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The Amazing J. Lawrence Cook of Tennessee

Alan H. Wallace

University of Tennessee - Knoxville, awallac5@utk.edu

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The Amazing J. Lawrence Cook of Tennessee



Alan Wallace

The University of Tennessee Libraries

Presentation for SEMLA, 2009 New Orleans

Q·R·S

Word Roll

7971

"Boogie" On St. Louis Blues

Played by J. Lawrence Cook



How I “found” J. Lawrence Cook

The Pianola or Player Piano

Why J. Lawrence Cook was and still is Important

What and How He Accomplished His Work

Examples and Rewards of My Quest!



Mr. Mike Meddings

Rugeley, Staffordshire, UK



J. Lawrence Cook
17, Suptonade
Mt. Vernon, N. Y. 10553

Memo to: Mr. Michael Meddings

INFORMAL MEMORANDUM
Date: 10/6/73
From: J. Lawrence Cook

Subject:

Dear Friend Michael;
Yours under date of 9/29/73 received and read with pleasure. Here's one thing that we all must keep in mind: it has been estimated that I have made something between 10,000 and 20,000 piano roll masters in my lifetime. Well, you & Ransie and I all know that that's just haven't been that many Ragtime numbers, no matter how many people consider them as their favorite. My interest in the result of all my efforts has survived through all these years only because I have worked very hard to please everyone who liked various types of musical expression from Minors Rhymes to Concertos.
(over, please.)

FORM NO. 608 AVOID VERBAL ORDERS — Put It in Writing — Save Time — Reduce Errors

One of Mr. Cook's letters to Mike Meddings in the 1970s.

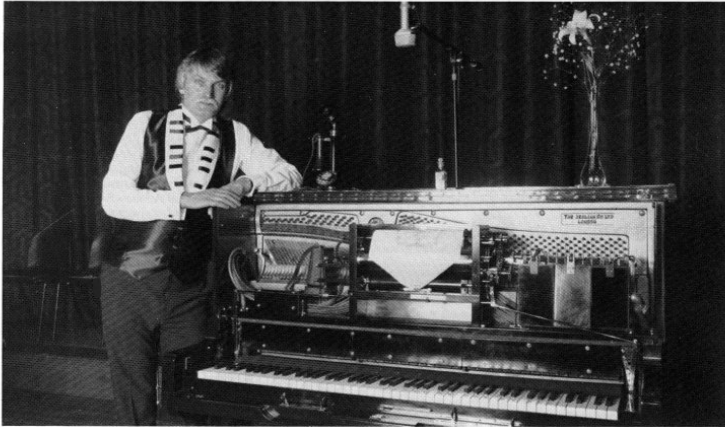
Mike Meddings in Concert

Music rolls with a live band – often featuring many works by Mr. Cook.

Monday, 20th July, 1987 – 7.30 p.m.
CIVIC HALL, ROTHER STREET, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Ragtime ... Blues ... & Hot Piano

featuring
MIKE MEDDINGS
and
THE ORIGINAL AEOLIAN SYNCOPATORS
with
NICK WARD – Traps



TITLE
GRANDPA'S SPELLS
IF YOU KNEW SUSIE
SWEET GEORGIA BROWN
PERFECT RAG
AH-AH
SHEIK OF ARABY
SURPRISE ITEM
CHICAGO (That Toddlin' Town)
KANSAS CITY STOMP
CHONG (He came from Hong Kong)
MR. JELLY LORD

Cincinnati 1924
New York 1925
Chicago 1925
Richmond 1924
New York 1928
Chicago 1921

Chicago 1922
Washington 1938
Chicago 1919
Cincinnati 1924

INTERVAL

AIN'T SHE SWEET
CAIRO
KING PORTER STOMP
TOM CAT BLUES
I AIN'T GOT NOBODY
THE CANNONBALL
IN THE JAILHOUSE NOW
CHARLESTON
BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE A DIME!
I'M COMIN' VIRGINIA
JAZZIN' BABY BLUES

Chicago 1927
Chicago 1919
New York 1939
Cincinnati 1924
New York 1925
New York 1959
Chicago 1924
New York 1925
Turlock 1981
New York 1927
Chicago 1923

PLAYED BY
'Jelly Roll' Morton
Victor Lane
Pete Wendling
Mike Meddings as played by 'Jelly Roll' Morton
Alan Moran
Zez Confrey
George Gershwin
Max Kortlander
Mike Meddings as played by 'Jelly Roll' Morton
Osborn and Howe
'Jelly Roll' Morton

Fred Parsons
Zez Confrey
Mike Meddings as played by 'Jelly Roll' Morton
'Jelly Roll' Morton
Rube Bloom
J. Lawrence Cook
James Blythe
James P. Johnson
Ralph Sutton
Thomas 'Fats' Waller
J. Lawrence Cook

UNIVERSITY OF ASTON
IN BIRMINGHAM

CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
THE STUDIO

MONDAY NOVEMBER 22, 1982
7.30 PM.



