Keys to the Past: Building Harpsichords and Feeling History in the Postwar United States

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation traces the range of popular forms and practices associated with the harpsichord in the 20th century in the United States, focusing on the 1950s, 60s and 70s. It draws on archives of period correspondence, sound recordings, and news clippings, as well as on my interviews with harpsichord builders and performers and on fieldwork I conducted at a prominent American harpsichord company during 2008. I argue that the harpsichord enabled practices and discourses through which the white middle class could critique the post-World War II United States, and that the material aspects of the harpsichord—its sound, its wooden materials and its construction methods—provided a gauge by which to measure how far the postwar everyday had veered from what was imagined to be an "authentic" human existence.

I focus the dissertation around the influence of a particular narrative associated with the harpsichord: that of the aristocratic, delicate instrument decimated by the Industrial Revolution. I first chart the ways that this narrative circulated in academic histories and popular media during the twentieth century, and how it was linked to perceptions of the harpsichord's physical "shortcomings." Focusing on its career in 1940s-60s popular music recordings, I then show how the stereotype of its "tragically disadvantaged" sound shaped acoustic and discursive constructions of that sound. I continue by demonstrating the classed critiques surrounding the instrument's commodification as a "do-it-yourself" kit—an affordable product that seemed to contradict the instrument's history as an elite, custom-made object. Lastly, I show how the harpsichord's story articulated with the biographies and sentiments of specific people, particularly those affiliated with the shop of Massachusetts harpsichord builder Frank Hubbard in late 1960s and early 1970s. Ultimately, I argue that the

Movement's ideal of "historical authenticity," along with the post-World War II mass appeal of period instruments and period performance practice, emerged out of time and place-specific meanings, and through multiple social and commodity networks.

Dedication

For my dearly missed friend Jen.

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Introduction

By the late 1960s, Wolfgang "Wally" Zuckermann, inventor of the do-it-yourself harpsichord kit, and busy owner of a once-small harpsichord company that had become a global industry, was "through" with the United States. He was through with its political upheavals, its noisy cityscapes, its quickening pace, and with its militaristic brand of international policy. In the fall of 1969, largely to protest the American involvement in Vietnam, he decided to move with his wife from Greenwich Village, New York to Devon, England.

Once settled in his new home, Zuckermann wrote a letter to some American friends that began with a critique of everyday life in the late-1960s United States:

> Well, we've been away from the States for about two months now and are leading such a different life that we've nearly forgotten New York, harpsichords, kits, business, traffic, race riots, Vietnam, etc., etc.[1]

Among his list are references to his American workaday as president of a successful kit business, the annoyances and social turmoil of 1960s New York City, and the War. Presumably, the list could go on for several more lines, given his "etc., etc." He continues with an account of his new medieval-style home, the surrounding sheep sheds and greenhouses, and then remarks:

> The landscape is incredibly beautiful. Here in Devon, life has not advanced much over the last few centuries. There are as yet no 20th Century evils except for one, which annoys us endlessly—training flights by fighter planes, some of them, ironically, American, seem to choose this area to fly their sorties and come over often and low. I would like to start the North-Devon

[1] Letter addressed to Frank and Diane Hubbard, dated November 22, 1969. Accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc., Framingham, Mass.

> Organization to Implement a Silent Environment (NOISE) and organize the local people against these monsters.[2]

In Devon, Zuckermann had achieved distance from the twentieth century, which for him, was linked to the United Sates. He contrasts images of twentieth century New York City with those of "Old World" Devon, a place where "life has not advanced much over the last few centuries."

For many of Zuckermann's white, middle-class demographic, the harpsichord had become part of the contemporary American landscape—a strange twist for an instrument that was perhaps most commonly associated with eighteenth century France. Part of the post-World War II revival of Western historical instruments, the harpsichord during the 1950s-1970s surpassed its Baroque counterparts in the range of mass cultural forms and practices it traversed. In its kit form, it generated thousands of annual worldwide sales during the 1960s and 70s. Dozens of harpsichord shops were set up across the United States, employing many middle class young adults hoping to learn the trade.

Further, images and sounds of the instrument seemed to proliferate in popular culture of the era—in television shows, movies, soundtracks, novels, and in advertisements seen in magazines such as the *New Yorker, Fine Woodworking*, and even *Playboy*.[3] Increasingly

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[2] Ibid.

[3] From this period, television shows that featured both images and sounds of the harpsichord include *Star Trek,* "Squire of Gothos" episode (1967); *The Addams Family,* "Lurch and his Harpsichord" episode (1965); and *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood,* Program 1129 (1970). Movies featuring shots of harpsichords include *Jennifer on My Mind* (1971) and *Love Story* (1970). Movie soundtracks featuring the harpsichord's sound include *Lolita* (1962); *The Paper Chase* (1973); *The Last Run* (1971); *The Thomas Crown Affair* (1968); and *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* (1968). Novels with references to the instrument include Philip K. Dick's *We Can Build You* (New York: Daw Books, Inc., 1972); John Fowles' *The Magus* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1965); Ivan Karp's *Doobie Doo* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965); and Roger Lichtenberg Simon's *Heir* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1968). The advertisement in *Playboy* features a replica of a 16th century Italian harpsichord built by

in the late 1960s and 1970s, popular musicians incorporated the instrument's sound in genres ranging from boogie and easy-listening to psychedelic rock and reggae.[4] Period news stories about the harpsichord's revival, as well as letters from customers and employees of American harpsichord companies, contained critiques similar to Zuckermann's of the twentieth century United States, of its alienated labor forms, imperialist foreign policies, increasingly dehumanizing cityscapes, and unjust social politics.

The question underpinning this dissertation is: amidst this mounting disenchantment with "America" and "progress," why did this symbol of Old World Europe proliferate in the United States? Drawing on archives research and oral histories, I will argue that the harpsichord enabled practices and discourses through which the white middle class could articulate critiques of the contemporary United States. Further, I will argue that the material features of the harpsichord—things like its sound, its wooden materials, and its construction methods—became measuring sticks by which to gauge how far the modern everyday had gotten from what was imagined to be an "authentic" human existence. As seen in the excerpt from Zuckermann's letter, and as I will argue throughout the dissertation, the harpsichord in the twentieth century was linked to a set of critiques, critiques that came attached to a particular demographic, to particular ideas about the United States and Europe—and also, to ideas about the relationship of sound to military, urban, or otherwise social contexts. In this letter, Zuckermann seeks a "historical authenticity," in which

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William Post Ross, the lid painting of which depicts a reclining female nude. See "A Little Night Music, Please," *Playboy,* December 1978, 390.

[4] See Appendix 1 for a listing of many of these recordings.

authenticity includes the trappings of an everyday characterized by quiet, natural acoustics, a slow pace, and minimal industrial intrusion—trappings that he associates with the "historical," and more specifically, with "Old World Europe."

In the following chapters, I trace the range of popular forms and practices associated with the harpsichord during the twentieth century, and focusing especially on the period between the 1950s and 1970s. Partly these chapters are meant to serve as a history of the American harpsichord revival. Telling that history involves laying out the revival's central builders and performers, as well as the musical repertoires involved. I give general timelines of when particular movements within the revival took place, as well as information on the magnitude of the instrument's mass media proliferation, through lists of recordings and through sales figures. A large priority in mapping out the project has been to document aspects of this history that are in danger of being lost, aspects that have not made it into existing secondary literature, that exist only in memories or in private archives. For example, documentation on harpsichordist Sylvia Marlowe's 1956 State Department-sponsored tour exist in a single (fragile) scrapbook of a private collection; it was important to me to reproduce at least part of those materials in the permanent format of a dissertation. The extensive history of the harpsichord's popular music career has not been systematically preserved; many of those recordings have not been saved in library collections and show up in eBay auctions less than once a year, or perhaps never.[5] This was part of the reasoning behind the first Appendix at the end of the dissertation, which charts the appearance of the harpsichord in popular and jazz recordings between 1939 and 1979, roughly the period

[5] This is the case with 1950s recordings by Harpsichord Tommy on the CI-SUM label.

covered in the chapters. The final chapter on the apprentice scene in Frank Hubbard's harpsichord shop remains vivid in the memories of those who cycled through it, but absent from published accounts of the harpsichord revival. It thus became important for me to preserve at least some of those stories and perspectives while so many of the "survivors" are still living.

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The harpsichord's resurgence occurred as part of the larger Early Music Movement of the twentieth century, in which musicians began playing Baroque and earlier repertoire on period instruments (or period instrument replicas), and in a style "authentic" to the way the repertoire would have been performed when it was composed. (For example, according to proponents of the movement, Baroque keyboard works were more "authentically" heard on the harpsichord than on the piano.) During the years following World War II, the term "historically authentic" had special currency. In subsequent decades, the term would be discredited and replaced with "historically informed."

This movement coincided with developments in recording technology, such that Early Music (the repertoire itself, as well as the practice of "period performance") became mass market and part of popular culture. The harpsichord served as a staple in much of these recordings—most notably in the solo keyboard albums of virtuosi Wanda Landowska, Ralph Kirkpatrick, Fernando Valenti and Sylvia Marlowe, that featured the works of J.S. Bach, Domenico Scarlatti, François Couperin and Jean-Philippe Rameau. Further, any ensemble or vocal work calling for continuo accompaniment would have required a

harpsichord as a sound and symbol through which to mark the "historical authenticity" of a performance.[6]

What constitutes "Early Music" changes depending on the era, but within Western art music, it generally indicates repertoires from the Baroque era (c. 1570-1750) and before. To its practitioners, "Early Music" is often distinguished from "music" more generally by the presence of an "interruption" in performing traditions; it is music for which performance practices must be reconstructed. In eighteenth century England, the practice of Early Music included organizations such as the Concert of Ancient Music and the Academy of Ancient Music, which produced concerts of Georg Handel, Henry Purcell, and earlier composers.[7] In nineteenth century France, it included scholars like François-Joseph Fétis who organized themed historical concerts at the Paris Conservatoire. In nineteenth century Germany, it included Felix Mendelssohn's 1829 performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and the series of Bach societies that subsequently sprung up across Europe. In many of these and other examples, nobility and wealthy enthusiasts coalesced around repertoires and composers imagined to be "historical."[8]

Early Music movements have had a long-standing relationship to ideas of "the modern," "the contemporary," to progress and change—where "the modern" refers not

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[6] Continuo refers to the bass line of a musical work from which the harmonies are derived. In Baroque practice, this part would typically be played by a harpsichord, lute, viola da gamba, or cello, sometimes in combination. Particular continuo instrumentations vary greatly depending on the repertoire and on the aesthetics of the performing ensemble. In post-World War II performance practice is was common to play this part on a harpsichord.

[7] For an account of English "Early Music movements" of this era, see William Weber's *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

[8] For more detailed accounts of these and other early Early Music movements, see Harry Haskell's chapter "The Musical Pompeii," from *The Early Music Revival: A History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988), 13-25.

necessarily to the time period of the mid-1400s to 1950, but rather, to aspects of a particular present that feel "new." Annagret Fauser notes that in the case of Fetis' Baroque music activities, Early Music performance formed "not only a validation of progress but also...the underpinning of a modern and national art."[9] In other Early Music "scenes" of the nineteenth century, historical performance was often viewed as a means to *retreat* from forms of "progress," musical or technological. The orchestra had grown in size and had come to signify standardization, de-individualization, its musicians working like cogs in a gigantic machine. The general landscape of Europe was felt to be changing as well—with steam-powered trains, massive factory-oriented industries, an increasingly powerful and populous middle class.

The English historical instrument builder and amateur period performer, Arnold Dolmetsch, developed a following in this late nineteenth century phase. His popularity coincided with the Arts and Crafts movement in England and the United States, a movement that placed value on the individual craftsman and on handmade objects, a movement that existed in dialectic with newer modes of factory production. His instruments seemed hand-made (though with expert workmanship) and not mass-produced. The many concerts held at his home featured amateur performers and an informal atmosphere, where it was not uncommon to stop and restart a piece during performance.

The Early Music practices that developed after World War II in the United States and Europe (the phase to which "the Early Music Movement" most commonly refers) picked up on many aspects of Dolmetsch's enterprise. Though Dolmetsch was quite popular

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[9] Annagret Fauser, *Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World's Fair* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 41.

and commercially successful, the postwar Early Music Movement garnered more mass cultural prominence, more marketability, and engaged a broader cross-section of the American and European middle class.

Revisiting the "Authenticity" Debate

Theodor Adorno pioneered the move to theorize twentieth-century period performance practices in his critique of attempts by musicologists to "neutralize" Bach, to render the composer part of a mass ideology.[10] According to Adorno, these modern interpreters framed the composer as a pious carrier of archaic compositional practices, as an exemplar of "order;" their approach evacuated Bach's music of its subjectivity and of the struggles evidenced in his compositions. Noting that Bach had become "monopolized" by "dilettante high schools,"the [11] Adorno argues that the public had turned its back on the innovations of current composers, and that contemporary Bach performers were flattening out what was once progressive in the composer's works.

During the 1980s, several scholars joined Adorno in critiquing the postwar Early Music Movement, linking period performance practices to broad cultural preoccupations. These critiques drew heavily on literary critics and cultural theorists in order to link period performance to modernism and postmodernism, and to cast period performance as a kind of historically-situated, alternative "reading."[12] Particularly influential were Richard Taruskin's early essays.[13]

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[10] Originally published in 1951, the article has been translated and included in a modern anthology. See Theodor Adorno, "Bach Defended Against His Devotees," in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 135-147.

[11] Ibid., 135.

Seemingly unnerved by the mass market success of period ensembles, he proposed that the ideals of "authenticity" and "objectivism" were themselves part of an ideology that had emerged historically to oppose the aesthetic and political dimensions of Romantic "excess."[14] Like Adorno, he suggested that this anti-subjective approach depleted the repertoire and composers of their expressive dimensions, rendering the music motoric and dehumanized.[15]

Since the 1980s, several scholars have reassessed the practices and ideologies circulated by the postwar Early Music Movement—partly to come to terms with the vitriol of the 1980s debates. John Butt has critiqued the 1980s writings on the movement, placing it amidst the modernism-postmodernism dialectic, and linking it to the architectural heritage movement in Britain.[16] Musicologist Dorottya Fabian has revisited the arguments around period performance

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[12] See especially Lawrence Dreyfus, "Early Music Defended Against Its Devotees," *Musical Quarterly,* LXIX (1983), 297-322, in which he characterizes the movement as an alternative stance, providing a defamiliarizing counter-paradigm to that represented in the "mainstream" Western Classical tradition.

[13] I am thinking here of "On Letting the Music Speak for Itself" and "The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past," both of which have been republished in Taruskin's collection *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 51-66; 90-154.

[14] Other important early contributions to the discourse on the Early Music Movement include Robert Morgan, Raymond Leppard and Joseph Kerman. See Robert P. Morgan, "Tradition, Anxiety and the Musical Scene," in *Authenticity and Early Music: A Symposium,* ed. Nicholas Kenyon, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1-18; Raymond Leppard, *Authenticity in Music* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1988); Joseph Kerman, "The Historical Performance Movement," in *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 182-217. Harry Haskell takes a more historical approach, placing the post-World War II era in a context of a 200-year history of early music movements in the U.S. and Europe. See *The Early Music Revival* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1988).

[15] See his discussion in Richard Taruskin, "The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past," in *Text and Act,* 108-122; 136-137. Bruce Haynes' recent study builds on Taruskin's stylistic critiques of objectivist performances, and places them within an extensive lineage of historically specific approaches to vibrato, articulation, phrasing, beat hierarchies, and tempo. See *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[16] John Butt, *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

by showing authenticity's meanings at different times within the larger trajectory of Early Music movements; she ultimately suggests that what Taruskin identifies as modernist objectivism may not have been specific to the twentieth century.[17]

In my view, not only did many of the 1980s arguments against "historical authenticity" disregard the agency and significance of the consumers who fueled its commercial success, but they also missed an opportunity to place Early Music activity in direct contact with United States and European material, economic and cultural contexts—including pop cultural contexts. As John Butt has pointed out, running through much of Taruskin's writings is a distrust of the Early Music consumer, a consumer unable to separate musicological fact from the fiction of hype. For example, in the postscript to the article "The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past," Taruskin writes, "…I have always considered it important for musicologists to put their expertise at the service of 'average consumers' and alert them to the possibility that they are being hoodwinked, not only by commercial interest but by complaisant academics, biased critics, and pretentious performers."[18]

The present study derives its inspiration in part from Lawrence Dreyfus's move to frame Early Music as a practice of resisting a "mainstream" and as a site of agency for both the commercially signed professionals and for the amateurs who participated.[19] This dissertation

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[17] See Dorottya Fabian, "The Meaning of Authenticity and the Early Music Movement—A Historical Review," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 32, no. 2 (2001), 152-167.

[18] Richard Taruskin, "The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past," in *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 153.

[19] While Joel Cohen accounts for the amateur involvement in the Early Music Movement, his approach is descriptive; he does not interpret participants' values or link them to historically contingent contexts in the U.S.

aims to show how these discourses were constructed by multiple Early Music "publics" in everyday as well as concert settings, and amidst popular as well as high art articulations of "historical authenticity." I show the "networks of meaning" (Hebdige 1988) associated with historical authenticity through an examination of how the idea and its related objects were taken up, consumed, altered, and recirculated in both mass-mediated forms and everyday practices.

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Given the 1930-1980 time frame, the dissertation charts an instrument's revival during several momentous transitions in United States cultural, political and economic history. The American harpsichord industry began while modernist thinking still inflected art and commodity production, thinking that encompassed a belief in progress and in technological control of nature, and a commitment to the principle of form following function. As Emily Thompson has demonstrated, this modernist phase was one in which Americans were acclimating to changes in the urban landscape, to increasing noise of automobile traffic, industrial machinery and crowds.[20]

World War II marked a sea change for United States culture and politics. For one thing, it changed the relationship between the United States and the rest of the world, marking a point at which the nation had become a massive global power. After the War, through the flow of American mass-market goods to Europe, and through initiatives such as the Truman Doctrine (which pledged to protect various regions "susceptible" to Communist

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and Europe. See Joel Cohen and Herb Snitzer, *The Extraordinary Revival of Early Music,* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1985).

[20] Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 2002.

control), the United States emerged as an imperialist force of increasing dominance. Within the United States, the white middle class after the War experienced increased affluence, with disposable income to spend on suburban homes, automobiles, domestic commodities and hobbies.

This postwar phase of the late 1940s and 1950s was not entirely positive for the white middle class, however. Popular literature, movies and magazines critiqued the era's over-mechanization, the alienating corporate environments, and the pressure to conform to confining gender roles. With the civil rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s, it became clear that the New Deal and postwar affluence were in fact benefitting only a subsection of the United States population. These critiques, as well as those of the escalating United States military interventions in Vietnam fueled various white countercultural practices, particularly during the late 1960s. These included student demonstrations, dropout movements, as well as politically conscious rock music performances and recordings. With the environmentalist movement of the 1970s, these rebellions came increasingly to involve "back-to-the-land" practices—of living on communes, producing food, clothing, shelter, furniture, and musical instruments with one's own hands, outside of mass market commodity circuits.

During the mid-1970s, economic conditions for the white middle class shifted, with recession, inflation, and especially increased energy costs. David Harvey has argued that the period around 1973 marked a transition from Fordist production and accompanying lifestyles to systems of flexible accumulation, the latter of which relied on constantly re-

invented products, markets and modes of production, increased outsourcing, and financial de-regulation.[21]

The chapters that follow can be read against these various shifts. I begin with an account of the modernist tradition in harpsichord building (predominant until the 1950s), an approach that advocated for the "development" of the harpsichord towards a yet-to-be-achieved mechanistic and acoustic ideal, that prized the efficient, reliable functioning of the "machine" (the harpsichord) and that celebrated new technology facilitating the domination of natural elements (such as wood). I move through the World War II period, when the United States displaced Europe as the center for harpsichord building, and when the United States became involved in campaigns to export its culture (represented in some cases by the harpsichord) to recently de-colonized regions of the globe. I follow the harpsichord on its path into the domestic space of the affluent middle class in the 1950s and 1960s—as a "tasteful" home furnishing and as a recorded sound emanating from high-end record players. I follow it still on its journey as one of many forms of do-it-yourself kits during the 1960s, used as a means to counter alienating effects of corporate or intellectual labor. Lastly, I show its role in countercultural practices, among the laborers of Boston harpsichord shops. My study ends in the late 1970s, a moment when United States harpsichord kit purchases dropped precipitously and permanently,[22] when Early Music performance had become professionalized and institutionalized (largely through conservatory programs in

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[21] David Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1990), 145-147.

[22] According to Glenn Giuttari of the Harpsichord Clearinghouse in Rehoboth, Massachusetts, the market for used harpsichords remained profitable through the 1980s and showed no signs of decline.

performance practice), when news articles pronounced Early Music to be "big business."[23] With these shifts, the harpsichord, Baroque music and "historical authenticity" meant something different than in previous decades.

Background

I came to this project with an interest in exploring the lateral, metacultural and material flows of Early Music during a particular era—across multiple musical genres, material forms and practices. My belief was that this lateral aspect was one of most significant aspects of the post-World War II Early Music Movement's cultural history. Related to this, I was interested in telling the story of the "authenticity" movement through its material remnants, remnants that directly connected to larger cultural and political trends. I hoped to account for the cultural significance of the Movement through a careful focus on the multiple social and commodity networks in which these musical products circulated.

During my first semester at Duke, I took a course called "Arts and Markets" in the Art History Department. The final project required us to apply microeconomic theory to an artistic commodity for which there were consecutive years of sales or price figures available. I knew I wanted to use the assignment to think further about the commercial and "lowbrow" contexts of the Early Music, and for several weeks cast about looking for a commodity that would allow me to do that. I ran across numerous *New York Times* articles and classified advertisements referring to the harpsichord kit, which provided a smattering of sales and price figures from the 1960s and 70s—I wondered whether I might be able to cull

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[23] One harpsichord builder told me that the 1980s marked a point at which young people were no longer willing to apprentice for little pay, when they ceased to value knowledge and experience as sufficient compensation.

together enough to sustain my final project. In order to track down more comprehensive documentation of sales or price figures I began phoning the companies mentioned in the *Times* articles. To my relief, Hendrik Broekman at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc. reported that although they did not have those figures compiled, I was welcome to rummage through the company's files to find the information myself.

Once I arrived in Framingham, I found shelves of boxes containing not only invoices and brochures dating from the company's 1949 inception, but boxes as well of customer correspondence, shop notebooks kept by Frank Hubbard, files of news clippings, and binders of photographs. I immediately recognized enough primary sources in the shop to sustain an entire dissertation. While the project ultimately developed facets beyond the harpsichord kit and the Hubbard company, the Framingham archives—and especially the customer correspondence—ultimately shaped the themes and organization of the project.

My understanding of the shared sensibilities of different postwar harpsichord contexts thus came partly from the narratives reiterated in correspondence and period media—and partly from my interviews with enthusiasts and builders who were active in harpsichord and Early Music scenes between the 1940s and 1980s. I tracked down as many harpsichord builders in the United States as I could, through Internet searches, the harpsichord listserv, contacts made at Hubbard Harpsichords, and at academic meetings. I travelled to meet them in cases where I had family, friends, or a conference hotel nearby. A yearlong research grant allowed me to live on the outskirts of Boston, within easy driving distance to a number of kind-hearted harpsichord builders and enthusiasts. These logistical factors resulted in many interviews in California and the Eastern Seaboard—but not many from the Midwestern, Pacific Northwestern and Southeastern portions of the country.

Theorizing Objects

In focusing my study around an object, I am drawing heavily on existing anthropological and cultural studies scholarship on the relationship between nostalgic practices and modern sentiments and on the potential of enchanted commodities to unlock interior dimensions of historical fantasy (see Stewart 1993, Seremetakis 1994, Samuels 2004, Allison 2006). Both Susan Stewart and Anne Allison have written about meaningful—and diminutive—objects of play that are situated in times of intense technological and industrial change, such as the dollhouse in late nineteenth century Europe (in Stewart's case) or character toys in millennial Japan (in Allison's case). Those objects take on significance as "otherworldly" and as sites of fantasy. For Allison, these meaningful material objects become a way to "reenchant everyday life."[24] Stewart claims that objects become sites of nostalgia when they are interpreted as material "traces" of other, "fictive" worlds. She suggests that these other worlds signify some form of "authenticity," and states, "'Authentic' experience becomes both elusive and allusive as it is placed beyond the horizon of present lived experience, the beyond in which the antique, the pastoral, the exotic, and other fictive domains are articulated."[25] What Stewart calls "authentic," Allison breaks down as "meaning, connection and intimacy"; in Allison's analysis, desire for these experiences

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[24] Anne Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2006), 21.

[25] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), 133.

becomes "mapped" onto commodities that are then "endowed" with some sort of magical capacity.[26]

In focusing on a material object, I am also of course drawing on musical instrument studies (called Organology) and especially on those works from the past two decades that have been retroactively termed "Critical Organology" or "Cultural Organology." The general field of Organology began in the 1880s as a practice of classifying, describing, collecting and preserving musical instruments from around the world. It has thus tended to be grouped with museum studies and at the margins of both Historical Musicology and Ethnomusicology disciplines. Since the 1990s, several book-length studies, special-issue journal volumes, book chapters and individual articles have seized upon the methodological and intellectual potential of musical instruments to reveal cultural formations and global commodity flows, and "to reveal new fields of knowledge."[27] Many of these scholars have not identified their work as "organological"; rather recent works by younger instrument-centered scholars has used the term in order to create an intellectual lineage.

Karen Linn's (1991) study of the banjo was a pioneering move in the way it exposed an instrument for being as much a social construction as a material one; her study is commonly cited as one of the earliest examples of "Critical Organology." Focusing on the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century United States, Linn gives thorough accounts of changes in banjo designs and performance practices, and in some cases, the relationship of these to the size and acoustics of the particular performance venues. Along with materials aspects of the instrument's sound and associated playing techniques, Linn also presents the range of mass-market material

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[26] Ibid., 13.
[27] Steve Waksman, *Instruments of Desire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 10.

culture that circulated ideas of the banjo's social meanings. She argues that attachments to the instrument were inflected by affective preoccupations of the turn-of-the-century, and particularly by what she calls "sentimental values of American culture"; these she describes as "The longing for home, sweet home, the fear of over-civilization, pastoral visions of premodern life, medievalism, primitivism, and an antimodernist aesthetic."[28] These sentimental values she suggests existed in distinction to prevalent "official" values; the banjo facilitated ways of cultivating sentimentalism in contrast to official culture.

Steve Waksman's study (1999) of the electric guitar has also been seminal within the "Critical Organology," particularly in his attention to the work of individual performers in interacting with the material specifics of their instruments to arrive at performance practices that are at once idiosyncratic and historically situated. Waksman's work has been especially useful for me in its consideration of the process of "building sound" through instrument construction, particularly in his chapter on Les Paul's process of designing the solid body electric guitar, and of questing after a "clean sound." Trever Pinch and Frank Trocco's volume (2002) on the development of the Moog synthesizer has also been useful in this regard, by giving nuanced accounts of instrument-building processes in relation to biographical and musical (both popular and classical) contexts. Paul Théberge's study (1997) of digital instrument developments during the 1980s has similarly offered a helpful model for historicizing the emergence of sound effects; one gets a sense of the individuals, institutions and epistemes behind the creation and circulation of particular digital sounds.

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[28] Karen Lynn, That Half-Barbaric Twang: The Banjo in American Culture, (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 7.

One strain of the "Critical Organology" movement has theorized instruments as having "careers" and "social lives" that carry them through various cultural contexts and circulation networks. This work builds upon Arjun Appadurai's (1986) formation that objects take on agency and meaning largely in their capacity to be recontextualized.[29] For example, citing Appadurai, guitar and lyra specialist Kevin Dawe states that "Like animals in a zoo or pinned butterflies kept in specimen drawers, musical instruments in collections and displays are *out of place*; but whilst their 'identities' inevitably deteriorate or change over time they may take on the role of *something else* to *somebody else, someplace else*."[30]

Within historical musicology, there is a strong body of work showing how musical instruments have been used in colonialist projects to articulate racial, gendered and classed identities, (Lindorff 2004; Pasler 2004; Fauser 2005; Irving 2009). These studies have done well to show the stakes behind representing and defining instruments. Craig Roell's (1989) study of piano cultures during this era shows the instrument's role in shaping ideals of bourgeois morality, and demonstrates its potential to hold "social capital" that figured in advertising, pedagogy and amateur practices.

Ethnomusicologists have a longer history of using instrument cultures as windows into social systems. Early formative examples include Alan Merriam's descriptive account (1969) of drum making in Central Africa and Paul Berliner's study of mbira practices in Zimbabwe.[31]

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[29] See for example Veronica Doubleday, "Sounds of Power: An Overview of Musical Instruments and Gender," *Ethnomusicology Forum* 17 (2008), 4; Karl Neuenfeldt, "Notes on Old Instruments in New Contexts," *The World of Music* 40(2) 1998, 5-8.

[30] Kevin Dawe, "People, Objects, Meaning: Recent Work on the Study and Collection of Musical Instruments," *Galpin Society Journal* 54 (2001), 222. Emphasis in original.

[31] Berliner goes so far as to include an appendix on how to build an mbira, complete with diagrams and lists of tools required.

Subsequent work has similarly focused on site-specific, non-Western musical cultures, using the instrument as a site around which to form questions about cultural formations and the construction of various types of difference. Many of these studies take a descriptive approach, covering the instrument's centuries-long history in the particular region, the musical forms and performance practices that have since become associated with it, the aspects of the local social system that link to instrumental practices, fieldwork examples (and especially biographical accounts of performers) demonstrating the links between the social and the musical, and the ways in which increased globalization and commodification affect performance, pedagogy and building traditions.[32] Anthropologist Amanda Weidman makes a strong case for the usefulness of musical instrument discourses and practices in gaining insights into the workings of colonialism. She does this through an extensively historicized account of how the Western violin came to symbolize the "authentic" in twentieth century India, with close attention to the violin's particular performance techniques and timbres that carried broad cultural meaning.[33]

My study shares with these an emphasis on the importance of long histories to current practice, on the relationship between "the instrument" and its commodity forms. Like those previous studies, it demonstrates that discourses and practices surrounding an instrument are an effective lens into particular ways that personal, national and subcultural identities are figured in

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[32] The articles in the 2008 special issue of *Ethnomusicology Forum*, "Sounds of Power: Musical Instruments and Gender" and from the 2005 special issue of *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, "Musical Instruments and Metaphor" follow this general format. Other examples include Suzel Ana Reily, "Hybridity and Segregation in Guitar Cultures of Brazil," and Rainer Polak, "A Musical Instrument Travels Around the World: *Jenbe* Playing in Bamako, West Africa, and Beyond," *Ethnomusicology: A Contemporary Reader*, ed. Jennifer C. Post (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2006), 185; Robin Ryan, "Jamming on the Gumleaves in the Bush 'Down Under': Black Tradition, White Novelty?", *Popular Music and Society* 26 (2003), 285-304.

[33] Amanda J. Weidman, "Gone Native?: Travels of the Violin in South India," *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern: The Postcolonial Politics of Music in South India* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006), 25-58.

particular times and places. My focus on the harpsichord's lateral moves—across highbrow and lowbrow contexts, across multiple media, and via a variety of incarnations and interpretations of its physical form—is a way of showing the instrument's career, and that its significance is consummated in its use (Théberge 1997), in its adaptations, in its recontextualizations into various commodity forms.

This orientation enables me to develop scholarship on the harpsichord's twentieth century career. Existing histories, by Wolfgang Zuckermann, Larry Palmer, and Edward Kottick provide careful descriptions of the approaches, designs and lineages of various twentieth century builders.[34] While Kottick and Palmer thoroughly account for the instrument's appearance in popular culture and have suggested connections between the instrument and its broader historical contexts, their studies have not explored these "pop" formations as sites of extended cultural analysis. Further, it was not within the scope of their histories to account for the *magnitude* of the instrument's multi-media mass-cultural circulation, or the historical, political and industrial forces that made these appearances possible.[35]

My goal in this project is thus to intertwine musical and extra-musical discourses of historical authenticity by focusing on primary texts and ethnographic detail. I locate the phenomenon in the postwar United States, and place the production and consumption of early music commodities in the context of American consumer culture during the years between 1950 and 1980. I place the specific mediating discourses of authenticity—quoted

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[34] Refer to Wolfgang Joachim Zuckermann, *The Modern Harpsichord: Twentieth-Century Instruments and Their Makers* (New York: October House Inc., 1969); Larry Palmer, *Harpsichord in America: A Twentieth-Century Revival* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); Edward L. Kottick, *A History of the Harpsichord* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

[35] See Kottick 457 and Palmer, 156-169.

from advertisements, liner notes, interviews, magazine articles, poems, transcribed from recordings—in relation to "extra-musical" commodities and ideas located in the same magazines, albums, and living rooms.

Methodology

To address a problem common to pop culture projects—of locating my "audience" when participants are dispersed across geographical space and (in the case of this dissertation) across a loosely defined era (1950s-70s), I have chosen to focus on "articulations," as understood by cultural studies theorists starting particularly with Stuart Hall. According to these formulations, cultural sensibilities emerge through the articulation of practices together, through "lines that distribute, place and connect cultural practices, effects and social groups."[36] This approach gives attention to cultural "texts" (broadly defined) not only at their "moment of enunciation" but throughout their careers, on their "subsequent circuit of exchange" (Radway 1988).[37] Whereas Early Music practices have typically been theorized from the perspective of the "industry professionals," this dissertation draws on the Cultural Studies tradition to theorize the meanings generated "from below"—even though the "below" in this case is still a relatively privileged class. Running through the dissertation is the idea that material forms and practices associated with popular harpsichord culture ultimately are shaped in relation to an idea of the dominant culture.

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[36] Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 71.

[37] See Janice Radway, "Reception Study: Ethnography and the Problems of Dispersed Audiences and Nomadic Subjects," *Cultural Studies* 2 (1988), 361.

Most of all, the dissertation is shaped by a series of questions about the relationship between material culture, historical context, and shared sensibility. In the theoretical backdrop to his study of the relationship between rock music and conservative culture in the 1980s United States, Larry Grossberg asks "Why now? Why in those particular forms? Why so successfully?"[38] Similarly, in the opening to her study of the popularity of "Japanese cool" in the 2000s United States and Japan, Anne Allison asks: "Is there something distinctive about Japan as a particular place/culture/history or about Japanese cultural industries that accounts for the production of a fantasy style that is gaining so much currency in global circuits today?"[39] Thus, this dissertation hones in on the curious situation of why the idea of "historical authenticity," and the sound, image and story of the harpsichord became such a popular fantasy and commodity at this (relatively) particular moment, and in the United States.

A focus on the harpsichord's metacultural flow during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s reveals the discourses of nature, technology, and history traveling between harpsichord builders, dealers, customers, popular musicians, professional harpsichordists, and through everyday correspondence, conversations, liner notes, advertisements, brochures, movies, television shows, short fiction, and radio broadcasts. To this end, my research involves a variety of materials from both public and private archives, as well as oral histories among harpsichord enthusiasts and key figures in the postwar harpsichord industry.

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[38]Grossberg, 3.

[39] Anne Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 11.

Sales figures and information about the American custom harpsichord and harpsichord kit industry come primarily from the private, uncatalogued archives at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc. in Framingham, Massachusetts. I draw other archival material on the industry from the William Dowd Papers at the Smithsonian Museum of American History, the Harpsichord Clearinghouse, the New York Public Library, as well as the extensive, privately owned estate of United States builder John Challis. Materials related to the 1950s-60s global tours of harpsichordists Ralph Kirkpatrick and Sylvia Marlowe I extracted from the Yale University Music Library Special Collections, as well as from a privately owned scrapbook collection. Materials relating to the multiple popular recordings and radio broadcasts featuring the harpsichord come from the Sound Recordings Archives at Bowling Green State University and the Recorded Sound Reference Center at the Library of Congress.

To trace how "period" practices articulated with identities and social politics of a particular time and place has also entailed a partial ethnographic approach, as modeled by Kay Kaufman Shelemay (2001) and John Shull (2006).[40] I draw especially on the recent work of Kirsten Yri and Kailan Ruth Rubinoff, which has brought a range of lateral contexts to bear on Early Music practices in specific times and places. In Yri's case, this has entailed linking Noah Greenberg's New York City performance projects to Leftist movements of the Cold War period, and to contemporaneous folk music practices.[41] In Rubinoff's case, this has involved analyses of

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[40] See Kay Kaufman Shelemay, "Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Early Music Movement: Thoughts on Bridging Disciplines and Musical Worlds," *Ethnomusicology* 45 (1), 2001, 1-29; Jonathan Shull, "Locating the Past in the Present: Living Traditions and the Performance of Early Music," *Ethnomusicology Forum* 15(1) 2006, 87-111.

[41] See her article "Noah Greenberg and the New York Pro Musica: Medievalism and the Cultural Front," *American Music* 24, no. 4 (2006), 421-444.

how various post-World War II institutional histories and economic contexts intersected with period performance pedagogy at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam.[42]

My archival research is thus complemented by extensive oral history interviews with family members and former employees of Frank Hubbard and William Dowd, as well as surviving postwar builders in Los Angeles, the Bay Area and New England, museum curators and United States dealers of domestic and German harpsichords. To this I add my own seven-month experience of building a harpsichord from a donated 1978 Hubbard kit with my graduate colleagues during the 2006-2007 academic year.[43] In order to gain access to the phenomenological aspects of Old World harpsichord labor, between February-August 2008, I worked in the current workshop of Hubbard Harpsichords where I learned to voice and paint harpsichords, pack shipments of kits—and where I once attempted to tune a clavichord.

Chapter Outline

In the first chapter, "Histories of Instruments and Instruments of History: Progress Narratives and the 'Genuine' Harpsichord," I examine the narratives surrounding the harpsichord, circulated in United States newspapers, magazines, countercultural catalogs, short stories, advertisements and academic histories during the 1890s through the late 1970s. I show how accounts of the harpsichord's history portray it as an undeveloped and disadvantaged species of keyboard, dramatically "killed off" by the pianoforte during the French Revolution and Industrial Revolution, in a battle of natural selection. I argue that

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[42] Kailan Ruth Rubinoff, "The Early Music Movement in the Netherlands: History, Pedagogy and Ethnography" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta, 2006).

[43] Our progress on this kit can be seen on our blog: http://hubbardkit.blogspot.com.

these narratives invoked the harpsichord's wooden construction, its fragility and its susceptibility to changes in climate as signs of its closeness to Nature and as sites requiring modern intervention.

The second chapter, "Developing the Antique: Acclimating the Harpsichord to Space-Time Compression," focuses on the discourses surrounding the instrument's physical response to modern demands of world travel and manufactured weather (steam heating and air-conditioning). In the postwar 1950s, when it traveled to recently decolonized regions of Asia in United States State Department-sponsored tours, when it became a common household object among the American middle class, journalists highlighted the instrument's susceptibility to humidity as a means of marking its historic, European origins, and its cultural distance from the contemporary United States, from the "non-West," and from the modern. I contend that climate differences became the language through which colonialist relationships (between Europe and the United States, between the United States. and post-World War II Asia) were articulated.

The third chapter, "Sounds of the Past, Sounds with a Past," outlines the different mediums through which the harpsichord's timbre was constructed - including literary works, concert reviews, liner notes, recordings, and actual instruments. I show how, on the one hand, a variety of sounds passed for "the harpsichord" in the mid-twentieth century (including the thumbtack piano), and on the other, modernist builders and recording engineers standardized its dynamic level as quiet. I argue that this stereotyped diminutive volume was then used as a means through which to stage both the noisy soundscape of modernity and the sophisticated sensitivity of modern recording technology.

The fourth chapter, "DIY Harpsichord Kits: Mass-Producing Luxury, Making the

"Purists" Bristle," traces the ambivalence surrounding the opposing features of accessibility and luxury among builders affiliated with the "historically-authentic" Boston School of harpsichord building. The DIY harpsichord kit allowed its participants the ideological benefits of DIY hobbyism through its links to unalienated labor, amateur-friendly technology, antithetical to social, scientific and urban chaos of the outside world. At the same time, advertisements, builders and fans of the instrument maintained the harpsichords distinction as an esoteric high art object, one necessarily handmade by artisans schooled in "highbrow" "modes of acquisition" (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]).

In the final chapter, "Personal and Cultural Trajectories: 'Historical' Time and "Outmoded" Labor among Harpsichord Shop Apprentices and DIY Builders," I explore the ways in which the harpsichord's quiet sounds, slow processes and stable histories facilitated a small rebellion against the large, destructive changes that seemed to dominate modern life for the communities of young apprentices working in the shops of Frank Hubbard and William Dowd during the 1960s-70s. Attending to apprentices' discourse surrounding different tasks, I show that these young men and women located themselves outside the "mainstream" by reorienting their everyday around the temporal discipline of slow, painstaking, historically-derived processes and thwarting modernity's temporalities of 24-hour clocks and accelerated productivity schedules. Ultimately, I contend that the apprentices linked this type of labor to an ideology of "outsider authenticity"—the authenticity of living and working outside the trajectories of technological progress, professional advancement, middle-class domesticity, and capital accumulation.

By studying the postwar United States career of an object associated with historical Europe, one gains insight into the importance of the "Old World" and of "highbrow" taste in

American nationalist narratives. Scholars in the "New American Studies" tradition have noted a disciplinary tendency not to engage with the imperialist politics engendered by United States cultural products.[44] An instrument that accompanied European expeditions during the Age of Empire and that took part in exoticist representations of Asian and North African musical forms,[45] the harpsichord in the post-World War II era again accompanied imperialist projects, this time in the service of the United States, via cultural exchange tours sponsored by the State Department. The harpsichord was called in to represent "American" artistic achievement, achievement that was grounded in "tradition" and "class." Focusing on the postwar career of this particular object thus foregrounds the global, colonialist "work" of United States material culture.

Further, American Studies approaches to the 1960s-70s counterculture have tended to focus on white middle-class appropriations of Native American, African American and white working-class cultural practices (Hall 1969; Miller 1991; Deloria 1998; Hodgdon 2008). A study of United States harpsichord scenes complicates this picture of the counterculture, by including white middle-class appropriations of aristocratic, European practices. As I argue, in the quiet rebellion of harpsichord enthusiasts, it was not necessarily whiteness and privilege that were being critiqued, but rather, an idea of "America," as a force of alienated labor, runaway progress, mass culture, global homogeneity, and inhumane politics.

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[44] See for example Janice Radway, "What's in a Name?," *The Futures of American Studies,* ed. Donald E. Pease and Robyn Wiegman. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 45-75.

[45] I am thinking here, for example, of eighteenth century French compositions, such as François Couperin's (le grande) "La Muse de Monaco," *Troisiéme Livre de Piéces de Clavecin*, 15 (1722) and "Les Chinois," *Quatriéme livre de piéces de Clavecin*, 27 (1730); or Jean-Philippe Rameau's "Tambourin," *Pieces de Clavessin* (1724) and "L'Egyptienne," *Nouvelles Suites de Pieces de Clavecin* (c. 1729-1730).

1. Histories of Instruments and Instruments of History: Progress Narratives and the "Endangered" Harpsichord

This dissertation puts forth two premises; 1) that "the instrument itself" is an ideal, always already complicated by varieties within a "species," by layers of discourse, and—in the case of the harpsichord—layers of restorations; and 2) that histories of instruments are not merely descriptive. Whether circulated in peer-reviewed or popular press, in monographs, liner notes, newspapers, advertisements or talk among builders, histories of instruments are cultural discourses that communicate ideas about nature, technology, and social difference. As I argue in this chapter, harpsichords are built not merely out of wood, metal, ivory, quill, and plastic, but also out of stories told and retold in particular social contexts.

