

## **Organists on a roll - the Welte organ's mechanically-recorded performances.**

by David Rumsey

### **Introduction**

This paper considers the value of player-rolls in performance practice study. The prime focus is material associated with the Welte-Philharmonie organ at the Museum für Musikautomaten, Sammlung Dr. h.c. H. Weiss-Stauffacher, at Seewen in Solothurn, Switzerland, including rolls dated 1912-1930. In conclusion some general considerations of idiosyncratic interpretations and consistent or inconsistent performance paradigms are dealt with.

### **Hierarchies of recorded importance**

In considering gramophone recordings as a basis for studying organ performance practice we are faced with several agonizing realizations. Firstly that useful acoustic or electro-acoustic recordings only reach back about 50 years if we consider LPs or tape. We can, perhaps, push further back - another 25 years? - if we take earlier technology into account. But vanishing points quickly emerge as we go back. Gramophone material becomes less useful on account of several limitations - technology, repertoire recorded, or statistically, in the risks of drawing conclusions from very small amounts of material.

Apart from these problems, and their tendency to mutually compound, there is also a second, generic, consideration: the credibility of performances in representing performance practices of preceding eras.

The lowest in this hierarchy - the performer who is playing music of a much earlier age - must be the least credible so far as original performance practice is concerned. The earliest recordings rarely venture into eras significantly before their own. When they do we usually hear late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century aesthetics being imposed on J. S. Bach. Their greatest value lies in revealing information about their own era, not that of Bach. Perhaps some earlier traditions do survive a century or more after they were originally in vogue but it is hard to show this definitively. We need at least another 50 years before we can begin to investigate that phenomenon from recordings.

Of greater credibility might be performances of recent music. We can reasonably allow some decades for traditions to be passed on and perpetuated through teaching and general musical osmosis until tastes and styles begin to change significantly.

Performances of music from a tradition that the performer is completely embedded in carry a clearer ring of authority. Yet even that assumption may be dangerous - what tradition are we in today? Can each of us lay claim to being able to perform with full authority every piece written in the past 25 years? Is every detail of interpretation the same for all of us? Is such conformity even a desirable end?

If a composer is performing his own music, then here we might have the ultimate in authority.

But existing recordings, for example of Reger playing Reger<sup>1</sup> or Messiaen playing Messiaen<sup>2</sup>, may well bring serious questions into such a hypothesis. If a composer is also a top-rate organist the credibility of such performances will naturally increase.

### Barrels and Rolls

Earlier, non-acoustic, means of recording performances exist, precursors of modern MIDI systems. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century barrels were pinned, sometimes even under the personal supervision of a Handel, Haydn or Mozart. They were typically played back mechanically through music boxes, clocks and organs. Pinning instructions - for instance those of Dom Bédos<sup>3</sup> - can be a useful guide to performance practice. Some studies have been made of surviving barrel-organs - for example in the work of Dr. Graham Pont<sup>4</sup>. These instruments are important, but limitations in technology, repertoire and the statistical credibility of so few surviving examples throw enormous difficulties in our way.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century a system of punched paper rolls was developed in conjunction with pneumatically-driven pianos. These recordings were made, copied and sold commercially. Editing and copying were important new procedures. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century this technology had been successfully extended from pianos to organs. In the first to fifth decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many famous organists recorded a great variety of repertoire using this medium. Many rolls have survived.

Rolls are extremely valuable as research material since they represent an earlier era in, and considerable supplementation of, usable recorded material. Their survival was also better assured than barrels, Darwinian fashion, simply by the mass-production and dissemination processes. The roll system also offered extended duration - well beyond the few minutes hitherto possible on most barrels or early acoustic means such as cylinders or disks.

Since rolls could be made to play well beyond the time-limitations of one side of a 78-r.p.m. record they also achieved what we might term a lower "Interruption Factor". I well remember Fernando Germani's odd little flexibilities in a recording of the Franck 3<sup>rd</sup> Chorale - induced by the evils of "side-changes" rather than as valid musical interpretation. It is still sometimes difficult for me to remember *not* to make these flexibilities when I play the piece myself. This

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<sup>1</sup> Recorded as *Max Reger spielt eigene Orgelwerke* by the Electrola Co. of Cologne, Germany (1961: 1C 053-28925) on the Welte organ in Wipperfürth before it was acquired by Dr. Weiss and moved to Seewen.

<sup>2</sup> *Messiaen par lui-meme*, EMI CLASSICS, CZS 7 67400 2. First released 1957, re-released 1992 by EMI France. 4-CD box.

<sup>3</sup> Dom Bédos de Celles, *L'Art du Facteur d'Orgues*, Facsimile in Bärenreiter edition ISBN 2-901135-01-3

<sup>4</sup> In a recent private communication Dr. Pont considers his own most important contribution in this connection to be found in 'A Revolution in the Science and Practice of Music' in *Musicology IV* pp.1-66 (1977-1979 The Musicological Society of Australia).

Interruption Factor may need to be taken into consideration when studying performance practice from 78s.

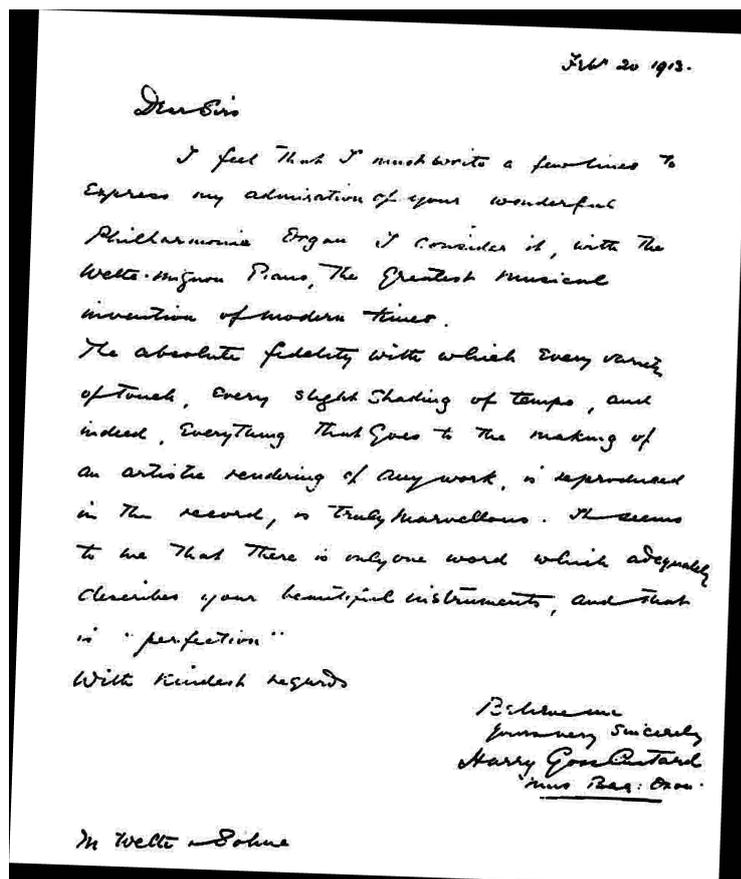
Organ rolls serve us well as primary source material, particularly in the 40 years or so of their commercial heyday. Roll technology had its own set of problems but was not generally plagued by the distortion, surface noise, kind of dynamic flattening, frequency range limitations, twinning, pre-echo, and tracking problems that were the woes of the electro-acoustic analogue era.

Rolls also lend themselves to simple and direct music printing procedures. Consider the value of arrangements, compositions, improvisations and/or editions now lost that were the basis of extant rolls. By means of a device that can read rolls and convert them directly to MIDI-data, a printed score is but a few computer key-strokes away.

### The Welte Recording Organ in Freiburg

A number of companies bestowed major commercial investment on recording and distributing rolls and building instruments dedicated to playing them. One was M. Welte & Söhne, of Freiburg/Breisgau, Germany.

Unfortunately player organs, sharing a similar fate to barrel organs, have generally dwindled out of the collective organ-consciousness - and beyond that into disrepair and loss. Few organs and collections of rolls survive. Seewen is a rare and outstanding resource. Others may



still be found, for example at Speyer (Germany) and Meggen (Switzerland). Although these are very important in their own ways, and for some individual aspects of their collections, the total Welte resource at Seewen must be considered superior in both quantity and quality. For example the organ at Seewen is almost twice the size of the organ at Meggen and far closer to the specification of the Freiburg recording organ. It is one of the largest of very few survivors, a most comprehensive resource together with its fine collection of rolls.

