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President’s Message

Spring is in the air, and we have 400+ daffodils starting to bloom here at home. It was a long winter indoors with foot pumpers, reproducing pianos, etc. The weather is getting warmer, and now many AMICAns have their instruments (organs and more) ready to attend outdoor events.

As I have stated many times before, each chapter is a recruiting office for AMICA. I believe in visibility, and AMICA must be seen at public functions. The easiest way is a “silent salesman” positioned in a conspicuous place. A “silent salesman” is a membership application holder (see photos). I challenge each chapter to make one of their own design. We have many clever members who can make the “salesman” happen; better yet, make it a chapter project. The “salesman” really looks good at the door of the Hospitality Suite at conventions. It attracts attention to AMICA, and that is what we want. The Bulletin Editor/Publisher has agreed to print photos and text chapters provide of their completed projects. I would like to see every chapter participate. I can provide the membership applications. See page 119.

Summer will soon be here along with the international convention in Buffalo, New York, July 7-11, 2010. Now is a good time to start making plans to attend.

Many thanks to Editor Terry Smythe for the many interesting pictures and technical articles in an outstanding Jan/Feb 2010 Bulletin.

John Motto-Ros
mottoros@sbcglobal.net

Editorial Observations

This issue blends our feature article, “The House of Wurlitzer”, with a report of our next annual AMICA Convention in Buffalo, NY. A major event of this convention will be a Band Organ Rally on the nearby grounds of the historic Wurlitzer factory in North Tonawanda, NY. At our last Convention in Cincinnati, Gary Rasmussen researched the Wurlitzer family and gave us a great audio-visual presentation with a Wurlitzer descendent in attendance. Gary’s presentation is now being made available to all members in this issue.

As with so many hobby oriented organizations, we too are experiencing difficulty in encouraging new members. Perhaps we might consider a shift in focus from a “hobby” to “preservation” of a unique slice of our musical heritage. Back in mid-60’s, I attended a party at a friend’s home, where they had a working player piano. I had so much fun that evening that I resolved to acquire one for myself. The rest is history.

Every Chapter and every member has an opportunity to replicate what my host did some 45 years ago – inspire a hunger within a guest to acquire a slice of this same musical heritage, be it a player piano, reproducing piano, coin piano, player pipe organ, music box, etc. The list is endless. President John has come up with an idea that has considerable merit with his Silent Salesman on page 119 in this issue. All are encouraged to get serious with this suggestion.

Over the years that I have been associated with this delightful avocation, my focus has changed from a fun hobby to preservation. I am not alone. Many members share this obligation we all have to each do what we can to preserve this very special musical heritage. This is not something for the few to embrace. Rather, we should all embrace preservation. Ideally, each of us becomes a missionary of sorts, with every Chapter meeting, every open house, every special occasion wherever and whenever non-members are present. And all members in attendance should walk away with our AMICA brochures and do likewise in their homes.

Again, I appeal to all members to seriously consider writing an article about an instrument of special interest. Ideally, its provenance if known, pics as found if available, pics during restoration, etc., all extremely useful and of great interest to our members. Think of this as an opportunity.

Terry Smythe
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Correction

Paul and Susan Turney's correct phone number is 925-997-0484

Apologies

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Lettr to Editor

I loved the Ramey Banjo Orchestra article. Quite wonderful. I would suggest that you ask the author for more photos that might be uploaded for the web site.

Mark Reinhart
21 January 2010

Letter to the Editor

This is an open letter in sincere appreciation for Mr. Tom Hutchinson’s article in the September/October issue of AMICA where he went into great detail about piano roll restoration.

I am in the process of memorizing this!

Some years ago I met Mr. Ken Ruhl here in Williamsport, Pennsylvania who had taught himself to restore player pianos and has allowed me to observe his basement workshop beginning with four or five pianos that are in his “waiting room” to seeing his progression of repairing pneumatics, pouch boards, replacing tubing, leather and on and on.

He showed me a homemade table for inspection and repair of piano rolls which led me to purchase one from Tom some years ago. Following Ken’s instruction I have begun to inspect and make repairs with Scotch Magic Tape and I have tried some archival tape as well. It is pretty expensive. Having purchased about 350 old tapes from two estates I now have a sufficient supply to keep me industriously entertained.

I’m especially appreciative of Tom’s sharing about the use of talcum powder (I have upended a rubber cup designed to fit at the bottom of a table leg where I keep my powder for easy finger dipping!). His advice about the use of the iron to flatten rolled edges is wonderful!

His information about tightening each roll after use so the paper will “set” is another revelation which I had not known. You can see, although I have begun to explore piano roll repair, I still have quite a few techniques to acquire.

I just acquired John Miller’s piano roll label making program and have begun the joy of making wonderful Duo Art labels. I tried Tom’s suggestion of placing two small rubber bands on the insert portion of the left roll flange but found this to be somewhat bulky.

John Miller also sells “O” rings which fit the flange exactly and I think make a neater spacer. Of course they run about 10 cents each but they surely do fit the bill.

Thanks also to Tom for his pointers about repairing boxes. I have a small brush which I use to brush the box of dust and lint prior to inserting masking tape to repair corners from the inside.

Many thanks again to Tom Hutchinson for sharing with us beginners some of the techniques to piano roll restoration!

Appreciatively,
A. Claude Williams, Jr. Williamsport, PA
Whenever his nickelodeon recut rolls come up for sale on eBay, Edward Freyer is referred to as “The Master” in the item description. His rolls were always carefully punched and professionally packaged. He edited the rolls with a great ear for the music to correct timing errors and incorrect notes. He ensured quality by using the best paper and boxes available.

Ed Freyer’s labels used an early Clark logo and the names of the songs were mimeographed on the label (see illustration). He was the first to make a large quantity of rolls for the collector market, thereby filling a great need and starting a tradition of roll making which continues to this day.

Nickelodeon rolls were originally cut for coin-operated machines that served the same purpose as juke boxes would in later years. The machine owners would buy the latest rolls to maximize the number of nickels likely to be collected. It's amazing that so many original rolls have survived, since older rolls would seldom be played. When amplification was developed, it was possible to play phonograph records at a volume sufficient to be heard in noisy environments and the nickelodeons became obsolete. The last Clark roll was made in 1940, although business was very poor for some time prior to this.

J. Lawrence Cook was the major arranger for most of the rolls made by Q.R.S. (and then by Clark) in the twenties and thirties. Cook started a small business making rolls for collectors in the 1950's. Cook mainly produced arrangements of new songs and new arrangements of “old standard” songs. He did not give much consideration to the quality of the paper, the precision of the perforations or recreating the sound of the 20’s that the collectors love so much.

The first question that comes to mind was how Ed Freyer became interested in Nickelodeons? Karl Freyer, Ed's son, relates this story:

Ed's father came from Germany and lived in Copper Hill, New Jersey, just south of Flemington. He made cane furniture and built a showroom consisting of a little bungalow on U.S. Route 202. City people would buy cane bassinettes, etc. Ed was about 12 or 13 at this time. The father got hooked up with the Mafia boys who wanted to store booze in his basement. He had an old truck and would drive to Trenton to the speakeasies. Ed drove the cobblestone streets to an abandoned warehouse. The garage door would open – two guys with machine guns would pop out and they would load booze onto hand trucks, go underground to another building, take an elevator up, knock on the door and bring in the delivery. The bar was hopping with girls in flapper dresses and there were nickelodeons everywhere. Ed’s father would get so drunk that Eddie would drive him home. Eddie never told his dad how they got home.

The Roll Recutting Business

Rusty King relates how Ed got started. Ed was a constant newspaper classified ad reader. Some time around 1957 Ed saw an ad in a local newspaper for a player piano for sale. He went to look at it and found a wood box with two small windows and some doors. He told the seller that this wasn’t a player piano because it had no keyboard. The guy opened the
doors and there was a big roll and a lot of mechanism. Fascinated, Ed bought the late style Link and brought it home. He got it playing. Now he started searching around and found more Link pianos but few rolls.

Enter Harvey Roehl. Harvey sent Ed the first “A” roll he had ever seen and gave Ed some contacts for coin-piano enthusiasts. Ed’s entry into music roll manufacturing happened because of the scarcity of Link music (and this was only 25 years or so after Link rolls became unavailable. Lyle Martin was influential in obtaining many Link rolls for Ed to recut.

Ed’s perforating machine came from Charles Kalhman, who had been a Wurlitzer and Capitol dealer and operated a large route of coin pianos, including many Link machines. Kalhman had made a few rolls for his own use, but when he sold the perforator to Ed, it was missing the die plates and interposer assembly. Ed created the missing parts and started to copy any Link music he could find. He later made “A” and “G” rolls since they also used six-to-the-inch spacing.

Ed had a flat table to repair the rips in the rolls to be recut. He punched holes to correct problems. He would play the roll on a nickelodeon and mark missing notes with a red grease pen. He had a fantastic ear for this. He would also correct the timing. The velocity of the roll across the tracker bar would speed up as the roll is advanced since the take-up always rotates at a constant R.P.M. He would use three different advance steps by changing gears in the perforator. Songs 1-3, 4-6, and 7-10 would use different gears.

Ed had an exhaustive examination of paper, finally using James River as his supplier. This paper had just the right amount of wax content. He bought a small truckload at one time (100 or 200 rolls at 70 to 80 pounds apiece).

Legend has it that Ed didn’t like the fact that the shutoff hole occurred immediately at the end of the last note of the song and consequently he added sustain perforations to allow the last notes to die out before the machine is shut off.

An Evening at Ed’s

Karl Freyer (Ed’s son) was born in 1951. Karl was five years old when Ed built a structure in the back yard. This building would become the center of activity. Rusty King recalls:

In Ed’s building behind his house, the perforator and a big work table were in the middle, along with a Seeburg L and a Regina Sublima. Around the outside, from left to right, stood a Haines Brothers Ampico upright piano, a Seeburg G, a late Link 2E, a Seeburg KT Special, a Seeburg KT with single stroke xylophone, a Double Mills Violano, a late Seeburg E with reiterating xylophone, an early Seeburg E with violin pipes, an upright Duo Art and upright Welte.

Ed got the Double Violano as the result of a trip to Bellm’s museum in Sarasota, Florida. He brought it back in a trailer he built with 1931 Chevy axles. The machine was in a major flood and required considerable restoration. Eddie would work on cutting rolls and restoring the machines every night after work. He tuned the machines every two months and maintained an exact 50% humidity.
Saturday night was fun night at Freyer’s. The local coin piano fans would show up and the machines would bang out jazzy music for hours. Beer was always on hand and about 9:00 PM someone would make a pizza run. Carl Thompson (who operated a player piano store), Adam Lojewski, Fred Jacyn, Glenn Grabinsky, Fred Thonebe and John Zeliznak were all regulars. Rusty King was there several times, but not as often as he would have liked because he had to be alert and at work at 6:30 AM Sunday morning. If Ed cut a new roll that week, everyone listened to it and anyone who wanted a copy bought one right there. The Bridgewater Diner was the regular stop on the way home for coffee and pie.

The Seeburg Sale

Eddie was in the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) and had airplanes. He would often fly to Harvey Roehl’s house in Vestal, New York. This story was related by Art Reblitz:

Harvey knew that Eddie wanted a Seeburg KT Special, and Harvey placed an ad in the Antique Trader magazine offering a Seeburg for sale, complete EXCEPT for drums, xylophone, piano action, player mechanism, piano back, cabinet, art class and three casters. Freyer answered the ad, and Harvey and Dave Bowers got in a truck and delivered the single caster on a piano dolly to Ed’s house! David Bowers confirms this story but adds that Ed knew it was from Harvey.

One time, Dave Bowers and Harvey Roehl took Ed to meet Ed Link. Art Reblitz used to order rolls from Ed Freyer. Art was in Newburgh, New York with the NORAD band when it was on tour from Colorado Springs. The band was scheduled to play in Greenland next and Art had the day off. He took a bus to Flemington, New Jersey. The work area was very neat; Ed was very congenial and would play really good rolls.

Dave Bowers relates that if you loaned Eddie a roll to recut, he would give you a roll free. This practice continues to this day with modern recutters.

The Final Days

Karl Freyer relates this story about Ed’s final days. Karl and Ed went to the west coast to go to the MBSI convention on the Queen Mary (Long Beach, California) in 1985. Karl really wanted to move to California and Ed was indifferent. They visited Bill and Betty Toth in Dana Point, California. Don Rand, Ed Openshaw and Dave Junchen all had dinner with Ed in 1986.

This was the only time Don Rand had seen Ed Freyer. Don says to Eddie: “Here you are moving to the west and I am moving to the east coast” (Don had recently purchased a house in Stonington, Maine).

So Ed and Karl sold the Seeburg G to Don Teach, packed up the perforator and lots of stuff and bought a house in Valley Center, California (near Escondido and the Palomar Observatory). It had a five car garage and separate apartment. Karl inventoried all the rolls. Mildred, Ed’s wife, didn’t want to move and refused to allow the real estate agent to show the house in New Jersey. Ed went back east to try to expedite matters. He complained of lower back pain on his trip back west. It turned out he had pancreatic cancer. A Hospice nurse asked Eddie how he felt about dying. Eddie answered “I’ve never been afraid of anything in my life and I’m sure as hell not afraid of dying”. The nurse’s jaw dropped, and she said “There is nothing more I can do here”, and she left never to be seen again.

Ed Freyer died in hospital in Escondido, California on January 27, 1987. His wife, Mildred, died a year later of lung cancer. Karl had an older sister, Linda, who died two years ago. Another sister, Karen currently lives in Flemington. Martha was Ed’s first wife. They divorced in 1974. They waited until Karl was out of college (they wanted to see that everyone got launched on their own).

Karl had an odd yearning to return to New Jersey, so he sold the house in California. Karl tried cutting rolls for a while, but it didn’t work out. Karl’s main interest was automobiles. He sold the perforator to Dave Miner, who cut rolls for about a year. Dave, in turn, sold it to Don Rand in 1990, who uses it to this day for cutting rolls as the Clark Orchestra Roll Company.
Begin Construction of Mammoth Duo-Art
Aeolian Pipe Organ for Davenport Theater

Instrument Said to Be Largest Ever Designed Now Building at Garwood, N. J.,
Plant—Has Many New Features Originated by Frank Taft, Head of Aeolian
Organ Department

The mammoth Duo-Art Aeolian pipe organ planned for the Kindt Theater Concertorium in
Davenport, Iowa, and estimated to cost about $180,000, is now under construction in the factories of
the Aeolian Co. at Garwood, N. J. The instrument is
to be one of the largest ever built, it is said, and in
resources and perfection of equipment will surpass any
organ in the world. It is being designed especially
for radio broadcasting from Station WOC, located in
Davenport.

Pictured herewith is the factory model of the con-
nsole of the monster instrument showing its six man-
uals. Hereunto the maximum number of manuals, even in the largest organs, has been five. The added
manual was introduced in order to bring the tremendous resources of the organ under perfect control of
the performer and to permit effects that hitherto have
been impossible.

New Departure in Organ Building

Frank Taft, head of the organ department of the
Aeolian Co., and designer of the organ, has introduced
this new departure in organ building. As indicated in
the picture, he has arranged for the gradual tilting of
the fourth, fifth and sixth manuals at varying de-
gree toward the performer. This makes it possible
for an organist of medium height and reach to play
comfortably on any two of the six manuals at the same
time. The placing of the manuals also permits “thumbl”
work and staccato chord playing without interference
from the overhand of the keys. Numerous combination
pistons and controls to be introduced in this console
will be in accord with the Aeolian Co.’s latest equip-
ment.

