

# Harpsichord & fortepiano

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# The harpsichord in 19th-century Britain

Peter Holman

We are familiar with the idea that the harpsichord passed out of use around 1800 and was only revived in Britain about a century later, with the work of A. J. Hipkins and Arnold Dolmetsch, though Howard Schott recognised that it 'never really became extinct in the same sense as the dodo bird, for it continued a fitful existence as a concert instrument throughout the 19th century, making sporadic appearances in "historical recitals" by enterprising virtuoso pianists like Moscheles and Pauer'.<sup>1</sup> In fact, we shall see that the picture is much richer and fuller than this; much new evidence has recently come to light through the projects to digitize newspapers and periodicals.<sup>2</sup> I argued, using these powerful new research tools, that the viola da gamba was played in England throughout the 19th century,<sup>3</sup> and we shall see that the same is true of the harpsichord.

## The continuous tradition

The harpsichord was still in widespread use in Britain around 1800, despite more than 30 years of making, playing and writing for the piano. Pianos became well established in London's concert life in the 1770s, but mainly as vehicles for keyboard solos and concertos.<sup>4</sup> It was not until the 1790s that even the best grand pianos could compete in volume with the powerful English harpsichords produced by Shudi, Kirkman and their competitors, and so musical directors generally preferred to direct from the harpsichord until just before 1800.<sup>5</sup> Harpsichords were used to accompany recitative in the Italian opera house, the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, until at least 1809, while as late as 1817 a critic complained about the 'miserable fiction of a jingling harpsichord' in London's minor theatres.<sup>6</sup> It was needed to accompany a 'miserable sort of a pretended recitative', a dodge sometimes used to try to evade the provisions of the 1737 Licensing Act, which only allowed speech in London's two main theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden. Harpsichords were also used surprisingly late in concerts. Charles Dare, organist of Hereford Cathedral, was listed as playing one in an announcement for the 1812 Three Choir's Festival.<sup>7</sup> During the annual dinner for the New Musical Fund at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in London in March 1813 Sir George Smart reportedly 'presided over the musical entertainments of the day, and displayed his talents at the harpsichord'.<sup>8</sup>

It is more difficult to gauge to what extent harpsichords were still being played in the home. The last surviving harpsichord is the Joseph Kirkman of 1800,<sup>9</sup> though Hipkins stated that Muzio Clementi (who had taken over Longman and Broderip) made one in 1802,<sup>10</sup> and Carl Engel wrote in 1879 that 'the late Mr [Joseph] Kirkman told me that he, with his father [also Joseph], constructed the last harpsichord in the year 1809'.<sup>11</sup> A 'remarkably fine-toned Grand HARPSICHORD, by Kirkman, with double row of Keys and Venetian Swell, and very handsome Mahogany Case and Leather Cover' was advertised for £50 in Southampton in September 1806; it was made 'only five years ago, when it cost 110 Guineas'.<sup>12</sup> The torrent of harpsichords coming onto the market around 1810 suggests that that was the moment when fashion among amateurs decisively changed in favour of the piano. In 1819 an 'elegant highly-finished harpsichord' that had reportedly belonged to Queen Charlotte fetched less than £2, despite being 'a royal relic' and originally costing 100 guineas.<sup>13</sup> Yet a Liverpool newspaper informed its readers as late as October 1816 that there might be a purchaser for an upright harpsichord 'of good quality, and in tolerable condition'.<sup>14</sup>

Advertisements show that Kirkman was by far the most common make, followed by Shudi, which is in line with an estimate that as many as 170 Kirkmans have survived compared to about 50 Shudis.<sup>15</sup> What is striking – and tantalising for lovers of old instruments – is how many sightings there are of harpsichords by English makers with no examples listed in Donald Boalch's revised *Makers of the Harpsichord and Clavichord 1440-1840*. Those offered for sale between 1800 and 1814 include instruments by 'Rock' (Benjamin or William),<sup>16</sup> Robert Stodart,<sup>17</sup> Roger Plenius ('an upright harpsichord by the elder Plenius'),<sup>18</sup> Samuel Blumer,<sup>19</sup> 'Howston' (James Henry Houston or Houston & Co.),<sup>20</sup> John Harrison,<sup>21</sup> Joshua Done,<sup>22</sup> 'Cahusac' (Thomas senior, Thomas Junior or William Maurice),<sup>23</sup> John Harrison,<sup>24</sup> Frederick Neubauer,<sup>25</sup> Miller of Gloucester,<sup>26</sup> Balthazar Rolfe,<sup>27</sup> John Metzener,<sup>28</sup> John Joseph Merlin,<sup>29</sup> 'Hickman',<sup>30</sup> 'Buntibar' (?Gabriel Buntebart),<sup>31</sup> and 'Falkner' (Robert Falkener).<sup>32</sup> Of these, we only have spinets by Harrison and Rock;<sup>33</sup> only combined harpsichord-pianos by Merlin and Stodart;<sup>34</sup> only harpsichords that Falkener fraudulently passed off as by Kirkman;<sup>35</sup> and only

pianos by Cahuac, Buntebart, Done and Houston.<sup>36</sup> There seem to be no surviving keyboard instruments by Blumer, Metzener, Miller, Neubauer, Roger Plenius and Balthazar Rolfe.<sup>37</sup>

