Appendix L

Gallery

This appendix contains photographs of selected square pianos by Frederick Beck. The criterion for selection was simple: photographs that were available to the author at the time this book went to press.

Selected Square Pianos by Frederick Beck

ca 1772–73 (Longman, Lukey & Co., reasonably attributed to Frederick Beck)

This instrument is dated ca 1769–73 (a date towards the end of the range seems most likely—ca 1772–73). Made for Longman, Lukey & Co., the piano has been reasonably attributed to Frederick Beck. The attribution to Beck is largely based on the absence of dampers after c⁴. The undamped top five notes are characteristic of Beck’s instruments; no other maker of square pianos followed this damping pattern. Both the damping pattern and the nameboard inscription (Plate 425b) of this instrument suggest that in ca 1772–73, Beck was in business with Longman, Lukey & Co. It is not known what Beck’s obligations to Longman, Lukey & Co. were, nor is it known for how long the business relationship was maintained.

On Thursday, 11 November 2010, the piano was offered for sale at auction by Serrell’s of Malvern, UK. The instrument was described as a ‘square piano by Songman’. The sale price was estimated at between £150 and £200. The piano sold for an astonishing £2700. Six months later, in May 2011, the instrument was again offered for sale.¹

By April 2012, the piano had been sensitively restored by David Hackett. The instrument is currently owned by Albert Bil, Scotland.


Source: Reproduced with permission of Albert Bil. Photo by David Hackett.


Source: Reproduced with permission of Albert Bil. Photo by David Hackett.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Albert Bil. Photo by David Hackett.

1773

Alan Rubin, of Pelham Galleries Ltd., London, UK, acquired this instrument from the widow of the eminent musicologist H. C. Robbins Landon (1926–2009). The instrument is in fine condition, and currently plays very nicely. The piano can be heard on *Claviers mozartiens* (Lyrinx, 2006), CD, LYR 2251, tracks 11–13 (inclusive); the instrument is played by the virtuoso scholar-musician Pierre Goy.

Plate 425c Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1773).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Pelham Galleries, London.

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2 I am indebted to Alan Rubin for this information (Email from Alan Rubin to the author, 9 April 2013).
1774


Source: Reproduced with permission of the Bachhaus, Eisenach/Neue Bachgesellschaft e.V. Inv. no. 1. 4. 1. 12., I 86.


Source: Reproduced with permission of the Bachhaus, Eisenach/Neue Bachgesellschaft e.V. Inv. no. 1. 4. 1. 12., I 86.
Plate 427a Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1774): round-tapered, fluted screw-in leg—the moulded circular boss lends a touch of ornament to the round capitals, a variant of the French style.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Bachhaus, Eisenach/Neue Bachgesellschaft e.V. Inv. no. 1. 4. 1. 12., I 86.

1776

The distinguished fortepiano dealer and aficionado Andrew Lancaster restored this square piano ‘a few years ago’. The piano eventually passed into the hands of Graham Walker, who acquired it in the United Kingdom at ‘a provincial auction a couple of weeks ago. Against an estimate of £200 (no reserve) it was knocked down for £4,000 (+ premium) to … Graham Walker.’ I am indebted to David Hackett for this information (Email from David Hackett to the author, 24 November 2013). Graham Walker subsequently sold the instrument to Luke Bradley, Lausanne, Switzerland. In ca March 2014, Bradley offered the instrument for sale for £7000. The piano was purchased by its current owner, Michael Borgstede, Germany. The instrument is in excellent condition.

Plate 428 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1776).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Michael Borgstede.

3 Email from Graham Walker to the author, 22 December 2013.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Michael Borgstede.

Plate 428b Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1776).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Michael Borgstede.
Plate 428c Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1776).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Michael Borgstede.

1777

Plate 429 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1777).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Carleton University, School for Studies in Art and Culture (Music), Ottawa. Photo by James Park.
Plate 429a Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1777).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Carleton University, School for Studies in Art and Culture (Music), Ottawa. Photo by James Park.


Source: Reproduced with permission of Carleton University, School for Studies in Art and Culture (Music), Ottawa. Photo by James Park.
Plate 431 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1777): characteristically for Beck, the top five dampers are omitted.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Carleton University, School for Studies in Art and Culture (Music), Ottawa. Photo by James Park.
1778

Plate 432 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1778).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Thomas Strange.


