

## Thomas Goff, Four Harpsichords, J.S. Bach and the Royal Festival Hall

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During the 1950s and 1960s in London, in the Royal Festival Hall, an unusual series of concerts took place. These concerts stood apart from the usual offerings in London's post-war musical life. What they offered was early music, principally J.S. Bach's concertos for two, three and four keyboards, played not on the piano, as had hitherto been the case, but on the harpsichord. This article documents, for the first time, the facts, and the implications, of the Royal Festival Hall concert series: how it came about; the repertoire; the performers; and the performances. The article concludes that the Royal Festival Hall concerts were notable in the evolution of the early music movement in the UK, deepening its reach to a broader audience and nurturing an awareness of an issue that was increasingly to gain traction in the later decades of the twentieth century: the idea of historical authenticity in the performance of early music.

**Keywords:** Early music movement in the UK; Thomas Goff; Royal Festival Hall; harpsichord concert series

### Introduction

During the 1950s and 1960s in London, in the Royal Festival Hall (hereafter RFH), an unusual series of concerts took place. Organized by Thomas Goff (1898–1975), a British aristocrat who had abandoned a career in the law for the more arcane occupation of harpsichord making, these concerts stood apart from the usual offerings of London's rich post-war musical life. What they offered was early music, principally J.S. Bach's concertos for two, three and four keyboards, played not on the piano but on the harpsichord.

It was not the performance of Bach's music that was significant in this series of concerts. Such performances had already been cemented into London's musical life, their popularity nourished by the BBC Proms which had, for decades, included much of the repertoire of J.S. Bach. The six concertos for two, three and four harpsichords BWV1060–1065 had formed a not insignificant part of the Proms repertoire, receiving a total of 92 performances in the period 1900–70 (Table 1).<sup>1</sup> Yet from the earliest of these Proms performances, on 11 October 1900 (the Concerto in C major for Two Keyboards, BWV1061), the harpsichord had been overlooked in favour of the pianoforte as the solo instrument. It was not until a performance on 13 August 1970 (of the Concerto for Three Harpsichords BWV1064) that the harpsichord was reinstated as the solo instrument.

Proms performances of Bach's concertos for solo harpsichord BWV1052–1056 and BWV1058, numbering 73 in all, had fared little better in this respect, with the Proms scarcely

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1 The BBC Proms Archive, which must be taken as the definitive source, lists no performances of any of the six concertos BWV1060–1065 after 1970 (*The Proms Archive*. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/proms/archive/search/1890s>. Accessed on 17 July 2013).

**Table 1.** BBC Proms performances of J.S. Bach's concertos for 2, 3 & 4 harpsichords BWV1060–1065

WORK	PERFORMANCE DATES	PIANO/HARPSICHORD
BWV1060 for two keyboards	<b>16 performances</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> perf. 2 Nov. 1900, last perf. 9 Sep. 1957	Entitled 'Concerto for two keyboards'. All performances were on piano
BWV1061 for two keyboards	<b>34 performances</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> perf. 11 Oct. 1900, last perf. 14 Aug. 1952	Entitled 'Concerto for two keyboards'. All performances were on piano
BWV1062 for two keyboards	<b>3 performances</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> perf. 12 Oct. 1923, last perf. 4 Sep. 1925	Entitled 'Concerto for two keyboards'. All performances were on piano
BWV1063 for three keyboards	<b>9 performances</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> perf. 28 Sep. 1923, last perf. 6 Sep. 1961	Entitled 'Concerto for three keyboards'. All performances were on piano
BWV1064 for three keyboards	<b>12 performances</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> perf. 31 Aug. 1923, last perf. 13 Aug. 1970	Entitled 'Concerto for three keyboards'. The first 11 performances were all on piano. The last, on 13 August 1970, was played on the harpsichord*
BWV1065 for four keyboards	<b>18 performances</b> First perf. 9 Oct. 1901, last perf. 1 Sep. 1948	Entitled 'Concerto for four keyboards'. All performances were on piano

Note: \* The soloists were Christopher Hogwood, Simon Preston and Philip Ledger with Neville Marriner conducting the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields.

deviating from the practice of presenting performances of the concertos on the modern pianoforte.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it was not until 15 August 1955 that a Bach concerto for solo harpsichord was rendered on the instrument for which it had been written, in a performance featuring George Malcolm as the soloist in the Harpsichord Concerto in D minor BWV1052. Two additional performances of this concerto were given by Malcolm, in 1957 and 1958, both on the harpsichord, after which the pianoforte resumed its role as the preferred instrument for the performance of Bach's keyboard music.<sup>3</sup> The idea of authenticity in the performance of Bach's keyboard repertoire was, it seems, slow to arrive at the BBC Proms.

That Bach's keyboard concertos had featured so prominently in Proms concerts was in itself significant, however, and it is clear that British audiences were well acquainted with the music of Bach, not least his concertos for two, three and four keyboards, well before the RFH series of harpsichord concerts which began in 1952, and which is the subject of this article. What British audiences were less acquainted with was the performance of this repertoire on the harpsichord. Despite the pioneering work of Arnold Dolmetsch in the early decades of the century (see later discussion), and despite some widening of its base by the middle of the century, the early music movement had not yet garnered a large popular following, nor had it made a broad commitment to the idea of authenticity in the performance of early music. The RFH concerts were, then, notable in the evolution of the early music movement in the UK, deepening its reach to a broader audience and nurturing an awareness of an issue that was increasingly to gain traction in the later decades of the twentieth century:

<sup>2</sup> The 73 Proms performances of Bach's concertos for one keyboard began with BWV1052 on 17 October 1908 and concluded with BWV1056 on 2 August 1993.

<sup>3</sup> In fact 35 years were to elapse before the harpsichord again replaced the pianoforte as the solo keyboard instrument in a Proms concert, in a performance of BWV1056 on 2 August 1993, with Anthony Halstead as soloist.

the concept of historically informed performance practice.<sup>4</sup> This article examines the facts, and the implications, of the RFH series of harpsichord concerts within the context of the early music revival in the UK, and against the background of the emergent concept of performative authenticity.

