via a paper roll in a Canadian church. These rare machines were made by the successor of the successor of the Orguinette Company, that is the Automatic Piano Player Action Company who had followed the Aeolian Company, and apparently there is one in a church in Malta. I noted earlier that the island has a church for every day of the year; it is also smaller than the Isle of Wight. Searches have failed to reveal which church it is in, although one in Valetta would be the likely choice.

The playing of mechanical musical instruments in public museums is uncommon. One which bucks the trend is the Laurence House Museum in Launceston, Cornwall. Free entry gives the opportunity to hear a fine working 24 ½ penny-in-the-slot Polyphon and if you desire, you can purchase a double CD set of its entire repertoire. Whilst in the town, if steam railways light your fire, I can recommend a visit to the Launceston Steam Railway. A narrow-gauge line it is just down the hill from the castle and Laurence House. Check running times first though, as operating hours are not as frequent as other steam lines. Another public museum I was told of many years ago is Maidstone's where there is a

Seraphone organette, but I doubt that it is played.

Houses open to the public also fall within the sphere of having the instruments of having them but not playing them. In Northumberland, Cragside, the Victorian Gothic-style house built for William Armstrong was the first to be lit by hydro electricity. It contains at least three cylinder boxes. All lids are closed, but there is a recording of one of them playing in the room in which it resides. A surprise in a further room is a grand piano finished in, I believe, sandalwood, with a matching Pianola piano player. I was given the impression that if it had been possible a pedal on it would have been permitted had it been in working order. The story stated was that the restoration that had been carried out on the player had made use of incorrect materials and had now rendered it unplayable. In Kent, Chiddingstone Castle has two Georgian barrel organs. Rusland Hall in the Lake District had been open to the public along with a collection of mechanical music, but is no longer.

Off now to another island, better known for rain than sun. Take a cruise across the Irish Sea to visit Dungannon, County Armagh in Northern Ireland, the home of a National Trust property, The Argory. It houses an impressive barrel and finger organ by James Bishop, dating from 1824. Visitors are allowed to play it by hand, but not by barrel. I wonder why. A long run South into the Republic of Ireland and County Clare's main town, Ennis, brings you the





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opportunity of seeing something unusual in the 2000s, a shop with more than one musical box for sale. We visited Honan's Antiques in Abbey Street in 2018. Full of clocks, violins, more clocks and other antiques, we wandered in ... 'Look! A cylinder box. Look, another one.' The list got up to about eight or nine. They included what seemed to be a fully restored orchestral box and another, similar, with too much on top of it to permit a look inside. It was like being transported back to the 1960s and '70s.

A flight back to the Mediterranean for the next item. Looking through back numbers of another society's magazine, I came across something which I think missed the pages of *The Music Box*. The Villa D'Este, Tivoli, near Rome, was quite well written about for having had a water powered barrel organ which had long since disappeared. The item I read described how an entirely new mechanism had been built and fitted with a wind supply created via the original chambers. This work was carried out in the early 2000s by an English company, W & A Boggis of Diss, Norfolk, whose premises our society had visited in 2013.

In 1976 I penned a piece for *The Music Box*, Vol 8, page 28, about the Bevington church barrel organ at Barnston, near Dunmow, Essex. It had survived in playable order until the 1960s, but then remained mute until 2012. At that point, a figure of £16,000 had been raised to allow the organ's restoration to go ahead. This work was carried

out by Michael Young. If you like the idea of walking up, or down, the aisle to the strains of a restored church barrel organ, you could do nothing better than head for the village because the close-by wedding venue, Barnston Lodge, offers the opportunity to marry at St Andrew's church to the accompaniment of the organ.

The book *Church and Chamber Barrel Organs* by Lyndesay Langwill and Canon Noel Boston, listed all of the churches known either to have, or had at some point, barrel organs or dumb organists. I have found one more to add to the list. St Chad's, at Fardon, near Chester, had a barrel organ. As so often happened, it had replaced the church orchestra. While on the subject of church barrel organs and books, *The Music Box*, Vol 23, page 88, noted that a new book was being compiled about them. Is there any up to date information on this?

The late C S Robson once told the author that his great grandfather (who was named Wright) made a barrel organ for Fulham church about 1730, and this fact is also recorded, with some reserve, in Dr E J Hopkins' article on barrel organs in Grove's *Dictionary of Music*.

The Robsons and Flights were, during several generations, the principal makers of these instruments, which continued, for fully a century, to be in great demand for different places of worship.

After the death of John Robson, this branch of industry passed top Messrs. Imhof & Muckle of Oxford Street, and the making of

mechanical instruments has almost become a lost art in England.

The celebrated Apollonicon, built by Flight & Robson, cost about £10,000 and was completed in 1818. This instrument was provided with five manuals available for separate players, and was also activated by mechanical agency with further governed sundry instruments of percussion, thus completing the orchestral effects.

No excuses for now returning to the museum in Cotton. Figs 2 & 3 show an item that, although not by any stretch musical, does have a handle and bellows and a sizeable trumpet. This foghorn could always be guaranteed to get a shocked laugh as it emitted its blast to the visitors. The original story told to me by the museum's founder, Robert Finbow, was that it was used on fishing boats working out of Lowestoft harbour. Over the years further information would come to hand. Staying at a bed & breakfast in Lowestoft, run by a very elderly couple, we were regaled with nautical tales by our host. He had worked on the fishing boats, and told us that all of them, sail or steam, had to carry one of these foghorns. He was also confident that they were made in Norway. Later, a visitor to the museum said that until about 1970 all cargo-carrying ships had to have something similar on board in case of engine problems. The final story reinforced the Norwegian connection. In Winter, in then fjords of Norway, all ships have to use one of these types of machines because of the fear of an avalanche



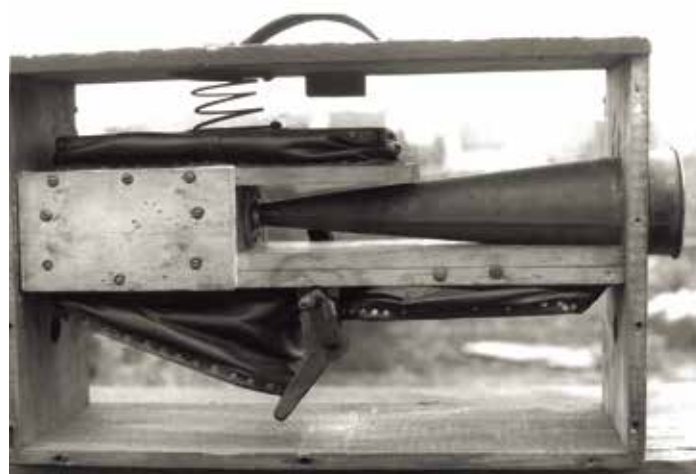
being triggered by a full blast from a ship's siren. They are strongly constructed but very simple, and use no glue or metals that would be affected by the sea air.

