Chapter 14

George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano Offered for Sale?

In order to continue our journey with surgeon Worgan’s piano, we must backtrack to an event that transpired on Thursday, 4 January 1810, 40 years before Elizabeth Macarthur’s death. This event was the auction at which Elizabeth purchased a piano from Thomas Laycock’s estate.

There are gaps in our knowledge of what became of Worgan’s piano following this auction. The instrument may have been sold at auction ca 1810, and if so, it may have been sold by one of Sydney’s leading merchants, the public auctioneer and emancipist Simeon Lord (1771–1840).1

Simeon Lord

Simeon Lord’s business establishment was situated in a large four-storey house—the largest in the town—adjacent to the Tank Stream bridge,2 on what is now the corner of Bridge Street and Macquarie Place.3 Although substantial, Lord’s house was built ‘with a minimum of decoration’.

‘Instead of facing the water, Lord’s house [looked] … up the hill towards Government House, which’, although it was separated from the harbour’s edge by gardens, ‘was somewhat smaller and shabbier than his home. Its deliberate aspect might have reflected deference or hubris.’

Lord built his house in 1803, using ‘local sandstone for the house walls … two floors were lined with cedar’.6 (In the same year, on Monday, 25 July,

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1 A watercolour portrait of Simeon Lord by an unknown artist, on ivory, dated ca 1830, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. MIN 92; Digital order no. a128827).
2 Simeon Lord’s house is depicted in a watercolour drawing entitled East View of Sydney in New South Wales by John Eyre (1771–?), dated ca 1809, housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. DL Pg 49; Digital order no. a1528247). Lord’s house is the large four-storey building in the distance, situated adjacent to the bridge over the Tank Stream.
5 Hoskins, Sydney Harbour, p. 71.
6 Ibid., p. 71.
at an auction held at his Sydney warehouse, Lord offered a pianoforte for sale. Judging by the advertised price of 60 guineas, it is reasonable to assume that the instrument was a grand piano. This is the first advertisement to appear in Australia’s earliest newspaper concerning the sale of a piano.) In 1811, D. D. Mann, in his *Present Picture of New South Wales*, described Lord’s house as ‘the most magnificent in the colony’, but, from the evidence available, ‘little except the very generously proportioned front doorcase with side-lights and large semicircular fanlight and the house’s unrivalled bulk supports such praise’ (‘houses, roads [and] … avenues are as fugitive, alas, as the years’).

The enormous size of Lord’s house can be explained by the fact that it was ‘planned as a shrewd business manoeuvre’, functioning simultaneously as a boarding-house, a business centre and a private home. Second Commander of the *Reliance*, Henry Waterhouse, when writing to Sir Joseph Banks on Tuesday, 10 June 1806, described Lord’s dwelling as ‘a good & neat … house, at which a stranger on his arrival might lodge & board, or eat by himself, this was so convenient to the masters & mates of merchant vessels, that Lord got the disposal of most of their investments’.

The lowest level of Lord’s house comprised storerooms. The ground floor was above these, comprising ‘four large rooms including a counting house and auction room … on the first floor there were bedrooms and dressing rooms and at the top were fourteen single rooms. Lord’s house became a focal point for trade and business … and the recognized rendezvous and shore base for visiting ships’ captains.’

Simeon Lord was one of the colony’s first merchants ‘to demonstrate their success materially in the size and appearance of their establishments’. As a successful merchant, Lord made his fortune ‘by moving local timber, Pacific sandalwood, Hunter River coal, Tahitian pork, South Seas whale oil’ (whaling was Australia’s first primary industry), ‘Indian rum and British manufactured goods through the harbour on their way to local buyers or markets overseas. That the colony imported more than it exported remained a constant.’

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8 Ibid.
Lord became so wealthy that he even ‘bought a Spanish ship, captured by a British whaler as a war prize, renamed it the Anna Josepha in honour of Governor King’s wife and used it to ship coal and timber spars to the Cape of Good Hope’.\textsuperscript{17} In fact, Simeon Lord and his wife, Mary (née Hyde; 1779–1864), ‘became one of the richest couples in the Colony of New South Wales, with only six Sydney residents having greater landholdings’.\textsuperscript{18}

If not to Simeon Lord, Elizabeth Macarthur may have sold Worgan’s piano to another of the several socially acceptable merchants and auctioneers who conducted their business in Sydney.

