David Rumsey

PEARLS AND RARITIES OF THE WELTE ORGAN ROLL COLLECTION

Hofner, Diebold, Philipp and the world's earliest recorded organists

The earliest-born of all Welte's organists seem to have been Carl Hofner and Johann Diebold. Judging by the catalogue numbers Franz Philipp, born half a century later, was possibly the first organist ever to record while still a student (see later). The honour of being first might also have been bestowed on one or two other now-obscure identities, e.g. A. Maenner or "Frey". However, Hofner and Diebold had at least 5 known rolls released by 1912, Philipp only one (Salvator Rosa's Canzonetta: Nah und fern on Welte No. 474). Maenner's only known dated release is 1922 which is also about when Philipp's main output of rolls started to appear. Some of these early rolls might have been played in Turin at the 1911 exhibition which ran from April to October, since the advertizing expressly stated: "Philharmonie-Orgel mit Künstlerrollen" (Philharmonic Organ with artist-recorded rolls).[1]

Carl Hofner

19th/early 20th century German organist and composer, also possibly noted for his improvisation
**1842 Jan 23: Inchenhofen/Augsburg (D)*
Studied for 5 years at the Munich Conservatorium then spent 8 years as "Music-Prefect" at the monastery school at Metten
1868 Oct: teaching position at the Church Music School in Freiburg/Breisgau; regular duties for the 9 a.m. service at the Münster
1871 Jan 1 began officially as organist at Freiburg Münster
1878 taught Joseph Schildknecht (an important Swiss organist)
† 1912 May 19 Freiburg (D)

Hofner's playing of Bach's music represents the closest training to Bach's own era. It is tempting to speculate that Rheinberger might have been his teacher in Munich – but the professor would have been a mere three years older than the student. Rheinberger was appointed teacher in 1867: by then Hofner had been in Metten for seven years.

Since there was a recording organ from 1909 in Freiburg, and he died before Bossi's arrival to make the first official recordings, Hofner's recordings must date somewhere between late-1909 and early-1912, possibly 1911. They may have been trials, but Welte found them worthy of listing in their later catalogues.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	3	3
Recording of an improvisation	1	1
Probable recording dates	1911–1912	
Known roll release dates	by 1912 (the improvisation 1926)	

Repertoire: His three recorded rolls are: J.S. Bach, Praeludium und Fuge (BWV 549) on Welte No. 716; J.S. Bach, Herzlich tut mich verlangen (BWV 727) Welte No. 717; an improvisation "on a theme" Welte No. 722

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Johann(es) Diebold

19th / early 20th century German organist and composer
**1842*
Studied at the Freiburg/Breisgau Church Music School
Took a leading role in establishing the Cecilian reform movement in his region
1869 – 1919 Chordirektor (Chorregent) und Organist at St. Martin in Freiburg
†1929

More information about Diebold may have been found in the diocesan, Saint Martin or Welte archives, but all of these were lost in WWII bombing raids. His roll recording of J.S. Bach's Toccata and Fugue in d minor (BWV 565) is the earliest known recording of this work.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	12	12
Probable recording dates	1909 – 1921?	
Known roll release dates	1912 – 1922	

Diebold played the following on Welte rolls:

Welte No.	Composer	Work
753	Birn	Weihnachts-Fantasie über *Kommet, Ihr Hirten op. 12*
754	Böttcher	Festal Postlude
755	Faulkes	Lied op. 136 No. 2
756	Mendelssohn	Sonata op. 65 No. 1 in f minor
757	Seiffert	Fantasie on a Motiv of Beethoven op. 10
758	Tinel	Improvisata
778	Neuhoff	Andante in E-flat major
779	Jongen	Pastorale in A major (appears under 2 roll numbers)
780	Guilmant	Communion in a minor op. 45
781	Rheinberger	Romanze, op. 142, No. 2
782	Mailly	Finale aus Sonata für Orgel, D dur
783	J.S. Bach	Toccata and Fugue in d minor

As mentioned above, Franz Philipp (1890 – 1972) was another early Welte organist, but much of the repertoire he is credited with is worthy of little more than passing mention: mainly popular hymns and songs. He would only have been 20 when Hofner and Diebold were committing much earlier-learned skills with far more solid repertoire to punched paper. Philipp's first known release was an isolated roll in 1912. At this time he was studying with Adolf Hamm in Basel. 1912 – 1914 saw only 6 of his rolls with relative trivia released. His real productivity for the firm begins tentatively in 1919 and assumes somewhat more serious proportions from 1921 onwards.

Marco Enrico Bossi: Welte's first official recording artist

Marco Enrico Bossi

**1861 Apr 25 Salò Lago Garda (I)*
Studied at Bologna Musical Lyceum and Milano Conservatorio
1881 organist at Como cathedral
1890 lecturer at Napoli Conservatorio; 1895 ditto Venezia
1902 director of Bologna Conservatorio; 1916 ditto Roma
†1925 Feb 20 at sea (Atlantic)

Bossi was the first internationally renowned organist ever to record for Welte, and the only Italian. The link was almost certainly made with the company's presence at the Turin exhibition of November 1911: Bossi's son – a German-trained organist – conducted an orchestral concert there with his father as soloist on 31st October.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	16	13
Recordings of his own compositions	6	4
First known recording date	18th July 1912	
Known roll release dates	1912 – 1925	

Most of Bossi's rolls were released 1912 – 1914 with just 3 after that – one each in 1921, 1922 and 1925. It is possible the 1925 release was commemorative, since Bossi died that year (a more extensive article in Italian by Nicola Cittadin is found in this publication).[2]

British Town Hall, Cathedral and Exhibition Organists

A healthy organ culture existed in late-19th/early-20th century Britain and virtually all of its colonies: one career path for organists was a church or cathedral position. A "secular", high-profile option open to a few was as organist to a civic corporation. Whether church, cathedral or Town Hall, much of the time they played transcriptions or accompanied choirs. There were also occasional invitations to play recitals and demonstrations at Exhibitions. Organs, and their latest technology, were a major feature of Exhibitions from 1827 until around 1960.

The phenomenon of the "Town Hall" organist arose partly as an after-effect of the Industrial and French Revolutions. While civic-employed organists were also found in Europe, the term Town Hall Organist had special ramifications in the English-speaking world (England, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Canada, United States of America and South Africa, and even India had at least two Town Hall organs). Town Halls, and the organs which stood in them as symbols of civic pride and affluence, were concert venues and meeting points for a wide range of secular activities. These could include ceremonial, meetings, dancing and a variety of entertainment genres. There was typically also a resident choir. Town Hall organs were designed with a view to substituting for orchestras, accompanying choirs and providing public entertainment. Along with that came the playing of orchestral transcriptions. Town Halls formed part of the performance circuits available to the best organists.

Thus it was that this phenomenon and Welte's purposes ran along much the same socio-musical lines with the appearance of the Philharmonie from around 1912: principally secular organ entertainment. Orchestral transcriptions were a preferred genre in both arenas.

English and American recitalists were well-represented in the Welte catalogues. Six of the best were British. Along with Lemare, who towered above most of them, they all responded well to the need to entertain. British organists and the firm's exports to England were somewhat symbiotic (Salomons' and Britannic were amongst their first,

Harrod's and many others followed – for a fuller listing see Gerhard Dangel's article in this publication). This became something of a world trend: in the USA a significant trade was available to Welte, and in 1926 a wealthy German had one installed in his Swiss castle at Meggenhorn on Lake Lucerne, one of the few still extant.

Not only are some of the most notable British recitalists of the era listed but they also recorded a proportionately large number of rolls. Harry Goss-Custard was Welte's most prolific organ recording artist and their catalogue of his rolls overwhelms the lists of his later disc recordings. Only one work, Lemmens' *"Storm"*, appears to be duplicated by him on both roll and disk. "Organ Storm" genres were Town Hall repertoire and became indispensable to organ entertainment world-wide.[3]

The recordings of Faulkes, Harry and Reginald Goss-Custard, Hollins, Walton and Wolstenholme were no doubt made partly to satisfy this British and American market where industrialists or shipping magnates were seemingly vying with each other to have the latest musical prestige symbols. The Philharmonie was the ultimate in this regard. The "Salomon" Welte at Tunbridge Wells is one example, fully preserved and recently restored. It is a sister – if not a twin – to the Seewen organ. They, and Meggen, are amongst the very few of their kind left in the world today on which Welte Philharmonie rolls can still be played.

William Faulkes

19th / 20th century British organist, composer
**1863 Nov 3 Liverpool (GB)*
Organist at Anfield, St. Margaret's Church, for nearly fifty years
†1933 Jan 25 Liverpool (GB)

Faulkes wrote a large number of organ works – up to opus number 186, then a further c. 240 without opus numbers. Classification of his music is difficult, because many bear the same name according to tempo, character or liturgical function (e.g. Communion, Offertoire). His music was widely played at the time, and was recorded also by some of Welte's other artists.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	31	28
Recordings of his own compositions	12	11
First known recording date	14th July 1913	
Known roll release dates	1913 – 1923	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, F.E. Bache, de la Tombelle, Friml, Gounod, Guilmant, Hatton, Henselt, Lefébure-Wély, Lemmens, Salomé, Thomas, Tours, Wesley and works of his own.

The Goss-Custard brothers

It is sometimes unclear which Goss-Custard recorded a particular Welte roll, because the attributions can be missing, incomplete or wrong. The name, properly Goss-Custard, was noted by Welte in this and a variety of other forms: "Goss Custard", "Custard", "gespielt von G. Custard", "H. Goss Custard", "Reginald Goss Custard". There is no reliable consistency to be gleaned from the spellings.