Source: Reproduced with permission of Thomas Strange.
Plate 434 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1778): hammers, bass end—FF–B.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Thomas Strange.

Often, Frederick Beck’s key fronts comprise an ovolo form with a protruding lip placed in the lower half. The 1778 piano stands apart from this, as the protruding lip is placed in the upper half (Plate 433).

1780/86?

Plate 435 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?)

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
Plate 435a The single-storey sandstone Georgian house in Ermington, Sydney, within which sits the 1780/86? Beck square piano (detail).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Stewart Symonds. Photo by the author.

1782


Source: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, Germany.
Plate 437 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798),
(London, 1782/87?, serial number 5008): 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 438 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798)
(London, 1782/87?, serial number 5008): 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.

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

Plate 440 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1782/87?, serial number 5008).

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA.
1. Alteration of the Serial Number and/or Date?

The Frederick Beck piano number 5008 is owned by the Norfolk Charitable Trust, in Sharon, Massachusetts, USA. The Trust’s ‘museum records give a date of 1782, but without explanation’. Clinkscale also dates piano number 5008 as 1782.5

a) Calligraphic Inconsistencies

At first sight, inconsistencies in the calligraphic style of the nameboard inscription subtly suggest that the nameboard inscription cartouche, if not perhaps the entire nameboard, may have been replaced (Plate 439).

Although the overall calligraphic style of ‘5008’ ‘is reminiscent of 18th century work’, the number of formations is uncharacteristically irregular and inconsistent with the high-quality penmanship revealed by the inscriptions on extant Beck pianos dating from the 1770s and 1780s. The top of the ‘8’ is markedly higher than the preceding numerals; the dimensions of the ‘8’, however, act as a visual balance in relation to the height of the ‘N’ at the beginning of the serial number inscription. Furthermore, the ‘8’ sits at a conflicting angle (Plate 439).

Aesthetically, the serial number does not sit easily in the top section of the nameboard inscription cartouche. The serial number has been crammed against the inscription’s infills, suggesting that the number may have been added sometime after the completion of the nameboard inscription. Not only do the ‘N’ and ‘8’ overlap the infills of penwork scrolls and dots, but also the entire serial number sits slightly off-centre. The impression is created that the serial number has been awkwardly forced to fit into the small space that exists between the top of the inscription cartouche and the infills (Plate 439).

The nameboard inscription’s lower-case letters are irregular:

1. beginning with the ‘o’ in ‘Broad’, ‘Broad Street’ increases in size
2. the first ‘o’ in ‘Soho’ is both smaller and misshapen in relation to the second ‘o’
3. the ‘k’ in ‘Beck’, the ‘N’ in the lower ‘No’, the ‘0’ of the street number ‘10’, and the ‘r’ in ‘Street’ sit at a conflicting angle (Plate 439).

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4 ‘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 this information.
5 See Watson, Clinkscale Online.
6 Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 168.
Compared with the nameboard inscriptions of other Beck pianos, the ornamentation associated with the upper-case pseudo-Gothic letters is unsubtle and lacking in both delicacy and intricacy. As a consequence, a sense of awkwardness and lack of skill permeate the inscription.

In some instances, the ink used to write the pseudo-Gothic lettering has bled into the surrounding wood, creating indistinct edges. No other Beck nameboard inscription presents an equivalent lack of clarity.

The nameboard inscription lacks the quality, proportional serenity, calligraphic uniformity, visual clarity and confident handwriting that are consistently found on the nameboard inscriptions of other extant Beck pianos. The entire inscription appears to have been 'written by someone who was not well practiced in the art'.

b) The Absence of a Date

The nameboard inscription of piano number 5008 does not contain a date (Plate 439). Of the 32 extant Frederick Beck pianos, the author is aware of the wording in 25 nameboard inscriptions

- 1772 (owner(s): unknown): Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1772 / Broad Street, Golden Square
- 1773 (owner: Pelham Galleries, London): Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1773 / No 4 Broad Street, Golden Square
- 1774 (owner: Bachhaus, Eisenach, Germany): Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1774 / No 4 Broad Street Golden Square
- 1774 (owner(s): unknown): Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1774 / No 4 Broad Street, Golden Square
- 1775 (owner: Musée de la Musique, Cité de la Musique, Paris): Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1775 / No. 4 Broad Street, Golden Square
- 1776 (owner: Michael Borgstede, Germany): Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1776 / No 4, Broad Street, Golden Square
- 1777 (owner: Carleton University, Ottawa): Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1777 / No 4 Broad Street, Golden Square
- 1777 (owner: Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto): Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1777 No. 4 and 10 Broad Street Golden Square
- 1778 (owner: Musée instrumental de Bruxelles, Brussels): Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1778 / No 4 and 10 Broad Street, Golden Square
- 1778 (owner: Thomas Strange, Easley, SC, USA): Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1778 / No. 4 and 10 Broad Street Golden Square
- 1778? (estimate) (owner(s): unknown; serial number 3091): Fredericus Beck No. 3091, 10, Broad Street, Soho

