

# ORGANS IN THE AZOREAN ARCHIPELAGO

by  
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## ABSTRACT

In search of an organ to play in the Azores, the writer describes the wealth of instruments he encountered — some from Lisbon, some built locally and one, a piano-organ, imported from England. Those from Lisbon include the magnificent Fontanes organ at the Igreja São José, Ponta Delgada and several built by António Xavier Machado e Cerveira in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. One of the locally made instruments is the work of Manoel (sic) de Serpa da Silva of Faial from the end of the 19th century. The piano-organ is the work of the London piano firm Collard and Collard, and dates from the 1830s. This instrument would appear to be unique. At the time of writing all of these organs were in need of restoration, to a lesser or greater extent, but with improved prospects for restoration the writer hopes to be able to give a recital at some future date.

## RESUMO

A procura de um órgão para tocar nos Açores, o autor descreve a riqueza de instrumentos com que deparou — alguns provenientes de Lisboa, outros construídos localmente e ainda um outro, um piano-órgão, importado de Inglaterra. Entre os provenientes de Lisboa, inclui-se o magnífico órgão Fontanes da igreja de S. José, em Ponta Delgada, e vários outros construídos por António Xavier Machado e Cerveira nos finais do século XVIII e princípios do século XIX. Entre os instrumentos fabricados localmente encontra-se um trabalho de Manoel de Serpa da Silva, do Faial, dos finais do séc. XIX. O piano-órgão é um trabalho da firma de pianos Londrina Collard e Collard e data da década de 1830. Este instrumento parece ser único. Na altura em que estas linhas foram escritas, todos estes órgãos necessitavam de restaurações, em maior ou menor escala. Havendo boas perspectivas de estas serem realizadas, o autor espera vir a dar um recital futuramente.

## *Introduction*

**W**HEN my work for the British Council brought me to Ponta Delgada early in 1985, I was about to give an organ recital of music by J. S. Bach in Lisbon. On an earlier visit to Terceira I had been told how infrequent concerts are in the Azores. With these two thoughts at the back of my mind, it seemed a good idea to look into the possibility

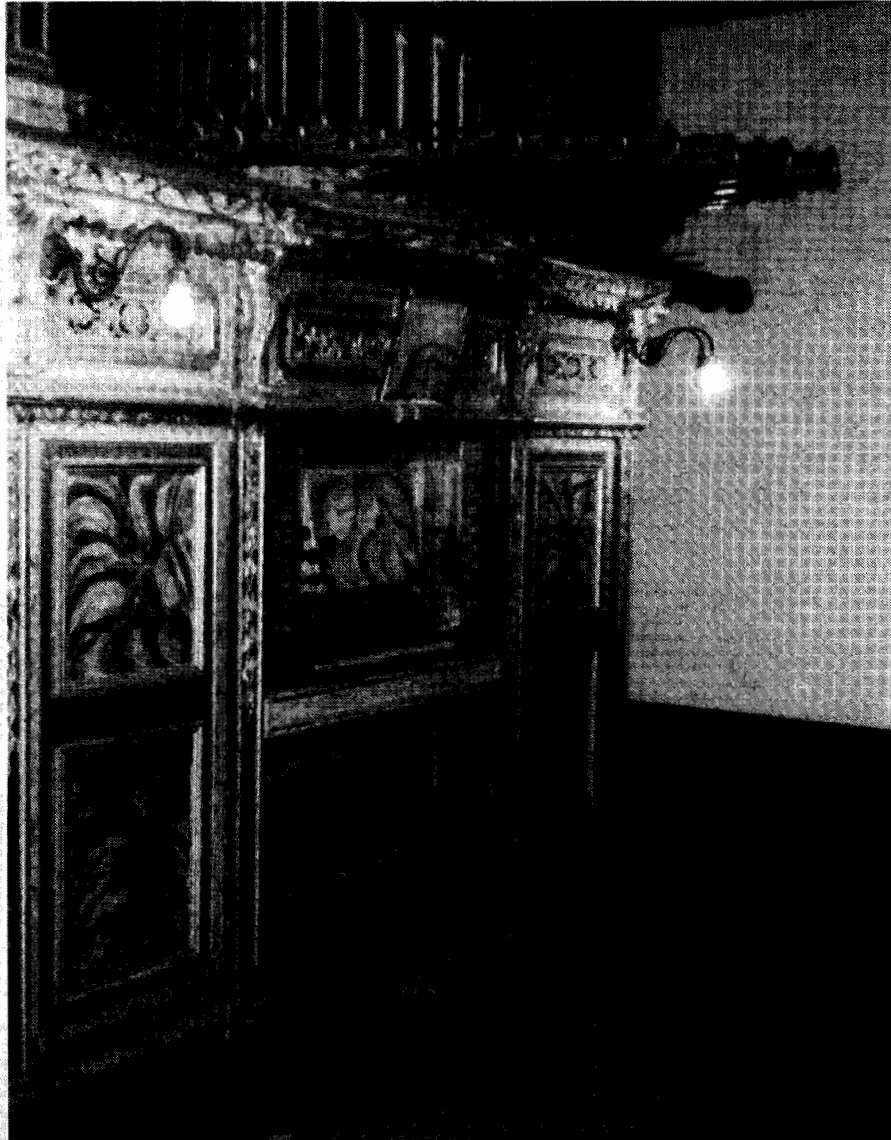
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of giving a recital also in Ponta Delgada. In this way began a long adventure of discovery as I began to search for a suitable venue. In my naivety I looked for an organ of approximately the kind I was used to — with two (or more) manuals (keyboards) each of four-and-a-half octaves (from bottom C to top g<sup>'''</sup>) and a pedal board of two-and-a-half octaves (bottom C to f<sup>'</sup>) — such as one would need to play any of Bach's music. It perhaps comes as no surprise to learn that I was out of luck. Organs there were, certainly, but not like anything I knew. A whole new world lay before me waiting to be explored. This article, then, sets out to describe the instruments I found during this and a subsequent visit the following year. It is not a complete survey of all organs in the Archipelago but rather an attempt to draw a picture from those I have seen in various cities, towns and villages on the islands of São Miguel, Terceira, Faial and Pico. For the sake of convenience I shall divide them into three groups — those imported from Lisbon, those made within the Archipelago and lastly an apparently unique piano-organ imported from London.

