



NEWSLETTER

of

The American Musical Instrument Society

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AMIS GOES TO MEMPHIS



Sunset on Beale Street. Photo by Joshua Brown courtesy of <https://www.memphistravel.com/trip-ideas/beale-street>

This summer, members of AMIS came together for our annual conference in one of the most musical cities in the USA—Memphis. The meeting, held from May 31st to June 3rd at the Scheidt Family Performing Arts Center (SFPAC) on the campus of The University of Memphis, promised to be an exciting mix of papers, panels, and discussions with colleagues from around the world highlighting recent research into musical instruments.

The meeting kicked off with an opening reception in the lobby of the newly opened SFPAC (so new that it seemed like the paint was not yet dry!). AMIS members were treated to a variety of snacks and wine, as well as local beer. Straight away there were reunions taking place among long-time members and introductions to be made with first time attendees. The convivial event set the tone for the rest of the conference. Following the reception, the Board of Governors met for their meeting and conference attendees made arrangements for dinner in various restaurants in the local area.



Jeremy Tubbs, Carolyn Bryant-Sarles, Jayson Dobney and Darryl Martin at the opening reception. Photo by Sarah Deters.

The next morning started early with coffee and pastries in the lobby of the SFPAC. As attendees filled up on caffeine and perhaps brushed away a few cobwebs following a late night catching up with friends and colleagues, preparations were underway for a day full of papers. We made our way to the meeting room, which was a black box theater-type space, for the start of the day. Welcomes were given, which included a safety PSA about visiting Memphis. Sadly, for being such an important center for music in the USA, the city does have a dangerous edge, and participants were reminded to be vigilant and safe while traveling and visiting the city.

After the welcomes, the first paper session began. Chaired by Núria Bonet, the session was a celebration of alliteration with its title “Bagpipes, Buttons & Banjos.” The first presenter, Maeve Carey Kozlark, who was also our first student paper, looked at the banjo and Irish identity. In the paper Maeve traced the banjo’s introduction to Ireland and explored how the banjo became a ubiquitous part of Irish traditional music. Next, the session

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NEWSLETTER of the

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The Newsletter is published two times per year for members of the American Musical Instrument Society (AMIS). News items, photographs, and short articles or announcements are invited, as well as any other information of interest to AMIS members.

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President's Message

Dear AMIS colleagues,

I was delighted to serve as one of your hosts for the 2023 annual meeting in Memphis, TN. So many of you undertook the sometimes-complex trip to reach our mid-west/southern US city, famous for its music, but definitely not on today's main travel routes. Sarah's review, presented in the current Newsletter, will remind you of the camaraderie of the meeting and of all the excellent work presented there. Within the next few weeks, many of the presentations will be available at <https://www.amis.org/>.

Planning for our 2024 meeting, to take place May 15–18, is well underway, and details will be available soon at <https://www.amis.org/2024-meeting>. We return to MIM (the Musical Instrument Museum) in Phoenix, where we last met in 2011. MIM's collections have grown since then, as has the museum's dedication to serving the community around it, and I look forward to learning more about the work that goes on there. The deadline for the William E. Gribbon awards for student travel is February 15, 2024; see <https://www.amis.org/awards-grants> for details. I look forward to seeing you in Phoenix!

A members-only area of the AMIS website is under construction and should be available soon. The area will include a membership directory and recent issues of JAMIS, so that members may opt out of receiving the paper copy if they so choose.

With best wishes,
Janet Page
President

News from the Editor's Desk

Dear colleagues,

It was a delight to be able to see many of our readers in person at the meeting in Memphis and I hope you enjoy the overview of last summer's conference contained in this issue. For those who could not attend, the article will give you an insight to the vast array of papers and events organized by the conference committee. Hopefully the overview will inspire AMIS members to attend the 2024 conference in Phoenix! In addition, in this issue are two articles that focus on instruments in university settings. The first article highlights instruments given by Lloyd Farrar and his late wife Doris to Campbellsville University. The second is an article by Darcy Kuronen that explores instruments held by Harvard University and the New England Conservatory and where they are located today. Finally, I am happy to announce that the Book Review section is back with a review of Emanuele Marconi's most recent monograph.

Please take note of a special request for photos, anecdotes, and reminiscences found on page 3. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of AMIS, we are planning a special anniversary edition of the Newsletter. Please don't miss this opportunity to have your stories told or your pictures included in that special additional.

As always, we welcome short submissions (maximum 500 words) as well as short articles (maximum 2,500 words). Email all submissions and suggestions to: amisnewsletter@gmail.com

Sarah Deters
Editor

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS, ANECDOTES, AND REMINISCENCES!

The first issue of the 2024 Newsletter will be a retrospective celebrating fifty years of the society's people and activities. Paper copies of this souvenir issue will be mailed to all current individual members.

Readers are invited to send photos, anecdotes, reminiscences, appreciations, and the like for inclusion. The tone can be breezy and informal, or more sober, if you prefer. It's optimal if you attach dates (or at least years) to photos and events you describe. We have a trove of usable photos already, but we can accommodate many more.

