

SOUNDING BOARD

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Please keep sending your contributions to editor@harpsichord.org.uk .

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EDITORIAL

The editorship of *Sounding Board* has fallen to me this Autumn, and I have the challenging but interesting task of accepting the baton, knowing it is, literally, for a season only as I shall pass it on to the next editor as soon as I have completed this issue.

In addition to a passion for playing the harpsichord, we all have our specialities and as Pamela Nash was able to give a focus on contemporary matters and William Mitchell concentrated on the instrument and its makers, I wanted to present some articles concerning learning the harpsichord, with which intention I submit something on the Couperin Preludes. I have always performed a lot of his music, so Couperin himself has become something of a theme. Without wishing to abuse the privilege, it occurs to me that I am allowed to be somewhat partisan, in highlighting favourite composers and asking some friends to contribute because next time you will have a different point of view. So I shall start with a prelude (eight, in fact) by offering you an essay with annotated bibliography that I hope might promote more interest in François Couperin's teaching pieces.

I am immensely grateful to all the contributors of the articles that follow and hope you will enjoy reading them as much as I have. Having immersed yourself in 18th century France, there is Raymond Head's article on composing for the harpsichord now, Helena Brown's encouragement to experience what the Associated Board has to offer and our President, Professor Barry Ife, relates the part the harpsichord has played in his life. We have a report on a happy visit to the Hogwood collection and a further article by Paul Y. Irvin and finally some feedback on the many enquiries that are received.

Last month I was in Germany with five students and one of them, Claire Randall, later described our sight-seeing thus: "*Hemiola-like, we spent the afternoon exploring the city in groups of twos or threes.*"

My own pupils as well as all those who have attended my courses at Jackdaws, Benslow, West Dean and elsewhere have taught me more about teaching than any books or methods, so the following comes with my thanks to them.

Reading between the Lines: Couperin's instructions for playing the Eight Preludes from ***L'ART DE TOUCHER LE CLAVECIN.***

Introducing the Context for the Eight Preludes:

François Couperin wrote his first book of harpsichord pieces in 1713 and his fourth in 1730 and thus, by the end of his life, had published twenty-seven *Ordres* as he entitled his collections or suites of pieces grouped together by key. He composed 235 individual, small and perfectly formed, pieces but it was the legacy of his uncle, Louis Couperin, that he chose to explore in his offering of the eight ostensibly pedagogic preludes at the end of his teaching manual, *L'Art de toucher le clavecin*, engraved and published in Paris in 1716.

L'Art de toucher le clavecin



Reading between the lines is particularly necessary with a composer such as Couperin, whose writing was often ambiguous; he admitted to a lack of confidence in his attempt to communicate his instructions within his harpsichord tutor and his titles were often loaded with double meanings. François Couperin had *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* re-issued in 1717, aware of the need to correct the many mistakes in his text. Thurston Dart pointed out in his article in the *Musical Times* (see item no 15 in the bibliography) that the treatise contained “a number of unguarded remarks, as well as certain suggestions that are virtually impossible to put into practice.”

As Frederick Neumann suggested, in an article for the International Musicological Society, (see the bibliography) in respect of its scope and content, “The book does not read like a work that has been carefully planned and thoroughly thought through, but rather like the transcript of an impromptu lecture in which the author talks in turn, and in no apparent order, about matters of pedagogy, problems of technique, and questions of interpretation, just as they happen to come to his mind.” Neumann’s valid point is that the ornament table is “unsystematic, ambiguous and incomplete.” Nevertheless, having written music that eloquently displayed the rich sonorities of the French harpsichord of his day, Couperin sought to engender beautiful, meaningful and expressive performances of it.

The Scope and Content of the Work:

In his article on Couperin, for Groves dictionary, Edward Higginbottom ignores the preludes, when he mentions the three forms of composition that Couperin uses within the *Ordres*: binary, rondeau and chaconne, adding an aside, in brackets, “He never felt confident enough of the abilities of his public to leave any unmeasured preludes, a semi-improvisatory genre which went back to the beginning of the French harpsichord tradition.” I contend that, in effect, he did leave at least four unmeasured preludes. The fact that his preludes are intentionally notated, to give as much information as it is possible for the composer to impart, may certainly say something about Couperin’s personal need for control (as does his table of ornaments and

demand that the player obeyed his markings to the letter) or it may be the fruit of the very experienced teacher that he undoubtedly was, but half of them are, nevertheless, *non mesuré*, to be played in the spirit of an improvisation because, as Higginbottom points out, “Couperin did not conceal his lack of faith in the ability of harpsichordists to improvise such pieces.” I would suggest that they are conceptually the same as those very preludes by Louis Couperin and others that, perhaps, required more experience than most of his students possessed.

Francois Couperin chose to specify his intentions with words and rhythm and with time signatures and barlines, rather than in graphically beautiful scores that were mostly without these conventions. In half the preludes, numbers 1, 3, 7

and 8 he suggested that his notation should be more strictly adhered to, by the marking, *mesuré*.



It is important to consider, I think, how this can be achieved without precluding *rubato* and *inégalité* and, indeed, how freely it is possible to interpret the given rhythmic restrictions in the other four. Perhaps the most noticeable fact about these preludes is their imaginative harmonic schemes, their use of *stile brisé* that prolongs the harpsichord's sonority and Couperin's ornate embellishments. The spirit of generosity in these richly furnished compositions is almost an *embarassment de largesse*, most unusual for short study-pieces, in which it is rare that the cup (however small and precious a goblet) “runneth over”.

In *L'Art de toucher le clavecin*, Couperin gives some standard practical advice to the beginner: he covers subjects such as posture and the suggestion that the instrument should be lightly quilled for a small, weak hand but he also encourages the right foot to be turned outwards: a more sophisticated instruction that, I have always thought, many professional performers would do well to follow, in order to demonstrate that they are playing to share this music with an audience rather than solely for themselves.

Much of Couperin's practical fingering guidance appertains to the pieces he had published in the first two books of *Ordres* and it is valuable for an insight into legato and for the scale-fingerings of his day as well as for specific details of articulation. As already mentioned, his large ornament-table was quite comprehensive, if not always sufficiently explained, and his further comments on this essential ingredient of the repertoire are welcome. Despite some exercises for scales and articulation, surely his real passion was encouraging and stimulating the musicality of his pupils to move the listener or, in his own words, to be “the mirror of human life”.

I have used letters to differentiate the various items in the following bibliography: A- article, B – book, CD – disc, E – essay/s, G-Groves entry, M – Music, R-review, T – treatise. I have also divided the bibliography into sections with some questions that I hope to find answered by the material or that might provoke further discussion. An unmentioned, but growing, listening-resource is YouTube.

An Annotated Bibliography:

<p>François Couperin: Who was he, how did his music fit into the society in which he lived and why did he write music so suited for the French harpsichord?</p>	
B	<p>Mellers, W.. <i>Francois Couperin & the French Classical Tradition New Version</i>. 2nd revised edition. London: Faber & Faber, 1987</p> <p><i>Francois Couperin & the French Classical Tradition</i> was a ground-breaking book in 1950 and, in its revised second edition, remains an excellent resource for setting Couperin and his music in context. Wilfred Mellers' writing style is pleasing and the specific notes on his pieces are useful in conjunction with those of Jane Clark.</p>
B	<p>Beaussant, P. (1980). <i>Francois Couperin</i>. Translated by Alexandra Land. Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1980.</p> <p>Within this biography of the composer and his works, Philippe Beassant devotes just over a page to L'Art de Toucher in which he highlights the difference between the measured and unmeasured preludes that should be, using Couperin's metaphor, as compared with poetry, the difference between prose and verse. Food for thought, indeed.</p>
B	<p>Clark, J and Connon, D. <i>"The Mirror of Human Life": Reflections on Francois Couperin's Pieces de Clavecin</i>. Wyton, Huntingdon., King's Music. 2002</p> <p>Couperin's keyboard pieces are described in the light of contemporary theatrical performances with very useful notes on the titles of most of the pieces; this provides valuable further research on her much praised article, Clark, Jane. "Les Folies Françaises", <i>Early Music</i>, 8 (2), 1980. I have also ignored the revised version, Clark, J. <i>François Couperin 'Pièces de clavecin': the Background</i> (Oxford, 1992) as this pamphlet was also superceded by The "Mirror of Human Life" which, itself, is being revised for a new edition.</p>
<p>L'Art de toucher le clavecin: What are the different editions, essays and comments that will supply information for the player to assess the value of Couperin's treatise as a guide to playing his Preludes?</p>	
T	<p>Saint Lambert, Monsieur de. <i>Les Principes Du Clavecin</i>. Paris, 1702. Reprint, Geneva: Minkoff, 1972.</p> <p>This is the most important French treatise and forerunner; it not only puts <i>L'Art de toucher</i> into context but also clarifies some of Couperin's intentions</p>
T	<p>Couperin, Francois. <i>L'Art de toucher le clavecin</i>. Facsimile edition of 1717, Paris second edition. New York: Broude Brothers Ltd., 1969.</p> <p>The second edition was Couperin's own improved edition which he monitored with care. A grasp of French will be necessary and, as already stated it can be ambiguous, but this is the nearest thing to a lesson with the great musician.</p>
T	<p>Linde, Anna, ed. <i>L'Art de toucher le clavecin</i>. Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Hartel, 1933.</p> <p>Although this was a standard edition for English speakers and is still available, it is not ideal, as the preludes are cramped onto the page, as if of little importance, and the English text has errors.</p>
T	<p>Halford, M. ed. <i>L'Art de toucher le clavecin</i>. Port Washington, N.Y.: Alfred Publishing Co. 1974.</p> <p>Forty years on, an edition considered by Kirkpatrick to be an improvement upon the earlier one, especially in its presentation and layout, with the translation printed parallel with the original texts of both 1716 and 1717 publications. I am not comfortable, however, with all her comments and disagree with some of her ornament solutions. If a facsimile is not chosen, the best modern edition of the 8 Preludes is that of <i>Ut Orpheus</i> below:</p>
M	<p>Vera Alcalay & Kenneth Gilbert eds. <i>8 Preludi e allemanda da L'Art de toucher le clavecin (Paris 1717) : per clavicembalo</i>. Bologna, Italy: Ut Orpheus Edizioni. 2001</p> <p>In his short introduction, Kenneth Gilbert compliments Vera Alcalay's impeccable text and stresses again, that one cannot study the Preludes too often. "Only by regular frequentation can one remain mindful of the timeless value of Couperin's counsel." This is a spacious and clear text with Couperin's own fingering large enough to read easily. The model <i>Allemanda</i> is printed at the end and is a reminder that Bach knew this work.</p>
M	<p>Fuller-Maitlans, J.A., ed., <i>8 Preludes and an Allemanda, from L'Art de toucher le clavecin (1717)</i>. London: Chester, c.1920.</p> <p>For historical interest, I have mentioned this early edition of the Preludes to compare with the clean one above. Sometimes it is the anachronistic that helps us see more easily, the right way ahead</p>