Another tantalising category is of makers with only a single instrument listed in Boalch. Harpsichords by 'Hitchcock' were auctioned at Eye in Suffolk and Ipswich in 1801 and 1803, in Highgate near London in 1809 and near Uttoxeter in 1816.<sup>38</sup> The 1803 one was clearly not either of the surviving harpsichords by Thomas and John Hitchcock because it had 'a pedal and a celestina stop'; the celestina was the *geigenwerk*-like device patented by Adam Walker in 1772.<sup>39</sup> Other appearances in auctions include harpsichords by 'Tabel',<sup>40</sup> 'Pether'<sup>41</sup> and 'Barton';<sup>42</sup> there is nothing to connect them with the surviving ones by Thomas Barton, William Pether and Hermann Tabel.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, harpsichords by Baker Harris, advertised in Edinburgh in 1800 and London in 1802 (the latter a 'capital Double-Keyed Harpsichord, by Harris'), may or may not be the same as the two or possibly three examples attributed to him today with varying degrees of uncertainty.<sup>44</sup>

The production of harpsichords seems to have stopped in Britain not so much because no-one was playing them but because there were more than enough instruments to cater for the demand: a contributor to an Edinburgh periodical in 1851 mentioned 'the despised old harpsichords, thousands of which are yet extant' and described how to convert one into a sort of bowed keyboard instrument along the lines of Walker's celestina.<sup>45</sup> Fascinating evidence that one old harpsichord continued to be played comes in the form of inscriptions inside a Longman and Broderip single-manual of 1787 apparently exported to Massachusetts when new.<sup>46</sup> They record cleanings in 1799, 1816, 1818 and 1826; it was then 'cleaned, repaired and tuned' on 13 March 1872, and 'tuned partly' on 15 August 1874. If the work in 1872 was really done in a single day then it must have been virtually playable – possibly for the near half century from 1826. We shall see that two London piano firms kept harpsichords in working order for much of the century.

There are also references to harpsichords being played in early 19th-century homes, from Windsor Castle downwards. It was reported in 1807 that Charles Wesley played Domenico Scarlatti on the harpsichord 'by particular command of His MAJESTY',<sup>47</sup> while there are descriptions in 1811, 1812 and 1814 of George III – an old music enthusiast through thick and thin – playing his harpsichord at Windsor during lucid intervals between bouts of his madness.<sup>48</sup> Charles Wesley was another late harpsichord player: a review of a concert given by the Bath Harmonic Society in April 1806 mentioned that he 'played two concertos on the harpsichord in a stile which

would beggar any description that words could give'.<sup>49</sup> George III's instrument was said to have been made in Antwerp in 1612 and to have belonged to Handel, which identifies it as the English two-manual rebuilding of a single-manual Hans Ruckers now at Fenton House;<sup>50</sup> it came from Windsor Castle and is still in the Royal Collection (Illus.1).



(Illus. 1) Harpsichord by Hans Ruckers (Antwerp, 1612), originally single manual but rebuilt as a two-manual instrument in 18th-century England; Royal Collection, RCIN 69026, © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (2020).

At the other end of the social scale, Liverpool's School for the Indigent Blind publicly thanked the donors of two harpsichords in January 1812 for the use of its pupils, perhaps for practising tuning as well as playing;<sup>51</sup> it was given five more harpsichords in 1819 and another in 1820, when it appealed for more harpsichords as well as pianos 'on account of the increased number of Musical Pupils'.<sup>52</sup> When Johann Bernhard Logier demonstrated his system of keyboard teaching in Dublin on 28 June 1815, the children reportedly played 'four piano-fortes, three harpsichords, and a small organ', sometimes 'all in full concert'.<sup>53</sup> In 1818 the actor Edmund Kean was said to have 'become able to play on the Harpsichord in a style that would not disgrace a professor',<sup>54</sup> while in 1824 an eight-year-old prodigy, George Aspull (1813–32), could reportedly play at sight and improvise 'on the harpsichord' with 'much taste and genius';<sup>55</sup> he had played to George IV at Windsor on 24 February that year, probably using the royal Ruckers as well as a piano. According to an early account, Aspull had 'the concertos

of Handel, and the Fugues of the Bachs and Scarlatti' in his repertory.<sup>56</sup>

In 1824 harpsichords were 'still recommended as practice for the organ', presumably because many of them had two keyboards,<sup>57</sup> while the London organist George Cooper (1820-76) was said to have had 'his road to the organ' as a child 'smoothed by an old harpsichord with pedals and two rows of keys, on which the lad practised at all available times'.<sup>58</sup> In 1871 it was reported that the London organist Josiah Pittman (1816-86) 'had a capital set of pedals to an old Kirkman harpsichord' on which his pupil William Rea (1827-93) practised, presumably around 1840.<sup>59</sup> Whether its pedals were hammered or plucked is unclear.

### Early revivals: Moscheles, Salaman and Pauer

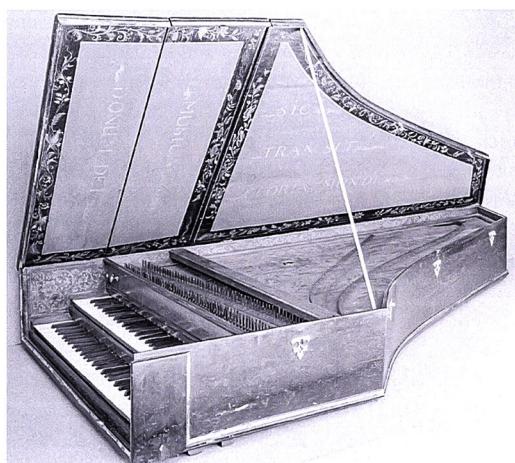
By 1840 the first revivals had already taken place. The use of harpsichords in historical concerts was pioneered by François-Joseph Fétis in Paris in 1832,<sup>60</sup> and it is normally said that the idea came to London on 18 February 1837, when the pianist and composer Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870) played some Scarlatti sonatas on the harpsichord in the first of a series of three 'historical soirées' at the Hanover Square Rooms; he used the 1771 two-manual Shudi now in Switzerland and gave similar concerts in the spring of 1838 and 1839.<sup>61</sup>

