Chapter 5

The First Fleet Departs from England

On Wednesday, 1 November 1786, when George Worgan joined the *Sirius* (having been discharged from the Portsmouth guardship *Ganges*),¹ he could not have imagined the adventures that lay ahead—for his piano, for the ship or for himself. It is reasonable to assume that he would have felt some pride in being assigned to the First Fleet’s leading vessel.

The First Fleet was not large; its 11 ships comprised two small navy warships (the small flagship *Sirius*, and the even smaller brig-rigged sloop *Supply*) and nine other ships that had been hired to the British Government by private shipowners for the duration of the voyage. Six of the nine contracted ships were used as convict transports, whilst the remaining three carried two years’ provisions and equipment. Most of the nine contracted vessels were quite new, the oldest having been built in 1781.

Being a naval officer … [Phillip] would have been aware of the government’s plan to strengthen the Royal Navy after the American War of Independence. This plan provided for sixty ships of the line by the end of 1786, and ninety-three by the end of 1790. But by 1787 only forty were ready for action and this, coupled with the growing crisis in the United Provinces [that is, Holland] was doubtless the reason why the First Fleet’s naval escort was so small and weak.²

On Friday, 13 April 1787, the British Ambassador in the Hague reported that the French were using Dutch East India Company ships to send troops and political agents to the Far East. The British Government ‘simply could not spare any more or larger vessels for the … [First Fleet], having to husband … naval resources in readiness for a possible showdown with France’.³

The departure of the First Fleet from Portsmouth was preceded by nine months of preparations.

As soon as the convicts came under the control of the Central Government, they were cleaned, clothed, fed and had their ailments treated.

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³ Ibid., pp. 161–2. See also Gillen, *The Founders of Australia*, p. 156.
According to [the] Navy Board official responsible for the fitting out and loading of the transport ships, Captain George Teer, the ships of the First Fleet were “completely fitted, their provisions and accommodations … better than any set of transports I have ever had any directions in”. For two months at Portsmouth, [the convicts] and the marines were given fresh foods in abundance, and the surgeons obtained adequate medical supplies (at a cost of some £1200).  

The first convicts began to be loaded onto the transports at Portsmouth towards the end of 1786.

Phillip had asked for ‘healthy young men and breeding women’ for his colony, but was given [among 734 others] Dorothy Handland, a sprightly 82-year-old perjurer, and Elizabeth Beckford, a septuagenarian cheese thief. The youngest convict was John Hudson, a thirteen-year-old chimneysweep who had been imprisoned since the age of nine.

By March 1787, all 736 convicts had been loaded onto the six convict transports; the 11 ships making up the First Fleet lay anchored at the Mother Bank off the Isle of Wight outside Portsmouth Harbour. ‘Here Phillip joined the fleet on 7 May.’  

‘At three in the morning of Sunday, May 13 [1787], before the first cold gristle of pre-dawn light had spread upon the sea’, ‘the signal to weigh anchor was made in the Commanding Officer’s ship the Sirius’ and the First Fleet, with its cargo of founding felons, ‘weighed anchor and shaped its course in a rising wind for Tenerife’—the first of three ports of call on the fleet’s journey. George Worgan wrote in his diary: ‘each Ship like another Noah’s Ark, away we steered for Botany Bay.’

left behind a country where green fields subsided in an orderly pattern to the sea, and where grey stone villages claimed with English restraint their modest portion of land. The fleet turned instead towards the open ocean and the possibilities of a land of disorderly colour, dizzyingly empty horizons and animals and plants whose designs would suggest a whole new template.
Marine Captain Lieutenant Watkin Tench (1758?–1833), sailing on board the *Charlotte*, observed that the male convicts were more upset to be leaving England than the females. He wrote:

[I]n general, marks of distress were more perceptible among the men than the women; for I recollect to have seen but one of those affected on the occasion, ‘Some natural tears she dropp’d, but wip’d them soon.’ After this the accent of sorrow was no longer heard; more genial skies and change of scene banished repining and discontent, and introduced in their stead cheerfulness and acquiescence in a lot, now not to be altered.\(^\text{12}\)

Somewhat aptly, Tench derived his poetic paraphrase from a line contained in John Milton’s (1608–74) *Paradise Lost*: ‘another tale of man’s fall from grace and journey into banishment.’\(^\text{13}\) By alluding to Milton’s text—’Som natural tears they drop’d, but wip’d them soon’\(^\text{14}\)—Tench may have entertained the hope that his readers not only were aware of Milton’s ensuing lines, but also recognised the aptness of Milton’s sentiments in relation to the departure of the First Fleet:

The World was all before them, where to choose
Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide\(^\text{15}\)

### George Worgan’s Piano Heard on the *Sirius* as a Solo Instrument

During the late eighteenth century, the piano played a central role within the context of the bourgeois world of intensely private emotion, sentiment and solitude.\(^\text{16}\) Surgeon Worgan’s piano provided the perfect medium through which the musical pleasures commonly associated with solitude might be induced. ‘Private music-making at the keyboard was invested in the popular imagination of the time with special, even exalted status … Paradoxically, only in the internal world of thought and emotion might the freedom that was lacking in daily political and social life be found.’\(^\text{17}\)

In 1784, the Swiss physician Johann Georg Zimmermann (1728–95) argued that the context of solitude gave artists the freedom to create without regard for

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15 Ibid., Book 12, lines 646–7.
17 Ibid., p. 148.
the constraints of convention. Within the ‘private’ sphere, improvising at the piano represented a context within which musical freedoms might be explored in the hope of resultant apotheosis.

Because of the thorough musical education that George Worgan had received at the hands of his father, he was doubtless conversant with the harmonic, figurative and rhetorical principles associated with keyboard improvisation. We will probably never know how skilfully, compellingly or indeed if George Worgan improvised when he was alone at his piano. It is pleasant to imagine that within such a circumstance he may have spontaneously explored a musical language ‘which perhaps in society he would not have dared openly to hazard without precaution’. If he played extempore to others, perhaps his improvisations caused some listeners to respond in the manner described by Carl Friedrich Cramer (1752–1807) on Saturday, 5 August 1786. Cramer, the editor of the Magazin der Musik, speaks of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach’s enthralling improvisations at the piano: listeners ‘have been astonished … [and] have rubbed their brow in disbelief, ‘and expressed regret that they did not have such knowledge’ and skill.

Not that the sound of Worgan’s ‘private’ playing on board the Sirius would have remained his alone to enjoy. The acoustics associated with shipboard life would have ensured that some (if only perhaps a few officers) may have overheard Worgan’s intimate musical musings.

Documentary evidence reveals that George Worgan played his piano within a ‘social’ context on board the Sirius, at Rio de Janeiro. Worgan appears to have been only too pleased to perform for a select audience. It is not known, however, whether such a performance—or for that matter, Worgan’s private, solitary playing—was a commonly occurring event during the journey to Botany Bay.

Captain John Hunter, the second captain of the Sirius, may have been only too happy to hear Worgan play his piano. As a former pupil of the English music

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21 See ‘Worgan Plays His Piano in Rio de Janeiro’ in Chapter 6, this volume.
historian Dr Charles Burney, Captain Hunter was an appreciative listener whose passion for the sea only narrowly overcame his passion for music. After John Hunter’s father was shipwrecked, John was sent to his uncle, a merchant of Lynn, who sent the boy to school, where [in his mid teens] he became acquainted with Charles Burney, the musician. Dr Burney wanted to make a musician of him, and Hunter was nothing loth, but the uncle intended the boy for the Church, and sent him to the Aberdeen University. There his thoughts once more turned to the sea.

It seems likely that Captain Hunter maintained a lifelong love of music as well as friendship with Charles Burney.

In their introduction to The Journal of Philip Gidley King, Paul G. Fidlon and R. J. Ryan observe that during the voyage to Sydney Cove, ‘Mr. Worgan, the ship’s surgeon, gave pianoforte concerts which were much appreciated by officers of the Sirius and of the other ships too’. This is pure conjecture.

In his journal, Lieutenant King remarks ‘c’est bien a propos ce soir’ [it is well by the way this evening]. Perhaps King’s comment—made on Thursday, 29 November 1787, almost 12 weeks after departing from Rio de Janeiro—cryptically alludes to the delights of an evening piano recital given by George Worgan. It is more likely, however, that King is pragmatically referring to the fact that following ‘one of the most confused Tumbling seas I ever beheld … the Sea abated much The latter part of this day had very pleasant & serene Weather, which in a Vessell of this kind is a very desirable circumstance’—therefore, ‘it is well … this evening’.

Victor Crittenden remarks that whilst the First Fleet lay at anchor off Santa Cruz on the island of Tenerife, surgeon Worgan ‘entertained the officers of the Sirius with sonatas on his piano which … he had on board’. Moreover, Colin Steele and Michael Richards state that ‘George Worgan … took a piano on board the Sirius on which he played Mozart’. Unfortunately, no extant contemporaneous documentary evidence supports either Crittenden’s or Steele and Richards’

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22 See Keneally, A Commonwealth of Thieves, p. 49.
26 Ibid., p. xviii.
assertions. Steele and Richards may have based their understanding on a statement made by the eminent Australian historian Manning Clark (1915–91). Steele and Richards write:

We were intrigued when Professor Manning Clark was quoted in The Bulletin of September 1, 1987 that ‘the First Fleeters brought with them a piano, sheet music of Mozart, an authorised version of the Bible and the complete works of Shakespeare—this is one of the things we have to try to remember in telling the history of Australia’.31

Crittenden’s mention of ‘sonatas’ is perplexing, given the lack of contemporaneous evidence related either to the specific compositional genres or to the repertoire that Worgan played whilst on board ship. Crittenden’s conjecture that Worgan played sonatas is, however, a reasonable one. During the late eighteenth century, sonatas (as a genre) were commonly associated with a specific type of player and listener.

**Liebhaber and Kenner**

Eighteenth-century music theorists designate players and listeners as belonging to one of two categories: the Liebhaber (lovers of music, with little knowledge of the art), and the Kenner (knowledgeable musical connoisseurs). Both types of musician could be what were commonly referred to in England as ‘amateurs’—that is, non-professional musicians. Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, ‘writers traditionally assign a spontaneous response of the heart to the music lover (Liebhaber), and a more studied (and discriminating) taste to the musical connoisseur (Kenner). Both might be moved by music of quality, but the Kenner could explain the reasons for the excellence of a work.’32

‘The primary arbiters in matters of “good” taste were the Kenner—the connoisseurs who, by virtue of their training, possessed true knowledge of music.’33

The Liebhaber tended to relate to music ‘at the same level of accomplishment at which, as amateur musicians, they could play’.34 The Kenner tended to fixate on ‘musical convention, artistry’ and ‘the rules of the genre’.35

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31 Ibid., p. 4.
33 Ibid., p. 36.
35 Ibid., p. 27.
Works written with the *Liebhaber* in mind were sometimes described as being ‘easy’, whilst works composed for the *Kenner* were often regarded as ‘difficult’.

