

## ABSTRACTS -- AMIS 2013 WILLIAMSBURG

### **Distinctly Different: Three American Square Pianos from the Early 1830s**

The many species of American square piano were never more diverse than in the period of 1825 to 1835, when at least three completely distinct approaches to piano design were in vogue. With centers of piano building in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, as well as more provincial builders in Cincinnati and Baltimore, the many competing piano designs gave rise to a rich legacy of building tradition.

The English style, based on the John Geib escapement and William Southwell damper patents, was in nearly exclusive use in the UK during the period under study, and was represented in America by such firms as William Geib, youngest son of John Geib Sr. While reliable in function, it had limitations as the piano grew in size, and was nearing its extinction point in 1830 when the example before us was built.

Also working in New York, Robert and William Nunns, together with John Clark, introduced into America innovations coming out of France, including a new damping system for the heavier wire and the unichord piano design, geared specifically for use in remote and/or Southern regions. The example under study is an 1834 unichord piano incorporating these latest improvements, including the Petzold-Pape action and weighted lever dampers that would come to dominate square piano design going forward.

Finally, the brief experimentation in America with a grand Viennese action, including bassoon and Janissary stops, is represented by the Andrew Reuss square of Cincinnati OH, and built in late 1834 or early 1835. This piano, one of a handful of survivors of the type, is nearly identical to the Austrian style pianos then being built in Baltimore by Joseph Hisky and Joseph Newman, one of which is featured in the Changing Keys exhibit. It has recently been restored including the pedal stops.

This presentation will contrast detailed technical descriptions and sound clips from each of these major types. While all three are certainly pianos, their distinctly different characteristic sound evokes a period in history when the concept of the piano as an instrument was highly varied.

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## The Metamorphosis of the French Musette

Metamorphosis in a biological sense is a series of conspicuous and abrupt changes in an animal's cell growth and physical differentiation. Of course the musette is not biological, but the evolution and etymology of the name and the devices related to it parallel the abrupt development of its natural counterparts.

In the later 18<sup>th</sup> century the musette was a small bellows-blown bagpipe popular particularly with the aristocracy for about 100 years. After the French Revolution its use was mainly among the lower classes, where it was known as the *musette de Poitou* and was accompanied by other instruments, such as the *hurdy-gurdy*, the *hautbois de Poitou* (a bagless chanter with a cap), and a bass instrument. In the 1830s Parisian makers began to manufacture small capless double reeds pitched a fifth above the soprano oboe. This smaller instrument, also termed a *musette*, was later widely used in urban dances, likewise called *musettes*, to add to the rustic timbre.

After the invention of the accordion in 1829, its manufacture in France developed into a thriving industry, which survived until the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. In the last decades of the century many Auvergnats and Italians settled in the 5<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> districts of Paris, with the former opening many bars and other small establishments known as *bal musettes*. The accordion was introduced into these venues mainly by the Parisian and Italian musicians, who also contributed many newer rhythmic styles. A prominent feature of the accordions used in these dance halls was a pairing of reed sets, with one being mistuned to create a vibrato that added rusticity to the music. The earliest accordions using this technique were manufactured in France about 1850, and were also called *musettes*. After the Prussian war much of the accordion manufacture was taken over by Italians and Germans, whose earliest instruments in the musette style did not appear until about 1900. These instruments spawned a host of dance styles and tunings that survive yet today.

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## **Harp-Guitar and Harp-Lute in Britain: Analysis of their construction and musical capabilities**

