

Metamorphosis No. 16: *De Tiet**

Rein Schenk

For the first time in this series we deal with an organ which left its native soil long ago. *De Tiet*—the organ acquired its rather striking name in the 1920s, from the busty female statuettes on the façade—was a thoroughbred Carl Frei from the stable of Van Jaaren. After restoration, in the 1970s the instrument was relegated to a “farewell organ,” when it was sold to an amusement park in the United States (Dutch Village, Holland, MI—*ed*). It has remained there ever since (**Figure 1**).

We can also see in this photo the original façade of *De Tiet* as a DeCap street organ: on the outer columns of the side cases are the Hermes (Mercury) figures with truncated arms (“Hermes-pilasters”); and on either side of the center opening, the two so-called caryatids, the carved female figures which gave the organ its name. In Greek architecture the caryatids fulfilled the function of a pillar; famous are the caryatids of the Erechtheum on the Acropolis in Athens, dating from the fifth century B.C.

For no apparent reason, these parts of the façade were later removed. Perhaps they were considered immodest? The wide side-wings also disappeared and were replaced with very narrow ones. This happened before the rebuild by Carl Frei, probably after Willem van Jaaren had become the owner. He rented out *De Tiet* for a while, still in this form as a DeCap organ, as seen in **Figure 4**. This picture was taken in front of van Jaaren's depot in the Vinkenstraat in Amsterdam; Van Jaaren stands beside it as the proud owner.



Figure 1. *De Tiet* in its present state, as a featured organ in Dutch Village, Holland, Michigan. Photo recorded June, 2002. Photo: Ron Bopp

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Tradition has it that *De Tiet* originated as a Gavioli barrel organ, which the firm of Koenigsberg rebuilt to a book organ after the First World War. It was then known as *Het Kindje van de Bakker* (“The Child of the Baker”), and in this guise became the property of the Amsterdam license-holder Hein de Munnik, nicknamed “Lange Hein” (“Tall Harry”). Hein Nuberg, owner of the well-known organ-rental firm, must have bought it from him in the 1920s. After first doing minor work on it himself, he later had it rebuilt by Gebr. DeCap in Antwerp, after which it reappeared as a DeCap street organ, from 1927 onwards. However, it is questionable whether this tradition is based on truth. The DeCap organ *De Tiet* does not resemble in the least the Koenigsberg organ in **Figure 2**. Also, as far as its musical specification goes, it was a completely different organ. *De Tiet* had more or less the same specifications as the other DeCap street organs of the time, several of which have already been looked at in this series. In **Figure 3** the typical DeCap registers can clearly be seen, including the wooden flute harmonique.

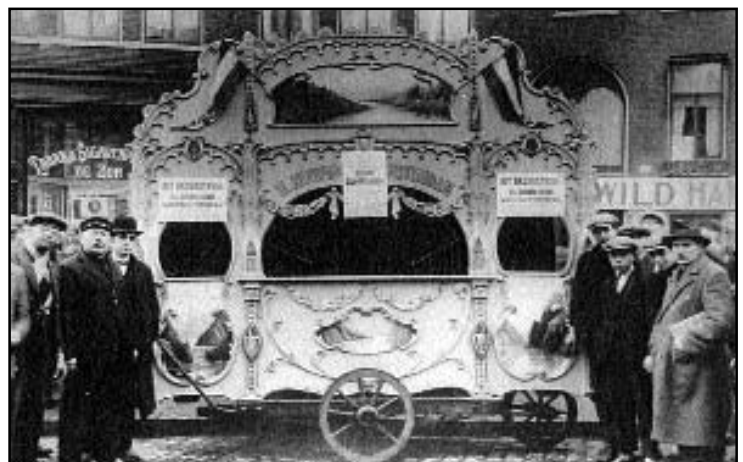


Figure 2. *Het Kindje van de Bakker* (The Child of the Baker)—forerunner of *De Tiet*?—Koenigsberg organ in the possession of Hein Nuberg.

Photo: KDV archives

*Appeared initially in *Het Pierement*, the official journal of the Dutch Society, KDV. Translation provided by Judith Howard.

