

## Carillon News

by Brian Swager

A carillonneur is featured in a 2006 murder mystery, *Swing* by **Rupert Holmes** (Random House, ISBN: 140006158X). It takes place in 1940 at the height of the big band era. The setting is San Francisco and the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island. Musical clues are provided in an accompanying CD of jazzy numbers.

Richard Watson announces a new website for **Meeks, Watson & Company**. The bell founding and carillon building firm, based in Georgetown, Ohio, installs both stationary and swinging bells, peals, chimes, and carillons. They also renovate, tune, and recast older instruments; <<http://www.mwbells.com/>>.

Jill Johnston has written a biography of her father, Cyril F. Johnston, one of the foremost English bellfounders in the first half of the 20th century. She has intertwined her birth circumstances and motivations for writing the book, which inevitably led to her investigations of the bells that her father cast. *England's Child: The Carillon and the Casting of Big Bells* is published by Cadmus Editions.

An Eijsbouts mobile carillon has arrived in the USA at **Chime Master Systems** in Lancaster, Ohio. This carillon comprises four octaves/48 bells. Information and schedule can be found at <[mobilemillennium.com](http://mobilemillennium.com)>. There is one other mobile carillon in America, a 35-bell instrument built by Petit & Fritsen, played by Frank DellaPenna and his **Cast in Bronze**. Information and schedule can be found at <[castinbronze.com](http://castinbronze.com)>.

**Christoph Paccard Bellfoundries** of Charleston, South Carolina has announced that they have become the exclusive representative in the United States for the Paccard Bellfoundry of Anancy, France. Stan Christoph is the president of the new firm. Paccard was formerly represented by the van Bergen Company.

Three record bells have been cast in the last decade. The largest tolling bell in the world was cast in 2006 by the Royal Eijsbouts firm of Asten, the Netherlands. Commissioned by Kiyozaku Shoji for the Tokinosumika park in **Gotemba, Japan**, the bell weighs 36,250 kg (79,918 lbs), has a diameter of 3.82 meters (12.5 feet), and is 3.72 meters (12.2 feet) high. It sounds a G-sharp. The previous record for a tolling bell was set in 1998 by the Peace Bell cast by the Paccard Bellfoundry of Anancy, France, for the Millennium Monument in **Newport, Kentucky**. It weighs 33,285 kg (73,381 lbs), has a diameter of 3.7 meters (12.1 feet), and sounds an A. Both bells were too large to be cast in the bellfoundries, so both firms used the facilities of foundries that make ship propellers. Eijsbouts used Wäritsilä in Drunen, the Netherlands, and Paccard used Fonderies de l'Atlantique in

Nantes, France. The lowest sounding carillon bell in Europe was cast by Royal Eijsbouts for the carillon of **Ghent, Belgium**, in May 2008. The Matilde bell was named for Matilde of Portugal, who was Countess of Flanders from 1157 to 1218. The bell sounds E, leaning toward E-flat, just as the entire carillon is closer to A-flat than to A. It weighs a bit more than the 10-ton bourdon of the carillon of Dordrecht, the Netherlands.

### Nunc Dimittis

The carillon world was saddened by the passing of two lovely carillonneurs recently. **Marilyn Clark** was carillonneur of the Church of Our Lady of Good Voyage in Gloucester, Massachusetts. I have many fond memories of Marilyn from visits to play in Gloucester, her visit to Bloomington, Indiana, and carillon congresses. Marilyn was a role model for me, especially in her ability to be so generous with warmth and loving kindness. **Sue Magassy** of Canberra, Australia, was the first foreign carillonneur to pass the playing examination in order to become a carillonneur member of the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America. A gregarious character and zealous supporter of the carillon art, she traveled all over the world to attend carillon events.

Send items for "Carillon News" to Dr. Brian Swager, c/o The Diapason, 3030 W. Salt Creek Lane, Suite 201, Arlington Heights, IL 60005-5025; <[brian@allegroruoco.com](mailto:brian@allegroruoco.com)>. For information on the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America: GCNA, 37 Noel Dr., Williamsville, NY 14221; <[www.gcna.org](http://www.gcna.org)>.

## In the wind . . .

by John Bishop

### Timelessness

I've had some nice experiences with older things in the last few days. This morning (it's Tuesday) I saw a 1912 Cadillac on Main Street. Yesterday I tuned an organ built in 1928 by the Skinner Organ Company and made a quick service call on an organ built by E. & G. G. Hook in 1870 (#529). On Sunday my wife and I attended a recital played on an organ built by E. & G. G. Hook in 1868 (#466). And on Saturday, a colleague and I visited a restored narrow-gauge steam railway.

I'm writing on a Dell laptop that must be about 20 months old. Now that's old. Funny how a laptop can be more rickety than a pipe organ built 140 years ago.

