

Westfield

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Tilman Skowroneck, Editor



A very warm welcome to the first Westfield Newsletter of 2015. Executive Director *Annette Richards* begins our news with a very personal introduction to the big Westfield event of this summer, the festival *FortelPiano: A Celebration of Pianos in History* (August 5–9, 2015). *Tom Beghin*, guest editor of *Keyboard Perspectives*, reveals the exciting table of contents for the upcoming Volume VII, which is almost entirely dedicated to Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata op. 106.

Instead of an interview, this Newsletter features *Becky Lu* and *Jordan Musser's* in-depth report of the Westfield conference *Environs Messiaen* that took place in March

2015. This is followed by my own report from the 2014 Göteborg International Organ Academy, whose theme was *The Bach Circle: Keyboard Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. The announcements include information from Tom Beghin on the research cluster *Declassifying the Classics Rhetoric, Technology, and Performance, 1750—1830* at the Orpheus Institute in Ghent, Belgium, and a notice from Bart van Oort about the June course at the Villa Bossi; the Newsletter concludes with two announcements from the *Historical Keyboard Society of North America*.

—Tilman Skowroneck



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FORTE/PIANO: A CELEBRATION OF PIANOS IN HISTORY

AUGUST 5–9, 2015, CORNELL UNIVERSITY: WHAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO

Forte/Piano

A FESTIVAL CELEBRATING PIANOS IN HISTORY

Longtime Westfield members may have noticed over the past years that we've been playing with our name. We were the *Westfield Center for Early Keyboard Studies*, but "early" seemed not to reflect the breadth of our interests as the study of instruments, music, performance practices of the past has kept on creeping closer and closer to the present. For a while now we've been, at first informally and now formally, the *Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies*, taking the view that history begins yesterday and that many aspects of the recent keyboard past beg to be explored from dynamic new perspectives.

Perhaps no musical instrument so clearly demonstrates the tensions that play out across notions of "early music" and "historically informed performance," ideologies of construction and reconstruction of instruments, festival and competition programming, and the individual careers of musicians, as the piano. This, it seems to me, is particularly starkly articulated in the distinction between Fortepiano and Piano, a distinction that we "early keyboard players" (even an organist like me, trained to play on a vast spectrum of historically, and nationally, specific instruments) tend to take for granted.

But what is the distinction between Fortepiano and Piano[forte], and what does it mean? Could it be that that very distinction reinforces a polarization that many of us have been seeking to query, as we think carefully not only about the relationship of particular repertoires to particular instruments, but also of the complex interactions that take place, surely muddying the waters, among performers, instruments, instrument-makers, and composers at any particular historical moment?

These are some of the questions that we hope to think about this summer at our bumper festival, *Forte/Piano*:

A Celebration of Pianos in History. It's going to be an extraordinary event, with fifty scholars and performers from around the world, and an unprecedented assembly of instruments that demonstrate the great variety of the piano across its four hundred year history, well into the 20th (and even the 21st) centuries. Take a look at the festival website (<http://westfield.org/festival>) and you'll find the detailed program there. Festival passes are now available for purchase on the website.

Just a few highlights: keynote recitals by Kristian Bezuidenhout and Alexei Lubimov; a "reunion" concert bringing together Tom Beghin, Malcolm Bilson, David Breitman, Ursula Dütschler, Bart van Oort, Zvi Meniker, and Andrew Willis two decades after their landmark complete recording on period instruments of the Beethoven piano sonatas; Liv Glaser playing Grieg; Tuija Hakkila playing Sibelius; Matt Bengtson and Miri Yampolsky playing Scriabin; Penelope Crawford with soprano Martha Guth performing Schubert songs; Sezi Seskir with violinist Lucy Russell playing Mozart; Mike Lee with Lucy Russell and R. J. Kelley on natural horn performing Brahms's Horn Trio, op. 40; Erin Helyard and Olga Witthauer playing Clementi and Dussek; and much much more.

When not listening to (or participating in!) performances we'll hear talks loosely grouped into sessions on



Alexei Lubimov and Kristian Bezuidenhout

“Four Hands and the Art of Collaboration,” “Pianists and their Pianos,” “Thinking at the Piano,” and “Improvisation and Concert Life.” Three sessions on “Builders and Performers” will feature Edward Swenson and Stefania Neonato on Graf pianos, David Sutherland and Antonio Simón on early 18th-century pianos, and Paul McNulty and Viviana Sofronitsky on a variety of 18th- and early 19th-century-style instruments. The festival also includes two master classes and a workshop for piano makers and

technicians, as well as an event for younger school-age musicians.

It will be a pianistic/fortepianistic event-to-remember and we look forward to seeing many Westfield members, and their friends, students, teachers, here in Ithaca playing, listening, talking, and exploring—loudly and softly, with all dynamic and expressive ranges in between—the wonderful history of the piano, or, dare we call it, the ... forte/piano/forte?

—Annette Richards



Hammer action of an 1805 Broadwood grand piano

P. S. Some bursaries for travel assistance for students who might not otherwise be able to make it to Ithaca in the summer may still be available. Limited on-campus accommodations (single and double dorm rooms) are also available. If you or your students would be interested in this, please contact Damien Mahiet (info@westfield.org) as soon as possible.