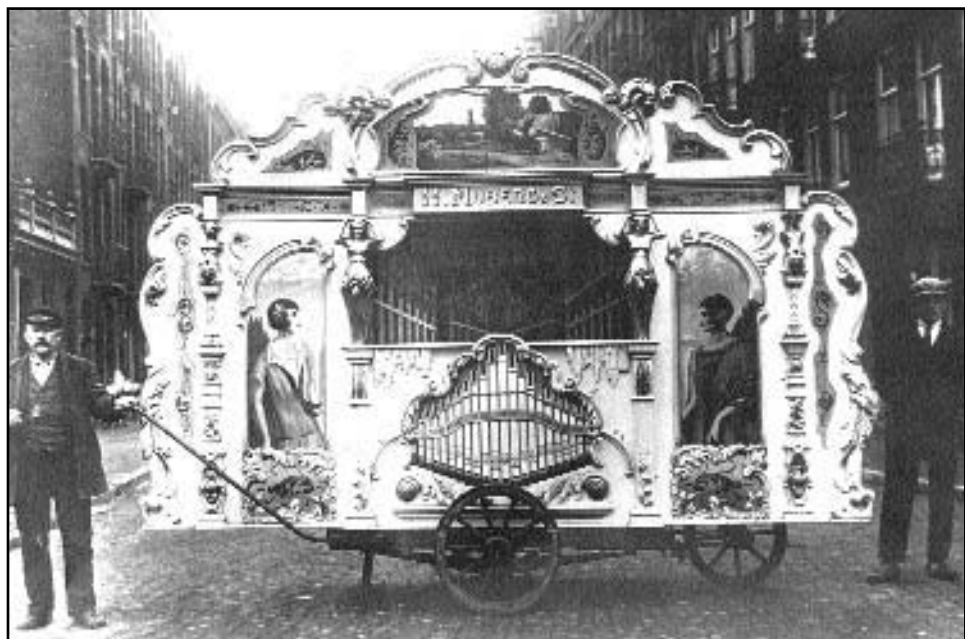


Figure 3. *De Tiet* as the new DeCap street organ with the wellknown Amsterdam licensee Jan Koers on the left and on the right, “Boeren”(“Farmer”) Arie.
Photo: F. Posthumus

Rebuilding to a 72-key Carl Frei

The organ in **Figure 4** dates probably from the summer of 1933. The rebuild by Carl Frei took place during the following winter. The organ was delivered in the spring of 1934, the same year in which *De Hindenburg* and *De Bloemenmeid* (the first two complete Carl Frei Biphone-organs) also saw the light of day. A signature found recently in the windchest of *De Schuyt* indicates that the work on that organ was also begun in April 1934. So 1934 was a very fruitful year for the firm of Frei. *De Tiet* was the third 72-key Carl Frei organ—after *De Sik* and *De Duif*—with Undamaris as the only register on the Countermelody. It's no wonder then that these three organs had so much in common. They were all straightforward Carl Frei pierements, robust and forthright in sound, with a tonal idiom which has never been surpassed!



Figure 4. *De Tiet* in 1933 as rented out by Willem van Jaaren.
Photo: F. Posthumus

With the rebuild, the front also underwent the necessary alterations. The wooden flute harmonique disappeared from the belly and was replaced with a painted panel. The painting in the centre section of the cap was replaced with decorative work, similar to that in the side sections. The results of the rebuild can be seen clearly in **Figure 5**. It is noticeable that the panels with the painted ladies, so characteristic of Belgian organs of the 1920s, were originally retained; later these were replaced, as usually happened, with open carved-work. We see this first in a photo from 1938, taken during the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the reign of Queen Wilhelmina (**Figure 6**). In the centre, in front of the organ, stands the licensee of *De Tiet*, Klaas Swildens, who operated this organ for many years. Next to him stands Chris Engel, who was later to form an inseparable organ-duo in

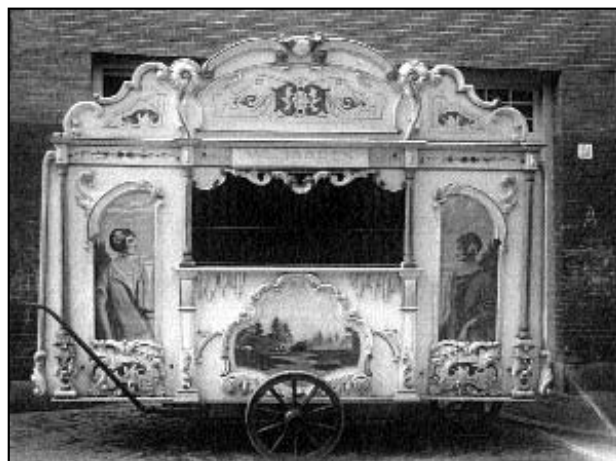


Figure 5. *De Tiet* after the rebuild by Carl Frei in 1934, in front of the depot of Willem van Jaaren. Photo: KDV archives