STEPPIN' ON THE IVORIES

Ragtime... blues... and stomps
on the pianola
presented by Mike Meddings

The Music Group is pleased to welcome again to the Centre for the Arts...MIKE MEDDINGS, who has prepared a special programme of historic 'live performance' music rolls from his collection. The concert, complete with period instruments, together with associated memorabilia, features performances by Eubie Blake, 'Jelly Roll' Morton, Zez Confrey, Clarence Williams and other notable keyboard personalities whose roll recordings faithfully capture the spirit and originality of this fascinating musical era.

Once again, drummer MIKE HASLUM will accompany selected numbers from the programme.

The Centre for the Arts also extends a welcome to Tenor Banjoist GEORGE LINDER and Clarinetist JOHN OSBORNE who join the event as special guest artists.



The Player Piano was a major form of entertainment in the early 20th Century

THE WORLD-FAMED
ANGELUS GRAND & UPRIGHT **PLAYER PIANOS**
 ARE A MASTERPIECE OF SCIENCE & ART
 THE PERFECTION OF BOTH PIANO & PLAYER
 responding to the most exacting demands, thus ensuring Artistic Supremacy.

THE HUMAN TOUCH OF THE MASTER HAND, controlling every gradation of Tone.

The **SIMPLE, EFFECTIVE** Patented Expression Devices include:
 The **GRADUATED MELODANT,** which accentuates the Melody or Theme.
 The **PHRASING LEVER,** which controls every variation of tempo.

The **ARTISTYLE,** the simple but infallible guide to musical rendition.

The **Angelus Player-Pianos** comprise Grand and Upright Pianos of the most artistic character, and include the Marshall & Rose, Brinsmead, Winkelmann, Squire, &c., &c.

THE PIANO WHICH INSPIRES:
Marshall & Rose
 GRAND & UPRIGHT PIANOFORTES
 For SPLENDOR OF TONE & PERFECTLY RESPONSIVE TOUCH are UNRIVALLED.



ANGELUS HALL, REGENT HOUSE,
 235, REGENT STREET, LONDON, W.

The Beckwith Player Piano
 (Style 26)

Established Dependability

The Beckwith Player Piano does its work satisfactorily at all times—it rarely requires any adjustment.

30 Days' Trial

Size, 4 feet 8 inches high, 2 feet 4 inches wide, 2 feet 10 inches deep.
 Weight, based on 1,000 pounds.

A Standardized Instrument
 Thousands of These Instruments Are Already in the Homes of Our Customers

THE Beckwith Player Piano, Style 26, offers unrivalled service and satisfaction. Its permanent reliability, pure liquid tone and faultless mechanical operation have been proved by almost every kind of test.

The Ease of Operation, the response of its fine action, its rare tone, all widen the margin between the ordinary player piano and the Beckwith, which immediately charms all who see it and leads to the besting vibrations of its fine scale.

The wonderful increased demand for this attractive instrument is convincing proof of its rare qualities.

Direct From Factory. Shipped direct from our modern and well equipped factories, where the most scientific means are employed and the closest attention is given to quality of material and precision of workmanship, which result in great economies to us and to you.

Our 25-Year Guarantee protects you constantly.

Send No Money With Your Order.

We now advance freight charges. If after three days you find the piano does not give you the pleasure you have paid for, we will return the money you have paid on it, including freight and postage charges.

\$8.00 a Month.

If at any time within one year from date of purchase you become dissatisfied, we will return the money you have paid on it, including freight and postage charges.

No. 445,820

Beckwith Player Piano, Style 26, including music cabinet and bench to match, also a full set of carefully selected records, which includes a representative number of classical, semi-classical, popular songs and other music, which, when being played, are automatically changed by the piano's own mechanism to the next record, song or selection. Be sure to state choice of vocal or instrumental.

\$410.00
 At \$8.00 a Month.




