

## Rare Welte-Philharmonie Organ Scheduled to Play Again

One of the last remaining Welte-Philharmonie player organs in the world is to be restored to full working condition. The instrument belongs to the **Museum of Music Automaton Seewen SO, Switzerland**. The project includes installation in a newly prepared concert hall ("KlangKunst-Saal"), and the preservation of a collection of over 1,300 rolls of invaluable historic performances by famous organists, most of whom were born in the 19<sup>th</sup>c. Few of these organists ever made phonograph or gramophone recordings. The rolls were released between 1912 and 1930 and thus represent a rare and precious musical heritage.

Dr. Christoph E. Haenggi, Director of the museum, announced the restoration in February 2006. Years of world-wide investigations into these instruments, and submissions from experts and organ builders, began in 1998 with the Seewen organ's removal and storage while the Museum prepared for extensions. Haenggi said "the project involves one of the world's last completely-preserved Welte-Philharmonie organs. It is of incalculable value both to the musical world as well as that of mechanical musical reproduction. It will fully unite these two areas". Haenggi continued "The organ is amongst the most comprehensive and original of the remaining Freiburg-built instruments, an ideal vehicle for playing the finest roll-recordings ever made by Welte's greatest artists. Few instruments of this size and type were ever constructed and hardly any survive. The organ at Seewen retains the full integrity of an original Freiburg instrument. When put together with our collection of rolls, we will undoubtedly have a unique world heritage resource here in Seewen."

Haenggi, since his appointment as Director of the Museum in 2003, has been the driving force in constructing the new "KlangKunst-Saal", central objective in the Museum's strategies to 2010. "Player pianos and orchestrions in full working condition will also be exhibited and played in this hall, but the restored organ will form the major focus, both visually and musically. We will have opportunities here for live-artists and roll-recorded concerts which will add new dimensions to our exhibitions" said Haenggi.

Swiss organ experts, such as Rudolf Bruhin, Basel, responsible for organ matters in the *Eidgenössischen Kommission für Denkmalpflege* (the Swiss Federal heritage committee), and European experts such as Dr. Werner König, a musicologist from Bergen, Netherlands, unanimously agree that this project is critically important to Swiss, European and world cultural heritage.

A committee was established in 2005 to guide the restoration process. It consists of:  
Dr. Christoph E. Hänggi, director of the museum and project leader  
Georg Hofmeier, president of the Society of Museum of Music **Automaton** Seewen (GMS)  
Bernhard Prisi, head of the museum's restoration atelier  
Dr. h.c. Heinrich Weiss, honorary president of the museum's board of directors  
David Rumsey, organist and organ consultant

### The Welte Company

The Welte Company was a German organ firm which was first established in 1832 at Vörenbach (Black-Forest) by automata manufacturer Michael Welte (1807-1880). In c1865 he moved to Freiburg/Breisgau and the firm was registered there as *M. Welte & Söhne*. During the remainder of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Welte firm expanded considerably and became

particularly noted for their orchestrations.

Welte's "Cabinet player", a reproducing piano without keyboard which bore the Mignon label, was first patented in 1904 while the firm was under the direction of Edwin Welte (1876-1958, grandson of the founder). The prototype was exhibited during late 1904 in Leipzig and became commercially available from early 1905. The Vorsetzer came on the market in 1908. Mignon was integrated into their upright pianos in 1909, and into their grand pianos from 1913.

In 1908 the technology was adapted and applied to the Welte "Philharmonic Autograph Organ". This was the forerunner of the "Welte-Philharmonie Organ" which was first publicly displayed at the Turin Exhibition of 1911. The firm then went on to successfully market player organs, cinema organs and, later, when their market contracted during the 1930s, church organs. They concurrently produced rolls of performances by the greatest organists of the day and sold them with considerable commercial success. From 1865-1917 they also ran a branch in New York (M. Welte & Sons) under Emil Welte (1841-1923, eldest son of the founder), but it was closed during World War I as an "alien enterprise".

