

180 -- Click [here](#) for a list of known Wurlitzer style 180 band organ rolls -- **180**

150 -- Click [here](#) for my online catalog of known style 150 band organ rolls -- **150**

125 -- Click [here](#) for Mike Grant's online catalog of known style 125 band organ rolls -- **125**

FOR SALE: New style 165 rolls arranged by virtuoso band organ arranger the late Rich Olsen.
For the contents of those rolls, to hear some selections from them, and for ordering information, click [here](#)

**A CATALOG OF MUSIC ROLLS
FOR THE
WURLITZER MILITARY BAND ORGAN
STYLE 165**



Glen Echo Park band organ
(courtesy of Mark Chester)

Compiled by
Gary Watkins

Revised by
Matthew O. Caulfield



First Edition June, 1969
Revised most recently January 23, 2016
(click [here](#) for details)

THIS CATALOG IS A SMALL MONUMENT TO

FARNY R. WURLITZER (1883-1972)

AND

THE ARTISANS OF THE RUDOLPH WURLITZER COMPANY

WHO CREATED THE ORGANS

AND THE MUSIC

WE CHERISH

To hear a MIDI version of the waltz "Clara," scanned from Wurlitzer roll 6684 (with a bit of Waldteufel's "Estudiantina" interpolated, courtesy of the talented Robbie Rhodes, of the South Frisco Jazz Band) [click here](#).

To hear a MIDI version of the popular waltz "Peggy O'Neil," scanned from Wurlitzer roll 6684 (with percussion crescendo effect, as used on the Wurlitzer Style 166 band organ, added by Robbie Rhodes in accordance with the snare drum FF perforations found in roll 6684) [click here](#).

To hear other 165 band organ tunes, played on real Wurlitzer Style 165 band organs, in MP3 or RealAudio format, go to the [Sound Files section](#) of this catalog.

If you are searching for a particular bit of Wurlitzer history or musical information and do not find it on this website, please email [us](#) with your question. It would be a pleasure to try to answer it.

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A NOTE ABOUT THE NOVEMBER 1986 REVISION

When I began to compile a complete list of Wurlitzer Style 165 Military Band Organ rolls two years ago, I had no idea that I was replotting thoroughly plowed ground. Fortunately Rosemary Deasy, the present owner of the Griffith Park Merry-Go-Round, informed me that Gary Watkins, of Sun Valley, CA, had been researching 165 rolls since 1969 and had produced a catalog, which was then in its 2nd edition, 2nd revision.

Gary graciously sent me a copy of his catalog and shared with me many supplemental observations and theories. I, in turn, was able to supply information about five rolls not known to him. It was gratifying to both of us to find that in several important respects we had independently come to similar conclusions. We had both, for example, postulated a hiatus of roll numbers between rolls 6578 and 6606.

Many people had collaborated in my two year information gathering process, and I had promised them copies of the catalog that I expected to produce. But that catalog is not to be. Therefore, Gary has generously consented to my making copies of his splendid catalog, adding the information that I have gleaned, and providing the result to interested persons. He also gave me a list of corrections he had intended to make in his next revision; those have been incorporated here.

Four previously unknown rolls (6639, 6651, 6661, and a second as-yet-unidentified march/waltz roll) have been added to the catalog, roll 6670 has been removed from the "no known copies" category, and the index has been revised to include new tune titles--these are the major changes made in this revision. There are numerous lesser changes and additions on other pages. In every case I assume the blame for any errors; all credit for the existence of this catalog as you have it in your hands is due to Gary Watkins.

INTRODUCTION

General

This catalog attempts to list all known style 165 band organ rolls, including rolls known only from catalogs or roll labels. The first section lists the rolls manufactured by the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company. Other sections list rolls manufactured by its successors. Listed last are B.A.B. 66-key rolls which have been converted to the Wurlitzer 165 scale, and rolls made in recent years by independent arrangers doing custom work. **Except as noted in its listing, every roll has been recut in enough multiple copies to ensure its survival for years to come.**

Seabreeze Amusement Park, Rochester, N.Y., has the most complete collection of Wurlitzer and T.R.T. Style 165 rolls in existence. For details, see the last section of this Introduction. In the Spring of 2009 three avid 165 roll fans -- myself, Glenn Thomas of Belle Mead, N.J., and James H. Drew III of Augusta, Ga. -- began a project, with the assistance of Rich Olsen and of Frank and Amanda Himpel (Valley Forge Music Rolls), to replace all of the known missing tunes in our copies of Wurlitzer 165 rolls. For questions about roll availability, please email us.

How many Wurlitzer 165 rolls still exist? There are 106 surviving rolls of those made by Wurlitzer during its ten-tune era (1914-1933). All have been recut. Every 6-tune roll made from 1934 to the end of T.R.T.'s production in 1967 exists and has been recut as a 12-tune composite with another 6-tune roll to eliminate its repetitiousness. That amounts to twenty 6-tune rolls from Wurlitzer and thirty-three from T.R.T. One of the thirty-three, the T.R.T. Christmas roll, 6712, was not composited but recut in its original form because of its nature.

Each roll listing shows, to the extent known, the title of each tune on the roll, the stage revue or motion picture featuring the tune, its composer, the date of first publication, and the type of composition (fox trot, waltz, one step, etc.). The date the roll was originally issued is also shown, or an estimated issue date is suggested for rolls of unknown date, when it has been possible to make such an estimate. Finally, notes have been added calling attention to significant errors found on printed roll labels and giving other information judged to be of interest to readers of this catalog.

The original plan was to transcribe listings exactly as they appear on the roll labels. However, the labels on some Wurlitzer rolls are lost, having succumbed to hard use as have many roll boxes and even the beginnings of some rolls themselves. The labels for rolls manufactured by the T.R.T. Manufacturing Company name the publisher of the sheet music for a tune (the influence of ASCAP and the royalty-collection agencies) but not the composer, and often give tune titles inaccurately.

In order to correct label errors, secure missing information, and determine the approximate issue date of the rolls, all tunes were checked against the records of the U.S. Copyright Office in the Library of Congress, Washington D.C. This procedure revealed that some of the information on Wurlitzer labels was also in error.

