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# MARGUERITE VOLAVY

BOHEMIAN PIANIST

*Scores Emphatic Success in Her*

*Aeolian Hall Recital, January 29, 1921*

## WHAT THE CRITICS SAID:

"... She has a musical touch... nimble fingers... much of her work showed delicacy of feeling. The audience received her enthusiastically."  
New York Tribune, Jan. 30, 1921.

"... Plays with energy... glowing vitality that piques your interest."  
New York Evening Mail, Jan. 31, 1921.

"It was in an attractive program that Marguerite Volavy elected to demonstrate her pianistic skill at Aeolian Hall on Saturday evening, Jan. 29. That her recital aroused considerable interest was made manifest by the good attendance. The audience was emphatic in its repeated tributes to the player.

"Miss Volavy employs in her work a considerable dynamic scale. She is liberal with tone and looks frequently for massive effects. Her interpretations are intelligent and interesting.

"The Bach-Busoni Chaconne opened the recital. There was no hesitancy in the mode of attack. It was a Chaconne in primary colors. Andante in F, Beethoven; Rhapsodie in E Flat, Brahms, and Schubert's F Minor Impromptu formed a group that served to show something of the pianist's technical equipment. Two pieces by Josef Suk—Minuetto and 'Idyl of Spring'—were bracketed with Dvorak's 'Dalliance,' a work that was interestingly interpreted. There followed a Chopin group and a Taussig arrangement of the Strauss waltz, 'One Lives But Once.'"  
Musical America, Feb. 5, 1921.

"On Saturday evening, January 29, Marguerite Volavy, a pianist who is already known in the musical world as an artist of talent and ability, gave a most successful performance before a large and appreciative audience at Aeolian Hall. She displayed brilliancy and a rich tone, large in volume. Her technic was clean and clear, and her legato smooth."  
Musical Courier, Feb. 3, 1921.

## Press Notices of Former American and European Recital Appearances.

"The concerto introduced a pianiste, Marguerite Volavy,—well liked by the audiences. She responded to insistent applause by an encore."  
New York Times.

"The solo part of the concerto was rendered by Marguerite Volavy in a thoroughly interesting style."  
New York Sun.

"Miss Volavy played in a brilliant manner."

"Madame Volavy is an accomplished artist who plays with animation and skill."  
New York Herald.

New York Herald.  
New York Times.

"Marguerite Volavy, the Bohemian pianist, proved herself a most capable artist. Skill, precision and brilliance are hers, and in her playing there is no sign of feminine indecision."  
New York Tribune.

"Madame Marguerite Volavy is a pianiste of more than ordinary ability who combines a fine musical feeling with technical proficiency."  
New York Herald.

"Miss Volavy has genuine musical personality and knows how to bring out all the artistic charms; she revealed astonishing technical qualifications together with plenty of brains and temperament... she is no doubt one of the most masterly and striking pianistes ever heard here."  
Dallas (Tex.) Daily News.

"Miss Volavy displayed true artistic temperament and finished technic."  
Galveston (Tex.) Daily News.

"A pianist of the highest rank; the audience was enthusiastic over her work."  
Light, San Antonio.

"A masculine strength and brilliancy combined with feminine delicacy and sympathy distinguished her playing, while her technic is irreplaceable."  
Daily Item, Mobile, Ala.

"Miss Volavy proved to be an artist of rare ability." Montgomery (Ala.) Journal.  
"Miss Volavy gained immediate success through her glittering technic, perfect evenness of the difficult passage work and the extreme and perfect brilliancy of her artistic feeling."  
Julius Korngold in Neue Freie Presse, Vienna.



"A soulful tone with manly but delicate touch distinguished Miss Volavy's playing."  
Berliner Tageblatt.

"Miss Volavy's infallible technic, her impressive playing almost masculine in touch, could create only admiration. We met once again a talent of highest order."  
Hlas Naroda, Prague.

"Miss Volavy understands the giving of real values in her artistic and thoroughly musicianly renditions."  
Muenchener Neueste Nachrichten.

"Her playing was masterly in its artistry and impressed the audience profoundly."  
Il Momento, Turin.

"The certainty with which she overcame the greatest difficulties, her repose, her splendid musicianship, gave Miss Volavy not only an undoubted success but a great warmth of appreciation."  
Wiener Tageblatt.

"Because of her most wonderful art of touch and stupendous technic—we can not refrain from giving our fullest appreciation to this artist."  
Breslauer Zeitung.

"Miss Volavy impressed through her grace of manner and her presence and her technic is of equal perfection."  
Caffero, Genova.

"Miss Volavy played the Schumann Concerto under the wonderful direction of Safonoff. The brilliancy of her technic, and wonderful dramatic feeling combined with masculine strength remind one of Teresa Careno."  
Birzevia Vedomosti, St. Petersburg.

"Miss Volavy convinced through her grace of manner and impressive perfect playing that she is the real artist."  
Figaro, Paris.

Concert Direction—LOUDON CHARLTON, Carnegie Hall, New York City

# THE AMICA BULLETIN

## AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENT COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION

Published by the Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association, a non-profit, tax exempt group devoted to the restoration, distribution and enjoyment of musical instruments using perforated paper music rolls and perforated music books. AMICA was founded in San Francisco, California in 1963.

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### AMICA BULLETIN

Display and Classified Ads  
Articles for Publication  
Letters to the Publisher  
Chapter News

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The ads and articles must be received by the Publisher on the 1st of the

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March	September
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# President's Message

Since the late 1800s, player pianos have produced great music for the masses. From quiet country farm houses to noisy city tenements, player pianos have been the musical equalizers, making every man, woman and child a Rachmaninoff, Debussy or J. Russell Robinson at the touch of a pedal.

During their heyday in the 1920s, it has been said that every home had a player piano. That may have been a slight exaggeration, but I bet that it was pretty close to the truth.

If you couldn't afford a player piano, you certainly knew someone who had one. Both of my parents, while they were growing up, had players in their homes. My mother's family kept theirs in the parlor, my father had one in his bedroom. When I was about five, we acquired my great grandfather's player, a 1918 Beckwith. I was told that it was a wedding present for his third marriage (his fourth wife finally outlived him). I would spend many hours standing on the pedals and pump away (I was too short to sit on the bench and reach the pedals). I would play "Always", "Sweethearts on Parade", "Break the News to Mother", "Just for Me and Mary" and at least fifty more. Those were fond memories for me and I am sure that many of you also have similar fond memories of your first piano.

We are the current keepers of these memories. We hold in our homes an integral part of American history, the music of the first forty years of the 20th century. It is important that we preserve this part of our cultural heritage. Not only must we preserve it, but we must also share it with future generations. This is not always an easy task but it can be done and is being done. Band Organ rallies are a good way of bringing a wide variety of music to attendees. Placing a player piano in a museum makes another segment of the population aware of the instruments and music of the past. But one of the best ways of spreading the word is by bringing the music to the future generations on their own "turf", so to speak. Ray & Nancy Dietz of Virginia are doing just that. A couple of times each year they pack up their Marshall & Wendel Ampico grand and have it transported to various schools in their part of the state. Concerts, skits and sings-a-longs bring a hands-on introduction of a by-gone age to children of ALL ages. A fellow AMICAn in Michigan is going to do the same thing. Is anyone else doing something like this??

I have a couple of assignments for you. No quizzes today!

The first assignment is to find a favorite roll that you own and put it on your foot pumper and play it. Listen carefully to the melody line and the harmonies that are brought out. Don't pump too hard. Make the piano sing for you.

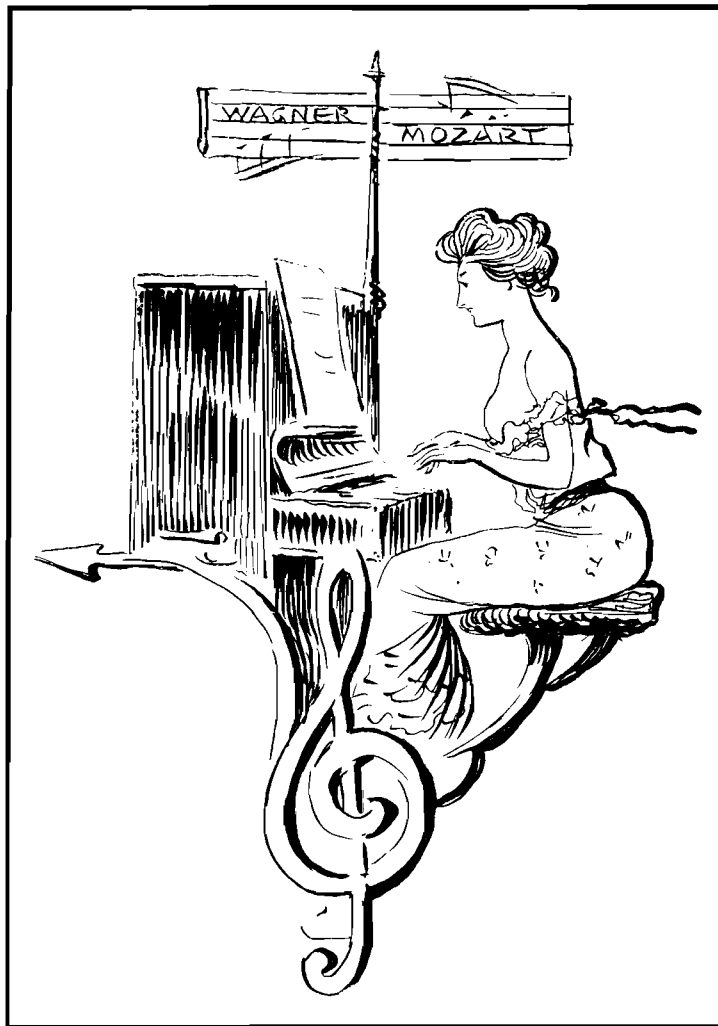
The second assignment is to tell us about your piano; how and why it is special to you, how you found it, or it found you. We would like to hear from you. You don't have to be a literary genius or an expert speller (that's why we have a publisher!) Send all submissions to Mike Kukral, our publisher. He'll be happy to hear from you!

The third assignment is to make a list of at least ten rolls that you must have. These can be either 88 note rolls or reproducing rolls. Please try to list the label, number and artist. Send me the list by e-mail ([amicapresident@yahoo.com](mailto:amicapresident@yahoo.com)) or mail with your name, address and phone number. I will sort these out and try to make your wishes come true. No guarantees, but we'll see what we can do.

The fourth assignment is to visit your local doctor, dentist, music shop, museum, antique store, etc. and drop off old copies of the AMICA bulletin. Before you drop them off, staple an application to the inside front cover. If you don't have any old copies of the bulletin or need applications, please contact our membership secretary, Bill Chapman. He will be more than happy to send some out to you. If you belong to a chapter, include a slip that lists your next meeting.

If you have any ideas of how this organization can be made better for all, please let me know. I am always open to suggestions! My e-mail address is: [amicapresident@yahoo.com](mailto:amicapresident@yahoo.com)

**AMICAbly yours,  
Mike Walter**





# L E T T E R S

Dear Fellow Amicans,

I just received my order from Keystone/Magic Melodies. At the moment of this writing I am listening to Beethoven's 5th Symphony. In the few years that my wife and I have been mechanical musical afficianados, we have found only one collector with all 5 rolls of this symphony. I urged Rich Groman several years ago to recut it. Well, he has. WOW! and DOUBLE WOW! I have also purchased rolls from Bennet Leedy and Dave Saul in recent weeks. "Whistle While You Work" cut by Dave Saul seems to be a great aerobic song as it gets everyone's feet (and other parts) going. The Leedy Bros. "Coney Island Rag" stirs up memories of days gone by and whets the musical appetite for more. These people are putting out superb products. I urge you to order from them and support their work for our hobby.

**Vincent Morgan, Pres.**  
Lady Liberty Chapter  
AMICA, Intl.s

Dear Mike,

Rec'd this May-June issue of the Bulletin, and was happy to see the page on Ethel Leginska. She has always been my favorite!

A question came to mind, I was wondering if she actually recorded all of those, or where some transferred from other systems? So, I checked the list (best I could), and found that most of those listed are indeed only available on the Artrio-Angelus system. #7510 was available on Duo-Art & Recordo. #7511, on Recordo. #7519, on Recordo and Duo-Art, #7533 was on Recordo also. #7542 was available on Duo-Art and Ampico also. #7593 was also on Recordo. NOW, I wonder if she did those recordings for the other systems? Or were these transfers? I suppose we will never know for sure. Perhaps someone with a critical eye could

compare the recordings & compare? This could shed a light?

**Bill Dean**

627 10th Ave., Bethlehem, PA 18018

Dear AMICA Group,

In January of 2003 I received a 35 key French organ for repairs and found that it had no drums with the shelves, no carved top and no legs or base and no frame around the center section. Also, it had been flooded up to the level of the top of the pump and not to the playing mechanisms, thankfully. Over the spring and summer months we made all the needed parts, thanks to a man in Belgium, Leonard Gynoprez who sent to me many pictures of organs many, many years ago. In that batch of pictures was this organ as it was supposed to appear and that was used to make all the parts. I have, in color, all the steps of restoration to the finished job and then the painting that an artist did that I hired and it looks like it came out of the factory in the front. Sorry to say most of the folding cardboard books were also drowned and not useable. Le Ludion of France sent to me a test book and a list of books now available cut from original ones.

If you want to feature this in one of your publications, I will get copies made and send them on to you. Each copy costs over a dollar so I do not want to send them out and not have them used. Please advise.

Sincerely,

**William H. Kromer, Jr. (Bill)**

53 Louella Court, Wayne, PA 19087  
610-687-0172

*Member of the Outdoor Amusement  
Businessmen's Association, PA. State  
Showmen's Association, and the Music Box  
Society Int.*

Dear Fellow Amicans,

This Spring I had the great pleasure of visiting the Fred Waring Archives. Mr. Waring, leader of Waring's

Pennsylvanians, had a compound at Shawnee on the Delaware River, not far from Bethlehem. Fred started a collegiate jazz band in the early 1920s, augmenting that with interesting vocal groups in the early to mid 1930s, finally concentrating on choral work in the 1940's until his death in the 1980s.

His 1920 records, made for the Victor Company, are highly collectible due to their innovative musical arrangements. From 1932 to 1942, Fred Waring made no commercial recordings, concentrating on Radio Broadcasts only. While visiting the Waring Archives, I was surprised to find that Fred Waring had recorded all his radio shows during the 1930s, and discovered hundreds of hours of transcribed musical entertainment thought lost forever!

The Director of the Archives and I had a long discussion about issuing this treasure trove of music onto CDs. There have been some compilations issued on a limited basis over the past five years by the Archives. I think they should reach a wider audience.

Here are a few of the tantalizing musical numbers:

The "Old Gold Shows"-1933-1934-featuring the Radio Orchestra with Babs and her Brother. Songs include: You're An Old Smoothie, Two Tickets To Georgia, Shuffle Off To Buffalo, Lookie, Lookie, Lookie, Here Comes Cookie, etc.

The "Ford Shows"-1934-1936-with Kay Thompson and the Girls Choir singing: She's A Latin From Manhattan, Louisiana Hayride, I Got Rhythm, etc.

The Ford V-8s"-1936-First swing vocal group singing fabulous arrangements of: Let Yourself Go, Honeysuckle Rose, Rap Tap On Wood, I'm Putting All My Eggs In One Basket, etc.

"Stella and Her Fellas"-1935-1936

Also featured are Tom Waring, Johnny "Seat" Davis, Rosemary and Priscilla Lane, Babs Ryan and more. And discovered, was the complete set of sound track dubbing masters from the 1937 Warner Brothers

*continue...*

movie, "Varsity Show," featuring Waring's Pennsylvanians-in pristine condition!