The harp-guitar today may be recognised by the general public as an American origin of instrument, which has a guitar-like body with extra bass strings. However, historically other instruments with the name 'harp-guitar' were invented, and sometimes patented, outside America. One such instrument was invented by English musician Edward Light around 1800; the shape and tuning of the instrument are rather different from those of the modern harp-guitar, and according to the Gregg Miner's terminology this is a 'true harp-guitar'. Interestingly, although dissimilar in construction, both the Light and the American instruments are hybrid guitars, incorporating features of the harp. This can be explained if we remember their history: the English harp-guitar was originally developed from the wire-strung English guittar by conversion to gut strings but retaining its open C tuning, while the American harp-guitar probably derives from the figure-of-eight shaped Spanish guitar from countries such as Germany and France, thus has a flat back and standard tuning for strings on the fretted fingerboard (E-A-d-g-b-e'). Despite having the same name, these two instruments differ in the number of strings: the Light has no diapason strings whereas the American has. Some later instruments of Edward Light did have extra bass strings, but then the name was changed to 'harp-lute-guitar' and 'harp-lute'. The aim of these inventions was undoubtedly to gain tonal resemblance to the harp. A survey of Light's instruments shows his attempts to add more and more open strings, with the consequential degeneration of the fingerboard on instruments named 'British-lute-harp' or 'Dital-harp'.

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## **European Contributions to Elkhart's Brass Roots: The Conn & Dupont Partnership (1876-1880)**

Frenchman Eugene Victor Jean Baptiste Dupont (ca. 1832-1881) arrived at the railroad station in Elkhart, Indiana in mid-January 1876, having been hired by Charles Gerard Conn (1844-1931) to supervise his newly established brass instrument manufacturing and repair business. Dupont's credentials included some thirty years working with and developing brass instruments in France and England, principally with Henry Distin and subsequently with Distin & Co. Dupont's move to the United States was hoped to be the culmination of the Frenchman's dream to introduce and capitalize upon his own innovations in brass instrument design.

Following a seven-month trial period, Conn and Dupont established a legal co-partnership on 22 July 1876. In an effort to keep up with the demands of their rapidly growing business, Conn & Dupont constructed a two-story, forty-foot-long extension to their facility in April 1877. This move enabled Conn & Dupont to employ fifty of "the best workmen that could be obtained . . . brought from Europe at great expense," and "paying them large salaries." Two years later, Conn sent Dupont to Paris and London to recruit twenty more skilled craftsmen to add to their workforce. However, according to local reports, Dupont suddenly left the partnership with Conn in April 1880, as a result of discontent and dissent among the factory workers. He died a premature death from tuberculosis the following year. Dupont's contributions, nevertheless, as well as those of his European co-laborers, proved to be essential for the continued growth of Conn's company and the establishment of Elkhart's brass roots.

This paper will present an overview of European immigrants' contributions to the musical instrument industry established in Elkhart by Gerard Conn, including the previously untold biography of Eugene Dupont and brief mention of some of the more notable—and colorful--Europeans hired by the firm during the four-year Conn-Dupont partnership.

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## **The English Voluntary in Colonial America**

For this lecture-recital, I am proposing a study of the English Voluntary in Colonial America. It will begin with a discussion on English organs of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, instruments which had traditionally been relatively small, lacking pedals and based on delicate principal stops, with a penchant for reeds and trumpets. I will then give a brief history of the voluntary genre itself, the evolution of the form, tracing its major developments from Locke through Blow, Croft, Stanley and Wesley, and the use of voluntaries in the English church, and finally, the organ in 18th-century America. Being that America was culturally influenced most by Britain at this time (pre-Revolution), it stands to reason that the type of pipe organs found in colonial churches and drawing-rooms were ones based on English models, or even better, made in England and shipped to an appreciative public.

The recital portion of the program, which will be interspersed throughout the lecture, will consist of at least four individual voluntaries, each highlighting a different aspect of the voluntary form and the characteristics of the particular pipe organ. While I have yet to finalize an exact program, the voluntaries selected will be ones where there is a possibility of performance in Colonial America, be it by an English or American composer. Two voluntaries will illustrate the evolution of the form I discussed earlier. They will be by William Croft and William Boyce, two composers who work on different ends of the historical spectrum. The other two pieces will be by composers working in America at the time, such as Peter Pelham, William Selby, Benjamin Carr and James Hewitt.

