

THE MUSIC BOX

JOURNAL OF



THE MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN



THE EDITOR WRITES:

Volume 2, No. 3. Autumn, 1965

Have you noticed the Membership Lists lately? From twenty-odd Founder Members we now have over 170 and are thus well on the way to achieving our 'second ton', as you might say. Why is this really worth drawing attention to? Because it affects each and every one of us. The major proportion of your Society funds is spent on

this, your Society Journal. The more money we can devote to its production and preparation, the greater its value to you, the Member. This value is demonstrated in size, content and presentation. The balance of funds, incidentally, is spent in the cost of our two yearly meetings - held in London - and direct expenses such as postages.

It should not be forgotten that our London headquarters, use of the facilities, telephone and so on, are provided free by our Secretary, Mr. C. de Vere Green, and I would like to thank him, on your behalf, for his generosity and enthusiastic support in every way for our common interest.

Incidentally, Member Graham Webb is responsible for several new Members. His shop, favourite meeting place for a number of London collectors and devotees on a Saturday morning, is bedecked in membership forms. A good scout, there!

Whilst talking 'shop' (Oooh! What a pun!), congratulations to Gerry



Planus who has abandoned sewing machines at his Bermondsey shop and gone over entirely to dealing in Musical Boxes and Old Clocks. As we all know, he has one of the most striking old clocks in the Society. He has stocked his shop with some 'good stuff', so he is well worth a visit at 567, Old Kent Road.

WHEREFOR ART THOU, OH ADVERTISEMENTS?

'Where are all the Classified Adverts?' writes Disgruntled of Dorking. 'Surely our Members want to buy or sell something - even if it's only musical wood-worm'. Point made, I think. Do make use of this facility in THE MUSIC BOX.

OUT OF PRINT AND INTO YOUR HANDS

The first four issues of THE MUSIC BOX have been out of print for some while. So great has been the demand for these that we have reprinted them. They are available from the Secretary price 5/- each post free. Now is also the time to buy your binder whilst stocks last. At 12/6d each, these convert your Journals into a smart volume to stand between 'Pickwick Papers' and the copy of 'Fanny Hill' - the one you recovered and labelled "History of British Wildlife".

LATEST FROM THE BACKROOM BOYS

A backbone of boffins has materialised amongst us! The day is not far off, I am assured in certain quarters, when it will be possible to reproduce a high-class musical box. With devoted application of their talents, several of our Members are gradually unravelling the secrets of the St. Croix artisans. Making a comb is, after all, not an impossible job, we have seen that re-pinning cylinders and copying discs is as much a reality as a flight round the moon (an analogy suddenly today the antithesis of the meaning of but a few years ago) and endlesses and wheels are commonplace. The exposure of mankind to stereophonics, 'double eff double ar' and hi-fi has catalysed our minority band of purists into renewed effort to recreate the music of the Victorian drawing room. As I write, David Tallis, famed re-pinner from Pinner (Oooh!) begs to decline honouring his offer of an article on his techniques for a while as he is engaged on some development work in his large workshop somewhere in Middlesex (security, you know). And, elsewhere, a Polyphon has been heard, secretly again, playing a 1965 version of "Take Five" on its 1895 combs. Like an ants nest, there is a lot of activity in our midst. We must await further news with our second wheels a-quivver.

"I ain't a one-man band no more—
I've formed meself into a group."
Reproduced from PUNCH with
grateful thanks and
acknowledgment

JOHN E. T. CLARK

It is with very deep regret that we have to record the death of John E. T. Clark, first President of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain, on Tuesday, October 12th at Bidford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, following a heart attack.

The Society is being represented at the funeral and an obituary will be published in our next issue.



Still rather shakey following an alarming experience in my little car when the steering mechanism fell off at speed, I popped in on Ron Lee at his home in the English-speaking quarter of London the other week. Mr. and Mrs. Lee live in comfortable juxtaposition with a number of very fine musical boxes and I was intrigued to see a specimen of a maker seldom seen - Humbert Brolliet of Geneva. A large box with impressive thick cylinder, Ron's example plays 12 airs at two per turn. Box has a brass bedplate (name in small letters in top left corner) no comb screw washers and, oddly, two screws through each cylinder arbor bearing. Number is 11797 and the tunes are written in ink on the right-hand case divider - where lives the key. Ron also owns a brace of pleasurable hymn boxes and numerous early Nicoles and Lecoultries of good quality. Being no mean engineer, his sitting room table turns out to be a glorious circular dentists' cabinet on ball bearings with drawers and trays in which reside endlasses and pinions where one sat molars and amalgam.

A little cardboard box housed the mortal remains of a minute singing bird no bigger than a match-box and made by Leschot. Ron assures me that the little fellow will shortly twitter a-new after a re-fit.

His garage contains two massive 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Autochange Polyphons in the course of reconstruction alongside a barrel organ which has been extensively modified to provide foot-operated bellows in addition to those worked by the crank handle.

Which recalls the fact that, some weeks ago, I hived it off to the wilds of Norfolk to view the famous Greenacre collection. Frank lives by the sea at Gorleston and, as a specialist in disc machines, justifies his title "The Metal Music Man" which titled a programme he did for television last year.

A protagonist of the Britannia, he owns several models ranging from the 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " to the 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ " size. The 'Smokers Cabinet' model is fascinating to hear and the fine, strident tone belies an instrument so small. Discs on this are the same set-up as the centre-drive 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " but are developed to 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ " to include the peripheral drive holes.

Frank also possesses a 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ " Stella in a classic, Empire-style desk-style case, richly inlaid, and sporting sixty discs. I rued the day past when, wooed with fine words and Scotch, I had let him talk me into letting him have the thing! Disc storage - a horny problem of long standing for us all - has been solved for the large machines by the conversion of bedside lockers into smart, effective cabinets. But a sight not to be forgotten, better far than the sound of the 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Poly in the kitchen that towers 'twixt dresser and door, is to see Frank at sport as a virtuoso on the Aeolian Pianola

Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume

A Wish Fulfilled..

A BONTEMS SINGING

☆ BIRD ☆

BY GERTRUDE

GILCHRIST



I have long wished to add a singing bird to my collection. I had visions of a fine specimen in a gilded cage, but the only examples I have seen for sale have been very dirty and in bad condition and, in spite of various throat complaints affecting their singing, very highly priced in my opinion.

Recently, during a few days holiday, I wandered into an antique shop and found a 7½" Monopol disc machine in excellent condition. The dealer suggested that as I was interested in musical boxes, perhaps I would like to see something unusual.

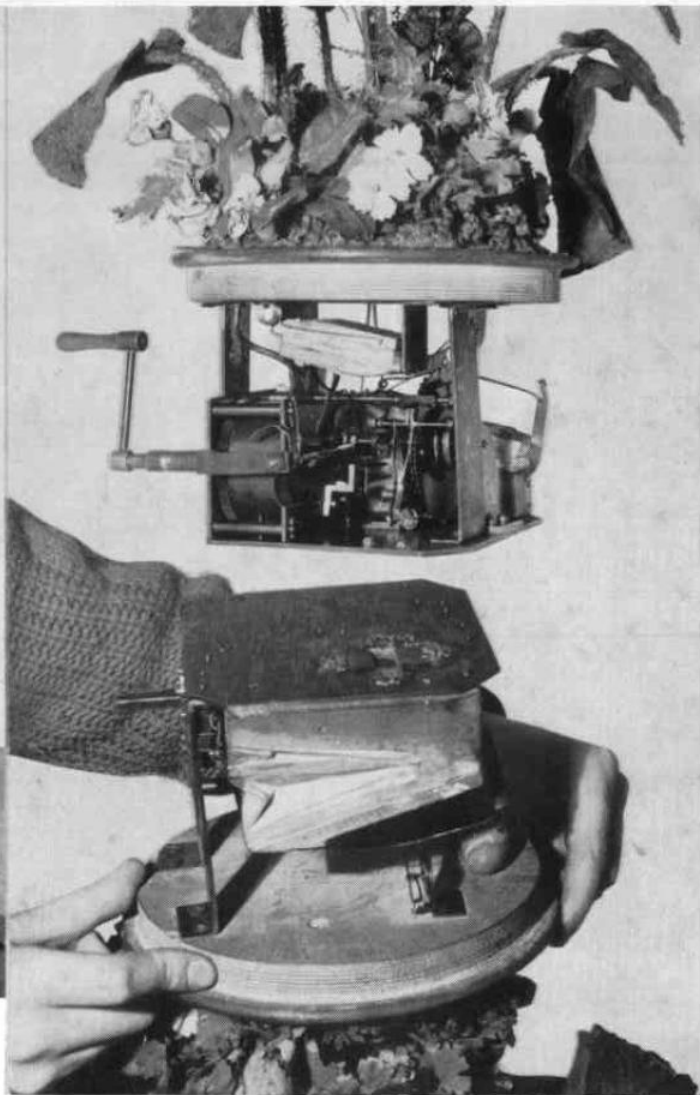
He produced a singing bird, not in a cage, but mounted on a white porcelain pot with painted decoration in rich blue, black, green and orange, with Persian key design around a centre portrait of a young lady. A conglomeration of typical Victorian foliage or flowers and begonia leaves fills the pot and sitting on top is the bird. This is bright blue and in fine voice, having movement of head, beak and tail, with a sound mechanism arranged to play the 'tune' continuously or intermittently, or stop. On examination, I found the maker to be Bontems of Paris and the date to be 1868. There is what I presume to be a self portrait of the maker drawn in pencil on the obverse side of the base to which the mechanism is attached which sits in the top of the pot. The date of manufacture and the Paris address is also shown.

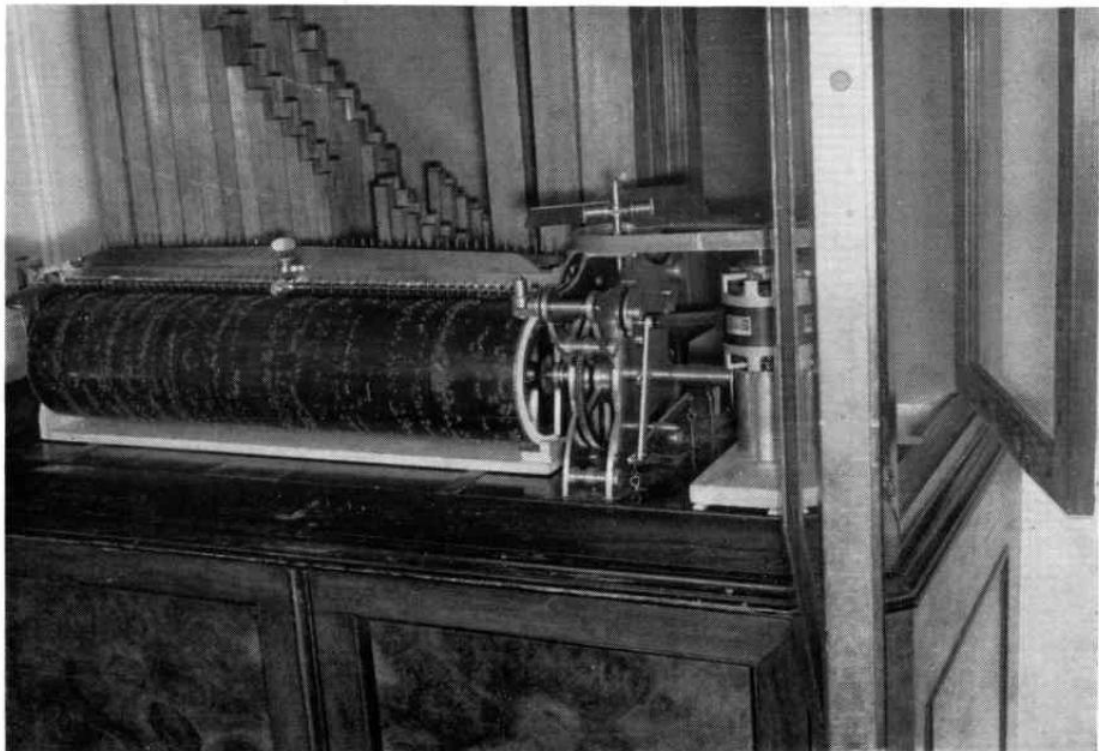
I feel that this is unusual and wonder if only one of its kind was made or whether perhaps mine is the last one surviving. The Paris address, incidentally, is Rue-de-Clery. This was at one time also the address of Henry Louis Jacquet-Droz, the famous manufacturer of singing bird movements. The date given is 1868 and the full address is "Rue de Clery 72, Paris" and the piece bears the pencil signature "Bontems" in addition to the trade mark (reproduced here) which is stamped into the brass-work of the mechanism.

