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# THE AMICA

AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENT  
COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION

# BULLETIN

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Volume 45, Number 4

August/September 2008



“THE CHORALCELO”

REPRODUCING PIANOS

WELTE-MIGNON

AMPICO

DUO-ART

ORCHESTRIONS

BAND ORGANS

VIOLIN PLAYERS

PLAYER PIANOS

NICKELODEONS

PIANO ROLLS

# THAT'S JUST MY WAY OF FORGETTING YOU

by

B.G. DE SYLVA  
LEW BROWN  
AND  
RAY HENDERSON



DE SYLVA BROWN AND HENDERSON, INC.  
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# THE AMICA BULLETIN

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Letters to the Publisher  
Chapter News

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another convention has come and gone. I hope those who attended had a good time. Conventions are a wonderful opportunity to visit with old friends and to meet new ones. The Southern California Chapter worked very hard to make sure we were all comfortable with events, hotel, and everything that makes a convention successful — Thank You!

One of the things we continually address is exposure. All members need to make an effort to expose collections and available publications to more people. There are many people waiting to join us, but we just have not found them or they have not found us. You can help by letting your friends and acquaintances know about [www.amica.org](http://www.amica.org).

Enjoy your summer, tune that instrument, and host a meeting.

John Motto-Ros  
[mottoros@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mottoros@sbcglobal.net)



# FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

Dear AMICA Friends!

Well, this is an encore for me! AMICA Publisher Mike Kukral has had a frantic summer. He has had to travel to Europe with a group of his college students from Rose-Hulman in Terre Haute and then he was on to Oregon for more time away. Mike asked me to pitch in and give him a hand with this issue while he is on the road.

I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I did putting it together for you. In it you will find a detailed article on the remarkable instrument the "Choralcelo". Make sure you read this article. Most of us if we came across one of these would not have a clue as to what it was. The article is detailed research, compiled and beautifully illustrated by author and Choralcelo authority Wade Jenkins.

Another fascinating article in this issue is the Welte Radio Phono combination. We have reprinted two corresponding articles from the 1990 AMICA Bulletin about this unique instrument too!

In this issue is a review of the new CD, "*The Perfect Combination*". Theater Organist Jim Riggs and Mike Coup's Ampico make a great pair. Check out the review and the fascinating story behind them!

It is great to be helping again with the Bulletin. Hope you enjoy this issue!



Sincerely,  
Robin Pratt

# 1929 SEEBURG AUDIOPHONE JR.

By Ronald P. Schultz, D.D.S.

Here are some photos of a 1929 Seeburg Audiophone Jr. pneumatically operated jukebox. It is a transitional instrument between the nickelodeon and jukebox. I purchased it in 2000 from another collector and rebuilt it myself. This model was introduced in late 1929, about the same time as the stock market crash and subsequent beginning of the Great Depression. Consequently, not too many units were produced or sold. Also, in 1930 the company developed a totally mechanical mechanism and then went into receivership in 1931.

The only other person I know of who owns one of these instruments is John Motto-Ros of California. He was kind enough to send me detailed photos of his machine when I was rebuilding mine. If any more of these instruments exist, I would like to hear from the owner and also see some photos. This is an unusual and fun instrument and my grandchildren love playing it when they come to visit.

I hope to hear from any other owners

Kind Regards,  
Ronald P. Schultz, D.D. S.



Front view with selector knob, title strip, coin slot (nickels only) and rear illuminated marquee.

Front door open revealing "Ferris Wheel" of 8 turntables, coin box, and electric lamp used as a resistor in the coin accumulator circuit



Ferris wheel mechanism removed for cleaning, repair, and adjustment.

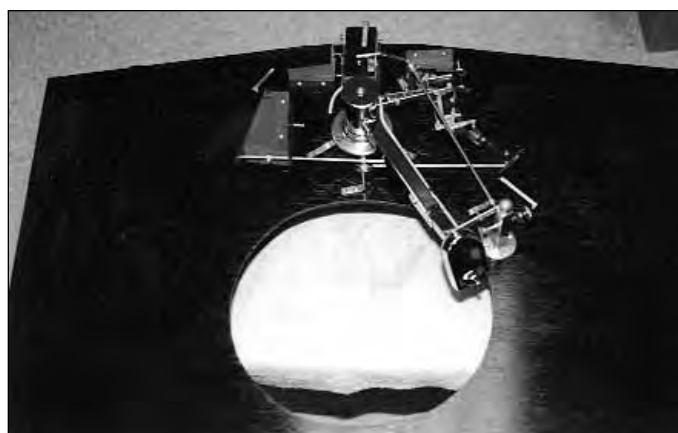


Rear view revealing electric motor (same type as in coin pianos) Small box type vacuum pump, "operadio" 5 tube (Triode Type) Amplifier, and valve block in upper right hand corner

Turntable showing pneumatics used to move tone arm. (Electric lamp illuminated only when record is playing) (Title strip lamp is on continuously to attract attention, as is marquee lamp)



Turntable with better view of the four pneumatics





# THE PIPES, THE PIPES ARE CALLING

By Martin Johnson - June 17, 2008 - The Wall Street Journal  
Sent in by Kenneth Hodge

During his 17 years as frontman for the legendary rock band Talking Heads and since their breakup in 1991, David Byrne has worked with some of the best musicians in the world. In his new work, "Playing the Building," anyone can play.

The work is an installation in the long-empty Battery Maritime Building at 10 South St. in Lower Manhattan, near the Staten Island Ferry terminal, and it literally turns the 9,000-square-foot building into a highly charged sonic environment. An antique organ has been placed in the middle of the structure's cavernous second-floor space, and via a series of tubes it is connected to the infrastructure, beams, water pipes, plumbing and heating devices. Playing the organ creates a unique series of sounds, reverberations and resonances from Maritime Building's innards. The installation is open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from noon until 6 p.m. through Aug. 10. Admission is free.

Although he still makes music in more conventional ways — leading a band, making records and touring — sonic installations like "Playing the Building" and other art projects are taking a large share of Mr. Byrne's attention. He curated a show about chairs that completed a tour of major galleries this winter, and his installation of guitar pedals was part of a benefit for The Kitchen at the Puck Building on May 21. Attendees walked over a carpet of 100 pedals, resulting in a wide variety of sounds.

"I still imagine that sometimes art or some cultural activity can alter the way we see things," said Mr. Byrne in an interview on May 15. "I sense that when the activity is in the public sphere it has greater odds of doing this than in a gallery."



*David Byrne's installation invites visitors to create music with infrastructure.*

His interest in the sound of buildings came from his varied experiences during more than three decades of living in New York apartments. "Buildings make noises: radiators, pipes, creaks and rattles. I sensed that this could be a little more organized and maybe even musical."

This move may not surprise enthusiastic followers of Mr. Byrne's career. Although he gained considerable fame via the Talking Heads, a band that integrated rock, funk, African and Cuban styles in a searing amalgam, there has also been evidence of his interest in found sounds. His first project outside of the group was 1981's "My Life in the Bush of Ghosts" (Sire), a recording with vocals and rhythms taken entirely from other previously recorded music and spoken words. The work, a collaboration with experimental music legend Brian Eno, was controversial at the time, but its technique and composition have become commonplace in pop music now.

"Playing the Building" had its beginnings in Stockholm three years ago. Jan Aman, the director of Fargfabriken, a Swedish arts organization, approached Mr. Byrne about doing a project in a former factory space. Mr. Byrne had grown fascinated with what sounds could be produced by hitting a building's girders

and other structural elements, and he wondered if there were wind and other musical possibilities, too. It just so happened that he had an organ in his studio that was no longer suited for professional playing, so they gave the project a go. When the installation proved a big success in Stockholm, he wanted to repeat it in New York.

Mr. Byrne had been introduced to Mr. Aman by Creative Time, the arts presenting and commissioning organization, which had

worked with the musician on a 2002 installation in the Winter Garden that celebrated the reopening of the World Financial Center near Ground Zero. In 2006, Creative Time began working with the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council to find a space that would be accessible and accommodating to Mr. Byrne's latest sonic experiment. The Battery Maritime Building — which has been vacant for decades and boasts cast-iron beams, abundant girders and numerous pipes — was the perfect host for the project.

The organ sits at the foot of a large skylight, so on a sunny day it is as if a natural spotlight falls on the instrument. On the Friday afternoon when I sat at the organ, I was initially surprised to feel anxieties flood back from childhood piano lessons 40 years ago. Then I faced the momentary confusion of my left hand wondering where the "a-s-d-f" of the computer keyboard had wandered off to. The keys on the left-hand side trigger a low rumbling from motors attached to the girders, which made a low bass-like sound. The middle keys create flute-like sounds from air being blown through the pipes (holes were drilled into them to vary the timbres). Touching the keys on the far-right-hand side causes the beams to be



struck with small mallets, producing high-pitched, percussive sounds. My mind filled with snippets of familiar songs I should try to create.

The next morning, during the press reception, a musically talented scribe recreated the opening salvo of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and another used the beams to mimic the theme from "Mission Impossible." Whether in my hands or in others', the building was best when left to its own vernacular of sound. The pipes, beams and girders combined for a fascinating sonic collage that maintained its influence on my ears

even after I went outside and the indoor sounds were replaced by those of car horns and motors and the chatter of pedestrians talking on their cellphones.

"Sound is one of the most underconsidered aspects of urban life," said Anne Pasternak, executive director of Creative Time, when asked what drew her to Mr. Byrne's work. "There's such an onslaught of it. People begin to tune out."

Music, too, is becoming ubiquitous, and that fact provided some of the impetus to Mr. Byrne's sonic installations. He said that he wanted

people to become more sensitive to the sounds around them and to change their relationship to music. "I don't want the public to be passive consumers of culture; you have to participate [at the building] to make sounds."

The other issue is authorship. Mr. Byrne is adamant that it's not his music that is being heard at the Battery Maritime Museum. "The person who plays the organ is the author of the music. I am not the author of what they play any more than Les Paul is the author of a million guitar solos."

## Kimball Piano Pamphlet

Submitted by John Motto-Ros

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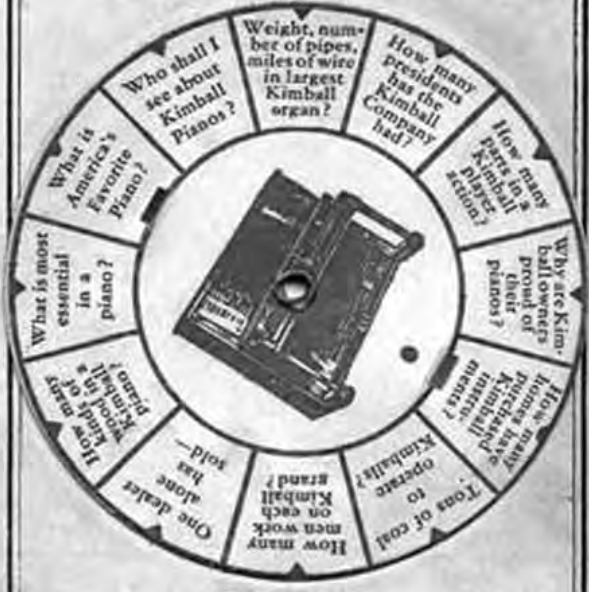
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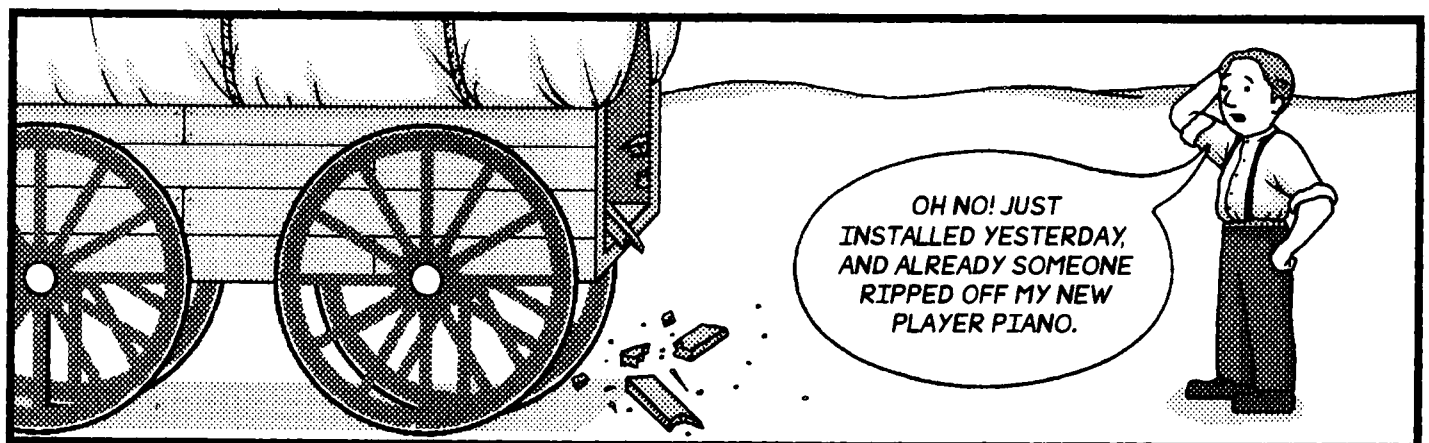
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## CARTOON -



# F OR A STEINWAY, I DID IT MY WAY

By Anne Marie Chaker - May 22, 2008 - The Wall Street Journal  
Sent in by Kenneth Hodge

Concert pianists select Steinways the way rock stars favor Fenders. And while I'm neither, I've always wanted the grandest of pianos.

In recent months, and after years of not playing, I've reconnected with my instrument, practicing sometimes for hours a day, the way I used to when I played seriously before college, a job and life in general took over. For the most part, I've been practicing on a tinny hotel grand tucked in a conference room a few blocks from the office. Then I began hankering for my own, and resumed my dream of owning one made by New York-based Steinway & Sons. I began saving my pennies — or, more accurately, my C notes — and started scouring Internet and newspaper classifieds.

For me, buying a Steinway was the only way to go, as it is for many of the best pianists in the world. But it was also out of my price range: A new Steinway grand can retail from around \$40,000 to well over \$100,000 for a full-size concert piano.

Of course, there are many other highly reputable piano manufacturers, such as Mason & Hamlin, based in Haverhill, Mass., and C. Bechstein of Germany. But Steinways have a special place in the world of pianists. International star and Uzbekistan native Yefim Bronfman recalls when the Tashkent concert organization acquired a new Steinway. "Nobody local was allowed to touch the instrument," says the Grammy-winning Mr. Bronfman, who was a teenager at the time and already playing concerts. "I was begging the promoter to even play one note of it. It was a very guarded commodity."

Today, he performs exclusively on Steinways. "A good Steinway has a way of inspiring a performer," he says.

And while I'm no Grammy winner, I still wanted that Steinway sound. To my surprise, I found loads of used Steinways for sale, perhaps reflecting the sorry state of the economy. Fewer people buy such



*Movers with the Vienna Piano Company haul the instrument up the front steps to its new home.*

pricey instruments when money grows tight. And more people with grand pianos gathering dust in their living rooms "take a second look" at the hulking instruments when they consider liquidating some assets, says Rochester, N.Y., piano technician Joe Ross, who runs piano-sales Web site PianoMart.com. "If you're in the market for a used piano, this is a good time for you."

## Piano Sales Dip

Indeed, the number of new pianos sold declined 19% in 2007, the second consecutive annual decline in unit sales, according to Englewood, N.J.-based Music Trades, which tracks sales of new musical instruments. .

Experts say it's much harder to track sales of used pianos, but Boston-based piano technician and author Larry Fine speculates that there are five to 10 times more used pianos sold than new, with a wide range of brands and conditions.

But buying one proved more complicated than I expected. Just because I play the piano doesn't mean I understand the mechanics of it, any more than the fact that I can drive a Porsche means I could evaluate its transmission. A look under the "hood" is daunting: More than 200 strings, attached to a harp-like plate, are struck by hammers. The hammers are linked to a series of intricately connected parts with names like "jacks" and "wippens."

From the library, I borrowed Mr. Fine's guide to piano shopping, "The Piano Book," which diagrams the guts of a piano and discusses what consumers should look for. In it, Mr. Fine states flatly: "The most important thing you should know about buying a used piano is that you should have it inspected by a piano technician before putting your money down."

A technician will charge anywhere from \$75 to \$150 for a consultation. But

a good tech is money well-spent, since he has the experience to know whether the price a seller is asking is fair, and how much it can cost to restore a piano that needs work.

“Pianists, even the most wonderful pianists, for the most part don’t know very much about the instrument,” says Irving Faust, owner of Faust Harrison Pianos, a dealer in Irvington, N.Y.

Some pianists maintain that the best pianos are the older Steinways built before World War II. Founded in New York in 1853, the House of Steinway experienced waves of immigration, deaths and a patchwork of family members running it at different points in its history.

“The new ones don’t have as much three-dimensionality, they don’t have as much color. They don’t have as deep a soul as the old ones do,” says Sara Faust, who along with her husband, Irving, started a business around rebuilding vintage Steinways while working as a concert pianist in the 1980s.

For its part, Steinway says that’s a myth. “Our point of view is that technical innovation means that the Steinway today is the best Steinway ever,” says Leo Spellman, senior director of communications for Steinway & Sons, the New York-based piano unit of Steinway Musical Instruments Inc. Still, Steinway began its own restoration operation in 1987, which has grown steadily to capture 13% of total sales in 2007, compared with 8% a decade earlier. It got into the business to hedge its bets: “The biggest competition for a new Steinway,” says Mr. Spellman, “is old Steinway pianos.”

Granted, they may need rebuilding, which can run around \$30,000 or more for such things as new strings and refinishing. That doesn’t include the price of the used piano itself, which added together, can wind up costing more than a new one. But you can still find a Steinway that has been lovingly cared for and rebuilt over the years, which can result in a very good piano for a fraction of what a new one would cost.

My search began on the Internet,



*The reporter, feeling grand with her Steinway grand.*

where there exists a whole world of used pianos. Web sites like eBay and Craigslist abound with listings claiming “like new” or “completely rebuilt” or “excellent working condition.” Which means a lot of traveling to try out a lot of pianos.

A glance at Craigslist resulted in trip to Philadelphia to look at a smaller Steinway grand. Described as having been recently performed on by a concert pianist, the visit revealed a tattered instrument with numbers and letters taped to keys. The seller was asking \$16,000 for a sad-looking beast whose sound vibrated and whirred ominously. I gingerly tried to play a Chopin etude before flitting out the door.

On the way home to Washington, D.C., I stopped at a piano store in Wilmington, Del., that advertised “everything must go” because it was going out of business. It had two Steinway grands; the first, a small model from 1900 that the dealer said was rebuilt with Steinway parts. The second was a similar model from 1917, which the salesman said was also rebuilt but didn’t specify the type of parts until prompted. (They weren’t from Steinway). The price on the first was \$29,000; the second was \$22,500. The pianos didn’t sing to me; the older one felt a bit sluggish to the touch; the other sounded brassy.

### Going to College

Then there was the college used-piano sale. In the local paper, American University announced the sale of its music department’s pianos, “sold at

substantial savings during a one day event” in March.

But besides a fine-print mention of service provisions, the ad didn’t specify who was really running the event: Local piano dealer Jordan Kitt’s Music.

In an arrangement common throughout the industry, the company lends pianos at no cost to colleges. In return, the school agrees to provide space for a sale of those and other pianos from the dealership. “It’s a good partnership all the way around,” says Chris Syllaba, executive vice president.

But for the consumer, maybe not so much: The pianos are generally only 5% to 10% below the store’s retail price; the ones that have been used by the schools sell for about 15% below retail. Steinways I looked at were generally at least \$40,000. They sounded lovely and full, but were far more than what I could afford.

Not having any success on the Internet or in advertised sales, I started scouring local newspaper classified ads. As it happened, I noticed one placed in a New Jersey paper for a larger model Steinway than the ones I’d previously seen. It was “with bench, #156245, Honduran mahogany case, concert condition.”

I called the phone number listed. The piano’s owner, 85-year-old Richard Stobaeus, had arranged for a church to house it — while keeping rights to practice on it — some 15 years ago, and decided the time had come for him to sell. We made arrangements for me to test it out.

For \$100, I hired a technician to give me an assessment of how the piano looked and whether the price was fair. Because technicians often have their own sales business and may want to buy a piano for themselves in order to resell — or try to sell you one of their own — I made it clear that he would be acting as my agent, and that he shouldn’t discuss pricing details with the seller.

On a Friday night, I drove the four hours to Summit, N.J., and pulled up to a large stone church. Mr. Stobaeus was waiting for me in the music room, his hand lovingly resting on the nearly seven-foot piano, its long tail gleaming



of rich mahogany and its 88 perfect black-and-white keys beckoning. I prayed that it played as beautifully as it looked. So I tested some Bach, Chopin, Debussy and a bit of jazz. The sound was incredibly rich, and the touch, or “action,” was very responsive.

It was built in 1912; Mr. Stobaueus had owned it for the past 35 years, during which time he had it gradually restored, first with a new Steinway soundboard and in the past decade, new German-made action parts installed by a prominent technician in New York. It had ivory keys when it was first made — a material that is no longer used — but they’ve been replaced with synthetic keys. This was one of the better pianos I’d ever played. The technician gave it a clean bill of health.

#### A Grand for \$22-Grand

He already had another offer on the table, but Mr. Stobaueus said he was moved by my playing. “It’s yours if you want it,” he said. We settled on \$22,000 to compensate for the competing offer and to pre-empt any bidding war. Then we hugged and cried.

It would cost me \$1,200 to bring it to suburban Washington. Having it tuned



### Tips on Buying a Piano

From the Piano Technicians Guild, some things to consider when buying a new or used piano:

- Select a piano that has the touch and musical tone that you like. Listen to many pianos to discover which features are most appealing.
- Play the same piece on a number of pianos to compare the sound and touch of the instruments.
- Ask a registered piano technician to inspect the instrument and, if your knowledge of pianos is limited, to weigh in on the asking price.
- Listen for rattles or buzzing noises when the piano is played. It may indicate that the soundboard has cracks or the ribs used to strengthen it have come unglued.
- Listen for notes that sound terribly out of tune when played by themselves. The instrument may have a bad pinblock - a crucial component that affects how the strings work.

### Resources

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ■ <a href="http://ptg.org/findatechnician.php">ptg.org/findatechnician.php</a><br>Locate a registered technician | ■ <a href="http://www.bluebookofpianos.com/ages">www.bluebookofpianos.com/ages</a><br>Determine the age of a used piano |
| ■ <a href="http://www.pianoworld.com/buypiano.htm">www.pianoworld.com/buypiano.htm</a><br>Tips on buying a piano | ■ <a href="http://pianonet.com">pianonet.com</a><br>Click on Piano Manufacturer list for brands and websites.           |

and the action “regulated” in a few weeks will probably set me back another couple hundred.

But first they’ll have to pry my hands off of it.

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## Welte Radio Phonograph

Submitted by Dallas Texman





**See Pages 196 & 237**

# KOHLER & CAMPBELL WELTE RADIOLA

Submitted by Dallas Texman

## The AMICA

News Bulletin of the  
AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENT COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION

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Charles Carnes, Treasurer  
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MAY 1970

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SEEBURG AND APOLLO

by Art Reblitz

Several articles in recent AMICA bulletins have brought out an interesting relationship between Seeburg and Melville Clark: the Seeburg Phono-Grand and the Clark Apollo X were the only known American pianos which combined a player piano with a phonograph. AMICAns Dave Bowers and Bill Pixley have pointed out to me the existence of several examples of a small Welte "entertainment center", containing a short scale keyboardless Welte piano, an electrically amplified phonograph, and a radio. A limited number of these units were supposedly made by Brunswick or some other furniture manufacturer. According to Dave Bowers, the tonal length of the strings "makes the Seeburg L look like a grand piano!" (*Coincidentally, and unbeknownst to Messrs. Reblitz, Bowers, and Pixley, Durrell Armstrong of Wichita, Kansas, wrote about the same compact marvel. Its description appears elsewhere in this bulletin. -Ed.*)

In the February bulletin on page 7, Frank Adams suggested that I was referring to the Phono-Grand in the December bulletin. Actually, I neglected to mention that Seeburg manufactured at least two expression instruments: the style X Xpression piano, and the Phono-Grand. The Seeburg X is a full keyboard upright, while the Phono-Grand is a small keyboardless cabinet piano. Both have the same basic expression system, using XP rolls made by the Automatic Music Roll Company.

The Phono-Grand was introduced in October, 1917. Judging by the few remaining examples, it saw limited production; by 1924, if not sooner, it was no longer made. The Automatic bulletin from December 1924 states: "For Seeburg Style X, Xpression pianos only. These rolls will not play on any other Seeburg instrument, excepting the Style X." However, by October 1925, the roll bulletins added: "Also adapted for Apollo X."

The Apollo X is what Mr. Wood calls the Apollophone on page 13 of the February bulletin. "Apollo X" is probably the original name, and the "Apollophone" most likely refers to the phonograph mounted on the left of the piano's spool box. If Automatic Co. XP rolls will play on the Apollo X, I would imagine that Apollo X rolls will also operate the Seeburg X and the Phono-Grand.

From a mechanical standpoint, the Apollo X with Apollophone is very interesting. The tempo lever controls both turntable and roll speed, as well as rewind. The phonograph may be wound with a crank on the right side of the piano case, or if the player is used periodically, the pump automatically winds the spring. The piano spoolbox is also spring-driven, so the roll may be rewound without pumping and with the electric pump turned off.

The Apollo/ArtEcho tracker scale is completely different from the Apollo X/XP scale:

| Apollo (ArtEcho)                   | Apollo X (Seeburg X, Phono-Grand) |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 First bass intensity             | 1 Semi crash                      |
| 2 Second bass intensity            | 2 Sustaining pedal                |
| 3 Third bass intensity             | 3 Soft expression*                |
| 4 Sustaining pedal                 | 4 Loud expression*                |
| 5 Cancel bass intensities          | 5 Rewind                          |
| 6 Bass diminuendo                  | 6 Shut off (coin trip)            |
| 7 Bass crescendo                   | 7 First playing note in bass      |
| 8 Bass hammer rail lift            |                                   |
| 9 First playing note in bass       |                                   |
| 91 Last playing note in treble     |                                   |
| 92 Short perf; cancels 8, 93, & 94 | 92 Last playing note in treble    |
| Long perf: rewind                  |                                   |
| 93 Treble hammer rail lift         | 93 Bass hammer rail lift          |
| 94 Pianissimo                      | 94 Treble hammer rail lift        |
| 95 Treble crescendo                | 95 Accent                         |
| 96 Treble diminuendo               | 96 Play (cancel rewind)           |



SEEBURG AND APOLLO (cont.)

Apollo/ArtEcho tracker scale, cont.

97 Cancel treble intensities

98 Third treble intensity

99 Second treble intensity

100 First treble intensity

" " "

\* Holes 3 and 4 in the Seeburg X scale operate a shuttle valve with four degrees of expression, similar to that in the Seeburg Celesta and MO organs.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE BIG AMPICO LIST IS READY

Remember, back in February, when I announced Barden & Clark's publication of the (almost) complete Ampico Jumbo list - I told you they've been working on the whole thing? An AMICA Editor never lies. Now, after six years and many monies, they are ready to release the 60,000 series. It has 1,000 rolls in it, representing the bulk of the Ampico classical recordings, issued from 1921 through 1929.

The price is \$5., postpaid. B & C try to be nice guys, but everyone knows nice guys finish last, so Nelson Barden is coming out with a new, hard line: "If you catch anybody running off copies on their desk-top kazoos, we pay a \$25 bounty." And rightly so. Cheating those who are working so hard to serve us is definitely un-AMICAn.

Send your order and \$5 check directly to Barden & Clark, 22 Rutland Square, Boston, Massachusetts, 02118.

\* \* \* \* \*



WHAT DO REPRODUCERS  
AND STOMACH ACID  
HAVE IN COMMON?

They cause reactions like this in vulnerable young ladies, that's what. The full page from which this was taken will appear in a subsequent bulletin, but meanwhile if you'd like to contribute a caption suggesting what might actually be distressing this poor dear, send it to your Editor at the new address:

Jim Elfers, AMICA Editor  
827 Cortland Avenue  
San Francisco, California  
94110

# THE WELTE-BRUNSWICK "RADIOLA"

The following is an especially interesting excerpt from a letter from Durrell Armstrong of the Player Piano Company, Wichita, Kansas:

"...I am owner of all three: Ampico, Duo-Art, and Welte, and have a collection of about 2,000 rolls between them. My interests are primarily popular music. I own a rare variety of the Welte licensee players -- the Radiola, which was manufactured by Kohler & Campbell sometime between 1925 and October 20, 1931, when the company abruptly ceased manufacture of all players. I was told by a Mr. Swanson, a player repairman still active in the New York City area who was once an employee at Kohler & Campbell in the Welte licensee division, that the Radiola was made only upon custom order during those years, at the price of \$4,200, and perhaps only 12 or 15 were made. The first ones (in addition to a 61-note piano harp) contained the first electric "Panatrope" phonograph turntable made by Brunswick, and a radio also made by Brunswick. It was the forerunner of the more modern "home entertainment center". It had no keyboard; one door exposed the spoolbox, the other, the radio knobs. The top above the radio lifted to expose the turntable and the adjacent top lid allowed limited roll and record storage. The Welte expression parts were all built on a miniature scale to allow compact installation. Obviously, the instrument sold only to the extremely wealthy at the price of \$4,200..."

\* \* \* \* \*

## LIBRARY ADDITIONS

Two more booklets have been added to the AMICA Library - a 1920 Ampico catalogue, and a 1927 supplement to the 1925 catalogue (already in the collection). Both are in excellent condition. I regret that I can no longer acknowledge the donors, as prior donors have been subjected to awkward situations as a result of my announcement. I hope most of you appreciate the difference between adding a book to an individual's collection, and donating one to the AMICA Library whereby the Editor can make its information known to all collectors.

Toward that end, I can release the tidbit that Ferdinand Himmelreich, the near-blind artist who did over 100 recordings for the Angelus Artrio, did his own transcription of "Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms" for the Ampico. This was dropped from the 1925 catalogue. He also did one Duo-Art recording (Annie Laurie, #5622), but I didn't learn that from the Ampico catalogue.

\* \* \* \* \*

## NANCY PROVIDES A GUIDE THROUGH 1969

Nancy Feinstein of Petaluma, California, shoulda been in advertising. Get this fantastic come-in: "What do Jacqueline Kennedy and W.C. Fields have in common?" "They both appear in the 1969 AMICA Bulletins!" What she's trying to push is the complete index of all the 1969 bulletins, which she was kind enough to compile and type, and which has been printed and is now selling for 50¢ a copy. Regarding the epic job as her life's blood, Nancy was ready to settle down and raise chickens and baby Joshua in Petaluma, until I prevailed upon her to type the bulletin for me while I'm busy moving and renovating the new place.

The index can be ordered from the same helpful folks who have been handling the '69 bulletin reprints for me: Bob and Barbara Whiteley, 175 Reservoir Road, San Rafael, California, 94901.

