

## Notes on the festival in Copenhagen March 13-15 by Jim Thvedt/USA

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The Copenhagen International Clavichord Festival was held in collaboration with the Deutsche Clavichord Societät March 13 - 15 at the Brønshøj Kirke. Those attending heard superb playing, saw fascinating instruments, with exceptionally congenial company.

The theme of the festival was “The Danish Clavichord,” a focus which was reflected in the programming choices by the artists playing concerts, and in some of the clavichords on display.

However, the full original vision was somewhat constrained because Mads Damlund, who hosted the festival, and who was to open it with a concert devoted to the music of H.O.C. Zinck, had broken a finger, and was unable to play. This dark cloud, however, had silver linings, in that Mads is well on his way to recovery, and with the addition of Anna Maria McElwain to the already stellar group of clavichordists, Julius Hartung, Lars Colding Wolf, and Valentina Villaseñor.

The opening concert was played by Julius Hartung, a dazzling young keyboardist (his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday fell on the same weekend as the festival), currently a student in Copenhagen, studying with Mads Damland among others. He held an audience of about 60—participants in the festival as well as other musicians, music students and music lovers from the area—rapt, with a program ranging from the 16<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, played on three different instruments (see the programs at the end). Most memorable to this reporter was his performance of the Bach Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue, played from memory, on Martin Kather’s new prototype copy of the 1759 Magnus Christensen clavichord at Fredericksborg Castle, using the Pantalon stop (more on this instrument below).

Saturday brought two more concerts, both well attended, and a master class conducted by Mads.

In the afternoon, Lars Colding Wolf played an engaging program on a clavichord by Karin Richter (his personal instrument). Wolf is very active as, among other things, an organist, accompanist, and leader of a Baroque orchestra in Aarhus, the Ensemble Zimmermann. His concert was very stylish and beautifully played, with a Buxtehude “set” being particularly revelatory, the clavichord under Wolf’s hands divulging different aspects of these works, normally performed on the organ or harpsichord.

On Saturday evening, Anna Maria McElwain presented a concert that began with early classical music, and went forward from there to (!) Sibelius, playing on the two instruments by Martin Kather. Anna Maria is perhaps familiar to readers because of her active concertizing and adventurous programming for the clavichord. This concert, despite being predominantly lesser-known composers, was captivating, fully living up to her reputation for virtuosic playing. In the 5 short pieces by Sibelius, Anna Maria used the Pantalon stop of the Kather/Christensen instrument, for a truly ethereal effect.

Mads' masterclass attracted a number of auditors beyond the five brave souls willing to play and receive comments live in front of others. The level of experience with clavichords varied greatly amongst those playing, and Mads had appropriately kind and helpful comments for each, from basics such as hand position, more advanced topics, such as the relation between fingering practice and articulation.

On Sunday, Valentina Villaseñor held a "demonstration concert," wherein she played one or two short, historically appropriate works on each of the displayed clavichords. As examples, on the Verwulf instrument, Valentina played a Buxtehude Ciacona and a Weckman variation set; on the Bergmann/Friederici, a theme and variations by Josef Martin Kraus, a German-Swedish composer (1756 – 1792, known as "the Swedish Mozart"). Valentina's selection of music was charming, and was charmingly and fluently played, showing the instruments to excellent effect.

The two new instruments presented at the festival call for some comment.

#### [Gregor Bergmann's instrument after Friederici](#)

Martin Kather's copy of the Magnus Christensen clavichord in the Fredericksborg museum, is unusual in that it incorporates both a lute and Pantalon stop. Martin's instrument was commissioned to be as exact a copy of the original, which is not playable, for the museum. A lute stop interposes leather or cloth (by one or another mechanism) between the metal tops of the tangents and the strings, changing the tone of the instrument. A Pantalon stop deploys a second, fixed, set of tangents to the strings, which then isolate the sounding length of the string from the damping cloth, so that the strings continue to vibrate (at the correct pitch) after the key is released: it is somewhat analogous to holding the damper pedal down on a piano. This clavichord, then, has the possibility of four distinct sounds, the "basic" clavichord sound, either of the two stops used alone, or the two stops used together. It was used in two of the concerts, as discussed above, and, of course, in the demonstration concert as well, to acclaim from both players and audience. It is full toned, and speaks very quickly and directly. The lute stop produces a round, mild tone more similar (to these ears) to an early piano than a lute. When both stops are used together, the sound is magical, mild and shimmering.