Due to these factors, the primary source of all the listings in this catalog is the record in the Copyright Office. Secondary sources, in the order used, include the band organ roll labels themselves, catalogs published by Wurlitzer, music reference books, sheet music, phonograph records, and other music rolls.

Tune titles

Titles are given as registered by the composer or publisher with the Copyright Office. When multiple registrations show variations in the title, the title shown on the earliest registration of the tune as a published composition is the one used in this catalog. It is normal to find multiple registrations for the more popular tunes. The earliest registration is usually for the tune as an unpublished work, followed not much later by a registration of the tune as a published work. There may follow, over any number of years, registrations for arrangements of the tune for various instruments or for various purposes.

When no date is shown for a tune in this catalog, no registration for the tune could be found in the Copyright Office. The tune may have been copyrighted abroad, or it may not have been copyrighted anywhere, or it may have been copyrighted prior to the time reliable records were kept by the Copyright Office (roughly prior to 1898), or the title/composer/publisher information known may be insufficient to locate one registration among the million tune registrations in the Copyright Office. For example, it took many years and a bit of luck to find the registration for the tune named on roll 6702 as "Brook's Triumphal March." The roll was produced in 1952. But the tune, when found, turned out to be almost a half century older, with the correct title being "Brooke's Triumphal." Assuming a search in the correct chronological file in the Copyright Office (the file containing registrations for 1898-1937), "Brooke's" still is found nearly a hundred cards distant from "Brook's."

Stage revues and motion picture data

The stage revues and motion pictures shown as featuring a tune are usually the original production or the production contemporaneous with roll issuance. The information has been taken from the copyright record or from the following sources:

"Blue Book of Broadway Musicals" by Jack Burton, Century House, 1952

"Blue Book of Hollywood Musicals" by Jack Burton, Century House, 1953

"Blue Book of Tin Pan Alley" by Jack Burton, Century House, 1951

"American Popular Songs: From the Revolutionary War to the Present" by David Ewen, Random House, 1966.

Composer credits

Our intent is to show only the composer of the music for each tune, not the author of the lyrics. However some copyright records say "words and music by" A & B, leaving it unclear which is the composer. The listings in this catalog show the composer credits as recorded in the Copyright Office, even when in conflict with the credits on the roll label.

In some cases where a tune's composer is not given in the roll data, we find dozens of compositions with the same title registered in the Copyright Office by different composers (e.g. for "Dream" there are 168 registrations). In most cases it has been possible to identify the correct composer. But when that has not been possible--as for example in the case of a lost roll where it is not possible to audition the tune--two or more of the most likely identifications are suggested.

Individual tune dates

As already stated, the Copyright Office records are the primary source for the dates given in this catalog, and where multiple dates for multiple registrations are found, the date recorded here is the date found for the first published version of a tune. That date best serves the original purpose for researching tune dates: to estimate the release dates of the rolls. It was initially presumed that style 165 rolls were released when the tunes on the rolls were at the height of their popularity, and that the date the tunes were first published would be a good indication of that peak. That premise has been borne out by experience in all but a few cases, notably certain rolls numbered from 6501 to 6537, which are discussed below.

When only a registration for an unpublished version of a tune could be found in the Copyright Office, the date of that registration has been used. This situation seldom occurred, because the music usually chosen for inclusion on style 165 music rolls was popular--and therefore published--music that would have been diligently copyrighted. It is unlikely that sheet music for an unpublished composition would find its way into Wurlitzer's hands to be selected for inclusion on a roll.

The Wurlitzer factory in North Tonawanda, N.Y., may well have had standing arrangements with certain music publishers to receive their published sheet music. The Vandersloot Music Publishing Company, located in Williamsport, Pa., 150 miles south of the Wurlitzer factory, seems to have published a large share of the rather undistinguished tunes found on early Wurlitzer band organ rolls. Was that perhaps due to a mutually beneficial working arrangement between the two companies?

In the case of very old American compositions, classical tunes, and foreign compositions--categories for which there are no useful copyright records--the year of composition or date of first performance found in other reference is shown.

Type of composition

The type designation (waltz, fox trot, one step, etc.) is derived almost exclusively from the roll label. The Copyright Office only rarely indicates the type of composition on the file card (with the exception of marches). Copyright laws do require the deposit of two copies of the sheet music in the Library of Congress as a condition of registration, and these copies would reveal the type of composition. However, the sheet music copies were not normally examined in preparing this catalog due to the tremendous amount of time that would be required and due to the fact that in the process of arrangement for the band organ, a fox trot could become a waltz or vice versa. A case in point is the waltz arrangement of "Ciribiribin" on roll 6529 and the fox trot arrangement on roll 6682.

Wurlitzer roll numbering and dating

Wurlitzer's earliest style 165 rolls, rolls number from 6501 to 6537, present a rather confusing and complex picture. For them, see the next section, titled "Rolls 6501-6537: What was Wurlitzer up to?"

Rolls numbered from 6538 upwards to the end of roll production (6724), covering the period 1918 to 1967, present a clear picture of rolls issued in chronological sequence at regular intervals (TRT rolls 6668 to 6676 must be excluded from the picture; they are mere duplicates,

both in numbering and in contents, of earlier Wurlitzer rolls). The intervals varied over the life of the roll business, depending on the market and industry economics, but in any given year band organ owners were assured of having a predictable number of new rolls available for purchase.

Earlier editions of this catalog could only estimate the issue dates for most of these rolls, based on dating the individual tunes on the rolls, as explained above. Late six-tune rolls were the only ones that could be dated precisely, because their labels carry a date code in the lower left corner. The code "71840," for example, indicates a roll issued July 18, 1940, while "2242" indicates a February 2, 1942, release date.

In 1988 Richard J. Howe, of Houston, Tex., generously made available to us copies of all the original Wurlitzer monthly roll bulletins in his collection which listed one or more band organ rolls. The bulletins significant for the study of style 165 rolls cover the period from November 1917 to June 1923, with only a one-month lacuna (January 1921). The period from October 1923 to August 1925 is more imperfectly covered, lacking 7 issues (Jan. 1924, Apr. 1924, Jan. 1925, Mar. 1925, May-July 1925). Altogether a remarkable collection! We have subsequently received a copy of the May 1925 bulletin from Harvey Roehl.