Welte's instruments became status symbols and the epitome of entertainment in their day. They were installed in stately houses, palaces, schools, department stores (Harrods in London had one), yachts, ships (one was manufactured just too late to be aboard the Titanic) and even apparently a "house of pleasure" (the Atlantic Garden orchestration). Around the world they were dispersed throughout Europe, USA, with their market is known to have extended much further - to Istanbul, Russia, China and Sumatra for example. The top of Welte's Orchestration/player-organ range was the "Welte-Philharmonie". Very few of the full-sized model were ever manufactured.

From about 1926 Welte began to be threatened by a rapidly growing radio and recording industry. Business declined so much that, in 1932 they narrowly escaped bankruptcy. At about this time they were also involved in a collaboration with the Telefunken Company which was terminated because Edwin Welte's first wife, Betty Dreyfuss, was Jewish. This stalled collaboration involved the development of electronic organs. Using (analog) sampling and photo-cells, truly prophetic developments at that time, had Welte been successful they might well have eliminated the Hammond organ from the pages of history. It was World War II which finally precipitated the total demise of the firm. The Freiburg premises - all stock, instruments and historical documents - were effectively annihilated by British bombing in November 1944. The bombed out factory was something of a landmark by the Freiburg railway station for at least decade until the mid-1950s.

### **History of the Seewen Organ**

It is unclear exactly when the Seewen organ was originally built, but 1912-1920 are the considered limits with 1913/14 most likely. It was constructed as a variant of Welte's orchestration "Grundmodell" V-VI, but also given a two manual and pedal console with stops, thus allowing normal "live" performances by organists in addition to playback from pre-recorded rolls. It was first installed in a Stuttgart villa belonging to August Nagel (1882-1943) a manufacturer of cameras whose business later became Kodak's. Nagel returned the organ to Welte in 1935 for reasons that are now unclear. In 1937, after work on it in the Freiburg/Breisgau company, Welte sold it to an electrical manufacturer, who installed it in his "Radium" Company's Concert and Meeting Hall in Wipperfürth/Rhine. Meantime it had lost

its original casework and a simple wooden grill was substituted.

In 1945 the instrument suffered water damage as a result of bombing and was offered for sale during the 1960's. There were no buyers and by 1969 it was about to be sold for scrap when Swiss businessman Heinrich Weiss was informed. Weiss owned a collection of automatic musical instruments which later became the Seewen Museum, nowadays an important part of the group of Swiss National Museums. He acquired the organ and, in somewhat dramatic circumstances, packed and moved it carefully back to Seewen. There, after renovation, a re-inauguration of the organ was celebrated on 30th May 1970.

German organ builder Werner Bosch had a close connection with the instrument already in 1937 when he was an employee of Welte, and during the removal to Switzerland his experience was critical in ensuring its preservation and proper functioning. He, and Basel organ builder Bernhard Fleig, helped Weiss with the Swiss installation, and later also its maintenance. Apart from normal wear-and-tear the organ has remained in a highly original condition, with very few losses or changes, none of which are of any major consequence to a return to its earlier condition.

### **The Seewen Roll Resources**

Werner Bosch later sold his entire roll collection to Weiss. It remains carefully stored in Seewen, a combination of precious playing rolls and many original mother-rolls. It was supplemented over the years by Weiss' own acquisitions. This extensive collection of rolls now averages about 10 times in number that of most other currently-known comparable collections. It is also noted for its "classical" rather than "popular" emphasis in the repertoire areas it represents. On these rolls are performances (sometimes of their own music) by Harry Goss-Custard (150 rolls), Edwin Lemare (87), J. J. Nater (84), Paul Mania (76), Kurt Grosse (58), Alfred Hollins (47), Joseph Bonnet (44), W. Wolstoneholme (39), Walter Fischer (37), Eugène Gigout (35), Thaddäus Hofmiller (31), Herbert Walton (30), William Faulkes (29), S. A. Baldwin (26), Karl Matthaei (17), Clarence Eddy (20), F. J. Breitenbach (16), Alfred Sittard (15), Marco Enrico Bossi (12), P. Hindermann (13), Max Reger (11), M. J. Erb (11), Karl Straube (7), Marcel Dupré (7), and Günter Ramin (8) amongst many others. Gigout was born in 1844 and is but one name amongst these artists who represents the full tradition of 19<sup>th</sup> organ playing.

