

The eventful life of a Centenarian An attempt to reconstruct the history of "JUPITER"

Cornelis Ruijvoorn

This organ was built under serial number 9067 (which dates it shortly after 1900) by Gavioli & Cie. of Paris as a 67-key dance hall organ (it must have looked very much like the Aalster Gavioli which now can be seen and heard in the Utrecht museum *Van Speelklok tot Pierement*). As appears from annotations inside the organ chest it was built for and imported in Belgium by Th. Mortier who, before starting his own organ building business, acted as an agent for Gavioli.

It started its working life in the Scheldekwardier (quarter near de river Schelde) in Antwerp. It is supposed to have had a large rectangular façade with in the top part four medallions in which the flags of Italy, America, Great Britain and Sweden were painted.

After the First World War Em. de Vreese, builder of mechanical organs from Antwerp, bought the organ and rebuilt it from a dance hall organ into a street organ. Of course the organ was fitted with a new, De Vreese-style façade as well.

In Rotterdam Jac. (Jaap) Minning and W. Berk (a music-shopkeeper) exploited an organ rental company together. In 1925 they decided that their stock of organs needed extension and that, amongst others, an organ from De Vreese needed to be included. In the same year a visit was paid to the widow of De Vreese (who had died in 1924) who continued the company for some time before clearing out. It was decided to buy three organs: a 52 key De Vreese (later known as the "Mandoline"),

a Koenigsberg (later known as "Harmonium" and the present "Jupiter" (by that time of course still without a name).

The façade of the Gavioli bore the factory name "Wwe. Em. de Vreese" (Widow of Em de Vreese), the new owners placed a sign on the harmonic flute with their company name: "R.M.I.O." (Rotterdamse Maatschappij In Orgels, Rotterdam Company In Organs).

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In 1925 the organ was hired out for the first time, to Chris Ackema. During the two years that he had the organ he reaped a lot of glory with it. In this time the organ was known as the "GAVIOLI VAN BERK" (Gavioli of Berk) while the name "OUWE GAVIOLI" (Old Gavioli) also was frequently used.

At a given time Jaap Minning changed the De Vreese name on the façade into Gavioli & Cie., Paris while the façade also was fitted with side panels (**Figure 1**).

In 1927, due to a lack of money, the organ, together with the other two organs, which were bought in Antwerp, was sold to G.A. (Gerrit) van der Wouden from Lekkerkerk. The organ now got known under the name "GAVIOLI VAN VAN DER WOUDE" (Gavioli of Van der Wouden) while in an article in *Het Pierement* by Feite Posthumus also the name "ROEIBOOT" (rowing boat) is mentioned once. Van der Wouden hired the organ out to several people, one of which was Miet Roos.

Van der Wouden sold this complete collection of organs in 1931 to Jan Diepstraten. This meant again a new name was used for our organ: "GAVIOLI VAN DIEPSTRATEN."

Diepstraten had the organ looked after and altered by Carl Frei who changed some of the registers. Until then the repertoire consisted mainly of books by the Belgian noteur Jan Gilissen (like *Overture Zampa* and *Domino Noir* by Auber, *Les Saltimbanques* by Louis



Figure 1. Jupiter in 1927 or 1928, after the name "Gavioli" and the side panels were added. The banner on the harmonic flute bore the name RMIO. On this picture it is not visible if this name is still there (meaning the picture was taken before the organ was sold to Gerrit van der Wouden) or not.

Ganne, *Skaters Waltz* by Waldteufel and Gilissen's own composition *Clock Waltz* which was published by the music-shop, Berk). There were some books with Marengi-labels as well. From now on more and more Carl Frei repertoire were added (amongst others *Abendlied*, *Ohne Dich*, *Oh Mona*, and *Moeders Jaren*).

In this time Louis Holvoet hired out his organ Rotterdamse Harmonica, an organ with an accordion that had a lot of success. Jan Martijn had the "GAVIOLI VAN DIEPSTRATEN" and he was under the impression that having an organ with harmonica would automatically bring success. Therefore he, with the use of some string and iron wire, attached an old harmonica to the organ (it did not play of course). This did not bring more money into his collecting tin so the accordion soon disappeared again.