This is truly an astounding collection from one of America's premier shapers of popular entertainment during the glorious days of the great "American Song Book." If you like big Radio Orchestras with plenty of rhythmic vocals and novelty, all in high fidelity, these are for you! The CDs will have about 25 selections on each disc and sell in the \$15.00 to \$16.00 range. Anyone interested in acquiring the Waring CDs, please let us know. Keystone will be working with the archives in the release of these programs.

Sincerely,  
**Richard Groman**

*If you have an interest in the above project described by Richard, you may convey that interest through us at Magic Melodies, or write directly to Richard Groman, Keystone Music Rolls, P.O. Box 650, Bethlehem, PA 18016-USA*

*Shelby and Laura Lee Kennard  
Keystone-Magic Melodies*

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## **THANKS FOR A GREAT CONVENTION!**

Hello Everyone,

It's been more than two weeks now since the AMICA Denver 2004 convention finished! It was a huge success and I have gotten a number of great responses. Still not one single complaint. It was my expectation to write each one of you a personal note of thanks for your work, but I'm still so busy catching up that I didn't want to wait a moment longer. THANKS to each of you for your hard work to make the AMICA convention in Denver one of the best ever. I told many people that the convention could not have taken place without each of you - the wonderful committee that did all the work. Also, the computer and the cell phone made the event possible. How did people do this work before the internet and the cell phone? On Friday morning of the convention, I remembered the table cloths for the evening party - I had forgotten to get them! I called my sister,

Kathe Graham. She drove to Denver from Niwot, bought the table cloths, went to Four-Mile House, drug the tables around, put the cloths on and then the rain came up, blew them all off, soaked Sis and she did it all over again, in time for our arrival. Thanks Sis and thanks for cell phones.

Anita Nickels Johnson thank you for your support from the other side of Colorado. Your experience and wisdom and encouragement from the beginning were a big plus to me.

Art and Jean Reblitz put in countless hours preparing the wonderful talk and presentation that kicked our program off to a flying start right from the beginning. Hosting the entire group at your home and workshop was no small task and we can't thank you enough. All the drives to Denver for meetings as well as having the group at your home, too. Helping everyone get their pianos ready for the event and running a referee and writing and editing service all at the same time. How do you do it? I'm looking forward to your book about Automatic Music in Colorado! Art also recorded and edited the music Dick Kroeckel played which became our Q.R.S. Souvenir Roll. Thank you Art, and Bob Berkman at Q.R.S. for a superb job.

Barry Weiss helped gather ads for the program, hosted Julian Dyer from England and drove a car full of visitors to Chris Finger Pianos. Barry was always available with a smile when needed. He even worked the program ad list from his computer on vacation! Thank you, Barry.

Ben Haass our new member from Fort Collins, no North Carolina! Ben took over the website, moved himself, his family and his job and still kept things going for us and made it back to Denver for the convention!! Thanks Ben for a wonderful job. Ben is always available with enthusiasm for Automatic music and he even brought his brother from Wyoming for part of the convention.

Don and Ginger Hein hosted our committee, helped organize the home tours and took charge of the "Pumper Contest" prizes, and helped out on registration. Great job Don and Ginger. I'm looking forward to seeing your collection when I don't have a convention on my mind.

Don and Owanah Wick did double - no triple duty. Don was working through the night to make an organ in Colorado Springs work as well as making sure the Organ at the Paramount Theater was in top shape. Both Don and Owanah are part of the ATOS group that worked so hard to bring us the spectacular closing concert. I'm afraid that Owanah missed most of her doll convention for us, but always with a smile they were there to support the group. Thank you both.

Dick Kroeckel - what can we say? Dick, your big big black Steinway made the convention! You should take her out more often. Everyone loved her and she seemed to enjoy the trip, too! The Paramount concert was the perfect close to a perfect week! You made it look easy - but remember not one of the rest of us could do what you did, so I know it's not. You hosted our group and kept us pumped up. Then, you hosted the home tour buses. No matter how tired you were after a day of playing and driving and you still had that big wonderful laugh that kept me going through the hard times. Thanks for sharing so much!! Remember Dick's music is forever preserved on the spectacular Q.R.S. roll and we thank you for making that possible, too. It takes a lot more than just playing the song once to turn the music into a paper roll, and Dick worked extra hard on this task.

Frank and Shirley Nix were our lighthouse afar. As the national convention coordinator, Frank helped negotiate the hotel contract and pushed and pulled and twisted my arm to get things going when it was really too close, and seemed so far in the future. Frank was always on the other end of the phone for questions and answers and advice and guidance. Thanks Frank and Shirley. We did it! I bet you wondered if we would make it, two years ago, didn't you?

Jan and Lucy Myers conceived and created the Georgetown trip - the option that everyone took. It was truly one of the highlights of the event. The lunch was superb and the scenery the best. You couldn't have arranged better weather. Jan led the premiere presentation as well as the preparation of our QRS roll and I've heard he may be changing his name to Jan Denver. Thanks Jan and Lucy. Jan

also found time to keep the Mart on track, too. Did you buy enough stuff, everyone? I think we should make the Mart part of every meeting in the future.

Jerry Hutt was always at meetings quietly adding some sage advice just when needed. He worked tirelessly on the walking tours. I think for our first AMICA Rocky Mountain Chapter meeting that we should take one of the Denver walking tours that he arranged. Really, I'm serious. Those walking tours are FUN! Jerry lent his voice to the premiere of our convention roll, too. Always there, always ready to help. Thank you Jerry.

Jim Bratton was right at the other end of the computer offering encouragement and advice when I needed it. He shared the AMICA convention time with his clock convention, taking place at the same time, but we appreciated the support. I know many were pleased to be able to visit with Jim again.

Joe Saman never runs out of good ideas and I could always count on him for wisdom and advice - and work. Several of the "new" things we did were Joe's ideas. The audience participation in the Pumper Contest judging, and the prizes for second and third place were thanks to Joe. Joe and John Roberts played their accordions at lunch in Georgetown which was a surprise for everyone. Complete with costumes, their music made the moment special! Thanks, guys. Joe spent Saturday afternoon - missing the Mart - washing centerpiece bowls for the banquet and then setting them all up for the night's party. Thanks.

John Wilkens kept his pencil sharp from start to finish - well, we are almost finished. The treasury was always balanced to the penny and every dime accounted for. John kept the bills paid on time and helped keep the budget on track. John, we applaud you. Maybe you'll have a new career as an accountant?

Larry Kerecman was in the forefront with the best website that AMICA has ever seen - or is likely to ever see again. Larry this website would make the Denver Convention and Visitors Bureau proud. It was sight to behold complete with music. We had many, many compliments. Larry kept the program flowing with his knowledge of audio visual equipment, too. The extra touches right down to the labels on the light switches helped make the meeting look so easy which is a sure sign that lots of advance work and preparation have taken place. Larry helped put Art Reblitz on "Power Point" which gave his presentation that extra degree of professionalism which people are still talking about. Larry, we really do owe you a debt of thanks.

Louise and Clara! What would we do without you?! Louise Lucero and her mother Clara Wingfield. New members who just bought an Apollo piano, and heard about AMICA when I went out to evaluate their new instrument. Clara worked Kansas to bring out the members, Louise worked registration from beginning to end with a million details in between. The map with the pins where everyone came from - thank Louise! The door prizes - thank Louise! I don't know - ask Louise! Always there with the help, the smile the answer, the solution. At 10:30 p.m., there was Louise at work ready to convert a file over to my computer system. Presto, there it was. We'd have had to get four people to do the job that Louise and Clara did. And dance! Ask Clara. She's ready to go now, and can follow even two left feet on carpet. We're so glad to have you in AMICA.

Steve McCormick. Thank you, thank you, thank you! Steve filled in all the blanks - and there were lots of them. He arranged all the bus transportation, drove all the routes not once, not twice - how many times did you drive them anyway? He wrote all the scripts for the bus

captains, and drove ahead to make sure the way was paved for all of our guests. Your work was invaluable, Steve and we can't thank you enough. Those little "mini schedules" in your name badges. Yup, Steve typed and printed and cut them. Thanks a million times from everyone for those little gems.

The Rocky Mountain Region includes Wyoming and one of our most loyal and valuable members made it to nearly every committee meeting around 300 miles each way. That beautiful program - that was Tom Zook's creation. The workshop presenters and schedules - Thank you Tom. Just tell Tom what you need and consider it done - perfectly and quickly. You were a pleasure to work with, Tom. Come on down to Colorado anytime. There's room for you here!

If I were running a company, I'd hire every one of you! We'd be rich in no time. Anybody got an idea for a product? How about the convention planning business? I've probably forgotten - or maybe never even knew some of the great things that you all did to make this convention such a wonderful time for so many people. There are countless details and some big things which I've not mentioned, but were very appreciated by me and by everyone who attended. Each one of you deserves a standing ovation and I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your hard work. It was a pleasure and a privilege to spend the time with each of you.

Now, let's party! Don & Ginger Hein and Jan & Lucy Myers have both offered to host a get together. Would anyone else like to do the arranging? I'll be happy to turn over the e-mail list. With all best wishes and sincere THANKS to each and every one of you.

Yours Sincerely,  
**Jere**



# TELEKTRA PLAYER PIANO

Submitted by David Krall

Telektra-1 is from the  
New York Globe, Oct. 10, 1914



**IS THIS PIANO ALIVE?**

It depends on whether there is anyone in the home who can play it. If no one plays it, or plays it well, it is merely a piece of furniture, as useless and unnecessary as the fifth wheel of a coach. It gives pleasure to no one. It is dead. You can bring it to life by attaching to it

**The Telektra  
Piano Player**

which will transform it into the most artistic of all player-pianos. The Telektra may be attached to it in your own home in a few hours' time without injuring your piano or altering its appearance in any way. The keyboard is always free for hand playing. Write for a catalogue, or call for a demonstration.

**TEL-ELECTRIC COMPANY**  
Tel-Electric Building  
299 Fifth Ave. Cor. 31st St. New York

Telektra-2 also from the New York Globe, Oct. 15, 1914

Telektra-3 also from the  
New York Globe, Oct. 8, 1914



## A Real Gift for the Whole Family

Let there be at least one gift that your whole family will enjoy—one which is lasting—one which gives everlasting pleasure to all the members of your household. No gift has these qualities like

## The Telektra Piano Player

It quickly transforms your own piano, regardless of its age, style or make, into the most artistic of all player pianos.

The Telektra not only eliminates all pumping, but if you so desire will play for you with complete musical expression. Its Artist Autograph Rolls perfectly reproduce the identical hand playing of famous pianists. If you own a piano or are considering the purchase of a player piano it is advisable that you

### Send Now for This FREE Book!

For picture and text it affords comparisons that will enable you to most wisely select your player piano. Beautifully illustrated and artistically printed in five colors, this book is as truly a work of art as the player it describes and pictures.

We want you to have a copy. We want you to more than admit its beautiful illustrations—we want you to give its text earnest consideration. Just call, write or phone to-day—a copy is here awaiting a request from you.

**THE TEL-ELECTRIC COMPANY**  
299 Fifth Avenue, Corner 31st Street, New York City  
(PHONE MADISON SQUARE 9343)



## Sale of High Grade Pianos

The Tel-Electric Company has on hand a number of Grand and Upright Pianos which it offers for sale at a fraction of their original price.

Some have been used in demonstrating the Telektra Piano Player, but none of them has ever been off the floor of the warehouses since it was received from the factory. They are literally as good as new and have just been tuned, regulated and polished.

We also have a number of used pianos which have been taken in exchange and rebuilt by us.

We will accept a small deposit and liberal terms for the payment of the balance.

## The Tel-Electric Co.

Tel-Electric Building

299 Fifth Ave., cor. 31st Street New York

# P IANO TUNER

## CAUGHT IN U.S. - CUBA DISCORD

Submitted by Antonio de la Cova

By TRACEY EATON  
The Dallas Morning News  
July 2, 2003

*This Havana piano tuner just wanted to attend a Dallas convention, but his visa denial is part of the same old song in nations' conflict*

HAVANA – Armando Gómez is suddenly a subversive. And only an act of God – or George Bush – will allow him to attend the piano tuners convention in Dallas this week.

Mr. Gómez laughed at first when U.S. authorities refused his travel visa.

"What am I? A Taliban?" the Havana piano technician recalled saying.

Then it sank in. He can never again travel to the United States unless the American president intervenes.

*Tracey Eaton / DMN*

**Armando Gómez was denied a U.S. visa under a law that gives officials broad discretion to deny entry to foreigners.** U.S. officials rejected his visa application under an obscure immigration rule giving Washington broad discretion to deny entry to foreigners, including those considered potential threats to national security or public safety.

*Critics call it ridiculous.*

Piano tuners want harmony – not disharmony, said Paul Larudee, an American piano technician and friend of Mr. Gómez.

"It is ... absurd to think that he represents a threat to U.S. security," he said.

However strange the visa denial may seem, it is an everyday occurrence in the rarified world of U.S.-Cuba relations, experts say.

America and Cuba have been at odds since 1959. They've fought with bullets and bombs in the past. But these days they battle with words and speeches, visas and red tape.

Caught in the middle are people like Mr. Gómez, the 49-year-old director of Havana's School/Workshop of Tuning

and Instrument Repair. He began fixing old pianos in 1989.

Many of the country's musical instruments are falling apart. Spare parts are scarce.

In 1995, American piano tuner Benjamin Treuhaft decided to help out. He started Send a Piana to Havana, a humanitarian group, and made Mr. Gómez his partner. The group has since collected and donated 210 upright and grand pianos to Cuba.

Volunteer tuners from the United States join Mr. Treuhaft on his trips to Cuba. One of them, Takashi Yogi, said he couldn't figure out why a battered Russian piano wasn't working. Then he peered into a wooden hinge and found the problem: "Two termites were having dinner."

Seventy percent to 90 percent of Cuba's pianos are infested with termites, Mr. Gómez estimates. Others are caked in rust or mold. So they need some attention.

At first the U.S. government didn't mind that the Americans were involved. Even when the Commerce Department couldn't find a category for Mr. Treuhaft's piano shipments, officials obliged, telling him that for some bureaucratic reason, his request would have to be approved by the U.S. Office of Missile and Nuclear Technology – and it was.

Mr. Treuhaft began shipping pianos. But he soon got into trouble with the Office of Foreign Assets Control, which enforces the Trading with the Enemy Act. It threatened him with a \$1.3 million fine for his Cuban piano venture in 1996. Mr. Treuhaft only grew more defiant and dressed up as a 1935 Tonk upright piano during a trip to Cuba on Halloween of that year. That got him some publicity.

U.S. authorities weren't amused but offered to settle the case for \$3,500. Mr. Treuhaft ignored that and continues traveling to Cuba without U.S. permission.

### Clamping down

Bush administration officials have

made it more difficult for Americans to travel to Cuba – and they've clamped down on Cubans, too.

They've rejected visas for everyone from Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's national assembly, to Chucho Valdés, an acclaimed Cuban musician who won a Latin Grammy in 2002.

U.S. Rep. Tom Lantos, D-Calif., a ranking member of the International Relations Committee, tried to persuade officials to let Mr. Gómez go but was told he was a "potential foreign policy concern."

U.S. officials stamped Mr. Gómez's Cuban passport "212F." That refers to subsection 212F in the Immigration and Nationality Act. It was added to the law as a presidential proclamation and allows the government to deny entry to foreigners for a variety of reasons.

Subsection 212F was first used in July 1995 to detain a high-level official of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, accused of atrocities in that country's civil war, according to Human Rights Watch.

American officials declined to offer a specific explanation for Mr. Gómez's visa denial. But they said some Cubans don't obtain visas because they don't apply in time. New homeland security requirements require in-depth screening of applicants, and Mr. Gómez didn't apply until April.

American officials say any visitor from Cuba or any of the other six nations that the United States considers to be state sponsors of terrorism must go through a tough screening process.

"We also turn people down for political reasons," said a senior U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity. "I don't mind telling you we do that. It's clear."

