

Canadian University Music Review Revue de musique des universités canadiennes

Stewart Pollens. *The Early Pianoforte*, Cambridge Musical Texts and Monographs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. xx, 297 pp. ISBN 0-521-1725-5 (hardcover)

Lynda Smyth

Volume 17, Number 1, 1996

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1014702ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1014702ar>

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Publisher(s)

Canadian University Music Society / Société de musique des universités canadiennes

ISSN

0710-0353 (print)

2291-2436 (digital)

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Cite this review

Smyth, L. (1996). Review of [Stewart Pollens. *The Early Pianoforte*, Cambridge Musical Texts and Monographs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. xx, 297 pp. ISBN 0-521-1725-5 (hardcover)]. *Canadian University Music Review / Revue de musique des universités canadiennes*, 17(1), 131–134.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1014702ar>

David Schulenberg finds Robert Hill's *Keyboard Music from the Andreas Bach Book and the Möller Manuscript* to be disappointing.³ There are mistakes in pitches, ornament-signs, accidentals, beaming, and voice-leading in Hill's edition, and some of these errors seem to be taken over from previous editions of the repertoire. Nonetheless, Schulenberg welcomes the volume for the insights it provides into late seventeenth-century keyboard music, and for the "broad view that it opens onto the little-known musical world of early eighteenth-century Germany" (p. 213). He thinks that "reissued with corrections or provided with a thorough and accurate list of errata" (p. 213), the volume would be much improved. An incomplete list of errata is provided at the end of his review.

Schulenberg prefaces his review with a disquisition on editing music. He questions the fact that Hill accepts his two sources at face value; however, others who have edited some of the same repertoire from these sources, notably Georg von Dadelsen⁴ and Hartwig Eichberg,⁵ have also let questionable passages stand. In my opinion, Hill's edition is no worse than some of the readings presented in the *Neue-Bach Ausgabe*, Series V. For example, Wolff's edition of the Goldberg Variations is so flawed as to be unusable, as I have pointed out elsewhere.⁶

Bach Perspectives I is a splendid beginning for a new series. Its contributors share their new discoveries and question facts that have been accepted as truth for more than a hundred years.

Erich Schwandt

Stewart Pollens. *The Early Pianoforte*. Cambridge Musical Texts and Monographs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. xx, 297 pp. ISBN 0-521-41725-5 (hardcover).

This book debunks two major myths believed by many, i.e., that Cristofori invented the piano in 1700, and that the harpsichord was the forerunner of the piano. To do this, it traces the history of the pianoforte from its earliest known mention in 1440 through to 1763, and proves that Cristofori was the rediscoverer and popularising agent of the hammer-action principle, rather than its creator. A discussion of the copies of Cristofori instruments found in Portugal, Spain, and Germany, and the parallel development of independent piano mechanisms in Germany and France follows.

As the Associate Conservator for the Department of Musical Instruments in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Pollens has ample training and experience for the subject matter, which is based on his own thorough examinations of all

³Published by Harvard University Press, 1991.

⁴See his two-volume edition of Bach's early harpsichord works: *Fantasien, Präluden und Fugen* (Munich: Henle, 1970), and *Suiten, Sonaten, Capriccios und Variationen* (Munich: Henle, 1975).

⁵See his edition in the *Neue-Bach Ausgabe* V/10.

⁶Erich Schwandt, "Some Questions Concerning the Edition of the 'Goldberg Variations' in the *Neue-Bach Ausgabe*," *Performance Practice Review* 3, no. 1 (1990): 58-69.

known extant pianofortes in this time period. While this book is aimed specifically at technical specialists (and contains enough information to delight their hearts, such as string lengths, striking points, case dimensions, and wood types), the material is presented in an interesting way, with abundant photographs, drawings, and tables so that it is of interest to all those who are interested in early pianofortes and the music written for them.

The introduction mentions the circumstances that allowed Pollens to visit and examine the various pianos, his methods of examination, and the development of his research into a book, while the main part of the book is divided into seven chapters according to the piano's development in the various countries at different times.

The first chapter begins with a definition of 'pianoforte' and considers the origins of the keyboard. This leads into a discussion of the first mention of the pianoforte in the manuscript of Henri Arnaut of Zwolle in the fifteenth century. Four descriptions of stringed keyboard instruments found in this manuscript are given in English translation, along with their accompanying drawings, followed by the original Latin texts. Pollens then discusses the viability of the fourth type of action, which is a rebounding striking action, and the descriptions of Arnaut's *clavisimbalum* [*sic*] and *dulce melos*. His conclusion is that the four actions describe actual instruments in existence at the time, suggesting that the pianoforte was "among the first stringed keyboard instruments to be developed" (p. 25). While it is the only source extant from this era, the accuracy of Arnaut's other accounts in the manuscript lend credence to this one.¹

The second chapter looks at the pianoforte in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy before Cristofori. Documentary evidence includes letters from Cricca (the organist and instrument caretaker at the Ferrarese court) to the Duke of Modena, which mention pianofortes that needed repair. The original Italian version is given in the first Appendix. Through logical deduction, Pollens arrives at a description of the instrument type Cricca referred to, then gives the first technical description of an extant instrument—a *spinetto* in the Crosby Brown Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I find the use of the term "tangent" used in connection with a rebounding action confusing after it has been used in relation to the clavichord; nevertheless, the account is exceptionally detailed, since Pollens had free access to this instrument. His examination led him to believe this may be "the earliest surviving piano" (p. 41).

