

'Marco Polo' Harpsichord

The Marco Polo is a Franco-Flemish double-manual harpsichord, built from scratch by Daniel Ruf and inaugurated in May 1991 by Robert Kohnen with the Kuijken Consort.

Dr Daniel Ruf was an enlightened and motivated enthusiast who was known in the harpsichord maker community for the thoroughness of his work. He was entrusted with the restoration of the 17th century historical Denis harpsichord. The success of the restoration enabled the Denis to produce its rich sonorities once again, making it the only Denis in working order today. It was inaugurated by Gustav Leonhardt.



The Marco Polo has a two-keyboard set: lower manual with a 4' and an 8' pitch, and upper manual with an 8' pitch.

This harpsichord was built using traditional materials such as wooden jacks, raven-feather plectrums, boar-bristle springs, and wood carefully selected in the Franche-Comte region...

The instrument was nicknamed 'Marco Polo' following a tour in China in 1992, from Beijing to Shanghai, with the Swiss harpsichordist, Michel Kiener. It has been played by a variety of musicians, such as Fabio Bondi (with Europa Calante), Sigiswald Kuijken (with La Petite Bande), or Pierre Hantaï. It was recently played by the ensemble of Jean Tubery. It was also used for the sound track of the film: *Tous les matins du monde* (All the mornings of the world).

Excerpts from the Marco Polo Guestbook:

'I hope your harpsichord enjoyed being played as much as we enjoyed playing it'. Sigiswald Kuijken

'If all the harpsichords in the world could be as magnificent as this one....' Pierre Hantaï

The Marco Polo value was estimated at 20000 €. It is for sale together with its stool and stand. It is located in Dijon (France).

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Le plan de ce clavecin, de style franco-flamand, a été conçu par Daniel Ruf qui en a aussi réglé la mécanique et assuré l'harmonisation. Les bois, entièrement de la région, ont été mis en œuvre par Michel Poinso. La décoration de la table d'harmonie a été faite par Pierre Gauthier. Quant à la peinture du couvercle, Fabienne Schmidt s'est inspirée de Claude Gellée dit le Lorrain. Enfin le piétement a été tourné par Daniel Royer.

Cette œuvre, due à un groupe d'amateurs passionnés, a été achevée fin 1990.

Michel Kiener, professeur de clavecin à Genève, a choisi ce clavecin pour faire une série de récitals en Chine, de Beijing à Shanghai, du 29 mars au 12 avril 1992. La série mémorable de tribulations auxquelles il a été exposé lui ont fait mériter le surnom de
MARCO POLO.