Without referring specifically to the Gómez case, the official said that Washington rejects some Cubans' visas in retaliation for actions by the Cuban government.

*continue...*

Cuban authorities, for instance, do not allow Americans to carry out “public diplomacy” – to freely express their views to ordinary people in Cuba. So U.S. officials aren’t likely to let a Cuban diplomat – or Cuban government employee – do the same in the United States, the official said.

He added that “people get denied visas all the time for all sorts of reasons.” And that is insignificant in the case of Cuba, he said, where the focus should be on such issues as the lack of basic freedoms and the jailing of political dissidents.

**Convention reaction**

In Dallas, piano tuners began setting up Tuesday for the Piano Technicians Guild convention, which runs through Sunday. About 700 guild members from countries as far as Germany, China and Japan are expected.

Guild executive director Barbara Cassaday said she can't do much to help

Mr. Gómez.

“He's basically from one of those countries that is affected by heightened United States security,” she said. “It's a shame that it's the reality, but it is.”

*Participants' views were mixed.*

“It’s difficult to imagine anything a piano technician might do as a threat to security,” said Mark Wisner, national service manager for Pearl River Piano Group in Ontario, Calif. “It sounds silly, you have to admit.”

Bruce Clark, a technician for Mason & Hamlin in New Hampshire, said he understands the State Department's reasoning.

“If I was a terrorist and wanted to come in, would I come in with a sign that said, ‘terrorist’?” he asked. “I’d have to be something benign, and a piano tuner is a great disguise.”

Exhibitors this week will showcase the latest on tuning, restoring and moving pianos.

“I wanted to be there,” said Mr. Gómez, who is married to a fellow piano tuner, Yuly Díaz, sitting a few feet away from their living room piano and their pets – a few hamsters scurrying around in cages.

“And no,” Mr. Gómez said, “the hamsters are not terrorists.”

He laughs again at the thought that he's some dangerous terrorist. But it also makes him sad. He has attended piano tuning conventions in the United States in the past, and he wants to return.

Now, though, he has “212F” stamped in his passport, and he doubts he’ll be back.

“I’m just a tuner,” he said. “But with this in my passport, I won't even be able to go to Haiti.”

*Staff writer Michael Grabell in Dallas contributed to this report.*

E-mail [teaton@dallasnews.com](mailto:teaton@dallasnews.com)

# PAINTED PONIES

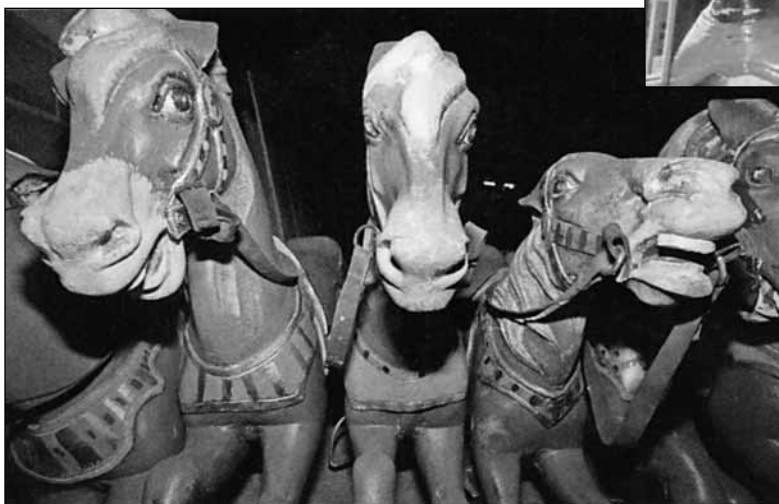
By Beth Py-Lieberman

From the Attic  
Smithsonian-September 2004

“Word that a carrousel will be installed permanently on the Mall grounds,” the *New York Times* reported in 1967, “disturbs some people.” Wary of ideas that newly appointed Smithsonian secretary S. Dillon Ripley had proposed-outdoor puppet and musical performances, sound and light shows, popcorn wagons-some in Washington feared that the Institution would become an “ivy-covered Disneyland.” But Ripley, recalling boyhood rides on a carousel just outside the Louvre in Paris, faced down his critics and had a 1922 merry-go-round with 33 gliding animals and two chariots put in place that summer in front of the Arts and Industries Building on the National Mall. Complete with a Wurlitzer band organ, its wooden pipes and bellows blasting the “The Sidewalks of New York” and other oompah-pah favorites, the carousel was an immediate hit with visitors, who paid 25 cents each to ride it.

“One of the best things that’s happened,” wrote one city resident. In 1981, museum officials replaced Ripley’s worn-out merry-go-round with a larger one, a 1947 vintage model with 60 horses (below, the steeds before installation). Today, the carousel’s music wafts from a CD player. And though the ticket price has climbed

to \$2, it’s still the cheapest round-trip fare in the city.





Everybody's doing it: Marathon dancers are the display in this dealer's storefront.

—Talking Machine World

You CAN take it with you: Cloth-covered portables of European origin, like the German Triumphon below, were introduced in 1914.



engage in the Turkey Trot within the limits of Boise, Idaho, and other municipalities. In one nationally publicized trial a woman in New Jersey was arrested for singing "Everybody's Doing It Now" and dancing the Turkey Trot on her way home, and was acquitted only after—to the applause of courtroom spectators—the dance was demonstrated to the jury.

There were no big name big bands in 1914, but a lot of the music was recorded by Arthur Prior's Band and the Victor Military Band on Victor, and by Prices's Orchestra on Columbia.

The talking machine put an orchestra in every home, a fact not lost on Victor advertising. Dealers promoted dance marathons in their storefronts; in one case in Memphis the distraction caused the demolition of an automobile. Two enterprising young Chicago women hauled a Victrola off to New York, and set up a dance hall on the sands of east coast resort beaches.

The dance craze was led and made respectable by two dancers of impeccable grace and unlimited talent: the British Vernon Castle and his American wife Irene. It was said that Vernon Castle invented many of the steps on the fly.

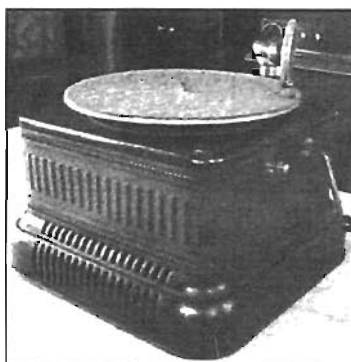
As the year advanced several companies began to test the Victor patents, primarily with machines of European origin. Ads appeared for models from Klingsor, Triumphon, Polyphon, and the Triton, America's first picnic portable, "suitable for various excursions." The Big Three of course had their own plants

overseas. There wasn't, relatively speaking, a lot of export business the other way, from the US to Europe, maybe around \$200,000 worth per month. Columbia did announce in April a line of Columbia-Europa machines made in Germany but distributed world-wide, some likely sold in the United States. Meanwhile, the remaining inventory of the unsuccessful Keene-o-Phone experiment was either liquidated at a substantial discount or cannibalized for parts by its successor, the Rex Talking Machine company.

#### Growth of the Victrola clones

A serious challenge to the Big Three's hegemony wasn't mounted until the fall, with the advent of internal horn machines from Aeolian, Pathe, Cheney, and Sonora.

Aeolian had reported in September that it had contracted to display a complete stock of Grafonolas and Columbia records at its flagship Aeolian Hall in New York, but then a few months later surprised the trade with its line of Vocalian machines.



War casualty: The metal shelled Columbia-Europa was made in Germany for only a short while in both internal and external horn. The oval case at the left is very scarce.

—Courtesy Loran Hughes

Pathe Freres announced in October that it was ready to enter the American market with machines and double-sided hill-and-dale discs, featuring artists of international renown, such as Slezak and Tita Ruffo, although as it turned out sales didn't really get rolling until 1915. This was no small news, because Pathe was a European powerhouse not only in phonographs but also in motion pictures.

Cheney was bankrolled by department store magnate Marshall Field, who furnished an elegant talking machine parlor on the third floor of his Chicago emporium.

The talking machine business was a seasonal business—strong in the winter, sluggish in the summer, when the dealers turned to complementary items such as bicycles. July 1914 was no exception, and as people stopped dancing in the heat they stopped purchasing dance records. There was also fear of war—not with Germany but with the Huerta government in Mexico, where President Wilson had ordered the Marines to seize Veracruz.

#### Holding the line

The jobbers also held their annual convention in July; most of the talk this year was about price maintenance agreements. Price maintenance, common in many American industries at this time, allowed the manufacturer to set the final retail price of his product. The Progressive movement had another name for it, a name associated with a hated and dishonorable practice of the railroad trusts: price fixing.

Price maintenance had not been adjudicated illegal in 1914, but two recent Supreme Court decisions led to the conclusion that the Court was trending in that direction. The jobbers and small dealers strongly favored price maintenance.



nance—"protection of all," they said—because it immunized them from price cutting by the emergent chain stores, and the dealers had in fact formed a committee to lobby Congress to retain the manufacturer's right to control who sold his products, and at what value.

Installment sales, something relatively new, were another topic at the convention. The manufacturers encouraged it and issued suggestions for dunning delinquent customers, but it was the dealer who financed it and assumed the risk. The thought was ventured that the dealer should be permitted to charge interest, perhaps as much as six percent. **A Fox chase**

As the weather cooled business picked up. In September, dealers reported that the new Victrolas X and XI were selling well, particularly in the new English Brown. The dance craze continued hot and heavy; one bemused midwest dealer noted that people were purchasing only popular tunes — not "real music like Caruso." A new dance, the Fox Trot, displaced all other dances. A combination of the of the One-Step and the Two-Step, the Fox Trot was attributed—nobody knows if correctly—to an improvisation by a New York vaudeville personality named Harry Fox.

In September the Little Wonder, a record 5" in diameter that played for two minutes, was cutting into Victor and Columbia profits. It sold for first 15 cents, then later 10 cents, and in about three months was purchased by Columbia.

In August for obscure reasons a Great War broke out in Europe. The American phonograph trade was little touched, save for a few executives on Continental vacation who were inconvenienced and had to scurry home. The British gramophone industry came to a dead halt for lack of buyers and lack of parts (precision parts had been of German manufacture), and the Gramophone Company's City Road facility was turned over to the British war effort. A song that had been rejected by at least 20 London publishers, "Tipperary," became the unofficial anthem of the British army.

Pianos were pitched off British warships in favor of Victrolas, and gramophones could be heard resonating through German trenches. Americans followed the plight of the million man

**Post-mortem: Keene-o-Phones (right) were cleared out at a discount of 50% and more at the beginning of the year by retailers such as Gimbel's. By the end of the year, upstarts such as Pathe and Sonora, below, challenged Victrola dominance.**



Sonora Grand, \$200.

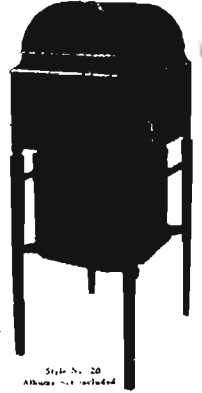
## An Amazing Sale of the World's Greatest Machines



The Keene-o-phone—most marvelous producer the age has known and the absolute masterpiece of all talking machines—offered the trade at giveaway prices for quick clearance.

There are very few dealers who are not familiar with the wonder of the Keene-o-phone—how the inventor, after realizing his ideal of the world's perfect talking machine, but not because he failed to realize that "making" is one thing and "creating a market" another; how the factory went on turning out these superb instruments with no real market developed. When the crash came shrewd dealers snapped up most of the surplus, but there are still about

2000 of these machines left and offered to you at a discount of 70%, which means:



## \$100,000 Worth of Machines for \$30,000



### Read the High Lights on this Remarkable Machine

- € The Keene-o-phone will play any Disc record made.
- € Its patented features eliminate all scratching, rasping and all foreign noises of any kind.
- € This silvery clearness and purity of tone in itself marks the Keene-o-phone's decision supremacy over all other machines.
- € All the cabinet work was designed and made by Pooley—evidence enough that these are among the most artistic finely finished oak, mahogany and Circassian walnut cabinets built.

There are five styles left—more of some than others. Several styles are equipped with the famous Pooley Filing Device. And remember! all are perfect high-grade machines—and cannot last long. Hurry your reservation today! Reserve the first time as many as you can use, or write quick for appointment at address below, or for any information wanted.

Address all inquiries to

**E. BAUER, Special Selling Agent**  
214-218 So. 17th Street  
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

IN DOLLARS AND CENTS.	
Keene-o-phone No. 152 30	75.00
153	75.00
154	75.00
155	75.00
156	75.00
157	75.00
158	75.00
159	75.00
160	75.00
161	75.00
162	75.00
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armies with keen interest, though most of the news received was of British origin, for the English had severed the German trans-Atlantic cable **Tragedy at West Orange.**

On Dec. 9 disaster struck home when a fire consumed the Edison plant in West Orange, New Jersey. Leaping from a can of highly combustible celluloid film, the flames destroyed the Film Works, Diamond Disc Works, Cylinder Phonograph Works, and Administration Building as Edison's fire department fought impotently. Edison vowed to rebuild "strong enough to withstand anything but an earthquake," and was again shipping out records after one month.

As the trade prepared for the all-important Christmas season of 1914 it seemed prospects were very favorable. Victor launched unprecedented full-page ads in major metropolitan dailies listing the names and address of local dealers.

The only noticeable effect of the war thus far was seen in the ethnic communities of large cities such as New York, an increasing demand for recordings of

patriotic airs of the warring nations.

It was felt that the European War might be good for American business. America was neutral, and President Wilson had always espoused an isolationist policy. There might be a good market for American grain, meat and cotton—cotton being not just for clothing but also as the raw stuff of munitions.

In the fall of 1914 America had been blessed with an especially bountiful harvest. The European War seemed very far away, and besides, all the experts had assured that it would be over in just a few months.

Sources: Koenigsberg, Allen. Patent History of the Phonograph.

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Talking Machine World, 1914.

Article Written  
By  
Lynn Bilton

Submitted By Geoffrey Kaiser

# 1914

## *America, and the phonograph industry, on the eve of the Great War*

In the year 1914 the world had barely begun to cohere into a shape that you would recognize as modern.

There was no radio, no television, certainly no internet (only a trans-Atlantic cable), no air conditioning, no antibiotics. There was limited electrification. There was—in a way that would feel different though comfortably familiar—telephone service, brand name merchandise, credit purchases, magazines and newspapers of mass circulation, and big corporations, derogatorily referred to with the epithet of The Trusts.

Suffrage was not yet universal; only a dozen states granted women the right to vote. Around 70% of the nation was freed of the plague of intoxicating liquor thanks to the efforts of groups such as the Anti-Saloon League. Victorian mores had begun to crumble, but had not collapsed.

There were motor cars, and early in January Henry Ford had scandalized American business when he announced that he would pay his workers the unprecedented amount of \$5 per day, a sum up to five times the prevailing wage. Ford believed, it was theorized, that this would give workingmen the capital to purchase motor cars, and other consumer goods.

The business of America was not business, it was the betterment of mankind. It was the peak of the Progressive Movement, a time when Americans felt that the purpose of government ought to be to meliorate the abominations of sweatshops, tenement housing, poisonous food and drugs, and unchecked concentrations of economic power. In 1912 the nation had elected as president a progressive Democrat, Woodrow Wilson, the former head of Princeton University.



Castles in the air: Vernon and Irene Castle

There was of course a well established talking machine industry, so impreguably divided among three companies that special cash registers for the trade offered only three keys: Edison, Victor, and Columbia. An industry fortress had been dismantled in 1914: the Victor needle-in-the-groove patent had expired, and although Victor owned several other patents upon which it could force competitors to defend, principally the tapering tone arm patent, the Big Three nervously eyed the competition and the burgeoning anti-trust movement.