Harry recorded in 1913, Reginald 1926.[4] This gives a basis for tentative attribution especially if the recording or release date is known. Unfortunately there are not many dates available. However, the allocated Welte roll-numbers follow a vaguely systematic plan. They are the best guides presently available although other facts often need to be taken into consideration. Reginald's recordings begin at Welte No. 1998 and run to 2035. This is a significant aid to clarification. A few conflicts still arise. The available on-line database shows the latest attributions, taking into account all of the above.[5]

It is possible that Harry made multiple trips to Freiburg to record. It could have been difficult to record so many items in the time normally allocated for recording (typically about 10 days). His roll numbers are in three main blocks: 1–1159, 1443–1502 and 2500–2506. The first two blocks are found – not contiguously – in most available records, but the third is found only in a US database. It includes works that might have been very popular in the US but less so elsewhere (My Old Kentucky Home; America). That might argue in favour of a US recording session, but unless he visited prior to the closure of the Welte New York branch in 1917 it is difficult to see that as a possibility. There is little logic to be found in their release dates. 1918 was the only year in the entire range of Harry's dated rolls in which none was released. Only one roll (the hand-perforated "Marriage of Figaro" Overture, Welte No. 421) was released in that year. Much clarification is still needed: did he go behind enemy lines to record? Welte were sleeping with the enemy by releasing his rolls between 1914 and 1917. Was he ever in New York before the Welte branch there had been declared "alien" and closed? He was there later, and Reginald was there in 1916. The case is decided but the jury remains out.

Walter Henry (Harry) Goss-Custard

20th century English cathedral organist, recitalist
**1871 Feb 7 St Leonards-on-Sea (GB)*
1886 organist of Hastings, Christ Church
1891 organist of Hastings, Holy Trinity
1895 awarded B. Mus (Oxford)
1902 organ position in Lewisham
1904 organ position in Ealing
1917 first organist appointment at Liverpool Cathedral (organ unfinished)
1926 played in a substantial number of the earliest "78" organ recordings
†1964 Jul 6 St Leonards-on-Sea (GB)

Harry was one of the most celebrated and certainly the most recorded organist of the first half of the 20th century. Although never a "Town Hall" organist himself, his career ran along similar lines with a repertoire acknowledging the need to entertain. Transcriptions occupied a significant part of this. It is no wonder that Welte enticed him to record for them. Clearly he obliged to the full with an impressively broad repertoire that was ideal for Welte. He created more rolls for them than any other organist. They now provide an important audio cameo on the era, revealing the entire British pomp, Germanic connections, sentimentality, musical and religious culture at its immediate post-Victorian Imperialistic peak.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings (including 2 re-releases)	135	123
First known recording date	February 20th 1913	
Known roll release dates	1913–1927	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Batiste, Beethoven, Bond, Bossi, Bruch, Chopin, Davies, Dreyschock, Dvorák, Elgar, d'Evry, Faulkes, Foster, Gaul, Reginald Goss-Custard, Grieg, Handel, Haydn, Hofmann, Hollins, Humperdinck, Karg-Elert, Kullak, Lefébure-Wély, Lemare, Lemmens, Liszt, MacDowell, MacKenzie, Mascagni, Mendelssohn, Merkel, Meyerbeer, Moliqué, Nessler, Nevin, Puccini, Rachmaninoff, Rubinstein, Schellenberg, Schubert, Schytte, Sibelius, Simonetti, Smart, Spindler, Spohr, Sterndale-Bennet, Sullivan, Thomé, Tschaikowski, Wagner, Wheeldon, Widor and Wolstenholme. He also recorded some familiar hymns from "Hymns Ancient and Modern".

Reginald Goss-Custard

19th/20th century English organist, recitalist, composer of organ music, arranger, author of an organ method on pedal technique
**1877 Mar 29 St Leonards-on-Sea (GB)*
1902 organist at Westminster, St. Margaret (successor to Lemare)
1916 major tour to USA
1922 organist at Chester Square, St. Michael's
†1956 Jun 13 Dorking (GB)

Reginald made some early "78" recordings: works by Watling (Minuet in Old Style in D-flat major, also recorded on a Welte roll), Coleridge-Taylor, Boëllmann, and his own Nocturne in D. Interestingly, one of his own roll-recorded works (Benedictus in A *b* major), is only known through his roll-recording of it – it is not yet found in the published lists of organ repertoire.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings (including 2 re-releases)	34	32
Recordings of his own compositions	1	1
First known recording date	August 15th 1926	
Known roll release dates	1926 (1 in 1927)	

Repertoire: Borowski, Braga, Chopin, Coleridge-Taylor, Drdla, Elgar, Faulkes, Fletcher, Fricker, German, Goss-Custard, Guilmant, Hollins, Mason, Paderewski, Saint-Saëns, Smart, Somervel, Taylor, Tschaikowski, Vierne, Watling, Wheeldon, Wolstenholme, the Londonderry Air.

Alfred Hollins

19th/20th century blind English organist, concert pianist composer/arranger
**1865 Nov 9 Hull (GB)*
1874 attended the Wilberforce Institution for the Blind (York)
1878 Royal Normal College for the Blind: piano with Hartvigson, organ with E. J. Hopkins
In Berlin: piano studies with Hans von Bülow
1884 appointed as organist at Redhill, St. John's (GB)
1885 appeared at the Music and Inventions Exhibition (London) as organist
Studied at the Raff-Konservatorium in Frankfurt/Main (D)
1888 organist of the People's Palace, and St. Andrew's, Upper Norwood
Became professor of piano and organ in the Royal Normal College
1897 appointed organist at Edinburgh, Free St. George's Church
1904 organ recital tour to Australia
1907 and 1909 two recital tours to South Africa
1916 third recital tour to South Africa
1925 recital tour to USA
†1942 May 17 Edinburgh (GB)

Hollins' musical oeuvre is original and varied – songs, church music, instrumental music and organ works which achieved popularity, most notably his Concert Overtures. A 1936 autobiography, A Blind Musician looks back, has a useful description of the Welte recording process (quoted in the companion article above).

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	51	48
Recordings of his own compositions	16	14
First known recording date	August 28th 1913	
Known roll release dates	1913 – 1925	

Repertoire: transcriptions and original works by Bairstow, Clausmann, Cowen, Dvorák, Faulkes, Foote, Guilmant, Hall, Handel, Hesse, Hopkins, Hoyte, Johnson, Lemmens, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Paderewski, Pleyel, Rousseau, Sillas, Smart, Stewart, Sullivan, Watling, West, Whiting, Wolstenholme. He also recorded some of his own works: A song of sunshine; Andante in D; Andante poco tranquillo; Cantilène; Concert Rondo; Gebet und Wiegenlied; Grand Choeur in g; Grand choeur No. 2; Morceau de concert; Pastorale and Communion; The silver cord; Theme with Variations and Fuge; Triumphal March, and an Improvisation.

Herbert Francis Raine Walton

19th/20th century English/Scottish organist, composer
**1869 Thirsk, Yorkshire (GB) eldest son of James Walton, schoolmaster and organist*
c. 1877 aged 8 began playing services (on manuals: his legs were too short to play the pedals)
c. 1882 appointed organist at the church of Shipton on Swale
c. 1884 organist at the church of Kirkby-Wiske; organ lessons with Naylor (York Minster)
1886 enrolled at the Royal College of music in London
1887 awarded a three-year scholarship for organ-playing
1890 appointed private organist to the Earl of Aberdeen (Scotland)
1893 became organist and choir-master at Leeds, St. Mark's; began a noted teaching career
1896 was one of five selected candidates for organist to the Corporation of Liverpool
1897 May appointed organist at Glasgow Cathedral – †
†1929

Walton was a recording artist on both early electrical gramophone "78"s and for Welte. For the "78"s he played at least one of his own works, the *Lament of Sir Rory Mer.* What is now touted as his most popular composition, *Rhapsodic Variations on two contrasted themes* (c. 1922) appears never to have been recorded. He played none of his own music on Welte rolls.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	32	29
First known recording date	September 15th 1913	
Known roll release dates	1913 – 1928	

Repertoire: Arne, J.S. Bach, Barnett, Best, Brassin, Buck, Chipp, Cowen, Flagler, Fuchs, Grison, Guilmant, Hailing, Handel, Harwood, Haydn, Karg-Elert, Krebs, Liszt, Mansfield, Meyerbeer, Morandi, Mozart, Piernè, Pullein, Taylor, Widor and Wolstenholme.

William Wolstenholme

19th/20th century blind English organist, improviser, composer
**1865 Feb 24 Blackburn (GB)*
1887 concluded Mus.B. at Oxford (first blind musician since John Stanley to take the degree)
Studied at the "College for Blind Sons of Gentlemen", Worcester (organ with Dr. William Done, Worcester Cathedral organist, and violin with Edward Elgar)
1888 organist at St. Paul's, Blackburn
1902 organist at London, Kings Weigh House Church, Grosvenor Square
1904 organist at London All Saints', Norfolk Square
Organist at All Saints', St. John's Wood, London
1908 toured USA
1925 President of the London Society of Organists
†1931 Jul 23 London (GB)

Wolstenholme also wrote chamber works, songs, part songs, and orchestral music. Some titles of his organ pieces are highly creative: "The Question – The Answer" (op. 13/1), "The Seraph's Strain" (16/2), "Air du Nord" (38/5), "An Irish Phantasy" (63), and "Bohèmesque". Opus numbers cease at 84 with around 20 unnumbered.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	47	39
Recordings of his own compositions	26	21
First known recording date	September 26th 1913	
Known roll release dates	1913 – 1926	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Bairstow, Boëllmann, d'Evry, Faulkes, Franck, Handel-Thorley, Hollins, Lemare, Mendelssohn, Rheinberger, Saint-Saëns, Salomé, Schumann, Wareing, Wesley, some of his own works and the two improvisations.

The North Americans

Two major US organists of their day were engaged by Welte to make recordings: Clarence Eddy and Samuel Baldwin. There were two others that came in on this scene from abroad: Lemare and Bonnet. Bonnet can be left in the French lists, but with Lemare it is less clear. Born in Britain, he traveled the world and conquered it with his fine playing, eventually settling in the US where he aroused professional jealousy on account of his high fees. He, Hollins and Dupré were the only Welte organists who ever toured as far as Australia; Lemare also played in New Zealand.

