"What a Horrible Racket! No Piano in My House!"

"The Tuner Calls"

"What Fine Music! I'm going to buy a Playerpiano!"

It Makes a Big Dif'

Tuners generally will see the logic in the above cartoon. The difference between a piano in tune and a piano out of tune is the difference between Noise and Music. Music sells itself; Noise doesn't.
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Articles for Publication
Letters to the Publisher
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playerpianogroup.org
As we enter my term as president, I want to thank all of the members who have been my friends and who have supported AMICA over the years. I look forward to your assistance in helping make this term successful.

The 2006 convention was great, and the Chicago Chapter is to be congratulated for their endless hours of hard work. The schedule was full and kept us very busy, but that is what conventions are about each year. The Hospitality Suite was busy at all times with old friends getting reacquainted and meeting new ones. There was a lot of good Ampico, Duo-Art, and some Wurlitzer Pianino music—great fun for all. AMICA is very strong and healthy.

A little info about myself: I have been an AMICA member since 1969. I was president of the Founding Chapter in the 1990’s and the recent president of the Sierra Nevada Chapter. I have been collecting automatic musical instruments for 40+ years and have a player piano, reproducing piano, and some nickelodeons and orchestrions. I did a little rebuilding early on and am interested in the mechanical part of our hobby as well as the music.

In summary, remember to say yes when asked to host that chapter meeting. Invite new faces and share the music and warmth of AMICA with all.

John Motto-Ros
mottoros@sbcglobal.net

I have received many wonderful notes about the last issue of the Bulletin. Most of the praise concerned the amazing color photos in Yousef Wilson’s article on nickelodeon song slides. The clarity and color of the photos we reproduced was truly amazing and several members have asked for “more color” in our bulletin. I am always looking for methods to improve our publication and if you would like to see this or other changes please drop me a line. The Bulletin is for our members and your contributions are wanted and needed.

A second issue I would like to bring up is the reprinting of the Ampico, Duo-Art, and Welte-Mignon complete roll catalogue books published in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. Have you tried to read the wonderful Ampico catalogue book lately? The type face and font are challenging as we all grow a little older. Moreover, these books are no longer commonly available and sell for hundreds of dollars when found. It would be an important project for AMICA to issue new editions of all of these books. Is there interest here? Let me know and I’ll give it the old college try.

Mike Kukral, Publisher
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hello All -

Just a mention I spent Saturday making photo album on the AMICA Website for the last 2 years of the convention. Most of these are from Terry Smyth sending me a full CD of his images for the last 2 years.

Mike K. or Tim B.: Would you please mention in the next Bulletin that people should go to the site and click “Annual Convention” to see many photos from Minneapolis 2005, and Chicago 2006 Conventions.

I have a few more to add, and there are format consistency corrections, but they’re there to see at this point.

Please send me more if you have them folks ... electronically if at all. If you have e-photos of ANY past convention, I’ll make a page similar and post them.

Karl Ellison

Dear Michael,

I thought I would like to write and congratulate on your presentation of the AMICA Bulletin. It is always hard to please everybody with the contents but I think you have achieved the right format in my view.

What I would like to see are some articles on Frank Milne. I understand that this has been done in the past and is in the archives but I seem to be unsuccessful to flush them out. Frank, being the father of the player piano (in my view), I would think the articles would make extremely good reading, not only for me, but for a lot of the younger element of AMICA and of course would help to fill up the Bulletin.

Thank you for thinking about this. We hope to catch up with you all in Germany next year.

Yours faithfully,
Peter Tallent
60 Liberty Lane
Addlestone
Surrey
KT15 1NQ
UK

Hi Mike,

Here are a couple of things to use in the Bulletin, if you’d like.

I am enjoying the Bulletin, especially the articles from other magazines that pertain to our hobby. I would never know them if it weren’t for you publishing them.

Kenneth L. Snowden
355 Santa Ana Avenue
San Francisco, CA
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CONVENTION

JULY 5-20, 2007 - GERMANY AND HOLLAND

The convention in 2007 will be in Germany and Holland, and promises to be a memorable trip, limited to 100 due to hotel and bus capabilities in Europe.

Our trip will start in Erding, with our hotel across the street from the train depot where it’s easy to board a train into Munich. (We will have a bus tour the first afternoon.)

We’ll have a free day to explore Munich on your own. There are loads of things to do in Munich, including lunch at the famous Hofbrau Haus, the Carillon Tower with its Automata joust, the Deutsches Museum, the Schoenberg Palace, good shopping, or a trip out to the WWII concentration camp at Dachau, a sobering but historical outing.

When we leave Munich we’ll travel to King Ludwig’s Linderhof Palace, where you will get a feel for how he nearly bankrupted Bavaria with his extravagances. There is gold leaf everywhere, and rococo is the name of the game. You can walk up to his peacock throne and grotto complete with a lake and boats. This monarch knew what he wanted and money (the country’s of course) was no object.

Our next stop will be Oberamerrgau, which is a beautiful, quaint town with painted buildings everywhere. It is a center for wood carvers, and if you find something you can’t live without they will gladly ship it home for you.

We’ll visit Friedrichshafen, which is located on the Bodensee, and where you can visit the Zeppelin Museum. We will proceed to the Raffin Organ Factory and have a private tour there. You may find an organ clock or small organ you like here.

You will have the choice the next day of going to the Rheinfall on the Swiss side, which is a spectacular waterfall. There are 300 steps down to the bottom for the best view, (and of course, 300 steps back up) but there are viewing areas all along the way, and you can stop anywhere you choose. The views are fantastic, and the scenery back to Triberg is a real treat.

If you rather you can choose to go on directly to Triberg in the Black Forest.

In Triberg you will want to visit the Black Forest Museum with it’s treasure trove of mechanical music, Black Forest clocks, and much more.

There is a very picturesque waterfall here, and you can hike up to the top if you are in good condition…it’s a steep path.

Shopping is good in Triberg, and we heartily recommend you go to Pinoccio’s for a slice of Black Forest cake…they have the best in the whole town, and it’s a real treat.

There is the house of 1000 clocks to visit, and perhaps to
purchase a cuckoo clock or a grandfather clock, or choose from many, many souvenir items.

The next day we are on our way to Waldkirch, which was the center of organ building prior to WWII. Ruth, Weber, Bruder and other well-known companies were here, and some of the buildings still exist. There are signs all over town marking the sites for the various companies.

We’ll tour the Elztal Museum, with its samples of organs from all the major manufacturers who were in the area.

The Black Forest Zoo is one possible walk, albeit a hilly one, with a very pretty park on the way back into town, or you can take a hike up to the castle ruins on the hillside at the edge of town.

Later in the afternoon we’ll go to the Jager-Brommer factory for dinner and entertainment.

You can explore a little more in the morning, and in the afternoon we’ll take a scenic ride through the Black Forest to Bruchsal, where we will stay for three nights.

We’ll see the ancient walled city of Rothenburg, another nice place to shop and explore. A wall surrounds the city, with walkways inside, and windows for observation and protection by archers.

Back in Bruchsal we’ll visit the Spyer Museum, with buildings dedicated to mechanical music and technical machinery. You will see the double deck carousel, and a double Phonolizst.

We’ll also have a tour of the Deutsches Musikautomaton Museum. This museum recently acquired a large collection, which doubled its display.

The museum has been under renovation, and you will notice the entry and ceiling have been newly restored.

Saturday night we’ll have dinner with our German counterparts and will end the evening with the pumper contest. We’ll be using a very special restored grand piano which belonged to Conrad Adenauer, and which is now on display at the Museum.

From here it’s on to Rudesheim, and we’ll tour the wonderful collection of Sigfried Wendel and wander the lovely town. Shopping and eating are the main attractions after the Sigfried adventure.

The following morning we board our boat for a cruise down the Rhein. We’ll see lots of castles. The river was the main route for trade and traffic of all kinds before the advent of trains, planes and automobiles.

Our hotel in Utrecht, Holland is right downtown, close to everything, and we’ll be here for the rest of the trip. You can walk, shop, explore, take a canal cruise, or get lost...just be back for the evening private tour of the famous National Museum.

Our guide will be Bob Vanwely, who is the new curator. He took over when Dr. Jan Jap Hospels retired. This will be a real experience.

Our good friend, Maarten Vandeflugt, will be our guide in Holland, taking us to Haarlem’s organ museum, where we’ll have lunch, and to visit two private collections near Tilburg, where he lives.

Our last day will be spent at Efterling, which is a fantasy and mythological theme park. We spent a lovely day there, and you won’t want to miss the Carousel, a smaller version of Jasper’s Eden Palais. There are lots of things to see and do, and it’s a good, relaxing way to end the trip.

Those who are leaving for home right away will take the bus to Amsterdam for their flight home, and the rest of us are on our own.

We really think this will be a super trip, and urge you to sign up as soon as the registrations come out, since we have to make arrangements, and as I said, the limit is 100.

A couple of tips for the trip:

1. Pack light. You will be carrying your own luggage and the bus has limited luggage space. There may be stairs at the hotels, and you must be able to walk without help, such as wheel chairs, scooters, walkers, etc. Europe is not as handicap friendly as the U.S.

2. No one under the age of 18 will be allowed.

3. Check your health insurance...Most policies don’t cover you in Europe. You can buy insurance for the trip through a couple of companies.

4. Be sure your passport is good for six months beyond the date you are coming home.

5. Get some Euros before you leave or at the airport when you leave the U.S. or arrive in Europe. You will need money for tips, and for days on your own.

The registration forms will give more information and instructions, and will come out the first part of 2007. The price right now is figured at $2800 per person, plus airfare. This could be adjusted, depending on the price of the Euro, and other things beyond our control. If there is money left over you will get a refund.
Aus Freiburg in die Welt, 100 Jahre Welte-Mignon
September 2005 to January 2006

This exhibit was the culmination of over 20 years of research and acquisition of Welte related collections. The basis of the exhibit was the personal estate of Edwin Welte the co-inventor of the Welte-Mignon. The curator, Gerhard Dangel, prepared and developed an exhibit that covered the complete history of M. Welte & Soehne of Freiburg in the Breisgau. By displaying material from the entire history of M. Welte & Soehne, the Welte-Mignon was placed in the context of a company with extensive involvement in music as well as its internationally recognized reputation. Curator Dangel sought input from world recognized authorities to assemble the most comprehensive yet well researched exhibit of its type. The Smithsonian Museum exhibit of automatic pianos could take a lesson from the Augustinermuseum in its attention to accuracy and detail.

Among the experts consulted by curator Gerhard Dangel for both the exhibit and the exhibit catalog were internationally known Welte-Mignon authority, Hans-W. Schmitz, London player piano experts Denis Hall and Rex Lawson, Welte orchestrion authority Durward Center, and Richard Simonton, Jr., whose father brought to the world’s attention the Welte-Mignon recordings in the 1950s at a time that they were largely forgotten.

The broad input allowed Dangel to produce an amazingly well documented exhibit which was divided into three main periods and displayed in large exhibition halls with smaller connecting halls adding additional information to the entire Welte-Mignon time period.

**First Period:**

M. Welte & Soehne and the Orchestrions

The first exhibition hall covered the earliest period of M. Welte & Sons, that of the Welte Orchestrions. The orchestrions were large self contained music machines that simulated the playing of orchestras using pipes and percussion. The later orchestrions added piano but for the majority of the production they were based upon organ pipe work to approximate the playing of an orchestra. Michael Welte, founder of M. Welte & Soehne, produced some of the most intricate and ornate yet musically complete orchestrions of the period. The Augustinermuseum exhibit described the orchestrion and the years of improvement and development that made the Welte Orchestrions the standard by which others were judged. The Augustinermuseum exhibit noted the many awards won by M. Welte & Sons for their orchestrions further supported the world recognition. Emil Welte was the inventor of the paper roll orchestrion. The Orchestrion exhibit included a Welte Cottage Orchestrion which was played daily for visitors to the exhibit. This orchestrion used a paper roll mechanism of the type invented by Emil Welte. The Welte Orchestrion was placed in a room setting of the period so that museum patrons could experience the ambiance as it might have appeared when the orchestrion was new. Sales of Welte Orchestrions were throng throughout the world. The orchestrions sold to both the wealthy and musically sophisticated market as well as to parks and restaurants for the enjoyment of their patrons. The orchestrions appealed to a broad spectrum of listeners. The museum exhibit allowed visitors to experience this first hand.

**Second Period:** The Welte-Mignon

The Welte-Mignon was invented by Edwin Welte and Karl Bockisch. The Welte-Mignon and later the Welte-Philharmonic Organ became the dominant sales product for M. Welte & Soehne making the firm stronger again in the post 1910 period. Edwin Welte and Karl Bockisch were the leading forces in this advancement of the Welte product line. The Welte-Mignon was the first device to record and offer a reasonable playback of the playing of the most famous pianists of the day. Because of this invention, the entire musical landscape changed. For the first time those who could afford a Welte-Mignon piano could have the world’s pianists play in their home at their whim. The Augustinermuseum exhibit of the Welte-Mignon is based primarily on the collection from the Edwin Welte estate. The many family photos, oil paintings and awards placed in context many of the people who were present during this important time for M. Welte & Soehne. There were even many of the autographed photos which hung in the Welte recording salon on display in this exhibition room. The original awards in the cases and rare catalogs made the exhibit that much more thorough in its scope. On display was the Steinway-Welte grand piano that graced Edwin Welte’s home. The piano is in a custom Biedermeier influenced art case. The piano, now fully restored, is

The picture of Edwin’s Piano you can see the oil painting portrait of Michael Welte (Company Founder) in the background.
capable of the same playing that Edwin Welte would have enjoyed in his home. The piano was only played for special occasions. Also on display is an extremely rare (“Green”) T-98 Gunther-Welte upright with a dual pedal and electric mechanism. This piano was played daily for museum patrons. As an enthusiast of the Welte-Mignon, I cannot explain how exciting it was to see so many Welte-Mignon artifacts on display in a single exhibit.

**Third Period: The Welte Photo Tone Organ**

As M. Welte & Soehne had done in the previous years, Edwin Welte continued to work toward developing a fully electric organ. Completed in the 1930s, the Welte Photo Tone Organ used rotating glass discs as the tone generators. The individual discs could be recorded from the most prestigious organs of Europe and the tones generated in the home of the organ buyer. So well designed, the working model was used by the Berlin Philharmonic in 1936. Unfortunately, wartime and the political party in charge prevented Edwin Welte from making any headway in the German market for his new invention. By the time the war had ended, the working model was destroyed and the competing companies Wurlitzer and Hammond had their own systems. Edwin Welte sought the help of Richard Simon to help with the sales of his organ but the time for success had passed.

The Augustinermuseum exhibit displayed the glass tone wheels and many of the remaining parts of the system. Even more interesting was learning that the museum has the original negatives for all the tone wheels from which a working model could yet be built. The comprehensive nature of the Photo Tone Organ exhibit was remarkable that so much had survived the war. One wonders whether M. Welte & Soehne would have dominated the electronic organ market had politics and a war not changed history forever. The museum exhibit certainly suggests that Welte would have been a force to be reckoned with in the field of electronic organs.

The exhibition closed in January 2006. We can hope that it will be offered again as many who would have enjoyed the exhibition could not attend in the short time that it was featured.

Kudos to the curator, Gerhard Dangel, for his work and fortitude to provide such in-depth displays which were enjoyed by the many patrons who visited the exhibit. Continuing the important work of preserving the Welte legacy, Gerhard Dangel and Hans-W. Schmitz will soon publish the Complete Library Of Recordings For The Welte-Mignon Reproducing Piano 1905-1932. ISBN# 3-00-017110-X. Watch for a forthcoming review of this important work.

ORGAN RALLIES

Several readers have asked me to write about how to put on a successful organ rally. This is like asking me, who has a half built Castlewood, to advise Don Stinson on how to build a band organ.

First, figure out WHY you want an organ rally. Once you have that established, then you can proceed with the rest.

Enthusiasm is a main ingredient. It must emanate through your pores. Without it your rally will sink before it is launched.

Don’t be concerned with size. We had only 2 band organs, 2 player pianos, one kit street organ that was battery operated, one Molinari, one Hicks, one Hoffbauer and one Castlewood. Oh yes, there was the 1971 Buick, the 1930 Model A Ford and the 1958 Rolls Royce Bentley. But we had a lot of enthusiasm and a huge amount of FUN. We demonstrated these things to people who had never seen them before. Some of the people saw them in movies or read about them in books, but were never up close.

Plan ahead. We put our rally together in only 6 weeks, which is not enough time. Plans should begin a year in advance. As soon as it is appropriate in your area secure the necessary permits. If you plan to have one or more organ grinders with live monkeys check on the local laws. In some places you need a special permit and the Fish and Game people need to come out and inspect the place first. In Denver, for instance, don’t get caught training your dog or cat. Trained animals of any kind are illegal, plain and simple. I maintain a working list of all organ grinders with live monkeys in the United States. So, if you plan to have an organ grinder with a live monkey, contact me and

By Vincent Morgan
I can put you in contact with someone closest to your area. My e-mail address is vincent.morgan2@verizon.net.