Beginning in the nineteenth century, and on into the late twentieth, stories of the Western keyboard describe two trajectories of progress: progress in which quiet and unstable mechanisms developed into louder and more stable ones, and progress in assembly techniques from the slow pace of artisans' handiwork to the efficiency of factory-production. According to these stories, early in the nineteenth century, the harpsichord fell victim to this teleological march forward. Tragically disadvantaged in areas of expression, volume, durability and versatility, the harpsichord lost the battle of natural selection to the "fitter" pianoforte. It did not merely decrease in production as more pianos were produced, nor did it gradually taper off in popularity among domestic music-makers. Rather, it was momentously "displaced," thrust into oblivion.

In accounts of the harpsichord's history—academic and popular, written and oral—the harpsichord came to emblematize the cost of progress, a case of something artisan-produced and "natural" overrun by the rush to industrial progress.[1] To study the history of the harpsichord as a player, a builder, or an instrument buyer, required one to participate in this discursive drama, to read and reread the story of the "Queen of Instruments," who, after three centuries, died tragically at the hands of her younger rival.[2] This chapter investigates these narratives, their various repetitions into the twentieth century, as well as how they coexisted with beliefs and practices of builders in the business of constructing and reconstructing the harpsichord with their hands.

1.1 Stabilizing "the Harpsichord"

A glance through catalogues of keyboard instrument collections, or through the shop diaries of a builder re-encountering a particular instrument through its years of maintenance and repairs, indicates the extent of change within the lifespan of a single antique harpsichord, and thus the difficulty in representing the instrument's essential history.[3] Famous examples of this ontological instability include the "transitioning" of seventeenth century single-manual Ruckers instruments into eighteenth century double-manual extravagances, or the

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[1] For more on the influence of nineteenth century biological sciences on organological representation, see Laurence Libin, "Progress, Adaptation, and the Evolution of Musical Instruments," *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society* 26 (2000), 187-213. Ann Bond also alludes to this in her chapter, "The Eclipse and Rebirth of the Instrument," in *A Guide to the Harpsichord* (Portland, Oreg.: Amadeus Press, 1997), 45.

[2] The organ is typically referred to as the "King" of instruments. (Incidentally, harpsichordist Wanda Landowska sometimes referred to the harpsichord as the "King" of instruments.) One informant suggested that I consider here the multiple meanings of "Queen," and thus frame the harpsichord as a "queered" keyboard.

[3] See for example John Koster, *Keyboard Musical Instruments in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1994). See discussion in Chapter 4 of builder Frank Hubbard's shop diary, which charts the changes in timbre and mechanism of hundreds of his custom-built instruments as they returned to his shop for maintenance. Accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc., Framingham, Mass.

infamous tinkerings of nineteenth century harpsichord forger Leopoldo Franciolini. Subtler cases include replaced soundboards, restringing, redecoration and other small alterations. Further, with the help of adventurous builders, some harpsichords have had more anomalous circumstances—morphing into pianofortes, organs, lutes, or hurdy-gurdies. The historical importance of these "hybrid" instruments tends to be minimized in representations of the harpsichord, as experiments, blind alleys, or as stepping-stones to more central keyboard developments.[4]

In choosing to represent something called "a harpsichord"—as a commercial product, a narrative figure, or a recorded sound—builders, writers, players and sound engineers chose among not only "exemplary" instruments, but also among exemplary centuries, years, even *days* within the life of a single instrument—days when the jacks happened to be fitted with unbroken crow quill, when the wood was dry enough for the registers to shift easily (but not so dry to crack the soundboard), days when the tuner had recently come to visit.

Like all instruments, harpsichords *do* have legitimate weaknesses. They had—and continue to have—flaws that present challenges in many ensemble and concert hall situations, in recording studios, in living rooms and practice sessions. They are, generally speaking, incapable of dynamic modulation.[5] They strain to be heard over a modern

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[4] See Michael Latcham's entry on the "Harpsichord-Piano" in *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed September 6, 2007), <http://grovemusic.com>, and Edward Kottick, *A History of the Harpsichord* (Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 2003), 301-303.

[5] For the most part, harpsichords are not touch-sensitive in the manner of pianos and clavichords. That is, variations in the amount of speed applied to the key do not result in significant dynamic variations. However, subtle dynamic variation can be achieved, however, by engaging more than one choir of strings, and through skilled use of articulation and chords.

orchestra. They fall out of tune easily. Their cases warp and rot, their soundboards crack and get eaten by woodworms, their bridges come unglued, their strings snap. Whether made of plastic or crow quill, their plectra break easily. Harpsichords even suffer what some builders call "self-imposed abuse"; as the string tension of a regularly-tuned harpsichord pulls the case in on itself, the instrument gradually self-implodes in a condition popularly known as "cheek disease."[6]

While some of these flaws have to do with the harpsichord's "purely musical" shortcomings (such as quiet volume and dynamic inflexibility), many of them have to do with the instrument's lack of "stability." The harpsichord exists in a state of perpetual flux, as its wooden parts shrink and swell with the weather, as months of regular use cause its plectra to break, as the case and soundboard battle the wire strings in a centuries-long tug-of-war. Not only do the instrument's tuning and physical contour change with humidity, age, and wear-and-tear—but so do many of its expressive dimensions such as tone, touch, and articulation. Too much humidity causes keys and jack slides to stick. Age changes the resonating properties of cases and soundboards, and causes quill and plastic plectra to weaken, changing their timbre (before they ultimately break).[7]

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[6] For more on cheek disease in eighteenth century English harpsichords, see Kottick, 367-368.

[7] In a 1994 letter to a customer, Hendrik Broekman, current technical director of Hubbard Harpsichords, provides a succinct explanation of these failures in quill and plastic (Delrin) plectra: "Quill tends to bend as if hinged near its base and usually gives fair warning of its impending failure by becoming noticeably softer than its neighbors. Delrin, however, cannot tolerate the concentration of flexing in one area; the misery has to be dispersed over the greatest possible area or else the area most flexed will work-harden, ultimately breaking there quite cleanly and suddenly. Because of Delrin's habit of hardening due to flexing as well as to exposure of the surfaces to air, the touch of well-used harpsichords voiced in Delrin gets progressively heavier (all other regulation kept constant, of course.)" Here, Delrin refers to a brand of plastic used to mimic crow quill plectra. Accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc.

These imperfections are the ways in which Nature defies human control, the ways that wood, metal, bone, ivory, plastic and quill defy technology's attempts to make their physical properties useful. Harpsichord building is, after all, the practice of harnessing Nature's materials into an object of culture—harvesting, slicing, and planing old-growth Alaskan or Norwegian spruce (among other woods)—in order to produce reliable, functioning, culturally valued mechanisms. The harpsichord's "flaws" are occasions of wood doing what wood does—expanding, contracting, warping, feeding woodworms. They are occasions of Nature resisting the culturally situated builders who willed it to be something *other* than wood. In the late nineteenth century, and throughout much of the twentieth century, these imperfections became sites of cultural discourse, of mechanical and ontological "fixing," of painstakingly trying to stabilize a slippery, fluctuating figure.

1.2 Survival of the Fittest Keyboard: Harpsichords and Pianofortes Do Battle

The early stages of the harpsichord are not well known, but literary and iconographic evidence suggests that stringed keyboard instruments existed by the second half of the fourteenth century and that keyboard instruments fitted with jack mechanisms existed as early as 1425.[8] The harpsichord became a common instrument across Europe by the mid–fifteenth century, likely because of its usefulness in playing multi-voiced compositions. During the Renaissance, the instrument gained increasing prominence; harpsichord historian Edward Kottick suggests that there may have been "hundreds, possibly even thousands" of harpsichords built during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[9] The instrument's

[8] Kottick, 13.

[9] Kottick, 30.

"Golden Age" is generally said to have occurred during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries throughout Western Europe, and especially in France, Italy and the Netherlands, when the instrument connoted royalty, power, and wealth.

During the twentieth century, academic as well as journalistic narratives highlighted the lofty associations achieved by the harpsichord in this "golden" era. For example, pianist and scholar Arthur Loesser writes that "…it belonged properly in royal operas and princely orchestras" and that "In Italy it had long been a collector's object for wealthy nobles."[10] For *House and Garden*, Herbert Russcol writes:

> . . . from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, the harpsichord reigned as the "Queen of Instruments." She ruled supreme in cathedrals, theatres, and in patrician drawing rooms. Small table models, easily carried from room to room, were played by cultivated maidens.[11]

According to popularly circulated narratives, the instrument's fate changed with the Industrial Revolution. Unable to fill larger concert halls, to achieve dynamic nuance to a degree that would suit Romantic keyboard works, the harpsichord fell out of favor. Music critic W.J. Henderson noted this feature in 1897,

> It will be readily understood that these instruments [harpsichords] were incapable of gradations of power. No matter how forcibly or how gently the key was pressed, the elasticity of the plucking quill remained constant, and so produced just the same amount of twang from the string. . .[12]

Further, with political changes brought by the French Revolution, the instrument's aristocratic associations worked to its disadvantage. Many instruments were seized from

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[10] Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos: A Social History*, (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1954), 15.

[11] Herbert Russcol, "Boom Goes the Harpsichord," *House and Garden,* October 1968, 76.

[12] W. J. Henderson, "Evolution of the Pianoforte," *New York Times,* October 31, 1897, SM6.

nobility during the Reign of Terror and placed in State-owned storage; Attali notes that harpsichords were banned at France's National Institute of Music, a regulatory body designed to uphold revolutionary ideals, because they were "undoubtedly too closely associated with the ancien régime."[13] According to the historical trope, the harpsichord fell victim to a kind of natural selection—that is, it lost out to the pianoforte, an instrument better adapted to survive the changing soundscape and middle-class makeup of modernity. Pianos "triumphed" in the new episteme because they were louder, stronger, capable of dynamic nuance, and of projecting in large concert halls.

Since the late nineteenth century, and into the 1970s, the harpsichord's history was encapsulated into three phases: its flourishing, its extinction, and its subsequent revival. Indeed, it seems that nineteenth-century narratives of natural selection infused twentieth-century accounts of harpsichord history, with the piano positioned as the anthropomorphic agent of progress, and the harpsichord the under-developed victim. An 1894 article in *The Saturday Review* on the instrument's revival refers to the harpsichord as "obsolete and, for the ordinary purposes of music, rightly consigned to the taciturn seclusion of the museum."[14] As the revival continued into the twentieth century, journalists and historians continued to sensationalize the instrument's fate: "losing favor to the pianoforte,"[15] "ousted. . . by the louder and more flexible modern piano,"[16] "killed off in the eighteenth century by the

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[13] Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999 [1977]), 56. During the harsh winter of 1815, many of these were taken apart and used for firewood See the account in Raymond Russell, *The Harpsichord and Clavichord,* (London: Faber & Faber, 1959), 119.

[14] "Bach and the Harpsichord," *The Saturday Review*, December 15, 1894, 654.

[15] Alan Rich, "The Siren Sounds of Harpsichord, Virginal, and Clavichord…The Lute and the Recorder," *House Beautiful*, January 1967, 140.

modern piano,"[17] "in use until displaced by the pianoforte,"[18] "[having] died away when the resonant tones of the piano outrivaled it,"[19] "involuntarily relegated to the status of a museum piece during the Romantic heyday of the nineteenth century," and "once nearly over the edge into oblivion."[20] The piano is deemed "the real villain in the near-demise of the harpsichord."[21] This trope continues into the late 1970s, as evidenced by the following teaser from the *Washington Star-Portfolio*:

> The harpsichord provides a striking example of fickle fame. For close to three hundred years—1500 to 1800—it reigned supreme as the solo and ensemble instrument of Europe. By 1800 the piano, which had been standing in the wings perfecting its voice for nearly a century, took over. The harpsichord with all its exquisite variations became a musical has-been.[22]

Harpsichordist Wanda Landowska, who wrote extensively on her instrument, titles one essay, "The Advent of the Fortepiano," which she begins with the question: "How did the phlegmatic fortepiano succeed in dethroning the dynamic harpsichord?" She continues by explaining that until the mid-nineteenth century, "the pianoforte had a sonority weaker than that of the harpsichord," and that in Bach's time, "the harpsichord had reached its

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[16] "Musical Antiques," *Time,* October 30, 1939, 36.

[17] Russcol, 74.

[18] William Lyman Johnson, "Return to the Harpsichord: After Long Eclipse, the Instrument of Bach, Handel and Other Great Musicians of the Past is Regaining Favor for the Faithful Reproduction of Their Music," *Christian Science Monitor,* June 23, 1937, 6.

[19] "A New Sound in the Living Room," *House Beautiful,* January 1953, 82.

[20] Victor Wolfram, "The Harpsichord: Back from the Brink," *High Fidelity,* June 1972, 43-47.

[21] Ray McGlew, "The 'Delrin' Biography," *Harpsichord* 4, no. 2 (May-July 1971), 18.

[22] "Harpsichord Revival," *The Washington Star—Portfolio Extra*, December 13, 1978, Z1.

perfection, while Silbermann's[23] first fortepiano probably was still in an embryonic stage." She states that in the nineteenth century, the pianoforte ultimately achieved "its real triumph."[24] The next phase in the harpsichord's life she describes with particular drama, giving the harpsichord the role of "confidant" and "absolute monarch," and casting the tale of its nineteenth-century decline in pathetic terms, as if to warrant great sympathy.

> … the day came when the king of instruments which for three centuries had charmed the humors of chatelaines, animated the solitude of cloisters, had been the confidant of Frescobaldi, Bach, and the Couperins, and had reigned as absolute monarch in the theater and in the church was dethroned, disdained, and despised. It ended its days miserably, transformed into desks, dressing tables, or linen chests; or, thanks to the paintings of Boucher, Téniers, or Van Loo that decorated the lid, it was relegated to gathering dust in museums, subject to the scorn of gapers who understood nothing of its elegance, beauty, nobility, and splendor.[25]

In his book *Men, Women and Pianos*, Arthur Loesser groups harpsichords and clavichords together as belonging to the family of decimated keyboard species, and titles one of his chapters "The Claviers are Neck and Neck, But the Pianoforte Wins Out." The chapter describes how the "pianoforte could win out over its rivals" (the harpsichord and the clavichord).[26] Loesser evocatively and anthropomorphically portrays the clavichord's predicament thus:

> . . . the beloved clavichord, for a generation the 'clavier' par excellence, was a weak thing: its tone began to peter out at a distance of ten feet, a single healthy violin could crush it into a confused murmur, and in an ensemble it would be totally inaudible.[27]

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[23] The reference here is to Gottfried Silbermann, the builder credited with introducing piano technology to Germany in the early eighteenth century.

[24] Wanda Landowska, *Landowska on Music*, ed. Denise Restout, (New York: Stein and Day, 1965), 134-138.

[25] Ibid., 138.

[26] Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos,* 105.

Wolfgang Zuckermann, builder and inventor of the do-it-yourself harpsichord kit, describes the harpsichord's history this way:

> For almost three hundred years the harpsichord reigned supreme as the solo and ensemble instrument of European music. . . But by the year 1800 the piano had completed almost a century of development and was ready to take over as the basic instrument of European music.
>
> The death of the harpsichord was comparatively sudden and almost absolute. Not until the end of the nineteenth century was there to be a revival of interest in what had become an ancient and archaic instrument.[28]

Like his fellow authors, Zuckermann evacuates composers, musicians and builders from his account. Rather, the story is a battle of instruments, acting anthropomorphically of their own accord. Raymond Russell similarly gives instruments characteristics of human agency when he writes:

> The pianoforte had been on the ascent since about 1770, and it had gained such ground and with such speed that for practical purposes we may say that the early instruments were extinct by the turn of the century.[29]

Elsewhere in the article, and in his seminal book *The Clavichord and The Harpsichord: An Introductory Study*, he presents careful research into the personalities responsible for developing new keyboard technologies. But in this passage, it is the instruments themselves that are drawn into battle. Rather than frame the issue as a matter of musicians playing the early instruments (clavichords and harpsichords) less frequently, or builders ceasing to build

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[27] Ibid., 106.

[28] Wolfgang Zuckermann, *The Modern Harpsichord: Twentieth-Century Instruments and Their Makers* (New York: October House, 1969), 11-12.

[29] Raymond Russell, "The Harpsichord Since 1800," *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 82 (1955), 61-74.

them, Russell instead describes the scenario in terms of a depersonalized and inevitable phenomenon of extinction, a phenomenon wrought by some unseen hand, a biological force beyond humans and their everyday decisions. In a 1972 lecture given at Boston University, American harpsichord builder Frank Hubbard noted this narrative habit as a feature of organological writing in general:

> Organologists (a dreadful word) sometimes tend to describe the morphology of instruments as if the latter were biological specimens engendering their young through processes completely independent of any purpose of man, their creator. The instruments in this monstrous world then "evolve" one from another, apparently without human intervention or musical necessity.[30]

This passage appears as part of a larger argument in Hubbard's lecture for the importance of musical works and composers to the study of musical instruments. Earlier in the lecture, he states that "music, after all, is the *raison d'etre* of musical instruments and no history of instruments which gets far from the music can be valid."[31] In this case, by removing composers, musicians, builders and consumers from the story of the harpsichord's nineteenth century fate, the instrument's history is staged as a drama—a drama that resonated with twentieth century concerns about the relationship between nature and technology.

1.3 Narratives of Decline

Following its loss to the piano, the harpsichord entered a phase of stillness, silence and oblivion, beginning in the early 1800s, lasting (depending on the source) sixty to a hundred years. Larry Palmer titles the opening chapter of *The Harpsichord in America* "The

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[30] Lecture of Frank Hubbard, "Materials of Research into History of Musical Instruments," delivered to a Boston University course on histories of instruments in 1972. Accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc.

[31] Ibid. Emphasis in original.

Harpsichord in Decline," mentioning as indicative the end of harpsichord production and harpsichord performance prizes in the late eighteenth century.[32] Edward Kottick titles this section of the instrument's history "The Harpsichord Hibernates" in his 2003 monograph, a period in which he states

> . . . the harpsichord—if it was thought of at all—was considered an outworn, outmoded relic of a distasteful past, overly delicate in nature, needing constant attention and adjustment, with an inadequate, unattractive, puling sound.[33]

Kottick describes the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the fate of the harpsichord, and the "violent" transition from an agrarian to factory and city-based economy.[34] As evidence for the distaste for the harpsichord, he mentions the 1885 International Inventions Exhibition in London, where many early keyboard instruments were exhibited. Kottick writes

> Were such an assemblage of antiques to occur today, it would be considered a stunning display of priceless treasures from which we could expect to learn important lessons about the past. But those artifacts were not put there to be admired…rather, they were foils against which the progress of the nineteenth century could be judged. The vision of the complex machinery of the modern piano juxtaposed against the 'crudeness' and utter simplicity of the antiques was intended as concrete evidence of the triumph of contemporary technology.[35]

Why the "death" of the harpsichord? Why "extinction," when so many instruments outlasted their makers and survived for centuries? What does it mean for an instrument to

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[32] Larry Palmer, *Harpsichord in America: A Twentieth Century Revival,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 1-2.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Kottick, 391.

[35] Kottick, 392.

be dead or extinct? The implication of the preceding passages is that the harpsichord ceased to function; it ceased to fulfill its use-value as a musical instrument. A harpsichord is a harpsichord only to the extent that it is recognized as such—as a useful musical tool—by composers, builders and players. Death, for an instrument, refers to a state where it is "not gone but forgotten" (Roach 1996); they exist, but only in museums and dusty attics.[36]

Several scholars and informants have pointed out that the harpsichord was never really gone, and that, while they stopped being built between 1807 and 1889, there were still "fringe" groups and amateurs who continued to play them, including in small concerts.[37] In obscuring these lines of continuity between the eighteenth and the twentieth century, the authors and journalists quoted above are able to create a romanticized past, violently separated and "epically distant" from the present.[38] As Susan Stewart has argued, creating a glorified imagined and consumable past requires symbolically "killing" the object of history, making it seem irrevocably immutable and remote.[39] Harpsichords, as distant ancestors of the modern, familiar piano, signified the natural past and the unalienated individual—aspects of an "authenticity" thought to have been lost during the industrial advances of the nineteenth century.

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[36] See Joseph Roach, "Introduction: History, Memory, and Performance," in *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 1-32, where he shows how the dead continue to live in the present via traditions, especially performance traditions.

[37] See for example Harry Haskell's thorough description of nineteenth century Early Music concerts in France, England and Germany, many of which featured the harpsichord, in Harry Haskell, *The Early Music Revival: A History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 15-25, and Howard Schott, "The Harpsichord Revival," *Early Music* 13, no. 4 (1974), 85.

[38] M.M. Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bahktin*, ed. Michael Holquist, tr. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, Tex., 1981), 15-19.

[39] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, N.C., 1993), 143.

1.4 Reviving the Dead: Interpreting the Survivors

Central to the story of the harpsichord is the interruption that occurs between past and present. This interruption is troped not only in "objective" accounts of journalism and historical monographs, but also in fictional, fanciful discourse as well. In popular fiction and poetry, harpsichords serve as haunted objects, uncannily animated by the ghostly presence of Old World Europe. For example, the original instrument of choice for the television series *The Addams Family* is a 1503 harpsichord, a family heirloom made by an ancient (but fictitious) builder named Krupnik.[40] The family's members themselves are zombies who live at 001 Cemetery Lane, in a home that the theme song describes as a "museum." As such, it is filled with a combination of "exotic" souvenirs (e.g. Morticia's plant, the "African Strangler"), cobweb-covered furniture, and obsolete European objects.

In twentieth century fiction and poetry, harpsichords were often portrayed as remnants of and portals to bygone days. Their histories are indexed in the marks on their surfaces and in their quiet, tinkling, or out-of-tune sounds. For example, in a poem advertising harpsichord kits, published in the Bay Area's countercultural *Whole Earth Catalog,* the do-it-yourself harpsichord kit is portrayed as the means through which to access a lost connection to the order and decadence of Old World Europe: "long for the good old days, with velvet sleeves / the tinkle of cut glass / crystal chandeliers / stiff back chairs / tuffets?. . ."[41]

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[40] The attribution of the Addams family harpsichord is revealed in the episode "Lurch and his Harpsichord," *The Addams Family*, Orion Pictures Company, 1965.

[41] JD, "Harpsichord Kits and Supplies," *Whole Earth Catalog,* Fall 1970, 78.

In M. Valguarnera's 1964 poem "Listening to the Harpsichord," the harpsichord is linked to a formative political legacy. The collective "we" of the poem seems to be channeling this gone-but-not-forgotten era, by means of the harpsichord's sound. The harpsichord links the subject to an earlier age of albeit ruthless political stability and certainty ("the right to be right"), in seeming contrast to the "doubting dark" of the present.

> But
> all choices were made
> before we were born.
> All choices were made
> all cornerstones laid
> firm and forever
> by fathers long gone.
>
> Who killed ungrieving
> who ruled this land
> who slaughtered ungrieving
> and died believing
> themselves immortal
> where we rule by their hand.
>
> Where in preordained rows
> we sit – and despair –
> in decorous rows
> as the doubting dark grows
> we in harmony whisper
> the caretaker's prayer:
>
> "Behind us dead legend
> before us the night,
> Oh Music, restore us
> the right to be right."[42]

Several twentieth-century short stories spin lengthier fantasies on the harpsichord as an uncanny figure. Drama in these stories unfolds as the enchanted instrument carries its

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[42] M. Valguarnera, "Listening to the Harpsichord," *Mademoiselle,* May 1964, 209.

twentieth century beholders back in time, to ancient family origins, or to deeper, transcendent roots of one's self. These stories at times evoke Freud's sense of the word "unheimlich," "where the word for the utterly strange, the *unheimlich*…in fact 'leads back to what is known of old and long familiar.'"[43] Harpsichords are "haunted" in their capacity to unlock forgotten, identities that are at once foreign and intimately known.

In his 1905 story, "The Haunted Harpsichord," James Huneker tells, in "mock medieval" style, of two knights' quest for a fugitive in post-Revolution France.[44] Late one night, the tired pair lands upon a haunted inn, The Scarlet Dragon, where they decide to rest until daybreak. They subsequently learn from the innkeeper that the inn "was once a thriving place," but has seen no guests for a long while on account of its "evil reputation."[45] The innkeeper tells the story of the inn's heyday during King Louis XVI's reign, when a duke and duchess ruled the region from a decadent chateau beside the inn. The composer Christoph Gluck reputedly came to visit and to entertain the duchess on her harpsichord. One day, the duke became jealous and stabbed them both to death. Since that day, the inn has been haunted by occasional sounds of "ghostly" harpsichord music.

The innkeeper's story turns out to be pure farce; the knights discover that the "faint, tinkling" sounds they hear are produced not by Gluck's ghost, but by the fugitive they have

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[43] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth Press, [1919] 1955) 17. The passage is quoted in Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*, (New Brunswick, N.J., 2002), 76-77.

[44] James Huneker, "The Haunted Harpsichord," in *Visionaries* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 182-197. Edmond Johnson offered an astute reading of this story in relation to the harpsichord's modern symbolism as a ghostly figure in a paper delivered at the November 2008 meeting of the American Musicological Society, entitled "The Death and Second Life of the Harpsichord."

[45] Ibid., 191.

been seeking, playing an old harpsichord out on the lawn. Though not legitimately haunted, the instrument serves as a remnant of an earlier regime of wealth and aristocracy. It is the object around which tall tales of duchesses, royal stabbings and ghostly presences can be fabricated.

Philip Freund's story, "The Harpsichord" tells the story of a fictitious twentieth century composer, Walter Honfils, who gradually developed a fascination for the harpsichord, though he had never written for it.[46] His personality and compositional style were out of phase with his current context; "he quietly dissociated himself from twentieth century dissonances and atonalities," and one critic wrote: "Honfils is born out of his period."[47]

One night Honfils dreamt of a woman playing a new work on the harpsichord; when he woke, he transcribed the piece. As he put notes on the page, he mused

> What I sought to recreate was not artificial at all, but filled with a past life that was living for me. A whole era came up before me, and I wanted to capture it.[48]

Later that day, he wandered about town and stumbled upon a harpsichord recital. The harpsichordist was the woman from his dream, and she started the recital with the very piece he had just transcribed. In the program, it was attributed to "anonymous"—but the programme had borne only an empty space where it was customary to have the date of the

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[46] Philip Freund, "The Harpsichord," in *A Man of Taste* (New York: Beechhurst Press, 1949), 249-292.

[47] Ibid., 263.

[48] Ibid.

composition. To what period did it belong? The present…the past?"[49] Honfils is disconcerted by the uncanniness, and "each time the quick, active fingers struck the two-tiered keyboard, he had another tremor of recognition."[50]

Years later, Honfils' biographer, knowing of the uncanny experience, had occasion to hear the piece again, still known as by "anonymous." He is struck that "in the perception of harpsichord music, there was always this…the sound instantly heard; the plucked string echoing in memory, the sensation of it still strong; the anticipation of the next sound to follow immediately."[51] As the biographer puzzles over the piece's true origins, he wonders

> What about artistic inheritance? Might not a man of such quiet and such musical gifts as Honfils be descended from some unknown Eighteenth-century French composer; if so, the laws of chance were narrowed a bit-? What if "Anonymous" who had written the sonata was actually an early relative of Honfils? An inspired but obscure contemporary of Rameau or de Gallot? In Honfils there might be some memory of that. A personal unconscious memory like a racial memory, or family memory, reaching far back in time. Genetic memory.[52]

Harpsichords are not haunted in this story, but they are the stuff of collective, subconscious memory. Being drawn to the instrument makes sense for someone living two centuries later than he belongs—for a human anachronism. It as though Honfils' focus on the harpsichord enables him to access his "authentic" self, as well as his cosmological connection to history.

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[49] Ibid., 272.

[50] Ibid., 267.

[51] Ibid., 285.

[52] Ibid., 291.

In Elizabeth LeFanu's short story entitled "The Harpsichord," a girl named Alicia discovers a harpsichord in an upstairs box room in her Aunt Sophie's house. Examining the instrument, "she is puzzled to notice a great black scar running across the polished wood, and the intricate inlay had been damaged, too—how and when she could not guess."[53] Eventually, she learns that it was her great-great-grandmother's. Her Uncle Frederic teaches her a bit about what a harpsichord is—including that it "goes out of tune very quickly." Frederic instructs Alicia to play the instrument, which had gone unplayed since her great-great-grandmother, and to "bring it to life again."[54] The following day, Alicia meets with a keyboard instrument restorer, who had examined the harpsichord some years ago. She asks him about the scar on the case and he replies,

> It was the first thing I noticed when your uncle asked me to restore it, years ago now, and I've never been able to account for it…It looks almost as if the wood had been burnt—something has seared right into it, one can't imagine how. And look here—the ivory must have been broken off two of the keys at the same time. You can see that it has been replaced—oh! Probably as much as a hundred years ago—look, the ivory on these A and B keys is not quite so old and yellow.[55]

As she plays the instrument over the next few days, Alicia "had the strange feeling that she was doing again something she had done before, long, long ago," and accesses the spirit of her great-great-grandmother.[56] The drama of the story unfolds as she experiences the uncanny and channels her ancestor and (re)experiences the tragic event that caused the

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[53] Elizabeth LeFanu, "The Harpsichord," in *The Times Anthology of Ghost Stories*, ed. Patricia Highsmith and Christopher Lee (London: Corgi Books, 1975), 60.

[54] Ibid., 61.

[55] Ibid., 63.

[56] Ibid., 63, 67.

instrument's scars—a lightning bolt that struck a man blind as it struck the instrument. LeFanu's story presents the harpsichord as portal to a kind of familial past, what Steedman might call "the place where the past lives."[57] Time is compressed into the form and sound of the harpsichord. Its surface is marked with signs of discoverable past events and of its original owners, its sound. The harpsichord's characteristic tinkle, as well as its out-of-tune state, indexes its "golden age" and its years of disuse.

1.5 The "Real" Life of Harpsichords: Searching for Clues

Destabilizing the idea of "the harpsichord itself" involves an emphasis on the instrument's status as both a discursive construction and a material reality. That historical harpsichords' surfaces and sounds bear clues to their origins, that their mechanisms are so susceptible to change, are integral to literary fantasy and to actual practice. Investigating an instrument's origins based on surface clues, remedying its various changes, arriving at a picture of a historical French, English, Italian, German, Flemish harpsichord, are the stuff of professional livelihoods for builders, restorers and curators.

The study of antique harpsichords is often compared to archaeology and forensics because of the number of unknowns that their forms present. In the same Boston University lecture quoted above, Frank Hubbard attested to this, saying "The store of knowledge we possess on the subject of the history of musical instruments has been obtained by the minute scrutiny of fragmentary and elusive sources. Nothing is more ephemeral than a song that has

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[57] Steedman, 70.

ended or an instrument that is extinct."[58] In other words, that antique harpsichords are objects of mystery is not merely a narrative trope—but a professional and material reality for practitioners looking to restore instruments to their "original" state, and to learn the techniques of seventeenth and eighteenth century building. In bringing the harpsichord back into fashion, designing modern harpsichords and restoring old instruments, makers felt, and continue to feel, as though in the business of recovering lost origins and "bringing back the dead." Jersey City builder Frank Rutkowski, who came to harpsichord building after working on the line at his father's Chicago coffin factory, jokingly referred to the similarity between coffins and harpsichords: "All you have to do is put strings on!," he quipped.[59] When I met West Coast keyboard restorer Bjarne Dahl, he referred to himself as a "cadaver expert." He was poking his finger through a termite-eaten soundboard on late eighteenth century harpsichord, pointing out the telltale signs of different kinds of bugs. The bridges were relatively unscathed, save for a few nibbles. "You see this little indentation here?" he asked me. "Yeah, the termites started into that, but it didn't taste good. So they abandoned it. So they left this piece perfectly good, but this piece was all eaten up." Dahl was explaining how to assess warping and other kinds of damage the instrument had suffered over the years, calling the process a kind of "forensic medicine."[60]

In describing his experience examining a particular 1635 Ruckers harpsichord, Berkeley builder John Philips recalled with tangible excitement: "The bottom had never been

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[58]Frank Hubbard, "Materials of Research into History of Musical Instruments" (1972). Accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc.

[59] Interview by the author, Jersey City, NJ, August 2, 2009.

[60] Bjarne Dahl, interview by author, June 1, 2007.

off it, until I took it off. And it was a bit like opening up King Tut's tomb."[61] With the bottom unveiled, Philips was able to see plans and measurements drawn under the soundboard, giving him clues to how harpsichords were measured out and constructed in the Ruckers workshop. San Francisco builder Kevin Fryer put it this way, "Well, what's a modern instrument maker? We're part historian, we're part musician, we're part archeologist."[62] In a 1979 interview for KTLA News in Los Angeles, builder Jerome Prager similarly stated about his profession: "It's archaeology. For me it's definitely archaeology. I got to a museum, and I select an instrument that is of interest to me."[63] Since the advent of historically informed building and restoration after World War II—a phenomenon to be further described in the following chapter—builders gained knowledge of harpsichord construction through close analysis of clues revealed in surviving antique instruments.

1.6 The Meaning of "Harpsichord"

In an essay entitled "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others," science historian and feminist theorist Donna Haraway analyzes discourse surrounding various "helpless" and "endangered" figures of the twentieth century. She suggests that these representations take the form of simplified dramas, in which figures emblematizing Nature depend on saviors from the privileged West to speak on their behalf;

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[61] John Philips, interview by author, June 2, 2007.

[62] Kevin Fryer, interview by author, June 2, 2007.

[63] Jerome Prager, interview by Kim DeVore, KTLA News, December 24, 1979, Los Angeles, Calif. University of California at Los Angeles Film and Television Archive, Los Angeles, Calif.

the effect of this discursive technique is both to flatten objects of sympathy as "speechless" and one-dimensional, and to ignore crucial contexts and human agents.[64]

I am drawn to consider this essay in light of originary narratives of the harpsichord. "Othered" by its distance from the twentieth century (indeed, completely separated by a century of "oblivion") and its closeness to Nature (as indexed by the unruliness of its organic components), the instrument is made to service twentieth-century fears of modernity's onslaught. In the historical drama of the harpsichord, the instrument is defined through its "shortcomings"—its out-of-tune sound (one of the first things Alicia noted in LeFanu's story), its susceptibility to humidity (indicated as the Addams carefully squirt water in between the Krupnik's keys),[65] its tendency to malfunction, its inability to express gradations between loud and soft; it is one-dimensionally essentialized based on its "imperfections." Rendered speechless not only by its broken plectra, but also by the absence of its seventeenth and eighteenth century inventors and champions, the harpsichord called on modern subjects to speak on its behalf, to vouch for its value in an episteme where it might otherwise be forgotten. Endangered by ruthless restorers like Franciolini, who wreaked havoc on its "original" components and historical clues, harpsichords are mapped as sites of priceless cultural heritage, as flickering bits of origins, perilously close to being forever forgotten *and* gone. As I demonstrate in the following chapter, its twentieth century revival is cast as a story of heroic rescue, first by Arnold Dolmetsch, Wanda Landowska and European piano firms, and ultimately the "Boston School" of harpsichord building. The

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[64] See "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others," in Donna Haraway, *The Haraway Reader*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 63-124.

[65] "Lurch and His Harpsichord," *Addams Family,* 1965.

privilege of representing harpsichords becomes a highly politicized domain peopled by agents acting in or against the instrument's "best interest."

In thinking through what and why "harpsichord" means in twentieth-century discourse and practice, I am inspired by Haraway to treat it as a "material-semiotic agent" that is at once a discursive construction and a material reality—both a wooden box of strings that get plucked *and* a culturally-resonant ideal that is ultimately materialized in stories, instruments and building practices, in uncanny visions of "not gone but forgotten" identities, in accounts of modernity's costs. Its agency as an "instrument of history" comes from its power as a sounding entity and a technology, working in partnership with composers, players and builders to create art (musical and visual) and experience that transport one to imagined scenes of the Old World. As I show in the following chapters, to solve the riddle of what "harpsichord" means in the twentieth century requires an investigation into how—in their broad, multi-media circulation—the word, the ideal, the sound and the "instrument itself" are able to function as shorthand for aspects of the historical West purged by the industrial and political changes of the nineteenth century: aristocratic order, quiet soundscapes, handcrafted commodities, and unalienated selfhood. The following chapters show the powerful circulation of this shorthand in the harpsichord's industrial, political and personal contexts in the postwar United States.

2. Maintaining the "Old World" Harpsichord in "New World" Contexts

In a break during a 2001 show in Dallas, Texas, pop vocalist and pianist Tori Amos introduced some of the vintage electric keyboards on the stage with her. She was still seated in front of her Bösendorfer piano, an instrument that has become her signature in the way that Pleyel harpsichords became a signature for Wanda Landowska. One audience member shouted "Do you still play your harpsichord?," recalling Amos' *Boys for Pele* tour a few years earlier which featured her playing the harpsichord in several songs. She answered, "Yes, I have two harpsichords and they might come with me next time." The crowd cheered in approval. Then she added,

> But the thing is, I have to bribe the crew, because they're [the harpsichords], like, more delicate than…have you ever been out with somebody that's like, you know, 'I can't have my sauce on my fish, and I can't have ice in my drink, and I can't sit next to this person, and if I can't…' and it's like 'Oh my God.' Well, that's sort of what a harpsichord's like.[1]

In this banter with the crowd, Amos anthropomorphizes the harpsichord as a "high maintenance" figure, one that disciplines its companions through its constant need for coddling. In so doing, she circulates a stereotype common to descriptions of the harpsichord since the early years of its revival and that accompanied its increasing, mass-mediated circulation during its post-World War II career. Just as Amos' crew struggled to meet the demands of their traveling harpsichords, so did the pioneers of twentieth century harpsichord performance also struggle to maintain a functioning machine. For example, in

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[1] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAgQa034t3w>, accessed 18 May 2007, 2:52 PM, added to youtube, Aug 2, 2006. Amos typically played on double-manual eighteenth century-style instruments modeled after French prototypes. The harpsichord used on her *Boys for Pele* album was made by the English historicist builder Thomas Goff, active during the mid-twentieth century.

an section of his autobiography, Ralph Kirkpatrick gives the following account of a harpsichord come undone:

> At this time, there was no one on the Eastern seaboard to whom I could turn for regulation and maintenance, and although I have always hated every intervention in the function of mechanical objects, be they bicycles, automobiles or harpsichords, I was for many years obliged to be my own repair man. The first and one of the most impressive of a long line of traumatic experiences had already occurred at a concert in Cambridge in February 1934 when the coupler mechanism of the Harvard Chickering [harpsichord] ceased to function immediately before my performance of the Goldberg variations, and I was obliged to lie on my back in full evening clothes, screwdriver in hand like any garage mechanic, until peering up into the belly of the instrument, I performed an operation that permitted the program to go on…[2]

Stories of the harpsichord gone haywire—on tour, in concert, and at home—proliferated during the post-World War II years. For one thing, harpsichords were "getting out" more; they had become a common household object and they were performed more regularly in concert and recording engagements. Thus, there were more opportunities to witness the spectacle of wooden materials responding to different climatic contexts. Additionally, as I argue in this chapter, the spectacle of the harpsichord-come-undone proliferated because it was linked to cultural preoccupations of the postwar United States. I contend that the harpsichord functioned as a "boundary object" (McClintock 1995), liminally situated as an "old" object in a "new" world, an "undeveloped" mechanism amidst hyper-industrialism, and that this liminality was indexed by the harpsichord's literal, physical response to barometric change.

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[2] Ralph Kirkpatrick, "Harpsichords and Their Transport," 8. Accessed in the Ralph Kirkpatrick Papers, Yale University Music Library Special Collections, Box 12, Series IIIE, Folder 53. Portions of this autobiography were published as Ralph Kirkpatrick, *Early Years* (New York: P. Lang, 1985). Passages quoted in this chapter come from the unpublished sections.

2.1 "Plucking Pianos"

As discussed in the previous chapter, during the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century, journalists tended to critique the harpsichord through comparisons with the piano.[3] Early harpsichord makers operated with the modern piano as their frame of reference—as the end point of a trajectory, and as the basis against which to compare historical keyboard instruments.

Among the first harpsichords to be built since the instrument's nineteenth century hiatus were those made by the French firms of Érard and Pleyel for the 1889 Paris Exhibition (Exposition Universelle Internationale). The Exhibition took place shortly after the Eiffel Tower had been built, a structure seen as "a triumphant tribute to the industrial use of steel and the tallest structure in the world."[4] In addition to examples of technological progress—like the Eiffel Tower—the event also featured arts and crafts from around the world, including objects from non-Western locations, as well as from Old World France. The Érard and Pleyel harpsichords were exhibited as representative of historical European artistic culture, and several concerts were given staging the harpsichord and the piano alongside one another, as a means to contrast the "historical" and "progressive" forms of keyboard.[5]

Both Érard and Pleyel modeled their Exhibition instruments after a historical harpsichord, a double manual built in 1769 by the French maker Pascal Taskin. Although the firms started from a historical design, they contributed something of their own modern

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[3] For an account of this, see Albert G. Hess, "The Transition from Harpsichord to Piano," *Galpin Society Journal* 6 (July 1953), 75-94.

[4] Edward Kottick, *A History of the Harpsichord*, 409.

[5] Annegret Fauser, *Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World's Fair* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 32.

aesthetic, including thicker case sides than the original, open bottoms, thick strings, and other features derived from piano manufacture of the time. After the Exhibition, Érard and Pleyel continued building harpsichords, though Érard soon discontinued its line. Pleyel's harpsichords continued in the modernist style they had started, and in 1923 went so far as to include a cast-iron frame as part of their mechanism.

To Érard and Pleyel, and to late-nineteenth century listeners encountering the instrument for the first time, the harpsichord offered advantages of a novel timbre and special effects not possible on the piano.[6] On the other hand, the instruments seemed nearly inaudible, easily broken, and susceptible to barometric change. Thus, as harpsichord historian Edward Kottick states about this turn-of-the-century phase, "The search was on for an efficient harpsichord built according to modern—that is, piano—principles, a harpsichord in which all the supposed ills of the classical instrument were recognized and remedied."[7] One current builder caricatured the Pleyel approach as: "If it plucks, it must be a harpsichord;" a number of contemporary builders have critiqued these early French instruments as "plucking pianos," and not "real" harpsichords. Noting their hybrid quality as half-piano, half-harpsichord, these later builders also frequently critiqued the instruments' overwhelming gadgetry: modern interventions that marred not only the "historical authenticity" of the instruments, but their tone as well. (This latter critique is further explored in Chapter 3). In his autobiography, Ralph Kirkpatrick writes:

> …it was the gadgetry of the late harpsichord that enabled the earliest proponents of its revival to make propaganda for it as against the piano; two keyboards instead of one, 6 to 8 pedals instead of 2 or 3! (Not to mention all

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[6] These effects were offered by the different stops and the coupling mechanism.

[7] Edward Kottick, *History of the Harpsichord*, 413.