Elements identifying a piece of music as being calculated either for the *Liebhaber* or for the *Kenner* included

1. the technical demands placed upon the performer
2. the complexity or simplicity of the harmonies
3. the number and nature of the musical ideas
4. the general trajectory of form
5. the extent and nature of the counterpoint.\(^{36}\)

Music for the *Kenner* manifested

1. ‘variety in melodic embellishments and rhythmic contour’\(^{37}\)
2. contrasts achieved by the juxtaposition of contrapuntal textures and homophonic or unison passages
3. ‘a capricious sequence of gay, tender, sad, or sublime feelings’ and ‘tone pictures’ that ‘allow the imagination free play’.\(^ {38}\)

In particular, imitative counterpoint ‘provided something of a litmus test dividing *Kenner* from *Liebhaber*’.\(^ {39}\)

Certain styles of music and specific compositional genres were associated with the *Liebhaber* and with the *Kenner*. ‘This accords with the premise of a place for everything and everything in its place. But there is, in addition, a largely unspoken assumption of a place for everyone and everyone in his place.’\(^ {40}\) This is because the complex metaphor of late eighteenth-century social harmony comprised ‘an intricate nexus of ideals pertaining to gender, social station, sensibility, religion, and national identity. Each person occupied his or her correct place … with decorum, the result was harmonious balance within the individual, and in society.’\(^ {41}\)

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39 Bonds, ‘Listening to Listeners’, p. 36.
Music for the *Liebhaber*

In late eighteenth-century England, *Liebhaber* pianists usually played:

1. pieces based on popular tunes (usually taken from ‘the ballad operas recently performed in London theatres’)\(^{42}\)
2. Scottish or Welsh folk tunes (real or imitative)
3. simple arrangements of oratorios (usually oratorios by Händel; these were often arranged by the organist, composer and pupil of Johann Christian Bach, Joseph Mazzinghi [1765–1844])
4. sonatinas
5. ‘accompanied’ sonatas (usually accompanied by a violin or flute, and occasionally with a ‘cello doubling the bass line’); the sonata ‘with accompaniment’ was ‘the mainstay of the drawing-room and a staple of publishers’ catalogues into the early nineteenth century. Usually fairly easy to play and destined for amateur use, they were primarily meant for convivial evenings at home. The keyboard part was always most prominent, with the accompanying instruments playing a subordinate role\(^{43}\)
6. illustrative ‘program’ music commemorating an important event—such as Domenico Corri’s (1746–1825) ‘Lunardi’s Flight’. On Wednesday, 15 September 1784, Vincenzo Lunardi (1759–1806), in front of a crowd of 200,000, made the first hydrogen-filled balloon ascension over London. ‘He was accompanied by a dog, a cat and a caged pigeon.’\(^{44}\)

Lunardi, who had hopes of advancing through the air by rowing, had brought along oars of different shape, one of which broke when he started. But he remained convinced that the oars were instrumental in his reaching a cornfield near North Mimms, some 13 miles north of London. Here he landed at 3.30 p.m., divested himself of his remaining ballast and released the cat, which by now was quite benumbed with cold. Though Lunardi throughout the trip had stayed at altitudes of below 1,000 ft, he had registered temperatures as low as –16ºC.\(^{45}\)

A particularly fine example of illustrative ‘program’ music is Jan Ladislav Dussek’s (1760–1812) ‘The Sufferings of the Queen of France’ (Plate 58).\(^{46}\)

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\(^{42}\) Cole, *Broadwood Square Pianos*, p. 88.
Dussek’s work ‘graphically depicts the guillotining of Marie Antoinette’,\(^{47}\) and, characteristically for solo piano music in this genre, not only borders on the histrionic, but is also deeply moving.\(^{48}\) The unrelenting emotional intensity of this work may be explained by the fact that Dussek was Marie Antoinette’s favourite musician.\(^{49}\)

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\(^{48}\) Illustrative program music was so popular that even the genius Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach composed a sonata entitled ‘The Battle of Bergen’ for harpsichord, fortepiano, organ or harp. See C. P. E. Bach, *Sonata pour le Clavecin, Forte-Piano, Orgue ou Harpe qui représent le Bataille de Bergen* [Sonata for Harpsichord, Forte-Piano, Organ or Harp Depicting the Battle of Bergen] (Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 2007) [Originally published Paris: Hubert, 1776]. This work is devoid of the compositional, aesthetic and technical sophistication usually found in Bach’s music, and appears to be calculated for the most basic kind of *Liebhaber* player.

\(^{49}\) See Cole, *Broadwood Square Pianos*, p. 73.
Pieces in this genre were popular as far afield as America. In 1797, for example, ‘James Hewitt (1770–1827), one of early America’s important composers, wrote *The Battle of Trenton* … to mark one of George Washington’s important Revolutionary War victories’ over the English.\(^{50}\)

Importantly for late eighteenth-century amateur pianists, illustrative program music usually did not present many technical challenges. The inherent dramatic implications of the music were obvious, and could be easily understood. All that was required was a player who possessed a reasonable technique and a modicum of emotional sensitivity and imagination.

### The Battle of Prague

Five years prior to the publication of Dussek’s ‘Sufferings of the Queen of France’ (1793), a hugely popular piece of illustrative program music swept through England: the work (for piano), entitled ‘The Battle of Prague’,\(^{51}\) was composed by František Kocžwara (Francis Kotzwara; ca 1750–91), a Czech violinist, violist and double bassist living in London. Kotzwara ‘was also a consummate and convincing forger of other composers’ styles (in particular J Haydn and Pleyel) and supplemented his income thereby’.\(^{52}\) ‘Few composers can have become so famous on account of one single work to quite the same extent as Kotzwara.’\(^{53}\) ‘The Battle of Prague’ is replete with musical banalities: ‘marches, bugle calls, “the word of command”, the hail of bullets, cannon shots, an “attack with swords”, cries of the wounded, and so forth, all captioned in the text and musically illustrated in a highly flimsy’, harmonically bland and often ‘noisy manner’.\(^{54}\)

Following its publication by James Harrison in Dublin ca 1788,\(^{55}\) ‘The Battle of Prague’ was, for 50 years (at least within the context of English-speaking

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50 Hoover et al., *Piano 300*, p. 15.
51 The historical ‘battle of Prague was an early engagement in the Seven Years’ War (1756–1763)’. Kottick, *A History of the Harpsichord*, p. 514, fn. 25.
54 Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos*, p. 244.
55 See R. R. Kidd, ‘Koczwara, Frantisek’, in S. Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan, 1980), Vol. 10, p. 136. Ireland was not ‘slow in adopting the [piano] … the first recorded public solo performance on a pianoforte in Dublin’ took place on Thursday, 19 May 1768. ‘It was given by Henry Walsh, organist of St. Patrick’s Cathedral.’ One of the account ledgers of the Dublin-based Ferdinando Weber (1715–84) gives ‘information concerning the supply and tuning of harpsichords, “Spinnets” and ‘Forte Pianos’ going back to 1764. This may well be one of the earliest detailed keyboard instrument-maker’s accounts of this kind to survive in Europe … Weber was almost certainly the first piano-maker in Ireland, and contemporary with the earliest makers of the instrument in England: an entry in his ledger for Mrs. David Latouche records a sum due for tuning her “Forte Piano” from [Thursday, 17] October 1765.’ Cobbe, *Composer
countries), the most played and the best-known piano work in existence. ‘Its fame reached America’, where in late eighteenth-century 'Boston it was described as “the indispensable climax to every concert”, spawning a spurious Siege of Quebec\textsuperscript{56} which incorporated some of … [Kotzwara's] music'.\textsuperscript{57}

Well into the nineteenth century, Kotzwara’s ‘The Battle of Prague’ appeared in countless editions on both sides of the Atlantic … at any moment … [its] loud, silly clatter-clutter might have resounded simultaneously in Llandudno and Londonderry, in Philadelphia and Annapolis, in Malta, Madras, and Melbourne—wherever a form of English was the speech of the realm and … London piano [makers] … could ship their products.\textsuperscript{58}

The work’s first performance was given by a Miss Hoffmann, who ‘placed it on the program of a concert given for her own benefit at the Assembly Rooms, Turnham Green’, approximately 6 kilometres west of London,\textsuperscript{59} in June 1792. ‘Miss Hoffmann … had already enjoyed the honour of having her playing graciously received by Their Royal Highnesses in Windsor Castle; thus, her concert’s success [was] … preassured.’\textsuperscript{60} For the occasion, Miss Hoffmann was accompanied on the timpani by her brother (who, at the time, was three-and-a-half years old). Miss Hoffmann was six.

Child ‘prodigies’ such as Miss Hoffmann and her brother represent the kind of idiocy through which the late eighteenth-century English public’s hunger for musical stunts was satisfied. Child prodigies were in fashion: the eight-year-old Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, for example, ‘on his visit to London in the 1760s … was followed most notably … by the 3-year-old [William] Crotch’, Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778–1837), aged nine, and Miss M. C. Poole (later the famous singer Mrs Dickons) ‘at a Benefit in 1785 … not eleven years of age’.\textsuperscript{61}

A fine example of the musical inanities available to late eighteenth-century London audiences concerns an Italian who, in 1789, ‘came to London and gave

\textsuperscript{56} W. B. de Krift, \textit{Siege of Quebec, a Sonata for the Harpsichord or Piano-Forte with Accompaniments for Violin, Violoncello & Tympano Ad Libitum} (London: J. Bland, 1792).
\textsuperscript{57} McCulloch, Frantisek Kotzwara Op. 23 The Battle of Prague, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{58} Loesser, \textit{Men, Women and Pianos}, p. 244.
\textsuperscript{59} See Moule, \textit{Environs of London}, middle of the top half of the bottom left-hand quadrant.
\textsuperscript{60} Loesser, \textit{Men, Women and Pianos}, p. 244.
a concert with eleven cats. The animals were well trained: each one had its own particular timbre and range; each one made correct entrances upon a given signal and also kept pretty good time. So it was said.62

The late eighteenth-century London taste for novelty was nothing new. On Monday, 14 April 1746 (43 years prior to the concert given by the 11 Italianate cats), the composer Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714–87) exploited the London taste for ridiculousness by performing ‘a Concerto upon Twenty-six Drinking Glasses, tuned with Spring-Water, accompanied with the whole Band, being a new instrument of his own invention’.63 Having plumbed the depths of bad taste, Gluck left England shortly thereafter, and never returned.

During the early 1770s, at Vauxhall, ‘thousands of people paid 10s 6d—the price of a good seat at the opera’ (in the boxes or pit), and about one-thirtieth of a prosperous tradesman’s annual income, ‘to gaze on a … mechanical pineapple that opened to reveal a nest of mechanical singing birds’.64

The public’s fascination for musical machinery was indulged at ‘Maillardet’s Automatical Exhibition, Spring Gardens’, where, as the The Observer advertised in August 1798, there was to be found ‘Conjuring, Music, Rope-dancing, and Singing-bird. This combination of amusement, in the highest degree of perfection, is conveyed by the pleasing and wonderful efforts of Mechanism, in the stile of excellence, superior to any comparative idea that can be formed.’65

Thomas Danvers Worgan, in an address he gave in London to the Philharmonic Society, reveals that musical silliness was still to be found as late as 1820:

If any proof were wanting of the frivolity of a taste, however refined, that is not consolidated by knowledge, such proof can easily be found. On questioning ladies, who have attended concerts, where the first performers have been engaged, and the most masterly compositions performed, I have generally found, that almost every harmonious impression has been effaced by some trifle, such as an old ballad, a new face, or the performance of a child: and I will venture to affirm, that if the Philharmonic Society were to exert themselves to inspiration, and in the course of their performances, to put an infant with a fiddle in his

63 General Advertiser, 31 March 1746, fo. 2r. Quoted in Howard, Gluck, p. 19.
65 The Observer, 12 August 1798, No. 347, p. 3.
hand on a table, nineteen in twenty of a female audience, would the
next day remember little or nothing of the concert but the child and the
fiddle.66

‘Musical mice’ were also ‘a phenomenon’ in London in 1847. The mouse that
‘was exhibited at Palmer’s Hair Cutting Rooms in the Strand … not only boasted
a voice “whose notes resemble those of a bird in spring” but also played [a] …
cottage piano’.67

Musical absurdities continued to surface throughout the nineteenth century,
and not just in London. For example, in 1869, in America, the December issue
of the periodical Folio advertised an instrument that produced its sound by
means of different-sized cats (this is reminiscent of the Italian who employed 11
cats for performances given 123 years before in London). A certain Mr Curtis
announced a ‘Grand Vocal and Instrumental Concert’ to be given in Cincinnati,
featuring no less than 48 cats in his ‘Cat Harmonicon’. The first work on the
program was to be ‘Auld Lang Syne’. Unfortunately (according to a report of the
concert), the cats became more than usually excited,68

paid no attention to time, tune, rhythm or reason, but squealed, mewed,
yelled, spat, and phizzed in the madness of pain and terror,’ drowning
out the accompanying organ in a welter of wails.

There must be something special about Cincinnati. Apparently that
same city was the first to introduce a Porco-Forte in 1839, which used
pigs instead of cats.69

In 1803, the German medical theorist Johann Christian Reil (1759–1813) published his
Rhapsodieen über die Anwendung der psychischen Kurmethode auf Geisteszerrüttungen
[Rhapsodies on the Application of Psychological Methods of Cure to Disorganised
Spirits].70 In his long polemic, Reil proposed that a keyboard instrument comprising

Education. – 2. On the General State of Musical Taste and Knowledge in this Country. – 3. On the Study of
Music in Score. – 4. On a Work Now in the Course of Publication, Entitled Vocal Sonatinas, &c. and on a System
of Education Connected with that Publication; To which is Prefixed a Proem, Explanatory of the Address. By
Cradock & Joy, 1821), Vol. 3, No. 9, Art. XI, p. 72. Thomas Danvers Worgan gave the address on Tuesday, 26
September 1820.
upright form of piano, whose height is approximately 1.5 metres, with vertical strings extended to the floor,
and whose floor area occupies no more than a square piano. It was invented by Robert Wornum in 1811. See
68 See Isacoff, A Natural History of the Piano, p. 57.
69 Ibid., p. 57.
70 J. C. Reil, Rhapsodieen über die Anwendung der psychischen Kurmethode auf Geisteszerrüttungen
[Rhapsodies on the Application of Psychological Methods of Cure to Disorganised Spirits] (Halle: in der Curtschen
Buchhandlung, 1803).
cats whose tails were played like the strings on a piano by key levers with nails attached (in order to induce a yowling meow from the cats) ‘could be used to treat patients with a modern day equivalent of Attention Deficit Disorder’.  