7 Ibid., p. 168.
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- 1780 (owner: Musikinstrumenten-Museum, Berlin): *Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1780 / No 4 and 10 Broad Street, Golden Square*
- 1780/86? (George Worgan's piano) (owner: Stewart Symonds, Sydney): *Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1780 / No. 4 and 10 Broad Street, Soho*
- 1782 (owner: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg): *Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1782 / No 10, Broad Street Soho*
- 1782 (owner(s): unknown): *Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1782 / No 10, Broad Street Soho*
- 1782/87? (owner: Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA; serial number 5008): *No 5008 / Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit No 10 Broad Street Soho*
- 1782/90? (owner: Osaka College of Music Museum, Japan; ‘tangent action’ instrument): *Fredericus Beck Fecit 1782 / No 10 Broad Street, Soho*
- 1783 (owner: Sibeliusmuseet, Turku, Finland): *Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1783 / No 10, Broad Street Soho*
- 1785 (owner: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA, USA): *Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1785 / No 10 Broad Street Soho*
- 1788 (owner(s): unknown; serial number 1941): *No 1941 Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1788 / No 10 Broad Street Soho*
- ca 1790 (estimate) (owner: private collection, England; ‘tangent action’ instrument): *By the King’s Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit Paten / No 10 Broad Street Soho*
- ca 1790? (owner(s): unknown, in Germany; serial number 2505): *No 2505 / F Beck et G Corrie Londini Fecerunt / No 10 Broad Street Soho* (sometime during the Victorian or Edwardian period, the case was painted with neoclassical decoration; in the light of this decorative alteration, it is reasonable to entertain the notion that the nameboard decoration, cartouche and inscription may also have been altered)
- ca 1790 (owner(s): unknown; serial number 2580): *No 2580 / Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit / No 10 Broad Street Soho*
- ca 1795 (estimate) (owner(s): unknown): *Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit No 10 Broad Street Soho.*

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9 I am indebted to Malcolm Rose for this information. Giovanni Paolo di Stefano also quotes the nameboard inscription in ‘The Tagentenflügel and Other Pianos with Non-Pivoting Hammers’, p. 100, fn. 89. Di Stefano inadvertently spells ‘Fredericus’ as ‘Friedericus’, and omits the ‘t’ in ‘Street’.
10 I am indebted to Graham Walker for this information (email to the author, 15 March 2013).
11 I am indebted to Andrew Snedden for this information (email to the author, 12 December 2013).
12 Because of this instrument’s extended keyboard compass (FF–c4), Kenneth Mobbs proposes a date of 1795. See Watson, *Clinkscale Online.*
Eleven of the listed nameboard inscriptions originate from the 1770s, 10 from the 1780s, and four from the 1790s. Piano number 5008 (1782/87?) is one of six instruments listed above whose nameboard inscription does not contain a date (one piano dates from 1778?, and the remaining four date from the 1790s). It is reasonable to assume that Beck’s usual practice was to include the date as part of his nameboard inscriptions. Given Beck’s consistency in this regard, the absence of a date in the nameboard inscription of piano number 5008 is inexplicable.

2. The Nameboard Inscription Cartouche

The style of nameboard inscription cartouche on piano number 5008 is both markedly and unaccountably different from those found on other extant Beck pianos dating from the 1780s.

Beck’s 1780s nameboard inscription cartouches almost invariably comprise an elongated rectangular form, either with ogee pointed ends (for example, Plate 17a) or with convex rounded ends (for example, Plates 20a, 436, 442, 444, 445). The nameboard inscription cartouche on piano number 5008 (Plate 439) has none of these elements.

