

Issue 33, Summer 2023

MECHANICAL MUSIC WORLD



A very early Joseph Hicks barrel piano
- see article on page 11

An Association of Musical Box Collectors Publication

From the Editors' Desk

Well, it's Good News/Bad News time. In this case the Bad News has been turned into Really Good News. Our Chairman has been through health problems but is now over the worst and really looking forward to the rest of the Good News - which is a meeting of the Chanctonbury Ring planned for early September. Perhaps we shall recover from our isolation during the 'Covid' era, and 'normal service will be resumed as soon as possible!'

It is also Good News that Laurence Fisher has planned what looks like a most interesting auction and social event - remember those at Christie's South Kensington? A 'traditional mechanical music feast' is promised, and looked forward to!

After the austerity of the last few years, a few days by the seaside might be just what the doctor ordered! David Soulsby has been travelling further afield and has once again generously shared his adventures with us. Beautifully illustrated as usual and he has been kind enough to put a computer link to a YouTube channel so that you may enjoy the 'live' performance.

The Hicks family of barrel piano makers has caused a few headaches over the years to collectors trying to assign the correct maker to a particular instrument. Paul Bellamy's article in this issue will be invaluable to those of us who, in the past, just called them Hicks, with no thought to the individual behind the epithet.

Musical boxes have not been overlooked in this issue and a delightful small four-tune box is

featured. Its programme of music comes from operettas, comic opera and operas comique, so a delightful repertoire.

It has been interesting to uncover a remarkable collaboration between the Aeolian Company of New York and the Riley-Sloan Company of the same city. Riley, related to Riley Brothers of Bradford, UK, large scale manufacturers of magic lanterns and slides from the mid-19th Century until well into the 20th, collaborated with Aeolian in the mid-1920s to produce an audio-visual experience directed toward the education market. Basically they would supply a Duo-Art piano and a set of slides to be projected in sequence with the music on the roll.

It may have been the introduction of sound movie films (from 1927) that limited the scale of the enterprise, as it appears they may have only produced one programme with plans to produce a second one. If anyone has any information about this project please contact the editors, as we would love to do a follow-up on it.

As always, we would like to thank all our contributors who work so hard producing wonderful articles and point out that, if you have a pet project, do please share it with us. We can help prepare articles, illustrations etc should you need it. Our definition of 'mechanical music' is quite broad, as you may have noticed over the years!

We hope your summer will be healthy and happy!

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Chairman's Report

I apologise for the delay in announcing another Chanctonbury Ring meeting at the Old School. As one gets older, health issues sometimes get in the way and they have done so since the last meeting. I have made good progress and now, hopefully, will be able to host my meeting on the Sunday 10th September.

The morning will be devoted mainly to musical boxes and the afternoon to organs and organettes. If you have anything you would like to bring along, either to play and demonstrate yourself or for us to do that for you, please let me know before the day (T: 01403 823 533) or let Paul Bellamy know (bellamypaul@btinternet.com). One musical box will be a 'fat' cylinder Nicole Frère 4-air movement. There will also be a few interesting and unusual musical jugs.

I would also like to thank our committee member Juliet Fynes, back in harness proofing reading and doing other useful things since the loss of our friend, her husband, Chris.

Laurence Fisher is holding an auction, so take a note of the date and attractive commission rates as announced on page 3 of this Journal and on our website, where you will also find other website updates. Laurence wants this to be a social event, so we welcome the opportunity to meet with those who share our interest in all aspects of 'mechanical music'.

Remember, if you want help and advice any of our committee members will do our best to assist you, but please do not ask for valuations.

*Ted Brown
Chairman*



The Tournaphone Music Company of Worcester, Massachusetts, made Aurephone organettes as well as Tournaphones. See article on page 26.

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Publication Dates for "Mechanical Music World"

Winter issue 28th January; Spring issue 28th April; Summer issue 28th July; Autumn issue 28th October

We need articles and advertisements (unless repeats) to reach the Editors at least one month in advance of these dates. Please allow more time for involved articles with many illustrations.

AMBC MEETINGS

Sunday 10th September

Meeting at the Old School
Bucks Green.

Arrive any time after 10 a.m. for coffee, tea and biscuits in the school canteen. Meeting starts in the school rooms at 11 a.m.

Free lunch about 1 p.m.

Please let Ted Brown know if you wish to attend - 01403 823533

SPECIAL MECHANICAL MUSIC AUCTION and SOCIAL MEET-UP

27th-28th October 2023

The Langham Hotel, 43-49 Royal Parade, Eastbourne,
East Sussex, BN22 7AH

Viewing:

Friday 27th October 2pm - 7pm

Saturday 28th October 9am - 11am

Auction:

Saturday 28th October 11.00am

ENTRIES WELCOME NOW UNTIL 22ND SEPTEMBER

Featuring a wide array of cylinder and disc musical boxes including early, mid-period and late examples, interchangeable and coin operated models, organettes, other pneumatic instruments, snuffboxes, automata, novelty musical boxes, and most things in-between. This is going to be a traditional mechanical music feast, like it used to be years ago.

Open to all with a warm welcome, this event is being held to honour the subject we love, to see one another again and to welcome new-comers, cross-society members and all those who would like to get closer to this field.

To buy in this sale, the commission fee is just 10% with no VAT, and to sell it is the same rate. No other charges whatsoever.

To receive the auction catalogue, or if you have any questions about this sale, however big or small, please get in touch with the organiser and mechanical music specialist Laurence Fisher either by phone or email:

07704 779 603 (+447704 779 603 if non-UK) laurencefisher444@yahoo.com

To book a room for a stay, contact the venue hotel:

The Langham Hotel 01323 731 451 (+441323 731 451 if non-UK)

Note for travelling:

UK attendees - Eastbourne, on the south coast, is served by the A21, A22 and M23 roads from the north and the A27 or A259 roads from east-to-west.

Mainland European attendees -

There are direct trains from Ashford International to Eastbourne railway station, in addition to good road links from Ashford.

There is free parking behind and beside the hotel and low-charge parking on the seafront at the front of the hotel.

Ready for some traditional mechanical music auction fun by the sea? Good - look forward to seeing you there!