Amsterdam after 1945 with Coen Mulder, who can be seen (still very youthful!) on the extreme right of the photo. On the right, seated, is Jaap Tiepel, another genuine Amsterdam organ-man, who continued to play until well into his old age.

With the rebuild, the front also underwent the necessary alterations. The wooden flute harmonique disappeared from the belly and was replaced with a painted panel.

Figure 6. Amsterdam, Queen's Jubilee, 31st August 1938: De Tiet with open carved-work in the side-cases.

Photo: KDV archives



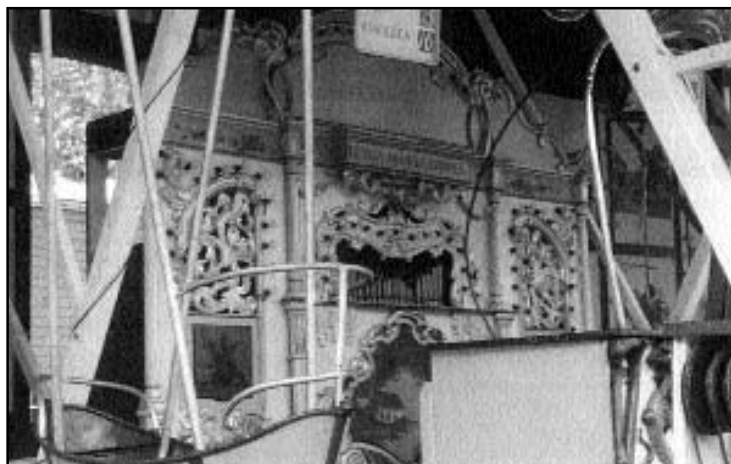
This photo shows that a considerable amount of extra carved-work was added in the centre-opening, too. The painted panel in the belly was meanwhile replaced with a somewhat more crudely painted landscape.



Figure 7. *De Tiet* in 1939.

Photo: F. Posthumus

The last pre-War photo (**Figure 7**) dates from somewhat later, and shows evidence of further work, as witnessed by the scenic painting in the cap. In this photo the licensee Klaas Swildens can again be seen, and next to him Coen Mulder. On the left is Joop Roeland, who was Klaas Swildens' regular colleague until July 1961, when both gave up working with organs.



Peregrinations("Wanderings")

It is not known who became owner of *De Tiet* when Willem van Jaaren sold all his organs in 1942. In any case, after the War it did not reappear as a street organ. Evidence that it found its way onto the fairground, comes from a series of photos taken in the early 1950s showing the organ in the swing boats of the firm Maas-Leander of Nijmegen (**Figure 8**). What condition it was in at that time is not known. It was probably maintained by Louis van Deventer, as the repertoire still includes a number of arrangements by him from that period, such as *Klappermelk met suiker* (*Coconut milk with sugar*) and *Je bent te dik voor mij* (*You're too fat for me*). We are also in the dark concerning the period immediately following this, up to 1964.

Restoration, tourist attraction, and export:

"*De Tiet* turns up again" is the title of an article by Feite Posthumus in *Het Pierement* of April 1964, in which the return of this organ to the organ scene is announced with unconcealed enthusiasm. At the time that was great news, because it meant that the organ world could be enriched by the skillful restoration of a genuine Carl Frei organ. Little were we then to suspect, that within only one decade, this stock of organs, so successfully renovated, would begin to be eroded—spoiled by unnecessary alterations in the name of so-called "improvement"!

Mr. Zwan bought *De Tiet*—together with the 80-key Mortier (rebuilt to a street organ) *De Gouden Engel* (*The Golden Angel*)— "as a tourist attraction and for his personal enjoyment."