Whether he was lured to the US or pushed out of England may well be a moot point, but it was a clear migration. So we include Lemare in the North American lists, also justified because it was here that he had particular influence in the later traditions of transcription playing. By contrast, Eddy and Baldwin played more original organ works. Eddy also showed an interest in early music (Clérambault, Couperin) something of a precursor to what was soon to be coming world-wide. Baldwin preserved some American works for us. With him comes a reminder of Guilmant's pioneer touring of the U.S. through his inclusion of two works by the French virtuoso: *Lamentation* (op. 45) and *the Sonata No. 1 in d minor* (op. 42).

Welte's New York operations also symbolized the connections to the English-speaking world that were so strong with this firm. American prosperity particularly created a demand for organs in some of the richly-endowed music salons of the wealthy. Other companies also specialized in residence organs. One was in the home of George Eastman, Rochester NY – where organist Harold Gleason was paid to play during breakfast each day. The affluence that fueled demand for residence organs – Welte's earliest sales to the US stand out in Philharmonic lists – was swept away by the stock market crash of 1929. It also wiped out Lemare's retirement savings.

(Hiram) Clarence Eddy

19th/20th century North American organist, teacher, composer and compiler
**1851 Jun 23 Greenfield (MA-USA)*
1867 studied with Dudley Buck
1871 – 1873 studies with Karl August Haupt and Carl Albert Loeschhorn in Berlin; undertook an extensive European tour before returning to USA
1874 – 1876 organist at Chicago, First Congregational Church; later at New York, Temple Beth El
1881 – 1909 compiled and published several anthologies of organ music
1895 – 1903 resident in Paris (F)
1916 – 1919 organist at Oakland, CA, First Presbyterian Church
1917 – 1920 compiled and published an organ method
†1937 Jan 10 Chicago (USA)

Eddy was recognized as the leading US concert organist of his era, well known also in Canada, and the first from the US to give significant concerts in Europe. He set standards and broadened perceptions of repertoire in his own country. His programs bore the imprint of his studies in Berlin with German repertoire of the day, including Bach and Reger. He recorded organ rolls for Aeolian as well as Welte. It is not impossible that some or all of his rolls were recorded in New York, or that he had two sessions: two master rolls in Seewen bear clear "New York" evidence: Welte No. 1661 (Klein, *"The secret of love"* op. 32/1) and 1665 (Saint-Saëns, *Le Cygne/ The Swan* – a Guilmant arrangement). They were both recorded on April 11th 1914 in New York. At present these seem to be the only clear proofs that anything was recorded in New York, although our databases show many US Welte titles made there, apparently by hand.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	22	20
Recordings of his own compositions	1	1
First known recording date	April 11th 1914	
Known roll release dates	1914 – 1929	

Repertoire: Bossi, Buck, Cadman, Clérambault, Couperin, Crawford, Faulkes, Ferrata, Frÿsinger, Klein, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Reger, Saint-Saëns, Schubert, Wagner and one of his own works ("Festival Prelude on the 'Old Hundredth'").

Samuel Atkinson Baldwin

19th/20th century leading American organist and teacher
**1862 Jan 22 Lake City, Minnesota (USA)*
†1949 Sep 15 New York (USA)

In the Welte Catalogue Baldwin was identified as "Organist and Head of the Department of Music College of the City of New York". The isolated roll bearing a 1912 release date is a curiosity: possibly an error, possibly recorded separately (in New York?) – it is of Debussy's *Prélude de la Demoiselle Elue*, one of two Debussy rolls recorded by him. The other (given on the roll as: *The little shepherd; Menuet*) bears no date. It looks like they belong together.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	27	26
First known recording date	July 8th 1913	
Known roll release dates	1912? 1913 – 1922	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Bartlett, Batiste, Beethoven, Borowski, Buck, Debussy, Fauré, Foote, Frysinger, Guilmant, Harker, Huntington, Kinder, MacDowell, Massenet, Nevin, Shelley, Thiele and Wagner. This included The Star Spangled Banner variations by Dudley Buck (roll released in 1915).

Edwin Henry Lemare

19th/20th century British-American organist, composer, arranger, compiler
**1865 Sep 9 Ventnor/Isle of Wight (GB)*
1885 May 4 – end Oct sprang into prominence for the first time at the London International Inventions Exhibition (he played twice daily on the Brindley & Foster exhibit).
1895 organist and choirmaster to London, St. Margaret Westminster
1898 Mar 1 arranged, with special permission from Cosima Wagner, and accompanied a performance of Wagner's Parsifal Act I, at St. Margaret's
1900 Dec 27 left for a visit to New York and played a recital there on New Year's Day
1901 Feb 9 returned to play and direct a memorial service for Queen Victoria; Jun recital for the Glasgow Exhibition; after Sep 15 – recital tour of USA sponsored by the Austin Organ Co. Mid-Dec took the organist's post at Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh
1903 played a series at Sydney, Town Hall, Australia
1905 Jan 9 last Pittsburgh concert
1906 second Australia tour: Sydney, inauguration of Melbourne, Town Hall, New Zealand
1910 – 1913 extensive touring in USA and British isles
1913 roll-recordings for Welte at Freiburg; another USA tour
1915 engaged to play on the Austin organ at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition
1917 appointed San Francisco city organist
1921 Jun 3 accepted the post of Portland City Organist
1922 May concert tour of England
1923 left Portland, moved to Boston
1925 appointed city organist of Chattanooga
1927 contracted to record ("78"s) for the Victor Co. (project started but abandoned)
1929 May 26 farewell recital on leaving Chattanooga; moved to Hollywood
1930 Jan inaugurated the organ at Calvary Presbyterian Church
†1934 Sep 24 Los Angeles (USA:)

Lemare developed special organ playing techniques; pedaling natural keys with heels only when possible, "thumbing down" and "seamless" stop-changing (i.e. without gaps or depending on crescendo pedals). He is known to have had crescendo pedals disconnected (e.g. in Sydney Town Hall). His highly characteristic registrations and rapidly-varied "orchestrated" stop-changes were features of his playing. He was noted, too, for his special "accent" technique: *Rondo Capriccio: A Study in Accents*

(op. 64) perpetuates this – mainly a highly developed use of the swell pedal to give quick *sf*-dim effects. He crossed the Atlantic Ocean 55 times and the Pacific twice in his highly mobile career. He may well have had two recording sessions with Welte in 1913: many rolls are signed by him with March to June dates, but the surviving Welte records have him booked in from 2nd September. He even endorsed one of Harry Goss-Custard's rolls on May 5th 1913 (a piece by Lemare). He was the third most prolific Welte recording artist after Goss-Custard (135), and J. J. Nater (100).

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings (including 2 re-releases)	92	85
Recordings of his own compositions	30	28
First known recording dates	earliest March 7th 1913 officially 2nd September	
Known roll release dates	1912(?)–1928	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Bach-Gounod, Bizet, Boccherini, Bohm, Brahms, Chauvet, Chopin, d'Evry, Dubois, Dvorák, Elgar, Faulkes, Goldmark, Gounod, Guilmant, Handel, Hofmann, Hollins, Horseman, Humperdinck, Johnson, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Nevin, Offenbach, Rheinberger, Rossini, Saint-Saëns, Schmitt, Schumann, Turner, Verdi, Wagner, Weber, Wolstenholme and his own works, including four improvisations.

Fig. 1 – Edwin Lemare at the recording organ in Freiburg

Germany

German, Austrian and Swiss organists account for about half of Welte's recordings artists. Their recordings mainly reveal the Berlin school of around 1900 (Eddy studied there, too). Freiburg and South Germany around the era of Josef Rheinberger are also well-represented. The pioneers, Hofner, Diebold and Philipp, have been dealt with above. Switzerland, on account of its natural linguistic affinities with neighboring countries, is a special case, dealt with separately, as is Austria for different reasons.

Whatever hopes Welte might have had at the outset to use English talent and sell their products to the English-speaking world, those soon crumbled with the outbreak of World War I. The options for engaging artists rapidly narrowed to organists from their own side of enemy lines in the 1914–18 conflict. It took a year or two to recover – also part of the Britannic organ story.[6]

In the decade after Hofner and Diebold, 1911–21, there were certainly a few German organists mentioned, but British and Americans predominated, spiced with Gigout, Bonnet and a very small handful of others. There was also Franz Philipp with his few rolls from 1912, but from 1921 he, and others, began forming an impressive line of leading German organists who then followed (listed here according to the date of their earliest known roll release):

— 1912 Thaddä Hofmiller (? – ?)
— 1913 Max Reger (1873–1916)
— 1913 Alfred Sittard (1878–1942)
— 1920 Paul Mania (1882–1938)
— 1921 Walter Fischer (1872–1931)
— 1922 Karl Straube (1873–1950)
— 1922 Kurt Grosse (1890–?)
— 1926 Günter Ramin (1898–1956)

(and on through to Kurt Binninger, Otto Dunkelberg and others well into the 1930s).

The following summaries deal with the first eight above in the order of their birth.

Walter Fischer

19th/20th century German organist and teacher
**1872 Jul 10 Seibusch/Galizia (1868 – Austro-Hungarian empire)*
Studied with Heinrich Reimann in Berlin
1902 – 1914 conducted a correspondence with Max Reger (survives)
1903 – 1910 organist at Berlin, Garnisonskirche
1910 – 1917 organist at Berlin, Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche
1917 – 1931 organist at Berlin, Domkirche; he gave weekly recitals there usually including a Reger work
†1931 Jul 17 Berlin (D)

Later, in 1930, Fischer made "78"s of Rheinberger and Handel organ concertos, location (thought to be the Berliner Dom) conductor and orchestra all unidentified.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings (including 5 re-releases)	39	38
Probable recording year	1920–1921	
Known roll release dates	1921–1929	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Brahms, Chaminade, Duparc, Franck, Gade, Godard, Gottschalk, Handel, Herberigs, Liszt, Moszkowski, Reger, Rubinstein, Saint-Saëns, Schumann, Strauss, Tschaikowsky, Weber, Zipoli and van den Gheyn. Welte released a number of rolls that were the prototypical "music minus one" type – an accompaniment intended to have another instrument or voice playing or singing in ensemble with the organ. The Herberigs seems to be one of these, the roll (Welte No. 1779) is marked "Gesangrolle".