Laurence Fisher

07704 779 603

Website: www.lfisherconsultancy.co.uk

The Aeolian Duo-Scope

David Evans discovers a Brochure

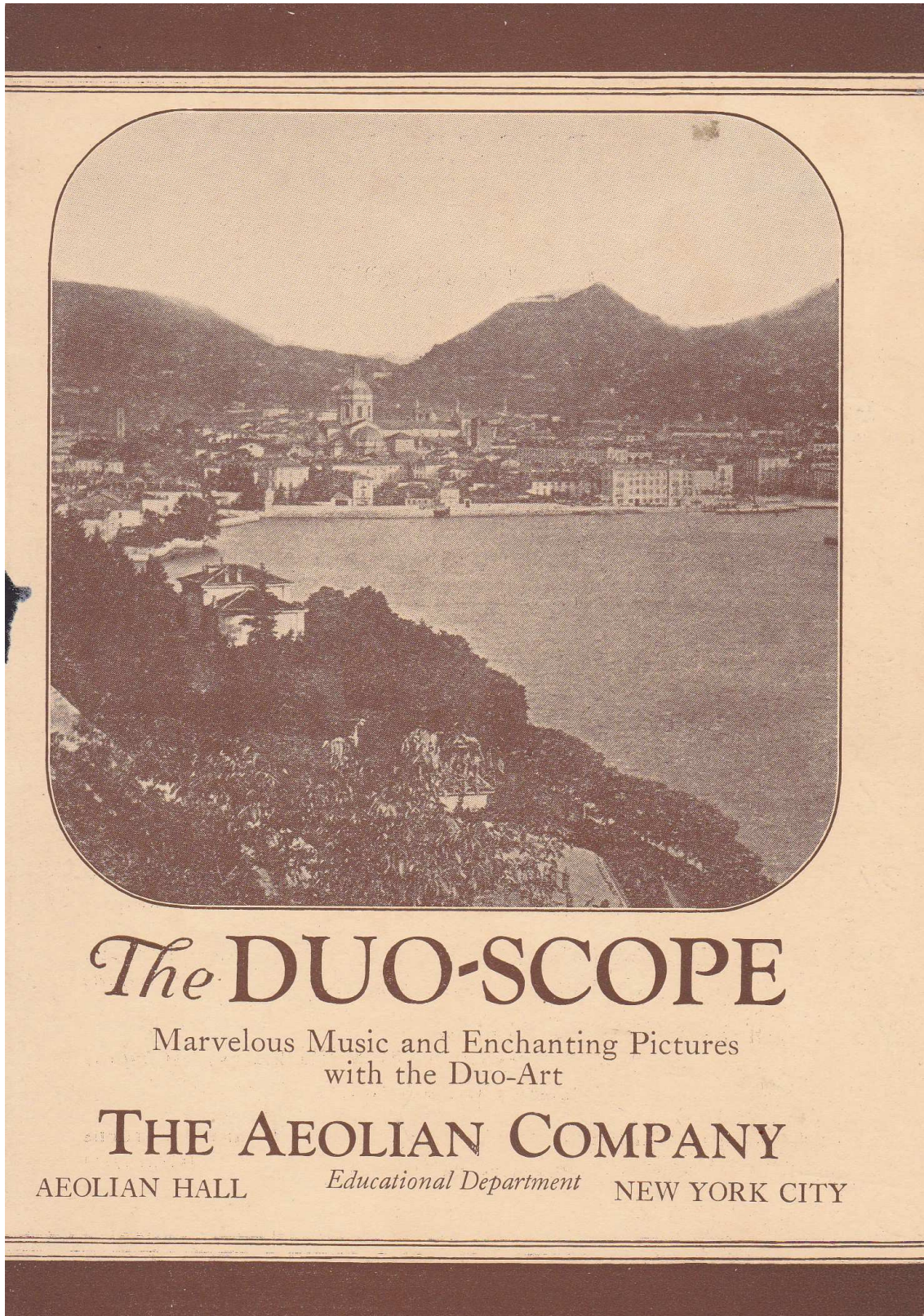


Fig 1:
The brochure
front.

Your editors, wearing their other hats as editors of The Magic Lantern Gazette for the Magic Lantern Society of USA and Canada, recently acquired the remaining stock and archive of the H P Riley/Riley Optical Company of New York. Herbert Jowett Riley was the son of Joseph Riley of Bradford who founded the Riley Brothers magic lantern business in Bradford, Yorkshire, around 1887. Herbert J moved to New York with his family in 1894, including wife Minnie and their son Herbert Percival Riley (1891 – 1969), aged 3. Herbert J and H Percival after him managed the New York branch of the business, which lasted well into the 1950s.

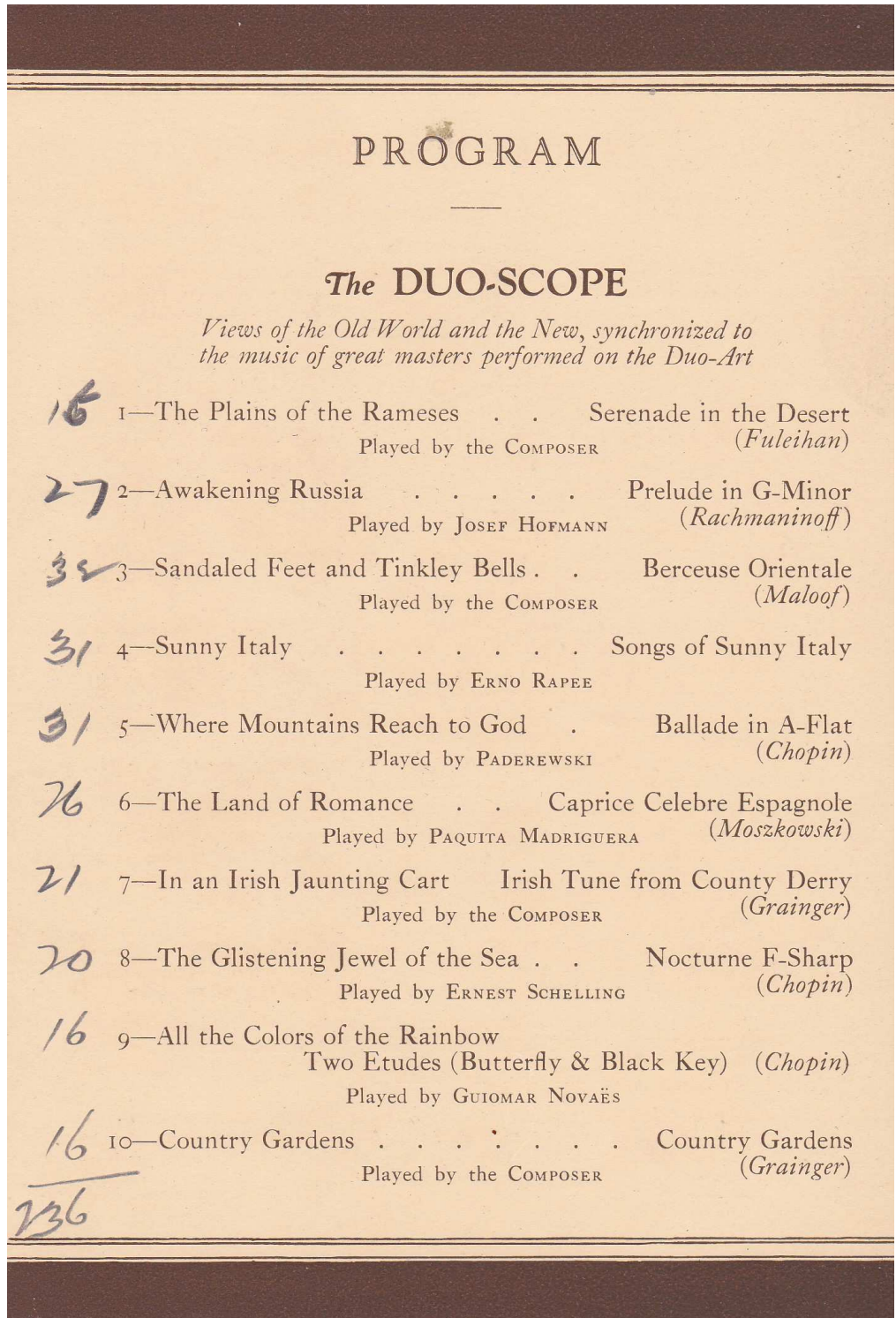


Fig 2:
page two of the brochure,
showing the Duo-Art rolls
that were to be played.
The pencilled numbers at
the left are the number of
slides to be shown for each
roll.

Amongst the large archive of lists, catalogues, brochures etc we were interested to find information about the Duo-Scope, a collaboration between the Aeolian Company and the Riley-Sloan (as it was then, in the mid-1920s) Company to produce “Marvellous Music and Enchanting Pictures with the Duo-Art”, basically an early form of semi-automatic audio-visual entertainment. The brochure (Figs 1-4) lists ten Duo-Art rolls to be played on the instrument whilst suitably hand-tinted magic lantern slides were projected on a screen big enough to impress the audience.