Many organists made recordings using the medium of rolls: “theater” organists, “classical” organists, and some that Gilbert and Sullivan would have identified as “piano-organists”. The recording

Figure 1 Goss-Custard's letter to Welte

and playback technology was regarded as very good. The famous English organist, Harry Goss-Custard, had this to say in a letter of February 20<sup>th</sup> 1913 to the Welte company:

Dear Sirs

I feel that I must write a few lines to express my admiration of your wonderful Philharmonie Organ. I consider it, with the Welte-Mignon Piano, the greatest musical invention of modern times.

The absolute fidelity with which every variety of touch, every slight shading of tempo, and indeed, everything that goes to the making of an artistic rendering of any work, is reproduced in the record, is truly marvellous. It seems to me that there is only one word which adequately describes your beautiful instruments, and that is "perfection".

With kindest regards  
Believe me  
Yours very Sincerely

Harry Goss-Custard  
Mus. Bac. Oxon.

*Transcript of Goss-Custard's letter to the Welte Company*

### **Player organs and the general reliability of roll reproduction**

Notwithstanding Goss-Custard's enthusiasm there were some limitations in the system. Most of these have been treated in detail by Dr. Peter Hagmann<sup>5</sup>.

Hagmann suggested that some organ rolls might originally have been recorded on the piano, then later converted<sup>6</sup>. The fact that both the organ and piano roll versions of Nikisch's Brahms' Hungarian Dances, Paderewski's Chopin Op. 37 No. 2 and Felix Mottl's excerpt from Wagner's Parsifal are exactly the same lengths, forms the basis of his argument. There may be questions about the full extent of this practice. Obviously such a process involved compromises that sound warning bells before we place too much credibility on the value of these rolls as sources of organ performance practice study.

The recordings of Reger playing his own music might have fallen into another problematic category - rolls that run too slowly. Playback tempi on these and other rolls might have been around 20% too slow<sup>7</sup>. On my first visit to Seewen around 1980 Dr. Weiss kindly brought out

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<sup>5</sup> Doctoral thesis published as "Das Welte-Mignon-Klavier, die Welte-Philharmonie-Orgel und die Anfänge der Reproduktion von Musik", *Peter Lang Verlag, Bern, 1984*.

<sup>6</sup> Hagmann, Op. cit. p. 100.

<sup>7</sup> Hagmann, Op. cit. p. 100

and played many rolls of interest. My own observation of Karl Straube's performance of the Buxtehude g minor, BuxWV 149, gave the impression of slow-running<sup>8</sup>. With the theater organists we might also deduce that either they played more slowly than they do now (or did on earlier recordings) or the rolls are running a little slowly. Gigout's playing of his own Toccata seemed almost too lively by contrast<sup>9</sup>. [Recent research has established likely faster roll transport speeds which endorse the analysis above.]

Whilst rolls offered extended duration this was sometimes achieved at the cost of reliable tempo reproduction. Thus the complete Suite Gothique of Boëllmann was made to fit on one very thick roll<sup>10</sup>. It had to be made to run slowly by a speed adjustment that was anything but scientifically exact<sup>11</sup>. So we need to be cautious about judging tempi from these sources, although Goss-Custard's reference to "every slight shading of tempo" still rings true.

Some closely-guarded trade secrets of Welte were agonizingly never revealed and are probably now lost forever, but it seems to have been a technician who, separately, either recorded or edited the dynamics of early piano rolls. In spite of claims made in company advertizing about exact fidelity of all aspects of roll reproduction, the specific question of dynamics is one that remains wide open. Hagmann infers editing processes which used intervention<sup>12</sup>. Ben M. Hall, echoing company propaganda, claims total fidelity<sup>13</sup>. Bowers provides a graphic with details that indicate differentiation was made only between bass/left hand and treble/right hand dynamics<sup>14</sup>. Claims of accurately recorded piano dynamics, down to the finest detail, might look convincing at first glance, but they leave something to be desired when examined carefully. One conclusion we could draw from this is that the prevailing tastes and standards in piano playing of the day were not at the time particularly bothered about anything other than differentiation between left and right hands. Were they unconcerned about variant dynamics for middle voices? By that criteria the system could well have been "perfect". So what we have by way of dynamic nuance coming from piano rolls may well not represent any exact recording of detail. Corrections were made to rolls. Hagmann consistently questions the "manipulation" after recording. Mistakes could be as easily edited out with rolls than they can now be eliminated by tape-splicing or digital editing. Either way, elements of true live performance practice (dare one say the accurate recording of inaccuracies?) are lost in these processes. Total dynamic accuracy was, therefore, possibly

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<sup>8</sup> Welte Catalogue number 1825, roll dated 1922.

<sup>9</sup> Welte catalogue number 1084, roll dated 1913.

<sup>10</sup> Welte's Catalogue number 752. Suite Gothique Opus 25, organist P. Hindermann.

<sup>11</sup> Hagmann, Op. cit. p. 99.

<sup>12</sup> Hagmann summarizes this and all problematic details in Op. cit. p. 177ff.

<sup>13</sup> quoted in Q. David Bowers, *Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments*, Vestal Press, New York ISBN 0-911572-08-2 - p. 327.

<sup>14</sup> Op. cit. p. 335.

sometimes a casualty with piano recordings.

With organ it was a different matter. The relatively good predictability of registration meant that organists were probably better represented by their recordings than pianists, at least dynamically. Yet even here the variety of specifications of roll-playing organs - although revolving around a few standard models - made it unlikely that player-organs could always recreate the exact registrations of the recording organ. In any case the limited tonal resources of the recording organ itself must sometimes have restricted players' registrations. For one thing only two manuals were available in Freiburg, never more. So, whilst bringing due caution to bear where appropriate, we can still generally be confident in assessing registration matters from these rolls.

The acoustic situation of both recording and playback organs at Welte's studio was to all intents and purposes invariably "dry". In Figure 7 the limited capacity of the Freiburg recording room is partially evident - although it was sizeable - and that plush carpet was certainly not destined to encourage long reverberation times (nor was the lady's amazing hat!). Figures 3 and 5 likewise show apparently less than "reverberant" auditoria for the player organs. Roll-recordings therefore possibly never represented the articulation and touch used in the more normal acoustic environments of cathedrals and large auditoria where these artists customarily played - or did they just play as they always played, irrespective of environment? Caution is again advisable here.

Swell-shutter dynamics suffer similar limitations. Here, too, are compromises that could be of concern to the scholar-performer. The Welte system typically allowed played back swell settings only as "slow crescendo/diminuendo" and "fast crescendo/diminuendo". It is hard to know whether these were automatically recorded, jockeyed by a technician, or added later. Clearly we will also need to be cautious about judging such dynamic aspects from these sources. But the end results remain fully convincing today and were endorsed along with everything else by the recordings artists themselves.

There were design curiosities such as a pneumatic switching arrangement that recorded, for each bass note, information whether it was played on the manuals, the pedals, or both together. The glide-blocks over which the rolls ran and imparted their pneumatic information were a limiting factor. In order to keep them manageable in terms of size, design and production, the number of holes had to be limited. The two manuals and pedals of the Seewen organ was about as far as Welte was prepared to go. But 150 holes were still needed, even when the pedals were multiplexed in this way and not given their own separate block-holes. An independent pedal (30 notes?), its stops (8?), and a third manual (58?) and its stops (10?) would have dramatically compounded complexities if a hole for each note and stop had to be added to the block. It would have required paper rolls about double the width (or half the diameter of the punched hole - a dangerous engineering venture). The organ-roll system gives a feeling of having attained its optimum-maximum size limits with the Welte *Philharmonie* scheme.

The pedal-switching solution worked well enough. But it was an expedient. A slight, but audible, time-delay was needed for it to operate, make its decisions and play the right notes. This meant that one note would come slightly before/after the others it was supposed to sound

with. So implications of anticipations or arpeggiations are dangerous and probably inaccurate performance practice conclusions to be drawing if they are based exclusively on such roll-playing systems. It seems that some arpeggiation by pianists on rolls could have been their way (or the technical editor's) of overcoming the treble/bass dynamic limitations of the recording system - i.e. by intentionally staggering what should have been simultaneous notes of differing dynamic - not a secure foothold to base performance practice conclusions on, although this was an interesting indicator of creative artistic tolerance under duress<sup>15</sup>.

In spite of these cautionary limitations, rolls represent a vitally important heritage for the study of organ performance practice around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of these limitations can be easily overcome - especially now with the knowledge and technologies we have available.

That the heritage of still-functioning player organs seems to be dwindling to extinction is sorely lamentable. It makes the restoration and preservation of all existing instruments, as well as the conservation and duplication of their deteriorating paper roll collections even more imperative.