Consequently, exact issue dates can be now shown for many rolls, the contents of many lost rolls can be given, and the pattern of parallel roll numbering for rolls 6501 to 6537 can be seen and perhaps understood.

For some rolls to which an exact date of issue still cannot be assigned, an estimated issue date is shown, derived from the dates of the tunes on the roll and from the issue dates of the rolls before and after it. Only a range of four months has been used: "Early," "Mid-," or "Late" with respect to a given year. The period selected was additionally verified by noting issue dates for piano rolls and recording dates for phonograph records.

Rolls 6501-6537: What was Wurlitzer up to?

The rolls numbered from 6501 to 6537 are in many regards not typical of the other style 165 rolls issued by Wurlitzer. The foremost point of difference is that for many of them there exist two different rolls with the same number. Although recuts of these rolls have been assigned letters A and B to distinguish them when both versions of a number have been recut, Wurlitzer did not do this, suggesting that the two versions were never stocked and sold at the same time. Examination of these roll pairs reveals that in each case one of the rolls contains tunes popular when the roll was issued--and invariably this roll is the earlier of the two, when it is possible to date each of the pair. The other roll contains tunes of more lasting popularity, "evergreens" so to speak--and all of those that can be assigned dates were issued after mid-1921, whereas all the popular-tune rolls of the pairs were issued between 1914 and 1918.

The phenomenon of twin rolls does not extend beyond roll 6537; that is a known fact. It is more difficult to say whether the phenomenon began with roll 6505, the earliest roll we know of that contains popular tunes of the year, or whether there might have been such rolls numbered from 6501 to 6504. Perhaps someday Wurlitzer monthly roll bulletins for 1914 and 1915 will surface to answer these mysteries.

Examination of the tune titles on the evergreen rolls will show that many of the tunes on these rolls have also appeared on rolls of the popular-tune type. In fact a few of the rolls are duplicates, or near duplicates, of rolls issued earlier, though perhaps numbered higher in the 6500's. Surviving roll masters in the Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum bear proof of the reuse and renumbering of tunes: old stamped indicia of roll number and tune position have been altered by cutting away the top layer of cardboard where numerals needed to be changed and over-stamping with the new, correct digits.

All evidence points to the conclusion that Wurlitzer originally viewed the 165 roll market in the same fashion as record manufacturers view their market today: buyers want the hit tunes of the moment, and rapid turnover is good for everybody. Indeed, Wurlitzer advertising carried two watchwords month after month: "Buy new rolls to keep ahead of the competition," and "Positively no rolls exchanged." But by 1921 the idea must have developed of offering, in addition to the popular-tune rolls which would be sold for a short time only, a class of rolls containing tunes of lasting popularity, which would be kept permanently in stock, the class of rolls which we have come to call "evergreens." Unfortunately for historians of the roll business, a decision seems to have been made to assign numbers to these rolls that had once been used for earlier rolls no longer stocked. The only benefit of this decision that we can see is that it allowed the company to group its evergreen rolls together in the early 6500's and, by starting afresh in 1921 with the 6600 numbering, to keep its ongoing popular-tune series separate from it.

If this theory is correct, it should follow that owners who purchased their 165 band organs in the mid-1920's or later should not have been able to purchase any of the popular-tune 6500 rolls, but should have been able to purchase evergreen 6500 rolls. There is evidence that this was, in fact, the case. The free rolls that came with the Seabreeze 165 in 1931 and the Griffith Park 165 in 1929 were evergreens.

The rolls we know as 6501, 6502, and 6503 are clearly evergreen rolls. They have the character of the evergreen series, and do appear in a comprehensive catalog listing all the evergreens which was printed by Wurlitzer. Ross R. Davis had a copy of that catalog, a paper-bound, red-cover catalog, which has since disappeared. Fortunately those data were copied from that catalog by Gary Watkins before it disappeared, because the evergreens went unlisted in Wurlitzer's Monthly Roll Bulletins until roll 6528 (March 1921). Moreover rolls 6501, 6502, and 6503 are commonly found in roll collections, including those of owners of organs purchased in the 1920's.

One question that we cannot answer from what we now know is, With what number did Wurlitzer begin its 165 roll series in 1914? It is simplest to assume Wurlitzer began with roll 6501. But it may have begun with roll 6505 (1914), the earliest surviving roll. The roll we know as 6500 is certainly not the earliest 165 roll issued. It includes several 1919 tunes, and we now believe it is not even a Wurlitzer roll, as our notes to its catalog entry indicate. The existing rolls 6501, 6502, and 6503 are evergreens, not original 1914-1915 rolls. This is proven by

three characteristics: their content, their prevalence in collections today, and the fact that popular-tune roll 6505 (1914-early 1915) contains two marches found on rolls 6501 and 6502, something Wurlitzer would not have done had the three rolls been issued so soon after each other.

It is odd that while the other thirty-six evergreens have all been identified and their contents known, roll 6504 is still a mystery. We have never found any information about it. But it is difficult to believe that Wurlitzer skipped that number in producing its evergreen rolls./P>

The reason we suggest that Wurlitzer might have begun numbering its first style 165 rolls with roll 6505, not 6501, is that there are a few cases we know of where the company began a roll series with the fifth number in the series. The numbering of the style 125 long-roll-tracker-frame roll series, for example, seems to have begun with roll number 3005, while the 150 long-roll series seems to have begun with roll number 13005. We speculate that the first four numbers might have been reserved for rolls not advertised but given free with each new organ purchased. In this connection it is interesting to note that, when Wurlitzer jumped from the 6500 series to the 6600 series in issuing 165 rolls, it seems to have begun not with roll 6600 or 6601, but with roll number 6605.