> the possible additional handstops which in later instruments were available to regulate various degrees of inaudibility.)[8]

After Pleyel and Érard, a number of German firms entered the harpsichord business during the first half of the twentieth century: Steingraeber, Ibach & Sons, Glaser, Merzdorf, Maendler-Schramm, Ammer and Neupert. Like the French instruments, these German harpsichords tended to have thick cases and iron frames; harpsichord historian Larry Palmer describes the Maendler-Schramm instruments as "built to withstand total war."[9] In 1936, Ralph Kirkpatrick purchased a Maendler-Schramm, hoping it would serve as his low-maintenance, high-volume concert instrument. He was unpleasantly surprised to find the instrument complicated by layers of technology:

> …I brought home one of those monsters that I believed would ensure survival, and that could perhaps even talk back to an orchestra. It was a Maendler-Schramm instrument…naturally, with as diabolically complicated a mechanism as has ever been seen on a harpsichord. One spent more time repairing the complications unnecessarily introduced by the maker than in achieving the actual regulation of the instrument…my Maendler-Schramm harpsichord progressively lost its voice, became a nightmare of unsolicited tinkering, and as far as I can recall never even really talked back to an orchestra.[10]

World War II presented a major setback for harpsichord building in Germany. The Neupert, Ammer and Wittmayer firms were among the few to continue operations after the War, and, both before and after the conflict, were known for mass-producing harpsichords. Several other German companies soon joined the business of harpsichord mass-production,

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[8] Ralph Kirkpatrick, "Harpsichords and Their Transport," 3.

[9] Larry Palmer, *Harpsichord in America*, 109. The shops, however, were not so impervious; Maendler-Schramm's workshop was destroyed by bombs and the Glaser factory was in the Russian zone and burned down. See Hans Neupert, correspondence November 16, 1947. Accessed in the Ralph Kirkpatrick Papers, Box 7, Series IIC, Folder 66.

[10] Kirkpatrick, "Harpsichords and Their Transport," 16-17.

including Sperrhake and Sassmann. These various companies built modernized harpsichords that used heavy framing, keyboards and other features modeled after the modern piano. In some cases, complex screw adjustment mechanisms were incorporated as a means to minimize humidity-related fluctuations. Kottick attests that, between the top three German harpsichord factories, "tens of thousands of harpsichords of all sorts" were produced.[11] For the American consumer in the years immediately following World War II, a German factory instrument offered a more cost-efficient option than one domestically made, even with shipping charges. As a result, many appeared in concerts across the country, and in numerous popular recordings.

2.2 "New World" Harpsichords

2.2.1 The First "Boston School"

In 1906, instrument maker and Early Music performer Arnold Dolmetsch was hired to head the harpsichord division of Boston's Chickering Piano Company. During Dolmetsch's tenure at Chickering, he also organized many performances of Early Music around Boston, often with members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, forming part of the early history of Boston's period performance scene. Boston at this point already had a longstanding footing in the piano industry, including the companies Mason & Hamlin, Woodward & Brown, George Steck Piano Company, Henry Miller & Sons, Hallet & Davis Piano Company. Concentrated around Boston's South End, these makers were among the first to use factory methods for piano production.[12]

During the 1910 recession, the piano market took a downturn and Chickering's

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[11] Kottick, 416-417.

[12] Chaim M. Rosenberg, *The Great Workshop: Boston's Victorian Age* (Mount Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2004), 33.

harpsichord division was quickly eliminated to cut costs. Dolmetsch returned to Europe and eventually went to work for the Gaveau piano firm in Paris.

2.2.2 The "Detroit School"

Beginning in the 1930s, John Challis became the first American-born harpsichord revivalist. Challis had studied with Arnold Dolmetsch in England for four years before returning to Michigan in 1933 and setting up shop—first in Ypsilanti, then Detroit.[13] In 1966, he moved his shop to a warehouse on New York City's Fifth Avenue. In a 1967 lecture to the American Bach Society in New York, Challis told the story of his beginnings as a harpsichord maker, including his transition from building in Europe to building in the United States:

> I came back to this country very much frightened because these European instruments were all made of wood—and we have humidities, very high and very low, very hot and very cold and we have to make instruments to stand these difficulties. So I started out to find ways to make instruments that would withstand these problems. I introduced a metal frame to the instrument so that they would stay solid through transportation, through weather changes, made parts of the instruments of materials that would not give up and make trouble.[14]

Challis' goal was an infallible mechanism, impervious to the weather, able to survive the rough and tumble of life on tour. He believed that the historical harpsichords "needed" improvement, and that the ideal harpsichord had yet to be achieved. He made his soundboards out of aluminum, his jacks out of hard rubber (the material out of which telephones were made at the time), and his wrestplanks out of Bakelite.[15] He viewed his instruments an improvement

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[13] Kirkpatrick, "Harpsichords and Their Transport," 8.

[14] John Challis, "Harpsichord and Clavichord Making," lecture transcript from Advanced Bach Study Group, International Bach Society, July 17, 1967, 8. Accessed at the New York Public Library, Performing Arts Research Collections, New York, NY.

[15] The wrestplank is the thick block (often made of walnut) into which tuning pins are hammered.

over not only antiques, but also over earlier modernist harpsichords. In a letter to harpsichordist Ralph Kirkpatrick, he referred to "the usual faults of the Pleyel—poor carrying power, stiff action and complete freakishness in whether it will play or not if the weather changes."[16] Challis instruments ultimately did become known for staying in tune, and thus ideal for traveling musicians. According to legend, a touring Challis harpsichord once dropped into the Colorado River on its way to a concert. Once pulled out and dried, it was found to be in tune and concert-ready.

In an interview for *Harper's Magazine*, Challis suggested that his approach had been positively impacted by the Fordist legacy of his city:

> …it's not so odd that harpsichords should be made in Detroit. If I had been born anyplace else, I probably wouldn't be doing this today. There are two attitudes you can take toward making harpsichords. First, there's the attitude that the instrument had been perfected by the end of the eighteenth century, when it also disappeared. Then there's the attitude—the one you'd expect to find in Detroit—that the instrument wasn't perfect at all, but needed development to revive it. That was my attitude.
>
> At the end of the eighteenth century, concert halls as we know them hardly existed…If the harpsichord were to be played in a concert hall, then tonally it had to grow.
>
> But that wasn't all. The eighteenth-century harpsichord was like the Model-T Ford, made for people with lots of time on their hands. Every time the Model-T owner took his car out, there was a contest to see who'd succeed, the car or the driver. Every driver brought a tool kit with screwdrivers, pliers, heaven knows what. The same with the harpsichord player. Each time he'd set up to play, he had to retune the strings, adjust the action of the jacks, all sorts of things. The instrument requires extremely accurate adjustment.[17]

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[16] Letter from John Challis, December 7, 1941, Ralph Kirkpatrick Papers, Series IIC, Box 4, Folder 43.

[17] Bernard Asbell, "The Harpsichord with the Forward Look," *Harper's Magazine*, June 1958, 79.

Human-interest stories occasionally made note of the irony that Old World, handmade harpsichords were being produced in Detroit, the epicenter of the American auto industry.[18] For example, an article in the *Detroit News* noted: "Less than 40 miles from Detroit, pioneer in super-mechanization, progressive assembly and quantity production, a young man is laboring to produce by hand the musical instruments of a long-vanished era."[19] An article in the *Toledo Blade* stated:

> Most of the harpsichords now tinkling in the United States are put together in an old brick house on a gritty street in Detroit. The street is dusty and trade-ridden and shabby; probably it once was genteel and spacious. Utility has eroded these fine distinctions.[20]

One of the outcomes of modern industrialism was to rid the middle class of the kinds of mechanical annoyances that Challis described in relation to the Model-T Ford, to enhance the bourgeois everyday through a series of working domestic machinery. At the same time, to tinker on a broken machine was to mark that one had the *time* to tinker, the luxury to be time-inefficient. Within twentieth-century discourse surrounding the harpsichord, the mechanical modernizations that revolutionized automobile (and harpsichord) manufacture, that rid the

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[18] Laurette Goldberg alludes to this in her oral history, recalling the moment when Alan Curtis exchanging UC Berkeley's Challis harpsichord for a Hubbard: "He [Alan Curtis] gave back their aluminum-framed harpsichord that was made in Detroit, in Pontiac, Michigan, like the cars." See "Early Music Performance in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1960s-Present," interview by Mary Mead in 1996, 152. Regional Oral History Office, the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Hugh O'Meagher made a similar connection in an article for *Harpsichord*: "The current monsters of steel-and-glass which are rolling off Detroit's assembly-lines are no less automobiles than the 'Model T' or the 'Stanley Steamer.'" See Hugh O'Meagher, "The Pure Exalted," *Harpsichord,* November-January 1968-1969, 18.

[19] Allen Shoenfeld, "Michigan Man Revives an Old Art, Makes Musical Instruments of Long Ago," *Detroit News Pictorial*, 9 January. (Year is ripped off in archived copy.) Accessed in Private Collection, William Frayer, Pound Ridge, NY.

[20] Julian Seaman, "Detroiter's Marked Ability to Build, Musically, Translates eighteenth Century Instrument to Modern Use," *Toledo Blade Pictorial*, July 5, 1953, 10.

consumer of tedious, "tool kit"-oriented repair work, carried "lowbrow" stigma, linked to commerce, "trade-ridden and shabby" urban spaces, and the working class.

2.2.3 Return to Tremont Street

William Dowd and Frank Hubbard met as teenagers, both growing up in Westchester County, New York and eventually attending Harvard University, where they majored in English. During World War II, Hubbard served in the U.S. Army in Panama, while Dowd served as an instructor in the United States Navy. When Hubbard returned, he received a Master's degree in English literature from Harvard, enabled by the G.I. bill. His library carrel located in the musical instruments section, he often perused organology texts along with his English studies. Meanwhile, Dowd had developed an interest in historical keyboard instruments and aspired to replicate a harpsichord. Soon the pair joined forces, planning to recreate the entire Baroque orchestra. They studied the instruments in Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and eventually built a clavichord together, an instrument that sold almost as soon as it was finished.

At this point, in 1946, Hubbard used his G.I package to relocate to England and begin an apprenticeship with Arnold Dolmetsch. Fired after a few months, he moved on to the shop of harpsichord maker Hugh Gough in London. While in Europe, Hubbard traveled (via motorbike) to a number of major instrument collections in England and on the Continent, taking photographs of and measuring antique harpsichords and clavichords.

Meanwhile, Dowd had moved to Michigan for a one-year apprenticeship with John Challis. He returned to Massachusetts while Hubbard was still abroad and set up shop at 485 Tremont Street—a few blocks up the street from the Chickering Piano Factory building in Boston's South End. The workshop was heated by a coal stove during the winter months and reputedly frigid; the workday typically began with an hour or two of shivering in front of the

stove. Once Hubbard returned from Europe and the shop opened its doors in 1949, several employees and volunteers were added to the roster: Charlie Fisher, Robert Ken Lee and Angelica Bodky Lee. An engineer by trade, Fisher served primarily as a business partner, though he collaborated on some of the shop's early designs.[21] Robert Ken Lee, also an engineer, specialized in three-dimensional drawings of museum instruments, from which Hubbard and Dowd built.[22] At one point, Lee was contracted by the C.I.A. to develop camera systems to photograph a Russian submarine that had sunk in the Pacific Ocean; this work eventually proved useful for his dimensional instrument drawings, facilitating close-up photographs of antique harpsichords from multiple dimensions. His wife, Angelica Bodky Lee, a professional sculptor who designed the company's early soundboard rose, received much of the "grunt work." Eric Herz, a flautist who had recently emigrated from Israel, became the shop's first apprentice—he later became a well-known harpsichord builder in his own right.

One of the first projects undertaken by the Hubbard and Dowd team was the restoration of a 1798 Kirkman double manual harpsichord at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Once the restoration was complete, the company made and sold replicas of the antique, the casing of which featured thick plywood slabs—a far cry from the thin hardwood cases for which the "Boston School" later became known. The company's first orders came primarily from professional harpsichordists; through these connections, as well as feature stories in newspapers and magazines, Hubbard and Dowd soon found themselves with a waiting list of two to four years.

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[21] Early Hubbard & Dowd roses feature a carving of a fish, symbolizing Charlie Fisher.

[22] Related to the development of the Boston School was Lee's practice of reproducing and selling instrument plans—mylar or paper patterns showing measurements of a particular instrument—which allowed builders to reproduce historical instruments found in museums.

In 1958, with its production expanded, the company relocated to Waltham, Massachusetts. Through personal connections of Charlie Fisher, they were able to rent shop space in the carriage house of the so-called Lyman Estate, a historic preserve located on Lyman Street and owned New England Historical Society. By November 1958, irreconcilable differences between Hubbard, Dowd and Fisher caused the partnership to split. Frank Hubbard bought out Bill Dowd's portion of the business and remained in the Waltham carriage house; Dowd established his own harpsichord shop on Cambridge's Thorndike Street.

Hubbard and Dowd's historicist approach prioritized the close study and "faithful" replication of antique instruments. This "Boston School" aesthetic, as it came to be known, sought the "true harpsichord" in previous building traditions, whether it be sixteenth-century Italian or eighteenth-century French. As Dowd explained in a 1971 interview,

> You see, one of the things that happened to us was that we went to museums. When it was possible, we heard these instruments and found them beautiful. We felt that the whole German school, Neupert, Wittmayer, and Pleyel, who is sort of the chief anti-Christ of them all, must all have plugs in their ears. They were not making anything that was remotely like an antique harpsichord…[23]

As Hubbard or Dowd took on more employees and apprentices (several of whom subsequently set up their own shops nearby), Boston gained a reputation as the fountain of historicist harpsichord building.[24] Hubbard's ideas on the specific features and methods required of "authentic" harpsichords also spread through his 1965 book, *Three Centuries of*

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[23] "Portrait of a Builder: William Dowd," *Harpsichord* 4, no. 1 (Feb.-Apr. 1971), 13.

[24] Some former Hubbard or Dowd employees who opened their own harpsichord shops included Steven Sørli, Barbara and Tom Wolf, Hendrik Broekman, William Post Ross, Willard Martin, and George Stilphen.

Harpsichord Making[25]—reputedly, one of Harvard University Press' most successful investments. Many builders I spoke with consulted (or quoted from memory) this text during our interviews.

With the ascendance of the Boston School's historicism came harsh dismissal of the earlier modernist approaches as passé, ill informed, and destructive to the knowledge and material legacy of the past. In newspaper and magazine feature stories, advertisements, and everyday talk these earlier instruments were labeled "horrid piano-harpsichords" or even "bastard instruments."[26] Speaking about the 1970s Bay Area scene, builder Kevin Fryer told me that "…the zeitgeist of Early Music here was that anything having to do with those modern plucking pianos was just awful and Landowska was horrible."[27] A 1977 advertisement for Zuckermann harpsichords refers to "the massive structures, the hideous designs, the complicated gadgetry and 'improvements' and the weak, puling tone that resulted from trying to cross the harpsichord with the modern piano;" it goes on to praise something called the "genuine harpsichord," "derived from the great tradition of harpsichord building."[28] As Chau-Yee Lo points out, since the predominance of historicist harpsichord building traditions, Challis

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[25] During 1956-1958, Hubbard returned to Europe to research the history of the harpsichord, funded by grants from the Belgium American Educational Foundation, the American Philosophical Society Grant, as well as a Fulbright Fellowship.

[26] These terms circulated in my interviews.

[27] These critiques paralleled those of Landowska's idiosyncratic performance practice.

[28] David Jacques Way, "Authenticity," [Advertisement for Zuckermann Harpsichords, Inc.], *Early Music* 4, no. 3 (July 1976), 302.

and Pleyel harpsichords became "endangered species," no longer produced, no longer the harpsichords of choice for contemporary composers.[29]

Just as modernists like Challis circulated an idea of progress, towards a more resilient and dependable harpsichord, the Boston School also espoused a teleology.[30] Builders seeking to produce historically faithful replicas often dismissed earlier phases in the harpsichord revival as primitive stepping-stones on a path towards historical fidelity. In a section of his autobiography, Ralph Kirkpatrick remarked, "Within the aura of the Boston school cults have flourished and dwindled, but what is important about their exasperating little pedantries is that they concern something that can be called a real harpsichord."[31] In the early 1960s William Post Ross, a former Hubbard apprentice who had opened up his own shop in the Tremont Street Chickering building, wrote to Frank Hubbard about the prospects for developing a harpsichord market in the Midwest:

> …the Midwest is open and I wish to establish there; the market will be growing and I may not be able to handle it—the market in New England and the East is growing and you may not be able to handle it; these areas are not likely to overlap insofar as competition between you and me are concerned, but it might be advantageous to spread the *The Truth* (Hubbard's way of harpsichord) as far and as wide as possible to establish standards. This would create a plateau that would be (however small) a bulwark against Neupert-era mediocrity and mis-guided new-comers.[32]

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[29] See Chau-Yee Lo, "Endangered Species: The Harpsichord and its New Repertoire since 1960" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Leeds, 2004), 11.

[30] These narratives parallel those about the twentieth century development of period performance practice: 1) pre-World War II phase of "we-know-best" modernism, 2) post-World War II phase of "historical builders knew best" antiquarianism, 3) current phase of moderation.

[31] Kirkpatrick, "Harpsichords and Their Transport," 25.

[32] Emphasis in the original.

As Hubbard and Dowd gained clients and publicity, their approach came to be felt, inside and outside of Boston, as an ideological force. For example, Hollywood Neupert dealer Helga Kasimoff recalled some of her experiences with customers during the 1960s and 70s:

> HK: People used to come to our store with a small ruler and they would ask to look into a harpsichord…They would look in and they would put their little ruler on the C—not the middle C, the upper, above middle C. And they would say, "Well, they didn't do this quite correct." So I asked them, "What is it?" They said, "Well, this C string between the bridge and the striking point…should be exactly ten inches."
>
> JW: Where did they get that figure from?
>
> HK: Hubbard and Dowd or somebody. I mean, you know, there were so many theories that came out of New England on, you know, "it's not a harpsichord when it's not ten inches, a certain string." And that's really ridiculous, you know, you don't do that to a piano, and there were 400 years of harpsichord building. I mean, some of these claims were so far-out that my husband called them—well, they are sectarians, like religious sectarians. They fish one word out of the Bible, and their whole belief, their whole view, everything is white and black and…they take everything so literally, and so a harpsichord has to be so literal, you know, everything has to be exact. But then if you said, "Yeah, but they're using plastic materials," then they say, "Yeah, but that's the only thing," you know. But they're using plywood, you know, or something.[33]

Kasimoff's point here is partly that with a history so long, harpsichord construction came to encompass numerous variations—to the point where judging the value of an instrument based on a measurement derived from a particular, "representative" model seemed illogical. As she notes, Hubbard (and others) deviated from historical precedent with innovations such as plastic jacks—a technological intervention that he reasoned was permissible within a historicist aesthetic because it did not compromise the "authenticity" of the tone.

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[33] Interview with the author, January 11, 2008. Incidentally, R&B singer-songwriter Barry White rented Neupert harpsichords from Kasimoff's shop during the 1970s.

2.3 Early Music's Frontier Narratives

At the time that Hubbard and Dowd were building their business, the historical performance scene was just beginning to gain momentum in the United States and Europe. Much of the activity around Early Music emerged through musicological findings during the post-World War II era, particularly with the recent influx of European scholars during the War. These musicologists became known for unearthing "forgotten" repertoire that early music groups then introduced to the public.[34] Among them, Erwin Bodky settled in the Boston area and subsequently began an Early Music series—the Cambridge Collegium Musicum (eventually the Cambridge Society for Early Music); this became central to the growth of the Boston early music scene.

Ralph Kirkpatrick began his career in Early Music in 1930s Boston, before these musicological advances had taken place. Not only period instruments, but also pre-eighteenth century repertoire were considered "undiscovered" territory. Even after critics began writing of Early Music's massive commercial success in the 1970s and 1980s, journalists and performers continued to frame period performance as an Enlightenment project of plundering uncharted terrain.[35] Early Music groups and their repertoire were described as "exotic," or as a "curious island."[36] Period instruments were presented in evolutionary terms, "like living organisms transforming themselves from one page of natural history to the next," that "stretch, shrink and

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[34] Donal Henahan, "Those Musicological Thickets," *New York Times,* September 20, 1981, D25, 28.

[35] For example, in 1986 Tim Page reports: "Today, a visit to New York by the Academy of Ancient Music or the English Concert may sell out almost as soon as it is announced…Deutsche Grammophon's Archiv label, founded as a semischolarly early-music imprint in the mid-1950s, now provides many of the company's strongest selling items." "Early Music: Gentle Grace and Tempting Choices," *New York Times,* February 14, 1986, C1.

[36] Henahan, "Building Time Machines for Bach, Et Al," *New York Times,* June 21, 1981, D19.

wriggle their way from epoch to epoch, either dying from a wrong turn or a false move, or else adapting and moving on."[37]

Popular discourse framed Early Music groups as pioneers. According to journalists, not only were these performers discovering the "virgin wilderness" of ancient repertoire, but they were also beginning to annex standard Classical and Romantic works, imposing "defamiliarizing" (Dreyfus 1983), historically derived readings on familiar favorites. For example, *New York Times* critic Will Crutchfield refers to "authenticity's slow march forward—past Baroque music, through the Classical period and into the world of the early Romantics…"[38] Writing about period performances of Mozart and Beethoven, critic John Rockwell refers to "the early music movement's inexorable encroachment on the modern orchestra's traditional turf."[39]

Partly, the narrative of period performers "colonizing" various musical territories stemmed from mainstream classical musicians' fear of losing their market. But it was a narrative that had been present in discourse around the Early Music Movement since its inception in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and in the post-World War II phase as well. In a retrospective published in *Early Music,* Ralph Kirkpatrick wrote that "The harpsichord scene in [1930s] Boston was virgin wilderness or at least it looked like it. Everything still remained to be done."[40] In order to become a proficient harpsichord and clavichord player, to study

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[37] Bernard Holland, "Old Music is Enjoying New Popularity," *New York Times*, October 30, 1981, C1. Holland draws upon this metaphor again in "In Praise of Early Music," *New York Times,* May 22, 1983, SM64.

[38] Will Crutchfield, "A Report from the Musical Battlefield," *New York Times,* July 28, 1985, H1.

[39] John Rockwell, "Voices that Reflect a Return to Simplicity," *New York Times*, January 1, 1984, H13.

[40] Ralph Kirkpatrick, "Fifty Years of Harpsichord Playing," *Early Music* (January 1983), 32.

performance practice using primary sources, to plough through and transcribe hundreds of Scarlatti sonata manuscripts (as he did), he needed something of an enterprising spirit.

> It could be seen that veritably I had a vast continent in front of me to colonize. Here I should say something further about the scene in Boston and Cambridge at the time of my initial decision to occupy myself with early keyboard music. This was before the Europeanization of America and much longer before the Americanization of Europe. But long traditions of European culture were kept alive in Boston and Harvard College.[41]

A few pages later in the memoir, he writes:

> Now the time has come for a backward glance from this now well-populated domain of early music at the green valleys and virgin forests of earlier. In some ways, it arouses the same nostalgia that one feels on reading the journals of European travelers through the United States in the first part of the nineteenth century, in seeing how much greenness and pleasantness has vanished in favour of industrialization, standardization and housing development.[42]

In his description of the "green valleys and virgin forests of earlier," Kirkpatrick taps into an ideology that had shaped the Early Music revival since its nineteenth century beginnings, an ideology that had also underpinned the historical exhibits in nineteenth-century world's fairs: that discovering and "knowing" the past was a form of progress exercised by the modern industrial West. In 1893, the World's Fair was held in Chicago, a city representing "America's frontier." The event was meant to coincide with the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's 1493 "discovery." In the context of the Fair, Columbus "could be seen as the original prototype of the American adventurer/hero who, like Boone or Crockett or Carson, blazed trails into an unknown wilderness so that others might follow and begin building the

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[41] Ibid. Kay Kaufman Shelemay also notes Boston's reputation among Early Music performers as a city that feels "European." See "Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Early Music Movement: Thoughts on Bridging Disciplines and Musical Worlds," *Ethnomusicology* 45, no. 1 (Winter 2001), 15.

[42] Ibid., 40.

American Empire.[43] The event was designed to trump previous world's fairs, and to remedy global perception of United States culture; Miller states that at previous exhibitions, American exhibits "had been dismissed as coarse, unsophisticated, or at best derivative products of a rough-and-ready nation with no cultural heritage to call its own. The Columbian Exposition's planners intended to remedy this state of affairs by proving that America was capable of artistic enlightenment as well as massive industry and unrefined ostentation."[44] Given this context of nationalist representation through displays of "high culture" and spectacles of Western progress at a glance (McClintock 1995), it makes sense that the optician and collector Morris Steinert would have showcased his array of antique keyboards, including harpsichords, at the 1893 event—instruments exemplifying stopping places on the path to progress.[45]

2.4 The Harpsichord Overseas

As mentioned above, journalists during the 1940s and 1950s noted the irony that harpsichords were being handcrafted in Detroit of all places. In the 1950s and 1960s, journalists circulated a similar irony, that the United States, of all places, had become the industry leader in replicas of "authentic" *European* harpsichords.[46] Both ironies contain a classed perspective, pointing to a perceived incommensurability between America, the land of assembly lines,

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[43] This passage appears in Badger's *The Great American Fair: The World's Columbian Exposition and American Culture* (Chicago: N. Hall, 1979), qtd. in Miller, 138.

[44] Miller, 137.

[45] Harry Haskell states that Steinert sent his clavichords and harpsichords to the exhibition. See Haskell, *Early Music Revival*, 98.

[46] Some builders I spoke to felt that the popularization of the Boston School was more of a media construct than something anyone was actually aware of at the time. In my interviews, some noted that makers in Europe (notably Hugh Gough and Martin Skowroneck) had been building historicist harpsichords years before Hubbard and Dowd, but that these European historicists tended to be omitted from journalistic narratives of the period.

automobiles, and mass culture, and Old World Europe, fountain of high culture and artisan-produced masterpieces.

During the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, harpsichords accompanied Western imperialists in India, Latin America, China and Japan.[47] In the 1950s, the instrument again traveled across the globe, via touring virtuosi, and particularly to regions with histories of colonization, playing repertoire from its seventeenth and eighteenth-century "Golden Age."[48] Press coverage for these appearances dramatized the rarity of seeing a harpsichord in venues outside Europe and the continental United States. When harpsichordist Gertrud Kuenzel Roberts gave a performance in Maui, Hawaii, the *New York Times* reported,

> Halekala, the word's largest dormant volcanic crater, rose awesomely in the warm February sunshine. Across the fertile tropic plains below, a truck rumbled through the cane fields, carrying live pullets, fresh-cut flowers, ice cream and one special burden no islander could remember having seen there before. This was a harpsichord, undoubtedly the first ever brought to rugged Maui, in the Hawaiian group.[49]

Between January and February 1956, harpsichordist Sylvia Marlowe toured the "Far East," sponsored by the International Exchange Program of the American National Theatre Association in cooperation with the State Department. Chairman of the ANTA board,

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[47] See Minor Myers, Jr.'s entry "India" and Motoko Nabeshima's entry "Japan" in *The Harpsichord and Clavichord: An Encyclopedia* (Cambridge: Routledge, 2006), 256-257; 273-274. See also Joyce Lindorff's article "Missionaries, Keyboards and Musical Exchange in the Ming and Qing Courts," *Early Music* 32, no. 3, (August 2004), 403-414.

[48] For example, Sylvia Marlowe's concert programs for her Asian tour included works by J.S. Bach, François Couperin (le grande), Jean-Philippe Rameau, Domenico Scarlatti, Henry Purcell and Antonio Vivaldi.

[49] Ben Hyams, "Tale of a Harpsichord's Visit to Hawaiian Island," *New York Times,* March 14, 1948, X7.

Robert W. Dowling, noted that it was "the first time in concert-tour history that a harpsichord has traveled such far-reaching distances by air."[50]

The tour included visits to Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Hong Kong, Iran and Iraq, concerts as well as radio and television broadcasts—including on Radio Republic Indonesia, AIR (Bombay-based radio station), the Philippines' DZAQ-Radio and DZAQ-TV, among others. Marlowe's concerts included solo recitals, as well as performances of keyboard concertos with regional orchestras such as Singapore's Colony Chamber Orchestra, and Bombay's AIR Symphonic Strings.[51] Following a performance in Jakarta, she met with Indonesian president Dr. Ahmed Sukarno; at least one American journalist viewed this meeting as facilitating Sukarno's visit to the United States later that year.[52]

The ANTA program had begun with the passing of the International Cultural Exchange and Trade Fair Participation Act in 1956. The bill promised to help artists touring abroad "if their tours are adjudged to be contributions to the Government's cultural presentations program" as a means of "the cultural challenge of Russia."[53] Prior to 1956, the Symphony of the Air, the New York Philharmonic-Symphony, the New Orleans and the LA

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[50] "U.S. Artist Here Next Month," *Manila Times*, December 15, 1955. Accessed in the Sylvia Marlowe Archives, curated by Kenneth Cooper, New York, NY, Scrapbook III, 5.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Paul Craig, "Sylvia's Secret Weapon: The Long-Haired Harpsichord Became a Blockbuster in the Orient," *Sunday Mirror Magazine*, September 1956, 10. Sylvia Marlowe Archives, Scrapbook III, 5.

[53] Ross Parmenter, "U.S. Helps Out: Bill Passed to Make Cultural Tours a Branch of Our Foreign Policy," *New York Times*, August 5, 1956, X7.

Philharmonics had toured under ANTA sponsorship "on an emergency basis."[54] According to the *Times*, "the Government undertook to help them largely to offset the propaganda effects in the uncommitted nations of the cultural presentations of the Soviet Union."[55]

Penny von Eschen suggests that the cultural tours sponsored by the ANTA—well-known today for featuring American jazz artists such as Dave Brubeck, Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong, and Benny Goodman—were part of President Eisenhower's attempt to change the global perception of the United States in recently decolonized regions.[56] As part of the campaign, the U.S. Information Agency distributed transistor radios to enable residents to listen to U.S.-sponsored broadcasts.[57]

In 1957, Representative Frank Thompson Jr. stated that the United States was "behind the Communists in our cultural appeal. Throughout the world, they were (and still are) denouncing us as materialistic, uncultured barbarians, soulless. They spoke sneeringly of our 'gadget' civilization."[58] His pitch against the United States' "lowbrow" associations recalls that surrounding the 1893 Chicago World's Fair noted above. President Eisenhower similarly summarized the stereotype of Americans:

> …a race of materialists, whose only diversions are golf, football, horse racing, and an especially brutalized brand of boxing. Our successes are described in

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Penny M. von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 4-7.

[57] Von Eschen, 16.

[58] U.S. House of Representatives, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Appropriations, Supplemental Appropriations Bill, President's Special International Program, 84th Congress, 2nd Session, Part 2 (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1957), 747. Quoted in von Eschen, 19.

> terms of automobiles and not in terms of worthwhile cultural works of any kind. Spiritual and intellectual values are deemed to be almost nonexistent in our country.[59]

Comparable Soviet tours at the time featured performances of ballet, classical and folk music. The American program was intended to contrast with these Soviet tours and to present art forms in which the United States was known to excel—such as modern art or jazz. It is possible that a harpsichord virtuoso fell under this parameter; during the 1950s, America was arguably the center for both harpsichord playing and building.

No information appears on Marlowe's tours in the Bureau of Cultural Affairs collection (which extensively documents the jazz tours) other than the listing of her name among "approved projects" on the Agenda of the Music Advisory Panel, dated December 20, 1955.[60] Marlowe, however, kept a scrapbook of photographs, news clippings and programs from most stops on her tour, with the exception of those in Africa. She spent a month each in Jakarta and in India (Bombay and Poona), one week in Singapore, six weeks in Japan, and two weeks in Manila.

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[59] Quoted in Ninkovich, "U.S. Information Policy and Cultural Diplomacy," *Foreign Policy Association: Headline Series,* 308 (1996), 24.

[60] Thanks to Vera Ekechukwu at the University of Arkansas Special Collections Library for this information.

Figure 1: Marlowe, mid-tour, 1956. Sylvia Marlowe Archives.

According to press releases, Marlowe was apparently the first solo musician that the ANTA sent to tour Asia. Press coverage further plugged her trip as the "first time" that a harpsichord had been heard in these locations.[61] An article in the *Sunday Chronicle* of Manila

[61] These statements are countered in several historical accounts. See Minor Myers, Jr. "India," Motoko Nabeshima,"Japan," in *The Harpsichord and Clavichord: An Encyclopedia* (Cambridge: Routledge, 2006), 256-257; 273-274. See also Joyce Lindorff's article "Missionaries, Keyboards and Musical Exchange in the Ming and Qing Courts," *Early Music* 32, no. 2, (August 2004), 403-414. Additionally, harpsichords were brought to

(where she stayed for 2 weeks) stated "the introduction of the sixteenth century musical instrument to Manila music lovers marks a definite period in the progress of musical education in the Philippines."[62]

In the American *Sunday Mirror Magazine,* Paul Craig commented,

> That such an instrument was used as the opening gun in our effort to combat the high-powered Communist campaign to ensnare the university students of the Orient was a surprise in most circles. But no one could deny that the often befuddled State Department had at last made a decision that smacked of genius for Sylvia's tour was nothing less than a series of blockbusters, politically as well as musically.[63]

Speaking about the students she encountered in her audiences, Marlowe stated,

> The students couldn't get enough information about America. They were particularly anxious to hear about our cultural life, as the Polish, Chinese and Russians have been deluging them with propaganda about how culturally sterile we are. They seemed to think all artists in America were starving.[64]

In an interview with the *New York Herald Tribune*, Marlowe noted, "It's important to remember that the Far East still thinks of America as a land of Coca-Cola, automobiles and films."[65]

Many articles about Marlowe's trip noted that since she was traveling with her harpsichord during rainy season, she required a harpsichord specially made for the tour in

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Paraguay and Argentina during seventeenth-eighteenth century Jesuit missions. See Enrique Alberto Arias, "Latin America," *The Harpsichord and Clavichord: An Encyclopedia,* 303.

[62] "Sylvia Marlowe Delights Manilans," *Sunday Chronicle*, January 15, 1956. Sylvia Marlowe Archives, Scrapbook III, 7.

[63] Paul Craig, "Sylvia's Secret Weapon: The Long-Haired Harpsichord Became a Blockbuster in the Orient," *Sunday Mirror Magazine,* September 26, 1956, 10.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Jay S. Harrison, "U.S. Harpsichordist Finds Far East Avid," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 22, 1956, 1.

Germany, of modern materials.[66] Luckily, she had been able to procure an all-nylon wardrobe from her close friend Christian Dior, allowing her to travel without a personal attendant. But for her harpsichord, Marlowe needed a traveling technician, Clifford Wheeler. The press explained,

> Although Miss Marlowe has a special wardrobe of nylon dresses so that she can travel without a maid, the delicate harpsichord needs an attendant, so Clifford Wheeler, harpsichord specialist, has been engaged to look after it during her journeys.[67]

The *Daily Mirror* of Manila, Philippines, reported: "Interesting is the point that since there is no harpsichord in the Orient, Miss Marlowe carries her own specially-built instrument made of rigidly-tested materials to offset climatic changes."[68] Manila's *Evening News* similarly reported,

> Since there is no harpsichord available in the Orient, she is taking with her a specially built one of lightweight materials. It is equipped with plastic jackets [jacks] and was assembled with a special glue guaranteed to stand the humid weather of places like Bali, where it is reported even pianos sometimes fall apart because of extreme humidities in the rainy season.[69]

In the midst of the tour, Wheeler sent a note to Bill Dowd on the back of a photograph taken on the Bombay stop. The photograph shows several local men carrying Marlowe's instrument on their heads. Wheeler writes,

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[66] The harpsichord was made by the German firm of Maendler-Schramm and weighed 603 pounds.

[67] Charlotte Clayton, "America's Renown Celebrity: Sylvia Marlowe and Her Harpsichord," *Times of Indonesia*, February 9, 1956, 3.

[68] "First Harpsichord Recital in Manila by Sylvia Marlowe," *Daily Mirror,* December 29, 1955. Sylvia Marlowe Archives, Scrapbook III, 8.

[69] "Harpsichordist's Recitals Series to Usher in 1956 Musical Season," *The Evening News* (Manila), December 29, 1955. Sylvia Marlowe Archives, Scrapbook III, 8.

Dear Bill,
This has been some trip. The photo shows how they move instruments in India (Bombay). This is the common practice even with concert grand pianos. The tour was a great success with no serious trouble. The damn thing certainly needed frequent tuning though. Most times I had to tune even at intermission. Most times the humidity was near 90% but once or twice it went to 100% and then we had real trouble keeping it tuned![70]

Figure 2: Marlowe's harpsichord on tour, 1956. Courtesy of Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc.

Circulated during these tours was a representation of the harpsichord—through the eighteenth century repertoire Marlowe played, through the German instrument she brought, through her performance style, as well as through the tropes reiterated in the surrounding press coverage. Many of the articles announcing the tour glossed the harpsichord's standard

[70] Accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc.

narrative—of the aristocratic, Old World instrument gone extinct. For example, the Japanese newspaper *Nippon Times* stated, "The harpsichord was dislodged by the piano at the end of the eighteenth century, and for over a century the piano reigned supreme."[71] The Manilan *Women in the Home* similarly announced: "Musical history returns with Sylvia Marlowe. The ancient aristocratic harpsichord breaks its mothball wraps after two centuries of comparative unuse."[72]

The instrument thus conjured three layers of development narratives. First, there is the narrative of the harpsichord as a primitive and decimated species from the past requiring modern intervention for survival in the present. Second, there is the narrative of Asian regions being exposed to the harpsichord for the "first time," being thus "brought up to speed." Finally, there is the narrative of the United States emerging as an imperialist power, shipping its cultural forms to politically "susceptible" regions.

The harpsichord's delicacy, its precarious position amidst air travel and tropical climates, indexed its class (it required its own attendant) and its "undeveloped" status. Its susceptibility—as well as its acoustic struggles in many of the ANTA concerts, further discussed in the following chapter—marked its position as a "boundary object" (McClintock 1995). To foreground this susceptibility was to indirectly articulate boundaries between "Old" and "New" Worlds, the West and the non-West, highbrow art objects and mass cultural commodities. In the case of Marlowe's ANTA tours, these distinctions served a nationalist purpose: to show the United States as a global power with highbrow cultural capital.

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[71] [title and author missing], *Nippon Times*, December 31, 1955. Sylvia Marlowe Archives, Scrapbook III, 1.

[72] "Sylvia Marlowe: No Musical Snob," *Woman in the Home,* January 12, 1956, 11.

2.5 Modern Domestic Environments

Air-conditioning was developed near the turn of the twentieth century as a means to maintain a stable humidity in factories using hydroscopic materials (materials receptive to moisture).[73] Gail Cooper explains that the initial goal of this atmospheric control was to eliminate the possibility of damage to goods and raw materials, and to facilitate the efficient performance of humans and machines in factory settings.[74] By the 1920s, the ideal of "manufactured weather" and a completely controlled interior environment had taken hold in the United States; by the 1930s air-conditioning was thought of primarily as a means to human comfort, and window units became commonplace. Emily Thompson argues that the various aspects of "interior control" (temperature, humidity, light and sound) in this era all became signs of the relative "modernity" of built structures.[75]

Steam heating was conceived much earlier than air conditioning (Sir Hugh Platt had the idea as early as 1594), though its use became most prevalent in the twentieth century, also in factories.[76] Seichi Konzo, a research specialist in United States heating systems, states that the result of these central steam heating systems was to "free the average citizen from the backbreaking drudgery of chopping wood, stoking coal furnaces, or cleaning out ash pits," similar to the way air-conditioning "eliminated the enervating effects of long, humid

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[73] Gail Cooper, "Customer Design, Engineering Guarantees, and Unpatented Date: The Air Conditioning Industry, 1902-1935," *Technology & American History: A Historical Anthology from Technology & Culture,* Stephen H. Cutcliffe and Terry S. Reynolds, eds., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 242.

[74] Cooper, 254.

[75] Emily Thompson, *Soundscape of Modernity*, 222.

[76] Lawrence Wright, *Home Fires Burning: The History of Domestic Heating and Cooking* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), 169.

summers."[77] The control of interior atmosphere was thus also about ridding bourgeois existence of the physical labor associated with Old World heating regimens.

In his history of Western heating systems, Lawrence Wright states "Steam heating has never been so popular in Britain as in America, with its more extreme climate, and its greater opportunities for communal heating." He further notes the associations between the United States and the "permanently closed window."[78] Partly, this discrepancy between the European and American climates (a discrepancy reiterated in many of my interviews with builders and curators) reflects the earlier incorporation of heating systems into domestic space in the United States than in Europe. Partly, it may also reflect differing customs in temperature maintenance between the two regions. In his book on domestic heating systems, Seichi Konzo shows that thermostat settings in the U.S. rose by a few degrees each year between the 1920s and the 1970s.[79] He further attests:

> Foreign business travelers to our shores sweltered in our distinctly warmer environment. An Englishman with his heavy woolen fabrics and his accustomed exposure to a bracing 60° F. environment stepped into our overheated hotel rooms and was soon gasping for breath. Americans, on the other hand, with their light clothing and their adaptation to a 75° F. indoor temperature, found themselves shivering in the damp, foggy climate of the British Isles.
>
> After the "energy crisis" of the 1970s, when thermostat settings in the United States suddenly dropped about 5° F., this discrepancy between the Old and New Worlds diminished.[80]

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[77] Seichi Konzo, *The Quiet Indoor Revolution* (Champaign, IL: Small Homes Council-Building Research Council, University of Illinois, College of Fine and Applied Arts, 1992), 1.

[78] Ibid., 66.

[79] See his "Decades in the Twentieth Century" graph, 67.

[80] Ibid.

The harpsichord found itself in the middle of these shifts in twentieth century American domestic heating and cooling practices. Like all instruments made out of wood, they are susceptible to changes in "natural" as well as "manufactured" weather. Modernist builders sought to eliminate this susceptibility by designing dependable, "all-weather" harpsichords, incorporating modern metals and rubbers. Boston School builders accepted it, prioritizing faithfulness to original sounds and materials—and accepting humidifiers, dehumidifiers, frequent tuning and careful treatment as "facts of life."[81] Some historicist builders made (and still make) instruments as either summer or winter instruments, with the assumption that the instrument will function best in one climate condition or the other, but not both.[82]

Following a concert appearance in Texas, Ralph Kirkpatrick wrote a letter on behalf of his harpsichord (Flora) thanking his friends for storing it in their garage.

> Please forgive this dictated letter, but I am only a harpsichord, and although people say that I can both talk and sing, I have never learned to write. But Mr. Kirkpatrick thinks, and I agree, that I should thank you for your hospitality last week while I was being fitted for my traveling costume. I much appreciated the warmth and shelter of your garage and decided to behave better than usual. Mr. Kirkpatrick does not always speak very kindly about me. He says that my beauty is not always matched by my virtue, and occasionally I have even heard him descend to such vulgar language as to say that I am a bitch. But I really mean well. It is simply that these changes of dryness to dampness and the drafts that blow on me from what I believe are called air-conditioning systems do upset me, and since I know that Mr. Kirkpatrick likes me in spite of all the unkind things he occasionally says

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[81] In an interview *Harpsichord* magazine, Bill Dowd stated, "…of course no one in Europe had clue one as to what we were facing in climate here in America. When John Challis was working with Dolmetsch they were building beautiful instruments, but they weren't suitable for American climate." "Portrait of a Builder," *Harpsichord* IV, no. 1, (1971), 13.

[82] The degree of moisture contained in the soundboard (which affects its size) at the time of installation determines whether it will be a summer or a winter instrument.