\* \* \* \* \*

# DUO-ART POPULAR 200 ROLLS

Submitted by William Chapman

| Title  | Composer                 | Pianist    | Number | Price |
|--|--------------------------|------------|--------|-------|
| Sweet Genevieve                              | <i>Tucker</i>            | Armbruster | 102635 | 1.25  |
| The Sweetest Story Ever Told                 | <i>Stulls</i>            | Bergman    | 101785 | 1.25  |
| Sylvia                                       | <i>Speaks</i>            | Armbruster | 102665 | 1.25  |
| Tales of Hoffman Barcarolle.                 | <i>Offenbach</i>         | Shattuck   | 58810  | 2.50  |
| "Tannhauser" Evening Star Song.              | <i>Wagner</i>            | Rapee      | 62358  | 2.00  |
| "Thais" Meditation.                          | <i>Massenet</i>          | Byrd       | 60929  | 2.25  |
| Then You'll Remember Me                      | <i>Balfe</i>             | Bergman    | 102975 | 1.25  |
| Thou'rt Like Unto A Flower.                  | <i>Rubinstein-Rogers</i> | Armbruster | 69247  | 1.75  |
| Tommy Lad! (Song Roll).                      | <i>Margelson</i>         | Bergman    | 102775 | 1.25  |
| Traumerei, Op. 15, No. 7.                    | <i>Schumann</i>          | Godowsky   | 5855-3 | 2.75  |
| The Two Skylarks.                            | <i>Leschetizky</i>       | Leginska   | 65399  | 2.25  |
| "Vagabond King" Selections.                  | <i>Friml</i>             | Armbruster | 69769  | 2.25  |
| The Valkyrie, Excerpts from Act I.           | <i>Wagner</i>            | Leopold    | 69400  | 2.50  |
| The Valkyrie, Excerpts from Acts II and III. | <i>Wagner</i>            | Leopold    | 69410  | 2.50  |
| Valse Brillante, Op. 34, No. 1.              | <i>Chopin</i>            | Paderewski | 6551-8 | 4.00  |
| Valse Coquette, Op. 77, No. 3.               | <i>Friml</i>             | Mering     | 69618  | 2.00  |
| Valse d'Amour, Op. 27, No. 5.                | <i>Moszkowski</i>        | Ganz       | 6418-3 | 2.75  |
| Valse in A-flat, Op. 42.                     | <i>Chopin</i>            | Paderewski | 6618-6 | 3.50  |
| Valse in E-flat.                             | <i>Durand</i>            | Bauer      | 6932-4 | 3.00  |
| Valse Lente and Pizzicatti.                  | <i>Delibes</i>           | Armbruster | 69809  | 2.25  |
| Valse, Op. 34, No. 1.                        | <i>Moszkowski</i>        | Leginska   | 6159-4 | 3.00  |
| Venetian Carnival.                           | <i>Burgmein</i>          | Armbruster | 69058  | 2.00  |
| Waldorf-Astoria Concert Music.               |                          | Armbruster | 69359  | 2.25  |
| West of the Great Divide                     | <i>Ball</i>              | Bergman    | 102755 | 1.25  |
| When the Sun Goes Down                       | <i>Penn</i>              | Penn       | 102505 | 1.25  |
| The Whispering Wind.                         | <i>Wollenhaupt</i>       | Pitot      | 69147  | 1.75  |
| Widmung (Dedication)                         |                          |            |        |       |
| (Devotion) Op. 25, No. 1.                    | <i>Schumann</i>          | Bachaus    | 6958-3 | 2.75  |
| "William Tell" Overture.                     | <i>Rossini</i>           | Rapee      | 6232-3 | 2.75  |
| Will You Love Me in December                 |                          |            |        |       |
| As You Do In May?                            | <i>Ball</i>              | Armbruster | 102935 | 1.25  |
| Will You Remember (Sweet-heart) "Maytime"    | <i>Romberg</i>           | Armbruster | 102785 | 1.25  |
| The World Is Waiting For the Sunrise         | <i>Seitz</i>             | Bergman    | 101555 | 1.25  |
| Your Eyes Have Told Me So                    | <i>Blaufuss</i>          | Armbruster | 102815 | 1.25  |



Greyam Ingersoll



*The Aeolian Company*

AEOLIAN HALL  
NEW YORK

## Appreciation

THE wide use of the Duo-Art in homes, schools and conservatories, and the splendid selection of music available through its library of music rolls, make the sale of these Duo-Art rolls an accurate index to musical taste.

The following list of the two hundred best-selling Duo-Art rolls indicates the high quality of musical appreciation. The names of Chopin, Liszt, Rubinstein and other great composers; the giants of the piano, among them, Paderewski, Hofmann, Ganz, Gábrilowitsch—all are represented in abundance. So are the beautiful arrangements of the finest operas, played by Armbruster and Rapee. Every selection is a work of distinction in its particular class, be it salon, popular or classic.

New patrons should find this list an excellent guide in arranging a library of music rolls. The Duo-Art owner of long standing will be interested to compare his own musical taste with that of the majority.

## MOST POPULAR DUO-ART MUSIC ROLLS

| Title                                   | Composer         | Pianist    | Number | Price |
|---|------------------|------------|--------|-------|
| Adeste Fideles—Oh Come, All Ye Faithful | Reading          | Armbruster | 102765 | 1.25  |
| Ah, Moon of My Delight.                 | Lehman           | Armbruster | 102725 | 1.25  |
| "In a Persian Garden"                   | Verdi            | Armbruster | 66769  | 2.25  |
| "Aida" Selections.                      | Schuetz          | Bauer      | 6986-4 | 3.00  |
| A La Bien Aimee.                        | Liloukalani      | London     | 100935 | 1.25  |
| Aloha Oe                                | Berlin           | Armbruster | 102965 | 1.25  |
| Always                                  | Berger           | Pitot      | 66996  | 1.50  |
| Amoureuse.                              | Arnold           | Armbruster | 67776  | 1.50  |
| Arabesque, Op. 59, No. 2.               | Erlebach & Milne |            | 101378 | 2.00  |
| Around the Christmas Tree               | Cadman           | Cadman     | 58537  | 1.75  |
| At Dawning.                             | Cadman           | Cadman     | 102995 | 1.25  |
| At Dawning                              | Berlin           | Ohman      | 103025 | 1.25  |
| At Peace With the World                 | Gounod           | Ganz       | 6070-4 | 3.00  |
| Ave Maria.                              | Schubert         | Armbruster | 102835 | 1.25  |
| Ave Maria, Op. 52, No. 6                | Herbert          | Armbruster | 66869  | 2.25  |
| "Babes in Toyland" Selection.           | Chopin           | Paderewski | 6832-8 | 4.00  |
| Ballade in A-flat major                 | Rossini          | Ganz       | 523-4  | 3.00  |
| The Barber of Seville Overture.         | Fearis           | Bergman    | 102315 | 1.25  |
| Beautiful Isle of Somewhere             | Adams            | Armbruster | 102795 | 1.25  |
| The Bells of St. Mary's                 | Strauss          | Friedman   | 6984-4 | 3.00  |
| Blue Danube Waltzes, Op. 314.           | Balfe            | Rapee      | 64210  | 2.50  |
| "Bohemian Girl" Selections.             | Gilbert          | Pitot      | 102655 | 1.25  |
| Bonnie Sweet Bessie                     | Moussorgsky      | Armbruster | 69720  | 2.50  |
| "Boris Godounov" Selections.            | Moret            | Pitot      | 68766  | 1.50  |
| Brides and Butterflies Waltzes.         | Gilder           | Braun      | 68988  | 2.00  |
| The Brook's Lullaby.                    | Lieurance        | Lieurance  | 67347  | 1.75  |
| By the Waters of Minnetonka.            | Kreisler         | Rapee      | 62908  | 2.00  |
| Caprice Viennois.                       | Bizet            | Rapee      | 65080  | 2.50  |
| "Carmen" Selections.                    | Bland            | Arndt      | 100155 | 1.25  |
| Carry Me Back to Old Virginia           | Mascagni         | Longo      | 62268  | 2.00  |
| Cavalleria Rusticana, Intermezzo.       | Mascagni         | Armbruster | 67359  | 2.25  |
| "Cavalleria Rusticana" Selections.      | Friml            | Armbruster | 66406  | 1.50  |
| Chanson (Melodie).                      | Kendall          | Pitot      | 69037  | 1.75  |
| Charme d'Amour (Love's Spell).          |                  | Rapee      | 100478 | 2.00  |
| Christmas Fantasie                      |                  | Armbruster | 70049  | 2.25  |
| Commodore Concert Music.                |                  |            |        |       |



| Title   | Composer        | Pianist    | Number | Price |
|---|-----------------|------------|--------|-------|
| Concerto in E-minor, Op. 11 (Part I).           | Chopin          | Hofmann    | 6915-6 | 3.50  |
| Concerto in E-minor, Op. 11 (Part II).          | Chopin          | Hofmann    | 69168  | 2.00  |
| Concerto in E-minor, Op. 11, 2nd Mvt.           | Chopin          | Hofmann    | 6917-4 | 3.00  |
| Concerto in E-minor, Op. 11, 3rd Mvt.           | Chopin          | Hofmann    | 6918-6 | 3.50  |
| Country Gardens, No. 22.                        | Grainger        | Grainger   | 6149-4 | 3.00  |
| Dance of the Hours.                             | Ponchielli      | Armbruster | 67249  | 2.25  |
| Dartmouth College Songs                         |                 | Golde      | 102718 | 2.00  |
| Days of Hearts and Flowers                      | Tobani-Shilkret | Bergman    | 102805 | 1.25  |
| Engulfed Cathedral.                             | Debussy         | Hess       | 69270  | 2.50  |
| Fantasia Impromptu, Op. 66.                     | Chopin          | Bauer      | 6058-4 | 3.00  |
| "Faust" Selections.                             | Gounod          | Rapee      | 65630  | 2.50  |
| The Force of Destiny.                           | Verdi           | Armbruster | 69238  | 2.00  |
| Forget Me Not, Op. 22.                          | Macbeth         | Pitot      | 69506  | 1.50  |
| Giannina Mia, "The Firefly"                     | Friml           | Armbruster | 102855 | 1.25  |
| The Glow Worm. Idyl.                            | Lincke          | Rapee      | 63868  | 2.00  |
| The Gotterdamering—Prologue.                    | Wagner          | Leopold    | 69450  | 2.50  |
| The Gotterdamering—Excerpts from Acts I and II. | Wagner          | Leopold    | 69460  | 2.50  |
| The Gotterdamering—Excerpts from Act III.       | Wagner          | Leopold    | 69470  | 2.50  |
| Gypsy Love Song                                 | Herbert         | Armbruster | 102195 | 1.25  |
| Hark, Hark, the Lark!                           | Schubert-Liszt  | Paderewski | 6694-6 | 3.50  |
| Harvard College Songs                           |                 | Hancock    | 102698 | 2.00  |
| Humoresque, Op. 101, No. 7.                     | Deorak          | Ganz       | 63690  | 2.50  |
| Idylle—Piece Pittoresque, No. 6                 | Chabrier        | Cortot     | 69100  | 2.50  |
| If Love Were All                                | Axt             | Pitot      | 103015 | 1.25  |
| I Love You Truly.                               | Jacobs-Bond     | Arndt      | 100375 | 1.25  |
| "Il Trovatore" Selections.                      | Verdi           | Rapee      | 64120  | 2.50  |
| Indian Love Call.                               |                 |            |        |       |
| "Rose Marie".                                   | Friml           | Armbruster | 102485 | 1.25  |
| Indian Summer and Dagger Dance. "Natoma".       | Herbert         | Armbruster | 69138  | 2.00  |
| I Wish That I'd Been Satisfied With Mary.       | Henderson       | Armbruster | 102886 | 1.50  |
| Jocelyn Berceuse.                               | Godard          | Adler      | 57467  | 1.75  |
| June Brought the Roses.                         | Openshaw        | Pitot      | 102495 | 1.25  |
| Just A Cottage Small.                           | Hanley          | Ohman      | 102895 | 1.25  |
| Kammenoi-Ostrow.                                | Rubinstein      | Bauer      | 6057-4 | 3.00  |

| Title   | Composer         | Pianist       | Number | Price |
|---|------------------|---------------|--------|-------|
| Kashmiri Song.                                | Wood.-Fin.       | Armbruster    | 102015 | 1.25  |
| A Kiss in the Dark, "Orange Blossoms".        | Herbert          | Ohman         | 102675 | 1.25  |
| A Kiss in Xanadu, Op. 16.                     | Taylor           | Armbruster    | 69049  | 2.25  |
| Kiss Me Again, "Mlle. Modiste".               | Herbert          | Armbruster    | 101725 | 1.25  |
| "La Boheme" Selection.                        | Puccini          | Fabri         | 56398  | 2.00  |
| La Paloma (The Dove).                         | Yradier          | Berumen       | 61697  | 1.75  |
| "La Traviata" Selections.                     | Verdi            | Armbruster    | 68619  | 2.25  |
| The Lark.                                     | Glinka           | Armbruster    | 56977  | 1.75  |
| Last Hope, Op. 16.                            | Gottschalk       | Adler         | 58577  | 1.75  |
| Let Me Call You Sweetheart.                   | Friedman         | Armbruster    | 102275 | 1.25  |
| Liebesfreud.                                  | Kreisler         | Thompson      | 58648  | 2.00  |
| Liebestraum (Dream of Love)                   |                  |               |        |       |
| Nocturne No. 3, O Love.                       | Liszt            | Ganz          | 6081-4 | 3.00  |
| Love's Old Sweet Song                         | Molloy           | Knaffl        | 101515 | 1.25  |
| Love Sends A Little Gift of Roses             | Openshaw         | Summers       | 101465 | 1.25  |
| Love Song, Op. 40.                            | Cadman           | Cadman        | 68998  | 2.00  |
| Lucia di Lammermoor.                          | Donizetti        | Rapee         | 63960  | 2.50  |
| "Madame Butterfly" Selections.                | Puccini          | Armbruster    | 67129  | 2.25  |
| Magic Fire Scene.                             | Wagner           | Friedman      | 6531-4 | 3.00  |
| Marche Militaire.                             | Schubert         | Gabrilow.     | 6487-6 | 3.50  |
| Marcheta (Mexican Love Song)                  | Schertzinger     | diGivoan.     | 101145 | 1.25  |
| "Martha" Selections.                          | Flotow           | Armbruster    | 66429  | 2.25  |
| Meditations, No. 1.                           |                  | Armbruster    | 67168  | 2.00  |
| Medley of Old Favorites.                      |                  | Arndt         | 60048  | 2.00  |
| Medley of Plantation Songs.                   |                  | Arndt         | 60228  | 2.00  |
| Melody.                                       | Dawes            | Armbruster    | 68518  | 2.00  |
| Melodie, E-minor, Op. 8, No. 1                | Gabrilowitsch    | Gabrilowitsch | 6926-4 | 3.00  |
| Melody in F, Op. 3, No. 1.                    | Rubinstein       | Hofmann       | 6099-6 | 3.50  |
| Memory's Garden                               | Denni            | Bergman       | 102865 | 1.25  |
| Merry Widow and Gypsy Love Waltzes.           | Lehar            | Armbruster    | 67878  | 2.00  |
| Mighty Lak' A Rose                            | Nevin            | Arndt         | 100215 | 1.25  |
| "Mikado" Selections.                          | Gilbert-Sullivan | Armbr.        | 66489  | 2.25  |
| Minuet, Op. 14, No. 1.                        | Paderewski       | Paderewski    | 6100-8 | 4.00  |
| Moon Dream Shore                              | Lockhart         | Ohman         | 102825 | 1.25  |
| Motives on the Ring of the Nibelung, Part II. | Wagner           | Leopold       | 69490  | 2.50  |

| Title  | Composer     | Pianist        | Number | Price |
|--|--------------|----------------|--------|-------|
| Motives on the Ring of the Nibelung, Part I.     | Wagner       | Leopold        | 69480  | 2.50  |
| My Heart At Thy Dear Voice, "Samson and Delilah" | Saint-Saens  | Armbrus.       | 102906 | 1.50  |
| My Wild Irish Rose                               | Olcott       | Armbruster     | 102545 | 1.25  |
| Narcissus.                                       | Nevin        | Ganz           | 6920-3 | 2.75  |
| National Emblem March.                           | Bagley       | Erle. & Milne  | 17788  | 2.00  |
| "Naughty Marietta" Selections.                   | Herbert      | Armbruster     | 66559  | 2.25  |
| Nola—Novelette (Fox Trot).                       | Arndt        | Arndt          | 56576  | 1.50  |
| "Oberon" Overture.                               | Weber        | Leginska       | 6999-4 | 3.00  |
| "Old Timers" Waltz (Medley).                     |              | Milne          | 18478  | 2.00  |
| "Orpheus in the Underworld".                     | Offenbach    | Pitot & Arm.   | 69779  | 2.25  |
| O Sole Mio                                       | Capua        | Marco          | 101325 | 1.25  |
| "Pagliacci" Selections.                          | Leoncavallo  | Armbrust.      | 67689  | 2.25  |
| Pal of My Cradle Days                            | Piantadosi   | Ohman          | 102575 | 1.25  |
| The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers. March.        | Jessel       | Mills & Brooks | 18325  | 1.25  |
| "Peer Gynt" Suite 1, Op. 46, Nos. 1 and 3.       | Grieg-Grain. | Grainger       | 6522-4 | 3.00  |
| A Perfect Day                                    | Jacobs-Bond  | Arndt          | 58025  | 1.25  |
| Pierrette, Op. 41.                               | Chaminade    | Bauer          | 69550  | 2.50  |
| "Poet and Peasant" Overture.                     | von Suppe    | Rapee          | 62490  | 2.50  |
| Prelude in D-flat, Op. 28, No. 15.               | Chopin       | Cortot         | 6773-3 | 2.75  |
| Polonaise, Op. 40, No. 1.                        | Chopin       | Paderewski     | 6140-0 | 4.50  |
| Prelude, Op. 3, No. 2.                           | Rachmaninoff | Gabrilow.      | 5804-5 | 3.25  |
| Prelude, Op. 23, No. 5.                          | Rachmaninoff | Hofmann        | 6229-8 | 4.00  |
| "Princess Flavia" Selections.                    | Romberg      | Armbruster     | 69609  | 2.25  |
| Princeton College Songs                          |              | Samuels        | 102708 | 2.00  |
| Prisoner's Song (The)                            | Massey       | Hasse          | 102955 | 1.25  |
| "Red Mill" Selections.                           | Herbert      | Armbruster     | 69349  | 2.25  |
| Remember   | Berlin       | Ohman          | 102745 | 1.25  |
| Rhapsodie Hongroise, No. 2.                      | Liszt        | Paderewski     | 6670-0 | 4.50  |
| Rhapsodie Hongroise, No. 12.                     | Liszt        | Hofmann        | 6139-0 | 4.50  |
| Rhapsody in Blue—Second Half.                    | Gershwin     | Gershwin       | 68787  | 1.75  |
| The Rhinegold, Excerpts from Act I.              | Wagner       | Leopold        | 69390  | 2.50  |
| The Rhinegold, Excerpts from Scenes I and II.    | Wagner       | Leopold        | 69380  | 2.50  |
| "Rigoletto" Selections.                          | Verdi        | Rapee          | 6517-3 | 2.75  |
| The Robin's Return.                              | Fisher       | Pitot          | 69256  | 1.50  |
| Rolling Down to Rio                              | German       | Armbruster     | 103085 | 1.25  |
| Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 14.                       | Mendelssohn  | Hofmann        | 6119-8 | 4.00  |

| Title   | Composer              | Pianist    | Number | Price |
|---|-----------------------|------------|--------|-------|
| The Rosary.   | Nevin                 | Ganz       | 63970  | 2.50  |
| Roses of Picardy  | Wood                  | Pesetzki   | 101755 | 1.25  |
| Rustle of Spring.   | Sinding               | Shattuck   | 58099  | 2.25  |
| Serenade.   | Schubert-Liszt        | Bauer      | 6671-3 | 2.75  |
| Serenade from "Millions d'Arlequin".  | Drigo                 | Armbruster | 68417  | 1.75  |
| Shadowland.   | Gilbert               | Pitot      | 69526  | 1.50  |
| A Shepherd's Tale—Shepherd's All and Maidens Fair, Op. 16, Nos. 1 and 2, "In Arcady". | Nevin                 | McLeod     | 69377  | 1.75  |
| Siegfried, Excerpts from Act I.   | Wagner                | Leopold    | 69420  | 2.50  |
| Siegfried, Sounds of the Forest, Act II.  | Wagner                | Leopold    | 69430  | 2.50  |
| Siegfried, Excerpts from Act III.   | Wagner                | Leopold    | 69440  | 2.50  |
| So Am I, "Lady Be Good"   | Gershwin              | Gershwin   | 102625 | 1.25  |
| Sonata, Op. 81, First Movt.   | Beethoven             | Novaes     | 69080  | 2.50  |
| Sonata, Op. 81, Second Movt.  | Beethoven             | Novaes     | 6909-3 | 2.75  |
| Sonata Quasi Fantasia, Op. 27, No. 2. First and Second Movements, "Moonlight".        | Beethoven             | Paderewski | 6929-8 | 4.00  |
| Sonata Quasi Fantasia, Op. 27, No. 2. "Moonlight" Third Movement.                     | Beethoven             | Paderewski | 6930-6 | 3.50  |
| Song of Love, "Blossom Time"  | Romberg               | Armbruster | 102365 | 1.25  |
| The Song of Songs   | Moya                  | Bergman    | 102165 | 1.25  |
| Song of the Boatman of the Volga.   |                       | Ganz       | 63580  | 2.50  |
| Songs My Mother Taught Me, Op. 55, No. 4  | Dvorak                | Armbruster | 103095 | 1.25  |
| Songs of Christmas Tide   |                       | Kennedy    | 101368 | 2.00  |
| Songs of Sunny Italy (Medley).  |                       | Rapee      | 64849  | 2.25  |
| Souvenir.   | Drdla                 | Rapee      | 63349  | 2.25  |
| Sparklets.  | Miles                 | Banta      | 62477  | 1.75  |
| Spinning Song, Op. 67, No. 4.   | Mendelssohn           | Paderews.  | 6569-4 | 3.00  |
| Spring Song, Op. 62, No. 6.   | Mendelssohn           | Hofmann    | 68740  | 2.50  |
| Stars and Stripes Forever March.  | Sousa                 | Lincoln    | 62487  | 1.75  |
| Stephanie Gavotte, Op. 312.   | Czibulka              | Pitot      | 69746  | 1.50  |
| "Student Prince" Selections.  | Romberg               | Pitot      | 68879  | 2.25  |
| Suite, Op. 15. Valse.   | Atensky               |            |        |       |
|   | Bauer & Gabrilowitsch |            | 5849-0 | 4.50  |
| The Swan  | Saint-Saens           | Ganz       | 60648  | 2.00  |

# THE CHORALCELO

## (CELESTIAL CHOIR) HISTORY: 1888-1942

*(Kor Al seh low)*

**By Wade Jenkins © 2004 - Hanover, Mass**  
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The story of the Choralcelo is the story of two unique men ...Melvin Every, the brilliantly gifted, many-faceted inventor, and Wilber Farrington, an idealistic, philosophic visionary who devoted his life to his vision, and his life would come to include a talented young wife, who believed and committed herself as deeply as he did.

There were several men who worked on improving the tone of the piano electrically in the nineteenth century, seeking to prolong its tone to a steady note, rather than a blow and then decay. One of these was Eli C. Ohmart of Detroit, Michigan. In April of 1890 he filed a patent on a method of prolonging the tone of a piano string electromagnetically. One of the witnesses was Melvin L. Severy, of Boston, Mass., and the invention is assigned to him. Prior inventions of others are mentioned, specifically, Elisha Gray, (1835-1901) who was a prolific inventor and had many patents on the telephone. Several of them have to do with musical tone, and one granted in 1876 was based on his accidental discovery that he could control sound from a self-vibrating electromagnetic circuit, and in doing so, invented a basic single note oscillator.

In May, 1901, the Choralcelo Manufacturing Company was incorporated in Portland, Maine, the amount of capital stock being one million dollars, six of which were issued at ten dollars each. Charles W. Noyes of Melrose, Mass. was president, and Wallace H. Jose of Dorchester, Mass., treasurer. Since the average hourly wage then was fourteen cents an hour, and in the year 2000 it was over fourteen dollars, in today's money the capital stock would be about one hundred million, and one share, about a thousand.

In November of 1900, Melvin L. Severy and George B. Sinclair, brothers-in-law (they had married sisters, Elizabeth and Margaret Flint) applied for a patent on an "Electric musical instrument" to be

assigned to the Choralcelo Manufacturing Company, a corporation of Maine, Severy's address being given as Arlington Heights, Mass., and Sinclair's as Winthrop, Mass. The general principles of the Choralcelo interruptor mechanism and other features of the instrument were given, and, magnets were to be placed on both sides of the strings. Severy mentions the superiority of what they have accomplished over work done by others.

In the incorporation papers from Maine, William L. Flint, a brother of the sisters mentioned above, is listed as one of the owners of the six shares. He would figure steadily in the development of the instrument, and would finally be given a bequest in Severy's will. His address in 1910 was 34 Farnsworth St., Boston.

Archives mention a private demonstration being given in 1905 at Tremont Temple, Boston, with Hattie Forbush, Choralcelist and a mixed quartette. Miss Forbush, who had been trained in the playing of the new instrument, demonstrated the varied voices of the electrically excited strings, in which the idealized tones of the cello, horn, flute, bassoon, mandolin, fife and drum, vox humana, and echo organ could be discerned.

In 1910, the principal office of the corporation was 33 Broad Street, Boston, and the president was Melvin Severy, 236 Park Avenue, Arlington Heights, Mass., treasurer, George B. Sinclair, 145 Adams Street, Medford, Mass. There were nine directors, of whom one was Wilber E. Farrington, 1514 Beacon Street, Brookline, Mass. In December of 1906 he is listed as a witness for one of Severy's patents. The following information on Melvin Severy clipped years ago from a



*Console shown above #164*

German publication gives a remarkable account of the inventor.

SEVERY, Melvin Linwood, Inventor b. Melrose, Mass., August 5, 1863, s. Solomon and Caroline Place (Babb) S.; ed. Walpole, Mass., to 3 yrs. high School; moved to Boston; grad. Monroe Coll. of Oratory, 1883; m. Wilhelmina Carlstrom, of Boston, Nov. 5, 1884; (died 1895); m. Elizabeth Ann Flint, of Plymouth, N. S. June 2, 1897 (died 1919). Began as inventor, 1882, and has taken out many patents; awarded John Scott medal of Franklin Institute, 1898, for invention known as the Severy process of printing; ex-pres Severy Impression Process Co., Choralcelo Mfg. Co., Choralcelo Co., dir. Solar Power Co., Automatic Tympan Co. (All founded on his inventions). Mem. Franklin Inst., Phila. Author: *Fleur-de-lis and Other Stories*; *Materialization and Other Spiritual Phenomena from a Scientific Standpoint*, 1897; *The Darrow Enigma*, 1904; *The Mystery of June Thirteenth*, 1905; *Gillette's Social Redemption*, 1907; *Gillette's Industrial Solution*, 1903. Sr. inventor of the Choralcelo and the Vocalcelo; sole inventor of the Vocalsevro. St., Los Angeles, Calif.

The former from a German publication.



Severy had patents on solar heating, fluid drive in automobiles, the "iron lung" and "glass boot" respirators, orthopedic shoes, the typewriter, a printing press, the camera, and was also a scholar, artist, musical composer, and noted author... and had even done some acting.

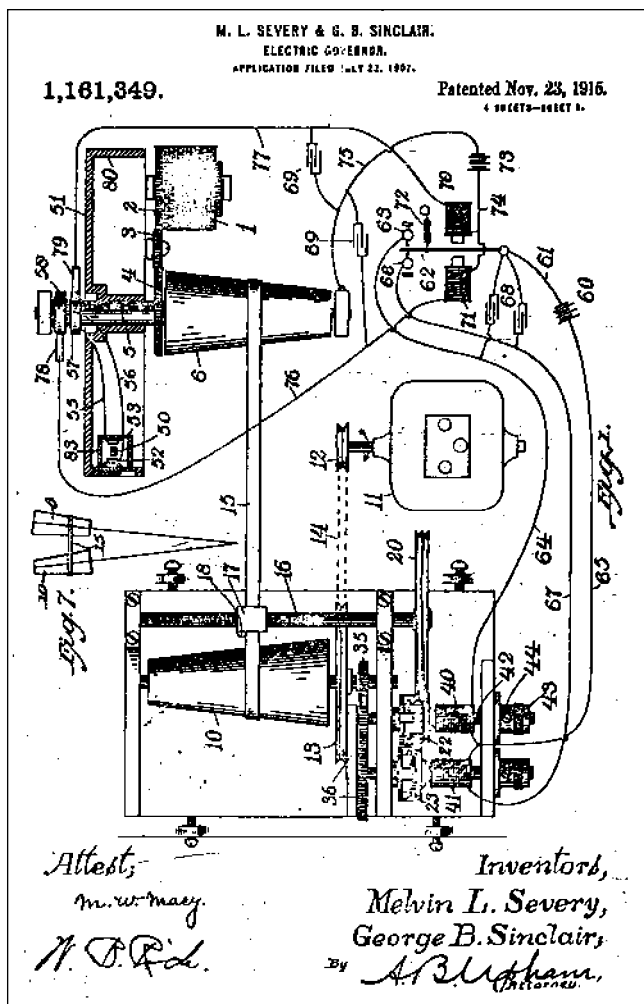
The principle that Severy and Sinclair were working on was simple in principle but unbelievably difficult in execution. As an example, take the note "A", vibrating 440 times per second. If an electromagnet is placed close to the string and fed 440 pulses of D.C. current per second the string will emit a steady musical tone as long as the current is applied... but they must be synchronised perfectly, and that was the monumental stumbling block. The magnet must attract the string as it is in its normal swing toward it, but must release it precisely when it starts its swing away, or the tone will lose its character, fade away, or vanish altogether. To achieve such unimaginable accuracy was the challenge behind this concept. The lowest bass note would require about 20 pulses of current per second, and the highest over 2000 per second. The patents on the Choralcelo indicate what labor, capital, and ingenuity went into developing a governing mechanism.

Coupled with this obstacle was the fact that electrical service of the day was uneven. Regene Weiler, one of the young women trained to demonstrate the instrument, relates that she would be in the middle of a demonstration

and the tone would die away. Fortunately, the instrument also had a standard piano keyboard and piano action with hammers, which could be quickly engaged to play the instrument as piano only, while an engineer could remedy the trouble and the master of ceremonies, often Wilber Farrington, would address the assembly to engage their attention until Miss Weiler knew the governor was working again. The patent drawing here illustrates what is believed to be the type of governor used originally, with belts. (Picture to right)

The following is another patent drawing illustrating an improvement in the reliability of the governing mechanism. It comprises four pages of drawings and eight pages of explanation. This was applied for in 1911. The time and effort to layout such a complicated device are daunting... and the cost to build it would have been formidable. But the governing of the interruptor device was the key to their efforts, and indispensable. (Picture on following page)

The governor would also incorporate some sort of clutch mechanism, which would allow the running machinery to get up to speed without having to have an unusually large motor, because, once up to speed, it did not take a large amount of force to maintain speed. There were no starting coils in those days. But once the proper speed had been attained, the clutch could not simply run at top speed because of the vagaries of electrical current at that time, which meant that it would have to continue a certain degree of slippage as long as the instrument was being played, so that it could speed up or slow down as required to keep the speed of the interruptor mechanism perfectly constant. Archives state that producing

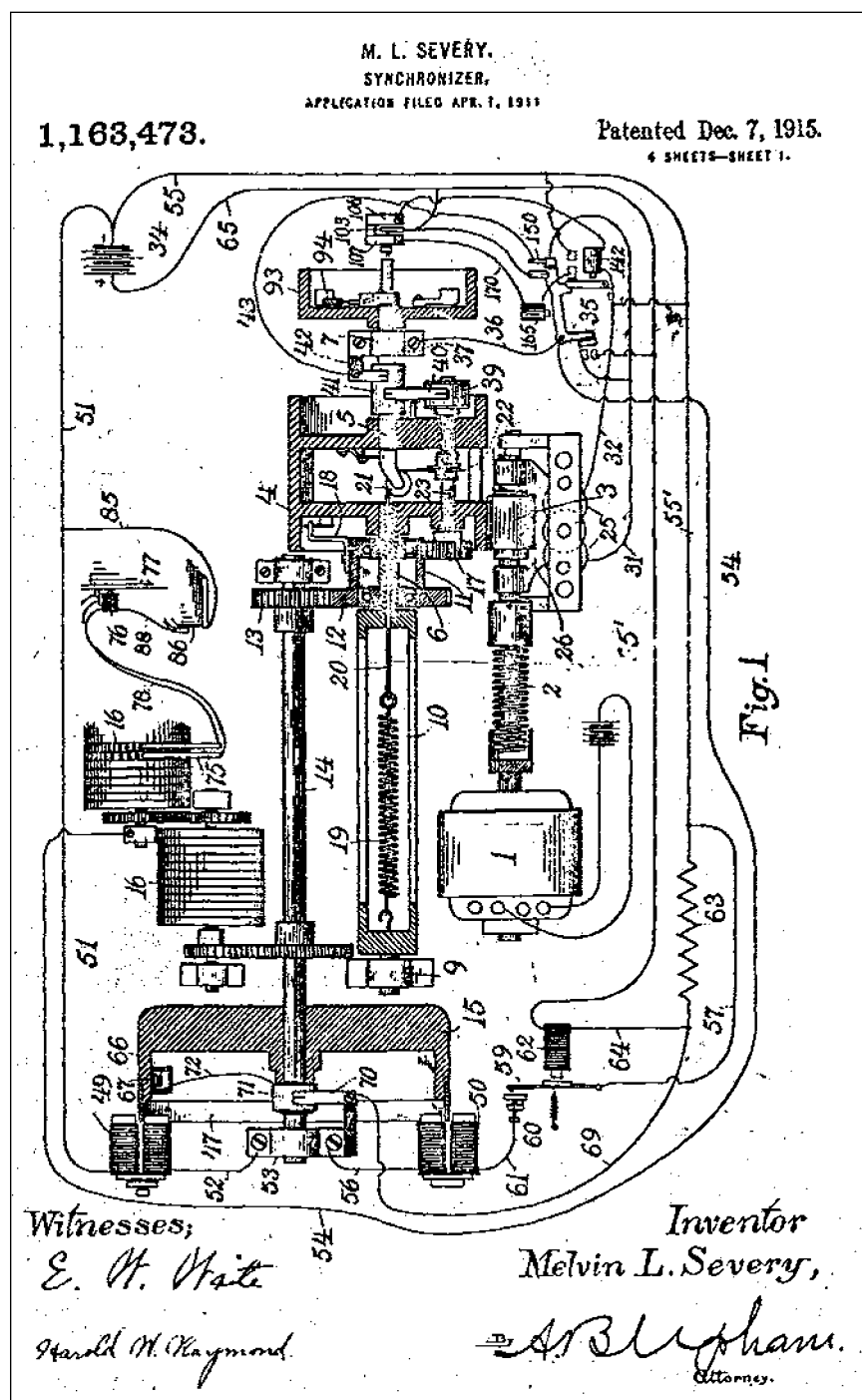


the Choralcelo as it finally stood cost three million dollars. That figure in, say, 1915 dollars, when the hourly wage was \$0.24. Today the average hourly wage is \$13.74.

