

**Zeitschrift:** Publikationen der Schweizerischen Musikforschenden Gesellschaft. Serie 2 = Publications de la Société Suisse de Musicologie. Série 2  
**Herausgeber:** Schweizerische Musikforschende Gesellschaft  
**Band:** 53 (2010)

**Artikel:** Viennese keyboard instruments, 1750-1790  
**Autor:** Maunder, Richard  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-858691>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 28.03.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## Viennese Keyboard Instruments, 1750–1790

Richard Maunder

It is a common assumption that all Viennese keyboard music from the second half of the eighteenth century was written for the standard ‘Viennese fortepiano’, as made, typically, by Anton Walter around 1800 (or ‘c. 1795’, as CD notes prefer to say). I would like to suggest, however, that this is a greatly oversimplified picture of what actually happened at the time. The period was very far from being an age of uniformity and, as in former times, musicians delighted in the rich variety of keyboard instruments, each with its own special character and purposes. As we shall see, harpsichords and clavichords as well as fortepianos were made in Vienna; and there was also a lively trade in imported instruments, some from as far away as London. All kinds of combination instruments also made their appearance from time to time, including harpsichords combined with fortepianos such as Stein’s elaborate ‘vis-à-vis’, Mozart’s fortepiano standing on a separate pedal-piano, and square pianos combined with chamber organs.

First, harpsichords. There was a long-standing independent Viennese tradition of harpsichord-making, stretching back at least to the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup> What may be the earliest surviving example is the one shown in Illustration 1. There is some ambiguity about the exact date and the identity of the maker: the top and bottom keys carry monograms ‘HA’ (or possibly ‘HN’) and ‘1696’ respectively, but the soundboard is signed, on the underneath: ‘Walter fecit 1703 Viena’. ‘Walter’ must be Franz Walter, Imperial Court *Orgelmacher* (no relation to Anton Walter); I suspect HA or HN was an owner, not a maker, since his monogram is surmounted by a coronet, and 1696 might represent a significant date in his life. This instrument already shows most of the characteristic features of the eighteenth-century Viennese harpsichord:

1. A single manual, with just two 8' ranks (no 4'); usually only one rank is movable, and only from inside the instrument (there are no hand stops).
2. A short scale with  $c^2$  typically having a sounding length of around 270 mm – as this one was originally, though it was subsequently altered (this scaling is similar to that of Italian harpsichords; by contrast, northern European instruments usually have  $c^2$  of 350mm or more).
3. A lightly built case (later ones are of walnut), with veneer decoration around the key-well, which – unlike all other schools of harpsichord making – has sloping cheeks.

<sup>1</sup> For more details, see R. Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments in Eighteenth-Century Vienna* (Oxford, 1998), and A. Huber (ed.), *Das österreichische Cembalo* (Tutzing, 2001).



Illustration 1: Harpsichord by (or rebuilt by) Franz Walter, Vienna 1703  
(Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum)

4. A short octave arrangement in the bass which, again, is unique to the Viennese school (Illustration 2). The F $\sharp$  and G $\sharp$  keys are split (with front and back sections); on what looks like the E key the ivory is lifting off the back section of a divided natural; the next one down, with the black-and-white decoration, is split into three, front-to-back; and what appears to be an end block is also a key (not split). Illustration 3 shows which bits play which notes. It certainly looks bizarre, but makes sense regarded as an extension of the old C/E short octave (with two split sharps) down to bottom F with the extra notes squeezed into as little space as possible. The arrangement has become known as the 'Viennese short octave', and it was standard there for much of the eighteenth century.

We now move forward half a century to a harpsichord of 1755 by Johann Leydecker, Franz Walter's pupil and his successor as Court *Orgelmacher* (Illustration 4).

Very little in the design has changed in over fifty years – which can probably be explained by the rigidly controlled Viennese guild system, whose aim was to assure its members' livelihood by suppressing all competition, and hence all innovation.<sup>2</sup> The scaling is almost the same as before, and the Viennese short octave is still used (Illustration 5), although the bottom F key now looks like a proper key instead of an end-block. This complicated arrangement does at least have the advantage of making playable some impossible-looking stretches and chords in the bass – which was exploited by composers from Alessandro Poglietti in the 1670s to Haydn in his 'Acht Sauschneider' variations of 1765 (see the last two bars of Illustration 6).



Illustration 2: Bass end of keyboard of harpsichord shown in Illustration 1  
(photo by Rodger Mirrey)

	BB $\flat$		F $\sharp$	G $\sharp$		
		BB			B $\flat$	
	AA		D	E		
FF	GG	C	F	G	A	B

Illustration 3: The 'Viennese short octave': arrangement of the bass keys

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 3 of Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments*.