Please send contributions by **February 15, 2024**, to amisnewsletter@gmail.com. Written contributions can be up to 200 words; please consult the editor if you'd like to write longer. For photos, please submit (with caption and photographer's name) in jpg or png format, in high resolution if possible.

See below for some sample contributions.



Photos by Susan E. Thompson of [left] Carolyn Bryant; [middle] Sarah Deters, Jonathan Santa Maria Bouquet, Jayme Kurland, Núria Bonet; [right] tuba exchange (not sure yet about this photographer).

Greeted by Phil Young, 1991

The first AMIS member I met at the first AMIS meeting I attended was Phillip T. Young. The year was 1991, the place was Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. When I arrived at the registration desk, Phil, who was then president of AMIS, was haunting the lobby, greeting arriving members. He warmly welcomed me, a stranger, though he probably knew that I would shortly be delivering a paper on the proto-bassoons described in Mer-senne's treatises. A former bassoonist himself, Phil had been a mentor to Jesse Read, a pioneering player on early bassoons. It was Jesse, my recent teacher, who suggested that I submit a paper proposal for an AMIS meeting.

I was aware already of the first edition of Phil's 2500 Historical Woodwind Instruments (Pendragon Press, 1982), his exhibition catalogs, and his pathbreaking articles on early woodwind makers. He was then preparing a greatly expanded second edition of the census, published in 1993 by Tony Bingham as 4900 Historical Woodwind Instruments. Later we corresponded several times, but this was my only meeting with Phil, as he died in 2002, before I regularly attended AMIS meetings. Readers may not know that the main recital hall at the University of Victoria, where Phil Young taught for two decades, is named after him.

James Kopp

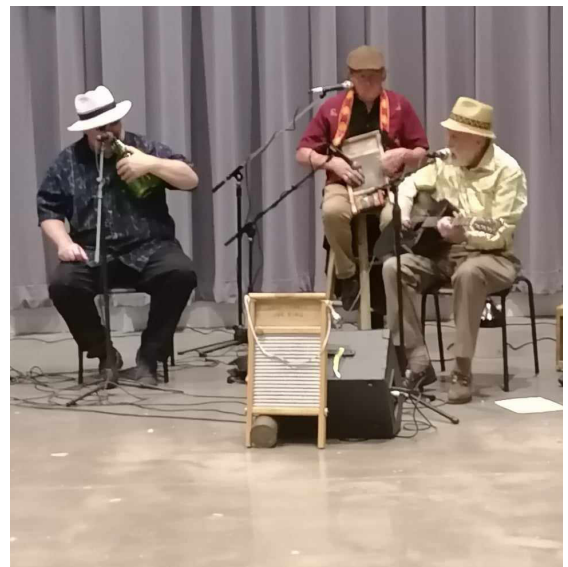
moved on to bagpipes as Cassandre Balosso-Bardin presented on the aesthetics, materials, and symbolism present in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's bagpipe collection. Interesting points from this paper touched on the symbolic nature of the decorative elements of the bagpipes. For example, Italian zampognas are often painted black and red to repel the evil eye and amber is used as a decorative element in many countries because it was believed to contain healing powers. Unfortunately, the third paper did not happen because the presenter, Hannes Vereecke, was unable to attend because of an accident. We all hope that he made a speedy recovery.

After a slightly extended coffee break, Matt Zeller ushered us back for the second session, which looked at different research techniques as well as sound studies. The conference was in a hybrid format and our first virtual presentation kicked off this session. This was given by Jack Adler-McKean and focussed on his method of researching the evolution of the tuba. His research method combines traditional organological approaches alongside those of practice-led research. The result of his study and methodology is an updated timeline of the tuba's development, which calls into question previously written histories. The next paper challenged ideas of what is considered a musical instrument and was given by student presenter Devaney Haruta. In her paper, Devaney explored three "instruments" that provide sonic interest in Japanese gardens. This interesting paper looked at how each "instrument" has a particular timbre and resonant quality and how these are perceived within the garden's overall sonic and visual experience. The final paper of the session was by Massimiliano Guido and Joel Speerstra. Massimiliano presented the paper, which was a look at

the clavichord through the lens of embodied cognition, a term that was unfamiliar to many in the audience.

Box lunches were provided during the break and many participants took the opportunity to listen to a live musical performance during lunch time. The performance featured David Evans and his Jug Band and they played traditional music from the Mississippi Delta. The three-member ensemble included guitar, washboard, harmonica, voice, and of course, the eponymous jug. Conference attendees seemed to enjoy the performance, judging by the number of pictures and videos taking place throughout lunch.

Although it would have been great to have more time to listen to the musical performance, eventually we had to return for the third paper session of the day. This session, chaired by Carol Lynn Ward-Bamford, focused on harps and looked at instruments from South America and Africa. Alfredo Colman virtually presented his paper on harps from Paraguay and their connection to that country's cultural identity. Alfredo traced the legacy of the instruments from their introduction by Jesuit missionaries through to the modern day and how the instruments led to the creation of different genres of Paraguayan music. The next two papers highlighted a large research project focusing on harps from Central Africa. First of the duo was Sylvie le Bomin, who virtually presented the results of a survey being undertaken that focuses on categorizing and quantifying the differences in the construction and forms of harps from Central Africa in order to identify where the instrument was constructed. Sadly, Sylvie told us that no pattern seemed to have emerged yet, but a large amount of data was collected for further analysis. Next Salomé Strauch presented her student paper on the methodology she created in order to meticulously catalogue harps from Central Africa. The exhaustive catalogue



David Evans and his Jug Band performing during the first lunch break. Photo by Sarah Deters.

process was impressive, but perhaps a bit daunting to many members of the audience.

