

DOUBLE-MANUAL HARPSICHORD Jacob and Abraham Kirckman, London 1775

Descriptive notes for players of the instrument

Two keyboards with 60 notes: FF,GG–f^{'''}, ivory naturals and ebony accidentals, keydip stopped by front rails, strung in yellow brass and iron, A415. Original pearwood jacks, reproduction Kirckman tongues in holly and boxwood, boar bristle springs, crow quill plectra.

In contrast to the more familiar Continental double-manual harpsichord, there is no buff stop or manual coupler. The Front 8' jacks pluck the longer unison strings and are dogleg, so when that register is ON, it plays from both keyboards. Be warned when tuning that the Front 8' tuning pins are the row closest to the nameboard.

The 1775 Kirckman has four hand stops controlling the registers, from left to right:

1. Upper manual Lute 8' ←
2. Lower manual 4' ←
3. Dogleg Front 8' ←
4. Lower manual Back 8' →

The 4' is normally ON, and is turned OFF only by depressing and holding the machine stop pedal, so its handstop is superfluous. The simple machine mechanism can be overridden by wedging the back register permanently in the OFF position with the stylus which is tethered to the spine soundboard moulding.

It is entirely possible to enjoy the unusual registration of having the Front 8' strings plucked by both the Lute jacks and the Dogleg jacks at the same time. The only way of dialoging the keyboards independently is to turn both the Lute and Back 8' registers ON and ensure the Dogleg is OFF.

Pictures and further information on the history of this instrument and its restoration can be found at <https://hpschd.nu/cln/kirckman-1775.html>.