



AMICA International

Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association

AMICA Articles

A reproducing piano

Read our Bulletin article "[The Evolution of the Ampico](#)"

A reproducing piano

A reproducing piano, like a player piano, is a regular piano with a mechanism that allows the piano to play automatically. Reproducing pianos have sophisticated playing capability that permits automatic adjustment of expression and volume of musical notes, thus reproducing the performance of the original artist. When reproducing pianos were introduced in the early 20th century, they were extremely expensive; most reproducing pianos are fine grand pianos.



Photo and Instrument: George Wilder

Ampico

This Marshall and Wendall piano has an Ampico reproducing mechanism. Ampico reproducing pianos were the most popular of the reproducing pianos. Ampico's music catalog emphasized popular music. Notice the drawer beneath the keyboard which houses the roll playing mechanism. The drawer can be closed and hidden from sight.



Photo and Instrument: George Wilder

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Duo-Art

This is a Steinway piano with a Duo-Art reproducing mechanism. Duo-Art reproducing pianos were known for

their extensive repertoire of classical recordings. The roll mechanism of the Duo-Art was above the keyboard. Although more conspicuous than Ampico's drawer, this placement left space under the keyboard open, an advantage for those who like to sit at the piano and play by hand.



Instrument: Margaret Bisberg and Richard van Metre

Welte

Here's another brand of reproducing piano, the Welte. This one is installed in a Kimball piano. If you've read this far, you may be wondering where AMICA members find the room to house collections of grand pianos. This one is lovingly nested between a wall and the couch.



Photo: George Wilder; Instrument: Tom and Norma Everett