The Cadillac is a great-looking car (see photo). The paint job was vibrant, the leather seats had a distinctive luxurious smell, the chrome was polished, and the whole thing looked perfectly elegant. The engine ran smoothly, and the car drove regally down the street attracting attention from every direction. The owner has clearly invested a terrific amount of effort, knowledge, and money to make it look and run so beautifully, and I admire the passion behind the preservation of such an elegant artifact.



1912 Cadillac (photo by John Bishop)

But the car had a simple cloth roof and it didn't look as though the windows would achieve a very tight seal when closed. The windshield doesn't completely separate the car's interior from the wind, rain, or insects. The tires are thin and the wheels are made of wood. At the risk of offending those who have toiled and moiled preserving antique automobiles, I prefer modern cars for everyday use. I appreciate the fact that the windows of my car really close so I can choose between having the wind in my erstwhile hair and having the option to use the heater or air conditioner depending on the weather. I like the automatic transmission, the electric windows, the radio and CD player, and the cup holders. I like the windshield squirter and the multiple-speed windshield wipers. It snows a lot where we live. The large tires and four-wheel drive add a lot to our safety in the winter. And anti-lock brakes and air bags were both wonderful innovations, making cars much safer. I don't think I'd like having to rely on a car made in 1912 the next time I have to spend a day driving in the rain. The modern car is better.

§  
My friend Patrick Murphy is proprietor of Patrick J. Murphy & Associates, organbuilders in Stowe, Pennsylvania. His company has produced many fine new instruments, and has renovated or restored a long list of both mechanical and electro-pneumatic organs. Take a look at <[www.pjmorgans.com](http://www.pjmorgans.com)>. He is also a train buff. He's interested and knowledgeable in the history and operation of railroads, and he owns model trains that run on live steam. Patrick and his wife Les spent last weekend with us in Maine, and while "the wives" found something else to do, Pat and I visited the Wiscasset, Waterville and Farmington Railway in Alna, Maine (see photo: WW&F).



WW&F (photo by Keith Taylor)

The WW&F had roots from the 1830s and was fully established in 1894 as a two-foot gauge railroad. In the world of trains, the gauge is the distance between the rails. Modern railroads have a standard gauge of four feet, eight-and-a-half inches (4' 8.5"). Strange number, isn't it? It turns out that early American trains were patterned after English trains of the early eighteenth century. Those were built using the same jigs and tools used to make carts and carriages. The width of the carriages was intended to stay consistent with the width of ancient roads so their wheels would not be worn out by ruts of different widths. So who came up



FREE INFORMATION ABOUT BELLS AND CARILLONS  
The Guild of Carillonneurs in North America  
37 Noel Drive  
Williamsville, NY 14221

with that measurement in the first place? The horsemen of ancient Rome, who else? Four feet, eight-and-a-half inches was the standard width of a Roman chariot, wide enough to accommodate the rear end of a Roman war horse. Next time you see a modern train roll by, think of Charlton Heston in a toga!

Narrow-gauge tracks are less expensive to build than those for full-sized trains, especially considering the rough terrain of rural Maine, and the curves in the tracks can be tighter, but the trains themselves are small so they have less capacity for passengers and freight. The WW&F stopped operating in 1937. Most of the rolling stock was scrapped and the rails were torn up. The land that formed the right-of-way stayed in the ownership of Frank Winter, the last president of the railway. In 1940, he transferred ownership of the land to the Winter Scientific Institutes, a company he formed for the purpose of avoiding the taxes on the land. And in 1985, Harry Percival of Alna, Maine purchased most of the land. It was his vision to restore the railroad as a museum.<sup>1</sup>

To tell an extraordinary story in a few sentences, a non-profit corporation was formed, a large membership of volunteers assembled, and today there are about two-and-a-half miles of track relaid by hand on the old rail bed. They have acquired two historic steam locomotives, one that is operational that came from another two-foot railroad, the other originally owned by the WW&F, currently being restored on the premises. The enthusiasm and quality of workmanship of these volunteers is displayed regularly when the museum is open. A modest admission fee gets you a ride on a steam-powered train and a tour of the workshops and museum. I recommend this to anyone traveling along Route 1 in Lincoln County, Maine. Visit their website at <[www.wwfry.org](http://www.wwfry.org)>.

This is testament to the vision of one man and the enthusiasm of hundreds more. But while this tiny train is fun to ride, I'd hate to have to rely on it to get from Farmington to Wiscasset, Maine in February. It would be a long, noisy, cold, uncomfortable ride. Your eyes are filled with smoke and cinders, and the seats in the passenger coach are pretty small (see photo: John and Pat).



