

Harpsichord & *fortepiano*

Vol. 9, No. 1 Spring, 2001

© Peacock Press.

Licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

You are free to share and adapt the content for non-commercial purposes, provided you give appropriate credit to Peacock Press and indicate if changes were made. Commercial use, redistribution for profit, or uses beyond this license require prior written permission from Peacock Press.

Musical Instrument Research Catalog
(MIRC*at*)

Windebank's Virginal: A Lost Ruckers Harpsichord

By Paula Woods

In 1631, Balthasar Gerbier was appointed Charles I's representative at the Court of the Archduchess Isabella in Brussels. His diplomatic duties must, at times, have been extremely trying, given the delicate nature of Anglo-Flemish relations, and hundreds of his letters survive in the Public Record Office as testimony to his conscientious efforts on behalf of the English Crown. But none of this extensive correspondence has received a fraction of the scrutiny accorded to the few brief paragraphs that form the oft-quoted, and frequently misunderstood exchange between Gerbier and his immediate boss, Secretary of State, Sir Francis Windebank, regarding the purchase of a harpsichord. All the standard works quote from these letters, published in W.N. Sainsbury's *Papers Relating to Rubens*, and numerous other writers refer to them in passing. A variety of assumptions have been made about their significance, yet they seem never to have been properly examined. It is, perhaps, time that the story was considered more carefully.

I originally decided to do this, simply as a footnote to a biography of Gerbier, and there is still work to be done before I can offer a comprehensive answer to all the questions raised by what appears to be a trifling episode in harpsichord history. The objectives of this article are to elucidate the story of Gerbier's curiously unsuccessful shopping expedition, to reconstruct - albeit just verbally - the instrument that he bought, and to provide one or two answers to the questions surrounding Windebank's response to it.

First of all, the correspondence itself, which we find transcribed from Sainsbury¹ in the works of Hubbard, Russell and O'Brien: the transcriptions are generally accurate, with one or two minor errors. By consulting the originals, in the Public Record Office, I was able to rectify a couple of anomalies. I was also able to look for one letter that Sainsbury did not include. It seemed likely that there should be a request from Windebank,

prompting Gerbier to find him a 'Virginal'. Gerbier's offer was unlikely to be spontaneous and it was satisfying to find the relevant paragraph at the end of Windebank's routine diplomatic despatch to Gerbier, dated "29. Decem: 1637: (Old Style):

"If there be any good Virginals in those parts, as I have understood there are, I wold gladly gett a good instrument and I desire yo^u to let me know if it may be don. In the meantime I desire yo^u likewys to sende me som Virginall stringes of the sizes according to their note.²

This letter at once clarifies two points: firstly, the 'Virginal' is not, as some commentators have assumed, for Court use, but for the private recreation of Windebank and his family. Secondly, although Windebank is aware of the reputation of Flemish makers, he knows little about keyboard instruments. Had this been the case, then he would obviously have specified his requirements in detail, both in terms of a new instrument, and as regards the requested strings. As it is, nothing is said about compass, stringing, or even the type of instrument. Since 'Virginal' can be taken to mean simply a plucked keyboard instrument, we would at least expect to be told whether a rectangular instrument was required, or a harpsichord. Windebank seems to have been an honest and industrious Secretary for whom the pleasures of domestic life took priority in his off-duty hours: but we find no reference to him in accounts of musical entertainment at Court. Gerbier, French by ancestry and English by choice, had been brought up in Calvinist Middelburg, and though well-trained in the visual arts and with extensive knowledge in a variety of fields, appears to have lacked any musical accomplishment. In short, neither man seems to have been well enough informed.