### 1. *Organs imported from Lisbon*

By far the greatest number of organs in the Azores (8 of the 12 I have examined in detail) were built by Joaquim António Peres Fontanes or António Xavier Machado e Cerveira, the two major Lisbon organ builders in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth, and jointly responsible for the re-building of the six organs at the Basilica of the Palace at Mafra in 1806/7. The fact that the proportion of Lisbon-built organs is so great is not as obvious as it might at first seem. In Tenerife, for example, the great majority of organs are of German origin, mainly from Hamburg<sup>1</sup>; similarly, virtually all 19th-century pianos still present in Ponta Delgada are not of Portuguese but French or English origin<sup>2</sup>. The predominance, therefore, of Lisbon-built organs seems to indicate the ready availability and, I would suggest, suitability of Fontanes and Machado e Cerveira organs at this period — suitable in that they are free-standing, not built into the fabric of the church, which makes the reconstruction of them *in situ* straightforward, and in that (particularly in the case of Machado e Cerveira) they could be tailor-made to fit the size and wealth of the church.



THE FONTANES ORGAN AT THE IGREJA SÃO JOSÉ, PONTA DELGADA

To give you an idea of the kind of instrument we are talking about (and how different it is from what I was accustomed to), I would like to describe in some detail the finest of the instruments I have seen, the Fontanes organ in the Igreja São José, Ponta Delgada. Built in Lisbon

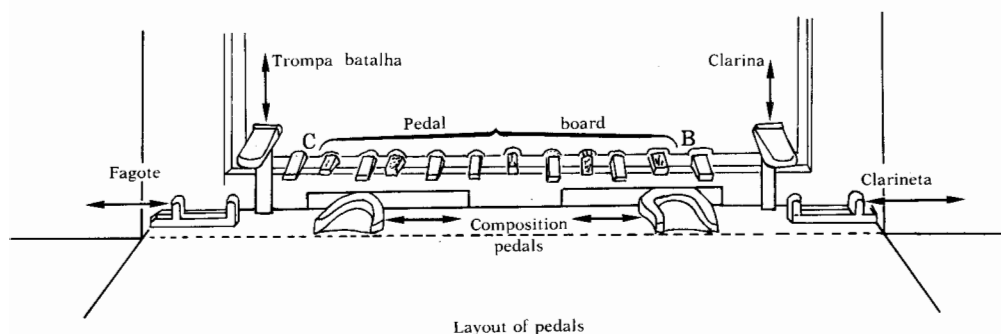
in 1797, it has a single manual of four-and-a-half octaves (C to g<sup>'''</sup>) and, exceptionally among the organs of this period, 12 pedals (in semitones C to B). The manual is “halved” between middle c’ and c#’ — that is to say, the notes up to middle c’ operate in conjunction with one set of stops placed to the left of the manual, while the notes from c#’ upwards operate with a separate set placed to the right. The purpose of this “halving”, a feature typical of Iberian organs, is to bring about the effect of *meio registo*, in which the treble plays a solo (e.g. in imitation of a trumpet) accompanied by a quieter bass, or more rarely with a solo in the bass and accompaniment in the treble. The pedal notes are “coupled” to the bottom 12 notes of the manual, in other words these bottom notes can be played either by the hands on the manual or the feet on the pedals. There are no separate stops for the pedals. Both treble and bass have a set of 12 stops, in many cases the treble being simply an upward continuation of the bass. They are laid out as follows: —

