

Westfield

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*A National Resource for the Advancement of Keyboard Music
Serving Professionals and the Public since 1979*

Summer 2019

Stephen Craig, Editor



Welcome to the summer issue of Westfield 2019. As the academic year approaches, an exciting event is around the corner: Westfield's 40th Anniversary and Conference, *Blending Past and Present: Collections and Collectors*, at Oberlin Conservatory October 23-26, 2019. Thank you Paul Fritts and Brian Wentzel for providing background information about the new Paul Fritts organ at First Lutheran Church in Lorain, Ohio which will be featured at this conference. Catharina Meints reminisces on her experiences with her late husband James Caldwell in amassing The Caldwell Collection of Viols, one of the several collections also included at the conference - Kathryn Stuart provides more information about this.

Hans Davidsson warmly invites participants to Göteborg International Organ Festival, October 11-

20, 2019, *The Organ as a Mechanical Musical Marvel*. Joel Speerstra provides us with a glimpse of the new claviorganum built for Göteborg Baroque and the center piece of this year's organ festival.

Tilman Skowroneck interviews Ulrika Davidsson, an expert in a wide range of historical keyboard instruments, and a notable pedagogue. From organists to pianists, Ulrika's influence on a diversity of musicians, including myself, is remarkable.

Andrew Willis kindly writes about his sabbatical concert tour, *On the Road with Bach*. With a David Sutherland Cristofori-tradition replica fortepiano as his companion, Andrew shares his experiences through a compelling narrative and captivating photos.

~ Stephen Craig



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FROM THE DESK OF KATHRYN STUART, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies was delighted to accept an invitation from the Boston Early Music Festival to begin a collaboration that included co-sponsorship of the Keyboard Mini-Festival on June 13 and a concert on June 12 as part of BEMF's Fringe concert series. Westfield member and instrument builder Anne Acker arranged for the room, brought her instruments, and coordinated with builders Doug Maple, Robert Hicks, and David Moore to show their instruments as well.

Westfield colleagues Andrew Willis, piano and Erica Johnson, clavichord, presented an excellent concert to a room overflowing with an audience eager to hear, see, and try the instruments. Andrew opened the program with works by Ignaz Mocheles and John Field, performed on a Streicher copy by Margaret Hood that was completed after her untimely passing by Anne Acker. Erica Johnson offered pieces by J.S. Bach, Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, and C.P.E. Bach. She performed on two clavichords by Doug Maple, the first (for the J.S. Bach) based on instruments by Philip Jacob Specken, and the second (for Sweelinck and C.P.E. Bach) was adapted from instruments attributed to Johann Heinrich Silbermann.

As you know, Westfield is committed to fostering dialog among performers, scholars, and builders, so this event was a wonderful opportunity for us to acknowledge the outstanding work of builders whose instruments help us better understand the music.

Westfield was also well represented at BEMF by David Yearsley, who performed as part of the Organ Mini-Festival which he directs, and Kimberly Marshall, whose performance was also part of this Mini-Festival. Sandra Mangsen, harpsichord, presented a Fringe concert with her group Bennington Baroque, Carol lei Breckenridge offered a solo recital, and Elaine Funaro with her actor son Eric Love, presented *Harpsichord Diaries*. Altogether it was a pleasure to hear wonderful performances and visit with friends, colleagues, and those who were eager to know more about Westfield.



As we move into the final stages of preparation for our conference, *Blending Past and Present: Collections and Collectors* at Oberlin Conservatory October 23-26, 2019, we are delighted to include in this newsletter a piece about an exceptional collection in Oberlin, the Caldwell Collection of Viols. Due to the generosity of Catharina Meints, a conference session entitled “*Most Excellently Choice and most*

Eminently Rare”: *Three Perspectives on the Caldwell Collection of Viols* will be presented at Catharina Meints’ home on the Friday morning. The description is included among Lecture Recital & Paper Abstracts at <https://westfield.org/wf-40th/program/abstracts>.

We look forward to receiving your registration, as well as applications for the three masterclasses offered by Edoardo Bellotti, harpsichord, David Breitman, fortepiano, and Christa Rakich, organ. Apply to perform for a masterclass [here](#). The entire schedule and much additional information is available at <https://westfield.org/wf-40th>. Once again, please note that full-time college students are encouraged to register and will not be charged a registration fee. The deadline for the “early bird” registration is September 5, 2019.