Recent Recordings That Are Real Blues



3707—Black Snake Blues
 3724—My Man Just Won't Don't
 3674—Dead Man Blues
 3675—Midnight Mamma
 3676—He's My Man
 3572—Falling Rain Blues

Q · R · S
 TRADE MARK
PLAYER ROLLS
are Better

WATCH FOR THE FOLLOWING
 They Will Be Ready Soon on Q. R. S. Player Rolls

3788—Trouble in Mind | 3780—Love Story Blues
 3784—Those Lonely Blues

SPIRITUALS NOW READY—Q. R. S. WORD ROLLS

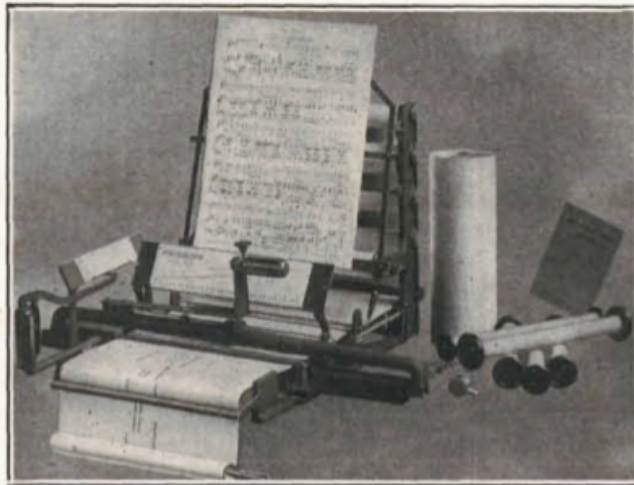
3757—I'm Gonna Die With the Staff in My Hand
 3639—My Lord's Gonna Move This Wicked Race
 3551—All God's Chillun Got Wings (Heab'n, Heab'n)
 3552—Git on Board, Little Chillun, (the Gospel Train)
 3554—When All the Saints Come Marchin' In

RECORDING Q. R. S. ARTISTS

JELLY ROLL MORTON | CLARENCE WILLIAMS
 SID LANEY | JAMES P. JOHNSON
 J. LAWRENCE COOK | CLARENCE JOHNSON
 LEMUEL FOWLER

Creating a Piano Roll

- 1. Hand Perforating Machine



Model No. 5

The New
LEABARJAN

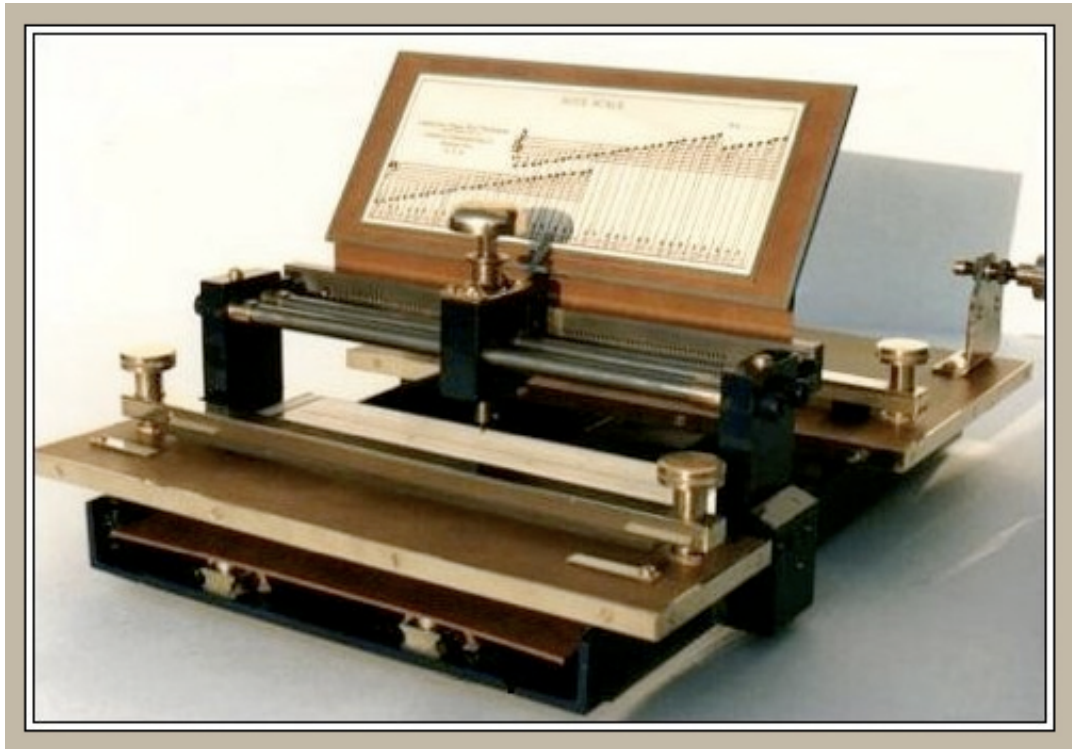
Roll perforating machine is one of the developments of modern music that will contribute most toward a real condition of better music and music appreciation in the American home.