Choose an area with the highest foot traffic possible. I understand that in many places there is no such thing as foot traffic as people drive everywhere. But locate where you can draw a crowd or bank on someone else’s crowd. In NY City this isn’t a problem. We ARE a crowd.

Plan on a date that will draw the most attention. Palm Sunday (which also conflicted with Passover) was not at all convenient, but we found out that New Yorkers, who have been penned up all winter, are just awakening from hibernation. It is also opening day at Coney Island, the location of our rally. Being a world famous tourist attraction helps. Opening day is when the news reporters show up in swarms. Find the cameras. Grant interviews. Talk about the instruments, the people, the collections, the friendships that have developed as a result of the organization(s), but talk.

Make sure you have extremely detailed and clear directions. If there is a restriction on cars with trailers and trucks then you need to know the truck route. If you don’t know it, find out from a trucker or your local police department and drive the route yourself with someone taking notes. Then make sure anyone driving that route has at least 2 cell phone numbers of people already at the location of the rally. One of our organ men got lost for almost 3 hours because we failed to make sure that he had the best directions via the truck route and we didn’t have each other’s cell numbers.

At the location of the rally make sure you have adequate electrical power. Here, we can get a permit to hook up to the light poles. Check with your local community for their requirement. Spread out. Space your organs so that they don’t conflict with each other. Set up the smaller organs and player pianos away from the larger ones so they can be heard and enjoyed more.

What sanitary facilities are available? For us that wasn’t a problem, but in some locations it might be.

Make sure your organ rally benefits the local community. Help draw a crowd to THEIR event. Bank on other clubs in the area and network with them. You might have a garden club, Lions Club, antique car club, clock collectors, etc. The more people you can get involved and the more organizations you can benefit, the better. This builds public relations, which we all need. The more people your rally will benefit, the more it will benefit you.

Encourage participants to sell their CD’s, cassettes, hand out their business cards, etc. If someone takes his organ out only to make money, he can go elsewhere. We do not pay anyone to be in the rally. Here in NY City people pay enough in tolls just to come here. It is a great way for them to advertise. Business will follow. This is a time to have fun and attract new people to the hobby. Our organ men ran out of business cards and so did our piano techs. They will all have business in the future as a result of the cards given out. The folk from the Enrico Caruso Museum generated so much interest that it was often difficult to get near their table. Every photo that we have found in newspapers concerning the rally featured Aldo Mancusi of the Enrico Caruso museum. Terrific! We all had fun and he got the publicity. An obscure museum in Brooklyn will now benefit greatly due to their participation.

Get your audience involved. Make up certificates to give out to people who will crank an organ or pump a piano. Ours, which I made up on my computer, stated that the person was a graduate of the “Coney Island Organ Grinding School”. There was a line for the person’s name, a place for the “Chief” organ grinder’s signature and another line for the date. What a hit! We had people waiting in line. Get people dancing in front of the band organs. The more you can get them to participate, the more interested they will be and the more fun you will have. When you pump a player piano bounce a little and sing with the words. Encourage those watching to sing along with you. Teach them how to read the words (if you have a word roll) from bottom to top as they probably have never done that before.

Make sure you have enough AMICA, MBSI, COAA, etc. brochures. We ran out rather quickly because of poor planning on our part. We failed to make phone calls and cover overnight shipping. We ended up giving out pieces of paper with web addresses and local phone numbers.

If you can’t afford to buy advertising, do something newsworthy. Write up a press release and send it to as many newspapers, radio stations, TV stations as you can that operate in your area. Ask a local radio station if they would like to set up a mobile unit at the rally. That helps you and helps them at the same time. They will help you draw a crowd and will interview people on the spot. Get local officials involved. Todd Robbins (not Robinson as I erroneously wrote previously) is a key man for us. He is connected to Dick Zigun, the unofficial mayor of Coney Island. They are both connected to the Brooklyn Boro President, Marty Markowitz. Mr. Markowitz was already committed to be there to officially open Astroland, just down the block. Todd and Dick invited him over. Terrific! He was able to make a public statement. He benefited and so did we.

For those traveling a long distance hotel/motel and restaurant information should be available. We also recommend that private homes be made available. One time my wife and I attended a rally in another state, which happened to coincide with a NASCAR event nearby and all hotels and motels were booked for a 50 mile radius. A private house where we could meet local people in the hobby would have been really nice. In our case we don’t have lower priced hotels or motels in the area. But we do have restaurants. Nathan’s, the birthplace of the hot dog, is just around the corner. Plus you can get funnel cakes, corn on the cob, cotton candy, pizza and more within a block radius of the rally. Also, one of our members who lives in the area invited the partipants over to his house for dinner afterwards. His 42 player pianos and over 4,000 piano rolls were an extra bonus.

Security is also important. In Coney Island we have a police station down the block, but that is probably not the usual situation in most places. If your rally is more than one day, you may want to station people on location around the clock.
For many years Emmett Ford wrote biographies of pianists that recorded music rolls. I hope that this pair of biographies will motivate others to write about their favorites as well. While many of the reproducing piano performers have been well documented, some of the 88-note performers still remain relatively unknown to many today. I hope that this will be the start of many biographies that we may all enjoy and find enlightening. I dedicate these biographies to Emmett Ford for his years of diligent work writing about pianists.

Ignace Jan Paderewski

Ignace Jan Paderewski was born 18 November 1860 in Podelia, Poland and died 29 June 1941 in New York. Paderewski was a student of Welte-Mignon artist Theodore Leschetizky. Paderewski was a world renowned pianist and president of Poland in his later life. In recital he was known for his subtle dynamics and tempo rubato which were distinctive characteristics of his playing. Paderewski probably remains supreme as a classic virtuoso with the public accessibility of a Liberace or Victor Borge. He was a rare musician whose serious, classical style appealed to the general public. Most of his life he toured widely to present his love of music and Poland.

Ignace Jan Paderewski recorded for Welte-Mignon on 27 February 2006, recording at the Popper’s Studio in Leipzig. The studio recording session photo is one of the most widely publicized photos used in Welte-Mignon literature. Richard C. Simonton who knew Edwin Welte and Karl Bockisch in the 1950s shares some of the details in the recording of the Welte-Mignon artists. “It was always Karl Bockisch’s job to handle the talent, many of whom were very temperamental. Karl Bockisch knew talent when he heard it. They had quite a time with Debussy. Paderewski was every bit as difficult. He was living in Switzerland at the time. He would not answer a letter. Finally the Weltes received a note from a servant stating that if they would present themselves at his villa, the Master would talk to them. So Bockisch and Welte went to Switzerland hat in hand. After being kept waiting a number of hours a white haired figure in a velvet robe descended the stair case in a grand manner. Fortunately, negotiating with Paderewski was considerably easier than getting to see him initially.”

Paderewski recorded for Welte-Mignon, Duo-Art and Victor Records. Some of the Paderewski Welte-Mignon recordings were converted for use on the ArtEcho reproducing piano and a few of the Duo-Art performances were converted for use on the Ampico. Arttio Angelus Paderewski rolls are listed as foreign recordings whose source is not identified.

Notable in the Paderewski Welte-Mignon recordings is a freedom of playing not typically found in his later recordings. Paderewski recorded in the earliest block of recordings when Welte and Bockisch were first establishing the Welte-Mignon catalog from January 1905 through Spring of 1906. Chopin compositions on rolls Number 1249, Ballade in A-flat, and 1256, Polonaise in A-flat, both exemplify well the Paderewski tempo rubato style of playing. Rolls 1246 and 1247 contain the three movements for the Beethoven Moonlight Sonata. While not generally played with rubato today, the second movement on roll 1246 also demonstrates well the Paderewski style of playing. Roll 1248, the Schubert Impromptu, No. 3 in B-flat also exemplifies Paderewski. The length of the work allows for the opportunity to enjoy Paderewski’s lyrical style.

Recommended reading on Paderewski and other reproducing roll pianists is in The Great Pianists by Harold C. Schonberg. This book places many from the golden era of pianists and pianism in the context of their peers.

Muriel Pollock

Muriel Pollock was born 21 January 1894 in Kingsbridge, New York and died 24 May 1972 in New York City. Pollock received an early music education concentrating on classical repertory. As a public performer, Pollock played popular and Broadway tunes. She recorded circa 1916 for M. Welte & Sons, Inc in New York. Most of the selections released were from New York musical comedies. Her playing of one-steps is full of zest and novelty touches. Pollock’s Welte-Mignon recordings from 1916 were all cut in T-100 format with only a few of the
THE EVOLUTION
OF THE MUSIC ROLL

by Charles F. Stoddard
Inventor of the Ampico
originally contributed by Al Werolin

[Recently in going through some old papers which my father had accumulated when he worked for the Ampico Corporation, I came across a draft of a speech which Charles F. Stoddard, the inventor of the Ampico, apparently prepared for delivery at a piano tuners’ convention in June of 1927. At that time, Mr. Stoddard was Director of the Research Laboratory of the American Piano Company in New York City. It may be that this speech has been reprinted previously in the AMICA Bulletin, but it contains a very clear and complete description of the Ampico roll making process, so perhaps it will be of interest to read again. — Al Werolin]

In about the year 1840 we find the first mention of the use of the continuous paper roll which later supplanted the pin cylinder. Claude Felix Seytre of Lyons, France, appears to be the inventor of the perforated paper note sheet. This patent was dated January 24, 1842. Until about 1850 the only mechanically operated keyboard instruments were organs. At this time, we find Hunt and Bradish in Warren, Ohio, taking out a patent on a little pianoforte controlled by a paper music roll and actuated by a crank turned by hand, so we may safely say that about 1850 was the earliest date of a piano player actuated by a paper music roll. This patent of Hunt and Bradish is accompanied by a drawing of a little piano with only thirteen strings which could be carried around easily under the arm. The illustration shows the crank, but as no monkey is shown I presume it was not carried under the arm or strapped over the shoulder.

The first music rolls which were laid out were merely perforated rolls with the notes exactly as they were shown in the sheet music, thus leaving it entirely to the operator to provide the musical expression. A great many thousands of players were sold which were operated by these crude mathematically laid out music rolls. How well do we all remember having a neighbor who owned one of those piano players! Those owners had a lot of fun trying to put musical expression into those mechanically played notes, but the neighbors suffered a lot of agony.

Generally speaking, the owners of those instruments had about as much idea of music as the old fellow in the country church orchestra who played the piccolo. At one of the vespers services at which the orchestra performed this particular old fellow got the pages of his sheet music mixed so that he was playing the third page while the rest of the orchestra were playing the second page. A distinguished gentleman who sat in the third pew was so upset by the mistake that he could not repress his feelings and in his disgust said right out loud, “the damn fool piccolo player.” After the orchestra had completed its selection, the minister stepped to the front of the pulpit and asked the person in the congregation who called the piccolo player a “damn fool” please to stand up. The distinguished gentleman did not stand up, but a little deacon in the back of the church rose and said, “Preacher, may I suggest that you do not try to find out who called the piccolo player a damn fool, but that you try to find out...

As no monkey is shown I presume it was not carried under the arm or strapped over the shoulder.

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who called the damn fool a piccolo player?"

It was a long time before it became evident that the general public were not musicians. They loved music, but they did not know how to give musical expression. Realizing this, many inventors in the field of the player piano set about to construct various devices which would help the public to give musical expression to those mechanically played notes.

In 1891 R. M. Hunter of Philadelphia conceived the idea of putting a wavy line on the music roll to denote when the music should be played loudly and when softly. This was the first step in the long road travelled in the development of the marvelous present day players. From this important step the evolution of the music roll took a turn toward producing various effects automatically instead of leaving them to the discretion of the operator of the player piano.

Following Mr. Hunter by nearly ten years, F. L. Young of the Aeolian Company conceived the idea of the Metrostyle, which was also a wavy line running the length of the sheet and a pointer attached to the tempo lever, the index end of which reached up to the tracker bar. If the tempo lever were moved so that this index end of the pointer followed the line the various retards and accelerandos and other tempo effects were rendered in musical style.

Some five years later the Themodist was invented simultaneously by Mr. Crooks and Mr. Skinner. This improvement in the music roll consisted of inserting supplementary perforations on the edge of the sheet opposite each theme or melody note. These perforations controlled a mechanism which automatically brought out the melody of the piece.

While these later improvements were going on in this country, Edwin Welte in Germany was attacking the problem in an entirely new manner. He was taking an actual record of a musician’s playing and reproducing it entirely automatically. Mr. Welte’s music roll contained supplementary perforations which controlled the force with which the different notes were struck. His achievement was by far the greatest step forward made up to that time in mechanically produced music. Simultaneously with the development of the Welte, there was a similar development made in this country which later was bought out by the American Piano Company and is now known as the Ampico.

Sometime after the Ampico, came the Duo-Art, which was also entirely automatic. These reproducing instruments were all operated by electric motors instead of by foot pedals.

With the advent of the Ampico, there came another improvement in the music roll, the development of a means for producing tonal effects which had been, up to that time, regarded by many musicians as not being within the realm of mechanism but were rather, as they liked to express it, “A manifestation of the soul of the performer.” This invention consisted of arbitrarily extending the perforations of certain notes in order to carry their tones from one harmony to another thereby obtaining precisely the effect which the performer did by his subtle operation of the damper pedal. Numerous patents were applied for and granted to the American Piano Company on this method of obtaining these subtle tonal effects.

The next development in the evolution of the music roll came in the method of recording a musician’s playing. Mr. Welte’s method was secret, so we cannot know how it was done. The method used in the early days of the Ampico was covered by a patent granted about 1912. This consisted of placing electric contacts on the piano key which would indicate on a moving sheet the length of time it took the key to be depressed. We can readily see that it requires a much longer time to depress the key when playing a soft note than it does when playing a loud note. So a long mark denotes a soft note and a short mark denotes a loud note, with various gradations between.

This Ampico process of recording like most of the others was kept a profound secret. Many people were skeptical about it being possible to record all the delicate shadings that a pianist gave to his playing and they regarded these secret recording processes as “the bunk.” Only recently has the American Piano Company decided to break away from this great secrecy and to show what it is doing in the way of recording. There are some recent improvements in the process upon which patents have not been granted, and these of course must for a while be kept secret, but in the main, I will explain how it is done.

Any process of recording which goes in for extreme accuracy entails an unbelievable amount of labor and expense. I have in mind a very wonderful record of Lhevinne’s playing of the Blue Danube waltz, which took over five weeks to complete, and represented over 100,000 operations. This piece contains 7,915 notes and every note required thirteen or more operations before the record was ready for publication.

Generally speaking, the method employed in making an Ampico recording is a complete and thorough measurement of every detail of the playing, reducing the same to terms of simple figures. These figures, which show with great exactness just what the artist does, are then translated into side hole perforations which cause the Ampico to give forth exactly the same music as does the artist.

Two records are taken simultaneously of the artist’s playing, one of the notes and the pedaling, and the other of the dynamics. The record of the notes consists of penciled marks made on a moving sheet. The exact position of the pedaling is recorded as is also the speed with which the pedal is depressed and released. The dynamic record consists simply of measuring with great accuracy the amount of energy in the hammer just at the instant it strikes the string. It is right at this point where the secrecy of the Ampico method exists, but I may say that the accuracy of this measurement discloses differences in the pianist’s touch ten times more delicate than the human ear is capable of detecting.

In the Blue Danube Waltz, Shultz-Elver transcription, played by Josef Lhevinne, there are, as I said before, 7,915 notes, and the dynamic force with which Mr. Lhevinne struck every one of these notes was measured accurately.

The first operation on the note record is a check of each and every single note with the notes on the sheet music to eliminate
wrong notes. We call the checking of each individual note with the sheet music one operation, so that in the note check-up of the *slue Danube waltz* there were 7,915 operations. This took one operator about three days. While the notes are being checked, there are two operations going on in the dynamic record, one the identification of the marks, and the other the measurement of them. The two sheets are then put on a pantograph table, which makes it very easy for the operator to transfer the figures of the dynamic sheet, which show the loudness with which every note was struck, to the note sheet. This entails another 7,915 operations, making a total of 31,660 operations to this point. The roll is then given to an operator who translates the record of the pedaling into extended perforations which, with the automatic damper pedal of the reproducing piano, control the quality of tone. This is one of the most interesting steps in the process of editing the roll. Now we have a note sheet with a figure at the beginning of every penciled mark telling exactly how loud that note was struck. Another operator then takes the roll and translates these figures into side hole perforations which will control the loudness of every note, so that the performance the *Ampico* will render is exactly as the artist played. This necessitates 7,915 more operations, and on this particular roll required nearly five days of the operator’s time.

The producing of subtle tone shading through pedaling is a very important part of the playing of every great pianist. There is full pedaling and half pedaling. Half pedaling is a quick use of the damper pedal which does not wholly cause the strings touched by the dampers to cease sounding. The vibrations of a half-pedaled string continue long after the artist’s finger has left the key. These vibrations mingled with those of the notes struck in a harmony immediately following create one form of what is known as tone color. This is one of the subtle things that makes piano playing so wonderful. It is something thoroughly understood and constantly used by the great artists.