Finally, we are pleased to tell you about an upcoming event. In March 2020, Cornell University will host a conference and festival dedicated to Robert Moog and the synthesizers he invented that changed the musical world. Scholarly panels will address historical, technical, and cultural aspects of Moog’s revolutionary instruments, which were designed and built in nearby Trumansburg, NY. The festival will coincide with an exhibit at Cornell’s Kroch Library featuring items from Moog’s recently acquired archive. From Wendy Carlos’s *Switched-On Bach* to Mother Mallard’s Portable Masterpiece Co. (featuring Ithaca legends David Borden and David Yearsley), the festival offers attendees the chance to re-acquaint themselves with music of the 60s, discover new music that Moog’s instruments continue to inspire, and to get their hands on a keyboard at the Synthesizer Petting Zoo. Dates and further details will be forthcoming in the next issue of the Newsletter.

We very much look forward to seeing you in Oberlin in October.

~ Kathryn Stuart

THE NEW PAUL FRITTS ORGAN
AT FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH IN LORAIN, OHIO



Five years ago, an icon of American organ building was destroyed in an arson fire at First Lutheran Church in

Lorain, Ohio. John Brombaugh's 1970 Opus 4 was a groundbreaking organ employing valuable design and construction ideas he had observed during study trips to Northern Germany and The Netherlands. He brought new perspectives to what a true organ from the Baroque period was. Gone were the steely, shrill sounds of the Neo-Baroque, replaced by warm, clear sounds brought to life by a responsive key action and a wind system that responded in a musical way to the music. Opus 4 was the first modern organ to use an unequal temperament (Werckmeister III), and one stop was made out of hammered metal. These were revolutionary ideas in the 1970's.

A wave of organ builders working today were inspired by John Brombaugh's work. With the good fortune of an adequate insurance settlement, an organ committee was formed within months of the fire with the desire to commission a new instrument

of comparable beauty and significance. There was brief discussion of the possibility of reconstructing Opus 4, but with the paucity of material that remained after the fire, and the developments of the intervening years, the committee decided rather to seek an organ of our time within the spirit of Brombaugh's groundbreaking work. Paul Fritts & Company was chosen after an intensive selection process, and their Opus 42 now graces the new First Lutheran sanctuary.

The new organ, with 37 stops distributed over 2 manuals and pedal, pays homage to John's work in a number of ways. The free-standing case is similarly inspired by Renaissance Dutch organs with its overall proportions, and protruding and angled towers. Three wedge bellows provide flexible wind. Embossed pipes grace each tower, and some stops are chosen and scaled like Opus 4. The temperament is Kellner. The only

salvaged material from Opus 4 – copper from its ten largest pipes – was not used in the new organ, but repurposed as bas-relief artwork now adorning the sanctuary's main doors.

The new organ also reflects the research and experience acquired during the nearly fifty years since the Brombaugh was built. Like Opus 4, the new organ has a second manual division positioned in the lower part of the case but with added swell shades. The keydesk is located in the base of the case rather than the Brombaugh's detached console. The key action is suspended-direct mechanical. The stop action is mechanical with electric pre-set system piggybacked on in a way that enables the organ to function when electrical components eventually fail.

Opus 42 is only the second American organ to be built entirely with sand-cast metal for the pipes. The two alloys – high lead and high tin – both contain small percentages of copper, antimony, bismuth and traces of other metals. These "impurities" strengthen the metal in important ways. Sand casting enables the freshly-cast metal to cool fifteen

times faster than cloth-cast metal. The pipes not only have a different feel but, more importantly, they spring to life faster with less fuss thereby enabling the sound to be warm and colorful. The voicing style accentuates this quality. The wind pressure is a relatively low 66mm (2 5/8").

Paul Fritts and acoustician Richard Boner of BAI were involved with the architectural design of the church from the beginning, and the result is a sanctuary with sparkling clarity and enveloping support for choral and organ music. Reverberation time varies from 2.5-5 seconds depending on the fullness of the room.

The specification is quite generous for a two-manual



Installation in Lorain, May 3, 2019
Photo by Brian Wentzel





Brian Wentzel and Paul Fritts in the Fritts shop.
Photo by Bruce Shull

instrument, with eight reeds, seven 8' flues (including a celeste) on the manuals, and a 16' Praestant anchoring the Great. The main case is built of Douglas fir and the keydesk of heat-treated maple. The pipeshades, which are populated by a number of mythical creatures, were hand-carved by Andreas Rink in Dresden.

Katelyn Emerson will play the dedication recital on Sunday, August 25, at 3:00pm. Additional recitals this season will be played by Jonathan Moyer on February 23 (*Clavier-Übung III*) and Brian Wentzel on May 17. A complete stoplist, photos of the organ, and details of the concerts may be found on the church's website, <http://www.firstlutheranlorain.org>.