During the coffee break many lively discussions were had about the presentations so far and speakers were sought out to answer additional questions or to give comment on various ideas. In particular, the papers on the African harps seemed to raise a number of issues, with conference attendees talking about research methods, the value of oral histories, and decolonizing approaches to cataloguing.

For the final paper session of the day, it was John Watson's turn to chair three papers on keyboard instruments. Darryl Martin's paper looked at the development of the double manual harpsichord. Through the examination of archival sources, Darryl presented a paper that laid out the reasons why the double manual harpsichord may have first been made in England rather than in the Low Countries. Two students from the instrument making course at the Royal Conservatory in Ghent followed. The first was by Bastian Neelen, who presented on his project to reconstruct the original disposition of a Fleischer harpsichord. Bastian gave an excellent overview of Fleischer harpsichords and why he thinks the particular harpsichord he was studying and making a copy of was originally with 16' 8' 4' registers. Kamiel Dockx followed with his reconstruction of a claviorgan by Hauslaib. Kamiel outlined the history and importance of the claviorgan as a luxury item, compared the extant Hauslaib instrument, and presented his progress on his reconstruction. There was also an exciting moment when he revealed that he may have found another instrument by the same maker.

In the evening, many of the conference attendees made their way to Beale Street. This famous street in downtown Memphis is significant to the history of Memphis and to the development of blues music. Conference attendees could participate in a walking tour of Beale Street provided by Tyler Frits. The tour explored the history of this historically Black neighbourhood and its importance to the development of the blues. After the tour, participants experienced the many blues venues, restaurants, and bars lining the strip. The evening was warm and pleasant and was a welcome excursion. It was also important for conference attendees to be

able to experience the music and culture that makes Memphis famous.

The next morning was another early start for those wanting to grab a coffee and pastry before the start of the papers, which started with a session on string instruments chaired by Jayme Kurland. Esteban Mariño Garza started the session with his virtual presentation exploring the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century history of the cittern through modern philosophical theory, including the writings of Marx and Adorno. The next paper was presented by Riccardo Angeloni and looked at the conservation and restoration of the Serafin violin over time. Through different examination methods, including archival and scientific analysis, Riccardo was able to present a thorough history of the interventions of the instrument. It was equally a historiography of a violin and an examination of changing concepts of conservation and restoration in Italy. The final presentation of the session was a student paper on the *jarana* given by Wesley Somers. In his paper, Wesley picked apart the idea of the *jarana* as a baroque guitar and how this concept has shaped instrument making and *jarocho* performance. In particular, he looked at

the *jarana barroca*, an imagined instrument that creates a version of a guitar that never really existed. It was an interesting paper that brought to light neocolonialism and the relationship between history, perception, reality, and capitalism.

After the coffee break, we transitioned back for our next session chaired by Allison Alcorn and with the

intriguing title of "Musical Machines." Tom Strange started the explorations of musical machines with an examination of electric pianos in America. In the paper, Tom walked participants through the many different designs of electric pianos (starting with the Helmholtz resonator from the 1880s) and posited why the instrument did not truly become successful until the Fender Rhodes piano was released. Next up was Núria Bonet with another paper that called into question the concept of what is a musical instrument. In her paper, Núria looked at the jukebox as an instrument and presented her research based on observations in pubs in Plymouth, England. Through examining how people interact with the jukebox, Núria was able to successfully argue that this tool for playing music allows musical

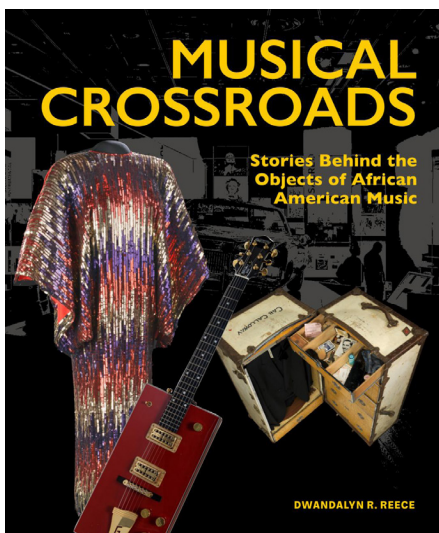


Blues music on Beale Street. Many conference attendees took advantage of the live music venues while in Memphis and attended performances like this one of Blind Mississippi Morris at the Blues Stage on Beale. Photo by Sarah Deters.

participation without musical skill. By the end of the presentation, not only did Núria make her case, but she also had many volunteers willing to help with any future research. The session then moved on with William E. Hettrick and his paper that put the record straight on the incorporation of player mechanisms in American piano production. As always, Bill's thorough research was peppered with anecdotes and accompanied with his signature handouts.