Yet Gerbier is clearly pleased with himself when he replies to Windebank on January 20th 1638:

The Virginal I do pitch upon is an excellent peece, made by Johannes Ruckarts att Antwerp, its a dobbel staert stick as called, hath foure registers, the place to

play on att the inde, the Virginal was made for the latte Infante, hath a faire picture on the inne-side of the Covering, representing the Infantas parke. and on the opening att the part were played, a picture of Rubens, representing Cupid and Psiche, the partie askes 30 ls star-lings. Those virginals w^{ch} have no pictures cost 15 ls, Yr. hon^r will have time enuf to consider on the sum, cause I can keepe the virginal long enuf att my house ³

It is obvious that we are dealing with a standard four-register double manual harpsichord from the workshop of Ioannes Ruckers. Someone has apparently told Gerbier that such an instrument is known as a 'dobbel staert stuck', and that it possesses four registers, but these technicalities are not elaborated. Gerbier is far more effective in describing the harpsichord's decoration, to which I shall return later. The price asked suggests that it is something special; the vendor wants double the normal amount. And a significant provenance is hinted at in the fact that it was 'made for the latte Infante'.

Who was this 'latte Infante'? Some commentators have implied that the instrument was a cancelled export order, unexpectedly on the market due to the untimely demise of some young Spanish prince.⁴ In relation to Gerbier's presence in Brussels, however, there is only one possible Infante to whom he could be referring; the Archduchess Isabella's late husband, Archduke Albert, who died in 1621. The harpsichord must therefore have been made before that date, and the grandeur of the lid decoration - from the hand of Rubens himself - starts to make sense in the context of a royal commission. Gerbier has found it in Brussels, not in Antwerp. Far from being a recently-built cancelled order, this is a second-hand instrument, at least seventeen years old.

The third letter in the sequence is Windebank's reply, dated 2nd February.

In a lt^r a part yo^u are pleased to give me testimony of yo^r care of my privat little businesse concerning the Virginal, for w^{ch} I return yo^u my most affectionat thanks.

If the Instrument for sounde & goodnesse be right, I do not much respect the accessories of ornament or paintings, & therefore if yo^u can meete wth a very good one plaine and without these curiosities, I shold rather make choice of such a one. But I will advise wth y^r good friende & myne Mr Norgat whose skill in these businesses is excellent: & then I will take the liberty to

acquaint yo^u with my further desires. Presenting my true love to yo^u, & making it my suite to yo^u to use me as freely as by yo^r many civilities yo^u have obliged me to be (Sr)....⁵

This confirms that Windebank is looking for an instrument for his own use. He is cautious: thirty pounds is a good deal of money. Gerbier, for example, earned two pounds per day in his ambassadorial post. And a more simply decorated instrument would be adequate. But Windebank will seek expert advice on the matter, by consulting the accomplished Edward Norgate, who was indeed a friend of both men. Gerbier knew him as a fellow miniature painter; and Windebank as an illuminator of royal documents. And Norgate had a second career at Court as repairer and tuner of keyboard instruments, with a reputation as a fine player.

Norgate must have been to some extent familiar with the instruments made by the Ruckers family and we have to conclude that he responded positively to Windebank's questions. Certainly it does not appear that Norgate expressed any reservations about the purchase. No one seems to have referred to differences between Flemish and English keyboards, and it may be that Windebank simply mentioned the name 'Ruckers' and met with an enthusiastic response. As a result, he wrote to Gerbier agreeing to buy the harpsichord, in a letter alluded to in passing by Sainsbury, but which I was unable to locate in the PRO. The next letter I found was that in which Windebank acknowledges receipt, on 20th July.

The Viginall w^{ch} yo^u sent me, is com safe, & I wish it were as usefull as I know yo^u intended it. ⁶ But the workman that made it was much mistaken in it, & it wantes 6: or 7: Keyes, so that it is utterly unserviceable. If either he cold alter it, or wolde change it for another that may have more keyes, it were well: but as it is, our Musick is marr'd. Nevertheless - I am exceedingly behoulding to yo^u for it, & do acknowledge as many thanks to be due to yo^u as if it had bene the most exquisit peece in the Worlde: In that quality I beseeche yo^u (Sr) comaunde....⁷

Windebank's disappointment is unconcealed. One suspects that his extravagant acknowledgement of Gerbier's efforts is an attempt to mitigate the strong terms in which he expresses his disapproval. And we cannot doubt that it must indeed have been an 'exquisit peece'.

