Chapter 1

In his introduction to *Federation: Australian Arts and Society 1901–2001*, John McDonald writes: Australians reserve their highest admiration for sportsmen and women, followed by entertainers and actors. Political leaders appear well down the scale of public affection, and it is further still before one encounters any artists[, musicians[ or writers.1 Piano makers and professional concert pianists are rarely mentioned, nor consistently celebrated.

Many Australians are unaware of the complex and pervasive pianistic history that makes up a large part of our nation’s musical heritage.2 Widespread ignorance often produces a devastating reality: old pianos are thrown onto the rubbish dump or converted into writing desks, dressing tables,3 bookcases or bars (a vandalism that thoughtlessly destroys a wealth of historical information). ‘In the land that is a nursery for hedonistic abandon, where nothing is taken more seriously than sport, and where spiritual pleasures are subsumed both by physical ones and the accumulation of material wealth’,4 awareness of, let alone concern for, the preservation of pianos that survive from those that were either brought into Australia between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries or manufactured in Australia by Australian piano makers appears to be the furthest thing from the interests of most people. The gulf between the past and the present has never been wider.

During the nineteenth century, however, many Australians (especially women) appear to have regarded the piano as an indispensable part of life; the isolation experienced by a considerable number of pioneers was often a catalyst for piano ownership. In his *Hints for Intending Missionaries and Emigrants*, the Reverend Henry Hanson Turton (1818–87) observes (somewhat typically for a nineteenth-century man of the cloth): ‘if your wife is anything of a performer … [a piano] will provide a valuable and cheerful companion in a foreign land.’5 Other nineteenth-century Englishmen also urged emigrants to take a piano with them to foreign climes. In 1856, for example, Edward Brown Fitton (?–?), a landowner and magistrate in Canterbury, New Zealand, advises:

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4 McDonald, ‘From Gallipoli to Homebush Bay’, p. 1.
5 Quoted in J. MacGibbon, *Piano in the Parlour: When the Piano was New Zealand’s Home Entertainment Centre* (Wellington: Ngaio Press, 2007), pp. 11–12.
If a lady were hesitating whether to pay the freight for her piano or a chest of drawers, I would decidedly recommend her to prefer the piano. It will afford more gratification and cheerfulness from the associations aroused by its music than can be supplied by more practically useful furniture, for which, after all, it is easy to get a substitute from any skilful colonial carpenter.6

In 1861, Charles Hurtsthouse (1817–76), a colonist at New Plymouth, New Zealand, remarks: ‘I would advise any fair emigrant to take a piano with her as part of her battery of charms.’7

Pianos have always been voices of culture and civility. Some symbolise the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century ideal of ‘accomplished’ femininity (English ‘women [virtuoso] pianists were rarely outshone by their male counterparts’);8 others represent pinnacles of human achievement in relation to design, manufacture and sound; some reflect the focus of middle-class hearth and home; whilst others reveal working-class aspirations.

The Australian musicologist Roger Covell (1967–) observed that the values and priorities of the middle class

rarely expressed themselves with more touching gallantry and tenacity than in the sacrifices and discomforts endured by countless families in order to bring this cumbersome symbol of higher values to their chosen home in small unstable ships and on grinding bullock drays.9

Such ‘tenacity’, ‘sacrifices and discomforts’ are alluded to, for example, in the diary of Annabella Boswell (née Innes) (1826–1916),10 whose life was full of dancing to the playing of bagpipes … long horse rides and walks with picnics … bathing, dinner parties and gardening.11

In March 1838, Annabella speaks of spending several months at ‘The White Rock, near Bathurst’, in New South Wales.12 She comments on the condition of the road leading to White Rock, by stating that ‘nothing could be worse than this road’.13 Given the notoriously bad condition of roads around Bathurst

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7 Quoted in MacGibbon, Piano in the Parlour, p. 12.
11 Ibid., p. iii.
12 Ibid., p. 21.
13 Ibid., p. 22.
during the 1830s, it is not surprising that Annabella also writes the following: ‘At this time we got a piano. A most laborious business it was conveying it.’14 (Annabella had put aside her guitar in favour of the piano, despite the fact that, as she wrote: ‘I am getting on very well with the guitar, and can play several long pieces, besides three pretty waltzes and the accompaniments for three songs.15 I assure you I never look off the book now when I am playing.’)16

The owners of pianos were not the only ones to suffer because of the inconveniences associated with extreme conditions and piano moving. The instruments themselves sometimes had more than a hard time of it. Writing from Augusta in Western Australia on Wednesday, 7 November 1832, Georgiana Molloy (1805–43) mentioned that she had to rub oil into the case veneer of her piano ‘as the heat has rather warped it’.17 Sarah Harriet Selwyn (1809–1907), wife of George Augustus Selwyn (1809–78), the first Anglican bishop of New Zealand, complained, for example, that her ‘poor dear Piano … came, perforce in a wagon over such a road! It had a nest of ferns to soften its fate, but the keys are much loosened and the treble is in a bad state.’18 In 1845, the grazier John Everett (1816–1902)19 wrote: ‘Within the last few years many ladies have ventured to try the bush life, and none I think regret the experiment; on each side of us, and far beyond us, petticoats are to be found, and pianos … considerably out of tune. I don’t think drays and stony ranges improved musical instruments.’20

In some instances, pianos were completely ruined during transport. In 1846, the pastoralist Stewart Marjoribanks Mowle (who ‘was dedicated to singing and

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15 In a letter written at ‘a boarding school in Bridge Street, Sydney … [on Saturday, 16 April 1836] to her uncle, Major Innes at Lake Innes, Port Macquarie’, Annabella states that she can ‘play the accompaniment to “Ye Banks and Braes”, “Ah Vousdirais”, “Rondo”, and a few other little airs’. P. Clarke and D. Spender (eds), *Life Lines: Australian Women’s Letters and Diaries, 1788–1840* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1992), pp. 177, 178. Clarke and Spender take the quotation from: A. A. C. D. Boswell, *Early Recollections and Clearings, from an Old Journal or Some Recollections of My Early Days Written at Different Periods* (No publisher, 1908), p. 19.


music’\textsuperscript{21} observed that ‘the piano had been topsy-turvy, and some of the ivory was off the notes … It had been packed … in wet sheepskins, and the result was that the back was loose, the polish taken off part of the top of it, and almost all the keys had been shot the eighth of an inch [2 centimetres] out of their places’.\textsuperscript{22} Prior to the ruining of this piano, Mowle’s wife, Mary (1827–57), in her diary entry for Tuesday, 7 January 1851, confessed that playing the piano had been her ‘chief solace’:

The same old story, get up, dress the children, feed the poultry, breakfast, go to work [she always referred to sewing as work], put Kate to sleep, hear Florence her lesson, dine, read, feed chickens, work till sunset, feed chickens, stroll about till dusk, put Kate to bed, have tea, undress the others—play [the piano] for an hour (my chief solace) work till eleven, go to bed & rise next morning to recommence the same routine.\textsuperscript{23}

For many settlers who found themselves in what must have seemed a cultural wasteland, the piano became a tangible symbol of the re-establishment of a polite and ordered society … In 1843 a traveller through the wilds of western Victoria expressed astonishment at finding ‘a piano, well stocked table and a lighted fire’ in the living room of a pioneer homestead … the piano ranked beside shelter and food in the list of colonial essentials.\textsuperscript{24}

During the mid-nineteenth century in Sydney, Hobart and remote new settlements, possession of a piano ranked among the marks of social gentility. Nor was the piano an essential indulgence exclusive to the wealthy middle class. It often figured prominently in working-class aspirations. After all, in England, there was gratifying evidence that musical tastes were not class-specific. Handel was reported to be popular among northern factory audiences as early as 1788; employers simply had to encourage and foster, and this they did. In … Yorkshire and Durham the London Lead Company, and in Cheshire … all gave encouragement to the musical propensities of their employees. Of the cotton-spinners of Cresbrook in Derbyshire it was said in 1824 that ‘their highest species of enjoyment, the highest that man can enjoy, is music; this delightfully intellectual source of pleasure is improved, encouraged, and scientifically taught at Cresbrook’.

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{21}] Cumes, Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid, p. 329. ‘Mowle had a difficult and materially unrewarding life but he continued with those things that gave him real pleasure, mostly riding and singing and going to good parties with good friends.’ Ibid., p. 243.
\item[\textsuperscript{24}] B. McKinlay, Sweet & Simple Pleasures: Australian Entertainment in Colonial Times (Melbourne: Collins Dove, 1988), p. 28.
\end{itemize}
... As H. A. Bruce commented in an address at the Swansea Musical Festival in 1864, the promotion of music amongst the working classes ‘has induced them frequently to desert the public-house, and to seek for some higher and better occupation. And no occupation surely can be purer, or free from anything like dangerous influences, or more successful in its results than the … cultivation of music.’

In 1892, the poet, novelist and radical commentator Francis William Adams (1862–93) observed that urban tradesmen often owned ‘a small, iron-framed, time-payment piano, on which his daughters, returning … from the local “public school” … discoursed popular airs with a powerful manual execution’. In the same year, Francis Campbell Brewer, the editor of the Sydney Morning Herald between 1865 and 1877, wrote: “The Australians are a very musical people, and in Sydney particularly … it is not inappropriate to call Sydney the “City of Pianos”.”

From the late eighteenth century, the love of, and desire for, the piano spread from England across the world with incredible speed, consistently meeting with approval in the highest intellectual quarters. The American philosopher and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82) observed approvingly, ‘Tis wonderful how soon a piano gets into a log-hut on the frontier’, ratifying the instrument’s position as the symbol of respectability and sophistication. Emerson’s evocative prose paints a compelling picture:

[W]itness the mute all-hail  
The joyful traveller gives, when on the verge  
Of craggy Indian wilderness he hears  
From a log-cabin stream Beethoven’s notes  
On the piano, played with master’s hands.

During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the piano represented a cultural and social symbol such as no musical instrument had before.

26 Humphrey McQueen, A New Britannia (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 2004), p. 112. McQueen takes the quotation from: Francis William Lauderdale Adams, Australian Essays (Melbourne: Inglis, 1886).
The First Piano to be Brought to Australia

History shows that the arrival of a piano with the First Fleet at Botany Bay was prophetic. Not only did the instrument highlight the importance and role of music in the lives of the first settlers, but it also served as a herald for notions of musical idealism and entertainment that inspired ensuing generations of Australian piano lovers.

The first piano to be brought to Australia was a small rectangular instrument, a so-called ‘square’ piano. Square pianos superficially resemble an ‘unfretted’ (‘fret-free’) clavichord. Like clavichords, square pianos appear as an oblong, fairly shallow box, open at the top (closed by a lid), with an inset keyboard at the front long-side of the instrument, a soundboard at the treble end, and horizontal strings running obliquely, above up-striking hammers, from the back of the instrument at the bass end to the front at the treble end (the bass strings being nearest to the player), the strings passing over the soundboard. Square pianos, like clavichords, are usually ‘double-strung’—that is, each note has two adjacent strings tuned to the same pitch.

Two extant instruments contend for the title ‘First Fleet piano’

1. a square piano made in 1780/86? by the London-based, German-born (?) piano maker Frederick Beck, inscribed Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1780 / No. 4 and 10 Broad Street Soho

Since there was only one piano on board the Sirius as the ship made its way to Botany Bay, there can only be one First Fleet piano. Claims that either of these two instruments is the First Fleet piano are based substantially on provenance details originating in hearsay. Given that hearsay inevitably comprises a constructed interpretation (whether conscious or not) and is never an artless recollection, there are both tension and interaction between the histories of

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30 See ‘Clavichord’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication. Clavichords built with the possibility for each of several adjacent key levers to strike a string-course (two or more adjacent strings tuned to the same pitch) at different places, each adjacent key lever producing a different note from its neighbour, are called ‘fretted’ clavichords. Clavichords in which each string-course is only ever struck by a single key lever are designated as ‘unfretted’ or ‘fret-free’. See B. Brauchli, The Clavichord (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 4.
31 See ‘Up-Striking Hammers’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
32 This definition is based on one found in Clarke, ‘The English Piano’, pp. 254–5.
33 See Appendix A, Volume 2 of this publication.
34 See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
the two instruments, and the provenance details associated with each raise so many unanswered (and perhaps unanswerable) questions that a conclusive identification of the First Fleet piano is thwarted.

With the importance of historical context in mind, however, and when placed within the framework of evidence based on hearsay, the unique hinged cabriole legs and campaign-furniture-inspired stand of the 1780/86? Frederick Beck square piano represent the strongest evidence supporting speculation that the instrument was brought to Botany Bay by George Bouchier Worgan in 1788. The author favours this speculation. Mindful that I am ‘answerable to the giver of all data for the accuracy of … [my] observations’ and that my ‘interpretations are vulnerable to error’, for the purposes of this study, the Beck square piano of 1780/86? will be referred to as: ‘George Worgan’s piano’; ‘George Worgan’s square piano’; ‘George Worgan’s Beck piano’; ‘George Worgan’s Beck square piano’; ‘George Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck piano’; ‘George Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano’; ‘Worgan’s piano’; ‘Worgan’s square piano’; ‘Worgan’s Beck piano’; ‘Worgan’s Beck square piano’; ‘Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck piano’; ‘Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano’; or ‘the First Fleet piano’.

Worgan’s square piano was one of many made in London towards the end of the eighteenth century within the context of a raging enthusiasm for such instruments, and exemplifies the redefinition of piano design that took place in London between the mid-1760s and 1780s. This redefinition comprised innovations made in relation to design, sound and touch, and was the result (in large part) of the influence of several London-based piano makers who had emigrated from Germany. These emigrants included Frederick Beck.

Frederick Beck’s pianos were the consequence of a long history of the piano in London. This history is outlined below.

The Piano in London

The First Pianos in London

The history of the piano in London is ‘like a great tree whose roots reach … back’ to the 1730s. During the eighteenth century, it bore ‘many fruits: some … mouldered where they fell, some … sprouted shoots of their own, and some … were picked and carried many miles away to feed the souls of … [music lovers] in far distant lands’. 37

Two of the first pianos ever seen in England were what we would now refer to as ‘grand’ pianos. The term ‘grand’ was first coined in London by Robert Stodart in his 1777 patent for a ‘grand Piano-forte’. Stodart’s patent application describes his invention of a new sort of Instrument or of Grand Fortepiano with an Octave Swell and to produce various Tones together or separate and the … Instrument will be more durable and produce finer and more variable Tones than any yet made.

Stodart’s grand piano was an instrument with up-striking hammer action modified to incorporate the plucking action of a harpsichord. It is not known whether Stodart ever made one of these ‘grand’ combination pianos. Stodart’s earliest surviving grand piano without an added harpsichord action is dated 1781.

Documentary evidence dating from 1716 through to 1792 reveals that combined hammer and plucking-action keyboard instruments existed throughout most of the eighteenth century. ‘What may appear as a specialized’ development involving both aesthetic and design ‘issues is often only really comprehensible as the specific form of’ the resolution of ‘a larger problem’. The emergence of combined hammer and plucking-action keyboard instruments suggests that

1. there was a need for expressive instruments—that is, instruments capable of producing a variety of timbres and dynamics
2. there was a perceived congruity between an instrument that put a wide range of sounds at the command of a single player and the concept of ‘unity

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38 See ‘Discovery’, in the Introduction, this volume.
41 See ‘Up-Striking Hammers’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
42 See M. Latcham, ‘The Apotheosis of Merlin’, in M. Latcham (ed.), Musique ancienne—instrument et imagination. Actes des Rencontres Internationales harmoniques, Lausanne 2004 (Berne: Peter Lang, 2006), pp. 276–84. There are nine extant such combination instruments: 1) dated 1746, made by Giovanni Ferrini (d. 1758) (owner: Luigi-Ferdinando Tagliavini Collection, Bologna, Italy); 2) dated 1763, made by Johann Ludwig Hellen (owner: Giulini Collection, Briosco, Italy); 3) undated, made by Johann Ludwig Hellen (attribution) (owner: Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Germany, inv. no. MINE 105); 4) undated (before 1779), made by Johann Ludwig Hellen (attribution) (owner: Musikinstrumenten-Museum, Berlin, Germany, inv. no. 2165); 5) undated, made by Johann Ludwig Hellen (attribution) (private ownership, France); 6) dated 1777, made by Johann Andreas Stein (attribution) (owner: Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona, Italy); 7) dated 1783, made by Johann Andreas Stein (owner: Conservatorio di Musica San Pietro à Majella, Naples, Italy); 8) dated 1777, made by Tadeus Tornel (owner: Museo Arqueológico, Murcia, Spain, inv. no. 2257); and 9) dated 1792, made by James Davies (owner: Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, USA, inv. no. 315, 718). See Latcham, ‘The Apotheosis of Merlin’, pp. 279–84.
in variety’—a paradigm contemporaneously regarded as a ‘microcosmic reflection of a varied universe under the seeing eye of a single deity’  

3. ingenuity and inventiveness were valued.  

Although the first two grand pianos seen in England have not survived, it is reasonable to assume that they would have looked much like Italian-style harpsichords. They were probably modelled on the arpicembalo che fa il piano e il forte (‘harp-harpsichord that has the soft and the loud’) of the Paduan-born Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655–1731; 1732 according to the modern calendar).  

The term arpicembalo che fa il piano e il forte was first used to describe a particular keyboard instrument in an inventory, taken in Florence in 1700, of the musical instruments owned by Cristofori’s employer, Grand Prince Ferdinando de’ Medici of Tuscany (1663–1713). (Ferdinando ‘was one of the great patrons in musical history, reportedly a gifted musician, an excellent harpsichordist and a singer of skill and charm’.)  