<i>Left (bass)</i>	<i>Right (treble)</i>
Trompa real	Trombeta real
Oitava real	Oitava real
Dozena	Dozena
Flauta de 6 tapada	Flauta em 6
Quinzena	Quinzena
Dezanova e 22a	Mistura
Mistura	Cornetta inglesa
Simbala	Flauta traveça
Flautado de 12 tapado	Voz humana
Flautado [de] 12 aberto	Flautado de 12 aberto
Trompa batalha	Clarina
Fagote	Clarinetta

The stops may be divided into three types — *fundos* (diapasons) such as the *Flautado de 12 aberto* with a plain flute or “churchlike” tone<sup>3</sup>, *cheios* (mutations) such as the *Mistura*, which give brightness, and *palhetas* (reeds) such as the *Trompa*, *Fagote* and *Clarinetta* stops. Among the mutations it is worth drawing attention to the *Cornetta inglesa*, a solo stop particularly popular in England and magnificently exploited by 18th-century English composers (e.g. John Stanley), which was much admired and used in the Iberian peninsula. As for the reeds, the *Clarina* (treble) and *Trompa batalha* (bass) form a handsome set of pipes “en chamade” (that is to say projecting *horizontally* from the case), visible from the nave below as a series of trumpets pointing forwards

and on either side. This feature, exclusive to the Iberian organ, is used either for solo effect or to conjure up the sound of war in the 17th-century pieces known as *batalhas*.

An additional feature of this organ are the various devices which enable the organist to change registration (stops or stop combinations) without taking the hands off the keyboard. To begin with there are three pairs of pedals. The two outer pairs are solo pedal "pistons", that is they draw out single stops. The pair furthest to left and right operate by means of a horizontal movement and draw the *Fagote* and *Clarinetta* respectively. The next pair work vertically, drawing the *Trompa batalha*, left and *Clarina*, right. The central pair, placed beneath the pedal-board, are "composition pedals". These are linked to the mutation and reed stops such that these stops will only sound if the pedal is in the "on" position, thus allowing the organist to pre-set the stops and bring them into play (on) or not (off) as appropriate. This allows for sudden changes of dynamic or timbre, and effects such as echo. The left pedal is linked to the bass stops, the right to the treble.



As well as these devices, there is a knob to the right of the keyboard, which operates the *Cornetta inglesa*.

As may be imagined with so large an instrument the bellows needed are massive. Indeed there are three large bellows at the rear of the instrument, which work by pulling in turn three ropes placed round a great wheel for each.

In addition to the organ at the Igreja São José, Ponta Delgada, Fontanes built organs for other churches. One of particular magnificence, donated by D. Maria I, used to exist in the Cathedral of Angra do Heroísmo. Having survived the earthquake of 1980, it was destroyed in the fire that struck in 1983. Another still exists in the Igreja

das Angústias, Horta. Built in 1805, it is slightly smaller, with 10 stops each treble and bass. Unfortunately, it is very poor condition, effectively beyond repair.

To turn to the Machado e Cerveira organs, six of those I have seen are his work, built over a period of 35 years. They are numbered and dated, and are to be found as follows: —

- No. 40 (1793) — Igreja Matriz (Santa Cruz), Praia da Vitória.
- No. 66 (1804) — Igreja Matriz, Lajes do Pico
- No. 78 (1814) — Igreja Matriz (São Salvador), Horta.
- No. 81 (1815) — Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Conceição, Angra do Heroísmo.
- No. 102 (1828) — Igreja Matriz (São Sebastião), Ponta Delgada
- No. 104 (1828) — Igreja de Santo André (Museu Carlos Machado), Ponta Delgada.

I shall describe them briefly in pairs<sup>4</sup>. Nos. 40 and 66 have a manual of only four octaves and a tone (C to d<sup>'''</sup>), likewise halved at middle c'/c#'. No. 40 has 8 stops bass and treble, No. 66 only 4 each. Both lack reeds "en chamade". In both instruments there are just two composition pedals, which operate jointly, so that as the left pedal rises, the right falls, and vice versa. They operate throughout the range. Both the Praia da Vitória and Lajes do Pico organs are basically in good condition, needing only tuning, patching up leaks in the bellows and minor repairs to be in good working order.