### Seewen - the museum

The Weiss-Stauffacher Museum at Seewen began as the private collection of Heinrich Weiss, a Swiss engineer and businessman who dedicated to it a lifetime of energy and financial endowment. He was awarded a Doctorate, *honoris causa*, in recognition of his efforts by the University of Basel in 1976. The Museum is situated in a most pleasant rural setting, less than an hour from Basel by train and bus (and a good bracing walk up an impressive hill). It is now part of the Swiss National Museum network and well worth a visit. The collection consists mainly of barrel-playing devices, music boxes, limonaires, player pianos and what must be regarded as the most important surviving player organ that Welte made. Dr. Weiss managed to collect most of the rolls that Welte sold commercially - indeed there is a high proportion of valuable master rolls here.

### Seewen - history of the organ



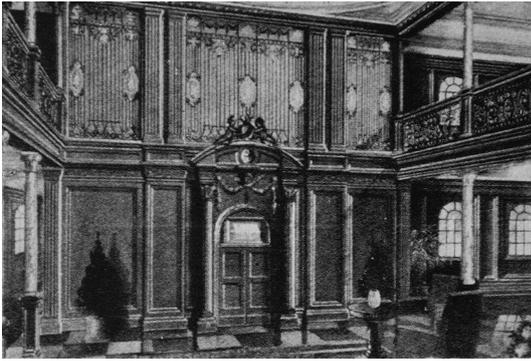
**Figure 2** Welte Philharmonie in Harrod's Department Store, London.

The Seewen organ began life about 1912-1920 as a Stuttgart house-organ - in a villa belonging to the Nagel family, owners of the Kodak firm. In 1937 it was purchased by Dr. Kärstner of the Radium Company of Wipperfürth, Germany, had some revisions made in the Welte workshop, and was then installed in the company's Concert Hall.

Apart from its notable size, one of the organ's features is that it has keyboards, a pedalboard and stops. It may thus be played either normally, by a

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<sup>15</sup> Hagmann, Op. cit. pp. 180 ff.

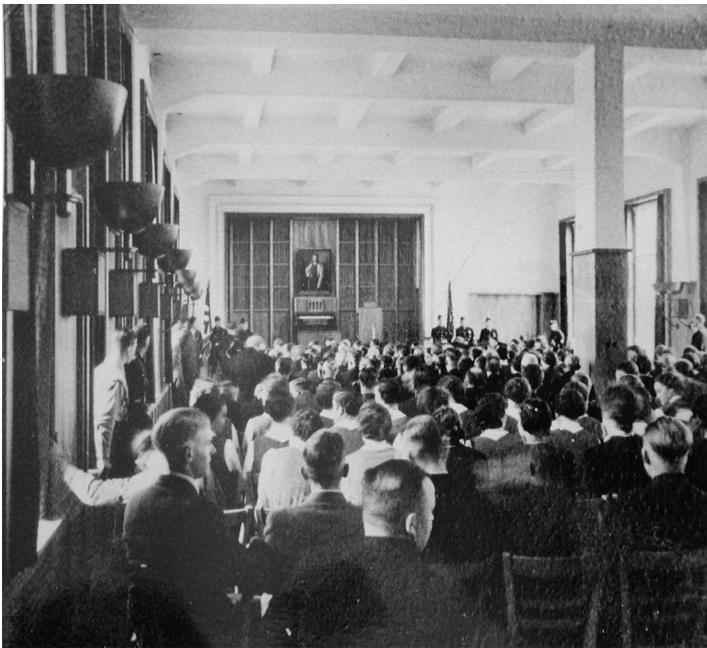


**Figure 3** Welte organ aboard an English steamship

performer, or automatically, by rolls. This was not altogether usual in player organ designs, although we know of others with a keyboard - very expensive top-of-the-range models. There was one in Harrod's Department Store in London, others in the homes of millionaires and some even in luxury cruising yachts. Jules Verne's Captain Nemo was not unique: he was part of a whole culture.

But these organs, and almost all of their kind, have vanished. So when we regard this precious survivor, and add to that the music and musical performances that can be heard on rolls here, it becomes increasingly evident that Switzerland is the guardian, at Seewen, of a uniquely important piece of world cultural heritage.

From 1937 until the late 1960s the Seewen organ, was installed at Wipperfürth, Germany in a private concert-meeting hall. The instrument was clad in a pipeless wooden-grilled case.



**Figure 4** The Seewen Welte-Philharmonie organ in the concert hall at Wipperfürth.

In 1945 it is reported to have suffered water damage as a result of an allied bomb attack. It was offered for sale in the 1960s but attracted no attention and was on the point of actually being sold for scrap. Heinrich Weiss acquired it under both amusing and dramatic circumstances in 1969<sup>16</sup>.

He installed it at Seewen, without its case (which was left in Wipperfürth). Work was done on it by Werner Bosch and Bernhard Fleig - especially around its installation in 1969 and then later in 1978. Bosch had a long personal association with the Welte company and this instrument in particular.

But during the last two decades of the 20th century it wore out and ceased reliable functioning, a natural product of an aging organ. On 10<sup>th</sup> March 1998, after a major report on it was prepared by the Kuhn Organ Building Company of Männedorf, Switzerland<sup>17</sup> the organ

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<sup>16</sup> For a full account of this acquisition see: Weiss, Heinrich *Früh biegt sich, was ein Haken werden will* (Basel: F. Reinhardt, 1998) pp. 110-120. ISBN 3-7245-1012-8.

<sup>17</sup> Orgelbau Th. Kuhn AG CH-8708 Männedorf/Manufacture de Grandes Orgues Th. Kuhn SA Männedorf *Bericht zur Welte-Philharmonie-Organ* Musikautomaten-Museum,

was dismantled, packed and put into protective storage.



**Figure 5** The organ installed at Seewen - photo ca.1990?

### **Seewen - the specification**

A brief comparison of the Seewen specification with that of the Welte Company's recording organ in Freiburg is instructive. The Seewen specification recorded here represents the instrument more or less as it has reached us today. The basic stop-list only is given for Seewen. There is some borrowing and extension, off-chests, accessories for roll control, combinations and various supplementary details not listed here. But for Freiburg such additional details seem now to be lost. It had a swell to the entire organ and no facade pipes (just the wooden grill hiding the shutters). Freiburg appears to have been much the same but with a facade rank outside the swell-box. The recording organ no longer exists. It, along with the whole Welte operation, ultimately fell victim to the bombing raids that England inflicted on Freiburg in retaliation for earlier German raids on Coventry. In the Seewen organ various changes, at the outset from Welte's "Grundmodell V/VI" on which it was based, and over later years, are clouded in some obscurity. But Seewen's organ had, as its point of tonal departure, a specification almost identical to the recording organ.

When we compare Seewen with Freiburg and other specifications of Welte player organs we realize that we are dealing here with one of the company's largest and most distinctive instruments. It was possible at Seewen to play back, virtually exactly, every aspect of a performance recorded on the Freiburg instrument.

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Sammlung Dr. h.c. Heinrich Weiss, Seewen/SO. Private document kindly made available to me by the Museum authorities.

More modifications were made after 1978. Dr. Weiss undertook many of them himself mainly in an effort to keep the instrument playing. They took in certain new electrical and electronic technology, some patching up processes, including adaptations to the player mechanism. In about 1980 tape recordings were made and copies deposited in both the Seewen Museum Archives and the University Library in Basel. They are still in reasonable condition, but their usefulness is limited by such questions as the sampling of rolls chosen, accuracy of tempi and the effects of a worn mechanism.

Clearly the careful restoration of this most valuable resource, now completed, was urgently needed. Above all other considerations top priority is now being given to the instrument's ability to accurately and reliably play its collection of rolls. Being nearly a century old these rolls are also showing signs of age and fragility. Protecting them as well as restoring the organ to provide the full range of registration, tempo and other adjustments required, has been of prime consideration in this restoration.



**Figure 6** Harry Goss-Custard at the Freiburg Recording Organ.

**Seewen, Museum für Musikautomaten  
1920, 1937, 1978 &c.**

<b>Manual I</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>Manual II</b>	<b>II</b>
Bordun	16	Harmonieflöte §	8
Principal	8	Bordun	8
Traversflöte	8	Viola	8
Gedeckt	8	Aeoline	8
Gambe	8	Blockflöte	4
Viol. d'orch.	8	Quinte	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
Vox coelestis	8	Terz	1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>5</sub>
Octave	4	Sesquialter	
Rohrflöte	4	Quintzimb	1
Nachthorn	2	Clarinete	16
Mixtur		Horn	8
Trompete	8	Oboe	8
Fagott	8	Trompete	8
Harfe		Vox humana	8
Glocken			
<b>Pedal</b>		§ originally a Wienerflöte	
Violonbass	16		
Subbass	16		
Gedackt	16		
Cello	8		
Posaune	16		
Trompete	8	The entire organ is	
Clairon	4	enclosed in a Swell box.	
Sing. Cornett	2		

*Compass:* Manuals: C-a<sup>3</sup>, Pedals: C-f<sup>1</sup>; *Couplers:* I/Ped, II/Ped, II/I; *Accessories:* Vox Humana Echo (opens/shuts Vox Humana's separate box lid); Tremolo.

