

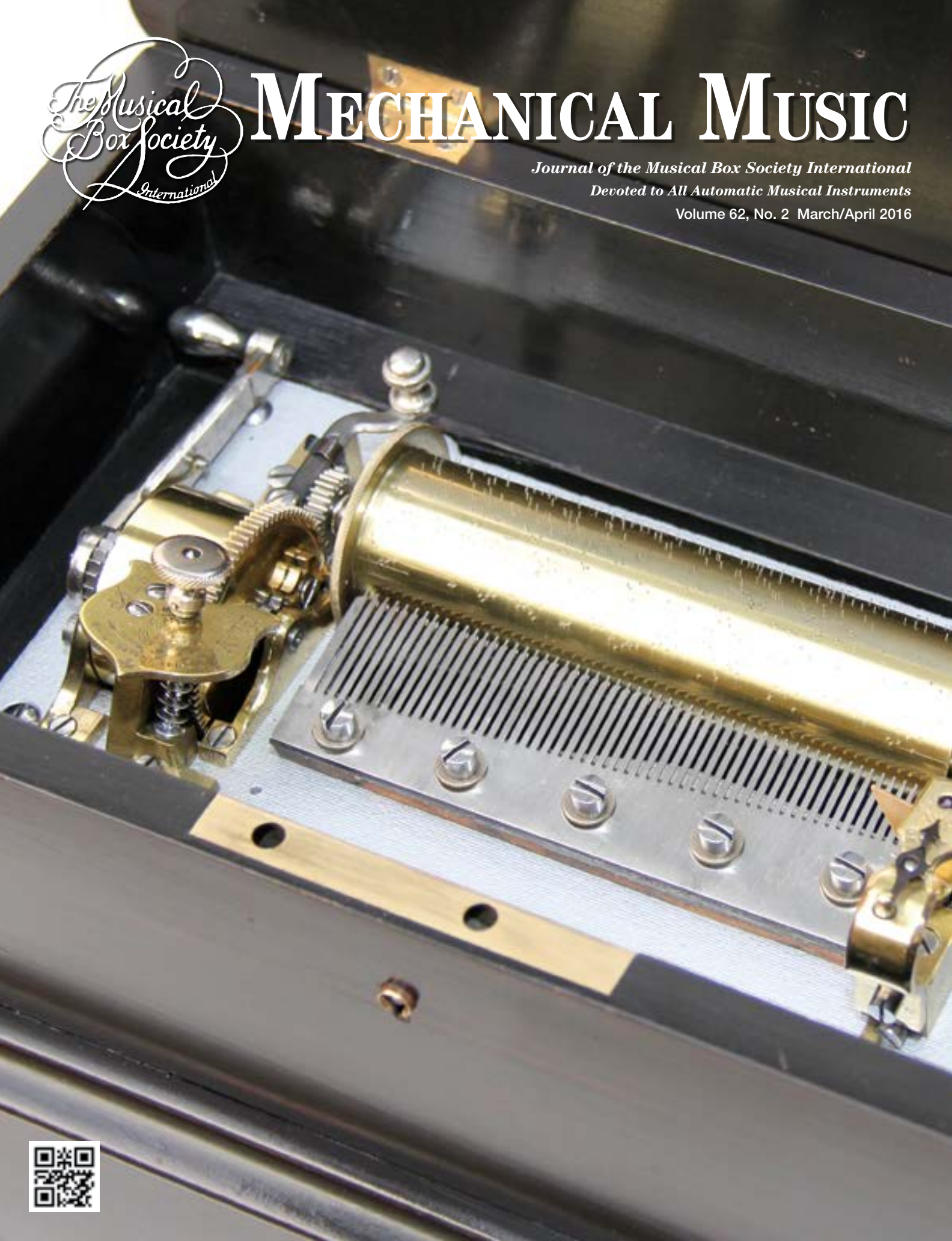


# MECHANICAL MUSIC

*Journal of the Musical Box Society International*

*Devoted to All Automatic Musical Instruments*

Volume 62, No. 2 March/April 2016



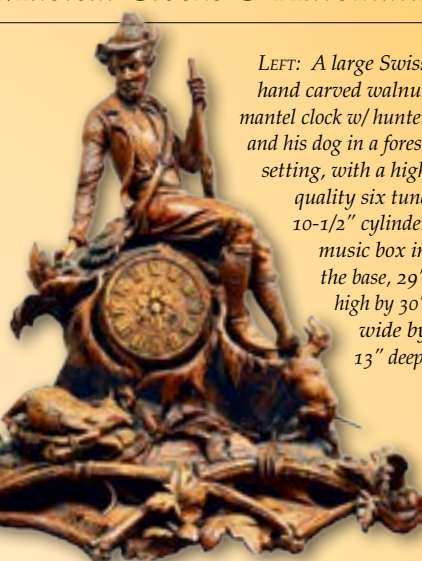
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ABOVE: Exceptional Swiss automaton minute-repeating gold pocket watch by Jaeger Le Coultre with high-grade 30-jewel movement, the dial featuring two maidens striking bells in synchronization with tuned gongs.

ABOVE LEFT: Austrian musical painting clock in carved giltwood frame, with eight-tune cylinder musical movement, the clock with Grand Sonnerie quarter-striking movement. circa 1840.



LEFT: A large Swiss hand carved walnut mantel clock w/ hunter and his dog in a forest setting, with a high quality six tune 10-1/2" cylinder music box in the base, 29" high by 30" wide by 13" deep.



ABOVE AND RIGHT: Swiss 19" x 3-1/8" fat cylinder music box playing sixteen tunes in two per turn

format, with original tune sheet, marketed by Nicole Freres, the lovely Brazilian rosewood marquetry case decorated with floral and scroll inlays and measuring 8-1/2" high by 30" wide by 11-3/4" deep.



ABOVE: German 15-1/2" disc music box by Polyphon, Style 45 in exceptional carved burl walnut with floral marquetry inlaid case.



LEFT AND ABOVE: Monumental German organ clock in flame mahogany case with arched top, carved lyre applique and 12" porcelain dial. Four interchangeable cylinders play eight tunes each on ninety nine wooden pipes. On each side of the hood a handpainted oil landscape scene is featured. Circa 1840, measuring 114" high by 35" wide by 17" deep.



ABOVE: Swiss early twelve-tune key wind 13" by 3-1/8" fat cylinder music box by Le Coultre of Geneva, in burl walnut case measuring 7-1/2" high by 22" wide by 9" deep.

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# MECHANICAL MUSIC

*Journal of the Musical Box Society International*

*Devoted to All Automatic Musical Instruments*

Volume 62, No. 2

March/April 2016

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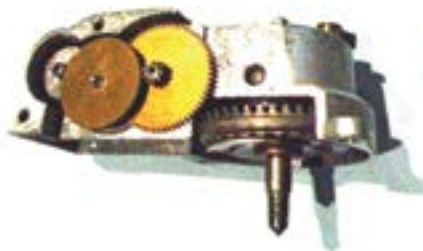
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**Each One  
Reach One  
New Member**



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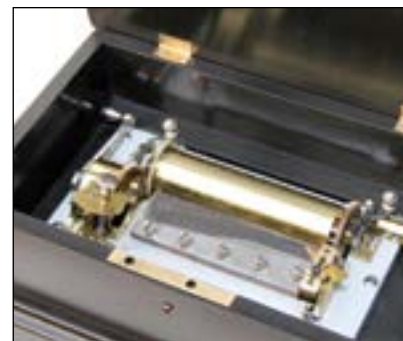
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# The World of Mechanical Music

*Copy this page, and give it to a potential new member. Spread the word about MBSI.*

**A** fascinating hobby! It combines all the appeals of art, history, craftsmanship, and music all into one. Automatic music doesn't just sit there; it is ever willing to perform for those who care to hear it. Play an automatic music machine in a room full of people and all else will stop as the machine enraptures the audience with the sparkling melodies of yesteryear!

A "Music Box" is an instrument which plays music via the plucking of teeth on a tuned steel comb. Teeth may be plucked directly as by pins on a rotating cylinder, or indirectly as by projections beneath a rotating disc. When formed in October, 1949, MBSI's scope of interest was limited to the collection and preservation of these instruments. However, the scope of interest now extends to encompass all automatically played musical instruments — musical boxes, musical automata, player and reproducing pianos and organs, phonographs, and self-playing stringed, wind, and percussion instruments of any kind.



48 key Alan Pell crank organ.  
Photo courtesy of the Bronson Collection

The Musical Box Society International, chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, is a nonprofit society dedicated to the enjoyment, study, and preservation of automatic musical instruments. Founded in 1949, it now has members around the world, and supports various educational projects.

Regional chapters and an Annual Meeting held each year in different cities within the United States enable members to visit collections, exchange ideas, and attend educational workshops. Members receive the scholarly journal, *Mechanical Music*, which also contains advertising space for members who wish to buy, sell, and restore mechanical musical instruments and related items; the Directory of Members, Museums, and Dealers.

The only requirements for membership are an interest in automatic music machines and the desire to share information about them. And you'll take pride in knowing you are contributing to the preservation of these marvelous examples of bygone craftsmanship.

## More Information:

Phone/Fax: (417) 886-8839

Email: [jbeeman.mbsi@att.net](mailto:jbeeman.mbsi@att.net)

## Membership Application

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#### Member Benefits

Six magazines annually — *Mechanical Music* plus the *Directory of Members, Museums, and Dealers* (published every two years). Membership also entitles you to participate in the Annual Meeting and to join regional chapters. New members receive a welcome letter, a Goods & Supplies Order Form, *Directory of Members, Museums, and Dealers*, and a list of the regional chapters.

#### Membership Dues

US members (per household).....\$60

Canada.....\$70

Other International .....\$75

*(Add \$20 for International air mail.)*

**Join online: [www.mbsi.org/application.php](http://www.mbsi.org/application.php)**

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# President's Message

**By Judy Caletti**

*MBSI President*

I hope this message finds you enjoying our hobby and our wonderful Journal!

While you are doing that, your Board of Trustees, officers, committee chairs and publisher are hard at work on your behalf. Preparations for the mid-year meeting are underway and it should be a good working session for those in attendance. The mid-year meeting is when we review the Society budget, the Policies and Procedures, and any new business that might need to come to a vote of the membership at the next Annual Meeting.

This year's mid-year meeting will be held in Houston, TX, on March 17-20.

It occurred to me that while we are meeting, many of you might be looking for opportunities to contribute to the future health and well-being of the Society too. So, here goes:

This Journal has advertisements for many interesting auctions. Hopefully you will be able to bid and acquire some new "toys" to play. Don't be shy about telling us about them, either! We always like a good yarn for The Hunt column, or an informative tale about

the history of your new acquisition. As always, we encourage you to support our advertisers and mention that you saw their ad in our Journal. These advertisements help defray the cost of producing this beautiful magazine, which in turn helps the Society (that being YOU).

If you aren't in the market for a new piece to add to your collection, maybe you would consider volunteering for a national committee or a taking a leadership position in your local chapter. Perhaps you might start writing an article for the Journal (our publisher will help you) to share your expertise or enjoyment of mechanical music. You might try recommending the Journal to companies you buy supplies from as a good place to advertise to other MBSI members. The simplest way to support the Society, of course, is just sharing the joy of membership in MBSI with a friend.

While pondering how you might contribute, let's not forget to think of all those who have already contributed so much... it is awards time! Put on those thinking caps, look around and nominate the most deserving folks!

The list of Society awards and description of each is in your *Directory*



*of Members, Museums and Dealers.*

Email or phone your recommendations to MBSI Vice President Clay Witt. Do it soon as nominations must be in by March 1.

As is required in the Society Policies and Procedures, I must inform you of any actions taken by the MBSI Executive Committee. The Executive Committee has approved the reprinting of a picture from an early Journal and approved my recommendation for the President's Award, but I can't spoil the surprise so I won't say who the recipient will be.

I look forward to seeing you in Minneapolis, MN, for this year's Annual Meeting!

## A Lasting Legacy



Throughout its history, MBSI has fostered an interest in and preservation of automatic musical instruments. Your gift to the Endowment Fund will support programs that will help future generations appreciate these achievements of man's creative genius. Visit [www.mbsi.org/efund.php](http://www.mbsi.org/efund.php) to learn more.

IN ORDER FOR ANYTHING  
ONCE ALIVE TO HAVE  
MEANING, ITS EFFECT  
MUST REMAIN ALIVE IN  
ETERNITY IN SOME WAY

— ERNEST BECKER, PHILOSOPHER

The Musical Box Society International is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations to the Endowment Fund are tax deductible. A gift of any size is welcome.

## By Russell Kasselman

Editor/Publisher

It's the day I am scheduled to send this issue off to the printer, and I'm finally feeling enough calm in my brain to get these words on the page. What a whirlwind of activity recently! Between work on the new MBSI website, preparing budget and progress reports for the Mid-Year Meeting that is set for March 17-20 in Houston, TX, and working on the articles and photos you see in this journal I feel like the world started spinning a little more quickly around me and I'm running just to catch up. The great thing is that all of what is happening is really positive and I am looking forward to seeing the results of all this activity. This journal is one of those great results. We have contributions on a wide variety of topics and many wonderful photos to peruse. A huge thank you goes out to all the authors and proofreaders who took their valuable time and contributed it to making this issue a success.

You may also notice we have several more advertisers in this issue than we have had in past journals. Thank you to all of these companies for choosing to advertise with the Society, and thank you to all members who

have recommended the journal as a good place for businesses to share their news of upcoming auctions, quality services available and amazing mechanical musical items for sale. These advertisements help keep the cost of printing the journal low, so please be sure to look the ads over closely and let these advertisers know how much you appreciate them.

Now, a couple of notes about things that don't fit anywhere else in this issue. First, we received a nice email from MBSI member Michel Tremouille in France, who is the president of a museum called La Ferme des Orgues. Michel wanted to let us know that his museum is open from April to October and it's located in the north of France, near Lille. The museum director is Patrick Desnoulez and the address is 2, rue de l'hollevecq, 59181 Steenwerck, France. The phone number is +33 (0)3 28 49 13 13 and the email address is [contact@lafermedesorgues.com](mailto:contact@lafermedesorgues.com). The museum's website is [www.lafermedesorgues.com](http://www.lafermedesorgues.com). Michel tells us the museum has a nice selection of crank organs, musical boxes and orchestrions to view. If you happen to be heading to France this summer, you might consider putting this museum on your itinerary.

Next we received another note



from Taizou Murakami, a member of the MBSI Japanese International Chapter about a new mechanical music museum being planned in either Tokyo or Kyoto sometime in the next three years. A man named Shigenobu Nagamori, the head of the Sankyo Seiki Mfg. Co., which makes small servo motors, sensors and musical box movements has announced he will be building this new museum with his own money and has already sent employees to Europe to investigate museums currently in operation there. The Sankyo company is also renovating their Lake Suwa Music Box Museum - Somei-Kan (opened in 1996) in Shimosuwa, it will be re-opened in the middle of March 2016 with a new name, Nidec-Sankyo Memorial Museum of Music Boxes.

Sounds like an adventure in the making, if you ask me.

## Welcome new members!

### December 2015

Igor and Jana Martynova  
Carmel, CA  
Sponsor: David Corkrum  
Tom and Laura Stierman  
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Sponsor: Tom Wurdeman  
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Surprise, AZ

### January 2016

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Justin and Meredith Mackay-Smith  
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Allan and Valentina Stafford  
Damascus, PA  
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MBSI is always interested in increasing its membership and is pleased to offer new members a \$15 discount off their first year's membership. You are considered a new member if you have not been a member in the past three years. This discount is also available on our website, [www.mbsi.org](http://www.mbsi.org).

Current MBSI members who sponsor a new member will receive a \$5 discount off their next year's MBSI membership renewal for each sponsorship. Attach a copy of the discount voucher below to a copy of the membership application form on Page 4 of this issue of *Mechanical Music*. Place your name as "sponsor" on the application form.

Please make copies of these forms as needed and send the completed forms with checks to the MBSI administrator at the address listed below.