KEYBOARD PERSPECTIVES, VOL. 7

Our newest issue of *Keyboard Perspectives* VII, entitled *Myth and Reality in Beethoven's Hammerklavier Sonata, Opus 106*, with guest editor Tom Beghin, is nearing its completion. Here is the Table of Contents of what promises to be an eminently readable volume, almost entirely devoted to a central piece of the piano literature:

Tom Beghin
Editor's Preface

Kristin Franseen
Mälzel and Mechanical Music in Beethoven's Vienna

Michael Pecak
Signs of Frustration in the First Movement of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata, Opus 106

Zoey M. Cochran
The Operatic Heartbeats of Beethoven's Opus 106

Michael Turabian
The Riddle of the Sphinx, Liszt as Oedipus, and Opus 106

Tom Beghin
Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata, Opus 106: Legend, Difficulty, and the Gift of a Broadwood Piano

BOOK REVIEW

Erin Helyard

Ears, Hands, and Throats

Adrian Daub, *Four-Handed Monsters: Four-Hand Piano Playing and Nineteenth-Century Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014)

James Q. Davies, *Romantic Anatomies of Performance* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014)

CD REVIEW

Eric J. Wang

A Surfeit of Meantone Temperaments

Johann Jacob Froberger, *Meditations and Fantasias*; Siegbert Rampe, harpsichord, virginals, organ (Virgin Veritas, 2012)

Johann Jacob Froberger, Jean-Henri d'Anglebert, Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer, et al., ... *pour passer la mélancolie*; Andreas Staier, harpsichord (Harmonia Mundi, 2013)

Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Pièces de clavecin*; Mahan Esfahani, harpsichord (Hyperion, 2014)

Tilman Skowroneck

Remembering Martin Skowroneck (1926–2014)

REPORT OF THE WESTFIELD CONFERENCE: *ENVIRONS MESSIAEN*

BY BECKY LU AND JORDAN MUSSER

“*Environs*,” in French, is a noun that refers to a vicinity or proximity. But it relates also to the verb “*environner*,” the act of surrounding, encompassing, or enveloping, and to the noun “*environnement*.” Between March 5th and March 9th, 2015, Cornell DMA student *Ryan MacEvoy McCullough* and Cornell Professor of Music *Xak Bjerken* joined the Westfield Center to create *environs* of their own in celebration of the composer, organist, pianist, ornithologist, and teacher, Olivier Messiaen. From evocations of birdsong and landscape in *Catalogue d’oiseaux* to the vastness of the supranatural in *Visions de l’Amen*, the keyboard served as one of Messiaen’s favorite means to investigate and re-imagine both the nature of music and the music of nature. The weekend’s program of events dedicated itself to exploring the connections that Messiaen made and envisioned between the keyboard, the natural world, and the acoustic ecologies attending to both.

The performances, lectures, film screenings, and art exhibitions interpreted this ecological theme rather as a creative impetus than as a conceptual delimitation. Analyses of Messiaen’s vision of nature coalesced with reflections on his mystical catholicism; meditations on the spirituality of place splintered off into enquiries about synthetic experience; discussions concerning the aesthetics of soundscapes gave way to debates over environmental politics. *Environs Messiaen* enriched and challenged what many of us have come to know as the milieu of Messiaen’s aesthetic environment, in terms of what it is, what it was, and how we, as performers and scholars, contribute to its making.

The festival opened with a lecture by Professor *Robert Fallon* of Carnegie-Mellon University, entitled “‘*Des Provinces de France*’: Interpreting Habitat and Landscape in Messiaen’s *Catalogue d’oiseaux*.” Composed between 1956 and 1958, Messiaen’s three-hour *magnum opus* of thirteen movements for solo piano is a challenge for any listener, and Fallon complicated matters of interpretation by questioning the “authenticities” of birdsong and natural scenery that the *Catalogue* seeks to evoke (as indicated by the highly detailed texts that accompany the work). First, Fallon discussed the literalness with which Messiaen strove to convey a sense of landscape, for the composer was as concerned with situating the birds specified in the movement titles ecologically as he was with representing their songs. Second, he explained how the subjects depicted in

the *Catalogue* evince a certain degree of autobiographical significance. “*Le Loriot*,” for instance, the title bird of the second movement, is a homophone of the name of the composer’s muse and second wife, pianist Yvonne Loriod.



Robert Fallon lectures on the *Catalogue d’oiseaux*.
Photo: Michael Small

Fallon also discussed how Messiaen enciphered his earthly birds and landscapes with subtle references to the divine simplicity of God by invoking the timeless simplicities of numerology and symmetrical balance. The phrase lengths of the birdsongs are often prime numbers, as are the number of movements in *Catalogue*. Itself symmetrically structured, “*La Rousserolle Effarvate*,”—the seventh and by far the longest movement—occupies the central position in the work. According to Messiaen, “*La Rousserolle Effarvate*,” “is one large arced movement, from midnight-3 o’clock in the morning, to midnight-3 o’clock in the morning, the events of the afternoon to the night repeated in reverse order of the events from the night to the morning.” The ordering of music bespeaks the divine order of nature, as Messiaen’s birds themselves envoice the “natural” world they inhabit.

