Introduction

Discovery

In 1974, as an undergraduate music student, my life’s work as a player of fortepianos and advocate for ‘historically inspired performance practice’ began with the chance discovery of a large collection of fortepianos in the home of the eminent antiques dealer, keyboard instrument enthusiast and gentleman of Sydney William Frederick Bradshaw (1922–2009). Bradshaw was one of the most respected members of Australia’s antique dealers’ fraternity, and his knowledge of the developments that occurred in piano design and manufacture between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries was extensive. For the time, Bradshaw’s musical enthusiasms were prophetic: during the early 1970s in Australia, the notion of performing music composed during the Classic and early Romantic eras using instruments of the period was, for many members of the musical profession, virtually incomprehensible.

1 The term ‘historically inspired performance practice’ refers to the conventions of performance that appear to have been prevalent among knowledgeable performers prior to our time, including those customs that were so commonly understood that they were not noted, as well as aspects of performance that were too subtle to notate. See S. P. Rosenblum, Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music: Their Principles and Applications (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. xvii. Historically inspired performance practice provides ‘a vital key to our understanding’ and interpretation of the ‘incomplete record represented by musical notation’, enabling a musical score to be read, understood and interpreted ‘in a richly contextualised way’. P. Walls, History, Imagination and the Performance of Music [Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2003], pp. 10–11.

2 In a widely accepted and commonly encountered periodisation schema of Western music history, the ‘Classic’ era is defined as the period between ca 1750 and ca 1830. Classicism (a European phenomenon) possessed certain aesthetic characteristics: an ‘ideal of peace and serenity and … tendencies toward repression and formalism’. J. Barzun, Classic, Romantic, and Modern [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975], p. 58. The term ‘Classical’ is broader in its meaning, and is often used colloquially when referring to Western ‘art’ music.

3 In a widely accepted and commonly encountered periodisation schema of Western music history, the ‘Romantic’ era is defined as the period between ca 1830 and ca 1880.

4 During the 1970s, many professional musicians in Australia experienced the reinvigoration of Baroque keyboard music through historically inspired performances given on either replicas of or restored seventeenth and eighteenth-century harpsichords (in a widely accepted and commonly encountered periodisation schema of Western music history, the ‘Baroque’ era is defined as the period between ca 1600 and ca 1750). Some musicians dared to entertain similar expectations in relation to the Classic-era piano and its repertoire. It was an exhilarating time, filled with controversy and fervent self-defence. The late twentieth-century journey towards the concomitant use of historical keyboard instruments and historically inspired performance practice is perhaps best described by the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860): ‘Every truth passes through three stages: First, it is [neglected or] ridiculed; Second, it is violently opposed; and Third, it is accepted as self-evident.’ H. von der Wagon Brecht (ed.), Quotable Arthur Schopenhauer: Kernels of Wisdom and Insights [Morrisville, NC: Lulu Enterprises, n.d. [2008?]], p. 104. See also M. Skowroneck, Harpsichord Construction: A Craftsman’s Workshop Experience and Insight (Bergkirchen, Germany: Edition Bochinsky, 2003), p. 265.
Behind the unassuming façade and narrow central double doors of Bradshaw’s antiques shop lay a musical paradise: an unbelievable number and variety of the piano’s varying historical incarnations cluttered rooms and filled hallways, spilling into the large freestanding uninsulated red brick garage and workshop at the rear of his terrace house at 96 Queen Street, Woollahra, Sydney. The cornucopia of pianos kept company with a profusion of the most exquisitely beautiful Regency and Empire clocks (made by the most celebrated clockmakers of London and Paris) that hourly filled the house with a cacophony of chiming bells. At the height of this collective rhapsody, sight was drawn to eighteenth and early nineteenth-century mirrors that reflected light shimmering through opulently curtained windows, a light infused with gentle warmth by a surfeit of ormolu and the sheen of more intricately inlaid French-polished Regency cabinetwork than convenience required.