~ Paul Fritts and Brian Wentzel



WESTFIELD AT OBERLIN: 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AND CONFERENCE THE CALDWELL COLLECTION OF VIOLS

The Caldwell Collection evolved over more than thirty years, starting in the late 1960s when James Caldwell and Catharina Meints were first married. Their courtship centered around the viol despite the fact that they both played in the newly-formed and short-lived Chamber Symphony of Philadelphia. Jim, James' nickname, was principal oboe and Catharina was assistant principal cello. As their interest in viols grew beyond the consort literature into more soloistic music, they became interested in the frequent discussions harpsichord players and makers were having about the national styles of keyboard instruments. Jim began studying both viols and baroque oboes for similar differences. He received a full-year sabbatical grant to travel throughout Europe visiting museums and private collections. He had a fine eye for remembering the minute features of instruments. Jim passed away in 2006. Catharina reminisces on their experiences in amassing this fine collection of instruments:

We were introduced to our first antique viol by the dealer who had recently sold me my Panormo cello. We eagerly bought it and started looking seriously for old viols. Since much of the fine literature in the baroque period is for two viols - either equal duets, or solo and basso continuo - we decided we wanted to own two English viols, two German viols, and two French seven-string viols. That was our goal. Of course we needed a treble or two for consort music, and two pardessus de viole for those cute rococo duets. A baroque cello or two was needed as well.

The collecting began by informing everyone we knew that we were interested. The acquisition of each instrument had a story which was much of the fun. Almost none of the viols were playable, so restoration became a large part of our lives and budget. We worked with a number of different restorers and unfortunately the experiences did not often end well. But the viols



Catharina Meints
Photo by Tanya Rosen-Jones

would eventually end up sounding as we had hoped. We amassed more than the six basses we'd aimed for, because every viol has its own voice and we were reluctant to sacrifice the special character of each just to have a little more space in our gamba room.

We always intended that the Collection would be played, unlike the ones in many museums. We made a number of recordings using most of them in the 1970s and 80s. Since we lived in Oberlin, we could easily play our concerts here on the appropriate instruments. After Jim's death I decided to write a book about the Collection. *The Caldwell Collection of Viols — a Life Together in the Pursuit of Beauty*. It contains photographs, measurements, and memoirs. I included a CD with me playing a short piece on all the instruments. Each piece is chosen to be close in years and a few miles from where the viol was made. The book is available on Amazon and I will have a number at the Westfield meeting. The recordings we made are now available on my website: <https://catharinameints.com> under "Music from Oberlin." There are the equivalent of 17 CDs on the website.

- Catharina Meints

GÖTEBORG INTERNATIONAL ORGAN FESTIVAL 2019

The Organ Academy celebrates its 25th anniversary, and this year's festival takes place October 11–20. Since 1992, the city's unique treasure of new, restored, and reconstructed organs has grown step by step. In 2019, the notable addition of a Claviorganum is the focal point. With the theme *The Organ as a Mechanical Musical Marvel*, the festival offers a rich program including concerts, workshops, lectures, panel discussions, a Pop Up Museum of Musical Mechanical Marvels, and the Gothenburg Youth Organ Festival. The first part of the festival (October 11–16) focuses on early music and the claviorganum. The second part (October 17–20) focuses on new music, presents several new commissions, and celebrates the Swedish composer and organist, Sven Eric Johansson (1919–1997). Performers and presenters include: (concerts and workshops) Monica Melcova, Catalina Vicens, Kimberly Marshall, Karin Nelson, Anette Richards, Ligita Sneibe, Ulrika Davidsson, Edoardo Bellotti, Hans-Ola Ericsson, Nathan Laube, Joris Verdin, Göteborg Baroque; in the conference on “The Pinned Barrel Organs as Music Archive” (led by Johan Norrback), Ture Bergström, Marieke Lefeber-Morsman, Roland Hentzschel, Franziska Bühl, Leonardo Perretti, Emily Baines, Helmut Kowar; and in the conference “The Organ as a Mechanical Musical Marvel” (led by Joel Speerstra), Peter Holman, Walter Chinaglia, Annette Richards, Eleanor Smith, Mattias Lundberg and Massimiliano Guido. For more information and registration for active participation in workshops follow the link: <http://organacademy-english.mystrikingly.com>

~ Hans Davidsson

A NEW CLAVIORGANUM FOR GÖTEBORG BAROQUE

Background

Göteborg has the good fortune to have two churches with organs in meantone with subsemitones: the Brombaugh organ, twin sister to the Fairchild Chapel organ at Oberlin College, was installed in Haga Church in 1991, and GOArt's research organ, based on Arp Schnitger, was installed nine years later in Örgryte New Church after an intensive six-year research project. Both have regularly been used as continuo instruments in ensemble music-making, creating a culture of listening to, and learning from meantone organs. Several strong early music ensembles were established in Göteborg in the following years, owing something fundamental to this new culture of meantone listening. Göteborg Baroque, led by Magnus Kjellson, has regularly made music with both of these instruments, but has its home in the German “Christinae” Church in the old town where the only organ is a large nineteenth-century Marcussen, in an evolved state. For many years Kjellson led the ensemble from a harpsichord placed on a portable chest organ,

experimenting with the concept of a claviorganum, and a kind of platonic ideal for a continuo instrument grew over time.