Does the *Catalogue* set for itself too tall an order to fulfill? For Fallon, the work’s overlapping registers of symbolic complexity are at odds with Messiaen’s desire for illustrative specificity. Despite Messiaen’s introductory notes for each movement and evidence elsewhere suggesting that he wanted his listeners to understand his work in literal terms, Fallon argued that the composer fails to provide the listener with a sense of authentic place—the birdsongs are indistinguishable from the music of the sea, which is indistinguishable from the songs of the water lily, and so on. The piece’s ambition dilutes its sense of purpose.

Fallon’s provocative conclusion inspired a lively dialogue that continued throughout the festival. Professor *Christopher Dingle* of the Birmingham Conservatoire (UK) summed up the salient counterarguments to Fallon’s main critique in his lecture, “Truth, Reality, and Messiaen’s Transfiguration of Nature.” Messiaen’s apparent truth-claims can indeed be interpreted as autobiographically, theo-



The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in April snow.
Photo: Michael Small

logically, and ornithologically problematical, but Dingle made the distinction between artistic and literal truths. The latter, as understood by Messiaen, was the exclusive realm of God—He alone is unique in true reality, a reality the arts enable His children to glimpse imperfectly. Messiaen’s birdsongs are not confined to literal, objective transcriptions of the sounds the composer heard on his nature walks, but are instead artistic creations that invite more flexible readings of truth-content. To that extent, Dingle demonstrated how Messiaen notated a wood thrush call at least four times such that, with each rendering, the transcription evolved further away from a single-line melody sounding unremarkably similar to the original into a densely harmonized and timbrally complex orchestral passage. (Not coincidentally, Messiaen’s original source was a recording produced by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, whose extraordinary collection of recorded birdsongs was an important resource for Messiaen, as Robert Fallon points out.) The enhanced wood thrush call, Dingle suggested, represents a combination of realities, which are imaginative, synesthetic, and spiritual in kind. Taken as a whole, Messiaen’s birdsongs and landscapes testify to a multiply layered hyperreal. Analysts and audiences might consider taking Messiaen’s incomprehensibility for the fecundity it affords rather than attempting to literally map sounds to birds and “real”-world locations.

Fallon and Dingle’s lectures prepared us for the Saturday afternoon performance of the complete *Catalogue d’oiseaux*, whose immense difficulties were surmounted admirably by Bjerken, McCullough, Cornell DMA students *David Friend* and *Andrew Zhou*, and guest pianist *Mari Kawamura* of the New England Conservatory of Music.

The concert took place in the glass-enclosed atrium of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, where Messiaen conducted research in the 1970s.

The unorthodox venue laid bare the points of contention between Fallon and Dingle’s talks. Regardless of contested authenticities *within* the work, how can the authentically natural be “rendered at the keyboard”?

Furthermore, why might a performance’s location matter? In that regard, the performance opened up several avenues for reflection vis-a-vis the notion of the performance practice of contemporary music and the vexed issue of authenticity that underwrites much of performance practice discourse. Perhaps the organizers conceived of the event more ecologically than historically, querying not so much the historically-based problematic of how music sounded in the past, but instead how “contemporary” music might sound (or not) in the ever-renewing contemporary moment.



Xak Bjerken silhouetted against the snowy landscape, performing *Catalogue d’oiseaux* at the Lab of Ornithology.
Photo: Michael Small

In this instance, the serene landscape that surrounded the atrium offered a visual counterpoint to the performances—actual nature was musical nature’s frame of reference. In a sense, the *Catalogue’s* ornithological soundscapes mirrored the ornithological landscape that extended just beyond the softly tinted glass. Despite the transition

from daylight to dusk, the occasional flurry, and the ex-temporaneous flights of the native birds, the wintery panorama outside seemed endless and unmoving; the barren trees, stripped of their leaves, seemed to have forgotten spring. Messiaen's techniques of non-development tend to produce textures that convey a comparable sense of stasis. Messiaen formulated the *Catalogue's* transcriptions as relatively self-contained modules, or cells, which lack harmonic direction and rhythmic predictability. Instead of developing these modules through disintegration and reconfiguration to create new material, Messiaen treats them kaleidoscopically, altering their harmonic colors and formal shapes while preserving their fundamental characteristics. For the most part, movements end in the manner in which they began, resulting in the sensation that despite the passage of time, little has changed, as if we had been standing in a landscape, shifting our focus from one natural element to the next as our surroundings stay unflinchingly still.

and performance, site and sound, and through interpretive stances informed by, but not reducible to, Dingle and Fallon's lectures.



Xak Bjerken, Andrew Zhou, David Friend, Mari Kawamura and Ryan MacEvoy McCullough after performing *Catalogue d'oiseaux*. Photo: Becky Lu



Ryan MacEvoy McCullough at the piano, with Xak Bjerken, page-turner. Photo: Michael Small

It would be an oversimplification, however, to suggest that the sounds and visuals of the *Catalogue's* performance simply reflected each other on a one-to-one basis. Indeed, were we so easily swayed by the Lab of Ornithology's stunning view of the outdoors, we would have failed to register both the literalness of the habitats Messiaen evokes and the artistic verities of a multi-laminar hyperreal. Instead, the venue refracted Messiaen's *Catalogue*, as did Dingle's and Fallon's lectures. The five pianists, too, cast the work in five countervailing lights. The audience, of course, also weighed in with interpretations of their own. As such, like all performances, the performance of the *Catalogue* was thoroughly social. The event's meaning did indeed seem to emerge ecologically, through the interaction of work