In the first-floor drawing room (Plate 1), a grand piano by John Broadwood & Son dated 1802 (with its casework of cross-banded mahogany, boxwood stringing creating the effect of outlined panels along the sides of the instrument, satinwood decorating the keywell, and the wrest-plank veneered in maple) sat under the windows. For me, of all the wonderful instruments in Bradshaw’s collection that lured with their captivating call, this piano sounded out the

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5 Bradshaw’s shop had a ring-the-bell-before-entering system.
6 The garage had a metal roof, as well as a large metal roller door that opened to the lane at the rear of the building. In 1957, Bradshaw paid £2470 for 96 Queen Street, Woollahra (having moved from his shop at 12 Market Street, Sydney). After Bradshaw’s death in 2009, his shop was ‘tenanted to Jacardi, the children’s clothing store from Paris, following’ the property’s A$2.7 million sale. J. Chancellor, ‘Queen Street Eschwes Antiques for Fashion’, BusinessDay, 10 May 2010. See also W. Oakman, ‘Man of Antiques Lived on Fruit Cake’, Sydney Morning Herald, 1 December 2009.
10 ‘Wood from shrubs or small trees of the species Buxus sempervirens.’ Ibid., p. 331.
11 ‘Wood of the closely related species Chloroxylon swietenia (East Indian satinwood) and Zanthoxylum flavum (West Indian satinwood; called Fagara flava by some taxonomists).’ Ibid., p. 332. Broadwood probably used the West Indian species in this instrument.
12 ‘Wood from the trees of the genus Acer … The European species Acer pseudoplatanus is called “sycamore” in England.’ Ibid., p. 331.
ravishing beauty and expressivity of Classic-era keyboard repertoire more profoundly than any other. It was the first time I had heard such sounds, and the instrument changed my musical life.

Another piano by John Broadwood & Son (ca 1805) sat on out-swept legs in the centre of the room. This instrument functioned as a sofa table (the keyboard pulled out like a drawer),\(^{13}\) and was derived ‘from a design of 1803 by Thomas Sheraton’\(^{14}\) (1751–1806) (Plate 1).

A beautiful square piano\(^{15}\) made in New York by Robert & William Nunns (1828)—veneered with mahogany, and with rosewood\(^{16}\) cross-banding, single brass and ebony\(^{17}\) stringing, its nameboard and the front curved corners of the case ornamented with gilt transfers—sat against the right-hand wall, near the far right-hand corner; the instrument’s trestle stand and stretcher (with carved acanthus leaves and claw feet) were designed by the leading American furniture maker Duncan Phyfe (1768–1854).\(^{18}\) Adjacent to this piano stood one of a pair of large, enthrallingly beautiful Pierre-Philippe Thomire (1751–1843) candelabra, their magnificent pedestals’ relatively ‘sober and simple adornment’ vividly contrasting with the elaborate ‘detail and [refined] finishing of the candlesticks’ [branched] arms’\(^{19}\) (Plate 1).

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\(^{14}\) Williams and Lloyd, *The Australian Room*, p. 28.

\(^{15}\) A ‘square’ piano is superficially similar to a clavichord, and comprises a fairly shallow rectangular box, open at the top (closed by a lid), with an inset keyboard towards the left at the front long-side of the instrument, a soundboard at the treble end, and horizontal strings running obliquely from the back of the instrument at the bass end to the front at the treble end (the bass strings being nearest to the player), the strings passing over up-striking hammers and the soundboard. See Clarke, ‘The English Piano’, pp. 254–5. Square pianos usually have dampers (unlike keyboard pantalons). ‘Only in recent years has there been a renaissance when these long-neglected instruments have been appreciated for their fine craftsmanship and the beautiful effects that they impart to’ Classic-era music. M. Cole, *Square Pianos: A Brief History* (Newly Revised April 2012).

\(^{16}\) ‘Wood from various species of the genus *Dalbergia*.’ Koster, *Keyboard Musical Instruments in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, p. 332. The Nunns brothers probably used the Central or South American species in this instrument.

\(^{17}\) ‘The black wood of several species of the genus *Diospyros*.’ Ibid., p. 331.


