

The Electro-Acoustic Clavichord

Renée Geoffrion

Renée Geoffrion, originally from Montreal, is a musician and instrument builder living in France.

Musical instruments have always evolved in conjunction with the desires of musicians, whether these are musical or practical. For those who know the history of the clavichord, I do not think it necessary to enumerate all the attempts made by clavichord builders in the past to make this refined and expressive instrument sound a little louder. The weak nature of



Photo 1 Clavichord by Renée Geoffrion

the sound signal, i.e., the low energy released by the vibration of its strings, does not permit the clavichord to obtain an important volume acoustically. It is precisely this particular characteristic that caused the neglect of the clavichord in the 19th century.

The electro-acoustic clavichord (EAC) that I have invented is simply a clavichord provided with an electric amplification specially adapted to the instrument's sonorous physiognomy. The amplification is usually installed during the fabrication of the instrument. It aims to be as pure as possible, since it is much easier to transform a distorted electric sound into a pure sound. Therefore the device used for amplification must be installed as close as

Electro-Acoustic Clavichord, cont. on p.5

The British Clavichord Society Awards for Clavichord Composition, 2004

Peter Bavington

Peter Bavington builds clavichords and is the Editor of the British Clavichord Society Newsletter.

The purpose of the international clavichord composition competition recently sponsored by the British Clavichord Society was to encourage the writing of 21st-century music for the clavichord: we took the view that the instrument needs new repertory if it is not to be merely antiquarian. The idea had been in the air for some time, and the tenth anniversary of our Society seemed a good time to go ahead with it; accordingly, the awards scheme was launched in autumn 2003. It was open to all composers, amateur or professional. Entrants were invited to submit an original solo composition for clavichord, provided only that

it was their own work and had not already been published. Compositions were to last no longer than eight minutes, and were to be playable on a clavichord of traditional type (maximum compass five octaves, FF-f^{'''}) by one player using only the keyboard.

The competition was administered by Paula Woods. Entries were submitted in score and evaluated anonymously by a panel of three judges: Paul Simmonds, John Cranmer and Anthony Payne. In order to assist composers with limited experience of the instrument, a *Guide to Composing for the Clavichord* was compiled by Francis Knights (this is still available on the British Clavichord Society's website: www.bcs.nildram.co.uk). Cash prizes were offered for up to five winning compositions, something made possible by generous support from the PRS foundation, Musica Antica a Magnano and an anonymous donor.

We were encouraged to go ahead by the success of the Aliénor awards for new compositions for harpsichord, organized by

the Southeastern Historical Keyboard Society in the USA; however, our scheme differed in some important respects from theirs, particularly in not requiring the pieces to be of any particular standard of technical difficulty.

No fewer than 48 entries were received, from 12 countries. The five winning scores (see below) were announced early in July; and on 29 August it was at last possible to hear some of this music for the first time, in the Celebration of New Music for the Clavichord held at the Russell Collection, St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh as part of our Society's Edinburgh weekend meeting.

Geoffrey Allan Taylor's *Pages from Homer* (fifth prize) was performed first by Joel Speerstra, using the Russell Collection's Hass clavichord of 1763. Geoffrey described the piece as "variations in search of a theme." The idea of wandering and eventual homecoming was inspired by Homer's *Odyssey*, but the "pages" are not descriptive of particular episodes in the story. The order of the movements is at the player's discretion; indeed, it is not essential to play them all, except the first and last, which must open and close the piece. I noticed some exploration of sombre effects from the lower register, with marked contrasts of dynamics. The return

British Clavichord Society, cont. on p.4

In This Issue

Teaching a Child page 2

A Dolmetsch Recording page 3

Audley Green
 Introduces New Works page 7

Teaching the Clavichord to a Child

Paul Simmonds

Paul Simmonds performs and records on the clavichord and is active in the British Clavichord Society. (Discussion on teaching the clavichord to children will continue in our next issue.)

I have had the good fortune over the years to have had a number of small children as students of early keyboard instruments. These have been in the main harpsichord pupils, only one learning the clavichord as a first preference.