### *Dues Voucher – \$15*

New U.S. members may join MBSI for one year at \$45 (instead of \$60); Canadians \$55 (instead of \$70); and, other International members at \$60 (instead of \$75). This certificate must accompany payment and a copy of the completed membership application from page 4 of this issue of *Mechanical Music*.



New Member Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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Please mail this form together with your check made payable to "MBSI" to the MBSI Administrator at the address listed above. Memberships are \$45 for U.S. residents, \$55 for Canadian residents, and \$60 for other International residents.

# Nickel Notes



A 1909 advertisement in *Presto* stating that Clark started making rolls in 1889.

By Matthew Jaro

I was searching issues of the “Music Trade Review” and the “Presto-Times” for information on Clark nickelodeon rolls to help complete the catalog of all rolls I am compiling. These publications are old music trade magazines that cover the period of the nickelodeons and player pianos. Many articles and advertisements are pertinent to our hobby. I stumbled upon the most interesting tidbit:

*It is conceded that Mr. Clark is something of a popular music critic himself. He has been making Clark rolls since 1889.*

*-- Presto-Times Mar. 3, 1928, pg 7.*

Ernest G. Clark was responsible for roll cutting at Q.R.S. and then later the Clark Orchestra Roll Company (1920). But 1889? Could this really be?

## How Long Was Clark in the Roll Business?

An advertisement by Clark appearing in a 1929 issue of *Presto* (see illustration) states that the company has been making rolls since 1889. This seems to officially corroborate the date quoted in the 1928 article.

In the Mar. 25, 1909 (Page 19) edition of *Presto*, it is mentioned that the Q.R.S. company was founded in 1899 (see illustration at left). Were 10 years of experience added by means of exaggeration or was there a predecessor to Q.R.S?

## Lawsuit

In April 1903 there was a famous lawsuit by a music publisher against the Apollo Company for “alleged infringement of copyright by means of perforated rolls.” The Apollo Player Piano was a product of the Melville Clark Company and of course Melville’s brother Ernest (QRS) was responsible for roll production.



The testimony, quoted is:

*Ernest G. Clark testified that he was a manufacturer of perforated rolls for musical instruments. Had been engaged in his present occupation for about three years.*

*-- Presto, Apr 16, 1903, pg 15.*

This seems to confirm that Ernest Clark started making rolls around 1899 and not 1889.

Incidentally, the testimony sheds some light on the original intent of the Q.R.S. Company.

*Q. Who is the Q.R.S. Co.?*

*A. The Q.R.S. Co. is a corporation incorporated under the laws of Illinois.*

*Q. Do I understand that its entire output of perforated music rolls is sold to the Melville Clark Piano Co.?*

*A. Yes.*

The initial purpose of Q.R.S. was for Ernest to supply brother Melville rolls for his Apollo Player Piano ONLY. It was sort of like Wurlitzer making rolls for their own machines.

The case was decided in 1906 in favor of the Clarks:

*We are therefore of the opinion that a perforated paper roll, such as is manufactured by defendant, is not a copy of complainant’s staff notation*

The reason given was that in practice you probably would not actually read music from the roll and rolls did not contain the subtleties of the sheet music and would not replace the printed scores.

About the origins of the initials

## CHICAGO CONCERN'S NEW VICE-PRESIDENT

Melville Clark Piano Co. Elects E. G. Clark to That Office.

Ernest G. Clark, the newly elected vice-president of the Melville Clark Piano Co., Chicago, is no new figure in the activities of the house. But although he has served in various capacities and for years has been



ERNEST G. CLARK.

closely associated with the energetic head of the concern, Ernest G. Clark is better known by his work than by personal acquaintance with the trade.

When the Q. R. S. Co. was organized in 1899, E. G. Clark was elected president and treasurer, and the substantial condition of that music cutting corporation is the best tribute that could be secured for his solid worth as a business man and a far-sighted manufacturer. He was elected vice-president of the Melville Clark Piano Co. at the annual meeting last February. His abilities will be of signal advantage to the company of which his brother is the head.

A portrait of Ernest G. Clark stating that the Q.R.S. Company was organized in 1899.

"Q.R.S.", Adolf L. Jansen of the Apollo Company said in 1903:

*He also said the company's perforated music rolls were manufactured by the "Q. R. S. Co., of Chicago," but could not explain the meaning of these mysterious initials, their orders going through the Melville Clark Piano Co., of that city.*

You can see that this famous controversy (discussed in the online forum Mechanical Music Digest, [www.mmdigest.com](http://www.mmdigest.com)) existed as far back as 1903.

The final irony is that the complainant for the suit (a music publisher), had all its legal expenses paid for by the Aeolian Company — producers of a number of automatic instruments including the well-known and immensely popular Pianola! Why would Aeolian want to pay copyright royalties for perforated music?

## Were Rolls Being Made in 1889?

Q. David Bowers states that the first roll-operated piano seems to have been conceived by Claude-Felix Seytre of Lyon, France in 1842 (*Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments*).

The Pianista, a pneumatically-operated player piano was patented in 1863. It met with some commercial success and was exhibited at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. The 1890's, however, saw an expanding popularity.

Ernest Grant Clark was born in 1866. In 1889, when Ernest was supposed to have begun cutting "Clark" rolls, there were ads for the self-playing Aeolian Organ and Wilcox & White organs. The Aeolian Pianola was introduced in 1898. But these companies were not predecessors of the Clark Orchestra Roll Company, Q.R.S. or the Melville Clark Piano Company.

The only remaining company to consider is the Story and Clark Company. Melville Clark, Ernest's older brother was a partner in this firm. In the beginning, Story and Clark made organs. On March 16, 1895, the Story & Clark Piano Company was incorporated. Their first self-playing instrument was announced on Sep. 17, 1898:

### **The "Orpheus" Catalogue.**

*The "Orpheus" catalogue just issued by the Story & Clark Organ Co., is an artistic and exceedingly creditable publication, whether viewed from a literary or typolithographical standpoint. The story of the "Orpheus" piano (self-playing) is an interesting one. The illustrations are many, and the designs shown of each instrument are of rare attractiveness. The Story & Clark Co. have good reason to feel proud of this unique volume.*

On Feb. 10, 1900, The Apollo was announced:

*Melville Clark, of Story & Clark, is the inventor of a new attachment for playing the piano, constructed on the pneumatic principle, which is christened the Apollo. It is said he will manufacture and sell it himself.*

Finally, Melville Clark breaks away from Story and Clark (Feb. 17, 1900):

*One of the most important happenings of the week in this city has been the organization of the Melville Clark Piano Co. and the divorce, after sixteen years of close association, of the interests controlled by Melville Clark and the Storys. The Melville Clark Corporation has been organized with a capital stock of \$100,000 all paid in, with Melville Clark as president and treasurer. The other officers will be chosen later. The stockholders are all prominent men of this city, and there is ample financial backing.*

*It is the intention of the Melville Clark Piano Co. to make the Clark piano, an instrument of high grade, and which by reason of Mr. Clark's scientific ability and prestige, as well as the quality of its manufacture, will command a special position in the trade field. This concern will also make the Orpheus self-playing organ and the new Apollo attachment, to which reference was made last week.*

*The separation of Melville Clark and the Storys is not due to any friction. They part company with exceeding regret. Mr. Clark for some time has been anxious to develop his many inventions through an organization of which he would have absolute control. As an inventor and Scientist he stands high and in his new field he expects a more liberal return from his expert knowledge and the values which he will embody in his products.*

Now the stage is set for the Clarks to develop automatic musical instruments and their associated rolls. All of this corresponds to Ernest Clark's statement in 1903 that he has been in the music roll business for three years.

Ernest G. Clark goes on to invent most of the roll-cutting machinery. They build a huge plant in DeKalb, Illinois. Q.R.S. makes all of the Seeburg nickelodeon and orchestrion rolls and later the Automatic Music Rolls. In 1920, Clark broke away from Q.R.S. and formed the Clark Orchestra Roll Company. He was in competition with himself, because for about ten years he made both Clark rolls and

Automatic rolls.

The Q.R.S. website says:


*QRS was founded in 1900 by Melville Clark (of Story & Clark piano fame) who developed the player piano as we know it today. QRS supplied music rolls to the player piano market, with production peaking in 1927,*

*when QRS Music Company sold 10 million rolls.*

The ultimate irony is that Q.R.S. now owns the Story and Clark Piano Company. This completes the circle.

If anyone has interesting stories or information about rolls and machines, comments or complaints, errors or

omissions, feel free to contact me at [mjaro@verizon.net](mailto:mjaro@verizon.net)

Don't take any wooden nickels. 

.....  
*Reprinted with permission of the author and The Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association (AMICA). Originally printed in the Jan-Feb 2010 issue of the AMICA Bulletin.*

## SHOP THE MBSI MART ONLINE



### **The Music Box Makers, The History of the Music Box in Ste. Croix**

Jean-Claude Piguet's compilation of two separate works chronicles the development of the musical box industry in the Saint-Croix region of Switzerland. Beginning in the early 1800s before mass communication and electricity were common and continuing through to the age of assembly lines, this fascinating story describes the erratic fortunes of the people who were involved, their companies, and the social and economic climate they endured. An outstanding and important work, originally in French, now in English.

Original Price: \$77.50

**SPECIAL: \$10 PPD U.S.A.**



### **The Golden Anniversary Book**

A pictorial and editorial walk through 50 years of MBSI. This is a 240 page hardcover treasure of over 800 photos and 58,000 words. It is a must for every member, new and old, of MBSI.

Original Price: \$35.00

**SPECIAL: \$10 PPD U.S.A.**

### **Regina Certificates**

MBSI will provide a certificate showing the shipping date and recipient of your Regina Music Box. After completing the purchase of this item, email the serial number to [jbeeman.mbsi@att.net](mailto:jbeeman.mbsi@att.net). The serial number is stamped into a raised area on the bedplate of the circular platform on the center spindle of the Regina.

\$5 PPD U.S.A.



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# Centrifugal governor, a failure for musical boxes

By Luuk Goldhoorn

Looking at small Swiss musical works dating from 1820 onwards they appear almost identical. Combs, cylinders, and spring barrels, apart from their dimensions, have not changed in the course of a long period. But the governor did not always follow this same standard construction pattern. Governors were the subject of a number of patents, but in the end they have returned to their original form, a governor housing machine-made from one piece of brass in which the endless screw, the fan and the last wheel are placed.

That seems to be more or less the end of the development of this device. Even today small musical works are built with the same parts as almost 200 years ago.

Although the governor existed already in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the very early musical works, housed in watches, pendants, rings, and other things, used an open pinion construction. That device worked satisfactorily because of the very short duration of the pinned melody. But when a tune is longer than 10 seconds, any deviation in tempo became unacceptable. A fan driven by an endless screw was a far better solution for longer pieces of music.

In 1890 Mermod constructed a governor which was directly driven by the great wheel on the cylinder. (Patent 222). This saved two wheels. (Figure 1), but it was not a success as evidenced by the fact that he returned to the standard practice.

George Samuel Jaccard patented, in 1893 (Patent 6735), a construction with a horizontal fan, also to save wheels in the governor. A year later a construction in which the endless was directly driven by the ratchet wheel under the spring barrel was patented (Patent 9640). An example of a horizontal fan is showed in Figure 2.

And then, for more than 40 years, no further inventions regarding the governor were made. We have to wait

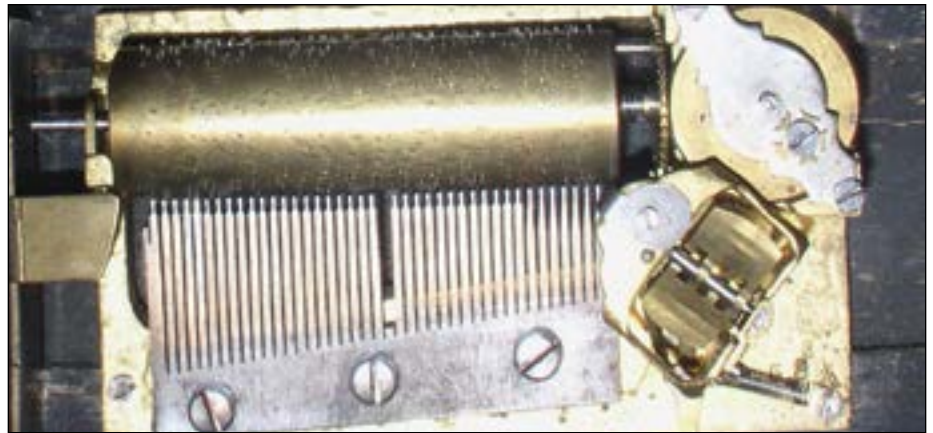


Figure 1: Showing a Mermod regulator driven by the great wheel on the cylinder.

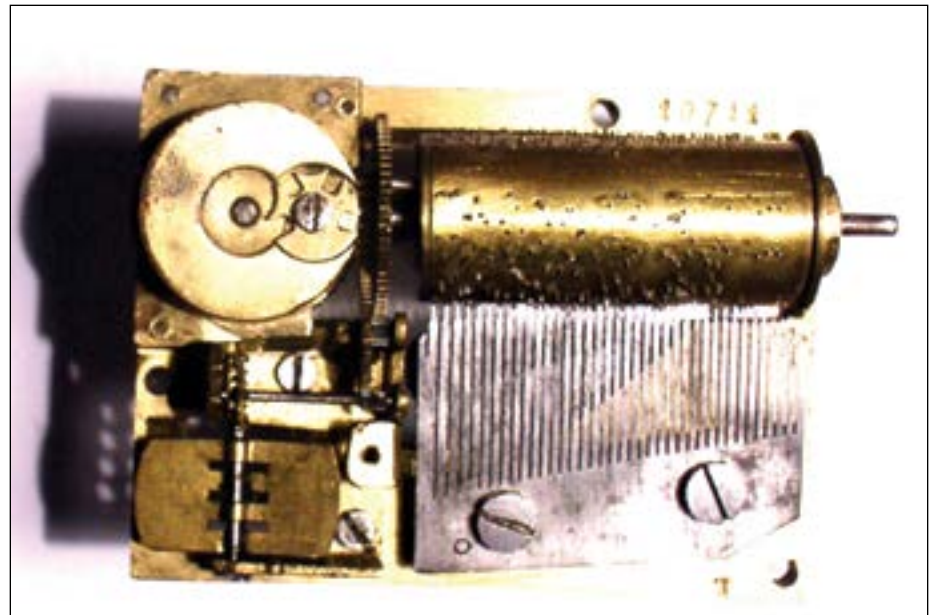


Figure 2: Showing a horizontal fan construction saving wheels in the regulator.

until 1939 when Thorens developed a governor based on centrifugal power. He took patent 211177 on this device. In the following years this construction was improved. (patents 233281 and 235591).

In Figure 3, the governor based on centrifugal force made by Thorens is shown. It plays two melodies on one revolution. It seems that the spring barrel and the roof over the governor are separate, but they are one piece of aluminium. Figure 4 shows the two wheels and the upper part of the centrifugal part that is housed in a somewhat wider caddy. The two

halves of the barrel are shown. Each of these two halves has at their sides a rubber patch which will meet the wall of the caddy by centrifugal power and will cause an almost constant speed. In Figure 5, the bottom of the spring barrel is shown. The wheels and the caddy are visible.

In the following years this construction was the subject of similar ideas by Louis Jaccard Bohan (Patent 246531) and Pierre Grosjean (Patent 247528). Also Reuge patented a number of devices based on centrifugal power in the 1950s. But none of these inventions was a breakthrough. The

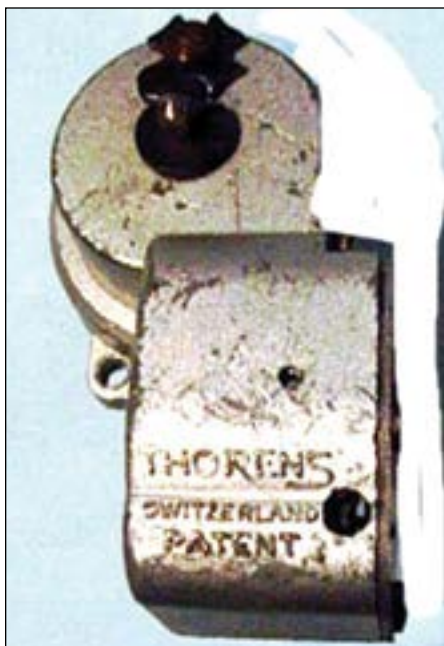


Figure 3: The spring barrel and governor housing.