The new claviorganum

The chest organ spoke near the floor and towards the back of the room. An organ with a façade that stood at the back of the stage would better support the ensemble and speak towards the audience. From this first design decision the rest of the instrument grew organically in a multi-year dialog with organbuilder Mats Arvidsson. The instrument was inspired by the “long movement” organ Händel had in Covent Garden, but also even earlier experiments dating back at least to Monteverdi. The resulting instrument is an eight-stop organ with a wooden Principal 8 in the façade based on the Jula of the 1776 Casparini organ in Vilnius. The organ has a self-contained bellows system below the impost, and a façade that stands over a meter from the ground, connected to a detachable console that can be placed



Göteborg Baroque Claviorganum

either at the instrument or 2 1/2 meters in front of it, allowing a harpsichord to be placed above the organ manual.

The organ also has a Quintadena 16 in the discant, and a Dulcian 16 in the bass (playable from the pedal or the manual). The Principals 8, 4, and 2, as well as the Gedackt 8 are all divided, the Quint 3 is only in the discant. The Regal 8 sits in the façade and the Dulcian 16 is built into the organ console directly behind the pedalboard. The harpsichord, by Andreas Kihlström, also has a divided coupler to the organ and can be played from the organ's keyboard. The harpsichord has two 8s and a buff stop and is based on an anonymous instrument in Visby, thought to be from either a student or relative of Michael Mietke. The organ in long movement position allows the entire ensemble to hear the organ from behind them while the instrumentalists are gathered near the harpsichord.

Tuning and temperament

Learning the importance of ensemble intonation from working with the big meantone organs led Kjellson to design an organ that can be played at both 415 and 465 at either quarter comma or sixth comma meantone. The organ has a keyboard with twelve notes per octave but borrows the windchest idea from the enharmonic

Parker organ (ca. 1760) in the Edinburgh University instrument collection, whose windchest has a second layer of sliders. Each register in the new organ has three extra sliders operated by three stops to the left of the keyboard that allow the performer to re-program pairs of sharp keys in three different combinations.

Flexibility

The small chest organs in use by ensembles today have been designed primarily to be easily moved and retuned. One of the main goals of this project was to create a continuo resource that could also be transported, but still be as much like the church organs as possible. Many design decisions were taken to keep the weight of the instrument as light as possible, including cedar wood for the wooden pipes. The organ case can be easily lifted off of its base by four people and the case, the console, and the long movement action, packed in four transport cases.

The instrument will be featured in conference sessions, workshops, and solo and ensemble concerts during the Göteborg International Organ Festival October 11 – 20, 2019.

~ Joel Speerstra



TILMAN SKOWRONECK INTERVIEWS ULRIKA DAVIDSSON

Ulrika, you started your career on the modern piano. I remember you told me once about the influence of the Dutch pianist and pedagogue Willem Brons. Was it Brons' teaching that made you curious about historical soundscapes and instruments? What other influences were there?

During my undergraduate studies at the School of Music and Musicology at the University of Gothenburg, I was fortunate to have Elisif Lundén as my main teacher, an extraordinary musician and pedagogue. She made me aware of issues regarding style and performance practice in piano studies, and introduced me to the harpsichord and organ as related keyboard instruments.



Ulrika Davidsson
Photo by Sven Andersson

I already had an interest in early music since I studied recorder for several years as a teenager. I also regularly heard the harpsichordist Leif Grave-Müller, an excellent musician and teacher at the University, perform in town.

During this period, I chose organ as a secondary keyboard instrument for a semester. After only one lesson, I realized how different this instrument was and that it called for an entirely different keyboard technique. Soon I played music by composers I had never engaged with before: Buxtehude, Couperin, Sweelinck... It took a little while to get used to playing a wind instrument, and to use

articulation, “attack and release,” as the main means of musical expression.

In 1985-86, I spent one academic year in Amsterdam, studying at the Sweelinck Conservatory. Not so long before that, my husband Hans Davidsson and I had bought our first historic instrument, a copy of the Donat clavichord. It was his teacher, the late Jacques van Oortmerssen, who recommended Hans to study the clavichord in order to enhance his organ technique. Of course, I tried the instrument as well, but I have to admit, it didn't attract me and did not make much sense to me at the time. Later, I realized that this was a consequence of the instrument's behavior as it was a lightly-strung clavichord. During my time in Amsterdam, I went to many concerts with early music ensembles and became more and more interested in the early repertoire and its diversity of sounds and character.