By the window, near the tail of the 1802 Broadwood & Son grand piano, a single-action harp by Sébastien Érard (1752–1831) evoked refinement and celestial beauty (Plate 1).\(^{20}\) This superb instrument was originally purchased on Tuesday, 11 May 1813, from Érard in Paris by a Monsieur Durnets.\(^{21}\)

In the back half of the drawing room, an upright grand piano by John Broadwood & Sons (1815)—the instrument’s front handsomely pleated with vivid silks\(^{22}\)—dominated the far wall. Bradshaw was particularly fond of this imposing instrument (Plate 2).

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\(^{20}\) This harp (serial number 273) is currently housed in the Stewart Symonds Collection, Ermington, Sydney, NSW.

\(^{21}\) See S. Érard, ‘Ledger 1806–1819 (no d’inv. D.2009.1.75)’, in Centre Sébastien Erard (1806–19). ‘Unfortunately’, Érard’s sales registers ‘rarely list a purchaser’s name if the harp is resold’ (as this particular instrument may have been). Email from Rosemary Hallo to the author, 17 May 2013. I am indebted to Ms Hallo for this information.

Plate 2 The first-floor drawing room in William Bradshaw’s home, view towards the entrance from the front left-hand corner of the room.

A square piano made in 1830 by the Rapperswil-based piano maker Heinrich Huni (1798–1866) nestled in the corner near the drawing room's entrance (Plates 2 and 3). This instrument had belonged to a Swedish family who fled to Australia during the horrors of the 1940s, and who returned to their home country after World War II (Bradshaw acquired the piano from the family at a Friday Lawsons auction in 1946). The piano was veneered in olivewood, and had four columnar legs with beautiful brass capitals. Each leg sat on an individual square block base. With its fallboard closed, the instrument functioned as an attractive side table. In the form of a Parianware sculpture, flanked by two glowing Argand lamps, Hebe, the goddess of youth, offered fragrant nectar and ambrosia to the gods and goddesses of Mount Olympus from atop this piano (Plates 2–4 and 401).

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23 The town of Rapperswil is located on the eastern shore of Lake Zurich, Switzerland.
24 During the twentieth century, the family-owned company of Lawsons was a leading Sydney auction house.
26 This piano (serial number 292) is listed in Clinkscale, Makers of the Piano, Vol. 2, p. 195.
27 Dame Nellie Melba (1861–1931) features prominently in the history of this sculpture. See Appendix I, Volume 2 of this publication.
Every object in Bradshaw’s extravagant drawing room had won its ‘right to be there’ ... through high quality and by being characteristic of the best of ... [its] age’. The room was indeed ‘a jewelled collectors’ cabinet’; more importantly, it was a peaceful haven for gracious living, and the soul of Bradshaw’s home.

In the downstairs shopfront room, an 1834 John Broadwood & Sons grand piano led me ever closer to the essence of the early Romantics. This instrument, prior to its recent purchase by Bradshaw, had resided in the Green Drawing Room of Warwick Castle, where, as one of two matching instruments, it had been used as a barrier to keep members of the visiting public away from a painting by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640). Its lustrous rosewood case, inlaid with brass scrolling leaves and flowers, and reeded lobed baluster legs with engine-turned gilt metal collars, were beyond compare. To this day, I have not encountered an English grand piano with casework more spectacularly beautiful than this refined and seductive instrument (Plates 5 and 6).

Unlike many who had become absorbed by the proliferating complexities of a shallower world, Bradshaw, in his passion-driven preservation of rare, gorgeous pianos, demonstrated one of the moral obligations of humanity: to protect the works of love.

On many a visit, I was required (at Bradshaw’s insistence) to sightread Carl Czerny’s (1791–1857) ‘Grand Mosaic ... Founded on Bellini’s Norma’, a set of variations on arias and choruses from Bellini’s opera ‘Norma’ (a particular favourite of Bradshaw’s). The fragile, yellowed early nineteenth-century first-edition score of this scintillating work was one of several enchanting treasures in Bradshaw’s eclectic collection of music and letters.
Plate 4  William Bradshaw’s Parianware statue of Hebe, the goddess of youth (detail).

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

Plate 5 Grand piano by John Broadwood & Sons (London, 1834).