Figure 4: Side view of centrifugal part.

inventors were simply ahead of their time. It would have been possible only with sophisticated machinery, unavailable in that time, to make the devices cheaply enough. The new designs were simply too expensive, and consequently only a few applications of these designs are known.

The centrifugal force governor ended up being mainly used in gramophones because it granted a more constant speed than the fan governor. If the

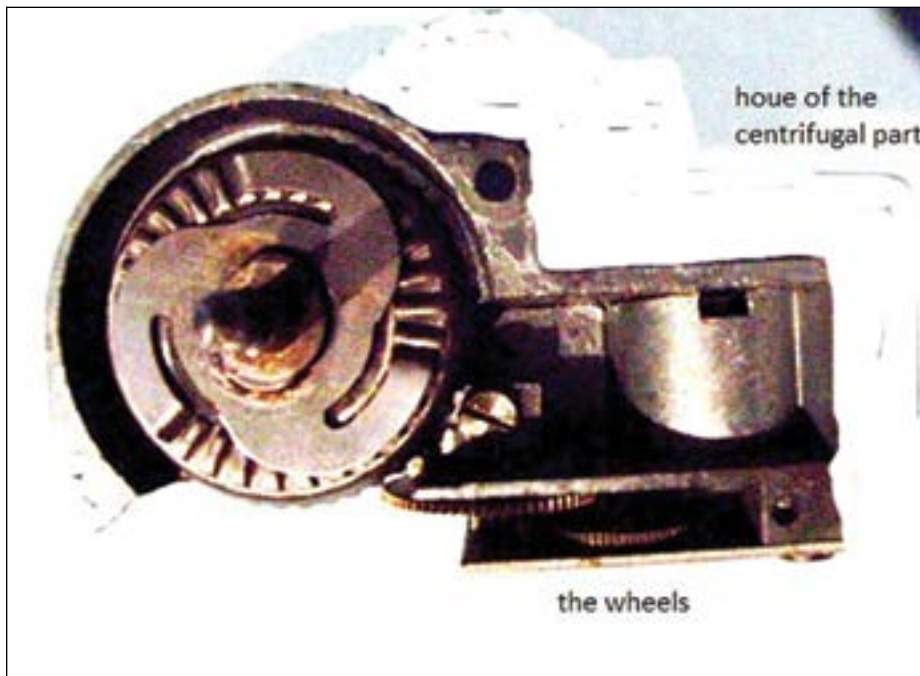


Figure 5: The bottom of the spring barrel with wheels and caddy visible.

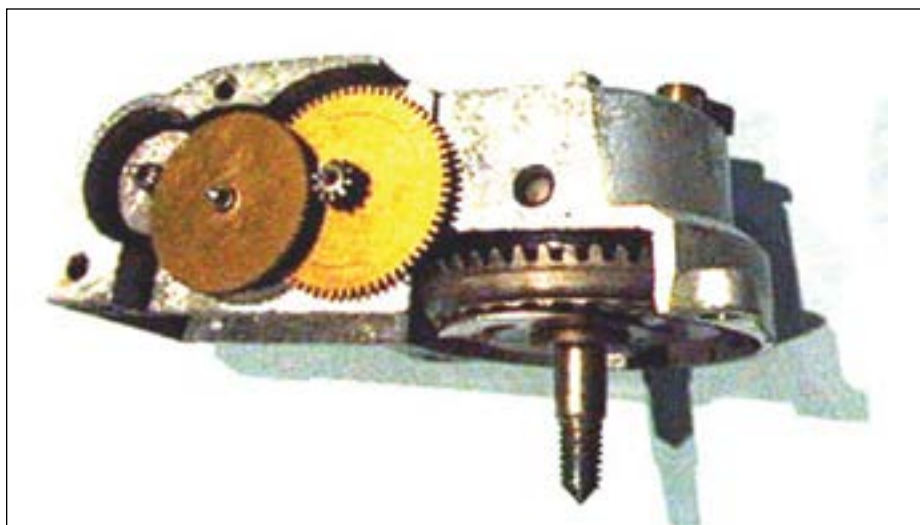


Figure 6: The left side of the caddy with a focus on the wheels.

speed of a record diminishes, the pitch lowers, which is unacceptable. In a musical box it is only the tempo that slows down.

Comparing the centrifugal force governor with a fan type, it is obvious that the latter is far cheaper to produce. The advantage of a centrifugal governor lies in the constant speed, but for the snuff box type musical works with a tune duration of about 30 seconds this does not justify such a high price.

It is almost unbelievable that so much effort was put into "improving" this construction. The fan did, and

does, an excellent job.

- All patents can be found via [DEPATIS-NET](#). They are mostly in French.
- Who was Jalco? The Piguet book brings us the solution. It was Louis Jaccard-Bahon from l'Auberson who used this name. He was active between 1940 and 1969. In his earlier years he made parts for small musical works, but after 1951 also complete movements. It was at that moment that he took on the name of Jalco. There were close connections with Thorens and the well known plant of Melodies S.A. was in fact the plant of Jaccard-Bahon.



An antique, early keywind, Nicole Freres "fat cylinder" music box recently sold by the author on eBay.

# eBay tips for the music box seller

How to sell your mechanical music treasures yourself and maximize the selling price

By Troy Duncan  
[www.singingbirdbox.com](http://www.singingbirdbox.com)

For many MBSI members, the days of acquiring new pieces have passed and the next challenge is deciding what to do with a collection built over many years. The best case scenario is that the collector is financially secure, their heirs are also financially secure, and the whole family appreciates the beauty of the collection and makes space in their homes to act as custodian for these treasures.

The best case scenario unfortunately does not happen all too often, leaving the collector or their heirs the task of selling the collection. There

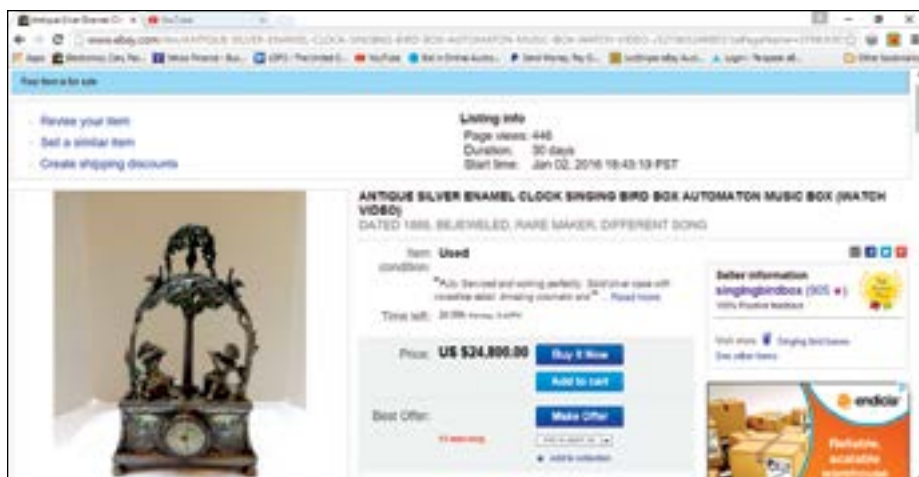
are several routes one can take to disposition such pieces: sell to a dealer, consign with a dealer, consign with an auction house or sell to a private party directly.

Let's briefly evaluate each option:

**Sell to a dealer.** This requires little effort on your part as the dealer does all of the heavy lifting. The dealer also needs to make a profit and takes the risk of carrying the inventory. As such, the price you will receive is naturally discounted and sometimes heavily. The pros are little effort and quick cash but often times a significantly discounted price to you.

**Consign with a dealer.** Similar with selling to a dealer except the dealer does not take the risk of tying up capital. The price you will receive should be slightly better than selling your collection outright but the timeframe to receive any sales proceeds could be very long or never and you need to assess what type of global sales exposure your pieces will receive as most mechanical music dealers have little to no Internet presence. The pros are little effort but no guarantee of a sale, uncertain cash flow and also a discounted price to you.

**Consign with an auction house.** This also requires little effort on your



A screenshot showing a good example of an eBay listing. Note the high-quality photo, extra description line and trusted seller badge.

part and if you are able to consign with one of the major international auction houses, your pieces will receive maximum sales exposure. This option also comes with a cost in that most auction houses charge a 20 percent to 25 percent buyer's premium and often times a 10 percent seller's premium, plus insurance and photo costs. For the average collection, the sales proceeds remitted to you are approximately 60 percent of the final "all-in" selling price. If your collection is exceptionally fine, you can negotiate the selling fee to zero as the auction house will want your collection to drive bidder activity. If your collection contains exceptional pieces (i.e. the Metzger collection and such), this is probably your best option. The other thing about an auction house is the timing is not always quick. However, if your collection is grand, your final proceeds will most likely be maximized.

### **Sell to a private party directly.**

This requires the most effort on your part and it also can produce the highest proceeds back to you. The key success factor is achieving maximum exposure for your collection and closing the deal. Because most MBSI members are no longer acquiring pieces, chances are you do not have a prospective buyer that you personally know that wants to purchase your pieces for a strong retail price.

This is where selling your collection on a global Internet platform comes

into play. I will explain how to maximize exposure, achieve a strong retail price and protect yourself from fraud.

Without question, eBay provides the best online sales channel for individuals to sell their collection. It has global exposure, reasonable selling fees and is both safe and secure. I know many of our members do not trust the Internet. However, that is caused purely by a lack of knowledge on how to protect yourself. I regularly sell mechanical music items on eBay and have never had a single issue. The Internet is safe and secure. I wrote an MBSI article in *Mechanical Music* Vol. 61 No. 5, September/October 2015, on using YouTube videos to increase MBSI's exposure and global footprint. This article follows the same concept.

As a seller, the three most important aspects are to create excitement/interest in your piece, create trust with a prospective buyer and generate maximum exposure. Most items offered for sale on eBay or any Internet platform fail these three aspects which is why the end result is not optimized.

This article is not intended to walk you through on how to open an eBay account or what to click to create a listing as both are very easy and self-explanatory when you go to [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)

When creating your eBay listing, take full advantage of the 12 high-definition (HD) quality photos that eBay allows each listing to contain. These photos should be crisp, clear and present your item in the best possible

manner while also making sure not to hide any obvious defects. Because mechanical music pieces produce sound, and some even animate, embedding a YouTube video within your listing is highly recommended as this allows prospective buyers to see and hear what your item does. Videos make an enormous difference when selling mechanical music pieces online. Would you ever purchase and download music online from an artist you do not know and for a song you have never heard or cannot listen to?

You also need to accurately describe your item within the text section of your eBay listing. This is where you create additional excitement and interest about your piece. There is an old saying in sales, "sell the sizzle and not the steak." Focus on what makes your item special and superior to similar items that others are selling. There is nothing wrong with being a tad boastful. At the same time, you must also highlight any obvious mechanical and/or cosmetic defects. The goal is simple: the combination of 12 HD quality photos, a video, and your text description should create excitement and draw prospective buyers to your listing while also accurately describing your item – including any defects.

To this end, creating the right item description is equally important because this is used in the online search results. For example, when I list an antique singing bird box for sale, I include key searchable words such as "automaton," "music box," and "clock" in addition to other relevant words such as "enamel," or "silver," if appropriate. The goal is for your item to appear in as many Internet search results pages as possible.

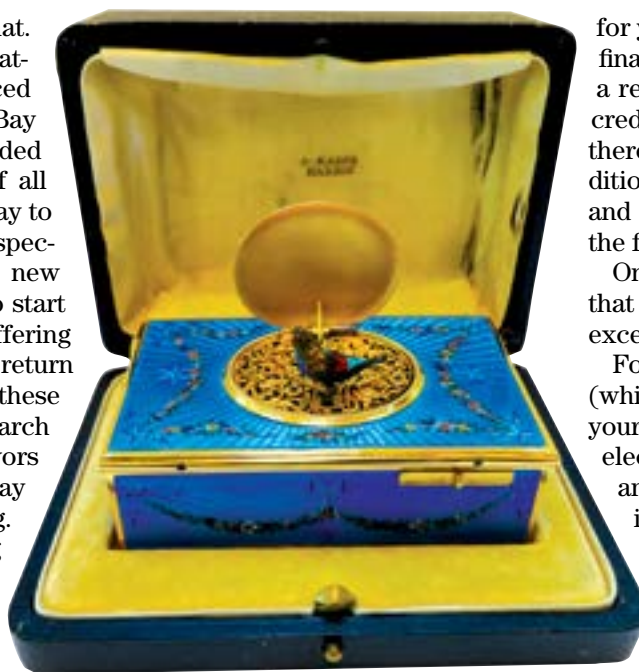
I also advise spending the \$1.50 per listing to include a subtitle as that increases the click through. In this instance, I highlight that the piece is from 1888, is bejeweled, and also plays a different bird song than most.

Now that you have created your listing, you need to create trust with any prospective buyer. Like any business, trust is created over time and the more successful transactions you have, stellar feedback comments, feedback rating and any special eBay

seals greatly help establish that. I am a Top Rated Plus and Platinum Power Seller, as evidenced by the gold seal on my eBay listing. This seal is only awarded to approximately 1 percent of all eBay sellers and goes a long way to establish trust with a new prospective buyer. Assuming you are new to selling on eBay, you need to start somewhere and that is why offering free shipping and also a 14-day return policy is important. Both of these choices will increase your search results because eBay favors listings with at least a 14-day return policy and free shipping. Everyone likes free shipping and simply bundling the cost of shipping into your item price is simple. Most importantly, offering a fair return policy has a huge impact on sales and extremely few people return pieces if they are accurately presented. This ties into my next point which is very important.

Even if you do not offer returns, you offer returns. Any item that is paid using PayPal or a credit card allows the buyer full right of return if it is not accurately described. Many sellers do not understand this. If an item is received by the buyer and you did not accurately describe it, you will be required to pay for the return shipping costs. So you will be out the original shipping plus return shipping and also be forced to refund the original item purchase price. Sellers that do not offer returns greatly reduce the probability of selling their item for a strong retail price because “no returns” immediately creates a sense of buying caution.

I also see a lot of items offered for sale that do not provide any shipping and the item is simply listed as “for pickup only.” If you do not offer shipping, you are wasting your time trying to sell your item online. To that end, I offer global shipping on everything that I sell. This creates maximum exposure and opens up the prospective buyer market beyond the U.S., which makes your sales market enormous. Shipping within one business day also adds exposure to your item



An antique, gold gilt, sterling silver, guilloché and enamel singing bird box crafted by Flajoulot of Paris, France, recently sold by the author on eBay.

because eBay will favor your item in the search results.

#### To summarize:

- Create excitement/interest and trust in your item with a well written listing that contains 12 HD quality photos and a video.
- Further expand the trust factor by allowing a 14 day return policy. You must legally accept returns anyway, whether you want to or not, so take advantage of the return requirement and generate trust instead.
- Generate maximum exposure by using appropriate keywords in the item description, add a subtitle, offer shipping, and consider offering global shipping.

As you successfully sell more items on eBay, and assuming you did everything right, your feedback score and comments will start to accumulate, which establishes you as a trustworthy and high-integrity seller.

The final point to discuss is how to protect yourself when selling on eBay. Most sales transactions will be with a buyer that you do not know who paid

for your item with PayPal. PayPal is a financial institution and is therefore a regulated entity just like a bank or credit card company. This means that there are specific legal terms and conditions in place to protect both buyers and sellers. As a seller, you must do the following to protect yourself:

Only ship to the buyer's address that is registered with eBay – no exceptions.

For items sold in excess of \$750 (which will be most of your pieces), your shipping method must include electronic signature confirmation. I am not talking about the old fashioned little card that gets returned to you. It must be electronic.

Pack extremely well as shipping insurance is almost worthless. I over pack everything as the best insurance is to take an offensive position and over pack. Insurance is a defensive measure.