Illustration 4: Harpsichord by Johann Leydecker, Vienna 1755  
(Graz, Steiermärkisches Landesmuseum Joanneum)



Illustration 5: Keyboard of harpsichord shown in Illustration 4 (photo by the author)



Illustration 6: Haydn, Hob. XVII:1 (1765), last 5 bars

Harpsichords continued to be made in Vienna for some years: there are extant examples, both dated 1778, by Mathias Blum (Illustration 7) and Gottfried Mallek (Illustration 8). They look very similar to each other, and they remain firmly in the Viennese tradition, with a single manual, just two 8' ranks, a short scale, and a walnut case with sloping cheeks; however, they both now have a fully chromatic 5-octave compass, that is, the 'Viennese short octave' has at last become obsolete. These two are the latest surviving Viennese harpsichords known, but one Johann Georg Volkert was still advertising harpsichords of his own make in 1783.<sup>3</sup> It would be quite wrong to think that the increasing popularity of the fortepiano in the 1780s caused the immediate demise of the harpsichord: for example Haydn's friend Maria Anna von Gennzinger still possessed only 'a very good harpsichord' in 1790, when Haydn recommended that she buy a fortepiano instead;<sup>4</sup> and when the composer Joseph Anton Steffan died in 1797 his effects included only a harpsichord and a clavichord,<sup>5</sup> despite his having written much music explicitly for fortepiano. The harpsichord continued to be the standard continuo instrument, especially in operas; in particular there appears to be no historical justification for the current fashion of using a fortepiano to accompany the recitatives in Mozart's operas. Schönfeld's *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag* of 1796 speaks only of the harpsichord for continuo work; a report of performances of C. P. E. Bach's *Die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Christi* in 1788, conducted by Mozart, makes clear that Ignaz Umlauf played continuo on the harpsichord;<sup>6</sup> and in both 1785 and 1793 the music copyist and dealer Johann Traeg advertised large harpsichords in the *Wiener Zeitung*, which he explicitly said were 'suitable for an orchestra'.<sup>7</sup> However, spinets seem to have been regarded as a legitimate alternative when space was short in the orchestra pit: a spinet described as 'from an opera orchestra' was advertised in the *Wiener Zeitung* in 1791,<sup>8</sup> and there are surviving instruments made as late as 1799 and 1804 by Engelbert Klingler (Illustration 9) and Christoph Bock (Illustration 10). Interestingly, both makers were employed by the Burgtheater, Klingler as instrument maker and Bock as keyboard tuner.

3 *Wiener Zeitung*, 11 Jan. 1783, quoted in Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments*, pp. 152–3.

4 See Haydn's letter of 27 June 1790.

5 H. Picton, *The Life and Works of Joseph Anton Steffan*, 2 vols. (New York and London, 1989).

6 J. N. Forkel, *Musikalischer Almanach für Deutschland* (Leipzig, 1789, repr. 1974), p. 121.

7 *Wiener Zeitung*, 14 Sept. 1785 and 7 Aug. 1793, quoted in Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments*, pp. 156 and 173.

8 *Wiener Zeitung*, 22 Jan. 1791, quoted in Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments*, p. 166.



Illustration 7: Harpsichord by Mathias Blum, Vienna 1778  
(Greillenstein, Schloßmuseum; photo by Martin Pühringer)



Illustration 8: Harpsichord by Gottfried Mallek, Vienna 1778  
(Bratislava, Mestské Múzeum; photo by Martin Pühringer)



Illustration 9: Spinet by Engelbert Klingler, Vienna 1799 (Prague, Národní Muzeum)



Illustration 10: Spinet by Christoph Bock, Vienna 1804  
(Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum)

Now to clavichords which, contrary to what is sometimes said, were as popular in Vienna as in other parts of the German-speaking world. There is an anonymous instrument from around 1750 with 'Viennese short octave', which is decorated exactly as on the Leydecker harpsichord (Illustration 11). Several other Viennese clavichords survive, including instruments made in the 1790s by Ferdinand Hofmann, Johann Bohak and Klingler (both the Hofmann and the Bohak are 'said to have belonged to Haydn', but there appears to be no supporting evidence). As noted above, Steffan possessed a clavichord, and Mozart's instrument, now in the Geburtshaus Museum in Salzburg, has a label signed by Constanze Mozart stating that her husband used it when composing various works in 1791. The clavichord was evidently the standard small keyboard instrument for the serious musician's study, although music specifically for clavichord was composed by Vanhal, Steffan and (almost certainly) Haydn. Charles Burney, on his visit to Vienna in 1772, saw mostly harpsichords, but called on Vanhal who played him, on his clavichord, what Burney describes as 'six lessons which he had just made for that instrument'.<sup>9</sup> Moreover what appears to be the first keyboard tutor published in Vienna, Franz Rigler's *Anleitung zum Klavier* of 1779, was obviously intended specifically for clavichord since he describes *Bebung* and *Tragen der Töne* as an integral part of *Klavier* technique.