### The early music revival in the UK and beyond

By the time the RFH series began in 1952, the early music revival had been under way for more than 200 years. From its inception in early eighteenth-century England, France and Prussia, the movement had gathered pace through the nineteenth century, fuelled by the emergence of historicism and by Mendelssohn's landmark performance, in 1829, of Bach's St Matthew Passion. The concept of authentic performance practice was yet to emerge, however; this had been a revival based on repertoire, with 'little or no consideration [given] to re-creating the performance practice of Bach's day'.<sup>5</sup>

It was Arnold Dolmetsch (1858–1940) who pioneered the next stage in the revival. Arriving in London in 1883 from his birthplace of France, Dolmetsch led the way as a maker of early instruments, a performer of early music, and a researcher into neglected early music repertoire and historically informed approaches to playing it. Early music, he contended:

Must be presented in its original form, for obviously nobody can improve it. It must be played upon the instruments for which it was intended, in the conventional manner of its own period, free from the uncongenial ideas and modes of expression of our own time.<sup>6</sup>

It was through Dolmetsch's work that British audiences had their first opportunity to hear early music played on period instruments (albeit Dolmetsch's interpretation of such instruments – see later on historical authenticity in instrument construction) and in a historically informed manner, with the performances often given by Dolmetsch himself and members of his family. Style and interpretation were informed by his research, which also appeared in published form, most notably in *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVII and XVIII Centuries, Revealed by Contemporary Evidence* (1915).<sup>7</sup> As noted by Haskell, others before Dolmetsch had covered some of the same ground but no one had put the pieces together and made the connection between the theoretical and practical aspects of reviving early music.<sup>8</sup> Dolmetsch's scholarship, too, drawing as it did on historical treatises and writings, established an approach that was to be taken up by others committed to the concept of authenticity in the performance of early music. Robert Donington's *The*

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4 The concept of authenticity, whilst widely embraced by performers and musicologists in the 1960s and 1970s, was subsequently discredited in the musicological debates of the 1980s and 1990s. Differing interpretations of early music treatises, musical perceptions that were inevitably coloured by stylistic changes that had emerged in the centuries following the Baroque period, and twentieth-century performance contexts which differed markedly from earlier ones, combined to discredit the notion of performative authenticity. As a result the term has, in the past two decades, been largely rejected and replaced with less contentious ones, such as 'historically informed performance practice' – terms which implicitly acknowledge the limitations of historical fidelity, and which also account for the multiplicity of approaches that have emerged.

5 Harry Haskell, *The Early Music Revival: A History* (London, 1988), 15.

6 Arnold Dolmetsch, cited in Chalmers Burns, 'The First 20 Years: 1925–45', *Fortieth Haslemere Festival Programme Book* (1964), ACGB 50/112/2, Victoria and Albert Museum Archives: 4.

7 Arnold Dolmetsch, *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVII and XVIII Centuries, Revealed by Contemporary Evidence* (London, 1915).

8 Haskell, *The Early Music Revival*, 43.

*Interpretation of Early Music*,<sup>9</sup> for example, owes much to Dolmetsch both in the subjects with which it engages – many of which overlap with those in Dolmetsch's ground-breaking work – and in its use of historical sources. Indeed, Donington's dedication acknowledges the work of his predecessor: 'In grateful memory of Arnold Dolmetsch'.

Notwithstanding Dolmetsch's pioneering work, his agenda was not to be broadly embraced until later in the twentieth century. In the meantime the early music revival was sustained by small groups of enthusiasts – in England by such groups as the English Consort of Viols (run by two of Dolmetsch's students, Richard Nicholson and Marco Pallis); and most notably on the Continent by the network of Collegia Musica established in German universities, and by the Schola Cantorum, the music academy and research institution based in Basel. There were also occasional figures who 'made their presence felt beyond the specialist world',<sup>10</sup> including the harpsichordist Wanda Landowska (1879–1959). Her 'star quality' on both sides of the Atlantic hastened the acceptance of the harpsichord 'as a legitimate concert instrument',<sup>11</sup> and her approach had much in common with that of Dolmetsch. In the period immediately following the Second World War, the newly formed BBC Third Programme was quick to fly the early music banner, including, in its very first week of transmission in September 1946, a performance of Bach's Goldberg Variations, played on a two-manual harpsichord by Lucille Wallace. The performance of this work in its entirety, and on the harpsichord, was, at the time 'a rare and memorable experience',<sup>12</sup> and it underlined not only the commitment of the BBC's Third Programme to cater for 'the whole range of possibilities ... and for all classes of its listeners',<sup>13</sup> but also the growing profile of the early music revival.

It was not until the late 1960s, however, that the movement truly came of age in a 'sudden irruption' of professional concert-giving and recordings; for the first time, too, early music 'acquired [a] huge popular following'.<sup>14</sup> Early music groups and specialists became household names: David Munrow's *Early Music Consort of London*, and on the Continent such figures as Nikolaus Harnoncourt and his *Concentus Musicus of Vienna*, Gustav Leonhardt and Frans Brüggen. When the RFH series began in 1952, these later developments were yet to come. By the time the series came to an end in 1969, the early music revival was on the cusp of an exponential expansion in both its audience base and its commitment to performative authenticity. What role the RFH series might have played in this will be explored later in the article.

### The RFH harpsichord series

It was Thomas Goff who came up with the idea of the RFH concert series.<sup>15</sup> With his fourth harpsichord recently completed and now enough of his own instruments for the performance of four-harpsichord repertoire, Goff asked his old friend Boris Ord, then Director of Music at King's College Cambridge, whether he would conduct a concert which would feature Goff's

9 Robert Donington, *The Interpretation of Early Music* (London, 1974). The 1974 revised version followed the first and second editions, published in 1963 and 1965 respectively; clearly there was a demand for the sort of performance guidelines which Donington's book provided.

10 Nicholas Kenyon, 'Introduction: Some Issues and Questions', in *Authenticity and Early Music*, ed. Nicholas Kenyon (Oxford, 1988), 2.

11 Haskell, *The Early Music Revival*, 54.

12 Harold Rutland, 'Music Diary', *Radio Times: Journal of the BBC* (Midland Edition), 92/1200 (27 September 1946), 17.

13 William Haley, 'The Third Programme: An Introduction', *Radio Times: Journal of the BBC* (Midland Edition), 92/1200 (27 September 1946), 1.

14 Kenyon, 'Introduction: Some Issues and Questions', 2.

15 Thomas Goff, Autobiographical Talk, n.d., T2134–2136B&W, British Library.

four harpsichords.<sup>16</sup> The venue, Goff suggested, would be the newly opened Royal Festival Hall.<sup>17</sup> Ord agreed and on 20 May 1952, the inaugural concert was held. It was to be the first in a series of annual concerts held in the Royal Festival Hall, featuring Goff's instruments and Bach's concertos for two, three and four harpsichords. Entitled 'Concertos by Johann Sebastian Bach', the inaugural programme included the Concerto in C for Two Harpsichords BWV1061, the Third Brandenburg Concerto, the Concerto in C for Three Harpsichords BWV1064, the Concerto in D minor for Three Harpsichords BWV1063, and – to finish the concert in spectacular fashion – the Concerto in A minor for four harpsichords BWV1065. Whether wittingly or unwittingly, Goff had opened a new chapter in the early music revival in the UK: the performance of Bach's concertos for two, three and four harpsichords on the instrument for which they had been written, and in a large concert venue. And whether knowingly or not, he had sensed an audience demand for such performances – one of sufficient magnitude to fill a concert venue with the considerable seating capacity of 2,500. More than one review made reference to the large audience which had been attracted to the inaugural concert,<sup>18</sup> and the extensive press coverage of the event was, on the whole, positive:

No one will pretend that an auditorium of this size is suited to chamber music such as Bach must have intended; but the opportunities for hearing these great works played on harpsichords rather than pianos are so rare. That pleasure outweighed any suspicion of absurdity. The piano is always inadequate as a medium for Bach's harpsichord works; and with two, three or four instruments the inadequacy becomes more and more marked. What a difference with three or four harpsichords! The tone of the solo instruments blends beautifully with the strings, and every embellishment, every counterpoint, can be heard. Certainly the 21 strings often seemed too many on this occasion; but in the last two concertos – the D minor for three harpsichords, and the A minor for four there were moments of great beauty. The sound of the broken chords crossing and intertwining in the slow movement of the A minor concerto was exquisite ...<sup>19</sup>

With this winning formula in place, the concert was held annually for the ensuing nine years and then again in 1967 and 1969, always in the Royal Festival Hall, always with Bach's concertos for two, three and four harpsichords at the heart of the programme, and always concluding with the Concerto in A minor for Four Harpsichords BWV1065 (Table 2).<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the spectacular concluding four-harpsichord concerto became to Goff's concert series what the annual singing of *Land of Hope and Glory* was to the BBC Proms.

