

# Harpsichord & *fortepiano*

Vol. 12, No. 1    Autumn, 2007

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Musical Instrument Research Catalog  
(MIRCAt)

**Report on the 36th Annual Meeting of the  
American Musical Instrument Society, 27 June  
–1 July, 2007**

by Anne Beetem Acker

You never know what kind of excitement you'll find at the annual meetings of AMIS, but the 36th annual meeting held on the picture perfect, 300-year old campus of Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut surely topped them all. We found ourselves sharing our surroundings with Indiana Jones and Paramount Pictures. Despite a few glitches, we peacefully coexisted.

Out of the over 500 members of AMIS, 138 organologists, musicologists, makers, collectors, museum curators and performers gathered from around the world. Members came from Istanbul, Edinburgh, London, South Dakota, California, Maine, Australia, Sweden, Tennessee, Montreal, Germany and France. It was heartening to see a significant increase in young people attending. AMIS is no longer a greying dinosaur, but a healthy vibrant organisation.

We enjoyed a wide breadth of topics and concerts. Papers ran the gamut from "Iconographic Evidence of Kettledrums in 14th-century North Italy", to a discussion of the use and abuse of the Hecklephone, to a presentation by a modern day *Geigenwerk* builder and inventor, to a good number of excellent papers about keyboards that I will discuss in depth in the final section of this article. Notable was a shift to include late 19th- and 20th-century topics.

Extraordinary concerts filled each evening. Our first night featured *The Ivory Consort* (who sang, and played a variety of instruments including oud, hurdy gurdy, vihuela, and percussion) in "Music in the Land of Three Faiths: Songs of Medieval Spain". Friday evening's programme was Keyboard Night at the Yale Collection of Musical Instruments. Held in the crowded keyboard instrument room, it featured a broad selection of their prize collection of harpsichords, pianos and a chamber organ. Performances included Susanne Skyrn (Frescobaldi on the 1620 Francesco Poggio spinetta), David Schulenberg (Couperin on the Blanchet harpsichord, 1740), Nicholas Renouf (playing Stanley on the Schnetzer Chamber organ, 1742, which is the sort first used in performances of *Messiah*), Richard Rephann (Chambonnières on the Taskin, 1770.), Matthew Bengston (Bach on the Hass harpsichord, 1760-1), Kathryn Shanks Libin (Chickering & Sons clavicord, made under Arnold Dolmetsch's direction, and restored in 1991 by Rutkowski and Robinette), and Maria Rose (Mozart on a Könnicke piano, c. 1795;

Schubert on an 1828 Bösendorfer). Two late 19th-century pianos finished off the programme with Ryosuke Yanagitani, playing Ravel on 1881 Erard, with a distinctive high treble, and with Mingzhe Wang, classical clarinet, playing music of Niels Wilhelm Gade on the 1864 Bechstein grand. One of the continuing truths of AMIS meetings is the realization of how much the seemingly disparate fields of music can learn from each other. Hence you will find brass people at keyboard lectures and keyboard people at percussion and medieval iconography discussions. In contrast to the sometimes dry talks of meetings past, this year increasingly benefited from animated speaking, good use of computer based projections, computer animation, and audio and video clips.

On the first day, we find the usual introductory talks along with papers on brass instruments, a description of the Yale University Collection of Musical Instruments which began when Morris Steinert, (a local piano entrepreneur who, donated some of his personal collection to Yale). Of particular note is the keyboard collection, with superb specimens dating from 1556 to a John Challis harpsichord from 1963.

Virginals, harpsichords, early pianos and mid to late 19th-century pianos accounted for a significant number of papers this year. Laurence Libin, now Honorary Curator for Steinway & Sons, gave a discussion of the one known copy of a private publication, 835, by New York City's Society of Journeymen Pianoforte Makers. I am excitedly awaiting the upcoming publication of this document that discusses in detail the prices journeymen charged manufacturers for the piece-work involved in building square and upright pianos, revealing much about the process of piano building in early 19th-century America.