	<p>Background to French thought, theory and practice: Why did Couperin write preludes for teaching purposes? How precise was his notation, considering he did not notate inégalité? Were his intentions successful and what does he convey? How can the preludes still be used for improving technique and expression?</p>
A	<p>Kirkpatrick, R. (1976). "On Re-reading Couperin's "L'Art de toucher le clavecin"." <i>OUP: Early Music</i> Vol 4, no 1 (Jan. 1976): 9. This is especially interesting because it is written by a mature performer, re-assessing this valuable work at a time when the harpsichord revival was in full swing and the instrument was being taken up by amateurs, once more.</p>
M, B	<p>Tilney, C. <i>The Art of the Unmeasured Prelude</i>. London: Schott & Co Ltd., 1991 This is the definitive guide to the unmeasured prelude. The set of three volumes consists of all the most important unmeasured Preludes; there is a facsimile set and a modern edition of the same edited by Colin Tilney and his commentary forms the third volume. The F. Couperin preludes are beyond his scope but this does give the essential background and ethos of the form most comprehensively.</p>
A	<p>Moroney, D. "The Performance of Unmeasured Harpsichord Preludes". <i>OUP Early Music IV</i> (1976): 143-151. Another experienced performer's thoughts on playing these free-form works. He has also written for Groves on the subject.</p>
B	<p>Soderlund, Sandra. <i>How Did They play? How Did They Teach? A History of Keyboard Technique</i>. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Hinshaw Music, 2006. A compendium of historic methods and treatises in which she offers the gist of each of these primary sources. This places Saint Lambert and Couperin in the middle of the French chapter which starts with Mersenne and finishes with Corrette - a general overview.</p>
B	<p>Hogwood, C. Ed., <i>French Music and the Fitzwilliam</i>. Cambridge: Fitzwilliam Museum. 1975. This is a commemorative book including essays, a catalogue and two concert programmes. The catalogue contains mention of a copy of <i>L'Art de Toucher</i> exhibited there in 1975 and seemingly owned by Lord Fitzwilliam in 1769. Duphly's instructions on <i>Du Doigter</i>, an autograph set of exs. that appear to have been written for his pupil, Fitzwilliam, were also in the exhibition. Significant essays include <i>Classical French music and the theory of imitation</i> by Edward Higginbottom and <i>Sources for the performance of French keyboard music</i> by Christopher Hogwood..</p>
B	<p>Cowart, G., Ed., <i>French Musical Thought 1600-1800</i>. Studies in Music. Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1989. Essays on French musical thought discussing the effects on the emotions of art and music. They include an important one by Jane R Stevens on the meanings and uses of <i>Caractère</i> in 18th cent. France, Mersenne and others upon the <i>affects</i>, critical language and emotional content.</p>
E	<p>Hogwood, C., Ed., <i>The Keyboard in Baroque Europe. Musical performance & Reception</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. A very valuable collection of essays for Leonhardt's 75th birthday. Arranged into 4 sections, including Moroney's <i>Couperin, Marpurg & Roeser</i> which highlights the influence of this important work upon other theorists.</p>
G	<p>Wendy Thompson, <i>Notes Inégales</i> (Fr., "unequal notes"). Groves Online, 27 Oct. 09 This is a basic overview of the subject but only citing the following, in the format below, with a disappointing lack of original sources of which there are plenty. She admits the controversy but leaves it in the air. I include it because it is necessary to dig deeper into this important stylistic seam that Couperin mentions in the treatise and is so integral to this music. S. E. Hefling, <i>Rhythmic Alteration in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Music: Notes inégales and Overdotting</i> (New York, 1993) J. Byrt, <i>Notes inégales: A European Style</i> (Tiverton, 1996)</p>
A	<p>Dart, T. 'On Couperin's Harpsichord Music'. <i>Musical Times</i>, cx (1969), 590-94 An exceptionally insightful article touching on the French instruments of the time, acknowledging the importance of other texts by Saint Lambert and also L'Affilard and Monteclair with some helpful pointers to interpreting ornamentation with particular attention to the controversial <i>port de voix</i> and its origins, exploring Couperin's near 20 time signatures and his use of slurs.</p>

R	Schott, Howard, review of <i>Complete Works for harpsichord, vols 5, 6, 7</i> by François Couperin, Kenneth Gilbert, <i>The Musical Times</i> , Vol. 116, No 1586 (Apr., 1975), p. 345. stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/960347 Referred to in my summary of the state of research at the present time.
A	Neumann, F. 'Couperin and the Downbeat Doctrine for Appoggiaturas. <i>Acta Musicologica</i> , Vol 41, Fasc. ½ (Jan.-Jun., 1969), pp. 71-85 He proves that Couperin has not been entirely successful in explaining his intentions for the <i>port de voix</i> (or appoggiatura) and puts forward an excellent argument for tempering the length and position of this ornament according to context, rather than to Couperin's rules that are unclear and incomplete.
CD	François Couperin, <i>Complete harpsichord music</i> , Michael Borgstede, CD, Brilliant Classics, 11 discs, 93082. March 04 – June 05. Borgstede takes the opportunity to insert the preludes, as Couperin suggested, before the corresponding Ordres in this complete set, demonstrating their suitability for the purpose and consequently, they appear as follows: Prelude 1 in C to Ordre 3, Prelude 2 for Ordre 2, Prelude 3 for Ordre 1, Preludes 4 & 5 for Ordres 4 & 5, prelude 6 for Ordre 8, Prelude 7 for Ordre 6 and Prelude 8 for Ordre 7. All of which suggests that it may have been an afterthought to add them to his previous works for harpsichord; be that as it may, the first Prelude had to be the C major one, as it is the easiest to manage.
CD	<i>Couperin Family Harpsichord Works</i> , Gustav Leonhardt, Philips 420939 1 PH; LiJ 420 939-2PH (62 mins: DDD). Leonhardt chooses to play the 8 Preludes as a noble set on this recording and thereby offers the opportunity for appreciation of their musical range and consideration as a whole.

The state of research at the present time:

Perhaps Wilfred Mellers did too good a job of placing Couperin in context, to tempt others to research further, yet Jane Clark commendably took up the baton which he himself, acknowledged in his revised edition, and has continued her researches into the meanings behind the titles of his harpsichord pieces.

Heugel printed a scholarly edition of the *Ordres* by Kenneth Gilbert in 1969 and both concert performances and a wider dissemination, in recordings, have played their part in establishing Couperin's worth but the preludes have had less attention.

Stanley Sadie's review of Broude Bros facsimile edition of *L'art de toucher* in the *Musical Times*, (vol.112, No 1546 (Dec. 1971) p1200) stated, "Much of the material in *L'art* is of limited interest today..." By 1975, Howard Schott, in a review of Kenneth Gilbert's 7th volume, insightfully recognised that, "Perhaps ... none sums up Couperin's art so well as the pieces from *L'art de toucher*, which are played (in this recording) as a group ..." In 1976, Kirkpatrick wrote "Certainly its value is very great in having transmitted to us the Preludes which are among Couperin's finest music." (see item 9 in the bibliography). Kirkpatrick's good friend, Geraint Jones, must have caught his enthusiasm as he once said to me that he was giving all his beginner-pupils the Preludes to play, which I thought a tall order and this may be the problem: the able consider themselves beyond such fare and the less able find them too rich to digest.

It took another twenty five years for a good edition of the preludes, by *Ut Orpheus*, (see item no 7 in the bibliography) to be published, although the opportunity for comparison, by placing each one alongside the original, was missed. Despite the admiration of so many respected musicians, I have found very little written on the eight preludes. It is as if, being tacked onto the end of the important treatise, of which there is more than one translation, they have fallen by the wayside of academic interest. Yet, they still throw up questions

to be solved. Harpsichordists could do no better than to work at these pieces for learning about their instrument and the touch required upon it, about overholding and articulation, about subtle and expressive ornamentation and for exploring Couperin's imaginative sound-world in order to communicate it to others. It seems we must look to the performer to supply more information.

Davitt Moroney, unusually, chose to play all eight at the concert he gave at Hatchlands, East Clandon, on the 25th June, 2008, to celebrate the restoration of the Ruckers harpsichord, an instrument that is, in his estimation, one of the best three instruments in the world. His programme consisted of three *Ordres* and the eight *Preludes*. These preludes proved ideal for displaying the beauties of a magnificent harpsichord.

The complete recording by the harpsichordist, Michael Borgstede, completed in 2005, pays tribute to *L'Art de toucher le clavecin*, both in the accompanying pamphlet and by including the preludes as introductory pieces to the *Ordres* from books one and two, whose keys they match. Although Couperin did not write specifically on the affect of keys, as did other theorists, (Charpentier in the late 17th century and Mattheson only three or four years earlier than the treatise) Mellers notes Couperin's sensitivity to key (the great *Passacaille* in Bminor for example) and that is another area that might be explored further.

