

# Harpsichord & fortepiano

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Musical Instrument Research Catalog  
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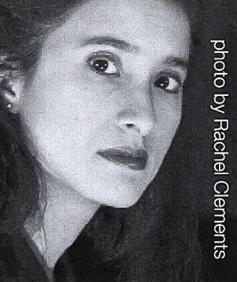


photo by Rachel Clements

# A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

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*Dear Readers,*

Many deaths in the music world this year have happened, including Pierre Boulez, Peter Maxwell Davies and George Martin, but most importantly for our field, Nikolaus Harnoncourt. When people ask who will fill their shoes, we have to keep in mind that nobody really came before some of the greats of the early music revival.

This issue we include a follow up to our piece by Richard Troeger on the Pleyel. It seems there are more instruments inspired by pianos of this later era. (Next issue we hope to include an interview of David Winston regarding the clavicharpe.) . Our interviewers have learned about Maggie Cole and about Paul Irvin, who himself has contributed several items to this magazine, all extremely thought-provoking.

I have managed to review two items in this issue. Books seem to fall to me and I couldn't really resist the novel about Francis Tregian. Who thought I would finally get to use the word "eponymous" in print? As I have a second copy, I'm offering it as a prize to whomever submits the best suggestion for our next novel to review.

Subscribers should note that our banking details have changed from HSBC to the Co-op, so any standing orders will need updating. Online subscription renewals now allow for recurring payments, and those who wish to make one-off payments can still make bank transfers; however please check that you have the amounts correct, to take shipping and currency conversion into account.

Thanks,

*Dr. Micaela Schmitz, Editor*

## LETTERS, NEWS & VIEWS

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## OBITUARY

Peter Derek Collins, 9 April 1941 – 24 October 2015

The passing of organ builder Peter Collins late last year is a sad loss to the organ world in the 50th anniversary year of the founding of P. D. Collins Ltd. I was privileged to be a friend and colleague of Peter's for nearly all that time, meeting him through my then teacher, Peter Hurford, at St. Albans very soon after his first organ was built at Shellingford in Oxfordshire in 1968. Peter had by then gone from his original apprenticeship at Bishop's in London through training with Rieger in Austria, and from the outset was determined to build mechanical action organs which followed historical principles of construction, and an integrity of tonal design. He was extremely knowledgeable about every aspect of organ building and design, and his office had shelves of books on organs to which he would often refer during conversation. In later years his dog Snoopy would be there in a corner of the office, no doubt more concerned about her next walk than discussions on pipe scaling!

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A large proportion of his organs had fine cases he designed himself, and when he was allowed to do this by church and architects the results were superb. Half a century saw many organs built, from the little box organs, so familiar in cathedrals and concert halls; to many individually designed church organs from a few stops to his finest large organs in St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich, and Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh. St David's Hall, Cardiff was his largest instrument, the Turner Sims Concert Hall at Southampton University rather more modest. Many schools have Collins organs, which with their sensitive actions and fine voicing (always finished by Peter himself) have nurtured generations of young organists. The last organ on which he was working when taken ill is the new two-manual instrument for the St. Albans International Organ Festival – a Festival for which in St Saviour's Church he had already built an organ in 1989 after the style of Silbermann, at the behest of Peter Hurford. Over the years I played many of these organs, and recorded on Greyfriars in 2005 with Peter there to tune and keep an eye on things (and do my page turning!)

Apart from new organs, the company also did much restoration and rebuilding work – not so headline catching, but resulting in many churches having organs which were in good order and suitable for the work they had to do week in, week out. I worked closely with Peter and his team in the restoration of the important 1849 Nicholson at Croxton Kerrial in Leicestershire, and the result is an organ in superb condition tonally and visually which should still be playing for decades to come. The attention to historical detail and the desire to get things right was typical of his approach.

It was in Greyfriars Kirk that I was playing a recital only weeks after Peter died, giving me a wonderful way of bidding farewell to a good friend – a man of warmth, integrity, and a great sense of humour, whom I will never forget. -- *Douglas Hollick*

### Discovery of Pleyel piano owned by Chopin

A grand piano that actually sat in Frederic Chopin's living room in Paris was discovered after a Sherlock Holmes-like investigation by Alain Kohler, a Swiss physicist. "To make music on a piano of such luminous sound is to enter into the very intimacy of this prince of melancholy," said Mr Kohler. The piano had been restored by Edwin Beunk and Johan Wennink in the Netherlands in 2009. Presently it is privately owned in Germany. This discovery has been confirmed by an expert.

