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Stein's "Favorite Instrument": A Vis-à-vis Piano-Harpsichord in Naples

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NORBERT HADRAVA, AUSTRIAN DIPLOMAT IN BERLIN during the 1770s and in Naples during the 1780s, was an amateur musician of varied interests, many of them having to do with musical instruments.¹ He played and composed for the keyboard; he improved a hurdy-gurdy, which he called the *lira organizzata*, and taught the king of Naples how to play it. As self-appointed agent for the great instrument-builder Johann Andreas Stein among Neapolitan music-lovers, Hadrava arranged for the purchase and shipping of instruments by land and sea from Stein's workshop in Augsburg to Naples. In doing so he played an important role in the consolidation of the piano's triumph over the harpsichord in Italy and in the enhancement of Stein's international prestige.

Hadrava's letters to his friend the German clergyman-musician Johann Paul Schulthesius, who served as Lutheran pastor to a German congregation in Livorno, represent an important source of information about musical life in Naples during the 1780s and about Hadrava's own activities, including his piano-importing business.² A letter of 1782 contains useful information about the international piano trade and about

1. Of Hadrava's life and diplomatic career little is known beyond what is said in a very short article about him in Ludwig Gerber's *Historisch-Biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler* (Leipzig, 1790–1792). His residence in Berlin and Naples is documented in the compilation, published annually in Vienna, of Imperial-Royal government personnel, the *Hof- und Staats-Schematismus*. He is mentioned for the first time as *Legationssekretär* in the Imperial-Royal embassy in Berlin in 1776; he is listed under the same title in 1778; but his whereabouts during 1779 and 1780 are unknown. From 1781 to 1791 he is listed as *Legationssekretär* in Naples. According to Otto Friedrich Winter, *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Länder*, vol. 3: 1764–1815 (Graz: Böhlau, 1965), Hadrava served, in the absence of an ambassador, as the Viennese chargé d'affaires in Naples from 1789 to 1791.

2. Hadrava's letters to Schulthesius are preserved in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, Signature S.M. 8979. An edition by Giuliana Gialdroni of the complete correspondence is forthcoming in *Le fonti musicali in Italia: studi e ricerche*. Excerpts from several letters were quoted without attribution in Carl Friedrich Cramer's *Magazin der Musik* 2 (1784–85): 59–70; and a monograph on the pianist-composer Johann Franz Xaver Sterkel includes substantial extracts from the letters; see Augustin Scharnagl, *Johann Franz Xaver Sterkel: Ein Beitrag zur Musikgeschichte Mainfrankens* (Würzburg: Tritsch, 1943), 75–85.

the increasingly important role that the piano played in Neapolitan musical life during the 1780s. Another letter, written in 1789, largely concerns a vis-à-vis piano-harpsichord by Stein that Hadrava had helped a Neapolitan nobleman to obtain. It contains descriptions not only of Stein's instrument but also of a recital in which Hadrava played it, first by himself and then together with Giovanni Paisiello. This letter is of special interest to historians of the piano because one of two surviving vis-à-vis instruments by Stein is preserved today in Naples. That instrument may well be the one described by Hadrava in 1789.

Hadrava's correspondent may have had a special interest in Stein's pianos because he too had played on one. An amateur keyboard player and composer of some distinction, Schulthesius played a recital before Archduchess Amalia of Parma and her brother Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, according to a report in Carl Friedrich Cramer's *Magazin der Musik*. The report, from Livorno, may well have been written by Schulthesius himself:

Some further news about a German, the Lutheran preacher Schultesius in Livorno. On the 10th of August [1782] he enjoyed the honor of playing his sonatas for an hour before the Archduchess of Parma and the Grand Duke of Tuscany; he played on a fortepiano by Stein, whose instruments are especially valued here [in Tuscany? in Italy?], and have been purchased by both the Grand Duke of Tuscany and the Queen of Naples (who paid 200 ducats). The Archduchess herself turned the pages on the music stand for him, and after he, together with Herr Mayer, had concluded the concert with a sonata for four hands by J. C. Bach, he was presented with a gold watch by his princely audience.³

