

The  
**Encyclopedia**  
of  
**Disc Music Boxes**  
1881-1920

A History, Catalog Raisonné, and Appreciation



by **Q. David Bowers**

Foreword by **Steve Bozhek**

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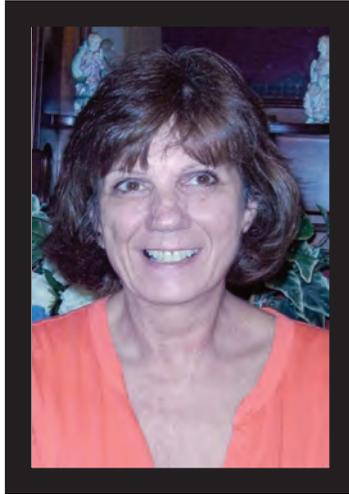
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*Dedicated to the late*



*Evelyn Rose Mishkin*

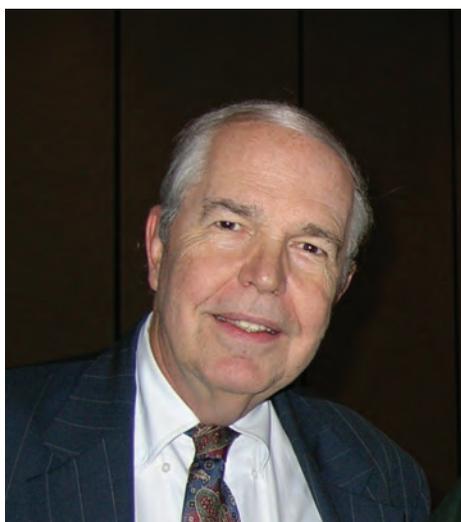
*1953-2015 Who was instrumental in the production of this book.*



## **What is AMICA?**

The *Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association* is an educational non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of a unique slice of musical heritage. With worldwide appreciation of historic automatic musical instruments, AMICA provides a lively forum for the sharing of the many aspects of this very special interest. AMICA's website - [www.amica.org](http://www.amica.org)

AMICA was founded in San Francisco in 1963. In addition to its goal of preservation, it introduces people from all walks of life to the beauty and value of automatic musical instruments. AMICA has prevented the destruction of many fine rare instruments that have been restored to their former glory. Not only that, but AMICA has placed many instruments in places where the general public can see, hear and enjoy these glorious instruments from the past, as opposed to typical museum displays that appeal only to the sense of sight.



**Q. David Bowers**

**Q. David Bowers** has collected, studied, and enjoyed automatic musical instruments, beginning in 1960. In the intervening years he has written several books on the subject, including *A Guide Book of Automatic Musical Instruments* (1966), *Put Another Nickel In* (1968), *Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments* (1971), and *Treasures of Mechanical Music* (co-authored with Arthur A. Reblitz, 1981). He has contributed many articles to the journals of the Musical Box Society International and AMICA (Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors Association), and is one of just four recipients of the Musical Box Society International's Lifetime Service Award. The author, whose main business over the years has been as a dealer in rare coins, has traveled extensively through America and Europe seeking information relating to automatic musical instruments.

From the late 1960s to the early 1980s he was a partner in Hathaway & Bowers, Inc. (with Terry Hathaway), American International Galleries, Inc. (with Bonnie Tekstra), and the Mekanisk Musik Museum A/S (Copenhagen, with Claes O. Friberg). These companies were major suppliers and advisors to many of the finest private and museum collections ever formed, including those of Michael Ames, Donald D. Barr, Bellm's Cars and Music of Yesterday, Alan Bies, British Piano Museum, Arthur "Bud" Bronson, Jens Carlson, Dr. George and Susie Coade, Jerry Cohen, Deutsches Musikautomatenmuseum Bruchsal, Disneyland and Walt Disney World, Klaus Fischer, Robert Gilson, Kenneth Goldman, Murtogh Guinness, Roy Haning and Neal White, Judge Roy O. Hofheinz (Astroworld), Knott's Berry Farm, Jim and Sherrie Krughoff, Claude P. Marchal, Marino Marini, Hayes McClaran, Bob and Paul Milhous, Dr. Robert Miller, J.B. Nethercutt (San Sylmar museum), Sam's Town (Sam Gordon, Shingle Springs, California), Jasper Sanfilippo, Tim Trager, Van Speelklok tot Pierement Museum (Utrecht; name changed to Museum Speelklok in 2010), Heinrich Weiss-Stauffacher, Siegfried Wendel, and many more.