Source: Owsten Collection viewing, Overseas Passenger Terminal, Circular Quay, Sydney. Photo by the author.
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Source: Owsten Collection auction viewing, Overseas Passenger Terminal, Circular Quay, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Within a pervasive atmosphere of serenity and good taste, there ‘was always time for tea’ and rich, moist fruitcake.35 Tea was served from a sterling silver Matthew Boulton (1728–1809) teapot (Plate 7).36 Number 96 Queen Street, Woollahra, was truly Heaven.

35 E. Jensen, ‘Clock Runs Out for Father of Sydney’s Antique Trade’, Sydney Morning Herald, 19 November 2009. Once a week (unfailingly), Bradshaw would make a trip to the retail store David Jones in order to purchase a Big Sister tinned fruitcake. On one occasion (having undertaken his journey very late on a Friday afternoon), he was, upon arrival, informed by a member of David Jones’ staff that there were no fruitcakes left. A vociferous exchange ensued, after which Bradshaw triumphantly returned home from the esteemed store in a taxi with a large three-tier wedding cake (purchased for five guineas); this particular confection had functioned as the David Jones exemplar for varying styles of wedding cake decoration. Bradshaw’s friends were immediately invited to somewhat unceremoniously assist in consuming the oversized and eclectically decorated cake. During the weekend, Bradshaw and his mother undertook the gigantic task that had been left uncompleted by Bradshaw’s friends; Herculean feats were performed with the knife and fork, and by Monday the cake (including its columns) had gone. This information is derived from a conversation held on Thursday, 22 March 2012, between the author and Stewart Symonds. See also Lawson, ‘The Other Man in Keating’s Life’.

36 See Oakman, ‘Man of Antiques Lived on Fruit Cake’.
During the years following these life-changing meetings with William Bradshaw, his name was regularly associated with reliable, substantiated and accurate information concerning the provenance of antiques—be it pianos or other artefacts; his knowledge was prodigious, and his insights were commonly respected. The day after Bradshaw’s death, the journalist Erik Jensen wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Thursday, 19 November 2009:

He will be, forever, the man Neville Wran [Premier of New South Wales, 1976–86] chose to refurnish Elizabeth Bay House.37 A dealer who sold to the Packers and the Fairfaxes.38 Who sourced clocks for Paul Keating [Prime Minister of Australia, 1991–96, and] ... whom [Keating] ... described as ‘simply the most knowledgeable antique dealer Australia has known’.39

Little did I know that this intelligent, cultured and distinguished man was to feature prominently in my life 39 years later, in connection with one of the

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37 Elizabeth Bay House is an imposing and elegant historic home that was built for the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, Alexander Macleay (1767–1848), between 1835 and 1839. It was built on 22 hectares of land at Elizabeth Bay, Sydney. The land was granted to Macleay in 1826 by Governor Ralph Darling (1772–1858). It is uncertain who designed the house. Recent research suggests that the colonial architect, builder and pioneer settler John Verge (1782–1861) was the principal designer.

38 The Packers and the Fairfaxes are two of Australia’s wealthiest families.

39 Jensen, ‘Clock Runs Out for Father of Sydney’s Antique Trade’. 
most culturally significant\textsuperscript{40} pianos in Australia: the First Fleet\textsuperscript{41} piano. As my erudition grew during those 39 years, my comprehension of the depth and wisdom of William Bradshaw’s knowledge and opinions intensified.

Until recently, as Professor of Music at The Australian National University School of Music, I taught fortepiano at the institution that (in its former guise as the Canberra School of Music—a community of enquirers infused with ‘a relentless spirit of creativity’\textsuperscript{42}—where ‘learning had no end in view except its own furtherance’)\textsuperscript{43} prepared me so well for a fulfilling professional life. The memory of those transforming hours spent with Bradshaw’s pianos was conscripted into the service of a private dream. I was privileged to play the pianos in Australia’s largest public working collection of historical keyboard instruments, a collection I assembled at the university in the hope that the lives of students and music lovers might be transformed (as was mine) by the utter beauty of the sound of eighteenth and nineteenth-century keyboard instruments. My ardent hope is that these instruments will survive the stealth and prideful ignorance of any whose obsession with money and hunger for power undermines educative philosophy, integrity, decency, courtesy, ideas of the beautiful or deep truth. All too often it seems the oppressions of corporate governance have their origins in small minds and cruel hearts. The craving for worldly goals is a false substitute for true existential need, union with God,\textsuperscript{44} and it comes as no surprise that music mystifies and intimidates those who ‘are so blind that they are … [unaware] that they … [live] in darkness’.\textsuperscript{45}