The inventory lists the instrument as arpicembalo di Bartolomeo Cristofori, di nuova inventione, che fa il piano e il forte (‘harp-harpsichord by Bartolomeo Cristofori, of new invention, which has the soft and the loud’). The name ‘arpicembalo’, combining the words for ‘harp’ (arpa) and ‘harpsichord’ (cimbalo), gives an indication of how the character of the sound of the newly invented instrument may initially have been perceived.  

In the winter of 1688, Ferdinando travelled from his home (the Pitti Palace in Florence) to attend the Carnival festivities in Venice. The prince, who had a shaky marriage and a ‘roving eye … enjoyed himself thoroughly’. He probably ‘met Cristofori on his way back home’ during March or April 1688.  

The timing was perfect. Antonio Bolgioni, Ferdinando’s resident harpsichord maker and tuner, had died in February. As a consequence, the prince found himself in need of someone not only to service his large collection of instruments in Florence, but also to tune harpsichords for ‘the upcoming musical events at Pratolino, the Prince’s summer residence’ (within which context Ferdinando’s harpsichord tuner received bonus payments).  

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45 See ibid., pp. 288–9.  
46 Niccolò Susier (1688–1737), a theorbo player at the court of Grand Prince Ferdinando de’ Medici of Tuscany (1663–1713), noted Cristofori’s death in a diary entry dated 27 January 1731: ‘This date is given in the ‘stile fiorentino’, in which the new year began on March 25, the Annunciation; the obituary was thus written in 1732 according to the modern calendar.’ S. Pollens, The Early Pianoforte (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 47.  
48 Isacoff, A Natural History of the Piano, pp. 20–1.  
49 Pollens, The Early Pianoforte, p. 47.  
50 See Isacoff, A Natural History of the Piano, p. 22.
the notion, it is possible that ‘while passing through Padua … [Ferdinando] heard about a talented 33-year-old local instrument builder and technician, Cristofori’.\(^{51}\) Some years later, Cristofori recounted that when Ferdinando first offered him employment at the Florentine court, ‘the prince was told that I did not wish to go … he replied that he would make me want to … Ferdinando … returned home with two things of significance … the future inventor of the piano and the venereal disease that would eventually claim his life’.\(^{52}\)

‘The earliest official mention of Cristofori’s presence at [Ferdinando’s] court is a record dated’ Friday, 30 April 1688.\(^{53}\) Following 10 years of part-time employment at the prince’s court, Cristofori was promoted to full-time status in 1698. This promotion may have been associated with a commission to build a piano; if so, Cristofori may have made his first arpicembalo che fa il piano e il forte sometime during the very late 1690s.

The Medici musical inventory of 1700 contains detailed descriptions of 35 stringed keyboard instruments. These 35 instruments are conventional harpsichords, spinets and clavichords; it seems unlikely that any of these instruments would have inspired Cristofori to create his arpicembalo.\(^{54}\)

Grand Prince Ferdinando de’ Medici was a

cultivated and enthusiastic patron of painting and the decorative arts … [He] also appreciated ivory carving and turning, as well as horology—over forty clocks are listed in an inventory made after his death [in 1713], including some with musical mechanisms. Ferdinando’s interest in complex mechanical devices of all kinds may have led him to support Cristofori’s experimentation with the piano.\(^{55}\)

By 1711, Cristofori had made three pianos: two were sold in Florence, and one had been given, in 1709, as a gift from Grand Prince Ferdinando to the greatest patron of the arts of his generation, Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni (1667–1740) in Rome.\(^{56}\) We know this from a detailed contemporaneous description of Cristofori’s arpicembalo che fa il piano e il forte written by the poet, librettist and playwright Marchese Scipione Maffei (1675–1755). Maffei’s description, published in 1711 in

\(^{51}\) Ibid., p. 21.
\(^{52}\) Ibid., p. 22.
\(^{53}\) Pollens, The Early Pianoforte, p. 47.
\(^{54}\) See ibid., p. 49.
\(^{55}\) Ibid., p. 49.
the Giornale di Litterati d’Italia, is the fruit of ‘the earliest known interview of a musical instrument maker’. In 1709, Maffei saw three of Cristofori’s ingenious new pianos. From Maffei’s description, it becomes clear that he had spent time with Cristofori looking at the new instruments (Cristofori must have taken the action out of the pianos in order to show Maffei how they worked).

It is from Maffei’s published description that we get the name now commonly used in association with Cristofori’s pianos: gravicembalo col piano e forte (‘large harpsichord with soft and loud’).

Except for their [hammer] actions … [Cristofori’s] pianos were generally quite similar to harpsichords.

… This is not to deny Cristofori’s several brilliant innovations, such as the inverted wrest plank and the doubling of the bent side to separate the functions of holding the hitch pins and the soundboard … The shape of the cases of his pianos, their scaling, and the structure of their soundboards are, however, quite similar to those of Cristofori’s harpsichords.

It is not known how precisely the first two grand pianos seen in England replicated Cristofori’s design.

Samuel Crisp’s Piano, Made by Father Wood

During the 1730s or early 1740s, the cultivated littérateur Samuel Crisp (1707–1783), ‘a man of learning and a man of exquisite taste in all the arts’, returned from Italy to England with a piano.

Samuel Crisp was

a scholar of the highest order; a critic of the clearest acumen; possessing, with equal delicacy of discrimination, a taste for literature and for the arts; and personally excelling as a dilettante both in music and painting.


58 Pollens, The Early Pianoforte, p. 56.

59 Koster, Keyboard Musical Instruments in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, pp. xv; xvii, fn. 23.

60 C. Burney, ‘Harpsichord’, in A. Rees (ed.), The Cyclopædia, or Universal Directory of Arts, Sciences, and Literature, 39 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1819), Vol. 18, n.p. Burney’s entries were completed in ca 1803. ‘The relevant volume of the Cyclopædia did not come out until 1811 and the whole encyclopaedia was given the official publication date of 1819 (the year in which the last volume was completed).’ Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 389, fn. 7.
He was the author of … [an unsuccessful] tragedy called Virginia, and several poetical effusions in the magazines of the day. He … took up his residence at Hampton; where he fitted up a small house with paintings, prints, sculpture, and musical instruments, arranged with the most classical elegance.61

According to the English music historian Dr Charles Burney (1726–1814), Crisp’s piano ‘remained unique in this country for several years’.62 Burney recounts that the instrument was made in Rome by an expatriate English monk, Father Wood, who was a friend of Samuel Crisp.63 Nothing is known of Father Wood, and unfortunately ‘there is no record of anyone called Wood’ being enrolled at the esteemed English College in Rome ‘in the period 1700–1740’.64 Father Wood’s piano may have been modelled on Cristofori’s instruments; perhaps in Rome, Father Wood had seen and/or heard the Cristofori piano that had been given as a gift by Grand Prince Ferdinando de’ Medici to Cardinal Ottoboni.

It was not unknown for clerics to make keyboard instruments. For example, in 1702, the Lazarist priest Theodoric Pedrini (1671–1746) was sent to China to be a court musician to Emperor K’ang Hsi (1654–1722); as well as teaching music to members of the imperial family, he made harpsichords and organs.65 From Peking (Beijing), Pedrini wrote to Cardinal Fabrizio Paolucci (1651–1726), the Secretary of State to Pope Clement XI (1649–1721) and Pope Benedict XIII (1649–1730):

Nobody was ever more liked by the Emperor than me … so that he started to praise me, and went on for many years with several presents, calling me to his presence several times, and taking me to high esteem … [The emperor] also used to write music notes, and … we often played together the same harpsichord, each with one hand.66

It is not known whether Father Wood made any other pianos apart from the one that Samuel Crisp brought from Italy to London.

61 E. F. Rimbault, The Pianoforte, Its Origins, Progress & Construction: With Some Account of Instruments of the Same Class which Preceded it Viz. the Clavichord, the Virginal, the Spinet, the Harpsichord, etc. (London: Robert Cocks & Co., 1860), pp. 130–1, fn. Rimbault rewrote Charles Burney’s account of Samuel Crisp and his piano without acknowledging Burney as his source. See Burney, ‘Harpsichord’. Rimbault ascribes the story to “tradition” (Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 389, fn. 7).
62 Burney, ‘Harpsichord’.
63 See ibid. Burney does not provide a date for the importation into England of Samuel Crisp’s Father Wood piano.
Fulke Greville Purchases Samuel Crisp’s Piano

Possibly during the mid-1740s, the wealthy aristocrat, Member of Parliament, High Sheriff of Wiltshire and man of fashion Fulke Greville (1717–1806) purchased Samuel Crisp’s piano ‘for the enormous sum of 100 guineas’.67 (A ‘conversion rate of 21 shillings per guinea … [was] established … in 1717’.68 The instrument’s price was approximately twice the cost of a good harpsichord;69 this is not surprising, given the uniqueness in England of Crisp’s piano.

Greville was generally looked upon as the finest gentleman about town. He excelled … in all the fashionable exercises, riding, fencing, hunting, shooting at a mark, dancing, tennis, &c. and worked every day at every one of them with a fury for pre-eminence not equalled, perhaps, in ardour for superiority in personal accomplishments since the days of the chivalrous Lord Herbert of Cherbury [1583–1648]. He travelled in a style that was even princely; not only from his equipages, out-riders, horses, and liveries, but from constantly having two of his attendants skilled in playing the French horn; and these were always stationed to recreate him with marches and warlike movements on the outside of the windows, when he took any repast.70

Fulke Greville housed Crisp’s piano at his country mansion, Wilbury House, near Newton Toney, in Wiltshire.

In 1746, Greville asked the harpsichord maker Jacob Kirckman (1710–92) to find him a music teacher and companion ‘who had a mind and cultivation, as well as finger and ear’.71 Kirckman recommended someone who was to become one of eighteenth-century England’s most important music historians, Charles Burney. In 1747, the 21-year-old Burney was employed as Greville’s music-master-in-residence, subsequently living in Greville’s Wilbury House between 1748 and 1749.72

That Wilbury House was located in the countryside may have been irksome for Charles Burney, who (it appears) preferred city living. In 1744 (three years before starting his employment under Fulke Greville), Burney (at 18 years of age) had been brought to London as an apprentice to the leading English composer

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67 Cole, The Pianoforte in the Classical Era, p. 43. Charles Burney writes: ‘Fulk Greville, esq. purchased this instrument of Mr. Crisp for 100 guineas’ (Burney, ‘Harpischord’).
72 See Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 389, fn. 20.
Thomas Arne (1710–78). Burney ‘soon embedded himself in the musical life of the capital as Arne’s copyist, occasional composer, and free-lance violinist and harpsichordist, while keeping detailed notes on concerts and performers, which formed the basis of the later chapters of his General History’. Samuel Crisp (who became a close friend of Burney) described London as ‘the centre of riches, luxury, taste, pride, extravagance—all that ingenuity is to fatten upon’. It appears that Burney found London, with all its stimulations and failings, enticing. Although he was a Shropshire lad (having been born in Shrewsbury), ‘late in life, Burney decried [William] Wordsworth’s [1770–1850] paens to rural solitude as inimical to civil society. The countryside held no romance for Burney.’

Burney’s favourite poet was Pietro Antonio Domenico Trapassi (1698–1782), commonly known by his pseudonym, Metastasio. Metastasio held sentiments similar to Burney’s concerning the countryside. In a letter dated Wednesday, 30 November 1768, written to the castrato singer Carlo Maria Broschi (1705–82), whose stage name was Farinelli, Metastasio advised the famous singer to avoid

the autumnal exhalations, and the poisonous vapours of a great part of … [the] country … the air of paved cities is much less impregnated with this poison, not only from the exhalations of the earth being impeded, but from the numerous and constant fires, as well as the motions of the inhabitants, which agitate and correct the air.

(Burney and Metastasio were not alone in their dislike of the natural environment. For example, the French painter François Boucher (1703–70) complained that nature was ‘too green, and badly lit’; the biologist Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707–88), was determined to mould nature according to his personal taste: ‘Brute Nature is hideous and dying; I, and I alone, can render her pleasant and living.’)

Although Charles Burney may appear to today’s champions of ideological correctness as being both ‘ecologically challenged … [and] shockingly insensitive to eternal aesthetic values’, he did manage to cast aside any negative feelings that may have emerged as the result of his employment within a rural context at

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74 Quoted in V. Patten, Chawton House Library and Early Women’s Writing—Women Writers: Frances Burney (1752–1840).
76 Burney translated and published the treasure-trove of letters written by Metastasio to his close friend Carlo Maria Broschi (1705–82), the famous castrato singer, commonly known by his stage name, Farinelli.
77 Quoted in Heartz, Music in European Capitals, p. xxii.
78 Quoted in ibid., p. xxii.
79 Quoted in ibid., p. xxii.
80 Ibid., p. xxii.
Wilbury House. In his memoirs, Burney reveals not only that he subsequently enjoyed the advantage of moving in the best circles of society, but also that he was able to spend many hours practising on Fulke Greville’s piano.

It appears that Greville’s piano had several pronounced weaknesses, as well as strengths. Burney observed that ‘the touch was very imperfect, and the mechanism clumsy; so that nothing but slow movements … could be executed on it’. Burney’s description makes it clear that Greville’s piano was not an exact version of Cristofori’s, whose pianos contain an action that is subtle, precise, reliable and efficient.

Although ‘nothing but slow movements … could be executed on it’, Burney remarks that the tone of Greville’s piano ‘was … superior to that produced by quills’—that is, by a harpsichord. The salient tonal beauty of Greville’s piano created a context within which slow movements ‘and other solemn and pathetic strains when executed with taste and feeling by a master … accustomed to the touch, excited equal wonder and delight in the hearers’.

Rutgerus Plenius Copies Fulke Greville’s Piano

Fulke Greville’s piano became celebrated. As a consequence, in ca 1747,

Rutgerus (or Roger) Plenius (originally Pleunis) (1696–1774), a harpsichord maker from the Low Countries who was resident [in 1736] at South Audley Street, Grosvenor Square ['ye King’s Arms being over ye Door'] proposed to make an improved version [of Greville’s piano], and was given permission to copy the [instrument].

After playing Plenius’ copy, Burney stated that ‘the touch was better, but the tone very much inferior’. Plenius asked Burney to give a public demonstration of his piano copy, but Burney declined on the grounds that he ‘had other employments’.

82 Burney, ‘Harpsichord’.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
wch I liked better than that of a shew-man'. Burney's uncharacteristically sardonic response lacks kindness and grace. Demonstrating keyboard instruments, however, was nothing new to Burney, who 'had been closely connected with the Kirckman workshop. From a small preserved fragment of Burney's intended autobiography it is known that as a young man he demonstrated their harpsichords to potential clients'—an activity that, it appears, he found odious.

Plenius was 'unable to generate sufficient interest in his instruments', and 'failing to rescue his finances by running a raffle', he 'was declared bankrupt in 1756, at which point his stock', including his piano copy, was 'sold ... at auction'. From this moment, the fate of Plenius' piano copy (described at auction as a 'Piano piece') is shrouded in mystery. (Two 'Forte Pianos', presumably made by Plenius, were in Plenius' workshop in 1756. 'So London musicians and connoisseurs had opportunity to buy pianofortes during the 1750s though no record of their use in concerts has been found.')

After Plenius' bankrupting in 1756, his eldest son, Johann (John) Christian (1720–75), continued in the harpsichord-making business (in 1737, John was apprenticed to his father, and, having successfully completed his training, later worked as a journeyman). In 1763, Thomas Mortimer's (1730–1810) *The Universal Director* lists Plenius (without a Christian name) as 'Harpsichord-maker. Catherine Street, Strand.' This maker is one of the sons of Roger Plenius (possibly his son John).

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89 Klima et al., *The Memoirs of Dr Charles Burney 1726–1796*, p. 73.
91 Cole, *The Pianoforte in the Classical Era*, p. 44.
93 Cole, *The Pianoforte in the Classical Era*, p. 44.
94 Ibid., p. 45.
95 See *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser*, 11 December 1756, No. 4755, p. 3.
96 'Roger Plenius (1696–1774)', in M. Debenham and M. Cole, 'Pioneer Piano Makers in London'.
97 See ibid., fns 9, 20.
98 T. Mortimer, *The Universal Director; Or, the Nobleman and Gentleman's True Guide to the Masters and Professors of the Liberal and Polite Arts and Sciences; And of the Mechanic Arts, Manufactures, and Trades, Established in London and Westminster, and their Environs* [London: J. Coote, 1763] [Canberra: National Library of Australia. Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale Cengage Learning].
99 Ibid., p. 52. See *The Public Advertiser*, 23 August 1763, No. 8981. See also 'Catherine St.', in *A Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster*, Map Section: northernmost extent Lambs Conduit Fields and southernmost extent Lambeth.
100 Plenius' son Rutgerus Plenius (1729–?) 'is known to have been working with his father and brother John in the 1740s'. Roger Plenius' *Pioneer Piano Makers in London', Appendix 4. Another of Plenius' sons, Joseph (?–?), made harpsichords at 89 High Holborn, London, between 1785 and 1790. See ibid.
A letter written at Mount Vernon, USA, by George Washington (1732–99) to John Didsbury, ‘a boot maker in London who had made shoes for Washington in the 1750s’, dated Monday, 12 October 1761, contains a request for

1 Very good Spinit, to be made by Mr. Plinius, Harpsicord Maker in South Audley Street Grosvenor Square.

Note it is beg’d as a favour, that Mr. [Robert] Cary [the shipper] would bespeak this Instrument as for himself or a friend, and not let it be known that it is intended for Exportation. Send a good assortment of spare Strings to it.102

It appears that Washington, in 1761, did not know that Roger Plenius had been declared bankrupt five years before. ‘Clearly Plenius’ fame as a maker had reached far and wide, despite his personal financial difficulties.’103

It is reasonable to assume that after his bankruptcy, Plenius remained unwilling to pursue his pioneering efforts in relation to the piano. Plenius died on 4 January 1774, at the home of his son (John?). Four days later, on Saturday, 8 January 1774, The General Evening Post reported his death: ‘On Tuesday, at his son’s house in Catherine-street in the Strand, Mr. Rutgerus Plenius, by birth a German, and supposed to be the greatest harpsichord-maker in England.’104

William Mason’s Piano, Made by Friedrich Neubauer(?)

