

Westfield

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTFIELD CENTER FOR HISTORICAL KEYBOARD STUDIES
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*A National Resource for the Advancement of Keyboard Music
Serving Professionals and the Public since 1979*

Late Summer 2018

Tilman Skowroneck, Editor



A very warm welcome to the summer issue of the 2018 Westfield Newsletter! The Westfield conference *The Organ in the Global Baroque* at Cornell University has just come to its close, and we are presently collecting reports and pictures to feature prominently in the following Newsletter, which will appear very soon—high time to catch up with some events from the first half of this year.

Executive Director Kathryn Stuart reports from the study day dedicated to the music of Claude Debussy at the Berkeley Festival. I am interviewing composer/pianist Prach Boondiskulchok about his new compositions for fortepiano.

We include two reports from recent competitions for players of the early piano: Eric Zivian writes about the Berkeley Festival International Early Piano Competition which took place in early June this year, and Liselotte Sels reports from the Historical Piano Summer Academy at the Orpheus Institute, Ghent, Belgium (July 3-12, 2018), which included a rather special competition modeled after the Paris Conservatoire Grand Concours of the early 19th century. Finally, Anne Laver announces the Syracuse Legacies Organ Conference at Syracuse University (March 29-31, 2019).

~ Tilman Skowroneck



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THE WESTFIELD CENTER FOR HISTORICAL KEYBOARD STUDIES
AT THE BERKELEY FESTIVAL



Alexei Lubimov

This year's San Francisco Early Music Society Berkeley Festival and Exhibition took place from June 3 through June 10. It was the 15th biennial Berkeley Festival (which alternates in even-numbered years with the Boston Early Music Festival) and its theme this year was "reimagining, reinventing, redefining early music."

Partly inspired by the theme, the Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies partnered with the Berkeley Festival to sponsor a day of discussion and music making dedicated to the music of Claude Debussy (2018 being the centenary of his death). It began with a lively colloquy, well-attended by the general public, led by Nicholas Mathew (UC Berkeley), who is also a Westfield Center board member. The colloquy, entitled *Debussy as Early Music: The Piano and the Pianist in the Early Twentieth Century*, featured two performer-scholars long associated with the early music movement, George Barth (Stanford University) and Rebecca Plack (SF Conservatory), alongside two younger scholars, Desmond Sheehan (UC Berkeley) and Daniel Seyfried (Greensboro, NC). Their discussion ranged from the status of Debussy's own piano rolls as historical evidence, to the style and aesthetic of French pianism in the late nineteenth century, to the

broadest challenges of applying an "early music" ethos to music barely more than a century old.

Later the same day, Alexei Lubimov, world-renowned pianist and historical keyboard specialist, performed an outstanding recital on a 1901 Bechstein from UC Berkeley's early piano collection. Lubimov's career has encompassed harpsichord and modern piano, as well as award-winning recordings of Mozart, Schubert, and Brahms on Viennese pianos, Chopin on French pianos, and C. P. E. Bach on the now obscure tangent piano. ECM New Music released his recording of Debussy's Preludes – on an early Steinway and an early Bechstein – in 2012.

Lubimov's program for the Berkeley Festival included a selection of six Debussy Preludes from Book I and another six from Book II, Scriabin's Sonata No. 9, Op. 68 ("Black Mass"), selections from *Sports et Divertissements* by Erik Satie (the humorous prose poems, part of *Sports et Divertissements*, were read engagingly by Nick Mathew), and the Stravinsky Sonata. Lubimov's performances are always sensitively shaped by whichever instrument he has chosen and in this case the 1901 Bechstein turned out to be an adaptable vehicle to display the different colors of Debussy and Scriabin, the neoclassical transparency and eighteenth-century gestural language of Stravinsky, and the light-hearted slapstick of Satie. The audience's ovation was enthusiastic, and brought Lubimov back for two encores, both by Debussy: the Prelude from *Pour le Piano* and "La fille au cheveux de lin" (the eighth Prelude from Book I).