It appears that Mr. Zwan of Texel bought the organ, which by now was due for a thorough overhaul, from Jan van Eyk. Zwan bought *De Tiet*—together with the 80-key Mortier (rebuilt to a street organ) *De Gouden Engel* (*The Golden Angel*)—"as a tourist attraction and for his personal enjoyment," as he took care to announce in many interviews at the time (**Back Cover**). However, his "personal enjoyment" seems to have been short-lived, as, after restoration/rebuilding respectively, both organs disappeared shortly after one another to the United States. They ended up in the amusement park "Dutch Village" in the town of Holland in the state of Michigan—the town to which *De Vierkolommen* had already departed in 1947.

Figure 8. *De Tiet* as a fairground organ in the swingboats of Maas Leander, early 1950s.

Photo: F. Posthumus

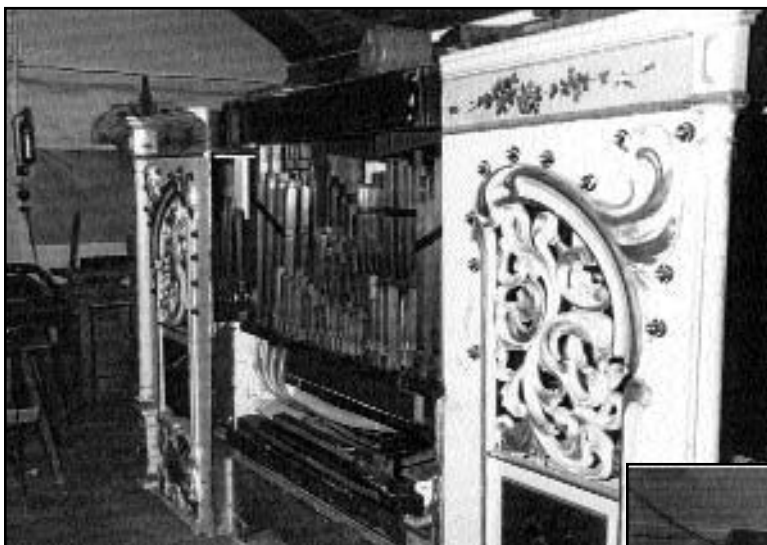


Figure 9. In the workshop of Carl Frei, Waldkirch, 1964.
Photo: KDV archives

Obviously, “personal enjoyment” was suitably fluid, when under pressure from a tidy sum of dollars!

Zwan sent both organs to Carl Frei in Waldkirch, where first of all *De Tiet* underwent a thorough overhaul. The old pipework was retained, so that the organ kept its tonal character. **Figures 9 & 10** were taken in Frei's workshop. The pipework—still in more or less flawless condition—can be clearly seen. The façade was restored in the Netherlands, and painted by the decorator Piet van Heerwarden. He introduced paintings symbolic of the Texel landscape: storks and a sheepfold in the cap, and in the belly the church at Den Hoorn.



Figure 10. Carl Frei junior tuning the organ, 1964. Photo: KDV archives

The photo at the start of this article shows us *De Tiet* in its present state, featured as an attraction at the Dutch Village in Holland, Michigan.

At the same time an attempt was made to return the front to its original state, i.e. from the time of Nuberg; this was only moderately successful. The mermaid-like figures were a rather pale imitation of the original shapely ladies. It represented a well-meaning attempt. The organ was given three figures by the woodcarver Karl Rieber of Furtwangen, and was fitted with two new side-wings. Although *De Tiet* had, to the joy of the enthusiasts, clearly retained its Carl Frei character, no attempt was made to restore its musical repertoire to something like its former glory; it went no further than some modern arrangements of what passed for popular music in the 1960s. It would seem that the music was another area where the “personal enjoyment” of Mr. Zwan was rather thinly spread....

have been issued, it is apparent that *De Tiet* has retained its Carl Frei tonal character; in the past 25 years the pipework has not been messed around with. (Just think, by contrast, what might have happened to it in the Netherlands....!)



