



News @ Notes

Upcoming Events

Feb 21: Dallas, Texas

Duo d'amore featured in-house concert hosted by Patsy & Bob Brooks
Premiere of David Sanford's *Salvum*

March 5: Duke University (see pg. 4)

De Falla Concerto,
Argento Elizabethan Songs, and
Aliénor Chamber pieces

April 20-29: Lima, Peru

John Pruett, violin
Elaine Funaro, harpsichord
Aliénor solo and chamber music pieces

May 14: St. Luke-in-the-fields, NYC
and May 25: Durham, NC

(Memorial Day House Concert)
Rebecca Pechefsky and Elaine Funaro,
harpichords, featuring duos by Edwin
McLean and Frank Oteri

June 9-10: First Lutheran Church
of Boston (Early Music Festival)

Aliénor Showcase featuring winning
compositions from the
2008 competition

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the efforts of Aliénor, please call:

Elaine Funaro Love
Executive Director
Phone: 919.493.4706
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Five Centuries of Dances

Aliénor Ensemble's Stunning Winter Concert in Raleigh, NC

The inaugural performance of the Aliénor ensemble was met with enthusiastic appreciation as they played "Airs and Dances through the Centuries" on November 11, 2008. Playing pieces that ranged in tone from delicately beautiful to toe-tapping lively, this quartet of harpsichord, cello, baroque oboe, and baroque flute delighted the 80-person audience in attendance at Saint Mary's School (Raleigh, North Carolina). As part of the Smedes Parlor Concert Series, this concert provided an intimate venue for listeners to enjoy traditional and contemporary music written with the harpsichord at the center.

The diversity of musical arrangements gave each of the four seasoned ensemble members—harpichordist Elaine Funaro (Executive Director of Aliénor), flutist Rebecca Troxler, oboist Geoffrey Burgess, and cellist Stephanie Vial—the opportunity to display their impressive individual talents. However, what was most compelling about the show was the complex interplay between the instruments: the low, resonous cello; the high, delicate flute; the rich, evocative oboe; and the versatile, dynamic harpsichord. The closing work, *Arias and Dances* was commissioned by Aliénor for this quartet arrangement and is an especially good example of how the unique timbres of the four instruments can be blended into a splendid whole.

The selection of compositions was a key to the success of the concert. The first half started with a sonata written in 1712 and continued with three modern works. One of these pieces was *Humilitatem*, a section of the work *Salvum* for oboe and harpsichord (world premiere). After completing the fast, highly intricate piece, Funaro smiled at the audience and said, "And that's the easy movement!" Aliénor Award winner (2004) *Sonata Rondo* concluded the first act, with the audience bobbing their heads to the rhythm, especially the second movement, *Rondeau Bleu*. During intermission, one audience member said of this movement, "It sounds so bluesy! But played on these instruments, a paradigm shift is required."

The second half began with a "Medley of Airs and Dances for the Harpsichord," a set that Funaro, said, "was fun to put together. It's a bit of time travel, a piece from every century. It starts with one of the first pieces ever published for



The Aliénor Ensemble (L to R):
Burgess, Funaro, Troxler, and Vial

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About Aliénor...

A little background: Aliénor was named in honor of Eleanor of Aquitaine, a famed 12th century patron of the arts. Eleanor was the richest woman in Europe, and was married successively to King Louis VII of France and King Henry II of England. Her name was actually Alia Enor (literally “another Enor,” since her mother was named Enor). Aliénor is an elision of Alia Enor.

Eleanor was mother to the English Kings Richard the Lionhearted and John Lackland, who was forced to sign the Magna Carta in 1215. She is one of the most notable women in European history.



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The Person Behind the Score

Composer GLENN SPRING, in his own words, about writing for the harpsichord:

When as a young man I first had a ‘hands-on’ encounter with a harpsichord, Byrd’s *Earle of Salisbury: His Pavane and Galliard* was sitting on the rack. I was overwhelmed by both the music and the sound of the instrument—I couldn’t leave it alone!



Such encounters were rare until 1982 when Walla Walla University, where I was teaching, took delivery on a long-awaited new powder-blue Dowd French double. Sitting at that keyboard was déjà vu (magnified!) and exploring the technical and expressive potential of the instrument was a must-do. I had no clue what to call the resulting 6-minute piece, but a perceptive organist friend who was the first to try it suggested: *William Dowd: his bleu*. I recognized the name immediately as ‘just right’. (Oddly, the connection with that early harpsichord encounter only occurred to me years later.)