> about me, I do try to do my best for him. I think he was really quite pleased with my performance in Texas. I hardly went out of tune, and I heard him say that perhaps I was becoming more constant with age. But I don't quite like the way he said it because he said he thought that there was a chance of my becoming respectable at last…
>
> Yours very sincerely, Flora[83]

Mimicking the style of a formal letter, Kirkpatrick frames his instrument through discourse of "appropriate" upper-class femininity—including the ideals of beauty, virtue and respectability. He casts the harpsichord's anxieties as those of one desperate to meet societal expectations of proper comportment; for Flora, this comportment becomes endangered with exposure to the elements. The letter thus shows the harpsichord caught in the boundary between nature and culture. As it fluctuates in a draft, revealing its origin as an organic material, as "uncivilized" nature, it loses its "respectability" as a controlled, in-tune and concert-ready. American domestic environments in which harpsichords were housed thus became a theater for staging boundaries between nature and culture, as well as distinctions between Old Europe and the modern United States.

House & Garden magazine reported "Although European factory products are good as such, there are sometimes headaches because they are not designed with American central heating and sudden climatic changes in mind."[84] Boston School builder William Post Ross

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[83] Letter from Ralph Kirkpatrick to Mr. and Mrs. George Young, February 14, 1973, Ralph Kirkpatrick Papers, Box 3, Series IIB, folder 35. Flora was William Dowd's 85th instrument (b. 1966), one of a series of Dowd-built harpsichords originally commissioned or owned by the harpsichordist Albert Fuller of New York. Fuller gave each of these harpsichords a name. Besides Flora, there were also Claude and Maude, Magda, Caroline, Mary Jane, Jules, Pearl, Sapphire, and Merlin.

[84] Herbert Russcol, "Boom Goes the Harpsichord," *House Beautiful*, October 1968, 78.

explained the humidity problem as a function of modern domestic heating in his 1971 brochure for harpsichord kits:

> The use of central heating causes the indoor humidity to drop as low as 10% in the winter; wood responds to this by drying out, shrinking and sometimes cracking and warping. In the summer the humidity may stay between 80% and 90% in some areas, particularly near the water…Antique instruments were not subjected to such extremes; before central heating the humidity rarely fell below 40% anywhere, anytime, except in the desert.[85]

Through correspondence, phone calls and the popular media, harpsichord owners acquired anxiety around the effect of humidity on their instrument. A glance through the customer correspondence of Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc. reveals the extent to which harpsichord owners worried over humidity levels in their homes, and the effects of these fluctuations on their instrument (and their investment). One Dolmetsch harpsichord owner and player from Texas wrote for advice in 1951, "As you know, the English wood of the Dolmetsch instruments is seasoned only for the English climate. These instruments suffer badly over here in the over-heated rooms, halls, and hotels."[86] From a Hubbard owner in Georgia: "It is unfortunate that our climate here near Atlanta makes this a winter time instrument. I cannot count on using it at all in the summer." And from another in Illinois: "The weather has been very hot and humid the last few weeks and has made it impossible to keep the harpsichord in tune for any length of time."

In letter after letter, Frank Hubbard and his staff circulated warnings about the dangers of keeping a harpsichord at less than 40% humidity. Across the postwar U.S.,

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[85] William Post Ross, "Kits for Virginals and Harpsichords," brochure, April 1971, 5. Accessed in the Dowd Harpsichord Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Box 9, Folder 7.

[86] Correspondence dated February 9, 1951, addressed from, Lubbock, Tex. Accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc.

thousands of harpsichords hung in precarious balance, at the mercy of barometric fluctuation. While riding in a jeep through the streets of Vietnam, a U.S. naval officer typed a letter to his trusted harpsichord company back home about his life overseas. Towards the end of the letter, he remembered his harpsichord, and wrote "I was a bit mad after I had left and realized that this will be the first time it has undergone an American winter unhumidified."[87]

Fastidiously maintaining barometric pressure between 40% and 80% was required for owners hoping to preserve both the musical-functional as well as the monetary value of their purchase. Working to maintain the barometer and the harpsichord took on power as a quasi-obsessive domestic ritual. Partly, as will be further discussed in Chapter 5, these rituals of harpsichord labor provided a counterpoint to the manic pace of the outside world. But also, to maintain and "domesticate" one's harpsichord was to mark one's class; it offered a means to mark that one possessed something special enough to require constant upkeep. Describing the nineteenth-century Victorian fetishistic practice of polishing doorknobs, Anne McClintock states,

> Servants spent much of their time cleaning boundary objects—doorknobs, windowsills, steps, pathways, flagstones, curtains and banisters, not because these objects were especially dirty, but because scrubbing and polishing them ritually maintained the boundaries between private and public and gave these objects exhibition value as class markers.[88]

A 1959 article for the *New York Times* entitled "How to Live with a Harpsichord and Like It" stated:

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[87] Correspondence dated September 13, 1958, addressed c/o United States Navy, San Francisco, Calif. Accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc.

[88] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 170.

> A harpsichord decides in what apartment its owner may live (will it fit into the elevator or go up the stairs?), how the furniture in its room will be arranged (it must not sit on an outside wall—too cold—or near a radiator—too hot), what windows one may open (direct drafts are damaging), what temperature one may have in the room (no sudden changes permitted), what the humidity should be (too much and the action sticks, too little and it rattles), how long one may spend away from it (too many weeks without playing and it is probably unplayable without several days of regulation), and if one decided to take it along on one's vacation, it decides where (peace at any price). A harpsichordist often achieves for the first time patience or forbearance through his instrument…He nurtures and coddles his instrument."[89]

A 1968 article from *House & Garden* magazine offered a similar characterization of harpsichord owners:

> They worry all the time about the health of their instruments, and write long anxious letters to the builders. Drafts are dangerous for the delicate harpsichord. Too much humidity is terrible. It must never be placed near an outside wall (too cold), nor near a radiator (the wood may crack). Doting relatives with cigarettes and glasses must be watched and kept at a firm distance. 'You have to coddle it all the time,' says one smitten suburbanite. 'It's like having a new baby in the house.' Yet, despite all sacrifices, the faces of happy harpsichordists light up when they meet one another, like mothers who have shared a maternity ward.[90]

What builders and media portrayed as a general difference in climate between the United States and Europe also articulated the distance between the modern and pre-modern eras, eras that were represented by the United States and Europe, respectively. (Incidentally this discourse tended not to mention that King Louis XIV employed a full-time harpsichord technician). In this way, the domestic harpsichord facilitates "a transformation of imperial time into consumer space" (McClintock 1995). Through the spectacle of the harpsichord-coming-undone, one could consume at a glance the industrial history that had displaced the

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[89] Paul Wolfe, "How to Live with a Harpsichord and Like It," *New York Times,* November 8, 1959, X9.

[90] Herbert Russcol, "Boom Goes the Harpsichord," *House Beautiful*, October 1968, 74.

instrument in the nineteenth century, which was part of the same trajectory that was currently causing it to warp, crack and de-tune amidst manufactured heating and cooling. One could also consume at a glance its imperialist history—as a high art object brought from Europe to its colony, as an object revived from a distant epoch to become part of the bric-a-brac of mid-century domestic commodities.

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In the so-called "Kitchen Debate" of 1959, American Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Krushchev sparred on the relative merits of capitalism and communism, while taking a tour through an exhibit of an American model home. Nixon proudly pointed to the color television set, the built-in panel-controlled washing machine and the data-processing device that could answer questions about the United States—modern conveniences he said were affordable for low-wage American steel workers. Unimpressed, Krushchev asked: "Don't you have a machine that puts food into the mouth and shoves it down?" He then continued, "Many things you've shown us are interesting but they are not needed in life. They have no useful purpose. They are merely gadgets."[91] He was critiquing the over-mechanized, dehumanizing dimensions of Nixon's version of the modern American household.

The presence of the historicist, susceptible harpsichord in the modern American household offered a means for consumers to domesticate an unwieldy, archaic figure, to maintain a humanizing connection to the sort of instabilities and inconveniences eliminated by the Industrial Revolution, by what were felt to be distinctively *American* contributions to

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[91] "The Two Worlds: A Day-Long Debate," *New York Times*, July 25, 1959, 1.

progress—contributions that, in the post-World War II years, had gained global notoriety as "lowbrow," gadget-oriented materialism.

3. Distinguishing the Harpsichord's Sound

3.1 Representing Keyboards

Beginning in the early 1940s, the Young People's Records label began a series designed to introduce children to various popular and classical Western instruments: *Tubby the Tuba, The Wonderful Violin, The Concertina That Crossed the Country, Licorice Sticks: The Clarinet's Story*, *The Hunter's Horn*.[1] In 1948, the label released the 78-RPM *Said the Harpsichord to the Piano,* featuring harpsichordist Sylvia Marlowe, an uncredited pianist, and narrators David Allen and Gilbert Mack in a dramatized conversation between the two instruments. [2]

The record starts with the harpsichord pining for its aristocratic heyday "long ago," the days "when kings and queens used to listen to its music." After a few melancholy measures, the piano (played by David Allen) interrupts the reverie exclaiming: "Say, can't you ever play anything cheerful? Why don't you play music like this?" The piano then plays the opening phrases of Chopin's *Polonaise in A-flat*, a mass of sound, with octaves in the left hand jumping between registers, dense chords in the right hand, and heavy use of the damper pedal to keep the bass harmonies ringing and the melodic lines legato. The harpsichord (played by Gilbert Mack) sadly replies: "I can't play that, it's not my kind of music. I haven't any damper pedals and can't jump around the keyboard the way you do." It demonstrates by playing a few measures of the *Polonaise*. The piano again interjects: "What makes you sound so tinny? Is it because you're little? Little pianos don't sound tinny."

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[1] For more on the Young People's Records series, see David Bonner, *Revolutionizing Children's Records: The Young People's Records and Children's Record Guild Series, 1946-1977* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2008).

[2] *Said the Piano to the Harpsichord.* Young People's Records YPR-411, 1948. The pianist is suspected to be Rosalyn Tureck. Tureck was also a noted harpsichordist and reputedly Marlowe's rival.

> Oh, the harpsichord began to get mad. "Just because you have hammers that hit the strings and make a lot of noise, you needn't feel so stuck up. You're like a big drum playing a lot of notes, 'bang, bang, bang, bang.' My music is gentle, like the harp. My keys have jacks that pluck the strings. [The harpsichord plays an arpeggio.] You see the effect is quite different. At least I stick to my own music and don't foolishly try to play yours."
>
> Now the piano got mad too. "Let me tell you this, you hand-painted antique. I can play your music so that it sounds better than you can possibly make it. Here, I'll show you. Here's one of your most famous pieces." [The piano plays the opening of Rameau's "Tambourin" from the *Suite in E Minor*.]
>
> But the harpsichord only laughed. "Do you really think that sounds well? Why it's so thin, and the tone sounds all alike. Here, let me show you how it ought to go." [The harpsichord plays the first half of "Tambourin," with both 8-foot registers engaged.]

Having played the same piece at the same tempo and with the same embellishment, the two instruments at this point begin to appreciate their differences. The piano admires the harpsichord's "effect so the music spreads out all over the keyboard," its ability to "make that many notes sound at once," and to "sound like two different instruments."[3] In turn, the harpsichord admits "Well, I wish I could make accents as well as a piano." The record concludes with the pair playing the folk song "The Old Grey Mare," taking turns playing the melody. The piano plays its version of the tune in heavily pedaled blocked chords spanning the keyboard, referencing late nineteenth-century piano compositions of Chopin and Brahms. The harpsichord plays its version embellished with scales, trills and contrapuntal figurations, referencing keyboard style of seventeenth and eighteenth century keyboard compositions.

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[3] The piano here is referring to the harpsichord's multiple registers, which 1) enable several strings to be plucked simultaneously by the same key, and 2) allow the player to achieve different timbres, through the use of the buff stop. (The buff stop is not used in the harpsichord's performance of "Tambourin.")

Through the course of the album, the two instruments demonstrate opposing personalities. These personalities are revealed in the conversations, in the repertoire choices, as well as in the timbre of the instruments' speaking voices. For example, the piano initially comes across bullish, impatient, competitive, loud, strong, capable of nineteenth century virtuosic demands—and the harpsichord melancholy, sensitive, quiet, and weak. The characterizations are also established through the timbres of the instruments themselves. Like its speaking voice, the piano sounds loud and resonant in its musical performances. In contrast, the harpsichord sounds unresonant and quiet, similar to the intentionally nasal, diminutive sound of Gilbert Mack's voice.

In trying to discover what "harpsichord" means in the twentieth century, one could look to this recording and its representation of the instrument. In just a few minutes, it offers a culturally and historically situated snapshot of its history, its repertoire, its sound and its personality. The album *could* have featured the harpsichord alone, similar to the Young People's albums for the tuba, violin, French horn, concertina and clarinet. Rather, its identity emerges as a relational one, in its difference from the modern piano. The story *could* have opened with the harpsichord in high spirits, playing hard-edged boogie-woogie at the Rockefeller Center's Rainbow Room—after all, the Young People's *The Wonderful Violin* featured that instrument in symphonic as well as jazz band contexts. Highlighting the harpsichord's aristocratic past is similarly a representational choice, one that results in mass-circulation of an idea of "the Instrument" in general.[4] The harpsichord brought to the recording session was a small John Challis instrument owned by Sylvia Marlowe. Once in the

[4] Marlowe often played boogie-woogie at the Rainbow Room during the 1940s.

studio, having learned that the album was to be a staged competition between instruments, Marlowe regretted that she had not brought her larger Challis; she reputedly worried that the small Challis would not ideally represent "the harpsichord."[5] Thus, the recording *could* have been made with a different sort of harpsichord. Chapter 2 showed the representation of the harpsichord's history as following narrative tropes. This chapter shows that the representations of something called a "harpsichord" –in sound and in words about sound— also circulate tropes, tropes that reveal as much about a surrounding historical context as about "the instrument itself."

Research into the harpsichord's sound attests to the importance of components such as the soundboard, the bridges, string length, string width, plectra material, and plucking point.[6] For the most part, these articles conclude with a degree of uncertainty about what effect these material variations have on tone quality. The articles hesitate to define the distinguishing features of the harpsichord's sound; they explain the physics of how sound waves travel through the bridges and soundboard, for example, but do not account for physical features that people hear as *distinctive* in the harpsichord's sound.

This chapter does not attempt to rectify these uncertainties, but rather to focus on the varied, situated representations of the harpsichord's sound during its post-World War II career. It explores the cultural values that go into imagining, representing and building the harpsichord's voice, and how "problems" with its voice became integral to the

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[5] Interview with the author, May 25, 2008, Great Barrington, Mass.

[6] See for example, N.C. Fletcher "Analysis of the Design and Performance of Harpsichords," *Acustica* 37 (1977): 139-147; N. Giordano and J. P. Winans II, "Plucked Strings and the Harpsichord," *Journal of Sound and Vibration* 224, no. 3 (1999): 455-473; Edward L. Kottick, "The Acoustics of the Harpsichord: Response Curves and Modes of Vibration," *The Galpin Society Journal* 38 (1985): 55-77.

representations of it—reiterating its problems, actively *staging* its problems as a way of staging the difference between the modern and pre-modern, and rehearsing this binary through the harpsichord's acoustic shortcomings.

3.2 Old Sounds in Modern Spaces

During the nineteenth century, the decline of court entertainment and the music patronage system prompted musicians to seek funding from ticket sales. The increase in number and power of a musically educated middle class led to increased demand for musical entertainment. The "purpose-built" concert halls erected across Northern Europe in the mid-1800s, which in some cases could seat between 2000-2500 people, accommodated not only this demand, but also the increasingly large-sized orchestras.[7] At the same time, European keyboard builders were experimenting with designs that would increase dynamic volume, projecting power and octave span—developments aiding the touring piano virtuosi, who now more frequently performed on concert hall stages rather than in salons (as had been the case during the eighteenth century Classic period).[8] Keyboard historian Arthur Loesser states, "It was especially as a concert instrument that the pianoforte could win out over its rivals. This was the instrument that had not only expression, but also enough volume to fill a larger room."[9]

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[7] Michael Chanan, *Musica Practica: The Social Practice of Western Music from Gregorian Chant to Postmodernism* (London: Verso, 1994), 156-157; 205.

[8] Ibid., 204. While pianos of this era were louder than those of the eighteenth century, they had not achieved the volume of twentieth century pianos.

[9]Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos: A Social History* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1954), 105-106.

With the Industrial Revolution, the soundscape outside the concert hall changed as well as inside. In addition to "old school" noises of crowds, animals and horse-drawn carriages, there were now the sounds of trains, factories, automobiles, airplanes and electric loudspeakers. Drawing on period testimony, Emily Thompson argues that these new noises proliferated between 1900-1930 to an extent that many feared physical and psychological consequences.[10] Acoustic experts worked to devise ways of diminishing noise, through measuring techniques, soundproofed spaces—and in some cases, social control. The urban concert hall was to be a retreat from the cacophony, a "hi fi" soundscape with a strong signal-to-noise ratio.[11] Thompson describes how modern concert halls built in the 1920s-1940s reproduced some of the "high fidelity" features of "close-to-microphone" recordings—with minimal reverberation, blended and clear sound.[12]

The harpsichord revival took place amidst these changes. Because of its quieter timbre, its relative lack of sustain and volume in comparison with the modern piano, it struggled to be heard in these large concert halls—particularly those in which ambient city noise managed to seep. An article in the *Detroit Free Press* stated,

> During the 16th and 17th centuries, the harpsichord was supreme among stringed keyboard instruments. Its two banks of keys, elaborate stops and stringing produced tinkling, metallic music well suited to the drawing rooms of those days. However, the larger concert halls built in later years required a

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[10] Emily Thompson accounts for these changes in *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), 117.

[11] R. Murray Schafer uses the term "hi fi" to indicate soundscapes in which the ambient noise level is subdued enough to facilitate hearing discreet sounds. See R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester, Vt.: Destiny Books, 1994 [1977]), 42.

[12] Thompson, 248.

> keyboard instrument with more power, and the harpsichord gave way to the piano, which at first had neither the range nor the brilliance of tone of its predecessor, but it *could* be heard in the back row.[13]

The harpsichord's inaudibility in the concert hall focused listeners' attention on the problem of modern noise. Its relative quiet volume and short sustain provided a scale of measure indicating how far past the pre-Modern the current soundscape had escalated and offering a standard by which to judge a venue's acoustics. For example, a critic at one of harpsichordist Ralph Kirkpatrick's 1957 performances in South Africa wrote,

> There could be no doubt last night that Ralph Kirkpatrick was a virtuoso of the harpsichord. But, having one of the worst seats (center of the basketball field), in the YMCA Main Hall for the first half of his first Johannesburg recital, I could hear a baby crying, dogs fighting and cars gearing up Rissik Street with more amplification than came from the stage.
>
> Only when I shamelessly cupped my earlobes to create my own amplifier did I get something of the unadulterated harpsichord timbre, the pleasure of which I afterwards shared with the first three rows and probably as many behind.[14]

Following Sylvia Marlowe's 1956 performance in Manila, Philippines, a critic opened with complimentary remarks before commenting,

> …It seems a shame, however, that an auditorium as fine as St. Cecilia's Hall, which is part of Sta. Scholastica's College, can't be sound-proofed. It would be of much greater value to the school itself and wouldn't ruin otherwise top performances. At Saturday's recital, all kinds of street noises kept intruding with sound effects never intended by the composers – train whistles, automobile horns, firecrackers, even a dogfight. Besides occasionally

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[13] "Modern Maker of an Old-Time Instrument," *Detroit Free Press*, *Graphic*, April 13, 1947, 6. Emphasis in original.

[14] Doris Sowden, "Artist Versus Critic," *Johannesburg Sunday Express*, November 15, 1957. Accessed in Ralph Kirkpatrick Papers, Box 8, Series IVB, folder 55.

> drowning out the delicate tones of the harpsichord, they were obviously disconcerting to the musician…[15]

The harpsichord similarly struggled in American concert halls. I once asked a harpsichord enthusiast who had grown up during the 1940s about the first time he had heard a harpsichord live—he recalled one of Landowska's Carnegie Hall performances. Accustomed to her closely miked recordings for RCA-Victor, he was surprised by its effect in the hall, particularly amidst the ambient noise context of New York City.[16] He told me,

> I was sitting up there…in Town Hall, with the din of the New York streets in my ears. Landowska came out; she arranged the red velvet gown over the pedals of the [harpsichord]… and started to play. She was doing the entire first book of the *Well-Tempered,* which starts out with a very soft prelude. I couldn't hear it. I heard *nothing.* I was stunned.[17]

In the context of modernity, the harpsichord's diminutive timbre marked it as emblematic of a soundscape and accompanying social order that had been disrupted by industrial progress and urbanization. In a *Time* magazine interview, harpsichordist Anthony Newman attested to the instrument's difficulty in concert halls more generally,

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[15] *The Manila Chronicle*, January 16, 1956. Accessed in the Sylvia Marlowe Archives, Sylvia Marlowe Scrapbook III, 9.

[16] The hall may have disadvantaged instruments besides the harpsichord. Emily Thompson quotes conductor Henry Higgonson's 1899 critique of Carnegie Hall, "Very noisy music produces considerable effect, but the moment an orchestra plays the older music and relies on delicate effect, everything is gone. I have always disliked the hall very much, and I expected to like it very much before trying it." Thompson, 29.

[17] George Lucktenberg, interview with the author, Waleska, GA, October 14, 2006. William Dowd gives a similar account in a 1986 letter to the editor of the *Boston Globe:* "I was conditioned by the recorded sound of her instrument which, because of her [Landowska's] engineer, managed to recreate the great organ in the Cathedral of Notre Dame. In 1944 or 1945, while serving aboard a destroyer, I had the good luck of being in port in New York just before a Landowska concert in Carnegie Hall. It was, of course, sold out, but on a wild chance, I wrote to her, and she graciously sent me a 10th row ticket. Filled with joy at last to be hearing a proper performance of the fifth Brandenburg concerto, I took my seat…There were not one, but two Pleyels on stage; Denise Restout was playing continuo. The bitter truth – I hardly heard a thing even from the 10th row! One irreverent critic, and most critics were very reverent in the presence of Landowska, described the sound as "like a June bug on a fly screen." Letter dated February 22, 1986. Accessed in the Dowd Harpsichord Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Box 4, Folder 21.

> Much as he loves the harpsichord, Newman became frustrated by the failure of its quaint, rather tinkly sound to fill up big concert halls. 'It's like listening to someone whisper for a long time," he complained. "After a while, you stop listening."[18]

Critiques of industrialization, such as those popularized by R. Murray Schafer (1977), suggested that not only did the soundscape acclimate people to a louder volume of sound, but it also desensitized its listeners to acoustical nuance.[19] The capacity to perceive this acoustic nuance was imperative in the case of hearing a harpsichord in a concert hall. In a review of a Sylvia Marlowe concert at the Hunter Playhouse in New York, a critic noted the acute hearing ability required by the harpsichord's sound:

> Science says that dogs respond to pitch levels unheard or at least unappreciated by mankind, which in turn, has progressed, if one cares to think so, to appreciation of higher degrees of sonority. The unresonant harpsichord is a step on the way and it has a devoted public, content with an evening of sound, however purveyed, in this monochromatic sphere.[20]

While the critic here suggests that human hearing in fact is *developing* rather than deteriorating, he still attests that the harpsichord's timbre is one that requires heightened perceptive abilities. The harpsichord's inaudibility in large, modern spaces thus provided a means through which to assess current states of human hearing and noise—both acoustic

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[18] "Hip Harpsichordist," *Time Magazine,* August 28, 1972, 35.

[19] For example, a 1908 columnist writes, "Are we deafer than our forefathers? There certainly seem to be a large proportion of young or middle-aged persons who suffer from partial or total deafness, and that in a day when the mechanism of the ear is so carefully studied by specialists. But it is the unnoticed deterioration in the average of mankind with which I am more concerned. It does appear that the majority must be afflicted with the loss of fineness and discrimination in hearing, by the testimony of the kind of music increasingly popular, of the constitution of the modern orchestra and the aims of the professional trainer of the singers." She goes on to cite the encroachment of the city upon the country, writing "It may well be that it is this loss of beauty that is blunting our senses as well as stunting our souls." Elizabeth Godfrey, "Are Our Senses Deteriorating?," *The Living Age,* June 20, 1908: 707.

[20] "Harpsichord at Hunter," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 1, 1966. Accessed in the Sylvia Marlowe Archives.

and social noise. Hearing and noise were parameters heavily altered by twentieth century industrialism—and both were subjects of extensive cultural preoccupation.

3.3 Distinguishing Features

Since at least the eighteenth century, the harpsichord's sound has been humorously critiqued and caricatured through its "distinctive" shortcomings. Perhaps most famously, Thomas Beecham remarked that the instrument sounded like "two skeletons copulating on a corrugated tin roof,"[21] and Charles Burney that it sounded like a "scratch with a sound at the end of it," or "a bird-cage twanged with a toasting fork."[22] Jean-Jacques Rousseau reported that it was "the worst timbre," "both dull and harsh at the same time."[23] Wanda Landowska described antique harpsichords as sounding like "a cage of mosquitoes," giving only "faint and buzzing sounds."[24] One 1926 article stated that it "has about as much aural impact as the patter of spilled hairpins in a metal bowl."[25] The liner notes to the 1956 re-release of *Artie*

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[21] Several versions of this quote have circulated. Kottick gives "two cats copulating. . ." in *History of the Harpsichord* , 519. In some versions, the skeletons are copulating on a corrugated tin roof during a thunderstorm, and in others the word "corrugated" is omitted. For a well-considered discussion of some of these variants, see the blog entry "History of the Tin Roof" by harpsichordist Tilman Skowroneck, http://skowroneck.wordpress.com/2008/02/10/history-of-the-tin-roof/, accessed February 11, 2010, 7:57PM.

[22] Quoted in Robert Donington, "On Interpreting Early Music," *Music and Letters* 32 (1954): 241. Some sources attribute the saying to Thomas Beecham.

[23] Quoted in Emily Dolan, "E.T.A. Hoffmann and the Ethereal Technologies of 'Nature Music,'" *Eighteenth-Century Music* 5, no.1 (2008), 12.

[24] Mildred Adams, "An Artist of Ancient Music," *The Woman Citizen,* April 1926, 40.

[25] "The Goldbergs" *Newsweek,* April 2, 1962, 50.

Shaw and his Gramercy Five (which extensively features the harpsichord) refer to the "peculiar, clanking sound of the instrument."[26]

Articles about the harpsichord's resurgence typically included a brief thumbnail description of its timbre—that it sounds like "a choir of mandolins,"[27] a "tinkling twang,"[28] an "unfamiliar twang" with an "exotic quality,"[29] that it is "tinkling and metallic,"[30] "sharp and pungent, a little like that of a guitar, not sweet and fuzzy like a piano's,"[31] or even "dematerialized."[32] In the James Hunecker story cited in Chapter 1, the narrator states, "After a while, too, the tinkle of the harpsichord becomes monotonous; it begins to sound too much like a music-box."[33]

These accounts note three main aspects of the harpsichord's sound: its percussive attack, its minimal sustain and its quiet volume. Descriptions such as "harsh," "sharp and pungent"—or the "scratch with the sound at the end of it"—indicate the perceived percussiveness at the ictus of the harpsichord's notes. This percussiveness was variably valued as a novel sound or devalued as "noise" in popular discourse. For example, the quality is celebrated in the liner notes to one of Enoch Light's *Far Away Places* albums:

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[26] Liner notes by George T. Simon. *Artie Shaw and his Gramercy Five*, RCA-Victor LPM-1241(1956)

[27] "Musical Antiques," *Time* Magazine, October 30, 1939, 36.

[28] "A New Sound in the Living Room," *House Beautiful,* January 1953, 82.

[29] "The Syncopated Harpsichord," *House Beautiful*, January 1953, 10.

[30] "Modern Maker of an Old-Time Instrument," *Detroit Free Press*, April 13, 1947, Graphic Section, 6.

[31]Arthur Loesser, "The Return of the Harpsichord," *House Beautiful*, January 1956, 84.

[32] "Listen to the Harpsichord: An Interview with Manette Marple," *Etude* 62 (January 1944), 9-10.

[33] James Huneker, "The Haunted Harpsichord," in *Visionaries* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 197.

> The sound of the harpsichord, in particular, has a transparency that lights up all the selections in which it is heard. And at the same time it is a delightful rhythm instrument with a bright, crackling percussiveness that propels a tune with a sound that no other instrument can produce.[34]

Adjectives such as "dull," "metallic," "tinkling," "clanking," "dematerialized," or comparisons to mosquitoes, or to the sound of bone against tin, fork against birdcage, hairpins against metal, point to a perceived lack of sustain in the harpsichord's timbre, a quick decay envelope with minimal "ring" and pitch. For the instrument's critics, this feature rendered the instrument weak, inaudible or unable to project. The lack of sustain kept the instrument in the realm of noise (if not silence), and out of the realm of pitched musical sound. On the other hand, the instrument's fans heard the feature as an advantage. For example, an article in *Time* magazine explained, "To the unschooled ear, the harpsichord jangles like a regiment of mice scurrying through a pile of coins. But its connoisseurs find in the harpsichord rarefied and rustling harmonies, comparable to a choir of flutes and mandolins."[35] Another noted that "the harpsichord produces no overtones or other distracting tonal by-products…the harpsichord sounds 'tinny' only to those who insist on regarding it as a primitive piano."[36] Musicologist and critic Paul Henry Lang similarly prized the feature, stating

> Granted that unlike its kid sister, the clavichord, or big brother, the piano, the harpsichord cannot "sing"' rather, its bright, metallic-silvery tone was designed to bring out with clarity the part-writing in polyphonic music, or to replenish the accompaniment with luminous chords.[37]

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[34] Enoch Light, *Far Away Places*, Vol. II. Command RS 850 (1963).
[35] "Harpsichordists Out of Tune," *Time Magazine*, February 3, 1947, 46.

[36] Howard L. Goodkind, "The Return of the Harpsichord," *American Mercury* 68 (1949), 345-350.

[37] Paul Henry Lang, "Harpsichord or Piano?" *Etude* 75 (March 1957), 16.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, builders from the first phase of the harpsichord revival saw the quiet volume, short decay envelope and tuning instability as evidence of the harpsichord's "stunted" development. During this early phase, advocating for the instrument's return required one to demonstrate its potential to project as loudly, with as much resonance and intonation as a modern piano. Beyond that, the harpsichord needed the competitive advantage of special effects achieved by registration changes. Landowska once commented that "It was a battle, you have no idea what a battle it was, to impose the harpsichord upon the musical world."[38]

3.4 Constructing Distinctive Features

The Detroit builder, John Challis, hoped to advocate for the harpsichord by helping it to project in modern concert spaces, and to compete with the piano. He once explained,

> At the end of the eighteenth century, concert halls as we know them hardly existed. Music was intended to be played in a room about this size [referring to his living room, which was approximately 40 feet long.] If the harpsichord were to be played in a concert hall, then tonally it had to grow.[39]

A true modernist, Challis believed that the harpsichord existed on a path to progress and that the task of the twentieth-century builder was to improve the instrument beyond where the eighteenth-century makers had left it. He experimented with a variety of materials and designs, including up-to-the-minute developments such as Bakelite, iron frames, plastics, and aluminum soundboards. The incorporation of aluminum soundboards became perhaps

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[38] *Time Magazine,* February 3, 1947, 46.

[39] Bernard Absell, "The Harpsichord with the Forward Look," *Harper's*, June 1958, 78.

his most famous innovation, and the ultimate example of how technologically modern his approach had become.[40]

Partly, these innovations targeted the harpsichord's humidity-related problems, such as cracks, sticking registers and tuning instability. But Challis also intended the innovations to improve the harpsichord's tone. He described his tonal ideal perhaps most extensively in an unpublished treatise entitled "Notes on the Art of Practical Harpsichord and Clavichord Building."[41] For example, in the section "The Ideal Instrument," he states:

> In tone it [the harpsichord] should:
>
> 1. Have enough power to be heard with ease in the place where it is used.
> 2. Have the quality of tone in its several registers which will give ample variety, contrast and continuity for the most exacting player and listener.
> 3. Have proper relationship between treble, middle and bass in both quality and quantity of tone for both harmonic and contrapuntal music

He further expounds on harpsichord tone in a section entitled "Tone Character," where he writes,

> In general the ideal character of tone is one in which the fundamental and all overtones it has diminish at the same rate, thus maintaining the same tone quality throughout the length of vibration…
>
> To get this ideal will be extremely difficult if one also wishes to have the tone last as long as possible and get a tone quality that is not excessively brilliant. In other words it can be obtained only by heavy, high bridges on a thick soundboard, all of which conditions tend to make the fundamental weak in proportion to its overtones, particularly the high ones. So some compromise

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[40] In a 1961 letter to a customer, Challis wrote, "For the past 30 years I have constantly improved and developed the harpsichord. Twenty-five years ago I developed a structural frame of aluminum. That was only one thing out of many and has recently resulted in a most fabulous soundboard of metal which exceeds the resonance possible with wood.[40] Accessed in the Dowd Harpsichord Collection, Box 2, Folder 9.

[41] The treatise consists of approximately 100 handwritten and typewritten pages in rough draft form. Accessed in the private archives of William Frayer.

> will be necessary, or one will have to find other ways to obtain this ideal without as great a compromise.

Though Challis used a variety of terms in writings and interviews to describe his ideal timbre, his priorities seem consistently to have included sustain, volume, tonal variety, abundant harmonics, and strong fundamental. Each of these priorities comprises a historically and culturally specific aesthetic. For example, that the harpsichord's voice *should* be heard across a concert hall is a modernist ideal—one increasingly contested with the growth of the 1960s historical authenticity movement, when period performers argued that the concert hall was not the acoustic context for which the harpsichord was designed. Challis' goal of "tonal variety," refers to the availability of multiple stops and registrations on a harpsichord; each of these offers a different sound that could be deployed to distinguish different sections of a musical work. That the sound of the harpsichord playing Baroque repertoire with minimal registration changes is "too monotonous" for modern ears is another aesthetic principle. This principle, too, was overturned during the 1960s and 70s, partly as the result of new research suggesting that registration changes were not terribly common in period practice (not everyone's instrument was outfitted with multiple manuals).[42] Partly, the "monotony" critique dissipated with changing attitudes towards the harpsichord's sound and expressive potential. Not only was the timbre of a single register considered sufficiently "interesting," but harpsichordists (such as Gustav Leonhardt) of the 1960s and 70s also increasingly developed an expressive palette centering around articulation

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[42] For summaries of post-1960s harpsichord registration practice, see Alexander Silbiger, "Performance Practice," *Keyboard Music Before 1700*, ed. Alexander Silbiger (New York: Routledge, 2004 [1995]), 369; David Fuller, "Harpsichord Registration," *The Diapason*, 69, no. 1, (July 1978), 6-7.

and timing nuances, rather than registration changes. In his article "How to Buy a Harpsichord," harpsichordist Frank Cooper explains,

> Modifications wrought in the name of modernity definitely changed the harpsichord's tone. The resulting sound lacked those higher partials of the overtone series that characterized harpsichords through the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. Despite the tantalizing charm of a first hearing, certain early 20th-century harpsichords were rather neutral in tone—dull, lifeless. To compensate, the pioneer performers quickly learned to tread their pedals for frequent changes of registration. As their playing gained in shifts of color, the music they featured took on many aspects of romanticism. How wonderful it was!—prismatic sprays of sound in every direction! Landowska's recording of the *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* is a magnificent example…[43]

Further, as Cooper's comment points out, the "dull" quality of the harpsichord's sound was itself a historically specific construction characteristic of certain models of twentieth century instruments. Builder Frank Rutkowski, who worked for Challis for four years during the 1950s, remembered "John [Challis] had gotten this maggot in his head a year or two before I left that harpsichords don't sustain enough."[44] Rutkowski explained that this aesthetic was largely shaped by Challis' slow style of keyboard playing. Challis had developed this style under the influence of minimally virtuosic nineteenth century organ tradition. In slower paced and generally unornamented works, the onus remained on the instrument to sustain the tone and preserve the musical lines.

Rutkowski also remembered Challis' quest after more fundamental from the tone and told me,

> Ralph Kirkpatrick used to always complain to John "I want more fundamental, more fundamental." But Ralph was speaking as a musician

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[43] Frank Cooper, "How to Buy a Harpsichord," *The AGO-RCCO Magazine*, January 1977, 34-35.

[44] Interview with the author, August 2, 2009, Jersey City, N.J.

> using in fact an art critic's or a wine critic's vocabulary. It does not help a craftsman. So what Ralph was really I believe claiming was that he wanted to hear the note that the score said he's playing. The way Challis did it, the only way you'd hear that note is if you do everything so slowly that the fuzz fades away and finally you hear what the score is doing. And on Challis instruments, without a box under them[45]—the bass, which was bad to begin with—was not reinforced by any fundamental. And so you get an ever thinner, tinnier and falser bass.[46]

Rutkowski explained that to get more fundamental, Challis built his 1950s harpsichords to pluck farther from the nut, at the most actively vibrating spot on the string. Rutkowski explained,

> So John was plucking these strings at sometimes the point of maximum or near-maximum vibration. This meant that you could not play a trill very rapidly…and the stringing was too thin for the scales he was using. So the string was just flying all over the place and a stiff leather plectra, which had been cut to within a tolerance of say 2 or 3 thousandths of an inch, simply would not be there. So he would start loading damper sticks to stop the string. In other words, everything he was doing was aimed at suppressing tone. And the instruments got softer and softer…You could play slow fugues on them. And yet when you got into the bass, you wouldn't be hearing those wonderful bass notes, you'd be hearing sevenths and ninths and all this little sparkling stuff.

I asked Rutkowski how Challis's instruments compared to Pleyel models in terms of volume. He said that Challis harpsichords were much louder, an assessment that has been confirmed by several others of my informants.

Rutkowski's comments show the layers of design and technology that Challis applied to his instruments in order to produce the aesthetic results of sustain and fundamental. These measures ultimately suppressed resonance, volume and fundamental, resulting in a

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[45] Many of Challis' instruments during this phase had open bottoms, which was detrimental to resonance.

[46] Interview with the author. Though he ultimately became a devotee of historically informed Boston School harpsichords, Ralph Kirkpatrick played Challis harpsichords in the early part of his career.

sound that journalists and later historicist builders deemed "dull." The link of "the harpsichord" to a "dull sound" thus formed what Thomas Turino has theorized as an "indexical cluster": "a redundant grouping of preexisting signs, such that they come to be indexically associated with each other and this relationship takes on the 'naturalness' or 'reality' of indexical relations."[47] Challis' harpsichords appeared across the United States in concerts of prominent virtuosi (such as Fernando Valenti, Sylvia Marlowe or Ralph Kirkpatrick) and many mass-circulated classical and popular recordings.[48] Thus, while the relationship between "the harpsichord" and its "distinctive" dull sound became a naturalized and indexical one, it emerged as a historically contingent material and semiotic construction.

3.5 "Overbuilt" Sounds

An article in *High Fidelity* characterized the difference in tone between antique and modern harpsichords, stating:

> These harpsichords [antique instruments] speak with a strong, rich, and virile baritone voice, not the polite tinkle so often imagined. In contrast, the typical modern harpsichord of the first half of the twentieth century (as well as many built today) has a soundboard twice as thick, a heavily framed rigid case, and an open bottom that calls to mind the open baffles of cheap low-fidelity loudspeakers. The tone that results from this type of construction was thought to be interesting—nay, beautiful—so long as traditional criteria remained in the background. When compared with the

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[47] See Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 236.

[48] For example, Fernando Valenti's Challis harpsichord was likely the one used on Rosemary Clooney's hit singles for Columbia Records. Clooney states that Mitch Miller rented one "from a teacher at Juilliard," who at the time would have been Valenti. See Rosemary Clooney, *Girl Singer: An Autobiography*, with Joan Barthel (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 75.

> tone of an antique harpsichord or a good modern replica, it sounds harsh, uninteresting, and lacking in volume.[49]

With the advent of the Boston School came the idea that harpsichords were not "less evolved" but "different" from the modern piano, and that any progress in instrument design ought to aim towards the timbre of restored antique instruments in museums and private collections. Brochures for Hubbard instruments advertised that their instruments "exactly" reproduced the sound of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century instruments on which they were based.[50] By the 1960s, the American harpsichord building industry had shifted from Challis' to the Boston area shops. Players and schools began replacing their Challis, Pleyel or German factory instruments with Hubbard and Dowd harpsichords.

Among professional harpsichordists and Boston School proponents, earlier twentieth-century models gained notoriety for being technologically over-complicated, enormous in size, and diminutive in sound. In correspondence and everyday conversations among historicist circles, these "overbuilt" models were often termed "whisperchords." Describing a "Bach-model" Maendler-Schramm harpsichord at the Salzburg Mozarteum, Larry Palmer stated "for all its heavy construction, the instrument was of that variety known as a 'whisperchord.' Hearing it at all was a triumph."[51]

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[49] Victor Wolfram, "The Harpsichord: Back from the Brink," *High Fidelity*, June 1972, 44.

[50] A section of a late 1960s Hubbard brochure for a kit replicating an eighteenth century French harpsichord contains a discussion of the use of plastic (delrin) for the jacks. It is then noted, "Their [the jacks'] mass is identical to that of a wooden jack. Thus the resulting action feels like an old one and the tone is identical." Accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc.

[51] Larry Palmer, *Harpsichord in America: A Twentieth-Century Revival* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), n.8, 182. Berkeley harpsichordist Laurette Goldberg recalled the postwar era in harpsichord building, including the early days of Hubbard and Dowd, in her oral history: "All the instruments made in this country were the old kind that weighed seven hundred fifty pounds and you can't hear past the third row and feel like a piano

The word "whisper" means "to speak softly using one's breath rather than one's throat," "an act, or the action, of whispering, or speaking 'under one's breath;' the low, non-resonant quality of voice which characterizes this," or "speech or vocal sound without musical or resonant tone produced by vibration of the vocal cords; a 'breath' sound, as distinguished from 'voice.'"[52] A "whisperchord" referred to a harpsichord lacking in fundamental and volume. Granted, there was a range of harpsichords that received the epithet—so that it signaled an aesthetic distaste for "whispering" timbres (relative to non-whispering ones) than anything concrete or distinctive to the instruments themselves.

Besides overbuilt instruments, the term could also connote one that had been too lightly voiced, or inexpertly regulated.[53] For example, one of Dowd's employees told me that Dowd would sometimes refer to Hubbard instruments as "those damned Hubbard whisperchords." [54] In these instances, Dowd critiqued what he perceived as Hubbard's tendency to over-voice harpsichords to the point of rendering them quiet and lacking in fundamental. Similarly, Ralph Kirkpatrick once wrote about harpsichords he had played that

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with pluckers." See "Early Music Performance in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1960s-Present," interview by Mary Mead in 1996, 151. Regional Oral History Office, the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

[52] "Whisper," *Oxford English Dictionary Online,* accessed February 18, 2010.

[53] Voicing here refers to the art of shaving slices from the plectra to weaken the pluck, creating a lighter action for the keyboardist, and a less abrasive tone. Regulating refers to the art of lengthening or shortening the length of the jacks (on modern instruments, via screws on the bottom), which affects the distance of the plectra from the string, and thus the amount of time it takes for the pluck to occur once a key is pressed. In instruments with more than one register, one must choose whether to regulate so that when all registers are engaged, either 1) the two 8' and 4' strings will be staggered slightly when the key is pressed, or 2) all 3 strings will sound at once. Staggering decreases the action stiffness and the volume.

[54] Don Angle, interview with the author, March 1, 2008, Salem, Mass.

had been regulated to an extent that rendered them whisperchords. Kirkpatrick notes that these instruments were grossly regulated in order to adhere to historical precedent.