~ Kathryn Stuart



INTERVIEW WITH PRACH BOONDISKULCHOK
COMPOSING FOR THE EARLY PIANO

Prach Boondiskulchok is internationally active as a pianist, historical keyboard player and composer. I met Prach earlier this year at the Orpheus Institute in Ghent, Belgium, where we are researching Beethoven's pianos and their music as a part of Tom Beghin's research cluster "Declassifying the Classics" (see also the report from the Historical Piano Summer Academy 2018 at Orpheus further below). To my surprise, however, Prach also presented a new composition – for the fortepiano! In the following interview, he explains what lies behind his interest in the various kinds of historical piano.

Prach, you are performing both on the modern piano and historical ones. How did you, as a performer, become interested in historical pianos?

Like many people, my first contact to music was through the modern piano, but pretty soon, aged 12 or so, I became fascinated by the harpsichord and clavichord. I was fortunate to have had Carole Cerasi as harpsichord teacher since I was 16, and so by the time I had access to a 18th century Viennese piano at college, it was not so alien.

Many pianists seem to be comparing these two kinds of instruments – the modern piano and various historical ones – and then speak in favor of one of them (often still the modern piano). What makes you think differently?

I feel that each type of instrument brings different aspects of the music to the foreground, and I am not just talking about the fortepiano versus modern piano, but also about differences between historical pianos themselves: English vs. Viennese, Stein vs. Walter and so on. Of course you can have types of instrument that you are more accustomed to and feel more comfortable playing. It is perfectly justified to have preferences (for example, I find 18th century English squares rather difficult to play well). On the other hand I am suspicious of giving preferences

too much importance, as they are always a complex mix of habit, prejudices, fashion, as well as genuine artistic taste. I value variety over homogeneity, and this is what fascinates me about the 'fortepiano'.

So, in performance, historical pianos (of many types) offer textures and sonorities that perhaps match those called for by the music that was composed when these instruments were around. Is this, to you, a straightforward way of looking at historical instruments and their use, or is there more?

You ask a very good leading question while opening a can of worms. I love it! Let's unpack this a little bit. I think music, even during the course of one movement, "calls for" different things. Some music does not call for any specific textures or sonorities, while some depends hugely on them. In the latter case, it becomes

especially important to understand the kind of tools the composers had in mind. But I don't think reproducing composer intentions is an end in itself, but rather a helpful place to start the complex process of interpretation. Historical instruments, crucial as they are to our need to historicise and contextualise music of the past, perhaps can also exist as instruments in their own rights, outside of the "museum of musical works."

I was asking because you have recently composed new music for the Viennese 5-octave fortepiano: "The Remora: Les notes coincées" and "A Bao A Qu's Stairs". What strikes me is that your compositional approach is not historicising, but rather uses the instrument as a new, singular "beast" with a specific set of possibilities. Is this description correct? What brought you to this way of thinking about a historical instrument?

It will sound as if I am contradicting my own point above, but actually, for me the Viennese fortepiano cannot be treated as a simplistic "new, singular beast". I see the fortepiano as an object that relates to many practices, a



Prach Boondiskulchok.
Photo by Professor P. Koralus

boundary object, if you like. That is to say, the instrument means different things to different people past and present (HIP performers, modern pianists, Cristofori, Beethoven). And as a fortepianist, I cannot ignore its historicity, nor can I, as a living composer, restrict its use only to historical music. Rather, I try to find inspiration and new ideas from the fortepiano's story as an instrument. In the case of *A Bao A Qu's Stairs* I looked for textures that exploit the different colors in each register of the instrument while using a rhythmic motif from Haydn's F minor Variations. In *The Remora* I experimented even further with the idea of the hand stop that originally operated the open dampers register.

An interesting thing happens in The Remora where you insert a number of paper wedges that keep selected strings open, free to resonate with the rest of the music. In view of the usual narrative about the Viennese piano as a "speaking" instrument with a short sustain, I found this an interesting decision. What was your inspiration here?