The specifications of this organ are literally crowded
with new and unusual improvements in organ building
necessary to cope with the unprecedented size. Among
them is an open diaphanous pedal stop of sixty-four foot
pitch, the largest pipe of which will be sixty-four feet
long by four feet square, probably double the size of
any pipe in the world’s biggest organ.

Two New Groups of Stops

Included also will be two new groups of stops, in-
vented by Mr. Taft and placed for the first time in
any organ. They are the orchestral brass organ and
the vox humana choir. The former is a close approxi-
mation of the brass effects in a symphonic orchestra.
The latter is an elaboration of the present type of vox
humana, yielding a flood of full, rich tone ethereal in
its quality.

The huge instrument is the gift to Davenport of Dr.
B. J. Palmer, head of the Palmer School of Chiropractic
in that city. Some months ago a Duo-Art Aeolian pipe
organ was installed in the home of Doctor Palmer, and
by reason of its success he entrusted to the Aeolian
Co., the building of his gift organ.

The design of the Kindt Theater Concertorium, which

Factory Model of Console of Mammoth Duo-Art Aeolian
Pipe Organ

will house the organ, was inspired by the form of the
Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah. It is 320
feet long, 160 feet wide and 90 feet high, with a seating
capacity of 6000.

With every expectation that the acoustics of this
new auditorium will approximate those of the historic
tabernacle, it is the purpose of the Aeolian Co. that
the organ, with its wealth of tonal variety under easy
control, shall be so skillfully constructed and tone-regu-
lated that it will be the most commanding and effective
organ ever built.

Dance to Music They Sell

PORTLAND, ORE., March 10.—The Sherman, Clay &
Co. Employees’ Association gave a dance recently in the
Hotel Mallory ballroom in honor of their new local
manager, Frank M. Case, and his charming wife. The
party was declared a huge success and one of the most
enjoyable ever held. A five piece orchestra played
Sherman, Clay & Co. “hits,” which were in great de-
mand, among them the new fox trots, “Oh, Yera,”
“China Girl” and “My Best Girl.” Among the waltzes
“Bygones” was a big favorite. Those in charge of the
affairs were Maud McCauley, general manager, Irene
Gross, Serge Habman, Charles Burnett, S. H. Johnson,
Bert Christenson, Walter A. McDonnell, Walter Brown,
William Maxwell and George McGinnis.
House of Wurlitzer

by Gary Rasmussen

Thank you so much for joining us for this brief history of Wurlitzer. There is no way that we could do justice to the Wurlitzer overall company history in the short time we have today. This review will tend to focus on the Wurlitzer company as it relates to Cincinnati, the family of Wurlitzer as well as some focus on automated and non-automated pipe organs, mostly prior to the 1930’s.
When most people think of Wurlitzer, they may know the name for a piano, a jukebox, or perhaps the Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ. In my research of the company, I found that the company was over ½ century old, before these things came to be. This will help give you a better idea of the company and the people that really made the company.

I am proud to be joined today by members of the Wurlitzer family, Bill Griess and his wife …

The Wurlitzer company was started by Rudolph Wurlitzer, right here in Cincinnati, in 1856. Rudolph was born on January 30, 1831, in the Saxony village of Schoeneck, now a part of Germany. He attended “The Commercial Institution” in 1845 and 1846. He also attended the Technical University in Leipzig, completing his studies in 1852.

Rudolph did not play any musical instruments, but loved music. The community he grew up in was the center of considerable musical businesses. Many in the area farmed in the summer and worked making musical instruments in the winter. Generations of Wurlitzers were known to have lived and worked in this way for as much as 300 years prior to Rudolph.

Rudolph's father, Christian, was in the business of purchasing or bartering musical instruments, selling to exporters or jobbers in Hamburg, Frankfurt and Leipzig. In turn, he sold the local people groceries, clothing and others items from a general store of sorts.

When Rudolph returned from school at the age of 22, Rudolph's father had decided that his business would eventually be inherited by Rudolph's younger brother, Constantin, who was 15 years younger than Rudolph.

Rudolph was apparently not pleased and told his father he was going to America. His father said “Fine, you have to come up with your own money,” knowing Rudolph had none. Rudolph’s uncle Wilhelm ended up loaning him 350 Marks (about $80 at the time) and 22 year old, 5 feet, 4 inch Rudolph headed to America.

Rudolph’s first job was with a grocery store in Hoboken, New Jersey. His poor English was the butt of jokes and shortly Rudolph moved on to Philadelphia. In his quest to find work, he stopped a well dressed Philadelphian to ask about work in broken English, and was chastised, “Young man, you are obviously a foreigner and are new to our ways. One of the first things you must understand is that we do not permit begging here in America.” Crushed and humiliated, he decided to head to Cincinnati, where a friend said they were more hospitable to German immigrants.

The city at that time was (and still is) a magnet for Germans.

In Cincinnati, Rudolph first made a living peddling trinkets door to door. Shortly thereafter, he found a job as a porter at a dry goods establishment for $4.00 per week. Rudolph had determined before he came to America that he would save 25% of what he earned. Since he could not pay rent, buy food, and save $1.00 per week, he made a deal with his employer to sleep at his work place in a packing crate.

Within a year, Rudolph mastered the English language enough to secure a job at a private banking firm, Heidelbach and Seasongood, at a salary of $8.00 per week, double that of his first job, according to several publications about Wurlitzer. Griess suspects that the reported bank job was in the credit department/bank of a primarily dry goods company, which type company Heidelbach & Seasongood was listed as in the city directory, with Rudolph as a bookkeeper. Included with the job was the privilege of sleeping in a loft in the building. Rudolph was a resourceful employee and was promoted steadily. Within three years, Rudolph repaid his uncle Wilhelm the $80 borrowed and also saved a modest sum of money.

Near the bank that young Wurlitzer worked at was a music store, on the north side of 4th Street, between Main and Walnut, operated by Mr. Johnson. Rudolph was astonished at the high prices for what he considered to be inferior musical instruments. Young Wurlitzer learned that it was difficult for the store owner to acquire instruments. Upon investigation, he found that other stores had similar issues. Rudolph decided to try importing a selection of musical instruments to sell to retailers in America.

Rudolph invested in the venture and asked that his fami-
ly ship him a variety of musical instruments. Rudolph was reportedly very methodical, carefully calculating his costs, including customs and freight and 100% profit. In the fall of 1856, when young Wurlitzer was 25 years old while still working at the bank, he received his shipment of musical instruments, mainly woodwinds. Rudolph's first prospective customer was Mr. Johnson. He first examined samples of the instruments with warm interest. But after receiving prices on various instruments, Mr. Johnson's attitude turned cold and antagonistic. Rudolph was unable to make the slightest impression on the hard shelled Mr. Johnson. Finally, under persistent pressure, Rudolph was astonished to learn that Mr. Johnson concluded that the instruments must be stolen. There was no way these instruments could be sold at the prices requested if they were honestly acquired.

Thinking quickly, Rudolph confessed that this was his first attempt at importing musical instruments and he must have made a mistake. He explained that this was a personal venture and he was regularly employed at the nearby bank.

Mr Johnson said “If you actually bought these instruments, at your asking prices you would definitely lose money. You look like an honest young man. Go back and refigure your costs. If you can assure me you own these instruments, we can do business.” Rudolph did so, explained that he made a mistake on customs and transportation, adjusted prices so that he made $1500 on his first transaction instead of $700, and as they say, the rest is history.

What Rudolph had done was to cut out the middlemen. About this time, Rudolph rented space in the upper floor of the Masonic building at the corner of Fourth and Sycamore for warehouse space. (Note: This address was not in the city directory for RW, but the following picture with caption is from the December 1, 1906 The Music Trades magazine “House of Wurlitzer” article.)

Within a couple years Rudolph had imported and sold several orders of ever increasing size. In 1859, after returning from a buying trip in Germany, he rented larger quarters on the second floor of a building at 123 Main Street. On October 8, 1859, Rudolph became a US citizen; and before long he left his bank job.

In 1860, Rudolph added retail space to his location on Main Street and by 1862, his enterprise occupied the entire 123 Main Street building. In 1868 the entire business was moved down the block to 115 Main Street. The business remained at this address until 1891.

As noted earlier, Cincinnati addresses were renumbered about 1895; so addresses before that time do not indicate address locations today. The City directories say that corners of 3rd and Main were numbers 96 and 99. Number 153 on Main was at 4th Street. So both stores were either in the Duke Energy block between 3rd and 4th Streets, or on the other side of the street across from where the Duke Energy office building is now.

Beginning in 1860, Wurlitzer began selling drums to the US military. A small factory, Wurlitzer’s first, to manufacture drums was set up in his store. Military trumpets and bugles were imported from Germany for use in the Union Army. It is said that many of the bugles and drums used in the US Civil War were supplied by Wurlitzer, imported from Germany or manufactured in Cincinnati. From the very beginning of the Civil War, Union troops marched to Wurlitzer instruments.

In 1891, the Cincinnati location of Wurlitzer was moved to 121 E. Fourth Street, the address that would be the world headquarters for the next 50 years and still the Wurlitzer store into the 1960’s.
Unfortunately, the former Wurlitzer headquarters building no longer stands. It was taken down 40 to 50 years ago. But the buildings of the same style and look, that were next door, still stand. These photos are of this 4th Street area a week or so ago, along with a photo of the Wurlitzer building from about 1910 that appears to include these buildings.

Rudolph’s second retail outlet was opened in Chicago at 82 Dearborn Street in 1865. It was destroyed by the great Chicago fire of 1871, then re-established at 329-331 Wabash Street, occupying all of the building’s five floors.

Most of Wurlitzer’s early years were focused on regular music instruments. Beginning in the late 1880’s, about the time Rudolph’s sons started becoming involved with the business, America became interested in music boxes.

In 1872 the firm name was changed to Rudolph Wurlitzer and Brother, reflecting his brother Anton’s participation. Rudolph’s youngest brother, Constantin, the one to whom his father was going to leave the family business, left Germany at the age of 18 to become a part of Rudolph’s business, but never became a partner.

This photo is of Rudolph later in life.

In 1872 the firm name was changed to Rudolph Wurlitzer and Brother, reflecting his brother Anton’s participation. Rudolph’s youngest brother, Constantin, the one to whom his father was going to leave the family business, left Germany at the age of 18 to become a part of Rudolph’s business, but never became a partner.

In September 1868, at the age of 37, Rudolph married Miss Leonie Farny. The Farny family name is quite well-known in some circles. Leonie’s brother, Henry Farny, was well-known for his landscapes and portraits of American Indians.
Rudolph and Leonie lived at this house at 60 Franklin Street in Cincinnati until 1901. This house was taken down many years ago.

Rudolph and Leonie had five children, two girls and three boys; a sixth died in infancy. Their first child, Sylvia, was born in 1869. Their first male child, Howard, was born in 1871. Bill Griess' grandfather, Henry, is in this photo, and his mother about two years old is also present.

When their children were small, Rudolph built a playhouse for them in the backyard. When Farny, their youngest child became old enough, he raised pigeons in the playhouse. Leonie also raised chickens in the backyard.

In general, it was said that Rudolph was a quiet, kindly man that literally would not hurt a fly. Leonie found to her dismay that her husband absolutely refused to kill anything, not even a chicken for Sunday dinner. All three sons eventually became a part of the business.

Rudolph was one of the first in Cincinnati to own a car when they became available. He first owned a Winton, then a Franklin. A phone was first installed in their home in 1895.

Howard, the oldest son, attended Cincinnati public schools and attended Woodward High school but only for three years because his father needed him in the business. In 1889, at the age of 17, Howard joined the business.

After 1901, after the children were raised, the Wurlitzers moved to an apartment in Auburndale at the corner of Taft and Auburn. Rudolph died in this apartment in 1914.

Rudolph and many of his family are buried at Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati. A brochure showing the location of this cemetery, along with the location of both the Wurlitzer and Baldwin family plots, was included in your convention visitors packet. The cemetery is only about 10 minutes from here.
During the next 25 years, Howard was a potent factor in the business. He married and built this house at 6 Beech Crest Lane in Cincinnati. He died in 1928.

Rudolph's second son, Rudolph Henry, was born in 1873 and was the real musician in the family. Although he wanted to be a violinist, he joined the family business in 1894. He became one of the world's foremost authorities on rare violins, assembling what was once considered to be the greatest collection of rare violins in existence.

Harry Garrison, who remembers the Wurlitzer building, told me that these rare violins were kept in a special vault in the store, three levels below street level. This photo is possibly of that vault.

Pictured is Rudolph Junior playing the violin at his father's home, with his sister Sylvia. The two of them, accompanied by a great-aunt, went to Berlin in 1892, where she studied piano, and he the violin under Emanuel Wirth. He also had studies at the University of Berlin in history of music, acoustics and physics, and spent two afternoons a week in the shop of a violin maker.

Rudolph Henry's residence was at 2147 Madison Road in Cincinnati, in the East Walnut Hills area. Unfortunately this home no longer exists. In addition to the Wurlitzer residence organ, a unique feature of this home was the slowly revolving dining room table. It was supposedly created to settle daily arguments among his children as to who got to sit across from the view of the garden. Rudolph Henry delighted in tricking guests sitting across from the garden, to find that during the salad course they had a different view.

Pictured here is Rudolph Henry's music room, with his residence pipe organ in view.

The Wurlitzer's fourth child was Leonie, born in 1875. Her only connection to the company appears to be as a stockholder; her interest in the firm was bought out in 1928.

Rudolph senior's third son and youngest child was Farny, born in 1883, when Rudolph was 52. Farny was sent to Cincinnati Technical School and went to Europe in
1901, at the age of 17, by himself. In about 1907, Farny took charge of the Automatic Music Department in Cincinnati. After the purchase of the deKleist factory in North Tonawanda, NY in 1908, Farny commuted, and then moved there permanently in 1910 to head up that factory.

Farny passed away in 1972 at the age of 88. He is pictured here in the late 1950’s or early 60’s with Q. David Bowers, author of the Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments and the earlier “Put Another Nickel In.”

About the time Rudolph’s sons started becoming involved with the business, America became interested in music boxes. Rudolph secured the distributorship rights from the Regina Music Box Company of Rahway, New Jersey. In time, the Wurlitzer company grew to become the largest single sales outlet for Regina products. In 1896, Wurlitzer persuaded Regina to equip music boxes with a coin slot, particularly the 27-inch model.

In 1897 Wurlitzer’s larger scale entry into the musical instrument business resulted from an association with Eugene DeKleist. Eugene had come to America in 1892 to start the North Tonawanda Barrel Organ Works because a US government tariff increase on barrel organs, made it unprofitable to import them. Within two years, Wurlitzer became the agent for DeKleist pianos.

In 1897, Eugene DeKleist met with Howard Wurlitzer in Cincinnati. Because of Howard’s familiarity with the success of Reginas with a coin slot, he encouraged DeKleist to develop a coin operated piano. It took him two years to create what became know as the Wurlitzer Tonophone, an electrically operated barrel piano with a capacity of 10 tunes that would play two tunes for a nickel. Wurlitzer’s first order with DeKleist was for 200 Tonophones for $200 each. Once demand started, the market for coin operated pianos grew like wildfire.