I would be delighted to hear if any Member possesses a similar specimen. Maybe, somewhere, some day, I shall find my bird in a gilded cage!



Trade mark stamped into brasswork
Actual size 3/4" x 3/8"





THE GREAT IMHOFF ORGAN RESCUE

BY BRUCE ANGRAVE

Once upon a time, in the Year of Our Lord 1953 or thereabouts, I chanced to visit a large auction emporium which shall be nameless unless Mr. Ord-Hume can persuade it to take advertising space in this Journal. My curiosity had been aroused by a friend who told a tale of a strange musical instrument, half piano, half harp, which lurked there amid the treasures. This, I found to my astonishment, was none other than Stewart's Patent Euphonic, a marvellous riot of cast iron, ormolu, and calamander wood, dreamed up by a North Country gentleman in 1840. It's full-compass keyboard operated an incredibly complicated hammer action on exposed strings with worm drive tuning gear in a giraffe frame 7' 6" high. Instead of soundboards, it boasted three cello-shaped resonators, fantastically fretted, filligreed in gold and surmounted by ormolu vases.



It didn't play. of course, so naturally I had to bid for it because it needed rescuing. And because I didn't really want it, naturally it was knocked down to me, just as it reached my top bidding limit.

The problem now was how to get it into my 9th floor flat. True, five stalwart porters trundled it merrily along the pavement on its three trolley wheels (one had broken off). Agreed, they humped its quarter-ton bulk successfully, though crashingly, into the van. Yes, they clattered it happily to the lift door. But it was six inches wider than the lift.

An hour and a crowd of frustrated tenants later, I succeeded in hack-sawing through the apparently undo-able bolts which held the calamander wood bits to the cast iron bit.

Success was crowned by a bill for repairs to the lift door.

One year and three unsuccessful restoration attempts later, I sold Stewarts Patent Euphonic to an American dealer, together (accidentally) with all my Victorian furniture. It took me years to replace this and cost me four times as much for new Victorian furniture as the dealer paid me for the old.

What has all this to do with the story? Well, in that emporium, dur-

ing the same sale as that graced by my Euphonic, stood what I now know must have been an Imhof barrel organ. It looked, as I recall it across the years, exactly like the one I now own and was knocked down, I dimly recollect, for £60. Three months later, it reappeared in another large emporium, marked at, I believe, 300 guineas. I remember it playing a Mozart overture with great panache and sweetness. I remember, too, wishing I could own it, though this was before my music-box days and it was, in any case, far too big for my flat.

Well, the years rolled on, I acquired my first Symphonion and my first overture box and I read John Clark's book. I often thought of the splendid barrel organ which I had seen at the emporium. Then one day I had a sudden recollection. On a Saturday afternoon, back in the dawn of history, I had seen something behind an old bed in a junk shop near the Portobello Road - something resembling the organ in the sale.

Curiosity took me back to the old bed the following weekend. The bed had now been joined by tow up-ended sofas and a marble overmantle. But behind them still jutted a tall, worm-eaten case and some dirty old pipes. Further down, through a chink between the fireplace and a chest of drawers I could see a battered barrel and some corroded cog wheels.

Curiosity was satisfied. I laughed merrily at the thought of some nit lumbering himself with that rubbish one day, and strolled away.

Ten years later I chanced to remember the old bed and its Background. I had now acquired a large house which needed filling up. My Marshall & Rose pianola had helped, but more was needed.

So back I went to the old bed. It was still there and so were the sofas and the mantelpiece. These had been joined by three wardrobes and an upended bar from an old pub, two chaise longues, some grandfather clocks and a miscellany of mattresses. The Background was now no longer visible but the vendor assured me of its continued existence. "May I see it?" I asked. "Don't be daft", he said. "How can I get through that lot?"

So I went away.

A year later my renewed enquiries met with the same result. Two reception-room doors with door-cases and the proscenium arch of a Victorian theatre, complete with safety curtain, had now been added to the pile. "There are six others interested in it now", he said darkly.

Six months later I delivered my ultimatum. "Now look here, my man. About that organ thing. I mean business and I want to see it. Now is the time to sell", I said. "Besides" I said, "they're in fashion now", I said. "Next year - out!" I said. "Besides", I said, "just listen for a moment". A soft munching sound filled the air. "Woodworm" I said.

"six months more and that Background will collapse in a mound of dust. Then where will the old bed and all those other things it's propping up be?"

He was visibly moved. "Next Thursday" he said "I'll make a hole and you can have a look".

I forgot all about it until the following Friday when my blood ran cold. "God!" I thought, "he'll never forgive me! Another ten years to wait. Or he'll sell it to Number 2 on the list". So I rang him up and grovelled.

Now there was no turning back. I was honour-bound to buy.

WORM IN THE WINDCHEST

The organ arrived on a bleak January day. There was snow falling as two grinning men humped and bumped its many parts into the leaky garage. They obviously thought I was mad. "This'll keep you busy, matey!" they said amicably but you could tell they were humouring me.

The bits consisted of the base of the case, two doors and two side panels with dangling silk-remnant trimmings, the large top, a back from another organ, the action frame complete with bellows, wind chest, key frame and clockwork, several bundles of wood pipes done up with string, an immense weight weighing 300 lbs ("Going in for weight-liftin', matey?") several pounds of filth and nine battered cylinders looking like mangle rollers after junior has fed a bagful of staples through them. On the ends of the cylinders, still decipherable, were exotic legends as follows: (1) No. 1874 Barn Dances; (2) L'Etoile du Nord; (3) Selection Lucretia Borgio by Donizetti; (4) L'Elisar D'Amore. Come Paride. Io son Ricco. Vecete di Quest. Donizetti; (5) Hymns Austran & Russian with Variations; (6) Ernani Involami. Cavatina Trovatore. Polacci Ernani; (7) Selection Rigoletto by Verdi; (8) No. 1873 Annie Laurie, Minstrel Boy, Auld Lang Syne, Come back to Erin; (9) No. 1872 Ave Maria, Gounod, The Lost Chord, Sullivan.

When the weather became a little warmer, I went into the garage to inspect the organ. What to do first? Well obviously to remove the top layer of filth and sprinkle it on the garden (to the delight of my holly-hocks and grape vine).

Appraisal of the newly revealed machinery yielded the following facts: (a) The clockwork seemed to be in order though black with corrosion; (b) All the keys were corroded into their slots; (c) The pipes were complete and more or less 'in tune though three or four had become unglued; (d) The wind chest looked like a woodworms' banquet; (e) The bellows had a tatty look but appeared to hold wind to some extent; (f) Most of the stickers were broken.

Well, I fiddled and rummaged and cleaned and oiled and polished and Rentokiled and tinkered for several weeks without ever producing more than a grampus gasp from the apparatus. Never once did I produce a note, though the pipes played beautifully when I blew through them. I appealed to Mr. Coombs. "You never know where you are with those", he said. Mr. Mundy, my pianola man, gave me some wire to make new pallet springs. Mr. Morley, the piano man, glanced at the organ while looking at a square piano which I had recently rescued from the local sale room. "Try Mr. Seares of Croydon" he said. "He knows about organs". Mr. Seares came and looked at it. "The pallets are ciphering" he said. So I packed the organ action into my ancient car and staggered off to Croydon. Months later, Mr. Seares completed the job of recovering the pallets, made new springs and designed special spring guides to keep them in alignment. He also threw in a new set of stickers for good measure.

Instead of the grampus gasp I could now produce strange Schönbergian shrieks from the organ. No matter which barrel I played - it might be "The Lost Chord" or something from Rigoletto - the music always came out atonal, sometimes Varese, sometimes Stockhausen, but more often Webern. This was all very well, but I knew that the Members of the Musical Box Society would be very suspicious of a hundred year-old organ which played serial music, so once again I recommenced my search for a magician who would bring it back to life in its own century.

I found him at the November 1964 meeting of the Musical Box Society when I met Freddy Hill. Instantly all my troubles were over and in a very few weeks, Freddy had the machine playing as merrily as new.

There only remained the problem of the Weight. I decided that a 300 lb weight on the first floor of a hundred year old house, particularly when located over my bedroom, made an uneasy combination. So, ignoring the shouts of the purists, I decided to affix an electric motor if this could be done without damage to the original mechanism.

Once again a genius from the M.B.S., this time in the shape of Mr. Lawrence, came up with the answer - a pulley miraculously fashioned in brass and cunningly fitted to the butterfly in such a way that it looked to be part of the original design. With the aid of this and a Conyers 1/30 h.p. motor purchased from M.R. Supplies, the conversion was simple.

The weight? It still stands in my hall where the porters left it nearly two years ago.

EPILOGUE - Report by Freddy Hill

A German clockwork barrel organ bearing the maker's nameplate reading "Imhof & Mukle, 547 Oxford Street, London. International Exhibition 1862-65. No. 2296." Instrument has 46 keys plus 4 keys to work the two

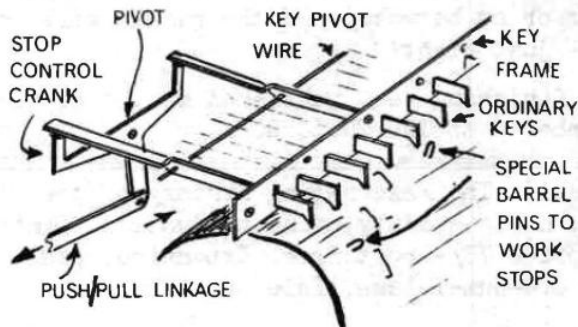
stops. There are 85 pipes comprising two 4ft. stops (all open wood pipes with inverted mouths), the front rank voiced louder than the other stop. The lowest 10 pipes are shared by both stops. The rear rank of pipes are slightly tapered. The compass is a full chromatic scale of $4\frac{1}{2}$ octaves.



The clockwork train, with large endless screw escapement and three-wheel train, turns the barrel as well as blowing. The keyboard is automatically raised at the end of the tune and the barrel moves from right to left in a spiral as it turns, making 8 revolutions for one tune - a duration of approximately 5 minutes.

The bellows occupying the bottom area of the frame have four feeders and a diagonal reservoir. Measurements of the bellows: 20" wide x 35" long. The framework of the organ is very solidly constructed of $1\frac{1}{4}$ " thick wood. Measurement of the organ without its case = 3ft. 10in. wide x 1ft. 10in. deep x 5ft. 4in. tall. The clockwork requires a weight of approximately 300 lbs with a single line to drive it (i.e. no multiple pulley blocks). The windchest was found to be lined with a German newspaper dated 1870. Each barrel is 28" long and $6\frac{7}{8}$ " diameter.