Finally something a little different. The BBC comedy series, *'Allo, 'Allo* was very popular, with a cast of likely and unlikely characters. One, Leclerc, appeared in many disguises and always sought to ensure that René, the bartender, knew who he was by announcing, 'It is I, Leclerc.' One of his disguises was as an Italian organ-grinder and if I remember correctly, for an organ he had a Concert Roller Organ strapped around his neck.

Roger Booty, March 2019

### **Editor:**

*Readers may be interested to know that MBSGB founding member Arthur W J G Ord-Hume wrote extensively about 'the self-playing water organs of the Italian gardens' in Music & Automata, Vol 3 Number 9, February 1987, (ISSN 0262-8260); a copy of the Langwill & Boston book Church and Chamber Barrel Organs is in the MBSGB archive; the proposed 'new' book on church barrel organs was to have been authored by a Maggie Kilbey and a Marcel Glover: an enquiry to the only contact, Maggie Gilbey, came back undeliverable (does any member know more about this publication?); unlike many 'houses' open to the public, Overbecks in Devon makes a point of regularly playing its Polyphon disc musical box (see comments by Richard Gregory in his article), which is maintained by Lester Jones, whereas Speke Hall just outside Liverpool has a barrel organ which is not played as it 'might wear out the mechanism and require restoration'; a foghorn similar to the one described by the author was seen recently in the museum of Hunting & Polar Exploration in Tromso, Norway, which would add further credence to the belief that the Finbow/Cotton foghorn originated from Norway.*



*(Black & white photographs) The Norwegian foghorn, late of the Finbow/Cotton collection (supplied by author, Roger Booty);  
(Colour) Norwegian Foghorn in Tromsø Polar Museum (Photo: Max Biden)*

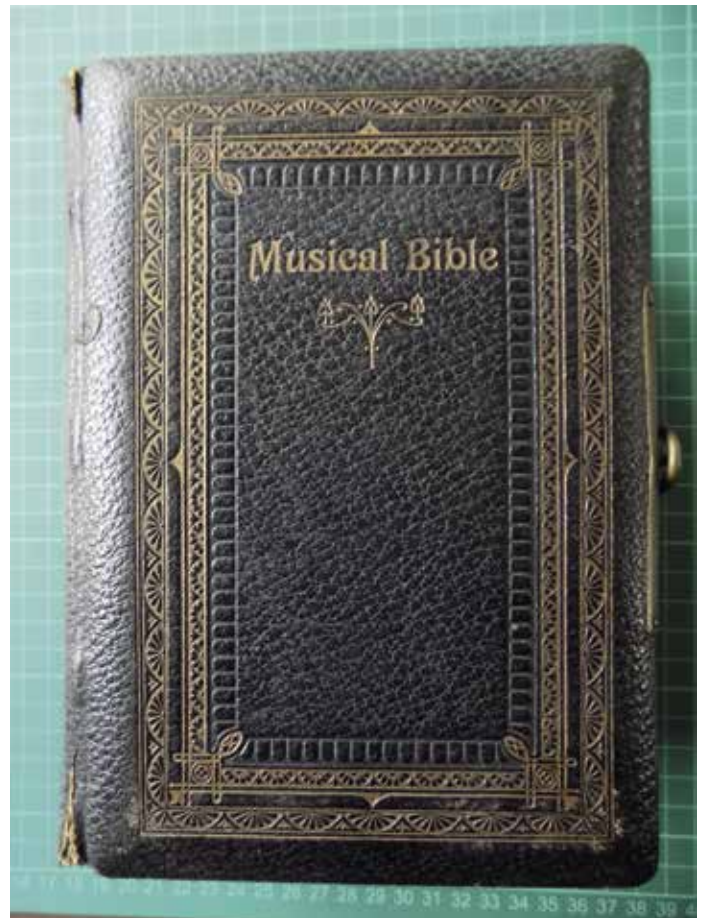
## Kevin McElhone asks *A Musical What ?*

There are many types and sizes of musical books found, most are photograph albums, but recently a musical bible has been found. It is a heavy book at 1.44 kilos and the size is 20cm x 15cm x 7.8cm, which is between A4 and A5 size. It is a fully printed version of the King James Bible of 1090 pages with a further eight-page 'Indexed Atlas of The Holy Land' at the back, plus 14 coloured maps at the rear with one of the countries marked 'Palestine'. Unfortunately there are no printer's dates, but it does say "Printed for the Proprietors of *Sunday Companion*, Carmelite Street, East City, London.

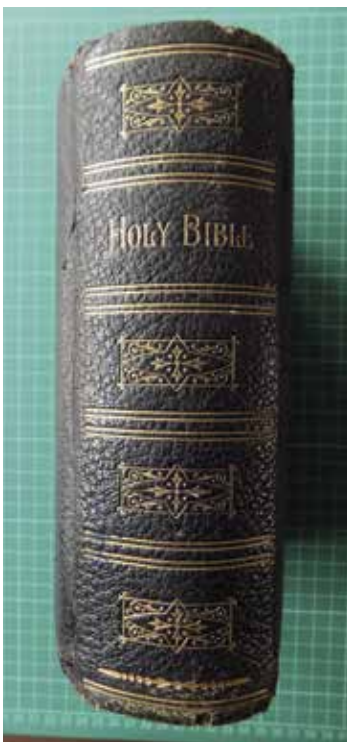
There is no reference to *Sunday Companion* in a list of 19th Century periodicals. A copy has been noted as being sold for 1d a week. (1d = one 'old' penny. For those unfamiliar with pre-decimalisation currency, there were 240 pennies to the pound. Decimalisation came in on 15th February, 1971.) Another issue sold for 1½d dated 6th January 1917, issue number 1,174, Volume XLVI (96), although what start date that indicates is not clear, but 1,174 divided by 52 weeks is over 22 years.