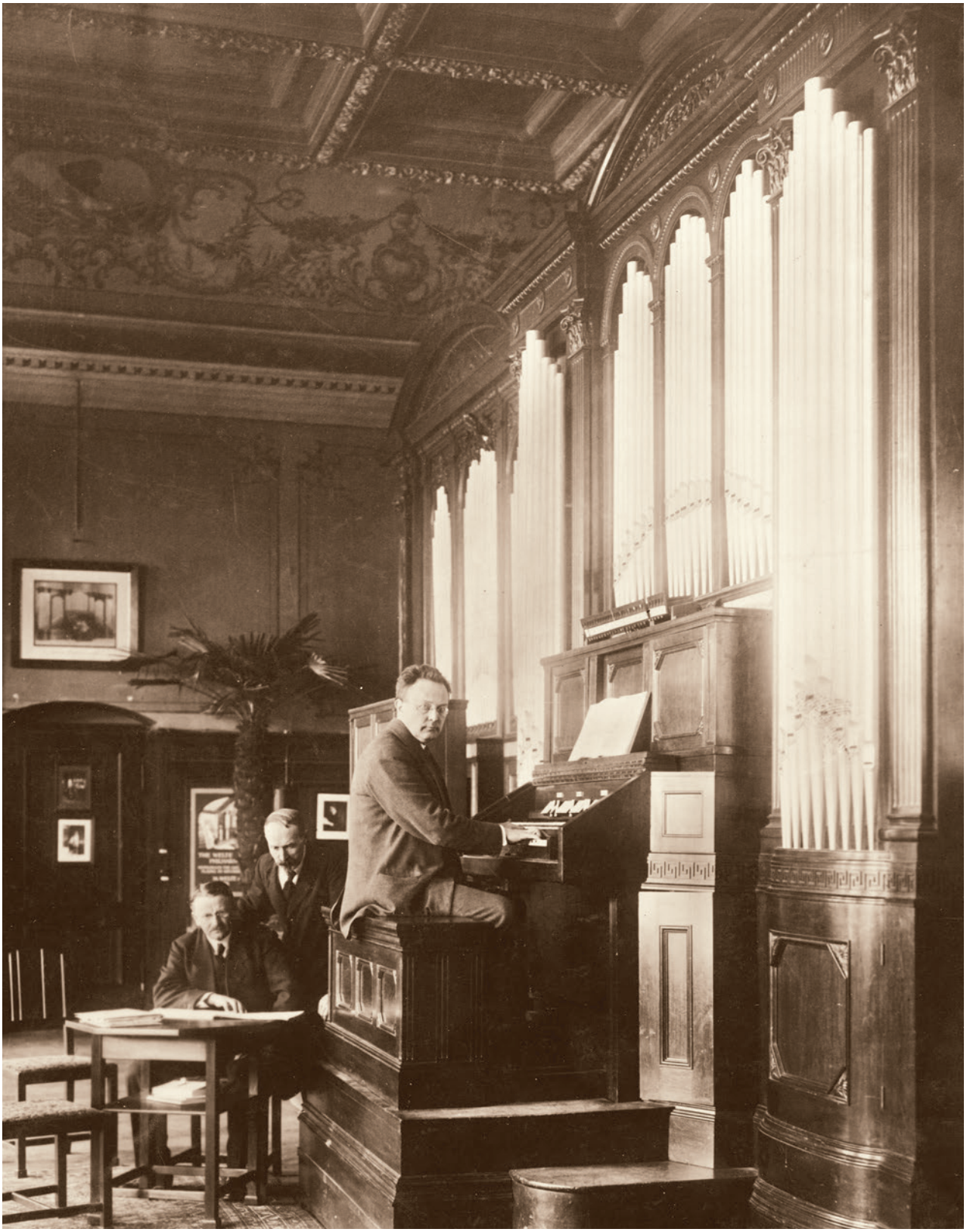

Fig. 2 – Walter Fischer in Freiburg in 1921

Max (Johann Baptist Joseph Maximilian) Reger

late 19th/early 20th century German pianist and organist, mainly remembered as a composer
**1873 Mar 19 Brand/Bavaria (D)*
1874 his family moved to Weiden; took lessons from Adalbert Lindner, the town organist
1886 – 1889 organist at Weiden, St. Michael (a Simultankirche)
1901 settled in Munich
1902 Oct married Else von Bercken
1905 – 1906 organ teacher at the Munich Academy of Music
1906 appearance (as conductor) in St. Petersburg (RUS)
1907 – Director of Music at the Leipzig University where he taught composition
1908 received an Honorary Doctorate from Jena University
1911 – 1913 appointed conductor of the Court Orchestra in Meiningen
1915 took up residence in Jena
†1916 May 11 Leipzig (D)

Reger was a controversial musical figure in his day and remains so to some extent. This is also the case with his organ-roll recordings. The works he recorded for Welte are of an easier grade of difficulty – other organists played his virtuosic works. Reger's surviving recordings might indicate that he expected the performer to take liberties with the published scores, including tempo, dynamics and registration, but they also show possible signs of carelessness in the playing. Was it the editing? No doubt Welte were happy to secure such a famous musician to record for them. Irrespective of the difficulty of work attempted, better performances were achieved for Welte by other organists than the composer himself. Reger's piano roll recordings appear to have fared better at the composer's hand. Was it the editing?

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	16	14
First known recording date	26th July 1913	
Known roll release dates	1913	

Repertoire: Reger recorded only works of his own. All were released in 1913. There is one roll in Seewen which appears to be a spurious attribution (not counted in the above).

Karl (Montgomery Rufus Karl Siegfried) Straube

19th/20th century German organist, music editor, author, arranger, choral conductor and organ pedagogue
**1873 Jan 6 Berlin (D) – his father was long-time organist at the Berlin, Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche*
1888 became a student of Heinrich Reimann
1895 regular deputy to Reimann at Berlin, Kaiser Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche
1897 Cathedral organist at Wesel
1897/98 beginnings of a lifelong association with Max Reger
1902 appointed organist at the Leipzig Thomaskirche (began 1903 Jan 6)
1903 director of the Leipzig Bachverein (Bach Society)
1907 appointed organ teacher at the Leipzig Konservatorium
1918 appointed Thomaskantor (11th after J.S. Bach)
1919 initiated, then directed the Kirchenmusikalisches Institut der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Landeskirche Sachsen
1922 inaugurated the Walcker "Praetorius" organ at Freiburg, University – it seems likely this was an opportunity taken to make his 6 Welte roll recordings
1923 Honorary Doctorate from Leipzig University
1927 Honorary Doctorate of Philosophy awarded by Leipzig Faculty of Theology
1933 Conductor of Leipzig Gewandhaus Choral Society
1933 the empowerment of the anti-church Nazis imperiled his Thomaskantor position and other working opportunities; he had openly opposed Hitler in 1931, but eventually joined the party to protect his own and the Thomaner's interests, continuing to work until 1939. Even then his attitudes were clear and open – he did not attend party meetings and continued associations with Jewish friends and colleagues. They made the renewal of his contract in the Thomaskirche dependent on the agreement of his designated successor (G. Ramin), a disagreeable condition which drove Straube to resign.
1948 Straube remained as a Leipzig Konservatorium teacher
†1950 Apr 27 Leipzig (D)

Reger's organ music is generally thought of as promoted through an association with Karl Straube, although there are other sides to this perception. The friendship was known to be under strain on occasions. Interestingly, not one of Reger's works is available on Welte roll played by Straube. Indeed, Straube was maintaining a dedicated early-music repertoire at the time he made these recordings – probably around the organ-building conference being held in Freiburg in 1922. This conference must have given Welte food for thought and caused a design modification or two to the Philharmonie, possibly prompting adjustments to pedal delays and other technicalities. Straube became the foremost German organist of his day.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	6	6
First known recording date	August 14th 1922	
Known roll release dates	1922–1928	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach and Dieterich Buxtehude.

Alfred Sittard

19th/20th century German organist, composer, editor
**1878 Apr 11 Stuttgart (D)*
Studied at Köln (Cologne) Konservatorium
1903 organist at Dresden, Kreuzkirche
1912 organist at Hamburg, Michaeliskirche
1925 organ professor at Berlin
†1942 Mar 31 Berlin (D)

Sittard, along with Straube and others, was a significant influence in the early days of Organ Reform. Sittard edited and published music by Buxtehude, Scheidemann and Weckmann. Apart from his Welte roll recordings in 1913 he made "78"s in 1928–32. These were in Berlin (Alte Garnisonskirche) and Hamburg (Michaeliskirche). 6 recording titles are duplicated on both roll and disk (2 by Bach, 3 by Handel, 1 of his own).

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	17	17
Recordings of his own music	1	1
First known recording date	September 9th 1912	
Known roll release dates	1913–1924	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Franck, Handel, Liszt, Reger, Saint-Saëns, a roll with the Handel (March from Hercules) coupled with a work of Baumann (Tut auf das Tor) and one of his own works (Choralstudie: Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein).

Paul Mania

19th/20th century German organist, "harmonium virtuoso" and composer
**1882 Sep 22 Tschöplowitz/Silesia (D)*
Studied with P. Hielscher
1906 fl. Köln
1928 Berlin Cathedral organist
†1938 Aug 11 or 12 Berlin or Obernigk/Breslau (D)

Mania composed a symphony "Die Reise des Kölner Musikgesellschafts-Verein nach Belgien und England", choral music, Lieder, harmonium and piano music. He released a "75"-rpm (sic!) disc with Lotte Lehmann of Hummel's Halleluja and made other early disc recordings. He was apparently also a cinema organist, which could account for some of the lighter works found amongst his recordings. He was one of the more prolific Welte roll-recording artists.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings (including 1 re-release)	81	80
Recordings of his own music	13	13
Probable recording year	(1920?) 1923–1924	
Known roll release dates	1920(?) then 1924–1929	

Repertoire: d'Albert, E. Bach, Bizet, Bortniansky, Brahms, Burow, Chaminade, Chopin, Couperin, Delibes, Donizetti, Duon, Dvorak, Eulenburg, Franck, Galuppi, Giordani, Gounod, Grieg, Gumbert, Hummel, Jensen, Kienzl, Kreisler, Kuhlau, Leclair, Leoncavallo, Liszt, Mascagni, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Pirani, Pressel, Rabaud, Radecke, Rameau, Saint-Saëns, Scharkel, Schubert, Schumann, Sinding, Stojowski, Strauss, Thomas, Verdi, Vivaldi, Weingartner, Wolf, including some popular hymns and songs. He also recorded up to 13 works of his own, up to four of them improvisations.