> …In some cases, on the basis of a single historical example, the 8'8'4' tutti has been emasculated by a plucking timing which has the 4' sounding after the two 8's or, by an arbitrary caprice of at least one maker, between them. The general level of sound has been so reduced as to merit the appellation "whisperchord."[55]

To make the harpsichord whisper was to misrepresent the instrument, to create something that mechanistically fit the parameters of "the harpsichord," but that acoustically fell somewhere short of the "real thing." The critique was one of a particular moment and social network (see the following chapter for a more extended discussion of the classed aspects of the Boston School), and part of a "high fidelity" aesthetic that saturated mass-market music discourse of the era. That is, the whisperchord produced an inefficient signal-to-noise ratio—more upper partials than fundamental pitch. To critique an instrument as a whisperchord was to mark one's own "hi fi" aesthetic.

Returning to Beecham's quote, that the harpsichord's timbre resembles that of "two skeletons copulating on a corrugated tin roof," one should note an earlier appearance of this metaphor to critique a 1925 Orthophonic Victrola. About that device, a journalist lamented "You hear the deep boiler-factory cacophony of the bass, the shrill shrieking of the trebles. Every instrument sounds like a skeleton's Charleston on a tin roof."[56] As Jonathan Sterne

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[55] Ralph Kirkpatrick, "50 Years of Harpsichord Playing," *Early Music* (January 1983), 38. For a similar critique of the whispering of "over-voiced" harpsichords, see David Jacques Way, "Whispering Harpsichords" [Advertisement for Zuckermann Harpsichords, Inc.], *Early Music* 4, no. 4 (October 1976), 472.

[56] Quoted in Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: The Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 272. "Charleston" refers to the dance step popular at the time.

points out, the comment speaks to the tendency of early sound reproduction devices to interfere with the delivery of the music, to "add its own sound to everything it touches."[57] In the case of the modernist harpsichords that Beecham likely heard, the problem was the instrument's lack of volume, resonance and sustain—but the issue was similarly a poor signal-to-noise ratio. Many heard this sound quality change with the "hi fi" timbres of post-World War II historicist harpsichords. Harpsichordist Tilman Skowroneck has recently suggested that Beecham's comment be reread as a critique of the modernist harpsichord, rather than of the harpsichord in general. Correcting the modernist assertion that the piano was an improvement upon the harpsichord, that Bach would have played the piano had it been invented, Skowroneck states, "It is, after all, not: 'Bach would have preferred the Steinway.' It is 'Beecham would have loved the historical tin roof.'"[58]

3.6 Aged Sounds

Key reasons for the burgeoning interest in harpsichords and early music following World War II included the invention of the long-playing record format, the emergence of smaller Classical labels (such as Westminster), and the proliferation of recordings of pre-eighteenth century music. Gronow and Saunio state that during the 1940s, companies found it profitable to release recordings of off-the-beaten-path repertoire—primarily including genres of Early Music and recent experimental music.[59] Not only was there now an eager

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[57] Ibid.

[58] Tilman Skowroneck, "History of the Tin Roof." Skowroneck here discusses the possible connection between the two uses of the copulating skeletons metaphor, citing Jonathan Sterne's discussion.

market of middle-class audiophiles with disposable income, but also the LP format was particularly suited to the longer duration of classical works. As Robert Fink explains, these factors created a culture in which Baroque music recordings could become part of the fabric of middle class domesticity.[60]

Gronow and Saunio also note that by the end of the 1940s, ninety percent of record sales were in popular music genres; the demand for swing-oriented pop, country and R&B were the areas of most increased demand.[61] As smaller companies emerged to release classical recordings, so did a number of companies spring up specializing in a particular genre of popular music.

The harpsichord made its way into these various postwar niche markets: obscure Early Music, swing, country, rhythm and blues, jazz, and eventually easy-listening recordings of the late 1950s and early 1960s. In addition to classical albums, the instrument also appeared on numerous singles intended for jukebox and radio play, as well as for Victory discs (V-discs) shipped to United States troops overseas. This trend towards the "hot harpsichord" (the period term for a harpsichord playing popular repertoire) began in the late 1930s and early 1940s, still during the period of 78-RPM records. The idea seems to have struck a number of musicians during the same few years; a 1939 review of a harpsichord

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[59] Pekka Gronow and Ilpo Saunio, *An International History of the Recording Industry*, trans. Christopher Moseley, (London: Cassell, 1998), 112.

[60] Robert Fink, "'A Pox on Manfredini:' The Long-Playing Record, the Baroque Revival, and the Birth of Ambient Music," in *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2005), 169-207.

[61] Gronow and Saunio, 95.

boogie recording in *American Music Lover* noted "Not that jazz on the harpsichord is anything new; it's been done before."[62]

Sylvia Marlowe began playing boogie versions of classical repertoire at the Blue Angel supper-club and at the Rockefeller Center's Rainbow Room in New York City during the late 1930s and early 1940s. In 1939, she released the album *From Bach to Boogie Woogie* on General Records, a small label geared towards jazz listeners. During the 1940s she released several singles in the same style for Decca; two of these, "Eighteenth Century Barrel House" (an arrangement of a Jean-Philippe Rameau work) and "Cuckoo-Cuckoo" were listed among "Advance Race Record Releases" in *Billboard* magazine in 1948.[63]

In the 1930s, harpsichordist Yella Pessl was asked to play a jazz arrangement of a classical work for a Paramount Pictures film. She sought the jazz arranger Alec Wilder to arrange something; in the process of trying his François Couperin-based piece on Pessl's instrument, he became enchanted with the timbre.[64] A few years later, when asked to compose a series of jazz arrangements for Brunswick records, Wilder decided to include a harpsichord in the eight-piece ensemble that also included winds and percussion. In 1939, twenty-eight of these songs were recorded.[65]

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[62] Enzo Archetti, "Swing Music Notes," *American Music Lover* vol. 5-6 (1939), 74. The review is of Sylvia Marlowe's General Records album *From Bach to Boogie-Woogie.*

[63] "Advance Race Record Releases," *Billboard*, October 30, 1948, 29.

[64] Desmond Stone, *Alec Wilder in Spite of Himself: A Life of the Composer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 55.

[65] David Demsy, "Introduction," in Alec Wilder, *Clues to a Life: Letters Never Mailed* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 11.

Some years later, when the oboist from Wilder's band, Mitch Miller, began producing singles and albums, he was inspired to include a harpsichord in many tracks.

Among the most famous of these were those that featured vocalist Rosemary Clooney, such as "Come On-A My House," which was number one on the pop charts for several weeks in 1951. (See appendix for an extended listing.) Clooney and Marlene Dietrich also recorded several singles with harpsichord accompaniment: "Dot's Nice, Donna Fight," "Too Old to Cut the Mustard" and "It's the Same." The harpsichordists for these recordings were either Stan Freeman or Buddy Weed. Freeman had several pop harpsichord singles of his own, produced by Mitch Miller—"Cuban Nightingale," "Bunk House Boogie," "Without My Lover (Bolero Gaucho)"— as well as his own album, *Come On-A Stan's House*. Buddy Weed also recorded some singles for harpsichord and rhythm section, released on Coral Records, a subsidiary of Decca: "That Girl," "Just Dreaming," and "Harpsichord Rag."

In 1940, having released recordings on celeste several years earlier, boogie-woogie pianist Meade "Lux" Lewis recorded four 78-RPM sides on the harpsichord for Blue Note Records. Like Marlowe's recordings, and typical of boogie style, the cuts feature rhythmic ostinatos in the bass, with short, syncopated phrases in the treble. A rhythm-oriented genre, not dependent on singing melodic lines, boogie suited the modern harpsichord well. A 1940 review of the Lewis track "19 Ways of Playing a Chorus" states, "At times he sounds like Teddy Bunn improvising on a big guitar against a vibrating background."[66] By the second track, the critic's attention has waned: "the tone gets a bit monotonous at times and it

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[66] Enzo Archetti, "Swing Music Notes," *American Music Lover* 7 (1940), 433. Teddy Bunn was a jazz and blues guitarist active primarily during the 1930s and 40s.

sounds as if the soloist were driving the instrument too hard," and by the fourth: "here the instrument is not incongruous but still a shade on the monotonous side because of its limited means of expression."[67]

Besides those mentioned above, other examples of boogie-style harpsichord releases include "Sticky Fingers" and "Honky Tonk Harpsichord" by Billy (Sticky Fingers) Murphy, "Harpsichord Rag," "Harpsichord Blues" by Big J.J., "It's Really Nothing" by Eddie Heywood, "Hot Pepper" by Floyd Cramer, or "Walk Bach to Me" by Bobby Darin. Later it included the tracks on Memphis Slim's *Southside Reunion* album, "Ain't Nothing But a Texas Boogie on a Harpsichord" and "Ain't Nothing But a New Orleans Boogie on that Same Harpsichord." Most of these tracks were released on the Columbia and RCA-Victor labels (companies in fierce, direct competition during the late 1940s and 1950s), but also M-G-M, Decca (and its subsidiary, Coral) and Capitol, and smaller labels such as Day Dell, Josie, Parlophone, Mala, London, Everest, Empire, Abbott and Felsted.

These recordings played on the irony and novelty of the "highbrow" instrument playing "lowbrow" repertoire, and on the acoustic similarities between honky-tonk pianos and harpsichords (and liner notes often commented on the "surprise" of finding the harpsichord playing popular repertoire). Both the honky-tonk piano and the harpsichord were instruments that derived their acoustic character from being aged and "weathered." Years of use and disrepair in barrelhouses, bars or attics, honky-tonk pianos and harpsichords were "lo-fi" keyboards that produced jangling "noise" with their pitches,

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[67] Ibid.

pitches that might even be out of tune. Within boogie-woogie and swing genres, the thumbtack piano was often called a "harpsi-piano" or a "harpsichord-piano," which were other names for the thumbtack piano: a piano with thumbtacks or staples in the hammers, which caused strings to "twang" or "jangle" when struck, and which decreased the sustain or "ring" of the tone. In some cases, a chain (the same sort used in toilets) was draped across the piano's to create a similar effect.[68] The idea was to mimic the sound of a run-down piano, in which the felts had been worn off the hammers, causing the hammers to bounce on the string multiple times.[69]

In his 1958 single "There's No Piano in This House," baritone and big band leader Vaughn Monroe sings, closely-miked, of a ghostly keyboard. Every night between 12 and 3 a.m., the sounds of a piano emanate from the narrator's home, though there is no such instrument present and though he has lived alone for years. During the choruses, a more distantly miked, and heavily reverbed voice calls "I hear it, I hear it"; this is the vocal strategy for representing the ghostly keyboard presence. The instrumental strategy is the use of a thumbtack piano, which plays short hooks following each vocal verse, also with increased reverberation. Though there is no mention of instrumentation on the 45-RPM, the *Billboard* magazine reviewer hears a harpsichord: "Pleasant warble by Monroe on a cute, happy-sounding novelty, sparked by a flat harpsichord and a chorus assist."[70] This review attests to

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[68] Dick Hyman, phone interview with the author, February 23, 2008.

[69] Several of the harpsichord builders I interviewed remembered placing spoons or knives on the strings of their pianos when they were young, to approximate the sound of a harpsichord; without money to purchase a harpsichord of their own, they devised a make-do strategy to achieve "the next best thing."

[70] "Reviews of New Pop Records," *Billboard*, March 10, 1958, 55.

the indexical cluster that had been established in American popular music culture between the sound of a thumbtack piano and the identity of the harpsichord; the ghost-oriented theme also contributes to this link.

Describing Eddie Heywood's 1958 harpsichord version of "It's Really Nothing," a *Billboard* critic writes "Tricked up piano (honky-tonk harpsichord flavor) work by Heywood on a lively instrumental theme."[71] The liner notes to Stan Freeman's album, *Come On-A Stan's House, He Give-A You Harpsichord* note this similarity in a description of the "St. Louis Blues" track:

> *The St. Louis Blues* has a rough-house humor and feeling here that is generally caught only on tinny old pianos of disreputable history…[72]

The genre of boogie-woogie originated as a dance in the Deep South during the early twentieth century. It emerged as a musical form during the mid-1920s, (often accompanying dancers) offering entertainment for African American employees of lumber, turpentine and railroad industries. Boogie-woogie was typically played in a barrelhouse, a venue that boogie historian Peter Silvester describes as "a crude building given its name from the liquor barrels supporting planks from which the rough liquor was served, with floor space for dancing, to the piano and gambling." Silvester adds that "there is no doubt that in many instances, the barrelhouse also acted as a brothel."[73] Honky-tonk pianos were the keyboards found in these spots—worlds apart from the harpsichord's aristocratic milieu.

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[71] "Reviews of New Pop Records," *Billboard*, June 2, 1958, 44.

[72] Stan Freeman, *Come On-A Stan's House, He Give-A You Harpsichord,* Columbia CL 6193 (1951). The album's title refers to the Rosemary Clooney single.

The irony is thus that two keyboards of opposing histories become equivalent among popular music circles during the postwar era. For example, the liner notes to the album *They Laughed When I Sat Down* by Billy Rowland (and his thumbtack piano) remark on the near-interchangeability of the harpsichord with its "lowbrow" counterpart. The author imagines what might have transpired at the recording session:

> "Billy, can we check the piano for sound—just the piano, please," says [the studio engineer].
> Rowland strikes a few chords, saturated with the tintinnabulations of thumbtacks.
> [Engineer] looks askance at all present. "Who, in the name of Thomas Edison, ordered a harpsichord for this date?"
> End of tableau…[74]

He then continues with a descriptive summary of how the album will sound:

> I venture to say that you will hear a lot of swinging, tack-accented piano—a sort of po'-boy harpsichord—and quite possibly, gain a lot of plain cotton-picking fun.
>
> You've got to get with it, gang! This is Milleniumsville. First there were space-rockets and now we are tacking pianos. After all, it's a free country. It can happen only in America.[75]

An article for *The Mother Earth News* recommended this technique for home harpsichord playing: "Purchase two cards of thumbtacks, enough for eighty-eight keys. Choose tacks with bare metal heads for a loud ricky-tick / harpsichord sound and pick plastic-coated heads for a softer, less metallic tone." After describing the procedure for

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[73] Peter J. Silvester, *The Story of Boogie-Woogie: A Left Hand Like God* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 11.

[74] Billy Rowland, *They Laughed When I Sat Down*, RCA LPM-1872, (1959).

[75] Ibid.

installing the tacks, the author suggests, "Now break out some beer barrel songs or Bach or Scarlatti."

> The new sound is louder than the old and the keyboard action may be faster. If your hand falls heavy on the keys, a rousing ricky-tick tone will result…If you get tired of the new sound you'll find that the tacks come out easily…but save them just in case you again get the urge to transport your playing back in time.[76]

Whereas the "whisperchord" was something that mechanistically, but not acoustically, could pass for a harpsichord, a "harpsi-piano" was something that could acoustically signify a harpsichord, despite its mechanistic identity as a piano. Some examples of recordings featuring this instrument include Bill Snyder's "Harpsi-Boogie," Carmen Cavellero's "Running Wild Boogie", Dolly Dawn's "Buzz Me Baby," Dick Hyman's album *Dick Hyman & Harpsichord in Hi Fi* for M-G-M (singles from this album were distributed to disc jockeys), and the track "Allegro for Harpsichord" by Henry Brandon and his Big Band with a Swing Beat on the album *Brandon Swings*. Les Baxter's 1957 album *Skins! Bongo Party with Les Baxter* featured a thumbtack piano (called a "Porto Seguro harpsichord-piano" in the liner notes) for the tracks "Brazilian Bash" and "Mood Tattooed." An artist named Harpsichord Tommy recorded several sides for the Cincinnati label CI-SUM on the harpsichord-piano in the mid-1950s.

3.7 High Fidelity Sounds

To popular music producers, the harpsichord presented a novel sound that could help sell records. The "shortcomings" of its timbre may have been a worry for builders,

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[76] Suzanna S. MacDonald, "How to Get a Ricky-Tick Harpischord [sic] Sound from your Piano," *The Mother Earth News*, January 13, 1972, 22.

players and many sound engineers, but it also provided an opportunity for engineers in the business of high fidelity. With the application of magnetic tape technology to popular music recordings in 1947, and the invention of the long-playing record format in 1948, a wider range of frequencies could be recorded.[77] With tape, different microphones could be placed around a studio to pick up different perspectives on the sound source, and later mixed into a single recording. Together, these various developments led to the emergence of "high fidelity" sound quality, and to the proliferation of "hi-fi" albums and sound reproduction equipment.

The designation "high fidelity" was a highbrow one, meant to entice middle-class American adults. Hi-fi recordings were pop *albums* and not singles; as opposed to the "lowbrow" teen market associated with single 45-RPM and 78-RPM releases, albums of 78-RPM and 33-RPM were linked to adults.[78] Producers of hi-fi players advertised the capability of their machines to produce "realistic" sound: a true-to-life range of frequencies, with minimal background noise. Producers of hi-fi albums, which tended to feature classical music or mood music, advertised the range of frequencies captured on the record, the extent to which particular sounds within an ensemble could be distinguished, and the clarity of the signal.

In this context, musical instruments functioned as raw materials to showcase the skill of recording engineers, the sophistication of recording equipment used by the engineers, and

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[77] Gronow and Saunio, 96-99.

[78] For a more detailed discussion of classed distinctions in adult and teen popular music categories between the 1940s-1960s, see Keir Keightley, "Music for Middlebrows: Defining the Easy Listening Era, 1946-1966," *American Music* (Fall 2008), 309-335.

the quality of the consumer's playback device. Novelty sounds—such as harpsichord, Theremins, or non-Western percussion instruments—became part of a strategy to sell records. The argument was: if a recording could realistically capture the elusive sound of the harpsichord, it must be high fidelity.

A number of explicitly "hi-fi" harpsichord albums describe the parameters of high fidelity sound on the album sleeve. For example, the notes to Bruce Prince-Joseph, *Anything Goes: Hi-Fi on the Harpsichord* explains that "[high fidelity] is distinguished by these characteristics: 1. Complete frequency range, 2. Ideal dynamic range plus clarity and brilliance, 3. Constant fidelity from outside to inside of record, 4. Improved quiet surfaces."[79] A later recording featuring so-called "dynagroove" recording technology lays out similar acoustic ideals: "1. Brilliance and clarity – the original sound in startling definition, 2. Realistic presence – sound projected in "photographic" perspective, 3. Full-bodied tone – even when you listen at *low* level, and 4. Surface noise virtually eliminated!"[80]

Within this set of acoustic ideals, the harpsichord's voice offered a special opportunity to demonstrate the advances of recording technology. The liner notes to harpsichordist Bruce Prince-Joseph's album *Swingin' Harpsichord* state,

> The "highs" in harpsichord sounds are a real test for your equipment. The lower end of the harpsichord (goes down to 16' pitch) is 32 cycles per second and makes a nice "thud" and "twang" sound.[81]

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[79] Bruce Prince-Joseph, *Anything Goes: Hi-Fi on the Harpsichord*, RCA-Camden CAL-416 (1958).

[80] Description of RCA's Dynagroove records system of recording from [80] Liner notes by Sheldon Toomer, Derek and Ray, *Interplay: The Keyboard Sounds of Today!,* RCA-Victor LSP-3530 (1966) .

[81] Bruce Prince Joseph, *Swingin' Harpsichord*, High Fidelity Recordings, Inc. R-603 (1957).

Some articles from the period discuss the difficulty of recording the harpsichord, and specifically in achieving an acceptable signal-to-noise ratio. The object was to make the instrument robust on a recording without also magnifying its action noise: the sound of the jacks hitting the jack rail and returning back down, "the annoying click that is heard every time a note on the harpsichord is struck."[82] An article in *High Fidelity* explained,

> Harpsichord tone poses a number of hazards to the recording engineer, even apart from the old trap (usually avoided now) of setting the recording level twice as large as life. Some noise elements are native to the harpsichord, particularly those caused by the backfall of jacks when keys are released. In proper proportion this faint clatter adds to the inherent charm of the instrument, like the "chuff" of a baroque organ. Other noises are less desirable and must be minimized by the performer as well as by the recording technician. The thud of fingers on the keys or the overenergetic knock of jacks against the jack-rail can be amplified into a rattling din of transients that will assail the ear and belie the true sweetness of the tone.[83]

An article for *House Beautiful* states

> In general, the tone of a harpsichord by itself does not have sufficient volume to function importantly in a modern wind ensemble playing popular music. However, if its sound be stepped up with the aid of a microphone, its peculiar sharp impact may give dance music a distinctive interesting flavor.

It goes on to mention the recordings of Rosemary Clooney, Stan Freeman and Artie Shaw and then suggests,

> Well-known lyrical and sentimental pieces, such as "Clair de Lune" and "Liebestraum," come out rather bony and hideous on a harpsichord; and hit numbers from the latest musical shows will likewise seem stiff and puny. Certain jazz music will sound rather better, as will music of a Spanish

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[82] Howard L. Goodkind, "The Return of the Harpsichord," *American Mercury*, March 1949, 349.

[83] Victor Wolfram, "The Harpsichord: Back from the Brink," *High Fidelity*, June 1972, 44.

> rhythmical flavoring; still it is wise to reflect that in a room full of liquorous hilarity a harpsichord will be almost inaudible.[84]

Liner notes and articles frequently described the harpsichord's problems in recording contexts. For example, the notes to keyboardists Derek Smith and Ray Cohen's album *Interplay: The Keyboard Sounds of Today!* state, "Perhaps it should be noted that, while the piano and harpsichord have certain similarities, their differences pose some special problems in recording. The 'big' sound of the piano can easily overpower the more delicate, 'stringy' quality of the harpsichord…"[85]

In the boogie-woogie recordings described earlier, the harpsichord had no trouble shining through its rhythm accompaniment. Beginning in the late 1950s, the instrument appeared more frequently in the genre now termed "easy listening"—which typically featured choir and orchestra covering Broadway, Tin Pan Alley, international tunes, or newly-composed songs that stereotyped non-Western music. The easy-listening genre presented a special challenge for engineers hoping to achieve acoustic balance between the harpsichord and surrounding instruments. Here, the quiet, modernist harpsichord faced the danger of being nearly inaudible when combined with the vocals and orchestra.

The track "Havah Nagilah" from Berlingeri's album, *Excitement of International Percussion* (c. 1961),[86] demonstrates this acoustic problem. Here the harpsichord is so quiet that there almost seems to be a hole in the texture during the antiphonal sections. Without

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[84] Loesser, "The Return of the Harpsichord," 84.

[85] Liner notes by Sheldon Toomer.

[86] Berlingeri, *Excitement of International Percussion: Featuring Berlingeri and his Percussive Harpsichord with Orchestra*, Grand Prix KS-170, (c. 1961).

being able to isolate and individually boost the harpsichord in the mix, engineers, arrangers and players often resorted to other measures to enlarge its sound. The players typically engaged all the instrument's registers—both 8-foot choirs, the 4-foot and the 16-foot. And as was the strategy in Berlingeri's album, many arrangements featured the harpsichord in a call-and-response relationship to the rest of the ensemble, giving it at least a few measures to be heard alone. In Enoch Light's recordings, which made use of stereo recording techniques popularized after 1958, separation between the harpsichord and the ensemble is established by separating the two into left and right channels.

In the case of recordings produced by Mitch Miller and Martin Denny, the harpsichord's track drastically varies in volume between different sections of the same song. In Rosemary Clooney's hits such as "Come On-A My House" or "Mambo Italiano" for example, the signal from Stan Freeman's harpsichord playing is reduced in the mix during the vocal sections, and then boosted during solo sections.[87] The cover photo for Stan Freeman's album, *Come On-A Stan's House* shows a microphone hung directly inside the harpsichord's lid. This is likely the setup used for Clooney's singles. In the case of the Clooney tracks, the signal from the harpsichord's microphone was likely turned up during instrumental solos, and turned down again with the return of the vocals.

[87] The same technique is used in Denny-produced tracks such as "Burma Train" and "Love Dance" from Sonsi Sodsai's *Sondi*, Liberty LRP 3110, (1959).

Figure 3: Album cover for *Come On-A Stan's House*, 1951

Dick Hyman, one of Enoch Light's harpsichordists, explained to me that one additional step could involve the technique called "baffling": placing a screen around the instrument, blocking it from the rest of the group. Normally, the technique was used for percussion instruments; a large screen would be placed around those instruments to prevent their sounds from bleeding into and covering the rest of the ensemble. In the case of the harpsichord, the screen allowed the engineer to pick up a strong signal from the

harpsichord's closely placed microphone with minimal bleeding in from the rest of the ensemble.[88]

When I played the Enoch Light and Berlingeri tracks for a professional builder brought up in the Boston School, he was quick to note that the timbre suggested something with a heavy case that had been closely miked and electronically doctored. He suggested that Berlingeri's harpsichord was most likely a German factory instrument, based on a tell-tale "chirp" he heard at the ictus of all notes coming from the 4-foot register (possibly due to the wire). On the other hand, the peculiar intonation problems of the Enoch Light harpsichord made him think of Pleyel. He was quick to tell me that these "are not real harpsichords—they're really just plucking pianos."

The liner notes to Enoch Light's *Far Away Places* make no secret that the big harpsichord sound on the recording is a modern achievement, and that qualities like resonance and projecting power are not "natural" to the instrument. The extensive notes begin by defining exotic to mean "the mysterious East, the sinuous motions of seemingly boneless dancers" or "the lush, luridly colored fertility of the jungle depths of South America;" they subsequently describe the process of plundering the globe for the variety of distinctive-sounding percussion instruments used on the album. Finally, the notes announce the harpsichord as "the most unusual and—in this context—the most unexpected sound of all," explaining its position as the antecedent to the piano, relatively common during the eighteenth century, but rare in the twentieth. Its sound is characterized in the following passage:

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[88] Dick Hyman, phone interview with the author, February 23, 2008.

> …the harpsichord is an extremely difficult instrument to record. Unlike a piano, it has almost no resonance and when a note is hit, it dies immediately. Because the harpsichord has none of the overtones that are the resonant body of a note, it is all but buried when it is played with an orchestra. Yet in these recordings we hear a sparkling, vital twentieth century harpsichord…and despite its use in orchestral surroundings, recorded with amazing clarity.[89]

Typical of recordings in the "high fidelity" vein, *Far Away Places* is in the business of selling sound quality, rather than musical quality—and likely, selling hi-fi playback equipment rather than the record itself. This passage naturalizes non-resonance as a distinctive feature of harpsichords in general, and casts the "sparkling, vital" sound of the Enoch Light harpsichord as a *modern* achievement. It stages the various technologies of the album—the arrangements and the recording—as enablers upon which the harpsichord is dependent. The liner notes imply progress from the historical to the "vital" sound of the twentieth-century modern harpsichord and of the more resonant piano. Following a trope which had been thoroughly solidified in 1950s exotica albums, the passage demonstrates one of the common ways in which the harpsichord's sound became storied in postwar liner note narratives—as diminutive, precious and deficient, and as the represented object of an acoustic struggle in which the recording artists are the agents.

The aspects of the harpsichord that were interpreted and fetishized as evidence of its weakness are, as this chapter has argued, the results of technological innovations, materials and processes as modern as the recording technology—technology that is painstakingly listed on the back of Enoch Light's album jacket, down to the brands and model numbers of

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[89] Liner notes, Enoch Light and His Orchestra Featuring Harpsichord and Exotic Percussion, *Far Away Places,* Command Records RS 33 822, (1961).

the seven types of microphones, the tape machine, the equalizer and amplifier used. Very rarely do the liner notes to postwar albums mention the make and model of harpsichord. Unlike the brand names of microphones, harpsichord technology is not deemed the kind of data that sells records to audiophiles or hi-fis to households; it is not central to the narrative of the quiet instrument made loud through modern innovation.

3.8 New Sounds

In the years following World War II, the harpsichord also became prized for signaling novelty as well as "old age." In popular music recordings, it was often juxtaposed alongside synthesizers and Theremins; it was also incorporated into experimental works by composers such as John Cage and György Ligeti. Use of the harpsichord as a sign of the "new" became increasingly common during the easy-listening era, as artists such as Juan García Esquivel featured it among a battery of instruments and noisemaking devices. In Esquivel's case, this included sounds of the ondioline (a precursor to the synthesizer), Theremin, Fender Rhodes keyboard, as well as the harpsichord. In 1969, a few years after the *Far Away Places* albums, Enoch Light released an album featuring Moog synthesizer and other electronic instruments (*Spaced Out*); that same year, Dick Hyman released his synthesizer-heavy albums *Age of Electronicus* and *Moog: Electric Eclectics of Dick Hyman*.

Incorporating the harpsichord as part of a modern timbre palette became increasingly common during the psychedelic rock period of 1967-1969, such that it became a distinctive component of the "psychedelic sound." (Appendix 1 lists many examples of psychedelic rock releases featuring harpsichord.) Bands from multiple rock genres included the acoustic harpsichord with other "new" sounds, such as sitars, Theremins and

synthesizers—sometimes within a single album (such as the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and Captain Beefheart's *Safe as Milk*) or a single song (such as the Beach Boys' "Heroes and Villains"). Additionally, the countercultural *Whole Earth Catalog*, popular during the period 1969-1971, featured ads for harpsichords and harpsichord kits alongside ads for Theremins and synthesizers.

With the development of electric harpsichords and Rock-si-chords by the Baldwin and Rocky Mount Instruments companies in 1966-1967, the link between the harpsichord and the "new" became further solidified.[90] The RMI Electric Piano-Harpsichord 300-series even allowed players the special novelty of emulating the timbre of a thumbtack piano; this could be accomplished by engaging the piano and harpsichord settings simultaneously.[91]

3.9 Period Sounds

As the previous sections show, the harpsichord's timbre offered a rich site for debates around sound quality—on recordings, in instruments, in concert halls, and in the outside world—and in such a way that drew distinctions between highbrow and lowbrow taste. Hearing a "hi-fi" harpsichord sound in "hi-fi" meant championing an instrument overrun by mass-culture and mass-production. It meant the social distinction required to choose the equipment that would best filter out various levels of "noise" and that would most effectively transport one to the past's repertoire of "orderly" sounds and affects.

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[90] The Baldwin Combo Harpsichords was designed with the help of Boston harpsichord builder Eric Herz.
[91] Mark Vail notes this in the chapter "Electric Pianos, Harpsichords, & Clavichords," from his book *Vintage Synthesizers: Pioneering Designers, Groundbreaking Instruments, Collecting Tips, Mutants of Technology* (San Francisco: Miller Freeman Books, 2000), 269. I have attempted this on my own RMI 300B and found that the timbre falls something short of a "real" thumbtack piano.

A 1959 *Time* magazine article about a concert by harpsichordist Virginia Pleasants began by describing the harpsichord's difficulty in achieving dynamics and its dependence on "delicate, precise fingering." Near the end of the article, an audience member is quoted saying, "It seems that the dry, tinkling sounds emanating from this delicate box satisfy an inherent longing for an orderly perfection which has long been lost in our vulgar present day."[92] This audience member articulates an indexical relation between the "dry, tinkling" sound and the social order of that sound's heyday; in describing the present as "vulgar," this listener marks his or her longing as highbrow. Twentieth-century harpsichord concert reviews and feature stories abound with similar dialectical comparisons between the harpsichord's restorative sounds and modernity's noise. While the harpsichord's sound itself might have been "lo-fi" (akin to the monotone, "flat-line" sounds that Schafer argues characterize the modern soundscape), one needed a "hi-fi" soundscape in which to hear it.[93] That is, one way to recognize the "fidelity" of one's own soundscape was to listen for the harpsichord.

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[92] "Hausfrau at the Harpsichord," *Time Magazine*, February 23, 1959, 59.

[93] For an elaboration on Schafer's idea of the "lo-fi" soundscape and "flat-line" sounds, see Schafer, 71; 78.

4. Do-It-Yourself Harpsichord Kits: Mass-Producing Luxury, Making the "Purists" Bristle

In a 1970 episode of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, Fred Rogers introduces his viewers to the harpsichord.[1] After a brief discussion of teeth and feathers, Rogers sits himself at a 1967 William Dowd and explains that "the harpsichord is like a piano but it sounds different." He points out that it has two keyboards before moving to a more subtle distinction between the piano and its forerunner. "Now the difference about a harpsichord is that it has little jacks that pluck the strings. I'll show you," he says, as he takes the jack rail off. He pulls out a plastic jack and explains, "Each one of these is a little pluck. A long time ago, they used to even be made out of feathers and they would pluck the strings like that…" (He uses a feather to pluck one of the strings). Rogers then shows his viewers a gooseneck tuning hammer and demonstrates how to tune a string. Finally, he sums up his presentation "it is a very *fancy* instrument." A few moments later, harpsichordist Frances Cole knocks at the door. She has just enough time to play a Scarlatti sonata (K.146) and a Bach minuet (from the *Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach*, Anh 114) before an impatient Mister McFeely arrives to hurry her along to a concert engagement.

In this brief segment, Rogers marks the harpsichord as both "fancy" and mechanistically accessible. Fitting with his larger project of demystifying technology, of unveiling the materials and processes behind everyday commodities, Rogers' description makes plain the harpsichord's inner workings: its plucking action, the shape and function of its jacks and "little plucks" (plectra), the motion of turning a tuning pin. He even touches on

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[1] *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, program 1129, WQED Pittsburgh, 1970.

the idea of old versus modern materials in noting that "a long time ago" the plectra would have made out of a different material (feathers as opposed to plastic).

This episode of *Mister Rogers* appeared as part of a popular culture context in which the harpsichord was marked as "highbrow" cultural capital, and in which this cultural capital was democratized through access to its complicated mechanism. In the 1960s and 70s, these dual features of "fanciness" and accessibility fueled a massive movement for home-harpsichord building, and a mass market for do-it-yourself (subsequently abbreviated "DIY") harpsichord kits.

As I argue in this chapter, the mass appeal of harpsichord building among white-collar men in the United States was channeled through the seemingly antithetical ideologies of technological access and classed elitism. The DIY harpsichord kit allowed its participants the ideological benefits of hobbyism through its links to unalienated labor, amateur-friendly technology, ideals felt to be antithetical to social, scientific and urban chaos of the outside world. At the same time, advertisements, builders and fans of the instrument maintained the harpsichord's distinction as an esoteric high art object, one necessarily handmade by artisans schooled in "highbrow" "modes of acquisition" (Bourdieu 1997). The way builders carved out the harpsichord's place in relation to DIY ideologies shows how classed values attached to the instrument, and to its surrounding discourses of historical authenticity. This chapter traces the ambivalence surrounding the opposing features of accessibility and luxury among professional builders and players affiliated with the "historically-authentic" Boston School of harpsichord building.

4.1 Birth of the Kit

The harpsichord kit and the proliferation of home-harpsichord building started with a breakthrough invention of ex-child psychologist Wolfgang "Wallace" Zuckermann. An amateur cellist, Zuckermann had been playing Baroque repertoire in a chamber ensemble. In these sessions, he played the continuo part on the piano. He began to think that a harpsichord would sound "better" for that type of music.[2] But in mid-1950s New York City, harpsichords were hard to come by, exorbitantly expensive and generally rare. Hubbard and Dowd had just started their business, were only producing a few instruments a year, and were mired in a years-long waiting list. John Challis was still in Detroit; his instruments too were priced out of Zuckermann's market, particularly when one figured in shipping costs.

Unable to purchase one, Zuckermann decided to make his own. He studied instruments in books and museums and made a prototype that amalgamated features of several historical models. Through word of mouth, he soon found himself with multiple requests and decided to build harpsichords for a living. He set up his shop at 133 West 14th Street and produced approximately three harpsichords a month. On June 10, 1958 at 4PM, a fire consumed several floors of his building, damaging five in-progress instruments. The next day, a *New York Times* article appeared describing the incident.[3] The publicity increased demand so that by the time Zuckermann relocated his shop to Greenwich Village, he was

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[2] Phone interview with the author, October 4, 2007.

[3] "Blaze Destroys Five New Harpsichord In Shop of Craftsman on 14th Street," *New York Times*, June 11, 1958, 29.

swamped with nearly more orders than he could handle. When he began his business in the late 1950s, he produced twelve instruments per year. By 1960, he made 60-70 annually.[4]

Beyond mere production, Zuckermann also found himself struggling to keep up with a variety of maintenance calls on sold instruments: how to tune, how to alleviate jacks sticking in their registers, or how to repair broken plectra.[5] As he began to sell more and more instruments, he envisioned his life increasingly consumed by letters and phone calls from people struggling to maintain their harpsichords. He calculated that if he sold 100 instruments, and if each of those owners phoned him semiannually for repairs, that would lead to a call every couple of days, if not more. Knowing that most of these problems would ultimately have to be resolved through personal housecalls, he "panicked."[6]

At this point Zuckermann began to think critically about the harpsichord's need for maintenance, "its delicacy, its need for babying and for loving sympathy from its owner."[7] He concluded that the middle-class demographic of his consumers was not trained in the kind of labor required for mechanical upkeep. As he wrote in his 1969 book, *The Modern Harpsichord*, "My customers were, for the most part, modern people who expected to turn on a switch and have a machine that works. And who can blame them? In our society of division of labor, each one performs his own tiny task and leaves the rest to 'experts.'"[8]

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[4] Wolfgang Joachim Zuckermann, *The Modern Harpsichord* (New York: October House, 1969), 200-201.

[5] In the late 1950s and early 1960s, there were relatively few people available to service harpsichords.

[6] Ibid.,15.

[7] Zuckermann, "How to Get into the Business Without Really Trying," *Harpsichord* I, no. 1, (1968): 2.

[8] Ibid.

He wondered about a way to balance the harpsichord's need for maintenance with his own need to have a manageable schedule not totally overrun by his customers and production schedule. In our phone interview, he told me, "I only had the idea [for the kit] because when I was building the whole instrument, there was a big demand for it. I realized that I couldn't satisfy that demand. I just would have had to start a huge factory."[9] His solution was to integrate the consumer into the process of building in order to demystify the instrument's mechanism, making harpsichord maintenance and repair an accessible domain to the modern layperson. The kit would also move much of the labor of instrument construction and finishing to the consumer's end.

Zuckermann's business solution tapped into an ideology of selfhood (Taylor 2008), which scholars of American hobbyism have argued is central to DIY movements (Gelber 1997, 1999; Atkinson 2006; Waksman 2004). Influential particularly among white-collar men, this ideology encompassed a belief that one lost a sense of self through the intrusion of machines, middlemen and factory systems into the more organic "flow patterns" of production of pre-Industrial society.[10] This longing for selfhood circulated among consumers of DIY kits (through talk and advertisements) and fueled sales – even though the kits were themselves mass-produced and mass-marketed, and the kind of pre-packaged product that many cultural critics saw as emblematic of American consumer culture.

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[9] Phone interview with the author, October 4, 2007.

[10] I am drawing here on Carroll Pursell's account of the move from flow pattern production to batch-oriented production (the latter being exemplified in Ford's 1913 assembly lines). See *The Machine in America: A Social History of Technology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 87-93.

Tapping into this ideology of unalienated selfhood meant Zuckermann could tap into the market of amateur tinkerers, who sought technological, craft-oriented and "unalienating" hobbies.

4.2 First Kits

Zuckermann developed the kit by first giving sets parts and diagrams to approximately ten friends minimally exposed to the harpsichord's mechanism and to woodworking. This "focus group" of non-experts gave him a customer profile around which to design the product, and helped him accommodate a range of skill levels.[11] In late 1959 he started selling the kits. Physicist Edward Ginsberg recalled visiting the Christopher Street shop that year while a graduate student, seeking advice on building a harpsichord from scratch. After hearing Zuckermann's plans for the kit, he offered to be the first customer.[12] By 1962, the product became a runaway business success. Four years later, he quit his line of custom instruments in order to keep up with demand for the kits.[13] The *New York Times* reported in 1962 that he was selling them "at the rate of two or three a week"[14] and that same year The *Village Voice* reported that he was selling at a rate of one per day.[15] In 1966 Zuckermann was reportedly selling between 1600-1700 kits annually.[16] By 1975, that figure

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[11] Phone interview with the author, October 4, 2007.

[12] Interview with the author, February 2, 2008.

[13] Allen Hughes, "The Harpsichord Develops a New Sound—Boom," *New York Times,* December 31, 1966, 11.

[14] "Skillful Lover of Music Can Build Harpsichord," *New York Times*, January 4, 1962, 50.

[15] Michael Smith, "Do-It-Yourself Excursion into the Baroque World," *Village Voice,* June 21, 1962, 8.

[16] Hughes, 11.

jumped to 4,000 annually.[17] According to a *New York Times* article, there were in 1975 approximately 31,365 kit-built harpsichords in homes across the United States.[18] This number would jump even higher if one were to include the number of kit-built clavichords.[19]

By the late 1960s, several other harpsichord builders joined the bustling economy of harpsichord and clavichord kit manufacture: S. R. Williams (Los Angeles), William Post Ross (Boston, then New Hampshire, then Maine), Carl Fudge (Boston), Herbert Burton (Lincoln, Nebraska), Eric Herz (Boston), and Frank Hubbard (Boston). Of these, Hubbard and Burton came closest to Zuckermann's commercial success.[20] Presently, Zuckermann and Hubbard are the only U.S. companies to be producing new kits. Many of these were based on Frank Hubbard's designs, influenced by the "Boston School" aesthetic of authentic replica. Post Ross and Herz worked as apprentices in the Hubbard shop before setting out on their own.[21] Burton began his business using designs given to him by Frank Hubbard.

The kit business ultimately spawned a global industry of harpsichord kits. Zuckermann and Hubbard set up dealerships in Western Europe, Canada, Israel, New Zealand, Australia and Japan. It encouraged sales of harpsichord and Early Music recordings,

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[17] Virginia Lee Warren, "Organs to Banjos: Kits that are Music to Do-It-Yourselfer's Ears," *New York Times,* September 27, 1975, 34. By this point, several makers in the U.S. were manufacturing harpsichord kits.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Zuckermann and several of his prominent rivals began producing clavichord kits starting the late 1960s.

[20] Burton had planned to sell his kit plans to Heathkit for true mass-production, but thought better of it following a stern letter from Frank Hubbard.

[21] Although Herz's designs ended up being markedly different from Hubbard's he did keep some things the same, like the 5-octave compass and the general jack design.

of Frank Hubbard's books[22] and of magazines such as *Harpsichord* and *Early Music*. It spawned the purchase of multiple kits —harpsichords of the same model, of different models, clavichord and organ kits. The purchase of an early keyboard—whether kit or custom—fueled the micro-economy of humidifiers and dehumidifiers, tuners, tuning forks, antique music stands, quilted cases, and pamphlets on harpsichord maintenance.[23] Further, one kit purchase tended to beget future kit purchases, as builders became inspired to build additional, different, or more complicated models.

4.3 Kits and Mass Production

Frank Hubbard's widow, Diane Hubbard, remembered amateur builders coming into the Hubbard Harpsichords shop in Waltham, Massachusetts to seek her husband's guidance on their harpsichords-in-progress. Hubbard began his line of kits partly to save time lost by repeating these instructions; he standardized his directions through the manual for the kit. In a 1972 interview for *Harpsichord* magazine, Frank was asked what inspired him to start his DIY line. He answered,

> (laughter) Money! There are really several things. To begin with I was hounded by amateurs who wanted to make their own harpsichords and came around for advice and I found myself repeating the same things over and over again. Then too, my natural bent in harpsichord making is somewhat experimental and fussy in nature and I am not very well psychologically equipped for mass production. I got married and was starving to death so it seemed to me that this kit might turn out to be a meal ticket which would subsidize making harpsichords and that's exactly what it is.[24]

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[22] *Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making* (many kit builders purchased the book when they purchased the kit, and it inspired them to want to build instruments from scratch) and *Harpsichord Regulating and Repairing*.