It is probably unnecessary to say that a special set of circumstances (or parents) result in a child taking up an early keyboard instrument, particularly in the UK. In Switzerland, where I taught for a while, this was less the case, due in the main to the network of local subsidized music schools, a number of which have their own harpsichord, which would be introduced together with the more "normal" instruments on open days. An early instrument was therefore regarded as not totally "weird," if not exactly mainstream.

The children I taught, both here and in Switzerland, had one thing in common, and that was a determination to play the instrument. This is a necessary attribute, as they have to survive possible peer criticism as non-conformists, particularly as their instruments do not fit in quite so readily with established musical activity. It is easier when the music school offers other "early" instruments, and by this I don't mean the throw-away descant recorders which are used to plague small children before they move on to something "real." At the music school in Rheinfeldern where I taught I was lucky that the recorder was presented as a real instrument; and there was a shawm-band that was often to be heard at mayoral functions or openings of art exhibitions.

I may seem to be laboring a point, but we need, even more than teachers of mod-

ern instruments, to be clear in our own minds what we are preparing children for. The clavichord, in the past, was a tool of instruction preparing budding musicians for lives as organists, harpsichordists and, later, fortepianists. The aesthetic it was preparing musicians for was the prevalent one, unlike today. I would question the wisdom of starting a child off on the clavichord as a preparation for the modern piano, or even organ. My attitude has always been that a child drawn towards either the harpsichord or clavichord is likely to grow up happiest in the set of aesthetics associated with early music, and I have planned my teaching accordingly. For example, one of my first harpsichord pupils became the

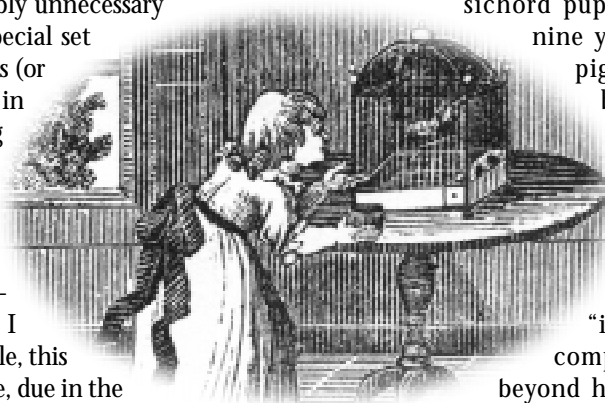
nine year old guinea-pig for a planned

basso-continuo tutor for children, and at ten was much in demand as an accompanist, delivering "improvised" accompaniments well

beyond her note-reading capabilities at the regular music school concerts. What became of her? Having recently graduated with a harpsichord diploma from the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis she is now, as harpsichordist and organist, a working "early" musician. I cite this example, not wishing to sound smug – I only started her off, after all – but to emphasise the different approach I feel should be taken where children and early instruments are concerned.

My only specifically clavichord child-pupil to date was six years old when she began lessons on a copy of the triple-fretted "Praetorius" clavichord in the Mirrey collection.* I taught her the normal early keyboard touch from the word go, which meant that the fretting system was never a problem for her.** This came easily to her and remained her standard touch, even when a few years later we moved to a larger unfretted clavichord, which the family fortunately had available. I did not, however, confine her to early repertoire. Uli Molsen's *Klavier-Boutique: eine Schule mit Piff* [Sikorski, Hamburg, 1983] is a book I

Teaching a Child, cont. on p.7



TANGENTS

The Bulletin of the Boston Clavichord Society is published by The Boston Clavichord Society, P.O. Box 540515, Waltham MA 02454.

On the World Wide Web at: <http://www.bostonclavichord.org>
Benjamin Martinez, Webmaster

The Boston Clavichord Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion of the clavichord and its music. For information on becoming a Friend of the Boston Clavichord Society, please write to the above address.

TANGENTS is published biannually in the spring and in the fall, and is sent free to Friends of the Boston Clavichord Society. Single copies and back issues can be obtained by writing to the address below.