### Looking ahead

The year opened on a hopeful note as the results of the all-important Christmas season of 1913 were tallied. 1912 had not been a good year. Christmas 1913, though not what it should have been, saw dealers reporting

sales up 50% and more. Edison announced a \$450 machine in Circassian walnut, but dealers reported scant interest in higher priced machines, with most sales in the under \$200 range, and in fact this trend would hold true throughout 1914.

But there was something else going on in 1914 with records, something that drove sales of records to a fever pitch, a pitch so high that all year long the industry could not race fast enough to keep up with demand. That something was the dance craze.

America was dance mad. A full-frontal assault upon Victorian sensibilities, the dance craze had actually begun in the fall of 1913 and continued gay and unabated.

Ballroom dance had always been a pursuit of the upper classes, performed in mansions with private orchestras; the roots of the new dance music were vaguely disreputable, reaching to ragtime, bordellos and the black community.

Within a few months all America was stepping to the Turkey Trot, the Grizzly Bear, the Maxixe, the Horse Trot, the Lame Duck, the Camel Walk, the Waston Heat, the Castle Walk, and the steamy Tango. Dance halls were opened; businessmen dashed off to the halls during lunch breaks; the hardwood floors of business offices were converted to dance use after hours. Restaurants added dance areas to their premises -- these establishments, for some reason, were known as lobster palaces.

### The art of the dance

Dancing instructors mysteriously appeared with exotic French and Latin names, but most people couldn't afford private lessons so instructions and diagrams were printed in popular newspapers and periodicals.

The dance craze was denounced as immoral and the road to hell, and laws were passed to proscribe it. Dance halls were licensed and regulated; it was illegal in some communities for anyone under the age of 18 to enter one. Bouncers were employed in restaurants to keep the dancers at least nine inches apart, the miscreants reminded by a gentle tap on the shoulder.

The Turkey Trot, accomplished with wild gyrations of the arms and much shaking of the head, was seen as particularly reprehensible. It was illegal to



# SOFI

## THE SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE

By Craig Brougher

*This in depth article (submitted this year for the first time) on the SOFI Orchestration by AMICA member Craig Brougher, was originally conceived and ultimately written at the suggestion of former long term AMICA Bulletin Editor/Publisher Mr. Robin D. Pratt. Mr. Brougher's article contains his conception and realization of this immense, unique and custom-built orchestration. It is sincerely hoped that the members of AMICA and especially the Heart of America Chapter members enjoy this delightful article which has been written, submitted and presented here for the very first time.*



*The man standing with SOFI is John Del Carlo, Bass Baritone with the Metropolitan Opera who has been heard in over 100 performances in 12 roles incl. Falstaff, Dr. Bartolo, and Balducci.*

SOFI is an orchestration. While she was being built she was called by her prospective new owner "The Giant Ding-A-Ling," but— things do change. SOFI stands for **Spirit Of Independence**. She began in 1992 as a foam-board model about 2 ft. long, and was finished and playing around December in 1998.

SOFI was actually a project for a client who wanted a large orchestration placed in the great room of his mountain cabin. Asked how large he wanted it to be, he returned the dimensions, 10 ft. long, 8 ft. high, and about 7 ft. deep. From that point on, the most important basic thing about an orchestration like this for him would be one-man maintenance— ease of tuning, quick repairs and adjustments, lots of music, and thorough documentation.

The problem with owning practically all old, large orchestrations has been that it requires a very extensive shop and at least 2 trained technicians at a time to tune and maintain them if you play them very much. Since trips to Montana from Independence, MO had to be kept to a minimum, SOFI had to be reliable, simple, and obvious, and she had to play O-rolls because he had lots of them. SOFI has two spool frames which store 20-30 songs between the two of them, playing alternately. But SOFI's main source of music today are MIDI files. Some are taken from scanned player piano rolls, and some are arranged from scratch. She has to date over 100 new arrangements.

Original O rolls can still be played and every rank of pipes, percussion instrument, or lighting combination can be manually switched in and out during the song by a remote switch box. As the rolls play, a listener can change the arrangement, including adding his own drum arrangements by switches on the box. That's George Bogatko doing the honors as SOFI responds.



This orchestration was about a year from completion when the owner was worried by doctors that he might soon be incapacitated, so arrangements were made to transfer ownership, and from that day forward, Craig had to find some place to put it. It has become the main attraction at the Brougher residence, and gets a lot of exercise.

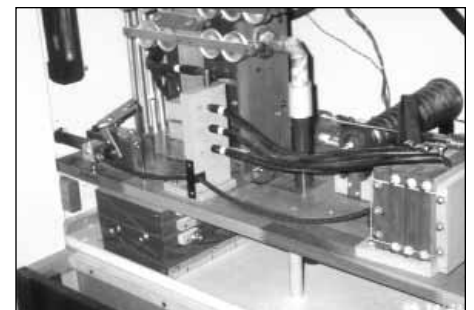
### Interesting Features

The 1/5th scale replica was initially built to see what problems might be encountered and if it was visually balanced from different angles. When that question was resolved, other initial

requirements had to be considered. For instance, it had to be designed to ship flat. All removable joints had to be self-aligning and true, and flat framing had to be strong and square with permanent mortised and doweled joints. Major weight bearing members are fabricated of fir and oak, instead of traditional heavy members of solid wood. The large vertical panels creating the 3 front cabinets were built from Medex— a medium-density water-repellant fiberboard with excellent stability.

The foundation is novel. It's a flexible 1x6 pine outline with dovetailed joints to fit together initially on the floor, leveled with shims, then drawn together with special hardware before the vertical posts and panels are mounted. So even if the floor happened to be partly carpet and partly hardwood (as it is now), there would be no trouble using this system. Once this "shadow-foundation" is shimmed flat and level in all directions and drawn tight, an MDF fiberboard floor is then laid down inside the foundation, and leveled approximately to the foundation. Then the piano is rolled in and everything else is efficiently mounted on the foundation and bolted together.

The swell shutters are 3/8" thick polycarbonate. They don't swivel about their center-lines like all other shutters but on their leading edge so that they do not go past the front edge of the cabinet. This kind of plastic does not



seem to attract dust, will not craze with time, and operates quickly with 6 different positions. The pneumatic motor is below the pipe rack, on the pipe chest, out of sight. A much smaller quick return motor similar to it but standing on the pipe rack is visible. Its purpose is to aid a large return spring (not shown) and gives the shutters a snappy action.

The skeletal frame and the prefab panels are drawn together either with 1/4-20 bolts and T nuts, threaded brass inserts, or removable joinery that allows a complete disassembly. All panels and walls are essentially flat. Other than the piano the largest single component is the center pipe chest. The pipe chests are connected through the center panels by flexible 3" diameter deer-hide sleeves which are then made air-tight by tapered ring spreaders pressed into them against their mounting holes. Very simple, foolproof, and airtight.

SOFI's appearance was to be unique and singular without borrowing from other orchestrions if possible. One important aspect of its case is that its solid walnut moldings could not be reminiscent of anything one might find in ordinary millwork, and should represent an American style of "federal" architecture. The case is real walnut designed uniquely for SOFI. The contrasting wood trim in the 6" border is called Dao in the Philippines, or Zebra wood in the United States.

The mechanism was to be pneumatic and simple in concept, utilizing electromagnet/relay technology from the

turn of the 20th century as found in theater organs. That technology however could be taken to a higher level of performance in a smaller space.

The art glass represents an 1890's Sunday concert in the park-- another American tradition through the 30's. The artist who designed the glass is Brian Lewis, a professional stained glass master artist who was enthusiastic about doing the piece and studied the styles of dress in this period. Many pieces of glass are shaded on the back, detailed on the front, and fired separately, so when the lights are on, the realism of the picture is delightful and stands close scrutiny.

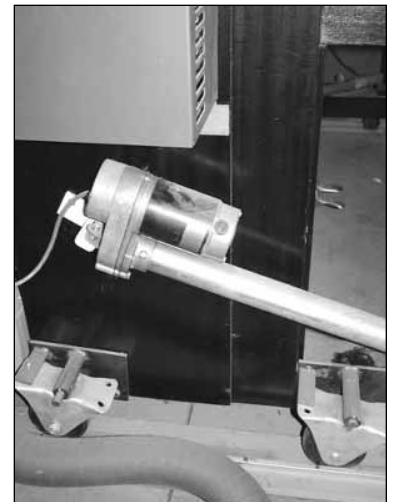
The piano inside is a Behning. Visible is the mandolin rail and the top of the player stack. Above the player stack is a row of vertical magnets which play the stack valves from the note relays.

The goal of the physical layout was simplicity and easy, quick accessibility to everything. For instance, one person can tune the entire instrument. Removal of the shutters and xylophone require only perhaps 3 minutes, and the entire facade

can be removed in less than 15 minutes including the art glass and frames. Complete accessibility to all the pipe valves in the 3 solo pipe chests (in the three cabinets in front) does not require removal of their pipes first. Instead, the bottom panels of the chests drop away, mounted by machine bolts into threaded T-nut inserts. Convenience is another feature of this orchestrion. Maintenance and tuning could be a major consideration for an owner, particularly if he were the only person to do it, so it was designed for efficient maintenance by only one person.

Piano moving linear actuators on each side of the piano work synchronously to roll the piano back and forth, allowing tuning and access to either front or rear. Note the casters below the mover, which rest over center, and so can be flipped up or down.

continue. . .



Owners of large orchestrions like this one, reflecting on their own personal experiences, realize what expense there is in owning very large instruments requiring a day's work, two people, and a lot of extra floor space on the same level close by, just to get into the bowels of your average behemoth. Forgetting one thing (which is also easy to do) will often cause you to go through the entire exercise all over again. I'm sure that brings back some memories. SOFI has none of the headaches reserved for big machines. She is a real pleasure to tune and maintain. Tuning happens once a year at the most. Maintenance is almost never, but even that is not scary. To date, maintenance has been one art glass light bulb and a pesky UV fluorescent drum light ("Oh, what a day I had today!"). The hundreds of relays that play the notes, make the switching and provide the power have never given a second's trouble. It's a real pleasure.

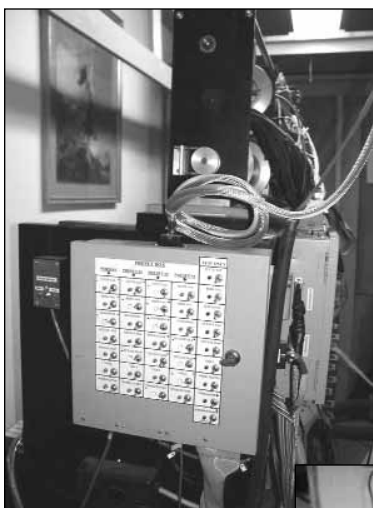
SOFI's solo pipes have their own shipping crate just in case, with their own "slots" that keeps them safe, cushioned, and protected. She has her own tool kit and a complete set of cables for testing, tuning, and troubleshooting, as well as complete, up to date documentation, and is provided with chest stands that allow the pipes to be set up in their own pipe chests and tested as a complete unit, outside of the orchestrion for any reason necessary, including revoicing.

### **Orchestrion Scale and Complement**

The scale of this orchestrion is modeled after the American "O" scale. Now, some may complain that an "O" roll isn't much of a scale because it only has 24 solo notes.

That is exactly why it was chosen. It is about the most flexible orchestrion scale ever designed because it will fit the widest variety of different orchestrion schemes in the simplest manner, and make for some of the easiest to arrange music, as well as some of the most excellent-sounding arrangements at the same time. This may not be immediately apparent. At first glance, a complex scale like the Weber might seem ideal.

With only 24 solo notes, one is able to arrange and play any song that was ever written, with any and all key changes.



This allows for the largest accompaniment section of any normal scale orchestrion to be switched with whatever isn't contained in the solo section. Naturally, the scale will also allow the solo to play in the accompaniment section and continue unnoticeably through the solo. This is done much of the time in SOFI arrangements too, just like it happens in an orchestra.

There are other very good scales one could select, but none of them seemed to have all the pluses of the "O" roll, especially including the greatest endless selection of music ever offered on orchestrion rolls. The "H" roll might be considered a fairly good scale for this purpose too, but for tonal density and full orchestral advantage its solo section is larger than needed, which limits the all-important range of its accompaniment, and with only one "snare drum beater, the most important single percussion, the H scale cannot mimic effortless percussion riffs. They are fine for use in their original machines, with original arrangements in which the drums supplement and punctuate, but unlike SOFI, cannot be featured. Every scale has its characteristics. This is not a criticism of any scale per se, but an evaluation as to what would suit the requirements best.

Because of the O-roll scale, tonal density and color are much richer. This is created primarily by how many pipes

can be playing at any given moment, and what those pipe scales might be. In an instrument with only 24 pipes/solo rank, one might wonder just how rich the sound could be, but with 8 solo ranks, considering the chords played, you can have 50 or more solo pipes playing at any given moment. So this is a major advantage of selecting the O roll scale. An organ with many times this number of pipes can seldom achieve the large tonal density that SOFI can manage with ease because of her coupling scheme. This



was the orchestrion idea, originally, so that full chests were not necessary.

The paper "O" roll may also be modified to play 6 of the 8 multiplexes provided in this machine. Even after editing a recut "O" roll with a punch or knife, it will not prevent that roll from playing without any changes on any other "O" roll orchestrion. So if you have several "O" machines, they will all play the same rolls, even after those rolls are reformatted for full SOFI multiplex. (This scheme, by the way, takes advantage of the new trackerbars put into Player Piano Co spool frames which contain 90 note holes instead of the usual 88, plus rewind and forward to play.)

In SOFI, there is a total of 10 ranks of pipes. That's 252 pipes by the way, but these are always within the arrangement field (unlike full compass organ chests), such that there are oftentimes as many notes playing at once as in a theater organ. This is because it is mechanically programmed and those ranges taken advantage of, and of course can sometimes equal an 8 hand arrangement instead of just 2.

One interesting feature of SOFI's pipe complement is her sweet octave diapasons and octave sax. These are tiny little pipes, as short as 1-1/2 inches long. They are not brittle or screechy, and can both carry the melody or act as a mixture pipe. So when that particular preset is selected, the arranger is also able to appear to carry the melody above solo compass in 3rds, 5ths, or 6ths to the melody (depending on the chord), and the little rank broadens the tonal color by providing both these harmonics as well as mixing with the larger melody pipes to create a "virtual" extra rank to the ear, that doesn't actually exist. This idea also saves space, arrangement work, and makes the impression that there are more pipes than there actually are when one knows how they work and how to arrange with them. To my knowledge this idea wasn't used before in orchestrion design but was incorporated into SOFI from the initial concept.

I really appreciate the help of Charles Wilson, organist and musician, organ builder and voicer, whom I have relied upon to carve down some of these pipes. When you buy a complement of ranks, there is just no way to assemble them without some serious time spent modifying their structural characteristics and proportional ratios so they complement each other and sound balanced together-- in all combinations. Charles and I seemed to agree and we critiqued everything-- so he is a kindred spirit that just sort-of knows what I'm listening for, and makes it happen. It was Charles who suggested that SOFI be circle-winded to possibly improve breathing.

Also, while I'm giving credit where it's due, Bob Maes provided all the original pipes used in this instrument-- all of which came from



theater organs. Were it not for Bob, I would probably still be buying ranks of pipes and yet never quite satisfied with anything. Thanks, Bob. I really don't know what I would have done without you. Just like Charles and his wife Lee, I want everybody to know who you are.