In teaching these pieces, I encourage students to view them in the light of advice from Couperin (and other French writers), in order to put contemporary theories into practice and to test them out beneath the fingers, in order, for example, to discover a real legato in the first prelude and consider Couperin's rather sweeping statement that "it is necessary to preserve a perfect legato in all that you play" and to consider the appoggiatura in the *non mesuré* 4th prelude; this is, in itself, a conundrum that leads to much speculation, notwithstanding Couperin's advice, on the appropriate length in each case; Neumann's article (item no 17) might be of assistance here.

As with so much music, the notation never tells the whole story and maybe this was a particular frustration to the French prelude-writers; their choices were to be less demanding of the performer, abandon traditional notation and continue to write in the unmeasured style or, like D'Anglebert, provide yet more complex ornament tables. It remains a fascinating area of study for collaboration between players and researchers and there is still more to be found in reading between the lines.

Penelope Cave January 2010

www.impulse-music.co.uk/cave.htm

A revised edition of Jane Clark's excellent and insightful handbook on Couperin's harpsichord Ordres is to be reissued and there is a sample of her considerable knowledge of this repertoire in her article below.

The Mirror of Human Life by Jane Clark and Derek Connon.

A handbook to François Couperin's Harpsichord pieces,
with explorations of the social, literary and theatrical worlds
from which he drew so much of his inspiration.

This will be a second, revised edition of the book first published by King's Music in 2002, incorporating the latest research and including a new essay by Jane Clark on the architecture of the Ordres.

Publication date will be 6 December 2010. Price: £14.50 plus post & packing from



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'Whence comes this strange language?'

François Couperin's contemporaries felt his harpsichord music to be in a completely new style. The composer himself praised the work of his ancestors and said that their music still appealed to people of refined taste. 'As for my pieces' he adds, 'their new and diversified character has assured them a favourable reception with the people who matter'. Today the work of Couperin's ancestors seems to be far more accessible to players and audiences than his own. The reverse was true before the musical world became aware of, for want of a better word, 'authenticity'. That great pioneer Wanda Landowska asked: 'Whence comes this strange language?' Perhaps because she asked, the legacy she left encouraged the next generation to find answers, answers which were often fanciful but which were vividly characterful and appealed to the imagination of their audiences. Few players considered a recital complete without François Couperin. Today, even in a festival at which he was 'Composer in Residence', relatively few of his *Pièces de Clavecin* were played. Perhaps the question for us today is: 'How comes this strange situation?'

To judge by Couperin's irritated Preface to Book III of his pieces few of his contemporaries bothered to ask Landowska's question. In the Preface to Book I he says: 'I have always had a subject in mind.....the titles refer to ideas that have occurred to me,' and, many of the pieces are: 'are portraits of a kind, which under my fingers have, on occasion, been found to be tolerable likenesses'. He was quick to say that if the titles appeared to flatter him they actually referred to the 'amiable originals.' Perhaps the fact that he also said he might be forgiven if he did not explain them has led people to think they do not matter. As many of them

are far from flattering he was probably wise. At the same time, an attempt to find out something about these originals perhaps helps us to answer Landowska's question. Couperin also warns players that he has included all the necessary ornaments.

So why, when he reaches Book III, does he have to complain: 'I am always astonished, after the pains I have taken to indicate the appropriate ornaments for my pieces, to hear people who have learnt them without heeding my instructions. Such negligence is unpardonable, the more so as it is no arbitrary matter to put in any ornament one wishes. I therefore declare that my pieces must be performed just as I have marked them, and that they will never make much of an impression on people of real discernment if all that I have indicated is not obeyed to the letter, without adding or taking away anything.'

Difficult, and occasionally almost impossible as it may be, it is surely acute attention to all Couperin's markings that communicates his intentions. But unless those intentions are understood the markings often make little sense. Like the Marquise de Lambert, at whose famous salon he played, Couperin was clearly fascinated by psychology. Most of his portraits must be specific, his own reactions to particular people and particular situations, otherwise why would he have claimed that they had been recognized as 'tolerable likenesses' under his fingers?

But while no other composer was writing portraits and satires, poets and playwrights were. Couperin's harpsichord music is not like his chamber music or his church music, which was written for the court or the royal chapel, most of it must have been written for an informed audience, for occasions like the salon of Madame de Lambert. Poets brought their latest portraits and Couperin did the same.

Many of the portraits refer to the theatre. One of these is the allemande *La Verneüil*. This is almost certainly refers to Achile Varlet, seigneur de Verneüil, a great tragic actor. *La* refers to *la piece*, not to the subject. This is borne out by the next piece, *La Verneüilléte*. Verneüil's wife was a soubrette actress. This light and charming piece is a great contrast to the drama of *La Verneüil* where Couperin has, unusually, marked appoggiaturas in the middle of the chords. Some people claim that this means the chords are spread with an extra note. If this view is accepted the declamatory character is then removed and the piece is reduced to yet another beautiful allemande. If the instructions are obeyed the great actor appears, declaiming Racine or Corneille. Anyone who had been fortunate enough to hear Eugene Green, who has studied the declamatory style of the seventeenth century French actors, will immediately see the point of Couperin's markings if he is in fact portraying Achile Varlet.

La Verneüil is the first movement of the 18th. *Ordre*, much of which refers to the theatre, as does the 16th *Ordre* where the opening allemande is *Les Graces incomparables ou la Conti*. Often thought to be the Dowager Princesse de Conti who was a pupil of Couperin's, a far more likely candidate is Prince de Conti of

whom Saint Simon said; 'There was a grace in everything he did', *graces incomparables*. Saint Simon also gives the show away by saying that his laugh was like the braying of an ass. This radiant allemande is interrupted at the double bar by a strange little figure which Couperin uses in another piece to describe the braying of an ass. Jacques Ibert also uses it in his piano piece The little white Donkey.

The next piece in the 16th. Ordre is *L'Himen-Amour*, Married Love. Conti was in love with his brother-in-law's wife so married love was not something he never experienced. He was particularly interested in the theatre, of which he was a great patron. There is a play by Dufresny called *Les Mal-assortis*. The directions say the stage represents the room of the ill-matched couples. You see Hymen, God of marriage, 'amongst husbands and wives who turn their backs on one another. He is sitting under a dead tree on which perch birds of evil-omen; cuckoos, owls, bats etc.' This piece mimics cuckoos in the bass, owls and bats in the treble, and wedding bells are briefly heard in bar five. The piece, like many of Couperin's, is quite a tough satire.

The relationship between the subjects of the pieces strengthens the identification of the characters Couperin is portraying. This happens in many instances and gradually you become aware of a conscious plan in each ordre. The second part of *L'Himen-Amour* should be a happy musette with a drone bass, like all other musettes by Couperin. The musette, a small bagpipe, was a sexy symbol. In this piece Couperin has broken the bass, putting bare octaves with rests in between, so continuing the irony of the first half.

It has been said that by reducing Couperin's pieces to their subjects their stature is reduced. Couperin was acutely sensitive to human feelings, our own feelings, perennial human conditions and this lifts his miniatures onto a universal plane. But unless we try to find out what particular human condition he is trying to communicate we may perhaps be in danger of misrepresenting him. There is a school of thought that believes Couperin to be beautiful but superficial. This possibly stems from a misunderstanding of his intentions. It also may prompt people to feel they have to 'do something' with the music to make it interesting. Take *Les Rozeaux*, the reeds. If the title is taken at face-value it is simply a nice little nature piece about gently waving reeds and may be thought pretty but little more. But, as Wilfrid Mellers, who wrote the great classic on Couperin, said just before he died, he had come to realise that Couperin's pieces were 'about people, full stop'. 'Man is only a reed, the weakest thing in nature' to quote Pascual. It is surely one of the most deeply felt and sympathetic portrayals of human frailty ever written, just because of its direct simplicity.

The 13th. Ordre from which *Les Rozeaux* comes is all about human frailty. It seems to be a portrait of the Regent, Philippe d'Orléans, the man who created the official title of Ordinaire de la Musique du Roi for Couperin, a post that carried with it a pension. This was more than Louis XIV had ever done for Couperin. It could also have been intended as a warning for the young Louis XV. It opens with *Les Lis naissans*, The birth of the Lilies, the Fleur de Lis being the emblem of the Kingdom of France, also the emblem of purity. Then

comes Les Rozeaux. Next comes temptation, L'engageante, a seductive bow of yellow ribbon that young ladies wore on their breasts. The reed gives way and is led through Les Folies françoises, a set of tiny variations loosely based on the famous Folies d'Espagne. Each variation is a character at a masked ball. The Regent held masked balls three times a week, but eventually they caused such a scandal they had to be banned. All these characters work their way to their inevitable doom, L'âme-en peine, The Soul in torment.

The Regent appears in several ordres, his own allemande *La Régente ou la Minerve* opens the 15th. Ordre. This sombre piece portrays the other side of the Regent. He was a highly cultured man, a good musician who studied what was then early music, composed operas and was also a good painter. He was liked and respected by both musicians and artists. Like so many people at the time he was seriously interested in science. This is the Regent of *La Régente ou La Minerve*, Minerva, Goddess of Wisdom and the Arts. This complex man has come down in history as a thoroughly bad lot, but this far from the truth. He was denied any official positions by Louis XIV who feared him as a rival to his own less brilliant sons and forced him to marry one of his illegitimate daughters.

The highly critical Saint Simon writes of him, just as Couperin does, in sadly sympathetic terms: 'When his ambitions were thwarted he took pride in licentiousness. The rakes of Paris gained a hold over him. Resentment at being forced into an unsuitable marriage drove him to seek consolation elsewhere. Disappointment at being refused the command of an army and the other offices he had been promised finally led him into dissolute living which he carried to extremes in order to show contempt for his wife and the King's displeasure.'