On Friday, 27 June 1755, the poet, musician and cleric Reverend William Mason (1725–97), biographer of his friend the poet Thomas Gray (1716–71),105 the ‘author of the famous Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard’,106 wrote: ‘I

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104 The General Evening Post, 8 January 1774, No. 6281, p. 3.
105 W. Mason, The Poems of Gray, To Which are Prefixed Memoirs of His Life and Writings by William Mason (York: A. Ward, 1775).
bought at Hamburg such a pianoforte, and so cheap! It is a harpsichord too of two unisons, and the jacks serve as mutes when the pianoforte stop is played.'107 (Apparently, ‘two sets of 8’ strings108 were both plucked and struck’.)109

The only instrument maker in Hamburg known to have made combination instruments of the type described by Mason was Friedrich (Frederick) Neubauer. Neubauer made a wide variety of keyboard instruments. In the Privilegrierte Hamburgische Anzeigen of Monday, 2 September 1754, Neubauer advertised that he sold harpsichords, unfretted clavichords (FF–f3), pantelongs (pianos)110 and a ‘new invented Clavicimbel de Amour’ (an upright pantalon), which had ‘taken much diligence, research and care’ to create.111

Four years later (by mid-1758), Neubauer was resident in London. (In the summer of 1758, at St James’s Church, Piccadilly, Neubauer’s daughter, Charlotte, married the harpsichord and piano maker Abraham Kirckman. Neubauer’s signature appears in the marriage register. As there is no evidence for a shotgun wedding, it is reasonable to assume that Neubauer immigrated to London, at the latest, in 1757.)112 As a London-based instrument maker, Neubauer advertised the same types of keyboard instruments that he had made in Hamburg, replacing the name pantelong with ‘piano forte’.113 In 1763, an entry in Mortimer’s Directory reveals that Neubauer made pianos. This entry is the earliest known advertisement in which pianos are offered for sale in London.114

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108 In stringed keyboard instruments, the term 8’ (8-foot) is used to describe a set of strings, each string of which sounds at a normal point of pitch reference. For example, at a pitch standard of a1 = 430 Hertz, the string for the note a1 (the note nine semitones above middle-C) sounds at 430 Hertz. (‘Hz is the International Standard symbol for Hertz, the unit of frequency, defined as the number of cycles per second of a periodic phenomenon … Sound is a travelling wave which is an oscillation of pressure. Humans perceive frequency of sound waves as pitch.’ Each note [sounding pitch] in music ‘corresponds to a particular frequency which can be measured in Hertz’. ‘Hertz’, in Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia (n.d.). An 8’ set of strings sounds an octave lower than a 4’ (4-foot) set of strings. See ‘8’ (8-foot)’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
109 See ‘Zumpe’s Small Piano-Forte’, below.
113 See ‘2. Origins to 1750’.
According to an advertisement published in the *Public Advertiser* of Monday, 21 January 1765, Neubauer established his workshop ‘in Litchfield Street, St Anne’s Soho’, at the sign of ‘the Hand & Tuning Hammer’ (Soho was an especially attractive area for many immigrants at this time; there was a strong French protestant settlement in Litchfield Street throughout the eighteenth century). In this advertisement, Neubauer used the term ‘pyano forte’ to describe one of the types of keyboard instrument that he offered for sale:

F. Neubauer, harpsichord-maker from Compton Street, now in Litchfield Street, St Anne’s Soho, at the Hand & Tuning Hammer, makes, sells and repairs all sorts of Harpsichords, Pyano Fortes, Lyrichords, Clavir d’amours, Clavychords &c. Harpsichords from 200L [£200] down to 20L [£20], and all sorts of musical Instruments, according to the value of the Workmanship and the Fineness of Tone, at reasonable Prices. Lovers of Music will be surprised to find so many Improvements, and so well finished, which he makes no Doubt will please the Nobility and Gentry, with his extraordinary Workmanship, and likewise every Lover of the common Way will also find them very reasonable.

Neubauer’s pyano fortases may have been square pianos; then again, they may have been ‘grand’ instruments ‘in the Italian-derived style, like those previously built by Plenius’.

As far as is known, the following three instruments represent the most noticeable pianos seen in England from the 1730s and early 1740s up to 1760:

1. Fulke Greville’s piano (by Father Wood), purchased from Samuel Crisp
2. Rutgerus Plenius’ copy of Greville’s piano
3. William Mason’s piano (by Friedrich Neubauer?).

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122 ‘Frederick Neubauer (ca. 1705?–74)’, in Debenham and Cole, ‘Pioneer Piano Makers in London’.
Georg Friedrich Händel Plays a Piano

In London, Georg Friedrich Händel (1685–1759) played a piano on two separate occasions: 1) on Monday, 16 May 1740; and 2) 16 years later, on Saturday, 29 May 1756. Each occasion is described in a contemporaneous document.

1) The first account of Händel playing a piano is given in a letter dated Tuesday, 17 May 1740, written by Thomas Harris (1712–85) to his elder brother James124 (1709–80). Thomas Harris was a lawyer who had been called to the Bar at Lincoln’s Inn, was a Master in Chancery, music lover and one of Händel’s inner circle of friends. He witnessed Händel’s will and the first three codicils; in the fourth and final codicil, Harris was named as the beneficiary of the not inconsiderable sum of £300. ‘No other English composer of the eighteenth century, as a result of his professional activity, attained the dizzy heights of wealth enjoyed by Handel. It was … Handel as impresario, not as composer, who scaled the cliff and guarded his crock of gold.’125

Harris’ correspondence reveals an intense interest in Händel’s welfare and musical endeavours. Harris reports that his friend Georg Friedrich Händel ‘was in good spiritts yesterday and played finely on the Piano-forte’.126 No further information regarding this piano has come to light. Unfortunately, ‘we don’t know Handel’s reaction to this new instrument … but he apparently didn’t go out of his way to play it more frequently’.127 Sixteen years ensued before Händel again played a piano.

2) The second account of Händel playing a piano is found in a diary entry dated Saturday, 29 May 1756, written by George William Harris (1717–69) (Plate 8).128 Harris records that he attended a dinner party at the house of Charles Jennens (ca 1700–73),129 after which Händel played on Jennens’ ‘piano forte’. George Harris’ diary entry reads: ‘May 29th 56 Dined at Mr. Jennings’s, ormond street. W[i][t][h] Mastr. Handel [and] Hetherington. Handel quite Blind, but pretty cheerfull, and after Dinner play’d finely on Mr. J’s Piano forte.’130

124. James Harris was a brilliant littérateur, who created an oratorio-style libretto from John Milton’s (1608–74) poems L’Allegro and Il Penseroso. The libretto was further developed by Charles Jennens (Händel’s librettist for ‘Messiah’). Charles Burney held James Harris in high regard as a writer on music.
126. Hampshire Record Office, inv. no. 9M73/G307/2.
128. George William Harris was the younger brother of the lawyer and friend of Händel Thomas Harris.
129. Charles Jennens was not only a patron of the arts, but also Händel’s librettist for ‘Messiah’.
130. This document is housed in the Hampshire Record Office: Malmesbury papers, 9M73/G57.
Plate 8 Diary entry dated 29 May 1756, written by George William Harris (1717–69).

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Hampshire Record Office. Malmesbury papers, 9M73/G57. Photo by the author.

Apparently, Händel’s blindness was not a hindrance to either the energy or the quality of his playing. Five years before, on Sunday, 14 March 1751, the MP Sir Edward Turner (1719–66) observed: ‘Noble Handel hath lost an eye, but I have the Rapture to say St. Cecilia makes no complaint of any Defect of his Fingers.’

During the eighteenth century, loss of sight was not an uncommon condition for the aged. That ‘blindness seems to have been a condition that elicited either pity or revulsion … is confirmed by Burney when he says that Handel was embarrassed by his blindness; this embarrassment was no doubt caused in the supremely independent Handel by his perceived “weakness”, which required a childlike dependence on others’.

There is a remote possibility that when Händel played the piano after the dinner party at Jennens’ house on 29 May 1756, he used the piano copy that had been made by Rutgerus Plenius almost a decade before. Plenius was declared bankrupt in early 1756. His stock-in-trade would probably have been auctioned between February and mid-May 1756. George Harris’ diary entry indicates that

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131 Quoted in van Til, George Frideric Handel, p. 279.
132 Ibid., p. 286.
a piano was located in Jennens’ home by 29 May 1756. It is possible that when Händel played Jennens’ piano, the instrument had been acquired only about two weeks earlier at the auction of Plenius’ stock.

Records suggest that in 1756, there were only two pianos in London. Jennens’ piano was one of these. After dinner, on 29 May 1756, Händel can only have played either of the following.

1. Fulke Greville’s piano (by Father Wood), which Greville had purchased from Samuel Crisp, and which Händel had played 16 years before, on 16 May 1740.

2. Rutgerus Plenius’ copy of Greville’s piano, possibly purchased by Jennens at the recent auction of Plenius’ stock.

‘Despite the fact these early pianos were seen and enjoyed by a significant group of musical enthusiasts who were well connected with the aristocracy and with the London theatres’, it seems no English professional musicians were convinced to transfer their allegiances from the harpsichord to the piano.

The Twelve Apostles

Adlam, Clinkscale, Cranmer, Dale, Erlich, Good, Harding, Henkel, Hollis, James, National Museums Liverpool, Ord-Hume, Palmieri, Pollard.

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133 Cole, The Pianoforte in the Classical Era, p. 46.
135 Clinkscale, Makers of the Piano 1700–1820, pp. 6, 19, 22, 61, 62, 113, 219, 329.
139 E. M. Good, Giraffes, Black Dragons, and Other Pianos: A Technological History from Cristofori to the Modern Concert Grand (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1982), pp. 40–2.
143 P. James, Early Keyboard Instruments: From their Beginnings to the Year 1820 (London: Peter Davies, 1933), p. 51.
144 ‘English Square Piano … Instrument by Frederick Beck, Outer Case Attributed to Christopher Führloh’, in Lady Lever Art Gallery: A Beautiful Building Housing One of the UK’s Finest Collections of Fine and Decorative Art (n.d.).
Schott,\textsuperscript{148} Swan,\textsuperscript{149} Wainwright\textsuperscript{150} and Williams\textsuperscript{151} (to mention but a few) all speak of a group of 12 pioneering German piano makers ‘who emigrated to London from Saxony around 1760\textsuperscript{152} when trade was at a standstill owing to the Seven Years’ War [1756–63]. This … group of piano makers are frequently referred to as the ‘Twelve Apostles’.\textsuperscript{153}

The story of the ‘Twelve Apostles’ is apocryphal, and was first mentioned in 1860 by Edward F. Rimbault (1816–76). Rimbault states:

> At length, about the year 1760, many ingenious German mechanics left their country and came to England in search of employment as pianoforte-makers; this gave the instrument its first impetus. A party of twelve travelled hither in one company, and obtained, from this circumstance, the appellation of the ‘twelve apostles’.\textsuperscript{154}

Many subsequent writers, including an alarming number publishing on the Internet (none of whom provides any evidence in support of their fanciful assertions), reiterate Rimbault’s fiction. Furthermore, those who subscribe to Rimbault’s fallacy, and who go so far as to name those comprising the twelve apostles, fail to agree on exactly who the twelve apostles were.

During the 1760s, not just 12, but many German musical instrument makers emigrated from Germany to London. A treaty ending the Seven Years’ War was signed in Paris in 1763. The war ‘and its aftermath [not only] caused stringent economies, affecting industries of all kinds … [but also] emigration to less hazardous environments … a temptation succumbed to by many’.\textsuperscript{155}

Documentary evidence suggests (and in some instances proves) that of the London piano makers who were commercially active prior to 1800, the following were born in Germany (although this is not initially obvious if they anglicised their names upon their arrival in London)\textsuperscript{156}

1. James Ball (1770–1833; fl. ca 1787–1819)
2. Gabriel Gottlieb Buntebart (b. 1726; fl. 1768–95)
3. George Fröschle (Froeschle) (fl. 1776–1800)


\textsuperscript{152} Handel had died recently (on Saturday, 14 April 1759).

\textsuperscript{153} Cole, ‘Adam Beyer, Pianoforte Maker’ (n.d.).

\textsuperscript{154} Rimbault, \textit{The Pianoforte, its Origins, Progress & Construction}, p. 131.


\textsuperscript{156} See Cole, \textit{The Pianoforte in the Classical Era}, p. 80.
4. Christopher Ganer (fl. 1774–1809)
5. John Geib (1744–1813; fl. ca 1777–97)
6. Ludewig Augustus Leukfeld (fl. 1790s)
7. Friedrich (Frederick) Neubauer (fl. 1757 – ca 1765)
8. Johannes (John) Pohlmann (Pohlman) (fl. 1767–93)
9. Frederick and Christian Schön (Schoene) (fl. ca 1780s)
10. John Henry Schrader (fl. ca 1768–1802)

No unequivocal evidence supports the commonly encountered claim that Adam Beyer (1729?–1804; fl. 1768–1801) (despite the sound of his surname) and Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756–98) were born in Germany.

London acted as a magnet for immigrant craftsmen because

1. of its wealth
2. it was located in a country that had not recently endured a war
3. it was free of restrictive guilds
4. unlike many European cities, no permission or licence was needed to set up in trade.

By 1750, London held over one fifth of the total population of Britain and was at least ten times bigger than the largest of provincial towns. It was the national centre of fashion and patronage, of luxury production and consumption. It provided the greatest access to cultural information from abroad, [and] was the hub of a growing press network as well as printing and publishing.

Even as early as 1713, for those with an entrepreneurial spirit, London ‘offered opportunities rarely found in comparable countries and cities in mainland Europe’. The German music theorist, composer and Händel’s friend Johann Mattheson (1681–1764) wrote: ‘In these times, whoever wishes to be eminent in music goes to England. In Italy and France there is something to be heard and learned; in England something to be earned.’

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157 See ibid., p. 80. The area around Zumpe’s birthplace (Furth, near Nuremberg) ‘was not … one of those most directly affected by the’ Seven Years’ War, ‘but had been gradually declining in prosperity since the sixteenth century. Thus … it seems most likely that Zumpe left home to seek his fortune abroad as a young journeyman carpenter, perhaps in the late 1740s when he would have been in his early 20s.’ Koster, *Keyboard Musical Instruments in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, p. 118, fn. 7.
158 Concerning Frederick Beck’s place of birth, see ‘Frederick Beck’, in Chapter 2, this volume.
159 See M. Cole, ‘Maker’s File: Adam Beyer’ [n.d.].
161 Ibid., p. 38.
162 J. Mattheson, *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestra [The newly founded Orchestra]* (Hamburg: Benjamin Schiller, 1713). Quoted in ibid., p. 38.
The German musicologist Eva Badura-Skoda (2004) suggests that the title ‘Twelve Apostles’ may have originated with Burkat Shudi’s (1702–73) youngest daughter, Barbara (1749–76). Burkat Shudi (also Burkhart, Burkhardt, Schudi, Tschudi, Tshudi) was a Swiss harpsichord maker who came to London in 1718. He dominated the harpsichord market there between the 1740s and the 1760s. Shudi’s instruments were highly praised and greatly sought after (he was ‘as famed in London as [Pascal] Taskin [1723–93] was in Paris’). In 1775, Charles Burney remarked: ‘I must observe, that the Germans work much better out of their country, than they do in it, if we may judge by the harpsichords of … Shudi.’ Shudi’s illustrious clientele included Frederick the Great, for whom he made five harpsichords; the first of these was given as a gift in 1744.

The [1744] instrument … [has not] survived, but it was probably shown to Johann Sebastian Bach [1685–1750] on his visit to the King in 1747. Shudi’s gesture was ultimately rewarded by an order in 1765 from Frederick the Great for no less than four harpsichords, one of which [production number 496] … [before it] was shipped off to its royal destination … was played by the nine-year-old Mozart and his sister Nannerl (then fourteen), who visited Shudi’s shop whilst in London with their father.

Concerning King Frederick’s relationship with music prior to his accession to the throne, Charles Burney informs us:

It was by stealth, that this prince indulged his passion for music, during the life of his father, the late king, who had forbid him, not only to study and practise music, but to hear it … it was the late queen mother, who at this time encouraged the prince in his favourite amusement, and who engaged musicians for his service; but so necessary was secrecy in all these negociations, that if the king his father had discovered that he was disobeyed, all these sons of Apollo would have incurred the danger of being hanged. The prince frequently took occasion, to meet his musicians a hunting, and had his concerts either in a forest or cavern.

166 See Kottick, A History of the Harpsichord, p. 360.
168 See Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 383.
In 1769, Barbara Shudi married John Broadwood (1732–1812), who at the time was employed as foreman by her father. 'Barbara's marriage to her father's foreman was a normal practice in Georgian London since the business would then remain a family concern, ensuring its continuance, together with the maintenance of the family, after the death of the original master.' A year after Broadwood's marriage to Barbara Shudi, he became a partner in his father-in-law's business, and the firm's name was changed to Shudi and Broadwood. John Broadwood eventually became one of the most successful piano makers in history; when Broadwood died, he left a personal estate of £125 000 ('in modern terms, the fortune of a multi-millionaire') as well as 'a business worth much more, employing over a hundred men, and substantial London properties'. (The Broadwood firm continued until 1970, making it the world's 'longest continuously running firm of instrument-makers'.)

