

Chapter 1 : Harpsichord - Wikipedia

The harpsichord was largely obsolete, and seldom played, during a period lasting from the late 18th century to the early 20th. The instrument was successfully revived during the 20th century, first in an ahistorical form strongly influenced by the piano, then with historically more faithful instruments.

The sound of the wing-shaped harpsichord and its smaller rectangular, triangular, or polygonal relatives, the spinet and virginal, is produced by plucking their strings. The plucking mechanism, called a jack, rests on the key and consists of a

A brief treatment of harpsichords follows. For full treatment, see keyboard instrument: Generally, the harpsichord has two or more sets of strings, each of which produces different tone qualities. One set may sound an octave higher than the others and is called a 4-foot register, whereas a set of strings at normal pitch is called an 8-foot register. In some 20th-century harpsichords, a foot register, sounding an octave lower, is added, but this addition was extremely rare in old harpsichords. Two sets of 8-foot strings may produce distinct tone quality because they are plucked at different points or with plectra of different material. The tone of the harpsichord is amplified by a soundboard placed beneath the horizontal plane of the strings, which pass over a bridge that is glued to the soundboard and that transmits their vibration to it. The plucking mechanism consists of sets of jacks, thin vertical strips of wood that rest on the far ends of the keys and pass through a lower fixed guide and an upper slide, or movable guide; the slide moves a given set of jacks either slightly toward or slightly away from its set of strings, depending on whether that set is to be used or unused. A pivoted tongue at the top of each jack is pierced in its upper half to take a plectrum of quill or leather and is held upright by a spring of wire or bristle. A cloth or felt damper completes the jack; this quiets the string when the key is released and the plectrum falls beneath the string. The earliest surviving harpsichords were built in Italy in the early 16th century. Little is known of the early history of the harpsichord, but, during the 16th–18th century, it underwent considerable evolution and became one of the most important European instruments. National schools of construction arose, notably in Italy, Flanders, France, England, and Germany; and highly decorated cases with painted lids became fashionable. Most of the great Baroque composers played or wrote for the harpsichord. By the middle of the 18th century the harpsichord had grown to a normal compass of five full octaves, three or more sets of strings and jacks, and often two keyboards. The harpsichord is incapable of this dynamic gradation and was overwhelmed in popularity by the piano. The harpsichord was revived in the late 19th century, and it continues to evolve—but not necessarily to improve—in the hands of modern builders and composers. See also clavictherium ; spinet ; virginal. Learn More in these related Britannica articles:

Chapter 2 : Reviving the modern harpsichord - SOUNDINGS Music at Southampton SOUNDINGS Music a

The modern harpsichord;: Twentieth century instruments and their makers [Wolfgang Zuckermann] on racedaydvl.com
**FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. This is the first book on the harpsichord of the twentieth century, covering all known makes since the revival began about fifty years ago.*

