



News @ Notes

Upcoming Events

November 12-14:

Back to Bach & Beyond: Redefining the Harpsichord

- 3** Harpsichords, played by:
Elaine Funaro (Durham)
Beverly Biggs (Durham)
Rebecca Pechefsky (NYC)
- 5** Baroque string players
- 3** Concertos by J.S. Bach
(for 1-3 harpsichords)
- 2** Sonatas by Aliénor winner Edwin
McLean (for 2-3 harpsichords)
- 1** New harpsichord by Richard
Kingston (Opus 333)
- 3** North Carolina dates:
Durham, School of Science & Math
Thursday, Nov. 12, 2009 7:30pm
Chapel Hill
University United Methodist Church
Friday, Nov. 13, 2009 8:00pm
Raleigh, Meredith College
Saturday, Nov. 14, 2009 8:00pm

Contact Us ...

For more information about how to become a donor and support the efforts of Aliénor, please call:

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Aliénor Takes Boston by Storm

Rebecca Pechefsky reports from the Boston Early Music Festival

Four concerts in two days with twelve harpsichordists and several assisting instrumentalists—offering mostly contemporary music at a festival devoted to early music?

Yep. That was Aliénor at this year's Boston Early Music Festival. Although I helped Elaine Funaro and Beverly Biggs put together those four concerts, I haven't been around long enough to be blasé. I watched with admiration as



Elaine Funaro and Rebecca Pechefsky play Edwin McLean's "Sonata for Two Harpsichords."

Elaine and Bev made the rounds of other concerts the day before (both other fringe concerts and main events in Jordan Hall), boldly handing out programs to audience members that, after all, had come to Boston expecting to hear mostly music written before 1800. A poster for our showcase even greeted me upon my arrival at the Radisson.

Elaine had first outlined it for me back in March, and it sounded ambitious, to say the least. A sure recipe for, well, a lot of planning and hard work. Would the BEMF crowd come to concerts devoted to newly composed works? Happily, they did: all four concerts had enthusiastic and receptive audiences. The winners of last year's Aliénor competition were the featured composers, but the concerts were packed full of other compositions as well, from early revivalist composers, such as the Castelnuovo-Tedesco English Suite played by Dr. Larry Palmer, to works that were even more recent than those by the Aliénor winners. James Dorsa's "The Tea Party," for example, was a world premiere, composed, as the title implies, for his first trip to Boston. And a scattering of Baroque works by Bach and others rounded out the concerts. The spare, clean lines of the First Lutheran Church seemed especially appropriate for modern harpsichord music, and its resonant yet clear acoustics allowed us to hear distinctly all the different musical styles. Glenn Giuttari of the Harpsichord Clearing House kindly lent his sonorous 1974 Rubio French double for the occasion.

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About Aliénor...

Aliénor was named in honor of Eleanor of Aquitaine, a famed 12th century patron of the arts. Eleanor was the richest woman in Europe, and was married successively to King Louis VII of France and King Henry II of England. Eleanor was mother to the English Kings Richard the Lionhearted and John Lackland, who was forced to sign the Magna Carta in 1215. She is one of the most notable women in European history.

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

California continues to engage the world of harpsichord by way of its West Coast flare, featuring numerous harpsichordists with provocative dreams.

First-place Aliénor solo competition winner for 2008 was James Dorsa of Los Angeles,

James Dorsa



whose Jupiter's Moons established him as a force to be reckoned with as both performer and composer. A native of the San Fernando Valley, Dorsa is active in jazz, country, rock, modern abstract and avant-garde music. He's busy these days composing a notebook of short pieces for solo harpsichord while continuing to serve as vocal coach, accompanist, and studio musician. Listen to a clip from Jupiter's Moons at <http://www.jamesdorsa.com>.

Another southern Californian in the news is Sally Mosher. Her latest album, *From Now On: New Directions for Harpsichord* (New Mix Music 1005), explores the sonic resources of the modern harpsichord. Cello and synthesizer accompany some pieces, but all range in mood from gently lyrical to propulsively dramatic. This composer-keyboardist is also a painter who has experimented with multimedia, combining visual art and music. Mosher's piece, "Night Train Boogie", was performed at this year's Boston Early Music Festival by Christopher Lewis. More of Sally's work can be heard and seen at her web site. <http://www.NewMixMusic.com>



Sally Mosher

Up in Berkeley, MusicSources: Center for Historically Informed Performance, Inc. continues a 22-year history as an educational home base for music from 1500-1850, with occasional performances of new music. Founded by Laurette Goldberg and now under the artistic direction of Gilbert Martinez, MusicSources houses a small teaching collection of antique and replica keyboard instruments spanning 400 years. Its ambitious concert schedule of distinguished local and international artists includes a March 2010 performance by Jane Chapman that will include new works by Bay Area composers. <http://www.musicsources.org/>

Aliénor in Boston

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Some other highlights for me, in addition to the pieces mentioned above, were Sonia Lee's masterly performance of an intense Toccata by Kent Holliday; Asako Hirabayashi's fluid renditions of her own compositions; Margaret Sandresky's haunting Shakespeare Songs (performed by Karen Hite Jacob and Carolina Pro Musica); Joyce Lindorff's vivid execution of Alessandro Scarlatti's La Folia, followed by the American premiere of Tawnie Olson's La folia, played brilliantly by Katelyn Clark; Randall Love's foot-stomping rendition of Paul Whetstone's Bulgarian Dance Fantasy, and John Howell Morrison's evocative "My Love Lives Down That Long Dirt Road," presented lovingly by the cycle's inspiration, his wife, Vivian Montgomery. And let's not forget Christopher Lewis, blasting down from Montreal to fill in at the last moment, entertaining us with his versions of Philip Glass and Carole King. My personal performing high was playing Edwin McLean's Sonata for Two Harpsichords with Elaine Funaro. Let's do this again soon!

