

The New Grove Musical Instruments Series

EARLY KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS

*Edwin M. Ripin, Howard Schott, John Barnes,
G. Grant O'Brien, William Dowd,
Denzil Wraight, Howard Ferguson
and John Caldwell*

THE NEW GROVE®

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Edwin M. Ripin Denzil Wraight
G. Grant O'Brien Howard Ferguson
John Caldwell Howard Schott
William Dowd



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G. Grant O'Brien, Howard Ferguson, John Caldwell, Howard Schott,
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General abbreviations

attrib.	attribution, attributed to	Jg.	Jahrgang [year of publication/ volume]
<i>b</i>	born	kbd	keyboard
BWV	Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis [Schmieder, catalogue of J. S. Bach's works]	n.d.	no date of publication
<i>c</i>	circa [about]	pf	piano
CNRS	Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique	pll	plates
		pubd	published
<i>d</i>	died	<i>R</i>	photographic reprint
diss.	dissertation	<i>r</i>	recto
		repr.	reprinted
		rev.	revision, revised (by/for)
F	Falck [catalogue numbers in M. Falck, <i>Wilhelm Friedemann Bach</i> (Leipzig, 1913, 2/1919)]	ser.	series
facs.	facsimile	suppl.	supplement
<i>fl</i>	floruit [he/she flourished]	trans.	translation, translated by
		transcr.	transcription, transcribed by/for
Hob.	Hoboken catalogue [Haydn]	U.	University
hpd	harpsichord		
Hz	Hertz [cycles per second]	<i>v</i>	verso
incl.	includes, including	wQ	Wotquenne catalogue [C.P.E. Bach]
<i>Jb</i>	Jahrbuch [yearbook]		

Bibliographical abbreviations

<i>AcM</i>	<i>Acta musicologica</i>
<i>AMf</i>	<i>Archiv für Musikforschung</i>
<i>AMP</i>	<i>Antiquitates musicae in Polonia</i>
<i>AMw</i>	<i>Archiv für Musikwissenschaft</i>
<i>AnM</i>	<i>Anuario musical</i>
<i>AnMc</i>	<i>Analecta musicologica</i>
<i>AnnM</i>	<i>Annales musicologiques</i>
<i>CaM</i>	<i>Catalogus musicus</i>
<i>CHM</i>	<i>Collectanea historiae musicae</i>
<i>DDT</i>	<i>Denkmäler deutscher Tonkunst</i>
<i>DM</i>	<i>Documenta musicologica</i>
<i>FoMRHI</i>	<i>Fellowship of Makers and Restorers of Historical Instruments Quarterly</i>
<i>GfMKB</i>	<i>Gesellschaft für Musikforschung Kongressbericht</i>
<i>Grove 4</i>	<i>Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 4th edn.</i>
<i>Grove 1</i>	<i>The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments</i>
<i>Grove 6</i>	<i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>
<i>GSJ</i>	<i>The Galpin Society Journal</i>
<i>IMSCR</i>	<i>International Musicological Society Congress Report</i>
<i>JAMIS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society</i>
<i>JAMS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Musicological Society</i>
<i>JbMP</i>	<i>Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters</i>
<i>KJb</i>	<i>Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch</i>
<i>MB</i>	<i>Musica britannica</i>
<i>MD</i>	<i>Musica disciplina</i>
<i>Mf</i>	<i>Die Musikforschung</i>
<i>MGG</i>	<i>Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i>
<i>ML</i>	<i>Music and Letters</i>
<i>MMg</i>	<i>Monatshefte für Musikgeschichte</i>
<i>MMN</i>	<i>Monumenta musicae neerlandicae</i>
<i>MQ</i>	<i>The Musical Quarterly</i>
<i>MR</i>	<i>The Music Review</i>
<i>MSD</i>	<i>Musicological Studies and Documents</i>
<i>MT</i>	<i>The Musical Times</i>

