

# Abstracts of Articles in GSJ Volume LXIX (April 2016)

## **Royal Kettledrums from the House of Hanover: JAYSON DOBNEY**

**Abstract:** In 1780, the Hanoverian goldsmith Frantz Peter Bundsen (c1725–1795) was commissioned to build a pair of silver kettledrums for the Life Guard Regiment of George III, King of Great Britain and Elector of Hanover. The contract for the commission of these drums was recently discovered in the Hanoverian state archives along with several guild documents related to contemporary kettledrummers who may have played the instruments. The kettledrums were acquired by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2010, providing the opportunity examine these extraordinary instruments and to piece together their remarkable history. The drums were used both as functional instruments alongside a set of silver trumpets, as well as beautiful pieces of decorative arts that had a role within the famed Hanoverian silver collection. This article aims to understand these instruments within a number of different contexts, the ceremonial musical culture of the court, the history of the silver collection, the political history of Hanover, and as related to several other pairs of silver kettledrums. It is hoped that by understanding these drums as both functional instruments and valuable works of art a greater understanding of their role within the households of the *ancien régime* can be gained.

## **Barbieri's Automatic Electric Organ at Aielli: GIORGIO FARABEGOLI**

**Abstract:** Sant'Adolfo's church (now San Giuseppe's) built in 1937 at Aielli is one of the most important examples of twentieth-century architecture in the Abruzzo region in central Italy. The peculiar concept of its automatic electric organ corresponds to the distinction of the building. The organ comprises a conventional organ with echo division, a roll-operated organ player, a carillon of tubular bells, and, instead of bells, a set of four loudspeakers at the top of the steeple. This system constituted a particular kind of sound installation that could play automatically. The features and history of this installation are delineated from its magnificent beginning to its partial destruction and restoration, a story of vanities, mad ambitions, political delusions, and public rage.

## **Update: William Frecker, Grand Piano Maker c1761- c1834: MARIE KENT**

**Abstract:** *The Galpin Society Journal* of 2012 featured an article I wrote about the life and career of a little-known piano maker named William Frecker who worked in the early days of the London industry and whose contribution to the development of the piano and relationship to leading makers of the day had not previously been researched. Consequent to that publication, several interesting new discoveries have been brought to light, and one highly significant piano. This paper revisits Frecker's life and career in light of these discoveries and reveals how newly accessible insurance policies, newspaper advertisements, internal inscriptions, measurements and details in Frecker's surviving pianos, and the discovery of an additional early instrument in his name, throw new light not only on Frecker's biography but also on those of his contemporaries. Previously unknown workers and lodgers are revealed to have preceded Frecker at Americus Backers' workshop at No.4 Jermyn Street, a second possible master of Frecker's apprenticeship is introduced, more is learned of his early business at No.101 Wardour Street, and the extent of his relationship with Broadwood and Stodart is considered further and reappraised.

## **A New Look at Classification and Terminology for Musical Instruments: RODERIC KNIGHT**

**Abstract:** The Knight-Revision of Hornbostel-Sachs, or K-Rev, was created to aid the teaching and application of organology. Dewey-style numbers are used, but with an initial letter identifying the four intact H-S families. Internal logic has been reworked. Idiophones are least changed, classified by how played, then by shape, with material an added criterion. Membranophones, also classified by how played, are subdivided by number of heads, then by shape. The chordophone dichotomy of simple versus composite is abandoned, replaced with seven types: Dournon's variable tension, the musical bow, the pluriarc, harps (divided 'strings-over' versus 'strings-in'), zithers, lutes, and lyres. Aerophone terminology is revised, from free versus wind instruments proper to ambient versus blown. Ambient types are slicing, beating, and the whip. Free reeds join other reeds among the blown instruments, which are: open, reed, and lip-reed. The open instruments are flutes, chamber-duct, corrugahorn, and siren. Flute types are four: vessel, vertical, oblique, and transverse, with duct/no-duct identified next. Reeds are free or beating, but termed hard-tuned versus soft-tuned. The latter are distinguished first by bore, then by reed number. Lip reeds are either narrow or wide compass, each in turn divided by their fixed or variable length. Plosive aerophones are last.

## **The Rise and Fall of the Minipiano: ALASTAIR LAURENCE**

**Abstract:** The 'minipiano' was a commercial musical curiosity which in almost every way contrasted with the conventional large upright pianos being produced in London during the 1920s and 30s. From 1934, the item was manufactured by Brasted Brothers Ltd at the firm's Harringay works, north London, with the brand name Eavestaff attached. For a number of years, the minipiano appears to have been the smallest and cheapest kind of piano available for anyone to purchase, and as such it was deemed to have 'saved' the piano industry by maintaining sales at a time when the piano was becoming less fashionable. With its extraordinary diminutive size but clear and sweet tonal quality, it certainly enjoyed something of a vogue from the mid-to-late 1930s until the mid-1950s. To acquire one, in whichever choice of casework or polish, was to be at the forefront of fashion. Most of the other London piano manufacturers emulated Brasted's example and soon began to produce similar diminutive specimens in an attempt to gain sales. But from the late 1960s, the piano-buying public appears to have had a renewed appreciation of the merits of larger and more conventionally sized uprights. The Japanese companies Yamaha and Kawai made inroads into the musical marketplace with their larger instruments, as public interest in the minipiano declined. Brasted Brothers' factory ultimately closed down in 1970.