Perfecting a clutch that would answer such formidable standards was astronomically expensive. The fact that it would have to continually slip even after attaining speed was a tall order. The surfaces would overheat, even burst into fire. Fortunately, Severy's dogged persistence finally paid off in an elegantly simple, unique solution... a clutch and governor combined which operated only on magnetism, with no physical contact, and operating on the principle of "eddy current drag", as Severy says in his notes. Thus, there was never any friction and thus no wear of contact surfaces, and no matter how long it ran, it would not heat up.

Severy in his notes describes the incredible accuracy mandatory in the frequency of the electric pulses delivered to the magnets behind the piano strings:





"There is required a degree of correspondence, or synchronism, which is almost beyond belief. For example, the vibrations of the upper treble strings of a piano are several thousand per second, and the synchronizing mechanism must not permit the pulsation producing devices to vary in speed a fractional part of one of such vibrations for, if there is such variation, a magnetic pull upon the string may occur just as the latter is beginning its vibrational swing away from the electromagnet instead of toward it, with the result that the

actuation of the string will be weak, irregular, and worthless for all musical purposes." Quoted from April, 1911.

And again, in August of 1905: "Without this synchronism, the electromagnetic attractions were mutually annihilatory, producing but the slightest vibration of the associated sonorous body, and that of a periodicity causing the slight tone that was emitted to be false in timbre and of no musical significance. Worse than that, this false quality of tone was continually changing both in timbre and in loudness, being at

one instant faint and 'snarly', at another louder and more dismal, and yet again feebler than before as well as thinner and more 'whining', while at no time would it ever be full, true, constant, or in any way dependable. After years of experimentation we have finally solved these problems."

In July of 1905, again he writes, "The difference between absolute synchronism and a one-thousandth of a degree off is enough to produce so wide a difference in volume of tone as to prevent any pedal action from being used with any proper effect. None of the so-called governing devices shown by others are a one-hundredth part accurate enough for constancy of tone, being too crude even to get any considerable tone at all, let alone maintain it with uniform loudness."

### PHASE I ... THE SINGLE MANUAL INSTRUMENTS

The state of the unique new instrument as first introduced in 1905.

Magnets behind the strings of 73 notes of a piano.

Interrupted pulses of DC timed to coincide precisely with the natural periodicity of the individual notes. A switching device activated by a slider can connect the magnets with vibrations usually sent to the note one octave above or one octave below thus deriving a harmonic 4 foot or harmonic 16 foot tone or, for example, a quint. The slider of the instrument under consideration has six positions ... one for the notes' natural periodicities, and the others, harmonic derivatives.

The next page is an announcement in "The Musical Age", May, 1909 of the "First Choralcelo Concert," given in Symphony Hall, Boston. It has been understood that a concert was given in 1905, but this may have been a private showing, and reports indicated that the instrument then was just at the beginning of its development.

At any rate, this was obviously a very public showing and as the article says, the hall was crowded. Harriet Forbush is one of the Choralcelists; she is mentioned frequently in news reports of the time and was the teacher of Regene (Wylor) Farrington. Walter E. Young (other reports say William Lyman Johnson, [ed.]), was the man who arranged the

*From The Musical Age, New York, May 1st, 1909.*

# FIRST CHORALCELO CONCERT PROVES HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL

**Unique Musical Instrument Faithfully Demonstrates Claims of Inventors at Boston Musicales—Results from Twenty-one Years of Persistent Endeavor.**

BOSTON, April 27.—The first program of choralcelo concerts was given this evening in Symphony Hall. Miss Harriet H. Forbush and Walter E. Young played the choralcelo and were assisted by Miss Charlotte Williams, soprano, and Adolphe Bak, violinist; Ralph Smalley, violoncello, and about forty members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, directed by Gustave Strube. The hall was crowded and the numbers were enthusiastically received. The audience included representatives of Boston's best-known families.

The program:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Overture—"Anacreon".....                                 | Cherubini   |
| Symphony—Op. 95, No. 5, "From the New World"—Dvorak..... | Orchestra.  |
| Madrigal.....  | Mr. Young.  |
| Serenade.....  | Simone  |
| La Fontaine, Idylle, Op. 84.....                         | Pierrot   |
| The Nightingale.....                                     | Messrs. Bak and Young.                                |
| Song Without Words, No. 1.....                           | Lyberg  |
| Scherzo, B Minor, Op. post.....                          | Alabert-Liszt   |
| Jewel Song—from "Faust".....                             | Mendelssohn   |
| Concerto, F Major, Op. 187.....                          | Mendelssohn   |
| Barcarolle—from "Tales of Hoffman".....                  | Miss Forbush.   |
| Hymn, "Gottschalk".....                                  | Gounod  |
| Instrumental Effects—Cello, Flute, Bassoon, Harp.....    | Miss Williams and Mr. Young.                          |
| Fizzicati.....   | Rheinberger   |
| Serenade, A Major.....                                   | Mr. Young and Orchestra.                              |
| Prelude, D Flat, Cr. 28, No. 15.....                     | Offenbach   |
| Air de Ballet.....                                       | Hymn, "Gottschalk"                                    |
| Kammerlei-Ostrow, Op. 19, No. 22.....                    | Instrumental Effects—Cello, Flute, Bassoon, Harp..... |
| Ave Maria.....   | Fizzicati.....  |
| Cradle Song.....   | Miss Forbush.   |
| Plus de Tourments—from "Le Cid".....                     | Widor   |
| Serenata.....  | Messrs. Bak, Smalley and Young.                       |
| Nocturne, G Major, Op. 37, No. 2.....                    | Chopin  |
| Concerto, G Minor, Op. 25, No. 1.....                    | Chaminade   |
|  | Robinson  |
|  | Mr. Young.  |
|  | Bach-Gounod   |
|  | Miss Williams, Messrs. Bak and Young.                 |
|  | Brahms  |
|  | Massenet  |
|  | Miss Williams and Mr. Young.                          |
|  | Moszkowski  |
|  | Chopin  |
|  | Miss Forbush.   |
|  | Mendelssohn   |
|  | Mr. Young and Orchestra.                              |

As for the choralcelo itself, it proved an unique and interesting instrument. Fronting the audience from the platform was a mahogany box to disguise an upright piano somewhat exaggerated, and with

two rows of keys. The instrument, it was announced, resulted from twenty-one years of persistent labor on the part of its inventors, Melville L. Severy and George D. Sinclair, both of Boston. The choralcelo obtains the sounds of the violoncello, the trumpet, the French horn, the oboe and bassoon, the harp and the pipe-organ from a single compass from the wire strings used in the pianoforte, which are vibrated by means of small electro-magnets stationed at scientifically determined points along their length.

The principle of operation in these magnet vibrators is simple, and it is a somewhat similar principle to that which rattles the clapper of an electric bell, and the strings of the choralcelo, though much more delicately vibrated, are acted upon by much the same method. The magnets are set in action in the keyboard and various switches to them control the combination. The hammer action of the piano is also provided to add another to the variety of effects aimed at, but the ordinary effects of the choralcelo are obtained from the wire strings untouched by the hammer and vibrated by the magnet. The current required is taken from the circuit employed in lighting the house.

The surprise in the choralcelo is that the ordinary piano string can be made to give more sounds than those obtained from it under the blow of the hammer, and the variety of these sounds is great on account of the immensely increased possibility of making what the student musician knows as overtone. The concert this evening faithfully demonstrated the merits of the choralcelo, and it may be expected to contribute important things to music. Great skill is required in its handling. The player is embarrassed somewhat by the very largeness of the means at his disposal. He must learn to select. With careful study this new instrument is designed to do many and large things, and the contention of its inventors seems to be fully justified.

player rolls for the automatic player. It is not known if at this concert he played by hand or via rolls. Soloists also were presented with the new instrument;

soprano, violinist, and cellist are mentioned, along with 40 members of the Boston Symphony orchestra, directed by Gustave Strube. The inventor is mis-

takenly identified as "Melville" instead of "Melvin".

One interesting highlight of the article is prominent mention that the new

instrument is the result of "twenty-one years of persistent endeavor." This would place its inception at 1888, which would tie in with data mentioned elsewhere in this treatise.

It is surprising that the Choralcelo is described as having two manuals, and this in such an early instrument. One would have thought that the two manual Choralcelo was not developed until a few years later, but perusing the patents suggests that this might have been a variation with two complete and totally separate bedplates and soundboards, perhaps one for each manual, for there is no mention of the later (as it appears) remote attachments of metal or wood bars. As may be seen in the patents, a wealth of possible variations was designed and it is not known today which ones may actually have been manufactured. As stated elsewhere, the development of the Choralcelo was a gargantuan effort and many millions of dollars in today's dollar value were spent. Severy used his richly inventive mind to seek out every direction his brainchild might take. And the principle was so new that he explored every possible application ... and patented them.

In June of 1907, on the same subject, he writes: "A variation of one ten-thousandth of a second in the rotation of the make and break disks cannot be allowed. Accordingly, a governing device for said disks which can control the same with an accuracy heretofore undreamed of, is not simply desirable, but is absolutely essential. After years of experimentation, we produced such a governor and applied the same to our electrical musical instruments, with the result of converting them into an unqualified success, where all others were failures."

Again Severy mentions the tone derived when synchronization is perfect as "full, clear, and true."

The Choralcelo as first developed was a large upright piano with magnets behind the strings of 73 of the notes. One which exists has five pedals where there are usually only three, and large knee swells. Some of the incorporated player mechanisms were of an unusual style, having large leather pouches instead of the usual wood sided purse pneumatics covered with rubberized

cloth. The company arranged its own rolls under its own label, and William Lyman Johnson was in charge of the arranging department. The front key panel swung down to make accessible a slider mechanism for the Choralcelo or organ tone which will be returned to shortly. The casework typically incorporated beautifully matched veneers and included masterfully carved openwork panels backed with silk for the benefit of the musical tones produced. At one time it is reported the company was considering a brass roll system, to avoid the problem of dampness swelling the rolls, but this did not come about. Everything about the instrument bespoke quality...the finest workmanship in all its components.

This new musical instrument, which at first could be heard only by invitation, was unique in that it could produce organ tone from the piano strings, without the action of the hammers, which could be disengaged at will. They also could be used alone, strictly as a piano, or both the magnets and the hammers could be used at once. There was a volume control for the electric current, so that the volume could be reduced to a whisper, and this was totally free of any physical contact, which caused quite a sensation. There was no scrape of the bow, or breathiness as in the flute, of smothering effect as in the swell shutters of the pipe organ. A new effect was possible with sustained tone, in that, since it was produced on piano strings, the damper pedal could still be used to create interesting and quite beautiful effects.

Another significant feature of the new instrument was that the tonal quality of the strings when sounded by the magnets could be changed, similar to changing the stops of a pipe organ. This was accomplished in the following manner: Returning to the slider in front of the keys, moving it resulted in various alterations in the tone quality. Usually the current fed to the magnets was the natural frequency; i.e., to refer again to A, this note would receive 440 pulses of interrupted current per second, for an A of the middle register, or eight foot tone, in pipe organ terminology. But if, instead, the frequency an octave higher were routed to this same A, a harmonic tone would result from the strings being

forced to vibrate to a frequency higher than its normal one, in this case, four foot tone. Others could be the two foot, or two octaves higher, or the tierce, or the quint. Thus one could draw from the same set of strings various tonal qualities, greatly expanding their capability.

Here, Melvin Severy speaks about this feature of his invention: "So remarkable is the change in tone effects produced in this manner, that we are enabled to imitate, or rather to excel in their own field, almost every kind of musical instrument. For instance, with the hammers alone active, the instrument is a piano; with the electric devices alone, and in their normal condition, the effect is that of a large church organ; with the brushes shifted to one specified row of contacts, a flute is apparently playing; to another row, a chorus of voices is simulated; to another, a wind instrument apparently sounds; with the hammers active and another shift in the brushes, a drum and fife duet; and, in fine, we are able with the one instrument and a single player, to produce tone effects indistinguishable except for their superior smoothness and uniformity, from those of a large variety of instruments, and also to produce numerous combinations involving a plurality of such tone effects. Another important use for this instrument is that of a dumb keyboard for students' practice."

The Choralcelo had a motor-generator to produce 30 volts of DC, and the interruptor mechanism, which initially consisted of nine cylinders of brass, geared to rotate at designated speeds. The surface of each had eight tracks, with one having one extra to make up the 73 notes excited electrically. On these tracks, which were 1/4" wide, rode sterling silver brushes, designed so that they could easily be replaced when they wore down. The tracks they rode on had a make-and-break configuration, in which every other segment was set in with enamel, a non-conductor, while the alternates were the brass of the cylinder itself, which was live. The cylinders were 3 1/2" long, and the assembly was integral with the magnetic clutch/governing mechanism, driven by a moderate sized motor.

One of the complications to electrical paraphernalia in that era was the great

variety of power used in various locations. The Choralcelo company had to issue blueprints for wiring the instrument for localities that were using DC, AC, three phase AC, 2 phase 3 wire AC, 3 phase AC, 2 phase 4 wire, and also where double mechanisms are used on DC, or double mechanisms on single phase AC. The last of these blueprints is dated 4/25/1918. This machinery was located remotely, usually in the basement, and connected via cables to the instrument.

Archives state that Wilber E. Farrington was urged to hear the new instrument by a friend, a Colonel Ware, about 1905.

Here was another unique individualist who would figure prominently in the development of the Choralcelo and its subsequent vicissitudes, for the rest of his life. He was of the family which owned the Farrington Manufacturing Company, of Boston, making items such as fabric-covered eyeglass cases, Charge-a-Plate credit cards, and also razor cases for the King C. Gillette Company. His father was Alanson W. Farrington, and Wilber, born in 1869, was the eldest of five children. He and his friend Ware were both members of the Christian Science church, and he had sung in the choir as a boy. Mrs. Farrington remembered that he loved beauty in all its forms, and that he had a fine collection of carpets; also that he was much interested in the philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson as a young lad growing up.

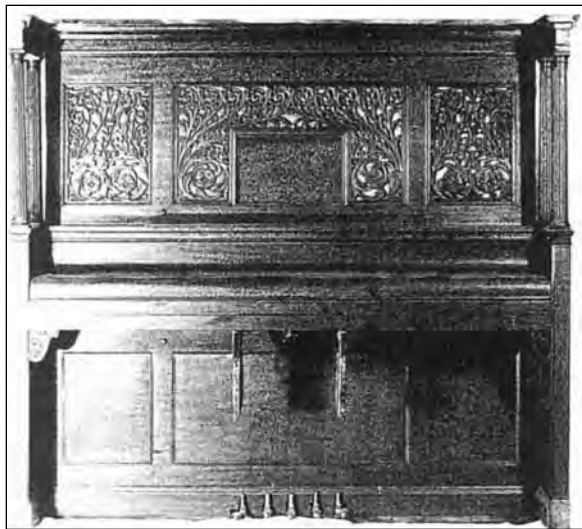
Farrington and his friend went to Watertown, Massachusetts to hear the new instrument, and found the inventors secretive about the method of obtaining the sustained tone from piano strings without using the hammers. Others were working to develop the same principle, and they feared having their methods stolen. The two men found the unique tone quality beautiful, but Wilber did not act immediately, weighing it over for a year until he felt clearly moved to become involved in the effort. His wife reported that he said it was almost like hearing a voice.

His business address was "Wilber E. Farrington, Bonds and Investment Securities, 100 Boylston Street, Boston and his home, 1514 Beacon Street,

Brookline, Mass. He related that an infusion of funds was necessary for the continued development of the new instrument, and that he proceeded to raise the money, some of which may have been his own. He signed as a witness for one of Severy's patents filed Feb. 1907, a patent revealing the fecundity of the inventor's creative powers... among other ideas covered in this patent was a method of receiving musical sounds from a telephone receiver. Records indicate that there was a concert in Symphony Hall in 1909. The location of the principal office was 33 Broad Street.



Wilber E. Farrington



Single manual Choralcelo # 17X with superbly carved openwork panels backed by silk, and the finest mahogany veneer.

#B 17 X Console  
Early 1912

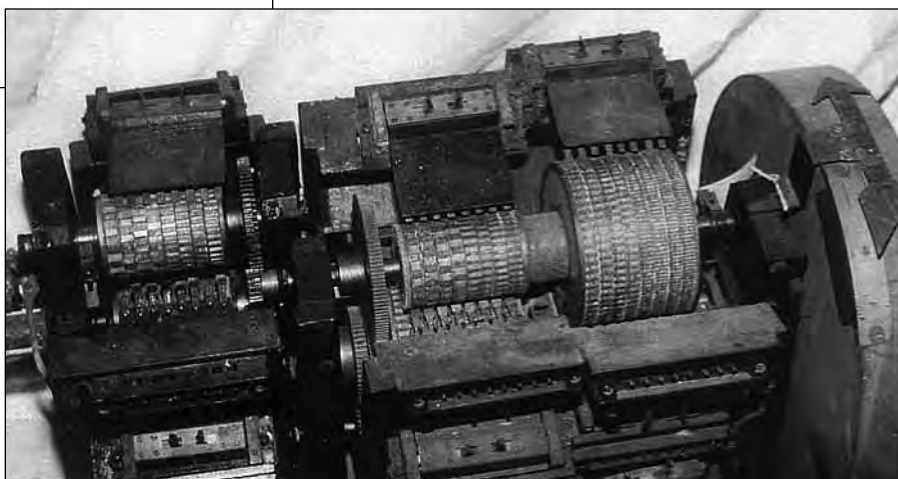




Refinished Dec. 2004



The interrupter mechanism from the single manual Choralcello rescued from a Brookline mansion being razed, and still in that gentleman's possession. It still has its original motor and the original library of Choralcello rolls, was still with the instrument. (Picture to right)



## PHASE II... THE TWO MANUAL MASTER INSTRUMENT WITH PEDALBOARD AND SELECTED REMOTE AUXILIARY "ECHOES" OR ATTACHMENTS.

By 1914, the Choralcello had metamorphosed into a highly articulate instrument capable of amazing tonal effects through the unique, newly-invented bar units.

Typical remote attachments, or units, consisted of sets of tuned wood, aluminum, or steel plates, for example, activated also by the interruptor mechanism via electromagnets, and these bars or plates had tubular resonators suspended over them to amplify the tone. The same technique of switching periodicities sent to the magnets in order to derive

variations in tone was still used, but now that the control was by means of stop tablets, there had to be a warning tablet next to the stops cautioning the musician not to use more than one tone quality on a stop at a time. (Of course, such a warning was not necessary with

the single manual instruments, because with the slider it was impossible to make this mistake.) (Picture above top right)

(bottom) Stop tablets of H 156, Lake Mohonk. Note the warning tablet to the left... This referred to II String, which had four possible voices, and the





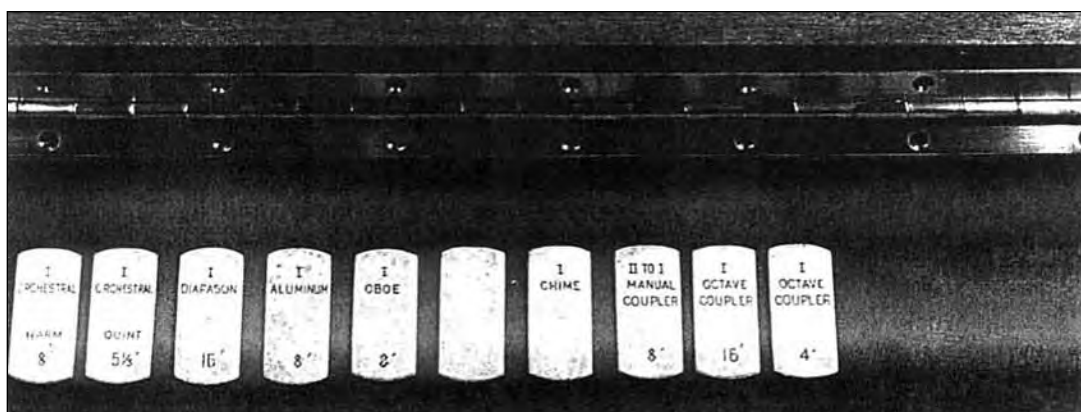
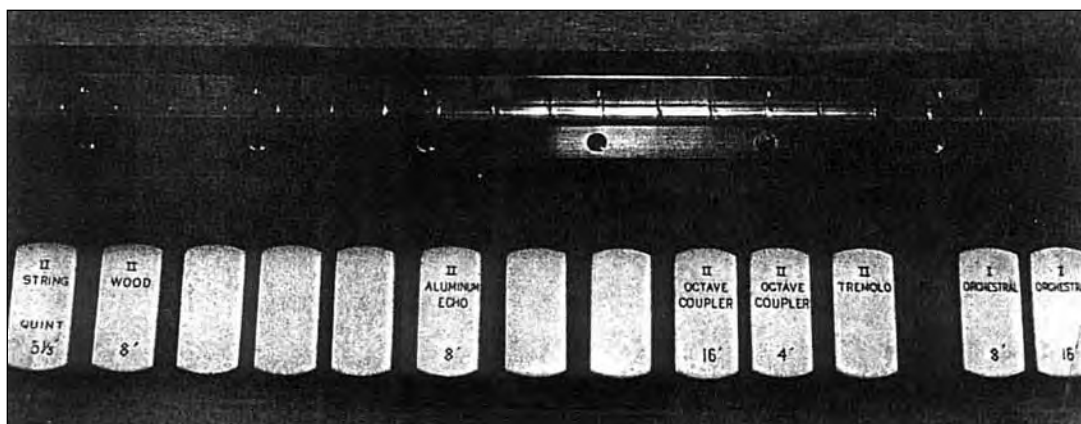
orchestral, which had five. (One is not visible in the photo, the harmonic 4'.) Each derivative sends pulses to the note not its natural periodicity, and putting on two stops is warned against.

"Wood" refers to the wood bar unit. Aluminum echo is the one up in the turret overhead. Organists are usually bemused as to the meaning.. ("What's an aluminum stop?") (Top right)

This aluminum bar is the one in the balcony. (Bottom right)

The "Orchestral" unit had five sound qualities. One, the harmonic 4', does not show in the picture. The instruction manual, issued 90 years ago to the Lake Mohonk Mountain House and through their own meticulous filing process, still miraculously in existence, describes what must be this particular unit... it evidently furnished two notes from one ribbon steel, and both ends had to be tuned to arrive at this result, it sometimes being necessary to go back and fine tune the first portion. There are also "chains" mentioned in this unit... evidently it did not come up to expectations and was taken out to be replaced by the remote string, which was merely an augmentation of the strings in the main console, for added strength of mass effect. It must have been a great strain on the company financially to go so far in developing a remote unit which seemed promising and after producing it to find it was not going to be a success after all.

On the subject of stop names, when the next generation of Choralcelos were designed, the stops for the "Wood" and "Aluminum" units were given the designations "Instrument I" and "Instrument II". Other stops were given more traditional pipe organ terminology and were preset at the factory to connect the appropriate overtones. Now the magnets for specific notes were always fed the proper number of pulses of DC for that particular note and never forced to respond to interrupted current normally sent to a note an octave above or below, for example, or higher up for a quint.



At this time George Fiske was the head engineer and he would be the one to remedy the situation if the tone faded away during a demonstration. Mikarl Scuterud was another of the employees, and his brother Harold joined the force too, in time. H. Hanscom was the head draftsman in the blueprint department.

George Sinclair was a very quiet, even-tempered man, able to work in harmony with his brilliant brother-in-law. Melvin Severy's grandson relates that his grandfather feared thought transference when he was concentrating on an invention.

Toward the end of 1910 another personage who would be an enduring force in the work came into it... Regene Weiler, a talented young musician who had studied piano at the New England Conservatory and at that point was also studying art. Her uncle owned Oettinger's Boston Music Store where he dealt in fine early violins that he purchased on trips to Europe, and devotees of the violin would gather in a side room to examine the various instruments and try them out, even to early instruments like the Viola da Gamba.

William Lyman Johnson, who happened to be in charge of the music

roll division of the Choralcelo Company, was a friend of her uncle. It happened that her uncle mentioned the Choralcelo to his niece, and asked her if she would like to hear it. Miss Weiler related, "a group of us went down at night after hours into the Colonial building and Mr. Johnson played the instrument with the records(rolls)... and I thought I was in another world; I thought, 'Now that is what the great composers heard when they composed; they must have heard this music from another world.' Not too long after that Mr. Johnson called me and asked me if I'd like to come in and learn to play this instrument."

And although she was doing very creditably with her painting at the time, she did just that. In 1912 she went to the Choralcelo studio in New York City, where she played at Holland House and at the Belmont Hotel. Another young woman who had studied to become a Choralcelist, Rachel Orcutt, was playing at the Belmont at the same time. One of the Choralcelo technicians, Sewall Cabot, who would have a great influence on the development of the instrument, did some work on the instrument at that time.

During this time, experiment and development was going on. There was a

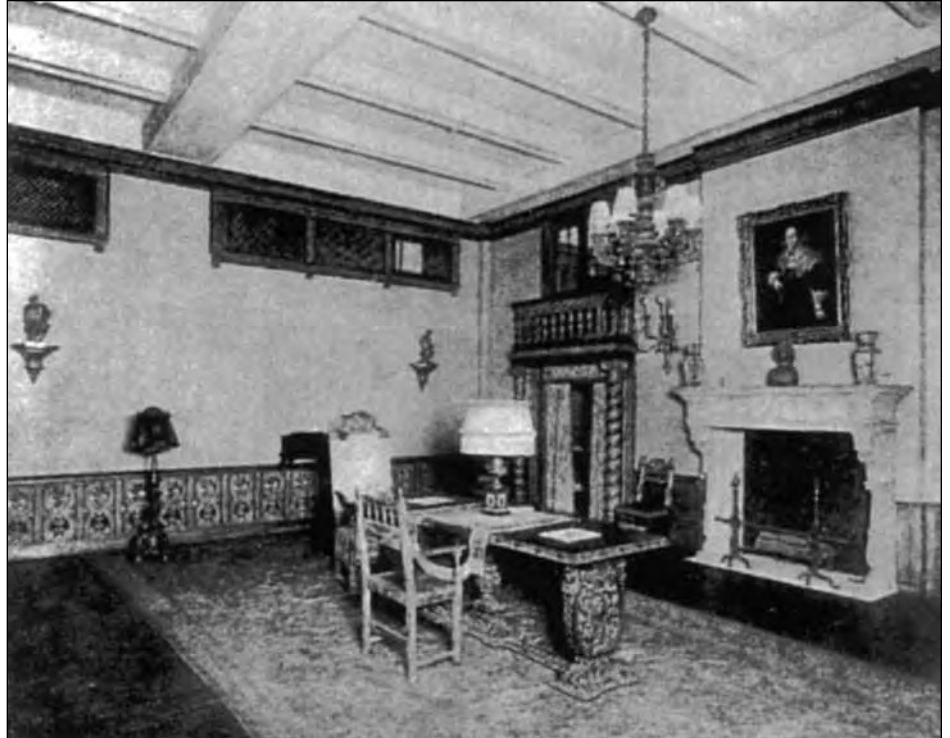
feeling that the instrument was on the threshold of unimaginable and unlimited possibilities for this completely new concept of tone production without physical contact. The console of the instrument was enlarged to provide two keyboards; the full piano keyboard of 88 notes, the lower manual, and an organ keyboard of 63 keys, the upper. It still would have a player mechanism unless ordered without one.

There would be a concave and radiating 32 note pedal board as in a pipe organ. The lower piano manual would operate as in the single manual instruments, only now, with the pedal board for the feet, the piano sustaining action would have to be accomplished by the right knee swell. As in earlier models, the damper action would have to have a supplementary electric action for when the keys were disengaged from the action, so that the dampers would still work.

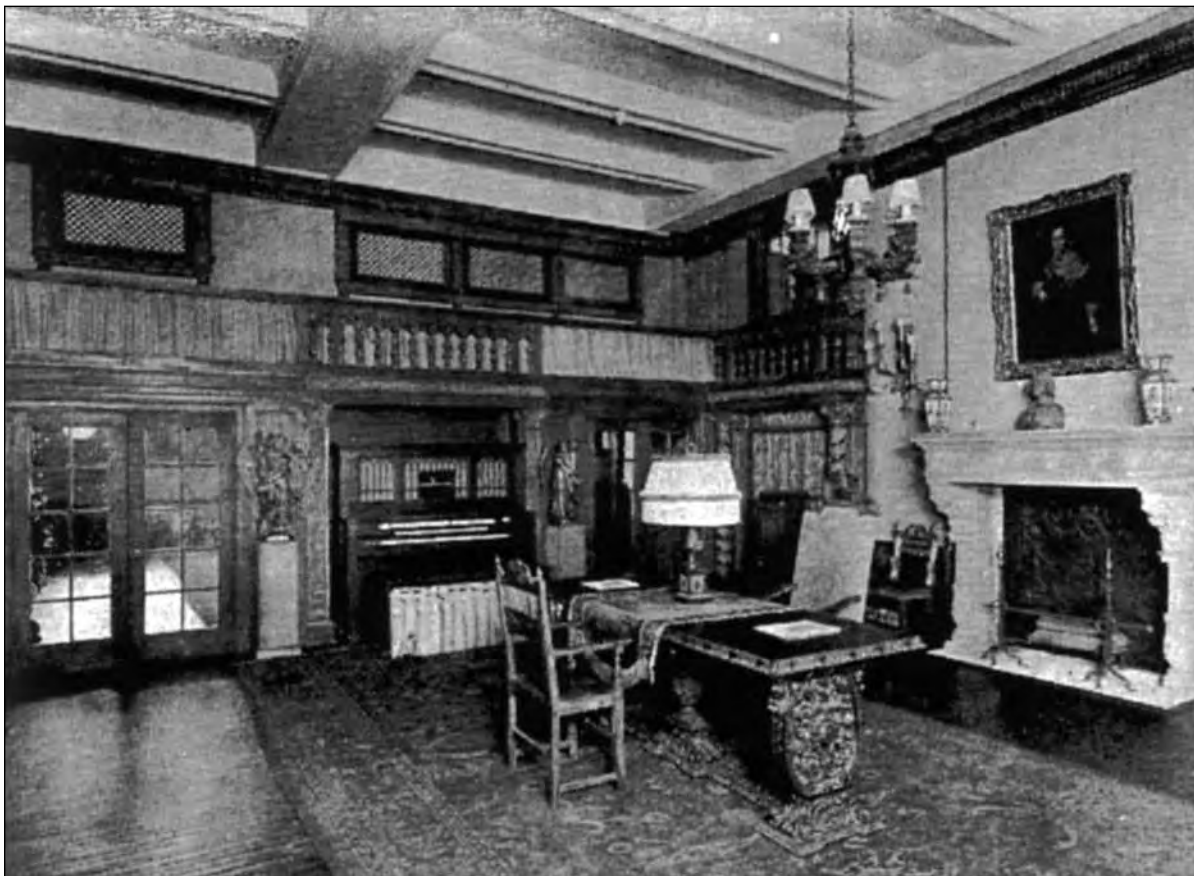
Experimental work was done on deriving tone from metal bars magnetically, with superb results. The unit of steel bars, of graduated lengths such as one sees in a xylophone, containing 49 notes or steel bars from

19 1/2" long to 5 1/2" long had magnets placed under them, and positioned over each one was a fiber tube open at each end and of graduated lengths and circumferences to augment the volume of the tone. Later on an additional 11 bars were

added at the treble end so that the upper harmonics would not run out too soon, when the wiring was revised to allow for harmonic manipulation.