Oral tradition among members of the Broadwood family reported that German immigrants usually received the help and hospitality of the Shudi family. One can imagine the joy with which German immigrants arriving in London met other Germans working in the same trade, who were willing to help them settle in this new environment.

It is possible that Barbara Broadwood, daughter of the Swiss-Deutsch-speaking Burkat Shudi, was still fluent in German [during the 1760s], and therefore could have been a great help in linguistic matters to most of the German immigrants, including [the inventor of the square piano, Johann Christoph] Zumpe, who worked for her father. She could have been the originator of the nickname ‘Twelve Apostles’ when she visited or hosted a gathering of the German musical instrument builders and there happened to be 12 of them around.

One of the German émigré instrument makers who arrived in London during the 1760s subsequently invented a new type of piano that catalysed a redefinition of the role of the piano in society. This instrument maker was Johann Christoph Zumpe.
Johann Christoph Zumpe

Zumpe’s ‘Small Piano-Forte’

‘The critical event that changed perceptions in relation to the piano [in England] was the invention by the German-born craftsman Johann Christoph Zumpe (Johannes Zumpe, John Zumpe, or John Zumpé) of a small rectangular instrument that has since become known as the “square piano”.’

During the late eighteenth century, the square piano was commonly referred to as the ‘small piano-forte’. In The Morning Post and Daily Advertiser of Thursday, 10 February 1780, Zumpe described himself as ‘the inventor of the Small Piano-Forte and Maker to her Majesty and the Royal Family’ (note that Zumpe’s ‘claim to be the maker of choice for the royal family’ is placed after his ‘claim to have invented the small piano’).

What or Who Inspired Zumpe to Invent His ‘Small Piano-Forte’?

If we look for evidence of any surviving square piano from Germany that might have served as a prototype for Zumpe, or indeed for any surviving piano that is obviously derived from some shared ancestor, the search proves entirely vain. The only known German pianos that resemble Zumpe’s are very obviously derived from him and made after he produced his first ‘small piano-forte’ … ca. early 1766.

Zumpe may have been inspired by any one of the several varieties of touch-sensitive keyboard instruments that emerged in northern Germany during the first half of the eighteenth century, or those that appeared in London during the early to mid-1760s.

Krämer’s Tafelklavier

Günther (2006) observes that around 1760, Zumpe (who at the time was an apprentice to the Swiss harpsichord maker Burkat Shudi in London) returned to his birthplace (Fürth, approximately 8 kilometres from Nuremberg) to visit

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179 Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 31.
180 The Morning Post and Daily Advertiser, 10 February 1780, No. 2286, p. 1.
relatives. ‘On his return to London, Zumpe brought back with him the idea of the Tafelklavier (“table keyboard instrument”). He may even have brought back a Tafelklavier made by Georg Ludwig Krämer [fl. ca 1760].’

A tafelklavier is a rectangular-shaped transversely strung hammer-action keyboard instrument, similar in outward form to a clavichord. In Germany, a large number of makers developed a plethora of variations on the instrument’s design. Some tafelklavier had bare wooden hammers, whilst others had leather-covered hammers; some had two sets of hammers:

One set was usually of bare wood [or some other hard material] while the second set of hammers, brought into play by a handstop, was tipped with soft leather to produce a dulcet tone. The player selected one or the other set according to the tonal requirements of the Affect of the music.

Some tafelklavier had dampers, whilst others did not. Some had tone-colour altering devices; one such device, for example, comprises a mechanism that interposes a strip of woven cloth between the hammerhead and the string (now commonly referred to as a ‘moderator’), producing a characteristically ‘dark’, ‘distant’ and ‘ethereal’ sound. The action of some tafelklavier had an escapement (an escapement provides the player with comfortable, reliable and subtle control over dynamics). Although no extant tafelklavier is dated from before 1767, advertisements for such instruments appeared from the 1740s. Despite the wide range of design and sound represented by the tafelklavier, no specific or consistent tradition emerged.

When compared with the number of extant late eighteenth-century English square pianos, relatively few early eighteenth-century German tafelklavier have survived. It seems that in Germany during the first half and middle of the eighteenth century, the tafelklavier did not reach the same levels of popularity or production as did the square piano in late eighteenth-century England.

In 1781, ca 20 years after Zumpe’s encounter with Krämer’s tafelklavier, the German music theorist Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749–1818) remarked: ‘Ein berühmter und geschickter Orgelbauer und Instrumentenmacher … Namens Georg Ludw. Krämer, hat … eine neue Art von Fortepiano … erfunden, die nicht

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185 Cole, ‘Another Line of Investigation’.
186 See ‘Moderator’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
‘größser als ein gewöhnliches Clavier’\(^{190}\) (‘A famous and skillful Organ maker and Instrument maker … whose Name is Georg Ludwig Krämer, has invented … a new Kind of Fortepiano … not much larger than a Clavichord’).

Similarities ‘between the actions in extant instruments by Krämer and Zumpe’\(^{191}\) suggest that Zumpe may have been influenced in some way by Krämer’s \emph{tafelklavier}. (At the very least, Krämer’s influence may have extended only to the notion of a rectangular-shaped piano.)

\section*{The Pantalon}

It could be viably posited that the design features of a pantalon represent a subset sitting at the extreme end of the design range of the \emph{tafelklavier}. A pantalon (pantaleon, pantalone or bandaleon) is a small rectangular or harp-shaped keyboard instrument whose horizontal metal strings run obliquely from the keyboard. The soundboard extends the entire length of the instrument, above the keys. Typically, a pantalon has a single string for each note. Usually, the strings are struck by bare wooden pivoted hammers. Commonly, there are no dampers (in such instances, there were never meant to be any).\(^{192}\)

Because the action of a pantalon has no escapement, the range of dynamic nuance that can be achieved through touch is limited. There is no check\(^{193}\) (a check catches the hammerhead after it rebounds from hitting the string and prevents the hammer from bouncing back up and hitting the string again). Without a check (depending on the dynamic), rapid note repetition and trills may be fairly slow and awkward. Pianos with no check must be played physically more gently than those with a check (especially within the dynamic context of \emph{forte}).\(^{194}\)

A variety of timbres is available to the player via ‘mutation’ stops. A mutation (in eighteenth-century German writings, \emph{Veränderung} or \emph{Mutation}) alters or modifies the timbre of the sound using a mechanical device that is incorporated into the instrument, such as a ‘moderator’;\(^{195}\) or, as another example, an s-shaped wooden batten suspended above and following the line of the bridge, with a teased cloth covering attached to the underside that, when lowered, rests lightly on the strings (producing a characteristically ‘pizzicato’ sound). A pantalon may have as many as five or more mutations. Because the scope of dynamic nuance that can be achieved through touch is limited, the sense of dynamic shading is mostly created through

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\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item J. N. Forkel, \textit{Musikalischer Almanach für Deutschland auf das Jahr 1782} [\textit{Musical Almanac for Germany for the Year 1782}] (Leipzig: im Schwickertschen Verlag, 1781), pp. 36–7. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the author.
\item Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 389, fn. 14.
\item Also called ‘back check’.
\item In music, the Italian term \emph{forte} is a performance instruction denoting ‘loud’ and ‘strong’.
\item See ‘Moderator’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
\end{itemize}
changes in tone colour that result from the use of mutations. These mutations ‘were
designed to reproduce the tonal effects and musical resources of’ the dulcimer—
perhaps specifically of Pantalon Hebenstreit’s (1667–1750) ‘famous dulcimer but
with the convenience of playing them through a standard keyboard’.196

The shape of Hebenstreit’s dulcimer was trapezoidal. The instrument ‘had
two soundboards, and two or more bridges and soundholes’.197 On Tuesday,
22 September 1772, whilst in Dresden, Charles Burney saw Hebenstreit’s
instrument, observing that it was ‘more than nine feet [2.7 metres] long,
and had … 186 strings of catgut’.198 (The Guinness Book of Musical Facts and
Figures claims that Hebenstreit’s dulcimer was the ‘largest stringed instrument
ever made’.199 This is true, at least for the eighteenth century.) Hebenstreit’s
dulcimer also had an unknown number of metal strings. Alternation between
gut and metal strings gave the player a choice of different tone colours. Each
note probably had three unison strings (some notes may have had four). As with
all dulcimers, the strings were hit with small, handheld mallets. The creation
of a variety of timbres was achieved by alternating bare wooden mallets with
mallets that had padded cloth-covered heads.

None of the strings had a damper, and therefore the instrument, as it was played,
built up a rich and prominent background ‘glow’ of overtones.

Hebenstreit … liked to roll great billows of arpeggiated chords over
the wide range of his instrument and to allow the full resonance of
the undamped strings to die slowly on the listeners’ ears. It was a new
sensation at the time, and it seemed ravishing.200

When one set of … strings [gut] was played upon, the other set [metal]
(attached to the bottom, or ‘flip-side’ of the instrument) vibrated
sympathetically. Piano makers later achieved this same musical effect [via
a mechanism that enabled all the dampers to be simultaneously raised] …

Hebenstreit went to Paris in 1705 and performed for King Louis XIV, who
christened this large dulcimer a ‘pantalon.’ According to Sarah E. Hanks
[1969], ‘the fact that the Sun King … [so named] the instrument … was a

‘A Note on the Frontispiece: A Concert in Cambridge’, in C. Hogwood and R. Luckett (eds), Music in Eighteenth-
Century England: Essays in Memory of Charles Cudworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983),
p. xv, fn. 2.
200 Loesser, Men, Women and Pianos, p. 25.
double-entendre. The term pantalon was a familiar designation in French and Italian comedy for a clown, and appropriately described the amusing jerks and leaps of the player’s body, visible behind the large instrument.201

Charles Burney tells us that, following Hebenstreit’s audience with Louis XIV, ‘the inventor [that is, Hebenstreit] went by the name of his instrument ever after’202 (that is, Pantalon Hebenstreit).

It was only a matter of time before instrument makers created a keyboard version of the pantalon, inspired (if not by the timbres and undamped sounds of the folk instrument the dulcimer) by the opulent undamped soundscapes that emanated from Hebenstreit’s giant dulcimer.

Herman Vietor

In London, Herman (or Harman) Bernard Vietor (or Viator) (?–?), instrument maker and organist at ‘St George’s Lutheran Church, Allie Street, Whitechapel, since at least early 1764’,203 advertised in the press between 1766 and 1768. The only extant instrument by Vietor is a square piano dated 1767. This instrument has no dampers, and as such reflects tafelklavier/keyboard pantalon making, ‘knowledge of which … [Vietor] had presumably imbibed somewhere in north Germany before 1765’.204

In 1766 Vietor was located at 19 Mercer Street, Longacre, Soho, and by 1767, had moved to 32 Porter Street, Newport Market, St Ann’s, Soho.205 Unfortunately, Herman Vietor was not a professional instrument maker, and his sole extant instrument exhibits both faulty design and poor craftsmanship.206

In 1765, Vietor named his ‘invented’ instrument Coelestin d’Amour.207 In 1766, he gave the instrument the name ‘Piano ex Forte’.208 In an advertisement published in The Public Advertiser of Monday, 1 February 1768, Vietor claimed to be the ‘sole Inventor’ of his ‘Forte Pianos’, which came in ‘different Sizes and

204 Cole, ‘Another Line of Investigation’.
207 The Public Advertiser, 27 September 1765, No. 9643, p. 3.
208 The Public Advertiser, 2 May 1766, No. 9826, p. 3.
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Constructions’. Vietor also claimed that he ‘had the Honour to sell a great many of them within these seven Years to a great Part of the Nobility and Gentry in these Kingdoms’—that is, the United Kingdom.

It is difficult not to see in … [Vietor’s advertisement] the desperate braggadocio of a failing entrepreneur. From being an organist with a sideline in making and selling novel keyboard instruments he is now apparently a dealer in all manner of musical instruments and, if we were to believe him, the sole inventor of Forte Pianos. Musical cognoscenti of the period cannot have been fooled by this, for they would certainly be aware that in 1768 regular professional instrument makers—Zumpe, [Gabriel] Buntebart [fl. 1768–95], [Johannes (John)] Pohlman [or Pohlmann] [fl. 1767–93], and others—were experiencing huge demands for their ‘Forte Pianos’. There is not much that may be said for his astonishing claim to have sold ‘a great many of them … to a great part of the Nobility and Gentry in these Kingdoms’. Judging by the poor quality of design and construction in his 1767 specimen one would be surprised to find any example of such work in the well-furnished homes of any English aristocrat … His claim to have been selling such instruments ‘within these last seven years’ could be as dubious as his other statements, or it may suggest that he had been constructing some sort of [experimental] hammer-action instruments since 1761.

If this is so, it is possible that similar instruments were also being made in northern Germany as early as 1761.

Zumpe’s Genius

In 1761, Johann Zumpe left Shudi’s employment to set up his own workshop at the sign of the Golden Guitar.

We may never know exactly what it was that inspired Zumpe to invent the square piano; perhaps it was Krämer’s tafelklavier, the keyboard pantalon, early eighteenth-century German tafelklaviere, or instruments made in London by Friedrich Neubauer or Herman Vieter during the early 1760s.

Historians often marvel at the tendency for inventions to come in multiples, the lightbulb going on in several people’s brains at almost

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210 *The Public Advertiser*, 1 February 1768, p. 4. See also Cole, ‘Another Line of Investigation’.
exactly the same moment. Great ideas often seem to be less the result of brilliance than the logical outcome of having a set of thinkers who share the same questions and methods.\textsuperscript{214}

Evidence suggesting that Zumpe was influenced by anyone at all, however, is, at best, both fragmentary and inferential. There remains the strong possibility that his invention of the ‘small piano-forte’ may simply have been the product of his genius alone.

No Escapement

The action of Zumpe’s square pianos (as also with Krämer’s \textit{tafelklavier} and Neubauer’s piano forte) does not have an escapement. This creates two major disadvantages:

1. in order to enable the hammer to build up enough momentum to hit the string, the player has to use a slightly ‘jabbing’ touch; this touch is the antithesis of what would naturally be associated with dynamically subtle, expressive playing

2. the touch for \textit{pianissimo} can be difficult to predict; sometimes, the small amount of energy required to produce a \textit{pianissimo} is absorbed by the baleen\textsuperscript{215} damper springs; when this happens, the hammer falls back to its rest position before it hits the string. A reliable \textit{pianissimo} depends on the player perfectly judging the touch.

Mutations

In order to reproduce the background ‘glow’ of overtones and tonal variety associated with Hebenstreit’s pantalon, Zumpe incorporated mutations into his pianos; these mutations were engaged via hand levers. The following mutations are found in Zumpe’s pianos:

1. 1766 (the five earliest extant Zumpe pianos date from 1766):\textsuperscript{216} one hand lever for raising the bass dampers


\textsuperscript{215} ‘Usually called ‘whalebone’ … [baleen is] made from the filter-plates from the mouth of certain kinds of whale. Its most common use was in corsets, but it was also used for the springs of … dampers in … early square pianos.’ Gadd, \textit{The British Art Piano and Piano Design}, Vol. 1, p. 261.

\textsuperscript{216} 1) Privately owned in the United States; 2) Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA, inv. no. 1968-294; 3) Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart, inv. no. 1982-96; and 4) Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 389, fn. 15. 5) Recently, another early square piano by Zumpe (albeit severely reworked during the early nineteenth century) has been discovered; the instrument is part of the Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney (Plates 455–77). According to Michael Cole (Email from Michael Cole to the author, 5 December 2012), certain features of the instrument’s action suggest it was originally constructed either late in 1766 or in 1767.
2. 1767 onwards: two hand levers for independently raising treble or bass dampers
3. 1769–70: a ‘buff’ stop, which places a strip of leather against the strings, producing a lute-like sound.

In performance, mutations would have been used quite freely. It is reasonable to assume that some pianists played with the dampers continuously raised. An observation made by Charles Burney reinforces this proposition.

On Wednesday, 20 June 1770, whilst in Paris, Burney heard Madame Anne Louise Brillon de Jouy (née Boyvin d’Hardancourt) (1744–1824) play the piano. He describes her as being

one of the greatest lady-players on the harpsichord in Europe. This lady not only plays the most difficult pieces with great precision, taste, and feeling, but is an excellent sight’s-woman; of which I was convinced by her manner of executing some of my own music, that I had the honour of presenting to her. She likewise composes; and was so obliging as to play several of her own sonatas, both on the harpsichord and piano forte … To this lady many of the famous composers of Italy and Germany, who have resided in France any time, have dedicated their works; among these are [Johann] Schobert [ca 1720, 1735 or 1740?–67] and [Luigi] Boccerini [Boccherini; 1743–1805].217

It appears that Burney did not like the piano played with the dampers continuously raised. He remarks: ‘I could not persuade Madame Brillon to play the piano forte with the Stops on [that is, with the dampers lowered, in contact with the strings]—’too dry’ she said—but with them off unless in arpeggios, nothing is distinct—’tis like the sound of bells, continual and confluent.’218

Burney’s comment reveals that there were differences of opinion amongst musicians during the 1770s in relation to playing with the dampers lifted.

