



a million jukeboxes
a million first dances

A history of rock 'n' Rowe.

1909

The National Automatic Music Co., with only \$200 in working capital, began leasing and building automatic electrical player pianos. The company's manufacturing division, National Piano Manufacturing Co., operated as a separate entity.

Early 20th century player pianos, which played music without the need for a human pianist, were controlled by mechanical or pneumatic means; today they are electronic. They were popular in the early 1900s, around the same time the acoustic gramophone became fashionable. For its player piano, National held two patents for a "selecting device" that allowed the patron to select any desired music roll in the magazine to play. It had only eight selections from which to choose.

From the start, National Automatic Music was based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the boyhood home of President Gerald R. Ford Jr.

1922

The player piano maker moved into a facility located at 1500 Union Avenue, a site previously occupied by a manufacturer of horse-drawn hearses, where it has been building jukeboxes ever since.

1925

National Automatic Music, which operated some 4,200 player pianos, and National Piano Manufacturer merged their business activities to form the Automatic Musical Instrument Co., and the newly created AMI would become an enduring symbol of jukebox Americana. AMI acquired a record-changing mechanism from inventor B.C. Kenyon. The apparatus allowed the factory to make use of the then-modern 78-RPM low-fi disc, the first electrically recorded music technology, and enter the budding jukebox market, which would soon make player pianos obsolete.

At the same time, an American inventor named William Rowe devised a cigarette vending machine that began a trend toward selling higher-priced merchandise in the emerging automatic merchandising sector. Before the Rowe cigarette machine, merchandise venders were primarily limited to dispensing penny gum and candy.

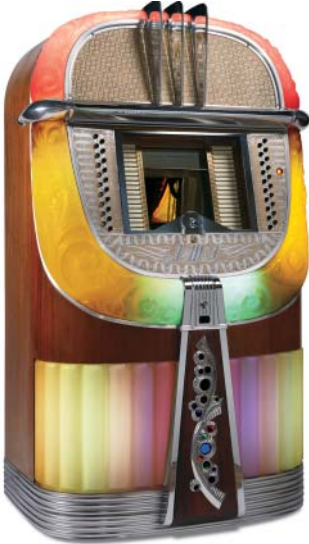


1936 Top Flight

The Top Flight utilized newly developed Bass Reflex loud-speaker system. Also, the unique selector system allowed the patron to place his nickel in the individual slot for his song. Twenty selections and twenty slots. A patron could not press the wrong button and hear the wrong song!

1940s

The jukebox industry of which Rowe is a significant part got underway in earnest during the post-Depression era. Juke joints – the colloquial term for an informal establishment featuring blues music, dancing and alcoholic drinks – sprang up everywhere. High production volume at the Grand Rapids jukebox plant continued until the Second World War.



1940 – 1945

Not unlike many other American industrial factories, Rowe suspended production to retool for the war effort from 1940 until 1945.

The postwar years saw a nation hungry for entertainment, and the AMI factory ran at full capacity producing 100 machines per day for 245 working days annually to feed that appetite. This boom lasted several years, during which time the jukebox industry benefited from – and contributed to – a surge of new audio technology.

1946 Model A

This was the first model manufactured after WW II. The Model A was known as the “Mother of Plastic” because of its opalescent plastics and colored gemstones. The Model A was also the first jukebox to play both sides of every record. It held 20 78-rpm discs and offered patrons 40 selections.

1950s

The modern jukebox emerged in the late 1940s and enjoyed explosive growth in the following decade as the hi-fi vinyl micro-groove 45-RPM record, replacing 78-RPM technology, became the dominant recorded music format. The popular culture period defined by malt shops and bobby soxers fueled the demand for inexpensive entertainment. Before artists had the opportunity to promote their new recordings to the public on the radio, the jukebox was the best way for the music industry to reach out to record-buying patrons. Any establishment with a jukebox was the best place for music lovers to hear their favorite artists’ new recordings. And while jukeboxes gave the public a method to hear the hot new songs, the designs developed by the engineers of Rowe also created a stylish look for the jukebox.

The vending machine business William Rowe founded united with AMI during a period of large-scale mergers and acquisitions that was a part of the postwar full-line vending revolution. The Automatic Canteen Co., a nationwide vending operation undergoing rapid expansion, acquired Rowe Manufacturing Co. Inc. in the mid-1950s



1951 Model D

Featuring many innovations, the Model D was the first AMI box to play 78 and 45-rpm discs. It was available in two models – one played 40 discs and one played 80 discs. The D-40 was available in September 1951 and the D-80 followed in October. Both featured a new sound system with separate manual bass and treble controls. AMI moved the title strips to be at eye level. Also, the internal lights were fluorescent tubes to reduce heat.