*The room before installation of the Choralcelo*



*The Choralcelo demonstration studio in New York City prior to both WWI and WWII*



*The mirrored French doors to the right of the console swung open to show the bar units*

At the factory at 34 Farnsworth Street, Boston, marvels were unfolding. The Choralcelo was metamorphosing into a stunning new instrument. Experiments in deriving tone from magnetically

vibrating flat bars of steel or other material were producing auxiliary units like the one below-bottom left, which has aluminum bars with small iron armatures fastened underneath to react with the magnets, since aluminum does not. The unit is six feet tall and has 41 notes, the aluminum bars varying from 10 1/2 to 5 3/4 inches in length. The square wooden resonators are open at both ends and do not touch the bars, but are for sound reinforcement only. Usually tubular fiber resonators are used, but this particular unit was high in a turret over a grilled opening in the center of a spacious auditorium at Lake Mohonk, New York, and therefore was not enclosed in any way.

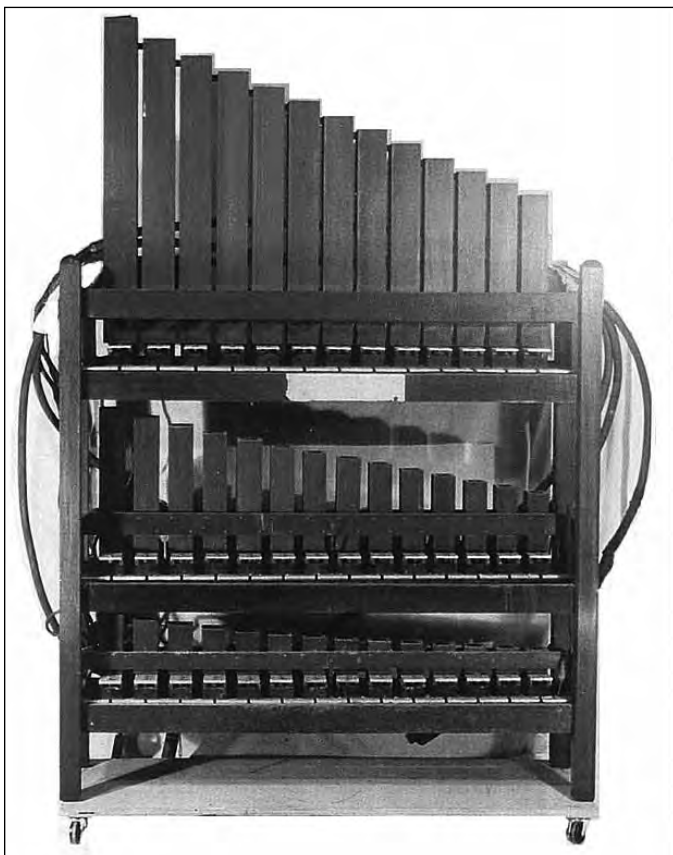
The bars had tuning weights at the ends, in elongated slots, for individual tuning, because, as in the piano strings, absolute synchronicity was critical. Even the resonators had adjustable vanes at the tops for voicing.

A typical wood bar unit, with the more common fiber tube resonators. (below right) The wood bars are

chemically treated under pressure for stability. There has never been any indication whatsoever that "hard and soft woods" were used. There are several articles on the instrument on the Internet which have been there for quite some time, but they are generally unreliable and filled with inaccuracies. One warning sign is when the name is spelled "Choralcello" with a double "l". Another article was written by the daughter of an original Choralcelist and is interesting reading, but it is of course only second hand, and the rather vague reminiscences are those of a young girl musician and do not present the actual instrument itself factually.

The unit is four feet four inches in height. It has repp cloth panels on finished hardwood frames which close it in, as it was in the balcony at Lake Mohonk and therefore was in public view.

Glass bars also were experimented with but it is not known to what extent they may have been used. One of the men involved in the work stated that the longest glass bars were three feet long, and that the resonating tubes could be as long as five feet, for the lowest notes. He also mentions that these tubes might have been closed at one end. He remembered at least one occasion when one of the bars broke when it was being played and a new one had to be prepared, so it may be that the glass bar units, or "echoes" as



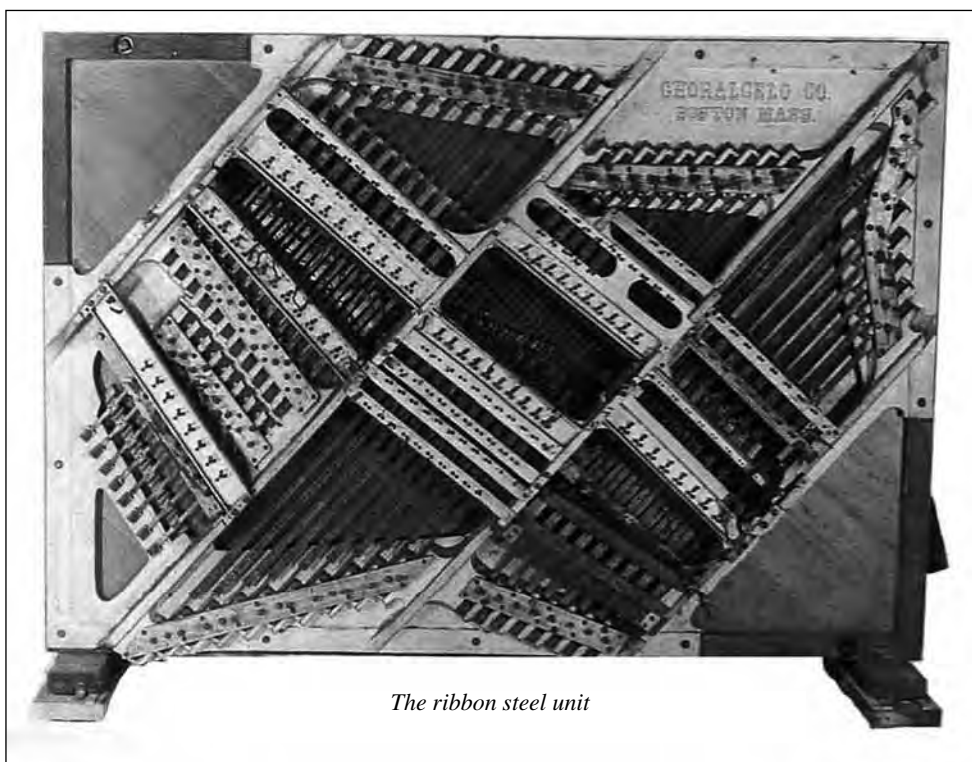
the company sometimes called the bar units, were not issued, although there is one report by the daughter of another Choralcelist of having seen one instrument which did have a glass unit.

In July of 1918, Sewall Cabot applied for a patent on a novel new type of resonator which was fixed to the vibrating bar and was open only at the top, creating what one might call a type of loud speaker for each note. It proved to be more powerful than the resonators which had heretofore been used. The patent was granted in 1927.

What seemed to be a fairly standard configuration was the console with the piano strings, and a steel, an aluminum, and a wood unit. There was also a larger size bass steel bar unit for the pedals, with larger resonators. The console for these large instruments had a number of stop tabs to control the play of the various components, and the contact rollers and remote relays which were controlled from the console were installed in two cabinets which were placed in the basement along with the motor generator set and the interruptor mechanism, and the blower for the player mechanism as well, and the lines were fed through the floor to the console. The remote units of tuned bars could be situated in the basement as well, and speak through grills to the music room, where

the only thing visible would be the console, or the bar units could be concealed in the room itself, in whatever manner the owner wished to harmonize with the existing woodwork.

If everything but the console was placed in the basement in this manner, all of the equipment of the Choralcelo would take up the space of a modest bedroom, roughly.



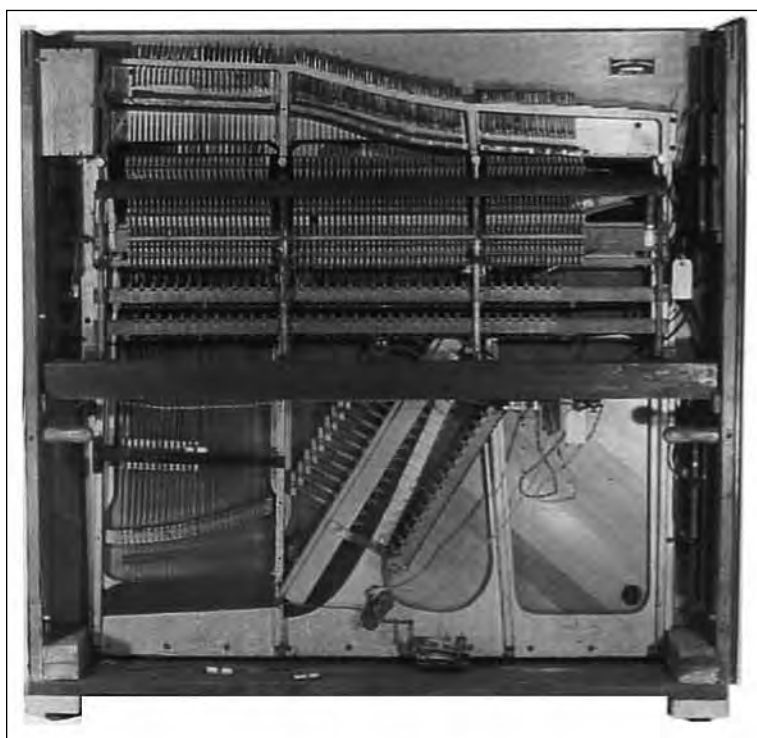
*The ribbon steel unit*

Another remote unit was the auxiliary string, which in effect was a repetition of the strings in the console for added mass effect. It was a full upright instrument and played all 73 of the Choralcelo tones, and had magnetic dampers but no permanent keyboard, although it did have a detachable tuning keyboard which could be attached to aid in tuning ... tuning the strings was done with heavy hammer blows to set the temperament and stay in tune longer.

Of course, in this instance the piano hammers would not be used in playing, but were only for tuning. Also, the sustaining mechanism to lift all the dampers would have to be performed remotely.

Another experimental sounding unit was the ribbon steel unit, in which the tone was derived from a thin tuned band of steel, as the name indicates, instead of the three piano strings of a standard piano. This had 66 notes and had three soundboards arranged in zig-zag fashion with soundposts connecting them. One has to marvel at the complexity of the cast iron bedplate, which has multi-levels for the cross strung ribbons and added superstructures for the dampers.

The engineering and drafting for this structure alone would have been very costly. In fact, the entire effort is herculean in its scope... to develop a



*5' 4" high  
5' 8" wide  
18" deep*

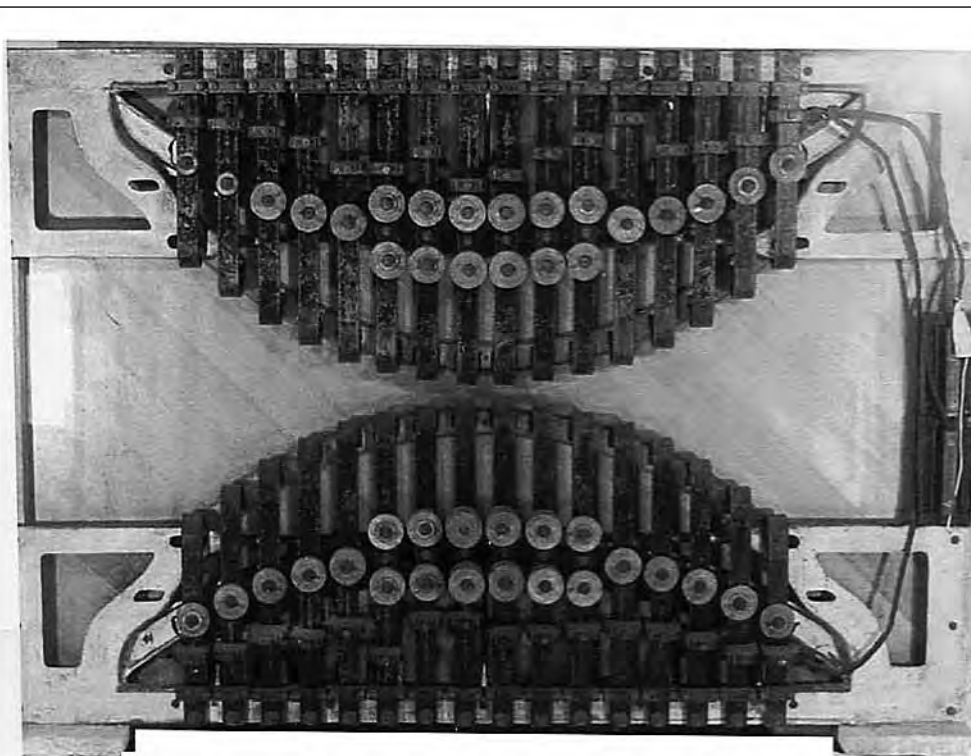


totally new instrument of this complexity and of unique principles throughout in such a short time challenges the imagination... besides the initial inventive genius required and the state of the art ability requisite in the drafting and blueprint stages, the machining and casting bespeak prodigious effort and investment. In examining the instruments still in existence, one cannot help but notice that there seem to be so many variations in layout; everyone requiring the casting of a new type of bedplate, for all the units were built on a cast iron base designed just for that particular format.

(Top previous page) The ribbon steel unit. With one flat steel ribbon per note, it was necessary to adjust only one tuner per note, instead of the three screws necessary for the three individual strings of the Mason-Hamlin style screw tuning in the piano strings in the main console. There are no hammers in the ribbon steel unit, but there are dampers, electrically operated. The unit is four feet high, five feet eight inches wide, and eighteen inches deep. It has three ribbed piano soundboards, arranged in zig-zag fashion, with soundposts connecting them. Sixty-six notes.

One of the most intriguing and beautiful sounding of the remote auxiliary units was the double bass, above. It produces 32 notes from the curved steel bars tuned by heavy lead weights, and has five piano soundboards, ribbed and in zig-zag configuration, and connected by multiple soundposts. It sounds, as Mrs. Farrington put it, "like a battery of bass viols." It must have been expensive to produce, although that never seemed to deter the Choralcelo Company, but she did say, too, that most of these large instruments had the steel bar bass.

In speaking of the cost of the instruments, she stated that the owners paid twelve thousand dollars for them, and as she went on, "Even that didn't cover it." In 1915 the average hourly wage was twenty-four cents. In the year 2000, the average hourly wage was \$13.74. Converting to modern dollars,

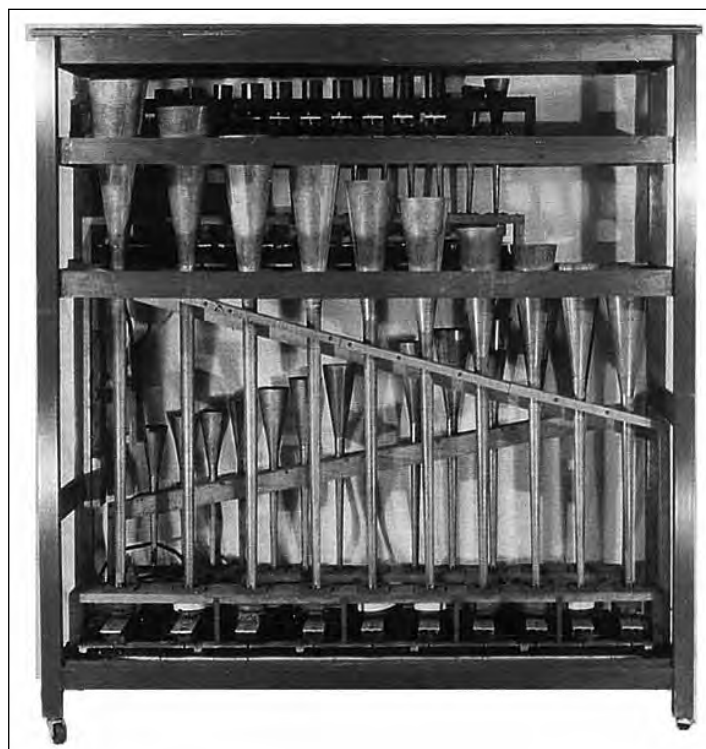


5' 9" wide, 4' high, 28" deep

one can easily understand why the instruments so often were installed in wealthy estates, or in theaters where the daily take would pay for them. Some instruments were installed in churches, two are known to have been installed on yachts, one in Mount St. Mary's, a large Catholic-retreat and curative rest resort at Niagara Falls... this was an unusually extensive and striking installation ... and a few in other locations.

Experiments were done on an oboe unit but when the redesign invented by Cabot took place at about this time, it was found possible to create synthetic oboe tone by the use of the new harmonic principles advanced by von Helmholtz's book, "The Sensations of Tone."

Severy and Sinclair worked on a reed application also but that was not continued. Cathedral chimes were occasionally requested, in which case conventional Deagan church chimes were provided. This unit had twenty notes and was sounded by Hammers powered by electromagnets.





The inlaid console on the cover of this publication was provided with a xylophone and a glockenspiel as well.

Given the level of development of electrical engineering at that time, the inventors and engineers had to invent and manufacture components that were necessary in the building of the instruments. A case in point is the condenser, which reduced sparking at the silver brush tips and thus prolonged their life, and also improved the tone produced from the components. The company made them individually by hand. Two strips of aluminum were tightly wound into a cylindrical shape, with blotting paper in between to separate the layers. Each strip was left with a tab protruding

to hook up to the circuits.

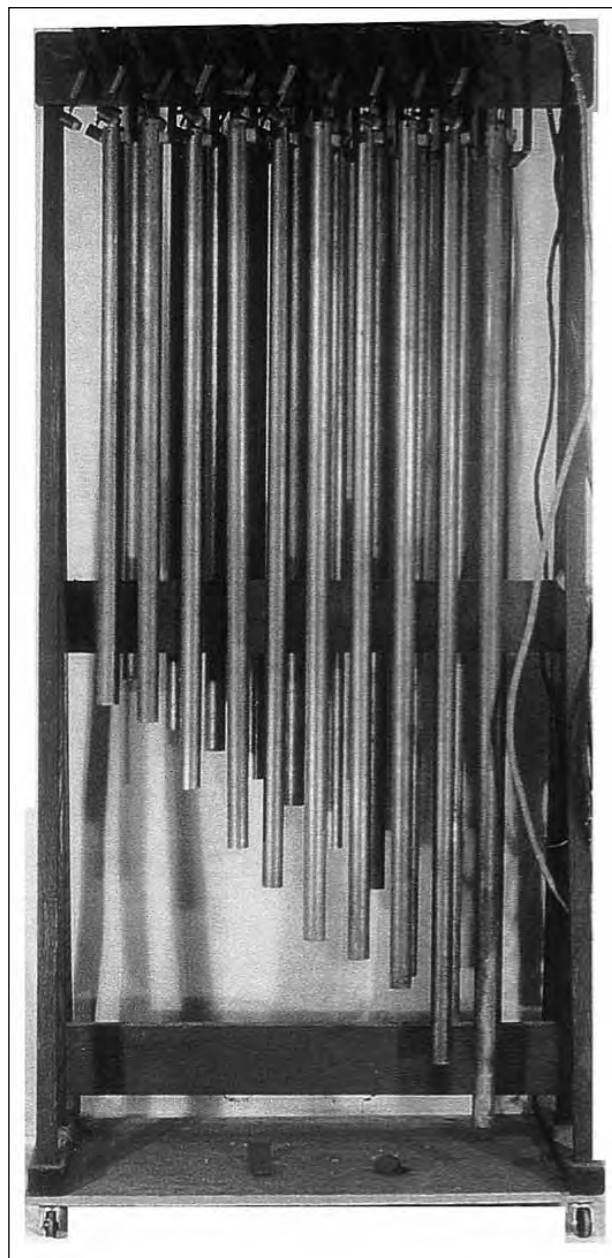
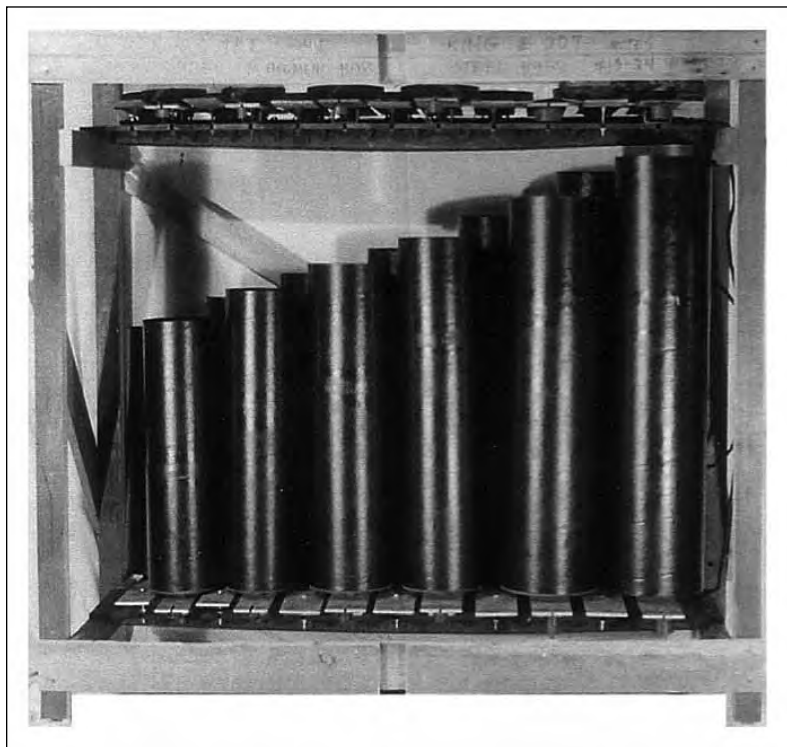
The whole was wound tightly around a short glass tube, the end of which also was left to protrude at one end. It was wound with electrician's tape and sealed with black waterproofing. The electrolyte could be introduced through the glass tube, which had a minuscule cork provided to close it. *(Top left)* Below is a picture of one of the largest ones, and they stepped down in five or six sizes, to the shortest.

The glass tube can be seen at the right end, with the tiny cork in it. Each aluminum tab at the ends of the unit connects to one of the two aluminum strips with the electrolyte-soaked blotting paper separating them. Later on when

they were available, the company used commercial wax paper radio condensers.

Cathedral chimes from Lake Mohonk... were installed remotely overhead with one of the aluminum units to be played as an echo through the grillwork in the ceiling as described elsewhere. *(below right)*

Steel bar bass with resonating tubes. *(below left)* Two of these units were paired together thus having the same notes at the same pitch, giving more power to the bass. This would have been much less expensive to manufacture than the double bass from the Lake Mohonk instrument, with the five soundboards. However, that bass played down to the lowest Choralcelo note, # 1, while



the steel bar bass did not go quite that low.

Wilber Farrington's son, Lawrence, provided data that his father had, in 1914, sent information to "Who's Who in New England" for their 1915 edition that he is "also president of Choralcelo Company, Boston and New York."

In 1906 the capital stock was increased from one to two million, and again in 1914, to ten million.

One of the most interesting of the instruments built at this time was installed in 1914 in St. Mary's Hospital, Niagara Falls, New York. The console was installed in the balcony of the chapel, where the nuns would play it, and there were "echoes", as the company called the remote units, throughout the building in the hallways, where they would play whatever music was being played on the main console. There were no fewer than eight of these remote units, probably remote strings, since they would have the same range that the master console had.

Another significant instrument was # 156, installed in September of 1915 at the Lake Mohonk Mountain House, New Paltz, New York, a resort high in the

mountains and at that time, closed in the winter. The instrument was a gift to "Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Smiley by many of their grateful conference guests" as the engraved brass plaque on the instrument states. The reference was to the Lake Mohonk conferences on "International Arbitration" and of "Friends of the Indian and other Dependent Peoples." Miss Martha E. Pettit and Mr. Kenneth Shaw Usher were the Choralcelists, and there were also a soprano, a tenor, and a pianist.

Some of the selections, to give a glimpse of the recital choices of the day, were "Caprice Viennois" and "liebesfreud" by Kreisler, Communion in G Major, Batiste; La Cinquantaine, Gabriel-Marie; Hymn St. Cecilia, Gounod; Ave Maria, Bach; Valse Lente, Delibes; Scherzo, Mendelssohn; Prelude to "Parsifal" and Pilgrim's Chorus from Tannhauser, Wagner; Berceuse from "Jocelyn", Godard; Barcarolle, Tchaikowsky; Largo, Handel; The Swan, Saint-Saens. The instrument was installed in a very large Victorian Parlor with a very high ceiling and a lofty balcony stretching all across one wall, over the entry door. The console was

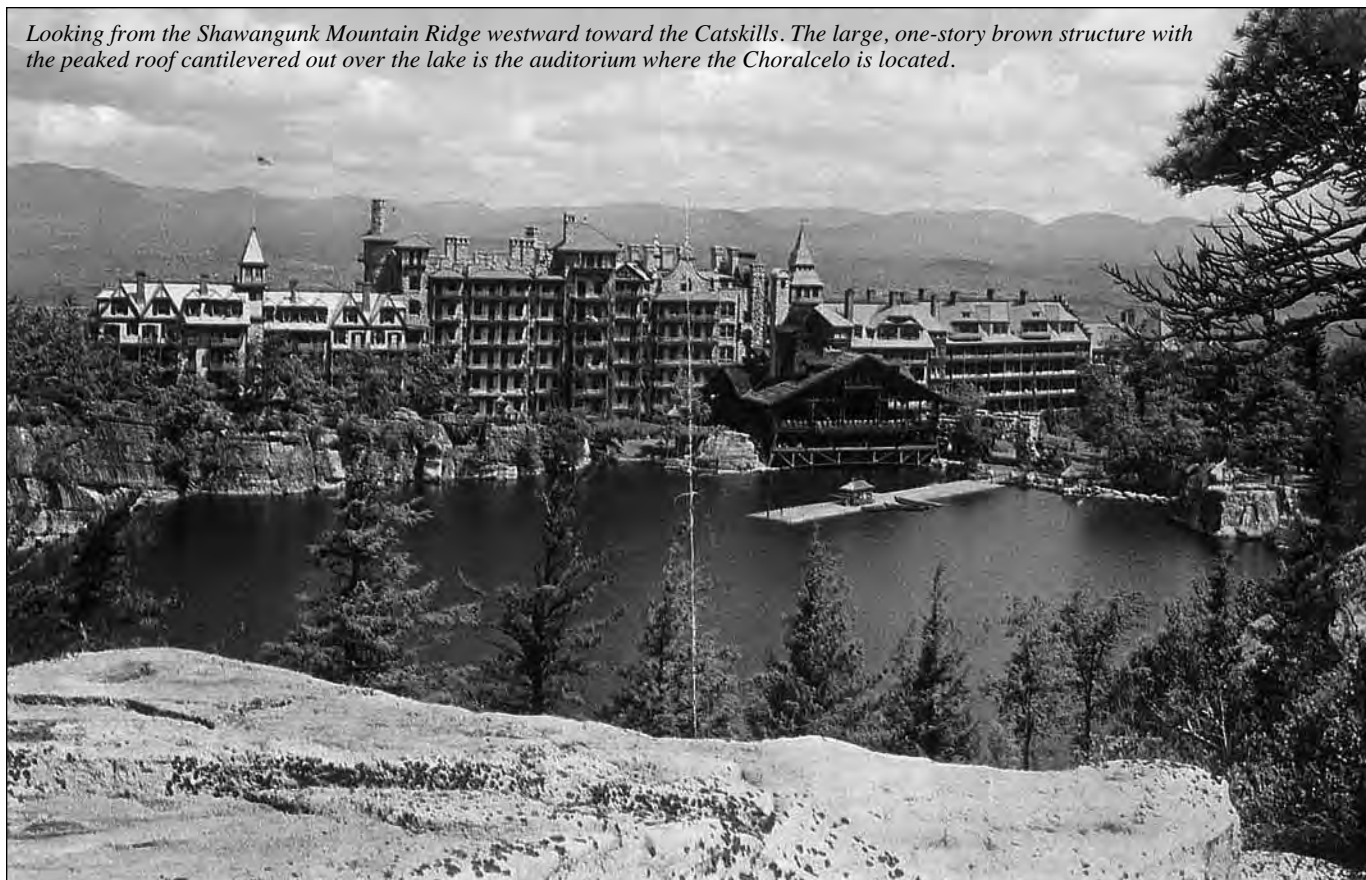
placed against the left side wall as one entered. There was no player mechanism ordered. This huge structure was built cantilevered out over the lake so that there is no basement under it.

The heavy main cable, as large as one's wrist and containing 500 wires, was run inside the wall, up to the overhead, and entirely back into the interior of the main building, where it was run through the elevator shaft and entirely down into a sub basement, where the interruptor mechanism, the motor-generator, and the two control cabinets were. This main cable was armored (covered with woven wire strands tightly interlaced to keep the sheaf of color-coded wires inside from damage). Then cables were run back up to the balcony mentioned earlier, and all the playing remote units, or "echoes", were placed against the back wall.

There was a wood unit, two aluminum units, a remote string unit, an early experimental oboe unit, and the big five-soundboard double bass unit. Since these were all exposed to public view, they were all enclosed in panels of monk's cloth in nicely finished frames.

In the center of the high ceiling was an openwork grill opening upwards

*Looking from the Shawangunk Mountain Ridge westward toward the Catskills. The large, one-story brown structure with the peaked roof cantilevered out over the lake is the auditorium where the Choralcelo is located.*





**THE RESIDENCE OF HENRY L. BRITTAIN, ESQ. - GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT**  
*One of the largest Choralcelo installations is being built for this beautiful home. Units in the cupola will serve as an echo in the house, and their tones can be controlled to float softly or majestically over the entire estate and the surrounding country.*



**THE HOME OF ROBERT V. V. SEWELL, ESQ., - OYSTER BAY, LONG ISLAND**  
*The Choralcelo is installed in both the house and the gardens*

into a ventilating turret. The inventive installation department of the Choralcelo company installed an aluminum bar unit and a full set of 20 cathedral chimes in this turret so the sound would come down through the decorative grill in the ceiling as a remote echo. Eventually a choralcelist, Rachel Orcutt, of Abington, Mass., was hired to play it, and a romance developed with the Smiley's son, and they were married ...and so she played the instrument for close to fifty years. Mr. Smiley was very fond of the instrument and they went to great lengths to keep it serviced, even eventually having their own die made to stamp out their own sterling silver brushes, so it was kept playing into the sixties.

Finally, after fifty years of service, it was put into storage. Fortunately, it has survived.

It is with full appreciation of the remarkably soothing effect of music on the mind and nerves that provision was made in the planning of the building for the installation of the Choralcelo. This wonderful musical instrument is the

first of its kind ever installed in such a institution as Mount St. Marys. The Choralcelo marks a distinct epoch in the history of music. It is claimed to produce the first faultlessly pure tone the human ear has ever heard. The string, reed or other sonorous body is vibrated through the agency of electricity and thus without contact gives off perfect synthetic tones. Every possible gradation of quality and loudness is readily obtained. So varied are the capabilities of this remarkable instrument that it has not only the flexibility, range and volume of a great pipe organ, but it produces also violin and piano music, either separately or



together, giving in the latter case an altogether charming orchestral effect.

The Choralcelo at Mount St. Mary's consists of a master instrument and eight subsidiary instruments or "echoes," as they are called, placed in various parts of the building, thus at will flooding with celestial harmony the entire structure or any selected part of it.

The Choralcelo alone gives Mount St. Mary's a distinctive position among all similar foundations in this country.

The enclosed cabinet sitting against the wall to the left is one of the remote Choralcelo units, or "echoes" as they were called. These were placed about the establishment and would play whatever was being played on the master console in the balcony of the chapel, and thus the music could be heard in various parts of the building, and on different floors.

[The unit is most likely a remote string. It is closed in by means of cloth panels stretched on polished hardwood frames, as was the practice when units were exposed to view in public places. Ed.]