My piano teacher in Amsterdam was, as you mentioned, Willem Brons; a phenomenal artist and teacher, and one of the rare concert pianists who held a sincere interest in historic keyboards. He was, and still is, a master of sound-control, and I believe this is what captivated him about historic keyboards: all the possibilities of various sounds you can create. Brons dared to go outside the Steinway bubble...he was a master of exploring each particular instrument in order to bring out its most interesting sounds, and certainly his performance at the historic keyboard festival Antwerpiano was a revelation for me.

At this festival I heard many fine performers; one that stood out was of course Jos van Immerseel. I had never heard such musicianship paired with the rich, transparent and expressive sounds of the fortepiano. I became convinced that I wanted to expand my musicianship with the two dynamically-responsive historical keyboard instruments, the fortepiano and clavichord.

Over the next few years, I gradually explored these instruments. In the 1990s, Joel Speerstra's work at GOArt gave me an excellent opportunity to delve into the world of the clavichord, both as a performer and pedagogue.

Harald Vogel, who was a frequent guest at the Göteborg International Organ Academy, and one of the most experienced clavichord performers in the world inspired me to continue with this instrument. I went on various courses with him, and visited the north German organ academy twice.

Since my Amsterdam years, I had admired Malcolm Bilson's fortepiano playing. I went to some of his masterclasses, and finally took lessons in Ithaca and later at the Eastman School of Music as part of my doctoral program with him. He certainly opened the doors to a new dimension of the Viennese school and its fortepiano culture.

Things moved quickly from there, and today you could be called the ultimate universal early keyboardist, with degrees for, and a performing career on, fortepiano, clavichord, organ and harpsichord. Being a harpsichordist myself, let me first ask you about your relationship to this instrument. With all the nuances of the clavichord and fortepiano at your fingertips, what does the harpsichord mean for you? What does it, in your experience, have to tell our day's audiences?

As much as I enjoyed hearing harpsichord performances and admired performers like Gustav Leonhardt or Ton Koopman and although I played the instrument in ensembles, it was not really until my doctoral studies at Eastman that I decided to seriously enter the musical world of this instrument as performer.

I was fortunate to have William Porter, an excellent organist and harpsichordist as my teacher, and later I taught secondary harpsichord at Eastman. The soundscape, touch, and technique of the harpsichord was so different from that of the clavichord and fortepiano that it was less natural for me to play this instrument, at least in solo performance. In Göteborg, the harpsichord culture and access to high quality instruments was very limited compared to Amsterdam, for example, and this also contributed to the fact that I did not explore the instrument as early as the others.

It was particularly the music of the French clavecinists, with its rich, idiomatic gestures and diverse character pieces that attracted me to become a harpsichordist. They took ultimate advantage of the sonorous qualities of the instrument and, accordingly, wrote music, which is foremost grounded in sound rather than, for example, counterpoint. A lot of the keyboard repertoire of the seventeenth and eighteenth century can successfully be played on several types of instruments, but the French repertoire is an exception. This music does not really work on any of the other historical keyboard instruments. Once I realized and experienced this in actual playing, I could also see the non-French repertoire in a new light, including Johann

Sebastian Bach's music.

The harpsichord, like the organ, is an instrument whose sound is foregrounded in any performance; you hear the sounds of the instrument more than the personality of the performer compared with the fortepiano and the clavichord. As a harpsichordist you enjoy the long-lasting tone, the resonance of the bass register, the shift of timbre and character of the various registers that results in clarity and transparency of the musical texture, and the distinct speech that allows for infinite possibilities of arpeggio and over-legato, essential and truly exciting to explore.

The staggering in the touch opens up an exploration of the experience of "the present" that is particular to the harpsichord. Both timing in general and particular timing of individual notes and figures through touch, as well as the release, requires a lot of attention on the harpsichord, and provides for expressive qualities that in clavichord and fortepiano playing can be achieved by dynamics. Some of the harpsichord-idiomatic arpeggio and overlegato techniques are also useful in clavichord and fortepiano performance, however to a lesser degree.

I remember a shared public clavichord masterclass with you and Joel Speerstra, and what struck me then was the ease with which you were able to present the clavichord as a suitable tool for teaching both musical expression and a good technical approach. What, to you, makes the clavichord especially suited for these tasks?

I have been teaching keyboard players for almost four decades. My experience is that the clavichord is the most profound and efficient tool to affect a player's technique and musical skills. One of my students once said, "the clavichord is merciless, it really gives you an X-ray of your technique," and I think that says a lot. A prerequisite here is that you use an instrument with a fairly high string tension, so that the touch resembles that of, for example, historic north German keyboard instruments, and in particular organs. If this is the case, it becomes very difficult to produce a good sound if you don't use your playing apparatus in an efficient and ergonomic way.