Finally, it is impossible to discuss the festival without noting the venue of the Brønshøj Kirke, which played no small role in the success of the festival. The concerts were held in the sanctuary of the church, where the acoustics could scarcely be better for a clavichord concert: the room is not large, but resonant, and isolated from street noise. The clavichords were displayed in a modern hall, well suited for that purpose, as well as the demonstration concert and master class. Parishioners gave helpful and friendly support.

(Without discussing the rich historical and artistic aspects of the Kirke, readers are referred to the website: [About Brønshøj Church.](#))

Following pages:

Concert programs

List of displayed instruments

## Julius Hartung, Friday March 13

**Diderik Buxtehude (1610 – 1689)**

Prelude in g minor, BuxWV 163

**Johan Lorentz (the younger) (1637 – 1707)**

Suite: *Praeludium, La Bouré, Minuet, Aria, Sarabande & Gavotte*

**Melchior Schildt (1582 – 1667)**

Lachrymae Pavan

**Diderik Buxtehude**

Suite in g minor, BuxWV 242: *Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gigue*

**Johann-Gottfried Wilhelm Palschau (1741 – 1815)**

Sonata in F-dur: “*Componosta dal Signor Guiovnni Godofredo Palschau, Virtuoso di Cambalo in Copenhagen*”

**Hardenack Otto Conrad Zinck (1746 – 1832)**

7 Variations on “Lison dormait dans un boccage”

**Carl Nielsen (1865 – 1931)**

Folketone & Arabesque<sup>3</sup>, from “Five Piano Pieces op. 3

**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)**

Chromatic Fantasia & Fuge, BWV 903

[Encore] **Johan Wikmanson (1753 – 1800)**

Fragmentor för min lilla flicka no. 2

Instruments: Verwulf, Kather/Tannenber, and Kather/Christensen.

## Lars Colding Wolf, Saturday March 14

**Melchior Schildt (1582 – 1667)**

Gleich wie das Feuer

**Dietrich Buxtehude (1610 – 1689)**

Toccata i G (BuxWV 164)

Canzona i G (BuxWV 171)

Aria (con variazioni, BuxWV 246)

Suite i A-dur (BuxWV 243): *Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gigue*

**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)**

Fantasia in a minor, BWV922

**Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809)**

Sonata 3, D-dur (Hob. XVI: 37)

*Allegro, Adagio, Menuet*

Instrument: Saxon-style 5 octave unfretted instrument by Karin Richter, 1991.

## Anna Maria McElwain, Saturday, March 14

**Johan Helmich Roman (1694 – 1758)**

Sonata No. 3, G major (BeRI 227):  
*Largo, Allegro moderato, Allegretto, Allegro assai, Menuet*

**Hinrich Philip Johnsen (1717 – 1779)**

Sonata No. 6, C major

**Joseph Martin Kraus (1745 – 1792)**

Sonata, E-flat major, BV195  
*Allegro moderato, Andante con variazioni, Allegro ma non troppo*

**Jean Sibelius (1865 – 1957)**

Cinq Morceaux, Op. 75

*När rönnen blommar*

*Den ensamma furan*

*Aspen*

*Björken*

*Granen*

**Carl Ludvig Lithander (1773 – 1843)**

Capriccio

[Encore] **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)**

Bagatelle no. 25, a minor (“Für Elise”)

Instruments: Kather/Tannenberg, Kather/Christensen

## Instruments on display

C – c3, double fretted

*Copy of Leipzig No. 16 (German instrument, “second third of the 17<sup>th</sup> century”)*

**Dick Verwulf, 2020**

C/E – c3, double/triple fretted

“after a South German instrument in the Edinburgh Collection”

**Sander Ruys, 2004** (restrung Andreas Hermert)

F – g3 unfretted

After Friederici

**Gregor Bergmann, 2026**

C – f3, unfretted, with Lute and Pantalon stops

Copy of instrument by Magnus Christensen, 1759, at Frederiksborg Castle

**Martin Kather, 2026**

F – f3, unfretted

Based on building instructions by David Tannenbergh, ca. 1780

**Martin Kather, 2024**

F – f3, unfretted

Revival instrument by the Danish piano firm

**Hornung & Moller, 1937**