



# SOUNDBOARD

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*Newsletter of the Friends of St Cecilia's Hall  
and Museum*

NO. 40, WINTER 2024



## THE FRIENDS OF ST CECILIA'S HALL AND MUSEUM

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*Front cover:* Eric Thomas and Héloïse Bernard providing 'A Celebration of Lute Music' at St Cecilia's Hall on 7th September (see p. 7).

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### New members

The Friends of St Cecilia's Hall are always happy to welcome new members. Please do encourage your friends, family members and colleagues to join us.

They should be able to find a joining form on our new website (currently under development): <https://friendsofstceciliashall.com>.

Alternatively, anyone interested in joining the Friends can write, requesting the necessary forms, to: Hon. Treasurer, Friends of St Cecilia's Hall and Museum, Niddry Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1NQ.

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## *From the Chair's Desk*

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Greetings to you all from Cremona, Italy having just returned home from an exciting and packed Annual Organ Festival in Göteborg.

We are delighted to be able to include two more bursary reports in this edition: from Huw Keene who presented his research on medieval partbooks at two conferences in 2023, and from David Coney who was conducting research into the Chapel Royal of Scotland in the 16th and 17th centuries and who used the bursary to attend the annual MedRen conference.

The Committee are very grateful for the support of various organisations who work with us on our Festival Fringe concert series. This year The Vauxhall Band concert was supported by both the Shackleton Fund and the Continuo Foundation. You can see some short videos from their visit to Edinburgh on their YouTube channel “The Vauxhall Band”. We are also very grateful to Jenny Nex, who organises this concert on behalf of the Shackleton Fund.

We were also very thankful to the Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Edimburgo, who both advertised the Italian-related programmes in the Fringe to their members, but also invited us to a networking event in early August to present our concerts. Our Secretary, Dorothy Wright, presented at this event and reported that it was an interesting and successful afternoon. The Committee have discussed how we might build on this relationship, and develop links with other such institutions in the city.

Finally, we have continued a very successful relationship with the Keyboard Trust, originally initiated by Pamela Jackson – with this year’s concert featuring Germany-based Avinoam Shalev who played a number of instruments from the Collection. Avinoam has written a short article for us about his visit to Edinburgh, which is complemented by a piece from Elena Vorotko of the Trust’s Artistic Directorate.





*An enthusiastic turn-out for 'A Celebration of Lute Music' (see p. 7)*

In the last year we have had a retiral from the Friends Committee – Roger French who has taken care of our website for many years has retired to concentrate on other important projects. We are very thankful of the time that Roger has dedicated to the Friends over the years, and the page that he built. We are also grateful to new committee member Jean Allen, who has taken on the mantle of communications and is in the process of designing a new website for us. In this she is being aided by Kate Wilsdon, and they will present a sneak-peak of the new site at the AGM in November.

This has been a very busy year for me personally, with two weddings (both my own), another international move, and being part of a major European Project Grant application – which we have recently found out has been funded. I am grateful as ever to the Friends Committee for all their hard work during the year, which is the only way I can continue as Chair from afar and was very happy that some were able to come and celebrate with us in Old St Paul's in June.

Final thanks must go as always to Erica Schwarz who typesets these editions, and has raised the level of our *Soundboard* publications to such a high standard.

*Eleanor Smith-Guido*

## *Pamela Jackson Memorial Scholarship*

### *Luke Whitlock Lecture Recital*

At our Annual General Meeting in November 2023, we were delighted to have with us Luke Whitlock, the first recipient of the Pamela Jackson Memorial Scholarship. Luke is a composer, researcher and producer for Radio 3 and at the AGM he provided us with a midterm update on his Masters programme – *Neglected Creatives: a portfolio of compositions exploring instruments made by women, accompanied by a public performance of these new works using the museum instruments for which they were composed.*

One of the potential outputs being considered was a public lecture recital the following summer, and this unique, well-attended and thoroughly enjoyable event took place on 20th July 2024 in St Cecilia's Hall. It took the form of an informal concert introducing around 80 attendees to a selection of instruments from the University of Edinburgh's Musical Instrument Collection. Luke chose to concentrate on the 'neglected individuals' who influenced their creation: Barbara Shudi, Florentine and Marthe Besson and Carleen Hutchins.



The performers were John Kitchen, musicians from the Wallace Collection and string players from Edinburgh and Glasgow, with 11 musicians taking part in total. Using a mixture of presentations from Luke, interviews with individual musicians and performance, we learnt about the personal history and life stories of these women, their contribution, the mechanics of the instruments, the challenges of playing them and the sounds they produced.