Editor: Beverly Woodward
P.O. Box 540515,
Waltham MA 02454
Phone/Fax 781 891-0814
Email: BostonClavichord@BostonClavichord.org

Graphic Design: Walden Associates
www.waldenportfolio.com

Printer: Allegra Print & Imaging
Waltham, MA

Submissions: This bulletin is a forum for its readers. We welcome articles, letters, questions and other contributions. Copy can be submitted by mail, e-mail or diskette to the Editor. Please contact her about preferred format before making a submission.

The copy deadlines are February 15 and September 1.

Board of Directors:
Peter Sykes, President
Mariko Irie, Vice President
Beverly Woodward, Treasurer
Paul Monsky, Assistant Treasurer
Erich Groat, Clerk
Paulette Grunden, Assistant Clerk
Martha DasSarma
Alan Durfee

Tim Hamilton
David Schulenberg
Jay Tucker

Board of Artistic Advisors:
Joan Benson
Clifford Boehmer
Bernard Brauchli
Lynn Edwards Butler
Christopher Hogwood
Margaret Irwin-Brandon
Mark Kroll
Darcy Kuronen
William Porter
Howard Schott
Richard Troeger



Revisiting the 1928 Art of Recording the Clavichord: Comparisons and Comment

Dick Wahlberg and friends

The Dolmetsch recording of the e minor fugue in volume 1 of Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier, described in the following article, will be placed on the BCS website. (We thank the Dolmetsch family for granting permission.)

Earlier this summer, I received a phone call from Jay Tucker, a member of the Board of Directors of the BCS, who, being familiar with my large sound recording archive dealing heavily in keyboard and chamber music, invited me to do an article for the bulletin on a Dolmetsch 78 rpm clavichord recording. Since Jay had plans to visit San Francisco, we set up an appointment, with Richard Troeger joining us, to listen to Arnold Dolmetsch playing Bach's Prelude and Fugue No. 10 in e minor from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book 1. I played this original 1928 "48 Society" pressing on a 1906 Victrola with an outside horn, equipped with a special sound box that can handle electric recording. Immediately after the Dolmetsch, we played on a high-end stereo system the Archiv Ralph Kirkpatrick clavichord recording of the same e-minor Prelude and Fugue made thirty years later. Right after the comparison, since I have a sound recording studio in my archive, I recorded all of our comments and reactions, on which this article is based. Although the artists are playing similar small Dolmetsch unfretted four-octave-and-a-tone double-strung instruments, they get entirely different sounds.

The Dolmetsch clavichords on these two recordings are based on nothing in particular; they are of Dolmetsch's own design. (Dolmetsch also made instruments that more closely resemble historical models.) I think the instrument that Dolmetsch is playing is much better than the later instrument Kirkpatrick is playing. In the Dolmetsch recording, the microphone seems to be placed in the open cavity under the soundboard. In the Kirkpatrick recording, the clavichord is in an acoustically treated portion of a cathedral with a microphone four feet back.

In the beginning of the prelude,

Dolmetsch repeats the soprano sustained notes in order to make clear that they are sustained notes. (One of the difficulties in rendering this piece on clavichord or harpsichord – or even modern piano – is getting the soprano voice to sound like a melody with sustained notes, instead of part of a chord played with a filler bass until shorter notes make activity.) Kirkpatrick's solution is simply to sustain the note as best he can.



Prelude: measures 1-2

The presto half-way through the prelude is realized essentially in the same way by both players, although Kirkpatrick continues to accelerate past his initial acceleration.

The fugue as played by Kirkpatrick sounds as if he fingered it so that his large hands could play it legato, and then never bothered to make further decisions. It is all legato basically, and the characteristic upward leap of a sixth that occurs frequently in the counterpoint is not brought out by him at all. Dolmetsch does make an effort to bring out the leap. In the recurring figure (measures 15-16) Dolmetsch articulates the eighth notes.



Fugue: measures 15-16

In addition, Dolmetsch highlights the spots (measures 19-20 and measure 38)



Fugue: measures 19-20

where Bach, by means of an octave doubling of the figure in the treble, suggests a more orchestral style. Kirkpatrick just breezes through these places without any differen-



Arnold Dolmetsch at Chickering's, Boston, circa 1908.

tiation at all, like a freight train leveling everything in its path. Many people have criticized Kirkpatrick's playing because he tends to smooth out contrasts rather than bring out the differences.