With this repertoire in mind, I would like to propose that this recital take place on the 18th-century English organ currently in the chapel of the College of William and Mary, a superb example of the organ known to Boyce and Stanley, but which would have suited Locke, Blow and Croft perfectly well.

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## **The Mysterious “1623” Harpsichord**

Many people will recognise the “1623” from photographs in various books on the history of the harpsichord, and from articles published since it came to light in the early 1970s. Michael Thomas, who bought it at auction in 1972, always held that the date was genuine, while John Barnes, then Curator of the Russell Collection, believed it to be, if not a fake, at least a later instrument dressed up to look much older. A heated exchange of letters in *The English Harpsichord Magazine* ensued.

After Michael Thomas’s ownership the instrument was part of the Beurmann Collection, and its current owner is the Cobbe Collection Trust, near Guildford, UK.

During recent work to rectify the structural weaknesses of this instrument, it has at last been possible to piece together the original compass and disposition, and to work out several later changes. This harpsichord can now be assigned to a small group of similar instruments, which together help to narrow down its provenance to early Georgian London.

### **Malcolm Rose**

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## Casualties in World War II

After Curt Sachs was dismissed from his post as a director of the Staatliche Instrumentensammlung by the Nazi Party the collection of musical instruments was incorporated into the Staatliches Institut für Deutsche Musikforschung (today: Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung Preußischer Kulturbesitz). Before worldwar II there were approximately 4000 instruments in the collection, in 1945 Alfred Berner listed only 700 instruments. On behalf of the museum the author is currently preparing a catalog of these lost instruments. This paper will give an overview of the missing instruments and will throw light on forgotten valuables. It will also give some insight on the work in progress and on the possibilities to manage and organize even lost parts of a collection. Accordingly it will introduce shortly *MuseumPlus*, the Collection Management Software used. Last but not least this talk will provide information how researchers worldwide will be able to access this data.

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## **Intersections of Music and Science in the Experimental Violins of Chanot and Vuillaume**

Tensions between innovation and tradition in violin making have impeded the acceptance of most attempts to improve or alter the structure of the instrument. The nineteenth century, however, saw a proliferation of innovative violins as luthiers responded to musical developments and changing social and economic environments during the Industrial Revolution. As nineteenth-century composers called for greater range and diversity in timbre, chromaticism, dynamics, range, and key, instruments were developed to accommodate these demands. But perhaps more important than the purely musical considerations was the interdisciplinary collaboration between musicians and scientists in the pursuit of acoustic perfection. Many luthiers viewed themselves as scientists and engineers, experimenting with acoustic properties and new materials in order to improve upon the existing form of the violin. In a reciprocal relationship, acousticians recognized musical instruments as rich sources for the study of acoustic principles, and luthiers consulted with acousticians and engineers about the technical construction of experimental forms.

François Chanot and Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume each developed innovative violins in attempts to improve the acoustics, playability, and ease of production of the instrument. Chanot, a naval construction engineer, applied a guitar shape to the body of the violin and also experimented with ergonomic body patterns. Vuillaume, a well-known maker whose instruments are still in demand today, collaborated with the medical doctor and acoustician Félix Savart in the search for improved tone production. This paper will examine the environment and conditions in the early-to-mid nineteenth century that impelled Chanot and Vuillaume, among others, to experiment with the traditional form of the violin. Discussing the makers' biographies and examining the technical construction of these instruments for insight into their novel construction techniques and acoustic properties, I will relate this experimental trend to the alliance of the sciences and arts during the Industrial Revolution. A study of the motivations and aims of such experimental violin makers and the technical construction of these instruments offers a look into the cultural milieu of the first decades of the nineteenth century when technology, the arts, history, and science intersected in new ways, challenging musical traditions.

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## Feivel Winger's Violin

This paper will tell the remarkable story of a violin that was once owned by Feivel Winger (1905-2002), a Romanian Jew who was expelled from his home on October 10, 1941. He survived a death march to Transnistria, a territory that Romania had designated as the ethnic dumping ground for the tens of thousands of Jews who had survived several months of brutal genocide. In the Transnistrian ghetto of Shargorod, Winger borrowed a valuable Amati violin that a fellow deportee had grown too weak to play. Winger quickly became popular among Romanian officers and Ukrainian farmers looking for entertainment. He performed at their parties and weddings in exchange for leftover food and precious firewood that he could bring back to his family.