A 1960 graduate of the Pennsylvania State University, he is a recipient of the Pennsylvania State University College of Business Administration's Alumni Achievement Award (1976), a fellow of the American Antiquarian Association, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the American Numismatic Society, and is a trustee of the New Hampshire Historical Society (2010-2011).

**Steve Boehck** wrote the Foreword.

**Terry Smythe**, past editor of the *AMICA Bulletin*, author and researcher, supervised the book for AMICA and did the graphics and related layout.

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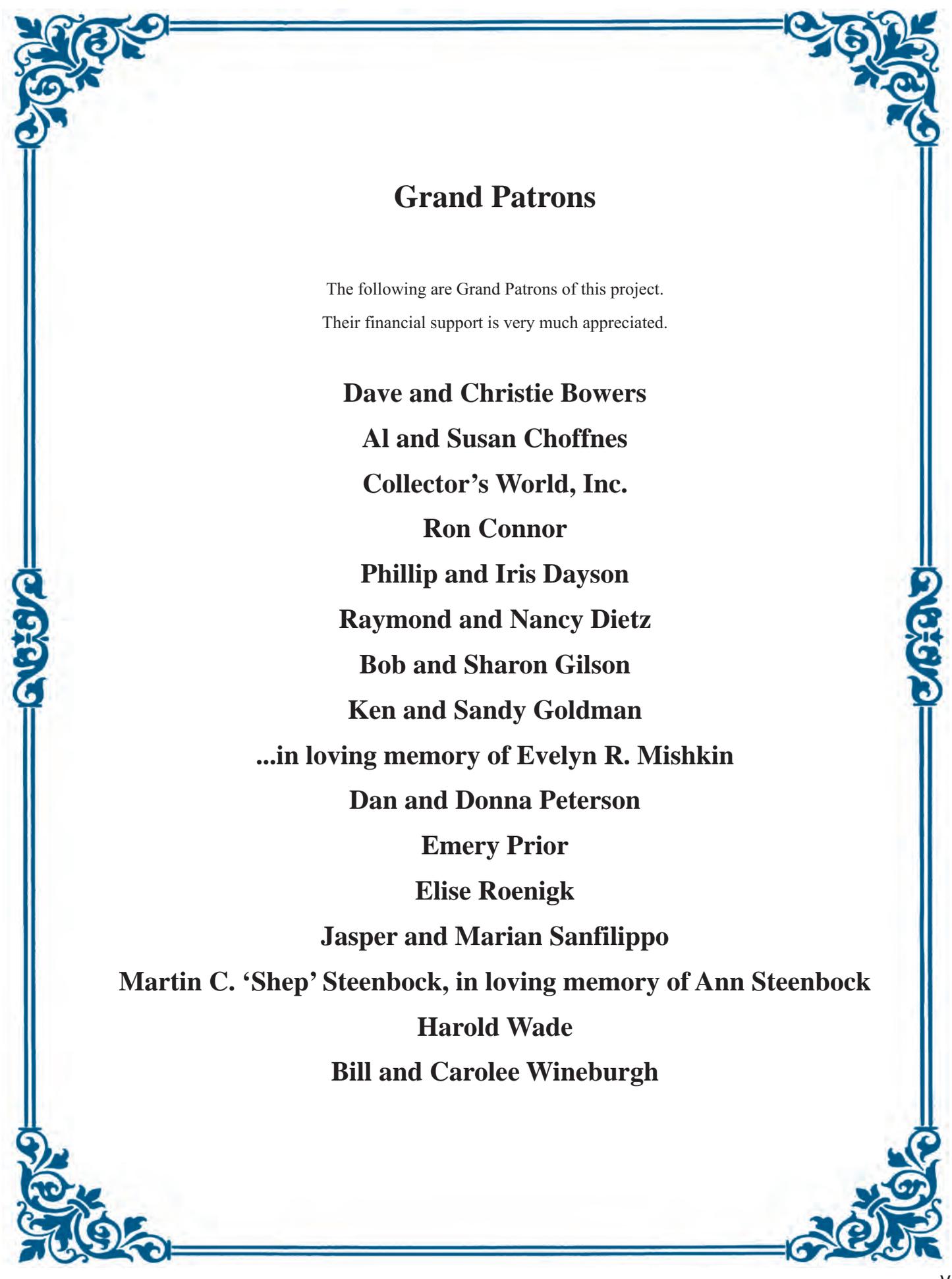
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**Tim Trager** loaned several catalogs..