Nos. 78 and 81 are almost identical, with the slightly larger (halved) range of four octaves and a third (C to e<sup>'''</sup>). Each has 9 stops bass and treble, including reeds "en chamade" (*Trompa batalha* bass and *Clarim* treble), though unfortunately they have been removed from the Horta instrument. Once again these organs have two combination pedals, but this time not linked; the left works in conjunction with the bass mutations and reeds, the right with the treble. The Angra instrument needs general restoration but is fundamentally sound; the Horta instrument has generally been tampered with and may be beyond repair.

Nos. 102 and 104 have the full (halved) four octaves and a fifth (C to g<sup>'''</sup>) range. No. 102 is a large instrument with 9 (plus 2 dummy) stops for the bass and 11 for the treble; No. 104 is much smaller with 6 and 6. In addition both organs have two pedal notes to the left of the composition pedals. These notes — a bottom D and A — are each produced by a pair of stopped wooden pipes, tuned to slightly different pitches, with the result that they produce "beats". These *tambor* or

“drum” notes are used, like the reeds “en chamade” for the martial *batalhas*. The composition pedals themselves (3 for No. 102, 2 for No. 104) work with more specific combinations of stops than on the earlier instruments. The Matriz, Ponta Delgada, organ has been repaired but still needs major overhauling, and the rather noisy electric motor for the bellows needs replacing; the Igreja Santo André organ needs only minor repairs and tuning.

## 2. Organs built in the Azores

Three of the organs I have seen were built in the Azores — in the Igreja São Pedro, Ponta Delgada, the Igreja Matriz (São Jorge), Nordeste and the church of Fazenda just outside Nordeste.

The organ of São Pedro, Ponta Delgada was constructed by João Nicolau Ferreira of Ponta Delgada in 1858. It has the full (halved) 4 octaves and a fifth range, 9 stops each bass and treble and two composition pedals, like Machado e Cerveira’s organs 78 and 81. Indeed the whole design suggests that Machado e Cerveira’s organs served as a model for this one. I was told that this instrument had been restored in 1985 while the church was itself undergoing repair. However, when I visited it the following year a lot more work was needed — repairs to the bellows, tuning and general overhauling to the horizontal reeds.

The organ at Nordeste, built by “Manoel de Serpa da Silva / Construtor de órgãos / 25 - Rua de D. Pedro IV - 25 / Fayal — Açores / 1897” is the largest organ I saw. It has a range of 5 octaves (C to c<sup>'''</sup>) on the single manual and a pedal-board with a range of 2 octaves and a tone (C to d<sup>'</sup>). The stops are as follows: —

<i>Stop Diapason</i> — 8' (c'-c <sup>'''</sup> )	<i>Simbal</i> — (C-c <sup>'''</sup> )
<i>Stop Diapason</i> — 8' (C-b)	<i>Mixture</i> — (c-c <sup>'''</sup> )
<i>Viola da Gamba</i> — 8' (C-c <sup>'''</sup> )	<i>Twelfth</i> — 2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> (C-c <sup>'''</sup> )
<i>Principal</i> — 4' (C-c <sup>'''</sup> )	<i>Fifteenth</i> — (C-c <sup>'''</sup> )
<i>Clari]on</i> — 4' (c'-c <sup>'''</sup> )	<i>Flauto Traverso</i> — (C-c <sup>'''</sup> )
<i>Trumpet</i> — 4' (C-b)	<i>Subbass</i> — 16' (C-d <sup>'</sup> ) (PEDALS)
<i>Open Diapason</i> — 8' (C-c <sup>'''</sup> )	<i>Bombarda</i> — NON-FUNCTIONING
<i>Flute Dolce</i> — 8' (C-c <sup>'''</sup> )	<i>Tremolo</i> — affects whole range

(The Clari]on and Trumpet are “en chamade”.)

In addition to these stops there are four unlabelled knobs placed horizontally above the manual, which operate a set of harmonium reeds. The inner pair are stops for bass (left) and treble (right) at pitch, the outer pair likewise but sounding an octave higher. There is a swell-pedal, which opens and closes the shutters of the box in which all but the pipes “en chamade” and the harmonium reeds are placed. There are also combination pedals, the leftmost operating the harmonium reeds.