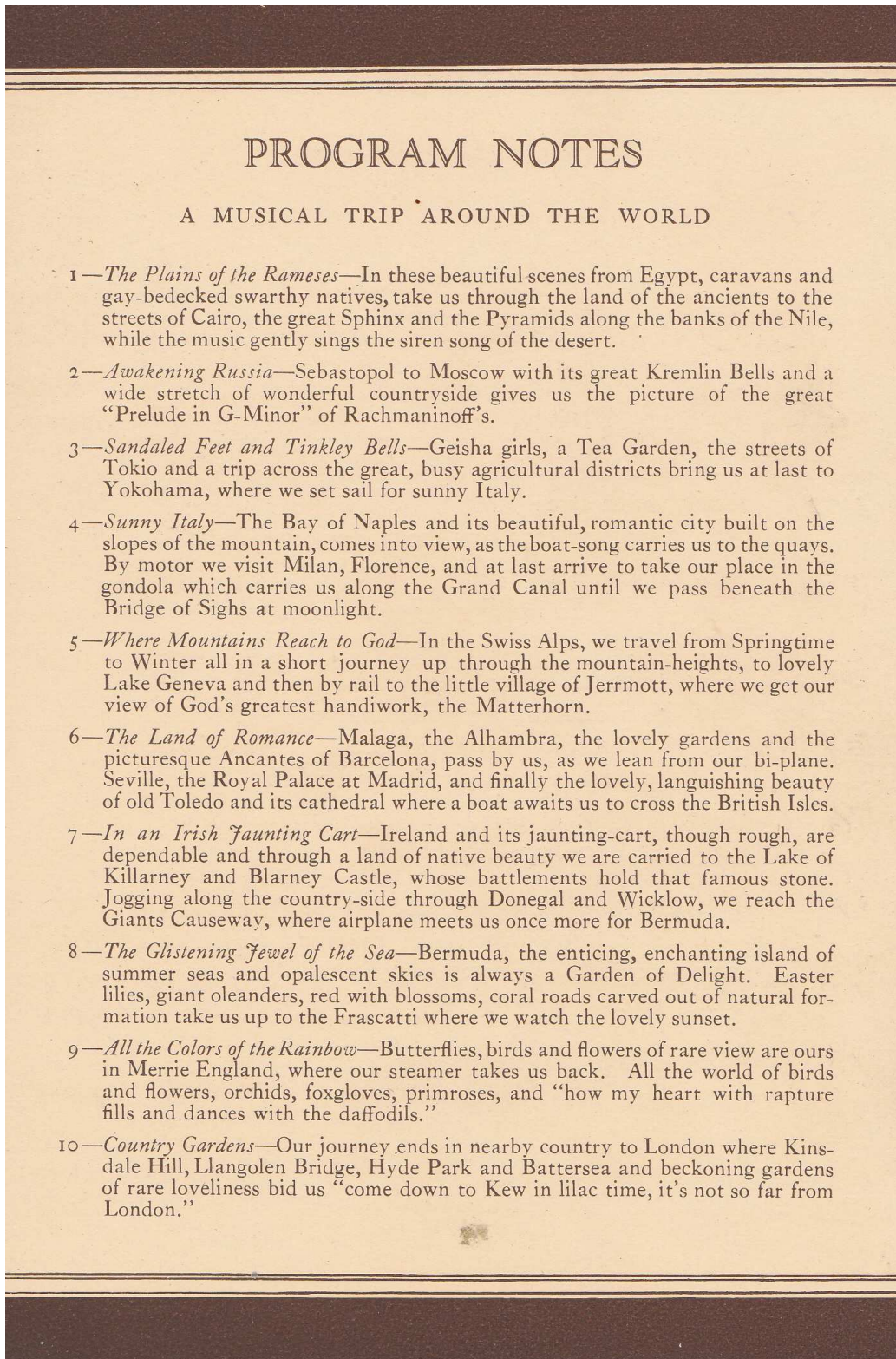


Fig 3:

Notes describing the images to be shown.
Under No. 10, Country Gardens, we can catch a glimpse of some Americans' grasp of British geography. Kinsdale Hill probably refers to Kinsale Hill in Ireland, and Llangollen Bridge is in Wales. Both obviously 'nearby to London'!

THE PLAN

THESE wonderful pictures are available through your local Duo-Art dealer, who can easily make arrangements to have the equipment necessary to project them, sent to your city whereby they may be shown in your schools, clubs or local theatres at a minimum cost.

The pictures are made by the Riley-Sloan Company of 122 Fifth Avenue, New York City, and have been colored, except in the case of the two final numbers, by Katherine Green of Montclair, N. J., an authority on world travel color.

These are the most beautiful set of hand-colored pictures available today.

The last numbers are made by the Paget Natural Color Process, the rights of which are exclusively controlled in this country by the Riley-Sloan Company.

Fig 4:

How and where to get it.

The Riley-Sloan Company was a major manufacturer of magic lantern slides.

Lists in the Riley Archive detail the slides to be used with each roll, which have to be “synchronised to music of great masters performed on the Duo-Art”. No doubt the magic lanternist had some extensive practice sessions to achieve this and hoped no-one would move the tempo control of the piano!

The project is mentioned in the fifth edition of The Duo-Art Book of Music, published by Aeolian, though not dated, where it is made plain that it was intended for use in the educational sphere, for presentation to schools (Fig 5). The date was presumably a year or so either side of 1925. All but one of the Duo-Art pieces mentioned were issued as regular rolls, the exception being Songs of Sunny Italy, played by Erno Rapee. This appears to have been commissioned specially for the Duo-Scope. Rapee recorded a dozen or more piano pieces for Duo-Art that were issued in the usual way. The advertisement in The Duo-Art Book shows the same programme as above, but appears to indicate that a second one was being contemplated, but probably never completed, as there is no reference to it in the Riley archive.

CORRELATION WITH VISUAL EDUCATION

Duo-Scope for Schools

MUSICAL TRIP AROUND THE WORLD

<i>Pictures</i>	<i>Duo-Art Records</i>
1. The Plains of the Ramesses (Egypt)	1. Serenade in the Desert (<i>Fuleihan</i>) Played by Fuleihan
2. Awakening Russia	2. Prelude in G-Minor (<i>Rachmaninoff</i>) Played by Hofmann
3. Saddled Feet and Tinkley Bells	3. Berceuse Orientale (<i>Maloof</i>) Played by Maloof
4. Sunny Italy.	4. Songs of Sunny Italy..Played by Rapee
5. Where Mountains Reach to God (Switzerland)	5. Ballade in A-flat (<i>Chopin</i>) Played by Paderewski
6. The Land of Romance (Spain)	6. Caprice Celebre Espagnole (<i>Moszkowski</i>).....Played by Madriguera
7. In An Irish Jaunting Cart	7. Irish Tune from County Derry (<i>Grainger</i>).....Played by Grainger
8. The Glistening Jewel of the Sea (Bermuda)	8. Nocturne F-Sharp (<i>Chopin</i>) Played by Schelling
9. All the Colors of the Rainbow	9. Two Etudes, Butterfly and Black Key (<i>Chopin</i>) Played by Novacs
10. Country Gardens (England)	10. Country Gardens (<i>Grainger</i>) Played by Grainger

THE MEDITERRANEAN IN HISTORY, ART AND ROMANCE

<p><i>Descriptive of Sea and Waves</i></p> <p>MADIERA Marvelous beauty of mountain scenery</p> <p>ALGIERS Arab street life of Mystery and Romance</p> <p>PALERMO Native Transportation</p> <p>MONTE CARLO Gardens and Terraces evening—Lovely by nature more lovely by art</p> <p>VENICE The charm of narrow streets and secret courts, where sunlight and shadow play</p> <p>THE LAGOON AND ADRIATIC Venice in its grandeur and simplicity seems to fade away in the glory of the sunset.</p> <p>ALEXANDRIA Visions of the past—Ancient Egypt Cleopatra's Galley and the Pyramids</p> <p>CALABRIA Caruso as Canio in I Pagliacci</p> <p>BAY OF NAPLES In the gorgeous brilliancy of the setting sun. London—Trafalgar Square beautiful reflections and twinkling lights New York—Brooklyn Bridge majestic and fascinating in the stillness of night.</p> <p>CAPITAL DOME</p>	<p>Fingal's Cave Overture (<i>Mendelssohn</i>) Played by Ganz and Hutcheson</p> <p>Valse Bluette (<i>Drego</i>) Played by Rapee</p> <p>Arab Dance (<i>Tschaikowsky</i>) Played by Grainger</p> <p>Ciribiribin (<i>Petalozza</i>) Played by Rapee</p> <p>Naila Waltz (<i>Delibes</i>) Played by Bachaus</p> <p>O 'Sole Mio (<i>di Capua</i>) Played by Gartlan</p> <p>Gondoliera (<i>Liszt</i>) Played by Ganz</p> <p>Bedouin Dance (<i>Fuleihan</i>) Played by Composer</p> <p>Vesti la giubba (<i>Leoncavallo</i>) Played by Armbruster</p> <p>Serenade (<i>Tosselli</i>) Played by Armbruster</p> <p>Dixie (<i>Emmett</i>) Played by Armbruster</p>
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(Prepared by Col. E. A. Havers)

Fig 5:

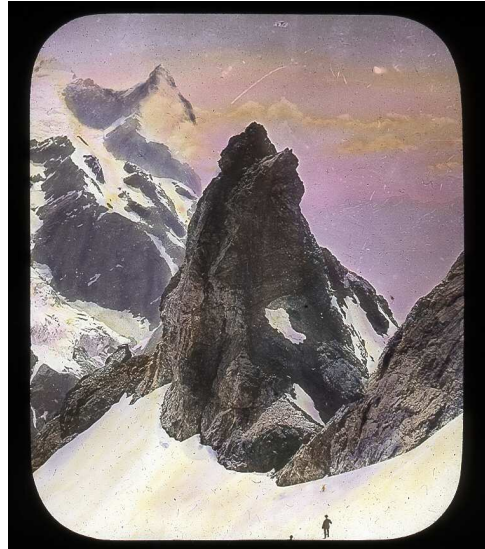
The advertisement in The Duo-Art Book of Music. Note the second proposed programme - The Mediterranean in History.

