

Westfield

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

End of Winter 2023

Stephen Craig, Editor



Welcome to the winter 2023 issue of the Westfield Newsletter! The success of the Westfield conference at the Sigal Music Museum (Greenville, South Carolina) is detailed by the exemplary report by Bonny Miller.

The Westfield Center's inaugural Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion grant awards were given to Rebecca Cypess and Thomas Feng. Matthew Bengtson describes

the selection process on behalf of the DEI Committee. Thank you also, Matthew, for giving us a glimpse into happenings at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance with two festivals showcasing multiple early pianos and recent additions from the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments.

—*Stephen Craig*



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BETWEEN OLD WORLDS AND NEW: KEYBOARD ENCOUNTERS, c. 1700–1900

MARCH 9–11, 2023 AT THE SIGAL MUSIC MUSEUM

Amidst a panoply of historical instruments, the Sigal Music Museum (Greenville, South Carolina) provided the venue for keyboardists and scholars to encounter one another under the umbrella of the Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies. Papers, performances, and discussions explored Old and New World contact back and forth through the lens of keyboard instruments and musics (domestic, concert, liturgical, traditional) that reached across continents and centuries. The theme, “Between Old Worlds and New: Keyboard Encounters, c. 1700–1900,” embraced two-way exposure and influences between European nations and emerging states in North and South America, Africa, Australia, and the Indian sub-continent.



Sigal Music Museum, Greenville, South Carolina.
Photo: John Jacob.

More than a dozen keyboard instruments were stars, whose biographies in the conference brochure preceded those of presenters and performers. The lineup of keyboards selected and prepared for the conference included four harpsichords, a clavichord, a reed organ, four fortepianos, 1785–1815, the so-called “lying harp” *Tafelklavier*, and three pianos from the mid-nineteenth century—one square (1834 unichord) and two grand pianos (1845 and 1863). Also among the conference stars were the dedicated individuals who tuned instruments whenever needed, sometimes from hour to hour: Andrew Willis, Barbara Wolf, and Ken Walkup.

The Sigal Music Museum began as a covey of historical keyboard instruments collected and restored

by Dr. Thomas Strange, who established the Carolina Music Museum in 2016. His vision continues as artistic director and chief curator for the museum, which has grown to include hundreds of instruments in a significant cultural resource for the city, state, and Southeast. The Westfield Center event at the Sigal was coordinated by the indefatigable Andrew Willis of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. Additional longtime associates of the museum who contributed immeasurably to the event were John Watson, Matthew Bengtson, Elaine Funaro, and Thomas and Barbara Wolf.

Three afternoon and three evening recitals allowed for a lush survey of instruments and their repertoire. Innovative pairings of old and new (Jacquet de la Guerre/Zwiliich; Bach/Bartók) were a feature of Matthew Dirst’s program on the 1769 Taskin harpsichord. Well-known masterworks by Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin, and Brahms took on fresh aspects in imaginative and illuminating performances by Federico Ercoli, Mike Cheng-Yu Lee, Matthew Bengtson, Charlotte Tang, and Gabriel Merrill-Steskal on the Broadwood and Érard pianos. Elaine Funaro, Charles Metz, Matthew Bengtson, and Gabriel Merrill-Steskal presented some less familiar but very welcome repertoire (Galuppi, Marcello, Alberti, J. B. Cramer, Clementi, Beach, MacDowell, and Alkan) on the Florentine fortepiano (Cristofori-style instrument), 1805 Broadwood, 1845 Broadwood, and 1863 Érard, respectively.

The Thursday evening concert was a cultural tour de force of music connected to the Haitian song, “Lisette,” presented by bass-baritone Jean Bernard Cerin and keyboardist Nicholas Mathew. Haiti was squarely rooted in Enlightenment thinking, and its tradition of Black classical music is older than other Latin American countries. Cerin revealed the cultural significance of the original tune, likely the first song published in the Creole language, and its travels across the ocean to France and back again in new guises in collections of Louisiana folk songs and piano music by the Haitian composer Ludovic Lamothe (1882–1953).