Within a few years, DeKleist became very rich and became much more interested in his boat racing and being Mayor of North Tonawanda, than in running his company. Quality and service suffered. In 1908 Howard visited DeKleist with an ultimatum: sell out or Wurlitzer would take their business elsewhere. In January 1909, the deal was closed and Wurlitzer absorbed DeKleist.

Introduced about 1902, the 44-note Pianino was the first Wurlitzer coin piano to operate from a paper roll.

The Pianino, also called the Pianolin, was a best seller for Wurlitzer. They were most popular from about 1906 to the mid ’teens. Production continued well into the 1920’s. In 1908 the first 65-note player piano was introduced.
In 1905, Howard Wurlitzer wandered into a downtown Cincinnati café and saw a most unusual instrument, a self-playing harp! The harp was a prototype made by the JW Whitlock company in Rising Sun, Indiana, a small town on the Ohio River about 35 miles downstream, west of Cincinnati.

An agreement was made for Wurlitzer to sell the harps on an exclusive basis, and a contract for 1000 harps was signed. Between 1905 and 1915, an additional two or three thousand were ordered. Demand dwindled as the novelty wore off.

Initial price for the harp was $750, including one roll of music. Additional rolls were $6.00. By 1916, the harps were reduced to $375, and shortly thereafter, they were dropped from the catalog. The harps became popular so quickly that a listing in 1906 showed harps at 135 locations in Cincinnati alone. Pictures following are several of the Cincinnati establishments with harps.

One of Wurlitzer's successes, particularly in the area of automatic musical instruments, was in marketing. Some of the marketing literature included discussions such as:

- Music as a revenue
- Music as a business stimulator
- The charming influence of music
- Music as a modern acquisition
This particular piece said in 1906 they cut 12 new tunes a week for the automatic harps, 500 a year, and they phoned every one of their Cincinnati customers, every day, to make sure everything was operating correctly, etc.

Following are just a few examples of the 7" x 11" place cards Wurlitzer made available to their customers who had automatic instruments in their establishments.

In 1902, Howard joined his brother Farny for a visit to the Leipzig trade fair in Germany. On display were many orchestrions including Hupfeld. Howard approached Hupfeld to secure the exclusive right to market them under the Wurlitzer name in the US. Hupfeld agreed to all provisions of the distributorship except the requirement to allow Farny to apprentice in the Hupfeld factory for a few months, because they were fearful that Wurlitzer would use the knowledge acquired to set up a competing business in the US.
Not discouraged, Howard looked elsewhere and found Philipps und Söhne. The Philipps product line was not as extensive as Hupfeld but the quality was great.

A deal was struck including the apprenticeship. But Philipps would not allow the usual open account terms. To rectify the situation, Farny made arrangements for his father, Rudolph Wurlitzer Senior, to visit Germany personally. Farny arranged to have Rudolph to be attended with splendor befitting a king, including lavish hotel, a fine coach, and magnificent horses. Impressed by the incredible display, Philipps not only agreed to open account terms, they agreed to receive payment for the machines three months after shipment!

From 1903 to 1914, all Wurlitzer PianOrchestras sold in the US were imported from Philipps in Germany. Annual total purchases averaged about $250,000, which translated to 150 to 250 PianOrchestras and Paganinis per year. Retail prices ranged from $1200 to $7500 or more. Exports ceased from Germany in 1914 because of World War I.
Steinway and Wurlitzer were competitors, but in 1906 Wurlitzer was one of the largest dealers of Steinway pianos. Pictured here is the Steinway Room here in Cincinnati.

In 1919 the Rudolph Wurlitzer Co. bought the piano and player-piano business of the Melville Clark Piano Company, whose factory was in DeKalb, Illinois, near Chicago, after Melville died in 1918.

Melville Clark was the Clark of Story & Clark. He broke away from Story and Clark in 1900 to start his own piano company. Melville also started the QRS player piano roll company. Wurlitzer pianos were produced at DeKalb into the 1980's.
From 1910 the manufacture of theater organs at the North Tonawanda manufacturing plant became an increasingly significant part of Wurlitzer's business. This came largely from Robert Hope-Jones, who came to America from England in 1903. After brief employment with two other organ manufacturers, Robert started the Hope-Jones Organ Company in Elmira, NY, in 1907. Many improvements to the pipe organ, including leathered lip, the tibia family of stops, and the double touch, are attributed to Robert Hope-Jones and he was granted a multitude of organ-related patents. In 1910, Wurlitzer acquired the Hope-Jones Organ Company and moved it to North Tonawanda.
"There Is the Reason Why Mine is the Only Straight Picture House in Cincinnati Getting

Billy Brown

owner of the Palatial Nordland Plaza Theatre, Cincinnati; and Brown speaks after having had a Wurlitzer Orchestra over a year.

Other high-class houses in Cincinnati running the same Film Service as Brown, but WITHOUT Wurlitzer Music, can get but 5 cents. That is proof POSITIVE.

Wurlitzer Music in this Theatre is an Equal Attraction with the Pictures

Brown is not only enthusiastic but GRATEFUL for what Wurlitzer Music has done for him. He said—"Not only do they give me the dime for a straight Picture Performance, but many spend 10 cents extra. And those automobiles that stand outside, that proves my trade is high-class and I KNOW it—I am absolutely certain of it; the thing that gets me the 10 cents and attracts the ‘classy’ people is my Wurlitzer Orchestra. You can make the tax strong as you want. It’s true and I’ll stand behind it.

A Wurlitzer Orchestra is Entirely Controlled by One Operator

No Human Orchestra, or group of musicians, can equal its quickness of manipulation. The Music is subject to lightning change and is perfectly timed to all the rapidly shifting scenes of the pictures. Plays every kind of Music and every kind of effect. Full Orchestra and Full Brass Band. Bass Drum, Snare Drum, Church Organ, Cornet, Violin, Bass Viol, Piano, Castanets, Xylophone, Flute, Clarinet, Flute, Flute and all kind of Orchestra. Tambourine, Bag Pipe, Kettle Drum, Cello, Triangle, Ocean’s Roar, Chair, or Quarter Singing, Telephone or Door Bell, Storm—thunder, howling of wind; Cat’s Yowl, Rooster Crowing, Dog Barking, Rifle Shot, Clatter, Cuckoo, Train Effect, Glass Crashing, Sleigh Bells, Cannon’s Roar, Bird, Fire Department, Horse Trot, Call’s Cry, Pig’s Cry, Lion’s Roar, Automobile Horn, Baby’s Cry, Door Creak, Indian Tom Tom, Steamboat Whistle, Etc, Etc.

CALL FOR DEMONSTRATION OR WRITE FOR CATALOGUE

Wurlitzer

THE RUDOLPH COMPANY

Cincinnati: 121 E. Fourth St.

Albany: 17-19 Green St.
Cleveland: 800 Huron Road
Detroit: 26 Adams Ave. W.
Milwaukee 153 Second St.
Rochester: 370 Main St. E.

Buffalo: 701 Main St.
Columbus: 57 E. Main St.
Kansas City: 1027 Main St.
New York: 115-119 W. 40th St.
San Francisco: 985 Market St.
Syracuse: 427 S. Clinton St.

Chicago: 329-333 S. Wabash Ave.
Dayton: 133 S. Ludlow St.
Louisville: 652 S. 4th Ave.
Philadelphia: 912 Chestnut St.
St. Louis: 1100 Olive St.

This promotional piece from 1914 gives a testimonial of a Cincinnati theater operator that says he gets 10 cents per person, where other theaters showing the same film get only 5 cents, because he has a Wurlitzer organ.
Initially, the photoplayer and unit orchestra or pipe organ business was unprofitable, but after a few years it became the majority of Wurlitzer business, as the automatic musical instrument business declined after 1920.

Console of the Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ in the Shea Buffalo Theatre

Ed. Note: Illustrations with embedded captions were extracted from original literature. Captions retained to illustrate their original source. ts
The 2010 AMICA Convention will be in Buffalo, New York from July 7th through July 11th.

**Wednesday, July 7th**

Although the Board has its meeting during the day, there will be an option for those not engaged at the Board Meeting. There will be an architectural tour given, probably twice during the day, that will visit the Observation Deck of Buffalo City Hall and various churches and other buildings in the Downtown area. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Buffalo was a vibrant, growing city and many prominent architects erected buildings that are today considered masterpieces. Stained Glass murals and brief organ recitals will highlight the tours. Come and experience these wonders with us. Some walking and “subway” riding is required. After dinner on your own, an entertainment is planned that will be entertaining and educational. This is not to be missed.

**Thursday, July 8th**

After our welcoming breakfast, our guests will board buses on a “Southtowns” Tour. Along the way we will stop at:

- **The Darwin Martin Complex** - This is the only multi-building residential complex ever designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. It has been lovingly restored over the past fifteen years and has now been returned to its original beauty as conceived by the master architect.

- **The Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society** - The only remaining building from the 1908 Pan-American Exposition held in Buffalo, New York. The museum, which holds much memorabilia from Buffalo's earlier years, also has an **Aeolian player pipe organ** that was originally installed in one of the more affluent homes of the Queen City. A short concert will be held in the auditorium to demonstrate the organ's capabilities.

- **The Pierce-Arrow Museum** - One of the more recent offerings in Buffalo, the Pierce-Arrow Museum displays a collection of automobiles manufactured in Buffalo by the prominent turn of the century company. The Pierce-Arrow was said to be the most expensive automobile produced during that time period and is today one of the more collectible antique automobiles in the world.
The **Roycroft Campus** - Founded by Elbert Hubbard in East Aurora at the turn of the century, this was a gathering of artisans and craftsmen who eschewed the mechanics of the industrial world by producing hand crafted items of great beauty and style. The campus is much the way it had been originally and a tour through its buildings will bring one closer to a lifestyle much slower and more "genuine". Lunch will be served at the Roycroft Inn.

**Vidler’s Store** – is one of the last remaining Five & Dimes in the country. Stepping through their doorway is like walking back in time to an age of simplicity. Wooden floors, gumball machines, brass cash registers and smiling faces welcome each customer. A place you must experience.

Once you have returned to the hotel, you will have the opportunity to explore some of **Buffalo’s eateries**. Over fifty restaurants are in the Downtown Buffalo area and many may be visited on foot or by hopping onto the free above ground “subway”.

If you take a while to dine, when you come back to the hotel you will find that the Mart will be ready to open around 7:00 pm. You can take your time and browse at your leisure. The Hospitality Suite will also be open.

**Friday, July 9th**

Breakfast will be on your own. Workshops will be held after breakfast and we have lined up the following:

1. **Bob Taylor** will give an illustrative talk on REAL Ampico coding. This is not just about 2,4,6,7 and crescendos! Learn from the expert!
2. **Herb Lindahl** will give a wonderful presentation of player piano rebuilding with a hands-on approach.
3. **Spencer Chase** will demonstrate the art and techniques of printing words on a roll using the same disc for operating the perforator and driving the printer.
4. **Ray Dietz** will be demonstrating his roll and box repairing techniques that he has developed over the years.
5. **Liz Barnhart** will have her annual cross-stitch class for those inclined to the gentler arts.
6. Members of the **South Towns Quilters Group** will show and talk about quilts.

And…all the time that the Workshops are being held, there will be an **Open House in the Hospitality Suite** so that Western New Yorkers and folks from Ontario can experience Automatic Musical Instruments up close and personal. We are hoping to have media coverage of this event.

After all of the excitement of the morning, everyone can take a short breather and get some lunch on their own. At 1:00 pm will be departing for Niagara Falls. Depending on individual choices, there will be stops at major Niagara Falls venues. There are planned stops for:

The **Maid of the Mist** – This is a boat ride on the lower Niagara River to the base of the Horseshoe Falls. You really get to experience the awesome power of the Niagara River from this viewpoint. There is the probability of your getting a bit damp, but you are given a plastic slicker to wear.
Cave of the Winds – This is an opportunity to get up close and personal with the falls. You walk alongside of the Bridal Veil Falls on stairs and landings for different viewpoints of the falls. It’s great for photographers. You will get wet and lockers are available to place valuables (I believe).

Trolley Car Ride – If you would like a more relaxed time at the Falls, you can take a Trolley Ride around the grounds of the park. The ride has stops at different areas and you can disembark at an area, look around and hop on the next trolley that comes around in about 20 minutes. The ride has a conductor that points out areas of interest for the riders.

Seneca Niagara Casino – For all the gaming fans, the casino offers a complete compliment of gaming tables and machines. A special bus will be going directly to the casino and each rider will be given a $20 credit and a $5 voucher toward your dinner. For those more adventurous, you can walk around the park on your own or leisurely walk toward our rendezvous place for dinner, the Seneca Niagara Casino.

Dinner will be at the Seneca Niagara Casino at approximately 5:00 pm. The casino has six restaurants and you can dine with friends at any one of the restaurants. In each registration packet there will be $25 to spend on food or whatever while you are there.

At approximately 7:00 pm we will travel back to Buffalo and be dropped off at Shea’s Buffalo Theatre. Once inside this fantastically restored building, we can listen to a special artcase Wurlitzer Apollo Grand Piano in the lobby, especially built for Shea’s when it was opened in 1926 and then we can sit back and relax in the theatre itself and be entertained by Dennis James, a prominent theatre organist, who will demonstrate his prowess on the four manual, 21 rank Wurlitzer Pipe Organ accompanying a silent film or two. After the concert, we can walk a short distance back to the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Saturday, July 10th

After such an exciting day on Friday we will take it somewhat easy on Saturday morning. A light breakfast may be in order. A morning entertainment is in the works but hasn’t been confirmed yet.

At 10 am we are scheduled to experience one of the great festivals of the US. Two short blocks away from the hotel’s main door is “The Taste of Buffalo”. This is the second largest food festival in the country. At least 60 restaurants and wineries set up shop for two days offering their best and most exciting foods from their menus. There will be foods from many different countries and parts of our country. Everyone will receive $10 in tickets to spend on a variety of foods. Additional tickets can be purchased at each end of the festival.
At about 2:00 pm we will have the **Pumper Contest**. All are encouraged to participate in this year’s contest. I hear that there are going to be some “sleepers” waking up the Hospitality Suite. Bring a great piano roll and pump off a few calories. After the Pumper Contest is over and the Footsie has been awarded to the deserving winner, there will be a couple hours to rest and relax.

At about 6:30 pm people can start heading for the Banquet Room where will be a cash bar. **The Banquet** starts at about 7:30 pm and we will listen to the music of **The Pyramid Band**. We welcome you to wear a period costume for this evening.

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**Sunday, July 11th**

A not-quite closing breakfast and business meeting will take place around 8:00am. After the business meeting is over, those people not staying another night will have an opportunity to check out and store luggage at the check out desk.

At 11:00 am we will board our buses and take a short trip out to North Tonawanda to experience the first-ever **Band Organ Rally** on **Wurlitzer Factory** grounds. Members of the **COAA (Carousel Organ Association of America)** have been invited to have a Band Organ Rally on Wurlitzer grounds for Saturday and Sunday. During this afternoon we will have the opportunity to go to the **Herschell-Spillman Carrousel Museum**, listen to a talk by **Jeff Weiler** on the **History of the Wurlitzer Company in North Tonawanda**, or just plain listen to Band Organs. We are hoping for approximately 30 instruments to be playing for the weekend. In the late afternoon, we will take our buses back to the Hyatt where the Hospitality Suite will be open for the last time.
Herschell-Spillman Carrousel Museum, including a working Wurlitzer band organ roll perforator.