B.A.B. roll numbering and dating

The B.A.B. Organ Company, Brooklyn, N.Y., issued just forty-four 66-key band organ rolls, the only size B.A.B. roll which has been converted to the Wurlitzer 165 scale and therefore the only B.A.B. roll series of interest to this catalog. Its first 66-key roll, 001, was probably issued in 1928. Its last roll, 044, was issued in 1957. All B.A.B. rolls numbered higher were manufactured on a custom basis, using original B.A.B. masters, by Oswald Wurdeman and later by his son Thomas Wurdeman, of Minneapolis. The Wurdemans manufactured custom B.A.B. rolls of various sizes besides the 66-key size that interests us here, but all were numbered serially beginning with roll 300 and reaching almost to roll 600. Only B.A.B. rolls up to 044 can be dated from their contents; the Wurdeman composites cannot be dated to the year of their creation because any one roll could contain any combination of tunes from across the years. Moreover the unpredictability of tune dates on Wurdeman composites makes it sometimes difficult, in the absence of composer credits, to identify a tune from its title alone.

Roll length

Wurlitzer probably began to issue style 165 rolls in mid-1914. The first 165 band organ was shipped on April 15, 1914. That event is the best evidence for when the first style 165 roll would have been made, lacking roll literature for the period.

The company had been selling its smaller organ rolls (styles 125 and 150) a little previous to marketing the larger style 165 roll. At that point the company standardized their band organ roll production on these three sizes. Previously each band organ model used a roll unique to it, e.g. a style 155 roll for the old 155 (or Monster) band organ and a 160 roll for the 160 (Mammoth) band organ. The 125 roll and the 150 roll were both produced in two different lengths: a short roll containing no more than 4 tunes, and a longer roll generally containing 10 tunes, for the "long roll trackerframe." Most tunes were available in either format. By the time the first 165 band organ was manufactured, the company must have been equipping its organs only with the long roll tracker frame, because the 165 roll was not issued in two different formats at any time; the ten-tune roll was standard from the beginning. Although a few shorter rolls were made in the 6500 series, they were exceptions to the norm and did not constitute a separate roll series as was the case for 125 and 150 rolls.

With the switch to the 6600 series, short rolls disappeared entirely from the picture. The normal roll was a ten-tune roll, though generally the tunes were each a little shorter than the typical tune on a 6500 roll. This, together with tempo differences between 6500 and 6600 rolls (see "Roll tempo" below) resulted in 6600 rolls being a bit smaller than most 6500 rolls. This situation obtained until 1934. In that year Wurlitzer, yielding to economic pressures, cheapened its product significantly by adopting as the standard format a six-tune roll, which it advertised as "length of a ten-tune roll." Arrangement costs, which were then--and still are--the significant costs associated with music roll making, were reduced by arranging a verse, a chorus, and a transition for each tune. These short passages were then used to produce one of the six tunes on the roll by repeating them over and over until one-sixth of a standard (ten-tune-length) roll had been filled. The result is that, while some good arrangements were produced after 1933, band organ tunes on 6-tune rolls sound endlessly repetitious - because they are.

Recuts of 6-tune rolls made by Play-Rite avoid this shortcoming by combining two 6-tune rolls into one 12-tune roll, shortening each tune accordingly and alternating the tunes to preserve the proper tempo.

It might be remarked here that the rolls from the ember days of the band organ business seem to be arranged with less delicacy than earlier rolls, producing more sheer volume. That may have been a shrewd tactic to make organs not kept in good repair sound better than they otherwise might; it takes a well-maintained machine to handle a subtle solo passage arranged for a minimum number of pipes.

Roll tempo

A problem inherent in roll music which is not encountered with book music is that, as the music paper builds up on the take-up spool of the tracker frame, the speed with which the paper is drawn across the tracker bar increases, due to the fact that the take-up spool (which pulls the paper) turns at a constant number of revolutions per minute and the fact that the diameter of the take-up spool is steadily increasing. Therefore tunes in the latter part of a roll must have longer perforations for a note of a given duration than would be required for the same note in tunes at the beginning of the roll.

Wurlitzer production perforators solved this problem ingeniously. Automatic tempo compensation was built into the paper-advancing mechanism of Wurlitzer production perforators: as the perforation process moved along from the beginning to the end of the roll, the distance the paper was advanced underneath the punching dies--which cut the countless tiny holes forming each note--was incrementally increased at each punching stroke, the result being that the perforations became longer as the process moved down the roll. Tune masters were marked by staff arrangers and punched to run the perforators without any consideration of where on a roll the tune would fall, meaning that all masters could be marked and perforated with notes of standard length. The same master could be run to make tune 2 on one roll and later to make tune 7 on a different roll. Examination of surviving masters in the Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum proves that this was done many times in creating the second series of rolls 6501-6537 (see below).

Like many blessings, this feature had a drawback--rather minor, indeed, and noticeable only in the playing of the last tunes on some rolls, in some notes on some organs. It derives from the fact that, as the spacing increases between the individual punchings that make up a perforation for a long, sustained note (where bridging is required at intervals in the chain perforation, in order to prevent undue weakening of the paper by what would otherwise be a long slit in the paper), the bridges may get large enough to cover the organ's tracker bar hole sufficiently to cause the pneumatics to very briefly interrupt the sounding of the pipe. Whether this happens or not is a function of bridge size in relation to the bleed capacity of the primary pneumatic associated with the particular pipe. When it does happen, the result is a slight but audible stutter of the pipe, though it may not necessarily be judged unattractive.

The perforators used by Play-Rite, working not from masters but from original band organ rolls, do not have any means of automatic tempo compensation. Therefore, the order of tunes on a roll can be changed only within narrow limits. It is for this reason that, in combining two six-tune rolls into one twelve-tune roll, it was necessary to alternate tune 1 of the first roll with tune 1 of the second roll, followed by tune 2 of the first roll, and so on. By cutting the length of each tune approximately in half, proper overall tempo is maintained while the listenability of the tunes is vastly increased.

Before leaving the subject of tempo, two observations might be made. Many rolls in the 6500 series do not pair up well with rolls in the 6600 series on a dual tracker organ, because those 6500 rolls need to be played at a slower tempo than 6600 rolls. By and large 6600 rolls have less paper on them, need to be played faster, and therefore finish faster than most 6500 rolls. The reasons for these differences are not entirely clear. But 6500 rolls could not have contained much more paper than they do, and still fit on their roll chucks. The slightly shorter tune length of 6600 rolls made them smaller and also may have prompted the company to cut them at a slightly slower tempo (longer note perforations, ergo more paper per tune) than was possible with the 6500 rolls. Most rolls in the 6500 series contained quick-paced two-steps or marches alternating with waltzes, while the 6600 rolls contained a preponderance of slower fox-trots with a few waltzes. This was a reflection of changing musical tastes and dancing styles over the decades, but it may also have influenced Wurlitzer's roll-cutting practices.