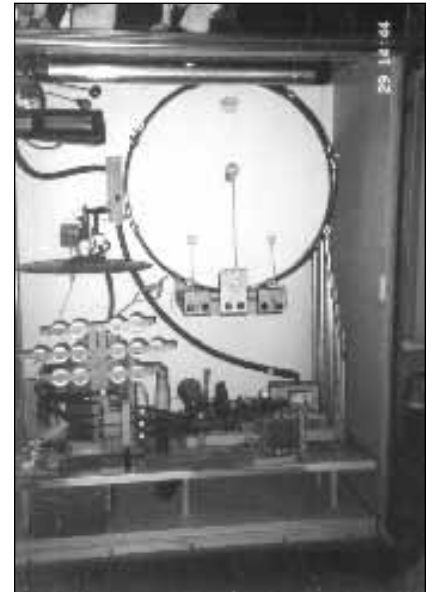
The pipes all play from a Mohler tremolo, which can be switched on or off through the MIDI controller if desired. The Blower is built by Ventus through Aug Laughauf, a German company which makes a very quiet machine, balanced and heavily built. The Ventus blower was chosen for its capacity relative to size, and its silence. That choice was a good one. They are well worth the extra money.

The pipe chests in this instrument are voiced at 8" of pressure. The normal range is about 6 inches. The extra pressure does several things. First, it allows wider dynamic range, it provides more harmonics, and it allows single pipes to solo with panache, when called for. Something else that original orchestrions could not do. The chests are quite large in cross-section and won't allow starved sections in the air flow around the circuit, but as long as one may take advantage of every trick there's no sense in risking a problem, later.

The overall pipe complement is: Violins, Celeste, open Wooden Flutes, Diapason, Flute Sax, Aeolian (floating) reed Sax, octave Flute Sax, octave Diapason. The accompaniment pipe ranks (behind the piano in Great) are, stopped 8 ft. Gedeckt Flutes, and Diapason. All solo pipes can be arbitrarily combined into "presets," of which presently there are 4. There is



however a fifth preset multiplex, reserved for perhaps another "personality" of the instrument sometime in the future. Since all ranks are instantly rearrange-able at the panel of the pipe rank box, SOFI's secondary personality is instantly changeable as well.

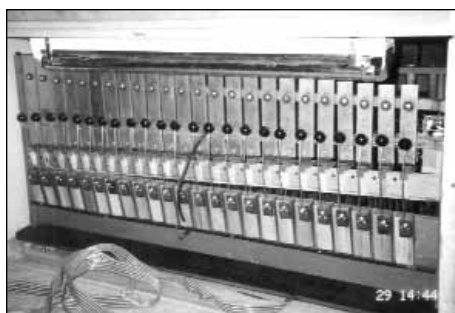


## PERCUSSION FEATURES

The Solo Percussive instruments are: Piano, Mandolin effect, Wooden Xylophone, and Metal Xylophone (called Orchestra Bells).

The rhythm percussion and sound effects are quick. They can split a 32nd note They are: Snare (tap and roll), Wood Block, Triangle, Tympani (1 & 2), Castanets, Tambourine, Bass Drum, Ride Cymbal (separate and reiterating), Crash Cymbal, Temple Block, Cow Bell, Fire Gong (effect, great for train songs). Then there's the Train Whistle (effect), Bird Whistle (effect), and Nest of Bells (effect). Those three designate live sound effects which can only be played from the remote box that sits on a coffee table. The rest play automatically.

The Orchestra Bells (with bar dampers), are unusual, designed to be *both* reiterating and single stroke. When it solos it reiterates. But because it can play with the xylophone too, and because the wooden bar xylophone *must* reiterate, they would not sound great reiterating together. So the bell reiterators are bypassed automatically by the xylophone "on" signal when they play together.



Imagine a bell- sound at the beginning of each xylophone note. This gives each xylophone note a “punctuated” bell-like tone when they duet, creating a third instrument tone combination between them that has a bright, festive sound like a third kind of xylophone. (This is a device that the arranger doesn’t have to worry about. It’s automatic, easing the arrangements.)

### THE INTERFACE

What is meant by “interface” is the pneumatic to electric conversion that allows rolls to be played on SOFI. It’s basically just a set of pouches that operate silver wire contacts, like an old style theater organ might do.

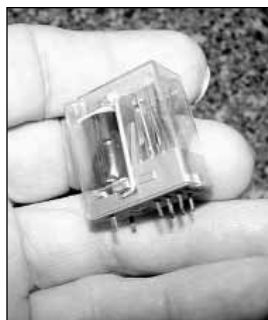
Electronics were not incorporated into SOFI for a good reason. Components’ availability often have a short half-life on shelves and quickly go to surplus, so finding exact replacements might be difficult. Nothing about this orchestrion is electronic except the MIDI controller which is separate and replaceable, but a spare UM-1 Octet controller is waiting, just in case. The MIDI controller is just a “media” source, meaning another place to get its music from.

Regarding a player’s media, all pneumatic music instruments old or new are not changed or even modified by an interface which allows the playing of an alternate source of music. In the case of coin-operated pianos, for instance, an electronic interface is simply Y’d into



the tubing and no mechanical changes are required, including the coin trip. Only an extra electrical connection, which is invisible and removable, at will. However, the option multiplies the opportunities to hear thousands of times more music than ever before, and someday when asked, “Do you ever play all your instruments at the same time,” you can answer Yes, and the entire room becomes a concert stage. This is coming. It is the dream (or nightmare) that every collector has thought about from his first cabinet piano, I suspect. And it doesn’t matter how far apart the instruments may be, thanks to MIDI.

Most of the playing is taken care of with ordinary subminiature 2pdt relays.



They are far quicker than notes are, so having one for each note plus a logic circuit which is programmed to perform all the lock-and-cancels, functions,

and multiplexes automatically gives this instrument sureness, reliability, and isolation from the roll interface stack.

There are four removable relay boxes mounted on SOFI’s piano. Every relay in the L/C Logic box has either a red, green, or yellow LED indicating its purpose and state. The relays are mounted pins up and all connections soldered so that everything can be probed without removing or touching anything. The relay cases are pressed into aluminum channels which hold them securely and allow removal. The lid of each box contains a plastic covered “legend” so each can be found easily without getting out the schematics, and just in case, SOFI has many spares.

There is one small exception to “electronics,” and that is in the remote box. Simple little 555 timing circuits were used to make multiplexing switches happen with one touch of a switch. However, this does not compromise SOFI, which plays without the remote box.

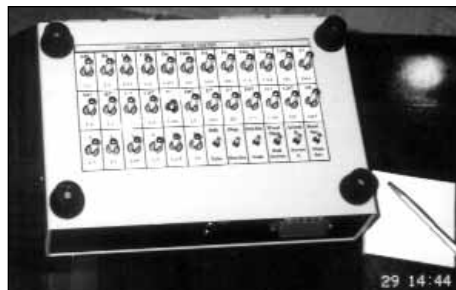
The spool frames are from the Player Piano Company. Very reliable, and play

alternately without need for a note cutout stack, because of their smooth and quick control of the paper. A switch provided allows the playing of just one roll or the other, or both alternately. Either format is available.

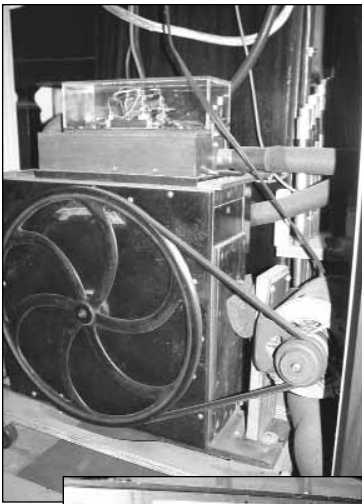
One thing which has not yet been done but is supposedly feasible, is the ability to record O-Rolls through the UM-1 Octet MIDI controller into the Cakewalk program on the computer. It is designed to allow both to be on at the same time, a roll playing and the MIDI recording the roll, while the interface sends ground connections for each switch-on event. However, MIDI files made especially for SOFI are able to play the instrument to its capability, so O-rolls are no longer used.

### A FEW MORE DETAILS

Not to ignore the remote box, by the way. You can “arrange” any music medium as it plays by overriding the automatic switching as it proceeds. You can turn on and off anything in the instrument, manually. Say for example you have an O-roll playing the instrument. You can sit in your easy chair and add pipe ranks, percussion, and even do the drumming (there’s also a percussion cable that connects to it). It was envisioned for an interactive control for O-rolls.



The remote box controls, tunes, and tests everything. It has double-acting switches both on its top and bottom, which means each switch has a dual purpose. The top of the box overrides all instruments. It can play the drums, pipes, percussion, switches the solo instruments, and operates special sound effects as well as the lighting controls. On its bottom are a full complement of double acting tuning switches which are then used to tune the pipes, and other on-board connectors allow this box to



test virtually every function of the machine. All cables connect to it.

The speed at which the percussions respond is attributable to ordinary pneumatic valves operated with primary magnets, but at distances only inches away. A tried and true variation of Hope-Jones technology from old theater organs, actually. There is nothing creatively earth-shaking about this method of operation, and the reason these percussions are able to play the fastest, jazziest music effortlessly is due to its physical layout and dimensions, optimizing their response. It is very *low tech*. For SOFI, reliability is everything so if it can't be trusted, it isn't there.

The lighting includes standard cabinet lighting behind clear plexiglass diffusers, chaser bulb strings above those diffusers, a reflector above the xylophone to double (and reverse) the action, and black light effects.

One black lighting effect is called the "Aurora light." If you have ever watched an aurora borealis, you see undulating lights suspended in space. Now this is a bit of a stretch, but you get all the borealis colors undulating in rhythm behind the xylophone, seemingly suspended. When it isn't on, there's a one-way mirror obscuring it, so you see the back of the xylophone reflected, if anything. When it's on, you see an eerie

variety of colors meandering behind the xylophone as they convolute. They are actually plastic fluorescent slinkies in a black light chamber. It's silent and curious, together with the beaters of the percussion and other moving things glowing under ultraviolet. All three bass drum beater strikes are accentuated with splashes of fluorescent patterns behind the drum skin where each beater strikes.

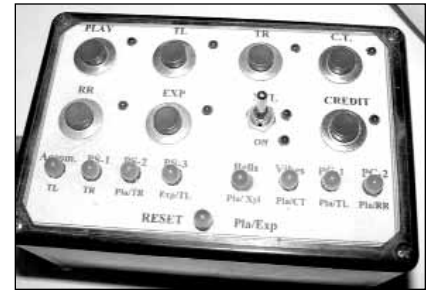
Activated also by the black lighting are the raised luminescent letters on the drum head which spell Spirit of Independence.

The vacuum comes from an Ampico rotary pump with metal connecting rods. The box sitting on the top of the pump contains the usual regulator, but also contains a complete vacuum expression system, operated electrically, and provides regulated pressure from 10 to 30 inches, and unregulated pressure at about 30 inches.

SOFI also contains a Vacuum Threshold Monitor, just for fun. If it is ever necessary to check to see the lowest value the unregulated vacuum level dropped to, this device monitors the vacuum levels and holds the various low levels it's designed to sense. So even after the tune has played, one is still able to see what the lowest level of vacuum dropped to during the song.

Most of SOFI's electrical hardware was surplus— except most of the connectors. The connectors and cable alone cost about \$1000. So if you decide to build one for yourself, make sure you know where to get parts, and figure things up before you spring for it. It was surprising how quickly costs mounted up. Records were kept on the cost of everything. All components for SOFI had to be modified or changed in some way just for use in the machine, so individually they aren't worth much. When building a big orchestrion (or a small one), the components are dedicated to that instrument and nothing else, so they are worth little, apart from the instrument they were intended to go into.

Other hidden costs in a big project like this one include time spent documenting and then updating all underlying documents, schematics, and instructions as things evolve. The tendency is to put it off. Then of course the main expense after it's all finished is



the time required to arrange the music. That doesn't happen quickly. Even with pre-arranged midi music to provide the basic arrangement from which the final arrangement is based, it required about 20 hours work for 6 minutes of music. When you begin with a "clean sheet of paper," double that time, at least. It takes longer for most large orchestrions to get equivalent arrangements. However when arranging music for SOFI, it is much easier than for most big instruments of this nature, and you can play it back instantly— on SOFI, herself. So as changes are made, you are able to hear them in real time.

Finally there is a little "Multiplex Box" which is used to arrange music for SOFI. It monitors the ongoing program with its own lights, and can also override and insert any multiplex. It is used with a midi sequencing program like Cakewalk. You can listen to see if you like the effect, and then add it to the music or try another. SOFI will play it for you as you make the change, on the spot.

SOFI is a tremendous amount of fun for us and a big hit with everybody. They invariably think she should be in a big public place. I personally don't think so. She is in a perfect place-- right here. Her repertoire includes classical, semi-classical, popular, novelty, blues, modern jazz, scat, marches, waltzes, and whatever else one can think of. She seems comfortable with about anything and her rhythm is infectious. She has many facets of personality, and thanks to the programmable rank preset box, her tonality can change instantly with the flick of a switch, while her musical capabilities and pleasant surprises seem endless.

If you would like to hear SOFI play, you can do so if you have a computer by going to Craig's website at [www.player-care.com/cb/](http://www.player-care.com/cb/). At this page, click on SOFI and follow the links to find a set of digitally mastered CD's for sale, or a few songs offered free.



# A TRIBUTE TO MARGUERITE VOLAVY

*"The exultant certainty with which the skips concluding the second movement (Schumann's C. Major Fantasie Opus 17) were attacked must have aroused envy in the hearts of many of the pianists present."*

*-New York Herald Tribune*

Marguerite Volavy-distinguished concert pianist, prolific recording artist, Ampico and QRS-Artecho editor. There can be few serious collectors who have not heard her name. She recorded, at one time or another, for American Piano, for Welte, for Aeolian, and for QRS. Her recordings were issued on Ampico, Duo-Art, Welte, Artecho, Recordo, Soloelle, Solostyle, and QRS labels - and perhaps others unknown to this writer.

But who was she? Those who knew her agree that she was indeed a fine pianist. She is listed among "The Great Pianists" in Ampico catalogs, but her name is not included in the "Official List" of seventy-two "Most Prominent Pianists" compiled in 1928. She was important enough as a concert pianist to be listed in the 1920 edition of Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, but she is not listed in later editions. Her name may be a household word to most AMICAnS-Ampicophiles especially-but when her playing is presented to others, the usual query is, "Marguerite who?"

Marguerite Volavy, "the distinguished Bohemian pianist," was born on December 28, 1886 in Brno, Moravia, a province in what is now Czech Republic. She showed remarkable musical talent as a child, was admitted to the Vienna Conservatory of Music at the age of twelve, and graduated three years later with the first prize in piano playing. After further study with Theodor Leschetizky, she made her debut in 1902 with the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra. In the next few years she made successful concert tours of Austria, Germany, France, Italy, and Russia. Grove's Dictionary mentions: "...from 1902

known as concert pianist throughout Europe, since 1914 has played in America."

She first visited the United States in company with a violinist in 1906-07, and she returned to make her home in the United States a few years later. She began to record for American Piano Company in 1912, and in the following years she appeared frequently in concert. The 1920 Duo-Art catalog mentions her "series of concerts and recitals in the season of 1913-14." And Grove's Dictionary mentions her New York debut as soloist with the Russian Symphony Orchestra on February 13, 1915.

Her earliest known recording is NOVELETTE Op. 21, No. 1 Schumann. This was issued early in 1912 as Rythmodik Record Music Rolls J1225. Some time between 1912 and 1915, expression coding was added to this recording and it was issued as Stoddard-Ampico 5221F. In 1918 it was reissued as 56935H, the number by which it is listed in all later Ampico catalogs.

Like Howard Brockway, Marguerite Volavy came to American Piano Company just as reproducing roll production was getting underway. And during the Stoddard-Ampico era (1912-1915), Howard and Marguerite, between them, account for almost half of the known recordings and more than half of the known Stoddard-Ampico issues. Perhaps taking her cue from Howard Brockway, whose alter ego was Andrei Kmita, Marguerite recorded her lighter numbers under the pseudonym Felix Gerdts. One cannot help but wonder why she did not select a more euphonious name.

