

Alexandre Gasparini and Foucher-Gasparini, A Parisian Band Organ Manufacturer

Fred Dahlinger, Jr.
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One make of organ that was virtually unknown in America until the advent of the organ preservation and collecting era is Gasparini. It is of greater interest than suggested by Gasparini's very limited involvement in the American organ market because the firm's catalogs exemplify various strategic inflections in the organ business. Represented in its publications are the changeover from cylinder to book organs and the progression from decorated furniture cases to organs with detachable facade construction. Lacking broader Gavioli documentation for the same period, the Gasparini materials beckon the researcher interested in understanding the era.

The founder of the firm, Alexandre Gasparini, probably came from the same area as did many other Parisian organ builders, northern Italy. According to the information given in later publications he established his business in 1865. That is likely the year that he just went to work, not when he commenced his own organ building enterprise that was later styled simply "A. Gasparini." Long time French band organ man Leon Honorez (1889-1976) stated that Gasparini came to Paris after the 1870 war and worked for Gavioli, who had recently returned from exile in Alsace. Accompanying Gasparini was a friend from Lombardy named Scapini, who later manufactured pasta products. Gasparini was succeeded by his son-in-law, H. Foucher, who re-titled the firm Foucher-Gasparini between about 1894 and 1898. The proposed event dating is derived from two published documents. An 1893 fair exhibitor listing was in the singular name of Alexandre Gasparini, exclusive of Foucher, whose name subsequently appears on a circa 1895-1898 catalog.¹

Like the Limonaire brothers, it appears that Gasparini did not manufacture organs in his own name until the very late 1870s or early 1880s. Both firms apparently entered the field as the demand for instruments proliferated among outdoor showmen, dance hall operators and skating rink proprietors. Later Gasparini letterheads and catalogs refer to no organ exhibitions earlier than the 1885 Antwerp fair. No older Gasparini organs of any type are known to exist, nor is there reference to the firm in any older period literature known to the author.

Through 1887 the Gasparini factory was at 205-207 Boulevard Voltaire in Paris, France, but by the mid-1890s it was relocated to 17 and 19 Rue de la Vega, in the 12th Arrondissement, near the Station de Bel Air. Ord-Hume (*Barrel Organ*, 1978, page 449) also notes the numbers 11 and 18 being used on the same street. Catalog engravings depict the factory as a large three and four-story masonry structure with a stucco exterior and an adjacent, side yard. The facade, done in the Second Empire style, provided a glass-fronted showroom facing the street. There may have been living quarters above it. Gasparini and subsequently Foucher-Gasparini made presentations at the following important events: Antwerp's 1885 and 1894 world's fairs; the 1889, 1898 and 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris; an 1891 fair in Toulouse, France; the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago; the 1906 Exposition at Liege, Belgium; and the 1910 Exposition Universelle in Brussels.

One make of organ that was almost completely unknown in America until the advent of the organ preservation and collecting era is Gasparini.

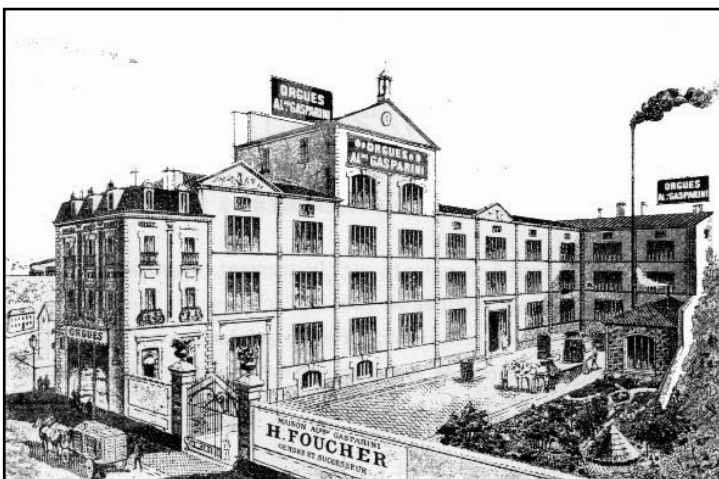


Figure 1. The Foucher-Gasparini factory was an impressive four-story structure with nearly 11,000 square feet of manufacturing space on the Rue de la Vega in Paris, France.

