

# THE AMICA

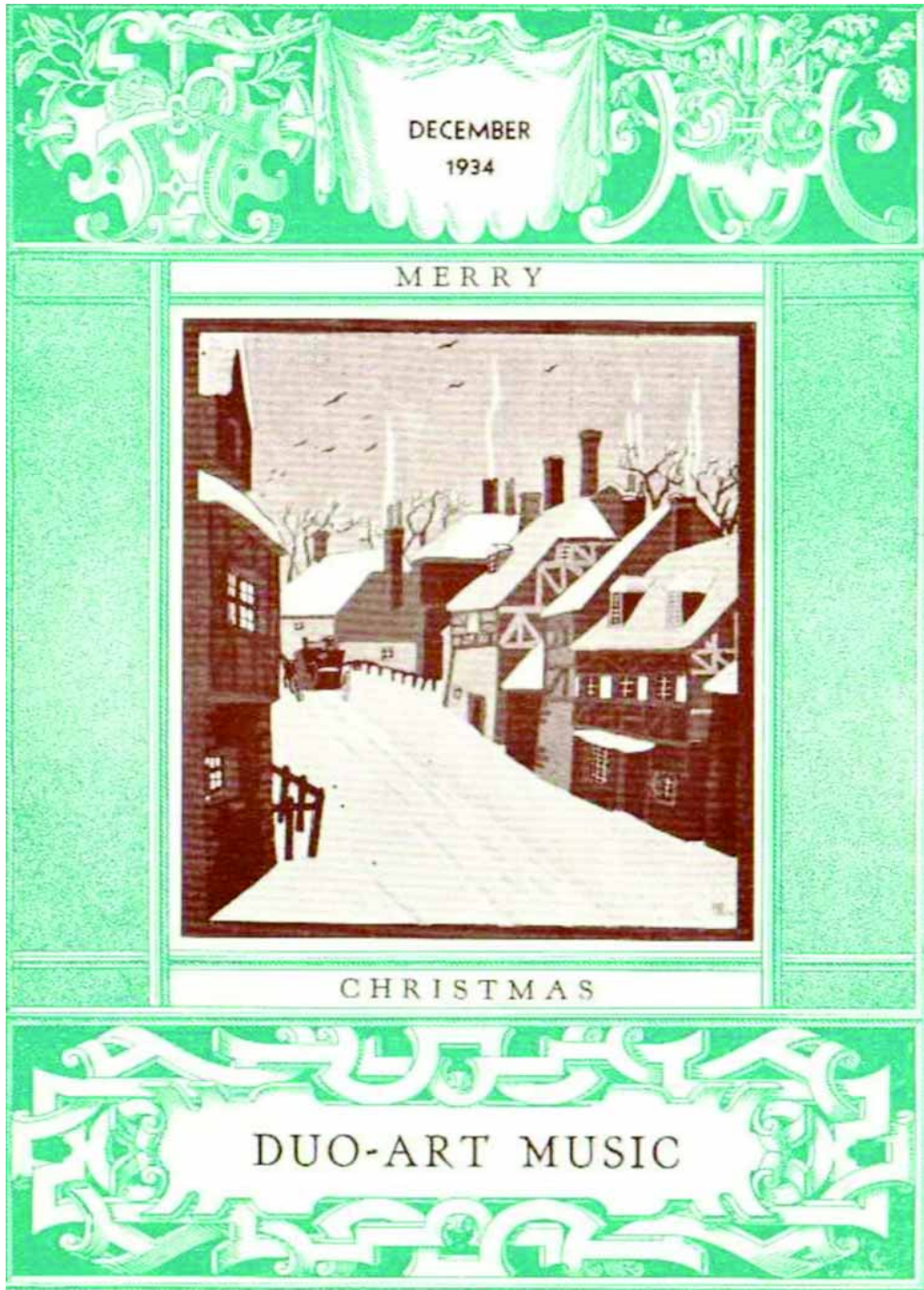
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Volume 44, Number 6

December 2007/January 2008

AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENT  
COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION

# BULLETIN



REPRODUCING PIANOS ♦ WELTE-MIGNON ♦ AMPICO ♦ DUO-ART ♦ ORCHESTRIONS ♦ BAND ORGANS ♦ VIOLIN PLAYERS

REPRODUCING PIANOS ♦ WELTE-MIGNON ♦ AMPICO ♦ DUO-ART ♦ ORCHESTRIONS ♦ BAND ORGANS ♦ VIOLIN PLAYERS

# CONVENTION 2008

## YOU'RE INVITED TO A PARTY!

THE AMICA SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER CONVENTION THAT IS!

July 1-5, 2008 - Woodland Hills, California

Yes, it is the 2008 convention, but we have packed so much fun into it you will think it's a party...

There will be a visit to the Nethercutt collection, starting with their wonderful antique car museum, and an antique train out back, then over to the main building for a wonderful tour, starting with the cream of the crop of their cars, then up the staircase with other goodies along the way...clocks, a reproducing piano, hood ornaments, and more. Moving along, we go up the stairs further to the mechanical music area.

Here you will be treated to a tour of one of the finest collections anywhere, with everything from music boxes, nickelodeons, orchestrions, fine reproducing pianos, and of course the theater organ. There literally is something for everyone here, and we in Southern California feel fortunate to have such a wonderful place available to us, and we're sure you will enjoy this.

The Nix collection will also be visited, with lots of time to enjoy their instruments. This collection changes constantly, as most collections do.

You will be treated to music from the Hupfeld Helios, the Weber Styria, the Duwyn café organ, and so much more. What a way to spend your time.

There are also two or three other collections we are trying to line up which haven't been seen before, and will be quite exciting.

We'll take you to the Gene Autry Museum, where you can relive your youth, remembering the old westerns you saw on Saturday afternoons. You'll see costumes, sets, and so much more. The Museum also always has displays



*You'll visit the Nethercutt Museum, with some of the finest restored cars, automatic musical instruments and other collectibles.*



*Gene Autry Museum*



*The Nix Collection will be on the agenda with instruments from small music boxes to large orchestrions and fairground organs. We are hoping to have other collections available for touring, but that is still in the works.*



... continued on inside back cover

# THE AMICA BULLETIN

## AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENT COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION

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VOLUME 44, Number 6

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**Inside Front:** Convention 2008

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**Inside Back Cover:** Convention 2008

### AMICA BULLETIN

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

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Bulletins will be mailed on the 2nd week of the even months.

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings,

Another year is coming to a close, and the holiday season is here. I have received correspondence from most chapters, and their meetings look like a lot of fun. I wish Nadine and I could attend them all. We do manage to make some meetings with the Founding and Southern California Chapters.

Please share your collection—a single player piano or a room full of instruments—with your family. Yes, your children or grandchildren; they may have more interest than you think.

Once again, please look at the AMICA web site ([www.amica.org](http://www.amica.org)) and check out at the 2007 convention in two parts on You Tube. Well, not all of the convention, but about 40 minutes are included. There are also other You Tube clips attached to the web site. If we are going to attract new members, this is a start. We can share our hobby with others who have not seen automatic musical instruments.

Enjoy the CD in this issue—The Billings Rollography. Many thanks to Terry Smythe for his effort in copying all of the material into a CD.

Nadine and I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



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

# FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

## Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

I am waiting on a snow storm coming over the Rockies and across the Great Plains as I write this letter. My house is becoming ready for family and friends coming to visit at this holiday time. The piano rolls scattered throughout the dining and living room must be picked up, sorted, and shelved again. It's time to put these toys away; only to get them out again for some visitors! This is a problem for most roll collectors (as least the people who play their rolls regularly!): roll shelving and organization. The goal for me is to be able to locate a roll when I want to play it. I've tried organizing rolls on shelves by artist, by composer, by number (which in my opinion is only for the insane), by title, and by genre. After years of experimentation I've concluded that the method that works best for me is to arrange classical music rolls alphabetically by composer, pop selections alphabetically by title, and then a few special groups such as Christmas music.

I hope everyone enjoys the AMICA holiday gifts enclosed with this issue. If you don't have use for them please pass them on to others. This is what we collectors should all do with the stuff in our often overcrowded homes.

Happy Holidays!

Mike Kukral,  
Publisher



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dr. Kukral

David Bonner sent me a copy of the AMICA Bulletin, (August/September 2007), featuring my mother, Judith Sidorsky. What a wonderful surprise and pleasure!

Is it possible to get additional copies for other family members? Her grandchildren would especially treasure this.

Rob Grenell  
Burnsville, NC

**Response:**

Sure! Let me know how many and where to send them. Our NEXT issue will also have 2 more articles about your mother.

Mike Kukral

Mike

That is just terrific. I was anticipating that there might have been a very limited number printed and there would not be any extras. I would love to send one to my sister and brother and my two children. Also, Judith was a very important part of our cultural community here helping found our local orchestra, teaching at our

community college and working with our Community Arts Council. I would like them to have a copy too. That's a total of 6 copies if you can manage it. Judith had many admirers here who truly doted on her for her feisty manner, engaging wit, deep musical knowledge, and always entertaining lectures and performances. You would have enjoyed seeing her perched on her stack of old music books piled on the piano bench, (she was under 5 feet tall in her later years), while she belted out a Scott Joplin rag to a sold out audience at the First Baptist Church here in town.

I will also look forward to the next issue. Let me know the cost for these issues including postage.

Rob Grenell  
(son of roll artist Judith Sidorsky)  
Burnsville, NC 28714

Again, many thanks for your work and interest.

Rob

Dear Professor Kukral:

I am a pianist, a lawyer and a member of AMICA. I own an Ampico Reproducing Piano in a Knabe Upright. I recently recorded many of the rolls and put some of them on a CD. The songs I selected are in the public domain, with the exception of "Ain't She Sweet", for which I obtained licenses through the Harry Fox Agency.

Along with three CDs of my own playing I've added this one to my website- [www.garyspiano.com](http://www.garyspiano.com). You can listen to all the tracks by going to my site. There you'll also see my link to your AMICA website.

Please contact me if I can help in your efforts to maintain appreciation of this part of our musical heritage.

Very truly yours,  
Gary Rinehart

Dear AMICA Members:

Many thanks for all your kind words about Dave. They are very much appreciated.

Sincerely,  
The Caldwell Family

Coin from W. F. Schwentker Piano Co.  
Evansville, Indiana



# B ERCEUSE FOR BECHSTEIN

**Written by Stephen Hough**  
**Submitted by Robin Pratt**

How many of us have had that experience, perhaps an early and lasting memory, of seeing in the corner of some old aunt's drawing room a tall, heavy, black box supporting an army of fading photographs which, when opened up, displayed a line of yellow keys and the mysterious, tarnished letters—C. BECHSTEIN. Whilst the Steinway gleams on the world's most glamorous concert-platforms evoking the image of a new Rolls-Royce, the Bechstein seems

rather to suggest that vintage car under blankets in the garage, whether sparkling with care or a sad shell of rust and dust.

Last year saw the demise of the Bechstein Company, home of the piano for which the Wigmore Hall was originally built, and which Brahms, Liszt, Debussy, and Scriabin played and used when composing. From the company's foundation in 1856 in Berlin until the Second World War the Bechstein piano played a major role in European musical

life, from concert halls to the salons of patrons and socialites, from the studios of famous artists and teachers to the practise rooms of students. However, decline was swift following the Bechstein family's friendship and support of Hitler, and the firm's location in the divided city of Berlin during the years following the war. The bad will of the 40s and the uneven workmanship of the 50s and beyond made the piano's continuing success an impossibility. In addition, good, cheap



*Bjorn Andresen as Tadzio in Luchino Visconti's 1970 film, "Death in Venice".*



pianos from the Far East began to appear in the showrooms of the West, and, as with cars, offered a serious challenge in price and quality to the middle-range European instruments.

Taste, too, had changed in the post-war years. Audiences and ears were becoming used to the greater brilliance and penetration of the Steinway, especially in concerto repertoire, where it seemed a better match for the string section of the orchestra, now more frequently using steel rather than gut for their strings. The Steinway was always at the forefront in the development of the piano. The company was founded in 1853 in New York by Henry Steinway and three of his sons and within two years had developed the iron frame which came to be the standard skeleton for all serious pianos. There followed a string of patents, including the introduction of the Capo d'Astro Bar in 1875 enabling the piano to utilize larger, more powerful hammers resulting in a bigger sound. These developments continued into the twentieth century and gave the Steinway its trailblazing image. The Bechstein's more delicate nuances and shallower, slower action-response made it less suitable too for the new virtuoso techniques which composer-pianists such as Rachmaninoff and Prokofiev, were developing; and, in addition, the recording studios had discovered that the clearer tone of the Steinway was more suitable for their ever-improving techniques. Once music colleges and concert-halls began using the Steinway with an increasing exclusivity a monopoly came into being, excused only by the extraordinary quality and beauty of the Steinway pianos. A notable exception was Jorge Bolet who preferred to play Bechsteins when in Europe.

But earlier in the century there was

a genuine variety of opinions about the relative merits of the great piano firms. A pianist like Horowitz would reject the Bechstein as being better fitted for chamber music, and became a loyal Steinway artist from the start of his career. He was only once seen publicly playing a piano other than a Steinway when he played Scriabin's Bechstein in Moscow, captured by the television cameras. Whereas Schnabel referred to the Steinway as being, "terribly loud", and insisted on taking two Bechstein concert grands plus a technician to America when he visited there before the war. After the Nazis had come to power and he was compelled to use Steinways in America, he asked for their sound and action to be doctored and made closer to the feel of his beloved Bechstein. Comparing the playing styles of these two pianists gives an over-generalized but valid indication of the differences between their preferred pianos. Many artists whose techniques had been developed on European pianos found the Steinway a handicap. Their whole approach to tonal control and colouring relied on the horizontal motion of the hand across a feather-light key rather than the greater vertical pressure required by the weightier actions of the American instruments. Moritz Rosenthal, the renowned Liszt pupil, is an interesting case in point. One of his trademarks was fast, fleet figuration exploiting extreme soft dynamics, and he claimed that it was impossible for him to achieve his effects on the Steinway piano.

Another wider social issue is relevant to the collapse of many piano companies. The whole notion of the piano as an instrument for the home, a magnet drawing friends around it for evenings of amateur entertainment, quickly disappeared in the post-war period. The

piano seemed like just another relic from the Victorian age, which, like an old armoire, took up too much musty space in the newly designed houses of the period. Its elephantine size, its jaundiced ivories, simply couldn't compete with the stampeding arrival of that smaller box, the television, with its bright, passive images. It was so much more appealing than Aunt Maud's arthritic fingers struggling with Chaminade's *Autumne*, or Uncle Harry's repeated attempts to find *The Lost Chord*. So the pianos went to the antique shops, Maud and Harry went to the nursing home, and, suddenly, a chapter of European life was finished. The piano seemed part of the baggage of Imperialism, and the guitar's six strings and keyboards which could be plugged in (although requiring more sensitive ears to be plugged as well) suited the spring-cleaning mood of the age. So unfortunately the baby was thrown out with the Bechstein, and an unswimmable gulf was formed between the professional pianist and the now passive audience member, a gulf which had deeply affected concert life over the last few decades and seriously threatens its future, as audience numbers decrease steadily.

So has that piano which was by appointment to his Majesty, Emperor William I of Prussia gone the way of the country which he ruled? Has that black box in the corner of the drawing-room become its own coffin, awaiting only the death of its owner before it is dragged to the junk shop without even the last-anointing of some furniture polish? Last week a friend of mine phoned me, "Stephen, I know you're looking for a second piano. I've just seen a beauty—a big, black instrument with a gorgeous tone. It's a...Bechstein."

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## **SUSKIND, RUTH (LIPPMAN) Published: January 14, 1999**

SUSKIND-Ruth (Lippman) on Tuesday, Jan. 12, of Woodmere. Beloved wife of the late Milton Suskind. Loving mother of Leslie A. Burg of Newton, MA., Barry Suskin of New York City, and Ellen S. Waldron of Bedford, MA. Cherished grandmother of Scott, Matthew and Jennifer. Dear sister of Ethel Mintz of FL and the late Lillian Schwartz. Services at the Levine Chapel, 470 Harvard Street, Brookline, MA, on Thursday, January 14 at 12:00 Noon. Memorial observance at the home of Leslie Burg, Thursday only, 2:00-7:00 pm. In lieu of flowers, remembrances may be made to the Alzheimer's Disease & Related Disorders Association.



# EIGHTY YEARS ON.

Written by Grahame Code

Many AMICA members visited Melbourne Australia in 2001. My family and I had the opportunity to spend time with them and even had some visit us at home, three hours drive from Melbourne. One day soon, we will attend a convention overseas. Now that our son Ian is 8 years, travel becomes easier.

1927 was a great year for Australian music lovers - the centenary year of Beethoven's death. There were tribute concerts throughout the world and three major tribute concerts in Melbourne. Melbourne was then the capital of Australia from 1901 to 1927 when Canberra became the Australian capital. It was also considered a cultural hub at that time.

The Melbourne Town Hall had just been constructed. Royalty in the person of the Duke of York, later King George the VI came to visit and world famous musicians toured here. 1927 saw the birth of the artist Fred Williams, writer Vincent Buckley and scientist Dave Curtis.

It also saw visits by great international musicians: opera-singer Chaliapin; the Russian ballet dancer Pavlova; violinists Efrem Zimbalist and Jascha Heifetz and the wonderful pianists, Ignace Jan Paderewski, Ignaz Friedman, Wilhelm Backhaus and Australia's own Percy Grainger.

The Aeolian Company made much of Paderewski's visit. Even opening their new showroom and offices, "Aeolian Hall" during his visit. During his concerts he featured his Duo-Art roll favourites, including the Hungarian Rhapsody No.2, The Maiden's Wish, Hark, Hark the Lark, Schubert's impromptu in B flat Op. 142, numerous Chopin pieces and of course his own Minuet and Caprice. **(See Illustration)**

As a tribute to Beethoven, Paderewski also played both the Moonlight and Waldstein Sonatas during the tour as well as Beethoven's 32 Variations in C minor.

This was Paderewski's second visit to Australia. He had toured here in 1904, but by this time he was not only a great master of the piano and a composer but also an outstanding statesman. His second tour of Melbourne and the other Australian capital cities was even more successful than the first.

Australian born pianist and fellow Duo-Art artist, Percy Grainger paid this tribute to Paderewski during the tour, "He towers above the other pianists of his generation, just as Wagner towers above other modern composers - and for a similar reason. Both these geniuses are all-round men, expressing a great variety of human experiences, emotions, urges and endeavours, in a variety of artistic ways. The curse of our age is specialisation, a trend tending to make small men even smaller than they otherwise would be, but a trend to which no really great man - in any line of life - will ever submit."

"Specialists always end by being small fry, however hard they strive, while all-round, many-sided, adventurous natures who try their hand at a wide gamut of life, at a variety of contrasting occupations, sometimes end up as outstanding geniuses, such as Wagner and Paderewski."

"Just as Wagner was sociologist, revolutionary, "wolf's head", pamphleteer, patriot, poet, dramatist, stage manager, conductor, composer, and religionist, so Paderewski is pedagogue, virtuoso, composer, businessman, patriot, Premier, and philanthropist. The saint and the hero form part of Paderewski's make-up alongside of the artist and showman. I need not allude to his lifelong devotion to the cause of his native Poland, to his self-sacrificing generosity towards suffering humanity. All the world knows of these.

"But even if we did not know of these historic sides of his personality we could

divine the multitudinous diversity of his nature as expressed in his art. None but a deep-down patriot, a soldier-type, could invest the Chopin polonaises with the soaring martial glory they acquire at his hands. Only one who had drunk deep of the draught of personal and racial suffering could bring home to us as he does, the full tragedy of the Chopin Funeral March. Only an intense humanist could interpret, as only Paderewski can, the full range of romance, amorousness, wistfulness and gracefulness found in the "Romantic" school of composers such as Schumann, Listz, Chopin, Stokowski, and others. No one could unfold, as Paderewski does, the formal grandeur, the sweeping proportions, the overwhelming climaxes of the greatest compositions of Bach and Beethoven, who was not himself a truly great and experienced composer. A lesser composer than Paderewski could not possibly, as a performer, recreate for us, as he does, the greatest piano works of all time."

It is worth remembering that all the superlatively great interpretative virtuosi of the past that we could place beside Paderewski were likewise composer performers - men such as Rubenstein, Joachim and Paganini."

"Paderewski's greatness is the greatness of master-interpreter, the artistic manifestation of a heroic period in the life of his race. When he leaves us, his place will always remain empty - no other pianist will ever step into his shoes. He is, and will always remain, unique - an expression of universality, a combination of wide contrasts, a magical blend of Polish local colour and cosmopolitan culture, a world artist and a world figure."

Percy Grainger, during his tours, played many of his Duo-Art successes - Mock Morris, Colonial Song and Shepherd's Hey as well as the Grieg Concerto for Piano and Orchestra.

At the end of the year in November

arrived Wilhelm Backhaus. He was a prolific recording artist with over two hundred reproducing piano rolls to his credit. He recorded for Hupfeld – Welte Mignon and the Duo-Art. In records he may have been the only great pianist whose recording history spanned from cylinder to stereo disc.

Duo-Art music lovers value his performance of the Brahms – Variations on a theme of Paganini, as well as his other rolls. It is interesting to note that in early Aeolian catalogues his name had been anglicised to “William Backhaus and the Aeolian Company retained the “William” in its Melbourne advertising. His tour was a success but he complained bitterly about the heavy action in the Melbourne made concert grand piano used for his concerts. Three years later, during a 1930 tour, he had become “Wilhelm Backhaus” once more. (See Illustrations)

Ignaz Friedman enjoyed his life in Australia immensely. Later on fleeing from the Nazis, Friedman made his home in Australia. Sadly twenty years after his first wonderful visit, Ignaz Friedman’s health deteriorated rapidly and he died in Sydney, Australia on Australia Day, the twenty-sixth of January, 1948. His Duo-Art recordings and some Columbia records pay tribute to this wonderful pianist. The writer’s favourite roll is his astonishing roll of La Campanella and also his beautiful performance of the Sonata Op.28 in D by Beethoven, recorded in the year of his Australian visit.

Yes, for Melbourne, Australia 1927 was a Memorial Musical Year.

... THE ...

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DEDICATION WIDMUNG	.....	Schumann
LIEBESLIED	.....	Kreisler
ROMANCE from CONCERTO, Op. 11	.....	Chopin
SERENADE from DON JUAN	.....	Mozart
SERENADE (STANDCHEN)	.....	Strauss
SONATA in C Minor, Op. 13, PATHETIC	.....	Beethoven
VARIATIONS ON A THEME OF PAGANINI	.....	Brahms
WALTZ from BALLET "NAILA"	.....	Delibes
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who records exclusively for  
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Page Six

The world’s greatest artists on piano and violin with singers and dancers of renown all following in quick succession visiting Australia!

This display page from the magazine “Table Talk”, Christmas 1927, serves to recall their many pleasant memories for Australian music lovers.

# THE MARQUE AMPICO

By Bill Englund

A short time ago I purchased a 1924, Franklin Marque Ampico, which of course is a foot-pumped upright. This piano has an 83 note, single (right side up) valve stack with a transposing Ampico trackerbar yet. I assume that to play an Ampico roll transposed, one must turn the Ampico off. Fortunately whoever supposedly "rebuilt" this piano only replaced most of the tubing and hoses. Unfortunately they also removed the Ampico expression. They basically turned it into an 83 note foot-pumper.

I have a 1920 Marque Ampico tubing chart which is nothing like my piano. This tubing chart shows basically a foot pumped Model A Ampico complete with crescendos and an Ampico cutout pouch block. I have heard that there were Marque Ampicos both with and without crescendos. There seems to be very little information about Marque Ampicos. What little there is seems to indicate that (unlike the upright foot-pump Duo-Art, which was evidently quite standardized during it's production life) the Marque Ampico was anything but standardized.

Inside the case of my piano there are screw holes which would fit the mounting of Model A expression exactly. However there is no trace that there were any

crescendo pneumatics. Also the Ampico cutout pouch block is nothing like a Model A. Actually it is indentical to the one in my 1924 Fisher, 88 note, foot-pump, upright Artigraphic player. (This is the same piano that has appeared in previous articles both by myself and by Vernon Brown. This piano has an 88 note transposing trackerbar with sustaining pedal port.

The cutout pouch blocks in these two pianos have ten cutout pouches and two control channels - no screens. Each control channel controls five pouches. But the way these two blocks are controlled is entirely different in each piano.

In the Artigraphic player spoolbox there is a three position switch. In the "Player" position, all 88 notes and the sustaining pedal play. In the "Art Normal" position, 84 notes and the sustaining pedal play (two notes missing on each end) for the playing of Ampico rolls. In the "Artigraphic Transposed" position, 80 notes with no sustaining pedal play, for the transposing of Ampico rolls two keys up or down. Ironically this position also allows the playing of Duo-Art rolls (not transposed), or maybe even Welte rolls transposable one key up or down. From this it can be seen that in the "Player"

position all ten cutout pouches are open; in the "Art Normal" position five pouches are open and five pouches are closed; and in the "Artigraphic Transposed" position all ten pouches are closed.

In the Marque Ampico spoolbox there is a two position switch. In the "Automatic On" position, five of the cutout pouches are open and the other five are closed. In the "Off" position, the opposite five pouches are open and the other five are closed. Since there were no tubes connected to this block in my piano, I can only guess what the functions were. I can probably figure it out, but if anyone has any tubing charts, literature, diagrams, pictures, etc. please let me know. I have no idea what they used for the so-called spring pneumatic. I am at 7475 SW St John Pl, Portland, OR 97223. (503) 977-0103 or (928) 667-7102.

I guess it doesn't matter that this piano didn't have crescendo pneumatics. The B Ampico didn't have them either. Evidently for this piano, the foot pump person (pianolist in Aeolian jargon) is the amplifier. Who knows. Maybe B rolls would work well on this piano.

## AMICA Convention 2007 Photos/Movies On-Line

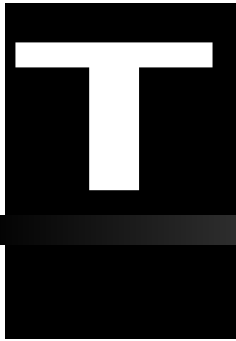
Find hundreds of photos and a two part 15-minute movie of the 2007 Germany/Holland convention at the AMICA website. Click on the "Photo Gallery" link at [www.amica.org](http://www.amica.org).

Also, I'm looking to immortalize your past convention photos and movies. If you have a VCR, CD or DVD of movies, or digital photos of any past AMICA convention, please contact me and I'll arrange to place it on the AMICA website for the world to see. I'll return your media if requested.

