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PIANOS AT INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITIONS

A Glance Back at the Great Chicago World's Fair of 1893

COMMENTS ON ACTIVITIES OF TODAY



MANUFACTURERS' exhibits of musical instruments, whether only for display or entered also for awards, have been prominently featured at all great international expositions of both continents, since the days of the Crystal Palace Exposition of London on to the present time. The

several Paris expositions have been notable for the prominence of their musical sections and particularly as to the foremost position given pianos in their exhibits. Manufacturers have heralded Paris exposition awards as signal triumphs for the prominence of their displays and the quality of their product.

Antwerp, Berlin, London, Madrid, Paris, Vienna, abroad, and Philadelphia, Buffalo, St. Louis, San Francisco, Chicago, in this country, have matched each other in the prominence given to music and the music industries.

But of all these exhibits, at home or abroad, the climax of ensemble, of grandeur and importance was reached at the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893 by the famous display in Section I of the Liberal Arts Division; a location that became famous and known the world over under the appellation "Section I-L. A."

Section I probably contained the biggest array of piano and reed organs ever made before by any one country. There were 58 American exhibitors and 314 pianos in the booths, besides about 125 organs. Elsewhere on the ground of the exposition there were not less than 250 pianos of American make and probably 75 of foreign manufacture, besides the regular foreign exhibit. The total value of pianos in Section I was estimated at \$280,000 and the expense of the exhibit \$284,000.

THE CENTURY OF PROGRESS EXPOSITION PIANO EXHIBITS

Now, on the opening of the Century of Progress Exposition, forty years after the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 which has been heralded as the "Greatest World's Fair of All Times," we are confronted with the spectacle of an international exposition limited in extent numerically the main display in the Exhibit Building being made by one representative house, The Baldwin Piano Company of Cincinnati, particulars of which exhibit will be found further along in these columns. This exhibit, which is extensive in the space occupied, is important as showing the development of piano making, and like all Baldwin exhibits it is constructive and educational. Baldwin instruments are also to be found in the Ohio building and a very beautiful Masterpiece grand in the official reception room. Inasmuch as the Baldwin is the official piano of the exposition other prod-

ucts of the Baldwin factory will be found on the exposition grounds.

Other pianos may be seen in various buildings on the grounds. State and individual concessions will contain instruments, some of them to be supplied with several pianos, grands and uprights. A notable exhibit of model grands are the two Wurlitzer specially designed instruments, one for the Masonite house and one for the model house built by the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association. Further reference to this exhibit also appears elsewhere in this issue. A special Bechstein grand outfitted with electrical devices is on exhibition in the Hall of Science building.

Pianos have been purchased for some of the buildings and concessions and, naturally, many instruments will be placed complimentary where social functions prevail, for no place of social gathering or entertainment can be complete without the piano, just as outdoor festivals and demonstrations cannot function without drum, cymbal, and the brass and woodwind instruments.

Just how it comes about that the music industries did not set about to have a united exhibit appears to be a tale untold. It has been suggested by persons outside of musical circles that the exposition, desiring to attract especially such lines of manufacture as show features of marked progress thus conforming to the thought of the name, "Century of Progress," did not solicit doubly hard for a musical instrument exhibit.

THE BALDWIN CENTURY OF PROGRESS EXHIBIT

BALDWIN THE OFFICIAL PIANO OF THE EXPOSITION

An episode which could well be considered of distinct and vital importance to any active, going manufacturer of the day; peculiarly so for an establishment whose activities in leadership point to an auspicious future, has just come to one of America's great piano manufacturing houses, The Baldwin Piano Company. The story of this distinction is told in the caption:

"Baldwin the Official Piano of the Century of Progress Exposition."

The industrial products gathered for the Century of Progress Exposition have been brought together on the presumption that such products show progressive development in manufacture, a proposition in which the manufacturers of Baldwin pianos amply qualify.