However, an unnamed harpsichordist had already taken part in an historical concert in London the previous year, put on by the harpist and composer Nicolas Bochsa at Drury Lane on 19 February 1836.<sup>62</sup> In this epic concert, which went from ancient Greek music and chant to Arne and Gluck by way of Josquin, Palestrina, Marenzio, Giovanni Gabrieli, Orlando Gibbons, Lully, Purcell, Corelli, Tartini, Rousseau and J. S. Bach, a song by Nicholas Lanier was accompanied by 'viol di gamba and harpsichord'. In fact, the 1836 'harpsichord' was later identified as Queen Anne's own spinet, the 'loudest and perhaps the finest that ever was heard'; it had passed down to successive Masters of the Children of the Chapel Royal from William Croft to William Hawes (d. 1846).<sup>63</sup> Edward Rimbault added the information that it was by 'Hayward' and had been 'consigned to the cock-loft' of Hawes's house, 7 Adelphi Terrace.<sup>64</sup> It has no obvious connection with any of the Charles Haward spinets known today.<sup>65</sup>

Moscheles apparently used a harpsichord for Scarlatti not out of a concern for historical accuracy – he played Bach, Handel and other early music on the piano in the same concerts – but because a two-manual instrument facilitated the hand-crossing frequently required. The idea that Moscheles played Bach's D minor concerto BWV1052 in London on the harpsichord, put forward

by Jerome Roche,<sup>66</sup> seems to be an error caused by Charlotte Moscheles's biography of her husband: she described the 1771 Shudi and then went on to discuss Bach's concerto, but without actually linking the two.<sup>67</sup> In fact, Moscheles played the concerto on the piano in his benefit concert on 11 May 1836,<sup>68</sup> adding wind instruments to the strings, and repeated it, also on the piano but without the wind instruments, at the Concerts of Ancient Music on 15 March 1837.<sup>69</sup>

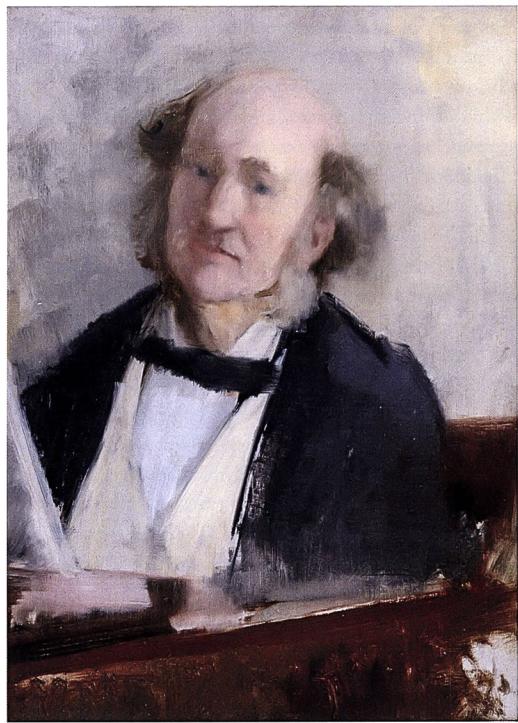
Moscheles figures in every account of early music in Victorian England, but his successor, Charles Kensington Salaman (1814-1901), has been largely ignored despite being much more committed to the cause.<sup>70</sup> Salaman came from a prominent Jewish family in London, studied at the Royal Academy of Music and worked as a pianist before beginning to promote early keyboard instruments and their music. On 9 January 1855 he gave a lecture at the Marylebone Literary and Scientific Institution on 'the ancient keyed stringed instruments', the first of a number of similar events he promoted over the next few years. The instruments mentioned in a review were (i) a 'most picturesque' virginals, said to be the first time 'it had *ever* appeared in public'; (ii) a 'very fine Reicher [Ruckers] harpsichord'; (iii) an unidentified spinet; and (iv) 'Handel's own double harpsichord, kindly lent to him by Messrs. Broadwood'.<sup>71</sup> He played Byrd's 'Carman's Whistle' on (i), Orlando Gibbons on (ii), and Handel's 'Harmonious Blacksmith' on (iv). The reviewer was enthusiastic: Salaman's performances 'were as artistic as his observations were instructive'.



(Illus. 2) Harpsichord by Andreas Ruckers (Antwerp, 1651), originally single manual but rebuilt as a two-manual instrument in 18th-century England; © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1079-1868.

By 10 May 1855 Salaman had got into his stride. In a lecture-recital attended by Queen Victoria and

Prince Albert at the Royal Polytechnic Institution in Portman Square he demonstrated no fewer than seven instruments – a tuner's nightmare.<sup>72</sup> Some of them were clearly the same as in January: (1) 'A virginal, made for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth (1600.)', presumably the Italian spinet now known to date from 1594 and thought to be by Giovanni Antonio Baffo;<sup>73</sup> (2) 'a virginal by John Loosemore (1655.)', probably (i), which Salaman owned at the time;<sup>74</sup> (3) 'A single harpsichord, by Johannes Rükers [Hans Ruckers], of Antwerp (1640.)', presumably (ii);<sup>75</sup> (4) 'Handel's own double harpsichord, by Rükers [Andreas Ruckers], of Antwerp (1651.)', presumably (iv) (Illus.2);<sup>76</sup> (5) 'A spinett (1713.)' and (6) 'A spinett (1724.)', one of them probably (iii); and (7) 'A double harpsichord, by [Joseph] Kirkman (1798.)'. Salaman reportedly played the 'Carman's Whistle' on (2), repeated the 'Harmonious Blacksmith' on (4), and played a 'Presto in C' by C. P. E. Bach on (7). These choices show he was far in advance of his time in attempting to match particular old instruments to more or less appropriate music – an idea popularised by Gustav Leonhardt in the 1960s.



