

Abstracts of Articles in GSJ Volume LXVII (March 2014)

Heterochord Board and Strip Zithers in the Cordillera, Northern Philippines: FREDELIZA CAMPOS & ROGER BLENCH

Abstract. This article discusses a previously unknown tradition of board zithers among the Ifugao and related peoples of the Cordilleras, northern Luzon. These zithers have two to four strings, improvised resonators and can sometimes be tuned by movable bridges. They are used primarily for personal entertainment. As a musical tradition, they are severely endangered and are now played only in remoter areas. The paper describes instruments encountered during fieldwork in 2010, but also those in museum collections in the Philippines. The research also uncovered an undescribed zither-type, provisionally named the 'strip zither', where the strings are made from two stretched metal bands about 2cm in width. The bands pass over bridges and are nailed to the ends of the wooden board, but cannot be tuned except by moving or increasing the height of the bridge. These instruments must be struck with light sticks and evidence suggests they were used to rehearse rhythmic patterns played on flat gongs. An unusual anthropomorphic strip zither without exact provenance is described. The authors suggest that these instruments originate with the idiochord half-tube zithers found in this region, but that their organology changed as a result of the availability of new materials. A parallel instrument occurring among the Kachin people, now in the National Museum of Myanmar, is described, but its connection with the Philippines instruments is as yet unclear.

Reconstructing the Medieval Irish Harp: PAUL DOOLEY

Abstract. For centuries the harp played an integral part in Gaelic culture and yet, remarkably little is known of this iconic instrument and its tradition. The Trinity College harp is the oldest surviving harp in Ireland. Having suffered considerable damage over the years the harp has been repaired and reconstructed many times. Its present form is based on that of the Scottish Queen Mary harp. This reconstruction, however, is marginally incorrect and this, coupled with errors and inconsistencies in measurements previously available, has led to difficulties in stringing and tuning modern reproductions of this harp. If a credible replica is ever to be built, the lengths of the strings as intended by the maker must be known. This article explores the issues regarding the restoration of the harp to its original form, concentrating particularly on the string layout. In turn the possibilities offered in terms of tuning, string diameters and alloy composition, are investigated. The analysis reveals that this harp was engineered with great precision and that its design operates on clearly defined mathematical principles, with the original string layout optimized for a particular range of notes and more than likely for strings made of a single copper alloy.

A Barretone, an Instrument of Musick: its History, Influences and Development pre-1750: RACHAEL DURKIN

Abstract. The baryton is generally considered to have been invented in England at the start of the seventeenth century, although this term is not used in England until 1685. Until now, the baryton has been studied in relative isolation, acknowledging its music and historical references, but with limited consideration given to its organological context and construction. This article looks to address the history of the baryton from an organological standpoint, considering the historical literature; the questionable role of Daniel Farrant in the baryton's creation; the influence of the poliphant and stump on the baryton's use of additional sets of wire strings; and the position of the often-associated lyra viol. Additionally, the construction of the early baryton is assessed with reference to the earliest extant baryton by Magnus Feldlen, while an instrument by Johann Andreas Kämbel highlights the adaptations made to many barytons during the mid to late eighteenth century in light of changing musical fashions. It is therefore suggested that the baryton is more closely linked to the poliphant than either the stump or the lyra viol, and that early barytons probably had at least three sets of strings, with the extended bass side of the bridge serving the third set.

A Comparative Study of Northern Apennine Bagpipes and Shawms: RICCARDO GANDOLFI, VALTER BIELLA & CLAUDIO GNOLI

Abstract. Four bagpipe types are recorded as having been played in northern Italy and the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland: two types of *piva* (one found in Ticino, another in the regions of Parma and Piacenza); the *pia* or *baghet* (in the Bergamo region); and the *musa* (in the Four Provinces area). In most cases the musical tradition has ceased and all that remains is a variety of artefacts scattered amongst private collections and museums. By measuring and comparing surviving specimens, and by building working copies, it is possible to suggest fingering systems and ways in which the instruments originally functioned. In addition, a single type of shawm in northern Italy (the *piffero*) is still played in the Four Provinces area and a number of antique examples show signs of modification. This work impacts on our understanding of *musa* chanters, since the two instruments were traditionally played together. Moreover, our study redefines the accepted nomenclature, suggesting that the *piva* may be divided into two groups according to wall thickness and their tuning and fingering systems, while the terms *piva* and *musa* may merely reflect linguistic differences.