In his talk entitled, "Environs Boulez, 1946-1951: *Le Visage Nuptial*," David Gable (Clark Atlanta University) ushered us out of the *environs* Messiaen and into those of his one-time student, Pierre Boulez. The talk signally concerned Boulez's "first period," which Gable designated as the span of aesthetic researches taking place between the composition of *Le Visage Nuptial* in 1946 and the cantata's re-orchestration in 1951. Gable used *Le Visage Nuptial* as a means of mapping out a topography of influence, overlap, and exchange of aesthetic practices in post-war Paris. Glossing the composer's student years, Gable suggested that although he had distanced himself from the Stravinskyan vogue for neo-classicism in favor of the "less mechanical, more spiritual" aesthetics of Messiaen and André Jolivet, Boulez nonetheless bore a muted admiration for the works Stravinsky produced during his so-called "Russian Period." So too did Messiaen, among numerous other French composers. By way of comparison with Mussorgsky's *Sunless* song cycle, Gable demonstrated how works such as Debussy's *Images* and Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps* bespeak an unmistakably Russophonic rhythmic and harmonic vocabulary. The question thus arose: might the "family resemblances" amongst French avant-gardists bear the trace of Russia in more ways than instinctively meet the ear?

Indeed, resemblances abound—but not without ambivalences. Gable discussed how Boulez embraced the techniques Messiaen had used in pieces such as *Trois petites*

liturgies de la présence divine, but in a concerted effort to construe a compositional voice more distinctively his own. In a sense, Boulez's early works are Messiaenian, without sounding like Messiaen (whereas later works like *Répons*, for instance, signal more palpably a renewed interest in the work of his former teacher). Boulez held an "enduring ambivalence" for the influence of Schoenberg, as well. To that end, Gable suggested that the expressionism of *Le Visage Nuptial* represents a confrontation with the unsystematically atonal expressionism of Schoenberg's *Die Glückliche Hand*—after all, Boulez considered both pieces to be dramatizations of a "sustained paroxysm." Gable traced this concept to the work of the theatrical luminary Antonin Artaud and his theory of the Theatre of Cruelty, iterating once more the diversity of influences that mark the early work of Boulez.

After Gable's lecture, the speaker joined Fallon, Dingle, and Professor *Ronald R. Hoy* of the Cornell University Department of Neurobiology and Behavior for a panel entitled "Music and Nature in the Avant-Garde." McCullough moderated the discussion. A specialist in the biophysics and neurophysiology of insect hearing, Hoy initiated the dialogue with some reflections on music cognition, the concept of synesthesia, and other forms of inter-sensory experience. The discussion quickly progressed into a conversation about synesthetic triggers in Messiaen's piano music, wherein McCullough invoked the "proto-spectralist" premium that Messiaen placed on meticulous hearing. In doing so, he raised the question: might synesthetic modes of experience be somehow particularized according to schools of composition and ear training?

McCullough's remarks revived some of the discussion elicited by Professor *Marilyn Nonken's* Friday afternoon presentation on "The Spectral Piano." Based at the Steinhart School at New York University, Nonken is a performer, musicologist, and pedagogue whose area of expertise lies in the modern piano repertoires of the 20th- and 21st-centuries. Her lecture offered a detailed introduction to the aesthetic principles that unite the otherwise variegated field of techniques and practices that are commonly identified with spectralism.

Spectralism, she emphasized, refers to a loose collection of sensibilities—not to a unified school of thought—that centers around an interest in the materiality of sonic environments. Nonken thus challenged the commonplace notion that "ecological attitudes," as she called them, began with composers like Tristan Murail, Gérard Grisey, Hughes Dufourt, and other affiliates of the group



Marilyn Nonken lectures in Barnes Hall on "The Spectral Piano."
Photo: Michael Small

L'itinéraire. On the contrary, Liszt, for instance, anticipated spectralist attitudes in that the composer-pianist saw sound as a living and vibrating force. Scriabin's experimentation with piano sonority presaged spectralist experiments with microtonality and harmonics. And Messiaen, of course, pursued aesthetic researches on temporality, timbre, and process in ways that directly influenced several of his students' work in psychoacoustics and the digital synthesis of sound. Nonken ended the presentation with performances of Murail's *La Mondragore*, Dominique Troncín's *Ciel ouvert*, and Joshua Fineberg's *Till Human Voices Wake Us*.

Later in the evening, Nonken joined forces with Cornell's resident new music group, Ensemble X, soprano *Lucy FitzGibbon*, and members of the Cornell Chamber Orchestra and Cornell Symphony Orchestra under the baton of *Chris Younghoon Kim*, for a performance of music that evinced precisely the kind of "ecological attitude" toward sound that Nonken discussed in her lecture-recital.

The program consisted of music by Gilles Tremblay, Corey Keating, Gérard Grisey, Jonathan Harvey, James Wood, and Claude Vivier. Messiaen made no appearance on the program. Nonetheless, these works for solo piano (Tremblay's *Musique de l'eau*), piano and electronics (Keating's *Bush Creek* and Harvey's *Tombeau de Messiaen*), viola and electronics (Grisey's *Prologue* from *Les espaces acoustiques*), solo marimba (Wood's *Secret Dialogues*), and soprano and orchestra (Vivier's *Lonely Child*) share with

Messiaen's aesthetic a fascination with the physical-spatial properties of sound and a predilection for musically reimagining the sounds of nature.