Please do NOT email me photos without first checking with me, else it'll just end up in my spam box. If you have regular snapshot prints to send, please email me first to describe how many we're talking about to make sure I'll have the time to scan them in a reasonable timeframe.

Karl Ellison

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# THE AEOLIAN-AMERICAN CORPORATION'S INTRODUCTION OF THE STYLE G SPINET AMPICO

By Mark Reinhart

In the United States, the 1920s saw remarkable financial expansion. This new money enabled many families to buy new and larger homes. With this expansion came the desire for better home furnishings. While an upright player piano might have been the norm to most, many found they could now afford a small grand piano which, not surprisingly, was fitted with a new reproducing action. Others whose space might be limited may have bought a reproducing upright or top loading studio size piano. Sales were strong and the various makers of reproducing pianos thrilled with their new found retail volume.

The stock market crash in 1929 brought an end to much of this new money. The subsequent depression slowed piano sales to a snail's pace. Everything changed for most people in the US. The advancement of radio and electric phonograph technology replaced the piano as the source of music for those who could afford such luxuries in the post 1929 US. Still the piano houses that did survive noted the transition to smaller pianos.

Home furnishings began to show signs of Colonial Revival influence. The well documented reconstruction of Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia and other Colonial structures throughout the US gave a rebirth to this style of furnishing. As early as the Centennial Celebration of the US in 1876 there was renewed interest in the US Colonial period. The 1920s saw interest in the signed and colored photographs of Wallace Nutting in his photographic homage to the Colonial period. By the mid 1930s the piano houses were all selling a colonial influenced spinet model of piano. The new drop actions allowed the piano houses to build ever-lower height pianos for this new trend. Aeolian-American was not the least to see this new and valuable market and moved to provide these new pianos with colonial influence to the ready buyers. Aeolian-American offered spinet

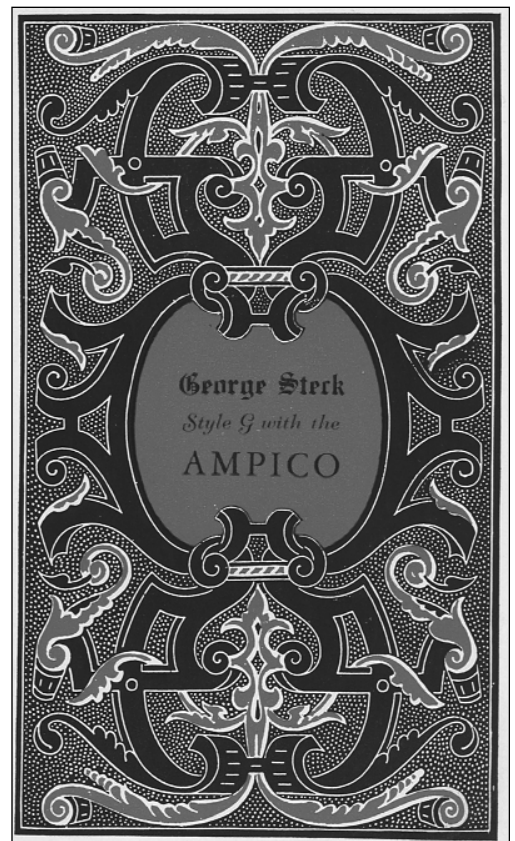
models in most all of their lines of pianos.

Since Aeolian-American Corporation still sold pianos fitted with AMPICO and Duo-Art actions on demand; it made sense to provide a new Spinet piano with one of these actions. The decision was made to provide an AMPICO action in the new spinet model pianos. The decision to provide AMPICO actions in the Spinet model pianos must have been dictated by current roll sales indicating that the AMPICO had a stronger market share than the Duo-Art.

To date no surviving documentation has surfaced to show who made the decision and when but we do know that Aeolian-American Corporation enjoyed Spinet AMPICO sales in 1937. It is likely that the new Spinet Model was in development about 1935 or early 1936. The new compact AMPICO utilized existing technology and likely at least some of the remaining parts from previous production of the AMPICO. Still the new model required new engineering to build a small pump and to fit the stack to the new drop action. The decision was made to utilize AMPICO type "A" expression components. Perhaps the engineers felt that the model "B" high pump pressure was outside the range required for the smaller piano. The model "B" range of dynamics was likely too powerful for the smaller model piano. Fitting the small Spinet piano case with all the necessary AMPICO hardware and player action required moving the bottom board forward as much as possible and filling every inch of the interior space with player action components. This was a nightmare for servicing the piano actions but enabled these small pianos to play fully utilizing the AMPICO action. This was a real feat of technology.

The Spinet AMPICO case design shows Chippendale influence with a

Chippendale-Chinese frieze along the front of the case. Turned delicate legs and the low top profile called out to the colonial revival market. Most Spinet AMPICO pianos that survive are in mahogany cases. While the Spinet AMPICO pianos were designated style G, the pianos carry different house names such as Steck or Fischer, and perhaps others; the pianos themselves were otherwise identical save the decal applied to the case. The piano action and scale are the same in this model. Clearly this was an ingenious production move to reduce the cost of manufacture while allowing the dealers to provide pianos within their own lines and keeping production costs constant at the factory.



*George Steck Color booklet cover, courtesy of Alan Mueller*

The Spinet Ampico case was provided according to the first owner's wishes, in mahogany or walnut. My own piano is mahogany but was painted ivory with silver leaf highlights, brightly showing the Fischer decal. The piano is very Art Deco in style for the period 1937-1938. One could imagine this deco style case in a smartly decorated and stylish apartment with "Fred and Ginger" dancing to the latest Milne rolls.

Aeolian-American Corporation having much experience in marketing their product lines, provided dealers with a range of promotional materials. While the 1920s budgets were significantly larger enabling extensive support with extensive sales literature to support the local dealers, the Aeolian-American marketing provided some beautiful and useful tools for their dealers who chose to sell the new Spinet AMPICO. Booklets provided to introduce these new pianos to the market depicted colonial revival room settings. These small booklets provided useful marketing tools to the piano showrooms letting would be buyers see the room settings while extolling the virtues of owning one of these fine instruments and offering the entire library of music for the AMPICO. "Life was good with a Spinet AMPICO" these booklets extolled. Some booklets were provided in monochrome, others in beautiful color.

Aeolian-American Corporation also provided ad mats to their dealers for promoting the new line of pianos in local advertising. The piano dealer merely inserted their own dealer information and the ad was camera ready for the local media. These ad mats could be printed in a variety of sizes since the artwork was very sharp in monochrome. This was a very useful advertising technique with no artwork costs to the local dealers. Aeolian-American clearly knew how to support their dealers.

Exact production numbers of the Spinet AMPICO, style G are unknown. J. Wells Benedict, a longtime employee of Aeolian American player service technician, records in his notes that 200 Ampico Spinets were made, 600 were in progress, 400 completed spinet actions were produced when defense work was undertaken in 1940.<sup>1</sup> Given how many of these pianos survive today, sales must have been quite reasonable

## For Quick Service

Address:

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Advertising Department

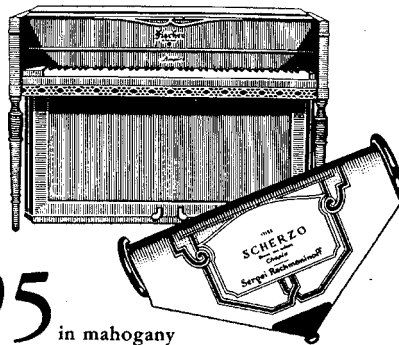
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GODOWSKY  
HOFMANN  
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LENER  
LEVITZKI  
LHEVINNE  
MOISEWITSCH  
ORLOFF  
ORNSTEIN  
RACHMANINOFF  
ROSENTHAL  
RUBINSTEIN  
SAMAROFF  
SCHMITZ  
SCHNABEL  
VOLAVY  
and many others

*and playing ballad  
and dance bits*

ARDEN  
BARGY  
CARROLL  
CONFREY  
DELCAMP  
FAIRCHILD  
FRIML  
GROFE  
HERBERT  
LOPEZ  
MILNE  
RAINGER  
SIMS  
and many others

**Dealer's Name**

Admat for F29 and F28, courtesy of Alan Mueller

for the economy and time period. Even with competition from the radio and electric phonograph, the Spinet AMPICO found a market share and supported roll sales for the AMPICO roll division within

Aeolian-American. Clearly, the advent of the war in Europe was the reason for the end of production of the Spinet AMPICO, style G.

However, the Spinet AMPICO must have been considered so significant that Elmer F. Brooks, Jr., President of the Aeolian-American Division of the Aeolian Corporation<sup>ii</sup> retained a Spinet AMPICO in his executive office at Aeolian-American decades after these piano were out of production. Clearly this was an important chapter in Aeolian-American Corp. history.

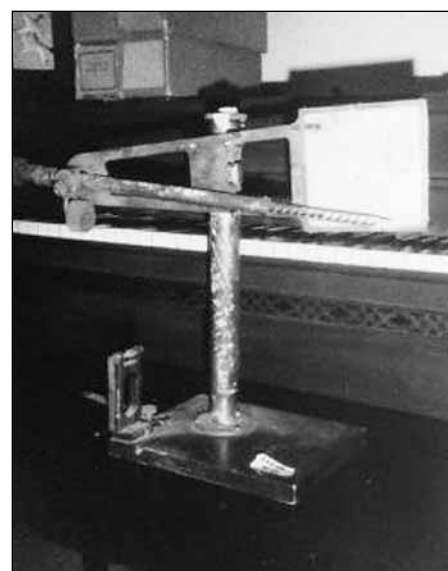
Author's note: Some might wonder how this author came to write something not related to the Welte-Mignon. I have to ask myself the same question. I am well out of my element with the AMPICO and claim no authority nor expertise in the area. What I do have are friends! Bruce Clark and I were e-mailing about piano chat and started talking about the Ampico. I told him how much I enjoy the Milne rolls of the 1930s. Discussion moved to our pianos and I mentioned that I have a Spinet AMPICO. Bruce reminded me that Alan Mueller was really the authority for the AMPICO and would know the story of the Spinet.

I have known Alan Mueller for perhaps 20 years but have not communicated much recently. Getting back in touch with my long time friend, Alan encouraged writing something about the neglected Spinet AMPICO since there is so little published. So with grateful thanks, I acknowledge with a tip of my Parker pen, that this article would have been impossible were it not for the encouragement, research, knowledge and generosity of Alan H. Mueller. Further research was provided by the Strong Museum in Rochester, New York all entirely through the efforts Alan.

*The two photo's are views of "Elmers" piano in a first floor room of the office building, just after the piano works had closed for a final time. A small exhibit had been set up some years before.*



*This is Alan Mueller with Elmer Brooks Jr's Spinet Ampico*



*The device on the piano bench may look familiar, check out page 25, Ampico Service Manual -1929. It is the testing instrument Hickman used to measure touch and friction in a piano action. Age had begun to show on the pot metal. The Strong Museum does not have this device, whereabouts unknown by me! The large boxes on the piano are Ampico "stencil" masters. After Powell and later Groman acquired the bulk of the "stencils" a few were still left behind. The stencil making machine always turned out three copies, so these are probably duplicates.*

### References Consulted for this Article

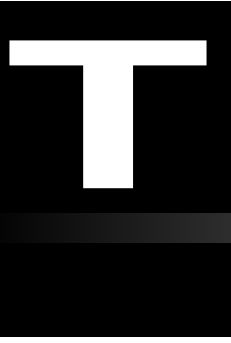
A Guidebook for Automatic Musical Instruments, 1967-68 Edition, editor Q. David Bowers, Vestal Press, 1967

Re-enacting the Artist...a story of the Ampico Reproducing Piano, Larry Givens, Vestal Press, 1970

Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments

<sup>i</sup> The notebook of J. Wells Benedict describes that the complete player actions were dumped into the swamp when the company undertook defense work in 1940 all per Alan Mueller. Further, Alan notes that the defense work preceded the actual entry of the US into the war in December 1941.

<sup>ii</sup> Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, Upstate section, 24 August 1975



# THE BILLINGS ROLLOGRAPHY



## Ginny and Bob Billings

The **Billings Rollography** is a monumental twenty-five year dedication into research, compilation, editing, writing, typesetting, reproduction, binding and publication by **Ginny and Bob Billings**, long time members of AMICA. Their research resulted in a set of 6 books, basically focusing on QRS word rolls, Recordo and Solo-Carola rolls for the period 1916 through to 1994, followed by their research into the Tel-Electric Company 1905 to 1917. They have graciously gifted their copyrighted work to AMICA, in the spirit of making available a powerful research tool.

The complete Rollography has been converted into PDF format on a single CD, enclosed with this Christmas issue of the AMICA Bulletin, as a gift to all members. This CD contains all 6 volumes as follows:

- Volume 1 - Complete listing QRS word rolls 1916 through to 1934.
- Volume 2 - History of QRS, Recordo and Solo-Carola, with some technical information.
- Volume 3 - Complete listing of pianists associated with these rolls.
- Volume 4 - Continuation of Volume 1, embracing QRS word rolls 1934 through to 1994.
- Volume 5 - Authorized history of the QRS company 1934 through to 1994.
- Volume 6 - The Tel-Electric Company 1905 to 1917

Among AMICA's aims are:

- To promote the acquisition and distribution of technical and historical information concerning vintage automatic musical instruments, and
- To educate about the historical and cultural significance of automatic musical instruments.

AMICA has been blessed by this contribution of this amazing research effort. AMICA is delighted to make these documents available in this form, completely consistent with these aims and objectives.

### NOTE:

The CD has been successfully tested under Win95, Win98, Win98SE, WinME, WinXP, and Mac OS9.0. There is an assumption that all computers have the Acrobat Reader installed.

For **Windows** users who do not have the Acrobat Reader installed, **Acrobat Reader 6** [for Windows] may be found on this CD as a self-extracting executable, ready for installation.

For **Macintosh** users who do not have the Acrobat Reader installed, they will find an **Acrobat Reader 5** folder [for Mac] on this CD. Simply drag and drop it into your main Applications Folder and install it.

For those inclined to work with printed versions of these documents, most any local Office Depot type printing services can print Acrobat PDF documents at a modest competitive per page cost. To cut cost, you may wish to direct the Service Center to print the document 2-up on a page, shrinking the page count in half.

Or you can print it yourself on your own computer. Check your printer's capabilities for 2-up, or duplex, or back-to-back, or booklet, or whatever.

Sincere thanks are extended to Bob and Ginny. Their gift is very much appreciated.

Enjoy!  
Terry Smythe





# THE WELTE-MIGNON PATENTS

By Mark Reinhart

Edited by James Keaton From Bulletin Mar/Apr 1995

A patent is a proprietary right granted to an inventor for the invention of an apparatus, method or improvement in an area of technology. The duration of enforcement of a patent in the United States is 17 years. This limited monopoly enables an inventor to protect the production and sale of an invention with legal recourse. In the U.S., after 17 years, the technology which was previously protected by patent becomes public domain.

Patent laws vary from country to country. Early in this century, to obtain patent protection internationally meant filing for patents in each country in which the protection was sought. This also meant the term of the patent varied as did the degree of protection with each jurisdiction. Edwin Welte, for example, understood the value of international protection very well and applied for patents in a number of countries for the Welte-Mignon. The focus of this article is the U.S. Patent activity relating to the Welte-Mignon.

The Welte-Mignon in the U.S. was not controlled by a single corporate entity. The reasons and details for the different entities are discussed at length in the Welte-Mignon opus by Charles Davis Smith and Richard James Howe. Readers seeking more in depth information are directed to that book. For the purpose of clarity the patents are listed in three divisions. First, the patent granted to Edwin Welte and assigned to M. Welte and Sons, Inc.; second, the patents assigned to Auto Pneumatic Action Company and last, the patents assigned to the Welte-Mignon Corporation. It is extremely important to recognize that these were different corporate entities. Research and development at one firm did not necessarily indicate any knowledge of that activity by another firm. It is also important to remember that these were not the only corporate entities involved. Corporations changed control or were reorganized during the teens and twenties, just as they do today.

Edwin Welte owned controlling interest in the firm M. Welte and sons,

Inc. of New York by 1914. The Great War forced Edwin Welte to serve for Germany. During the war, the important Welte-Mignon patents were licensed to Auto Pneumatic action Company for its use and right to produce what is generally known as the Welte-Mignon Licensee. The U.S. passed the Alien Custodian Act which seized "enemy" owned assets. The controlling interest of M. Welte and Sons, Inc. was sold, under the Act, at auction to unknown bidders and was eventually obtained by George Gittins. The firm was reorganized and assets merged with other Gittins' holdings to become the Welte-Mignon Corporation. The Gittins empire continued to evolve but for the sake of simplicity in this article it is generically listed as the Welte-Mignon Corp. It is unfortunate that with the sale of Edwin Welte's assets, there was no further patent activity by him in the U.S.

The patents granted to Edwin Welte and M. Welte & Sons, Inc. are nearly all directed to the T-100 Welte-Mignon (red paper Welte in common vernacular). The Auto Pneumatic Action Co. patents involve the Welte-Mignon Licensee action. The Welte-Mignon Corp. patents are directed to the Welte-Mignon "Original". It is of note that the Welte-Mignon "Original" is the trade name used by Welte-Mignon Corp, for their line of pianos which played Purple Seal and Licensee Welte-Mignon rolls. "Original" does not refer to the T-100 wide scale Welte-Mignon.

It is interesting to compare the patent output of each group. The Edwin Welte patents are comprehensive and extremely significant to the development of the Welte-Mignon. The Auto Pneumatic Action Co. and Welte-Mignon Corp. had a higher volume of patents but were basically only "improvement" patents taking the concepts of Edwin Welte, and, of course, the singularly important Welte-Bockisch patent and refining the function to meet their own production needs. Whether it was a corporate philosophy or the prodigious application of patents, the result was a high volume

of patents granted to both the Auto Pneumatic Action Co. and the Welte Mignon Corp. The contributions of Edwin Welte cannot be underestimated; however, here in the U.S., there are others who also played important roles.

The Auto Pneumatic Action Co. relied on Thomas Danquard as its chief inventor/engineer in research and development and later Hubert La Joie. Thomas Danquard was instrumental in taking the Welte patent 1,225,902 and transforming the concepts into Auto Pneumatic Action Co. technology resulting in the mass produced Welte-Mignon Licensee. The Danquard patent 1,525,497 enabled Auto Pneumatic Action Co. to offer the Welte-Mignon to the general public. Prior to the Welte-Mignon Licensee, the Welte-Mignon T-100 (red paper) was so expensive that it was marketed only to the most wealthy clientele. Thomas Danquard went on to found the Danquard School, a trade curriculum to train tuners/technicians to service the Welte Mignon in the 1920's.

The Welte-Mignon Corp. relied on Tolbert Cheek for most of its patent improvements. Cheek was the primary inventor associated with the development of the Welte-Mignon "Original" as well as refinements in its control hardware. Cheek was still inventing improvements for player pianos as late as 1953. More information on the life of Mr. Cheek can be found in the Smith-Howe Welte-Mignon book.

Complete copies of U.S. Patents may be ordered by writing to the United States Department of Commerce, Patent and Trademark Office, Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Box 6, Washington, DC 20231. Patents are ordered by number only at a cost of \$3.00 each. The order time for copies is probably two to three months. Private copy services can offer patent copies in a fraction of the time at much greater expense. Please note that there is no government search service to find patents by subject. To obtain patents by subject or area of technology requires a search. Private search services

are available but can cost hundreds or thousands of dollars (with no guarantee of finding a specific patent) plus the cost of the copies.

### **U.S. Patents granted to Edwin Welte and M. Welte & Sons, Inc.**

U.S. Pat. No. 1,008,291, Edwin Welte and Karl Bockisch, filed 17.August.1904, granted 7.Nov.1911, Mechanism For Regulating The Expression In Apparatus For Playing Musical Instruments. (This is the Welte-Mignon patent which was the basis for all that followed.)

U.S. Pat. No. 946,297, Edwin E. Welte, filed 24.May.1909, granted 11.Jan.1910, Automatic Player Piano. (This patent is directed to the pump elements secured to the underside of the keybed.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,225,902, Edwin Welte, filed 25.May.1914, granted 15.May.1917, Pressure Controlling Mechanism For Automatic Musical Instruments. (This is the patent upon which the Licensee system is based.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,467,889, Edwin Welte, filed 25.May.1914, granted 11.Sept.1923, Pneumatically Controlled Regulator For Musical Instruments. (Expression regulator involved in interference with Stoddard, adverse decision to Welte.)

### **U.S. Patents Assigned to Auto Pneumatic Action Co.**

U.S. Pat. No. 1,287,649, Thomas Danquard, filed 5.Oct.1914, granted 17.Dec.1918, Soft Tension Graduating Device for Musical Instruments.

U.S. Pat. No. 1,609,610, Thomas Danquard, filed 4.Feb.1916, granted 7.Dec.1926, Expression Device for Musical Instruments. (This is an expression system with lock and cancel valves.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,413,832, Thomas Danquard, filed 4.Feb.1916, granted 25.April.1922, Expression Device for Automatic Musical Instruments. (Like the above patent.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,413,831, Thomas Danquard, filed 6.Nov.1916, granted 25.April.1922, Expression device for Automatic Musical Instruments.

U.S. Pat. No. 1,525,497, Thomas Danquard filed 16.Sept.1918, granted 10.Feb.1925, Expression Mechanism for Automatic Musical Instruments. (This is the Licensee Welte-Mignon patent based on the Welte 1,225,902. This is an improvement patent. Danquard mechanisms perform Welte function.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,527,313, Hubert J. La Joie et al., filed 28.Oct.1921, granted 4.Feb.1925, Action Operating Mechanism. (This is a grand stack in a drawer with a roll frame.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,566,654, Thomas Danquard, filed 24.Feb.1922, granted 22.Dec.1925, Expression Mechanism for Musical

Instruments.

U.S. Pat. No. 1,666,602, Hubert J. La Joie et al., filed 22.Sept.1922, granted 7.Apr.1928, Expression Controlling Mechanism for Pneumatically Operated Musical Instruments. (This is a soft tone regulator.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,668,159, Hubert J. La Joie, filed 12.Apr.1925, granted 1.May.1928, Mechanism for Controlling the Dynamics of Pneumatically Operated Musical Instruments. (This is a Licensee type regulator in a Record environment.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,680,385, Hubert J. La Joie, filed 4.Oct.1926, granted 14.Aug.1928, Automatic Mechanism for Operating Drawers of Automatic Musical Instruments. (This is a pneumatic drawer retraction device.)

### **U.S. Patents Assigned to the Welte-Mignon Corp.**

U.S. Pat. No. 1,613,501, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 5.Nov.1920, granted 4.Jan.1927, Record Controlled Musical Instrument. (This is a soft modulator for dampening expression devices.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,605,303, Charles Uebelmesser, filed 21.Apr.1921, granted 2.Nov.1926, Transmission Mechanism for Record Controlled Instruments. (This is a roll frame transmission.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,505,161, Martin Nickels, filed 5.May.1921, granted 19.Aug.1924, Player Grand Piano. (This is a pneumatic stack for grand installation.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,498,233, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 7.May.1921, granted 17.June.1924, Controlling Means for Pneumatic Motors. (This is a vacuum control for a roll motor, a T-100 frame and transmission are illustrated.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,676,633, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 7.May.1921, granted 29.May.1929, Record Controlled Musical Instrument.

U.S. Pat. No. 1,715,279, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 7.May.1921, granted 29.May.1929, Record Controlled Musical Instrument. (This is control hardware for a reproducing player.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,521,571, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 6.Oct.1922, granted 30.Dec.1924, Automatic Musical Instrument. (This is a leaf spring expression regulator.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,665,905, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 6.Oct.1922, granted 10.Apr.1928, Automatic Musical Instrument. (This is a patent for the grand tubing junction block and filter screen.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,600,755, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 1.Dec.1922, granted 21.Sept.1926, Valve Mechanism. (This is a lock and cancel valve mechanism.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,505,374, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 13.July.1923, granted 19.Aug.1924, Record Controlled Grand Piano. (This is a pneumatic stack which fits within the housing of a grand case.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,712,980, Guiseppo Caroccio, filed 13.July.1923, granted 14.May.1929, Fall Board Operating Mechanism. (Fall board retractor for a grand.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,715,280, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 13.July.1923, granted 28.May.1929, Fall Board.

U.S. Pat. No. 1,579,192, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 20.Sept.1923, granted 0.March.1926, Cabinet Player. (Vorsetzer)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,626,327, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 20.Sept.1923, granted 26.Apr.1927, Cabinet Player. (Vorsetzer)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,750,037, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 20.Sept.1923, granted 11.Mar.1930, Means to Eliminate Noise In Parts of Record Controlled Musical Instruments. (This is a damper for the sforzando piano valve.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,613,441, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 25.Sept.1923, granted 4.Jan.1927, Record Controlled Musical Instrument. (This is a soft tone modulator.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,626,328, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 25.Sept.1923, granted 26.Apr.1927, Means to Operate Piano Pedal Mechanisms Under control of a Record. (This is the pedal actuating device for their Vorsetzer.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,660,546, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 3.Dec.1923, granted 28.Feb.1928, Record Controlled Musical Instrument, this is assigned by mesne assignment to Welte Co. (This is pedal pump structure.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,599,394, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 29.Jan.1924, granted 7.Sept.1926, Stop Relay Mechanism for Record Controlled Musical Instruments. (This is a roll rewind/shut off system.)

U.S. Pat. No. 1,727,809, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 29.Jan.1924, granted 10.Sept.1929, Stopping Mechanism for Record Controlled Musical Instruments. (This is electric shut off with roll motor vacuum cut off.)

### **Miscellaneous Related Patents**

*These are patents granted to Tolbert Cheek and assigned to a Welte-Mignon Piano Corp. This is a different corporate entity than the earlier Welte-Mignon Corp. It appears that the focus of this new Welte-Mignon Piano Corp. was now on small spinet players.*

U.S. Pat. No. 2,242,417, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 13.May.1938, granted 20.May.1941, Player Piano. (This is a small spinet player stack.)

U.S. Pat. No. 2,242,418, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 13.May.1938, granted 20.May.1941, Player Piano. (This is a small spinet player stack.)

U.S. Pat. No. 2,824,477, Tolbert F. Cheek, filed 14.May.1953, granted 25.Feb.1958, Power Pneumatic, there is no assignment listed as there were for the above patents. (This is a small stack for above keybed mounting.)