COAA Band Organ Rally on the grounds of the original Wurlitzer factory.
The Buffalo Hyatt Regency Hotel is located at 2 Fountain Plaza in Buffalo, NY 14202. It is our host during the 2010 AMICA Convention. It has just undergone a $15 Million renovation to serve us better with improved amenities. Located in Buffalo’s Theatre District, it is central to all venues in the area. A special convention rate is $105 per night. You may contact the hotel locally at 716-856-1234 or 1-800-233-1234. When booking your reservation by phone, please use the code “MUSI” to obtain the special convention rate. If you book your reservation on-line, please use the code “G-MUSI” to obtain our special rate. Hotel registration may also be done on-line at:

http://buffalo.hyatt.com

For Convention Registration (not hotel registration), please make checks or prepaid bank money orders, payable in the total amount on your Registration to “AMICA 2010”, and mail with the Registration to:

Holly Walter
65 Running Brook Drive,
Lancaster, NY 14086 U.S.A.
Phone: 716-656-9583
E-mail: bballmomma99@yahoo.com

If you have any questions, please contact us!

Convention registration includes 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 2 dinners, transportation, and entry to the Darwin Martin House, Pierce-Arrow Museum, Buffalo Historical Museum, Roycroft Campus Tour, Vidler’s 5&10, Workshops, Dennis James Concert, Band Organ Rally, Jeff Weiler talk in the Wurlitzer Factory, Herschell-Spillman Carousel Museum and entry to the Seneca Niagara Casino. Com-plementary internet access in guest room is provided.
Southern California Chapter

President - Rich Ingram
Reporter and Photographer - Shirley Nix

February 13th was the date for the Southern California Chapter meeting in Riverside at the fabulous “Bill’s Wild West Town” belonging to Bill and Bonnie Leuer and John Ekman, and what a meeting it was.

The creation of the town took over 20 years, starting with two young college students talking. When Bill mentioned he’d like to have a four-wheel drive Jeep John said he knew where there was one for sale in Nevada and off they went to buy it. Of course, after obtaining one Bill decided he needed another one, and when that necessity was fulfilled then the two decided they needed the accessories for these vehicles also.

Many more hunting trips ensued, and the more they collected the more they “needed”. They started obtaining World War I trucks and vehicles, which meant they needed uniforms, posters and more accessories. Other old vehicles and various things associated with them kept turning up, and were absorbed into the collection.

Soon it became clear to Bill and John that they needed buildings to house all the things they had accumulated, but they didn’t want just any buildings of course. They decided to build a town! They used wood from old buildings that were being torn down, and the Wild West Town was born, complete with a school, a printer’s office, a dry goods store, a bar (with a wooden Indian outside, naturally), a house of ill-repute, a mine and a train station just to name a few. Train tracks circled the station and a railroad hand car was added for the enjoyment of the visitors.

In the barn area an auto area was built, with many WWI army vehicles, and delivery trucks from an early time, including a Mills Novelty Company Violano Delivery truck.

This was the area where lunch was available at very low prices, and the lines formed to take advantage of the opportunity.

There were still left over parts and accessories galore, so it was necessary to add an additional museum up the hill. Here were an amazing range of auto parts, cars, trucks, and whatever you might need for autos of the era.

Also housed here is the World War I uniform and poster collection. This is a truly fascinating place to visit and enjoy.

To add to the fun, visitors had the option of riding in a WWI troop carrier up to the museum. That’s something you don’t do every day.

We shared the premises with the antique car, truck, and roaring 20’s car clubs. The town is opened only once a year for visitors, and we were lucky enough to have Dave and Dianne Reidy arrange for us to be invited. There was a large crowd, with the car clubs, AMICA and the neighbors, and everyone enjoyed the day immensely.

It was nice to have Bob Gonzalez from Northern California and his friend Bill Brennen attend this meeting. It turned out that Bill had worked with AMICA member Don Rugh some 28 years ago and hadn’t seen his friend since then, so Don was called and the two were able to get together and enjoy a special time. It was good to see Reese Banister, too. We were very sorry to hear his brother Terry isn’t well.

Dan and Philip Wright brought their two organs they built, Don Henry and Kelly Peters brought their fire truck golf cart with the large Pell organ on the back, and Frank and Shirley Nix brought their Limonaire fairground organ and the Hofbauer organ, which Lloyd Osmundson demonstrated for the day.

The music fit the scene beautifully, and really added to the ambience of the day. The Leuers and John Ekman all said it was a welcome addition, and we hope they will remember us next year.

We thank the Leuers and John Ekman for the opportunity to share their passion, and thank the Reidy’s for arranging the whole thing for us.

Pensive “lady” on balcony of bordello

Two young men try their hand at the railroad hand car
WW I troop carrier loading up for trip to upper museum

"Sheriff" Don Henry with Deputy Kelly Peters

Frank Nix and Thomas Silverstein outside the entrance to the "gold mine"

John Ekman, long time AMICA member and one of our co-hosts, tells us some of the town’s history

Seeburg Piano with interested customer

We all had to check our guns because they aren’t allowed in town

World War I Posters

World War II Vehicles
Mills Novelty Company Violano Delivery Truck

Car club members in full costume of the era

Bob Gonzalez admires the auto parts collection

Rick Shaw, Dave Reidy, Diane Lloyd and Dianne Reidy

Bill and Bonnie Leuer have fun with the Nix Hofbauer

Bill Blair, Lloyd Osmundson, Frank Nix, Shirley Nix, Brooke Osmundson, Richard Ingram by the Hofbauer Organ in front of the ‘House of Ill Repute’
Rocky Mountain Chapter

President - Jere DeBacker
Reporter - Larry Emmons

The Rocky Mountain AMICA chapter met April 25th at the Boulder Colorado home of Barry Weiss for an old fashioned singing party. We enjoyed playing and singing along with large selection of popular music rolls from the 1890s to 1920s, and musicals from the ’40s and ’50s. The rolls were played on Barry’s beautifully restored oak Conway player piano with Simplex mechanism.

After a desert pot luck and brief business meeting lead by chapter president Jere DeBacker, chapter member Dick Kroeckel was persuaded to play. Dick shared his delightful ragtime style perfected over decades on the road and in Central City Colorado saloons and casinos. We sang along to selections from The Fantastics, Music Man, My Fair Lady and other great Broadway shows. How do we remember all those lyrics, but forget what we went to get at the grocery store? Dick also entertained with a Fats Waller medley and some obscure gems, most notably Saloon, and I Want To Play Piano In A Whore House, both enthusiastically sung by Jerry Hutt. A grand time was had by all.

Our host Barry Weiss at Conway player piano

Dick Kroeckel and his delightful ragtime stylings

President Jere DeBacker

Ed Note: Apologies are extended for the oversight in posting the above Chapter Report earlier. t's
Rocky Mountain Chapter Christmas Meeting

President - Jere DeBacker
Reporter - Larry Emmons

The Rocky Mountain Chapter met for a weekend of music and fun on December 12th and 13th 2009 in Denver, Colorado. On Saturday, December 12th, a Christmas open house was hosted by Bill and Rosanna Harris at their large facility located in North Denver. This large collection is unique in the region and it is always a great place to visit. The Harris’ have a large collection of European Fairground and Dance Organs and well as numerous Orchestrians and Nickelodeons.

The Dutch Street Organ, Romantika (formerly called Philo) is a recent addition to the Harris’ collection and what a crowd pleaser it is! The instrument was rebuilt by Jan Roos in 1975 from a Mortier Dance Organ. It uses the 90 key Carl Frei system. While on the streets in The Netherlands there was a lot of book music arranged and cut for the organ which gives it a wide range of songs, both American and European. Many of us had fun exploring the insides and back sides of this instrument and many of the other instruments in the collection.

Some 40 music enthusiasts enjoyed the afternoon of eating, conversation, and listening to terrific music coming from the many rare and well maintained instruments. The potluck dinner was enjoyed by AMICAN’s plus guests from the local phonograph collectors club and members of the Music Box Society International (Rosanna is the publisher of the MBSI Journal, Mechanical Music). This affair provided a great opportunity to invite guests and potential new members.

The potluck supper hosted by Bill and Roseanna was a magnificent success as evidenced by this collection of photos of the participants.
The chapter members reassembled on Sunday, Dec. 13th at the home of Steve McCormick in Arvada, CO for brunch, entertainment by Steve’s Steinways and for a business meeting and annual election of officers. The RM Chapter has 39 member families at this time. The chapter voted to raise dues from $5 per year to $10 starting in 2011 in order to work toward a reserve for the chapter treasury and to support activities in the future. President Jere DeBacker thanked everyone for making the past year a successful one for the chapter. The revised method for planning meetings where the members/hosts make the plans has been very effective; six meetings/events were carried out in 2009! The current slate of officers were re-elected for 2010. These are:

President: Jere DeBacker
Vice President: Ken Hodge
Secretary: Louise Lucero
Treasurer: Barry Weiss

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After the meeting we moved a few blocks to the home of Dick Kroeckel, where the remaining part of the afternoon was spent looking over, under and inside of Dick’s many instruments. The usual ‘star’ of any visit to Dick’s home is the extremely rare 9’6” Steinway D, the first one of 10 fitted with a Duo Art (1919). Equally popular are Dick’s own renditions of just about any title one can think of (played real-time of course)!
Founding Chapter
SPOTLIGHT ON AMICAns

TOM HAWTHORN
a man who wears many hats

My first exposure to automatic music was when I was 10 years, at Knott's Berry Farm. Many of us saw our first nickelodeons there. I was impressed by the Coinola X so much I spent 98 cents (almost two weeks allowance) for a 45 rpm record of this wonderful instrument. I still have it.

My first piano was an Emerson 88 note pumper, bought in 1967. It was mostly restored. It got many workouts with my friends spending weekends at my home just to play it. But I had heard a Knabe Ampico A at a neighbor's house. Nothing would satisfy me until I had my own. I found an original 1927 Fisher Ampico needing total restoration at an estate sale. This Ampico still sits proudly in my living room.

I missed the fun of pumping 88 note rolls. I found an excellent 1913 Steinway upright Themodist-metrostyle I bought in 1994. My house flooded in 1995 halting restoration. I still have the piano. With eventual plans to downsize, I found a Fisher Marque Ampico and decided that would be an ideal compromise for when I have to sell the Fisher and give up on the Steinway. Collecting pianos definitely requires a lot of square footage in your home!

My interest in antique phonographs and records came before my interest in pianos. I remember an Edison upright with discs in an antique store about 1960 for $20.00. I had that amount but my parents didn't think I should spend it on "such junk." I got my first phonograph a few months later, a table model Victrola with a broken spring for only $1.00. My father was a good machinist and repaired the spring. From there on, there was no stopping me. Every trip to Goodwill or Salvation Army brought back a stack of 78s or another phonograph. I quickly outgrew my bedroom. My parents let me have a downstairs room to house all my stuff. The collection grew through high school, college, the Air Force, and two marriages and now numbers about 40 phonographs and over 8000 78s and cylinders.

For the past 20 years I have run a mail order record auction, catering to collectors of early 78s and cylinders. I repair antique phonographs, and sell restored instruments both at my shop in Roseville and at antique fairs. With this overlap of business and hobby, it's difficult to tell when I'm working or having fun!

I joined AMICA in 1970, beginning with the Southern California Chapter then moved north in 1975.

The support and encouragement of so many wonderful members has really given me a boost for my hobby and business. Without AMICA, I would probably still be pumping that partially restored Emerson upright.

Ed note: Reprinted from March-April 2010 Pneumatic Pheus with permission
Pacific Can-Am Chapter

President - Bill Mote
Reporter - David Goodwin

Our Sept meeting was held at the home of Dan Brown in Spokane WA. Dan has a wonderful collection of reproducing pianos, phonographs and many other interesting items.

Ampico A reproducing piano

Dave Goodwin next to the Chickering Ampico B

Life size Nipper

Stu Swanberg, Rob Wilson, Bill and Judy Mote and Mark Smithberg

So good to see the Marshalls who moved to Spokane so we don’t normally get to see them

Our host Dan Brown

Dan playing his pump organ
Our Dec meeting was held at the home of Carl and Hallie Dodrill. We had a great time with an elephant gift exchange a great potluck and special music.

The group is looking at the Welte Reproducing piano

Peg Kehret and Mark Smithberg

Our business meeting

Marylou Becvar

Dan’s Red Welte upright piano

Carl showing us his Aeolian player Pipe Organ. Quite amazing!!!
The historic town of Wabash Indiana was the destination for the fall meeting of the Midwest Chapter. Saturday afternoon brought us to the Wabash County Historical Museum, housed in a renovated 1894 downtown department store. Our tour guide came in on her day off to show us the featured exhibit Portraits of Lincoln: The Robert Lang Collection. In a story that seemed to be out of Antiques Roadshow, she told of how the huge featured portrait of Lincoln was found in England by a man who shipped it back to his sister as a rolled canvas. She didn’t bother to look at what was inside but sold it at a yard sale as a piece of canvas to cover a picnic table – for only 50 cents! It turned out to be a famous painting by William T. Matthews, which once hung in the White House. Displayed among other portraits of Lincoln were campaign buttons and ribbons, a press pass from his photographer and a piece of his coat from the night of the assassination.

The rest of the museum was devoted to the history of the area, including a switch that commemorates the city as being the first electrically lighted city in the world! Four arc lights invented by Clevelander Charles Brush were placed on top of the courthouse, and on March 31, 1880, the lights were seen by 10,000 people from miles around! For a town with a population of 320, this was a huge event!

Not far from the museum is the Dr. James Ford Historic Home – the original part was constructed in 1841. More rooms were added through the years and today it is restored to the way it might have appeared in 1875. His Civil War surgery practice was commemorated in a surgery suite with authentic instruments and “patient”. Completing our visit was the carriage house featuring a sleigh and horse.

We had a little free time to visit downtown with its shops and restaurants, with many more buildings under restoration. Then it was time for dinner at the Honeywell Center, built in 1949 by industrialist Mark Honeywell, whose name you may recognize from Honeywell thermostats. The center features concerts and plays and has banquet facilities where we were greeted by our host for the weekend, Hope Rider. Hugh McIntyre welcomed us with accordion music before dinner and afterwards we had a drawing for the beautiful table arrangements.

The highlight of the evening was our trip to Hope Rider’s home, where the collection of automatic music was perfected by her late husband Frank. Our tour guides were sons John and Karl Rider and friend Mike Grant. There was a large selection of nickelodeons, Regina music box, Ramey Banjo-Orchestra, Seeburg L Orchestrion and a Violano-Virtuoso. A fairground organ, band organs, street organs and other musical memorabilia added to the collection. We enjoyed listening to all of the instruments and hearing the history of each.

Sunday morning was time for the brunch and business meeting at the Charley Creek Gardens, where we entered the arts and crafts-styled meeting room through a huge greenhouse. We reviewed the Cincinnati convention and planned for future meetings, the next one to be held in Marion Ohio on April 17-18, 2010. The chapter would like to thank Hope Rider, Hugh McIntyre, Don Johnson and Bob Andersen for planning this special weekend.
Our host Hope Rider explains this automaton machine by Fr. Oerlein. Don Johnson’s relative makes these in Germany. Watching are Rod Hanscom, Jody Trittipo, Don Johnson and Miriam Hanscom.

Admiring Hope’s favorite Seeburg E are Mike Grant, Alvin Wulfekuhl, Gary Rasmussen and Shirley Ekvall.

