

G. W. MacKinnon's Organ Offerings 1969 - 1975

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From 1969 to 1975 the collecting world was blessed with some of the most prolific catalog offerings to that time (and since, as well). G. W. MacKinnon (Figure 1), of Charlotte, North Carolina, produced over ten catalogs of mechanical music, giving collectors the ability to select from many instruments. Of interest to the author is the number of organs offered (Figure 2). During the time from 1967 to 1984 competitors Hathaway and Bowers, Mekanisk Music Museum, American International Galleries and Mechanical Music Center offered 35, 39, 25 and 39 organs respectfully while G. W. MacKinnon's catalog business offered a whopping 375 similar units.



Figure 1. G. W. MacKinnon posing with a 84-key Mortier fair organ. The organ was offered in 1974 for \$19,500. Restored by Oscar Grymonprez, MacKinnon had this to say about him and this organ:

This summer, I bought the entire inventory of parts, books, and all organs from this world famous organ builder, as he wanted to close shop and retire. I have bought many organs and orchestrions over the years from him. It is a pity to see this fine honest man leave the business. The organ we have here is the last organ he restored and I will go on record here and now as saying this organ rates in the top five of the best organs I have heard.

In his first catalog (1969) MacKinnon stated:

Actually, I have been collecting and restoring musical instruments for about ten years now and the last three to four years, I have been collecting them for some of my collector friends while collecting for myself to get the benefits of shipping containerized freight for both myself and my collector friends.

Organs Offered By Catalog (1967—1984)

1967 - 1971	Hathaway & Bowers	35 organs
1973 - 1976	Mekanisk Music Museum	39 organs*
1975 - 1980	American International Galleries	25 organs
1978 - 1984	Mechanical Music Center	39 organs
1969 - 1975	G. W. MacKinnon	375 organs

*Includes three organs first offered by MMM and then AIG

Figure 2. Organs offered by catalogs from various purveyors of mechanical musical instruments.

Mr. MacKinnon's daughter, Pam Lackey, related to me that her father got into mechanical music with an interest in a player piano (obtained when she was a child). She noted that she now has the piano in her home. She also confirmed his statement (in the preceding paragraph) in that his friends would like music boxes, other instruments and even merry-go-rounds, and he would obtain those items for them (an example is Alex Jordan of House on the Rock fame—Spring Green, Wisconsin). Pam worked with her father at the business in Charlotte for many years (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Pam (MacKinnon) Lackey in 1972.

G. W. MacKinnon's primary business was the textile company, Southern Wipers, of which he was President. It manufactured wiping rags and he would use that to illustrate and promote the use of his truck service to deliver instruments throughout the East Coast. Later, when Mrs. MacKinnon became sick with cancer, he managed a health-related natural vitamin and healing business.

The mechanical musical instruments were first displayed in Charlotte, North Carolina; then Santa Fe Springs, California in 1972 when he acquired the firm of Hathaway and Bowers; and much later (and finally) in Houston, Texas. In his Winter, 1970 catalog (printed December, 1969) he noted that he had warehouse facilities in Antwerp, Belgium; Copenhagen, Denmark; and Charlotte.

Where did G. W. MacKinnon obtain the instruments he was marketing? In his first catalogs of 1969 he noted that:

In my trips to Europe, I have met many collectors and have found many sources to buy some of the dwindling number of machines still left in Europe.

Pam Lackey related to me that her father did go to Europe and buy a lot of band organs (as well as other mechanical musical instruments). . . “He had some on consignment but most were his.” COAA member, Bill Soper, related that while in Heidelberg MacKinnon contacted him to help with the search of instruments. Bill took many day trips with him and noted that he had lots of notes of people and places to check out. Since Bill knew the language, he helped translate as well as find the way around Europe.

Others questioned, during this research, believed that some instruments were offered on speculation only, and that once an offer was tendered the sale might be made. Photos were made and the organ pictured in the next catalog. He was certainly an opportunist, and considering his likeable personality, many sales were made. He subsequently boasted in his fall catalog of 1972 (#18) that he had sold over 50% of the items offered in the Winter, 1972 catalog.

G. W. MacKinnon’s catalogs and retail mechanical instrument company ceased sometime after 1975 but he continued offering mechanical instruments including an automatic accordion machine, into the late 1990s. He died December 19, 2000.



Figure 4. A collection of many of G. W. MacKinnon's catalogs.

The Catalogs

G. W. MacKinnon’s catalog offerings (**Figure 4**) began in the spring of 1969 and ended with #22, a beige-colored catalog dated September 1976. In this time interval 375 band, fair or Dutch organs as well as calliopes and hand organs were presented for the American buyer. Later catalogs were perfect-bound (**Figure 5**) with color covers (brick red, blue, gold, green and beige-#s 18 to 22) while earlier catalogs were of legal paper size (8 ½ x 14) with fancy filigree borders. The last five catalogs sold for \$2.00each.