3. "Auch noch etwas von einem Deutschen, dem lutherischen Prediger Schultesius zu Livorno. Er genoß den 10ten August die Ehre, vor der Erzherzoginn von Parma und dem Großherzog von Toscana eine Stunde lang von seinen Sonaten auf einem Steinischen Fortepiano zu spielen, die überhaupt hier sehr geschätzt werden, und von denen sowohl der Großherzog hier, als die Königin von Neapel welche zu 200 Ducaten das Stück bekommen haben. Die Erzherzogin wandte ihm selbst die Blätter auf dem Pulpete beym Spielen um, und er ward, nach dem er zum Beschluß mit Herrn Meyer eine Sonate für 4 Hände von J. C. Bach gespielt hatte, von den Herrschaften mit einer goldenen Repetiruhr beschenkt." *Magazin der Musik* 1: 170–71. That Schulthesius contributed to the *Magazin der Musik* is suggested by Cramer's publication of several excerpts from Hadrava's letters to Schulthesius. For a brief discussion of Schulthesius's career and of his Piano Sonata, op. 2, see this author's "The Tuscan Piano in the 1780s: Some Builders, Composers, and Performers," in *Early Music* 21, no. 1 (1993): 4–26.

Hadrava as Piano Importer in the Early 1780s

The German keyboard virtuoso and composer Franz Xaver Sterkel visited Naples in 1781–82 and displayed his talents in several recitals and in the composition of an opera, *Il Farnace*, for the Teatro San Carlo. He met Lady Catherine Hamilton, considered by Charles Burney, who heard her in 1770, as the finest harpsichord player in Naples.⁴ By 1782 Lady Hamilton's instrument of choice was apparently the piano, for it was on pianos (including one by Stein) that she and Sterkel played together before the royal court, according to an account in the *Magazin der Musik*:

[Sterkel] had the pleasure of playing double sonatas and concertos with her [i.e., Lady Hamilton] before the Queen [Maria Carolina of Naples] and the Grand Duke and Duchess of Russia; and the memory of such sweet, heavenly harmony drawn by four expert hands from pianos by Stein and imported from England will always be treasured.⁵

Whether these “Doppelsonaten und Concerte” were works for two pianos or for two players at one piano is unclear.

Like many other German musicians visiting Naples, Sterkel had dealings with Hadrava, who, typically, came away from the experience deeply offended. An anonymous letter harshly critical of Sterkel as performer and composer appeared in the *Magazin der Musik* in 1783.⁶ The author of this letter was almost certainly Hadrava; its tone and style are very close to what one finds in his letters to Schulthesius. Sterkel, responding to the attack in the same journal, attributed it to “a certain German” resident in Naples and claimed that it was motivated, not by musical considerations, but by the author's personal hostility towards him, hostility that had been clearly apparent during his visit to Naples.⁷ Hadrava assumed that Sterkel was referring to him; and, in a letter to Schulthesius dated Caserta, 11 December 1784, he denied that he had written the letter critical of Sterkel. But he acknowledged hostility to

4. Charles Burney, *Music, Men and Manners in France and Italy 1770*, ed. H. Edmund Poole (London: Eulenburg, 1974), 180–81.

5. “Letzterer [i.e., Sterkel] hatte das Vergnügen mit ihr vor dem König und der Königin und den Großfürstlichen Herrschaften von Rußland Doppelsonaten und Concerte zu spielen—und das Andenken einer so süßen himmlischen Harmonie aus Steinischen und Englischen Pianofort's vom 4 Meisterhänden gezogen, wird immer im Andenken.” *Magazin der Musik* 1: 342.

6. *Ibid.*, 574–78.

7. *Ibid.*, 969–71.

Sterkel and complained at great length of having been mistreated by him during his visit to Naples. Sterkel, among many other misdeeds, seems to have tried to grab a share of Hadrava's piano business by offering Stein's pianos at a lower price than Hadrava's (an excerpt of Hadrava's letter, with English translation, is in the appendix).