That means having a good posture to start with, to use your arms, hands and fingers in the most natural way, like we do for non-playing activities. Wrists should be level, knuckles should be active and not sink into the hand, all finger joints should be strong, to just mention a few of the particulars. If these things are not in place, the tangent will not press efficiently on the

strings, and you get a blocked tone, as the tangent most likely bounces several times against the strings. This immediate feedback you get from the instrument will tell if you do the right thing or not. All movements of the body come back in the sound.

As for the musical side, I find that if you don't engage musically, the instrument doesn't really project anything. There is no big sound to hide behind so to say. In fact, you hear the performer's musical "speech" and intention more than the sound of the instrument. Indeed, a good clavichord really shows the musical personality of the player. Therefore, it is quite revealing, and you just have to engage in the music. As another of my students said: "when you sit down at the clavichord it just requires you to be present, and musically engaged from the first to the last note. It is an instrument that requires the presence and performance in the power of now."

When you inaugurated the magnificent five-and-a-half octave clavichord at Gunnebo castle a few years ago, audibility was in fact not a problem for the listeners. This was in part due to the instrument, but also of your, the player's, poise, and the taken-for-grantedness with which you presented the clavichord. The clavichord has advanced from being a benevolently tolerated sensitive (or "empfindsam") box of keys and strings, to a recognizable public persona. How does one stage the clavichord to its full advantage? What attitudes benefit the clavichordist, what does she need to avoid?

The advantage of playing several types of keyboards is the constant adjustment you have to do to each instrument. So for any instrument to sound good, and that goes for the clavichord in particular, I find it important to find the limits of the instrument. When I try out a clavichord, I check how softly you can play, which in most cases is down to inaudible. Then I go in the other direction and see how loud I can go. If it is a good instrument a vast dynamic range is possible. Otherwise one should avoid playing louder than the instrument can take, i.e. going over the level where you can still play in tune, and where the instrument has a pleasant sound.

If you sit at an instrument with light string tension, you just have to respect that characteristic, and not try to force the sound level. Since the listeners adjust their hearing after a few minutes of clavichord music, the task and challenge for you as a player is to bring them into the dynamic range and level of the instrument in

question, and to stay within those boundaries. If you exceed the range of the instrument, the attention of the listener is drawn away from the music to what is perceived as deficiencies of the instrument, although the real problem may be an inflexible attitude of the performer... The new clavichord at Gunnebo, based on the late eighteenth-century Swedish tradition of large clavichords, has an unusually wide dynamic range and diverse touch characteristic which gives the performer a unique palette of musical expression.

I have noticed that some students, when they are new to the instrument, tend to be overcautious in their approach. The soft dynamic level might make you think the instrument is fragile. However, a well-built instrument allows for physically fully-engaged keyboard playing, like when you play fortepiano, organ, and in general also a modern Steinway, however you have to adjust the use and balance of your playing apparatus properly.

What qualities do you expect in a good clavichord, which properties would you rather not find in an instrument you encounter?

String tension is one of the most important parameters. I don't think I have ever encountered a lightly strung instrument that has a strong tone. So the tension is important for both musical and technical reasons. The narrower the dynamic range in the instrument, the less expressive potential it has, because the dynamic variation is after all the primary expressive factor in the clavichord

I feel very inspired when I can elicit various sounds out of an instrument depending on the touch, so as to be able to play both in a sweet and gentle manner, as well as with force and strong character. Some instruments don't respond much to a variation regarding touch, and that always feels like it cuts off the expressivity. This may have to do with the balance and resonance of the keys. It is amazing what a difference it makes when the keys are tuned for the sound development and for the variety of touch characteristics. Tuning stability is also a very important factor. It influences the player more than one would think and allows for a full focus on the performance.

Stephen Birkett from the University of Waterloo, Canada, has researched historical string materials and reconstructed eighteenth-century iron. I have used this material for several years, and it is much more stable

than many other string materials available on the market and also generates a full and rich tone.

It is important for the clavichordist to listen in to the instrument and explore. The first impression does not always give the right understanding. In fact, it is not always the instruments that are 'easy' to play that will offer more in terms of expressivity.

