

Title:

The Music Box Industry: Then and Now

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Summary:

It has been over 200 years since the music box was invented in 1796. There were many influences, which impacted its development. Let's discover what they were.

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Article Body:

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It has been over 200 years since the music box was invented in 1796. There were many influences, which impacted its development. It wasn't until 1815 that the music box industry finally became organized on a company basis. Manufacturing practices and techniques made it possible to start producing them in 1840. However, only special designs with two or more combs or with mandolin combs were made. It wasn't until 1860 that manufacturers began to think about mass production.

Initially, the qualities of manufactured music boxes were quite good. However, due to an increase in the rate of production, factories' technology was unable to keep up and therefore the quality of music boxes was lowered.

In 1890, the disc machines that were made challenged the cylinder music box. Disc boxes became popular and were manufactured rapidly. Large quantities were produced over a period of 25 years until 1914 when World War I began. Due to the great need for accurate reproduction during the war (which greatly helped the on-going development of the phonograph), and the great capabilities of the gramophone, the need for forms of mechanical music decreased.

The years between World War I and World War II were one of great technological development as well as political and societal uncertainty. While a great number of Victorian music boxes were bought by the British, by 1920 music boxes became "old hat". People began to spend their money on things such as motorcars. However, the end of the music box industry wasn't totally over. A modern industry would soon begin as evidenced by towns such as St Croix and L'Auberson

in Switzerland. David Tallis in "Music Boxes: A Guide for Collectors" says that: "Also manufacturing in St Croix we have Breitler S.A. founded in 1929, Les Fils de John Jaccard founded in 1862 by Jules Jaccard, and finally Regue S.A. who are on of the most important modern manufacturers."

Today, there are over nine registered companies who make, repair, and market musical boxes in these two towns. There are also many other companies all over the world who do this work as well.

In modern times, Japan also has its place in the music box industry. This country now produces musical boxes and musical movements, which competes against the Swiss companies. Some of the main manufacturers are the Tokyo Pigeon Orugoru Company, Tokyo Seiki Orgel and the Sanyko Sieki Company.

Today, it is not difficult for music box and antique collectors to find high quality music boxes with great movements.