[23] Kit companies like Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc. listed these items in their products catalog.

[24] Hal Haney, "An Interview with Frank Hubbard," *Harpsichord* 5, no.1 (April 1972), 14.

Like Zuckermann, Hubbard initiated his line of kits as a means to avoid the labor of face-to-face customer guidance. In the passage above, Hubbard also asserts a commitment to a deliberate work pattern; he wished to maintain a slow, painstaking and perfectionist process that he felt suited his personality. Setting up a line of kits kept production-oriented labor from changing the pace and nature of his custom instrument building.

Harpsichord kits freed builders like Hubbard and Zuckermann from much of the labor of producing harpsichords on a large scale. The more minute aspects of assembly and finishing would fall to Hubbard for his custom instruments, or to DIY customers for their kits. These minute aspects are part of what gave the harpsichord its ideological definition as something pre-modern, ill-suited to twentieth century industrial methods. Its reputation as something esoteric gave the illusion that knowledge of it did not come from following the media or current trends. Zuckermann sometimes wrote about the harpsichord's antithetical relationship to mass production and mass marketing:

> The harpsichord is curiously resistant to mass-production. This is due partly to critical building processes such as soundboard construction, voicing and regulating techniques which do not lend themselves easily to production, and partly to the mentality of good makers who do not wish to exchange the workbench for the front office. In addition, the harpsichord resists conventional advertising and distribution techniques, appealing as it does to a group of extremely literate consumers shunning hard-sells and sales talks.[25]

But Zuckermann also depended on outsourcing much of his company's kit production to an enormous woodworking plant that covered several Philadelphia city blocks

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[25] Zuckermann, *Modern Harpsichord*, 212.

– he in fact *did* have to set up a huge factory—one of the key reasons he invented the kit.[26] The harpsichord, it turned out, worked well for production at this factory because hundreds of pieces could be fashioned without requiring new designs or jigs.[27] When Zuckermann decided to sell his business in 1969, it was largely out of frustration that the operation had become so big that his workaday had become more administrative than craft-oriented—largely because his product was selling on such a massive scale.[28] The processes of producing kit parts, ordering supplies and assembling boxes for shipment did ultimately demand mass production techniques (though ultimately, the kits reduced the amount of labor on the company's end). Years later, Diane Hubbard explained, "Because time-consuming hand labor wasn't required for the manufacture of the kit, production expenses were reduced. Kit parts were manufactured in batches and mass production on a modest scale was introduced into this otherwise small, apprentice-oriented shop."[29]

The kit forced the harpsichord into precarious position. It was sold to white-collar hobbyists seeking to reorient their lives around meaningful craft (rather than clerical or intellectual labor), and as a form of mild ideological rebellion versus the trappings of modern industrial, consumerist America. The popularity of the harpsichord as a domestic object

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[26] Even his production rate was enough to prompt a statement in *Time Magazine* that "Wallace Zuckermann turns out the U.S.'s only mass-produced harpsichord, an instrument that sells briskly for $750, but is derided by professionals." See *Time Magazine*, "The Plectra Pluckers," August 15, 1960, 56.

[27] Zuckermann, *Modern Harpsichord*, 202-203.

[28] Phone interview with the author, October 4, 2007.

[29] Matthew James Redsell, "Frank Hubbard Remembered: An Interview With His Wife, Diane Hubbard," *Continuo* 13, no. 2 (June 1989), 4.

people wanted to acquire—however financially possible (often through a kit) –emerged from the harpsichord's appeal as a victim of the Modern.

The harpsichord kit produced scenarios in which the building process was reified into a standardized process with mass-produced pieces and steps, modern power tools, molded plastic pieces, and many outsourced parts.[30] The harpsichord kit created a scenario in which devotees of the instrument's preciousness scrambled to reassert its preciousness, to articulate hierarchies in which mass-market, mass-produced harpsichords were deemed not only "cheap" but "amateur" and "low-brow." Through the responses (from Boston School proponents) to the harpsichord in its kit form, one can see the cultural capital of the instrument and what the instrument symbolized—and the stakes that people had in that symbolism.

4.4 Two Companies, Two Approaches

4.4.1 Zuckermann

A 35-pound box containing a keyboard, jacks, and a binder full of instructions and measurements, Zuckermann's "Z-boxes" were only loosely based on historical harpsichords. Initially, Zuckermann sold one type of kit—with one manual, one 8-foot register, a harp stop and a half stop, which he called a "piano stop". These early models, produced until the mid-1970s, had an "inner-outer" case design typical of 16th century Italian harpsichords, in which the main body of the harpsichord was housed inside a slightly larger case. The inner case would be built on top of a ½" harpsichord-shaped piece of plywood. The outer case allowed amateur builders to disguise any flaws in the joinery of the inner case. Perhaps most

[30] For example, Hubbard kits used keyboards produced in Germany for a period.

distinctive about these early kits were their "straight bent-side" or "slabside" design, in which all outer faces of the instrument were uncurved. Though ahistorical, this simplified the process for the builder, not having to bend the wood and risk cracking.

During the first few years of Zuckermann kits, customers were expected to purchase the wood for all the large pieces at a local lumber yard: maple for the inner case sides, bridges and wrestplank,[31] plywood for the case bottom, and wood of one's choice for the case sides and legs. The soundboard came provided with the kit and was made out of plywood "to prevent cracking, shrinking or expanding."[32] According the brochure, the action parts (jacks and registers) were designed with barometric fluctuation in mind as well: "The action parts are provided with enough room for possible expansion without the immediate sticking that is a feature of European harpsichords." Other parts in the pre-packaged kit box included the keyboard (wooden keys with ivaloid covering), jacks, plectra, tuning pins and other small parts. In the box of parts came a full size drawing containing all measurements, and serving as a pattern for various pieces to be cut. Delivery time was between one to four weeks by Railway Express. Some of the brochure runs in the mid 1960s were accompanied by a floppy 45-RPM single, in which Zuckermann introduced his kit and several Bach and Scarlatti pieces played by harpsichordist Pamela Cook.

By the mid to late 1960s, the company also produced spinet harpsichord kits, clavichord kits (in sizes small, medium and large) and pre-cut "cabinet kit" or "screwdriver assembly" kit versions of harpsichords and clavichords, with all wooden pieces pre cut to

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[31] The wrestplank is the thick block of wood into which the tuning pins are hammered.

[32] *Catalogue of Harpsichords and Clavichords Made By Zuckermann*, brochure, c. 1960s.

measurement. Though more expensive ($308 instead of $150 for harpsichords, $193 instead of $100 for clavichords), these versions promised "Now you can enjoy the luxury of owning a harpsichord or clavichord at the low cost of a kit without having to be a skilled hobbyist or home workshop craftsman." The brochure stated, "If you have hesitated before, these pre-cuts will now enable you to join the thousands who are making authentic baroque music in their own homes!"[33]

Brochures underlined the prestige and accessibility of the Zuckermann kit by noting the range of professional and amateur customers who owned them: the Philadelphia Symphony, the New York City Center Ballet, Columbia University, New York University, Columbia Records, RCA-Victor Records. They also noted the range of individuals who purchased kits: "students, ministers, artists, advertising men, teachers, and professional musicians." In his 1969 book, Zuckermann indicated an even more diverse demographic: "Once a 300-pound truck driver walked into the shop, sat down, rattled off a Bach invention, and pulled out the cash to buy a kit, all in dollar bills. A 13-year-old boy appeared with the contents of a piggy bank . . .a soldier took a clavichord to Vietnam. . . A prison warden once wrote us that a convict had made a harpsichord while serving time for murder."[34]

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[33] "Zuckermann Harpsichords announces the addition of a Spinet Harpsichord to its other kit instruments," company brochure, 1966.

[34] Wolfgang Zuckermann, *The Modern Harpsichord*, 208-209.

4.4.2 Hubbard

Frank Hubbard sold his first two harpsichord kits to personal friends in December 1962. His success paralleled Zuckermann, though his kit line never reached the same level of production. By 1965, Hubbard kits were selling at a rate of 50 kits per year. This gradually rose to 100 per year in 1973, to 250 in 1974. From there, it gradually declined in America.[35] In Europe, kit sales peaked in 1977, remained constant in 1978, before dropping in 1979. The product brought in sales of over $400,000 per year during the peak years 1974-1979.[36] Sales dropped significantly during the recession of the 1980s and never recovered.

Hubbard derived his competitive edge by producing "historically authentic" models, based on a 1769 harpsichord by French builder Pascal Taskin. Working within a "Boston School" aesthetic, Hubbard catered to a high-end market at $500-$1000 per kit. The "Boston School" came attached to both a "historically-faithful" approach to building harpsichords and to a social circle of academics that abhorred signs of commercialism and mass production.

Hubbard's European agent attested to this "highbrow" approach when he wrote to the company's Waltham business manager, suggesting approaches to overseas marketing:

> . . . presenting your kits one would have to emphasize their superiority in design and materials and not try to price them down to the Zuckermann

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[35] See appendix for chart of Hubbard kit sales from 1962-2002. Following the dip in sales in 1974, Hubbard developed several new lines of keyboard kits: the single manual Flemish kit, the Viennese fortepiano, the English bentside spinet, the "mother & child" virginals, and the Flentrop organ kit. In addition, the company developed its European market by setting up a number of dealerships.

[36] Calculated by the author, based on invoice amounts.

> level. On the contrary, the only hope, it seems to me, is to present them as the Cadillacs of the kit harpsichords.[37]

One of the early brochures highlighted that the kit was specifically patterned after an eighteenth century French harpsichord (the 1769 Taskin housed in the Yale Collection of Musical Instruments), and called the kit "a replica," stating in the brochure that "Every significant detail of the original, whether involved in the production of the sound or the feel of the action, or merely an ingredient of the style and practice of the ancient French harpsichord makers has been retained. The materials have been carefully selected and match or closely reproduce those used by the ancient builders."

By the mid 1960s, Hubbard kits were offered in single and double manual versions – the single manual cost $595 and the double $795. These prices were for the so-called "basic kit," which provided the keyboards, jacks, registers, the spruce soundboard, bridges, nuts, wrestplank, felt, wire, pins, glue, and curved pieces of the case. Similar to the Zuckermann kit, the builder purchased wood for the straight pieces separately (plywood or poplar were recommended). For an extra fee, Hubbard also offered "complete kits" with either dimensioned materials or pre-cut parts, or "assembled kits" (with all woodworking completed in the Hubbard shop). In addition to these options, builders could choose the style of legs they wanted (a basic trestle stand, or Louis XVI legs for example), an extra stop (the *peau de buffle* – a register with leather plectra), wooden or plastic jacks, cherry or walnut veneer, Flemish-style decorative paper, and even gold leafing.

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[37] Letter from Howard Schott to Lawrence Erdmann, September 7, 1974. Accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc.

Current San Francisco builder Kevin Fryer recalled the fallout that resulted when Zuckermann's new owner decided in the 1970s to compete more directly for Hubbard's elite market—changing from Z-boxes to more elaborate, historically-derived and expensive models, and simultaneously discontinuing the $150 no-frills, amateur-friendly models and effectively abandoning legions of loyal fans. I asked Fryer for his theory of why the switch upset people and he explained:

> [the Hubbard kits] were incredibly complicated and sophisticated, and certainly superior in sound, but who could get access to them? They were expensive, they were really hard to build, the instructions read like a helicopter maintenance manual . . . .[38]

Fryer's comment points to the two different markets for harpsichord kits: the Hubbard market of higher-priced and complicated models, and the early Zuckermann market of mechanically and financially accessible models. Though Boston School proponents criticized Frank Hubbard for sullying the instrument by turning it into a commercially popular box of parts for easy assembly, Fryer's comment shows that not all kits were as easy to assemble as promised.

4.5 Kit Consumers

Scholars writing about DIY hobbyism have portrayed it as an activity of white collar men, in which the DIY activity engages an ideology of resistance to the alienated and sedentary work day (Corn 1992; Douglas 1992; Keightley 1996) and to the commodified and feminized everyday of domestic life. The activity offered a form of escape, specifically to

[38] Interview with the author, June 2, 2007.

those who owned single-family homes that gave them the space and freedom to make noise with power tools (Atkinson 2006; Gelber 1999).

Even in its cheaper versions, harpsichord kits appealed to an elite subculture within the broader field of white-collar professionals, as was often noted in the popular media. A *New York Times* article mentioned that "Hobbyists who like to work with their hands, especially physicians, have bought many of the harpsichord kits"[39] and that "the Zuckermann company estimates that 30 per cent of its buyers are physicians or otherwise connected with the medical profession. Another 30 per cent are in teaching and education, and the remainder are from all walks and ages of life."[40] While on the one hand Zuckermann gave anecdotes like the one cited earlier about his customers coming from all walks of life, he more often stressed the middle-class demographic of his client base.

> I have found doctors, lawyers and architects for my personal use among the kit builders. When I needed a surgeon for a recent operation I chose from among a number of doctor-kit-builders by looking at their harpsichords. The man I picked on the basis of his neat work turned out to perform a flawless operation.[41]

Harpsichord kits sold primarily to men or to husband and wife teams, though there were some women who participated in the hobby independently. Many harpsichord kit builders were men who worked in non-music professions, building for the benefit of their wives who were amateur or professional keyboardists. It is difficult to say how significantly the instrument's musical use-value figured in the purchase, though many surveys and letters

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[39] Warren, 34.

[40] Hughes, 11.

[41] Wolfgang Zuckermann, *Modern Harpsichord*, 208-209.

came in from customers saying that the completed instrument was enjoyable to play. In 1965, Zuckermann Harpsichords released a promotional 45 RPM record featuring its kit harpsichord and clavichord models in solo keyboard works by Bach, Scarlatti, Handel, and the Baroque Portuguese composer José António Carlos de Seixas.[42] According to Zuckermann's spoken introduction, the record was produced in response to the many customer requests to hear the sound of a completed kit before making a purchase. Unlike kits for other musical instruments, it was not common for harpsichord kit companies to offer repertoire books; by the 1980s, the Zuckermann company listed Fernando Valenti's edition of Scarlatti's first 30 Sonatas, as an "accessory." Among kit-builders I consulted, Bach's *French Suites* and *English Suites*, and Scarlatti Sonatas seemed to be most common.

In 1981, Hubbard Harpsichords sent surveys to all of their customers who had purchased kits. Four hundred sixty-seven were mailed back completed. These surveys provide information on the age and occupation of the builder, the ultimate use of the instrument, as well as the various media and biographical contexts that surrounded the purchase of the kit, including questions like "Where did you first hear of us?," "Where have you noticed our recent ads?" The third section asked whether the customer had amateur or professional experience as either a musician or a woodworker.

Of those 467, 117 responded that they worked in music-related fields and 296 reported that they worked in fields other than music. (The full breakdown of occupations appears in Figure 1 of the Appendix.) Among the non-music professionals, the best-represented occupations included engineering, medicine, science and education. Other

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[42] Thanks to David Calhoun for making me a copy of this recording.

occupations included a police air rescue pilot, a television commercial producer, an art conservator, a bus driver, a rancher and a "dream fulfillment specialist." Slightly less than half of the total respondents reported being amateur musicians. Among magazines most frequently listed were *Scientific American, Fine Woodworking, New Yorker, Early Music, Smithsonian, Saturday Review, Diapason, American Organist, New York Times Magazine, Yankee Magazine, American Guild of Organists* and the *Whole Earth Catalog* (listed in order, from most frequently to least frequently mentioned.)

As indicated in the Hubbard surveys, as well as in my interviews with builders and former shop employees, many DIY builders learned about the possibility of building a harpsichord through ads and feature stories in publications which tended to cater to a moneyed demographic, as well as in the countercultural, DIY media. Besides the *Whole Earth Catalog*, ads and articles about custom and kit harpsichords also appeared in the *Mother Earth News*, the *First New England Catalog*, or *The Goodfellows Catalog of Wonderful Things*. These latter publications marketed commodities like weaving looms, potter's wheels, geodesic dome kits, and do-it-yourself harpsichord kits that could convert the process of passive consumption into a means to agency and self-sufficiency, and as a means to learn a manual trade.

Figure 4: Zuckermann Harpsichord Kit Advertisement, 1968

In 1969, Zuckermann wrote that his advertisements in general circulation magazines (like *Look* or *Life*) would get one response per 100,000 readers and one order out of 100 responders. On the other hand, he said "with the literate magazines like the *New Yorker* and *The Saturday Review* the response goes up to as high as one in 10,000 readers, with one order from 25 responders. In every college and university town there are twice, three and even four times as many kits as in non-college communities."[43]

[43] Ibid., 210.

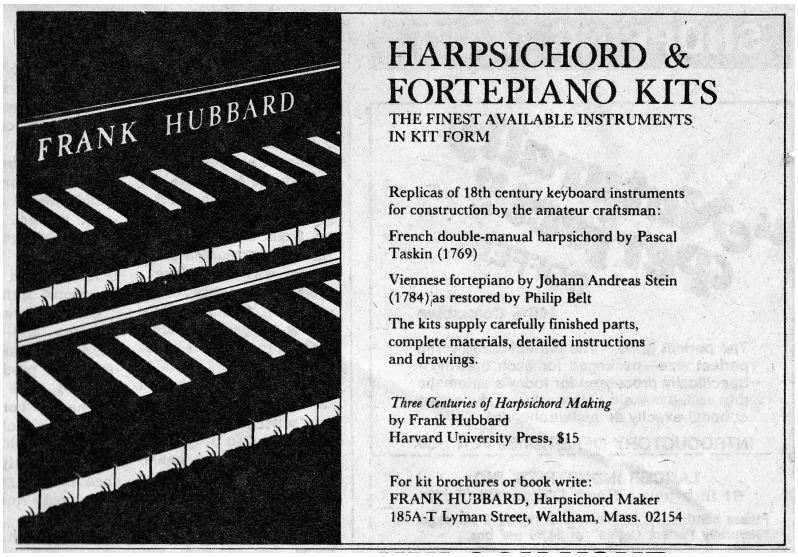

Figure 5: Hubbard Harpsichords Kit Advertisement, 1976

Steve Lowry, who served as technical director of Hubbard Harpsichords immediately after Frank Hubbard died in 1976 recalled that the company "keyed" their advertisements (resulting in the same sorts of statistics that Zuckermann mentioned above), and that the *New Yorker* was their "big ad."[44]

4.6 The Harpsichord as Status Symbol

In 1965, New York pop art dealer Ivan C. Karp published his first novel, *Doobie Doo.* The novel tells the story of Maynard Ricefield, a thirtysomething recent Musicology Ph.D. who works for the C. S. Prunekey Company, manufacturers of clavichords, harpsichords and harpsichord kits, and who sets out to seduce two vaguely disenchanted women, Clarissa and Audrey.

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[44] Phone interview with the author, September 16, 2008. The Hubbard company did not begin their advertising campaign until the 1970s, with the addition of Lawrence Erdmann as partner.

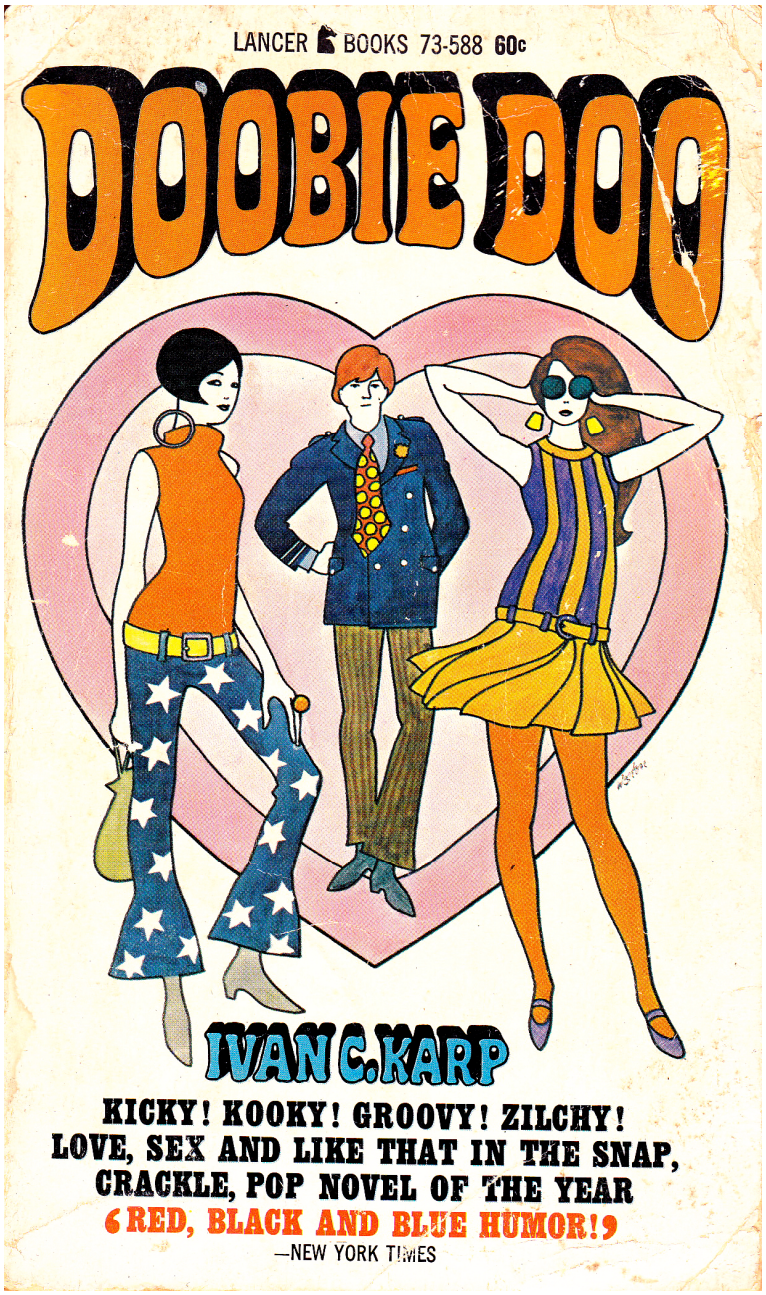

Figure 6: Ivan Karp, *Doobie Doo*, 1967 edition

Maynard's moments of seduction typically take place in the apartments of one of the two women. In these scenes, Karp mocks their middle-class pretentiousness through descriptions of their domestic commodities, through implications that the objects were

purchased merely to articulate class status, and that they have an underlying unromantic quality: all style and no substance. In one scene, Karp describes Clarissa's "modernistic" sofa as "a couch without puffed-out punchy pillows on which Boucher's couples never could confer or undulate baroquely."[45] Maynard had earlier learned that Clarissa was from "American nobility," after having seen her family scrapbook. Remembering the scrapbook, he thinks to himself: "the only thing I really like about the [scrap] book and all those sights and spectacles of old-time America which we all admire in our America Nostalgia Complex."[46]

Eventually, Karp illustrates Clarissa's musical sensibility through her recordings and playback equipment: "On the middle-income turntable was a sonata for ukelele and jewsharp by an up and coming Icelandic deaf-mute, performed by a Knoxville duo at a festival in Yak, Montana."[47] By mixing remote regions and obscure musical traditions to excess, presenting a "novelty" composer and combination of instruments seemingly marketed and purchased for novelty's sake, Karp seems to be making a comment on the vacuous nature of Clarissa's middle-class, "hipster" culture that cultivates knowledge of the esoteric as a way of marking one's taste as "not mass."

Karp, who lived in New York City and was aware of Zuckermann's business,[48] locates the harpsichord kit as part of middle class culture that posed through its

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[45] Karp, *Doobie Doo* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1965), 50; also released in 1967 edition by Lancer Books, a division of Doubleday & Co. Francois Boucher was an eighteenth century French Rococo painter.

[46] Ibid., 76.

[47] Ibid., 51.

commodities, in which the ultra-modern was juxtaposed with the ultra-ancient. In the case of this novel, the juxtaposition seems to suggest that "modern" and "ancient" are all façade. Placing Maynard Ricefield in a harpsichord kit factory seems to be part of marking American-made, American-consumed "Baroque-ness" as commercialized, factory-made, and thus not "authentic."

In contrast to the family of products surrounding the harpsichord kit in countercultural publications, middle classed magazines showed the instrument surrounded by various high-end domestic decorative and musical commodities. For example, next to 1960s articles about harpsichords and harpsichord kits in *House Beautiful* were ads for Wurlitzer pianos and organs, bedspreads and drapes, Heatilater fireplaces, GE convertible high fidelity amplifiers, Parkay flooring, Parma Italian provincial furniture, Waverly Fabrics, Writer's Digest schools, Stiffel Lamps, Lorraine IV cabinets, and snow tractors. Next to an advertisement for Hubbard harpsichord kits in the *New York Times Magazine* were ads for the Old Town Canoe Company, Burke Elevating Chair, the Salvation Army, handmade patchwork tablecloths, and original etchings by Al Hirschfeld.[49]

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[48] Ivan Karp, email correspondence, July 24, 2004. I asked Karp about his decision to employ Ricefield in a harpsichord kit factory and he told me: "His employment as a harpsichord builder is an enigmatic element in his character and serves to enlarge its dimension. Beyond that, you might appreciate that I am well-acquainted with music for the harpsichord."

[49] In countercultural publications, the instrument appeared among other DIY commodities. Next to harpsichord kit articles in the *Whole Earth Catalog* were advertisements for dulcimer, sitar, guitar, balalaika, thumb piano and Irish harp kits, guitar molds, banjo parts, books on piano tuning, electric organ-building, and Moog synthesizers.

Don Angle, a longtime employee of Bill Dowd's shop, told me that Dowd's harpsichord prices were based on what a beginning professor at Harvard could afford, indicating the targeted demographic for custom-built historically-informed harpsichords.[50] Not surprisingly, in both bourgeois and countercultural publications, the harpsichord was presented as a status symbol. A 1965 article in *High Fidelity* suggested:

> For the kit builder who has worked his way through the elements of a high fidelity rig and feels that there are no worlds left to conquer, the availability in kit form of a complementary instrument to his home music system should be welcome news. When that instrument is a harpsichord, his pleasure should be compounded: not only does such a kit afford all the familiar satisfactions associated with do-it-yourself activity but the harpsichord itself is a perfect instrument to grace the living room.
> Intimate and delicate in sound, evoking the charm of a courtly past, the "modern" harpsichord has a history so ancient that its beginnings are shrouded in obscurity.[51]

A 1962 article in *House Beautiful* noted that "Harpsichords are rather too expensive and too sedate to be casually acquired by persons anxious to be chic…On the whole, owning and playing a harpsichord confers a distinction not easily degraded." It went on to note that the instrument was to be found "in all upper-class homes" during the eighteenth century, and that owners included George Washington, Queen Marie Antoinette and Frederick the Great and that even in twentieth-century built instruments "something of the old aristocratic feeling for elegance persists."[52] Later in the article, Loesser writes, " . . . if you are sensitive and educated enough to enjoy the exquisite lines of Sebastian Bach's *French Suites* and *Partitas*, or the lively figuration of Orlando Gibbons' pieces, composed in the days of James

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[50] Interview with the author, March 1, 2008.

[51] Roy Lindstrom, "A Kit Can Be A Harpsichord," *High Fidelity*, July 1965, 35.

[52] Arthur Loesser, "The Return of the Harpsichord," *House Beautiful*, January 1956, 82-88.

I, you will also feel that the harpsichord gives forth the true tone of voice in which that music ought to be uttered."[53] Appreciation of the harpsichord came partly from a "refined" sensibility, as well as from cultural knowledge.

An article for *House and Garden* advised: "Listen carefully to the sound of the instrument, and especially to its repertory, before you plunge. The harpsichord and its music is a little closed world of its own, and you have to be irresistibly drawn to it."[54] As quoted in Chapter 1, the 1970 issue of *The Whole Earth Catalog,* the advertisement for harpsichord kits appeared in the form of a poem, which read:

> long for the good old days, with velvet sleeves,
> the tinkle of cut glass,
> crystal chandeliers,
> stiff back chairs,
> tuffets?
> want to build something intricate,
> delicate,
> complicated?
> try building a harpsichord.[55]

In the catalog's next issue, a reader introduced Hubbard Harpsichords with the line: "Have you ever heard a harpsichord? It'll make a gentleperson out of you."[56] These excerpts place the harpsichord within "highbrow" culture, in the sense articulated by American historian Lawrence Levine. Levine argues that in the eighteenth century, class hierarchies of

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[53] Ibid., 84.

[54] Russcol, 78.

[55] JD, "Harpsichord Kits and Supplies," *Whole Earth Catalog,* Fall 1970, 78.

[56] *The Last Whole Earth Catalog*, Summer 1971, 332.

"lower," "middle" and "upper" emerged as a result of the Industrial Revolution and that in the nineteenth, cultural hierarchies similarly arose as the consequence of "modernization."[57] "Highbrow" culture served as a means of distinguishing art and literary forms from the "mass" and the "ordinary." Popular discourses about the harpsichord placed it on the upper rung of a cultural hierarchy, as "not mass" and "above ordinary." Beyond that, these discourses elevated the instrument by linking it to a heritage tied to a historical European past.

Within the Boston shops of Hubbard, Dowd, William Post Ross (and to some extent Eric Herz, though he was more modernist), classed ideas of taste circulated not through overt references to money, but through the language of historical authenticity. Of course, instruments fastidiously based on historical prototypes did fall at the upper end of the price scale for both kit and custom instruments.

As discussed in Chapter 2, before World War II, when the harpsichord industry was centered in Western Europe and Detroit, companies claimed to have "improved" the instrument's mechanism, incorporating materials (and in the case of German firms, mass-production techniques) adapted from piano technology. Instruments produced by mid-century German firms such as Neupert and Sperrhake were often referred to in the U.S. as "factory harpsichords" and dismissed by many builders and performers for that reason (as well as for the peculiarities of their sound, as discussed in Chapter 3).[58] After the war, the

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[57] Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow / Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 225.

[58] According to Hollywood Neupert dealer Helga Kasimoff, the "factory" aspect of Neupert's production system was somewhat exaggerated among U.S. builders and the media. As she explained, there were few

industry's hub recentered around the Boston area, where makers like Frank and Bill Dowd positioned sixteenth through eighteenth century harpsichords as ideals to be emulated. Frank and Bill maintained that, while these primitive, historical designs may have caused the instruments to be more fragile and more susceptible to barometric change, the designs in fact made harpsichords more resonant and easier to play. Proponents of the "Boston School" of harpsichord making dismissed the modernized harpsichords of the German firms and of John Challis as hybrid, ahistorical and "inauthentic."

Within the Boston School circle, value was conferred partly by the quality and historical precedent of the materials and designs used and partly by the amount of detailed workmanship involved. Within this ideology, the instruments of highest cultural value were made in Old World traditions of with master craftsmen and their apprentices laboring for months over a masterpiece. To recognize the distinction of Boston School instruments was to be schooled in the historical organological tradition they revered and perpetuated. To "know better" than to modernize the historical harpsichord's mechanism was to have read available books on historical harpsichords, to have visited museum instruments, to have been acclimated to the value of "original" historical objects.

These classed hierarchies of authenticity were circulated in letters to customers, and in conversations among employees and walk-in visitors. At the top were thin-cased "antiquarian" models made by Boston School makers. In the middle were so-called "piano-

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machines in the Neupert shop and approximately ten employees working on one or two instruments at a time. Interview with the author, January 11, 2008.

maker's harpsichords" —which were thick-cased, sometimes iron-framed models made in Germany or Detroit. At the bottom were what Frank Hubbard called "cheap" harpsichords—dubiously historical models made in quantity as kits in Los Angeles or in Zuckermann's shop, usually out of plywood. This breakdown is given in notes to Frank Hubbard's 1967 lecture to students of instrument restoration at the Paris Conservatoire (cited in Chapter 1). It is also given in a letter, dated 1961 to a prospective custom harpsichord customer eager to know the distinctions between U.S. and Europe-built harpsichords. In these materials, Hubbard writes:

> My harpsichords are closer copies of antiques than those of most other makers. No compromises have been made which in my opinion would change the tone and an attempt has been made to retain the décor of the old ones. In this they are quite different from the average European ones which are frankly modern. I think that the resulting sound is brighter, louder and more interesting.

He then follows with a breakdown of modern harpsichords and their attributes:

> 1. Piano-maker's harpsichords (too heavy construction, weak and nasal tone.)
> Pleyel, Neupert, Wittmeyer, Sperrhake and all other German makes with the exception of Skowroneck.
>
> 2. Imitations of the above (same disadvantages but work less well.)
> Dolmetsch, John Paul, Goble, De Blaise and all English makes with the exception of Hugh Gough.
>
> 3. Makers with antiquarian bent.
> Frank Hubbard, William Dowd, Eric Herz (less so)
>
> 4. Ultra modern type.
> John Challis, Frank Rutkowski (less so and better tone)
>
> 5. Cheap instruments.

Zuckermann, Jones and Clayton[59]

One may recall from Chapter 3 Victor Wolfram's comparison of open-bottomed, modernist harpsichords to "the open baffles of cheap low-fidelity loudspeakers."[60] An article for the *Atlantic Monthly*, written by someone who had visited the shops of Zuckermann, Hubbard and Dowd, suggested a similar scheme of distinction, stating that "one gets the impression that to Hubbard and Dowd, even the big German harpsichords of Bach's time are coarse, gross, misbegotten things. . . ."[61] Towards the end of the article, the author mentions that "European instruments . . . are as *non grata* in Boston as a plague of Norway rats;" here he is referencing the explicitly modern harpsichords produced in factories or in piano firms in France and Germany.[62] He goes on to defend twentieth century German factory-made harpsichords, including those made by the postwar firm of Sperrhake. Then he warns:

> Sperrhakes should, of course, not be imported into Massachusetts, where owning one is a social disadvantage like being covered with gangrenous sores or being married to a kleptomaniac.[63]

To learn more about the Boston School "scene" during the 1960s and 70s (described more extensively in the following chapter), I met with a retired instrument curator, a well-known harpsichord specialist who worked in Frank Hubbard's shop during the early 1960s.

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[59] Letter dated February 24, 1961. Accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc.

[60] Victor Wolfram, "The Harpsichord: Back from the Brink," *High Fidelity*, June 1972, 44.

[61] Robert Evett, "The Harpsichord Boom," *Atlantic Monthly* 225, no. 5, May 1970, 127.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

At one point I asked him what he made of the kit phenomenon. He immediately bristled and said that he had never wanted anything to do with the kit industry. He disliked the idea of the kits, and specifically "the idea that you could give someone a box of parts and say 'here, build this,' when it's supposed to be a musical instrument, when it's supposed to make music." He disliked the idea of so many people trying to build a harpsichord without knowing what one was supposed to sound like. I asked him why.

> Curator: What if someone gave you a box of parts to make your own schooner? Would you do it?
> JW: If I had woodworking experience.
> Curator: Yes, but how would you know what a schooner was?
> JW: I could read a book. Surely there's a *Three Centuries of Schooner Making* or something.[64]
> Curator: So you think you could read and learn what it is.
> JW: [pondering] I *think* so.
> Curator: You're too young.[65]

The curator objected to increased access to the harpsichord as offered by the kit form. Knowing "what a harpsichord is supposed to sound like," when it "makes music" and when it does not, cannot merely be learned by reading a book or experimenting with a box of parts and a set of instructions. Knowing what a harpsichord is supposed to sound like comes from first-hand exposure to original instruments—from examination of their mechanisms, attentive playing and listening. This kind of exposure comes with the means to travel to museums, to gain access to those instruments. Preferences for certain kinds of harpsichords—a Boston School custom instrument versus a cheap Zuckermann kit—result

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[64] Reference to Frank Hubbard's book, *Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965). This book was used as a how-to guide for many home harpsichord builders working from kits or from scratch.

[65] Fieldnotes, December 11, 2007.

from what Bourdieu calls "modes of acquisition;" that is, from "immediate familiarity with things of taste," and frequent contact with "ancient objects."[66]

Craig Roell and Tim Taylor writing on nineteenth and early twentieth century piano cultures and Susan Douglas and Keir Keightley writing on post-World War II audio tinkering cultures suggest that those activities were immersed in an ideology about claiming access to both technological expertise and cultural capital.[67] For example, Susan Douglas suggests that in high fidelity enthusiast groups, technological knowledge was used as a means to maintain a closed "fraternity": "Technical knowledge separated outsiders from those in the know"—a kind of "authenticity" having to do with being able to recognize "good music" using specialized auditory knowledge.[68]

When I asked the curator what a harpsichord was "supposed" to sound like, he answered, "like an antique." I asked what an antique was supposed to sound like and he again answered "like an antique." Eventually, he distinguished "good," "historical" harpsichord sound by demonstrating the aural phenomenon of "bloom" on several of the collection's instruments. Partly, he was making the point that there is no generic standard for harpsichord sound, that one should be governed by the sound of whichever historical

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[66] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 77.

[67] See Craig H. Roell, *The Piano in America, 1890-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989); Timothy D. Taylor, "The Commodification of Music at the Dawn of the Era of 'Mechanical Music,'" *Ethnomusicology* 51 (2008); Keir Keightley, "'Turn it Down!' She Shrieked: Gender, Domestic Space, and High Fidelity, 1948-1959," *Popular Music* 15 (1996); Susan J. Douglas, "Audio Outlaws: Radio and Phonograph Enthusiasts," in *Possible Dreams: Enthusiasm for Technology in America*, ed. John L. Wright (Dearborn, Mich.: Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village).

[68] Susan Douglas, 54.

prototype one strives to reproduce. But I also sensed that he was avoiding direct responses to my questions as a means of restricting access to the kind of knowledge necessary to good harpsichord building—the painstaking result of his years of experience handling and playing antique instruments as a performer and curator.

Those close to Frank Hubbard during the 1960s-70s remember the criticism he received from historically informed performers and other Boston School builders when he introduced his line of do-it-yourself harpsichord kits. For example, I asked Diane Hubbard about the reception of Frank's kits.

> JW: Did Frank ever catch any heat from purists about going the kit route?
> DH: Oh, all the time, 24-7. *All* the time. I mean . . . builders who were always making new models and expanding the field that way felt that this was a great blot on the landscape.[69]

In his book, *The Modern Harpsichord*, Zuckermann noted that Hubbard had "drawn some fire from fellow makers for giving away the hard-won fruits of his knowledge for the price of a kit. Aside from taking orders away from other makers, it is argued, the kits bring the harpsichord from its high perch down to the common level of the tinkerer."[70] The kits democratized the art of harpsichord making by lowering the cost and by allowing amateurs to participate in a craft otherwise limited to a specialized few. To many in Boston's authentic performance circles, this "cheapened" the practice and put the instrument in the hands of corrupting dilettantes. At the same time, this democratization was largely responsible for the

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[69] Phone interview with the author, December 18, 2007. The "new models" Diane Hubbard mentions refer to historical replica instruments. Within authentic harpsichord building, one of the ways builders innovated was to reproduce specific antique instruments that had never before been replicated. An example would be when Hubbard Harpsichords introduced its line of custom Hieronymus Hass replica harpsichords in the late 1970s.

[70] Zuckermann, *The Modern Harpsichord*, 133.

bustling apprentice scene in Boston-area harpsichord shops; many applicants cited their kit-building experiences as the inspiration to abort their intended careers.

4.7 Making Luxury Accessible Through Mass Production

Commenting on the postwar mass appeal of the harpsichord, Zuckermann made sure to note "But there is, and always has been, something precious, rare and exclusive about the instrument which no amount of kit or mass production can, or should, do away with."[71] Numerous articles in the popular press asserted that Zuckermann's historical importance was in making the rare, esoteric, and expensive instrument something accessible to the masses. The *New York Times* reported: "As recently as a decade ago, a harpsichord was a luxury instrument available only to the affluent. Now, do-it-yourself enthusiasts can have one for less than the cost of a big color television set."[72] The article for *House & Garden* quoted above called the harpsichord kit "a revolution" and stated "Yankee ingenuity has brought the price down to less than the cost of a hi-fi set."[73]

In the 1976 documentary, "Harpsichord Building in America," (which aired on public television stations) the narrator noted the democratizing importance of the kits, and that this democratization had occurred through industrialized methods pioneered by the United States:

> . . . One can order beautifully painted soundboards, elegantly fashioned trestles, even lids painted with Flemish landscapes, if one can afford the price. But the harpsichord is not becoming a luxury, which only wealthy

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[71] Ibid., 211.

[72] Hughes, 11.

[73] Russcol, 78.

> Americans can afford, because more and more builders like Hubbard are selling inexpensive kits of historical instruments. The mass production and mass marketing techniques that make inexpensive kits possible may annoy purists but the kit harpsichord is a happy example of American ingenuity, one that places modern industrial techniques in the service of art and individual craftsmanship.[74]

Not only did American ingenuity put modern industrial techniques in service of individual artisanship, but it also put the technologies in service of the aspiring American middle class—through a complex, esoteric object and practice that distinguished its consumers from the masses, and placed the consumer in the highbrow realm of complicated technology.

The harpsichord kit allowed practitioners to access luxury as an *American* cultural object and an *American* pastime. Chapter 3 discussed attempts by the State Department to revise global perceptions of the United States, to assert through its "high" cultural artists that America meant more than Ford Motor Company, assembly lines and mass culture. In the postwar era, the various markers of the harpsichord's "class"—its complexity, its aristocratic past, its association with artisanal labor—countered fears of dehumanizing, debasing aspects of American modernity. The harpsichord kit gave its consumers a sense that they were producing something of substantial monetary value and cultural capital, something complex enough to elevate it beyond ideals of mass production and cost efficiency with which the United States had become associated.

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[74] *Harpsichord Building in America.* Dir. Robert Ornstein. (Cleveland: Dept. of Educational Support, Case Western Reserve University, 1976).

5. Personal and Cultural Trajectories: Historical Time and Outmoded Labor among Harpsichord Shop Apprentices and DIY Builders

Speaking about his decision to abort his English Ph.D. program, Frank Hubbard recalled how, months into his studies, he had begun to feel "a sort of general malaise." Part of the problem, he thought, was that the Harvard English Department was then caught up in "the New Criticism," a modern approach that to him seemed to divorce literary works from their beauty and context.[1] The scenario conjured for Frank an image of "a sort of bare chassis of an historical cart laboriously drawn by professors in yoke, occupied by the skeleton of the poet, all sparsely delineated by the new critics carping in chorus."[2] Thus, he dropped out and took an apprenticeship at the Dolmetsch shop in Haslemere, England, where he was, as he said, "permitted to drill identical holes in thousands of small objects, make tea at 11 each morning, and sweep."[3] Oddly, in Frank's various autobiographical accounts, the word "laborious" tends not to reappear after his departure from Harvard.

A year later, Frank joined Bill Dowd at their new Tremont Street shop; soon, they were swamped with orders and known to the Northeastern media as the "Boston School" of harpsichord making. By the 1960s, after Frank and Bill had split into separate companies, New England newspapers and weeklies ran human interest stories on Frank, the "Harvard

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[1] Frank Hubbard, "Reconstructing the Harpsichord," in *The Historical Harpsichord: A Monograph Series in Honor of Frank Hubbard*, ed. Howard Schott (New York: Pendragon Press, 1984), 3.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., 7.

dropout" who gave up intellectual for manual labor, and who declined a life of upward mobility for a "hand-to-mouth" but meaningful workaday in a historically-authentic woodshop.

