

Music Project Volunteer: Documentation of Finchcocks stringed keyboard instruments

Supervised by the Musical Instrument Curatorial Team and/or external specialist restorers

Main purpose:

The Horniman acquired three historic keyboard instruments in 2016 from the Finchcocks collection. This acquisition allows us to broaden our collection and widen participation and engagement with visitors.

This role provides an opportunity to assist the specialist musical instrument restorers and the musical instrument curators in the research and documentation of two of these instruments. We are looking for one or two enthusiastic and organised individuals to help us make this part of the collection more accessible. Skills and experience will be gained in the curation, care and documentation of early keyboard musical instruments.

Objectives:

- Improving documentation of the musical instrument keyboard collection.
- Supporting the curatorial team with research on the new acquisitions.
- Developing greater knowledge of and access to the collection both within and outside of the museum.

Commitment:

2-3 days per week on two occasions sometime between April 2018 and June 2019 [i.e. probably no more than six days in total, excluding the study days (see below)].

The activities may take place at the restorer's workshop in Chippenham, near Bath, at the Horniman Museum's conservation lab, or in a Horniman curatorial office space.

The volunteer will also be encouraged to attend either or both of the free Horniman/HLF-supported Study Days focussing on each of the two instruments: an Italian virginals of 1668 by Onofrio Guarracino and a square piano of 1777 by Adam Beyer, although this is optional.

Main Activities (including but not limited to):

- Documenting the instruments with museum and specialist external guidance, using existing or modified templates and transfer to and the Collections Management System (Mimsy XG).
- Researching previous history of the instruments.
- Use photography to assist and clarify documentation.
- Research and report on the history of the instruments including information about previous collectors, context and their historical and musical significance.
- Produce a blog post for the Horniman website on the research/documentation undertaken.
- Produce evaluation of volunteering experience.

The role would suit someone who:

- Has a demonstrable interest in and enthusiasm for museums, heritage or the cultural sector in the field of historic musical instruments.
- Has interest in music history and historical research.
- Pays close attention to detail and has excellent organisation and communication skills.
- Has good English language skills and is able to understand and follow guidelines precisely and consistently.
- Has good IT skills.
- Is willing to undertake repetitive tasks and able to work independently.

What we can offer participants:

- Experience of working with a world-class musical instrument collection and contributing to the documentation of two outstanding historical objects.
- Experience of volunteering in a curatorial team, and in a small modern musical instrument workshop which relies on handwork and historically informed practice.
- Experience of working on and adhering to museum standards and procedures.
- Collections Management Systems (Mimsy XG) training.
- Opportunities to produce digital content for the Horniman's website.
- Travel expenses (as agreed in advance) and lunch (when volunteering for a full day), will be reimbursed.