The other brilliant prince who suffered the same fate was the Prince de Conti. It was partly his influence that led Philippe d'Orléans along the road to ruin. Saint Simon is sympathetic to this victim too: 'He was a constant joy in Society and at the Court, the idol of the army and the masses, the hero of young officers, and the hope of scholars and men of science. He had an extremely good brain, enlightened, precise and well informed.' Saint Simon also adds the revealing remark: 'He kept a cool head amidst all the futility of the Court.' It seems Couperin felt this futility too. He satirises Madame de Maintenon in *La Prude* and *La Favorite*, at the time no one knew she was the king's wife, she was simply his favourite. Of course only those in the know would have seen what Couperin was doing, it only becomes clear when evidence builds up over all twenty-seven ordres. Obsequious courtiers are satirised in *La Flateuse*, The Flatterer and in *Les Vieux Seigneurs* and *L'Amphibie*, the first and last pieces in the 24th. Ordre.

Like Alexander Pope who wrote of 'the amphibious thing', a courtier he could not stand, as: 'wit that can creep and pride that licks the dust', Couperin clearly scorned insincerity. La Bruyère, also used the term amphibious to describe the ambitious courtier in his *Caractères*, a copy of which Couperin possessed. Couperin was probably a bad courtier himself. He seems to have had to work hard to gain the ear of Louis

XIV after his initial organist's appointment in 1693. His sympathies were evidently with the less successful like the Prince de Conti, who had everything. This was his misfortune, because the King resented his superiority over his own sons, just as he did with Philippe d'Orléans. His final undoing came when a letter he wrote home from the wars was opened by the King, who found himself referred to as 'The Monarch of the Stage'. Conti was banished to Chantilly.

Couperin shared the Prince's love of the theatre, particularly the King's Italian comedians under the great Harlequin, Evaristo Gherardi. He makes many references to the actors, and to the plays. This troupe was banned in 1697 at the instigation of the unpopular Madame de Maintenon, which would be enough to damn her in Couperin's eyes. Couperin makes several references to specific moments in these plays, one of them being in his famous portrait of Gherardi, *L'Arlequine*. This is a Harlequin chaconne. Couperin has marked it to be played 'grotesquement' but the very fact that a Harlequin was dancing an aristocratic dance like the chaconne would be grotesque in itself.

Gherardi made his debut in Regnard's play, *Le Divorce*. In *L'Arlequine* Couperin refers to a scene in this play in which Harlequin is singing duets with an Italian singing master. His efforts are not a great success and drive the singing teacher mad: 'Do please sing in tune' he begs. Harlequin, who insists he is an accomplished musician, retorts: 'Oh, sing in tune yourself; I know what I'm talking about. Do you think I don't know that it's necessary to mark a dissonance there, and that the octave comes in clashing with the unison, forming a b sharp minor?' which is absolute nonsense. But towards the end of his piece Couperin writes astonishing clashes, quite unlike him, which presumably refer to this scene. It is possible that at the beginning Couperin is imitating a fairground organ, remembering that Gherardi's plays were done at the Fair Theatres. This agonisingly nostalgic piece is in the same mood as the great French cabaret singers, Couperin simply got there first.

But all Couperin's references to these plays are not nostalgic, many are comic like *Le Gaillard-Boiteux*, marked to be played 'dans le Goût Burlesque', which refers to the Italian Comedy. Furetière explains in his *Dictionnaire Universel*: 'Burlesque, this word is quite modern, it came to us from Italy. It was not in fashion for long because the Italian actors introduced too much licence and too many ridiculous jokes.' One of the dancing masters at Versailles was called Jean Gaillard. In Regnard and Dufresny's play, *Les Chinois*, we are told that the actors are going to mock themselves at last, having mocked everyone else: 'There is not a profession that has escaped their satire; Attorneys, Doctors, Magistrates. They have not even respected Roman Emperors or dancing masters.' In this scene, from another play, the dancing master has a wooden leg (*boiteux* means lame). Harlequin asks: 'And what is your profession?' The dancing master replies: 'I was the dancing master at the opera house in Lyon, but as the opera has fallen....' Harlequin butts in: 'It fell on you I suppose, and there you are, completely crippled'. Clearly Mr. Gaillard was an object of ridicule in which Couperin's limping piece succeeds brilliantly.

Regnard and Dufresny's play *Les Chinois* was evidently something very special for Couperin. His last ordre, the 27th, includes a piece called *Les Chinois*. In fact the last two ordres show just how influenced by Gherardi's troupe Couperin must have been. The third piece in the 26th. Ordre is *La Sophie*, not a pretty girl but a whirling dervish. One of the plays done by Gherardi's troupe was *Mezzetin en Grand Sofi*. This is important where the design of this ordre is concerned. It comes between two gentle pieces making the contrast Couperin was always so careful about.

In his final ordre Couperin seems to be summing up what he has been trying to do in his *Pièces de Clavecin*. It opens with a sad allemande, *L'Esquise*. Furetière explains how this word was used: 'All this book is full of exquisite thoughts, exquisite experiences, exquisite sentiments.' Next *Les Pavots*, the poppies. Poppies were a sleeping drug and Couperin was all too aware that this would be his last ordre. Then comes *Les Chinois*. In this play the French Isabelle manages, after certain obstacles have been removed, to marry her Italian lover Octave. This would be a subject that would appeal to Couperin with his passion for *les goûts réunis*.

The play opens on Mount Parnassus with Apollo and the Muses, and on the summit stands Pegasus (symbol of literature) portrayed as a winged ass. Couperin again uses the same little figure to denote the ass that he used in *La Conti*. The braying interrupts the conversation, and when Apollo asks Thalia, the muse of comedy, why they have not fed Pegasus, she tells him: 'The poor devils can scarcely feed themselves. These days one can hardly get fat on chewing laurels.'

This is very likely a reference to the fact that Couperin felt he had not received enough money, or enough recognition, or both, in other words that all his exquisite compositions had not been sufficiently appreciated. Light is thrown on this by the son of the composer Claude Daquin, who was a pupil of Couperin's rival, Marchand. He says: 'These two men shared the affection of the public and fought between themselves for first place. Marchand possessed rapidity of execution, a lively and sustained genius and a style of composing that only he could do. Couperin, less brilliant, less even, less favoured by nature, had more art, and according to several alleged connoisseurs was more profound. Sometimes, they say, he raised himself above his rival, but Marchand for two defeats gained twenty victories. He was a man of genius, work and reflection formed the other.'

The last piece of all, *Saillie*, has many meanings. As well as a joke or a jump it means a reproach and it seems Couperin is reproaching the public for not understanding his music. Furetière adds: 'It is used also of certain brilliant and surprising shafts of wit that seem to arise spontaneously in a work of eloquence, of poetry, or in conversation.' Perhaps it was the contrasts in so many of the plays done by Gherardi's troupe that appealed to Couperin and certainly the two halves of this final piece illustrate this dramatically. The first half is seriously contrapuntal, conversational and poetic, and very French, whilst the second brings us abruptly down to earth

and is very Italian. It probably refers to the ballet of acrobats in *Les Chinois*, described in the stage directions: ‘An air is played on the violin, upon which four tumblers do a ballet of acrobatic tricks.’ These tricks would have been none too polite. This part of the piece is certainly more grateful on the violin than the harpsichord and is full of leaps and bounds.

In one of the most beautiful speeches from *Les Chinois*, Apollo, God of the Arts, reproaches someone who fails to understand the comic theatre, by saying: ‘The Comedy forms the spirit, elevates the heart, ennobles the sentiments; it is the mirror of human life that shows vice in all its horror and virtue in all its magnificence.....all the most beautiful thoughts in the world have two sides. The theatre is the school of *politesse*, the rendez-vous of fine spirits.’ These are surely the ‘people of real discernment’ Couperin refers to in his preface to Book III.

Some of the music for these plays survives and though Couperin, if he had wanted the ear of the King would not have revealed it, a lot of it has a distinctly Couperin-like flavour. Be that as it may, it seems that the inspiration of the Italian comedy goes a long way towards answering Landowska’s question: ‘Whence comes this strange language?’ And if so perhaps an attempt to understand and communicate the character of Couperin’s ‘portraits’ may help to answer the other question: ‘How comes this strange situation?’

Jane Clark.



*The Goermans Taskin harpsichord, Paris, 1763/83-84
Edinburgh University Collection of Musical Instruments
Raymond Russell Collection, Inventory number (4329)*

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<http://www.music.ed.ac.uk/euchmi/>

I tend to think that playing contemporary music teaches us a lot about our instrument and how to make it sing. Raymond Head has much of interest to say in the inspiration of earlier composers, including Couperin.

Writing Harpsichord Music Today by Raymond Head

Enshrined in the re-discovery of the harpsichord at the end of the 19th century was a commitment to the re-discovery of Early Music so that it has seemed like a contradiction in terms for there to be anything called a modern repertoire. I knew famous works like the de Falla music and the Elliot Carter concerto for piano and harpsichord and I had the Berio *Sequenza*, which I disliked, and was much more taken by Ligeti's *Continuum*. Personally, I became aware of the problem of writing a modern work for the harpsichord in 1997, when a friend of mine, Klyne Williams of Totnes, asked me if I would write something for her to play at a Taskin Conference that was going to be held at Dartington later that year.

At one time and with the righteousness of youth I had hated the sound of the harpsichord but at Dartington I had lessons from John Wellingham and he introduced me to a new understanding, - a new listening which I found revolutionary. Firstly, I used the modern Goble and then I was allowed to play the wonderful Ruckers instrument in the private house. The repertoire particularly of works by Couperin and Rameau but by Peter Phillips was entirely new to me (I was then a Stockhausen fan) and they became new-found treasures. Then when I left to teach I hardly touched a harpsichord again.