She continued to record for American Piano Company until late 1916 or early 1917. Her last known Ampico roll during this early period is VALSE TRISTE OP. 44, Sibelius, played by Volavy, issued as Rythmodik Record Music Rolls J15764 late in 1916 and as Ampico 51675G in 1917. It is important to remember that



all higher numbers 5xxxx and early 6xxxx Volavy rolls appeared after she had left American Piano Company. Most of these have known antecedents; "that is, they are recordings issued earlier as Stoddard-Ampico and/or Rythmodik Record Music Rolls. The poor quality of many of her 5xxxx and early 6xxxx rolls may well be due to the fact that a good many were coded for Ampico long after Marguerite herself had left American Piano Company. The notes are Marguerite's, but the dynamics are someone else's, inserted without reference to any actual performance.

After leaving American Piano Company, she recorded for Duo-Art and for Welte-at least four rolls for Duo-Art and some twenty for Welte. In 1919 the QRS Company announced that they had "secured Howard Brockway and Marguerite Volavy as exclusive artists for QRS rolls." At QRS, Marguerite was not only recording artist but also, from about 1923 till 1926, the classical editor for QRS Company. During this time the company was producing 88-note QRS rolls, expression Recordo rolls, and reproducing Artecho rolls. It was during her QRS sojourn that she dropped Felix Gerdts in favor of a new pseudonym: George Kerr. Her first

*continue...*

known Kerr recording is Recordo 1136 HUMORESQUE Dvorak (Violin Accompaniment) issued in April 1925. Of her twenty-eight known Artechos, twenty-seven are played by Volavy and one by Kerr. Of her thirty-seven known recordo rolls, thirty-two are played by Volavy, four by Kerr, and one (four hands) by Brockway and Volavy.

She returned to American Piano Company in 1926, her first late period recording being Ampico 66273 H SPANISH DANCES OP. 12, NO. 1, C MAJOR; NO. 2, G MINOR Moszkowski, played by Volavy, and issued in July of that year. Her first Ampico roll played by George Kerr follows a few weeks later. During her late Ampico period, she was both recording artist and editor. Josef Lhevinne's encounter with Marguerite in her capacity as editor ("Madame, what are you doing to my recording?" "I am editing it-making corrections." "But you are punching holes in my recording!...") is related by Michael G. DuBrow and reported by Karl Peterson in the AMICA Bulletin, March 1972, page seven, last paragraph.

She continued to record and edit for Ampico till 1930 or 1931. Her last recording (and according to some, her finest) is her Liszt CONCERTO IN E FLAT MAJOR issued as 70973-70983-70993 and as LP 100775. The three-roll set was issued in April 1932 and the LP at about the same time. She once said that this Liszt concerto was her favorite concerto and that she had played it more often than any other in concert.

After leaving Ampico (now the Ampico Corporation), she apparently devoted herself entirely to teaching. According to Emse Dawson, Ampico editor: "She made quite a few records until the depression when she was let go (as we all were to be after that). I did not see her after that, but heard that she had opened a piano studio in White Plains, [Westchester County, New York], near [Elmsford] where she lived."

She was often referred to as Madame Volavy in spite of the fact that she never married. Emse Dawson: "You ask 'Why was she Madame?' This title, as far as I know, is a mark of deference conferred sometimes on someone who is in the public eye. In Marguerite's case, it was

undoubtedly instigated by the American Piano Company to enhance her glamour as a recording artist."

And Angleo Valerio, Ampico artist and editor: "She was not married either when she worked at the QRS Artechos with Mr. Wade or with us. As to her being called 'Madame' Volavy, her proportions were such that the term seemed appropriate."

Clarence Hickman: "I did know Madame Volavy. She often came to our laboratory to use our Ampico in her editing work. I think she used the Madame in front of her name to give a little class."

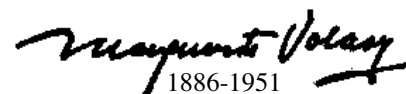
Ted Sadlowski remembers her as "a very cultured woman" and says she "spoke a fine English with a heavy accent." She was very fond of cats, and according to Sadlowski, "had a collection of twelve cats which had musical names like Figaro, Tristan, Aida, etc."

Marguerite Volavy is listed in Westchester telephone directories from 1934 through 1950, her address in the 1950 book being 68 Hartsdale Road, Elmsford, New York. She died at the age of 65 on July 30, 1951. Her ashes were strewn over Grand Canyon in compliance with her request.

She left us, as her legacy, a remarkable number of recordings. Besides the Welte, Duo-Art, Artechos, and Recordo rolls mentioned above and an undetermined number of QRS 88-note rolls, she recorded a phenomenal 245 known rolls for American Piano Company. Of these, 152 are known Ampico issues, and 93 are known only as Rythmodik issues. Of her 152 known Ampico rolls, 87 are played by Marguerite Volavy, 45 by Felix Gerdtz, 15 by George Kerr, and 5 (four hands) by Volavy and Brockway.

Those who knew her remember her as "a grand dame" and as "quite an imposing person." She is described as being "of ample proportions" and as "a short buxom woman." It is said that she liked to play Liszt transcriptions in concert and that once while playing the Wagner-Liszt LIEBESTOD, the piano bench collapsed and she fell to the floor of the stage. However, another bench was brought in, and she seated herself and started over, apparently not a bit ruffled by the experience.

The best evaluation of her playing (in the opinion of the Volavy fan) is to be found in the 1927 Recordo catalog: "Possessed of great pianistic talent and a strong, magnetic personality, she plays with emotional intensity, all of her work being characterized by virility and marked rhythms." Although, as mentioned above, some of her early rolls leave something to be desired, her late rolls are very fine and do indeed "bear the imprint of a master pianist."



Marguerite Volavy  
1886-1951

This article was prepared with the assistance of Ginny Billings, Ralph and Elaine Obenchain, Robert A. Pye, William Knorp, Jim Elfers, Richard J. Howe, Ted Sadlowski, Clarence Hickman, Angelo Valerio, Emse Dawson, and the staff of the White Plains Public Library.

— August 1972

Elmsford, N.Y.  
April 26, 1972

Mr. Ralph R. Obenchain  
The Chicago Corporation  
208 So. LaSalle Street  
Chicago, Ill. 60604

Dear Mr. Obenchain:

Enclosing the copies of material I had in my possession of the late Madam Volovay-sorry that the photo didn't come out a bit better-as you will note none of the sheets carry a date, so have no idea just when they were actually printed.

As I mentioned in our telephone conversation Madam passed away on July 30, 1951-cremated close by at Ferncliff-Ballard-Durand of 2 Maple Ave., White Plains, N.Y. officiated and possibly their records might show a date of birth-records I have show the age at death as 65.

Have endeavored to locate some friends-a Mrs. Agnes Anderson, 170 Grand St., White Plains N.Y.-now residing in Fla.; Mrs. Lillian Edmonds, 5 Lockwood Ave., Scarsdale, N.Y.-Mrs. Jennie Sudbeaz of 142 Woodland Ave., New Rochelle, N.Y.

continue. . .

These people were named in her Will at the time-Steinway Grand Piano went to Grasslands Hospital in Valhalla, N.Y. Mrs. Anderson, as I mentioned in my telephone conversation was designated as the person to dispose of the Ashes-to be strewn over Grand Canyon-one of her last vacation trips was spent in that area and she was so impressed with the beauty, etc., that was her request.

Also find enclosed the envelope from my neighbor at 68 Hartsdale Rd., for Mr. Vernon Brown inasmuch as you said you were both working on the same project.

Your very generous check in the amount of \$25 is enclosed also-thank you very much but if the enclosed will be used in Madam's memory it is compensation enough.

Very truly yours,  
Susan Dearman

Mrs. Chas. Dearman  
8 Poplar Street

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## A FEW PRESS NOTICES

Miss Volavy gained immediate success through her glittering technic, perfect evenness of the difficult passage work and the extreme and perfect brilliancy of her artistic feeling.

Julius Korngood in  
*Neue Freie Presse*, Vienna.

A soulful tone with manly but delicate touch distinguished Miss Volavy's playing.  
*Berliner Tageblatt*.

Miss Volavy's infallible technic, her impressive playing almost masculine touch, could create only admiration. We met one again a talent of highest order."

"*Hlas Naroda*" Prague.

Miss Volavy understands the giving of real values in her artistic and thoroughly musicianly renditions.

*Muenchener Neueste Nachrichten*.

Her playing was masterly in its artistry and impressed the audience profoundly.

*Il Momento*, Turin.

The certainty with which she overcame the greatest difficulties, her repose, her splendid musicianship, gave Miss Volavy not only an undoubted success but a great warmth of appreciation.

*Wiener Tageblatt*.

Because of her most wonderful art of touch and stupendous technic-we can not refrain from giving our fullest appreciation to this artist.

*Breslauer Zeitung*.

Miss Volavy impressed through her grace of manner, and her perfect technic is of equal perfection.

*Caffara*, Genoa.

Miss Volavy played the Schumann Concerto under the wonderful direction of Safonoff. The brilliancy of her technic, and wonderful dramatic feeling combined with masculine strength remind one of Teresa Careno.

*Birzevia Vedomosti*, St. Petersburg.

Miss Volavy convinced through her grace of manner and impressive perfect playing that she is the real artist.

*Figaro*, Paris.

Miss Volavy proved to be an artist of rare ability.

*Montgomery Journal*.

A masculine strength and brilliancy combined with feminine delicacy and sympathy distinguished her playing, while her technic is irrefragable.

*Daily Item*, Mobile.

Miss Volavy is a pianiste of the highest rank; the audience was enthusiastic over her work.

*Light*, San Antonio.

Miss Volavy displayed true artistic temperament and finished technic.

*Galveston Daily News*.

Miss Volavy has genuine musical personality-and knows how to bring out all the artistic charms; she revealed astonishing technical qualifications together with plenty of brains and temperament...she is no doubt one of the most masterly

and striking pianistes ever heard here.

*Dallas Morning News*

The concerto introduced a pianistic, Marguerite Volavy,-well like by the audiences. She responded to insistent applause by an encore.

*New York Times*.

The solo part of the concerto was rendered by Marguerite Volavy in a thoroughly interesting style.

*New York Sun*.

Miss Volavy played in a brilliant manner.

*New York Herald*.

Madame Volavy is an accomplished artist who plays with animation and skill.

*The Times*.

Marguerite Volavy, the Bohemian pianist, proved herself a most capable artist. Skill, precision and brilliance are hers, and in her playing there is no sign of feminine indecision.

*The Tribune*.

Madame Marguerite Volavy is a pianiste of more than ordinary ability who combines a fine musical feeling with technical proficiency.

*New York Herald*.

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# PRESS

*The New York Times*

## MARGUERITE VOLAVY PLAYS.

*Pianist displays Qualities of a True Artist in Town Hall Recital.*

Marguerite Volavy, a pianist who has been absent from the local concert stage for six years or more, returned in a recital yesterday afternoon at the town Hall. She is an artist who has many admirable gifts, chief of which are a singing tone, a marked sense of rhythm and a fleetness of touch that gave especial brilliancy to the classic items which opened her program. These

continue. . .

were the Gluck-Sgambati "Melodie," Mozart's sonata in D and the Bach-d'Abert Prelude and Fugue in D.

Schumann's Fantasie, Op. 17, likewise received a performance of notable warmth and virtuosic power, especially in its stirring second movement. There were moments when the pianist's tone hardened from occasional forcing, but the phrasing and general outlines of the work were at all times those of a true artist. The remainder of the program comprised Brahms's Romanze in F and the Capriccio in B minor; Chopin's Prelude, Op. 45; the Mazurka in F sharp minor and the Waltz, Op. 42; two Preludes of Rachmaninoff, two "Fairy Tales," by Medtner, and Liapunoff's "Lesghinka." Miss Volavy was recalled many times by an enthusiastic audience and added several encores.

## **NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE**

*Mme. Volavy in Recital Offers  
Fine Performance*

*Pianist at Town Hall After Long  
Absence From Concert Work*

After an absence of some years, Marguerite Volavy returned to the concert platform in a recital of piano music at Town Hall yesterday afternoon. The Bach-d'Albert Prelude and Fugue in D Major, which closed the first group on the program, received a notably fine performance. The architectural structure was apparent throughout and the climax, cannily built up, revealed a rare command of bravura octaves and orchestral tone, never unaesthetic in quality.

Sgambati's transcription of the flute melody from Gluck's "Orpheus" seemed to us too slow in tempo and too near the borderline of sentimentality to do justice to

the spirit of "Beyond Good and Evil," which emanates from its chaste tones. Nor was the Mozart Sonata in D Major so well suited to Mme. Volavy's full-blooded style. With the restraint which she therein imposed upon herself, she concomitantly introduced an amorphousness of contour which was not beneficial to her otherwise delicate interpretation.

The truly great artistic stature of the pianist evinced itself most fully in Schumann's C Major Fantasie Opus 17. The striking individuality, the glowing emotional and imaginative gifts, as well as a superb mastery of the many technical difficulties all combined to provide a performance suffused with poetry and ardor. The exultant certainty with which the skips concluding the second movement were attacked must have aroused envy in the hearts of many of the pianists present. The program included pieces by Brahms, Chopin, Rachmaninoff, Medtner and Liapunov.

# **AEOLIAN PIPE ORGAN**

*National Post  
Saturday, July 31, 2004*

The Aeolian Pipe Organ played at the Butchart Gardens is an early twentieth century residence instrument equipped with its own pneumatic player. Built in the early 1920's by the Aeolian Company of New York this model, once owned by Vancouver department store owner, Chris Spencer, is identical to one owned by R. P. Butchart and installed in his residence here at Benvenuto. Fully playable manually, this organ boasts just under one thousand individual pipes, a set of twenty tubular chimes and

a forty-nine note percussive harp. Paper organ rolls display the virtuoso ability of the automatic player to reproduce complex orchestral works.

The photograph shows Christopher Ross, great-grandson of the Butcharts, and friends at the keyboard of the refurbished Aeolian Pipe Organ which he helped to restore.



# AMPICO MUSIC CABINETS

By Jerry Biasella

In 1979, I attended my first AMICA convention in Philadelphia, PA. At Wanamaker's Department Store, we heard a concert on the Grand Court organ, then took a side trip to the third floor piano department to see a Marshall and Wendell Ampico piano and a William and Mary Ampico roll cabinet, Style 8D. This cabinet was very dark brown mahogany with hand painted floral designs on the two doors. It was the first Ampico roll cabinet I'd ever seen. The piano was for sale, but the cabinet was a store fixture. We were told it had been there since the 20's or early 30's.

I've been wanting to write an article about Ampico roll cabinets ever since I bought one in 1983, but I've discovered factory literature and other information on these receptacles for our Ampico recordings is almost non-existent.

In Ampico magazines from late 1924 and some of the Ampico bulletins starting in May 1927, the American Piano company show most models available. Today there seem to be few surviving examples even in the hands of Ampico collectors. I have personally seen about three dozen to date. Over the years, I know of only four or five which have been offered to collectors of which only half can be accounted for today.

From 1975 to 1988, a company called Bill Edgerton's Mechanical Music Instruments sold automatic music machines. Bill also offered three Ampico roll cabinets: an Italian Renaissance style with a Philco radio, a mahogany Style 9, and a walnut Style 9 which is the model I currently own.

The accompanying photos illustrate some of the styles of cabinets produced. General dimensions are 15" deep, 28" wide, and 58" high. Some on short legs are only 48" high. Following is a brief description of all Ampico roll cabinet models.

Italian Renaissance (Style 3) models are probably the most abundant. These were bought as companion pieces for hand carved pianos such as the Mason &

Hamlin from Milan, Italy. They were also used with other art-cased Ampico and Duo-Art models. The walnut cases are richly decorated. Carved in the Italian style, they represent the top of the line in craftsmanship and design. Two upper hand carved medallions resemble the profiles on roman silver coins. The two lower doors are carved with heraldic shields. There are slight variations in these carvings, and some cabinets have additional carvings. There are also major differences in the color of all existing units. Some are light honey walnut, and others are much darker. No matter which color or carving it has, if you have one of these, you have a treasure. Some of these models have the Ampico decal, and some do not. Hence, some may have been sold to non-Ampico owners. Decals, located on the upper right hand door, are the same as those used on the lower right hand corner of the fallboard of the later Ampico pianos.