Kurt Grosse (Große)

19th/20th century German concert and recording organist
**1890 Feb 25 Berlin (D)*
Student at the "Kgl. Hochschule" (Royal Music Academy)
1914 – 1919 organist at Berlin, Garnisonskirche (Spandau)
1920 appointed organist and choirmaster Friedrichs-Werdekirche, Berlin
1936 Nov 6 gave a concert on the Welte "Lichtton-Orgel" (early form of electronic organ) in Berlin, with associate artist cellist Armin Liebermann
†?

Kurt Grosse is an interesting enigma – virtually unheard of today, he was one of Welte's more prolific recording artists. Although he made fewer rolls than Goss-Custard, Nater and others, Grosse's offerings included some of the epic Reger works (Fantasia on *"Wachet auf ruft uns die Stimme"* op. 52 No. 2; *Toccata and Fugue* d/D op. 56 No. 5 and 6; *Fantasia and Fugue* on BACH op. 46). Born directly into the culture of Brahms and Reger, he was "Berlin organ school" to the core. Around 1930 – 40 he also made "78" recordings at the Berlin Garnisonskirche and was soloist for a "78" recording of Bossi's Organ Concerto (op. 100, II and III) conducted by Manfred Gurlitt, organ unidentified.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings (including 2 re-releases)	65	60
Recordings of his own music	3	3
Probable recording year	probably 1921 – 1922	
Known roll release dates	1922 – 1929	

Repertoire: three of his own Improvisations (one subtitled "Stimmungsbild"), J.S. Bach, Bartmuss, de Beck, Beethoven, Benoit, Brahms, Dayas, Elgar, Franck, Handel, Haydn, Herberigs, Karg-Elert, Kistler, Kromolicki, Liszt, Moszkowski, Puccini, Reger, Reznicek, Rimsky-Korsakov (in US inventories only), Ritter, Roger-Ducasse, Ropartz, Rost, Saint-Saëns, Sjögren, Tschaikowski, Wagner and Widor. The Herberigs is again prototypically a "music-minus-one" roll (soprano accompaniment). Welte also listed some popular songs and chorales played by him – including what is now the Swiss National Anthem, "Schweizerpsalm, Trittet im Morgenrot daher" and "O Tannenbaum, Weihnachtslied".

Günther (Werner Hans) Ramin

19th/20th century German organist, composer and choral director
**1898 Oct 15 Karlsruhe (D)*
1910 attended Leipzig Thomasschule, where he was a chorister
Studied organ with Teichmüller and Straube
1918 appointed Thomaskirche organist
1940 appointed Thomaskantor (see also K. Straube)
†1956 Feb 27 Leipzig (D)

After his teacher Straube, Ramin was one of the next most important forces in German music, including the revival of early organ music. This was partly through a series of high-profile concerts in Hamburg's Jacobikirche in the 1920s. The skill of the student, Ramin, at least equaled that of his master, if these rolls are any guide. He also made gramophone recordings around 1950 – at least one work in common with his roll recordings (Reger op. 129).

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	10	10
Recordings of his own music (improvisation)	1	1
Probable recording year	probably 1925 – 1926	
Known roll release dates	1926	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Buxtehude, Handel, Lübeck, Reger and an improvisation on "Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her".

Taddä Hofmiller

19th/20th century German organist, and organ consultant
**?*
by 1912 he had recorded organ player rolls for Welte in Freiburg (but the dates are not mentioned in the surviving archives with Bossi et al from that year)
Organist of Augsburg Cathedral (before 1921)
1921 wrote a report on the organ in the Parish church at Baindlkirch
? possibly made a second series of recordings for Welte
†?

Little is known of Hofmiller, but he was a significant recording artist of Welte, the single most frequent Rheinberger exponent in this collection, with 5 of Seewen's 14 Rheinberger rolls to his credit.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings (including 6 re-releases)	33	33
Probable recording year(s)	possibly two: 1912, 1921	
Known roll release dates	1912–1913, 1921–1928	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Callaerts, Debussy, Dukas, Gigout, Johnston, Karg-Elert, Lalo, Malling, Massenet, Piernè, Renner, Rheinberger, Saint-Saëns, Salomé, Wachs, Wagner and Widor. This includes one roll which may be misattributed to Hofmiller.

Many other interesting German organists not mentioned here are represented on Welte rolls. To take but one more: Otto Dunkelberg (1900–1964), the young organist presiding over the new giant installation at Passau Cathedral at this time. He left 4 rolls, none are dated. (Repertoire: Renner, Ferrata, Zipoli and Handel; a work by Buxtehude and an improvisation on "Wenn alle untreu werden" are also ascribed to him).

Fig. 3 – Günther Ramin taking a Thomaner choir rehearsal

Fig. 4 – Otto Dunkelberg at the console in Passau

The Three Parisians

Apart from Erb, who was Alsatian and is dealt with later, three highly significant French organists were engaged by Welte. They were all resident and working in Paris. In the known order of their recordings or releases they were:

— 1912 Eugène Gigout (1844–1925)
— 1913 Joseph Bonnet (1884–1944)
— 1926 Marcel Dupré (1886–1971)

Gigout and Bonnet were among the first organists ever to record. They made no other known recordings. Dupré must have been engaged at least partly for the enviable reputation he was gaining for himself around the globe. All three of them were great French names that Welte must have been particularly pleased to be able to include in their catalogue. Although numerically far fewer than the British, German, or Swiss organists on their lists, here Welte managed to choose what were clearly three of the greatest Parisian artists of their day. Especially in the case of Gigout, born 1844, fully immersed in the culture of Lemmens, Franck, Boëllmann and Boëly, these recordings are of the utmost heritage importance.

Eugène Gigout

19th/20th century French organist, composer, pedagogue
**1844 Mar 23 Nancy (F)*
Attended the choir school of Nancy Cathedral
1857 studied at École Niedermeyer in Paris with Camille Saint-Saëns amongst others
Married Caroline-Mathilde Niedermeyer; taught organ and other subjects at his father-in-law's school
1863 – † appointed organist at Paris, St. Augustin (organ was unfinished until 1866)
1868 beginning of an increasingly prestigious international concert career
1885 founded a school of organ and improvisation
1911 succeeded Guilmant as professor of organ at Paris Conservatoire
†1925 Dec 9 Paris (F)

French writer, Félix Raugel, represents Gigout as having a fine personality, admired by all about him, including Franck. His must be the most authentic recording of Franck's music in existence, for they lived and worked in the same city and musical environment for decades together and knew each other well. Much the same applies to Boëllmann, a student of Gigout's, some of whose works Gigout also plays on roll. There were close family associations. Amongst the most important of Gigout's recordings are Lemmens' works: music by the Belgian founder of the 19th century French school, played by a leading performer of the generation immediately following – a veritable treasury of performance practice.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings (including 1 re-release)	39	35
Recordings of his own compositions	11	11
First known recording date	26th November 1912	
Known roll release dates	1913–1922 and 1926	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Boëllmann, Boëly, Chauvet, Franck, Lemmens, Mendelssohn, Saint-Saëns, Schumann and works of his own. A roll was released by Welte using Gigout's Bach E-flat major Prelude (abridged) coupled to Galuppi's Adagio (from a D major Sonata) played by Paul Mania.

Joseph Elie Georges Marie Bonnet

20th century French organist, composer
**1884 Mar 17 Bordeaux (F)*
1904 student of Guilmant, Vierne and Gédalge at Paris Conservatoire
1906 organist at St. Eustache, Paris
1940 in USA.
1943 appointed organ teacher at Montréal Conservatoire (CAN)
†1944 Aug 2 St. Luce-sur-Mer (CAN)

Bonnet toured widely as a virtuoso recitalist and published organ music mainly of an impressioniste or concertiste kind, much of it music associated with the organ's equivalent to the piano's "salon" environment at that time. He wrote, then recorded his own "In Memoriam Titanic" for Welte not long after the tragedy. He is also to be noted – particularly coming from France at this time – for his recordings of earlier music which included not just Bach, but Frescobaldi, Clérambault, Buxtehude and others.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings (including 4 re-releases)	49	45
Recordings of his own compositions	17	16
First known recording date	6th February 1913	
Known roll release dates	1913 – 1926	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Berlioz, Boëly, Buxtehude, Chauvet, Clérambault, Corelli, Debussy, Frescobaldi, Gluck, Grieg, Grigny, Guilmant, Handel, Lulli, Lully, Marcello, Martini, Moussorgsky, Mozart, Purcell, Ropartz, Saint-Saëns, Schumann and works of his own.

Marcel Dupré

20th century French organist, improviser, teacher, composer, editor and arranger
**1886 May 3 Rouen (F)*
Student of Guilmant, Widor, and Vierne at Paris Conservatoire
1906 assistant to Widor at Paris, St Sulpice
1916 deputy for Vierne at Paris, Notre Dame
1926 organ professor at Paris, Conservatoire
1934 – 1971 organist at Paris, St. Sulpice
†1971 May 30 Meudon (F)

Dupré's recording career began with Welte rolls. No doubt his tenure at Notre Dame acting for Vierne could have been influential in the Welte invitation, but his precocious talent had for long attracted attention. The 1926 Freiburg Organ Conference[7] may have been the catalyst for an invitation to record; but he was there after the conference. The relatively few recordings for Welte hint at a busy schedule and a short stay in Freiburg. This seems somehow comparable to Straube's story in 1922, also the year of an Organ Conference in Freiburg. They were both possibly last-minute invitations from Welte. Dupré undertook many European and North American tours (USA and Canada), one Australian tour (1939), and traveled extensively within Europe.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	10	9 with access to 10
Recordings of his own compositions	3	2 with access to 3
First known recording date	18th September 1926	
Known roll release dates	1926 – 1927	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Daquin, Franck and Widor, an improvisation on Schubert's ("Schlafe, schlafe ...", Wiegenlied, D 498 op. 98 No. 2) as well as his own Prelude and Fugue in g minor and Cortège et Litanie.

