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of uncertain financial support for the arts, when museum collections of musical instruments can all too easily lose out in the stiff competition for funding.

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Clemens von Gleich. *A Checklist of Pianos: Musical Instrument Collection Haags Gemeentemuseum*. Checklists of the Musical Instrument Collection of the Haags Gemeentemuseum, 1. Edited by Rob Van Acht. The Hague: Haags Gemeentemuseum, 1986. 119 pp.; 78 black-and-white photographs. ISBN: 90-6730-045-4 (soft cover). Hfl 20.00.

The *Checklist of Pianos* is a paperback book of humble proportions with qualities of which to be proud. Its 119 pages contain checklist descriptions and black-and-white photographs of the seventy-three pianos and three practice keyboards in the Musical Instrument Collection of the Haags Gemeentemuseum in the Netherlands. The *Checklist* is published in English and includes a glossary that translates important technical terms into Dutch, German and French. The pianos in the collection are presented chronologically within the main piano types: grand, square, large upright, pianino (small upright) and practice keyboards.

The black-and-white photographs are of the highest professional quality. In fact, they are better than many of those found in some expensive hardback piano catalogs. Obviously much effort was spent to get such clear, crisp and well-lit photographs. The *Checklist* does not, however, include photographs of the interiors or actions of the pianos in the collection.

The same single-column checklist format is used for each instrument, allowing researchers to compare each piano with its neighbors easily and scientifically. The measurements of the cabinet dimensions, sizes of the keys and string lengths given for each piano will be much appreciated by scholars.

An obvious omission from the checklist format is any description of cabinet style. I feel that at the very least the woods used should have been listed; I suppose the writer and editor felt that the excellent photographs said it all, but most musicians are not knowledgeable enough to identify types of wood just by looking at photographs. Also missing from the checklist format is a mention of the materials used in important parts

of the actions: the dampers (cloth or felt), hammer coverings (felt or leather), and string metal (brass, copper, iron, steel). The condition of the pianos (whether in original state or refurbished) is not mentioned, though since the pages have lots of blank space, this information could have been included without crowding.

There is a brief preface mentioning the origins of the collection, and an alphabetical list of the piano makers whose work is included in the collection; a bibliography of twenty-five sources guides the reader to more detailed information on pianos and other museum collections. A second volume covering the clavichords, harpsichords and organs in the Haags Gemeentemuseum is planned.

The content of public piano collections often depends upon who is donating instruments and what pianos are locally available. As is to be expected, the Haags Gemeentemuseum is entirely European except for one American square piano by an unknown maker and two practice keyboards. Pianos by Dutch makers are abundantly represented in the collection; the Netherlands did not play a large part in the world of piano technology development and piano manufacture, but there have been small companies making pianos in the Netherlands from early times. Dutch pianos are equal in quality to the instruments of the giant piano makers in England, France and Germany.

The collection also has other strengths. Square pianos of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, especially those of England and the Netherlands, are well represented. Small uprights tend to be relatively overlooked by collections, which seem to dote on concert grands and pianos with "art" cases; but the fifteen pianinos in the Haags Gemeentemuseum collection offer a view of such pianos of humbler aspirations. The collection has an impressive three Pleyel grands from ca. 1844, ca. 1847, and 1879. But Erard, a grand piano that was more influential and more often preferred by nineteenth century virtuosos, is represented by a lone 1808 example that does not contain the Erard repetition action, invented at a later date, which brought lasting fame to the Erard company.

A Checklist of Pianos gives us a peek into the piano section of a wonderful museum. The Haags Gemeentemuseum has done a service to the advancement of musicology and to musical instrument scholars by presenting *all* their pianos in superior black-and-white photographs and a concise, consistent checklist format.

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