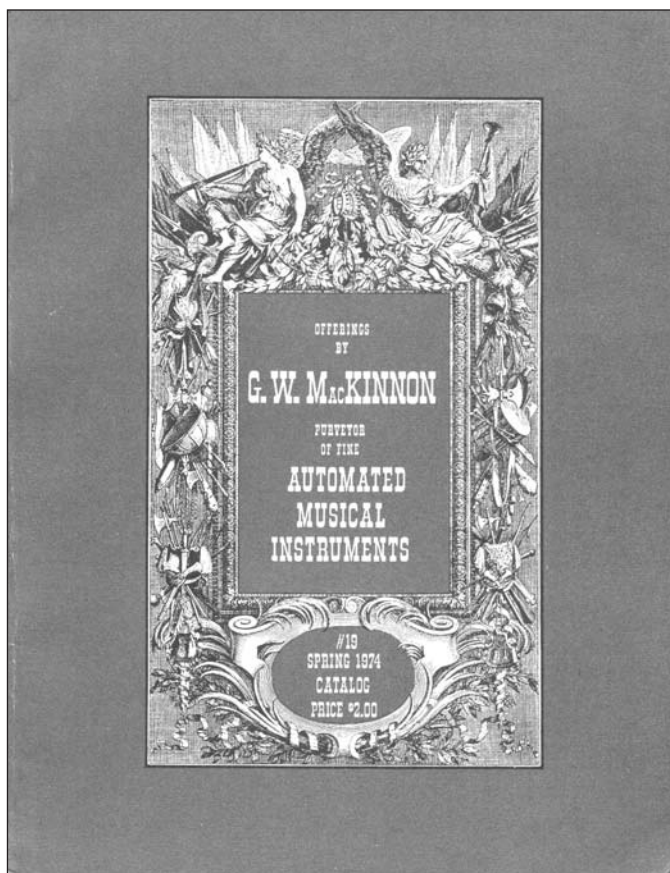


Figure 5. An example of one bound catalog from 1974.

Earlier MacKinnon promoted European instruments and in the Fall, 1972 issue noted that:

In my opinion European instruments are all wonderful values compared to most of the prices that American machines are bringing. It is true that the machines in Europe are getting scarce and more expensive just like the American instruments. I have sold over 50% of the items I had to offer in my last catalog. There is a reason why: I try to keep buying costs low and profit low. Selling prices in turn must be lower than those of most of my competitors. In fact, if I didn’t enjoy this business so much, I would be foolish to operate in this manner.

Three years later, however, he changed positions on which continent to buy instruments and noted in the Winter, 1975 catalog:

We have come with a nice catalog again for you. We have done this even though we have practically discontinued importing merchandise from Europe. We contend that prices in Europe are high for the collector and the investor to be buying at this time and we do not feel like paying the high prices they are asking for their merchandise. I feel like letting them sit on their musical instruments at high prices. If they want to sell later at the right price then we will have the instruments for you.

Buy American while they are cheaper, buy European when they are cheaper. In order to sell the instruments . . . they will have to become cheaper. Wait and See. We have imported more musical instruments from Europe than anyone at any time and will again when the time is right.

In the same issue as the last proclamation he also announced his retirement and that the business was for sale. In 1976 (issue #22) it was noted that the North Carolina showroom had closed on August 25, 1976, and the California showroom on September 23, 1976 (which coincided with a Musical Box Society year convention). The Houston, Texas showroom closed shortly thereafter.

The Organs

Three hundred seventy-five outdoor organs, calliopes and hand organs were offered to the buying public by G.W. MacKinnon (Figure 6) during the same time that Hathaway & Bowers and Mekanisk Music Museum together promoted 74. Breaking these numbers down I found that there were 41 band organs; 31 hand or barrel organs; 16 calliopes, 146 dance organs; 22 Dutch street organs and 119 Fair organs. Examples of each category will be listed in the following paragraphs.

Band Organs (41)	Dutch Street Organs (22)
Artizan (6)	
deKleist (1)	Fair Organs (119)
North Tonawanda (2)	Bruder (29)
Wurlitzer (29)	Decap (5)
Misc. (3)	Duwyn (1)
Hand or Barrel Organs (31)	Fрати (4)
Bagicalupo (8)	Gasparini (4)
Fрати (3)	Gaudin (1)
Reimer (2)	Gavioli (6)
Misc. (18)	Hooghuys (8)
Calliopes (16)	Limonaire (15)
Artizan (1)	Marengi (2)
Cozette (2)	Richter (3)
National (4)	Ruth (16)
Tangley (1)	Voigt (1)
Wurlitzer Caliola (3)	Wellershaus (6)
Misc. (5)	Wrede (2)
Dance Organs (146)	Misc. (16)
Arbuo/Bursens (41)	
Decap (39)	
Duwyn (3)	
Grymonprez (3)	
Mortier (57)	
Misc. (3)	

Figure 6. A summary of organs, calliopes and hand organs offered by G. W. MacKinnon.

American Band Organs

During the time of catalog production 41 American band organs were offered. These included six Artizans (including

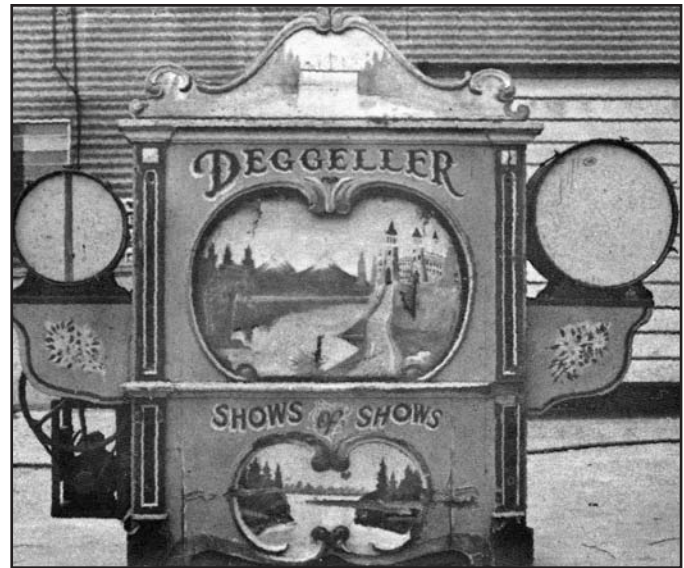


Figure 7. An Artizan Style X-A-1. MacKinnon noted “Planned and designed for “Kiddie” rides and show platforms, \$1,500.” Advertised in his Fall, 1972 catalog, #T-254.

two large Style Ds) and one X-A-1 (Figure 7). The X-A-1’s description included:

Artizan Style X-A-1 46-key band organ in excellent restorable condition. Has basses, wood trumpets, three bassoons, violin pipes, flute pipes, bass and snare drums. Uses 10-tune rolls. Planned and designed for “kiddie” rides and show platforms. \$1,500.