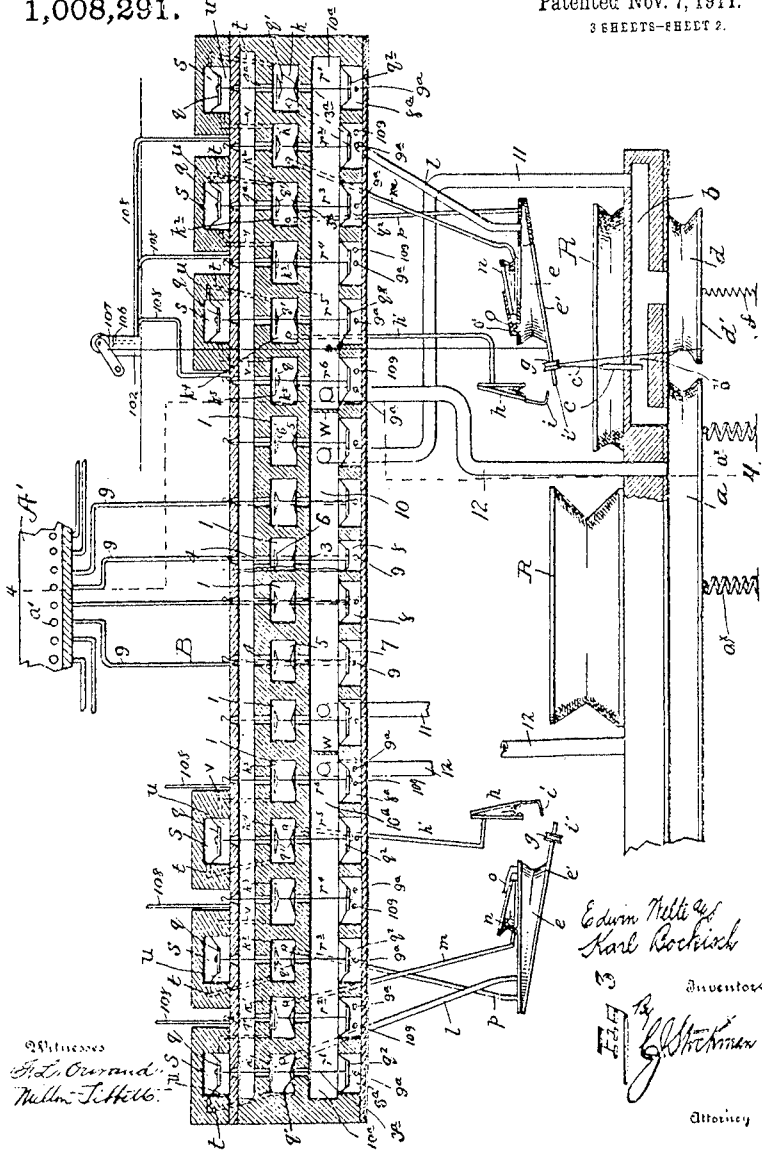
E. WELTE & K. BOCKISCH.  
MECHANISM FOR REGULATING THE EXPRESSION IN APPARATUS FOR PLAYING MUSICAL  
INSTRUMENTS.

1,008,291.

APPLICATION FILED AUG. 17, 1904.

Patented Nov. 7, 1911.

3 SHEETS—SHEET 2.



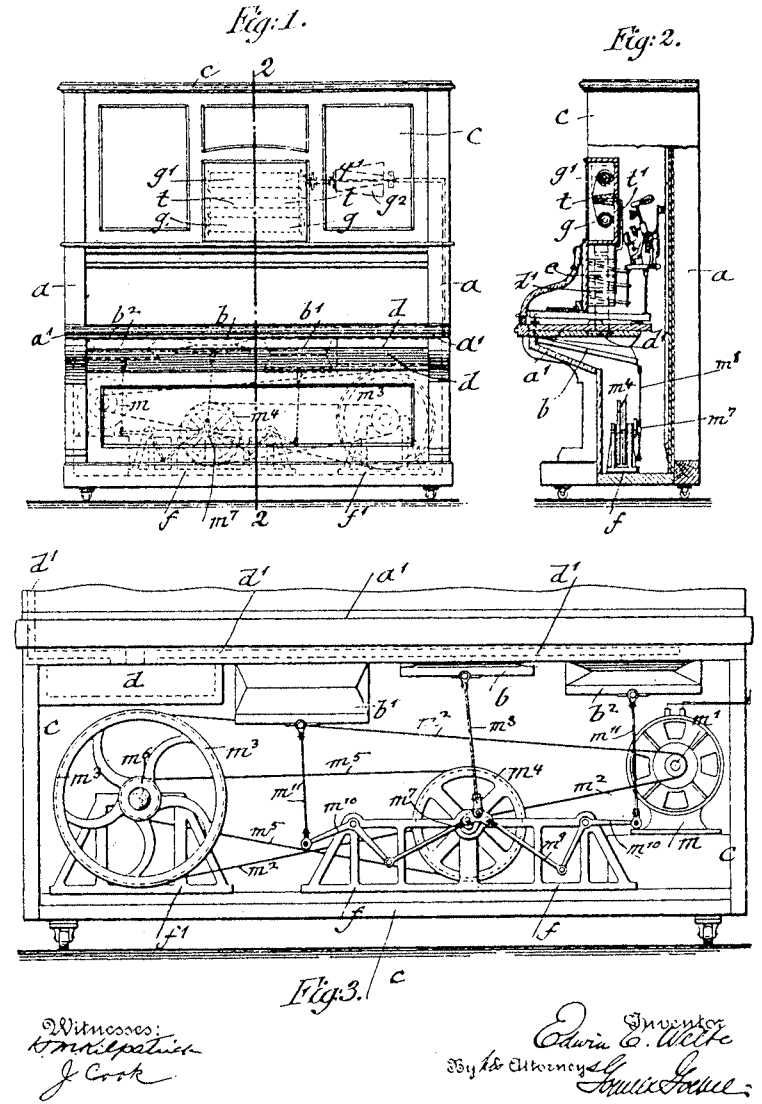
Witnesses  
Ed. L. Orland  
Muller-Lohde.

Edwin Welte &  
Karl Bockisch  
Inventors  
J. G. Schmitt  
Attorney

E. E. WELTE.  
AUTOMATIC PLAYER PIANO.  
APPLICATION FILED MAY 24, 1909

946,297.

Patented Jan. 11, 1910.



Witnesses:  
K. M. Lohde  
J. Cook

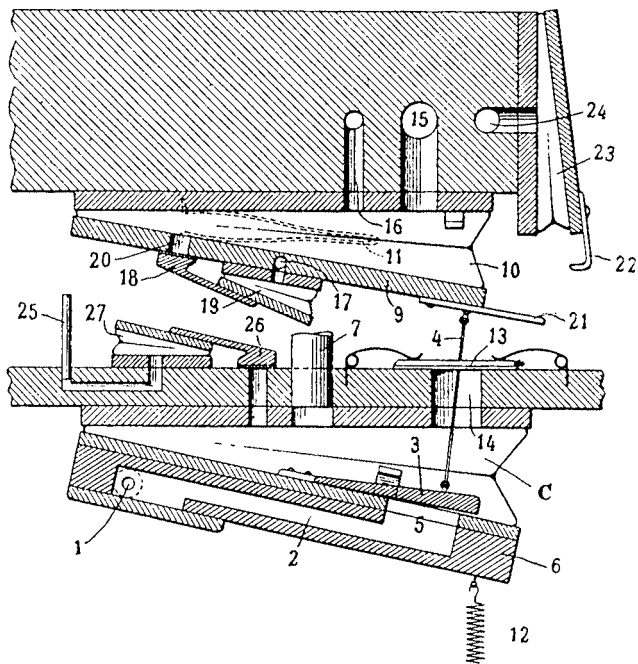
Inventor  
Edwin E. Welte  
By his Attorney  
J. G. Schmitt

E. WELTE.  
PRESSURE CONTROLLING MECHANISM FOR AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.  
APPLICATION FILED MAY 25, 1914.

1,225,902.

Patented May 15, 1917.  
3 SHEETS—SHEET 2.

Fig. 2-



WITNESSES  
*J. G. [Signature]*  
*Kate [Signature]*

INVENTOR  
**Edwin Welte,**  
BY *[Signature]*  
ATTORNEY

Sept. 11, 1923.

1,467,889

E. WELTE

PNEUMATICALLY CONTROLLED REGULATOR FOR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Filed May 25, 1914 2 Sheets—Sheet 2

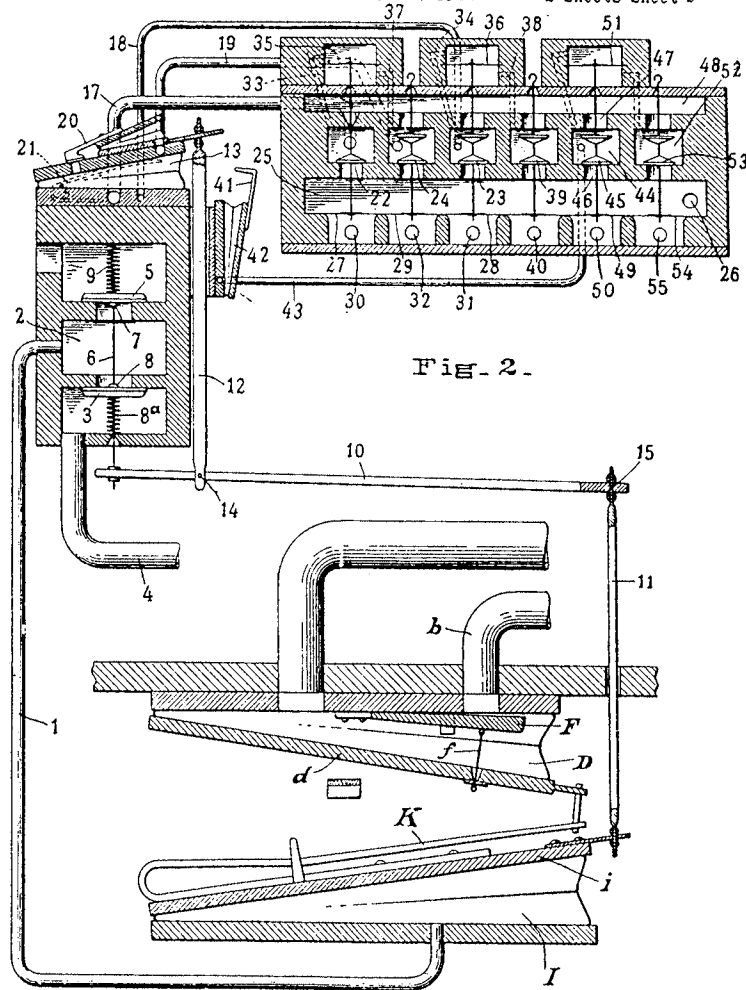


Fig. 2-

WITNESSES  
*J. G. [Signature]*  
*Kate [Signature]*

INVENTOR  
**Edwin Welte,**  
BY *[Signature]*  
ATTORNEY

Sept. 11, 1923.

E. WELTE

1,467,889

PNEUMATICALLY CONTROLLED REGULATOR FOR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Filed May 25, 1914 2 Sheets-Sheet 2

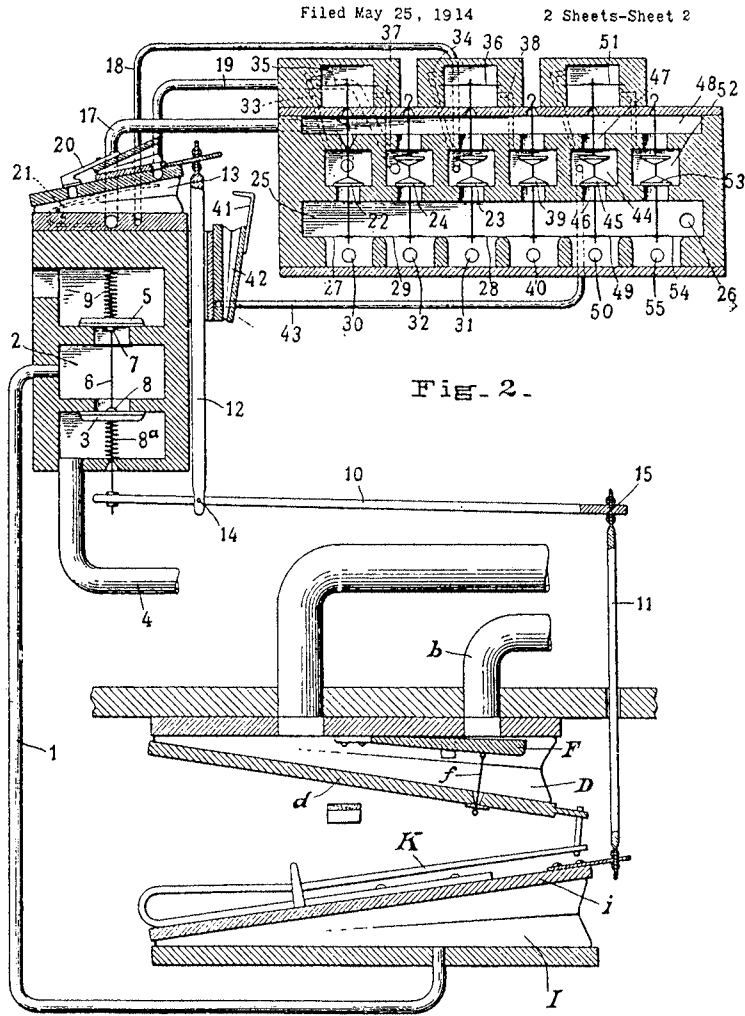


Fig. 2.

WITNESSES

J. G. Schreyer  
Kate Brenner

INVENTOR

Edwin Welte,

BY  
W. H. Barber  
ATTORNEY

T. DANQUARD.

SOFT TENSION GRADUATING DEVICE FOR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.  
APPLICATION FILED OCT. 5, 1914. RENEWED APR. 5, 1917.

1,287,649.

Patented Dec. 17, 1918.

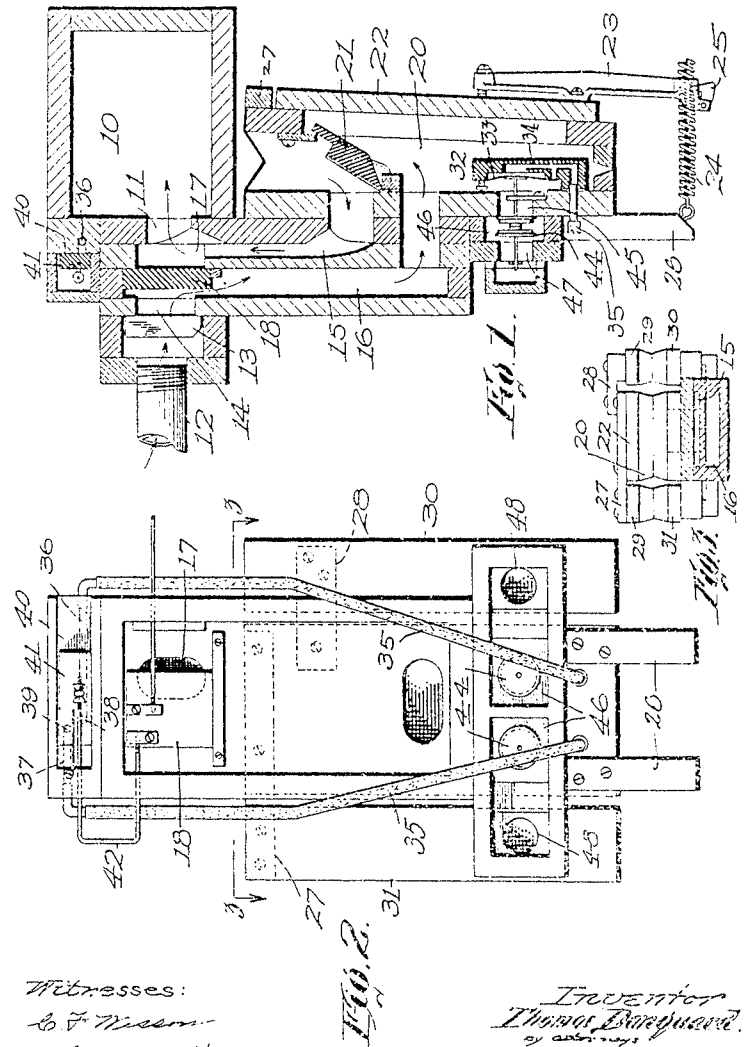


Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Witnesses:

G. F. Mison  
O. O. Hartnett.

Inventor  
Thomas Danquard  
Southport & Southport

Dec. 7, 1926.

T. DANQUARD

1,609,610

EXPRESSION DEVICE FOR AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Original Filed Feb. 4, 1916 3 Sheets-Sheet 1

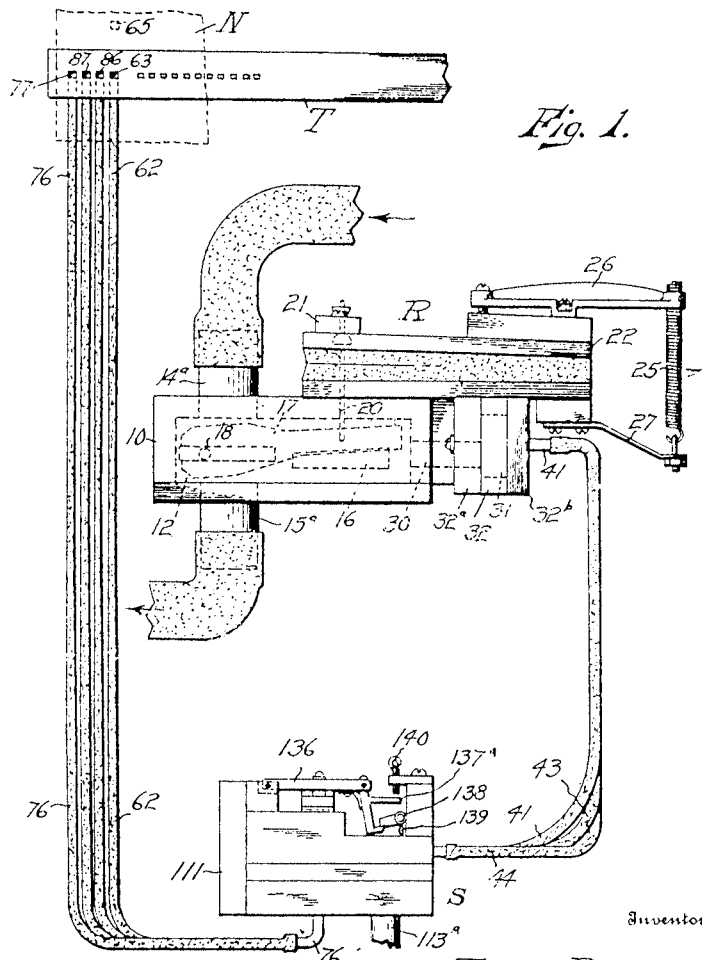


Fig. 1.

Inventor

THOMAS DANQUARD

Southgate & Southgate  
Attorneys

T. DANQUARD.

EXPRESSION DEVICE FOR AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

APPLICATION FILED FEB. 4, 1916. RENEWED JULY 19, 1921.

1,413,832.

Patented Apr. 25, 1922.

4 SHEETS-SHEET 2.

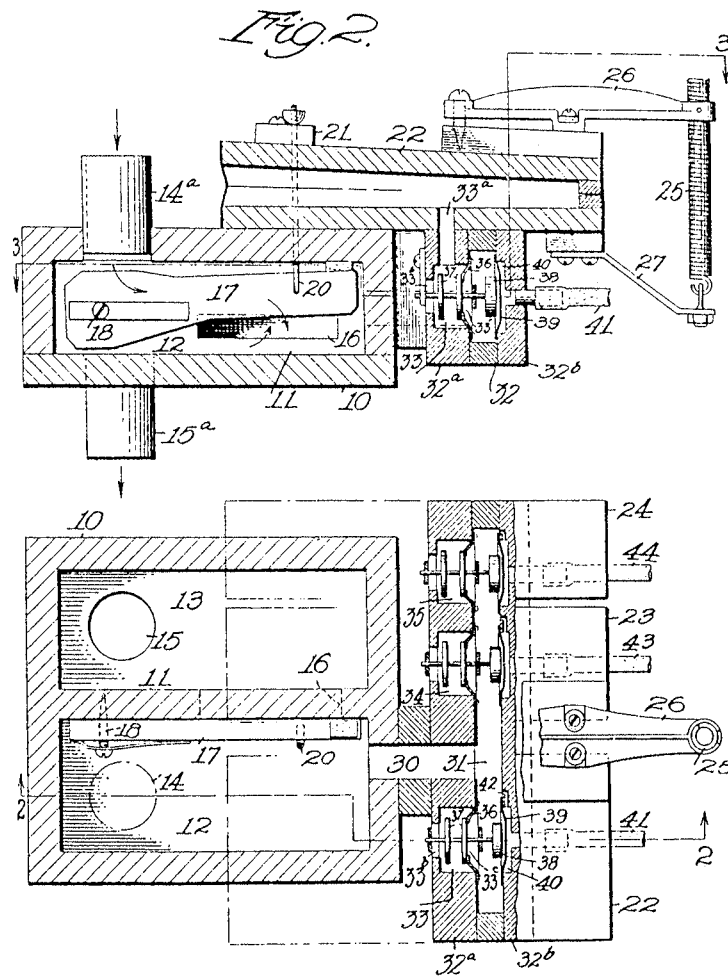


Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

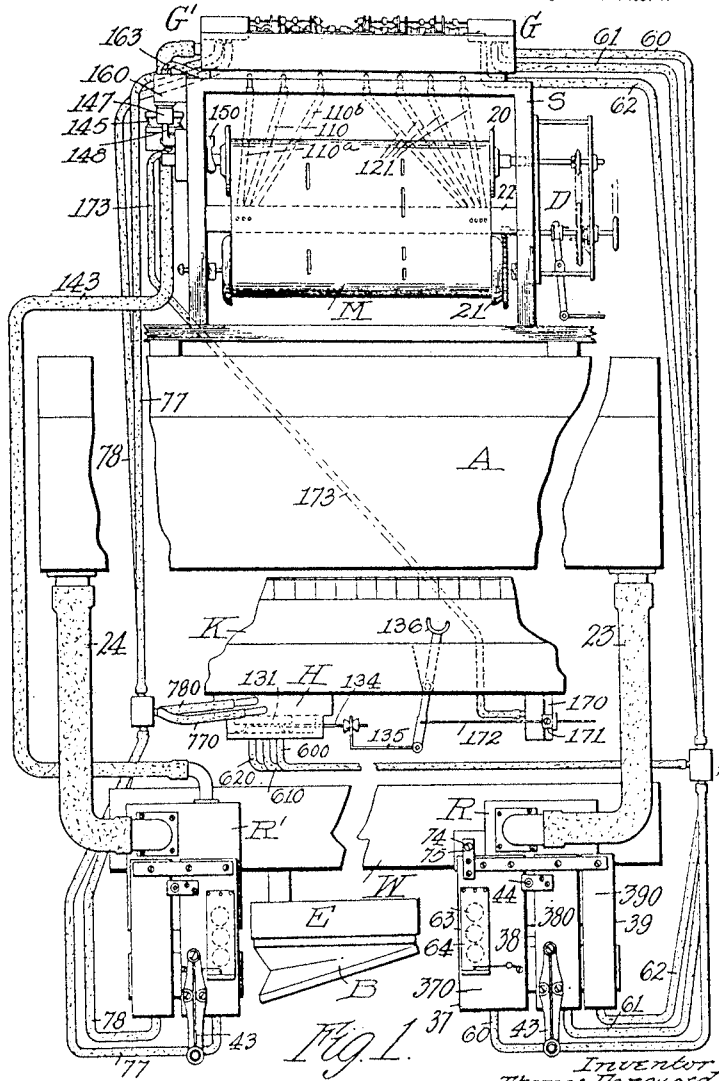
Witness:  
C. F. Messer.

Inventor  
Thomas Danquard  
by attorneys  
Southgate & Southgate

1,413,831.

Patented Apr. 25, 1922.

5 SHEETS—SHEET 1.



Fitness  
 C. F. Messer.

Inventor  
 Thomas Danquard  
 by attorneys  
 Smithgate & Smithgate

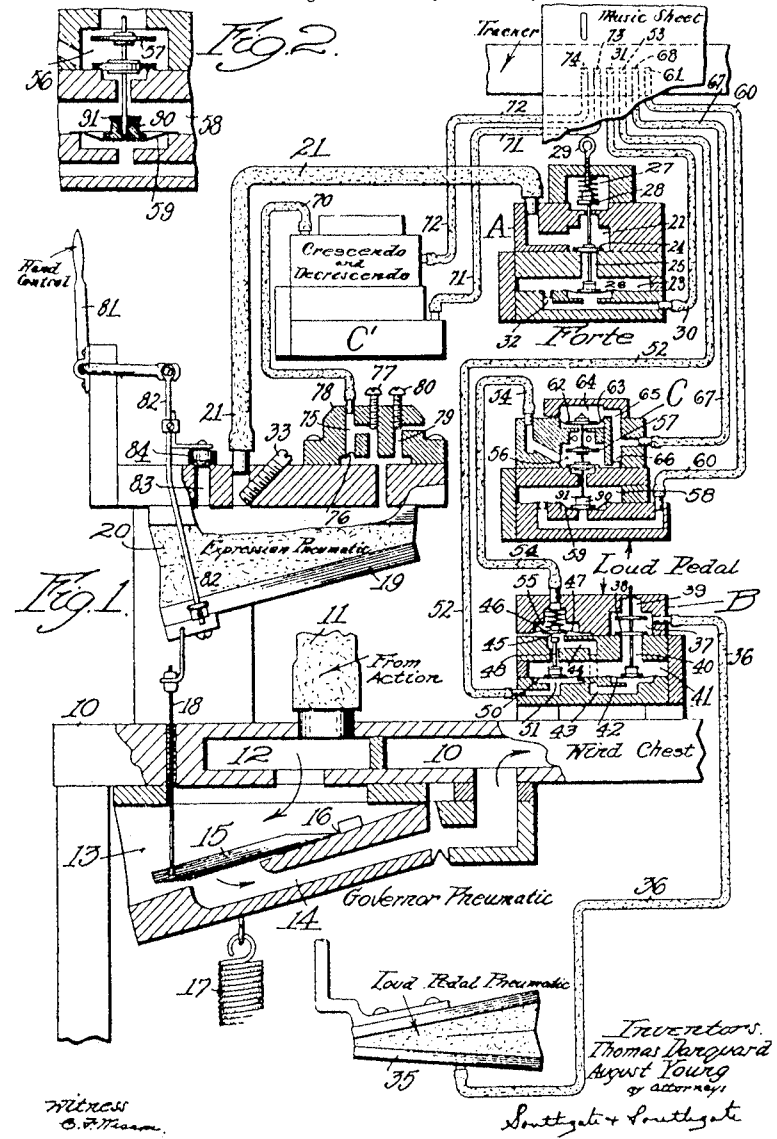
Feb. 10, 1925.