The Keyboard Instrument Construction session covered virginals, spinets, and harpsichords of the past, as well as a modern innovation of the *Geigenwerk*. Pedro Branco dos Santos Bento began with a paper which examined different virginals by Bertolotti (1586) and Poggio (1620) in the Russell Collection at Edinburgh, measuring their plucking points, and comparing the resulting timbral properties. Additional virginals with different plucking points by Guarracino (1678) and Keene (1668) supplied further metric and timbral data for comparison. The questions asked were excellent, including a) How relevant is the plucking point to the timbre of an instrument and? b) What other constructional details might be important to the timbre of an instrument? However, the tiny sample size and lack of experimental controls make this work highly speculative at best. The instruments had different

itches, stringing materials, quilling, and styles, and in different states of preservation, hardly forming a strong experimental result. While this is a laudable realm, we hope for a more scientific experimental approach to follow.

John Philips examined solid evidence from a specific harpsichord from the workshop of Ioannes Ruckers, 1635. One of only six surviving single manual instruments by this maker, this instrument has the additional remarkable property that, despite having undergone a conservative *ravallement* in 1700, its basic structure was left virtually intact, and the case never widened or opened. Hidden inside on the bottom of the Ruckers harpsichords are marks sufficient to construct the instruments, with far more marks than usual, revealing an evolution of instrument design and giving amazing insight into the design practices and principles of the Ruckers workshop.

Peter Mole, a doctoral candidate at the University Edinburgh, gave a paper on the bent-side spinets of Stephen Keene and his school. Archives from the parish of St. Bennet Fink, London and discovery of Keene's and his wife's wills have revealed a special relationship with his collaborator, builder Edward Blunt. Substantial physical study including digital photography enabled Mole to show a clear line of development from the earliest surviving spinet, c.1682, to the last in 1712. Akio Obuchi from Tokyo gave an excellent presentation on his work in making and improving *Geigenwerk*. His Masters' degree in mechanical engineering, and initial employment as a researcher in electro-acoustics, evidently were excellent training for harpsichord and *Geigenwerk* making. His improvements include moving the friction disks further from the nut towards the soundboard bridge, in imitation of violin acoustic design, and an ingenious modification allowing dynamic control without excess pitch modulation.

Maria Rose presented new information gleaned from inventories of instruments and music surrounding the French Revolution. First she discussed the content and purpose of the Bruni Inventory of confiscated musical instruments and revealed a published address by Marie-Joseph Chenier to Paris's National Convention in July 1795 indicating that the instruments seized were to become part of a national music library and free school. A little known inventory of music libraries in ten of the same houses from which instruments were taken is a fascinating source detailing the types of scores found in those aristocratic houses. She also followed the fate of some of the pianos kept from the original 79 confiscated for use at the Conservatoire until 1816.

Papers by Sandra Rosenblum always draw a

large and interested audience and again, she did not disappoint. Using the appropriate vintage Bösendorfer and Pleyel pianos in the collection, she demonstrated her hypothesis for the differing pedal markings in editions of Chopin based on the differences in Viennese versus. French pianos of the time. Chopin had stayed in Vienna from November to July 1830-1, as well as making trips to Germany up to 1836, so he was familiar with Viennese instruments, a fact often overlooked by those studying Chopin and his music through French pianos. She illustrated by playing from different editions of the Nocturnes Op. 37/2 and Op. 55/1 and the Berceuse Op. 57.

Nicholas Renouf of the Collection of Musical Instruments, Yale highlighted the 1864 Carl Bechstein piano in the collection and its close association with Richard Wagner. Wagner's patron, King Ludwig II of Bavaria loaned the Yale Bechstein to him days after his rescue from debt and despair. Dealer and consultant Jean Michel Renard gave a fascinating paper discussing the forgeries in the nineteenth century which were aimed at recognized experts and historians. Forgers either created crude work intended to create the impression of very old instruments, or decorated instruments in an overly elaborate way to emphasize the supposed status of the original owner. He convincingly asserted that the question was about representing a preconceived image, and showed specific examples from Vuillaume to Franciolini. The afternoon concluded with a dynamic and entertaining glass armonica lecture demonstration by professional pianist, celeste and glass armonica performer Cecilia Brauer of Merrick, New York. Her talk centred on the instrument's inventor, Benjamin Franklin. She demonstrated the haunting sound of this instrument and discussed her research revealing the use of this instrument in opera and symphonic repertoire by various composers including Mozart.