Some pianists went to great lengths to exploit the effects of mutations. Morse (1902) provides an example:

There is an Astor [square] piano in Salem … made as late as 1815. It had two pedals, one being used to prolong the tones [probably damper raising]. The other served to produce a novel and taking effect, by lifting a section of the top of the piano lid, which was then allowed to fall suddenly, the slamming serving to illustrate the firing of a cannon. [This mutation was called a ‘Nag’s Head swell’, and was a commonly

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218 C. Burney, Music, Men & Manners in France & Italy 1770: Being the Journal Written by Charles Burney, Mus.D., During a Tour through these Countries Undertaken to Collect Material for a General History of Music, edited by H. E. Poole [London: Eulenburg Books, 1974], pp. 19–20. This is an extended version of Burney’s The Present State of Music in France and Italy collated with his unpublished notes.
encountered accessory on square pianos during the 1780s and 1790s.\textsuperscript{219}

The young lady who owned the piano created a sensation by playing battle pieces with this startling accompaniment.\textsuperscript{220}

In the hands of an imaginative player, the mutations available in Zumpe's pianos allowed for the enhancement of an already sweet, sonorous and succulent un-mutated sound. These dimensions of sonic beauty go a long way to explain the success of Zumpe's pianos, as well as the contemporaneous emergence of the music they inspired.

Zumpe's House

Zumpe's workshop was at 7 Princes Street,\textsuperscript{221} a small street leading to the then fashionable Hanover Square, on the western fringes of London.\textsuperscript{222} Zumpe's shrewd decision to live and work near a fashionable district ensured that his clientele would be of the wealthy and 'respectable' variety.

Plate 9 shows Hanover Square as it appeared in 1754 (seven years prior to Zumpe's relocation from Shudi's workshop in Great Pulteney Street\textsuperscript{223} to his own premises in Princes Street). Princes Street enters Hanover Square at the square's north-eastern corner. Tall buildings obscure the street, but the small chimneypot at the very edge of the picture (or the roof above the three windows immediately to its left), following the line of the street to the right, may belong to the house in which Zumpe lived and worked. In ca 1787 (five years after Zumpe had relinquished his business and address to the Schoene\textsuperscript{224} brothers, and approximately three years before his death), the bird's-eye-view paths in the shape of a cross with diagonals in the gardens of Hanover Square were replaced 'with a circular path running around the circumference bordered by trees'.\textsuperscript{225}

Plate 10 shows Zumpe's house as it appears today; it is the building painted white, and further marred by a tinted-glass street-level front. What a scandal that such architectural vandalism has been allowed to occur. Because Zumpe's house was the first building in the world to be dedicated exclusively to the making

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\item See Cole, \textit{The Pianoforte in the Classical Era}, p. 76.
\item See A Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, Map Section: northernmost extent Mary le Bon and southernmost extent Tothill Fields. See also 'Princes S', in Bowles, Bowles's Reduced New Pocket Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, Grid Reference Bn.
\item See Cole, \textit{The Pianoforte in the Classical Era}, p. 51.
\item Known during the eighteenth century as Pultney Street, and from the second decade of the nineteenth century as Great Pultney Street. Now known as Great Pultney Street. See ‘Pultney Str’, in J. Cary, Cary's New and Accurate Plan of London and Westminster the Borough of Southwark and Parts Adjacent; Viz. Kensington, Chelsea, Islington, Hackney, Walworth, Newington &c with an Alphabetical List of Upwards of 500 of the Most Principal Streets with References to their Situation (London: John Cary, 1795), in London and Environs Maps and Views (Last updated 31 December 2011), Map Reference 27.
\item 'Originally Schön.' Cole, \textit{The Pianoforte in the Classical Era}, p. 72.
\item 'Hanover Square Gardens: A History of the Locality' (London: City of Westminster, n.d.) [information on a permanent sign located at Hanover Square, London].
\end{thebibliography}
of pianos, the cultural significance of this building cannot be underestimated. Oddly, there is no blue heritage plaque identifying the building as the residence of the inventor of the English square piano.

Zumpe’s house is currently owned and occupied by the Salvation Army. A conversation held between the author and a representative of the Salvation Army’s London management revealed that the 2008–09 global financial crisis had stalled the planned gutting of Zumpe’s house. The photographs of and from the first-floor front room (Zumpe’s principal room for receiving guests) are possibly the last to be taken before redevelopment (which was scheduled to begin in early 2010) obliterates the internal space as it currently exists (Plates 11 and 12).

In Plate 12, the ‘Lloyds TSB’ building on the left-hand side of the image occupies land on the southern corner of the intersection of Princes Street with Hanover Square. If Zumpe had walked a few buildings south from this intersection, he would have come upon the Hanover Square Music Rooms, located at the intersection of Hanover Square and the northern side of Hanover Street. Richard Horwood’s Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, the Borough of Southwark, and Parts Adjoining226 shows Hanover Square, 7 Princes Street (Zumpe’s house) and the Hanover Square Music Rooms (Plate 12a). Horwood labels the Hanover Square Music Rooms as ‘Concert Rooms’. During Joseph Haydn’s (1732–1809) first visit to London in 1791, the symphonies he composed for Johann Peter Salomon’s (1745–1815) concert series were premiered at the Hanover Square Music Rooms (the concert hall comprised 235 square metres, and accommodated an audience of 500). ‘Credit for the first regular series of public commercial concerts in England is usually given to the violinist John Banister (ca 1624–79); they were held in his own house in Whitefriars [two blocks south of Fleet Street, near the northern bank of the Thames]227 in 1672 and advertised in … [The] London Gazette, thus drawing on the coffee-house audience that provided the readership of early newspapers.’228

The front door of Zumpe’s house would have opened from the street directly into the front room, where he may have displayed the pianos he had for sale (Zumpe’s timber-framed workshop was situated behind the house). For those with money, ‘shopping was an important component of late 18th century [life]. Indeed, the shops where luxury objects’ such as Zumpe’s pianos ‘were sold were places for sociability’.229

‘In England a man’s house served as his ultimate possession, the absolute confirmation of his status. Accordingly, vast sums of money (often a family’s

228 Chanan, Musica Practica, p. 133.
whole substance) were spent to build, decorate, improve, maintain, and furnish the domestic enclosure." There can be little doubt that a large portion of the considerable fortune that Zumpe made through the sale of his pianos would have been spent on improving, maintaining and furnishing his house.

During the five years after 1774, London experienced the biggest surge of the century in building:

Fireplaces and bigger windows became standard, but spaces were also more confined. In small houses status was indicated by a simple cornice over the best fireplaces or in the best room, and plain painted panelling was found in all but the poorest houses.

Large numbers of houses incorporated shops.

Zumpe’s house was one such building.

Plate 9 Sutton Nicholls (fl. 1680–1740): Hanover Square (1754). Engraving; longest dimension 46 centimetres.


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The First Fleet Piano: A Musician’s View

Plate 10 Johann Zumpe’s house.

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 11 The first-floor drawing room in Johann Zumpe’s house. The fireplace surround is not from the eighteenth century.

Source: Photo by the author.
Plate 12 The view of Hanover Square from the first-floor drawing room in Johann Zumpe’s house.

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 12a Hanover Square and surrounds (detail).

Johann Christian Bach’s Support

Zumpe appears to have gained affirmation and support from his friends Johann Christian Bach (1735–82), the youngest son of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750; ‘Master of the Queen’s Musick’, chamber musician to the Queen’s household, ‘accompanist to the flute-playing George III’ and internationally acclaimed composer), and Gabriel Buntebart, possibly harpsichord maker to Queen Charlotte (1744–1818) and ‘grand Piano forte Maker to Her Majesty’. A favourite at court, affable with both the aristocracy and the intelligentsia, and comfortable in lower social circles, J. C. Bach was good looking (he had an ‘enchanting smile’), engaging, was of ‘worthy character’ and had a gift for making friendships that captivated both sexes equally. Bach was greatly respected not only by the professional musical fraternity, but also by the royal family. Both J. C. Bach’s and Buntebart’s close connections with the court and the immediate cohort of attendants in Queen Charlotte’s household meant that these two gentlemen were perfectly positioned to encourage the acceptance of Zumpe’s new invention by those who represented the highest and most fashionable levels of society.

J. C. Bach arrived in London in the summer of 1762. (‘London in 1762 was well provided with musical entertainment, concert halls, and musicians … [including] foreigners, attracted to its service by the generosity of its purse.’) The position J. C. Bach occupied at court had remained unfilled since Händel’s death in 1759. Amongst the small number of German professional musicians in London, only J. C. Bach was considered to have sufficient reputation and merit to replace Händel. That the German-born Queen Charlotte ‘should desire a
compatriate as her music-master was as natural as that she should invite her brother Duke Adolph Friedrich to provide one ... The national bias of a German Queen rejected an Italian master'.

Queen Charlotte was a passionate devotee of music.

At the tender age of 17, during a stormy ten-day voyage ['which rendered her five ladies-in-waiting unfit for service'] when she crossed the English Channel to marry a man she had never seen (George III), she comforted herself by playing the harpsichord. She ... left her cabin door open so that others on board the ship could enjoy her playing.

Revealing a degree of political astuteness surprising in such a young person, she included in her performances her rendition of the British national anthem, *God Save the King*. She also ‘memorized a few English sentences—English had not been taught at the court of Neustrelitz’.

The young King George III ... was woefully immature to be an effective ruler, and Charlotte was certainly no beauty, but they had one redeeming feature in common: both were ardent music lovers. The king had taken instruction on composition from Handel, and the queen was a competent singer and [keyboardist].

After her wedding to George III, the Queen established her own private orchestra; members of the orchestra dressed in uniforms of scarlet and gold. She often performed organ concerti by Handel, having beforehand placed a bust of the composer by Louis-François Roubillac (Roubiliac; 1695–1762) above the organ.

Roubillac, ‘whose statue of Handel erected at Vauxhall Gardens in 1737 was among his first works for London, was commissioned to create the monument’ for Handel’s grave, located in Westminster Abbey; ‘it turned out to be his last work’.

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243 Ibid., pp. 59–60.
244 Cooper and Powell, ‘Sophie Charlotte’.
246 Cooper and Powell, ‘Sophie Charlotte’.
The sculptor probably knew Händel as a friend. They may have met at Slaughter’s Coffee House in St. Martin’s Lane\(^{251}\) [Charing Cross] to exchange gossip and discuss Händel’s scores, some of which had been published with engraved illustrations by [Hubert-François Bourguignon, commonly known as] Gravelot [1699–1773], a French artist who was also a friend of … [William Hogarth (1697–1764). At the time, Hogarth was] the most famous frequenter of Slaughter’s.\(^{252}\)

Queen Charlotte cannot have been blind to the musical strengths of Zumpe’s square piano (during his first visit to London, between 1791 and 1792, Joseph Haydn found Queen Charlotte’s keyboard skills to be ‘quite good—for a Queen’).\(^{253}\) Fortunately for Zumpe, Queen Charlotte’s acceptance of his square pianos conferred upon them the ultimate accolade and guarantee of fashionable status.\(^{254}\) Queen Charlotte may even have been one of the first to play a Zumpe piano.\(^{255}\) Because Zumpe’s pianos were ‘the chosen instrument of the Queen … no woman of fashion or quality could be without one’.\(^{256}\) As a result, Zumpe soon had more orders than he could fill. It is probable Zumpe made up to 50 instruments a year (that is, about one every week).

The Bach-Abel Concert Series

It took a long time for the grand piano to win general favour in London. On the other hand, Zumpe’s ‘small piano-forte’ quickly became prodigiously fashionable.\(^{257}\) The popularity of Zumpe’s square pianos may have been due, in part, to their use in the exclusive Bach-Abel concert series. This series began on Monday, 23 January 1764, and continued until 9 May 1781.

Carl Friedrich Abel (1723–87), ‘a former pupil of J. S. Bach and friend of’ the German composer and music theorist Johann Adam Hiller in Dresden,\(^{258}\) was not only an accomplished harpsichordist, but was also renowned as the greatest viola da gamba virtuoso of his day.

\(^{251}\) See ‘St. Martins St.’, in Bowles, *Bowles’s Reduced New Pocket Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster*.  
^{255}\) See ibid., p. 61.  
^{256}\) Goold, *Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano*, p. 96.  
^{258}\) Young, *The Concert Tradition*, p. 144.
In 1743, Abel was a gambad player in the Dresden court orchestra (the high technical and musical standard of which amounted to that of a utopian fantasy) under the direction of the famed Oberkapellmeister Johann Adolph Hasse (1699–1783). During the destruction of Dresden by Frederick the Great in 1758–59, Abel left the city and travelled to Frankfurt, Mannheim and Paris. In 1759, Abel went to London, where he became a vital force in the musical culture of the city that was to be his home until his death. Approximately five years after his arrival in London (in ca 1764), Abel was appointed as a chamber musician at the court of Queen Charlotte.259

As two of London’s internationally respected immigrants, J. C. Bach and Abel sought to present their subscription concerts like an expanded soirée for polite society, a simulation of the private sphere with many of the audience known not only to the performers but also to each other. True, the buying of tickets was a commercial transaction, but it was disguised under a veneer of aristocratic sociability in a manner very characteristic of London’s advanced urban culture.260

Bach and Abel’s concert series was not only ‘a vital marketing tool in building a reputation and maintaining public visibility, but … was’, as for most instrumentalists in eighteenth-century London, ‘primarily a way of engineering … essential contacts with influential and wealthy patrons at the core of the musical structure’.261

Concerts were given weekly, with J. C. Bach and Abel directing the concerts on alternate Wednesdays. Subscription tickets could be purchased at J. C. Bach’s house, on the corner of Carlisle and Dean streets262 near Soho or Kings Square.263

Plate 13 shows J. C. Bach’s house as it appears today. Coincidentally, the security alarm of the ‘Jazz@Pizza Express’ shop located directly opposite Bach’s house is labelled ‘Abel’ (Plate 14).

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261 Ibid., p. 32.
263 An engraving entitled Soho or King’s Square, by Sutton Nicholls (fl. 1680–1740), dated 1754, is housed at the National Library of Australia, Canberra (Pictures Collection, nla.pic-an10268665). See ‘Soho Squ.’, in Bowles, Bowles’s Reduced New Pocket Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, Grid Reference Cn.
Plate 13 Johann Christian Bach’s house.
Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 14 The security alarm labelled ‘Abel’ located directly opposite Johann Christian Bach’s house.
Source: Photo by the author.
The music presented at the Bach-Abel concert series ‘was doubtless of fine quality, yet ... the [high-society] audience was largely interested in itself and came to see and be seen ... In 1774 Bach deposited £3595 in the bank as the season’s gross revenue from the undertaking—not a bad intake in any century.’

Not surprisingly, the use of a Zumpe square piano in the Bach-Abel subscription concerts would have brought the instrument to the attention of both potential and socially influential buyers.

Charles Burney remarks:

After the arrival of Johann Christian Bach in this country ... all the harpsichord makers tried their mechanical powers at piano-fortes; but their first attempts were always on the large size [that is, grand pianos], till Zumpé ... constructed small piano-fortes of the shape and size of the virginal, of which the tone was very sweet, and the touch, with a little use, equal to any degree of rapidity. These, from their low price, and the convenience of their form, as well as their power of expression, suddenly grew into such favour, that there was scarcely a house in the kingdom where a keyed instrument had ever had admission, but was supplied with one of Zumpé’s piano-fortes. In short, he could not make them fast enough to gratify the craving of the public.

One infers from the opening of Burney’s statement that J. C. Bach’s preference was unequivocally in favour of the piano rather than the harpsichord. This is not surprising. Between 1750 and 1754, J. C. Bach studied music in Berlin under his half-brother Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–88). The extraordinary expressivity of Emanuel Bach’s musical style, and the sound of the grand piano by Gottfried Silbermann that C. P. E. Bach used to accompany the flute-playing Frederick the Great (1712–86) (within the context of the royal concerts at Sanssouci—Frederick’s summer palace—and at the Berlin court), may have inspired J. C. Bach to support piano making in London.

Although [Charles] Burney gives no date for the first appearance of ... Zumpe’s square pianos], the start of ... [the Bach-Abel concert series] in 1764 must have roughly coincided with the time the piano first came into fashion in London. This is not contradicted by the date of the four earliest surviving Zumpe square pianos, all made in 1766.
Documentary evidence shows that both J. C. Bach and Charles Burney thought so highly of Zumpe’s square pianos that they willingly acted as agents, recommending them to friends and acquaintances everywhere.’

Gabriel Buntebart

It is likely that as harpsichord maker to Queen Charlotte, Gabriel Buntebart provided politically valuable connections between Zumpe and the palace. Buntebart may even have been involved with Zumpe’s work from the very beginning in 1766. From 1768 onwards, the names of both Zumpe and Buntebart appear jointly on the nameboard of Zumpe’s pianos, which are inscribed: Johannes Zumpe et Buntebart Londini fecerunt. Given the popularity of Zumpe’s pianos, it is reasonable to assume the need for increased production was the catalyst for Zumpe’s partnership with Buntebart.

Buntebart was J. C. Bach’s close friend and business associate. Evidence of some of their financial transactions is preserved in Bach’s bank accounts of the 1770s. (‘An interesting feature of some surviving pianos by Buntebart is the presence of J.C. Bach’s endorsement which appears as a faint but legible signature at the far edge of the soundboard.’)

After Zumpe and Buntebart amicably dissolved their business partnership on Friday, 25 September 1778, it was Buntebart who supplied a grand piano for Queen Charlotte. If Charlotte Papendeik (the assistant keeper of Queen Charlotte’s wardrobe) observed correctly, this ‘superb instrument’ may have been ‘a little hard in the touch’. Doubtless, J. C. Bach was an essential link in the process associated with the Queen’s acquisition of a grand piano by Buntebart.

Frederick and Christian Schoene

Following the dissolution (by mutual consent) of Zumpe and Buntebart’s business partnership in 1778,

Zumpe established a new workshop … in a newly built house in Princes Street [off the northern side of Oxford Street] near Cavendish Square.