The Baldwin Piano Company brings to the Century of Progress Exposition a unit in its group of exhibits of more than passing interest and importance. They make a display worthy the industry they are allied with.

The Baldwin exhibit is in General Exhibits Building No. 3, booth 9, where, aside from their display of pianos, they will depict the historical and educational development of the piano from the earliest days of the instrument to the present time. In this group will be shown a spinet of the early 17th century; a piano manufactured in the early days of American piano making (1823) alongside a modern grand of today, a Baldwin Masterpiece model.

The Baldwin educational exhibit is, in itself, an attraction to command attention. Dealers will be interested and the general public will get an insight into piano construction that will be well worth viewing. Here they can see the parts that enter into the construction of the piano, grands and uprights and may visualize the operation of the action, hammers and keys to the strings in producing tone.

The story of the development of the piano action as it may be studied in the Baldwin educational exhibit is interesting; indeed it is fascinating. About a

hundred years ago there started experiments on the action which have culminated in the present day highly responsive instrument. While the various stages of this development have been too many to enumerate here, their importance can readily be seen by comparing the model of the piano action today as shown in the Baldwin exhibit with the model of the instrument built by George Charters in Cincinnati in 1823. The Spinnet piano of this exhibit built in the early seventeenth century, before the invention of the real pianoforte, may be studied with exceeding interest for these studies in comparison naturally lead up to the beautiful examples in the development of the present day piano illustrated in the Baldwin models.

The public, the trade and musical people generally, will say "hats off" to the house of Baldwin for their display, an exhibit which illustrates the great strides made in piano building during the past one hundred years, culminating in the king of musical instruments today, the Grand Pianoforte.

Many other Baldwin pianos beside the Exhibits Building display are located in various buildings on the grounds. In the Trustees' Reception Room there is a modern Masterpiece grand installed for use at official and social functions; there are several at the Enchanted Isle playground and as referred to elsewhere in this issue the Baldwin is the piano used in the broadcasting studios on the exposition grounds. In the Ohio State building there will be a fifteen-minute motion picture showing how Baldwin pianos are built.

"Baldwin at the Exposition" will be heralded to the world by radio through several broadcasting stations. One message says: "See the Baldwin Piano Company's Educational exhibit at the Century of Progress Exposition, located in General Exhibits Building Unit 3." Another air message says: "See what happens inside the piano when you strike the keys. Learn about this at the Baldwin piano exhibit in building 3, General Exhibits Building, Century of Progress Exposition."

EXHIBITS ELSEWHERE

However, regardless of exposition exhibits or pianos on the Exposition grounds, numerous displays of American pianos may be seen at the various Chicago agencies. Many of the leading pianos are represented in Chicago by dealer agency or other representation. Dealers and others in attendance at the Music Merchants and Radio conventions are specially invited by the manufacturers of these various pianos to call on their Chicago representatives while they are in the city.

WIDE RANGE OF MUSIC AT EXPOSITION

The proposed musical events scheduled for the A Century of Progress exposition which take in a wide scope of musical entertainment, vocal and instrumental, will offer many rare treats for the music lover. Choruses are expected from abroad, some from the great universities of Europe and many gatherings from various parts in the United States will make "music at the exposition" a very prominent feature well worth the attention of visitors who are planning to come to the exposition. The first important chorus event will be a presentation of Handel's Messiah by the combined choirs and choruses to be given on June 4 at the exposition. A chorus of 1,500 will also sing on opening day, May 27, accompanied by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

BRUSH MAKING EXHIBITION

An interesting showing of how paint, varnish and other brushes are made will be found at the exhibit of the Gerts-Lumbard Company, Chicago, leading makers in America of this line of appliances used by piano manufacturers. Their exhibit will be in the home planning hall of the Century of Progress Exposition where they will have a workman from their factory explaining the process of the making of brushes, a line of work little understood by the general public, for few people realize today that the bristles in even inexpensive brushes must be arranged and set by hand, and that the brush maker is one of the few craftsmen left in a world of machine industries.