In a varied programme John Kitchen played on the double-manual harpsichord (Burkat Shudi, 1766) beginning with Handel's *Overture in Athalia*. This was followed by three works composed by Luke, all of which were having their world premiere. The works showcased the wide range of instruments being used by

the musicians including treble, mezzo, soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, small bass and contrabass violins together with alto and contrabass cornophones. Over the course of an hour and forty minutes the audience was taken on a fascinating journey of exploration with an innovative format that gave all of us who attended a truly informative and enjoyable experience. The event was recorded by Luke and will form part of his research output and the conclusion of his Masters. Luke is now [*as at July 2024*] in the process of writing up his research before submitting his thesis in August.

*Dorothy Wright*





## *The Lute Manuscript*



On 7th September 2024 the University of Edinburgh mounted the first of what we hope will be a series of events built around the Lute Manuscript, the purchase of which was supported by the Friends. The manuscript contains a unique early 17th-century collection of 320 pieces of Italian and French music.

The event took place in St Cecilia's Hall and was entitled 'A Celebration of Lute Music'. Edinburgh alumnus Eric Thomas (lutenist) was joined by soprano Héloïse Bernard in a true celebration of music for the lute. The whole concert was inspired by the University's acquisition of this exceptional 1620 volume and featured works by John Dowland, Vincenzo and Michelangelo Galilei and René Mesangeau, as well as including some pieces from the volume. By all accounts the concert was a great success with over 100 people attending. Having conserved, digitised, catalogued, displayed and now performed material from the manuscript, attention will now turn to academic research, recording, publications and further performances.

*David McClay and Dorothy Wright*

## *'Practising and performing on historical instruments is a rare gift'*

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*Report from Avinoam Shalev*

Arriving at St Cecilia's Hall and Museum for the first time – in fact seeing Edinburgh for the first time, indeed this being my first time in Scotland – I was excited. The concert was originally planned for 2020, but due to the pandemic and then due to a new member in my family, it had to be postponed for a total of four years. Walking through the city from Princes Street tram stop, I was struck by the many layers of its history – some quite ancient, and some very recent. Old buildings alongside new ones, centuries-old shops next to the newest chain of cafés. And then, in a street with multiple popular pubs, I suddenly found myself in front of the Museum.

I was greeted very kindly and cordially by every worker and volunteer I encountered there. Jenny, Jonathan and Esteban were very generous in allowing me to take my time with the incredible gems, the keyboard instruments of the collection. In far-away Berlin, after looking into their various specifications and after consulting with Jenny, I had concocted a programme using the softest and the loudest – the Hubert clavichord of 1784 and its distant relative, the Broadwood harpsichord of 1793, with all its bells and whistles. This unusual combination ended up as attractive as I had hoped for, giving me great pleasure in exploring the wide expressive range of these instruments and allowing the public to experience their hearing adjusting to two very different sonic worlds in one concert.

Practising and performing on historical instruments is a rare gift. It is a fundamentally different experience from playing on modern copies. Both are



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(usually!) evidence of fine craftsmanship and assist in understanding the musical mindset of the time. The historical ones, though, transport the performer and audience back in time, they look and feel antique. They have experienced history, with some elements changed by humans, climate or simply age. And they have a certain aura – this harpsichord was owned by this composer and that fortepiano was purchased by this important historical figure. It is rare and a fortunate thing that living collections, like that of St Cecilia's, exist and are run by such highly-motivated experts. It enables a very lively exchange between the works of art, restorers, performers and audiences.

I would like to thank the staff of St Cecilia's, the Friends and Carola in particular and finally Elena and Sarah from the Keyboard Charitable Trust. Till next time!

*Avinoam Shalev*

*Professor für historische Tasteninstrumente und Direktor des  
Instituts für Alte Musik an der Universität der Künste Berlin*

*Professor of historical keyboard instruments and head of the  
early music department at Berlin University of the Arts*



## *The Keyboard Charitable Trust*

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The Keyboard Charitable Trust and its members were very excited when the first concert collaboration with St Cecilia's Hall was established in 2014. As well as donning beautiful architecture and unique shape, the Hall is the oldest purpose-built concert hall in Scotland and it is connected directly to the Russell Collection, now part of the wider University of Edinburgh's Musical Instrument Collection, one of the greatest historical instruments museums in the world. For the historical performance branch of the Trust this set-up was a real treasure.