The 'Rosetta-Stone' and other Measuring Gauges for Music Wire from Nineteenth-Century Vienna: ALFONS HUBER

Abstract. In 2005 the Collection of Historic Musical Instruments in Vienna purchased three so-called slip gauges intended for measuring the sizes of music wire. The smallest appears to be calibrated in sizes according to the English string gauge system, which correspond reasonably well to the 'Webster piano wire' as published by Kützing (1844). The other two gauges are of particular interest as they provide a concordance between the English system and the continental system, together with their equivalents in the metric system. One side of slip gauge SAM 1080, which is probably Viennese and from the second half of the nineteenth century, is marked with both a traditional continental and a modern English gauge system; both scales appear to follow a logarithmic progression. Moreover, the reverse side provides an additional string number system for piano wire, with more or less even steps between each gauge, but not in a consistent logarithmic progression. Considering that the piano making firms of Streicher and Graf had their own different systems, it is clear that more than one standardised string gauge system was in use in Vienna during the nineteenth century.

The Musical Instruments in Lodewijk's Plattner's Auction (1843): JOHAN VAN KALKER & ALBERT R RICE

Abstract. Lodewijk Plattner was a German musician who moved to Rotterdam in 1802 and in 1805 took over the music business of Nicolaas Barth following his bankruptcy. Plattner was a successful businessman, introducing lithographic music printing to The Netherlands in 1809; he published about 700 musical works, some in collaboration with other publishers. His music store sold a variety of instruments and after his death in 1842, the next year a public auction was held over three days. This article describes the types of instruments sold including prices paid as noted in the notary records of the Rotterdam City Archives. An alphabetical list of makers with instrument type is given for bowed and plucked string instruments; pianos; brass and woodwinds; and bows; a variety of strings for various instruments are described. Excerpts from the catalogue are included with brief summaries of each category, the instruments and their characteristics (following the order of the catalogue), and summaries of prices paid in guildens (f.).

The Membrano-Reed, a Discovery for the Twenty First Century: RODERIC KNIGHT

Abstract. The 2011 MIMO-revised Hornbostel-Sachs classification system includes a new item, 424, the membranopipe. This article examines two such instruments, the Sonic Blast Horn and the Mega-Blast Horn, both made by Ja-Ru in China. They are nothing more than very loud toys, but the sounding mechanism is new to science. A more accurate designation is membrano-reed, because in both, a membrane closes the top of the bore and functions as a closed beating reed. The mouthpiece is a double-walled cylinder with an embouchure on the side. The space between the cylinders is moulded shut at the bottom and covered on top by the membrane. Air blown in can only escape by forcing open the membrane covering the inner cylinder or bore, setting up an oscillation. The Sonic Blast horn is a conical pipe of 28cm and produces the note F above middle C, or 349 Hz. The Mega Blast is only a mouthpiece, but inserting a cylindrical pipe to lengthen the bore produces the familiar sound of the clarinet – a timbre missing its even-numbered partials. A membrano-reed with fingerholes might be imagined to have some musical potential.

Ingenuity and Practicality in the Double Flageolet: Two Rare Twin-bore Double Flageolets Compared and Contrasted: DOUGLAS MACMILLAN

Abstract. Most English double flageolets follow the pattern established by William Bainbridge with separate pipes for each hand. A rare double flageolet with both bores in one piece of wood by Bainbridge and Wood is contrasted with an apparently similar instrument, the Delecta Harmonia of Thomas Scott and John Purkis. The fingering of each instrument is examined – particularly with respect to playing chords – and Bainbridge’s concept of using the same fingers of each hand is outlined. On the Bainbridge instrument, the upper part has to be sounded on the second pipe whilst playing certain chords whereas the first pipe always plays the upper part on the Delecta Harmonia. The instruments differ in respect of the method of operating the second pipe, the fingering of the second part – with either the use (when possible) of ‘the same fingers of each hand’ or independent fingering using keys, and the practice of hand changing with either hand taking the upper part. More extensive harmonic possibilities are available on the Bainbridge instrument.