William Hettrick began the final day with a look at sources for and a description of piano manufacturing procedures and factories during the second half of the nineteenth century. Edmond Johnson of the University of California, Santa Barbara gave a philosophical look at the question of "Where is the division between player and instrument?" when considering player pianos, and even early phonographs, concentrating on instruments from 1890-1910 and pointing out that the operators themselves can consider themselves true "players."

Another annual meeting over, replete and exhausted, the members of AMIS left the domain of Indiana Jones and the company of their fellow enthusiasts. Many of us work in relative isolation



spread around the world, and these events are a blessed infusion of shared passions amidst excellent company. In 2008, AMIS will meet at the exceptional collection and facilities at the Cantos Music Foundation in Calgary. New members are always welcome. The only requirement for membership is a passion for musical instruments. Do come.

**A report on the SEKHS [Southeastern Historical Keyboard Society] Conference**  
by Karen Hite Jacob

"The Performer as Teacher / The Teacher as Performer" was the focus for the annual conference of the Southeastern Historical Keyboard Society (SEKHS) held 8-10 March, 2007 at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. This theme was fitting as teachers, performers and students were in attendance for the sixth Mae and Irving Jurow International Harpsichord Competition, a part of our event.

Davitt Moroney's opening performance of Louis Couperin and Johann Jacob Froberger on the Gene Bedient IV/41 French Classical Organ was followed by a wonderful reception. His playing was superb, and seeing this instrument's short pedals and differently sized keyboards was engaging for everyone.

The next two days were filled with much variety. Highlights included Joyce Lindorff's talk on Daniel Gottlob Türk as teacher, reminding us "pedagogy is not separate from performance practice." Türk's *Clavierschule* (1776) is quite specific about what Türk wanted regarding dynamic changes and ornaments. Jacques Ogg's lecture "Rhetoric for Harpsichordists" began with Greek and Latin meanings of the word "rhetoric," references to Mattheson (i.e. "good speech is like a good melody") and examples from Bach, Froberger, and Clerambault. Ogg stressed the importance of silence in performance. Andrew Willis' performance "Rhetoric, Sensitivity, and the Keyboard Instruments of C.P.E. Bach (1714-1788)" followed this informative talk. Willis used harpsichord, clavichord and fortepiano to draw attention to compositional changes that coincided with specific instruments over a 50-year period. Selections were Sonata in Bb, W. 62/1 (1731), Arioso with Twenty Variations in C, W. 91/4 (1777), and Rondo in C Minor, W. 59/4 (1784).

David Chung from Hong Kong showed similarities between the French language and keyboard music in the seventeenth century in "Observations on the Defects in Classic French Keyboard Music". A shift from imprecision in

both occurred as written language and printed music became the norm.

Lynn M. Hanson detailed "Bach's Students: How did they learn and what did they write?" – a presentation with biographical information, listings of printed music and compact disks. Virginia Pleasants treated us to works by Philadelphia Alexander Reinagle. John Bennett moderated a markers panel that included Allen Winkler and Doug Maple. Luis Sanchez concluded Saturday afternoon with an exciting performance of Beethoven's sonata in Bb Major, Op. 22.

On Friday, 35 students of *The University of North Texas Baroque Orchestra* and *Collegium Singers* presented a period instrument performance of the music of Telemann and C.P.E. Bach. Bach's Concerto in Eb Major for harpsichord and fortepiano served as the inaugural event for a new fortepiano by Paul McNulty.