The two conference keynote speakers, Nicholas Mathew and John Watson, each offered a soaring overview of times and places. A summary cannot do justice to the rich content of these lectures. In “Pianos in



Nicholas Mathew and Jean Bernard Cerin in recital.
Photo: John Jacob.

the Tropics,” Mathew considered the routes taken and roles enacted by pianos in tropical climes, from India to the Caribbean and New Orleans. A London fortepiano on the veranda imbued European culture and a sense of home in the midst of foreignness of colonial India, while playing piano on the terrace near the volcano of Guadeloupe signified Nature tamed. The eminently urban pianoforte soon resided far and wide amidst savage and remote venues, an emblem of colonial politics. Yet the materials of these civilizing pianos, gathered from various continents, were quickly absorbed back into nature by these tropical environments. A possible modern counterpoint to the “civilizing piano” was Ai Weiwei’s photograph of a white grand piano being played by a Syrian woman in a muddy refugee camp in Greece in 2016. Mathew asked, “did we need to see her playing the instrument to understand the humanity of these refugees?” Weiwei’s iconic image was used as a bookend to frame this keynote address.

John Watson surveyed the development of keyboard instrument making in the American colonies and young nation in his “Vignettes from the Beginnings of American Keyboard Culture.” He outlined two distinctive currents: English-made instruments imported to the Southern region for domestic use by women and daughters, and a distinctive German Saxon line of artisan carpenter/instrument makers working in Pennsylvania. Watson’s investigations and painstaking recreations of hybrid instruments from the colonies demonstrate the inventive thinking going on with adaptations from other instruments, including an upright dulcimer keyboard instrument and “organized pianos” with organ pipes and bellows filling the space below a square piano frame.

A panel on technology and maintenance of historical keyboards included input from instrument makers and technicians (Tom Strange, Anne Acker, John Watson, Ken Eschete, Ken Walkup, and Scott Hankins). The participants discussed their philosophies in approaching an instrument: whether to restore, repair, or build a reconstruction, while saving the original unchanged for the knowledge it holds. All materials change over time; thus, even a faithful replica may sound quite different than the original instrument sounds at its current age. Among the concerns was the lack of organized training or an apprentice path in historical keyboard instruments for students and piano technicians. Performers and devotees would also benefit from acquiring more hands-on knowledge, to be able to tune, change strings, and tinker with their harpsichords and fortepianos. Current academic programs were mentioned as well as online resources; however, builders and technicians often learn best practices from each other.



Panel on technology and maintenance of historical keyboards.
Photo: John Jacob.

Six sessions during the three-day conference contained a total of thirteen papers and lecture-recital presentations. Once again, the topics challenged notions about exposure and influences across time and space.

The opening session, “Uniquely American,” offered glimpses into three different kinds of musical experience during the nineteenth century. Artis Wodehouse brought her own Estey reed organ (1871) to perform excerpts by the eccentric immigrant composer Anthony Philip Heinrich (1781–1861). His rambling works bring together threads of American life in a texture that sometimes foreshadows the music of Charles Ives. As shown in Wodehouse’s selections, Heinrich embraced elements of African American music-making (banjo,

call and response) and Native American vocal ceremony (Huron/Iroquois festival of the dead). Heinrich's music is more often talked about than played, but Wodehouse made a convincing demonstration of how it can sound.

Anthony Bonamici brought the American unichord (1834) to life with performances of John Knowles Paine's lyrical collection of character pieces, *Ten Sketches for the Piano*, "In the Country," Op. 26 (1876). The single stringing of the Nunns & Clark square piano resulted in fewer tuning issues in Fairfield County, South Carolina, where the instrument escaped destruction by Sherman's troops in 1865 through Eliza Lyles's moving performance on it. Bonamici's persuasive playing demonstrated Paine's skill as a composer who combined an American voice with European training. Paine (1839–1906) achieved the position of cultural influencer in academia as the first professor of music at Harvard, after beginning as the college organist and choir director.

The American concerts of the European virtuoso Sigismund Thalberg (1812–1871) were exemplified in repertoire from his 1856/58 tours performed by Robin Morace. Thalberg's abiding interest in song artistry at the keyboard was evident in his concert arrangements of Beethoven's "Adelaide," Op. 70 no. 3, and Henry Bishop's "Home, Sweet, Home!," always a favorite with American audiences. The *Barcarolle*, Op. 60, represented the pianist-composer's original compositions. Thalberg's music is difficult to play even when it sounds easy, but Morace mastered the deception with elegance.

The modern-era history of harpsichords was addressed in two papers during a session on "The Twentieth-Century Early Music Revival." Christina Edelen painted the vivid personality and career of Sylvia Marlowe (1908–1981). Self-taught at the harpsichord, the Brooklyn native performed music from old and new, including boogie woogie, on the instrument, and commissioned more than thirty works for the harpsichord, either solo or chamber ensemble. Marlowe was unparalleled as an ambassador and advocate for the "harpsichord in the modern world." Edelen completed her engaging portrait with performances of two movements from the Sonata All'Antica (1946), commissioned by Marlowe from Vittorio Rieti (1898–1994).