Windebank may be the only dissatisfied customer in the history of the Ruckers workshop. If only we knew more about the response Gerbier received when he visited Ioannes Ruckers, as he obviously did on the arrival of Windebank's letter! On returning to Brussels, he regretfully replied:

I have y^r hon^rs letter to me of 20/30 July, to w^{ch} I have no more to say. But that I must take patience the Virginall⁸ proves not according expectations, Iff y^r hon^r causeth the same sent to me agayne well conditioned; and a Just meseaure of the keyes desired annother Virginall to be, I will cause this to be sould as itt can, and annother made forthwth by M^r Rickaerts, the same and the best Master here; who saith this virginal cannot be altered, and none elscie made here on saille.⁹ Humbly take my leave and rest....¹⁰

Anxious to make amends, Gerbier is prepared to sell the unsatisfactory instrument in Flanders, replacing it with one commissioned from Ruckers, with whatever keyboard Windebank cares to specify. But Ioannes Ruckers, who, as Gerbier hastens to remind his boss, is considered the finest maker in Antwerp, is not prepared to alter the original. This refusal has attracted a good deal of comment, and needs to be examined, as do Gerbier's words 'none elscie here on saille'. The latter could mean either that Ruckers make no other model, or that there is at present no suitable instrument on the market. I see no reason to introduce the question of whether any other kind of double was produced by Ruckers: it must have been obvious to Gerbier by now that a single-manual 'Virginall' would be adequate for Windebank's needs, and I believe that too much has been read into this phrase in an effort to justify arguments for or against the production of other types of double-manual instrument. It is much more likely that Gerbier is simply reporting the fact that Ruckers built to order, and did not have any instruments available for immediate delivery. As to Ruckers' refusal to alter the harpsichord, the reasons for this will soon become obvious.

The last we hear of the instrument in the correspondence comes in Windebank's letter of August 3rd:

For the Virginall, I desire yo^r not to trouble yo^r selfe, seeing the fault was myne that did not give better instruction.¹¹

And from this point, the harpsichord is lost. No

surviving Ruckers double fits Gerbier's description, though it is not impossible that either the missing instrument, or perhaps one of the lid paintings may be found one day. What is possible however, is to reconstruct the harpsichord from Gerbier's account of it, and to relate it both to a surviving double, and to another which, though itself lost, may be closely related to it.

Before we can do this, it is essential to establish the date at which Windebank's 'Virginall' was built, as this will determine, for example, which soundboard painter is likely to have worked on it. As has been shown, the latest possible date for an instrument commissioned by Archduke Albert is 1621. The earliest likely date is 1614, when Ioannes Ruckers was appointed builder to the Brussels Court, and while it seems unlikely that such an appointment would be made without an accompanying commission, there is no evidence to suggest that Windebank's was the first or only such instrument.

Is it possible to be more precise? Well, Gerbier describes the harpsichord's lid paintings in detail, and refers specifically to a front-flap painting by Rubens, depicting Cupid and Psyche. The story, as related by Apuleius, was well known, but Rubens' extant works on this theme are not promising as harpsichord-decoration material. Large figures dominate the composition, and from the player's point of view would be too overwhelming. Yet there is a landscape by Paul Brill, to which Rubens added the figures of Psyche and Jove in the form of an eagle; while the scene in which Cupid discovers the sleeping Psyche occurs in various pictures of this period, including one by van Dyck. A design of this kind is more likely to have been used by Rubens for a harpsichord lid. The painting of 'the Infantas Parke' recalls numerous such landscapes, many of them by Jan Brueghel, sometimes in association with other Antwerp painters of Rubens' circle, such as Hendrik van Balen. A representation of the Coudenberg Palace in Brussels, familiar through many such pictures, seems probable, and it seems natural that Brueghel, himself working for Albert and Isabella, should have contributed to the decoration of their Ruckers harpsichord.