\section*{Investigation}

It has long been thought that the first piano to be brought to Australia had been forever lost in a miasma of oblivion. This is not surprising. ‘The casualty rate of late 18th century square pianos is notoriously high. This is the result of a combination of changing fashion, advances in relation to sound, touch

\textsuperscript{40} In New South Wales, an ‘item may be classed as culturally significant if it meets any one of seven criteria’. S. Rosen, \textit{Australia’s Oldest House: Surgeon John Harris and Experiment Farm Cottage} (Sydney: Halstead Press, 2007), p. 11, fn. 4. These criteria are listed in ‘4. NSW Heritage Assessment Criteria’, in \textit{NSW Heritage Manual. 2: Assessing Heritage Significance} (Sydney: NSW Heritage Office, 2001), p. 9.

\textsuperscript{41} The ‘First Fleet’ is the name commonly given to the British convoy, comprising 11 ships, which sailed from Portsmouth, UK, on Sunday, 13 May 1787, to establish a colony at Botany Bay in Australia. On arriving at Botany Bay, the ‘area was deemed to be unsuitable for settlement so … [the fleet] moved north arriving at Port Jackson [later called Sydney] … on 26 January 1788’. C. Dunn and M. McCreadie, ‘Australia’s First Fleet—1788’, in \textit{IFHAA Shipping Pages: The Founders of a Nation} (Last modified 20 March 2006).


\textsuperscript{43} James, \textit{Cultural Amnesia}, p. xxiv.


\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p. 112.
and design, and the space generally available in the home.\textsuperscript{46} (For any musical instrument, the voyage from the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries can be a perilous one; square pianos especially need the buoyancy of good fortune to survive.)\textsuperscript{47} As a consequence, researchers (in the absence of an actual instrument, and perhaps because of indifference) have not tracked the history of Australia’s first piano past its being owned by George Bouchier Worgan (1757–1838)—a London-born naval surgeon serving aboard the flagship of the First Fleet, the \textit{Sirius}—and Worgan giving the instrument as a gift to Elizabeth Macarthur (1766–1850) in 1791. I am in agreement with the eminent music historian Thérèse Radic (b. 1935), who observes: ‘For the most part … [Australian] historians ignore music. They find space for literature and the visual arts … but they shy off any serious consideration of music as a central cultural manifestation. Music enters into our older histories at the margins.’\textsuperscript{48} Perhaps this is because of the unintentional influence of those musicologists who—having shamed themselves and their calling by a reluctance to engage with the wider academic community—have failed to assert that ‘ theirs is not marginal material but rather that music is central to the human condition’.\textsuperscript{49} (‘In a world in which we struggle for understanding we cannot afford to overlook what music has to offer, and this means active engagement with it, not a fastidious and melancholy withdrawal.’)\textsuperscript{50} It may also be so because of a fear of the power of music—the power of meaning.

Music ‘is not a plaything, but a necessity, and its essence, form, is not a decorative adjustment, but a cup into which life can be poured and lifted to the lips and be tasted’.\textsuperscript{51} As Vasily Kandinsky (1866–1944) observed, art—especially music—‘remains silent to those who do not wish to listen to form’.\textsuperscript{52} After all:

\begin{center}
[Music] is good for us. Period. It is good for the soul. It is good for human tolerance. It frees our minds. It reinforces our capacity to feel and understand.
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\textsuperscript{51} West, \textit{Black Lamb and Grey Falcon}, p. 55.
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Music, and the devotion to beauty it represents, releases some of the most positive, noble and life-affirming feelings that humans are capable of.53