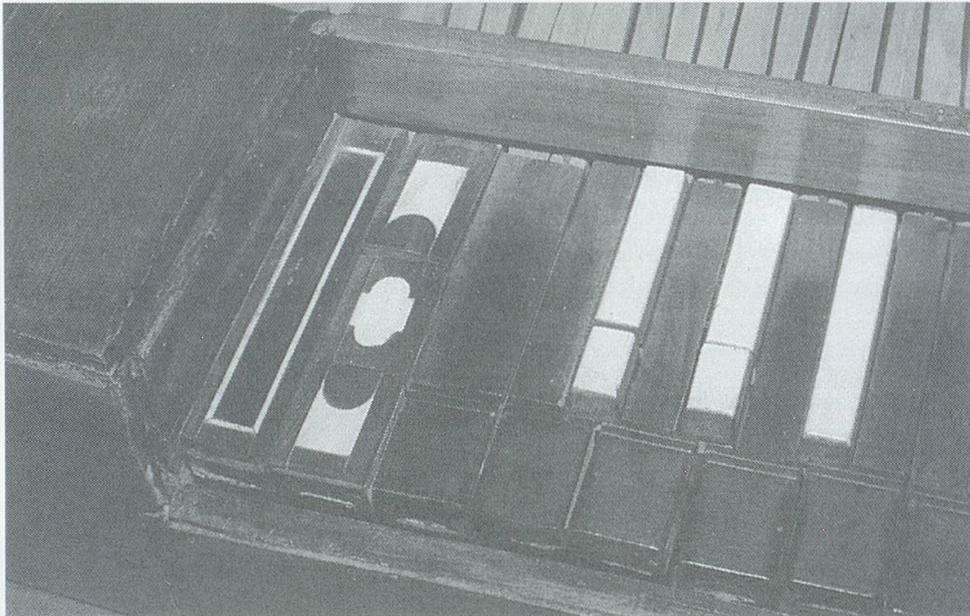


Illustration 11: Detail of clavichord, probably Viennese, c. 1750  
(private collection, England; photo by Rodger Mirrey)

As for fortepianos, it is important to realize that there is no evidence that any were made in Vienna until about 1780. It is true that one Johann Baptist Schmid

9 C. Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Provinces* (2nd edn, 2 vols., London, 1775, repr. 1959).

performed a concerto in Vienna on 6 March 1763 on what was described as ‘his new instrument called Piano et forte’.<sup>10</sup> But this was a ‘one-off’ event, and certainly did not start a fashion as has sometimes been suggested. Dittersdorf, in an article for the *Wienerisches Diarium* of 18 October 1766 called ‘On the Viennese taste in music’, does not mention the fortepiano at all, although he praises the harpsichord playing of Wagenseil and Steffan. And the many newspaper advertisements for second-hand instruments tell a very clear story: although harpsichords and clavichords were regularly for sale, not a single piano appeared before 1777, and there were only three – all of them imported – up to the end of that decade, two of which were combined with harpsichords and the third was, somewhat equivocally, described as ‘ein Pantalon’.<sup>11</sup> The first explicit ‘fortepiano’ was advertised in 1781: it was described as ‘a good fortepiano in the latest French style’ so was probably a French or English square piano.<sup>12</sup> It was not until 1786 that the number of pianos for sale exceeded the number of harpsichords.<sup>13</sup> However, there is no doubt that fortepianos were made in Vienna during the 1780s. Perhaps the best known example is Mozart’s, by Anton Walter (Illustration 12). (It is often stated that Mozart acquired his instrument in 1782, but there is little or no evidence for this date, and the first unambiguous reference to it is in Leopold Mozart’s letter of 12 March 1785.) It will be noticed how similar this fortepiano looks to the harpsichords by Leydecker, Blum and Mallek: there is no way of distinguishing Viennese harpsichords from fortepianos without looking inside at the action. This is worth stressing, for there is a temptation to identify any such instrument in a picture as a fortepiano, as for example in a well known portrait of Emperor Joseph II and his sisters, dated ‘before 1780’ (Illustration 13). It is usually taken for granted that the instrument is a fortepiano, though it could equally well be a harpsichord – indeed, if the painting really does date from before 1780, a harpsichord is much more likely.

This visual resemblance is a clue to the origin of the Viennese fortepiano, which (like its English counterpart) evolved by fitting a piano action into the standard local harpsichord design. What must be one of the very first is obviously conceived as the simplest possible adaptation, and closely resembles the Blum and Mallek harpsichords of 1778 (which helps to date it to around 1780). The action is very simple (Illustration 14): all that the maker did was to mount the hammers on what looks like a front jack-register (so the hammers face towards the player), and to use the rear register for the dampers. There is no escapement: the ‘sticker’ fixed to the back end of the key just propels the hammer towards the string. The action is nothing at all like *Prellmechanik*, where the hammers are mounted on

Illustration 13 Emperor Joseph II with two of his sisters  
(Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum)

10 P. Gumpenhuber, « Repertoire de Tous les Spectacles, qui ont été donné au Theatre de la Ville », quoted by D. Heartz, *Haydn, Mozart and the Viennese School, 1740–1780* (New York and London, 1995), p. 56.