Perhaps it was the general popularity of ‘The Battle of Prague’ (and a cathartic realisation of just how mediocre the work really is) that explains why Francis Kotzwara went to Vine Street, St Martin’s, on Thursday, 2 September 1791, and hanged himself in a brothel.

On the other hand, Kotzwara ‘was reputed to have had unusual taste in his vices, and was accidentally hanged while conducting an experiment in a house of ill-repute. Susan Hill, his accomplice in the experiment, was tried for murder at the Old Bailey on 16 September 1791 and was acquitted.’

The emergence during the late eighteenth century of a debased popular taste is perhaps best exemplified by descriptive musical vacuities such as Kotzwara’s ‘The Battle of Prague’. During the 1780s and 1790s, the emergence of popular musical mediocrities was catalysed by the increasing availability of cheaper pianos, composers hoping for an easy profit and an intensifying trend towards a culture of consumption.

Nowadays, we tend not to take late eighteenth-century illustrative program music very seriously, finding in its melodramatic excesses too many similarities with the style of music once used to accompany silent movies, and levels of sentimentality and emotional intensity that border on the hysterical. Oddly, in a sentimental culture, we find sentimentality quaint and, at worst, embarrassing.

Sentimentality is feeling that shuts out action, real or potential … So far is the sentimentalist from being one whose emotions exceed the legal limit that he may be charged with deficient energy in what he feels; it does not propel him. That is why he finds pleasure in grief and when he is in love never proposes … [The sentimentalist revels] in irresponsible

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75 The dramatic intensity and musical gesturalism of late eighteenth-century program music acted, in part, as a catalyst for the development of nineteenth and early twentieth-century melodrama.
grief and love. This condition explains why the sentimentalist and the
cynic are two sides of one nature. In such matters the arts are transparent
and the connoisseur can easily tell imitation feeling from the real thing.\footnote{Barzun, From Dawn to Decadence, p. 411.}

Apart from pieces based on popular tunes, Scottish or Welsh folk tunes, simple
arrangements of oratorios, sonatinas, accompanied sonatas and illustrative
program music, four remaining genres were commonly associated with \textit{Liebhaber}
pianists:

1. minuets
2. rondos (a favourite genre of the dilettanti)
3. sets of variations
4. lessons from instructional piano methods.

Music calculated for the \textit{Liebhaber} was usually ‘easy … to comprehend, and
easy to hum afterward’.\footnote{Wheelock, Haydn’s Ingenious Jesting with Art, p. 39. Wheelock takes the quotation from: K. D. von
Dittersdorf, ‘Über die Grenzen des Komischen und des Heroischen in der Musik [Beyond the Boundaries of
the Comic and the Heroic in Music]’, in Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung [General Music Journal] (Leipzig:
Breitkopf & Härtel, 1798), Vol. 1, No. 9, Col. 141.}

As the middle (professional) class

 gained prominence and prestige … composers responded to their
needs and wishes, creating a musical style that … suited middle-class
musical ideals. Whereas many if not most aristocrats (not coincidentally
associated with languor and laziness by the middle classes) tended to
enjoy music passively, performed by servants or employees … bourgeois
families and their friends actively made music together in the comfort of
their parlors and music rooms.\footnote{M. S. Lott, ‘Changing Audiences, Changing Styles: String Chamber Music and the Middle Class’, in R.
Illiano and L. Sala (eds), Instrumental Music and the Industrial Revolution (Bologna: Ut Orpheus Edizioni,
2010), p. 175.}

\section*{Music for the Kenner}

Musically challenging piano music was composed with the \textit{Kenner} in mind.\textit{Kenner} pianists were commonly associated with

1. sonatas specifically calculated for the connoisseur
2. conceptually uncompromising, virtuosic ‘grand sonatas’
3. pre-composed or spontaneously improvised fantasias.
During the late eighteenth century, music for the *Kenner* (that is, high art) and music for the *Liebhaber* (that is, entertainment) were not regarded as incompatible. Mark Evan Bonds, in relation to Joseph Haydn, states that recent attempts to equate Haydn’s ‘popular’ style with a ‘pandering’ to the lowest common denominator … rest on nineteenth- and especially twentieth-century aesthetic notions that value the learned over the popular, the challenging over the readily accessible. [James] Webster has convincingly argued that ‘there is no reason why an approach to composition as entertainment should be considered either morally suspect or inherently incompatible with the production of great art.’

The value judgment that simple, compositionally uncomplicated music that is easy to listen to is unworthy is founded on the untenable assumption that ‘great’ music is necessarily intense and overtly complex. ‘In one of its most compelling guises’, music is ‘art that disguises its artistry (which is the composer’s business and, to a lesser extent, the performer’s) yet fully reveals its emotional expressiveness (which is the listener’s business)’.80

George Worgan, as a result of the musical training provided by his father (if not also because of his inclinations), was more than likely a musical *Kenner*. It is possible that some of the higher-ranking and commissioned officers who listened to Worgan play his piano on board the *Sirius* may also (as a result of their upbringing and the educational benefits associated with their social status) have been musical connoisseurs.

By the 1770s in London,

there were over a hundred papers and journals, and men of affairs met in coffee houses all over the city to read them and discuss and settle the questions of the day. One of the most influential journals … was the *Spectator*. In conveniently short essays it advocated a system of polite behaviour by which men could accommodate the complexities of modern life and live in harmony by cultivating good taste and regulating and refining their natural passions to a greater Elegance. Gratification of the passions was effeminate, in the sense of womanish; intellectual pursuits [such as literature and the arts] were deemed manly … in late

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eighteenth-century England such manners were promoted as the key to civilized living. Politeness was a modus vivendi, essentially urban, sociable and cultured.\footnote{Goold, Mr. Langshaw's Square Piano, p. 147. 'What changed in the decades after 1800 was the growing acceptability of the idea that composers might not be writing for a universal audience. They could compose for such an audience if they chose to, of course, and they often did just that. But when they did so, they now ran the risk of being accused of “pandering” to the public taste, as opposed to creating great art. It is a division that continues to shape the ways in which we listen to—and analyse—music today.' Bonds, 'Listening to Listeners', p. 47.}

Perhaps the higher-ranking and commissioned officers of the Sirius exercised their cultivation of good taste, elegance and intellectual pursuits by ensuring that they found occasion to listen to George Worgan play his piano. In 1788, the educator, writer, moralist and social reformer Hannah More (1745–1833), in her Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society, reflected on ‘the progressive refinement of manners, the art of polite conversation and the sociable sharing of ideas and cultural pastimes. Such civilized social intercourse found its natural home in … convivial gatherings of like-minded connoisseurs who joined together for exclusive evenings of refined music-making.’\footnote{Ibid., p. 149.} For any officer on board the Sirius who may have been a musical Kenner—for example, Captain John Hunter—there was probably a certain sense of safety in like-minded exclusivity.

Worgan, however, may have been hard-pressed to find many musical cognoscenti amongst his companions of similar rank. After all, cultural and intellectual interests, particularly of literature and music, ‘may have been available to young gentlemen of independent fortune, but were unlikely interests of subordinate officers engaged in active service’.\footnote{J. Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta: A History and a Guide (Glebe, NSW: Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 1995), p. 8.} In this respect, Worgan’s close colleagues probably differed from higher-ranking and commissioned officers.

As a musical Kenner, Worgan may have been ‘anxious to appeal to a broad listenership even while cultivating the approval of connoisseurs’.\footnote{Bonds, 'Listening to Listeners', p. 37.} As a keyboard player, he may have found himself in the same situation as many composers: needing to find ‘the fine line between’ presenting works that could be ‘appreciated by a wide range of musicians and listeners and yet at the same time [rising] ... to the highest standards of art’.\footnote{Ibid., p. 36.}

Despite the absence of contemporaneous documentary sources detailing the specific repertoire that George Worgan performed on board the Sirius, Victor Crittenden’s assertion that Worgan played ‘sonatas on his piano’\footnote{Crittenden, The Voyage of the First Fleet 1787–1788, p. 21.} is plausible. If George Worgan had a virtuoso technique, he may well have inherited his father’s enthusiasm for
the keyboard sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti. If Worgan was a musical Kenner, he may also have played some of the sonatas intended for connoisseurs composed by Joseph Haydn, or perhaps keyboard works written specifically with the Kenner in mind by C. P. E. Bach. Having been raised in an environment that was so constantly associated with music, George Worgan would doubtless have formed his own strong ideas (despite his father’s musical conservatism) concerning the repertoire that he found attractive.

As a Londoner, Worgan would have had access to a wealth of keyboard repertoire written not only by English or London-based non-English composers, but also by composers who lived and worked on the Continent.

**George Worgan Plays Music Written by English and/or London-Based Non-English Composers**

Piano music written by English and/or London-based non-English composers may have occupied much of George Worgan’s time spent at the piano. The six suave, beautiful sonatas comprising Johann Christian Bach’s Opus 5 (1766) and/or the six sonatas of J. C. Bach’s Opus 17 (1779) may well have been part of Worgan’s repertoire. (J. C. Bach’s Opus 5 ‘were the first compositions to appear in London with a title-page mentioning the Piano Forte as an option to the harpsichord’.)

Even though by the time of Worgan’s First Fleet voyage, J. C. Bach’s keyboard sonatas were generally considered to be almost antiquarian, they were immensely popular, having been written (with Zumpe’s square pianos in mind) by ‘an accomplished composer with the highest credentials’. Bach’s piano sonatas ‘were well calculated to please a public who expected to be able to play the notes without … [too much] struggle’.

If George Worgan’s technique was up to the task, he may also have played some of Muzio Clementi’s (1752–1832) difficult solo sonatas Opus 2, composed ca 1770. An anonymous writer in the English music journal *The Harmonicon* described the reaction to Clementi’s Opus 2 of the Leipzig-born pianist who became the ‘Master of the Queen’s Musick’ in 1782, Johann Samuel Schroeter (Schröter; ca 1750–88):

> [T]hough it is now, from the immense progress which manual dexterity has made in the last sixty years, within the powers of even second-rate performers—was, at the period of its production, the despair of such pianists as J. C. Bach and Schroeter, who were content to admire it,

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87 Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 362.
89 Ibid., p. 63.
but declined to attempt to play what the latter professor declared could only be executed by its own composer, or by that great performer of all wonders, and conqueror of all difficulties, the Devil.90

A critic writing in the *Quarterly Musical Magazine & Review* in 1820 declared that Clementi’s Opus 2 sonatas were ‘the basis on which the whole fabric of modern sonatas for the pianoforte has been erected’.91 Clementi was fortunate enough to be ‘a polymath, with an almost alarming ability to excel at whatever he touched’.92 It was Clementi who ‘figured out how to link instrument sales, printed music, journal subscriptions, concert tickets, piano lessons, musical keepsakes—and dreams—so that they all promoted one another’.93

It is also possible that George Worgan had his father’s ‘Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord’ (1769) in his repertoire. Performing music originally written for the harpsichord on a piano was a common occurrence in late eighteenth-century England. Documentation shows that late eighteenth-century performers had a more flexible attitude in relation to their choice of keyboard instrument (often determined by what was available) than that held by many twenty-first-century early instrument specialists. The late eighteenth-century musical bourgeoisie played the latest keyboard music on harpsichord, clavichord or fortepiano, whether the composer really wanted this or not.94 (A reading of contemporaneous accounts of composer-performers’ flexibility in this regard—including C. P. E. Bach, W. A. Mozart and Joseph Haydn—supports the notion that an informed performance-based exploration of late eighteenth-century ‘common practice’ may invigorate our understanding of Classic-era soundscapes and musical meaning.)

