

Harpsichord & fortepiano

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Musical Instrument Research Catalog
(MIRCat)



photo by Rachel Clements

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

Dear Readers,

The issue we have interviews with two Renaissance men; both of them play more than one type of historic keyboard instrument and either make instruments or research them. We follow this up with a great insight into the inimitable Landowska and the Pleyel firm with whom she was paired. Finally, we must extend our apologies to Paul Irvin, whose short biography was inadvertently omitted from Vol 18/1 (Autumn 2013). We have included it in this issue in "About the Contributors". For our next issue we would welcome any items on C.P.E. Bach (or the Bach family) in light of his recent 300th birthday!

Thanks, Dr. Micaela Schmitz, Editor

LETTERS, NEWS & VIEWS

The Columbian harpsichordist **Rafael Puyana** died on 1 March 2014 in Paris, aged 81.

Because the source that funded the **Westfield International Fortepiano Competition** in 2011 no longer provides support for this purpose, a second competition cannot take place in 2014 as initially planned. Instead, Westfield is launching what we hope will be an even more exciting project: an International Piano Festival to be held in Ithaca, New York in August 2015, featuring recitals, lectures, chamber music sessions, and masterclasses given by leading performers, scholars, instrument-makers and organologists from around the world. The festival will take a historical approach to pianos of all varieties, into the early 20th century, offering access to Cornell's outstanding instrument collection, providing advanced instruction and musicological tools to visiting pianists, and significant performance opportunities to young players. Participants will be able to explore aspects of source studies, notation and interpretation, organology, critical and cultural contexts, and historical and contemporary approaches to keyboard performance. The Center will have several bursaries to bring aspiring young players to the festival, to play, to study, to participate. – Annette Richards, Executive Director

The Horniman Museum, London launched its collection of keyboard instruments on 29 January 2014. The event featured prominently the Kirckman 1772 harpsichord which was restored in 2013 by Christopher Nobbs and Ben Marks (who was featured in our issue on apprentices in H & F 13/2,-Spring 2009).

Other instruments in the collection include many from the Victoria and Albert Museum on permanent loan. On view were an octave virginals, anon 1625-50; an anonymous virginals from c1568 Belgium; a virginals by Annibale dei Rossi; and a virginals by Thomas White. Spinets includes ones by John Player, Crang 1758, Mahoon 1771, an anonymous octave spinet, late 17th/ early 18th century; and most interestingly, a Blanchet spinet 1709. A Chickering-Dolmetsch clavichord 1940's was also on display, as well as other keyboard instruments. The collection is sited within the Music Gallery as a whole, where display s allow the user to simply press button on a screen to show information on a particular instrument or play a short recorded excerpt.

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Peter Bazalgette (leftmost), Mimi Waitzman, and others examine an instrument in the collection. *Photo by Ludo des Cognets*

Peter Bazalgette, Chair, Arts Council England, gave a short address explaining how the museum is part of “our collective memor” and that he hoped the keyboard collection would emphasise “music not marquetry” through many live events. Mimi Waitzman, Deputy Keeper Musical Instruments, Horniman Museum, noted that after the Kirckman’s restoration “a voice that was waiting within the instrument was released”. She also noted the museum role in supporting culture in the locality of Lewisham and hosting the Dulwich Music Festival harpsichord competition.

By way of “inauguration” Jane Chapman played pieces newly composed for the Kirckman which had won a recent composition competition, as well as music by Bach and one of the Hindustani airs from the Oriental Miscellany (pub. 1789) that was featured in her article in *H & F* 17/2 (Spring 2013).

Also in attendance were Penelope Cave – an important representative of the British Harpsichord Society; Pamela Nash – a big proponent of new music for the instrument; Peter Bavington, Richard Ireland and Judith Wardman from the British Clavichord Society; donors from keyboard charitable trusts; and members of the Dolmetsch family.

