

*The heavy dark brown braids fall alongside their face. A droplet of sweat traces the concave from nose to mouth. A minuscule line of transpired water slugs over finely pored skin. The sound of an electric engine powering a height-adjustable shaft is audible in the otherwise damped dim room. With a gentle strike of a key a high and slightly squeaky timbre fills the room.*

A clavichord is a primitive string instrument featuring a key board. Its origins date back to the 14th century and enjoyed high popularity up until the late 18th century. Its size and technical simplicity meant it was relatively cheap, could almost be made in a DIY fashion and was thus widespread across a diverse social spectrum. The clavichord has long outdated its popularity due to its quiet and hyper-sensitive nature. A clavichord has many benefits that are - as it often is- also its limitations.

The technical term for a detachable case of some early keyed instruments is True Inner Outer. It stands opposite the subsequent False Inner Outer, a non-detachable case. The latter version is a visual claim, simulating the condition of the past. The terms *True* and *False* hint towards notions of authenticity, value and opposites. They establish that there is such a thing as truth.

Using the historical as a template has a long tradition. In literature Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage* (1939), *The Fraud* (2023) by Zadie Smith and *Stag Dance* (2025) by Torrey Peters tell stories about wood, class, intimacy and grief. Narratives that let us fathom complicated conditions of the quotidian. Within these settings a mélange of imagination and fact transpires. There is a tension to behold between curiosity and arrogance of the present and the revelations a past can deliver. That tension can be articulated as an interplay between the poetic and prosaic; between emotion and conviction; between an instrument long gone and contemporary means of production.

A back-and-forth movement on a string creates a *Bebung* – a characteristic of the clavichord that is unique amongst keyboard instruments. A tremulous touch on the key produces a subtle fluctuation in pitch which — as the word suggests— adds vivacity. Moving through space the *Bebung* oscillates into an uncanny equilibrium. It fills the resonance chamber which offers a place to fathom ones own beliefs.

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