T. DANQUARD ET AL

1,525,497

EXPRESSION MECHANISM FOR AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Original Filed Sept. 15, 1918



Fitness  
 C. F. Messer.

Inventors  
 Thomas Danquard  
 August Young  
 by attorneys  
 Smithgate & Smithgate

Feb. 24, 1925.

H. J. LA JOIE ET AL  
ACTION OPERATING MECHANISM

1,527,313

Filed Oct. 28, 1921 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

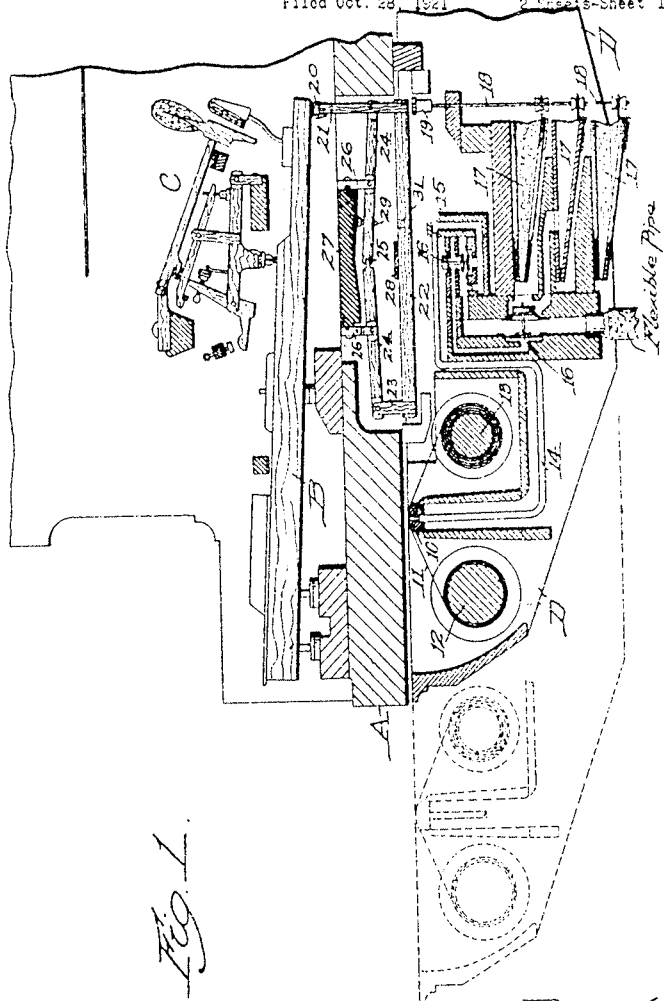


Fig. 1.

INVENTORS  
Hubert J. LaJoie  
Albert Leguak  
Frank Pokorny  
BY ATTORNEYS  
Smithgate & Smithgate

Witness  
C. F. Mason

continue...

Dec. 22, 1925.

T. DANQUARD

1,566,654

EXPRESSION CONTROLLING MECHANISM FOR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Filed Feb. 24, 1922 3 Sheets-Sheet 1

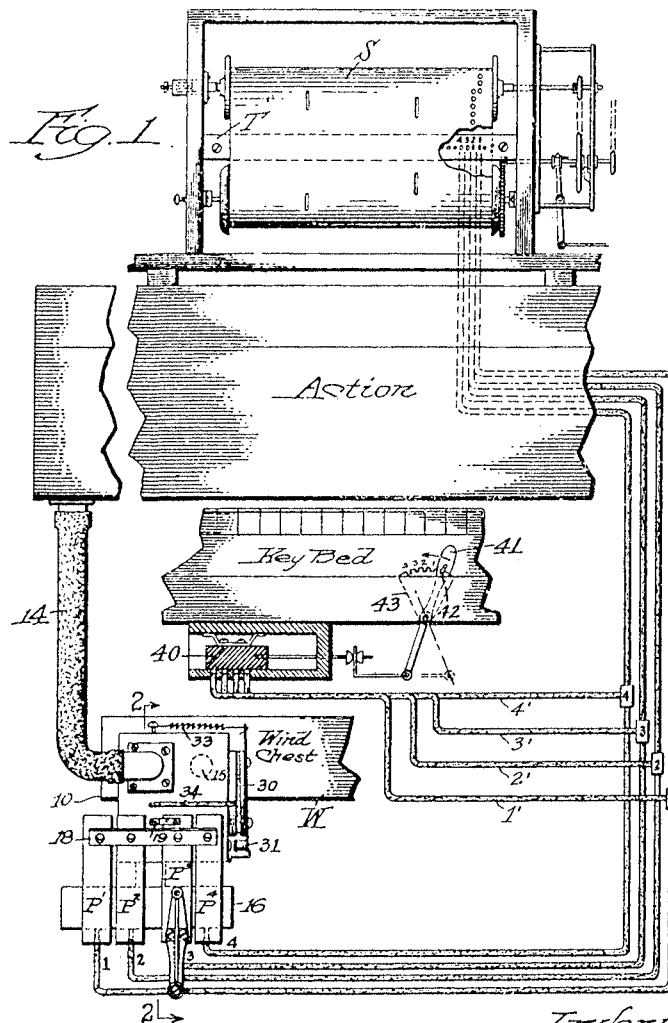


Fig. 1.

INVENTOR  
Thomas Danquard  
BY ATTORNEYS  
Smithgate & Smithgate

Witness  
C. F. Mason

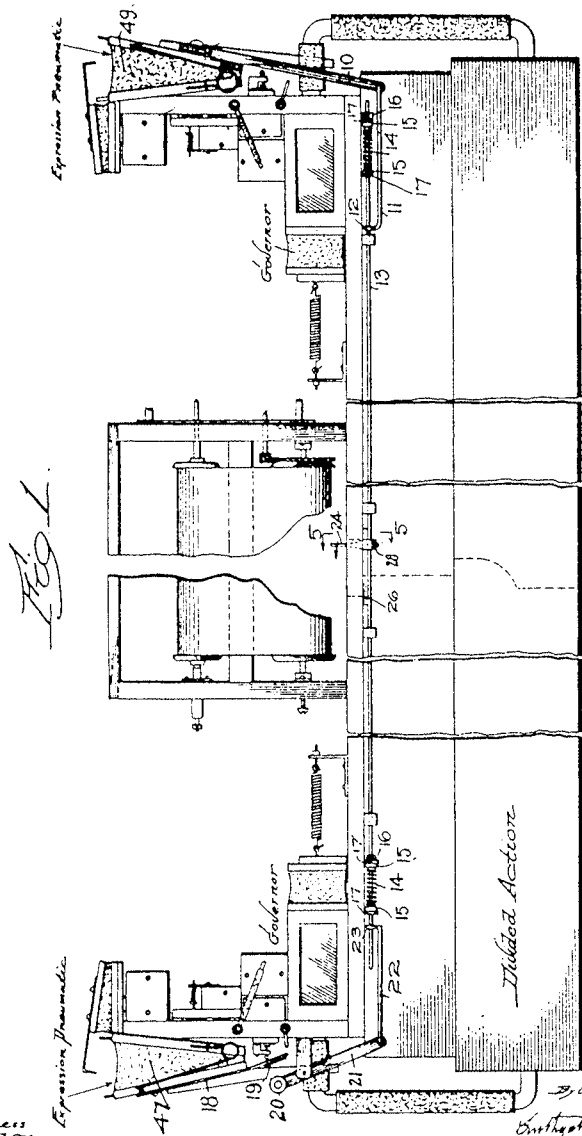
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April 17, 1928.

1,666,602

H. J. LA JOIE ET AL  
 EXPRESSION CONTROLLING MECHANISM FOR PNEUMATICALLY  
 OPERATED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS  
 Filed Sept. 22, 1922 2 Sheets-Sheet 1



Federator  
 Hubert J. LaJoie  
 Albert Ugochare  
 Frank Piskovny  
 By attorneys  
 Guthrie & Guthrie

Witness  
 C. P. Mason

May 1, 1928.

1,668,159

H. J. LA JOIE  
 MECHANISM FOR CONTROLLING THE DYNAMICS OF PNEUMATICALLY  
 OPERATED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS  
 Filed Aug. 12, 1925 4 Sheets-Sheet 1

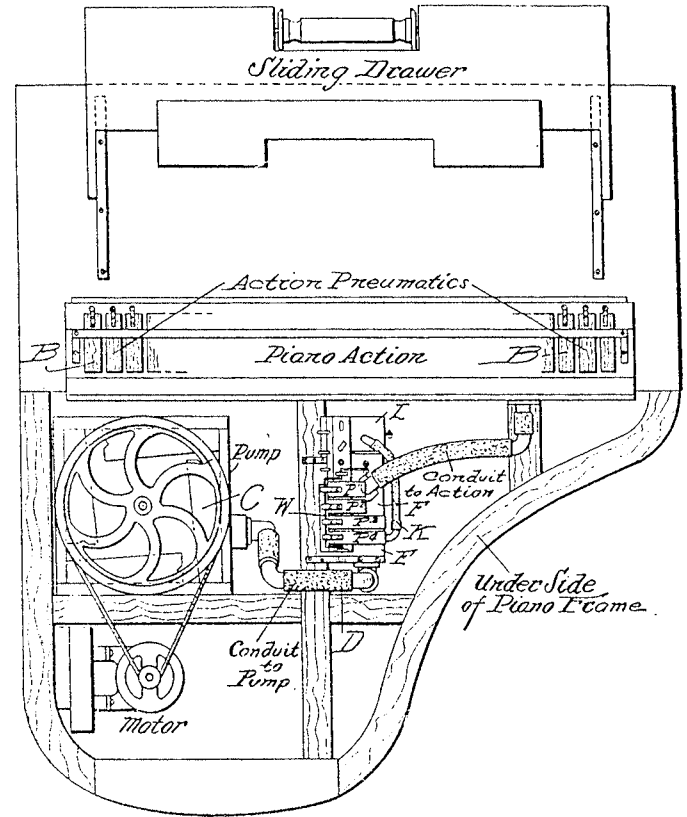


Fig. 1.

Federator  
 Hubert J. LaJoie  
 By attorneys  
 Guthrie & Foye Hamley

Witness  
 C. P. Mason

continued...

Aug. 14, 1928.

H. J. LA JOIE

1,680,385

AUTOMATIC MECHANISM FOR OPERATING DRAWERS OF AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Filed Oct. 4, 1926

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

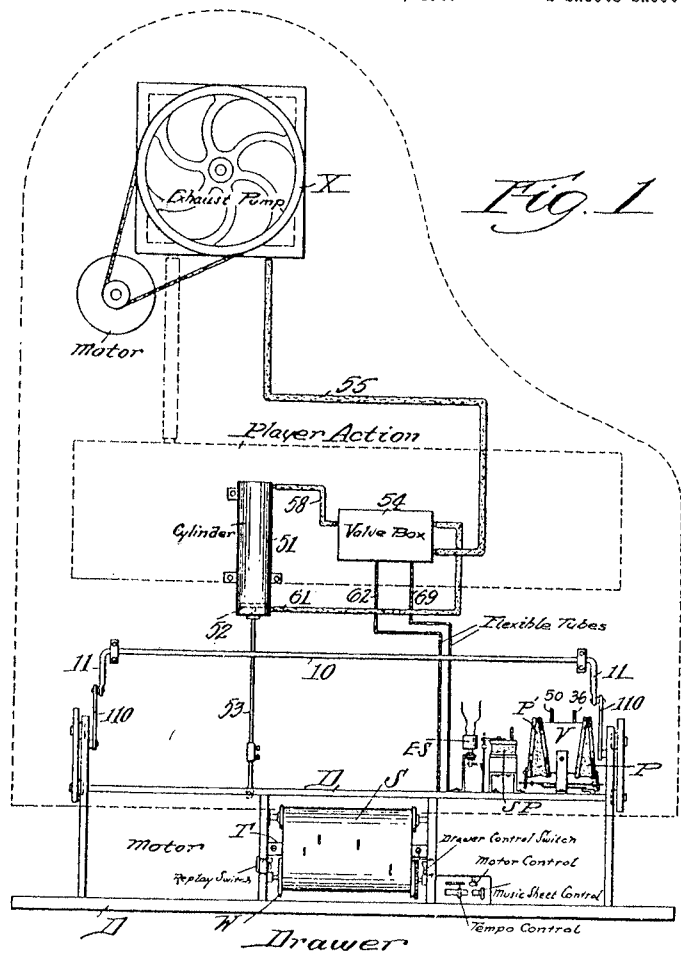


Fig. 1

W. H. Moore  
C. F. Moore

Inventor  
Hubert J. LaJoie  
By  
Augustine Fung, Humbley  
attorneys

Jan. 4, 1927.

T. F. CHEEK

1,613,501

RECORD CONTROLLED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

Filed Nov. 5, 1920

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

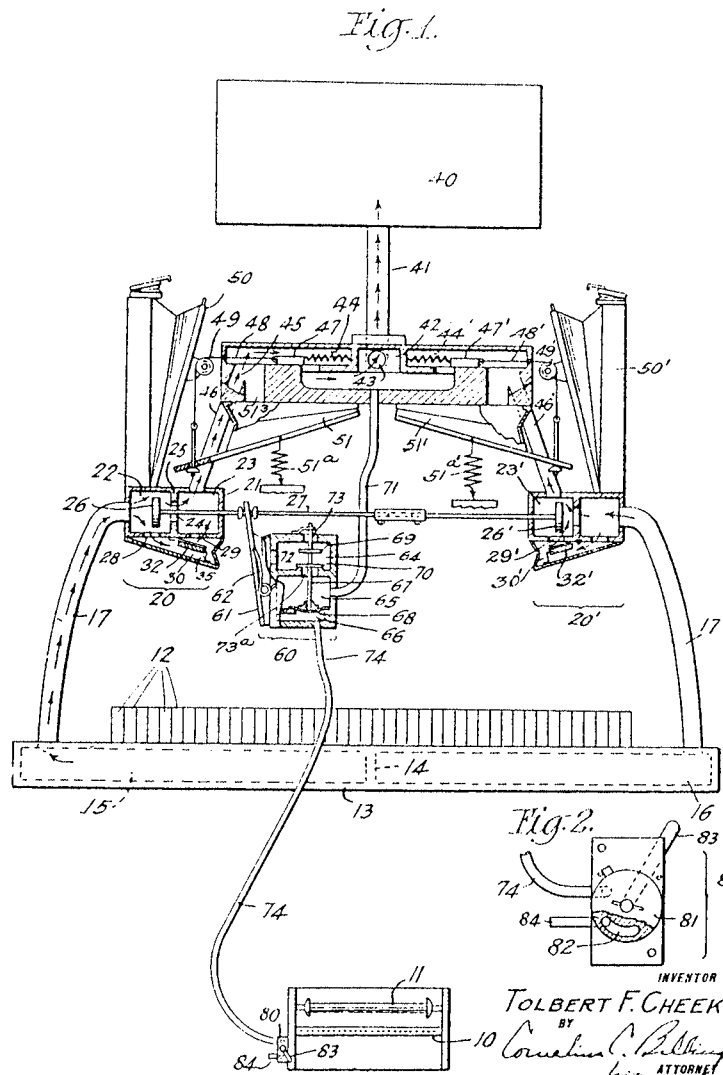


Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

INVENTOR  
TOLBERT F. CHEEK  
BY  
Cornelius C. Ballinger  
ATTORNEY

Nov. 2, 1926.

C. UEBELMESSER

1,605,303

TRANSMISSION MECHANISM FOR RECORD CONTROLLED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Filed April 21, 1921 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

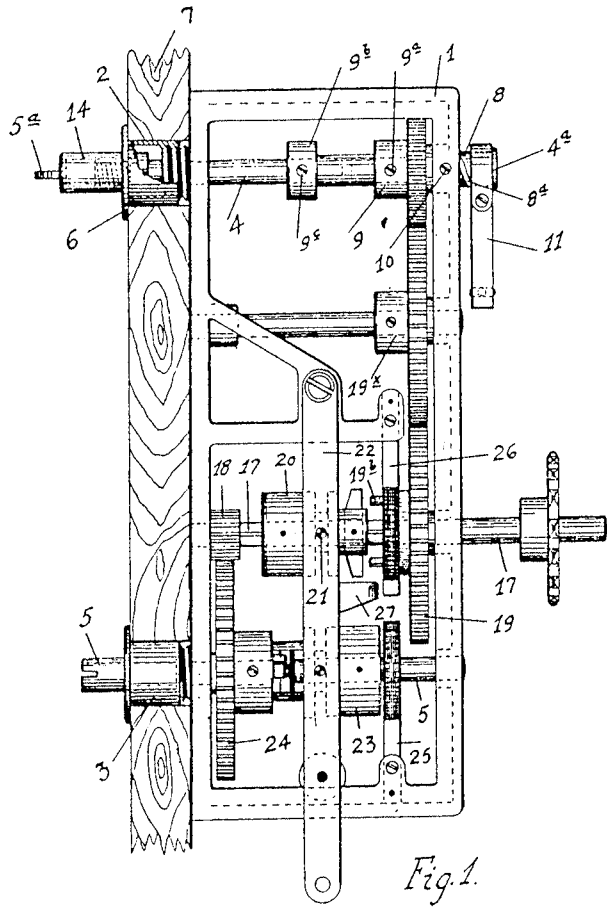


Fig. 1.

INVENTOR  
*Charles Uebelmesser*

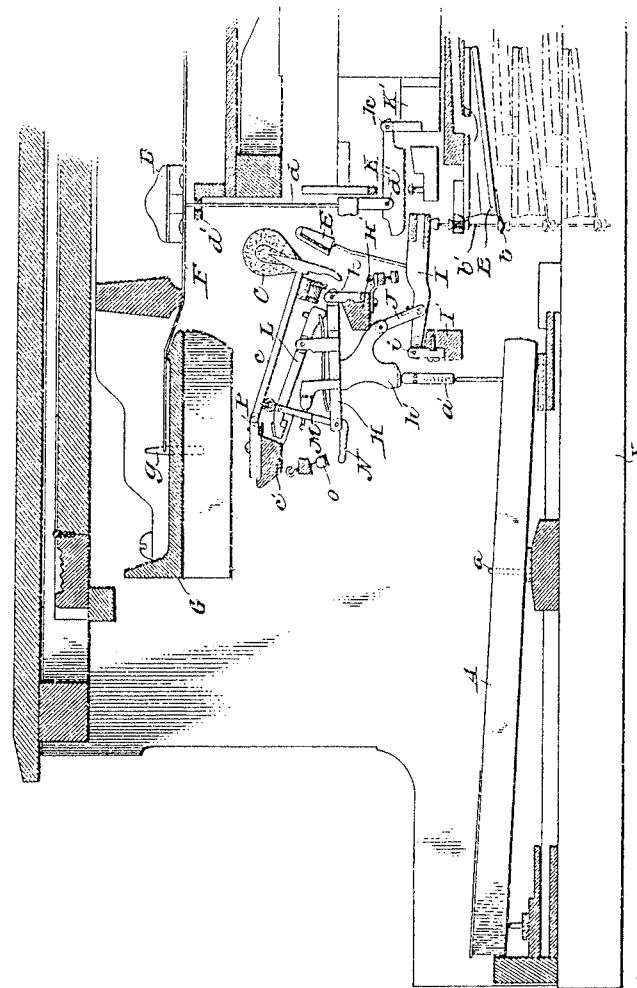
Aug. 19, 1924.

M. NICKELS

1,505,161

PLAYER GRAND PIANO

Original Filed May 5, 1921



Inventor

*Martin Nickels*  
*G. J. Stockman*

Attorney

continued...

June 17, 1924.

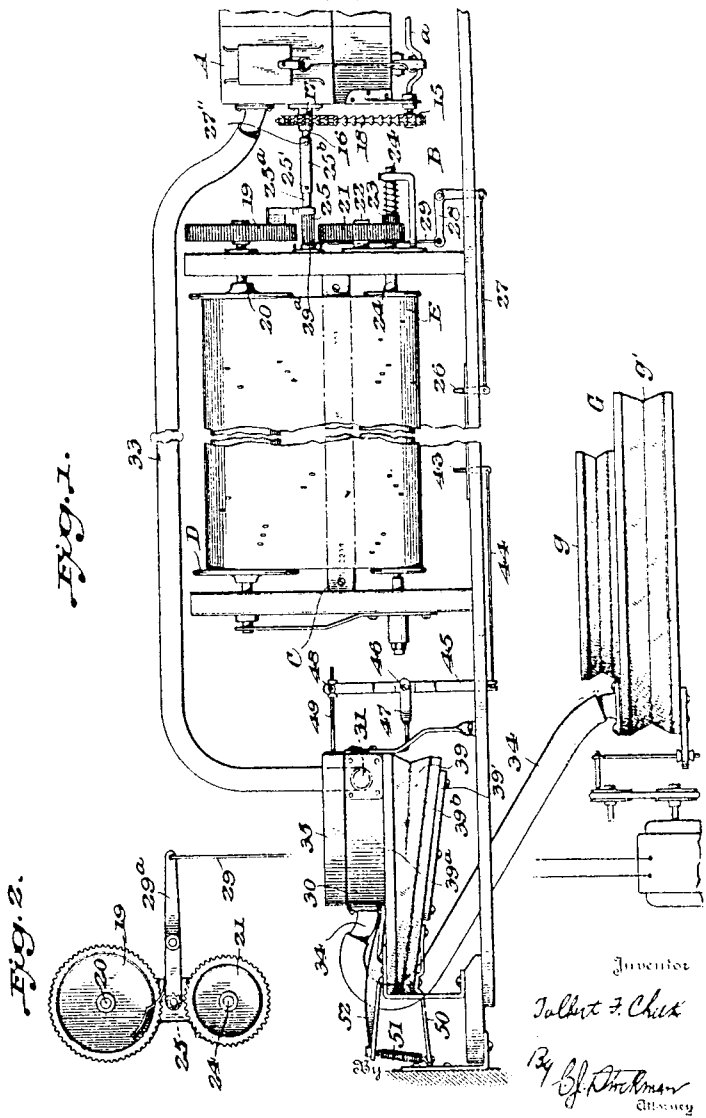
T. F. CHEEK

1,498,233

CONTROLLING MEANS FOR PNEUMATIC MOTORS

Filed May 7, 1921

3 Sheets-Sheet 1



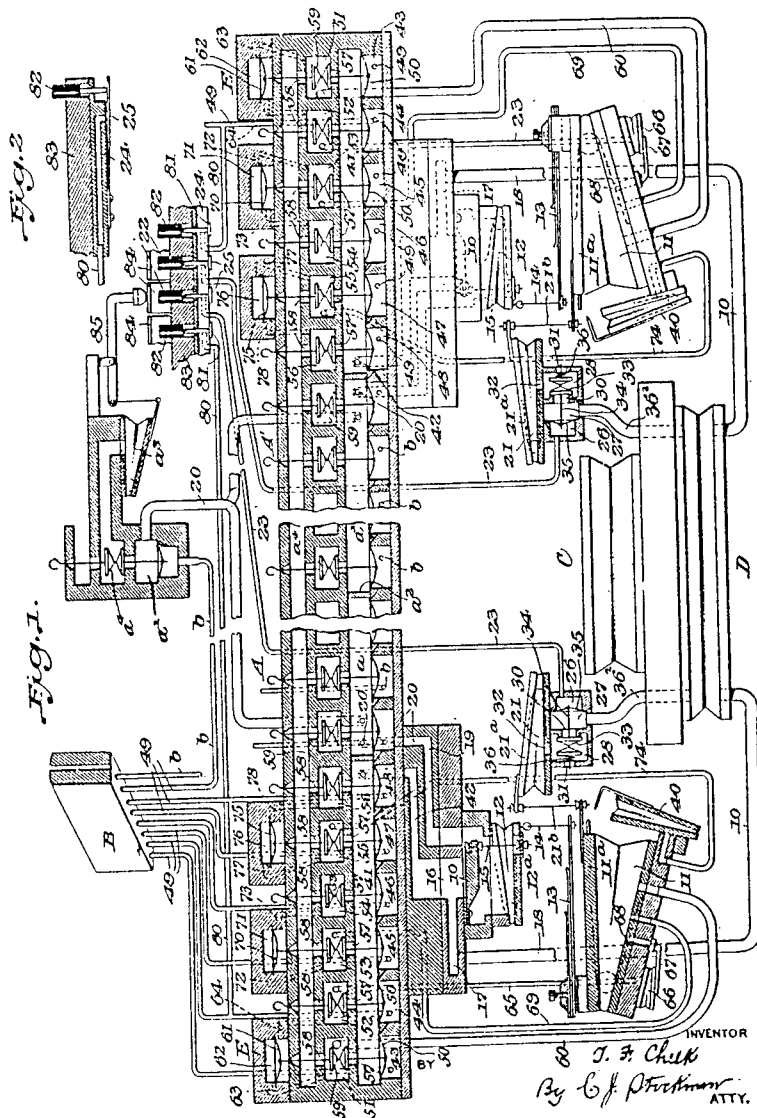
July 10, 1928.

T. F. CHEEK

1,676,633

RECORD CONTROLLED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

Filed May 7, 1921.



May 28, 1929.

T. F. CHEEK

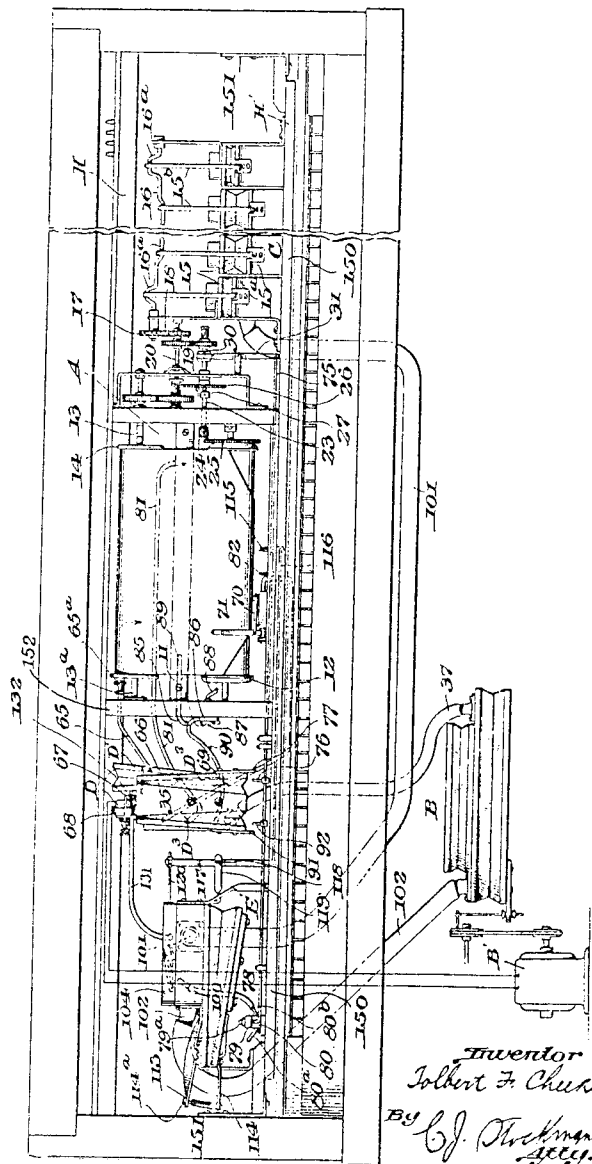
1,715,279

RECORD CONTROLLED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

Filed May 7, 1921

7 Sheets-Sheet 1

FIG. 1.