‘No Maker to be Compared’ – The Early Pianos to Thomas Tomkison (c1764-1853): NORMAN MacSWEEN

Abstract. Despite Thomas Tomkison’s considerable reputation during his lifetime, the fact that he had no sons or partners to carry on his business after 1851 contributed to his rapid relegation to the historical back shelf, and he has not received any recent critical attention. This article examines evidence that has recently become available relating to Tomkison’s apprenticeship and output before he opened his workshop in 1799. The new information points to the strong likelihood that Tomkison was associated with, though not a partner in, the Wardour Street workshop of James Henry Houston. Once Tomkison’s own workshop was established in Dean Street, his reputation spread rapidly and soon, as well as exporting to the continent of Europe, he was supplying instruments to the British Royal Household. Tomkison was responsible for some early experiments and innovations in construction, but his pianos are notable principally for the quality of their casework, and for some avant-garde stylistic features in the second decade of the nineteenth century. An appendix lists sequences of serial numbers for Tomkison instruments which are still extant.

Musical Migrations: the Origins of the Portable Street Barrel Piano: NICHOLAS NOURSE

Abstract. For many years it was stated that the portable barrel piano on Britain's nineteenth-century streets was an English invention and the product of a pair of cabinet-making brothers, John and Joseph Hicks of Bristol. More recently, and especially since the publication of Antonio Latanza's *Il piano a cilindro* (2009), it has been accepted that the instrument originated in Italy. Latanza, though, still acknowledges the importance of the Bristolian family to Britain's street piano-making industry, and this article examines what reliable links there are, if any, that tie Italian street pianos with Bristol and the Hicks family. The story is one that focusses on the social and cultural history of two countries and communities and begins by considering the competing accounts of the instrument's origins. The social background and history of Britain's early Italian immigrant communities is then examined to offer challenging ideas that suggest a connection between Britain's foreign street musicians and their instruments with Bristol, London and the seemingly disconnected communities of Italian barometer makers. Finally, the article examines the role of the Bristolian family and how they came to be attributed, erroneously, with the invention of an Italian portable barrel piano.

'Wha sweetly tune the Scottish lyre': A Guittar by Rauche & Hoffmann and its Connection to Robert Burns: PANAGIOTIS POULOPOULOS

Abstract. A small pear-shaped guittar, made by Rauche & Hoffmann in London and dated 1757, survives in the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum (RBBM) in Alloway, Ayrshire. This guittar is unique in various aspects. Firstly, it is one of the earliest surviving examples of this kind of instrument being preserved in its original state. Secondly, it has several unusual design, construction and decorative features which are worth analysing. Thirdly, this guittar is the earlier of the only two extant instruments by Rauche & Hoffmann, two musical instrument makers and dealers of whom relatively little until now was known. Lastly, this guittar is thought to have belonged to Robert Burns, reportedly a competent musician and songwriter. This article provides a thorough study of the historical and technical features of this exceptional instrument, focusing particularly on its distinctive characteristics and also assessing its recent conservation and display in the RBBM. Furthermore, the article presents new details on the manufacturers of this guittar, Rauche & Hoffmann, investigating their biographies and professional activities through the inspection of surviving instruments, written sources and iconography. Finally, the article examines the connection of Robert Burns to this guittar and inquiries its role in Burns's poetic and musical accomplishments.

The Insurance of Musical London and the Sun Fire Office 1710–1779: LANCE WHITEHEAD & JENNY NEX

Abstract. The core collection of the Sun Fire Office on deposit at the City of London Corporation, London Metropolitan Archives, consists of some 1,200 volumes of personal insurance policies covering the years 1710–1863. All surviving registers for the years 1710–79 have been scrutinised and over 650 policies held by musicians, musical instrument makers and others directly involved in the musical life of London transcribed. While some important individuals are absent, fire insurance records generally encompass a broader spectrum of society than poll books and rate books, enabling the role of women, tenants and foreigners to be highlighted. The accompanying commentary also demonstrates the extent to which these records chart the growth of London musical life, especially during the 1760s and 1770s.