The School of Music owns three harpsichords. There is a two manual "Hubbard" type harpsichord in the Recital Hall, a similar instrument in Room 118 which is used for harpsichord lessons and practicing, and a small spinet model made from a Zuckermann kit that is kept in the choral rehearsal room. The Early Music Ensemble, directed by Dr. Hathaway, generally uses the harpsichord in Room 118.

The two Hubbard type harpsichords have two manuals and three registers of strings. The one in the Recital Hall is generally kept at A=440 equal temperament, and the one in Room 118 is tuned at A=415, Valotti/Young temperament (mildly unequal). Although either instrument can be changed to a different pitch/temperament, it is far preferable to simply switch instruments. Changing the pitch involves taking sections of the instrument apart and shifting the keyboard upward by one note. This takes time to do and is somewhat hard on the instrument.

The School of Music made a significant investment in overhauling the instrument in Room 118 during the summer of 2008. The work was done by the esteemed Chicago harpsichord builder, Paul Irvin. Therefore, to protect our investment it is very important that the harpsichord policy be followed.

The newer Hubbard instrument that resides in the Recital Hall was donated in 2011 by the family of Jayne D. Schafer (1922-2008) in loving memory. Jayne received degrees from NIU in music education (B.M.) and piano performance (M.M.), studying piano with J.B. Floyd and harpsichord with Larry Rast.

All requests for use of either of the harpsichords must be approved by James R. Brown (please refer to the harpsichord request form).

As harpsichords require a different keyboard technique than a piano to avoid damage, the Hubbard may only be played by a student who has studied harpsichord (or any faculty member). (Students who have not studied harpsichord do not have permission to use this instrument.) Three people are needed to move the large Hubbard instrument, so relocating it requires some pre-planning. Either harpsichord will need to be tuned in the place where it will be played. Tuning takes about an hour. If the harpsichord is used in the recital or concert hall, or other location, appropriate time for tuning the day of the concert must also be scheduled in that room. Harpsichords do not stay in tune by themselves. They need to be tuned for each performance.

David Graham is in charge of harpsichord tuning and maintenance. He is also in charge of moving the instruments, and supervision of student workers who might assist him.

The harpsichord request form is attached.

Thank you,
James Russell Brown
Applied Artist, Organ & Harpsichord
Harpsichord Request Form

Please return this form at least 2 weeks in advance to James R. Brown. He will then forward this information to David Graham. Please note that late requests may result in non-availability of instrument or lack of tuning.

Performer’s Name__________________________________________________________

☐ Faculty Recital  ☐ Student Recital
If Student Recital, who is your teacher?_________________________________________

Who will be playing the harpsichord?__________________________________________

Type of musical program_____________________________________________________

Date instrument is needed___________ Location____________________________________

Day/time of dress rehearsal_________ Day/time of performance_____________________

Time reserved in the room for tuning before performance (obligatory)______________

Special tuning needs: A=415, A=440, meantone, etc_____________________________

THANK YOU!