The usual narrative that you mentioned is true from a modern perspective. But if we hear the Viennese fortepiano in its 18th century context and compare it to other contemporary English and French instruments, we come to appreciate its incredibly efficient dampers that stop resonances very quickly. By having some notes effectively damperless, an interesting contrast is made between those with and those without dampers. But my original inspiration really came from when I was researching the use of hand stops; I reread the well-known account of the Mozart-Clementi duel in 1781, when Mozart complained that he had to play on a piano with three stuck notes. I tried to imagine whether he would have reacted to those stuck keys, and if so, how. So I created my "stop" which I call the *sordino* stop.

Mozart's sticking keys as musical inspiration—it reminds me of my own idea that a musically strong improvisation is theoretically possible on instruments in any kind of state, as long as they are able to produce at least some kind of music... Yet I suspect that you are hoping for a good fortepiano for your pieces. What, then, is a "good" fortepiano to you? Why did you choose a Viennese 5-octave model?

I think most players want a good instrument! Coming back to the Mozart letter that I mentioned, it is interesting that Mozart went through some trouble to borrow his favorite instrument for the duel, but the Emperor told him to play on the less good one! So we are back to preferences again. And as I mentioned earlier about preferences being complex, I think my choice for a Viennese 5-octave is a mixture of pragmatism (there are lots of them around) and artistic preference (I do love the sensitivity and colorfulness of these instruments). More importantly, I envision these pieces to be played alongside Mozart, Haydn, C.P.E. Bach, as I think both the old and new pieces benefit from each other's contextualisation.

One of the things that can be tricky on an early piano is touch and dynamical control. You challenge the performer not only in virtuosic passages but also by writing a wide range of dynamics, between ff and ppp. In comparison, for Beethoven pp already indicates a very special effect and is often difficult to achieve. How do you approach a ppp passage on a Viennese fortepiano, technically and musically?

Unlike Beethoven, my musical language enjoys a less widespread grammatical understanding. A Beethoven *pp* can mean dozens of dynamics, dictated by harmony, rhythmic hierarchy, and affects. I feel that without such a clear system, I need a little more help from notation to communicate proportions. Ultimately, I guess I believe that dynamics is the domain of the performer, and notation is a kind of 'serving suggestion', designed to clarify the underlying meaning to be interpreted.

Where will you go from here? Is there more music for the fortepiano coming? What other projects are you planning in the near future?

Many more! I am experimenting further with other alteration stops, as well as the fortepiano in ensemble.

Thanks very much for this interview!

~ Tilman Skowronek

See also Prach's website at <https://www.prach.net> .



REPORT FROM THE BERKELEY FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL EARLY PIANO COMPETITION

On June 7th, at 11 am, the finals of the Berkeley Festival International Early Piano Competition took place at Hertz Hall on the Berkeley campus. This was a very special competition devoted to the performance of Classical and Romantic piano music on instruments modeled on those in use when the music was written, generally known as fortepianos. After a taped round, three finalists were chosen: David Belkovski, Anastasia Chin, and Christian De Luca. Each played the first movement of a Classical sonata and a single-movement Romantic work. For the Classical sonata movement, the pianists played on a fortepiano by Rod Regier, a copy of an instrument by Anton Walter from about 1790 generously provided by Nicholas Mathew and the UC Berkeley Music Department. For the Romantic work, another Regier instrument was used: a copy of a Conrad Graf from about 1830, provided by George Barth and Stanford University.



Christian De Luca performing during the competition.
Photo by Micaela McNulty

All three pianists did a beautiful job bringing across many qualities of the music that do not emerge easily on a modern instrument. In the end, Christian De Luca, who played the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 10 no. 3 and the Chopin Scherzo in B minor, was the unanimous choice of the jury, which consisted of George Barth of Stanford, Corey Jamason of the San Francisco Conservatory, Nicholas Mathew of UC Berkeley and Eric Zivian, the Music Director of the Valley of the Moon Music Festival, a Sonoma-based summer festival specializing in Classical and Romantic chamber music played on period instruments.