Every dealer should know of its far-reaching benefits.

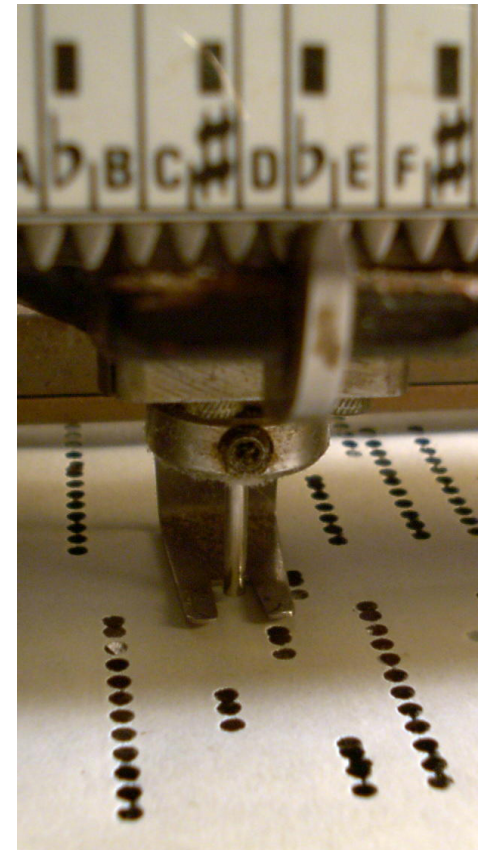
The Leabarjan Mfg. Company
Hamilton Ohio

Creating a Piano Roll

- 1. Hand Perforating Machine

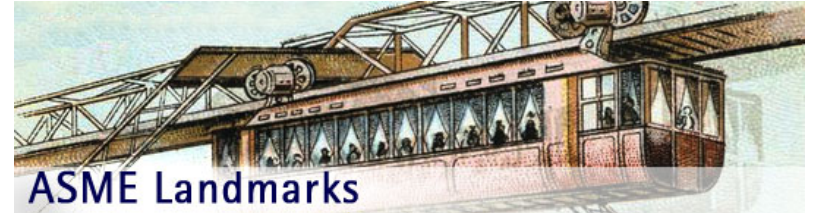


Piano roll punch made by Mike Meddings



Creating a Piano Roll

- 2. Marking Piano



#161 Q-R-S Marking Piano
(1912)

Creating a Piano Roll

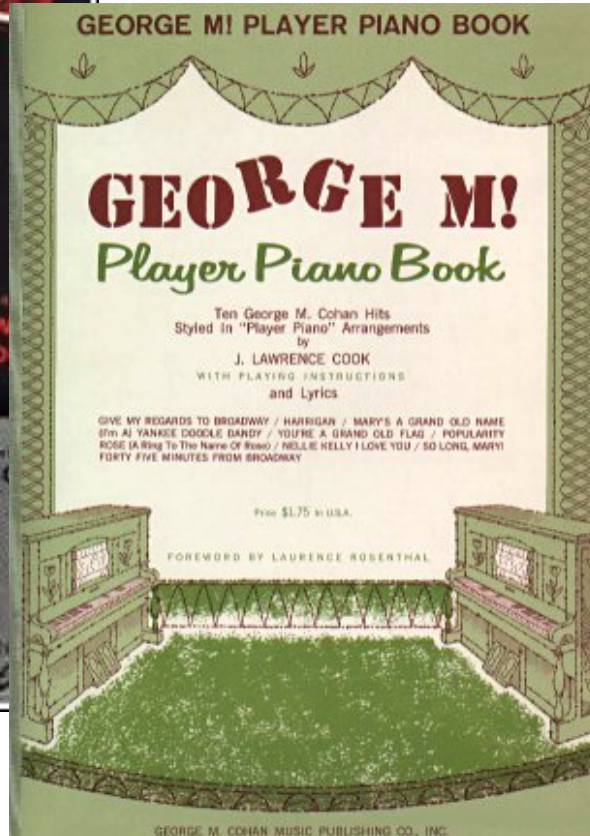
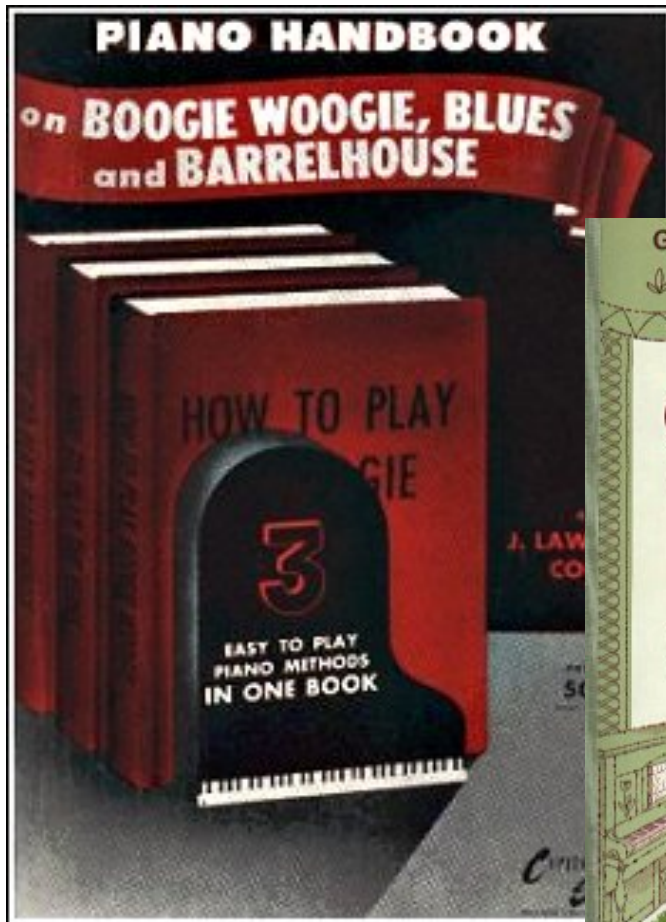
- 3. QRS Step-perforator & Recording Piano



