

Music Box Organs

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One part of this great hobby is that of collecting the artifacts and related items that make it even more fun. Most collectors only have a few playing organs; however, collecting means that we're supposed to, well collect! So it was many years ago that I

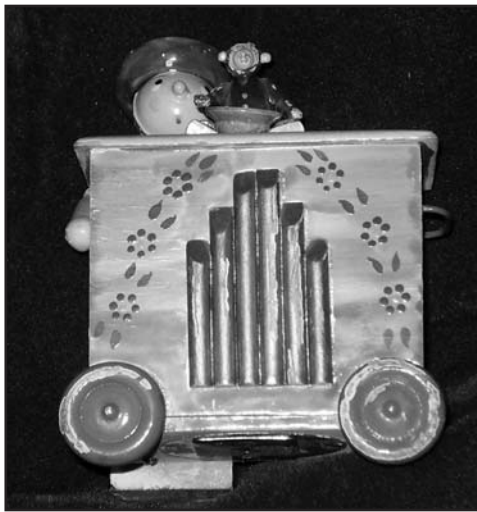


Figure 4. Dating from the 1930-40s era, this is made of a plaster type material and measures about 4" square. Unknown maker or country.

embarked on this odyssey of collecting everything and anything I can related to the organ grinder and carousel organ. I've never done a complete inventory; however it easily numbers in the hundreds of items.

This article features some of the more "entertaining" of the organ pieces, because each of them has a music box. With rare exception, they were made in either Germany or France. Those I enjoy the most have an operable crank which allows the musical movement to be played. Included are a few that come from France and

are meant to hang on the wall; these are identified by the pull string at the bottom. Historically, pull-pull string music boxes don't fare very well because eventually, a child, or someone, pulls the string too hard and dis-



Figure 2. A contemporary promo piece made from wood from Jaeger & Brommer, Germany.



Figure 3. Typical "smoker" from Germany, circa 1985. It is wood, with a manivelle music movement. About 6" tall.

engages it from the mechanism... and as we all know, repairing such items are, well, challenging.

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Most of the organs featured here are relatively contemporary, within the past 15 years, and were made as novelties. There are a couple exceptions: The organ firm of Jaeger and Brommer has made at least two model organs promoting their products (Figure 2); and the renowned Siegfried Wendel has two models of himself and his Bacicalupo organ, one is a music box and the other a whistler.

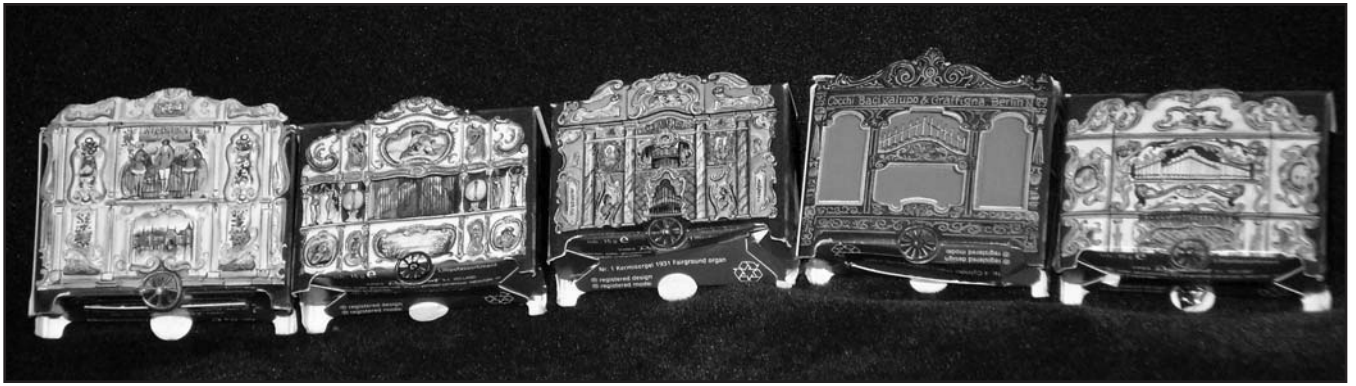


Figure 4. An unusual array of street organs, each made of paper. About 3" square, circa 1990.

Hope you enjoy these photos as much as I've enjoyed collecting them. I'm certain there are many more out there; and I have another dozen or so that I didn't include this time. It would be interesting to see how many other variations have been made over the decades.

Happy cranking!

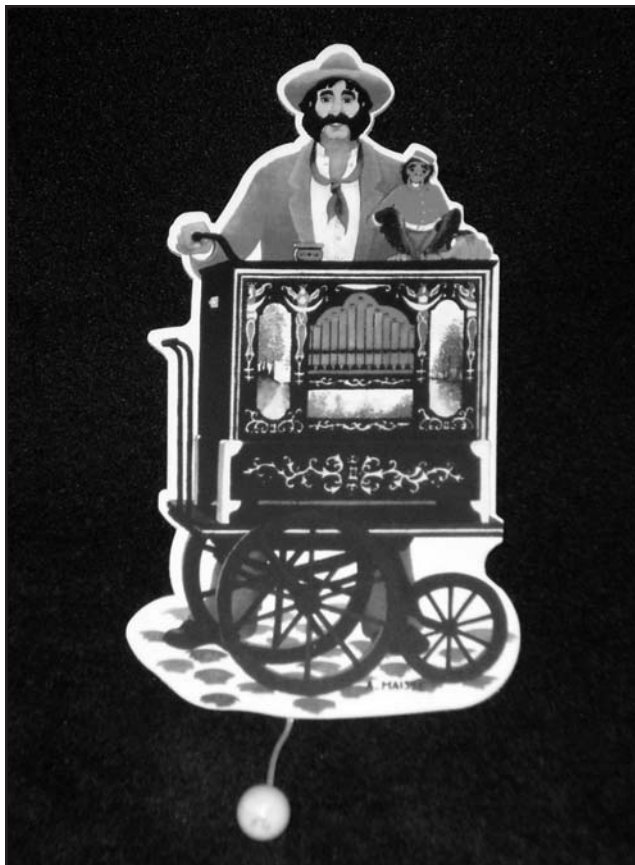


Figure 5 (above). From France, a detailed cardboard grinder with pull-cord mechanism. About 7" tall.

Figure 6 (right, top). The renowned Limonaire firm is featured, made of cardboard and with pull-cord mechanism.

Figure 7 (right, below). Made of plaster of Paris, a classic Bruder-style organ with wind-up mechanism, circa 2000.