Sterkel had arrived in Naples, according to Hadrava, with "a miserable clavichord." If he had tried to display his virtuosity on this instrument he would have failed to impress the Neapolitans, not only because of its poor quality or condition, but also because the clavichord's sound in general did not appeal to Italian taste. As evidence of this Italian antipathy to the clavichord, Hadrava cited his own instrument as "my outstanding Berlin clavichord, which was a favorite instrument of the famous Kirnberger and on which Friedrich Bach played with inexpressible pleasure; yet it failed to please the Italians here."⁸

Sterkel performed in Naples not on his clavichord but on a Stein piano that Hadrava had helped an unnamed royal lady-in-waiting (presumably a Neapolitan noblewoman) to buy shortly before Sterkel's arrival; and Sterkel played this instrument "with real pleasure." But instead of expressing his gratitude to Hadrava for having brought this instrument to Naples, he offered to obtain another, better piano from Stein for the lady-in-waiting and at a better price than Hadrava's. Sterkel's lower price, according to Hadrava, failed to take into account costs of transport and of customs duties; with these included, the price of a Stein piano in Naples came to the equivalent of 400 Viennese Gulden, which was the price that Hadrava offered his Neapolitan clients.⁹

8. Of several clavichord builders who worked in Berlin during the second half of the eighteenth century, the one who made Hadrava's instrument may have been Johann Augustin Straube (1725–1802), who built harpsichords and pianos as well as clavichords. The theorist and composer Johann Philipp Kirnberger (1721–1783) helped Straube with the design of some of his instruments, according to Donald H. Boalch, *Makers of the Harpsichord and Clavichord*, 2d. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974). We might expect Kirnberger to have looked with particular favor on a clavichord to which he contributed his theoretical knowledge. Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach (1732–1795), the third of the four sons of Johann Sebastian Bach to become professional musicians, served the Bückeburg court from 1750 until his death. Hadrava presumably became the owner of his Berlin clavichord during the 1770s, when he served in the Austrian embassy in Berlin.

9. Hadrava's price seems reasonable when compared to those of one of Stein's most prominent rivals in the international piano business. Anton Walter, the leading piano maker in Vienna during the 1780s, claimed in 1790 that "he sold pianofortes to Poland, Saxony, Prussia, to the [Holy Roman] Empire, and to France and Italy, for 80 and 100 ducats." (See the present writer's "Anton Walter, Instrument Maker to Leopold II," in this

Hadrava turned briefly from his diatribe against Sterkel to correct an error in the *Magazin der Musik* report, quoted above, of Schulthesius's concert on a Stein piano. The article claimed that Queen Maria Carolina of Naples had paid 200 ducats for a piano by Stein. Hadrava explained that he had arranged the sale of two Stein pianos to the royal court: one for the Queen and the other for her eldest daughter, Princess Maria Teresa. Both instruments cost the normal 400 Gulden, a price less than half that which, according to Hadrava, the Queen had recently paid for a big English piano, "which however is not by any means to be compared with a Stein instrument."

Hadrava's claims are less interesting for what they say about piano prices in Naples than for what they tell us about the increasingly important place of the piano at the Neapolitan court during the 1780s. Maria Carolina's patronage of piano makers parallels that of her brother Leopold, grand duke of Tuscany, with the important difference that Leopold bought pianos mainly from Tuscan instrument builders whereas Maria Carolina looked abroad for pianos. (Neither Maria Carolina nor Leopold, although both grew up in Vienna, seems to have shown much interest in the pianos of Walter or other Viennese makers.) The parallel goes further. The Tuscan composers Salvador Pazzaglia and Filippo Gherardeschi, music-teachers of Leopold's eldest daughter Maria Teresa, wrote keyboard music specifically intended for the piano and dedicated that music to their grand-ducal pupil.¹⁰ Similarly, the Neapolitan composer Vincenzo Orgitano, music-teacher of Queen Maria Carolina's eldest daughter Maria Teresa, wrote vast amounts of piano music and dedicated it to his royal pupil.¹¹

JOURNAL 15 (1989): 32–51, esp. p. 39.) Eighty ducats was (in 1790) the equivalent of 360 Gulden; 100 ducats the equivalent of 450 Gulden. It is not clear whether these prices included shipping costs. If they did not, Walter's prices were considerably higher than Stein's (just as they were generally higher than those of other Viennese piano-makers); if they did include shipping, Walter's prices extended from somewhat lower than Stein's to somewhat higher.