Report: Roots of Revival Conference, Horniman Museum, 12-14 March 2014

The Horniman Museum in Forest Hill, London has a

greatly extended display of musical instruments including many fine examples of keyboard instruments. This wide ranging conference lasting three days covered instruments and historical personalities who had much to do with the revival of music from the past. In this short report I will cover mainly the papers dealing with keyboard instruments. A more complete report will be published in *Early Music Performer*, the magazine of the National Early Music Association.

Dr. Peter Holman opened proceedings by pointing out that study of music of the past first became established with the need to revive cathedral repertory after the discontinuity of the Civil War. Although revival of older music long preceded him, Arnold Dolmetsch introduced a new opportunity, that of being able to make a career as scholar performer to revive music and instruments of the past. This led to combining of the roles of conservatories with universities which was uniquely practised in Britain for the early part of the twentieth century, but soon spread to other countries.

An important paper for keyboard players was delivered by Martin Elste from the Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung, Berlin. He pointed out that Wanda Landowska regarded the harpsichord as a stringed organ less than as a precursor to the piano. Gustav Leonhardt had a different concept and regarded the harpsichord as a sort of mechanical lute. This moved the emphasis from tonal colours to finesse of touch. This talk was followed by a lecture recital by Hank Knox and Rachelle Taylor from Canada. The focus was on music by G.G. Kapsberger using source documents in lute tablature to reconstruct keyboard music. This methodology bypasses later editorial interpretations of keyboard sources.

The second day started with a talk by Thomas McCracken from Washington, D.C. describing the fruitful collaborations between Arnold Dolmetsch and the U.S. piano maker Chickering & Sons. The paper concentrated on viols but it is known that the collaboration produced 75 keyboard instruments

(clavichords, spinets, virginals and harpsichords) manufactured between 1906 and 1911 which graced the homes of several wealthy families in the U.S. In a later talk harpsichord maker Malcolm Rose described an English rectangular virginal made by Thomas Bolton in 1684. Leslie Ward of the Dolmetsch firm had conducted some restoration in 1953. Since then it had deteriorated and Malcolm Rose had been asked to put the instrument back in to working order for a recording. This gave Mr. Rose a good opportunity to study changes in conservation methods over 60 years.

Sonia Gonzalo Delgado from Aragon, Spain described a set of correspondence between Wanda Landowska (1879-1959) and Joaquin Nin (1879-1949). This mainly concerned whether it was appropriate to perform early keyboard works on the harpsichord (as it existed then) or on the piano. Nin believed the harpsichord was an inferior instrument and should not be used for this repertoire.

The final day of the conference produced two papers of interest to keyboard players. The first by Bradley Strauchen-Scherer was concerned with the role of Emanuel Winternitz in curating the instrument collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and arranging concerts using these instruments. The second, by Katherine Hawnt of Southampton University and the National Trust, dealt with the revival of the harpsichord as a suitable instrument for modern day composers, using Raymond Russell as the springboard and Mottisfont Abbey (Russell's home) as a location.

—submitted by Mark Windisch

Report : The Second International Conference on Historical Keyboard Music, Edinburgh, 19-21 July 2013.

Two years ago, the first conference in what looks set to become a regular series of events took place in Edinburgh, and was so successful that as it drew to a close, delegates were already looking forward to the next. I was among them, and returned in the summer of 2013 for the second conference, which more than lived up to expectations.

Any event that looks for support among people fascinated by the history of keyboard music obviously has a head start if it can take place in Edinburgh. The University's world famous collection of historic keyboard instruments offers the perfect environment. The extraordinary galleries at St Cecilia's Hall contain examples of almost every category of keyboard, from all eras of instrument making, including some of the world's most significant — and musically remarkable — clavichords, harpsichords and early members of the piano family. The concert hall itself, in which many presentations and recitals took place over the three days of the conference, is one of the oldest in Britain, and ideally suited to the performance of the music under discussion.