As long as you ship to the registered address and receive electronic signature confirmation, you are protected by PayPal.

To further protect yourself, do a little due diligence and research the buyer who purchases your item. Every eBay account holder has a feedback score which shows their transaction volume and also the transaction time metrics. I will look to see if the buyer has recent feedback and, if so, how much and how good or bad it is. After your item sells, you will have the shipping address of the buyer. I regularly Google the address of the buyer to see what type of home I am shipping to. I look at both images and property valuations. If the buyer purchased a \$10,000 item and they live in a run-down house in a bad neighborhood, I become a little suspicious and will call PayPal to make sure everything with the buyer's account is OK. This due diligence should expand as the value of the item sold increases. These are just little extra precautions I take especially when selling internationally.

In summary, if you are willing to sell your collection yourself using the global tools available, you will come out ahead and maximize the cash for your collection.

# Restoring a rare Jean Billon-Haller interchangeable

*Article by Bob Caletti  
Photos by Bob Caletti  
and Jonathan Hoyt*

My first impression of a rare Jean Billon-Haller music box, upon receiving it from its owner, was that the box was in pretty bad condition. Gears were worn or broken and the comb was missing teeth. The governor was missing a fan blade and there were other missing parts as well. The first order of business was to document what we had so we could start to make a list of what we would need and what we would need to do to bring this box back to life. The fact that this music

box is rare meant there wasn't much information about it from easily-accessible sources like the internet. Deeper digging would be needed.

We started a thorough examination by removing the mechanism from the case and examining it carefully for any broken or missing parts.

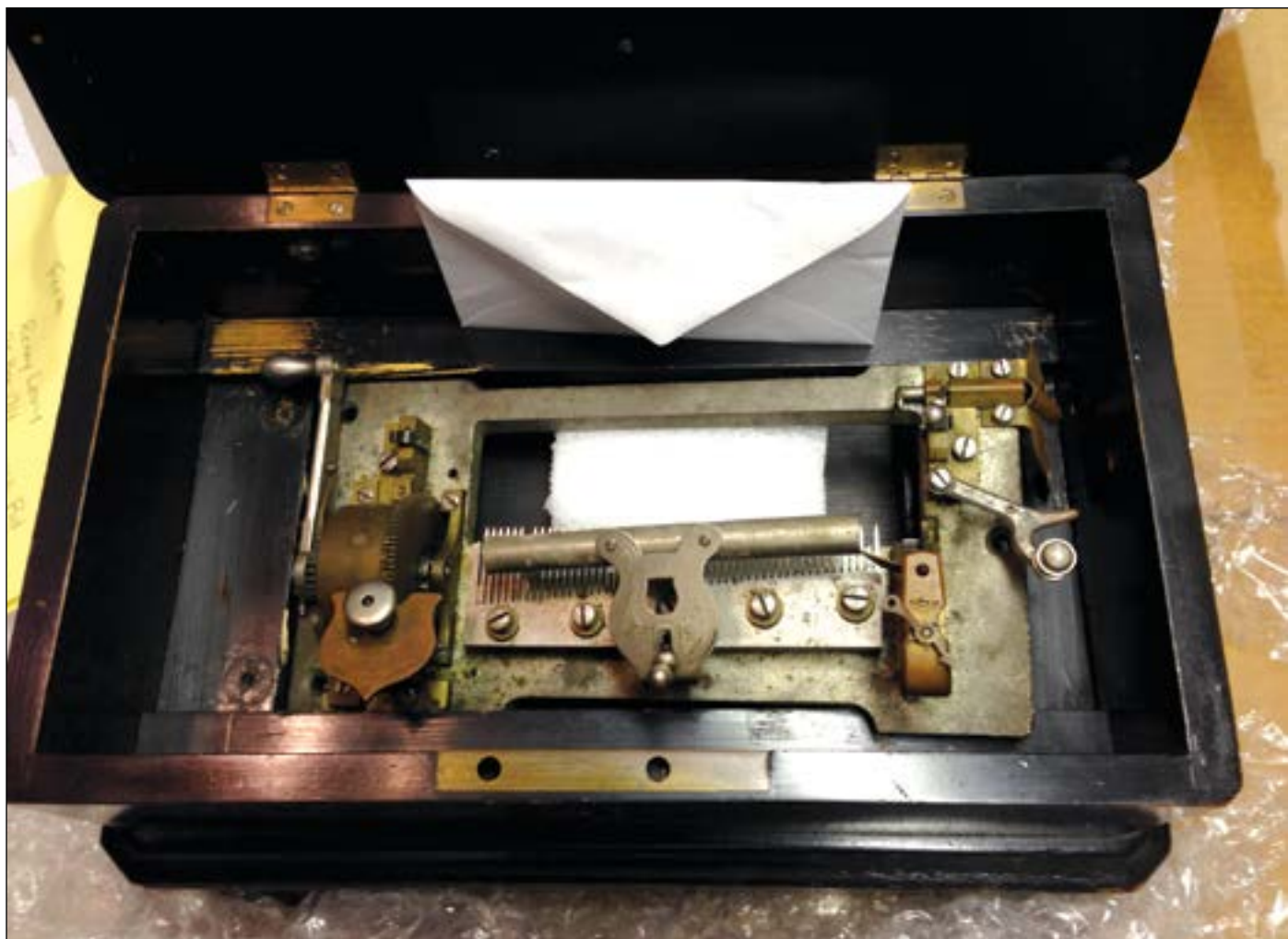
The first, and most obvious, things noted were the broken worm gear and spur gear teeth. As it turned out, these parts would become the biggest challenge to remake. The spur gear was an unusual pitch and tooth profile and the worm gear was also very special.

I contacted a number of people I had worked with before to see if any of

them could remake the special worm gear. Nobody I contacted or anybody they contacted could do it.

I turned to a local clock guy that I know and he suggested I talk with MBSI member Roger Slocum, who is an expert machinist. Roger makes a lot of custom tooling to do special jobs and he lives near me in the San Francisco Bay area in California, which was a bonus. Roger said he could make both the spur gear and the worm gear to match.

Using an optical comparator, Roger determined the critical dimensions of both the worm gear (endless screw) and the spur gear profile. He then



The music box as it was received. It is a Jean Billon-Haller music box with six interchangeable cylinders. The cylinder is removed in this image.



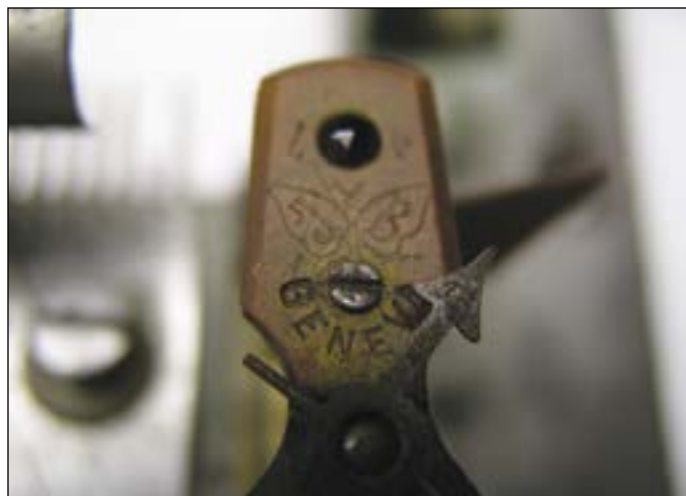
View showing how cylinders were identified with a paper strip showing the tune title, cylinder number, and composer.



The comb had several broken teeth and the bedplate plus associated parts were grimy with age.



A close up of the broken gear teeth and damaged worm gear that would both need to be replaced.



The logo of the music box maker and place of manufacture shown on top of governor.

made CAD drawings for the gears and any other parts he would need to make. Next he made a special cutter to produce the specific profile needed for the spur gear. The spur gear is cut in the conventional manner, but the worm gear is quite another thing. For this he made another special

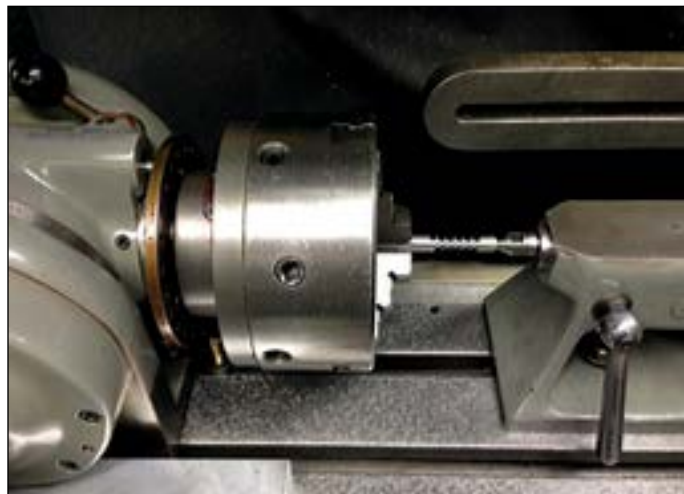
cutter to match the worm gear profile. Then using a special variable ratio mechanism he made himself, Roger cuts the correct pitch worm gear. This involves selecting the correct set of gears to drive the helical gear cutting tooling that will produce the desired worm gear pitch. Setup screws are cut

and tested to make sure everything is correct and then the final screw is cut, polished, and hardened. Roger has built many custom fixtures to make very specialized parts so this job was right up his alley.

While the work to reproduce the gears was going on, the other tasks



Worm gear machining set up.



Worm gear index head with spiral cut set up



Worm gear machining set up showing gear changes.



View of trial worm gears made to check set up accuracy



Close up of new worm gear and mating spur gear installed.

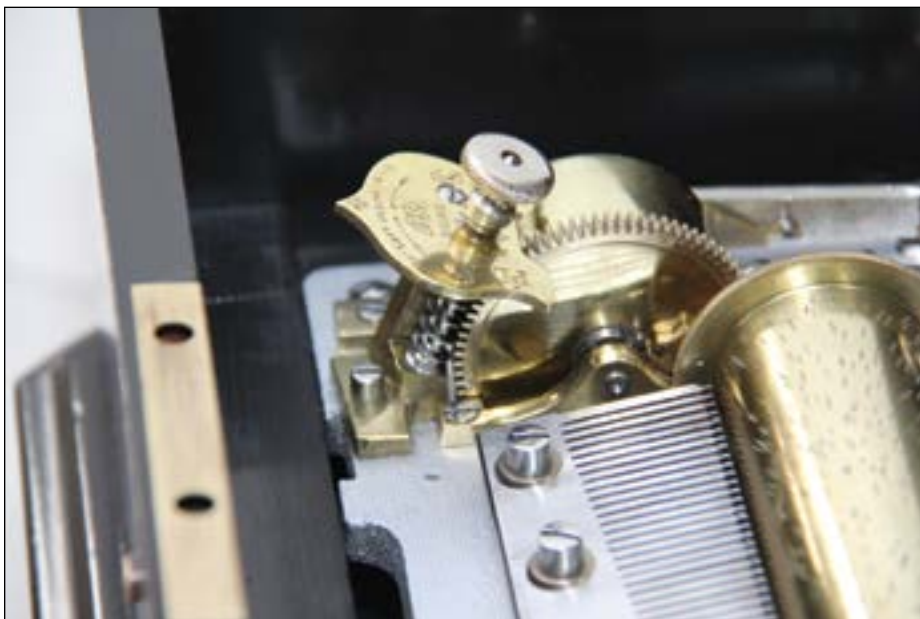


Wider view of the replacement worm gear and mating spur gear.

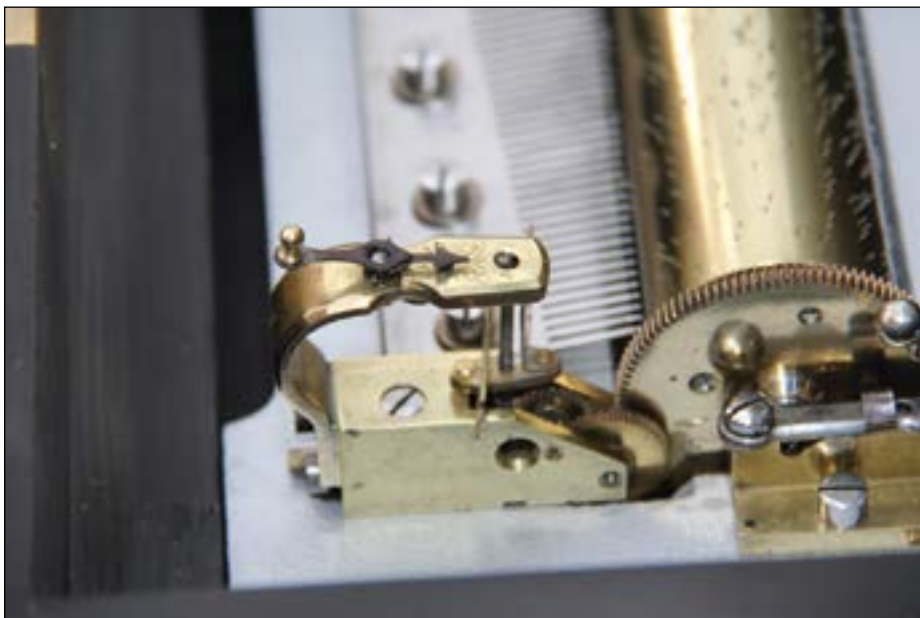
required to restore this music box to its former glory were started. This box has an unusual start/stop mechanism that requires you to turn the knob counter-clockwise to play and clockwise to stop the mechanism. There is a small spring inside the lower bearing cup for the worm gear that raises the worm gear up during play. During play the worm and knob turn freely against the spring barrel gear. The mechanism is stopped by a jamming action (nondestructive) of the worm gear against another gear which is forced downward against its lower collar when the knob is turned clockwise. The worm and gears should not be lubricated so that there will be adequate friction between the two gears to facilitate the lock up.

Looking at the mechanism in the photo on Page 20 you can trace the power flow through the mechanism. The power comes from the spring barrel on the left, through the start stop gears to the cylinder which is in turn coupled to the governor on the right. The governor is what controls the speed of the cylinder rotation and determines the tempo of the music.

If the cylinder is not present, and the start/stop knob is turned to the



View of the restored start/stop knob, cylinder and comb all polished to a high shine.



View of the restored governor and gears on the right side of the cylinder.

## Other Billon-Haller Music Box articles:

Maurer, Susanne, "SBI and the Billons", *Geneva, MBSI Technical Bulletin*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 1975, pp. 182-188.

Vreeland, Roger, "Jean Billon-Haller's Cylinder Musical Boxes", *Mechanical Music*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 1988, pp. 1-6


Karp, Larry, "The Billon-Haller Control Mechanisms: An Update", *MBSI Journal of Mechanical Music*, Winter 1994, pp. 30-33.



Overall view of Finished Music Box. The six interchangeable cylinders are stored in the drawer in the bottom of the case.

start position, the spring barrel would unwind violently. I have a feeling that a violent unwinding is probably what did the damage to this music box gear train in the first place.

There may have been additional parts missing from this mechanism that might have facilitated stopping the governor as well as adding an additional level of safety to the

stopping function, but no information could be found about them. Since the control knob started and stopped the mechanism as intended, we restored it the way it was. 