It was strange because the request for a modern piece ignited a flame inside me, instantly I began to hear sounds, some mellifluous, some rather spiky. Back at home I tried pinning some of these sounds down on paper and realised that I wanted to write a musical tribute to Couperin and Rameau, but quite definitely not in a pastiche style. By then I had already begun to realise that composing these pieces would provide me with an opportunity to write a musical homage to a great friend of mine called Mary Potts (1905 - 1982), a pioneering harpsichordist whose Shudi harpsichord came from Arnold Dolmetsch and who had died some years before in Cambridge. She had been very kind to me during a difficult period in my life and had opened my eyes to the joys of T'ai chi lessons at the Oriental Faculty, Cambridge and even allowed me to play her beloved Shudi ("very late you know"). Her great loves were Couperin and Rameau amongst many other composers.

Quite a challenge presented itself; how to write for the harpsichord in a modern but idiomatic style so that players and listeners would feel comfortable with them in the appropriate context. I think contemporary works should be performed within in a normal concert programme albeit one carefully thought-out and planned, otherwise, new music remains in a ghetto: anything new I think should be perceived as just part of a continuum of music going back centuries. Over the years I have found that my pieces fit very well into programmes of early English and French styles.

After thinking about the problem I felt there were going to be two contrasted pieces; the first *le Mystère* I thought should be very resonant with slowly shifting harmonies like Couperin's *Les Barricades mystérieuses* (played slowly) or some of the pieces in *L'Art de toucher le clavecin*. The term *non mesuré* is central to this first piece which should always be very expressive yet have forward impetus as if on an ambling voyage of discovery. Then the second piece *Le rappel du l'humanité* was going to be quite different, more extrovert, linear with slightly offbeat rhythms and have some harsh dissonance. Slowly these pieces were worked out in detail.

From a technical point of view neither is particularly demanding. I felt strongly that there was no reason for writing an extremely difficult piece for harpsichord when very few players play any modern music at all. The pieces had to be technically accessible yet introduce a modern world of sound.

Many years later in 2006 a commission from Penelope Cave allowed me to complete what I had always thought should be a set of three pieces for harpsichord. This time my inspiration came from a very different source; the *Sema Mevlana* ceremony of the whirling dervishes in Istanbul. I took the 4-part structure of the

ceremony with its whirling and contrasted moments of inner stillness as the basis for the work. Then I had to decide how the music would flow to suggest movement. A Bach prelude suggested a resolution combined with a hint of Couperin and the use of a modern minimalist technique.

It is always very gratifying when pieces work and I think these do. A new yet strangely familiar sound world opens up which should not surprise us too much but still give the feeling of having been written in recent times. They have been performed several times in different venues and I am pleased that they have on every occasion been well received. One of the roles of the contemporary composer is to introduce new sounds to people so that there is feeling of the times in which we all live. We happily accept new technology like mobile phones, email, shopping online, so why not try some modern music as well?

Raymond Head.
raymondhead@aol.com

Le Mystère - Two Pieces for Harpsichord (1997) £ 7.50 plus p&p

- *Sema Mevlana (2007) £6.50 plus p&p*

Music available from Sky Dance Press - www.raymondhead.com

- 10 Worcester Road, Chipping Norton Oxfordshire OX7 5XX Tel: 01608 642025

Helena Brown, Harpsichordist, teacher, senior examiner & adjudicator, has always championed contemporary music:

We live in such fortunate times....at the press of a button we can find out so much,- and I would urge readers to investigate, if you haven't done so before, the extensive and varied repertoire for the harpsichord which the ABRSM has on its current syllabus. www.abrsm.org

A really satisfying way of measuring progress is to involve oneself or one's students in performances, whether formal or informal, and, the requirement of needing to perfect the repertoire by a certain date is often a very useful thing for both student and teacher.

Many adult students are wary of entering themselves for exams, perhaps after many years away from that world, but Performance Assessment is always helpful at any age or stage, and playing to an appreciative audience, (usually on home-territory), who subsequently gives feedback, is undeniably a useful pedagogical tool.

Exploring the repertoire might, also, lead you to find out about much earlier, or much later works than you would normally play: perhaps the music of Picchi or Weckmann, (see Grade 6), or the music of Peter Heeren (see Grade 5), or Scheidemann (Grade 4).

The exams, currently, are available from Grade 4 up to Diploma level and, from a teacher's point of view, assessment is useful at whatever stage, or age you happen to be...

Enjoy exploring!

Helena Brown HelenaBrown@mowat-brown.co.uk

We are fortunate to have Professor Barry Ife CBE FRC Hon FRAM, the Principal of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, as our President and it is fascinating to discover what the harpsichord has meant to him.

A Gift of Music

Like many enthusiasts, I came to the harpsichord by a rather roundabout route. I was a fairly good pianist as a teenager, but let it go when I went to university and in spite of a lot more lessons after I graduated, I never really got it back. Two performances of the Goldberg variations whetted my appetite for the harpsichord: one was by Thurston Dart in the chapel at King's College London, where I was an undergraduate; the other was by a junior lecturer at Nottingham, where I held my first academic post. Later, when I was living in Cambridge in the 1970s, I met Trevor Beckerleg and bought an instrument from him. As part of the deal, he threw in Mary Potts as teacher, and I was a convert for life.

Anyone who knew Mary Potts knows what an amazing teacher she was. She had been a pupil of Dolmetsch and gave lessons on her Shudi harpsichord, so one had the strong sense of being part of a tradition that stretched back many decades, almost to the nineteenth century. Her own playing, especially of French repertoire, was indescribably fluid, with the left and right hands operating in completely different time zones. But it was so stylish and so full of braggadocio (one of her favourite words). She was known throughout Cambridge as the champion of the slow bicycle race and it was her infinite poise and bearing that kept her upright on the bike and made her such a convincing advocate of historical performance.

A group of Mary's pupils used to make periodic visits to study weekends at various locations including Dartington, run jointly by Roy Truby, and the Loosemore Centre at Buckfastleigh. It was at such events that I met a wide range of experts and enthusiasts and sat in on (and occasionally played for) masterclasses by Gustav Leonhardt, Christopher Hogwood and Kenneth Gilbert. It was also through these events that I got to know Roy Truby so well and our collaboration took us to Spain and resulted in the three volumes of Early Spanish Keyboard Music, published by OUP alongside their English, French, German and Italian anthologies edited by Howard Ferguson.

The harpsichord and its repertoire have brought me a lot of pleasure over many years. I was never very much good as a player, but from studying the instrument and its repertoire I learned a lot about a wide range of music in its historical and social context, and a lot about performers and performance, some of which I use in my current job at Guildhall. Some of my colleagues and teachers from this period now work for me – Carole Cerasi, James Johnson and, this term, Jill Severs – and Penelope Cave commissioned this memoir. The harpsichord also led me to Christine Whiffen who became my second wife and mother of two hulking great sons. We have both moved on since then but she still plays my Michael Johnson harpsichord, long after I shamefully abandoned it to concentrate on my academic career and senior management. In which line of work I still try to live by the maxim inscribed on the lid: *plus fait douceur que violence*.

Professor Barry Ife

A highlight of the year, for those of us lucky enough to have been “pulled out of the hat”, was a visit to Sir Christopher Hogwood’s collection of keyboard instruments in Cambridge.

The BHS and the BCS visit Cambridge

At the end of 2008, The British Clavichord Society announced, *“Our events in 2009 will include a visit to Christopher Hogwood’s instrument collection in Cambridge”*. They generously extended the invitation to our members and we joined forces to finalise the arrangements. There was a lot of interest from members of both societies and with a limit on numbers, it was agreed that a ballot was the fairest way to share out the available places. One of the lucky ones, Micaela Schmitz has written an account of that fascinating day.

The visit to Christopher Hogwood’s collection on 31 October 2009 was a real delight. I have the singular privilege of being the first member to join the British Harpsichord society, and it was a wonderful development to see our two societies (BCS and BHS) collaborating, especially on such a memorable occasion.

In German, keyboards are called ‘Tasteninstrumenten’. Tasting, touching, testing, and investigating, we enjoyed an afternoon with 16 instruments, were supplied with a handlist of the instruments and their specifications, offered lovely tea and cakes, and treated with the utmost of hospitality. We divided into two groups (those comprised mainly of harpsichordists, and those comprised mainly of clavichord society members) and were let loose to wander between the many rooms distributed over four floors (for such is the size of the collection that it requires this much space.)

It was useful to have makers there; in fact three of the four who had carried out repairs and restoration were present. They gave commentary, giving insights into the particular situations of instruments and the decisions that had to be taken. Their comments were useful, and I realised that they had arrived one day in advance just to undertake the mammoth task of tuning! I have rarely visited a collection that was so well in tune, and this was really a wonderful thing.

Christopher Nobbs explained that the anonymous 17th Century Italian had been found



chopped down and remade into a smaller instrument. When ‘restoring’ it back to its previous condition, the outer case decoration gave clear signals as to the instrument’s original dimensions.

It is now playing very well. We also learned that it acquired its name ‘Picinani’ from its owner, who is referenced on the lid. The naming helped it achieve a listing in Boalch: advice to the aspiring astronomer-restorer who needs to name a find!

*Anonymous
C17th Italian Harpsichord*

Peter Bavington helpfully pointed out the 'flying buttresses' and the fact that the Lindholm clavichord is deep only by virtue of it being long and requiring such depth for the stability of the box itself. I tried a snippet of 'Für Elise' on this huge instrument.

The Schiedmayer clavichord gave me a distinct impression of fortepianos and Peter helpfully explained its rarity and signposted people to his restoration report in *De Clavicordio*.



Pehr Lindholm, Stockholm 1791



Derek Adlam happily compared his own early work with later items and laughed as I played Joplin on the booming Chickering clavichord.

