

Appendix M

Tangent Action Square Piano by Frederick Beck (London, ca 1790 – estimate): Measurements

Until a few years ago, this instrument (Plate 446) was located in Brighton, East Sussex, England, and was owned by the Oscar-winning cinematographer David Watkin (1925–2008),¹ whose illustrious career included movies such as *Catch-22* (1970), *The Boyfriend* (1971), *The Devils* (1971), *The Homecoming* (1973), *Jesus of Nazareth* (1977), *Chariots of Fire* (1981), *Yentl* (1983), *Out of Africa* (1985), *Moonstruck* (1987) and *Tea with Mussolini* (1999). Watkin passed away on Tuesday, 19 February 2008.

Whilst in the custodianship of Watkin, the instrument was restored to playing condition by Bronislaw (Bron) Szczepan Roguski, of West Harrow, Middlesex.²

The location and current owner of the instrument are unknown.

Case

Length

- Treble-edge front corner to bass edge front corner (including main lid overhang): 1504 millimetres.
- Right-hand side front (from the treble-end cheek to the right-hand outside edge): 511 millimetres.
- Left-hand side front (from the bass-end cheek to the left-hand outside edge): 146 millimetres.
- Keywell: 847 millimetres.

Width

- Outside measurement from the front to back: 542 millimetres.

Height

- From the bottom of the instrument: 198 millimetres.

¹ I am indebted to Malcolm Rose for this information (email to the author, 27 February 2013). I am further indebted to Rose for the ensuing measurement data.

² See N. Roguski's response to 'The Pianos at the Mews (from David's Autobiography)'. See also 'Roguski, Bronislaw Szczepan', *The London Gazette*, 3 May 1960, p. 3135.

Soundboard

In the manner of some harp-shaped southern German keyboard pantalons, the soundboard covers 'the entire surface of the case (excluding the wrest-plank) instead of ending to the right of the keyboard as in ordinary eighteenth century clavichords and square pianos'.³

Action

Hammers

- Wood.
- Non-pivoting.
- Vertical.
- Two intermediate levers are pivoted at the rear of each key lever:⁴ 'one for the hammer (left) and the other one for the damper (right)'.⁵ The intermediate levers are oriented towards the player.⁶

Hammerhead Covering

- Leather.⁷

Keyboard

Compass

- Fully chromatic: FF–f³ (61 notes).
- Keyboard width at natural fronts: 834 millimetres.
- Three-octave span (F–f²): 486.5 millimetres.

Key Plates

Naturals

- Length of key head: 41 millimetres. This represents the almost invariable standard for most late eighteenth-century London piano-making workshops.

Sharps

- Length: 79 millimetres.

3 di Stefano, 'The *Tangentenflügel* and Other Pianos with Non-Pivoting Hammers', p. 101; see also fn. 90.

4 See *ibid.*, pp. 91, 100.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 100–1.

6 See photograph in *ibid.*, p. 101, Figure 19.

7 See *ibid.*, p. 101.

Stringing

- Double-strung throughout.

Speaking String Lengths

The speaking string length is measured from the longest of the unison strings—that is, the one on the left—measuring from bridge-pin to nut-pin.

- f^3 : 112 millimetres.
- c^3 : 146 millimetres.
- f^2 : 223 millimetres.
- c^2 : 300 millimetres.
- f^1 : 435 millimetres.
- c^1 : 554 millimetres.
- f : 721 millimetres.
- c : 840 millimetres.
- F : 1101 millimetres.
- C : 1135 millimetres.
- FF : 1327 millimetres.

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