An ardent environmentalist, Alaskan composer *John Luther Adams* made three appearances in the festival's program of events. On Sunday afternoon, a performance of his

songbirdsongs took place at the Nevin Welcome Center of the Cornell Plantations, where the composer's Messiaen-like evocations of birdsong were set against the backdrop of Cornell's botanical garden, arboretum, and nature preserves. Scored for piccolos, percussion, and celesta, the piece supplies each performer discrete sound modules whose contours and gestures, like the *Catalogue*, imitate birdsongs and other natural elements, such as sunlight, rivers, and trees. *Songbirdsongs* is an indeterminate work. That is, other than specifying the order in which the instruments start and stop playing, Adams permits the players themselves to choose which modules to play. With the instruments dispersed throughout the space, one hears the piece as a continually evolving kaleidoscopic sound installation. In fact, Cornell Lecturer *Michael Compitello* invited the audience to walk freely about the room during the performance. A far less challenging work than the *Catalogue*, *songbirdsongs*, in a more literal way, reproduces the immersive experience of strolling through a natural landscape.

While the immersive experience of *songbirdsongs* in many ways resembled that of a sound installation, conference attendees had the opportunity to experience one of Adams's actual pieces of sound art, *Veils* (2005), at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art. The piece consists of three segments: *Falling Veil*, *Crossing Veil*, and *Rising Veil*. Each veil is sculpted from strands of pink noise that are passed through a series of harmonic filters tuned to non-tempered modes. Together, the segments span a range of ten octaves and number a total of ninety polyphonic voices. Played either successively or concurrently, the veils produce a dense, undulating texture of harmonic color



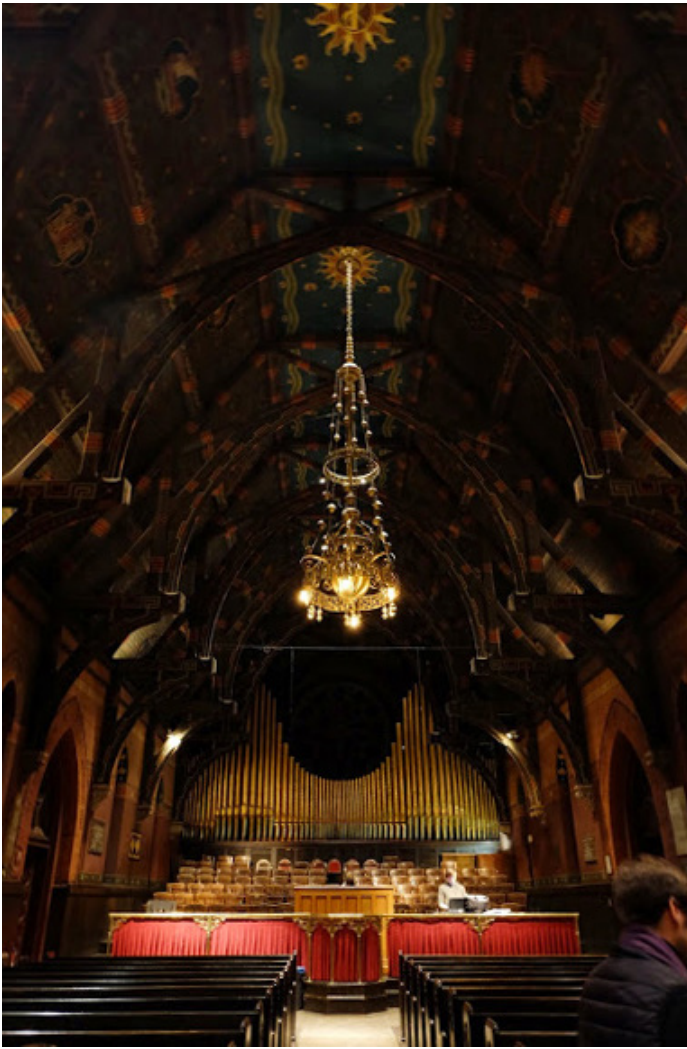
Members of Ensemble X and the Cornell orchestras in Sage Chapel.
Photo: Becky Lu

that recalls a choir of “human voices mixed with bowed glass or metal,” as Adams puts it. One can feel the veils resounding. Indeed, one does not listen to *Veils* so much as one penetrates its palpably material surrounds. The piece produces the ecology it inhabits and invites us to hear, and, indeed, walk our way through its contours.

Adams's music had also resounded in a quite different environment, earlier in the festival. His *The Immeasurable Space of Tones*, performed on vibraphone, piano, double bass, violin and organ, shimmered and reverberated in the Gothic splendor of Sage Chapel as part of Thursday evening's concert, filling the space with its subtly changing, yet hypnotically still harmonic landscapes.