John and Pat (photo by Keith Taylor)

The photo shows Patrick and me joining the engineer and fireman on board. I had the sense we might be too much for the thing! And I learned that one of the hazards of operating such small railroad equipment was that the weight of the water (to be converted to steam) carried in the tender behind the locomotive was sufficient to derail the train if the engineer took a corner too fast. The modern train is better.

§  
Let's compare the organs that I've seen and heard in the last few days. In 1868 and 1870, Elias and George Hook were building tracker-action organs, logical enough because electricity was not to be available for decades more. (Thomas Edison first equipped the Manhattan

## MANDER ORGANS

New Mechanical Action Organs

Exquisite Continuo Organs

Imaginative Reconstructions

St. Peter's Square  
London E 2 7AF • England  
[t] 011 44 20 7739 4747  
[f] 011 44 20 7729 4718  
[ManderUK@mander-organs.com](mailto:ManderUK@mander-organs.com)  
[www.mander-organs.com](http://www.mander-organs.com)

## PACCARD

Cast bronze bells  
Digital carillons  
[www.christophpaccard.com](http://www.christophpaccard.com)  
800/849-6670





Hook #466, 1868 (photo by William T. Van Pelt)

home of J. P. Morgan with 250 electric lights on Thursday, June 8, 1882.<sup>2</sup> Ernest Skinner was committed to the use of direct-current electricity to operate the actions of his organs by about 1904.

The two Hook organs are pretty similar (see photo: Hook #466). Opus 529 has a Great Trumpet and a Swell 2' stop not found in Opus 466—otherwise the stoplists are identical. The voicing is brilliant and clear, and the cases are made of black walnut. The sharp keys of Opus 466 are higher and wider than those of Opus 529, as if the builders realized that they were uncomfortable to the player and changed them in the intervening two years. Both of these organs have been renovated and are in terrific playing condition (see photo: Hook #529).

The Skinner organ is about 60 years newer than those Hook organs, but 80 years qualifies it as old. It has the symphonic voicing characteristic of Mr. Skinner's vision. Many organists agree that the sharp keys on Skinner keyboards are as comfortable as any to the player. There's a simple combination action, a concave-radiating pedalboard, and Skinner's very effective eight-stage whiffle-tree engine.

*(Here's our second allusion to horses—a whiffle-tree is the rig used to connect a team of horses to a carriage that allows each horse to pull independently while the horsepower of all of them is added together. Mr. Skinner's Swell engine incorporates the whiffle-tree concept to allow the pneumatic for each stage to move the shutters independently, with the motion of all pneumatics combining to provide the full range of power and motion of the shutters. Skinner made these motors in eight- and sixteen-stage versions.)*

While the Hook and Skinner organs are very different, they have in common an essential element: all three of these organs are absolutely vital and appropriate for modern use. While you can say a modern organ is different, you cannot say that it's better. Automobiles and railroad trains have been improved immeasurably over the years, but a pipe organ that's 80 or even 140 years old is an organ for today. It's timeless.

It's amazing that you can play music written a year or two ago on an organ built just after the Civil War. How did



Hook #529, 1870 (photo by John Bishop)

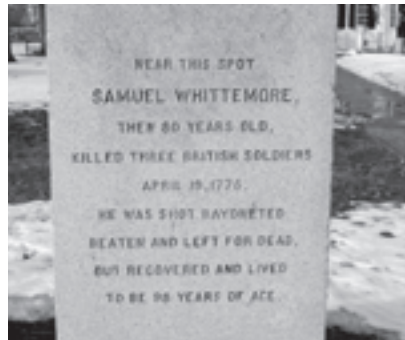
the brothers Hook conceive of instruments that would be so useful now? Did Mr. Skinner know that his organs would sound good to people living and working in the twenty-first century? (Actually, from what I've read about him, he may have thought that his organs would be the only instruments worth playing in the twenty-first century!)

Many modern organists prefer to play instruments festooned with lots of electric and solid-state gadgets. Pistons and toe-studs with sequencers and multiple memories, transposers, and programmable crescendos are the playthings of the modern organist. There's no question that gear like that allows ever more flexibility of registration, and after all, registration is one of the organist's most important expressive tools; but the three organs I'm thinking about today all have fewer than 20 ranks and each of them are easily and effectively played without sophisticated modern controls.

And by the way, these three organs are within three miles of each other in Medford, Arlington, and Lexington, Massachusetts. Let me know when you're coming to the area and I'll organize your visit. You history buffs will be interested to know that the addresses of these churches (High Street in Medford and Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington and Lexington) are all on the route of Paul Revere's famous ride on April 18, 1775 (Mozart was nineteen years old), warning the militias of towns in Middlesex County of the approach of the British soldiers ("Redcoats") in the hours before the start of America's Revolutionary War. Your visit could include a whole range of historical interest.