*At a competition I once remember being told that I should make more use of the typical "Empfindsam" effects in my clavichord playing, that is, the key vibrato called *Bebung* and the tone sustain or *Tragen der Töne*. Some clavichord recordings from that time display a readiness of performers to use these expressive devices, but with the disconcerting result that they actually go out of tune quite a bit. It seems that, with sturdier-strung clavichords available, all this has quite radically changed. What is your approach to these two techniques, in performance and in teaching?*

If you play any single-strung instrument, and there are still some around, you have to work really hard not to play a *Bebung* on every single note... Most students are thrilled when learning about this technique and want to explore it. For a keyboard player to be able to play a vibrato is indeed very liberating. But there's a time and place for everything. In the clavichord revival, *Bebung* was considered one of the main features of clavichord playing and was often overdone. However, John Barnes' research and hypothesis concerning string tension in north European historical clavichords, and Joel Speerstra's research in building and performance, have brought new perspectives. With higher tension the *Bebung* doesn't come by itself. In fact, you can use natural weight and force in playing without causing a vibrato, which can be experienced as liberating as well. You have to deliberately engage in making a *Bebung*, and approach this expression as an ornament. When teaching the pedal clavichord the *Bebung* can be one technique to use in order to get a good tone, that is, have a good key contact, and control the pressure on the strings. If it is not overdone, one could regard the *Bebung* as a natural way to keep the tone alive, just like an ornament in for example vocal practice. Singers in pop or jazz often start out with a straight tone, and then add the vibrato at the end. I find myself using *Bebung* more frequently now, than, say 15 years ago.

*Right now, you are performing and recording Bach's *Art of the Fugue* on a duo clavichord together with Joel Speerstra. I imagine*

that this project is absorbing, not only because of the possibility of playing together that this particular instrument offers (it seems like a clavichord-ish re-conception of Johann Andreas Stein's "Vis-à-Vis" piano-harpsichords), but also because of the challenges of this particular music. What are your experiences with playing rigorous counterpoint on a "sensitive" instrument? How does sharing this music with a co-performer influence your view on these pieces?

It has been quite an eye opener. All who have played the music as a solo piece know that it is very difficult, especially if the keyboard instrument is dynamically responsive. When we play on the duo clavichord we only have two voices to play each. That makes it technically possible to play and shape each voice individually and in an expressive manner. So performing this work on the duo-clavichord generates a possibility to render this rigorous contrapuntal masterpiece as a very expressive piece. It is fascinating to shape each line as a melodic voice and it results in a more transparent performance.

As for collaborative work, I have always found that inspiring. Any piece you do with someone else widens the view, and opens up a wider range of possibilities, both in the preparation and performance phases. We have, for example, had many discussions on affect, tempo, accentuation, and form that I do not think I would have engaged in without the process of performing the music as a duet. Ultimately, this instrument generates the possibility to approach what we perceive as solo repertoire in collaborative study and performance.

You have also made a brilliant recording of Haydn sonatas on the fortepiano. In comparison to the other instruments we have talked about, what is it that especially fascinates you about early pianos?

In the five-octave Viennese instruments I really appreciate the 'speaking' quality. When I first started working on such an instrument, the efficient damping made me discover all the rests in the music. The silence between the notes all of a sudden became an area for expressivity, and heightened the awareness of minute timing of the release.

In my youth I played timpani in a youth symphony orchestra. Playing the fast section of Beethoven's Pathétique, first movement, made me recall that, as I worked on the oscillating octaves in the left hand, which are so distinct on early instruments.

Harpsichord, clavichord, fortepiano: do you have favorite "corners" of the repertoire where you frequently like to hang out?

Haydn is a favorite on the fortepiano, as well as Beethoven. The Bach family and circle is more or less a daily "must" for me on clavichord as well as harpsichord. Among the earlier German masters, Froberger, Buxtehude, and Böhm are wonderful to perform on clavichord, harpsichord, and organ alike.

After your cooperation on the Art of the Fugue, what are you planning to do next?

I have been working with the Well-Tempered Clavier over many years and played it on all keyboard instruments, however the last year I have focused on performing it on clavichord. I plan to record the first book on the clavichord before the end of the year. Joel Speerstra and I have worked on Clavierübung IV and we are discussing to record the Goldberg variations on the duo-clavichord as well. I would like to play more of the Viennese concerto repertoire on fortepiano with orchestra, and continue my work with WTC book II. However, much of what I actually choose to play is inspired by the instruments I have access to. It is when the connection between instrument and music is strong that you get most inspired. The choice of repertoire for an early keyboardist is thus, to some extent, unpredictable and more of a dialogue than the pursuit of long-term dreams.

Thank you very much for this interview!

~ Tilman Skowroneck and Ulrika Davidsson



ON THE ROAD WITH BACH

Late this past March, a Dodge Grand Caravan pulled out of a driveway in Greensboro carrying a fine David Sutherland Cristofori-tradition replica fortepiano. Exactly one month later the van pulled back in, after crisscrossing the northeastern United States to bring Bach Partitas to the ears of fifteen audiences. A semester's research assignment (my university's term for sabbatical) had enabled me to unite the adventure of travel with the luxury of performing a favorite repertoire multiple times. To lead a nomadic existence, reuniting with good friends all along the way, while immersing one's mind, ears, and fingers in the miracle of Bach's keyboard genius: well, it doesn't get much better than this.