(Illus. 3) Sydney Starr, *Charles Kensington Salaman*, (c) Ferens Art Gallery, Hull Museums, KINCM:2005.6184.

Salaman's recitals greatly increase the number of harpsichords and virginals known to be in working order in the middle of the century. We shall encounter (7) being

used in 1870 and the 1880s, and (4), the 1651 Ruckers, was evidently a second harpsichord Broadwood's kept in working order for hire. The 1771 Shudi, its stablemate, had been seen by the Moravian pianist Joseph Fischhof during a visit to Broadwood's in 1851; he described its mechanism (including a Venetian swell apparently not present today) and reported in a footnote: 'A gentle request, to inspect an instrument of that sort another day, prompted the well-educated and diligent factory master to return it quickly to working order'.<sup>77</sup> It was still working on 17 June 1862, when Salaman played Handel and Scarlatti on it in a concert at the Hanover Square Rooms,<sup>78</sup> a performance repeated on 2 July for the Musical Society of London – he was its 'chief mover' and secretary.<sup>79</sup> In addition to the Loosemore virginals, Salaman owned a 1768 two-manual Kirkman reportedly selected when new by Charles Burney for his grandmother;<sup>80</sup> improvising on it was a 'favourite pastime'.<sup>81</sup> It may be the instrument he plays in a vivid oil sketch by the English impressionist painter Sydney Starr (Illus.3).<sup>82</sup>

The next person to play the harpsichord in public in London was the Austrian pianist Ernst Pauer (1826–1905). He came to England in 1851, and in 1862 began the series of recitals of old keyboard music for which he is mainly remembered. He continued these on and off until at least the spring of 1884, when he gave a series of lecture recitals for the Royal Institution.<sup>83</sup> Pauer often played old music on the piano, though in his 1862 series at Willis's Rooms he played the 1771 Shudi harpsichord as well as an 1820 Broadwood and more recent pianos. It was announced that 'each work will be played on the exact instrument for which it was composed',<sup>84</sup> which, if not precisely true, was an early articulation of a central tenet of the later early music movement. These concerts were particularly important for including several chamber works with obbligato harpsichord by J. S. Bach, including the E flat sonata BWV1031 played on 1 February by Pauer on the Shudi and Robert Sidney Pratten on a Baroque flute.<sup>85</sup> The discovery of Bach's music in Britain during the course of the 19th century was an important driver for the revival of the obsolete instruments needed to perform it.

Pauer was also important for his editions, which greatly increased the amount of available music suitable for old keyboard instruments, notably in the series *Old English Composers for the Virginals & Harpsichord* (London, [1879]), consisting of anthologies of Byrd, Bull, Orlando Gibbons, Blow and Henry Purcell as well as a complete edition of Arne's *VIII Sonatas*.<sup>86</sup> These volumes had a long life – they introduced me to Blow and Arne in the 1960s – and their influence can be seen in Victorian concerts. For instance, C. H. Lloyd, newly

appointed organist of Christ Church, Oxford, played 'a selection from the works of Arne, Blow and Purcell' on the harpsichord at his college in the autumn of 1882, presumably from Pauer's editions.<sup>87</sup> The instrument, a two-manual Shudi and Broadwood of 1781, had been given to Lloyd by the composer Hubert Parry.<sup>88</sup>



(Illus. 4) Harpsichord by Joseph Kirkman (London, 1798); © National Music Museum, University of South Dakota, John Koster, photographer.

### The 1880s

After Pauer the received narrative of the British early music revival moves to Hipkins and Dolmetsch, but in fact there were other people at the time giving concerts on early keyboard instruments. One of the most intriguing events was the student concert at the Royal Academy of Music on 30 June 1870, when a Mr Decker played 'Clavier-Musik a due Manuali, Aria, con variazioni, for the Harpsichord (J. S. Bach)'; it was almost certainly the first British performance of some or all of the Goldberg Variations played on the harpsichord.<sup>89</sup> The published report stated that 'This Harpsichord, lent and prepared for the occasion by Messrs. Kirkman & Son, was made by Joseph Kirkman in 1798. It has been entirely renovated, produces 22 different effects or changes, and is one of the last Harpsichords made after the Introduction of the Pianoforte'. Kirkman's (by then a piano-making firm) evidently kept it in working order for hire as an alternative to Broadwood's harpsichords. Salaman had used it 1855, and we shall encounter it again at the 1885 Inventions Exhibition (Illus.4).<sup>90</sup> It was probably

also the one Broadwood's provided in May that year for Henry Irving's production of *Olivia*, an adaptation at the Lyceum Theatre of Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*.<sup>91</sup>

By the 1880s new people were turning to the harpsichord and it was spreading outside London. In August 1880 the piano makers John Brinsmead & Sons put on an early keyboard recital in St James's Hall by the German pianist and composer Johann Heinrich Bonawitz (1839–1917).<sup>92</sup> He used a virginals of 1666 lent by Chappell's, evidently the Adam Leversidge which they owned at the time;<sup>93</sup> a Kirkman harpsichord of 1777; a square piano at which Gluck supposedly composed *Armide*; and a Pleyel piano once owned by Chopin.<sup>94</sup> He played pieces by Thomas Ford, Muffat, Couperin, Domenico Scarlatti, J. S. Bach and Gluck as well accompanying the ballad, 'Mad Tom', which was said – wrongly – to be by Purcell. Bonawitz also gave some 'Historical Pianoforte Recitals' in London in 1885 and 1886, but apparently without using early keyboard instruments.<sup>95</sup>