Alexandre Gasparini supplied a cylinder organ of his manufacture to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, but it did little to stimulate any trade with American showmen. No subsequent Gasparini sales are noted in available trade papers. There is only a single Gasparini entry in the cylinder organ scales compiled by Max Schilling of the Boecker Organ Company. It was from an 85-key Gasparini barrel organ that was situated in an American skating rink about 1905-1907.² No scale of that size is shown in any Gasparini catalog, suggesting that it was perhaps a slightly expanded 83-key barrel organ. If it had been a book organ, Schilling would not have arranged music for it nor would it be in his ledger. There are no other

older, pre-hobbyist imported Gasparini organs known in American band organ history, nor are there any known illustrations of the Chicago or Schilling instruments. The many 52-key Gasparini organs that exist in the United States today are not old imports, but recent hobbyist acquisitions. They are reflective of the activity of collectors and not vintage showmen.

In 1899 a Gasparini representative named J.-B. Blanche-Petit, established a Gasparini agency at Valenciennes, in northern France, to serve customers in Belgium and Holland. He had the capability to conduct business in the Dutch and Flemish languages and apparently led the firm's representation at world's fairs in those countries. The storefront showroom and office of the firm were then situated at 1 Avenue du Quesnoy, with later workrooms and annexes at 4 Avenue du Quesnoy and on the Rue de Wattignies (1909).

In documenting the story of Gavioli, Henri Bank located and learned much from Mlle. Andrée Gavioli, the daughter of Ludovico Gavioli II. In one contact she stated the Parisian factories were incurring ruinous losses as the result of making too many special organs, each to the individual desires of the customer. To stabilize their businesses, the various factory directors came together and agreed to make only a select number of standardized instruments.

Figure 3. This delightful cylinder-operated trumpet organ arrived in America with a children's carousel. The very rare, museum caliber 67-key instrument is owned by Philip Jamison. Author's photograph.



Figure 2. The workmen and perhaps the owners of the Gasparini firm are documented in this extremely rare photograph taken at the shop in Paris. Image courtesy Philippe and Eve Crasse.

ments. The understanding was likely something that transpired in 1908, or perhaps 1907, but it did not endure. It was just one of the factors that ultimately brought down the flagship firm of the trade.

The closure of Gavioli, the famed giant of the French organ business, placed Limonaire on top in Paris. Mlle. Gavioli suggested that the Marengi firm was also not in strong condition, saying that the factory had "an uncertain future," and perhaps they, too, profited from Gavioli's closure. Limonaire's ongoing success before the onset of World War I, coupled with the shrinkage of the organ market may have caused the demise of Foucher-Gasparini soon after the failure of Gavioli. Gasparini activity is noted in the literature at least through 1910, when they were represented at the Brussels fair and earned an award. The last dated document that we have seen concerning the firm is a June 17, 1911 invoice to Madame Perlee-Warnies, covering the conversion of a 58-key Ruth barrel organ to Gasparini's 52-key book system. The work included furnishing an art nouveau facade as well as drums and removable statues on the façade. There was no contact between Perlee and Gasparini following 1911, when attention was turned to Limonaire instruments. There is also a Gasparini tune listing that bears the combined date 1911-1912, but it obviously appears to be a 1911 issue. Given that there are so few existing cylinder operated Gasparini instruments, one suspects that the factory did a large business in converting cylinder organs to book operation towards the end. Most of the work that they did for Perlee in the time of 1906-1911 was to adapt Bruder and Ruth cylinder organs to book operation.³ One secondary source speculates that Gasparini was acquired by Limonaire in 1912 while Wieffering refers to one new Gasparini machine in 1913. Honorez stated that the firm was taken over by a gentleman named Butel. Books with his name on them were with the Gasparini in the Utrecht museum.⁴ Determination of the final closure date of the Gasparini firm awaits further research in Parisian archives.

firm, which we would identify as Limonaire, chose not to participate. It was inferred that their non-participation was a factor in the downfall of Gavioli & Co., with the non-participant profiting from its demise. The agreement among builders must have been the "organ trust" that Louis Berni referred to in his early 1909 advertise-





Figure 4. Tom Kuehn's collection of original condition instruments includes this example of a fine Style 115 book-operated 52-key Gasparini organ. Image courtesy Tom Kuehn.