After the papers, the group moved to a showcase of clarinets on display in the SFPAC. The instruments were collected by Nophachai Cholthitchanta and he was on hand to tell the stories of the acquisitions and to answer questions about the instruments. It was a bit of a "show and tell" type of experience and clarinet aficionados, such as Al Rice, were more than happy to discuss the finer points of the instruments in the collection. Following the clarinet chat, the group grabbed box lunches and were encouraged to attend the AMIS General Meeting. The meeting was conducted in its usual efficient manner with reports on the organization's finances and various initiatives.

Following the General Meeting, Jayson Dobney chaired a panel discussion led by four representatives from the Smithsonian Institute. Dwandalyn Reece, Steven Lewis, Hannah Grantham, and Timothy Anne Burnside each presented on the stories behind different objects related to African American music. The stories all highlighted different aspects of the collections of the National Museum of African American History and Culture and are included in their recent publication *Musical Crossroads: Stories Behind the Objects of African American Music*. Included in the presentations were musical instruments, costumes, and ephemera from well-known musicians, which highlighted the importance of material culture within organological research.



Front cover of *Musical Crossroads*.
Image courtesy of <https://nmaahc.si.edu>

During the break we all received a special treat – locally made popsicles called Mempops! It was truly a delight to see how professionals of all ages were transported back to childhood when given an ice-cold Mempop. It was an especially welcome treat to beat the heat on a Memphis summer day.



Smiles all around as (from left to right) Patrick Connor Dittamo, Lisa Beebe, Robert Warren Apple, and Darryl Martin enjoy their Mempops during the break. Photos by Sarah Deters.

Next the group took a trip across campus to visit the Art Museum of the University of Memphis. The museum had three temporary exhibitions focused on regional blues music and related visual arts. Included in the visit was a guided tour by Tucker Nance, who was the guest curator on a temporary exhibition celebrating High Water Records, a record label that documented, recorded, preserved, and promoted the Mississippi Delta region's country, blues, and Black gospel music. Dr. David Evans, an ethnomusicologist and founder of the record label, was also on hand to talk about the items on display. The day was winding down following the museum visit. After returning to the SFPAC for an update on the MIRCAT project by John Watson and Darcy Kuronen, the day was over and conference attendees had the evening for themselves.

The final day of the conference started with a session on American musical instruments chaired by Carolyn Bryant-Sarles. Jayson Dobney was the first presenter and his thought-provoking paper explored the legacy of the side drum, not as a symbol of freedom as it is often characterized in American ephemera, but as a possible symbol of oppression, menace, and danger for African Americans. The paper was one that brought to light how different communities can view an object in completely contrasting ways and that when interpreting these objects, museum curators need to consider the legacies of colonialism and slavery. Following Jayson's paper was one on innovations in the American pipe organ in the nineteenth century given by student

Abraham Ross. Abraham explored the uniquely American style of organ making and how the instrument was used within American music. The final paper in the session was by Loren Ludwig and focused on New England viol traditions. Looking at extant instruments, Loren elucidated the unique construction techniques of the instruments and how these were related to the diverse musical culture found in eighteenth-century New England.

The focus of the next set of papers shifted east with two papers looking towards China. Michael Suing was the chair and after he wrangled people away from their coffees during the break, we all settled in for a presentation by Stewart Carter and Zhiyu Zhang. In their paper, they explored how European musical instrument design inspired “reforms” in traditional Chinese musical instruments in the Qing Dynasty and how the Jesuit missionary Joseph-Marie Amiot interpreted these reforms and wrote about them for a European audience. Another paper which made connections between European and Chinese music was given by Patrick Huang. Patrick, one of the student presenters, compared the stringing of the ancient Greek lyre to the early *guqin* and his presentation was a whirlwind of ancient music theory.

The two papers were then followed by a session on pedagogy. Bradley Strauchen-Scherer welcomed our first presenter, Allison Alcorn. Allison walked us through her fantastic survey of children’s literature specifically about musical instruments and the results of a study focusing on the effectiveness of these books in engaging young readers. The paper highlighted the importance of engaging children with musical instruments in a time when music provisions are being cut from schools and how children’s books can be an important part of this process. The next paper, given by Eddie Chia-Hao Hsu, continued with exploring how we can better engage people with musical instruments. Eddie demonstrated how the MIM in Phoenix incorporates audio and video into their displays and how this enhances representation of world cultures and indigenous musical practices.

