



# AMICA International

## Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association

### AMICA Articles

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#### **A band organ**

This is a band organ. It is big, it is loud, it entertains the public and that is what it was made to do. Band organs were created for entertaining crowds, usually outdoors at fairs, circuses and other forms of entertainment. Band organs play automatically. This organ, while Victorian in its style, is manufactured in the 21st century.



Photo and Instrument: Courtesy of Stinson Band Organ Company

#### **110 Key Gavioli Band Organ**

This organ was imported by Gavioli's New York City Bond Street office. It was the largest Gavioli imported to America in the old days. It is the style extra-powerful. The Gavioli was first used in New York City's huge Lenox Lyceum Roller Skating Palace. It was then sold by Louis Berni to Euclid Beach Park, Cleveland, Ohio for use in their 20,000 square foot roller rink. In 1910 they paid \$15,000.00 for it. It remained in this park for over 50 years. The 110 Gavioli comprises the full chromatic compass of a 100 piece concert band from its 21 bass and contra-bass notes to its highest piccolos. The instrument weighs 4 tons and has over 1000 pipes. It is the only original Style 110 key Gavioli known to exist.



Photo courtesy of the Trager Collection

### **Music on folded Cardboard "Books" ...**

Band organs originally usually use book music, folded sheets of heavy paper punched with holes, to tell them what notes to play (courtesy of Joe Lavacchia)



### **... or Music on Paper Rolls**

Around the 20th century paper rolls were used. Two spools were employed so one could be playing while the other was being rewound or changed, giving you continuous music. This is the back of a Wurlitzer carousel organ (courtesy of Joe Lavacchia).



### **Band organ figurine**

Band organs are often decorated with figures like this one.  
Photo and Instrument: Courtesy of Stinson Band Organ Company



## Dance hall organ

Before the disco, before the jukebox, there was the dance hall, with music provided by the dance hall organ.



## Carousel organ

This colorful organ provides the cheery music enjoyed by carousel riders (and everyone else around.) If you happen to pass through Mansfield, Ohio you can see an organ of this type at the Richland Park Carousel.



Photo and Instrument: Courtesy of Stinson Band Organ Company

## A monkey organ

Why do they call this a monkey organ? Where's the monkey? A monkey organ is a small organ operated by turning a hand crank. The small size of these instruments made them suitable for use by street performers, known as organ grinders. At one time (a long time ago) organ grinders were often accompanied by live monkeys, who not only attracted attention, but worked the crowd of spectators by carrying a cup to collect coins.



Photo and Instrument: Courtesy of Debence Antique Music World

## Turning the crank

The organ plays when the crank is turned. No batteries or electricity are required, so monkey organs are very portable. They are well suited for outdoor performance.



John Smith Busker Organ

## Music on punched paper

Music for monkey organs is often punched rolls of paper like this one. Since monkey organs are generally used as a form of public entertainment, they often play crowd-pleasing popular music.



Photo and Instrument: Courtesy of Debence Antique Music World

## Monkey

These days, organ grinders are often accompanied by toy monkeys, not live ones.



## Organette

Cranked, the large hold in the paper roll are \*the\* valve that admits air to the reeds.



## Roller organ

Wooden 'cobs' with staple-like projections push arms that open reed pallets. Cobs are interchangeable. Note crank on the front.



## Reed organ

Wilcox & White Symphony Player (Jon Hall)





## Reed Organ and Push-Up Player Combo (Rare!!)



Wilcox & White Combination Reed Player-Organ and Piano push-up Player (Jon Hall)

## Calliope

Pronounce either "Cal-ee-<oh>-pea" or "Ca-<lie>-oh-pea" (potato, potatah ..)

This one is powered by compressed air and is automatically played.