Extended marks on the side of the *Ampico* record show exactly where the damper pedals lifted the dampers from the strings and where they were returned. There are also indications which show exactly how fast the dampers were lifted from the strings or returned to them, and how deeply the dampers sunk into the strings.

To solve this troublesome problem of reproducing these subtle tonal pedal effects with a mechanically operated pedal mechanism, the *Ampico* uses a patented process of extended note perforations. We can readily understand that so long as a note perforation is extended, just so long will the key remain depressed and the damper be held off the string, and the string continue to sing or vibrate. If the record of the artist’s playing shows that he “half-pedaled” in a given place, and did not damp out certain tones which had been sounded, the perforations in the music roll controlling these tones will be extended right through that part where the mechanical pedaling damps the strings. We must remember that mechanical pedaling is not “half-pedaling,” but complete pedaling. The tonal effects obtained by this process of extended note perforations are identical with those obtained by the artist.

I have gone into an explanation of this detail at great length as it is one of the peculiarities of the *Ampico* record which is very often misunderstood. Many times in the record there are as many as eighteen or twenty note perforations being extended at the same time. This makes it appear as if the artist had held down that many notes with his fingers, which would be an impossibility. What the artist did do was to keep that many strings singing by the manipulation of his damper pedal, and in order to give precisely the same quality of tone as the artist did these perforations are extended as we see them in an *Ampico* music roll.

Up to this time no holes have been placed in the record, but it is now ready for the preliminary perforating. This is done by hand. A perforation about one fourth of an inch long is placed at the front end of all the penciled lines indicating notes, except the very shortest, for which a much shorter perforation is used. A single round hole is placed at the end of each penciled line. With these perforations merely at the beginning and end of the penciled lines the record is now ready to go to the automatic stencil making machine. It must be realized that it has not yet been put on a player, therefore it has never been heard, although more than 71,235 operations have been done on it.

The automatic stencil machine finishes the stencil completely, and a trial cutting with it ready to be heard, in less than an hour and a half. In the old days much of the work of laying out a stencil like this was done by hand, and the *slue Danube waltz* would have taken six boys about three days to complete.

The dynamic figures are copied from the original note record into this new trial roll which comes from the stencil machine to guide the editor in the next operation, which is a complete inspection of the roll to see that no errors of any kind exist. After all corrections are made in this proof roll and transferred to the stencil, another cutting is made and the piece is now, for the first time, ready to be heard by the artist.

The record submitted to the artist is a perfect performance, an exact duplicate of the one he gave when making the record. It is seldom that the artist requests any change. If a change is made, it is not a correction. Hearing the record, the artist becomes his own critic and if a change is made it is to meet his wish to alter slightly his own performance.

The record of the *Blue Danube waltz* contains about five times as many notes as the average record and it required considerably over 100,000 operations to bring it to completion, but the result fully justified the great effort.

Now we see on looking back that in the beginning the music roll contained only the notes and the person owning the player was supposed to put in all of the musical expression. The evolution of the music roll has carried it to a highly developed product which leaves absolutely nothing for the owner of the instrument to do but to insert the roll and turn on the switch.
DAVID C. RAMLEY
RESTORER, MENTOR AND FRIEND

December 25, 1927 – July 21, 2006

Dave Ramey—one of our best friends and one of mechanical music’s most positive influences—passed away at the age of 78 on Friday, July 21, 2006. He loved coin pianos and orchestrions, and his enthusiasm for their music spread to hundreds of collectors over a 50-year period.


Dave was born and raised in Danville, Illinois. His first memory of a coin piano was in the late 1930s, when he was 10 or 12 years old. His brother-in-law had one that he no longer wanted, so he had Dave and his nephews demolish it, keeping only the coin accumulator, which Dave later thought was probably from a Cremona. (Dave clearly remembered his brother-in-law calling it a “nickelodeon,” indicating that the word has been to describe coin pianos at least since the 1930s.)

Dave interrupted high school to serve as an M.P. in the Army in the Philippines in the 1940s. After finishing his enlistment and high school, he worked as a meat delivery truck driver for Armour Meat Packing Co. for 17 years. In 1952, he married LaVina Samson. “Toni,” as she was known by her close friends, inherited that nickname when she gave Toni brand home permanents to local women.

Illus. 2. Dave as an M.P. in the army in the Philippines, circa 1945.

Illus. 3. Dave and Toni with oldest daughter Nancy, born in 1952, and Donna, born in 1956, taken on Christmas day—which was also Dave’s birthday—in 1956.

In 1955, Dave paid $50 for his first nickelodeon, a moth-eaten Cremona G sitting in the back of a plumber’s shop in St. Joseph, Illinois. It originally had been used in the St. Joseph Opera House, and if the plumber hadn’t rescued it, it would have been destroyed when the Opera House was bulldozed. Dave also repaired a few player pianos during this time. His brother Charlie was in medical school in Chicago, and when he saw the Cremona, he suggested that Dave visit a bar in Chicago that had a collection of coin pianos, referring him to Valente’s House of Nickelodeons. Dave visited Valente’s, spending one evening and part of the next day there. Before he left, Angelo Valente suggested that he stop at Svoboda’s Nickelodeon Tavern in Chicago Heights on his way home.

Svoboda’s Nickelodeon Tavern

Dave visited Svoboda’s and told Al about his experience fixing his Cremona G and a few player pianos. He noticed that Svoboda’s was cleaner and had more business than Valente’s, and the pianos worked better. Al already had several dozen instruments, including about 15 coin pianos and orchestrions that he bought from the Boyer Collection, also of Chicago. The next time Dave returned to Svoboda’s, Al gave him the job of repairing a 4-door Seeburg L from Boyer. Dave took the Seeburg home, successfully restored the player mechanism, and when he returned it, Al paid him by giving him a very early Cremona A-roll piano. (Dave later sold that Cremona to Jack Lemmer for $200, including one A roll. He then felt guilty about providing only one roll with the piano, so he gave Jack a second roll. This was before the days of abundant recut rolls made by Eddie Freyer, Play-Rite and others. Jack still owns the Cremona—and has promised David Jr. the first right to acquire it if Jack ever sells it.)

This first experience at Svoboda’s led to Dave repairing one piano after another for Al. While continuing his job with Armour, Dave drove from Danville to Chicago Heights each Thursday evening, worked at Svoboda’s Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and went back home Sunday night. In Dave’s words, “During the late 1950s and early 1960s, every weekend when I walked in, it seemed like Al had bought another nickelodeon.” Certainly, one reason Al acquired so many pianos during this booming era was that he could count on Dave to put them into good playing condition.
As Dave serviced the pianos and restored their components, he had an opportunity that is almost nonexistent today: he was able to study nearly every brand of American coin piano and orchestrion in pristine unrestored condition, with original factory dimensions including the correct pneumatic and bellows spans, valve travel and other parameters. He also repaired and serviced many home player pianos for Reynolds music store in Chicago Heights during this period, gaining much experience with both old and contemporary 88-note player mechanisms.

Long before any articles or books showed how to recover pneumatics and bellows, Dave figured out how to cover them so they were both factory-neat and airtight. With each new job, he took the time to observe how the valves and other parts originally worked and how to make them as airtight as possible. In an era when the average technician made a coin piano play better by putting a bigger pulley on the motor, Dave was already figuring out how to do the work the right way. He had a gift for observing the most minute details; whenever he visited another repair shop or collector, he noticed if a piano played exceptionally well, and then figured out why.

[I grew up on the south side of Chicago and first visited Svoboda’s when I was in high school in 1961, where I met Dave and saw him occasionally for the next few years. In 1965, Al offered me a job, and I worked at Svoboda’s during vacation breaks from college for the next four years. Dave was there Thursdays through Sundays, usually accompanied by Tom Sprague, a piano and player technician and nickelodeon collector from LaGrange, Indiana. Al bought his 92-key Decap organ in the summer of 1965, giving the three of us the opportunity to work together to prepare it for use as soon as possible.

Those were exciting times of discovery for all of us, before the days of Hathaway & Bowers or the Vestal Press—constantly finding new instruments that we had never seen before, being able to hear some of the best music ever made on rolls, and learning how various brands of instruments were built, how they worked and how they sounded. Dave was already one of the finest pneumatic technicians in the country. Tom was a professionally-trained piano technician and ragtime enthusiast, and I came with a musical background, tuning experience, and an interest in learning everything I could about nickelodeons and restoration. Svoboda’s was in its prime, business was great, and there was more than enough work to keep the three of us busy as we learned from each other.]

In December 1965, Dave quit his job at Armour, and moved his growing family to LaGrange to work on mechanical music full time with Tom Sprague, still traveling to Svoboda’s on weekends. Then in October 1966, Dave and Toni moved the family to their Western Avenue home in Chicago Heights on Halloween. Toni remembers handing out Halloween candy at the front door while Dave was moving things in the back.

In May, 1968. At the end of the commercial, the camera zoomed in on the snare drum and a light bulb came on, illuminating the Schmidt’s logo.
The Restoration Business Grows

For the next few years, Dave worked full-time for Svoboda’s, but gradually added more jobs for other collectors as well. In October 1969, he paid his first visit to Alex Jordan’s House on the Rock in Spring Green, Wisconsin. Within a few years, he began restoring original instruments there including a Seeburg KT and a Hupfeld Phonoliszt-Viola. This was one of the first Phonoliszt-Violinas ever to be put into good playing condition, and it immediately drew the attention of collectors all over the Midwestern U.S. to its remarkable musical capabilities. (In the same time period, Alan Lightcap restored one for the Guinness Collection in New York, and Terry Hathaway restored one in California. Within a short time of these three restorations, the value of the Phonoliszt-Violina skyrocketed.) Dave also created some of the first fantasy displays at House on the Rock, including early all-pneumatic versions of the “Franz Joseph” and “Blue Room” when they still incorporated real band organs and orchestrions.

Illus. 8. Left to Right: Howard Fitch (co-editor of the MBSI Journal with his wife Helen), Tom Sprague, Al Svoboda, Dave Ramey and Eddie Freyer at the Cohen Collection in Studio City, California, during the Sept. 1970 MBSI Convention in Anaheim.

Illus. 9. Left to Right: Dave Junchen, Tom Sprague, P.M. Keast and Dave in Mr. Keast’s home in Elmhurst, Illinois. During Christmas break, 1970, Dave, Tom, Dave and I spent several hours interviewing Keast, who worked as an orchestrion roll arranger for the coin-operated division of QRS in Chicago, then Clark Orchestra Roll Co. in DeKalb and finally the Capital Music Roll Co. in the Operators’ Piano Company plant in Chicago from 1917 through 1930. After that time, he was active in the school band programs in Elmhurst and Park Ridge until his retirement in 1954.

Illus. 10. August 1972 photo of Dave with his North Tonawanda Pianolin. He had just finished restoring it, took it to the mart at the MBSI Convention in Crete, Illinois, and sold it there to Murtogh Guinness.

In 1972, Dave restored the Blessing three-piece mannequin band for Bellm’s Cars and Music of Yesterday in Sarasota, followed by other restorations and service trips there for several years. Dave’s customer list grew to include most of the collectors in a large radius surrounding Chicago. By the time Svoboda’s moved from Chicago Heights to Lynwood in 1974, Dave was very busy with his own full-time restoration business and only did minor work for Svoboda’s from then until it closed in 1982.

Illus. 11. Putting finishing touches on a Hupfeld Phonoliszt-Viola at Bellm’s Cars and Music of Yesterday in Sarasota, Florida. The year was 1974. The orchestrion in the background is an immense Imhof & Mukle Admiral II from the Boecker hoard.
[From 1968, when I moved to Colorado, until 1974, Dave and I corresponded regularly. His letters form a detailed history of instruments he restored and friendships he developed during those years. Names like Tom Russo, Frank Trotta, Don McElhinney, Tom Champion, Ozzie Wurdeman, Paul Eakins, Don Robertson, Dutch Village, John Maxwell, Jack Kaplan, Frank Wachala, Eddie Freyer and many others sprinkle the pages, together with sketches of mechanisms, descriptions of restoration techniques and stories about nickelodeons that he had bought and sold.]

**Illus.12. Left to Right:** Dave, Flo and Al Svoboda, and Art Reblitz at the front door of Svoboda’s Nickelodeon Tavern in Chicago Heights in 1984.

### The Encore Banjo Project

In 1977, Dave had the opportunity to acquire the remains of a hoard of Encore Banjo parts from Jim Wells, a dealer and collector in Fairfax, Virginia. A route operator named Frederick Rohrs had put them in storage in 1913 and sold them to collector George Battley in 1966; Battley eventually sold them to Wells. While there was not one complete set of parts, nor a complete original cabinet, there were several pumps, roll mechanisms, some banjo parts, fret fingers, a few valve boxes and numerous other small parts. With a complete original Encore Banjo on hand to serve as a guide, Dave built new Encores using as many original parts as he had, and made patterns of the rest until he was finally equipped to make completely new Encore Banjos. Manufacturing them became an important part of his business from that time on.

### The Scott Ave. Shop

By 1983, Dave’s business had outgrown the old shop, and the family moved to a much larger 1917 Georgian brick home that once served as a doctor’s office on Scott Ave. in Chicago Heights, where Dave and his sons built larger workshop quarters. While restoring many instruments for the Krughoff, Sanfilippo and Gilson Collections and many others in this shop, Dave and his son David Jr. also began production of new Seeburg H orchestrion replicas for customers around the country.

**Illus. 13.** Dave busy at work preparing bead fringe for the hanging lamps on the Krughoff’s Hupfeld Pan in December, 1989.

### The Ramey Banjo-Orchestra

In the early 1980s, Rick Crandall found an original Engelhardt Banjorchestra that was missing the banjo, percussion instruments and music rolls. Rick approached Dave about restoring it because of Dave’s extensive experience with the Encore Banjos, and asked if he’d be interested in arranging new music rolls for it because I’d already arranged new rolls for some of Rick’s other instruments. The three of us worked together designing the musical scale, and Dave designed the mechanisms and layout. Having the extremely complex rolls punched by hand proved to be impractical, but within a few years, MIDI-driven roll perforators made their appearance and the project resumed. Meanwhile, Dave became interested in creating his own Banjorchestra and possibly building more for other customers.

While continuing to restore many instruments for collectors and his own growing collection, he and David Jr. completed the original Crandall Banjorchestra, an exact copy using parts from an Engelhardt style F for Bob Gilson, and began creating their first new Ramey Banjo-Orchestra, patterned after the Connorized version sold in 1914. The prototype was finished in 1994 and unveiled to rave reviews at the Musical Box Society International Annual Meeting in Houston, Texas. At the same time the Rameys adopted “D.C. Ramey Piano Co.” as their business name, having it cast into the piano plates for most of the new Banjo-Orchestrations. David Jr. worked for the company full time in 1981-82, attended college at the Theatre School at DePaul University (formerly Art Institute’s Goodman School), graduating in 1986, and has worked for the Ramey Piano Co. full time ever since.

### The New Shop in Lynwood

In 1997, the Ramey Piano Co. moved to Lynwood, where Dave and Toni, and David Jr. and his family now had adjacent homes and built a much larger new shop. Since then, they and their employees have continued to restore instruments for collectors all over the United States. From 1994 through 2006, they’ve built five Seeburg H replicas, one Ramey style G orchestrion and numerous other reproduction Seeburg parts, nearly 50 new Encore Banjos, three Ramey Encore Double Banjos, two Ramey “Duet” machines that play banjo and dobro guitar, and 24 Banjo-Orchestrations.

Dave was awarded the President’s Award of the Musical Box Society International in 1994 In 2002, Dave was awarded the Musical
Box Society’s Darlene Mirijanian Award for creativity in the field of mechanical music.

**Illus. 14. Left to right: Dave Ramey, David Jr. and Art Reblitz with the prototype Ramey Banjo-Orchestra completed in 1994.**

**Thank You**

Of the many he taught, there are four—his son David Jr., John Hovancak, Jerry Biasella and I—who have gone on to make our own lifetime careers in automatic music restoration. We were fortunate to spend the afternoon of Wednesday, July 19, with Dave, for what would turn out to be our last visit. He, David Jr. and their long-time employee Ed Konieczka showed us the current projects in the shop—a Seeburg KT and Wurlitzer Pianino that they had just completed, and the new Banjo-Orchestrass under construction—and then we enjoyed playing orchestrions in Dave’s music room. We all thank him for giving us our start and generously sharing his lifetime accumulation of knowledge whenever we asked for advice. We’ve had many debates with him over the years regarding the best restoration techniques, but we all share his love for the music, the instruments and his commitment to high quality restoration. I’d also like to take this opportunity to thank Dave’s wife Toni for making me feel like one of the family for a period of four decades.

Dave is survived by Toni, his wife of 54 years; four daughters: Nancy and her husband Daniel MacDonald, Donna and Michael Witt, Carol and Paul Sharos, and Rose and Lee Taylor; three sons: David Jr. and his wife Susan, Samuel and Jennifer, and John and Kelly; 17 grandchildren, three great grandchildren, and one brother, Albert. Dave was a member of the American Legion Steger Post 521, Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors Association, Carousel Organ Association of America, and the Musical Box Society International.