Diepstraten offered two organs, one of them the Gavioli, to Jaap Minning in exchange to his "Grote Blauwe." Since Minning did not accept the offer, Diepstraten sold both organs a short time after to Aart Schermer. Our Gavioli got another name: "GAVIOLI VAN OUWE SCHERMER" (Gavioli of Old Schermer).

Schermer himself did not use the organ very often. It was however hired out every now and then. One of the renters was the Evangelisation.

About that time the occupying Germans declared a general ban on street organs (on September 12th, 1942) the Gavioli, together with all his partners in distress, was stored away in the warehouse. Supposedly, to keep them in condition, from that day on Schermer played his organs on a regular basis in his warehouse.

The Gavioli attracted a lot of interest with street organ enthusiasts. They often met at the Gavioli and the group got larger and larger. This resulted, in 1954, in a coffee shop in the Caen van Necklaan in Rijswijk near The Hague, with the founding of the Kring van Draaiorgelvrienden (K.D.V., Circle of Street-organ-friends).

During the hunger winter of 1944 Schermer sold the Gavioli to a Mr. Feijen who, in 1945, hired it out to Piet Steenbruggen to attend the liberation festivities. At the end of 1945 Feijen sold the organ out of Rotterdam after which it started roaming the country and, for a short while, even ended up on the fairground in a set of swing-boats.



Figure 2. This photo shows "Jupiter" after it became the property of Henri Bank and Jan van Heijenoort. The organ was used at this time by Nico de Graaff.

In this state the totally neglected Gavioli was bought in 1950 by Jaap Minning from Rotterdam. In doing so he became its owner for the second time. He undertook a serious restoration/alteration (with again the change and rearrangement of some registers). The view was changed as well—the paintings (ladies in the top and on the side chests and a landscape on the belly) were replaced by sea-scenes, and the side-panels were removed. The organ was also fitted with three figures. Next Minning sold the organ in 1952 to Henri Bank and Jan van Heijenoort, both from Delft (**Figure 2**). They hired it out to Nico de Graaff in The Hague. It was here that the organ again got a new name: the "GROTE GAVIOLI" (Large Gavioli).

In 1954 Nico de Graaff celebrated his 50-year organ-grinders jubilee. In front of the town hall there was a concert on the Gavioli in honor of this celebration, which attracted a huge public attention. Nico was congratulated by the then Mayor Schotting. This celebration was part of the reason to give the inner city of The Hague free for street organ exploitation again after many years of prohibition.

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In these days the repertoire of the Gavioli was extended with books by Piet Maas and Gerard Razenberg while Henri Bank also arranged some books (*Lime Light*, *Daisy Bell*, *Stars and Stripes forever*). The organ also had the scoop to play the first post war arrangements and compositions by Carl Frei (*Greetings to Breda*, *Serenade Organmans Dreams*, *Der Lustige Flötenspieler*, *Greetings from Waldkirch*). Frei also showed his concern for the still young K.D.V. through his composition *Long live the Pierement* ("Pierement" being the old name for street organ and also the name of the K.D.V.'s magazine).



Figure 3. “Jupiter” as it arrived in Haarlem in 1955. The top and side panels have been changed and the side chests are now open.

Early in 1955 the Gavioli got another overhaul by Minning while he had the façade altered by Joop Muilenberg from The Hague. The side panels came back in a slightly changed form, the top was altered a little bit to make it somewhat less angular and the side chests were opened (Figure 3). Again the organ got a new name: “JUPITER” (Minning had started the habit of naming organs he worked on to planets, which resulted, amongst others, in “Saturnus,” “Uranus,” and “Mercurius”). This was the first name given to the organ by its owner. All previous names arose spontaneously by the public.



Figure 4. After Jupiter became the property of Theo van Zutphen it was not used commercially any more. Theo only took it out for special occasions. In the mid 1960s he used Jupiter to raise money for care for disabled children. The sign clearly states the purpose of the concert: “Voor het gehandicapte kind” (“For the disabled child”).