Switzerland

No less than five of Welte's organists were Swiss. Listed in possible order of their recording sessions, taking known or estimated recording dates and roll-numbers[8] into consideration, they were:

- 1909–1912 Paul Hindermann (1868–1925) Welte No. 741–752
- 1912–1913 Karl Hermann Köhl (1855–1919) Welte No. 775–777
- 1909–1912 Johann Jakob Nater (1878–1972) Welte No. 1052–1065 then 1255–1685
- 1912 Franz Josef Breitenbach (1853–1934) Welte No. 1066–1078
- 1925–1926 Karl Matthaei (1897–1960) Welte No. 2048–2065

It appears Nater might have had two sessions, the second possibly 1920–1921.

The first four had good connections with both Germany and France – at least so far as their studies and musical selections were concerned. These connections are particularly strong with Rheinberger on the one hand, and Guilmant and Dubois on the other. Köhl and Hindermann each have 1 roll of Guilmant's to their credit, but among the 100 rolls recorded by Nater, 31 were of works by Guilmant and 23 of Dubois. Nater covers nearly one third of his known roll recordings and approaches two thirds of the 52 known Welte rolls of Guilmant's music. Matthaei, who played nothing of either Rheinberger or Guilmant, was one of the leading initiators of the 20th century early music revival and Organ Reform. His rolls form an important historical niche in this collection.

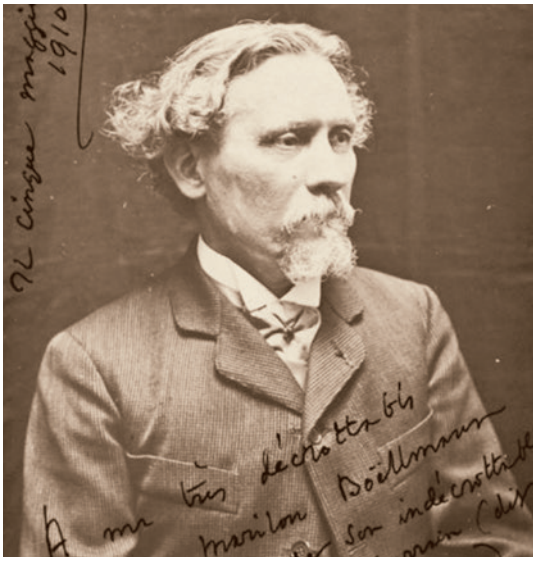

Fig. 5 – Eugène Gigout in 1910

French organists showed little inclination to record either Guilmant or Dubois, two of their most illustrious 19th century organists and composers. The full breakdown of who played Guilmant is interesting:

Welte recordings of works by Alexandre Guilmant

Organist	Total rolls	Guilmant rolls
France		
Bonnet	49	1
Erb (Alsace)	11	5
Germany		
Diebold	12	1
Gustav Stark	10	2
England and USA		
Baldwin	27	2
Farnam	12	1
Faulkes	31	4
Goss-Custard	133	1
Hollins	51	1
Lemare	92	3
Noble	16	1
Walton	33	1
Switzerland		
Hindermann	13	1
Köhl	3	1
Nater	100	31

An even more dramatic proportion is evidenced in the recordings of the works of Théodore Dubois. Of the 27 known rolls of Dubois' music, 23 are played by Switzerland's Nater. The remaining four rolls of Dubois consist of one hand-perforated roll by Franz Xaver Franz, and one each recorded by Bossi, Heim and Lemare. Not a single French organist among them.

With Nater, Köhl and Hindermann there is an enigma: since their rolls were first released in 1912 or 1913 it could be reckoned that their recording sessions came soon after Wolstenholme's on 26th September. Equally they might, as was apparently the case with Hofner and Diebold, have been unofficial early "trial" organists, or performed some similar function in the 1909–1912 timespan. Yet it seems unlikely, unless the Swiss were taking an unusually intense interest in the process of organ recording. With an artist of the calibre of Nater, and his 100 catalogue listings, it is hard to imagine that he was brought to Freiburg just for trials. One roll of his was released in 1912 and eleven in 1913 (amongst those dated). So there was something about this

contingent of Swiss organists that led Welte to invite so many of them so soon. Geographical proximity no doubt had a part to play, as it possibly did with Erb from Strasbourg.

Breitenbach is known to have held organ positions in Freiburg in the 1870s where he must have had some contact with Welte. Freiburg's Franz Philipp had a term of study in Basel and Köhl was from a famous resort town. At any rate there were some possible lines of communication and, whatever special connections there were with these Swiss organists, it has left us with some highly valuable material. There were also the paradoxes: Hindermann was a student of Rheinberger and thus brought German influence to Switzerland, yet he plays none of his master's works on Welte rolls. The most striking connections are Nater and the French school, and Matthaei's dedication to early music.

The remaining four rolls of Dubois consist of one hand-perforated roll by Franz Xaver Franz, and one each recorded by Bossi, Heim and Lemare.

Thus Switzerland assumes a special importance, not only for the preservation of the Britannic organ and its rolls, but as a cultural cross-roads between German and French 19th century romantic music and the 20th century renaissance of music of the 16th to 18th centuries. Added to this is an interesting statistic: Nater had more re-releases than anybody else. Together with Breitenbach and Hindermann around 25 % of these re-worked earlier rolls were accounted for by Swiss organists.

Franz Josef Breitenbach

19th/20th century Swiss organist
**1853 Apr 27 Muri (AG/CH) son of Joseph Heinrich B (*1808 – †?) from 1849 Musikdirektor and Organist of the Muri Parish Church – fl. in Einsiedeln*
1871 to Stuttgart (D) Konservatorium
1874 returned to Wil (CH)
1876 in Muri
1878 musical director in Baden (CH)
1889 organist at Luzern Cathedral
†1934 Aug 30 Luzern (CH)

As a composer, Breitenbach was one of a generation who perpetuated Orage ("Organ Storm") traditions: at least one organ work of his is dedicated to this genre (not recorded). He even gave it Swiss content: Fantasie pastorale sur des Motifs et Chansons suisses et Orage dans les Alpes (4 movements: Alphorn call with echo – folk-tune from French Switzerland – storm scene – song of thanksgiving after the storm). He also wrote some liturgically-based music, and contributed to Schildknecht's Organ Method and a collection of organ music published by Diebold (one of Welte's German artists – see above). He is mentioned in the Möhler-Gauß Kompendium der katholischen Kirchenmusik 1915.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings (including 3 re-releases)	16	16
First known recording date	16th September 1912	
Known roll release dates	1912 – 1926	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Bossi, Gigout, Liszt, Lorenz, Mailly, Saint-Saëns, Schubert and Wagner.

Karl Hermann Köhl

19th/20th century blind Musikdirektor and Organist in Chur (Switzerland)
**1855 Oct 28 Odessa/Ukraine (his parents were Swiss, from Chur)*
Became blind at 3 weeks
1862 aged 7, after the mother's death, he and his father moved back to Chur
Attended schools in Chur
Studied music in Stuttgart
1868 – † appointed organist at Chur, St. Martin's reformed church
†1919 Dec 6 Chur (CH)

The few details on Köhl survive only in the Welte catalogue and the Chur City records, mainly in a newspaper report about his funeral.[9]

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	3	3
First known recording date	1912 or 1913	
Known roll release dates	1913	

Repertoire: Welte No. 775 Theme and variations on "God Save the King" by Adolphe Hesse; Welte No. 776 March on a theme of Händel by Alexandre Guilmant; Welte No. 777 Sonata c minor op. 65 No. 2 Felix Mendelssohn.

Paul Hindermann

19th/20th century Swiss organist
**1868 May 28 Zürich (CH)*
Studied with Rheinberger
Obtained a Professorship in Zürich
Organist at the Grossmünster, Zürich
†1925 Jul 24 Zürich (CH)

Little is known of Hindermann outside what can be gleaned from the Welte rolls and catalogues. Similar to Köhl, since his rolls were released in 1912 – 1913, it could be reckoned that his recording session came immediately after Wolstenholme's on 26th September. Equally he might have been another "trial" organist in the 1909 – 1912 timespan.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings (including 1 re-release)	13	13
First known recording date	1909 – 1912?	
Known roll release dates	1912 & 1913 (1 late release: 1926)	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Brahms, Saint Saëns, Franck, Boëllmann, Schumann, Guilmant, Salomé and Reger.

Johann Jakob Nater

Late 19th/early 20th century Swiss organist
**1878 Sep 10 son of the Wädenswil (CH) Organist and Musikdirektor Johann Jakob Nater*
Studied with his father, later at the Zürich and then Berlin Hochschule für Musik; while in Berlin he was also called on to accompany the class of violinist Joseph Joachim
A private student of Alexandre Guilmant in Paris; sojourns also in Nice and Milan
1900 – 1905 organist at the Pauluskirche, Basel
1907 – 1913 taught Gregorian Chant and Liturgy at the Beuron (Catholic) Church Music School (in spite of the fact that he was a Protestant)
1918 – 1948 organist at Zürich, Jakobskirche
Taught at the Zürich Musikakademie
Many concerts played internationally, especially in Germany and England
He played also in the Zürich, Forum cinema
Retired to Tesserete in Tessin/Ticino (CH)
†1972 Jun 18

Contemporary critics acknowledged Nater as "bearing the stamp of a lively, aware musicianship, completely cognizant with the stylistic qualities of all epochs of music and equally possessed of an apparently effortless technical mastery of his instrument".[10] He was one of the most prolific of Welte's recording artists. With 100 known rolls attributed to him, this places him second only to Harry Goss-Custard. His close association with the music of Guilmant and Dubois makes his recordings of singular importance to world musical heritage.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings (including 9 re-releases)	100	86
First known recording date	1909 – 1912?	
Known roll release dates	1912 – 1929	

Repertoire: Adam, J.S. Bach, Bach-Gounod, Brahms, Chopin, Debussy, Dubois (22 rolls), Fauré, Floridia, Gluck, Grieg, Guilmant (31), Gulbins, Handel, Jongen, Lalo, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Nardini, Rheinberger, Ropartz, Saint-Saëns, Schubert, Schumann, Tartini, Thomé and Widor. Several, including the Bach-Gounod, are indicated as accompaniment rolls.