The player depresses a key that rocks over a pivot in the middle of its length. The other end of the key lifts a jack a long strip of wood that holds a small plectrum a wedge-shaped piece of quill , often made of plastic today , which plucks the string. When the player releases the key, the far end returns to its rest position, and the jack falls back; the plectrum, mounted on a tongue that can swivel backwards away from the string, passes the string without plucking it again. These basic principles are explained in detail below. The jack is a thin, rectangular piece of wood that sits upright on the end of the keylever. The jacks are held in place by the registers. These are two long strips of wood the upper movable, the lower fixed , which run in the gap between pinblock and bellyrail. The registers have rectangular mortises holes through which the jacks pass as they can move up and down. The registers hold the jacks in the precise location needed to pluck the string. Upper part of a jack In the jack, a plectrum juts out almost horizontally normally the plectrum is angled upwards a tiny amount and passes just under the string. Historically, plectra were made of bird quill or leather; many modern harpsichords have plastic delrin or celcon plectra. When the front of the key is pressed, the back of the key rises, the jack is lifted, and the plectrum plucks the string. The vertical motion of the jack is then stopped by the jackrail also called the upper rail , which is covered with soft felt to muffle the impact. This is made possible by having the plectrum held in a tongue attached with a pivot and a spring to the body of the jack. The bottom surface of the plectrum is cut at a slant; thus when the descending plectrum touches the string from above, the angled lower surface provides enough force to push the tongue backward. A decorative rose descends below the soundboard in which it is mounted; the soundboard itself is adorned with floral painting around the rose. The bridge is at lower right. Each string is wound around a tuning pin, normally at the end of the string closer to the player. When rotated with a wrench or tuning hammer, the tuning pin adjusts the tension so that the string sounds the correct pitch. Tuning pins are held tightly in holes drilled in the pinblock or wrestplank, an oblong hardwood plank. Proceeding from the tuning pin, a string next passes over the nut, a sharp edge that is made of hardwood and is normally attached to the wrestplank. The section of the string beyond the nut forms its vibrating length, which is plucked and creates sound. At the other end of its vibrating length, the string passes over the bridge , another sharp edge made of hardwood. As with the nut, the horizontal position of the string along the bridge is determined by a vertical metal pin inserted into the bridge, against which the string rests. The bridge itself rests on a soundboard , a thin panel of wood usually made of spruce , fir or cypress in some Italian harpsichords. The soundboard efficiently transduces the vibrations of the strings into vibrations in the air; without a soundboard, the strings would produce only a very feeble sound. A string is attached at its far end by a loop to a hitchpin that secures it to the case. Multiple choirs of strings[edit] While many harpsichords have one string per note, more elaborate harpsichords can have two or more strings for each note. When there are multiple strings for each note, these additional strings are called "choirs" of strings. This provides two advantages: Volume is increased when the mechanism of the instrument is set up by the player see below so that the press of a single key plucks more than one string. Tonal quality can be varied in two ways. First, different choirs of strings can be designed to have distinct tonal qualities, usually by having one set of strings plucked closer to the nut, which emphasizes the higher harmonics , and produces a "nasal" sound quality. The mechanism of the instrument, called "stops" following the use of the term in pipe organs permits the player to select one choir or the other. Second, having one key pluck two strings at once changes not just volume but also tonal quality; for instance, when two strings tuned to the same pitch are plucked simultaneously, the note is not just louder but also richer and more complex. A particularly vivid effect is obtained when the strings plucked simultaneously are an octave apart. This is normally heard by the ear not as two pitches but as one: When describing a harpsichord it is customary to specify its choirs of strings, often called its disposition. Strings at eight foot pitch sound at the normal expected pitch, strings at

four foot pitch sound an octave higher. Harpsichords occasionally include a sixteen-foot choir one octave lower than eight-foot or a two-foot choir two octaves higher; quite rare. When there are multiple choirs of strings, the player is often able to control which choirs sound. This is usually done by having a set of jacks for each choir, and a mechanism for "turning off" each set, often by moving the upper register through which the jacks slide sideways a short distance, so that their plectra miss the strings. In simpler instruments this is done by manually moving the registers, but as the harpsichord evolved, builders invented levers, knee levers and pedal mechanisms to make it easier to change registration. Harpsichords with more than one keyboard this usually means two keyboards, stacked one on top of the other in a step-wise fashion, as with pipe organs [2] provide flexibility in selecting which strings play, since each manual can be set to control the plucking of a different set of strings. In addition, such harpsichords often have a mechanism the "coupler" that couples manuals together, so that a single manual plays both sets of strings. The most flexible system is the French "shove coupler", in which the lower manual slides forward and backward. Depending on choice of keyboard and coupler position, the player can select any of the sets of jacks labeled in figure 4 as A, or B and C, or all three. The depressed upper key lifts the jack A upwards. The depressed lower key lifts jacks B and C. The upper keyboard is coupled to the lower one by pulling the latter. The depressed lower key lifts jacks A, B and C. The English "dogleg" jack system also used in Baroque Flanders does not require a coupler. The jacks labeled A in Figure 5 have a "dogleg" shape that permits either keyboard to play A. A lute stop is used to imitate the gentle sound of a plucked lute. Dogleg jack, English coupler system. When depressed, the upper key lifts the "dogleg" jack jack A upwards. The lower key lifts all three jacks A, B, and C. The use of multiple manuals in a harpsichord was not originally provided for the flexibility in choosing which strings would sound, but rather for transposition of the instrument to play in different keys see History of the harpsichord.