The final paper session of the conference was after lunch. This bumper session had four papers looking at wind instruments and was chaired by Jim Kopp. The session started with a look by student presenter Patrick Connor Dittamo at the difficulty of obtaining high quality reproduction instruments by New York Pro Musica performers during the early music movement. Patrick’s paper was an important look at how the relationship between musicians and makers helped to drive the development of high quality reproductions. Robert Warren Apple followed with a paper continuing

his exploration of all things keyed trumpet. In his paper, Robert presented musical examples that showed that the transition from keys to valves was not immediate and that there was a longer transitional period than many think. Continuing with keys, but this time on the flute, Robert Bigio introduced the work of Abel Siccama, an innovative flute maker in London, whose design expertise, aggressive marketing, and use of celebrity endorsements would be right at home today. The final paper was a virtual presentation by Emanuele Marconi, who explored the La Couture-Boussey region, the “cradle of wind instruments,” and how the production of musical instruments in this area of France has shaped the people, life, and even topography of this area of Normandy. Finalizing the academic side of the conference was a lecture-demonstration by James E. Cunningham and Glen Gillis. The duo presented on the sewerphone, an instrument invented by James that draws on elements from the didgeridoo but uses plastic tubing commonly used by plumbers. In the presentation the duo explained the sonic properties of the instruments and played various pieces for sewerphone and saxophone.



Sewerphone and Saxophone by Adolphe Sax.

Photo courtesy: <https://jamesecunningham.org/2020/01/25/dgc-sonic-eclipse/>

The last event of the conference was the banquet, which took place in one of the rooms of the SFPAC. After a mingling session, participants made their way in to the banquet space and found a place at the many round tables in the room. The dinner was buffet-style and comprised of a variety of dishes, many with a slightly southern flair. As participants had dinner, the conversations continued, many reflecting on presentations of the conference, while others were reminiscent of previous AMIS meetings. The light-hearted nature of the dinner continued as we moved onto the award presentations. Darcy Kuronen was this year’s Curt Sachs awardee and his speech was everything one would ex-



Darcy accepting his Curt Sachs Award from AMIS President Janet Page at the 2023 AMIS banquet.

pect from the AMIS member with a reputation for fun, puns, and jokes. Accompany Darcy's speech were several photos (some slightly incriminating) that spanned his career and the relationships that grew through our organization. But all jokes aside, the speech was a touching reflection on a fulfilling career in musical instruments. The Nicholas Bessaraboff Prize was given in absentia to joint winners, to Robert Adelson for his book *Erard: A Passion for the Piano* and to Murray Campbell, Joël Gilbert, and Arnold Myers for *The Science of Brass Instruments*. Also unable to attend the meeting was the recipient of the Frances Densmore Prize, Jennifer Kyker, who received the prize for her article "Music under the Ground: Ethnomusicological Research on the Ground-Bow in Africa." Luckily the winner of the Frederick R. Selch Award was present at the dinner. This year's award for best student paper was presented to Wesley Somers for his paper "The Jarana as Baroque Guitar: A Neocolonial Claiming of Jarocho Instrument-Making Traditions."

As the evening came to a close, people started to make their way back to their accommodations or to bars to carry on socializing, many remarking that it was hard to believe the conference was already over. Special thanks to the local arrangements team of Janet Page, Joel Roberts, and Jeremy Tubbs for all their hard work and planning. It is a lot of work to host our annual meeting and a heartfelt thanks goes to them for pulling it off so effortlessly.



Sarah Deters

Grant Supports Study of Vietnamese Monochord



Lisa Beebe poses with a Vietnamese *đàn bầu*, the focus of her research.

The JAMIS publication grant for 2022 was awarded to Lisa Beebe for research into contemporary innovations for the *Đàn Bầu* monochord within the Canadian-Vietnamese diaspora. A focus of the research is the fretted *đàn bầu*, invented in the 1970s by Chi Khac Ho; his wife, Bic Hoang, based in Vancouver, BC, is the foremost performer on the fretted monochord. The publication grant will allow Dr. Beebe to photograph and measure the instrument and to discuss its construction in detail with Ms. Bic. As of 2016, nearly 35,000 Vietnamese immigrants had settled in Greater Vancouver.

Lisa Beebe received a PhD in Cultural Musicology from the University of California, Santa Cruz, in 2017. In 2019, she was appointed an assistant professor of music at Cosumnes River College in Sacramento, CA, where she teaches world music, western music history and literature, history of rock & roll, and basic musicianship.

The American Musical Instrument Society offers an annual grant of up to \$1,000 to help defray the costs of preparing an article appropriate for publication in the *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society*. Instructions for applying for the grant are online at: <https://www.amis.org/jamis-publication-grant>.



Farrar Gift to Campbellsville University

Lloyd Farrar, a longtime AMIS member, has restored more than eighty historic drums with his son Mark Farrar. One of these was recently donated to Campbellsville University in Kentucky, joining an earlier gift of historic and modern pianos. The mid-nineteenth century drum shell, plain and unsigned, is now restored as a rope-tensioned marching snare drum.

With his late wife, Doris Vogt Farrar, Lloyd Farrar in 2012 donated four pianos, a historic pipe organ, a reproduction fortepiano, and assorted books, sheet music, posters, and photographs relating to the pianos. The pianos now form the Vogt-Farrar Piano Collection at Campbellsville University in Campbellsville, Kentucky.

Taken together, the historic pianos demonstrate the evolution of the American piano industry from before the Civil War to the early twentieth century. Three pianos are rectangular grands (sometimes called table grands), each built in Baltimore during the nineteenth century. The oldest, dating from ca. 1846, is signed by the partners Knabe and Gaehle and built with an iron frame, the strings running in the same direction without overlay.