When the Amati was confiscated, Winger was given a much cheaper violin by a Ukrainian farmer as a payment for playing at a wedding. The newly acquired instrument was made around the turn of the twentieth century at the Placht Brothers' Musical Instrument and String Factory. The Placht Brothers were descendants of a proud dynasty of luthiers from Schönbach, Bohemia (now Luby, in the Czech Republic), a town with a rich tradition of violinmaking that dates back to the sixteenth century. By playing the Placht Brothers violin, Winger was able to sustain seventeen family members and friends throughout the Holocaust.

After the war, Winger immigrated to Israel. He continued to treasure the Placht Brothers violin, which he called simply "Friend." When Winger turned 90, his Friend was refurbished by Amnon Weinstein, an Israeli luthier who has spent the past two decades locating and restoring violins that were owned by Jewish musicians during World War II. Although Winger was delighted to be reunited with his Friend, his advanced arthritis made it impossible for him to play again. He nevertheless cherished the instrument to his last day, hugging it as his eyes welled with tears of gratitude for saving his family. Today, Feivel Winger's violin is part of a touring collection of Holocaust instruments known as the Violins of Hope.

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## **A Narrow Escape from Nazi Europe: Mark Brunswick and his work with the National Committee for Refugee Musicians, 1938-1943**

In the early-twentieth-century United States, Jewish and European immigrant scholars, musicians, and composers dominated the academic, orchestral, Vaudeville, and film music scene. While some musicians arrived voluntarily and without issue, others, fleeing the genocide of the Holocaust, lived as immigrants in exile due to religious and political persecution.

In 1924, Jewish-American composer Mark Brunswick (1902-1972) moved to Europe to study with Nadia Boulanger, and later found his niche socializing with members of the Second Viennese school (including Anton Webern and others in Vienna). Returning to the US in 1938, Brunswick suspended his compositional career and founded the Placement Committee for German and Austrian Musicians (later, the National Committee for Refugee Musicians) to aid in the relocation of at-risk musicians and their families during WWII. The committee comprised composers, music critics, music educators, instrumentalists, and patrons of the arts. Anti-Semitism and immigration quotas made relocation difficult, but Brunswick and the committee found sponsors, wrote letters, and utilized personal contacts to acquire visas for musicians fleeing Nazi Germany. Additionally the committee fundraised, facilitated job placement services for immigrants, located organ and piano performance and practice spaces, and provided career counseling, resettlement assistance, and scholarships for exiled children to continue their musical studies. Committee member Irving Berlin, with Carl Fischer Music and others, also spearheaded musical instrument acquisition and repair.

In 1938, the committee helped relocate Jewish-Viennese accordionist Max Hamlisch and his family to New York City. Hamlisch's escape illustrates the risks he took in order to save his family and his musical livelihood, narrowly escaping an SS officer on a train when his many instruments caused him unwelcome attention. Hamlisch performed as a professional accordionist and later directed the Viennese Opera Ball of NY. His son Marvin Hamlisch became an influential theater and film music composer. Narratives of escape, concealment of instruments, and finally, beginning a new American life in music, show the will to survive and the importance of music in survival. The work of Mark Brunswick and the Committee for Refugee Musicians during WWII profoundly changed American musical life beginning in the 1930s, and the effects have persisted through today.