## **A South-Netherlandish Quint-Pitch Clavichord: DARRYL MARTIN**

**Abstract:** It is a commonly-accepted view that the great majority of clavichords were strung with brass throughout their compass. However, there are some types of clavichords which are known to be exceptions to this, such as the late-Swedish school, and the occasional instrument like the 1543 clavichord by Domenicus Pisarenis who worked in Venice. The argument for the iron treble stringing in the instrument by Pisarenis, the same material as used in the other instruments by the same maker, is compelling in an instrument in which the string lengths themselves suggest that all-brass stringing can successfully be used, as found on many modern reproductions.

An analysis of an unsigned instrument which is part of the Mirrey Collection, now at the University of Edinburgh, shows that it is most likely built in Antwerp, most probably around 1620, or perhaps up to 1650. At this time the various Ruckers workshops were dominant in Antwerp. They, and other Antwerp makers built in very similar styles and all used iron-treble stringing for their instruments.

If Antwerp can be established as the location of the clavichord it is reasonable that it would also be strung in the same material, and would play at a high-pitch level, a fifth above the reference pitch found in the majority of surviving harpsichords and virginals.

### **The 'Concert' or 'Vocal' Horn: ARNOLD MYERS**

**Abstract:** The instrument in 8-ft C that Rudall, Rose & Carte originally termed 'Concert Horn' (later 'Vocal Horn') was specifically developed for use in domestic music. It was designed to be light and elegant, with a timbre appropriate for the drawing-room, and easy to play. The concert or vocal horn was launched at the London International Exhibition of 1862 and continued in production over nearly 70 years. A tutor book by Giuseppe Tamplini was published for it c1880. This article is based on a study of many of the extant examples, manufacturers' archives and other contemporary records, and discusses the history and acoustical characteristics of the vocal horn. Comparisons are made with similar instruments by other makers, including Boosey & Company's later 'Ballad Horn'.

### **French Harpsichord Register-Regulation Plates: GRANT O'BRIEN**

**Abstract:** In the course of the restoration of a splendid Franco-Flemish harpsichord, a sophisticated and highly-accurate system for the regulation of the upper-register positions was noted on the 1769 Pascal Taskin double-manual harpsichord in the Russell Collection at the University of Edinburgh. It consists simply of a beveled iron plate with three machine-screw bolts located in positions opposite the ends of the three upper guides.

The idea of the register-regulation plate is simple: when the registers are pressed against the ends of the machine-screw bolts, the position of the register in the instrument can be regulated very precisely with an accuracy of at least 0.10mm. The amount that the quills in the jacks project under the strings is the same each time the register of jacks is moved against the machine-screw bolt, and the regulation and voicing of the instrument is maintained with precision and complete reliability.

Although the plate was not being used in the present restoration it seems clear that it is original and that it was the system used by Taskin. My objective in the restoration of the Franco-Flemish harpsichord was to use the same system. Therefore a similar plate was drawn and manufactured for the restoration of this instrument.

The register plate and spring are presently installed, functioning and in use in the Franco-Flemish harpsichord and the system works extremely well with both precision and reliability.

### **Reconstructing a Sixteenth-Century Fiddle from a Cornish Bench End Carving: DANIEL ROSE-JONES**

**Abstract:** Sometime during the sixteenth century a fiddle player was carved onto a bench end in the parish church of Altarnun, Cornwall. This square bodied, three-stringed instrument represents a late example of a non-standard type of medieval instrument soon to be superseded by the modern violin. In order to better understand both this instrument and the possibilities available to the reconstructive organologist, a modern reproduction was created by the author and the decisions involved in the process recorded and discussed in this article. As part of this, surviving contemporary instruments are compared, particularly the two similar fiddles recovered from the wreck of the Mary Rose which sank in 1545, as well as documentary and artistic evidence. The conclusion is reached that although many details will never be known it is possible, with the help of other sources, to create a reasonable working reconstruction of the instrument.

