

20th century harpsichords

by Bart Becker

HARP'SI-CHORD (-cord) *noun*. A keyboard instrument of the 16th-18th centuries, precursor of the piano, but having the strings plucked by quills instead of struck.

Well, yeah. But it's a 20th century keyboard instrument, too. Burton's Harpsichord Co. of Lincoln is proof of that.

The harpsichord works, in the spacious second floor of a downtown Lincoln building, produce the parts of a harpsichord. A kit is then sold to the customer who assembles it.

The Burton Company sells about 150 kits a year at prices from \$200 to \$700. Those 150 instruments actually are a fairly large percentage of the total U.S. Harpsichord production.

Ron Eddy, an employee of Burton Harpsichord, said one company exists which produces about 1,500 harpsichords a year. Additionally, Frank Hubbard of Boston produces about 50 instruments a year.

The Burton Harpsichord Co. was started in 1966 or 1967, Eddy said. Initially the company completed instruments which they sold to a wholesaler. He, in turn, sold them to a retailer who dealt to the public. All that handling pushed the price up about twice as high as it currently is.

The company now employs three full-time and three part-time workers. Birch and veneered plywood is used for the case with 1/8-inch spruce used for the sounding board in the more expensive models.

"Schools and churches are the main institutions that buy the instruments," said Eddy. "The rest go to

plain old people, even some people who neither know how to play the harpsichord nor know much about Baroque music."

In Eddy's opinion, antique harpsichords were better constructed than those being built today. The piano evolved from the harpsichord and the earliest modern harpsichord builders—in the first quarter of this century—were piano makers.

Therefore, many modern harpsichords were based on piano construction.

"The piano depends on the soundboard but a harpsichord depends more on a whole box resonance," Eddy said. This construction concept made for heavier harpsichords and less of a pure harpsichord sound.

He also noted the piano has caused a lot of people to think keyboard instruments shouldn't go out of tune. But with the harpsichord this isn't true.

"In the earlier days a tuning guide was part of the information needed with a harpsichord," he said. "Tuning was considered part of harpsichord technique."

Eddy is trained as an architect, and he plays the violin but not the harpsichord. So why does he choose to work with them?

"I'm here because I'm convinced there's no difference between this and architecture," he said. "It's not design in the 'inspirational process' sense. But it's working in the realm of string lengths, the thickness of the case and things like that."

"There's more soul in designing harpsichords, I suppose."



Ron Eddy . . . "There's more soul in designing harpsichords."