Restoration work carried out; The inside of the windchest re-papered and the leaks sealed up. New feeder and reservoir valves made and fitted to the bellows. The windtrunk joint re-leathered and all the leather treated. The clockwork dismantled, the pivots burnished, the escape wheel pivot hole rebushed, a new tension slip spring made and fitted to the fly. Rust and corrosion scraped from the parts and the latter polished. The locking repaired, a locking screw made and fitted to the detent. The keyboard taken to pieces and the rusty keys removed, scraped, their working faces filed and burnished. New pivot wires for the fifty keys fitted. The check buttons refelted and two new buttons refitted. A new stop stick-er made and fitted. Six broken screws drilled out and new screws fitted. The barrels cleaned and pins straightened. Over 400 new pins and bridges fitted to three of the barrels. The whole action and clockwork assembled and the organ finally started.



The diagram on the left shows the method by which the stops are automatically operated. At both ends of the keyboard are two stop-keys fitted as are the ordinary keys. Their tails act on a T-shaped lever the base of which pushes open one stop, closing the other at the same time. Special tall barrel pins lift one or the other key as setup on the barrel.



very collector is faced sooner or later with having to restore a box and restoration often entails a thorough cleaning and re-finishing of the case. Here are just a few tips to use towards tackling the job.

Paint can be removed with any proprietary stripper, but do wash the prepared surface thoroughly with white spirit before starting to re-finish.

Old varnish, polish and dirt can be taken off by a liberal application of a solvent cleaner made up with equal proportions of paraffin, methylated spirits, linseed oil and pure turpentine. This foul mixture should be painted on with a stiff brush - one of those old paint-brushes which, through carelessness, is ninety per cent stiff is ideal.

tips on restoring cases

by the editor

Cleaned wood can be bleached for refinishing using 6 drops of ammonia in an egg-cupful of peroxide. This fizzes merrily on the dirt and cleans the last vestiges of dirt or paint from the wood pores.

Wood staining and French polishing are today made easy and a browse round the local 'do-it-yourself' store will provide an abundance of good materials to call upon to restore the finish of your box.

Wax polishing must be done with a good, genuine furniture wax - NOT a silicone-based polish. Put on the polish so as to give an even, regular coat. Leave overnight for the solvents to evaporate, then polish - hard.

To repaint the black inside of a lid or the frame of the glass inner lid, top lid edging and dividers, do not use a brush. Make up a little cotton rubber as you would for French polishing only a bit smaller. Use a black enamel paint of the quick-drying gloss type. Dip the cloth in the pot so as to pick up a small drop - not a dirty great dollop - and rub on the paint as if you are polishing. This results in an ultra-thin coat which fills up any cracks and crevices in the old finish (which must naturally be rubbed down with fine glasspaper first). Several applications are needed, leaving an hour or so between, and the result will be a very fine, slightly matt finish - just right!

Basic instructions for case finishing were published in the article by 'Endless Screw' in Vol. 1, Number 6 of THE MUSIC BOX.

SALE "Player Piano Treasury" (Roehl). The Fascinating History of the Player Piano. Profusely illustrated, a top-quality, fine production. Limited number of mint copies available price 78/- post free. Expensive, yes - but worth every penny of it. Arthur Ord-Hume, Lake, Isle of Wight. (1)

Following the publication of the article on dampers in the last issue of THE MUSIC BOX, I knew I would be inundated with letters, so I wrote this article before the magazine was printed! I realised that I had not mentioned the dampers of small musical box movements and musical snuff boxes. These have been a great problem to me for some time and I have expended many hours of completely non-productive effort trying to sort them out.

Like everyone else, I studied most carefully the section in Mosoriak's "The Curious History of Musical Boxes" written by Glen P. Heckert on the repair of musical boxes. There, on page 231, is a description of how to replace feather dampers with an illustration of the part of the feather to be used. It was taken from the portion of the feather where the barbs are toughest.

I myself have tried feathers from all sorts of imaginable birds from sparrows to the goose - from Soho to Manchester - all to no avail. Perhaps the birds of the United States are different but my ornithological friend, Henry A. J. Lawrence from Leamington Spa, assures me that they are all alike. Every feather barb which I have removed is always semi-circular in cross-section. This means that if they are placed on the comb as Heckert suggests, namely flat side of the barb towards the comb teeth, then the cylinder pin will strike the curved surface and just deflect the damper. I have observed this happening. Sometimes it works but, after a few playings, I noticed that the dampers had been so distorted that they were useless.

dampermania

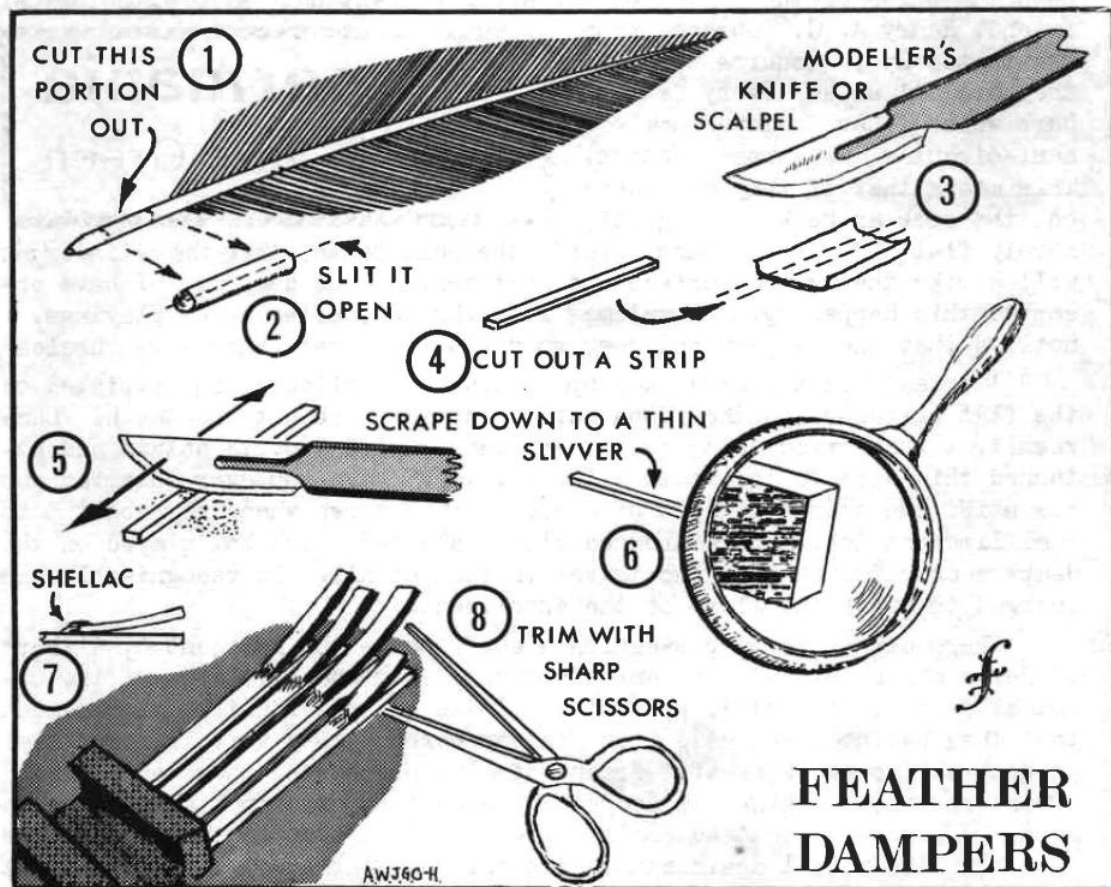
by C. de Vere Green

I tried them the other way up so that the cylinder pins impinged on the flat surfaces and the round surface of the barb hit the teeth. Same result. I then tried using the finest damper wire I could obtain and attached this wire to the teeth with Araldite. Have you ever observed just how stiff the thinnest piece of damper wire becomes when only about 3 to 4 millimetres long and reinforced with Araldite? The box played on the dampers only for they had no 'give' in them at all. No recognisable tune emerged to crown the glory of the experiment.

There came into my possession a snuff box - the movement by Alibert of Paris circa 1825 with a laminated comb. Fortunately, some of the original dampers were still present. It was quite evident on examination that they had not been made from feather barbs - they were thin and flat on both surfaces. A chemist friend of mine pronounced them 'animal' and I wondered about making the dampers of some form of animal skin or parchment. However, as these small dampers have always been referred to as "feather dampers", I again examined a chicken feather. I found that it was a simple job to cut the quill portion of the feather into narrow

strips. This I did and redampened the comb again using Araldite. Once again to no avail. The quill dampers were far too stiff. I removed them all once more, made another set and this time used shellac. The result was better but still not correct. Yet again they were all removed. The idea seemed on the right lines and so I set about thinning down the strips of quill by scraping them on both sides on a flat surface with a scalpel. After thinning they were then cut into correct widths, but longer than required. These dampers were attached with shellac and, when set, trimmed to their correct length with fine scissors. So far they appear to be working successfully and my technique seems to be justified.

One or two tips have been discovered through these trials and tribulations. Firstly, the amount of shellac should be minimal otherwise it can flow on to adjacent teeth and it then becomes almost impossible to separate the teeth without dislodging the damper. It is imperative to position the damper in line with the point of the comb tooth and to check



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this position as the shellac thickens for the dampers often tend to drift or float out of alignment. Another tip is to damper alternate teeth of the comb at a time. If the teeth are dampered in sequence, it is inevitable that the adjacent damper will be touched by one's tweezers and be knocked out of alignment, so I suggest, from experience, fitting alternative dampers at a time. When the shellac has set (and I find that to set well takes from three to four days), trim to the required length with fine surgical scissors and then fit dampers to the teeth missed out previously.

To have properly set and adjusted quill dampers on your favourite snuff box really will make a great difference and, having re-dampered the Alibert about ten times, it is my hope that my experiences will spare you from the title of this article!

This article was completed at the end of August and to date only one letter has been received - it was the one written by myself to myself - the one which prompted me to write the foregoing.....

NEXT SOCIETY MEETING

THE AUTUMN MEETING of the Society is to be

held on Saturday, November 6th at Berners Hotel, Berners Street, London, W.1. This is off Oxford Street and very close to Oxford Circus Underground Station (Central & Bakerloo lines). The meeting will start at 10.30 when coffee will be served. This will be followed by a talk entitled "History of the Mechanical Organ" by Mr. Arthur Ord-Hume illustrated by examples of instruments in his collection. The luncheon recess will be followed by Mr. Cyril de Vere Green who will give an illustrated talk on his visit to the United States to attend the meeting of the American Musical Box Society in September. From 3.30 onwards, tea will be served and Members will have plenty of time to get together and play their boxes. There will be as usual plenty of space for display, so bring along your favourite or choice items. We certainly hope to welcome more 'out of town' Members this time. Our Secretary has already circulated full details of the meeting, but PLEASE HELP by returning your replies as quickly as you can - it saves so much time and ensures you coffee and space as well as lunch if needed. After discussion, your Committee has decided against holding an auction at this meeting but there will be provided a Sales Table on which Members who have boxes to sell may display them. Any Member who is a photographer is urged to come and take pictures both for our archives and THE MUSIC BOX. We hope to see EVERYONE on November 6th. Don't forget the date!

LAST WORD

A MANCHESTER friend reports that she recently told her newly-arrived Finnish au pair girl: "Tomorrow were all going to Bellevue. Would you like that?" The girl looked worried. "I do not know," she said, "I have never been belved."

Is there an Organ in the house?