10. Rice, "The Tuscan Piano," 9–14.

11. Orgitano's activities as music teacher and composer of chamber music for the Neapolitan princess Maria Teresa, and the relationship between these activities and the musical taste of Queen Maria Carolina, have been explored by Hanns-Bertold Dietz in his article "Instrumental Music at the Court of Ferdinand IV of Naples and Sicily and the Works of Vincenzo Orgitano," in *International Journal of Musicology* 1 (1992): 99–126. Orgitano served Maria Teresa for about a decade (from about 1780 until her departure for Vienna in 1790), composing no less than eighty-five works for the princess. Most of these works involve the piano: sonatas for piano and violin; trios for piano, violin, and

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In 1789 Hadrava had another opportunity to associate himself closely with Stein, not only as businessman but also as performer and composer. Again the experience left him angry, frustrated, and eager to share his feelings with Schulthesius.

On 27 April 1789 Hadrava wrote a long letter that deals in large part with a vis-à-vis piano-harpsichord by Stein (an excerpt from the letter, with English translation, follows in the appendix). The vis-à-vis Flügel, as Hadrava called it, is one of many eighteenth-century keyboard instruments in which the mechanisms of the piano and harpsichord are combined.¹² The instrument is rectangular and consists of a grand piano and a grand harpsichord joined together, with separate sets of strings, and with keyboards at the shorter sides of the rectangle. The vis-à-vis can be played by a single player at either end or by two players facing one another (hence the term vis-à-vis). The instrument that Hadrava obtained from Stein had a piano keyboard at one end and two keyboards at the other. At the end with two keyboards one could play the harpsichord (the lower keyboard), or the piano (the upper keyboard linked to the piano action at the other end of the instrument), or both simultaneously.

Hadrava described the vis-à-vis that Stein sent to Naples as the builder's "favorite instrument"; he claimed that Stein had built it "with the greatest diligence over several years as a test of his wide knowledge of his craft" and that he had showed the instrument "to all friends and music-lovers to their satisfaction, applause, and admiration." These claims may well involve some exaggeration; but it is certainly true that Stein had

cello; divertimenti for piano solo; and sonatas for two pianos. It was presumably for Maria Teresa's Stein piano that Orgitano wrote much of this music, and on this instrument that she played it.

12. Eva Badura-Skoda has argued that such "compound instruments" were common in the eighteenth century and that Mozart, among other musicians, used them frequently. See "Mozart and the Compound Pianoforte," forthcoming in the Kirkendale Festschrift (Florence: Olschki), and "The Viennese Piano in the Eighteenth Century," forthcoming in *Essays on Music in Eighteenth-Century Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). On compound instruments in Paris see John Koster, "Foreign Influences in Eighteenth-Century French Piano Making," in *Early Keyboard Journal* 11 (1993): 7–38; and, on an early Italian compound instrument by Ferrini of Florence, see Luigi Ferdinando Tagliavini, "Giovanni Ferrini and His Harpsichord 'a penne e a martelletti,'" in *Early Music* 19, no. 3 (1991): 398–408.

been interested in compound instruments and active in their design and construction for many years, as Eva Hertz demonstrated in her pioneering study of Stein's life and works.¹³

In 1769 Johann Adam Hiller published in his *Wöchentliche Nachrichten* a description (probably written by Stein himself) of a Stein instrument said to represent an improvement on the piano.¹⁴ Parts of this account were reprinted three months later in the *Augsburger Intelligenzblatt*, where Stein's instrument was given the name *poli-toni-clavichordium*.¹⁵ By combining a harpsichord and a piano, each with its own strings and case, in a single instrument, the poli-toni-clavichordium offered players the piano's dynamic range and flexibility and the harpsichord's brilliant sonority. The original description suggests that the poli-toni-clavichordium was not a vis-à-vis, but rather a two-manual harpsichord ("Das obere Instrument") mounted on top of a single-manual piano ("Das untere Instrument"), with all three keyboards operated by a single player.¹⁶

Certainly by 1777 Stein had constructed a vis-à-vis instrument. In that year he brought "an instrument with two keyboards [*Claviere*] opposite each other" with him on a trip to Vienna, according to Paul von Stetten, author of an important eighteenth-century chronicle of the arts and crafts in Augsburg. Stetten described the instrument as "newly invented."¹⁷ Since this account does not specifically say that the instrument in question combined a harpsichord and a piano, it could have been a

13. Eva Hertz, *Johann Andreas Stein (1728–1792): Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Klavierbaues* (Wolfenbüttel: Kallmeyer, 1937; and Würzburg: Mayr, 1937), 44–52.