Of the six concertos which Bach wrote for two or more harpsichords, five were performed over the course of the concert series: BWV1060, 1061, 1063, 1064 and 1065. Only BWV1062

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16 *Ibid.*

17 *Ibid.*

18 See 'Experiments with Bach', *Western Morning News* (Plymouth), 22 May 1952, n.pag., Eileen Joyce Collection, Callaway Centre Archive, The University of Western Australia, CAL0005/49–54, 1952–57, File 1952(b); see also L.H.S., 'Music Review – Bach Harpsichord Concertos at Royal Albert Hall', *Kensington News*, 30 May 1952, n.pag., Eileen Joyce Collection, Callaway Centre Archive, The University of Western Australia, CAL0005/49–54, 1952–57, File 1952(a).

19 'Harpsichord Concertos by Bach', *The Scotsman, Edinburgh*, 22 May 1952, n.pag., Eileen Joyce Collection, Callaway Centre Archive, The University of Western Australia, CAL0005/49–54, 1952–57, File 1952(b).

20 It should also be noted that in 1962 and 1963, Thurston Dart and George Malcolm respectively and the Philomusica of London presented two all-Bach programmes, neither of which included any of Bach's two, three or four harpsichord concertos. Without the thread that had unified the 1952–61 concerts, the 1962 and 1963 RFH concerts fall outside the parameters of this article and therefore are not included in it. The 1967 and 1969 RFH concerts, on the other hand, returned to the earlier *raison d'être*: the performance of Bach's concertos for two, three and four harpsichords. The latter two concerts, then, fall within the scope of this article and are included.

Table 2. Royal Festival Hall concert series programmes

YEAR	COMPOSER	WORK	ARTISTS
1952	Bach	Concerto in C for two harpsichords, BWV1061 Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G Concerto in C for three harpsichords, BWV1064 Concerto in D minor for three harpsichords, BWV1063 Concerto in A minor for four harpsichords, BWV1065	Eileen Joyce Thurston Dart George Malcolm Denis Vaughan Conductor: Boris Ord Orchestra: RPO
1953	Bach Mozart Bach Mozart Vivaldi–Bach	Concerto in D minor for three harpsichords, BWV1063 Cassation in B <sup>b</sup> Concerto in C for three harpsichords, BWV1064 Concerto in F for three harpsichords, K242 Concerto in A minor for four harpsichords, BWV1065	Eileen Joyce Thurston Dart George Malcolm Denis Vaughan Conductor: Boris Ord Orchestra: LSO
1954	Bach Handel Malcolm Bach Mozart Blow Vivaldi–Bach	Concerto in D minor for three harpsichords, BWV1063 Overture to <i>Samson</i> Variations on a theme of Mozart for four harpsichords Concerto in C for three harpsichords, BWV1064 Concerto in F for three harpsichords, K242 Suite from <i>Venus and Adonis</i> Concerto in A minor for four harpsichords, BWV1065	Eileen Joyce Thurston Dart George Malcolm Denis Vaughan Conductor: Boris Ord Orchestra: LSO
1955	Bach Mozart Malcolm Vivaldi–Dart Mozart Handel Vivaldi–Bach	Concerto in C minor for two harpsichords, BWV1060 Adagio and Fugue for strings Variations on a theme of Mozart for four harpsichords Concerto in D minor for four harpsichords Concerto in E <sup>b</sup> for two harpsichords, K365 Overture to <i>Faramondo</i> Concerto in A minor for four harpsichords, BWV1065	Eileen Joyce Thurston Dart George Malcolm Denis Vaughan Conductor: Boris Ord Orchestra: LSO
1956	Bach Dowland Malcolm	Concerto in C for three harpsichords, BWV1064 <i>Lachrimae</i> for lute and strings Variations on a theme of Mozart for four harpsichords	Eileen Joyce Thurston Dart George Malcolm

(Continued)

Table 2. Continued.

YEAR	COMPOSER	WORK	ARTISTS	
1957	Vivaldi–Dart Bach Vivaldi–Bach	Concerto in D minor for four harpsichords Concerto in D minor for three harpsichords, BWV1063 Concerto in A minor for four harpsichords, BWV1065	Denis Vaughan Julian Bream (lute) Conductor: Boris Ord Orchestra: Philharmonia	
	Bach Dowland Malcolm Vivaldi–Dart Bach Vivaldi Vivaldi–Bach	Concerto in C for two harpsichords, BWV1061 <i>Lachrimae</i> for lute and strings Variations on a theme of Mozart for four harpsichords Concerto in D minor for four harpsichords Concerto in D minor for three harpsichords, BWV1063 Concerto for viola d'amore, lute and strings Concerto in A minor for four harpsichords, BWV1065	Eileen Joyce Thurston Dart George Malcolm Denis Vaughan Julian Bream (lute) Harry Danks (viola d'amore) Conductor: Raymond Leppard Orchestra: Boyd Neel Orchestra	
	1958	Vivaldi–Dart Dowland Malcolm Bach Bach Vivaldi Vivaldi–Bach	Concerto in D minor for four harpsichords <i>Lachrimae</i> for lute and strings Variations on a theme of Mozart for four harpsichords Concerto in C for three harpsichords, BWV1064 Concerto in D minor for three harpsichords, BWV1063 Concerto in G for lute and harpsichord Concerto in A minor for four harpsichords, BWV1065	Eileen Joyce Thurston Dart George Malcolm Denis Vaughan Julian Bream (lute) Conductor: Raymond Leppard Orchestra: Philomusica of London
	1959	Vivaldi–Dart Dowland Malcolm Bach CPE Bach–Leppard Vivaldi Vivaldi–Bach	Concerto in D minor for four harpsichords <i>Lachrimae</i> for lute and strings Variations on a theme of Mozart for four harpsichords Concerto in C for three harpsichords, BWV1064 Concerto in F for four harpsichords Concerto in G for lute and harpsichord Concerto in A minor for four harpsichords, BWV1065	Valda Aveling Thurston Dart George Malcolm Denis Vaughan Julian Bream (lute) Conductor: Raymond Leppard Orchestra: Philomusica of London
	1960	Vivaldi–Dart Malcolm CPE Bach–Leppard Vivaldi Vivaldi–Bach	Concerto in D minor for four harpsichords Variations on a theme of Mozart for four harpsichords Concerto in C for three harpsichords Concerto in G for lute and harpsichord Concerto in A minor for four harpsichords, BWV1065	Valda Aveling Thurston Dart George Malcolm Denis Vaughan Julian Bream (lute) Conductor: Raymond Leppard Orchestra: Philomusica of London

(Continued)

Table 2. Continued.