Karl (Friedrich Albert) Matthaei

20th century Swiss organist, an early leader of historic organ consciousness in Switzerland.
**1897 Apr 23 Olten (CH)*
1920 – 1923 studied with Karl Straube in Leipzig (D)
1925 – Organist and Harpsichordist to the Musikkollegium and Director of the Music School in Winterthur (CH) (a Winterthur street is now named after him)
1939 – Organist at Winterthur Stadtkirche
†1960 Feb 8 Winterthur

Because of his early 20th century performances and publications of 17th and 18th century music, Matthaei stands apart as a luminary of both Organ Reform and Early Music Movements. He taught many of the next generation of leading Swiss organists, including Hans Vollenweider, and was responsible for publishing a number of important books and editions, mainly dealing with early music.

Of special importance here is the influence that Organ Reform had on Welte. The modifications made to the Britannic organ in the 1920 – 1937 era endowed it with additional registers which were needed to bring it "up-to-date" and provide it with mutations, higher-pitched mixture stops, pedal cantus firmus reeds (4′ and 2′) and some lighter 8′ Gedackts or similar registers, usually "neo-classical" tonal options. In Freiburg, Welte must have been acutely aware of the "Praetorius" organ at the University – inaugurated in 1922 – which was a major harbinger of change. Karl Straube played the inauguration and, significantly perhaps, his rolls were released from 1922 onwards. So the inauguration and the recording sessions must have been fairly closely scheduled around his visit. This organ would cer-

tainly have given Welte much food for thought, as the conference was strongly dedicated to repertoire arenas that Welte had never considered until then. Matthaei and Straube's recorded repertoire, reflecting the conference, stretches from Praetorius through to Bach and Buxtehude. It was at this time that Straube went through his "road to Damascus" experience. Four years later Organ Reform was "formally declared" by no lesser figure than Christhard Mahrenholtz at another organ conference, also in Freiburg, in 1926. Matthaei attended and wrote a report.

Praetorius in Welte's own front garden! Full credit to them, that the firm took these reactionary organ design concepts very seriously; they had to, since their own organ type was providing canon fodder for the reactionaries. If, as seems highly likely, Matthaei's activities in nearby Switzerland were known to them, then this is the right timespan (1922–1926) needed to draw on the new ideas and repertoire, bring them into Welte's recording plans, then engage and get Matthaei to Freiburg.

The review of rolls which Welte undertook between about 1923 and 1926 was precisely within this time-frame. Not only that, but the multiplexing on the Britannic organ also seems to have been extended to deal with Matthaei's new registration ideas – it enabled the recording of registrations using the new mutations, mixtures, Sesquialtera and other "neo-classical" additions.

Fig. 6 – Actor Edward Everett Horton with organist Karl Matthaei

Although a thorough study of the phenomenon has yet to be undertaken, prima facie it appears that Matthaei and Welte were collaborating in the wake of this organ revival and early music phenomenon. Matthaei and Straube were not the only organists Welte presented with early repertoire – Bonnet or Bernard ten Cate were others – but Matthaei was the outstanding example. He was involved in much of what was happening in this connection in Switzerland at the time – it was not to be long before the official founding of the Basel Schola Cantorum (1933), a specialized early music school. Seewen has all of Matthaei's known roll recordings.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	18	18
First known recording date	1925–1926?	
Known roll release dates	1926–1927	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Buxtehude, Hanff, Pachelbel, Praetorius, Scheidt, Sweelinck. He also recorded 2 rolls of popular Swiss songs, seemingly under the name of Walter Sprüngli.

Alsace, Netherlands, Austria

Alsace was always part French, part German and part itself: and never more so than in its organ traditions. Only one of its organists recorded for Welte. Others, like Boëllmann, who might have, tended to gravitate towards Paris. This only made the territory even more distinctive: a triangle formed with Basel and Freiburg. The distances involved were not so great, so Alsace was in Welte's sights if there was an organist there worth recording or rolls and organs worth the effort to sell.

Belgium and the Netherlands were further away, although sales of organs there seemed to have been more promising than in Alsace. One Belgian-Netherlander, ten Cate, came to Freiburg and worked there, he made a small handful of important roll-recordings.

The Salzburger, Joseph Messner, a musician of considerable capability and importance to cultural history, was also a recording artist for Welte and left some fine and rather unique material for posterity.

So it was that just one Alsation, one Netherlander and one Austrian made rolls in Freiburg, completing a line which, very broadly considered, stretched through the middle of Europe, East to West, across England and over to the USA.

Marie-Joseph Erb

19th/20th century composer, organist and teacher at Strasbourg
**1858 Oct 23 Strasbourg (Alsace)*
†1944 Jul 9 Andlau (Alsace)

Erb made a total of 11 rolls for Welte – 5 of them of works by Guilmant. Their release dates raise similar questions about his recording session dates as were raised about others – presumably he followed Wolstenholme in what must have been intense activity at the end of 1912.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	11	11
First known recording date	by 1912	
Known roll release dates	1912 – 1925	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, Debussy, Franck, Guilmant, Mendelssohn and Wagner.

Bernard Jan ten Cate

19th/20th century organist fl. Netherlands, Belgium and Germany
** 1879 Apr 8 Hoogezand (NL)*
Organist at the Nederlandse Evangelische church in Brussels
1903 a prizewinner in organ playing at the Koninklijk Conservatorium in Brussels
1905 August 18 played the inaugural recital on an organ brought from Antwerp to the Gereformeerde kerk at Hoogeveen
1905 became organist at the Aa-kerk in Groningen
1924 Jan 31 to 1929 Oct 8 registered as living in Freiburg/Breisgau, became a Welte employee and made roll recordings for them; he was organist at the Freiburg Ludwigskirche
1930 Feb 26 reported to be in Wilhelmshaven (D)
† unknown

Of particular note is his connection with the Organ Revival Movement and related early music movement seen through his "vignette" recording of the Byrd Pavane – his registration of this piece reveals some knowledge of the style, reminding us of his far more prolific contemporary in early-music roll-recordings influenced by Organ Reform, Karl Matthaei.

A 1908 photograph is probably of Bernard ten Cate. Although the exact identity of this person is uncertain everything points to this as being the organist.[11]

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings	4	4
First known recording date	1925 or 1926?	
Known roll release dates	1926/1927	

Repertoire: J.S. Bach, BWV 538ii Fugue in d minor (Dorian); Debussy, The Submerged Cathedral; Byrd, Pavane; Bruch, Kol Nidrei.

Joseph Messner

20th century Austrian organist, composer and conductor
**1893 Feb 27 Schwaz/Tirol (A).*
Studied in Innsbruck and Munich
1922/23 appointed as cathedral organist in Salzburg
1924–192 6 released organ player rolls for Welte
1926 became Domkapellmeister in Salzburg (–1967) then turned to conducting and direction of the Cathedral Concerts of the Salzburger Festspiele
†1969 Feb 23 St. Jakob/Salzburg (A)

Messner was awarded three Honorary Doctorates: Theology (Alma Mater Paridiana); Music (Whitmann College, USA); an Ehrendoktorat from the University of Salzburg. His two extant organ works were not recorded for Welte.

	Global	Seewen
Currently-known Welte recordings (including 1 re-release)	*7*	*7*
Probable recording year	probably 1923 or 1924	
Known roll release dates	1924–1926	

His known roll recordings are an interesting mix: Mendelssohn (oratorio transcriptions, accompaniments) Handel, Theophil (Gottlieb) Muffat, Reger (one organ work, one harmonium work arranged for organ) and a contemporary organ work by Max Springer.

1 *Zeitschrift für Instrumentenbau, Bd. 32 (1912–1913). See the article of Gerhard Dangel in this publication.*
2 *See also Nicola Cittadin, "Marco Enrico Bossi al Welte-Philharmonie-Orgel", in: Acta Organaria e Organistica XVIII, No. 79 (2011).*
3 *This was a most notable phenomenon of the times, particularly associated with Town Hall organ cultures where, for example in Sydney, Storm performances were a great attraction in popular Sunday afternoon concerts. They featured thunder and rain effects and sometimes included magnesium flares in the top of the organ case simulating lightning. Miraculously they never set fire to the organ itself. See also Switzerland for an "Alpine" Storm reference.*
4 *Harry's (first?) recording date has been generally known for some time, but Reginald's was established through Gerhard Dangel during early 2011.*
5 *See www.musikautomaten.ch or www.davidrumsey.ch.*
6 *A large collection of relevant articles in English, French and German can be found at www.davidrumsey.ch.*
7 *The second conference in 4 years, both influential in the "Organ Reform Movement". Held 27th to 30th July 1926.*
8 *Welte's sequencing of roll numbers requires a separate and detailed study when the databases reach a point they can be reliably used for this. At the time of going to press that situation was rapidly approaching. Even so, the roll numbers may never yield completely definitive results since the company's sequencing is not always consistent. However, in many cases, as here, they can at least provide some generally reliable signposting.*
9 *Communicated by Jean-Claude Pasche, Thèâtre Barnabè at Servion.*
10 *Much of the elusive information about Nater (including his first names which are entirely missing from Welte's surviving records) was researched and conveyed by Edith Keller in early 2011, mainly from relatively obscure Swiss newspaper articles.*
11 *Most of his Curriculum Vitae details come from Kurt Binninger's article in Acta Organologica 1987 and from Gerhard Dangel at the Augustiner Museum in Freiburg.*

David Rumsey

ABSTRACT

Pearls and rarities of the Welte organ roll collection

In this section, the discussion introduces a who's who of those who made these early organ recordings for Welte, including the repertoire played. Some musical heritage surprises are found. It is dealt with on a national basis. Each commences with a survey of the relevant organ scenario, proceeds through short artist biographies, gives a summation, and concludes with some statistics and lists of the composers represented on their rolls.