Joyce Wei-Jo Chen illuminated the resurgence of interest in the harpsichord generated by DIY kits and the Zuckermann factory (originally in New York; now in Stonington, Connecticut). The popular kits spurred

widespread curiosity in the instrument and its music, and they offered an alternative to the artisanal keyboards built by leading makers like Dowd and Hubbard. The kits, initiated in 1960, were intended in part to lower the workload at the Zuckermann factory, where Chen recently worked as an intern. With simple lines, plywood construction, and natural finish, Zuckermann kits shared design aspects popularized by Ikea for its home products. The DIY kits no doubt democratized the harpsichord for a larger public, but many amateur builders did not extend their involvement to extensive playing or performance. Chen argues that the made-at-home keyboards functioned more broadly as a "pedagogical apparatus" to learn skills of carpentry and instrument making. In this sense, Z-box kits represent a "unique genre of musical instruments."

The session on "European Music in Africa and Australia" offered a pair of unique papers. Keyboard instruments traveled to areas of Africa and India as early as the sixteenth century, as delineated by Janie Cole in a virtual presentation Zoomed in from South Africa. Early modern ambassadors made use of harpsichords and/or clavichords from Portugal as diplomatic gifts to the Christian kingdom of Ethiopia c. 1520. Travelogues from the period suggest an Italian organ in the highlands of Ethiopia as early as the 1480s. The port of Goa was a point of triangulation between Portuguese colonizers and their regions of interest in India and Africa. Keyboard instruments were not prohibitively expensive, yet demonstrated technology, craftsmanship, and artistry. These gifts smoothed the way to trade and commerce, and thus could be political tools for the Portuguese at the same time they contributed to the Ethiopian ruler's image.



Janie Cole presenting virtually.
Photo: John Jacob.

The story of a Gilded-Age organ in Australia provided a canvas for Michael Koenig to weave aspects of the function(s) of large municipal organs, the biggest organ in the world at the time (American), the hegemony of British organ builders, and attitudes in the Australian colonies when the city of Sydney decided to commission a monumental organ (completed 1889) for the new town hall. Despite keen interest in the huge instrument built on Long Island by Hilborne Roosevelt (1883), the committee's choice for the contract went to the safe but conservative London maker, Hill & Son. Progressive technology from another "frontier" nation proved no match for colonial politics and protectionist trade policies. Few major American organs found a home in Australia before 1970.

Two presentations on "European Music in Latin America" posed unexpected evidence of musical activities in South America. A lecture-recital by Patricia García Gil outlined "cross-compilations" of music, instruments, and music instruction entering South America from Spain and Portugal during the eighteenth century. Gil traced the presence of works by Scarlatti and Soler in personal music anthologies in the Americas. These compilations belonged to women of some middling social status (Maria Antonia Palacios, probably a Chilean slave; and Maria Guadalupe Mayner, a Mexican woman whose origin and status are unknown). The music in these collections included pedagogical material and compositions by Haydn as well as Spanish and Latin American composers. Cultural transfer between Iberia and South America was by no means limited to Christian liturgical music. The compilations demonstrate the spread of music instruction, availability of fortepianos, and domestic music making in South America before 1800.

Even earlier in South America, as Marcos Krieger's paper illuminated, Jesuit priests and missionaries fostered music through instruments, instrument making, and repertoire. Not just organs, but clavichords and harpsichords, came from Europe and became seeds for regional music culture and instrument making in Bolivia, Uruguay, and southern Brazil. Instruments and music manuscripts have been preserved in part by their presence in the so-called Jesuit reductions, secure areas where native groups lived and received European indoctrination. Krieger described a musical environment that went beyond liturgical contexts, as seen in the Bolivian manuscript, "Sones mo organo" (c. 1746). The musical examples from this manuscript



Patricia García Gil in lecture recital
Photo: John Jacob.

were composed by Domenico Zipoli (1688–1726) and Martin Schmid (Swiss Jesuit priest; dates unknown).

In the session devoted to "Domestic Music in the United States," Joyce Lindorff was unfortunately unable to attend the conference or present her paper on the Washington harpsichord and the music books of Eleanor Parke Custis.