J. Lawrence Cook on “You Asked for It,” early 1950s.



Music Books



Recordings



Between May 1941 and April 1943, J. Lawrence Cook wrote at least 16 articles on jazz piano technique for *The International Musician* (the official organ of the American Federation of Musicians).



1949

Photos by Duncan Scheidt
www.duncanschiedt.com



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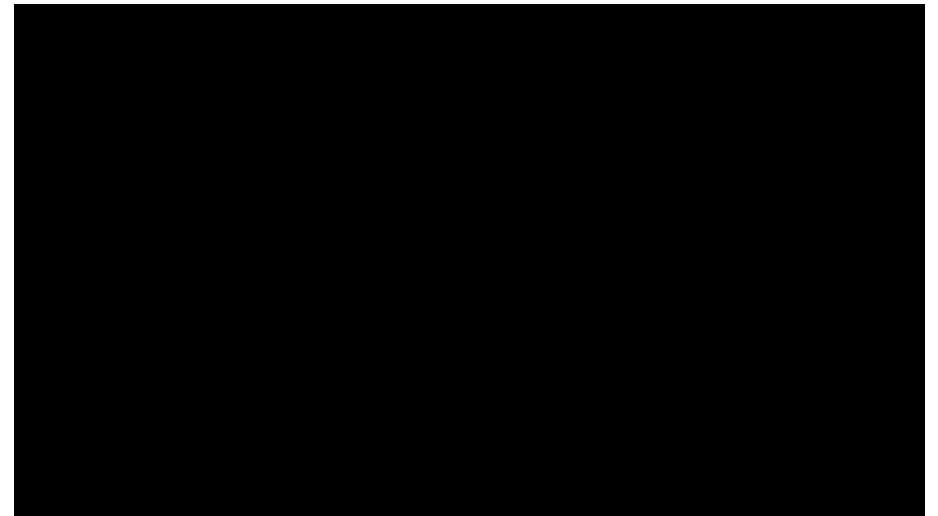
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A Modern Recording of some of J.L. Cook's Finest Arrangements
Available from Shellwood Productions



The Very Thought of You
(YouTube Video)



Questions?



Alan & Mike, 2005

Ragtime · Blues · Hot Piano International Researchers

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[Prof. James Dapogny](#) · [Mike Montgomery](#) · [Floyd Levin](#)
[Dr. Robert Pinsker](#) · [Prof. Alan Wallace](#) · [Dr. Philip Pastras](#)
[Michael Hill](#) · [Peter Hanley](#) · [Dr. Edward Berlin](#)
[Millie Gaddini](#) · [Brian Goggin](#) · [Butch Thompson](#)
[Karl Ellison](#) · [Ate van Delden](#) · [Mike Meddings](#)

Selected Web Sources

Ragtime – Blues – Hot Piano

Monrovia Sound Studios

Mr. Mike Meddings, UK

The premier sight for information on both J. Lawrence Cook and Jelly Roll Morton.

QRS Music

Includes a link to a YouTube video on making piano rolls

ASME Landmarks

Great engineering achievements including the QRS Marking Piano

Mechanical Music Digest

A moderated list about mechanical music