

# Harpsichord & fortepiano

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Musical Instrument Research Catalog  
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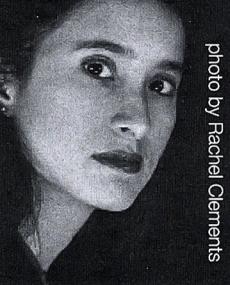


photo by Rachel Clements

# A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

*Dear Readers,*

The issue we include a tribute to Christopher Hogwood, CBE, an interview with keyboardist Mahan Esfahani, a very useful piece on historical fingering by Richard Lester, and a special feature on the keyboard pictured in Vermeer's painting *The Music Lesson*. Please note that we have re-ordered some of our usual items to allow for colour images on the inside back cover. Because it's quite a full issue we are holding over reviews for next time, but promise to feature many, especially ones concerning pedagogy.

*Thanks, Dr. Micaela Schmitz, Editor*

## LETTERS, NEWS & VIEWS

### From 9-25 October 2014, the fourth instalment of the Geelvinck International Fortepiano

**Festival** took place in the Netherlands. The Festival, established by the Museum Geelvinck Hinlopen Huis, Amsterdam, promotes the Sweelinck Collection of historical square pianos and fortepianos, which was originally part of Amsterdam Conservatory. This year, the Festival was under the artistic leadership of Michael Tsalka and the patronage of Richard Egarr. Circa 30 events—including 25 concerts, two symposia, master classes and two competitions—were organized over 16 days in central Amsterdam, including the Geelvinck Hinlopen Huis, the Pianola Museum and the Posthoornkerk as well as other locations across the Netherlands, among them Jagthuis and Castle Heeswijk.

Outstanding performers of early keyboards, such as Willem Brons, Megumi Tanno, Bart van Oort, Ursula Dütschler, Frederic Voorn, Kaoru Iwamura, and Anna Maria McElwain shared their expertise. They introduced audiences to 12 historic fortepianos and eight square pianos, reproductions of harpsichords and clavichords, and the best-preserved example of a Christian Müller organ, the "Geelvinck" organ (1757) in Beverwijk. Other instruments included a Buntebart & Sievers square piano (1787), a Zahler fortepiano (c. 1805), a Stodart fortepiano (1815), a Böhm fortepiano (c. 1820), a Dohnal fortepiano (c. 1825), an Ehlers square piano (c. 1828), a Rosenberger fortepiano (c. 1830), and a Pleyel grand piano (1849). Solo repertoire explored works such as Schubert's Sonata in C Minor, D958, Bach's "The Art of the Fugue", BWV 1080, and Beethoven's "Sonata Pathétique" in C Minor, Op. 13.

A satisfactory aspect was the collaboration of early keyboardists with string and wind players, including guitarists Mårten Falk and Izhar Elias, flutist Kinga Prada, mandolinist Alon Sariel and mezzosoprano Anna Traub. Chamber ensembles included original baroque instruments and also modern instruments. The sonic balance and dialogue achieved between these instruments and historical keyboards was particularly effective and even surprising.

The Festival also encouraged new compositions for early keyboards through its call for Contemporary Compositions on Historic Square Pianos. Extraordinary examples included "Inegales", composed for harpsichord, guitar and flute by Swedish composer Christopher Elgh, "Shogi/White Dragon" for koto and

**Harpsichord & fortepiano**

square piano by Russian/Dutch composer Anna Mikhailova and the imaginative miniature-cycle "The Wanderer" by Japanese composer Haruyo Horie. The next Festival will be 7-21 October 2015.