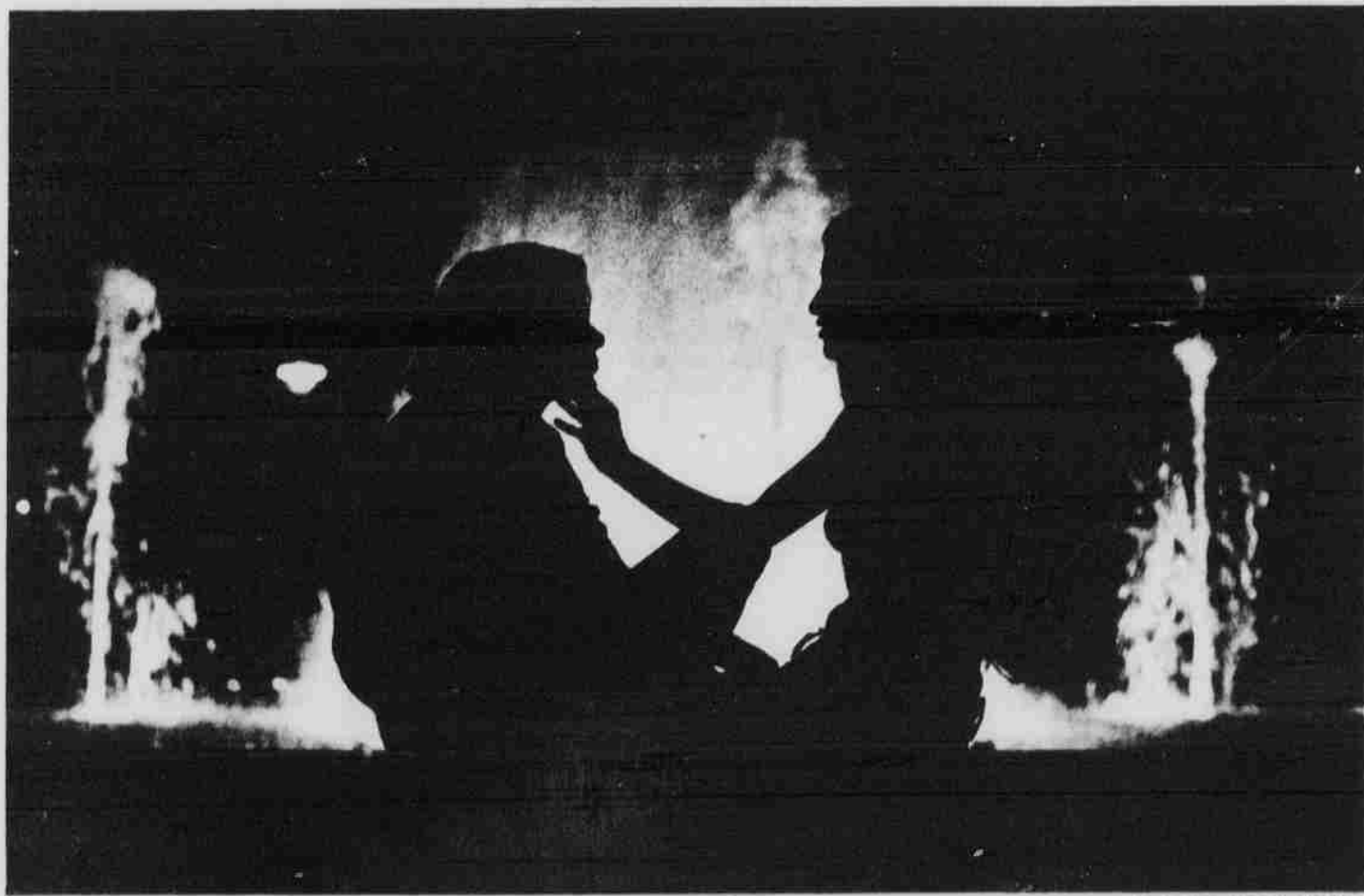


photo by Dan Ladely

Soapy pranks empty Broyhill

If pranksters continue to dump soap and dye into Broyhill fountain, it might be empty longer than normal this winter.

"I don't think we can keep spending maintenance money to clean the fountain when we have leaking roofs on campus," according to Ron Wright, assistant director of University business and finance.

There have been five or six soapings already this year, he said, compared to a total of four last year. Each one means the fountain must be drained and clean water substituted.

A routine draining just to change a light bulb costs about \$60. When soap or dye is involved, the cost rises. One clean-up last month cost \$250, Wright said.

He estimated the fountains upkeep will cost from \$3,600 to \$4,000 this year.

"When the fountain was first put in, soapings were pretty frequent," he said. "But there was an appeal in the campus newspaper which was pretty effective in cutting down pranks."

Pranksters also discovered that soap won't foam up in the fountain because the water is treated with silicone, he said, and this helped decrease soapings.

Other universities apparently have similar problems.

"Kansas University just closed down their fountain because they had so many difficulties with soapings," Wright said. "We'd hate to do that—we think the fountain is esthetically important to the campus."

Wright said he does not expect the fountain to be closed.

What could happen is that the fountain might have to be closed longer than usual during the winter, he said.

The water is heated, but during extremely cold weather the fountain is drained to prevent spray from drifting onto sidewalks and freezing.

If cleanings become too expensive, he said, the fountain would just be left empty longer.

Super poll tells all

Amazing facts about UNL students' attitudes and opinions will be revealed in the **Daily Nebraskan** Super Poll which will run through next week.

A month ago the **Daily Nebraskan** sent questionnaires to 340 randomly selected UNL students. Two hundred-forty three completed the survey and returned it to the **Daily Nebraskan**.

Fifty-two freshmen, 59 sophomores, 48 juniors, 66 seniors and 15 graduate students returned the poll. One hundred-forty seven were male and 95 were female.

The affiliation was: 83 independent, 57 Greek, and three Co-op. Sixty-seven reside in residence halls and 29 in Greek houses. Of those who live off campus, 39 live with parents or relatives, 78 in a rented room or apartment, and 30 own their home.

Thirty-nine respondents were 18-years-old or younger, 54 were 19-years-old, 36 were 20-years-old, 32 age 21, and 29 age 22. Forty-six were in the 23 to 30-year-old group and eight indicated they were 30 year-old or older.

The respondents registered their attitudes on a number of issues: politics, quality of education at UNL, sex, drugs, and religion.

The **Daily Nebraskan** conducted a similar survey in the spring of 1971. Some of the findings from the current poll will be contrasted with the results from that survey.

However, other results will show students' opinions in new areas—areas that have demanded student concern over the past year and a half.

The **Daily Nebraskan** Super Poll reveals UNL students' attitudes and opinions on politics in the next issue.

