

HUBBARD HARPSICHORDS INCORPORATED

FLEMISH 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY SINGLE-MANUAL HARPSICHORDS

If the harpsichord was born in Italy during the 15th century, it matured into prominence as a solo instrument in Flanders between 1575 and 1650. Flemish builders were not hesitant about using a more robust construction than that traditionally used in the typical Italian instruments. The results of their innovations became the most widely emulated approach to harpsichord building in the classical era. By 1625, Antwerp was the acknowledged center for harpsichord production, a position it held until the growth of the French school in the next century. Until the harpsichord was discarded as a vehicle for musical expression, nearly all North European makers claimed descent from the great workshops of Antwerp.

À PETIT RAVALEMENT

HARPSICHORD AFTER HANS MOERMANS (1584) WITH EXTENDED RANGE

The Hubbard large Flemish single-manual harpsichord is patterned on an instrument built in Antwerp in 1584 by Hans Moermans. Frank Hubbard was privileged to obtain this instrument from a Belgian collection in the 1960's. Following 18th c. period French practice, we have preserved the outline and structure of the instrument but enlarged the 55-note, bass short-octave range of the original keyboard to a chromatic span of 58 notes (GG-e''') and adapted the layout to provide a French 18th-century scaling.

In true 18th century fashion, the instrument possesses two choirs of strings at eight-foot pitch (2 x 8'). The design allows for transposition between a' = 415 and 440 Hz - all keys play in either position. The instrument has a crisp, free-speaking tone capable of performing the brilliant solo keyboard works of both the 17th and 18th centuries as well as concerti with baroque orchestra. Its rich bass allows it to serve equally well as continuo accompaniment in the chamber music literature of the period. Perhaps its most practical feature, however, is its compact size, which makes it a portable and welcome companion for the touring professional.

The layout and touch of the keyboard is that of the 18th century originals from which its design is derived. The keys are rear-guided by pins running in an unbushed wooden rack at the rear of the keyboard and painstakingly balanced for evenness of touch. The octave span is 6 1/4" and the natural key heads are 1 3/8" long, conforming to 18th century French practice. Key fronts are decorated with wood arcades (pear or box, as available), the ebony key heads are rounded and scored with decorative lines, and the stained hardwood, bone-topped sharps are tapered in height and width. The jacks are meticulous reproductions of 18th century French jacks manufactured from the correct woods. Tongues can be furnished pierced for Delrin or feather plectra with return springs of either Nylon or hog bristle. Hubbard Delrin jacks may be substituted. It is close attention to details such as these that results in the light, reliable and,



Flemish single-manual harpsichord
à petit ravalement
shown on carved-foot baluster stand

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above all, comfortable action favored by 18th century composers and players – one that these instruments possess.

Our large Flemish single *à petit ravalement* is offered painted in a traditional 18th century French style, with contrasting interior and exterior colors reconciled by gilded moldings and accented with gold-leaf bands on case and lid. The soundboard and wrestplank may be decorated in period French style, as well. Each instrument comes with a carved-foot baluster stand finished in black. A turned-leg trestle stand in dark-stained oak may be substituted at a modest additional cost. Matching benches are also offered.

HARPSICHORD AFTER ANDREAS RUCKERS (1640) WITH EXTENDED RANGE

Our small Flemish single-manual harpsichord is based on an instrument made in Antwerp in 1640 by Andreas Ruckers, which, sometime in the 18th century had its range extended from 45 to 51 notes, probably by an English maker. From the view of conservation of originality, this job was very well done. Even more compact than its larger cousin, this instrument makes a great deal of superior sound, more than one might judge possible from its size – in this regard the remodeler's decision to retain the archaic 1 x 8', 1 x 4' disposition was particularly well judged. Despite the inevitable cramming and scaling changes, one certainly still hears in it a great deal of the magical tone quality that was a part of the mystique surrounding 17th century Flemish harpsichords. Frank Hubbard had the privilege of restoring this instrument in 1970 at which time detailed drawings were made.

As with the larger instrument, the keyboard layout is directly patterned on the original 18th century replacement keyboard. The range C-d^{'''}, chromatic, is eminently useful.