The second observation concerns the tempo of rolls 6501, 6502, and 6503 specifically (and perhaps also 6529, which seems, in spite of its numerical distance from the other three, to be very much like them). While the tunes on those rolls are very fine tunes, indeed, and well arranged, the tempo of the rolls as a whole leaves something to be desired. If an organ's tempo control is set so that the first few tunes on one of those rolls play at a satisfactory tempo, then the tunes at the end tend to race noticeably. If the tempo is set so that the final tunes play well, then the first tunes drag too much. Were these rolls perhaps manufactured before Wurlitzer developed automatic tempo compensation? Not a likely explanation, because copies of these rolls purchased after 1925 for the Seabreeze Park band organ exhibit the same problem. Some early Play-Rite recuts of these rolls do too, although the problem seems to have been corrected on later recuts (recuts containing the copyright infringement notice lacking on the earlier recuts).

Composers' pseudonyms

Composer names have been recorded as found in the sources used, e.g. Copyright Office records. However it is known that some of those names are pseudonyms. For example Jaan Kenbrovin, composer of "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles" is a group name for three composers well-known under their individual names: James Kendis, James Brockman, and Nat Vincent.

Carl Loveland, the name used on the waltz "Garden Of Lilies," hides the march virtuoso Harry J. Lincoln, who also often wrote under the name Abe Losch and that of one or another of the Vandersloots. Similarly, William C. Polla used the pseudonym W. C. Powell as well as his real name. The Hoover who collaborated with Onivas (another pseudonym; see the next paragraph) on several tunes was Joe Hoover, a pseudonym of J. Russel Robinson. On his "Little Sweetheart Of The Prairie" William J. (Billy) Hill used the pseudonym George Brown. The famous Mary Earl was a man who also composed under his real name, Robert A. King. On the other hand, Vaughn De Leath was a woman, Leonora Von Derleath (married name "Geer"), who sometimes used Gloria Geer.

Other composers seldom used their real names: Neil Moret's real name was Charles N. Daniels; Horatio Nicholls was legally Lawrence Wright; D. Onivas was an anagram for Domenico Savino; Jule Styne was born Julius K. Stein; Violinsky was Sol Ginsberg; Ross Bagdasarian, composer of "The Chipmunk Song (Christmas Don't Be Late)" was actually David Seville; Alice Hawthorne was a man, Septimus Winner; Sunny Skylar was Selig Shaftel's pseudonym; Noel Gay was actually Reginald Moxon Armitage.

Some composer identities are so confused they may never be properly sorted out. The confusion over the authorship of the famous march "Repasz Band" is well documented in William H. Rehrig's The Heritage Encyclopedia Of Band Music. In his article on Harry J. Lincoln Mr. Rehrig tries to sort out the works composed by Lincoln under his own name from those on which he used any of several pseudonyms or the name of another real composer such as Charles C. Sweeley or one of the Vandersloots, the Williamsport family of composer/publishers who published many of Lincoln's works until Lincoln bought the company in 1929 and moved it to Philadelphia. Another Lincoln mystery Mr. Rehrig discusses is his relationship to E. T. Paull's "Midnight Fire Alarm."

Not exactly a pseudonym situation is the confusion surrounding the identity of H. B. Blanke, composer of "Francezka Waltzes" (1902), "Hearts Courageous" (1902), "Stingy Moon" (1906) and "In The Good Old Irish Way" (1907). She is probably the same person as Henriette Blanke-Belcher, composer of "Honey-Land," "Marsovia" (1908), and "Telling Lies" (1910), where her name appears on the sheet music as Henrietta Blanke Belcher. She is probably also the person who wrote "Loyalty Waltz" (1918) and "Butterfly Waltzes" (1922) under the name Henrietta B. Blanke-Melson.

(With acknowledgment to Dick Baker, editor of Stomp Off Records' composer/title indexes; to Mike Grant's Wurlitzer 125 Roll Catalog; and to Wm. H. Rehrig's 3-volume band encyclopedia just cited)

Arrangers and arranging

Too little is known about the identity of the arrangers responsible for the music listed in this catalog. We do know the names of four of what must have been many: Charles Nilson, Sylvia Schultz, John William Tussing, and Ralph Tussing.

Only the masters of Nilson and John W. Tussing clearly identify their work. Nilson arranged early masters, probably working until his death. His funeral was March 12, 1924. Masters arranged by him carry the circled initials CN in blue pencil. John W. Tussing arranged from the late 1930's until the end of Wurlitzer's band organ business. His masters are stamped with his name. Ralph Tussing's work was confined entirely (or mostly) to arranging done after he purchased the band organ business from Wurlitzer/Herschell. Sylvia Schultz fits in chronologically somewhere between Nilson and J.W. Tussing. She is known from her name scratched into a Wurlitzer arranging table and from the reminiscences of William Haessler, an arranger for the Rand Company (North Tonawanda Musical Instrument Works), who dated her.

Examination of markings on the masters shows that the arrangers marked out verses and choruses in pencil, as few times as necessary, leaving notations for the ladies hired to do the actual hand-punching of the cardboard, showing where they should repeat verses and choruses and how they should be altered if necessary, to produce the finished tune master. The names Ruth and Amelia are found on some early masters as ladies who worked on them in some way.

Where are the originals?

As the catalog entries note, many original rolls have disappeared entirely, and no surviving copies have ever been found to be copied as recuts. A few of those that did survive to be recut (thus assuring perpetuation of their music) were later destroyed by fire. For the rest, catalog entries attempt to show the current ownership of the original from which recuts were made, when the roll is in one of the smaller collections. But where no ownership is shown the chances are good that the original roll is in the grand-daddy of all Wurlitzer 165 roll collections, the one owned today by Don Rand and Ed Openshaw that was built by Ross R. Davis.