YEAR	COMPOSER	WORK	ARTISTS
1961	Vivaldi–Dart CPE Bach–Leppard Bach Mozart Malcolm Vivaldi–Bach	Concerto in D minor for four harpsichords Concerto in F for four harpsichords Concerto in C for three harpsichords, BWV1064 Concerto in E <sup>b</sup> for two harpsichords, K365 Variations on a theme of Mozart for four harpsichords Concerto in A minor for four harpsichords, BWV1065	Valda Aveling Geoffrey Parsons George Malcolm Thurston Dart Conductor: Raymond Leppard Orchestra: Philomusica of London
1967	Vivaldi–Dart Malcolm Vivaldi Bach Bach Boccherini–Bream Vivaldi–Bach	Concerto in D minor for four harpsichords Variations on a theme of Mozart for four harpsichords Concerto in G for lute and harpsichord Concerto in C for three harpsichords, BWV1064 Concerto in D minor for three harpsichords, BWV1063 Introduction and fandango for guitar and harpsichord Concerto in A minor for four harpsichords, BWV1065	Eileen Joyce George Malcolm Geoffrey Parsons Simon Preston Julian Bream (lute) Director: Neville Marriner Orchestra: Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields
1969	CPE Bach–Leppard Bach Bach Mozart Vivaldi–Bach	Concerto in F for four harpsichords Concerto in C minor for two harpsichords, BWV1060 Concerto in C for three harpsichords, BWV1064 Concerto in E <sup>b</sup> for two harpsichords, K365 Concerto in A minor for four harpsichords, BWV1065	Eileen Joyce Geoffrey Parsons Raymond Leppard Simon Preston Director: Neville Marriner Orchestra: Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields



in C minor, for two harpsichords, was omitted – inexplicably because, as an arrangement of Bach’s well-known concerto for two violins in D minor BWV1043, the two-harpsichord version works extremely well.<sup>21</sup> These concertos formed the core of Goff’s concert series, recycled year after year, feeding the audience’s appetite for the pleasure afforded by repeated hearings of familiar works. Such familiarity, too, would have been nourished by the earlier versions upon which two of the concertos were based, and with which the audience could reasonably be expected to have been acquainted: BWV1060 was a reworking of the well-known Concerto for Oboe and Violin, and BWV1065 was an arrangement of Vivaldi’s Op. 3 No. 10 for four solo violins.<sup>22</sup> Most frequently performed were the concertos with later BWV numbers: BWV1065 (12 years); BWV1064 (nine years); and BWV1063 (seven years). Not coincidentally, these were the concertos scored for the greatest number of solo instruments – respectively for four (BWV1065) and three (BWV1064 and 1063) harpsichords. They offered not only a spectacle that must have excited audience sensibilities, but also a profoundly rich – and perhaps at the time somewhat exotic – aural experience. The earlier BWV numbers (1060 and 1061) each received only two performances over the entirety of the 12 concerts – possibly because the scoring for two solo instruments offered less spectacular entertainment both visually and aurally. It is surprising, nonetheless, that BWV 1060 did not receive more performances, this being a familiar and appealing work in its original scoring and one which works extremely well in its re-scoring for solo harpsichords. That BWV 1061 was performed only twice is more understandable. It would have been less familiar to audiences in its original version, and the thin scoring of the slow movement (written entirely for two solo instruments, without orchestra) might well have presented acoustic problems in the large expanse of the Royal Festival Hall, notwithstanding the amplification that was employed in the concerts (for further on amplification see later in this article).

There were variations in the repertoire from year to year. After the all-Bach inaugural concert in 1952, Mozart was the first to be added with the inclusion, in 1953 and 1954, of his Concerto in F for three harpsichords (K242, dated 1776). The following year, and again in 1961 and 1969, a further Mozart concerto was performed: his Concerto in E flat for two harpsichords (K365, dated 1780). The performance of Mozart’s keyboard concertos on the harpsichord marked a notable digression from established concert practice in mid-twentieth century London and in this, too, the RFH concert series broke new ground. Yet this new manner of performance was, as noted by Thurston Dart, historically accurate. All of Mozart’s keyboard works written between 1773 and November 1777 (with the possible exception of the six sonatas K279–84), including K242 and extending also to K365, were intended

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21 The slow movement is less successful than the fast outer movements, however, because of the rapid decay of the harpsichord sound and the limitations of the instrument in sustaining slow-moving melodies. This is an issue which Bach dealt with in different ways in the harpsichord concertos. In BWV 1060, for example, pizzicato strings provide a harmonic underpinning for the solo instruments – a method that does not fully compensate for the inability of the harpsichord to sustain the dotted crotchets in the melodic line. In BWV 1063, Bach’s (more successful) method is to double the Sicilienne melody in the (arco) first violins and RH of all three solo harpsichords, giving the harpsichords solo billing in two episodes that are based on faster moving and more idiomatic semiquavers. Arco strings as melodic reinforcement are also employed in the following concerto, BWV 1064. The issue is dealt with in the last of the concertos, BWV1065, first through block chords in strings and harpsichords, followed by rapid figuration in the solo harpsichords.

22 Of the remaining three concertos, BWV1061 was scored originally for two harpsichords without accompaniment, and as such would not have been familiar to audiences. BWV1063 has been claimed by some scholars to be an arrangement of works by other composers; others believe it to be an original composition by JS Bach. BWV1064 is generally seen to be an adaptation of a concerto scored for three violins.

specifically for the harpsichord<sup>23</sup> – an instrument which, even in the final decades of the eighteenth century, had not yet been fully eclipsed by the rise of the fortepiano.<sup>24</sup> Dart's research is largely confirmed by Richard Maunder, who, through his meticulous survey of correspondence by Mozart and his father, suggests that K242 was clearly written for the harpsichord; less certain, in his analysis, is whether K365 was written for the harpsichord or the fortepiano.<sup>25</sup> The ambiguous dating of K365 lies at the heart of the uncertainty; the concerto 'could have been composed as late as the winter of 1780–81', and Mozart 'always had the fortepiano in mind' for keyboard compositions written after 1780.<sup>26</sup> What is clear is that K365 sits on the cusp of Mozart's transition from the harpsichord to the fortepiano in his keyboard writing. Indeed, the harpsichord and the fortepiano were often interchangeable during this period of transition, as evidenced in the early performances of K242, which was first performed on three harpsichords in the year of its composition by Countess Antonia Lodron and her two daughters.<sup>27</sup> Mozart himself performed the work on a 'wretched' fortepiano in Munich in October 1777; the following January his sister played it on a harpsichord in Salzburg.<sup>28</sup> In this context, and given the evidence provided by both Dart and Maunder, the performances of K242 and K365 on the harpsichord were wholly plausible, and they reflected the growing commitment to the idea of authenticity in the performance of early repertoire.