A concert on 16 February 1882 in the Saloon of the Philharmonic Hall in Liverpool seems to contain the first evidence of the revival of harpsichord making in Britain, if a review can be believed.<sup>96</sup> It is normally thought that the first revival instrument was Dolmetsch's extravagantly decorated green harpsichord, made in 1896 with the encouragement of William Morris,<sup>97</sup> though making had apparently resumed in France in 1888,<sup>98</sup> and Hipkins wrote in 1896 that 'Metzler & Co. constructed one [a spinet] for Mr. Charles Wyndham a few years ago'.<sup>99</sup> Wyndham, actor-manager of the Criterion Theatre, was particularly associated with comedies from, or set in, the 18th century, notably his revival in 1886 of John O'Keefe's *Wild Oats* and his wildly successful production in the same year of T. W. Robertson's *David Garrick*, in which he took the title role. The programme for *Wild Oats* acknowledged 'The Spinet ... kindly lent for the occasion by Messrs. Kirkman and Co., of Soho'.<sup>100</sup> Wyndham presumably commissioned a spinet from Metzler's for plays with period settings, avoiding having to hire a delicate antique instrument for use as a stage prop.

The review of the Liverpool concert stated that W. H. Davies junior played a solo on a modern harpsichord 'of the upright or cottage shape', pointing out that the problem of making the jacks return on an upright harpsichord had been overcome, though the writer thought that 'to those who are accustomed to a good grand piano the effect was absurdly comic, the tone reminding one strongly of the dulcimers so recently heard up and down our streets'. W. H. Davies junior was presumably related to the Liverpool piano-maker W. H. Davies who published a six-part article in 1878

entitled 'How to Make a Pianoforte'.<sup>101</sup> He described a vertically strung sticker action similar to those in cabinet pianos, long obsolete by the 1880s.<sup>102</sup> The solo played by Davies junior on this strange Liverpudlian invention was not identified, though Carl Walther was praised for his performance of a Tartini sonata; perhaps he was also accompanied by it.

Other early provincial revivals include a lecture recital on 23 January 1884 by the organist and writer Stephen Stratton (1840-1906) at the Erdington Institute in Birmingham; he used two of his own instruments, a fretted clavichord and 'a fine Tschudi harpsichord', to play 'Selections from Bach, Frescobaldi, Scarlatti, Bird, Purcell, and Handel'.<sup>103</sup> The harpsichord was evidently the Shudi and Broadwood two-manual of 1782 now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.<sup>104</sup> In Manchester in February 1885 the organist and collector James Kendrick Pyne (1852-1938) used 'a clavichord by Silberman'; 'a Virginals'; 'a delightful specimen of a "Keene" spinet; a Kirkman harpsichord; and several early pianos'.<sup>105</sup> Pyne's collection, subsequently acquired by the Manchester businessman Henry Boddington, was dispersed in 1900,<sup>106</sup> though its catalogue shows that Pyne owned a German clavichord then thought to be by Silbermann;<sup>107</sup> a Thomas White virginals now dated 1644;<sup>108</sup> a Stephen Keene spinet of 1700,<sup>109</sup> and two J. and A. Kirkman two-manual harpsichords, dated 1773 and 1789.<sup>110</sup>

Harpsichords were mostly used to play solo keyboard music in Victorian historical concerts, though that began to change in the 1880s. In C. H. Lloyd's 1882 Oxford concert the programme included 'one of Corelli's beautiful sonatas for two violins, 'cello, and harpsichord'. Things were taken a stage further in the autumn of 1885 in three concerts at the Steinway Hall in London, on 27 October, 10 and 24 November.<sup>111</sup> Otto Peiniger, violin teacher at Harrow School, directed 18th- and 19th-century string music with J. A. Fuller-Maitland playing the harpsichord. The first concert included concertos by Corelli, Vivaldi, Geminiani and William Corbett, and a Purcell song, 'O let me weep'. So far as I know, this enterprising concert was the first since the early 19th century in which a harpsichord was used in an orchestra to play continuo, though J. S. Shedlock's review criticised the fact that it was not also used in the violin solos by Richard Jones, James Brooks and Johann Georg Lang. A review of the third concert revealed that Fuller-Maitland 'presided at the harpsichord'; he used the 1798 Kirkman in movements from concertos by Michael Christian Festing and Pieter Hellendaal, a sonata for obbligato harpsichord and violin by Charles Rousseau Burney, and a song by Blow.<sup>112</sup>

Two years later, on 7 July 1887, two harpsichords, played by Fuller-Maitland and J. D. Rogers, were used

in a revival of the Jacobean *Masque of Flowers* at Gray's Inn.<sup>113</sup> The printed libretto-cum-programme tells us that they played in a string orchestra, apparently modern with the exception of the lawyer and antiquarian Edward Payne playing the gamba, and that much of the music was specially written by Arthur Prendergast and H. F. Birch Reynardson in pastiche Jacobean style. Fuller-Maitland (1856-1936) was another important harpsichord pioneer, very active as a player in the 1880s. He was also a music critic, for *The Manchester Guardian* at the time, and he is mainly remembered for the landmark edition of the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, published in 1899 with his brother-in-law William Barclay Squire.<sup>114</sup>