Solo keyboard music written by any of the following English or London-based non-English composers may have formed part of Worgan’s repertoire (published works written by these composers were available for purchase in London):

1. Carl Friedrich Abel
2. John Alcock (1715–1806)
3. Thomas Arne

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4. Samuel Arnold
5. Thomas Attwood (1765–1838)
6. Theodore Aylward (1730–1801)
7. Samuel Babb (?–?)
8. François-Hippolyte Barthélémon (1741–1808)
10. J. D. Benser (fl. ca 1770–85)
11. George Berg (1730s–70s?)
12. Thomas Billington (ca 1754–1832)
13. Robert Broderip (1758–1808)
14. John Burton (1730–82?)
15. Thomas Busby (1755–1838)
16. Thomas Butler (ca 1755–1823)
17. John Camidge (1734–1803)
18. Charles Carter (ca 1735–1804)
19. Matthew Cooke (?–?)
20. Miles Coyle (?–?)
21. William Dale (?–1827)
22. William Dance (1755–1840)
23. Charles Dibdin (1745–1814)
24. William Duncombe (?–?)
25. William Flackton (1709–93)
26. John Garth (1722–1810?)
27. Tommaso Giordani (ca 1733–1806)
28. Thomas Gladwin (ca 1710–99)
29. William Goodwin (?–?)
30. Philip Hayes (1738–97)
31. Joseph Holder (1765–1832)
32. James Hook (1746–1827)
33. William Howard (fl. ca 1782–90)
George Worgan Plays Music Written by Continental Composers

English or London-based composers ‘jostled with their foreign colleagues for space in publishers’ catalogues, but they were a beleaguered set, pitted against a public who usually preferred the music of their continental contemporaries’. 95 That ‘foreign music and musicians dominated serious musical life in London’ 96 not only created a musical cosmopolitanism, but also fostered

a self-conscious Britishness. This comes out rather consistently and most forcefully in articles that imply that a national musical crisis existed and was manifested in the preference for foreign music and the lack of British musical genius. Various explanations were offered for this situation, but in such discussions we find strongly nationalistic utterances about British music and its relationship to the nation.97

Late eighteenth-century England’s prolific music-publishing industry and innovations in piano design and manufacture interlocked in a commercial network that embraced European music in every dimension. Britain was a world-leader in instrument technology, and its international trade benefited from what was already a commercially and financially mature economy.98

Numerous music publishers in late eighteenth-century London were quick to buy (or pirate) the works of Continental composers such as

1. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach
2. Georg Anton Benda (1722–95)
3. Ludwig Berger (1777–1839)
4. João Domingos Bomtempo (1775–1842)
5. Carlo Campioni (1720–88)
6. Jean-Frédéric Edelmann (1749–94)
7. Franz Jacob Freystädter (1768–1841)
8. Philipp Joseph Frick (1740–98)
9. Felice Giardini (1716–96)
10. Adalbert Gyrowetz (1763–1850)
11. Johann Adolph Hasse (1699–1783)
12. Joseph Haydn
13. Friedrich Himmel (1765–1814)
14. Nicolas-Joseph Hüllmandel
15. Johann Nepomuk Hummel
16. Feliks Janiewicz (1762–1848)
17. Johann August Just (ca 1750–?)

97 Ibid., p. 75.
98 McVeigh, ‘Industrial and Consumer Revolutions in Instrumental Music’, p. 34.
18. Leopold Kozeluch (1747–1818)
20. Willem Lootens (1736–1813)
21. C. R. Molenaer (?)
22. Gabriele Piozzi (1740–1809)
23. Ignaz Joseph Pleyel (1757–1831)
24. Venazio Rauzzini (1746–1810)
25. Francesco Antonio Rosetti (ca 1750–92)
26. Johann Schobert
27. Ferdinand Philippe Joseph Staes (1748–1809)
28. Johann Franz Xaver Sterkel (1750–1817)
29. Jacob Tours (ca 1759–1811)
30. Johann Baptist Vanhal (1739–1813)
31. J. Xalon (?)  

Given the possible influence of Worgan’s father on the development of his son’s musical abilities and taste, it is highly likely that George Worgan played solo keyboard music written by at least some of these Continental composers. Much of the latest keyboard music composed by ‘foreign’ musicians was procurable in London. During the 1760s, the importation into England of music written by non-English composers was accepted practice for any publisher with pretensions to a wide audience … by the last part of the eighteenth century importation … [represented] the primary distinguishing feature of the more sophisticated publishing establishments … these houses [went] … to considerable lengths to be able to uphold the claim that on their lists was indeed to be found music 'by the first talents of Europe'.

Keyboard repertoire written by Parisian composers had much in common with English keyboard music; this set French keyboard repertoire apart from the

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keyboard works written by composers who resided outside France. Generally, French keyboard music contained the hallmarks of the newly developed, overtly virtuosic English piano style. This innovative style comprised

1. expansive, lyrical legato phrases
2. melodies written in octaves
3. new standards of virtuosity, such as passagework in thirds, sixths and octaves, flamboyant arpeggio and scaldic passages, wide leaps, and thick chords
4. the use of thick chords at the extreme ends of the keyboard (notably in the treble)
5. the use of extremes of dynamic
6. the notated use of raised dampers over many bars at a time
7. hocket-like figuration (alternating notes in the left and right hands)
8. ‘drum bass’ figuration (an accompanying figure comprising repeated bass notes with a simultaneous pedal point one octave lower, an oscillating bass octave divided into small note values or an oscillating bass octave enriched by added texture).

Contrastingly, ‘composers writing within the Viennese musical tradition tended to emphasise invention and craftsmanship, harmonic sophistication, and the sensuous richness of instrumental colour’.\textsuperscript{101} Virtuosity was rarely explicit.

Given the traditional tensions that existed between France and England, it seems remarkable that the French so readily absorbed a demonstrably English piano style. The French tendency towards English-style virtuosity was not so much the result of adopting an English aesthetic, as a rejection of the overrefinement associated by contemporaneous commentators with ‘the Italian school’.\textsuperscript{102} Late eighteenth-century French piano music, with its focus on technical prowess, represents a move away from what was seen as an effeminate aristocratic salon culture. The French composer François-Joseph Gossec (1734–1829) articulated this attitude in a speech given on Thursday, 8 November 1793: ‘The soul of the French, restored to its original grandeur, should not be weakened any more by effeminate sounds in the salons or


in the temples dedicated by the Imposture."\textsuperscript{103} Only after ca 1800 did a more refined and sentimental French piano style begin to surface again, perhaps simply because it became evident that Napoléon [Bonaparte (1769–1821)] favoured Italian opera.\textsuperscript{104}

Music Publishing in Late Eighteenth-Century London

In London, the ‘creation of a substantial market for music’,\textsuperscript{105} catalysed by a ‘massive growth of music publishing after 1750’\textsuperscript{106} stimulated music making within both domestic and public contexts. Between the 1760s and 1780s in London, as a commercial response to the intense demand for printed music, at least 62 music publishers plied their trade. These included

1. Samuel Babb
2. Thomas Baker
3. John Bew
4. Birchall & Andrews
5. John Bland
6. James Blundell
7. R. Branston
8. Robert Bremner
9. J. Buckland
10. Thomas Cahusac
11. Cobb & Watlen
12. J. Coote
13. Joseph Dale
14. P. Evans
15. Robert Falkener
16. Catherine Fentum

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., p. 21.
17. John Fentum
18. John Fielding
19. William Forster
20. Henry Fought
21. James Freeman
22. J. French
23. G. Gardom
24. William Gawler
25. Goulding & Company; Goulding, Phipps & D'Almaine
26. John & Andrew Gow
27. James Harrison
28. Joseph Hill
29. P. Hodgson
30. Robert Horsfield
31. A. Hummell
32. John Johnson
33. John Kerpen
34. Thomas Knibb
35. J. Lewer
37. William Napier
38. William Owen
39. John & Sarah Phillips
40. A. Portal
41. John Preston
42. William Randall
43. Michael Rauche
44. John Rutherford

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Chapter 5

45. George Smart  
46. William Smith  
47. Richard Snagg  
48. Thomas Straight & Thomas Skillern  
49. Thompson & Sons  
50. Charles & Samuel Thompson  
51. Samuel & Ann Thompson  
52. Samuel, Anne & Peter Thompson  
53. Henry Thorowgood  
54. S. Vache  
55. John & Gerard Vogler  
56. John Walsh, jr  
57. W. Warrell  
58. John Welcker  
59. Charles Wheatstone  
60. Maurice Whitaker  
61. Robert Wornum  

Because of the proliferation of music publishers in London, and the extraordinary amount of musical activity taking place there, it could be argued that during the second half of the eighteenth century, England ‘was the most musical country in Europe’.¹⁰⁸


The extensive 1789 music catalogue of the music-publishing house Longman & Broderip provides a glimpse into the types of music available to pianists in late eighteenth-century London. Longman & Broderip ‘were the first music publisher to deposit [their] … new publications at Stationers Hall for copyright purposes, and [were] probably the most prolific of all London music publishers in the 1790s’.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ D. W. Krummel and S. Sadie (eds), Music Printing and Publishing (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990), p. 102. See also ‘21) James Longman (ca 1740–1803) and Francis Broderip (d. 1807)’ in Appendix E, Volume 2 of this publication.
In order to survive, publishers had not only to supply their customers with music, but to provide them with the sort of music they wanted to play or hear, not just the sort of music that composers thought they should publish. The problematic nature of this endeavour may be one of the reasons for the bankruptcy of so many eighteenth-century music publishers [including Longman & Broderip].

Longman & Broderip’s 1789 catalogue lists 1664 works. Of these, 565 are for harpsichord or pianoforte. Of these 565 works, 300 are sonatas or lessons, and 30 are duets. There are 333 songs for solo voice accompanied by harpsichord, 90 dances (such as cotillions, country dances and minuets) involving the use of a keyboard instrument, favourite airs with variations, and arrangements for keyboard solo of overtures taken from popular operas. Almost 60 per cent of the listed music involving a keyboard instrument—that is, 988 works—could only have appealed to people who owned pianos or harpsichords. There can be little doubt that George Worgan’s repertoire would have included works written in most, if not all, of these genres.

When Muzio Clementi and his business partners purchased Longman & Broderip on Thursday, 1 November 1798, he immediately embarked on a frenzied letter-writing campaign in order to establish business relationships with important Continental composers and music publishers. Among the first to be contacted was Artaria in Vienna, who had published some of Clementi’s works in the early 1780s and who had previously collaborated with Longman & Broderip. Within a matter of months, he was also writing to Pleyel in Paris and Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig.

‘Not only did Clementi’s firm have regular contact with the likes of Haydn and Beethoven [1770–1827], but it also negotiated for works by a whole host of lesser figures including Berger, Bomtempo … Gyrowetz, Himmel, [and] Janiewicz.’

As the son of one of London’s finest musicians, George Worgan (despite the musical conservatism of his father) was probably aware of, and perhaps owned some of, the latest ‘fashionable’ music released by London music-publishing houses.

114 Ibid., p. 527.
115 Ibid., p. 537.
George Worgan’s Piano Heard on the *Sirius* as an Accompanying Instrument

For centuries, when European sailing ships headed south out of the North Atlantic, they made their first port of call at the Canary Islands [off the coast of north-west Africa] … The route to the Canaries was second nature to European navigators. It was facilitated by the northeast trade winds and the surface currents of the North Atlantic.116

Jonathan King writes that on Wednesday, 6 June 1787, whilst the First Fleet lay at anchor off the Spanish island of Tenerife in the Canary Islands,117 Governor Phillip and ‘twelve carefully selected officers … dined with the Spanish Governor in his Santa Cruz palace’.118 Captain Lieutenant Watkin Tench was amongst the chosen few, and was astonished by the ‘profusion of ices which appeared in the dessert’,119 which he found ‘surprising, considering that we were enjoying them under a sun nearly vertical’.120 Tench must have expressed his surprise, and in turn received an explanation, for he continues: ‘But it seems the caverns of the Peake, very far below its summit, afford, at all seasons, ice in abundance.’121

Apart from ices, jellies and creams constituted popular late eighteenth-century desserts, and would probably have been offered to the Spanish Governor’s dinner guests. During the late eighteenth century, jellies were made with isinglass (a type of gelatine derived from the air bladders of sturgeon and certain other fish), fruit, sugar and occasionally brandy. Savoury jellies were also produced.122 Other sweet delicacies were part of late eighteenth-century cuisine:

Cherries were often bottled when they were in season for use later in the year. Favourite dessert fruits were oranges, pineapples, strawberries, peaches and occasionally grapes. Quinces, rhubarb, damsons, plums and apples [may also have] … featured on the menu, and the juice of lemons [may have been] … used for flavouring.123

Jonathan King suggests that whilst Governor Phillip and his 12 select officers were enjoying the hospitality of the Spanish Governor at the palace, on board the

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117 A watercolour drawing entitled *Santa Cruz on the SE Side of Teneriffe; Sirius and the Convoy in the Roads, June 1787*, by William Bradley (17577–1833), is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney: Call No. ML Safe 1/14 opp. p. 19; Album ID. 823705; Digital Order No. a3461002.
119 Tench, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*, p. 11.
120 Ibid., pp. 11–12.
121 Ibid., p. 12.
123 Ibid., pp. 55–6.
Sirius ‘there were sing-songs around’ surgeon Worgan’s piano.\textsuperscript{124} Although it is possible that, on occasion, Worgan may have played his piano to accompany ‘sing-songs’, no contemporaneous evidence describes him using his piano within this repertoire-based context (the few details that have come down to us consistently imply that George Worgan used his piano to perform solo repertoire).