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269 M. Cole, ‘John Zumpe including Gabriel Buntebart, Sievers, the Schoene Brothers, and Meinke Meyer’, in Square Pianos (n.d.).
274 See ibid., pp. 61–2.
In 1782 he relinquished this address and the business to the brothers Frederick and Christian Schoene (born 1749 and 1747 respectively). They came from his home town Fürth: like him they had previously served an apprenticeship there. Presumably they paid Zumpe royalties because the inscription of their pianos reads Schoene & Company/Successors to Johannes Zumpe etc. The name Zumpe is purposely written much bolder than Schoene, sometimes leading to mistaken identifications. Buntebart meanwhile … took a new partner, Christoph Julius Ludwig Sievers, from Hanover, who presumably brought new capital into the business.276

In the mid-1780s, the Schoene brothers made improvements to Zumpe’s action by including

an intermediate lever between the hammer and the key. This had the effect of transforming the action from one in which the acceleration ratio between the hammer and the key increases as the key is depressed, to one in which it decreases … this makes for much easier finger control. Moreover, this second lever also increased the damping factor of the action, reducing hammer rebound. This action … was capable of rapid and reliable repetition and of a wider dynamic range; the overall performance of this action was not improved further until the advent of [Sébastien] Érard’s double-escapement action in the 1820s.277

Zumpe’s Pianos are an Inspiration

Zumpe’s square pianos so captivated hearts and minds that professional and amateur musicians alike ‘almost fell over each other in their intense desire to explore and exploit the piano’s potential for both brilliance and subtlety of expression’.278

Because Zumpe’s square pianos have a keyboard compass279

of almost five octaves280 … they could be used for virtually any published music. Their clear articulation and charmingly novel tone made them ideal for the kind of … sonatas … as provided by J. C. Bach (and his brothers), Boccherini, [Baldassare] Galuppi [1706–85] and dozens of lesser masters. The soundboard is very small, but the success of their

276 Cole, ‘John Zumpe’.
279 See ‘Compass’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
280 An ‘octave’ is the sounding distance between two pitches, where the sound of the higher pitch is produced by vibrations that are double the frequency of the lower pitch; the sound of the lower pitch is produced by vibrations that are half the frequency of the higher pitch. See ‘Octave’, in ibid.
distinctive tone originated chiefly in very robust string tensions (greater than on any piano made before) and the voicing of their tiny hammers by covering them with soft bookbinders’ leather.

The softness, elasticity and durability of leather depend on the type of tanning process. ‘Deer, goat, sheep, and calf can make good covering material, though it seems that goat and deer are more likely to be found in English square pianos.’ The leather found on a 1769 Zumpe is vegetable-tanned sheepskin—but beware, an eighteenth-century sheep bears no resemblance to today’s animal, which has such a relatively massive coat that the skin structure is compromised. ‘Vegetable tanning is the oldest [tanning] method, dating back to prehistory. It involves treating in tannic acid from plant/tree material’, often using a combination of several tree species—‘oak or spruce bark, chestnut wood, sumach leaves, and oakgall’—for the best results. Vegetable-tanned leather is easily recognisable by its yellow or light-beige coloration. The tanning process ‘is generally slow (6–12 weeks), [and] involves numerous manual bath changes and stirring, [resulting] … in leather that will need to be physically worked and oiled to become flexible again’.

Several eighteenth-century piano makers (for example, Adam Beyer and John Broadwood) used ‘alum-tawed goat skin … It is usually white, soft, and flexible, but when you pull it does not stretch … However, another frequent choice by historic makers was thin vegetable-tanned calf. It is flexible, but ultimately it is not so durable.’

The succulent treble of Zumpe’s square pianos was especially suited to the prominent melodic lines and the expressive subtlety of music written in the fashionable ‘galant’ style. Like most stylistic labels (perhaps even more than most), the term galant is a vague one.

In non-musical discourse of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, its signification varied with the user, covering such a broad range of meanings as to embrace virtually opposite attributes—brave, noble, chivalrous, courtly, lascivious, immoral. Often it was simply an
approbatory adjective describing what was modish … Although the application of galant to music was often wide ranging and imprecise, a general concept of galant composition emerged towards the middle of the eighteenth century: easily accessible, agreeable, flowing music, in which melody predominated [commonly comprising predictable, symmetrically balanced phrase lengths] and accompaniment played a subordinate role, or, negatively, music that avoided contrapuntal texture or other compositional complexity, and made no stringent demands on the intellect or emotions of the listener.290

In some instances, adjectives such as ‘urbane’, ‘elegant’, ‘pleasing’, ‘light’ and ‘charming’ were used to conceal judgment of the galant style as being superficial, facile and short-winded. Such a judgment is reflected, for example, in the opinions of the eighteenth-century English music theorist Sir John Hawkins (1731 – ca 1800), who, in his An Account of the Institution and Progress of the Academy of Ancient Music (published in 1770), states:

For reasons, which no one is willing to avow, adagio music is exploded, and we are content to forego [sic] the majesty and dignity of the largo and andante movements, with all the variety arising from the interchange of various airs and measures, for the noise and rattle of an unisonous allegro, to which no name can be given, or the intoxicating softness of that too-often iterated air, the minuet.291

It is not surprising that, as a 69-year-old, Hawkins found it difficult to adapt to the aesthetic changes wrought by the emergence of the galant style; as with many innovative musical styles, galant was ‘at once proposition’ (that is, an experimental style, whose aesthetic, emotional and compositional limits were untested) ‘and resolution’ (that is, a style defined by specific aesthetic and compositional parameters).292

In London, the musical strengths of Zumpe’s pianos and the compositional characteristics of the galant style not only found themselves inextricably linked, but also inspired composers to produce some of the late eighteenth century’s most extraordinarily beautiful piano music.

Several decades after Zumpe’s invention, the square piano was still viewed in a more than favourable light. A dealer’s catalogue dated 1789 describes some

291 Quoted in Hogwood, Liner notes for Johann Christian Bach, p. 2.
of the advantages of the square piano: ‘Their tones are remarkably sweet and
delicate, and their structure renders them agreeable for travelling with, as they
may be conveyed and even performed upon in a coach.’

A complex mixture of social and economic factors contributed to the square
piano’s popularity. During the late eighteenth century, trade was the foundation
of the English economy. As a consequence, the ‘professional’ classes acquired
more wealth and influence, many finding themselves both with the desire for
and in a position to purchase a ‘small piano-forte’; the status of ‘gentlemen’ was
associated not only with wealth, but also with ownership of a piano.

Zumpe’s Pianos in England and Abroad

The Professional Class: Piano music and hedonism

In 1709, the English author, journalist and pamphleteer Daniel Defoe (ca 1660–
1731) described England’s socioeconomic groups as

1. The great, who live profusely.
2. The rich, who live plentifully.
3. The middle sort, who live well.
4. The working trades, who labour hard, but feel no want.
5. The country people, farmers, &c, who fare indifferently.
6. The poor, that fare hard.
7. The miserable, that really pinch and suffer want.

Defoe’s ‘middle sort’ included both the lower end of ‘the rich’ and the upper end
of ‘the working trades’. ‘Contemporary observers noted the apparent ease by
which gentility could be acquired via … prosperity, and thus how new blood
from trade or the professions swelled the ranks of the “genteel”.’

A large number of the people in late eighteenth-century England who owned
a piano and who bought and played piano music belonged to the ‘middle sort’.
This socioeconomic group is now commonly described as middle class; this is

293 Music Trades Review, 15 December 1890, p. 21, Col. 1.
294 See ‘The Professional Class: Piano music and hedonism’, below.
296 Defoe’s fame derives from his novel Robinson Crusoe.
298 Ibid., p. 13.
not a term with which the middle sort would have been familiar. ‘Such people probably did not consider themselves to be part of a monolithic ... [middle] class, but rather as part of a professional class.’

The ‘professional class’ comprised those who did not hold hereditary noble titles, and who earned

> a living by some (legal) activity other than manual labour ... [The professional class] was a highly diverse group, extending from very wealthy industrialists and commercial magnates and bankers, through the ranks of lawyers, physicians, and holders of middle-tier government posts, down to small shop keepers, minor officials, and school teachers.

At the ‘lower’ end of this social spectrum, certain trades possessed an inherently higher status than others. For example, goldsmiths and watchmakers were considered to be more ‘respectable’ than shoemakers and butchers. Traditionally, apprentices were held in low esteem, regarded as ‘members of a youth sub-culture prone to frivolous behaviour, irresponsibility, riot, and in the worst cases, criminality’.

As the professional class became increasingly affluent,

> their demand for music in diverse forms increased and spread to an ever-widening fraction of the population. Hearing music performed professionally and having the means to perform it oneself were luxury goods, defined by economists as goods whose consumption rises more than proportionately with advances in real income.

The expansion of the professional class presented significant opportunities for social mobility.

One was recognised as a gentleman through the acquisition of the proper clothing, manners, fashionable possessions and, most importantly, the ability to support oneself without manual labour.

> The piano became a status symbol, not only because elaborately inlaid instruments were expensive, but also because they provided the...

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302  Scherer, Quarter Notes and Bank Notes, p. 33.
303  Loesser, Men, Women, and Pianos, p. 185.
opportunity for a gentleman’s wife and/or daughters to acquire and
display musical skill, which was considered a highly attractive genteel
‘accomplishment’.304

Genteel families and those aspiring to higher ranks subscribed to
the belief that among women an appearance of leisure, combined
with moderate artistic accomplishments reflected directly on their
families’ prestige in society. Alongside needlework, drawing, and an
understanding of foreign languages, the ability to sing and play the
piano were considered highly desirable skills for nubile ladies who were
expected to parlay their accomplishments into suitable matrimonial
matches. Unsurprisingly, women were important consumers of keyboard
music in the late eighteenth century, a considerable amount of which
was written to meet what was seen as their tastes and needs.305

The presence in the home of a piano served not only to substantiate a gentleman’s
claims to consequence, but was also useful in revealing his innate moral
character; the piano continued to function in this regard well into the early
nineteenth century. For example, in Jane Austen’s (1775–1817) novel, Pride and
Prejudice (1813),306

Mr. Darcy’s gift to his sister of a piano demonstrates his generosity
and readiness to care for the women nearest to him. Tender recesses
of Darcy’s character are thus revealed, and by strong implication, his
potential kindness as a husband. Simultaneously, Austen shows that a
piano was regarded as an essential feature of gentility.307

Making music at the piano was often the primary source of entertainment in the
home, and amateur musicians (often members of the professional class) sought
both ‘diversion and refuge in providing their own musical entertainments …
Images of elegant ladies, gentlemen, and children playing instruments permeate
… the arts of … [the] period’.308

304 Conway, The Advent of the Zumpe Square Pianoforte, p. 12.
'The salon was the locus where music became a commodity which could be exchanged for social status.' In the salon, the aspirational, status-conscious professional class sought to emulate the tastes and materialistic ostentation of the wealthy aristocracy; the purchase and ownership of a piano enhanced this aim.

It appears that there was no limit to the obsessive materialism of the professional class. In *Essays on Practical Education*, the Anglo-Irish novelist Maria Edgeworth (1767–1849) wrote (in collaboration with her father) of ‘the higher classes in life … it is in vain that they intrench themselves, they are pursued by the intrusive vulgar. In a wealthy mercantile nation there is nothing which can be bought for money, that will not long continue to be an envied distinction.’

In attempting to provide a reason for the ‘addictive consumption of the late 18th century’, Colin Campbell proposes that it was a ‘modern hedonism, an individual pleasure in luxury material goods’ within the context of ‘a newly legitimised commercial society’ that motivated the affluent, multi-layered ranks of the professional class to imitate the manners, ‘luxury tastes and conspicuous consumption of the wealthy elite’.

During the late eighteenth century, the enriched bourgeoisie’s hedonistically motivated hunger for belongings, as well as its insatiable appetite for style and fashion, radically changed patterns of consumption. This ‘consumer revolution’ sometimes catalysed shrewd responses from craftsmen. The production and marketing strategies of Josiah Wedgwood (1730–95; ‘Potter to her Majesty’) provide us with a particularly fine example. Wedgwood’s vision was to expand the market for his pottery by not simply … churning out cheap cups and plates for a mass market, but by replicating a luxury product for a wider clientele. He invented a classic design subliminally identified with aristocratic culture ['Wedgwood cultivated a taste for classical forms and ornamentation in reaction to earlier rococo styles'], only to develop the revolutionary technical processes and working methods needed to reproduce it in

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310 The educational writer and engineer Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744–1817).
315 See ibid., p. 5.
quantity for a bourgeois market. Yet Wedgwood still made sure to woo royalty and aristocratic patrons, retaining an image of luxury as he sold in large numbers. His success was nicely dependent upon retaining the prestige value of his products: if the brand became too widely diluted it would lose its exclusive cache, disdained by the aristocracy and thus no longer desirable to the emergent bourgeoisie either.318

The production and sale of square pianos in late eighteenth-century London mirror Wedgwood’s production and marketing strategies. Piano makers were quick to follow Wedgwood’s ‘concept of commercialising a luxury product … simultaneously’ making it relatively cheap and ‘widely desirable’.319 The square piano, in particular, represented a new and desirable type of luxury item. In its most unadorned, basic version, it was not specifically ‘crafted for high society’,320 and yet through ownership of a square piano, the ‘modernity, politeness, respectability, and independence’321 associated with the values of the aristocracy were instantly made available to members of the professional class.

Ownership of a square piano by an aspiring professional-class family was a visible symbol of respectability (which was ‘the sharpest of all lines of social division’), and placed ‘the piano … at the centre of social change’, identifying it as ‘a potent symbol of social emulation’.322 This is not to say that a square piano might not have been ‘desired for its own sake rather than for any prestige which may’ have been attached to it (after all, a square piano does yield its ‘own immediate and obvious satisfactions’).323 The professional class was ‘both able and willing to purchase a product previously’ identified with ‘aristocratic consumption patterns’.324

Social standing, pretence or hedonism were not the only things that may have stimulated many in the professional class to purchase a piano; the notion that a true gentleman should express his emotions in a refined and/or artistically mediated way may also have had an influence. In the end, ‘a variety of … meanings, motives and intentions’325 goes towards explaining why the professional class regarded the square piano as an essential part of their material world.

319 Ibid., p. 9.
320 Ibid., p. 7.
324 Ibid., p. 40.
325 Ibid., p. 41.
The design of the square piano ensured that it could be made inexpensively and reproduced (handcrafted) easily. The late eighteenth-century ubiquity of the instrument suggests that the professional class placed ‘value on … craftsmanship, on beauty, on being able to see and feel the hand of the artisan behind the [instrument]’.326 Their response was an emotional as well as an aesthetic one.

The professional class overwhelmingly ‘came to be thought of as a “public”—a group with growing economic clout, and one thought to hold certain collective ideas, wishes, and tastes’.327 At the end of the eighteenth century, this was a completely new notion. Some researchers ‘with a xenophile agenda have suggested that interest in pianos and piano music was superficial and reflected no genuine musicality on the part of the British’—for example, Hermann Muthesius (1861–1927), ‘that intense watcher of the British’, explained to his German audience328 that ‘the English are probably the most unmusical race in the world’).329 ‘They forget that people, however rich or poor, are not generally inclined to spend their money on something they don’t like or don’t understand, nor to raise their social standing by acquiring something unless it is highly valued and prized by society.’330

As the 1700s gave way to the new century, London piano makers did not restrict themselves to the home market. In relation to the sale and distribution of English pianos on the Continent, the trade embargo imposed on English goods during the Napoleonic wars amounted to nothing more (at least for entrepreneurial London piano makers) than a passing inconvenience. During the first decade of the nineteenth century, ‘the manufacture of British pianos represented not only a significant export but also a powerful symbol of national technological prowess and modernity’.331

Zumpe’s ‘Small Piano-Forte’ Copied Abroad

By 1780, many instrument makers throughout Europe had copied Zumpe’s concept—for example: in Stockholm, Pehr Linholm (1742–1813) and Mathias Peter Kraft (1753–1807); in Amsterdam, Meinke Meyer (ca 1740–?); in Paris, Balthazar Péronard (fl. 1760–89) and Johann Kilian Mercken (1743–1819); in

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Brussels, Henrique van Casteel (fl. ca late 1750s–70s); in Berne, Johann Ludwig Hellen (1716–81); in Madrid, Antonio Enríquez (fl. ca late 1770s); and in Seville, Juan del Mârmol (1737–?). Given the current paucity of research into the dissemination of Zumpe’s ideas on the Continent, it is possible that other such makers will be identified in the future.332

‘The late eighteenth century ‘English square piano’, with its origins in Zumpe’s square pianos, was the instrument that established the piano both as an item of trade and as a cultural artefact of central significance.’333

The Cost of Zumpe’s Pianos

Charles Burney ascribes the success of Zumpe’s square pianos, in part, to ‘their low price’.334 Compared with harpsichords, Zumpe’s square pianos were inexpensive; in the 1770s, at 16 guineas each,335 they were priced at the equivalent of approximately one-half to one-third of the cost of a single-manual harpsichord. Shudi, for example, ‘charged between thirty-five and forty guineas for a single-manual instrument, fifty guineas for … [a] single-manual [harpsichord] with an added “Venetian swell”336 device he invented, and eighty guineas for [a] double-manual harpsichord … with the swell’.337

Reckoned in today’s monetary values, the price of a Zumpe square piano was approximately £1070 (that is, approximately A$1900).338 During the 1780s in London, ‘a prosperous tradesman’s family lived well on £350’ (approximately £22 000, or A$39 000).339 ‘People with incomes of between ca. £50’ (£3100, or approximately A$5600) and £200 (£12 600, approximately A$22 000) ‘a year who could afford some of life’s pleasures constituted about a quarter of the population’.339

During the mid-1780s, the usual cost of a square piano made in London ranged between 15 and 20 guineas340 (£990–1300, or approximately A$1800–2400). This represents about one-fifteenth of an annual middle-class income. (Analogously,
this is the current equivalent in Australia of the cost of a reasonable-quality home entertainment system. Unlike contemporary home entertainment systems, however, the making of piano-based chamber music encourages both community and communication.) At the same time,

6d would buy enough meat and drink for a journeyman’s dinner [a journeyman cabinet-maker earned between 15s and £1 a week], 1lb of candles cost 2s 10d, a ticket for the Messiah at the Foundling Hospital was 10s 6d and a set of false teeth with gold springs at £73 10s cost more than a [good single-manual] harpsichord; little wonder that many got dead drunk on gin for 2d.342

The Popularity of the ‘English’ Piano in Paris

During the late eighteenth century, the only city that rivalled London in importance and influence was Paris.343 Only a handful of years after the invention of the ‘English’ (that is, Zumpe-style) piano, the instrument (and the music it inspired) had spread to the French capital. By 1770, J. C. Bach had arranged for at least one piano to be shipped to Paris (whether this instrument was a square piano made by Zumpe is not known).

