

Harpsichord & *fortepiano*

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Musical Instrument Research Catalog
(MIRCAt)

HKSNA's Eighth Annual Meeting is 13-15 May 2019. The theme is *Il Gusto Italiano: Italian Style and Transalpine Exchanges in Early Keyboard Music*. It will be held at Sam Houston State University School of Music, Huntsville, Texas, U.S.A. Further information will be available at <http://historicalkeyboardsociety.org/>

The British Clavichord Society is closing down as of 31 July 2019 after over 25 years of service to the early keyboard community. <http://clavichord.org.uk>



Davitt Moroney introducing a paper



Emer Buckley and Jochewed Schwarz in performance.

A symposium held on the 350th anniversary of the birthday of Francois Couperin was hosted by the Birmingham Conservatoire. Scholars from The UK, France, Israel, and USA attended. The conference had the refreshing feature of live music examples. The symposium started on Friday evening with one talk and a concert, and a full day of papers on Saturday. Friday evening there was a short a concert performed by Davitt Moroney, who has just recorded all of Couperin on 12 CDs. (We note that Carole Cerasi has recently performed a similar feat.) The programme featured much of *Pieces de Clavecin IV*, plus all of *l'art de Toucher le Clavecin*.

Couperin was celebrated from many different perspectives.

A few talks stood out for the sheer volume of work they represented, with some interesting insights. Denis Herlin (well known as editor of Chambonnières' work) presented his research on the many editions of Couperin's work. The total number of distinct impressions of his output more than doubled as compared with previous research. Herlin was able to shed light on Couperin's reasons for lavishing much money and attention on his beautifully engraved editions, his fundraising to make the first two books possible; his keeping of the plates at his home; his innovations (including a "portrait" rather than "quarto" format; variation in sizes of trill symbol to match the note's duration; the revisions of price lists to show the availability of works as well as Couperin's residence so people could buy them. All these showed that Couperin's undertaking to publish his own work was a task not taken lightly; we modern folk benefit from the care he gave to the task. Curious issues of corrections and lack thereof were explained- some corrections being easier than others to make .

In particular, Julien Dubruque's talk about the so-called Couperin chord (where a 9th labelled as a 2 not a 9 as $7/5/2$ is played on the fourth degree of the scale) was fascinating. Whether it serves as evidence that Couperin was indeed the composer of a newly found cantata about Bacchus was less important than the interest it engendered in the listeners. We now have opened our ears to the uniqueness of Couperin. We also were staggered by the task Dubruque set to comb through Couperin's output and to find systematically all the instances of this chord. He is only part way through the process.

Another talk showed the massive undertaking of one PHD research project by Chloé Dos Reis, who made a statistical analysis of ornament tables, to show that Couperin was not so much innovative in creating new ornaments, but more so in codifying their names and usage, which itself influenced other composers. One cannot separate the composition from the undertaking to print.

The idea of what makes Couperin unique were a running theme throughout the conference, partly because Moroney's own talk on Saturday concerned this idea. Some ideas were unique to Couperin; a few ideas were inserted because of importance. The one that struck me forcibly was the issue of how to perform *tierce de coul  *. Many of us, apparently stemming from Kenneth Gilbert, have been performing the little note before the beat, but Moroney pointed out evidence from *l'art de Toucher* to say that the little note should be on the beat (but not too ostentatious). There are some cases where little notes are slurred and they should always be connected to the note to which they are slurred. When one examines original editions, some cases have the tiny note slurred to the previous note (so they are tucked in before the next beat); the bulk of them, however have the tiny note attached to the large note following, and these should be treated as appoggiaturas. He also suggested that everyone should use real quill; when conservatories do this and teach maintenance that might happen...

There was further information connecting Couperin to the Italian theatre, building on work of Jane Clark and others. Shirley Thompson posited a mentor-student relationship between Couperin and the older Charpentier, and Graham Sadler gave evidence for or against Couperin or Rameau's authorship of a bawdy canon. Many listeners were intrigued by the search for verifiable portraits of Couperin's face; interested in the man because of his music, they were encouraged by the work of Florence G  treau. I was quite interested in the talk by Susan Daniels on the first collected works edition of Couperin's work. It was shown to be a political, pioneering move, and we were made more fully aware of the debt we owe L'oiseau Lyre's founder, the Australian Louise Dyer, for making this a monument to French culture and making the first "collected works" in history. Near the end we were treated to excerpts of *Les Nations*, performed by Emer Buckley and Jochewed Schwarz, interspersed with insights on the musical decisions performing this on two harpsichords necessitated. A review of their recording appears in this magazine (see reviews).

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A Harkness Fellow and alumnus of the University of Michigan, **Pamela Nash** has led many initiatives for the contemporary harpsichord including HarpsichordFest 2004 and 2006 and the British Harpsichord Society's International Composition Competition in 2014, from which she produced the CD recording "Shadow Journey". She also contributes reviews for Bachtrack, and most recently, she directed the Charlotte Bronte 2016 Bicentenary concert at Elizabeth Gaskell's House.

Claudio di Veroli is a harpsichordist and musicologist living in Lucca, Italy. His public performances and publications (papers and books in English) have been praised by world leading musicians and favourably reviewed.

<http://harps.braybaroque.ie/biog.html>