During the late eighteenth century, the compositional genres commonly associated with ‘sing-songs’ were

1. canons
2. catches
3. glees.

Canons

A canon is a musical form in which a melodic line is introduced by a single first voice; at some place during this melodic line (after a specified duration, for example, one bar, two bars, and so on), the first voice’s melodic line is repeated exactly by a second voice; during the second voice’s presentation of the melodic line (and after the same specified duration), the melodic line is repeated exactly by the third voice, and so on. All voices may continue repeating the melodic line indefinitely. When all voices (usually three or four) are singing, different parts of the melodic line not only coincide, but also fit harmoniously together.

A canon (sometimes called a ‘round’) is a simple form of part-singing, because only a single melodic line needs to be learned by all involved. As typical examples, three well-known canons (rounds) are: ‘Three Blind Mice’, ‘Row, Row, Row Your Boat’ and ‘Frère Jacques’.

Catches and Glees

In London in 1761, a society called the Noblemen’s and Gentlemen’s Catch Club was formed to provide a context within which catches and glees might be sung.\textsuperscript{125} Another particularly well-known glee club was formed in London in 1783, and lasted until 1857.\textsuperscript{126}

The terms ‘catches’ and ‘glees’ were frequently interchangeable. Catches and glees are both part-songs.

\textsuperscript{124} King, \textit{The First Fleet}, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{125} The club is still in existence, and is currently based at the House of Lords.
\textsuperscript{126} See Gadd, \textit{The British Art Piano and Piano Design}, p. 39.
Compositionally, a catch functions in the same way as a canon (round). What sets a catch apart from a canon is the text. In a catch, a word or a phrase that is not apparent in the text emerges when the text is sung by all voices in performance.

The text of a catch frequently breached the decorum of polite society. For example, in 1774, the Anglo-Irish politician and composer Garret Colley Wesley, First Earl of Mornington (1735–81), wrote a catch entitled ‘See the Bowl Sparkles’. Within the context of each separate voice, the text is innocuous. In performance, however, between bars five to eight, different voices successively sing and hold the words ‘see’ (sounding as the letter ‘c’), ‘you’ (sounding as the letter ‘u’), ‘end’ (sounding as the letter ‘n’) and ‘tea’ (sounding as the letter ‘t’), clearly spelling out the word ‘cunt’. A profusion of such obscenities necessitated the publication of collections of catches without ribald texts—‘The Words Consistent with Female Delicacy’.127

A glee often comprises several short, musically contrasting movements. The glee’s (respectable) text may be convivial, fraternal, idyllic, tender, philosophical or dramatic, making its performance appropriate for refined female company.128 The glee is usually scored for three or four solo voices. Generally, the glee was a manifestation of politeness. ‘The glee … selected or written for public concerts was undoubtedly of the more genteel and artistic type.’129

On the other hand, in 1787, the British musician, dramatist, novelist, actor and songwriter Charles Dibdin suggested that Thomas Arne’s ‘catches and glees had caused half the drunkenness and disorder that pervaded’ the Noblemen’s and Gentlemen’s Catch Club’s ‘convivial meetings’.130

John Wall Callcott (1766–1821), an acquaintance of Joseph Haydn in London, was one of the most prolific composers of catches and glees.131 In his Essays on Musical Subjects, Callcott reveals that

devotion to the past was … at least in part responsible for the establishment of … the Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club … in

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127 See, for example, T. Arne et al., Musicae Vocalis Deliciae being a Collection of Scarce & Celebrated Madrigals, Glee, Catches, Canzonets, Rounds & Canons, both Antient and Modern Composed by Arne, Atterbury, Breuer, Bird, Baldon, Berg, Battishill, Craft, Ford, Gregory, Hilton, Howard, Hayes, Long, Morley, Morrinton, Norris, Purcell, Rogers, Smith, Weelks, Webbe, & Other Eminent Masters; Most of which are Sung at the Noblemens Catch-Club, Anacreontic Society, and Je ne scai quoi Club. The Words Consistent with Female Delicacy (London: T. Skellern, ca 1790).
129 McVeigh, Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn, p. 110.
130 C. Dibdin, The Musical Tour of Mr. Dibdin (Sheffield: J. Gales, 1788), p. 162.
131 ‘Haydn’s most lasting contribution to the glee was to provide piano (or harp) accompaniments for’ ‘Twelve Sentimental Catches and Glees, for Three Voices’, ‘by the Earl of Abingdon … a patron and friend of the composer’. Robins, Catch and Glee Culture in Eighteenth Century England, p. 124.
1761 ... In Callcott’s words, the objective of the Catch Club [was] ‘to encourage the efforts of rising composers’, an ambition that would gain fulfilment in a unique repertoire of [English] ... music.132

As the name implies, the Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club’s members came from the upper echelons of the social spectrum. ‘The earliest use of the title Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club discovered to date is on the title page of a collection of glees and catches by’ the composer, organist and singer Joseph Baildon (ca 1727–74) published in 1768.133 Membership of the club ‘was firmly controlled and the club developed a strict set of rules that included fines and expulsion for non-attendance’.134

‘Catch clubs were usually located in an alehouse or tavern.’135 In London, the consumption of alcohol was an ordinary part of daily life. ’Men, women and children all drank “small” or weak beer, partly because there was no reliable supply of clean water, while stronger drinks of “spirituous liquors”, primarily gin, were relatively cheap and easily available.”136 Singing with friends in a tavern became a common pastime for many late eighteenth-century English gentlemen.

The craze for catches and glees reached such a pitch in the late eighteenth century that prizes were instituted for new compositions, and pubs even ran competitions for the best performances ... 137

By the late 18th Century there were numerous Glee Clubs in London, where gentlemen met to eat, drink and sing English ‘glees’ or part songs. The degrees of bawdiness in the punning lyrics depended on whether ladies were admitted.138

According to the popular mid-eighteenth-century English composer of catches, glees and canons William Hayes (1708–77), the fundamental ethos of glee clubs was ‘cheerfulness, and good humour, friendship and love of harmony’.139

In the same year that Captain Cook sailed northward along the east coast of Australia, 1770, the Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club passed a resolution ‘to invite professional musicians to become’ (styled variously) privileged,
professional ‘or honorary members of the club’.\textsuperscript{140} This resolution suggests that the club was not solely concerned with conviviality, but also with standards of music making. The presence of professional musicians ensured that musical standards remained high, and may also have ensured that there was a constant availability of newly composed catches and glee. The London-based organist and composer Richard John Samuel Stevens recalled that, in 1782, ‘to be an Honorary Member of the Catch Club appeared to me (at this time of my life) to be a desirable thing for a young Musician’\textsuperscript{141}

The first professional musicians to become members of the Noblemen and Gentleman’s Catch Club were

1. John Beard (1716–91), the finest English tenor of his day
2. the eminent composer of church music and organist Jonathan Battishill
3. the leading English composer Thomas Arne
4. Gaetano Quilici (fl. 1754–80), ‘a good musician with a base [that is, bass] voice’\textsuperscript{142}
5. the German émigré and eminent viola da gamba virtuoso Carl Friedrich Abel
6. the Italian composer and London’s principal resident violinist during the 1750s and 1760s Felice Giardini,\textsuperscript{143} whose ‘great hand, taste, and style of playing, were so universally admired, that he had soon not only a great number of scholars on the violin, but taught many ladies of the first rank to sing’\textsuperscript{144}
7. a singer by the name of Cowper
8. William Savage (1720–89), who had a ‘pleasant bass voice … clear articulation [and] … perfect intonation’\textsuperscript{145}
9. Samuel Champness (d. 1803), ‘a bass who was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and who sang at the Covent Garden oratorios’.\textsuperscript{146}

As an independent gentleman, George Worgan—along, no doubt, with some of his fellow officers—may have been aware of the more risqué glee club repertoire. The prudish Exeter essayist and composer William Jackson (1730–1803) criticised the London Catch Club for singing bawdy catches; in the tenth of his \textit{Thirty Letters on Various Subjects}, Jackson made a ‘thinly veiled attack

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[141] Argent, \textit{Recollections R. J. S. Stevens}, p. 43.
\item[143] Giardini maintained this status until Wilhelm Cramer (1746–99) settled in London in 1772.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
on the Catch Club and its espousal of a form “not judged perfect, if the result be not the rankest indecency”. After all, ‘openly and without danger to their rank or their claim to be Christians, the gentlemen and nobles of England lived … dissolute lives; gambling, drinking, Sabbath breaking, and committing adultery’. Both in England and in France, the overt rejection of traditional Christian sanctions and indifference to religion resulted in the close association of freedom of ideas and free-living; ‘the pedlars of radical Enlightenment tracts often mixed [their] … trade with the sale of pornography’.

In late eighteenth-century London, as the music publishing industry boomed, and concerts proliferated, sexual licence became ever more flagrant, especially by the royal princes. During the late 1780s … a movement of serious moral concern arose over the course that public life had taken. Even before the French Revolution one can see [the English] … beginning to rethink their life and trying to establish stricter standards of behaviour, embracing a kind of early Victorianism.

Through bawdy glees, the culture of the catch club reflected a level of moral laxity that had intensified in London during the 1770s and 1780s. Such laxity extended to the Grand Tour, which was ‘often regarded as an episode which might include sexual as well as cultural initiation’. The culture of the catch club was dependent on ‘the basic tenets of male conviviality—drinking, smoking and male companionship’. Bawdy texts set as glees were congruous with the risqué lyrics and double entendre traditionally inherent in some drinking songs.

The English composer William Hayes proposed that the performance of catches and glees should ideally manifest subtlety and sophistication in relation to dynamics, tone colour and expressivity. Hayes writes:

I must beg leave to suggest, that, so often as it [the catch] is repeated, an Alternacy of Forte and Piano or Loud and Soft, in imitation of the Chiaro Oscuro, or Light and Shade in painting, has an agreeable effect;

except in such, where the humour of the Subject requires a certain
Jollity to be kept up throughout the whole, which the Performer will
very easily distinguish. And if … any should be found worthy of being
pathetic, or to have anything delicate in their Taste or Construction, I
would recommend Mezzo Piano (at least sometimes under the full Tone
of Voice) as being more expressive of Tenderness.

… [T]he best Guide will be a true Perception of the Sense and Drift
of the Design; and … Expression … resulting from … instantaneous
Feeling.\textsuperscript{153}

The scores of many catches and glees contained precise dynamic markings; these
markings included pianissimo, piano, forte, fortissimo, sforzando, crescendo
and diminuendo. (This range of dynamic indicators may, representatively, be
seen in \textit{A Twenty Sixth Collection of Catches, Canons and Glees for Three, Four
and Five Voices Most Humbly Inscribed to the Noblemen and Gentlemen of the
Catch Club at the Thatch'd House Tavern, St. James's by their Much Obliged
and Devoted Servant Thomas Warren.})\textsuperscript{154} Just how often an ideally crafted
performance was achieved under the influence of alcohol and conviviality is,
however, another matter.

Not all glees were ribald. Most were compositionally intricate, overtly beautiful
and had texts that reflected pious, noble, polite and/or heartfelt sentiments. ‘By
the end of the 1780s the glee had become firmly established among amateur
musicians, its entry into the domestic sphere of music long established.’\textsuperscript{155}

As might be expected, the standard of performance of glees sung within the
domestic context sometimes left much to be desired. Richard John Samuel Stevens
recalled that, in 1793, he sang the tenor part in the domestic performance of a
glee that he had written: ‘Ye Spotted Snakes’:

[H]ow we got to the end I scarcely know: but of all the exerable Music
that was ever howled by any set of Infernals, the discord, yell, and
grumbling … could never be exceeded: I have never in my life heard
anything so very diabolical and detestable … Mrs. Hughes has often
mentioned my look after this \textit{divine} performance: she often says, ‘that
she shall never forget it as long as she lives’.\textsuperscript{156}
Accompanied Glee

Did Worgan accompany glees with his piano on board the *Sirius*? During the last two decades of the eighteenth century, an ‘increasing and controversial employment of keyboard accompaniment’\(^{157}\) was incorporated into the performance of glees within the domestic context.