14. "Nachricht von Verbesserung des Pianofortinstruments," *Wöchentliche Nachrichten* 3 (July 1769): 32, 40. Badura-Skoda quotes and discusses Hiller's article, which was apparently unknown to Hertz, in "Mozart and the Compound Pianoforte" and in "The Viennese Piano."

15. 5 October 1769; quoted by Hertz, *Stein*, 45–46.

16. Hertz, *Stein*, 46, called the Verona vis-à-vis "very similar" to the poli-toni-clavichordium as described in the *Augsburger Intelligenzblatt*; but later (p. 47) she warned that there is no reason to assume the poli-toni-clavichordium to be a vis-à-vis instrument. See also Boalch, *Makers*, 171; Badura-Skoda, "Mozart and the Compound Pianoforte" and "The Viennese Piano"; and Michael Litcham, "The Pianos of Johann Andreas Stein," forthcoming in *Early Music*. Litcham suggests 1777 as the date of Stein's invention of the vis-à-vis.

17. Paul von Stetten, *Kunst- Gewerb- und Handwerks-Geschichte der Reichs-Stadt Augsburg* (Augsburg, 1779), 162; quoted by Hertz, *Stein*, 47, and by Litcham, in "The Pianos of Johann Andreas Stein." Litcham usefully emphasizes the significance of the phrase "neu erfundenen." I have followed his translation.

double piano or a double harpsichord. But Hertz may well be correct in suggesting that the instrument brought by Stein to Vienna in 1777 is the vis-à-vis piano-harpsichord that is now preserved in Verona.¹⁸

Stein displayed another vis-à-vis instrument in Augsburg in 1783, according to Stetten, but again his description leaves doubt as to the mechanisms involved:

Among the newest works of craftsmanship of our famous Herr Stein are a *Clavecin organisé* built for a customer in Sweden and a so-called vis-à-vis or *Doppelflügel*, which, on account of its special mechanism, can be played by a single person on both sides at once, thereby producing a great variety of registers: not by artificial means but rather from natural permutations of the instrument itself; and further, a piano forte conventional in appearance but different in tone. The crescendo and diminuendo are of such compass that from the most sublime fortissimo the tone gradually diminishes until it becomes nothing at all. During the exhibition of works of craftsmanship held in 1783 the artist had the opportunity to display to music-lovers these last two in his house.¹⁹

Stetten's reference to an exhibition in which Stein displayed his vis-à-vis to music-lovers (*Liebhabern*) reminds one of Hadrava's statement that Stein had shown "to all friends and music-lovers (*Liebhabern*)" the instrument that he later sent to Naples. This suggests the possibility that the vis-à-vis instruments described by Stetten and by Hadrava were one and the same.

The Neapolitan nobleman whom Hadrava helped to buy a vis-à-vis piano-harpsichord from Stein was not himself a competent keyboardist. Hadrava, always eager to involve himself in the affairs of others, took upon himself the task of learning about the instrument and its effects and of demonstrating them to Neapolitan musicians and music-lovers. The purchase of the instrument was accompanied and followed by correspondence between Hadrava and Stein in which the builder explained how the instrument was to be played. Eighteenth-century musicians and instrument makers felt a mutual kinship of a kind that is less in evidence today. Hadrava seems to have sought the same kind of close relationship with Stein that Mozart, visiting Augsburg in 1777, had enjoyed.

Hadrava explored the newly-arrived vis-à-vis, "completely alone and in a locked room." He was "thrilled and delighted by its excellent effect."

18. Hertz, *Stein*, 47.

19. Paul van Stetten, *Nachtrag zur Kunst und Handwerksgechichte* (Augsburg 1788), 56; quoted by Hertz, *Stein*, 48.

So were his listeners, once he felt able to demonstrate the instrument to others.

Hadrava responded to the splendid qualities of Stein's instrument by composing a sonata "in which its variety of registration and its nuances of expression are introduced." In the course of his letter he described the sonata in enough detail to allow us to identify it as one of two printed sonatas by Hadrava.²⁰ Although Hadrava adjusted the sonata in preparation for publication so that it could be played on instruments other than the vis-à-vis piano-harpsichord (there are no specific instructions within the sonata itself for the use of piano or harpsichord, and the title-page makes no reference to the vis-à-vis), the sonata's preoccupation with dynamic contrast may well reflect the instrument that inspired it and for which it was composed (fig. 1).