And it is this link with the circle of Rubens that provides a clue. For a surviving Ruckers double implies this kind of high-level artistic collaboration. The instrument in the collection of the Musée de la

Musique in Paris, shown by Grant O'Brien¹² to date from 1617, has lid paintings by some of Rubens' closest associates. The main lid carries a picture of the contest between Apollo and Marsyas, attributed to Brueghel and van Balen; the front flap painting is of Orpheus playing to the Beasts. The latter is attributed to Brill, an assertion which needs to be tested, since Brill was living in Rome at the time, and the picture is entirely typical of the work of Brueghel.

The similarities between the decoration of this harpsichord and Windebank's suggest that the legend of the harpsichord having been commissioned by Marie de Medici, while acting as Regent for her son, Louis XIII, may not be a total fiction. There were close links between the French and Flemish Courts; Isabella gave protection to Marie when she was obliged to flee France, and their respective Court keyboard players, John Bull and Jacques Champion de la Chapelle, were also friends. It seems highly likely that a Ruckers double-manual harpsichord would have been purchased for the use of Champion, whose son, Chambonnières, later bought a Couchet.

These two instruments are comparable in type and finish, and were made within a short time of each other. But was Windebank's the only Ruckers double built for the Brussels Court? It would appear not. Between 1614 and 1617, Rubens, Brueghel, van Balen and a number of other painters were employed on another royal commission: the production of the set of allegorical paintings representing the Senses, to be sent to the Spanish Court in Madrid, and thus now to be found in the Prado. In these pictures, and in various similar sets

of Sense Allegories produced by these artists (and later by Brueghel's grandson, Jan van Kessel), the artists included depictions of numerous items from the Coudenberg Palace - chairs, furniture, musical instruments, and even Isabella's parrots. Among them, a double-manual harpsichord is prominent. It has often been discussed, in part because the painters did not manage to get every detail right: a manual without its arcades; a strange number of registers protruding through the cheek - such anomalies have inevitably attracted suspicion. Not surprisingly, it has been suggested that the instrument, if indeed it existed in anything but a painter's imagination, was not by Ruckers at all.

I think that it certainly existed and was indeed by Ioannes Ruckers. In fact, I would contend that it was one of three produced between 1614 and 1617 in response to royal commissions, and decorated by the same group of painters, who were then engaged on painting the Allegories for Albert and Isabella. The depicted harpsichord has a front flap painting of 'The Annunciation of the Shepherds', and a full-size preliminary oil-sketch for this, by Hendrik van Balen, has recently come to light in Spain. In addition, the depicted harpsichord occurs in several different pictures, and it is possible to compare the representations in detail. For this purpose, it is useful to refer to Lucas van Dijck and Ton Koopman's *The Harpsichord in Dutch Art Before 1800*,¹³ a standard work on keyboard iconography, and specifically to plates 56a, 57 and 101. The first of these is attributed to Jan Brueghel and Rubens, the second to Brueghel and van Balen and the third to Jan Brueghel II and Jan van Kessel.

This table may simplify the comparison:

Table 1
Comparison of the Harpsichord depicted in Allegories of Hearing by Painters of the Circle of Rubens

Detail	Plate 56a Rubens/Brueghel	Plate 57 Brueghel/van Balen	Plate 101 Brueghel/van Kessel
Casework	red/brown marbling	red/brown marbling	red/brown marbling
Lid flap painting	'Annunciation of the Shepherds' - van Balen	'Annunciation of the Shepherds' - van Balen	not visible (music)
Keywell Papers ¹⁴	Type 12	Type 12	Type 12
upper manual	?	Type 13	?Type 17
lower manual	?Type 6 (or 9, minus border)	?Type 6 (or 9, minus border)	?Type 6 (or 9, minus border)
keywell flap	?not clear	Acta virum probant	Acta virum probant
Keywell flap motto	normal transposing	normal transposing	normal transposing
Keyboards	Turned trestle, curved ends.	Turned trestle, curved ends.	Turned trestle, curved ends.
Stand	Cf. HR 1616.	Cf. HR 1616.	Cf. HR 1616.