This very catalog, in fact, owes its existence to the data generously provided to Gary Watkins many years ago by Don Rand and to Don's interest in all kinds of mechanical music and to Wurlitzer 165 band organ music in particular.

Recutting of original rolls

For several years after Ralph Tussing (T.R.T. Manufacturing Company) stopped arranging and cutting band organ rolls, style 165 rolls were nearly impossible to acquire, especially in the pre-Internet era when communication between band organ owners was difficult. By 1963 the Davis family, Ross R. Davis and his son, John O. Davis, of Los Angeles, had begun to investigate ways of getting copies made of their extensive collection of original Wurlitzer rolls. Out of their efforts grew the activity of Play-Rite Music Rolls, Turlock, Calif., where owner John Malone developed high-speed production perforators capable of copying with fair accuracy original music rolls. Up to that point Wurlitzer rolls were produced on perforators which worked from three-to-one cardboard masters. That is, each tune was hand-punched onto a separate cardboard scroll using a punching scale that was three times as long as the finished music roll. Ten of those cardboard masters were needed to produce ten-tune rolls, and approximately twenty copies were produced per run.

Play-Rite's perforator copied original Wurlitzer rolls on a one-to-one scale, making approximately eighteen copies per run at a faster rate than was possible on the Wurlitzer perforators, partly due to the higher speed at which the Play-Rite machine ran, but mostly due to not having to work with masters--changing them, backing them up, and re-running them for the repeats characteristic of many rolls, particularly the later ones. Ray Siou, of Oakland, Calif., retailed the Wurlitzer rolls produced by Play-Rite for twenty years until his retirement about 1994. That ended the plentiful and cheap supply of Wurlitzer rolls.

Then Mike Grant, of Columbia City, Ind., stepped into the breach, using a small perforator capable of making four copies of an original roll at a time. Mike Kitner, of Carlisle, Pa., offered a hand-copying service by which he could produce a dozen copies of almost any kind of music roll on a contract basis. But his untimely death at the age of 56 on Dec. 12, 2000, from bone marrow cancer, which he had fought for several years, has deprived us of his service as well as of the society of a good man and talented restorer. The Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum in North Tonawanda, N.Y., operates one of the original Wurlitzer production perforators, perforator #12, using surviving original masters to make new copies of style 125 and style 150 rolls on the 3-to-1 scale just as Wurlitzer did decades ago. In 2009 Play-Rite resumed making Wurlitzer recuts, and is today the only source of volume recuts of Wurlitzer rolls. Valley Forge Music Rolls operates a laser perforator capable of making

Seabreeze Park Roll Collection

Seabreeze Amusement Park prides itself on having the most complete and updated collection of Wurlitzer and T.R.T. 165 rolls in the world. The collection includes a copy, in the form of recuts, of every known surviving roll issued from North Tonawanda from the beginning of production in 1914 to the end in 1967. By design it does not have any B.A.B transcriptions, the one exception being the presence of "Junior Order March" on roll 6637 in place of the missing unknown tune 1. But that tune has been modified for the 165 scale by the addition of triangle and castanet perforations not found on B.A.B. transcriptions. Besides the Wurlitzer and T.R.T. rolls, the park has all of the better rolls arranged by modern-day arrangers.

The Seabreeze collection began in 1931, when George W. Long bought a Wurlitzer 165 band organ (serial #4292) for the park's carousel. By the time Wurlitzer stopped making rolls in 1945, he had acquired the following rolls: 6501, 6502, 6503, 6512, 6519, 6529, 6535-A, 6633, 6634, 6639, 6641, 6643, 6644, 6651, 6655, 6660, 6661, 6666, 6670, 6672, 6673, 6674, 6677, 6678, 6680, 6681, 6682, 6683, 6684, 6688, 6689, 6690 and 6691. When recut rolls began to be produced, George Long's son-in-law Merrick Price, who had a particular fondness for the band organ and had taken charge of it, began buying 165 recuts from Ray Siou, who sold them in one-dozen lots. Merrick also sent several original rolls that were unique to the Seabreeze collection to Play-Rite for recutting. At the time of the March 31, 1994, fire that destroyed the carousel, band organ, all rolls, and so much else in the park, the Seabreeze collection had been made fairly complete. But the fire reduced it to zero.

The years 1994 and 1995 were a time of rebuilding for Seabreeze, and to accelerate the process of rebuilding the band organ department, I donated my extensive personal 165 roll collection to the park. After Merrick Price's death on November 13, 1996, I took over the maintenance of the band organ and the roll collection.

When Play-Rite and Ray Siou started issuing recuts of original rolls, carrying on work that had been begun in the 1960's by Ross Davis, they found that often the first tune or two was missing from an original roll they located for copying. This was caused to some degree by the natural aging and fragility of the first few windings of paper on a roll, which were subject to attack by light, air, and moisture (which the CO2 in the air turned acid). But the primary cause was the frequent, often careless, handling of the roll, as it was put on and taken off the organ over the years.

A good case in point is Seabreeze's copy of roll 6535-A from 1923. When I first heard it around 1950, it was already missing the first few measures of tune 1. When I recorded it ten years later, one third of tune 1 was missing. As time went on, more and more was lost, until finally there was so little of tune 1 left that the roll was re-leadered to begin with tune 2. And then the wear started anew there. When Seabreeze's copy of 6535-A, the only known copy, was sent to Play-Rite for recutting around 1985, all of tune 2 was gone, and the roll as issued by Play-Rite began with tune 3 of the original roll, but with two substitute tunes from other rolls added to replace the missing tunes 1 and 2. The original roll perished in the 1994 Seabreeze fire. In 1989, using my 1960's recording and the sheet music for tunes 1 and 2, I had those tunes newly arranged, and Play-Rite recut the roll anew, with all ten tunes on it.

