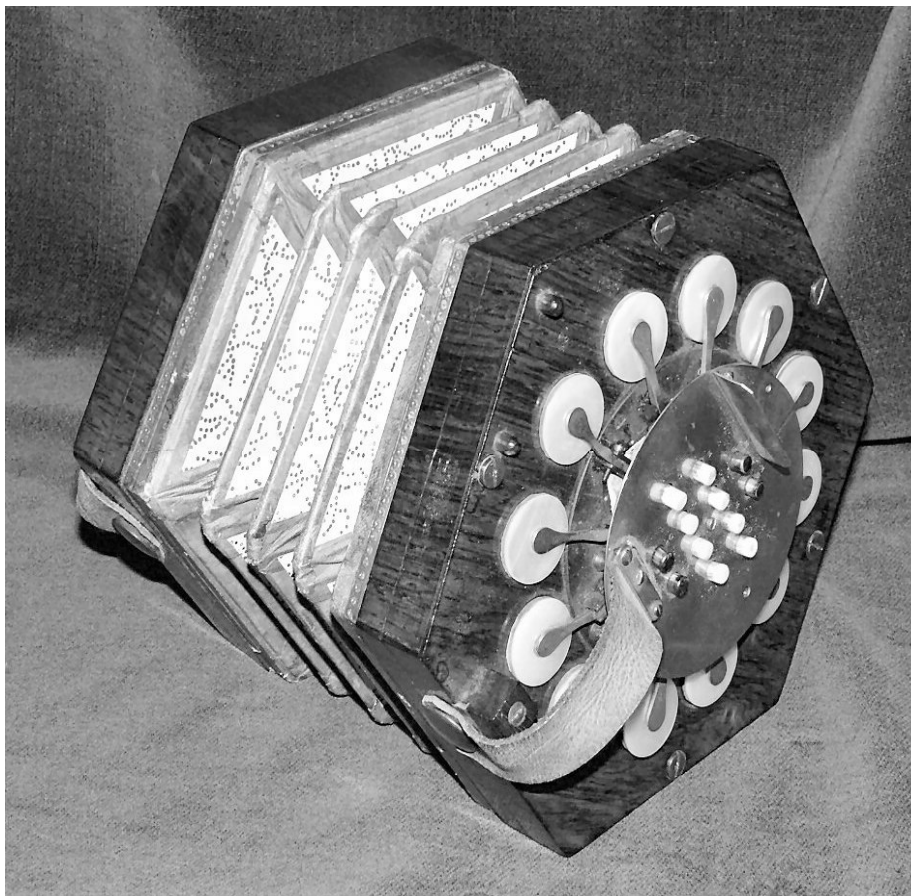


## BRIEFLY NOTED

### Two New Concertinas at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Introductory note by J. KENNETH MOORE

As part of a continuous effort to augment and refine its collection, The Department of Musical Instruments at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City purchased several free-reed instruments offered at a June 2003 auction in Vichy, France.



**Fig 1. An early Wheatstone English concertina, 'open-pallet' design, c. 1833-1834.**

Among the instruments purchased were two concertinas manufactured by Wheatstone & Co. One is a very early English concertina, apparently without serial number (Acq. No. 2003.380—see Fig. 1). With its three-fold bellows, hexagonal rosewood casing, and twelve visible levers on each side (with mother-of-pearl key-flaps and ivory buttons), the instrument is a rare example of what Neil Wayne has

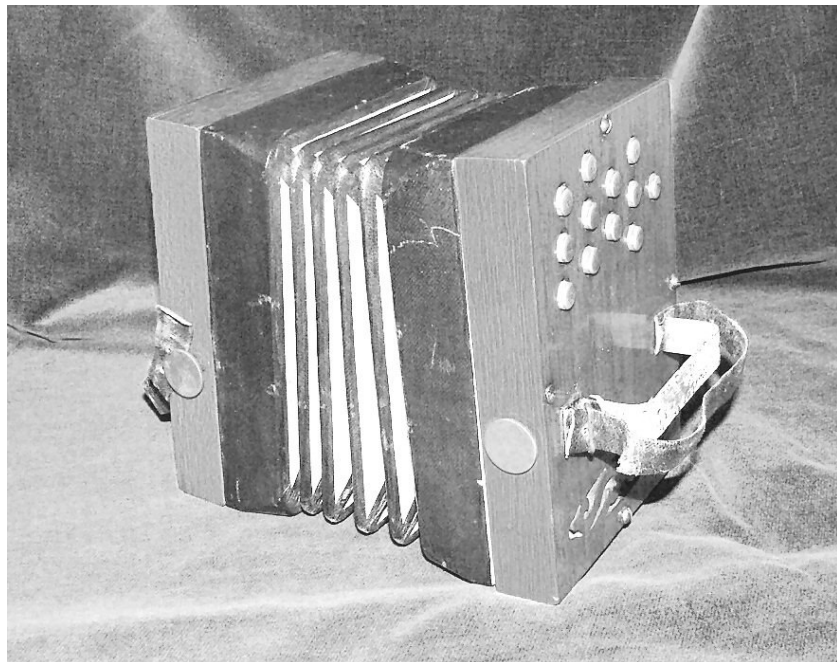
dubbed Wheatstone's early 'open-pallet' design,<sup>1</sup> and it can probably be dated from 1833-1834 by analogy with both Wheatstone's well-known No. XXXII, currently housed at the Horniman Museum, London, as part of the Neil Wayne Collection, and an unnumbered Wheatstone in the private collection of Mr Stephen Chambers, Dublin.<sup>2</sup>