This instrument is for various reasons rather curious: —

- i) Its range of 5 octaves is greater not only than other Portuguese organs but than other organs in general;
- ii) The fact that harmonium reeds are included as well as the organ pipes — the harmonium part of the instrument can be played either alone or simultaneously with the organ part;
- iii) While most stops operate throughout the range, the *Stop Diapason*, the *Trumpet/Clarion* and the harmonium reeds are halved at *b/c'* (not *c'/c#'*), thus following the practice for harmoniums rather than organs;
- iv) The names of the stops are in English, yet the organ possesses the exclusively Iberian reeds “en chamade” (the *Trumpet* and *Clarion* stops);
- v) The pedal board has only one stop and no “couplers” to link the manual stops to it — the lack of provision of stops for the pedals would appear to defeat the object of having a more extended pedal board;
- vi) The swell-pedal, as we have seen, is not normally an Iberian feature;
- vii) The general scale of the instrument would seem to demand a second manual, but there is only one.

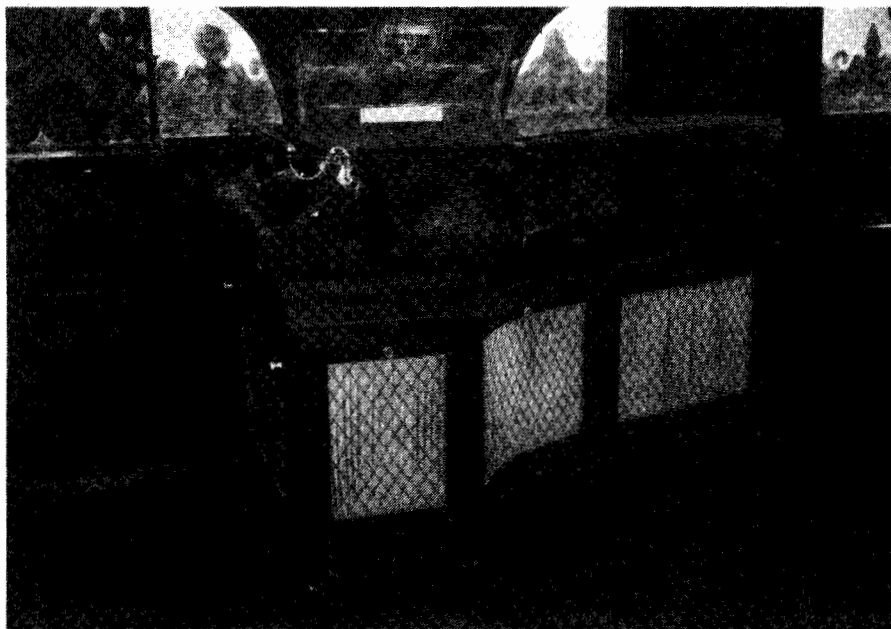
Altogether this organ is a curious hybrid of organ and harmonium, of Portuguese and English, of ancient and of modern. It is difficult to see exactly what purpose the builder had in mind in designing it like this. This instrument is basically in good condition still — out of tune, rather dusty and with a few minor mechanical faults but no fundamental problems.

The little organ at Fazenda is of modern construction, and is severely lacking. Only three of its five stops are in proper working order,

and two of these are simply bass and treble sections of the same rank of pipes. It is probably adequate for simple choir accompaniment but nothing more elaborate.

### 3. *The "Patent Repeater" Piano-organ*

We come finally to the instrument in the Convento de Nossa Senhora da Esperança, Ponta Delgada. This instrument is a cross



"PATENT REPEATER" PIANO-ORGAN (GENERAL VIEW)

between a grand piano and a pipe organ, the organ case being placed beneath the piano, where otherwise would be an empty space between the three legs. The specification is as follows: —

"Patent Repeater / Collard & Collard / Late Clementi, Collard & Collard / London"

Dimensions: 209 × 122 × 132 cm.

Range: F' to g<sup>'''</sup> (but top g<sup>'''</sup> dummy)

*Pianoforte section:* —  
 English mechanism  
 Bridge divided  
 Single and double strings  
 Without pedals  
 Serial No. 7369

*Organ section*

Left

2 *Principal* — 4' (C# f#c''')  
 1 [*Bourdon*] — 8' (C# c')

Right

3 [flute] — 8' (c# f#''')  
 2 *Open Diapason* — 8' (c# f#''')  
 1 [*Lieblich Gedackt*] — 8' (c# f#''')