The chapel's strange decorative scheme, with vines and tendrils climbing up from its mosaic floor to cover walls and ceiling as if in a magical forest, set the tone not only for this work, but also for Messiaen's *Messe de la Pentecôte*, performed by DMA student *Jonathan Schakel* on the Aeolian Skinner organ. Messiaen's transformation of the organ into a sonic color-machine and sacred aviary—especially in the *Communion*, with its cuckoo, nightingale and blackbird—transports listeners into a mystical supranatural world, while, in a fashion more literal yet no less inspiring, recreating under the fingers of the player the composer's own improvisational practice at the organ console. The third focus of Thursday's concert, the pioneering electronic instrument the *ondes Martenot*, highlighted another of the festival's themes—the challenge to keyboardists to conjure an unlimited, flexible, and expressive world of color and space at their instruments. Under the hands of *Gen'viève Grenier*, the haunting ondes was heard in music by Messiaen (from the *Fête des belles eaux*, for six ondes, with Matthew Hall at the organ playing the other five parts), and by André Jolivet, the *Trois Poèmes* for ondes and piano, with Marilyn Nonken at the piano.

Environs Messiaen came to a close with tour-de-force performances by internationally acclaimed pianists,



Sage Chapel. Photo: Becky Lu

Pierre-Laurent Aimard and *Tamara Stefanovich*. (In a brilliant postscript to the festival, Aimard taught a masterclass the following day for the student performers of the *Catalogue d'oiseaux*). Presented in collaboration with the Cornell Concert Series, the event featured works by Boulez and Messiaen. In the first half, Aimard performed Boulez's Sonata No. 1 for piano (1946); Stefanovich followed with a performance of the composer's *Incises* (1994; 2001), a platform for virtuosity that Boulez composed as a compulsory piece for an international piano competition. Aimard and Stefanovich came together to end the first half with *Structures, Deuxième livre* (1956; 2001), a freer reworking of an earlier serial composition, *Structures, Première livre* (1952). The concert ended with Messiaen's *Visions de l'Amen* (1943) for two pianos.

The pairing of Boulez and Messiaen underscored the bifurcation of objective and subjective musical elements that had preoccupied so many composers affiliated with musical avant-gardes of the mid-20th century. The com-

positions' titles alone betray the composers' respective adherences. Aimard and Stefanovich spoke before each of the Boulez pieces to shed some light on Boulez's "objectivist" approach to composition. Before *Incises*, for example, Stefanovich drew our attention to the manner in which Boulez developed the piece's opening material as a segue into an aggressive toccata. The term "development," here, is key. As Gable had noted, Boulez's influences are difficult to pinpoint. But whatever he might have absorbed from Messiaen, the Boulez of *Incises* and the first piano sonata is a product of Schoenberg and his coterie. The aural experience of the concert's first half was more linear than spatial, more in the voice of the Second Viennese School than that of a Messiaen or an Adams. Boulez's presence in this concert thus highlights another refraction of *environs* Messiaen: music need not render anything outside of itself. Musical works can be closed systems, subject to their own rules. As always, we listeners make up our own minds about how Boulez's music might signify or allude to external meaning. But in contrast to the *Catalogue* performance, this was an evening concert in Barnes Hall, a traditional venue, which invited and reinforced a more absolutist take on the derivation of musical meaning.

Visions de l'Amen, conversely, is an intensely personal work. Its religious overtones and amorous undertones are apparent in its movement titles. In seven movements (evidence again of Messiaen's fascination with prime numbers and divine numerology), *Visions* progresses from *Amen de la Création* toward the centerpiece movement, *Amen du Désir*, and culminates with *Amen de la Consommation*. *Visions* held significance for Messiaen on at least two fronts. First, by the time of its completion in 1943, Messiaen had fallen deeply in love with Loriod, his pupil at the time, who premiered the work with him not long after his first wife was institutionalized because of mental illness. Second, *Visions* was the first work he composed after his release as a prisoner-of-war. As Matthew Hall and Elizabeth Lyon, PhD students in musicology at Cornell, put so eloquently in their program notes for the work:

Visions de l'Amen might itself be seen as the "Amen" by which Messiaen returned to his work as a composer; by which he honored the duty he felt to his sick wife; through which he yearned for Loriod and affirmed his hope in a future with her; and in which he even enacted, in performance with Loriod, a foretaste of their ultimate union. For Messiaen, the drama of this tumultuous time in his personal life is the Image of an eternal, cosmic, drama.

For the listener, *Visions* is a far less challenging experience than the *Catalogue*, lasting roughly one hour. The vast expanses rendered in the *Catalogue* are also evoked here, but the sense of stasis is eventually overcome by a musical and emotional trajectory that builds toward the ecstatic conclusion. Barnes Hall may lack arresting natural views, but its acoustics amplified dramatically the religious and romantic splendor suffusing the seven movements of

Visions. Indeed, Barnes endowed Aimard and Stefanovich's brilliant rendering of the piece's exhilarating ending with a reverberant brilliance of its own. In a way, its environs threw into relief the cosmic Image of the environs of *Visions de l'Amen*—a fitting conclusion to a weekend investigating how nature, Divine and otherwise, might be “rendered at the keyboard.”

THE GÖTEBORG INTERNATIONAL ORGAN ACADEMY 2014 “THE BACH CIRCLE: KEYBOARD CULTURE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY”

BY TILMAN SKOWRONECK

The academy was held in Gothenburg from Thursday, October 23 to Sunday, October 26, 2014. In its new, leaner form, this mini-festival will now take place every fall. It is organized by the Göteborg International Organ Academy Association in cooperation with the University of Gothenburg (the Academy of Music and Drama and the Göteborg Organ Art Center), and in collaboration with various churches around the city and with Gunnebo House and Gardens in Mölndal. The head sponsor is the City of Gothenburg.

