

Basic Detail Report



Harpsichord

Date

1785

Primary Maker

Jacques Germain

Description

This harpsichord features the standard late-18th-century French disposition: two manuals with compass FF to f3; lower manual with quilled 8', a peau de buffle 8' (plucking the same set of strings as the quilled 8'), and 4'; upper manual with 8'; buff to the upper 8'; and shove coupler.

Presumably, the registers were originally controlled by

genouillères (knee pommels). The keyboard naturals are made of ebony, while the sharps consist of hardwood stained black and covered with bone slips. Although the instrument was unsympathetically rebuilt in the early 1950s, these alterations were reversed by Hugh Gough, from whom the NMM acquired the instrument in 1983. The soundboard, with its beautiful original decorative painting, is in an excellent state of preservation, as are the keyboards and the major components of the case. The Louis XV-style case is original, while the painted decoration on the case exterior and interior of the lid is an early-twentieth-century "enhancement." Most importantly, the instrument retains the superb, refined tone that is so characteristic of the 18th-century French harpsichord.

Dimensions

Length: 7' 10 ½" Width at keyboard: 3' 2½" Height: 3' ¾" String lengths in mm < 8' 4' f3 136 75 c3 176 85 f2 266 123 c2 359 168 f1 528 258 c1 694 336 f 980 484 c 1207 612 F 1517 807 C 1705 955 FF 1790 1166