Abstracts of Articles in *GSJ* Volume LXXVIII (2025)

Olaf Aasland: The Professor who Unknowingly Started the Free Reed Revolution

Abstract: Christian Gottlieb Kratzenstein (1723–1795) was a German professor, physician and polymath who spent most of his academic life in Copenhagen. His competence spanned widely, and one of his achievements was a small organ that could play the five vowels a, e, i, o and u, for which, in 1780, he won the gold medal at a prize competition proposed by The Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg. He erroneously thought that the human sound generator was a vibrating epiglottis and discovered a new type of pipe with freely vibrating reeds. Nicolai Kirsnik (1741–1802), an organ maker in St Petersburg and runner-up in the same competition, was the first to use free reeds in musical instruments, and when Georg Joseph (Abbé) Vogler (1749–1814) visited Kirsnik in St Petersburg in 1788 he was so impressed that he engaged Kirsnik's assistant, Georg Christoffer Rackwitz (1760–1844), to accompany him on his many Europe-wide concert tours to install free reed stops in existing organs, thus disseminating the new knowledge. Within the next three decades free reed instruments of all sizes and shapes popped up everywhere. Now there is probably no inhabited place in the world where you cannot find a mouth harmonica or an accordion.

Christian Ahrens: The Introduction of the French Hautbois at the Saxon Court in Dresden

Abstract: In his book *The Eloquent Oboe* (2001, p.137), Bruce Haynes gave 1695 as the date French hautbois were first acquired by the Dresden court, perhaps ten years later than some secondary Saxon principalities. Newly discovered sources show that the court in Dresden did in fact purchase six hautbois from Paris in 1689. Interestingly, these were for the hunting pipers rather than the court chapel, and at the same time, a musician was hired to teach the hautboists how to play their new instruments.

Importantly, the duties of hunting pipers included not only blowing during the hunt, but also to provide their superior, the *Ober-Jägermeister*, with 'all their pleasant music every morning and evening' (*Zedler-Lexikon*, 1739). This meant that they had to fulfil similar functions to the regimental pipers/regimental hautboists. It is not known whether they had to be able to play stringed instruments like the latter, but it is known that the Dresden hunting pipers were permitted to play French horns from 1697 onwards.

The Dresden sources show that French hautbois had been in use since 1686 (the earliest evidence dates from August 1686), three years before the acquisition of hautbois for the hunting pipers and ten years before the employment of the hautbois players Charles and Jean-Baptiste Henrion in the Dresden court chapel in 1696.

Walter Chinaglia: The Recreation of the Harding Bible Organ

Abstract: This article illustrates the author's recreation of the Medieval organ depicted in the Stephen Harding Bible (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 14, vol.3 fol.13), a manuscript created in Burgundy in the early twelfth century. Considered in the light of medieval drawing techniques, the image conceivably represents a realistic organ in its salient points.

In order to achieve an historically-informed reconstruction of the organ, most notably the windchest and conical pipes, reference was made to the coeval treatise *De diversis artibus or Schedula diversarum artium* by Theophilus. The lengths of the organ pipes, their arrangement on the windchest and the lineup of their mouths, all correspond to the illustration. It follows that the image should be regarded as one of the earliest documentary evidences of an organ with variable widths-scaling.

Some questions concerning the sound of the organ remain, most notably were the pairs of equal-length pipes tuned in unison or slightly mistuned, resulting in an undulating sound? Would this oscillation or beating effect be a plausible sound model for medieval organs? And could it be considered as a precursor of the Italian Renaissance organ stop, the 'Voce Umana'?

Benjamin J. Harbert: Ruin and Recovery: Consumer Culture and the Development of American Zither Technology from 1880 to 1930

Abstract: This article explores the intricate relationship between consumer culture and the development of American zither technology from 1880 to 1930, focusing on the autoharp, dolceola, and ukelin. By examining the rise and fall of these instruments, the study reveals how marketing, cultural reception, and economic forces shaped their trajectories. The autoharp's journey from a German invention to an American icon, the dolceola's brief prominence, and the ukelin's fleeting popularity illustrate the complex dynamics determining musical technologies' success or obscurity. The article highlights music-making's ongoing 'democratization' and the unpredictable factors influencing the adoption and evolution of new musical instruments. Through this historical lens, the study provides insights into the relationship of music to technology and cultural values, emphasizing the importance of cultural, economic, and social contexts in the development of musical instruments.