‘The practice of accompanying glees on the keyboard dates at least from the early 1770s’\(^{158}\)—the earliest recorded instance occurring during 1773. The organist and composer Richard John Samuel Stevens recalled that in 1773, during his student days as a chorister at St Paul’s Cathedral, the leading English composer ‘Doctor [Thomas] Arne accompanied some Glees, but his method of playing the Harpsichord, and his figure at the Instrument being remarkable and rather ridiculous, could not but tickle the fancy of us boys: we, also particularly noted his bad habit of swearing’.\(^{159}\) That Stevens does not express surprise at the existence of a keyboard accompaniment, choosing instead to comment on the *way* in which Dr Arne *played*, suggests that by 1773, the accompaniment of glees using a keyboard instrument was not unusual.

By the early 1780s, the domestic performance of glees may often have involved the use of an accompanying keyboard instrument. For example, during a visit to Bath in April 1782, after a social breakfast, the gentleman composer John Marsh (1752–1828) ‘sang some glees, accompan’d on the harpsichord by Miss H’, the daughter of the prominent amateur glee composer Dr Henry Harington (1727–1816).\(^{160}\) By way of further example, Stevens remembered that during mid-1788, ‘after breakfast, the Ladies persuaded the Glee party to go to the Piano Forte, and to sing’ his glee ‘Sigh No More, Ladies’ ‘several times over’.\(^{161}\) Stevens’ account implies that, at least by the late 1780s, the use of a piano to accompany the performance of a glee was not considered abnormal. Stevens also recalled that in 1793, at a private ‘Concert Room, which was intolerably full of a mixture of Company … we were absolutely in an Oven’,\(^{162}\) he ‘conducted’—that is, accompanied—the performance of a glee from the harpsichord:

> Miss Bruton (an Apothecaries daughter in Duke Street, St. James’s) kindly undertook to sing the Soprano part; Stephen Groombridge (now President of the Glee Club), undertook the Base; I was to sing the Tenor;

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162  Ibid., p. 92.
and a Gentleman (who I afterwards found) did not know a note from an Oyster, was to sing the Alto. I sat down to the Harpsichord as Conductor, and we began.  

Controversy abounded, however, when in the same year (1793), John Marsh was censured for providing (within the context of an evening’s domestic music making) a piano accompaniment in the performance of a glee. Marsh writes:

[W]e all went to a musical party at Mr Middletons to whom I lent my piano forte for the occasion on w’ch amongst other things I accomp’d a new glee sung by Mrs S. Hemming, Mess’rs Moore & Toghill, the latter of whom immediately afterw’ds observ’d that it wo’d have a better effect another time without accompaniment … tho’ … saying he did not mean to criticise on my accompaniment in particular, but on accomp’ts in general.

Three years later, in September 1796, during a visit to the Nottingham Catch Club, Marsh heard ‘some glee &c. very decently done, some of w’ch I accompanied on the piano forte’.

‘In the glee, admittedly a minor genre in the grander scheme, the British developed an indigenous achievement that was unique.’ Perhaps George Worgan, gentleman and up-to-date musician, consented to play his piano as an accompaniment to glee’s in the ‘sing-songs’ that may have taken place on board the Sirius. If so, his improvised accompaniments may have produced the effect described by the Genevan philosopher, writer and composer Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) in relation to bass lines and/or textures that supported a melodic line: ‘a light murmur comparable to the sound of a brook or the twittering of the birds.’ Then again—if indeed glee’s were sung on board the Sirius—Worgan may have adopted a more circumspect and traditional musical response, his piano remaining silent.

Although there is no documentary evidence to support the hypothesis, Worgan (weather permitting) may have accompanied hymn singing within the context

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163 Ibid., pp. 92–3.
167 See King, The First Fleet, p. 53.
of religious services held on board ship (whilst anchored at Rio de Janeiro and at Cape Town, ‘Mr. Johnson, the chaplain, preached on board two of the transports every Sunday’).169

During the late eighteenth century, the playing of keyboard music was part of a wide and complex social intercourse. Piano music’s discourse was ‘practiced at many different levels: seriously and frivolously’.170 George Worgan may have used his piano to play repertoire ranging from improvised fantasias, through sonatas, to accompanying glees and (possibly) hymns; he may also have played his piano within ‘private’ and ‘social’ contexts.

**Playing with the Lid Closed**

In all probability, George Worgan would have played his piano with the lid closed—not propped open and acting as a sound reflector as is currently fashionable. We can make this assumption because during the 1770s and 1780s many square pianos by English makers had no internal ‘sideways-folding music desk fitted to the back of the name board’,171 which, when extended, held the lid open. Often, ‘the only provision for music sheets was a ledge fitted to the inside face of the lockboard, to be used with the lockboard opened and standing in its vertical position’ (Plate 59).172 This meant that when a music score was used, the main part of the lid of many square pianos had to remain closed, the upright lockboard serving as a convenient prop for the score.

A notable exception to this design is found in a square piano by Frederick Beck dated 1782/87?173 (Plate 59b). Rather than being split into discrete hinged parts by a longitudinal cut over the nameboard (extending the length of the instrument) and a short lateral cut over the right-hand cheek (Plates 361 and 362), the lid is cut along its entire length in the middle; this forms two large rectangular segments, which are hinged to one another.

The lockboard is hinged to the inside face of the front-half segment of the lid (Plate 59c). The front-half segment of the lid can be folded backwards to lie flush against the back-half segment. When the front-half segment of the lid is in this state, the hinged lockboard may be brought to its vertical position and used as a music desk. The ‘half-open’ lid, however, does not fully expose the

170  Cole, *Broadwood Square Pianos*, p. 89.
171  Ibid., p. 91.
172  Ibid., p. 90.
173  The instrument is owned by the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA.
soundboard or strings. As a consequence, the closed back-half segment of the lid acts as a damper, inhibiting the effect of action noise, and suppressing some upper partials of the sound. The result is a sound that has no trace of harshness.

When the lid is fully opened, the outside face of the front-half segment of the lid acts as a music desk (Plates 59a and 59b). With a fully opened lid, space is created along the entire length of the instrument for sound to be liberated. The fully opened lid, however, does not fully expose the soundboard or strings. Once again, as a result, the lid acts as a damper, blocking out intrusive action noise and some overtones. A smoother, richer and slightly more distant timbre emerges.

The disadvantage of this remarkable design lies in the fact that the player is limited to the sonic character resulting from the influence either of a half-open or a fully opened lid; the player is never allowed to exploit the piano’s unadulterated volume or character of sound.

Visually, the fully opened lid is beautiful. For the time, its proportions are exotic (Plate 59a): inlaid lines (stringing) of satinwood form an ornamental rectangular panel that emphasises the shape of the instrument’s case; and the elaborate patterns of the grain of the lid’s yellow mahogany\textsuperscript{174} are clearly visible (Plate 59b).

During the late eighteenth century, playing pre-composed music from memory was not a commonly encountered or expected element of the performance aesthetic. The use of a music score in performance was the norm.\textsuperscript{175} This is confirmed by many late eighteenth-century paintings, drawings and cartoons, in which the use of a music score in performance is depicted.

The English organist and composer Richard John Samuel Stevens describes a domestic performance within which context the score was used: ‘A little time after, a … Girl … entertain[ed] us with a Harpsichord Lesson; and Mr. Peter Denys … was to accompany her on the Violin. I was on the left hand of the young lady, and had the honour of turning the Book for her.’\textsuperscript{176}

\textsuperscript{174} See ‘English Square Pianoforte by Frederick Beck, London, circa 1782’, in Norfolk Charitable Trust records. I am indebted to Elisabeth McGregor, Curator/Archivist of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, for providing me with this information.

\textsuperscript{175} Improvisation created a performance context within which a music score was usually absent.

Plate 59 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): lockboard music desk—right-hand front lid flap closed.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Plate 59a Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1782/87?): lid open—the backwards-slanting outside face of the front-half of the lid acts as a music desk.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA.
Plate 59b Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1782/87?): lid open—the backwards-slanting outside face of the front-half of the lid acts as a music desk.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA.

Plate 59c Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1782/87?): lid standing open, revealing the hinged lockboard music desk (top centre of image).

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA.
This is not to say that performance from memory did not take place. C. P. E. Bach, for example, goes so far as to suggest that works that have been memorised should be played in the dark, in order (ultimately) to increase proficiency in sight reading: ‘In order to become oriented at the keyboard and thus make easier the acquisition of a necessary skill at sight reading, it is a good practice to play memorized pieces in the dark.’

Many late eighteenth-century paintings, drawings and cartoons also show square pianos being played with their lids down. This may not always have been because the lockboard of some square pianos was an integral component of the music desk; perhaps the closed lid also functioned as a moderator of tone.

The closed lid of square pianos not only filters out extraneous action noise, but also suppresses the effect of some of the upper partials of the sound. This produces a slightly ‘darker’ and more mellow timbre. Arguably, the quality of the sound is enhanced, although the volume is less. Late eighteenth-century players and listeners were attracted to this ‘warmer’ timbre.

That the lid of a square piano usually remained closed in performance may also have been so because, ‘in an age when elegance and refinement were all-important, exposing the working parts of the hammer action would be somehow indecorous.’ If a stronger tone was required, a ‘small lid flap at the right might be opened, for a more immediate sound, at the player’s discretion’ (Plate 60).

The provision of a prop-stick (in order to hold the entire lid open) fitted in some English square pianos made during the 1780s and 1790s suggests that it gradually became ‘increasingly common to open up the piano to maximize the immediacy and loudness of the instrument’ (Plate 61).

The lid-stick of Worgan’s piano is missing. The lid-stick would most probably have been tapered, and made of wood. It was hinged at the bottom (wide) end of the taper on a screw (extant). On Worgan’s piano, the lid-stick fastening hole is located at the bass end of the underside of the lid. Witness marks show the lid-stick’s arc of rotation around its hinging screw (Plate 62).

By the end of the final decade of the eighteenth century,

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178 Cole, The Pianoforte in the Classical Era, p. 79.
179 Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 90.
there were thus three options. A square piano could be played with the
lid entirely closed … which … is … the [option] most frequently seen
in contemporary pictures. Alternatively, it could be played with the lid
flap open on the right, in which position most of the sound is available.
Or, if the maximum sound was required, as, for example, when playing
a sonata with violin and cello, the whole lid could be propped open.\textsuperscript{181}

Plate 60 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London,
1780/86?): right-hand front lid flap open.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., p. 79.
Plate 61 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): entire lid held open (manually).

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Plate 62 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): witness marks indicating the (missing) lid-stick’s arc of rotation.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
Tuning George Worgan’s Square Piano: A keyboard all at C

George Worgan would have been acutely aware of temperature and humidity changes on board the *Sirius*, because the vagaries of the weather would have constantly compromised the tuning stability of his piano, which was wooden-framed. Keeping his piano constantly in tune may well have been akin to an uninterrupted nightmare.

Not all owners of keyboard instruments were capable of keeping their harpsichords and/or pianos in tune; as a result, many professional keyboard performers found recurring alternative employment as tuners. An idea of the scale of such activity is revealed by ‘the accounts of Thomas Green (1719–1791), a Hertfordshire organist, tuner of musical instruments, and teacher of music. In 1755–65, he tuned about 180 different harpsichords, 115 spinets and 40 pianofortes, nearly all within eight miles of Hertford.’

Owing to the overtly musical environment within which George Worgan was raised, the comprehensive nature of his musical training and the apparent importance of music in his life, it is reasonable to assume that he was a sensitive and erudite musician who would not easily have tolerated an out-of-tune instrument. Despite the fact that no extant document mentions Worgan (or anyone else for that matter) tuning his piano, it is highly probable that this is something he would have done himself, and possibly (because of changes in temperature and humidity) quite often.

In 1824, Carl Dieudonné (ca 1780–1825) and Johann Lorenz Schiedmayer (1786–1860) remarked in their *Brief Manual on the Proper Use and Knowledge Concerning the Playing, Tuning, and Maintenance of Fortepianos*:

> As for the strings … they … suffer … from heat and cold … If a piano were tuned in a room at 16 degrees, and the temperature were to drop overnight to 10 degrees, the bass would already be higher, and vice versa …

182 Although the English bentside spinet had ‘neither the resources nor the depth and brilliance of the’ harpsichord, ‘neither did [it] … have the cost or upkeep of the larger’ instrument. It did, however, ‘provide the middle and upper classes with harpsichords of a sort, capable of playing the contemporary literature’. Kottick, *A History of the Harpsichord*, p. 499, fn. 25.