For Saturday's harpsichord competition round, each contestant performed for about 50 minutes. The set programme included Couperin: *21e Ordre*; J.S. Bach: Prelude and Fugue in A Minor, BWV 894; Bull: *In Nomine* (Fitzwilliam Virginal Book II), plus works of the contestant's choice not played elsewhere in the competition. The judges deliberated a long time. Alas, there was no first place winner, Canadian Ilya Poletaev, and Gabriel Shuford of the United States, shared second prize. Chu-Chun Liang from Taiwan received third prize and Sonia Lee was voted the most promising semifinalist. Charlotte Mattax (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) chaired the competition. The photo shows the four winners and panel of judges as follows:



From Left to right,

Back row: Arthur Haas, Charlotte Mattax, Jacques Ogg, Webb Wiggins (judges)

Front row: Davitt Moroney (judge); Sonia Lee, Chu-Chun Liang, Ilya Poletaev, Gabriel Shuford (contestants)

The Society's next meeting: "Four Centuries of Keyboard Music in Salem", 6-8 March, 2008, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, will feature performances on the restored 1798 and 1800 organs by David Tannenberg, tours of Old Salem and new compositions for harpsichord (The Aliénor Awards). Membership in SEHKS is open to persons and institutions worldwide. Publications include the scholarly *Early Keyboard Journal*. [www.sehks.org](http://www.sehks.org).

**Report on MHKS [Midwestern Historical Keyboard Society] Conclave, May 2007**  
by Gregory Crowell

The 2007 meeting of the Midwestern Historical Keyboard Society took place at the Schubert Club in downtown St. Paul, Minnesota. Housed in the historic Landmark Center, the Schubert Club is an organisation that sponsors concerts and educational programmes, and maintains an outstanding collection of historical musical instruments and musical autographs. The Landmark Center was an exceptional venue for the meeting; the elegant courtroom that was the site of many of the lectures and smaller concerts proved to be a sympathetic and atmospheric space, and the instrument displays were spectacularly housed in rooms adorned with intricate wood carvings and marble fireplaces.

The Schubert Club has amassed a collection of historic and reconstructed pianos that allows one to trace the history of the piano in sound simply by moving from one instrument to the next. A tour of the collection was greatly augmented by the presence of the brilliant pianist Andrew Willis who, though not knowing that he would be called on to do so, stepped forward to demonstrate each instrument with appropriate selections, ranging from a Cristofori model by David Sutherland, to a beautiful Erard from the 1840's.

Among the many concerts, several stand out. David Breitman's recital of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven on a fortepiano by Thomas and Barbara Wolf after Schantz was elegant and expressive. Jacques Ogg and his *Lyra Baroque Orchestra* presented a concert of music by J.S. Bach's sons, students, and one colleague (J.C. Bach, J.C.F. Bach, J.G. Mützel, C. Graupner), including several harpsichord concertos, masterfully played by Ogg on a Flemish double by Willard Martin. Particularly fascinating was an early composition by J.C. Bach from his Berlin years—very *empfindsam*, and as far as one can get from the melodic pleantries of his London compositions.

Andrew Willis played a piano after Gottfried Silbermann by David Sutherland, with violinist

Gesa Kordes in works by C.P.E. Bach.

A programme of English and French music was exquisitely sung by Maria Jette (of *Prairie Home Companion* fame), accompanied expertly by Nanette Lunde on a harpsichord after Mietke by Joop Klinkhamer. There was new music, too, including a programme of works by Asako Hirabayashi, who played a very resonant French double by Knight Vernon. Gregory Crowell presented a programme tracking the northward migration of the Italian style in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, playing on clavichords by Peter Bavington (after Leipzig No. 10), and Thomas and Barbara Wolf (after Hoffmann).

Fascinating lectures and discussions included a keynote address on David Tannenberg by Laurence Libin, who focused largely on what can be learned from his recent discovery of a signed clavichord by Tannenberg. This talk was augmented by the presence on stage of the Schubert Club's own 18th-century Moravian clavichord, which shows some similarities to the Tannenberg instrument. Larry Palmer gave an entertaining presentation on unusual clavichord recordings. Particularly notable were a brilliant recording of Violet Gordon Woodhouse playing Mendelssohn, and a recording of Oscar Peterson (clavichord) and Joe Pass (guitar) in duet. Paul Irvin provided a thought provoking rumination on what it really means (or doesn't mean) to say that one is copying an historical instrument. Stating that "we make better copies of Ruckers than Ruckers did," Irvin issued a challenge to continue to work with a close knowledge of historical techniques, but to be one's own builder. This philosophy was beautifully demonstrated by a bentside spinet by Irvin that was part of the builders' exhibit. Constructed with a keyboard that slides in and out, parallel to the strings (and activated by a knee lever), this instrument allows the player to make adjustments to the plucking points, even while playing. After the initial novelty of exploring the extremes of plucking points wore off, the real fun came when the subtle shadings this instrument made possible became apparent. It seemed an ingenious way to make a small instrument with only one choir of strings much more flexible and colourful.