This year's Artistic Director in Residence was *Annette Richards*, who also played in the joint evening concert on Thursday, gave the opening lecture, and played the evening organ recital on Friday, all in addition to leading three masterclasses. The practical planning was in the unfailing hands of *Paul Peeters* and his staff.

By necessity, this report will only give a few highlights from the conference. I could not attend, for example, the opening lunch concert on Thursday in the Christinae (German) Church by flutist *Paulo Ghiglia* and *Camerata Promus*, which featured C. P. E. Bach's flute concerto in G major Wq 169. At the time I was at the Haga Church rehearsing for the evening concert, which took place at 8:00 P.M. This was a joint recital in which *Ulrika Davidsson*, *Annette Richards*, *Joel Speerstra* and I played, featuring Bach-circle-themed duets for fortepiano or organ and harpsichord, and solos for organ, harpsichord and fortepiano. A fortepiano after Walter, tuned at $a=430$ Hz., and a small organ at $a=440$ Hz. were in place, as well as two harpsichords (a German model tuned to match the fortepiano, and a French instrument for playing with the organ).

A sizeable and generous audience had assembled, and it should be said that we performers had huge fun

with our program. For me, the special “ear-openers” were Joel's interpretation of C. P. E. Bach's A minor “Württembergische” Sonata on the church's own Matthias Kramer harpsichord, in which he made great use of the instrument's full-sounding 16' stop, and Wilhelm Friedemann Bach's Fantasia in D minor Fk 19, thoughtfully played by Ulrika on the fortepiano. The allegro of J. S. Bach's concerto in C major BWV 1061 was shared between fortepiano (Ulrika) and harpsichord (me); this does not necessarily reflect original practice, but the difference in timbres and the added dynamical quality did serve the piece well; it can tend to sound a bit monochromatic. Johann Christian Bach's Sonata in G *à deux cembali obbligati*, finally, is a slightly naïve duo in the Classical style. I greatly enjoyed joining Annette to perform this piece on harpsichord and organ, and was surprised how well such music works in concert. The program contained various other pieces and combinations and ended with the Concerto for 2 keyboards in F major Fk 10 by Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, joyfully played by Ulrika and Joel on harpsichord and fortepiano.

Friday, October 24 began with Annette Richards's lecture on Organ Culture in 18th-Century Berlin, and my own lecture on a piano amateur's attempts to understand the breaking strings in her new Streicher piano in 1810. We then drove to Gunnebo House in Mölndal, an 18th-century country estate, where Ulrika Davidsson and Joel Speerstra gave a lunch concert with music by C. P. E. and W. F. Bach, W. A. Mozart, Christoph Schaffrath, and the recipient of C. P. E. Bach's famous “Silbermannsches Clavier,” Dietrich Ewald von Grotthuß.

The concert featured a newly designed double clavichord in which the duo players face each other. It is a lovely instrument, and astonishingly, the two parts do



North entrance to Gunnebo House. Photo: Tilman Skowroneck

sound different enough to make it possible to discern the two players.

I stayed at Gunnebo to listen to Ulrika’s and Joel’s joint masterclass “Bach and his sons at the keyboard” which included an introduction to playing free fantasias, masterfully coordinated between these two outstanding teachers.

Annette Richards played Friday’s evening recital on the magnificent North German Baroque organ at Örgryte New Church. The program began in grand style with repertoire that could be expected on a meantone organ with multiple subsemitones, such as Buxtehude’s Passacaglia in d minor BuxWV 161 and Bruhns’s chorale fantasy *Nun komm’, der Heiden Heiland*. Matters soon became more cutting-edge (from an 18th-century perspective) with C. P. E. Bach’s B-flat major and g-minor sonatas (Wq 70/2 and 70/6), the tonalities of which occasionally require some dainty tiptoeing around the enharmonic options of the keyboard. The third part of the recital was a step back in time with two pieces by J. S. Bach: the chorale prelude BWV 659 (like the Bruhns on *Nun komm’, der Heiden Heiland*), and the *Pièce d’Orgue* BWV 572. The solid chromatic ending of the concluding piece served as

a great demonstration of the resources but also the limitations of a meantone organ with subsemitones. The effect was earth-shattering, and perhaps also unaccustomed for those who prefer their Bach well-tempered and clean. Annette Richards deserves special praise for remaining unperturbed and focused throughout the performance of such diverse and taxing repertoire on a wonderful, but very challenging organ.

The morning lectures of the third day of the academy (Saturday, October 25) began with two practice-oriented lectures.



Paul Peeters introducing Ulrika Davidsson.
Photo: Tilman Skowroneck

Ulrika Davidsson spoke on “Keyboard techniques and sonority in the Clavier Works of C. P. E. Bach,” and Joel Speerstra on “C. P. E. Bach’s Clavier.” Driving my harpsichord home, I sadly missed the lunch concert by Magnus Kjellson at Jonsered Church and subsequent events. A student’s concert was scheduled on that evening, and the Sunday was devoted to various activities for children and teenagers: demonstrations focusing on the clavichord and the organ.

