

# Harpsichord & fortepiano

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# LETTERS, NEWS & VIEWS

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*Dear Editor:*

I promised a comment and addition to Daniel Moult's excellent article "Ten Top Historic Organs". I was pleased that he worded the title that way, rather than being tempted to say they were *the* ten top historic organs! My addenda are all from the seventeenth century:

The first is the organ in Adlington Hall in Cheshire. Adlington's two manual organ is a rare survival, and fine example of the organ maker's art, and is England's most important 17th-century instrument, giving some idea of the sound world of Purcell and his contemporaries. The organ occupies most of the east wall of the Great Hall. It's undated, but believed to have been made around 1693. It bears a coat of arms celebrating the marriage of John Legh to Isabella Robartes in that year, and the style is in keeping with that date. The maker is unknown, though some clues point to the well-respected German organ maker, Bernard Smith. The organ was painstakingly restored in 1958-9 by Noel Mander, following at least a century of neglect, and was a fine early example of a sensitive restoration of a historic organ.

The second is the Hans Scherer organ of 1624 in the Stephanskirche of Tangermünde on the Elbe to the north of Magdeburg. This is one of the only surviving examples of an early 17th-century North German organ, having been built by Scherer of Hamburg following a disastrous fire which destroyed the town centre in 1620. There are 32 stops over three manuals and pedal, all with the C/E short octave. It was restored in 1990-92 by Schuke of Potsdam, and still possesses certain characteristics of the renaissance organ played by Sweelinck in Amsterdam, where so many of the Hamburg organists of the period studied: a large plenum on the main manual, flutes and reeds on the *Oberpositiv*, including the treble

compass Zincke which is mentioned as a part of many solo registrations, plenum and flutes on the *Rückpositiv*, and the much more developed pedal which is typical of North Germany. It is tuned in quarter comma meantone, and here one can experience the sort of sounds that would have been heard by Scheidemann, Jacob Praetorius, Reincken and a very young Buxtehude.

The third is an organ which immediately takes one into the life of Buxtehude, and is probably the most important historic organ in the whole of Germany – the great 1659 Stellwagen in the Marienkirche, Stralsund. Stralsund is east of Hamburg near what is now the Polish border on the south coast of the Baltic, and the Marienkirche is a brick Gothic church only a little smaller than Buxtehude's Marienkirche in Lübeck, and unlike Lübeck was never bombed. Like Tangermünde, the previous organ was destroyed in a fire, so this is a completely new organ built by the organ maker who worked on the organs in Lübeck shortly before Buxtehude took up his appointment there in 1668, and reflecting both the most up to date thinking, and the Danish tonal world with which Buxtehude was so wedded.

The organ was restored after the Second World War in the late 1950s by Schuke of Potsdam – and this, like the Mander Adlington organ, was a model restoration of its period. It has now been restored again following much research and the discovery in the church archive of all the original documents relating to the making of the organ. The extraordinary level of survival can be seen in the fact that the 32-foot pedal Principal front case pipes are the only surviving 32-foot of this period in Germany – most were melted down for munitions. The unusual compasses are original and reflect the fact that Stellwagen didn't have to use old material and case around a C/E short octave, so here we have keyboards of C, D – c<sup>3</sup> and a pedal compass of C, D – f<sup>1</sup> – quite

extraordinary for 1659! In short, here one can experience an organ almost exactly like those Buxtehude played (apart from those unusual compasses!), with the acoustics of a church near identical as well, and where the high musicians' galleries still exist in the nave (They weren't rebuilt in Lübeck in the reconstruction after the War)! This organ has to be in any top ten historic organs of Europe!

Many thanks,

*Douglas Hollick, Lincolnshire*

*Editor's Note:*

*Douglas Hollick also recommends the following site, which has a slideshow of stunning photographs at Stralsund <<http://www.st-mariengemeinde-stralsund.de/slideshow%20stellwagenorgel.html>>*

The 2013 annual conference of **the Historical Keyboard Society of North America (HKSNA)** took place in Colonial Williamsburg, VA from 31 May – 1 June. The theme of the conference was “Roots of American Musical Life” and Williamsburg was a particularly appropriate venue, with its wealth of 18th-century ambiance and its large collection of restored English antique spinets, harpsichords and forte pianos. In addition to the early English instruments available for recital and concert use were some examples from modern makers: an English bentside spinet by John Watson, a 17th-century Ridolfi-based Italian harpsichord by Robert Brooke, a brand new copy of a 17th-century La Brèche harpsichord by Owen Daly, a very early 18th-century Ferrini-based forte piano by David Sutherland and a Taskin-based French double manual harpsichord by Knight Vernon. All received use in recitals during the event, as did a number of the antique instruments in the Williamsburg collection.