After this job was finished the organ did not go back to The Hague. Nico de Graaff started the exploitation of another organ

and “Jupiter” attended the “E55,” a big exhibition in Rotterdam. Its début after the restoration however was on the big street organ contest on liberation day, May 5th 1955, on the market square in Haarlem.

After the E55-exhibition (which lasted until September 3rd 1955) “Jupiter” was hired out to the Haarlem based license holder J. Dams. To embellish the organ even more, the three not-very-beautiful figures were replaced by original Gavioli figures (Figure 10). Those were repaired by Henk van de Heuvel while Theo van Zutphen took care of the movements and their fitting to the organ.

“Jupiter” was part of the reason for the founding of the KDV. In 1956 “Jupiter” stood at the cradle of the Haarlem Division of the K.D.V. This very active group of people saw in 1958 their chance to bring the huge (but derelict) Kunkels Organ to Haarlem, which in turn led to the founding, on March 28th 1962, of the Kunkels Organ Foundation, followed on October 5th 1969 by the opening of the Haarlem Organ Museum.

Until mid 1963 the organ was exploited by the Dams family. The repertoire was supplemented regularly with books by Gerard Razenberg, Piet Maas, Cor Coenen and P. vd Stap (who composed the *Spaarnecity Waltz* and had this music arranged by Carl Frei for the “Jupiter”). Minning, Bank,

Karel Struys and Theo van Zutphen took care of regular maintenance on the organ which took place, most of the time, in Van Zutphen’s warehouse. Theo van Zutphen constructed new bourdons and other quality pipe work (replacing poor quality work over the years) with parts that were bought by the Decap firm



Figure 5. The effort to raise money for good purposes did not stop in Haarlem. In May, 1966, Theo van Zutphen was invited to give a similar concert in Osnabrück (the German twin city to Haarlem). Here Jupiter played to raise money for a sheltered workshop for the disabled.

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Figure 6. Theo van Zutphen (1914-2000), one of the founders of the Haarlem Division of the K.D.V. and of the Kunkels Organ Foundation. He was a long-time chairman of both organizations, the driving force behind the initial restoration of the Kunkels Organ, and owner of the “Jupiter” from 1964 until the time he sold it to the Foundation in 1992.

Photo: Jan Kees de Ruijter

Antwerp. The decoration was also changed (an angel in the top and a portrait of Jupiter in the belly). In 1958 Jupiter toured through Holland and Germany (during which time in Haarlem its place was taken in by the “Oranjestad”).

From the summer of 1963 the organ did not go out any more. The two owners Bank en Van Heijenoort both died in 1964. The new owner was Theo van Zutphen who kept maintaining it and for special occasions presented it to the public every now and then (Figure 4). From the first day of the opening of the Haarlem Organ Museum the “Jupiter” was on loan to the Kunkels Organ Foundation and was part of the collection on display (Figure 7).

On March 28th 1987 the Kunkels Organ Foundation celebrated its 25th anniversary. On that same day in the Haarlem Museum the K.D.V.’s annual general meeting was held. To make sure “Jupiter” would be in a good condition on this day (in view of its relation to the founding



Figure 8. “Jupiter” as it is now.

Photo: Jan Kees de Ruijter

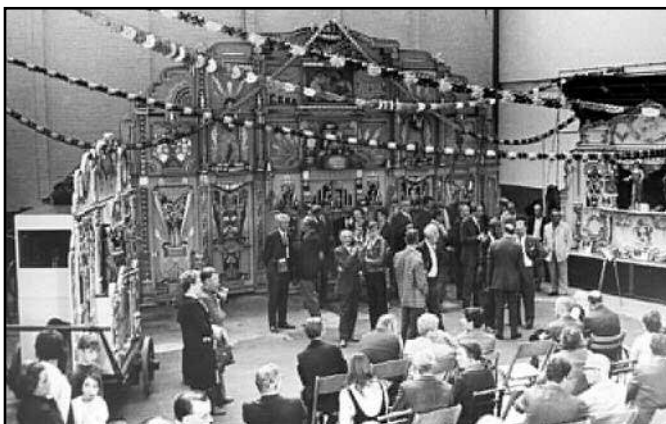


Figure 7. When the Organ Museum in Haarlem opened its doors to the public (October 5, 1969) “Jupiter” (to the right of the Kunkels Organ) was loaned to the Kunkels Organ Foundation to make part of the (then, still very limited) exhibition. On the left of the Kunkels Organ the “Grote Cap” is visible, the first guest-organ in the museum.

of the KDV, the Kunkels Organ Foundation and the museum itself), it received a last overhaul. This was done by Theo van Zutphen and JanKees de Ruijter. During this work some leaking parts of the reaction works were repaired and a few needed to be replaced.