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1957 Model H

45-rpm jukebox that reflected the style of the day. Operators could adjust the mechanism to play 100, 120 or 200 selections. The amplifier produced a whopping 22 watts.

1959

Automatic Canteen Co. bought AMI, merging the two units into a manufacturing subsidiary called Rowe AC Services. Canteen, which redirected its focus on foodservice, eventually divested the manufacturing division and Rowe continued to build jukeboxes under the Rowe/AMI name, along with full-line vending machines.



1962 Continental 2

The Continental 2 jukebox featured "Stereo - Round" sound and played both 45 and 33 rpm discs. This jukebox played 200 selections from 100 discs. The Continental (1961) and Continental 2 (pictured, from 1962) were nick named "Sputnik" for obvious reasons. It was truly a jukebox that was out of this world.



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1973 RI-1 Heritage

This is one of the jukeboxes designed by Rowe to allow great jukebox fidelity and full selections (100 45-rpm records... 200 selections) in locations where space is a premium. For many years Rowe has offered an alternative to the full-sized jukebox. In the tradition of the RI series, Rowe currently makes a compact CD model called Encore and a compact digital downloading model called Solara.

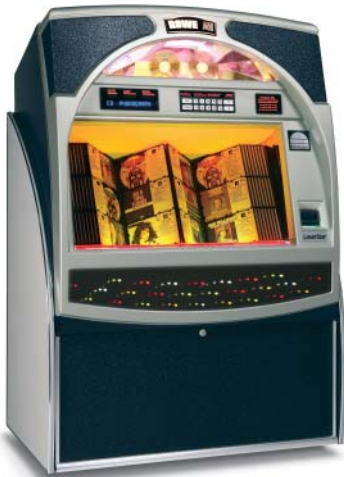


1980 R-85 Starlight

One of the most striking jukeboxes ever made. The specially designed infinity lights gave this jukebox a beauty and depth like no other music machine of its generation. The Starlight was developed with input from Rowe's distributors – and was a big hit. Location after location demanded this jukebox "with all the lights!"

Late 1980s and 1990s CD Era

During the CD era Rowe grew to be the dominant jukebox manufacturer, commanding an estimated 65% to 70% of the domestic jukebox market share and 55% to 60% worldwide.



1993 Laser Star American 100C

The most popular CD jukebox of its day. The 100C became the standard by which all other CD jukeboxes were judged. The model was so popular, the company kept the design and offered merely cosmetic changes in the next year's model (100D). The 100C and 100D models were the largest selling CD boxes in the company's history.



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2003

Rowe sold its vending business to apply all its engineering and marketing resources to the pursuit of new opportunities in the digital jukebox market. As part of that initiative, Rowe launched its AMI Entertainment Inc. subsidiary, which provides and manages digital music content, software and networking technology for today's Internet-access jukeboxes. Rowe also continues to design, market and build money-changing machines for the carwash, laundry and vending industries.

Today

While Rowe has earned its place in history as one of the most influential organizations in the coin-operated music industry, its new jukeboxes, also on display in the museum, illustrate how skillfully the company has kept pace with, and taken full advantage of, today's information technology to provide the 21st century patron with the best musical entertainment available.

Proof of this capability, which has enabled Rowe to adapt to technological and social changes, is the cumulative production of one million machines.



2006 NiteStar™ Digital Internet Access Jukebox

The NiteStar is a digital downloading jukebox powered by AMI Entertainment. It is the highest quality machine available anywhere. The NiteStar has great features including My Song First™, Music On Demand, Any Song, Any Time™, large capacity hard drive and dynamic LED lighting.

About Rowe

Rowe International Corporation is the number one manufacturer of commercial and home coin-op jukeboxes, and the leading maker of CD-to-digital upgrade kits. The Company manufactures the NiteStar™ and Solara™ (floor model) and StarBrite™ (wall-mounted) all-digital Internet-access jukeboxes. The company's Internet-enabled devices can operate over a variety of broadband connections. AMI Entertainment, a wholly owned subsidiary of Rowe International Corp., provides digital music content and Web-based management services for the Rowe Internet-access jukeboxes over the AMI Entertainment Network. Rowe jukeboxes powered by AMI Entertainment are designed to maximize revenue with features like Any Song, Any Time™, which allows the music patron to search and purchase music by song, artist, album title or genre from a vast music library licensed by AMI Entertainment. Rowe International and AMI Entertainment are headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Rowe also maintains a technical support and sales office in London, and has one of the industry's most extensive sales and support systems, with distributors in more than 35 countries.

www.RoweInternational.com

To download high-resolution pictures of the Rowe jukeboxes shown, please visit www.WeNeedAURL.com.



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