Louis XV (Style 5) cabinets are also abundant. This style was possibly the most popular of all art case piano styles. It was available in walnut and mahogany cases with rosewood center panels and highly decorated green or antique red lacquer painted in the Italian style. This painted style is the most rare; only two are known to date. The dimensions of this style are the same as Style 3.

Louis XIV (Style 1) cabinets are very hard to find. The Louis XIV case style was very popular, but matching roll cabinets are scarce. The well made Louis XIV cabinets have two long doors on top and two short doors on the bottom. The arrangement is the opposite of the Italian Renaissance style. They still hold 110 recordings, and maybe a few monthly bulletins. Doors on the Louis XIV model have beautiful carved moldings around the center diamond pattern veneered in rosewood. Small rosettes decorate the corners of the top two doors. Shorter versions of this cabinet were made with six-inch instead

of fifteen-inch legs. Although less decorated than their taller brothers, these have the same storage capacity.

On the Italian Renaissance, Louis XV, and Louis XIV cabinets, most of the hardware is similar, if not the same. There are no doorknobs, only keyholes. The key, usually in the form of a double dolphin, serves as a door pull.

Colonial (Style 9) cabinets may have been the style that could be used with any and all semi-art cases and standard pianos because it is fairly plain. These cabinets are walnut or mahogany in a variety of colors. Style 9D was decorated, and its floral hand painted doors could be very handsome. On each door, there is a small brass doorknob sporting flowers in the center. This model has no lock or key.

The Ampico Secretary (Style 30) was the top of the line model. Not only a cabinet for your rolls, it also doubled as a very useful writing desk. Made for the ladies of the home and appointed with hand paintings, it could surely be the focal point in any well-furnished living room. Style 30 cabinets are Louis XV style made of two tone walnut hand carved with painted decoration. The slant front desk has four small drawers and pigeon holes for letters. This cabinet was mainly designed to match the Mason & Hamlin pianos with similar carving on the legs. It could also be sold to accompany a Knabe or Chickering. Only three examples of this style are known.

Another Secretary (Style 35) was a Sheraton style desk in complete contrast to the higher style of the Style 30. The two upper doors display bold multi-patterned cross-grained figured mahogany. The lower doors are of the same wood, but do not have the bold look of the top doors. The two secretary style roll cabinets are the only ones which may be able to house the Ampico jumbo rolls. This secretary style roll cabinet is the only ones which may be able to house the Ampico jumbo rolls.

*continue...*

This secretary style is the rarest of the rare. As of this writing, there is only one example known of the Style 35; it was found in East Rochester, N.Y., home of the American Piano Company Factories.

In addition to these models, there is evidence that Ampico also offered Styles 24, 25, and 28. All were lowboy console style, and Style 28 had a Spanish influenced design. However, there are no formal factory photos or literature known regarding these pieces.

Those of us who have been members of AMICA for 25 years or more might remember a section of the AMICA Bulletin titled "Instruments" which began in 1971. Members were encouraged to send in photos of their pianos and/or roll cabinets. This section lasted a few years and yielded a few early photos of Ampico roll cabinets. Recently, while reading through some of my original Duo-Art monthly roll bulletins, I saw a photo in the May 1927 issue of S. L. Rothafel, ROXY movie theater owner in New York city, sitting at his Steinway Duo-Art Spanish art case playing a roll. Just over his shoulder is an Ampico Italian Renaissance roll cabinet. Did Aeolian buy these cabinets from Ampico Piano Company? Or did all fine piano retail shops sell these rolls cabinets? Of course, all piano shops sold these roll cabinets, whether Ampico, Duo-Art or Welte. Maybe this explains why some have the Ampico decal and some do not.

Who made Ampico roll cabinets? The manufacturer of these cabinets is a slight mystery, as there are many possible cabinet shops across the East and Midwest. Herzog Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan; Udell Works Company of Indianapolis, Indiana; and Henry Holtzman & Sons of Columbus, Ohio all made phono cabinets for 78 records, roll cabinets and sheet music cabinets. None of the Ampico cabinets have markings on them: not a paper label, not a brand mark, not even a brass tag. So, who made them?

Allen Mueller from Rochester, New York, has been collecting Ampico literature for several years. When I posed the question to him, he said no clear factory records still remain. However, one clue may be in a story he related to me. Allen knew the son of the Chickering division's then supervisor. The son told

Allen that his father had been given a Style 35 Louis XV secretary desk by the Bernard & Simmonds Furniture Company, then located in East Rochester, New York. This company was known to have supplied music desks and piano benches to the Ampico Piano Company. Could Bernard and Simmonds have also supplied the roll cabinets? Although some factory ledgers and other records still survive, nothing proves this theory. If anyone reading this can help by looking at your cabinets to see if there is a mark, please let the author know.

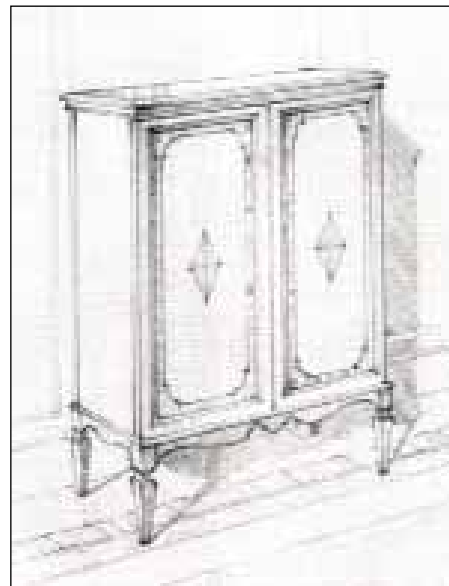
I would like to thank the following members for their knowledge and help either with photos or printed materials for this article:

- Allen H. Mueller . . . .New York
- Dick Howe . . . . .Texas
- William Knorp . . . . .California
- Frank Malfitana . . . .New York



*(Photo 1981) AMPICO ROLL CABINET with Philco Radio, circa 1930. Ampico roll cabinets are rare. They are rarer when they are in a carved, Italian Renaissance walnut cabinet, but how many were there that also had a dealer installed radio in the upper compartment? This is in beautiful original condition. The radio is a Philco Model 91 of 1930 vintage. The radio is not working, and we believe that a bad capacitor is at fault! The original owners bought it with a matching Mason & Hamlin Ampico in 1930, and the piano dealer who also sold Philcos, installed the radio with the deal. Most rare, very desirable.*

*Stock Number M-2825-50-C \$2,000.00*



*(Photo from 9/1924 AMPICO Bulletin) A Cabinet for Ampico Recordings*

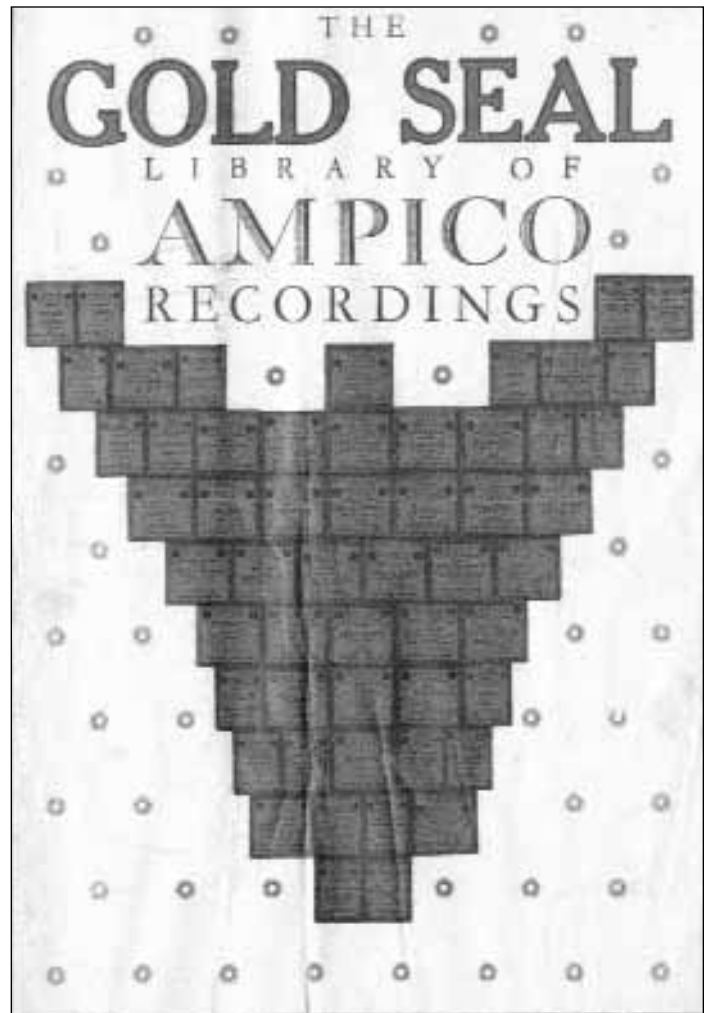
*The illustration shows a beautiful cabinet, specially designed to contain one hundred and ten Ampico recordings. It is made in mahogany*

*with matched mahogany band around the doors, this decorative feature being repeated in the diamond in the center of the panels.*

*In design, its restraint is in keeping with the Ampico grands and uprights in the regular styles. The cabinet is four feet high, two and one-half feet wide and fifteen inches deep, and is a beautiful piece of furniture in addition to supplying a convenient receptacle for Ampico recordings. It may be had of all Ampico dealers.*

*This bulletin with the January 1923 Catalog supplies a COMPLETE LIST of all Ampico Recordings to date.*





*Ampico cabinet w/ "The Ampico decal" cr. 1924*



*Italian Renaissance Ampico roll cabinet at Jim Krughoff's -1929?*



*Louie XV*



May 1994 Ampico cabinet (Piano Roll)  
Style: Louis XV (No. 5)  
Holds 110 rolls  
(2 cabinets) Introduced:  
Oct. 1926 Mahogany  
with rosewood panels.  
Hand-carved.



Louis XV secretary desk



1 of 2: Louis XV Ampico piano  
roll cabinet Louis XV Style 5  
Mahogany with rosewood panels.  
Introduced: October 1926  
Holds 110 rolls (one of two)  
Pair of cabinets Louis XV  
Style 5 May 1994



Louis XVI-short legs





*Colonial open showing decal*



*Louis XVI Ampico roll cabinet w/NO Ampico decal- 11/2002*



# They Shall Be Remembered



**Richard Z. Vance**  
**1938-2004**

*Richard's daughter Rachel has sent some detail to give a picture of the man to those who only met him away from home:*

My dad was born July 7, 1938 in Pittsburgh. He went to Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie Mellon University) here in Pittsburgh. Then, he joined the army and served during Vietnam. After returning home, he met and married Barbara, and they settled in the suburbs

of Pittsburgh. My dad worked as an electrical engineer. My brother, Douglas was born in 1975. I came along in 1976. Our mother passed away after a brief battle with cancer in 1976. My father continued working for the same company, it got bought out several times, the most recent being Kvaerner.

My dad's sister has art work that my dad drew as a child depicting the inside of factories, automobiles, pianos, organs in great detail. She actually did a college project on my dad because he was so gifted. He fixed his first piano at the age of 12. Through college, he earned money by fixing or tuning pianos. I don't know when he bought his first...they were always just there in our house. He bought his pipe organ completely disassembled in 1984. He would work on it every free minute, then get sidetracked with a new project or he would have to travel for work. I don't know how he amassed such a collection of rolls, either. They just appeared out of nowhere. In his house, he has the pipe organ, several pianos, and more in the garage and a storage locker.

Every year, he looked forward to his

trip to Europe and would come back with many pictures. He didn't really have any other hobbies, this took up most of his time! He always enjoyed a good laugh watching Monty Python or Benny Hill, though!

Sadly, the pipe organ still stands unfinished, but to look at the work that went into getting this far is amazing.

My dad was also a very proud Grandpa, too!

Rachel Mitlo



*Gary with son David.*

**Gary Sage**  
**1941-2004**

Gary Sage, born in Carmel and who was considered by many locally and abroad to be the foremost piano restorer

in the country if now worldwide, died this last week peaceably, of an illness he struggled with for many years. His parents, A. Lee Sage and Emma Joanne Sage, along with Jake Stock, were an integral part of the foundation of world famous Monterey Jazz. Many people did not realize that Gary was one of the finest stride jazz pianist of our generation. He often played the local festivals packing the audience to the walls.

Gary was considered in his field to not be merely gifted, but a true genius. He was most definitely a prodigy tuning for the Carmel Bach Festival for over 25 years, beginning at the age of 14. Steinway and Sons, the world's most prestigious piano company would often call Gary for advice on piano building. He was one of the few craftsmen left who actually knew the mavericks in the field of piano building. Alfred Knight of Knight Pianos, London, England, heard the rumors of this young man building and restoring and flew here just to observe his techniques. Much much more can be said about this remarkable man. Many articles have previously appeared in the Monterey Herald and Gary has been featured on T.V., one with his 2 year old son playing a player organ in his legendary instrument museum once housed in Monterey.

Gary is survived by his former wife, musician and writer Katherine Cameron Sage, and his only son, Elijah Merlin David Sage, aged 9, who is a gifted student at the International School of Monterey.

Gary held the Sage Coat of Arms that is anciently traced to St. David of Wales, an ancient King himself, and reputedly the uncle of the legendary King Arthur. Both he and his son at one time made a 'pilgrimage' to the ancient town of St. David's where the Sage name is carved in the Cathedral Walls.

A small quiet memorial service will be held at the Church of the Wayfarer this Saturday, July 10 at 11 a.m.



## **Maverick tuner: Perfect pitch and the perfect soundboard**

*By Anne Papineau  
The Camel Pine Cone July 9, 2004*

Blessed with perfect pitch, dedication to the craft of piano tuning and restoration, and an accomplished musician in his own right, Gary L. Sage died June 29 following a lengthy illness. He was 62.

Mr. Sage was born in Carmel, the son of Lee Sage, a former jazz player turned piano technician, and Emma Joanne Sage. His parents, along with Jake Stock, were integral members of the Monterey jazz community.

Under his father's tutelage, Mr. Sage studied piano tuning and repair from an early age.

"By the time Gary was 12 or 13, he had so far surpassed his father's skills that the father virtually became an apprentice to his son," said Lyn Bronson of Carmel, who teaches intermediate and advanced piano at CSU Monterey Bay.

For more than 25 years, beginning at age 14, Mr. Sage tuned keyboard instruments for the Carmel Bach Festival.

"Gary had a form of perfect pitch-recognizing instantly the pitch of any tone he hears-that was the best I have ever known," said Bronson. "Gary could rub the brass windings of a bass piano string or scratch a piece of paper and

immediately identify its pitch. This was no mere parlor trick, for he perfected and used this knowledge in the acoustic redesign of pianos in the rebuilding process."

"Steinway and Sons, the world's most prestigious piano company, would often call Gary for advice on piano building," said his former wife, Katherine.

"He was also controversial," added Bronson, "for he sometimes redesigned the stringing of Steinway pianos."

"Once, in the rebuilding of an 1893 vintage Steinway concert grand piano for us, he replaced the original tired soundboard with one he had constructed himself. As an example of his fanatical attention to detail, he learned that this vintage Steinway used Adirondack Sitka spruce, which is cheaper and more prevalent in piano constructed today. Not only did he search far and wide for the Adirondack spruce lumber stock, but he constructed a special room in his workshop that was hermetically sealed and with constant temperature-humidity fluctuation in which the new soundboard could properly season before being installed."

Bronson said Mr. Sage worked for him as recently as last month.