Over the course of the 1960s and 70s, applications poured in to Frank and Bill's shops from Northeastern youth hoping to land apprenticeships; many of them had their first experience with harpsichord labor through building a DIY kit. In 1972, Bill reported receiving 150 applications a year, and in 1978, he wrote to a prospective apprentice "at present, harpsichord making as a profession is only equaled in popularity by filmmaking and potting.[4] We receive several letters a week from highly qualified people."[5] In their letters, applicants wrote of general malaise: of the drudgery of academic work, of being divorced from tangible results of their labor, of being chained to predictable life paths dictated by their social circles. Following World War II, the affective consequences of alienated labor appeared in mass-circulated books such as David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* or William White Jr.'s *The Organization Man*.[6]

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[4] Dowd's estimations of the number of apprentice applications are given in the article Thomas Dotton, "Making Harpsichords: An Exotic Art That Found a Home in Boston," *Boston Globe* 10 December 1972, and in two letters written from Bill Dowd to prospective apprentices, dated 11 September 1973 and 27 July 1978. Dowd Harpsichord Collection, Box 7, Folder 6.

[5] Correspondence dated 27 July 1978, Dowd Harpsichord Collection, Box 7, folder 6.

[6] In the early twentieth century, the term for the malaise of bourgeois overcivilization was "neurasthenia." T. J. Jackson Lears argues that neurasthenia was part of what drove the ideological and commercial appeal of the Arts and Crafts movement. See *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 47-51. Political philosopher-turned-motorcycle mechanic Matthew Crawford wrote about a similar affliction among current white collar Americans in *Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009).

In his writings on the Early Music Movement, musicologist Richard Taruskin argues that the quest for historical authenticity is a twentieth century modern ideal, showing the links between twentieth century modernist music composition and performance practice and Early Music and performance practice.[7] Other scholars on the period performance movement have framed it as ideological in its antithetical relationship to the mainstream of Western Classical music performance (Dreyfus 1984) or to progress narratives of Western music history (Haynes 2006). In this chapter, I use the Boston School apprentice scene as a case study through to link an Early Music subculture to the modern, and to show the ways in which apprentices' practices were shaped in resistance to an idea of the mainstream, to an idea of progress. This chapter's contribution to earlier writings on the Early Music Movement is in showing how ideas of the mainstream, progress and modernity articulated to specific personal and social contexts of the late 1960s and early 1970s, contexts that reached beyond narratives and traditions of Western Art Music. My approach in the chapter draws upon anthropological, ethnomusicological and cultural studies theorizations of authenticity—specifically that the quest for an authentic Other of any sort is a modern means to critique the "inauthenticity" of one's late capitalist self and everyday life. I conclude with a vignette of my own fieldwork as an employee of Hubbard Harpsichords in 2008, as a means to access the phenomenology of pre-Industrial labor.

In fact, the romanticization of historical authenticity among participants in the harpsichord apprentice scene forms part of a context of romanticizations of authentic

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[7] Several of these writings have been collected in his volume *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

"Others" among middle class whites during the Cold War years. In these formations, the quest for "native" or "natural" Otherness was tied to the perceived "inauthenticity" of white middle class identity and its associated projects of progress, imperialism, and capitalism. For example, drawing on anthropological discourse, American historian Philip Deloria (1998) suggests that in the Cold War U.S., the idea of the authentic became "a way to imagine and idealize the real, the traditional and the organic in opposition to the less satisfying qualities of everyday life."[8] In this historical American moment, harpsichord building and its accompanying ideals of apprenticeship and artisanship signified as a means to avoid the conformity and alienation associated with upward mobility, alienated labor and the domestic trappings of marriage, children and commodity accumulation.

5.1 Classed Trajectories

Frank Hubbard himself once explained that his career choice arose partly "to escape from working under all sorts of pressures."[9] According to his first wife, Ruth (Hubbard) Wald, he encountered tremendous pressure from his mother, Frances Hubbard, to be a financially soluble breadwinner. Though a bravely outspoken Democrat, Frances Hubbard travelled in predominantly Republican, high society circles of Westchester County, where the family lived. Frances Hubbard was highly ambitious, but somewhat trapped in her role as a mid-twentieth century woman. She thus poured everything she had into her husband and especially Frank, who was her only child. A research biologist with her own income, Ruth

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[8] Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 101.

[9] Thomas Dotton, "Making Harpsichords: An Exotic Art That Found a Home in Boston," *Boston Globe,* December 10, 1972, 68.

remembered "running interference" for Frank, assuring his mother that she was in fact not interested in having children, and did not expect Frank to "provide." Diane Hubbard, Frank's third wife (until his death in 1976) told me,

> I don't think his mother ever understood. In the early days, the name for what he and Bill Dowd were was "bohemian." And you know, they didn't wear three-piece suits to work, and they worked with their hands—I don't think she quite understood that.[10]

Like Frank, Bill Dowd had also grown up in middle class Westchester County. One of Bill's longtime employees told me that

> [Bill] said he had this occasional nightmare where his father would come up from New York and he'd show him all around the shop. And [his father] said 'Oh, this is all very well, Bill, but when are you going to come to New York and get a real job?[11]

These comments give voice to the classed expectations surrounding Frank's and Bill's personal trajectories. Frank himself sometimes marked his pursuit as in fact *upper*-class—because of the amount of historical research involved, because of the cost and prestige of his product. In an interview with the *Boston Globe*, he remarked on the singularity of harpsichord building as a form of labor well suited to people of his background.

> Usually, if you have a mechanical aptitude connected with training you get into lower trades, lower class occupations. So, there are not many fields left where intelligent people can indulge a mechanical aptitude. [12]

In commenting that there are not many fields left where "intelligent people" can indulge a mechanical aptitude, Frank indirectly invokes some of modernity's macro shifts, the kind of

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[10] Phone interview with the author, December 18, 2007.

[11] Don Angle, interview with the author, March 1, 2008.

[12] Thomas Dotton, "Making Harpsichords," 32-34.

shifts that resulted in fewer professional arenas in which both mind and hands were involved in processes of production. He calls forth the nineteenth and twentieth century technoscientific developments that led to alienated labor, drudgery and malaise—as well as to the obsolescence of commodities, like the harpsichord, that could not be adapted to cost-effective, machine-driven production. At the same time, Frank's quote also links this ideology of modernity's decline to a white, middle class ideology. In this late 1960s and 70s Northeastern moment, the ideology came steeped in the romance of a certain *kind* of manual labor—not the kind that happens on assembly lines in factories—but the kind that happens in period workshops, via time-inefficient, and generally cost-ineffective methods, and surrounding esoteric objects of leisure. Within the apprentice and DIY communities circulating around Frank's and Bill's shops, this sort of manual labor allowed builders to live and work outside the trajectories of both middle class upward mobility, and of postwar technological and industrial "progress."

5.2 Outsiders

Some people close to Frank remembered his uncle Harlan as a potential role model for his "bohemianism;" Harlan Hubbard was a proto-dropout before "dropping out" had become a mass movement. In the mid-1940s, Harlan began building a house raft out of found scraps of wood. After a couple of years, he and his wife, Anna, launched their shanty down the Ohio River, starting from Cincinnati. For the next few years, they drifted down the river, making stops along the way, where they planted crops and purchased supplies. They arrived in New Orleans in 1950.

In 1953, Harlan published a book of memoirs of their journey called *Shantyboat: A River Way of Life*. In it, he describes their daily routines: watching for signs of change in the weather, maintaining the raft, reading, playing music, tending to crops, and sometimes just thinking. Early into the memoir, he writes

> …There were other and deeper reasons for my going down to the river. I thought I might be able to engage there in certain harmless and simple activities which town, and even country, interfered with. For where can one find more freedom than on the river? The fields and woods are all owned by someone, and beyond the narrow bounds of the public road the walker is trespassing. I do not say that the river is entirely outside the law, although we have been told of certain sections that are, but it affords a chance for a more unhampered life than any other accessible region. I had no theories to prove. I merely wanted to try living by my own hands, independent as far as possible from a system of division of labor in which the participant loses most of the pleasure of making and growing things for himself.[13]

Ruth (Hubbard) Wald told me she remembered visiting Harlan and Anna on their boat early in their journey. They had anchored at a point along the river, and were tending a vegetable garden they had planted somewhere along the shore. I thought it sounded idyllic, but she said that it was often boring and exhausting—and that it still bore many of the mundane elements of middle class domesticity.

> We thought it was an interesting way to live until we did it for a week and thought "Oh Jesus Christ, there isn't time for anything." And they were very proper, I mean, the dishes had to be washed immediately, they had to be stacked, and they had to be dried. They were much fussier than we were. So in a way it was a very bourgeois existence that they lived on their houseboat. There was no mess, and of course you can't afford to have a mess if you live for months and months on a houseboat.[14]

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[13] Harlan Hubbard, *Shantyboat: A River Way of Life* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1977 [1953]), 38.

[14] Interview with the author, July 22, 2008.

Ruth remembered the experience as we were talking about the iconoclastic young workers at Frank's shop during the 1960s and 70s. Her own stepson, David Wald, had apprenticed there after college, just before moving to Oregon to build guitars on a commune. I mentioned an infamous 1972 *Boston Globe* photograph of Frank surrounded by his sea of longhaired apprentices and asked whether she found it odd that Frank ended up with such a motley group. Part of the answer to that question was that Frank was himself an iconoclast, with family precedent for bohemianism. The other part, as I later learned, was that—just as Harlan and Anna Hubbard kept their bourgeois existence on the shanty—these "outsider" practices still carried ideologies and customs of the privileged.

Figure 7: Frank Hubbard and his apprentices, *Boston Globe,* December 10, 1972

5.3 Dropouts

During the 1960s and 70s, Frank's and Bill's shops teemed with the kind of middle-class youth that the media (and some of the apprentices themselves) termed "dropouts."[15] Derived from Timothy Leary's slogan, "tune in, turn on, drop out," the term came to connote young, primarily white people on hiatus from societal expectations, commodity culture, the rat race, upward mobility, and labor practices in which they were physically and cosmologically divorced from the end product. As Charles Reich noted in *The Greening of America* (1970), while modernity had the advantage of a decrease of backbreaking labor, its disadvantage was in the increase of meaningless "paper pushing."[16]

Timothy Miller has theorized the 1960s-70s U.S. practice of dropping out as "the disowning of a life oriented toward work, status, and power," and "a search for poverty, simplicity and new ideas."[17] He and other writers on the subject have focused on the movement's male participants, and have emphasized both their white, middle class backgrounds and their glorification of poverty and working-class labor.[18] As many mainstream and underground publications pointed out, their lives gestured towards

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[15] For example, in his description of his visit to the 1960s Hubbard shop, Wallace Zuckermann wrote that "The workers are, as is usual in American harpsichord shops, an assortment of college drop-outs, Sicilian cabinet makers, semi-hippies, harpsichord "nuts" and "deaf-mutes." In *The Modern Harpsichord: Twentieth-Century Instruments and Their Makers* (New York: October House, 1969), 131.

[16] Charles A. Reich, *The Greening of America: How the Youth Revolution Is Trying to Make America Livable* (New York: Random House, 1970), 236.

[17] Timothy Miller, *The Hippies and American Values* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 110-111.

[18] See for example Ryan Edgington, "'Be Receptive to the Good Earth': Health, Nature, and Labor in Countercultural Back-to-the-Land Settlements," *Agricultural History* 82(3), 2008, 283-284; Stuart Hall, "The Hippies: An American 'Moment,'" in *Student Power*, ed. Julian Nagel (London, Merlin Press, 1969), 170-176.

monotony. Their membership to the moneyed class committed them to competitive professional hierarchies, to the "mind-numbing" aspects of domesticity, or worse (particularly in the late 1960s and early 70s), to the military. In a section of his book, "Recovery of Self," Charles Reich encourages the liberating potential of extracting oneself from these expected professional and personal paths, of "recovering self from the world of [one's] parents, from the pressures of school and from the looming demands of role, career, and the draft."[19]

For the DIY harpsichord builders, apprentices and prospective apprentices (primarily men, though several women did participate as apprentices and DIY amateurs) harpsichord building provided "room to maneuver" (Chambers 1991), a means to live outside the "mainstream," that is, outside the timetable of lifestyle choices, and entry into professional, academic or economic trajectories. In this scenario of 1960s-70s harpsichord-building, outmoded forms of commodity production became the means to reinvent a lifestyle, career and subjectivity.

5.4 Apprentices

In 1958, the Hubbard & Dowd business relocated to the Lyman Estate in Waltham, Massachusetts, where they rented the carriage house from the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Within the year, Frank and Bill split into separate businesses; Frank stayed on in Waltham and Bill moved his shop to a factory building in East Cambridge.

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[19] Reich, 178.

Diane Hubbard remembered the apprentice scene being prominent at the Lyman shop from early on, saying "I suppose it's because Frank was such a historian, that 'this was the way harpsichords were made in Antwerp in 16-whatever' and he just figured that this was a workable situation."[20] Bill Dowd reportedly instated an apprentice system as well, with the idea that it had historical precedent. In the Dowd shop, however, the system remained more of an ideal than a reality; only two or three of the employees during that company's history were thought of as apprentices.[21]

To some, it appeared that Frank would take just about anybody willing to work for two dollars an hour—but he actually had an informal list of criteria that nearly mirrored criteria for college admission. One had to be "educated," to speak at least one other language besides English, and to have some kind of musical training. The 'X factor' was to have patience for grunt jobs. Previous woodworking experience helped, but was not a requirement.[22] In an interview for *Harpsichord* magazine, Frank described these guidelines as follows,

> In order to make a harpsichord properly you have to be well educated. In order to do it intelligently you have to read more than your native language. You have to have a historical perspective which means you must have a knowledge of European history, the history of art and so on. A high percentage of the people who come to us now are college drop-outs. That already is a bad start. There are exceptions of course but they are rare.

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[20] Phone interview with the author, December 18, 2007. Some of the 1960s-70s Hubbard employees do not remember the term apprentice being applied to the workers there. I use it here because the majority of my consultants and period media do use the term.

[21] Willard Martin, interview with the author, July 29, 2009. A few who frequented Dowd's shop told me that it had a more professionalized atmosphere than Hubbard's.

[22] Former apprentice and current fortepiano builder Barbara Wolf shared these criteria with me. Interview with the author, August 18, 2008.

> In any case, they ought to first prepare themselves in this way. They should know several languages. Then they ought to face the fact that they are not going to make a lot of money as apprentices.[23]

Once they arrived, they would receive a set of tools: a Stanley block plane, a Starrett square, a marking gauge, and a beaver knife, among a few other tools. Frank would then put the apprentices (typically between six and eight at a given time) to work sawing pieces for the kits and custom instruments, installing soundboards, gluing case sides together, drilling holes in hundreds of plastic jacks, painting and sanding cases, voicing plectra, stringing and tuning.

Diane Hubbard remembered, "I think there came a time when Frank realized that it takes more time than was advantageous to have some of these people around," referring to the variability in work ethics, skill levels and commitment to the instrument among the workers. In an interview for the *Boston Globe*, Dowd similarly commented that "I get everyone walking into my shop from a kid with God-given hands who wants to dedicate himself to building harpsichords and who three months later ends up making sandals in Vermont to the very studious, serious music-oriented youths who are genuinely motivated."[24] In the same article, Hubbard said "I am constantly inundated by people with no positive interest in harpsichords who are trying to get away from society."[25] In an interview the following year, he similarly commented that "too many people who come to us are in rebellion against society for reasons that I can literally understand, so they go into

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[23] Hal Haney, "An Interview with Frank Hubbard," *Harpsichord*, 5, no. 1 (April 1972), 16.

[24] Thomas Dotton, "Making Harpsichords," 68.

[25] Ibid.

harpsichord making as an escape not because they are deeply interested in the instrument."[26] While a good many of the apprentices have continued to build harpsichords and other instruments up to the present day (indeed, most of my interview participants have been those who stayed in the business), many of them were attracted to the work because of the romance of what it symbolized: pre-Industrial craft, unalienated labor, and an Other time/space. As Diane told me, "they were the gentlest, nicest people, but they felt very deeply about being out of the mainstream. And I think that that was what the harpsichord industry represented to them."[27]

5.5 Outsider Space

The Lyman shop sat a few miles from Brandeis University, on a 400-acre estate originally built in 1793 for a wealthy Boston textile merchant. By the 1950s, it had been acquired by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, including its nineteenth century greenhouse, working farm and grapevines that had been planted in 1870. The Society preserved this space amidst modernity's encroachment; as a historical landmark, it was a space that could not be developed.

Waltham began as an industrial town, and today, flags along Main Street proclaim it "The Birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution." Paper mills were built there in the early 1800s, followed by a large cotton mill run by the Boston Manufacturing Company, which is sometimes referred to as the U.S.'s "first true factory," with all processes resulting

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[26] Haney, "Interview with Frank Hubbard," 16.

[27] Phone interview with the author, December 18, 2007.

from water (and not human) power, and all taking place within the same building; this vertically integrated, management-run set-up became known as the "Waltham system."[28] Eventually the Boston Watch Company (later called the Waltham Watch Company) set up operations, and became both the world's largest watch factory during the early twentieth century and the first to produce watches on an assembly line. Responding to increasing modern pressures for prompt transport of people and commodities, the company specialized in manufacturing watches that would allow trains to stay on time.[29]

In 1957, production at the factory stopped—a year before Frank Hubbard and Bill Dowd moved their business to the Lyman Estate. While the city went on to become a center for high-tech industries, it also became known for its harpsichord shop, a cultural node on an historical preserve, physically sequestered from both modern city and suburb, "keeping alive" New England's heritage through outmoded farms, greenhouses and architecture.

It also became the site of anachronistic labor practices, where upwardly mobile dropouts went to "demobilize," to avoid the kind of labor where one needed to be on time, and to subvert other basic tenets of the Industrial Revolution having to do with the efficient management of time and money.[30] Thus, through the Lyman shop, Waltham also became a

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[28] See Carroll Pursell, *The Machine in America: A Social History of Technology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 35-45; James L. Conrad, Jr., "'Drive That Branch': Samuel Slater, the Power Loom, and the Writing of America's Textile History," in *Technology and American History: A Historical Anthology from Technology and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 45-49. Conrad points out that the importance of Waltham and Pawtucket, Rhode Island have been over-emphasized in U.S. industrial history.

[29] Chaim M. Rosenberg, *The Great Workshop*, 56.

[30] T.J. Jackson Lears argues for the relationship of being "on time" to industrial progress, and notes that the expression "on time" appeared in the 1870s, concurrently with development of the mass-production-oriented workplace. He writes, "The corporate drive for efficiency underwrote quantified time as a uniform standard of

birthplace of a *resistance* to the American Industrial Revolution—the revival of the practices, materials and commodities that the Industrial Revolution and factory production had displaced (craftsman-oriented labor, wooden materials, harpsichords).

5.6 Outsider Time

Rodney Myrvaagnes, who built several harpsichords on commission during 1973-1985, and who today remains active as an amateur builder, remembered going to visit Frank Hubbard for advice on his first scratch-built harpsichord (an Italian model). Once Rodney had drawn his measured plans, he brought them to the Lyman shop. Frank graciously examined them and took out his own plans for an Italian harpsichord, laying the two sets on top of one another for comparison. Everyone in the shop stopped what they were doing to gather and listen. Rodney's description of this relaxed and collegial atmosphere among the workers prompted me to ask about the apprentice scene.

> JW: There were tons of apprentices there, weren't there?
> RM: Yeah, and he kept a—he used a time clock, which normally is a tool of oppression.
> JW: You mean to punch in and punch out.
> RM: Yeah, punch in and punch out. But in this case, it was a favor to the apprentices, because the rule was, you could punch out and work on your own project with the facilities, and punch back in again when you were going to work on his stuff. And people were allowed to do that, as far as I understand it, whenever they felt like it. There must have been some kind of limitation on that.[31]

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measurement and reinforced the spreading requirement that people regulate their lives by the clock. The heaviest pressure came from employers in factories and bureaucracies who increasingly demanded rigid adherence to quantified schedules." See *No Place of Grace* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 10-11.

[31] Interview with the author, March 17, 2008.

At the Lyman shop, apprentices could stay after hours, build an instrument of their design, with their own name (rather than Frank Hubbard's) on the nameboard. Though not all the apprentices shared this view, for some the time clock (invented in 1890 as a factory implement) came to represent the freedom of being able to work for oneself, to live within an alternate "temporal discipline."[32] In this workplace, employees had the freedom to "punch out" at will; they could subvert the time clock such that the workday did not necessarily subdivide into modernity's "nine-to-five" configurations.[33] Wally Zuckermann also noted Hubbard's time clock in his 1969 book, in a section where he describes the Lyman shop's productivity:

> Since orders never slack off (Hubbard is four years behind), a lean period does not occur due to a business slump but as a result of poor organization, waste motion, supply failures, employee turnover, etc. Few harpsichord shops work efficiently—the work force is of necessity off-beat, coming in at irregular hours (Hubbard surprised them recently by installing a time clock), and quitting without notice. In Hubbard's shop visitors and amateurs take up a great amount of time, clogging the wheels of progress. Recently he has become stricter and more efficient…[34]

While we were talking about the political affinities of the apprentices (sympathetic to Leftist movements, but generally not to the point of activism), Diane Hubbard indirectly attested to this when she told me

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[32] At Dowd's shop, apprentices were permitted to stay after hours to build one's own harpsichord, but were required to use Dowd's designs and to put Dowd's name on the instrument. I use "temporal discipline" here in David Harvey's conception, *Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), 228.

[33] Typically, though, "working for oneself" tended to happen early in the morning, during lunch, or in the evening hours.

[34] Zuckermann, *Modern Harpsichord*, 133.

> I remember during the 60s they would ask Frank—one or two of them—if they could go off and march in Cambridge, against the war in Vietnam. They'd come back with fists stenciled on their T-shirts.[35]

I asked Diane if they had trouble asking Frank for time off, and she told me "They didn't even ask for time off. They just went. Well they asked if they could go and then when they came back, they punched back in—we had a time clock, where they'd punch out and punch in."[36]

5.7 Outside the "Mainstream"

The roster of apprentices rotated every couple of years, but the eccentricity never wavered. There was the French cabinetmaker who refused baths, lived in a tent in the Waltham woods, and survived on dandelions and home-baked bread so tough it had to be sliced on the shop's bandsaw. There was a married couple that camped on the property in a hearse for a year. There was the Boston College dropout who coworkers remember commuting ten miles daily from Concord to Waltham on a bike with no seat. There was the son of a Nobel Prize winning biochemist who lived with his Golden Retriever in his van outside the shop—even during the winter when he got his electricity by routing an extension cord from the carriage house. And there was the Massachusetts Institute of Technology grad, who aborted a promising career in mathematics to apprentice for Frank. Several years later, he ended up in Maine, selling his own harpsichord kits, hunting knifes, bumper stickers, and pamphlets on weather prediction.

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[35] Phone interview with the author, December 18, 2007.

[36] Ibid.

A frequent visitor to Frank's shop in the 70s remembered:

> There were all these people coming in and out of there. This guy spent the whole night just sort of sleeping in the Hubbard shop because he didn't have an apartment at the time. He was just about a street person. But Frank let him hang around.[37]

Some of Bill Dowd's employees recalled a similar atmosphere at the Cambridge Dowd shop. One of them told me,

> [they were] young and jobless and they had a romantic notion of what this was. They didn't know what it was to work either. There were a couple who had drug problems, there was one alcoholic who Bill fired – I didn't realize he drank that much…There was another fellow who said when he had to machine jacks, he would show up stoned out of his mind, sitting near a drill.[38]

In 1970, a concerned mother from Concord, Massachusetts wrote to Frank Hubbard regarding her son (the seat-less rider)—also named Frank. Young Frank was at the time enrolled in Boston College. But of late, he'd been spending increasing periods of time at the Waltham shop. She writes,

> Dear Mr. Hubbard,
>
> At the end of his junior year at Boston College, Frank was fired with ambition to go on to graduate school. However, we have become increasingly concerned over the change in his attitude during the summer. He seems to have absorbed much of the thinking of his co-workers—to the point that at present he seriously questions the need to return to college for his degree. He'd just as soon devote his life to the building of harpsichords…[39]

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[37] Allan Winkler, interview with the author, October 16, 2007.

[38] Don Angle, interview with the author, March 1, 2008.

[39] Correspondence dated August 8, 1970. Accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc.

Young Frank's coworkers remember him as one of the true characters of the shop. I once asked one of them whether he would count as a "hippie." I was told "No, Frank was too eccentric to be a hippie. He was certainly an outsider. We were all outsiders in some way. Not made for the ordinary world, particularly." I asked what was meant by ordinary world, and he said "Like going to medical school, or becoming professional, or getting married and having children by the age of 25."[40]

5.8 Unalienated Labor: Building a Whole Thing

Rodney Myrvaagnes, quoted above, built his first harpsichord in the early 1970s he said because "I wanted a break from what I was doing before": working for a defense contractor that had been designing methods to detect moisture on Mars. The company asked him to fudge some data; Rodney refused and was laid off. His wife Barbara had built a clavichord in the late 1960s while developing a career as an avionics engineer. The two met working in lab together while undergrads at Tufts University. Late in our interview, I asked them why it was that so many scientists fell into harpsichord building.

> BM: I think it's nice to have a whole thing that you made yourself. In a musical instrument it's conceivable. Most engineering or scientific jobs now are a group effort.
>
> RM: That was the appeal to me, to do almost everything. The only thing I didn't do is draw wire. Everything in there I made with my hands. That's why I couldn't buy jacks for the first one.
>
> BM: It is nice to make a whole thing and say 'I've made this thing.' If you're working at making an airplane, you're only working on making one little tiny part of it… if building a building…maybe the architect has a little bit of feeling for doing the whole thing but, he's going to be working with the engineers and that kind of stuff, so you don't have the sort of ownership you

[40] Phone interview with the author, September 16, 2008.

> get when you did an instrument… I did get to make some little things – small parts of radar systems – and what I actually did was make a small electronic unit, which would be put into another unit, which would be put into another unit, and it might go into an airplane. So I would only do a small section of something. So you didn't really feel a connection to what was coming out at the other end, and actually you didn't have *any* connection to it, because I didn't work for a company that made airplanes—I made things that went into airplanes. You get very far-removed from the end. It's sort of more of a Renaissance attitude to make an instrument, because at least you had to know how all parts of it come together. Even if you didn't make the wire, you've got to know a lot about the wire.[41]

Many apprentices came to the shop having previously built a do-it-yourself kit harpsichord. Many believed that their apprenticeship was a stepping-stone to a life as a professional harpsichord builder. Thus, while in Frank's shop, they might not have the experience of assembling entire instruments, the mentality was that they one day would be. In 1966, a DIY harpsichord builder from Seattle wrote to Frank Hubbard: "With respect to building in particular, a sense of contribution, worth and satisfaction is derived from a felt involvement with a whole product of labor and skill. This is not generally encountered these days… My belief is, however, that your field offers one of the exceptions."[42] Many customers wrote in to both Frank and Bill with similar accounts of the satisfaction of building whole things by themselves.

5.9 Outmoded Crafts

To give me a sense of what life was like working at Frank's shop in the 1960s and 70s, Steve Lowry, one of the former employees, technical director of the company during

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[41] Interview with the author, March 17, 2008.

[42]Correspondence dated May 16, 1966. Accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc.

the late 1970s, (and one of the "marchers") sent me George Sturt's 1923 book, *The Wheelwright's Shop*, something he remembered reading while working at the Lyman Estate.[43] In it, the author gives an autobiographical account as a worker in a turn-of-the-century wagon-making shop; Sturt portrays the business as one of the last holdouts of Old World labor and artful commodities, of an era in which objects were made locally, from local wood, clay and wool, by craftspeople who had spent lifetimes learning their trade. *The Wheelwright's Shop* is Sturt's ode to working with wood, in a sociable environment devoted to an ages-old craft.

The son of a famed microbiologist and National Academy member, Steve came to the harpsichord after several lackluster years in Biology graduate programs at both Berkeley and Harvard, and amidst feelings of general (though not necessarily parental) pressure to "make something of himself." He had dropped out (and also self-identified as a "dropout") of Harvard's graduate program when he heard from a friend of a friend about Frank's Lyman Street shop. He became enchanted with the idea of a job in eighteenth century-style woodworking on a historic preserve.

Steve sent me the book for its description of life in the wagon shop: the daily tasks, the everyday antics of the employees, and the sensual pleasures of getting to know different woods. The descriptions indeed reminded me of my time apprenticing at the current Hubbard Harpsichords shop in Framingham, Massachusetts this past year: the subtle rebellions of Bo, the cabinetmaker, upon being assigned a "tedious" task he didn't want to do, the hurried excitement the day the wood shipments arrived from Maine Lumber

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[43] George Sturt, *The Wheelwright's Shop* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000 [1923]).

Company, or the stress of trying to get a soundboard to shrink on schedule during July humidity. And in reading about the repertoire of meaningful sounds in wagon-making – the "piercing scream as of agony" indicating "a lazy carter's neglect to grease the wheels,"[44] or "the shriek of [a] saw against a hidden nail [that] would bring the shop to a horrified standstill"[45] —I thought of distinctive shop noises of Framingham. How quickly the boss would flinch and beeline at the sound of snapping wood under someone else's hand plane. How embarrassed I felt when I would stall out the gears on the wire-winding motor so loud I was sure that everyone in the shop could hear that I'd forgotten to flip the switches in the right order. The happy sound of productivity, as plank after plank of wood buzzed through cabinetmakers' table saws. The sound of springtime one March afternoon, when the soundboard of a 1970s restoration instrument sprung a crack, loudly, and we all swarmed with mild curiosity like it was a science experiment in which something had finally happened. And when, after an afternoon of drilling (not quite) identical holes in hundreds of identical pieces of wood, I finally heard the difference in sound between clean and messy cuts, and realized why the scruff around a drill cut is called "chatter" or "noise."

But beyond the everyday details of shop life, Sturt's book also seems to capture the dimension of nostalgia for Old World craft that circulated among both shop apprentices and DIY kit builders during the 1960s and 70s. Several times, Sturt frames his craft in relation to modernity's encroachment; for example, his love for wood as a material is presented in dialectic with his ambivalence towards the rise of steel. He writes of a period late in his

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[44] Ibid., 135.

[45] Ibid., 83.

career, watching the changes in his local landscape: "Too plainly Old England was passing away," he thought as he watched bricks being carted to the Surrey-Hampshire border by a wagon fitted with a steam-powered engine, which moved faster than traditional horses.

> Instead of quiet, beautiful cart horses, a little puffing steam-engine was hurrying this captive along, faster than ever farm wagon was designed to go…the shafts had been removed as when Samson was mutilated to serve the ends of his masters – and although I couldn't see it, I knew only too well how the timbers would be trembling and the axles fretting at the speed of this unwanted toil. [46]

As my first chapter discussed, at both the turn of the twentieth century, and in the post World War II era, newspapers, magazines and popular literature framed the harpsichord in terms of its dialectical relationship to modernity. The harpsichord was the antiquated, handcrafted, locally tailored victim of the Age of Steel, of newly devised methods including assembly lines and interchangeable parts. Shop apprentices such as Steve developed personal investments in these dialectical narratives of antiquated versus modern technologies (like the horse-drawn versus the steam-powered wagon, or the harpsichord versus the iron-framed piano) because they themselves felt displaced by the shifts in technological, academic and corporate cultures during the postwar era, "being hurried along faster than they were ever designed to go." The young men and women of Frank's Lyman shop were able to step outside of this modern trajectory, through labor practices unable to be translated into a machine-operated process, or into stronger and more cost-effective materials.

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[46] Ibid., 66.

5.10 "Making Progress" in an Outmoded Craft

Some thirty years after the heyday of the Waltham shop, I started an informal apprenticeship at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc., now run by one of Frank's former apprentices, Hendrik Broekman. During the early 1970s, as part of a plan to increase the shop's efficiency, the kit portion of the business was moved to a separate building on Waltham's Moody Street; office work and custom instrument building remained in the Lyman carriage house. Around 1980, the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities decided to move its headquarter to the carriage house, forcing the Hubbard business to move its entire operation to the Moody Street building. Initially, the shop retained the separate divisions between kits and custom instrument building; kit production took place on the building's third floor, and custom on the second. As the kit business further declined during the 1980s, the company was forced to confine its entire operations to a single floor.

Late in the 1980s, the business subsequently moved farther west to Sudbury, into a converted indoor tennis court, built in the 1970s and reputedly "soulless." In 2001, the company relocated again to its current location in a 1920s factory building in the historic Saxonville district of northern Framingham—a "real New England factory" as I once heard Hendrik describe it.

Since the 1970s heyday, the apprentice scene at harpsichord shops around the U.S. has declined. As instrument sales dropped during the 1980s and 90s, companies cut costs by reducing their staff. At the same time, apprentice wages did not rise to accommodate increased housing costs—an issue felt especially in the Boston area. For the most part, builders have decided that it is not cost and time-effective enough to maintain the set-up of the 1960s-70s

era.[47] A former Hubbard apprentice, Cesar Giudini, came to Massachusetts from Americana, Brazil in 1998 to learn harpsichord making. Cesar said he remembered there being a team of builders in the shop when he started and he fondly recalled the camaraderie of shop dinners on Thursday nights. Some 10 years later, the scene was much different. Cesar quit his position at Hubbard to earn more money at an antique car restoration shop. The first time I showed up in Framingham in 2003 to rummage through invoices, the company employed one apprentice, Nick, there to learn the trade under Hendrik, along with two or three freelance employees who showed up at irregular intervals to help "knock out" parts for kit orders or to perform minor maintenance on restoration instruments. When I returned four years later, Nick had quit—he told me because he could no longer afford Boston-area rent on his training wage.

One of my first jobs was to refurbish the delrin[48] jacks on a 1971 Hubbard instrument that had come into the shop for an overhaul. I remember Hendrik's nervousness the first time he gave me an assignment—I think he wondered how dexterous and detail-oriented I would turn out to be, and whether my unpredictable learning curve might result in a loss of company materials (and ultimately money). Seeking reassurance, he had asked for an oral resume of my previous manual labor experience. He knew I was a keyboardist, so I mentioned every hobby I'd explored since age 12. He finally seemed relieved when I remembered that I used to make oboe reeds.

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[47] Zuckermann Harpsichords, International recently started an internship program, in which one person per year is hired to learn the craft in the company's Stonington, CT shop. Kenneth Fryer also has an apprentice. I am told as well that the situation in Germany is much different. Neupert dealer Helga Kasimoff told me that her son apprenticed at the Neupert factory and worked with teams of men at various stages of building a harpsichord; she described the intensely social aspects of learning the trade at that shop.

[48] Delrin is a type of plastic, invented c. 1956, used for modern reproduction harpsichord jacks.

First, it was cleaning 37 years of grime out of the jacks' crevices with a paper towel. Then it was counting out the right amount of tongues, the right amount of plectra (after slicing hundreds of them on a paper cutter), fitting the plectra into the tongues, and finally attaching the tongues to the jacks. The first time I saw the three registers of jacks laid out next to each other on jack palettes[49]—two 8-foot registers and one 4-foot – I felt nearly bewildered at the prospect of having to do the day's given procedure 189 times (63 keys per register, times 3). The tinyness of the pieces seemed to affect my perception of the amount of work to be done, so that 189 times may as well have been infinity.[50] Through this jack assembly process, I learned something about how objects acquire value, as time-consuming procedures become layered onto an object, it becomes more and more precious, even when dealing with a relatively cheap material (plastic, as opposed to wood).

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[49] Jack palettes are 1x8x36" trays designated to hold a register's worth of jacks.

[50] Gradually, I learned that the size of the piece to be manipulated was directly related to the number of times I would drop or break it, which ultimately prolonged the time the procedure took; the smaller the size, the increase in the level of difficulty.

Figure 8: Fitting many plectra into many tongues. Photo by the author.

Once the tongues were fitted into the jacks, I had to screw in the top screws to the perfect depth so that the tongue's back would be flush with the jack. These were all straightforward, objective procedures, with tangible, objective, and fixed endpoints. The next phase, however, was entirely different, as I learned to voice the instrument.[51] At first, the endpoint (an attractive sound of appropriate volume, an ideal balance between high and low

[51] Voicing is the process of shaving thin slivers off the bottom of plectra to weaken the pluck in small increments. One typically uses a surgical scalpel or a beaver knife for this purpose.

ranges of a particular register, and between the three registers, a comfortable amount of resistance from the keys) was not something I could readily distinguish. Gradually, my ears acclimated to varieties of harpsichord sounds, to different overtone profiles, and I learned how these aural features changed depending on the approach to voicing. I learned the degrees of minutiae between my voicing attempts and the ideal, and sometimes found tedium living in that space.

> 6.6.08 Fieldnotes
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> Today it was a lot of manual labor. First, I had to drill arcades[52] in maple, for practice. In order to decide which side of the wood to drill, I had to figure out which faces had been sawed (rougher) versus which had been planed (smoother). This turned out to be one of those distinctions obvious to Hendrik but seemingly nonexistent to me. It took me awhile to recognize what a saw mark looked like: a darkened spot that came from burning the wood when the blade was left on it for too long. Then it was time to slide two arcade blanks into a jig, fit the jig under the drill, and start drilling.[53] Hendrik said I needed to find an equilibrium speed – not so slowly that it would burn the wood, but not so fast that it would chew it up either. He gave me some maple (less expensive) blanks to practice on before moving to pearwood (more expensive).
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> Once I finished drilling the maple, it was time to prepare the pearwood blanks by sticking them into a wooden jig and planing off the excess. I had a hard time. My index finger's knuckle began to hurt and my pinky went numb within the first ten blanks. It was hard to attack them in one continuous stroke; I kept getting hiccups and delays in the stroke, causing lines in the wood that were then impossible to get rid of. My arm wore out quickly.
>
> Then it was drilling them, hundreds of them. A thunderstorm rolled in and day turned into night, but my focus was only on decreasing the size of the pile of blanks left to drill. It became fun to see how close to ideal I could get, how much control I could execute over the drill. I started to feel connected to the machine like I sometimes do when I'm sewing. Like I was

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[52] Arcades are small decorative squares of wood glued on to the ends of keys, typically with ridges in a half-moon shape. The half-moon design is cut into strips of wood using a drill press.

[53] The blanks in this case were short strips of wood, about five inches long, ¾ inch wide, and ¼ inch thick. The jig for this procedure was a set of metal braces that held two blanks together, side by side.

> practically hugging it while I was working, because I had to in order to get enough control over it.

In the months I spent working in the Hubbard shop, I tried my hands at a variety of different tasks – voicing, tuning, regulating harpsichords, machining jacks, replacing the action on a fortepiano. And I started to think about what it feels like to experience pre-Industrial modes of labor. How, for example, in assembling all the minute and interlocking parts of an eighteenth century fortepiano action, I felt myself on the cusp of when keyboard technology "needed" to change. Processes became so repetitive and difficult physically to keep consistent, and tiny wooden pieces so finicky and fragile; opportunities proliferated to "waste" time, money and physical exertion.

In working on refurbishing a Hubbard-designed fortepiano kit, originally built by a DIY customer in the 1970s, I found myself thinking that what I was trying to do would be accomplished so much better by a machine. Immersed in the mind and finger-numbing aspects of all the minute and repetitive steps, I wondered if this wasn't the mentality of eighteenth century makers who wanted instrument building to "evolve already." In these moments of exasperation, I found myself thinking that "life is too short," or wondering "shouldn't there be a machine for this?"

I one day heard Hendrik tell a group of students about his realization long ago that the Hubbard DIY harpsichord kit was "less a musical instrument than an exercise in self-discovery—it requires patience, tedium management, clarity of mind and a lot of clamps."[54] Later that day, I found myself in the midst of a project to shave slivers of kid suede off of 72

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[54] Fieldnotes, April 8, 2008. Clamps are indispensable in holding joined pieces of wood together as glue dries.

fortepiano hammers. It was painstaking work to cut the material neatly, to get an even taper from the head to the side of the hammer, particularly since the suede dulled the knife blade quickly, requiring me to replace it after every two or three hammers. Looking for a distraction, I asked Hendrik if he thought the feeling of tedium was cultural. He said he thought so, and that the discipline to deal with the physical appetites (like hunger and sex) was certainly culturally learned. He thought aloud that in every culture there are people facing tasks where they wish they could be doing something else (a key component to tedium). But in most of those cases, he said, the tasks are necessary to subsistence – such as sowing millet seed. With harpsichord processes, the feeling is not only that you'd rather be doing something else, but that you in fact could be doing something else, certainly if has means and leisure enough to purchase a harpsichord kit. He added: "Don't get me wrong, I love the instrument, but no one really needs a harpsichord."

In one of his early 1960s brochures for harpsichord kits, New York maker Wally Zuckermann wrote: "a craftsman was once described as a person with sharp tools and a quiet mind."[55] A quiet mind is what allows one to work within this alternate historical realm of precision and patience, and outside the trajectory of efficient productivity. In the case of DIY kit-building, a quiet mind meant the capacity to be alone with one's instruction manual, tools and materials, completely absorbed in a task that progressed slowly by minute and incremental steps, and with a high tedium risk. In 1981, Hubbard Harpsichords mailed surveys to all customers who had purchased kits during the 1960s and 70s. The final

[55] Brochure, Zuckermann Harpsichords, Int'l, 1970. Private donation.

question asked customers to describe any difficulties in their experience. One 1970s customer wrote that "The painting is so bloody long and tedious, that had I known I probably would not have ordered the kit…it is so time consuming, boring and dirty…that I have developed a violent hatred toward it." Another wrote: "We wanted a playable instrument in a reasonable amount of time, rather than to improve ourselves through woodworking."[56]

My final job at Hubbard, painting the case of a kit harpsichord, taught me the phenomenological experience of tedium. Taping and covering areas to be left bare and priming the case went by without hitch. But Hendrik was right when he ominously cautioned during that happy phase that "anyone can be a hero with primer, but pigment is another story." Indeed, with the rubbing of the actual paint, I felt myself frozen in an endless process. Leaving visible brushstrokes, dust specks, drips and skittering ridges (when I tried to even out a spot after the paint had begun to set)—these little imperfections began to consume me as I arrived each day for a month to hear Hendrik's dreaded verdict that, unfortunately, it would have to be sanded and painted again. Sanding and painting for hours every day week after week began to weigh on my conscience as a task I couldn't seem to put behind me. If the academic year hadn't started up again at the end of August, I might still be there, sanding and painting, gradually covering myself in a thickening shroud of black and red paint dust, and sweat.

5.11 Alternate Trajectories

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[56] Customer surveys, accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc.

Tedium makes up a central trope in amateur harpsichord builders' correspondence largely because of its relationship to progress. For exasperated DIY builders, tedium emerged as an experience of not "making progress" within an attempt to produce something, working at a speed slower than one's expectations. To embrace these less efficient, differently paced practices was to embrace slow, incremental process, and to narrowly skirt the possibility of wasted time, money and labor. In the 1960s and 70s, embracing the alternate temporal discipline of pre-Industrial "tedium" meant an ideological positioning in relation to modernity, to technological and industrial progress. It indicated a switch to an alternate discipline of anachronistic labor.

The harpsichord forced its devotees to reorient their subjectivity so that their everyday centered on the temporal discipline of painstaking crafting processes, rather than modernity's temporalities of 24-hour clocks and productivity schedules. In *The Condition of Postmodernity*, David Harvey writes, "cyclical and repetitive motions…provide a sense of security in a world where the general thrust of progress appears to be ever onwards and upwards into the firmament of the unknown."[57] In both the popular media of the 1960s and 70s, in correspondence, and among my interview participants, harpsichord building is often presented as what Harvey calls a "counterpoint to progress."