**Harold Wade** provided information about instruments in his collection.

To respect privacy, pictures of instruments in private collections have not been attributed to ownership. The owners are, however, included in the credits above.



## **Grand Patrons**

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**...in loving memory of Evelyn R. Mishkin**

**Dan and Donna Peterson**

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**Jasper and Marian Sanfilippo**

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# Easy-Finding List of Music Box Names and Trademarks

This Easy-Finding List gives the names and trademarks of various disc music boxes and related instruments and the chapters in which *primary information* about them can be found. For many other mentions see the Index.

**Adler** • Adler Musikwerke • Chapter 6

**Aegir** • Ludwig & Co. • Chapter 17

**Alexandra** • B.H. Abrahams Co. • Chapter 5

**Arion** • Société Anonyme Harmonie • Chapter 10

**Ariophon** • Plagwitz Musikwerke “Ariophon,” R.M. Polter • Chapter 26

**Arno** • Arno Musical Box Co. • Chapter 8

**Baskánion (Bascanion)** • Leipziger Musikwerke (formerly Paul Ehrlich & Co.) • Chapter 15

**Britannia** • B.H. Abrahams Co. • Chapter 5

**Capital** • F.G. Otto & Sons • Chapter 23

**Celesta** • Berliner Musikinstrumenten-Fabrik (Formerly Ch. F. Pietschmann & Söhne) • Chapter 9

**Coronation** • Vereingte Uhrenfabrik von Gebrüder Junghans und Thomas Haller A.-G. • Chapter 12

**Criterion** • F.G. Otto & Sons • Chapter 23

**Crown** • F.G. Otto & Sons • Chapter 23

**Edelweiss** • Hermann Thorens • Chapter 40

**Empress** • Mermod Frères / Lyon & Healy • Chapter 19

**Euphonia** • F.G. Otto & Sons • Chapter 23

**Euphonion** • Polyphon Musikwerke • Chapter 28

**Euterpephon** • Otto Helbig & Polikeit • Chapter 11

**Fortuna** • Adler Musikwerke / Zimmermann • Chapter 6

**Gloria** • E. Paillard & Cie • Chapter 25

**Harmonia** • Société Anonyme Harmonie • Chapter 10

**Helvetia** • Hermann Thorens • Chapter 40

**Hymnophon** • Fabrik Müller’scher Musikwerke Müller & Co. • Chapter 22

**Imperator** • F. Ad. Richter & Cie • Chapter 30

**Imperial** • B.H. Abrahams Co. • Chapter 5

**Imperial Symphonion** • (The) Symphonion Manufacturing Co. • Chapter 36

**Kalliope** • Kalliope Musikwerke • Chapter 