# Emilian Wehrle

## The man and his clocks Part 2

*By Justin J. Miller and Alfred L. Wehrle*

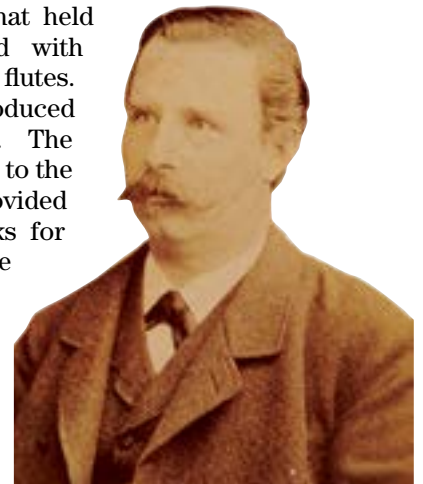
*Part 1 of this article was published in Mechanical Music Vol. 62 No. 1, January/February 2016. We pick up the story after Emilian Wehrle has married, become partners with his father in law and found some success making trumpeter clocks. He is now expanding his company with new offerings.*

### Flute Clocks

Through the new partnership with his father-in-law, Emilian Wehrle & Co. brought its first “flute clock” into production. Similar to the company’s trumpeter clocks, Wehrle’s flute clocks play musical tunes on the hour, reproducing the sound of a flute player’s song. Other than a few minor differences in the pneumatics, Wehrle flute clocks are identical to the trumpeter clock in almost every way. Nearly all the case styles the company used for its trumpeter clocks could also be ordered as the case for a flute clock. They utilized the same basic mechanical components as the Wehrle trumpeter clocks, with a large air chest and twin bellows system generating the air needed for the tune. The two main differences between them are that the reeds and metal horns found on the trumpeter clocks were replaced with wooden pipes, and the figures that held trumpets were replaced with similar figures holding flutes. The flute clock also produced a much softer sound. The addition of the flute clock to the company’s offerings provided a wider variety of clocks for its customers to choose from while requiring only minimal changes to the production process already in place.

The “mountaineering” figures were used in the carved clocks, while soldier-style figures were commonly found in the architectural designed cases.

Emilian Wehrle & Co. clocks could be



Emilian Wehrle (1832-1896), the leading producer of trumpeter clocks in the Black Forest. He also produced other musical clocks, including flute clocks, singing bird clocks, and rooster clocks.



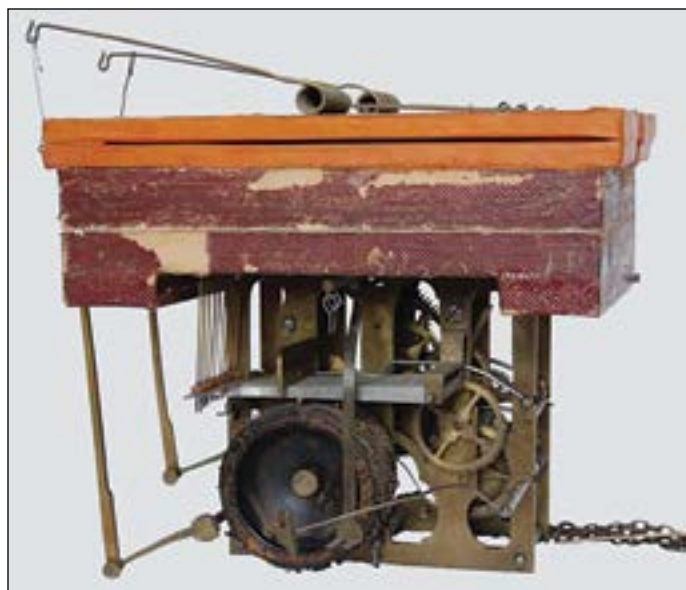
An example of a Emilian Wehrle & Co. Flute clock.



An example of a wall-mounted flute clock made by Emilien Wehrle & Co., circa 1890. This example is equipped with a brass plate, three-train movement, which runs for 30 hours. After striking the hour on a large gong, the clock plays one of two preselected tunes on eight wood pipes. The exquisitely carved walnut case features a hunting scene.



This flute clock movement is nearly identical in every way to the trumpeter movement described in Part 1 of this article. By replacing the metal horns and reeds with wood pipes, the clock produced a much more mellow and softer sound. Today some collectors prefer the sound of the flute, while others favor the louder trumpeters. The firm produced more clocks equipped with the trumpeter, making the Wehrle flute clocks more difficult to locate today.



The movement shown above is a typical three-train, 30-hour movement that has time, strike, and music functions. Movements were also produced that are nearly identical in construction, but only utilize a time and music train. These movements are not nearly as robust as the solid brass plate movements shown previously, but were much more affordable. The majority of trumpeter and flute clocks produced utilized these 30-hour movements



ordered with many different options. As mentioned, the buyer could choose a trumpet or flute clock, but they could also select the case style, the number of pipes or horns, and several different tunes from a menu. Emilian also designed several different movement variations that added even more customer options.

His 30-hour, weight-driven movements were available in both a two-train (time and music) and a more complex three-train model that added a strike feature. The clock would strike the hour on a large gong, followed by the musical tune. The firm also offered customers the option of an eight-day clock that utilized a spring-driven movement with solid brass plates. Although the time train of the movement would run the clock for eight days, the musical train still had to be wound daily. These eight-day movements were used almost exclusively in the more expensive shelf clocks, but they could also be ordered with select wall cases. Although Wehrle used several different spring-driven movement variations over the years, the firm's most popular clocks featured the two-train, eight-day (time and music) movements, and the eight-day, three-train (time, strike, and music) movements. As you can imagine, the large three-train spring movements represent the pinnacle of Wehrle's movement offerings. These movements are so large and robust that they are attached to their cases by a set of large iron L-brackets located just below the movement and a large iron-bar bracket across the top. Without these supports, the weight of the movement alone could easily pull the



The images above show a variety of figures used by the Wehrle firm. As the music plays, these large 4.5-inch figures holding their instruments appear behind the double doors. The earlier clocks have smaller primitive figures carved from wood, but the majority of the figures are made of a plaster-like composition and painted. Some clocks are equipped with single figures, while others have two figures standing side-by-side. The carved clocks nearly always have the mountaineering figure shown above, while the architectural cased clocks usually have a soldier-type figure. There are even figures of men on horseback holding outstretched trumpets.

movement loose from the case.

Emilian Wehrle & Co. offered high-quality cases in wall and shelf styles, with some of the shelf clocks offering an option of matching wall brackets or floor-standing pedestals. The wall hanging models with 30-hour movements were the most affordable and the firm's best sellers. The vast majority of his clocks found today are of this type. Architectural cases traditionally were more affordable than the heavily carved ones, but this was not always true. Augustin Tritschler, one of the most respected cabinet-makers in the Black Forest, made the high-quality architectural cases used by the firm, and these architectural cased clocks could be equally if not more expensive than the carved variety. The most expensive clock ever produced by Emilian Wehrle was the model no. 33, also known as the Schefel-Uhr. The model no. 33 trumpeter is the only clock in the Wehrle catalog that also features a music box that is

activated after the trumpet sounds. In the firm's catalog from the 1890s, this model carried a whole-sale price of 1,200 marks, which was three times the price of the second-most expensive clock in the catalog. Very few of these models were produced, making them extremely rare today. There is a handful of surviving examples; the most well known is on permanent display at the Deutsches Uhren museum in Furtwangen, Germany. There are also privately held examples both in the United States and Europe.

The carved cases varied from simple cases with typical Black Forest motifs, looking much like an oversized cuckoo clock, to massive, carved cases covered with animals all carved in full relief. The large carved shelf clocks could weigh close to 100 pounds. Most of the motifs on the clocks circulating today are known catalog designs, but it is clear that Wehrle also produced some unique examples upon special order. The



This coin-operated flute clock was made as a special-order piece for Camerer Kuss & Co., a UK-based retailer for Emilian Wehrle's clocks. The clock was used as a display/revenue-generating item: patrons could deposit an English penny to activate the music on demand. The clock not only produces the song of the flute on the hour using eight wood pipes, but a large music box in the base is activated following the completion of the organ. The music box and the tune sheet found in this special-order clock are identical to the musical movement and tune sheet used in the model no. 33. The coin operation mechanism was a factory-added feature; the movement has additional gearing within the plates specifically designed to operate the coin activation mechanism.



A view of the inner workings of the Emilian Wehrle coin-operated flute clock.

most mechanically complex clock produced by Wehrle is a special-order, eight-pipe, two-tune shelf flute clock. This clock (at left) also contains a factory-installed coin operation mechanism with a locking coin drawer, as well as a large, six-tune music box that fills the base of the clock. After the organ finishes playing one of the two preselected tunes on the wood pipes, the music box plays one of six airs. The airs on the music box automatically change after each song is played.

Emilian Wehrle's name is engraved on a brass plaque on the front of the case along with basic instructions for the coin operation. Augustin Tritschler also made the case for this clock. This clock was special ordered by Camerer Kuss for use as an income-generating clock, and although more may have been produced, it is the only surviving example known today. To further our grasp of the cost of Wehrle's musical clocks, a wholesale price list from the

1880s provides the following information: A basic wall trumpeter could be purchased for as little as 85 marks, while the cost of a shelf clock with a high-quality carved case that was equipped with an eight-horn, eight-day, and three-train movement quickly rose to 300 marks. Even Wehrle's most basic clocks were extremely expensive when compared to other types of clocks then being produced in the Black Forest.

As a point of comparison with typical skilled-labor wages during this time period, the average skilled worker engaged in the Black Forest clock trade made no more than two to three marks for a ten-plus hour day!<sup>1</sup>

This means it would take close to six months of typical wages of a skilled laborer to purchase one of the better models. Then, too, the prices above are wholesale; the retail prices would have raised the actual sale prices several times this figure. Emilian Wehrle & Co.'s clocks were produced for the well-to-do, and they were primarily sold outside the region. Trumpeter clocks, including the non-Wehrle, non-Bäuerle "blower"-style ones, were also produced in very small numbers when compared to clock production in the Black Forest as a whole. It has been estimated that only one of every 4,000 clocks produced in the Black Forest during this period was a trumpeter.<sup>2</sup>

Today's collectors seek trumpeter and flute clocks of all types, but they naturally focus most on examples that have the nicest case and movement combinations. Just as they were when ordered directly from Emilian Wehrle & Co., current values for Wehrle's musical clocks vary greatly, based on the movement and case. In recent years, the massive, heavily carved shelf clocks, which are adorned with multiple, carved, full-relief live animals, seem to consistently generate the biggest overall demand. These large carved shelf clocks have become very difficult to locate and only infrequently change hands.

### Singing Bird Clocks

In the mid-1870s, Emilian Wehrle & Co. added a singing bird clock to its production line. Incorporating the



A wall-mounted singing bird clock made by Emilian Wehrle & Co. This example is equipped with a standard brass plate, three-train movement that runs for 30 hours.



The singing bird movement removed from the case. Instead of a large pinned wood musical wheel found on the flute and trumpeter clocks, the singing bird clock has a large cam wheel machined from brass.

same basic technology used for the trumpeter and flute clocks, Wehrle was able to adapt the movement to perfectly mimic the sound of a songbird. While the clock's musical movement produces the song of the bird, a fully feathered automated songbird "sings" in a stunning visual display.

On the hour (or on demand), the movement activates the musical train of the clock. The movement pumps the bellows to generate the needed air pressure that is forced through a brass flute-like whistle. At the same time, a brass cam wheel on the back of the movement rotates. This cam wheel is precisely cut, controlling both the valve (airflow) and the plunger (pitch of the note). This sequence reproduces the song of a bird. Although Wehrle did not invent the mechanical singing bird clock, the way he designed and produced them, using many of the same components being used in the trumpeter and flute clocks, was very ingenious. Factory records from a catalog that was distributed in the late 1870s reveal that a carved singing bird wall clock had a wholesale price of 180 marks. Another catalog from this



A shelf singing bird clock made by Emilian Wehrle & Co., circa 1875. This example is equipped with a solid brass plate, three-train movement that runs for eight days. After striking the hour on a large gong, the full-feathered bird located in the upper arch of the clock comes to life. The bird has automation to the beak, head, and tail, which all move in perfect sequence to the bird's song. The ebonized case has extensive accents in gold. The backboard is inscribed by hand and dated in German. The inscription states that this clock was made by Emilian Wehrle in 1875 and gives the information of its first purchaser, who purchased the clock in 1876.

same period shows an eight-day, three-train shelf example, with an ebonized and gilt case and bracket, at a price of 300 marks. Because the singing bird clocks were extremely expensive, coupled with the competition from the firm's more popular trumpeter and flute clocks, very few singing bird clocks were produced. As a result, they are today one



Rooster shelf clock made by Emilian Wehrle & Co., circa 1890. This example is equipped with a brass plate, two-train movement, which runs for 30 hours. This example retains its original matching bracket.

of the most coveted of all clocks made by Wehrle. Few if any museums in the world appear to have an Emilian Wehrle singing bird clock, although there are about a dozen known examples in private collections.

### Rooster Clocks

The final clock type produced by Wehrle was the rooster clock. As with the trumpeter and singing bird clocks, Wehrle did not invent the rooster clock — but, once again, he advanced its function and sound far beyond any of his competitors. In the late 1850s Jacob Bäuerle experimented with and produced a small number of rooster clocks using air pressure with a brass reed and a horn to reproduce the rooster's crow. This was very similar technology to what he used in his trumpeter clocks. Wehrle invented something completely unique—even



Located on the back of the rooster clock movement is a small wooden “sound box.” The box is attached to the movement by a metal arbor, allowing it to pivot on its axis. On the top of this small wooden box is a serrated wheel. This wheel rides on a thin metal reed that extends across the top of the sound box. When the serrated wheel is spun, it vibrates the reed, causing the sound to echo through the sound box. On the back of the movement is a small, precisely cut, cam wheel. The cam wheel controls the amount of pressure applied to the serrated wheel, thus controlling the pitch of the call. On the hour (or on demand), the movement activates the cam wheel. The rooster's crow is reproduced by the varying speed at which the serrated wheel is spun. The cam wheel also controls the automated rooster located at the top of the clock. As the movement produces the call, the rooster leans forward and opens its beak before tipping back and letting out his crow as the beak slowly closes. The rooster crows three times on the hour.

for him—his rooster clock became the only musical clock he made in which the music or call was produced without the use of air. Instead of air, he designed a simple apparatus that reproduced the crow of the rooster through the use of friction. Wehrle applied for a patent for this innovative design on October 8, 1884, and was granted the patent DRP 32141 in 1885. Wehrle's design is quite simple. The rooster clock, although very ingenious, was not a success story for Emilian Wehrle & Co. Whether the lack of popularity was due to the high cost of the clock or the overall unpleasantness of the crowing sound produced each hour (which can be described as “shrieking”), we will never know. Although today all of

Wehrle's clocks are considered rare, his singing bird and rooster clocks are by far the scarcest.

### Business in Transition

As mentioned above, Emilian Wehrle & Co. clocks were never produced in anywhere near the numbers put out by many clock factories of the era and always represented a very small part of the total Black Forest clock production. The 1873 Vienna exposition catalog stated that as of 1871 Black Forest makers produced one million eight-hundred thousand clocks annually.<sup>13</sup> In 1871 Wehrle made 300 trumpeter clocks; Wehrle was responsible for only one six-thousandths (1/6,000) of that year's Black Forest clock production. The majority



Emilian Wehrle as a young man seeking to make his fortune.



Emilian Wehrle as a successful business man with a thriving business. Emilian died in 1896 at age 64.



Franz Xaver Wehrle, Emilian's father in law, died in 1885.

of Emilian Wehrle & Co. clocks were exported to the United States, Great Britain, and other industrialized countries enjoying business booms and expanding wealth. Production did gradually increase over the years as the company continued to improve and expand its offerings. The increased demand for these high-quality clocks brought the Wehrle family considerable wealth and fame.

Emilian Wehrle passed away in October 1896, when he was only 64 years old. His partner, Franz Xaver Wehrle, had died 11 years earlier. Upon Emilian's death, the company was taken over by his brother-in-law and partner in the firm, Julian Wehrle (1835–1927). It should be noted again that although Julian and Emilian both shared the same family name, as far as can be determined, their families were not related until Emilian married Julian's sister Norma. From this point on, the day-to-day operation and decision making at the company was relinquished from Emilian's side of the family forever.

A few years after Julian took over the firm, business slowed. Some blamed Julian for the decline in sales

in the following years, but the truth was that the era of the large, expensive trumpeter clock had already started its decline before the turn of the century. The decline was more likely the result of a poor economy and changes in taste of twentieth-century patrons than a lack of management skill on Julian's part.<sup>3</sup>

Julian's son Erwin (1896–1971), a graduate of the Uhrenmacherschule (clockmaker school) in Furtwangen, was brought into the business in 1914 and, years later, he took over as sole director of the firm. Well before he joined the firm, the company had moved away from the manufacture of large musical clocks, converting its engineering and craftsmanship expertise and resources toward the manufacture of precision mechanical parts for various industries in the Black Forest, such as "metallic elements and (spare) parts for other industrial production fields."<sup>4</sup> Following World War II, the firm retooled once again and started making water meters and other plastic products.