On these records one is hearing Dolmetsch playing at age 70 and he clearly has less technical control than Kirkpatrick. He can be mannered and a bit strange with accents, but in my view Dolmetsch has the better rendition because he is emphasizing all those differences. ☺

Discographer's Note:

Here is a complete list of all works performed by Arnold Dolmetsch in his seven 12" 78 rpm album on the "48 Society" label:

Bach Preludes and Fugues, Book 1:

D major, #5

D minor #6

E minor, #10

Db minor, #22

Bach Preludes and Fugues, Book 2:

C major, #1

Eb major, #7

F minor, #12

G major, #15

Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue

Fels Book on Early Painting Methods

Donald Fels, a builder of historical keyboards and a Friend of the BCS, has published a book "devoted solely to documenting in detail the varnishes, painting mediums and painting methods used by Renaissance and Baroque craftsmen and painters." Details about the book, which is entitled *Lost Secrets of Flemish Painting*, can be found on his website at <http://www.amberalchemy.com/index.html> ☺

home in the last page is signalled by a return to tonality, with a tune which, perhaps appropriately in view of the location, suggested to me a bagpipe melody.

Extracts from Julia Usher's *Clavicle* (fourth prize) were performed by Micaela Schmitz, who, since the piece requires a fretted instrument, used the Russell Collection's 1784 C. G. Hubert instrument. This is perhaps the most strikingly contemporary of the winning pieces in idiom. Julia explained that a clavichordist friend (Ruby Reid Thompson) had asked her if she would like to compose for the clavichord, and offered to lend Julia her "desktop" clavichord, which turned out to be a small diatonically fretted instrument. Julia explored all the possibilities of sound production on this instrument; in particular, she was fascinated by effects which could be obtained through the frets, for example by holding the lower note and playing the upper one briefly to create a kind of mordent. *Clavicle* is described as a "touch-piece." The title was inspired by a love-ditty invented by a character in a novel by Ian McEwan: "I'll play upon your clavicle." Julia said the phrase seemed to capture the intense and direct physical sensations which are such a key part of playing the clavichord. Sections of the piece consist of a quasi-improvisatory exploration of the touch of the instrument, using all parts of the compass; other sections are in more coherent rhythm. There is an extended *Cadenza*.

Paul Simmonds was the performer of Graham Lynch's *Admiring Yoro Waterfall* (third prize), once again using the Hass instrument. The composer was not present, but Paul explained that the piece had been inspired by a wood-block print of that title by the great nineteenth-century Japanese master Hokusai. It had originally been conceived for harpsichord, but had been extensively reworked for clavichord. The piece seemed to me to contrast phases of stillness and even silence with sudden bursts of energy, like water bursting from a crevice. There is a slightly pentatonic character to some passages. Paul said he planned to add the piece to his own repertoire, and was eager to try the effect of it on his antique pantalon clavichord.*

The second-prize winner was Philippe Forget, a singer and conductor from France. His *Little Suite for Clavichord* has four movements with quizzical titles, whose secret was at last revealed: they refer to the dedicatee, clavichordist/keyboardist Marcia Hadjimarkos, and her children Orlando and Phoebe. Extracts were played by Derek Adlam, at one stage helped by the composer who "conducted" him through some tricky rhythms. The opening movement, *Orlando's Fury*, is an extremely fast and furious dance mainly in 7/8 time with a cleverly varied ostinato bass; *Phoebe's Tango* makes much

"...at least 25 worthwhile pieces had been added to the repertoire of the clavichord."

use of hands wide apart, at the extremes of the compass; the last movement, *Waltzing M...* refers to Marcia herself, and is a witty and elegant waltz. But who is the "Frog" of *Frog's Intermezzo*?