His bleu became a finalist in the 1990 Aliénor contest, and my colleague, Kraig Scott, performed it at the SEHKS Conclave in Augusta. That event put me in touch with the wider harpsichord fraternity, spawning many new friendships and performances in the ensuing years. Larry Palmer went beyond performance, publishing *William Dowd: his bleu* as the ‘centerfold’ in the February 1992 issue of “The Diapason,” a memorable tribute to Bill Dowd on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

Other composition projects kept me away from the harpsichord during the 90’s, but in 1999, between larger projects, I wanted to write something just for fun. *Trifles*, a suite of seven miniatures was the result. History does repeat itself: Kraig Scott was the first performer of the piece; it became another Aliénor finalist; and Larry Palmer played the 2004 SEHKS performance in Durham. *Trifles* has been adopted by pianists and organists as well, and has become one of my most-played compositions.

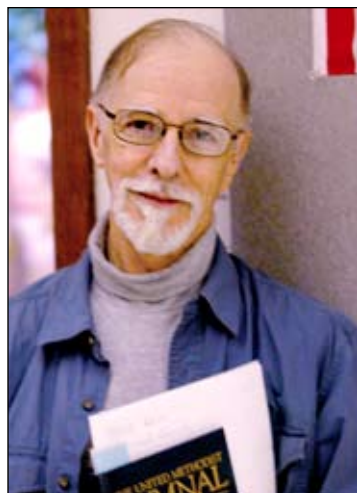
Lucky for me, Larry Palmer (*see* interview, page 3) seems to like my music, and has commissioned the four harpsichord works I’ve written since *Trifles*. (Nothing else beats writing music for friends.) Larry premiered the newest work, *In Memoriam Georgia O’Keeffe*, last July in Santa Fe.

Though I’m not really a keyboardist, and I don’t own a harpsichord, I continue to enjoy writing expressive music for the instrument. (To date, that means 6 works, comprising a total of 28 movements.) I still think the harpsichord’s expressive capacity is underutilized, and I congratulate Aliénor on its continuing mission of encouraging new composition.

Aliénor at the Boston Early Music Festival

**Boston Early Music Festival - Tuesday and Wednesday, June 9-10, 2009, 2-5pm
First Lutheran Church of Boston, 299 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA**

At the 2009 Boston Early Music Festival, Aliénor will host a “fringe event” featuring 9 performers from the 2008 competition finals concert! In addition, two distinguished past presidents of the Southeastern Historical Keyboard Society, Larry Palmer and Cal Johnson, will perform. Each performer will give a 45-minute recital that includes an Aliénor winning composition. For details, visit www.harpsichord-now.org.



Interview with Larry Palmer

LARRY PALMER is the Professor of Harpsichord and Organ and Director of Graduate Studies in Music in the Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, where he has taught since 1970.

In this interview with Elaine Funaro, Larry reveals how he became enamored of the harpsichord and what pieces he would want if he were marooned on a desert island.

EF: What is your earliest recollection of the harpsichord?

LP: As a high school student I checked out 78 rpm recordings from my local public library in Crestline, Ohio, with the permission of the librarian, Miss Marie Welshon. It was through these that I first encountered the playing of Wanda Landowska. The first time I ever heard a harpsichord, *live*, was at an all-Scarlatti recital by Ralph Kirkpatrick, on a Challis harpsichord during my freshman year at Oberlin Conservatory. I wasn't overly impressed at that point. The actual conversion to the instrument came during my junior year in Salzburg. Classmate Max Yount, fresh from his first harpsichord lesson, excitedly told me "You must meet this **woman**" [Isolde Ahlgrimm, the harpsichord teacher newly engaged to teach at the Mozarteum]. She was such a superb artist and a beautiful person (both mentally and physically) that I fell in love with the instrument, its music, and with her.

EF: What did you do upon returning to Oberlin for your senior year?

LP: I was so excited about the harpsichord at that point, that when my parents offered to buy me a small, single manual harpsichord as a graduation present, I, in my entrepreneurial manner, convinced them to let me pay the difference so I could acquire the smallest double manual harpsichord. So, in November of my senior year, a double manual Sperrhake harpsichord arrived in Cleveland, shipped via the St. Lawrence Seaway! It was a good thing that I had my own instrument since I had decided it would be non-productive to study with Edward Mattos, the Oberlin harpsichord teacher, so he refused permission for me to use the school instruments. Despite this, I actually was asked to play for most of the senior recitals requiring a harpsichordist that year, and also did a little coaching with my organ teacher, Fenner Douglass.