From this it can be seen that, in all significant details, there is little variation between the three depictions. Such differences as exist can be accounted for by the fact that a number of painters would have been involved in completing the canvasses. The consistency between the three is remarkable by the notoriously variable standards of instrument iconography, and an eye for detail is evident in a variety of instruments in these paintings. I therefore feel justified in proposing that the ‘depicted’ harpsichord should be considered in any account of the instruments produced to royal commission during this period. Since it is this one, and not Windebank’s ‘Virginal’ that we find in the Allegories, I am tempted to conclude that this instrument was the one made by Ioannes Ruckers¹⁵ in 1614, for the Archdukes, and decorated by van Balen, together with whoever decorated the unseen main lid. The religious theme of the painting

implies that it may have been for use in the Royal Chapel, and we have documentary evidence to prove both that a harpsichord was kept there and that Ioannes Ruckers maintained it.¹⁶ At some time after this, a second harpsichord - Windebank’s - was provided by Ruckers, this time for secular, ‘Chamber’ use, with a picture from Greek mythology and a local landscape. This was presumably completed by about 1617, when the painters working on the lid completed their simultaneous work on the Allegories. The third instrument, contemporary with Windebank’s, and by its style of decoration also bound for a prestigious location (arguably the French court) also dates from 1617.

It seems useful to summarise the similarities between these three instruments:

Table 2
Three Ioannes Ruckers Double-manual Harpsichords decorated by Painters of the Rubens Circle

Detail	Windebank’s Virginal	1617 IR (Paris)	The ‘Depicted’ double
Date	(1614-17)	(1617)	(1614-17)
Casework	Not known	strapwork decoration	red/brown marble
Main Lid	‘The Infantas Parke’ ?Brueghel/van Balen	‘Apollo and Marsyas’ attrib. Brueghel/van Balen	not visible
Front Flap	‘Cupid and Psyche’ Rubens	‘Orpheus and the Beasts’ ?Brueghel	‘Annunciation of the Shepherds’ Van Balen
Keywell Flap	Not known	flap lost	Acta virum probant
Customer	Albert and Isabella	Louis XIII/Marie de Medici	Albert and Isabella
Possible players	Bull/ Philips ¹⁷ /Cornet	Jacques Champion	Bull/Philips/Cornet

Such a comparison allows us to see Windebank’s instrument as one of a small group of exclusive harpsichords, made in the workshop of Ioannes Ruckers, and decorated by members of Rubens’ immediate circle, between about 1614 and 1617. Consequently, it is not entirely appropriate to compare Windebank’s ‘Virginal’ with the 1638bIR, as is often done, since the soundboard will presumably have been decorated by the earlier of Ioannes’ two soundboard painters. Nevertheless, the Edinburgh harpsichord, as the only surviving double with its transposing mechanism intact, gives us the clearest idea of what Windebank received from Brussels in 1638. It is unsurprising that Ioannes Ruckers was unwilling to alter what must have been one of the most beautiful instruments ever produced by his family. The decoration, the association with the highly-regarded Archdukes -

everything about this harpsichord was exceptional. We have no idea how Gerbier obtained it, though we know that resources were limited at the Brussels Court, and Isabella herself had more than once put her own jewellery and valuables on the market.

This naturally brings us to the question of why Windebank was so dissatisfied with it. Various suggestions have been put forward, including the unlikely idea of damage in transit. But Windebank is concrete and specific in describing why his family’s “Musick is marr’d”. The ‘Virginal’ “wantes 6; or 7; keyes.” In other words, he finds the compass inadequate.