Christian's prize was an award of \$1000 from the San Francisco Early Music Society, and a paid performance with the Valley of the Moon Music Festival, which will take place within the next 12 months or so.

– Eric Zivian

HISTORICAL PIANO SUMMER ACADEMY 2018, JULY 3-12 AT THE ORPHEUS INSTITUTE, GHENT, BELGIUM

A report by Liselotte Sels (with special thanks to Tom Beghin and Shin Hwang)

The Historical Piano Summer Academy was directed by Tom Beghin (Orpheus Institute and McGill University) and Erin Helyard (Melbourne University), with as special guests Frédéric de La Grandville (Université de Reims), Jeanne Roudet (Sorbonne Université, IReMus), Prach Boondiskulchok (Orpheus Institute), and Ellie Nimeroski (Orpheus Institute). Participants: Hannah Aelvoet (Belgium), Domitille Bès (France), Shin Hwang (USA), Luca Montebugnoli (Italy), Márcio Reverbel (Brazil), Liselotte Sels (Belgium), Joshua Villanueva (USA), Akkra Yeunyonghattaporn (Thailand).



The Maene-Erard at d'Hane Steenhyse
Photo provided by Liselotte Sels

On the afternoon of July 11th, eight candidates presented themselves to a five-member jury in the Ceremonial Room of 18th-century former aristocratic palace d'Hane-Steenhuysse in downtown Ghent. They performed sonatas, fantasies and variations on a replica of Beethoven's Érard Frères piano (no. 133 from 1803) built by the Belgian maker Chris Maene in 2016.

These young pianists from six different countries participated in a competition modeled after the Paris Conservatoire *Grand Concours* of the early 19th century. Similar to the historical *concours*, the sessions were open to the public—with an extra dimension added by broadcasting them live on Facebook.

The jury president, Frédéric de La Grandville, awarded the *premier prix* to both Shin Hwang and Luca Montebugnoli, and second prizes to Akkra Yeunyonghattaporn and Domitille Bès, while the other participants received an *accessit* (honorable mention).

The featured pieces included six “prize-winning” compositions, originally performed by *concours* candidates between 1797 and 1819, complemented by two other sonatas from this period of similar technical and musical demand:

- John Baptist Cramer's Sonata in F major, op. 7 no. 3 (played on the 1797 concours by L. Pradher),
- Muzio Clementi's Sonata in C major, op. 33 no. 3 (played by J. Ozi in 1799 and P.J. Zimmerman in 1800),
- Hélène de Montgeroult's Sonata in G minor, op. 2 no. 1 (published in 1800),
- Louis Adam's Sonata in C major, op. 8 no. 2 (played by F. Kalkbrenner in 1801),
- Johann Nepomuk Hummel's Fantasy in E-flat major, op. 18 (played in 1806),
- Pierre Joseph Guillaume Zimmerman's Sonata in G major, op. 5 (played by himself in 1807),
- Ferdinand Herold's Sonata in C minor/major, op. 1 (played by himself in 1810, dedicated to Louis Adam),
- Adam's *Air du bon Roi Dagobert avec douze Variations précédé d'un Prélude ou Introduction* (played by Mlle A.H. Dutey in 1819).

The pieces had been selected by Tom Beghin and Erin Helyard, who organized the concours as the concluding event of the first historical piano summer academy of the Orpheus Institute, a European center for advanced artistic research in music.

ance a été composée par l'auteur, pour le jeu céleste des grands Fo
 us; il faut pour faire ce jeu mettre les deux Pedales du milieu à la fe
 ale qui perpetue les sons, lorsqu'il y a des soupirs. on pourra exécute
 ordinaires, en ne se servant que de la grande Pedale .

And.^{te} grazioso un peu aminé.
 dolce
 P
 legato
 Les 2 Pedales du milieu ensemble.