*Adlam Burnett, 1972
Replica of C17th Flemish
muselar Virginal.*



*Chickering/Dolmetsch, 1909
Clavichord based on German
Model by Hoffman*

He also made a helpful identification of the Brodmann, distinguishing it from the other anonymous instrument that some of us mistook for it. I felt a little sheepish but was heartened to realise that experts had originally taken this anonymous one as a Brodmann for quite some time, so I was not too far off the mark. The 'real' Brodmann had a mellow, 'patina' to its sound. It was interesting comparing it to my memory of playing the one that David Winston has made for The Tudeley Festival. The warmth of tone in the original was extraordinary; it is a big sound that cries out for Beethoven or even later repertory.

Christopher Nobbs agreed that the anon. one was a bit bright, and we all enjoyed trying out the janissary stops on these instruments, with a general agreement that they sounded their best with the moderator engaged. We also discussed what music should be used to show off the janissary and the conclusion seemed to be that Mozart's 'Rondo alla turca' only refers to this music; these pianos, being later, may benefit from works such as 'The Battle of Prague, or in my case, some improvisation.

Josef Johann Brodmann, Fortepiano, Vienna c1815



No question was considered too basic, and these conversations were very fruitful. Young makers and more experienced makers were welcomed equally. Professional performers, students, and amateur enthusiasts were all made to feel welcome and comfortable. The tea and cakes were in themselves works of art and there was a lot of lively conversation both in the rooms and in the break times.

Everyone will have their favourites;
I was most interested in the Bodechtel clavichord, which played so easily!



Johann Jacob Bodechtel, Nürnberg, 1790's

My only regret was this: Much like at a wine tasting, I wandered from item to item, trying, tasting, re-tasting, making notes on my list about construction, tone, set up, repertoire, and impressions, and comparing those ideas with others. When one attends a wine tasting, there is often the opportunity to buy some to take away. Of course with original keyboards and in some cases, unique items, this was not possible!



Spinet, Thomas Hancock, London, 1732.



Travelling Clavichord by Johann Heinrich Gräbner (The younger) Dresden, 1761.



Clavichord, Johann Adolph Hass, Hamburg, 1761



Harpsichord, Jacob Kirkman, London, 1766.

Harpsichord, Thomas Culliford for Longman & Broderip, London 1782



My thanks on behalf of the entire BHS and BCS to Christopher Hogwood for his gracious hospitality; to the makers/restorers Derek Adlam, Peter Bavington, and Christopher Nobbs for tuning and giving helpful background; and to Judith Wardman of the BCS and Edna Lewis of the BHS for organising the day. We may not have won the national lottery but we certainly do not take for granted the chance to experience this.

Thanks,

Dr. Micaela Schmitz
Director, Early Music in the Vale
Editor, Harpsichord and Fortepiano magazine

Photographs by Claire Hammett & Edna Lewis



One of the beauties of the British Harpsichord Society is its number of international members. We have Paul Y. Irvin, from “across the pond”, to thank for sending us his musings on the instrument. It has taken us some time to publish it and he was keen to have some response from members to the questions he poses. I doubt those questions will all have been either answered or challenged in the interim, so I hope you will respond!

Historical Keyboard instruments: the Vocal Ideal, and other Historical Questions

For four hundred years, European people knew what to expect when they heard a harpsichord. Then came a period of approximately one hundred years when the harpsichord was not used. Consequently, when the harpsichord revival began there was no one alive who had ever heard the sound of the harpsichord when it was a mainstay of the musical culture, and 20th century people’s first encounters with the sound of the harpsichord came from the early attempts at restorations of historical instruments and the sounds of the “Revival” harpsichords (Pleyel, Neupert, Sperrhake, etc.). These early 20th century expectations of what a harpsichord should sound like have slowly changed due to the last half-century’s interest in primarily reproducing physical copies of historical harpsichords, but these expectations are still largely descended from a broken knowledge of the historical sound.

In the Baroque era the vocal qualities of the singer were seen as the ideal model for the sound of musical instruments. The closer any instrument could replicate the qualities of the sung voice the more “perfect” an instrument it was considered to be. This comparison of instruments to the singing voice is still heard fairly frequently today.

For most bowed string, woodwind and brass instruments this vocal quality is accessible for the player to control, with practice. It is not, however, significantly under the control of players of keyboard instruments that pluck, strike or hammer the strings. But that does not mean that it is not possible to approach this vocal quality in the sound of keyboard instruments. Other non-keyboard instruments activate their tones by plucking and striking: psaltery, hammered dulcimer/pantaleon, lute, guitar, harp, etc., and the sounds of these instruments can serve as a model of what can be aimed for with their keyed variants. Successful versions of these non-keyboard instruments are constructed and played in a way that focuses on creating a clean, stable, well-focused, sustaining tone without drawing attention to the method of starting the sound, just as the human voice does. Much practice is spent so that the finger, or the pick, or the feather, or the hammer is not heard in the sound. If they were apparent, the intrusion of such a consistent mechanical sound would spoil the comparison to a tone started by a good singer, and detract from the tone created to realize the music.

While harpsichord and clavichord players can try to play the notes in a singing manner, there is very little they can do to affect the actual vocal quality of the tone itself. That is the responsibility of the instrument builder. A harp that can only produce plink, plank, plunk would not be considered a very successful instrument, especially next to one that can go “pling, plang, plung”. The fact that there are harps of both kinds that can appear quite alike, means that the quality of the sound is not a direct consequence of the basic design and dimensions, but of other, more subtle details. Reproducing the basic shape will produce an identifiable musical instrument; identifying and controlling the factors that produce a good sound will make the instrument musical.

There is no evidence, of which I am aware, that historical harpsichords and clavichords were distinct from the other instruments in not trying to achieve this vocal ideal. Consequently, it would seem reasonable to expect these vocal qualities to be present in the sounds of our modern copies and restored antiques, and to expect these qualities to be a major goal for builders in trying to create a musical and historical sound.

Besides this historical vocal ideal, other historical references are available to provide evidence and clues about the tonal qualities and characteristics of historical keyboard sound. Some of these possible references are the sounds of other instruments of the same period that were played with keyboard instruments, the needs of the music, the musical requirements of various instrumental groupings, the sound needs of the typical historical venues, the presence and absence of various features of the keyboard instruments, the historical performance usage of the particular keyboard instrument’s resources, historical performance documents, etc.

Comparing historical evidence with typical modern features, sound, and performance practices raises a variety of interesting questions:

Why do Baroque-era instruments such as bowed strings, woodwinds and brasses share characteristics of a mellower-than-modern tone colour and the vocal speech qualities

promoted in historical literature, but most modern harpsichords and restored antiques do not display these characteristics?

Why are the plucking qualities sought in Baroque lute, guitar and harp playing so different than the characteristics of the plucked sound achieved in most harpsichords?

With the lack of any evidence that historical performers tried to match their harpsichords geographically and temporally to their repertoire as most modern players often do, and a significant amount of evidence that they did not try to do so, what instrumental qualities were the historical players considering for their performances?

Why do many builders and restorers use wire that is significantly stiffer, stronger and different in other physical characteristics than historical wire samples and yet expect to produce an historical sound, especially when wire with properties closer to historical wire is widely available, and has demonstrably more favourable sound qualities?

If using historical-strength wire results in too much breakage, aren't there other reasonable historical factors that can be adjusted rather than using unhistorically-stronger wire as is often done now?

How can using this stronger wire to achieve a higher pitch than would be possible with the known historical wire (surprisingly frequent) be expected to result in a copy of the original sound?

Why are firm-clothed, rectangular flag dampers used on most new and restored antique harpsichords now when virtually no historical dampers have ever been found with this type of material or shape, and the string spacing of many antiques does not allow these to work properly?

Why did all Ruckers, Couchet and Delin 8' jacks, and many Italian ones, use double dampers when very few modern builders use them in their copies? What may be different in the sound, or the damping expectations?

Why does it seem so impossible now to recreate the known historical playing of clavichord with singers and other instruments?

Why were various early fortepianos historically acclaimed as having "singing trebles", when many of their restorations and copies are heard by modern audiences, as sounding choppy and short-lived?

Why have so many modern players expected an even, and usually light, touch across a keyboard, and usually between keyboards in doubles, when neither period organs nor clavichords were built with that homogeneity? Nor was (or is) evenness of response an expectation in any other string, woodwind, or brass instrument.

Since the historical evidence appears to indicate that the lower manuals of 18th century French doubles were usually played with both of the 8' s and the 4' engaged¹, and few modern performers appear to follow this, how is the historical intention of the music being preserved?

¹ Francois Couperin, for instance, notes in one of his pieces croisees (Les Bagatelles, Ordre 10, p. 62 of the original edition [Pieces de clavecin, second livre, Paris 1716-1717]) that for this piece the manuals should be uncoupled and the 4' turned off. The need for this instruction would seem to imply that at least for most of the other pieces in this body of work, and quite possibly other French repertoire, that the usual registration of a double was with the keyboards coupled and all the registers turned on. This default registration of the lower manual would seem to make it musically important for the upper 8' to be strongly enough voiced so as not to be completely overwhelmed by the usual three voices of the lower manual. The lower manual with three registers playing would naturally be the "Grand/Forte clavier", and the upper manual with only one register would be the "petit/piano clavier"; there would be no need to weaken the voicing of the front/upper 8' since this terminology is one of keyboard resources and not of 8' strengths.

See also Harald Hoeren's article, "Remarks on Harpsichord Building and Harpsichord Repertoire in France from 1650 to 1780" in The Harpsichord and Its Repertoire, Proceedings of the International Harpsichord Symposium, Utrecht 1990, Edited by Pieter Dirksen. Utrecht: STIMU Foundation for Historical Performance Practice, 1992, pp. 87-95.