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mélomanie



means "music mania"!

Mélomanie presents concerts of early and contemporary works in innovative chamber music collaborations with guest performers and composers. Mélomanie offers this series at its new home at Grace United Methodist Church, Wilmington, Delaware, where it is Ensemble-in-Residence. The concerts feature provocative pairings of early and contemporary works for flute, violin, viola da gamba, cello, and harpsichord. For more information, send an email to info@melomanie.org.

Harpsichordist Tracy Richardson, the co-founder of Mélomanie, has degrees from the Oberlin and New England Conservatories and spent two years in Amsterdam as a special student at the Sweelinck Conservatorium. Meet her and the rest of the players at www.melomanie.org.

Free Aliénor Concert in Durham, NC — March 5, 2009

**March 5, 2009 • 8:00pm • Durham, NC
Nelson Music Room • Duke University**

Mark your calendar for a unique concert featuring over 80 years of harpsichord music from the 20th and 21st centuries. The program will open with winning chamber and solo compositions from the 2008 Aliénor competition held in Winston-Salem, NC. *Six Elizabethan Songs* (1962) by the American composer Dominick Argento for soprano, flute, oboe, violin, cello and harpsichord will follow. The piece features

poems by Shakespeare, Thomas Nash and Ben Johnson. Following intermission a premiere of a song cycle written by James Dorsa, finalist from the competition will feature a set of poems by Charles Simic, winner of the 1990 Pulitzer Prize and the coveted MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant. The 1926 masterpiece *Concerto for Harpsichord* by Manuel de Falla for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Violin and Violoncello will conclude the program. It was written for Wanda Landowska and is considered a true "classic" in the harpsichord repertoire."

Aliénor Ensemble

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the harpsichord (1531). Further down is ‘Row, row, row your boat’: an air we all know but in a unique arrangement by Don Angle. This performance is dedicated to him.”

The second half ended with “Dance (Reel),” the final movement from Dan Locklair’s 2008 piece “Arias and Dances.” As the spirited piece ended, the audience stood and applauded for several minutes.

Visit www.harpsichord-now.org for a list of upcoming Aliénor Ensemble concerts and other contemporary harpsichord events.

Larry Palmer

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EF: With whom else did you study?

LP: After Oberlin I went to Eastman to do the MM and DMA in Church Music. At that time there was no harpsichord teacher there, so I just did a lot of playing on my own. After graduating, I attended two life-altering Haarlem summer academies in 1964 and 1967, where I studied in Gustav Leonhardt’s extraordinary master classes.

EF: How did you get involved with “contemporary music”?

LP: For a summer substitute job as organist of First Presbyterian Church in Canton, Ohio following my first year at Oberlin, I asked my classmate Calvin Hampton to write me a short offertory piece, “*Consonance for Larry*.” [It has just recently been published by Wayne Leupold Editions.]

EF: How did you then get involved with new pieces for the harpsichord?

LP: While at Eastman, my friend Neely Bruce sent me his charming “*Variations on an Original Theme*”. Thus began my lifelong involvement with new music. There have been more than 50 new works written for me, thus far.

EF: What three works do you consider the most important harpsichord pieces of the last 100 years?

LP: Hands down, *Continuum* (1968) by György Ligeti is the most unexpected success of the 20th century. He was a genius who figured out how to show off the instrument and make the harpsichord sound well; additionally the work does not outstay its welcome! It’s a masterpiece. The Poulenc *Concerto* (1928) is the most fun piece to play and is a work that attracts audiences to the instrument. The Elliott Carter *Sonata for Flute, Oboe,*

Cello, and Harpsichord (1952) brought the harpsichord into the contemporary mainstream.

EF: What work do you keep going back to?

LP: The Martinu *Sonate* (1959). I’ve played it more often than any other 20th-century work and have even traveled to Basel specifically to consult the manuscript at the Sacher Archive there (where I found many differences from the published score!) I’d like to do a new recording of it, along with other early 20th-century pieces such as the Castelnuovo-Tedesco *English Suite* (1940) and the Busoni *Sonatina pro Clavicembalo composita*, (1915).

EF: If you were marooned on a desert island, what three collections of harpsichord music would you take with you?