**Freiburg, Welte Company's premises  
Pre-1913?**

<b>Manual</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>Manual</b>	
Bordun	16	Wienerflöte	8
Principal	8	Bordun	8
Traversflöte	8	Viola	8
Gambe	8	Aeoline	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			
		The entire organ was	
		enclosed in a single swell-	
		box and an additional	
		open-shut echo box	
		houses the Vox Humana	
		within this.	
<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>1</sup>(?); *Accessories:* Vox Humana Echo (opens/shuts Vox Humana's separate box lid); Tremolo

### Seewen - the rolls

The collection of nearly 1,300 player master-rolls is to be found carefully preserved in the basement of the Museum. About 250 copy rolls, sometimes duplicating the masters are also preserved. Alongside them is a large collection of piano rolls and related material. The organ rolls are mostly intact.

At the point of the organ's removal and storage in 1998 the Museum's inventory of these rolls was basic. Typed into carbon-copied lists some decades ago by Dr. Weiss' first wife they are grouped more or less according to composers, although not alphabetically, and details are erratically and summarily added<sup>18</sup>. 260 rolls bear no date. Dated rolls range between 1912 and 1930. 168 rolls do not bear the name of a player. A major database of them is now being structured which is quickly and reliably filling in many gaps.



Figure 7 Gigout recording in Freiburg c1913.

### Seewen - the organists

The following is an abbreviated list of the identified performers on the Seewen rolls.

Amongst these names we note many well-known organists. Anglo-Saxons might be more familiar with some names through their cultural heritage or because they were composers, or were famous, like Straube and, perhaps, Ramin, as Thomaskantors, or for their early gramophone recordings. Others were well known in Switzerland and Germany or were theater organists - or pianists rather than organists.

Harry Goss-Custard was the most prolific recording artist amongst them. He made recordings for Welte, that are in the Seewen collection, release-dated annually from 1913 to 1926 with the exception of 1918. (There is only one dated roll from 1918 in the Seewen collection, an *Overture to the Marriage of Figaro*). We might deduce from

this that economic problems accounted for the fall-off in production here (rather than wartime travel restrictions? - even for organists from hostile nations?) Welte's New York office had to be closed as a result of problems resulting from the First World War. Total roll production, again gauged by the Seewen collection, was down to a mere 25 rolls in 1915, as we might expect. What we might not expect is that the same names, by and large, appear as artists. This also applies for the 29 rolls of 1916, and the mere 17 dated rolls from 1917 - but they were still selling (and even making?) recordings by organists from enemy territories. Nater and Diebold (one roll each) were the only two identified performers with expected Germanic

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<sup>18</sup> I recently put all this material onto a computer database and a working copy of this will be in the hands of the museum once compatibility is sorted out.

connections in 1917. The 1914-18 period accounted for the release of no fewer than 34 of Goss-Custard's rolls.

Perhaps there are other explanations. Rolls made in the U.S.A. used a different system but there was some exchange, presumably with conversions. Against this, Seewen has a large proportion of mother rolls - all made in Freiburg. In any case no less than 103 named and dated rolls were released by French, English and American organists in 1914: Gigout, Faulkes, Lemare, Hollins, Clarence Eddy, Goss-Custard, Baldwin, Walton, Bonnet and Wolstenholme all being amongst them and now in the Seewen collection.

### Identified organists with recordings preserved at Seewen

Baldwin	Fischer	Kirsch	Philip/Philipp
Beck	Friedheim	Köhl	Ramin
Binninger	Gigout	Landmann	Reger
Bonnet	Goss-Custard	Lemare	Reinecke
Bossi	Greise	Lhévine/Lhévinne	Renner
Breitenbach	Grosse	Mackle	Samaroff
Bröckel	Grünfeld	Maenner/Männer	Schorr
Buhlig	Günter	Mania	Sellars
di Benici	Haass	Matthaei*	Sittard
Diebold	Happel	Messner	Stark
Dunkelberg	Häuser	Mottl	Straube
Dupré/Duprés	Heim	Nargolies	Svara
Eddy	Hindermann	Nater	ten Cate
Epstein	Hofmiller	Nikisch	Walton
Erb	Hofner	Paderewski	Wolstenholme
Faulkes	Hollins	Paur	Wurmser

\* Karl Matthaei was an important Swiss organist whose name is perhaps not so well-known in Anglo-Saxon circles. His recorded rolls at Seewen include far more early music than those of any other organist in this collection: 10 organ works of Bach, 4 of Buxtehude, 1 each of Scheidt, Praetorius, Sweelinck and Hanff. These are all original organ works. There were also two rolls of popular Swiss songs that he recorded.

If credibility is to be attached to early 20<sup>th</sup> century performances of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century music, then Matthaei was a most informed and experienced venturer in this area. He may prove to be a most rewarding line of investigation to follow. A helpful monograph exists: Verena Gäumann *Karl Matthaei 1877-1960: Leben und Werk eines Schweizer Organisten*. Ed. Dominik Sackmann (Florian Noetzel). ISBN 3-7959-0715-2

Similarly Straube (Bach and Buxtehude) and Ramin (Bach, Buxtehude and Reger) were strongly dedicated to recording early music. In Seewen, though, their tallies combined totaled less than Matthaei's - and with a narrower range of composers. Nevertheless comparisons are proving illuminating for one reason or another now that these rolls can be heard once again.

## Selected Details

Harry Goss-Custard <sup>19</sup>	(150 rolls, 1913-27)	Prof. S. A. Baldwin <sup>32</sup>	(26 rolls, 1912-22)
Edwin Lemare <sup>20</sup>	(87 rolls, 1912-28)	Karl Matthaer <sup>33</sup>	(17 rolls, 1926-27)
Prof. J. J. Nater <sup>21</sup>	(84 rolls, 1912-29)	Clarence Eddy <sup>34</sup>	(20 rolls, 1914-29)
Paul Mania <sup>22</sup>	(76 rolls, 1920-29)	F. J. Breitenbach <sup>35</sup>	(16 rolls, 1912-26)
Kurt Grosse <sup>23</sup>	(58 rolls, 1915-29)	Alfred Sittard <sup>36</sup>	(15 rolls, 1913-24)
Alfred Hollins <sup>24</sup>	(47 rolls, 1913-25)	Marco Enrico Bossi <sup>37</sup>	(12 rolls, 1912-25)
Joseph Bonnet <sup>25</sup>	(44 rolls, 1913-26)	Prof. P. Hindermann <sup>38</sup>	(13 rolls, 1912-26)
W. Wolstenholme <sup>26</sup>	(39 rolls, 1913-26)	Max Reger <sup>39</sup>	(11 rolls, 3 dated 1913)
Prof. Walter Fischer <sup>27</sup>	(37 rolls, 1921-29)	Prof. M. J. Erb <sup>40</sup>	(11 rolls, 1912-25)
Eugène Gigout <sup>28</sup>	(35 rolls, 1913-26)	Karl Straube <sup>41</sup>	(7 rolls, 1922-8)
Thaddäus Hofmiller <sup>29</sup>	(31 rolls, 1912-28)	Marcel Dupré <sup>42</sup>	(7 rolls, 1926-7)
Herbert Walton <sup>30</sup>	(30 rolls, 1913-28)	Günter Ramin <sup>43</sup>	(8 rolls, 1922-6)
William Faulkes <sup>31</sup>	(29 rolls, 1913-24)		

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<sup>19</sup> [Walter] Henry G. C. GB: St. Leonard's-on-Sea \*7 Feb 1871-St. Leonard's-on-Sea 6 Jul 1964

<sup>20</sup> Ventnor/Isle of Wight \*9 Sep 1865-Los Angeles †24th Sep 1934.

<sup>21</sup> Information lacking - it is not Joh. Jak. N. \*Hugelshofen 4 Aug 1827-Wädenswil †19 Jul 1906.

<sup>22</sup> \*Tschöplowitz Silesia 22 Sep 1882-Berlin †11 Aug 1935. Berlin Cathedral organist.