Chapter President Don Johnson presents host Hope Rider with a souvenir AMICA bell at our business meeting on Sunday. Looking on are Bob Andersen, Hugh McIntyre, Mary Pollock, Richard VanMetre and Shirley Ekvall.

This new reproduction Seeburg KT was made out of a case ordered from Kimball of Jasper, Indiana by Bill Edgerton of Connecticut and built by Dave Ramey. Note the roll number (8) indicator.

Miriam Hanscom and son Rod consider “having their character read” by this 1920s fortune machine.

Enjoying a “Sound of Music” medley on the Stinson are Liz and Mike Barnhart.
Hope Rider demonstrates her Ramey Banjo-Orchestra to Rod Hanscom.

Fill 'er up! Bob Andersen thought this Crown gas pump at the Wabash County Historical Museum would go great with his classic cars.

Nipper the RCA Victor dog and an organ grinder and his monkey preside over the band organ room in Hope Rider's collection.

Our tour guide at Dr. Ford's home shows pharmacist Alvin Wulfekuhl an 1800s mold for pill making.

Part of our group meets on the porch of the Dr. James Ford home.

Lincoln campaign buttons and a press pass from his photographer.

This large portrait of President Lincoln, described by our guide at the Wabash County Historical Museum, was once purchased for only 50 cents at a yard sale!
The sleepy small town of Hanford, California came to life with its presentation of "The Magnificent Organs of Hanford", a tour of four wonderful churches with organ concerts at each, plus the Fox Theater featuring silent movies with Wurlitzer organ accompaniment. (The Fox has been completely restored to perfection by its current owner.) The tickets included a buffet lunch in the 1924 Auditorium with entertainment by the High School Jazz Band, which was really great, and the monkey organs of Southern California. After lunch the people were led to the next church by a bagpiper. Each church has a wonderful organ and the concerts were really fantastic.

The Southern California chapter of AMICA furnished 9 monkey organs, plus the fire truck golf cart with the fantastic Pell Organ on the back and a Wurlitzer 105 owned by Rick Shaw (sounding great) to entertain the people as they went from one venue to the other. The shortest distance a member came was that of Rick Shaw who lived just a short hop, skip and a jump away in nearby Visalia, and the furthest were Bob Meyer from San Diego and Ken Hodge from Colorado. That’s dedication. People seemed to enjoy the ambience of the organs as they went from one spot to the other.

This was the first time for this event, and it was a lot of fun. We were given tickets for lunch which allowed us entrance to any of the other events. Most of us got to go to the Fox for the silent movies and to enjoy the concerts occurring in at least one or two of the churches, plus the lunch.

Hanford is an old town, dating from the 1880’s, and many of the buildings are from that time period. One of the churches was rebuilt in the early 1920’s, and the original church, which was built of redwood in the 1880’s, was in such good shape that the town decided to keep it rather than tear it down. It was jacked up, put on logs and horses pulled it to a spot next to the new church, about a mile and a half away. The early one is quite unique, with all hand-hewn pews and all hand made metal fixtures. The stained glass windows are original, too, although no one seems to remember if they were left in the church for the move or taken out and re-installed after the building was in place.

We stayed at the Irwin Street Inn, which is a complex made up of four original Victorian buildings which were moved on site to form the Inn. They do a lot of weddings there and it’s a lovely place.

One of the famous spots in town is the Superior Dairy, which is known for its home made ice cream, made in 10-gallon batches by hand on site. They make the largest, tallest banana
split I have ever seen, and we watched a man from town actually eat the whole thing. Most of us ordered a “single scoop”, which turned out to be probably close to a pint of ice cream. We sat at the counter and watched the concoctions being served, each one larger than the last, which was amazing. It’s hard to believe the residents of Hanford are not all quite heavy, but they aren’t.

There is talk of another event in April, and we have been invited to participate again.
Silent Saleman
by John Motto-Ros

(See President’s Message at beginning)

Suggest all Chapters take on these Silent Salesmen as a project. The object is to have it in a conspicuous place at Chapter Meeting, Open Houses, etc., so that guests can walk away with them and join AMICA after seeing what our members have as their contribution towards preservation of a unique slice of our musical heritage.
In The News

KLRE/KUAR-FM Public Radio
Little Rock, AR
7 February 2010

Eubie Blake On Piano Jazz

This month marks the 122nd anniversary of James Herbert "Eubie" Blake's birth. Blake was the last-known original ragtime pianist when he appeared on the second season of Piano Jazz at age 93. On this program from 1980, Blake remembers his vaudeville days and writing the classic songs "Charleston Rag" and "I'm Just Wild About Harry."

Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz

by Grant Jackson

This week, Piano Jazz digs deep into the archives with a session featuring James Herbert "Eubie" Blake. He was the last of the known living original ragtime pianists when he appeared on the program in 1980 with host Marian McPartland. Here, the 93-year-old Blake recalls working in vaudeville, performing at the height of the Jim Crow era, writing "Charleston Rag" and even watching a performance by the great Russian pianist Sergei Rachmaninoff.

Blake kicks off this session with a bouncing solo tune, "Betty Washboard Rag." Blake's chord voicings show the importance of improvisation in jazz from its very beginning. "I play it the way I want my music to sound, not the way they say," Blake says. "Like 50 cents. You can get 50 pennies — it looks better — but it ain't but 50 cents just the same."

Not That Marian, The Other Marian

The session continues with Blake's "Marian's Waltz," written for his wife, who shares a first name with McPartland. Blake glides across the keyboard at a lilting tempo, jumping in between easy and assertive moods with a few bars of fiery stride. For 50 years, the tune's namesake, Marian Blake, handled Eubie's business matters and made sure he rehearsed three hours a day.

Blake performs a tender vocal on his "You're Lucky to Me." The sentimental, old-fashioned lyric, sung by its author, is at once beautiful and haunting. He continues with a few bars of "Charleston Rag," also a Blake original. "That was before I could write music," he says. "In 1899, I composed it."

He then performs "Dream Rag," commenting to McPartland and calling out the changes as they happen. "You know what key's been worrying me? E major," Blake says, as he launches into "For the Last Time Call Me Sweetheart" by Al Johns.

"Oh, I love it," McPartland says.

For Blake, however, the lovely tune conjures grim memories of the Jim Crow era: "Johns played that song for a singer, a white girl," Blake says. "Would you believe they wouldn't let him come out on stage to play? He's backstage and she's out there on stage singing."

Seeing Sergei Rachmaninoff

On a separate, happier occasion, Blake remembers seeing Rachmaninoff perform "The Star Spangled Banner" at Carnegie Hall. He describes Rachmaninoff's legendary hands interpret the tune through octaves across the keyboard, a reminder that Blake and other early jazz players held classical music in high regard.

Blake and McPartland get together for two duets: "Kiss Me Again" and "St. Louis Blues." McPartland then performs a solo tribute to Blake with her elegant rendition of "I'm Just Wild about Harry." The tune was written by Blake and Noble Sissle for their 1921 musical Shuffle Along, which became the first hit musical on Broadway written by and about African-Americans. Blake asks of McPartland's playing, "Why didn't I think of it that way?"


Set List

"Betty Washboard Rag" (R. Kreve)
"Marian's Waltz" (J.H. Blake)
"You're Lucky to Me" (J.H. Blake, A. Razaf)
"Charleston Rag" (J.H. Blake)
"Dream Rag" (J.H. Blake)
"For the Last Time Call Me Sweetheart" (A. Johns)
"The Star Spangled Banner"
"Falling in Love With Someone" (V. Herbert, R. Young)
"Kiss Me Again" (V. Herbert, H. Blossom)
"St. Louis Blues" (W.C. Handy) McPartland, solo
"I'm Just Wild About Harry" (E. Blake, N. Sissle) With McPartland
"Gypsy Sweetheart" (V. Herbert, H. Smith)

Another $105,000 for organ project

by Janne Seletto

WILLOWBY'S historic Wurlitzer organ will get a $105,000 upgrade on top of more than $500,000 already allocated to restore it and relocate it to The Concourse, Chatswood.

This is despite advice by the project control group that the upgrade may be a waste of money.

On Monday, Willoughby Council voted to spend $105,000 to upgrade the organ's two-keyboard console to three keyboards.

Additional pipe ranks will be installed so it can be used as a concert organ as well as in a traditional theatre organ role.

North Shore Times
Sydney, Australia
6 February 2010
The decision was based on advice from organ experts and consultants, including Pipe Organ Constructions.

It said the organ in its present state was neither satisfactory for solo performance nor to accompany an orchestra or choir. Pipe Organ Constructions said the style H organ was a small, basic model, which was limited to its traditional role as an accompaniment to films.

It has been dismantled and is being stored in bits at an air-conditioned Seven Hills warehouse until it is rebuilt. The upgrade can only be done now, before the organ is built into the new concert hall. And the new hall, with its greater size and better acoustics, would make greater demands on the instrument.

“It's a no-brainer,” Cr Wendy Norton said. “We're going to spend $533,000 already - that's a very large amount of money.

“It's a false economy to not end up with an excellent instrument after such an enormous investment.”

But Cr Judith Rutherford cited the report of the project control group, which is made up of Willoughby General Manager Nick Tobin and the council’s three senior officers.

The report said current demand for organ music was not great, and that an upgrade was unlikely to result in larger audiences or more organ concerts at Chatswood.

Mr Tobin questioned the impact on the historical value of the instrument during the upgrade.

“If you say it fast $105,000 may not sound like a lot of money, but it is,” Cr Rutherford said.

The organ, used in Chatswood’s Arcadia Picture Theatre from the 1920s, was entrusted to the council in 1962 by Albert Crispe for the people of Willoughby.

Pittsburg Post-Gazette
Pittsburg, PA
22 February 2010

Eric Singer's robotic device proves a mechanical and musical success

By Marty Levine
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The Pied Piper of musical robots has led his mechanical children to Pittsburgh.

Eric Singer spent the past 10 years running the League of Electronic Musical Urban Robots (LEMUR) in Brooklyn, attracting high-tech collaborators, including They Might Be Giants, while making musical instruments out of plastic fish, flame-throwers and toy slime in his spare time.

Now his workshop is a Squirrel Hill basement, where Singer's latest GuitarBot is under construction. Two other computer-driven guitars are currently on a world tour with Pat Metheny, alongside a software-run marimba, vibraphone, orchestra bells and other percussion instruments -- 40 in all -- that Singer mechanized for the jazz guitarist's latest album.

The 1988 Carnegie Mellon University grad moved his wife, young daughter and in-laws here in August, and he has hooked up with local roboticists and musicians.

"If there's a brain drain going on it's in the direction of Pittsburgh right now, and I like that a lot," he says.

LEMUR's work has already been featured here at First Night and the Children's Museum.

Following CMU and a "not very interesting IT job," Singer decided to work on his saxophone playing at Berklee College of Music. "It didn't take me long to sniff out the music technology department. I kept playing the sax, but I never looked back."

By 2007, LEMUR's work had attracted the attention of Metheny, who was intent on composing for a new kind of one-man band. Singer developed the instruments and joined him for rehearsals in a rented Brooklyn church in 2008. The "Orchestrion" album -- named for a 19th-century mechanical orchestra akin to a player piano -- was released last month.

"I know Pat has had a lot of people from his past bands come in to see what he's doing and think it's pretty cool. In fact, [vibraphonist] Gary Burton and [drummer] Jack DeJohnette have contributed instruments to the project" -- instruments Singer mechanized for Metheny to control.

Computer MIDI technology and solenoids -- a piston-like mechanism that allows a clothes washer to switch cycles, for instance -- do the rest.

The GuitarBot looks more like four short metal skis mounted next to each other than a musical instrument. Each silver plank holds a steel guitar string, with a sliding bridge to control the pitch moving like a guitarist's fingers up and down the neck. A wheel with four picks rotates to pluck each string near the bottom, while a damper stops the sound.

Software allows the player to control everything from a note's length to its "rubberiness," in Singer's words. The whole thing is mounted on a short metal stalk that lets the instrument vibrate and sway.

The partly completed version in Singer's basement is secured to the floor with a huge anvil.

"It doesn't look like a guitar and it doesn't look like a robot," Singer notes. "And it plays entirely differently than what you'd think of an animatronic robot picking up an off-the-shelf guitar. I've always tried to stay away from that Chuck E. Cheese esthetic of a teddy bear playing the banjo."

In fact, for all the robotics involved, it sounds like an acoustic instrument played live. It has the opposite musical effect of a synthesizer or sample.

The GuitarBot can be programmed to respond to a human musician on another instrument, allowing for a kind of dual improvisation. Or, as Metheny used it on the "Orchestrion" CD, it can double a musician note for note or play its own part live as a member of a large band controlled by a single person.

Similarly, Singer rigged the percussion instruments with multiple sticks and mallets so that they can be played in ways only an eight-armed drummer or 25-armed marimba player could han-
dle.

"I've seen [Metheny] sit there and jam on the guitar, and the marimba follows along in nearly perfect sync," Singer says. "It's close enough that it seems virtually simultaneous."

Leaning on his bandsaw, surrounded by metal shavings and computer boards, Singer muses about his next frontier: robotic woodwinds.

"There's a wow factor to the musical robots," Singer says, "but they stand on their own musically, and that's always been of utmost importance to me. Because if they don't sound good, then what's the point?"

New York Post
New York, NY
22 February 2010

Civic groups fighting to keep 1920s carousel out of DUMBO park

By RICH CALDER

A state plan to relocate an exquisitely restored 1920s carousel to popular waterfront parkland in DUMBO is infuriating local civic groups, who say it's a bad fit that isn't worth losing trees and lawn space over.

Jane Walentas, wife of DUMBO developer David Walentas, has agreed to relocate the carousel she bought and restored to the western shore of Empire State-Fulton Ferry Park's cove in front of the historic Tobacco Warehouse. The carousel would be located within a massive glass pavilion designed by architect Jean Nouvel.

Doreen Gallo, executive director of the DUMBO Neighborhood Association said "We all love the carousel; we just think it belongs in another part of Brooklyn Bridge Park."

Empire State-Fulton Ferry Park, which will eventually be absorbed into the long-delayed Brooklyn Bridge Park project, saw part of its green space shut down last month as construction began to make room for the carousel.

Gallo also questioned why no public input was solicited before the state-city Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corp. in December agreed to accept the carousel and put it in the park. The carousel is not addressed in the park's project plan.

Other groups putting pressure on elected officials to keep "Jane's Carousel" out of the Empire State-Fulton Ferry include the Fulton Ferry Landing Association, Vinegar Hill Association and the Brooklyn Bridge Park Defense Fund (best known for fighting to keep condos out of the park, too).

Judi Francis, who heads the Park Defense Fund, said Nouvel's designs are typically "modern," so it's unlikely that his glass pavilion would fit in with the rest of the historic buildings along the DUMBO waterfront.

"It's hard to guess what his design will be because no one will tell us about it," she said.

She said a better location would be on the Brooklyn Heights side of Brooklyn Bridge Park, such as Pier 6. Gallo suggested under the Manhattan Bridge.

Francis also said it's a travesty that trees are being cut down to pave way for the carousel when other segments of Brooklyn Bridge Park have been delayed because of lack of financing and bickering between the city and state over control of the park.

Jane Walentas is also donating $3.45 million for landscaping and other improvements in the park that include lighting to allow the tourist hotspot to remain open well past its current dusk closing time, eventually extending the hours to 1 a.m.

Walentas would operate the ride through a nonprofit "Friends of Jane's Carousel," and any profits from concessions would go towards park maintenance, officials have said.