Shortly after Gavioli pioneered the book organ in 1892, Gasparini issued its own competing models. There were differences from the Gavioli effort, either to avoid patent claim infringement or to demonstrate the firm's own design prowess. Their books were made of thinner, single thickness cardboard, and not the usual two-ply arrangement. The arrangement had a deficiency. The key frame keys were set further apart so that adjacent slots had cardboard left between them after punching. It resulted in frequent tearing by keys stuck in the raised or playing position. In practice, this left weak "bridges" that were prone to tearing and operational problems.⁵

Unlike most French organs that displayed the well crafted, visually balanced pipework, these designs largely concealed the works from view.

Gasparini organs were softly voiced, sometimes without flue basses, and with, according to Hans van Oost, lingual "bombardons" to provide the military sound.⁶ Their specification worked well for quieter city streets and modest fairs, but would not have been desired by an outdoor showman necessarily seeking great volume to cover the noise or ride machinery or to attract riders. The design essentially dictated the buyer's market, or perhaps Gasparini had taken steps with a niche-type end use in mind.

Gasparini organs were very popular in turn of the century Holland, especially after their increasingly enjoyable tonal designs had captured the leadership in the marketplace. The

late Romke de Waard wrote that "Considering the pierement [Dutch street organ], originally it was mainly Gasparini and, after 1910, Limonaire Freres who supplied the Netherlands with street organs." Tom Meijer has written that the first 52-key Gasparini book instruments appeared in Amsterdam about 1905-1906, a date that is also concurred with by Frans Wieffering, author of *Glorieuze Orgeldagen* (1965). There may have been some earlier examples with fairground rides and shows, but confirmation has yet to be secured for them. Organ rebuilder Henk Veeningen recently stated that some 80 Gasparini organs of 52-key size were once in Holland.⁷ That number probably represented several years of factory construction output. It appears that Holland and Belgium, along with native France, were the major countries into which Gasparini instruments were sold. Most in Holland were later rebuilt into "Dutch" street organs by changing the pipework and registers, but a few survive substantially as they left the Gasparini plant.⁸ It is likely that their tonal structure and specification, which sometimes excluded bottom pipes and flue basses, were well suited for street service.

Nothing is known of the Gasparini firm's total output. Serial numbers have rarely been presented in the literature and most have been obliterated in rebuilding projects. Jim Welty found the number 110 inside the 52-key "Gypsy Queen," a cylinder organ that was converted to books (**Figure 11**). The number 351 is on one 52-key instrument of unknown style and the number 695 has been discovered on a model number 115, 52-key instrument. Music with the latter organ dates from when the firm was making both barrel and book organs. Whether Gasparini assigned numbers in sequence only to new organs, or skipped numbers, or also included and consecutively numbered book orders and instrument rebuilds is unknown. From surviving Foucher-Gasparini books it appears that their music arrangers or book punchers signed or initialed their production. The name "Bajus" appears on one and the initials "YH" on another.⁹

The records compiled by Louis Francois Hooghuys (1856-1924) of his barrel-arranging work document Gasparini organs going through his shop no earlier than December 14, 1898. A 52-key cylinder organ bearing the Gasparini number "8" was then in the Hooghuys



Figure 5. Another beautiful 52-key Gasparini is this instrument owned by Doug Cusick. Organs like this one were well suited to small fairground rides erected on city squares.

Author's photograph.



Figure 6. Perhaps the most familiar of the Foucher-Gasparini Dutch street organs is this fine-playing 52-key example in the Utrecht, Holland museum.

Author's photograph.

shop. Another 52er of unknown serial number was there in July 1903 while Gasparini number "9," a 67-key barrel organ, was noted on April 12, 1911. One can only assume that if the Gasparini was a popular make in Belgium that Hooghuys was simply not frequently favored with their care and maintenance. It is possible that most were returned to the factory for work, or serviced by other repairmen and shops.¹⁰

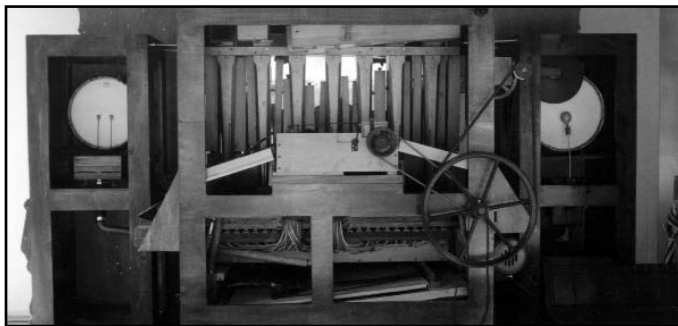


Figure 7. Note the central keyframe position on this 52-key Gasparini formerly owned by H. Kiel & Son of Enschede, Holland. The large façade is covered with stylized branches and leaves.

