

Abstracts of Articles in GSJ Volume LXVI (March 2013)

The Erat Harp Manufactory: Painted and Gilded Decoration 1821-1826: MIKE BALDWIN

Abstract: Through detailed examination of documents pertaining to the Erat harp manufactory in London (1797–1858), chiefly those from the period 1821–26, this article reassesses the richness of decoration and diversity of colour schemes of the late Georgian harp. The main decorative phases, directly influenced by archaeological discovery and architecture, are well documented, and model names, such as Grecian and Gothic, derive from historical periods. Newly discovered documents provide information about the tools, materials and artists of the Erat manufactory, from which it is possible to trace trends in colour, gilt finish and ornamentation. Accounts detail the purchase of paints, varnishes, gilding and finishing materials, illuminating decorative tastes during the closing years of the Georgian era. In this article the sales of the Erat company, trends in paint colour, gilt type and ornamentation are quantified revealing a surprisingly wide decorative palette; unfortunately, this wide range of paint finishes is not fully represented among surviving Erat harps. Purchases of pigment and gold leaf are examined for the first time. Through inventories compiled in 1821 and 1824, harps in various states of finish, and their corresponding values, are revealed. The influences of interior decoration on the harp, in particular that inspired by the classical revival of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, are discussed.

The Marine Shell in and around the Maltese Islands: ANNA BORG-CARDONA

Abstract: This paper investigates the large marine shells used as sound producers in the Mediterranean, with special focus on that of the Maltese archipelago. The two large shells most commonly used to generate sound in the Mediterranean are the *Charonia lampas* and the *Charonia variegata*. This study considers the mythology, rituals and traditions attached to the shell, and the terminology used by the different peoples of the Mediterranean. Research includes ethnographic work carried out over the past 16 years mostly in Malta and in different areas of neighbouring Sicily, but also in the islands of Lampedusa and Linosa, Italy, the Balearic island of Mallorca and Greece.

Triton shells were held with special reverence by man in prehistory and antiquity and were attributed with strong magical and protective powers. The shell has been associated with seamen, fishermen, pastoral and agricultural settings, seasonal celebrations and with various other rituals. Terminology seems to show two separate groups of early intimate relationships comprising the central Mediterranean region on the one hand and the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa on the other. The end-blown instrument used all over the Mediterranean area occasionally has an added metal mouthpiece. Though the shell's use has now largely disappeared, it still has significance in some present-day rituals, and it still carries vestiges of its ancient magical powers.

The Viola d'Amore – its Heritage Reconsidered: RACHAEL DURKIN

Abstract: The origins of the viola d'amore have remained largely untouched since the work of Harry Danks in the 1970s, and it is widely assumed that the modern viola d'amore is a viol with the addition of sympathetic strings. This article looks to challenge this notion and bring the understanding of the viola d'amore up to date by considering recent research into the baryton, and reconsidering the original seventeenth-century observations of the viola d'amore. The article acknowledges the presence of what have been called octave-barytons, and highlights the potential link between this and the englische violett, further substantiated by an observation of an englische violett by Paulus Alletsee. It is therefore suggested that the modern viola d'amore has descended from the baryton, through the octave baryton and then the englische violett, and that the englische violett is not a development of the viola d'amore. It is also suggested that the original viola d'amore of just wire playing strings, was a treble viol restrung with wire, in order to give the instrument some added popularity in the face of the viol family's demise. It can be deduced from this, and through the observation of some adapted instruments, that the wire strung viola d'amore was combined with the englische violett to form the modern viola d'amore.

John Evelyn on Musical Instrument Wood: MICHAEL FLEMING

Abstract: Prominent among the life-long interests of the polymath diarist John Evelyn (1620–1706) were natural history and gardening. His book about trees and wood titled *Sylva* was first published in 1664 then expanded for subsequent editions. He made a point of identifying the uses that many of the trees served, including how their woods were used. His comments include noting that various woods had particular uses for musical instruments. This article traces and compares musical references in the four editions of *Sylva* published during Evelyn's lifetime, noting also his information about woods that are now used for instruments, although he did not identify such a use for them, and some other common woods. His comment that the wood of *euonymus europeae* was used for viol bows is unprecedented in the English literature.

Piano Silkers in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century London (1784–1911): a Genealogical Survey: MARIE KENT

Abstract: On 28 April 1785, Edward Johnson feloniously stole 'fifty-nine-yards-and-a-half of green silk, called Persian' from the Holborn workshop of his employer, John Geib, a contractor of Longman & Broderip of Cheapside and a maker of square pianos. The silk was worth 50 shillings, Johnson sold it for seven, and his sentence was seven years' transportation. So reads the transcript of his trial at The Old Bailey, where Geib's testimony that he used the silk 'in the inside of my instruments, for my Piano fortes' is the earliest known written reference to piano silk-work in the history of London piano making. The application of plain or pleated silk behind fretted panels in pianos, as a practical and decorative feature, became a characteristic of London piano making that endured for more than 125 years, being first introduced in the late eighteenth century and reaching its fashionable peak in the mid-Victorian era. The history of its use, the careers of the men and women who perfected its application, and its eventual disuse, are explored through the Broadwood company archives, the *Post Office London Directory*, *The London Gazette*, later criminal trials detailing the curious particulars of its manufacture and supply, and surviving silk panels in extant instruments.

