

SofI

(Spirit of Independence)

A one-of-a-kind work. A beautifully balanced musical, mechanical, and architectural work of art, of which there will be— only one. SofI was conceived and designed by Craig Brougner from the standpoint of three criteria: Timeless physical beauty, unquestioned performance, and extraordinary reliability. Because of her beauty and inspiring voice, she will be treasured, as with the large instruments once commercially manufactured and today residing mostly in the largest private collections.

SofI is a feature attraction among all the American built orchestrions in history. She is the most spectacular, self-contained pneumatic orchestrion of American design ever built. Her case is solid American walnut in American Federal architecture. Her art glass cornice, a design by Brian Lewis, will become one of the finer examples of American glass art. The theme, of course, is a Sunday concert in the park. A 100% Americana pastime, whose freedom and independence was so treasured by our forebears and memorialized in this tribute.

This orchestrion sets a new standard for mechanical orchestra music. The fast response achieved by simple design changes in old-fashioned pneumatic technology has created a completely new standard of performance. The enormous maintenance requirements common to all large orchestrions has been eliminated, also the time and expense required to tune its instruments, to no more than the time required to tune a simple “5 rank” organ. She is a joy to own.

The interior cabinets were designed to be beautiful and interesting, allowing the viewer to watch her play. The swell shutters are of 3/8" thick polycarbonate; a dense, bulletproof plastic having 6 discrete positions and able to vastly expand the dynamics and visual impact of this instrument.

The pipes selected were specially voiced to play together. Their physical arrangement is not accidental. The arrangement is not only beautiful, but designed to enhance the power and purity of tone while eliminating tonal interference common to some instruments of this nature.

SofI has 10 ranks of pipes plus an unused preset stop that has never been equipped, so she is still expandable. With only 252 pipes, her melody and tonal color is equivalent to better than a 20 rank organ. She achieves this amazing command by means of her orchestra scale, by playing all of her melody (solo) section on just a 24 note compass. This does not limit her, musically, but just the opposite, actually— it increases her tonal density by a factor of about 3 times, and widens her accompaniment range, creating a larger counter-melody and bass section. It isn't unusual to have 50 or more pipes playing at any given moment. That is equivalent to a theater organ, and why SofI sounds so extraordinary for her size.

Beyond this is another advantage. Her percussion is so quick and responsive, easily capturing 32nd notes, that drum combinations and patterns can be created that would take several percussionists to accomplish. While few songs require it, novelty songs and special effects are

available, now the potential is there.

Sofl will be sold with her music and is presently valued at **\$325,000**. As her repertoire increases, her value and price will also increase. She plays “O” rolls, too, and can actually record “O” rolls into a computer MIDI program, from whence they can be enlarged upon and arranged to take more advantage of this instrument’s power. But MIDI music files are the best source of unarranged music. With these features, music sources will be practically unlimited.

She comes with an interactive control box as well, allowing the use of mechanical sound effects like a train whistle and a large bell— like might be found on a steam engine or a river boat. There is also a bird whistle and a nest of bells, but all of the other percussions can be played from this same box, as well as lighting effects. The solo instruments and ranks can be switched in or out as desired, overriding the roll or MIDI program at any time. You can be your own director.

Musical arrangements are easier, hence cheaper to make, and musicians acquainted with arranging for other orchestrions with all their typical limitations, delays, and requirements, are going to appreciate Sofl. She also has an outboard indicator box which sits at the composition keyboard and can be played in real time as notes, functions, and presets are switched on and off. So if you own her and fell like doing so, you can arrange your own music, right on your own computer and Sofl will play it back with the next click of the mouse.

It is hard to imagine a feature this instrument doesn’t have, including a very well documented schematic set and instruction manual. Price does not include shipping and setup.