Figure 11. *De Tiet* being painted for the last time in its current history.
Photo: Harry Nelius

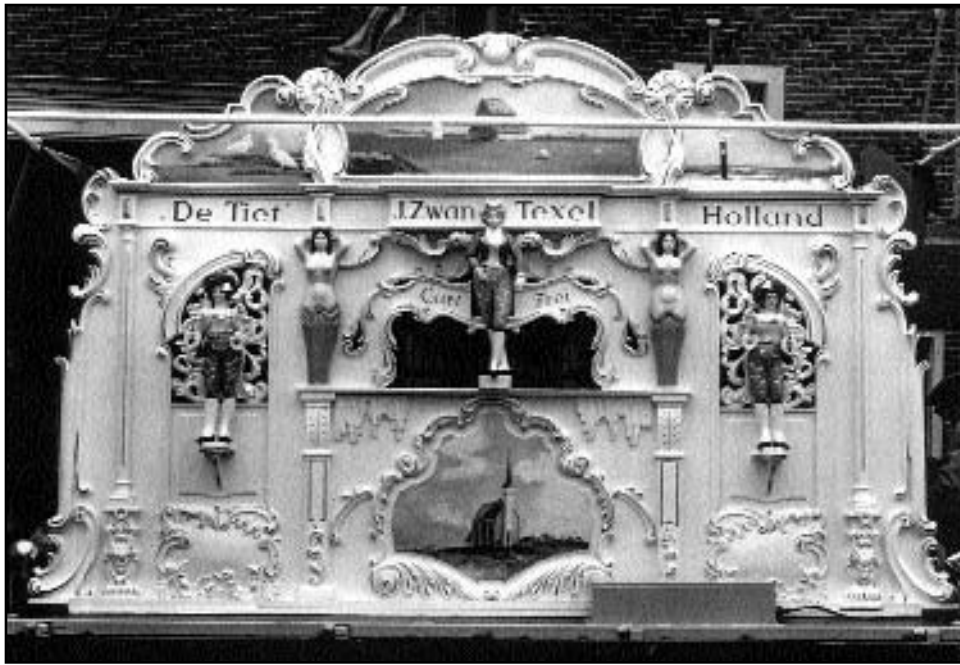


Figure 12. *De Tiet* after restoration in 1965.
Photo: F. Posthumus

potential of being a thoroughbred Carl Frei organ. All that is missing in its present location is simply the expertise to turn *De Tiet* back into the familiar pierement of old. Who knows, perhaps we shall one day get the chance again in the Netherlands? Perhaps with the export of his two Carl Frei organs, Mr. Zwan (unwittingly) did us a service after all.

Figure 13. *De Tiet* as it sits today in the railway station of Dutch Village.

Photo: Ron Bopp

Epilogue

Taking everything into consideration, we must ask the question whether the departure of *de Tiet* from our land is really so regrettable. The KDV has always set itself fiercely against the departure of historic organs from the Netherlands. An important reason always given for this opposition is the fact that organs meet their doom when they go abroad. In many cases that has demonstrably been the case. But there are also organs which precisely because of their departure have escaped the organ-vandalism which has caused so much damage in the Netherlands since the 1970s. *De Tiet* is one such organ. There is a good chance that in the Netherlands it might have ended up in the hands of people who would have subjected it to their passion for “improvement.” Now it is far away and we cannot enjoy it, but it still has the



Rein Schenk, has written this history of *de Tiet* as one of the “Metamorphosis Series” in *Het Pierement*. Most of the organs he has described he has known for over 40 years. He is a member of the publication committee of KDV and as such, keeper of the archives.

(... continued from page 3)

COAA Happenings

Contributions—

Every organization depends on incoming monies to help fund projects, etc., in addition to the revenue generated by membership. The COAA is no different—however, the only project that the COAA has at this time is the production of the *Carousel Organ*. Improvements to the journal would include larger issues and hopefully, inclusion of color. At this time the COAA is not a non-for-profit organization but we are working on that. There will be two ways for members to contribute:

Memorial Donations

Members may contribute at the time, or later, in memory of a COAA member that has passed on. Our secretary, Marge Waters, will notify the family that such donation has been made to the COAA.

Friends of the Carousel Organ

Members may become a “Friend of the *Carousel Organ*” by donating an amount within a specified category and donations will be recognized each year by inclusion in the April issue. Contribution categories are:

\$10 to \$49	Wurlitzer 105 level
\$50 to \$99	Wurlitzer 125 level
\$100 to \$249	Wurlitzer 153 level
\$250 to \$499	Wurlitzer 165 level
\$500 or more	Wurlitzer 180 level

Contributions may be made to:

Marge Waters
7552 Beach Rd.
Wadsworth, OH 44281