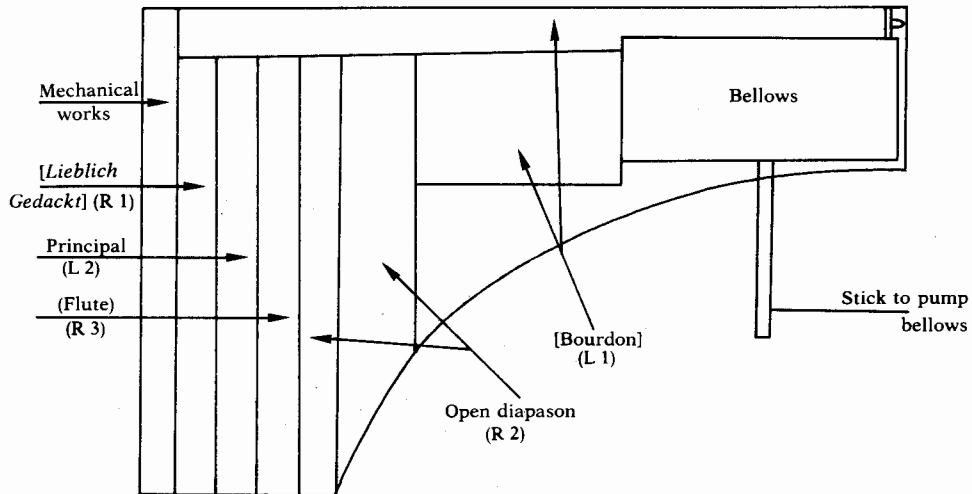
The instrument dates from the 1830s (Muzio Clementi gave up his partnership with the brothers Frederick William and William Frederick Collard in 1830) and the term “Patent Repeater” refers to the pianoforte action. At this period many piano-makers were seeking techniques to improve the touch and repetition of notes in order to compete with the “double escapement” mechanism of the French maker Sébastien Erard. For commercial reasons the maker often indicated such improvements to their own instruments on the name board, as in this case. The Lisbon Instrumental Museum possesses an early pianoforte made by J. H. Traummann of London also with the indication “Repeater”<sup>5</sup>. Collard and Collard were one of the most important 19th-century pianoforte makers and the Museu Carlos Machado, Ponta Delgada, possesses a fine concert grand piano made by them later in the century<sup>6</sup>.

To turn to the organ section, it is quite small, with just 5 stops, placed just below the keyboard, two on the left, three on the right. As can be seen from the specification, the range of the stops is in all cases less than the range of the pianoforte. Only the *Principal* operates in both bass and treble — all others operating only below or above the middle c'/c#' halving point. The smallness of the organ is an inevitable consequence of the limited space available in the case. By opening the panels and looking at the interior we see 5 ranks of upright metal pipes and a set of closed wooden pipes<sup>7</sup>, some upright and some laid flat along the long side of the case. These wooden pipes belong to the [*Bourdon*] (left 1), and the pipes for the lowest notes, being too long to fit vertically within the case, have to be laid flat. Of the 5 ranks of metal pipes the 1st (front) rank has closed pipes and belongs to the [*Lieblich*

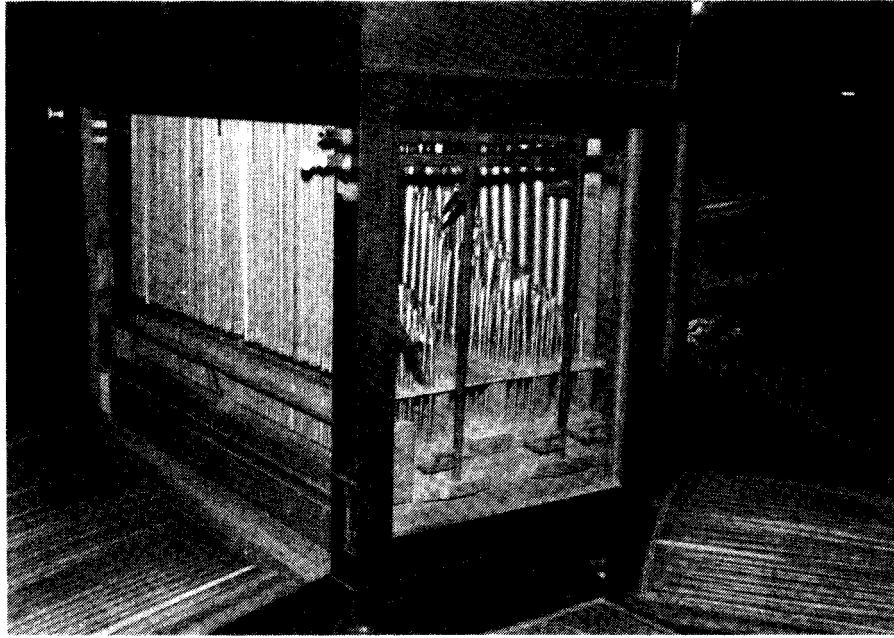


"PATENT REPEATER" (SIDE VIEW WITH PANELS OPEN)

