

Florence G treau, ed. *Musique–Images–Instruments* N  11: *Le pianoforte en France 1780–1820* (Paris: CNRS  ditions, 2009). 286 pp. 35 .

Taking a fresh look at period instruments, techniques and practices – apart from their socio-historical contexts alone – historically informed approaches are no longer the province of early music alone. Historically informed scholarship opens up new perspectives in musical authenticity, by drawing on organology, iconography, history and music history, musical analysis, aesthetics and performance practice. The eleventh volume of *Musique–Images–Instruments*, ‘*Le pianoforte en France: 1780–1820*’ (Pianoforte in France: 1780–1820), addresses a theme somewhat neglected by recent research, which has tended to focus on the mid-nineteenth century, as well as on English and Austro-German areas. But France at the turn of the nineteenth-century is a place and time rich in unprecedented innovation and experimentation – at least as far as the complete evolution of the pianoforte is concerned.¹

Created in 1995 and subtitled ‘*Revue fran aise d’organologie et d’iconographie musicale*’, *Musique–Images–Instruments* is published under the supervision of IRPMF (*Institut de Recherche sur le Patrimoine Musical en France* – UMR 200). Twelve volumes have now been published, all addressing topics closely related to both organology and musical iconography², thus explaining how unusually sumptuously illustrated this unique series of books is. Significant space is also given to international scholars and to English-language writings, generally nearly as important as French ones.

As Christophe Coin³,  ric de Visscher⁴ and general editor Florence G treau point out in their editorial introduction, the fifteen articles gathered here, nine of which in French and six in English, make up the proceedings of a symposium organized in La Borie en Limousin in April of 2007, and entitled ‘*Existe-t-il une  cole fran aise de piano (1780–1820)?*’ (Does a French Piano School (1780–1820) exist?), though this volume’s content does not entirely cover this question. The texts’ linear progression offers readers much freedom to appreciate the diversity of intertwining views, suggesting three complementary research areas, which will guide the present review, and respectively aimed towards socio-historical and aesthetic context, specifically organological inquiry, and their relationship to issues of musical repertory.

Such a study, centred on the birth and early development of the pianoforte at the turn of the nineteenth-century, must include an analysis of the socio-historical and aesthetic context in which these developments took place.

¹ For works that have addressed this general topic, see in particular Catherine Gasghidina and Jean-Louis Jam, eds., *Aux origines de l’ cole fran aise de pianoforte* (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2004), and *Le pianoforte en France: ses descendants jusqu’aux ann es trente* (Paris: Agence culturelle de Paris, 1995).

² These volumes have covered a wide range of historical periods, ranging from Renaissance to nineteenth century, and subjects: new timbres, regional schools and traditions, musical instrument collections, pianoforte and orchestra.

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⁴  ric de Visscher is director of the *Mus e de la Musique* (Paris), which has a large collection of pianofortes, several of which are discussed in the volume under review here.

Closely related to historical methods of musicological research, the articles relevant to this topic are exclusively based on the analysis of extra-musical objects such as literary texts, paintings and engravings, as well as various archives documents.

A perfect introduction to the volume, Manuel Couvreur's article, 'Éléments de réflexion sur l'esthétique des Lumières et la naissance du pianoforte' (Elements of Reflection on the Enlightenment's Aesthetics and the Birth of the Pianoforte), situates the pianoforte in its philosophical and aesthetic context: 'Est-il possible de lier [...] l'émergence d'un nouvel instrument avec celle d'une nouvelle génération de penseurs?' ('Is it possible to link [...] the emergence of a new instrument with that of a new generation of thinkers?', p. 11). According to Couvreur, the blossoming of the pianoforte would have been favoured by Rousseauist aesthetics, linked to subjective emotion and singing. The author also explains that it would have taken advantage of the abandonment of traditional *mimesis* for the benefit of the aesthetics of the sublime, thus leaving room for the artist's sensibility, and would result from adapting the instrument to both large concert hall acoustics and the intimacy of domestic practice.

Showing great erudition, Michael Latcham's article, 'In the shadow of the enlightenment; stringed keyboard instruments in Diderot's *Encyclopédie* and its derivatives', consists of a chronological analysis of articles from this literary corpus dealing with such types of instruments. Diderot's monumental work⁵ constitutes an inescapable reference point for the definition of that period's knowledge. Unsurprisingly, the article's conclusion confirms the poor scientific quality of later works,⁶ compared to the initial version: 'of the versions of the *Encyclopédie*, only the original at least set out to follow the principles of the Enlightenment; the rest, through their infidelity to those principles, remain in the shadows.' (p. 45.)