After the 1953 concert the repertoire expanded still further, precipitated, it seems, by the success of Bach's four-harpsichord concerto BWV1065. For seven consecutive years beginning in 1954, and then again in 1967, the annual concerts included George Malcolm's Variations on a theme of Mozart for four solo harpsichords. Based on the theme of the Andante Grazioso from Mozart's Duo for Violin and Viola in B<sup>b</sup> K424, Malcolm's arrangement cleverly expanded two lines of music into a rich, four-harpsichord texture. The following year, and in each consecutive year up to and including 1961, the concerts added Thurston Dart's four-harpsichord arrangement of Vivaldi's well-known concerto grosso Op. 3 No. 11. Scored initially for two solo violins and solo cello with ripieno strings, this was a work which, as observed in the programme notes, lent itself well to rearrangement for harpsichords.<sup>29</sup> The third in the set of arrangements was that by the conductor Raymond Leppard, whose starting point seems to have been a concerto for two keyboard instruments and strings by CPE Bach (W46) as well as CPE Bach's Concerto in A minor, to which the Leppard arrangement is more obviously related.<sup>30</sup> This concerto was performed just three times, in 1960, 1961 and 1969.

The programmes also began to include earlier repertoire, of which Dowland's *Lachrimae for Lute and Strings* was perhaps the most notable, played by the young rising star of the lute, Julian Bream, in the 1956, 1957, 1958 and 1959 concerts. By then Goff had also turned to

23 Thurston Dart, 'The Harpsichord Concerto', programme notes for *Concertos by Bach and Mozart for 3 & 4 Harpsichords*, 18 May 1953, Eileen Joyce Collection, Callaway Centre Archive, The University of Western Australia, CAL003/3, File 1952–58(b).

24 *Grove Music Online*, 'The Advent of the Piano', by Robert Winter, accessed on 6 December 2012. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.ecu.edu.au/>.

25 Richard Maunder, 'Mozart at the Keyboard: Mozart's Keyboard Instruments', *Early Music* 20, no. 2 (May 1992), 210, 218.

26 *Ibid.*, 216, 218.

27 Thurston Dart, 'The Harpsichord Concerto', programme notes for *Concertos by Bach and Mozart for 3 & 4 Harpsichords*, 18 May 1953.

28 Winter, 'The Advent of the Piano'.

29 Thurston Dart, 'The Harpsichord Concerto', programme notes for *Concertos by Bach, Mozart and Vivaldi for 2 & 4 Harpsichords*, 24 May 1955, Eileen Joyce Collection, Callaway Centre Archive, The University of Western Australia, CAL003/3, File 1952–58(b).

30 Charles Cudworth, liner notes for *Music for Four Harpsichords*, Decca Ace of Diamonds SDD 451 (London, 1967).

lute making, inspired by his friendship with, and admiration for, Bream.<sup>31</sup> It was this friendship that led Goff to construct more than 20 lutes,<sup>32</sup> one of which was used by Bream in the RFH concerts.<sup>33</sup> Further lute repertoire was added in subsequent concerts: Vivaldi's concerto for viola d'amore, lute and strings (in 1957), and Vivaldi's concerto in G for lute and harpsichord (in 1958, 1959, 1960 and 1967). The viola d'amore was a further significant inclusion in the 1957 concert – an instrument which, like the harpsichord and lute, had already re-emerged in the early music movement but had not yet found its way into the musical mainstream. Indeed, one review of the 1957 concert referred to it as 'a rare sound unknown to modern music'.<sup>34</sup> This broadening of both repertoire and instruments took the RFH series beyond its initial brief, leading London audiences to a deeper awareness of the riches of early music.

## The performances

### *The soloists*

In all, eight harpsichordists participated in the RFH series, bringing to it an impressive pedigree of keyboard skills and experience, but varied early music credentials (Table 2). Star billing was given to the expatriate Australian pianist Eileen Joyce (1908–91), who brought a brilliance of fingerwork that was ideally suited to the harpsichord; indeed, she was the perfect exponent of the virtuosic figuration in BWV1063 and BWV1065. She also brought a large and adoring audience, established during the war years through her tireless performances throughout the UK. With Joyce's name linked to the concerts, a large audience was guaranteed. In no way, however, was she an early music specialist. Her reputation had been forged through the great Romantic repertoire; Bach had featured rarely in her concerts, particularly in the last two decades of her career.<sup>35</sup> Joyce's limited experience with early music and the harpsichord was more than offset by the involvement of Thurston Dart (1921–71), who possessed impeccable credentials as both a scholar and a performer of early music. George Malcolm (1917–97), too, was a notable inclusion, having forged a reputation as a conductor, chamber music pianist and brilliant harpsichordist.<sup>36</sup> The Australian Denis Vaughan (b. 1926) was the fourth of the initial group of soloists; he brought experience as a conductor and, in the context of the RFH concerts, as an organist, harpsichordist and clavichordist.<sup>37</sup> To this impressive team, further soloists were added over the years: Valda Aveling (1920–2007), who had been active as a harpsichordist before the wider emergence of the early music movement;<sup>38</sup> the Australian pianist Geoffrey Parsons (1929–95), whose career had been forged as an accompanist; and Simon Preston (b. 1938), a noted

31 Goff, Autobiographical Talk.

32 *Ibid.*

33 The programme notes for these concerts, written by Bream, note that the instrument on which he played was made by Thomas Goff (Julian Bream, 'The Lute', programme notes for *Concertos by Bach and Vivaldi for 3 & 4 Harpsichords*, 1 May 1956, Eileen Joyce Collection, Callaway Centre Archive, The University of Western Australia, CAL003/3, File 1952–58[b]).

34 'Festival Hall: Harpsichord Concertos', *The Times*, 22 May 1957, n.pag., Eileen Joyce Collection, Callaway Centre Archive, The University of Western Australia, CAL0005/49–54, 1952–57, File 1957(b).

35 For a full discussion of Joyce's involvement in the early music movement, see Chapter 5 of *Destiny: the Extraordinary Career of Pianist Eileen Joyce* (Melbourne: Lyrebird Press, in press).

36 Howard Schott, 'Malcolm, George (John)', in *Grove Music Online*. Available from: Oxford Music Online (Accessed 11 December 2012).

37 'Denis Vaughan', in Nicholas Slonimsky (ed.), *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 8th ed. (New York, 1992), 1945.

38 Pamela Nash, 'Obituary: Valda Aveling', *The Guardian*, 18 December 2007. Available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2007/dec/18/1> (Accessed on 26 July 2013).

early music specialist, organist, harpsichordist, conductor and pedagogue.<sup>39</sup> Included in the 1967 and 1969 concerts, Preston represented the new generation of the early music revival. The lutenist Julian Bream (b.1933), too, formed part of this new generation; his participation, moreover, broadened the reach of the concerts beyond the harpsichord. Finally there was Harry Danks (1912–2001), a noted viola player who was also an exponent of the viola d'amore.

The soloists were in large part, then, significant figures in an early music movement that was gathering pace through the 1950s and 1960s. Thomas Goff had assembled an impressive team in the realization of his vision.