11 Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments*, pp. 147–9.

12 *Wiener Zeitung*, 20 June 1781, quoted in Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments*, p. 151.

13 Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments*, p. 132.



Illustration 12: Fortepiano by Anton Walter, Vienna c. 1780  
(Salzburg, Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum)

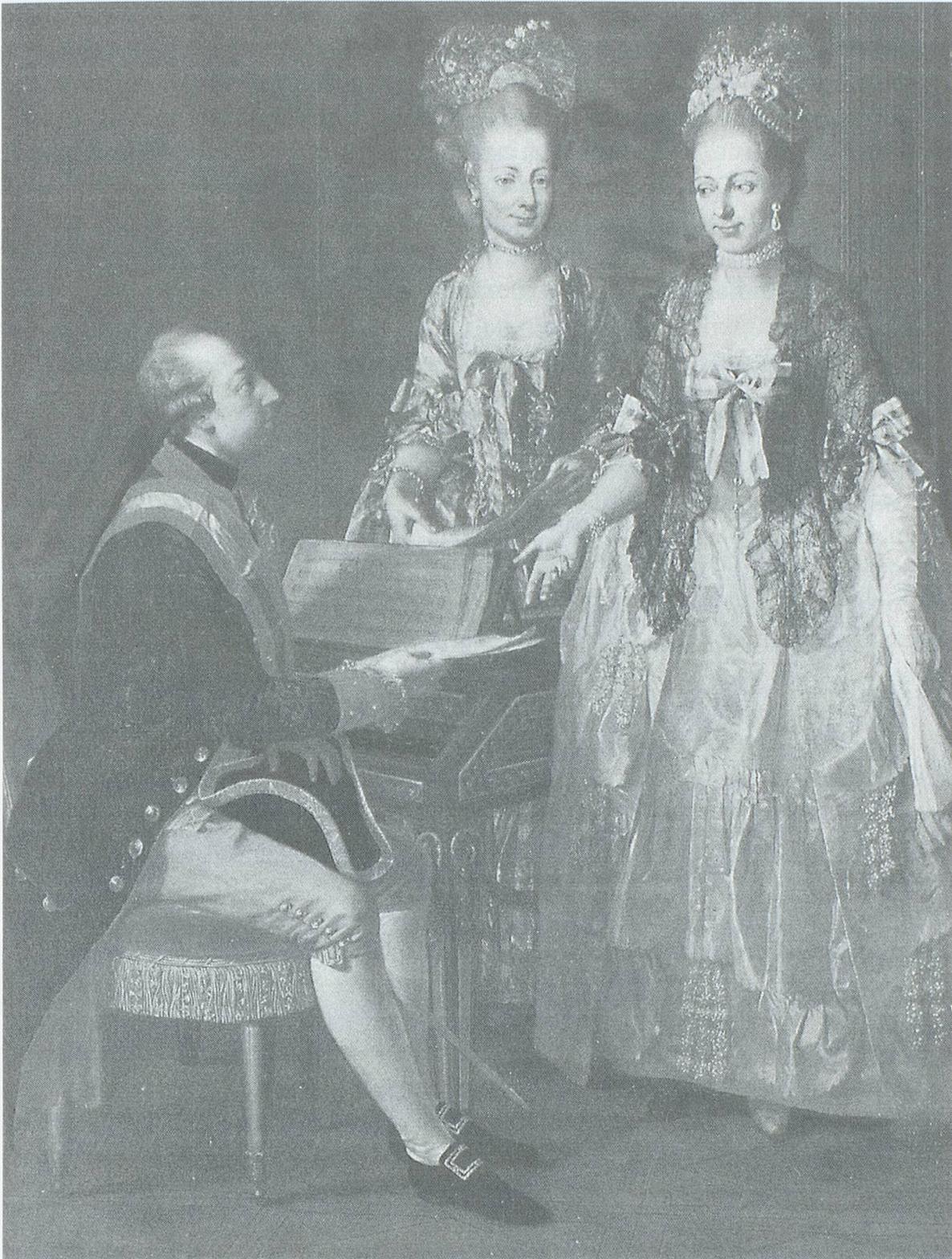


Illustration 13: Emperor Joseph II with two of his sisters  
(Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum)

the keys (as in Illustration 16), but resembles that of the earliest English square pianos except that their hammers face away from the player.

The next step was to fit this action with escapement. This was done in the 1780s by Ignaz Kober of Vienna (Illustration 15), and the action continued to be made in Vienna until well into the nineteenth century. It was used, for example, by Johann Baptist Streicher on an instrument of 1841. It is sometimes – misleadingly – called ‘Anglo-German action’, under the erroneous assumption that it is a later synthesis of the English grand action and *Prellmechanik*, whereas in fact it evolved in Vienna before *Prellmechanik* became established there.