He does not comment on the pitch of the harpsichord, implying that the instrument played at a pitch common to both England and Flanders, and

presumably to other parts of Europe, since the same scale is found in plucked keyboards of the time wherever harpsichords were made. Windebank does not even comment on the transposing mechanism, which suggests that this too may have been common to other instruments in England. His problem in fact appears to be wholly with the compass. A likely conclusion to draw here is that Windebank - or rather a member of his extensive family - wanted to play recent, English music, and found the C/E short octave bass too restricting. It was not what he expected.

What did he expect? We do not know the compass of the instrument that he wished to replace - the one in need of new strings - but in 1638 it is apparent, both from the available repertoire and from the few surviving English instruments, that makers were gradually moving from the C-c3 compass to one starting with the GG/BB short octave. (The C# in England had for years been tuned to AA.) It is virtually impossible that Windebank could have expected a larger compass than this, and his reference to '6 or 7 notes', imprecise though it is, must reflect the fact that the GG/BB keyboard would have supplied G, AA, Bb, F# and G#. What he received was, of course, a C/E short octave harpsichord - something that had never been popular in England. What he failed to realise was that the lower manual was in fact a GG/BB-c3 keyboard, which, with some reasonable skill in transposing, could have been used to play almost any of the available music. This skill would have been expected of a professional player, and it is

arguable that the Ruckers double was aimed at the professional market: there is evidence for the presence of these instruments in locations, both sacred and secular, where professional musicians were employed.

How much of the available repertoire could Windebank have played on a C/E-c3 keyboard, such as the upper manual of his Ruckers double? To answer this question, I took a cross section of keyboard sources, from the late 16th century to 1663, and tabulated the compass of each piece. The chosen sources contain both straightforward and much more difficult music, some composed by Windebank's own contemporaries. Given the contingency of repertoire and the impossibility of knowing just what Windebank had access to, I tried to cast a wide enough net to allow for most eventualities. I then worked out the percentage of pieces playable in each collection, including the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book. The results were surprising. The virginal books of amateurs, such as Clement Matchett and Priscilla Bunbury, were almost entirely playable, while even the Fitzwilliam, with a high proportion of virtuoso keyboard music by composers such as Farnaby, Gibbons and Bull, was 68% playable. This is not, of course, to suggest that it was written for the C/E keyboard: there are relatively few that exploit the potential for wide chords in the bass. Much of it appears to have been composed for 16th century English compass of C-a2 or c3.

The results are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3
Sources of Virginal Music 1591-1663: Compass and Suitability for C/E keyboard

YEAR	SOURCE	COMPASS	EXTRA NOTES	PLAYABLE	PERCENTAGE
1591	Lady Nevells Book	C-b2	F# G#	40/42	95%
1599	Susanne van Soldt's VB	D-a2	none	47/47	100%
1600	Tisdale's VB	C-a2	F# G# ?A1	18/20	90%
1610-35	Scottish Keyboard Music	C-a2	F#	9/10	90%
1612	Parthenia	C-a2	F# G#	13/21	62%
1612	Clement Matchett's VB	C-a2	none	12 of 12	100%
c.1620	Fitzwilliam VB	C-a2	F# G# A1	204/297	68%
1625	Parthenia Inviolata	C-a2	F# G# A1	10 of 20	50%
1630	Thomas Tunstall's VB	C -?	F# G# A1	30/42	71%
1638	Anne Cromwell's VB	C-c3	F# G# ?A1	46/50	92%
c1605-40	Sabol:Stuart Masques.	C-c3	F# G# A1(1only)	33/42	79%

c1640	Ben Cosyn's VB	C-b2	F# G# A1	13/25	52%
c1645	Priscilla Bunbury's VB	C-a2	A1	15/16	94%
c1650-60	Ben Rogers' VB	C-c3	F# G#	9 of 13	69%
1656	Elizabeth Rogers VB	C-a2	F# A1	63/94	67%
1663	Musick's Handmaid	C-c3	E ^b F# G# A1	50/79	63%
				Average:	83.60%
Playable'	indicates that the music is				
playable	on a C/E short-octave k'd				
Extra' not	es are those which are not				
available	on the C/E keyboard.				