Of the 32 extant Beck pianos, the author is aware of the style of nameboard inscription cartouche on 21 instruments

- 1772 (owner(s): unknown): elongated rectangular form, ogee pointed ends
- 1773 (owner: Pelham Galleries, London): elongated rectangular form, ogee pointed ends
- 1774 (owner: Bachhaus, Eisenach, Germany): elongated rectangular form, ogee pointed ends
- 1775 (one of two instruments with exquisitely beautiful casework of astonishing quality, made by Beck in conjunction with Christopher Fuhrlohg) (owner: Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight Village, Wirral, UK): elongated rectangular form, ogee pointed ends
- 1775 (owner: Musée de la Musique, Cité de la Musique, Paris): elongated rectangular form, ogee pointed ends
- 1776 (owner: Michael Borgstede, Germany): elongated rectangular form, ogee pointed ends
- 1777: (owner: Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada): elongated rectangular form, ogee pointed ends

13 See Plate 428a.
• 1777 (owner: Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto): elongated rectangular form, ogee pointed ends
• 1778 (owner: Musée instrumental de Bruxelles, Brussels): elongated rectangular form, ogee pointed ends
• 1778 (owner: Thomas Strange, Easley, SC, USA): elongated rectangular form, ogee pointed ends
• 1780/86? (George Worgan’s piano) (owner: Stewart Symonds, Sydney): elongated rectangular form, ogee pointed ends
• 1782 (owner: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg): elongated rectangular form, convex rounded ends
• 1782/87? (owner: Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA; serial number 5008): stylised small rectangular form
• 1782/90? (owner: Osaka College of Music Museum, Japan; ‘tangent action’ instrument): plain elongated rectangular form
• 1783 (owner: Sibeliusmuseet, Turku, Finland): elongated rectangular form, convex rounded ends
• 1785 (owner: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA, USA): elongated rectangular form, convex rounded ends
• ca 1790 (estimate) (owner: private collection, England; ‘tangent action’ instrument): plain rectangular form, occupying the entire length of the nameboard
• ca 1790? (owner(s): unknown, in Germany; serial number 2505; the nameboard inscription, cartouche and decoration may not be original): elliptical form
• ca 1790 (owner(s): unknown; serial number 2580): elliptical form.

Of the 32 extant Beck pianos, 15 date from the 1770s; of these, the author is aware of the form of nameboard inscription cartouche on 11 instruments. Each of these 11 instruments from the 1770s has a cartouche comprising an elongated rectangular form with ogee pointed ends.

Of the 32 extant Beck pianos, 11 date from the 1780s; of these, the author is aware of the form of nameboard inscription cartouche on seven instruments:

1. one has a cartouche comprising an elongated rectangular form with ogee pointed ends

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14 See Plate 449.
15 See Plates 453 and 454.
16 I am indebted to Andrew Snedden for this information (email to the author, 12 December 2013).
2. four have a cartouche comprising an elongated rectangular form with convex rounded ends

3. one has a cartouche comprising the stylised small rectangular form\(^{17}\)

4. one (1782/90?) has a plain elongated rectangular form.\(^{18}\)

Of the 32 extant Beck pianos, five date from the 1790s; of these, the author is aware of the form of nameboard inscription cartouche on three instruments:

1. ca 1790? (serial number 2505): an elliptical form

2. ca 1790 (serial number 2580): an elliptical form

3. ca 1790 (estimate) (a ‘tangent action’ instrument): a rectangular form that occupies the entire length of the nameboard.

It becomes clear from these data that the elongated rectangular form is the most commonly occurring cartouche style. For pianos dated during the 1780s, variety is evidenced in the design of the ends of the elongated rectangular form.

Typically for the time, decisions regarding the decorative style of an instrument were made in response to what a customer could afford. It may be that a customer specifically requested the form of cartouche found on the nameboard of piano number 5008 (1782/87?).

3. The Nameboard Veneer and Inlay

Consistently, the nameboard veneer and inlay found on Frederick Beck’s square pianos are of the highest quality. This cannot be said of piano number 5008.

The nameboard (Plates 437 and 439) comprises a wide central band of high-quality vertical-grained, light-coloured, golden veneer (possibly satinwood or ‘fiddle-back’ sycamore),\(^{19}\) surrounded top and bottom by a band of darker-coloured veneer with conspicuous grain running vertically. Although there is no horizontal-grained veneer, the overall impression is created of crossbanding. This decorative approach to proportion, colour and grain (excluding the direction of the grain) can also be seen on the nameboard of a 1786 Beck square piano (Plates 20a and 445).