Case[edit] The case holds in position all of the important structural members: It usually includes a solid bottom, and also internal bracing to maintain its form without warping under the tension of the strings. Cases vary greatly in weight and sturdiness: Italian harpsichords are often of light construction; heavier construction is found in the later Flemish instruments and those derived from them. A false inner case begins to the right of the keyboard, and continues backward only far enough to provide a slot to support the jack rail. The case also gives the harpsichord its external appearance and protects the instrument. A large harpsichord is, in a sense, a piece of furniture, as it stands alone on legs and may be styled in the manner of other furniture of its place and period. Early Italian instruments, on the other hand, were so light in construction that they were treated rather like a violin: Many harpsichords have a lid that can be raised, a cover for the keyboard, and a stand for music. Harpsichords have been decorated in a great many different ways: More often, though, it specifically denotes a grand-piano-shaped instrument with a roughly triangular case accommodating long bass strings at the left and short treble strings at the right. The characteristic profile of such a harpsichord is more elongated than a modern piano, with a sharper curve than the bent side. Virginals The virginal is a smaller and simpler rectangular form of the harpsichord having only one string per note; the strings run parallel to the keyboard, which is on the long side of the case. Spinet A spinet is a harpsichord with the strings set at an angle usually about 30 degrees to the keyboard. The strings are too close together for the jacks to fit between them. Instead, the strings are arranged in pairs, and the jacks are in the larger gaps between the pairs. The two jacks in each gap face in opposite directions, and each plucks a string adjacent to the gap. The English diarist Samuel Pepys mentions his "tryangle" several times. This was not the percussion instrument that we call triangle today; rather, it was a name for octave-pitched spinets, which were triangular in shape. Clavicytherium A clavicytherium is a harpsichord with the soundboard and strings mounted vertically facing the player, the same space-saving principle as an upright piano. An ottavino built by Arnold Dolmetsch in , and modeled after a instrument by Joannes Carcassi Ottavino[edit] Ottavini are small spinets or virginals at four-foot pitch. Harpsichords at octave pitch were more common in the early Renaissance, but lessened in popularity later on. However, the ottavino remained very popular as a domestic instrument in Italy until the 19th century. The ottavino could be removed and placed on top of the virginal, making, in effect, a double manual instrument. More common were instruments with split sharps , also designed to accommodate the tuning systems of the time. The folding

harpsichord was an instrument that could be folded up for travel. Occasionally, harpsichords were built which included another set or sets of strings underneath and operated by pedals which pluck the lowest keys of the harpsichord. Although there are no known extant pedal harpsichords from the 18th century or before, from Adlung The jacks are similar, but they will benefit from being arranged back to back, since the two [bass] octaves take as much space as four in an ordinary harpsichord [12] Prior to when Keith Hill introduced his design for a pedal harpsichord, most pedal harpsichords were built based on the designs of extant pedal pianos from the 19th century, in which the instrument is as wide as the pedalboard. However, the set of pedals can augment the sound from any piece performed on the instrument, as demonstrated on several albums by E. The largest harpsichords have a range of just over five octaves , and the smallest have under four. Usually, the shortest keyboards were given extended range in the bass with a " short octave ". If a tuning other than equal temperament is used, the instrument requires retuning once the keyboard is shifted.

Chapter 3 : A History of the Harpsichord

The harpsichord sounds, to most ears, as an instrument exclusively related to music from the Baroque period. Spanish and Latin American composers from the 20th century, however, have written many pieces dedicated to the venerable instrument.

Pinterest What is it? Chiefly associated with renaissance and baroque music, Bach remains arguably the master composer of the harpsichord. In the s, the harpsichord had something of a resurgence in "baroque pop" , thanks to experiments in instrumentation by the likes of the Beatles , the Rolling Stones and the Left Banke. A second pop resurgence for the harpsichord occurred, weirdly, in hip-hop, sampled in productions for Eminem , Cypress Hill , Outkast and others. How does it work? Pressing a key causes a plectrum to pluck and then "dampen" one or more strings. Where does it come from? Hard to trace its exact origins, although the earliest historical reference is in , for an instrument called the clavicembalum , invented by one Hermann Poll. Why is it classic? The strings are mechanically plucked and then muted, making the sound brittle, rattling and clipped, with no variation in dynamics, that makes the harpsichord sound more "formal" and precise than the more sonorous, romantic and ponderous piano. Five facts and things The name harpsichord is actually an umbrella term for different instruments that evolved separately in Belgium, France, Germany, England and Italy over the centuries, and which are now referred to variously as virginals , spinet , clavictherium , ottavino and archicembalo. The defining differences involve a number of strings and keyboards, length and therefore pitch of strings, as well as general shape and aesthetics. The renaissance yielded some eye-wateringly beautiful and ornate harpsichord designs, but the modern age has brought us something even more lovely: Misintepretations Corner, entry no. Speeding the tape up solved the problem, and resulted in the harpsichordy tone. Want to create your own harpsichord hip-hop? There are royalty-free samples here. Why do some harpsichords have two keyboards? The two keyboards, or "manuals", control different sets of strings. In some designs, the second manual might control strings tuned a fourth four notes down from the main keyboard. This allows the harpsichordist to switch to a lower register when required, which frees up the higher registers for a vocal accompaniment.