Of all the pianos made during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, only 2 to 4 per cent have survived.54 A plethora of these, representing a wide cross-section of the piano’s varying developmental incarnations, can be found in Australia. The demand for piano-based music making within the contexts of Australian private and community life during the nineteenth and early-to-mid-twentieth centuries, Australia’s nineteenth-century economic prosperity and the importation of culturally significant pianos by several antiques dealers and collectors have all ensured that our nation is a treasure-trove of pianos. These pianos constitute an important and irreplaceable part of Australia’s movable cultural heritage.55

Some piano collectors (reflecting the enthusiasms of the amateur rather than the discrimination of the professional researcher) privately claim that a particular instrument in their collection is the first piano to have been brought to Australia. (‘There is … an understandable desire among collectors to possess instruments that are unique in some respect. Most prized would be the only example of some interesting type, but, failing that, the oldest.’)56 In one instance, a specific design element strongly reinforces the validity of the claim.

In a house in Ermington, Sydney, a piano made in 1780/8657 by the London-based piano maker Frederick Beck (1738 – ca 1798)58 sits unobtrusively in the entrance hallway. The instrument is a typical example of an English square piano of the era, except for two distinguishing features: uncharacteristically, the instrument has hinged cabriole legs, and these are incorporated into a campaign furniture-inspired stand—unprecedented features in a piano of the time.

This instrument was once part of the vast collection of William Bradshaw, who not only sold the piano to its current owner, the reputable interior designer and

55 The whereabouts of these instruments today has not been charted comprehensively. Many of the rarest examples have survived in this country because they have been forgotten, and therefore remain in original condition.
57 See, ‘Date’, in Chapter 2, this volume.
59 See ‘A Unique Stand’ and ‘Campaign Furniture’, in Chapter 2, this volume. See also ‘A Rival First Fleet Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
fortepiano aficionado Stewart Symonds (b. 1937), but in so doing, informed him that the instrument had been brought to Botany Bay by surgeon George Bouchier Worgan on board the flagship of the First Fleet, the *Sirius*. Bradshaw recounted that the recurring mantra uttered by generations of mothers to their children in the family from whom he had purchased the instrument was ‘be careful … it came out with the First Fleet’. This book provides, for the first time, a comprehensive set of measurements and photographs of this particular piano.

Given the existence of these tantalising clues (the unique hinged legs, campaign-furniture-inspired stand and Bradshaw’s remarks), I entertained the possibility, upon examining the instrument, that I had encountered and could verify the existence of the First Fleet piano. Where subsequent paths of inquiry led me constitutes the substance of this book: at best the tome supports supposition that the 1780/86? Beck square piano is the instrument that George Worgan brought to Botany Bay in 1788. At the very least, it makes known that a rare and magnificent square piano made in 1780/86? by Frederick Beck exists in Australia.

This book represents the first time that aspects of the piano’s developmental history, as well as the instrument’s role in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century English society, have been used as a springboard from which is explored the history of the first piano to be brought to Australia. This book also seeks to encourage an understanding of what owning the first piano to be brought to Australia may have entailed.

As we grow older and see the ends of stories as well as their beginnings, we realize that to the people who take part in them it is almost of greater importance that they should be stories, that they should form a recognizable pattern, than that they should be happy or tragic.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the First Fleet piano was played and heard by individuals who were closely associated with a defining era in Australia’s history. Reflecting the truism that ‘nothing is insignificant in the history of a young community, and—above all—nothing
seems impossible’, stories from their lives are told in the hope that light may be shed, however obliquely, on the circumstances within which the First Fleet piano contributed its unique enrichments to the quality of their daily life.

It is tempting to look back on Australia’s colonial history simply as ‘the actions of men and women [with whom] we cannot identify’ and whose ‘motives we do not really understand. It is emotionally easier and … more convenient to inquire no further.’ The story of the First Fleet piano, however, is not a remote one. Rather, it is intimate, immensely rich, real and worthy of serious and sustained attention.

Tradition only whispers, for a short time, the name and abilities of a mere Performer, however exquisite the delight which his talents afforded to those who heard him; whereas … [ideas] once committed to paper and established, live … at least in libraries, as long as the language in which … [they are] written.

My fervent hope is that this book (apart from acting as a catalyst for further research) will long encourage celebration of our nation’s cultural roots and colonial history, as the story of the foundation of Australia’s rich and intriguing pianistic past unfolds.

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