Cristofori's *Gravicembalo col piano e forte* is the subject of the third chapter. The usual date given for Cristofori's 'invention' is 1700, and literary evidence is given to prove this, including an article by Maffei—a poet, librettist, and playwright. Shorter excerpts have the Italian version immediately following, while the complete article and its notes are given in Appendices Two and Three. The reason for including the short excerpts in the original language in the text is unclear, since the book is written for English readers, but this may have been done to keep the number of appendices to a minimum.

¹Such as the description of the pipework in the organ of St. Cyr in Nevers.

A short biography of Cristofori leads into a discussion of his work history and improvements to his instruments. A detailed comparison of Maffei's article with the four extant Cristofori pianos from 1720, 1722, ca. 1725, and 1726 follows, along with a description of the provenance of the pianos and the process of restoring the 1720 piano. Photographs and diagrams abound to prove Pollens's statements.

Cristofori's main student was Giovanni Ferrini, whose work, along with that of P. Domenico Del Mela, constitutes what is known of the Florentine school of piano building. Detailed discussions of Ferrini's combination piano and harpichord and Del Mela's upright piano occupy the first part of the third chapter, while the last part comprises a brief note on the piano industry later in the eighteenth century.

Perhaps the most unusual chapter is the fourth, which amplifies the development of the pianoforte on the Iberian peninsula. Apparently the first ones were Cristofori imports and Florentine pianos purchased by Dom João V; however, indigenous makers were soon prolific. Speculation on Scarlatti's relationship with the piano leads into a comparison of two Spanish and three Portuguese pianos in the technical section of the chapter.

The sixth chapter takes the reader to Germany, and documents the facts that Maffei's article had been translated into German, and that a Cristofori piano had been imported into the country. Despite this, Silbermann was credited with the invention of the piano by Zeller, and Schröter claimed the invention for himself in 1717. The text of Schröter's claim is given in English in the chapter, while the original German version is given in Appendix Four. His drawings for hammer-action keyboards are examined in detail, followed by a review of Silbermann's sources for his keyboards and his connections to Bach and Frederick the Great. Three extant Silbermann pianos are compared to the Cristofori pianos pictured in chapter three. Many characteristics are the same, showing that although Silbermann was heavily influenced by Cristofori, he added his own improvements. Of the many instrument makers that flourished in Germany as the piano gained in popularity, Friederici was well known, and three *Pyramid* pianos attributed to him are explicated, followed by an account of the only extant Socher piano, which, because of its 1742 label is generally considered to be the oldest extant square piano. Pollens, however, views this allegation "with great suspicion" (p. 202).

The final chapter covers the pianoforte in France, beginning three hundred years after Arnaut's description in the first chapter, with Jean Marius's four drawings for piano actions first published in 1735 (posthumously). The original text, as before, is printed in Appendix Six. The earliest pianos actually manufactured in France, however, appear to be from 1759. Due to the strong supremacy of the harpsichord, the piano did not become popular until later in the century, and many of the instruments came from England. Surviving French pianos within the time limitations of the book do not exist, and Pollens has resisted the temptation to discuss later instruments.

The short conclusion highlights the national developments discussed in the body of the book, as well as the history of the pianoforte in England (since the

material on England is too limited for a separate chapter) and traces the rise of the piano in public estimation. The format involves endnotes rather than footnotes, which renders the body of the book easier to read. The bibliography is selective, but excellent.

I found this book to be very thorough and detailed, yet so well presented as to be enjoyable by readers from many areas. While it is certainly a wonderful resource for the technician, it is also of interest for performers and historians interested in the early pianoforte. Pollens's description of the sound quality of the instruments wherever possible, and the music written specifically for these early instruments is especially useful, increasing the scope of the book. His research methods are meticulous and consistent, and well-documented by tables, diagrams, original manuscripts, and photographs, so that the reliability of his statements cannot be questioned. I would recommend this book to all concerned with the early pianoforte.

Lynda Smyth

John Rink and Jim Samson, eds. *Chopin Studies 2*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. x, 253 pp. ISBN 0-521-41647-7 (hardcover).

Chopin Studies 2, the companion to Cambridge University's first, analytically-centred volume of Chopin studies (1988), encompasses a wide spectrum of subject matter and methodology relating to three main fields of inquiry: reception history, aesthetics and criticism, and performance studies. The present volume comprises a series of twelve essays—by Jim Samson, Andreas Ballstaedt, Anne Swartz, Jeffrey Kallberg, Karol Berger, Anthony Newcomb, Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, Edward T. Cone, Carl Schachter, L. Henry Shaffer, David Rowland, and John Rink—with an appendix by Jeremy Barlow.

I. Reception History

The topic of Chopin reception is first approached by Jim Samson, with an informative introductory section on nineteenth-century reception history. While Samson's essay offers some insightful theories on the implications of reception studies for music history and analysis, the general overview of Chopin reception is perhaps *too* general. Instead of offering a brief synopsis of Chopin reception by French critics, German publishers, Russian composers, and English amateurs, as Samson has done, a more effective strategy may have been to focus on a single receptive field, critics for example. Such a study could compare critical reception in France, Germany, Russia, and England, and theorize as to the reasons behind any discrepancies.

"Chopin as 'salon composer' in nineteenth-century German criticism," by Andreas Ballstaedt, documents recurrent references to the salon milieu in German criticism of Chopin's music, but provides little evidence to support the author's assertion that such references held negative connotations for the composer. Ballstaedt's text selection, which excludes journal articles and reviews other than extended essays, is questionable. Anne Swartz explores