The second purchase, dating from the 1850s, is an early 'Duett' concertina (Acq. No. 2003.381—see Fig. 2), designed in a way that

permitted a melody, played in the right hand, to be joined by a simple accompaniment in the left hand. This instrument has a (German-looking) rectangular, mahogany casing, four-fold bellows, and twenty-four buttons, with a range of *g* to *c*<sup>'''</sup> (with the only 'accidental' being F sharp).<sup>3</sup> To help introduce the instrument, Wheatstone published an instruction book titled *Instructions for Performing on Wheatstone's Patent Duett Concertina* (c. 1855),<sup>4</sup> along with twelve books of arrangements of popular music. Both instruments were purchased with funds from the Robert Alonzo Lehman Bequest, and are currently on display along with other free-reed instruments, including a Wheatstone symphonion (Acq. No. 89.4.2985).

The museum's collection also houses two other concertinas of note:

another Wheatstone English, No. 11758, probably dating from late 1861/early 1862 (Acq. No. 89.4.1124),<sup>5</sup> and a twentieth-century Lachenal, No. 46875 (Acq. No. 63.211.5a,b), which belonged to the well-known folk-singer Burl Ives (1909-1995), who donated it to the museum in 1963.<sup>6</sup>



**Fig:2. Early Wheatstone "Duett" Concertina; ca 1850.**

Within the next year the department hopes to mount a temporary exhibition of a selection of its free-reed instruments in the Musical Instrument Galleries.

Finally, the Department of Musical Instruments welcomes serious researchers by appointment. For access, please contact the department at the following address: Department of Musical Instruments, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10028.

## NOTES

1. See Neil Wayne, 'The Wheatstone English Concertina', *Galpin Society Journal*, 44 (1991), Plate 2; this article is now available online: <<http://www.free-reed.co.uk/galpin>>.

2. Wheatstone No. XXXII is Item CMC 1278 in the Wayne Collection; for a photograph, see the article in note 1; there is a photograph of the instrument in the Chambers collection in Stephen Chambers, 'An Annotated Catalogue of Historic Free-Reed Instruments from My Private Collection', in *Harmonium und Handharmonika: Bericht des 20. Musikinstrumentbau-Symposiums 1999*. Michaelsteiner Konferenzberichte, 62, ed. Monika Lustig (Blankenburg: Stiftung Kloster Michaelstein, 2002), Plate 10; now available online: <<http://www.maccann-duet.com/chambers/chambers-michaelstein.htm>>. Developed by Mr Robert Gaskins, the website <<http://www.maccann-duet.com>> contains a rich collection of materials relating to the concertina, especially the Duett/Duet concertina.

3. On the early Wheatstone Duettts, the fingering system of which eventually formed the core of John Hill Maccann's later Maccann-system Duet, see Robert Gaskins, 'Early Wheatstone Duett System Duets', online: <<http://www.maccann-duet.com/duet/index.htm>>. The instrument is 'German-looking' enough to have deceived those who compiled the auction catalogue into attributing it to Friedrich Uhlig of Chemnitz.

4. The tutor is conveniently available online: <<http://www.maccann-duet.com/duet/Wheatstone-Duett-Tutor-1855.pdf>>, as is the first known advertisement for the instrument, which appeared in the *Daily News* (London), No. 3064 (13 March 1856), 1: <<http://maccann-duet.com/duet/Daily-News-13-03-1856-page-1.pdf>>.

5. Although the Wheatstone sales ledger C1052 (Horniman Museum, London, Wayne Archive), which lists sales from 21 October 1859 to 30 April 1864, does not have a notice for this particular instrument, we may note the following: (1) an instrument numbered in the 11700s (No. 11734) is sold for the first time on 3 September 1861 (p. 57); (2) the first instrument from the 11750s sequence (No. 11753) was sold on 9 January 1862 (p. 64); and (3) No. 11759 was sold on 21 February 1862 (p. 66). My thanks to Allan Atlas for this information.

6. I should note that this concertina was actually used in performance by Allan Atlas at a concert given at the museum in December 1997.

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