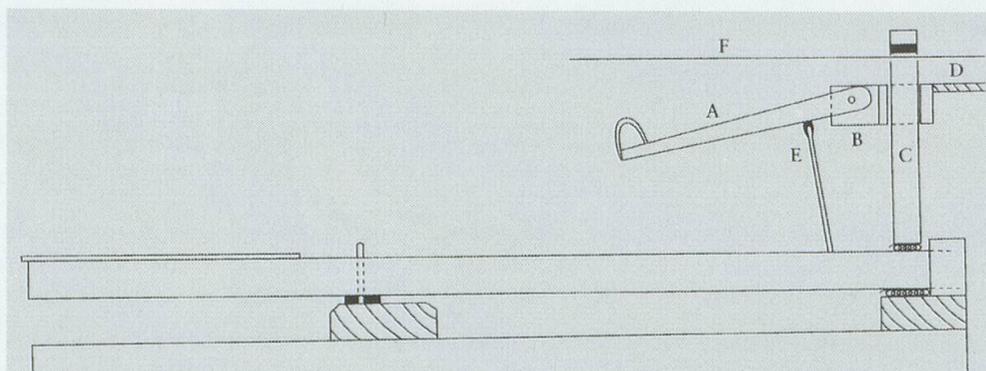


Illustration 14: Action of anonymous fortepiano of c. 1780 (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, SAM 858): (A) hammer, (B) hammer-rail with wire pivot, (C) damper, (D) soundboard, (E) ‘sticker’, (F) string

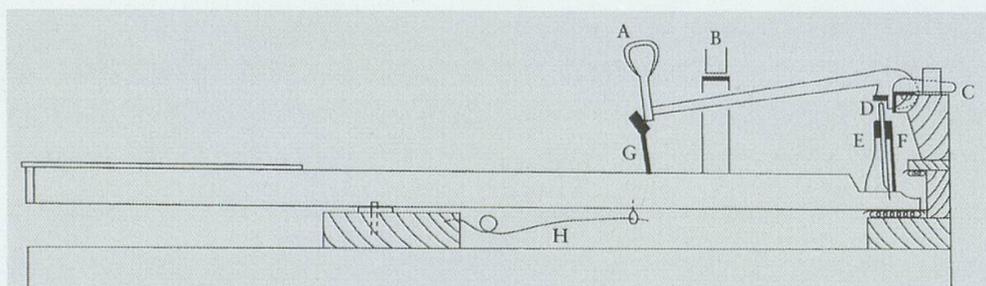


Illustration 15: Action of fortepiano by Ignaz Kober, Vienna c. 1785 (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum): (A) hammer, (B) damper-jack, (C) wooden wedge to hold hammer-pivot in place, (D) escapement lever, (E) spring, (F) stop, (G) hammer rest, (H) key-lever return spring

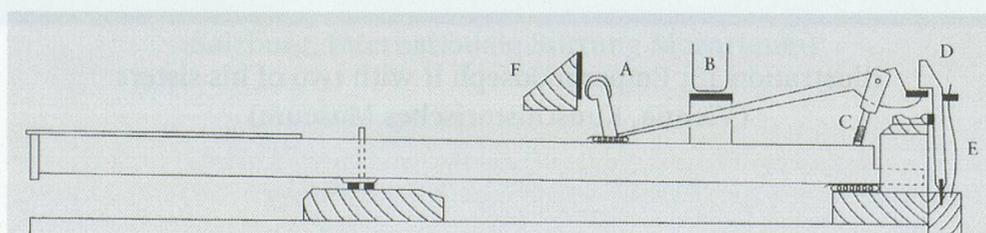


Illustration 16: Action of fortepiano shown in Illustration 12: (A) hammer, (B) damper-jack, (C) brass *Kapsel*, (D) escapement lever, (E) spring, (F) check rail

In about 1780 Johann Andreas Stein of Augsburg began to make fortepianos with *Prellmechanik* (the principle is shown in Illustration 16, though Stein's action has wooden *Kapsels* and no check). Stein's *Prellmechanik* was copied by Mallek on a fortepiano dated 1787,<sup>14</sup> and by the 1790s most Viennese makers had adopted it: Illustration 16 shows the action that Mozart's Walter now has. However, thanks to the work of Michael Latcham and Alfons Huber we now know that this action was installed after Mozart's death – though apparently in Walter's workshop.<sup>15</sup> Various clues show that Walter almost certainly made it originally with an action like that shown in Illustration 14 or – perhaps more likely – as in Illustration 15.<sup>16</sup> It is hard to tell whether the present action represents the first major conversion, or whether there might have been an intermediate stage, perhaps requested by Mozart himself when he bought the instrument, when Walter installed an earlier version of *Prellmechanik* with wooden *Kapsels*: there is a surviving Walter, roughly contemporary with Mozart's, with such an action, once again apparently replacing something earlier.<sup>17</sup> Another complication is that the dampers on Mozart's instrument were originally raised only by hand-levers, and someone later added knee-levers for this purpose. Since the workmanship does not appear to be up to Walter's usual standard, this may have happened at a different time from the alteration(s) to the main action.<sup>18</sup> But when? There has been much debate in *Early Music* and elsewhere about whether Mozart himself had the knee-levers fitted, some maintaining that it is inconceivable that he could have done without them (and he certainly saw such things on Stein's instruments when he visited Augsburg in 1777); others, however, have pointed out that there is insufficient evidence to give a definite answer and that, when the instrument was combined with a pedal-piano (as Mozart did on many occasions), hand-levers would actually have been more convenient than knee-levers, which of course cannot be used without taking one foot off the pedal board.