*TOM BEGHIN INTRODUCES THE NEW RESEARCH CLUSTER DECLASSIFYING THE CLASSICS:
RHETORIC, TECHNOLOGY, AND PERFORMANCE, 1750–1830
AT THE ORPHEUS INSTITUTE IN GHENT, BELGIUM*

This research cluster explores the intersection of historical technology and rhetoric, and its relevance for modern-day performance. Taking as its core repertoire the works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, while maintaining a

focus on the keyboard in its various technological guises, we hypothesize that, for a revival of the art of rhetoric to work, we need not just awareness of historical rules of performance (traditionally known as “performance

practice”) but also sensitivity to historical socio-cultural contexts, including social identity, skill, and gender of our historical counterparts (composers, composer-performers, performers, dedicatees, targeted users, or listeners).

Going beyond borrowing the language of the pulpit or the salon as a critical metaphor, we explore through performance the ramifications of socio-cultural and intellectual networks of both men and women historically engaged in musicking. What does it mean for four men to be seated around a quartet table and play through a Haydn quartet? How can or should such a *prima vista* experience inform modern-day performance? What made Beethoven praise so highly Ms. Dorothea von Ertmann’s performance of one of his sonatas, while scolding his pupil Carl Czerny for taking too many “liberties” in his Piano & Winds Quintet? The proposed time span marks, on the one end, C. P. E. Bach’s seminal *Essay on the True Art of Playing the Keyboard* (1753) and, on the

other, Beethoven’s late works and beyond. Our study of rhetoric includes also those elements that (especially as we move into the 19th century) have been understood as indicative of a “decline” of rhetoric. Of special interest are shifting conceptualizations of the identities of composers vs. performer and, as their goals redefine themselves, the emerging act of “interpreting” pieces of repertoire, to replace the traditional “delivery” or “execution” of music.

Absolute premise is the performance on historical instruments—newly built. The new construction of some specific types of keyboards—to fill crucial gaps in our knowledge of the past—happens in partnership with Pianos Maene (Ruisselede, Belgium) as part of our laboratory. Engaging technology, but resisting teleology, our artistic research revisits familiar scores and explores unfamiliar ones to tell “real” stories of men, women and their instruments in a period that the later 19th century so reverently—but stiffly—called “classical.”



FORTEPIANIST *BART VAN OORT* WRITES:

This June I will teach a summer workshop in Villa Bossi (Friday, June 19–Sunday, June 21) together with Wolfgang Brunner from the Salzburg Mozarteum, who will also work on the harpsichord. Simultaneously there will be a

workshop for modern piano. As usual, the picturesque setting in Villa Bossi, the great number of instruments and practice spaces, and the lovely atmosphere will make these days very enjoyable.

<http://www.accademiavillabossi.com/corsi/summer-workshop-2015>



THE *HISTORICAL KEYBOARD SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA* WILL HOLD ITS *FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING*, COINCIDING WITH THE *NINTH ALIÉNOR HARPSICHORD COMPOSITION COMPETITION*, AT THE *SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MUSIC OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY IN MONTREAL, CANADA* MAY 21–24, 2015

The conference, entitled “French Connections: Networks of Influence and Modes of Transmission of French Baroque Keyboard Music,” aims to deepen the understanding of French baroque keyboard music, its style, influence, transmission, and the different teaching traditions that nourished it.

Nearly 40 papers, lecture-recitals, and mini-recitals will be presented during the conference. Evening events

will include an organ-harpsichord recital by Peter Sykes on Thursday (May 21), an organ-harpsichord concert given by former students of John Grew, Organist Emeritus at McGill University, on Friday (May 22), and the Aliénor Finals Concert on Saturday (May 23). Guest artist Peter Sykes will give a master class on Friday May 22 at 9:30am–12:30pm. The 2015 conference website can be found at: <http://hksna2015.com>.

The *Historical Keyboard Society of North America* is pleased to announce the eighth *Mae and Irving Jurow International Harpsichord Competition*, to take place March 23–26, 2016 at Oberlin College, Ohio, USA. Harpsichordists under age 35 at the time of the competition are eligible to enter. The deadline is October 1, 2015, for preliminary qualification by recording, submitted electronically.

Semi-final and final rounds will be held at the HKSNA conclave at Oberlin College, 2016. A maximum of twelve players from the preliminary round will be admitted to the semi-final round.

First Prize: \$5,000 (US)

Second Prize: \$2,500 (US)

Third Prize: \$1,500 (US)

Jurow Prize: \$750 to be awarded to a promising non-finalist (Mae and Irving Jurow, donors).

Jury: Jane Chapman (Professor of Harpsichord, Royal College of Music, London), Lisa Goode Crawford

(Professor of Harpsichord, Emerita, Oberlin Conservatory of Music), Catalina Vicens (Ensemble Servir Antico, Basel/ Leiden), Hank Knox (Professor of Harpsichord, Schulich School of Music of McGill University), Vivian Montgomery (Early Music Faculty, Longy School of Music).

Entry fee: \$115 (US)/\$95 for HKSNA members, payable online or by check/money order to HKSNA.

Further information available at:

www.historicalkeyboardsociety.org. Facebook at Jurow International Harpsichord Competition.

Contact: Competition Director Vivian S. Montgomery, DMA (Early Music Faculty, Longy School of Music of Bard College)

vivian.montgomery@longy.edu

jurow.harpsichord.competition@gmail.com



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Submissions and questions may be directed to:

Tilman Skowroneck, Editor (tilman@skowroneck.de)

Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies

Department of Music
Cornell University
101 Lincoln Hall
Ithaca NY 14853

info@westfield.org / www.westfield.org



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