Bonny H. Miller presented an overview of the evolution of pianism in the works of composer Augusta Browne (c. 1820–1882), tying this development to the evolution of the piano itself and to the continuing trend towards bravura virtuosity in the nineteenth century. Miller's presentation sketched a portrait of an industriously entrepreneurial composer of the nineteenth century. From variation sets, Browne branched out into operatic fantasies, "bouquets" of national tunes, dances, and programmatic character pieces. Of significant interest was an unpublished piece dedicated to Franz Liszt, *Aurora, Romance (on original Melodies)*, Op. 200, that incorporated bravura touches in Lisztian style.

Stephanie Schmidt began her presentation on Bayard Rustin with the Elizabethan song *Gather Ye Rosebuds While Ye May*, which she performed on the c. 1790 "Liegende Harfe" clavier that once belonged to Rustin. The ethereal sound of the small, undamped *Tafelklavier* and Schmidt's refined playing of it created an intimate tone. Widely known for his activist role in the civil rights and gay rights movements, Rustin was an accomplished singer who recorded several albums that informed Schmidt's repertoire selections. She transitioned seamlessly between seventeenth-century Elizabethan song and twentieth-century spiritual, both

sounding equally at home in the haunting soundscape of the “Liegende Harfe.”

“The Cosmopolitan Virtuoso in America” was the theme for two papers that highlighted American pianists. Duets by Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829–1869), performed by the Duo Amadeae, brought the vivid sounds of Creole and Cuban rhythms to the stately Érard piano. Esther Park and Sun-A Park play as if they were identical twins, even if they are siblings years apart. Their performance combined pinpoint ensemble with verve and color. The selections highlighted assimilation of Old and New World cultures in Gottschalk’s publications, with European waltzes and polkas next to Caribbean-infused songs and dances.



Duo Amadeae in lecture recital.
Photo: John Jacob.

Interwoven connections link three large musical personalities of the Americas: Gottschalk, Teresa Carreño (1853–1917), and Edward MacDowell (1860–1908). Paul Bertagnolli uncovered and traced a formative “chain of close mentorships” between these three famous composer-pianists. Carreño performed Gottschalk’s music and interacted with the composer when she was a youngster. MacDowell was something of a protégé of Carreño’s as a teenager. Carreño remained a staunch advocate and frequent performer of his works. Gottschalk’s piano duet arrangement of Rossini’s overture to *Guillaume Tell* was a piece of sheet music owned by the young MacDowell. Carreño had played the work with Gottschalk and possibly played it



Saturday evening recital.
Photo: John Jacob.

again years later with “Eddie” MacDowell when she encouraged him to sightread and practice more. This artifact joins the three musicians in a “cosmopolitan nexus” of Old and New Worlds.

The conference culminated on Saturday evening, as seven pianists changed musical chairs in a playful program of duos and duets performed on pianos from 1784 to 1863. Genres of sonata, variations, rondo, romance, and character pieces included music by J. C. F. Bach, Mozart, von Weber, Moscheles, Bizet, Beach, Rachmaninoff, and Chopin. Andrew Willis appeared early and often, along with Stephanie Schmidt, Robin Morace, Patricia García Gil, Lin Lao, Gabriel Merrill-Steskal, and Matthew Bengtson.

The exhilarating encounters between performers, instrument builders, and scholars left the participants deeply grateful to the organizers from the Westfield Center and the executants at the Sigal Music Museum. It would be remiss to fail to recognize the mathematical planning and precision that resulted in so many different instruments being moved, placed, and prepared for each conference session. Tom Strange was the mastermind who worked out the logistics behind this critical aspect of the conference strategy. Many thanks to Tom and Andrew Willis for making this event such a robust success.

—Bonny Miller



In this academic year, the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance presented two festivals with multiple early pianos. These two events featured both the thriving early piano program and some recent additions to the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments, which is the largest such collection affiliated with any major university. The three pianos were an original 7-octave 1866 Érard piano and an original 5.5-octave 1808 Broadwood piano, which belong to the Stearns Collection, and a 1790s 5-octave Walter-type fortepiano by Paul McNulty, owned by the Piano Department.