--Submitted by Dr. Angélica Minero Escobar

## **University of Cambridge Digital Library Music Collection:**

Cambridge Digital Library is launching a new Music Collection with the online release of the "crown jewels" of English lute music. Dating from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the manuscripts contain handwritten copies of scores by John Dowland, Francis Cutting and dozens of other early modern composers. Holdings include music scores, texts on music, ephemera, concert programmes, and archival materials documenting the life and work of composers. The new online collection of lute music comprises high-resolution zooming images of around 650 pieces contained in eight manuscripts, allowing full access to unique

items to anyone with internet access. Pieces from the collection range from celebratory jigs and dances, to popular ballads and sorrowful music for funerals, giving an extraordinary insight into the role of music in early modern England. More information at <http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/music>

In October 2014, Paul McNulty completed the **first replica of Brahms's favourite 1868 Streicher grand** (Serial No. 6713) for Neal Peres da Costa. We hope to report more on this next issue.



**27 June 2015** British Clavichord Society AGM and recital, London

**21-24 May 2015** International Conference of the Historical Keyboard Society of North America, The Schulich School of Music of McGill University, Montreal, Canada. 400-word abstracts for papers, lecture-recitals, mini-recitals, etc. on the theme "French Connections: Networks of Influence and Modes of Transmission of French Classical Keyboard Music" are due by 30 September 2014 to [hksna2015@gmail.com](mailto:hksna2015@gmail.com). This year, HKSNA hosts the **Ninth Aliénor International Harpsichord Composition Competition**.

For more details visit <http://historicalkeyboardsociety.org/competitions/alienor-competition/>.

## **A report on the Joint meeting of the German and Swiss Clavichord societies, 2 -5 October 2014, Schloss Bad Krozingen**

*Submitted by Paul Simmonds*

The town of Bad Krozingen, a few kilometres south of the university city of Freiburg (Breisgau) is well known as a spa town. Lesser known is its castle, more a stately home than a fortress, dating from 1579 but modernised in the Rococo style in 1748. Its medieval connection with the monastery of St Gall in Switzerland is one good reason for its hosting a joint event of the German and Swiss clavichord societies. The second more direct reason is that the second floor houses the Neumeyer/Junghans/Tracey collection of early keyboard instruments, one of the oldest privately owned collections in Germany. From 2-5 October about 40 enthusiasts from Europe and Alaska (!) assembled to enjoy concerts and talks centred on the historic clavichords in the collection and visiting reproductions, with the two themes "Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and

his followers" and "15th--and 16th-century music from Switzerland and Southern Germany".

Following an introduction by the German Society's president, Thomas Bregenzer, a concert was given on the Thursday evening by the French clavichordist Mathieu Dupouy, who presented a programme of three Prussian Sonatas and Fantasies by Carl Philipp, together with pieces by his elder brother Wilhelm Friedemann and J.W. Hässler. For this he used one of the most lively clavichords from the collection, the diatonically fretted clavichord dated 1787 by Späth and Schmahl. In a second concert on the Saturday he performed the remaining Prussian Sonatas and Wilhelm Friedemann's 12 Polonaises on a Friderici reproduction by Martin Kather.

On the Friday Michel Bignens gave an impressive performance of Swiss and South German music from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries on a Pisaurensis reproduction by Sander Ruy. As to whether playing from a facsimile of the original tablature contributed to the performer's infectious affinity with this period we can only speculate. I certainly have never heard a more convincing rendering of the keyboard music from this era.

For the Friday evening concert we returned to the late eighteenth century and in particular music associated with Beethoven. In addition we heard works by Hiller, Neefe and Haydn. At the start of the concert Müller apprised us of the death two days previously of the maker, and business partner of Marc Vogel, Michael Scheer. The performer had had close contact with Scheer, and as a tribute adjusted his programme to include works by J.S. Bach.

For the Saturday morning concert we returned to the Renaissance with music played by Maria Bayley on a reproduction of the Royal College clavicitherium alternating with the Pisaurensis clavichord. As an unplanned encore we heard similar music played on the Renaissance lute by Lukas Henning, who had grown up in the building in which we were guests, and is studying at the Schola Cantorum in Basel.

On the Saturday evening Enno Kastens, who for seven years was musical advisor to the collection's concert series, gave an electrifying recital on a tangent piano by Christoph Friedrich Schmahl dated 1801. He presented repertoire by the "typical" clavichord composers Benda, Reichardt, E.W. Wolf, Häßler, Eckard and, of course, C.P.E. Bach.