In 'Les images de pianistes en France, 1780–1820' (Portraits of Pianists in France, 1780–1820), Florence Gétéreau delivers some results of her work centred on pictorial representation of musicians on the pianoforte. The author is currently developing the corpus of portraits on which this study is based, and it would have been interesting to learn more about its methods of constitution. Gétéreau's description and analysis of paintings bring to light three main functions of the pianoforte: as 'instrument de représentation' ('instrument of representation', p. 142) for society women and professional women musicians like the singer Rosalie Duplant and the pianist and composer Hélène de Montgeroult; as an expression of 'l'harmonie des liens familiaux' ('harmony of family links', p. 142); and as a symbol of both musical inspiration and social rank for composers like Steibelt, Dussek, Boieldieu and Hérold.

⁵ Cf. Denis Diderot et d'Alembert, eds., *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une société de gens de lettres* (Paris: Briasson, David, Le Breton and Durand, 1751–7; Paris: Le Breton, 1765).

⁶ Cf. *Supplément à l'encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une société de gens de lettres* (Paris: Panckoucke, Stoupe & Brunet; Amsterdam: Rey, 1776–7). *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire universel raisonné des connoissances humaines, mis en ordre par M. De Felice* (Yverdon: 1770–80). *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une société de gens de lettres. Mis en ordre & publié par M. Diderot; & quant à la partie mathématique, par M. d'Alembert. [...] Nouvelle édition* (Geneva: Pellet, 1777–9; Lyon: le Roy, 1780–81). *Encyclopédie méthodique, ou par ordre de matières: par une société de gens de lettres, de savans et d'artistes* (Paris and Liège: Panckoucke and Plomteux, 1782–91).

In his 'Piano business in England and France', David E. Rowland adopts a less strictly musicological posture,⁷ given his interest in the way economic factors 'affected the establishment of a distinctively French piano industry in the period 1780 to 1820.' (p. 127.) In the light of events linked to revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods, the author analyses the progressive transition from English dominance to French empowerment and domination of the European pianoforte market. It would be a mistake to underestimate the importance of economics in this matter. Rowland offers here new and valuable insights regarding the international reach of firms like Clementi and Pleyel, whose business played a decisive role in the development of the piano in France.

Finally, Frédéric de La Grandville examines 'La coexistence du clavecin et du piano au Conservatoire de musique de Paris de 1796 à 1802' (Coexistence of the harpsichord and piano at the Conservatoire de Paris from 1796 to 1802). The archival documents of the first years of this institution reveal a transitional period, which is visible in the flexibility within instrumental terminology, in some confusion within 'mixtes' ('mixed', p. 156) musical works, and in the simultaneous use of both types of instruments. This article also examines the collective methods of teaching, requiring significant attendance time as well as 'pédagogie par la répétition' ('pedagogy through repetition', p. 154). The definitive passage from harpsichord to piano reflects, finally, a change in social and aesthetic models.

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Organological aspects are set at the very heart of another subset of articles, which approach the pianoforte essentially from the technical standpoint of instrument making. Focusing on the instruments themselves, these studies complement another research area centred on the acoustics of the piano,⁸ which generally ignores the diachronic perspective adopted here.

Jean-Claude Battault's work, entitled 'Les facteurs de pianoforte des provinces de France, 1760–1820' (Pianoforte Makers from the Provinces of France, 1760–1820), fills a large gap within research usually centred on Parisian musical life. His inventory in progress of provincial piano makers and instruments is based on the study of written sources making explicit reference to the pianoforte and on close organological scrutiny of the preserved instruments themselves. This work shows a decentralization of the know-how involved in piano-making, especially in Strasbourg,⁹ in other north-eastern French towns of Alsace and Lorraine, and to a lesser extent in Lyon. Nevertheless, the choice of a historical frame exceeding the limits imposed by the present volume would have been justified.

Stewart Pollens's technical and concise article, 'Cristofori and Erard', explores details of pianistic mechanism, showing the relationship between the systems respectively elaborated by these factors, which aimed principally at controlling dynamics and repetition speed: 'Although Erard's repetition action may be viewed as a development of the English grand action, it can also be seen as a

⁷ See his earlier works, such as David E. Rowland, *A History of Pianoforte Pedalling* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and *Early Keyboard Instruments: A Practical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁸ See for example Anders Askenfelt, ed., *Five Lectures on the Acoustics of the Piano*, <www.speech.kth.se/music/5_lectures/>, accessed 2 June 2012.