<sup>23</sup> \*Berlin 25 Feb 1890-?

<sup>24</sup> Hull \*1865-Edinburgh †1942

<sup>25</sup> Bordeaux \*Mar 17 1884-St. Luce-sur-Mer (Canada) †Aug 2 1944.

<sup>26</sup> William W. (blind) Blackburn/Lancs. \*24 Feb 1865-†Hampstead 23 Jul 1931.

<sup>27</sup> Seibusch/Galizia \* 10 Jul 1872-Berlin †17 Jul 1931. Student of Reimann and Cathedral organist in Berlin.

<sup>28</sup> Nancy \*Mar 23rd 1844-Paris †Dec 9 1925

<sup>29</sup> Organist of Augsburg Cathedral.

<sup>30</sup> \*1890 Thirsk/Yorks. Organist in Glasgow.

<sup>31</sup> \*1863- †25 Jan 1933. Organist at Liverpool Cathedral.

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<sup>32</sup> Samuel Atkinson B. Lake City Minnesota \*22 Jan 1862-†15 Sep 1949 New York.

<sup>33</sup> \*1877-†1960.

<sup>34</sup> Greenfield MA \*13 Jan 1851-Chicago †10 Jan 1937.

<sup>35</sup> Franz Joseph B. \*27 Apr 1853 Muri (Switzerland)-†30/8/1934 Luzern. Organist at Luzern Cathedral.

<sup>36</sup> Organist of the Hofkirche, Dresden.

<sup>37</sup> Salo Lago Garda \*Apr 25 1861-at sea †Feb 20 1925.

<sup>38</sup> Zürich \*28 May 1868-Zürich †24 Jul 1925. A student of Rheinberger.

<sup>39</sup> Brand/Bayern \*Mar 19 1873-Leipzig †May 11 1916.

<sup>40</sup> Strasbourg \*Oct 23 1858-Andlau †Jul 9 1944. Composer and Organist at Strasbourg.

<sup>41</sup> Berlin \*Jan 6 1873-Leipzig †Apr 27 1950.

<sup>42</sup> Rouen \*May 3 1886-Meudon †May 31 1971)

<sup>43</sup> Karlsruhe \*Oct 15 1898-Leipzig †Feb 27 1956.

### Seewen - the recorded repertoire

The music these organists played was quite varied. It included Theater Organ Music, and transcriptions (from Opera, Operetta, Symphonic repertoire, Piano music, Lieder, Popular Music, Folk Songs.) We also note one item that must be the prototypical Music-Minus-One recording - an aria accompaniment without the aria: Herberigs' "Prière"<sup>44</sup>. There are about 57 rolls of National Anthems and songs of a generally Germanic tendency. However *The Star Spangled Banner* variations by Dudley Buck is there - recorded by Baldwin in 1915. Quite a number of simple Hymns and Chorales (some from *Hymns Ancient and Modern*) also appear.

The list of identified composers on the Seewen rolls follows (arranged alphabetically). It is transcribed from the sometimes mechanically ("Remington") typed catalogues - sometimes written, often corrected, and always perfunctorily. Its spelling errors seem to arise partially from the linguistic complications that regularly beset a quadri-lingual country. In the Seewen situation they also had to cope with English as an obligatory fifth. In two instances corrections are offered which seem reasonably likely to sustain authentication, bearing in mind the culture and sociology surrounding this instrument. In the lists of works some strange, unheard of titles are included ("Sinfonie No. 7" of Franck, for example). Such titles, like nicknames, were also part of the world surrounding this instrument and its culture.

#### Composers (and categories) represented in the recorded rolls at Seewen

Adam	A.	Böhm	
Adams	Stephen	Bonnet	Joseph
Arne	Dr.	Borowski	Felix
Bach	E.	Bortniansky	D.
Bach	Johann Sebastian	Bossi	M. E.
Bach	W. F.	Böttcher	W.
Bach-Gounod		Braga	G.
Bache	F. Edw.	Brahms	Johannes
Bairstow	Edward C.	Brassin	Louis
Barnitt	John Francis	Bruch	Max
Bartlett	Homer N.	Buck	Dudley
Batiste	Edouard	Burow	
Bayer		Buxtehude	Dietrich
Beethoven	Ludwig van	Byrd	W.
Benoit	Peter	Callaerts	J.
Berger	Rodolphe	Chaminade	C.
Berlioz	H.	Chauvet	A.
Best	W. F.	Chipp	Edm. Thomas
Bizet	G	Chopin	Fr.
Bocherini		Clausmann	Aloys
Boëllmann	L.	Clérambault	
Boëilly	A. F.	Corelli	

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<sup>44</sup> played by Kurt Grosse, Welte Catalogue number 1809.

Couperin	François	Gaul	A. R.
Cowen	F. H.	German	Edward
Crawford	Thomas J.	Gigout	E.
Croises	A.	Giordani	Giuseppe
Cui	C.	Gluck	Chr. W.
d'Albert	Eugen	Godard	Ch.
d'Evry	E.	Goldmark	
Daquin	Louis Claude	Goss-Custard	R.
Davies	Walford H.	Gottschalk	L. M.
Dayas	H.	Gounod	Ch.
de Beck	Aug.	Grieg	E.
de la Tombelle	F.	Grison	Jules
Debussy	Cl.	Grosse	K.
Delibes	Leo	Guilmant	A.
Donizetti	G.	Gulbins	M.
Drdla	Franz	Gumbert	Ferdinand
Dreyschock		Hall	King
Drigo	R.	Händel	G. F.
Dubois	Th.	Händel-Thorley	W.
Dukas	Paul	Hanff	Johann Nicolaus
Duon	Paul	Harker	Flaxington F.
Duparc	Henri	Harwood	Basil
Dupré (catalogue: "Duprés")	Marcel	Hatton	J. L.
Dvorak	A.	Haydn	J.
Eddy	Clarence	Henselt	
Elgar	Edw.	Herberigs	Rob.
Engelhart	F. H.	Herold	L. J. F.
Eulenburg	Philipp	Hesse	A.
Faulkes	William	Heuberger	Richard
Fauré	G.	Heykens	Jenny
Ferrata	Guisepe	Hofmann	H.
Flagler	J. V.	Hofner	C.
Fletcher	Percy E.	Hollins	A.
Florida	P.	Hopkins Edwards	J.
Foote	Arthur	Horseman	Edward J.
Foster	Stephen C.	Hoyte	W. S.
Franck	C.	Hummel	Ferd.
Freire	Osman Pérez	Humperdinck	E.
Frescobaldi (catalogue: "Trescobaldi")		Huntington	Woodman R
Fressel	G.	Hye	M.
Fricker	H. A.	Jensen	A.
Friml	Rudolf	Johnson	B.
Frysinger	J. F.	Johnston	E.
Fuchs	Robert	Jongen	J.
Gabriel	Marc	Karg-Elert	S.
Gade	Niels W.	Ketèlby	Albert W.
Galuppi		Kienzl	Wilhelm

Kinder	Ralph	Piernè	G.
Kistler	C.	Pirani	
Klein	Bruno Oskar	Ponchielli	A.
Kranemann	Helmut	Praetorius	Michael
Krebs	Joh. Ludw.	Puccini	G.
Kreisler	Fritz	Pullein	John
Kreutzer		Rabaud	Henri
Kromolicki	J.	Rachmaninoff	S.
Lalo		Radecke	
Lanner		Raff	J.
Lasson-Liszt		Rameau	Philipp
Leclair	J. M.	Reger	Max
Lefébure-Wély	W.	Reinecke	C.
Lehar	Franz	Renner	J.
Lemare	Edwin H.	Reubke	J.
Lemmens	J.	Reznicek	E. N. v.
Leoncavallo	R.	Rheinberger	J.
Liszt	Franz	Ritter	A. G.
Löhr	H.	Robaudi	V.
Lorenz	C. Ad.	Roger-Duvasse	
Lübeck	Vincent	Ropartz	J. Guy
Macdowell	Edward	Rosa	Salvator
Mailly	A.	Rossini	G.
Makenzie	A. C.	Rost	
Malling	Otto	Rousseau	Samuel
Mania	P.	Rubinstein	A.
Mansfield	P. J.	Saint Saëns	C.
Marcello	Benedeto	Salome	Th.
Martini	Padre G. B.	Sandiford Turner	H.
Mascagni	P.	Scharkel	Rudolf
Mason	Edward	Scheidt	Samuel
Massenet	J.	Schubert	Franz
Mendelssohn	F.	Schubert-Fischhof	
Merkel	Gustav	Schubert-Liszt	
Meyerbeer	G.	Schumann	R.
Moliqué		Schütt	E.
Morandi	Giovanni	Schytte	Ludwig
Morel		Seiffert	C. Th.
Moszkowski	M.	Sellars	Gatty
Moussorgsky		Sgambati	G.
Mozart	W. A.	Shelley	Harry Rowe
Nessler	Viktor von	Sibelius	Jean
Neuhoff	L.	Sillas	E.
Nevin	E.	Simonetti	A.
Offenbach	J.	Sinding	Christian
Pachelbel	Johann	Sittard	Alfred
Paderewski	J. J.	Sjögren	E.