('Compass' reflects the general compass of the music in each collection.)

It is clear that 83% of this repertoire is playable on a C/E keyboard. To play the remaining 17% requires, above all, the 'chromatic' (or C#/AA short octave) bass from C, which was standard in England during the first half of the 17th century. It was to comply with this need that Ruckers built their chromatic English singles. There is, by 1638, also the call for AA, though only in a limited number of pieces: by far the greatest restriction of a C/E keyboard would have been the lack of F# and G#.

At first, I suspected that the Windebank family included a talented keyboard player, keen to perform all the most complex pieces of the virginalist repertoire. Yet had this been the case, such a player would certainly have managed the transpositions necessary to accommodate the music to the standard Ruckers keyboard. Perhaps a more likely conclusion is that an amateur player of average ability wanted to play the music just as it was written, and particularly missed the AA, F# and G# that the C/E keyboard lacked. Had they been content to play the great majority of available music that was possible on the C/E keyboard, Windebank would have had no complaint. His family seems to have been most disappointed to find that their new instrument was not the latest model, and had a type of keyboard with which they were quite unfamiliar. But the claim that they were unable to play much music is unfounded: they could have played the vast majority of the music of their time. Other players were clearly doing so, as is evident from the amount of music from the

previous century that was still popular.¹⁸

There is a great deal more to be said about the Ruckers double, in relation to the purposes for which it was designed, and the use to which it was put in the first half of the 17th century. Nicholas Mitchell has provoked a lively discussion on the issue of pitch, providing some intriguing ideas about the transposing potential of the instrument, and it is clear that a full analysis of its function cannot be offered without a satisfactory explanation of how the pitch of the harpsichord relates it both to other European keyboards of the time, and to the solo and ensemble requirements of 17th century players. Alternative models of 17th century pitch also need to be considered in this context - something beyond the scope of the present article, and this is a subject that I hope to address more fully in the future.

The story of Windebank's 'Virginall' is a tale of incompetence and misunderstanding. I have tried to explain the circumstances that brought Archduke Albert's harpsichord to London in 1638, and to establish an identity for the instrument in relation to others of its type. This is no more than a brief summary, which I hope clarifies some of the issues raised by the Windebank-Gerbier letters. If either of the two men involved had known a little more about the instruments they were dealing with, the outcome might have been more successful. Windebank was so dissatisfied that it would not be surprising to learn that he had disposed of the harpsichord. Unfortunately, there is no documentary evidence at all: he himself fled England on the eve of the Civil War, dying in exile. His family never recovered their position, and there

does not even seem to be a portrait of Windebank in existence.

Yet if one is prepared to speculate, there is a remote possibility that the lost Ruckers double found a home with an accomplished player - someone equipped to make full use of it. In a will, dated October 1649, we find a well-known harpsichordist and organist bequeathing to his "grandchild Mrs Anne Maning, my Harpsichord Virginal."¹⁹ The player, known as "a great lover of musicke",²⁰ was Edward Norgate.

Footnotes

¹ W.N.Sainsbury: 'Papers Relating to Rubens'. London 1869

² Public Record Office. SP77/27. F627v

³ SP 77/28 F31r

⁴ E.Ripin. 'The 2-Manual Harpsichord in Flanders before 1650'. GSJ 1968. P36

⁵ SP 77/28 f 50r

⁶ The word 'it' was added by Windebank, and has an inverted V beneath it in the original.

⁷ SP 77/28 F400r

⁸ Gerbier has now adopted Windebank's spelling of 'Virginal'

⁹ The words 'on saille' have been added by Gerbier, as indicated by an inverted V beneath them.