The second was built ca. 1852–54 by George Eggert and Charles Bobbeth, one of three known surviving pianos by the two partners. The partnership was interrupted by the Civil War in 1861, when Bobbeth joined the Union army and Eggert joined the Confederate army. According to Farrar, Bobbeth returned from the war with his right arm useless, but Eggert welcomed him back and cared for him for the remainder of his life. Dating from ca. 1885 is a third rectangular grand, also made by Knabe, a famed piano builder whose name is still used today by the Samick Music Corporation.

A fourth piano in the gift—a “modern” Steinway model L, dating from 1927—is in studio use in the University’s music department. A fortepiano made in Vienna in 1790 by Anton Walter served as a model for a reproduction instrument completed in 1995 by Thomas and Barbara Wolff. The Wolff replica, also part of the Farrar gift, is in concert use in the University music department.

A one-manual pipe organ, made in Baltimore in 1875 by August Pomplitz, is one of fewer than a dozen surviving from approximately 225 built by the firm. The action is mechanical and the air pressure was originally driven by water, but an electric blower is now installed. The action was restored by B. Rule & Company and a new case was built to replace the

original, which had not survived. For reasons of space, the organ was installed in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church, which is next door to the University’s music building.

Lloyd and Doris Farrar met as undergraduate students at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Lloyd, who taught musicology for many years at the University of Illinois, formed a large collection, concentrating on historic brass and keyboard instruments. Most of his collection and research papers were donated to the Sousa Archives and Center for American Music at the University of Illinois.

Doris Farrar, who taught piano privately for forty years, was also a researcher of piano repertory. Through her efforts, several works by the late nineteenth-century American composer Amy Beach were recovered and published.



The Pomplitz organ at Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Photo courtesy of Campbellsville University. Photo by Drew Tucker.



Knabe Square Piano, circa 1885. Photo courtesy of Campbellsville University.

Boston Area Instrument Collections on the Move

Darcy Kuronen

During my many years working with the major collection of musical instruments at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, I also took interest in various other smaller collections of instruments in the New England area. These differed greatly in size, scope, and location, many housed in smaller museums and historical societies. But some belonged to colleges, universities, and conservatories. Two such instances of the latter are Harvard University's Music Department in Cambridge and the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. In recent times these two particular collections have become essentially dismantled and are now largely relocated elsewhere.

The group of about 130 instruments at Harvard is extremely diverse in both coverage and quality, and in the words of one observer was more of an assemblage than a collection. It contains four rather fine members of the viola da gamba family and a viola d'amore, all donated by Mary Otis Isham. Some of these viols are, or at least were, in playing condition and were periodically used by students. At the other end of the spectrum are several fairly ordinary instruments donated by faculty members and others, though among these is a somewhat rare contrabass sarrusophone (with its original wooden storage box) made by Mahillon during the second half of the 19th century and donated in 1961 by composer and former Harvard music professor Walter Piston. The largest group of instruments was collected by Edward R. Hewitt and is composed primarily of plucked strings. Most of the thirty-five instruments from the Hewitt collection, however, are in quite poor condition and appear to have been in rather bad shape before coming to Harvard. Not surprisingly, the music department had also acquired a replica harpsichord and virginal made in 1950 and 1961 by two of its more illustrious graduates in the field of organology, namely Frank Hubbard and William Dowd. Also present are a clavichord and harpsichord, dated 1906 and 1907 respectively, made by Arnold Dolmetsch during his time working at the Chickering Piano Factory in Boston.

The collection occupied a sizeable room in the music department's building that required climate control and contained several keyboard instruments (mostly modern replicas) besides the above-mentioned examples, and these understandably took up a sizable footprint. I was consulted in 2017 to offer thoughts about the collection and what might be the best disposition for it. The collection had likewise been surveyed in 1989 by Susan Thompson, curator of the Yale Collection of Musical Instruments. Although I did not offer specific suggestions

for the future of all of the collection's instruments, it was clear that the Music Department was anxious to regain use of their "instrument room" for other purposes, recognizing that most of the collection was not being adequately utilized by Harvard students or outside researchers. A bit of research on the part of the Music Department determined that the instruments from Hewitt were actually placed on loan to Harvard in 1957, and that the loan stipulated that if and when the Music Department did not find the collection useful, it should be returned to the lender. Hewitt had passed away, but descendants of his family were associated with Ringwood Manor, a historical property in Northern New Jersey. So, this group of mostly string instruments was ultimately sent to Ringwood Manor, which has reportedly expressed interest in "restoring" them. As for the various other instruments still belonging to the Music Department, the viols are now displayed in the Department's Isham Memorial Library, the keyboards have been moved to the piano technician's workshop, and the other remaining instruments distributed here and there among faculty offices. The room the instruments formerly occupied has justifiably been converted to a new media lab that better suits the current needs of the Department.

