

The Special Wurlitzer Carousel Band Organ

LeRoy Schumacher

This carousel band organ (Figure 1) was manufactured in North Tonawanda, New York, in approximately 1917 or 1918 and it was shipped on April 24, 1920. It is believed that the delay in shipping is because it was used as a sales demonstrator. It is model No. 146A (early style), serial No. 3266, and was shipped to Peter Burgard in Lockport, New York, with a white case and a Jamesan Chest using Style 150 rolls. It was used on a carousel by J. L. Cronin Shows, presumably owned by Mr. Burgard, and used in a truck carnival from 1922 to 1931. The early history is vague, but about the year 1950, Powelson Amusements purchased it in Missouri and used it for display. It was stored in 1963 and in 1973 purchased by CMT Enterprises.

The instrument was restored to playing condition. It has 105 wooden pipes, which include 16 octave violin pipes, 3 wooden trombones, 3 octave bases 15 trumpet pipes, 15 flue pipes, 16 violin pipes, 10 accompaniment pipes, 16 melody pipes, nine open pipes and three open bass pipes. It also has a snare drum, bass drum, and cym-

bal. It has two sets of bellows: one for pressure to play the pipes and one for vacuum to control keying. It is 7 ft. high, 7 ft. wide, 30 inches deep, and weighs 900 pounds.

Carl Tucker (CMT Enterprises) of Coshocton, Ohio, then sold it to Richard Carnes of Medina, Ohio, who displayed it at several Mid-America Chapter (MBSI) organ rallies.

Betty and I are the current owners of the organ—we purchased it on October 2, 1999, at auction, after the death of Mr. Carnes. It was in non-playing condition at that time. It is interesting to note that one of the bidders at this auction was a representative of the National Football League who intended to restore it and use it as a showpiece at one of the NFL stadiums.

I preformed the restoration with the help of my brother, David Schumacher, and Terry Haughawout of Haughawout Music Company in Bloomdale, Ohio, who performed the technical restoration. During this restoration process, two major improvements were made. Glockenspiel bells were added and the façade was completely stripped and restored to its original factory design. The glockenspiel bells were hand made by Mike Kitner of Carlisle, PA, and installed by Terry. Tony Orlando of Dearborn Heights, MI, who is a professional artist and restorer of carousel memorabilia, restored the façade. Originally powered by the carousel itself, it is now run by a 1/3

horsepower electric motor.

The restoration was complete in July of 2000. It was then mounted in a new custom-built display trailer manufactured by Wells Cargo to travel to the various shows sponsored by the COAA and MBSI. On its second show trip, traveling to the Pioneer Power Show in Le Sueur, MN, on August 25, 2000, a tractor-trailer rig struck the trailer from behind at a turn-pike tollbooth in

Beloit, WI. The trailer was totally destroyed and the organ sustained considerable damage mainly to the lower pipes located at the base of the organ. Again we called upon Terry Haughawout who performed the complete repair from August 2000 to June 2001.

Historical data was supplied by Fred Dahlinger, Jr., Director of Collections and Research, of the Circus World Museum in Baraboo, WI.



Figure 1. The Schumacher Wurlitzer 146-A (early style) band organ, resplendit with its facade returned to original paint.