On piano number 5008, the wide satinwood central band is separated from the conspicuously vertically grained darker-coloured veneer by a dark-coloured stringer. The stringer runs parallel with, and slightly below the edge of, the

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17 See Plates 437 and 439.
18 See photograph in di Stefano, ‘The Tangentenflügel and Other Pianos with Non-Pivoting Hammers’, p. 90, Figure 8. This instrument is owned by the Osaka College of Music Museum, Japan.
19 ‘Sycamore: the English name for *Acer Pseudoplanatus*, the prevalent maple species in England.’ ibid., p. 120.
wide light-coloured, golden central band (Plate 439); this creates the impression that two contrastingly coloured stringers lie adjacent to one another. Such a decorative conceit is consistent with the usual quality and sophistication of Beck’s cabinetwork.

The high quality of the wood used for the wide satinwood central band is also consistent with Frederick Beck’s usual practice. On the other hand, the darker-coloured veneer at the top and bottom of the wide satinwood central band is roughly executed, and the nameboard inscription cartouche—both in form and in execution—is a surprising disappointment; Beck’s usually high standards are simply not in evidence.

The nameboard inscription cartouche of piano number 5008 is fundamentally rectangular, the edges of which are delineated by a bipartite stripe comprising two thin stringers placed directly against one another (Plate 439). The visual form of the bottom long side of the cartouche is indented upwards, creating the effect of a protruding ‘foot’ at either end of the rectangle. This style of cartouche is not found on any other extant Beck piano from the 1770s or 1780s. Moreover, the ‘rectangle’ comprising the cartouche is small and proportionally unattractive compared with the exquisitely proportioned elongated rectangular form found on Beck’s 1770s and 1780s instruments.

Uniquely for Beck, the nameboard inscription cartouche is made of the same plank of wood as the nameboard’s wide satinwood central band. The bipartite stripe delineating the edge of the cartouche is clumsily inlaid into the stainwood plank (Plate 439). In fact, no other Beck nameboard reveals such inferior workmanship. The cartouche itself is simply stained a darker colour. This is uncharacteristic of Frederick Beck, and such an obvious and unsophisticated approach to creating a nameboard leads one to suppose that Beck played little, if no, part in the process.

Both bands of conspicuously vertically grained darker-coloured veneer show signs that segments have split, loosened and come away from the nameboard (Plate 439). (Could this have happened, perhaps, when the original nameboard was altered by the forceful incorporation of a ‘new’ plank of satinwood containing the current inscription cartouche?)

4. The Lid

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’, 20 which, when extended, held the lid open. Often, ‘the only provision for music sheets was a ledge fitted to the inside face of the lock board, to be used with

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20 Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 91.
the lock board opened and standing in its vertical position’

Piano number 5008 reveals a notable exception to this design (Plate 437). 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 in the middle along its entire length. 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 440). 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 soundboard or the 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 ‘warmer’, ‘darker-sounding’ instrument.

When the lid is fully opened, the outside face of the front-half segment of the lid acts as a music desk (Plates 437 and 438). 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, 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 of either 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: 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 are clearly visible (Plate 438).

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21 Ibid., p. 90.
22 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.
Plate 441 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1783).

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Sibelius Museum, Turku, Finland. Inv. no. 0171.


Source: Reproduced with permission of the Sibelius Museum, Turku, Finland. Inv. no. 0171.
Plate 443 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1783): French frame—the square-tapered legs are original; the apron is not.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Sibelius Museum, Turku, Finland. Inv. no. 0171.

1785

Plate 444 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1785).

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA, USA. Photo by John R. Watson.
Plate 444a Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1785).


1786


ca 1790 (estimate) (‘Tangent Action’ Square Piano)

In the manner of some harp-shaped southern German keyboard pantalons, in this piano, the soundboard covers ‘the entire surface of the case (excluding the wrestplank) instead of ending to the right of the keyboard as in ordinary eighteenth century clavichords and square pianos’.


During the late 1970s, the instrument was restored to playing condition by Bronislaw (Bron) Roguski. Restoration took four years to complete. In a letter written by Roguski to Watkin, Roguski stated: ‘Dear Mr Watkin, There is a date on the sound board; your Fredericus was born in 1790.’

The location and current owner(s) of the instrument are unknown.

Plate 446 Tangent action square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, ca 1790 – estimate).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Malcolm Rose. Photo by Malcolm Rose.