There can be no doubt that both the organ restoration and its associated control systems (the original pneumatic roll-player and a proposed new "outboard" computer) is critical to these rolls being preserved and heard as they were intended. Most other surviving Welte-Philharmonie organs, even in Europe, were either smaller, or manufactured in the USA (where different systems and roll-repertoires applied). Even the two or three original Freiburg instruments still surviving in Europe have sometimes been modified in manners which leave small or large differences to an original Welte Freiburg production model. Seewen has an essentially unmodified core of the Freiburg specification. What has been added also has Welte imprimatur since it was carried out to their own designs and standards in Freiburg.

### **20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Resurgence of Interest in Historic Roll Recordings**

During the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century interest in and awareness of the value of roll-recordings went through a re-awakening. The movement spread world-wide. Piano rolls were

the first to receive attention. Recordings of roll-performances were released and used both for research and entertainment. This was the backdrop to an increased historical musical awareness which many leading performers took very seriously. The phenomenon was established during the 1960s and 1970s and continues to grow.

With the release of the "Reger plays Reger" LP recording (*Max Reger spielt eigene Orgelwerke*, Electrola Co. of Cologne, Germany 1961: 1C 053-28925) which was recorded off the Seewen organ prior to its leaving Wipperfürth, horizons expanded to include organ rolls. Then, through Peter Hagmann's doctoral thesis [*Das Welte-Mignon-Klavier, die Welte-Philharmonie-Orgel und die Anfänge der Reproduktion von Musik*, Peter Lang Verlag, Bern, 1984] and a series of recordings made by Swiss Radio DRS in the 1980s using the Seewen organ, further interest and musical credibility was offered. The rolls used for the broadcasts were mainly from the collection of Heinrich Weiss but some also came from the Max Reger Institut in Freiburg where another important collection exists - albeit without an organ to play them on. The broadcast tapes, so far as is known, were only transmitted once, and recordings never publicly released. Copies of these tapes remain in both the Seewen archives and those of the Paul Sacher-Stiftung.

Other recordings and articles were released to a fascinated public. From one of the very few remaining Welte player organs (EMI 5CD set 7243 5 74866 2 recorded off the Welte organ in Linz am Rhein, Germany) the musical world also came to be increasingly alerted to the existence of these highly important historic performances. In 1986 Nelson Barden from Boston published a major article on Lemare, who, along with Max Reger and others, was one of Welte's most illustrious recording artists (*Edwin H. Lemare* in *The American Organist* 1986 Vol.20. Nos. 1, 3, 6, 8.). In 1987 German organist and organ builder Kurt Binniger, one of Welte's former staff, published an article entitled *Die Welte-Philharmonie-Orgel*, in *Acta Organologica* Vol. 19 (Berlin - Kassel ISBN 3-87537-227-1). At around this time Nelson Barden made recordings of Edwin Lemare's roll performances available. In the process he investigated certain technological quirks of Welte's arcane but brilliant recording/playback technology and began to develop methods which enabled an even more faithful recreation and analysis of the original performances. He was also, and remains, involved in programming for computer-control of player organs.

In 2002 Dr. Kimberly Marshall (Arizona State University USA) organized a conference on recorded organ music which featured a major presentation on roll-recordings (David Rumsey *Organists on a roll - the Welte organ's mechanically-recorded performances* due for publication 2006 by GOART Göteborg, Sweden). In 2005 a Max Reger Symposium was arranged by organ professor Brett Leighton at Bruckner University in Linz, Austria, where some of the Seewen radio recordings were presented and a paper given by David Rumsey. This paper will soon to be available in German with short musical excerpts from the Swiss radio tapes from Bruckner University (an English version will also be made available and both it and the German version should eventually be downloadable as PDF files from a site yet to be determined).