### *The orchestras*

Like the soloists, the orchestras enjoyed a high profile in London's post-war musical life, but they also came with varied early music credentials. The LPO, RPO and Philharmonia, which featured in the first five concerts, were not noted early music exponents, although the musical direction was provided by the early music specialist Boris Ord. The sixth concert, in 1957, marked a shift in the direction of early music specialization with the participation of the Boyd Neel Orchestra, conducted by Raymond Leppard. This orchestra was 'about the size of a court orchestra of Bach's time'; the players also used Bach bows in seeking to replicate Baroque practices in phrasing, dynamics and articulation.<sup>40</sup> The Boyd Neel Orchestra and its successors, the Philomusica of London (1958–1961) and the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields (1967 and 1969), were all noted for performing and recording early music,<sup>41</sup> although none used period instruments, gut strings or 'original pitch standards'.<sup>42</sup> Notwithstanding the work of Arnold Dolmetsch in *The Interpretation of Music of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries* (1915), Thurston Dart in *The Interpretation of Music* (1954) and Robert Donington in *The Interpretation of Early Music* (1963), England did not have a genuine period instrument orchestra until 1973 when Christopher Hogwood formed the Academy of Ancient Music.<sup>43</sup> The orchestras which participated in the RFH series, then, reflected an early music movement in transition, one that was moving towards, but had not yet fully embraced, period instruments and the idea of historically informed performance practice.

### *The solo instruments*

The harpsichords which occupied centre stage also mirrored the broader transition towards the concept of historically informed performance practice. Thomas Goff, the maker of the instruments, had come to harpsichord construction in the 1930s, five decades after the revival of the instrument in the 1880s. Like almost all harpsichord makers until the 1950s, Goff experimented with 'improvements' to the original Baroque designs. He claimed his

39 'Simon Preston', in Nicholas Slonimsky (ed.), *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York, 1992), 1443.

40 Thurston Dart, 'The Orchestra', programme notes for *Concertos by Bach and Vivaldi for 2, 3 & 4 Harpsichords*, 21 May 1957, Eileen Joyce Collection, Callaway Centre Archive, The University of Western Australia, CAL003/3, File 1952(b)–58.

41 Peter Watchorn, *Isolde Ahlgrimm, Vienna and the Early Music Revival* (Aldershot, 2007), 18. On the Continent, Karl Münchinger's Stuttgarter Kammerorkester had been well known for its Bach performances since 1945, and Paul Sacher's Basle Orchestra had made notable recordings of the Brandenburg Concertos in 1950 (Watchorn, 18).

42 Watchorn, *Isolde Ahlgrimm, Vienna and the Early Music Revival*, 18. The matter of performing pitch standards will be returned to later in the article.

43 *Ibid.*, 19.

harpsichords were modelled on eighteenth-century Kirkman instruments<sup>44</sup> but in reality he followed the design of his teacher, Herbert Lambert, who had been influenced by both the later Dolmetsch and the modern German harpsichords.<sup>45</sup> Goff's was very much a nineteenth-century conception of the instrument. 'Harpsichords', he said, 'must be able to respond to every fine and subtle musical feeling of the player'.<sup>46</sup> This led him to attach half-hitches to the seven pedals which replaced the Baroque hand stops, in order to 'vary the dynamics and play loud[ly] and soft[ly] on each stop at will'.<sup>47</sup> His claim was that 150 different sounds could be produced on each note of his instruments<sup>48</sup> – a subtlety that ran counter to the aesthetic of the Baroque harpsichord. His instruments were, nonetheless, roundly approved of by the British harpsichord virtuoso, Violet Gordon-Woodhouse (1872–1948) who, along with such figures as Valda Aveling, Thurston Dart and George Malcolm, embraced Goff's harpsichords. These instruments were, however, problematic in many ways. The iron frame, which went completely against the principles of Baroque harpsichord construction, placed such pressure on the instrument as to inhibit its sound; moreover, the touch was heavy because of the additional mechanisms that had been designed to create greater expressivity.<sup>49</sup> As the RFH concert series was getting under way in 1952, harpsichord makers had already begun to turn towards more historically informed principles of instrument construction, away from the approaches and practices of the late nineteenth century. In 1949 the American makers Hubbard and Dowd had established a workshop in Boston with this purpose in mind; others soon followed on both sides of the Atlantic. Authenticity had become the catch cry and Goff and his harpsichords were gradually left behind as players turned to instruments which more accurately replicated the Baroque style of construction.<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, Goff's instruments, inauthentic as they now can be seen to be, had 'played a significant part in bringing about an increased acceptance of the harpsichord in British performances of early music'.<sup>51</sup> As the most visible public showpiece for Goff's instruments, the RFH concert series played a notable role in this burgeoning acceptance, notwithstanding what might now be seen as shortcomings in the construction of the instruments.

Goff's influence also extended to the lute, which he began to make in the late 1940s in response to the paucity of suitable instruments.<sup>52</sup> He had been alerted to the problem by Julian Bream; Goff soon came to his aid.

In the late 1940s it was not easy to procure an instrument. The only ones that seemed available at the time were made by Dolmetsch. They were well built but the quality of the tone was never wholly satisfying and the tactile feel of the strings seemed to me unnecessarily soggy. Thomas Goff, the London keyboard maker ... came to the rescue and offered to make a lute based on a Tieffenbrucker in the Victoria and Albert Museum.<sup>53</sup>

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44 Goff, Autobiographical Talk.

45 Howard Schott and Martin Elste, 'Harpsichord: 1900–1940', in *Grove Music Online*. Available from: Oxford Music Online (Accessed on 9 August 2013).

46 Goff, Autobiographical Talk.

47 *Ibid.*

48 *Ibid.*

49 Fergus Hoey, interview by Victoria Rogers (London, 21 March 2010).

50 *Ibid.*

51 Howard Schott, 'Goff, Thomas', in *Grove Music Online*. Available from: Oxford Music Online (Accessed on 26 August 2013).

52 Goff also made a number of clavichords. For a discussion of his clavichords see Howard Schott, 'The Clavichord Revival, 1800–1960', *Early Music* 32, no. 4 (November 2004), 599. See also Howard Schott, 'Review of Thurston Dart's Clavichord Recordings', *Early Music* 27, no. 4 (November 1999), 678–9.

53 Julian Bream, cited in Julian Bream and J.M. Thomson, 'On Playing the Lute', *Early Music* 3, no. 4 (October 1975), 348.

Bream played this instrument for 12 years, and whilst it proved to be ‘a tremendous success’, the quality of its sound was less than authentic, notwithstanding its excellent acoustic properties:

Whilst it was not the most authentic sounding lute, it had a resonance and beauty of sound which was quite remarkable. The character of the ‘timbre’ was so well focused that the projecting quality in a medium-sized hall was excellent, some might say phenomenal – a prime consideration for an artist who had to give concerts in halls of every conceivable shape and size throughout the world.<sup>54</sup>

Less noted for his lutes than his harpsichords, Goff’s contribution in this area has now largely slipped out of sight. It was, nonetheless, a notable contribution, notwithstanding questions as to the instruments’ authenticity of tone.