Smart	Georges Risely	Tschaikowski	P.
Smart	Henri	van den Gheyn	M.
Somervel	Arthur	Verdi	G.
Songs & Chorales		Vierne	Louis
Spindler	F.	Vivaldi	A.
Spohr		Wachs	P.
Springer	Max	Wagner	Richard
Sterndale-Bennet	W.	Wakefield-Gudmann	
Stewart	R. P. Prof.	Wareing	H. W.
Stojowski	Sigismund	Watling	Horace T.
Strauss	Johann	Weber	K. M. von
Strauss	Richard	Weingartner	F. v.
Sullivan	A.	Wesley	S. S.
Suppé	F.	West	J. A.
Sweelinck	J. P.	Wheeldon	H. A.
Taylor	S. C.	Whiting	G. E.
Thiele	L.	Widor	Ch. M.
Thomas	A.	Wieniawski	J.
Thomé	Francis	Wolf	H.
Tinel	E.	Wolstoneholme	W.
Titl	A.	Y'Euer	
Toselli	Enrico	Zipoli	
Tours	Berthold		
Translateur	S.		

Thus, if our interests lie in Buxtehude as played by Ramin, Matthaei, Bonnet, Straube, Landmann or Stark, then there are a reasonably representative 13 pieces available. The same applies for Sweelinck (just two rolls - *Allemande: Unter der Linden grüne* and *Variationen über: Mein junges Leben hat ein End* - both played by Karl Matthaei), Zipoli (one performance each by Fischer and Dunkelberg), or the isolated Frescobaldi Elevation Toccata (played by Bonnet). But with music played by any performer some two centuries after it was written I venture to suggest that little about its original performance practice can safely be gleaned. For one thing the recording and playback organs were unashamedly romantic and had a totally pneumatic technology. That alone is in direct antithesis to 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century instruments. But the rolls do reveal a lot about who played, what they played, and how, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As far as the music of Johann Sebastian Bach found on these rolls is concerned, the following is a complete list, along with the organists (where identified) playing it. Note that the last 3 items were still attributed to Wilhelm Friedemann at the time. They are identified as such on the rolls and in the original catalogue:

### Performances of works by Johann Sebastian Bach

Work	Organist	Roll Date
2.Choralspiel zu"Nun kommt der Heiden-Heiland"	Straube	1922
2.Sonate No.1		1926
2ter Satz,a.d. IV.Sonate	Stark	1921
3 Choräle- 1)Wo will ich fliehen hin	Dupré	1926
3 Choräle- 3) Nun freut euch	Dupré	1926
3 Choräle- 2) Christus lag in Todesbanden	Dupré	1926
6.Sonata 1.Satz		1926
Adagio aus Concert A moll	Erb	1913
Adagio aus Orchester-Suite D dur	Fischer	
Allegro Moderato a.d.1.Sonate	Gigout	1914
Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'	Matthaei	1926
Chaconne (für Violine)	Landmann	1921
Choralspiel a) nun kommt der Heiden Heiland	Matthaei	1927
Choralspiel d) Es ist das Heil uns	Matthaei	1927
Choralspiel b) Christe du Lamm Gottes	Matthaei	1927
Choralspiel c) Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein	Matthaei	1927
Dorische Toccata, D moll	Hindermann	1913
Fantasia, G dur	Breitenbach	1913
Fantasia u.Fuge C moll	Fischer	1922
Fantasia G-moll	Straube	1926
Fantasia und Fuge in G moll	Wolstenholme	1916
Fuga á la gigue	Walton	1921
Fuge Es dur	Breitenbach	
Fuge G moll	Goss-Custard	
Fuge, Es dur	Goss-Custard	1919
Fuge No. 4	Lemare	

Fuge in D-moll	ten Cate	1926
Herzlich tut mich verlangen,Choral	Hofner	1927
Hirten-Symphonie a.d.Weihnachts-Oratorium, bearb.S.Karg-Elert	Grosse	1916
I.Sonata Es-dur (Trio-Sonate	Fischer	1921
Ich rufe zu Dir, Herr Jesus Christ	Sittard	1913
In dulce jubilo,Orgelchoral	Bonnet	1914
In Dir ist Freude	Gigout	1914
IV.Sonata E moll,III.Satz	Matthaei	1927
IV.Sonate E moll	Matthaei	1927
Jesus meine Zuversicht, Choral a.Suite D dur	Baldwin	1913
Konzert G dur	Erb	1913
O Mensch, beweine'dein'Sünde' Gross,Choral	Gigout	1919
Partita über den Choral: Sei gegrüßet Jesu gütig,Variationen.VII-XI	Ramin	1922
Partita über den Choral: Sei gegrüßet Jesus gütig,Var.I-VI	Straube	1922
Passacaglia C moll	Matthaei	1927
Passacaglia, C moll	Nater	1921
Pastorale	Nater	1916
Praeludium, E flat major		
Präludium u.Fuge C-moll,No.6,Heft 2	Baldwin	
Präludium u.Fuge C-dur	Binninger	
Präludium u.Fuge E moll (tutti)	Bonnet	1913
Präludium u.Fuge D moll	Bossi	1922
Präludium u.Fuge No.2,E moll	Duprés	1926
Präludium u.Fuge F moll	Faulkes	1920
Präludium u.Fuge, G dur	Fischer	1921
Präludium u.Fuge (Trippelfuge)	Fischer	1921
Präludium und Fuge G moll	Fischer	1929

Präludium Es dur	Gigout	1922
Präludium u.Fuge D dur	Greise	
Präludium und Fuge A dur	Landmann	1921
Präludium H moll	Lemare	
Präludium u.Fuge A moll	Lemare	1922
Präludium u.Fuge D moll	Lemare	1926
Präludium und Fuge A moll	Matthaei	1927
Präludium E moll	Sittard	1913
Präludium u.Fuge, G dur	Sittard	1924
Präludium H-moll	Stark	1925
Préludes: No. 1 C dur, Nr. 3 Cis dur, No. 4 C dur, Nr. 6 D moll, Nr. 13 fis dur	Nater	
Rondo, B moll,nach Interpr. Prof.D.Schorr		1922
Sonatina (Gottes Zeit in die allerbeste Zeit)arr.Guilmant	Bonnet	1913
Toccata u.Fuge,D moll	Diebold	1914
Toccata, E dur	Gigout	1920
Toccata u.Fuge, D moll	Hindermann	1913
Toccata u.Fuge, D moll	Lemare	
Toccata, Adagio undFuge	Lemare	1923
Toccata, F dur	Matthaei	1927
V.Sonate, Largo	Gigout	1914
VI.Orgelsonate G dur,Lento,2.Satz	Ramin	1926
Vier Orgelchoräle: a) Wir danken dir Herr Jesus Christ	Straube	1922
Vier Orgelchoräle: b) Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund	Straube	1922
Vier Orgelchoräle z.Weihnachtsfest	Straube	1922
Vier Orgelchoräle: c) Christe, du Lamm Gottes	Straube	1922
Vier Orgelchoräle: d) Christ lag in Todesbanden	Straube	1922
Wachet auf, Choralvorspiel	Wolstenholme	1914

Finale a.Konzert D moll	Sittard	1920
Largo aus Konzert D moll	Hofmiller	1913
Largo aus Konzert D moll	Sittard	

As valuable as these Bach performances are, however, the importance of the Seewen collection dramatically increases with late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century music. A cross-section of this repertoire is now given as a sampling of what is available at Seewen:

#### Performances of works by Lemmens

Work Title	Organist	Roll Date
Allegretto	Hollins	1913
Cantabile	Gigout	1914
Fanfare	Gigout	1914
Fanfare, Echo-Orgelrolle	Gigout	1926
Gebet	Gigout	1914
Grosse Fantasie "Der Sturm) E-moll	Goss-Custard	1925
Prélude, Es dur	Gigout	1914
Scherzo symphonique	Faulkes	1921
Scherzo Symphony concertant	Gigout	1914