13

**Komet** • Komet Musikwerkefabrik • Chapter 14

**Libellion** • F. Ad. Richter & Cie • Chapter 30

**Lipsia** • W. & R. • Chapter 42

**Lochmann “Original”** • Original Musikwerke Paul Lochmann G.m.b.H. • Chapter 18

**Lyraphon** • Orphenion Musikwerke • Chapter 22

**Mira** • Mermod Frères • Chapter 19

**Monarch** • American Music Box Co. • Chapter 7

**Monopol** • Leipziger Musikwerke (formerly Paul Ehrlich & Co.) • Chapter 15

**New Century** • E. Paillard & Co. / Symphonion Manufacturing Co. • Chapter 25 & Chapter 37

**Olympia** • F.G. Otto & Sons • Chapter 23

**Orphenion** • Orphenion Musikwerke • Chapter 22

**Orpheus** • Ludwig & Wild • Chapter 17

**Perfection** • Perfection Music Box Co. • Chapter 26

**Phönix** • Leipziger Musikwerke Phönix Schmidt & Co. • Chapter 16

**Polyhymnia** • K. Heilbrunn Söhne • Chapter 20

**Polyhymnia** • Metall-Industrie Schönebeck A-.G • Chapter 21

**Polymnia** • Société Anonyme Fabriques Réunies • Chapter 34

**Polyphon** • Polyphon Musikwerke • Chapter 28

**Regina** • Regina Music Box Co. • Chapter 29

**Roepke** • Roepke & Co., Ltd. • Chapter 31

**Saxonia** • Leipziger Musikwerke Phönix Schmidt & Co. • Chapter 16

**Serenada** • Otto Helbig & Polikeit • Chapter 11

**Silvanigra** • Vereingte Uhrenfabrik von Gebrüder Junghans und Thomas Haller A-.G. • Chapter 12

**Sirion** • Sirion Mechanische Musikwerke Bortmann & Keller • Chapter 33

**Stella** • Mermod Frères • Chapter 19

**Sterling** • F.G. Otto & Sons • Chapter 23

**Sun** • Schrämlli & Tschudin • Chapter 32

**Symphonion** • Symphonion Musikwerke • Chapter 35

**Tammany Concert Grand Organet** • Tammany Organet Co. • Chapter 38

**Tannhäuser** • Musikwerke Tannhäuser • Chapter 39

**Triumph** • American Music Box Co. • Chapter 7

**Troubadour** • Polyphon Musikwerke made *some* Troubadour models • Chapter 28

**Troubadour** • Troubadour-Musikwerke B. Grosz & Co. • Chapter 41

**Unikon** • Berliner Musikinstrumenten-Fabrik (Formerly Ch. F. Pietschmann & Söhne) • Chapter 9

# Easy-Finding List of Disc Music Box Makers

This Easy-Finding list gives the chapter number for music box makers, listed by the first letter of the trade name and also by the main name of the firm (to facilitate ease of use by international readers). For many other mentions see the Index.