A panel discussion featuring panelists Edward Kottick, David Sutherland, and Philip Belt re-examined the revival of early keyboard instruments in the twentieth century, with a special emphasis on the work of John Challis. Though still much maligned in many circles, Challis' workmanship and ingenuity were outstanding, and it was heartening to hear such acknowledged experts call for a complete re-



assessment of this builder's work. Other topics covered included the work of David Way, and the early revival of the fortepiano.

The presence and participation of Philip Belt at the meeting was especially heart warming for all present. The MHKS made a special presentation to him in recognition of his pioneering work on the revival of the fortepiano. Belt had brought along a newly built piano (quite beautiful, and skillfully played by Michael Tsalka), as well as a separate pedal piano—something he intends to make his specialty now.

Another exciting event at this meeting was the participation of the first recipient of the Ben Bechtel Award. This award allows a young scholar or performer to attend the meeting cost-free, and honours the contributions to the MHKS of longtime member and Treasurer Ben Bechtel. Performer and scholar David Kim, a student of Malcolm Bilson, gave a fascinating talk on articulation markings in Schumann, followed by an exciting and seasoned performance of *Papillons* on a piano by Rodney Regier after Conrad Graf.

An important part of these meetings is the mingling of performers, scholars, and builders in a way that really is not possible at larger meetings, such as BEMFE. The exchange of ideas happens over the course of three days, during which time we are not only treated to great music and ideas, but to excellent food and fellowship, as well. Next year's meeting takes place 21 to 24 May in Iowa City, Iowa, and will focus on the music of Buxtehude and Scarlatti. Scheduled performers include Pieter-Jan Belder, Delbert Disselhorst, and Craig Cramer. [www.mhks.org](http://www.mhks.org)

## Two views of The Boston Early Music Festival 2007

### A View From the Fringe of the Fringe by Grant Colburn

The Boston Early Music Festival 2007 was for me a head first dive into a brave new early music world. As one living in Green Bay, Wisconsin—a *mecca* for football, beer and bratwurst but hardly early music—it was my first exposure directly with the heart of the beast. I was asked to the festival by Gavin Black, director of the Princeton Early Keyboard Center to play some short recitals of my harpsichord works.

I arrived in Boston on Monday, and on Tuesday met my first room mate, Frans Muller, recently arrived from Holland. Frans is the author (along with his wife Julia) of the essays "Completing the Picture: The Importance of Reconstructing Early Opera," which appeared in

*Early Music*, and Purcell's *Dioclesian* on the Dorset Garden Stage. After some friendly conversation I headed to the expo center only to find that the exhibition didn't actually open until Wednesday. So I headed bravely out with my fringe concert schedule and site map in hand. The first concert I attended was "Dances and Doubles" by the leaders of the baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado with Cynthia Miller Freivogel (violin) and Frank Nowell (harpsichord). It included the works of Bach, Buxtehude (for the 300 anniversary of his death) and Heinrich Biber, particularly his works in alternate tunings known as *scordatura*. The performances were brilliant and fiery though warm humid day and broken air conditioning in the hall may have contributed just a bit. The one thing that Boston definitely has going for it is beautiful locations for concerts. This one was in the main room of the Goethe Institute.

The next recital I was the favourite of mine for the entire festival, "Restoration: The Music of Henry Purcell's England." The songs were preformed by Kathryn Aaron (soprano) and accompanied by David Walker (archlute) and Joshua Lee (viola da gamba). A particular standout was the anonymous 16th-century *a capella* song, "The Death of Queen Jane," a sadly moving performance. In that dark church the outside modern world seemed fade away for just a few moments. By now it was time to meet up with my host Gavin Black and join in some harpsichord moving. I also met John Burkhalter III of the *Practitioners of Musick* ensemble. John and I in particular hit it off immediately due to his love of the music of colonial America and the English baroque. With my own obsession for the English baroque needless to say we had much to talk about!