The MMD - Mechanical Musical Digest, journal of the Mechanical Music Society - also ran a series of articles around 2000 in which the mysteries of the Welte piano-recording systems were discussed. Various contributors tried to fathom just how it really worked, since Welte themselves had kept it an amazingly tight trade secret - one which has essentially been lost. A glimpse at this correspondence and an article by Dr. Ludwig Peetz may be found at <http://www.player-care.com/welte-recording.html> under the banner of Craig Brougner

(Brougher's Restorations). As a matter of interest, the New York Welte recording apparatus was also acquired by Seewen museum in the late 1990s.

Late in 2005 the Augustiner Museum in Freiburg/Breisgau mounted a major exhibition dedicated entirely to the world of Welte, which included much relevant material to this subject and an excellent book with contributions by authorities such as Gerhard Dangel, Richard Simonton, Thomas Jansen, Denis Hall and many others ("Automatische Musikinstrumente aus Freiburg in die Welt / 100 Jahre Welte-Mignon", Freiburg 2005) In it is also to be found a solution to the Welte recording mystery which also has critical relevance to the organ, since the systems were related and developed out of each other.

In the course of these high-profile and important events many interesting and challenging facts have already come to light and much has been gleaned about the performance practices of the organists involved. A number of fine organists of the era have also been "rediscovered" - for example Kurt Grosse from Berlin and the American Clarence Eddy, in the course of the 2005 Linz conference. By 2006, however, only a very limited and unrepresentative selection of the available roll-repertoire has become publicly available through recordings.

### The Welte Organs

In the Freiburg Welte premises a recording and a playback organ stood side by side. The specification of the Freiburg recording instrument of 1909 was given by **Kurt Binniger** in **Acta Organologica** 1987 Vol. 19. This must have been - or had a very close relationship with - the prototypical "Philharmonic Autograph Organ":

<b>Manual</b>		<b>I</b>	<b>Manual</b>		<b>II</b>
Principal <sup>1</sup>	metal	8	Viola <sup>11</sup>	m	8
Traversflöte <sup>2</sup>	wood	8	Wienerflöte <sup>12</sup>	w	8
Viol d'orchestre <sup>3</sup>	m	8	Aeoline <sup>13</sup>	m	8
Gamba <sup>4</sup>	m	8	Bourdon <sup>14</sup>	stopped w	8
Vox coelestis <sup>5</sup>	m	8	Horn <sup>15</sup>	w g <sup>0</sup> -	8
Fagott <sup>6</sup>	papier-mâché	8	Klarinette <sup>16</sup>	papier-mâché	16
Flöte <sup>7</sup>	w	4	Oboe <sup>17</sup>	g <sup>0</sup> -	8
Harfe <sup>8</sup>	m (plates) G-		Posaune <sup>18</sup>	C-f <sup>#0</sup> -	8
Glocken <sup>9</sup>	m (tubes)		Trompete <sup>19</sup>	g <sup>0</sup> -	8
<b>Pedal</b>			Vox humana <sup>20</sup>	m	8
Violon	open w	16			
Subbaß	stopped w	16			
Cello <sup>10</sup>	m	8			
Posaune	w or m	16			

*Compass:* Man I: C-a<sup>3</sup>; Man II: C-g<sup>3</sup> (sic!); Ped: C-f<sup>1</sup>.

*Action:* Pneumatic (pouch/membrane)

*Location:* To the right of the playback organ.