Hadrava had opportunity to perform his sonata on the vis-à-vis in a recital, the description of which is the most interesting part of his letter. The recital, which took place before and after a lunch to which several distinguished music-lovers were invited, was organized so that Giovanni Paisiello, the most famous composer then resident in Naples, could see and hear Stein's instrument. With a good sense of the theatrical, Hadrava waited as long as he could before going to the vis-à-vis. Only after "everyone was satisfied with seeing the instrument" did he actually play.

Hadrava began at the piano keyboard with two movements of his sonata in D major: the second movement, an *Adagio sostenuto* in A, followed by the third movement, an *Allegretto*, also in A. It is easy to see why he played these movements together. The slow movement, short and intensely lyrical, ends on an open cadence (V of A major), with the instruction "*Attacca subito.*" If the second movement of a four-movement cycle is a slow movement, the third movement usually returns to the key of the first. Hadrava's *Allegretto* is an exception, unless one thinks of the *Adagio sostenuto* and the *Allegretto* as an indivisible movement pair, the *Adagio* serving as a kind of introduction to the *Allegretto*.

Hadrava's statement that he played the *Adagio* "very softly" is especially helpful for our understanding of the beginning of the *Adagio*, where the printed score has no dynamics. Hadrava must have played the

20. *Sonata per il clavicembalo, o piano-forte* (Naples, n.d.), of which only one copy is known to survive, in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.



FIGURE 1. Title page of Norbert Hadrava's Sonata per il clavicembalo, o piano-forte, written for Johann Andreas Stein's vis-à-vis piano-harpsichord and performed on this instrument by the composer. This and the following facsimiles courtesy of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

first two measures of this tender melody quietly, so as to enhance the effect of forte in the more passionate passage in parallel thirds that follows (fig. 2). The term *sostenuto* in the tempo indication of the printed score is clarified by Hadrava's statement that he wanted his listeners to "notice the sustaining of the tones and the reverberation of the harmony" during his performance of this movement.

Hadrava's gentle Adagio sostenuto requires little in the way of dynamic extremes; the score includes pianissimo only once (at the end) and fortissimo not at all. The Allegretto that immediately follows, on the other hand, can almost be called a study in the contrast of extreme dynamics, as Hadrava suggested when he wrote about his performance of this music: "I also observed the piano and pianissimo, the forte and fortissimo." The principal melody is a pastoral idea, in which a four-measure phrase labeled *piano* is followed by a four-measure phrase labeled *fortissimo* (fig. 3). Later in the movement one moves within five measures from piano to pianissimo to forte to fortissimo: in other words, a sudden diminuendo followed by a sudden crescendo. Hadrava's "changes of tempo" can only refer to a passage about two-thirds of the way through the movement, where a return to the main theme is preceded by a written-out cadenza labeled *a piacere*. The four fermatas associated with this cadenza must signal the "changes of tempo" that Hadrava displayed in his performance of the Allegretto.

Having demonstrated to Paisiello and the rest of the listeners the sound of Stein's piano, Hadrava moved to the other end of the instrument "and sat down at the side where two manuals are located, namely the pianoforte above and harpsichord below, together with its registers: the octave [i.e., a 4' stop] and the *Büffel Zug*, as Herr Stein has called it." The *Büffel Zug* (literally, buffalo stop) could have been either a buff stop (which brings a piece of leather into contact with each string) or what French harpsichord makers called the *peau de buffle*, a stop that brings into play a set of leather plectra instead of the regular quills. Both the buff stop and the *peau de buffle* caused the strings to produce a gentle, lute-like sound when plucked.²¹ Hadrava inserted a brief terminological discussion in which he explained that since the Italian word

21. Michael Latcham (personal communications, 11 May and 18 May 1994) suggested the possibility that the *Büffel Zug* was a *peau de buffle*. He pointed out that Stein's use of a *peau de buffle* would not be surprising in view of his familiarity with French harpsichords.

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The image shows a page of musical notation for the second movement of Hadrava's Sonata. The score is written for a double keyboard instrument, with two staves per system. The tempo is marked 'Adagio Sostenuto'. The music features complex textures with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. Dynamic markings include *f* (forte), *p* (piano), and *pp* (pianissimo). The score concludes with the instruction 'Attaca Subito'.