Shaw, Köhler & the Disc Valve in Britain: FRANK TOMEST†, SABINE KLAUS & ARNOLD MYERS

Abstract: The search for improvements in brasswind instruments with valves in the first half of the nineteenth century led in England to the development of the disc valve, a type in which additional tubing is introduced by rotation of discs. The disc valve, developed by John Shaw of Glossop in Derbyshire in collaboration with the Köhler firm in London, had its precursor in the swivel valve, patented in 1838. Biographical information about Shaw shines light on his possible involvement in the manufacture of the only surviving swivel-valve trumpet at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The transition from the swivel to the disc valve can be traced in another trumpet in New York and reports in the *Practical Mechanic & Engineer's Magazine*. The technological development of Köhler disc-valve instruments is put in chronological order, based on an examination of surviving instruments and 1851 Great Exhibition catalogues. Using contemporary and modern reports as well as acoustical analysis, an assessment of the quality of the disc valve is given. A list of all known Köhler disc-valve instruments is appended.

The Clients of Johann Andreas Stein as Recorded in the Notebook of Johann David Schiedmayer and Elsewhere: MICHAEL LATCHAM

Abstract: Johann David Schiedmayer (1753–1805), famous in his lifetime as a builder of *Hammerflügel*, was a journeyman with Johann Andreas Stein (1728–1792), illustrious organ and stringed keyboard instrument maker in Augsburg. Schiedmayer was with Stein from July 1778 to April 1781. Schiedmayer kept a notebook in which he noted his earnings as a journeyman in Stein's workshop and from extramural work he undertook for some 40 of Stein's clients. One organ, a number of harpsichords and almost certainly clavichords and pianos were involved. The clients included the Prince Bishop of Augsburg, two members of the Fugger family, numerous top merchant bankers and cotton manufacturers, all interlinked by marriage, two school teachers and a doctor,

two artists, a cooper and a bed maker. Supplementing the names of these clients with some of those mentioned in Stein's own notebook gives a remarkably full impression of the clients who had Stein's instruments. This picture is enriched with descriptions of the clients, of Stein's days as a journeyman before he settled in Augsburg and of the context in which he made his instruments. Details of some of Schiedmayer's clients when he worked independently in Erlangen and later in Nuremberg are interspersed at suitable moments to offer ancillary information.

Bartolomeo Cristofori in Florence: STEWART POLLENS

Abstract: Bartolomeo Cristofori was born in Padua in 1655 and became the salaried Medici court keyboard instrument maker in 1688. While working in the Medici court in Florence, he perfected a keyboard instrument with hammer mechanism, and the *Arpicembalo* 'with soft and loud' that is described in the court's 1700 musical instrument inventory is widely considered the first pianoforte. Despite the historic importance of this invention, the pianoforte evidently played a small role in the Medici court, and the piano inventoried in 1700 is absent in subsequent inventories. Cristofori's daily responsibilities involved the maintenance of the court's large collection of harpsichords, as well as the construction of new ones, including a novel spinet with uncompromised string lengths and multiple stops that was intended for use in the court opera orchestra. The Medicis were diligent record-keepers, especially with regard to the payment of court bills, and because many of these records are preserved in the Archivio di Stato Firenze, we can reconstruct Cristofori's activities virtually month by month. This article recounts Bartolomeo Cristofori's professional experiences in Florence through information contained in the itemized bills he submitted to the Medici court, the court's payment records, and the keyboard instruments he made and restored that are described in the court's musical instrument inventories. Concordances are established among the inventoried instruments, records of private commissions, and extant instruments.

Musical instruments described in a fourteenth-century Persian treatise *Kanz al-tuḥaf*: GEN'ICHI TSUGE

Abstract: One of the earliest musical instrument sources of the Islamic world is the Persian treatise *Resāle Kanz al-tuḥaf dar mūsīqī* (hereafter referred to as *Kanz al-tuḥaf*), probably written in either 1355 or 1363. Importantly, the third discourse (*maqāle*) is devoted to a description (with illustrations) of nine musical instruments, including the *'ūd*, *ḡešak*, *robāb*, *mizmār*, *pīše*, *čang*, *nuzha*, *qānūn*, and the *muḡnī*; it also contains a description of how to make silk and gut strings. While the original manuscript has not survived, there are five extant copies, the most recent of which (dated 1665, preserved at the British Library, Or. 2361) was used by Henry George Farmer for his abridged translation. While drawing upon the evidence found in all five copies, it is the earliest of these (dated 1383, British Library, I.O. Islamic 2067) which is the focus of this article, the first translation of the discourse in its entirety.

Benoit Joseph Boussu (1703–1773): Violin Maker and Notary: GEERTEN VERBERKMOES

Abstract: This is the first comprehensive study of the violin maker Benoit Joseph Boussu, who was active in the Brussels area during the middle of the eighteenth century. From an analysis of a number of extant violins and cellos, a possible working method for this maker is proposed, which incorporates both local archaic as well as foreign influences. In addition, archival research has provided detailed information on his life and background. Boussu was born in 1703 in Fourmies, France, and for the first half of his life he worked in the region surrounding his hometown as a notary. In his 40s, he must have made some profound decisions: he and his family moved north, subsequently to Liège, Etterbeek and Brussels, and at the same time he commenced a ten-year period of intensive violin making. Just as abruptly as he had started, he seems to have abandoned this newly acquired profession, and in the 1760s moved again, possibly to the Amsterdam area, or otherwise directly back to his native area of France, where he died in 1773.