Erwin Wehrle had two children, Renate and Friedhilda, who are both now deceased. Renate was involved

with the firm as a member of the board of directors and was later given the title of "President," although she was never fully involved with the company's day-to-day operations. She never married. Her younger sister, Friedhilda, married a banker and real estate broker named Eduard Herth, who at this time still resides in Furtwangen. He was taken into the firm as a business executive and worked there for many years. The couple had four children before Friedhilda's untimely death. Their son, Georg Herth, is the current director of the firm, now named WEHRLE-WERK AG, which is still located Auf dem Moos [on the moor]. The firm's focus has shifted once more and is now primarily involved in energy engineering and environmental technologies and employs more than 170 persons. Its website touts the firm's fifth-generation history of products that display high-quality craftsmanship and technological innovation.<sup>5</sup>

#### Descendants of Emilian Wehrle

Several publications have erroneously reported that there are no longer any living descendants of Emilian and Norma Wehrle. In this final section, we put this rumor to rest by briefly tracing the lives, whereabouts, and continued creative and musical endeavors of those who have followed in the lineage



Alfred Wehrle, Emilian's oldest child, in his younger days. Alfred was born in 1867.



Alfred Wehrle served as commander in chief of the Furtwangen Volunteer Fire Brigade. He died in 1948.

begun by the uniting of these two very talented Wehrle families.

Emilian's marriage to Norma Wehrle (1844–1901), eldest child of Franz Xavier Wehrle (1819–1885), or "Wanne

Xaveri" as he was known, produced three children: Alfred (1867–1948); Kamilla (1869–1972); and Franz Xaver (1870–1948), named after his grandfather. None of Emilian's children went

into their father's business, although each had a share in it through inheritance.

Kamilla married factory owner Herman Siedle of Furtwangen. She had five children and lived to be 103 years of age.

Franz Xaver, a graduate of the Uhrenmacherschule, did become a clockmaker, but because of the difficult economic times, he found little work in his field in the Black Forest. In 1902 he emigrated to the United States, eventually finding employment as a model maker with the Seth Thomas Clock Company in Thomaston, CT. His plan was to save enough money to buy out his sister's and brother's interest and return to Germany to take over and run the company. But the hard economic difficulties in Germany that followed World War I, and the arrival of children prevented his return. He did go back to the region for a visit in 1928, but this was the one and only time he returned to his homeland. He eventually retired from the Seth Thomas Clock Company and lived out

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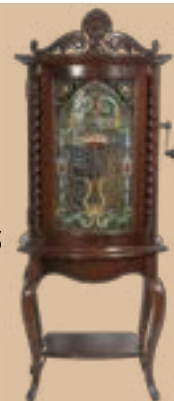
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Kamila Wehrle (1869-1972) was Emilian's second child and only daughter.



Franz Xaver Wehrle (1870-1948) was Emilian's youngest child.

the rest of his life in Thomaston. Franz Xaver had four children—Frank, Erna, Gerda, and Armin. Only the two boys had children of their own. Frank had one child, Frank Jr., who died childless. Armin had three daughters. Two of them, Ingrid and Martha, still live in Oregon where they grew up. The third and youngest, Pamela, died in a boating accident at a young age. Hence there are no heirs carrying the Wehrle name from Franz Xaver's descendants.

Emilian and Norma's eldest son, Alfred, grew up in Furtwangen, and except for tours of duty in the military never left the town. Upon his father's death, he inherited the family home at 27 Badstrasse that Emilian had purchased in 1884. It still stands today, but the name of the street is now Baumannstrasse. He had little interest in his father's clock business; instead, he made his living as a professional photographer with his own studio in Furtwangen. Two of his original photo albums have survived and give a rare glimpse into Furtwangen and

the Wehrle family during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was also a salesman for the Siedle Company.

Alfred also had many other interests. He was a lover of music, having studied both violin and piano in his youth. A photo taken in 1904 shows him as the director of the String Orchestra of Furtwangen. He was also a long-time member of the Arion Singing Society, Commander-in-Chief of the Furtwangen Volunteer Fire Brigade from 1919 to 1937 (Figure 28), and was the longtime chair of the 11-member "Fasching" or Carnival Krewe board of directors (Figure 27). Alfred came to his love of music naturally. His father Emilian was also a member of the Arion, as well as its director at one point in the 1880s. Through his mother Norma, he was the grandson of Franz Xaver Wehrle, who as noted earlier had apprenticed with the preeminent organ maker Martin Blessing and brought immense skill and musical innovation to the clocks produced through his partnership with Emilian.

In 1899 Alfred married Prima Kern, and they had two children, Alfred Karl (1899–1965) and Willy Adolf (1904–1982). Both became clockmakers, also training at the Uhrenmacherschule. Both sons were also very musically inclined, studying piano and violin, and were members of the Arion Singing Society in their youth. Because of the depressed economic conditions in Germany following World War I, the brothers struggled to find work. As a result, they contacted their Uncle Franz, and he subsequently sponsored their emigration to the United States. They settled in Thomaston — first Willy in 1924 and then Alfred K. in 1926. In keeping with the Wehrle musical tradition, in 1931, Alfred, Willie, and their uncle Franz founded the H. S. Liederkranz Singing Society, which is dedicated to preserving the heritage of German choral music. It is still an active singing society today.

Upon arrival in the United States Alfred went to work for the Seth Thomas Clock Company, and at the time of his retirement in 1962 was in charge of production. In 1929 he married Erna Kuss (1899–1979), daughter of Leopold Kuss, then a partner of the London firm, Camerer, Kuss and Company, which was a major purchaser of Wehrle clocks. They had two children, Carolina Prima (1930–2010) and Alfred Leopold (b. 1933).

Carolyn married Gunther Muller, a German immigrant tool and dye maker, and remained in Thomaston raising her family. They had five children.

Alfred L. also worked for the Seth Thomas Clock Company while in high school and college, tuning the chimes for the quarter- and half-hour strike clocks. He has three daughters. The oldest Kelli, lives in Montana; Royellen lives in Florida; and Karla is in Connecticut. He resides in Florida and is the oldest living direct descendant of Emilian Wehrle who carries the Wehrle surname.


Willy worked periodically for the Seth Thomas Clock Company, but his lifelong love was music. After World War II, he earned his living as the director of several German singing societies in such cities as Hartford

and Torrington, CT, and as director of the H. S. Liederkrantz in Thomaston. In the mid-1960s, he purchased the Hartford Travel Bureau and remained its owner until he retired. In 1930 he married Louise Kuss (1908–1979), Erna's sister, and they also had two children, Francis (1932–2000) and William (1935–1989).

Upon graduation from high school in 1950, Francis went to Furtwangen and studied at the Uhrenmacherschule. He had completed two years of the three-year curriculum when he received his draft notice and had to return to the United States and enter the army.

After completing his military service, he took a job with the Seth Thomas Clock Company and worked in the purchasing department. When production slowed, he left and joined his father in the travel business. He married and had four children: Stephen lives in California, Gretchen in Boston, Peter in New Jersey, and Kathryn in Thomaston. Neither Stephen nor Peter has children.

Finally, we come to William (or Bill, as he was known), the last of Emilian's descendants whose children might carry on the family name. Bill had three children, Lisa and David, who

live in Connecticut, and Bill Jr., who lives in New Hampshire. Bill Jr. is a confirmed bachelor, so it has fallen to David to keep the Wehrle name going. He and his wife Allison have done so. They currently have two young sons, Daniel (born 2001) and Michael (born 2003), who is also known as Mickey. Neither boy has yet to show an interest in clockmaking or music. But they are, of course, the great-, great-, great-grandsons of Emilian Wehrle. We should perhaps give them a bit more time. 

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2. Wiener Weltausstellung: Amtlicher Katalog der Ausstellung des Deutschen Reiches, 510-511).

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5. To learn more about today's company, visit its website, [www.wehrle-werk.com](http://www.wehrle-werk.com). The site is in German.

## About the Authors

Justin J. Miller is the owner of a website at [www.BlackForestClocks.org](http://www.BlackForestClocks.org), the leading informational English-language website on the subject. He has also authored a book, "Rare and Unusual Black Forest Clocks," which contains a chapter on musical Black Forest Clocks and additional information on Emilian Wehrle. It is available at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) and through booksellers worldwide.

Alfred L. Wehrle is retired from the Army and teaching. He inherited his love of music from his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

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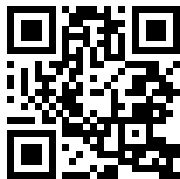
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# Snowbelt chapter provides music for A Prairie Home Companion

*By Tracy Tolzmann  
Photos by Merrie Tolzmann*

The Snowbelt Chapter of MBSI recently took advantage of a rare opportunity to provide Christmas music played on automatic musical instruments for the final Christmas broadcast of Garrison Keillor's "A Prairie Home Companion" on National Public Radio. The two-hour long program aired live from Fitzgerald Theater in Saint Paul, MN, at 5 p.m. Central Standard Time Saturday, Dec. 19.

Keillor, the well-known and beloved star of the show, had charged program researcher Olivia Pelham with the task of locating musical boxes and reed organs for use on the broadcast. Pelham contacted the MBSI through its website and Web Secretary Knowles Little provided her with local contacts in the Twin Cities. Pelham reached out to former MBSI Trustee Rich Poppe and current Trustee Tom Kuehn. Rich was unable to assist, but Tom was on board and enlisted Tracy Tolzmann. Nancy Fratti had also been contacted, and put Pelham in touch with Ralph Schultz, who also joined the team.



Snowbelters Ralph Schultz, Tracy Tolzmann, and Tom Kuehn with Garrison Keillor following the broadcast.

Kate Cooper of Saint Paul's musical museum, The Schubert Club, was also enlisted to provide a musical box from the museum's collection.

Pelham told everyone involved she really had no idea of just what Keillor had in mind for the use of the instruments provided, noting that he is notorious for leaving plenty of room for improvisation with last minute

changes. We would all have to wait for the Friday afternoon rehearsal and sound check to see just what was in store for us.

As the opportunity to demonstrate each instrument arrived, the entire cast and crew of the program were fascinated by the sights and sounds. Kate started off playing a 20-inch Kalliope upright disk box that had recently been donated to the Schubert Club. (Surprisingly, the donors had been neighbors of Tom Kuehn many years ago and the instrument was one of the first of its type that Tom had seen. It had been acquired in Germany when the owners, John and Bella Sanders, were teaching there.) Keillor made notes as the crew repositioned microphones and timed the instrument's disk, playing "The Christmas Song."

Next, Tom played "Home Sweet Home" on a 12-tune Paillard alternating-tip cylinder box and then "The Hallelujah Chorus" on a 20-note Bijou Orchestrone reed organ. Then came Ralph, playing "Silent Night" on his 20¾-inch Regina. The rich full sound of the instrument struck Keillor so profoundly that he decided to open the show with the instrument's beautiful



Keillor listening to Tracy Tolzmann's 20-note Pell Street Organ. Bandleader Richard Dworsky (left) records the scene on his cell phone while actor Fred Newman looks on at right.



Tom Kuehn shows Garrison Keillor his Paillard cylinder box and Bijou Orchestrone reed organ. (l to r) Keillor, show researcher Olivia Pelham, singer Lynn Peterson, pianist/bandleader Richard Dworsky, Tom, and actor/sound effects man Fred Newman.

tones. Ralph also demonstrated a Concert Roller Organ playing "Joy To The World." Finally, Tracy cranked-out "O Come All Ye Faithful" on his 20-note Pell Street Organ.

With sound checks over after Keillor's review, we were discharged for the evening with orders to return by noon, Saturday for further instructions and rehearsal. The mild Minnesota winter (so far) made transporting our instruments to the theater less burdensome and we were assured we could leave them securely where they stood with no concerns.

Saturday arrived a much brisker day, but we gathered in the theater's basement green room for tasty treats and refreshments provided by Prairie Home Productions. Finally, the call came for the automatic musical instrument providers to come on stage. It was now that we learned how Keillor intended to use the instruments. With

a little tweaking and script editing, the show was set.

A delicious dinner was served to cast and crew as the house opened and the sold-out crowd of 950-plus entered the marvelous Fitzgerald Theatre, the oldest theater in Saint Paul. The theater originally opened in 1910 as the Schubert Theater. The venue is ideal for live performances as every seat in the beautiful, double-balconied auditorium is within 90 feet of the stage! Attendees of the 1987 joint MBSI-AMICA Annual Meeting may recall the theater as the site of our silent movie presentation which featured the theater's Wurlitzer pipe organ. Once known as the World Theater, the stage has been host to the popular international broadcasts of A Prairie Home Companion for most of the show's 40-year run. The 2007 MBSI Annual Meeting, hosted by the Snowbelt Chapter, featured a trip to

the Minnesota State Fair for the 350 attendees to watch the recording of Keillor's show there.

With everyone in their places at exactly 5 p.m., the broadcast began with the "American Public Media" introduction (the program's nationwide distributor) followed immediately by Ralph's Regina. The audience was in silent awe of the beautiful tune and tones. Following an extended musical "Amen," the house band jumped in with the show's theme song, "Tishamingo."

The Royal Academy of Radio Actors joined Keillor in numerous comedy sketches interspersed between musical boxes and vocal interludes throughout the evening. Tim Russell, Sue Scott, and Fred Newman are not only talented performers but seem to be new musical box enthusiasts. The same can be said of opera singer Maria Jette and singer-songwriter Lynn Peterson, who

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both sang beautifully, often accompanied by Keillor's rich baritone.

Kate, from the Schubert Club, was next to play the Kalliope, with Ralph turning the crank on his Concert Roller Organ shortly thereafter. Following intermission, Tom played the Palliard as Tim Russell read a historic recollection of Christmas memories written by a Minnesota pioneer. Tracy then stepped out to stage edge to perform on the Pell busker's organ which was followed by band leader Richard Dworsky pumping and playing the same tune on a reed organ with the audience joining in singing "O Come All Ye Faithful."

The automatic music finale for the evening was Tom's turning of the crank on the Bijou box for a rousing "Hallelujah Chorus." The audience was invited to sing an a capella version of "Silent Night" before a finish by the band playing a rousing bluegrass version of Handel's "For Unto Us A Child Is Born," with the entire cast, singers, and musical box providers invited on stage for bows to a standing ovation!

Off the air, and as the crowd began to leave the auditorium, the band continued to play seasonal selections as an encore while actors and crew hustled about. When the band's music was through, Tracy was invited to play seven more Christmas tunes on the Pell street organ as many audience members lingered to ask questions and learn more. Tom and Ralph were busy showing their instruments to cast and crew and audience members who were invited on stage for a closer look following the broadcast.

While Garrison Keillor did not interview any of us on the music-packed program, he showed a keen interest in the instruments and hinted that a return visit could well be in the (short) future of the program: Keillor will retire from the show on July 2, 2016, wrapping up a 41-year run of the popular show. Tom, Ralph and Tracy all agreed that the radio experience was a wonderful and memorable way to celebrate the Christmas season!

Audio and video excerpts of the broadcast are available on line at the program's official web site: [www.prairiehome.org](http://www.prairiehome.org).



Ralph Schultz demonstrating his 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch Regina for Keillor.



Tom Kuehn playing the Bijou during the broadcast. The Schubert Club's Kalliope at left.

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# Rowman & Littlefield in the market for new authors

The publishing firm that purchased Vestal Press from Harvey and Marion Roehls and continues to publish many of Vestal's former titles, is in the market for new authors.

Jed Lyons, CEO of Rowman & Littlefield and MBSI member, said that one of his company's best selling books is still Art Reblitz's manual on how to repair, service, and rebuild player pianos. Q David Bowers' "Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments" still sells pretty well too, he added.

More books in either the "How To" or "Encyclopedia" style would be welcome additions to Rowman & Littlefield's library.

