



JESUS COLLEGE MUSIC SOCIETY

&

PICCOLA ACCADEMIA MONTISI

present

STANISLAV GRES

RUSSIA

**IN THE FIRST OF THREE RECITALS BY
INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS ON THE BRUCE KENNEDY
HARPSICHORD AT JESUS COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE**

Saturday 26th October 2013

8.00pm

BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE MASTER AND FELLOWS

THE INSTRUMENT

In the initial discussions about the commissioning of a harpsichord for Jesus College, Mark Williams and I considered details of the Chapel's acoustic, the interests of the donor and, in particular, the requirements of the instrument for accompanying concerts, and acting as a continuo, solo and teaching instrument. I soon reached the conclusion that a double-manual version of an original instrument I had seen some 25 years ago in Hamburg – the 1728 Christian Zell which had then been recently restored – was the instrument needed for these circumstances.

When I made my first “copy” of the instrument in 1986 for the current harpsichordist of the music ensemble Musica Antiqua Köln I attempted to make as faithful a copy of the original as I could, an approach that I always adhered to when first getting to know another maker's work. Sometimes I would repeat the process several times to be more certain of his ‘acoustic world’.

But today, after the experience of thirty years of building more than 160 harpsichords of various historic models, I have started to shape those diverse ideas into my own vision of what any given musical situation demands. It was clear that Jesus College needed the clarity and speech-like quality of a continuo instrument to accompany the choir and other musical ensembles that perform in the Chapel, while still enjoying the power, depth and diversity of a double-manual harpsichord for concertos and solo performance suitable for various composers. The original 1728 Zell model was an excellent starting point but its keyboard key lengths were excessively long – not designed for fast ornamentation in the bass as is sometimes required in French music – so they were modified.

The original soundboard produces a very refined sound, curiously one that is better listened to at a distance than close up to the instrument or even at the position of the player himself. To create a more focused sound that could project its sound at all locations, I have made modifications to the soundboard design, while never altering the original scaling and pluck points of this essentially northern German “sound ideal” that works so well for Bach's polyphony. As to its décor, while I chose elements such as the leg design or the gold motifs on the case that are typical of the first half of the 18th century, the colours were specifically chosen to fit the chapel. The soundboard painting features the 1575 version of the College Arms.

BRUCE KENNEDY

The double-manual harpsichord bearing the name of Christian Zell (dated 1728) and now housed in Hamburg's *Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe* is one of the finest surviving examples of harpsichord building from a tradition historically very little understood by scholars. Pioneering writers such as Frank Hubbard (in his celebrated *Three Centuries of Harpsichord Building*, 1965) tended to see German instruments as imperfect in comparison to instruments of the French and Flemish traditions. Wrote Hubbard (in whose time, to be fair, there were very few period German instruments in good enough condition to judge): “the commanding position of German composers in the history of Baroque music forces us to take German harpsichords seriously. If it were not for this fact we should dismiss them as well made but not well thought out.” Even later writers such as Peter Williams write with a sort of condescension of the “neutral tone” of instruments contemporary to J.S. Bach, and reserve most of their praise for Germany's organs or clavichords rather than for their harpsichords. Generations of harpsichordists have been trained on a Franco-Flemish sound model by which they judge other instruments, and as a result the various types of German instruments are generally not well-represented in the discography of Baroque music.

With the historically-informed restoration of harpsichords in a finer state than it has ever been, we are in a much better position to judge the German school (or schools) of building. Certainly, the builders of a cosmopolitan port such as Hamburg were making instruments for a wealthy and discerning clientele, and the superb tone quality of the instruments attests to the high regard in which Zell was held by his contemporaries. To our modern ears, the 1728 double manual from his hand possesses a timbre that one could define as more feminine in contrast to the forceful-sounding instruments of his fellow Hamburgers Hieronymus and J.A. Hass. The ‘front 8-foot’ (the register plucked closest to the nut) is not overly nasal and the ‘back 8-foot’ has a bright, golden tone in the treble and a distinctive and complex bass. Visually, the original is also one of the most impressive and perhaps even overdecorated instruments surviving: each panel of the lid is surrounded by false tortoise-shell painting and the sharps are topped with tortoise shell as well, while the case is painted in a beautiful dark-green chinoiserie that must have been breathtaking when it was new. I have little doubt that Johann Sebastian Bach would have come into contact with instruments if not by Zell himself than at least of this general style (by Fleischer, for instance) on his many visits to Hamburg.