**Adler Musikwerke** • Chapter 6

**American Music Box Company** • Chapter 7

**Arno Musical Box Co.** • Chapter 8

**B.H. Abrahams Co.** • Chapter 5

**Berliner Musikinstrumenten-Fabrik A.-G.** • Chapter 9

**Brachhausen & Riessner (1889-1895)** • Chapter 28

**Ch. F. Pietschmann & Söhne (firm succeeding)** • Chapter 9

**Deutsche Musikwerke System Pietschmann A.-G.** • Chapter 9

**E. Paillard & Cie** • Chapter 25

**Ehrlich & Co.** • Chapter 15

**F. Ad. Richter & Cie** • Chapter 30

**F.G. Otto & Sons** • Chapter 23

**Fabrik Lochmann'scher Musikwerke** • Chapter 35

**Fabrik Lochmann'scher Musikwerke Kuhno, Lochmann & Co.** • Chapter 35

**Fabrik Müller'scher Musikwerke Müller & Co.** • Chapter 22

**Gebrüder Lochmann Original Musikwerke** • Chapter 18

**Heilbrunn, E., Söhne** • Chapter 20

**Helbig & Polikeit** • Chapter 11

**Hermann Thorens** • Chapter 40

**K. Heilbrunn Söhne** • Chapter 20

**Kalliope Musikwerke** • Chapter 13

**Komet Musikwerkefabrik Bauer & Co.** • Chapter 14

**Komet Musikwerkefabrik Pöllnitz & Bauer** • Chapter 14

**Leipziger Musikwerke (formerly Paul Ehrlich & Co.)** • Chapter 15

**Leipziger Musikwerke "Phönix" Schmidt & Co.** • Chapter 16

**Leipziger Musikwerke** • Chapter 15

**Leipziger Musikwerke Libellion, Schützhold & Werner (1892-1894)** • Chapter 30

**Lochmann (Fabrik Lochmann'scher Musikwerke) • Chapter 35**

**Lochmann (Paul Lochmann) • Chapter 18**

**Ludwig & Co • Chapter 17**

**Mermod Frères • Chapter 19**

**Metall-Industrie Schönebeck A.-G. • Chapter 21**

**Musikwerke Tannhäuser (1898-1900) • Chapter 39**

**Musikwerke Tannhäuser Oskar Caspar (1900-1901) • Chapter 39**

**Nähmaschinenfabrik und Eisengießerie, Seidel & Naumann • Chapter 18**

**Neue Leipziger Musikwerke, A. Buff-Hedinger • Chapter 15**

**Neumann, A.W. • Chapter 11**

**New Century Music Box Company • Chapter 37**

**Original Musikwerke Paul Lochmann G.m.b.H. • Chapter 18**

**Orphenion Musikwerke • Chapter 22**

**Orphenion Musikwerke Seiler, Müller & Hensch (1899) • Chapter 22**

**Otto (F.G. Otto & Sons) • Chapter 23**

**Otto Helbig & Polikeit • Chapter 11**

**Otto Manufacturing Company (1904-1905) • Chapter 23**

**Paillard (E. Paillard & Cie) • Chapter 25**

**Paul Ehrlich & Co. • Chapter 15**

**Perfection Music Box Company • Chapter 26**

**Pietschmann & Söhne (firm succeeding) • Chapter 9**

**Plagwitzer Musikwerke "Ariophon," R.M. Polter • Chapter 27**

**Plagwitzer Musikwerke, R.M. Polter • Chapter 27**

**Polter (Plagwitzer Musikwerke, R.M. Polter) • Chapter 27**

**Polyphon Musikwerke • Chapter 28**

**Regina Company (1904-1921) • Chapter 29**

**Regina Music Box Company (1892-1904) • Chapter 29**

**Richter (F. Ad. Richter & Cie) • Chapter 30**

**Roepke & Company, Ltd. • Chapter 31**

**Ruckert (Bruno Rückert 1890-1893) • (Bruno Rückert Orphenion Musikwerke-Fabrik 1893-1899)**  
 Chapter 22

**Schmidt & Co. • Chapter 16**

**Schrämli & Tschudin • Chapter 32**

**Schützhold & Werner (1892-1894) • Chapter 30**  
**Seidel & Naumann • Chapter 33**  
**Sirion Mechanische Musikwerke, Bortmann & Keller • Chapter 33**  
**Société Anonyme Fabriques Réunies • Chapter 34**  
**Société Anonyme Harmonia • Chapter 10**  
**Sun Music Box Manufacturing Co. • Chapter 32**  
**Symphonion (*The Symphonion Manufacturing Company*) • Chapter 36**  
**Symphonion Manufacturing Company • Chapter 37**  
**Symphonion Musikwerke • Chapter 35**  
**Tammany Organet Company • Chapter 38**  
**Tannhäuser (Musikwerke Tannhäuser) • Chapter 39**  
**Thorens (Hermann Thorens) • Chapter 40**  
**Thost & Richter (Leipzig 1891-1892) • Chapter 30**  
**Troubadour-Musikwerke B. Grosz & Co. • Chapter 41**  
**Vereingte Uhrenfabrik von Gebrüder Junghans und Thomas Haller A.-G. • Chapter 12**  
**W. & R. • Chapter 42**