Our Secretary and his Orchestrelle were featured in a B.B.C. sound broadcast during May. The programme was broadcast three times - it had the honour of being selected for repeat in the 'Pick of the Week' review of items of outstanding merit. David Tindall, B.B.C. reporter and himself a mechanical musical instrument enthusiast, called at Devonshire Place one evening to interview him about the organ. To the question "Do the neighbours complain?", Mr. de Vere Green replied "I haven't had any complaints yet". Tindall then said that he had spoken to the neighbour nearest the instrument and he had said that having never heard the thing he was in no position to comment. David Tindall commented that, when the organ was going full blast - as it frequently does - either the walls must be sixteen feet thick - or perhaps the neighbour sleeps with a sack over his head. And the name of the neighbour? Bernard Levin, journalist and critic, T.V. personality and once voted London's Most Unpopular Person!

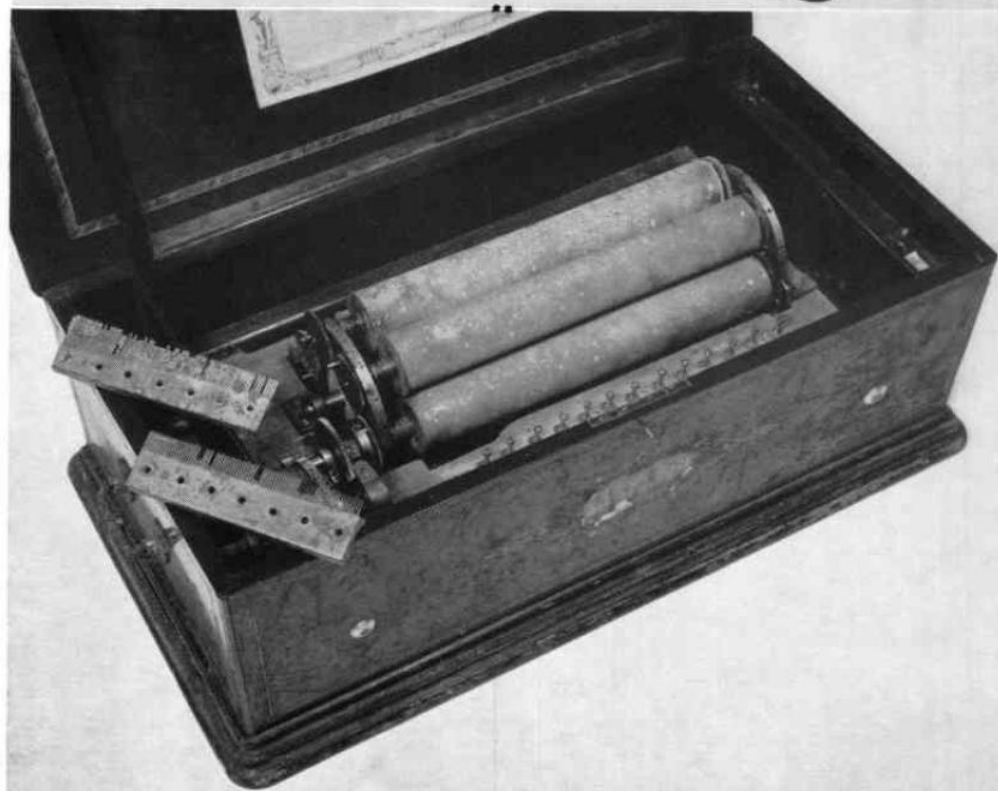
Mechanical Music to relieve you...

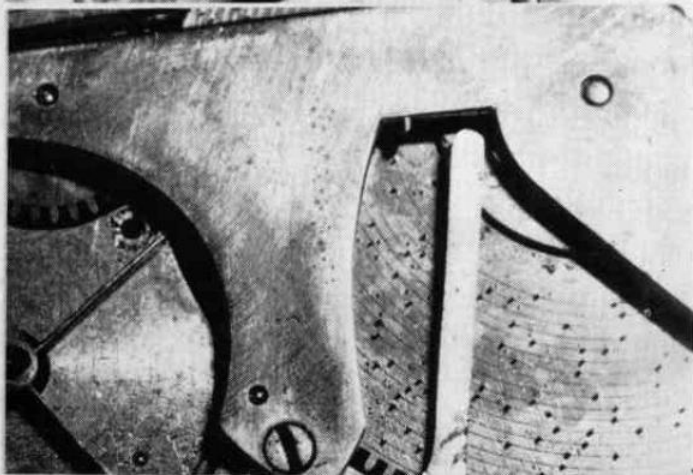
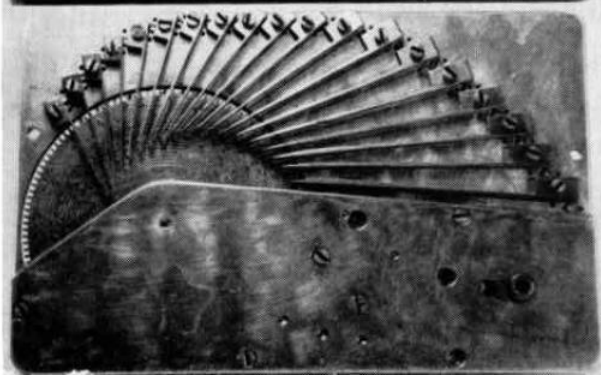
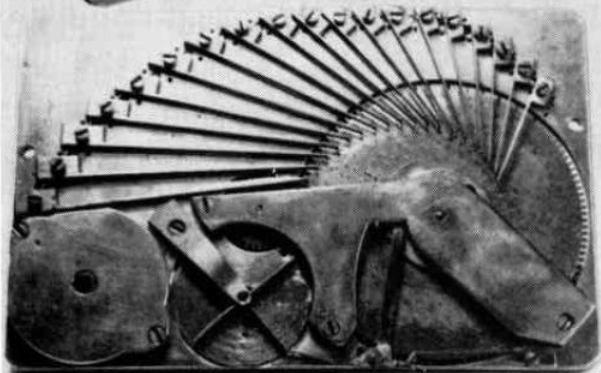
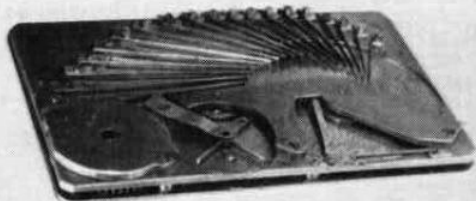
That incredibly interesting and amusing book "CLEAN & DECENT - THE FASCINATING HISTORY OF THE BATHROOM AND WATER CLOSET" by Lawrence Wright and published by Routledge & Kegan Paul, contains the following reference: "...A novelty of the late nineteenth century is the jerry with a concealed musical box that gives a recital of appropriate chamber music when it is lifted and cannot be turned off by the embarrassed guest. But it is not truly a novelty: in 1820 Prince Metternich, staying at the Palace of Furstenberg, was awakened at midnight by music of the flute near his bed. His Night Table* was giving this untimely entertainment. He found and pressed a button and the music stopped - more or less, for once an hour it tried to resume and made disturbing little noises. When he complained in the morning the valet remarked that the Princess' own Night Table even played trumpet music"

* The Night Table formed a vital necessity in the bedroom of the well-to-do. Presumably the drapes of a four-poster prevented the simple expedient of the conventional utensil being placed thereunder (Editor).

This six-cylinder revolver box plays 36 airs and has two mandoline combs. From the Planus collection, the lower picture shows it as it was when it arrived in his possession. The restoration of the superb case presented a problem, portions of the enamel miniatures being lost but the top picture shows the finished case. Movement is still being restored.★







The Musical Silver Snuff Box illustrated on Page 106 was made by Samuel Pemberton in Birmingham in 1817. I was lucky to find this box, which is now the proud centrepiece of my collection. Both box and music are of exceptional quality and from the condition of box and movement it has been well cared for. A description might be of interest. The

box is $2\frac{1}{8}$ " long by 2" wide and is 1" deep of which depth only $\frac{1}{4}$ " is taken up by the movement. The movement is radial with 19 teeth arranged fan-wise either side of the disc, there being 38 teeth in all. Two airs or tunes are played. The power from the spring is let down as follows:

1. Spring wheel, 50 teeth, to
2. brass wheel, 36 teeth, to
3. brass pinion, 12 teeth, on brass wheel, 40 teeth, to
4. brass music disc, $1\frac{1}{4}$ " diameter, 154 teeth, to
5. steel pinion, 8 teeth, on brass wheel, 52 teeth, to
6. steel pinion, 8 teeth, on brass wheel, 50 teeth, to
7. steel pinion, 8 teeth, on brass wheel, 54 teeth, to
8. steel pinion, 6 teeth, on which is a small, slender air brake.

Unit 7 of this reduction train is fixed in an eccentric screw to adjust the speed and Unit 8 is fixed in drilled garnet bearings.

May I add that the above information was obtained by dismantling an identical, but damaged, movement. The only work carried out on the writer's box was to line the spring box with greased paper and to adjust the stop mechanism.

The music is a march, not yet identified, but probably one of the choruses from a Mozart opera, and the second tune is the Glockenspiel Song from the Magic Flute, "Das Klinget so Herrlich". The latter air was played on the B.B.C. music programme not fifteen minutes before the box was purchased! It is truly a magic music box, made by a master craftsman who left not a number or name on any part of his work

Incidentally, I have another laminated movement (groups of 5) marked 'ARF' - this time in a horn box. Either Charlie Arf is at work again or Al. Reuge Freres worked earlier than we thought. Box is 1830-1840 and I wonder if anyone would care to comment on the mysterious ARF?

WANTED Old barrel organs (mechanical pianos) wanted, street and ld slot. Good prices paid for good examples or old wrecks. Distance no object. Smith, Builder, The Street, Takely, Bishops Stortford. 1(1)

A MUSICAL SILVER SNUFF BOX

— by DAVID TALLIS —



f all the musical instruments ever produced, it seems that the Hurdy Gurdy has eschewed for itself far more misrepresentation and misinterpretation than any other musical device.

The hurdy-gurdy is not, in the fullest sense of the term, a mechanical musical instrument unless you argue that the wheel is a mechanism on its own. Notwithstanding this ambiguous point, the only justification

THE HURDY GURDY

by A. ORD-HUME

for writing this article is to try to dispel once and for all the multitude of myth and the tangle of wrong thinking which has been created in the minds of people, knowledgable and otherwise, concerning the hurdy-gurdy.

Reference to this instrument is found in many early writings and it is also featured in paintings, sculptures and other art expression as early as the 12th century. The instrument had a background of lowliness in its earliest form, rising to class and aristocracy up to and throughout the Rococo period, then once more declining to the chattel of the pitiful beggar towards the end of the 18th century. In the beginning, then, it was an instrument of the commoner, associated with the poorer classes. It then became a very fashionable instrument as we shall show but, after the French Revolution, it was relegated to even greater depths of degradation becoming the accoutrement of the itinerant as he dragged his wretched form along the highways and byways. There seems little explanation for this class fluctuation.

No lesser composers than Mozart and Haydn composed for the instrument. Haydn wrote also not for the simple hurdy-gurdy with strings only, but for the 'Lira organizzata', which was a more ingenious variant with an enclosed organ attached. Haydn's patron was the King of Naples whose delight was to perform on the instrument himself. The many concertos and nocturnes which Haydn wrote so gratified the sovereign that he tried to persuade him to stay in Naples - an invitation which Haydn so nearly accepted instead of going to London.

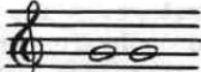
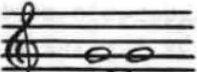
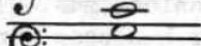
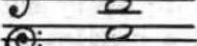
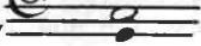



The hurdy-gurdy, variously described as a vielle and, by Chaucer, as a rotte ('rote' q.v.) suffered from a complete absence of subsequent development engineering. Whereas the primitive dulcimer became the sophisticated piano-forte of today, the hurdy-gurdy, first appearing as early as the tenth century, depicted during the 12th century and extant until the 18th century* began life more or less as it ended although at the beginning its proportions demanded two people to perform it and, again, at the time of J.S. Bach it was transformed to a sostenente keyboard instrument inspiring description by Evelyn. But the 'geigenwerk' which attracted Bach's attention was relegated and it was allowed to revert to species.