We have made the minor adaptation of the case to allow the keyboard to transpose one semitone up to a['] = 440 Hz - all keys play in either position. The octave span is 6 5/16". The touch surfaces of the natural keys are real bone, the accidentals are ebony-capped dark hardwood. The keyfronts may be decorated with English-style mouldings (as in the original) or French-style arcades, as wished.

It is offered decorated with reproduction block-printed paper on the interior surfaces and painted on the outside. The soundboard and wrestplank may be decorated in the original 17th c. Flemish style, which happily survived the 18th c. re-purposing of the instrument. The instrument is offered standard on a dark-stained oak trestle stand but a custom baluster stand of seven turnings may be substituted at modest additional cost.



Flemish Single after Andreas Ruckers (1640)
with 18th c. extended range
shown on custom cherry stand

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Specifications and prices

HARPSICHORD AFTER HANS MOERMANS (1584) WITH EXTENDED RANGE

Range: 58 notes, GG-e^{'''}, chromatic, transposing one semitone

Disposition: 2 x 8', buff stop; handstops

Touch-surface octave span: 6 1/4"

Dimensions: length 6' 11"; width 2' 10"

Instrument weight (exclusive of stand): 100 lbs

Shipping weight: 310 lbs. crated

Painted decor, black-painted carved-foot baluster stand,
ebony naturals, bone-topped hardwood sharps,
reproduction wood jacks, leather covered registers

\$ 18,000

Options

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| a. Delrin® jack credit | \$ -1,250 |
| b. Keyboard with bone-covered naturals & stained hardwood sharps | \$ 600 |
| c. Soundboard & wrestplank decorated in XVIIIc. French style | <i>inquire</i> |
| d. Marbled exterior of case | <i>inquire</i> |
| e. Keywell & interior lid & case decorated with Flemish papers, mottoes & Ruckers style name batten | \$ 1000 |
| f. Turned trestle stand - 4 turned oak legs with ball feet, moulded lower stretcher | \$ 475 |
| g. Cordura nylon carrying cover | \$ 350 |
| h. Feather plectra (wood jacks only) | <i>inquire</i> |

Plan view of the extended-range Flemish single after Hans Moermans. It is given to the same scale as the plan view of the original-range Flemish single after Ruckers, below.



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HARPSICHORD AFTER ANDREAS RUCKERS (1640) WITH EXTENDED RANGE

Range: 51 notes, C-d^{'''},
transposing one semitone

Disposition:

1 x 8', 1 x 4', buff stop

Touch-surface octave span:

6 5/16"

Dimensions:

length 6'; width 2' 5"

Instrument weight (exclusive of
stand): 90 lbs

Shipping weight: 300 lbs. crated

Painted/papered decor, oak turned trestle stand, bone naturals, hardwood sharps,
reproduction wood jacks



\$19,000

Options

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| a. Delrin® jack credit | \$ -900 |
| b. Soundboard & wrestplank decorated in XVIIc. Flemish style | <i>inquire</i> |
| c. Marbled exterior of case | <i>inquire</i> |
| d. Cordura nylon carrying cover | \$ 350 |
| e. Custom 7-turning baluster stand (oak, cherry or walnut) | <i>inquire</i> |



Recording of interest:

Demonstration/comparison CD; Music of Anonymous, O. Gibbons, L. Couperin, H. Purcell and J.S. Bach played on both an instrument after Hans Moermans (1584) with extended range and an instrument after Andreas Ruckers (1640) with extended range

\$10

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FLEMISH 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY SINGLE-MANUAL HARPSICHORDS ORIGINAL RANGE

In the case of both these instruments, the original range included the use of a so-called 'short' octave, a traditional tuning scheme for extending the bass range of the keyboard without making it appreciably larger. In the case of the large single after Moermans, the range is so large originally that one is able to play a great deal of much later literature. If one wishes only to play music verbatim, the small single after Ruckers is largely limited to music of the seventeenth century, and not all of that.