FIGURE 2. Hadrava, Sonata, second movement.

bufalo (which he misspelled "buffalo") has comic connotations, he preferred to use the term *harmonica* for the Büffel Zug.

Hadrava continued his recital with a performance of the first and last movements of his sonata, *Allegro* and *Prestissimo*. In these movements he exploited the instrument's potential for coloristic contrast: "I introduced a very unusual effect now and then, and played the fortepiano with one hand at the upper keyboard and the Flügel [i.e., the harpsichord] with the other hand, and *vice versa*."

Hadrava told Schulthesius that the copy of the sonata sent with his letter contained annotations concerning "the various changes of registration" demonstrated during his performance. Because that particular copy has apparently not survived, we will probably never know exactly how Hadrava exploited the contrast between harpsichord and piano that the double keyboard of Stein's instrument offered him. However, various hints are to be found in the printed score of the first movement. The lyrical (and highly conventional) melody that follows the movement's opening chords has no dynamic marks, but its expressive *appoggiaturas*

The image shows a page of musical notation for the third movement of Hadrava's Sonata. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The score is arranged in two systems, each with a treble and bass clef. The music is characterized by intricate rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes. Dynamic markings include *p*, *f*, and *fmo*. The piece ends with the instruction 'Volsi presto'. A small number '7' is visible in the upper right corner of the first system.

FIGURE 3. Hadrava, Sonata, third movement.

and broken chord accompaniment would probably sound better on the piano than on the harpsichord (fig. 4). Hadrava may have played the second theme of this sonata-form movement, labeled *pianissimo* in both the exposition and the recapitulation, either on the harpsichord with Büffel Zug or very gently on the piano.

Passages in the closing material Hadrava may have played with one hand on the piano keyboard and the other on the harpsichord (the “very unusual effect” mentioned in his account); these are the only passages in the sonata in which the left hand and the right hand have different dynamic indications. In a passage appearing in both the exposition and the recapitulation, the broken chords in the left hand are labeled *piano*; the fragmentary right-hand melody, in which trills are an important element, is labeled *forte* (fig. 5). In performing this passage, Hadrava may have played the piano keyboard quietly with his left hand and the harpsichord keyboard with his right. This idea is followed in the recapitulation by another passage in which the left hand and right hand have different dynamics; here the right-hand part, probably intended for the

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Allegro molto

FIGURE 4. Hadrava, Sonata, first movement, beginning.

piano, features a quiet melody in parallel thirds while the left-hand part, probably intended for the harpsichord, accentuates the principal points of harmonic arrival with loud, resonant chords.

Earlier in his letter Hadrava had expressed admiration for the instrument's "true pianoforte and the harpsichord, and then the uniting of both in a *tutti*." He could have meant a *tutti* created by playing simultaneously, at the harpsichord end, the harpsichord with one hand and the piano with the other. But it is also possible that the two manuals at the harpsichord end could be coupled, allowing Hadrava to play both harpsichord and piano with both hands. Such a device would be especially suitable for grand fortissimo passages like that at the end of the first movement of his sonata and for the massive chords with which the sonata begins.

Improvisation a due

So far Hadrava's audience had not heard both sides of the vis-à-vis played together; and evidently Hadrava had not brought music for two



FIGURE 5. Hadrava, Sonata, first movement, conclusion.

keyboard instruments with him to the recital. When someone asked to hear Stein's instrument played by two performers, one at each end, the only way to satisfy his curiosity was by improvisation. Paisiello, up until now part of the audience, joined Hadrava in an elaborate improvisation that lasted almost half an hour.

Paisiello and Hadrava were acquainted. In an earlier letter Hadrava had recorded a conversation with Paisiello about a performance of Gluck's *Alceste* in Naples in 1785 ("Io non comprendo la musica di Gluck," Paisiello had admitted to Hadrava on that occasion).²² Hadrava had opportunity to hear many operas by Paisiello during his years in Naples. Their acquaintance and Hadrava's knowledge of Paisiello's music must have contributed to their ability to improvise with one another at such short notice.