1810: David Bevan

The \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser} of Saturday, 31 March 1810 contains an advertisement for the sale of ‘an elegant\textsuperscript{19} piano forte’. The advertisement states:

Sales by Auction, by Mr. Bevan,

At his rooms in High Street, Sydney, on Monday next the 2d of April, at ten o’clock in the forenoon, a quantity of Brazil tobacco, black and white lace, ladies dresses, bed-gowns, gowns, petticoats and shifts, a few dozen bottles of capers, ladies and gentlemen’s shoes, buggy and [?] key whips, large pin glasses, an elegant piano forte, ladies’ side saddles, a child’s English chair, a small quantity of crockery ware, glass, and plate, writing desks, iron pots and other kitchen furniture, and a variety of other fashionable and useful articles.\textsuperscript{20}

Apart from three advertisements listing a piano for sale on board the \textit{Mary} in May 1812 (immediately following that ship’s arrival in Sydney),\textsuperscript{21} this advertisement is the only one appearing in the \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser} between 1810 and 1812 listing a piano for sale in Sydney.

Given that Elizabeth Macarthur purchased a piano from Thomas Laycock’s estate on Thursday, 4 January 1810, it may be conjectured that she arranged (at that time) for David Bevan to sell Worgan’s piano sometime after the auction.

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\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 73.
\textsuperscript{18} N. Bannan, ‘Relationship with Simeon Lord’, in Bannan Family Australian Relatives (Unpublished ms, n.d.), p. 4. I am indebted to Nicholas Bannan of Perth for providing me with a copy of this unpublished text.
\textsuperscript{19} Implications of the term ‘elegant’ (in relation to pianos) are discussed in ‘Thomas Laycock’s Estate Auction’ in Chapter 13, this volume.
\end{flushright}
Because of the commonly encountered ‘trade-in’ practices of the time (usually related to ‘updating’ a piano), Worgan’s piano may even have formed part of Elizabeth’s payment for Laycock’s instrument. Within this context, Worgan’s piano may have come into the possession of the auctioneer David Bevan. If so, Worgan’s piano may be the unidentified elegant pianoforte that was subsequently offered for sale by Bevan at his salerooms in ‘High Street, Sydney’ on Monday, 2 April 1810.

1813: Robert Jenkins

Two years and seven months later, in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Saturday, 30 October 1813, another piano is advertised for sale. This piano is described as having additional keys and was ‘made by Bolton’. It was sold by R. Jenkins (1777–1822), ‘licensed auctioneer, Macquarie street’. Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano has a fully chromatic compass of 61 notes (FF–f’), and as such cannot be described as an instrument with additional keys. The piano advertised on Saturday, 30 October 1813 in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser cannot be Worgan’s piano.

1814: David Bevan

A year later, the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Saturday, 8 January 1814 advertises ‘[a]n excellent piano forte’ for sale at auction. This auction took place at 11 am on Wednesday, 12 January 1814, at Bevan’s George Street sale rooms. The piano’s vendor is unidentified, so it cannot be ascertained whether or not this instrument is Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano.

1815: Mr Charters, 68 George Street, Corner of Market Street

We do not know what became of Worgan’s piano during the five years between Thursday, 4 January 1810—the date of Elizabeth Macarthur’s purchase of Laycock’s piano—and Saturday, 14 January 1815.

On 14 January 1815, the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser includes the following advertisement: ‘Now on sale, at 68, George street, corner

22 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 30 October 1813, p. 1.
23 Ibid., p. 1.
25 Ibid.
of Market Street,\textsuperscript{26} some choice Newcastle cedar, in inch, three quarter inch, and half inch boards. N. B.—A very handsome piano forte by Beck, in perfect order, to be disposed of.'\textsuperscript{27}

This advertisement signals the beginning of a period of approximately four and half months during which a Beck piano was offered for sale six times in the \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser}.

That the piano is described in the advertisement as being both ‘very handsome’ (implying exceptional case decoration and exquisite design) and ‘by Beck’ strongly suggests that it was Worgan’s instrument. The 1780/86? Beck square piano currently owned by Stewart Symonds in Sydney (identified in this study as having belonged to George Worgan) has an attractively veneered and inlaid nameboard and a beautifully inlaid case.\textsuperscript{28} Uniquely for English square pianos, the instrument has exquisite square-tapered cabriole legs. The curved inside edge of each leg is inlaid. These elegant design and decorative elements more than suggest a ‘very handsome’ instrument.