1885 was a turning point for the developing early music movement. It was the year of the Inventions Exhibition at South Kensington with its large exhibition of musical instruments, including 65 harpsichords, spinets and virginals.<sup>115</sup> Among them were many of those already encountered in this article: the 1798 Joseph Kirkman, lent by Kirkmans; the Leverside virginals, lent by Chappell's; the 1614 Ruckers, lent by Queen Victoria; the Italian spinet associated with Elizabeth I, lent by the Rev Nigel Gresley and his brothers; the 1773 and 1789 Kirkman, lent by James Kendrick Pyne; the 1781 Shudi and Broadwood, lent by C. H. Lloyd; the 1782 Shudi and Broadwood, lent by Stephen Stratton; and the famous 1771 Shudi, lent by Broadwood's.<sup>116</sup>

The accompanying concerts in July were a revelation for many, including George Bernard Shaw, who wrote some largely appreciative reviews. Several groups from the Brussels Conservatoire appeared, bringing with them and exhibiting a number of harpsichords and virginals from its collection, including the very large H. A. Hass double-manual of 1734 with its original 16' rank.<sup>117</sup> The Hass was used for solos by Chambonnières, Couperin and Rameau and to accompany the gamba player Edouard Jacobs in Bach, Boccherini and Tartini.<sup>118</sup> Another concert, of earlier Italian and English sacred music with an English choir, included John Bull's setting of 'Een Kindeken is uns geboren' played on the 1798 Kirkman. Shaw, characteristically acute, realised that there was a problem with playing Bull on a 1798 harpsichord: 'As far as historical accuracy was concerned, it might as well have been played on a Steinway grand'.<sup>119</sup> He did not name the player, but Fuller-Maitland revealed in his memoirs that he had been at the Kirkman that day, adding: 'after a little while it became my own, and remains a priceless treasure to me now'.<sup>120</sup>

Alfred Hipkins (1826-1903) was a prime mover behind the old music at the Inventions Exhibition. He edited the exhibition catalogue,<sup>121</sup> and subsequently published a beautifully illustrated book describing many of the instruments exhibited.<sup>122</sup> It introduced generations

of musicians – including myself – to old instruments. Hipkins had an extraordinarily upwardly mobile career: he started at Broadwood's aged 13 as an apprentice piano tuner, spent his life working for the firm and ended up as a manager, in charge of its London showroom.<sup>123</sup> He had become one of the 'senior workmen' in 1849 so he was probably the 'the well-educated and diligent factory master' Fischhof encountered in 1851.<sup>124</sup> By 1885 he was the leading English authority on early keyboard instruments, though he was also an accomplished performer, and was painted playing his Kirkman harpsichord in 1898 by his daughter Edith, a successful portrait painter (illus.5);<sup>125</sup> she presented the instrument, a two-manual of 1773, to the Royal College of Music in 1903.<sup>126</sup> It also appears to be the instrument depicted in 'With thy Sweet Fingers', Edith's Vermeer-inspired fancy-painting of 1883 taking its title from Shakespeare's Sonnet 128; it shows a girl in 18th-century dress playing the harpsichord, an English guitar hanging from her chair.<sup>127</sup>



(Illus. 5) Edith J. Hipkins, *Alfred James Hipkins* (1898), © National Portrait Gallery, NPG 2129.

Hipkins often gave lecture recitals in the manner of Salaman and Pauer, illustrating them with his own playing, as when he appeared at the Oxford Music Club on 25 November 1890; his substantial and informative lecture was read for him by W. H. Hadow and was published apparently complete and verbatim.<sup>128</sup> In addition to exhibiting an Italian 16th-century spinet and two 'early square pianos', Hipkins played five instruments: the 1743 J. A. Hass clavichord;<sup>129</sup> the 1683 Charles Haward spinet;<sup>130</sup> a spinet 'bearing the name Edward Blunt, London, 1703', now attributed to Thomas Hitchcock;<sup>131</sup> the beautifully decorated two-manual Jacob Kirkman harpsichord of 1744, the earliest Kirkman known;<sup>132</sup> and the 1781 Shudi and Broadwood

harpsichord. Of the five, the first four came from the collection of the Oxford music shop owner Thomas Taphouse (1838–1905),<sup>133</sup> while, as we have seen, the fifth was owned at the time by C. H. Lloyd.

The narrative of the British harpsichord revival normally starts with Arnold Dolmetsch, so it is appropriate to end this brief survey with him. In a lecture, given at the recently formed Royal College of Music on 6 November 1883, Hipkins demonstrated 'specimens of the clavichord, spinet, harpsichord, early square piano (1780), and short iron grand piano of the present day, contributed by Messrs. Broadwood, Mr. Herbert Bowman, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Dale, and Mr. Hipkins'.<sup>134</sup> This event has a special importance because Dolmetsch was probably present: he had joined the College as a student at the beginning of the 1883 academic year.<sup>135</sup> He gradually developed his interests in old music and old instruments over the next few years, including restoring a spinet, an Italian virginals and a Kirkman harpsichord.<sup>136</sup> A harpsichord was used in his first London appearance, in a miscellaneous concert on 21 May 1890 at the Princes Hall in Piccadilly when his pupil Countess Valda Gleichen sang Henry Lawes's song 'Sweet echo' from Milton's *Comus*.<sup>137</sup> He played a viola d'amore, his 12-year-old daughter Hélène played a viola da gamba, and Henry Bird a harpsichord supplied by Broadwood's; it was probably yet another outing for the 1771 Shudi.