This organ was offered in the Fall, 1972 catalog and had an identification number of T-254. This was the only catalog in which this instrument was offered.

MacKinnon’s numbering system included prefixes that would let the buyer know where the prospective organ was located at the time of the sale. Those organs with the prefixes of M, MA, MB, MS or TS were located in the North Carolina or Santa Fe showrooms. Those with prefixes of A, B, C and F were usually located in Europe and those with N, R or T were organs on consignment within the continental U.S.

Another band organ that was frequently seen in his catalogs was the “Bandola.” The Bandola (Figure 8) was a 41-note organ, which played the Wurlitzer Style 125 roll and was cosmetically similar to Wurlitzer’s Style 125. Each organ contained 100 pipes including brass piccolos, violins and either chrome-plated or polished brass (later ones) trumpets.

The catalog description notes:

Military band organ which uses Wurlitzer 125 rolls. A new instrument custom-made to my order. New from the ground up, including all

electric action. Send for brochure and specifications on the newest band organ to be made for sale in the USA. \$4,295.

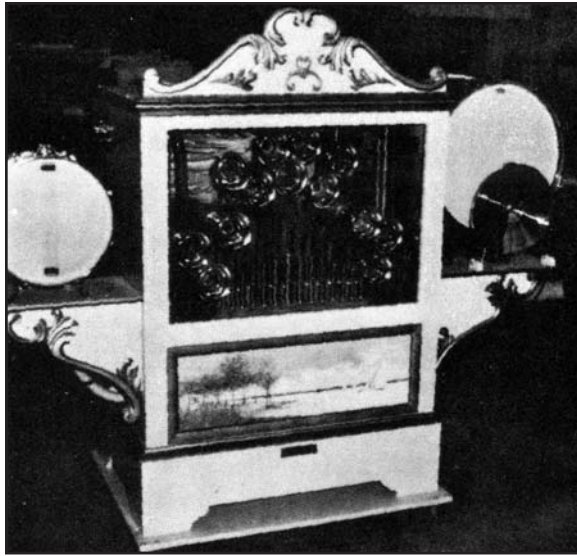


Figure 8. Advertised in the Fall, 1972 catalog, this Bandola used Wurlitzer 125 rolls. MacKinnon advertised this as the “newest band organ to be made for sale in the U.S.A., \$4,295.00.”

The Johnson Organ Company (Fargo, North Dakota) manufactured the Bandola. After the first such organ was made in 1970 Lance Johnson was commissioned by MacKinnon to make more and approximately 12 such Bandola organs were manufactured. MacKinnon had estimated that “we will make more of this model this year than Mr. Wurlitzer did during his first three years of production (27 units).”

The Bandola model was sold as the “Bandola 125” in the Fall, 1972 and Spring, 1974 catalogs for \$4,295 and \$4,995 respectively. Later it was marketed as the “Bandola 105A” in the Winter, 1974 and Winter, 1975 catalogs for \$4,895 and \$6,995 respectively. More information on the Bandola can be found in Dave Mahr’s article “The Bandola Model 125” which was in issue #20 of the *Carousel Organ*.



Figure 9. MacKinnon’s “Big Mack.” The organ featured 244 pipes plus bass and snare drum, kettledrum, cymbal, triangle and castanets.

The Johnson Organ Company made another organ for G. W. MacKinnon and this was the “Big Mack” or M164-A (Figure 9). The Spring, 1974 catalog claimed that “this is the organ R u d o l p h Wurlitzer should have made—it has the looks of the old 164 but

that is as far as it goes.” The organ utilized the Style 165 roll and was advertised as the “newest organ to come from the production line for G. W. MacKinnon.” He also stated: “This instrument has automatic registers and different types of pipes, that allows all types of music to be played properly—the old waltzes, polkas and even the classics.”

The Big Mack was offered for \$14,500 in the Spring, 1974 catalog and by the time of the printing of the Winter, 1975 catalog it was \$19,750.

The Winter, 1975 catalog offered TS-1295, a deKleist organ (Figure 10) which had been converted to play Wurlitzer Style 165 rolls. A catalog description of the organ noted:

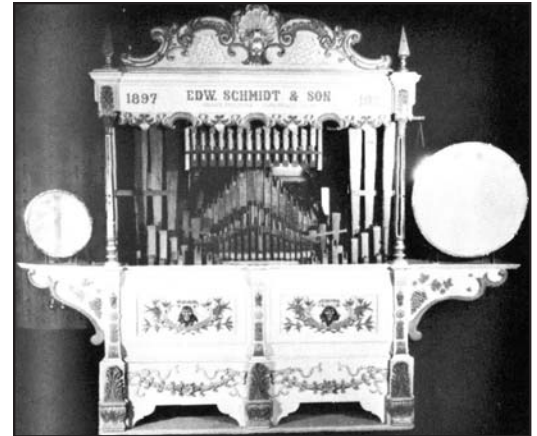


Figure 10. A Fully restored deKleist band organ advertised in the Winter, 1975 catalog for \$24,995.00.

This organ was originally at the Pomona fairgrounds, until it was purchased by its present owner in 1965. It was restored and repainted in 1971 by Ed Schmidt. This organ is not only a pleasure to listen to, but also a pleasure to look at (the mirrored and jeweled columns and finials revolve while the music is playing). Organs of this caliber are fast disappearing from the market. It comes with twelve 165 rolls.

A very early American band organ appeared in just one catalog (Fall, 1972) which was a Wurlitzer 3534 (Figure 11). MacKinnon’s notes on this organ included:

Wurlitzer No. 3534 brass trumpet cylinder organ. Meticulously restored. Has fiery grained mahogany case. 10 trumpets, 57 flutes, 2 bells and 2 drums. 4 stops, 9 tunes including *Old Black Joe* and *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. A distinctive calliope sound when just one rank is playing. A gem. \$2,750.00.