Chapter 4 : The modern history of a Franco-Flemish harpsichord

Think the harpsichord is an inherently limited instrument, too quiet, too inexpressive, too inferior to a modern piano? That, he argues, implies asking the wrong question to begin with.

Later given a treble ravalement in by Jacques Barberini and Nicolas Hoffmann. Details of the modern history of this instrument The modern history of the Franco-Flemish harpsichord The oldest known record of this harpsichord comes from the first edition of The Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Ed. George Grove Macmillan Pub. The entry outlined with a heavy line refers to this instrument which is also referred to in subsequent editions of The Dictionary of Music and Musicians as belonging to M. A scan of the entry from Boalch is given below: Dolmetsch then sold it on to Mrs. She and her husband were also personal friends of Arnold Dolmetsch and they were members of the Dolmetsch inner circle. This is the same instrument as that listed in my book Ruckers. The entry in my book which I wrote before ever seeing the instrument! A large double-manual instrument. Photographs of this instrument in the Russell Collection Edinburgh, show it to be a beautifully-decorated harpsichord, probably of French origin. It has a compass of F1 to f3, painted decorations in the style of Boucher, and a gilt stand in the style of Louis XV. The width of the tail is too great for it to have been a Ruckers instrument. This photograph is shown below. The front and rear of the photograph of the Franco-Flemish harpsichord in the Russell Collection, Edinburgh. The date of the photograph is unknown. This is clearly the same instrument as that under study here. It has the same stand, lid decoration, case decoration and keywell decoration as the Franco-Flemish harpsichord. The inscriptions on the back of the photograph are intriguing. The top left-hand inscription seems to be the number of the negative from the photographic studio that originally printed the photograph. This seems to indicate that this photograph once belonged to Russell and that it was part of his own large archive of photographs of early keyboard instruments. Sydney Newman who was a member of the Faculty of Music at the University of Edinburgh and who was instrumental in the foundation of the Russell Collection of Early Keyboard instruments there. The date of this photograph is not known. However, it is likely that it was taken during the early period when it was in England about or it was taken slightly later when it arrived in San Simeon Castle built by Hearst in California see the section below. Click here to see an image of the double-manual harpsichord by Louis Tomasini, , in the Berlin Musikinstrumentenmuseum Not mentioned in any of the references above is any connection with Louis Tomasini April 11, - August 31, However, additions to the decoration on the Franco-Flemish harpsichord are clearly in the same hand as that of the decorator of the Tomasini double-manual harpsichord in the Musikinstrumentenmuseum in Berlin above. One of the unusual features of the Tomasini harpsichord seen in the link above is that the bridges are painted in gold paint or bronze powder. The Franco-Flemish harpsichord also has this unusual feature. It seems likely that this fascination arose because one of his forefathers was a renowned keyboard builder - none other than Pascal Taskin the court harpsichord builder to Louis XV and Louis XVI. The instrument was none other than the Pascal Taskin double-manual harpsichord now in the Russell Collection at the University of Edinburgh, and one of the most famous and certainly the most copied harpsichord in the world! A branded stamp on the wrestplank of the Russell Collection Taskin harpsichord bears the inscription: This is probably therefore the earliest example of historical keyboard restoration in modern times! In the period around and the Exposition Universelle in Paris there was an amazing revival of interest in early music and in its performance. In parallel with this there was a sudden flourish among instrument makers in the production of early keyboard instruments. It would almost certainly have been among the antique and modern harpsichord exhibited and played then. To replace the main voice of a harpsichord with the sound of a peau de buffle register clearly means that Tomasini saw the role of the peau de buffle as an individual solo stop. So where did Tomasini get the sound and idea of changing the rear, lower-manual quill register to a peau de buffle register from? It is not in the list of Tomasini restorations because it has only just been discovered recently by me to have been restored by Tomasini. I now feel fairly certain that the idea of the peau de buffle register actually came to Tomasini from this Franco-Flemish harpsichord which was equipped with this feature. I know of no other harpsichord restored by Tomasini that

