

Miniature Model Organs

George Mackey

I have been a carver all of my life and a pattern maker by trade. Naturally I began making models, and since I have retired, I began making models of organs (Figure 1). I copied my Pell organ into a little hand, or monkey organ, complete with a roll (Figure 2). The organ doesn't actually play but there is room for a small music box in the bottom of the model.

The barrel organ is sort of a novelty—many COAA members have barrel organs but you never see one that is in the shape of the barrel, so I made this model (Figure 3 & the front cover). It even has spigot on the end of the barrel (along with a cup) in case you want a drink! The wheels on this organ are model airplane wheels but on the hand organ I made the wheels, bending the wood and manufacturing the spokes.

I use several types of wood; for example the barrel organ is made of Jelutong. This is a Malaysian wood, which has even grain. It is smooth and easy to carve (not quite as soft as Balsa). It is a wood used in pattern shops. Other woods include padouk, Spanish cedar and mahogany.

I have made four of these to this point in time. It takes a long time to produce an organ—probably about 30 hours (five working days) for each organ. Each organ has a different case style. The models can't be made cheaply so most wouldn't be interested. I basically make them for myself but would make one on demand if requested.

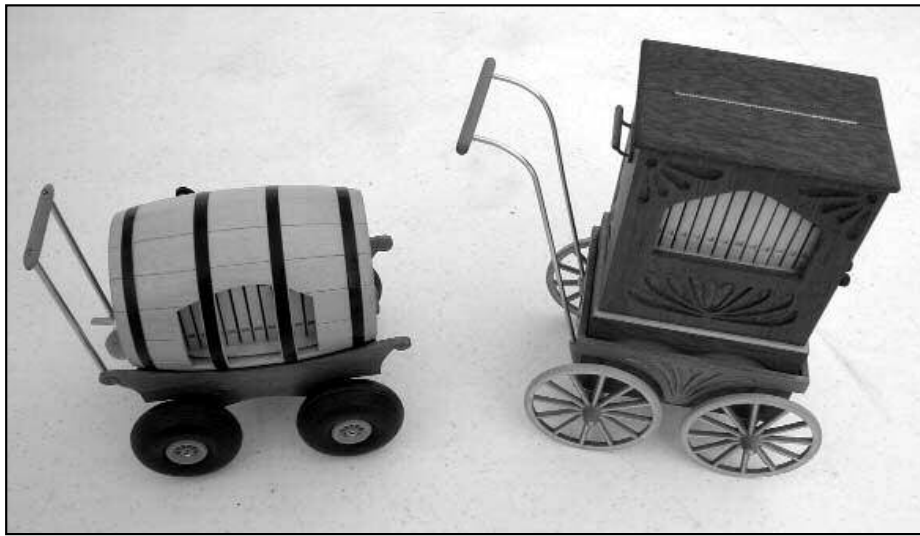


Figure 1. A carved "barrel" organ and a miniature Pell hand organ. Each organ requires at least 30 hours of carving and assembly. Each organ is approximately eight inches wide and three inches deep. The barrel organ is six inches tall and the hand organ is eight inches.

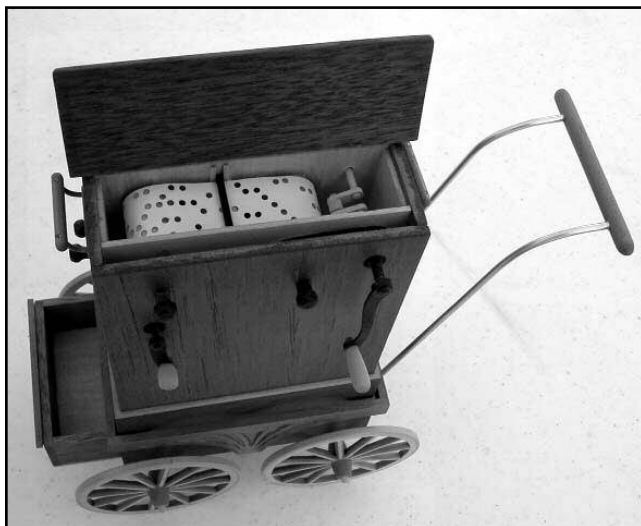


Figure 2. The reverse of the hand organ reveals the tiny roll, crankshaft and even a drawer below for the extra rolls.



Figure 3. The opposite side of the barrel organ has handles for both cranking the organ as well as rewinding at the end of the roll.

George Mackey worked as a silkscreen artist and wood pattern maker. He has been featured in art shows with his pen and ink drawings, wood carvings and half hulls. Since childhood, he has always been impressed with carousel organs, and now enjoys playing his 25-note Pell at organ rallies.