The first prize was awarded to Gary Carpenter's *Van Assendelft's Vermeer*, which was performed by Pamela Nash using the Hass clavichord. Pamela had worked closely with Gary on the creation of this piece. Gary explained that a 1711 inventory of property belonging to the widow of Nicholas Van Assendelft mentions *A damsel playing on the clavichord* by Vermeer. Does this painting still exist? It could be one of the pair of Vermeers at the National Gallery, London – in which case "clavichord" is merely a mistake for "virginals" – or it could be a lost work. This experience of perceiving something, then losing sight of it, is the theme and inspiration of the work. Gary said he was fascinated by the small and evanescent sound of the clavichord, of music half heard, half sensed. Long-held notes continue into silence; staccato effects only just produce a definite pitch before it disappears. Of the piece's four short movements, the third actually contains more

silence than sound. The first and last movements almost frame the piece, like the two paintings in the National Gallery.

Following the performances we heard from Paul Simmonds, chairman of the judging panel, who described his approach to selecting the winning scores. A number of entries – but surprisingly few – had to be excluded as well-meant but musically incompetent. Some had not complied with the competition's rules. Looking through the remainder, he was drawn to those which seemed to extend the language of the instrument, rather than those in "neo-historical" or "folksy" styles. Some he felt were basically piano pieces, without any understanding of the particular characteristics of the clavichord. Some seemed unnecessarily violent; some seemed determined to perplex the player with an unnecessarily complex notation. He was drawn to pieces which allowed the performer some freedom.

He was particularly grateful for the input of John Cranmer, who also scrutinized all 48 entries. Inevitably, they did not agree in every case. In due course 28 compositions were sent to Anthony Payne. The final stage involved discussion and compromise between all three judges, but they were unanimous in their choice of Gary Carpenter's *Van Assendelft's Vermeer* for first prize. All felt, though, that merit was by no means limited to the five pieces selected for prizes: several other entries would have received "honourable mentions" if the scheme had provided for them. In all, Paul estimated that at least 25 worthwhile pieces had been added to the repertoire of the clavichord.

The event concluded with a general forum. Having heard new repertoire, the question arose whether the clavichord itself could or should develop and change during the course of the new century. Did composers find themselves frustrated by its limitations? In every case, the reply came that the limits of what was possible were an inspiration and a challenge, rather than a handicap to creativity.

Afterwards many of the scores (not only the winners) were available for

British Clavichord Society, cont. on p.6

Electro-Acoustic Clavichord, cont. from p.1

possible to the sound source, i.e., on the bridge. The sound in the instrument's case and on the soundboard contains interesting acoustical elements, but is not sufficiently "clean and pure" to be amplified. The sound signal of the clavichord being very weak, the amplification will need a very high gain level; therefore the clavichord will be prone to feedback easily. All the trials I made with amplification devices attached to the soundboard, over or under, had important problems of acoustic feedback, accompanied in most cases with an unpleasant presence of the attack in the sound.

My clavichords are equipped with a wire-shaped piezo crystal active pick-up installed along the bridge, facing the tuning pins (see photo 2). It is held in place by a wedge that spreads the pressure of a spring attached on the bridge (see technical drawing).

The pin jack of the pick-up is placed at the back of the instrument through the case (see photo 3). The battery is placed in the tuning key box. The wiring crosses under the keyboard. Consequently, the physical appearance of the clavichord is not modified very much, the utilization of the amplification is quite simple, and the wiring of the electric pick-up is protected from potential accidents. The final sound of the EAC

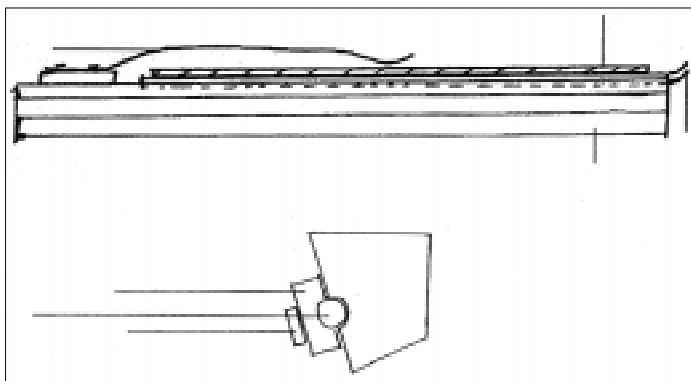
always depends both on the pick-up and on the sound system that is used for performance. The use of electric amplification frees the clavichord from its malaise, i.e., its weak volume. When the amplification is discrete and faithful it may also open new musical horizons for the clavichord. The clavichord is then no longer only an ancient instrument, but also an electro-acoustic musical instrument. For a clavichord recital, a little more voluminous sound permits playing with many more shades and a full use of the dynamic range. The sound reproduces faithfully in a small room sitting near the clavichord. The amplification, while

not betraying its presence, permits the clavichord to reveal its subtleties. In my experience, a maximum of 50% of amplified sound should be used during a recital. The clavichord being a soft instrument by