**End note:** This article will also be published in the Journal of the Musical Box Society International, where there will also be additional material written by other friends.

**Acknowledgements:** 41 years of live conversations, correspondence and phone calls with Dave Ramey; details verified by David Ramey Jr., Toni Ramey and Jack Lemmer; obituary from the Chicago Heights Star. Photos supplied by Dave Ramey Jr., Toni Ramey and Art Reblitz.

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**Aeolian, Go Ring-a dém Bells!**

Some musings on pneumatics and carillons

**The Aeolian Company**

The application of mechanical devices to music has fascinated people for centuries. In the late Nineteenth Century, the Aeolian Company was founded in the USA to manufacture a musical device they called the Organette, a keyboardless pneumatic roll-operated portable organ for use by travelling preachers. From 1896 Aeolian also became involved in the manufacture of the ‘player piano’, an in-built foot impelled pneumatic device which played the piano. Pumping the pedals created vacuum in a set of bellows connected by rubber tubes. The pneumatic impulse drove a perforated paper roll over a ‘tracker’ bar containing a line of holes corresponding to each note on the piano. As the roll passed over the bar each note’s perforation in the paper opened its hole on the bar and sent a signal to a small bellows which collapsed, causing the piano’s hammers to strike the strings. The player piano’s enormous popularity and Aeolian’s success at marketing it enabled the company to expand and establish itself in Europe and beyond. Indeed, so successful was the Aeolian Company’s marketing that by the early Twentieth Century its brand name Pianola had become the international generic term for the player piano.

At the time when sound recording was in its infancy, Aeolian followed the lead of the German Welte & Sons company and also developed a sophisticated version of the pianola, which they called the Duo-Art. The Duo-Art’s pump was operated by an electric motor (instead of foot power) and the rolls were encoded
with extra holes which caused the pneumatic impulse to change, thus producing variations in the musical dynamics. An ingenious recording device enabled the great classical and popular pianists of the day to record their live performances of well-known compositions. Famous pianists who never made it onto cylinder or disc had their interpretations captured, reproduced and immortalised on the paper rolls of the reproducing piano. The Aeolian Company and The American Piano Company, manufacturer of the Ampico reproducing piano, joined forces in 1932 as a survival tactic at the height of the Depression.

The Carillon
The history of the carillon dates back to fifteenth-century Europe. Generally located in specially built towers, carillons consist of 23 (two chromatic octaves) or more of harmonically tuned bronze bells hung stationary on beams and struck inside with clappers via a series of wires and springs controlled from below. The carillonneur (or carillonist) plays manually from a wooden ‘baton’ keyboard similar in configuration to a piano keyboard, and a pedal board similar to that of an organ. One of the more curious subsequent activities of the British branch of the Aeolian Company during the 1920s and ’30s was to design and install pneumatic roll actions for use in conjunction with carillons.

Of the hundreds of carillons found throughout the world a very small number were installed with a pneumatic system, which was used for hourly strikes, quarter hour chimes and pre-recorded tunes. Aeolian had applied the technology from their player piano to these carillons, which were operated automatically from perforated paper rolls, similar to those for the Aeolian pianola. They did not apply the added sophistication of the Duo-Art to the mechanism, however, which meant that the tunes were played with no dynamic variation or nuance as is possible during a live performance. But such devices proved useful for announcing the time, and the pre-recorded tunes at least gave people near the tower a sample of the carillon’s sound when a carillonneur was not present. However, the novelty of the roll-operated pneumatic devices in carillons apparently wore off when a carillonneur was not present. However, the pneumatic roll actions for use in conjunction with carillons.

University of Sydney War Memorial Carillon – Pneumatic play device
As a memorial to the fallen of the First World War, the University of Sydney – Australia’s oldest university, established in 1854 – had a 54-bell carillon installed in 1928 by the English bell-founders John Taylor and Company, and the decision was taken to include a pneumatic playing system.

As a music student in the 1960s Denis Condon was shown the carillon’s console and was amazed at what he saw. Due to his practical and theoretical knowledge of Aeolian pianos, he observed that the tracker bar was in fact of the type usually reserved for installation in Duo-Art pianos. With that one minor exception, the entire mechanism in fact used standard Aeolian pianola parts. Further, as a great deal of power was obviously needed to create a substantial vacuum to activate the largest bells, instead of one, there were two pumps to supply the pneumatics. The 25 paper rolls – well made on best quality Aeolian paper, beautifully cut and with bakelite flanges – needed manual removal and replacement, which means that to hear more than one roll per session an operator had to be present to change the rolls. By the ’60s, however, the electrical connections to the pumps were already dismantled and the whole roll system, having fallen into disrepair, was unusable.

Removal
With the establishment of the Australian Collectors of Mechanical Musical Instruments in the early 1980s, new interest was shown in the carillon, as members of the organisation wanted to publish some information on the pneumatic device. There was even casual talk of the possibilities of restoration. However, during most of his association with the instrument from 1932 until his death in 1991, the University Carillonist John D. Gordon had a strong dislike of any automatic playing attachment on carillons in general. Gordon vetoed any ideas of restoring the equipment. Condon was offered the opportunity to remove and dispose of it on condition that it was done immediately. If not, Gordon stated categorically that he would have it removed and ‘sent to the rubbish dump.’

Having salvaged what he could of the mechanism, Condon had ideas of using connecting the pneumatic cast-offs to a set of tubular bells but when he saw the titles of the roll collection he quickly lost interest in any practical demonstrations at home. Because the rolls have the same dimensions as those for player pianos, he kept them in order to play them on one of his reproducing pianos to anyone who was interested. The remaining useful pneumatic items from the system were retrieved and are still in his possession but are unusable in any carillon.
The Roll Music from Sydney

To date, other than the late John D. Gordon, Condon and Magassy have not found anyone who heard the automatic system in operation at the University of Sydney. There seem to be no documented reports that the system was used when the carillon was dedicated, nor for how many years it operated as a clock device.

One roll seems to have been composed especially for Sydney by Burrows (no other names given): ‘Chimes 1 and 2 for the pneumatic action of the Sydney Carillon’. The other 24 rolls include some rather surprising titles, only one of which has an Australian connection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bach</td>
<td>Invention No 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bach</td>
<td>Minuet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Francis</td>
<td>Australia will be there</td>
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<tr>
<td>Handel</td>
<td>Aria from th 14th suite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handel</td>
<td>Harmonious Blacksmith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Handel</td>
<td>La Brabanconne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncredited</td>
<td>Swing Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncredited</td>
<td>Old Folks at Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyes</td>
<td>Star Spangled Banner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mendelssohn</td>
<td>Consolation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mendelssohn</td>
<td>Spring Song</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rachmaninov</td>
<td>Prelude</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rouget de Lisle</td>
<td>La Marseillaise'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sullivan</td>
<td>Onward Christian Soldiers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Mignon Gavotte</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncredited</td>
<td>All Through the Night</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncredited</td>
<td>Annie Laurie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncredited</td>
<td>Four national airs: Wales, Wales;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Auld Lang Synce; The Minstrel Boy;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The British Grenadiers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncredited</td>
<td>God Save the King</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncredited</td>
<td>Londonderry Air</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncredited</td>
<td>Nursery rhymes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncredited</td>
<td>Rule Britannia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncredited</td>
<td>The Fist Nowell &amp; Good King Wenceslas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncredited</td>
<td>Ye Mariners of England</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Examples of other Carillons with Aeolian Pneumatics

The majority of 'pneumatically enhanced' carillons from the 1920s and '30s seem to have been in the USA. Although not an exhaustive list, a few examples follow:

Carillon of Trinity United Methodist Church, Springfield, Massachusetts

When Magassy was a guest recitalist in 2005 on this large carillon in the USA, she noted that most of its pneumatic playing equipment was intact, although not in working order. Like the Sydney University installation, it is an instrument from the Taylor foundry and typically the material around the baton keyboard area is of antique oak. Unlike Sydney, however, the Massachusetts instrument’s huge oak doors above the clavier keyboard are still in place to cover the carillon wires and the pneumatics from general view. (These long doors above the clavier have a negative side—the wiring from batons to the bells above needs to be much longer than normal, causing maintenance problems and more noise and movement in the wires when played).

The roll playing mechanism in the Springfield church carillon stands behind the clavier and, most surprisingly, the word ‘Aeolian’ can be clearly seen on the roll mechanism (see photos).

Bok Tower, Lake Wales, Florida

With its bells also from the Taylor foundry, the magnificent tower and carillon at Historic Bok Sanctuary was constructed by Dutch immigrant and philanthropist Edward Bok in 1928 as a memorial to his parents. The same pneumatic system was installed by the Taylor bellfoundry with the actual roll player positioned in a room below the main carillon keyboard. The compressor was behind the clavier. When Edward Bok first heard the mechanism he declared it ‘unmusical’ and had it removed and discarded immediately! Bok Tower, however, can broadcast pre-recorded recitals in the absence of a carillonneur, but these are achieved with state of the art recording equipment and produce all the dynamics, phrasing and nuance of those players it has recorded previously. The tower’s pianola player, with its double spool box to expedite subsequent roll ‘performances’, is on show in another area of the tower. It is not
the original from Bok, but from a 1932 Byrd Park carillon, Richmond, VA., a Taylor instrument whose pneumatic action was dismantled during the 1970s.

**First Plymouth Church, Lincoln, Nebraska**

The 1931 carillon in this church was provided with a pneumatic system, which was removed during renovations in the 1960s by then carillonneur/composer Ronald Barnes. Carillonneur Carl Zimmerman discovered the remaining cabinet work, which is still in his possession.

**Taylor Bellfoundry**

The Taylor foundry in Loughborough, Leicester, UK, has quite a number of Aeolian rolls in storage. It seems the foundry had duplicates made of all Aeolian rolls sent out to carillons with Aeolian systems lest replacements were ever needed. Interestingly, even though that foundry installed the bells of the Loughborough Carillon (1923) in the town park nearby, no pneumatics were ever added there.

Examples of pneumatic assistance needed by the carillonneur to play the heaviest bells of Gillett and Johnstone carillons include **Riverside Church, New York** (1925, 74 bells) and the **University of Chicago** (1931, 72 bells), both memorials to Laura Spelman Rockefeller. In Chicago the pneumatic system, which assist the player with the six heaviest bells and three others is not connected directly to the pedals but attaches to the same rods that connect to the pedals. The system connects to the clappers from below the bells, whereas the pedals connect to the clappers from above the bells. It is now operated by an Apollo II computer. The automatic fifteen minute strike system is activated by an electric version of the old speltrommel – a giant music box with low voltage electric contacts in place of the traditional mechanical jacks.

In England a 35-bell G. and J. instrument able to be played as a normal carillon from a clavier keyboard and which also contains an added automatic system can be found at **St. John’s Church, Perth, Scotland**. It has pneumatics with paper roll extant and functional.

**Atkinson’s Carillon, Old Bond St., London**, has a clavier keyboard with 23 bells for normal manual play and also has the pneumatic equipment with barrel mechanism extant but not functional.

**At All Hallows By the Tower, London** there is also an 18-bell *Chime* – basically a small carillon-style instrument with clavier keyboard – which has a mechanical barrel chimer extant and functioning.

Mention should also be made here of the very large Peace Tower Carillon – standing splendidly in the middle of the Ottawa (Ontario, Canada) Houses of Parliament buildings – a 1927 G. and J. instrument. While it could be expected that this carillon would have included automatic accessories, the only extra it has ever had is an electric clock chime.

Examples of G and J’s other electrical systems for automatic play include the 1924 *Norfolk County War Memorial Carillon, Simcoe, Ontario*, Canada, where much of it is on display in a glass case on the premises. The Carillon in St. George’s Anglican Church, Guelph, Ontario had the same equipment, some of which is apparently stored in the church basement. Readers may here be interested in the descriptive observations of Dominion Carillonneur Gordon Slater (Ottawa, Canada) concerning some G. and J. systems he has seen in Canada- see note below after Conclusion.

**Conclusion**

The authors are aware that other examples of carillon pneumatic systems still exist or have existed. They have merely sought to interest the reader in the added devices in early experiments which attempted to realize the full potential of an instrument full of bells.

Today carillons are in general provided with small computerised mechanisms for any automatic bell sounds required. The pneumatic systems of the 1920s and 1930s, with all their cumbersome equipment have mostly become historical pieces, with only a few of them still able to demonstrate the engineering expertise of a century ago.

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**Other Types of Pneumatic and Electrical Systems**

This article is principally concerned with presenting some of the history of pneumatic devices for carillons provided by the Aeolian Company, primarily because of Condon’s experience in restoring reproducing pianos over four decades, and also because of his association with the carillon in Sydney. However, the now long gone UK foundry of **Gillett and Johnstone**, installed other types of automatic systems, some pneumatic, but mostly electrical, sometimes for *live player assistance* and not for roll or other pre-recorded performance.
Note—Personal Observations by Gordon Slater.
Dominion Carillonneur, Ottawa.

“The G and J tune playing actions (I have seen) are not at all like a player piano. The paper is not rolled onto a shaft but hangs in a big loop from a long horizontal brass cylinder in a tall case. The paper has tractor (sprocket) holes down the middle which are engaged by a row of pins around the middle of the cylinder. The cylinder is turned by a small electric motor whose variable speed determines the tempo.

Many electrical contacts rest lightly upon the paper as it turns. The note-holes allow the contacts to touch the brass cylinder selectively there are two contacts for each bell for faster repetition. Each contact feeds the coil of an electric relay whose high current contacts feed electricity to a solenoid air valve. When energized a solenoid admits pressurized air from the compressor into the air cylinder moving the piston and pulling the internal clapper against the bell. In Simcoe and Guelph the cylinder bore would be about one inch and the stroke about four inches.

By contrast in the earlier tune player at Metropolitan Church carillon, Toronto, a drop-hammer was released onto the outside of the bell. A powerful constantly running electric motor reset the hammers immediately for their next stroke.”

1 Most carillonneurs tend to agree with him in this respect, while perhaps making an exception for the automatics concerned with clock chimes and an occasional time-related tune.

2 When it was installed on a small island in Lake Burley Griffin in the Australian Capital Territory in 1970, the Canberra Carillon, now called the National Carillon, also had an automatic system, but mechanically totally different to its older brother. The multi-tune roll was located in the underneath compartment of a celeste-like box, near the player’s console. The celeste-box had piano keys which meant it could be used to play tunes manually, though without any musical qualities, as the keys were linked to the electrical system. The roll is in excellent condition but is much wider than the others discussed in this article and therefore does not fit any player piano. Its most remembered item is ‘Greensleeves’! This electrical automatic contraption was also intensely disliked by John Gordon, not the least because the automatic sounds were also linked by landline to the City Centre and the resulting ‘noise’ could be excruciating. Gordon ordered the carillon’s government administrators to remove the whole system or as he put it: ‘I’ll unscrew it myself and throw it in the Lake.’ It soon disappeared.

3 An odd choice for Australia at the time.

Photographs: Denis Condon and Suzanne Magassy

The Authors
Both authors had connections to the University of Sydney during their student years. Denis Condon was also a lecturer there and Suzanne Magassy has since performed recitals as a guest carillonneur.

Denis Condon, who lives in Sydney, is a retired school music teacher and education lecturer. He is also a well-known radio broadcaster in the field of piano music and performance. His interest in mechanical music began as a teenager and he is regarded as a world authority on Ampico, Duo-Art and Welte Mignon reproducing pianos and their restoration. His formidable collection of reproducing piano rolls, many of which have been have been recorded commercially on CD, numbers more than 8000 (documented in a scholarly double volume publication in collaboration with composer Larry Sitsky). A highlight of his career was the performance by his Duo-Art piano of Percy Grainger’s original roll of the Grieg Piano Concerto with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and conductor John Hopkins in the Sydney Opera House and on tour in other Australian cities and New Zealand.

Suzanne Magassy lives in Canberra and after being involved in high school music education for many years, now works with disabled students. After initial carillon study with John D. Gordon she began recitals in 1980 in Canberra as an Assistant Carillonneur. Magassy studied further in the USA and has undertaken 15 guest recital tours to North America, Europe and Denmark during the last two decades. She has performed for many special events overseas and in Australia. Magassy was the first non-North American to complete examination requirements for ‘Carillonneur’ status in the Guild of Carillonneurs of North America. In January 2005 she was named Visiting International Carillonneur, Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, 2005-2006 to provide carillon tuition during her visits.

The authors happily thank the carillonneurs who offered helpful information for this article - also Dr. Robert Mitchell (Sydney) for invaluable advice on the text.
Three hundred fortunate registrants attended the 2006 Convention in Chicago, and what a treat they were in for. This is always a favorite destination with AMICAns, and this year Mel Septon and his capable committee made it a real jewel.

The Hotel was the Hyatt Regency, with a location close to restaurants, and perhaps even more important, the huge shopping mall just a couple of blocks away. Tuesday found a lot of attendees roaming the mall looking for bargains while the Board met at the Hotel.