For the next two years Dolmetsch used harpsichords in his pioneering concerts of early English music, mainly for accompanying and for the odd solo from the virginal repertory. However, in a series of concerts in the spring of 1892 given at 20 Fitzroy Street (the so-called Fitzroy Settlement, the base of the Century Guild of artists and designers), he began to include 18th-century music with obbligato harpsichord, including J. S. Bach's sonatas with viola da gamba and one of Rameau's *Pièces de clavecin en concert* played by 'Harpsichord, Viola d'amore and Viola da Gamba'; Dolmetsch shared the harpsichord parts that spring with Ethel Davis and Fuller-Maitland.<sup>138</sup>

A landmark, arguably the day when the British harpsichord revival came of age, was Dolmetsch's all-Bach concert at Clifford's Inn in London on 6 December 1894.<sup>139</sup> The main works were the D minor concerto BWV1052, with Fuller-Maitland as harpsichord soloist, and the Peasant Cantata, also performed with harpsichord continuo. Fuller-Maitland was credited with lending the harpsichord, so it must have been the 1798 Kirkman once again. The concert was well received, with one anonymous but well-informed critic praising Fuller-Maitland's 'extraordinary mastery' and exclaiming that to perform 'such a work as this Concerto on the piano ... would be as absurd and inartistic as to perform

a Nocturne by Chopin on the harpsichord'; the review concluded: 'After the performance at Clifford's Inn it is difficult to conceive how any musician, who is careful of his reputation as an artist, can venture to perform on the piano the harpsichord works of Bach'.<sup>140</sup> Clearly, the harpsichord had ceased to be a quaint novelty.

Much more could be said, and the activities of some important Victorian collectors and players – Fuller-Maitland, Thomas Taphouse, Hubert Parry and Ethel Davis, for instance – remain to be investigated in detail. However, we can now see that the history of the harpsichord in 19th-century Britain is far richer and more interesting than has been thought. It was an important strand in the developing early music movement, itself part of a wider and more profound cultural change in

which it came to be recognised that music had a past worth reviving, and that using old instruments to perform old music was a project worth pursuing. We can certainly see that the idea that the harpsichord needed to be revived at the end of the 19th century is at best an oversimplification.

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## Endnotes

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- 2 Principally *British Periodicals* [https://www.proquest.com/products-services/british\\_periodicals.html](https://www.proquest.com/products-services/british_periodicals.html); *British Library Newspapers, Part 1: 1800–1900* <https://www.gale.com/intl/c/british-library-newspapers-part-i>; *The British Newspaper Archive* <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.
- 3 Peter Holman, *Life after Death: The Viola da Gamba in Britain from Purcell to Dolmetsch* (Woodbridge, 2010), 287–301, 308–36.
- 4 See especially Albert G. Hess, 'The Transition from Harpsichord to Piano', *Galpin Society Journal*, vi (1953), 75–94, Howard Schott, 'From Harpsichord to Pianoforte: A Chronology and Commentary', *Early Music*, xiii (1985), 28–38.
- 5 See Peter Holman, *Before the Baton: Musical Direction and Conducting in Stuart and Georgian Britain* (Woodbridge, 2020), 299–302.
- 6 *Morning Chronicle*, 18 September 1817; also Holman, *Before the Baton*, 320–1.
- 7 *Worcester Journal*, 16 July 1812.
- 8 *Morning Post*, 24 March 1813.
- 9 Donald H. Boalch rev. Charles Mould, *Makers of the Harpsichord and Clavichord 1440–1840* (Oxford, 3/1995), 457.
- 10 A. J. Hipkins, *A Description and History of the Pianoforte and of the Older Keyboard Stringed Instruments* (London and New York, 1896), 92.
- 11 Carl Engel, 'Some Account of the Clavichord, with Historical Notices', *The Musical Times*, xx (1879), 356–9, 411–15, 468–72, at 356.
- 12 *Hampshire Telegraph*, 8 September 1806.
- 13 *Manchester Mercury*, 13 July 1819.
- 14 *Liverpool Mercury*, 25 October 1816.
- 15 Boalch (1995), 108.
- 16 *Morning Post*, 27 June 1801.
- 17 *Morning Post*, 16 September 1801; *Bury and Norwich Post*, 13 March 1811.
- 18 *Morning Post*, 23 September 1801.
- 19 *Morning Post*, 21 June 1802.
- 20 *Morning Post*, 16 August 1804.
- 21 *Morning Chronicle*, 9 July 1805; *Oxford University and City Herald*, 25 May 1811; *Nottingham Journal*, 3 October 1812; *Leicester Journal*, 26 March 1813.
- 22 *Morning Chronicle*, 18 June 1805; *Kentish Weekly Post*, 28 January 1812. The 'fine-toned harpsichord by Pone', advertised in *Morning Post*, 22 January 1813, was probably a misprint for Done.
- 23 *Leeds Intelligencer*, 19 November 1804.
- 24 *Morning Chronicle*, 7 July 1805.
- 25 *Cumberland Pacquet*, 10 March 1807; *Hull Packet*, 26 January 1813.
- 26 *Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser*, 27 July 1808.
- 27 *Public Ledger*, 17, 22 September 1808.
- 28 *Morning Chronicle*, 21 April 1809.
- 29 *Morning Advertiser*, 15, 21 June 1809; *Hull Advertiser*, 13 July 1811.
- 30 *Public Ledger*, 9 May 1812.
- 31 *Northampton Mercury*, 13 March 1813.
- 32 *Kentish Gazette*, 18 February 1814.
- 33 Boalch (1995), 362–4, 543.

34 Boalch (1995), 128-30, 505, 646-7. A Merlin combined harpsichord-piano was auctioned at Rougham Place near Bury St Edmunds in April 1811; see *Suffolk Chronicle*, 20 April 1811.

35 Boalch (1995), 57-8, 459-60; also Lance Whitehead, 'Robert Falkener: An Eighteenth-Century Harpsichord Builder, Music Publisher and Malfeasant?', *Galpin Society Journal*, lv (2002), 310-31.