"We publish more than 2,000 books a year. Most are focused on one particular topic that people are really enthusiastic about," Lyons said. "We find that the more general the subject matter, the smaller the audience for

that book is. But when you start to focus on really specific subject matter, the readership that is fascinated by that particular subject is very interested in purchasing books on the topic."

Other possible topics the publishing house would consider a good fit for their particular style are books on the history of personalities, or companies that made large impacts on the musical box industry.

Rowman & Littlefield maintains 12 core titles in active circulation that are focused on mechanical music, both repair and encyclopedia style books. Print on demand technology expands the number of titles available as the company can take an order for a book, print it and ship it out to the customer in short order.

To learn more about Rowman & Littlefield, visit [www.rowman.com](http://www.rowman.com). 📖

## Event alert

AutomataCon, a convention for artists, collectors, historians, and enthusiasts of automatons ([www.automatacon.org](http://www.automatacon.org)), will be on March 18-20 at the Morris Museum in Morristown, NJ ([www.morrismuseum.org/mechanical-musical-instruments-automata/](http://www.morrismuseum.org/mechanical-musical-instruments-automata/)).



## In Memoriam



MBSI has learned that the following members, and former members of the Society have passed away. Our deepest condolences are extended to the families.

Marjory Ryan, Liberty Twp, OH  
Carol Buonato Kennett Square, PA  
Mary Wilson of Old Monroe, MO  
Edward Young of Glide, OR  
Joe Romano, Metairie, LA  
Louis Boyd, Metairie, LA



### The Musical Box Society of Great Britain

is pleased to announce the publication of the

#### Fourth Supplement

to The late H.A.V. Bulleid's original work  
"Musical Box TUNE SHEETS"



Published with the kind permission of The Musical Box Society International [MBSI] and in an all-colour A5 format, this Supplement brings together, the combined work of the late **H.A.V. Bulleid and of Timothy Reed** to collect and identify images of a further 114 Tune Sheets; 110 of which have been published previously in the MBSI Journal, "Mechanical Music" 50 of the Tune Sheet images had been collected by The late Antony Bulleid prior to his death; a further 64 have been collected since by Timothy Reed who continued the project at Antony Bulleid's request.

In addition to the images of Tune Sheet Nos 401 to 514 in the series, the Fourth Supplement also incorporates **Version 3 of the "Musical Box Tune Sheets SEARCH ENGINE"** devised and Compiled by Luuk Goldhoorn.

In line with the policy adopted for previous Supplements, this combined publication is available from  
**The Musical Box Society of Great Britain Free of Charge plus Postage & Packing at cost.**

However, The Society welcomes donations towards the publication costs it has incurred.

For those requiring the complete MBSGB library of Cylinder Musical Box Tune Sheet publications, a package comprising the original book, its four Supplements and Search Engine V3 is available at a combined price of £10.00, plus Postage and Packing at cost.

**Orders:** Please refer to the Musical Box Society of Great Britain website for information on how to order and details of charges for individual booklets, Postage and Packing - [www.mbsgb.org.uk](http://www.mbsgb.org.uk)

\*\*\*\*\*

*During his lifetime Anthony Bullied gave permission for MBSGB to use his work and The Society is keen to ensure that the Tune Sheet Project that he started should be ongoing and its integrity intact; images of unrecorded cylinder musical box tune sheets are welcome and should be sent to either Timothy Reed at [reed402@msn.com](mailto:reed402@msn.com) or to The Musical Box Society of Great Britain at [www.mbsgb.org.uk](http://www.mbsgb.org.uk); they can then be made available to the wider interest.*

# The Hunt

*Story and photos by Ardis Prescott*



Column Graphic by Mary Clegg

Here I am writing another MBSI article and of all things... The Hunt! Of all the articles I thought I might write for this journal, The Hunt was not on my list. I love the musical instruments but I never had a burning desire to own one.

I actually came up with the idea for this column when I was a fairly new MBSI member. I had never seen such wonderful musical instruments and I wondered how these fantastic machines came to be found by their owners. I thought other new members might also be interested in this idea. I discussed it with Ralph Schack and Robin Biggins, who both thought it was a great idea, as did former journal editor, Rosanna Harris, and that is how The Hunt column was born. Mary Clegg drew the illustration.

Ralph and Gloria Schack introduced me to Carla Weimer, who was MBSI president at the time. Shortly after our meeting, Carla phoned me and asked if I would consider becoming the new chair of the Society's Membership Committee. I was very new to MBSI. I didn't own a musical instrument and I barely knew the names of most of the instruments. I couldn't believe I was being asked to be MBSI Membership Committee Chair! I thought, maybe I should have kept my ideas to myself. Anyway, Carla and Ralph convinced me my new ideas for growing MBSI membership, such as The Hunt column, were exactly what the Membership Committee needed.

As Membership Committee Chair, I



enjoyed writing articles about other members for the journal. With each article, I would include a photo of me with a favorite instrument, not my instrument, but my favorite from that member's group of musical instruments. I really liked any number of instruments I saw, but I still had no desire to own one. My all time favorite is the Welte, but thankfully (forget the cost) it will not fit in my house!

As years passed, members started asking me when I would be having an MBSI meeting at my house since I had such an outstanding musical collection! I was stunned! All my membership articles with photos of me next to outstanding musical instruments made people think they were all mine? I had a hard time believing it, but even this sort of thing didn't spark a desire in me to own my own machine.

Fast forward to 2015. I still thought The Hunt really didn't apply to me, as I honestly wasn't looking to acquire a musical instrument. However, this past November I was reading the newspaper and enjoying my morning



The author's "new" Regina Style 24 music box with the lid closed.

coffee when suddenly my eye was drawn to another newspaper, which just happened to be open to the Garage

Sale section. The first line, Estate Sale, caught my eye as it mentioned music boxes and, of course, I'm thinking

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jewelry boxes. I phoned my friend who lived near the estate sale to ask if she could check out the music boxes but she was not home.

I kept feeling like I really should check out the music boxes so I phoned Robin Biggins to see if he had time for a quick drive to check out the sale. We arrived at the huge warehouse sale and asked about the music boxes. There had been three music boxes and one had sold. The sales person had no idea about what kind of box had sold but walked us over to the other two boxes. One box had been electrified but over against the wall was a Style 24 Regina disc box. It was covered with a thick layer of dust but played quite well. Robin confirmed that it was fine mechanically. I inquired about the price, which was reasonable, and asked if the owner would take less. I was told that the estate sale was having a 50 percent discount on Sunday (it was Friday when I first saw the box) but she did not think it would apply to the music boxes. I left my email address and asked her to let me know whether or

not the machine would be discounted. I had no intention of keeping the Regina for myself but knew someone who would buy it from me.


So, after leaving the estate sale, I went to the bank and withdrew the cash I needed to pay for the box. On Sunday after church I still had not heard about a discount but Robin and I decided we would check it out anyway. When we arrived, the sales person immediately told me that the price was lowered but not by 50 percent, which I hadn't really expected anyway since the box was already reasonably priced.

I made the purchase of the Regina and discs and took the box to Robin's shop. I polished the outside of the box and Robin did some minor repairs and cleaning on the inside. Then we played the Regina and I absolutely fell in love with it and lost any desire to sell it. Who knew I would wait almost 13 years to find "my" music box!

I contacted Bob Yates and ordered a Regina certificate. It is a Style 24, playing a 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch disc, and has a

cupola lid with small spindles. Most of the Reginas I have seen have thicker spindles. The box was sold from the Regina factory Dec. 20, 1899, to someone named Koss. Bob Yates thinks Koss may have worked at the Regina factory and the box might have been a Christmas gift to the family.

The story doesn't end there. I've always tried to come up with ideas of how to introduce more people to our hobby. So for Christmas Eve church services I suggested to my pastor that we have my Regina music box playing "Silent Night" as parishioners entered and left the church. He thought it was a great idea! The Regina amazed every person who attended Christmas Eve services. Cell phones came out, pictures were taken and the music recorded. Many questions were answered and the pastor suggested we have the Regina playing at our next Christmas Eve service. You never know when or where our instruments can/will attract interest.

Keep hunting and sharing your musical instruments! 



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# Japanese International Chapter

*Chair: Masayuki Yoshida*

*Reporter: Sadahiko Sakauchi*

*Photographers: Toshihiro Hamamura and Sadahiko Sakauchi. (Some photos are courtesy Horie Orgel Museum.)*

**Oct. 24-25, 2015 — Nishinomiya and Rokko, Japan**

The Japanese International Chapter

of MBSI held its 2015 autumn meeting at Horie Orgel Museum in Nishinomiya-city and Rokko International Musical Box Museum in Kobe-city. There were 21 attendees. We enjoyed many rare musical boxes at Horie Orgel Museum. The president of the museum, Mrs. Mariko Matsuura, prepared the boxes in good order and

kindly showed us more boxes than visitors see on an ordinary museum tour. She specially granted us, this time only, an exception allowing us to take photos in the museum. This restriction has been in place for more than 20 years so it was a very rare opportunity.

After the tour, we adjourned to the



This is an early sample of Polyphon automatic disc changer. Note the odd flat spot at the top of the disc.



The group poses in front of the Decap Dance Organ.



A view inside the Rokko Musical Box Museum.



This box, made by Henri Capt, had a well-balanced sound with bells whose volume was suitable for the comb.



This is an inline duplex cylinder musical box, which is rarer than a parallel duplex box.



This twin-disc box was made by Lochman. We enjoyed the powerful comb sound and well balanced tubular bells.



These boxes are made by a firm called Baker and Troll.



This box, made by Baker and Troll, is reported to have been made for Russian Czar Nicholas II.



We took a photo in the garden under the fine weather with the museum staff.

hotel, where we held our business meeting and workshop.

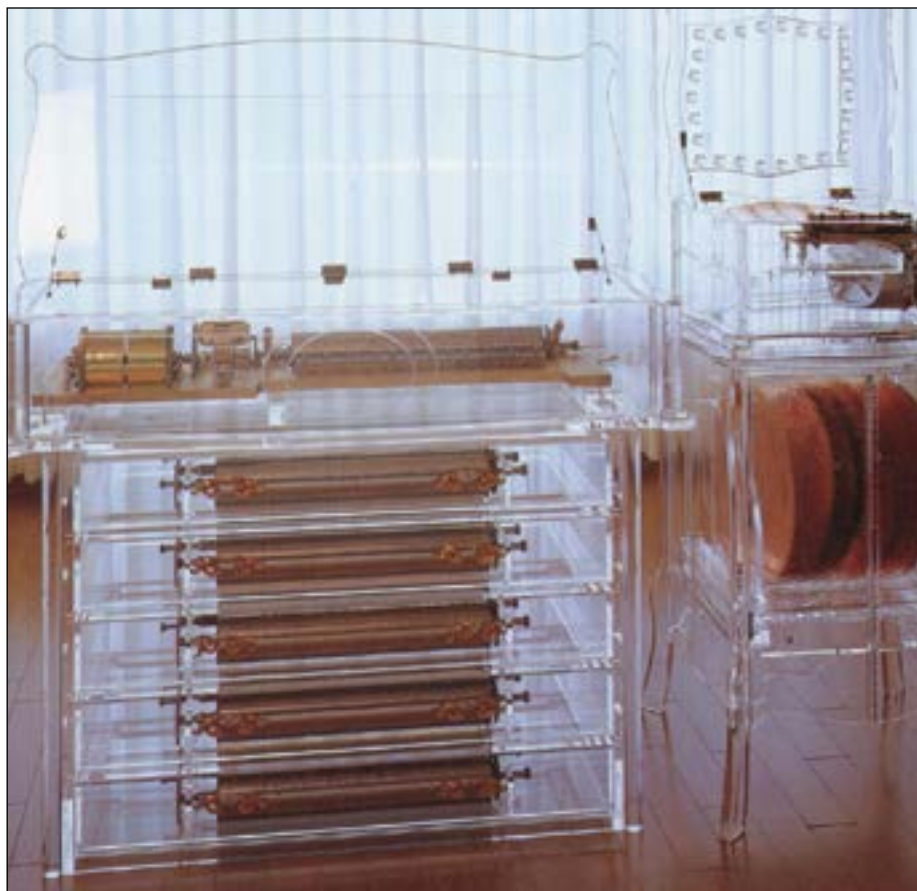
Next morning, we moved to Rokko International Musical Box Museum. We enjoyed the performance of various automatic musical machines, such as a Decap Dance Organ “DeKempen-aer,” a Phonoliszt-Violina, a Wurlitzer Style O Photo player, a Welte Style 2, and an Encore Automatic Banjo. Also, we saw a display of shadow pictures, which deeply impressed us.



This Orphenion box, unlike other coin operated boxes, had a gentle and mellow sound.



A brochure talking about the shadow pictures display at the Rokko International Musical Box Museum.



This big interchangeable cylinder musical box was installed in a transparent acrylic case allowing us to observe the movement as it was playing.



A gorgeous grand format overture box found in the museum.

# Southern California Chapter

*Co-Chairs: John and Linda Birkitt*

*Reporter: Ardis Prescott*

*Photographers: Lowell Boehland  
and Ed Cooley*

*Dec. 12, 2015 – Del Mar, CA*

On Dec. 12 the MBSI Southern California Chapter held a Christmas party at the lovely hillside home of Roger and Sandy DeWeese in Del Mar, CA. There were approximately 45 chapter members and guests in attendance.

After a brief tour of the beautiful home and collection, a delicious luncheon was served. After lunch our chapter chair, John Birkitt, called the meeting to order. John thanked our hosts and the members who brought food. Frank and Shirley Nix were the members who traveled the farthest to attend the meeting. Members were asked to introduce their guests and Jerry Kaliser introduced his guest, Joan Biasi.

Bob Lloyd, treasurer, presented his report and asked members to pay their chapter dues for next year. Robin Biggins suggested the chapter donate



Chapter members all took a moment to pause for a group photo.

\$500 for some needed restorations to the Stinson organ on the Merry-Go-Round in Griffith Park. The members present approved the donation.

Robin said we have some extra table favors for sale from our MBSI Annual Meeting in Torrance, CA. Several favors were sold. Diane Lloyd had 27-inch discs for sale to anyone

interested.

John and Linda Birkitt agreed to stay on as chapter co-chairs and were presented plaques for their outstanding service. Ed and Peggy Cooley also presented the Birkitts with a framed photo of chapter members.

Volunteers are needed to host 2016 chapter meetings. Members



Ed Cooley presented Linda and John Birkitt with a framed photo of chapter members.



A display of musical Christmas scenes fit perfectly into the holiday mood.



Dan Peterson, Terri Urbon, Robin Biggins and Brent Hoag enjoy the DeWeese music box collection.



Left to right: Don Henry, Dick Goetz, Christian Eric, Phyllis Goetz and Donna Peterson enjoy the lunch buffet.



Shirley and Frank Nix tour the DeWeese collection with Don Henry.



Many members enjoyed seeing this rocking boat baby cradle built by Roger DeWeese.



Roger DeWeese and John Birkitt find the Southern Comfort.



The DeWeese family were generous hosts for the meeting.

considering hosting meetings are Brent Hoag and Terri Urbon in San Diego; Harold and Barbara Hastain in Redlands; Lelland Fletcher in San Diego; David and Dixie Boehm in San Juan Capistrano; Dan and Donna Peterson in La Jolla; Bob and Diane Lloyd in Cowan Heights; and, Frank and Shirley Nix in Woodland Hills.

Once again the volunteers who worked so diligently in organizing our 2015 MBSI Annual Meeting were recognized and thanked for their untiring efforts in making our annual meeting a success. A tribute was paid to Ralph Schack for his dedication to MBSI and his contributions to our annual meeting.

We adjourned and toured the lovely DeWeese home seeing and hearing the musical collection. There were also many radio controlled model yachts and airplanes and a variety of interesting collectibles. As the wonderful afternoon came to a close, we thanked our hosts and headed to our homes in heavy traffic.



Roger DeWeese cranks a tune on one of his many music boxes.



Linda and John Birkitt received a chapter appreciation award for their long time service as chapter co-chairs.