David Hunter: Skunktail Schism: The English/British Divergence from European Stringed Keyboard Instrument Norms, *c*1685–*c*1755

Abstract: Until now, skunktail accidental keys have been an unsung feature of English/British stringed keyboard instruments. This article offers the first attempt to summarize their uniqueness, their duration, their materials, their design, and their survival. In isolation they may seem an unimportant complication in the history of stringed keyboard instruments, one of far less significance than innovations in stops, stringing, action, case decoration, and other features that have occupied organologists across the years. Many would argue that the sound of a spinet is unchanged whether its accidental keys are made of wood of various kinds, bone, ivory or some other material. But it is also the case that buyers feel differently about an instrument depending on how it looks and therefore bring different attitudes and actions when producing sound from it.

In addition to defining 'skunktail' I also unpack 'black' and 'white', colour terms used both to indicate the relative position of natural and accidental keys, and, most confusingly, the materials of which the key tops or blocks are made. An historical survey of the use of skunktail key blocks, their periodicity and prevalence as indicated by surviving instruments, shows how schismatic they were compared with orthodox European practice.

Cleveland Johnson: The Madras Microtone Harmonium

Abstract: For several decades, in the public lobby of Sathguru Gnanananda Hall, visitors to this busy, well-known concert facility in the South Indian city of Madras (today, Chennai), were greeted by a large, glass-encased display of South Asian musical instruments. In this collection—now removed—was a unique, hand-pumped South Asian harmonium, featuring a complex action with raised keys, allowing 24 subsemitones per octave. This article details the instrument's construction and considers its possible origin and purpose.

Because dominant thought in twentieth-century India about microtonal pitch posited 22—not 24—increments in the octave, the theoretical underpinnings of this harmonium require an alternative source. Documentation, photographs, and sound samples from 2002 (when the instrument was last examined before its disappearance) provide data that suggest an association with Dr. Rao Sahib M. Abraham Pandither, a South Indian physician and musicologist, who organized a series of six conferences in Thanjavur (1912–14) to discuss the history, theory, and practice of, specifically, the Carnatic music of southern India. In his monumental *Karunamirtha Sagaram* (1917) Pandither asserts that—for modern Carnatic music, grounded in the ancient music of the Tamils—the octave divides into 24 equal parts. This harmonium suggests an intention to demonstrate this premise.

Ángela López-Lara & Luca Chiantore: Hidden in Hamburg: Uncovering the Long-lost Gamelan of the 1889 *Exposition Universelle*

Abstract: The gamelan that performed at the *kampong javanais* during the 1889 Exposition Universelle has gained a privileged place in the history of Western music. However, after the exhibition, the instruments vanished without a trace, leading to much speculation about which ones starred in Paris and what they might have sounded like. As part of broader research focused on performance practices during the shows—which culminated in the article 'Sundanese Reverberances: Untangling Contradictions about the Gamelan Spectacle at the 1889 Paris World's Fair'—in January 2024, we finally located the gamelan.

Drawing on Indonesian, French, Dutch, and German sources, this article recounts its journey from the tea plantations of Parakan Salak (West Java) to its current location in the storehouse of the now Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK) in Hamburg, where it entered after the six-month *Exposition Universelle*. The discovery has allowed us to carry out the first study of the instruments' morphological features and tuning, expanding on the understanding of gamelan on the island of Java in the past. It also offers new insights into the sonic aspects of the 1889 gamelan performances, as well as into the role of the personal, commercial, and colonial interests that shaped this cultural representation.

Douglas MacMillan: The Transverse Piccolo: the First 100 Years. Part 2: 1801–1835

Abstract: The first part of this article (*GSJ* LXXVII, 2024) covered the organology and repertoire of the piccolo following it first description by Michel Corrette in 1735 to the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the present article discusses the history of the instrument up to its 'centenary' in the 1830s.

The organological development of the piccolo in the early nineteenth century is highlighted, particularly in respect of the addition of further keys to the one-keyed instrument. The relationship between the piccolo, the fife, and the conical band flute is discussed, noting that the piccolo is essentially an instrument of the orchestra.

The orchestral use of the piccolo and its increasingly challenging parts as colourist, melodist, and harmonist is noted and illustrated with music examples.