That Frederick Beck’s name is specifically mentioned in each of the six advertisements published in the \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser} in 1815 is significant. During the first two decades of the nineteenth century in Sydney, the inclusion of a maker’s name in advertisements for the sale of a piano was rare (pianos were most commonly described only as ‘piano forte’).

In 1815, in the absence of any sources suggesting otherwise, Worgan’s piano was the only instrument in Australia made by Frederick Beck. The mention of Beck’s name in the advertisement may have alerted astute potential buyers not only to the piano’s uniqueness, but also to the fact that the instrument had been owned by one of the colony’s most prominent citizens, Elizabeth Macarthur.

Perhaps the asking price was high, as the piano did not sell immediately. A month later, the following advertisement appeared in the \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser} of Saturday, 4 February 1815: ‘To be disposed of, a very handsome piano forte, by Beck, in perfect order, with a small collection of music. Enquire at No. 68, George-street, corner of Market-street.’\textsuperscript{29}

Two months later, the following advertisement appeared in the \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser} of Saturday, 15 April 1815: ‘Further particulars

\textsuperscript{26} The Sydney Town Hall is currently located at this address.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser}, 14 January 1815, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{28} Comprising a simplified form of Tunbridgeware inlay, consisting of an ebony stringer adjacent to a boxwood stringer, with a band of cross-banded fine ribbon-grained brown timber (beech?), followed by a band of alternating diagonally cut boxwood and an ebony stringer.
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser}, Saturday, 4 February 1815, p. 4.
made known by applying to Mr. Charters, 68, George street, corner of Market-
street. NB.—A very handsome piano forte in perfect order to be disposed of, for
which a negotiable bill will be taken in payment … Apply as above.’30

Still the piano did not sell. A month later, another advertisement appeared in
the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, on Saturday, 13 May 1815:
‘Now on sale, at 68, George street, corner of Market-street … Also, an excellent
piano forte, by Beck, in perfect order.’31

A week later, Charters again offered the piano for sale: ‘Now on sale, at 68,
George street, corner of Market-street … Also, an excellent piano forte, by
Beck, in perfect order.’32

Despite these efforts, Charters still had no success in selling the piano. Two
weeks later, on Saturday, 3 June 1815, the following (and final) advertisement
appeared in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, on Saturday,
3 June 1815: ‘Now on sale, at 68, George street, corner of Market-street … Also,
an excellent piano forte, by Beck, in perfect order, for which a negotiable bill
will be taken in payment.’33

No further advertisements for the sale of the Beck piano appeared.

George Chartres

‘Mr Charters’ was the lawyer George Chartres (fl. 1810–17). Dublin born, he was
convicted of fraud on Saturday, 14 July 1810,

and sentenced to be transported for seven years. [In July 1811,] he
arrived at Sydney in the Providence. He was given a ticket-of-leave
on his arrival and soon afterwards was appointed clerk to D’Arcy
Wentworth [1762?–1827] superintendent of police, at a salary of £30, a
position he held throughout his stay in the colony … [In 1812,] Chartres
advertised that he would transact all manner of conveyancing and was
ready to render professional assistance ‘as might appear requisite for
the prosecution or defence of suits’ in the courts … On 27 February
1813 he was sentenced to the Coal River (Newcastle) for misconduct, but
received another ticket-of-leave in December, returned to Sydney and on

30 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 15 April 1815, Vol. 13, No. 583, p. 2, Trove, National
Library of Australia.
31 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 13 May 1815, Vol. 13, No. 598, p. 2, Trove, National
Library of Australia.
Library of Australia.
33 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 3 June 1815, Vol. 13, No. 601, p. 1, Trove, National
Library of Australia.
13 June 1814 was conditionally pardoned. Five days later he announced his intention of resuming his legal activities, now at 68 George Street, though he accompanied his practice by mercantile dealings and keeping a public house.  

Having ‘sold his stock, his house and other assets’, he left Sydney for England ‘with his wife in the Harriet on 22 December 1817’. Although judge Jeffery Hart Bent (1781–1852) ‘wrote in 1819 that [Chartres] … had become bankrupt, nothing more of him is certainly known’.  

It is reasonable to assume that George Chartres maintained possession of the Beck piano for almost two years until the month before he left Sydney for England on Monday, 22 December 1817.

