

HUBBARD HARPSICHORDS INCORPORATED

ITALIAN 17TH CENTURY SINGLE-MANUAL HARPSICHORDS



During the 16th century, northern Italy became the world center of harpsichord making. Prior to the last decade of the century Italian makers enjoyed an almost complete monopoly of their trade. It is not surprising, therefore, that Italian harpsichords were the most common harpsichords on the continent even into the baroque era. While they were typically used as continuo instruments accompanying vocal and instrumental music, they are equally capable of projecting the most passionate affects in solo music. Most harpsichords were short-scaled and as a result their sound characteristically has a sharper attack and quicker decay than those of Flemish or French types. It is this clarity of voice that distinguishes Italian harpsichords from later instruments. Decorated with delicate moldings and graceful, carved cheeks, such fragile, slender instruments were often inserted into sturdy, harpsichord-shaped boxes which were often elaborately decorated on the exterior.

The Italian harpsichords we offer are lightly constructed of Mediterranean cypress, Port Orford or Alaska yellow cedar (depending on availability) around softwood bottoms and left in a natural finish. The keyboards have boxwood-

covered naturals and ebony-capped hardwood sharps. They are strung entirely in brass.

ITALIAN HARPSICHORD AFTER ANON, CA. 1600

Our obtuse-tailed Italian harpsichord (pictured) is largely based on an anonymous instrument of about 1600 in the Raymond Russell Collection, Edinburgh that Frank Hubbard particularly admired. This instrument began its life with not 51 but 57 notes. In its first life it had seven split sharps (D/F#; E/G#; e-flat/d#; a-flat/g#; e-flat''/d#'; a-flat'/g#', , e-flat''/d#'). This scheme accomplishes two things; first it allows the instrument to be tuned in meantone and still have access to more than the normal eight good keys in that temperament and, second, it extends the descent of chromatic notes in the bass from A to E. It probably gained its current range of C-d''' (51 notes, chromatic) early in the 18th century. It is this later range, extended by one note for transposing that we offer standard. This instrument may also be made in its original range (C/E-f''', broken bass octave, 7 split sharps) non-transposing.

ITALIAN HARPSICHORD AFTER G.B. BONI 1619

The acute-tailed Italian we offer is largely based on an instrument attributed to Giovanni Battista Boni and restored by Frank Hubbard in 1974. We offer this instrument with the disposition 2 x 8' and range C-d''', 51 notes, chromatic, transposing. It may also be had in its original range and disposition, C/E - c''' with split sharps on d's and g's (chromatic down to G), non transposing, 1 x 8'.



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Each instrument is provided with stands of turned legs and carved feet. They may also be fitted with a traditional outer case, either painted or veneered in walnut. Alternatively, they may be made up as false inner-outer instruments, retaining a good deal of the illusion of lightness of construction while being a great deal more robust - especially welcome when the instrument must be moved from venue to venue.

Recordings of interest

Demonstration CD of Hubbard & Broekman
1987 Single-manual harpsichord after
Anon ca. 1600. Music of Storace, Kerll,
J.S. Bach.
U.S. Postpaid \$ 10

Girolamo Frescobaldi: Toccate, Partite
Capricci and Other Works. Louis Bagger
plays a wide selection of pieces by the
early 17th C. Italian keyboard composer
whose influence reached well past J.S.
Bach. Instrument by Frank Hubbard
(1969) after Anon ca. 1600 Digital
Compact Disc. Titanic Ti-259 CD-022
U.S. Postpaid \$ 21

Specifications

ITALIAN 17TH CENTURY SINGLE-MANUAL HARPSICHORDS

Range: 51 notes, C-d¹¹, chromatic, transposing

Touch-surface octave span: 6 1/4"

Disposition: 2 x 8'; handstops

Dimensions: length 6' 1"; width 2' 7"

Shipping weight: 200 lbs. crated; with outer case, 300 lbs.

Inner case of cypress (waxed), turned leg stand, boxwood naturals, ebony-capped hardwood sharps, reproduction wood jacks \$ 16,500

With walnut outer case \$ 18,500

With painted outer case \$ 18,500

Options

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| a. Delrin® jack credit | \$ -900 |
| b. Bone-covered naturals & ebony-capped hardwood sharps | \$ 575 |
| c. Skunk-tail sharps | \$ 200 |
| d. Cordura nylon carrying cover | \$ 350 |
| e. Original range & disposition (after Anon) premium | \$ 1,000 |
| f. Original range & disposition (after Boni) credit | \$ -1,000 |
| g. Feather plectra (wood jacks only) | <i>inquire</i> |

Price January 1, 2007