Alain Kohler, a great admirer of Chopin, has made a truly thorough investigation. Through an accurate and contextual analysis of Pleyel's ledgers of all the grand pianos Pleyel had put at Chopin's disposal in his home between 1839 and 1847, he found with certainty several applicable serial numbers. Among those, the Pleyel grand piano no. 11265 caught his attention because he remembered that this piano had been put on the market by Edwin Beunk.

It was a surprise and a delight for Mr Beunk when he learned that the piano that he had so painstakingly restored was a piano played by Chopin! Although he obviously regretted having sold it, he was happy that it was to a good friend.

Chopin's Pleyel, no. 11265



Last year's discovery has been confirmed by Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, Emeritus Professor of Musicology at the University of Geneva and one of the foremost Chopin scholars. The famous Polish composer had lived in France since autumn 1831 and he stayed there until his death in 1849. In the summer of 1838 Chopin and George Sand became lovers. After a trip to Mallorca, the couple was wont to spend their winters in Paris and their summers in Nohant in Berry where Chopin took time to compose.

This Pleyel grand piano no. 11265 was in Chopin's living room at 9 Square d'Orléans in Paris between December 1844 and June 1845. Chopin taught his aristocratic students on it. During this period he did not play in public, but in his home he welcomed a strict selection of guests for private concerts. Chopin must certainly have sketched out the sonata for cello and piano op. 65 on this instrument.

[Aside from this instrument], five Pleyel pianos are historically known to have been played by Chopin. They are in the museums in Mallorca, Paris, Stockholm, Krakow and Warsaw. Nine years ago another was discovered by Mr Eigeldinger in the Cobbe collection in Great Britain.

--Text reproduced with permission from "Les pianos Pleyel chez Chopin pendant sa relation avec George Sand" by Alain Kohler, article in French published on <[www.musicologie.org](http://www.musicologie.org)>, February 2015, accessible directly on <<http://bit.ly/1GhCtBc>>. English translation by Allison Zurfluh, February 2016.

**6 March 2016**, was a celebration entitled "Clementi: Composer, pianist and father of the pianoforte" organised by the Dulwich Classical Keyboard Festival.

This was jointly organised by Gary Branch and Dulwich Classical Keyboard Festival, Lorraine Liyanage and Peter Basil Murdoch Saint. It featured performances by Branch, Sharona Joshua, and Paweł Siwczał as well as junior masterclasses for grades 0-5. Built in 1737, Clementi House in Kensington has remained essentially unaltered for nearly three centuries, and retains the ambience of a traditional upper class English family home. At the home can be viewed a full copy of the Clementi family tree and the Clementi 1817 pianoforte with its original strings (not playable).

**21-23 March 2016, annual meeting of the Historical Keyboard Society of America, at Oberlin College, Ohio, US.** The meeting's theme was "The Compleat Keyboardist: harpsichord, fortepiano, organ, clavichord, continuo". <http://historicalkeyboardsociety.org/2016-annual-meeting/> Paper topics included the move toward a 5-octave clavichord, the existence (or not) of knee pedal on Mozart's fortepiano, experiments in notation of pedalling, Francesco Pollini's piano method, female musicians and the Germanic ideal in the late Aufklärung, Dutch organs, continuo for bass soloists, guitar textures in Scarlatti sonatas, baroque rock, the music of Scheidt, the Turin tablature, intabulation and performance in 16th century Italy, and keyboard music in the Codex Faenza.

<http://historicalkeyboardsociety.org/>

**16-23 April 2016 The X Harpsichord Festival**, Tallin, Estonia, featured performances by Patrick Ayrton, Mahan Esfahani, and others. <http://www.klavessiin.kul.ee/en/>

**26 June to 2 July 2016 the Organ Historical Society** meets in Philadelphia, PA. The meeting includes numerous recitals in different settings, lectures, tours and talks, including by Hans Davidsson, Christopher Marks, Sean O'Donnell, Barbara Owen, Rollin Smith and others.

<http://www.organsociety.org/2016>

**9 July 2016 British Clavichord Society AGM** and recital by Terence Charlston, Oxford.  
<http://www.clavichord.org.uk/>