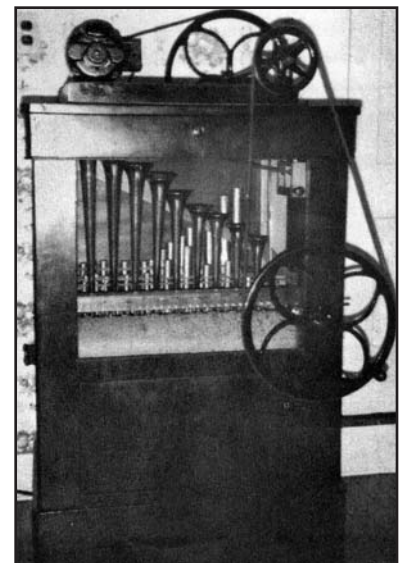


Figure 11. A Wurlitzer No. 3534 brass trumpet cylinder organ.

According to research discussed in my book, *The American Carousel Organ*, Wurlitzer offered the 3534 only in their 1906 catalog (Wurlitzer's first catalog featuring band organs) and for a price of \$175.00. This was a barrel-operated organ which was probably made by the Eugene deKleist firm and sold by Wurlitzer. The organ probably represents the last of the barrel-type organs manufactured. Later Wurlitzer organs were, of course, paper roll-operated.

Hand Organs

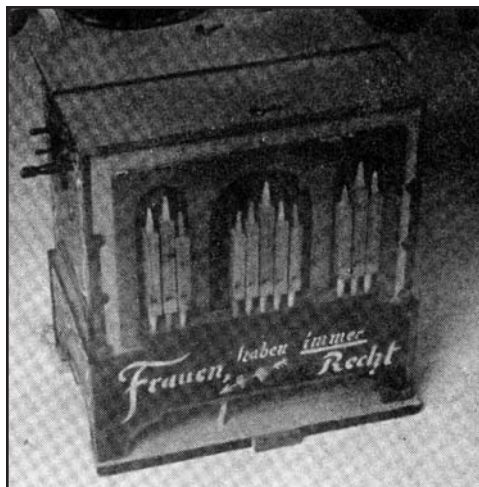


Figure 12 (above). A Hurdy Gurdy Barrel Organ advertised the Winter, 1970 catalog.

One example of a hand-operated barrel organ was MF-63 which was listed as a "Hurdy Gurdy Barrel Organ (Figure 12) in good condition" in the Winter, 1970 and Spring 1971 catalogs. The number of keys was not listed as were any other specifications—the organ was listed for \$1,080.00.

Today there are a plethora of new hand organs offered to the collector but during the 1960s and 1970s there were few, if any available. In the later part of MacKinnon's time marketing mechanical music, however, a "Brand New 'Hurdy Gurdy' from Germany" was offered (Figure 13). This was the only organ instrument in any catalog that had no catalog number. MacKinnon's description included:

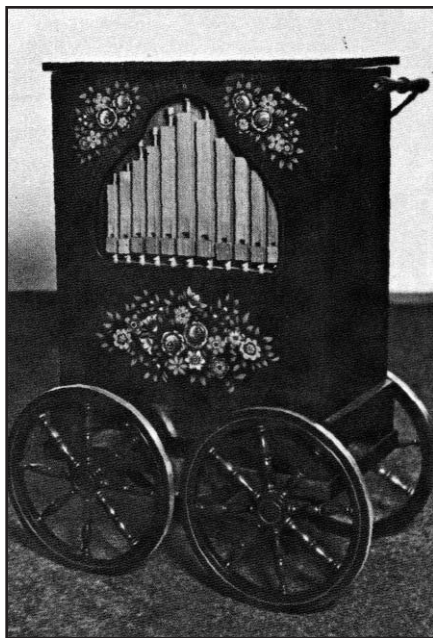
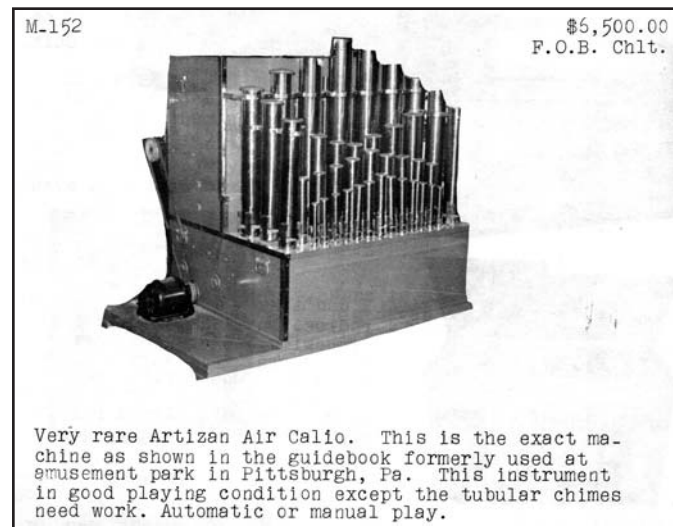


Figure 13. A "brand new Hurdy Gurdy" using paper rolls.

Genuine paper roll operated "Hurdy Gurdy," one six-tune endless roll included. At the present there are over 75 tunes available, priced at \$12.50 each. Perfect for either street, or home use. Mounted on a four-wheel cart, the designs on the front are hand painted. All pipes, no reeds. Price \$1,250 f.o.b. Charlotte or Santa Fe Springs.

Calliopes

G. W. MacKinnon offered 16 calliopes in his catalogs. These included (Figures 14-16) the Artizan Air Calio (the rarest of the rare, and now housed in the DeBence Museum in Franklin, PA); a pair of Cozette Calliopes; a pair of calliopes made in Danville, IL; several National Calliopes; several Wurlitzer Caliolas (one with brass pipes and one with drums) and just one Tangley unit.