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## **“J. Keat for Graves & Co.,” or How Did the Stölzel Valve Come to America?**

The so-called Stölzel valve, named after its inventor Heinrich Stölzel (1777–1844), is the first type of valve for brass instruments to achieve international and long-lasting success. Initially a German invention, first documented in 1814, it quickly spread to other countries and was in use in cheaper models into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It flourished most prominently in France, but also in Germany, England, and in Russia. Its simplicity decisively fostered the introduction of valve brass instruments in these countries, but it is not usually associated with the United States. Only one American-made Stölzel-valve trumpet is known to survive: NMM 7098 in the Utley Collection at the National Music Museum. This trumpet, made by James Keat for Graves & Co. in Winchester, New Hampshire, some time between 1837 and 1842, appears to play a pivotal role in the introduction of valve brass instruments to the United States from Europe at a time when there was no domestic production to speak of. James Keat (1813–1845), the third son of well-known London brass instrument maker Samuel Keat and well-connected with the London scene, can be considered the first professional European-trained instrument maker to produce valved brasses in the United States. NMM 7098 is therefore of great significance, and it shows Keat’s familiarity with European models. Among the instruments surviving by Keat, this is the only one with valves—the others are keyed bugles—and it paved the way from keyed to valved brasses.

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**“Movin’ On Up”:  
The Great Migration of Piano Manufacturers and Dealers  
to Harlem and the Bronx, New York, in the Period 1880–1930**

In the early 1870s, William Steinway purchased a large tract of land in Astoria in northwestern Queens County, New York, on which Steinway & Sons built a new factory complex of several buildings in the following years, thus greatly increasing their manufacturing capacity. The New York piano firm of Hugo Sohmer, founded in 1872 and therefore some twenty years younger than that of the Steinways, also had increasing needs for space. Like Steinway, Sohmer chose a site in Queens, where his large new factory was built along the East River in 1887, just two miles south-west of the Steinway plant. In spite of the preference for Queens shown by these two important manufacturers, however, it was eastern Harlem and especially the Mott Haven section of the Bronx (also known as the “North Side” or “Annexed District,” and even called “Harlem” by some writers of the time) that attracted the largest number of piano firms during the fifty-year period that marked the final surge of the great wave of piano manufacturing in New York City. Some of these were old companies that moved entirely or partially from quarters farther south in Manhattan, while others were newly established firms that built or acquired their first plants in the burgeoning northern districts. The list contains hundreds of large and small companies, many of them well known to historians of the American piano industry. One example is the Manhattan firm of George Charles Manner (1854), which then became Manner & Gabler, Manner & Co., the Arion Piano-forte Co., and Simpson & Co. As the Estey Piano Co., it built a factory in Mott Haven in 1885–86 that was enlarged in 1890, 1895, 1909, and 1919. This and other companies will be chronicled in the presentation, including descriptions of representative factories and their outputs. A handout will contain maps, pictures of factories in various stages of development, and a check-list identifying companies, their locations, and years of existence.

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## **The Dissemination, Promotion, and Preservation of the Balalaika and Domra in American Society**

The second decade of the 20th century catapulted the balalaika orchestra into the American consciousness. From 1910 to 1918, the Czar's Own Imperial Balalaika Orchestra, under the leadership of Vasili Andreyev and Alexander Kiriloff, completed five tours of the United States, each time receiving overwhelming acclaim. The subsequent formation of the St. Louis (1910), Chicago (1911), New York (1912), Philadelphia (1920), and Detroit (1926) Balalaika Orchestras ignited a 'flame' in America that has yet to be extinguished. Martin Kiszko researched the formation of balalaika orchestras in America using archival material from the University of Illinois Russian Folk Orchestra Archives (Kiszko 1996, 2002). Tamara Livingston (1995) and Natalie Zelinsky (2006) provide a brief historical synopsis of America's first balalaika orchestras, the Balalaika and Domra Association of America (BDAA) and personal reflections of the Russian folk music community in New York City. There are approximately sixteen balalaika orchestras in America today. The aim of these orchestras is that of presenting and preserving America's Russian heritage. It is reported by Alexander Ivashkin that "Russian culture exists more in the West than in Russia itself" (1990). The Russian diaspora in America is approximately 3 million (Dolitsky 2008); so why has the history of Russian folk heritage in America seemingly been overlooked? This presentation is an exploration into the contemporary development of the Russian folk orchestra in America, the impact the BDAA has had on those orchestras, and what the current initiatives are in the promotion and preservation of Russian folk music in America.