#### Performances by Bossi of his own music:

Work Title	Roll Date
Fatemi la grazia (Erhöre mein flehn	1912
Noël, Op. 94, No.2	1913
Volkslied aus Ath	1913

#### Performances by organist Clarence Eddy

Surname	First	Work Title	Roll Date
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Bossi	M. E.	Ave Maria, No. 104	
Bossi	M. E.	Abendgesang	1914
Buck	Dudley	Home, sweet home, Transcription, Op. 30	
Clérambault		Prélude	1921
Couperin	François	Soeur Monique, arr. Guilmant	
Crawford	Thomas J.	Toccata in F dur	1929
Eddy	Clarence	Festival Prelude u. Fuge	
Faulkes	William	Festmarsch, Op. 128, No. 1	1923
Ferrata	Guiseppe	Love song, Op. 7, No. 4	
Ferrata	Guiseppe	Hochzeitsmarsch Op. 20, No. 4	1922
Frysinger	J. F.	Nocturne	
Klein	Bruno Oskar	Le secret d'amour, Op. 32, No. 1	
Liszt	Franz	Präludium u. Fuge B A C H	
Mendelssohn	F.	Frühlingslied	1914
Reger	Max	Pastorale in F, Op. 59, No. 2	
Saint Saëns	C.	Le cygne, arr. Guilmant	1914
Schubert	Franz	Am Meer, Glocken	1914
Wagner	Richard	Brautchor aus Lohengrin	
Wagner	Richard	Lohengrin, Vorspiel	1924
Wakefield-Gudmann		From the land of the sky-blue	

#### Performances by Gigout of his own music

Work Title	Roll Date
Allegretto Grazioso	1914
Cantilène	1914
Communion	1913
Fughetta	

Grand Choeur dialogué	1913
Lied aus Suite	1914
Marche des rogations	1915
Marche de fête, Suite	1915
Marche religieuse	1915
Minuetto	1913
Toccata, tutti	1913

### Performances of works by Widor

Work Title	Organist	Roll Date
Allegretto de la 5ème Symphonie	Dupré	1926
Allegro vivace, Sinfonie No.5 1.Satz, Op.42	Grosse	1924
Andante Cantabile	Hofmiller	
I.Symphonie, No.5, Marche Pontificale	Goss-Custard	1922
Scherzo a.II.Sinfonie	Walton	1914
Serenade	Goss-Custard	1913
Sinfonie No.5, Andantino, 3.Satz, Op.42	Grosse	1924
Symphonie No.5, Adagio, 4.Satz, Op.42	Grosse	1924
Symphonie gothique, 2.Satz, Op.70	Grosse	1924
Symphonie, F dur, Toccata	Nater	
Symphonie, F dur, Allegro Cantabile	Nater	1929
VI.Symphonie, Intermezzo, Op.42	Goss-Custard	1921

### Performances of works by Brahms

Work Title	Organist	Roll Date
2.Wir wandelten, wir zwei zusammen, Op.96, No.2	Lemare	1921
Deutsches Requiem, 5.Satz: Ihr habt nur Traurigkeit	Grosse	1924
Deutsches Requiem, 2.Satz	Grosse	1924

Deutsches Requiem, 7.Satz: Seelig sind die Toten	Grosse	1924
Deutsches Requiem, 1.Satz: Seelig sind, die da Leid tragen	Grosse	1924
Deutsches Requiem, 4.Satz: Wie lieblich sind Deine Wohnungen	Grosse	1924
Die Mainacht, Lied	Mania	1926
Es ist ein Ros entsprossen	Hindermann	1913
Es ist ein Ros entsprungen,Op.122,No.8	Nater	1929
Herzlich tut mich erfreuen, Choralvorspiel	Grosse	1924
Herzlicher Jesu, Choralvorspiel	Grosse	1924
I. Intermezzo, Op.116, No.4	Lemare	1921
O Gott, Du frommer Gott,Choralvorspiel	Grosse	1924
O Welt ich muss dich lassen,Op.122,No.11	Nater	1924
Symphonie F dur, No.3, 1.Satz		
Symphonie F dur No.3, 2.u.3.Satz		
Symphonie, F dur, No.3, 4.Satz		1923
Symphonie C moll, 1.Satz	Grosse	1924
Symphonie C moll, 2.Satz	Grosse	1924
Symphonie C moll, 5.Satz,Allegro non troppo	Grosse	1924
Symphonie, C moll,3.u.4. Satz,Allegretto und Adagio	Grosse	1924
Ungarischer Tanz No.5	Nikisch	
Ungarischer Tanz No.6 für Orgel übertr.Fr.Franz	Nikisch	
Wie bist du meine Königin, Lied	Mania	1926

#### Performances of works by Franck

Work Title	Organist	Roll Date
3 Choräle No. 2	Mania	1925
3 Choräle No. 1	Mania	1926
Andantino G moll (Vox hum.)	Gigout	1913

Arie und Finale	Grosse	1924
Cantabile	Bossi	1913
Fantasie über Drei Orgelstücke,A-dur	Dupré	
Grand pièce symphonique	Landmann	1920
Grand pièce symphonique,Finale	Mania	1925
Grand pièce symphonique,2.Teil	Sittard	1915
La procession	Fischer	1921
Pastorale,Op.18,No.3	Erb	1913
Pièce héroïque No. 3	Hindermann	
Präludium	Grosse	1924
Präludium,Fuge,Variation,Op.18,No.3	Wolstenholme	1924
Sinfonie No.7, Finale		1927

**Performances by Bonnet playing his own music.**

<b>Work Title</b>	<b>Roll Date</b>
Angelus du soir (Echo u.Harfe)	1913
Berceuse	1913
Clarie de la lune	1925
Consolation,Vox hum.+ Echo	1915
Dédicace, Op.7, No.1	
Epithalase, Op.5,No.9	1913
Lamento , Op.5, No.2	1913
Pastorale Op.7, No.9	
Paysage	1913
Poèmes d'Automne No.1, Lied der Chrysanthemen	1915
Rêverie, Op.5, No.6	1914
Romance sans paroles	
Songe d'enfant,Op.7,No.5,moment musical	1913

Stella matutina, Op. 7, No. 4	1913
To the memory of Titanic's heroes	1914
Zweite Legende	1915

**Performances by Wolstenholme and his contemporaries of Wolstenholme's music:**

<b>Work Title</b>	<b>Organist</b>	<b>Roll Date</b>
A Pastoral	Wolstenholme	1913
Allegretto in F dur	Wolstenholme	1914
Allegretto, Es dur, Op. 17, No. 2	Goss-Custard	1921
Andantino in G moll	Wolstenholme	1922
Ballade in des dur	Wolstenholme	1914
Barcarolle	Wolstenholme	1913
Berceuse	Goss-Custard	
Bohèmesque	Goss-Custard	1926
Cantilène, As dur	Goss-Custard	1921
Cantilène F moll	Hollins	1920
Canzona	Goss-Custard	1914
Die Antwort	Goss-Custard	
Die Frage	Goss-Custard	1921
Die Frage, die Antwort	Lemare	1913
Eine irische Fantasie	Hollins	1914
Fantasie Rustique	Goss-Custard	1917
Finale in B dur	Wolstenholme	1921
Improv. über Ich hatt' einen Kameraden	Wolstenholme	1914
Improvisation	Wolstenholme	1922
Interlude in G	Wolstenholme	1921
Intermezzo a. Sonate Nr. 1 F-dur	Wolstenholme	1914
Introduction und Allegro im Stil von Händel	Walton	1914

Konzert-Marsch, Op.69, No.2	Walton	1914
Lied	Goss-Custard	1914
Méditation in G	Wolstenholme	1913
Melodie in B dur	Wolstenholme	1914
Melodie in C	Wolstenholme	1922
Pastorale in D u. Romanze A-moll	Wolstenholme	1913
Prélude in A dur	Wolstenholme	1914
Prélude in B dur	Wolstenholme	1921
Romanze und Allegretto	Lemare	1914
Rondino	Wolstenholme	1913
Scherzo, F dur	Goss-Custard	1921
Serenata	Hollins	1917
Sketches No.3, G-dur	Wolstenholme	1913
Sketches No.1, G-moll	Wolstenholme	1913
Sonate für Orgel im Stil v. Händel	Wolstenholme	1920
Volkslied	Wolstenholme	1913

### Recorded Improvisations

Deutsche Volkslieder, Improvisation	Mania 1920
Improv. über Ich hatt' einen Kameraden	Wolstenholme 1914
Improvisation	Grosse 1924
Improvisation	Grosse 1929
Improvisation	Hollins 1922
Improvisation (4. Februar für meinen Freund Karl Bockisch)	Lemare
Improvisation on a given Theme "tutti"	Lemare 1913
Improvisation mit Harfen- und Glocken-Effekt	Lemare 1913
Improvisation über ein Menuett	Lemare 1926
Improvisation (Glockenrolle)	Mania 1926
Improvisation über "Wenn alle untreu werden"	
Improvisation über das Weihnachtslied Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her	Ramin 1926
Improvisation	Wolstenholme 1922
Stimmungsbild (Improvisation)	Grosse 1924

(The item performed by Dupré in the Franck lists, entitled *Fantasie über Drei Orgelstücke, A-dur*, might also be counted amongst the improvisations).