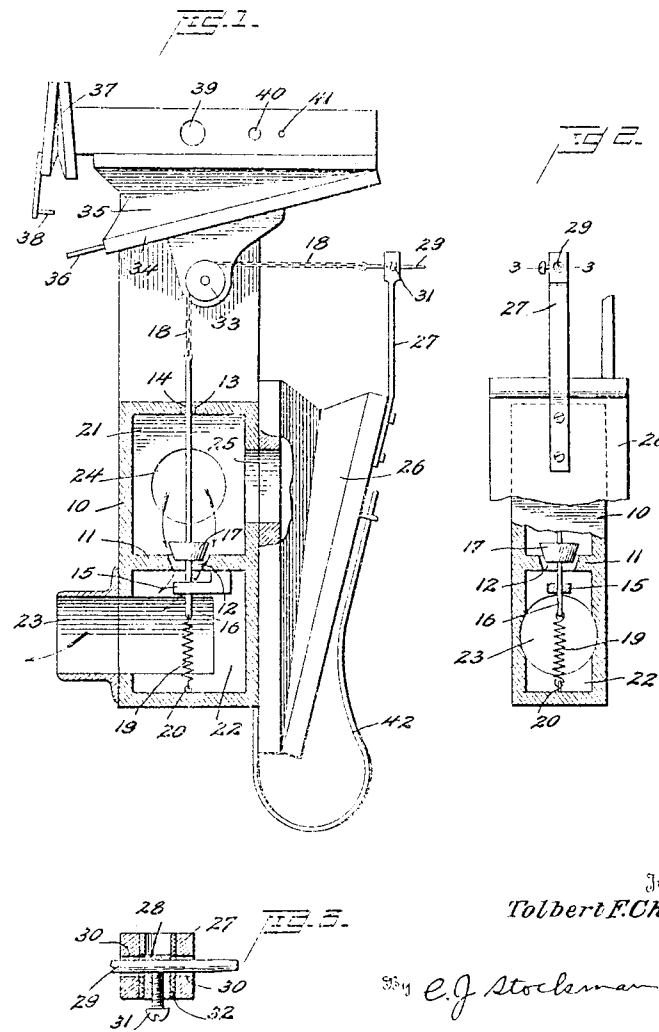
Dec. 30, 1924.

T. F. CHEEK

1,521,571

AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

Filed Oct. 6, 1922



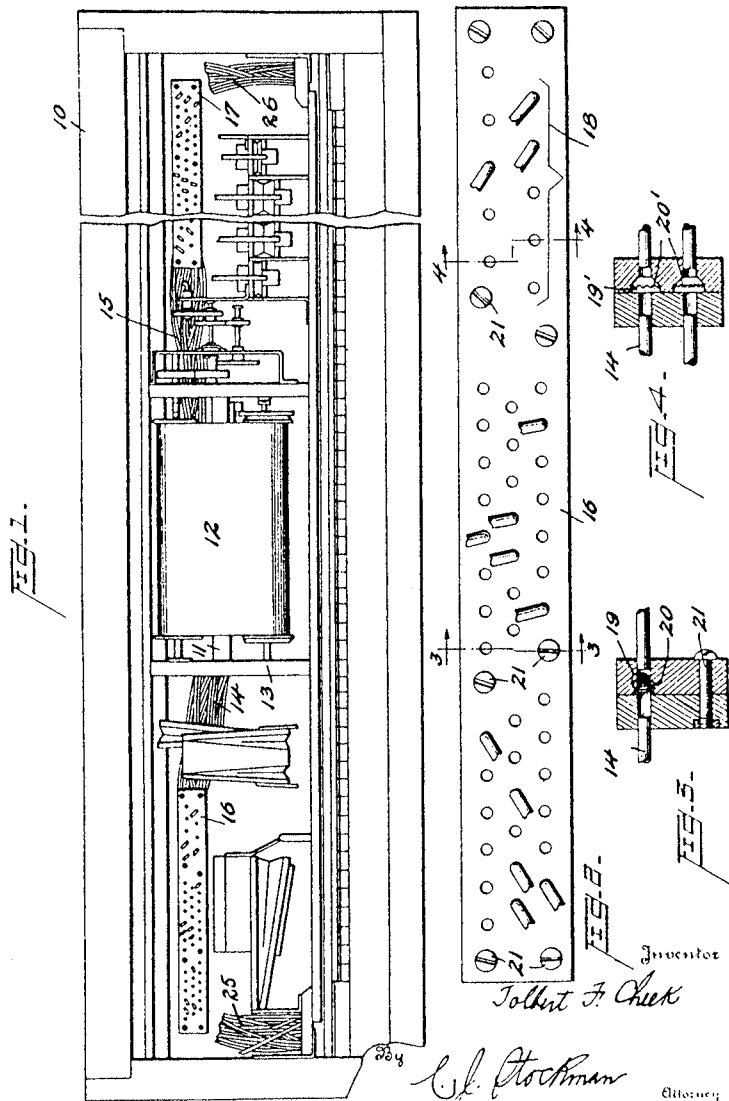
April 10, 1928.

T. F. CHEEK

1,665,905

AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

Filed Oct. 6, 1922



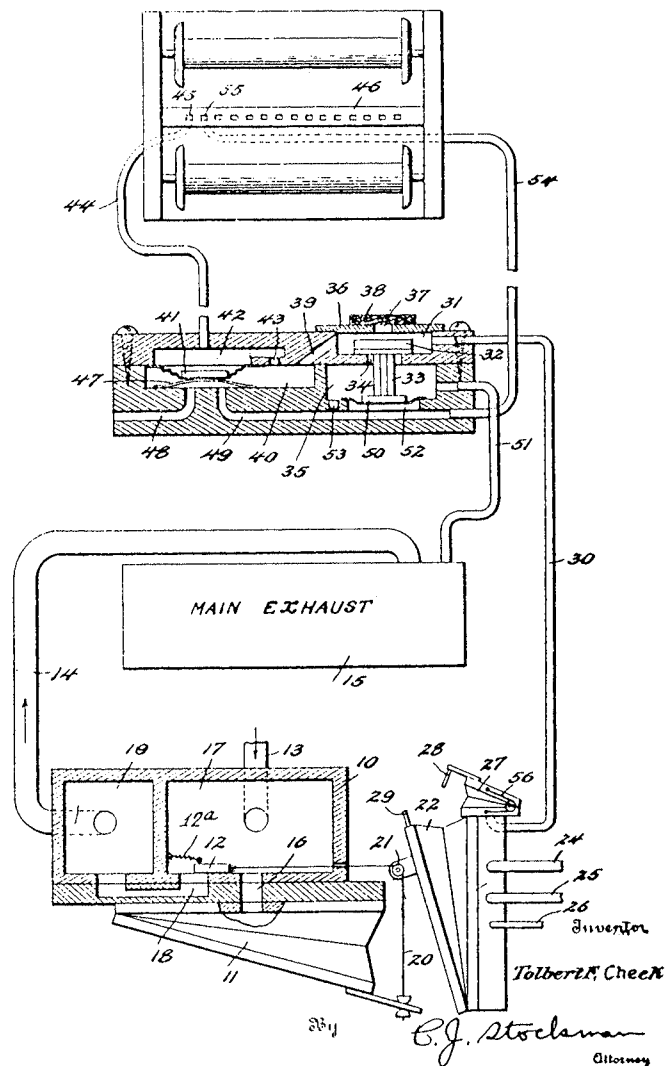
Sept. 21, 1926.

T. F. CHEEK

1,600,755

VALVE MECHANISM

Original Filed Dec. 1, 1922



Aug. 19, 1924.

1,505,374

T. F. CHEEK

RECORD CONTROLLED GRAND PIANO

Filed July 13, 1923

3 Sheets-Sheet 1

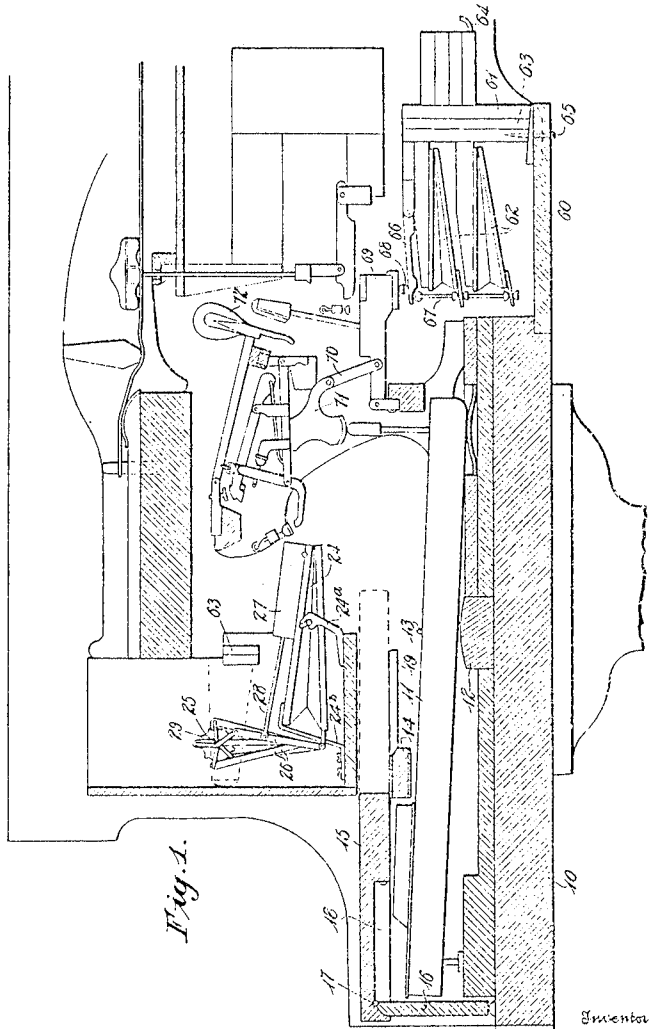


Fig. 1.

Inventor  
Tolbert F. Cheek  
By *T. F. Stockman*  
Attorney

May 14, 1929.

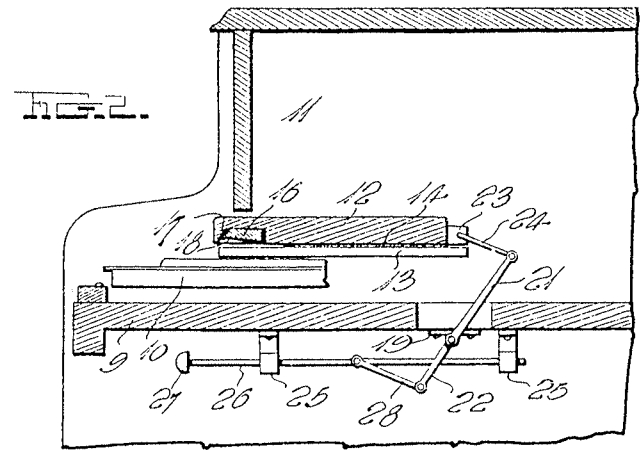
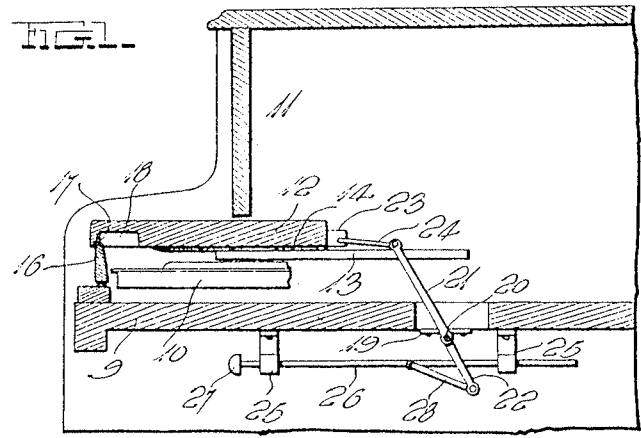
1,712,980

G. CAROCCIO

FALL BOARD OPERATING MECHANISM

Filed July 13, 1923

2 Sheets-Sheet 1



INVENTOR.  
GIUSEPPO CAROCCIO  
By *G. F. Stockman*  
ATTORNEYS.

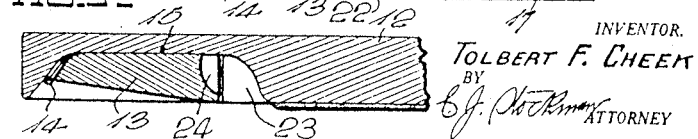
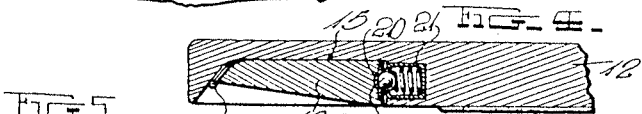
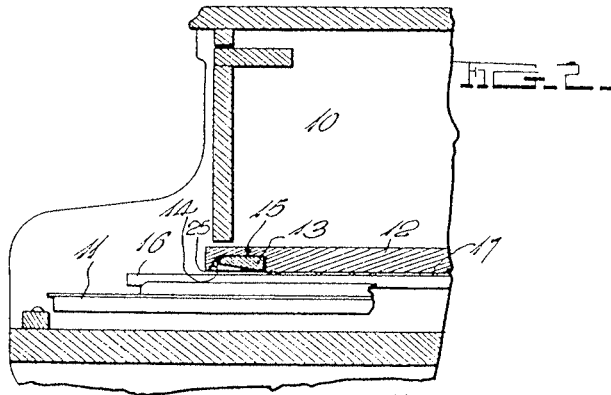
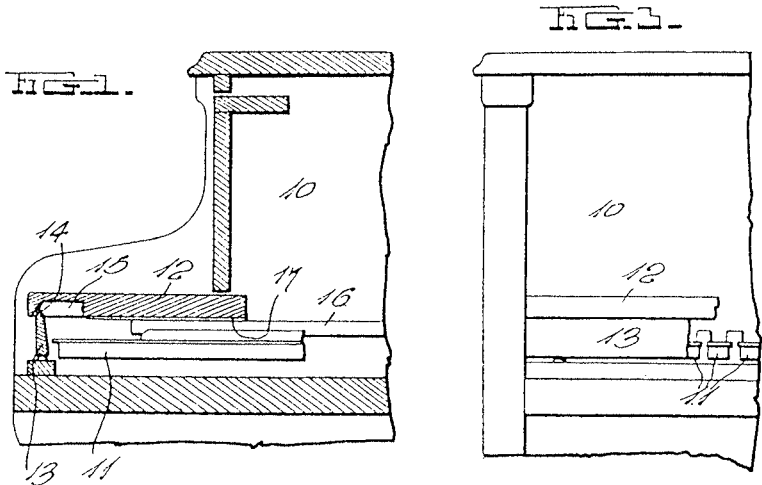
May 28, 1929.

T. F. CHEEK

1,715,280

FALL BOARD

Filed July 13, 1923



INVENTOR.

TOLBERT F. CHEEK

BY

*E. J. Stockman* ATTORNEY

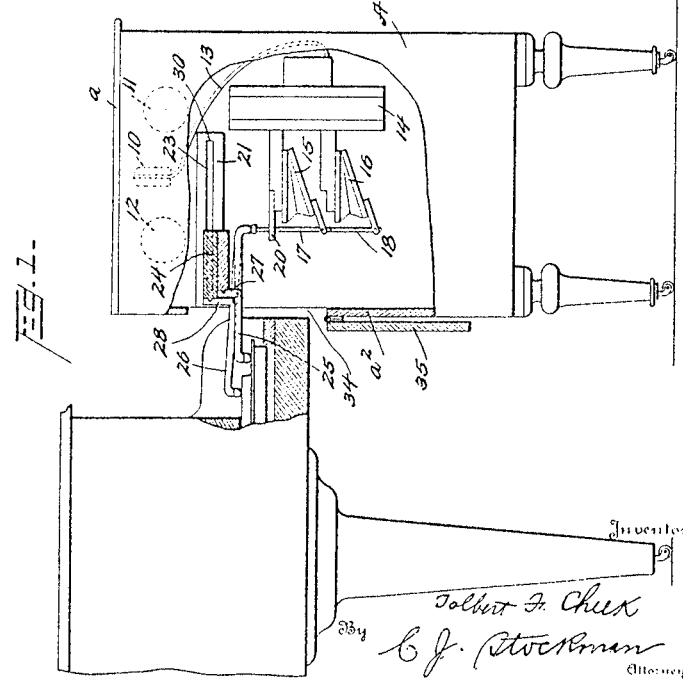
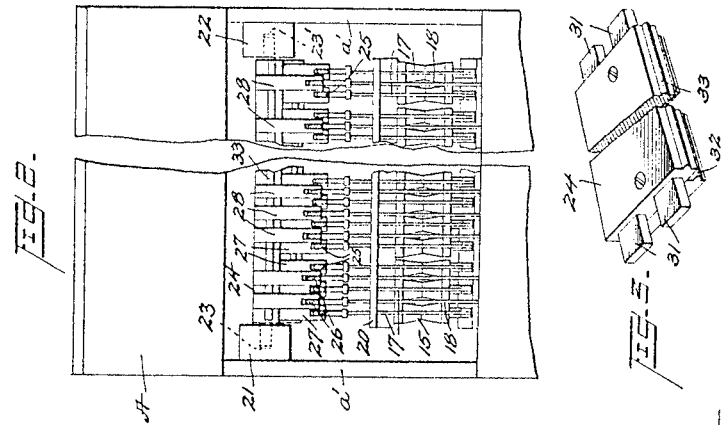
March 30, 1926.

T. F. CHEEK

1,579,192

CABINET PLAYER

Filed Sept. 20 1923



INVENTOR

Tolbert F. Cheek

*E. J. Stockman* ATTORNEY

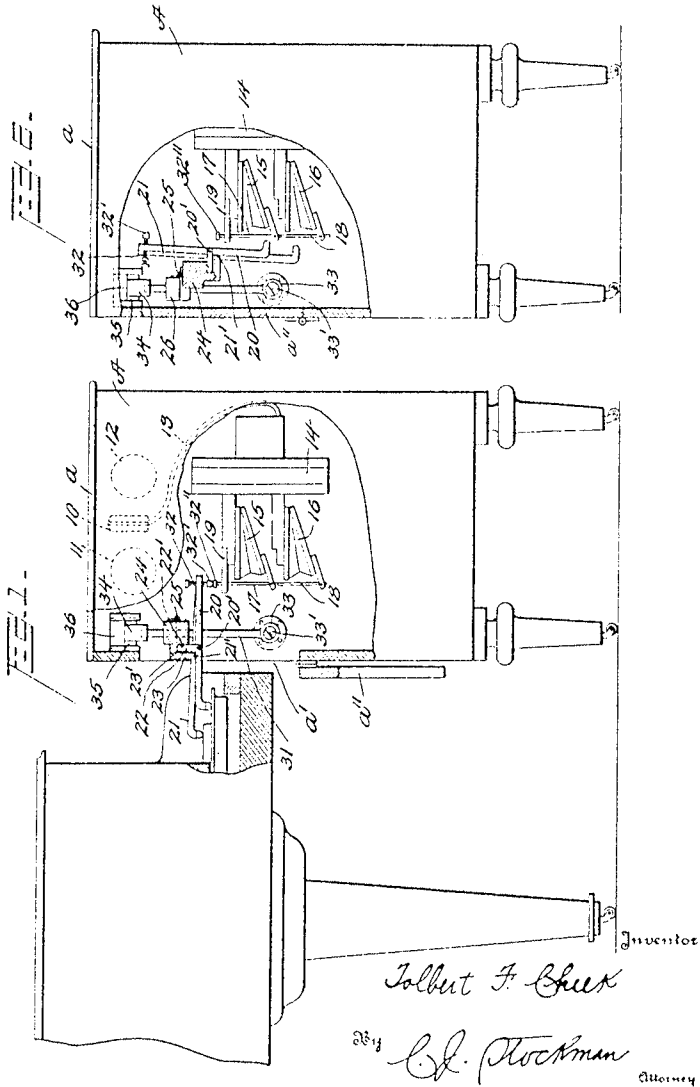


April 26, 1927.

T. F. CHEEK  
CABINET PLAYER

1,626,327

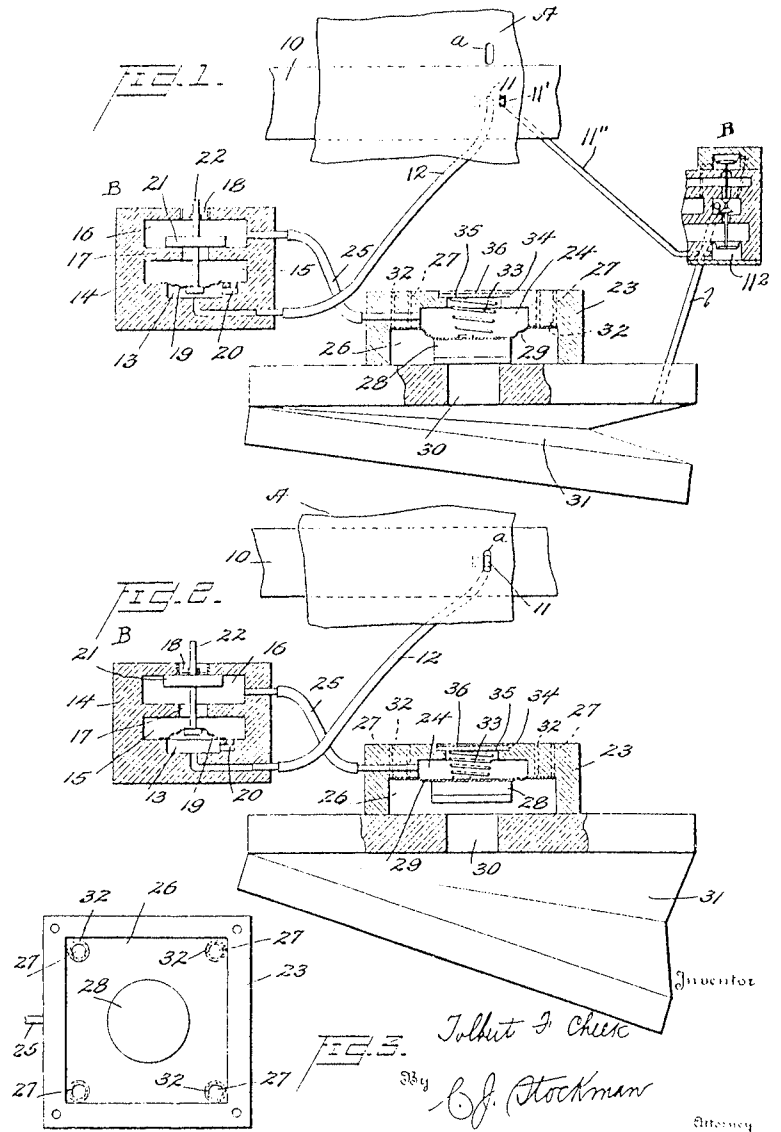
Filed Sept. 20, 1923 2 Sheets-Sheet 1



March 11, 1930.

T. F. CHEEK  
MEANS TO ELIMINATE NOISE IN PARTS OF RECORD  
CONTROLLED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS  
Filed Sept. 20, 1923

1,750,037



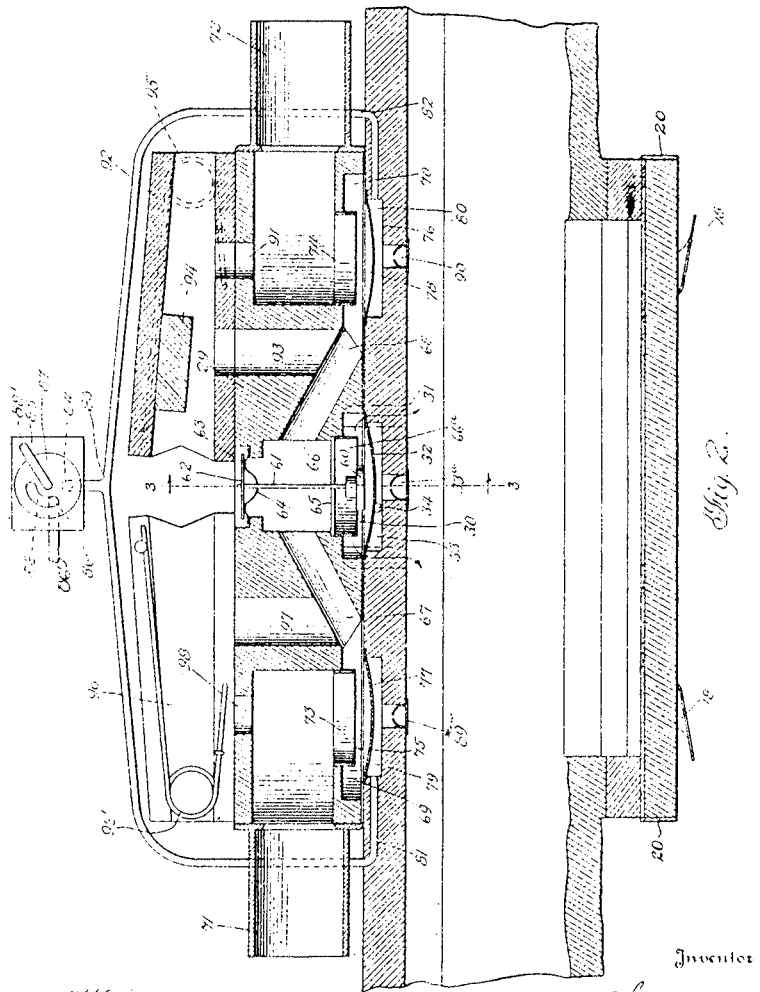
Jan. 4, 1927.