Elizabeth Mitchell, a spokesperson for the Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corp. said the development corporation is "extremely grateful for this phenomenally generous gift by David and Jane Walentas and is certain the landmark 1922 Carousel will enhance the space and the experience for visitors to Brooklyn Bridge Park. We look forward to sharing further details regarding how this beautifully restored carousel will fit into the landscape along the East River."

Brooklyn Bridge Park has been a political hot potato since project planners announced in December 2004 that more than 1,200 luxury condos would have to be included to raise enough money to offset the park's now-estimated $16.1 million annual maintenance costs.

Only one high-rise offering 440 luxury units has been built; another 780 units are on hold because of the slumping economy.

Gothamist
New York, NY
19 February 2010

Central Park Carousel Operator Canned

By Jen Carlson

A year after carousel operator New York One LLC abandoned the Queens Forest Park merry-go-round, claiming there wasn't enough foot traffic, the Parks Department has terminated their contract to run the famed Central Park Carousel. They told the NY Post the operator has failed to maintain and clean the ride up to their standards. The company will be out by Monday, and they may not have anyone else to run it for another month.

Some interesting tidbits from the article: the ride costs $2 and takes in just under $200K a year. There's a $7,500 concession fee the operator need to pay in order to run it. It's not running when the temperature falls under 32 degrees. And one man, Sal Napolitano, has worked in various positions at the ride for 39 years; he says that Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis once asked if she needed to pay to watch her children go 'round.
Volunteers touch up Missoula carousel to make it sparkle as new

By AJ MAZZOLINI

A strong chemical smell lingered in the air as a dozen people weaved their way through horses. They were careful not to brush against the animals, not because they were wild or dangerous, but because most of them were covered with a coat of varnish to keep the newly painted figures from getting scratched.

"Nobody's passed out so far," said Barb Alonzo. "The smell is a small price to pay to make the horses beautiful."

Alonzo was one of the many volunteers donating time Thursday to keep the horses in pristine condition. Each winter, workers close the ride for two weeks for maintenance that includes repainting, cleaning and mechanical work.

The amount of paint and clear coat varies for each horse, she said, because not every horse gets the same amount of attention.

"The animals getting ridden need a lot more coatings," Alonzo said.

Horses along the inside track of the carousel are used much less and kids "shy away from them" because it's less exciting, she said. The outer horses give them the chance to pull plastic rings from the mouth of an outstretched carved dragon.

Among the army of painters and varnishers, John Thompson worked on the dragon, sealing in the greens and reds on its body. Thompson, the man who had a hand in designing most of the carousel's creatures and many other wooden carved animals, drew up the first one in 1989 and has been engulfed in the carousel ever since, he said.

"What could we do otherwise?" said Thompson, a print maker by trade who spends more and more time carving wood.

"It keeps us off the streets with our sharp (carving) tools. You don't have a bad day at the carousel."

Like Thompson, Alonzo keeps coming back to the carousel every year. Seeing the horses evolve from design drawings to full-blown works of art is really special, she said.

"By the time you see them created from just wood to these beautiful horses and then onto the carousel with the music, you just have to keep coming back," she said. "We've all fallen in love with the horses."

"For the adults, it kind of brings you back to childhood," Alonzo said. "I think the carousel is kind of like a diamond for Missoula."

Jeff Stevens, the president of Pony Keepers, the group responsible for the upkeep of current horses and the creation of new ones, said he got involved with the project years ago right after the originals were first carved.

"I just showed up one day and said 'Put me to work' and they did," he said. "It's a hobby and it's very satisfying to take a block of wood and turn it into something like this. Now, we've carved enough other figures to populate another carousel this size."

The Missoula carousel was first dreamed up by Chuck Kaparich in the late 1980s to pay homage to the Columbia Gardens carousel in Butte that closed in 1973. It wasn't long before A Carousel for Missoula had enough carvers to begin churning out horses, with all the work being volunteered by community members.

"Our payment is basically enjoying what we do," said Stevens.

The carousel, which opened in 1995, will be celebrating its 15th anniversary this spring.

AJ Mazzolini is a junior studying print journalism at the University of Montana who is interning at the Missoulian. He can be reached at 523-5251 or at aj.mazzolini@missoulian.com.

See video: http://tinyurl.com/9d95jrk
No Easter opening this year for the carousel

A project replacing the ride’s 115-year-old drive shaft is currently underway

By George Morse

EAST PROVIDENCE - In recent years the Charles I.D. Looff Carousel in Riverside has seen the installation of a new roof, the rehabilitation of a few dozen horses and the re-silvering of some 100 mirrors.

None of these projects, however, are said to be as important as the one currently underway at Crescent Park’s oldest and sole surviving structure. Last week, workers from California-based Brass Ring Entertainment (BRE) spent a few days inside the carousel measuring more than a dozen gears that make up the ride’s main drive shaft.

Originally built with the ride in 1895, the drive shaft is now 115 years old.

“The last 10 years or so it’s become a problem, as anything that gets old and keeps running has to wear out,” said Ed Serowik senior, whose tenure with the carousel and Crescent Park as a whole totals more than 60 years.

“Nothing lasts forever.”

Altogether, the drive shaft consists of two, five-feet wide main gears and 14 smaller pinion gears. Were the drive shaft to go, the ride would shut down completely.

“It hasn’t broken down yet but the teeth are getting so worn out that we’re at the point now where we’re anticipating we might lose timing on the gears,” Mr. Serowik said. “So we decided to change the gears now before we have a major problem.”

But getting new gears for a ride as old as the carousel isn’t as easy as picking them out of a catalog. Built before the days of assembly lines, every gear in the Looff Carousel was custom built for that particular ride. To make sure the new gears fit properly, BRE workers had to make the trip from California to measure each piece one-by-one before making the cross country trip back to their shop. From here, each gear will be individually re-built before making yet another cross country trip for installation in Riverside.

“I’ve been here for 60 years and this is probably the most important job I’ve ever handled,” Mr. Serowik said.

If such a project seems time consuming and costly, that’s because it is. Replacing all of the gears is set to cost slightly more than $100,000. Funds to cover this project will be taken from a 2002 Save America’s Treasures grant given to the city’s carousel park commission. This project is set to use up the remainder of these funds.

Measuring and then re-fitting the gears, Mr. Serowik said, is estimated to take about six months. While this means the ride won’t be ready for its traditional Easter opening, it does mean the carousel should stay functional for decades to come.

Said Mr. Serowik: “Hopefully it adds another 100 years to it.”

Carousel to be missed

For some parents, Italian-themed ride at Fashion Island is an important part of their experience. It’s slated to be dismantled this year.

By Brianna Bailey

Every weekend, Jeff and Yolanda Staff of Dana Point bring their daughter Sofia, 2 1/2, to Fashion Island for a hot dog, a piece of chocolate, and a spin on the carousel.

This past Saturday might have been the last time Sofia gets to ride on her favorite carousel horse — the pink one adorned with rhinestones.

“Pink, pink,” the toddler said excitedly after getting off the ride.

The Irvine Co. announced plans last summer to take down the carousel as part and ongoing, $100-million renovation project at the 42-year-old shopping center.

The two-year project includes adding Italian-inspired fountains and 150,000 square feet of additional retail space, as well as old-world-style streetlights and paving stones.

The carousel is being dismantled to make way for 4,000 square feet of extra retail space, additional seating and a new fountain in Pacific Court at Fashion Island.

The company has not given an exact date as to when the
carousel will be dismantled. Officials have only said the ride will come down at the beginning of 2010.

“We were really disappointed to hear they were taking it out,” Yolanda Staff said. “I was hoping more people would protest it going away.”

Scores of families with young children milled around the koi pond and pushed strollers down the shopping center’s brick-paved, open-air vistas on Saturday morning.

Many parents said they would spend their Saturdays elsewhere after the carousel comes down.

“It seems like there will be less stuff for kids here now. I’ll be sad to see it go,” said Ken Malone, of Irvine, who visits Fashion Island every few weeks to ride the carousel with his 18-month-old son Bryce.

“You’re going to miss it too, aren’t you, B,” Malone said to his son after taking a spin on the ride Saturday morning.

Malone said he will probably stop coming to Fashion Island when the carousel comes down.

Erik and Lisa Bateman of Long Beach visited Fashion Island on Saturday with their family because they wanted to take their 21-month-old son Zak and 4-year-old daughter Natalia on the carousel one last time before the ride came down.

“We like the fresh air and the atmosphere here. It will be sad when [the carousel] comes down,” Lisa Bateman said.

The Italian-themed carousel, called the Carousel Carnival, has been at Fashion Island since 2003.

Irvine Co. officials have said in recent months that renovation plans are underway, and that it’s likely too late to save the carousel, despite many complaints from parents.

Gary Delsohn, vice president of communications for the Irvine Co., could not immediately be reached for comment on Thursday.

“Whenever we hear from a dissatisfied customer, we try to rectify the situation,” John Christensen, a spokesman for the Irvine Co., told the Daily Pilot in November. “Unfortunately, on this issue, our plans for the center are complete. There simply isn’t space for us to relocate the carousel.”

An online petition a local mother has started to save the carousel had gathered about 1050 signatures as of Saturday afternoon.

The petition can be accessed at www.ipetitions.com/petition/savethecarousel/index.html.

The Daily Camera
Boulder, CO
19 February 2010

Historic Nederland carousel set to open after 25 years of work

By Laura Snider
sniderl@dailycamera.com.

Twenty-five years after Nederland's Scott Harrison began carving a menagerie of wooden animals, the fanciful creatures will finally be part of a working carousel in May.

The grand opening of the Carousel of Happiness is scheduled for Memorial Day weekend at its permanent home in Nederland. It's been a long time coming.

In 1985, Harrison began carving the animals on weekends and at night when he wasn't working for Amnesty International on a campaign to prevent torture.

"Working on this was a great balance," Harrison said. "It was just fun."

A year later, in 1986, Harrison bought the frame of an old carousel that was originally built in 1910 by Charles Looff, one of the great carousel makers of his time. Like many old carousels, the animals -- mostly ponies -- had been stripped away and auctioned off as artistic showpieces.

Harrison dismantled the carousel -- which had turned first at an amusement park called Saltair on the shore of the Great Salt Lake in Utah and then at a nearby state school -- and brought the parts to Nederland. Over the next two decades, Harrison went to work restoring the carousel and carving the replacement animals.

But unlike the carousel hull, which Harrison has kept very much true to its historical form -- even the restored wooden floor is made from boards of Southern yellow pine that also date back to 1910 -- the hand-hewn carousel animals have mostly strayed far from their pony roots.

At the Carousel of Happiness, all manner of animals will careen around the ride: an alpaca wearing ballet shoes, a dolphin with a wreath of flowers around its neck, a zebra with the
occasional red or yellow stripe and even a gorilla with his arm thrown around a wheelchair-accessible space. Of the 35 whimsical sculptures, only one is a horse -- an Indian pony with feathers in its mane.

In 2005, Harrison turned his carousel project into a non-profit foundation, and a board of locals has since been working hard to find a home for the carousel in Nederland and raise money for the 12-sided building that will allow the ride to run all year long.

"I really wanted to make it a community project," Harrison said. "We built almost everything with the help of volunteers."

And the Carousel of Happiness may also give back to the community, enticing tourists and boosting the local economy.

"It gives people another thing to do and keeps them in town longer," said Teresa Warren, chairwoman of Nederland's Downtown Development Authority. "I think it will be a destination for a lot of people who have never been to Nederland."

Eastern Daily Press
Norfolk, UK
20 January 2010

Battle for future of Norfolk fairground

by ED FOSS

An international acoustic expert was one of the main speakers at a planning appeal yesterday which should determine the fate of a lovingly-preserved Victorian fairground.

The owners of The Pride of the South gallopers want to place their historic 1893 creation, which featured in the film Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, at the North Norfolk Railway's Holt railway terminus for around 10 to 12 weeks during the main summer season

At the moment they are limited to four weeks per year and need planning permission for any longer.

That permission was turned down last March by North Norfolk District Council because councillors believed homeowners and patients in Kelling Hospital could suffer as a result of the repetitive noise from the carousel's organ.

Yesterday planning inspector Laura Graham visited the council's Cromer headquarters to hold an appeal hearing about the refusal.

Adrian James, who runs a company called Adrian James Acoustics which has completed more than 500 projects in ten countries including gas terminals, theatres, cinemas and concert halls, gave a large part of the evidence on behalf of the gallopers' owner Nikki Jones.

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The 36-horse set of gallopers were in use at the Holt station in the summer of 2008 for the short time allowed and the planning application followed this visit.

All parties agreed the first visit caused noise nuisance, but the thrust of Mr James' argument was that the council had failed in its planning application refusal to take into account a number of measures which would have been taken to remove this nuisance.

These were to move the ride to the north, change the direction the organ faced and use the railway's rolling stock to block some of the noise - although this latter action could not be guaranteed to be in place at all times in case the rolling stock was needed for operational reasons.

With such measures implemented, noise from the organ would be "either inaudible or barely audible", said Mr James. He added that they would be happy to agree a planning condition not to operate the ride when the rolling stock was not present.

For the council, Peter Moore argued the main point was the well being of hospital patients, some of whom might be in the last few days of their lives and receiving palliative care, which was too important to risk.

Homeowners were also represented at the hearing, with one saying: "After four or five hours of 'I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts', you just want to move house."

Miss Graham will give her appeal findings in the next few weeks.

The gallopers, built by Frederick Savage's company at King's Lynn, were enjoyed over Christmas by families outside The Forum in Norwich.

If the planning appeal goes the way of the council, the ride can still be legally used at the Holt site for a maximum of 28 days in every calendar year.

WSJM FM Radio
Benton Harbor, MI
19 February 2010

Organ Association Backs Out Of Saint Joe Festival

It looks -- and sounds -- like an event that's taken place in downtown Saint Joseph for the past few summers is no more. The Herald Palladium reports that the Carousel Organ Association of America has declined bring its Band Organ Rally to the area this year. The reason is that the city recently imposed stricter rules on how many hours per day the organs may be played on the bluff. Organizers had hoped for 30 hours of music over three days, and say without that much time to play, it isn't worth their while to come. Additionally, the city wanted to regulate how many of the organs could be played at once. The Band Organ Rally had been planned for August.
AN INTERESTING WELTE-MIGNON (LICENSEE) RECORDING DEMONSTRATION

William C. Heaton, President of Auto Pneumatic Action Co., Astonishes Salesmen from All Over Country, Here for Conference, by Rapid and Perfect Recording

Above—Walter Lund, Salesman, Recording in the Welte-Mignon (Licensee) Studio at the First Meeting of the Sales Conference of the Auto Pneumatic Action Co. in New York Last Week. In Oval—Mr. Heaton Explaining How the Dynamics Are Clearly Indicated on the Master Record.
Library of Congress
Historic Sheet Music Collection
1800-1922

This sheet music collection consists of approximately 9,000 items published from 1800 to 1922, although the majority is from 1850 to 1920 [view finding aid for the collection]. The bulk was published in many different cities in the United States, but some of the items bear European imprints. Most of the music is written for voice and piano; a significant minority is instrumental. Notable in this collection are early pieces by Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern, as well as music by other popular composers such as Victor Herbert, Jean Schwartz, Paul Dresser, Ernest R. Ball, Gussie L. Davis, Charles K. Harris, and George M. Cohan. Numerous arrangements of classical tunes by Bach, Beethoven, Schubert and other famous classical composers are also well-represented.

http://tinyurl.com/yhrsof9

In the left column, there is a search window. A search on "ragtime" yielded 182 results, shows covers in full color and all the sheet music pages following.