The Trust was established in 1991 by John Leech MBE as a gift for his wife Noretta Conci MBE. After an illustrious career as a pianist and pedagogue Noretta was retiring, and John put together all their connections of musical friends from around Europe and the Americas and created a web of support for young musicians (aged 18–30). He felt that, just leaving conservatoires, pianists' tender young wings would benefit from a caring introduction to touring life and an opportunity to learn the workings of establishing a career while being supported by the Trust. Since then, the Trust has presented over 300 young pianists, historical performers and organists in over 900 concerts worldwide.

When the Keyboard Trust started to work with the Friends of St Cecilia's, we met like-minded people, who wanted to help young musicians build their



experience. For historical performers, playing on ‘new’ old instruments is always a tentative experiment. Each instrument is unique and has its own voice, quirks and challenges. Learning to work with that character is pivotal for a historical performer. Being flexible with the touch and creative with registers and pedals and merging with the instruments under their fingers to make them sing is not always straightforward. All these qualities need practice and St Cecilia Hall’s together with the University of Edinburgh’s Collection are here to give young harpsichordists and forte-pianists this opportunity. We are very pleased to have nurtured together such musicians as Jean Rondeau, Catalina Vicens and Avinoam Shalev, among others, giving them the unique experience of performing at St Cecilia’s Hall.

The Keyboard Trust extends special thanks and appreciation to Eleanor Smith and her colleagues for their annual invitations to recommend a top young musician for their series.

*Elena Vorotko*

*Honorary Research Fellow  
The Royal Academy of Music*

*Artistic Directorate  
The Keyboard Charitable Trust  
[www.keyboardtrust.org](http://www.keyboardtrust.org)*

### **Players presenting concerts as part of The Keyboard Trust/Friends collaboration**

**2014** - Ksenia Semenova

**2017** - Martyna Kazmierczak

**2019** - Masumi Yamamoto

**2024** - Avinoam Shalev

**2016** - Jean Rondeau\*

**2018** - Catalina Vicens

**2023** - Dominika Maszczyńska

\* At St Andrew’s and St George’s

## *Bursary Reports*

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### LATE MEDIEVAL DRAWING AND MUSIC PRODUCTION

My dissertation investigates late medieval drawing and music production through a set of four manuscript partbooks, collectively known as F-CA Mss. 125-8. These partbooks are exceptional not only because the 146 paper folios of each book are enlivened by pen and wash drawings – a rarity for medieval music sources produced in the Netherlands – but recent scholarship has revealed that their music was copied by their original owner, Zeghere van Male (1512–1601). Van Male is a documented Catholic merchant and burgher of Bruges, and therefore far removed from the typical profile of a 16th-century music scribe. My own thesis focuses specifically on the social meanings of the partbooks, exploring the context in which they were used; van Male's role as draughtsman; the social significance of his music copying and drawing; and the role of humour in domestic music performance.

With support from the Friends of St Cecilia's Hall Bursary Award, in July 2023 I was able to present two papers at conferences in the United Kingdom, both originating from my doctoral research.

The first, *Visualising Pilgrimage in Sixteenth-Century Domestic Music*, was delivered at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds and explored the semantic potential of word–image–music relations throughout the partbooks. I made the case that van Male intentionally associated drawings of pilgrimage with other signifiers across openings to criticise pilgrimage practice – in line with a number of other Catholic thinkers including Erasmus. In so doing, images functioned as prompts to navigate the subtleties of religious identity with friends and family in the domestic sphere.

The second, *Singing to be Social: Domestic Music, Drawing and the Shaping of Bourgeois Identity in Sixteenth-Century Bruges*, was delivered at the Society for Renaissance Studies Biennial Conference in Liverpool. Here, I reconstructed the original material context of the partbooks' use, arguing that they were seen and performed from in a social dining context. Not only did images mediate music-making, but also conversation and the consumption of food.

I received invaluable feedback at both conferences that will shape the direction of my doctoral thesis as I enter my third year. At Leeds I was prompted to think about the social significance of pilgrimage, and to what extent those performing from the partbooks saw themselves in the images. At Liverpool, I had thought-provoking debates as to the relationship between musical genre and the subjects represented in images. What, if any, was the relationship between images of food consumption and the music of the mass, for example?

All in all, both trips were very successful, and I benefited not only from the delivery of my papers, but also networking opportunities. I had much interest from publishers in developing my thesis into a monograph, as well as fascinating conversations with scholars whose work has inspired much of my own, such as Richard Wistreich. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Friends for all their support.

*Huw Keene*



## MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE MUSIC CONFERENCE

Thanks to the support of the St Cecilia's Hall Bursary Fund, I was able to attend 'MedRen 2023' (that is, the Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference). MedRen is perhaps the most significant yearly gathering of musicologists of 'early music', and attracts experts from across the globe to exchange ideas and keep abreast of the latest developments in early music research.