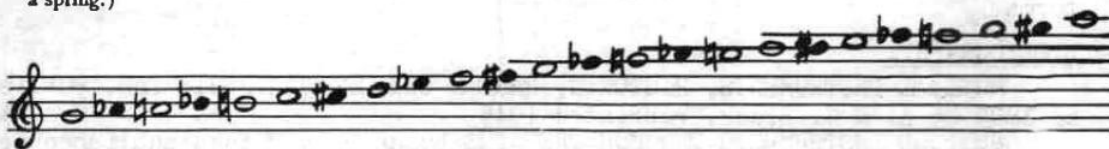
*Gehring states that it was still to be seen in London up to the 1930's but this could be a report of an organ grinder of a different vintage altogether.

It was altogether an unusual instrument when compared with the many other stringed instruments produced both contemporarily and subsequently. Basically, it consists of a deep-bellied sound chest of approximately rectangular cross section carrying on it a bridge, shoulder and head on the lines of a typical stringed instrument. The deep belly, however, houses a large-diameter wheel which is rosin-covered and rotated by means of a handle protruding from the front of the case. Six or more strings are attached to the instrument in such a manner that they are in contact with the rotating wheel. Normally, four of the strings, arranged in two pairs, run along the sides of the top of the instrument and these are called the drone strings. They are thus named for the simple reason that so long as the instrument is being played, these strings are being sounded continuously.

No provision is made for modulating the pitch of these drone strings whilst playing once they are adjusted with the usual turn screws at the neck. The remaining two or sometimes three strings are termed melody strings and these run over the top of the wheel and along the 'finger-board' and again, so long as the instrument is being played, these strings sound continuously but, unlike the drone strings, they can be shortened or stopped to play a tune and this is achieved by finger-operated keys linked to a system of tangents to press a peg against the vibrating string. In playing, the finger key is depressed, thus bringing the peg against the string and effectively shortening the playing length of that string and producing a note of the predetermined pitch.

The latest hurdy-gurdy had the following keyboard compass and tuning of the open strings:

<i>Tuned in C.</i>	<i>Tuned in G.</i>
Chanterelle 	Chanterelle 
Unisons. 	Trumpet. 
Mouche. 	Mouche. 
Bourdon. 	(Silenced.) 
(Silenced by a spring.)	Bourdon.



The open notes correspond with the long black keys of the instrument ; the black notes with the short white keys.

The fact that the instrument embodies drone strings in addition to melody strings coupled with the fact that the strings sound continuously, a characteristic monophonic sound similar in effect to the sound produced by the bag-pipe and other instrument which have drone strings results.

The very fact that the instrument had such a wide following in Court circles frequently led to examples being expensively ornamented and finely decorated with semi-precious stones, ivory and mother o' pearl. A number of examples have come down to us today and the specimen depicted here is from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and shows in detail the features of the instrument, together with the fineness of decoration.

As mentioned earlier, a variant of the hurdy-gurdy included in its mechanism an organ accompaniment and an example of this mutation also exists in the Victoria and Albert Museum. This specimen is mounted to a box containing a bellows mechanism driven by a reciprocator connected through the bottom of the Hurdy Gurdy's belly to the rotating rosin wheel. An arrangement of stopped wooden pipes is mounted alongside the instrument and follows closely the contour of the side of the belly. It is played very much as before with the exception that the depression of the finger keys also actuates a sympathetic pipe to accompany the note. The instrument in this particular instance is mounted on a small stand and would be performed no doubt in the same manner as the later street organ.

Classical art specimens feature the hurdy gurdy and at a recent London auction, a pair of porcelain figures were sold, one of which showed a woman performing on the instrument. The accompanying picture shows a bronze figure standing some nine inches high and of considerable detail, illustrating the instrument being played by a lady in period dress.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the general description for an organette, street piano or barrel organ as a 'hurdy gurdy' is totally incorrect. Indeed, whilst the sound of the instrument today appears to be dull and monotonous - perhaps a little soulless! - it was certainly a sound which played a very important part in the musical expression of the community for a very considerable period of our heritage. The fact that the instrument is played by turning a handle was no doubt responsible for the dubbing 'hurdy gurdy' to every subsequent mechanical musical device in which the operator turned a handle. This misnomer has been handed down for long enough and it is usually applied in derogatory - and unwarranted - terms.

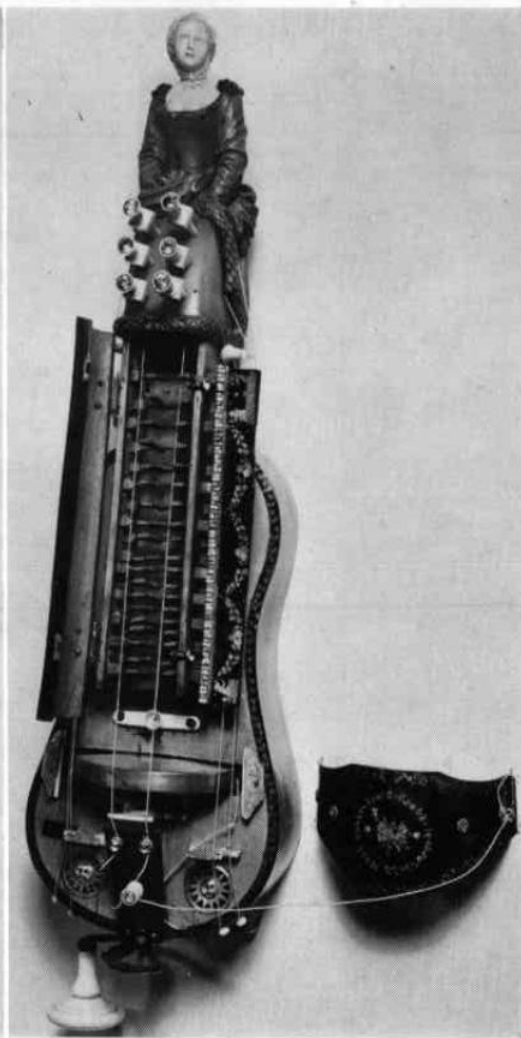
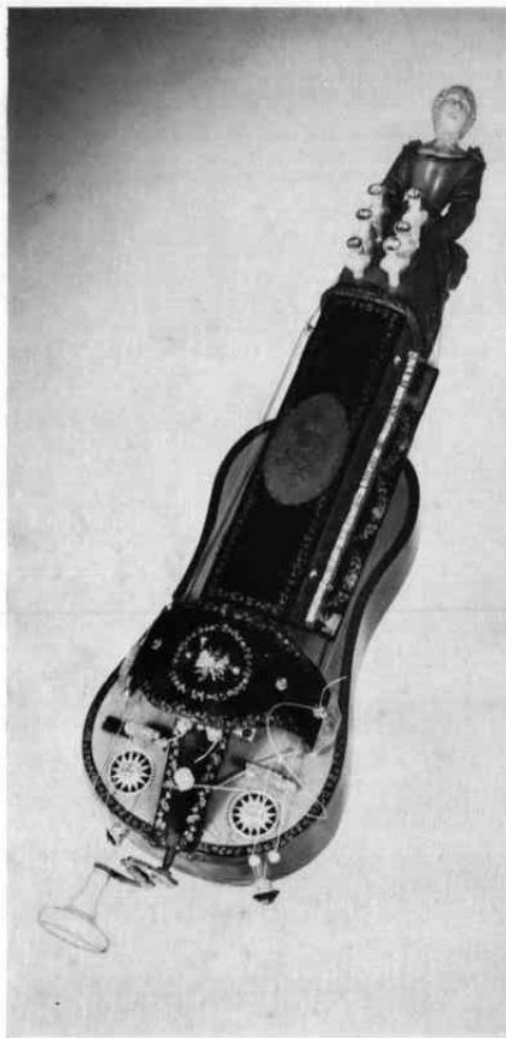
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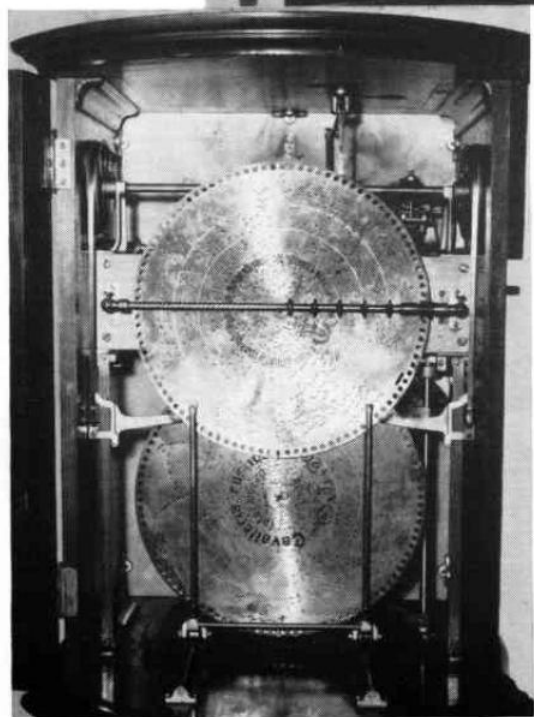
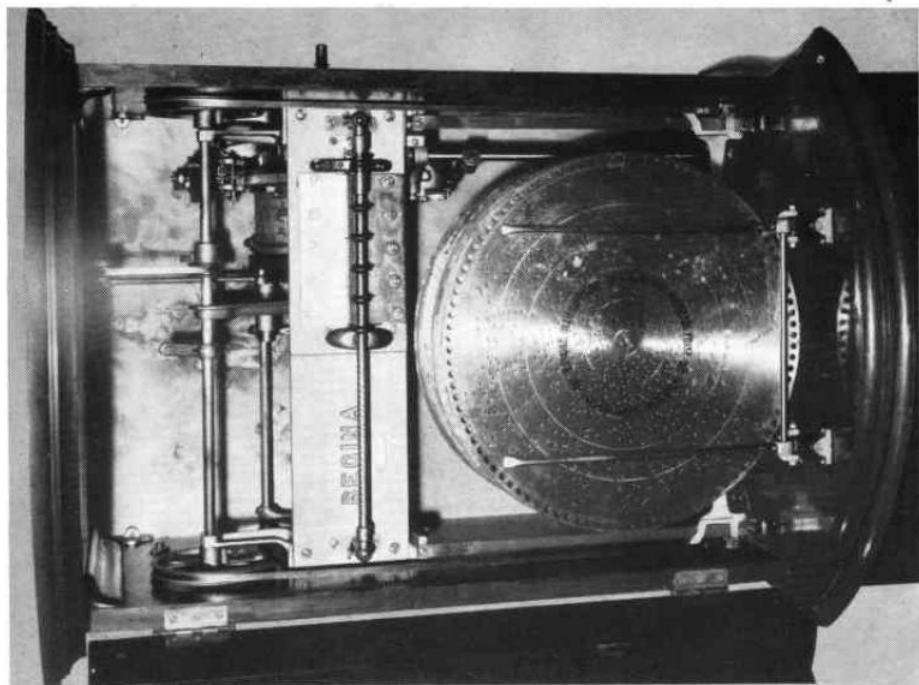
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, HISTORIC, RARE & UNIQUE by A.J.Hipkins, published 1885 by A. & C. Black, reprinted 1945

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS THROUGH THE AGES by Anthony Buines published for the Galpin Society by Penguin Books

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, THEIR HISTORY FROM STONE AGE TO THE PRESENT DAY by Karl Gehringer, published by Allen & Unwin







Regina Corona

The 15½" self-changing Regina Corona shown in the attached illustrations is in the collection of Mrs. Gertrude Gilchrist which is open to the public at the Gilchrist Galleries on the sea front at Cowes, Isle of Wight.