Chicago Sun-Times
Chicago, IL
18 January 2010

No touch screen, yet this keyboard rocks

BY BRAD SPIRRISON
Sun-Times Columnist

Couldn't make it to the Computer Electronics Show in Las Vegas earlier this year? Not sure you will be able to attend the "major" Apple announcement in San Francisco on Jan. 27? Fear not! To see (and hear) digital action at its finest, all you need to do is make a short drive to the Grand Piano Haus in Skokie.

Operated for more than a generation by the father and son duo of Fritz and Jeff Tasch, Grand Piano Haus is the only place in town that sells the AvantGrand Hybrid Piano by Yamaha. The deceptively digital instrument has no strings, yet possesses the visually elegant and full sound of a $175,000 concert grand piano. For universities, orchestras and even some individuals and families with extra scratch, the AvantGrand is a deal at less than $20,000.

"It's a hell of a piano," gushed my dad, Jim Spirrison, a jazz player who I took along for the demo to verify that the instrument was legit.

Having spent much of the past 25 years banging away on a traditional analog Yamaha in a downtown apartment, my dad appreciated that the AvantGrand had headphones. For his family and neighbors, a piano like this would mean no more waking up to Ramsey Lewis classics (however great) at 3 a.m. The four-speaker instrument also comes with five different voices, and at the flick of the switch could sound like a harpsichord or 1970s era electric piano. It also never needs to be tuned and comes equipped with a USB port to store and transfer your latest masterpiece.

Unlike any other digital piano or synthesizer, the AvantGrand comes with a real-wood keyboard and intricate grand piano action. It's visually stunning, and at first glance you wouldn't even know it was an electric instrument.

While you're at the Grand Piano Haus showroom, don't miss the High-Resolution Piano System that was invented by former rocket scientist Wayne Stahnke. A cross between a 1920s-style player piano and iTunes, the $8,000 system is installed in a mildly invasive fashion within a few select Kawai and Yamaha pianos. Listen to specially remastered performances by Judy Roberts and Art Tatum as if they were playing in your living room.

"I was blown away twice," said my dad, with a new appreciation toward this whole tech thing.

All About Jazz
19 January 2010

Pat Metheny: Orchestrion

by John Kelman
Managing Editor

The first question that has likely crossed the minds of many who've heard about guitarist Pat Metheny's Orchestrion is: why? Metheny has already published plenty of information about this unique project at his website, but it still doesn't get to the real heart of the matter. Orchestrion is a solo album in the truest sense of the word, with Metheny the only human player, and the only improvisational component over the album's five detailed compositions. The rest of the music—a rich tapestry of percussion, pianos, "guitarbots" and more—is driven by a vast array of solenoid switches and pneumatics, a modern day extension of the late 19th century orchestrion, itself an expansion of the simpler, paper roll-driven player piano. Why would this iconic jazz musician—one who has spent the vast majority of his career working in an idiom largely defined by interplay and interaction—choose to work with a series of mechanically-driven instruments?

There's an answer, but first some background. Long before the days of digital sampling—before actual sound recordings, even—it was possible to hear reproductions of songs on
pianos driven by rolls of paper with punched holes dictating which keys would be played and when. Yes, these player pianos were mechanical, losing the natural nuances created by even the most precise player's subtle variations in phrasing, time and touch. Still, it was a remarkable innovation. Even more extraordinary was the orchestrion—an array of musical instruments, most of them percussive, driven by pneumatics and electro-mechanics. Before it was possible to record real people playing real instruments, the orchestrion was the next best thing, and a remarkable sight to see: a stage full of instruments, all being played mechanically. Even in 2010, there's something otherworldly—magical, even—about the orchestrion.

As recording technology emerged—first with wax cylinders, then on to gramophone discs, magnetic tape and, ultimately, the various advanced methods available today—player pianos and orchestrians became relegated to the realm of curious archaism. Trust Metheny, then, to not only revive the orchestrion, but to work with a large group of inventors who have, over the past few years, been allowed by Metheny to build a contemporary orchestrion, one with far greater potential than its century-old predecessor. But still, the question remains: in a time when digital sampling makes it possible to reproduce virtually anything in a small laptop, why would Metheny choose to work with mechanically driven devices? Certainly they would be far more expensive to develop, and more cumbersome to take on the road—and Metheny is, indeed, taking his Orchestrion album on the road for a 2010 tour that is already booked for nearly 80 dates.

The answer is ultimately revealed on the album itself. The majority of the music is played in real time by the orchestrion, with Metheny alone layering his guitar—for the most part that instantly recognizable, warm, hollowbody electric tone—and delivering the solos that will, ultimately, be the only significant differentiator from performance to performance. But Metheny is also triggering other instruments with his guitar—mallet instruments, tuned bottles, cymbals and more—so when he is playing a part on his instrument, it's actually causing a myriad of others to play in concert with him.

For an album delivered largely through solenoid switches and pneumatics, the music of Orchestrion breathes, feeling natural, organic...human. Improvements in sampling technology have made it possible to create virtual rhythm sections that also feel more natural than when MIDI first emerged nearly 30 years ago, but they're still in the digital realm, completely removed from the imperfections—the humanity—of playing real instruments in real environments.

With an orchestrion, the same imperfections that happen when real people play real instruments can and do occur. Something as simple as a stick hitting a cymbal can vary based on criteria such as how tightly the cymbal is screwed on, or the subtle variations in the cymbal's angle and that of the stick hitting it. Magnify this with all the instruments in Metheny's orchestrion—several pianos, drum kit, marimbas, "guitarbots," a wide array of percussion instruments, cabinets of carefully tuned bottles and more—and the result is that, despite the actual programming of the orchestrion remaining identical from performance to performance, many of the same subtle nuances that affect real people playing these instruments remain at play. And that's what makes Orchestrion work.

As for the music? Not surprisingly, with Metheny in total control of the helm, this is perhaps the solo album he's been striving for ever since his first, New Chautautqua (ECM, 1979), and the more ambitious (and, to some, career-defining) Secret Story (Nonesuch, 1992). The title track is a complex piece that takes many of the elements of Pat Metheny Group's sweeping, 70-minute long The Way Up (Nonesuch, 2005)—hints of Steve Reichian minimalism, acoustic guitar-driven Midwestern American and, through it all, Metheny's unfailing sense of lyricism—and condenses it into a powerful, 15-minute tour de force. Vivid contrapuntal melodies weave their way in and around each other, with tuned percussion a defining textural quality. And, at its core, a lengthy solo section for Metheny which, in the new places that his orchestrion allows him to go orchestrally, clearly pushes him out of his comfort zone into some new improvisational territory as well.

That the music avoids feeling mechanical—despite the existence of fixed, predetermined parts—is a great part of Orchestrion's particular magic. "Entry Point" begins in balladic territory, but gradually ebbs and flows during the course of its ten minutes; a sparer composition than the title track, to be sure, but no less ambitious in Metheny's evolution of another lengthy solo section, one that feels as though it was being built behind him by a real group of players.

Metheny's career has been defined by a fearless pursuit of new directions. Some, like Zero Tolerance for Silence (Geffen, 1992) fall into the category of "failed experiments," but even so there's always some forward motion, something new and valuable that Metheny carries forward into subsequent projects. The Way Up was a challenge in that Metheny and his writing partner, keyboardist Lyle Mays, wrote a piece so challenging that pulling it off live with a group of players was a remarkable feat (and one that required sophisticated guidance techniques that were invisible to the audience, but were there nevertheless). Here, Metheny doesn't have to worry about such concerns, and so he's freed up to write some of the most demanding music of his career, the eight-minute "Expansion" eclipsing even Orchestrion's title track in its series of knotty changes, and sophisticated voicings that represent truly new territory, even for the ever-evolving Metheny.

It may appear to be the least ambitious track on the disc, but "Spirit of the Air" could turn out to be Orchestrion's greatest success. Another composition with a series of sections, it's the minor key blues to which the piece ultimately resolves for its solo section that's most inherently striking, where the orchestrion swings more in-the-pocket than many real rhythm sections man-
Sacrilegious? Perhaps. For those who want unbridled spontaneity, Orchestrion may be the musical equivalent of the Anti-Christ. But for those who want to hear a musician who, in the fourth decade of a career that never seems to be going anywhere but on an upward trajectory, Orchestrion combines complex writing with an unerringly appreciation of what makes music feel. Metheny may be playing with a bunch of solenoid and pneumatic-driven instruments—over 40 of them—but they play this knotty music without ever getting tired, without ever making mistakes, and with a sense of groove and dynamics that make it difficult to believe that they’re anything less than the real deal.

Orchestrion will, most likely, be a one-off project for Metheny, but unlike Zero Tolerance for Silence, it can be considered not just an unqualified and unequivocally successful experiment, but as one of the most innovative and compositionally profound albums of his career.

Tracks: Orchestrion; Entry Point; Expansion; Soul Search; Spirit of the Air.

Personnel: Pat Metheny: guitar and orchestrionics (pianos, marimba, vibraphone, orchestra bells, basses, guitarbots, percussion, cymbals and drums, blown bottles, and other custom-fabricated acoustic mechanical instruments, keyboard).

Photo Credit, All Photos Jimmy Katz, courtesy of Pat Metheny.

http://www.patmetheny.com

New DVD Movie

Leopold Godowsky: The Buddha of the Piano

Conceived, written and performed by Antonio Iturrioz
Narrated by Dr. Charles Sepos

This film is an homage to the legendary pianist, composer and arranger, Leopold Godowsky (1870-1938). Godowsky was a colleague of Rachmaninoff and Busoni, and together with them he represents the last of the lineage of the great post-romantic composers of the piano. Rachmaninoff said: "Godowsky is the only musician of this age who has given a lasting, a real contribution to the development of piano music."

Godowsky is primarily known as a superman of piano playing and a unique arranger. However few people know that he was also a wonderful and prolific composer. He composed for the two extremes of pianism - from the simple duets for four hands (Miniatures) to the legendendarly difficult 53 paraphrases on the Chopin Etudes, the Symphonic Metamorphoses, and the monumental Passacaglia. The critic James Gibbons Huneker referred to Godowsky as "a pianist for pianists", "the apostle of the left hand" and "the Buddha of the piano."

With this film I hope to contribute to keeping alive the legend of Godowsky and his immeasurably important contributions to the world of music. All background music played by Antonio Iturrioz are Godowsky's arrangements or his original compositions:
2. Etude Op. 10, No.9, by Chopin for the left hand.
3. The Swan, by Saint-Saens.
4. Tango, by Albeniz.
5. Gardens of Buitenzorg, by Godowsky.
7. Poem, Yearning, by Godowsky.

Antonio Iturrioz: A Brief Biography

Antonio Iturrioz was born in Cuba and came to the United States in 1962. He played his first concert at 9, and at age 15 made his orchestral debut playing the Liszt First Piano Concerto. His teachers include his father, Pablo Iturrioz, Francisco de Hoyos (a pupil of Gyorgi Sandor), Bernardo Segall, who studied with Alexander Siloti, who was a pupil of Liszt, Aube Tzerko and Julian White. He is the recipient of the Los Angeles Young Musicians Foundation Tushinsky Memorial Scholarship Award and the Dewars Young Artists Award. Mr. Iturrioz has taken master classes with Byron Janis, and in 1973 he was one of ten young pianists selected nationwide by Andre Watts to participate in the Andre Watts Piano Seminars at Tanglewood.

Mr. Iturrioz has an extensive repertoire that ranges from Scarlatti to present day composers and plays the complete piano works of Robert Schumann. He continues to perform in the United States and Europe. He has 2 CD's available: "A Waterfall of Romance", featuring Bellini's Norma arranged by Liszt, and "The Davidsbundler, Op. 6" by Schumann.

An injury to his right hand interrupted his career for several years during which time he developed a formidable reper-
toire of left hand piano music, including the complete Chopin-Godowsky transcriptions. This ultimately lead to his first-of-its-kind educational film, The Art of the Left Hand: A Brief History of Left Hand Piano Music, which has been shown on PBS, is distributed by KJOS and is available at:

www.theartofthelefthand.com

Pianist Jon Nakamatsu said of the film, "Great for musicians and non-musicians alike." "The Buddha of the Piano" is Mr. Iturrioz's latest endeavor and is another first-of-its-kind project, being the first and only documentary film on the legendary Leopold Godowsky. Marc-Andre Hamelin, pianist, says of this film: “Antonio Iturrioz has performed a wonderful service to music lovers in general and pianophiles in particular, by producing this lovingly researched film.”

“My gratitude to the following friends and colleagues whose invaluable help with this film is deeply appreciated: Guy Sandler, Keiko Shimizu Harris, Regina Kilgore, Anne Evans, Nancy Garden, William Puckett, Joan Buntzen, Edgar Self, Mel Cornelius, Larry Lobel, Richard Wahlberg, Jim Warwick, Michael Tabib, and Elena Casanova.”

Special thanks to Leopold Godowsky III, my narrator Dr. Charles Sepos, William Corbett-Jones, pianist, Geoffrey Kaiser (Tochkoock), Bruce Grimes, David Snyder (piano technician), and Ricardo Hernandez. Additional acknowledgements are listed in the film credits.

A Steinway Duo-Art concert grand will appear in a world premier movie about the great pianist and composer Leopold Godowsky. The showing is scheduled to take place at the Rialto Theater in Santa Rosa, California, just north of San Francisco on March 25 at 7:00 pm.

This tribute, entitled "The Buddha of the Piano: Leopold Godowsky" was conceived and performed by known concert pianist Antonio Iturrioz. It is narrated by Dr. Charles Sepos.

After 10 years of preparation, Antonio Iturrioz chose the Steinway Duo-Art piano recently restored by David Snyder and Tochkoock (Geoffrey Kaiser) as his "on-stage recording piano", remarking many times about its smooth, light action and its superb tone. The process of restoration of this piano was recently documented in several articles in the Amica Bulletin. There is a short clip of Godowsky playing the Duo-Art roll of Chopin's Ballade, op 23 in G-Minor.

The movie itself has received high acclaim from notable such as Kevin Bazzana, author of Wondrous Strange. The Life and Art of Glenn Gould, and internationally acclaimed pianist and Godowsky specialist Marc-Andre Hamelin who said, "Antonio Iturrioz has performed a wonderful service to music lovers and pianophiles in particular." Legendary pianist Byron Janis said, "Many bravos," and pianist Gary Grafmann said, "A splendid accomplishment!"

Copies can be ordered at:

www.theartofthelefthand.com

Ed. Note: I bought a copy of this DVD video and highly recommend it, very high quality, excellent research. Contains an interesting surprise and an excellent excerpt of a Duo-Art performance.

Library of Congress

Felix Mendelssohn's Birthday

Celebrate the composer's 201st birthday with the web presentation Felix Mendelssohn at the Library of Congress on the Performing Arts Encyclopedia.

http://tinyurl.com/yl3cnpf

Charles Templeton
Ragtime Jazz Festival

http://library.msstate.edu/ragtime/festival/

Books of Interest

Dear AMICA Friends,

I read a book that a friend gave me called "The Piano Shop On The Left Bank" by Thad Carhart. What a great little book. The New Yorker writes: "Carhart writes with a sensuousness enhanced by patience and grounded by the humble acquisition of new insight into music, his childhood, and his relationship to the city of Paris". It's so much more and for those of us who love our pianos, it's like a candy store of delightful images.