This year's conference took place over five days (24–28 July) in Munich, where we were graciously hosted by the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities on their impressive campus in the Munich *Residenz*, the former palace of the Dukes and Kings of Bavaria. The programme consisted of seminars from 9am to 5pm across the five days (with appropriate convivial breaks, naturally), and was supplemented with three evening concerts from local specialist ensembles. Although I am uncertain of the exact number, there were certainly a few hundred delegates and, for most of the presentation sessions, five separate seminars going on at once.

The seminars were hugely varied, covering everything from minute analyses of particular musical works, to far broader musicological work such as investigations into references to music in literature, and research into the 'sound-world' of historical places during significant ceremonial events. A few seminars had direct implications for my own PhD research, but even the most far-removed from my areas of interest were useful in building up a better picture of music culture in the medieval and renaissance periods, and allowing me to keep abreast of the latest developments in research – including some newly-available research methods.

It would be pointless to try to comment on everything I attended, but there were a couple of seminars I felt would be especially interesting to the St Cecilia's community. Patrick Allies presented a paper on attempts to improve the sonority of choirs in England in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, by constructing 'acoustic chambers' under the choir stalls. They were made by digging large trenches and lining the walls with pots 'tuned' to various resonant frequencies. Whether they actually worked, in fact, remains a mystery! Also, a paper on the painter Albrecht Dürer by Susan Forscher Weiss examined the influence of music on his work and his involvement in musical endeavours. Of particular note was the fact that the earliest recorded instance of German organ tablature occurs in Dürer's hand in a notebook of his – some fifty years before the next known instance of this notation!

The inclusion of concerts from top-flite ensembles was what really made the conference stand out to me. On Monday night, we were treated to a concert of music predominantly by Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376–1445) by Sabine Lutzenberger (voice), Marc Lewon (voice, lute and quinterne) and Baptiste Romain (fiddle and bagpipes). The Tuesday concert was provided by *Ensemble Phoenix Munich*, a mixed consort that performed in various combinations of voices, viols, guitars and lutes, with a programme of music from the Spanish court of the 17th century. But for me the concert highlight came on Wednesday, when German vocal sextet *Singer Pur* presented a programme focusing on Orlando di Lasso and Ludwig Senfl, both of whom are closely related to Munich city. Despite one of their regular members being replaced last-minute due to illness, the ensemble's performance was achingly beautiful. No doubt performing to an audience of experts is a nerve-wracking task!

Perhaps the thing that struck me the most about my visit was just how much Munich is steeped in culture. Before the conference I had little idea of just how



important the city was as a centre for music-making in the 16th century. The city is rightly proud of its musical heritage – its state orchestra is currently celebrating its 500th anniversary, tracing its lineage to the instrumental ensemble formed at the chapel of the Bavarian dukes in 1523. The composer Orlando di Lasso, who worked for a time in the court chapel, is celebrated with an entire street named after him (I can't think of any British streets named after composers, but I'm willing to be corrected...). But it was Ludwig Senfl who was probably the most significant figure for Munich's music, leading the chapel in its very earliest days. It surprises me that his music is not better known in the UK – eclipsed by his predecessors Josquin and Isaac, and the 'Palestrina generation' that would come after. A new critical edition of his complete works is being produced at the moment and is being made open-source (i.e., freely available for anyone to download), a practice which I hope will become standard for critical editions in the future.

In summary, MedRen 2023 was a much-needed boost to both my academic confidence and my grasp of the general field of early musicology. I made many new connections, some of which will be of direct benefit to my thesis, examining music at the Chapel Royal of Scotland in the post-Reformation/pre-Civil War period. I am deeply grateful for the support of the Friends of St Cecilia's in enabling me to have this experience.

*David Coney*

*David Coney is a current PhD student at the University of Edinburgh, researching the Chapel Royal of Scotland in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. He is also active as a practical musician, being an Alto Lay Clerk at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral and directing the early music vocal consort 'Cantores Sanctae Crucis'.*

**The Friends of St Cecilia's Hall Bursary Fund** offers awards to students of early music and related subjects. Awards are made annually and are to assist with expenses related to projects involving early music and early music technology. The Committee would be delighted and very grateful if you were able to support the Bursary Fund by making a single or regular donation. You can donate by cheque or bank transfer using the information overleaf. You can also Gift Aid your donation by completing and signing the Gift Aid form. Thank you.

### BURSARY FUND APPEAL

**Donations by post to:** Hon. Treasurer, Friends of St Cecilia's Hall and Museum, 1 Niddry Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1NQ  
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