We have located a few of the original slides in the Riley collection, illustrated below. Imagine these on a screen some twenty feet wide – the results would have been quite spectacular.

Images to go with Set 5 - Where the Mountains Reach to God



Slide 9: "Grat des Buerhorn" - probably "Ridge of the Burhorn". Riley's may not have been good at German!



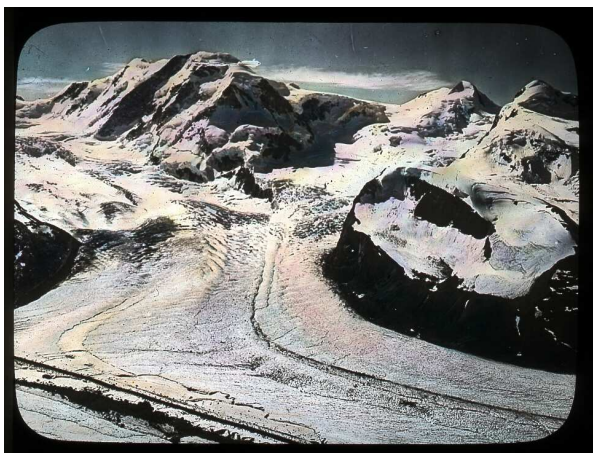
Slide 14: "From Summit of Monti Rosa" - Monte Rosa, the second highest mountain in Italy.



Slide 11: "Rumpfisehorn" - Probably Rumpfischhorn mountain.



Slide 15: "Monte Rosa"



Slide 12: "Panorama of Germeigrats" - Probably Garmisch, Germany.



Slide 17: "View on Shoulder of Matterhorn".

Slides to go with Set 7 - In An Irish Jaunting Cart



Slide 5: "O'Sullivan's Cascade"



Slide 8: "Killarney, a bit in".



All that survives of the introductory slide to the last two sets of images, Sets 9 & 10, Colors of the Rainbow and Country Gardens, which the brochure tells us were prepared using the Paget Natural Color Process. This slide sadly suffering from water damage due to unsuitable storage conditions.

The Duo-Art rolls and numbers used in the Duo-Scope presentation

Serenade in the Desert by Anis Fuleihan	Audio-Graphic A-124 & 63058
Prelude in G-Minor by Rachmaninov	6229F
Berceuse Orientale by Maloof	6379C
Songs of Sunny Italy	Not released
Ballade in A-Flat by Chopin	6832G
Caprice Célèbre Espagnol	
by Moszkowski	6013E
Irish Tune from County Derry	
by Grainger	5679E
Nocturne in F-Sharp by Chopin	5681B
Two Études by Chopin	6453E
Country Gardens by Grainger	6149B

Note that all the slide images were from monochrome photographs taken by Riley staff photographers and later tinted by hand, as indicated on the back of the brochure (Fig 4), except for the last two sets. The titles in "quotation marks" are taken from a slide list in the Riley archive.

I have been searching for further information on this enterprise, but it seems it was short-lived, if it ever took place at all. If anybody has any further information, please contact the editors.

The Hicks & Taylor Barrel Piano and Organ makers of Bristol

There has been some uncertainty about the family relationships and other details of the Bristol Barrel Piano and organ makers. This article, based on the research of Nicholas Nourse (Galpin Society journal 2014) and others, should remove some of this uncertainty.



Fig. 1A. A very early Joseph Hicks barrel piano, serial number 68.

Joseph Hicks (senior)

Joseph was born in 1787 and baptized on the 13th April 1788 at St. James, Bristol, the son of Peter Hicks (cabinet maker) & Jerusha Hicks *née* Townsend. Her charming name, rarely used today, derives from the biblical story of Jurusha, the daughter of Zadoc the priest.

The church was built in the 1790s but fell into disrepair until renovated as a Grade 1 listed building, Fig. 1. It is now used as a performance space for circus skills; no doubt Joseph would be pleased that it continues to entertain the public just

as he did.

Joseph married Maria Williams there on 28th February 1811. They had eight children including Maria, George, Joseph junior, and John. Joseph (senior) also had a brother called John, but little is known about him.

Joseph was listed as an Organ Builder from 1815, and a manufacturer of portable pianofortes from 1842. He died in Bristol in 1844 and was buried on 31st January at St. Michael on the Mount. This Grade II listed building was bombed in the 'blitz' and then suffered severe fire damage. It is now in private ownership and is intended to be another performing arts venue. Joseph seems to have had an artistic effect on both Saint James and Saint Michael.

See Fig 1A and front cover.



Fig. 1B. Joseph Hicks signature. (See Fig. 1A)

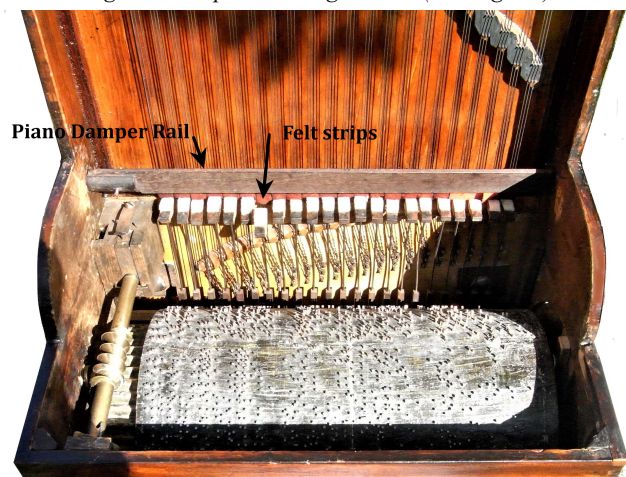


Fig. 1C. The damper rail and felt dampers. It can be rotated to interpose or lift clear the felts from between hammers and strings to produce a softer 'piano' effect.

Fig. 2. An early Joseph Hicks barrel piano with automata, serial number 604 (see back cover). All 10 automata figures move and are surrounded on three sides by mirrors.

George Hicks

Joseph's son George was born about 1818 and baptized on 28th November 1819 at St. Michael on the Mount. He married Harriet Baker on 23rd April 1838 at St. Andrew's, Bristol. Unfortunately, it was destroyed in the 'blitz' and only the graveyard survived. George was described as an Organ Builder from 1838 and as a maker of 'cylinder pianofortes' (barrel pianos) from about 1841. He and his family moved to London 1844/5 and then to the USA in 1847 where he made barrel pianos in New York until his death in 1863 in New York.



Fig. 3. A George Hicks barrel piano with automata.



Fig. 5A. A George Hicks barrel organ (Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institute).



Fig. 5B. A view of the barrel, key frame and arrangement for Fig. 5A.

Joseph Hicks (Junior)

Joseph, the brother of George, was born in 1822 and baptized on 23rd May 1824 at St. Michael. He married Sophia Caruthers on 22nd February 1845 at St. James. The family moved to London about 1846. He was also an Organ Builder and manufacturer of portable pianos from about 1845. He died in 1851 in Holborn and buried there at Saint Andrew's church, Fig 10, on 30th December.

