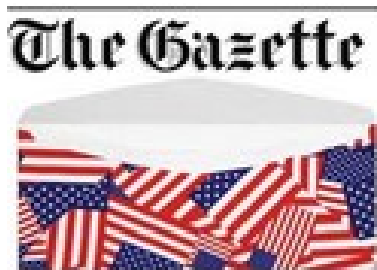


<http://lyc-george-sand-la-chatre.tice.ac-orleans-tours.fr/eva/spip.php?article1488>



# The puzzling "serinette"

- Archives du Blog - Espace international - The English Gazette -



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Wednesday, January 9th, we visited la Cité de la Musique in Paris. In addition to the Django Reinhardt periodic exhibit, we admired the impressive permanent collection of music instruments, which made us travel through time and all around the world.

We not only saw richly decorated samples of traditional instruments such as the viola, the guitar, drum (or their exotic and oriental equivalents), we also discovered strange instruments, like the "Octobass", (a three meter high doublebass) and the "serinette", a sort of model organ which was used to teach birds how to sing.

[<http://lyc-george-sand-la-chatre.tice.ac-orleans-tours.fr/eva/sites/lyc-george-sand-la-chatre/local/cache-vignettes/L195xH259/imagesqtbnAN6528-e8d6d.jpg>]

## This instrument, unlikely and absurd, puzzled me.

But unfortunately, whereas explanatory notes were available for most of the instruments on displays, I never found any for the "serinette". So, I have done some research in order to know a little bit more about this uncanny object.

It was created approximately around the XVIIIth century. Its name comes from the French word "serin", which designates a songbird. A cross between the music-box and the organ, the "serinette" is a mechanical instrument, which plays a melody stamped on a perforated paper roll. Its high-pitched whistle-like sound teaches the tame birds how to sing.

If this instrument catches your fancy, here is a couple of links to listen to "serinette"'s melodies :

[Serinette Par les2decoppet](#)

(Propriété du Musée Baud de L'Auberson/Suisse, ce modèle-ci a été fabriqué à Mirecourt dans les Vosges au 18ème siècle. C'est d'ailleurs la plus ancienne pièce que le musée Baud possède.)

[Les Gets - Musée de la Musique Mécanique - Serinette présentée par Audrey Defrasne](#)

[[http://lyc-george-sand-la-chatre.tice.ac-orleans-tours.fr/eva/sites/lyc-george-sand-la-chatre/local/cache-vignettes/L345xH400/Sans\\_titre\\_1-21-60cd9.jpg](http://lyc-george-sand-la-chatre.tice.ac-orleans-tours.fr/eva/sites/lyc-george-sand-la-chatre/local/cache-vignettes/L345xH400/Sans_titre_1-21-60cd9.jpg)] **La Serinette, tableau de Chardin (1751) Musée du Louvre** A l'aide d'une "serinette", le personnage féminin apprend à chanter à un oiseau en cage.