⁹ Five historic square pianos are preserved in the Musée des Arts décoratifs of Strasbourg.

re-introduction of the design Cristofori employed in his early action [...], in which the escapement lever is mounted on an intermediate lever.' (p. 80.) Several construction plans lend support to this argument.¹⁰ The particularly explicit Figure n. 6 superimposes both mechanisms, thereby demonstrating surprising similarities to within about 20°.

'Le piano en forme de clavecin Érard' (The Piano *en forme de clavecin* Érard) is examined by Thierry Maniguet from the beginning of its production, in 1791, to 1839, at which point the appellation '*en forme de clavecin*' is once and for all replaced by '*piano a queue*' (grand piano). Destined for the concert hall and therefore requiring increased sound level, this type of piano led the firm's innovations. Maniguet studies chronologically the different types of mechanisms, whose successive improvements – enhancing dynamics, touch and sound control – were diffused by musicians like Haydn, Beethoven and Liszt, and would find successful realizations in the romantic piano. Organological aspects, based on preserved Érard grand pianos,¹¹ are carefully related to economic dimension – although most different in nature – by several diagrams representing the evolution of the firm's production.

Finally, in a rich and technically highly informed article entitled 'Erard and Broadwood in the Classical era: two schools of piano making', Christopher Clarke returns to the notion of piano school: 'while there are undeniable English antecedents to the classical French school, it had its own particular identity and artistic aims right from the start.' (p. 99.) The inventiveness of Sébastien Érard, connoisseur of piano making history, contrasts with John Broadwood's adaptation and improvement approach, as showed by comparing their instruments. Remarkably accurate organological examination is based on several analyses of making plans and observations of instrumental organs. The autonomy of both piano schools is the result, according to the author, of musical and artistic intention specific to each piano maker.

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The question of the relationship between the pianoforte and its musical repertory follows logically from the two previous sections. The articles relevant to this topic seem to be the most important contributions of the volume, as far as musical composition and performance are concerned. Not only do they make us discover – or rediscover – a somewhat unfamiliar repertory, they also suggest relevant links with musical history, organology and musical analysis.

Tilman Skowronek's article, 'Beethoven and the Orchestral Piano', departs from the general theme of the volume to reveal insights on interrelationships between instrument construction and compositional process in the piano works of Beethoven. Contrary to what its title leads to believe, this article does not focus strictly on the notion of orchestral piano,¹² which is limited here to the sound colour created by the pianist. Based on events of Beethoven's life well known through his correspondence, the article aims to show that 'the idea that the "orchestral piano" [...] was a product of Beethoven's efforts is more complicated than much of the literature leads us to believe.' (p. 182.) Skowronek offers here a new interpretation of the historical facts, demythologizing the composer's

¹⁰ It would have been helpful to clarify the abbreviations in these plans.

¹¹ Among the 38 pianos identified here, several belong to individual collections, but six are preserved in the Musée de la Musique of Paris.

¹² See Hans Hering, 'Orchestrale Klaviermusik', *Acta musicologica* 46 (1974): pp. 76–91 for another understanding of the notion of *orchestral piano*.

influence on piano makers concerning the improvement of contemporary instruments. According to the author, the shift in Streicher's piano-making must be considered in a larger context, including the influence of firms like Breitkopf & Härtel, and the competition with 'the French and English building tradition' (p. 189).

In 'Louis-Joseph-Ferdinand Herold (1791–1833) et le piano' (Louis-Joseph-Ferdinand Herold (1791–1833) and the Piano), Hervé Audéon looks at Herold's life and work as a pianist, rather than as an opera composer, the role in which he is better known. Following his Parisian musical education, Herold's Italian stay coincides with a period of intense pianistic activities. His pianistic work, generally underestimated today, had in his day an attested place in artistic life. His style is varied; not limiting himself to quotations and evocations characteristic of *caprice* and *pot-pourri*, he reveals many influences and innovations, ranging from the 'influence du bel canto italien' ('influence of Italian bel canto', p. 215) and *rubato*, to the using of pianistic resources and the invention of a new key. Musical examples recall Chopin and Liszt, and illustrate the precursory character of Herold's pianistic writing.