This church, founded in 1297, survived the great fire of London in 1666 but was so damaged that only the tower could be saved. Sir Christopher Wren incorporated the tower with a new design. It also suffered damage to its nave during the blitz but was rebuilt exactly to his original design. It remains one of the finest protestant churches in Europe.

The move to Holborn must have been well planned because it was a vibrant area of commerce and law on the boundary of London's 'Square Mile'. It was where Charles Brun moved the Nicole Frères business from its origins in Geneva to Ely Place. Many craft and jewellery trades abounded and the area is of great historical significance. In Middle English 'Hol' meant hollow and 'Borne' was a brook, in fact the brook was the former river Fleet that still flows below the famous Fleet Street.

John Hicks

He was born about 1828 and baptized on 16th March 1828 at St. Michael, Bristol. He also moved to London about 1847 and married Jane Miles on 16th December 1848 at St. Marks, Clerkenwell. In the 1850s Clerkenwell was known as Little Italy because it was where many Italian immigrants settled. Many have long dispersed elsewhere in the UK and

become part of the British meld of many cultures but it remains the cultural centre for many of Italian origin today. It begs the question ‘why did John settle there?’ because the barrel piano was probably of Italian origin.

After the 1851 census they moved to New York, no doubt to join his brother George. Their first child Ellen was born there about 1852 but they moved back to London before the birth of second child Louisa in 1854.

John is mentioned in “Henry Mayhew: London Labour and London Poor, Volume 3, 1861” as a man who provides new barrels, probably meaning wooden piano barrels. Mayhew was a reporter who vividly described London’s inhabitants:

“The pavement and the road are crowded with purchasers and street-sellers. The housewife in her thick shawl, with the market-basket on her arm, walks slowly on, stopping now to look at the stall of caps, and now to cheapen a bunch of greens. Little boys, holding three or four onions in their hand, creep between the people, wriggling their way through every interstice, and asking for custom in whining tones, as if seeking charity. Then the tumult of the thousand different cries of the eager dealers, all shouting at the top of their voices, at one and the same time, is almost bewildering. “So-old again,” roars one. “Chestnuts all ’ot (hot), a penny a score (twenty items),” bawls another. “An ’aypenny (half a penny) a skin, blacking (black polish)” squeaks a boy. “Buy, buy, buy, buy, buy-- bu-u-uy!” cries the butcher. “Half-quire of paper (twenty sheets) for a penny,” bellows the street stationer. “Twopence a pound grapes.” “Three a penny Yarmouth bloaters (salted and smoked herring).” “Who’ll buy a bonnet for fourpence?” “Pick ’em out cheap here! Three pair for a halfpenny, bootlaces.” “Now’s your time! Beautiful whelks, a penny a lot.” “Here’s ha’p’orths (half a penny),” shouts the perambulating confectioner. “Come and look at ’em! Here’s toasters!” bellows one with a Yarmouth bouncer stuck on a toasting-fork. “Penny a lot, fine russets,” calls the apple woman: and so the Babel goes on.”

To what extent John and his family were ‘moved’ by such a vivid description of the London street traders is not known but move they did, to Birmingham. They appeared in the 1871 census but no records for John & his wife Jane have been found



Fig. 4. The trade label of a Henry Distin barrel piano at No. 2, Church Lane, Temple Street, Bristol. The label states: ‘From the late Joseph Hicks’ implying he was the successor to Joseph.

after 1871. However, one of their children was at school in Clerkenwell, London, in 1875 so presumably they missed the ‘cries of London.’ John and Jane Hicks both died in Holborn 1877.

Other Hicks.

John E T Clark in his book *Musical Boxes* mentions the name Hicks of Chapel Street, Edgware Road. Nothing more has been found about this address, so the assumption is that he is confusing Chapel Street, Edgware Road with Chapel Street, Caledonian Road or Chapel Street, Pentonville.

Alfred Dolge in his book *Pianos and their Makers* names Henry Hicks & Son of London, established 1845. There was a Henry Hicks in London describing himself as a pianoforte maker, but much later, from 1885. He seems to be unconnected to the Bristol Hicks.

Henry Distin.

He was born about 1815 to William and Mary Distin and baptized on 25th December 1815 at Temple parish, Bristol. Henry married Maria Hicks on 12th December 1836 at St. John the Baptist, Bristol. She was the first child of Joseph (senior) & Maria Hicks. Henry may have been apprenticed to Joseph Hicks although that has not been proven.

He described himself as a cabinet maker from 1838 to 1844. From 1847 onwards he became a musical instrument maker after the death of his father in law, Joseph Hicks (senior). Henry died in 1876 at

Church Lane, Bristol. There was another but unrelated Henri Distin who established an instrument manufacturing and sales concern, Distin & Co., in London about 1849. He sold his own brass instruments as well as those of Adolph Sax, the inventor of the Saxophone.

John Baylis.

John was born about 1815 at Mayshill near Bristol. He married Emily Wynne Biss in 1835 at St. Mary, Redcliffe. This was one of the founding churches of the 12th century on the red cliffs overlooking Bristol when it started to become a major port. Queen Elizabeth 1st described it as '*The fairest, goodest and most famous*' parish church in England. It lies not far from Temple Meads railway station, Figs 11A & B, designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and opened on 31 August 1840. It connected Bristol with London's Paddington station just 116 miles away.

John was a Carpenter from 1836, an Organ Builder from 1851, and a cylinder pianoforte (barrel piano) manufacturer from 1865. The family moved to London between 1851 and 1858. He may have had connections with the Hicks family, living in the same street as George Hicks, and at the same address that Sophia, widow of Joseph Hicks (junior), had occupied a few years earlier.

None of John's instruments are known to survive except for a label on a Hicks style barrel piano that was published in Ord-Hume's book *Clockwork Music* on page 292. Nothing is known of him after 1881.

Thomas Taylor.

He was one of two sons of George, a musician, and Sarah Taylor. Thomas was born in 1824 and baptized at Saint James church, Bristol. He married in 1849 at St. James church. He was described in 1841 as an Organ Builder and in 1851 as a Cabinet Maker. He died sometime between 1854 and 1861. His widow Julia and their three children were living in Birmingham.

Samuel Taylor

Thomas's elder brother Samuel was born about 1817 and baptized 1817 at Saint John the Baptist church in Bristol. He was also described as a maker of barrel organs and 'cylinder pianofortes.' No records of him exist after 1857.

William Taylor

No connection with the other Taylors is known. William was born about 1808. He married Ruth Bruton in 1829 at Saint Paul's, Bristol.

He was described as a musical instrument maker from 1831 and as a manufacturer of 'Handle Piano-fortes & Organs' from about 1840. In 1841 he was also described as a Nautical Stationer. These were wooden devices used to secure ropes to vessels. He died Bristol in 1847.

William Frederic Taylor.

This William, the son of William Taylor & Ruth *née* Bruton, was born and baptized in 1831. He married Julia Jones of Keynsham in 1854. An 1850 directory lists Taylor and Son as a business run jointly with his mother Ruth. He was described in 1855-59 as an organ builder and barrel piano manufacturer and in 1856 as a Chart Seller. He moved to London after 1861 as a Professor of Music and had no further involvement with manufacturing. A William Taylor organ has the printed label for 52 Broad Quay, Bristol, claiming he was a 'maker of cylinder or handle piano-fortes and musical clocks.'

Although there were many other makers in 19th century Bristol (Seede, Smith, Monday, Vowles, Haskins etc.), none are known to have made small portable Barrel Organs or Cylinder Pianos.

The Instruments

Barrels. Most have 8 or 10 airs pinned. Some are known to have 7 or 14 airs.

Musical Scale. Most have 22 to 27 notes. A few are known to have 19, 30 or 41. Most are triple strung with sometimes the lowest 2 or 3 notes double strung. Most have a diatonic scale with a single sharp. Low notes vary from a single **G** to a complete octave: C, D, E, F, F#, A, B, followed by C D E F F# G A B, C D E F F# G A B, C D E. One instrument did not have the top **E**. The scales of the 30 and 41 note examples are unknown.