Author's photograph.

No catalogs issued by A. Gasparini have been discovered. Three publications are available that illustrate the instruments manufactured by Foucher-Gasparini. The earliest catalog, circa 1895-1898, is among the first published that offered the recently introduced book organs. Unfortunately, only 20 of the original 24 pages are available, placing some limits on the available knowledge. The date is affixed by mention of the 1894 Antwerp fair, but no reference to the 1898 Paris event. Foucher-Gasparini's largest book organ catalog appeared following the total conversion to book organs, about 1905. A sur-

living original of this catalog has Blanche-Petit's plate affixed inside of it, assuring that the catalog was used until that time. The third catalog issue can be dated as circa 1910, coming soon after the awards of the 1910 Exposition Universelle at Brussels, Belgium.

Illustrated in the circa 1895-1898 Gasparini catalog is a full range of cylinder pianos, barrel-operated hand organs, trumpet hand organs, military brass organs, organs with wooden trumpets, a 15-trumpet cavalry fanfare instrument (also offered by Limonaire), symphony organs, fanfare organs, and a series of cardboard organs, "orgues a cartons," among the first of the type seen in any catalog. The document represents the transitional period in French organ making of the 1895-1900 era. A very limited number of hand organs were offered, suggestive of the shrinking organ grinder profession and the standardization of model styles and names. Smaller instruments were of the furniture case style, with either spiral or turned and incised corner posts, carved statues available on better quality models. A new style of flutes special to the firm, were also offered as an enhancement on selected models.¹¹

The book organs were orchestral type instruments, with wooden trombones, brass bodied saxophones in lieu of trumpets, with clarinets and piccolos remaining in use. Violins were fitted into the book organs. On some Gasparini organs a rank of narrow scale metal pipes, a violin voice, can be seen. Their narrow scale gave them a very stringy tone quality, the metal being selected for construction simply because wooden pipes effectively could not be made that slender. Snare and bass drums, along with a cymbal, were available for both barrel and book organs, for the "Musiques Militaires." The French equivalent of the phrase "band organ" is not seen. These instruments were termed "67 Touches A Batterie," and so on, by the key size, "batterie," as in "battery," defining an assembly of features, and not a voltaic cell.

Larger instruments had added side niches but only the largest had mechanized figures. The grandest organ illustrated, "83 Touches A Batterie, Valseuses & Chef Grand Format," had two bell ringers at the front corners of the main case, two revolving figures in the outermost of four side niches and a life-sized female figure standing on the floor directing it all. In addition to the cymbal and two drums, it was also outfitted with a patented, novelty attachment called the "Bouteillophone." Literally a "bottlephone," it consisted of a series of graduated and filled glass bottles struck by beaters. The moving beaters added action, the sound being a unique "crystalline" addition to the instrument. The concept of flat bar bells may never have been introduced on Gasparini organs.

Model numbers 1 and 2 are not documented in the surviving catalog pages, but they were presumably smaller military style machines. The various organ style numbers and their key (touche) sizes were as follows:

- Military organs: style 3, 50-key; 4, 52-key;
- 5, 65-key; 6, 67-key; 7, 67-key,
- 8 and 10, 81-key; 9, 11 to 13 bis, 83-key;
- 14 and 15, 90-key; 16 and 17, 92-key;
- 18 and 19, 100-key; 20 and 21, 102-key;
- 22, 113-key; 23, 114-key; 24 and 25, 115-key;



Figure 8. This 67-key Gasparini façade from a circa 1905 catalog may have been the inspiration for a similar design used later on some 52-keyless Model 107 Gebrüder Bruder instruments (see Figure 9).