Katherine Sage recalled that Alfred Knight of Knight Pianos in London, flew here just to observe the techniques of the maverick builder and restorer.

Mr. Sage was a founding member of AMICA, the Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors Association, and was a gifted stride jazz pianist. For a time Mr. Sage also accompanied screenings of silent films that were commissioned by Warner Bros. Studios, and he had the opportunity to play for legendary movie producer Hal Roach.

In addition to his former wife, he is survived by a son, Elijah Merlin David, age 9, of Monterey. Father and son enjoyed a journey to the town of St. David's in Wales, where the ancient Sage name is carved in the cathedral walls.

A memorial service for Mr. Sage will begin at 11 a.m. Saturday, July 10 at the church of the Wayfarer, Lincoln and Seventh, Carmel-by-the-Sea.

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*continue . . .*

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# News From The Chapters



## HEART OF AMERICA CHAPTER

*Reporter: Kay Bode*

President: Tom McAuley

On Sunday, June 20th, **H.C. and Marlene Beckman** hosted a delicious brunch followed by a chapter meeting at their home in Berryton, KS. Members all agreed that the Beckman's had done a great job of arranging for the rally and Saturday evening dinner.

**John and Barbara Washburn** of Grain Valley, MO will host the next Heart of America rally and Chapter meeting the weekend of September 10th, 11th, and 12th. Members are in for a fun filled weekend. On Friday evening members will attend the parade of the Concordia Comical Crew in Concordia, MO. On Saturday members will play for an organ rally in conjunction with the annual Concordia Fall Festival followed by dinner at the festival Beer Garden. After dinner members will drive to the Washburn's home for an evening of fun and 40's music by the Vintage Musical Singers. Sunday morning members will be back at John and Barbara's for brunch followed by a chapter meeting.

*Popcorn on the table helped stave off hunger pangs for Robbie Tubbs, Adam Tubbs, and Charlie Tyler all from Kansas City, MO, and Roger Stumfoll, Pittsburg, KS, and H.C. Beckman, Berryton, KS, as they waited for the real food.*



*Tom McAuley, Hutchinson, KS, shows off his colorful and patriotic street organ.*



*JoJo the mechanized monkey is always a big hit at rallies. JoJo belongs to Linda and Galen Bird of Grandview, MO.*



*Roadhouse Surprise! Gary Craig's wife Cynthia toted a birthday cake from St. Louis, MO, for the occasion. Billie Railsback, Hutchinson, KS, admires the decorations.*



*On stage at Gage Park, Charlie Tyler, Kansas City, Mo, listens to Roger Stumfoll, Pittsburg, KS, sing accompanied by one of his "talking machines".*



## SOUTHERN CHAPTER

*Reporter: Shirley Nix*

President: Frank Nix - (818) 884-6849

July 10 and 11 was the time for our last meeting, starting off at the lovely hilltop home of **Jim and Caroyl Westcott**. Their home has a wonderful view, and the home itself is comfortable and pleasant, with a large music room built next to the house. (Of course, there are music machines in the house, too.)

The Westcotts have been stalwart members for a long time, always coming out for the organ rallies, and never missing a meeting if it was possible for them to make it. Jim was president of our chapter a few years ago, and he put on some fascinating programs while in office.

The Westcotts have amassed a lovely collection, but are regrettably are having to move out of the area due to health considerations. This means they have the house and collection for sale, so this was our last chance to see the instruments together as a collection.

Their instruments include a Carl Frei 90 key Dutch Organ, a 43 Key Bruder with lots of rolls, a 54 Key band organ with MIDI, a 72 key DeCap Organ, a 60 key DeCap with MIDI, a Tanzabar Accordion, A Knabe Reproducing piano, a Hofbauer monkey organ, and the famous (in this area, at least) Pell organ mounted on a gold cart customized to look like a miniature fire truck. Add to that an Allen Theater Organ, and you have the makings of a grand meeting.

All the instruments were for sale at this meeting, and several were sold to our members. There are probably a few left, and the prices are reasonable, so if you are interested get in touch with Jim.

Jim also had a German band organ, good sized, needing some restoration, which he generously donated for a drawing...that's right...a free organ! That doesn't happen very often, although several people asked if others were going to follow suit, thinking it would be nice to have that happen at every meeting...of course, no one wanted to be the one to donate, only to win.

Anyone interested in the organ signed up, and at the appropriate time a number was drawn out of Jim's hat, and Jack Conway was the lucky winner. The only requirement was that the organ had to be moved out in a short period of time.

We spent the day enjoying the music, then went to dinner at a fine Mexican restaurant. When dinner was over most of us went back up to the house, where Jim put on a wonderful concert on the Allen organ. It was a really enjoyable day, and we went to sleep that night with wonderful music rolling

around our heads, with the thought that Sunday would add to the fun.

Sunday at 1:00 we ventured over to Santa Maria to "Doug's Piano Parlor". **Doug Mussell** had a printing shop, and on retirement converted it to a museum for his and Audrey's instruments. They host luncheons and civic events three, and Audrey puts on a really entertaining comedy routine, which she did for us.

The room is surrounded by orchestrions, including a Mills Violano, a Wurlitzer B, a Wurlitzer CX, a Seeburg K with pipes, A Mason-Hamlin Ampico A reproducing piano, and a Mason & Hamlin Welte Red Roll upright piano. Again, we enjoyed the music and the fellowship.

This was a wonderful meeting, and we thank both the Westcotts and the Mussells for their hospitality and warmth. We owe a special vote of thanks, though, to Jim and Caroyl for setting up the whole thing and arranging the dinner and the visit to Doug and Audrey's Piano Parlor. We will miss them when they move, and hope they will keep in touch. They will be in Northern California, so perhaps that chapter will be lucky enough to have them as members.

*Jim and Caroyl Westcott,  
our Saturday hosts*



*Jack Conway holds his  
winning number (15) with  
Jim and Caroyl Westcott in  
front of the raffle organ.*



*Richard & Beverly Ingram.*



*Mike Argain and Frank Nix*



*Doug and Audrey Mussell, our Sunday hosts.*



## **S.O.W.N.Y. CHAPTER**

*Reporter: Garry Lemon*

President: Mike Walter- (716) 656-9583

### **July 2004-Summer Gathering**

*Photography by-Nancy Group and Anne Lemon*

July in SOWNY territory brings the seasonal promise of summer mid day activities such as outdoor picnics and barbecues. Anne's colorful gardens provided the backdrop for fellow members to sit back, chat and simply enjoy this favorite time of year. Several members have been on the golf course, traveling to the theatre and outdoor concerts, cleaning and prepping their hobby cars, getting their growing students ready for college or tending to the grandchildren!

Pot-luck favorites such as summer salads, carrot casserole, vegetables and dip, pea-meal bacon, delicious vegetable chips and fresh Niagara cherries were appreciated. The highlight, though, was the dessert table-pecan pie from Colin's favorite Toronto bakery, white and dark chocolate chips home made by Nancy and Irish scones from an ancient and authentic recipe baked by Mike.

Before the short business meeting, President Mike introduced and welcomed two new members-**Daniel Tenerowicz and Audrey Cannizzaro**. Daniel is an enthusiastic supporter of musical events and a restorer of organs. Audrey told a story about why she purchased an historic home in Buffalo. Apparently the former owner's *grand piano in the bay window* inspired her to not only purchase the home but to also make inquiries about pianos for sale. Daniel came to her assistance and enabled the purchase of a player Weber grand-a fitting purchase indeed.

After the business meeting, Daniel demonstrated his improvisational skills and musical sense of humor on the piano. His musical accompaniment during the church service sometimes surprises the church clergy and congregation. Colin played some Scott Joplin rags and told a story about his music teacher who encouraged his study of this fascinating period of American music-making. Garry ended the night by playing Debussy's Reverie-and at 11:00 p.m., our fellow AMICANS bade farewell.

We are fortunate to have talented and generous spirited members who travel distances to attend our gatherings.



*Howard, Colin, Anne, Lori (in the colorful summer hat and dress), Daniel and Frank enjoying the barbecue.*



*Garden Party-Stan sampling the desserts (far right).*



*Mike and Holly sampling the desserts.*



*Colin playing, Frank and Daniel listening (Frank is a well known and respected jazz player who has mentored, promoted and adjudicated student ensembles).*



*Daniel playing.*



*Garry playing, Audrey and Daniel listening.*



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(Rev. 6-98)

**"Life is 10% what  
you make it,  
and 90% how you take it."**

~ Irving Berlin

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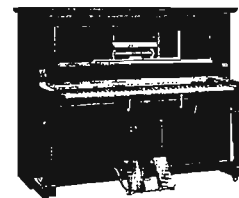
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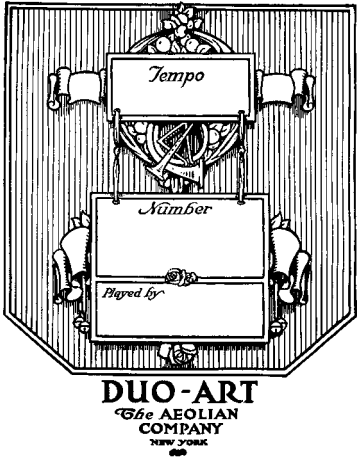
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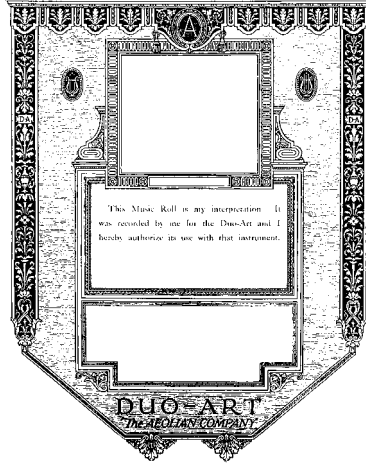
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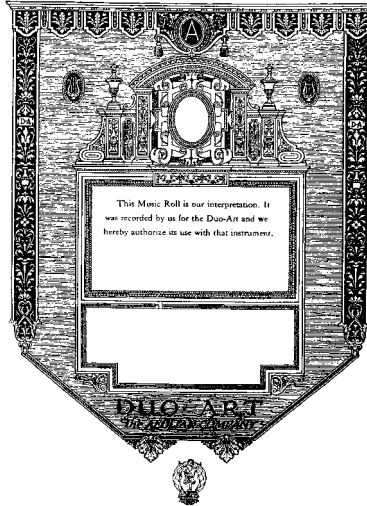
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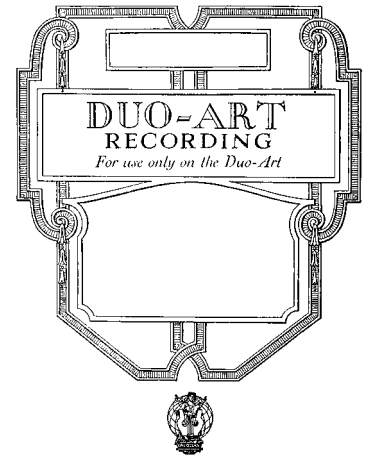
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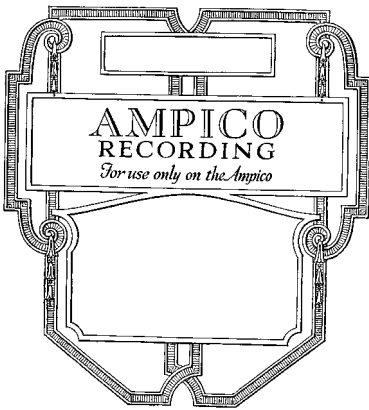
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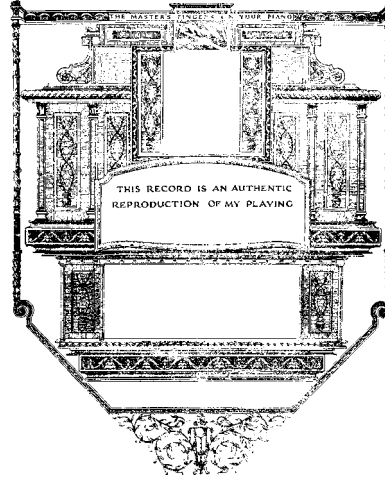
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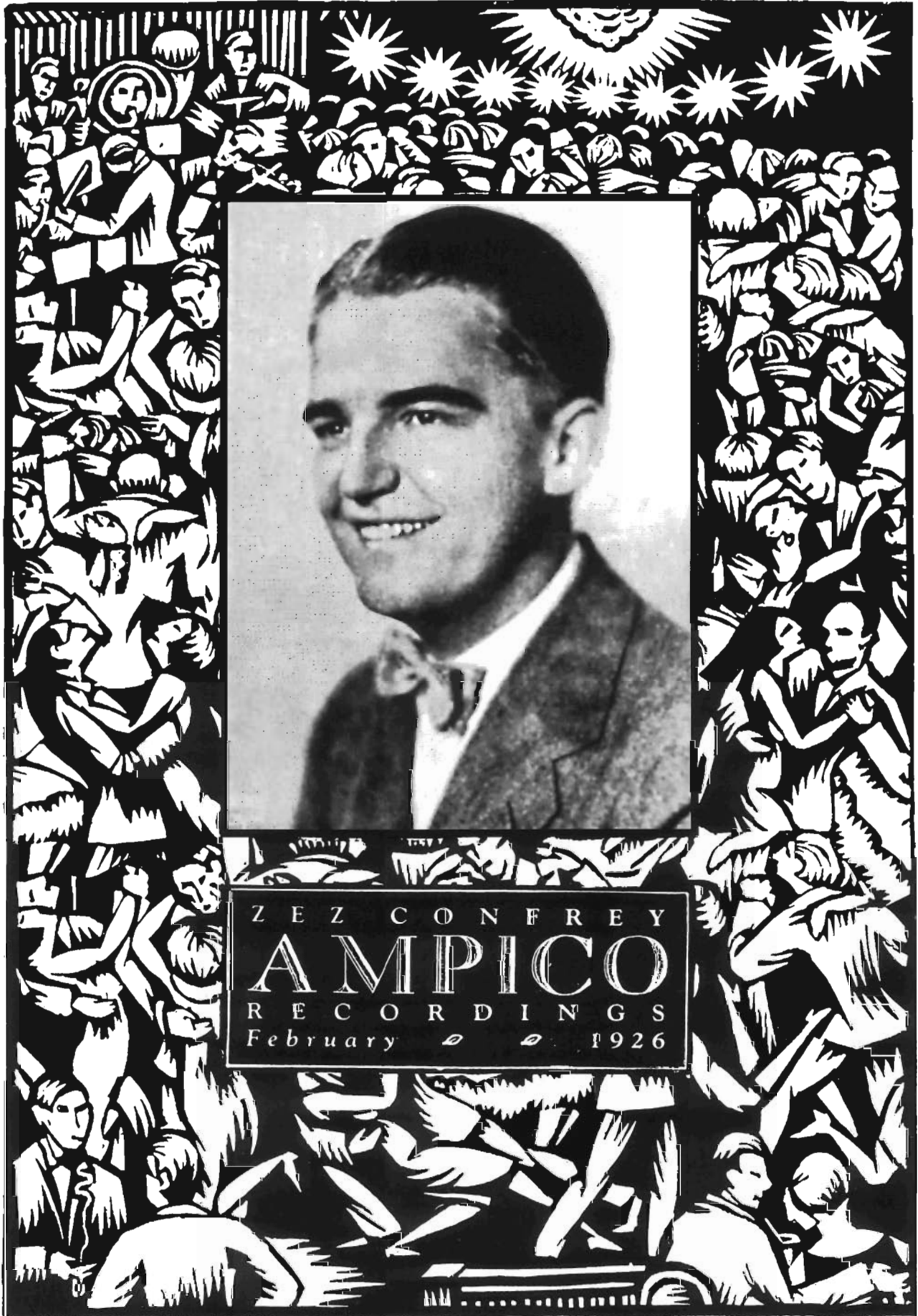
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