On Wednesday, 20 June 1770, Charles Burney, whilst in Paris, encountered the pianist Madame Anne Louise Brillon de Jouy.344 Burney reports:

There was a good deal of company at dinner which was excellent and bien servi. After coffee we went into the music room where I found an English pianoforte [that is, a Zumpe-style square piano]345 which Mr. [J. C.] Bach had sent her. She played a great deal and I found she had not acquired her reputation in music without meriting it.346

During the Ancien Régime,347 playing the harpsichord and the fortepiano was a favoured pursuit for French aristocratic women.348

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342 Goold, Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano, p. 146.
343 See Burnett, Company of Pianos, p. 133.
344 See ‘Mutations’, above.
345 The Zumpe-style square piano was widely called ‘the English piano forte’. See Debenham and Cole, ‘Pioneer Piano Makers in London’.
346 Burney, Music, Men & Manners in France & Italy 1770, pp. 19–20.
347 ‘While literally meaning the “old” or “former” regime, and properly describing the aristocratic and political system of rule established from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, the term ancien régime has become synonymous with the years immediately preceding the French Revolution.’ E. Cross, ‘The Ancien Régime’, in Napoleon: Revolution to Empire (Melbourne: The Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria, 2012), p. 49.
Madame Brillon was ‘rather pretty ... charming ... polite, easy ... naturally cheerful’,349 and often played host to musical luminaries. Her musical abilities were greatly respected by, for example, J. C. Bach, Luigi Boccherini, Johann Schobert, Ernst Eichner (1740–77) and Henri-Joseph Rigel (1741–99). Madame Brillon also enjoyed the company of the political and social elite. Benjamin Franklin, for example, became a close friend.

In the year following the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Franklin went to Paris to represent American interests. He stayed there throughout the Revolutionary War, returning after eight years in 1785. Franklin—now a widower in his seventies—did not let politics stand in the way of earthly pleasures. He spent a good deal of time socializing with the women of France to whom he was unceasingly attracted. Franklin was a lover of music, and he was able to combine his interest in women, chess, and music in twice-weekly gatherings at the home of ... Madame Brillon de Jouy. Madame Brillon was the thirty-three-year-old wife of a wealthy civil servant. At first Franklin’s attention to Madame Brillon was rather more than platonic—and her habit of sitting in his lap in the presence of others stimulated at least rumours. But before long, they adopted a father—daughter relationship, and she referred to him affectionately in her voluminous correspondence as ‘mon cher Papa’.350

The date of Burney’s visit to Madame Brillon (20 June 1770) indicates that she was among the first Parisians to own a piano. Her connection with J. C. Bach, and the fact that Burney describes Madame Brillon's piano as ‘English’351—that is, a Zumpe-style square piano—allow for conjecture that the instrument may have been made by Zumpe.

Charles Burney mentions that Zumpe had been in Paris in 1770.352 Unfortunately, the exact date of Zumpe’s visit to the French capital is unknown, as are details concerning his activities whilst there. Charles Burney’s encounter with Madame Brillon and her ‘English pianoforte’353 took place on 20 June 1770. If Zumpe made Madame Brillon’s square piano, perhaps he personally delivered the instrument to her during the first six months of 1770. Had this been so, however, the evening’s conversation would surely have revealed that Madame Brillon’s square piano was relatively new, and that the piano’s maker (by 1770, Zumpe was a famous man) had travelled from London to deliver the instrument; Burney remains silent in relation to these matters. It is also possible that Madame

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349 Burney, Music, Men & Manners in France & Italy 1770, p. 19.
351 Burney, Music, Men & Manners in France & Italy 1770, p. 19.
352 See ibid., p. 27.
353 Ibid., p. 19.
Brillon’s English pianoforte\textsuperscript{354} was an instrument made by Frederick Beck, Adam Beyer (fl. 1768–1801), Christopher Ganer (fl. 1774–1809), Johannes Pohlmann or the brothers Frederick and Christian Schoene.

\textbf{Un Inventaire sous La Terreur}

Thanks to the meticulous record-keeping of the French revolutionaries, the popularity of the English square piano in France during the 1770s and 1780s is exposed. During the Reign of Terror (Thursday, 5 September 1793 – Monday, 28 July 1794), an \textit{Inventaire}\textsuperscript{355} of ‘confiscated ancient and foreign instruments which were \textit{les plus rares, par leur perfection} [the most rare, because of their perfection] was made by the eleventh sub-commission of a ‘\textit{Commission temporaire des arts}’.\textsuperscript{356}

The Commission temporaire des arts (Temporary Commission of Arts) was established to protect the objects confiscated from the French aristocracy and bourgeoisie from vandalism. The Commission included two musicians: 1) violinist (at the Comédie Italienne, one of the three principal theatres of Paris) and composer Antonio Bartolomeo Bruni (1757–1821); and 2) Bernard de Sarette (1765–1858), the first director of the Institut National de Musique—subsequently the Conservatoire National de Musique).

On Saturday, 3 May 1794 (12 weeks and two days before the Reign of Terror came to an end), the Commission temporaire des arts decreed that authorisation had been given for ‘the professors of the Institut National de Musique to betake themselves, together with the commissioners, into the houses of the emigrated and the condemned, there to choose the best musical instruments for the use of the Institute’.\textsuperscript{357} The instruments were to be brought to a specially designated depot.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{354} Ibid., p. 19.
\item \textsuperscript{356} Gadd, \textit{The British Art Piano and Piano Design}, Vol. 1, p. 211.
\item \textsuperscript{357} Loesser, \textit{Men, Women and Pianos}, p. 322.
\end{itemize}
Antonio Bruni supervised the seizure of instruments, a process that began on 3 May 1794, and concluded more than 15 months later, on Tuesday, 18 August 1795. Bruni and de Sarette ‘visited 111 houses and mansions of the emigrated and the condemned, removing 367 items’.  

Although there were 33 houses that owned one or more pianos and no harpsichords or spinets, there were 31 other houses that owned one or more harpsichords but no pianos. Nevertheless, most of the dated harpsichords are earlier than the dated pianos and none of the seventeen houses with both harpsichords and pianos appears to have acquired a harpsichord after purchasing a piano, assuming the harpsichords were all acquired when new. Except for one, those houses that certainly or probably owned grand pianos had no other keyboard instrument.

Confiscated keyboard instruments provided the fledgling Institut National de Musique with an instrument collection, a public ‘Cabinet of instruments’ that ‘served as models because of their working principles’. Although instruments were stored in preparation for the establishment of a museum collection, little action was taken in relation to the matter ‘until 1861, when Louis Clappisson was finally put in place as curator’. (During the cold winters of the early 1800s, some of the confiscated instruments were used as firewood. During the winter of 1816, 20 harpsichords met their fate in this way.) Thankfully, not all seized instruments found their way into the collection of the Institut National de Musique. Some of the confiscated instruments were returned to the families of their guillotined owners—however, not all. Certain ‘high executives’ of the Directoire exécutif or Directory (‘a body of five directors that held executive power in France from 26 October 1795 until 10 November 1799, following the end of the Reign of Terror’). ‘as well as other highly placed officials seem to have taken’ the declaration of the instruments as ‘property of the nation’ quite personally … One of the Directors … Jean-Françoise Rewbell [1747–1807] … had a Taskin harpsichord and a Schoene piano, quite

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358 Ibid., p. 324.
360 Some of the instruments in this collection ‘form the basis of the collection of the … Conservatoire in Paris, now in the Cité de la Musique’. Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 391, fn. 55.
impartially, sent home for the use of his wife. Lazare Carnot [1753–1823], another exalted Director, must have been quite a music lover, for he helped himself to three pianos. The high-talking political moralist [Louis-Marie] Larevelliére-Lepeaux [1753–1824], another of the nation’s chief executives, took four instruments. [Pierre] Benezech [1775–1802], Minister of the Interior, inspired by the example of his superiors, also took a grab from the bag, but contented himself with a single organ—as did citizen [Charles] Cochon [de Lapparent, 1750–1825], a mere modest Minister of Police. However, citizen Angibault, Comptroller of Buildings, seems to have been quite drunk with musical enthusiasm, for he pilfered no fewer than seven instruments, some of them amongst the most valuable … It appears that … when the Conservatoire … [formed its] museum, not one of the enthusiastically ‘socialized’ instruments was at hand for inclusion.

Of the seized keyboard instruments, 62 were harpsichords and 71 were pianos. Amongst the instruments catalogued as a clavecin (harpsichord), one made in 1769 (24 years before the start of the Reign of Terror) by Jean-Henri Silbermann (1727–99) may have been one of Silbermann’s Hammerflügel (grand pianos):

92.—Un clavecin en bois de noyer, par Jean Henri Silbermann, année 1769, à Strasbourg.

[A harpsichord of walnut wood, by Jean Henri Silbermann, year 1769, from Strasbourg.]

(Confiscated from Laurent Planelli de Mascrany de la Valette, Baron de Maubec.)

‘The surviving pianos by Silbermann … all have plain walnut cases while numerous French harpsichords of the second half of the eighteenth century are painted and further decorated with gold bands.’ That the confiscated 1769 instrument is described as a clavecin is confusing. ‘Perhaps Silbermann’s Hammerflügel and other [instruments] like them were not … considered as pianos but as expressive harpsichords.’

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367  Loesser, Men, Women and Pianos, p. 326.
368  See Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 369.
370  ‘XXII Inventaire du 16 Messidor l’an Ile’, in Bruni, Un Inventaire sous La Terreur.
372  Ibid., p. 368.
Some of the other seized clavecins may also have been grand pianos. One of the named harpsichords of the confiscated 62 is listed as an undated clavecin by Louis Dulcken (1733 – after 1793). 'Another, a clavecin anglais by John Broadwood, dated 1789, was almost certainly one of his grand pianos.'

Of the 22 seized French-made pianos, 13 were by Sébastien Érard or by the ‘Érard frères’ (Érard brothers); ‘this is over half again as many as all other French makes put together’.

Of the 71 pianos seized from the aristocracy, 68 were square pianos: 34 were made in London; 22 were by Parisian makers; one was ‘Un forte-piano allemand par Henrion’, a German-style square piano by Henri Henrion (fl. ca 1780); and the remaining 11 square pianos were the work of unidentified makers.

Dated square pianos … were made between 1769 and 1791. [With the exception of two instruments] … twelve of the dated forte-pianos made between 1769 to 1782 were English. Of those made between 1783 and 1791, sixteen were English and eighteen were French. Apparently, until about 1782, the Parisians preferred … [imported square pianos] from London rather than equivalents made in Paris.

The Inventaire lists instruments made by Frederick Beck (five pianos), Adam Beyer (two combination piano-organs), Christopher Ganer (one piano), Johannes Pohlmann (four pianos) and Zumpe’s successors, the brothers Frederick and Christian Schoene (nine pianos). Bruni’s Inventaire attests not only to the popularity in Paris of instruments by these London-based makers, but also to the popularity in Paris of English pianos.

Listed amongst the confiscated pianos are seven instruments made by Zumpe: six pianos and an ‘organized piano’ (claviorganum)—that is, a square piano mounted on, and incorporated with, an organ. An organized piano may sound as a piano, an organ or as a simultaneous combination of both. With
Zumpe’s organized piano, the piano and the organ were combined using a single keyboard.387 ‘A special feature of all such combination instruments is that by modifying the touch (hard, accentuated touch or soft, legato style of playing) either the sound of the piano or that of the organ can be emphasised.’388

There is a paucity of surviving repertoire written specifically for the organized piano. Two works are particularly impressive.

1. Dmytro Stepanovic Bortniansky’s (1751–1825) Sinfonia concertante, composed in 1790 (Bortniansky worked at the imperial court in St Petersburg). In addition to a ‘fortepiano organisé’, the work is scored for two violins, harp, viola da gamba, bassoon and violoncello.

2. Domenico Cimarosa’s (1749–1801) Sextet in F major. In addition to a ‘pianoforte organizzato’, the work is scored for a colourful mixture of instruments: violin, harp, viola da gamba, bassoon and violoncello.389

There are no extant solo pieces for the organized piano; this sad state of affairs may be explained by the fact that every piano piece from the period not exceeding the commonly encountered keyboard compass (FF–f3) could also be played on an organized piano.390

The Inventaire contains the following seven entries in relation to instruments made by Zumpe:

19.—Un forte-piano de Johannes Zumpe, Londini, année 1787.
[A piano by Johannes Zumpe, London, year 1787.]391
(Confiscated from Joseph-Bernard de Chabert, Marquis de Gogolin.)

35.—Un forte-piano anglais, de Johannes Zumpe, année 1774.
[An english piano, by Johannes Zumpe, year 1774.]392
(Confiscated from Charles-René-Félix de Vintimille, Marquis de Luc.)

73.—Un forte-piano organisé, par Johannes Zumpe: Londini fecit, année 1771.
[A claviorganum, by Johannes Zumpe: made in London, year 1771.]393
(Confiscated from Count Pierre-Gaspard-Marie Grimod d’Orsay.)

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387 See ibid., p. 370. During the eighteenth century, the claviorganum seems to have enjoyed a particular popularity in England.
393 ‘XVI Inventaire du 6 Messidor l’an Ile, rue de Varenne’, in ibid.
138.—Un piano anglais de Johannes Zumpe, en 1769.
[An English piano by Johannes Zumpe, of 1769.]
(Confiscated from Louis-Georges Gougenot.)

293.—Un forte-piano de Zumpe, 1783, estimé 1 500 francs.
[A piano by Zumpe, 1783, estimated 1500 francs.]
(Confiscated from Mathieu-Paul-Louis Montmorency, Viscount de Laval.)

307.—Un forte-piano de Zumpe, 1784.
[A piano by Zumpe, 1784.]
(Confiscated from Charles-Étienne Pierre Maignart, Marquis de la Vaupalière.)

309.—Un petit piano de Zumpe.
[A small piano by Zumpe.]
(Confiscated from Charles-Étienne Pierre Maignart, Marquis de la Vaupalière.)

In late eighteenth-century Paris, the term ‘English piano’—that is, an English square piano—was commonly regarded as being synonymous with the term ‘piano’. During the 1770s, Zumpe’s square pianos were especially sought after, so much so that cost was no impediment to ownership. For example, Burney, whilst acting as an agent for Zumpe, opportunistically quoted an inflated price to the philosopher, art critic and writer Denis Diderot (1713–84) of 28 guineas (in London during the 1770s, a Zumpe square piano cost only about 16 guineas). That Zumpe had a fine reputation in Paris is further revealed by implication in the following listing taken from the Inventaire:

141.—Un forte-piano anglais de Schoene, successor de Johannes Zumpe, Londini fecerunt, estimé 800 francs.
[An English piano by Schoene, successor to Johannes Zumpe, made in London, estimated 800 francs.]
(Confiscated from Lord François-Thomas Kerry.)
The square piano by Schoene is deemed to be of quality because of Schoene’s association with Zumpe (‘successor to Johannes Zumpe’).

By the 1780s, English pianos became so fashionable that ‘a Parisian of the 18th Century’ advertised ‘that he would swap a Stradivarius [or Amati] violin for a … piano’. The advertisement is dated Sunday, 25 August 1782, and appears in the semiweekly gazette *Affiches, annonces et avis divers* [Various Posters, Advertisements and Opinions]:

Très bon forte-piano à vendre ou troquer contre un violon de Stradivarius, d’Amati … 25 août, 1782.

[A very good forte-piano through purchase, or in exchange for a violin by Stradivarius, or Amati … 25 August, 1782.]

The offer of exchanging a Stradivarius or Amati violin for a ‘very good forte-piano’ does not stipulate that the piano should be an English piano or one made by Zumpe. Readers of the advertisement, however, would have understood that the offer was made by a person who wished to acquire an English square piano. Because the musical quality of square pianos made in London was rarely poor, the advertisement’s ‘very good’ may refer to the excellence and beauty of the instrument’s casework.

Two years prior to this advertisement, in 1780, a combination piano-organ by ‘Zump’ is advertised for sale in the *Affiches, annonces et avis divers*:


[A piano by Zump, organised with a flute, oboe, galoubet, bass and bassoon. Price 48 louis, December 23.]

That is: a claviorganum with stopped wooden pipes, open pipes with reeds, open tin pipes, stopped wooden pipes and open pipes with reeds.

In 1788, again in the *Affiches, annonces et avis divers*, a square piano by Zumpe is advertised for sale: ‘Piano de Zump, 22 louis, 16 novembre.’

In both of these instances there is no connection with the advertisement dated 25 August 1782, in which an exchange with a Stradivarius or Amati is offered. The mention of Zumpe’s name in all of these advertisements suggests, unsurprisingly, that he enjoyed a credible and international reputation.