- Fanfare Organs: 32, 37-key; 33, 46-key; 34, 51-key
- Organs: 35, 37-key; 36, 46-key; 37, 51-key; 38, 66-key; 39, 74-key (wooden trumpets)
- Portable Organs:
- Uniflutes: 40, 22-key; 41, 26-key
- Harmoniflutes: 42, 44-key
- Harmonipans: 43, 26-key; 44, 44-key
- Melotons: 45, 26-key; 46, 32-key
- Portable Organs: 47, 42-key; 48, 45-key (wooden trumpets)
- Cavalry Fanfare: 49, 45-key (brass trumpets)
- Cylinder Pianos: 50, 33 hammers
- Cylinder Piano, Grand Format: 51, 43-hammer; 63, 64-hammer
- Symphony Organs: 52, 52-key; 53, 67-key; 54, 88-key
- Cardboard Organs: 55, 45-key; 56, 48-key
- Cardboard Organs, Grand Format: 57, 49-key; 58, 52-key; 59, 64-key; 60, 67-key; 61, 80-key; 62, 83-key

A second Gasparini catalog is a tour de force in French art nouveau book organs of circa 1905. Undulating scrollwork, enhanced by stylized leaves, flowers, peacocks, painted cameos and other elements provided some very attractive designs. The facades were detachable from the main case and generally stood in front of it, a point of special interest noted under most illustrations. A plane of separation was defined between the instrument maker and the decorative artisans.



Figure 9. The Model 107 Bruder wasn't introduced until about 1908 and this façade style until circa 1912, leading to the hypothesis that the Gasparini façade design came first. Author's photograph.

In addition to those very elegant contemporary designs, Gasparini also offered some very baroque-looking facades that revealed a heavy Germanic influence. Unlike most French organs that displayed the well crafted, visually balanced pipework, these designs largely concealed the works from view. The Gasparini design had a bandleader under a canopy, flanking musicians and dragons below, reminds one of the facades that were fitted to Model 37 and 38 A. Ruth & Son instruments in 1900 and 1904, respectively. An altered Gasparini facade featuring two female figures is now situated in front of the Hooghuys organ on the famed Carousel Becquart, operated by the French showman Francois Kopp (**Figure 12**). One 67-key Gasparini organ facade (**Figure 8**) may have inspired a similar design later utilized on Gebrüder Bruder Model 107 organs, which were first introduced circa 1908 (**Figure 9**). It included stylized leaves and blossoms among the various ornaments. No Gebrüder Bruder instruments with similar facades have been found that are dated earlier than circa 1912.¹²

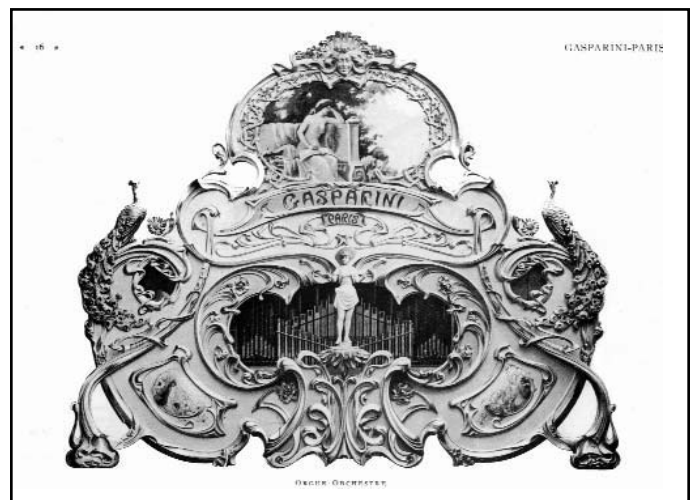


Figure 10. Gasparini supplied elaborate art nouveau facades after the turn of the century. This outstanding 87-key instrument exemplifies their general character.



Figure 11. The best known Gasparini in the United States is the former cylinder organ known as the Gypsy Queen. It has recently been restored to fine playing condition by Jim Welty. Author's photograph.

The two basic categories of instruments, Orchestra Organs and Concertophones, were separated because the latter featured the new concept of automatic registers. That design was brought to fruition about 1902. Orchestra organs were available with various options, starting with the basic organ, then adding drums and a cymbal, wider facades and finally, automated figures. The two series of Concertophones, designated by the letters "A" and "B," were differentiated by grander decorative treatments. More heavily relieved carvings were provided on the B set. A pneumatically operated xylophone was available as an add-on, but the device is almost non-existent on surviving instruments, suggesting limited application. The same is true for a set of front-facing baritone pipes. Visible on a number of organs in the catalog are the narrow scale, metal violin pipes that provided a very bright sound to the ensemble.