Very rare Artizan Air Calio. This is the exact machine as shown in the guidebook formerly used at amusement park in Pittsburgh, Pa. This instrument in good playing condition except the tubular chimes need work. Automatic or manual play.

Figure 14 (above). The rare Artizan Air Calio as seen in MacKinnon's catalog.

Figure 15 & 16 (below). The same calliope as seen today in the DeBence Museum in Franklin, PA.



Dance Organs

One hundred and forty-six dance organs were offered, giving the collector the chance to choose amongst many different types. Once such organ was T-235, a Bursens dance organ which featured a saxophone in the façade (Figures 17 & 18). MacKinnon's description included

Bursens 77-key coin-operated dance organ in excellent playing condition. A choice example of an instrument by one of Europe's best-known organ builders. \$4,995.00. F.O.B. New Mexico.

This organ was a featured organ in Floyd Mile's *Miles Musical Museum* in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. After he passed away the author acquired the organ, and recently it was transferred to the Blaine Thomas collection in Manhattan, Kansas where it has been restored.

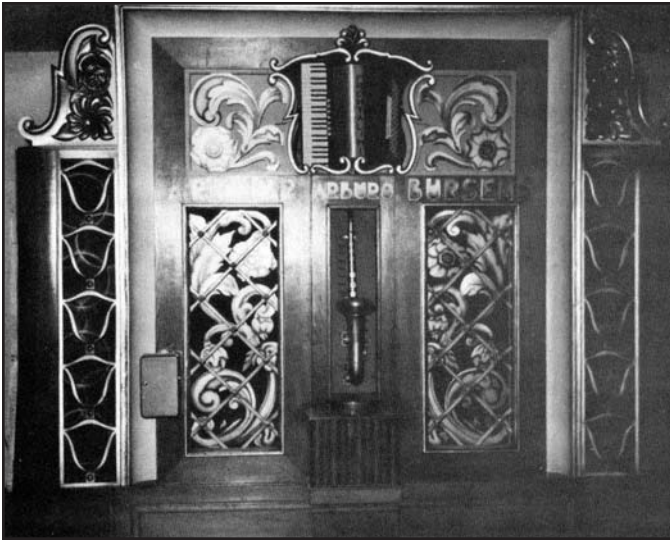


Figure 17 (above). The 77-key Bursens organ with coin-operation as offered in the Fall, 1972 catalog.

Figure 18 (below). The same organ as it appeared in the author's collection (sans coin-operation—probably removed by the previous owner, Floyd Miles, of Eureka Springs, Arkansas).



Robot dance organs are always a novelty and the organ seen in **Figure 19** is no exception. Offered as a Decap automat organ it was offered for \$11,000 to \$11,995 in the Winter, 1972 to Spring 1974 catalogs. MacKinnon's description included:



Figure 19. A Decap Robot dance organ offered for \$11,000. A similar organ is currently in a Chicago collection.

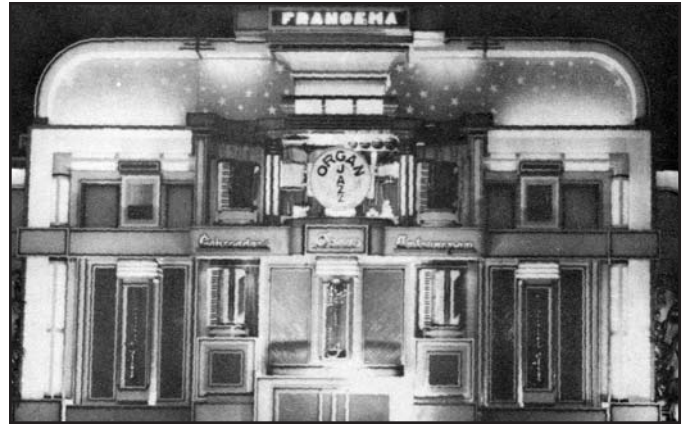


Figure 20. G. W. MacKinnon thought this was the “pinnacle of Gebr. Decap's organ manufacturing capabilities” and offered it for \$20,000.

MacKinnon had a significant number of very large organs including the C-19 121-key Decap Dance Organ (**Figure 20**). This organ was named *Frangema* and later became part of the Ghysel's collection in Belgium. Although not purchased from MacKinnon it was bought directly from the Teugels Brothers by Arthur Prinsen and Jef Ghysels (**Figure 21**). The Teugels Brothers are responsible for the name *Frangema* as “Fran” represents Françoise (Mrs. Teugels); “Ge” represents George (Teugels) and “Ma” represents Marcel (Teugels).



Figure 21. The Decap in Figure 20, now in the Ghysel's collection in Belgium.

The organ was highly thought of at the time of offering and the following promotional was used to describe it:

Tremendous! Gigantic! Pristine! Or pick any other adjective you might want to use to describe this 121-key Decap dance organ. Whatever you decide, you'll fall short of correctly describing this organ. This instrument is in the finest condition of any in the catalog. Stacks of music go with it. Believe that this is the pinnacle of Gebr. Decap's organ manufacturing capabilities. \$20,000.

This and other 121-key Decap dance organs were thoroughly reviewed in Maarten vander Vlugt's "121-key Decap Organs" in issue #28 of the *Carousel Organ*.