THE PROGRAMME

Dieterich Buxtehude (1637-1707)
Praeludium (Toccata) in G minor

Johann Adam Reincken (1643-1722)
Partite diverse sopra l'Aria
“Schweiget mir von Weibernehmen”
 (“Auf die Mayerin”)

Heinrich Scheidemann (1596-1663)
Ballett

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621)
“Mein junges Leben hat ein End”

Matthias Weckmann (1616-1674)
Canzona in C major

Johann Jacob Froberger (1616-1667)
“*Plainte faite a Londres pour passer la Melancolie*”

Louis Couperin (1626-1661)
Prelude a l’imitation de Mr. Froberger

Georg Böhm (1661-1733)
Suite in F major
(Allemande - Courante - Sarabande - Gigue)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Concerto in D minor BWV 974 *
(Andante - Adagio - Presto)

* This work is an arrangement of the Oboe Concerto by Alessandro Marcello (1669-1747)



We are very grateful to Dr Daniel Tidbar for preparing the instrument for this evening's concert

STANISLAV GRES

Stanislav Gres, born in Novosibirsk Siberia in 1980, began his piano studies in Novosibirsk Glinka Conservatory with Mery Lebenzon, Natalia Melnikova and Elizaveta Romanovskaya. In 2004 his interest turned towards the performance of early music and he entered a postgraduate study in the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, where he studied harpsichord, hammerklavier and basso continuo with Olga Martynova.

Since then he has continued his studies of the harpsichord, clavichord and baroque organ by participating in masterclasses and workshops given by many of the worlds leading early keyboard performers including Bob Van Asperen, Menno Van Delft, Peter Van Dijk, Jesper Christensen, Christoph Hammer, Ketil Haugsand, Gustav Leonhardt, Zvi Meniker, Davitt Moroney, Jurgen Schrape, Ella Sevskaaya, Skip Sempé and Christopher Stenbridge. Stanislav approaches music from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries through historical styles of interpretation, paying particular attention to the selection of instruments and temperaments. He has a particular interest in early Italian music.

He devotes his time mainly to his activity as a soloist and as a member of various ensembles including The Pocket Symphony, Moscow Baroque, BaRockers, Pfeyffer and Hermitage, performing baroque music in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and in Novosibirsk. He also teaches the harpsichord in the Gnessin Special Music School and Rubinstein Music School.

In 2006 his ensemble BaRockers performed at Utrecht Early Music Festival. In 2010 he was awarded the third prize in the international harpsichord competition “Musica Antiqua” in Brugge and the Baerenreiter Urtext Prize in the Bach competition in Leipzig.



OTHER RECITALS IN THIS SERIES

Saturday 1st March 2013

8.00pm

KORNEEL BERNOLET

(BELGIUM)

Böhm and Beyond

Music by Georg Böhm and his contemporaries

Saturday 10th May 2013

8.00pm

ANNA-RIIKKA SANTAPUKKI – HARPSICHORD

KARI OLAMAA – BAROQUE VIOLIN

JOHANNA KILPIJÄRVI

(FINLAND)

Rameau

Pièces de clavecin en concerts



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FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

Saturday 2nd November, 8.30pm

Jo Yee Cheung (Piano)

A third year Music student at Sidney Sussex College, Jo Yee presents an eclectic programme with music by Mozart, Chopin and Schoenberg.

Admission free

Saturday 9th November, 8.00pm

Cambridge University Opera Society

Cambridge University's finest undergraduate opera singers present a selection of arias including music by Verdi, Gounod and Britten.

Admission free

Saturday 16th November, 8.00pm

Elly Kornas (Piano)

The Senior Organ Scholar of Trinity College presents a programme of Haydn, Schubert and Chopin on the Chapel's new Steinway grand piano.

Admission free

Saturday 23rd November, 8.00pm

JCMS Michaelmas Concert

The JCMS orchestra performs Beethoven's *Coriolan* Overture, Op. 62 and his Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op. 68.

Tickets £4 and £2 concessions (or £1 Jesus Students), available on the door, or in advance from the Porters' lodge (from 11 November onwards).

Saturday 30th November, 8.00pm

Camilla & Maddy Seale (Sopranos)

Songs by Fauré, Strauss, Wolf and Britten; Adam Cigman-Mark accompanies.

Admission free

Tuesday 10th December, 6.00pm

The Choirs of Jesus College Cambridge & Britten Sinfonia

Handel's Messiah

Soloists: Ruby Hughes, James Laing, John Mark Ainsley & Eamonn Dougan
directed by Mark Williams

*Tickets £20 sighted / £8 unsighted (£10 / £4 students) available from
choir@jesus.cam.ac.uk or 01223 339699*