LP: J.S. Bach’s *Goldberg Variations*, Herbert Howells’s *Lambert’s Clavichord* (1927) and Bach’s *Well Tempered Clavier, Book II*.

EF: On a rainy day, what piece do you play for your own enjoyment?

LP: *Sehnsucht*, the fifth piece in Glenn Spring’s *Hommages for Harpsichord*, (self published by the composer) written for my 2006 SMU Harpsichord Workshop in Denver. I’ve always wanted a harpsichord piece in the style of Mahler, and here it is! I often play it even on sunny days or starlit nights! [And I’ve recorded it on my most recent solo harpsichord disc, also under the title *Hommages* (SoundBoard Recordings, Dallas)].

EF: Do you have any recommendations for young harpsichordists today?

LP: Besides “getting a real job?” Proficiency in organ playing would allow them to have steady, weekly employment, or a degree in library science could be helpful. Obviously, it’s very important to “follow your dream,” but temper that dream with some practicality: almost no one makes a living solely from playing the harpsichord.

EF: What do you do for fun?

LP: I like to cook so I find it amusing (and practical) to simplify recipes, including those I read in *Gourmet Magazine*. I like to walk, so I park my car and do things on foot.

EF: Tell me something about yourself that I don’t know!

LP: I conducted Duke Ellington and his Orchestra when my Norfolk State College Choir was selected to be the choral ensemble for a concert of his sacred concert in Portsmouth, VA in 1968.

EF: Anything else you want to say?

LP: Of course ... thank you.

EF: Thank you!

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¹ Given in memory of her husband, Remi. ² Given in memory of his wife, Andrea.
We remember Andrea and Remi for their great support and love of music. We will miss them.

Let's meet the MATCH!

Aliénor has been given a \$10,000 challenge grant this year to create new musical masterpieces and to share the 2008 award-winning compositions with audiences around the county – including the international audience that attends the Boston Early Music Festival. Your support at any level will help reach this important goal.

Thank you for your support! Tax-deductible gifts can be mailed to:
Aliénor, 3 Sylvan Road, Durham, NC 27701.

Every little bit helps! Your contribution of even \$10 makes you a sponsor of great Aliénor concert events and supports the printing of *News and Notes*.

Supporting What Enriches Our Lives

Everyone agrees – we're experiencing challenging times financially. That's why we would like to thank every one of you for doing your part to keep things going. There seems to be agreement that government can't do it alone – and that the nonprofit sector is very successful in making a positive difference.

After all, nonprofits manage to accomplish great things every day, and do it on a shoestring. So thank you for supporting and encouraging us all.

Essential services are very important – and once we've saved a life, we want to be sure that we're all surrounded by the experiences that make our lives worthwhile.

Aliénor has tightened its belt. We're working hard to move the mission forward, while making smart choices and lowering expenses.

We have a matching grant again this year. Your tax-deductible gift will help us meet the match. Contributions of all sizes are needed to reach the goal. Thank you so much for your support!

SmallWorld: Italy to NC

Giuseppe di Bianco, honorable mention winner from the 2008 Aliénor competition was in North Carolina. Giuseppe is from Maiori, Italy (on the Amalfi coast) and was brought to Chapel Hill for the performances of his choral piece being performed by Susan Klausmeyer and the Chapel Hill Community Chorus. (Peter Klausmeyer wrote the honorable mention *Five Pieces* for harpsichord in 1982).



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Special 6-page edition, featuring an intimate interview with Larry Palmer, past president of SEHKS!

The masterpieces of tomorrow are waiting to be written.

William Dowd, 86; Crafted Harpsichords the Old-Fashioned Way

William Dowd, 86, who revived the 17th-century craft of harpsichord making, building hundreds of historically authentic instruments now used around the world, died Nov. 25, 2008.

After taking apart and examining instruments from the 17th and 18th centuries, he and Frank Hubbard built some of the world's best classical harpsichords. They resized what had become an overly large and heavy instrument, using the proper woods and metals, and restored the original tuning. The result was an instrument responsive to the touch and beautiful in sound and appearance.

Later, on his own, Mr. Dowd built more than 800 instruments and his harpsichords were in 26 countries. In the US, his instruments are at the Julliard School of Music in New York, Independence Hall and City Tavern in Philadelphia and the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. A harpsichord he built on commission in 1980 for a Chicago group, the Friends of Marc Chagall, features an original Chagall painting on the underside of its lid and now resides in the Chagall museum in Nice, France.



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