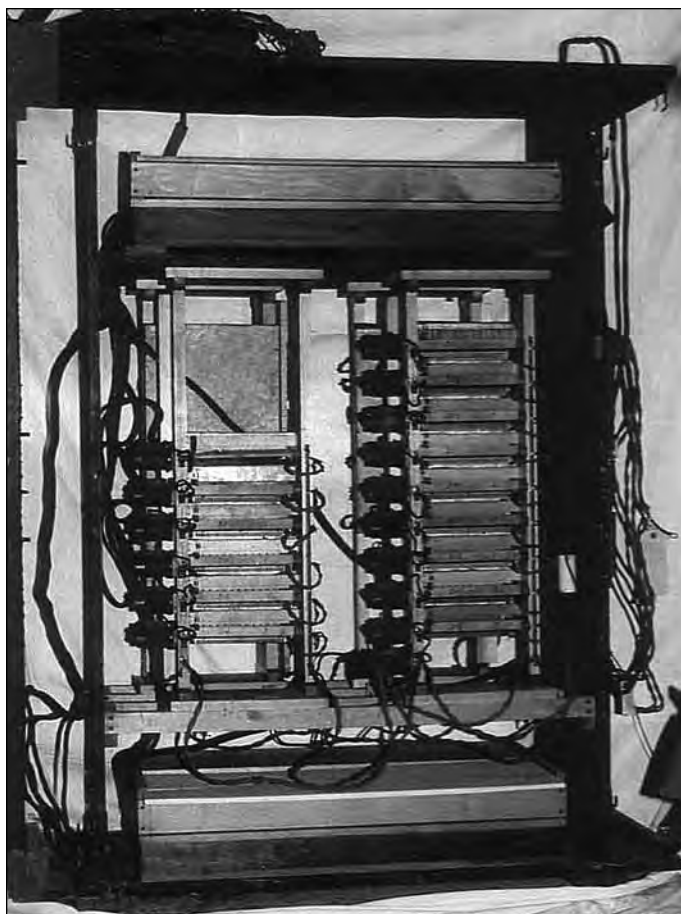
The radically designed wiring permitted limitless tone qualities through control of the upper partials (upper



ONE OF THE ALCOVES

*The new control cabinets as redesigned by Sewall Cabot to control harmonics desired and open up far greater tonal possibilities. The generation of tone was now completely natural and the musician could use any stops desired without any restrictions.*

*One of two remote control cabinets. This one contains the harmonic rollers. The flat chests in the top and bottom contain the remote relays from the contacts of the two manuals in the console. 5' 6" high; 4' 4" wide, 20" deep.*



*Captions for Next Page.*

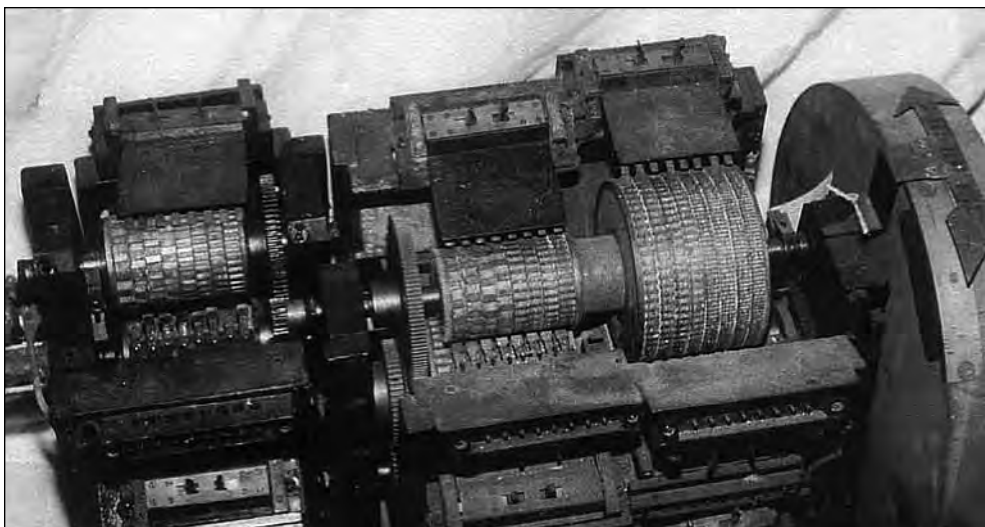
*(Top Photos)*

*Cylinder interruptor mechanism, nine cylinders with 16 brushes riding on each. (One has 18). Each cylinder has two sets of silver brushes. 34" long, 16" high.*

*(Middle Photos)*

*Two views of the original vacuum pump for the player mechanism of the Colorado Springs instrument... the only original vacuum pump known to have survived. It is constructed so that it can vary the volume of vacuum provided according to what is called for by different passages during the playing of the paper roll.*





uncharted territory, with nothing already existing on which to build. They did not know what possibilities might lie ahead, and only further invention and trial could give the answer. Work was done on electromagnetically exciting reeds, but no description of this effort survives.

A unit for use with the two manual instrument was called the ribbon<sup>1</sup> steel, or orchestral unit, and the maintenance manual describes it as having two notes on each tuning screw, so that adjusting one screw would tune two notes, although some further touch-up might be required. "Chains" are spoken of in



harmonics), some pre-set at the factory, some adjustable via the peg board.

### PHASE III THE WIRING AND CONTROL CABINETS REDESIGNED BY SEWALL CABOT

Electromagnets now always fed only the pulsations naturally matching the periodicities of the strings they activate. Harmonics now derived from upper or lower notes, and in three strengths, vastly increasing the tonal capabilities of the instrument and eliminating the need to warn the musician not to use certain combinations of stops. Harmonics were  $1\frac{3}{5}$ ,  $2'$ ,  $2\frac{2}{3}$ ,  $4'$ ,  $8'$ , and  $16'$ , as preset stops, and an adjustable board was also

provided so the musician could set up his own combinations.

By the very next year, 1916, further development greatly expanded the unique Choralcelo via a total revision of the control cabinets.

Once again, one cannot help but ponder the immense accomplishment of the principals over so few years. Their research and development was prodigious... developing a highly sophisticated instrument such as the unique Choralcelo in so few years, relatively speaking... to take a totally new tone producing method, overcome the many daunting technical problems in what was really still the infancy of electricity... it was completely



describing the vibrating bodies, but no further description is given, and the unit was removed subsequently by the Choralcelo Company and the remote string seems to be what replaced it. There was also an experimental oboe unit, with flared zinc resonating pipes at first glance resembling pipe organ pipes. This was superseded by the re-engineered Choralcelo when the control cabinets were fitted with gang switches to connect upper notes which would reinforce the partials, or overtones, as explained elsewhere. Engineering, designing, inventing

Footnote 1 - (The "ribbon steel" described and pictured in this book is not the one mentioned above, and this later one was a success.)



manufacturing all these varieties of auxiliary units demanded staggering sums of money. It is no wonder that a descriptive article on the instrument in 1916 mentioned that it could have been a "king's ransom".

Top and middle photos are recent views taken in 2005 by Art Reblitz of the beautiful ballroom and the unique, fascinating instrument. It is Number 200 [125-M] and is of the latest design. The fireplace is on the wall opposite the console of the instrument.

Two grillworks may be observed set into the floor along the wall where the doorways are. These open to the basement where the bar units are located.

mansion, so that their tones could be heard all over his estate, while at the home of Robert V.V. Sewell the Choralcelo had units in both the house and gardens.



*Choralcelo still in its original location in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and intact, though disconnected. Shown with noted author, Arthur Reblitz*



*View of the beautiful ballroom designed to showcase this unique instrument.*

*The wall facing the one above.*

This was a common arrangement. Otherwise these units could be located right in the music room behind suitable paneling or grillwork to blend with the architecture, or, because they were connected to the control cabinets by flexible cables, anywhere else that the particular location suggested. At Lake Mohonk, they were placed in the balcony, and one of the two aluminum units and the cathedral chimes were placed in the turret over the center grillwork of the high ceilinged Victorian auditorium.

As seen on page 215, the instrument owned by Henry L. Brittain had units high in a cupola of the beautiful



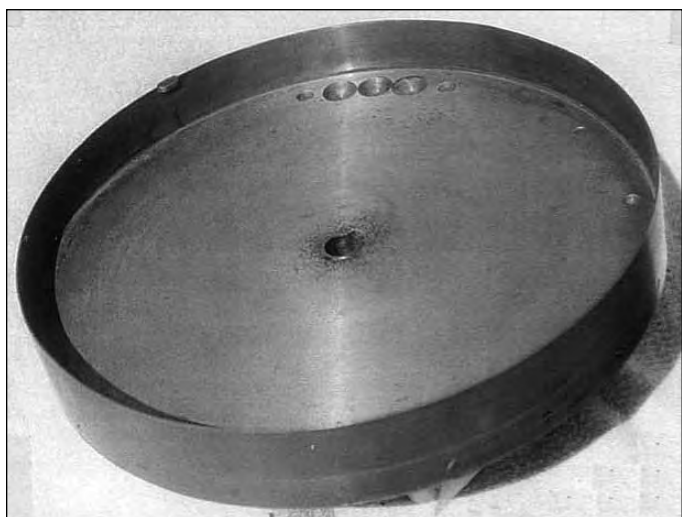


*The mansion in Colorado Springs where the Choralcelo ballroom is located. The owner at the time the ballroom was added on to showcase this beautiful, novel new instrument, was Berne Hopkins. The only Choralcelo known to be still in its original location, in Colorado Springs. The wooden grills, one large and one small, through which the bar units in the basement may be heard, may be seen on the right.*





*The copper band unit which drives the interrupter mechanism.  
Outside view.*



*Inside view. The flywheel of the interrupter mechanism is a large electromagnet. The positive and negative poles are innovatively constructed to be opposite each other with only an eighth inch of space between them. This slot cuts through a ring of holes in the face thus formed of the electromagnet.*

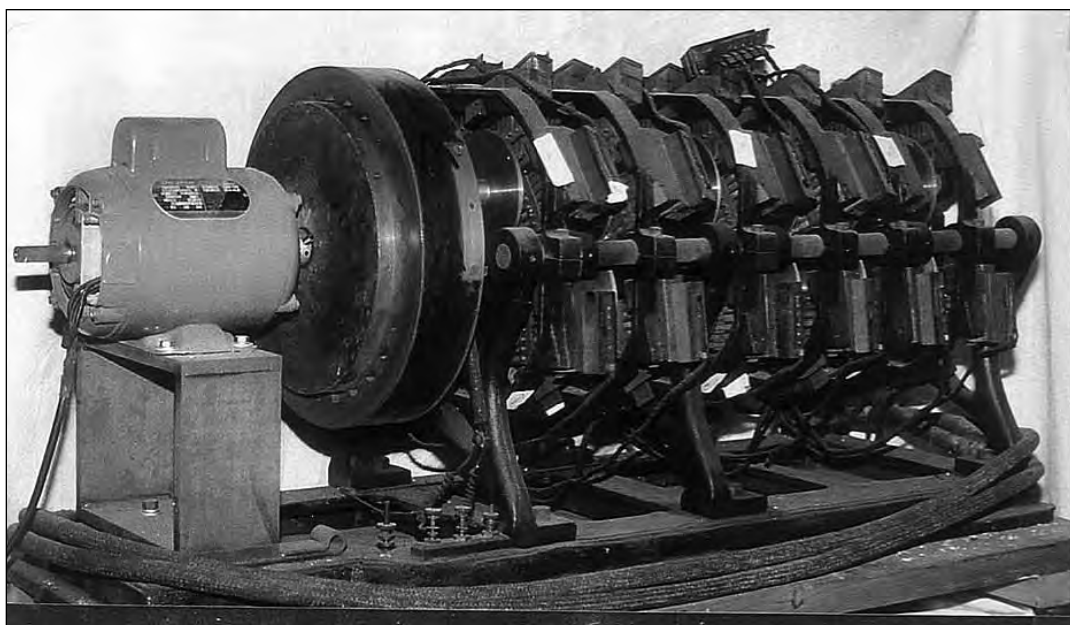
The single disc interruptor has twelve discs, five and one eighth inches in diameter, each with six tracks on it, one with seven for the seventy-third note. This one pictured is a double interruptor with twenty-four discs, built as one unit with the unique Choralcelo magnetic clutch/drive. The double interruptor could handle twice as many auxiliary units as could the single. The small cylinder at the end is the tremulant.

In 1915 Severy and Sinclair left the company for the west coast. Mrs. Farrington relates that they were each paid \$110,000 and given one third of the treasury stock. This was probably for the patents which were assigned to the Choralcelo Company. Severy moved to 431 So. Berendo St., Los Angeles, where he

continued to work on inventions, one an instrument he called the Vocalcelo, and another the Vocalsevro, his son Victor helping him up into the twenties, and ultimately his grandson.

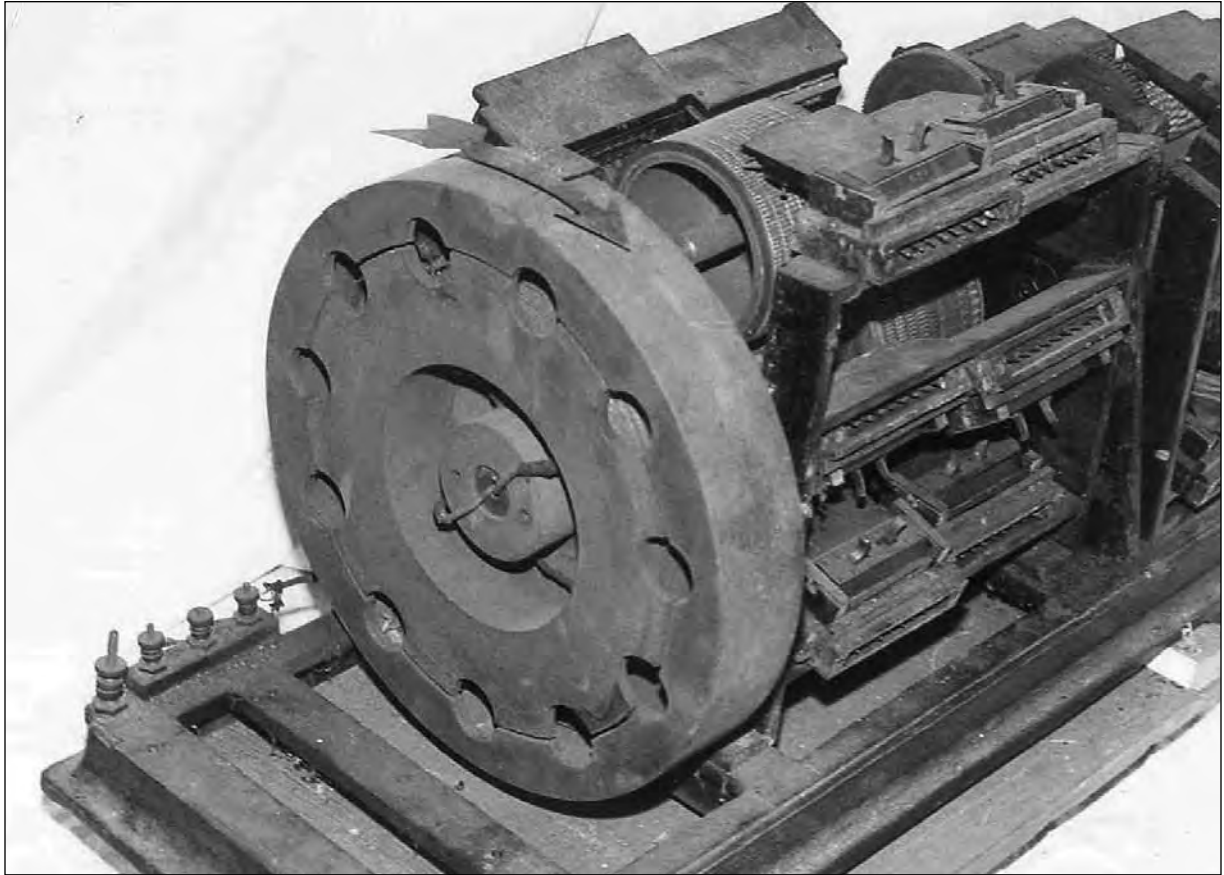
Sinclair and his wife also located in California. Mrs. Farrington relates that after their having made a trip back East, they met a tragic end when they returned to their home in Southern California. It appears that they had used a space heater because of the chill and they were both found asphyxiated at the breakfast table.

Big developments had been going forward at the factory. Sewall Cabot redesigned the wiring of the control cabinets so that harmonic overtones could be coupled at will, opening a vast new range of tone color possibilities. In this system, one could add upper partials 4', 2 2/3', 2', and 1 3/5 , and in three strengths, as well... soft, medium, and loud, by means of resistances in the circuit. Mrs. Farrington relates that she remembers seeing the girls winding the bobbins of resistances in the factory.



*Disc interruptor mechanism*

## Close-up of interrupter mechanism



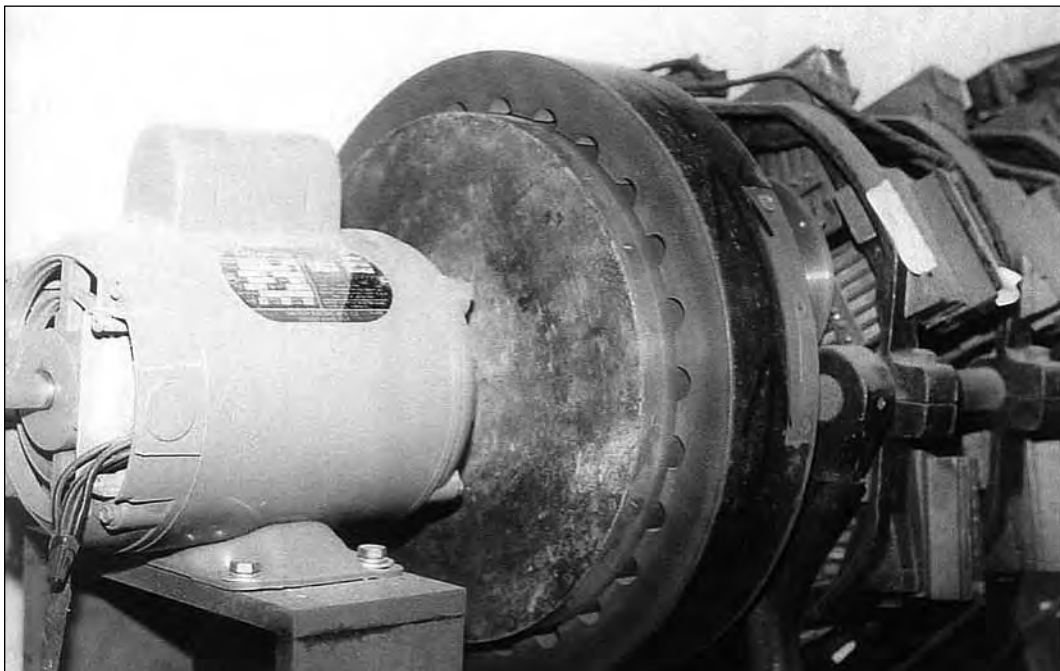
### Interrupter mechanism

This illustration shows the lower half of the ring of holes not visible in the following page. It is a picture of an earlier mechanism in a different

installation, and by chance rotating opposite to the unit on the following page. It also has fewer magnetic ports, perhaps illustrating constant evolution.

What is important is that it reveals what is behind the spinning copper band.

## Close-ups of components in place







The lower half of the ring of holes cannot be seen because of the copper band drive being in place. When the current is turned on, the copper band, which is fastened tightly to the shaft of the electric motor, begins to spin instantly. As it is cutting through the strong magnetic field between the two poles, the resistance causes the heavy flywheel to start to turn too, slowly at first and then faster until it is up to speed, regulated by the make-and-break points in the brass governing box in its rim.

It is absolutely fascinating to watch ... there is no physical contact whatsoever. The copper band just spins silently, touching nothing, and the flywheel follows it. Positively brilliant, because the setup has to function as a slipping clutch so that it can adjust for any variations in the unreliable current of the times. Since there is no contact, there is never any heat generated as there would be in any clutch which is designed to slip constantly... and consequently, no wear, either. It is mesmerizing to watch this phenomenon; almost surreal. The copper band spins in thin air, no contact, and yet it turns the flywheel. There had to be constant slippage instead of fixed locking because of the undependable current of the day.... if this wavered, for example, and slowed down, there had to be reserve magnetic power which could be called on

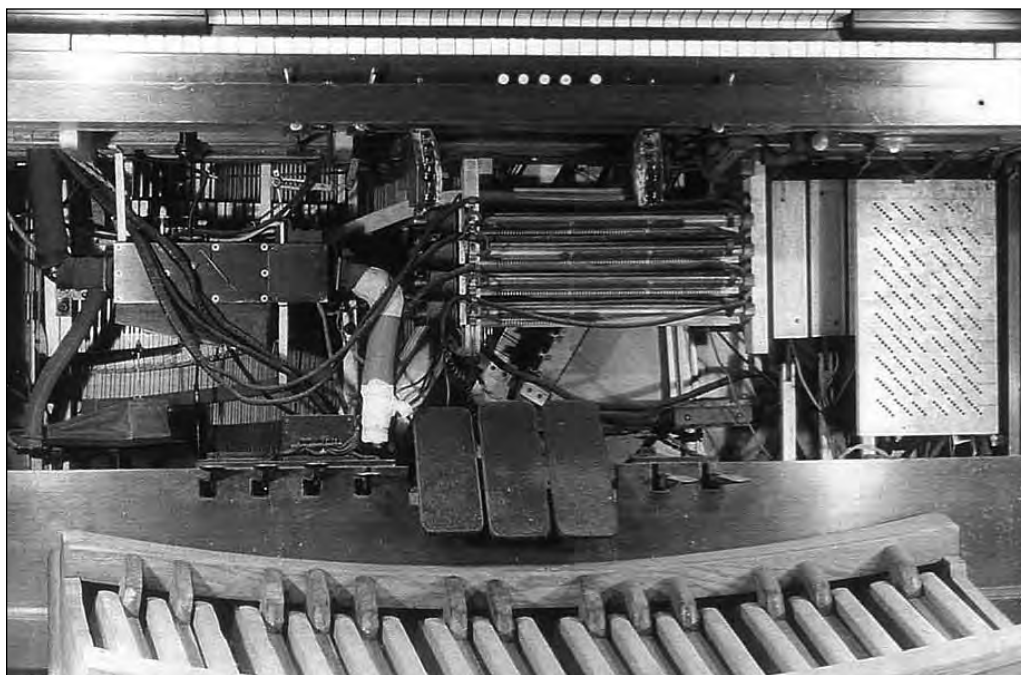
to make the magnetic drive stronger to counteract the drop in power in the main line... and conversely, if the power should increase, the governing mechanism had to have the ability to adjust. This was the huge stumbling block over which Severy labored so long and tried so many designs before finally arriving at this elegantly simple and unique idea. It was a Herculean task to synchronize to the finest degree, the pulses of DC with the vibrations of the already-tuned strings or bars. There could not be one iota of discrepancy. Many millions (in today's money) must have been spent on this gargantuan problem. Out of all these various trials came the idea for fluid drive in the automobile.

The console was redesigned so that the stops would automatically connect to the upper partials needed, and there was added an adjustable board under the right end of the manuals... one had to remove the lower panel over the pedals... and a number of choices could be made by means of small copper set-pins inserted in the appropriate holes in the adjustable board, which was hand lettered with the stop names and the harmonics. He notes that setting the 8' tone at soft, the 4' at loud, the 2 2/3 at loud, the 2' at soft, and the 1 3/5 at soft, will result in the quality of the oboe, and for the clarinet, strong 8' tone, weak octave quint, and weak tierce.

By this new method, a vast array of subtle tone colors was opened up, all from the same set of strings or tuned plates. Ethel Syford, a correspondent for "The New England Magazine" describes it very poetically (The ethereal, liquid quality of the Choralcelo inspired poetry.) "It is as if a color maker should go to the rainbow and draw down into usable form its pure rays, and give these to the painter, who would no longer be compelled to depend upon the accidental colors of various minerals and earths."

On some of the bar units they added an extra octave or more of notes in the treble, so the upper harmonics would not run out so quickly. With the new system of wiring, it was no longer necessary to caution the musician not to use more than one tone quality on a stop. The instrument was no longer forced to respond to frequencies higher than their natural one, so that the tone quality was improved. In the stop nomenclature, the words "wood" and "aluminum" were replaced by "Instrument I" and "Instrument II".

Occasionally; an organist trained on a traditional pipe organ would look over the stop list of the earlier style and ask, "What on earth is an aluminum stop?" Every magnet now was always fed the frequency of electric pulses matching its own natural periodicity... in other words, as in the case of A, if its natural vibration



*Position of the adjustable board.*

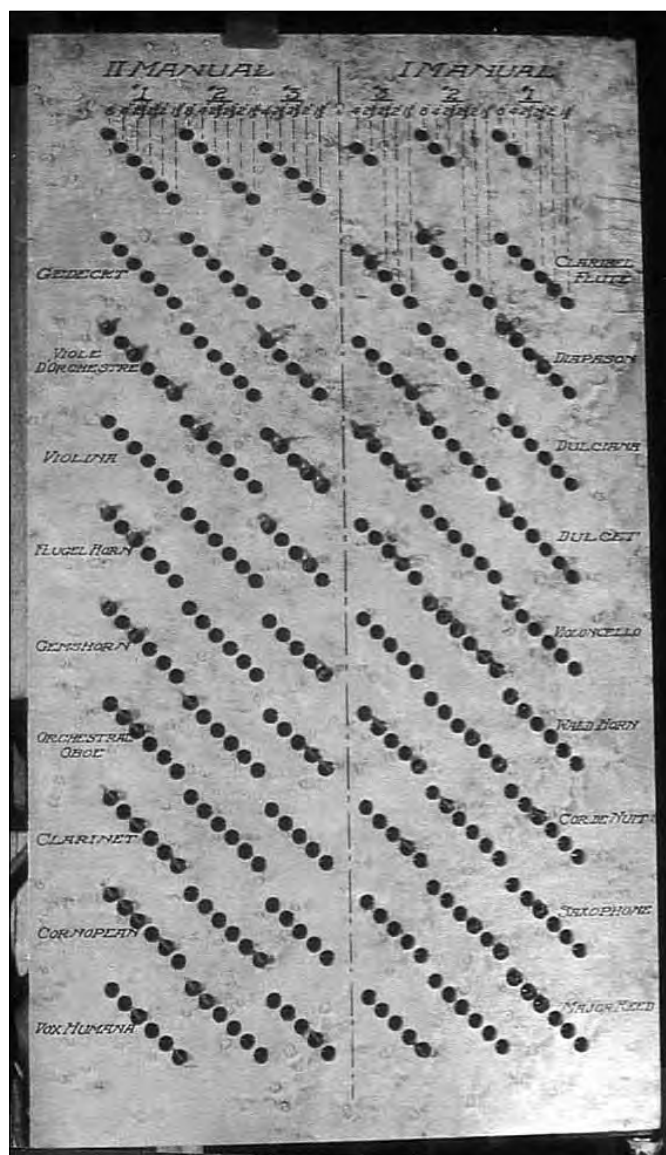
*The lower front panel of the case had to be removed to gain access to it.*

was 440 vibrations per second, then it would always be fed exactly 440 pulses of current per second, not forced to vibrate to 880 pulses per second (the four foot), or 1760 vibrations per second, or the tierce, or the quint as had been the practice previously, and thereby the results were better.

The phenomenal fecundity of Melvin Severy's creative brain becomes evident when one peruses his patents for the Choralcelo, not to mention all the ones he was granted on many other, totally unrelated inventions.

In December of 1906, he applied for a patent on means of adding upper partials or harmonics for richer tone. This is the same application for which W. E. Farrington was one of two witnesses... the only patent on which his name appears. Severy also indicates the use of loud speakers in this conception... activated by a diaphragm and magnet. He also incorporates in these designs various methods of inducing current fluctuations by having the rotating member charged highly enough, say by a static machine or a Ruhmkorff coil that it will influence the pickup point which will not quite touch it, and thus induce the desired fluctuation. He did not use this variety in the Choralcelo but had the brushes ride physically on the surface of the make and break cylinder or disc, even

*The adjustable board of the last incarnation of the Choralcelo... the redesign of the wiring by Sewall Cabot. Small brass pins could be inserted into the positions desired to obtain a desired tone quality. The Stop tablets above the upper console were preset at the factory to produce the tone designated on the tilt tablet.*



though the friction produced wear and wore down the silver brushes.

In a patent filed in 1907, he applied to patent various methods of producing musical sounds by means of blasts of air through holes in a traveling band of various materials, the holes properly spaced to procure the vibrations per second required by each note. He depicts various means whereby this could be achieved. He includes several means of applying various patterns of magnetic material to a moving belt which would interact with magnets attached to microphones as it passed under them.

In another patent of 1907, he applies to patent a series of further methods of generating sound in the manner of the inventor of the

Phonautograph, Leon Scott, in 1857, who found that a stylus attached to a diaphragm could be used to trace a wavy line on the smoked surface of a rotating cylinder and thus produce a visible record of what a sound wave looked like... Edison in 1877 went one step further and invented a device which would audibly play back the record which had been made. Severy would take the line thus inscribed by the stylus of whatever sound he chose to duplicate and fashion or inscribe the same line in a rotating cylinder. A stylus riding in this groove and attached to a diaphragm would thus reproduce the sound, although as a continuous note rather than a recording of what had been played in front of the Phonautograph device. He also mentions a concept of wiring a microphone to a telephone receiver, which sounds as if he must have been familiar with the work Cahill was doing on the Telharmonium, or Dynamophone, a monster machine designed to play music over telephone lines to subscribers so there could be music in the home. This was patented in 1897. Severy also includes another variation ... "It is evident that by having some fine singer deliver into a phonautograph one or more complete octaves of musical notes singing the broad A, for instance, and then having these Phonautographs reproduced into timbre forms the instrument can be adapted for the repetition of the tones of the human voice." As proposed in the patent, the "timbre forms" could be printed with magnetic ink or with sticky ink dusted with iron filings or electroplating, among others. He further proposes that the strip of magnetic material might be of any length and used for continuous records of songs, speeches, and so on.

It is interesting that circa 1907 the Goodale phonograph was manufactured, of which only one example seems to be known, which played celluloid strips. It had two horns according to the description, and one would assume that the strips must have been magnetic tapes.

The idea of making a record of individual sounds produced by the human voice and then translated into mechanical means of producing a musical tone using the sound waves was used in one of the electronic organs in

recent decades, wherein they made a photoelectric strip on celluloid of actual pipe organ tones and then used those strips in electronic organs to achieve more realistic organ tone.

In 1910 the inventors applied for a patent on a console having two full sets of strings back to back, so that each would have had to have a cast iron bedplate, making this in effect two pianos in one. (The weight would have been tremendous!) There are two keyboards, the lower, the usual piano type keyboard which engages with the piano hammers, and the upper one of short organ keys which operates the back strings organ style only with no piano action. There would be provision to be able to play the back set of strings via the lower piano keyboard as well. If all the components patented were actually produced the cost would have been high. In this particular version of the console, it would seem that the same thing could have been secured with the remote set of strings, which was essentially the same thing, only in a separate remote case.

In 1910 another patent was filed on the concept of timed puffs of air being used musically. Although this was filed by Edward G. Thomas, of Brookline, it was assigned to the Choralcelo Company.

In 1911 an application was filed by G. B. Sinclair and George I. Fiske on an interruptor mechanism which would not have brushes riding on it but induce the requisite pulsations via induction only, and again on an instrument using the principle of the air puffs, or streams of compressed air forced through a moving belt or cylinder perforated with the necessary numbers of holes.

An application for patent filed in January of 1913, covers the entire instrument and is one of the longest... seven pages of drawings and sixteen pages of text.

In August of 1917, Severy alone applied for a patent on a means of achieving synthetic timbre effects, a method of causing a piano key to strike a tuning fork, and an arrangement of organ pipes in a swell chamber which could function like the redesigned Choralcelo, with several pipes playing at once to augment the upper partials, and a design to be able to furnish them at several degrees of loudness. This

patent was issued in October of 1929. It was assigned to the Vocalservo (sic) Company of Los Angeles, a corporation of Delaware. Severy states that "any number of partials may be used," and also "the intensity of any of the upper partials or harmonics may be controlled."

This idea would appear to be the same sort of thing Cabot claimed in his application of July, 1918, which was granted in March, 1929, half a year before Severy's was granted. Cabot in all surviving documentation is the one who is credited with the redesigning of the Choralcelo. As early as 1906, Severy had Applied for a patent on adding upper partials for richer tone, as mentioned earlier.

Wilber Farrington was a visionary, an idealist with a humanitarian bent. As stated earlier, he and Severy were two unique individuals... Severy, a brilliant, many-faceted inventor, author... accomplished, productive. Farrington, wonderful salesman, highly charismatic... a highly illustrative anecdote survives regarding his early experiences as a salesman. As he related it to his family, the Diamond Crystal Salt Co. had several boxcars of salt on the siding which it was unable to sell. Salt was being sold unrefined in wooden boxes with a sloping top, (hence the term used for a style of colonial house), and the housewife could use the empty box once the salt was gone. The new salt, boxed in round cardboard boxes, was not selling. Farrington related how he took samples and demonstrated to customers what happened when you put the unrefined salt in water... the impurities could easily be seen when the salt dissolved, while that was not the case with the refined Diamond Crystal salt... the result was that he sold all the salt.

As mentioned earlier, he strongly felt called to enter the Choralcelo effort. He noticed that the music produced by the novel instrument could have quite an impact on the audience; a calming, relaxing, refreshment that eased tension and worries. He was committed to the best workmanship, the highest quality in the manufacture of the instrument, and was determined to maintain the integrity that was being built into it and not let it be cheapened or commercialized by mass production.