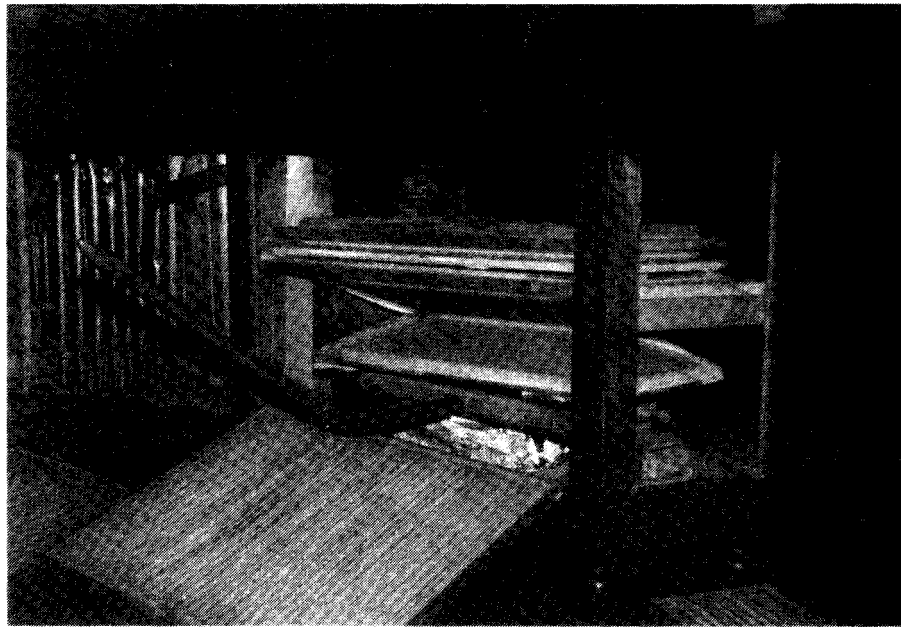
*Gedackt*] (right 1), the 2nd (open) belongs to the *Principal* (left 2), the 3rd (open) to the flute (right 3), the 4th and 5th (open) to the *Open Diapason* (right 2). At the back are the bellows, operated by a stick (now broken) in the side.



Plan of chest



"PATENT REPEATER" (DETAIL SHOWING STOPS, CONNECTING RODS, SLIDERS AND FRONT RANKS OF PIPES)



"PATENT REPEATER" (DETAIL OF BELLOWS)

Immediately to the left of the keyboard there is a knob which can be pulled forward or pushed back. In the back position, only the organ will function; in the forward position the piano will sound, alone if the bellows are not pumped, or simultaneously with the organ if the bellows *are* pumped.

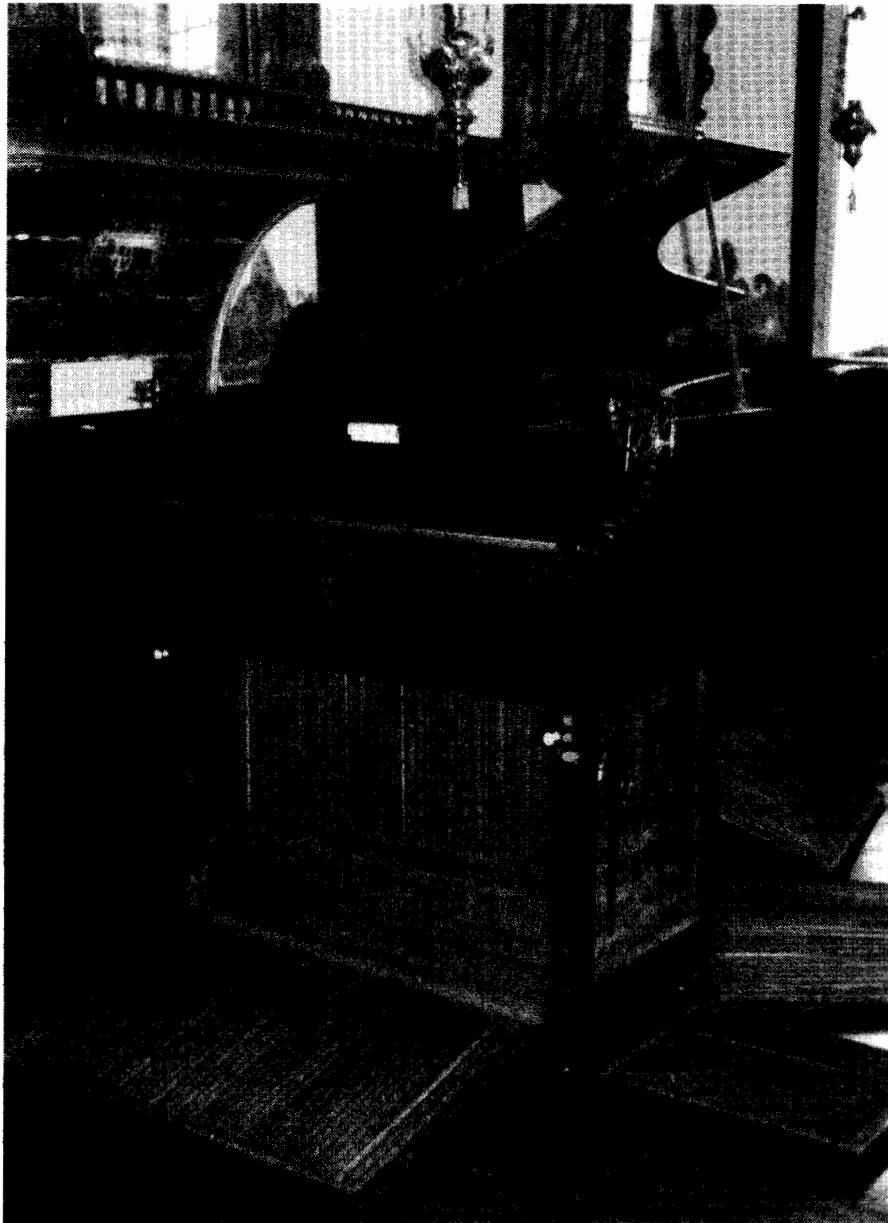
Although a number of hybrid piano-organs were constructed during the late 18th and 19th centuries, my enquiries and research have led me to the conclusion that the Ponta Delgada instrument is probably the only surviving one made by Collard and Collard. It seems to be a matter of some importance, therefore, that it be restored. The piano part needs considerable work but is fundamentally sound, the organ part is in better condition and needs relatively minor attention.