Another book that I heard about on NPR the other day is called, "A Romance on Three Legs: Glenn Gould's Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Piano" is a wonderful story of a Steinway concert grand, a nearly blind piano tuner technician and Glenn Gould and his music.

Jere DeBacker
Jere@totalspeed.net

New computer simulation

Music Box 15

MusicBox15 recreates the look, feel, and sound of an authentic Antique Disc Musical Box. In addition to playing faithful reproductions of actual antique discs, the program will rearrange standard midi files to simulate music box renditions.

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http://www.henstoothdiscs.com/MusicBox15.htm

Ed. Note: I bought this computer simulation of a disc music box, found it to be quite realistic. I recommend it. ts

American Organ Institute Newsletter
University of Oklahoma
Fall 2009

Möller Perforator and Rolls

The University of Oklahoma American Organ Institute has acquired another priceless treasure: the original Möller perforator and all known extant master rolls. First purchased from M. P. Möller Pipe Organ Company in the 1980s by James Weisenborne, they were later donated to the Music House Museum in Acme, Mich. The AOI recently negotiated with the museum to acquire these treasures.

The perforator, pictured here, converts the 26-1/2” wide master rolls into the standard 11-1/4” wide performance rolls. In early June 2009, Drew Mangus, Dan Sliger, Jeremy Wance and I made the trek to northern Michigan. We packed up the rolls and equipment over three days. The weight of the rolls and equipment required splitting the load into three separate 26’ trucks. Many hands (and muscles) sped up the unloading of the master rolls, which weigh between 20 and 100 pounds each.

Helping the four of us were Bob Wilhelm, Frank Wu, Craig Sproat, John Schwandt, Bob Shull and Bradley Fitch. In the last picture, Jeremy Wance, left, catalogs the numbered rolls before passing them up to Dan Sliger, right. Master rolls, perforator, player rolls and other equipment will be just one of the many items on display at the AOI shop during the “Old Wine, New Bottles” gala.

John Riester,
AOI Shop Manager

Ed note: Reprinted here with permission. ts
How To Make A Carrot Ocarina

http://tinyurl.com/yfsbp32

Contributed by John Dousmanis

Meet AMICAn Michael Woolf

http://www.michaelwoolf.co.nz/

Contributed by Thaddeus Kochanny

Bobby Skinner and his Theremin

See Bobby Skinner of the New Leviathan Oriental Fox-Trot Orchestra playing his Theremin at home in New Orleans. The song performed is "I'll See You Again," by Noel Coward, from the 1920s. Accompanied by an Ampico player piano.

http://tinyurl.com/ybptu4h

Contributed by John Motto-Ros. Bobby Skinner is a player piano technician, maintains a major collection in the Bay area.

The Ragtime Kid

By Larry Karp
Poisoned Pen Press

Book Review by Don Barton

I discovered Larry Karl's books at the 200? Music Box Society Convention in St. Paul. After closing my sales table at the Mart, I passed by Larry's table and took a quick glance at his books. Since I am quite a murder mystery buff myself, I was somewhat intrigued by someone who wrote murder mysteries revolving around music boxes. My interest was further piqued when I picked up a copy of The Ragtime Kid. Larry seemed like a nice guy and I didn't want to appear to be rude, so I proceeded to purchase a copy and I am glad I did!

The Ragtime Kid is a fascinating mix of fact and fiction surrounding the development of Scott Joplin's ragtime music in 1899 Sedalia, Missouri. The murder plot takes many interesting twists and turns. One would wonder why the main character, Brun Campbell, so brilliant at the keyboard, continually makes such ill advised choices* Some of those choices do, however, allow for a more in depth look into life in Sedalia which could be exciting for a rising musician but not so for a black citizen. It was unheard of at that time to pay royalties to black composers, hence the plot revolves around characters wanting to take advantage of Joplin and others that want to help the struggling composer.

The story takes a look into that part of our history we want to leave in the past. Karp has gone to great lengths to articulate the intricacies and nuances of ragtime music. One can tell that he thoroughly researched his material. I now have a much greater appreciation of this wonderful form of American music.

The author has obviously been to Missouri as he describes the weather, "They say the devil once spent a week in Missouri in July, then went back and set up Hell to specification. Only ten in the morning, but the air was already a sopping blanket ..."

I'm looking forward to reading more of Karp's books, a list of which can be found at; www.poisonedpenpress.com

Contributed by Don Barton after appearing in his company newsletter.

Meet AMICAn Don Barr

Don Barr and his double Mills Violano
(Recent photo by John Motto-Ros)

Our Published Heritage

AMICA has recently negotiated acquisition of a significant collection of original literature. Full details will published as the complete agreement emerges. An initial portion of the collection is a complete run of The Music Trades of 1925. This portion of the collection arrived a day prior to this issue being locked down. A quick review suggests this publication is rich in research data. A couple of samples are included within this issue. Following scanning, it will all be posted on our AMICA web site, freely available to all members.

All AMICAns are urged to be sensitive to opportunities to acquire more of the Music Trades, a trade newspaper catering to the commercial side of the musical instruments industry at the turn of the century. It was a lesser competitor to the Music Trade Review, so is comparatively rare and consequently difficult to find. If more are found, please let us know soonest.

And once again, an appeal is expressed seeking the loan of original literature, from within members’ personal collections. Our on-line library continues to grow.

Terry Smythe
smythe@shaw.ca
Head of NH’s Clark’s Trading Post dies

LINCOLN, N.H. (AP) — William Murray Clark, who ran Clark’s Trading Post with its performing bear shows, circus and train rides for many years, has died at 82. His family says Clark died Thursday.

The New Hampshire Union Leader reports in addition to carrying on the attraction his parents founded in Lincoln in 1928, Clark was a former state legislator and a volunteer firefighter in North Woodstock.

His wake has been scheduled from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday at the Indian Head Resort in Lincoln. Funeral services are private; and a public tribute is scheduled on June 12.
ADVERTISING

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT ALL ADVERTISING IN THE AMICA BULLETIN

All advertising should be directed to:
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55 Rowand Avenue
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3J2N6
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e-mail: smythe@shaw.ca

Ad copy must contain text directly related to the product/service being offered. Extraneous text will be deleted at the Editor's discretion. All advertising must be accompanied by payment in U.S. funds. Telephone or written ads without payment will not be accepted. This policy was established by a unanimous vote of the AMICA Board at the 1991 Board Meeting and reaffirmed at the 1992 meeting. AMICA reserves the right to edit or to reject any ad deemed inappropriate or not in keeping with AMICA's objectives.

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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 not later than the second week of the even months.

FOR SALE

THE GOLDEN AGE of AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS


Purchased PIANO STORE AND COLLECTION LIQUIDATION.

Restored original Tangley Calliope. $8500. Restored Wurlitzer 125 Band Organ $15,000, O-Roll Spool Frame for building up O-Roll Pianos, Donald Cunderla, 20173 Co. Rd., 77 Reads Landing, MN 55968, Phone 651-565-4775.

Ampico Symphonique B 5’ grand piano. All restoration work done by professional Don Dusenbury & Son - new finish, plate and sound board, new pin block and pins, new strings, new key tops, new hammer shanks and butts. I have over $10,000 in the piano. Will sell for $5,500.00. Photos on request. Contact Carl DeNunzio, Jr., 789 Lake Rd., Conneaut, OH 44030, (440) 593-2155, <corkyii@siit224.net>

Unusual piano rolls: first: a group of piano rolls 15 ¼” wide some are Apollo Concert Grand and Solo Apollo, etc.; also a number of QRS rolls 10 3/8” wide. Also Autotypist (pneumatic) complete with its correct “typewriter” style of paper perforator - (it uses paper rolls 11 1/4 inch wide). Also large scale Deagan electropneumatic (vacuum operated) Vibraharp, four octaves, entirely original, unrestored but untouched. Also vintage Conn Strobo-Tuner. Call John Field, (831) 423 1397, or email: <jafdf@yahoo.com>

1931 George Steck spinet Ampico piano. Player mechanism recently restored, $4500.00. 1922 Marshall & Wendell 5’ 2” grand, Ampico A, mahogany, player mechanism restored 3 years ago, $7,000 OBO. Vernon Gantt, Raleigh, NC, (919) 524-4000, <vgantt@ncrr.com>, photos on request.

Miniature and full size band organ cases for CD’s. Bill Kromer, 53 Louella Court, Wayne, PA 19087-3527, send inquiries within #10 envelope with 2 stamps. Will include other information.

I AM GETTING TOO OLD FOR THIS. Selling excess inventory. Potentially superb Sohmer Welte grand. 5’ 11” walnut case circa 1931 with roll cabinet bench and rolls. I used to sell new Sohmers, and this is the only one I’ve ever heard with a good bass. One owner. $ 3,000.00.

Haines 47” Ampico, very late. B drawer, B valves, A Expression, small pump. Much work required, $500.00. 54” Fischer Ampico, early nonfingered stack. Nicely designed case. In pieces but complete, $ 750.00. Red Welte upright, water damaged, some parts missing, needs extensive work, $ 250.00. Modeska

Vision is the art of seeing the invisible. 

Jonathan Swift

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**Recordo with Lang radio** (no speaker) with rolls, original bill of sale. Older restoration, running. New restoration suggested. $4,000.00. **Several upright pumpers** $100 - $200. Hundreds of **note rolls** sold in lots, $2.00 ea. Lot of **40 - 50 Duo-Art rolls.** $5.00 ea. Lot of **Artro Angelus rolls** $10.00 ea. Lot of **Estey Pipe organ rolls** (old style) $10.00 ea. Lot of 6 recur "O" rolls, titles not known, $15.00 ea. **Many piano parts** available, also '60's and 70's turntable parts. If you need 78 rpm records I have thousands. Mostly Victor, up to fine condition, some factory sealed. All categories, some excellent rarer opera artists. Some rare vinyl too. Let me know if looking. All prices negotiable, located in Rhode Island. **Kirk Russell**, 401 742 1565, email: <russellmusicisco@aim.com> (2-10)


**American Fotoplayer Style 15** - Beautifully Restored Unique Example, Unrestored **Empress Electric Xylophone Piano** playing "O" Rolls - Inexpensive, **Coinola X Orchestra**n with Orchestra Bells, **Seeburg K** with Flute Pipes, Link 2e, **Seeburg K** with Xylophone, **Wurlitzer CX Orchestra**n, **Seeburg H Orchestra**, **Peerless Wisteria Orchestra**, **Webster Grandezza** with xylophone, **Hupfeld Phonolitiz Violina**, **Wurlitzer 105**, **148, 150 Band Organs**, **Wilhelm Bruder Band Organ**, **97 Key Mortier Dance Organ** with Classic Facade, **Tangle Calliphone**, and MORE! Contact: **Tim Trager**, 30280 N. Darrell Road, McHenry, Illinois 60051, e-mail: <tim@timtrager.com>, tel: 630-269-3059, http://WWW.TIMTRAGER.COM (2-10)

**Seeburg K** restored and ready to go. Nicest one I've ever seen. $19,000. **Mills Violano** single mahogany. Good unrestored condition $26,000. **Bruder 48 key** (keyless) band organ. Approximately 168 pipes, Model 79, nice unrestored condition $25,000. See photos and videos on the web: http://antique mechanicalrestorations.com **Paul Manganaro** 610-965-5538 or email:PMann4960@aol.com (2-10)

**AMICA CD/DVD's for sale:**

* AMICA Bulletins to date
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* Purple Welte Book
* Billings Rollography
* Piano Playing Mechanisms, by William Braid White
* Technical History Of The Player by John McTammany

Most of this is already on our website, freely available to all members. For most, these discs will be more of a convenience for those not inclined to spend many hours of downloading time. And of course, for those with dial-up or no internet access at all. And even if they do not have a computer, there is always a friendly neighborhood Office Depot type service center than can print PDF files off the discs.

Each of these discs are priced at $25 (US), postage included. Purchasers will be invoiced.

Contact:

**Terry Smythe**

55 Rowand Avenue

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email preferred: smythe@shaw.ca

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**Chickering Model 59 grand piano** with operating Ampico player. Prefer well cared for piano with good original finish, and already rebuilt pneumatics. Also looking for Ampico roll cabinet. **Fred Neece** <ampicoman@sunlink.net> or ph 570-323-4679 (4-10)

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AMICA Advertising Manager

to contact businesses or individuals who would benefit by advertising in the AMICA Bulletin.

This position will receive a percentage payment of advertisements sold. The AMICA Executive Committee of the Board of Directors will set the percentage to be paid.

Please contact President John Motto-Ros
mottoros@sbcglobal.net
209-267-9252

WANTED - Membership Secretary

After many years of service, our current Membership Secretary Bill Chapman is looking to retire, and so AMICA is looking for someone who would like to fill this position.

The general duties of being the AMICA Membership Secretary are:

* Promote new membership.
* Attend annual convention.
* Not let work back-up to unreasonable levels during busy seasons (Sept-Jan)
* Maintain Accurate Membership rolls.
* Working with the public by phone/email.
* Communicate/cooperate with the President, Publisher, Treasurer and Website Manager.

Some Requirements of the position:

* Manage, print and mail the annual member renewal notices beginning each October, process returns in a timely fashion through Dec/Jan (this is the busy season).
* Process applications for new members, deposit checks in Bank of America, Process Credit Card and PayPal orders.
* Receive applications from AMICA’s website, mail, telephone.
* Store extra Bulletins for use during the year. Keep a folder of useful information.
* Provide chapters with materials as needed such as ready-made address labels, new members IDs, etc.
* Provide chapters with materials as needed such as ready-made address labels, new members IDs, etc.
* Maintain the membership database using Microsoft Access. Backup computer and send backups periodically to the President, et al.
* Correspond with the members or public as needed.
* Purchase supplies for printing, ink, envelopes, etc. at local discount office store.
* Work with N-focus (mailing label processor) who sends mailing labels to Engler Printing.
* Work with Engler Printing, and every 3 years provide them with the data for the Membership Directory.
* Required attendance to 2 out of 3 Annual Meetings and provide a report to the board with the prior year's activities, and the state of the membership (this trip is not reimbursed).
* Become proficient with Microsoft Word, Excel, Access Database.
* Live close to or have access to a US Post Office and a branch of Bank of America.

AMICA will provide:

* An annual Stipend of $1.50 per member (measured in May).
* Computer/Printer/Software (MS Office, etc.), internet service, answering machine, credit-card keypad, and any reasonable office furniture/supplies/expenses necessary.

We're looking for at least a 2 year commitment.

If you’d like more information contact our Membership Secretary Bill Chapman -
he welcomes any questions - no pressure!

Bill Chapman (760) 564-2951    shazam32@earthlink.net

John P. Wrasse, Piano Pro
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Cell (John): 563-580-2472
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rollertunes@earthlink.net
Phone: (540) 721-7188

Don Teach: Shreveport Music Co.
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David Saul: Precision Music Rolls
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davesaul@pacbell.net

Joyce Brite: Player Piano and Mechanical Music Exchange
http://www.mmdigest.com/Exchange/
http://www.mmdigest.com/Exchange/rollpage.htm
antiquedogs@yahoo.com

Dick Hack: Hack Mechanical Music
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rhack1@verizon.net
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Frank L. Himpstl:
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Kukral@rose-hulman.edu

Julian Dyer
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United Kingdom
www.pianorolls.co.uk
enquiries@pianorolls.co.uk

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