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404 Ibid., p. 17.
405 Ibid., p. 18.
During the early 1770s in France, discussion took place within public forums concerning the viability of the English square piano as an alternative to the harpsichord. For example, the periodical *L’Avant-coureur* (*The Forerunner*), dated Monday, 25 February 1771, contains an advertisement concerning the publication of a song (an ‘arietta’) composed by Antoine Albanèse (1729–1800). Albanèse was an Italian castrato, who had been a member of the Chapelle Royale. Between 1752 and 1762, he often performed as a soloist in the *Concert Spirituel* (a series of elite concerts that was presented in a room provided by Louis XV, located in the central pavilion of the Palais des Tuileries).

Albanèse’s *ariette* is dedicated to the Comte Louis d’Affry (1713–93), a French general and ambassador to the Dutch, and is entitled ‘The Arrival of the Pianoforte’. The advertisement in *L’Avant-coureur* reveals that in order to purchase Albanèse’s song, the buyer was required to part with 3 livres, 12 sous.

The text of Albanèse’s *ariette* passionately declaims:

Oui, cher ami, tu me viens d’Angleterre,  
Hélas, comment lui peut-on declarer la guerre …  
Il est donc vrai qu’enfin je te possède,  
Mon cher ami, mon pianoforte.  
Au plaisir de te voir tout autre cede.  
Ah, que tu vas être fêté!  
Ah, comme tu seras goûté!

[Yes, dear friend, from England do you come,  
Alas, how can I declare war upon you …  
It is true that finally I will have you,  
My dear friend, my pianoforte.  
All other pleasures diminish at the joy of seeing you.  
Ah, how you will be celebrated!  
Ah, how you will be savoured!]

408  French text quoted in ibid., p. 316.
Even as early as Monday, 2 April 1770, the *L’Avant-coureur* reported that a performance had taken place on a piano made by ‘M. de Virbès’, the description of the piano suggests it was a square piano inspired by Zumpe’s instruments—made ‘in the shape of those from England’.

Not all late eighteenth-century French music lovers were in favour of the piano. The writer, philosopher and historian François-Marie Arouet (pen name Voltaire, 1694–1778), for example, ‘declared in 1774 that the piano was a mere “kettle-maker’s instrument in comparison with the harpsichord”’. The reactionary Canon and organist of Nevers Cathedral Trouflant was “alarmed” at the piano’s ‘internal complexity adding: *Si les dessus en sont charmans, les basses dures, sourdes & fausses, semblent donner la consomption à nos orielles françoises* [If the treble is charming, the bass, hard, muffled and false, seems consumptive to our French ears]’.

In 1785, when Nicolas-Joseph Hüllmandel (1756–1823) wrote about the harpsichord in the *Encyclopédie méthodique*, he remarked that the characteristic ‘grace and lightness’ of harpsichord music were the consequence of ‘the different styles’ of certain composers. Hüllmandel’s list of the composers who had ‘wrought this revolution almost simultaneously’ comprises: Domenico Alberti (ca 1710–40), Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757), Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764), Johann Gottfried Müthel (1728–88), Georg Christoph Wagenseil (1715–77) and Johann Schobert.

The fresh breath of a new style was in the air after the 1760s, one in which crescendo and diminuendo were part and parcel of expressive design. Players, and hence builders, were ... interested in contemporary music ... and the ... French harpsichord was an excellent instrument on which that music could be expressed.

The inclusion of the *peau de buffle* (soft quills of buffalo leather) and the machine stop with *genouillères* (knee-levers to change registration) into the French harpsichord enabled musicians to play the music they wanted to hear.

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410 Ibid., p. 20.
411 Isacoff, *A Natural History of the Piano*, p. 25.
In fact, despite the change in musical style and the piano’s built-in ability to make ... dynamic nuances with fingers alone, it took hammer-action instruments much longer to achieve popularity in France than they did in England and Germany. The French believed that they had brought the harpsichord to perfection and did not easily give it up.  

Despite an enduring French confidence in harpsichords, the Encyclopédie méthodique reveals that by the last two decades of the eighteenth century, the English square piano had become the instrument of choice for many French composers:

Le forté-piano est agréable à entendre, surtout dans des morceaux d’une harmonie pathétique, & lorsqu’il est ménagé avec goût: par un habile musicien; mais outre les reproches qui lui sont faits par plusieurs maîtres, entr’ autres, par M. Trouflant, organiste de Nevers, on l’accuse d’être pénible à jouer, à cause de la pesanteur du marteau qui fatigue les doigts, & qui même peut rendre la main lourde avec le temps. Cependant, l’on voit la plupart des maîtres s’attacher de préférence à cet instrument pour leurs compositions de musique, parce qu’il leur donne des effets plus marqués que le clavecin.

[The forte-piano is agreeable to hear, especially in pieces that are filled with sad harmonies, and when the instrument is played with taste by a skilled musician. Adding to the disparaging remarks made by several master musicians, Mr Trouflant, organist of Nevers, regards the instrument as being painful to play because of the weight of the hammers, which fatigue the fingers and may make the player’s touch insensitive over time. However, it should be noted that most composers prefer this instrument, because it gives them more pronounced effects than the harpsichord.]

The following passage is representative of criticisms levelled at the harpsichord throughout the eighteenth century (the late eighteenth-century appearance in Paris of the English square piano certainly did nothing to alter negative opinion):

Le prix exhorbitant que coûte un bon clavessin, la difficulté de son transport, la place qu’il occupe, la dépense de son entretien, le mystère de son accord ou partition, dont le tempérament ... n’est fondé que sur une longue expérience ... & l’impossibilité d’enfler & de diminuer les sons, rebutent aujourd’hui les Dames de bon goût qui préfèrent la Vielle dans laquelle elles ne trouvent aucun de ces défauts.

416 Ibid.
417 Quoted in Latcham, ‘In the Shadow of the Enlightenment’, p. 45.
[The exorbitant price of a good harpsichord, the difficulty of transporting it, the space that it occupies, the expense of its upkeep, the mystery of its tuning, of which the ... temperament is founded only on long experience ... and the impossibility of increasing and diminishing the sound, repel Women of good taste who prefer the Hurdy-gurdy in which they find none of these defects.]418

By 1791, Nicolas-Joseph Hüllmandel was unquestionably preaching to the converted when he wrote:

The harpsichord lacks nuances ... An instrument in which evenness and purity of sound and all the desired degrees of strength and gentleness speak to the heart without hurting the ear, fulfils the aim of music to a much greater degree ... [Now various composers,] by giving to their music graduated nuances, contrasts, and a melody suited to the tone and resources of the piano, have prepared or determined the downfall of the harpsichord.419

The results of

a careful analysis of the availability of pianos [during the late eighteenth century in France], their mention on the title pages of published music, and the use of dynamic markings ... [in late eighteenth-century French keyboard music] strongly ... [suggest that the era of the French Revolution approximately] represents the close of the harpsichord era in France. It’s not that composers wrote exclusively for the piano after ... [the late 1780s and 1790s] but that they no longer called specifically for the harpsichord.420

The First Pianos in America

David Propert advertised in the New York Mercury to sell a piano, but nothing is known about the instrument. ‘Propert also gave America’s first known public performance on a piano.’421 On Thursday, 7 March 1771, a notice in the Massachusetts Gazette422 advertised a concert in Boston in which a piano was used.423 Unfortunately, Propert’s program is lost. ‘Propert also offered lessons in Boston in 1770.’424 Later, on Thursday, 7 November 1771,

421 Libin, ‘Early Piano Culture in America’, p. 382.
422 Massachusetts Gazette, 7 March 1771 (Boston: Richard Draper).
423 See Palmieri, Piano, p. 48.
424 Libin, ‘Early Piano Culture in America’, p. 382.
the *Virginia Gazette* announced a performance of ‘select pieces on the ... Piano-Forte’ in the town of Williamsburg.\(^{425}\) Also in 1771, Col. Robert Carter bought a piano for his house in Virginia, and Thomas Jefferson ordered an English piano as a gift for his fiancée. Thus, by the early 1770s, imported pianos had entered fashionable homes and appeared in public concerts from Massachusetts to Virginia.\(^{426}\)

As the commercial manufacture of grand pianos in England began during the 1780s, these instruments were square pianos (if not made by Zumpe, then modelled on his instruments).

In 1772, Johann Sheybli (‘an organ builder from Philadelphia’),\(^{427}\) ‘advertised in New York that he made and repaired pianos. In 1774, Sheybli offered to sell a ‘Hammer spinet’, by which he surely meant a square piano [one that, perhaps, he had made]. From New York, Sheybli moved to Pennsylvania, where he advertised pianos “of the best and newest sort”.’\(^{428}\)

In 1773, ‘H. B. Victor, formerly organist to the Princess of Wales, taught piano in Philadelphia and the Dutch immigrant Peter Albrecht Van Hagen gave lessons in Charleston, South Carolina’.\(^{429}\)

John (Johann) Behrent (Bahrent or Brent; fl. early to mid-1775), a German immigrant to Philadelphia\(^ {430}\)—‘the nation’s second largest city until around 1830’\(^ {431}\)—is usually credited with making America’s first piano. On Monday, 13 March 1775, Behrent placed the following advertisement in *Dunlap’s Pennsylvania Packet*:

> John Behrent, joiner and instrument maker, living in Third-street continued, in Campington, directly opposite Coates’s Burying-ground, has just finished for sale, an extraordinary fine instrument, by the name of piano forte, of mahogany, in the manner of an harpsichord, with hammers, and several changes: He intends to dispose of it on very

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\(^{426}\) Libin, ‘Early Piano Culture in America’, p. 381.


\(^{429}\) Libin, Liner notes for *Childhood Memories*.


reasonable terms; and being a master in such sort of work, and a new beginner in this country, he requests all lovers of music to favour him with their custom, and they shall not only be honestly served, but their favours gratefully acknowledged, by their humble servent, John Behrent.\textsuperscript{432}

That Behrent described his piano as being made ‘in the manner of a harpsichord’ suggests that the instrument was not a square piano, but rather, wing-shaped\textsuperscript{433}—‘a model rarely seen’ in late eighteenth-century America.\textsuperscript{434}

Behrent may have based his design on the pianos of Gottfried Silbermann. Silbermann is commonly regarded as being the first instrument maker in Germany to make pianos. By the early 1750s, Silbermann’s fame ‘as a builder of excellent piano-forte instruments’\textsuperscript{435} had spread throughout Germany.

In 1732, Silbermann’s wing-shaped ‘Piano Forte’ combined the action design principles and \textit{una corda}\textsuperscript{436} of Cristofori’s \textit{arpicembalo che fa il piano e il forte} with a mutation\textsuperscript{437} that enabled all the dampers to be raised simultaneously. Some of Silbermann’s pianos also included a mutation comprising ‘a row of ivory plates mounted over the strings right above the strike line of the hammers. When they touch the strings, a bright, almost harpsichordlike sound … [is] produced.’\textsuperscript{438}

The mutation stops in Silbermann’s pianos were operated by hand levers. The dampers, for example, had ‘to be lifted from both ends simultaneously. This is also true for … [other] mutation stops. Thus, it … [was] not possible to’ engage or disengage the mutations ‘in the midst of playing, but only’ when the music allowed time for the player to take his or her hands from the keyboard.\textsuperscript{439}

Given John Behrent’s German origin, and the fact that he had not spent any time in London (where, in 1771, Americus Backers replaced mutation hand-levers with foot pedals), the ‘several changes’ mentioned in Behrent’s 1775 advertisement may refer to an \textit{una corda} and hand-lever-operated mutations similar to those found in Gottfried Silbermann’s pianos. Then again, it is possible that several changes may refer to hand-lever-operated mutations commonly found in English square pianos of the time.

\textsuperscript{432} A facsimile of Behrent’s newspaper advertisement is reproduced in Hoover et al., \textit{Piano 300}, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{433} A shape that we would now refer to as being ‘grand’.
\textsuperscript{434} Libin, ‘Early Piano Culture in America’, p. 381.
\textsuperscript{436} A device that enables the keyboard (and therefore the action) to be laterally realigned, causing the hammers to strike only one string of double or triple-strung notes.
\textsuperscript{437} A ‘mutation’ alters or modifies the sound by using a mechanical device that is incorporated into the instrument. The mutations in Silbermann's pianos are engaged using hand-stops.
\textsuperscript{438} Badura-Skoda, ‘Silbermann, Gottfried (1683–1753)’, p. 357.
\textsuperscript{439} Ibid., p. 357.
Behrent’s piano forte certainly attracted attention. In 1775, when the champion of independence from British rule, John Adams (1735–1826), ‘inspected Philadelphia’s defenses … he wrote that Michael Hillegas [1729–1804], a music dealer and treasurer of the Continental Congress’—the governing body of the United States during the American Revolution—‘talked “perpetually of the forte and piano”’.440

Behrent’s piano-making activities were probably brought to a halt in late 1775 by the commencement of the revolutionary war against the British. The war for independence, however, did not create a context within which music was absent: ‘The civilian repertory before and after the war was kept up-to-date by the presence of British soldiers and their commanders, who favored Handel, Haydn, C. P. E. Bach, [Henry] Purcell [1659–95], and Arne.’441

During the 1780s, several piano makers emigrated from London to America. These included Thomas Dodds (New York, 1785), Charles Albrecht (Philadelphia, ca 1785), Charles Taws (New York, 1786; Philadelphia, 1787) and Charles Trute (fl. 1760–94).442 In 1786, John (Johann) Jacob Astor (1763–1848) was importing square pianos made by his brother George (1752–1813), from London into New York.443

In late eighteenth-century Philadelphia, audiences were especially erudite, for on Thursday, 14 December 1786, at a concert given in Philadelphia’s City Tavern, the composer and organist Alexander Reinagle (1756–1809) gave the first public performance in the United States of a work by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91): an unspecified piano sonata.444 In response to the public’s thirst for amusement, warnings concerning the moral dangers posed by the performing arts ensued. The New York Packet, for example, consumed by a paroxysm of civic duty, ardently protested:

A correspondent observes that the infatuation which possesses many of the people of this state for Theatrical Exhibitions is truly alarming … Alas! The delirium appears to have spread far and wide. And, strange to tell! The honest, sober Dutchmen of Albany, who were once distinguished by industry and a laudable parsimony, are now plunging

440 Hoover et al., Piano 300, p. 15.
into that very species of luxury and folly which stamps upon the metropolis an indelible stigma. Is it not high time for the considerate inhabitants to step forth and oppose the increasing evil.445

By the early 1790s, the square piano had established itself in America as an indispensible instrument. In New York (America’s most important port during the eighteenth century)446 on 19 September 1792, the Loudens Register published the following report:

The forte-piano is become so exceedingly fashionable in Europe that few polite families are without it. This much esteemed instrument forms an agreeable accompaniment to the female voice, takes up but little room, may be moved with ease, and kept in tune with little attention … so that on that account it is superior to the harpsichord.447

The Triumph of the Piano in London

There is a widespread, but mistaken, perception that during the 1770s the piano had already supplanted the harpsichord in London, and had become the invariable choice for professional musicians. This is not borne out by archival evidence. Throughout the 1770s, harpsichord sales in London continued to grow, apparently unaffected by the surge in piano production. Similarly in Paris, the rising popularity of the piano hardly affected the harpsichord, which was thoroughly established and showed little indication of any decline before 1780.448

The musical advantages of the harpsichord were its clarity and the brilliance of the treble. On the other hand, Zumpe’s square pianos were capable of flexible dynamics, and the sweet, radiant beauty of their sound was enticing. When compared with the sound of Continental square pianos (tafelklaviere), the sound of Zumpe’s pianos attenuated more slowly; the general effect was of greater smoothness.

Even as late as the mid-1780s the harpsichord and the piano were not so much rivals as equally popular alternative instruments. Many affluent households would have considered themselves socially compromised if they did not have both.449 For example, Thomas Twining (1735–1804), an astute amateur

445 Quoted in Isacoff, A Natural History of the Piano, pp. 36–7.
449 See Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, pp. 20, 29.
musician, decided (like many) to keep his harpsichord, but supplemented it by purchasing a square piano. In a letter written to Charles Burney, Twining, with enthusiastic anticipation, states: ‘How I shall accent and express, after having been so long cramped with the mountainous impotence of the harpsichord!’ Burney expressed his own (and perhaps prevailing) opinion by observing that ‘the harsh scratching of the quills of a harpsichord can now no longer be borne’.

By the mid-1780s, the piano (especially the square piano) had grown in popularity to such an extent that at least 31 piano makers were flourishing in London. In 1794, ‘that most conservative institution, the King’s band, retained’ the harpsichord for ‘as long as possible but this year it had to go. A harpsichord was used for … rehearsal but a grand piano for … performance.’ ‘The latest dated surviving English harpsichord was built in 1800 … While Harpsichords were sporadically built later in Italy and used in Italian opera houses, the English were the last to build them on a large scale.’ (‘Toward the end of his life Joseph Kirckman the Younger recalled having made, along with his father, the firm’s last harpsichord in 1809. The Kirckmans were almost certainly the last to make harpsichords in England.’)

In relation to the history of the development of the piano between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries, all available evidence annihilates the commonly encountered and ‘misguided idea that the grand piano of the late eighteenth century was created by inserting a hammer action into the harpsichord and that the square piano then followed in its wake as a lesser, domestic instrument’. In late eighteenth-century England, the square piano preceded the grand, and was the commonly encountered type; generally, financially successful professional musicians and the wealthy owned grand pianos.

From the second half of the 1780s, instruments inspired by Zumpe’s design were ubiquitous in England, and could be found throughout Europe. In January 1788, a fine example of one such square piano sat on board the flagship of the First Fleet, the *Sirius*, as it lay anchored in Botany Bay.
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