David Sutherland piano in the Florentine tradition.
Photo by Christopher Greenleaf

The first port of call, Philadelphia, saw the first of four house concerts that would take place during the



At the home of Ted & Patty Cheek
Photo by Andrew Willis

tour, this one at the home of Ted and Patty Cheek, who are true lovers of historical performance. If proof were needed, their music room boasts a gorgeous Jerome Prager Flemish double. After the Philadelphia gathering I headed north to Syracuse University, being warmly welcomed by faculty friends Ida Trebicka and Fred Karpoff and enjoying the marvelous playing of their students, one of whom boldly tried her hand at the Florentine piano. Fortuitously, right after my midday performance I was able to join Annie Laver, whose Syracuse Legacies Organ Conference (a Westfield event) was just getting underway, to attend a Westfield Board meeting by phone.

Next, it was down to New York City, where I spent a

weekend playing at two churches whose music director, Donald Barnum, is a chum from school days. Escaping the urban gridlock unscathed, I then dashed up the Taconic Parkway to Bard College, where Robert Martin, founding director of the Bard Conservatory, had invited me to hold forth. On an afternoon of high winds, the campus lost power in the middle of the recital, plunging the partitas into a very eighteenth-century gloaming. The next day I was treated to a tour of some of the college's historical pianos, memorably a lovely 1890s Erard.

Avondale, Rhode Island, the next base of operations, is the home of noted recording engineer Christopher Greenleaf, who provided the initial impetus for my odyssey by arranging a performance of the complete cycle of six partitas on two consecutive Saturdays at the La Grua Center in nearby Stonington, Connecticut. This visit was punctuated by a chilly but invigorating hike along Napatree Point beach preserve, where I happened



across an containing an pearl—the baroque. (It's of an inch in unmistakably

oyster shell actual misshapen very definition of barely an eighth diameter, but a pearl.) While in

the area I also performed on the Museum Concerts series in Providence and at the Mystic Arts Café, where I shared the bill with two poets.

In the interval between the two Stonington programs a change of climate took place, for I ventured to the White Mountain town of Gorham, New Hampshire, to perform at the Medallion Opera House under the auspices of Susan Ferré, the doyenne of early music in the Great North. Snow still lay on the ground, and it snowed again as soon as the piano was unloaded, leaving



Medallion Opera House, Gorham NH
Photo by Andrew Willis

the trusty van marooned halfway up my host's hillside driveway. Fortunately, the neighbors' driveway was negotiable, so we left the van at their house and they

delivered me to dinner in their snow-worthy vehicle. To my delight, the audience in Gorham included several children eager to try out the unfamiliar keyboard instrument, not to mention the police officer who had helped hoist the piano up to the stage and who may have been hearing a Bach recital for the first time.

After circling back to Stonington for the second concert at the La Grua Center, it was time to return to the Hudson Valley to enjoy the hospitality of Raymond and Carole Erickson in their spectacular converted church in Rhinecliff. I was delighted to discover that Philadelphians Joyce and Dave Lindorff were there for the occasion,



Park McCullough Carriage Barn,
N. Bennington, VT

something of a reunion, as Joyce has also played there. It was wonderful to see Maria Rose on this afternoon as well.

Heading into week four of the trip, I eased up to North Bennington, Vermont, where the affable Sandra Mangsen had arranged a concert at the venue where her Bennington Baroque ensemble performs, a generously proportioned nineteenth-century carriage barn. As everywhere, the hospitality was warm and the logistical assistance willing and able. (No forte pianos were harmed in the making of this tour.) Breakfasting with Sandra at the Blue Benn Diner the morning after the event, I blissed out over a homemade donut that was hands down the culinary high point of the entire month (no need to discuss the low point).

The rest of the week being unpropitious for concerts because of the approach of Easter, I spent a few days with a friend, the artist Barbara Trachtenberg, at her home in the Boston area. While there, I had the privilege of touring the instrument collection at the Museum of Fine Arts in the company of its gracious curator, Darcy Kuronen. The MFA's 1796 six-octave Broadwood is festooned with Wedgwood medallions and other luxurious appointments and is possibly the most lavishly decorated piano ever made as of that date. The ministrations of Tim Hamilton keep it in beautiful playing condition, and its wonderful sound remains imprinted in my memory.

The morning after Easter, I set course for the south, trekking to Williamsburg, Virginia, where my final performance took place in the Bruton Parish Church. Built in 1715, when Bach was in Weimar, it was infused with history and illuminated by candlelight, making it the most perfect setting imaginable in which to wrap up an incredible month with Bach on the road!

~ Andrew Willis



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