The musical movement contained within the bible has 55 fine teeth if they have been counted correctly and plays two tunes pinned on a cylinder 6.2 cm long, automatically changing after the end of tune. It is the same type of movement as that found in musical

**Editor's note:** In 1981 I accompanied my mother (Vera) on a visit to my uncle (Horace), both born and brought up in Oxford. For whatever reason, my mother brought up the topic of the 'big, old family bible' that she remembered from her childhood. I suspect its unknown whereabouts were a bone of contention with her, that she was keen to air (as she did from time to time!) Allegedly said to me listed – as many family bibles did – the family tree as far as was known, and I believe this was the interest for my mother. Uncle seemed perplexed for a moment or two at the reference to the bible, but then said, 'Ah! Do you



*The Musical Bible*



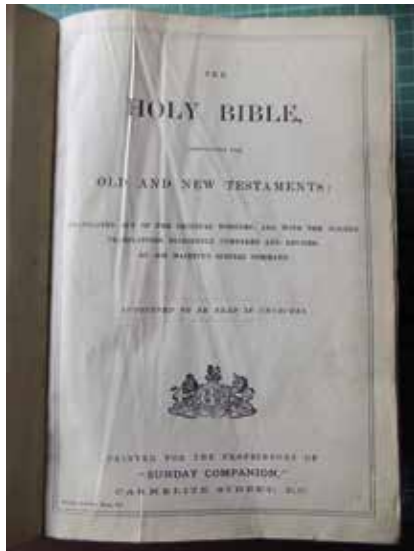
photograph albums, but the tunes are not identified and are not known to all who have heard them so far. This might mean that the tunes were not played in the middle of a Church Prayer & Bible Study meeting as this could have caused some consternation and upset from the Church Elders.

Does any other reader know of one of these, perhaps with a date inside?

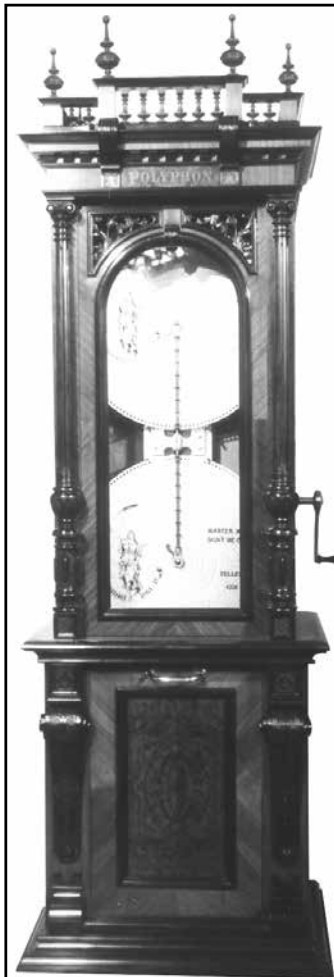
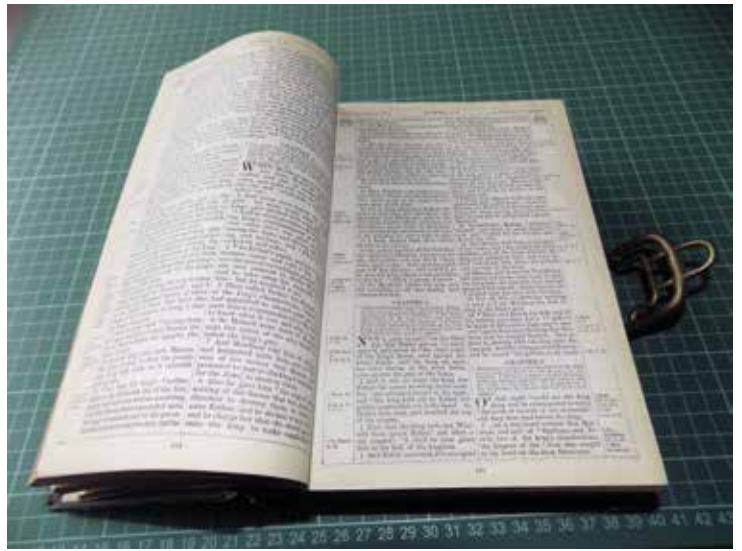




mean the musical bible?' Whether or not it was the same bible, we shall probably never know, since my mother was completely ignorant of any musical bible having been in the family, but evidently my uncle knew of one – and so then did I. As a fairly recent MBSGB joiner, my ears pricked up and I took more interest. My uncle's description was very similar to the one here, but alas, he was unable to cast any light as to its whereabouts. Family lore has it that the 'big, family, bible' (probably musical) had been spirited away by a sister of my Grandfather (Fred), by the name of Trixie. Unfortunately, research into our ancestry has failed to discover



a great-aunt Trixie, so she probably more commonly went by a different name. It was last thought to have found its way to Australia; I would guess sometime before 1960 and possibly considerably earlier. If anyone reading this comes across a musical bible – or just a 'big, old, family' one - containing the family tree of a family by the name of Shurmer, please do get in touch and solve the mystery! (Fred had a brother, Ralph, and a sister Rose.)



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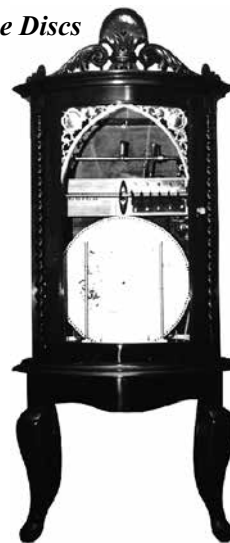
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# Spotlight On ... James Dundon

## AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMES DUNDON FROM MECHANICAL MUSIC RADIO

By Glenn Thomas with James Dundon

**Author's note:** *Subscribers and internet radio enthusiasts know from previous comments in The AMICA Bulletin and elsewhere, that a terrific new internet radio station, Mechanical Music Radio had its recent debut. Built and operated by radio and mechanical music impresario James Dundon, the station has had a remarkable launch and just keeps improving.*

*Following is a recent interview I had with James that describes how it was formed, the technology behind it, and its music.*



**James Dundon with his Dutch street organ, "Blauwtje" and a cardboard music book**

### **GT: What was your background and motivation to do this station?**

Radio and Organ music have always been my two loves. From the age of seven, I had a twin cassette deck in my bedroom and I used to play tape recordings of organs, and in between tracks, would speak into a microphone, announcing the music I'd played!

