

## ***The grand idea***

Some time in 2017, I read a posting on the MMD (Mechanical Music Digest) in which writer Marc Widuch from Munich, Germany proposed holding an international meeting of like-minded people whose interests were in piano rolls. I responded, as did many others in which I applauded the idea, also raising the question of language difficulties at an international conference. In April 2018, I met Marc at a piano roll conference at Stanford University where I was highly impressed by his presentation about Hupfeld. He showed, among many images, a photo of a concert grand Triphonola that was sent to Melbourne. We later chatted, and I was glad to meet someone whose interest was focused on reproducing piano rolls made in Germany, where it all started.

Marc's dream of a global conference about piano rolls became a reality at Leipzig in July 2018, in which he gave all participants a t-shirt imprinted with a design about the conference. This conference resolved to hold a second conference in 2020 with the support of Leipzig, Bern and Stanford Universities. After the conference some of us drove from Leipzig to Munich to visit Marc's establishment and to learn a bit more about this man who had managed to bring people together from so many parts of the world.

## ***Marc Widuch***

I asked Marc to tell me more about his background for the purposes of this article. By now I knew he had long been in business dealing in reproducing pianos and rolls. I knew he had a passion, and seeing his premises in Munich showed he had more than a passion, it was a lifestyle. His collection includes many historic Blüthner pianos, let alone reproducing pianos that come and go as they enter his shop for restoration and later sale. He presently has over 100 pianos and reproducing pianos in his collection.



The Edwardian Welte Cabinet piano sold at auction in Sydney some years ago is now under restoration in Munich. Marc has a huge collection of Welte, Duca and Hupfeld rolls that, like the instruments, come and go. Marc loves the music, the history and he regards piano roll recordings as an important resource for musicians, researchers and for anyone interested in piano music.

Marc's piano shop website is at <https://www.faszinationpianola.de/>, and it is possible to spend hours browsing this site.

In 2020, he formed an association with Daniel Heil, a technician and organ restorer to produce reprint rolls. The result is the reproduction of Welte-Mignon rolls that are like brand new originals. The website offering these rolls is called DMP and is at <https://pianolarollen.de/> (DMP stands for Daniel's-Marc's-Pianolarollen.)

But there is another side to Marc, which I found out when he sent me a brief bio. He is a management consultant, an activity he has been involved with for over 20 years. He offers a coaching service in personal development, and his consultancy website has the logo "Are you making the best of it?" This fits in with the Marc Widuch I have come to know. He is skilled at bringing people together and he knows how to manage meetings without causing offence, all the while encouraging the participants. His consultancy website is at <https://marcwiduch.de/>. Marc was born in 1968, and today lives with his wife and two adult children in Munich, outside the city centre. He is a force that has brought so many people together, including the hundred or more people who attended GPRM2 in Bern.