36 Buntebart was described as a harpsichord maker in 1766-8 but a piano maker in 1771; see the Appendix to Lance Whitehead and Jenny Nex, 'The Insurance of Musical London and the Sun Fire Office 1710-1779', *Galpin Society Journal*, lxvii (2014), 181-216 <http://www.galpinsociety.org/supplementary%20material.htm>, 52-4. For pianos by Buntebart, Done, Houston and Stodart, see Martha Novak Clinkscale, *Makers of the Piano 1700-1820* (Oxford, 2/1995), 61-3, 89, 153-4, 284-289; *Clinkscale Online* <http://db2.earlypianos.org/dbport/PianoSearch22.aspx>. For a square piano by Cahusac, see *Clinkscale Online*.

37 For Blumer, Houston, Metzener, Neubauer and Plenius as harpsichord makers, see Boalch (1995), 18-19, 94, 130, 138, 147-8. Miller may have been related to, or the same as, the organ builder and harpsichord maker Henry Miller, recorded in Bristol in 1752; see Boalch (1995), 132. Balthazar Rolfe and Hickman seem to be otherwise unknown harpsichord makers, though I am grateful to Jenny Nex for suggesting that 'Rolfe' might be an error for the harpsichord maker John Balthazar Zopfe; see Whitehead and Nex (2014), Appendix, 372.

38 *Bury and Norwich Post*, 15 April 1801; *Ipswich Journal*, 18 April 1801, 17 September 1803; *Morning Advertiser*, 29 July 1809; *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 27 April 1816.

39 Boalch (1995), 392-3, 395-6; Bennet Woodcroft, *Patents for Inventions: Abridgments of Specifications relating to Music and Musical Instruments*, A.D. 1694-1866 (London, 2/1871; repr.1984), 8.

40 *Bury and Norwich Post*, 29 April 1801.

41 *Morning Post*, 13 August 1801.

42 *Ipswich Journal*, 24 December 1802.

43 Boalch (1995), 231, 524, 650. See Clinkscale (1995), 216 for a square piano by George Pether.

44 *Caledonian Mercury*, 16 October 1800; *Morning Chronicle*, 1 October 1802; also Boalch (1995), 353, 355, 356.

45 'A Word on Pianofortes', *Chambers Edinburgh Journal*, xvi (19 July 1851), 36-8, at 37-8.

46 Boalch (1995), 489.

47 *Morning Post*, 26 June 1807.

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49 *Bath Chronicle*, 3 April 1806.

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51 *Liverpool Mercury*, 17 January 1812.

52 *Liverpool Mercury*, 15 January 1819, 14 January 1820.

53 'New System of Musical Education', *Caledonian Mercury*, 17 August 1816.

54 *Suffolk Chronicle*, 11 July 1818.

55 *The Lady's Monthly Museum*, xix (April 1824), 223.

56 'Musical Phenomenon', *Harmonicon*, ii, part 1 (1824), 42-3; Muriel Silburn, 'The Most Extraordinary Creature in Europe', *Music & Letters*, iii (1922), 200-5.

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58 'George Cooper', in G. Grove (ed), *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 4 vols. (London, 1879), i, 398.

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60 For Fétis and his historical concerts, see Holman (2010), 308-9 and the literature cited there.

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62 For the 1836 concert, see Holman (2010), 309-11.

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68 *The Atlas*, xi (15 May 1836), 311; Moscheles (1879), 228; Kroll (2014), 265.

69 *The Musical World*, v (24 March 1837), 24-5; Kroll (2014), 266.

70 For Salaman, see especially 'Charles Salaman', *Musical Times*, xlii (1901), 530-3; Grove (1879), iii, 217-18.

71 'Mr. Charles Salaman's Musical Lecture', *Musical World*, xxxiii (13 January 1855), 26.

72 Listed in *Musical World*, xxxiii (12 May 1855), 300; also *Musical World*, lvi (26 January 1878), 73.

73 Now Victoria and Albert Museum, 19-1887 <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O70511/the-queen-elizabeth-virginal-spinet-baffo-giovanni-antonio/>; also Howard Schott, *Catalogue of Musical Instruments in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, i: *Keyboard Instruments* (London, 2/1985), 29-31.

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81 'Charles Salaman', 533.

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94 It is probably the Pleyel of 1848 now at Hatchlands, see *The Cobbe Collection*, 'Chopin's "Own" Grand Piano' <https://www.cobbecollection.co.uk/collection/33-chopins-own-grand-piano/>; *Clinkscale Online*.

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100 Reproduced in T. Edgar Pemberton, *Sir Charles Wyndham, a Biography* (London, 1904), 150.

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107 Boalch (1995), 627; Paul Simmonds, 'Carl Engel and the Clavichord', *Galpin Society Journal*, lxi (2008), 105-113, at 111-13, where he identifies himself as the current owner.

108 Boalch (1995), 681-2; it is now in the St Fagans National Museum of History (formerly the Welsh Folk Museum). For its date, see Darryl Martin, 'The English Virginal', Ph.D. thesis, 2 vols. (University of Edinburgh, 2003), ii, 285.

109 Its present location is unknown, though it could be one of the two 1700 Keene spinets with an uncertain provenance listed in Boalch (1995), 414-15.

110 Boalch (1995), 445, 455.

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116 David Hackett, *Harpsichords and Spinets shown at the International Inventions Exhibition 1885, Royal Albert Hall*, nos.2, 23, 35, 38, 40, 42, 59, 60, 64 <http://www.friendsofsquarepianos.co.uk/square-piano-history/>.

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125 National Portrait Gallery, NPG 2129.

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