Representing a remarkable achievement in automating disc musical boxes, the Corona plays twelve discs one after the other if required, or can be set to play any one of the tunes set in the storage rack. Whilst Polyphons were also equipped with self-changing mechanisms - presumably from the same master brain of Gustav Brachhausen, the Regina mechanism is considered to be neater, more compact and simpler. Coin-operated, the mechanism incorporates a shutter which closes the coin chute whilst the selected tune is playing, thus avoiding possible jamming. This feature also appears on the Polyphons and Symphonions of the period.

The action of pushing a penny into the slot serves firstly to set into motion the disc storage rack which moves forward or backwards until the selected disc is reached. A steel band then lifts the disc up and under the pressure bar running the full width of the bed-plate. The bar is

Regina Corona, No. 37.

With automatic tune-changing device, Long-running movement. Two Combs with 130 notes. Tunes 20½ ins. diameter Size, 75 x 34 x 28 ins.

Price, including 12 Tunes, £72.

Extra Tunes, 5/6 each

Afterwards it is returned to the rack and the machine comes to rest or plays the next tune selected.

The above can also be supplied with Penny-in-Slot attachment.



GRAHAM WEBB

WHAT DOES THIS NAME MEAN TO YOU?



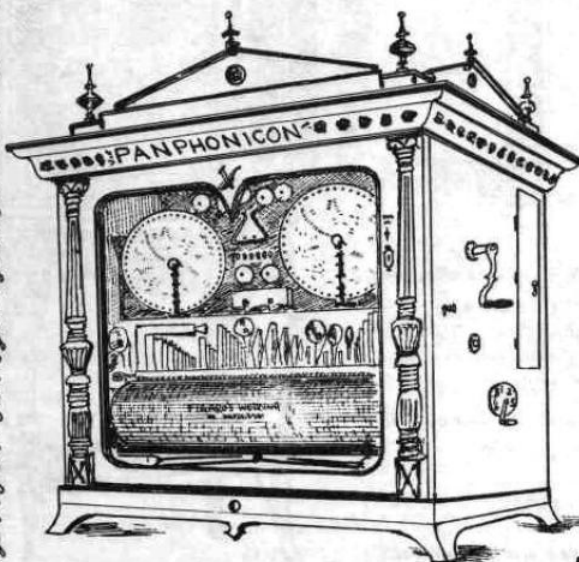
mark applicable reply with an X

TOO B ***** DEAR	
WHO'S HE?	
VERY HARD MAN	
BUT HONEST	
AT LEAST YOU CAN TALK	
CERTAINLY FINDS THEM	
GOOD CUP OF TEA	
BEST 3 THINGS IN MY COLLECTION	
CRUIKEY! IT'S THAT NAME AGAIN!	

Whatever your answer may be, ...there are some facts with which you may not be acquainted!

- 1) I find more mechanical musical instruments than anyone else in England, many of them never before seen by Members of the Society;
- 2) I sell them quickly - and this must mean that people can afford the prices which I ask;
- 3) It is not generally known that much of the dealings which I have with Members involves my taking in part or full exchange some item which they no longer require;
- 4) I am at all times ready to buy unwanted pieces from collections - often at more than you may consider them to be worth;
- 5) I have a large list of particular articles required by collectors so that many of the

finer and rarer pieces never go on display at all. On this list are such things as Aeolian Orchestrelle player organs (3 of which I've located), overture-boxes, triple-disc Symphonions, automata and some even more exotic items.....



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All Society Members are always welcome whether buying, selling, exchanging - or just nosing about!

MUSICAL BOXES

Unusual Barrel Organ in Auction

Sotheby's, the renowned firm of London auctioneers, had in their West End saleroom during July a rather unusual barrel organ.

Manufactured by Crowshaw of London, the instrument was housed in a mahogany case, the quartered front being of classic design with an oval panel of gilded imitation pipes with blue silk behind. It rested on a stand tastefully inlaid with cross banding and boxwood stringing featuring slightly flared bracket feet. This base provided storage for four of the five barrels which were offered with the instrument. The whole organ stood 54" high by 26 $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide and the case finished in a flat, hinged top.

The 33-key instrument performed, from left front to right, on a triangle with two clappers, a drum, also with two clappers, an 11-key organ and a 12-note spinet or piano. The two ranks of pipes - a somewhat small compass for the size of the instrument - comprised stopped diapason (a rank of stoppered wood pipes at the front of the pipe rack) and principal (a rank of open metal flue pipes at the back of the rack. It will thus be seen that the pipes in this organ were arranged in the reverse manner to usual where the wood pipes are behind the metal ones. An effective piano of twelve notes, each comprising two simultaneously-struck strings strung across bridges on pegs, was fixed to the right-hand back of the case and included a spruce sounding board.

A somewhat short, stubby winding-handle operated the instrument, twin reciprocators driving narrow doubld feeders in the usual manner.

The barrels, the complete programme of five having survived with the instrument, were quite long in relation to their various diameters, the largest of which was about five inches, and each played eight tunes. The fact that the barrels were all of differing diameters is not uncommon to find in barrel organs and it enabled tunes of varying length to be presented. Each barrel is mounted in a wooden carrier and this is made so as to present the pins to the key-frame at the correct height regardless of the diameter of the barrel.

Concealed in a recess in the lower front of the case and covered with a little sliding door bearing the crest and name of Crowshaw, were the five stops, two for the pipes and three to cater for the percussion. The maker Crowshaw has posed something of a mystery since nowhere does this name seem to have been recorded. The period of the organ appears to be about 1820 to 1840 and it is certainly from the hands of a craftsman. A brief examination by your Editor revealed that, although not in playing order, the instrument was readily capable of restoration. It is understood that the organ was withdrawn from the sale, a reserve not being met.

SUPPOSE YOU HAD AN AEOLIAN

An orchestra
for
every house



SUPPOSE YOU could have in your home an orchestra, and when you wanted music you had but to make a request and it would be immediately complied with. Suppose too (as long as we are only supposing it does not matter how improbable we are) that this orchestra

could play any piece of music ever composed without waiting to study or practise it. If you wanted a programme of operatic music you had only to mention the particular selections you wished to hear and they would be promptly rendered.

To play your
favourite
compositions

Suppose you had some friends spending the evening and wished to dance. Your orchestra could play waltzes, lancers, two-steps, and polkas with such perfect time and rhythm that the pleasures of dancing would be immeasurably increased. Suppose you were alone and your mood called for some particular piece—some old-time favourite—very likely you would have your own conception of the manner in which it should be played. Suppose that you found that you could conduct this remarkable orchestra yourself—direct its playing according to your own ideas and wishes.

Entertains
the greatest
musicians

And finally, suppose that the playing of this orchestra was exceptionally fine—so good, indeed, that great musicians such as Paderewski, De Reszke, Nordica, Campanini, and others equally as famous, had employed it to entertain them with its playing; so good that people of wealth and culture everywhere sought it for their homes—people with means sufficient to enable them to enjoy all that is best in art and music, and all the pleasures and recreations that money can purchase.

Technical
skill
unnecessary

Suppose we tell you that you can have this orchestra in your home, that you can have music at any or all times, and that you yourself can play any piece of music ever composed, even if you literally "can not tell one note from another."

The possession of an Aeolian will do all this. It will do infinitely more—it will entertain and instruct every member of the family, from the youngest to the oldest. Each can play it for himself or herself.

Repertoire
includes the
best music of
the world

It will bring into the home music never performed except by large and well-drilled orchestras. It will familiarise you with the works of the old masters and enable you to keep in touch with and enjoy the best music. It is the greatest musical educator and the most practical home instrument. You can purchase a good Aeolian for £24. Other styles up to £175. Aeolian Orchestrelles from £350 to £600.

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Aeolian supplied to Her Majesty
Queen Victoria

TRADE MARKS

J. Thibouville Lamy



The firm of Thibouville Lamy of Paris may rightly take their place alongside Lecoultrre and Bremond as makers of high-class, good quality musical boxes. Whilst in later years their boxes featured large, over decorated tune sheets with florid ornamentation - as well as their name and address - in keeping with the

general lowering of quality demanded by the period, their earlier boxes have no direct means of identification. There are, however, a number of easily-recognised common points of similarity between boxes of this maker which should offer no difficulty to the experienced eye of the collector. As is usual, design and construction features differed over the years and no one box may incorporate all the points of identification or be characterised by more than, say, one or two similarities. Generally speaking, however, many of these features were sustained throughout the years of production.

Some boxes (not necessarily with early serial numbers) have been unearthed which feature plain cases with lids closed by hooks and eyes in place of locks. Whilst no boxes of the early musical box period have yet been seen (key winders, for instance), the firm won a gold medal in London in 1862 and were thus established in this field before that time. Their continue to this day as manufacturers of musical instruments, their head office remaining in Paris. Their London address was destroyed along with many priceless records during the war, but their present home is at 34, Aldersgate, London, E.C.1.

The identification points to look out for are as follows: Case: Traditional shape, no projecting feet. Inner glass lid frame is of 'U' section wood, the glass sliding in from the left side (which is open) and secured in place with a small glued wooden block. There is a large wooden block glued to the case beneath the winding lever to wedge in the bedplate. The control platform is sometimes of brass but more usually of plain wood, the deck secured with two countersunk woodscrews, brass levers projecting through plain slots with no escutcheons. The divider at this end has its front and back lower edges chamfered back appreciably. The keyhole for the case lock often case an escutcheon let in flush which may be diamond shaped or rectangular with intrusive radiussed corners. These may be of boxwood or brass. Mechanism: The motor stop-

USINES A MIRECOURT A LA COUTURE & A GRENELLE PARIS

VIENNE PARIS

MAISON A LONDRES 10, Charterhouse Street Holborn circus

PARIS

EXPOSITION MELBOURNE 1881

Doux premiers prix un second prix

CHATELAIN DE LA LIGNE D'HONNEUR et de l'Ordre de François Joseph d'Autriche

HORS CONCOURS

Membre du jury des récompenses à l'exposition de Paris 1878

J. THIBOUVILLE-LAMY, RUE REAUMUR, 68 & 70

MUSIQUE. *Six* AIRS. *3* POUCES. *Gamme 1087* N° *2047*

1 <i>Home Sweet Home</i>	4 <i>Faust Waltz</i>
2 <i>My Queen Waltz</i>	5 <i>Wait till the Clouds roll by</i>
3 <i>The Volunteer's March</i>	6 <i>Mandolinata</i>



inches

MANUFACTURE D'INST. DE MUSIQUE ET DE CORDES HARMONIQUES

JÉRÔME THIBOUVILLE LAMY

HORS CONCOURS

MEMBRE DU JURY DES RECOMPENSES A L'EXPOSITION DE PARIS 1878

MEMBRE DU JURY DES RECOMPENSES A L'EXPOSITION DE PARIS 1889

MUSIQUE	AIRS	POUCES	N°
1		3	
2		4	

MELBOURNE 1881: 2 PREMIERES MEDAILLES

LONDRES 1883: 2 MEDAILLES D'OR

USINES A MIRECOURT GRENELLE & LA COUTURE

68, 68 bis & 70 Rue Reaumur PARIS

LONDRES 10, Charterhouse St. (Holborn Circus)