Since Francois Couperin advised in his *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* that a very young student should only play on a spinet or a single-manual that is extremely lightly quilled so that they do not develop a hard and pounding touch, what does this imply about the effort needed for the normal voicing of the 18th century French registers? What does this imply about the amount of effort needed to play the lower-manual with everything turned on?

Given the modern popularity of the back plucking 8' register as the primary 8' sound,

1. Why were over a hundred years of Ruckers singles (and many other makes) always built with the only 8' present being front plucking?
2. Why was the front 8' the only 8' register chosen to be conveniently located on its own keyboard in doubles, when most modern players would rather be able to access the back 8' easily for solo use?
3. Why did most of the large grand harpsichords made outside of France not have a back plucking 8', but rather 8' registers in the first two plucking positions and the 4' plucking in the back? What might this imply about performance usage in these instruments?
4. Why does the 18th century French evidence collected so far indicate that the lower manual was usually played fully registered and coupled, and no evidence for the common modern custom of registering the lower manual with just a solo back 8'?

Why is the front 8' often voiced so quietly now, when the historical designers deliberately positioned it to play alone against all the sonic resources of the lower manual? Why is this balance so different than typical two-manual organ assignment of resources?

Given the infrequency of modern use of the 4' register,

1. Why were most historical iron-strung single-manuals fitted with a 4' as the second choir rather than using another 8' as is largely preferred currently?
2. Why was an 8' register lever conveniently fitted for the player in historical 1x8 1x4 instruments if the 4' were not intended to be played alone?
3. Why do several historical doubles have the 4' as the only register on the upper manual if the 4' were not intended to be played as a solo stop?
4. If the 4' sound is better avoided, why were so many octave instruments built?
5. Why were 4' s rarely found on brass strung harpsichords, except in doubles?
6. What type of sound must the historical 4' have had to make it so musically useful that it was seen historically to be worth the extra work of building an additional bridge, nut and curved hitchpin rail, and to have dealt with the necessary fussy voicing as well as the seemingly frequent re-tunings that we encounter today?

Why is it so difficult to get most harpsichords to blend with instruments they are supposed to be accompanying, a difficulty not encountered by other accompanying instruments like the lute, cello, bassoon, or organ?

Why do most engineers recording trio sonatas, for instance, feel the need to turn down the harpsichord's recording level so that it is very difficult to hear the harpsichord's musical line in comparison to the other instruments?

Of what musical contribution is a harpsichord played with other instruments when all that is often left to hear above the other instruments is a tinny jangle?

Why does such a large instrument as the harpsichord seem to contribute so much less low fullness of sound than the smaller cello?

Why were the Ruckers so unconcerned, compared to us, that virtually all their “copies” varied noticeably in shape and dimensions from each other? Why didn’t this effect their reputation? What were the important factors for them?

If copying exact dimensions is so important in building in order to get the right sound, why did historical builders all seem to base their designs on convenient sizes of their local unit of measure, rather than using whatever distance was found to give the best possible sound?

In the pursuit of making good and/or sellable harpsichords why did historical builders never appear to copy other builders as we do? (not counting the lucrative historical forgeries and reusing of Ruckers parts to create new “Ruckers”, etc.)

Can a harpsichord that is GG-d’’, 2x8’, no buff stop, single flag-dampened jacks, and a bridge moved almost an inch closer to the bentside really be considered a “copy” of an historical instrument of C-d’ (historically enlarged from its original C/E-c’), 1x8’ 1x4’, split buff stops, with mouse-ear dampers, and double-dampers on the 8’ jacks? How many wrong impressions of the sound and musical resources will people have when they are told by a highly respected professor of the university collection that this is a copy of a 1640 Ruckers harpsichord?

Undoubtedly there are other discrepancies between historical and modern practices that can be observed if we look at the evidence closely. Some of the reasons for these differences will vary depending on the region and time period considered. It is highly unlikely that any answer will have 100% certitude. Such answers are in the minority in virtually any field. What is desirable is to be able to arrive at answers along with some sense of their probability of appropriateness, and then to work to improve the answer and the probability.

Even though we live in our own time with its assumptions and expectations, if our goal is to recreate historical sounds and to replicate historical performance practices, then investigating the reasons for these discrepancies can lead to further insights about both past and present. If we do not consciously and deliberately try to use the historical ideals and evidence as criteria to judge our modern attempts at reproducing historical sound and performance practice, we will be left subconsciously judging with the only other criteria we have, i.e., our modern tastes and expectations. And that approach can only reduce the probability of achieving an historical sound.

Trying to arrange the various pieces of historical evidence into a coherent, self-supporting pattern may seem like an impossible “needle-in-a-haystack” search, yet it is not impossible. Humankind now has a fairly confident understanding of the four billion year history of the earth, and of the evolution of life, with no written record and proportionately far less data than what we are attempting to use with early keyboard research. If a broader system of examining features and their interrelationships can be adapted for early keyboard study, as was employed with those much larger geological and biological endeavours, we should be able to significantly further our understanding of the keyboard sounds enjoyed only four hundred years ago.

9-05-09. **Paul Y. Irvin**

The BHS committee wants to encourage questions, comments and debate so were delighted at a request from America, which led to an enormous feedback and the results are given in the following article 'Organ for the Sultan'. In addition, I asked Edna, our Secretary, to give me an idea of the other sorts of enquiries she deals with. There are so many that this must be a précis of some of them; I was impressed with the amount of work she quietly does for the benefit of us all, but first here is the email that started the ball rolling:

'A QUESTION FROM WAUCONDA'

In August 2009 we received the following e-mail from a Librarian in America

'I am a reference librarian, and I am looking for information about a book one of my patrons remembers hearing about many years ago. According to my patron, at some point in the 1600s or 1700s "the king" (she did not specify which, or even what country) sent a harpsichord as a gift to someone (presumably a ruler) in the middle east. The king sent along his harpsichord maker to ensure that the instrument performed as desired. This harpsichord maker then wrote a book about his travels in the Middle East.

I realise this information is quite sketchy, but do you think that among your members there might be someone who would know something about this? My patron is looking for the name of the book and also the author.

Any direction you or your members can give will be most appreciated.

Yours,

Lynn McAlister

Wauconda Area Public Library

.....so we forwarded the request to our worldwide membership.

The response was overwhelming, with suggestions from members in England, the Isle of Man, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and from further afield, Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Chile, Germany, Switzerland and the United States.

Michael Ackerman has kindly collated all the material received and summarised it as follows.

An Organ for the Sultan.

The requirements are clearly stated by Lynn. We are asked for book and author about a harpsichord sent by a European king to someone in the middle east during the 16/1700s. No such book is known by our members. However, if you replace 'harpsichord' by 'organ' and replace 'king' by 'queen' you are talking about a famous event.

Here is what the distinguished organ builder, Kenneth Jones, has to say.

'I am morally certain that I have the answer to your query about the harpsichord being sent to the middle east in the 1600s or 1700s, but unfortunately it is not exactly the answer sought by the US librarian and patron!

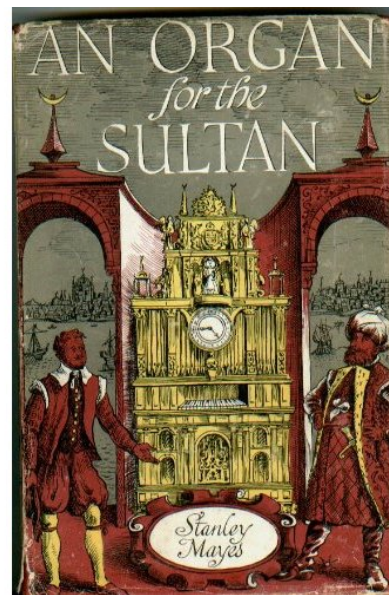
It was not a harpsichord (nor its maker) which went to the middle east, but a pipe-organ and organbuilder! The organ was not a gift from a "king" but from Queen Elizabeth I, and the recipient was the Grand Turk or Sultan in Constantinople, (now Istanbul, Turkey). The sailing even predates the "1600s or 1700s", for the little ship Hector sailed from Gravesend in February 1599, with the pipe-organ in the

hold, and its maker, Thomas Dallam, together with three of his craftsmen, on board. But there is tangential (no clavichord pun intended) harpsichord interest in the event, for Dallam was given permission to bring a pair of virginals (for which he paid thirty-five shillings) with which to amuse himself on the voyage and which he stowed in the gunroom of the ship, which seemed the safest and most comfortable place, and it appears he also found a corner there for his chest and bedding-roll.

The reason for the gift was a typical mixture of politics, rivalry with hated Spain, diplomatic intrigue and, of course, trade opportunities. Dallam kept a diary (most of which survives and is in the British Museum, with some pages missing) of his 15-month adventure, and in addition to the descriptions of the city and court of Constantinople it contains everything one could wish for, had it been merely a novel - even pirates and skulduggery!

The story is recounted, with historical background and contemporary narrative, direct quotations and some surmise (always acknowledged as such by the author) in *AN ORGAN FOR THE SULTAN*, by Stanley Mayes, published by Putnam, 42 Great Russell Street, London, in 1956, 272 pages, hardback.

It is impossible to over-rate this exceptional, absorbing and utterly marvellous book. It is not necessary to be a harpsichord-maker or an organbuilder, or to have an interest in either instrument, to find it absorbing! I note 6 copies on offer (USA) on Amazon. Buy it!



Regarding Dallam's own account of his adventures, Petr Jan Vins writes 'The voluminous diary of Thomas Dallam about this journey is today in the British Museum, and the 1893 edition of Thomas Dallam's diary is available for free download here: <http://www.archive.org/details/earlyvoyagestrav00dallrich>

So I think we have with your help fulfilled Lynn's requirements.