It is concluded that, whereas the piccolo had an occasional role in the eighteenth century as a 'character instrument', by the end of the third decade of the nineteenth, the instrument had become a regular third member of the flute section, a position facilitated by the organological development of the piccolo.

Darryl Martin: The Oldest Surviving Rectangular Virginal and its Relationship to Other Members of the Early-Neapolitan School

Abstract: The unsigned and undated virginal (04660) at the National Music Museum, Vermillion is the oldest surviving rectangular virginal, made in a workshop from which some half dozen or so other instruments are extant, one (a harpsichord now in Milan) with an attached date of 1533 (which might, in fact, be a repair date). This workshop also made harpsichords and clavichords. Viewed as a group they probably generally date from 1520–1540. The virginal has all of the characteristics of this early-Neapolitan school, the maple case with dovetailed corners being the most obvious. Although there is nothing experimental about the design, the string lengths present difficulties of analysis and – as a result – determining the maker's intentions in relation to pitch. A comparison with other instruments from the school suggests that – intentionally or otherwise – it could only reach a semitone below the accepted Neapolitan pitch standard (albeit there is documentary evidence for the pitch level it could reach). The early-Neapolitan school is discussed in detail, in particular relating to this virginal showing that the workshop was generally very precise in its work and with excellent craftsmanship.

Damián Martín-Gil: Nicolas Legros de la Neuville (1764–1844), the Inventor of the 'fixateur'

Abstract: In April 1822, the French Minister of State for the Interior granted a patent for the manufacture of *fixateurs*, a mechanism for stabilising the tuning pegs of plucked and bowed stringed instruments to prevent them from slipping under the tension of the strings, a device found in only a handful of guitars of the period, several of which were made by the famous French guitar maker Pierre René Lacote (1785–1871). Although briefly mentioned in several modern sources, this device, halfway between the traditional system of wooden tuning pegs and modern worm gear tuners, has not been the subject of any study, nor has its inventor, Nicolas Legros de la Neuville (1764–1844), one of the many minor music theory instructors and guitar teachers who lived in Paris at the time of *La Guitaromanie.* Therefore, in order to shed more light on Legros de la Neuville and his invention, the *fixateur*, this article will provide details on his life and works, as well as on the functioning and significance of this mechanism.

Nick Nourse: Musical teapots, 'bellows played *à la* the bagpipes' and other 'fakements': the Victorian Musical Clown and their instruments

Abstract: In 1889, an article appeared about one Harry Liskard, musical clown and musical instrument 'faker'. The 'fakements' were strange musical instruments Liskard claims to have invented and included a musical teapot, musical candlestick and a musical scrubbing-brush. In the world of the Victorian musical clown, strange and peculiar instruments were key to making an impression. Many were familiar orchestral or popular instruments but presented in overly large or small sizes. Others were early or experimental versions of instruments which are now established elements of the modern orchestra. But others were true novelty inventions, like the musical teapot, created by adapting or merging instruments, or parts of instruments, with everyday objects to appear comic or ludicrous yet also to be playable, musical instruments. For the organologist, it is an intriguing but challenging subject because none of the novelty instruments is known to have survived. The descriptions and analysis of the instruments, therefore, are subject to varying degrees of conjecture and speculation as to some of the detail of the Victorian Musical Clowns' instruments.

Benjamin Sanetra: Musical Instruments of War: Display and Interpretation in British War Museums

Abstract: Musical instruments are a small but nonetheless significant part of war museum exhibits and collections. This article explores how musical instruments accumulate meaning in war museums, how this context affects their calls for playability, and the methods curators utilise to control this meaning when displaying such objects to their visitors. This article first highlights the few instances in which these instruments are taken out of their collections and played, and the narrative significance of these moments. It then shifts to musical instruments on display at the Imperial War Museum and the National Army Museum, comparing what information is presented to visitors on placards to the information available on their online databases. Tracking information discrepancies between online and in-person collection information, especially in our post-pandemic world, provides useful insight into what information gains precedence in the service of war museum narratives. The framing of musical instruments in non-musical contexts demonstrates their suitability for multivalent meanings that are markedly different than those conveyed in musical instrument museums. Analysing the intended purpose of the inclusion of these instruments within war museums highlights their ability to contain multiple layers of significance, acting as potent and malleable symbols, contributing towards narratives of victory, sacrifice, and remembrance.