Beginning of the Romance from Adam's Sonata Op. 8 no. 2, with instructions for the use of all four pedals of the Érard grand piano.

The summer academy explored the artistic and pedagogical climate of the Paris Conservatoire around 1800, with the 1803 Érard piano as its centerpiece and the replication of the *concours* as its apotheosis. The broader context for this academy was the Orpheus research cluster “Declassifying the Classics: Rhetoric, Technology, and Performance, 1750-1830”, initiated and led by Tom Beghin since January 2015. During the academy, the participants experienced a balanced environment with plenty of intellectual and artistic occasions to study the pedagogic and musical idiosyncrasies of the early Paris Conservatoire, in relation to the development of the piano. The participants were given the opportunity to practice on and be coached at a collection of German, Viennese, English and French historical pianos owned by the Institute or Chris Maene: an Andreas Stein 1786 model, an Anton Walter model ca. 1790, an original Longman, Clementi and Co. from 1798, an original Thomas Tomki(n)son from 1808, a Conrad Graf from 1826 (of which the original is kept in Museum Vleeshuis in Antwerp), and of course the 1803 Érard, all built or restored by Maene.

Tom Beghin and Erin Helyard provided individual coaching with ample space for interaction between participants. An excursion to Maene's historical keyboard workshop and collection provided further historical context and organological-technical perspectives. Lectures and presentations from different angles stimulated the exploration and discussion of the central theme of the academy, while evening concerts and lecture-performances fostered artistic reflection and dialogue. In addition, participants were given the chance to record a short video

clip presenting their ongoing personal artistic research. (The clips may be viewed by following the links below.)

Erin Helyard and Tom Beghin's solo recitals entitled "The French Clementi" and "The French Beethoven" featured music by Clementi, Steibelt and Beethoven, while a lecture-recital by Prach Boondiskulchok, a docARTES student and member of Tom's research cluster, focused on contemporary fortepiano compositions and their historicity and idiosyncrasies (see also the interview with Prach earlier in this issue). Erin and Tom elaborated on their recital themes and underlying concepts in seminars. Jeanne Roudet and Frédéric de La Grandville gave revealing lectures respectively titled "*Lire la modernité de la Méthode de piano du Conservatoire, 1800-1810*" and "*À propos de l'enseignement du pianoforte au Conservatoire de Paris vers 1810*", the latter being presented as a fictive speech by Conservatoire director Luigi Cherubini.

Erin's seminar discussed Muzio Clementi's contribution in the emergence of a virtuoso piano culture from around 1800. Clementi's compositions featured novel stylistic elements of high technical demand. This musical-technical evolution

was accompanied by new didactic approaches and organological developments. Clementi's 1801 treatise was widely published and translated in different languages, while his qualitative fortepianos were in high demand. The influence of the English approach of piano playing and pedagogics was instrumental in the development of the modern French conservatoire.

Conversely, Tom Beghin explored the impact of the French sound and style on Beethoven, when he ordered his Érard in 1803. Typical stylistic and thematic elements of French music can be found in Beethoven's music of that period as well: "pastoral" movements or sections characterized by tonic-dominant alternations to be played with raised dampers, tremolo passages (*tremendi* – *continuité*

de son), and innovative and detailed use of diverse pedals. Borders between program music and absolute music, or between fantasy and sonata, were increasingly blurred.

As Jeanne Roudet argued, the opposition between "light" or "frivolous" French music and "profound" or "serious" German music was largely a historiographic construction. The concepts of music as science and the moral function of music contributed to the establishment of the modern conservatoire. This institution envisioned thorough technical training and at the same time training of musicality, not only in (collective) instrument classes, but also in the new *solfège* lessons. The pursuit of unity and uniformity in didactics led to the commission and publication of official instrument methods, such as Louis

Adam's piano method (1804). At the same time, the importance of developing an individual, recognizable style, just like composers, was stressed. The piano was considered as the instrument of the composer, and the combined profession of pianist-composer was still seen as an ideal, although it had become acceptable to be "only" a pianist/performer.