One of the Bay Area composers to be featured in Ms. Chapman's concert at MusicSources will be Sheli Nan, the published composer of more than 18 editions of music. Her published sheet music for harpsichord includes Diptyque: Voyage d'art Sicilienne; Two Love Letters and a Prayer; and Bach Boogie Blues. <http://www.shelinan.com>

Readers will remember Ms. Chapman as a Royal College of Music professor, dubbed "Britain's most progressive

harpsichordist." Her current tour features music spanning six centuries. "It's not just using the plucked sound of the strings," she told the Wall Street Journal last year, "but also using the instrument as a kind of physical being and an actual object." Demonstrating why she's been called fearless, Chapman co-commissioned and helped create Bay Area filmmaker Ian Winters' short film, *Rendition*, with music by Evelyn Ficarra. "I've had a whole microcosm inside

the harpsichord," she laughs, referring to the film's depiction of dolls, moving mechanical trains, and other objects inside the instrument. You can view *Rendition* at <http://www.ianwinters.com/rendition2.html>.

Chapman performed at The Harpsichord Center "Artist Series" Concert in 2008. The "Artist Series" is in its 31st season featuring harpsichord greats. The Harpsichord Center's William Neil Roberts and Anthony Brazier, both professional musicians, have shared their love of and talent in early instrument building since 1975, creating over 130 instruments. <http://www.harpsichordcenter.com/home.html>

Over in the San Francisco and Mill Valley areas the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, now in its 17th season, has commissioned and premiered more than 55 new works since 1992. Early next year, guest harpsichordist Katherine Heater and composer-performer Eric Zivian will join Left Coast for a program entitled Harpsichord Redux. Included will be works for harpsichord and chamber ensemble, featuring Bay Area composer Dan Becker's *Tamper Resistant*, and a world premiere by Zivian. The program will also feature Ligeti's "maddening, hilarious and ecstatic" *Continuum* and *Hungarian Rock*. <http://leftcoastensemble.org/>

There is much more to say about contemporary harpsichord music composition and performance on the West Coast—and too little space to say it. *Aliénor*, with its deep roots in the Southeastern clay, truly appreciates the creative nature of the West Coast musicians, daring to bring their California dreams to fruition.

— *contributed by Paul Baerman, new Aliénor Board Member*



Sheli Nan



Jane Chapman

Harpsichords in **HOLLYWOOD**

Ever wonder about the harpsichords you hear in the movies or television shows that are made in Hollywood? Well, during my delightful conversation with Helga Kasimoff, I learned all about it. The Kasimoff Blüthner Piano Company has been renting out Neupert harpsichords (from Bamberg, Germany) for the past 46 years. The list goes on: TV shows—*Mission Impossible*, *Columbo*, *Kung Fu*, *Barnaby Jones*; movies—*Alfred Hitchcock*, *Interview with the Vampire*, *The French Connection*, *Oceans 12 or 13* (she couldn't remember which), *Cold Mountain*, *Adams Family*, *Titanic*, *Seabiscuit*, *Gladiator*, *Munich*, *Finding Nemo*, *Horton Hears a Who*—you get the idea!

As far as the classical music world, they have rented to the likes of Gustav Leonhardt, Igor Kipnis and Fernando Valenti. Recently they had to drive to San Francisco to provide Elisabeth Chojnacka with a 16 foot instrument in order for her to perform the Xenakis concerto with Michael Tilson Thomas. Their harpsichord has also been used in countless other music venues: Janis Joplin (in her last recording for Capitol Records), Dixie Chicks and Stevie Wonder. Helga reported that John Denver was a lovely man and helped transport the legs of a harpsichord! Another story was renting to a pianist who upon fiddling with all of the handstops and turning off all the registers, looked up and asked, "Could you plug it in?" Moral to this story—Hire a harpsichordist!

Read the wonderful interview with Helga to learn more about this fascinating woman: <http://www.larchmontchronicle.com/ArchiveDetail.asp?ArchiveID=502>

Recent Chojnacka concert: <http://www.sfcv.org/content/ill-tempered-harpsichord>

Not to mention: The time that the Beach Boys rented one of Helga's Harpsichords, emptied out one of their swimming pools and proceeded to do a recording there! —EFL

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FALL 2009: East and West Coast Harpsichord Events Abound!

The masterpieces of tomorrow are waiting to be written.

Diane Hubbard: Beloved Businesswoman, Harpsichord Heroine



The harpsichord community mourns another loss of a major figure from the vibrant Boston scene. Diane Hubbard, who led Hubbard Harpsichords for a quarter century, died at her home on September 22nd. While working at Harvard and taking lessons at the Longy School, Diane fell in love with harpsichord craftsman Frank Hubbard, whose workshop was spurring a revival of the instrument.

Frank had formed Hubbard Harpsichords in the 1950s and in collaboration with William Dowd, helped lead the way in historically informed performance. After Frank died suddenly

in 1976, leaving Diane with two young daughters, she single-handedly continued the Waltham, Massachusetts business.

Under Frank's and Diane's guidance, Hubbard Harpsichords restored and built thousands of instruments, partly in the form of kits that keyboardists could use to build their own harpsichords appropriate to the compositions of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Diane, who was gracious, creative, well-organized and hardworking, will long be remembered for carrying this torch.

In This Issue:

Boston: 24 composers, 4 concerts, 2 days

California Dreaming

Meet Opus 333 at November Concerts

www.harpsichord-now.org