Gasparini organs were very popular in turn of the century Holland, especially after their increasingly enjoyable tonal designs had captured the leadership in the marketplace.

The jump from the highest model number in the circa 1895 catalog, 63, to the lowest in this publication, 101, might have been bridged by numbers assigned in another catalog, no copies of which are known to the author. Offered in the subject circa 1905 catalog were the following styles and sizes:

- Orchestra Organs: styles 101 and 102, 29-key;
103, 104 and 105, 36-key; 106 — 112, 49-key;
113 — 119, 52-key; 120 — 125, 67-key;
126 — 130, 87-key
- Concertophones, Series A: 131, 46-key;
132, 52-key; 133, 67-key; 134, 87-key;
135, 98-key
- Concertophones, Series B: 136, 46-key;
137, 52-key; 138, 67-key; 139, 87-key;
140, 98-key; 141, 104-key

For 1910, Gasparini agent Blanche-Petit issued a document in Dutch that called attention to the newest model, a 77-key instrument with automatic registers. It continued the art nouveau style facades, with one applied to an instrument that had standing, wooden trumpets, which are often termed "pistons," in the front. The only other advisement was that special consideration was given to the weather conditions in Holland during the construction of the instrument.¹³

The last available Gasparini sales document appears to be of ten pages, a standard eight-page brochure with a two-sided addendum. It was printed for distribution to visitors to the 1910 Brussels world's fair, being printed in French, Dutch and German. Its issuance must have taken place after the fair's awards were distributed, because the Diplome D'Honneur given to Gasparini is mentioned in the text.¹⁴ While an elegant façade featuring beautiful peacocks from the 1905 era catalog served as the cover piece, the real news was inside. Gasparini, like the German firm Gebrüder Bruder had done about 1908-1910, commenced to offer model name identifications, as opposed to numbers. A general catalog, describing instruments from 29 to 120-keys in size was offered, but no example is known to exist.



Figure 12. It is thought that the altered façade on the Carousel Becquart-Kopp Hooghuy's organ was originally with a Gasparini organ. The three center figures were a later addition. Author's collection.

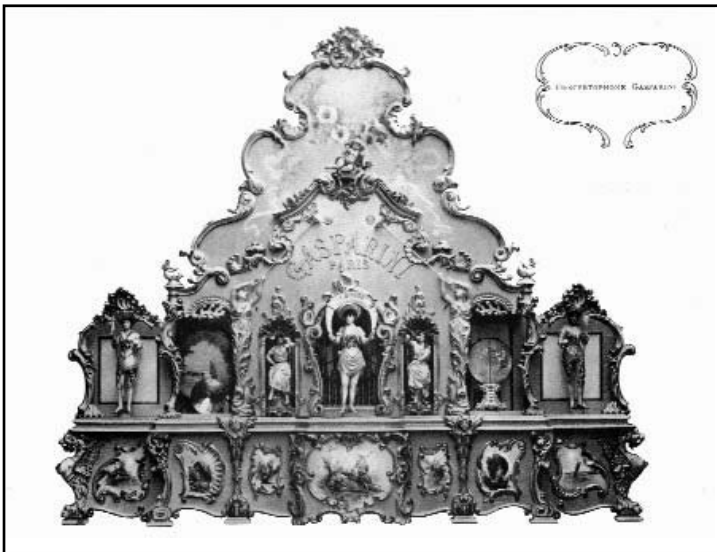


Figure 13. The Germanic styling of this Gasparini Concertophone is evident in the elements that can be seen on Model 37 and 38 Ruth organs built before it.

Readers were enlightened about the three available styles of the 52-key Gasparini, along with the “new” creation of the three styles of 87-key Concertophone called the “Euphone.” The inserted supplement went further in detailing the offerings, listing Orchestra Organ styles 142 through 151 (52-key); 152 (77-key); and 153 (87-key). The “Euphone” lineup was expanded to four models: 154 (57-key); 155 (67-key); 156 (77-key); and 157 (87-key). Special fair models of the 154, 155 and 156 styles were also available. The 157 was offered with three figures and all of these instruments were also capable of being equipped with a wooden xylophone. As a final option, the 52-key organs could also be purchased with a wooden xylophone or the Bouteillophone concept from the 1890s. The array suggests all attempts were being made to meet the competition by offering a menu of customer-selected options. Gasparini was also offering four different models of automatic pianos that were equipped with a decorative front, as well as a cymbal, snare and bass drums. Whether they were made by the firm or not are unknown, but a mechanical game called “Chance A Tous” and phonographs were also tendered within the catalog pages.

