

Three Organs and a Gaviman

Dave Rohe

How did I get to have three organs in a trailer? I had three American organs in my collection and thought it would be good to have all three on display at organ rallies (Figures 1 & 2). I find it is no more difficult to trailer one than three. The first one is an Artizan A, the second is a Niagara 180, and the third is a Wurlitzer Style 146A. The organs have been trailered together for seven years. All three

The organ was converted to play Wurlitzer Style 125 rolls (Figure 4) but the factory didn't change any of the rest of the organ as it still works on pressure only. Most conversions would have included the change over to vacuum as well, but this organ was not altered that way. The organ, therefore, uses the typical Artizan pressure roller but with Wurlitzer rolls. The scale is basically the same except for the presence of the

three trombones which the Wurlitzer roll scale does not call for (these are "Tee'd" in this organ). The organ was obtained from Mike Naddeo in Gap, PA.— it appears that it had been a carnival organ as it was banged up quite a bit.



Figure 1. The three American organs, the Artizan A, the Niagara 180 and the Wurlitzer Style 146A fit neatly into the 18-foot trailer.

organs have done well in the trailer (except for normal maintenance problems) and I even leave them in during the winter with no heat and they hold their tune and play well the next spring with no problems. The organs are in an 18-foot trailer, which makes for a nice display. I don't use a generator, as this is not a parade-type organ trailer.

The Artizan Style "A" (Figure 3) was a Wurlitzer conversion, more than likely done at the factory after a trade-in.



Figure 2. Another view shows the close but tidy relationship between the three organs. Each organ is labeled so that viewers and listeners are not confused.



Figure 3. The Artizan A, as shown in an early catalog.

The Niagara 180 (Figures 5 & 6) is a rare one—there aren't too many Niagara's in the United States that I know of, possibly four or five and not many of those are original. The



Figure 4. A rear view details the back of the Artizan A organ. Note the pressure roller sitting on top of the tracker bar. This is a feature retained from the original Artizan organ even though the organ has been converted to play from Wurlitzer Style 125 music.

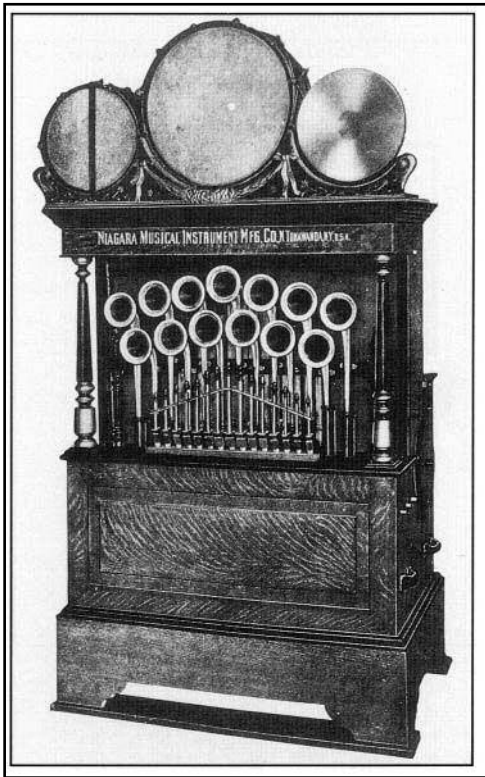


Figure 5. The rare Niagara 180 as illustrated in the Niagara catalog. The drums sit on top, similar to those organs made by the North T o n a w a n d a M u s i c a l Instrument Works.

one that I have was a barrel organ (and I still have the barrel for it) but I converted it to play Wurlitzer Style 125 rolls because they are readily available. This conversion didn't hurt the organ, however, as you can take out the roll frame and play the organ with the barrel if you wish. I listened to the barrel when I first obtained the organ but the barrel music didn't make too much sense.