Dimensions. Height 92-98 cms (31-38 ins); width 41-56 cms (16 -22 ins); depth 34 -43 cms (13½- 17 ins).

Other features. Some have a device that holds a strip of felt that can be lowered between hammers and strings to produce 'piano' effect. Others have the addition of automata and/or from 2 to 5 bells.

All the instruments have a similar shape and style.



Fig. 6. A photo of an 'organ' grinder and his Hicks barrel piano. The use of the name barrel organ was commonly used for barrel pianos as well as barrel organs, hence the name organ grinder.

Whether that origin is Hicks, Taylor or as now generally accepted, Italian immigrants, has not been confirmed. The style is very similar to early Italian barrel piano instruments.

It is assumed that the Hicks pianos and Taylor organs were initially made for domestic rather than street use. The story of Christie's old Organ was clearly an example of street use. It was undoubtedly a barrel organ because the story describes how, when Christie was asked to stop playing, the sound died away as the air pressure in the bellows collapsed. Although both types were quite heavy, they were fitted with brackets and leather shoulder straps plus a socket, which supported a staff that was also used as a walking stick; being a street musician was hard work and often not well received by residents and local authorities.

The construction of Brunel's Great Western Railway (GWR) started in 1836 and was completed in 1841 to fulfil his ambition of a trade link from London to Bristol, Figs 11A and 11B, and then by boat to New York. It provided an express route to the heart of the



Fig. 7. A photo of a Bristol 'organ' grinder with his barrel piano and its automata. (Also see Fig. 3).

old British Empire from the City of London. Its use must have had a dramatic impact on commerce and no doubt was used by the commercially minded organ and piano makers of Bristol; no wonder some moved to London and then to New York.

The references to the various churches where many were baptized, married and buried is a factor often overlooked in research. Not only did they survive but, by being listed as monuments in their own right, they provided much of the historical record of these almost forgotten makers. To know that two of these redundant churches have been 'recycled' for entertainment is an extraordinary co-incidence.

Births were rarely recorded, mainly because so many children did not survive so it was custom to await their baptism should they do so. In 1813 pre-printed parish baptism books were introduced. They did not require a date of birth but some clergymen did record them. It was not until 1860 that they included the date of birth.

The history of organ building in Bristol goes back to Robert Tanton who established his works in 1660. He was followed by a succession of organ builders and those who hired out barrel organs and pianos. In



Fig. 8. A sketch of Treffy carrying Christie's old organ, which is actually a barrel piano.



Fig 8A. Christie with his old organ.

the 1800s there were dealers and shops that sold mechanical and manual players including musical

boxes. Dean Organs continues that tradition today.

Christie's Old Organ

The story by the vicar's wife, Mrs. Walton, describes it as an organ, which for the purpose of the story, it was. However, some illustrators were just as confused about the name as we are today and the illustration, Fig 8, is almost certainly for a Hicks barrel piano. Others, however, got it right - Fig 8A from a magic lantern slide in the Editors' collection.



Fig. 9. All Saints Church, Bristol.



Fig. 10. The nave of Saint Andrew's Church, Holborn, London.



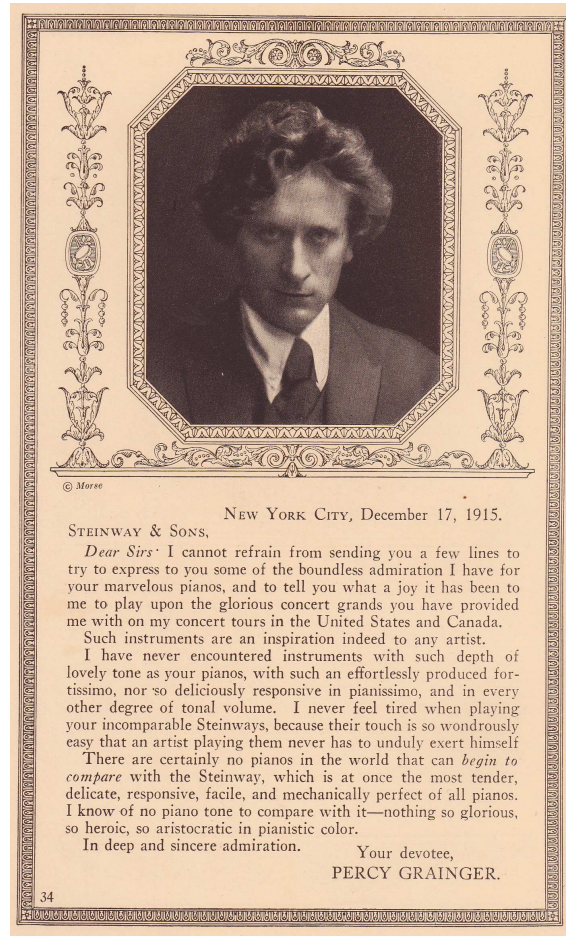
Fig. 11A. The engine shed of Brunel's Temple Meads station, 1843, showing the 7 foot broad gauge tracks and engines.



Fig. 11B. The station façade (Fig. 11A) remains much the same as Brunel's day but it had a spire that was removed before WWII.

Percy Grainger

"The young Siegfried of the Antipodes' and 'A Musical Puck' are two of the titles bestowed upon Percy Grainger since his arrival in America in 1915; for he is a conquering hero at the piano; and his compositions are compacted all of cheerfulness and prankish joy. Born at Brighton, near Melbourne, Australia on July 8 1883, his father was an eminent architect and engineer who was responsible for many of the finest buildings and bridges in Australia. His mother, a music teacher before her marriage, guided him in piano playing in his childhood, and at the age of ten he gave concerts in his native land, thereby earning the means to go to Frankfort-on-Main, Germany, where he continued his musical studies for the next six years. Later he studied for a time with Busoni, but meanwhile he had gone to London and entered upon the career of a virtuoso pianist. Even at seventeen he was an ardent composer whose writings began to show surprising individuality. But he determined to win success as a pianist before publishing any of his compositions. In the next few years he did win an extraordinary success as a virtuoso, winning also the



The Australian composer and pianist Percy Grainger recorded a number of pieces for Duo-Art. One of them was used on the Duo-Scope. See the article on page 8. He obviously liked Steinway pianos!

friendship of Grieg, whom he visited at his home in Norway, and that of practically all the leading orchestral conductors of Europe. When twenty-nine he began to bring out his works, and these original and whimsical creations have made their way to every corner of the musical world and been welcomed everywhere with enthusiastic approval. In the spring of 1917 Mr. Grainger enlisted as an oboist in a Coast Guard band, U. S. A., in appreciation, he says, of what America has done for him. He remained in the Army until the end of the Great War, received promotion and was honorably discharged. As a pianist Grainger has established himself among the masters of the first rank. As a composer he is self-taught; but instead of modeling his style on the classical masters, he turned his attention to the folk-music of the numerous countries he has visited. It is the quality peculiar to folk music that assured the instant and astonishing success of his compositions. Mr. Grainger makes his home in the United States, having become a naturalized American citizen."

Quoted from 'Duo-Art Piano Rolls' by Charles Davis Smith, California 1987.

From Circuit boards to Clockwork springs

some automata encountered on a European journey

By David Soulsby



Photo 1: The dragons of Blois emerge from the Maison



On a recent trip to France I visited Blois, a city in the Loire valley about a hundred miles south west of Paris. This was where the celebrated magician Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin was born in 1805 who is often credited as being "the father of modern magic". He transformed magic from a pastime for the lower classes, seen in market places and fairs, to an entertainment for the wealthy. He performed in theatres and private parties, dressed in top hat and tails. Some of the tricks and illusions he presented became all time classics that were copied by future magicians. The renowned American magician Ehrich Weiss was so fascinated by the French magician that he created the now famous stage name Harry Houdini as tribute. At the top of this hillside city across the cobbled square from the Royal Château is a classic building constructed in 1856. This is the "Maison de Magie" which is a museum dedicated to Houdin's memory and celebrating the history of magic including live demonstrations.

In order to attract visitors to the museum, the owners commissioned the design and construction of an incredible display entitled "The Dragons of Blois".