Michael Ackerman

Other articles about this event and a review of the book can be found in;

- 'An Organ for the Sultan' by Jack Warren, translated by Peter Bolwell Bent, see <http://www.theorganmag.com/articles/sultan.html>
- 'An Organ for the Sultan' The Galpin Society Journal, Vol. 10, May 1957 pp90-91
- 'An Organ for the Sultan' Review The Musical Times, Vol. 97 No.1364 Oct.1956
- "The Organ" by W L Sumner (3rd edn, 1962) pp 114-116.

and for those interested in delving further into the introduction of early keyboards and western music to other very different cultures, the following links and references may be of interest;

- In the 16th century the Jesuits took several keyboard instruments to China. Matteo Ricci a Jesuit priest, who lived there from 1583 until his death in 1609, presented an instrument to the Emperor in 1601. For more details <http://www.silkqin.com/01mywk/themes/matteo.htm>
- A gift of Virginals to Jehangir (the Great Mogul) from King James 1. It was delivered by Sir Thomas Roe in the years 1615-1619. For full details see 'The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul 1615-1619' pub. Hakluyt Society 1899 also <http://www.archive.org/details/embassysirthoma04roegoog>
- An article in the periodical 'Early Music Volume 32, No.3, August 2004 titled 'Missionaries, keyboards and musical exchange in the Ming and Qing courts' by Joyce Lindorff. It covers the period 1600 to 1793. For a brief description see http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/early_music/v032/32.3lindorff.html
- 'Early voyages and travels in the Levant', including the memoirs of John Covel, Thomas Dallam, and James Theodore Bent. Published by the Hakluyt Society see <http://www.archive.org/details/earlyvoyagesand01bentgoog>
- St. Francis Xavier who was in Japan from July, 1549 presented a clavichord to the Emperor after which there was an influx of small keyboard instruments, this and more see 'The Keyboard recital in Oriental Diplomacy, 1520-1620' by Ian Woodfield Journal of the Royal Musical Association, Volume 15 Issue 1 pp33-62 <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a908242788>
- And a painting in the Wallace Collection in London, by Carle van Loo, dated 1737, and titled 'The Grand Turk Giving a Concert to his Mistress' http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/l/loo/carle/gr_turk.html, which may in reality be a reflection of the interest at that time in Orientalist 'Turkish' subjects and shows a European chamber concert in an imagined oriental guise!

Finally, a special 'Thank you' to all the following who helped us with this particular enquiry and gave us tantalising insights into the many other musical links between East and West.

Michael Ackerman, Prof. Tom Beghin, Andrew Benson-Wilson, Colin Booth, Terence Charlston, Martha Clinkscale, Jane Clark, Grant Coburn, Alan Cuckston, Matt Eroglu, Prof. Martha de Francisco, Luke Green, Raymond Head, Erin Helyard, David Hitchin, François Jeandé, Kenneth Jones, Simon Jones, Richard John, Christine Keiffer, Prof. Hank Knox, Joseph Kung, Julia V Morley, Davitt Moroney, Charles Mould, Christopher Nobbs, Ruth Pedley, Mark Purcell, Malcolm Rose, Donald Roworth, Dr. Micaela Schmitz, Susanne Shapiro, Raul A. Simon, Eleanor Smith, Dr David J Smith, Bernard Taylor, Ludmilla Tschakalova, Ian Tucker, Revd Mgr. Petr Jan Vins, Andrew Walker, Paul Weeren, Paul White and several others who preferred not to be named.

**Queries addressed to and answered by Edna Lewis, secretary of the BHS
May to September 2010**

And here are some more from the "post-bag" as some may be generally relevant. As Member's e-mail addresses are not disclosed, Edna does a wonderful job acting as intermediary, passing on messages and requests on a variety of topics, from all parts of the world.

Many enquiries are about instruments. A new member from Cambridge, and one from Exeter had each recently purchased De Blaise harpsichords and were put in contact with restorers in their area.

A lonely harpsichord found in a recently purchased house was threatened with the skip if not immediately removed, members in the local (Manchester) area were quickly contacted and given first refusal.

A first time owner daunted by the prospect of tuning was given advice on electronic tuners. Help and advice was also sought to transport a harpsichord to Milan.

A new member in Peru sent an email in Spanish so Edna sent it to a linguist member and it was duly translated: *Greetings, members of the BHS. I'm a young harpsichord fan. Here in Peru it is very difficult to get hold of a harpsichord. And the costs are high. I'd like to use this opportunity to convey a heartfelt request if anyone has available an old or no longer used/usable harpsichord that I could buy, and if so how I might arrange to transport it here to Peru, and what would be required. Many thanks. Greetings from Peru.*"

Edna responded by passing the request on to our three other members in Peru.

New members often ask to meet other players, the following response can be helpful for those who are feeling a bit isolated.

"I see you are keen to contact other members living near you, if you wish, I can e-mail them on your behalf. Let me know if you would like me to do that and if I have permission to give them your e-mail address. Alternately you could join the BHS group on Facebook- see details on our website- and leave a message there."

A distinguished America Concert Organist e-mailed to say how much she had enjoyed one of our monthly recitals at the Handel House, and asked for information about the harpsichord there. Edna sent the following description,

'The Handel House Harpsichord was made by Bruce Kennedy in 1998 and is based on the 'Ruckers' harpsichord that Handel was known to have had at 25 Brook Street. Bruce Kennedy copied a fine example of a Ruckers harpsichord, made by the famous Flemish harpsichord maker Ioannes Ruckers in 1624, now in the Musée D' Unterlinden in Colmar, France. The instrument is thus known as the 'Colmar Ruckers'. It is known that Handel's instrument would have been expanded to 4½ or 5 octaves so that music of the 18th century could be played on it. The original Colmar Ruckers harpsichord was also given a 'petit ravalement' (extension) in the early part of the 18th century, and the Handel House Ruckers has an even larger compass of nearly five octaves. The soundboard inside the instrument is beautifully painted in the style of a Ruckers painting. Though several instruments claim to be Handel's Ruckers harpsichord including one in Fenton House, London, it is not certain if any of these belonged to Handel.'

Adding at the end of a long e-mail *'Although we are called The British Harpsichord Society we are truly international with almost half our membership coming from abroad. Why not join, membership is free!'*

And join she did!!

The BHS holds the archive of the English Harpsichord Magazine, from which selected articles can be downloaded from our website. A new member wrote enquiring about an article on Nicholas Carleton, listed in the Grove as 'B. Rose, English Harpsichord Magazine, ii, 1977-81, pp.20-21' saying 'it does not appear in the EHM Archive at: <http://www.harpsichord.org.uk/harpsichordmagazine.php> '

I was interested in this one, too, as some years ago I wrote a second virginals part, myself, for this unfinished Nicholas Carleton duet.

William Vine, custodian of the archive, was able to digitise the article and the file was sent to the enquirer. The file will eventually be added to those listed on the website.

A student at the University of Bristol currently working on a project that includes references to Crang Hancock pianos, was also looking for an article from *The English Harpsichord Magazine*, Vol.1/7 Oct. 1976), saying *'I have found it impossible to locate a copy of the magazine in libraries as well-stocked as the Bodleian in Oxford?If you have any other suggestions as to where I might find information on Crang Hancock organized pianos*, c.1790, this would be most helpful.'*

William succeeded where the Bodleian had failed and was able to supply the article from our Archive; he also made some helpful suggestions

- o This link may be useful. <http://www.earlypianos.org/>, Martha Clinkscale was the authority on historic fortepianos but sadly died a couple of months ago
- o Make a scholarship request to Hatchlands, near Guildford, where they have a Crang Hancock fortepiano on display.
- o Make contact with Michael Cole, also the Colt collection and John Raymond at the Russell Collection.

* *'Organized pianos'-- Crang was adept at making combination instruments, note the Claviorganum of 1745 now in the Russell Collection-a combined harpsichord & organ. In 1790 the firm of John Crang Hancock, organ builders and piano makers, took out a Patent for a new grand piano forte with a combined organ.*

Many of the enquiries lead to a long exchange and sharing of information across the world such as the following. In Dec 2008, Ina Unal joined BHS and added

"I am researching Pepys methods of teaching harpsichord; any info on his methods and his harpsichords will be much appreciated."

Edna suggested contacting Lewis Jones, a member of BHS, who has been involved in research at the London Metropolitan University, and has been Secretary of the Fellowship of Makers & Researchers of Historical Instruments. Nothing more was heard until July this year when she eventually made contact. Since then the BHS has been copied in to the many interesting exchanges between them- a couple of extracts below.

Ina wrote- *'Mr. Charles West Wilson one of the most significant American early musical instruments collectors, introduced me to the topic of alternate methods of teaching-learning harpsichords... my interest is mathematical' Mr Charles Wilson has recently bought at Bonham's a 'Howard Spinnet of c1668.and is prepared to claim this was Pepys's own instrument.*

Lewis Jones wrote- *'I am interested in Hayward, (most of my work in the past has been concentrated on Hayward's one extant harpsichord at Hovingham Hall) and in Pepys's involvement with music'*
The exchanges are on going; we hope eventually to have a full report on the outcome.

Edna also has enquiries from non-members, Bruno Gingras who was involved in a research project titled 'Study on the perception of expressive performance parameters on the harpsichord', sent the following advertisement which was sent as requested, to all professional players in the Greater London area. *The Intelligent Sound and Music Systems group, a research group based at Goldsmiths College (University of London), is looking for harpsichordists to take part in a study on the perception of expressive performance parameters on the harpsichord. The experiment is divided into two parts. The first involves listening to performances of a short piece by Frescobaldi and continuously rating the relative prominence of the upper parts. The second involves rating the degree of musical tension experienced when listening to performances of an unmeasured prelude. ...there followed various practical points and contact information, and ended with 'We are in desperate need of harpsichordists to participate, so please consider taking part.*

We hope eventually to have more information on these intriguing research projects- if you have any observations on these topics or comments to make on any of the subjects raised- please let us know.

Our thanks to all our friends and advisors who have generously given advice and guidance and made it possible for us to respond to these enquiries.