Soon after the New England Conservatory of Music (NEC) was founded in Boston in 1867 by conductor and organist Eben Tourjée, he began to acquire historical and ethnographic musical instruments with an aim of emulating similar collections at the musical conservatoires in Paris, Brussels, and Berlin. It is unclear from where or from whom Tourjée acquired instruments early on, but an illustration from the Conservatory's course catalog of 1883-1884 shows a considerable number of them already on exhibition in a large custom-made display case. In 1885, an unknown number of Japanese instruments that had been displayed at the New Orleans World's Exposition (also known as the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition) were donated to NEC with assistance from the Japanese government. By 1902 the collection had apparently further grown in scope, and most, if not all, of its instruments (especially the ethnographic examples) were included in a quite large exhibition at Boston's Horticultural Hall, held under the auspices of Chickering and Sons piano company. A small catalog of this exhibition was published, with photographs showing many of NEC's instruments.

A Master of Music thesis written in 1967 by NEC graduate student Elizabeth Burnett constituted a catalog of the entire collection and is invaluable in understanding its history. Regrettably, Burnett's catalog exposed a history of neglect, considerable loss, and damage of instruments at NEC over the years. Of the 130 or so instruments that at one time belonged to the Conservatory, 41 are believed to have been missing since sometime prior to about 1985. Among two of the most mysterious disappearances, which have never been accounted for, are two English pianos, a grand by Clementi and a rare square by Christopher Ganer that had a rank of organ pipes added to it (the Ganer piano was discussed in this Newsletter in 2006, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 10-11).



In 2003, I worked with NEC's collection in order to improve the display of the extant instruments in preparation for the centennial of the Conservatory's famed Jordan Hall auditorium. I and an MFA colleague did a thorough job of sprucing up an antique exhibition case and creating new labels, but most of these instruments were reportedly returned to storage just a few years later as the needs changed for the room in which they were displayed. In the process of this work, however, I was fortunately able to negotiate the donation of twelve instruments to the MFA in 2005, all pieces that could be better cared for and studied in a museum setting (a very rare and early Irish upright piano from this group was described in this Newsletter in 2008, Vol. 37, No. 3, pp. 11-12). These were joined in 2021 by the acquisition of a 1620 Flemish virginal by Joannes Ruckers, which had been on loan to the Museum from NEC since 1973.

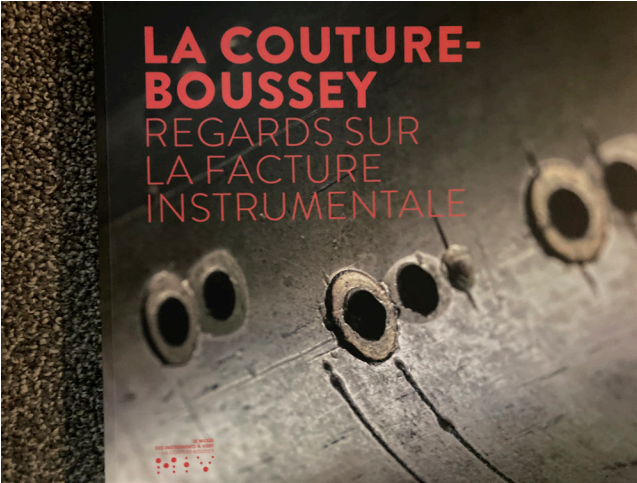
In 2018, I recommended to NEC that the remaining instruments from their collection be donated to some other deserving institution or perhaps auctioned somewhere, based on how inadequately the collection had been managed over the years and clearly was no longer serving its originally conceived role. I was thus pleased to learn that in 2022, fifty-two instruments from the collection were safely transferred to a new museum in Nilüfer Municipality in Bursa, Turkey, per a suggestion from NEC faculty member Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol. The main inventory of the Nilüfer Municipality Dr. Hüseyin Parkan Sanlıkol Musical Instruments Museum (MEM) consists of about 300 instruments collected from around the world by Sanlıkol's father, and Mehmet is the museum's curator and project director. So, the NEC instruments have gone to a good new home where they are being cared for and appreciated in an appropriate manner.

There are reportedly still a few instruments of historical interest remaining at NEC, though the reasons they were not donated with the others are not entirely clear. Among these are three violas da gamba (from an original four, one of which is lost) made in Boston during the early 1900s by Arnold Dolmetsch at the Chickering Piano Factory. They were purchased by NEC soon after their manufacture, presumably as part of Boston's pioneering interest in historically informed performance on instruments of the baroque and renaissance periods. As these viols are no longer state-of-the-art instruments for the performance of early music, however, it is hoped that they will someday be placed somewhere where they too can be carefully preserved as part of America's musical history.

The two situations described above well illustrate why educational institutions, be they universities, conservatories, and sometimes even prep schools, are often not ideal settings for the preservation of historical instruments. Having old and interesting instruments at such places might have seemed novel at one time, but it is clear that without a consistent and professional curatorial presence these objects can become damaged, physically deteriorate, and generally be neglected. Institutions that only have modest-sized instrument collections clearly don't have the resources to keep a curator on staff, which is why it is probably best that some of them start considering a better disposition for their collections at this point in time. To that end, AMIS recently posted a page on its website devoted to this topic, soliciting inquiries from colleges and universities who might have questions about exactly what they should do with historical instruments they oversee, whether it's a large group of pieces or even a single square piano that has come their way. 🍷

BOOK REVIEWS

La Couture-Boussey: regards sur la facture instrumentale, ed. Emanuele Marconi. La Couture-Boussey: Le Musée des instruments à vent, 2022. 275 pp., many color, sepia, and black-and-white photographs. €25.00 (paper). French and English texts.