Some years later, after graduating in Broadcasting at University, I secured a full-time job at a local commercial radio station in Cornwall called Pirate FM. I was there for ten years, and on needing a change in 2015, I moved to Heart FM. I love radio because it's such a personal medium. It's one to one. We all have a favorite radio station or presenter. Here in the UK over 90% of the population still consume radio daily. The song was wrong, video never killed the radio star! The medium is alive and well, and these days in the internet world, you will have noticed a lot more radio stations

playing specialist music, such as country or jazz. Radio has stood the test of time for its convenience. You push a button and get instant music and entertainment.

### **GT: Why did you decide to do a radio station that plays Mechanical Music?**

Because we need to make Mechanical Music more accessible. I think for Mechanical Music to survive, we all have a responsibility to 'do our bit', whether it be showing off our instruments at public events, supporting and bettering our societies or uploading good quality videos to YouTube and Social Media. All these things can attract a new audience.

These instruments play incredibly beautiful music and there are limited places to hear a good selection. There are surely millions of people out there in the world that have a love for the style of music our instruments play, never mind the millions who would be fascinated by the mechanism of the machines that produce this beautiful sound. Let's not forget how popular organ records and cassettes were back in the 60's and 70's. Major record companies like Decca would invest in recording Mechanical Music as heavily as the bands and singers of the era. We need to start bringing Mechanical Music back into the public domain.

### **GT: What was your vision with Mechanical Music Radio.**

Essentially, I wanted to make it 'sound like a radio station'! I didn't just want it to be a music channel or a playlist of music. Explanation is needed for some of the instruments played and I wanted to make it sound as professional as I could. I feel the sound of the station has settled down nicely and as you listen, you hear a good mix of content, features and fun bits.

Before launching it on April 1st, I tried every type of format and sound. Indeed, even after launch, I've continued making numerous changes every week, from





new jingles to loading new songs and laying out the music and content a little differently. Indeed, it will continue to evolve and hopefully get a little better with each little adjustment I make.

**GT: How much time did it take to set it up?**

It took 18 months from scratch to get together the technology, load the music, create the content, build the website, organize the publicity etc. Just too many jobs to list. I remember getting half way through the project and wondering if I'd ever finish. In the end, I just set a launch date, which made me work even faster! Presently, I'm spending a minimum of twelve hours a week on Mechanical Music Radio, whether it be adding new music, recording new content, updating the website or replying to emails. This really is a one-man project. Twelve hours a week doesn't sound a lot, but on top of a full-time job it does make me a busy person. Also, I've had one of my busiest years ever with my Dutch Street Organ 'Blauwtje', having nearly been out every weekend, April to September.

**GT: Tell us about the daunting technological challenge in doing this.**

Technology is the reason I can do Mechanical Music Radio. Having said that, Internet radio is no new thing. The last 15 years, amateur enthusiasts have done internet stations. The real difference these days is it's now easier to listen. With smartphones and tablets, you can listen on the go. Cars have Bluetooth devices, wireless internet and broadband speeds are getting faster and more reliable.

As for how we manage to run 24 hours a day, I use a computer programme popular with radio stations that will automatically schedule 24 hours worth of music, jingles and content. It's complex to explain, but basically every track of music (over 14,000 on the database) is categorized based on the instrument type. Also, on the style or mood of the music it's playing. This has taken thousands of hours to set up, but with most of the hard work done, the computer can now intelligently schedule the music ensuring every time you



**Front and rear views of James Dundon's Dutch street organ, "Blauwtje"**

tune in, you will hear a different selection. Added on top of that, you will notice themed jingles introducing certain features or instruments.

Again, this is all in the set up. Once categorized and programmed correctly, the computer will pick a suitable jingle to play into the song. Added on top of that are the announcements by me, which I go through recording and inserting as I double check the music log for each day.

**GT: Where do you get your music from?**

We have been very generously supported by Graham Spencer at Royalmusic Recording Services in the UK and John Van Kleef of Discus Records in the Netherlands, both of which saw the potential for a radio station that plays Mechanical Music and have donated their complete back catalogues. Many years of work from these two gentlemen are now to be enjoyed on Mechanical Music Radio.

Also, the legendary John Hulse from Causeway Recordings is slowly digitizing his archive and sending to us for playlisting. John is so passionate about this station, and I'm so honored to have him share the recordings which sold thousands of records and cassettes over the last fifty years.

I've always been worried people will assume Mechanical Music Radio will damage CD sales. I've always said, this radio station will enable you to discover instruments, arrangers and recordings you never knew existed. It's window shopping. Try before you buy. We are encouraging CD sales from the tracks we play by displaying album titles. If you have a CD for sale, it's strongly recommended you contact us and get your music playlisted. We will support you and get your release 'out there', totally free of charge.

Also, all the music we play is protected. All the songs heard have a jingle at the start and end of the track and a light 'compression' is put onto the whole station to balance levels, so no one will be able to copy your music. This is another reason why I never play several tracks from the same instrument back to back. You only

ever hear one track per instrument and if you'd like to hear more, I strongly recommend you buy the CD and support the recording artist and the instrument owner.

### GT: How much money do you make?

Nothing, no money is made from this project. And making money is never the intention. I'm doing this as a new way to promote the world of Mechanical Music and bring enthusiasts worldwide together.

Now, the station is costing £2,000 a year in licences, streaming and web costs. It is totally free. I don't charge for advertising or for listening. If you enjoy it, please do log onto the site and donate.

I always enjoy reading your emails. You can contact me direct by emailing [mechmusicradio@outlook.com](mailto:mechmusicradio@outlook.com), and don't forget to like us on Facebook and Twitter. Search for Mechanical Music Radio.

