

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING FLEMISH PRINTED PAPERS

Block-printed papers were a conventional part of the decoration of harpsichords during the great years of Flemish instrument making. The papers supplied were printed by the Ruckers Genootschap in Antwerp on paper hand-made for us in England. They are very similar to two of the designs used by the Ruckers workshop in the 17th century. The wide papers with the seahorse design are for the keyboard well—the inside of the cheek, the face of the nameboard, and the inside of the spine. The narrow papers with the fanciful arabesque design go around the inside of the case rim, above the soundboard and wrestplank.

To trim the papers to exact size you will need a steel straightedge and a single-edge razor blade. For glue, use the Resintex-TX supplied with the Zuckermann kits, or Titebond or other 'yellow' glue; Elmer's or other brands of white glue will also be satisfactory. The glue should be diluted not quite halfway with water. To put on the glue you will need a 1" to 2" brush with fairly stiff bristles.

The papers will be cut and fitted dry. Start with the narrow border papers. The first section to be done will be the back of the nameboard, beginning in the corner where it meets the cheek.

Measure from the top of the wrestplank to the beginning of the moulding. The design should center in this space. Go ahead and cut all the papers to this width, as this is the widest area to be covered with the border papers; around the soundboard you will have to trim more off the bottom edge of the papers because of the soundboard mouldings, but the top edge will remain constant clear around the instrument. Make sure you keep the same side up.

The papers should be cut a hair narrower than the space, as the paper will swell slightly when you wet it with glue. You want the top edge to come just shy of the moulding, avoiding any overhang, which would be very difficult to trim off later.

Once the papers have been cut to width, they need to be cut to length. Cut a number of them off at both ends, leaving about $1/32$ " of white space outside the last vertical element in the design. Be careful to cut them off at right angles.

Put diluted glue on the back of one of the papers, spreading it over the entire surface. Lay it in place on the back of the nameboard. You will be able to slide it into position, butted into the cheek corner—it can be moved for about five minutes.

Throughout the gluing be sure to keep your fingers clean!!

Continue across the back of the nameboard, gluing the papers one at a time, laying them in place, and sliding them into position, not overlapping but butting up against each other. Make sure the papers go on smooth with no bubbles. An X-Acto knife handle is useful in smoothing them down. Run it along to squeeze any bubbles out the end, and wipe up any excess glue before putting down the next piece.

Use something like a knitting needle to push the paper neatly back into the corner, and continue down the spine toward the tail. The papers will continue full width behind the register cleat. When you come to the soundboard moulding the space being papered narrows, and you will have to trim the papers to fit. Cut always off the bottom edge, keeping the top edge of the design level.

Where there is a step in the moulding, measure and cut out the notch to fit. Where the moulding runs level, there is a simpler method. Turn the paper upside down (but not end for end), with the design in against the case. Set it down against the soundboard moulding, and run your finger along the edge of the case top moulding to make a crease line in the paper. Use your straightedge and razor to cut along this crease, and when the paper is set in right way up it will fit the space.

Don't try to fold the paper into the sharp corner at the tail. Cut it to fit and set in the two pieces separately.

Continue right on around the instrument until you reach the starting point, and cut off the last piece to meet the first. No need to be concerned with matching the design here.

One of the large double-seahorse papers should be centered on the nameboard over middle C (c'). The vertical placement of the design will be determined from the cheek and spine, where the top of the design will reach right up to the edge of the case top moulding. On the face of the nameboard, more will be trimmed off the top edge to accommodate the nameboard cap moulding. The papers should be glued onto the nameboard clear to the bottom edge; the nameboard batten will be screwed in place over the papers.

You will have to use extra care to get the wide papers on flat and smooth, working any bubbles and excess glue out the edge. Again, do not try to fold the papers into the corners, but cut them apart, as the pieces on the inside of the cheek and spine will require extra trimming around the angle of the nameboard cap moulding. Cut the papers very slightly undersize to allow for swelling and butt them together, matching the design. If you haven't yet installed the key end blocks, put the papers on first, then glue in the end blocks over them. Or you will have to trim the papers to fit around the blocks.

Finally, brush on one or two thin coats of varnish to seal the surface and keep the papers clean. Use an oil varnish here, not shellac!—alcohol will dissolve the ink and ruin the papers.