The earliest known organists to make recordings were all either Welte employees or local Freiburg organists – no doubt testing the technology as it was developed. A similar procedure prevailed with Welte's earlier piano recordings. It is uncertain who actually made the first organ recording, but Hofner, Diebold and Philipp were three very important names.

The honour of the first international organist to record for them, Bossi, goes to Italy – where the Philharmonie had been unveiled at Turin in 1911.

British and American organists held the lions' share of the catalogue. The following two sections deal with these. Here was good business for Welte, as both countries were particularly affluent at the time and could better afford this expensive automata. Perhaps recognition of the benefits of nationalism is evident in Welte's targeting of British-derivative cultures, for these countries at that time also had above-average numbers of leading organists. Brief descriptions of the organ worlds in the two countries is given. Resolution of confusion in some of Welte's identities, especially the Goss-Custard brothers is offered.

As regards Germany, there is a mine of information to be found in this roll-heritage. Apart from the variant performance paradigms to be observed, some fine but now-forgotten German organists may also be heard. Grosse, Sittard, Dunkelberg, Mania are but four of them alongside the more familiar Straube, Reger and Ramin.

France is well-represented by three very important Parisians: Gigout, Bonnet and Dupré. They provide a direct window otherwise impossible to open now on the great 19th century French traditions.

The section on Switzerland reveals some new details. Swiss organists – such as Köhl, Breitenbach, Hindermann perpetuated a mix of mainly Germanic traditions. But Nater turns out to be the champion of both Guilmant and Dubois – more so than the French themselves. The intriguing topic of early 20th century pioneering in early music and Organ Reform is then well-represented by Matthaei. His work is seen as an influence on Welte, encouraging the firm to review their organ designs and roll-technologies in the mid-1920s.

Finally, a quick survey of three other organists, Erb (Alsace), ten Cate (Netherlands) and Messner (Austria), demonstrates the "global thinking" of the Welte company, reflecting both the importance of and the variety to be found in this unique musical heritage.

David Rumsey

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Perlen und Raritäten der Welte-Musikrollensammlung

In diesem Abschnitt wird ein eigentliches Who's who jener Musiker, die diese frühen Orgelaufnahmen für die Firma Welte eingespielt hatten, mit ihrem Repertoire vorgestellt. Dabei tritt, was das musikalische Erbe anbetrifft, so manche Überraschung zutage. Die Beiträge sind nach nationalen Kriterien organisiert und beginnen jeweils mit einem Überblick über die entsprechende Orgel-Szene, gefolgt von einer kurzen Künstlerbiografie, einer Zusammenfassung und schliessen mit einigen statistischen Angaben sowie einer Liste der auf ihren Rollen verewigten Komponisten.

Die ersten Organisten, von denen Aufnahmen bekannt sind, waren entweder Mitarbeiter der Firma Welte oder lokale Freiburger Organisten, die dabei zweifellos die in Entwicklung befindliche Technik testeten. Ähnlich war man schon bei den früheren Welte-Klavieraufnahmen vorgegangen. Wer die erste Orgelaufnahme gemacht hat, ist nicht bekannt, aber zu den meistgenannten Anwärtern darf man sicher Hofner, Diebold und Philipp zählen.

Der erste internationale Organist im Welte-Programm, Bossi, war wohl nicht zufällig Italiener: Die Welte-Philharmonie-Orgel wurde anlässlich der Weltausstellung in Turin 1911 erstmals dem Publikum vorgestellt.

Britische und amerikanische Organisten stellten den Löwenanteil des Katalogs und werden in den folgenden zwei Beiträgen behandelt. In diesen beiden Ländern machte die Firma Welte gute Geschäfte, da sie wohlhabend waren und die Kundschaft sich diese teuren Automaten eher leisten konnte. Die Vorteile eines nationalen Ansatzes zeigen sich vielleicht am ehesten darin, wie Welte die angelsächsischen Märkte anvisierte; diese Länder stellten auch eine überdurchschnittliche Anzahl an führenden Organisten. Es folgt ein kurzer Abriss über die Orgelwelt in den beiden Ländern. Im weiteren gelingt es auch, manchen Irrtum bezüglich der mit Welte verbundenen Persönlichkeiten richtigzustellen, wobei hier namentlich die Gebrüder Goss-Custard genannt seien.

Was Deutschland anbelangt, so vermögen diese Rollen eine Flut an Informationen zu liefern. Abgesehen von den verschiedenen Aufführungsparadigmen, die sich erkennen lassen, sind einige ausgezeichnete, heute zu Unrecht vergessene Organisten zu hören. Dabei sind Gosse, Sittard, Dunkelberg und Mania nur vier neben den bekannteren Namen wie Straube, Reger und Ramin.

Frankreich ist mit drei äusserst wichtigen Pariser Organisten vertreten: Gigout, Bonnet und Dupré. Diese drei ermöglichen uns einen direkten Blick auf die grossen französischen Traditionen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts.

Auch der Abschnitt über die Schweiz vermag mit neuen Erkenntnissen zu überraschen. Schweizer Organisten wie Köhl, Breitenbach und Hindermann verewigten ihre Mischung aus hauptsächlich deutschen Traditionen, während Nater sich – noch vor den Franzosen selbst – als eigentlicher Sachwalter Guilmants und Dubois' entpuppt. Matthaei wiederum ist ein hervorragendes Beispiel für einen Vorreiter der alten Musik und der Orgelbewegung im frühen zwanzigsten Jahrhundert. Man geht davon aus, dass sein Werk die Firma Welte massgeblich beeinflusste, ihre Orgelkonstruktionen und Rollentechniken Mitte der zwanziger Jahre zu überarbeiten.

Zum Schluss zeigt ein kurzer Blick auf die drei weiteren Organisten, Erb (Elsass), ten Cate (Niederlande) und Messner (Österreich) das «globale Denken» der Firma Welte und bringt den Stellenwert und die Vielfalt dieses einzigartigen musikalischen Erbes zum Ausdruck.

David Rumsey

RÉSUMÉ

Perles et pépites de la collection de rouleaux de Welte

Cette section s'articule à la manière d'un who's who des personnes à l'origine des premiers enregistrements pour orgue réalisés pour Welte, y compris le répertoire joué. Le patrimoine musical qu'ils renferment réserve quelques surprises. Les données sont présentées pays par pays. On peut lire une analyse du scénario organistique au début de chaque rubrique, suivie d'une brève biographie de l'artiste et d'un récapitulatif, et enfin quelques statistiques et une liste des compositeurs présents sur les rouleaux.

Les premiers organistes connus à faire des enregistrements étaient tous soit des employés de Welte, soit des organistes fribourgeois. Mais ce dont on est sûr, c'est qu'ils ont testé la technologie au fur et à mesure de son élaboration. Le mode opératoire était analogue à celui des premiers enregistrements de concerts de piano de Welte. Il subsiste des incertitudes sur l'identité de l'auteur du premier enregistrement de morceaux d'orgue mais on sait que Hofner, Diebold et Philipp ont tous les trois joué un rôle majeur dans ce domaine.

C'est Bossi qui a eu l'honneur d'être le premier organiste international à enregistrer pour eux après que l'orgue Philharmonie avait été dévoilé en 1911, à Turin.

Les organistes britanniques et américains se partagent l'essentiel des entrées du catalogue et c'est sur eux que portent les deux sections suivantes. Cette situation représentait une vraie manne commerciale pour Welte car les Etats-Unis comme l'Angleterre jouissaient à l'époque d'une grande prospérité et des conditions favorables pour l'acquisition de cet automate onéreux. Les avantages d'une approche «nationaliste» semblent transparaître dans le choix fait par Welte des cultures d'inspiration britannique, peut-être parce que ces pays avaient aussi un nombre d'organistes majeurs supérieur à la moyenne. La place de l'orgue dans chacun des deux pays est brièvement décrite et des éclaircissements sont apportés sur certaines personnalités complexes de l'univers de Welte, et notamment sur les frères Goss-Custard.

Sur le patrimoine allemand, ces rouleaux contiennent une mine d'informations. Outre les différentes références en matière d'exécution qui apparaissent, on peut aussi y entendre quelques talentueux organistes allemands malheureusement tombés dans l'oubli. Dans cette catégorie on pourrait citer notamment Grosse, Sittard, Dunkelberg, Mania, à côté de Straube, Reger et Ramin, qui jouissent quant à eux d'une plus grande notoriété.

Représentée par trois Parisiens importants – Gigout, Bonnet et Dupré – la France n'est pas en reste. Ces artistes nous dévoilent en effet une facette aujourd'hui méconnue des grandes traditions françaises du 19ème siècle.

Le chapitre consacré à la Suisse révèle quelques informations nouvelles. Les organistes suisses, dont Köhl, Breitenbach, Hindermann, ont perpétué leur savant mariage de traditions à dominante germanique. Mais, bien plus que les Français eux-mêmes, Nater se distingue comme le champion de Guilmant et Dubois. Les travaux fascinants de redécouverte de la musique ancienne et la Réforme de l'orgue au début du 20ème siècle sont bien incarnés par Matthaei. Ses travaux sont perçus comme une volonté d'influencer Welte, en encourageant l'entreprise à repenser la conception de ses orgues et ses technologies de rouleaux au milieu des années 1920.

Enfin, à travers un rapide survol de l'œuvre de trois autres organistes, à savoir Erb (Alsace), ten Cate (Pays-Bas) et Messner (Autriche), on parvient à discerner la «pensée globale» de la société Welte qui traduit à la fois la valeur et la diversité que renferme ce patrimoine musical unique.

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