Photo 2. Detail of pick-up installed on the bridge.

nature, the impression of intimacy must remain, and the auditor must always savor the sound of the clavichord as if it were a rare and precious dainty. This use of the



“...a wedge that spreads the pressure of a spring attached on the bridge.”

EAC is not intellectually complex but is extremely practical for musical communication.

The most interesting and thrilling facet of this adventure is certainly the exploitation of this new musical instrument. I am



Photo 3 “The pin jack of the pick-up is placed at the back of the instrument through the case.”

not a believer in “good” and “evil” in music. Music must before anything convince the listener. I do not think that one person can enjoy all the kinds of music that exist; therefore I speak here only for myself and about my own experiences. I by no means wish to impose my taste or to limit the use of the EAC.

When using amplification, one soon realizes that when the sound level exceeds the limit of the delicate help one wishes for a recital, the nature of the sound changes completely. At the point when the acoustic (natural) sound becomes imperceptible, one plays an electric instrument. Once one accepts playing an electric instrument, there is no point in trying to make it resemble an acoustic instrument. It would always be nothing but an imitation. In my opinion, it is a lot more interesting to work with the beauty of the electric sound, which is its true nature. A vast number of electronic devices enable one to give the clavichord multiple faces, while conserving the expressive flexibility of the acoustic clavichord, which remains the foundation of the sound. One may or may not use a mixing board, effects (echo, chorus, phaser, distortion, etc...), different types of amps and speakers—playing the clavichord alone or with other musical instruments. The possibilities are infinite.

As an instrument is not created with its repertoire, the experimentation is only beginning. Thus far I've always preferred analogue equipment. It seems to me that, despite its inconveniences, it works with the sound without impoverishing its essence. With these tools, I recognize my instrument; but with digital equipment, even of excellent quality, my clavichord seems to be transformed into a toy.

I began to develop a repertoire comprised of organ music

**Electro-Acoustic Clavichord,
cont. on p.6**

played on the EAC with an electric bass guitar where the analogue effects replaced the organ stops. Works by Bach, Reger, Buxtehude, and Franck were the first repertoire of the Geoffrion / Rivet duo *Alliance Contre Nature*. Later, we added the Goldberg Variations, a contemporary piece* based on an ancient Greek enharmonic mode (where the tuning of the clavichord makes special use of 1/4 tones and non-tempered intervals) composed by the Canadian composer Louis-Philippe Rivet, and a collection of tangos from Piazzolla. In addition to the traditional solo clavichord repertoire, I borrow with great pleasure pieces from the guitar literature (Tarrega and Barrios).

At present, I make three different models of clavichords, each with or without amplification. The first model is a travel instrument weighing 7kg. It is a copy of a fretted clavichord from Austria, anonymous, from the beginning of the XVIIIth century (see photo 1). The compass of the instrument is C to d^{'''}, with a short octave C/E, and with split accidentals F#/D-G#/E. The original is in the Kunsthistorische Museum, Vienna. The second model is slightly bigger and is also a copy of a fretted clavichord from Austria, anonymous, from the first half of the XVIIIth century. The compass is C to d^{'''}. This clavichord has a music desk made in fretwork lined with silk. The original is at the Musée de la Musique, Paris. The third model is a non-fretted clavichord, copy of J.H.Silbermann; the compass is FF to f^{'''}. The original is at the museum in Nuremberg.