After delivering Mr. Black's prized 17th-century anonymous Italian harpsichord and 1785 Longman and Broderip spinet to their new temporary home, I was off to see some of the historic sights of Boston. The next day brought about the official opening day for the exhibition. It was then that I could finally see all the work that had been put in by everyone involved. The harpsichords were dominated by the presence of Zuckermann and the Harpsichord Clearing House rooms, which were filled with harpsichords, clavichords, and even lute harpsichords, but sadly no fortepianos to be seen. David Black also noted the lack of baroque cellos finding only one 5-string in a sea of viola da gambas (including electric gambas complete with headphone jacks for private practicing).

My listening experiences for the day were mostly short recitals performed in the Princeton

Early Keyboard Center's room. Mr. Burkhalter and the brothers Black performed many recorder solo sonatas and pieces of England and colonial America, as well as other small ensembles throughout the day. I also learned, with Princeton's room being on the ninth floor, the meaning of patience as the four elevators seemed to reach our floor about once every 20 minutes and by then almost filled to overflowing. Oddly enough the stairs were out of the question, due to their being kept locked except for going to the ground level for fire purposes.

My own performance was to be a rather unique and ironic thing for an early music festival: newly written baroque and renaissance music being played on instruments two to three hundred years old! But the audience was appreciative and supportive, and for me it was a revelation to hear music I'd written in mean tone and other non-equal temperaments.

Thursday morning I played another short recital, then attended a talk by John Burkhalter on the recently discovered Neff Manuscript, the largest known repository of keyboard music in early Federalist Period America. The intimate lecture also included musical examples played by Gavin Black. We were able to examine the hand written volume close up.

My final fringe concert was *Cartoline d'Italia* (Postcards from Italy) a concert by *Ensemble La Strada* which included Arlene Travis (voice) Marie Dalby (viola da gamba) Grant Herried (theorbo, lute and voice) and Alexandra Snyder (harpsichord). Set in a beautifully gilded and white marbled room at the Boston Center for Adult Education, the concert featured music from 17th-century Italy including Allesandro Stradella, Francesco Rognoni, and Barbara Strozzi. It was the female composer that I found the most interesting, and the programme notes described "her ability to shift from measured to unmeasured sections and triple to duple meters; often melismatic treatment, and the poetry being the most important aspect." Also on the programme was a harpsichord sonata by Domenico Scarlatti played by Ms. Snyder. Though the piece was admirably performed, one did get the feeling that it was thrown into the programme at the last minute from Ms. Snyder's previous repertoire.

Throughout the festival the talk centred around this year's big excursion into baroque opera, *Psyché* by Jean Baptiste Lully. Unfortunately, I had to make a decision because also on Thursday was a performance by the Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra & Chorus of *The Judgement of Paris*, an ode by John Eccles. As I mentioned before, I have a strong attraction to

music of the English baroque so Britannia won out. Stephen Stubbs and Paul O'Dette (also the directors of the opera) led an energetic and at times humorous performance of Eccles' piece. Originally one of four odes written to the same text, *The Judgement of Paris* was part of a competition put on in 1700 for which composers Daniel Purcell, Gottfried Finger and the young John Weldon (a student of Purcell's) each submitted a work. Weldon won the prize with Eccles' setting taking second. Today many wonder about the results though the general consensus is that while Eccles' Ode is highly admired today, it may have been considered somewhat old fashioned at the time. The second half of the concert featured incidental music from various operas by Rameau. This music, though pleasant, couldn't help but seem a bit of a letdown after the dramatic solos and choruses of the first half.

As Friday morning arrived I had time for one further excursion, a symposium led by Messrs. Stubbs and O'Dette on the challenges of mounting Lully's opera *Psyché*. I stayed for two of the allotted four hours and was amazed at the difficulty involved in such a production, beginning with the fact that there were several wildly varying versions of the opera. I had known from previous discussions with Mr. Muller that his felt that for all its attention to period instrumentation, costumes and machinery, the opera lacked what for him was the primary ingredient for accurate period opera: moveable and changeable scenery. So I knew what was coming. One could sense almost a moment of dread as Frans asked his question. Surprisingly enough the directors of the opera had to admit that Frans was correct; that due to there still being few modern concert stages deep enough for scenery changes, it was the one element where they had to break with history.