**Keywords:** Russia, Balalaika, Domra

**Title:** The Dissemination, Promotion, and Preservation of the Balalaika and Domra in American Society

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## **The lutes of the Metropolitan Museum in the light of the corner point analysis**

The museum owns seven lutes from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. They are in different states of preservation and have labels by Hans Frei (1591), Sixtus Rauchwolf (1596), Vendolino Venere (beginning 17<sup>th</sup> century), Pietro Railich (1669), David Tecchler (1725), Ferdinand Wenger (1726), and Giuseppe Presbler (1797). The paper explains the corner point analysis, a form of dimensional analysis, the preconditions of its applicability, and the falsifiability of its results. It discusses the outcome of the analysis in the context of a sample of about 25 lutes. The analysis refers to the frame giving dimensions of the lute and has two possible uses: It can define more precisely the classification of the different lute models, and can possibly show how the lutes have been designed.

Herbert Heyde

**The social mobility of the 'English' concertina and of its European variants throughout the class structure of Victorian and early 20th century Britain and Europe, and the spread of these instruments throughout the societies and musical traditions of the world, with special reference to the concertina in the USA.**

After its invention in the early 1830s, Charles Wheatstone's 'English' concertina became a fashionable instrument amongst the 'amateur' musicians of the British upper classes of the early 19th century. As more London-based makers appeared, variants of the concertina became adopted as an elite concert instrument amongst the middle classes, and by the later 19th Century, had spread yet again to music hall and street performers, to working men's concertina bands, and had become the instrument of choice of the Salvation Army, both in Britain and the USA.

These British-made instruments faced competition in the 1850s from cheaper 'German' concertinas, of both the Anglo layout, and of the larger German instruments such as the Konzertina, Bandoneon and Chemnitzer concertinas; many of these were taken to the USA as an instrument of choice by European emigrants, which led to their great popularity, especially in the mid-west states of Minnesota, Wisconsin and others.

English emigrants also took their concertinas with them, and there is evidence of concertina bands being formed in the mill towns of the north-eastern USA.

After its serious decline between the world wars, a modest revival of interest in the concertina began in the 1960s in England, spreading to Europe, Australia and, via the folk music revival of the '60s and '70s, throughout the USA. There is now a strong tradition of concertina playing in many US states today, and a growing network of players' clubs, research web-sites and US-based makers.

The story of the instruments' spread and social mobility is illustrated with a wealth of images of Victorian players of all 'classes', and of American players, bands and dancers.

Neil Wayne completed a first degree in Applied Biology at Brunel University and University of Wisconsin-Madison, and continued some PhD-level biochemistry research as a Senior Demonstrator at the University of Nottingham. His concertina research, inspired by meeting Frank E. Butler, grandson of a Victorian concertina-maker, has involved editorship of *Free Reed – The Concertina Newsletter*, which ran to over 30 issues and 3,000 subscribers during the 1970s. He founded the Free Reed record label in 1976; it continues as the specialist source for recordings of Britain's surviving concertina players.

From the early 1970s to 1996, he formed his first collection of concertinas, related European free-reeds and their prototypes, together with an archive of images, music, original documents, and of Wheatstone memorabilia. In the mid-1990s, the Horniman Museum, London acquired his first collection; hitherto, this family of instruments had never before been fully conserved or displayed in any of the world's museums. His current collection of over 400 concertinas and many hundreds of archive items and related instruments is catalogued on-line at [www.concertinamuseum.com](http://www.concertinamuseum.com). Publications include three papers on the history of the Wheatstone concertina (*Galpin Society Journal*, 1992 and 2009; *Galpin Newsletter* Oct 2012), *Free Reed Magazine*, articles in many musical magazines, radio programs on the instrument; his publication summary page is on the research website [www.concertina.com/wayne](http://www.concertina.com/wayne) .

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