### ***The amplification***<sup>55</sup>

The migration of the harpsichord and lute from the chamber to the concert hall created a significant problem: as noted in the programme notes for the inaugural RFH concert, the harpsichord could not hold its own acoustically in the vastly expanded space of a modern concert hall.<sup>56</sup> The size of the orchestra and the loudness of the accompanying instruments had compounded the problem; post-Baroque changes to the construction of orchestral instruments had made them considerably louder.<sup>57</sup> The problem was further exacerbated by the construction of Goff’s instruments, whose heavy iron frames reduced, rather than increased, the volume of sound they were able to produce. The RFH series dealt with the matter through amplification, and in doing so located itself at the forefront of further innovation. Whilst the microphone and the amplifier had already been successfully incorporated into the performance of popular music, such technology had, to this time, been altogether less successful in the concert hall. New technical developments, however, offered a possible solution, as observed in the 1952 programme notes:

Recent advances in the construction of all the components of amplifying systems permit of results today which would have been inconceivable even two or three years ago. Extensive trials and experiments by musicians and engineers in collaboration have led to the selection of the system employed tonight; it is hoped that, used with discretion, it will not prove unacceptable.<sup>58</sup>

The system met with a mixed reception. Referring to the performance of the D minor concerto BWV1063 in the 1952 concert, one reviewer observed that ‘electric amplification can be adapted to the [harpsichord] to produce an enchanting and satisfying volume of sound in rivalry with a strong corps of violins’.<sup>59</sup> Another reviewer offered a different perspective: ‘The standards of performance, both technical and aesthetic, were high, but in spite of

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54 Bream, cited in Julian Bream and J.M. Thomson, ‘On Playing the Lute’, 348.

55 The amplification was designed by one of Goff’s friends, Pat Cousins, to whom Goff referred as ‘a great Cambridge acoustical engineer’ who located ‘the best available equipment’ for the concert series (Goff, Autobiographical Talk).

56 C.R.C., ‘The Amplifiers’, programme notes for *Concertos by Johann Sebastian Bach*, 20 May 1952, Eileen Joyce Collection, Callaway Centre Archive, The University of Western Australia, CAL003/3, File 1952(b)–58.

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Ibid.*

59 P.B., ‘Concertos Were a Delight’, *Star, London*, 21 May 1952, n.pag., Eileen Joyce Collection, Callaway Centre Archive, The University of Western Australia, CAL0005/49–54, 1952–57, File 1952 (a).

skilled amplification it was not possible to hear distinctly the harpsichords.<sup>60</sup> Regardless of such differing perceptions, it was the very existence of amplification that made the RFH series possible. Without it, the performance of harpsichord repertoire in a large concert venue would not have been plausible – a fact of which Thomas Goff was clearly well aware in his planning for the series.

### *Performance practice in the RFH concert series*

Although almost 50 years have passed since the last of the RFH harpsichord concerts, an enduring ‘facsimile’ of the performances has survived in two recordings, made respectively in 1956 and 1967.<sup>61</sup> Both recordings employ harpsichords made by Thomas Goff, and both include Bach’s BWV1065 (as well as other repertoire). These performances, frozen in time, can be assumed to reflect the performance practices adopted in the RFH concert series – both the initial group of five concerts (1952–56) and the two additional concerts given in the late 1960s. Viewed from the perspective of ears attuned, over subsequent decades, to more historically informed interpretations of early music, the two recordings present a snapshot of an early music movement that was moving towards, but had not yet reached, a more refined concept of historically informed performance practice. The string sound in both recordings is heavy and rather ponderous and it is clear that the orchestras were too large. Indeed, the matter of balance had already been identified in one review of the 1956 RFH concert, which commented on the ‘acute problems of balance’ which ‘were not always solved’.<sup>62</sup> This, the reviewer had written, was ‘all the greater in the Dowland [with lutenist Julian Bream] because the lute is the weakest of instruments ... aggravated by the fact that a body of violins was used with it, when a consort of viols, one only to a part, would have been historically more authentic and musically preferable’.<sup>63</sup> This review might have been the catalyst for the decision to use a smaller orchestra in the 1957 concert (see earlier discussion). How well these practices might have worked, however, and whether they were continued in subsequent RFH concerts, can only – in the absence of evidence – be conjectured. What is clear is that they did not carry through to the 1967 ‘facsimile’ recording, which, like its 1956 counterpart, is characterized by a thick, muddy string sound.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the ‘facsimile’ recordings, however, is the sound of the harpsichords. As noted earlier, these instruments reflected an era of harpsichord making that had sought to ‘improve’ the original Baroque design. The resulting sound is not unlike that of the Pleyel instruments used by Wanda Landowska, and the two recordings reveal a singular sound that lies somewhere between a piano and a harpsichord, but sounds like neither. Despite Goff’s modifications to the instrument, the sound lacks clarity, definition and an authentic harpsichord quality. The matter of authenticity also extends to the use of crescendos

60 M.C., ‘Harpsichord Concertos’, *Daily Telegraph, London*, 21 May 1952, n.pag., Eileen Joyce Collection, Callaway Centre Archive, The University of Western Australia, CAL0005/49–54, 1952–57, File 1952 (b).

61 *Music for Three, Four and Five Harpsichords: Bach, Vivaldi, Malcolm*, EMI Records, CLP1120 (1956) (with Eileen Joyce, Thurston Dart, George Malcolm and Denis Vaughan, and the Pro Arte Orchestra conducted by Boris Ord); and *Music for Four Harpsichords*, DECCA SDD451 (1967) (with soloists George Malcolm, Valda Aveling, Geoffrey Parsons and Simon Preston, and the English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Raymond Leppard). The 1956 recording has been re-released on an EMI Classics CD compilation, 5099970 440522.

62 ‘Four Harpsichords: Bach and Vivaldi’, *The Times*, 2 May 1956, n.pag., Eileen Joyce Collection, Callaway Centre Archive, The University of Western Australia, CAL0005/49–54, 1952–57, File 1956 (b).

63 *Ibid.*

and *diminuendos*, a performative possibility that had been made possible by the construction of Goff's instruments. This anachronistic development was noted somewhat critically in a review of the 1967 recording:

At several points in the Bach works Mr Malcolm and his colleagues take advantage of the resources of Mr Goff's instruments to play with apparent *crescendos* and *diminuendos* – it is done by adding stops gradually, a half at a time . . . . Bach didn't expect this; his music is designed in terms of clear-cut dynamic changes, not gradual ones; the effect is foreign.<sup>64</sup>

In two further respects, the recordings also seem to pre-date later developments in what subsequently became known as historically informed performance practice. Notwithstanding the involvement of the distinguished performer/scholar Thurston Dart in the 1956 (although not the 1967) recording, the ornamentation is minimal – although it should be noted, at the same time, that the degree and nature of Baroque ornamentation was to become a contested issue in the early music scholarship of the 1980s and 1990s. The recording also uses the twentieth-century pitch standard of A=440cps, bypassing, it would seem, questions about the wide diversity of performing pitches employed in earlier centuries.<sup>65</sup>