The start of the Convention actually was Wednesday, July 26th with a welcoming breakfast followed by tours to the wonderful Krughoff collection or the Museum of Science and Industry. The Krughoff collection always has something new every time you go, and this year was no exception. (Not that they need anything new to enchant the attendees) The Ruth 38 had just been finished being set up the night before. It is a magnificent organ, and everyone enjoyed it immensely. Another new item was the Robot Band, which kept us laughing and tapping our feet. Other items not to be forgotten are a Hupfeld Pan, a Welte Style 4, the Popper Felix, two Hupfeld Phonolizst-Violinas, a Phillips Monster Pagannini, the wonderful 97-key Steenput concert fairground organ, and other European machines.

A few American machines in the collection are a Seeburg “H”, a Cremona Orchestral “J”, a Wurlitzer Harp, and a Mills Bow Front Violano. These are just a few of the many instruments.

A Bar-B-Q lunch rounded out the day.

The Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago is in the building that was the Palace of Fine Arts at the 1893 World’s Fair. It is the largest science museum in a single building in the Western Hemisphere.

A captured WWII German submarine is among the exhibits, and is a fascinating tour through history. Other exhibits include a working coal-mine shaft elevator, a cantilevered Boeing 727, a 3,500 square foot model railroad, and on and on. It’s a great place to spend an afternoon.

When everyone returned to the hotel, had dinner, and relaxed for a while, they were treated to a piano concert by Nathan Bello. Many remembered Nathan from the Portland Convention a few years ago. He is a very talented artist, and has grown in self-confidence and stage presence immensely over the years.

He started off his program with “Windy City Blues”, which he wrote especially for the souvenir roll we were all to receive. He proceeded from there with another 27 numbers, all transcribed by him from great unknown jazz piano roll artists. It was quite a concert, and it was very pleasing to have this young man at the Convention for a repeat performance. I think many of us feel we have an emotional tie to Nathan, and were so happy to have him back.

The piano rolls were distributed after the concert ended, and Nathan was available to autograph them.

Thursday’s tours were a repeat of the Krughoff tour and the “3 in 1” tour.

The “3 in 1” tour included the wonderful collection of Al and Susan Choffnes. I don’t think you’ll find a better representation of musical box variety anywhere, and Al always has a program set up. This time was no exception, and he showed us boxes from the very early to the later models, both cylinder and disc. As he took us from box to box, he took us back in time, giving us history and romance of the era. It was interesting and entertaining, and we found ourselves entranced with the music and Al’s presentation.

Instruments dated from 1815 to 1930, and included miniatures, key wind, lever wind, interchangeable, Grand Format and orchestral cylinder music boxes. Many styles of disc boxes, including all sizes of Regina music boxes and many unusual case styles were featured.

There were also a Seeburg KT Special replica, a Mills Double Violano Virtuoso and a Steinway Duo-Art Louis XV reproducing piano.

Al and Susan have a lovely home, and their hospitality and warmth are exceptional.

Another part of this tour was the Schaff Piano Supply Co. tour. Schaff was founded in 1884 and has been a major supplier to the industry for over 120 years, it has the title of the oldest and largest piano supply company in the country.

This was the first time a collectors group was offered a tour of Schaff, and it was really a treat.

Part three of the tour was a trip through the Volo Auto Museum and Antique Malls. The showrooms have some 300 collectible cars, 25 TV and Movie cars, and a new Armed Forces Exhibit. Add to this the 3 large antique malls and you can spend hours wandering the grounds.

We came back to the Hotel, had dinner, relaxed and then proceeded to the Pumper Contest, which was, as always, a really entertaining show.

Every year seems to produce better and better contestants, with more and more talent. This year’s winner, Chris Kehoe, a young man of 16, presented “Love Tales” and managed to barely nose out Roger Stumpfoll for first place.

The whole contest, though, was very close, and the judges really had their jobs cut out for them, with contestants like Julian Dyer, Tim Baxter, Rob Deland, Alex Thompson, Joe Hutter, Richard Ingram (with a version of “Tijuana Taxi” we won’t soon forget – words written by a friend of Richards), Joyce Brite.

Of course, along with the above contestants was the master of wit and comedy – our own Larry Norman, assisted by Holly Walter doing “Cherokee”. Larry, of course, had provided costumes for himself and Holly. He was the Indian Chief, and she was Annie Oakley. You had to see it!

When the contest was over, Shirley Nix presented Larry a plaque specially made to thank him for his years and years of comic relief. The plaque said “With sincere appreciation for all the sophisticated comedy, deluxe costumes and sets, previously undiscovered local talent, and high-class music you have brought
to the annual AMICA pumper contest year after year”, with figures of some of his more memorable performances.

After the contest, we were treated to an ice cream social, with ice cream bars, cookies and drinks. It was really an entertaining evening. In fact, the whole day was really a lot of fun.


Of course, as always, there was a cross-stitch project, presented by Elsa Pekarek.

Something for everyone.

The Mart occurred in the afternoon, and was a large one, with lots of goodies.

Dinner was a New York Deli Buffet in the Tent, and it was a veritable gourmet delight. Entertainment was provided by Mike Barnhart and his Stinson 165 organ. Mike designed the façade himself, and it is a replica of a palace in Europe. Mike designed it so it breaks down into several pieces in order to fit in his van. He takes it to organ rallies and we were fortunate to have him bring it, both to the hospitality room and to the buffet dinner.

After the dinner we were presented with a program by Ron Bopp. That’s enough to let you know it will be a good, entertaining program. Ron’s program was “A Musical History of Patriotic Music”. (He had some competition from a singles dance band next door, but that’s another story.) It was a comprehensive program of heart-tugging melodies from the Revolutionary War up to the war on Terrorism.

The music was furnished by over twenty organs, each finely restored, and it couldn’t fail to touch the hearts of all with world conditions the way they are.

The table favors were distributed at the end of the program to avoid having them conflict with the banquet. These were bound to become favorites...a “Nipper” dog. They are beautifully done, and will grace the homes of all who received them.

Saturday started off with a breakfast buffet, the annual membership meeting and a slide presentation by Frank Nix showing highlights of next year’s tour of Germany and Holland. Looks like a lot of fun.

When we finished, we loaded the buses for a visit to the Sanfilippo home.

The usual comment upon entering the home is “Wow!!” and that was heard many, many times. The residence is 44,000 square feet, and is packed with one of the largest and best-known collections of automatic musical instruments in the world, with over 100 in the main residence alone.

Anything you want to see and hear is probably here. Nearly every European and American manufacturer is represented, each instrument restored to its’ original glory. Some of these instruments were the real “basket cases” when found, but no expense was spared to bring them back.

To name just a few (I couldn’t begin to name them all... we haven’t the space in the whole magazine), the only known Wurlitzer “EX” orchestrion, a wonderful Welte organ, Hupfeld Phonolisz Violinas, Mortier organs of several types and sizes, and Hupfeld Helios.

Large European instruments along the walls frame the main music auditorium, and the balcony contains some rare fairground organs and the jewel of the auditorium – the largest theater organ in the world. We were treated to a wonderful concert on the organ during our visit, with a visiting organist.

The lower level of the house contains restored steam engines, an antique bar with antique gambling machines and many more automatic musical instruments. You have to keep reminding yourself that many of these machines are one of two or three in the whole world, and are probably in better condition than any other anywhere.

From the home we trekked down to the carousel building...another “Wow”. Here we saw the “Eden Palais”, a restored French salon carousel. This was found in Montana, and was restored over many years. It is simply magnificent...a treasure to look at, and delightful to ride. I doubt there is another anywhere in the world, and certainly nothing like the restoration job here.

Around the perimeter of the building are band organs, fairground organs and dance organs, each one more lovely than the next. Also in the building are a restored steam locomotive, parlor car and caboose. Yes, that’s a full size train, and it doesn’t crowd a thing! There is also an antique power generating plant and a collection of restored steam engines.

We were fed a wonderful catered lunch in the carousel building, accompanied by music from the finest of the fine organs.

We are very fortunate that the Sanfilippos are so hospitable and willing to have us to visit their wonderful grounds and collection. Their passion for the instruments is obvious, and they seem to love to share with others.

When we got back, with our minds still reeling from our visit, we had a couple of hours to recover, and then on to the banquet.

The banquet entertainment was furnished by the “West End Jazz Band”, and they are a great group. Their specialty is music of the 20’s and 30’s, which fits our interests perfectly.

They were a super band to dance to, and everyone had a great time.

Sunday there were four open houses, with each one having it’s particular charm.

Margaret Bisberg and Richard VanMetre had a couple of music boxes that were really great examples of the art, a Steinway XR Duo-Art, and various other things around the house. We had a very nice visit there.

Carol Veome had one of the nicest Steinway OR Duo-Art in a Spanish art case. This was a beautiful piano, with great sound. Just right for the room. She also had a Mills Violano Virtuoso, a Seeburg “G”, Music Boxes and a super collection of phonographs, with many rare examples.

Wayne and Connie Wolf had a Seeburg “G”, a Coinola C2, a Link A, music boxes and phonographs. Everywhere you looked there was another treasure lurking. Another really fun place to visit.

Dave Ramey, Jr., Susan, and Toni also had an open house. This was a particularly generous thing, since Dave Sr. had...
died only the previous Friday. They turned the open house into a memorial for Dave, Sr., with pictures, mementos, and of course his instruments. It was a fitting tribute, and a touching one. I think everyone who attended felt the spirit of Dave there, looking on with his great smile.

We have so many people to thank for this wonderful convention, starting with Mel Septon and his committee, all those who generously opened their homes and collections to us, both on tours and open houses, those who provided entertainment, and all the unsung heroes who did the effort to make it all work….a great big “Thank You” from all of us.

It is the early 1960s. America is decorating with Danish modern furniture, listening to Elvis and Connie Frances, watching “Gidget Goes Hawaiian” at the movies and worrying about astronauts. But 6-year-old Richard Groman’s heart is elsewhere.

“There was this couple names Haines in my neighborhood,” he says. “They both taught at Moravian College. They had this player piano. It played ‘The Man on The Flying Trapeze.’ I was entranced. It was the grandest thing I had ever seen or heard.”

The years passed, but Groman never forgot his first love. In 1969, when he was in junior high school, he heard that the Edgeboro School in Bethlehem, which he attended as a child, was getting rid of old furniture. Among the items for sale was a player piano.

“My father knew the man who was handling the sale,” recalls Groman, whose family once owned the well-known Gromans Bakeries. “I was able to get the piano for $10.”

While his contemporaries were playing the Beatles “Abbey Road” album backwards trying to find out if Paul had died, Groman was offering neighborhood player piano

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PLAYER PIANO
COLLECTOR SHARES INSIGHT INTO ‘AGE OF MECHANICAL MUSIC’

By Frank Whelan
The Morning Call-Sunday, May 28, 2006

Richard Groman will help Moravian College’s push to become an all-Steinway campus by holding a fundraiser in his Bethlehem estate featuring his antique player piano.
sing-alongs featuring the “Darktown Strutters Ball,” the smash hit of 1917. “One lady was kind enough to donate an oriental rug so the garage was more like a 1920s living room,” he says.

Groman’s love of music led him to pursue a degree in music at Moravian College, which he received in 1978. And his love for player pianos led him to become a collector.

On Friday, as part of Moravian College’s At-Home Steinway series, a fundraiser to provide Steinway pianos for the college’s music department, Groman will share a lot of wonderful player piano music. The event, titled “The Age of Mechanical Music,” is the second in the series. It will be held at Groman’s home, “Sunset Acres,” the former A.K. Laros estate in suburban Bethlehem.

The concert will include a vocal performance by Moravian college student Chelsea Dehner, class of 2008, and a violin performance by Shirley Hart McBride, class of 1963. Both will be accompanied by player pianos.

Watching Groman at the piano bench in his spacious living room, decorated in 1920s Jazz Age style, it is easy to see that his player pianos are both a hobby and a passion. He is a font of information about their history and workings. And when Groman sits down to tickle the ivories, he does so with a deft touch that proves that he doesn’t need a player piano to make good music.

Groman’s collection includes a 1910 Technola Player Piano, a 1929 Knabe Ampico Reproducing Piano and a 1927 Duo-Art Steinway grand reproducing piano. Groman is currently having another Steinway reproducing piano restored. It belonged to David Sarnoff, founder of RCA and NBC. Its case is custom made and done in Louis Quatorze, the style popular in the court of the French Sun King, Louis XIV.

“It was built in 1927 and was in his New York brownstone until 1937, when Sarnoff’s wife decided to redo the place in Chinese modern,” says Groman.

Groman is also installing a pipe organ in his living room. “A niche for it was built into the home by Laros, but the instrument was never built, perhaps because of the Depression or maybe because by the 1930s they were no longer popular,” he says.

The roots of the player piano go back to the start of the 19th century. In 1800, the Jacquard Mills in France created a loom controlled by a system of punch cards. The cards, making a pathway for the threads to follow, created fancy designs in the fabric.

The cards inspired a number of what Groman calls “people who invent stuff.” Among them were Frenchmen Henri Fournieux and Americans Edwin Scott Votey and John McTammany, who all played a role in the development of the player piano.

From the 1850s to the 1900s, the piano was America’s home entertainment system. For most folks there was nothing better than getting together around the upright for a chorus of “Home Sweet Home.” And every young woman was expected to have at least one piano piece that she could play when potential husbands came to call.

But America’s piano makers turned out to be too successful for their own good. By the 1890s, the country was in piano glut. “Everybody had a piano,” says Groman. “Piano makers were in a panic.”

The player piano, with its novelty and “look ma, no hands” approach to music making was just what the industry needed. Soon everything from “Poor Butterfly” to “Yes, We Have No Bananas” was rattling from music rolls across the country. America had a new status symbol.

The player piano’s technology was based on the music roll, a paper roll with patterns of punched holes. The holes corresponded to different notes. The music roll moved over a tracker bar with small holes which matched those on the roll.

A pump, bellows and valves, controlled by foot pedals, were inside the piano. When the pedals were operated they created a vacuum that sucked a stream of pressurized air through the matching holes in the moving roll. This closed a pneumatic switch that struck the piano hammer against the strings of the piano, producing music.

The first player piano rolls were created by a technician who punched holes in the paper by hand. Using a musical score, he made the marks for the holes with a pencil. These early player pianos tended to make a tinny, flat sound. Contemporaries said it was like an organ grinder’s music. Later, a special roll-recording piano was created. It marked the music as it was played and allowed for more tempo.

“Starting about 1917 the sales of player pianos really began to take off,” says Groman. He notes that music-roll sales at that time were like hit CDs are today. The region’s leading music stores, like Aschbach or Hartman and Lansche in Allentown, always had customers for the latest piano rolls.

As early as 1905, German piano makers had made a breakthrough in the reproduction quality of player pianos. Ludwig Hupfeld of Leipzig built what he called the “reproducing piano.” By adding punched holes at the edges of the music rolls it was possible to reproduce the shading, expression and tempo changes made by the recording pianist.

“Parlor pianists bought the rolls, fitted them into the playing mechanism, and out came Rachmaninoff’s notes and expressive pauses and even his pedaling, just as if he were sitting in
your living room,” says the Web site of the Automatic Musical Instruments Collectors Association.

By the 1920s the new reproducing piano technique was popularized in America. The Aeolian Co.’s Duo-Art reproducing piano technology attracted some of the leading composers of the day. Artists as diverse as jazzy George Gershwin and modernist Igor Stravinsky made piano rolls for Aeolian. Aeolian Hall in New York, owned by the Aeolian Co., was used by them to showcase the leading talent. In 1924, Gershwin, with Paul Whiteman’s Orchestra, gave the first performance of “Rhapsody in Blue” at Aeolian Hall.

By the late 1920s, reproducing pianos were an important status symbol. The average price was $2,400; some cost up to $25,000. At a time when the average yearly income was between $500 and $1,000, that was more money then many people had. “In the 1920s, $2,400 was the price of a small house,” says Groman.

But even as the reproduction piano industry had reached the heights of popularity, it was already in trouble. Radio, which was rather crude in the first part of the 1920s, was making inroads into the middle-class piano market.

When the stock market crashed in 1929, it took the reproduction piano business down with it. Its once well-heeled market was looking for savings and cutting back on luxury items. “By 1932 there was not a single reproducing piano being made in America,” say Groman.

The road back for player and reproducing pianos was a long one. But, in time, like-minded lovers of these instruments have come together in clubs across the country.

Groman is a member of the Automatic Musical Instruments Collectors Association. Founded in 1963, it focuses on player pianos and other mechanical instruments from around the world.

“IT is really good to see they’ve come back,” says Groman.