A very good, durable piano can be tuned today and in a few days, indeed, even on the next day, the purity of the tuning could be lost, because the composition of the air … has changed itself completely … 185

Such a piano can … in very stable … air … do without tuning for an entire quarter year.186

The circumstances of George Worgan’s upbringing represent a context within which the tuning of a keyboard instrument would have been both ordinary and recurrent. Worgan’s father was one of London’s professional master musicians, and doubtless would have tuned his own harpsichord. For a professional harpsichordist ‘to call someone in to tune a harpsichord would have been as preposterous an idea as calling someone in to tune a violin for a professional violinist’.187

George Worgan received a complete musical training from his father. It is probable that his training included learning how to tune and maintain a harpsichord and piano.

Tuning a harpsichord or piano was a skill that did not take very long to master. In 1810, Captain Thomas Williamson observed that the skill

may be effected in the course of a month, or six weeks, by attention to the instructions of a regular tuner, who would feel himself well satisfied under a moderate compensation … Besides, in a country whose climate deranges the most skilful adjustment of the wires, often in a few minutes, merely by a slight exposure to heat, or to damp, the expence attendant upon such frequent tunings, as are indispensably requisite, would speedily absorb the full value of the instrument itself; the ordinary rates being a guinea for a grand-piano, and twelve shillings for a square one. Therefore, whether considered as a convenience, or as a matter of economy, too much cannot be said in recommendation of every [player] … learning to tune [their] … piano.188

Tuning a harpsichord or piano involved two important tasks. First, fixing the basic pitch of the instrument, and second, dividing the octave into its 12 constituent notes.

185 Ibid., p. 291.
186 Ibid., pp. 291–3.
Fixing the Basic Pitch

Usually, fixing the basic pitch of a keyboard instrument was achieved either by using a pitchpipe or (more uncommonly) a tuning fork. A contemporaneously representative recommendation for the use of a pitchpipe was made, for example, in *Apollo’s Cabinet*, a publication that contained eight song settings written by George Worgan’s father, John Worgan, amongst the 141 song settings by 45 other composers.

A pitchpipe is a small end-blown, square-bodied wind instrument without finger holes, ‘fitted with a moveable wooden plunger or piston on which a scale of notes with a range of about an octave [is] … marked’. When blown, the pitchpipe sounds the note of the scale as marked on the plunger. The mouthpiece of a pitchpipe may be shaped like that of a recorder—that is, ‘beaked’—or as a central turned element.

Typically, pitchpipes were made of mahogany. In his *Elementa musica* of 1739, Quirinus (Gerbrandzoon) van Blankenburg (ca 1654–1739) wrote: ‘you can make a square flute without finger holes, in which a sliding rod fits. On the four sides of the rod, different [pitch] levels can be marked … This is called a pitchpipe.’ Pitchpipes have limitations, as they can be ‘unstable in sound because of warmth and cold, humidity and dryness’, and the pitch ‘can be raised or lowered … by blowing harder or softer’.

Generally, however, ‘pitch-pipes operate on the same level of accuracy as recorders, since they use the same blowing technique. They are thus well within a useable range of tolerance for conveying musical pitch.’ Unlike recorders, a pitchpipe’s sound is harsh and consistently piercing.

Haynes compellingly reveals that a ‘considerable’ amount of historical evidence exists to support the fact that during the eighteenth century ‘the pitchpipe was the usual means of carrying pitch’, and that ‘pitchpipes were often used

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193 Ibid., p. 18.
to fix the basic pitch of keyboards'.

Pitchpipes were used well into the nineteenth century. In 1862, James Eardley submitted a patent for an ‘improved chromatic’ pitchpipe. Eardley’s pitchpipe was made of nickel, and was sometimes used in England and Scotland by church organists and choirmasters.

In 1905, the Scottish nonagenarian William Arthur stated:

> In the Auld Kirk, in my younger days, there was neither choir nor organ. On William Durie—the old precentor—sounding the keynote from his whistle [that is, a pitchpipe], immediately all the people joined in, and, keeping time to the evolutions of the pitchpipe, they sang together with great sound and evident pleasure.

Furthermore, William Arthur observed that by pushing a pitchpipe’s moveable wooden plunger in or out,

> an adept could play a tune: only, the tone being somewhat strident and coercive, it is better adapted as a prelude to the singing of the Psalms in the house of God. Directly attacking the nervous system, the shrill notes of the pitchpipe roused the sleepers when everything else had failed, and at the same time indicated the keynote to the congregation.

During the eighteenth century, tuning forks were used only sometimes to fix the basic pitch of a keyboard instrument. ‘Most references to tuning forks through the 18th century imply that they were a novelty and not commonly used.’

Sometimes, a non-keyboard instrument was used to fix the pitch of a keyboard instrument. For example, in a ‘somewhat lascivious letter written by’ the novelist Laurence Sterne (1713–68) ‘to Mrs Elizabeth Draper’, around March 1767, Sterne suggests that ‘your Piano Forte must be tuned from the brass middle string of your Guittar, which is C’.

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194 Ibid., p. 19.
196 Ibid., p. 44.
During the eighteenth century, the context of performance often determined the range within which a basic pitch might sound. ‘Opera pitch’ and ‘chamber pitch’ were usually different from one another (opera pitch was often lower). ‘Church pitch’ was usually the highest. 199

During the 1720s, in London, the basic pitch of Händel’s opera orchestra was approximately \( a^1 = 415 \text{ Hz} \)\(^{200}\) (\(a^1\) above middle C vibrates at 415 cycles per second, which is about a semitone\(^{201}\) below modern concert pitch). By 1751, Händel’s opera orchestra played at about \( a^1 = 423 \text{ Hz} \).\(^{202}\) The anonymous pitchpipe (made in London?) that Händel gave to Charles Burney (currently owned by the Royal Society of Musicians) possibly dates from the 1750s; this pitchpipe gives a pitch of \( a^1 = 429 \text{ Hz} \).\(^{203}\)

An original English pitchpipe stamped 1747 and made by Samuell Bennet gives a pitch of \( a^1 = 407 \text{ Hz} \).\(^{204}\) ‘This pitch-pipe is about 40 cm long, and 12 in diameter. Its size suggests that it stayed in one place, and was meant to be quite accurate.’\(^{205}\)

The eminent (and tone-deaf) English scientist Alexander J. Ellis (1814–90), in his article ‘On the History of Musical Pitch’,\(^{206}\) noted the existence of [tuning] forks probably made about 1750 in London that sound \( A[a^1]–424 \). The famous tuning fork left by Händel at the Foundling Hospital\(^{207}\) when the Messiah was performed in 1751 is at \( A[a^1]–423 \), and is supposed to represent the pitch of the organ\(^{208}\) (\(a^1 \approx 423 \text{ Hertz was the so-called ‘new consort pitch’} \)).

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199 Currently, we think of all instruments as being tuned to the same pitch, \( a^1 = 440 \text{ Hz} \)—that is, \( a^1 \) above middle C vibrates at 440 cycles per second. This pitch standard is commonly referred to as ‘concert pitch’. Worldwide, many orchestras now tune slightly higher than \( a^1 = 440 \), with ‘concert pitch’ sitting somewhere between \( a^1 = 440 \) and \( a^1 = 443 \text{ Hz} \). ‘A pitch standard near \( a^1 = 440 \) is actually quite old. It is about the same as Beethoven’s Wiener-Ton, for instance. And because Viennese music was influenced by Italy, Wiener-Ton was inherited from Corista Veneto, which was itself derived from a standard known as tutto punto that had been common in northern Italy since before [Claudio] Monteverdi’s [1567–1643] time. All these names, used in different periods, referred to a pitch in proximity to \( a^1 = 440 \).’ Haynes, A History of Performing Pitch, p. xxxvi.

200 Ibid., p. 291.

201 Commonly, the octave is divided into 12 notes. The distance (‘interval’) between each adjacent note is called a semitone.


203 Ibid., p. 475.

204 Ibid., p. 290. This pitchpipe is currently owned by the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester. See ibid., p. 475.

205 Ibid., p. 475.


Between 1770 and 1800, the pitch of woodwind instruments built in England moved upwards; extant instruments are ‘pitched between a¹ = 419 Hz and a¹ = 445 Hz, the range of a semitone, with an average of a¹ = 434’.

English chamber organs range between a¹ = 419 Hz and a¹ = 428 Hz, with most extant instruments pitched at around a¹ = 423 Hz.

It is likely that George Worgan, using a pitchpipe, or even a tuning fork, fixed the basic pitch of his piano on board the *Sirius* at somewhere between a¹ = 419 Hz and a¹ = 434 Hz.

### Dividing the Octave into its 12 Constituent Notes

After fixing the basic pitch of a keyboard instrument, musicians who tuned their own harpsichords or pianos would then divide the octave into its 12 constituent notes. This tuning was usually done by ear. Eighteenth-century ears were very sensitive to interval differences. Tuning a keyboard instrument involved judging the ‘relationships between the two notes of an interval by listening to the two notes melodically only’. The first note was never sustained while the second note was being played. Therefore, no beats could be heard. In other words, tuners tuned in the manner that singers sing.

Currently, the system of tuning commonly used for modern pianos results in every one of the 12 adjacent notes in an octave being the same sounding distance apart from one another; the size of the interval between each adjacent note (100 ‘cents’—a cent is one one-hundredth of a semitone) is identical. This means that each of the 24 major and minor scales has identical interval relationships. The musical consequences are

1. that every tonality or ‘key’ has the same ‘flavour’ or ‘character’
2. any tonality can be transposed to any other tonality, without the transposition having a different ‘flavour’ or ‘character’ from the original.

This tuning system is now commonly referred to as ‘equal temperament’.

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210 An ‘interval’ is the sounding distance between two pitches.
213 See ibid., p. 769.
The ‘Common Established Temperament’
(‘Well Temperament’)

During the eighteenth century, a tuning system emerged (as one of many available tuning systems) within the context of secular keyboard music that resulted in every one of the adjacent notes in an octave not being the same sounding distance apart. The size of the interval between each adjacent note could be different.

This meant that each of the 24 major and minor scales contained its own unique interval relationships …

During the 18th century, this tuning system replaced previous tuning systems to such an extent that it was referred to as the ‘common established temperament.’ Instruments tuned with the common established temperament were also sometimes described as being ‘well tuned,’ or ‘well tempered’ …

In the early 1960s, the term ‘well temperament’ replaced the eighteenth-century term ‘common established temperament’.

The English composer, music theorist, writer on music and Fellow of the Royal Society the Reverend William Jones described well temperament in 1781, and credited its invention to the Italian composer and theorist Francesco Antonio Vallotti (1697–1780). Vallotti probably developed his temperament as early as the 1720s.

The musical consequence of well temperament is that certain tonalities feel ‘tense’ (because they sound relatively out of tune), whilst others feel ‘relaxed’, pure and sonorous (because they sound either relatively or perfectly in tune). This results in each tonality having a distinct character or flavour. Eighteenth-century composers wrote with these characters or flavours in mind, and ‘incorporated the psychological effects of the various sizes of intervals into the emotional contents of the music itself’.

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214 Ibid., p. 769.
215 See ibid., pp. 173 and 294, note 5.
216 Ibid., p. 173.
218 Jorgensen, *Tuning*, p. 179. The German theorist, organist and composer Andreas Werkmeister (1645–1706) described well temperament as early as 1698 in his *Erweiterte und Verbesserte Orgel-Probe* [*Advanced and Improved Organ-Practice*] (Quedlinburg: Theodori Philippi Calvisii, 1698).
According to the ‘philosopher, physician, writer, administrator of science, and master of many languages’ Thomas Young (1733–1829), the eighteenth-century preference for well temperament resulted from the ‘considerable advantage’ obtained from the ‘difference of character produced by … various keys’—that is, the differing character of various tonalities. Young states:

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\text{[W]hen it is considered, that upon an average of all the music ever composed, some particular keys [tonalities] occur at least twice as often as others, there seems to be a very strong … reason for making the harmony the most perfect [that is, in tune] in those keys which are most frequently used; since the aggregate sum of all the imperfections [that is, the ‘out of tune’ intervals and tonalities] … must by this means be diminished in the greatest possible degree, and the diversity of character [that is, the emotional ‘character’ or ‘flavour’ of each tonality is] … preserved. Indeed, in practice, this method, under different modifications, has been almost universal.}
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In his *Il Principio or a Regular Introduction to Playing on the Harpsichord or Organ* of 1760, the organist, composer and master of the Chapel Royal (England’s most prominent school of music) James Nares (1715–83) implied that well temperament was the most commonly encountered English secular tuning system.