# Foreword



**Steve Boehck**

In the hobby of collecting antique mechanical music machines one name stands out as the person who has done the most to provide information in book form about these musical marvels that we collectors love. And that name is, of course, Q. David Bowers. From his second book, *Put Another Nickel In*, to the collectors' "Bible" on the subject, *The Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments* and the numerous volumes that have followed, our curiosity about these delightful machines and the people who built them has been satisfied to a large extent. Of course being an avid historian of these machines myself, I subscribe to the axiom that there can never be too much information about them. The once-obscure history of this industry (and it was a large industry at one time employing thousands of workers) and the various instruments that have provided untold joy and elation to their listeners for hundreds of years in some instances, has come to light in large measure due to the efforts of Dave Bowers. So, this latest effort on disc musical boxes, with the help of many authorities in the field contributing to its compilation, will be a great boon to all of us who have a special fondness for this genre of mechanical music.

Please permit me to take a little trip down memory lane about my own experience with disc boxes, an important part of my life:

I can trace my fascination with the magical sound of a plucked steel reed back to my earliest childhood when I was given a musical teddy bear for Christmas. Even to this day I can remember being lulled to sleep, listening to the whirring of the fan in the spring motor and the tinkling of the small musical movement playing Brahms' Lullaby, with my ear pressed close to the bear's belly. Several years later in the mid-1950s, both sets of my grandparents made separate extensive "grand tour" excursions to Europe and brought back many musical novelties as presents. Our family got a Griesbaum Whistler, a singing bird in a gilded cage, and I got a Thorens music box and a small musical Swiss chalet. Like so many other children growing up in the 1950s, I was exposed to novelty forms of mechanical music in a small way, at an early age.

During this same time my parents were interested in antiques and were especially smitten with the "early Americans" antique craze of that era. On the long drives on our summer vacations to visit relatives in the Midwest they would add a lot of enjoyment by antiquing all along the way up and back. While I cannot remember ever seeing an antique music box on these diversions, probably because most of the antique shops we visited handled more rustic type items. From childhood into my teen years I was fascinated with antiques of all kinds.

My first serious exposure to antique music boxes came in 1960 when we had just moved into our new home. My mother had bought a set of cane-bottom chairs at a local antique shop for our new breakfast room. She wanted me to go with her when she picked them up, to help get them into the car. Imagine my delight when I came across three different antique music boxes in this shop. A rare sight indeed! There were two disc boxes and a large Swiss cartel box. I knew I had to have one after I heard all of them render their live performances. But of course there was the price to consider. I didn't have much money at age 14 except for a small allowance. And then there were the two types to choose from—disc or cylinder? Also there was the condition factor to consider, as I basically didn't know anything about antique music boxes. I paused to consider the opportunity, then applied a little common sense to the decision making process.

The Swiss cylinder box sounded very nice but was very dirty. The price was \$75, but a big drawback was somebody had placed a potted plant on the lid marquetry which had gotten it wet. Therefore, most of the intricate inlay design was missing. I reasoned that this would probably be very expensive to fix, if in fact it could be repaired at all, so I eliminated it from consideration.

The next prospect was a 17-inch Stella in a handsomely carved mahogany case with a drawer in the bottom full of discs and an original tune list of discs that had been kept with the box. This was priced at \$150. It also sounded very nice and the large number of discs (there must have been 30 to 40) was a very appealing factor for me. But when I took the disc off to play another tune, I could see that there were several broken teeth on the treble end of the comb. As I said before, I didn't know anything about these antique machines, but I instinctively knew that a bunch of broken teeth could not be a good thing. So, this potential candidate was also eliminated. Looking back on it, I suppose the reason it still sounded very nice is that the lower of the duplex combs was hidden from view and was still playing the notes missing from the upper comb.

The third possibility was also a disc box. It was a 15<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>-inch Olympia in a very handsomely pressed "carved" mahogany case and priced at \$125 with 12 discs. I took the disc off and was pleased to see that there were no broken teeth in the single comb and the box looked in mint condition. Further, it sounded beautiful. At this time I wasn't aware of single and double comb or duplex comb variations. So my choice was made! I would have to have the Olympia...but how was I going to pay for it? My meager weekly allowance was certainly not going to make a dent in the price.