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# *In Memoriam: Dorothy Robinson, 1936 – 2019*

We were sorry to learn of the passing of Dorothy Robinson, a warm, thoroughly 'lovely' lady with a passion for mechanical music, steam, and their preservation. Dorothy was a much-loved and respected, long-standing member of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain, as well as belonging to other mechanical music organisations, notably the Fair Organ Preservation Society and British Organ Grinders Association. She was born in Nuneaton, and on leaving school she trained as a nurse in Leamington Spa and Birmingham, qualifying in 1958. Later she became a Health Visitor, first at Birchwood in Lincoln and then in 1969 at Welton until her retirement. Dorothy met future husband and fellow enthusiast Don whom she married in Washingborough in 1969 before starting their married life together in Market Rasen. They shared a mutual interest in all things 'steam and musical'.

After retirement Dorothy became a school governor at the primary school in Market Rasen. She was also heavily involved with the Parish Church of St Thomas and had been a keen bell ringer, ringing in various churches throughout the country. One of her legacies is that she is survived by a ladies' bell-ringing group which she was instrumental in establishing in Market Rasen.

Dorothy will best be remembered by many for her involvement with the preservation world. Road steam and the fair organ, along with the cinema organ, were amongst her passions. She was a long-term member

of MBSGB and had a wide-ranging collection of mechanical music. Dorothy always enjoyed her trips abroad, (some organised by MBSGB), to visit fairs and mechanical musical and organ collections.

For 33 years Dorothy was leader of the Fair Organ Section of the Lincolnshire Steam and Vintage Rally, building the section up to one of the best in the country. She also played an important role in organising meetings of the MBSGB in Lincolnshire, including at least one

organ grind in Lincoln itself. On other occasions she and husband Don generously played hosts to the Society on visits to their own magnificent collection. Despite her strong personality and drive, she was nonetheless generous, kind and considerate, ready to listen to others' points of view and find the best in them. No one who met her could be left in any doubt as to her warm and friendly nature, tempered by a touch of 'no nonsense,' as well as her commitment to her interests.

When husband Don passed away in June it had been his wish that the traditional Christmas Eve

Event on the Market Place at Market Rasen continued. Dorothy ensured his wish was carried out. This sadly was to be Dorothy's final visit to 'The Bailie' working with her beloved Gavioli organ.

Dorothy had been in declining health for a number of years, and we understand that shortly before she died she had been unwell, possibly suffering from bronchitis, but was reluctant to see the doctor. She will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by many.



*Thought to have been taken around mid 1980s, this shows Dorothy with a barrel organ, a 1970s replica of a Fritz Wrede of Hannover organ*

# MUSICAL BOX ODDMENTS

by H A V Bulleid

SEVERAL musical box makers used tune sheets decorated with two garlanded columns around which were entwined scrolls carrying the names of famous composers. Spaces were left for the number of airs, and for headings such as *Jeu de Timbres*, and for a serial number, and sometimes a maker's name such as J H HELLER of Berne, and occasionally a technical claim such as *Volant Compensé* (balanced governor); and often the common though long obsolete announcement *Etouffoirs en Acier—Soit à Spiraux* (spiral steel dampers) . . . by 1865 this was analogous to writing "four wheel brakes" on a modern car.

An interesting anomaly with these composer-embellished tune sheets is that many of the tunes played were not by the named composers. And a tantalizing feature of all tune sheets (in addition to their sometimes fugitive nature) is their casual approach to tune listing. They seemed to set out with the best intention of listing the three relevant items, namely

the source work, the individual tune, and the composer; but it is rare to find that they persevered to the end. A famous air from a Bellini opera may be listed as *Norma* or as *Casta Diva* or, correctly, as *NORMA—Casta Diva*. The composer may only be named for some of the airs—and this with a nonchalant disregard for his degree of eminence. There are also some frightful spelling mistakes, though admittedly these are very few when you consider that the source material was a mixture of Italian, French, English and German, and that the writer was usually a French-speaking Swiss.

Different tune sheets listed different composers: one typical 1865 list comprised, in this order and spelling: Bellini, Mozart, Rossini, Weber, Meyerbeer, Flotow, Verdi, Donizetti, Strauss, Labitzki, Gung'l, Schuloff. A clean dozen.

## Composers

The dozen above were presumably chosen for their prestige,

notoriety and drawing-power in 1865. Now, well over 100 years later, it is interesting that the first nine remain well-known with the possible exception of F von Flotow whose 1847 opera *Martha* had the hit tune *The Last Rose of Summer*. But how about the last three? Are they perhaps now forgotten? Well, here they are. . . .

## Labitzky

Josef Labitzky was born in Germany in 1802 and died in 1881. After a period as first violin in bands at Marienbad and Carlsbad he formed his own orchestra and with it toured Southern Germany. Then he took a course in composing at Munich; and he published his first waltzes in 1827. In 1835 he settled in Carlsbad as director of the town's band, taking it on tour as far afield as London and St Petersburg and growing in fame both as composer and performer of light music.

Labitzky's dances were acclaimed for their rhythm and spirit. His best waltzes included *Sirenen*,

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*Aurora* and *Carlsbader*, and his galops were said to rival those of Strauss.

# Gungl

Joseph Gungl was born in Hungary in 1810 and died in Germany in 1889. The apostrophe often inserted in his name is a long-standing and much-copied error. He started work as a schoolmaster, then enlisted in the Hungarian army and became a military bandmaster. He toured the Regimental band and later his own band around Europe, and in 1849 over to America, playing mainly his own compositions including his Hungarian March, opus 1. He was appointed *Musikdirektor* to the King of Prussia in 1849 and Bandmaster to the Emperor of Austria in 1858. By 1873 he had composed about three hundred dances and marches, mostly "distinguished by charming melody and marked rhythm". They included the *Eisenbahn-Dampf* (railway-steam) galop and sets of polkas, mazurkas and quadrilles entitled *Katharinen* and *Die Elfe* or, plural, *Die Elfen*, which scarcely need translating.

Note, however, that the title does not fix the composer. Different composers in the same country, and even more so in other countries, seemed to have no inhibitions about using identical titles—though probably most often in simple ignorance. So for example both *Katharinen* and *Die Elfen* are commonly found titles. Another of the *Katharinen* is a waltz by Labitzky.

# Schulhoff

Julius Schulhoff was born in Prague in 1825 and died in Berlin, 1898. He made his local debut as a pianist at the age of fourteen and his first public performance in Paris, helped by Chopin, in 1845. Paris was then the artistic Mecca for pianists. Schulhoff started composing his light but brilliant piano pieces in 1849, and between that year and 1853 made extensive playing tours throughout Europe, including London. His serious compositions included a sonata in F minor, but his tunes most commonly found on musical boxes include the *Grande Valse Brillante*, opus 6; his arrangement of *Le Carnaval de Venise*, opus 22; *Souvenir de Venise*, opus 28; and *Ballade*, opus 41.