- <sup>1</sup> "gentle singing tone"
- <sup>2</sup> "internal lips C-f<sup>#0</sup>; g<sup>0</sup>- overblowing, typical flute tone; wedge-shaped beards
- <sup>3</sup> "beautiful string-tone"
- <sup>4</sup> "stronger than the viol d'orchestre"
- <sup>5</sup> finely nicked; tuned as a beating rank to be used with the viol d'orchestre"
- <sup>6</sup> C-b<sup>0</sup> free reed with long wooden boots and covered resonators, very similar to the orchestral instrument; c<sup>1</sup>- flue pipes with Fugara scaling.
- <sup>7</sup> C-b<sup>0</sup> resonators tapering front to back; c<sup>1</sup>- very wide scaling giving a round flute tone.
- <sup>8</sup> metal plates placed over wood or papier-mâché resonators and hit with pneumatic hammers.
- <sup>9</sup> C-g<sup>0</sup> metal tubes, sounded as per Harfe.
- <sup>10</sup> often borrowed from the Violon 16.
- <sup>11</sup> tonally very similar to a Geigenprinzipal
- <sup>12</sup> harmonic flute, bass only (not harmonic in the trebles) scaled 2 semitones narrower than Traversflöte in Manual I with wedge beards
- <sup>13</sup> somewhat more gently voiced than the Man I Viol d'orchestre
- <sup>14</sup> voiced to sound full and round
- <sup>15</sup> Flue rank of special construction - as pictured - but was not harmonic possessing a very carrying tone;
- <sup>16</sup> free reed, similar to the Fagott, but with wide-scaled, open resonators. Very similar to the characteristics of the orchestral instrument.
- <sup>17</sup> Plays from C in the Tutti. Beating reed full-length resonators, lengthened tops and turning caps.
- <sup>18</sup> conical tops
- <sup>19</sup> continuation of the Posaune
- <sup>20</sup> built as a Silbermann Vox Humana

This organ was rebuilt, enlarged and altered in c1913 to the following specification, which was by then the model for future top-of-the-range models, specifically the Welte Philharmonie model, such as that now at the Seewen museum:

<b>Manual</b>		<b>Manual</b>	
Bordun	16	Viola	8
Principal	8	Wienerflöte	8
Traversflöte	8	Aeoline	8
Gambe	8	Bordun	8
Viol. d'orch.	8	Dolce	4
Vox coelestis	8	Quinte	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
Flöte	4	Clarinete	16
Piccolo	2	Trompete	8
Sesquialter		Horn	8
Fagott	8	Oboe	8
Harfe		(Vox Humana)	8(?)
Glocken		<b>Pedal</b>	
		Violonbass	16

Subbass	16
Cello	8
Gedackt	8
Posaune	16

*Compass:* Manuals: C-a<sup>3</sup> (c4?); Pedals: C-f<sup>l</sup>(?)  
*Accessories:* Vox Humana Echo (opens/shuts Vox Humana's separate box lid - known to have existed but apparently omitted in error here); Tremolo. Fully enclosed.  
*Action:* Pneumatic  
*Location:* In spacious but carpeted room in company premises.  
*Console:* Mounted on a podium just forward of organ (facing pipes)  
*Pipework:* This instrument possibly inherited much of the **1908** organ's pipework.  
*Associations:* See **Seewen Museum Resources**.  
*Exists:* Destroyed during an air raid in 1944.

### The Seewen Organ - Specification

The Freiburg c1913 organ dates from exactly the same epoch when the Seewen instrument was first built, and therefore comparisons are very useful. The current Seewen instrument knew three basic stages: origin 1912-20, 1937 and 1970s. Its unrestored 2006 specification is as follows (in the forthcoming restoration the few post-1937 extensions and additions are to be removed, the detail of this is being checked and confirmed as this article goes to press):

<b>Manual I</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>Glocken</b>	(1937?)
Bordun	16		
Principal	8		
Traversflöte	8	<b>Rocking-tabs:</b>	
Gedeckt	8	Pedal coded green	
Gambe	8	Manual I coded white	
Viol. d'orch.	8	Manual 2 coded pink	
Vox coelestis	8	For extensions see <i>Werk</i> below	
Octave	4		
Rohrflöte	4		
Nachthorn	2		
Mixtur			
Trompete	8		
Fagott	8		
Harfe			

<b>Manual II</b>	<b>II</b>
Viola	8
Harmonieflöte originally Wienerflöte	8
Aeoline	8
Bordun	8
Blockflöte	4
Quinte	$2\frac{2}{3}$
Terz	$1\frac{3}{5}$
Quintzimbel	1
Sesquialter	
Clarinetten	16
Trompete	8
Horn	8
Oboe	8
Vox humana	8
<b>Pedal</b>	
Violonbass	16
Subbass	16
Gedackt	16
Gedackt controllable only from rolls	8
Posaune	16
Trompete	8
Clairon	4
Sing. Cornett	2