The final concert, on the Sunday, was given by Jermaine Sprosse with a programme of music by Wilhelm Friedemann Bach and his students – Nichelmann, Rust and .... Sprosse.

The concerts were interspersed with demonstrations of instruments in the collection and visiting clavichords brought to Bad Krozingen for the event. A weekend devoted mainly to Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach would hardly have been complete without clavichords based on the surviving Friderici models, and indeed there were four on display; two by Martin Kather, and one each by Benedikt Claas and Thomas Steiner. During the course of the demonstrations Martin Kather emphasized his disaffection with the term "copy", saying that it was inevitable that a maker would impose his own aesthetics on the instruments he made, no matter how closely he adhered to the basic plans. This was amply vindicated in the demonstrations which displayed the differences between the four instruments. Also presented were a number of unusual models. Volker Platte's reproduction of the clavichord by the Schaffhausen maker Johann Conrad Speisegger, 1725 (Leipzig 3072) echoed the Swiss theme, as did Andreas Herment's interpretation, in recycled wood, of the anonymous instrument in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (No. 89.4.1215), which may possibly be by the Swiss maker Johann Adam Türig.

There were three talks presented. Thomas Steiner and Vanya Hug discussed a group of six late 17th-century clavichords, which included the anonymous triple fretted in the Russell Collection (c.1670) and the von Sury instrument in the Basel collection. They suggested, with a suitably large pinch of academic caution, that the clavichords were closely related and possibly from the same region in Switzerland. Research is ongoing.

Paul Simmonds' talk presented work in progress with the help of two clavichords from the 1920s associated with the C. A. Pfeiffer piano manufacturer in Stuttgart. One of these, from the speaker's collection, was a 1926 reproduction of the 1787 Carl Lemme in the Leipzig collection (No.28); the second, transported by its owner from Stuttgart for the occasion, did not reproduce any known original, and had the curious feature of being single strung from f1 upwards. The latter instrument sports the Pfeiffer label; the Lemme owns to being made in the Pfeiffer workshops but both are almost certainly from the hand of the legendary Otto Marx. By a rather satisfying coincidence, three instruments from Carl Pfeiffer's private collection, including the 1772 Hubert and the tangent piano, are now housed in the Bad Krozingen collection.

The third talk, given by the Locarno instrument maker and technician Ambrosius Pfaff speculated on the extent to which vibrato was employed in music in general and the clavichord repertoire in particular. Technical problems of an electronic nature meant that many sound examples were not optimal, but the presentation was entertaining and generated considerable discussion.

The concerts were all of a high standard, and the majority of the performers were young professional players with enviable keyboard accomplishments who were taking the clavichord seriously. I occasionally had the feeling that sheer technical ability led to tempi which were not necessarily to the advantage of the music. This was most apparent in some of the Wilhelm Friedemann Bach polonaises, which are intricate and difficult to understand at the best of times. I felt that excessively fast tempi, albeit impressive, sometimes detracted from the ability of the clavichord to react optimally and deprived the listeners of much musical detail.

Also gratifying to observe is that makers have moved away from slavish copying of originals. It is clear that the understanding of what makes a clavichord work and sound well is now on a high level compared with a generation ago. This allows for creative experimentation without sacrificing the instrument's integrity. One maker, for example, to balance out a Friderici model's natural tendency to be bass-heavy, devised a way of making the extreme treble triple strung, but in such a way that no extra strings were needed and the instrument, by adjustment of the tangents, could be returned to its normal state if desired. It was also demonstrated how the quality of the listing cloth and the way it is woven between the string courses can radically alter the feel of the instrument and its sound.

Although attendance by members of the Swiss society was noticeably thin on the ground, a good 40 to 60 people were present at any one time. The main room of the castle with its baroque wall hangings, stuccoed ceiling and graciously parquettled floor was an ideal setting for this civilized and enlightened event.



Lukas Henning talking about his renaissance lute



Clavichords awaiting demonstration

Photos by Paul Simmonds