NBJb	<i>Neues Beethoven-Jahrbuch</i>
NOHM	<i>The New Oxford History of Music</i>
PMA	<i>Proceedings of the Musical Association</i>
PRM	<i>Polski rocznik muzykologiczny</i>
PRMA	<i>Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association</i>
RaM	<i>La rassegna musicale</i>
RBM	<i>Revue belge de musicologie</i>
RdM	<i>Revue de musicologie</i>
ReM	<i>La revue musicale</i>
RMARC	<i>R[oyal] M[usical] A[ssociation] Research Chronicle</i>
RMI	<i>Rivista musicale italiana</i>
SIMG	<i>Sammelbände der Internationalen Musik-Gesellschaft</i>
SMw	<i>Studien zur Musikwissenschaft</i>
STMf	<i>Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning</i>
TVNM	<i>Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse muziekgeschiedenis</i>
VMw	<i>Vierteljahrsschrift für Musikwissenschaft</i>
ZIMG	<i>Zeitschrift der Internationalen Musik-Gesellschaft</i>
ZMw	<i>Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft</i>

Preface

The late Edwin M. Ripin was the original author of most of the articles in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* that have been drawn upon in this book. However, because of his early death (in 1975) and the continuing progress of research, his material was revised by Howard Schott before its first publication and supplemented by material supplied by John Barnes and G. Grant O'Brien. The final section on the harpsichord, since 1800, was written by Dr Schott. In the course of revision for publication in *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, Denzil Wraight provided new sections on the Italian harpsichord in the Renaissance and the 18th century and William Dowd a new section on the French harpsichord in the 18th century (as well as supplying revisions on the French instrument at other periods). For this volume, these authors have supplied further revisions to existing material; further, Mr Wraight has supplied a new text on Italy in the period c1590–c1700 and G. Grant O'Brien on Flanders in that period (drawing on his *Grove* entry on the Ruckers family).

With the exception of sections (5) and (6), originally written respectively by Howard Schott and Peter Williams, Chapter 4 has been assembled by Denzil Wraight, using as a basis (except for sections (2) and (3), which are his own) material by Edwin M. Ripin. Mr Wraight also supplied Appendices 1 and 2. Chapter 5 is based on Howard Ferguson's entry 'Keyboard Music' written for *The New Grove*, with additional material; Dr Ferguson also supplied material towards Appendix 3, the bulk of which was prepared by John Caldwell, who also supplied the bibliography for this section (based on his entry in *The New Grove*, 'Keyboard Music: bibliography').

S.S.

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Cover: detail of polygonal virginal ('arpicordo') decorated with precious stones, by Annibale Rossi (1577) (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