Leopold Mozart's letter of 12 March 1785, already mentioned above, says that his son 'has had a large pedal-piano made, which stands under the main instrument, is about two feet longer, and is incredibly heavy'; it was frequently used for concerts. The pedal department does not survive, unfortunately, but presumably the arrangement was similar to that on an instrument of around 1815 by the Viennese maker Joseph Brodmann, which consists in effect of two separate fortepianos, one played by the hands and the other by the feet (Illustration 17).

14 Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, SAM 960.

15 M. Latcham, 'Mozart and the Pianos of Gabriel Anton Walter', *Early Music* 25 (1997), 382–400; A. Huber and R. Hopfner, 'Instrumentenkundlicher Befund des Mozart-Flügels', in R. Angermüller and A. Huber (eds), *Mozarts Hammerflügel* (Salzburg, 2000), pp. 146–59.

16 A. Huber, 'Hatte Mozarts Hammerflügel ursprünglich eine Stoßmechanik?', in *Mozarts Hammerflügel*, pp. 187–99.

17 M. Latcham, 'Zur Frage der Authentizität und Datierung der Klaviere von Anton Walter zwischen 1780 und 1800', in *Mozarts Hammerflügel*, pp. 114–45. The instrument is in the Technisches Museum, Vienna.

18 Latcham, 'Gabriel Anton Walter'; Huber and Hopfner, 'Instrumentenkundlicher Befund'.



Illustration 17: Pedal-piano by Joseph Brodmann, Vienna c. 1815  
(Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum)

As for square pianos, the earliest surviving Viennese-made example is by Ignaz Kober, 1788 (Illustration 18). It looks not unlike an English instrument, with a mahogany case, although the action is the same as in Illustration 15, which remained standard on Viennese square pianos until the mid 1790s (it was not until about 1795 that any of them had *Prellmechanik*). It also has a hand 'stop' (in the form of a ring handle), not knee-levers, to raise the dampers. In the same year (1788) Haydn bought what he described as 'a new fortepiano' (possibly the first he ever possessed) from the maker Wenzel Schanz.<sup>19</sup> The price he paid (31 ducats, probably including 1 ducat for delivery to Eszterháza) is less than half

19 See Haydn's letter to Artaria of 26 Oct. 1788.

what he would have had to pay for a new grand,<sup>20</sup> so even allowing for a possible ‘trade discount’ it must have been a square – presumably, at this date, with Kober’s action. This is worth stressing, for when Haydn praised Schanz’s instruments for what he said was their ‘quite special lightness and agreeable touch’,<sup>21</sup> if his comments were based on his own instrument he was not talking about *Prellmechanik*. It is also worth pointing out that, although Wenzel Schanz’s younger brother Johann later became a well known fortepiano maker, there is no evidence that his instruments were anything like Wenzel’s – so Haydn’s recommendation has nothing to do with Johann Schanz’s fortepianos.



Illustration 18: Square piano by Ignaz Kober, Vienna 1788  
(Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum)

There is a very similar square piano by Franz Xaver Christoph, probably dating from around 1790, which is particularly interesting because it is combined with a chamber organ (Illustration 19). The piano action is very similar to that of the 1788 Kober, and once again there is only a hand-stop to raise the dampers (in the group to the left of the keyboard; the other two operate the ‘moderator’ and silence the piano department by disengaging the escapement-levers).