**1817: Simeon Lord**

On Saturday, 8 November 1817, the following advertisement appeared in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* concerning an auction, by Simeon Lord, scheduled for Thursday, 13 November 1817:

Sales by Auction … by Mr. Lord, at the residence of Mr. Chartres, [68] George-street, Sydney, on Thursday next, the 13th Instant, at eleven in the forenoon, and on every succeeding Thursday at same hour (until the whole shall be disposed of), the remaining stock in trade, consisting of men and women’s cotton hose, English prints, haberdashery, &c. &c.—Likewise, the household furniture; comprising an elegant rose-wood four-post bedstead, fluted and carved, running on brass castors, with English chintz hangings, rose-wood secretary, chest of drawers, parlour and drawing room chairs, sofas, dining and other tables, ladies and gentlemen’s portable writing desks, &c. &c. &c.—Also, a very excellent toned piano forte by Beck, a few volumes of books, an elegant gig and harness, a black gelding, well adapted for farming purposes, and a valuable gold watch, by Moon, London.  

Given the changes in piano sound and musical aesthetic that had occurred by 1817, that the piano is described as ‘excellent toned’ is a remarkable comment to make in relation to an instrument made in 1780/86?. The description is doubtless a sales ploy. It is not known if a buyer emerged for the Beck piano.

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35 Ibid.
1838: John Blackman

Given that pianos advertised for sale in the Sydney press during the 1820s and 1830s do not usually include any instruments made by Beck, any mention of a Beck piano must alert the senses. This is the case in an advertisement published in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Tuesday, 5 June 1838, in which ‘one second-hand pianoforte, by Beck, of London’ is mentioned:

For Sale by Auction, by Mr. Blackman, To-Morrow, the 6th June, 1838, at his rooms at 11 o’clock precisely, without reserve, 48 pair of fancy striped and railway drill trowsers 20 pair of superfine blue cloth trousers 2 pieces of English Parramatta cloth 15 elegant China crape shawls, various colors 2 bags sugar.

Also, one second-hand pianoforte, by Beck, of London.37

Was this Worgan’s piano? It does seem likely. That London is specified enables a narrowing of the field to occur.

1. During the first half of the nineteenth century, there were only three piano makers with the surname of Beck in the world
   a) Carl Friedrich Beck (1790–1839),38 who worked in Berlin between ca 1820 and 1839
   b) Johannes Beck (1817–63),39 who worked in Ebingen between 1817 and 1863, making six-octave square pianos (no surviving instruments are known)
   c) an unidentified Beck, possibly Joseph Beck, who worked in Paris between 1819 and 1822.40

As far as is known, these makers never worked or had a sales outlet either in London or anywhere in the British Empire.

2. During the 1820s and 1830s there were more than 220 piano makers and dealers in London.41 Not one of these London piano makers has the surname of Beck—or anything that resembles it. In fact, there had not been a piano maker named Beck in London since Frederick Beck established his workshop at 4 Broad Street, Golden Square, in ca 1771 (Beck died ca 1798). Moreover, during the 1820s and 1830s there appears to be no evidence for

38 See ibid., p. 45.
39 See ibid., p. 45.
40 See de Place, Le Piano-forte à Paris entre 1760 et 1822, p. 180.
41 See Appendix H, Volume 2 of this publication.
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a) pianos made by Beck being commonly available for sale in England; during the 1820s and 1830s, the only advertisement published in the British press in which a second-hand Beck piano is offered for sale appears in *The Bury and Norwich Post* of Wednesday, 27 April 1831

b) pianos made by Beck being exported from England for subsequent sale in Australia.

The mention of ‘one second-hand pianoforte, by Beck, of London’ in the advertisement in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of 5 June is tantalising.

Perhaps the auctioneer John Blackman included Beck’s name in his advertisement not only to alert potential buyers to the instrument’s age (in 1838, Beck’s piano would have been extremely outmoded), but also to its uniqueness in Australia. By the 1830s, any mention of a piano made by Beck would most probably have caused curiosity (if not indifference); this is because other piano makers had gained prominence in Sydney.

