

# Harpsichord & *fortepiano*

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Musical Instrument Research Catalog  
(MIRCAt)



photo by Rachel Clements

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

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*Dear Readers,*

This issue we feature a stimulating consideration of historic fingering, an interview with world-renowned Mozart scholar Robert Levin, obituary of David Evans and more. I am particularly pleased to feature interviews with women in early music; it has long been my feeling that the voices of women need to be heard more clearly. We have come a long way and what came out most strongly in these powerful conversations was how things have moved on so very much in the world (not least in early music). I hope we always retain our hunger to fight for the music itself – for new viewpoints, re-evaluations, and most of all dialogue– so that this living art is in good hands, regardless of gender.

This will be my last issue as Editor. From Autumn 2019 it will be edited by Francis Knights. I'm sure Francis needs little introduction; as a professor at the Cambridge University he is a scholar and a performer on a range of keyboard instruments and is a previous editor of *Clavichord International*. As some readers may know, I began editing the Spring 2006 issue, in which I had contributed an article (not realizing at the time that I would soon become Editor). I took on ownership of the magazine in 2011 as well as editing. My goal was to expand the range of instruments covered, and I'm happy that Francis will carry on. I dearly hope some of our most faithful contributors will support Francis, especially our interviewer Pamela Hickman, our review writer John Collins, and regular contributors such as Paul Irvin, Richard Troeger and others.

Jeremy and Ruth Burbidge of Peacock Press (see advert, page 8) will resume ownership of the magazine. To enable a smooth transition, those who are paid up for future issues can expect these to be fulfilled by Jeremy. Those who have an ongoing subscription via Paypal can expect that to continue uninterrupted, those using a standing order will be written to with new banking details, and agents will also receive new details. Once again, thank you for the comments and interesting conversations I've been privileged to have over the years; I look forward to renewing contacts upon our move to the U.S.

Sincerely, *Micaela Schmitz*

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## NEWS AND EVENTS

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### OBITUARIES



**Blandine Verlet**

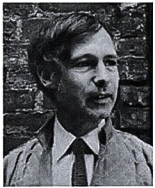
(27 February 1942 – 30 December 2018)

Photo from [allmusic.com](http://allmusic.com))

**Harpichord & fortepiano**

From Blandine Verlet's poem in celebration of Francois Couperin:

*"We hope we too have managed to grasp  
Your art of playing the harpsichord.  
The art of both poetry and precision.  
The art of whispering, murmuring.  
The song without words, lighter for having no text.  
Wandering shadows, expressions of the heart.  
Our thanks to you, Francois Couperin."  
(tr. Mary Pardoe)*



### **Wolfgang Zuckermann**

(11 October 1922 – 31 October 2018)

(Photo from Sundance Wolfgang Zuckermann –  
Photo c. 1963 use with Creative Commons 4.0)

This is the man who popularised kit harpsichords, thereby introducing a world of builders/makers and players to an inexpensive way in to the harpsichord world. He hardly needs an introduction. In a way he was one of the so-called "Twelve Apostles" in that he was born in Germany but brought instruments to English speaking America (and other) countries. His family had fled the Nazis and relocated to New York where he studied both English and Psychology at Queens College.

He was a man with many talents, and though he did not enjoy fixing problems with people, he was gifted with mechanisms. After learning piano mechanisms and tuning at a trade school he continued onwards self-taught. He visited Frank Hubbard in Boston and studied instruments at the Met in New York before making his first instruments.

A bit like Madhur Jaffrey, who tired of inviting people over and instead wrote a cookbook, Zuckermann wanted to spend less time on maintenance of instruments and more time on enabling customers to make their own (and thereby understand maintenance themselves). By the late 60's the kit was selling in its thousands during a period of vast growth in historical performance. Many of the steps were automated yet had to be supervised by skilled craftsmen.

As Zuckermann moved on in his career, he became a proponent of historical construction methods and published a book *The Modern Harpsichord*, in 1969. He paid homage to Frank Hubbard, William Dowd, and Martin Skowroneck. He was not afraid to criticize makers, particular German factory instrument operators, that did not adhere to historical principles. Zuckermann finally sold his business to David Way, who began to use some of Zuckermann's advice to make the instruments more adherent to historical principles. Zuckermann moved to England and collaborated with Michael Thomas.

His life in the UK was marked by political activism for the environment and against consumerism. He was a staunch support of Eric Britton's The Commons: Open Society Sustainability Initiative and was instrumental with Britton in founding the International Buy Nothing Day. Finally in 1995 he moved to Avignon and ran an English language book shop, retiring in 2012.