Musical entertainments also included evening chamber concerts featuring music which was in American hands during the Colonial

Period. In addition, the conference was held in conjunction with the 2013 conference/meeting of the American Musical Instrument Society (AMIS), so occasionally, one could hear the strains of a concertina in the halls or wander into a presentation on the state of balalaika playing in America.

The 2014 conference is now planned for mid-May in Vermillion, SD, which enjoys the presence of the National Museum of Music and one of the campuses of the University of South Dakota

*-submitted by Rob Brooke*

From 19-21 July 2013, **the 2nd International Conference on Historical Keyboard Music** was held at The University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

The symposium brief was the internationalisation in music in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There were a wide range of topics covered in two parallel sessions, which covered sources, modes, genre, performance practice, accompaniment, and issues of national styles as influences.

Kuopio, in Finland's eastern lake area, is home to a fine array of clavichords harpsichords, forte pianos, and baroque organs. During the **2nd Nordic Historical Keyboard Festival (14-23 August 2013)** they were featured in 21 concerts and a course for students, organized by artistic directors and virtuoso performers Anna Maria McElwain (Finland) and Michael Tsalka (Israel/Holland). They were joined by players from Europe, Asia and North America, including Roman Chlada, Ulrika Davidsson, Marcia Hadjimarkos, Jaana Ikonen, Kaoru Iwamura, Sonia Lee, Joyce Lindorff, Anna Maria Oraamo, Peter Sykes, Imbi Tarum and Pilvikki Virtaperko. Instrumentalists were Walter Reiter and Hugo Ticciati, violin; Markus Kuikka, viola da gamba; Martin Rummel, cello; Alon Sariel, mandolin; and Raivo Tarum, baroque trumpet. The diverse repertoire ranged from early vocal intabulations to newly commissioned works for clavichord

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(Leonardo Coral, Mexico), fortepiano (Liu Qing, China) and harpsichord (Mari-Anne Hof, Holland), with opportunities to hear music of Fux, Pasquali, Fischer, and others, along with a satisfying dose of Bach and sons. For more information see <http://www.nordicclavichord.org/>

*-submitted by Joyce Lindorff, Professor of Keyboard Studies, Boyer College of Music and Dance at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA.*



Photo: Artistic Directors Anna Maria McElwain and Michael Tsalka with Sonia Lee and Joyce Lindorff following Lee's 20 August recital

From 3-7 September 2013 **The Eleventh International Clavichord Symposium** was held in Magnano, Italy. The focus was on C.P.E. Bach. <http://www.musicaanticamagnano.com/>

**7-9 November 2013: Early Music Festival and Exhibition.** Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, UK.

<http://www.earlymusicshop.com>

**8-10 November 2013: Stiftung Kloster Michaelstein Symposium.** "Zur Entwicklung des Klavierspiels von Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach bis Franz Liszt" Blankenburg, Germany. With Arthur Schoonderwoerdj, Artist in Residence. <http://musik.kloster-michaelstein.de/de/kurse-konferenzen/konferenzen/2013/>

### **12-14 March 2014: Conference at the Horniman Museum: Roots of Revival**

This conference will be a three-day forum for presenting research on the lives and work of collectors, enthusiasts, craftsmen and musicians who had an impact on the course of the 20th century early music revival. Presentations on the historic models that makers such as Dolmetsch used as prototypes, accounts of their workshops and working methods, and of restorations that they undertook, are invited. Research into 19th and early 20th century notions about historic performance practice will also be welcomed.

The Museum's Music Gallery, displaying some 1,200 instruments, is soon to be supplemented by a new permanent keyboard instrument exhibit, including several examples from the Victoria and Albert Museum. A current temporary exhibition, the Art of Harmony, featuring about 40 instruments of all types from the V&A will continue to run during the conference and remain open until the end of March 2014.

The deadline for abstracts was November 2013. For more information visit <http://www.horniman.ac.uk/visit/events/event/roots-of-revival>

**29-31 May 2014: American Musical Instrument Society (AMIS) meeting**, Huron, Ohio. [www.amis.org](http://www.amis.org)

**23-31 August 2014: Comité International des Musées et Collections d'Instruments de Musique (CIMCIM) Nordic Conference:**

"Collectors at Music Museums: Reasons and Means" <http://network.icom.museum/cimcim/>