In the 14 years between 1828 and 1842, 17 piano makers/firms are specifically mentioned by name in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*:

- Anderson (mentioned once)
- John Benham (mentioned eight times)
- Broadwood (mentioned 43 times)
- Broadwood & Sons (mentioned 18 times)

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42 See Appendix N, Volume 2 of this publication.
44 John Benham (fl. 1831–45), ‘whose origins are uncertain, built the first piano in Australia’. Housed in ‘the Old Mint Building, Sydney, it is constructed of Australian red cedar’. See Clinkscale, *Makers of the Piano*, p. 27.
• John Chace (mentioned twice)48
• Clementi & Co. (mentioned 15 times)49
• Collard & Collard (mentioned 16 times)50
• Dale & Co. (mentioned twice)51
• Elliott & Co. (mentioned five times)52
• Joseph Davis (mentioned five times)53
• Gerock & Co. (mentioned four times)54
• Gunter (mentioned twice)55
• Isaac Henry Robert Mott (mentioned six times)56
• Small, Bruce & Co. (mentioned once)57
• Stodart (mentioned six times)58
• Tomkison (mentioned 15 times)59
• Wolfe & Co. (mentioned once).60

57 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 5 September 1840.
58 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 14 April 1832, Vol. 30, Trove, National Library of Australia; 26 January 1839; 29 January 1839; 31 January 1839; 2 February 1839; 2 February 1839.
60 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 19 May 1840.
By way of summary, the Broadwood firm occupies pride of place (61 times), followed by Clementi & Co. (including Collard & Collard; 31 times), Tomkison (15 times), Benham (eight times), Mott and Stodart (six times each), Elliott & Co. and Davis, Gerock & Co. (five times each), Chase, Dale & Co. and Gunter (twice each), and Anderson, Small, Bruce & Co. and Wolfe & Co. (once each).

These data suggest that in Sydney, at least by the 1830s, not only was private music making a common pastime amongst those who could afford to purchase a piano, but also a ready supply of instruments and sheet music was available. (‘In April 1828, the South-Asian Register reported that “Professor” Edwards’, who owned a ‘music warehouse in Underwood’s Buildings near the wharf in George Street … sold, during the previous three years, no fewer than twenty-three new pianos in Sydney, imported from London’. Furthermore, on Monday, 19 December 1831, Anne Maria Bourke, the daughter of the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Richard Bourke, observed that in Sydney ‘a good many ladies play the harp and pianoforte very well’.)

Apart from ardent amateurs, Sydney’s musical life also included professional musicians of talent and ability. For example, Vincent Wallace (1812–65), who settled in Sydney in January 1836, had been one of the leading violinists in the orchestra accompanying Niccolò Paganini [1782–1840] for his Dublin concerts in August–September 1831, and in the theatre orchestra directed that season by the renowned London leader, Paolo Spagnoletti [1768–1834].

While he was in Sydney … Wallace’s violin fantasies a la Paganini, and piano solos après Herz, reportedly pleased audiences less than

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61 Cumes, Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid, p. 106. Cumes sources his information from the South-Asian Register, p. 290.
63 Having ‘emigrated to Hobart Town with his wife and infant son, his sister Elizabeth, a soprano, and his brother Wellington, a flautist’ in November 1835, Wallace gave one recital there before he and his family moved to Sydney. For this recital, Wallace used a piano made by Goulding, d’Almaine & Potter. The instrument was owned by the artist and engraver Thomas Bock (1790–1855), who, having arrived in Hobart Town in January 1824, kept it at his home in Campbell Street, Hobart Town. The piano came to Van Diemen’s Land on the Tiger, which ran aground on a sandbank in the Derwent River; Bock’s high-quality piano had to be rescued from this precarious situation. William Bradshaw purchased the instrument from a second-hand dealer (the piano had become available because of a divorce; the husband sent the instrument from Tasmania to a Melbourne warehouse, from where it was sold to Bradshaw). The instrument, along with its original piano stool, is currently housed in a private collection. I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for this information. Quotation taken from C. Mackerras, ‘Wallace, William Vincent (1812–1865)’, in Australian Dictionary of Biography Online (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University) [First published in Australian Dictionary of Biography, Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 1967], Vol. 2.
his improvisations on their favourite airs, the same sort of sentimental ballads for which his opera *Maritana* later became (and long remained) famous.65