T. F. CHEEK

1,613,441

RECORD CONTROLLED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

Filed Sept. 25, 1923 3 Sheets-Sheet 2



*J. H. Kline*  
*Att. R. McCann & Co.*

*Talbot F. Cheek*

*B. J. Stockman*

Inventor

Attorney

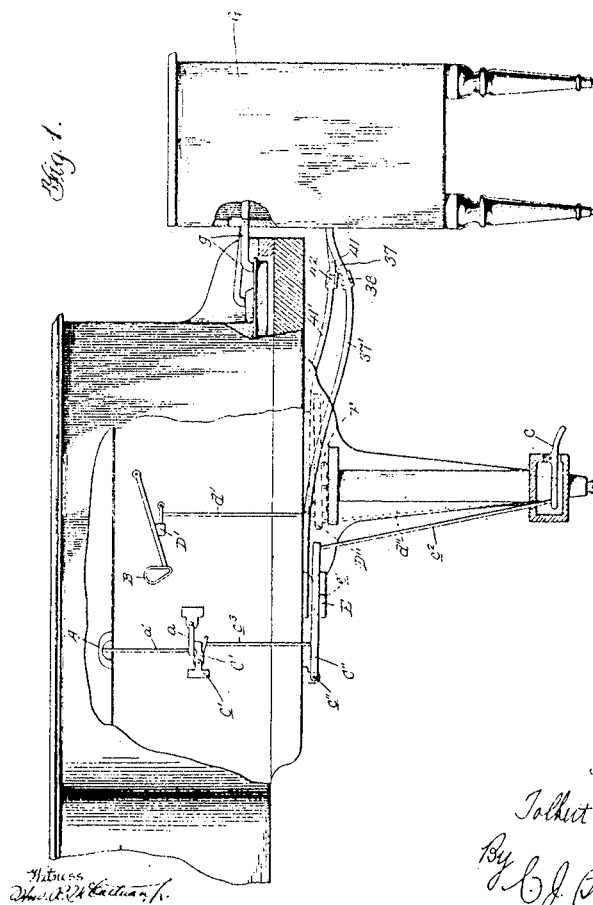
April 26, 1927.

T. F. CHEEK

1,626,328

MEANS TO OPERATE PIANO PEDAL MECHANISMS UNDER CONTROL OF A RECORD

Filed Sept. 25, 1923 2 Sheets-Sheet 1



*Att. R. McCann & Co.*

*Talbot F. Cheek*  
*By B. J. Stockman*  
*Attorneys.*

Inventor

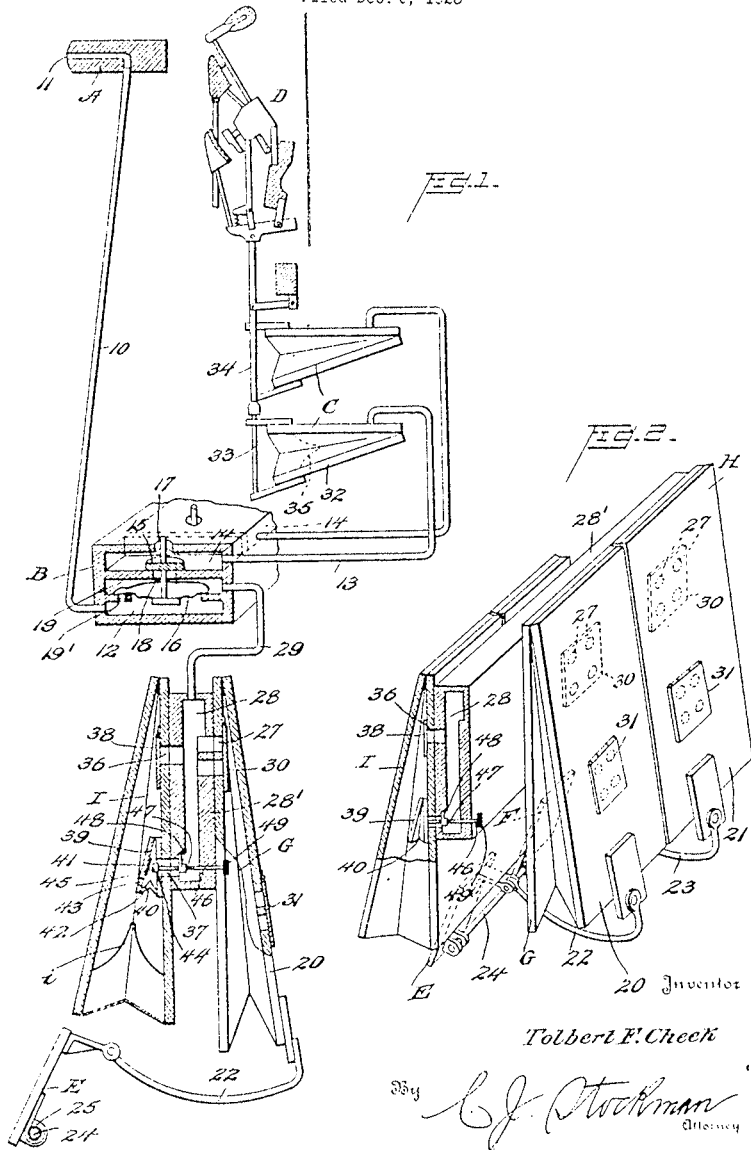
Feb. 28, 1928.

1,660,546

T. F. CHEEK

RECORD CONTROLLED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

Filed Dec. 3, 1923



Tolbert F. Cheek

By *T. F. Cheek*  
Attorney

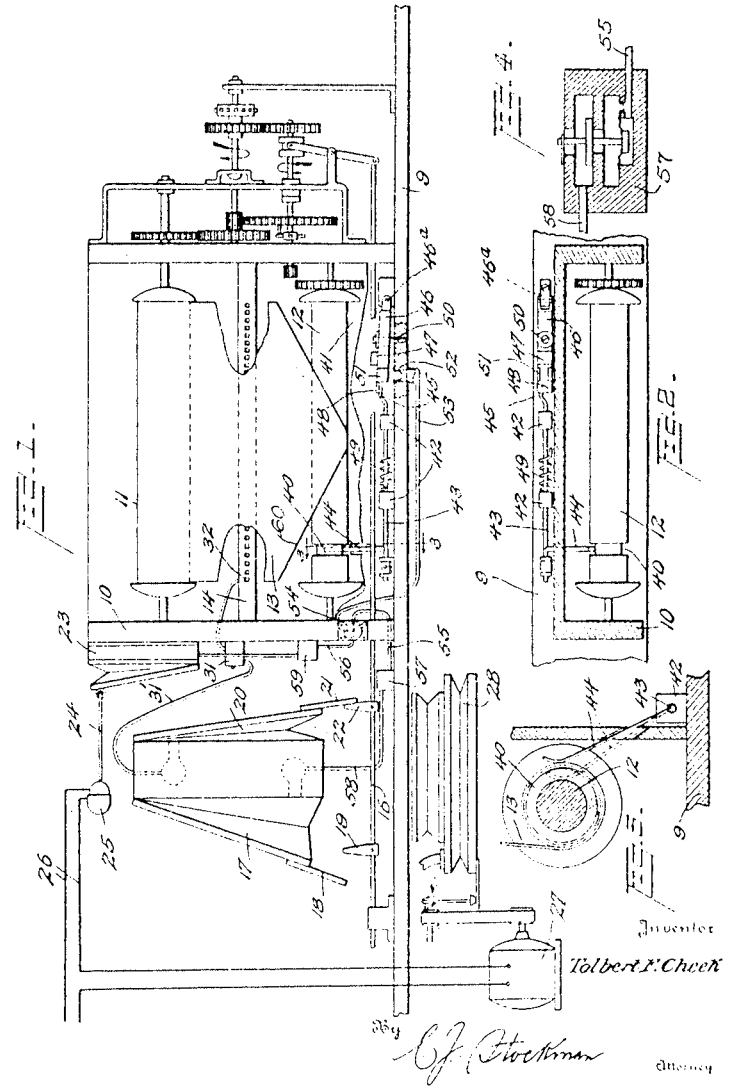
Sept. 7, 1926.

1,599,394

T. F. CHEEK

STOP RELAY MECHANISM FOR RECORD CONTROLLED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Filed Jan. 29, 1924



Tolbert F. Cheek

By *T. F. Cheek*  
Attorney

continued...

Sept. 10, 1929.

T. F. CHEEK

1727,809

STOPPING MECHANISM FOR RECORD CONTROLLED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Filed Jan. 29, 1924

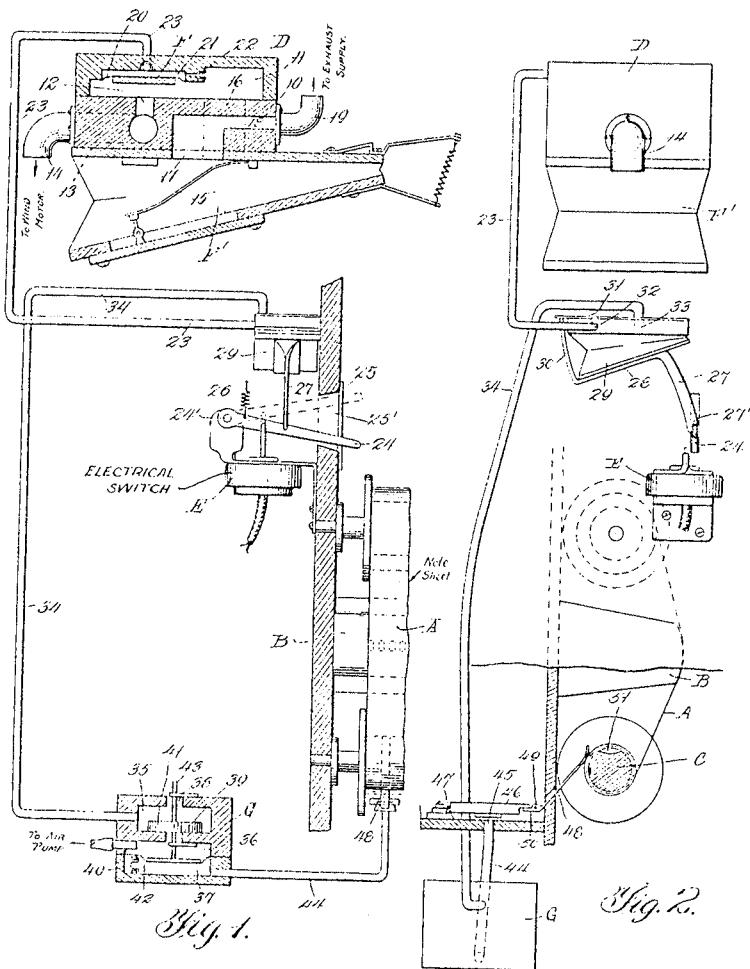


Fig. 1.  
 Fig. 2.  
 INVENTOR  
 Tolbert F. Cheek.

BY *W. J. Strohm*  
 ATTORNEY.

continue...

continued...

May 20, 1941.

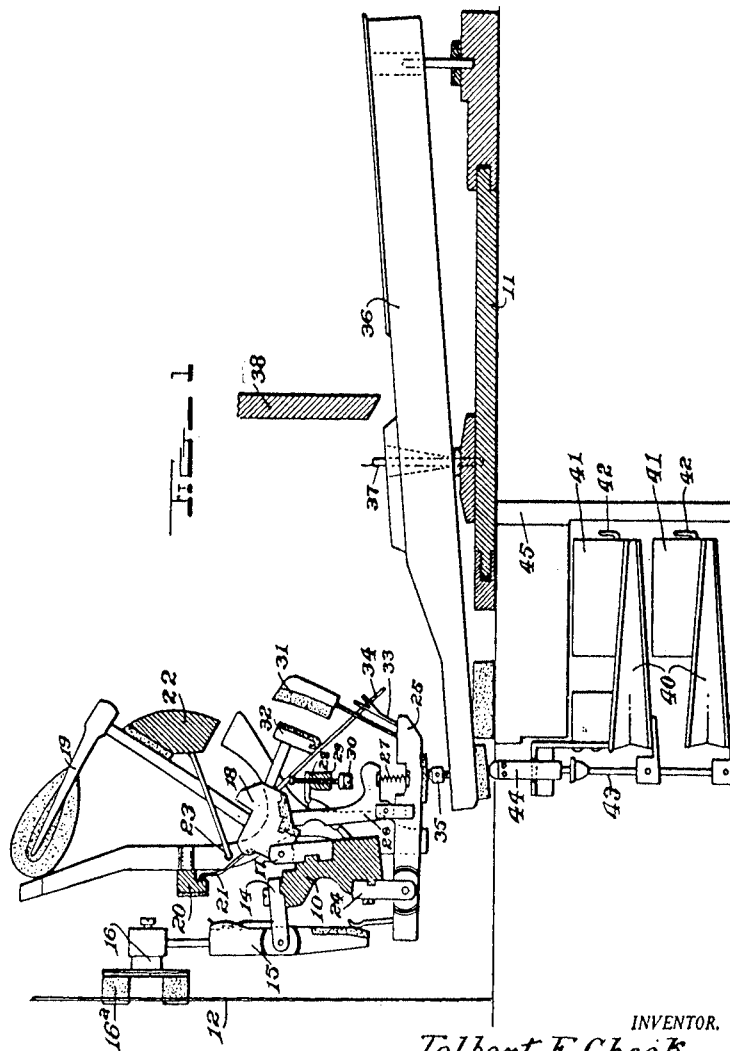
T. F. CHEEK

2,242,417

PLAYER PIANO

Filed May 13, 1930

2 Sheets-Sheet 1



INVENTOR.  
 Tolbert F. Cheek,  
 BY *Walter W. Burns*  
 ATTORNEY.

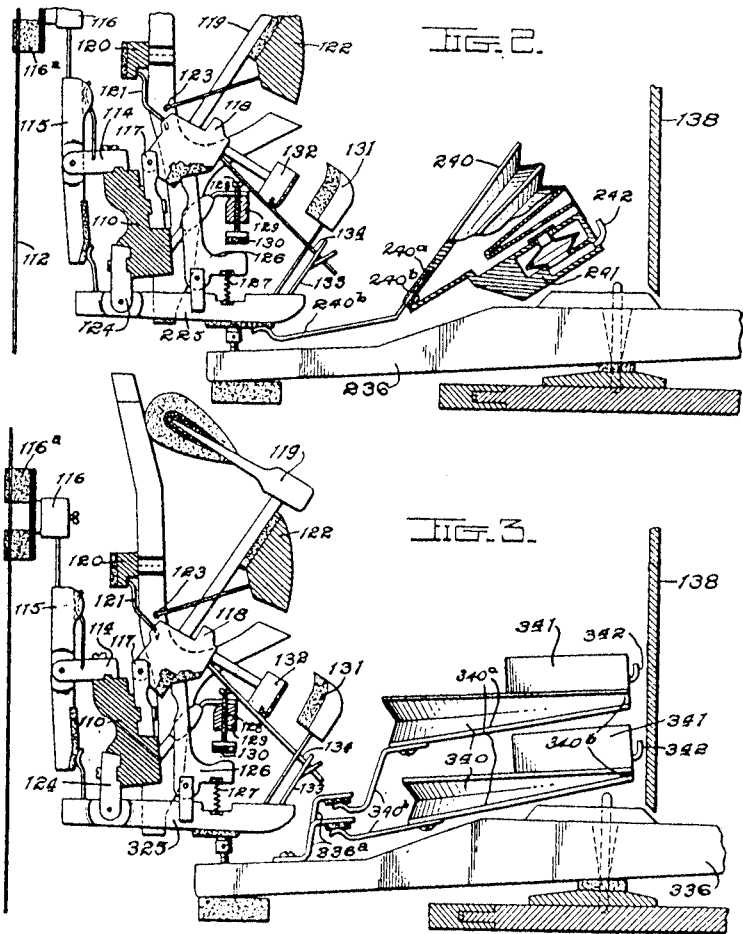
May 20, 1941.

T. F. CHEEK  
PLAYER PIANO

2,242,418

Filed May 13, 1938

2 Sheets-Sheet 2



Tolbert F. Cheek

By Walter W. Burns

Attorney

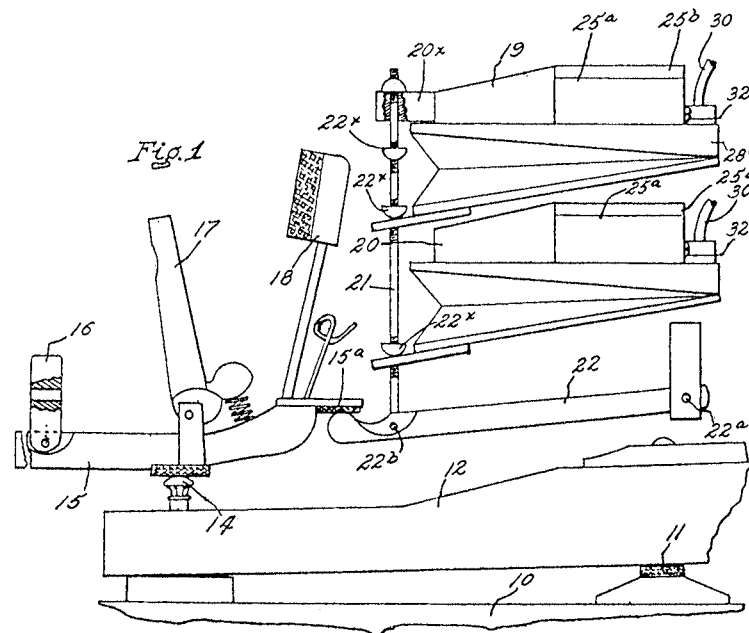
Feb. 25, 1958

T. F. CHEEK  
POWER PNEUMATIC

2,824,477

Filed May 14, 1953

2 Sheets-Sheet 1



INVENTOR.  
Tolbert F. Cheek  
BY Walter W. Burns  
Attorney



# JOHN FARRELL – 1936-2007

Sent in by Julian Dyer and Bob Billings

Fans of jazz piano rolls will surely be aware of the sad news that John Farrell died on 30th May 2007, following a short illness. He was 71.

John was well known as a producer of 88-note rolls, mostly in the jazz piano style known as 'stride', but with a sprinkling of ragtime and novelty piano solos here and there. He was a man of many musical talents, the most fearsome of which was his ability to listen to a recording and transcribe it note-by-note, usually into piano roll format. This he did with breathtaking speed and accuracy. Art Tatum performances were apparently the trickiest, taking as long as a week, but anything reasonably straightforward could be polished off in a day.

I first heard the name John Farrell in the early 1980s, after I bought a handful of RagMaster and JazzMaster rolls from the former Autoplayer Piano Company in Slough. I understood that John was the producer of these rolls, but it was to be some years before I heard his name again.

One morning in April 1998 I sat down to read my daily installment of the Mechanical Musical Digest, a well-known internet forum for mechanical music enthusiasts. On that day, John had subscribed to the forum and had written a nice introductory piece. Fascinated, and now in possession of his email address, I dropped him a line.

Imagine my surprise – and delight – when he responded with an invitation to visit. All my birthdays had come at once! Fortunately, John resided fairly close to me, in a village called Tingewick, in Buckinghamshire. So, within just a day or two, I found myself calling at the Farrell residence, an ancient and characterful terraced house by the distinctive name of 'Iona'. Here, I also



met John's charming wife Mary, an excellent host who made sure that I had plenty to eat and drink at all times. Next, I met the household cat; a large tom that answered to the name of Ellington.

In the corner of the front room stood a magnificent walnut-cased Steck pianola, one of the large Gotha-built variety. John explained that he had owned many players over the years, but this one was by far his favourite. In the spool box, I could see a roll that was clearly one of John's own creations, as I was about to find out. He then started to pedal and I found myself listening to a fabulous stride piano rendition. However, after no more than a minute, the music stopped abruptly and the rest of the roll appeared to be blank paper. John then explained that this was his latest production and that he had

been working on it since first thing that same morning. Had I not visited that day, I dare say that he would have completed the entire piece.

John then showed me to his roll editing room, which was up a steep flight of stairs on the first floor. The roll-perforating machine, a home-made device with a single hand-operated punch, sat on top of a wooden table. To the side was a large open-reel tape recorder with some headphones and also a small electronic keyboard. The latter, apparently, was largely redundant, as John had developed the ability to listen to a recording and perforate holes directly into the blank roll, without recourse to a piano keyboard. After arranging a few bars, he would go downstairs to the pianola and check the accuracy of the music before returning the perforator for the next few bars. Any errors were simply corrected with adhesive tape.

Batches of completed masters were posted to Custom Music Rolls in Texas, where Janet Tonnesen would scan them using a pneumatically-operated reader. A computerised master would be created, from which the required number of production copies would be perforated.

John and I spent the rest of the day talking about our favourite jazz pianists, particularly Fats Waller and James P. Johnson and taking it in turns to play rolls. John's roll collection resided two storeys above the pianola, so John would disappear upstairs for a few minutes at a time, returning with a large pile of rolls in his arms, ready for another round of jazz treats. I noticed that John had a neat party trick. Whilst rewinding a roll, and being an accomplished pianist, he would start to play by hand, mimicking what we had just heard on the roll.

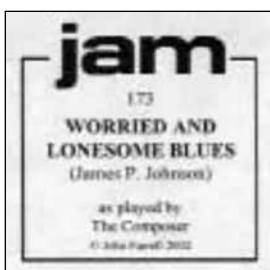
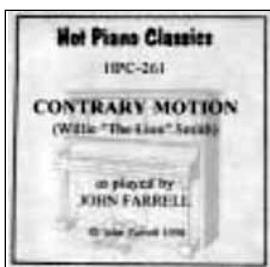
John was very particular about his musical tastes. He knew exactly what he liked and much didn't care for classical music, his real passion being for stride piano. I happened to mention that my own piano interest was triggered during my teenage years after discovering Winifred Atwell, but John was quick to point out that he really didn't like her style of music. However, I was amused when Mary chipped in to say that she did, and that John's best-selling roll of all time was the Winifred Atwell arrangement of The Black & White Rag. This was issued as RagMaster roll R2.

I met John on a handful of occasions subsequently, usually when I had arranged a couple of my own rolls and wanted to share my excitement about the results. John and Mary moved house to a modern house in Towcester during 2002. I didn't see John again after the move, but still kept in touch via email, occasionally sending over any audio recordings that might have been of interest for transcribing.

During the summer of 1999, John informed me that he had mastered the use of a MIDI sequencer on his PC and had started to use this for all his piano roll arrangements. Aside of the ease of use in comparison with producing of a paper master, it also afforded the convenience of emailing the finished musical arrangements over to Custom Music Rolls for perforation.

Responsibility for perforation and distribution of John's rolls later transferred to his good friend Bob Billings of Nevada, USA, who cleverly developed and constructed a versatile perforator machine.

In May 2006, John kindly helped me with an unusual project, which involved the production of some 65-note piano



rolls. It all started when I acquired an early 65-note Steck pianola with a spectacular art case. I wanted to get some jazz rolls for it and contemplated the idea that some of John's existing 88-note productions could be adapted to this format, then perforated by Bob Billings. Following selection of a few suitable pieces, John emailed me within a couple of days to say that he'd completed all of the necessary editing and emailed the files over to Bob for the perforator. I was very impressed by the immediate attention that John gave to the project and the fact that he took it so seriously.

John's rolls were released under several brand names over the years, commencing in the mid 1970s with RagMaster and JazzMaster, characterised by their brightly coloured boxes and eye-catching artwork. Later came Hot Piano Classics, JAM (initially a subscription-

only series) and JazzMan. From July 2002 onwards, all rolls were released on the JAM label, the subscription arrangement having been abandoned. In April 2005, John announced his involvement in a new roll-arranging project involving the production of a series of new A-rolls, which are used in nickelodeons.

For player-piano owners, the result of John's work means that we can enjoy the performances of celebrated jazz giants in our very own living rooms. The list is endless, but includes such luminaries as Fats Waller, James P. Johnson, Art Tatum,

Willie 'The Lion' Smith, Ralph Sutton, Donald Lambert, Cliff Jackson and Johnny Guarneri. A recent roll production (JAM 229) even featured a transcription of Martin Litton playing his own arrangement of Irving Berlin's 'He Ain't Got Rhythm'. Those who attended the PPG's 2004 AGM may recall that Martin actually played this piece during his performance.

Despite his exceptional talents, John always struck me as a very modest and private fellow. An introductory piece at his web site bears testament to this. The heading, "Here is a little information about me" is followed by the words, "For many years I have been making 88-note jazz piano rolls and have transcribed a considerable number of recordings by the great jazz pianists for use as source material." That's all that he chose to say about himself, yet I'm certain that any true account of his musical adventures and activities could have run to several volumes, had he chosen to put pen to paper.

John also had an excellent sense of humour and this frequently came across in his writing, particularly evident in his many postings on music-related internet forums. For instance, in a thread about Bix Biederbecke: "There is a village named Bix near Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire, England. I used to pass through it frequently during the days when I worked (a very loose interpretation) for a living. At one time I seriously considered moving there for the sole reason of having such an illustrious address, but sadly its astronomical property prices sent me scuttling back to Tingewick to rejoin the peasantry."

I am deeply saddened by John's passing and I feel privileged to have



Below: John Farrell demonstrates an early roll cutting technique. He now uses a more up-to-date method. From LP *Johns Malvern 1944, 11*

known him. He encouraged me greatly with my own roll-arranging interest, sharing his knowledge and experience freely and also helped to nurture my interest in the music and musicians associated with the stride piano style. The world has surely lost a real musical talent and a very agreeable fellow to boot.

John's web site is still extant at the time of writing and I hope that it will remain so. Here, visitors can download and listen to MIDI files of a large number of John's piano roll arrangements and also place orders for rolls. The web address, appropriately, is [www.stridepiano.co.uk](http://www.stridepiano.co.uk). Well worth a visit.

*Ian McLaughlin*

## John Farrell – a conversation with John Sirett, 26/6/2007

John Farrell lived for music and his family. In his early life he was a piano tuner, but at some point studied the Rent Act and worked in courts as an expert for the rest of his life, in later years delegating the work to assistants. He was known to friends as Ginger thanks to his red beard! He was prone to serious road accidents in the succession of Volkswagen camper vans that he owned, one reason for moving to Tingewick.

Much of his life was dedicated to Jazz piano. Living in Romford, he played in bands throughout east London, such as Keith Nichols' Sedalia Band in the early-mid 1960s and the Black Bottom Stompers in the mid 1970s.

His piano roll activities started with RagMaster, JazzMaster and Evergreen rolls, the first of them being produced in October 1976. These rolls finished in March 1993, there being 96 titles in total, but of course he carried on under other guises. The best sellers from this era were the Black and White rag and The Entertainer.