Some time ago there was publicity about another musical phenomenon. In the Luray caverns, a musical instrument had been conceived using the natural stalagmites and stalactites. It had been noted that when struck with a mallet, they would give off lovely musical tones, and an organ was created, installing solenoids with mallet tips on the rock formations. These could be controlled from an organ keyboard, and in the total silence and darkness of the cavern, the tones seemed to be everywhere... as indeed, they were, since the various notes were scattered wherever the correct size could be found. The description of the reactions of the hearers reminded one strongly of the Choralcelo... the luminous, transcendent beauty, bringing peace and renewal of the spirit. There was even an automatic player attached to the console.

The cavern is located in Virginia, and is the largest in the state encompassing 63 acres. The encyclopedia states that the "stalagpipe" organ is of particular interest.

John Herman Loud, a pupil of Alexandre Guilmant and organist and choirmaster of Park Street Church, Boston, wrote the company, "The music is ethereal in character and capable of the greatest climactic effects through which all of the inspiration of the soul can find expression. Because of the flexibility of the instrument, the charm of the use of the damper pedal (the first to be used on an instrument with sustained tone), its pervasive eloquence and refreshing quality, an organist with an imagination and a poetic sense of color can reach greater heights than with any other instrument I know."

From C. O. Johnston, a prominent Methodist minister: "The Choralcelo is more perfectly in tune with human life than any other instrument on earth. It is alive, and feels and responds and inspires and sets the heart strings vibrating."

And from a letter of Jan. 16, 1942: "It has interested me very much to observe its effect on others. Friends who come to hear it may be tired, or worried, or even discouraged. As they listen, they relax and their faces brighten, and when they leave the studio, it is with a new spirit."

An interesting letter from the First Unitarian Church, Schenectady, New

York gives insight into some of the transactions of the company. "The church wishes to have some alterations made in their Choralcelo, chimes added, and the company will take back the remote string unit the church now has." The bill, \$800. (Remember what wages were in 1917) In their letter of June 16, 1917, they say, "Please quote expenses connected with changes to take advantage of the improvements introduced by your Mr. Cabot since our instrument was purchased whereby greater variety and flexibility of tone is obtained."

Henry C. Delano, general manager, wrote back June 28, 1917, suggesting that the double wiring worked out by Mr. Cabot could be installed as the tones from the units now would be, of necessity, only the fundamental tones. Changing the wiring over, new control boxes, and the necessary changes to the console would amount to \$2,000.00. (The average wage in 1917 was \$.31 an hour. As said before, in the year 2000 it was \$13.74.)

Records indicate that the last new instrument shipped from the Boston factory was in March of 1917. By then about one hundred Choralcelos had been built. The corporation was excused from filing in June of 1917. Major changes were taking place. Wilber Farrington left Boston. Later he was to tell Lionel Cornwell, who is to have a significant role in this narrative, that he could not get materials because of the war effort, and he was not going to take war contracts. Other sources have it that there was a takeover of the management of the company by others. Certainly there have always been reports of more than one takeover... but the other big news was, he was leaving with a new bride, the lovely and talented Regene Weiler, now Mrs. Farrington. Within the next ten years they would have a family of four, three boys and a girl.

Various publications announced the fascinating new instrument with its unique concept of causing tone vibration with no physical contact ... i.e. as with a bow, for example, or hammer, or wind. "The Edison Monthly" was one of these. One of their remarks was, "Effects hitherto unknown to music have been discovered." Their article ended, "The future will undoubtedly see many

interesting developments and extensions of this instrument." The date is unknown.

Another description of the Choralcelo appeared in "The Music Trade Review," in which they stated, "It is too early at this time to predict the future possibilities of this very wonderful instrument. Suffice it to say that its musical applications appear to be unlimited."

Professor Joseph A. Hills, instructor of organ and piano at Lassell Seminary, Auburndale, Mass. for more than thirty years wrote, "I was among those who heard the first instrument and it created in me (a life-long musician) a feeling never before experienced."

"Popular Electricity and Modern Mechanics" related in part, "The musician offered the distinct novelty of a mixture of tone colors just as an artist might blend his colors on the canvas." And further on, "One cannot predict the future of this marvelous instrument, for it is too fundamental a discovery, too new in principle, for its possibilities to be fully appreciated. Certain it is, however, that it will have an important bearing upon the music of the future, producing as it does a synthetic orchestral tone of absolute purity, ... an hitherto unattained achievement in instruments of music."

At the eighty-third regular meeting of the Physics Club of New York, a demonstration of the Choralcelo at the Choralcelo studio was announced for Saturday evening, January 9th, at 8.15 o'clock. In their announcement, they state, "Words fail utterly to convey an idea of the truly wonderful purity of tone and range of tone quality produced by this instrument. You simply have to hear it to appreciate it; and you will then find yourself joining the vast throng (of which your president and secretary are already enthusiastic members) who try to describe its work in such terms as "beautiful," "wonderful," "celestial," "a revelation."

Their article mentions that the tone is derived from piano strings and plates of aluminum and wood, which helps somewhat in attaining a picture of the metamorphosis of this unique new discovery, since it was for January of 1915. This indicates that the greatly expanded two-manual Choralcelo must have been performing at least in 1914 as well.

John Hermann Loud, choirmaster and organist at Park Street Church, Boston, a pupil of Alexandre Guilmant of Paris and associate of the Royal College of Music of London, wrote, "The music is ethereal in character and capable of the greatest climactic effects through which all of the inspiration of the soul can find adequate expression. Because of the flexibility of the instrument, the charm of the use of the damper pedal (the first to be used on an instrument of sustained tone), its pervasive eloquence and refreshing quality, an organist with an imagination and a poetic sense of color can reach greater heights than with any other instrument known. Without doubt the music of the world will be produced by this perfect Choralcelo principle." Mr. Loud's mention of the use of the damper pedal refers to the fact that when sustained tone is derived from piano strings, the loud pedal can be used when the keys are released to allow the strings their natural decay, as can be done with any standard piano... but in this case, the effect was unique... somewhat akin to the natural decay of the tone of the pipe organ of a large cathedral.

An excellent and most informative article appeared in "The Electrical Experimenter" of March, 1916, under the title, "The Choralcelo, "... a Wonderful Electric Piano", and included photographs of the two-manual console, this one with a roll-playing attachment, and various remote units including a ribbon steel, a chime unit, and aluminum and wood. One series of rhetorical questions they pose, they themselves have the answer to... "What is the result of many years of untiring labor on the part of several of the cleverest men of the world? What is it on which a fortune that would ransom a king has been spent? The Choralcelo!" At the end of the article they give credit to Wilber E. Farrington for the illustrations.

An article in "The New England Magazine" under the title "Absolute Music," is probably the most telling panegyric of all... written by Ethel Syford, who was a most insightful, sensitive, and articulate author. She writes, "The tone, in its full purity, is of a strangely celestial quality. It permeates the air, and appears to surround the hearer, as though the very air had

awakened into song." And again, "It is as if a color maker should go to the rainbow and draw down into usable form its pure rays, and give these to the painter, who would no longer be compelled to depend upon the accidental colors of various minerals and earths, all muddy and impure in comparison with the color effects of light. He could now paint with nature's own palette and vie with her in radiance and glory of color. So does the Choralcelo give to the musician the full range of pure tone, in nature's own harmonics, modifiable at his will to produce what tone effects he may choose." She ends the article thus: "Certain it is that the Choralcelo will prove to be one of the great, beneficent gifts of inventive genius to mankind, enlarging musical art, adding new delight to life, healing our overstrained nerves, and realizing something of the poet's imagination when...

"The night shall be filled with music,  
And the cares that infest the day  
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs  
And as silently steal away."

This was the beginning of a unique life, centering on the Choralcelo. The Farrington's journeyed to Cleveland, where they remained a year, and then went to Chicago. In 1919 Wilber interested Mr. Lowery in the enterprise, but as Mrs. Farrington relates, he disagreed with Farrington's philosophy on the goals of the work and in 1920, traveled to California and teamed up with Severy, who then was working on the Vocalcelo or Vocalsevro with his son Victor.

According to Severy's grandson, Derwyn, Severy sold the Choralcelo patents (Presumably the ones which had never been assigned to the Choralcelo Company,) to Fred Lowery, for \$300,000.00.

In Chicago, records indicate that several men became connected with the instrument ... a Mr. Valentine, a big furniture manufacturer in Chicago, and also Monsignor Rempe in the Catholic parish of St. Clement's in Deming Place, off Lincoln Park. He wanted to manufacture the instrument without the strings and just the bar units, which Mrs. Farrington said would have

emasculated the instrument. Scuterud went to Rempe and also Cabot, who had some of the patents in his name. Both Valentine and Rempe were very influential and again Farrington found others had control.



*Regene Weiler Farrington*

In the Choralcelo file which the Smiley's kept at Lake Mohonk in the Catskills, there is a short monograph on the nature and capabilities of the Choralcelo, signed by Chas. Donaghue, Engineer Office and Factory, Bryan Place at Randolph and Ogden, Chicago, Ill.

There is no date on this information. Mrs. Farrington remembered that they went to Chicago in 1917 and stayed eight years. A business directory gives the address, "Choralcelo Company of America", 8946 South May Street, Chicago, from 1919 to 1929. The instrument was called the "Choir Celestial." At one time, the name "Symphonie Celeste" was also considered. The origin of the name is not clear. It is interesting that in 1895 the Acme Toy Company offered an Aeolian harp, a soundbox with strings on top which could be placed in the window where incoming breezes would sound the strings... and the name given was "Lyracelo". The pronunciation is not given.

There is only one Choralcelo, as far as is known, which is still in its original location and is largely intact. This one is in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The owner was so taken with the beautiful sounds of the instrument that he built as a wing to his residence, a large, beautifully paneled ballroom with a fireplace at one



side, as a setting for the instrument. The console was built into one wall, and all the rest of the instrument was in the basement, including all the bar units, and they spoke through a grill into the ballroom upstairs. Of course, the strings in the console would sound from where they were. The original interruptor mechanism has been disconnected and only the components which hold the silver brushes in place, as far as is known, are still there. A new interruptor mechanism, still in its original wood packing crate, is in a corner, the address on it is, "Choralcelo Company of America", 561 East Illinois Street, Chicago, Ill. It is addressed to Mrs. Berne Hopkins, Colorado Springs, Colo.

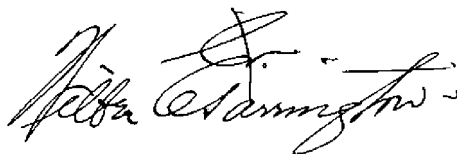
There is no record of what manufacturing may have been done in Chicago. Mrs. Farrington relates that it was mostly research and development, and she remembers there was a studio at 630 No. Rush St. The entry in the business directory states that they were distributors of the "Aromora Choralcelo", which term thus far has not occurred again. W. L. Flint was given as the agent.

In 1919, Farrington went to the American Conservatory of Music in search of a musician to demonstrate the Choralcelo, and Marie Bergerson was hired, and played four years. Her married name was Boroff, and her daughter, Edith Boroff, a musician and teacher at the State University of New York at Binghamton has written two interesting articles of reminiscences for "College Music Symposium," 1979 and 1982. She relates that her mother played for soirées at the home of Lysander Hill and that among other guests were Fritz Kreisler, Josef Lhevinne, Clarence Eddy, Rabindranath Tagore, and Josef Hofmann, who came to Chicago for two weeks to study the instrument.

Wilber Farrington had an indefatigable singleness of purpose in his loyalty and his belief in the instrument, which to him was infinitely more than just a musical instrument... it was a philosophy. His widow, Regene, relates that when war was breaking out, she asked him what his goal was, and how they could help. His answer was that he was getting ready for the reconstruction. Further, he believed that the greatest fear in the world was lack... especially,

lack of money, which he strongly felt was given too much importance. He believed the spiritual quality of the surpassingly beautiful tones spoke to the feelings and emotions, that the peculiar empathy led one to believe in a higher power. He had seen people's spirits renewed and their hearts lifted when the Choralcelo was played, and he saw mental, even physical healing. And this had been his conviction ever since he had first felt called to enter the work.

At the Chicago studios in 1921, Farrington was quoted as follows: "At any rate, the obstructions are removed and the Choralcelo is ready for world development. It has been a long, hard pull of more than sixteen years, during which time I have had to work without respite, night or day... but I wouldn't exchange the experience for all the money in the country... and nothing could compensate me for that feeling, which I have now, that no matter what happens, the world is going to have the instrument that, as a medium for expression, liberates to a world use all the wonder and beauty and inspiration of music."



At times, when control of the fortunes of the company was taken over by others, he took it philosophically... he did not feel that the Choralcelo was his, but rather, if someone else could do a better job, so be it... he was only interested in seeing that its potential for good be realized.

Another benefactor had appeared in the midst of the 20's, Edward Everett Hosmer, an English physician who was interested in the curative effects of the Choralcelo and had been trying to locate Farrington. A sensitive man, he subsidized the work for some time. Another benefactor was Hugo Heyl, who owned a large factory building at 84 South Water Street, East Port Chester, Conn. (In 1977 a listing gives the address as Byram, Conn.) A portion of the building was set aside for the Choralcelo, and the forces were marshaled to

produce what would be the "Master Instrument", the finest state of the art. As Lionel Cornwell relates a little further along in the history, it was an instrument which had originally been built in Boston. The bar units were mounted on brackets on a side wall, to be plainly visible to an audience, instead of having them concealed as they typically were in a residence. As a demonstration instrument, everything would be exposed to scrutiny. It had the usual bar units and a glass unit as well.

In 1930 Dr. Hosmer passed away, at the age of 66. With the depression drastically affecting business of all kinds, this must have been a grave setback. Wilber traveled to California, where he lived for a time with Severy's son Victor. At length, Regene Farrington and the children followed by ship, docking at San Pedro Harbor, so the family was reunited after six months. They would remain in California seven years, while the Master Instrument remained in the factory in East Port Chester all during the depression.

Nothing daunted, Farrington continued his efforts with the instrument, which was always uppermost in his mind, and his first priority. A Dr. Strong in Hollywood had a Choralcelo in his home, and may have been the host of demonstrations during that period. One of the men who heard it, a cellist in the orchestra, commented, "This is the tone we strive to produce with our instruments," when he heard the pure, idealized sound brought forth from the strings and bars without physical contact.

When they moved back to the East in 1937, Wilber went on ahead and the family followed by motor car. Now enters Lionel Cornwell, the last significant influence on the vicissitudes of the lovely instrument with the miraculous tone. As he related it in an interview, in 1937 he was working in Stamford, Connecticut for the Sonautograph Company... "when Wilber Farrington approached the president to try to interest him financially in the instrument, and he, in turn asked me to look into the matter and report back to him." As he goes on ... "A few days later I went down to Portchester, in the oil company building. Mrs. Farrington played it and I was absolutely astounded

at the superb quality! I've heard pipe organs, including the one in the tabernacle in Salt Lake City... and I've heard many, like Wurlitzer demonstrate their organs to me. In NYC, I climbed up amongst the pipes in the Paramount Theatre on Broadway of New York. It was a huge affair and very impressive to hear played... now with all of that background I always looked for fine tonal quality wherein the notes have their fundamental which of course, establishes the pitch and then the harmonics or overtones that run on up many frequencies higher and give it the character, and when I heard this Choralcelo, that just bowled me over...what a difference. To hear the finesse of those beautiful tones...Mr. Farrington noticed, of course, how I was really swept off my feet, and so he said "Well you can help me a lot!"... (in promoting this thing and engineering it to a finer degree).

An interesting document survives from "Choralcelo Sales Co. of America, 84 South Water St., East Port Chester, Connecticut". A four page document, it lists various inventions and how long it took to develop them, including the Choralcelo. The instrument, from the first laboratory model privately demonstrated in Boston, 1905, to the perfected and standardized unit type instrument of 1928, 23 years. Thus, the document seems to date from circa 1928.

Wilber Farrington's son Edward clearly recalls traveling with his mother, Regene, to the factory when she was preparing for a demonstration of the instrument, and later on, to the New York studio, which will be mentioned shortly.

Cornwell related that on one occasion, Wilber said to him, "I felt I could have done a lot of good with it, if I could have revived it one more time."

But, once more disappointment was to be the outcome. Disagreement arose between Hugo Heyl and Lionell Cornwell on one side and Farrington on the other, as one source puts it, at least partly because of money owed... and Farrington was denied access.

This time, fate intervened and Wilber received a sizable inheritance from aunts in England ... his mother was English. Wilber's *modus operandi* always was to have a studio where demonstrations

could be given, and this money gave him the power to persevere. Old records were perused in search of one of their Boston instruments which they might purchase and use in a studio in New York City, and ultimately they located one owned by King in Morristown, New Jersey. It had a superb double interruptor mechanism, which was able to control twice the number of auxiliary units as a single one would, and was of the disc configuration rather than the cylinder style. The instrument was a late one, with Cabot's so called "double wiring", and it had a steel, a wood, and an aluminum unit, as well the large steel bar bass. It had been ordered without a pedal board, but the pedal notes were playable via the keyboard. He had the instrument reconditioned, and rented a studio in New York City.

During the course of this search, the sad demise of one of the instruments was discovered... purchased by H. A. Fiske in January of 1917 and installed on his yacht... during the war, the government commandeered his boat "and at that time, took the installation out and chucked in into the harbor at Hell's Gate, New York." (this, from notes in the archives).

According to advertising booklets of the time, the Choralcelo Galleries were at 17 East Fortieth Street. Edward Farrington relates going with his mother to this studio also for demonstrations. Regene mentions that it was a coincidence that the location in New York City in the 40's chanced to be the very same one they had occupied before the First World War. Another interesting sidelight is that the Estey Organ Company had been the previous tenant. Estey developed a Chrysoglott which played on glass plates, although via felt hammers rather than the electromagnets of Choralcelo style, and one wonders if there might have been any correlation, or if it was pure coincidence.

In 1942 it was decided to make recordings. A professional recording company was engaged. The blanks used had heretofore been discs of aluminum with a black plastic coating, and were therefore unbreakable, but in wartime aluminum was not available, and so the core was of glass with a plastic coating. A large hole was left in the center for a fiber disc with the small hole for the

spindle in it, this, to avoid breaking the glass disc when putting it on the turntable, and even more so, if it was used on an automatic changer. Many discs were cut, trying various microphone placements, with portions of the various melodies reappearing and tried over in different arrangements. Mrs. Farrington sent a few of the best ones to her husband on one of his business trips about the instrument, and they were all broken in transit. Luckily, of the ones which were culled out, there are sections which reproduce fairly well, for WWII vintage sound recording, although those who had heard it live thought they were but a faint echo of what the sound really was like.

One thing these recordings do is give a glimpse of what a demonstration was like. One sound effect was of an orchestra tuning up, with the various instruments. Then melodies would be played on various stops to demonstrate the harp, bugle, music box, clarinet, oboe, flute, cello, or various other tones, which were idealized sounds imitating the pure essence of the particular timbre, minus the interference of mechanical stimulation... the bow, or the plucking of the string, for example.

Shortly after, Mrs. Farrington was alone at the studio and her husband was on a business trip to Chicago, and as she related, fearing for the safety of the instrument because of the war breaking out, she hastily had the Choralcelo moved out of the studio and taken out of town. One of the men who worked on the instrument, Marcus T. Lines, disassembled it and prepared it for moving. From there she had it put in storage, where it has remained, in one place or another, since then. Fortunately, it has survived.

Wilber Farrington passed away in 1945. Regene recalled that he had lain down to rest, and said that he had just had the most remarkable vision, and that he would tell them about it in the morning. "And that was the last that anyone heard from his lips," she said.

And so the man of unflagging zeal, deep convictions, of principle, devoted forty years of his life to his valiant effort to better men's lives. His son Edward spoke of what had come to be a mission. "He felt that most people were not guided

by principle... he wanted to devote himself to something higher. He had seen how people with a musical, or scientific, or philosophical background responded when they heard the Choralcelo, and he felt that by identifying himself with the instrument, it would give him a focus for what he wanted his life to stand for."

Edward Farrington also related an unusual and illuminating incident from his own school days. Edward had gone to the administration office at his school and there was a man also there who heard him give his name. Are you Wilber Farrington's son?" he asked. "Yes, I am," replied Edward. "Wilber Farrington, of the Choralcelo?" Again he replied in the affirmative. The stranger went on, "When an ordinary salesman talks to you, you can be spellbound, but when he leaves, the spell is broken. But with Wilber Farrington, you stay spellbound!" Later he looked up Wilber to renew their acquaintance.

Regene, ever a woman of resolve, now had to carry on with two of their sons still in their teens. She now was the sole representative of the Choralcelo Company. Owners contacted her, desperate for service for their instruments, but the service men were dwindling. A memorandum states that Donaghue went over an instrument in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1930 and got it "in fine shape". It is also noted that Victor Severy, Melvin's son, purchased the one owned by D. R. Deming, Cleveland, Ohio, which had been built in March of 1916. His son knew nothing of the instrument, however.

In October, 1947, Marcus Lines sent Mrs. Francis Smiley (Rachel Orcutt) information about correcting a tuning question on their extensive installation, and also sizes of condensers needed for the 73 notes, and a diagram of the numbers of segments in the tracks of the rotating cylinders to help in trouble shooting.

At the end of the forties, fire broke out in the section of the factory in Port Chester where the Choralcelo was still located, and it was destroyed. Lionel Cornwell had set up manufacturing in the same section of the building, and sustained serious losses as well. The interruptor mechanism, the motor generator set, and the two cabinets of

remote relays and roller contacts had been installed on the other side of the fire wall, and it was hoped they at least might have survived, but at that time Mrs. Farrington was in no position to investigate. Factory records were also in the building, presumably, but again nothing has ever come to light. So, the magnificent master instrument, with its state of the art fine tuning, and the glass unit...all gone.

The wonderful installation at Lake Mohonk in New Paltz, New York, had been kept playing all this time, by sheer determination on the part of the Smiley's and a local organ tuner who must have acquainted himself with the principles of the unusual instrument's construction. In 1961 they ordered a commercial machinist to construct a die so they could make their own silver brushes, and they located a supplier of sheet sterling silver. They also installed a new interruptor mechanism. In 1965 Mrs. Farrington journeyed up into the Catskills to see the instrument again, and Mr. Smiley turned it on for her... the power was being turned off for the winter when the resort was closed. She reports that after 23 years away from the Choralcelo, she lost herself in the music, and it was understandable to do that with the echoes up in the turret, the chimes, the complete roster of units up in the balcony, including the remote string, and of course, the thrilling double bass... and all heightened by the wonderful acoustics in the spacious, high-ceilinged Victorian auditorium. "Rachel (Smiley) came at last and reminded me that I had been playing for three hours!" she smiled.

Melvin Severy died in 1951 in California, at the age of 88, survived by



Melvin L. Severy California

his son, Victor, and his daughter, Enid, and their offspring. His own grandson, Wendell L. Severy, was the attending physician.

And what of Regene Weiler Farrington, after all these years of ceaseless toil and devotion, the vicissitudes of wars, of the depression, of control of the company taken over by others... and always the pressure of finances? The word "pluck" comes to mind. What a serendipitous thing it was, for Wilber and Regene to come together ... and what a rare union, for two people to share so unreservedly such an exalted and esoteric vision! And what a unique help meet, to share with equal passion in this devotion to "The Work", always in her elegant, unassuming, well-spoken way. The "magnificent obsession", par excellence.

She continued in every way she was able to try to find a new location for the Choralcelo in storage, approaching people likely to be receptive... Eleanor Roosevelt was one. Regene was successful in seeing that the magnificent instrument at Lake Mohonk was preserved. (Finally the Smiley's had to bow to the inevitable, with no servicemen or parts available, and removed their venerable instrument from the public parlor.)

Many of the installations had been in theaters, and so presumably they met the same fate as pipe organs built by Wurlitzer and others for background music for silent films when the "talkies" came out.

One of the earlier single manual Choralcelos in a residence in Brookline Massachusetts, did survive in excellent shape, complete, with a large library of original Choralcelo rolls, and is now in private hands, not playing.

Regene Farrington passed away in 1977, at the age of 90, in Falmouth, Massachusetts, where she was still earning her living renting rooms to college students with summer jobs, and playing the organ for a nearby church. She was still furthering the beloved Choralcelo, only the latter-day thrust was to find electronic means of furnishing the timed DC impulses to the magnets, so the mechanical interruptor mechanism could be dispensed with and thus greatly reduce the maintenance required for the

instrument. Earning her own living to the very end was the price she paid for her whole-hearted giving of self to the cause she and Wilber cherished. All of their own money had gone into "The Work."

#### AFTER WORD.....

From the vantage point of 2005, can one hazard a guess as to why this unique, magnificent instrument with the lovely poetic name should have vanished into the mists of time? It is such a pity after the Herculean effort ... Herculean and visionary. And astronomically expensive!

World War I was an immediate cause... when materials were no longer available because of the war effort, manufacturing was no longer possible, and Farrington stated that he would not consider producing materials for use in war.

One could not help but believe that the development of the completely new instrument, which gradually grew into the highly developed and complex instrument it became, was a formidable and challenging task. The principle, so simple in concept, proved to be nearly an insurmountable challenge to all the brilliance of the gifted inventor, Melvin Severy. That principle, matching with uncanny accuracy, the timed pulses of current sent to the electromagnets of an already tuned resonant body (steel string or tuned bar, for example) proved to be a nearly insurmountable goal, and one which consumed years of study and endless money, only to culminate in the deceptively simple and effective governing drive that eventually solved the problem. But it was unique. Even today, it is quite uncanny to watch it and see that it works so well... a magnetic drive without physical contact; no pads, no shoes, nothing to heat up or wear out. But anyone called to do any servicing who was not familiar with the principle would be at a disadvantage.

Another unique characteristic was the process of tuning. When it came to the piano strings, it would not do to have a piano tuner tune it in the conventional way... it had to be tuned with the power on and using the magnetic tone, as outlined in the instruction manual. The Choralcelo tuning method was simplicity itself, but the tuner had to be aware of it... and willing to use it. It is safe to say

that probably many, if not most tuners would not be much inclined to use any method but the one they had always used. Tuning the bar units probably would not have been such an issue as they do not normally need tuning as often as pianos do, and trying to tune them without having the power on would be somewhat like trying to tune the pipes of a pipe organ without having the blower on.

To return to a theme, setting off into totally uncharted territory, as the company did when it began to refine and develop their new instrument, was a tremendous challenge. It was not taking an existing entity, such as a piano or pipe organ, and adding refinements or altering the way some particular technique was managed... It must have seemed that the sky was the limit, so to speak... experiments were carried out on many applications of the electromagnetic principle, some of which were not pursued. Sometimes, as in the case of the "orchestral" unit at Lake Mohonk, it was evidently found that a remote unit which had seemed promising in development was found to be unsuccessful when actually in the field, when the company would remove it and replace it with another unit... in this case, the remote string.

One indication of the magnitude of the effort at achieving the potential of the new principal is in the numbering of two of the instruments. The one at Lake Mohonk, which is No. 156, used the initial principal of forcing tuned bodies to respond to frequencies of DC not their natural frequency... and No. 164, only eight numbers later, appears as the greatly expanded new version with the totally new system of wiring making possible the adding of overtones and thus opening up highly responsive tonal effects hitherto not possible. If the numbering is as straightforward as it would appear, then this would seem a staggering accomplishment. The Lake Mohonk instrument, aforesaid #156, was installed in September of 1915, and apparently the last instruments were built in 1916 or 1917. The latest number which is known is the one which was repurchased from King in Morristown and used in the New York studio until 1942 when another World War broke out,

and that was No. 207.

Wilber Farrington was deeply moved from the start by the searching, pure tones of this new instrument and was inspired by the new sound. He grew to see it as something much more than just a musical instrument. He felt strongly that there was a refreshing, empathetic effect on the listeners, from observing the audiences who came to hear the wonderful new instrument, and he did not want it to become cheapened by being mass produced. One dedicated customer was so moved by the delightful instrument that he had built onto his house an entirely new wing for a Choralcelo music room; a lovely spacious ballroom with beautiful paneling and a fireplace. (This instrument is still there today just as it was installed in 1916.)

Another patron, Robert V. V. Sewell, of Oyster Bay, Long Island, had his instrument installed both in his home and in gazebos in his gardens as well, so that one could enjoy the music while strolling about, its ethereal tones seeming to permeate the air. Another wealthy patron had his instrument installed with some of the remote ranks in the tower of his mansion in Greenwich, Connecticut, so that the lovely tones could be heard about his entire estate. This was a high quality instrument, and Wilber wanted to keep it that way. One cannot say what role this view might have had in affecting the fate of this noble instrument. He stated to an associate that in the years following WWI that he spent in trying to start production again, he thought he could have done a lot of good with it. He saw these introductory years as a time of trial and refining, and thought this end would be accomplished by monitoring the performance of the Choralcelo in many milieus. And it was installed in many locations... probably most often at estates of the wealthy, but many were installed in theaters to accompany silent films... but it was also installed in churches, in department stores and hotels, in a large rest resort in Niagara Falls and at Mohonk Mountain House, the large resort in the Catskills in New York... and there were even several on yachts.

One thing is certain ... many millions of dollars were spent on the instrument ... in today's dollars it would amount to

several hundred million... and although the instruments sold for half a million dollars or more, again in today's dollars, even that was not enough to compensate for the immense amount of experimentation that was taking place. In observing the few instruments still

in existence, one is struck by the variation which is apparent from one instrument to the next... so much re-working and re-designing was going on, one can see a unit laid out in one way in one instance and then, in another instrument, find that it has been

re-worked or combined with elements of another unit in a new approach, all of which meant new molds for cast iron bedplates as well as new work from the drafting and planning department ... and consequently, more expense.

## CHORALCELO GALLERIES

*17 East 40<sup>th</sup> Street*  
NEW YORK



12 October 1917.

NEW YORK

BOSTON

CHICAGO

**The Choralcello Company**

OF MASSACHUSETTS  
ANDERSON GALLERIES  
284 MADISON AVENUE  
NEW YORK

December 1, 1916

**Choralcello Studios**

174 East Chestnut Street  
CHICAGO

*Office of  
The President*

May 4th, 1921

*Some of the letterheads used at various times.*



## RECENT CHORALCELO PATRONS

|  | <i>Architect</i>      | <i>Decorator</i> |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|
| Mrs. Georgia Timken Fry, Rodin Studios,<br>New York City   | Cass Gilbert          |                  |
| E. D. Anderson, Esq., Hotel Des Artistes,<br>New York City | Stuart Travis         |                  |
| John F. Braun, Esq., Merion, Pa.                           | Day & Klauder         |                  |
| J. E. Aldred, Esq., Locust Valley, N. Y.                   | Bertram C. Goodhue    | Irving & Casson  |
| Arthur H. Marks, Esq. (Yacht "Aramis"),<br>Akron, Ohio     |                       | H. F. Huber      |
| J. E. Liggett, Esq., Port Washington, L. I.                | Tracy & Swartout      | H. F. Huber      |
| H. L. Brittain, Esq., Greenwich, Conn.                     | James C. Greene       |                  |
| William Sloane, Esq., Norfolk, Va.                         |                       | W. & J. Sloane   |
| Judge H. D. Rummel, Esq.,<br>Charleston, W. Va.            |                       | W. & J. Sloane   |
| B. R. Deming, Esq., 2485 Fairmount Blvd.,<br>Cleveland, O. | Howell & Thomas       |                  |
| Edward A. Deeds, Esq., Dayton, O.                          | Schenck & Williams    |                  |
| J. Harrington Walker, Esq.,<br>Walkerville, Ont.           | Albert Kahn           |                  |
| P. A. Myers, Esq., Ashland, Ohio                           | Vernon Redding        | H. F. Huber      |
| W. H. Foster, Esq., Elkhart, Ind.                          | E. H. Turnock         | Tobey Furn. Co.  |
| Berne H. Hopkins, Esq.,<br>Colorado Springs, Colo.         | MacLaren & Thomas     |                  |
| C. S. Church, Cleveland, O.                                | Fred'k W. Striebinger |                  |
| Hough Avenue Congregational Church,<br>Cleveland, O.       | Hubbell & Benes       |                  |
| Tioga Theatre, Philadelphia, Pa.                           | Paul R. Allen         |                  |
| Henry Miller Theatre, New York City                        | H. C. Ingalls         |                  |
| America Theatre, Denver, Colo.                             |                       |                  |

Lord and Taylor, New York, installed a Choralcelo, as did Marshall Field in Chicago.

Filene's, in Boston, purchased an instrument for their store, and later another for their restaurant. The arrangement of these two instruments was versatile and creative.

Belmont Hotel, in New York City, installed a Choralcelo at the end of 1916.

Other hotels which featured Choralcelos were Holland House, in New York City, which presented it in its first floor lounge, and Blackstone Hotel, in Chicago.