## **Registration**

A full study of organists' registration practices preserved on the Seewen rolls has been commenced now that the organ restoration is finished.

Joseph Bonnet's interesting performance of the Bach Prelude and Fugue in e minor (BWV 533) on a "tutti" registration may well be an odd instance of a fingerpost to an earlier "organo pleno" tradition. It may equally be an idiosyncratic approach to registration. Again it might possibly have been caused by the limitations of room acoustics or recording organ. Was there a "registration-jockey" also present somewhere in this recording? For the "piano-organist" rolls, where piano rolls were later converted to organ rolls, there must have been some intervention.

Of the recorded registrations at Seewen - less than 60 of the 1,300 rolls bear any written reference to registration - it is evident that the use of the Vox humana, Posaune, Harfe and Glocken registrations were considered special features - prized registers perhaps? Enough anyway to mention them on the roll-boxes. In an era when Vox Humana stops were mocked by many organists, it is notable that about 33 specific mentions of this register appear (around 50% of the noted registrations). For similar reasons the use of tremulant is another aspect that is proving interesting to follow up.

Apart from this the other registrations recorded seem mainly to be an occasional mention of "tutti" and frequent references to "Echo". We also know that the Seewen instrument allowed the operator to completely override the registration from that recorded on the rolls. The ability to do this was part of the advertizing push to sell these instruments - the operator was likened to the "conductor" of an orchestra in some of the more histrionic of these.

### **Percy Grainger, Olivier Messiaen and Idiosyncratic Performance**

The organist trying to follow Olivier Messiaen's recordings with a view to emulating his interpretations can be lead into a degree of bewilderment. Messiaen did not always follow his own musical instructions. Tempo changed, seemingly wilfully, at times. Occasionally the end result was conditioned by the composer/performer's apparent inability to reliably play exactly what he had written. Yet these recordings had, and still have, a great authority. They are fascinating particularly for their idiosyncrasies. Nobody has yet succeeded in emulating these performances. Has anybody tried? Does everybody? Other recorded Messiaen performances, in concerts and on recordings, often fare better in following the indications of the original scores and controlling the notes. But all are quite different interpretations to Messiaen's. And they can be good. Messiaen himself is reputed to have praised many of them.

Similarly with Reger's recordings: Hans Klotz's jacket notes for them identified problems in the condition of the organ, roughness of crescendi, Reger's departure from his own phrasing and other printed expressions. A surprising use of Mixtures is mostly the result of Welte's using a pneumatic patching-up system for organs larger than the recording instrument.

To attempt to base our own performance practice of Messiaen exclusively on Messiaen's playing, or Reger exclusively on his, is therefore a questionable exercise: an unattainable goal

in all probability. It leads us to the conclusion that recordings, even authoritative ones, whilst being a reliable basis for the study of performance practice, are not necessarily made to be emulated.

In a similar context we should mention Percy Grainger and Edvard Grieg. According to Grainger, Grieg is reputed to have preferred Grainger's performance of his famous piano concerto to all others. But Grainger's performances all seem to be lost - if they ever were recorded. However some piano rolls exist where the inimitable Grainger played it all, piano and orchestral parts together. The solo piano part was extracted from these rolls a few years ago by Dennis Condon and the whole concerto was performed "live" in Sydney Opera House under John Hopkins with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Soloist? None other than Percy Grainger! Being involved in other items on this program I had a close connection with it through the rehearsals and performances. To hear the orchestra playing and then see the notes go down on the piano as they were once actually played by Percy Grainger was a great musical "ghost" moment. Quite uncanny. It was also a very good performance although memorably eccentric and idiosyncratic.

In the preparation of the rolls Condon had to reconstruct not only the piano part by eliminating the orchestral bits, but Grainger had taken whole sections of the concerto and played them in an order entirely of his own. So Grieg had to be completely re-assembled. Even when this had been done the conductor had to hold a performance together in which sometimes quite whimsical freedoms and liberties were taken by the pianist. The results were, nevertheless, both impressive and an object lesson in musical idiosyncracies that made the performance distinctive and great. It lent credibility to Grieg's alleged praise<sup>45</sup>

If it was such idiosyncratic elements that Grieg was praising, then the value of rolls as a basis for the study of performance practice is fully endorsed. Yet here the lesson is not just one way to play the Grieg concerto, it is also that music is dependent on the creative processes of the performer alongside those of the composer.

The identifiable problem arising from such studies may be that we are not taking enough liberty.

### **Paradigms of Consistency and Inconsistency in Musical Performance**

Graham Pont speaks of performance paradigms. His remarks are well worth reading - especially detouring to his most valuable footnotes<sup>46</sup>.

Again I may have missed something, but I have yet to see historic source-confirmation of a number of performance practice conventions that we now take as automatic assumptions. For example, that once a theme is articulated, unequalized and ornamented then all these

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<sup>45</sup> It was later released on RCA records as an LP in the USA.

<sup>46</sup> Op. cit. and in Musicology V (1977-1979 The Musicological Society of Australia). Appendix II: 'The Paradigm of Inconsistency: the Evidence of Automatic Instruments'.

properties - articulation, inequality, ornamentation - are always strictly maintained thereafter. It is a reasonable assumption, perhaps, but its total authority is at least questioned by much of the historic information we have. So, for instance, as Pont and others have shown for printed scores alone, instrumental incipits are later followed by varied note-values in 32-35% of Handel's arias, 34% of Mozart's and 46% of Rameau's.

We might add to that tendencies quite universally found - Bach's "Little" Fugue in g minor, if an example is needed - to relegate entries of common-time fugue subjects, that started out on the main (first) beat of the bar, to later manifestations, where they enter on a secondary (third) beat of the bar: something which at least questions any tendency to a too slavish adherence to theoretical rhythmic orders.

The danger with the Bonnet "organo pleno" syndrome is that we might be trying to find - and then apply - a paradigm of consistency in musical performance where none exists. If a paradigm of inconsistency applies, then we could well be lost for any helpful conclusions, other than that we might, even should, be inconsistent.

This might sound like a musical chaos theory in the context of this conference, but, thanks to recordings, including rolls, idiosyncrasy and inconsistency in performance practice are demonstrable in eras prior to the mid-20th century.

### Coda

Hagmann's thesis contains a quote from H. G. Wells, dated 1909, which seems to sum up the world of rolls and players rather neatly. The reference is probably to a *Vorsetzer* - a device that was placed in front of a piano keyboard, replacing the performer. It was designed as a box, with felted arms projecting. These were fitted over the keys. Once the recorded rolls were set in motion it played the instrument.

*Does this thing play?  
Like a musical gorilla,  
With fingers all of one length.  
And with a sort of soul ...*

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Seewen contains the recordings of some of the greatest organists of a whole era. None of any significance was born as late as the 20th century. Gigout was born in 1844, others through each succeeding decade, 1850s, 60s, 70s, 80s, until Ramin in 1898. They were trained in traditions such as those of Reimann, Rheinberger, Guilmant and Lemmens and lived through, were part of, the eras of Wagner, Franck, Strauss, Brahms and Reger. Indeed, one of the organists was Reger. Recordings of great Swiss organists, including Matthaei, are also well represented here. As a piece of world cultural heritage these recordings, and the instrument to play them, can only be seen as unsurpassed and of incalculable cultural value.

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Figures 1, 4, 5, 6: Seewen Museum für Musikautomaten, Sammlung Dr. *h.c.* H. Weiss-Stauffacher

Figures 2, 3, 7, 8: taken from the Welte Catalogue (copy held in the Seewen collection).

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(Partial revision of 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2010)

See also sequel articles, especially -

“The Origins of Seewen’s Welte Philharmonie”) published by “The Diapason” March 2008  
Volume: 99 Number: 3

“L’Orgue de Seewen et ses Rouleaux” published in “La Tribune de L’Orgue” 60/1 and 60/2 of 2008.

These, including an English version of the latter, and more, may now also be accessed through this web-site <http://www.davidrumsey.ch/articles.php>