

Harpsichord & *fortepiano*

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Musical Instrument Research Catalog
(MIRCAt)

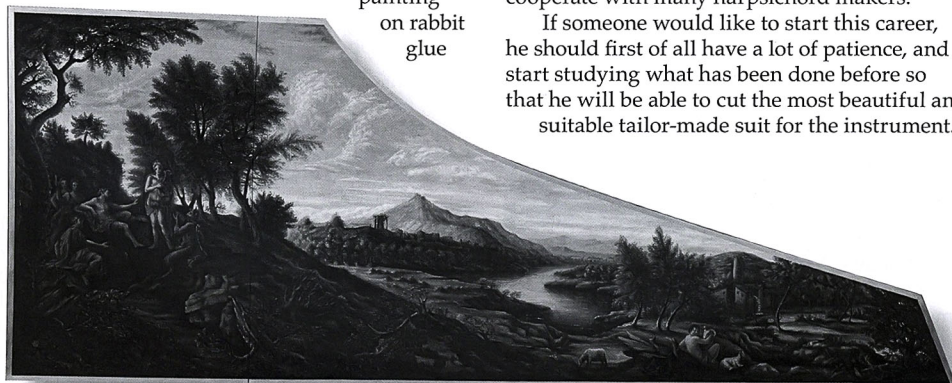
A PATH TOWARD LID DECORATION

by Elisabetta Lanzoni

I always considered harpsichords more than simple musical instruments because the ebonists, gilders and painters that decorate them are witnesses to the fashion and the artistic taste of the time in which they worked. That's why when my husband, Gabriele Gamberi, started to handcraft harpsichords. I engaged in research and planning decorations for these instruments, even though I had had a chance to decorate a harpsichord which was offered to me first by another well known craftsman. I'm still working with Gabriele.

I started my job one step at a time (if you can call a "job" an activity which involves so much emotion). First of all I started with case decorations using gold leaf and oil painting, inspired from motifs widely used in the past. Then I planned decorations, looking for motifs which respected the harpsichord's style of decoration, and found compatible iconographic models. Finally, I started to paint the lid and flap and —to obtain better results— I studied the traditional method,

painting
on rabbit
glue



and chalk layers. So I began to submit to my customers landscapes by famous painters like Claude Lorraine, Salvator Rosa etc.

My previous studies led me to my present activity. I first graduated *Maestro nell'Arte Ceramica* (Maestro in Faience decoration), then I graduated in painting at *Accademia di Belle Arti di Ravenna*, a sort of university for drawing and painting, and I have always worked in the field of arts and restoration, and also in artistic and archeological conservation. When painting, I prefer lid painting even though I find case decoration very rewarding.

I am deeply proud that famous musicians such as Maestro Riccardo Muti, Maestro Jesper B. Christensen and others appreciated my work and entrusted me with the painting of their personal harpsichords. Every painting is a source of pride for me and when, at the end of a piece of work I have to give it to the owner, I am almost "sorry" about being parted from it. I work for harpsichord owners who would like to decorate them and I also cooperate with many harpsichord makers.

If someone would like to start this career, he should first of all have a lot of patience, and start studying what has been done before so that he will be able to cut the most beautiful and suitable tailor-made suit for the instrument.