

# The Edmund Handy Celeste

*An instrument for the 21st century inspired  
by a 19th century classic*



[www.edmundhandy.co.uk](http://www.edmundhandy.co.uk)



Edmund Handy has designed a new celeste inspired by the original French instruments first built by Auguste Mustel in 1886. With its harmonically complex timbre, this instrument recreates the magical sound that was introduced to the world by Tchaikovsky in his ballet 'The Nutcracker', and quickly became an integral part of the orchestral palette.

# Introducing

Every component of the celeste has been specifically designed for modern professional use. Each instrument is hand-built using a variety of carefully chosen materials ranging from solid oak to state-of-the-art adhesives and teflon-coated steel cable. Edmund has many years' experience of maintaining and repairing celestes and this, together with the observations of many professional celeste players, proved invaluable in all aspects of the design.

One of the instruments has been bought by the Royal Opera House in London and featured in their Christmas production of 'The Nutcracker'.

A close-up photograph of a wooden keyboard instrument, likely a portable piano or organ. The image shows a section of the keyboard with several black and white keys. The keys are set against a light-colored wooden frame. A prominent red decorative stripe runs horizontally across the wood, positioned above the keys. The name "EDMUND HANDY" is engraved in a serif font on the wooden surface, following the curve of the keyboard. The lighting is soft, highlighting the natural wood grain and the smooth finish of the keys.

EDMUND HANDY

**Design:** The dimensions and weight have been kept to a minimum, resulting in a compact instrument with a minimal footprint - an important consideration on stage and in opera house & theatre pits. The casework and frame is light yet extremely rigid. As in the original celestes, all the keys connect directly with the action and hammers, so the sound is placed correctly within the instrument and the absence of trackers allows for a more consistent touch.

**Keyboard & action:** The keyboard height and geometry are designed to match that of a Steinway model D grand piano. The key levers are made from high quality basswood. The action parts are designed to be reliable and robust, and the hammers are custom made by a specialist hammer manufacturer. The tempered steel toneplates are made and tuned by hand and are mounted on hollow beechwood resonator boxes. The damper lift pedal is positioned to the right of centre.

# Specifications

**Casework:** The casework is made of solid oak, with end plinths raised on double-wheeled braked castors. Spring-loaded lifting handles are fitted into the case ends. The full-width music rest is designed to support a B4 size music score, giving an effective music rest area of 837mm x 352mm.

**Compass, pitch & tuning:** The compass is four octaves,  $c^1 - c^5$ . The instrument is tuned to equal temperament, with a stretched tuning scale in the treble. The standard pitch is a442Hz; other pitches can be specified at the time of ordering.

**Dimensions:**  
width = 873mm  
height = 841mm  
depth = 454mm  
approximate weight = 48kg

The instrument is supplied with a fitted drop-on cover, with the option of a custom made flightcase at extra cost. Please contact Edmund Handy for further details, price and delivery options.



“..... Edmund Handy has been able to produce a sound that has resonance, brilliance and sparkle, and he has also been able to improve on the touch which is more dynamically sensitive than the original (Mustel instruments). I cannot recommend this instrument too highly.” **Barry Wordsworth** (*Music Director, The Royal Ballet*)

“What Edmund Handy has achieved in making his new celeste is nothing short of remarkable. Beautifully constructed and finished, with a sound the equal of, and in many ways better than, the original Mustel instruments.....” **Matthew Downes** (*Orchestra Operations Manager, Royal Opera House*)

# Testimonials

“.....I am really enjoying playing the instrument. It is wonderful to be able to play expressively including the beautiful pianissimo which is now possible. Thanks for building it!” **Paul Stobart** (*keyboard player, Royal Opera House*)

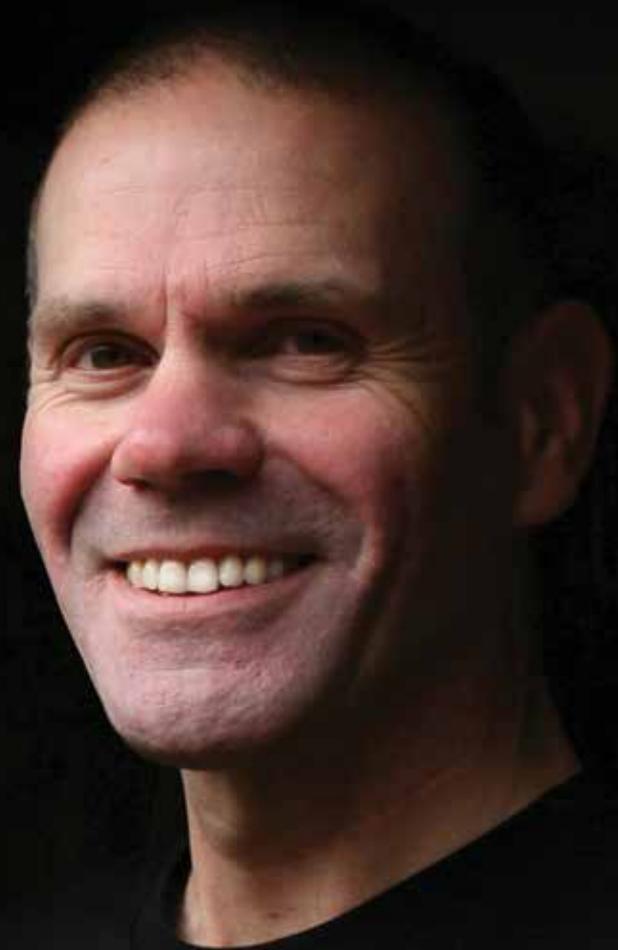
“Having played Edmund Handy’s new celeste in recent productions of ‘The Firebird’ and ‘Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland’ it is quite clear that Edmund has produced a superb instrument. The sound has just the right balance of brilliance in the upper register but also sonority in the lower register, and the touch is completely even and extremely sensitive across the whole four octaves. Quite simply, Edmund has thought of everything, and made an instrument far superior to any I have played before.” **Rob Clark** (*Head of Ballet Music Staff, Royal Opera House*)

Edmund began learning the piano at the age of five, and later studied piano and composition at the Junior Department of the Royal College of Music in London. He studied harpsichord making at the London College of Furniture (now the London Metropolitan University), and he now has over 30 years' experience as a professional early keyboard instrument maker and restorer.

# Edmund Handy

He has restored many important historical instruments, including a late-18th century clavichord which he restored on-site in a medieval Saxon town in Romania, and a very rare and unusual spinet-shaped 'transverse grand piano' made in 1777 by Crang Hancock.

Clavichords and celestes are hand-made in Edmund's workshop in south-east London, and he has repaired and serviced celestes for clients including Glyndebourne, the Royal Opera House and English National Opera, and for most of the major UK orchestras. He is also a highly experienced tuner of harpsichords, early pianos and clavichords for concerts and recordings.





## Edmund Handy LCG

*Early keyboard instrument maker & restorer*

Caladan, Coreley, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 3AP

Mobile: 07968 915410

Tel: 01584 892051

email: [contact@edmundhandy.co.uk](mailto:contact@edmundhandy.co.uk)

[www.edmundhandy.co.uk](http://www.edmundhandy.co.uk)