# 'IDEAL' TUNES

THERE are some tunes which almost everyone would vote ideal

for musical boxes, and prominent among them is the *Carnival of Venice*. Nobody knows who originally composed it, but it was first set down by the famous violinist Paganini (1782 - 1840). He heard it as a popular local air in Venice in the 1790s and he further popularised it and spread it by including it in his repertoire. Both Herz and Schulhoff made popular piano arrangements of it, and it was used as a song in an 1856 opera by Massé, *La Reine Topaze*. Then in 1857 it was used in the overture of an opera by A Thomas entitled, yes, *Le Carnaval de Venise*. So you see it was well like, and those excellent arrangers of tunes for musical boxes had plenty of ideas to draw on. Perhaps its most ambitious airing (appropriate term) was by Nicole on Gamme 1818 which was first pinned around 1865 and on which the tune ran for over three minutes.

# COMB TEETH

A GENERALLY reliable measure of musical box quality is the number of comb teeth. Yet this number is seldom quoted, perhaps because counting is a chore and the considerable danger of losing count is a further deterrent. Not that it matters to one or two teeth, particularly as the numbers are seldom "neat". The common run-of-the-mill 13-inch Nicole has 97 teeth, notable solely because it is a prime number.

If the comb length is *C* inches and the number of tunes is *T*, then the number of comb teeth is approximately 60 times *C/T*. So for example with the Nicole's 13-inch comb playing eight airs, the number of teeth is  $60 \times 13/8 = 97$ .

A six-inch comb playing eight airs with three bells will have  $60 \times 6/8 - 3 = 42$  music teeth.

A 12-inch comb playing ten airs with eight-striker drum and six bells will have  $60 \times 12/10 - 14 = 58$  music teeth.

A nine-inch comb playing eight airs two-per turn is of course like a four-air box and will have  $60 \times 9/4 = 135$  teeth.

I hope I haven't annoyed anyone with all these inches. If little *c* is the comb length in centimetres, the formula becomes: Number of teeth =  $24 \times c/T$ .

# CASE CARE

CYLINDER musical box lids were normally designed to remain open at a sufficient angle to support the glass lid without danger of it slamming shut. This was easily

achieved by so placing the hinges that the back overhang of the lid rested appropriately against the back of the case. A problem posed by this design feature was how to guard against the ham-fisted operator who would pick up the box by the open lid, and roughly at that. The answer was to use small screws so that they would loosen or pull out rather than split the wood. Accordingly, well-fitted countersunk steel wood-screws three-eighths of an inch long and size number 3 or 4 are normally ideal. Yet I have seen inch long screws into the case, and screw points actually penetrating the lid veneer. We have all seen resulting splintered lids and case backs. One also sees hinge screws at a drunken angle, forced in anyhow over the broken-off stub of an earlier screw.

If oversize screws have been used, or if the holes are otherwise damaged, they should be plugged with wood carefully whittled to a nice fit and then pressed firmly in after coating thinly with a wood adhesive.

To remove the remnant of a broken screw,

- (1) drill a ring of holes all round it, about half an inch deep, with a  $3/64$  inch (no 56) drill.
- (2) pick out the remnant.
- (3) drill  $1/4$  inch diameter by  $3/8$  inch deep to clean out.
- (4) procure or whittle a piece of  $1/4$  inch dowel, make sure it is a good fit in the hole, and press gently in after cutting to length and coating with wood adhesive.
- (5) leave to dry for a couple of hours before drilling to take new screw.

With the passage of time, even the best seasoned wood shrinks slightly across but not along the grain. This is why the front beading is often pushed awry at the corners of early type lids. It is also the reason why lids often fail to shut properly, the striker plate having become perhaps a sixteenth of an inch short of the hole in the lock plate. I have known misguided people seek to remedy this by altering the hinge position on the lid, thereby causing the lid to open too far and greatly increasing the stress on the hinges. Others ruthlessly remove the striker plate peg, often in a manner frightfully reminiscent of those Wild West dentists. The correct cure is to move the striker plate forward and fill in the resulting narrow gap in the lid behind it with a matching strip of veneer.

# News from Other Societies

## Periodicals published in English:

### **Mechanical Music, Vol 64 No 5, September/October, 2018**

(see also [www.mbsi.org](http://www.mbsi.org))

This edition opens with one of Matt Jaro's regular items in the series 'Nickel Notes', the subject this time being Glenn Thomas. Glenn's interest in mechanical music stems from his childhood in Southern California, where his parents would take him to see the carousel (along with its organ) in Griffith Park. His current collection contains a number of big instruments: a Wurlitzer AX, Nelspon-Wiggen Style 8, Seeburg KT special, Steinway Duo-Art XR Grand reproducing piano, and many others. The crowning glory is his 125 key organ, built by Johnny Verbeeck, nicknamed The Glacier. Steve Boehk then writes extensively about Art-Cased Musical Boxes, where the case is the focus of interest, as opposed to the music, all extravagantly illustrated. There are reports from Sunbelt, Southern California, and Snowbelt Chapters, and tributes to the late Stephen Kent Goodman, John Motto-Ros and Wally Donoghue. (The latter joined MBSGB at its 2012 50th anniversary meeting.)



### **Mechanical Music, Vol 64 No 6, November/December 2018**

(see also [www.mbsi.org](http://www.mbsi.org))

This edition is dominated by the 2018 convention, with a perspective of it by British MBSI



member Michael Clark, and reports of the Trustees meeting and annual MBSI business meeting. These are complemented by an item reviewing the activities of the Special Exhibits Committee over the past several years by its out-going Chair, Wayne Myers, and a longish piece in the series 'Nickel Notes' by Matt Jaro (winner in 2018 of the MBSI Literary Award.) The subject of this feature is Durward Center, who has a lot of experience working with Welte instruments (see elsewhere in this edition of *The Music Box*), and whose collection will be accessible to those attending the 2019 convention.