E. ROBERT SCHMITZ

E. Robert Schmitz, pianist, in recital last night at Carnegie Hall with the following program: Burlesca in G minor: Bourree in B minor-Scarlatti; Chorale Prelude, “I Call on Thee, Creator”- Bach-Busoni; Prelude and Fugue in A minor-Bach-Liszt; Prelude, chorale and Fugue-Franck; First Spanish Dance from “La Vida Breve”-de Falla-Schmitz; El Puerto from “Iberia”-Albeniz; Danza Iberica- Nin; Toccata and Rigaudon from “Le Tombeau de Couperin”-Ravel; Preludes: La Puerta del Vino; La Terrasse des audiences du clair de lune; Ce qu’a vu le vent d’ouest; La Cathedrale Engloutie; Feux d’Artifice-Debussy; Dance in E major-Debussy

Pianism as a Sport

After some years of absence from these parts E. Robert Schmitz returned last night to play in Carnegie Hall in a recital that can only properly be described as a triumph. It was a triumph from every point of view, musical and technical, as well as in terms of bravos shouted, of encores demanded and executed. Mr. Schmitz’s pianism is and always has been of a transcendental order. It was that twenty years ago when last I heard him play. Since that time it has been elaborated and perfected by practice and by pedagogical experience to such a degree that it resembles now more the work of Tilden or Budge on a tennis court than anything of a merely musico-poetic nature.

* * * * *

Not that his playing is lacking in either musicianship or poetry. On the contrary, his readings of the Bach A minor organ fugue and of the Franck Prelude, Chorale and Fugue were of a subtle and refined clarity, an apparent simplicity of architectonics that only the most comprehensive musicianship ever conceives and only the most commanding technique renders possible in execution. No slowing up for difficult changes of hand position, no pounding beyond the instrument’s resources. When he wants to play fast octaves with the left hand he plays them. When he wants more volume he gets it. When he wants to let the music fall as lightly on the ear as summer rain, that is the way the music falls. And what it is he wants is always a clear and sensible exposition, as well as a sensitive one, of the piece’s shape and content.

As for poetry, he avoids at all times the personal and the pseudo-emotional. He expounds each piece through its own rhetoric, makes its instrumentation and continuity clear, lets it sing for itself. So that in addition to the intrinsic beauty of the melodic material itself and of its expressive ornament there is the abstract poetry of a physical act beautifully accomplished. That is what I mean by comparing his work to that of a good tennis player. It isn’t that his motions are merely agreeable to watch. So are those of many a third-rate athlete. It is the constant accuracy of the result, under the most varied musical circumstances, makes it evident that there is a fine harmony between the muscular effort and what it accomplishes.

* * * * *

Last night’s triumph with the audience, though the warmth and the applause grew from the beginning, was crowned by the playing of six Debussy Preludes, plus two more and some other
Debussy as encores. Here was the occasion to exploit the gamut of varied timbre and touch that Schnitz is master of as in no other pianist. He did so exploit it, but withal so musically, so intelligently, with such sweet comprehension of the works themselves, that they were as if viewed under a magnifying glass in high illumination.

There is a poesy of dim lights and fog and faint suggestion, and there are many sincere musicians who think that is what Debussy should sound like. I know no historical evidence to make me believe that such vagueness ever was anything but a trickery of the not very competent. Debussy was a fanatic for precision and for delicate adjustments of timbre and volume. To make these adjustments more than ever precise and elaborate by slightly magnifying the dynamic proportions is in no way to diminish the poetry of the final effect. Rather the contrary.

It has been a long time since we have heard Debussy played like great music. That it may not be so long before we hear it so played again is the fervent wish of this reviewer. That the next time Mr. Schnitz deigns to visit these parts he may honor us with a complete rendition of the Debussy Etudes, all twelve of them, is my equally fervent hope. It is absurd that these master works should be so neglected by pianists and unbelievable that they should not be in the repertory of a pianist so completely in sympathy with their content as Mr. Schmitz and so magnificently equipped to treat their difficulties as no more terrifying than a good serve from a worthy opponent.

Submitted by Dr. John Gardner

By Eric Felten
November 10, 2005

 Intro from publisher:
“Europe recorded piano rolls for Welte and other companies. These rolls are quite scarce today. Does anyone have one?”
– Mike Kukral

When Glenn Miller joined the Army Air Forces in World War II, his first assignment was to lead a military band at Yale, playing for cadets marching around the New Haven green. Playing tired marches wasn’t exactly what Miller had had in mind when he formed an Army band made up of stars from the best dance bands of the day. Soon he had Ray McKinley out on the field drumming out a hybrid swing-march beat to “The St. Louis Blues.” The commander of cadets was not amused. “Look, Capt. Miller,” he said. “We played those Sousa marches straight in the last war and we did all right, didn’t we?” “You certainly did, Major,” Miller replied. “But tell me one thing: Are you still flying the same planes you flew in the last war, too?”

The major’s mistake wasn’t just in trying to limit Miller to “The Stars and Stripes Forever.” Not every Army band was playing it straight in the Great War. The most celebrated military band of World War I was led by Lt. James Reese Europe. Famous for its ragtime syncopation, blues and jazz, the band of the all-black 369th Regiment even performed “The St. Louis Blues”—that is, when it wasn’t fighting in the trenches.

Before the war, Jim Europe was at the top of the society music business in New York. After spending most of the aught-years on the road with a black theater troupe, in 1910 Europe settled in New York, where he helped to found the Clef Club, a sort of booking agency/union for black musicians. He organized and conducted the Clef Club Symphony Orchestra, which made its Carnegie Hall debut to a sold-out house in 1912. By the next year, Europe was the bandleader for Vernon and Irene Castle, the Fred and Ginger of that decade. Among the musicians performing with Europe were Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle, who would become prominent songwriters in the 1920s. According to Reid Badger’s excellent 1995 biography of Europe, “A Life in Ragtime,” the Vanderbilts, Goulds, Astors, Harrimans “and even Diamond Jim Brady” danced to Jim Europe’s Society Orchestra.

When the New York National Guard began to organize a Harlem regiment in 1916, Europe was one of the first to join up. “Our race will never amount to anything,” he told his friend Sissle, “unless there are strong organizations of men who stand for something in the community.” He persuaded Sissle to enlist too. When the regiment’s colonel learned he had the city’s best bandleader in his outfit, he handed Europe a baton and sent him out to get a regimental band on parade.

Within a year, U.S. soldiers were headed Over There. But when the 15th Regiment arrived in France on New Year’s Day, 1918, the U.S. Army wasn’t ready for an all-black combat unit commanded by black officers. And so it was attached to the French army, and renamed the 369th Infantry Regiment. It didn’t take long for the Harlem unit to earn its reputation and nickname—the “Hellfighters.”

Lt. Europe was one of the first African-American officers to lead men in combat in World War I. Patrolling the “no man’s land” between the trenches, he was shelled and shot at, and was nearly mowed down by friendly fire. A German barrage of poison gas landed Europe in a field hospital.

When Sissle came to visit the wounded Europe, he found the lieutenant sitting up, writing music. The song was “On Patrol in
No Man’s Land,” which would become one of the Hellfighters Band’s signature songs. Europe’s arrangement was complete with the heavy wallop of bass drum for the exploding “Boche” shells and the sharp report of snare drums mimicking the machine guns. Sissle can be heard singing it on a CD released in 1996 by the Memphis Archives label, a disc that brings together the 24 tunes the band recorded in 1919 for the French Pathe record company.

Those recordings capture the mix of music the Hellfighters Band played. There were ragtime marches, sentimental “plantation” medleys, novelty songs, W.C. Handy blues tunes, and—with swooping slidehorns on “That Moaning Trombone”—an early sort of big-band jazz. Writer Irvin Cobb described the band’s effect on drilling soldiers: “The music poured in at their ears and ran down to their heels, and instead of marching they literally danced their way along.”

In August 1918, the Hellfighters band came to Paris to play at the Theatre des Champs-Elysees, where, Europe told a New York newspaper, “Before we had played two numbers the audience went wild.” The Army brass took notice and kept the band in Paris for two months, playing at hospitals, camps and parks. The Hellfighters started the jazz craze that would later seize Paris.

Lt. Europe had been shot at, shelled and gassed by the time the Armistice was signed, 87 years ago tomorrow. But the band’s triumphant homecoming tour would prove to be his most hazardous mission.

By May 9, 1919, he and his band were in Boston. The Hellfighters put on more than just a band concert. The show featured a variety of acts from within the band’s ranks—a vocal harmony group, a trombone choir, a string duo. One of the band’s drummers, Herbert Wright, had a habit of wandering across the stage during the feature acts, and of being nowhere to be found when it was time for the drum-section spotlight. During intermission that night in Boston, and not for the first time, Europe had to correct Wright’s stage manners. “Lt. Europe, you don’t treat me right,” the drummer protested, launching into a litany of gripes. But Europe had turned to talk to some backstage visitors. That’s when the drummer screamed, “Jim Europe, I’ll kill you!”

Europe turned and saw that Herbert Wright was armed, just barely, with a pen-knife. He just waved the drummer off: “Herbert, get out of here.” Before he could say more, Wright lunged across the room, his knife going for Europe’s throat. As the drummer was dragged away, Europe wrapped a handkerchief around his bleeding neck and sent his assistant conductor out to lead the second half of the concert. Noble Sissle sat backstage with Europe as they waited for an ambulance. Leaving for the hospital, Europe reminded Sissle to have the band at the Massachusetts State House the next morning for a concert.

There would be no concert there: Europe died during the night.
CLASSICAL MUSIC:
Ghostly composers perform on CDs recorded from antiquated piano rolls

Austin—Down a tree-shaded gravel road, in an old stone house, Bela Bartok is playing the piano. When, that is, Claude Debussy or Maurice Ravel or Enrique Granados isn’t at the keys.

The composers, some of the most famous of the early 20th century, aren’t there in the flesh. But they’re invisible ghostly presences in Kenneth Caswell’s living room, as historic piano rolls recreate their performances with uncanny vividness.

“It was the spookiest darn thing I had ever experienced,” University of Texas audio archivist Karl Miller says, of first hearing Scriabin via one of Mr. Caswell’s piano rolls. “Thinking about Scriabin’s mysticism and everything, it was as if Scriabin’s ghost were sitting in front of the piano.”

Mr. Caswell, now retired after an arts-management career that ended up at his hometown Austin Symphony Orchestra has somewhere between 300 and 400 piano rolls stored in nooks and crannies. He plays them on two pianos with reproducing mechanisms: a 1929 Chickering grand and a 1923 Feurich-Welte upright.

He’s also been recording these reconstituted performances for CD release by the Austin-based, not-for-profit Pierian Recording Society, whose president is the University of Texas’ Dr. Miller. So far, the Pierian label has issued performances by composers Debussy, Ravel, Scriabin, Granados, Respighi and Alfredo Casella, and by pianists Fanny Bloomfield Zeisler and Teresa Carreno. More are in the works. The recordings are nationally distributed by Albany Music.

The performances are ear-opening, to say the least. Alexander Scriabin considerably rewrites one of his own mazurkas. Debussy plays his famous Engulfed Cathedral with tempo relationships different from those in the printed score.

Granados’ performances capture revisions he never got around to putting into print (although they’re being incorporated in a new critical edition). There’s an elegant playfulness to Bartok’s reading of one of his Hungarian folksong arrangements.

Again and again, from one composer after another, one hears rhythmic freedoms all but unimaginable in our age of musical literalism. A tendency to hurry groups of short notes fairly leaps to the ear.

“Not many of them stuck to the printed page,” Mr. Caswell notes with a chuckle, “particularly in the early 1900s. By the 20s, it was beginning to be less free.”

LIMITS OF WRITING

Musical notation tells us only so much about how a piece should sound. The rhythmic and coloristic nuances that separate distinctive performances from the routine are virtually impossible to write down. And what musician hasn’t wished to hear how Bach, Mozart and Beethoven actually performed their own music?

Piano rolls and early cylinder and disc recordings can tell us quite a lot about how composers including Gabriel Faure, Manuel de Falla, Alexander Glazunov, Gustav Mahler, Camille Saint-Saens and Richard Strauss played and imagined their works. Early recordings open windows into late-romantic performance practices that were largely stamped out by a mid-20th-century emphasis on the score
and nothing but the score.

Mr. Caswell was a University of Texas-trained geologist, a music-loving one, when he got interested in arts management. Hired as box-office manager of the Houston Symphony Orchestra, he went on to be manager of the San Antonio Symphony and Opera. Stints with the San Diego Symphony and Memphis Opera led to a 17-year-run as manager of the Austin Symphony.

“I come from a totally nonmusical family,” he says in a friendly Texas drawl. “But when I was 5 or 6 years old, my great aunt used to take me down to the old Reed Music Co. here, and they had a big table full of used 78s for anywhere from 5 to 25 cents each. She would give me a dollar, and that’s where it got started.

“I love good music, but I’m totally self-taught…But I have listened all my life, and being a manager of symphonies and operas I do believe you develop an acute ear, or you wouldn’t be there.”

Mr. Caswell bought his first reproducing piano while on his first geology job, in New Orleans. He traded up several times before landing his current pianos.

“Several of my collector buddies have five and 10 reproducing pianos,” he says, “but none of them work quite right. They don’t know what to do, or they don’t have time to adjust them properly. I figured I’m going to concentrate just on these two.”

**PIANO ROLLS: HOW TRUE?**

There were primitive player pianos as early as the late 18th century. But not until 1904 did the German firm Welte introduce a mechanism that could reproduce some semblance of the recording pianist’s subtleties of touch and volume. (These more nuanced playback instruments are called reproducing pianos, to differentiate them from less sophisticated player pianos.)

Welte and two competing (and incompatible) American systems, Ampico and Duo-Art, dominated the business during its heyday, from about 1915 until 1930. The Great Depression, and the arrival of more sophisticated electrical recordings, pretty much finished off the reproducing piano industry, although today, of course, Yamaha’s digital Disklavier has revived the concept.

The greatest pianists of the early 20th century, and a number of composers, recorded rolls, often for more than one company. And they signed glowing testimonials to the accuracy of the reproductions, which certainly seemed more lifelike than murky, scratchy acoustic recordings of the period. Piano rolls also offered as much as 18 minutes’ playing time, versus the 78-rpm discs four or so.

But one couldn’t always be sure that playback speeds, and thus musical tempos, were identical to the originals. With tiny leather-covered bellows moving the piano hammers, the more sophisticated reproducing pianos were also notoriously sensitive to variations in temperature and humidity. The paper of the rolls was fragile. And even when fastidiously maintained, the best reproducing pianos didn’t capture the full range of tonal nuances.

“With different climates and temperatures and humidities during the recordings, you have to know how to set the piano mechanism to suit that recording session,” Mr. Caswell says. “It’s not something you can put on a test roll and everything’s fine.”

Audio recordings from piano rolls have appeared on multiple generations of long-playing records and CDs. How accurately these represent the original performers’ intentions has always been controversial.

“I’m trying to get this accurately done once and for all,” Mr. Caswell says. “With the LPs, some of the speeds are right, some are wrong.

“We’re coming along 100 years after some of these recordings were made. I’m pleased, though, because people listening to these recordings for the first time are beginning to listen to the playing of the artists and composers and not talk about, ‘Oh, those old player pianos…”

Disc info-A catalog and ordering information are available at www.pierianrecordingsociety.org

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There has been much speculation of late as to the reason why some people seem to be tiring of their Player pianos. I, for one, cannot see that there is any mystery about this seeming attitude toward the player, and I believe that by concerted action, this state of affairs can be met and overcome.

If I were asked “What is wrong with the Player piano of today?” I would answer, “Absolutely nothing.” The players of today are the best we have had up to date, and one of the most successful inventions of this age.

Some people, who have no ear for music, do not care for the player or for any other kind of piano music. But, of the vast majority who do love music, I think few, if any, really tire of their players. We soon tire of the prettiest instrumental music or song if we hear it over and over again, especially if our next door neighbor happens to be the musician.

All the roll manufacturers make some rolls that make beautiful music—some that reach one’s heart. But it is no discredit to the roll makers to state that not all rolls produce music that is pretty or catchy. Some rolls, like some sheet music, have little or nothing to commend them. The roll makers do not compose the music.

When the average dealer sells a Player piano he usually gives from ten to twenty-five rolls with the instrument. He usually has several pretty sounding rolls with which to demonstrate the instrument. Then he picks up an armful of rolls. Good, bad, and no good, are sent over to new piano owners who try them all over once or twice, and those that do not appeal, are kept mostly for stock and seldom played. They do not tend to make one enthusiastic over the player piano. The prettier rolls are played constantly.

I claim—judging from the viewpoint of an independent tuner—first, that people do not dislike the player because as they claim “it is too mechanical,” but because it really plays too perfectly to suit their crude musical ears. Second, that people do not tire of the Player piano. They tire of hearing the same rolls played over and over. In other words, they tire of the roles.

Besides my Standard test roll, I always carry several beautiful sounding rolls with me in the car. When I get a player tuned and ready to try out, I put on the test roll, and explain what it is for, and how it works. It always interests the piano owners to see the scientific manner in which we can detect and locate dirt in the tracker bar holes, and other little faults and how easily we overcome these things. Then the pretty piece at the end of the test roll always pleases them. I then put on a pretty roll, one that has several changes from loud to soft, etc., like “Repas’ Band March” which is one that I carry with me. It always creates a new interest in the player, to hear someone play a beautiful piece with lots of expression. It proves that the player is not “too mechanical.” I then give these people the names of about a dozen beautiful rolls and they usually order some or all of them.