For many aspiring shop apprentices and amateur harpsichord builders, the workaday world involved regular contact with the techniques and tools of modern technology. Several builders, in explaining their initial interest, describe the excitement of poring over historical

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[57] David Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, 202.

diagrams of seventeenth and eighteenth century harpsichord dimensions, learning about the mechanical and acoustic physics of the plucking action. The harpsichord held special fascination for these new builders, partly because it exemplified a "primitive" stage within the larger trajectory of scientific development – development that was part and parcel to their professional livelihood. What these builders' workaday world did not require from these middle class professionals was handiwork.

Builders often describe what the late 1960s and early 70s felt like by using disorienting lists of things speeding up, proliferating, and revolutionizing. One of my correspondents, an engineer and, during the 1970s, a part-time clavichord builder, recalled the era as one of "American know-how, and the building of Unsinkable Ships, plastic this and plastic that, superhighways, junk food, Work Til You Drop, moneymoneymoney, A-bombs and H-bombs and Z-bombs."[58] Back in the 1960s, Wally Zuckermann himself circulated a similar version of the decade, in correspondence with other builders and in his articles for Harpsichord magazine. In 1969, he decided to protest the American involvement in Vietnam by moving from Greenwich Village to Devon, England. In the invitation to his 12-hour-long going away party, he listed all the emblematic things he would be leaving behind. His list reads:

> modern computerized living, dirty streets, avant garde movies, moon and mars travel, the latest in theater, the most powerful country, the coming Revolution, color television, air pollution, chemical warfare, superhighways, wars on peasants, tasteless architecture, plastic wrappings, happenings, litter, noise, mass media, modern dental work, big automobiles, police riots[59]

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[58] Private correspondence, August 2006. Name withheld by request.

[59] The invitation is undated, though the party is scheduled to occur on September 7, 1969. Accessed at Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc.

Wally Zuckermann's litany casts modernity within an ideology of contemporary decay, encapsulating the moment through a series of technological and artistic developments, social dysfunctions and changed landscapes. In his article for the book The Music Makers, Frank Hubbard positioned harpsichord building as a counterpoint to the era's downward turn.

> Other factors have contributed to the rise of the harpsichord as well. One was and is that people often turn toward the past to escape the present, which may be menacing, and the future, which may be terrifying. A strong motive for looking back is that this takes your mind off nuclear weapons, the population explosion, urban decay. I know that's where a lot of my energy comes from. Recently I went to climb Mount Monadnock. It's hard to imagine a mountain being jammed, but this one was, with a parade up and a parade down and people screaming in your ears both ways. It was almost a relief to get back down to the car and onto the highway. After an experience like that, you begin to feel there are no places to hide on this planet now, except in the past.[60]

In 1971, Harold "Tuck" Langland wrote an article called "Exotic Delicate Harpsichords" for the Last Whole Earth Catalog advertising harpsichord and clavichord kits. Diane Hubbard told me that this article was responsible for a major surge in kit sales that year, particularly from California. Tuck concluded the advertisement with the passage:

> I don't know if you want all this junk or not, but I suspect that the kind of people who want to stop killing, stop eating plastic food, stop building plastic relationships, get off the ladder of success, who want to smell trees, and hear the little noises in the world, would also like to hear and make music, and make their own instruments.[61]

Some 30 years later, I tracked Tuck down through the University of Indiana South Bend, where he had become Professor Emeritus of Studio Art (during the 1960s and 70s, he built

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[60] Frank Hubbard, "Frank Hubbard," *The Music Makers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 147.

[61] Harold Langland, "Exotic, Delicate Harpsichords," *The Last Whole Earth Catalog: Access to Tools,* Summer 1971, 338.

clavichord kits in his leisure hours). I wrote to him, asking about how he came to build historical keyboards, his theory of the harpsichord's 1960s resurgence—and for an elaboration on his last paragraph.

Towards the beginning of his generous response, he wrote

> ...Society was beginning to change radically from the comfortable 'I Love Lucy' era of the 50s into a new world of conflict, technology, and a changing role of the individual in society…There was rising crime in the streets, and the first real waves of the drug culture. There was acid and dropping out and freaks with long hair and a lot of things that disturbed people, that made people feel that the world in which they were comfortable was eroding and changing into something about which they knew little, and over which they had no control…[62]

After these comments, Tuck gave his "thumbnail history" of the harpsichord, including its nineteenth century demise, when, as he said, "[it] had pretty well gone the way of manual typewriters and slide rules." And he explained his final paragraph from the Whole Earth Catalog, excerpted here:

> …Plastic relationships have always been with us, but…in the 60s and 70s there was a move among a certain segment of society for more honesty in our relationships, more genuineness among us, and less of the debutant of the year marrying the most eligible bachelor sort of marriage.
>
> Of course the reference to killing and war concerned the Vietnam War, which was a gigantic black cloud over everyone's heads in those days. Whatever people feel about Iraq today, multiply it 100 times and you get the sense of how the nation was tearing itself apart over Vietnam…
>
> One way to stay sane during the madness was to bend over a lovely wooden box and pass strings from hitchpin to tuning pin and draw them up till they made lovely notes. Filing on the edges of keys, painting flowers on a soundboard, buffing the case till it shone, and then playing delicate, gentle, elegant music – what an antidote to the craziness and descent into insanity

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[62] Harold Langland, private correspondence, May 15, 2006. Quoted with permission.

> going on outside…Sensitive, gentle, quiet – those were the values we felt were missing as the nightly news gave us body counts and showed villages in flames.

In his 1971 and 2006 descriptions, Tuck articulates components of a white middle class ideology in relation to modernity. He conjures familiar bourgeois ideals in his reference to the "ladder of success" and the "debutant of the year marrying the most eligible bachelor," ideals against which instrument offered resistance. He also places the craft and its processes of filing keys and painting soundboards off of modernity's trajectory, portraying harpsichord building as an escape from the era's instabilities. As these accounts demonstrate, besides allowing an escape route, harpsichord building also enabled its participants—apprentices, DIY builders, and shop owners—to sustain their class position, by offering a means to cultivate a complex manual skill, by linking one to highbrow domestic musical practices, and by marking cultivated taste in objects of artistry.

In choosing to express the era through lists of wildly varying but nevertheless iconic phenomena, fads and technologies, these builders stage it as a disjointed, distracting, fast-paced and manic time, one that shifts in startlingly quick succession from superhighways to junk food to A-bombs and H-bombs. In trying to recover the shared sensibility that drove so many to apprentice at Boston School shops, and to build DIY harpsichord kits and in the 1960s U.S., I am drawn to consider this dialectic between the feeling of building and the feeling of living, between the feeling of being obsessively attuned to acoustic and visual minutiae of historical labor and the feeling of being lost in a sea of man-made developments, between the feeling of moving slowly, incrementally towards a tangible goal of historical purity and aesthetic perfection, and the feeling of speeding uncontrollably towards a

destination as bleak as it is unpredictable. It seems that in this particular time-space of the 1960s-70s United States, the perception of an outside world in destabilized decline provided a ground against which the still life of harpsichord building could figure both ideological and affective significance

Conclusion

United States poet John Hollander expressed the relationship between the harpsichord and the "modern" in his 1963 unpublished poem composed for Ralph Kirkpatrick. Entitled "On Playing an Obsolete Instrument," it begins with a summary of the harpsichord's disadvantages before moving to a reverie on the "old days" of musical listening in the age of Orpheus.

O
it
takes
too long
to tune and
looks far too
fragile to be
moved about a
world stocked
with disaster
too weak even
now to move a
freighted ear
Time untuning
everything of
tightness made
attentions slip
as it was played
for Olde Musickers
while Polyhymnia and
Clio fidgeted and seven
More wearied knowing girls
Fussed with their hats But then
The silliness stopped When Orpheus
Took up a tom-tom once visions and
Order impinged on the landscape of
fragile but wiry dreams ringing in

-possibilities O now even
tapping out syllables on
a curving back is not as
joyful or strong a music[1]

[1] Poem by John Hollander, 1963. Accessed in the Ralph Kirkpatrick Papers, Yale University Music Library Special Collections, Box 6, Series IIc, folder 56. Handwritten inscription reads: "For Ralph from John Hollander, London, July '63." Hollander is currently poet-laureate of Connecticut.

The lines "O it takes too long to tune" and "Time untuning everything of tightness made" evoke to the time-inefficient maintenance practices discussed in Chapter 2. That it "looks far too fragile to be moved about in a world stocked with disaster" conjures the vagaries of the instrument's wooden parts and pernickety plectra, vagaries that modernist builders strove to eliminate. The "world stocked with disaster" links to sorts of twentieth century developments described in the conclusion to Chapter 5. The line "too weak even now to move a freighted ear" recalls the perceived shortcomings described in Chapter 3: the "problem" of the instrument's quiet or monotonous timbre and the various aspects of disaster-stocked modernity that intercepted listeners' ability to hear—much less be moved by—the sound.

As this dissertation has shown, the idea of the contemporary world in decay was a classed critique of what were felt to be specifically *American* contributions to the twentieth century: assembly lines, mass culture, city noise. The historical aspects of the harpsichord that were storied as "decimated" by the Industrial Revolution became prized components of a middle class ideal of authenticity: as not mass-produced, artisan-based, as centered around delicate care, nuanced hearing, and historically-grounded feeling.

Besides being a story of the white middle class in the mid-twentieth century United States, this dissertation could also be read as a story of the middle-class white *male*. The period between the 1950s and 1970s was a transitional one for this gendered demographic. Middle-class white men returned from World War II to find themselves bound by social expectations to seek upward mobility. In the countercultural years of the late 1960s and early 1970s, this trajectory towards upward mobility (one that was experienced much differently

by men than by women in this time period, and among this demographic group) marked a point of contention. It was the age of the so-called "Peacock Revolution" in men's fashion, with flamboyant colors and patterns and Baroque-inspired styles, and the reclaiming of the "dandy" figure from the Enlightenment era. Interestingly, it is also at this moment when popular representations of J.S. Bach seemed to proliferate. I would argue that Bach came to represent the ideal of a post-1950s, "new masculinity"—a masculinity that encompassed deep sentiment as well as sexual potency. (Many 1960s-1970s representations of the composer noted the "vigor" that resulted in his 20 children.) Barbara Ehrenreich has suggested that not only did the Vietnam War call American foreign policy into question, but it also "discredited the style of aggressive masculinity kept fervently alive by two decades of Cold War anticommunism."[2] With the 1970s came men's liberation and consciousness-raising movements, largely oriented around reclaiming the right of men "to play and show affect," to be liberated from the "sex role demands to be thoroughly competent and self-assured," from the expectation to be dominant in the workplace and at home, and to be breadwinners.[3]

The gendered aspect of the harpsichord revival has not been my focus, though it is one that deserves extended future consideration. The American harpsichord revival covered in the preceding chapters certainly intersects with some of these trends listed above. For example, where much of the dissertation argues for a middle-class affective crisis, in relation

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[2] Barbara Ehrenreich, *Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1983), 105.

[3] Jack Sawyer, "On Male Liberation," *Liberation* 15 (August 1970), 32-33.

to mid-twentieth century contexts, one could further specify this as a middle-class *masculine* affective crisis. Frank Hubbard's narrative of disenchantment with the pressure towards upward mobility could be interpreted as disenchantment with the gendered set of expectations for middle-class men of the late 1940s and 1950s. Further, building harpsichords was an activity that was in many ways gendered masculine; many practitioners were socialized into cabinetmaking through high school shop classes, or working with their fathers in home workshops.[4] Within harpsichord shops, there was to some extent a gendered division of labor, with cabinetmaking tasks performed primarily by men, and musical finishing, kit packing and office work performed by women—though there were, of course, notable exceptions to this. Additionally, a few builders and shop visitors remembered a certain amount of heteronormative machismo in the harpsichord-building scene (one of my informants remembered anti-gay remarks being commonplace in early years of some shops); others did not remember this as pronounced.

Additionally, a number of "straight" informants I consulted remarked on the strong gay and lesbian contingent within harpsichord and Early Music scenes of the era. Indeed, some of the most influential harpsichord builders, players and Early Music performers have been gay.[5] Some period performers who got their start during the late 1960s and 1970s noted that Early Music has provided a safe artistic and social space in which to be "different" from various sorts of mainstreams, including sexual mainstreams.

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[4] On the other hand, some professional harpsichord builders began apprenticeships with no previous woodworking experience.

[5] A few prominent examples include Wanda Landowska, Ralph Kirkpatrick and John Challis.

Finally, one may note another prominent absence in the preceding pages: that of musical scores and transcriptions. As I noted in the Introduction, in my focus on changing the inflection around "historical authenticity," I have targeted this dissertation primarily to the field of Historical Musicology. As outlined above, the strategies I have used have been drawn from Cultural Studies, Organology, and Ethnomusicology. Thus, I see my contribution to Musicology being mainly a methodological one, by using ethnography, oral history and pop cultural ephemera as primary sources, by using eBay and thrift stores as repositories through which to reconstruct musical repertoires and genres, and (in case of Chapter 3's "High Fidelity Sounds" section) representing musical works through narratives of texture changes, rather than through transcriptions. In future revisions of the project, I hope to add sonograms of various postwar models of harpsichords as a means to present aspects of timbre on a more detailed scale.[6] I hope also to include more detail on how the specifics of the harpsichord's mechanism, touch, dynamic range and sound effects influenced the keyboard performance practices of popular musicians, particularly in the virtuosic genre of "harpsichord boogie." Partly, the methodological choices represented in this dissertation I made in order to broaden what counts as "analytical skill" in musicological scholarship, by showing that there are ways of demonstrating one's disciplinary "chops" other than mapping relationships between musical notes.

Perhaps as important for me has been to bring mass culture, consumers and amateurs within the purview of Historical Musicology. For example, I have attempted to

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[6] Current harpsichord acoustics studies tend not to include sonograms for pre-historicist models, such as German factory models, Pleyel or Challis instruments.

give equal weight to amateur and professional voices in my coverage of debates around what a harpsichord is. I have attempted to do the same for "lowbrow" and "highbrow" cultural forms, by juxtaposing "high" and "low" discourses and repertoires within the same chapters, and by leaving out assessments of artistry—assessments that in academic discourse have tended to land "easy-listening" genres with the short end of the straw. Arguably, I have done this to an extent that short-shrifts Classical music repertoire that was part of the project of representing harpsichords; Chau-Yee Lo for example, has noted the way in which Elliott Carter's 1961 *Double Concerto* presents the harpsichord and piano in battle with one another, in a manner perhaps similar to the *Said the Piano to the Harpsichord* album.[7] At the same time, I have attempted to bring Western art music practices within the purview of Ethnomusicology, by bringing issues of commodity circulation, authenticity, and exoticism (central to current works in the discipline) to bear on the practices of Western art music. Even today, there remains relatively little ethnomusicological work that treats Western Classical music practice, or Western cultures of privilege.

While on the one hand, I hope this dissertation makes the case that the materiality of instruments is part of what makes Organology a useful methodology for the practice of Historical Musicology (by liberating scholarship from considerations of composers and repertoires), I also it demonstrates that the ontology of an instrument emerges largely through intangible aspects of culture, through discourses, fantasies, and recorded sounds.

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[7] See Chau-Yee Lo, "Dramatizing the Harpsichord: The Harpsichord Music of Elliott Carter," *Mitteilungen der Paul Sacher Stiftung* (2004): 24-28.

Writing a history about people who are still alive, who were present during many of the scenes I describe, and who expressed some understandable uneasiness about being academically theorized, has been more than a little daunting. Being read and critiqued by one's informants is a wonderful "problem" to have, one that has and will continue to benefit my project—and that I hope might inspire some to publish their own accounts of postwar harpsichord and Early Music scenes. My interpretations do not and cannot encompass the nuances of all the individual perspectives I consulted, and my analyses may not ring true for everyone. My strategy in this dissertation has been to pursue those narratives and themes most often reiterated in archived correspondence, period media and interviews—but also to mark spots where informants had differing opinions. These spots of contention I plan to expand in the coming years of refining the project.

Appendix 1: Selected Discography of Popular and Jazz Recordings Featuring Acoustic Harpsichord or Harpsipiano, 1939-1979

This listing is not meant to be comprehensive, but rather to give a sense of the extent of the harpsichord's popular recording career in the mid-twentieth century and the range of genres involved. It is heavily oriented toward United States recordings and does not reflect, for example, the many releases from Britain and Germany. It also does not include the many soundtrack albums released in the United States and Italy during the 1960s and 1970s.

In cases of albums with four or fewer tracks featuring the harpsichord, separate tracks are listed. In cases where albums appeared on different labels, I selected the album released first. One should also note that many singles from the 1950s were released on 78 RPM as well as 45 RPM; I listed the formats as they appear in my private collection. If the track uses a harpsipiano instead of a harpsichord, this is noted in parentheses.

1930s-1940s

Alec Wilder Octet.

1938. "Concerning Etchings," "A Little Girl Grows Up." Columbia 36126. 78 RPM.
1938. "A Debutante's Diary," "Neurotic Goldfish." Columbia 36319. 78 RPM.
1939. "Japanese Sandman," "Sea Fugue Mama." Columbia 36323. 78 RPM.
1939. "Walking Home in the Spring," "Such a Tender Night." Columbia 36315. 78 RPM.
1940. "Bull Fiddles in a China Shop," "Pieces of Eight." Columbia 36187. 78 RPM.
1940. "His First Long Pants," "Her Old Man Was Suspicious." Columbia 36186. 78 RPM.
1940. "Please Do Not Disturb the House Detective," "The House Detective Registers." Columbia 36188. 78 RPM.
1940. "Kindergarten Flower Pageant," "Dance Man Buys a Farm." Columbia 36189. 78 RPM.

Chisholm, George and His Jive Eight. 1948. "Midnight in Piccadilly," "Out of Nowhere." London LA-40. 78 RPM.

Lewis, Meade "Lux." 1939. *Variations on a Theme*:
"19 Ways of Playing a Chorus." Blue Note RS 934B. 78 RPM.
"Self-Portrait." Blue Note RS 935B. 78 RPM.
"School of Rhythm." Blue Note RS 937A. 78 RPM.
"Feeling Tomorrow like I Did Today." Blue Note RS 938A. 78 RPM.

Marlowe, Sylvia.
1939. *From Bach to Boogie-Woogie*. General Records G13. 78 RPM.
"Honky Tonk Train." 4006A.
"Yancey Special." 4006B.
"In an 18th Century Drawing Room." 4007A.
"Pine Top's Boogie Woogie." 4007B.
"Bach Goes to Town." 4008A.
"Boogie Woogie Rhapsody." 4008B.
1948. *Said the Piano to the Harpsichord.* Young People's Records YPR-411. 78 RPM.
1949. "18th Century Barrelhouse," "Cuckoo-Cuckoo." Decca 24205. 78 RPM.

1950s

Baxter, Les. 1957. "Brazilian Bash," "Mood Tattooed." *Skins!* Capitol T-774. LP. (harpsipiano)

Betty Ann with Harpsichord Tommy. 1955. "12th Street Rag." CI-SUM 1154. 78 RPM. (harpsipiano)

Big J.J. c. 1950s. "Harpsichord Blues." Day Dell 1776-B. 45 RPM.

Brandon, Henry. 1958. "Allegro for Harpsichord." *Brandon Swings*. Urania UR 1210. LP. (harpsipiano)

Butler, Champ with the Percy Faith Orchestra. 1953. "Ya Ha Bibity Baby." Columbia 40055. 45 RPM.

Carson, Mindy. 1958. "Sentimental Touch." Columbia 41153. 45 RPM

Cavallaro, Carmen. [c. 1950s]. "Meet Mister Callaghan," "Runnin' Wild Boogie." Decca 28373. 78 RPM. (harpsipiano)

Clooney, Rosemary.
1951. "Come On-A My House." Columbia 39467. 45 RPM.
1951. "Find Me." Columbia 39591. 45 RPM.

1951. "I Wish I Wuz (Hi, Ho, Fiddle Dee Dee)." Columbia 39536. 45 RPM.
1951. "If Teardrops Were Pennies," "I'm Waiting Just For You." Columbia 39535. 45 RPM.
1951. "Rose of the Mountain." Columbia 39467. 45 RPM.
1951. "Cheegah Choonem (I Haven't Got It)," "Stick with Me." Columbia 40024. 78 RPM.
1952. "Botch-A-Me," "On the First Warm Day." Columbia 39767. 45 RPM.
1954. "Mambo Italiano." Columbia 40361. 45 RPM.
1954. "My Baby Rocks Me." Columbia 40142. 45 RPM.
1954. "This Ole House." Columbia 40266. 45 RPM.
1955."Key to My Heart." Columbia 40619. 45 RPM.
1958. "Digs Me." Coral 62061. 45 RPM.

Clooney, Rosemary with Marlene Dietrich.
1952. "On the First Warm Day." Columbia 39767. 45 RPM.
1952. "Too Old to Cut the Mustard." Columbia 4-39812. 45 RPM.
1953. "Dot's Nice, Donna Fight!," "It's the Same." Columbia 4-39980. 45 RPM.

Clooney, Rosemary with Thurl Ravenscrof.
1955. "Where Will the Dimple Be?" Columbia 40434. 45 RPM.
1955. "Love Among the Young." Columbia 40498. 45 RPM.

Corey, Jill. 1959. "Love Will Find Out the Way." Columbia 41360. 45 RPM.

Damone, Vic. 1958. "Gigi." Columbia 41122. 45 RPM.

Dawn, Dolly. 1952. "Buzz Me, Baby." Jubilee 6009. 78 RPM. (harpsipiano)

Denny, Martin. 1959."Ringo Oiwake." *Exotica Vol. III*. Liberty LST 7116. LP.

De Vol, Frank. 1958. "The Night They Invented Champagne." Columbia 41137. 45 RPM.

Diamond, Leo. 1956. "Sixth Finger Tune." RCA-Victor 6710. 45 RPM.

Donati, William. 1958. *The Happy Harpsichord.* Tampa TP 7. LP.

Edelhagen, Kurt. 1950. "Interlude." Empire DI 502. 78 RPM.

Elliott Dance Band. 1957. *The Hi-Fi Sound of the Dean.* Kapp KL 1056. LP.

Esquivel, Juan García. 1959. "Bella Mora," "Lazy Bones," "La Ronde," "Whatchamacallit." *Exploring New Sounds in Stereo.* RCA Victor LSP 1978. LP.

Faith, Percy.

1952. "Amorada." Columbia 39874. 45 RPM.
1953. "Tropic Holiday." Columbia 43746. 45 RPM.
1954. "Eleanora." Columbia 40185. 45 RPM.
1954. "Rainfall." Columbia 40323. 45 RPM.
1955. "Delicado," "Gaviota," *Delicado.* Columbia CL 681. LP.

Feyer, George. 1955. *Echoes of Christmas.* Decca 4814. LP.

The Four Lads with Jill Corey. 1954. "Do You Know What Lips are For?" Columbia 40177. 45 RPM.

Freeman, Stan. 1951. *Come On-A Stan's House.* Columbia CL 6193. 10-inch LP.

Gallup, Frank. 1958. "Got A Match." ABC-Paramount 9931. 45 RPM.

Garner, Erroll. 1958. "Song from Moulin Rouge," "Don't Look for Me," "Côte d'Azur," "Paris Blues," "When Paris Cries." *Paris Impressions.* Columbia CL 1212. LP.

Harris-Leigh Band. 1955. *Jazz 1755*. Kapp KL-1011. LP. (harpsichord-piano)

Hartley, Ray. 1958. "Chanson D'Amour." RCA Victor 47-7228. 45 RPM.

Heywood, Eddie. 1958. "It's Really Nothing." RCA Victor 47-7262. 45 RPM.

Hyman, Dick. 1958. *Dick Hyman & Harpsichord in Hi Fi.* MGM E3606. LP.

Jack Marshall Sextet. 1959. "Have You Met Miss Jones?," "I Didn't Know What Time It Was," "Sweet Georgia Brown." *18th Century Jazz.* Capitol T 1108. LP.

Jaxon, Bob. 1957. "I'm Hurtin' Inside." RCA Victor 7106. 45 RPM.

Lee, Peggy. 1957. "Greensleeves," "The Happy Monks," "The White Birch and the Sycamore." *Sea Shells.* Decca DL-8591. LP.

Madigan, Betty. 1955. "Be a Little Darlin.'" MGM 11903. 45 RPM.

Martin, Dean.
1957. "Good Morning Life." Capitol 3541. 45 RPM.
c.1959. "It Takes So Long to Say Goodbye." Capitol 4124. 45 RPM.

McCurdy, Ed. 1957. *When Dalliance was in Flower, Vol. 2.* Elektra EKL 140. LP.

Melachrino Strings. 1952. "Meet Mr. Callaghan." RCA V 20-4891. LP.

Michael Coldin Septet. 1959. "Silhouettes in Jazz." Everest SDBR 1038/LBR 5038. 45 RPM.

Miller, Chuck. 1957. "Songs After Hours." Mercury 61779. 45 RPM.

Miller, Mitch.
1951. "Bunk House Boogie," "Cuban Nightingale." Columbia 39742. 45 RPM.
1952. "Horn Belt Boogie." Columbia 39727. 45 RPM.
1952. "Just Dreaming." Columbia 39901. 45 RPM.
1952. "Without My Lover." Columbia 39901. 45 RPM.
1953. "Conversation Piece for Horns and Harpsichord." Columbia B-1674. 45 RPM.
1953. "Tira Lira Madiera," "Oriental Polka." Columbia 39982.
1956. "Lisbon Antigua." Columbia 40635. 45 RPM.
1956. "Madiera." Columbia 40655. 45 RPM.
1956. "That Girl." Columbia 40683. 45 RPM.
1957. "Who Will Kiss Your Ruby Lips." Columbia 40947. 45 RPM.
1957. "Whistle Stop." Columbia 40999. 45 RPM.

Monroe, Vaughn. 1958. "There's No Piano In This House." RCA-Victor 7193. 45 RPM. (harpsipiano)

Murphy, Billy (Sticky Fingers). c. 1950s. "Honky Tonk Harpsichord," "Sticky Fingers." Josie 45-875. 45 RPM.

Parker, Frank. 1954. "Parker's Lament." Columbia 40156. 45 RPM.

Prince-Joseph, Bruce.
1956. *Swingin' Harpsichord.* Hi Fi Record R-603. LP.
1958. *Anything Goes: Hi-Fi on the Harpsichord.* RCA Camden CAS-416. LP.

Rich, Dave. 1957. "Key to My Heart." RCA-Victor 6926. 45 RPM.

Rogers, Eric. 1959. "Joanna," "Lingering Lovers." London 1879. 45 RPM.

Snyder, Bill.
1952. "Flying Fingers," "Dizzy Fingers." Decca 9-27907. 45 RPM. (harpsipiano)
1952. "Harpsi-Boogie," "Raviolli Rag." Decca 9-28086. 45 RPM. (harpsipiano)

Sodsai, Sondi. 1959. *Sondi.* Liberty LRP 3110. LP.

Sunsetters. 1956. "Tennessee Walkin' Horse," "Waltzing Willie." ABBOTT 3017. 45 RPM.

Weed, Buddy. 1955. "Harpsichord Rag." Coral 9-61404. 45 RPM.

Paul Weston Orchestra. 1957. "Crescent City." Columbia CL 977. 45 RPM.

Winterhalter, Hugo. 1951. "Across the Wide Missouri." Victor 20-4017. 78 RPM.

1960s

Anita Kerr Singers. 1966. *Slightly Baroque.* Warner Bros. 1665. LP.

Association. 1967. "Angeline," "No Fair At All," "You Hear Me Call Your Name." *Renaissance.* Warner Bros. WPCR-10075. LP.

Axelrod, David. 1968. "The Fly." *Songs of Innocence.* Capitol 11362. LP.

Ayler, Albert. 1965. "Angels." *Spirits Rejoice.* ESP Disk 1020. LP.

The Baroque Inevitable. 1966. *The Baroque Inevitable.* Columbia CS 9387. LP.

The Beach Boys. 1967. "Heroes and Villains." *Smiley Smile.* Capitol 9001. LP.

The Beatles.
1967. "Fixing a Hole." *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.* Capitol SMAS 2653. LP.
1968. "Not Guilty." Unreleased until 1996, when it appeared on *Beatles Anthology 3*. Capitol C1 7243. CD.
1968. "Piggies." *The Beatles* [The White Album]. Apple SWBO 101. LP.

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1966. "Hard Lovin' Loser," "La Columbe," "In My Life." *In My Life.* Elektra EKS 74027. LP.
1967. "Both Sides Now." *Wildflowers.* Elektra EKS-74012. LP.

Cramer, Floyd. 1962. "Hot Pepper." RCA-Victor 47-8051. 45 RPM.

Crutchfield, Jerry. 1962. "That Happy Feeling" Felsted 8645. 45 RPM.

Darin, Bobby. 1961. "Walk Bach to Me." ATCO 6200. 45 RPM.

David Carroll and His Orchestra.
1961. "Percussion Parisienne." Mercury PPS 6008. 45 RPM.
1962. "Jacqueline and Caroline." Mercury 72046. 45 RPM.

Denny, Martin. 1960. "Sentimental Journey." *The Enchanted Sea.* Liberty LRP 3141. LP.

Derek and Ray. 1966. *Interplay.* RCA-Victor LPM-3530. LP.

Dickerson, Walt. 1965. "A Patch of Blue," "Alone in the Park." *Impressions of a Patch of Blue.* MGM SE 4358. LP. (Sun Ra, harpsichord)

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c. 1966. "Sunshine Superman," "Legend of a Girl Child Linda," "Bert's Blues." *Sunshine Superman.* Epic BN 26217. LP.
1967. "Hampstead Incident," "Sunny South Kensington." *Mellow Yellow.* Epic LN 24239. LP.

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Duchin, Peter. 1968. *The Life and Soul of the Party.* Decca DL 74987. LP.

Electras. 1967. "Action Woman." Scotty 6720. EP.

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Jobim, Antonio Carlos. 1967. "Antigua." *Wave.* A&M SP 3002. LP.

John, Elton. 1969. "Skyline Pigeon." *Empty Sky.* DJM Records DJLPS 403. LP.

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1967. "Session Man." *Face to Face.* Reprise RS 6228. LP.
1968. "Two Sisters." *Something Else.* Reprise RS 6279. LP.
1969. "Shangri-La," "She Bought a Hat like Princess Marina," "Young and Innocent Days." *Arthur, or the Rise and Fall of the British Empire.* Reprise RS 6366. LP.

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1967. *Lonely Harpsichord on a Rainy Night.* Viva 6006. LP.
1968. *Lonely Harpsichord in Shangri-La* Viva 6011. LP.
1968. *Lonely Harpsichord: Memories of that Rainy Night.* Viva 6016. LP.

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1966. "Frustration." *The Mamas & the Papas Deliver*. Dunhill 50014. LP
1966. "Monday Monday." *If You Can Believe Your Eyes*. Dunhill 50006. LP.
1967. "My Heart Stood Still." *The Mamas & the Papas*. Dunhill 50010. LP.
1968. "Midnight Voyage." *The Papas & the Mamas*. Dunhill 50031. LP.

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Martin, Ray. 1966. *Michelle Going for Baroque*. RCA Camden CAL-976. LP.

Matthews, Tobin. 1962. "Susan." Columbia 42489. 45 RPM.

Mauriat, Paul.
1967. *Blooming Hits*. Philips 600-248. LP.
1967. *Prevailing Airs*. Philips PHS 600-280. LP.

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1967. *Christmas Rhapsodies for Young Lovers*. Viva 6010. LP.
1967. *Rhapsodies for Young Lovers, Vol. II*. Viva 6008. LP.
1967. *Spanish Rhapsodies for Young Lovers*. Viva 6004. LP.

1968. *The Look of Love*. Viva 6015. LP.
1968. *Love Rhapsodies*. Viva 6013. LP.

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1967. "All of Your Toys." Unreleased until Rhino Records' 1987 *Missing Link* compilation.
1967. "The Girl I Knew Somewhere." Colgems 1004. 45 RPM.
1967. "Pleasant Valley Sunday." *Pisces, Aquarius, Capricorn & Jones Ltd.* RCA-Victor RD 79-12. LP.
1968. "It's Nice to Be With You." Colgems 1023. 45 RPM.

The Moody Blues. 1967. "The Morning, Another Morning," "The Afternoon." *Days of Future Passed*. Deram DES 18012. LP.

The Mystic Moods Orchestra. 1968. "Far from the Madding Crowd." *The Mystic Moods of Love*. Philips PHS 600-260. LP.

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1965. "Play with Fire." *Out of Our Heads*. London LL 34-29. LP.
1966. "Goin' Home," "High and Dry." *Aftermath*. Decca 4786. LP.

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Sapphire Thinkers. 1967. "Get Along Boy." *From Within*. Hobbit Records HB 5003. LP.

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The Sidewalk Swingers. 1966. *Folk Swingin' Harpsichord with 12 String Guitar*. Warner Bros. WS1532. LP.

Simon and Garfunkel. 1966. "Scarborough Fair." *Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme*. Columbia CS 9363. LP.

Solal, Martial.
1965. "Ah! Lea!," "Bi-gamme." *Martial Solal en Liberté*. Columbia CCTX 240502. LP.
1967. "Volez, Balles," "Virevoltant," "Billes de Joie." *Fafasifa*. Columbia CBS 63473. LP.

Sounds Orchestral. 1962. "When Love Has Gone." *Cast Your Fate to the Wind*. Cameo Parkway Records 7046. LP.

Steamhammer. 1969. "Johnny Carl Morton," "Turn Around." *MK II*. CBS 6369. LP.

Stone Poneys with Linda Rondstadt. 1967. "Different Drum." *Evergreen Vol. II*. Capitol 2763. LP.

Sunforest. 1969. "Give Me All Your Loving." *Sound of Sunforest*. Deram Nova SDN 7. LP.

The Three Suns. 1961. "Theme from 'A Summer Place.'" *Fever and Smoke*. RCA Victor LSP-2310. LP.

Ultimate Spinach. 1968. "Plastic Raincoats," "Pamela." *Ultimate Spinach*. MGM SE 4518. LP.

Van Morisson. 1969. "Cypress Avenue." *Astral Weeks*. Warner Bros. WS 1768. LP.

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Webster, Ben. 1964. *See You At the Fair*. Impulse A-65. LP.

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Zacharias, Helmut. 1966. *Pop Goes Baroque*. RCA Victor LPM 3597. LP.

Zombies. 1968. "I Want Her She Wants Me." *Odyssey and Oracle*. Date TES 4013. LP.

18th Century Concepts.
1967. *In the 20th Century Bag*. Sidewalk 5900. LP.
1968. *Off on a 20th Century Cycle*. Sidewalk 5909. LP.

18th Century Corporation. 1968. *Bacharach Baroque*. United Artists UAS 6697. LP.

1970s

Airto. 1970. *Natural Feelings*. Buddha Records BDS-21-SK. LP.

Angle, Don. 1975. *New Angle on Harpsichord*. AFKA SK-274. LP.

Baroque Jazz Trio. 1970. *Baroque Jazz Trio*. Saravah SH 10 004. LP.

Biggs, E. Power. 1973. *E. Power Biggs Plays Scott Joplin on the Pedal Harpsichord*. Columbia 32495. LP.

Crofut, Bill and Kenneth Cooper. 1975. *Folk and Baroque*. Unreleased.

Dilcher, Cheryl. 1970. "Music Box." *Special Songs*. Ampex A10109. LP.

Drake, Nick. 1971. "Fly." *Bryter Layter*. Island ILPS 9134. LP.

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Gagnon, André. 1971. *Let It Be Me*. Columbia ES-90034. LP.

Garner, Erroll. 1972. "When A Gypsy Makes His Violin Cry," "Tea for Two." *Gemini*. London XPS 617. LP.

Hardin, Louis. 1971. "Bells Are Ringing," "Voices of Spring," "What's the Most Exciting Thing," "Coffee Beans," "Down is Up." *Moondog II*. Columbia KC 30897. LP.

The Jackson 5. 1970. "I'll Be There." *Third Album*. Motown MS 718. LP.

The Keyboards. 1973. *Harpsichord Mood*. Contour Records 2870 339. LP.

The Kinks. 1970. "Village Green." *The Kinks are the Village Green Preservation Society*. Reprise Records RS 6327. LP.

Langdon, Verne. 1974. *Vampyre at the Harpsichord.* Electric Lemon PLP-1916. LP.

Leon & Malia. 1972. *Blend.* Trim TLP 1972. LP.

Mancini Magic. 1974. *Harpsichord Mood.* Contour 2870 363. LP.

Mittoo, Jackie. 1971. "Soul Bird," "Right Track," "Mother Funk." *Wishbone.* Light in the Attic 021. LP.

Modern Jazz Quartet.
1971. "Variations on a Christmas Theme," "England's Carol." *Plastic Dreams.* Atlantic SD 1589. LP.
1974. *Blues on Bach.* Atlantic SD 1652. LP.

Otis, Shuggie. 1970. "Oxford Gray." *Here Comes Shuggie Otis.* Epic BN 26511. LP.

Parton, Dolly. 1970. "Down from Dover." *The Fairest of Them All.* RCA Victor 4288. LP.

The Partridge Family.
1970. "I Think I Love You." *Partridge Family Album.* Bell 6050. LP.
1971. "I'm on My Way Back Home," "I Woke Up in Love This Morning," "I Would Have Loved You Anyway," "Summer Days." *Sound Magazine.* Bell 6064. LP.
1971. "Blue Christmas," "Christmas Card to You," "Sleigh Ride." *A Partridge Family Christmas Card.* Bell 6066. LP.

Queen. 1974. "Fairy Feller's Master Stroke." *Queen II.* Elektra EKS 75082. LP.

Roberts, William Neal. 1972. *Great Scott! Ragtime on the Harpsichord.* Klavier Records 17-L-69. LP.

Scruggs, Earl. 1973. "Peking Fling." *Dueling Banjos.* Columbia C 32268. LP.

Slim, Memphis. 1972. "Ain't Nothing But a Texas Boogie on a Harpsichord," "Ain't Nothing But a New Orleans Boogie on that Same Harpsichord." *Southside Reunion.* Warner Bros. BS 2646. LP.

The Stanley Steamer. 1973. *The Stanley Steamer.* Jolly Roger JR 5002. LP.

Tyner, McCoy. 1975. "Celestial Chant," "Land of the Lonely." *Trident.* Milestone Records M 9063. LP.

Van Morrison. 1970. "Everyone." *Moondance.* Warner Bros.-Seven Arts WS 1835. LP.

Wakeman, Rick. 1972. *The Six Wives of Henry VIII.* A&M Records SP 4361. LP.

Washington, Grover, Jr. 1972. "Love Song 1700." *All the King's Horses.* Kudu Records KU-07. LP.

White, Barry.
1973. "Never Never Gonna Give You Up," "Honey, Please Can't Ya See." *Stone Gon.'* Twentieth Century Records T 423. LP.
1973. "Standing in the Shadows of Love," "Bring Back My Yesterday," "I'm Gonna Love You Just a Little More Baby." *I've Got So Much to Give.* Twentieth Century Records T 407. LP.
1974. "I Love You More than Anything," "I Can't Believe You Love Me." *Can't Get Enough.* Twentieth Century Records T 444. LP.

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Zappa, Frank. 1970. "Twenty Small Cigars." *Chunga's Revenge.* Bizarre MS 2030. LP.

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Appendix 2: Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc. Kit Market Data[1]

Kit Customer Survey Responses, 1962-1981

Where have you seen our recent ads?	
Magazine	**No. reporting**
Scientific American	61
Fine Woodworking	56
New Yorker	53
Early Music	44
Smithsonian	43
Saturday Review	22
Diapason	16
American Organist	15
New York Times	13
Yankee	12
American Guild of Organists	11
Whole Earth Catalog	8
ARS Journal	3
Clavier	3
American Recorder	2
Continuo	2
Natural History	2
Country Journal	2
Early American	2
Workbench	1

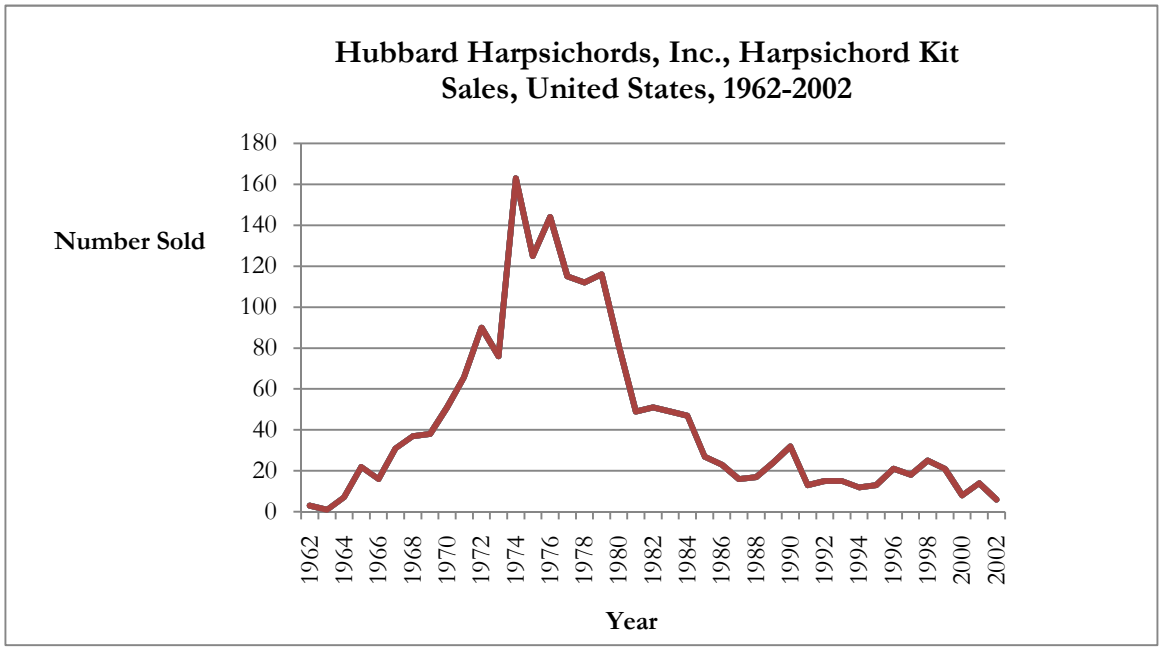
[1] All statistics gathered by the author.

Occupational Breakdown of Hubbard Kit Buyers

Job	Count
Music-related professions*	117
Engineering	64
Medicine	36
Science	27
Other (non-music)	24
Education (non-music)	21
None given	19
University professor (no field specified)	18
Administration	15
University professor (non-music)	15
Finance	13
Student, non-music	11
Computers	11
Professional art	8
Manual labor	8
Clergy	7
Manufacturing	7
Publishing	7
Law	6
Architecture	5
Social work	5
Marketing	5
Entertainment	4
Library work	4
Retired	4
Government	3
Museum work	2

***Music professions**

Professional musician	32
University music professor	27
Instrument making	15
Piano tech	14
Music teacher (non-university)	10
Church music	9
Music student	8


Hubbard Harpsichords, Inc., Harpsichord Kit Sales, United States, 1962-2002
Number Sold
180
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
1962
1964
1966
1968
1970
1972
1974
1976
1978
1980
1982
1984
1986
1988
1990
1992
1994
1996
1998
2000
2002
Year

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Biography

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