The clavichord lends itself to numerous and quite disparate musical roles. I cannot wait to hear all the new possibilities and to explore musical horizons that may encourage a new beginning for our dear instrument. ©

Renée Geoffrion can be contacted at unacorda@wanadoo.fr or by postal mail at *Una Corda*, 13 Place de Bas Château, 87260 Pierre-Buffière, France

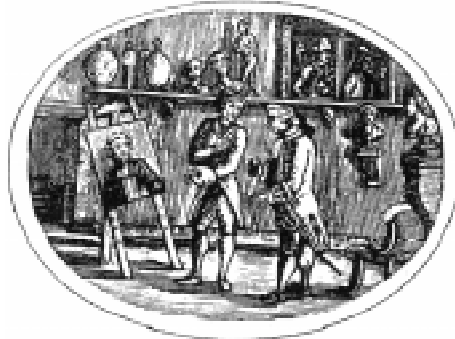
* "Variations Based on the Theme 'Au Clair de la Lune' in the Enharmonic Genus of the Hypolydian Mode (in memoriam, Professor Bengt Hambraeus)."

inspection. We now need to consider what help can be given to the composers to publish their pieces and how to encourage further performances, so as to make the compositions available to a wider audience.

Prize-winning scores:

More information about these scores will be posted in due course on the British Clavichord Society's website: <http://www.bcs.nildram.co.uk>.

First prize (£600): Gary Carpenter of West Kirby, Wirral, UK, for *Van Assendelft's Vermeer*. More details of Gary Carpenter and



his other compositions are available on <http://www.garycarpenter.net>. Copies of this score are available from the British Clavichord Society; see website for details.

Second prize (£300): Philippe Emmanuel Forget of Chalon-sur-Saône, France, for *Little Suite for Clavichord*.

Third prize (£100): Graham Lynch of Penzance, Cornwall, UK, for *Admiring Yoro Waterfall*.

Fourth prize (£50): Julia Usher of Colchester, Essex, UK, for *Clavicle*.

Fifth prize (£50): Geoffrey Allan Taylor of Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, UK, for *Pages from Homer*.

Entries were received from the following countries: 26 from the United Kingdom; seven from the United States of America; three each from France and Germany; two from South Africa; and one each from Austria, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Russia, and Switzerland. ©

*A pantalon clavichord has a special stop intended to sustain notes after the key has been released. An instrument of this type is owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Christian Kintzing, 1763; catalogue #1986.239).

Postscript: The American Competitors

Beverly Woodward

As reported by Peter Bavington, seven Americans submitted entries for the international clavichord composition competition. The compositions can be obtained by contacting the composers at the addresses below or, where indicated, going to their websites.

Timothy Broege

His *Fantasia for Clavichord* is available for a limited time for free, plus \$3 shipping, at www.timothybroege.com. Later the piece will be available from Woodbridge Wilson Music Publishers for \$10, plus \$3 shipping. Orders can be sent to timbrogue@aol.com

Kurt Ellenberger

His *Three Inventions* are available at his website <http://homepage.mac.com/ellenberger>. Other works by him are posted at the site of the Canadian Music Centre: www.musiccentre.ca/home.cfm
Email: ellenbek@gvsu.edu

John E. Haines

A few copies of his *Variations on an Azeri Dance Mode of Hajibeyov for Clavichord* are available from the BCS.
Email: jhaines@twinoakchurch.org

Jane L. Johnson

Her *Appalachian Journey* (entered in the contest as *Melodic Journey* so as not to identify her) can be obtained from her.
Email: jandav@loggingon.com Address: 82 Antioch Road, Crab Orchard, TN 37723.

J. Tylor Overton

His piece *A Sett: Basse Danse and Parson's Joy* can be obtained by writing him. Address: 2872 County Road 16, Arley, AL 35541. Email: puriteen18@yahoo.com

Tiffany M. Skidmore

Her pieces *Prelude II* and *Fugue II* can be obtained by writing her. Address: 13509 E. 27th Ave., Spokane, WA 99216.
Email: tiffanyskidmore@yahoo.com

James Wiznerowicz

His *Fugue* is being revised and will be available from the BCS in January 2005. Website: www.jameswiznerowicz.com
Email: james@jameswiznerowicz.com
Address: 128 Azalea Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22903. ©

Audley Green Introduces Three Composers

Beverly Woodward

Audley Green performed in the first ABCS recital of the 2004-2005 season. She presented a program that included works by Dietrich Buxtehude, J.S. Bach, Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer, and three contemporary composers: Jane L. Johnson, Betty Beath, and Miloslav Penicka. Before the recital I spoke with Audley about the contemporary works on her program. The composers of these pieces are all acquaintances of Audley and two of them are women, reflecting her ongoing search for new music and especially for music written by women.