Another reason for tunes being missing on a roll, particularly when the tune is not at the beginning of the roll, is an owner's decision to remove certain tunes from a roll for one reason or another. Ross Davis is known to have done this more than once. He probably had access to multiple copies of rolls, since he was the Spillman Company's west coast agent and a steady customer of the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company as well. He created two all-waltz rolls and one roll containing five marches from roll 6530 and a fox trot from roll 6635. Those three rolls were created by taking tunes from other rolls and splicing them together. The third roll was long sought after by Ray Siou, because the first tune on it was "Bombasto," missing on the only known copy of roll 6530, which he wanted to have Play-Rite recut complete. But Ray never did find the spliced roll with "Bombasto." So, when Play-Rite recut 6530, they had to substitute another tune. In 1999 I had Tom Meijer arrange "Bombasto" for me, thinking that the original Wurlitzer version would never be found, and Play-Rite re-issued roll 6530 with Tom Meijer's "Bombasto." In the summer of 2010 Glenn Thomas acquired some rolls from the estate of the late John Maxwell, and among the rolls was the spliced roll with "Bombasto." So now, we have the original Wurlitzer version of the march and the Meijer version to compare it with. The Wurlitzer version has been recorded but not yet recut.

As time has passed, more complete versions of rolls that were recut earlier by Play-Rite have surfaced. In every such case a copy of the complete rolls has been added to the Seabreeze collection. In addition, a project was initiated in 2009 to have new arrangements made for still-missing tunes. Those new arrangements, mostly by Rich Olsen, have been spliced into Seabreeze's copy to make the Seabreeze 165 roll collection the most complete in the world.

Here is a list of the improved Seabreeze rolls for which earlier, less complete versions also exist:

6505: new recut, with "High School Cadets" and "The Veleta; New Round Dance" replacing substitutes from roll 6537.

6517: complete 4-tune roll, one of only three copies made from original roll.

6528/6537-A: tune order switched for better tempo: "Morning, Noon, And Night in Vienna," "Zampa," "William Tell."

6530: new recut, with missing tune 1, arranged by Tom Meijer, replacing Play-Rite substitute.

6532: new recut of complete original roll, with tunes 1 and 2.

6535-A: new recut, with missing tunes 1 and 2, arranged by David E. Stumpf, replacing Play-Rite substitutes.

6546: missing tunes 1 and 2, arranged by Rich Olsen, added as tunes 9-10, replacing Play-Rite substitutes.

6554: missing tune 1, arranged by Rich Olsen, to replace B.A.B version found on some recuts as tune 3.

6570: missing tunes 1 and 2, arranged by Rich Olsen, to replace Play-Rite substitutes.

6578: missing tune 6, arranged by Rich Olsen, added.
6606: missing tune 1, arranged by Rich Olsen, added.
6607: new recut, with missing tunes 1 and 2, arranged by Bob Stuhmer, replacing Play-Rite substitutes.
6610: new recut of complete original roll, with tunes 3 and 10.
6615: new recut of complete original roll, with tune 1 replacing earlier Play-Rite substitute.
6617: new recut of complete original roll, with tune 2 replacing earlier Play-Rite substitute.
6618: missing tunes 2, 3, and 10, arranged by Rich Olsen, added to replace Play-Rite substitutes.
6637: new recut, with "Junior Order March," adapted from a B.A.B. roll, in place of missing, unknown tune 1.
6638: new recut of complete original roll, with tune 1.
6639: removal of first two tunes, which were erroneously added to Play-Rite recuts, to restore roll to original 10-tune state.
6655: new copy made for Seabreeze Park to speed up too-slow tune 1.
6658: missing tune 1, arranged by Rich Olsen, added.
6703-6717: missing tune 12, "The Convoy," erroneously replaced by duplicate copy of tune 11 in recuts, restored.
6707-6708: tune 12, cut too short in compositing process, lengthened.

Note: Copies of the missing tunes from rolls 6546, 6554, 6570, 6606, 6618, and 6658 are available to interested parties for splicing onto the rolls on which they belong.

Lost rolls and lost roll information

Wurlitzer began marketing its Style 165 Band Organ, which was the first organ to play the style 165 roll, in 1914. Between 1914 and September 1921, when Wurlitzer issued its last roll in the 65xx numbering series (roll 6578) and began issuing its rolls in the 66xx series, the earliest known of which is roll 6605 (December 1921), the company issued a total of approximately seventy-five to seventy-nine 65xx rolls. Excluded from this count is the special series of thirty-seven rolls which we now call the Wurlitzer evergreen rolls.

The existence of its evergreen rolls, which were produced from about 1918 to 1925, greatly beclouds the picture of Wurlitzer's roll issuing operation. To get a clear understanding of it, one must separate the evergreens from the regular rolls. But making the separation difficult is the fact that the evergreen series re-used roll numbers already assigned from 1914 to 1918 to Wurlitzer's early, non-evergreen (popular tune) rolls. Although this numbering decision causes great problems for collectors and historians today, it caused no problem to Wurlitzer. Wurlitzer never intended, nor wanted, its customers to preserve and continue to use its rolls once the popularity of the tunes they contained had waned. So regular rolls were kept in stock by Wurlitzer for only a brief period, after which the rolls and their numbers became obsolete.

By contrast, the tunes chosen for the new evergreen roll series were ones that had proven to be of lasting popularity, e.g. Viennese waltzes, Sousa marches, operatic melodies, to make rolls which Wurlitzer planned to keep in stock permanently. The first evergreen roll was roll 6501 and the last was roll 6537 (February 1925). The issue date of evergreen 6501 is uncertain, as is the date when the evergreen series was inaugurated, because the evergreen rolls were not announced in Wurlitzer's Monthly Roll Bulletins (unlike its regular rolls), until the series had reached roll 6528 (March 1921). Wurlitzer's main method of marketing its evergreen rolls seemed to be by publishing a single catalog of those rolls rather than announcing each release in a Monthly Roll Bulletin.

Because the evergreen rolls were listed in one catalog, the contents of all but one of the thirty-seven rolls are known (the exception being roll 6504), and most of those rolls survive today, because Wurlitzer sold them for years.. Only ten of them do not survive, they being mostly Cuban rolls or short three-tune rolls.