¹⁰ SP77/28 F435rv

¹¹ SP77/28 F439r

¹² Grant O'Brien. "Ruckers". Cambridge University Press .1990 p.245

¹³ L.van Dijk/ T.Koopman. 'Het Klavecimbel in de Nederlandse Kunst tot 1800' De Walburg Pers. 1987

¹⁴ Type numbers given are those in O'Brien.op. cit. Ch. 7.

¹⁵ Grant O'Brien has argued that the third of these depicted instruments, plate 101, may be by Andreas the elder (op.cit. p193). The choice of keywell papers reflects those used on several of his instruments, but I think it more likely that Ioannes, as Court Builder, would have provided the instrument.

¹⁶ J.A Stellfeld: 'Johannes Ruckers de jongere en de koninklijke kapel te Brussel' Antwerp 1945.

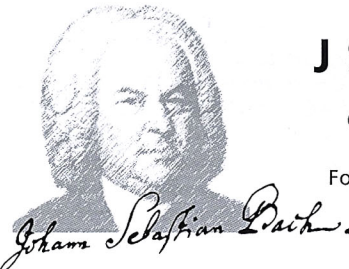
¹⁷ It is interesting that one of the 3 paintings discussed clearly includes the music of Peter Philips' motets.

¹⁸ I am grateful to Jeff Dods for drawing my attention to the high proportion of music in the virginal books, written for the 38-note keyboard.

¹⁹ Ed. J. Muller/J Murrell. 'Edward Norgate: Miniatura or the Art of Limning'. Yale UP. 1997. P2

²⁰ Ibid.

Paula Woods is currently working on a biography of Balthasar Gerbier. Since completing this article further correspondence between Gerbier and Windebank has come to light, which she will cover in this year's Galpin Society Jopurnal.



J S BACH

8 Concertos for Keyboard


For the first time with two-keyboard reductions
and a set of parts from the Urtext New Bach Edition

Bach's compositions for Harpsichord Concerto laid the foundation for the Piano Concerto tradition. With the exception of BWV 1061 (for two Harpsichords) all the Harpsichord Concertos are transcriptions of lost concertos for melody instruments by Bach himself. Indeed it seems that Bach reworked all his appropriate instrumental concertos in this way.

The Concertos published here therefore form a fascinating retrospective of Bach's work as a solo concerto composer. The set is complemented by the Concerto BWV 1052a, which is a transcription of a J S Bach Violin Concerto, by his son C P E Bach.

A few years later J S Bach reworked this Violin Concerto himself as the famous Harpsichord Concerto BWV 1052.

<p>Concerto No.1 in D minor BWV 1052 BA 5224a reduction £10.00 Strings ea £ 2.50</p>	<p>Concerto No.5 in F minor BWV 1056 BA 5228a reduction £ 9.00 Strings ea £ 2.50</p>	<p>Concerto No.6 in F BWV 1057 BA 5229a reduction £10.00 Recorders ea £ 3.00 Strings ea £ 2.50</p>
<p>Concerto No.2 in E-flat BWV 1053 BA 5225a reduction £10.00 Strings ea £ 2.50</p>	<p>Concerto No.3 in D BWV 1054 BA 5226a reduction £ 9.00 Strings ea £ 2.50</p>	<p>Concerto No.7 in G minor BWV 1058 BA 5230a reduction £ 8.50 Strings ea £ 2.50</p>
<p>Concerto No.4 in A BWV 1055 BA 5227a reduction £ 8.50 Strings ea £ 2.00</p>	<p>Concerto in D minor BWV 1052a. <i>version by CPE Bach. First edition.</i> BA 5231a reduction £10.00 Strings ea £ 2.50</p>	



Bärenreiter

Burnt Mill · Elizabeth Way · Harlow · Essex CM20 2HX · UK · Tel (01279) 828930
 Fax (01279) 828931 · www.baerenreiter.com · E-Mail: baerenreiter@diapix.com