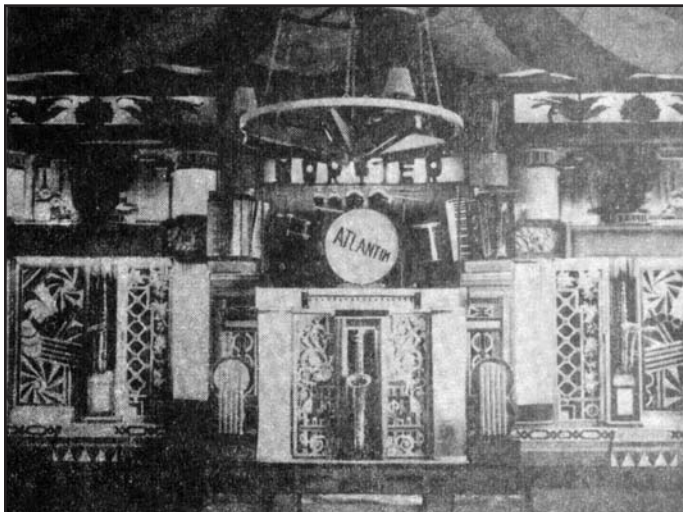


Figure 22. The 121-key Mortier, *Atlantik*, advertised in the Winter, 1970 MacKinnon catalog.

Currently in Bill and Cindy Hall's collection, organ C-016, Mortier *Atlantik*, is a 121-key cafe organ (Figures 22 & 23). The organ was purchased by Howard Furman in the early 1970s before transferring over to the Hall collection. More on this interesting organ can be found in my article, "The Bill and Cindy Hall Organ Collection," in issue number 25 of the *Carousel Organ*.



Figure 23. The *Atlantik* in the Bill and Cindy Hall collection in Florida.

Café organs are interesting instruments as they possess features of both outdoor organs with the quiet sounds of indoor instruments. One such organ offered by G. W. MacKinnon was T-154, an 84-key Mortier organ (Figure 24). Mackinnon described it "In fine appearance and condition. Been in storage and will need some tinkering and tightening." It was offered for \$8,250 in the Winter, 1972 issue. A similar organ is in the Milhous collection in Boca Raton, FL (Figure 25).



Figure 24 (above). An 84-key Mortier café organ with a catalog offering of \$8,250 in 1972.

Figure 25 (below). A similar 84-key Mortier organ in the Milhous collection.



Dutch Street Organs

Only a few Dutch street organs were offered from 1969 to 1975 in MacKinnon's catalogs. One such organ that appeared in every catalog was A-063 as *De Waterlander* (Figure 26). Interestingly, he noted that "three different sizes, first with books and the second and third with cylinders." They were priced at \$2,500 and \$2,750 and all featured the same façade.

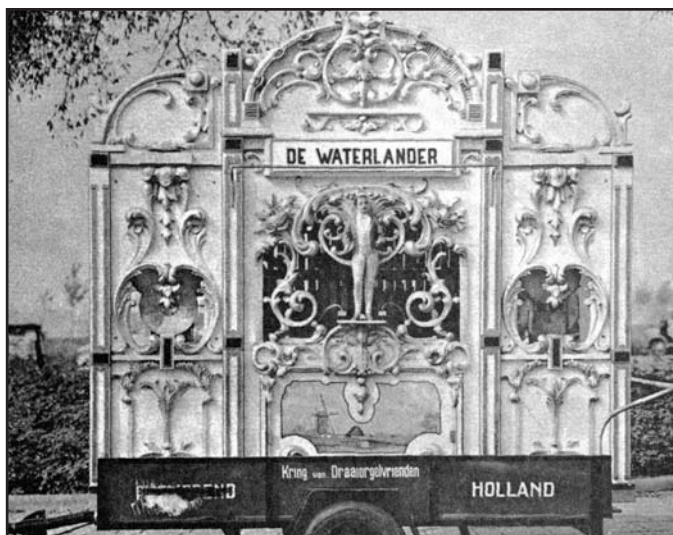


Figure 26. *De Waterlander*, a Dutch Street Organ offered in three (?) different sizes.

These must have been made for the American market as street organs in Holland are all unique, having their own name.

A larger Dutch street organ was *Kaasdrager* (Figure 27) which was a Mortier-altered Gavioli organ which used 90-keys and 14 registers. This was mounted on a 1957 Chevrolet truck and the sale included a generator “so you can play going down the road in parades, etc.” The organ was advertised as having over 700 pipes and included 200 meters of book music. This organ was offered in the Fall, 1972 catalog at a price of \$16,000.00.

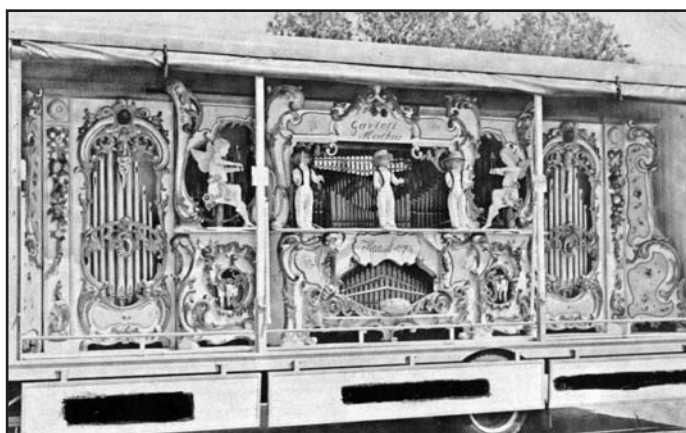


Figure 27. A Mortier/Gavioli street organ, the *Kaasdrager*. Offered for \$16,000 in 1974.

Fair Organs

One hundred nineteen Fair Organs were offered by MacKinnon with the Bruder firm(s) heading the list with 29 organs. A pretty little barrel-operated Bruder fair organ was M-265 (Figure 28). Selling for \$2,900 and advertised in the Fall, 1972 catalog MacKinnon noted:

This fine and beautiful instrument hasn't been played for years—and never has been in collector's hands before. We found it in an obscure location, so you'll be its first “New” owner. A real “dia-



Figure 28. A Gebr. Bruder organ advertised as a “Beautiful floor-standing barrel organ” in 1972.

mond in the rough.” Barrel-operated organs by Bruder, Ruth, etc. Are very, very hard to find these days—and this one has the potential of being one of the finest in any USA collection. Quick action is recommended to buy it!