Mr. Albert Rice located this stock certificate on the Internet recently (February 2007) and kindly sent a copy. As can be seen, at 2500 shares costing \$10 each, this was a \$25,000 investment in the company, a very significant sum even today but that was in 1915 dollars. In today's purchasing power, it would represent over half a million dollars. The treasurer is Henry C. Delano and the president is Wilber E. Farrington. The owner was offering it for sale at \$495.00 (reduced from \$695.00)

# CD REVIEW

– Robin's Review –

## "THE PERFECT COMBINATION" Vintage Ampico reproducing piano performances enhanced by Jim Riggs on the Wurlitzer Organ, Vol. 1

Last year I received an email from my long time friend Robert Ridgeway. He forwarded me a curious YouTube duet of "Dance of the Blue Danube" performed by an Ampico Music Record

Roll and a Wurlitzer Pipe Organ. I listened to it many times and was delighted by the combination. I checked and there were a few other videos on the site as well.

Recently while perusing Ebay (for the ten millionth time...) I found a CD for sale entitled, "THE PERFECT COMBINATION" (Vintage Ampico reproducing piano performances



### About Jim Riggs

Having regularly appeared at every San Francisco Bay Area movie house equipped with a Wurlitzer pipe organ, Jim Riggs has entertained well over one million toe-tapping patrons. In addition to countless performances all across the United States, Riggs has made scores of international concert appearances, frequently visiting the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.



### Acknowledgements

Many people contributed to this unique project: Jack Gustafson for providing the PianoDisc MIDI translations from the original Ampico rolls and for fielding many technical questions; Tim Rickman for his unique knowledge of the Uniflex relay system and his willingness to share it; Richard Harris for his invaluable help with recording and videography; and Ed Zollman and crew for keeping the Little River Studio organ in tip-top shape. Special thanks go to Ken Walters for his fierce friendship, great company and videography skills, and to Michael Coup, without whom the Little River Studio organ would not exist. His vision for the organ and his tireless support and enthusiasm for this project has made "The Perfect Combination" a dream come true.

### The AMPICO, The Wurlitzer and Jim Riggs

When I was very young, about 6 years old, my family had an upright player piano. It made a strong impression right away. I loved running it, primarily to watch the holes in the roll as they passed by the tracker bar. But there was something about that kind of music that grabbed hold of me deep inside and has never gone away. My ears were primed.

When I first heard a Wurlitzer pipe organ (at age 13) my astonished impression was "...like player piano music, only WAY better!" The theatre organ look elements common to the best piano roll arranging...delightful harmonies, rhythmic breaks, counter-melodies and stylistic variations...and infused them with the orchestral richness and sheer sonic power only it can generate. I was instantly hooked for life; from that moment on I knew the theatre pipe organ was my instrument.

Skip forward several decades to the Little River Studio in Wichita, KS. During dinner one evening, the Steinway/PianoDisc was playing in the background. Just then, it started playing J. Milton Delcamp's AMPICO recording of "I Want To Be Happy", a long-time favorite that I'd not heard in many years. Inspiration very often comes from the smallest things, sometimes from merely making a request of one's host. Mine was, "Do you mind if I played the Wurlitzer along with this piano roll?" I zipped down to the console and started experimenting.

After 4 or 5 run-throughs we pretty much ended up with what you hear on track 1 of this CD. We looked at each other and knew we'd stumbled upon something special: a combination of talents and instruments that linked across 80 years and results in some of the most joyful music ever to involve the theatre pipe organ. The AMPICO and the Wurlitzer were simply made for each other and are the perfect combination. Over the next few years I would make my way back to Wichita every so often and each time lay down 4 or 5 more piano/organ tracks, which I started calling "Phantom Duets". You hold the final result in your hand.

I have never played music that is happier, more orchestral or just plain fun than these Phantom Duets. When playing them I think of those fabulous pianists who recorded these reproducing roll performances so many years ago. I'm sure they would have approved (and quite possibly wondered why they didn't do it themselves way back when). So sit back and enjoy some music that's about the most deeply satisfying and personal work I've ever done. It was a long time coming and I'm absolutely delighted it's finally here.

### The Phantom Duet Process

For purposes of this recording, rather than using actual paper AMPICO rolls, the arrangements have been translated by organist and piano technician Jack Gustafson into a digital format for use with the PianoDisk player system. The Little River Studio Wurlitzer organ is equipped with a Steinway model B (7 foot) grand fitted with the PianoDisk. The organ itself runs off a Uniflex digital relay system, allowing for recording and playback.

When recording the duets, the PianoDisk plays the chosen song file independently while I play the pipe organ enhancement. The Uniflex records my playing, complete with registration changes and expression, into its memory and simultaneously records the piano information into a separate MIDI file. When playing back a complete duet the Uniflex plays both the organ file and the separate MIDI track in synchronization. Tempos and synchronization can be adjusted to provide a high level of precision.

### About The Organ

The Little River Studio organ is designed specifically to be a studio organ, much like the famous studio and broadcasting organs of the 1930's. In the days before prerecorded radio music many larger radio stations had theatre organs for use as both solo instruments and as accompaniment to ensembles and dramatic productions. In Hollywood, the major motion picture studios all had organs – mostly Wurlitzer – on sound stages for use during production. Sonically, a studio organ differs subtly from an auditorium organ. It cannot have the thundering bass of its big brothers. It doesn't need large or many Tibias to fill space, nor heavy diapasons for the same job. What it does require is clarity, color, transparency, articulation and careful voicing. It's a matter of tonal texture over power.

The Little River Studio organ started life as a standard, early style 235 3-manual 11-rank instrument. When installed in the studio the following additions were made to enhance the range of color and dynamics available: Brass Trumpet, Brass Saxophone, Post Horn, 2 Dulcianas, 1 additional Vox Humana and string, and Quintadena. When the console from the former Simonton Grande Wurlitzer, which was the last organ Jesse Crawford recorded, became available, it was purchased and now controls the organ, along with the original 3-manual console.

The organ is installed in the traditional way. Swell shutters are at pipe height and winding is run directly under the chests (with no extended windlines for subflooring). The room into which the organ speaks is hard surfaced and approximately the size of the Paramount Studio. Pipechambers open directly into the room; no tone chutes or other impediments exist. Much time was spent on voicing and regulating the pipework to product optimal, unstrained tone – sound suitable for a smaller space but retaining the characteristic Wurlitzer color.

The mission was accomplished. This organ is truly a recreation of a studio organ, with all the texture, transparency and lightness associated with the best of those original instruments. It is not an "in-theatre" sound, but rather a musical sound of a different kind, suitable for different applications, and uniquely suited in accompanying the piano.

enhanced by Jim Riggs on the Wurlitzer Organ). The CD auction was listed under "AMPICO". It was the "Danube" recording from YouTube along with twelve other selections. I instantly did the "Buy It NOW!" and a few days later the CD arrived in perfect condition...unlike MOST CDs you buy on Ebay which show up in an envelope with the jewel case smashed...

Not sure what to expect, I listened and then listened again. Musically speaking, this was a revelation! I had played along with Ampico duet rolls in the past but nothing ever like this! World famous organist Jim Riggs was playing with various Ampico artists to a selection of great Ampico pop rolls. Jim's attack and complete mastery of the popular period style, his abandon and rhythmic control are nothing short of mesmerizing! FIRST CLASS!

I sent a copy to my good friend and AMICA Founding Member Bill Knorp and he was as enthralled as I. Bill was not familiar with the Ampico roll of "Barbara" on the CD and was totally taken by both the roll and the duet with organist Jim Riggs. Always one of my favorite Ampico rolls, I had previously recut "Barbara" on my ARTISTS' CHOICE MUSIC ROLLS list so was excited to hear this new interpretation. It did not disappoint and is one of the best duets on the disc. "June Night" really gets really fired up while the well known "Cuban Love Song" and "It Happened In Monterey" waltzes are really smoothe and haunting. The variety from one track to another is what makes this disc even more enjoyable. Many organists tend to use the same "tricks" over and over ultimately winding up with rather tedious and repetitious performances. No need to worry here! ALL are a delight!

The beautiful Wurlitzer theater organ is in the home of AMICA member Mike Coup in Wichita, Kansas. And if things couldn't get even a little more ironic, Mike owns a beautiful early Knabe Ampico "A" that I restored for him. Will wonders never cease? The Knabe "A" is

| <h1>The Perfect Combination Vd. 1</h1>   |      |
|--|------|
| Vintage AMPICO reproducing piano performances enhanced by Jim Riggs on the Wurlitzer Organ |      |
| 1. I Want To Be Happy (Youmans/Cesar).....   | 2:43 |
| AMPICO performance by J. Milton Delcamp  |      |
| 2. Hello Bluebird (Friend).....  | 3:02 |
| AMPICO performance by Vincent Lopez (Assisted)   |      |
| 3. The Kinkajou (Tierney/McCarthy).....  | 2:56 |
| AMPICO performance by Ferde Grofe  |      |
| 4. The Cuban Love Song (McHugh/Stothart/Fields).....                                       | 3:33 |
| AMPICO performance by Harry Shipman  |      |
| 5. Making Whoopee (Donaldson/Kahn).....  | 3:47 |
| AMPICO performance by Adam Carroll   |      |
| 6. Barbara (Silver/Rose).....  | 2:42 |
| AMPICO performance by Vincent Lopez (Assisted)   |      |
| 7. I'm Sorry, Sally (Fio Rito/Kahn).....   | 3:09 |
| AMPICO performance by Victor Arden & Adam Carroll  |      |
| 8. June Night (Friend/Baer).....   | 2:54 |
| AMPICO performance by Vincent Lopez (Assisted)   |      |
| 9. It Happened In Monterey (Wayne/Rose).....   | 3:44 |
| AMPICO performance by Lewis Fuiks (Victor Arden)   |      |
| 10. Am I Blue? (Akst/Clark).....   | 4:08 |
| AMPICO performance by Victor Arden & Adam Carroll  |      |
| 11. Dance Of The Blue Danube (Fisher).....   | 2:39 |
| AMPICO performance by Vincent Lopez (Assisted)   |      |
| 12. Home In Pasadena (Warren/Clark/Leslie).....  | 3:24 |
| AMPICO performance by Adam Carroll   |      |
| 13. Lucky Lindy (Baer/Gilbert).....  | 2:49 |
| AMPICO performance by Vincent Lopez (Assisted)   |      |
| ©2006  |      |

not the one used in the recording. I think they used his Knabe Ampico B. Mike is a real music lover as evidenced by his involvement in this project.

It is rare that anything really new or unique appears in our hobby anymore. So if you want something new and exciting, well, then THIS is it! I encourage all of you to buy this delightful duet CD and experience these Ampico rolls all over again. It is like getting your piano completely restored and properly regulated and then hearing the rolls for the first time!

Robin Pratt

## BACKGROUND

Dear Robin,

These Phantom Duets of mine have certainly struck a chord with listeners. They've done nothing less than open up a whole new artistic avenue for me. It's the music I've been waiting 40 years to play—mainly because I have such a deep history with player pianos in general and reproducing pianos in particular.

When I was just a wee lad — about 4 or 5 — our family bought a Duo-Art upright. I can't recall the brand of piano but it was quite old. My father had taught me how to harmonize to simple tunes as "Sweet Adeline" and "Old Black Joe" a little before then so I already had

a budding sense of harmony and melody. I played rolls constantly. I liked the way they sounded: a far richer, more rhythmic version of the simple melodies I had learned. One aspect I really enjoyed was looking at the rolls as they would pass by the tracker bar. I could make out pictures from the patterns the holes on the roll would make. I especially liked a QRS roll, "South Rampart Street Parade", so much that I stuck a gold star on the box. What I didn't realize at the time was the whole genre of player piano music was being driven into my head by osmosis; it was the beginnings, the very foundation, of my present unique brand of rhythm, harmony and melody.

About the same time, I had a babysitter — Mary Jo — who played rag-time. Her best method for calming me down was to sit me at the end of the piano bench and her to wail away. I was utterly fascinated. AND I learned the very important fact that REAL people can play like that.

The Duo-Art went away when we moved in 1964. This was at the behest of my sister's piano teacher who insisted her student have a "proper" piano on which to play her scales. Humph! We got a tiny Everett console. It was pretty but sounded like a kitchen table radio. Double Humph!! Worst of all, it didn't play any of that fun music all by itself. Triple Humph!!!

So, being a resourceful child I started playing the piano by ear. I'd work out my sister's lessons before she could ever learn them. She was so upset by this she quit after a year or so. (and judging by the way she can't carry a tune, I did the music world a great favor.) I can't remember the sorts of tunes I was playing then, but I did manage to win a talent show in the sixth grade.

Also, my Aunt in Riverside, CA had a Welte Licensee in a Lindeman "Melodigrand" piano. Tiny little thing — sounded awful — but I loved to make it go. One summer when I was spending a few weeks with her I even re-tubed the



piano! (with a little help and much guidance from Reese and Terry Bannister.) So I was always able to get a player piano fix, even when I myself had none.

Then my parents did a remarkable thing: they hired a teacher that started me playing stride piano from the first lesson! No scales, no Czerny. Just tenth-chord-bass-chord and fully chorded melodies from day one. His name was Lee Green. Lee was a tremendously versatile pianist — working all the time — and even played with Harry James for a while. (Coincidentally, Lee was Peter Mintun's teacher as well.) We got on famously.

Then came my life-altering event: I heard my first Wurlitzer pipe organ. It was during a music class field trip. We went up to a lady's house just up the street from where I lived. She had the Wurlitzer from Loew's Memphis enlarged and installed in her home. Now, I had seen and heard pipe organs before and they didn't really make an impression. But this one was \*very\* different. After showing us the chambers, relay, regulators and blower she sat us

in the living room and climbed onto the console. When she started to play, it happened. It was like the clouds parted and the ray of light shone down on me from above. Quite literally I had tears coming down my face; it was the sound I was meant to hear. I was overwhelmed. Here was an instrument capable of taking the rhythmic nuances and harmonic richness of the player piano to an exponentially higher level. I knew from that very day what I was going to do.

Over the next two decades I concentrated on theatre organ. But I still kept around the periphery of player piano. (One of my closest friends at the time was Roy Powlan, a Founding Chapter member and collector.) Then, a few years ago, the light from above shone down once again.

I was at Mike Coup's house in Wichita. I had recently played a program on the New York Paramount Wurlitzer and was sitting at the dinner table. Mike's Steinway B (PianoDisc) was playing several MIDI'd Ampico selections. Then, one tune came on, a favorite arrangement,

"I Want To Be Happy" played by Delcamp. I don't know why it occurred to me but I asked Mike if I could turn the organ on and try playing to the roll. I did, and after a few run-throughs we just looked at each other and knew we'd stumbled on something very different and delightful. I felt like the guy who first found that big nugget at Sutter's Mill in 1848. I had hit the Mother Lode. Over the next few years I'd lay down a couple of Duets each time I'd visit Wichita, with the CD you now have as the result.

The pairing of the Wurlitzer and the reproducing piano seemed destined to happen. I'm shocked it hasn't been done (in any big way) before. I'm doubly shocked that I've never heard of any guys like Arden, Carroll, et al, doing it in the old days, either. It is a natural pairing — the perfect combination, in fact — and one I intend to explore for many years to come. It's music that takes me full circle and continues to be the most deeply satisfying thing I've ever done.

Best,  
Jim Riggs

## **CD PRICE and ORDERING INFORMATION**

**The CDs are \$18, plus \$2 S&H.**

*Orders of two or more CDs shipped to the same address may reduce S&H to \$1.25 per CD.*

**FOREIGN ORDERS:** US funds only, US \$18 each, with S&H US \$5.

*Checks, Cashier's Checks or Money Orders accepted, made out to Jim Riggs.*

**PAYPAL IS ALSO ACCEPTED**

**simply place the order to my email address (below) with the shipping address.**

I will then send a request for funds through PayPal and ship the order once payment clears.

The ordering address is: Jim Riggs Recordings  
25A Crescent Drive #185  
Pleasant Hill CA 94523

Any questions may be sent to the above address, or emailed to: [kinura@earthlink.net](mailto:kinura@earthlink.net)

P.S. (R.P.) And if this isn't enough, a SECOND CD is in the works!  
As the old saying goes, "FABULOUS!!!"

# W

# ELTE-MIGNON PLAYER PIANO / PHONOGRAPH

**Reprinted from May-June 1990 AMICA Bulletin  
Submitted by Mark Reinhart**

Among the more interesting concepts in automatic musical instruments is the player piano-phonograph combination. The Apollo piano-phonograph combination was marketed with some success but remains today largely a novelty from an earlier era. The use of the player piano and phonograph together was considered viable by the QRS Co., with the manufacturer issuing a series of 88-note rolls which were played as accompaniment to specific Victor records. The QRS Victor accompaniment rolls were without automatic expression leaving the dynamics as well as synchronization of roll and record up to the skill of the piano operator. The QRS Victor rolls are scarce today but then as now suffer from pitch variation due to record speed and/or piano tuning and synchronization problems between roll and record.

The problem of synchronization was studied by many experts of the era. Charles Stoddard, primary inventor of the Ampico, built a workable 88-note piano-phonograph which was reviewed by a trade publication circa 1913. Stoddard was not known to have marketed the device. The Aeolian Co. was also active in the study of player piano-phonograph synchronization. The Aeolian Co. was assigned a series of patents from the late teens granted to many of the same Aeolian engineers active in the development of the Duo-Art. The Aeolian Co. was not known to have sold or even publicly displayed any such instruments.

Edwin Welte whose highly successful piano, organ and orchestrion business was active in many areas of musical technology studied the problem of roll synchronization. In 1914 before departing for Europe, Edwin Welte filed a series of applications for patents. Among his inventions for which he was later granted patents was a device to synchronize the movement of a music roll with a motor shaft. This device had broad applications for synchronizing the likes of roll operated

organs and motion picture film. The same synchronization device had applications to phonograph and piano control. During Edwin Welte's absence Heinrich Bockisch continued to develop the technology. Heinrich Bockisch was the brother of Karl Bockisch, Edwin Welte's brother-in-law. Heinrich Bockisch filed for and was granted a few patents further simplifying the synchronization system. It was probably during 1916 or 1917 that the Welte-Mignon phonograph combination was reduced to practice. This system utilized a specially coded red paper (T-100) Welte-Mignon roll to not only accompany but synchronize with phonograph records.

There are currently no known surviving Welte-Mignon pianos with the synchronization mechanism. A handful of these strange synchronized (T-100) Welte-Mignon rolls have survived to give evidence that a working model was built. Adding to the mystery is the fact that no literature is known which lists this series of rolls. This in turn adds to the speculation that the piano(s) were displayed but not offered to the public for sale. Since the technology predates Gittins' control of M. Welte and Sons, Inc. it is possible that what survives was dispersed after Gittins acquired the firm, during the reorganization. This is only speculation at this time. Also of note is the fact that the technology was not applied to the Licensee format Welte-Mignon rolls.

Charles Davis Smith, the noted Duo-Art author, who is preparing a comprehensive book on the Welte-Mignon musicians, composers, history with a complete listing of all recordings has been consulted about these strange anomalies. Mr. Smith states that only a limited number of recordings have been identified and that no literature citing them has yet surfaced. Smith explained that the known Welte-Mignon catalog literature throughout the teens era contains no mention of the Welte-Mignon phonograph

record accompaniment series.

Mr. Smith explained that two different series of accompaniment rolls were prepared by M. Welte & Sons, Inc., Poughkeepsie. The 8000 series was assigned to accompaniment rolls for selected Victor issues and the 8500 series for Edison issues. At this time the only recordings identified are those which have been brought to the attention of Smith.

The reason for distinguishing between the two series is because each requires a phonograph specific to the record type. Victor records were laterally cut and played with steel needles. Edison discs (as opposed to cylinders) were heavy vertically cut discs played with a permanent diamond stylus and incorporating radial reproducer feed. Both Edison discs and Victor records were played at a recommended 80 rpms. The piano portion of the synchronization mechanisms would have been the same but the phonographs would have to have been built specific to the desired record type.

The photographs illustrate an example from the Victor accompaniment series. The synchronization device is actuated from a repeating slot using the normally blank treble hole No. 9. The perforation runs throughout the roll approximately one inch on and one inch off. It is the slot which produces the regular rhythmic pulse which triggers the synchronization between the piano and phonograph drive. The particular example shown here has a pencil line drawn across a blank section of paper before the first trigger slots which is believed to indicate the start position.

A number of features suggest that the surviving rolls were not a regular production item. Many T-100 (red paper) rolls cut in the US have the number and often initials (the perforator operator?) with the date of cutting on the back of the leader. The example shown here has the instrument series identified and title

information suggesting that the cutting was not familiar or common to the operator.

While as yet no surviving Welte-Mignon player phonograph combination is known to have survived either whole or in part hopefully the day will soon come when one is identified. Perhaps a collector reading this has a Welte piano with some strange unidentified mechanism, or a phonograph with pneumatic controls.

It seems likely that the actual system

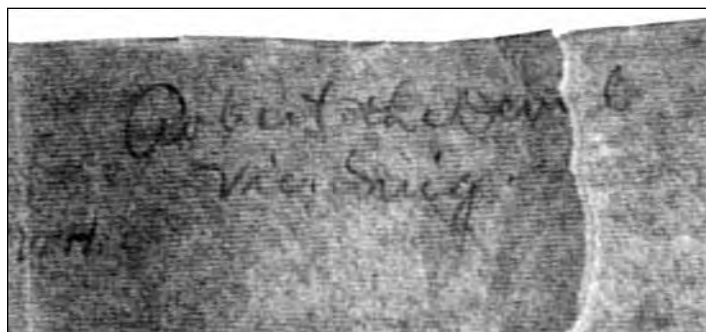
was probably built as a prototype on an experimental basis. Whether the device was actually exhibited at the Fifth Avenue showroom or merely retained at the Poughkeepsie factory for testing, it is impossible to say absent any additional facts. The sale of the Welte assets and Gittins control of the company only clouds the picture. It is possible that the rolls were circulated after the sale during the liquidation and consolidation of M. Welte and Sons, Inc. into the Welte-Mignon Corporation.

Any additional information or even roll titles are needed for verification of the material already compiled by Charles Smith, since all of this material will be included in Smith's work on the Welte-Mignon. Charles Davis Smith can be reached at 914 Norumbega Drive, Monrovia, California 91016.

I too would enjoy corresponding with collectors who have an interest in this subject matter. I can be reached at 118 North Lawrence Street, Charles Town, West Virginia 25414.



*The roll label affixed to the fabric leader on Number 8011. Note the composer error which should correctly read Meyerbeer. Victor record 88365 is sung by contralto Margarete Matzenauer.*

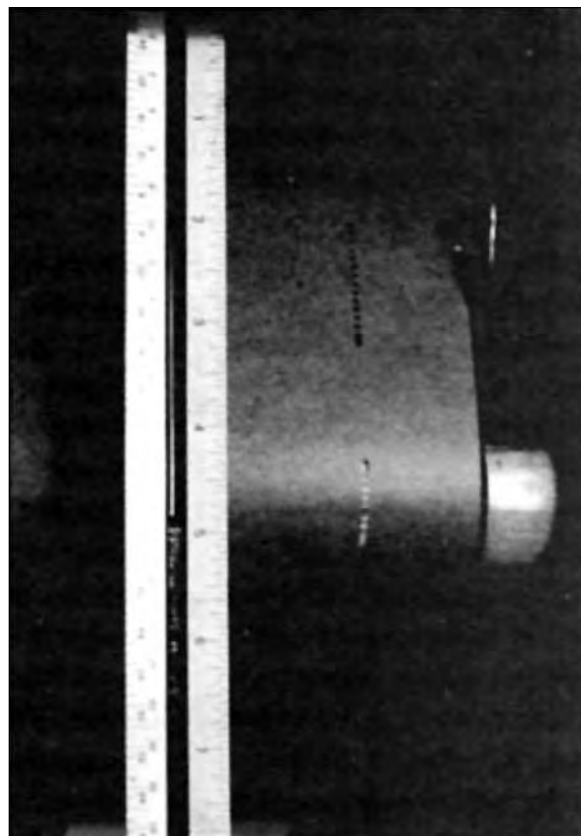


*The reverse side of the leader showing the inscription of the title, Vic. Mig., and initials V.H. written in pencil.*

*The synchronization slots which begin before the first playing notes. The ruler is shown for perspective. The first slot is slightly longer than the rest. It is thought that the first slot is used to cue the two systems.*



*The start of the roll showing the pencil mark which precedes the first of the synchronization slots. The roll travels from bottom to top.*



APPENDIX OF PATENTS ASSIGNED TO  
M. WELTE & SONS, INC. AND WELTE - MIGNON CORP.  
DIRECTED TO SYNCHRONIZATION

US Pat. No. 1,325,066 -Edwin Welte - filed 11. June. 1914

US Pat. No. 1,279,639 -H. Bockisch - filed 20. April. 1916

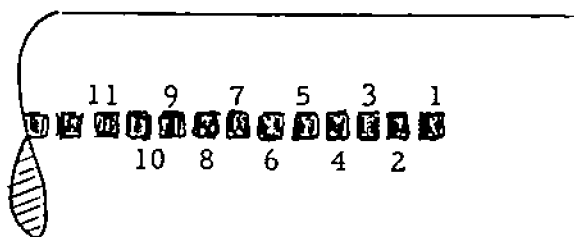
US Pat. No. 1,279,640 -H. Bockisch - filed 20. April. 1916

US Pat. No. 1,324,779 -H. Bockisch - filed 15. Dec. 1917

US Pat. No. 1,470,551 -H. Bockisch - filed 21. April. 1920

US Pat. No. 1,479,425 -H. Bockisch - filed 21. April. 1920

WELTE-MIGNON PLAYER PIANO/PHONOGRAPH  
TRACKER BAR LAYOUT



1. mezzo-forte off (p)
2. mezzo-forte on (f)
3. crescendo off (p)
4. crescendo on (f)
5. sfzorzando off (p)
6. sfzorzando on (f)
7. sust. ped. off
8. sust. ped. on
9. normally blank synchronization hole
10. reroll
11. highest playing note

*The synchronization is enabled by a repeating slot running roughly one inch cut then one inch blank for treble hole number 9. The regular actuation triggers the synchronization system between piano and phonograph. The reproducing characteristic of the Welte-Mignon T-100 (red paper) is not altered by the synchronization device.*

*The synch slot shown during play of the music. The channel runs the entire length of the roll.*





MEANS FOR SYNCHRONIZING THE OPERATIONS OF SOUND PRODUCING INSTRUMENTS AND MOVING PICTURE APPARATUS OR OTHER MOVING PARTS.

1,325,066.

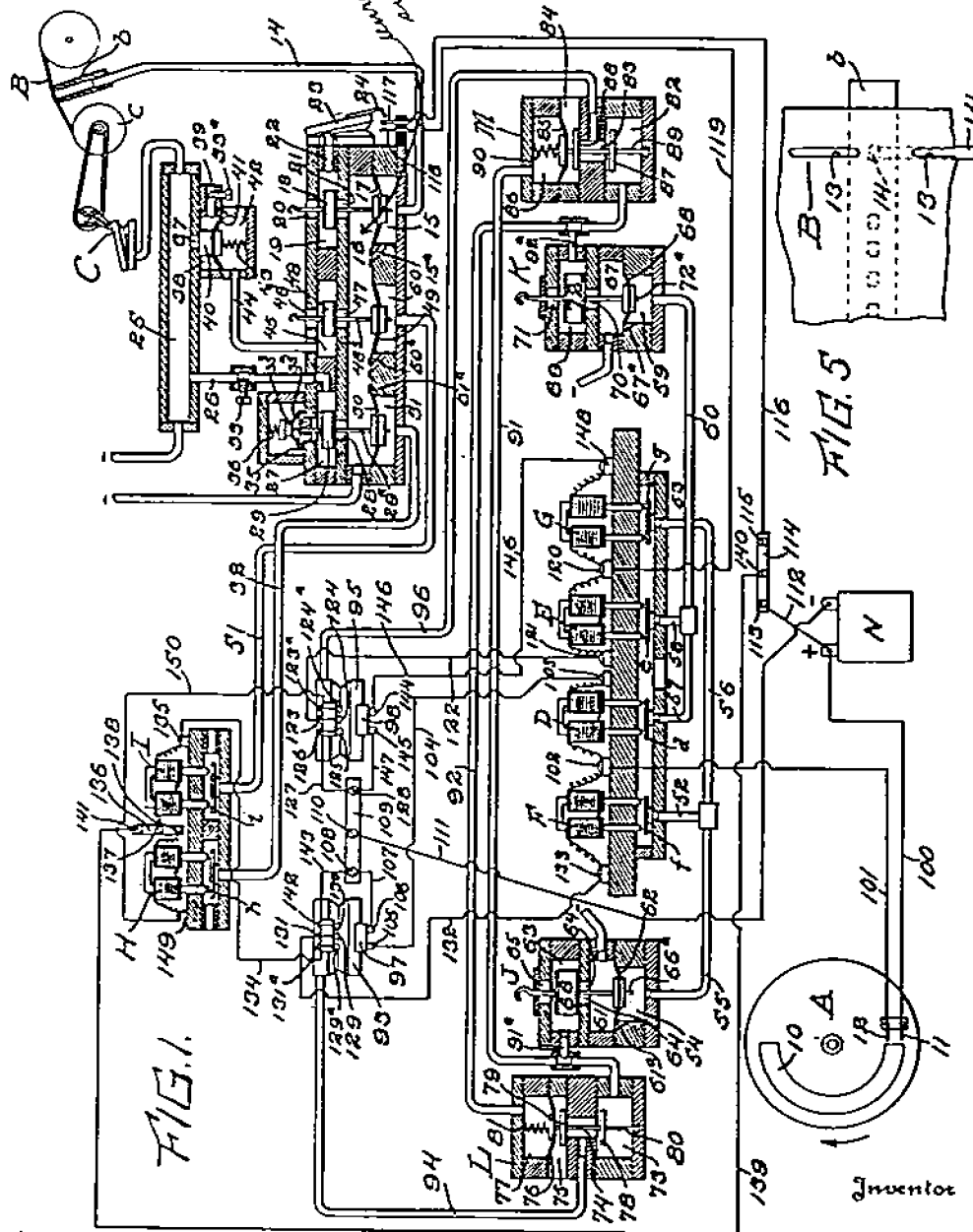
2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.



H. BOCKISCH.  
MECHANISM FOR SYNCHRONIZING THE OPERATIONS OF MOVING PARTS.  
APPLICATION FILED APR. 20, 1916. RENEWED DEC. 20, 1917.

1,279,640.

Patented Sept. 24, 1918.  
2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.



Witnesses  
A. M. Trogner

Heinrich Bockisch  
by C. J. Stockman Attorney

# WELTE-MIGNON PIANO COMBINATION

Reprinted from May-June 1990 AMICA Bulletin

By Robin Pratt - Thanks to Wayne Edmonston and Joe Bailey

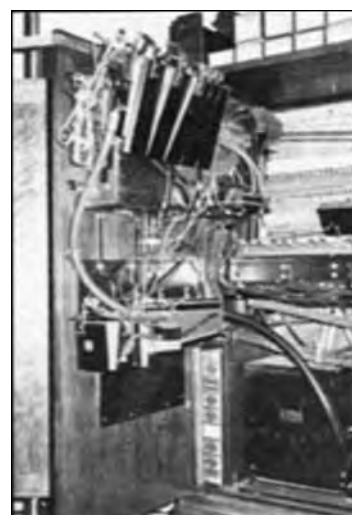
After receiving the incredible article regarding the WELTE Accompaniment roll device for use with Victor Phonograph records, I had to contact Wayne Edmonston and Dr. Joseph Bailey to see if they still owned the piano-phonograph combination that I saw in a video tape of their collection sent to me by Ray Siou. A quick telephone call and here are the results. Incredible photos of an even more incredible instrument! Thanks to Mark Reinhart for all of the in depth research in the preceding article and to Wayne and Joe for sharing this!

The Combination is in a finely trimmed Mediterranean Style cabinet with quarter-sawn burl doors. The unit is 54" high, 42" wide and 22" deep. The piano was manufactured by Kohler and Campbell with serial number H1376

(ca. 1928). It contains an RCA 6 tube Radio No. 047856 and a 78 rpm Brunswick phonograph with a 12" speaker. The reproducing system is the Welte-Mignon and is about 3/4 size of a full Licensee. The piano has only 61 notes, however, it plays all of the notes of an 83-note roll by having the extra notes teed or coupled to the octave. It is fully automatic with regard to the player unit, however, the phonograph is a single play type turntable, but with electric pick-up.

