

The new concert pitch of the Grace harpsichord now rests comfortably at  $a'=415$ , commonly referred to as baroque pitch. This new pitch replaces its former  $a'=440$  pitch commonly referred to as "standard" pitch. This harpsichord, nor any others following the practices of builders prior to the 20th century, were pitched at  $a'=440$ . Standard pitch of an instrument from this earlier era of harpsichords is usually 415 (or somewhere close) with "standard"  $a'=440$  being achieved only through a mechanical transposition by moving the keyboard a semi-tone to the right, (thus not affecting the original string tension and thus, the tension on the case). The additional concert pitch of  $a'=392$  on the Grace instrument is commonly referred to as French baroque pitch. Although not often heard in concert, a large number of newer instruments constructed today incorporate this pitch as a general option as a matter of versatility.

This new pitch does affect the sound of the instrument, resulting in a slightly darker timbre which more closely resembles the sound that a Ruckers instrument of this size would have had.

The new configuration of the Grace harpsichord after the renovation is:

$a'=415$  with a compass of GG-d''' - 56 notes (non-transposing)

$a'=440$  with a compass of GG-c#''' - 55 notes (with keyboard transposing 1 semi-tone to right)

$a'=392$  with a compass of GG#-d''' - 55 notes (with keyboard transposing 1 semi-tone to left)

Although this instrument follows the scaling of a Ruckers instrument, it is not a replica of any specific instrument by this family of Flemish builders. The most important feature that is incorporated into this harpsichord from Ruckers is the scaling. Scaling, usually starting with the length of  $c'$ , determines how the instrument will sound based on: the length of this string, the diameter of the string, the tension and the density of the material of the string. It determines how long the remaining strings will be, how large and of what kind of material they will be made. Another feature that makes it Flemish, is the plucking points of the strings. Flemish instruments such as this, pluck closer to the nut (a bridge-like termination point on the wrestplank), which gives it a brighter overall sound than, say a French instrument that plucks closer to the middle of the string...farther away from the nut. Other Flemish construction features include case depth, internal bracing scheme key lever length and compass.