The first festival, held on the weekend of September 17–18, 2022, consisted of three events. On Saturday afternoon, the Stearns Collection hosted an informal “Piano Petting Zoo,” where any interested members of the community could try out the Broadwood and the Érard. Participants varied widely by both age and playing level from young children to UM students to professional pianists. All emerged with memorable playing and listening experiences. That evening, I gave a concert featuring these two pianos, performing selections by Clementi and Beethoven on the Broadwood and Brahms, Liszt, and Chopin on the Érard. On Sunday afternoon, the McNulty fortepiano joined the Broadwood and Érard on the stage, and our DMA students Angie Zhang and Gabe Merrill-Steskal joined me in dialogue with Joseph Gascho, Director of the Stearns Collection, for the Virginia Martin Howard Lecture, which consisted of short demonstrations of these three instruments followed by conversation with and questions from the live audience.

The second festival was held from February 18–20, 2023, consisting also of three programs. Saturday evening’s concert featured the Érard in a program of solo and four-hand French music by Alkan, Fauré, Debussy, and Ravel—all ideal repertoire for that piano—as played by

seven of our MM and DMA Piano students. Sunday afternoon featured DMA student Hyerim Lee in a recital of Mozart’s Sonata K. 570 on the McNulty and Chopin’s complete Études Op. 25 on the Érard. Monday evening wrapped up the festival with a program of six faculty from the Piano Department (Amy I-Lin Cheng, Christopher Harding, Logan Skelton, Arthur Greene, John Ellis, and myself), with tenor Spencer VanDellen, in a mixed solo and four-hands program on the McNulty and the Érard, in music of Mozart, Chaminade, Brahms, Dvořák, Chopin, and Schumann.



Muse Ye, Antona Yost (standing), Nhi Luong, Ji-Hyang Gwak, Gabe Merrill-Steskal, Yumiao Mai, and Hyerim Lee.

The Érard piano came to the university through Anne Acker from the pianogrands.com collection thanks to a generous donation by Charles Metz. A selection of video recordings made on this piano will shortly be available on the SMTD YouTube channel. The Broadwood piano is part of the Charles West Wilson collection—now hosted by Stearns—which also includes numerous bent-side spinets of different eras and grand harpsichords by Kirkman and Shudi. The two early pianos were each acquired in 2021. All events were live streamed.

—Matthew Bengtson

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of Musical Instruments

18th & 19th Century
Piano Series

Three performances featuring
an original 1866 Érard piano
and a modern copy of
a 1790s Walter piano

Britton Recital Hall
The Moore Building

Solo and Chamber Showcase
Sat., Feb. 18 at 8pm
Works of Alkan, Debussy, Fauré & Ravel
Performed by Ji-Hyang Gwak, Hyerim Lee, Nhi Luong,
Yumiao Mai, Gabriel Merrill-Steskal, Muse Ye, & Antona Yost

Hyerim Lee
Sun., Feb. 19 at 2pm
Mozart: Sonata in B-flat major, K. 570
Chopin: Études, Op. 25

Piano & Voice Faculty Recital
Mon., Feb. 20 at 7:30pm
Works of Brahms, Chaminade, Chopin,
Dvořák, Mozart & Schumann
Performed by pianists Matthew Bengtson,
Amy I-Lin Cheng, John Ellis, Arthur Greene,
Christopher Harding & Logan Skelton,
with tenor Spencer VanDellen

NEW FROM THE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

The Westfield Center's inaugural DEI grant awards were split between two applicants, Rebecca Cypess and Thomas Feng. Cypess will be commissioning a new song cycle for voice and English square piano by African American composer Trevor Weston (b. 1967) based on texts by the Black British writer and composer Ignatius Sancho (ca. 1729–1780). Cypess is currently Associate Professor of Music at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. Feng will be digitizing a collection of historical analog recordings by Ethiopian composer, pianist, and nun Emahoy Tsege-Mariam Gebru. These digitized recordings will support Feng's dissertation research at Cornell University, where he is currently a candidate for the DMA in Performance Practice (Keyboard Studies).

The grant selection process was highly competitive, and the DEI Committee wishes to commend the numerous applicants who submitted some very enticing proposals, revealing a wide range of fascinating musical projects in relatively uncharted waters. The Board and the Committee would welcome a financial donation so as to offer more generous support to other such projects in future years. Donations to the Westfield Center submitted [via the website](#) can be earmarked DEI with this purpose in mind.

Westfield members interested in DEI-related topics can browse a wide selection of videos from the Westfield-University of Michigan "Diversity and Belonging" conference on [Westfield's YouTube page](#).

—Matthew Bengtson, for the DEI Committee



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Please consider making a donation towards our program of conferences, festivals, publications,
and the support of young keyboard artists.

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