

'Clavichord initiatives at the Royal College of Music, London', *British Clavichord Society Newsletter* 74, Summer 2019, pp. 41–42.

Clavichord initiatives at the Royal College of Music, London

Terence Charlston writes: We all know and understand the importance of experiencing the clavichord at an early stage of our keyboard life and studies.

Beginning in autumn 2019 the Historical Performance Faculty at the Royal College of Music (RCM; www.rcm.ac.uk) will be offering, for the first time, a syllabus in clavichord specific for undergraduate students. This will enable advanced keyboard students studying piano, harpsichord and organ to pursue a comprehensive introductory course in clavichord as a related study in addition to, and supporting, their main, first-study instrument.

The course is structured over three years and assessed by a technical and repertoire examination at the end of each year. The repertoire is drawn from a wide range of music from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century beginning with Santa Maria and the intabulation of vocal music and leading on to more familiar later music including J. S. and C. P. E. Bach, with options for studying twentieth- and twenty-first-century compositions.

The college has several of its own clavichords available (including the museum holdings: <http://museumcollections.rcm.ac.uk>) and we are endeavouring to find loan instruments for the students so they can have regular access to a good instrument. If anyone reading this has an instrument they might like to lend or donate to this initiative, they are warmly invited to contact me direct, terence.charlston@rcm.ac.uk.

The clavichord teachers at the RCM are Terence Charlston, Geoffrey Govier and Robert Woolley.

In autumn 2018 the RCM introduced the course 'Dynamic keyboards: harpsichord and clavichord for organists'. This course was inspired by the arrival of the Dutch- and North-German-style organ by Flentrop Orgelbouw, installed in the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall in 2018. The organ has an outstanding keyboard action which sets a new benchmark for our organists in terms of touch, finger control and musical response. The 'Dynamic keyboards' course develops musical and technical awareness from a historical perspective and is taught to the postgraduate organists in group sessions over one academic year. The clavichord repertoire is drawn primarily from C. P. E. Bach's *Probestücke* (Wq. 63), and the harpsichord component is taught using two instruments and focussing on improvisation, basso continuo and trio playing.