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### **Musiques Mecaniques Vivantes, no 108, 4th Quarter, 2018**

(see also [www.aaimm.org](http://www.aaimm.org))



This magazine opens with seven pages dedicated to the story of Jean Baptiste and Augustine Vaidie, pioneers in recreating in their very own little town, the 'Luna-Park' amusement establishment of their inspiration in Paris. This article catalogues some of the entertainment on offer beautifully illustrated with reproduced period images and evocatively described. It merits inclusion in the magazine on the basis that musical entertainment was provided by a barrel piano, not just any barrel piano, but one from the MAGNAN Brothers ... Vaidie's Luna-Park understandably became very popular – attracting criticism from the local kill-joys. Like its subject, a very entertaining read. The next article, also on the topic of mechanical pianos, is unusually not one penned by

Philippe Beau, but Jean-Marc Lebout and Raymond Messelier, who give an account of mechanical pianos and their concentration in Brussels in the first part of the 20th century. Pathé, world famous for its contribution to cinema, was also involved in the production of phonographs and discs, as elaborated by the prolific Philippe Beau, who follows with an article on his more usual topic of mechanical pianos, with another instalment on French manufacturers and retailers of the same. Jean-Marc Lebout then embarks on a lengthy and probing article about the development of the means of carrying the musical arrangements of a musical box (cylinder, disc and perforated strip.) This beautifully illustrated instalment is but the first, and concentrates on cylinders. Yves Roussel then argues that mechanical music is very much alive, with the capability of being both a source of creation and astonishment. Space here does not allow further elaboration of his theme; suffice to say it involves innovative use of MIDI systems, a lot of creative imagination, and the author's invitation for us to explore the topic by using the internet ... MMV then reproduces an article published originally by Vosges Matin in March 2018, about Gérard Mougin, described as an 'amateur' organ builder and restorer. This edition concludes with a brief account of the organ festival in Brno, Czechia, magazines reviews, and a brief item about the music found on the large electric orchestrion in the brasserie 'Au Roi de Bavière,' (Brussels), another composition from Jean-Marc Lebout.



# Letter

(extract of email from a new member)

To The Music Box Society of Great Britain

Vienna, 8th March 2019

Dear Mr. President, [sic]

Thank you for your very kind letter.

What is going on in Vienna after Helmut Kowar has retired?

I founded a society named EIOU 8 month ago, and I try to continue Dr Kowar's work.

eiou ([www.eiout.at](http://www.eiout.at)) is a very small society: membership does not cost money, but time: only members who write contributions or mail contributions and/or photos are accepted.

Eiou.at deals ONLY with movements from Prague and Vienna.

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Yours sincerely

Otmar Seemann

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## What is it?

Kevin McElhone sent this image he had found, and asks, 'Does anyone know what this is?' It looks as though it is made of embossed leather. One suggestion so far received is that it is the cover to a booklet for an interchangeable Paillard box, listing the tunes on the various cylinders.



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2019

12 May 2019	<b>National Vintage Communications Fair.</b> Warwickshire Event Centre, The Fosse, Fosse Way, Warwickshire, CV31 1XN.
18 May 2019	<b>MBSGB Midlands Group.</b> Meeting at the home of David O'Connor, near Horncastle, Lincolnshire. 11.00am start and please bring a packed lunch. Drinks provided. Please contact David on 01507 588530, <a href="mailto:davideoconnor@aol.com">davideoconnor@aol.com</a> David will premiere his restored Imhof and Mukle barrel organ.
1 June 2019	<b>MBSGB AGM.</b> Roade Village Hall, NN7 2LS.
15 June 2019 Worcs.	<b>MBSGB Teme Valley Winders.</b> Eastham. Tenbury Wells. 11.00am start. Please contact John Phillips, 01584 781118.
26 – 29 July 2019	<b>MBSGB Trip to Paris.</b> In conjunction with Melody Tours, we will visit the Café des Orgues, Phono Museum, Musée des Art Forains and an extensive private collection. The trip will also include time for sightseeing and taking a dinner en Bateau Parisien.
14 Sept 2019	<b>MBSGB London and Home Counties Group.</b> Meeting at the home of Richard Cole and Owen Cooper. Collection includes an Aeolian pipe organ and Wurlitzer cinema organ. Please book early. Lunch available at £8 or bring your own, but please tell Kevin of your choice. Small instruments welcome for demonstration. Contact Kevin McElhone, 01536 726759, <a href="mailto:kevin_mcelhone@btinternet.com">kevin_mcelhone@btinternet.com</a>
27 – 29 Sept 2019	<b>MBSGB Autumn Meeting.</b> Cedar Court Hotel, Leeds / Bradford, Rooley Lane, Bradford, BD5 8HW. This is a four star hotel conveniently located just off the M62 and only 1 ½ miles from Bradford station. A full weekend is being arranged to include mechanical music and local visits of general interest. Full details are given in the flyer. This will be a great value weekend.
6 Oct 2019	<b>The Grange Musical Collection.</b> Annual celebration of Bob Finbow of the Cotton Museum. The Grange, Palgrave, Diss, Norfolk, IP22 1AZ.
12 -13 Oct 2019	<b>Milton Keynes Organ Festival at the Milton Keynes Museum,</b> McConnel Drive, Wolverton, MK12 5EL. Please contact Ernie, 01908 379748 or Calvin, 07812 482097.
7 Dec 2019	<b>MBSGB Teme Valley Winders.</b> Eastham, Tenbury Wells, Worcs. 11.00am start. Please contact John Phillips, 01584 781118.

# Classified Advertisements

## FOR SALE

**For sale:** The John Hensell collection, Hampshire, 40 instruments including player reed organ; player piano; Pianola push-up; manual pipe organ; chamber barrel p.o., church barrel organ; fair organ; organettes; barrel pianos; cylinder and disc musical boxes; selection of manivelles and books.

Ampico upright player piano (Cambridgeshire); Nickelodeon playing "O" rolls with accordion 10 instruments; Aeolian model "F" Orchestrelle, 8 feet tall, 116 note, fully rebuilt, new bellows, pouches and valves etc; set of wad-punches for punching out leather & felt; Triola zither + up to 40 rolls; Tanzbar 28-note roll-playing Concertina, bellows rebuilt so plenty of air, in purpose-built case; small cylinder box 6 hymns all listed in German, unusual; cylinder box larger 10 tunes; Polyphon 11" curved Serpentine case; Symphonion 13¼" edge drive nice, clean, working well; Amorette 16-note, working well; card discs for Bascanion musical box; piano and Aeolian rolls including newly made boogie and upbeat dance titles (sample sound files available); hundreds of new & original tunes for organette; new piano roll boxes; disc storage bags; spare parts for organettes including full set of Ariston reeds. Clearing last pre-punched 20-note music for card-strip playing musical boxes and blank card for the 15-note size. Wooden disc storage boxes. About 100 other instruments all around the UK, please ask for list & photos.