To make sure “Jupiter” would stay in the country and be preserved for future generations (and after a lot of urging) Theo van Zutphen sold “Jupiter” to the Kunkels Organ Foundation in 1992. It stayed in the museum as before, of course, only now in the ownership of the Foundation itself.

The work done in 1987 took care of “Jupiter” only for a short time. After some years it started to decline in quality again. Thorough research learned that more than closing of some leakages was necessary to put all the problems right. In 1997 the committee of the Foundation started thinking about

their 40th anniversary (in 2002) and K.D.V.’s 50th anniversary in 2004. It was decided that in celebration of those events a complete restoration of “Jupiter” was in order. By complete restoration was meant not only the organ itself but the organ chest, façade and cart as well. It was made clear although, that no alterations should be made, the organ had to keep all its present character.

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The total cost of the job was estimated to be \$50,000.00 and the first step towards the restoration was to try to raise



Figure 9. A view of "Jupiter's" key frame and accompaniment pipes (left and right of key frame) and the countermelody bourdon (middle). Photo: Ron Bopp

funds for this purpose. It took until spring 2001 to obtain enough funds (we raised about 50% of the needed amount, the remainder was paid for out of our own meager resources) to start the job, which took a year. In this year the organ was totally taken apart, cleaned and repaired where necessary (only one violin-pipe had to be replaced due to unrepairable woodworm damage) and re-leathered. The chest has been taken apart, repaired, righted and repainted, the side-chests had to be



Figure 10. A closeup of "Jupiter" details the three central figurines. Photo: Ron Bopp

replaced (by exact copies of the originals). The façade has been stripped of many layers of paint, was redecorated and fitted with a modest amount of gold leaf. We found an old craftsman

who was able to make a brand new three-wheeled wooden cart as a replacement of the old trailer we got "Jupiter" on.

On April 28th 2002, exactly one month after the Foundations 40th anniversary, "Jupiter" was festively reintroduced in the museum (Figure 8). Its unveiling, while the organ museum was almost packed to capacity with organ enthusiasts and



Figure 11. "Jupiter" taking part of the Whit Monday organ festival in Haarlem on June 6th, 2003. Cornelis Ruijgvorm is caught in the picture on the left. Photo: Shane Seagrave

"connoisseurs," was done by the newly appointed Haarlem Alderman of Culture, Mr. Ruud Grondel.

In October last year, as a kind of try-out, we took "Jupiter" out for a very small local event. And even although we did not advertise this there were a lot of enthusiasts from all over the country who came to listen how "Jupiter" would sound outdoors (which had not happened for at least 25 years). The weather was great and "Jupiter" was splendid (outdoors it is even more impressive than in the museum). This year therefore we included "Jupiter" on the list of organs for our annual traditional Whit Monday* street organ event (Figure 11). It was great! I had the honor to take care of the organ all day and it did not bore me for one minute. I was amazed how fast time goes by when you are with an organ like this. We hope to be able to take part of some of the K.D.V.'s 50-year jubilee festivities this year with "Jupiter" as well.

* Whit Monday is the day following Whitsunday. Whitsunday is the Christian festive day in commemoration of the descent of the Holy Spirit (a few weeks after Easter). Whit Monday is an official holiday in the Netherlands and some other European countries.

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All photographs courtesy of the author except for those otherwise noted.

Cornelis Ruijgvorm was born in 1954 (the founding year of the KDV) and lives in Holland. He works as a bank employee, is married and has two children. He has been a volunteer with the Kunkels Organ Foundation and its museum since 1972 and a member of the Foundation's committee (as secretary) since 1985.