



Bright Light

Press Release

Harp Making in Late-Georgian London

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Published in hardback by Bright Light on 21 August 2020 priced £60

At the end of the eighteenth century, after the French Revolution, the centre of pedal-harp making moved from Paris to London. There, building on the work of its Bavarian originators and Parisian developers, mainly immigrant makers elevated the instrument to new musical, technical, and decorative heights, and placed it in the hands and salons of the British upper classes and aristocracy. Until recently, the story of harp making in England has been dominated by the Erard family who built about 7,000 of an estimated 22,000 harps made in London during the nineteenth century; some 20 other makers have been all but forgotten.

This book, the story of harp making in late-Georgian England, assesses the role and consumption of the harp in society whilst describing its decorative and technical development. Forgotten makers and their innovations are identified. Through the lens of newly discovered documents and the reinterpretation of others, Jacob Erat's manufactories are reconstructed. His working methods, illustrative of those used in the wider industry, are rediscovered, and employees and suppliers are revealed anew.

Mike Baldwin lives in London. After completing a degree in Music Technology in 1995, in which he specialised in harp making, he worked for Pilgrim Harps, the U.K.'s leading harp maker. In 2000 he retrained as a special-needs teacher and now teaches outdoor learning to teenagers with moderate and severe learning disabilities in a West London woodland. In 2008, following his discovery of the Erat harp company papers, Mike returned to study, completing an MA in Musical Instrument Technology and an AHRC-funded PhD, and in 2019 he won The Terence Pamplin Award for Organology from The Worshipful Company of Musicians. *Harp Making in Late-Georgian London* is Mike's second book from Bright Light Books, a company he founded to publish history books; the first, *Mixen: Rescued Folklore, Histories and Songs from Ireland's South-West*, was published in 2019.



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