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23 di Stefano, ‘The Tangentenflügel and Other Pianos with Non-Pivoting Hammers’, p. 101; and see also fn. 90.
24 I am indebted to Malcolm Rose for this information (email to the author, 27 February 2013).
26 ‘The Pianos at the Mews (from David’s Autobiography)’. 
Plate 447 Tangent action square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, ca 1790 – estimate): the soundboard covers the entire surface of the case (excluding the wrest-plank)—each note of the fully chromatic five-octave double-strung compass (FF–f3) has a damper located beneath the strings. Each damper compartment is made of red cloth.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Malcolm Rose. Photo by Malcolm Rose.
Plate 448 Tangent action square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, ca 1790 – estimate): the soundboard covers the entire surface of the case (excluding the wrest-plank) (detail)—each of the top five notes (c#3–f3) has a damper beneath the strings. Each damper compartment comprises red woven cloth, positioned like an open book with the pages facing upwards (see the top left-hand corner of the image).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Malcolm Rose. Photo by Malcolm Rose.


Source: Reproduced with permission of Malcolm Rose. Photo by Malcolm Rose.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Malcolm Rose. Photo by Malcolm Rose.


Source: Reproduced with permission of Malcolm Rose. Photo by Malcolm Rose.
Plate 452 Tangent action square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, ca 1790 – estimate): French frame, treble-front corner—the bolt head holding the frame together is concealed by the treble-end brass patera (only the side of this patera can be seen). A matching, purely ornamental brass patera has been added at the treble front.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Malcolm Rose. Photo by Malcolm Rose.

c. 1790?, Serial Number 2505

On Monday, 28 June 2010, this instrument was offered for sale (Auction 18096) in London by Bonhams. The instrument was offered as Lot 8, and sold for £240.27

27 See m.bonhams.com/auctions/18096/lot/8/.
Plate 453 Square piano by Frederick Beck and George Corrie (London, ca 1790?, serial number 2505): sometime during the Victorian or Edwardian period, the case was painted with neo-classical decoration.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Graham Walker. Photo by Graham Walker.
Square Piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (London, late 1766/67?)

Certain features of this instrument suggest it may be one of the earliest extant Zumpe square pianos, perhaps dating from late in the first year of his production, 1766, or from 1767 (Plates 455 and 456). There are four extant pianos from Zumpe dated 1766, excluding this instrument.

During the early nineteenth century, the case has been severely reworked: each front corner at the treble and bass ends has been rounded—rather than right-angled, as was the English tradition—and the mouldings altered (Plate 455).

A possum which had the good taste to expire upon this rare instrument caused the circular stain on the top of the lid at the treble end (Plate 455).

The instrument is in a poor state of preservation.

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28 I am indebted to Michael Cole (email to the author, 5 December 2012) for his reinforcement of this proposition.
Plate 455 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?).
Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Plate 456 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): nameboard cartouche and inscription (following the instrument’s ‘modernisation’ during the early nineteenth century).
Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

A single hand-lever engages and disengages the damper-raising mechanism. ‘Zumpe’s 1766 pianos are distinct from his subsequent output because, whereas most of his instruments have two hand stops to raise the dampers, the sustaining stop on the earliest ones is activated only by a single lever’²⁹ (Plate 457).

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Plate 457 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): a single hand-lever in a compartment at the bass end operates all the dampers—lever over dampers articulate on a metal rod, rather than on vellum hinges, a design feature of Zumpe’s pianos dating from 1766 or early 1767 (after which time Zumpe altered the damper design and added a second hand-lever).

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

Zumpe’s early soundboard barring consisted of two or three short [pine] ribs crossing under the bridge more or less at right angles. Later, when he lengthened his soundboards … he adopted the pattern of two ribs running parallel
to the bridge, the longer one beyond the bridge, passing under the
hooked treble end, and being thereafter lapped into the liner at the back
left corner.\textsuperscript{30}

Plate 458 shows that the angle of the mortice cut into the top of the belly rail,
and of the two mortices cut into the top of the treble-end front liners, into
which one end of each of three soundboard ribs are recessed, is consistent with
Zumpe’s early soundboard barring. Furthermore, the single mortice cut into the
top of the liner at the back right corner is consistent with Zumpe’s early design
(Plate 459).