Standing in front of the building I was able to enjoy the spectacle of the automata that feature in this show. It begins with the sound of clanging bells and eerie music reaching a crescendo as the windows of the Maison open. Tentatively the huge golden heads of five dragons appear out of the openings, one after another. (There should have been six but one seemed to have malfunctioned). Slowly they randomly twist and turn their necks as if inspecting the group below. (Photo 1). A gigantic clawed hand emerges from one window and smashes down the balcony railings (Photo 2). An enormous tail materialises from an attic window and thrashes around (Photo 3). The whole show lasts about five minutes and occurs twice an hour during the museum opening times.

The skin of the Dragons is made of carbon fibre and epoxy resin. Each head is 21 inches long and weighs around 33 lbs which is heavy enough to avoid inertia problems, that could occur with their rapid and wide sweeping motions. The flexible mechanisms are entirely pneumatic, and the dragons appear alive as they turn their necks, and snap their jaws without any jerky movements (Photo 4). They have steel and aluminium skeletons and are controlled by separate individual computers connected by around 1¼ miles of wires, its 72 'muscles' are air



Photo 2: One Dragon breaks down the balcony rails

cylinders with 2000 feet of interconnected piping. The automaton was created in 1998 by the artists Michell & Jean-Pierre Hartmann. The mechatronic sculpture as they call it, took four years from concept to completion. Since around 1973, J P Hartmann a former graphic and interior designer, made iconic automata which he called "imaginary toys" and sold them in sophisticated toy stores such as the legendary *Au Nain Bleu* in Paris. Since 1987 he has worked with Michell to create unique and complex work, in a variety of materials. "The Emperor of the Galaxy" for example is a beautifully created piece, a ship made of wood, bronze, tin and plexiglas, it is 106 inches long with 250 lights and has 144 separate movements.



Photo 3: The Dragon's tail appears from the roof.

They have also created other large outdoor automata such as the 7 foot tall blacksmith striking an anvil, forging a knife, and showing it to the crowd; It was unveiled in 2008 in the French town of Triers, renowned for cutlery manufacture since 15th century.



Photo 4: Dragons turn, snapping their jaws.

Videos of some of their achievements can be seen at www.jp-hartmann.com and show off the art and technical skills embodied in their unique automata.

The Dragon design appears to have been inspired by the the nearby Blois château's decorative motifs of similar golden salamanders, which were a symbol of the king (Photo 5). After the last dragon had shrunk back inside and the windows slammed shut, I sat down at an outside table of the neighbouring café. I sampled a glass of the local wine while I waited half an hour for the next show. In that time a throng of sightseers had lined up, in anticipation of the dragons return; they were certainly popular!



Photo 5: Salamander emblem, seen in adjacent Château de Blois

I continued to clock up the miles travelling south into Switzerland to visit the Baud museum in the Jura mountains at L'Auberson about an hour's drive from Lake Geneva. The museum has a long history dating back to the end of the Second World War. At that time the Allied soldiers were returning home and

needed souvenirs of their time in Europe leading to an unprecedented demand for Swiss musical boxes. The larger companies could not satisfy this demand and began to subcontract to smaller workshops. The Baud brothers, Frédy, Robert and Auguste set up an enterprise for the purchase, sale and repair of musical movements of all types. They signed a contract for the assembly and supply of ten thousand 18 tooth musical boxes per month over a 2 1/2 year period. They were able to make a living this way but also developed a passion for collecting and restoring mechanical music devices including automata. Following a successful exhibition in Zurich, the brothers were encouraged to open their museum at L'Auberson in October 1955, with a relatively small but unique collection of 35 pieces. The museum was well publicised, in the press, radio, and documentary films. With the entrance money accumulated from the many visitors, they were able to expand their collection. By the mid-60s around 30,000 visitors a year were coming to see it, an amazing boost for a remote village with a population of only a few hundred citizens. It appeared to still be popular today judging by the size of the crowd that joined me for the first guided tour of the afternoon. There were 2 rooms, the first full of smaller mechanical music devices, the second containing larger items such as gramophones and Orchestrions. We were taken round the first room by an enthusiastic guide who demonstrated the musical boxes and automata. Although he only spoke in French, the sights and sounds spoke for themselves.

I was drawn to the automata at the end of the first room. There was a white faced clown in traditional costume seated at a desk, quill pen in hand (Photo 6). Our guide lit the paraffin lamp on the desk and the Pierrot began to write a letter, after a short time his head slumped down as if asleep. The flame flickered but before it died the clown's arm reached over and turned it up. The lamp shone brightly again and the figure leaned forward and continued with his writing, dotting the i's, crossing the t's and applying the accents of the French alphabet. The automaton was a detailed copy by Michel Bertrand of the renowned original by Vichy from 1895, on show at the Guinness collection in Morrinstown, USA. Next in line was another clown strumming a mandolin to a classic representation of the moon with human features (Photo 7). The moon reacts to this serenade by rolling its eyes and blowing a kiss.



Photo 6: The Pierrot writes a letter by lamp light.



Photo 8: The conjuror, by Phalibois, presents his tricks



Photo 7: The Clown serenades the moon

The collection included a number of original items from the nineteenth century. An enthusiastic magician made by Phalibois, hiding and revealing various objects underneath cups (Photo 8).

A tableau depicting an orchestra of monkeys enthu-



Photo 9: The Monkey Orchestra performs a lively number.

siastically playing their instruments.(Photo 9).

An original Vichy of an immaculately dressed clown balancing a plate on a parasol (Photo 10).

It was really impressive when the guide wound and released the springs one after another, of several au-



Photo 10: A juggling clown by Vichy



Photo 11: Automata performing in unison.

tomata arranged together along a shelf (Photo 11). A man began tapping his foot as he teased a pig with a truffle; an elegantly dressed lady operated her spinning wheel, a belligerent wife shook her broom at her husband who ignored her, continuing to tap away at a shoe that he was making. I stood and watched these and several others in the group until they slowed down at various intervals and eventually came to a stop. I then moved on past cages of mechanical birds singing and preening their feathers to watch two life size guardsman dressed in stylish uniforms, put through their paces. They date from as far back as 1810, one with a trumpet the other with a drum (Photo 12). When started the two figures raise their heads, one lifting a bugle to his lips and starts playing while the other beats the drum. They can play six different tunes in succession, and finish their performance with a short bow. These mannequins were installed at the entrance to the Swiss Castle of Coppet. They are known as *The Automata of Coppet* and have become the symbol of the Baud museum.

The second room contained the bigger mechanical pieces, gramophones, orchestrions and large organs. In pride of place was a robot accordionist whose features were apparently modelled on a “famous” French tenor, Tino Rossi, who starred in nearly 30 films from 1936 onwards (Photo. 13). He played a merry tune on his accordion with his fingers moving over the keys in sync.

As I left the building, a coach drew up outside and several dozen tourists poured out and eagerly jostled to the Entrance.

It seems that whether technological or traditional, sophisticated or simple, my journey from Dragons to Drummer boys certainly showed me that well presented displays of automata remain very popular today.





Photo 12: The Automata of Coppet, dating from 1810.



The whole dragon performance can be seen on Youtube at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXW6usIWKiQ>

Photo 13: (Right) Robot accordion player with a face from the past.



A late little musical box

Or, the story of an opera buff

Paul Bellamy

Although the cylinder musical box industry was in gradual decline towards the end of the 1800s there was still a market for small, decorative, musical boxes. The disc musical box had not yet dominated the market and the era of the phonograph and its musical home entertainment competitors, the gramophones, were yet to supersede the cylinder music box in popularity. The makers of Saint Croix mostly dominated the manufacture at this time and made some delightful instruments that can enhance a collection even today.

One example is shown in Fig. 1. The entire case is covered in beautifully figured burr walnut veneer, a most untypical finish to a musical box case but completely original. That in itself makes it an attractive possession. The lid has an attractive decal, a form of transfer based on silver foil that is also an attractive feature, as shown in the close-up, Fig 2.



Fig 2: The silver foil inlay

The 4-air movement, Fig. 3, is quite small. The comb only has 40 teeth and the cylinder is just 4½ inches long but the musical arrangements are quite sweet. The only clue to the maker is the serial number 29058 written on the tune sheet. It is repeated in part as 90 and separately as 58 stamped on the bearing bracket at the drive end of the cylinder, Fig. 4.