George Worgan, as a thoroughly trained late eighteenth-century English musician, may have tuned his piano to well temperament; in order to facilitate this, he would have used a T-shaped tuning hammer to turn the wrest-pins.

On the other hand, the tuning method adopted by Worgan may have been that published by Nicolo Pasquali (1718–57). Pasquali’s ‘An Approved Method of Tuning the Harpsichord’, printed on a single page at the conclusion of his *The Art of Fingering the Harpsichord* (written between 1743 and 1757?), was both popular in England and widely available.

Pasquali migrated from Italy to London in about 1743, and he quickly established himself as a composer in both Dublin and Edinburgh. His tuning system is meant for harpsichords, not pianos; however, the popularity and easy availability of

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220 Ibid., p. 251.
222 Ibid., pp. 144–5.
224 N. Pasquali, *The Art of Fingering the Harpsichord; Illustrated with Examples in Notes; To which is Added, an Approved Method of Tuning this Instrument* (Edinburgh: Robert Bremner, n.d. [1743–57?]), p. 28.
Pasquali’s treatise in England may have meant that Worgan was not only familiar with Pasquali’s tuning plan, but also adopted Pasquali’s recommendations when tuning his piano.

In relation to well temperament, Pasquali’s tuning system is old fashioned. Pasquali advises that ‘[t]he firste Note G [should] … be Tuned by a pitch Pipe or any other wind Instrument. The 5ths must be Tuned rather flat than otherways.’\[^{225}\] If the resulting thirds are ‘fine … what has been done may be depended on; if otherways it will be best to begin afresh, and Tune all over again … By this Method of Tuning the imperfection of the Instrument is thrown in A\(_b\) and E\(_b\) its 5th’.\[^{226}\]

That Pasquali mentions an ‘imperfection’ lying between the interval of the fifth A\(_b\)–E\(_b\) reveals the temperament to be ‘meantone temperament’—or, ‘the old tuning’—not well temperament. This is because in Pasquali’s tuning plan, the G-sharps do not function as A-flats. In playing terms, for piano, the difference between G\(#\) and A\(_b\) is usually one of nomenclature only; both notes are usually played by depressing the same key lever, and both notes are usually sounded by the same string (or strings). In Pasquali’s tuning plan, bearing in mind that G\(#\) and A\(_b\) are the same key lever and string(s), the interval E–G\(#\) is acceptably in tune, whilst the interval A\(_b\)–C sounds hideously out of tune. The disadvantage of meantone temperament is that modulation is severely restricted; only tonalities such as C, F, G, B\(_b\), D, E\(_b\) and A-major will sound in tune.

A late eighteenth-century anonymous amateur poet even went so far as to compose a poem on the subject of tuning, likening the difficulties of eradicating any severely out of tune tonalities (along with their ‘sick semitone’)\[^{227}\] to ‘the trouble a lady has in expunging that last troublesome pimple from her visage!’\[^{228}\]

**Maintaining George Worgan’s Square Piano**

### String Breakage

Apart from keeping his piano in tune, George Worgan would have had to take responsibility for its maintenance. Instrument maintenance was a useful sideline associated with piano ownership.\[^{229}\]

\[^{225}\] Ibid., p. 28.  
\[^{226}\] Ibid., p. 28.  
\[^{228}\] Ibid., p. 80.  
\[^{229}\] See ibid., p. 61.
During the early nineteenth century, the inevitability of string breakage was an issue that was discussed in several tuning and instrument maintenance manuals. Structural weaknesses arising from impurities (nonmetallic inclusions) in handmade iron strings often caused some strings to snap spontaneously, especially when a sudden rise in pitch occurred as a result of the increase in humidity and drop in temperature associated with a storm. Despite the fact that strings become more brittle over time, 'the majority of historical strings that remain in instruments today will probably not break. Any faulty original strings will have had the opportunity to break during the past centuries. Any surviving historical strings are bound to represent the very best standard of historical string.')

Sudden changes in the environment, such as sudden drafts, the heat from candles and the increase in humidity and temperature caused by an audience located in proximity to the instrument, may cause historical strings to break. In the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Thursday, 20 January 1831, an anonymous author wrote:

> The pitch of a pianoforte is lowered in a warm day or in a warm room, owing to the expansion of the strings being greater than the wooden frame-work; and in cold the reverse will happen. A harp or piano, which is well tuned in a morning drawing-room, cannot be perfectly in tune when the crowded evening party has heated the room.

Within such contexts, the rapid expansion and contraction of the strings may cause some of them to snap. Tuning the piano to a high basic pitch may also result in string breakage.

By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the English had already encountered the problem of broken piano strings in extreme climates. For example, in 1810, Captain Thomas Williamson recommended that travellers to India take an abundance of spare piano strings: 'Nor would it be superfluous for a lady to take with her several sets of wires for her piano: they being very scarce.'

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Fine music wire [had] ... relatively high value for weight and could be shipped long distances with profit ... [During the late eighteenth century] as now, wire was used for a wide variety of decorative and mechanical purposes and so called ‘music wire’ was often chosen for use in other trades because of its superior quality. Studies of guild regulations and of trade records such as import and export documents have shed light on wire as an item of commerce.234

If Worgan had to replace any broken strings in the bass register of his piano—that is, brass strings—he would have been forced to deal with the ensuing sonic and musical ramifications:

When a brass string breaks ... and is replaced, the new string at first sounds duller than the old one and will stand out from its neighbours even if they all came from the same spool of wire. The effect, disturbing to musicians ... is called ‘brightening’ because with time the duller sound of the new string becomes brighter until it eventually matches that of the other strings. This process occurs most rapidly in the first few days but can take weeks, even months, to complete.235

When compared with modern steel strings (which sound ‘brighter’ and less ‘sweet’ than historical strings, being ‘filled with partials ... that are too pronounced to be pleasant’),236 iron strings—used in all registers, excluding the bass, of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century pianos—are ‘drawn’237 at a lower temperature. The lower forging temperature can result in impurities (nonmetallic inclusions) in the strings. In a metal wire, nonmetallic inclusions ‘have the effect of reducing the area of metal that bears the load and in extreme cases will cause fracture of the wire at that point. This loss of strength is called overdrawing.’238 The impurities problem was rectified by Henry Bessemer (1813–98) in 1856, with his invention of the so-called ‘Bessemer converter’. The converter—a furnace for forging steel—enabled blasts of cold air to be blown through the heated liquid metal, which burned off excess carbon and any other impurities that may have been present. The Bessemer converter had an enormous impact on the quality of steel piano strings—strings that were cheaper, more durable and that could take greater tension than the iron strings, which they quickly replaced.

235 Ibid., p. 113.
237 ‘To draw wire ... metal [is] formed into a strip or rod which is then pulled through a tapered hole shaped somewhat like a funnel.’ Goodway and Odell, ‘The Metallurgy of 17th and 18th-Century Music Wire’, p. 21.
238 Ibid., p. 67.
During the eighteenth century, wire for stringing keyboard instruments was ‘carefully manufactured to meet an exacting set of service requirements’. Evidence concerning the drawing of wire does not point to exotic alloys and arcane ‘lost’ processes but rather of common materials transformed by traditional skill and craft into a commercial product of superb quality. If there was any ‘secret’ of the old wire it was in this skilled and knowing craftsmanship, comparable in its way to that of the instruments upon which it was strung.\textsuperscript{239}

George Worgan, as the owner of a piano within a context that was located far from the piano technicians of London, would have needed the skills necessary to replace broken strings; he had probably obtained such skills as part of his upbringing in a musical home. There can be little doubt that Worgan would have had the foresight to travel with at least one spare set of strings.\textsuperscript{240}

**Re-Leathering Hammerheads**

Re-leathering hammerheads is a standard procedure in fortepiano maintenance. With a lot of playing, the density of the leather that covers the hammers changes; the leather becomes compacted and hardened. This results in the tone of fortepianos becoming brighter, more metallic and harsh. If George Worgan played his piano often (and if the leather that Frederick Beck had used to cover the hammerheads was not very durable),\textsuperscript{241} the hammerhead leather would have eventually hardened and produced an unpleasant tone. In order to maintain the characteristically sweet sound of his piano, George Worgan may, on occasion, have had to re-leather some hammerheads.

On English square pianos, there were always at least two layers, and usually three, of leather over each wooden hammerhead core. Worgan’s piano, in the manner of Zumpe, has three layers (Plate 63); this is consistent with Beck’s usual practice, as is representatively evidenced, for example, by the hammerhead coverings on a Beck square piano dated 1778 (Plate 63a).

When replacing the two leather under layers of a hammerhead (this would not often have been necessary), Worgan would have selected thinner leather for the treble (about 1 millimetre), and thicker for the bass (about 1.2 millimetres).

\textsuperscript{239} Ibid., pp. 127–8.
\textsuperscript{240} Most of the iron strings on Worgan’s 1780/86 Beck square piano are original. It is not known when the strings that failed were first replaced. See ‘Stringing’, in Appendix A, Volume 2 of this publication.
\textsuperscript{241} Ozone, oxygen and humidity also affect the durability of leather.
Plate 63 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): leather-covered hammerheads of the first four bass notes (FF–GG#)—for each hammerhead, two thin foundation layers of brown vegetable-tanned leather are overlaid with approximately 1 millimetre of firm, fibrous buff leather stretched tightly around a flattened semicircular solid limewood(?) core (no larger than a shirt button). The leather is glued to the core only on the sides.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Frederick Beck’s pianos are closely modelled on those of Zumpe. Beck’s aesthetic of sound, however, differed from that of Zumpe. In any piano, the hammerhead covering is the most influential factor in the creation of timbre. Zumpe’s hammerheads comprise a fairly thin outer layer of leather, which produces a sweet, light and percussive style of voicing. On the other hand, Beck’s thicker outer layer of leather creates a tone that is more mellow than that of Zumpe’s pianos. Worgan would have been sure to maintain the characteristic tone of his Beck piano by re-leathering hammerheads with a fairly thick outer layer (Plate 63). The ‘leather is always glued to the … sides’ of the hammerhead core, ‘never over the top surface, even for [the] under layers. The leather is wrapped like a [jam] roll’ (Plates 63 and 63a), with the glue remaining ‘out of the string contact area all the way to the
[wooden] core. The layers must be in good physical contact [with one another], but not stretched so tightly that they become hard. This was, and is, a technique that is acquired with practice.’

Worgan would then have shaped (shaved) the layers of leather, thinning them downwards on the lower sides of the hammerhead.

Plate 63a Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1778): leather-covered hammerheads of the first six bass notes (FF–AA#)—for each hammerhead, two thin foundation layers of brown vegetable-tanned leather are overlaid with approximately 1 millimetre of firm, fibrous buff leather stretched tightly around a flattened semicircular solid limewood(?) core(no larger than a shirt button). The leather is glued to the core only on the sides.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Thomas Strange. Photo by Thomas Strange.

Because Beck’s instruments are closely modelled on those of Zumpe, it is likely that Worgan would have used vegetable-tanned243 sheep leather to cover the hammerheads. (Typically, this leather type was ‘used for the outer covering of’ hammerheads on English pianos ‘from the 1760s’ to ca 1795.244 ‘The leather used on English squares from c1800 onwards was oil-tanned Chamois (the alpine goat-like animal Rupicapra-rupicapra).’245

243 See ‘Tanning’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
245 Strange, ‘Re-Leathering Your Square Piano Hammers and Action Parts’, p. 5.
Although at Sydney Cove during the last years of the eighteenth century ‘leather made from the skins of cattle, kangaroos, and seals, and tanned with the bark of the wattle tree proved good’, there can be little doubt that any hammerheads covered with such leather would have sounded different to those adjacent to them. Perhaps Worgan brought a small supply of hammerhead leather with him from England, in order to be able (as needed) to maintain the sonic aesthetic of his piano.

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246 Kangaroo leather is highly flexible, and is three times stronger than cow leather.
248 The hammerhead leathersing found on Worgan’s 1780/86 Beck square piano may be original. It is not possible to cut a replacement layer of leather so that it fits exactly with the layer underneath. Layers of original hammerhead leathersing are all cut together, and so are exact; this can be seen on Worgan’s piano (see Plate 232).
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