Left to right Shirley and Frank Nix, Jennifer Culp, Fran Einberg, Don Henry and Robin Biggins enjoy lunch in the backyard.



John Birkitt (right) thanks Roger DeWeese for hosting the meeting.



Chapter members also enjoyed lunch on the sun porch.

# National Capital Chapter

*Chair: Sally Craig*

*Reporters: Donna and Gene Borrelli*

*Photographers: Gene Borrelli and Paul Senger*

*Dec. 13, 2015 – Annapolis, MD*

The National Capital Chapter held its holiday meeting on Sunday, Dec. 13 at the house of Cheryl and Dick Hack which is on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay in Annapolis, MD. There were 60 in attendance including 13 guests, one of whom traveled all the way from Chicago, IL. We were treated to a catered luncheon followed by a business meeting.

At the business meeting, plans for 2016 activities were discussed. These activities include our annual trip to the C&O Canal in Maryland in May where music boxes, organs, and



Sally Craig with the Hupfield Phonoliszt Violina and the Wurlitzer CX (left).



Dick Hack and the Welte Orchestrion.



Sandy Lynch and Ruth Secamiglio enjoying the beautiful December weather.



Cheryl Hack at the Mortier organ.

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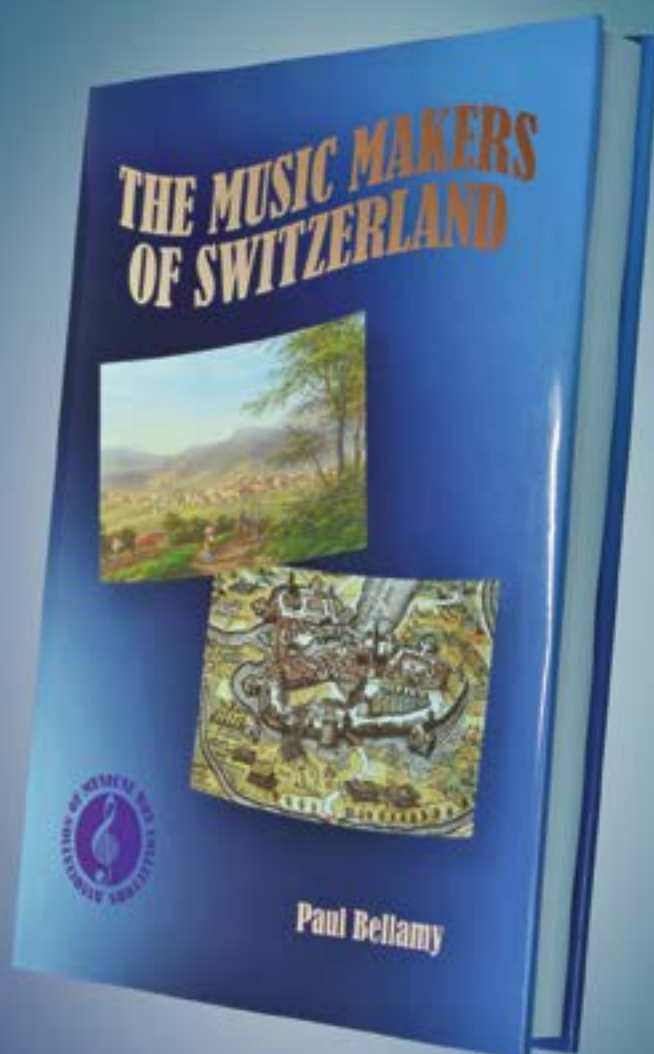
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other mechanical musical items are displayed. There also are plans for several meetings at members' homes to see their collections. Several are already making plans to attend this year's MBSI Annual Convention in Minneapolis, MN.

Following the business meeting Dick and Cheryl demonstrated their collection to members. The Hacks have an extensive collection of mechanical music. It includes a variety of nickelodeons, organs, orchestrions, pianos, music boxes, phonographs, jukeboxes, and movie jukeboxes. Some of the larger pieces are a Weber Unika, Hupfield Phonoliszt Violina, Seeburg G Orchestrion, Welte Orchestrion, Wurlitzer CX Orchestrion with added bells, Wurlitzer 153 Band Organ, Davrainville Clockwork



Glenn Thomas, Ken Gordon and Rob Johnston listen to the music from the balcony.



Florie Hirsch reads the Treasure's and Membership reports.






We had rare December weather for lunch. Enjoying the meal (from left to right) are Sy Epstein, Fred Krochmal, Virginia Barnett, and Margie Epstein. Near the windows are Cheryl Hack and Nancy Shaper.



Sally Craig, Jed Lyons, Ron Yancy and Mike Galvin look over a Link jukebox circa 1928.



Guests enjoying the Mortier organ.



Nancy Fratti

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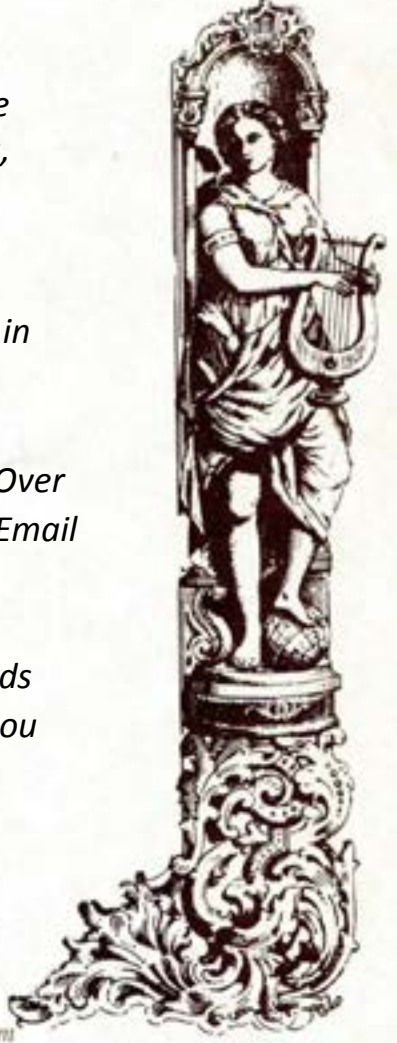
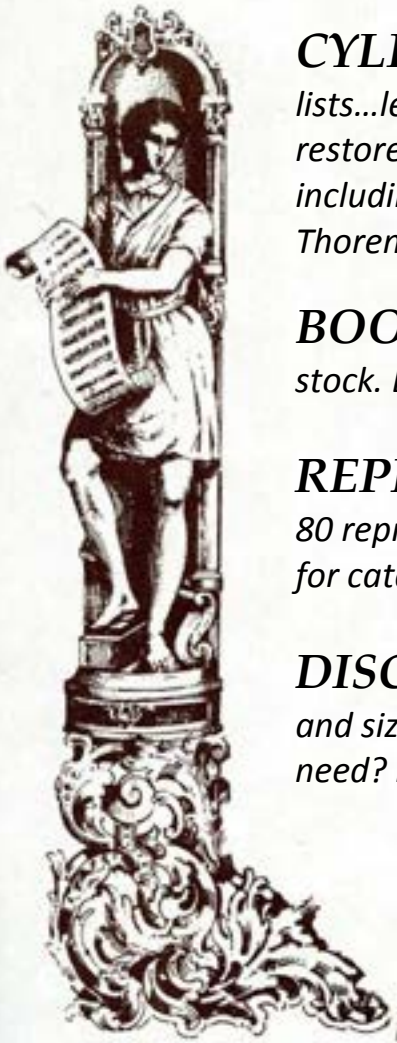
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jukebox, Polyphon 15½-inch musical tall clock, Wurlitzer Model B Harp reproduction built by Dick, and Link 2E Nickelodeon.

We thank Cheryl and Dick for hosting our holiday party for the fifth straight year. The chapter is planning for another meeting in March 2016. 📷



Jack Hardman and Joe Orens at the Mortier organ.



Dick Hack (left) demonstrates the "Baker's Pacers" horserace machine made by the Baker Novelty Company (circa 1939 -1946) to Glenn Thomas, Sabina Pade and Kim Kleasen.



Cheryl, Nancy and Joel Shaper listen to the Welte Orchestrion.



Ron Yancy, Ken Gordon, and Dick Hack at the Western Electric Selectraphone jukebox circa 1928

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# Stanton's Auctioneers 3-Day Spring 2016 Phonograph & Music Machine Auction

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SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2016 - 9 A.M.**

**To be held on the Eaton County Fairgrounds, Charlotte, Michigan**

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# Snowbelt Chapter



The lower level orchestra room was a popular listening area.

*Chair: Tracy Tolzmann*

*Reporter: Tracy Tolzmann*

*Photographer: Merrie Tolzmann*

*Dec. 6, 2016 – Mahtomedi, MN*

The Snowbelt Chapter of MBSI met for our annual Holiday Party on Sunday, Dec. 6, at the lakeside home of Trustee Tom Kuehn. Unseasonably warm weather made for easy travel and we had a large turn out of 37 members and guests.

Tom's varied collection of automatic instruments were at their best, playing Christmas favorites. Tasty hors d'oeuvres and refreshments were enjoyed as we listened to the Mills Violano Virtuoso. Tom's Dutch Street Organ naturally commanded attention, as did the Mason and Hamlin reproducing piano's medleys of Christmas music.

Exploration of Tom's meticulously maintained workshop revealed the progress on his Löesche piano restorations. (Tom will be presenting a workshop on this project during the 2016 Annual Meeting in Minneapolis.)

Orchestrions greeted us on the lower level of Tom's music addition,



Enjoying Christmas music on the single Mills Violano Virtuoso.

with a "drunk monk" Seeburg B, Coinola O roll piano, and the Popper Konzertist in fine tune. While the 2016 MBSI Annual Meeting committee met on the lower level, the rest of the Snowbelters enjoyed a Christmas concert on the Löesche pianos upstairs.

A short business meeting included welcoming five new members: Angelo

Rulli, Wes Cutter, Joyce Paxton, and Tom and Laura Stierman. We reviewed plans for the 2016 Annual Meeting and announced the opportunity for members to share their instruments on A Prairie Home Companion. (See story on Page 33.)

As always, a request for meeting sponsors was made. Two members

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responded and dates will be set in the near future!

A delicious dinner of fried chicken was served, accompanied by salads, side dishes, and desserts provided by the membership. "Technical difficulties" postponed the screening of our 2016 MBSI Annual Meeting promotional video until after dinner, but it received a great response when we were able to view it.

As darkness fell, members bade one another Christmas greetings and set forth into the mild evening with plenty of holiday decorations to view as everyone journeyed home. Thank you to Tom Kuehn for another wonderful holiday gathering.



(Left to right) Tom Wurdeman, Andy and Harriet Ellis, Beverly Mendenhall, Lawrence and Phyllis Crawford, Bill Nunn, Jock Holman and Merrill Mendenhall.



(Left to right) Rich Poppe, Ralph Schultz, meeting host Tom Kuehn, and Kiven Lukes chat as they listen to the Mason and Hamlin reproducing grand piano.



Wearing apropos headgear, meeting host Tom Kuehn plays his Dutch Street Organ.

## A Lasting Legacy



Throughout its history, MBSI has fostered an interest in and preservation of automatic musical instruments. Your gift to the Endowment Fund will support programs that will help future generations appreciate these achievements of man's creative genius. Visit [www.mbsi.org/efund.php](http://www.mbsi.org/efund.php) to learn more.

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Mar. 17-20, 2016	Trustees Mid-Year Meeting.	Houston, TX	Sunbelt Chapter
May 1, 2016	Lake Michigan Chapter Meeting	Algonquin, IL	Aaron Muller
May 20- 22, 2016	Spring Southeast Chapter Meeting	South Florida	Bob Smith and Howard Sanford
May 29, 2016	016 C&O Canal Organ Grind and Music Box Demonstration	Potomac, MD	Paul Senger
June 25, 2016	Lake Michigan Chapter Gala	Barrington Hills, IL	Jasper Sanfilippo
July 23-24, 2016	Mid-America Chapter, 41st Annual Band Organ Rally at Carillon Historical Park	Dayton, OH	Rob Pollock, Mary Pollock, Mike & Liz Barnhart
Aug. 31-Sept. 3, 2016	67th MBSI Annual Meeting hosted by the Snowbelt Chapter	Minneapolis, MN	Snowbelt Chapter

Please send dates for the Calendar of Events to: Don Henry (phonoworks@hotmail.com) and Russell Kasselmann (mbsi@irondogmedia.com)

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Cowan Hgts, CA 92705

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- March 20: Fine & Decorative Arts
- April 9-10: Firearms
- April 21: Coin
- April 23-24: Automobilia & Petroliana
- April 30- May 1: Fine & Decorative Arts
- May 14-15: Coin-Op & Advertising (Las Vegas)
- May 21-22: Advertising

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**AUCTIONS**

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**Press a Button, and Automatic Phonograph Plays Your Tune**



The mechanism of this magazine type phonograph, with switchboard, is shown at the right

**“The Autofono”, 1926**

Prototype of world's 1st practical jukebox by Oberlin Smith, Bridgeport, NJ/USA.  
**The only surviving example!!**  
Unrestored condition.  
Estimate: € 15,000 – 30,000 /  
US\$ 16,000 – 32,000 US\$

**Japanese Lady Walking Baby Automaton by Gustave Vichy, c. 1880**

with original box and costume  
Estimate: € 4,000 – 6,000 /  
US\$ 4,300 – 6,500



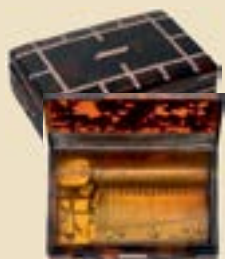
**Rare Lochmann Disc Orchestration, c. 1900.**

Estimate: € 12,000 – 18,000 /  
US\$ 13,000 – 19,500

**138<sup>th</sup> Specialty Auction**

**»Mechanical Music & Automata«**

**May 21, 2016**



**Fine Tortoiseshell and Gold Musical Snuff Box by F. Nicole, c. 1830**

Estimate: € 2,500 – 3,500 /  
US\$ 2,700 – 3,800



**Early Fusee Musical Box by Martinet et Benoit, Geneva, c. 1830**

Estimate: € 6,000 – 8,000 /  
US\$ 6,500 – 8,600



**Large Carved Black Forest Mantel Clock with Musical Movement, c. 1890**

Estimate: € 9,000–12,000 /  
US\$ 9,800–13,000

**French Ormolu »Cupido« Mantel Clock, c. 1820**

Estimate: € 2,000 – 3,000 /  
US\$ 2,200 – 3,200



**Large Full Orchestral Musical Box with Reed and Pipe Organ, c. 1880**

Estimate: € 6,000 – 8,000 /  
US\$ 6,500 – 8,600



**Monopol 11 3/4-inch Disc Musical Chalet, c. 1900**

Estimate: € 3,500 – 5,500 /  
US\$ 3,800 – 5,900



**Carved Swiss Musical Chalet Gentleman's Cabinet, c. 1890**

Estimate: 6,000–8,000 € /  
US\$ 6,500–8,500



**Barrel Organ by Imhof & Mühle, Oxford Street, London, c. 1870**

Estimate: € 5,000 – 8,000 /  
US\$ 5,400 – 8,600



**Orpheus Mechanical Piano, Model 18, c. 1897**

Estimate: € 2,400 – 3,000 /  
US\$ 2,600 – 3,200

**“Bébé Poudreuse” Musical Automaton by Leopold Lambert, c. 1890**

Estimate: € 4,000 – 6,000 /  
US\$ 4,300 – 6,500

**Automatic Disc Changer »Symphonion Style 120S«, c. 1900**

Estimate: € 30,000–50,000 / US\$ 33,000– 55,000

**...and many more!**

For more information and large colour photographs of some more of the upcoming Highlights please visit our website at: [www.Breker.com](http://www.Breker.com) / **New Highlights** and [YouTube.com](http://YouTube.com) at Auction Team Breker in April 2016

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**Conjurer Musical Automaton by Louis Renou, c. 1900**

in fine original costume  
Estimate: € 6,000 – 8,000 / US\$ 6,500 – 8,600