I have tuned in places where the people did not have one pretty or catchy roll in their possession. These people did not care for their Player pianos. Why? The perpetuation of interest in the Player piano is to some extent up to the tuner, and the dealer. Let the dealer order nothing but beautiful, catchy rolls—not necessarily classical music. Then let him advertise, demonstrate, and push the sale with the same vim that he uses in selling pianos. It will repay him in increased sales of both rolls and players.

The Player piano has already revolutionized the tuning business and brought the manufacturer and the tuners to a closer understanding. The tuner can, by doing a little demonstration work, create more or less new interest in the player, increase his own income, and at the same time, reciprocate in a measure for the many favors shown him by the player action manufacturers.

Here is a true slogan, “A Player piano can not be better than the rolls provided to use with it.”

The solution of the problem at hand, it would seem to the writer, is to keep the owners of Player pianos supplied with a continuous line of beautiful player rolls that interest them. Many people ask me what rolls to buy. Get them the right rolls, and they will not so soon tire of their players. If the manufacturer, the dealer, and the tuner all pull in the same direction on the same rope, results are bound to come. Last, but not least, the player should be kept in good tune.
IT PAYS TO SELL A PLAYER

In the merchandising of pianos, one point of great importance may have been overlooked. The point may readily be seen from the following:

It frequently happens that in the home only one child is trained as a musician. The piano is the instrument upon which that child plays, more or less. So far as the other members of the family are concerned, the piano is simply a dumb piece of furniture.

Eventually, the musician of the family, in the natural course of events, grows up, get married, and establishes another home. The parents, realizing that with the exodus of the musician goes also the music of the piano, are pleased to send the piano along as part of the new home furnishings. This leaves one home without music.

And right here is where the piano tradesman will profit by selling a Playerpiano in preference to a straight piano. A Playerpiano can be played by every member of the household. It furnishes music in response to the wishes of grandmother, wife, or school-child. Unlike the straight piano, it is an instrument with which that family would be loathe to part. There would, then not be such a ready tendency to let the Playerpiano go at the same time as the musician. And the new family established would perforce, be obliged to get an instrument of their own.

From a tradesman’s point of view, this matter should be given deep consideration. It means more business for them, and it means more music in more homes in America.

AROUND THE STANDARD FACTORY

There’s a sort of satisfaction to be derived from saying “That’s where So-and-so lives,” and pointing to a picture of the residence of Mr. S. & S. Well, here’s where Mr. Standard Player Action lives, and views of the surroundings of the House of Good Actions. Some of these pictures were taken in Winter, some in Summer—as is apparent. The “Standard” factory and offices are at the foot of West 52nd Street, New York City, right by the historic Hudson River. There are breezes from the river almost all the time, and your editors try to put a little of this breeziness into the magazine.

On the North side of the building is De Witt Clinton Park. This park is enjoyed by the action-builders during the noon hour. In the park is a section fenced in and laid out in garden plots. These plots of ground are cultivated by school children. From the highest window of the factory on the West end, one can get a fine view both up and down the river, and see the busy tug boats with their barges in tow, or the big ocean liners and freighters coming into or departing from their piers. The freight yards shown are across the river, and from there, one can see the sign that reads “Standard Pneumatic Action Co.” If you’ve never seen the home of Standard Player Actions, here it is, pictured; if you have seen it, then the pictures, we hope, will not call up unpleasant memories.

Inside the building, it is said, you’ll find some mighty pleasant people, and some workmen who have been in the piano business all their lives.
AWAY FROM YOU

Words and Music
by
TECH SGT HERMAN B. BABICH

I'm a-way oh, so very far a-way

but, I won't for-get you e-ver, dar-ling, I'll be al-ways

ture.

Some may say,

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TECH SGT HERMAN B. BABICH
POST HEADQUARTERS, FORT LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI
that, when a-part a love will stray, but I see our

love re-main as true and clear as skies of blue.

I left you back in our home-town,

I thought I'd be back soon, but, now that I've a
job to do, I won't be back till it's thru, and,
on that day, when I will be back to stay,
in my arms you'll hear me say dear, we'll be one in-stead of

1. two.

2. two.
THE progressive and successful business man who desires to make the most of his business, will investigate. We therefore present a few plain facts. KING'S AUTOMATIC PIANO TUNING PIN AND STRING POLISHER was invented five years ago by a well-known piano expert, whose thirty-five years of experience as a rebuilders enabled him to construct a tool that is convenient, practical and absolutely perfect in the execution of its work.

It is now used and recommended around the world.

It is used by three-fourths of the piano manufacturers and by a majority of the principal dealers of the United States, who, by its use, make the tuning pins, coils and upper portions of the wires, of rusty pianos, as bright as when new, in from sixty to ninety minutes, thus making these pianos salable at from $25 to $50 more.

It is used by tuners, wherever pianos are used, who double their annual earnings.

It is made of steel and will not wear out. Simple to operate, weighs one pound and is adjustable for tuners kit. Does not put piano out of tune.

We publish on back of this sheet a few of the hundreds of bona fide and unsolicited testimonials we receive from those who use this Polisher. If it is of such great value to them, will it not be of value to you?

The price was recently reduced to $3, cash with order.

We will cheerfully refund the purchase price to any dissatisfied customer upon the return of the tool to us.

Manufactured, sold and warranted by the

S. M. KING PIANO TOOL CO.
HOPE, INDIANA, U. S. A.
The SHAW PIANO
Made by the House of Stieff
Style 56

SHAW REPRODUCING GRAND
(Licensed under the original Welte-Mignon Patents).

Full iron frame; Capo d’Astro bar; copper bass strings; improved repeating action; brass continuous hinges on top and fallboard; solid brass trimmings throughout; equipped with Welte Mignon (Licensee) Auto DeLuxe Reproducing action. May be played by hand in the usual manner, or electrically operated as a player piano, using standard 88 note rolls with the expression manually controlled by means of expression levers or employing Welte Mignon (Licensee) action for the automatic reproduction of the artists’ records. Patented centralizing device for automatically aligning music when passing over the tracker bar; sustaining pedal operated automatically or at will. Length 4 ft. 13 in.; width 4 ft. 10 in.; height 3 ft. 4½ in. Net weight unboxed 800 pounds; gross weight, boxed, 1200 pounds.

Cubic feet, boxed, .962; cubic meters, boxed, 2.72
Style 59

SHAW FOOT PUMP PLAYER (UPRIGHT)

Made in dark brown figured mahogany or walnut, dull finished or polished. 73½ octaves; full iron frame; three strings in unison; copper bass strings; improved patented repeating action; continuous lock rail; brass continuous hinges on top and fallboard. Three pedals, ivory keys; soft bass button; soft middle and treble buttons; automatic loud pedal hole in tracker bar; tempo and reroll levers. Height 4 ft. 6½ in.; width 5 ft. 3¾ in.; depth 2 ft. 4 in. Net weight, unboxed, 750 pounds; gross weight, boxed, 1000 pounds. Cubic feet, boxed, 84.2; cubic meters, boxed, 2.42.
THE SHAW PIANO

For well nigh on a century the House of Stieff has kept faith with the public. Keeping faith with the public implies the maintenance of quality at a fair margin of profit. Since Eighteen Hundred and Forty-two Stieff pianos have been built of the choicest materials and highest grade workmanship procurable, in a factory where scientific research and supervision go hand in hand. Perfection in the ultimate has invariably been the goal—cost, a final consideration.

Few products today are created solely to meet the requirements of the most affluent. There are hundreds and thousands of families throughout this country whose finer sensibilities recognize and demand quality, and who are vastly unhappy if they are forced to accept the commercial substitutes of any market. For many years the piano-buying public has had to choose between the highest quality instrument and the commercial product, the latter often obscure as to origin, equally often a stencil, constructed under the high pressure methods of mass production and assembling. To continue to keep faith with the public the House of Stieff in 1906 purchased the Shaw Piano Factory in Erie, Pa. and moved it to Baltimore. The Shaw piano had been made in Erie for many years prior to this time and was an instrument well known and chosen for "a tone which is musical and well sustained, of good duration and singing quality; action of high standard, well regulated and commendable for its repeating qualities; an easy and elastic touch; durable construction of fine material; workmanship and finish of a high grade; cases well made, showing good taste and many practical improvements," according to the wording of the gold medal award at the World's Co
lumbian Exposition at Chicago in Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-three. Having always been built with supreme honesty and having been known for years as a quality instrument, it was peculiarly adaptable as a companion instrument to the Stieff. Within a comparatively short time the new Shaw Factory in Baltimore, operating under Stieff supervision, showed its influence in the re-birth of an improved and finer Shaw piano. Finer materials and superior workmanship enabled the House of Stieff to offer the public a piano of most excellent quality, superior, in fact, in construction and tone to many instruments aspiring to compete with the Stieff.

Particular attention should be called to the Shaw Grand. The greatest skill of the Stieff organization has been employed in the successful endeavor to practice economy of construction only where tone and durability would remain unimpaired. The result has been startling. No other instrument before the public, approaching it in price, embodies the tone and durable construction which are possessed by the Shaw. The music lover of discrimination is the greatest friend of this fine instrument. No piano built with a supervision less skilled could offer as much to its clientele.

Similarly the Shaw Player has been developed to a surprising degree of efficiency. Through the careful purchasing, selection, and supervision by the Stieff Factory executives the Shaw Factory has been able to evolve a player to supply the needs of an artistic and appreciative clientele. The finest shading, phrasing, and interpretation of the artist are possible of duplication by the medium of the Shaw Player. It is truly an artistic creation, well worthy of the praise which it has received.

It is with the greatest pride that the House of Stieff sponsors and recommends the products of the Shaw Factory, which has maintained the excellence of its product and improved upon it thru the guidance and support of the parent house.
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**NEW AMPICO ROLLS**

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<th>Roll Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Composer(s)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>3011</td>
<td>“Don’t Wait ‘Till The Night Before Christmas”. P/B Milne/Bill Flynt...</td>
<td>Milne, Bill Flynt</td>
<td>Great holiday number by fox trot genius Frank Milne. Issued in late 1930s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21646</td>
<td>“White Christmas” Medley P/B Liberace/Bill Flynt. Includes excerpts from: Jingle Bells; Silent Night; Come All Ye Faithful. Super holiday medley by Liberace and coded for Ampico by Bill Flynt.</td>
<td>Liberace, Bill Flynt</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30121</td>
<td>“Twelfth St. Rag” Bowman. P/B Liberace/Bill Flynt...Probably the best arrangement of this well known Rag played by Mr. Showmanship himself.</td>
<td>Bowman, Liberace, Bill Flynt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30123B</td>
<td>“Bert Bacharach Medley”. P/B Liberace/Bill Flynt...(1) Close To You; (2) Alfie; (3) Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head. Another Liberace/Flynt duo offering hits from the 1960s.</td>
<td>Bacharach, Liberace, Bill Flynt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30093B</td>
<td>“Gershwin Medley”. P/B Liberace/Flynt...(1) Rhapsody In Blue (excerpt); (2) Someone To Watch Over Me; (3) Swanee; (4) The Man I Love; (5) Fascinating Rhythm; (6) I Got Rhythm...How can you go wrong with Gershwin, Liberace and Flynt? You can’t.</td>
<td>Gershwin, Liberace, Bill Flynt</td>
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**NEW AMPICO SINGLES**

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<tr>
<td>213221</td>
<td>Baby’s Birthday Party-Fox Trot-Ronell-Played by Victor Arden and Adam Carroll. Originally released February, 1931</td>
<td>Arden, Carroll</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>214501</td>
<td>We’re In The Money-Fox Trot-Harry Warren-Played by Phil Ohman. Originally released Summer, 1933</td>
<td>Warren</td>
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<tr>
<td>214591</td>
<td>Lazybones-Fox Trot-Mercer-Carmichael-Played by Paul Rickenbach. Originally released October, 1933</td>
<td>Mercer, Carmichael</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>214681</td>
<td>Mine-Fox Trot-Gershwin-from “Let ‘Em Eat Cake”. Played by Paul Rickenbach. Originally released December, 1933</td>
<td>Gershwin</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>214711</td>
<td>It’s Only a Paper Moon-Fox Trot-Harold Arlen-Played by Victor Arden. Originally released January, 1934</td>
<td>Arlen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214811</td>
<td>The Old Spinning Wheel-Fox Trot-Hill-Played by Victor Arden. Originally released March, 1934</td>
<td>Arlen</td>
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<tr>
<td>216101</td>
<td>They Can’t Take That Away From Me-Fox Trot-Gershwin-from “Shall We Dance”. Played by Adam Carroll. Originally released Summer 1937</td>
<td>Gershwin</td>
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**NEW MULTI-TUNE AMPICO ROLLS**

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<tr>
<th>Roll Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Composer(s)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</table>
AND A DREAMY BALLAD

3073 I Dream Too Much-Jerome Kern-from “I Dream Too Much”. Truly some gems are found among the later Ampico ballad recordings, and we are pleased to offer yet another fine example here. This selection is superbly interpreted by Adam Carroll. Originally released January, 1936
Currently the rest of the states do not have an AMICA Chapter.
On July 1st 2006 the Lady Liberty Chapter visited the A.C Pianocraft at 333 West 52nd St. in Manhattan. Our host was Alex Kostakis. As we entered we were greeted by Alex and by large collection of fully restored Steinways, Mason and Hamlin and other classic grand pianos. Alex introduced his father Ted Kostakis who was a Steinway factory technician for many years and with the help of other technicians founded A.C Pianocraft in 1966. Alex is very proud that after a restored piano is placed in the showroom, Julliard students are invited to practice on the pianos. Quite often on a Friday night students studying violin will accompany the piano students and perform concerts in the main showroom. Students get practice time on exceptional pianos and the pianos get road tested.

After our business meeting was completed, Alex gave us a tour of the pianos in the showroom and how piano technology has changed over the years. We then went downstairs to tour the restoration shop. Making new sound boards and bridges was demonstrated. Also the process of fitting the plate into the case takes many test fittings to avoid buzz or rattle noise when the piano is completed. After the question and answer session, Alex treated the Lady Liberty chapter to a fine south western style buffet lunch.
Alex answers a question from Randy Herr.

Adjusting the key action before installation.

Alex explains string tension to Dale, Bill and John.

Fitting the plate to the case.

Marvin and Bill inspect a new soundboard and bridge.

Alex shows the chapter a damaged pin block found in a recent restoration.

Some of the clamps needed for a classic piano case.
Cincinnati, Ohio was the host area for the Spring meeting of the Midwest Chapter. We met on the outskirts of the city at the hotel and adjacent restaurant where we would later return that evening. We carpooled the 30 plus miles over the border to Indiana and the amazing collection of Hayes McClaran. He demonstrated each of his unusual instruments, many of which we had never seen before, in a tour around the building. The beautifully restored Hupfeld Phonoliszt-Violina was the first, playing with three violins and accompaniment. A Peerless Model O Orchestron featured beautiful casework and lighting, and next to it was the coin-operated Peerless D-X, with drums on top. The far end of the room was taken up by the huge Hupfeld Helios, which survived the war while in Berlin. Across the room was the Encore banjo and the band organ which entertained us as we sampled refreshments from the antique bar. The Duo-Art grand and many music boxes and organettes completed the collection, along with other items awaiting restoration.

We hated to leave the McClarans and their collection, but dinner awaited us back at the restaurant. We had our own banquet room, and Harry Garrison passed out souvenir packets with beautiful photos of his company’s restorations inside.

The evening was capped off with a visit to Ron Wehemeier’s century home back in Cincinnati. From the road it looks like any other home, but once you go through the main house to the back, there is a music room addition featuring his 4 manual Wurlitzer pipe organ surrounded by reproducing grands. It was amazing to see and hear the organ and piano coordinated together to play such selections as Chattanooga Choo-Choo with the train seeming to travel through the building. We were given a tour of the room behind the organ where the pipes are and then went back to the music room where hors d’oeuvres were being served at the antique bar. Throughout the house were other pianos, including one Ron made by combining an ornately carved case with a foot pedaled player mechanism, and both Duo-Art and Ampico models.

On Sunday morning, we were back in Cincinnati at the home of Harry Garrison. The 1930s home looks older because of the beautiful woodwork and furnishings. We were treated to a brunch and tour of his collections including a Mills Violano. He has an addition to the back of the house as well, and has an impressive collection of phonographs, pianos and even a large band organ downstairs. We were invited to his shop - The Player Piano Shop - downtown to see his newly restored Steinway piano.

It wasn’t far to Alvin Wulfekuhl’s historic brick home and his collections of pianos and transportation memorabilia. A traditional Cincinnati chili lunch awaited us as we listened to his Weber Duo-Art grand, the Steinway upright and his Marshall and Wendell Ampico. In the back yard were the classic 1929 Model A Ford with special parking lights then required by the city and an even earlier Model T Ford. And inside the house were many die cast models of classic cars.

It was a great weekend of fascinating collections, food, and friends and we’d like to thank our hosts for their hospitality! We are looking forward to future meetings in Michigan and in Indiana.
The Peerless D-X plays when you drop a nickel in the slot.