During a closing discussion led by docARTES student-

researcher Ellie Nimeroski, the assembled academy team shaped its own *concours* by developing criteria and evaluation tools for the jury members, distilled from Louis Adam's influential *Méthode de Piano du Conservatoire* and modeled upon a contemporary violin *concours* evaluation form. The composition of the jury reflected Conservatoire practices, engaging five members of different specialties (ideally three former prize winners, the director and the singing teacher). By means of a standard evaluation form, consisting of rationalized, fixed criteria in separate categories (e.g. *mécanisme*, talent, style, etc.), intangible aspects of musical performance were made measurable. Calculation of the ratings (consisting of dots, open and closed circles) identified the prize winners.



From left to right: Joshua Villanueva, Hannah Aelvoet, Akkra Yeunyonghattaporn, Márcio Reverbel, Shin Hwang, Frédéric de La Grandville, Erin Helyard, Jeanne Roudet, Liselotte Sels, Luca Montebugnoli, Domitille Bès, Tom Beghin.

Photo by SongHui Chon

In this specific, revolutionary milieu, novel pieces were added to the piano repertoire, and expressive and impressive performances were offered to the public—sometimes by one and the same person and often in close interaction with the conservatoire teachers. The new concept of “the prize-winning sonata” (a term introduced by Tom and his team) came into existence, as implied by the title page of Adam’s 1801 Sonata op. 8 no. 3: “This sonata was played by his pupil F. Kalkbrenner who obtained the *premier prix*”, and testified later by *Le pianiste* in 1833: “Who of us does not recall that the third sonata (in C) from Clementi’s Opus 33 had such prestige that it was solemnly banned from the *concours* at the Conservatoire because it always made the person who played it win the prize.” The Orpheus Institute, with this summer academy and *grand concours*, has provided a creative space to gain more insight in the artistic, pedagogical and philosophical mechanics of this exciting period in the history of piano construction, composition and performance.

<https://orpheusinstituut.be/en/news-and-events/historical-piano-summer-academy-individual-research-projects>

<https://orpheusinstituut.be/en/historical-piano-summer-academy-2018>

<https://orpheusinstituut.be/nl/nieuws-en-events/summer-academy-open-events>

<https://orpheusinstituut.be/nl/projecten/declassifying-the-classics>



SYRACUSE LEGACIES ORGAN CONFERENCE AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY, MARCH 29-31.2019



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Syracuse University
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The Westfield Center is pleased to co-sponsor the Syracuse Legacies Organ Conference to be held at Syracuse University in March 2019. This three-day event will celebrate the contributions of three important figures with ties to Syracuse University: Arthur Poister, esteemed Syracuse organ professor; Walter Holtkamp, Sr., builder of the university’s organs; and Calvin Hampton, acclaimed composer and alumnus. Focusing on these exceptional individuals provides an opportunity to explore the interconnectedness of twentieth-century organ pedagogy, performance practice, organbuilding, and composition in an academic setting that will include scholarly papers, masterclasses, and performances.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Syracuse Legacies Organ Conference invites papers that reflect on the work of Arthur Poister, Calvin Hampton, and/or Walter Holtkamp, Sr., or that seek to highlight one or more of their contributions in the broader context of twentieth-century organ culture in America. Topics might include (but are not limited to) organ pedagogy at the mid-point of the twentieth century, organ music or hymnody by Calvin Hampton, the relationship between instrument and composition, the organ reform movement in America, reception history, and performance practice.

The conference committee welcomes paper proposals for 25-minute presentations. Presenters will receive a \$500 honorarium. We particularly welcome proposals from younger scholars, and hope to make some funding assistance available for travel to the conference for current students. Abstracts of approximately 300 words should be sent to alaver@syr.edu by October 15, 2018.

For detailed conference information, schedule, and registration, visit: <http://cusecommunity.syr.edu/organ> .

– Anne Laver



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<http://westfield.org/donate/>

Submissions and questions may be directed to:
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