Kevin McElhone 01536 - 726759

kevin\_mcelhone@hotmail.com

(note the underscore \_ between my 2 names)

**For sale:** Superb Restored 8 air Mandolin Piccolo Zither cylinder box, Probably Bremond 1870/80

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Tel: John 01934 823081

email: sarahduke1951@hotmail.com

**For sale:** Symphonion Longcase Clock, excellent working condition, 12 discs, untouched collector/ museum quality. £7k.o.n.o

07905 554830 email: mikado54mark@gmail.com

**For sale:** Gothic Oak Elliott Longcase, built to regulator standard, chiming on a set of Harrington tubular bells, striking on a deep tone gong. Mercury compensation, bevelled glass, rare & stunning piece. 07905 554830

## WANTED

**Wanted:** Rigid Notation/ Square pattern cylinder box - Key wound 3 or 4 air overture box: I BUY... (Private) M.Singleton 07905 554830

**Wanted:** Thoughts, considerations, or contact from owners of early exposed control overture boxes that may help me round off a dot-joining exercise. If you have such a box with obscure / unknown music, I would very much appreciate hearing from you. Doesn't matter if it's not in tip-top order, it's the arrangements & interaction between three men at time of manufacture I am trying to process.

email: mikado54mark@gmail.com. Tel: 07905 554830

**Wanted:** This is a large selection from the 'wanted list' that I (Kevin McElhone) hold on file for members and friends. Perhaps if you are considering thinning out your collection you would let me know if you have any of these items please?

Workshop machine - Elliot Rotary 9 inch table

### Instruments

musical clock; Snuff box – segmented combs only; cylinder box + BUTTERFLY strikers;

cylinder box – forte-piano; musical box with interchangeable cylinders; cylinder musical box + reed organ. For Spanish collector Polyphon 8" costing up to £275; Symphonion with automata;

Gloriosa Christmas Tree Stand – prefer with bells, needing woodwork acceptable.

Britannia 9" or 12" upright; upright bell disc box; table-top musical clock + bells; Mira 12/15/18" any case format; small upright disc box (?) 11" (must be working); Polyphon 11" or 15 ½" upright (or 19" if cheap / small model) 2 people; empty case for Symphonion 25"; Victorian musical Automaton; Stella 26"; Polyphon 19" or 24" complete motor; Symphonion 9½" disc musical box; Symphonion 21" upright disc musical box + 10 Bells; Drapers Victoria organette or similar; Play-a-sax, phonographic cornet; Herophon, any complete/no woodworm condition; Thibouville Lamy – book playing organette larger than 16-note; Thuringer Konzertina - the earlier model; Chien / Tinplate organette; French Serinette; chamber barrel organ - small table-top model; chamber barrel organ working, max budget £1,000; Ariston 36-note disc playing piano playing device / push-up; Hupfeld piano player + endless loops; PEDA or EDA upright; Racca Piano 73-note, must be working perfectly.

Suction unit wanted for use in Aeolian pipe organ for the 'action'; also PEDA

A clavichord; a Celeste; Raffin 31 note street organ or similar; street organ with rolls; Mills Violano + Orchestrion; Hicks / Distin Barrel Piano.

### Music Wanted

Hallelujah Chorus - 14 note organette

Ariston discs any size, Melodia 14-note rolls; Herophon 24-note discs;

Celestina rolls No. 520, a selection from The Mikado, and Celestina roll Invitation to the Dance

London Verbeeck 36 music books; Red and Green Welte, Ampico, Duo-Art Piano rolls

### Musical Box Discs Wanted

Any Christmas music; Britannia 9" edge-drive; Capital Cuff – any size;

Chordephon 60 note; Fortuna 8" marked D; 7" but 27 teeth; Harmonia 10"; Kalliope – 9½" (23.5cm), 25.3cm edge driven, 13" (33cm) 17", 52.5cm, 23" (58cm); Komet 17", 64cm; Mira 9", 12", 18½"; Monopol 11 7/8";

Polyphon 6" or 8", Polyphon 19 5/8", 24½"; Symphonion 4 ½", 8 1/4", 11 7/8", 11 7/8" 19" (48.5cm) - must be excellent condition; 25" but 4,000 series titles; Thorens 4 ½".

Kevin McElhone 01536 - 726759

kevin\_mcelhone@hotmail.com

(note the underscore \_ between my 2 names]





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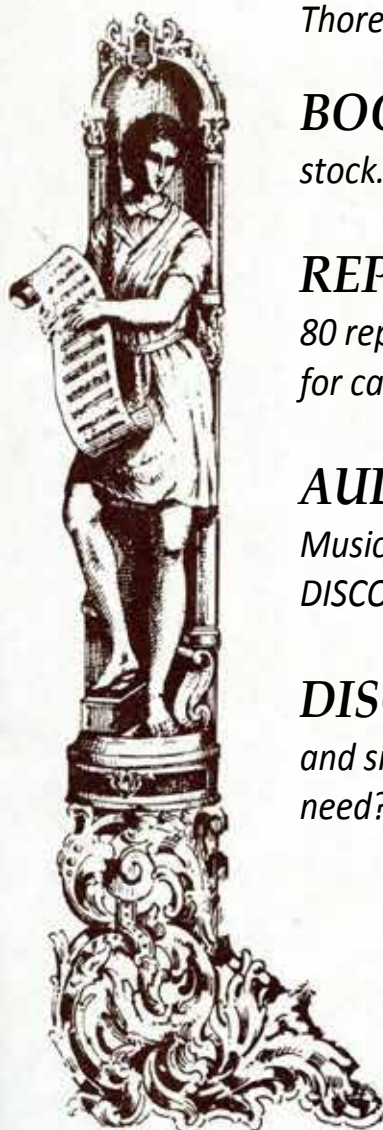
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