Maria von Epenhuysen Rose's article, '*Un clavecin piano et forte, d'une harmonie ronde et moëlleuse: Aesthetic features of the early French piano*', is closely related to the idea of a French piano school between 1780 and 1820. After a historical survey, the author examines a set of musical features characteristic of a specifically French taste. The many examples shed light on the notions of sustained and continuous sound, resonance, texture and imitation. This sound-quality-based aesthetics, being the opposite extreme of gratuitous virtuosity, certainly influenced composers like Mozart and Clementi and seems to have contributed to the emergence of a romantic pianistic style.

Pointing out a lack of terminological clarity concerning the notion of *fantasia*, Jean-Pierre Bartoli, in 'Réflexion sur l'évolution de la fantaisie pour piano au début du XIX^e siècle en France' (Reflection on the Evolution of Piano Fantasia in the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century in France), revisits this repertory by defining the formal stakes in the genre's evolution and distinguishing two categories. Faithful to its improvisational origin, the *fantasia-caprice* is a '[morceau unitaire] de proportions courtes ou moyennes' ('[single piece] of short or medium proportion', p. 193), like Pffingler's *Fantaisie* or Steiblet's *Trois caprices ou préludes* Op. 24. The *fantasia-sonata*, '[constituée] de plusieurs mouvements [...] et d'ampleur plus vaste' ('[constituted] of several movements [...] and of larger proportions', p. 193), progressively established itself as an alternative to sonata, as do Dussek's *Fantaisie* Op. 76 and especially Hummel's *Fantaisie* op. 18. Formal dimension as evidence of musical unity and coherence is used for a critical assessment of this rarely played repertory, and shows the existence of a reciprocal movement between 'la tradition de l'improvisation notée' ('the tradition of notated improvisation', p. 196) and the formal liberation characteristic of Romanticism.

In 'La pédalisation dans les premières méthodes destinées au pianoforte: une spécificité française?' (Pedalling in the First Pianoforte Tutors: A French Specificity?), Jeanne Roudet examines pedalling in the beginning of the nineteenth century through the teaching repertory. On the one hand, the development of the picturesque, as a typically French aesthetic value, coincides with timbral research in which pedalling plays an essential role. On the other hand, 'l'histoire de la pédalisation s'inscrit dans le débat sur le sens de la musique' ('pedalling history is part of the discussion on musical meaning', p. 228),

thus justifying the adoption by the author of a semiotic approach. Pedalling, on the boundary of musical writing, is closely related to the creation of auditory images, more precisely of topical figures, resisting instrument and performer changes, and principally based on timbral contrast. The musical sensibility of such reflection will no doubt delight connoisseurs of this repertory.

Finally, Pierre Goy studies 'L'utilisation des registres dans la musique française de pianoforte au début du XIX^e siècle' (The Use of Registers in French Piano Music in the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century), also through piano tutors. After comments about instruments, register types and action mechanisms – which leads inevitably to terminological difficulties, the author successively examines the method books of Milchmeyer, Steibelt and Adam, in which the ideas of vocal and instrumental imitation, as well as timbre associations, are ubiquitous. Admittedly, Goy underlines the role of contrast effects and the relation to affects, and he uses his practical knowledge in the field of period piano performance to complement the commentaries of quite long quotations from these tutors.

Through its diversity and erudition, this volume is particularly aimed at music historians, but it will also be of interest to anyone concerned with the pianoforte of this period. Many historical sources, some of which unpublished, are given to the reader and discussed in detail. A few needless repetitions underline many of the convergence points between the articles, which may be expected in a volume that collects the conference papers of fifteen international scholars. The volume is completed with the authors' biographies and the articles abstracts, all reproduced in both French and English. A bibliography, which was missing, is now available online¹³ along with a few other electronic resources, in particular the complete versions of Latcham's and Goy's articles.¹⁴ However, the URLs quoted throughout the work do not allow access these documents, which could disorient some readers. Although the reading flow is somewhat broken by a few misprints and untranslated quotations,¹⁵ the refined general presentation of the volume emphasizes as much the many illustrations as the content of the text itself, paving the way for an emerging research field.

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¹³ Florence Gétreau, 'éléments de bibliographie sur le pianoforte en France, 1780–1820: texte complémentaire', <www.irpmf.cnrs.fr>, accessed May 12, 2012.

¹⁴ Cf. <www.irpmf.cnrs.fr>, accessed May 12, 2012.

¹⁵ See, for example, the untranslated French quotations in Latcham's and Clarke's English articles (pp. 18–45 and pp. 98–125), and the untranslated German quotation in Battault's French article, p. 49.