Wallace came to Sydney unknown as a musician save to a few, went to the bush, and was for a time engaged on a station. He returned to the metropolis, and some friends hearing him play by accident were amazed to discover in a simple immigrant a violinist of the first rank, and at the solicitations of Sir Richard Bourke, the Governor of the colony, he was induced to give a concert, which took place on the 12th February, 1836, and proved a great success. He played his own compositions, both for violin and pianoforte … He then advertised himself as ‘Leader of the Anacreontic Society and Professor of Composition of the Royal Society’, and commenced teaching. Wallace did not remain long in Sydney. He went to New Zealand, from there he proceeded to South America, passed through a variety of incidents, and then returned to London, where he composed the opera of *Maritana*, and became famous, not only as an operatic writer, but as a composer of music for the pianoforte … his finest being the fantasia on *Maritana*, seldom performed.66

On Saturday, 19 March 1836, the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* referred to Vincent Wallace as ‘the Australian Paganini’.67 There can be no doubt that Wallace was the most talented and brilliant musician to perform in Sydney during the 1830s.

In the presence of a musical talent as dazzling as Vincent Wallace, it is unlikely that during the 1830s any mention of a piano made by Frederick Beck would have impressed.

It has been shown above that between 1828 and 1842, the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* specifically mentions 17 piano makers/firms by name. During the same period, *The Sydney Herald* mentions 10 piano makers/firms

- Allen (mentioned twice)68
- Ashton (mentioned once)69
- Broadwood (mentioned 10 times)70

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65 Ibid., p. 32.
The Broadwood firm occupies pride of place (10 times), followed by Clementi (six times), Stodart and Tomkison (five times each), Davis (four times), Allen (twice), Ashton, Dettmer, Kirckman and Smith (once each).

Between the late 1820s and early 1840s, information published in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* and *The Sydney Herald* suggests that the pianos most often purchased in Sydney as new instruments were imported from London, and were made by Broadwood, Clementi (including Collard & Collard), Stodart or Tomkison. (As early as 1802, Clementi’s pianos were estimated to be among the best in the world. In 1802, the London correspondent of the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* [*General Music Journal*] wrote that Clementi & Co. ‘without doubt produce the finest but also the most valuable instruments in the world, whose quality has been refined by Clementi’s technical mind and artistic experience’.)

Auctioneer John Blackman’s advertisement for ‘one second-hand pianoforte, by Beck, of London’ published in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Tuesday, 5 June 1838, appeared 21 years after the last mention of a...
Beck piano had been made in the Sydney press. After Blackman’s advertisement, the surname ‘Beck’ is never again mentioned in any Sydney newspaper in connection with a piano.

John Blackman’s auction was held on Wednesday, 6 June 1838; this was three months and two days after George Bouchier Worgan had died in Liskeard. Blackman had established his ‘Auction Mart’ sale rooms at ‘Mr. Hutchinson’s Buildings, No. 5, King-street’ four years before, on 29 March 1834. The *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Tuesday, 1 April 1834 contains the following observation: ‘Another competitor for public favour as an auctioneer enters the arena, in the person of Mr. John Blackman. His rooms are in King-street.’

Two days later, on Thursday, 3 April 1834, the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* more informatively reveals that ‘a Mr. John Blackman, has opened business as an auctioneer, at No 5, King-street, in the house lately occupied by Mr. Brenand.’

By the time John Blackman offered the Beck piano for sale on Wednesday, 6 June 1838,

there were nearly twenty thousand people in Sydney … Sixteen thousand of these were free and there was agitation to stop the transportation of convicts. The granting of free land had been abolished in 1831 and land sales now helped to raise money to assist free immigration … In 1836 … [there were] 570 arrivals in Port Jackson, and only 16 of these were convict ships. Of the rest, most were immigrant vessels, whalers, traders and local coasters carrying passengers and produce.

However vibrant a picture these statistics may paint, two years before John Blackman’s auction, the English naturalist Charles Darwin (1809–82) left Australia after a brief visit with the following valediction: ‘Farewell Australia! you are a rising child, and doubtless some day will reign a great princess in the south; but you are too great and ambitious for affection, yet not great enough for respect. I leave your shores without sorrow or regret.’

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79 An advertisement appearing in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* concerning an auction (scheduled for Thursday, 13 November 1817) at which Simeon Lord offers for sale ‘a very excellent toned piano forte by Beck’. See *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 8 November 1817, p. 1.
80 The author has searched for mention of a Beck piano in Sydney newspapers up to, and including, 1954.
82 *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 1 April 1834, Vol. 32, p. 2.
83 *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 3 April 1834, p. 3.
84 Hoskins, *Sydney Harbour*, p. 84.
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