



About the author.

Just born after World War II, in 1946, have spent a part of my youth in the Belgian Congo at that time with my parents. Around 9 yo, I have been selected to sing in a choral in the church of the Catholic college of Lubumbashi. The rehearsals took place in the chapel where a brand new organ Hammond B2 was just installed with two Leslie's. I was more fascinated by the sound of this instrument than singing in the choral. I really was infected by this Hammond virus at that time, indeed, a long time ago (no anti-virus available so far...).

Later on, back in Belgium, I made my studies in electronic and built by myself an electronic organ (transistorized) as final project to obtain my graduation. Surprisingly, the built-in reverberation unit was already an Hammond spring device.

After my military obligations, I started to work a few months in a research laboratory and afterwards I was hired by Wurlitzer to repair organs in Belgium. I had the great opportunity there to work with Robert De Kers, who was giving organ courses to customers and was allowed to attend those courses. Later on, slightly, I move from technician to Wurlitzer demonstrators and salesman. My wages were not sufficient to live comfortably (just married) so to supplement my incomes, I was repairing organs as a side business. Repairing organs means more Hammond's than others. This situation stood several years, that's where I acquired a certain expertise with many types of organs, tone cabinets, electronic drummers, guitar amps, etc..

The perspectives with Wurlitzer were not encouraging to envisage a real career. To be noted that Hammond had a factory in Antwerp at that time and they were very aggressive on a commercial standpoint contrarily to Wurlitzer. So, I decided to move in the industry and I was hired by Marantz-Europe. By the way, I bought my first Hammond L100PS with Leslie 122 (assembled in Antwerp) just after having left Wurlitzer. I stayed 17 years with Marantz and ended as technical director for the European market. Marantz company was repurchased by the Philips group in 1983 and was assigned as Key-Account manager in telecommunication sector.

During my stay with Marantz, I was forced to travel a lot (Far-East, USA, Europe, Africa, Middle-East..) and unfortunately had not enough time to play organ on a regular basis. Business first, no other alternative !

Since several years, travelling abroad was declining and the Hammond virus, that was still in sleepiness, reappeared again.

I had the great opportunity to meet Alain Kahn who is also seriously infected by the Hammond virus as well and since this meeting, we are in permanent contact, exchanging ideas, drawings, etc..

On top of the L100PS, I'm the proud owner of one B3, one C3 with Leslie's 122 and other 'plastic' keyboards. Recently, I bought one X-66 that was totally dead. He took me about one year to restore it.

Last year, I developed and produced a 50/60 Hz converter, called Pico-Two. Quartz driven through a PIC device, with the possibility to increase or decrease the tuning in a ratio of +/- 1%. One 4-digits display exhibits the true frequency from the A '440 Hz' taken out of the tone-wheel generator. Pico-Two was initially developed for B3, C3 and A-100 series.

Other ideas are still cooking and no doubt that I'll spend all my time in restoring Hammond's after my retirement scheduled in the next few years. More interested in restoring organs than repairing.

Daniel Vigin