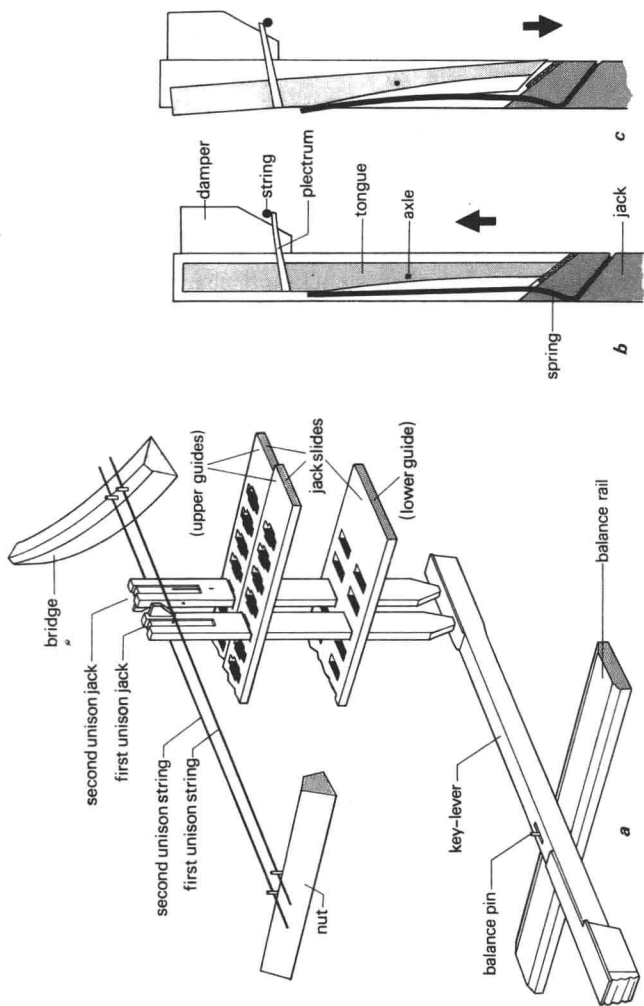
CHAPTER ONE

The Harpsichord

The harpsichord is a string keyboard instrument, distinguished from the clavichord and the piano by the fact that its strings are plucked rather than struck and characterized by an elongated wing shape like that of a grand piano. As in the grand piano, this shape results from the fact that the strings, growing progressively longer from treble to bass, run directly away from the player, in contrast to the oblique stringing of a spinet and the transverse stringing of a virginal. The earliest known reference to a harpsichord dates from 1397, when a jurist in Padua wrote that a certain Hermann Poll claimed to have invented an instrument called the 'clavicembalum'; and the earliest known representation of a harpsichord is a sculpture in an altarpiece of 1425 from Minden in north-west Germany. Other terms for the instrument include *clavecin* (French); *Cembalo*, *Kielflügel* (German); *cembalo* and *clavicembalo* (Italian).

The instrument remained in active use up to and throughout the 18th century, not only for the performance of solo keyboard music but also as an essential participant in chamber music, orchestral music and opera; in fact it retained the last of these functions long after most solo keyboard music and chamber music involving a keyboard was being composed with the piano in mind. The harpsichord had almost completely fallen into disuse by about 1810; its modern revival dates from the 1880s. (For a discussion of the repertory see Chapter Five.)

In describing keyboards in this volume the following conventions have been followed: an oblique stroke (e.g. *C/E*) indicates a short octave (i.e. an apparent lowest key *E* is tuned to *C* to extend the compass downwards without increasing the overall dimensions of the instrument); a comma indicates a missing accidental (e.g. *G', A'* signifies the absence of *G#*).



1. Mechanism of the harpsichord

STRUCTURE

1. STRUCTURE

The heart of the harpsichord's mechanism is the jack, a slender slip of wood (replaced by plastic in many modern instruments) which stands resting on the back of the key (see fig.1a). The top of the jack has a wide vertical slot fitted with a swinging tongue, which in turn carries a plectrum of quill, leather or plastic. When the front of a key is depressed, the jack rises, and the plectrum is forced past the string, plucking it (fig.1b). When the key is released, the jack falls, the plectrum touches the string (fig.1c) and forces the tongue to pivot backwards until the plectrum can pass the string, after which a light spring (formerly made of bristle or thin brass but often now of plastic) returns the tongue forward into its original position. Meanwhile, a piece of soft but stiff cloth held in a slot next to the tongue makes contact with the string, damping its vibrations and silencing it. A padded bar placed overhead – the jackrail – prevents the jack from flying out of the instrument when the key is struck. In many instruments the jackrail alone limits the vertical motion of the jacks and thereby defines the depth of touch.

This elegant and simple mechanism, though capable of producing any degree of legato or detachment of notes with great sensitivity, is incapable of producing any appreciable change in loudness in response to a change in the force with which the key is struck, since, regardless of force, the string is displaced virtually the same amount by the plectrum. Accordingly, the player can produce conspicuous changes in loudness only if the harpsichord is equipped with devices that can change the degree to which the plectrum extends beyond the string (thereby changing the amount the string is displaced when it is plucked), or if each key is provided with additional jacks and strings that the player may engage or disengage at will. The second of these options is much the more important; it is greatly facilitated by the harpsichord's longitudinal stringing, which permits each set of jacks to be placed in a row perpendicular to the strings, with as many rows as desired set one behind another. A set of jacks is engaged by being shifted towards the strings by a lateral movement of the slotted jackslide that supports it; the plectra are thus positioned below the strings and will pluck them when the keys are depressed. A set of jacks is disengaged by shifting the jackslide in the opposite direction so that the plectra pass the strings without plucking them when the keys are depressed.