20 See the discussion in Chapter 8 of Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments*.

21 Letter of 4 July 1790.



Illustration 19: Combination square piano-organ by Franz Xaver Christoph, Vienna c. 1790 (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum)

There is plenty of documentary evidence, much of it from advertisements in the *Wiener Zeitung*, that there were many imported harpsichords and fortepianos in Vienna as well as locally made instruments. English square pianos seem to have been especially popular: for example ‘a genuine English-made fortepiano’ was for sale on 17 January 1784 and ‘an English pianoforte’ five months later<sup>22</sup> (at that date surely both were squares, not grands). They probably had a certain ‘snob value’, which was exploited by the music-publisher Artaria in an advertisement of 24 November 1784 (which also, incidentally, helps to show that harpsichords were far from obsolete then):

English harpsichords and fortepianos. Artaria & Co. has imported genuine English instruments, namely: 2 large harpsichords, made with every possible refinement and luxury; each has 5 stops, of which the first and second operate unison ranks, then the popular 4', buff and lute, altogether more than 12 mutations; they also have 2 pedals, enabling one to play piano and forte, and obtain different tone colours, without touching the stop knobs. One is by Kirckman, the other by Longman & Broderip, of London. Then 3 pianofortes, one by Kirckman, very luxurious with 3 stops and 2 pedals, one by Longman & Broderip, and one by Smith, which also have 3 stops but no pedals.<sup>23</sup>

22 *Wiener Zeitung*, 17 Jan. 1784 and 2 June 1784, quoted in Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments*, p. 154.

23 *Wiener Zeitung*, 24 Nov. 1784, quoted in Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments*, p. 155.

And all, no doubt, very expensive: Forkel quotes the equivalent of 200 ducats for a Kirckman harpsichord in 1782,<sup>24</sup> presumably in Leipzig (for comparison, this is twice the standard fee of 100 ducats paid to composers such as Mozart for writing an opera for the Burgtheater). This may explain why, when in 1782 Mozart's friend Baronin Waldstätten asked his advice about 'a good small pianoforte', he preferred to recommend the maker Matthias Christian Baumann of Zweibrücken<sup>25</sup> (presumably no-one in Vienna was yet making square pianos). Even a few English grand pianos, as made by Americus Backers from about 1770 and later by John Broadwood, had reached Vienna by the 1790s: Hummel gave a concert at the Burgtheater on 12 March 1794 on what the advertisement called his 'englisches grand Piano-Forte',<sup>26</sup> and we know that Haydn brought one back from one of his visits to London in the 1790s.

There were also, of course, several Stein fortepianos, for example the one Gräfin Thun lent to Mozart on several occasions in 1781, including the famous contest with Clementi on 24 December. Stein himself visited Vienna in 1777, bringing with him what a contemporary account called 'a newly invented large *Flügel* having two *Claviers* opposite each other, and therefore playable by two persons'.<sup>27</sup> It was evidently his 'vis-à-vis', and the coincidence of date suggests that it might have been the actual instrument demonstrated at the *rencontres harmoniques* (which is said once to have had a label carrying the date 1777). However, a puzzling advertisement appeared in the *Wienerisches Diarium* on 9 April 1777:

Notice. Harpsichord lovers are hereby informed that such an instrument is for sale, made according to a new design and unlike any other harpsichord, being long and rectangular. At one end there are 2 manuals, of which one plays at normal pitch but the other an octave higher, that is, it is a so-called ottavino, with a pleasing sound. The upper manual can be pushed in to couple it to the lower, and by shifting the jack registers and buff stop various mutations are to be had. At the other end, however, with one manual, is the so-called Pantalon-type instrument [that is, some sort of piano].<sup>28</sup>

Was this Stein's 'vis-à-vis'? It would be extraordinary if there were two such instruments in Vienna at the same time; yet the detailed description in the advertisement does not match the surviving instrument, which has three manuals at the harpsichord end, and 8' and 16' ranks but no 4'. Is it possible that Stein made two such instruments in 1777, the one that survives and the one described in the advertisement?

24 Forkel, *Musikalischer Almanach* (1782), p. 198.

25 Letter of 31 Aug. 1782.

26 *Wiener Zeitung*, 12 Mar. 1794.

27 P. von Stetten, *Kunst- Gewerb- und Handwerks-Geschichte der Reichs-Stadt Augsburg* (Augsburg, 1779), p. 162.

28 *Wienerisches Diarium*, 9 Apr. 1777, quoted in Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments*, p. 147. The advertisement was inserted by a Herr Dürnberger of Leopoldstadt, House No. 16.

## Summary

It is often assumed that all Viennese keyboard music from the second half of the eighteenth century was written for the standard 'Viennese fortepiano', as made c. 1800. But the period was far from being an age of uniformity, for just as great a variety of keyboard instruments was available as in former times. There was a long-standing Viennese tradition of harpsichord making, the instruments being characterized by lightly built cases of walnut, a short scale with just two 8' ranks, and a single manual with a complicated short-octave arrangement in the bass (exploited by composers from Alessandro Poglietti to Joseph Haydn). Clavichords, too, were popular in Vienna until at least the 1790s. As for fortepianos, the first Viennese-made instruments appeared in about 1780, at first as straightforward adaptations of local harpsichords with a simple *Stossmechanik* action not unlike that of English square pianos, but with the hammers pointing towards the player; only later did makers such as Hofmann and Walter begin to use the *Prellmechanik* action developed by Johann Andreas Stein of Augsburg. Imported instruments, some from as far away as London, were relatively common in Vienna, and various combination instruments such as Stein's *vis-à-vis* and Christoph's combination square piano/organ made their appearance from time to time.