But the regular rolls present an entirely different picture. Of the seventy-five or so regular rolls issued in the 65xx series and only stocked while their popularity lasted, the contents of fifty-six of them are known. The primary reason for so many gaps in our knowledge of these rolls is that copies of Wurlitzer's Monthly Roll Bulletins between March 1914 and October 1917 have not survived. Most of the unknown rolls were made between 1914 (roll 6501) and mid-1917 (roll 6530). From that point on until the end of the 65xx series (roll 6579) we lack contents for only two rolls (6565 and 6569). Of the rolls for which we know the contents, twenty-seven are lost today, with eleven of them being identical to rolls in the evergreen series, so that only sixteen rolls are totally lost and unplayable.

Of the possibly seventy-nine regular 65xx rolls that Wurlitzer issued, including both those with known contents and those of unknown contents, fifty rolls are lost; but eleven survive in the evergreen series, leaving thirty-nine rolls totally lost.

It appears that the only hope of finding lost 65xx rolls today in the regular roll series is to locate still-existing 165-roll-playing organs that were made or converted to playing 165 rolls before 1922. This would exclude Style 157 band organs, which postdate this period, and focus solely on the seven surviving pre-1922 Style 165's. Those organs are serial #2943 (1915; Sanfilippo collection), serial #2992 (1916; Neilson collection); serial #3030 (1917; Circus World Museum), serial #3106 (1918; Neilson collection), serial #3124 (1918; Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk), serial #3358 (1921; Chase collection), serial #3378 (1921; Gilson collection).

Of the eighty-six rolls made in the 66xx series (rolls 6605 to 6690) before Wurlitzer sold its roll business to the Allan Herschell Company at the end of World War II, information on all is known except for seven: 6648, 6654, 6659, 6664, 6665, 6667, and 6668. The only rolls of the known seventy-nine for which no copies survive are four; 6605, 6608, 6614, and 6652.

2009 revision history:

- Jan. 13: A section "Historical Wurlitzer Pictures" added. Slight rewording in Section II D, regarding the manufacture of the rolls listed in that section.
- Feb. 15: Play-Rite mistake in tune order for roll 6534/6537-A corrected.
- Apr. 5: Paragraph about Seabreeze Park collection and plans to add missing tunes added to "Introduction." Roll number "6534/6537-B" corrected to "6534/6537-A."
- Apr. 7: Entry for roll 6606 edited to show creation of missing tune 1. Entry for roll 6557 edited to show that not all recuts add the B.A.B. substitution for missing tune 1.
- Sep. 17: Addition of Rich Olsen's newest roll, 6842. Change of rewording in Section II D made in Jan. 13 revision.
- Sep. 30: Addition of MP3 files to three tunes on roll 6842.
- Oct. 12: Addition of C.W. Parker/Luigi Bacigalupo information to roll 6500 and "Bacigalupi Special" listing.
- Nov. 22: Addition of roll 6843, and a few changes to sample tune available on rolls 6836-6842.

2010 revision history:

- Jan. 2: Revision of "Arrangers and arranging" section of Introduction; dating rolls 6510, 6528; deleting "not recut" note on 6620.
- Feb. 17: Minor changes to the Introduction.
- Feb. 28: Sale ad at top of home page and accompanying changes to page listing rolls 6836-6844.
- Aug. 14: Revision of roll 6620 data.
- Aug. 15: Revision of data for rolls 6546, 6554, 6570, 6606, 6618, 6658 to show all missing tunes newly arranged.
- Aug. 18: Addition of roll 6846.
- Nov. 18: Addition of "Seabreeze Roll Collection" section to Introduction.
- Nov. 22: Correction to listing for roll 6620.
- Dec. 1: Modify note on roll 6530; add Bowers/Friberg to HISTORICAL WURLITZER PICTURES section.

2011 revision history:

- Jan. 20: Addition to Appendix of list of all Style 165 band organs made by Wurlitzer.
- May 26: Correction to tune order of roll 308.
- Jun. 2: Addition of rolls 6848 and 6849; corrections to roll 6500-B and roll 401.
- Aug. 23: Correction to title of tune 3 on roll 354, tune 2 on 385, and tune 3 on 490.
- Oct. 18: Addition of roll 6850.

2012 revision history:

- Feb. 22: Addition of rolls 6851, 6852, and 6853.
- Feb. 29: Addition of roll 6651, renumbering of 6650, and removal of "No known copies" from 6532.
- Mar. 15: Moving 6504 to 6532-A (Variant); correction of 6532 data; renumbering 6651(?) as 6650 and adding new 6651.
- May 14: Addition of roll 6854.
- Jul. 13: Correct identification of "Brucker-Lager-Marsch" on rolls 6802, 6807, and Bacigalupi Special roll, previously misidentified as "Old Reliable."
- Sep. 25: Identify tune 9 on roll 6661.
- Oct. 19: Addition of rolls 6855, 6856, 6857.
- Nov. 21: Correct listing for 6833, tune 9.

2013 revision history:

- Jan. 18: Addition of roll 6652.
- Aug. 9: Identify tune 7 on roll 6505.
- Nov. 5: Discovery of surviving roll 6518.

2014 revision history:

- Jan. 6: Rearranging the tune groups in Section II in more logical order; identify tune 8 on roll 6521.
- Jan. 14: Correcting identification of tune 2 on roll 6529-A.
- Apr. 7: Identify tune 2 on roll 6505-A and tune 7 on roll 6521.
- Jun. 19: Addition of rolls 6858 and 6859.
- Jul. 9: Identify tune 2 and correct misidentified tune 8 on roll 6509-A.
- Dec. 3: Addition of roll 6566 and reword note about roll 6565.
- Dec. 13: Correct listing for roll 6670 in section IIC.

2015 revision history:

- Jan. 28: Addition of rolls 6860, 6861, and 6862.

Mar. 13: Revision of Introduction.

Apr. 9: Correction to roll 6505 and listing of tune 9 in SOUNDFILES as an unidentified tune.

Jun. 5: Corrections to roll 6636, listing of tune 4 in SOUNDFILES as an unidentified tune on May 28, but now identified.

Jul. 24: Identify tune 5 on roll 6505-A.

Oct. 4: Addition of rolls 6864, 6865, 6866, 6867.

Nov. 4: Addition of rolls 6868, 6869.

Dec. 7: Addition of roll 6871.

2016 revision history:

Jan. 23: Addition of roll 6872.

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