Jane Johnson lives in Crabtree Orchard, Tennessee. Her piece, *Appalachian Journey* (1985), was entered in the recent international clavichord composition competition. (See the article by Peter Bavington on page 1, which includes information on how to obtain this piece.) It is a “fancy on Appalachian tunes” including a quodlibet juxtaposing “In dulce jubilo” with “Lord Thomas and Fair Ellender.” Audley finds it goes well on both the clavichord and the harpsichord.



Wombat berry, an Australian plant

The other woman composer on the program, Betty Beath, is Australian, as is Audley by birth. Audley played Beath's *Two Preludes* (2001) and a piece, *Merindu Balu: Bali Yearning* (2002), written in response to a request by the Javanese pianist, Ananda Sukarlan, for compositions dedicated to the memory of the victims of the bombing of a nightclub at Kuta, Bali on October 12, 2002. The works submitted are collectively entitled *In Memoriam*. They have been performed in more than fifteen countries and have been broadcast nationally in Australia.

Miloslav Penicka is also Australian, although Czech by birth. Audley noted that many immigrants especially appreciate the flora and fauna of Australia. Penicka is among them and often camps in the bush, either alone or with his family. His piece *Australian Wild Flowers* (2002) has subdivisions named after Australian wild flowers: flannel flower, fringed violet, wombat berry, hop bush, and geebung. Audley has played a number of Penicka's works in concerts for children. She reported that Penicka had just completed a *Toccatina for Harpsichord* which he was sending her and dedicating to her 70th birthday. ☺

Teaching a Child, cont. from p.2

found most useful. It is actually a well-structured tutor for the modern piano, but adapted extremely well to the 17th century clavichord we were using, and made use of a wide range of repertoire, including pieces by Bartok, Stravinsky, Mátyás Seiber and others. This was complemented by standard early repertoire – *Amsterdam Harpsichord Tutor* [2 vols., edited by Kees Rosenhart, Saul B. Groen, Amsterdam, 1977] – and 20th century clavichord pieces. Haward Clarke's *Diversions for Clavichord* [available at www.bcs.nildram.co.uk] went down extremely well, the only slight difficulty being the learning of the more sustained legato required by the piece. Although the clavichord was my student's instrument, I was careful to insure that she played the harpsichord as well (I lent the family a small harpsichord for a while) and got a grounding in continuo playing, sufficient for accompanying her violin-playing sister at a basic level. In total I taught her for about six years before she was claimed by puberty and stopped playing the clavichord. Whether she returns to music, and specifically the clavichord, remains to be seen. ☺

Editor's notes:

* The Mirrey collection is an important private collection of early keyboard instruments in London.

** On “normal early keyboard touch,” see Simmonds article “*Abstossen, Schleifen and Das allgemeine Fortgehen* — Thoughts on Clavichord Touch,” in *De Clavicordio III* (Musica Antica a Magnano, 1997, pp. 54-60).

Building Keyboards: A Lifetime Hobby

The BCS recently received a delightful letter from James Mogford, who spent his career with British Petroleum, but is an avid keyboard instrument builder. “Building keyboard instruments has been a lifetime hobby,” he wrote. Enclosed were photos of five clavichords he has built at different stages of his life. In the photo shown here, Mogford,

now 77, was in his mid-thirties. The instrument shown was based on a Dolmetsch model, which he writes was “certainly an improvement” over earlier models he had used. Mogford invites BCS visitors to southern England to visit him and his instrument collection. For further information, contact the BCS office. ☺



James Mogford in the 1960's

BCS
TANGENTS
*The Bulletin of the
Boston Clavichord Society*

P.O. Box 540515, Waltham MA 02454

