

Harpsichord & fortepiano

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A Note from the Editors

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE in waiting for this issue of *Harpsichord & Fortepiano*. The departure of David Bray necessitated a change in editorship and it has taken us some time to gather together the magazine's many and varied threads. Readers owe David a considerable debt for providing them with a lively and thought-provoking periodical. We aim to continue to cover the wide spectrum of topics which the title can encompass: performers, both new and well-established; performance practice; the instruments, their maintenance and restoration; the builders; the musical repertoire and its composers; the relationship of the instruments to their social context, both in the past and today. In addition we will continue to cover current news in the early keyboard world, as well as to review recent recordings, books and music.

However, above all else, *Harpsichord & Fortepiano* must serve the community of early keyboard enthusiasts, both amateur and professional — whether they are performers, makers or composers interested in exploring the unique potential of these instruments — and, not least, those increasingly rare souls, the educated listeners who enjoy early keyboard music and wish to continue to inform themselves about it. As editors we cannot achieve this in isolation, which is why we appeal to you, the readers, to write to us with your concerns, your ideas, your discoveries, your news.

Perhaps you remember the diversity characteristic of the journal *Early Music* in its youth? *Music and Letters*, too, was first established to allow musicians themselves to air their views, unmediated by the professional critic. Both periodicals do still breed considerable activity and controversy, but at the same time it must be said that the arguments appearing in these journals, fully supported as they are by the whole weight of academic apparatus, do not allow many readers a way in to voice their own ideas, instincts, concerns. We do not intend to suggest that academic scholarship has been detrimental to the early music world — far from it: indeed, the unique relationship between scholar and performer has prevented the movement from slipping into a quagmire of well-meaning acceptance of received ideas, and the smugness which might result from it. Yet there should also be room for those outside the academic community to air their views. We need that stimulation — the long odds, the eccentric viewpoint, the idea in a thousand — in order to balance the other equations important in the early music world: that between professional and amateur, and that between performer and audience. To that end *Harpsichord & Fortepiano* will continue to publish scholarly articles but at the same time seek to publicise the views of the many others who have a stake in the early keyboard world.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Congratulations to the York Early Music Foundation for winning lottery money to build the much-needed National Centre for Early Music. The centre will need keyboard instruments and they are now willing to hear from established makers (see Soundboard).

Our cover story looks at Violet Gordon Woodhouse, a figure of great importance in the history of the harpsichord revival. On a personal note we feel sure that she must be a blood relation of Lord Peter Wimsey, whose own preferences in performance practice will no doubt invoke strong feelings of sympathy in our readers: "...I feel like the Italian Concerto this evening. It's better on the harpsichord, but I haven't got one here."

(Dorothy L. Sayers, *Strong Poison*, 1930).

We would like to thank our contributors, our publishers, and all the other people who have helped us with this issue in some way, including Jane Beeson, Victoria Bevan, Stephen Daw, Tess Knighton and Virginia Pleasants.