Fig 1: The Late Little Musical Box

The tune sheet had not been recorded by the late HAV Bulleid, Fig. 5A. The names of the tunes are: When the robin nest (sic) again, Merry War, Iolanthe Trio and Dona Juanita Waltz. The age of the instrument was also indeterminate but obviously quite late, maybe the end of the 1800s or even into

the early part of the 1900s, as indicated by the printed words: MADE IN SWITZERLAND printed along the right hand border.



Fig 5A: A corner of the tune sheet

Although unattributed, Bulleid published a similar tune sheet, No. 420, in his third supplement. There are remarkable similarities. Both have a simulated wooden frame with overlapping corners that encompass flowers. A scroll carries the tune titles and overlaps the left and right sides of the frame. The only difference between them is the flowers. The serial number for 420 is 21922 and he estimated the date as being after 1885. This makes serial 29058 later.



Fig 5B: The tune sheet

The tune sheet patterns indicate that they were for the same maker or agent. The question is: Who?

Another clue for 29058 is a tiny monogram in cursive script of an M superimposed on Fig. 5A, enlarged but still unclear as Fig. 5B. It may have nothing to do with the maker, possibly just an embedded monogram for the tune sheet printer.

The correct name of the first tune is 'When the robins nest again.' It was written by American Frank Howard for a lady called Miss Swain and published in 1883. The tune 'Merry war' was written by Austrian Johann Straus, (who also wrote the famous Radetzky March) as 'Der Lustige Krieg', an operetta. Fig. 6 is a copy of sheet music. It is not a very nice title when taken as read but the 'war' is between two lovers, Colonel Umberto Spinola and the widowed Countess Violetta. It was first performed in Vienna in 1881. Iolanthe was another comic opera written by Englishmen Gilbert and Sullivan in 1882. Finally, Donna Juanita was a French *opera-comique* written by Franz von Suppé in 1880. An opera-comique is not a comic opera but a light opera with spoken dialogue and arias.

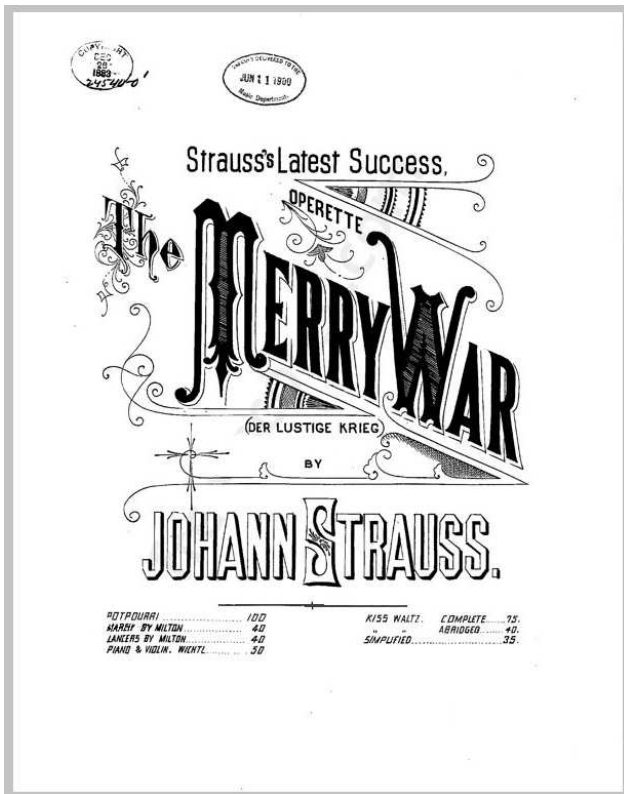


Fig 6: The sheet music for The Merry War

It is only when one starts to investigate a musical box that so much hidden detail can come to life. The probability is that the movement was made by Mermod. The programme must have been specially commissioned by someone who loved light and comic opera, whether American, Austrian, English or French.

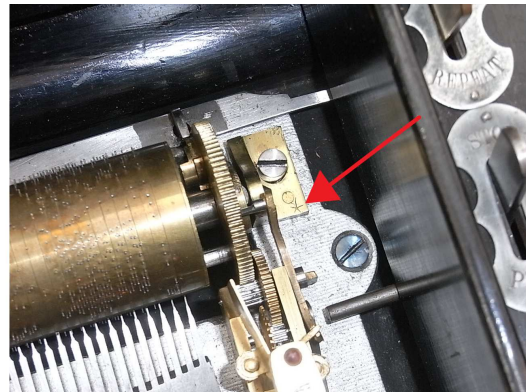


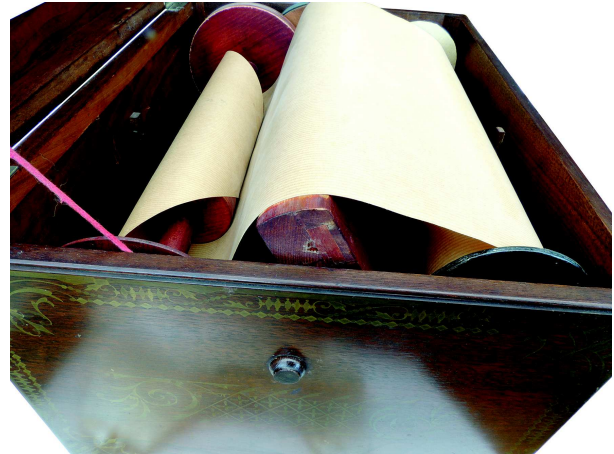
Fig 7A: The five-point star

There is just one further clue that remains unsolved; Fig 7A shows a 5-pointed star stamped on the non-drive end cylinder bearing bracket, enlarged as Fig. 7B. There were many such marks found stamped on musical movements and these were summarised in *The Music Makers of Switzerland*. Most remain a mystery. Bulleid thought that some could be repairers' marks there is insufficient evidence to substantiate this thought. That the mark may be personal to a person such as a justifier, (the person who validates the movement as perfect), a form of quality assurance mark.



Fig 5B: The star enlarged

The Tournaphone Organette



Probably the largest of the 'paper-as-a-valve' organettes, this American 25-note monster plays 13" wide rolls which can be up to 80 feet or so long. Made by the Tournaphone Music Company of Worcester, Massachusetts around the earlier 1880s, they have an unkind (to the roll paper) method of feeding from the top of the supply roll and attaching it to the underside of the take-up spool, thus flexing the paper in the opposite direction. This results in most original rolls being badly damaged. A

number of these instruments were exported to UK, where they were badged as Cabinettos. This example is of the slightly later type with a separate knob to select play or rewind. There is a spill valve which is activated by the rewind knob to prevent the instrument from playing in reverse, and it is also operated by the reservoir in the unlikely event of it spilling whilst playing. The instrument illustrated is marked as serial no. 449 on its blue maker's label.

More information is available in 'The Organette Book' by Kevin McElhone.



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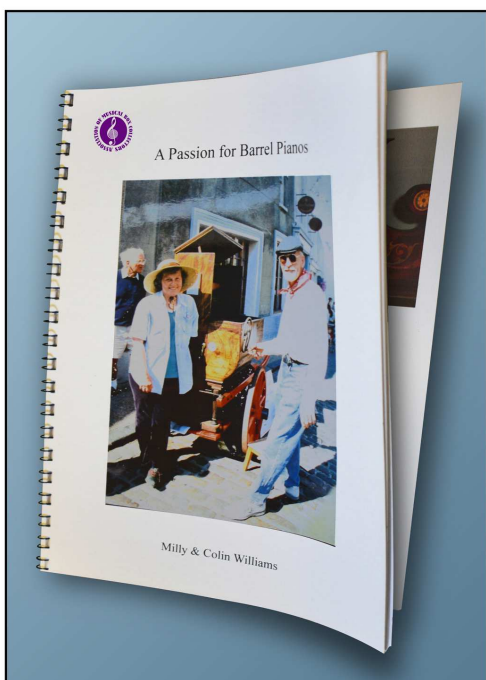
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