MANUFACTURE D'INSTRUMENTS DE MUSIQUE & DE CORDES HARMONIQUES

68, 68^{BIS}, & 70 Rue Réaumur
· PARIS ·

J. THIBOUVILLE LAMY & C^{IE}
CHEVALIER DE LA LÉGION D'HONNEUR ET DE
MEMBRE DU JURY
AUX EXPOSITIONS DE
L'ORDRE DE FRANÇOIS-JOSEPH D'AUTRICHE
DES RÉCOMPENSES
PARIS 1878 & 1889

MUSIQUE

AIRS

POUCES

N^{OS}

USINES A MIRECOURT
GRENELLE & LA COUTURE

LONDRES
110, Charterhouse St. Holborn Circus

MELBOURNE 1881: 2 PREMIÈRES MÉDAILLES

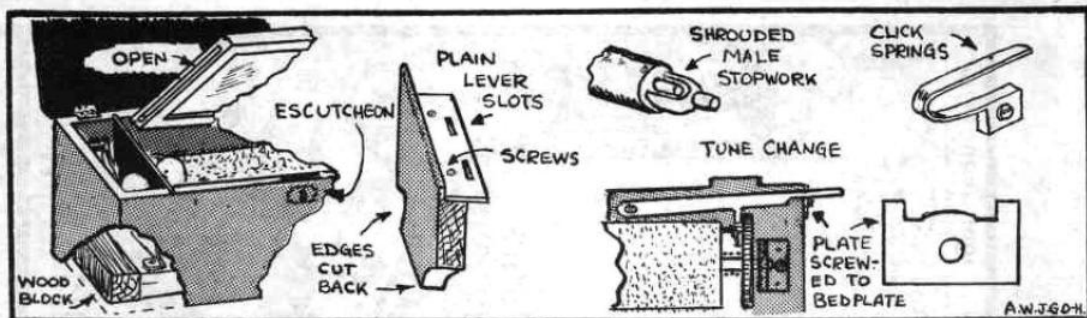
J. T. L.

LONDRES 1885: 2 MÉDAILLES D'OR

LITH. V. RALYART A PARIS



inches



work is sometimes by a fully-shrouded male in place of the usual Geneva male plate on a squared section of the arbor. Gear train stop finger and winding lever click springs are doubled back on themselves. The cock ends in a broad semi-circle. Three screws secure the works into the case from underneath, although in a hidden drum and bell box in the de Vere Green collection the bedplate carries on it four large lateral extensions to the back and front to take attachment screws through the front and back of the case. Bedplates are made of a peculiar brass alloy which often bears a marked resemblance to gun-metal, or even tarnished silver with blue patchings. The cylinder is divided as normally found and the comb point register dots are central. The comb screws are frequently very small and have been seen with and without washers.

Serial numbers are in tall shaded numerals quite distinct in shape from those commonly found and are positioned in the top left-hand corner of the bedplate. The letters 'SW' in an oval have been seen on two boxes stamped adjacent to the number on the bedplate but their significance is as yet undetermined. Winding levers are, on early examples, fitted with black hardwood handles and may either be reversed over the motor barrel, or as normal. Later boxes had 'Bremond' style levers of cast and polished brass with flat tops. The curled click springs, however, appear constant on all types and periods of this maker.

Motor barrel bridges are secured from underneath. The music is always well set up and the tone is pleasing. The insides of the cases are usually to be found finished in 'dragons blood' varnish but have also been seen painted black. Early tune sheets are plain printed black on thin white paper or green card. The tune sheets reproduced here represent a contrast between both early and later styles but unfortunately no clear example of the paper tune sheet is shown - most to be seen are fragmentary. Among boxes examined are the following serial numbers: 16295 (also stamped 'Nicole a Geneve' but certainly not a Nicole box); 24100 (hidden drum & bells); 21691; 26643 & 29538 (both stamped 'SW'); 35436; 45383; 51704 (plain case, hook catches, painted black); 53182.

Features are illustrated in the accompanying sketches.

So far, in the pages of THE MUSIC BOX, we have seen details of pianos played by barrels and varying in shape from the pub-sized proportions of the penny-operated piano to the portable barrel operated pianos of the street musicians. The piano has, of course, been mechanised in many ways from the primitive automatic fingers of Debain's Antiphonel to the electro-pneumatic reproducing concert grand but, somewhere in between, there were two attempts at cheap sophistication for the dining room. Both these instruments took the shape of a grand piano in miniature played by discs. One was the Pianette and the other was the Orpheus seen here and forming part of the collection of Gerry Planus.

THE Orpheus DISC PIANO by A. Ord-Hume

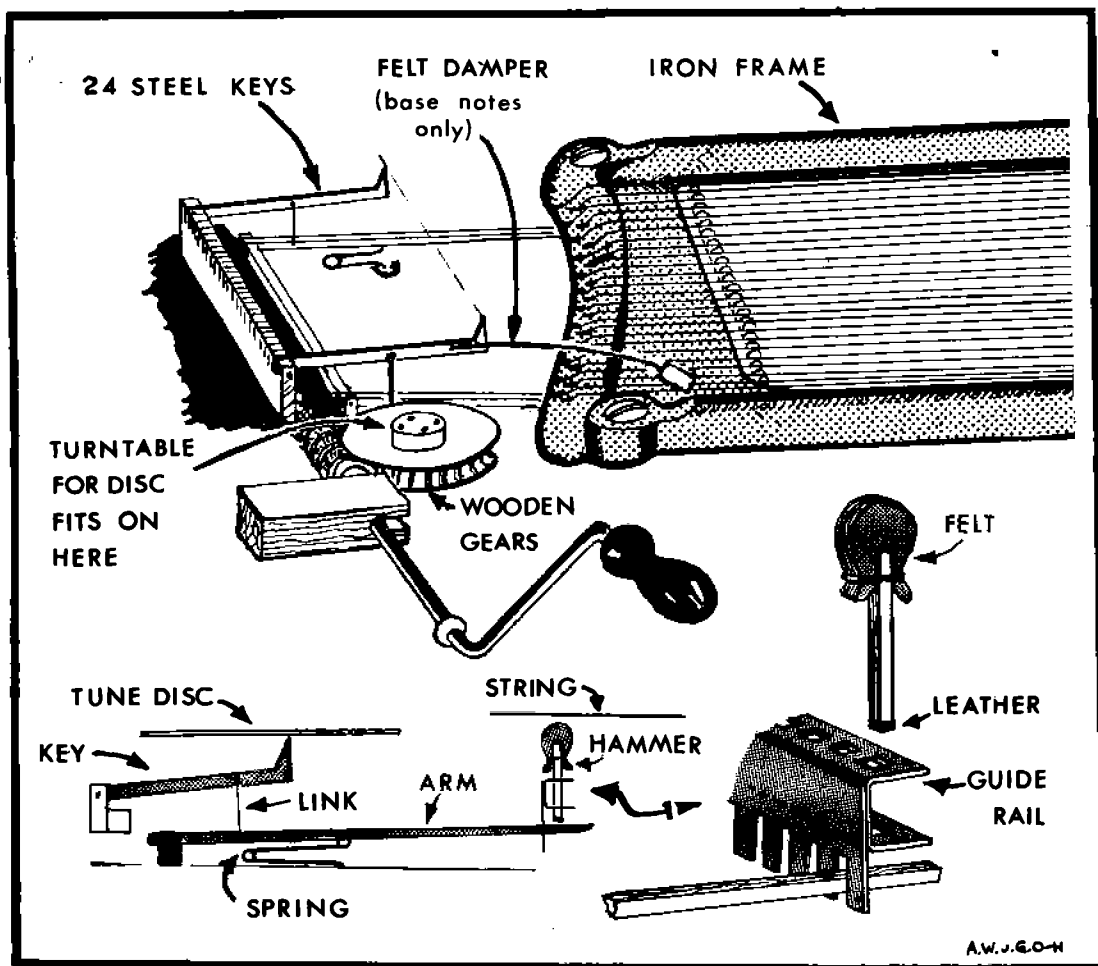
The Orpheus was a product of the enterprising Ehrlich brothers of Leipzig who made the famed Ariston organette and were associated with the Monopol disc musical box. Well built and of pleasing design and shape, the Orpheus features a sophisticated variant of a genuine piano-forte hammer action as devised by Christofori during the first half of the eighteenth century. In the Ehrlich application, no matter how long a note is sustained (governed by the length of slot in the tune disc), the hammer only strikes the string briefly, falling back immediately. Final 'closing' of the string (letting go of the key, in effect) drops a damper on to the vibrating lower strings. A sketch of this arrangement is overleaf.

The Orpheus plays standard Ariston 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter compressed card discs and is wound from the side by an Ariston-type handle. The piano has a lid which can be raised and sustained in that position by a swivel stay. Rather like the modern transistorised gramophone record players, the disc can be played 'with the lid closed', a slot being provided to let it protrude.

The harp comprises a robust iron frame carrying 24 strings. Tuning scale of the strings is as follows:



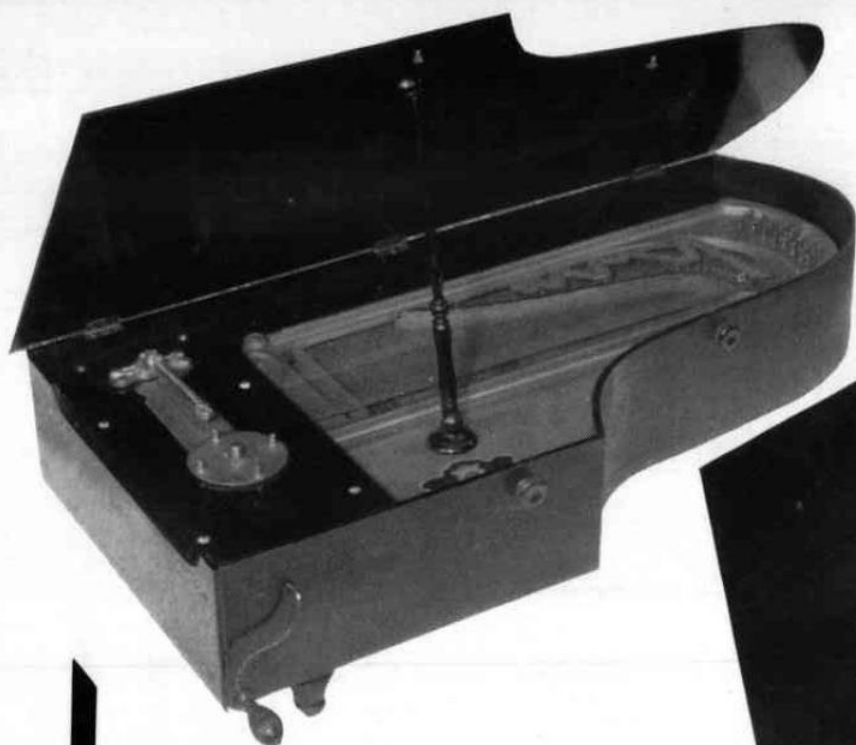
The instrument is a product of the 1880's or 1890's and appears to be comparatively scarce in this country. There is alleged to be an identical instrument in existence named the 'Pianette' and this may well one day turn out to be the same as the Orpheus. It will be remembered that the Ehrlich Ariston was marketed in this country under another name -



"The Hermann" by Hermann Loog Limited.