He started cutting rolls on his kitchen table, initially because at that time QRS was virtually the only source of jazz/ragtime, and he was not happy with QRS output so decided to cut his own. John Sirett and Sirett's uncle, George Huggett, encouraged him by promising to take every roll he made on a subscription system. George devised a roll cutting machine to make the master rolls which were then sent to America to be perforated (by Playrite at that time). John S. and George boxed and finished the rolls when they were sent back. Farrell was not interested or involved in this part of his output, or of the business side. Indeed, once he had made the roll that was the end of his interest, and he gave away many hand-made originals to friends – luckily these are in safe hands.

John Farrell had an excellent sense of humour and did not suffer fools gladly. There are many stories to tell, a few examples being...

Travelling with the whole jazz band in the pre-EU era, a friendly Dutch official wanted to know what the instruments were for. They explained a trad jazz band. JF blurted out "better than the Dutch Swing College band." The official then subjected them to a long search.

On a trip to Dresden, JF was on one side of a huge city centre fountain in the old style. He was hailed by the rest of the band. The quickest way to reach them was to walk through the middle of the fountain, much to the surprise of the passers by.

John S arrived at JF's house in the middle of a telephone conversation which he found puzzling. JF was asking how many pairs of pajamas he should bring with him. When the call came to an end it emerged that JF was asking a confused council official since he could not pay his rates and the rates bill warned him that non payment would lead to imprisonment.

*Malcolm Billingsley*



## The Piano Roll Company – JazzMaster Music Rolls

Operating from Essex, The Piano Roll Company was formally established in 1976 by three player piano enthusiasts: John Farrell (Chairman), who selects and prepares the items for inclusion in the catalogue; John Sirett (Marketing/Management Executive), who handles the Company's business affairs; and George Huggett (Technical Executive), now actively engaged in the design and construction of the Company's own perforating equipment, and already they are receiving enquiries from all over the world.

The earliest beginnings were some nine years ago. John runs a joint roll collection with a friend in his home town and after amassing all the commercially available titles within their sphere of musical interest, some at considerable expense, it was discovered that gaps existed in both repertoire and performers. Despite a wealth of knowledgeable contacts it seemed that it simply was not possible to make up these deficiencies as the sought-after items either did not exist or had gone underground and were untraceable. John Farrell therefore resolved to master the mystery of roll manufacture.

Predictably the first effort was a total disaster. Most of the obvious paraphernalia were tried: rulers, set squares, many types of cutting blades – all failed and were discarded. Progress was achieved by a series of minor breakthroughs and finally a roll was produced which played reasonably well.

The next stage came when he sent a taped recording of some of his efforts to a fellow collector in America who shared his musical tastes; totally unexpectedly he was besieged with requests for more. The suggestion was also made that some of the rolls be professionally reproduced on the Malone [Playrite] perforator in California.



This was arranged and two titles were initially run, both of which were eagerly seized upon by collectors. The enterprise quickly gathered momentum and the realisation soon dawned that unless the project was properly organised matters could get out of hand very quickly: hence the formation of The Piano Roll Company.

The master rolls are now cut on a sophisticated machine developed by George Huggett, who claims it is totally foolproof. It is capable of copying any written score faithfully and can capture the style of almost any given pianist. The Company has acquired an almost limitless library of sheet music suitable for conversion to piano roll, the copyright problems have been solved, a programme has been decided and lines of communication established which ensure the continuing existence of the operation.

The Company has decided to discontinue the name originally adopted for the label, Jazzmaster, as their intention is to divide the catalogue into three categories: jazz, pure 'exactly as written' ragtime, and finally, evergreens. It was feared that as a collective name, Jazzmaster might discourage prospective purchasers who were not sympathetic to the genre. [Reprinted from PPG Bulletin 64, January 1977. At the time these rolls retailed for £2.75, but £2.50 for PPG members. By the 1980s they were £4.75, and finally reached £6.50.]

## Remembrance of John Farrell – Bob Billings

We first heard of John Farrell in the early 1990s when we bought some piano rolls he'd arranged from Mike Schwimmer under the HPC (Hot Piano Classics) label. It didn't take long before we realized that his rolls were very good, and we began buying everything of his that Mike issued. We lived in the San Francisco Bay Area then, and were friends with Ed Sprankle. Eddie told us about John's JAM series rolls, which were available from him by subscription only, and after hearing some of his JAM rolls we wanted to get on that list. The subscription list was limited to 20 people, so we had to wait until someone dropped off it. That eventually happened and we started getting every JAM roll.

John and Eddie were great friends – as Eddie said once, "He's like the brother I never had." They traveled all around the country, visiting friends and poking into every likely antique shop for piano rolls finds, as well as some of the other things that Eddie collected.

In the mid 1990s John was visiting the US, and Eddie brought him to meet us. We got along well with this big red-haired guy, though we hadn't developed a friendship with him yet. We got together on each of his visits after that and found we had a lot in common. We moved to Reno, Nevada in 1997, and on John's next visit he and Eddie stayed in our "Casita", a guest house behind the main house. We had a great time and we spent a lot of time just sitting on the patio talking and drinking the beverages of our choice – in John's case whisky, which happened to be one of my favorites as well. We had a Jack Russell terrier named Badger, who took a liking to Eddie and John, and they remarked years after how Badger would be waiting for them at the Casita door when they got up in the morning. After breakfast we would go to the patio until lunch time, after which we agreed it was permissible to have the first drink of the day. By this time it was getting hot, so we retired to the house and talked and listened to music, and John played the piano, mostly stride and jazz. As we talked we appreciated all the more just how enormously talented John was, far beyond just piano roll arranging. He seemed to know just about everybody in the jazz field and had an incredible talent for listening to a performance and translating it later into a score and then into a piano roll.

Two years later John and Eddie visited us again and we became closer friends with both of them. Gray was beginning to show in our hair and we were slowing down a little, but we all still felt immortal. And Badger still greeted them at their door in the morning. Eddie and John were the closest of friends and



*With Ed Sprankle at the Billings', 2001*

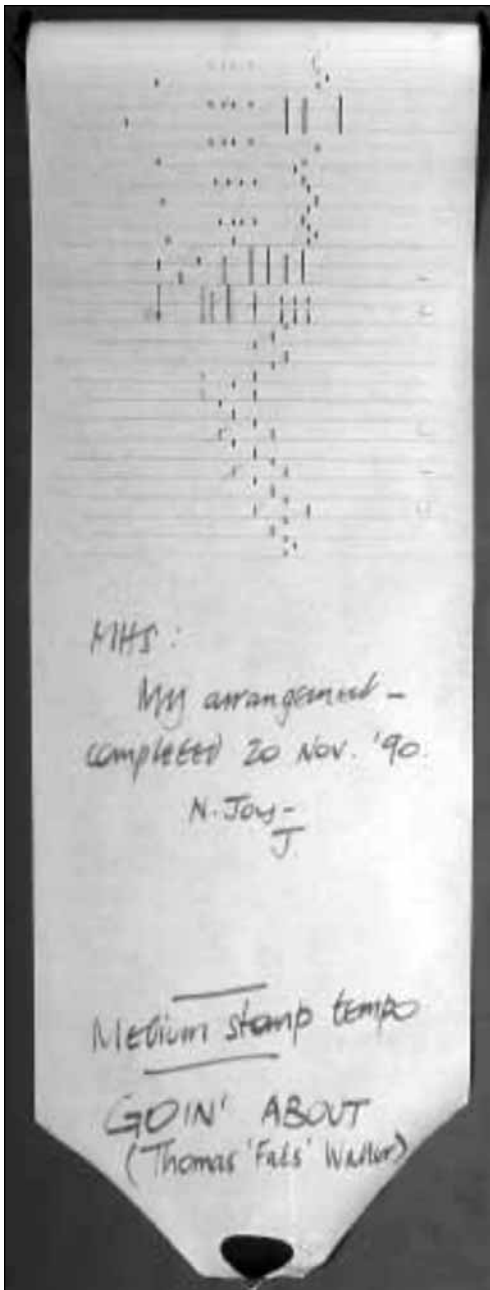
*Mary Farrell, 2006*



it was a joy to be with them as they bantered and laughed. I have a picture of the two of them sharing a laugh – it captures their friendship wonderfully.

Around this time I took over the JAM subscription work and John and I began to work together planning the JAM titles, and soon after that my perforator was operating. We dropped the subscription approach and began to sell to all buyers. Some of the rolls are classics and are still in demand. This began our close collaboration on piano rolls, and eventually nickelodeon rolls as well. I persuaded him to try some different types of music, which he did reluctantly. They were quite successful, so he did more, sometimes grumbling. Some of his Boogie would knock your socks off.

Then Eddie died unexpectedly, which was a big shock to all of us, and I think John took it harder than anyone else. The next year Eddie and Joan's daughter Debbie was married, and at her request John gave her away. After the reception some of us went to Joan's house and socialized. John produced a liter bottle of Macallan cask strength 12 year old and presented it to me as a gift. Naturally I had to sample it, so we shared a few and got



pretty jolly. After a few days John and Mary visited us in Reno and we enjoyed their visit immensely. John and I were early risers, so we would drink coffee and talk for a couple of hours until it was time to make tea for Mary. We talked about everything under the sun and became close friends. I began my campaign to get John to try his hand at nickelodeon rolls, which he resisted at first, then after a few months reluctantly agreed to arrange one. Mary and Ginny gabbed for hours and got along famously, and by the time they left for home we all wished they could have stayed longer.

By the end of 2004 we issued his first nickelodeon roll, A-1. It was received

very well – people said it was the best A-roll they'd heard in a long time, some said the best ever. John was surprised and delighted at the response and agreed to arrange more. We learned from A-1 how to improve the rolls, and A-2 was even better, though some didn't care for the Boogie style. One said that he wished we hadn't made A-2 because it was so good that he left it on his machine and couldn't bring himself to take it off. A-3 and A-4 followed in 2005, to great acclaim. John was now recognized as one of the best A-roll arrangers ever. He began to turn out many tunes for the next rolls, enough for maybe another 8 rolls. A-5 followed in 2006, and it was better than the first 4. There were many compliments about it. In mid-2006 I assembled the tunes for A-6 and auditioned them at John Motto-Ros' house, but hadn't issued it before John and Mary visited again in the Fall.

That year they spent a week at Joan Sprinkle's house, then a week at ours. We were older and grayer and heavier, though still filled with the joy of life. The weather couldn't have been nicer, so we spent a lot of time on the patio talking, joined occasionally by a jay we named Goober. Ginny had patiently overcome its natural spookiness and it would come down and take a peanut from her hand. That's how it came to be called Goober. Goober seemed to enjoy being around people, and would sometimes just perch on a chair and watch us.

John and I would rise with the sun and talk over coffee while the ladies slept a while longer, and continue over some fine malts after they retired. We became still closer friends, and by the time they left I considered him my best and closest friend.

We drove to John Motto-Ros' house in Sutter Creek one day, where we stayed overnight, John and Mary at their house, we at a bed-and-breakfast nearby. We brought along a couple of bottles of malt, one for Motto-Ros and one for us to enjoy after dinner. After listening to the trial A-6 on Motto-Ros' Cremona we all pronounced it yet again the best, and John signed the roll and we gave it to Motto-Ros, who said later that someone offered him a lot of money for the roll, but

he would never sell it. After dinner we sat on the patio and talked, while John and I nearly finished a bottle of Bushmills 16 year old malt. When it came time for them to leave for England we drove them to the airport and bade them goodbye, and all of us had tears in our eyes.

In an email in March 2007 John said he was not feeling well, waking up drenched in sweat and having no energy. Not long after that he was in the hospital and we talked with him on the phone. He sounded in reasonably good spirits and told us of trundling his medicine hanger out to a courtyard where he could have a smoke, and found that the door locked behind him. He was concerned that the doctors hadn't found the problem yet, but was still looking toward the future. In another week we talked to him again and he sounded very tired, and asked us not to come visit him. I wish we had, because that was the last we heard from him before he died on May 30. When he died we were devastated. We were both in tears at the loss – he was my dearest and closest friend.

He will live on in his music, some of which is yet to be heard.

Bob and Ginny Billings

## John Farrell's roll output

A rough count of John Farrell's output seems to be in the order of 700 rolls, easily making him one of the top handful of roll artists in the entire history of the player piano. There's no room here for a rollography, simply a description.

After the hobbyist start described above, formal production started in October 1976. There were eventually 51 JazzMaster originals and 32 RagMaster titles, plus some recuts. The last new titles came in late 1981 although the business ran until March 1993 with occasional stock refreshes. The rolls were custom-cut by Playrite in California, and shipped back to the UK to be finished, boxed and sold by John Sirett.

Starting in 1983 all of John's new titles were issued under the Hot Piano Classics label. These were finished and distributed from America by Mike Schwimmer, via his roll auction. The first three titles were cut by Playrite and the rest by the Tonnessens. Paul Johnson took

over the Schwimmer business in the mid 1990s and ceased trading rather abruptly in December 1998: the last HPC roll was perforated on 23 September 1997. Of the 262 HPC titles produced 244 were by John (the other 18 being Robbie Rhodes).

John then shifted his production to Frank Himpsl under the name JazzMan, a relatively short-lived association that saw 39 new titles released between 1999 and 2002 plus (for the first time) the re-issue of some of the older long-withdrawn HPC material under the JazzMan Archive label.

The JAM (John and Mary) series started in 1987 to offer yet more titles for insatiable collectors. This was originally a limited-edition subscription series with 20 subscribers at any one time – there was a long waiting list! These rolls were



distributed by Ed Sprankle (whose own 'Echoes' label was a major source of recut Jazz material.).

In 2002 the JazzMan series ceased and all rolls were issued on the JAM label, by this time on open sale rather than subscription, and under the expert care of Bob Billings. To date the series runs to 236 titles, and there are some as-yet unissued. Bob has almost all of John

Farrell's roll master files and has said he will continue to offer all titles for sale. See [www.stridepiano.co.uk](http://www.stridepiano.co.uk) for details. As well as the 88-note repertoire Bob also offers some 113 titles created for A-roll Orchestrions.

As well as these there were various gift rolls for friends and an unknown number of privately-commissioned items. John also produced at least a couple of recordings of himself playing his rolls. There was an LP in the mid 1970s, and more recently a CD "The Gods are in the house" that is still available.

*Julian Dyer  
(with thanks to all the authors,  
Robbie Rhodes & Robin Cherry  
for pictures and info.)*

# **N**EW PIANO ROLLS & RECUTS

*New from Kukral Collection, DECEMBER 2007*

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## **WELTE-MIGNON LICENSEE PIANO ROLLS:**

### **CLASSICAL WELTE-MIGNON**

**No. 7390** **Gottschalk: *Grand Scherzo in D minor, Op. 57*, played by Angelo Patricolo.**

This is a very rare roll and an exciting and dramatic piece of Louis Gottschalk. Dashing and full of character, this Welte roll from 1926 is one of the best made by the most famous of Gottschalk interpreters, Angelo Patricolo. Highly recommended. You won't find another copy. **\$16.50**

**Nos. 7701**

**& 7702** **Liszt: *Les Preludes*, played by Richard Singer.**

This is the bold and dramatic symphonic poem of Liszt recorded in 1927 by Richard Singer on 2 rolls. One of the great pieces of classical music and used in Howard Hughes' epic film "Hell's Angels," the set is very hard to find because it was issued somewhat late. You will recognize the melodies here at once. Highly recommended. **\$35.00**

### **POPULAR WELTE-MIGNON from the Teens and Twenties!**

**3714**  
**6135** **Christmas Music!** Rolls numbers 6135 & 3714 are combined on one new long play Christmas Music Roll! This jumbo size roll includes David Ashton playing First Noel; O Little Town of Bethlehem; Holy Night, Peaceful Night; Adeste Fidelis; AND, Henry Burkard playing Cantique de Noel; O Santissima; O Tannenbaum (Pine Tree); and, Silent Night. This new recut is a wonderful combination of two of my favorite Welte Christmas rolls and never offered before. Limited copies available! MERRY CHRISTMAS! **Special price of \$26**

75420 *"If You Want the Rainbow (from the film 'My Man'),"* played by Holbrook King. A wonderful song popularized by Fannie Brice in the 1929 talking picture "My Man." The full title is "If You Want the Rainbow, You Must Have the Rain." Outstanding performance! **\$14.00**

## **NEW 88 Note PIANO ROLLS** from the Kukral Collection

*"Does the Spearmint Lose Its Flavor On the Bedpost Over Night?"* (Pianostyle 20043) played by B.G. Howard. This is the first piano roll that I ever heard played on a player piano (with a very big woman pumping the pedals on the west side of Cleveland) and remains one of my favorites. This comedy song was revived in the 1960s. A tremendously sweet Pianostyle performance and much better than the QRS version. Lyric sheet included. **\$13.75**

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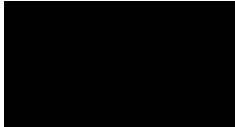
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7245  
7246 (3 roll set) **Italian Concerto, Mvts. 1, 2 and 3**; Composer: Bach; Roll Performance by: Vladimir de Pachmann
- 6615 **Tango**; Composer Ernesto Nazareth; Roll Performance by: Alfredo Oswald
- 7715 **Air de Ballet No. 4 from "Callirhoe"**; Composer: Chaminade; Roll Performance by: Raymond Burt
- 7487 **Petite Valse / The Music Box**; Composer: Poushinoff; Roll Performance by: Leff Poushinoff
- 7769 **Fantasia F Minor (four hands)**; Composer: Mozart; Roll Performance by: Maier & Pattison
- 6366  
6367 (2 roll set) **Papillons, Op. 2, Nos. 1 – 12**; Composer: Schumann; Roll Performance by: Cecile de Horvath
- 7882 **Theme and Variations on "Ah, Vous-dirais je, maman" [Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star]**; Composer: Mozart; Roll Performance by: Guy Maier
- 1467 **A La Bien Aimee (to the well-beloved)**; Composer: Schuett; Roll Performance by: Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler
- 7294 **Nocturne for the Left Hand Alone, Op. 9, No. 2**; Composer: Scriabin; Roll Performance by Magdeleine Brard
- 296 **Rigadoun**; Composer: Raff; Roll Performance by : Ossip Gabrilowitsch

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400 Lincoln Lake Ave., N.E. Lowell, MI 49331 • Phone (616) 897-5609 • DavidWFromMi@webtv.net

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- 713065** **Oh Lady Be Good.** Fox Trot. Gershwin. P/B Freddie Rich. \$12.00
- 713024** **Somebody Loves Me, "Scandals".** Gershwin. Fox Trot Played by Denny & Rich. \$12.00
- 713194** **Who.** Kern. P/B Moran & Milne. One of the best recordings of this 1920s standard. Four-handed recording that fills the keyboard! \$12.00
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- 713376** **"Doll Dance"** Brown P/B Constance Mering
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Phone: (269) 468-5986  
Fax: (269) 468-0019

**Larry Norman: Rollertunes**  
[www.home.earthlink.net/~rollertunes](http://www.home.earthlink.net/~rollertunes)  
[rollertunes@earthlink.net](mailto:rollertunes@earthlink.net)  
Phone: (540) 721-7188

**Don Teach: Shreveport Music Co.**  
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**David Caldwell**

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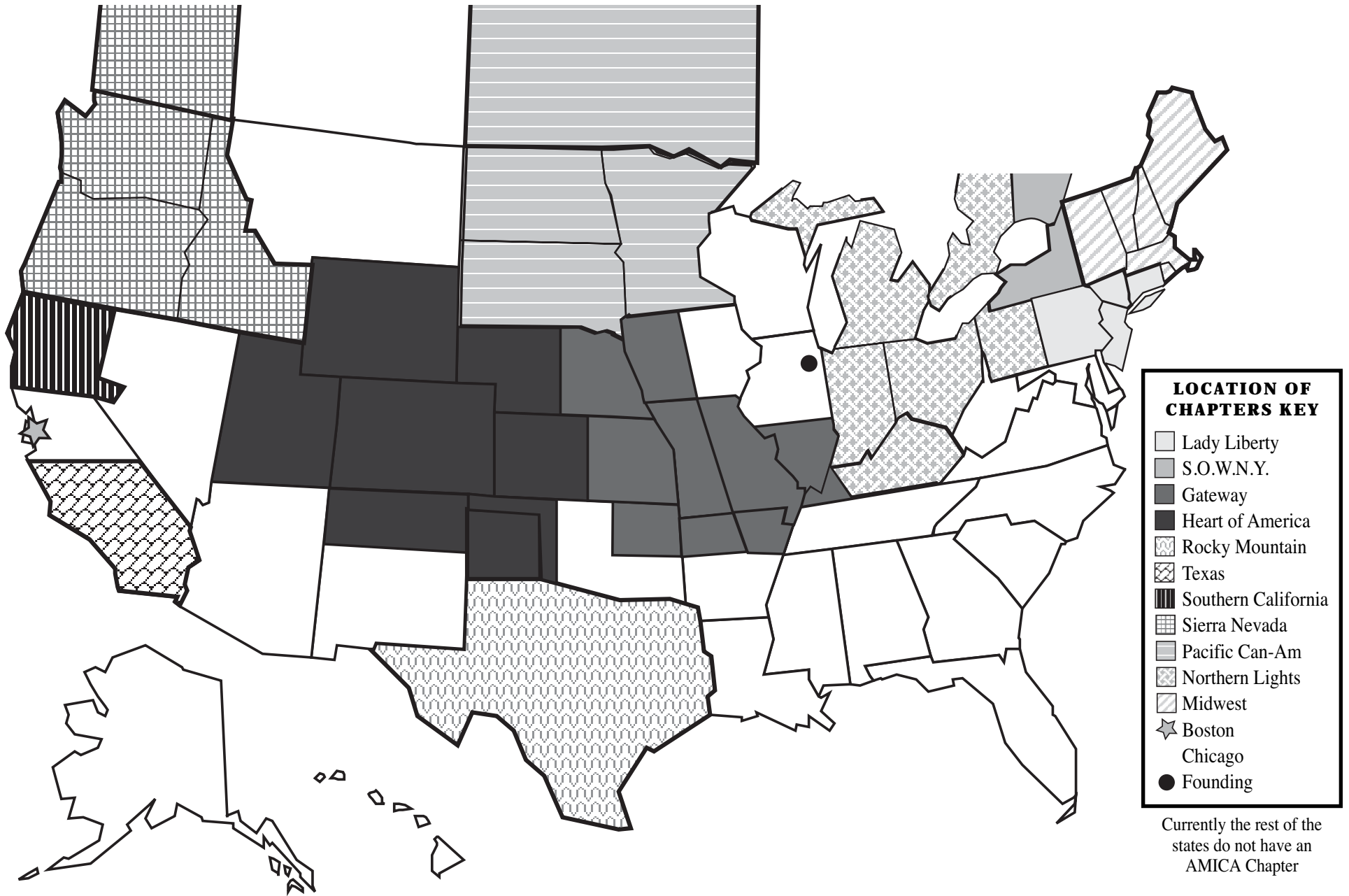
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[enquiries@pianorolls.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@pianorolls.co.uk)

# MAP of the AMICA Chapters



# News From The Chapters



## BOSTON CHAPTER

Reporter: *Bob Hunt*

President: *John VanOpdorp*

### September 16, 2007 Summer Meeting

On an absolutely beautiful Sunday afternoon the Boston Chapter of AMICA held their Summer Meeting at the Hebrew Rehabilitation Center in Boston, Massachusetts. This very hospitable location was chosen to pay a special visit to a long standing member of the Boston Chapter, **David Levin**. Mr. Levin now lives full time at the HRC and invited us all to hold our meeting there. Mr. Levin is no longer sufficiently ambulatory to attend regular Chapter meetings, so we thought we'd take him up on his kind offer and go to him!

To make this event particularly special we invited a particularly special guest, **Herman B. Babich**, or for the very few not familiar, Hi Babit – QRS and Melodee recording artist and expert, entertainer and all around get character. We had not enjoyed the theatrics and good humor of Hi in some time. So, the Chapter extended an invitation. And since Hi Babit loves flying, we thought it would be an easy sell. **Dorothy Bromage**, the Chapter Treasurer, magnificently orchestrated all the logistics for Hi's visit right down to having two pianos available for our event.

Our guest came all the way from his home in Florida. Hi Babit has a rich store of memories and is a good story teller, so the meeting was made very special. In September 1993, he became an Honorary Member of AMICA and is known not only for the rolls he made for the QRS, Aeolian, and Melodee labels, but also for the fact that he continues to record his arrangements, now on CD.

As Hi discussed his life and career, it became apparent that

he is a multi-dimensional person. In connection with his time as a pilot with his own plane, he invented several useful devices. Other inventions included a trestle for a model railroad and stacking roll storage boxes called "Stak-Raks." Hi told about his time during World War II, during which putting on shows took precedence over putting on a helmet. Those present were also treated to a discussion of the technical and business end of roll making. Most unforgettable, however, were the arrangements he played from a seemingly inexhaustible source of tunes. He is most generous with his time and talent, and members who brought his rolls were pleased to have him autograph them.

The Summer Meeting agenda also included an in-depth demonstration of the Moog PianoBar. **Ed Bordeleau** and his sister **Jan** came fully equipped with the PianoBar, an Apple PowerBook computer with Sibelius notation software installed, speakers and the whole nine yards. While Hi Babit was entertaining on one piano, Ed and Jan were configuring the PianoBar on the second. Once it was all set up, Hi moved over to play some more tunes and tell some more stories. But, this time his recorded music was played back on the spot!

Our Chapter Meeting and visit with **David Levin** was greatly enjoyed by all attending. Good music, good stories, good conversation, great people. Who could ask for more. And, special thanks to Hi Babit and to David Levin! We loved it!!



*Hi Babit entertaining Bill Koenigsberg and Jack Breen.*



*Dorothy Bromage helping Hi tell a story about one of his rolls; David Levin on left in foreground*





*Hi Babit expanding on a topic*



## HEART OF AMERICA CHAPTER

*Reporter: H.C. & Marlene Beckman*

President: Robbie Tubbs

### HEART OF AMERICA RALLY IN KANSAS CITY

Friday evening, July 13, 2007, **Paul Morgenroth** hosted a catered barbeque at his home in Oak Grove, Missouri, for twenty-six Heart of America members. The evening was spent enjoying the food and fellowship.

Saturday morning we met at the Kansas City Zoo nestled in the beautiful Swope Park. Grinders were set up throughout the zoo and the day was spent entertaining and visiting with zoo visitors and fellow Amicans and enjoying the animals and plants. In the evening we had supper at the Cracker Barrel, followed by more visiting.