### **Da Spalla or da Gamba? The Early Cello in Northern Italian Repertoire, 1650-95: ALESSANDRO SANGUINETI**

**Abstract:** In the second half of the seventeenth century the violoncello da spalla, a horizontally-played cello held on the shoulder like a violin, was purportedly widely used in Northern Italy. Some recent research proposes that the rubric 'violoncello' in Northern Italian repertoire during the period 1650-95 indicated such a *da spalla* instrument. Although a vertically-played bass violin was also in use, this instrument was allegedly not labelled 'violoncello' and was only used in a continuo role. My article challenges this and other established theories. Through examination of

archival, organological and iconographical evidence, along with a wide variety of musical sources, I aim to provide performers with a clearer picture of what composers and professional cellists meant when using the term 'violoncello'. The late seventeenth century was indeed an era of experimentation: two different cellos were in use, one played *da gamba* and the other *da spalla*. However, it appears that the violoncello *da spalla* was less widespread than previously proposed. Similarly the rubric 'violoncello' mainly referred to a vertically-played bass violin, closely connected to the 8ft violone, which was played by professionals in both concertante and continuo parts.

### **Hirsbrunner, a Swiss Family of Wind Instrument Makers: ADRIAN VON STEIGER**

**Abstract.** This article tells the history of the Hirsbrunner family of wind instrument makers. Over eight generations, 18 members of the same family were active in three different companies; emphasis is on the nineteenth century. Three Hirsbrunner brothers and their father began to manufacture wooden instruments shortly after 1800 in Sumiswald near Bern, brasswind manufacturing was added in 1819, valved brass as early as 1829. Three sons of one of the brothers continued with the company until it closed in 1880. Their cousin Johann Ulrich founded a second company nearby in 1847, concentrating on brass instruments. His younger son Friedrich took over the company and in 1900 moved it to the centre of Sumiswald (where it continues today); his elder son, Jakob, founded a third, smaller company in Aarau in 1870. Two generations later, this company closed in 1965.

Some 150 signed Hirsbrunner instruments are extant from the nineteenth century and are given in an Appendix. Most of the c50 extant wooden instruments were made in the first half of the nineteenth century: the majority are stamped 'Hirschbrunner' (the dialect spelling of the family name); the other woodwind and all the brasswind instruments are inscribed 'Hirsbrunner'.

### **An Inside Look at Four Historical Violins by Brussels Makers: GEERTEN VERBERKMOES, ANNE-EMMANUELLE CEULEMANS, DANIELLE BALÉRIAUX and BEREND C. STOEL**

**Abstract.** During the second half of the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century violin making in Brussels flourished, and instruments made during this era, both by court employees and independent makers, can still be enjoyed in various museum collections, concert performances and recordings. This article explores four of those instruments, all violins, by Jan de Maseneer, Gaspar Borbon, Egidius Snoeck and Benoit-Joseph Boussu, currently part of the collection of the Musical Instruments Museum (MIM) in Brussels. By using the present-day visualisation techniques of digital endoscopy and CT-scanning, we can now provide revealing and comprehensive insights into the architecture and material selection of these instruments. The results of these investigations enable us to demonstrate the way the violins were constructed and further, to discern developments in the way successive Brussels violin makers have worked. It also becomes possible to identify repairs and damage, and to determine the authenticity of various often-replaced parts of the instruments, such as the neck, the upper block and the bass bar.

### **Typological Analysis of the Chinese *Qin* in the Late Bronze: YUANZHENG YANG**

**Abstract.** The *qin*, a type of horizontal zither, has become China's foremost musical instrument since the age of Confucius (551-479 BC). From an archaeological perspective, however, very little was known about the morphology of the Bronze Age *qin* until the discovery in 1978 of the tomb of Marquis Yi dated 433 BC in Suizhou. Four other instruments of the same kind have also been excavated in the last four decades. This paper aims to carry out a typological analysis of the Chinese Bronze Age *qin* based on this corpus of available specimens.

## **Josef Šediva (1853-1915) and his Collection of Musical Instruments at the National Museum – Czech Museum of Music in Prague: TEREZA ŽŮRKOVÁ**

**Abstract.** TJosef Šediva was born in Semily (north-eastern Bohemia). In 1877 he settled in the Black Sea port of Odessa where he established an enterprise for the manufacture of brass instruments. Odessa was a favourable location for his business venture, for the city and its surroundings were home to several military garrisons, and thus also military musicians. The main focus of Šediva's production was brass instruments for military bands. In addition to making standard instruments, he invented and constructed at least ten of his own types, some of which he patented. The most important of these was the *šedifon* (patented in 1901). At the beginning of the twentieth century, Josef Šediva decided to donate a representative collection of musical instruments to the Museum of the Kingdom of Bohemia (now the National Museum) in Prague. This donation included a total of 174 musical instruments and accessories, as well as photographs and other printed material, together a remarkable window on the construction of brass wind instruments at the start of the twentieth century. Šediva died on 30 November 1915 and his factory seems to have been dissolved during the revolution of 1917.