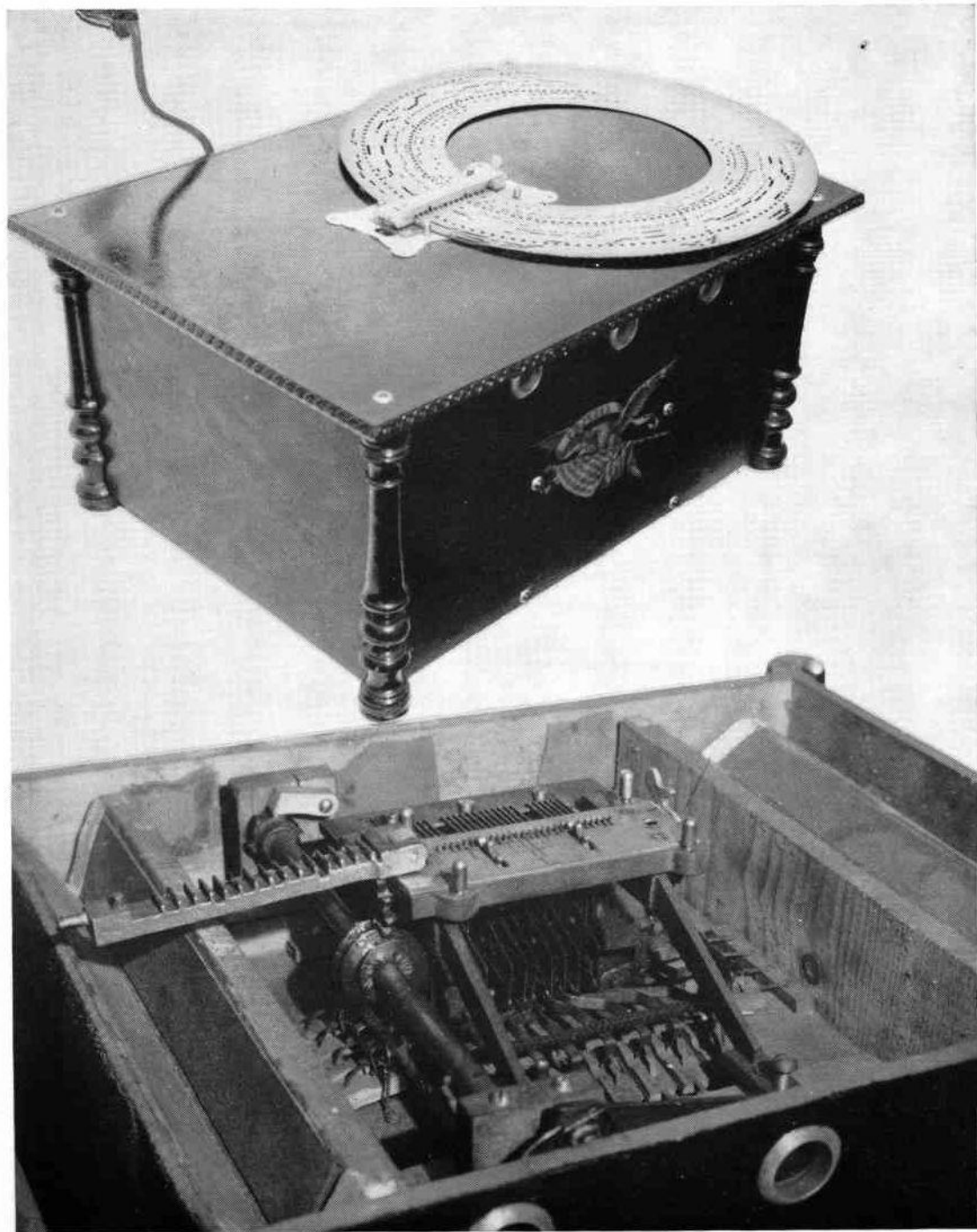
There does not seem to have been any special "Orpheus" discs made and, indeed, other than a sales point, it would have been valueless. It is thus evident that Ehrlichs was one of the few musical box manufacturers to endeavour to standardise on a disc size for more than one machine. A classic example of the other extreme is to be found with Symphonion, the production of two different machines with $14\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter discs (one with a single comb, the other with twin opposing combs) no doubt having generated most splendid confusion amongst customers and distributors alike!

WANTED TO BUY Musical movements with laminated combs including those in snuff boxes, early clock movements &c. Condition immaterial - but I live in hope! C. de Vere Green, 11, Devonshire Place, Wimpole St., London, W.1



Orpheus





Amongst my collection of organettes, I possess a large model of the Phoenix - a comparatively scarce make - which I consider to be worthy of description if only for the following reasons: (a) this particular type is ignored by Mr. Moss in his authoritative work published in Issue No. 4 of THE MUSIC BOX: (b) its brilliant performance caused considerable comment at the May meeting of the Society: (c) the fact that I could have sold it at least 3 times - it must be good!

A partial solution to the varying length of tune problem has been found by employing different sized discs or rings for varying tune lengths. For instance, a ballad such as "Wait till the clouds roll by" uses a ring $13\frac{1}{4}$ " outside diameter by $7\frac{1}{4}$ " internal and a hymn "All people that on Earth" is happily accommodated for two verses on a ring $12\frac{1}{4}$ " external by $6\frac{1}{4}$ " internal. It will readily be seen that, by using this system of operation, any size ring can be used, although a mammoth-sized one would overhang the cabinet considerably and demand external support! However, as the ring revolves quite slowly whilst being played, only a small increase in diameter gives a marked increase in time.

The case, dimensions of which are 18" x 13" x 9", houses an intricate looking mechanism which is basically similar to the Ehrlich's Ariston but possesses numerous improvements. Properly linked levers are used to actuate pallets in place of pieces of bent wire and a separate wind chest is incorporated instead of using the case itself. The whole thing is very much better made so that a disc similar in size to the Ariston will play half as long again.

The Phoenix I own - Model No. 5 according to a paper label on the bottom - is equipped with 24 notes and has the usual Phoenix/Ariosa type of drive comprising two toothed wheels of differing pitches which engage in two concentric sets of square-shaped holes in the ring.

Whilst on the subject of organettes, I look with surprise on Mr. Moss's remarks in his article concerning Gem roller organs playing "for about half a minute". I can only assume he likes his organ music very, very fast or the specimen in his collection has perforated bellows. Another point is that the Mignon which I have is clearly stamped "Made in Germany" although Mr. Moss believes it to be American.

WANTED TO PURCHASE from fellow Members: - Antique clocks and musical boxes
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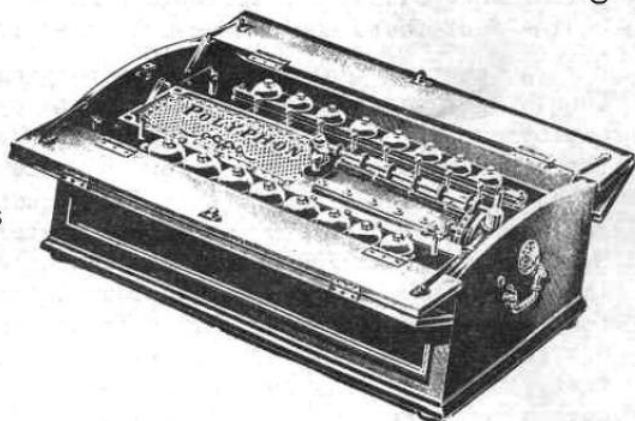


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
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
C. W. Cramp of 4, West Street, Horsham, Sussex, writes:

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Further to Mr. de Vere Green's unknown musical box maker in the Christmas, 1964, issue of THE MUSIC BOX, I have just seen another larger box with the same type of six-tune tune sheet.

It is key-wound and is in a large, inlaid box with 8 bells and a 5" diameter tambourin. It has a polished brass bedplate stamped "H. Metert, Geneve, No. 5857". The controls are locked with a separate key at the side. The cylinder is about 10½" x 2" and plays beautifully and it looks as though this answers the question with regard to the **naker** 

and on the same subject writes Graham Webb, 93, Portobello Road, London:

On the subject of the unknown make of music box discussed by David Tallis in Vol. 2 No. 1, I own one of this type. The number is 13612 stamped in shaded characters at the top left-hand corner of the polished brass bedplate. These figures, incidentally, are the same type as the ones used in Thibouville Lamy. Scratched on the left end of the 8½" long cylinder is 'G.114'. The figures '114' also appear pencilled on the top of the back of the box outside the right hinge and the word "Marquettee" is pencilled inside the bottom. Stop-start and change-repeat levers are in a plain wood plinth and the winding lever is conventionally-shaped flat-topped like Bremond. Small brass washers fit under the comb screws which, like the cylinder arbor bearing screws, are very tall-headed. The mechanism fits into the box with two screws through front and back and my box has never had a tune sheet. One little point is that the keyhole has a small boxwood escutcheon let in, and the lid is finely inlaid with some brass. Although the inner glass lid finishes short of the winding lever, there has never been a left-hand case divider. The baseplate has cast into it projecting lugs about 1/16" wide by the case screws to ensure a very tight fit without wedges. The box plays six airs and the comb has 78 teeth. Whilst writing, I would like to record some remarks made to me by a new Member at the last meeting. He said how rewarding it was to belong to a Society such as ours and to find that, although he knew nobody, everyone seemed pleased to meet him and made him very welcome. He also said that he was greatly impressed by the hospitality offered to him by Mr. de Vere Green whom he had never met before. Most Societies seem to develop into 'cliques' and he was pleased to find no such features with us. 

Frank Greenacre of 164, Lowestoft Road, Gorleston-on-Sea, Norfolk, writes:

I have just been reading the book "From Tinfoil to Stereo" by Oliver Read and published in America. I quote from page 115 as follows: "In 1893 the manufacturers of the Polyphon sent a representative to the United States to look into the prospects for opening a factory. This resulted in the organisation of the Regina Music Box Co. The success of the Regina inspired others to enter the field such as Criterion (made by M. & J. Paillard Co. of New York) and the Symphonion, another German-designed box, made at Asbury Park, New Jersey" 

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- 158 Francis N. Vanderpant, 37, Devonshire Place, London, W.1
 159 Mrs. J. A. Hobson, Flint Cottage, Addington Village, Nr. Croydon, Surrey
 160 N. Vince, Wood Farm, Bawdeswell, East Dereham, Norfolk
 161* R. M. Heintz, 725, University Avenue, Los Altos, California 94022, USA
 162 Robin Miric, 24a, Shepherds Hill, Highgate, London, N.6
 163 Peter Guinness, 15, Queenberry Way, London, S.W.7
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 165 John Smith Wright, 78, Cheyne Court, London, S.W.3
 166 Brigadier James Meyrick Neilson, 57, Strensall Park, York, Yorkshire
 167 J. P. Hall, 18, Hawesmead Drive, Kendal, Westmorland
 168 J. Perrot, 61, Avenue du Maine, Paris 14, France
 169 J. Jeffs, 15, Tinacre Hill, Wightwick, Nr. Wolverhampton, Staffs.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- 76 S. Farmiloe, BM/BWXN, London, W.C.1
 19 Mrs. C. Marks, 15, Cedar Drive, Hatch End, Middlesex.

CHELSEA ANTIQUES FAIR - SOCIETY DISPLAY

The 15th Chelsea Antiques Fair will be held at Chelsea Old Town Hall from October 6th to 16th. Internationally-famed, this is a major event for dealers and collectors throughout not only this country but overseas. Centre-piece of the exhibition is always devoted to a special display of 'unusual interest' loaned by a specialist collector and this year the Musical Box Society has been invited to participate. A showcase of ample proportions will house a selection of boxes together with M.B.S. literature.

STEAM WEEK-END

Birmingham's excellent Museum of Science and Industry is holding a Steam Week-end on October 23rd and 24th. Some 14 steam-operated engines will be 'under steam' including steam rollers, stationary beam engines and gas and hot-air engines into the bargain. The new Music Room housing the Liddell Collection of Musical Boxes, described in earlier issues of THE MUSIC BOX, will also be open.

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