I'm especially fond of an historical marker in Arlington Center that tells of an 80-year-old patriot who killed three British soldiers on April 19, 1775: "... He was shot bayoneted beaten and left for dead, but recovered and lived to be 98 years of age" (see photo: Samuel Whittemore).

It may not make much sense to compare the timelessness of a work of art with the advance of technology. The use-



Samuel Whittemore (photo by John Bishop)

fulness of a modern automobile is relevant to today's conditions. We expect to be able to drive at 70 miles per hour for hours without stopping, no matter what the weather. But we look at a Renaissance painting and appreciate its content and composition as well as the technique and vision of the artist, even if we could produce a more authentic image of the same scene with our 8.0-megapixel digital camera.

I believe that advanced technology has generally added to our world. I'm pleased with the BlackBerry that allows me to check e-mails in a taxicab. While I'm annoyed by people who use their cell phones rudely, I sure find it a convenience to have one when I'm traveling. (Maybe rude people will be rude no matter what equipment they have.) But I believe the advance of technology in the world of the organ has led to the compromise of authenticity. Solid-state switching has added much to the art of organ playing, but in my opinion, digital sound has not. The majesty of air-powered sound in a large building or the intimacy of air-powered sound in a small room is not improved upon with digital reproduction. It is not a musical, artistic, or liturgical advantage to introduce the specifications of a 100-stop organ in a 100-seat room. It is not a musical, artistic, or liturgical advantage to introduce the pitch produced by a 32-foot pipe in a room with a 15-foot ceiling. And it is not a musical, artistic, or liturgical advantage to have an antiphonal organ with Trompettes-en-chamade in a room with a 50-foot center aisle. A bride can walk that far in about eight measures of Purcell—why make such a racket?

Digital instruments are often purchased by small churches whose members claim there's no space for an organ. But these churches are typically trying to get a large three-manual organ into their small room. Of course there's not enough room. A room that seats 100 people needs an organ of eight stops. Don't tell me you can't play Widor on an eight-stop organ. I know that. I don't want to hear Widor in a 100-seat room.

Funny, I don't mind rolling up the windows of the car, turning on the air-conditioner, and enjoying a cup of coffee while listening to Widor played on Widor's organ at full volume. Keeps me off the phone!

#### Notes

1. <www.wmfry.org>, Railway history.
2. Jill Jonnes, *Empires of Light* (New York, Random House, 2003), page 6.

## On Teaching

by Gavin Black



### Counterpoint III

This month I want to outline, as systematically as I can, a method for taking any contrapuntal keyboard piece apart into separate voices, practicing those voices separately, and putting the piece back together. This builds on some of the ideas discussed in the last two columns. I will also begin to discuss motivic analysis, which I will expand upon next month in wrapping up this series on counterpoint.

To begin with, I will mention some of the reasons for approaching this kind of music in this way, since it involves, up front at least, more work than it would take just to finger and practice the piece. Any student who is being asked to put in this extra work deserves to know why it is being suggested, and thus to have a chance to become convinced of it and motivated, inwardly and enthusiastically, to do it. The first reason is in a sense philosophical. If a piece is convincingly contrapuntal—written in voices that are completely or very largely consistent, that is, each is a coherent melody from the beginning of the piece to the end—then the composer certainly wrote it that way on purpose. Therefore it makes sense to assume that the performer ought to understand it that way as well, at least as a point of departure for making decisions as to how best to play the piece. This is somewhat analogous to an actor's knowing the grammar and syntax of the language in which a play is written before performing in that play. It is possible to learn a part phonetically, in a language that you do not understand, but this is unlikely to lead to convincing rendering of the phrases and sentences, or possibly even of the words.

A second reason arises out of the first one. An actor playing a part in a language that he or she doesn't understand might be able to give a convincing performance of that part through coaching. That is, someone who does understand the language could demonstrate ways of speaking the words and phrases that are appropriate, and the actor could mimic that native speaker. This could perhaps

# Elsener

Organ Works, Inc.

Dedicated to the creation and preservation of the world's finest instrument.

**Elsener Organ Works, Inc.**  
120 East Jefryn Blvd, Deer Park, NY 11729  
Tel: (631) 254-2744 - Fax: (631) 254-8723  
[www.ElsenerOrganWorks.com](http://www.ElsenerOrganWorks.com)

## Atlanta First United Methodist Church

A.E. Schlueter Pipe Organ Company and Atlanta First United Methodist Church are pleased to announce the recent completion and dedication of their new pipe organ.

This instrument features a 5-manual console and 93 ranks of pipes in 9 divisions. The complete specification is available at [www.pipe-organ.com](http://www.pipe-organ.com) for this and other projects.

**A.E. Schlueter Pipe Organ Co.**  
P.O. Box 838, Lithonia, GA 30058  
800-836-2726 • [www.pipe-organ.com](http://www.pipe-organ.com)