*Compass:* Manuals: C-a<sup>3</sup>, Pedals: C-f<sup>1</sup>

*Couplers:* I/Ped (coded white-green), II/Ped (coded pink-green), II/I (coded pink-white) II/sub(octave)-I, II/super-I (pink-white); II super (pink);

*Accessories:* Vox Humana Echo (opens/shuts Vox Humana's separate box lid); Tremolo. 2 Freikombinationsschaltungen (Free combinations). Handregister ab (switches off stop control); Pedal-toe studs: II/sub-I; II/super-I; II super; I-Pedal; II/Pedal; II/I; Freie Komb I; Freie Komb II; Cancel; Tutti; Handreg. ab; Regschw. ab (Rollschweller function off); Zungen ab; Mixturen ab; Pedalpiano; 2 Pedals for Swell and (Roll) crescendo; Foot-pedals for Harfe and Glocke (1937?). Voltmeter. Switch to select hand-registration or automatic (player-roll registration); Switch for withdrawal of all roll-set stops; Slow/Fast regulator controlling the player-roll speed mechanism.

*Wind System:* Manuals: 97mm Pedal: 115mm. Suction wind: 263mm. 2 Schwimmers under the manual divisions, one over the Pedal blower. The suction wind bellows is found in the motor room.

*Tuning:* Equal tempering. a<sup>1</sup>=438 Hz. at 18°C.

*Action:* Mainly Electro Pneumatic (1912/20? 1937?), partially direct electric (1978).



*Console:* detached, but immediately in front center of the organ.  
*Werk:* The entire organ is enclosed. A number of off-chests and extension chests are involved.  
 Ped Stillgedeckt 16 = Ped Gedeckt 8 = Man I Bordun 16 = Man I Gedeckt 8  
 Man I Rohrflöte 4 = part of Man II Harmonieflöte 8.  
 Pedal extension reed-chest: Pos 16 =Tromp. 8 =Clair. 4 = Sing. Corn. 2  
*Pipework:* The Harmonieflöte (Man. II) was originally a Wienerflöte (cf. 1909 and c1913 above).

It will be clear that the Seewen organ has all of the essential elements of the Freiburg c1913 organ, being thus virtually unique in the world today in allowing very close fidelity in reproduction of registrations originally chosen and recorded by the organists.

### **Restoration Contract and Philosophy**

After a call for tenders in 2005, and deliberations following on through early 2006, the Seewen organ committee determined unanimously to award the contract to the Swiss firm Orgelbau Kuhn AG of Männedorf (with Wolfgang Rehn, Orgelbaumeister, Head of Restorations). Kuhn have a world-wide reputation for excellence in all forms of restoration and are noted especially for their careful attention to historic details in organs from all periods, including the Scherer/Freundt at Klosterneuburg near Vienna to Gabler's famous Weingarten and Ochsenhausen instruments in Germany. They are also noted particularly for their ability to make, re-make, restore and adjust pneumatic and Barker lever actions, as they did in exemplary fashion with the Walcker at Winterthur Stadkirche Switzerland, as well as the 1913 all-pneumatic Kuhn organ in the church hall there. They are also experienced in delicate Welte systems, having already restored the Welte player organ at Meggenhorn in Switzerland with acclaimed success (1987, 14 stops, II+P).

The Seewen organ specification will be restored as closely as possible to its state in 1937. This will, for example, revert the current Manual I 4' Octave back into the original "Flöte" 4' and eliminate some later off-chests, extensions and similar minor changes. The main exception will be the organ's case-work. This was lost sometime before or around 1937 and details - e.g. historic photographs - have failed to materialize in spite of intensive search efforts (with the exception of its Wipperfürth installation where a grill was provided in what was obviously an expediency.) However several epoch- and style- suitable organ cases have been located and negotiations are now proceeding towards the purchase and integration of one of these. Part of a missing rank of reeds - free reeds, cardboard resonators - must be replaced, but fortunately an almost complete disused original rank of precisely this kind has been located. The few missing pipes from this will carefully be re-made according to the manufacturing standards of Welte to ensure a perfect match. An identical rank at Meggenhorn will also act as a control model to ensure faithful recreation of this important rank.