\textbf{Plate 458} Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London,
late 1766/67?): the angle of the mortice cut into the top of the belly rail,
and of the two mortices cut into the top of the treble-end front liners,
into which one end of each of three soundboard ribs are recessed, is
consistent with Zumpe’s early soundboard barring.

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

Plate 459 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): the angle of the single mortice cut into the top of the liner at the back right corner is consistent with Zumpe’s early soundboard barring design.

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

The wrest-pins, carefully spaced in four rows, are original (Plates 460–2).

The hole drilled through the wrest-pin for one of the two unison strings comprising the lowest-sounding note is not original (Plate 462).

Plate 460 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): original wrest-pins.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
Plate 461 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): original wrest-pins (detail).

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

Plate 462 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): original bass-end wrest-pins (detail).

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
The J-form bridge is of beech, and is ‘not thin and serpentine like that of a five-octave clavichord [Plate 463], but shorter and more massive, terminating in a straight tenor and bass section’\(^{31}\) (Plate 464).

The bridge has a heavy, truncated triangular cross-section (Plate 464). There is no undercutting at the bass end (Plate 465).

*Plate 463 Clavichord in the Saxon style (ca 1770). Copy by Joris Potvlieghe (2007): serpentine bridge, with a curve at both the treble and the bass ends.*

Source: ANU School of Music Keyboard Institute Collection, Canberra. Photo by the author.

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Plate 464 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): beech J-form bridge with a truncated triangular cross-section.

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

Plate 465 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): the sculpted bass end of the J-form bridge (detail).

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
There are 58 separate key levers. The key lever for GG is permanently joined to a dummy GG\textsuperscript{#} (Plates 466–8); however, 59 hammers hang from the hammer rail. The ‘extra hammer’ (Plates 469 and 470) associated with the dummy GG\textsuperscript{#} key lever ‘has never struck a string, and remains unused and untouched to this day … Zumpe’s keyboards for years … retained this distinctive peculiarity, having a dummy sharp and a compass of 58 notes, but with the correct number of hammers’.\textsuperscript{32}

Plate 466 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): the key lever for GG, with a permanently joined dummy GG\textsuperscript{#}.

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

Plate 467 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): the key lever for GG, with a permanently joined dummy GG\textsuperscript{#} (detail).

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

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 55.
Plate 468 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): the key lever for GG, with a permanently joined dummy GG♯ (detail).

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

Plate 469 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90)(London, late 1766/67?): the first hammer sounds the note GG; the second hammer is for show only, as it belongs to the GG key lever’s dummy GG♯.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
Plate 470 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): the first hammer sounds the note GG; the second hammer is for show only, as it belongs to the GG key lever’s dummy GG#.  

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

Zumpe’s key levers provide ‘evidence of clavichord inspiration’: the tail (distal end) of each key lever is guided by a whalebone fillet (Plate 471), ‘working in a simple rack composed of saw cuts under the hitchpin block’.  

Plate 471 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): representative key lever—rear rack-guided with a whalebone fillet (detail).

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

33 Ibid., p. 55.
The key levers are ‘carved underneath at the balance rail. Given that Zumpe had worked for Shudi prior to setting up his own workshop, this is a very strange feature, wholly foreign to English harpsichord making’34 (Plates 472 and 473).

Plate 472 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): representative key lever—carved underneath at the balance rail (detail).

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

Plate 473 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): key lever for GG—carved underneath at the balance rail (detail).

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

The key plates of the natural keys are ivory. There are no keyhead score lines (Plate 474).

The key fronts comprise a spruce(?) moulding (Plate 474).

The pearwood sharps are stained black and topped with ebony (Plate 474).

34 Ibid., p. 58.
Hammerhead leather appears to be original, comprising ‘a thin layer of bookbinder’s leather, a smooth goat skin or similar material, light brown in colour’, tightly overlaid with approximately 1 millimetre of firm, fibrous buff leather (Plates 469, 470 and 475). ‘On his earliest pianos Zumpe used just one layer [of leather], but from 1767 onwards two.’\textsuperscript{35} In Plates 469 and 470, the fibrous buff leather that once covered the thin layer of bookbinder’s leather on the third and fourth hammerheads (AA and BB) is missing.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 53.
There is a rectangular hole in the belly rail (Plates 476 and 477).

Plate 476 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): rectangular hole in the belly rail.

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

Plate 477 Square piano by Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) (London, late 1766/67?): rectangular hole in the belly rail.

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