The Fall, 1972 catalog offered a 52-key Gasparini (Figure 29) with over 2,000 meters of music. The organ is somewhat similar to one discussed in issue #19 of the *Carousel Organ* by Gerry Bay, “A Well-traveled Gasparini Finds a Home.” (Figure 30) The catalog description of this organ describes a “best buy”:

A beautiful instrument with 3 Figures, exposed pipes, ornate façade and other desirable features. How much would it cost to have over ONE MILE of book music cut for this 52-key Gasparini? Over 2,000 meters of music are included with this expertly restored instrument. Deduct the value of the music and the organ cost you just slightly over \$2,000.00! This beautiful organ, restored in 1967, is one of the very best buys in this catalog. \$5,750,

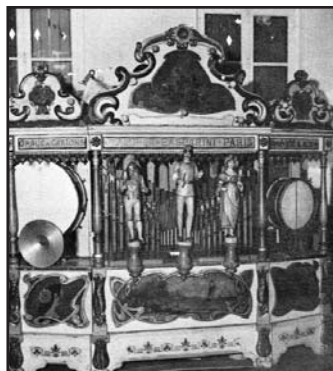


Figure 29 (left). A 52-key Gasparini fair organ offered in 1972 for \$5,750.00.

Figure 30 (right). A similar 52-key Gasparini in the Gerry Bay collection.

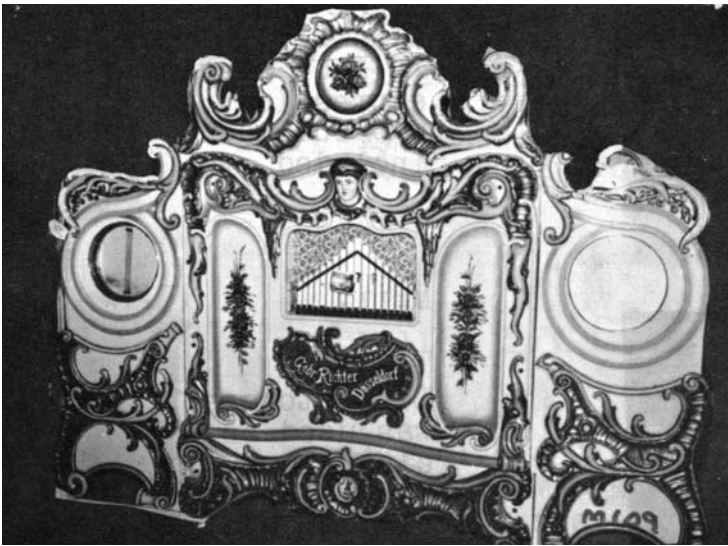


Figure 31. A 78-key richter carousel or fair organ offered in 1972.

Three Gebr. Richter organs were offered in the catalogs and one offered in the Winter, 1972 catalog (M-109) was a 78-key fair organ (Figure 31) now in the Sanfilippo collection, Chicago, IL. Owned by Dan Slack for several years, the organ was described as “Big and Bold.” MacKinnon claimed he had sold the organ two years previously for \$7,000 but now was asking \$4,750 for a “quick sale.”

A couple of 98-key fair organs were offered in the Winter, 1972 catalogs and are of interest. First is F-228, a 96-key roll-operated concert organ (Figures 32, 33 & back cover) which was offered with 50 or so rolls. The organ is actually 83-keys and has an interesting pedigree. While not sold directly from MacKinnon’s catalog offering, it nether-the-less did transfer to a German museum. This organ is a Gebrüder Bruder Elite Apollo which were normally of 80-key size. According to Tim Trager the organ was sold to Baaken Park (world’s oldest amusement park) in Copenhagen, Denmark where it was featured on a gasoline-powered racing car track by the Stefansen Brothers. Later, the organ was sold to a park in Jutland (Eventryland Park—themed after the stories of Hans Christian Andersen). The organ was inside of a band shell (which is the photo in Figure 32) at the time of Mackinnon’s offering. The photo on the back cover details the organ in an earlier time in Copenhagen.



Figure 32. What was offered as a 96-key organ was actually a 83-key Gebrüder Bruder Elite Apollo organ.

The Gebrüder Bruder Elite Apollo

The large Gebrueder Bruder fair organ in the photo (back cover) was sold to Baaken Park in Copenhagen, Denmark. Baaken Park is the world’s oldest amusement park. Many of the rides in the park were operated by the Stefansen brothers, thus their name on the top of the organ. The ride this organ was in featured small gasoline powered racing cars that were driven around the organ in the track. The sign by the organ translates: “Keep Arms and Legs in the Car!” The organ was later sold to a park in Jutland that was themed on the stories of Hans Christian Andersen. The organ was placed in a band shell which is the MacKinnon picture. G.W. MacKinnon featured it in two catalogs but it was bought by Siegfried Wendel for his museum in Rudesheim, Germany (Figure 33).

I acquired it from Siegfried Wendel about 14 years ago. The organ is a 83-key Gebrüder Bruder Elite Apollo Orchestra. It is currently being restored by Jens Wendel who has restored the House on the Rock 80-key Elite Apollo Bruder. The 80-83 key Elite Apollo organs are chromatic in the melody, countermelody, and accompaniment sections. They have 10 bass notes. They are an expansion of the 165 scale. A 165 has 14 countermelody notes. The larger one has 20 countermelody notes.

The Elite Orchester Apollo organs were priced about double of the regular ones due to the extensive additional pipe work such as swell shutters, brass trumpets, clarinets, multiple large scale violin ranks, extensive register controls, etc.