It was fortuitous that the Seewen instrument, possibly from c1912/20 and certainly by 1937, had a hybrid pneumatic-electric action. This means that, without any significant intrusion into its original Welte functions, a computer-control system can now be attached through a simple connector. Rolls can then be digitally recorded and played back. This will

also allow a major saving on wear-and-tear of these precious historic rolls. Since they average in age almost a century now, this is rapidly becoming a critical issue. Appropriate software can additionally provide such useful facilities as easy analysis of organists' registration practices, tempi analyses, articulation, expression pedal manipulation and many other details of this important era of playing.

Although information is extremely hard to come by, since full 150-note functioning Welte player mechanisms only appear to survive in about 8 organs world-wide, some tentative statistics only can be offered here in relation to existing Freiburg-built organs and their current associated roll collections. Of the full-sized (150-note) roll playing organs thought to be left in the world today it seems that only 3 others were of original Freiburg manufacture:

- \* Linz am Rhein (a smaller organ than Seewen, recently moved to the USA, and with apparently a mainly popular repertoire in the rolls associated with it)
- \* Residence of David Salomon, Salomon Centre, Tunbridge Wells, GB (modified with an added third manual, dual roll-playing system to also take smaller Welte "Cottage rolls"). There are only about 150 full-sized rolls in this collection compared to Seewen's c1300.
- \* the Schloss Meggenhorn instrument near Luzern in Switzerland (a much smaller instrument than Seewen and also with an apparently relatively small roll collection).

A Welte 150-note player was added to a Willis organ in Blenheim, GB, in 1931 where there appears to be a collection of some 80 rolls. They are said to be of English organists but it is not yet known if these are duplicated in the Seewen collection. It would be good if they were not duplicated since the repertoire from available rolls would be enhanced through their existence. Other still functioning Welte Philharmonie player organs known at present are in

- \* Technikmuseum Speyer, Germany
- \* one currently under restoration for the Swiss dealer Hanspeter Kyburz by organ-builder Remi Steis of Germany
- \* another is at Tuxedo Park, New York.

Apart from the Willis organ these instruments were all manufactured in the USA rather than Freiburg. The US-Weltes used a different system, the organs had 3 manuals rather than the Freiburg standard of 2, and the US company branch recorded and released a mainly popular repertoire. The US organs also had different specifications and voicing to the Freiburg instruments. Relatively few of the original 150-note "classical" Freiburg rolls appear to have reached the USA while Welte were in business.

It can thus be seen that the unique values of original Freiburg manufacture, preservation, comprehensiveness and suitability of tonal resources, with a relevant associated roll collection, leave Seewen as an outstanding resource amongst these few

remaining Welte installations. The eventual accessibility of the Seewen instrument will also be favourable, since it will be in a public venue, where it will be relatively frequently heard (rather than in private possession where instruments tend to be more rarely heard, at least by the general public.) The opportunity to play rolls borrowed from other archives where no means of playing them exist (such as was done in the 1980s with the Max Reger Institut's rolls) will allow a valuable supplementation of the already comprehensive roll collection of the Seewen museum and add validity to the restoration project, since the chances of such rolls ever being heard publicly to best advantage is slight.

Currently the Museum of Music Automats Seewen (<http://www.musee-suisse.ch/seewen>) is open Tuesdays to Saturdays from 11 am to 6 pm. The closest main city is Basel and although the Museum is not easily accessible by public transport, a hoped-for minor change in the Swiss Post-Bus system should achieve that before the organ is re-installed.

Restoration is due for completion by end of 2007. A festival centred on the restored organ and its rolls is envisaged for autumn 2008, symbolically the centenary year of the prototypical Welte "Philharmonic Autograph Organ". The Museum will then further consider projects such as commercial production and sale of CD-recordings of rolls as well as special functions, concerts, seminars, symposiums and festivals.

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