A quick survey of the literature and available documentation revealed between two and three dozen substantially intact Gasparini instruments in existence today. There are also at least several Gasparini fronts mounted on other makes of organ. Not all instruments that may have a Gasparini heritage can readily be identified, especially among street organs. The famous “De

Vijf Beelden,” or “The Five Figures,” was originally a Gasparini but one would never know that today were it not for the historical record. There are surely others in lesser known French and European collections. As a result, the Gasparini heritage is broader than any assessment via the published literature would reveal.



Figure 14. The façade in this image is from a Gasparini that was originally used in Holland. It now stands before a Bruder organ that was converted to 165 rolls by Noble Stidham.

The largest publicly known Gasparini organs are two book organs of the 87-key size. There is a rebuilt 83-key cylinder organ, two book instruments of 67-key size, and a very original military-style cylinder organ of 67-keys. The most popular Foucher-Gasparini model was the 52-key size. They far outnumber all other surviving sizes of Gasparini organs in existence today. More than three-quarters of existing instruments are 52-key, both original book organs and rebuilt barrel instruments. The number of organs from other makers that were rebuilt to Gasparini practices has not been determined.

The Gasparini instrumentation appears to have been fully optimized, there being just 254 pipes in one existing 87-key instrument. Being experts in design, the specifications yielded good sounding organs that were readily sold. Wieffering says that the “Gouwe Kappie,” which came from the factory in September 1911, had an ocarina stop that was so popular that the crowds gathered around it clogged the streets. Gasparini arrangements were also highly valued. When a melody was repeated it was always arranged in a different manner than the first time through, resulting in desirable musical variation for the listener. The 52-keys instruments were reportedly tuned downward a minor third from the indicated note in the scale.¹⁵

The author expresses his appreciation to those individuals mentioned in the text, notes and captions for their assistance.

Notes

1. Leon Honorez recollections are in *Het Pierement*, XXIII, 2, pages 29-30, reprinted in MBSGB's *Music Box*, VII, 7, pages 283-284. Nothing is known of H. Foucher, though Arthur W. J. G.

Ord-Hume (*Barrel Organ*, 1978, page 448, and *Automatic Pianos*, 2004, page 414) lists a George Foucher as a manufacturer of pianos and organs, including a “patent barrel organ” and a

pianoforte played manually by cranking a handle in 1881. Perhaps he was the father of Gasparini's son-in-law.

2. Author's collection.

3. Perlee family archives, reproduced in *Het Pierement*, LI, 2, page 75 and XLV, 1, page 11. Tom Meijer supplemented the information in an e-mail to the author on February 6, 2005.
4. Bank's Gavioli coverage is in early issues of *Het Pierement*, with the organ "trust" covered in VI, 1, page 17. Romke DeWaard, *Catalogus National Museum van Speeldoos Tot Pierement* (Utrecht?: 1972), page 68. Honorez, op. cit. Ord-Hume, *Automatic Pianos*, page 415, lists "Gasparini" as a successor to Foucher-Gasparini, a maker of clock-work barrel pianos for cafes and also book organs as flourishing circa 1920. The name also appears as such on some surviving organ books. Perhaps a new firm was organized under the old name following the war in Europe.
5. Observations courtesy of Gasparini organ owner Tom Kuehn, e-mail, November 25, 2003.
6. *Mechanical Music Digest* entry by Hans van Oost, December 22, 1997.
7. Romke deWaard, *From music boxes to street organs*, trans. Wade Jenkins (Vestal, 1967), page 131; Tom Meijer, "Amusementmuziek en Draaiorgels (2)," *Het Pierement*, XLV, 1, pages 8-13; Henk Veeningen, COAA *Carousel Organ*, 19 (April 2004), page 15. Gasparini organs bought by Dutch showmen are covered by A. A. van de Velde's memoir in *Het Pierement*, XIII, 1, pages 6-8.
8. *Carousel Organ*, April 2004, page 15. An early Gasparini-based street organ is owned by Jim and Sarah Harper in New Zealand. For coverage of it, see *Key Frame*, 2003, 4, pages 23-30.
9. Tom Kuehn, personal communication, 2004.
10. Stephane Godfroid, *Muziek Instrumentenbouw te Geraardsbergen van de 15de Eeuw tot Heden*, (1986), pages 78-108.
11. The catalog, from the Fournier collection, was reproduced from a microfilm copy supplied by Marc Fournier and published in *Het Pierement*, XXXVI, 1, pages 39-50.
12. Reproduction by Kring van Draaiorgelvrieden from the original owned by A. A. van de Velde and H. J. Wassenaar.
13. Reproduced in *Het Pierement*, XXX, 2, page 59, from the collection of A. A. van de Velde and H. J. Wassenaar.
14. *Het Pierement*, XXVII, 3, pages 111-120.
15. *Mechanical Music Digest* entry by Hans van Oost, May 26, 1998