The original ranges of each of these fine instruments proved, a while after their manufacture, too small for newer musical practices. This is why most small 17th century instruments of good reputation were enlarged in later times and not just set aside. The unfortunate irony is that such an enlargement must rob the sound of its original lustre. In the instance of the Moermans, it spent time strung as an instrument with two sets of 8' strings, a practice against which Ioannes Couchet attempted to warn Constantijn Huyghens. While the number of strings and keys did not change, the loading of the soundboard did and so did the sound. The Ruckers, even with its original disposition, was enlarged with additional sections at the ends of the bridges, moving strings and nut positions and a new keyboard. This made possible an additional six notes, four in the bass and two in the treble. While this made the instrument perfectly useful for much of 18th century music, the new bridge sections placed over formerly free soundboard also took a toll on the sound. This is not to say that the enlarged version of either instrument does not sound well - each does - but neither fairly represents its original type. For this reason we are more than happy to offer these instruments in their original ranges and dispositions. For these offerings reproduction wooden jacks are, of course, standard. Clever arrangement of the sort that must have been practiced by players when the instruments were nearly new will take care of most of the 'missing' notes. We are rewarded, in turn, with a nearly perfect response curve, as well as a very clear window into the sound that made these instruments so valuable to begin with.

Recording of interest:

Demonstration CD; Music of J.S. Bach, English virginalists, the Sweelinck school and North German organ school played on an instrument after Andreas Ruckers (1640) with original range \$10



HUBBARD HARPSICHORDS INCORPORATED

FLEMISH 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY SINGLE-MANUAL HARPSICHORDS ORIGINAL RANGE

Specifications and prices

HARPSICHORD AFTER HANS MOERMANS (1584) WITH ORIGINAL RANGE

Range: 55 notes, GG/BB-f^{'''}, non-transposing (a' ~ 415 Hz)

Disposition: 1 x 8', 1 x 4', buff stop; registers project through cheek

Touch-surface octave span: 6 5/8"

Dimensions: length 6' 11"; width 2' 10"

Instrument weight (exclusive of stand): 100 lbs

Shipping weight: 310 lbs. crated

Flemish decor, carved & painted baluster stand, bone naturals, imitation bog oak sharps, reproduction wood jacks \$ 19,000

Options

As above: a., c., d., e., f., g., i.

HARPSICHORD AFTER ANDREAS RUCKERS (1640) WITH ORIGINAL RANGE

Range: 45 notes, C/E-c^{'''}, non-transposing (a' ~ 415 Hz)

Disposition: 1 x 8', 1 x 4', split buff stop; registers project through cheek

Touch-surface octave span: 6 5/8"

Dimensions: length 6'; width 2' 4"

Instrument weight (exclusive of stand): 90 lbs

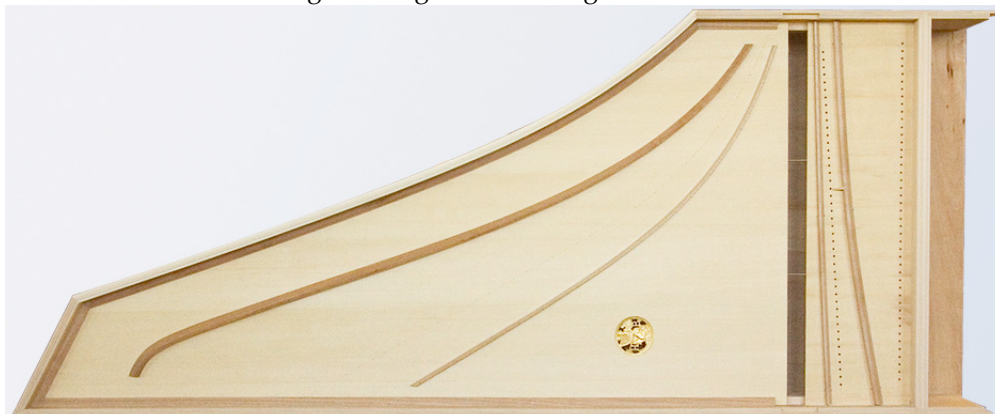
Shipping weight: 300 lbs. crated

Flemish decor, oak-turned trestle stand, bone naturals, imitation bog oak sharps, reproduction wood jacks \$ 19,500

Options

As above: a., b., c., d., f.

Plan view of original-range Flemish single after Andreas Ruckers



Price: July 1, 2007