From the perspective of one being on the fringe of the fringe concerts, I found my experience to be one of wonder at the diversity and variety of people and music available at the Boston Early Music Festival. One couldn't help but hear from many of the "good old days" of the festival when previously there were over 20 harpsichord builders attending rather than the nine of this season. Many blamed the high cost of participating along with the transport of such large instruments over land and sea. The conspicuous absence of Hubbard harpsichords was remarked about in particular, especially considering their location so close to Boston.

As with most things today, profit invariably seems to drive the existence of such an event. This is perhaps unavoidable but one would hope to



perhaps create a balance between profit and providing a well rounded experience to the festival goer. The cost to the festival participants is significant, though to go to the exposition for a day costs only \$5. I for one would be willing to pay a higher entrance fee to see a bit more of the actual history of music provided with displays of period instruments, first edition books, original manuscripts and the like. It would be a nice addition to the festival to draw museums and collectors to share their items with an interested and enthusiastic public, perhaps with the possibility to donate towards the upkeep and preservation of such a valuable part of our musical history.

But this is a trifling quibble to what was a grand and memorable experience for me. One must admire the organisation and expertise it must take to assemble all the various parts into a complete week long package of music, craftsmanship and art. And though the two years between festivals may seem like a long time for those of us impatient to return, I am sure for those directly involved in the planning, the clock is already away ticking fast.

#### **A view from an Exhibitor at BEMF**

*by Gavin Black*

I have had what I think is a somewhat unusual relationship to the Boston Early Music Festival. I have been to every Festival since 1989, always, until this past one, as a visitor. But I have actually never gone to any concert, recital, lecture or other event there of which I was not myself a part. This does not mean that I don't think well of those events: I have always heard remarkably good things about the opera, and many of the other goings-on look really enticing. The problem is that I can never tear myself away from the Exhibition. I am sort of an Exhibition groupie. The instruments, the books, the music, and, especially, the chance to bump into people I know whom I don't see very often, are all irresistible. (In 2005 I came the closest to actually attending a recital. It was in a harpsichord builder's room, and it was something fascinating, but I had only half an hour until I had to leave, and there were some rooms I hadn't visited yet!).

At this past Festival, I found myself present as an exhibitor, having decided to take a room on the ninth floor on behalf of the Princeton Early Keyboard Center, where I teach. The plan for this room was twofold. We brought two very interesting antique harpsichords – one unsigned and undated but clearly from Italy circa 1700 and the other a Thomas Culliford-built Longman &

Broderip spinet from 1785 – with a view to letting visitors inspect and play those instruments. We also scheduled many short recitals and lecture/demonstrations in the room, going for as much variety as we could muster. We ended up with lute songs, solo lute, all sorts of chamber music, renaissance consort music, solo harpsichord, clavichord, and organ, music for the Chinese instrument known as the *qin*, modern harpsichord music played by the composer, and more. There were seventeen events in all, and each was about half an hour long.

For me this was tremendous fun. I got to do some playing and a lot of listening, and I had the pleasure of meeting and talking to many people who visited. There was modest, steady traffic through the room, less modest and more steady on Friday and Saturday than earlier in the week. Our events on those two days were all “standing room only”, whereas the ones earlier in the week drew smallish crowds. (There were rumours that the slowness of the elevators prevented some people from deciding to visit the ninth floor at all.

I believe that the organisers are mindful of this problem as they plan for next time). There were, unfortunately, two sides to the heavy scheduling that we had done in our room. I can't think of anything we did there that I would have wanted to cut: far from it. However, visitors who wanted to play our instruments had less time to do so than they or I would have wished. We kept having to interrupt informal interaction for scheduled concerts, rehearsals, tuning, or warming up. I will have to muse in the coming months about how I can juggle these things more effectively another time.