Bennet Leedy plays a tune for Alvin Wulfekuhl.

Hayes shows the unusual wooden cassette with red paper.

An appreciative audience at Hayes McClaran's.

Hayes McClaran’s Encore Banjo is a rare sight.

Jody Trittipo and Miriam Hanscom enjoy the music and refreshments.

HAYES MCLARAN'S

Bennet Leedy plays a tune for Alvin Wulfekuhl.

The Peerless D-X plays when you drop a nickel in the slot.
Ron’s Wurlitzer is surrounded by reproducing grands, one which is synchronized to the organ.

Bob Andersen and host Ron Wehmeier take a tour of the Wurlitzer.

Ron Wehmeier demonstrates his ‘hybrid creation’ a player action installed into a non-player with an ornate case.

Harry Garrison’s band organ is restored down to the last detail.

Harry Garrison plays a selection for Jack Linker on a rare phonograph that plays Edison Diamond discs and regular records.

HARRY GARRISON’S

RON WEHEMEIER’S
Down on the Minnesota Farm

When the Northern Lights Chapter and MBSI gather for a summer picnic down on the farm, they have a major festival. The gathering of Minnesota & Iowa AMICANS for fun, food, wagon rides, and inspecting the magnificent collection of mechanical music instruments was as good as a country fair. Our hosts Kiven & Cheryl Lukes, opened their beautiful prairie home on Saturday 24 June for an afternoon of enjoyment.

Upon entering the house one immediately views a concert size music box and then in the salon a new concert grand piano and a restored Steinway Duo-Art reproducing piano. We were then greeted with a buffet of snacks, not to be outdone by the Kahler Hotel of Rochester. When all guests had gathered, the two groups were divided for respective meetings and then the first group traveled by horse drawn wagon to the senior Lukes home to view an additional collection. Kiven led the AMICANS through the home, viewing each instrument and the history of restoration. Following our home tour, we gathered for our chapter business meeting. At conclusion of discussion and events calendar, our 19th century passenger wagon arrived with two 1000 pound Percheron steeds chomping to get underway. No petrol was needed for this tour and really was: “take time to smell the corn, honey, and enjoy the ride”!

The senior Lukes opened their gracious home and again plied us with table laden with treats. We were impressed with the collection of gramophones, phonograph/music box, Mills Violino, nickelodeon, and various other mechanical instruments. Also a trip to the pond to feed the fish which leapt from the water in cascades of fish food thrown in. More entertaining than any iPod, I dare say. Concluding this visit we retraced our horse drawn route back to the farm and
dusted off our shoes, entered the barn, where ample refreshment was flowing. Soon the dinner bell was rung and we trundled into the main house for a sumptuous sit down dinner of roasted pork loin, barbecued ribs and other exquisite dishes. Impressive is the only operative word. The dinner was complimented with a variety of delectable desserts, all home made.

It was by far one of the most enjoyable events of our Northern Lights chapter. Having been raised in Iowa, life on the farm in Minnesota certainly has changed. In Kiven Lukes and his family, we are fortunate to have members with such knowledge and enthusiasm, not to mention the collection present and yet to come.
Chapter members Ray and Betty Stacey hosted a great day of wine, food tasting, and music in the Amador County Shenandoah Valley Wine Country. Members had the chance to visit over twenty valley wineries, the Amador Flower Farm and enjoy the spirit and sound of the Stacey’s 1924 Tangleys Circus Calliope. Our meeting took place Saturday, June 17, at the Serenidad Winery with the Calliope situated near the tasting room.

This Circus Calliope is a Tangleys air and “vacuum” manufactured in the 1920’s. It was meant to be small enough so that it could be loaded and operated by two good men. It has 42 whistles and is a model CA-43/#1347, which indicates that it is played with an “A” roll system. The curator at Circus World in Baraboo, Wisconsin, thought it was built around 1924-1925 and believes there are about 100 of these still in existence.

Our other musical instrument was an Aeolian player piano, brought by John Motto-Ros, and set up on the beautiful verandah overlooking the vineyards and swimming pool. Members brought some of their favorite 88-note rolls to play. A catered Santa Marie style BBQ dinner from INCA-HOOTS restaurant was enjoyed by all on the verandah.

Our thanks to Ray and Betty for organizing this wonderful event.
The music was perfect in Orangevale, California. Our August 19 meeting was at the lovely home of Doug and Vickie Mahr. This was just another well-planned meeting hosted by the Mahr’s.

Doug played some early 78 rpm records by Fats Waller. One was titled: “You Run Your Mouth, I’ll Run My Business.” The afternoon activities featured a Fox Trot-A-Thon. Nothing but toe tapping Fox Trots—no waltzes, classical, rumbas, marches, or polkas! Doug played several rolls on both the Ampico “A” reproducing grand and Duo-Art reproducing upright. A tune was only in the official contest when he blew the train whistle before the roll was played. The winner of the contest was Fred Deal by identifying: MA! HE’S MAKING EYES AT ME and SLEEPYTIME GAL.

Virginia Hawthorn informed us that husband Tom was in the hospital, but is recovering just fine. It is always great to see fellow members at summer’s end: Terry Casebeer, Bing Gibbs, Bob & Sonja Lemon, George & Sharyn Cunningham, Rich & Tricia Simms, and Fred Deal. The “Big Talk” was what a wonderful time we had at the convention in Chicago. Thank you Chicago Chapter.

We all took a look at Doug’s latest acquisition—a nice unrestored Seeburg “E” with xylo. Doug has his work cut out this winter.

Special thanks to our hosts Doug & Vickie for a great afternoon of music and fun.
Visit the AMICA Web Page at www.amica.org

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Bracelet found at AMICA Convention. Contact Mel Septon

More Convention Photos will be in the NEXT ISSUE!

Trisha & Rick Simms taking advantage of the Fox Trot-A-Thon contest.
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Terre Haute, Indiana 47803
Phone: 812-238-9656
E-mail: kukral@rose-hulman.edu
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PAYMENT: U.S. funds must accompany ad order. Make check payable to AMICA INTERNATIONAL. Typesetting and layout size alterations charges will be billed.

DEADLINES: Submissions must be received no later than the first of the odd months (January, March, May, July, September, November). The Bulletin will be mailed the second week of the even months.

(Rev. 5-05)

“We live in a moment of history where change is so speeded up that we begin to see the present only when it is already disappearing.”
- R. D. Laing

FOR SALE

Rebuilt 1929 STRoud METRO THEMODIst PIANO very good condition, completely electrified, 350 rolls, some new, most old, 500 more in attic. Bench holds old sheet music, books, tracker bar pump, punch & tabs. $4,000.00. M. Stockton, PO Box 957, Normandy Beach, NJ 08739, 732-830-3638 (5-06)

1926 STEINWAY DUO-ART, LOUIS XVI. Model O.R. 6’6”, Refinished (fair), player system rebuilt. Perfect ivories and sound board, with matching bench and 35 roll. Mel Septon, 9045 N. Karlov St., Skokie, IL 60076, (847) 679-3455, notpes@aol.com (5-06)

EDGERTON/SEEBURG KT SPECIAL, pristine condition, recently gone over by Dave Ramey, Jr., with 5 rolls, $15,000. Jim Millsp (219) 972-1111 (5-06)

Player Grands $5,000 up; 1000 QRS Ampico, Duo-Art Rolls $5.00 up-victorpianos.com 305-751-7502 (3-07)

1926 Mason Hamlin 5’8 1⁄2”ebony cabinet. Ampico A system original untouched, piano restrung, shimmied board, new hammers, new keytops, needs cleaning. Minor cabinet defects, $4,000. 1929 Weber Duo-Art player, original with belly cloth in place, late model with tubing around cheek blocks. Mahogany cabinet, replaced keytops & hammers, nice clean piano, $1,000. Photos available upon request. Louis A. Gentile, 96 Federal Avenue, Quincy MA 02169, 617-471-2494, gentilepiano@yahoo.com (5-06)

WEBER UNIKA, COINOLA “X” with Bells Oak Cabinet; Seeburg “E” with xylphone “A”roll piano with art glass scene; Wurlitzer 1015 Jukebox; Encore Banjo “Ramey” replica, some original Encore items used in assembly, many rolls; Cylinder music box 10 tune; cylinder 14 14 inches long inlaid mosaic top $3,500.00; cylinder music box 20 tune, 2 tunes per turn, cylinder 7 1⁄2 inches long, lid with tune sheet $3,000.00. All items professionally restored and refinised. J. Uhler – Box 126 – Ingomar, PA 15127 – 724-940-4331 (1-07)

http://www/mechanicalmusicpress.com (2-07)

1923 KIMBALL WELTE-MIGNON Licensee Reproducing Player Grand piano, 5’2”, serial #350911. Reinstalled, reinstalled, finished includes original matching bench and 20 rolls. Welte-Mignon mechanism completely rebuilt. Bodine motor/Minarik speed control for accurate tempo. Incredible expression! $9,000. Call Ron Olsen 763-535-6662 or write 4155 Quail Ave. N., Robbinsdale, MN 55422 (2-07)

NEEDED: A sincere Piano/Player Technician to buy my Piano Shop & Business and serve a large area of the country by keeping it in operation. My piano shop was featured on CBS News “Sunday Morning” and is located a few hours north of Denver in western Nebraska. It includes a nice building in a small town of 500 people with I-80 nearby, with good schools, hospitals, lakes- a great escape from the problems of the big city. The shop comes will all equipment, supplies, parts, more than a dozen players, a few square grinds, and other pianos. Please call me and let’s talk about it; Klint Schlake, 308-889-3522. P. O. Box 88, 409 Pine St., Big Springs, NE 69122. (5-06)

AMPICO, DUO-ART, WEITE, AND 88 NOTE PIANO ROLLS. New Recuts and Originals, including “Jumbo” and Program Rolls. Also N.O.S. QRS 88 Note rolls. Dave Caldwell, 400 Lincoln Lake Ave. N.E. Lowell, MI 49331; E-mail: DavidWFFromMI@webtv.net; phone: 616-897-5609. (1-07)
1924 WURLITZER BABY GRAND 4’10” professionally refinished walnut plain case with bench. Serial #61388. Restored ART ECHO/ APOLLO with 20 original rolls. $5000.00 OBO. More rolls available. Ina Spady 425-746-7182, Seattle area or inalspady@aol.com (6-06)

UNRESTORED 1933 STROUD DUO-ART WITH BENCH. $3,000. Serial number 104176. The case is mahogany in excellent original condition with nice detailing and minor checking. The tubing is around the ends of the action. A small collection of Duo-Art rolls will be included with the piano. This piano is from the estate of Sandy Libman. Proceeds of this sale will go directly to the AMICA Memorial Fund. For more information and photos, please contact Dorothy Bromage, 8 Skyline Drive - Billerica, MA 01821 978-670-1269 or e-mail: bromaged@comcast.net (5-06)

NEW PIANO ROLL BOXES - Duo-Art Audiographic series - Exactly like the originals! Marroon with Gold Printing, all 3 sizes available! (small & medium are “Top Hat” style) $7.00 ea. Quantities are limited, so get them before they are all gone! AMPICO “Top Hat” boxes- Black Leather with Gold Printing and False Bottom, Exactly like the originals, $5.00 ea. 88 note roll boxes in two sizes- Large (fits 2 34 flange) covered with Black Alligator paper (Top), Black Leather (Bottom), or Brown Leather Paper (Top & Bottom) $3.00 ea. Small (fits 2” flange) Covered with Black or Tan Leather Paper (Top), White Litho (Bottom) $1.80 ea. Other repair supplies available- Parchment Leaders, Tabs, Tubes, Flanges, Repair Tissue. Quantity Discounts available. Rich Ingram rollguyrich@yahoo.com (760) 244-ROLL (7655) (6-07)

STEINWAY RED WELTE GRAND (T-100), Hamburg Model O, with original rolls. Please contact alerad@att.net.mx for additional information. Alejandro Radchik, Av. Mexico 37-507, Condesa 06100, Mexico, DF. [Mexico City] Tel.: 011- 52-555-419-5374 (6-06)

WANTED
CAPITOL ROLLS and other Nickelodeon roll catalogs and bulletins wanted by researcher. John T. Lemmer 773-233-7710, 3412 W. 115 St., Chicago, IL 60655-3602 (6-06)

“STANDARD PLAYER MONTHLY” magazines wanted for use in this bulletin. Will buy or borrow. Mike Kukral, 812-238-9656, Kukral@rose-hulman.edu. (1-08)

“MALOOF” BRAND PIANO ROLLS. Mike Kukral, 812-238-9656, Kukral@rose-hulman.edu (1-08)

ARTICLES FOR THE AMICA BULLETIN PLEASE! I need your help if you don’t want to see blank pages in the future. The Publisher. (1-08)

TANGLEY CALLIOPE WANTED. Looking for an indoor style Tangley Calliope with muted volume and organ style cabinet. Also looking for an advertising vehicle customized by the Tangley Factory with a Tangley calliope installed in it. Martin Roenigk, 75 Prospect Ave, Eureka Springs, AR 72632. 479-253-0405. E-mail mroenigk@aol.com (6-06)

WELTE-MIGNON AND DELUXE REPRODUCING piano rolls. Mike Kukral 812-238-9656, E-mail Kukral@rose-hulman.edu. (1-09)

NEEDED: A sincere Piano/Player Technician to buy my Piano Shop & Business and serve a large area of the country by keeping it in operation. My piano shop was featured on CBS News “Sunday Morning” and is located a few hours north of Denver in western Nebraska. It includes a nice building in a small town of 500 people with I-80 nearby, with good schools, hospitals, lakes- a great escape from the problems of the big city. The shop comes will all equipment, supplies, parts, more than a dozen players, a few square grands, and other pianos. Please call me and let’s talk about it; Klint Schlake, 308-889-3522. P. O. Box 88, 409 Pine St., Big Springs, NE 69122. (5-06)

RED WELTE MIGNON piano rolls (T-100). Paying top dollar. Mike Kukral 812-238-9656 or Kukral@Rose-Hulman.edu (6-06)

BOOK: WELTE-MIGNON — ITS MUSIC AND MUSICIANS by Charles Davis Smith printed for AMICA by Vestal Press. Do you have a copy you are not using that is sitting on the shelf or in a box? Let me know. Robin Pratt, PIANOLA@aol.com 419-626-1903 (6-06)

FILMUSIC, PICTUROLLS, AND SUPERTONE PIANO ROLLS wanted. Call Alex at 209-478-0099. (6-06)

ARTPIO ANGELUS rolls and literature/catalogs/brochures/bulletins. Also want combination motor/generator set for Tel-Electric/Telektra piano player system. Motor 110 volts A.C., 1/4 h.p., generator 15 volts, D.C. 10 amps. Various makes ok such as Westinghouse, GE, Robbins & Meyers. David Krall, phone 219-932-2322, email djkrall@sbcglobal.net. (6-06)

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(1-08)
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(5-06)

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(5-06)

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(6-06)

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(5-06)
A number of months ago it became evident that a source of Test Rolls for AMICA members should be made. I contacted a number of roll manufacturers about the proposed project and all were enthusiastic about it. Bob Billings was selected to do the perforating. I am very pleased with the rolls he has produced and I am sure you will be too. Since this is the first offering of test rolls made for AMICA members, quantities are limited. This current offering includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ampico 55743 Installation Test Roll</strong></td>
<td>This roll was used in the factory and in the field to make certain that the instrument was performing to specification. The end of the roll includes a run up the scale in thirds. The roll includes printing as found on the roll.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ampico 58434 Special Amphion Tester</strong></td>
<td>This roll was used in the factory only to test the capabilities of the Amphion stack. The end of the roll includes a part of Ampico roll #50977K Poet &amp; Peasant Overture played by Volavy &amp; Brockway. Since this roll was used only in the factory, there are no instructions to accompany the roll.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ampico 201873 Special Staccato Tester</strong></td>
<td>This early test roll was used to check playing and repetition capabilities at low intensities. Included on this roll is a portion of #52315 Caprice Burlesque, played by Olga Samaroff. This roll does not include instructions, only a keen ear by the technician is needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>QRS Recordo 6910 Test Roll</strong></td>
<td>Originally produced by QRS, this is a very thorough test roll identifying the different functions of the Recordo system. An enclosed instruction sheet as well as printing on the roll makes this roll extremely easy to use. An added bonus of the “Sphynx Waltz” at the end rounds out an extremely useful roll.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cost of each roll is $12.00 U.S. ($10.00 plus $2.00 shipping) for U.S. orders. Outside of the U.S. shipping costs will depend on overseas rates. Since only a limited number of rolls are available at present, backorders may be necessary. Please be patient if this occurs. I will try to fill orders as quickly as possible.

Additional test rolls are planned for the future. These would include test rolls for the Welte and Duo-Art systems.

To order a roll(s), please make out a check to **AMICA International** and send it to:

**Mike Walter**  
**65 Running Brook Drive**  
**Lancaster, New York 14086**

Make certain that you specify which roll(s) you are ordering.
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