

MUSEUM FÜR MUSIKAUTOMATEN SEEWEN SO

Sammlung Dr. h.c.
Heinrich Weiss-Stauffacher

Museum für
Musikautomaten
Bollhübel 1
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www.musikautomaten.ch

Special exhibition from 1 October 2021 to 24 April 2022

«Jeu continu...»

Swiss music boxes in a class of their own

Manufacturers dotted along the Swiss Jura arc once produced large and exceptional music boxes, either for national and international exhibitions or on order. For almost unlimited musical enjoyment, technical innovations made it possible to play long pieces of music without interruption – a novelty in those days. This high point is based on the continuous development of Swiss music box production during the 19th century.

The “Plérodienique” category, together with music boxes featuring “hélicoïdal” and “semi-hélicoïdal” tracking, are true masterpieces of Swiss manufacture. The elegant musical furniture of the Belle Époque offered a blend of precision mechanics and particularly impressive musical performance encased in a dignified exterior.

The Museum of Music Automats in Seewen near Basel is the first in the world to showcase the diversity of these rare exhibits in a remarkable Special exhibition from 1 October 2021 to 24 April 2022. Outstanding items from the museum’s own collection will be supplemented by loans from private collectors and museums in Europe. The exhibition marks the first time some of the items will be on public display.

Incidentally, a step into the future of this subject was recently taken with the inscription of the “craftsmanship of mechanical watchmaking and art mechanics”, including the manufacture of music boxes and automatons, on UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity.

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Captions:

PICTURE_A:

“Orchestre” music box table
With interchangeable cylinders for continuous playing (semi-helicoidal system)
François Conchon, Geneva c. 1894
(© Seewen Museum of Music Automatons)

PICTURE_B:

“Sublime Harmonie Plerodienique” music box table
G. Mermod & Bornand, Sainte-Croix c. 1885
(© Seewen Museum of Music Automatons)

PICTURE_C:

Detail of a music box «Plérodienique»
C. Paillard & Cie., Sainte-Croix c. 1890
(© Seewen Museum of Music Automatons)