### *Conclusion*

There are many other organs in the Azores — to my knowledge, on São Miguel there is one in working order at the Ajuda Church, Bretanha, the only other with an electric blower, one at the Matriz, Ribeira Grande, and another in Lagoa. In Angra do Heroísmo several other churches had organs prior to the 1980 earthquake. Those in the Convento de São Francisco (now Angra Museum) and the Convento de São Gonçalo have been dismantled; the Igreja do Colégio and Igreja das Necessidades are also said to possess them, but the former church was being rebuilt at the time of my last visit and the latter has been closed for some years, so I cannot confirm the situation there; the Cathedral also had a second smaller organ which was destroyed in the fire.

None of the organs I have seen in the Archipelago are in proper working order, yet several need only relatively minor repairs and the installation of *good* electric blowers to be fully usable. I understand that one, at least, the Fontanes organ at the Igreja São José, Ponta Delgada, is being restored. It would not need an enormous sum to restore several others.

My journey of adventure began as a desire to give an organ recital in Ponta Delgada. It led to the discovery of a wealth of instruments such as I had never seen before, and from there to an equally rich repertoire of music written for instruments of this kind. Now it has returned full circle — with a wonderful organ being restored and a new repertoire learnt, how long before I shall give my recital?



"PATENT REPEATER" (FRONT VIEW WITH PANELS OPEN)

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Álvarez, R.: *Antiguos órganos alemanes en Tenerife (Siglos XVII al XIX)*; separata de la Revista de Musicología, Vol. IX, No. 2, Madrid, 1986. I am indebted to Dr. Macario Santiago Kastner for drawing my attention to this article.

<sup>2</sup> Cymbron, L.: *O piano e a sociedade açoriana oitocentista: subsídios para um estudo organológico em Ponta Delgada*; paper presented at the IV Encontro Nacional de Musicologia, Lisbon, 1986; publ. in Associação Portuguesa de Educação Musical, Boletim 52, pp. 83-85.

<sup>3</sup> The "12" refers to the length and therefore pitch of the pipes, measured in *palmas*. A rank of pipes of 12 *palmas* sounds at normal pitch (i.e. 8 feet in English measurements), one of 6 *palmas* an octave higher (i.e. 4').

<sup>4</sup> For fuller specifications of these instruments see my paper *Some organs of the Azores*, prepared for the IV Encontro Nacional de Musicologia, Lisbon, 1986; publ. in APEM Boletim 52, pp. 86-90.

<sup>5</sup> I am again indebted to Dr. Kastner for information about the repeater action and this instrument in the Lisbon Instrumental Museum.

<sup>6</sup> See Luísa Cymbron's paper (*op. cit.*) for further information on 19th-century pianos in Ponta Delgada.

<sup>7</sup> Closed (or stopped) pipes sound one octave lower than open pipes of the same length.