originally had a peau de buffle register. In some ways, therefore Emile-Alexandre Taskin, great grandson of the famous harpsichord builder Pascal Taskin, can be seen as the ultimate inspiration for the modern harpsichord revival!! Tomasini, as the restorer of the Taskin harpsichord in and of this Franco-Flemish harpsichord around the time of the Exposition Universelle also takes his place in the Hall of Fame as the first person in modern times to restore an antique harpsichord. He is also among the first to build a copy of an original antique harpsichord that is accurate at least in its overall appearance! The Franco-Flemish harpsichord is also therefore one of the first harpsichords to be restored during the modern era. Hence he was not in Paris until the period to , and it seems likely therefore that it was in this period that he would have bought the Franco-Flemish harpsichord. He added numerous stiflebars underneath both bridges below the soundboard, and the soundboard was also coated in a thick layer of oily brown varnish. It is therefore likely that the author of soundboard painting on the Franco-Flemish harpsichord is Mabel Dolmetsch. After receiving a good education the younger Hearst took control of the struggling San Francisco Examiner, a newspaper which the elder Hearst had bought in William Randolph remade the Examiner, and later a number of New York papers, into a blend of reformist investigative journalism and lurid sensationalism. By Hearst had established or acquired newspapers in every section of the United States. These newspapers soon attained an unprecedented circulation and earned Hearst an immense fortune. In the s he built a grandiose castle on a ,acre ranch at San Simeon, California, and he furnished this residential complex with a vast collection of antiques and art objects that he had bought in Europe. At the peak of his fortune in he owned 28 major newspapers and 18 magazines, along with several radio stations, movie companies, and news services. In he was forced to begin selling off some of his art collection, and by he had lost personal control of the vast communications empire that he had built up. He lived the last years of his life in virtual seclusion and died on August 14, It is not clear who then bought the instrument from Hearst nor how it found its way to Argentina. The owner then next saw the instrument at a house-warming party of Mrs. The Gambarottas supplied the mattresses for a new hotel Mrs. Gambarotta was running in Bariloche. The harpsichord had been given to Mrs. Gambarotta by General Pistarini [3] during the Peron era [4]. What remained of her estate including the harpsichord was sold to pay off her debts. They saw it in the shop of a French antique dealer in Buenos Aires who asked at great deal of money for it. However, the dealer eventually wanted to return to Europe and contacted the former owners before leaving. The dealer asked if the former owners were still interested in the purchase of the instrument. They replied that they were, but that the price was too high. The dealer suggested that the former owner offer an acceptable price and the sale was agreed at the price offered. When the harpsichord was first bought by the former owners from the antique dealer in Buenos Aires, it was unplayable. So the owners decided to have it restored. De Regina agreed to restore the instrument and took about 8 months to complete the work. He also replaced the wrestplank and nuts and changed the string scalings and plucking points in the process. He worked on the action and jacks, re-strung it and re-voiced it. It seems highly probable that he also lost the namebatten since it is clearly visible in the photograph shown above taken before the harpsichord went to South America. Eventually these owners decided to sell the instrument and it was sent to me to examine, measure, analyse and, eventually, to restore. Since then it has been the object of intensive investigation and study. During this period it has been kept in a humidified room in darkened conditions. The investigations and the restoration have continued here in Edinburgh. This report, among others, has been the result of these investigations. Some of the former owners of the Franco-Flemish harpsichord.

Chapter 5 : Harpsichords for Sale - Robert Morley & Co

Details of the modern history of this instrument The modern history of the Franco-Flemish harpsichord The oldest known record of this harpsichord comes from the first edition of The Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Ed.

Chapter 6 : Modern Harpsichord Music: A Discography - Greenwood - ABC-CLIO

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fields of interest or study. The specific requirements or preferences of your reviewing publisher, classroom teacher, institution or organization should be applied.

Chapter 7 : Harpsichord | musical instrument | racedaydvl.com

Don Angle plays: 1. House of the Rising Sun 2. Take 5 3. Because (Beatles).

Chapter 8 : Hey, what's that sound: Harpsichord | Music | The Guardian

A harpsichord is a musical instrument played by means of a keyboard which activates a row of levers that in turn trigger a mechanism that plucks one or more strings with a small plectrum.

Chapter 9 : Contemporary harpsichord - Wikipedia

In modern usage, "harpsichord" can mean any member of the family of instruments. More often, though, it specifically denotes a grand-piano -shaped instrument with a roughly triangular case accommodating long bass strings at the left and short treble strings at the right.