Significant as the RFH concerts and the two 'facsimile' recordings undoubtedly are, they cannot be taken as a universal reflection of the state of play of the early music revival at the time. A 1963 recording of Bach's BWV1065, performed by Gustav Leonhardt and the Leonhardt Consort,<sup>66</sup> reveals a greater awareness of historically informed performance practice. There is just one string player per part<sup>67</sup> and the resulting clarity and definition of sound stand in sharp contrast to the muddy texture of the 1956 and 1967 recordings. The Leonhardt clarity extends also to the solo harpsichords, which, unlike those used in the 1956 recording, are either original Baroque or direct replicas of Baroque instruments.<sup>68</sup> As such they are clearly distinguishable from each other and from the string ensemble. The ornamentation, which is quite extensive, also distinguishes the Leonhardt recording from the earlier one, as does its use of pitch which is, as noted in the liner notes to the recording, 'etwa ein Halbton unter normal'. As indicated above, recent research has revealed the diverse range of pitches employed across Europe in earlier centuries and 'around a semitone

64 S.S., 'Analytical Notes and First Reviews', *Gramophone* XLV, no. 533 (October 1967), 202.

65 See Bruce Haynes's definitive book on the topic, *A History of Performing Pitch: The Story of 'A'* (Lanham, Maryland and Oxford, 2003). Haynes notes that it was not until 1939 that pitch within Western countries was set to A=440cps. The war intervened, however, before the decision could be implemented. The International Standardising Organisation (I.S.O.) therefore reconvened in 1953 and reaffirmed the earlier recommendation of 440, which has remained the official international standard since then (Haynes, *A History of Performing Pitch*, 361).

66 *Johann Sebastian Bach: Concertos for Two and Four Harpsichords*, with Eduard Müller, Gustav Leonhardt, Janny van Wering, Annette Uittenbosch and the Leonhardt Consort led by Gustav Leonhardt, Telefunken-Decca SAWT 9424-B (1963).

67 Information on the record sleeve names each of the individual performers; from this it is clear that each string part is played by only one performer. See Otto v. Irmer, liner notes for *Johann Sebastian Bach: Concertos for Two and Four Harpsichords*, with Eduard Müller, Gustav Leonhardt, Janny van Wering, Annette Uittenbosch and the Leonhardt Consort led by Gustav Leonhardt, Telefunken-Decca SAWT 9424-B, 1963.

68 Of the harpsichords, the first was made by W. Rück, copied from C.A. Gräbner (1782); the second was by M. Skowronek, copied from J.D. Dulcken (no date); the third was a genuine J. & A. Kirckman (1775); and the fourth instrument was made by J.C. Neupert (1932). The stringed instruments were even more authentically Baroque. The two violins were made respectively by Jakob Stainer (1676) and Klotz (eighteenth century); the violas were made by Giovanni Tonini (seventeenth century) and an anonymous eighteenth-century German maker; the cello was a Guadagnini (1749); and the double bass was a German eighteenth-century instrument (Irmer, liner notes for *Johann Sebastian Bach: Concertos for Two and Four Harpsichords*).



below' A=440 cannot be assumed to be historically accurate. The Leonhardt approach reveals, however, a serious attempt at performative authenticity and as such it documents the whirlwind of historically informed performance practice that was beginning to emerge in the early music movement in the 1960s. The RFH concert series and its reflection in the 1956 recording, on the other hand, can be seen to mirror the state of play in the early music revival of the early-mid 1950s, one that still had far to go in terms of genuinely authentic approaches to instrument construction and the concept of historically informed performance practice.

### Significance of the RFH concerts

The RFH harpsichord concert series has long been forgotten, but the role of the series in the early music revival in the UK warrants recognition. In bringing early music, played on early instruments, to the concert hall, it created – and educated – a new, large audience for the developments that were to follow. The harpsichord, lute and viola d'amore were all brought into the concert hall; so, too, was some little-known early music repertoire, Baroque bows, and the idea of a reduced body of strings that approached Baroque performance practice. Familiar repertoire was given a new lease of life, with the piano replaced by the harpsichord in performances of keyboard concertos by Bach and Mozart. These were all significant innovations in the early music revival of the 1950s, made possible, moreover, by a further significant innovation: the use of amplification.

There was also, from the outset, a deliberate element of audience education. That this is so is evidenced by the programmes which included, each year, a one-page segment on the history and construction of the harpsichord – albeit Goff's reconceptualization of the instrument. An essay on the history and construction of the pianoforte, by comparison, was not included in the programmes of pianoforte concertos during this same period. The harpsichord concerto was the subject of a further essay – its origin, history and formal design; and in the years in which lute repertoire was included in the concert, there was information on the history and construction of the lute. Large-scale audiences were being exposed not only to new sounds and repertoire, but also to a broadening of their musical knowledge. Of this the concert organizers were clearly aware, and the expansion of the early music frontier was accompanied by programme notes which had as their objective the education of a new audience for early music.

It would seem to be beyond coincidence that as the early music revival was erupting in the late 1960s, the RFH harpsichord concerts came to an end. The series, it would seem, had had its time, overtaken by a proliferation of high-profile early music groups, personalities, performances and recordings. The RFH series soloists, too, were moving away from Goff's instruments and gravitating to more authentic ones, a development which Goff himself found difficult to accept.<sup>69</sup> It was this as much as anything that led to the demise of the RFH harpsichord concert series. Goff and his instruments – the driving force behind the concerts – had been superseded by the tidal wave of more authentic instruments and by increasingly sophisticated ideas of historically informed performance practice.<sup>70</sup>

It seems surprising, then, that the RFH series was resuscitated in 1967, after a six-year break. Perhaps it was a matter of sentiment. Earlier in 1967 Eileen Joyce had emerged from retirement, performing Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto at a charity concert in

69 Fergus Hoey, interview by Victoria Rogers.

70 It is notable, too, that the press showed a distinct lack of interest in the 1967 and 1969 concerts. There is no review of either of these concerts in four of the main sources of reviews in London in the 1950s and 1960s: *The Times*; *Musical Opinion*; *Musical Times*; and *Music and Musicians*.

support of the International Aid Society.<sup>71</sup> Her return to the concert platform might have fuelled the idea of resurrecting the RFH series. Memories of good times might also have played a part in the decision; the harpsichordists, it seems, always ‘had enormous fun, bobbing and nodding between themselves while orchestra and conductor struggled to keep pace with them’.<sup>72</sup> Regardless of the reason, it was a curious coda to a series which, in its first decade, had played a notable part in the evolving early music movement in the UK. Almost two decades before what Kenyon refers to as the ‘sudden irruption’ of concerts and recordings<sup>73</sup> in the late 1960s, the RFH series had brought the idea, the very possibility, of early music, the harpsichord and historical verisimilitude to large audiences in large concert venues. The series had played a part in reshaping public taste; Bach on the pianoforte in the British concert hall was no longer acceptable. Now largely forgotten, the RFH concert series might well be remembered for its role in helping to pave the way for subsequent developments in the early music movement.

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### Note on contributor

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71 This concert took place on 2 March 1967 in the Royal Albert Hall, with the RPO conducted by Anatole Fistoulari. Joyce’s return was short lived and she largely withdrew from the concert platform after the 1969 concert.

72 ‘Thomas Goff of Pont Street: harpsichord builder.’ Available from: <http://www.baroquemusic.org/goff.html> (Accessed 18 October 2013).

73 Kenyon, ‘Introduction: Some Issues and Questions’, 2.