By the seventeenth century, La Couture-Boussey, a village in the Eure district of Normandy, was a center for artisanal making of woodwind instruments. Building on this tradition, La Couture-Boussey region had by the mid-nineteenth century become a focal point for the industrial making of woodwind and brass instruments, comparable in output to Mirecourt, Markneukirchen, the Vogtland, and western Bohemia. In this lavishly illustrated, bilingual volume, Emanuele Marconi, curator of the Musée des instruments à vent, traces the musical products, tools, and artisans of La Couture-Boussey and the nearby villages of Garennes-sur-Eure, Ivry-la-Bataille, and Ezy-sur-Eure.

Marconi's historical narrative traces the evolution and transformation of musical instruments via scientific, technical, and acoustical discoveries. In the optimistic spirit of the century, makers worked to refine the tone quality of musical instruments and increase output through mechanization of both the instruments and the production processes.

From 1819, local firms—including Godfroy, Martin, Louis, Auguste Buffet, Laube, and various Thibouville firms—exhibited in international exhibitions. Many opened retail shops in Paris, while production remained in La Couture. Firms founded or relocated later included Hérouard, Laubé, Juliot, Martin, Couesnon, Georges Leblanc, and several firms bearing the

Thibouville name. Parts and accessories produced in the region were sold locally but also exported. In the nearby village of Ezy-sur-Eure, the Jeuffroy Garçon tool factory produced tooling for wind instrument factories.

New materials employed included nickel silver for keys, ebonite (hard rubber) for woodwind mouthpieces and liners, and exotic woods—including ebony, cocuswood, and rosewood from colonial forests. Steam-powered saws and lathes replaced manual or waterpower in La Couture after 1866, while electrical engines were known there from 1904. Labor strikes in the 1880s preceded the formation of a workers' syndicate, whose members in 1887 founded the museum that survives today. During agricultural harvest seasons, many home workers in the music industry doubled as harvesters. Most read music and played an instrument, often in a musical society that was active from 1849 until the early 1980s.

Specialties by World War I included turning, assembly, and finishing. During wartime, 170 of 800 workers were mobilized, and fifty-eight instrument makers died in the war. In the inter-war period, improvements in municipal infrastructure included natural gas pipelines and an electrical utility. A municipal water tower was erected in 1932, followed by new water pipes, a fire engine, and paved streets.

Robert Malerne and Noblet-Leblanc became the two largest makers in La Couture in the 1930s, before World War II led to the closure of Couesnon and Thibouville-Lamy. After production resumed in 1946, the American market was most important. During the 1950s and 60s, 400 of 700 inhabitants were employed in making woodwinds, parts, or accessories—eighty percent of French production of these items.

The pages of this volume are large—roughly 9.5 by 10.5 inches, or 24 by 27 cm—and the illustrations are generous. From the black-and-white era are revealing photographs of factory workers, workshop interiors, and early advertisements. More than eighty pages of sumptuous color photographs show instruments, accessories, tools, and machines, frequently including close-up details.

This book, as well as other publications, can be ordered on the museum's store page:

https://eure-mb-prestataire.for-system.com/z8502x-128727e2m1379_fr-Le-Musee-des-instruments-a-vent-27750-La-Couture-Boussey.aspx



James Kopp

The Erard Grecian Harp in Regency England Panagiotis Pouloupoulos



During the early nineteenth century, the harp was transformed into a sophisticated instrument that became as popular as the piano. This was largely the result of the harp's intensive technical, musical and visual upgrading, which gradually led to the transition from the single- to the double-action pedal harp. A major figure in this process was Sébastien Erard (1752-1831),

a tireless inventor and prolific manufacturer of harps and pianos operating branches in Paris and London. With the introduction in 1811 of the so-called "Grecian" model, the first commercially built double-action harp, the Erard firm managed to establish the harp not only as a novel, state-of-the-art instrument, but also as a powerful symbol of luxury, wealth and status.

Drawing upon a wide variety of primary sources, including surviving instruments, archival documents, and iconographical evidence, this book provides a comprehensive overview of the development, production and consumption of the Erard Grecian harp in Regency England. The innovative approaches employed by the Erard firm in the manufacture and marketing of harps are measured against competitors but also against the work of leading entrepreneurs in related trades, ranging from the mechanical devices and precision tools of James Watt, Henry Maudslay, or Jacques Holtzapffel, through the ornamental pottery of Josiah Wedgwood, to the clocks and watches of George Prior or Abraham-Louis Breguet. In addition, the book examines the omnipresent role of the harp in the education, art, fashion and literature of the Regency era, discussing how the image and perception of the instrument were shaped by groundbreaking advances, such as the Industrial Revolution, Neoclassicism, and the Napoleonic Wars.

For more details about the book see:

<https://boydellandbrewer.com/9781783277728/the-erard-grecian-harp-in-regency-england/>

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