Inside there is a small keyboard of 61 notes for tuning only. Above is roll storage and below are 12" albums for disc storage. The Combination was originally listed at \$4200.00 which is approx. \$46,000.00 today! Only 15 were made and four are known to exist today. This unit was originally located in Chicago, Illinois, and

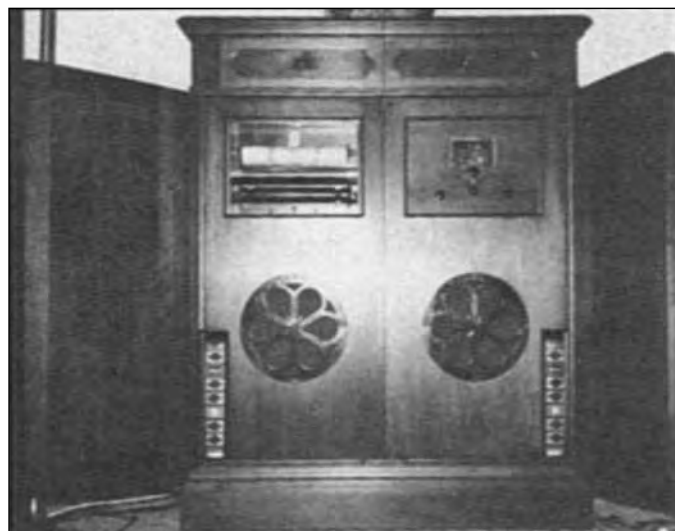
was purchased most recently from the late Mr. Bob Hutchinson of Orlando, Florida. The Welte Reproducing Piano Combination has had an impeccable restoration and is as new. Beautiful to the eye as well as the ear!



Rear view of the roll drive/spool box area. Lower unit is governor and automatic rewind/repeat.



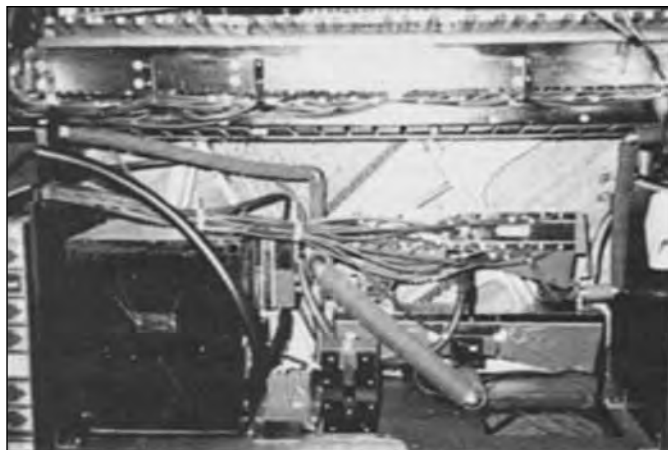
View of cabinet with detailing of fine wood in Italian style case. Walnut with burl panels. Height is size of standard upright player 54".



With both doors open, unit appears "stereo", but only speaker on right is real. Radio is Short Wave and AM only. Notice wood on inside (!) of door. Top folds back for access to Brunswick Phonograph and roll storage.



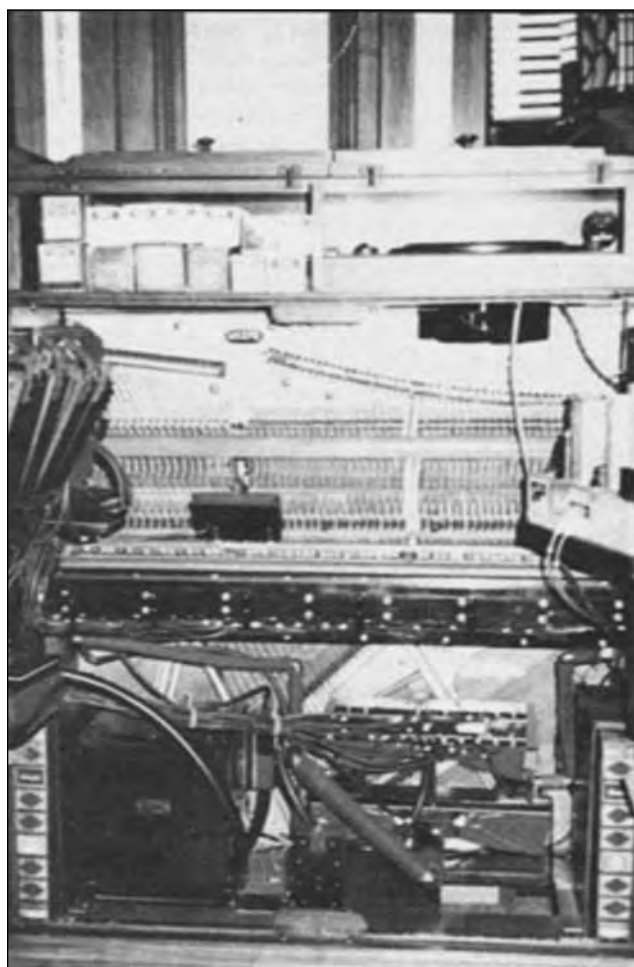
*Close-up of Brunswick electric pick-up single play Phonograph.*



*Lower unit view showing the turbine vacuum pump, the 3/4 size Welte-Licensee reproducing unit as well as the tiny stack above.  
There is a hole in the bottom on the right for ventilation as well as sound.*

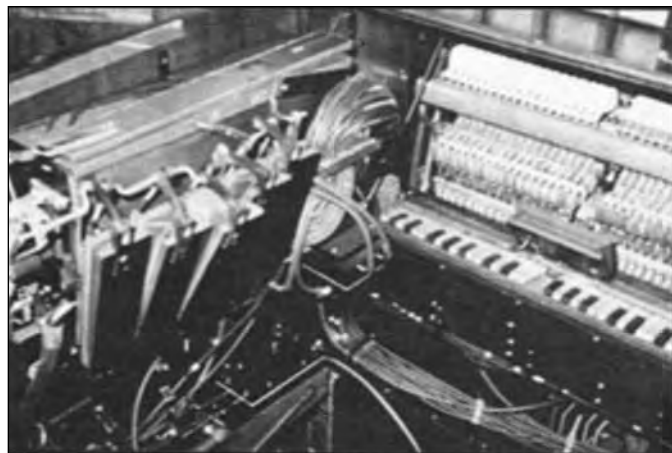


*View of 12" speaker and tube chassis of RCA Radio/Amplifier for Phonograph.*



*A full frontal, showing the roll storage area and Phonograph with separate fold back covers. Notice that the piano is actually smaller than 54" due to the top area. Piano is a delight and the Brunswick Phonograph/RCA Radio has a rich, full sound that must have thrilled the customers in 1928! The absolute best of all worlds at that time. . . and maybe even now!*

*View showing miniature keyboard for tuning and soft pedal pneumatic sitting upon miniature pneumatic stack. Note tracking mechanism sits on top of the entire spool box!*



# IN MEMORY

## BOB McCORD

May 12, 2008

### Passing of Bob McCord, California Collector

*Sent in by Frank & Shirley Nix*

The world of mechanical music, and indeed the world itself, lost a good friend with the death on May 12th of Bob McCord, of Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease, a brain disorder contracted by less than one in a million people. Bob was a one-of-a-kind guy, and everyone who came in contact with him will never forget him, or run out of stories to tell about him. His first love was originally circus memorabilia, but when he discovered mechanical music he jumped in with both feet and amassed a super collection in a very short time.

He was enthusiastic about everything he did, and he put the town of Calabasas, California, on the map when he opened his Sagebrush Cantina in 1974. His generosity was legendary, from sending money to schools in small, poor villages in Africa, hosting toy drives, buying a bobsled for the Jamaica bobsled team,

having free Thanksgiving turkey dinners for every senior who came by, and the list goes on and on.

Bob traveled extensively, and enjoyed everywhere he went. Those of us who knew him will miss him greatly, but he will live on in the minds and hearts, and in the "Bob" stories.

*Sent in by another AMICA Member*

Amica has lost a good member and friend in Bob McCord, who died from a rare brain disease.

Bob had long been a collector or circus memorabilia, and had become enamored of automatic music several years ago. He had amassed a fine collection, ranging from a reproducing piano to very large Mortier organs. He had appeared at our organ rallies in Descanso Gardens with his Verbeeck organ, and was always a big hit.

His generosity to our members in the form of Fabulous buffet meals at the Sagebrush Cantina at very low price, often below his cost I'm sure, was legendary. We had a meeting at his home where he showed off his collection, both of automatic music and of Beringer motions, along with collections of all types of good "stuff". I think Bob never saw anything interesting he couldn't start a collection of.



He was one of the most interesting characters we had ever met, and we'll miss him terribly.

## CALABASAS LESS COLORFUL WITHOUT MCCORD

*By Dennis McCarthy*

It didn't surprise any of Bob McCord's friends that they're old pal died cussing. The colorful owner of the Sagebrush Cantina in Calabasas was never one for mincing words. He let you know exactly what was on his mind, they say.

And what was on his mind last Monday, just before the end came, was cursing his rotten luck.

"The odds were one in a million, and Bob was that one," said longtime friend and co-worker Don Janiro.



McCord, 69 died of a rare, incurable brain disease called Creutzfeldt-Jakob. Worldwide, one person in a million gets it per year.

Bob McCord got it.

If you've ever stopped by the Sagebrush for a combination plate and a beer, you probably saw Bob. He was wearing a Hawaiian shirt and laughing.

The man who put Calabasas on the map, says Don Sanelli, another longtime friend.

"Calabasas was a hole in the wall until Bob opened the Sagebrush in 1974," he said. "Very little traffic was coming to this side of the freeway.

"When a lot of people started coming to sit out on the patio on warm nights, enjoying themselves, other restaurants and stores started opening in the area.

"He was the catalyst who created Calabasas."

McCord was flush with money in 1974 when he first laid eyes on the little, family-owned Mexican restaurant for sale with the old hanging tree out front.

He was a former sound man on the "Death Valley Days" TV show and had just received a nice settlement check after suffering injuries in a plane crash in Arizona while looking for remote locations to shoot the show.

Two of the men in the plane died in the crash. McCord suffered a broken back and ankle, surviving for two days in 110-

degree heat during the day and freezing temperatures at night until help came.

"It turned out the plane's location transponder didn't work, so Bob got a settlement and bought the little restaurant," Sanelli said.

It had four booths, three tables, seven bar stools and sawdust on the floor.

"One day I was moving the tables outside to sweep up the old sawdust, and when I went outside to bring the tables back in, people were sitting in them," McCord told me in 2004, celebrating 30 years in business.

"They had been driving by, saw it was a Mexican restaurant with tables outside, and decided to stop and have lunch," he said.

That's how the Sagebrush Cantina's famous patio dining started. By accident.

The restaurant quickly became a popular local hangout and a place where McCord could display and store collectibles from his real passion in life – the circus.

"He had two old Ferris wheels, a merry-go-round, band organs and the largest collection of circus banners in the world," said Janiro, who delivered the first 15 cases of beer to the new cantina when it opened.

"Bob had one Ferris wheel working for a while, but nobody would go on it but him because we were all scared it was going to fall apart." Janiro laughed at the

memory.

McCord quickly gained a Wild West reputation with his customers, but behind the scenes his reputation with other local merchants and city officials was as the guy who got things done.

"He had a heart as big as the sky," said Toby Keeler, chairman of Spotlight the Arts Foundation in Calabasas. "When he got behind something, he really got behind it. Whether it was fighting for Calabasas cityhood, establishing Old Town Calabasas or supporting the arts, Bob would do whatever it cost."

McCord – who is survived by his mother, Wanda McCord; sister, Penny, and son, Robbie – didn't like to talk about his charitable work because he thought it sounded too much like bragging, and Bob hated braggarts.

After a trip to Africa in 1998, he spent thousands of dollars to buy school supplies and equipment for kids living in two poor villages in Zambia.

He hosted local toy drives every year for kids and fed every senior citizen who walked into his place or Thanksgiving a free, hot turkey dinner.

"Somebody this week said it was sad that Bob died in the twilight of his years, just as he was beginning to enjoy life," Janiro said.

"Well, he enjoyed more life in 69 years than the rest of us could in 100," he said.

R.I.P., Bob. You were one of a kind.



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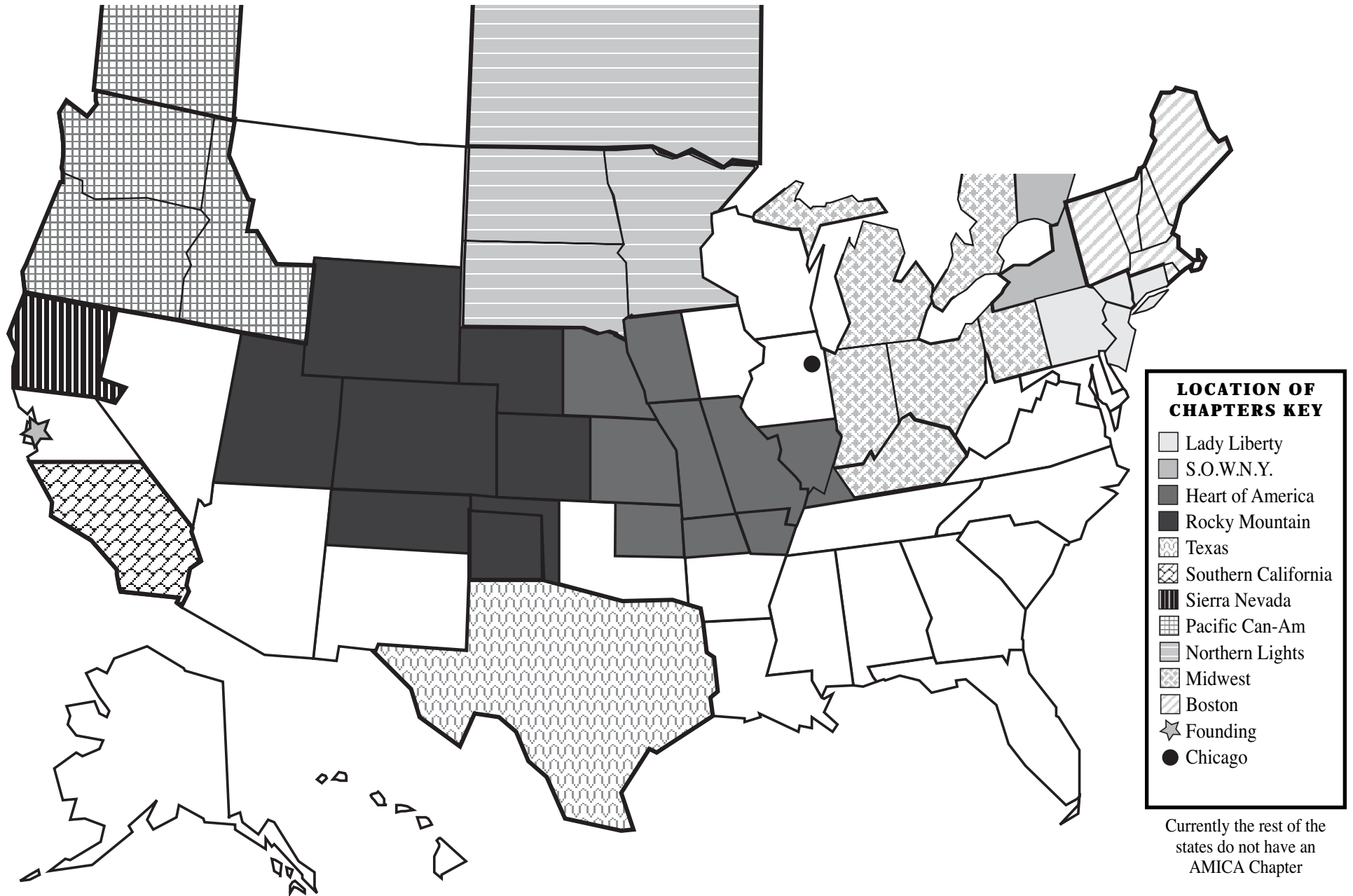
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# MAP of the AMICA Chapters



# News From The Chapters



## CHICAGO AREA CHAPTER

*Reporter: Curt Clifford*

*President: Jerry Biasella*

**SATURDAY - MARCH 29, 2008**

About 27 people attended the March dinner/theater evening in Chicago. A majority of the group dined together at Las Tablas Colombian steak house. We then went to the show across the street in a lovely theater on the second floor of the La Salle Bank. The silent movie "The Black Pirate" had plenty of swashbuckling adventure laced with humor, romance and suspense. It featured two full-scale ships and one of the very first color movies (shot in 2 strip Technicolor which is said to produce an eerie, dreamlike quality). David Drazin, an accomplished pianist from Evanston, IL, was just fabulous as the accompanist for the movie. His terrific original score drew from many sources, some quite familiar. In addition to the 94 minute film we saw a Mexican short called "La Cucaracha" with lots of music, amor and dancing. What was not to love? A great old movie on the big screen with live music for only \$3 per person

Prior to the movie, we had the theater to ourselves for a half hour. Our new President **Jerry Biasella** called the meeting to order. The minutes of our last meeting were read by the Secretary and approved. Minutes of this meeting will be posted on our web site in about a week.

Our next meeting will be hosted on Sunday June 8, 2008 by **Paul and Cynthia Mayer** in their home in Oswego, IL about 5 miles south of Aurora. Jerry Biasella has talked with **Ed Lisauskas** about hosting a future meeting at his warehouse on So. Western Avenue in the city. **Paul Meyer** suggested a meeting with CATOE when they next have an event in St. Charles. Lots of possibilities!!!



*LaSalle Bank*

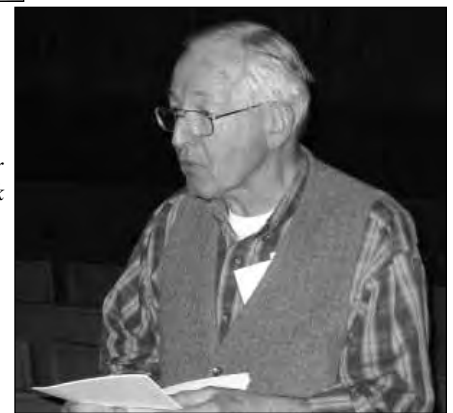


*President Jerry Biasella*



*Secretary Carol Veone*

*Treasurer  
Joe Pekarek*



## June Meeting

About a dozen people attended the June meeting, held at the home of **Paul and Cynthia Mayer**. After a very threatening beginning, the weather co-operated enough to allow us to enjoy our meal in the Mayers' beautiful and spacious back yard.

Paul Mayer offered a presentation on the Recordo piano expression system, using his 1929 Wurlitzer baby grand to demonstrate the rolls. He explained that the Recordo system has a 98 hole tracker bar, with five holes at either end used to control roll operation and provide the expression. He also described the history of Recordo roll-making as it moved from manufacturer to manufacturer.

Vice president **Richard VanMetre** then conducted a brief business meeting. In the absence of Secretary **Carol Veome**, **Margaret Bisberg** was drafted to take the minutes. Due to the

absence of both the Secretary and the Treasurer no reports were offered.

New Business: New Chicago AMICA member **Warren Stiska** has 65 note Aeolian rolls available for any one who can use them. He had purchased them thinking that they would be piano rolls, but they have very wide holes and use pins at either end.

Next Meeting: Vice President VanMetre said that he is working on it. Watch this space.

The meeting was then adjourned so that attendees could tour the Mayers' Louisiana plantation-style house and view Paul's Thorens automatic changer record player.

*Our hosts Paul and Cynthia Mayer.*



*Paul Mayer demonstrates his 1929 Wurlitzer Recordo*



*The Mayers' Louisiana Plantation style home*



*Chicago members gather for a short business meeting.*



*The Mayers' 1929 Wurlitzer*



## **LADY LIBERTY CHAPTER**

*Reporter: Buzz Rosa*

President: Vincent Morgan - [vincentmorgan@gmail.com](mailto:vincentmorgan@gmail.com)

### **January 2008 to April 2008**

On January 5th the Lady Liberty Chapter had their winter meeting at the beautiful home of **Paul Cancia** and **Dennis Westerzelt** in Wyckoff New Jersey.

On March 29th we had a birthday party for our president **Vince Morgan** who turned 60 years old.

And on April 26th we had our Spring meet at the home of **Joe and Judy Hanulec** in Shoreham N.Y.

My thanks to Vince Morgan and **Bill Maguire** for providing photographs to make these reports complete.

-Buzz Rosa





*Dennis Westerzelt and Paul Cancia greet AMICA members in front of the Hupfeld Phonoliszt Violina. A fine collection of restored antique radios are on the shelves.*



*The pool tables comes in handy to demonstrate 2 unusual instruments-the Stroh Violin and the 1912 Le- Talmodian*



*Paul demonstrates one of the loudest acoustically amplified phonographs ever made by Victor - The Auxetophone.*

*Vince and Maryam Morgan and Bill Maguire stand behind an all brass 10 roll Concertola which operates the Steinway Duo-Art remotely.*



*Paul shows how the violin part of the Le-Talmodian was fitted with a reproducer. The back of the violin was used as soundboard as it played the disk.*



*A view of the needle and reproducer*



*The Le-Talmodian plays violin and piano selections equally well*





*Vince Morgan plays Happy Birthday on his Castlewood Organ during his birthday party on March 29th.*

*Ira Malek was the first contestant of the player piano pumper competition.*



*Walter Kehoe and Joe Hanulec greet visitors in front of the Wurlitzer Pianorchestra Model 33A.*

*Joe Hutter selected a roll with words to gain points from the judges for presentation.*



*Paul Manganaro concentrates on foot expression, sustain and quiet pedal controls to add a human touch to his presentation.*



*John Sanfilippo plays requests on the Steinway XR as Janet comes up with new titles.*



*Joe Hanulec presented a workshop on how to measure pouch leakage accurately before final assembly of the pneumatic stack.*



*Dianne Polan and Ira Malek discuss relative merits of the members of the pumper competition*



*Dianne Polan enjoys the results of 12 years of restoration by Walter and Joe to return the Pianorchestra to its former glory*



*Dave Palter inspects the Wurlitzer roll changer through the front access door.*



*Vince Morgan presents the first place award to Joe Hutter for the best piano pumping as voted by the judges.*



*John Dousmanis and his mother Violet wait for the next contestant to compete in the pumper contest.*



*Barbara Lee is entertained by the Violano-Virtuoso for the first time*



*Judges scored each performance for presentation, Dynamic range, and Talent*



*Maryam Morgan takes care of the attendance and dues while Bill Maguire takes care of dessert.*

*Walter Kehoe, Bob and Joe Hanulec at the close of a fine meeting.*



*AMICA members search carefully for the missing motor and rotary pump as the Steinway continues to play selected rolls.*



*Joe answers questions from Ira about the restoration of the Pianorchestra*

## NORTHERN LIGHTS CHAPTER

*Reporter: Jerrilynn Boehland*

President: Paul Watkins - bpwatkins@usinternet.com

The Northern Lights Chapter gathered at the home of **Bob and Kathryn Dumas** in Long Lake, Minnesota on Sunday, June 8, 2008 for our summer meeting. Bob and Kathryn live on a working apple farm, and have many interests, hobbies, talents, and collections. Bob conducted a walking tour of the grounds, which included a collection of restored 1930's farm machinery, and a three story Victorian play house, which he built himself for his grandchildren. Inside, we were treated to a G-gauge garden railway, carousel horses (carved by Bob), and his latest project: A hand-built crank monkey organ. During our social hour, we listened to a 1920 Barton Theater O-roll player pipe organ (3/12 including an accordion), 1925 5'6" Marshall & Wendell Ampico A, Mason & Hamlin Pianocorder Piano 5'6" converted to MIDI, and a custom O-roll orchestrion built by Bob.

A beautiful buffet was provided by Kathryn and the participants. **Paul Watkins** conducted a business meeting on the deck assisted by Secretary **Michael LuBrant**.



*Our hosts, Bob and Kathryn Dumas.*





*Bob and the Victorian playhouse he built.*



*Paul Watkins and Michael LuBrant conducting the business meeting on the Dumas' deck.*



## PACIFIC CAN-AM CHAPTER

*Reporter: Peg Kehret*

Co-Presidents: Carl & Halie Dodrill



*Bob discussing the Barton theater organ with Don Barton and Tim Wheat.*



*Two examples from a talented craftsman: One of Bob's carousel horses and one of his orchestrions.*

Pacific Can-Am chapter members and guests were warmly welcomed on June 22 to the home of **David Goodwin** and **Larry Sanchez** in Federal Way, Washington. We enjoyed listening to a 1919 Weber Duo-Art upright, a 1930 Marshall and Wendell Ampico A upright, a 1924 Hobart Cable player and a 1936 Chickering Ampico B grand. All of Dave and Larry's instruments are fully restored and have a full, rich sound. Their home is filled with interesting collections, including Wizard of Oz and Lucille Ball memorabilia in the home theater. David's player piano workshop presently contains a piano that he is restoring for his parents.

Our meeting included a report by **Kurt Morrison** of the regular demonstrations of the Ampico piano at the Paramount Theater in Seattle. The piano is played for the public an average of ten times each month. **Mark Smithberg** and **Ron Babb** brought us up to date on the status of the piano our chapter is restoring for the Radio Museum in Bellingham. We hope to complete that project this summer. Plans for our Mechanical Music Festival in Leavenworth WA on Aug. 15-17 include moving a player piano to the site so that people can pump it there. Band organs and small organs will be played both Saturday and Sunday. We congratulated **Carl Dodrill** for his Pipe Organ Foundation's installation of a pipe organ in a New Orleans church.

Our host, David Goodwin, accompanied by **Halie Dodrill**, entertained us with two beautiful violin solos. There is a lot of talent in this group! There are also a lot of good cooks, as evidenced by the delicious potluck meal that concluded our day.





*Our host, Larry Sanchez, introduces Sugar and Bella to Jackie Slosson.*

*Fran and Maury Willyard chat with Halie Dodrill during the social hour.*



*Ron Babb welcomed our guest, Stu Swanberg.*

*David Goodwin, accompanied by Halie Dodrill, entertained us with two beautiful violin solos.*



*We all admired the current restoration in David's wonderful workshop.  
From left: Brian Tate, Mark Smithberg, David Goodwin, and Ron Babb.*



*Mark Smithberg and Rob Wilson select rolls at the mart.*



## SIERRA-NEVADA CHAPTER

*Reporter: Nadine Motto-Ros*

President: John Motto-Ros - (209) 267-9252

On Saturday, June 21, we met at the home of John and **Nadine Motto-Ros** in Sutter Creek, California. As with most of California, the weather was HOT, HOT, HOT!

We were able to make it most of the day outside—thanks to the umbrellas, sprinklers on the bank behind the patio and a large fan.

Prior to lunch, we listened to the Marshall & Wendell Ampico B, the Mason & Hamlin Upright Grand with PianoDisc, and the Cremona G playing that hot tune “Mama’s Got ‘Em.”

After a barbeque lunch outside, we moved indoors for a business meeting. John welcomed new International members **Marc Leukhardt** from Vallejo, CA, and **Everett & Nelleen Davis** from nearby Jackson, CA. We can’t say enough about Everett. Last year he inherited a family player piano. Armed with Art Reblitz’ “Player Piano Servicing and Rebuilding” and a visit with restorers **Bob & Sonja Lemon** in Sacramento for some additional guidance, his piano is restored and playing beautifully. Of course, Everett has built three airplanes (real ones)—still flies one, and he has restored several vintage automobiles including the 1934 Ford 4-door sedan (see accompanying photo). All of this and 87 years’ young. John discussed the recently added Members-Only section on the AMICA Web Page, pointing out where to find the current username/password and encouraging everyone to check it out.

For show and tell, **Ray Fairfield** brought a musical photo album he recently restored, and we all agreed that he did a beautiful job (see accompanying photo).

After the meeting, we moved downstairs to the music room for some live music with **Tom Brier** playing the 88-note Aeolian pumper accompanied by **Julia Riley** on flute. We enjoyed a great selection of songs, everything from ragtime to popular selections for the teens and twenties. It was a great treat to hear these two very talented musicians; both Tom and Julia will be appearing at the popular West Coast Ragtime Festival in Sacramento this November.



*Vickie Mahr, Doug Mahr and Ray Fairfield in the food line.*



*In the music room with Tom Brier at the piano and Julia Riley on flute.*



*Hosts Nadine and John Motto-Ros with new member Marc Leukhardt.*



*On the patio—Tom Brier, Bonnie Gonzalez, Everett Davis, Nelleen Davis, Karen Simons, Lewis Motisher, Bob Gonzalez with Nadine Motto-Ros in the background.*



*Everett Davis, Tom Brier behind chair, Bonnie Gonzalez and Tockhwock checking out Ray Fairfield's musical photo album, Ray Fairfield, and Julia Riley.*



*Everett Davis and John Motto-Ros with Everett's 1934 Ford Sedan.*

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(6-08)

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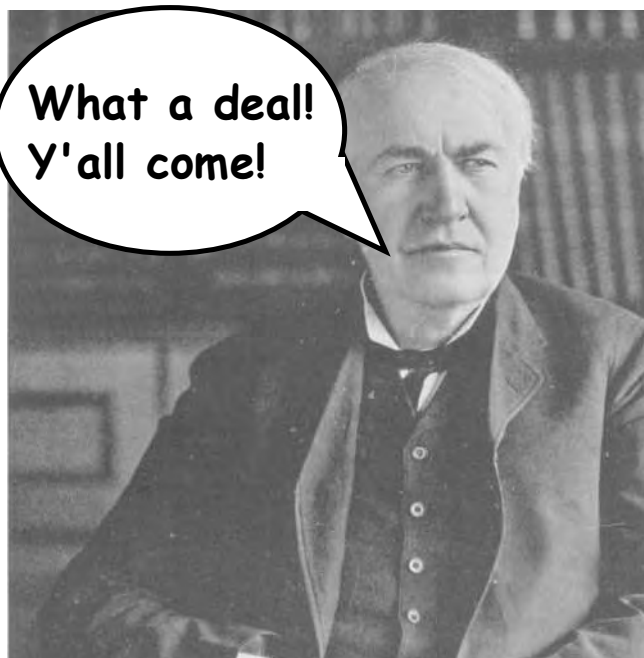
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(Rev. 5-05)

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- Douglas Adams

## FOR SALE

**CECILIAN PIANO PLAYER FOR SALE** - Best Offer. Farrand paper label shows #10129 and inspection signature for cabinet. Inquire for photos and further information at [bobkelly561@yahoo.com](mailto:bobkelly561@yahoo.com) (4-08)

**HUGE MECHANICAL MUSIC ARCHIVE** for sale! The lifetime collection of restorer Mr. Werner Baus contains over 300 books, 120 folders, extensive advertising, videos, interviews with Messrs. Imhof, Voight, Popper, and others, 400 original postcards, etc. Includes material on band, street, and monkey organs, orchestrions, coin-op, reproducing and player pianos, etc. For information please contact [info@pianola.de](mailto:info@pianola.de) or [www.pianola.de](http://www.pianola.de) or Werner Baus, Helsaer Berg 3, Helsa 34298, Germany. Phone from USA: 011-49-0-5602-918833.(5-08)

**1932 MODEL B AMPICO 5'4"** Knabe Queen Anne (single leg) style walnut art case reproducing piano with my entire collection of over 200 Ampico rolls (mixed original and recut), including 9 jumbos. Player action was partially restored 45 years ago. All notes play, but rebuilding is needed. Refinished 16 years ago, the finish is no longer perfect but looks pretty good. Reasonably priced at \$3,900. Located in Oakland CA 510-655-6896 Email: [Dhhic@comcast.net](mailto:Dhhic@comcast.net) (4-08)

**1913 STEINWAY UPRIGHT** pump player with added Duo Art mechanism. The motor and pump are installed in a new and matching beautiful roll cabinet. The piano, cabinet, and player mechanism were completely rebuilt in 1989 by Harry Garrison and associates in Cincinnati. Approximately 2000 new and old 88 note and Duo Art rolls. Two other old roll cabinets and shelves are included. It is a fun and sensitive pumper, but sad to say, we are moving to a smaller home. \$30,000. Bob Howard, 4106 Chesapeake Ave., Hampton VA, 757-723-0364, [thehowards1@cox.net](mailto:thehowards1@cox.net) (2-09)

**AMPICO ROLL CABINET**, Italian Renaissance Model, light honey walnut, hand carved, with Ampico decal and double dolphin key for door pull, holds 110 rolls, absolutely beautiful and in mint condition. Pictured in article by Gerald Baisella, Ampico Bulletin volume 41, number 5, for September/October 2004 (picture courtesy of Jim Krughoff). Asking \$6000 at Williamsport, PA H. Kenneth Ruhl, 570-322-4869, [hkruhl@aol.com](mailto:hkruhl@aol.com) (4-08)

**SEEBURG “E”** with xylophone - Walnut case, Heller “A” roll piano with art glass scene; **WURLITZER** 1015 Jukebox; **CYLINDER MUSIC BOX 20 TUNE**, 2 tunes per turn, cylinder 7 1/2 inches long, lid with tune sheet \$3,000.00. All items professionally restored and refinished. J. Uhler, Box 126, Ingomar, PA 15127; 724-940-4331. (3-08)

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## WANTED

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