Mozart owned and frequently played a separate pedal-piano, which stood under his Walter fortepiano.

## Résumé

Il est souvent admis que toute la musique viennoise de clavier de la seconde moitié du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle était écrite pour le pianoforte viennois de base, tel qu'il était vers 1800. Mais la période était loin d'être une période d'uniformité, car il y avait justement une aussi grande variété d'instruments à claviers disponibles que par le passé. La tradition viennoise de construction de clavecins existait de longue date, les instruments étant caractérisés par des caisses de facture légère, en noyer, par une courte mesure de cordes avec seulement deux jeux de 8', et un seul clavier avec une octave courte compliquée dans les graves (exploitée par les compositeurs d'Alessandro Poglietti à Joseph Haydn). Les clavicordes aussi étaient très populaires à Vienne au moins jusqu'en 1790. Quant aux pianoforte, les premiers instruments viennois apparurent vers 1780, ils ne furent, tout d'abord, que des adaptations directes des clavecins locaux avec une simple mécanique à pilotes (*Stossmechanik*) qui n'était pas différente de celle des pianos carré anglais, mais avec les marteaux dont les têtes se dirigeaient vers l'exécutant; ce n'est que plus tard que des facteurs tels Hofmann et Walter commencèrent à utiliser la *Prellmechanik* développée par Johann Andreas Stein d'Augsbourg. Des instruments importés, quelques uns d'aussi loin que Londres, étaient répandus à

Vienne, et divers instruments combinés tels que le *vis-à-vis* de Stein et le piano carré organisé de Christoph firent leur apparition de temps en temps.

Mozart posséda et joua fréquemment un piano à pédale séparé, qui était placé sous son pianoforte Walter.

Michael Lechman

It was a miracle of rare device,  
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!  
From Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Kubla Khan*, probably 1798

Johann Andreas Stein was born on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1728 in Heidelberg near Karlsruhe and died on the 29<sup>th</sup> of February 1792 in Augsburg (Ill. 1).<sup>1</sup> His initial training as an organ builder, was with his father, Johann Georg Stein (1697–1754).<sup>2</sup> On the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1748, the day Johann Andreas left home on his journeyman's travels, he bought a notebook in Karlsruhe.<sup>3</sup> The notebook, still preserved today, includes poems, sketches, anecdotes, descriptions of his journeys, brief references to the pianos of other makers including Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655–1731) and Franz Jakob Spath (1714–1786), and much other interesting material such as stringing schemes for harpsichords, pianos and clavichords. Stein used the notebook until at least 1777.

As a journeyman Stein spent nearly a year in the Strasbourg workshop of the brothers Silbermann, Johann Andreas (1712–1783), Johann Daniel (1717–1766), Johann Gottfried (1722–1766) and Johann Heinrich (1727–1799). In the notebook Stein wrote that he arrived there on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1748, three days after leaving home.<sup>4</sup> Johann Andreas and the youngest brother Johann Heinrich were

<sup>1</sup> Eva Hertz used the term *Expressivklover* in her inspired study of Stein. See: Eva Hertz, *Johann Andreas Stein (1728–1792): Eine Fehrgang zur Geschichte der Klavierbau, Wolfenbüttel and Berlin 1997*, 48 and 59. The author would like to acknowledge his debt to that study.

<sup>2</sup> In this essay, all translations are by the author unless otherwise stated. In the translations, any words such as *Piano forte* left not translated have been given in italics.

<sup>3</sup> Stein was baptized Johann Georg Andreas Stein. Usually called Johann Andreas in the literature, he is sometimes referred to as Georg Andreas. For further biographical details on Stein see: Hertz, *Johann Andreas Stein*, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup> « Georg Andreas Stein Von Heidelberg den 1 Augustus 1748 En ce jour que je m'ay suis allé quitter non père Je achete ce livre a Karlsruhe pour qu demi florin. » Johann Andreas Stein's notebook, unpublished manuscript (hereafter *The Stein notebook*), 1. I am much indebted to Wolfgang Streicher for granting me access to the notebook and for allowing my to publish material from it. The Stein notebook was explained in the twentieth century. The page numbers are used here, in my transcriptions I have followed Stein's spelling and punctuation.

<sup>5</sup> « Strasbourg Je suis arrivé le 4 me jour de mois d'Aout 1748. » See Stein, *The Stein notebook* op. cit., 9. As mentioned by Eva Hertz see: Hertz, *Johann Andreas Stein*, op. cit. « In the winter of Stein was hired by Johann Andreas Silbermann in his catalogue of organ organs: « Auf 1748 den 4 Augusti kam derselbe [Stein] zu meinem Bruder Daniel in Arben. » (On the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1748 the same [Stein] came to work for my brother Daniel.) See: Johann Andreas Silbermann,