The Wurlitzer 125 roll calls for the organ to have the trumpets playing all the time to get the best effect. If the trumpets are shut off the organ does not sound as good. On the Niagara, however, there are two sets of pipes that play with the trumpets and if the trumpets are shut off the organ still plays very nicely. A really nice feature if you want to soften

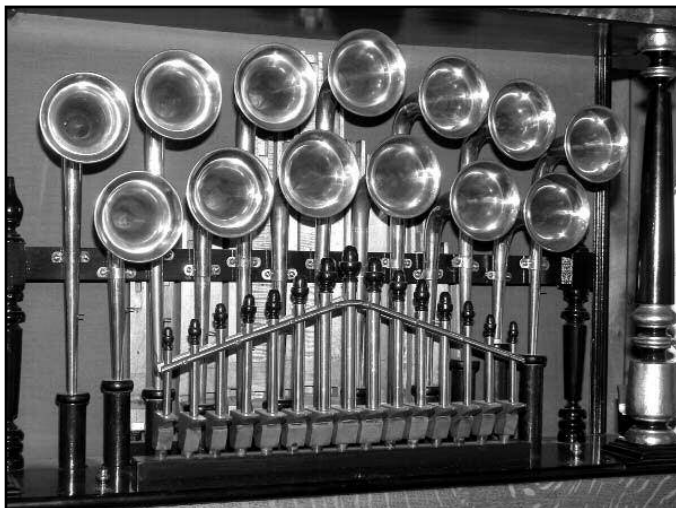


Figure 6. Sweet and mellow trumpets are a highlight of the Niagara.

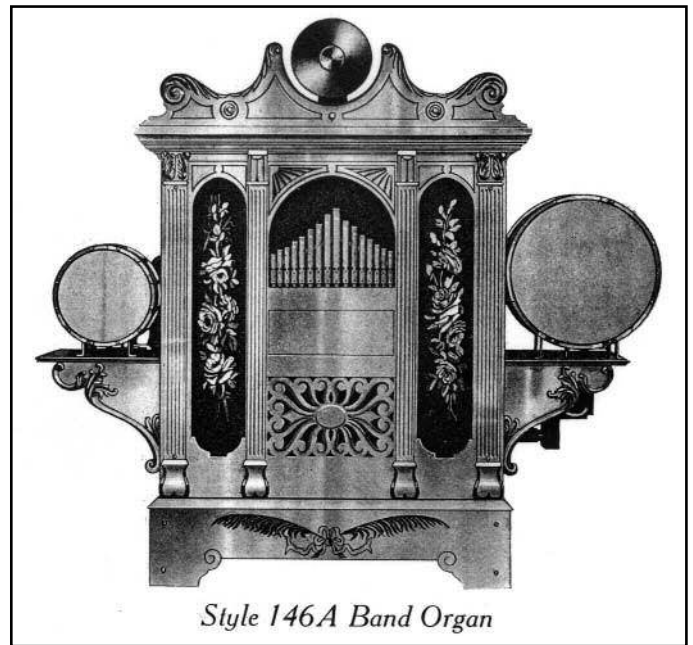


Figure 7. The Wurlitzer Style 146A as depicted in a 1923 Wurlitzer Company catalog.

the music from the organ. The trumpets on the Niagara are very sweet. These are not harsh like the ones on a Wurlitzer 125.

This organ was obtained from Jere Rider, Summit, NJ, in very good condition.

The Wurlitzer 146A is an original organ with added bells (**Figures 7 & 8**). The Wurlitzer was on a carousel in California before being obtained by a collector in Pennsylvania who owned the organ for around 10 years before selling it to a shop owned by Mr. Hamilton (who then sold it to Mike Naddeo).

The Style 146A uses the Wurlitzer Style 150 roll which has several more notes than the Wurlitzer 125 roll. It includes registrations to turn the bells on and off.

I like the American organs and I like the carnival sound. These organs provide that type of music. The rally crowd

seems to enjoy the variety of American organs that I display. Would I like to have a larger trailer with the other two American Organs represented (North T o n a w a n d a M u s i c a l Instrument Works and deKleist)? No way! This is enough for me.



Figure 8. The original Wurlitzer decal below the front rank of violin pipes.

Dave Rohe and his wife, Pat, live in New Jersey where they enjoy mechanical music as well as gardening. Dave is now retired as a self-employed mechanic. They have been collectors of mechanical music since 1983 and organ owners since 1985.