



Future Focused

The Barn Years

As you learned in our retrospective spring newsletter this year marked the 60th year the DeBence machines have been on display in Franklin and the 30th anniversary of the DeBence Museum. This year marks the beginning of the “next thirty years” and thus we have been laying the groundwork for these future projects.

On January 2nd, Cassady Calder began her duties as museum director. Working to maximize the museum’s resources she has been prioritizing projects with the largest impact. We recently took the first steps towards accreditation through the American Alliance of Museum’s assessment program which provided expert advice on how we can improve the care of our collection. This process will likely take a few years but as we get the ball rolling, we hope there will be significant improvements in the museum’s preservation efforts and interpretive displays.

As you may know Vince Bastecki, a longtime volunteer and docent, has also joined our staff as assistant director. Keeping the museum open six days a week is a difficult task with only two staff members and we are always grateful for our wonderful volunteers who help us in this task. Vince helps with daily operations, managing volunteers, and giving exceptional tours. We are blessed to have such a knowledgeable team.

DeBence Concert Series 2024

This year marked the triumphant return of the DeBence concert series. We would like to thank the Phillips Trust for their generous funding of this free concert and event series. We started the year with a 30th anniversary oral history celebration. In addition, we have hosted an organ recital on the recently donated Lowrey Stardust electronic organ, piano roll concerts, a bass/baritone opera singer, accordionist, classical guitarist, and others.



The Venango Brigade played music of the Civil War

Our volunteer Lydia Hipple has spearheaded the undertaking of monthly piano roll concerts. For these “performances” we pull piano rolls from our archives and play them on our 1922 Wing & Son player piano. These concerts generally follow a theme or particular artist with previous concerts on ‘Summer Dreaming,’ ‘Heroes of the Piano Rolls,’ ‘Liberace’, and ‘spooky music’. If you have

any requests for songs you would like to hear at these concerts or themes you are interested in, please send us an email or a note. We would love to know what music you are intrigued by!

We had our largest audience at Dr. Samuel DePalma's concert of opera, gospel, and popular music in September. Dr. DePalma is an exceptional singer who has performed all around the world. He entertained the crowd with beautiful ballads, stories of his life, and the history of some of the songs. Dr. DePalma was so popular that he agreed to perform a second concert.

Unfortunately, many of these events were planned later in the year than we would have liked owing to the changes in personnel at the start of the year. In the future we plan to put out a concert schedule with the spring newsletter so look out for that next year! However, you can also always find up-to-date event information on our Facebook page. We have already had musicians' express interest for next year!

New Donations and Acquisitions

The museum still accepts donations for the collection although we are particular about what we accept, conscious that we have a limited space and many large instruments. However, this year we accepted a few notable pieces of musical history.

Our friends at QRS Music Technology helped the museum move an 1884 Story & Clark pump organ to the third floor near the modern Story & Clark concert grand piano. We look forward to featuring these machines in 2025.

Our other large addition this year was a 2005 Lowrey Stardust electronic organ. The organ was donated by Anita Adams, Judy Baret, and Carole Spiros in memory of Helen Gibson. The organ can be seen on the second floor and was played by Cecilia Grace Burchill as part of her organ recital.

In addition to the larger instruments, we are grateful for a recent large donation of rare piano rolls, a 1930s radio, a 100-year-old violin, and other traditional instruments.



Cecilia Grace Burchill performing on the Lowrey Stardust Electronic Organ.

As part of our involvement in the American Alliance of Museum's Museum Assessment Program we were gifted dataloggers for environmental monitoring. These will help the museum ensure that we keep our historic collection of instruments at optimal temperature and humidity levels throughout the cold Pennsylvania winters. In addition, through the generosity of the Rees Trust, we were able to purchase storage and conservation supplies for the preservation of many of the instruments.



Classical guitarist Jim McCutcheon showcasing what can be done with a guitar.

Gift Shop

Visitors to our gift shop will notice several new artisans. In addition to LP record bowls, we now have stained glass music notes, jewelry, décor, and more handmade by our talented volunteers. And we finally got the much-requested fridge magnets. This may require a shopping trip before Christmas.

Regular Winter Closure

The museum will close to foot traffic November 1st through March 31st, as per usual. However, if you would like to visit at any time through the winter months, please give us a call and we can arrange a tour for you. We will have some open days through the winter season including Light Up Night on November 23rd, and Franklin on Ice in February. Watch our Facebook page for more information.

Newsletter via email

If you would be interested in receiving the newsletter via email, please let us know by emailing debencemuseum@verizon.net. We are currently working to set up an email newsletter to save us money on printing and postage.

Our Opportunities & Wishlist

We have set up gift list/registries at Amazon and Walmart. These work much like wedding registries. When searching for our wish list/registry you must use our name – DeBence Antique Music World.

If you would like to be part of the next 30 years at DeBence Antique Music World we are always looking for volunteers in all areas; machine repair and mechanics, secretary work, docents, education, woodworking, and more. Whatever your interest or passion we would be happy to have you!

We invite those of you who are not now sustaining members to join us. Members can receive free admission on visits to the museum!

Annual memberships

Individual-\$35	Family-\$50
Edison Club-\$100	Music Box Club-\$250
Nickelodeon-\$500	Calliope Club-\$1,000

Please consider filling in the appropriate blanks and returning your fully tax-deductible donation. Thank you for your past interest and we look forward to hearing from you. You may use Visa or MasterCard if you prefer.

Yes, I'd like to help you out with the building renovation and instrument restorations.

Yes, I'd like to join one of your Annual Clubs! Please note which level.

Name _____ Club Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

Card Type (Circle one) M/C or Visa _____ Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____ Cardholder please sign here _____

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