Elite Apollo Orchester organs are very unique in the world of German organ building because they are full of orchestral pipe work and do not have the typical forte mixture ranks. They are more like French organs leading some organ experts to conclude that they were built to compete with the Waldkirch Gavioli organs. Gavioli was brought to Waldkirch by Richard Bruder [see Wolfgang Brommer’s article “Ignaz Blasius Bruder (1806 -2006) and 200 years of Building Mechanical Organs” in the last issue (#30) of the *Carousel Organ*] who was pushed out by Gebrüder Bruder. He set out to get back at Gebrüder Bruder by bringing Gavioli to Waldkirch (Jüttemann book). Gebrüder Bruder countered with the Elite Orchester Apollo organs. The 69-key version was copied by Wurlitzer and became Wurlitzer’s first non-French design organ called the 165. Prior Wurlitzer scales evolved from Limonaire scales due to Eugene deKleist’s connection with Limonaire. It is also believed that C. W. Parker bought the first 165 style organ from Bruder. He then sent it to Wurlitzer where it was repaired and copied.

Tim Trager



Figure 33. The 83-key Gebrueder Bruder Elite Apollo as seen in Siegfried Wendell’s museum in Rudesheim, Germany.

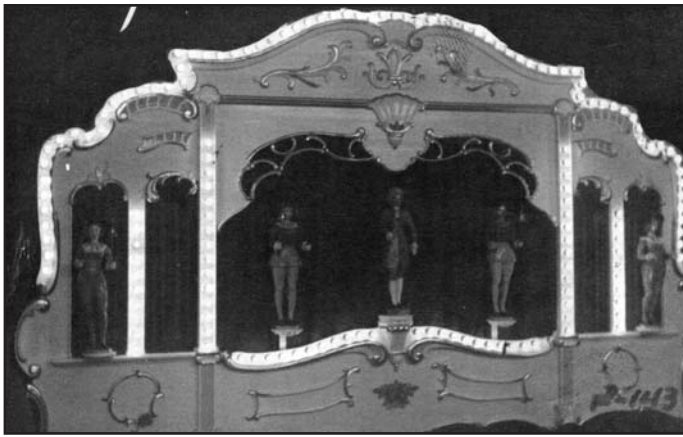


Figure 34. The Style 39 Ruth, a 96-key organ offered as “actually two #38’s built together. Restored with new front and five cases of music, \$15,000” in the Winter, 1972 catalog.

The second organ is a 96-key Ruth organ which was offered as a Ruth Style 39 (Figure 34). This is also known as the “double Ruth” and only two were made, one of which is in the “From Music Boxes to Street Organs” Museum in Utrecht. This organ priced at \$15,000.00. Likewise it did not sell through MacKinnon’s catalog offerings but rather, at a later and private sale.

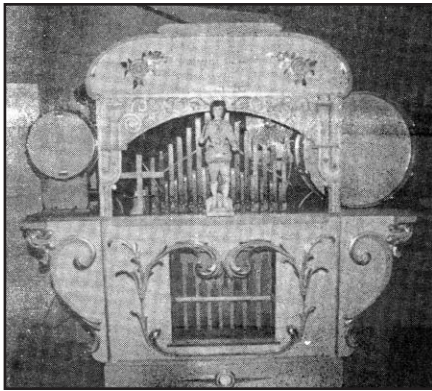


Figure 35. The “Eagle I”, 1 44-key organ built by the Verbeek firm for MacKinnon’s distribution.

The last organ I am using to illustrate the organ offerings by G. W. MacKinnon is the “Eagle #1” (Figure 35) which was made in Belgium for him. There were four organs, the Eagle #1 through #4 and all were 44-key organs. The first was offered in the Winter, 1970 catalog and #4 was offered until Winter, 1974.

Communication with Johnny Verbeek revealed that his father received the order to build the organs and they were made on a limited budget. Mostly old parts were utilized. In Figure 36 we can see Johnny Verbeek, who was 16 years old and just learning the organ trade. [photo credits: Key Frame, Winter, 1969]

Summary

This article serves as a glimpse into a past era, soon approaching 40 years, of mechanical music offerings that has stimulated many of today’s established collectors. While the validity of many of these organs (and other mechanical musical instruments) actually being on the market, and available through G. W. MacKinnon himself, has been questioned, one has to agree that the information offered is invaluable. The 17 year time span from 1967 to 1984 saw several firms in business who offered these instruments — G. W. MacKinnon was the most prolific in terms of volume of offerings.

Many organs were on consignment; many were offered as pure speculation, hoping that the owner would sell once an offer was tendered. Whatever the business arrangement was then, it is now part of history. And, whatever G.W. MacKinnon was then, he is now part of our history of mechanical musical instruments.

I wish to thank Q. David Bowers, Fred Dahlinger, Terry Hathaway, Lance Johnson, Pam MacKinnon Lackey, Arthur Prinsen, Angelo Rulli, Ed Schmidt, Bill Soper, Tim Trager, Hans Van Oost and Johnny Verbeek for their help in formulating the information and facts to assemble this article.

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Figure 36. An “Eagle I” with it’s builder, Johnny Verbeek (16 years old at the time).

Photo: Key Frame, Winter, 1969.

Lake Winnepesaukah Amusement Park—COAA Rally

The second COAA rally of the season is on Memorial Day Weekend (Thursday, May 24th through Monday, Memorial Day, May 28th, 2007). This is a good chance to loosen up your bellows and clear your pipes. This years rally is slated to be bigger than ever. Historic Lake Winnepesaukah, in its 82 years of operation, makes a beautiful setting for an organ rally. We hope you will join us to serenade the park guests and celebrate Memorial Day Weekend.

Limited accomodations are at the Comfort Inn Conference Center, 6710 Ringole Rd, East Ridge, Tennessee just off I-75. The motel is just south of Chattanooga, TN. The cut-off date is April 24th—be sure and mention “COAA.” Their phone is 423-893-7979. For those with RVs there is Holiday Travel Park on Ringole Rd, East Ridge exit, McSmith Rd. 706-891-9766.

More information will be in the mail. Questions: call Charles Walker at 404-892-0065.