With the subtitle of "The Keyboard and its role in the internationalization of music 1600-1800", the gathering attracted a range of speakers from around the world. Delegates from North and South America were able to swap ideas with colleagues from Asia and all over Europe, which emphasized how wide an interest there is in historical keyboards and their music. Organised by Dr Andrew Woolley and a mainly Edinburgh-based team of musicians, musicologists and organologists, the conference offered so many options in parallel sessions that difficult choices had to be made: should one attend a session on Early Iberian and Italian repertoire and instrumentation, or instead hear papers on aspects of continuo and improvisation? What soon became evident was that every speaker had something interesting to contribute, with many fresh insights to impart, or new research to talk about. And although there were more than 40 contributors, each with his or her specialist area of interest, every presentation had been put together in such a way as to make it accessible to the non-specialist.

The conference began with a tour of the instruments, which was a familiar pleasure for some, and gave others their first sight of the collection. After a reception hosted by Ashgate Publishing and the Friends of St Cecilia's, there was the ideal ice-breaker of an informal concert by Catarina

Vicens and Christoph Prendl, whose recital of music from *Parthenia* and *Parthenia Inviolata*, on virginals and viols, established a theme that was to run through the weekend: the 400th anniversary of the publication of *Parthenia*. Over the next two days, we were treated to a variety of lectures and performances, while between sessions and over lunch there was the chance to meet other delegates and explore further those aspects that were of particular interest. It would be impossible to give a full account of every contribution, but to give an idea of the range of topics explored, I'll mention some particular highlights. At the time of writing, abstracts are available at <http://www.ichkm.music.ed.ac.uk>.

On Saturday morning, Luc Ponet discussed organ interpretation and organists' practice in the area of Liège in the early seventeenth century, with reference to the recently discovered Berx Manuscript, found at Tongeren. It was intriguing to find that local manuscripts of the era reflect a strong Italian influence, as well as an individuality that distinguishes the practices of Liege from those of, for example Brussels. Since Liège was a centre of singing and organ building, it was interesting to find that the influence of secular music was becoming significant, with organ intabulations of popular songs included in the Berx Manuscript, and indications that the Great Organ sometimes accompanied vocal music.

The conference did not focus exclusively on the "standard" instruments, and Bart Naessens, from Bruges, reflected on the multiplicity of claviorgana available to the keyboard player in around 1600. A lack of specific instructions for the claviorganum in contemporary treatises may reflect that they were in fact not that unusual, and the variety of pieces specifying "organ and harpsichord" could indicate that they were not so uncommon as we might imagine.

Desmond Earley, of University College, Dublin, opened a wide-ranging session examining basso continuo technique, with a consideration of French practice regarding arpeggiation. He was followed by Thérèse de Goede, who spoke on Italian influences

on continuo playing across Europe, and Gustavo Angelo Dias, who discussed thorough-bass realization in the late 18th-century Iberian manual of Francisco Solano. Returning to English soil, Penelope Cave looked at some of the instructional texts published for amateur players in around 1800, and their approach to "Preluding for Beginners". It seems that while instructors were keen to encourage improvisation, and a spirit of rhythmic freedom and spontaneity, they were at the same time encouraging students to study written out preludes.

It goes without saying that keyboard players have always been an interesting group of people, and James Hume introduced us to the life of the early 18th-century organist John Reading, whose manuscripts reflect his varied career as singer, schoolmaster, (at Dulwich College) church organist, copyist and opera buff. Considering one particular manuscript among Reading's surviving corpus, James Hume followed the somewhat turbulent life of this little known figure, and discussed Reading's motives for producing his book.

Peter Holman, who looked at orchestral and conducting practices in the Georgian theatre, gave a particularly illuminating paper. Starting with the early eighteenth century, when a continuo group seems to have taken priority over the rest of the orchestral players — in both importance and salary — he related the way in which instrumentation and orchestral direction developed through the century. Handel's arrival clearly brought changes, with the composer directing his largely Italian and German forces from the harpsichord. In the 1770s Giardini brought a new emphasis on the string section of the orchestra, with his insistence on unified bowing practices — and higher pay! — for his violinists. From this point on, one sees the harpsichord gradually being marginalised, and in some cases vanishing altogether from the pit in the 1780s. The early nineteenth century saw the advent of the piano to the theatre, and Peter concluded by noting that the first use of the baton by a non-instrumental director seems to have taken place in 1832.