Although \$125 doesn't sound like all that much money today, at the time it was a large amount, especially to a 14 year old boy. I pulled my mother aside and reminded her that my birthday was next month, in November, with Christmas following in December. I made a pact with her that if she bought me the Olympia and applied \$75. toward my birthday and Christmas present, I would work off the other \$50 by doing extra yard work and odd jobs around the house. And to my surprise and delight she agreed. The stars must have been aligned in their right positions!

So, my first venture into the collecting field of antique mechanical music was a disc-playing instrument. And that, as they say, was the proverbial "slippery slope" for me, as it was all downhill and easy after that. Since that time I have had a special fondness for disc boxes because of the relative ease with which one can acquire an almost unlimited library of music for them. This does not hold true of course, if you get an example from a very rare maker or a model for which discs are hard to find. I have never counted all the discs we have, but it is a few thousand. The only disc machine for which we don't have many discs is our Swiss "Gloria" drum and bell box.

I must say that I love the history of these machines and their makers almost as much as the unique sound of beautiful music they produce. Upon getting my first old music box, I immediately went to the big public library downtown looking for books on the subject of old instruments. Of course this was several years before Dave Bowers' first efforts. To my surprise and chagrin, in 1960 they had only three. I checked all of them out and devoured all the information they contained, thirsting for even more. We now have probably 90 percent of all the books ever published on mechanical music in our library along with an extensive collection of original literature on the subject.

In about 1966 I came across Al and Lucile Hacker, who were demonstrating their antique disc and cylinder boxes at a department store in downtown Houston. This was how they sold recordings of their boxes. They put on a fine display and demonstration. They dressed in their fine Victorian costumes which added to the success of their venture. They were very friendly and after a nice conversation wherein I told them about my collection, they

convinced me to join the Musical Box Society International. At that time this was the only organization devoted to collecting and preserving mechanical music. It was also that year that I met Alan Bies, who according to an article in the *Houston Chronicle*, “was a teenager and Houston’s only antique music box collector.” When I came home from college at Thanksgiving that year, I looked him up and we have been great friends ever since. After I graduated from Texas Christian University, I spent a couple of years in Germany at the expense of Uncle Sam’s Army. I was very fortunate to be in the cradle of the disc music box industry instead of South East Asia. I met some great people there and brought home a few disc box treasures.

Our collection now spans the entire range of mechanical music. As mentioned earlier, I am an avid historian for all of mechanical music machines, collecting all the original advertising literature and ephemera that I can find concerning them. It has been my experience in seeking contemporary printed material for these instruments, examples for disc music boxes are the most prevalent. This is another factor that has drawn me closer to disc boxes. We have shared this knowledge and information with other collectors by writing articles, giving workshops, and putting on displays and demonstrations for other collectors and interested persons.

We usually always recommend to people who only want “one” antique music box that it should be a good 15½-inch double-comb Regina or Polyphon, the discs for which are interchangeable. You will not get the musical subtleties of some examples of fine and exotic musical format cylinder boxes, but in this disc size you can obtain the largest variety of classical, ethnic, popular, ragtime, and dance music as well as Christmas carols and other unusual arrangements. Literally there are several thousand tunes to pick from. Original discs of this size and the two makes are the most common. Adding to this pleasure, there are several people in America and England who provide new copies of old discs, a field highlighted by the Porter Music Box Company which offers hundreds of new and modern musical arrangements.

Returning to Dave Bowers’ latest book, I feel certain that everyone will enjoy *The Encyclopedia of Disc Music Boxes* very much. Even if you have only a slight interest in this aspect of the mechanical music field, you will be introduced to the most comprehensive and complete volume covering the history of various disc box makers and their products. If you have any questions about disc boxes, I am confident you can find the answers here in this book. Happy collecting and spread the joy!

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