**Robbie Tubbs** was hostess for the Sunday brunch and business meeting. We voted to make a donation to the Friends of the Kansas City Zoo in appreciation for their help and hospitality. **Ron Connor** resigned as Board Representative due to personal and family health issues. He will be replaced by **Gary Craig**. We also discussed plans for future meetings. Our next rally will be September 28, 29, and 30 in St. Charles, Missouri.

Thanks were extended to Robbie Tubbs for planning a fun filled weekend.



*Hi Babit being recorded by the PianoBar*



*Demo of the Sibelius notation software translating Hi's playing to sheet music.*



*Ed Bordeleau and sister Jan listening to Hi Babit.*



*Betty & Jerry Golmanavich*



*Bob Stout*



*Heart of America business meeting*



*Charles Tyler*



*Mike and Sandy Schoepner*



*Ken and Nancy Powers*



*Gary Craig*



*Mary Wilson with John Smith Organ built by Yousuf.*



*Roger Stumfoll*



*L to R Nancy Powers, Tom Hutchinson, Jerry Golmanavich, Sandy Schoepner, Craig Brock, Mike Schoepner, & Ellen Brougher*



*Paul Morgenroth*

*Yousuf Wilson home built organ with ivory inlay*



### HEART OF AMERICA IN ST. CHARLES

Fifty-three members and guests from twelve states traveled to St. Charles, MO, for a street organ rally in conjunction with the Old Town St. Charles Oktoberfest. On Friday night, September 28, a dinner and open house was hosted by **Yousuf and Mary Wilson** and their daughter, **Beth Garber**, who came from Cleburne, TX, to help with the event. Those in attendance enjoyed playing many automatic musical instruments restored or built by Yousuf.

On Saturday the festival featured a parade with the AMICA float carrying six street organs with grinders in authentic costumes winning third place in the Best of Show category. Before and after the parade organ grinders with thirty organs and five accordions lined the brick streets and Frontier Park along the Missouri River to entertain the crowds.

AMICAns playing accordions and Moritaten singers entertained festival participants in various locations during the day. An antique car display, carnival rides, craft vendors, authentic German food and music by a variety of German stage bands and musicians provided entertainment during the weekend. The Beer Gardens was a popular place to enjoy both food, music, and dancing.

Donations collected by grinders in souvenir cups was given to Lions International Charities.

**Cynthia and Gary Craig** organized another fun filled weekend for the group. The next meeting will be December 8 in Manhattan, KS hosted by Blaine Thomas.



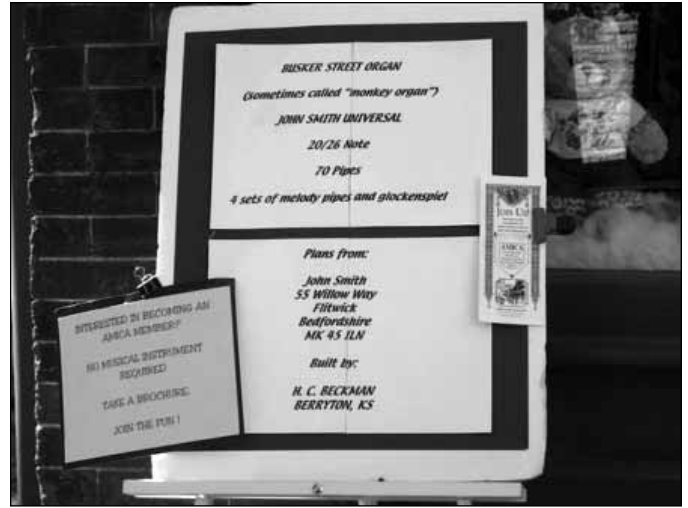
*Bill Klinger with his organs*



*Cathy and Bob Cantine*



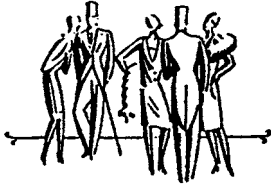
*Heart of America Accordion Player*





Jane and Dale Heller enjoy their organ





## MIDWEST CHAPTER

*Reporter: Christy Counterman*

President: Don Johnson - (248) 650-1840

Our trip to Indiana on May 5 began near downtown Indianapolis at the home of **Tim Needler**. His historic house is on a street filled with great 1920s to 1940s homes. Once the home of Senator Capehart, it now houses Tim's collections, including a Steinway Duo-Art grand and a Mason and Hamlin Ampico A with a B drawer. All on our impromptu tour admired art glass and tiffany style lamps throughout the home, as well as original stained glass windows.

After refreshments and music at Tim's we went on a journey far from town—in the middle of miles of farmland—to the Boggstown Cabaret. Housed in an 1873 building, Boggstown is a dinner theatre with great food and live entertainment, which we soon found out, featured the audience members as well as their excellent performers. Our chapter members were encouraged to wear their vintage clothing, and they fit right in with the show that took us on a tour of music styles throughout the decades.

Sunday May 6 brought us to the home of **Miriam Hanscom**, south of downtown Indianapolis, where she and sister **Jody Trittipio** served a great brunch as a prelude to our business meeting and our convention planning meeting. Convention Chair **Bob Anderson** led the meeting on finalizing the hotel arrangements; we voted on possible convention souvenirs and planned a tentative schedule of events. We are working on the Cincinnati, Ohio area convention for July 21-26, 2009, and will have a chapter meeting there in 2008 to check on accommodations and convention destinations.

When the meeting was over, we checked out the piano rolls that members brought to sell and quite a few of us took home some souvenirs of our visit. President **Don Johnson** concluded the meeting with thanks to our hosts, Tim, Miriam and Jody as well as for our Saturday night entertainment at Boggstown, where co-owner **Russell Moss** is an AMICA member.

*Boggstown host Howie Carlisle directs our chapter member Jack Linker in a song.*



*Dan Harrett demonstrates a Duo-Art roll on Tim's Steinway as Dan Tuttle looks on.*



*Host Tim Needler at the keyboard of his Mason & Hamlin Ampico Grand.*



*Russell Moss as Howie Carlisle recruited Dave Kananen into the act as Julie Powers serenades them.*



*Charlene Torer, Mike Barnhart and Shirley Eckvall enjoy the refreshments at Miriam Hanscom's house.*



*Liz Barnhart, Miriam Hanscom, Jody Trittipio, Charlene Torer and Boggstown Performer Julie Powers.*



*This double Violano actually came from a home just down the street from Tim Needler's.*



## PACIFIC CAN-AM CHAPTER

*Reporter: Ron Babb*

President: Carl Dodrill - [carl@dodrill.net](mailto:carl@dodrill.net)

The Pacific Can-Am Chapter met on Sept. 22 at the home of **Jackie and Larry Slosson**. Every square inch of this house and yard looks as if it should be featured in Country Living magazine. What a treat it was for us to see everything!

We had three guests: Gary Oliver, Dale Dodrill, and Bob Mosen. Bob entertained us by playing the Slosson's antique pump organ.

We enjoyed a wonderful video of the 2007 convention, taken by **Rob Wilson**. Rob took several hours of videos with accompanying sound from all the museums visited by AMICAnS on the convention tour. He then condensed it down to 35 minutes and put it on a DVD. The result is a truly compact and interesting summary of the convention which would make a nice program for any of our AMICA chapters. E-mail Rob ([robwil159@comcast.net](mailto:robwil159@comcast.net)) if you have an interest in obtaining a copy of the DVD.

A brief business meeting included a report on our chapter's ongoing project of playing the Knabe Grand piano prior to public productions at the Paramount Theatre in Seattle. It is also played during intermission, and while people leave the theater. In addition to keeping the piano in good repair, our group is now responsible for the upkeep of the piano which is part of the theatre's pipe Wurlitzer organ.

Plans continue for a band organ rally August 15-17, 2008. This will be in Leavenworth, Washington, a wonderful Bavarian village in the mountains and a superb vacation site. Contact Rob Wilson or **Bill Mote** ([bandjrest@worldnet.att.net](mailto:bandjrest@worldnet.att.net)) who are co-chairing the event if you can join the fun with or without an instrument.



*Halie Dodrill and her brother-in-law, Dale Dodrill, checking out rolls for sale at the mart.*



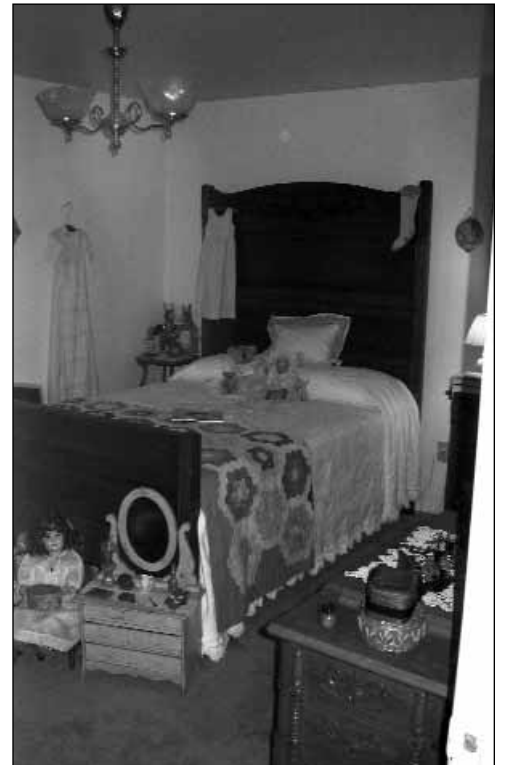


*Our hostess, Jackie Slosson, holding Benjie.*



*Mark Smithberg and Fran Willyard, eyeing the dessert table.*

*The Slosson's guest bedroom. We all wanted to spend the night!*



*Dave Goodwin and Larry Sanchez in the Slosson's "school corner."*



*Larry Sanchez, Ward Folsom, and Leigh Champlin, waiting for the business meeting to begin.*



## **ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER**

*Reporter: Larry Emmons  
President: Jere DeBacker*

**Rocky Mountain Chapter, September 8, 2007**

President: Jere DeBacker  
Vice President: Ken Hodge  
Secretary: Louise Lucero  
Treasurer: Fred Wilson  
Reporter: Larry Emmons

Our chapter's *first Organ Rally* was held in Englewood Colorado on a beautiful fall Saturday. The Englewood Days Celebration on September 8, 2007 provided a great opportunity for the Rocky Mountain AMICA Chapter to initiate a band organ get-together. **Ken Hodge**, our chapter vice president, did a wonderful job in organizing the Rally and making it all a success. We had enthusiastic participants from Wyoming and Colorado, and visits from members from other states in the RM chapter region.

The Englewood Car Show and Taste of Englewood is an event sponsored by the Englewood, CO Chamber of Commerce and the Englewood Merchants. Activities included displays of several hundred Classic Cars, Trucks, Motorcycles, Tractors, Strange Old Machines, Military Vehicles, Monster Trucks etc. There was Live Music on Stage, a Dog Parade, Bikini Bike Wash, a great Food Court, Sidewalk Venders and, of course, a number of Automatic Musical Instruments scattered around the area.

We were up bright and early to get instruments set up and playing by opening time of 9:00 AM. **John and Colleen Haass** drove from Casper Wyoming with their large trailer containing the Haass' Wurlitzer 105 Band Organ, a Monkey Organ and **Tom Zook's** built up 'O' Roll Orchestrion. **Ken Hodge** brought his J. Verbeck Model C Street Organ and an Alan Pell 20 Pipe Monkey Organ. **Jere DeBacker** spent the day pumping away on **Dick Kroeckel's** Aeolian Console Player Piano while being accompanied by Ciello, a very melodic Cockatiel!

Throughout the day many of our chapter members drifted through to visit and listen to the instruments. Not everyone in attendance managed to get into a photograph; we were in five different locations and we were never all in one place at the same time for a group photo. After a long day we loaded up and headed our separate ways in late afternoon. Thanks to the merchants for making space for us and to the organizers for welcoming the AMICA group.

Although this first Rally may seem modest, it was well received and we had a great time. We hope to locate some additional mobile instruments for next year; this was too much fun not to do it again!



*A small sample of the activity going on at the Englewood Days Celebration.*



*Ed Zimmerman, Tom Zook, and John Haass preparing to move Tom's 'O' roll Orchestrion.*



*Ken Hodge with his Verbeck 36-Key Street Organ*



*Larry Emmons and Tom Zook moved the Orchestrion several blocks down the street to its display location.*



*Bob Grunow looks on as Ken cranks the Verbeck*



*Ginger and Don Hein, Bob Grunow, Art and Jeanie Reblitz, John Haass, Ken Hodge, Jere DeBacker, Bryan Marklin, and Tom Zook listen to the last Music from the 105 being played at the end of the day.*



*Jere DeBacker providing accompaniment for Ciello, the star of the moment!*



*Jere and his friend Ciello*

*Bryan Marklin as he churns away on Ken's 20 pipe Pell Monkey Organ. His monkey, on the right, also performed until his battery ran down!*



*John Haass makes music with his home built Monkey Organ.*



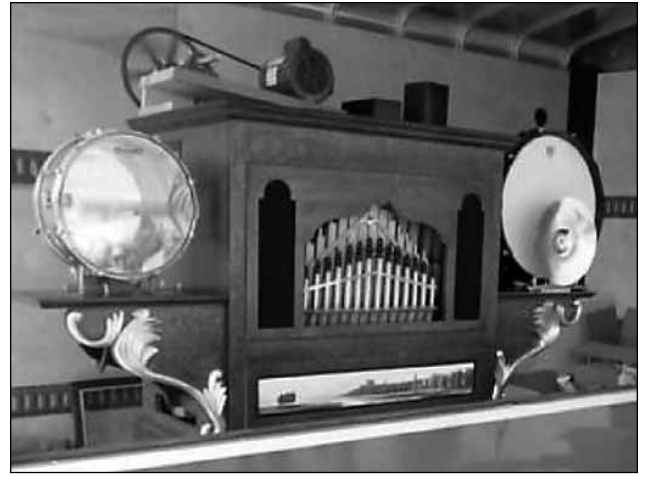
*Tom Zook is changing the roll as Jere DeBacker looks on from the rear.*



*Group photo of some of the participants. From left: Larry Emmons, Bob Grunow, John Haass, Tom Zook, Ken Hodge, Jere DeBacker, Bryan Marklin, Jeanie Reblitz, Art Reblitz.*



*Louise Lucero and Jere DeBacker posing next to the 'O' roll Orchestrion*



*Another photo of John's 105*



## SIERRA-NEVADA CHAPTER

*Reporter: Nadine Motto-Ros*

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



*Bryan, Ken, Rosanna Harris, Don Hein and Bill Harris*

On Saturday, October 20, the chapter met at the home of **Rick and Tricia Simms** in Carmichael (Sacramento area), CA. Several years ago, the Simms built an addition to their home to accommodate a large 1909 Aeolian pipe organ with about 1300 pipes. This organ was the center of attention at the meeting, although they do have some smaller organs and a music box.

The Simms prepared a delicious afternoon meal featuring baked ham, so most of us probably skipped an evening dinner. The carrot cake was a hit too.

After lunch **John Motto-Ros** held a brief business meeting; the 2006 Germany/Holland convention was reviewed. We also talked about next year's convention in Los Angeles. Since this will be a short trip for members in Northern California, we encourage everyone to make a trip to Southern California July 1-5 with open houses July 6. Then it was outside to check out the Duo-Art and 88-note rolls for sale. These rolls were given to **Tom Hawthorn** and dedicated to the chapter, so proceeds will go to the Sierra-Nevada Chapter Treasury. There are many good rolls left, so please contact Tom—he is listed in the AMICA Directory.

Thanks again to Rick and Tricia for a delightful afternoon.



*Tom Zook and John Haass pose in front of John's Wurlitzer 105. This large trailer is destined to hold John's Wurlitzer 153 once it is restored.*



*Nadine & John Motto-Ros with George Cunningham behind.*



*Time for lunch: Sonja Lemon, Tom Hawthorn, Sharyn Cunningham, George Cunningham, Nadine Motto-Ros, Vickie Mahr, Dave Moreno and Doug Mahr.*



*Our hosts, Tricia and Rick Simms with rat terrier Oreo.*



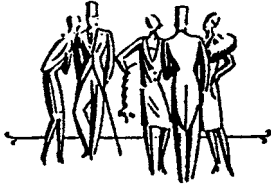
*Looking down from the loft: Dave Moreno, Nadine Motto-Ros, Sonja Lemon, Tom Hawthorn, George Cunningham, Doug & Vickie Mahr, Fred Deal, Virginia Hawthorn, and host Rick Simms waiting to catch something.*



*Doug Mahr and Virginia Hawthorn checking out the rolls for sale.*



*A good look at some of the pipes.*



## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

Reporter: Shirley Nix

President: Jerry Pell - (214) 328-6380

*Photos by Herb Mercer*

Our October meeting was held in September at the Griffith Park Carousel, with **Warren Deasy** and his crew as our hosts.

This is always a favorite meeting, and this year was no exception. We had almost as many guests brought by members as we had members this time, and that made the evening special. It's so much fun when we all get together.

This year we had several monkey organs, and that made it even more special. They played whenever the large organ didn't.

Matt Lloyd (almost 4) and Brooke Nix (almost 2) were our youngest potential new members. They enjoyed each other's company almost as much as they enjoyed the merry-go-round and the organ music.

We had the carousel all to ourselves for a private party, and I think everyone had their share of rides. Some people didn't want to get off at all, and I couldn't blame them for that.

It was a lovely evening, warm and pleasant, and some people brought their picnic lunches and even shared with those who didn't.

**Josh Rapier** had been over to the park to work on the Stinson organ, and it sounded really good. I always hate it when we see a carousel with no music or with taped music, which seems to be happening more and more. I feel the kids are being cheated out of a good part of the fun. I see this quite often in the malls...fiberglass horses and no music.

We had a short meeting, and everyone was reminded that we are having an organ rally in Sutter Creek October 13 and 14, and we'd like to see a good turnout, and since that is gold rush area, there is so much to see and do in the vicinity that it would be worth spending a few days. **John Motto-Ros** is setting it up for us. The organ rallies are a really good way to get our music out in public, and our chapter has gained some good members who found us when we were out and about.

We were told about Vaudeville night at the Alex Theater in Glendale. This sounded like so much fun that Frank and I made plans to go, and we saw several of our members there. It was a delightful show, and the silent movies were great on the big screen.

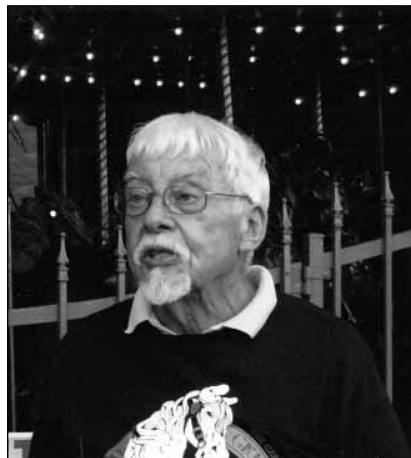
Our treasurer, **Lloyd Osmundson**, gave his report, and we're still solvent.



*Lloyd Osmundson, our treasurer, (that's his wife in back)*



*The beautiful Stinson organ.*



*John Schellkopf*

*Our host Warren Deasy*



*Peggy and Ed  
Cooley*



*Dave and Diane  
Reidy enjoying  
the lovely  
California  
evening.*



*Back-Frank Nix and Annette Lloyd  
Front-Brooke Nix and Shirley Nix*

*Southern California Chapter-Oct 13 & 14  
Reporter: Shirley Nix*

October 13 and 14 found several Southern California organ grinders in the quaint town of Sutter Creek in northern California at the invitation of AMICA president **John Motto-Ros**.

It was a long drive for the Southern California group, and the weather didn't cooperate at all for the trip up, with heavy rain and dark skies. We were worried because all we could see ahead of us were black clouds full of rain, and we didn't want to go all that way and then be rained out. We shouldn't have worried, though, because I guess John had ordered nice weather for the rally, and it was gorgeous.

Sutter Creek is a small town (John says downtown is a block and a half, and he's only half kidding when he says it), and a perfect place for an organ rally, along with a display

of old cars and even a horse-drawn wagon for free rides around town, featuring a short history lesson about Sutter Creek and the old foundry.

We had two larger organs, **Jerry Pell's** wonderful Bruder and the **Nix** Limonaire. They were placed far enough apart to not conflict with each other, and along the street there were monkey organs entertaining the crowds also. **Bob Meyer** had a perfect spot, from which he never moved, even for lunch. He was showcasing his two organs he had made himself, and he seemed to have an audience all the time.

**Rick Shaw** and **Darryl Smithey** had their organ with the animated circus scene, always a favorite, especially with the kids. **Herb and Rochelle Mercer** had their Stuber, a sweet sounding organ. The small organs moved from place to place as the mood struck them.

From the northern contingent of AMICA **Marion and Joan Van Veldhuizen**, nattily dressed in period clothing, brought their barrel organ. I must say I think they were born too late, because they really looked great in their outfits.

There were enough organs to fill the town with music, and the crowds were really quite enthusiastic. Even the people in the shops kept thanking us for coming, and one man, on seeing my vest, asked me if I had anything to do with the Louder Organ across the street. I figured, well, here comes a complaint, but instead he asked if we could turn the Limonaire UP because he couldn't hear enough of it in his shop, even though he kept the door open all day...when's the last time you heard that?

I love to watch the people who walk by, apparently not paying any attention to the music, but who do a little dance step unconsciously as they move along.

Saturday evening **John and Nadine Motto-Ros** invited everyone from AMICA to their house for dinner. What a treat that was for the twenty-something or so people who were there.

We had a wonderful dinner and were also able to enjoy their collection of musical instruments. Everything was in perfect playing condition and were almost as beautiful to look at as they were to listen to. It was a great evening, with good company, great food and good music...what else could you ask for?

Sunday night we chipped in and had pizza at the **Cunningham** home, which was another good time, and we sure thank both couples for their hospitality and good will.

We also have to thank John for arranging lodging for all of those who brought instruments. We were treated like royalty, and we really appreciated it.

I think the whole town of Sutter Creek turned out for the rally, and I'm sure a few other towns were represented, because by the sheer numbers who were there I'm sure there aren't that many residents in Sutter Creek.

Our next meeting will be in San Diego at the home of **Mike and Kathy Choate**. That will be a good one. They have been enlarging their collection and it will be fun to see what they've done.

Our December meeting and Christmas party will be again at the home of **Dana Bashor** in Hidden Hills.



*Our dinner hosts-left-Sharon and George Cunningham  
right-Nadine and John Motto-Ros*

*Old cars on display.*



*Horse-drawn carriage available for rides.*



*Bob Meyer with his organ.*



*Rick Shaw and Darryl Smithey  
enjoy John's banjo.*

*Rick Shaw and his  
organ complete  
with circus  
automata.*



*Herb and Rochelle Mercer*







*Frank Nix explains the Limonaire.*



*Marion and Joan Van Veldhuizen*



*Jerry Pell's wonderful Bruder.*

# THE PLAYER PIANO PROJECT

TUESDAY,  
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Composers from 5 countries have written new works for player piano. Some of the composers include Australians Chris Dench and Robert Dahm, Canadians Veronika Krausas, Julian Revie and Gayle Young; German/Canadian Marc Sabat, Argentine Osvaldo Budon, and Americans Larry Polansky, Lou Bunk, Daniel Corral, Robin Finck, and Sean Heim. Interspersed between pieces will be film clips and blue-grass fiddle music by the Dr. Ed Glass ensemble.

The works will be performed at the Alfred Newman Concert Hall at the University of Southern California in conjunction with a CD release of these pieces.

This concert is part of the Faculty Masters Series through the Thornton School of Music at USC, organized by faculty composer Veronika Krausas. The program and CD will also feature a work for player piano by American composer James Tenney (1934-2006), to whom the concert is dedicated.

For more information please contact  
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(Rev. 5-05)

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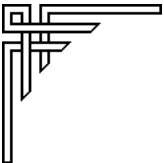
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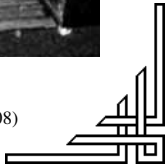
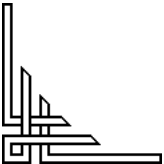
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having to do with early California. They have had some of the most interesting displays we have seen, with the Chinese in the west, Indian Jewelry, Cowboy life, and more. The schedule isn't set for next year yet, so we don't know what will be offered, but it will be interesting.

The Ronald Reagan Library is another tour we will take. This place is awesome, and takes you back to the Reagan years. Whether you are Republican or Democrat you will enjoy going back in time to another era. The Reagan years prior to his Presidency are covered, too, and there is a section devoted to the movie period.

You can walk through Air Force One; see how it is set up for the President, his staff and the press.

We will spend the Fourth of July evening at the Hollywood Bowl for patriotic music performed by the L.A. Philharmonic Orchestra and fireworks. It's a great way to spend a warm, balmy California evening outside hearing great music, and the fireworks are really impressive, too.

Our hotel is the Marriott in Woodland Hills, with the rate of \$99 per night, and right across the street is an upscale shopping mall for the ladies. It's located in a nice area for walking, with a park across the street in back.

There are two pools, a gym, and a coffee shop in the lobby, along with a Starbucks.

There are lots of places to eat, and if you have extra time before or after the convention there is a bus a half-block away that you can take to Universal City.

We will have a really nice hospitality room, with lots of instruments for your enjoyment, courtesy mostly of Richard Ingram and Jerry Pell, who have volunteered to furnish the room.



*2008 will find us in Southern California for our convention, centered in the San Fernando Valley.*

There will be lots of entertainment of different types, and of course the pumper contest, which is almost entertainment enough on it's own.

We're planning some workshops we know you will like.

The table favor, which has been in the works for over a year, is sure to be a favorite. We think we've really outdone ourselves this time, but we may be prejudiced.

A mart? But of course!

There will be other surprises along the way, and we recommend you allow extra time if possible, since there are many things to see and do in the area.

If there is enough interest we will line up a bus for some of the open houses on Sunday.

**Watch the AMICA bulletin for more information and registration.**



*Our hotel will be the Marriott, located across the street from a mall, with restaurants of all types and kinds within walking distance. Just down the block is the bus, which you can take to downtown or Universal Studios.*



*Hancock Park, home of the famous LaBrea Tar Pits, is site of the world's only urban Ice Age paleontological dig, where digging has been going since the early 20th century. Saber-tooth tigers, dire wolves, and bison are just some of the larger fossils found here.*



# THE ETUDE

music magazine

## Christmas Greeting

**C**alm on the calm sea on a night  
**M**ark! the her-ald an' yells sing  
**R**e-joice the Lord is King  
**I**n laud and jubilee and praise  
**S**ons and daughters let us sing  
**T**o Christ the new-born King  
**M**orn'g my peace has de-fined the day  
**A**n-gel hosts his praise shall sing  
**S**hout with the host of heav'n and sing

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