

# Instruments of the Eighteenth Century

Seminars run 1-2pm at the Bate Collection of  
Musical Instruments, Faculty of Music, St Aldates

**Week 1, Wednesday 17th January - Instruments of Learning: guitar playing and music education 1750-1850**

*Jelma van Amersfoort, University of Southampton*

In the eighteenth century learning an instrument was part of a 'good' education. Guitars were deemed especially suitable for young women.

In this seminar Jelma van Amersfoort will discuss and contextualize some of the available material (method books, instruments, teaching aids) with contemporary texts from a variety of sources to show how learning an instrument meant not only acquiring social and musical skills, but also introduced the learner to a world of embodied cosmopolitanism.

The seminar will focus on practices in Britain, and to a lesser degree, France, Italy, and the Low Countries. Jelma will perform on her historic guitar and instruments from the Bate Collection to demonstrate techniques and play examples.



Email [alice.little@music.ox.ac.uk](mailto:alice.little@music.ox.ac.uk) for info.  
All welcome - no need to book in advance.



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**Week 5, Wednesday 14th February - Instruments of Influence: the harp and female musical patronage at the late eighteenth-century French court of Marie-Antoinette**

*Dr Sarah Grant, Curator, Prints, Victoria & Albert Museum, London*

This paper will discuss the eighteenth-century French revival of the harp and the significant role played in this phenomenon by Marie-Antoinette and her female circle of courtiers.

Discussion will encompass patronage, compositions, portraits and painted iconography, as well as technical developments in the instrument.

The talk will include a short demonstration on the Bate Collection's glasschord.



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**Week 6, Wednesday 21st February - Instruments  
of Culture: Jan Alensoon - cultural and musical  
observations of an Eighteenth Century Dutch dilettante**

*Dr Kathryn Cok, Royal Conservatoire, The Hague*

What inspired a musical amateur from the town of Leiden in The Dutch Republic to make a Grand Tour at the age of forty?

This paper will provide insight into the life and activities of Jan Alensoon (1683-1769), amateur harpsichord player and singer: his family background, education, and musical activities. As an amateur musician of good parentage, Alensoon used music as a social tool to gain entry to the households of European nobility and diplomats during his tour. Occasionally, this resulted in impromptu chamber music sessions with renowned composers and performers.

Musical examples of repertoire familiar to Alensoon will be performed and discussed.



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## Week 7, Wednesday 28th February - Instruments of Culture: the Hardwicke Court Miller clarinets

*Dr Ingrid E. Pearson, Royal College of Music, London*

This presentation focusses on the distinctive pair of Bb clarinets by George Miller in the Bate Collection, which also appear in Johan Joseph Zoffany's oil-on-canvas entitled *The Sharp Family*, on display in the Museum.

These clarinets provide a lens through which to explore aspects of late 18th-century life including Miller's career, and the popularity of the clarinet. Dr Pearson will also discuss Zoffany's oeuvre, the unfavourable contemporary reception of *The Sharp Family*, and the wider scene of music-making in late 18th-century London, particularly amongst the aristocracy.

The talk will be accompanied by performances of music on clarinets of the period.



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**Week 8, Wednesday 7th March - Instruments of Enlightenment:  
The story of a clarinettist in eighteenth-century Germany**

*Dr Emily Worthington, Lecturer in Music Performance, University of Huddersfield*

This study of the life and activities of the clarinettist Franz Tausch (1762–1817) serves to deliver a more holistic insight into a musical prodigy moving freely between the old world of aristocratic patronage and the newly-emerging musical consumer culture. His efforts to promote the artistic capabilities of wind instruments and wind players not only won him musical recognition, but also brought him into close contact with key members of Berlin's aristocratic, political and cultural elite.

This paper will explore the traces of his activities, preserved through manuscripts, musical dedications, newspaper reports and contemporary writings; and will be illustrated with instruments from the Bate Collection.



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