Of course, I discovered that my role as the proprietor of an exhibit did what the enticement of many concerts had never been able to do: it prevented me from seeing very much of the Exhibition. (Several harpsichord builders whom I saw there had made the opposite transition from mine. They had decided not to exhibit, but to come as visitors, in part so that they *could* see things outside their own rooms! There was apparently a bit of an overall reduction in the number of exhibitors as compared to earlier years. This is also something that I gather the organisers are aware of and planning to work on for next time). I could only sneak away for a few minutes at a time, so I saw very little. Mostly I soaked up the hectic and joyous feeling created by hundreds of people who love early music going to and fro hoping – and expecting, with good reason – to bump into something exciting around each corner that they turn!



**Report on the one-day WEKA [Western Early Keyboard Association] Conference:**

**"The Historic Organ, Harpsichord and Fortepiano," Saturday, 2 June, 2007, in Seattle by John Edwards.**

*It might bring a smile to readers' faces to note that "weka" to a New Zealand-born expat signifies a small mischievous woodhen that loves to steal shiny things from campsites but which, as far as I know, is completely non-musical.*

The busy workshop day started at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral with presentations by Carole Terry, Professor of Organ and Harpsichord at the University of Washington, and Roger Sherman, Associate Cathedral Organist and President of Loft Recordings and Gothic Records. The great 1965 Flentrop organ that dominates the cathedral's east wall, the chapel organ built by Paul Fritts and modeled on 18th-century Dutch organs, and a delightful chamber organ made by Martin Pasi provided an ideal range of instruments for musical examples to illustrate their talks on history and technique.

Roger reminded us that the pipe organ was already at least 1650 years old when the harpsichord was born, but the lineage of the modern organ dates back to the 1400's, when large Gothic organs, none of which survive, needed up to 22 pumpers! The Baroque organ too required team work: five pumpers and a stop-puller, as well as the keyboardist. Limitations on practice time had two consequences: the development of the art of improvisation, and production by organ builders of clavichords and harpsichords as practice instruments for the home.

Roger and Carole explored the qualities of the clavichord, harpsichord and piano keyboards as preparation for organ technique. The clavichord, for example, forces precise regulation of touch while the harpsichord demands precision of onset and release. An unexpected novelty was due to Jack Peters, who exhibited his newly completed *clavicytherium*. In the afternoon we moved to Queen Anne Christian Church where Elaine Thornburgh conducted a master class using Jillon Dupree's superb Kevin Fryer 2002 harpsichord based on the 1624 Colmar Ruckers. Elaine emphasized techniques that build on the basis of melody, harmony and rhythm: the role of articulation, of the silence or rests etching the baseline harmonic foundation, of tied notes and gestural units in the creation of dynamic phrasing. The performances of several conference participants were critiqued, bringing out points of technique and interpretation that were

enlightening to all of us.

Nancy Zylstra then discussed aspects of Baroque vocal performance, focusing on how continuo players can support and assist singers in their exploration of early music. We then moved to the nearby Queen Anne home of George Bozarth and Tamara Friedman to savour the sights and sounds of their remarkable collection of pianos. George gave an account of their historical context and Tamara played pieces appropriate to each instrument. We heard, in historical order, their Nanette Streicher 1805 replica, made by Ken Bakeman in 1980; a second Streicher 1815 replica (its design influenced by customer Beethoven) made by Tom and Barbara Wolf; a charming English 1820 Broadwood; and a massive 1867 straight-strung Chickering grand, once owned by the first territorial Governor of Washington Territory. We were impressed by the range of tonal color brought out by Tamara's touch, something largely lost in the evolution of the modern grand.

We all agreed that this was a wonderful, memorable day, one which we hope to have repeated in the future. Many thanks to all who helped make the conference so successful: Barbara King and Jillon Dupree for all their hard work in organizing it; Sheli Nan, Michelle Futornick and Elaine Thornburgh for their helpful input; Susan Jarrett, John Edwards, Deborah Brown, Barbara King, Gerrity Shupe and Jillon Dupree for the delicious food; the many attendees who helped with carpooling; our five excellent master class participants; and all our superb artists for their insightful, witty and enlightening presentations.

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