Fred Dahlinger is a frequent contributor to the *Carousel Organ*. He is interested in all historical aspects of self-playing organs and especially European fair organs. He and his wife, Anita, live in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

The COAA Spring Rally

Join us for the COAA Spring Rally to be held on Memorial Weekend, Friday May 27 to May 30, 2005 (Memorial Day). **Lake Winnepesaukah** is proud to host the first COAA rally of the year in honor of its 80th birthday celebration. Historic Lake Winnepesaukah was started by Carol and Minette Dixon in 1925 as a fishing, swimming and picnic park.

The Cherokee Indians built the park's nine acre lake. They dug it out by hand with the aid of a mule. The lake is fed by 35 underground springs. During the Civil War the lake was called Green Springs Lake. Confederate President Jefferson Davis camped on the banks of the lake on the night of the Battle of Missionary Ridge. Union troops enjoyed the lake's campsite on the March to the Battle of Atlanta in 1864.

In 1934 a 322 pound man was billed as the "Human Cork" or Human Whale and bobbed in Lake "Winnie" for 73 hours straight during a 4th of July Celebration. Senora Carver, a blind stunt diver, appeared in the park in 1939. She made a daring plunge from a 42 foot tower astride her horse, Red Lips, into a tank of water.

The Dixons created the tunnel of Love Boat Shoot as a thrill ride for patrons. Soon other attractions were added and in the 1960s the roller coaster, "The Carolina Cannon Ball," was constructed. The park has continued to initiate and improve through its 80 year history.

The oldest ride in the park is the Grand Carousel built in Philadelphia by the Philadelphia Toboggan Co. in 1916. The carousel was to have been an attraction at the World's Fair in Atlanta but never materialized. It was moved to Lake Winnepesaukah in 1965. The 66 wooden animals and the Albright scenery panels, as well as its 52 foot diameter, make it one of the largest carousels in operation today.

Country music great, Lynn Anderson, got her start at Lake Winnepesaukah in 1968. She was paid \$50.00 performance and did so well she was book at \$150.00 for return engagements. She had to void the contract due to a singing engagement on the Lawrence Welk Show. Country singer Tom T. Hall wrote the song *Chattanooga Dog* based on a big black mangy dog that took up residence under the park's wooden roller coaster, and for eight seasons, chased the coaster train around the tracks on opening day.

As the park opens in the spring, and the music starts to play, large carp, fish of considerable size that have spent the winter burrowed in the mud, come out to be fed popcorn by the patrons.

There are many other attractions in the area, including an Aquarium, the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum, steam excursions, river boat rides, the incline railway up Lookout Mountain, Civil War Battlefields, Rock City, and Ruby Falls. Nearby Coolidge Park features a carousel with two organs, a Wurlitzer and a new Stinson 57-2.

Limited accommodations for the rally are at the Comfort Inn Conference Center on Ringold, Rd, Chattanooga, Tennessee. Call 423-893-7979 for special COAA rally rates (valid until May 12, 2005).

The Shipp's RV Campground is next to the Comfort Inn Conference Center. For reservations call 877-296-2017. Full hook-ups are \$22.50 per night.

This is a perfect place to celebrate Memorial Weekend and the first COAA 2005 organ rally. And a perfect place to enjoy the rich history that will surround you at **Lake Winnepesaukah**—you won't want to miss it!

More Information will be sent to members by mail soon!