22. Letter no. 8 (29 October 1785).

Hadrava's account of his improvisation with Paisiello is a rare and valuable description of eighteenth-century improvisation by two performers at once. The improvisation took place, not surprisingly, within the context of conventions associated with notated music. By beginning with music in a slow tempo, Paisiello communicated to Hadrava the idea of a slow introduction to a fast movement. From the style in which Paisiello played (and also probably because he was known primarily as a composer of operas), Hadrava understood that Paisiello had in mind theatrical music: the Grave evidently conveyed the anticipatory excitement of an operatic overture. Hadrava consequently also expected that the fast movement to follow, like most single-movement overtures and the first movements of most multi-movement overtures, would be in sonata form. Thus the basic plan of the first movement, the framework in which Paisiello and Hadrava improvised, was clear to Hadrava from the moment that Paisiello began his Grave.

By 1789 most overtures were in one movement. But both Paisiello and Hadrava knew of the tradition of the three-movement operatic overture; Paisiello had written many such overtures early in his career. When Hadrava proposed "a new theme, as if for the second movement of the overture," Paisiello must have understood his intentions and responded suitably to Hadrava's theme, which was probably a light, lyrical melody of the kind often found in the slow movements of Italian overtures of the 1770s.

From Hadrava's description of the way in which he and Paisiello ended their improvisation, we know that they returned eventually to a fast tempo, by analogy to the third and final movement of an operatic overture. Hadrava recognized Paisiello's "chords with *contrattempi*" at the final cadence from similar devices in his operas. Again notated music—operatic music—played an important role in the improvisation. Without knowledge of Paisiello's operas Hadrava might not have been able to join fully in this brilliant conclusion.

After lunch Hadrava and Paisiello improvised again, but this time their imaginations were dulled by the process of digestion, and they had little success. This led Hadrava to express to Schulthesius an extraordinary wish: "I would like to enjoy the most perfect pleasure at this excellent instrument: that of improvising for a whole hour—at night and without lights—with Mozart or Kozeluk." There is something vaguely and charmingly erotic about Hadrava's conception of improvisation at the vis-à-vis. He imagined it taking place in the dark: a private, intimate

encounter between two sympathetic minds, based on conventional gestures and expectations and yet somehow new, leading to a climactic fortissimo, and followed by the blissful astonishment and mutual gratitude that he and Paisiello expressed silently to each other in the afterglow of their improvisation.²³

Disillusionment

At the beginning of his discussion of Stein's vis-à-vis piano-harpsichord Hadrava told Schulthesius that the experience had "embittered" the pleasure that the instrument would otherwise have given him. Not until near the end of the account do we learn what went wrong. Hadrava published the sonata inspired by Stein's instrument, dedicating it to the instrument's noble owner (without asking first for permission, as was the normal practice) and presenting to him personally a copy of the engraved sonata. He was naturally crushed when the owner, who apparently expected some kind of payment from Hadrava, expressed disappointment that the package contained music rather than money. (The only surviving copy of Hadrava's sonata is dedicated to the Neapolitan nobleman Signor Don Onorato Gaetani, who may have been the owner of Stein's vis-à-vis; but it is also possible that the owner was some other Neapolitan nobleman and that, after being so insulted by him, Hadrava rededicated the sonata to Gaetani.)

Hadrava was even more offended when the instrument's owner, forced to move from one palace to another, began negotiating to sell the instrument that Hadrava had gone to such trouble to obtain for him. Afraid "that this famous masterpiece by Stein could perhaps fall into the hands of an inexperienced man who did not know how to appreciate it," Hadrava offered to buy the instrument himself, and the owner, after

23. Hadrava was not alone in preferring to improvise at night. Although he tended to compose (that is, to put his ideas down on paper) in the morning, Mozart like to improvise at night, according to the first biographical sketch published after his death, in Friedrich Schlichtegroll's *Nekrolog auf das Jahr 1791* (reprinted as *Mozarts Leben* [Graz 1794; facs. reprint, Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1974]), 32: "From childhood he preferred to play during the night; if he sat down at the keyboard at 9 in the evening, one could not persuade him to get up before midnight; and even then one had almost to force him away, otherwise he would have improvised the whole night through." If we understand the word *man* (one) in this account to mean principally Constanze, trying to persuade Wolfgang to come to bed, we may be able to sense again the erotic connotations of improvisation, which for Mozart represented a solitary alternative to the marital bed.

some hesitation, agreed to sell it to him. We might have thought that an enthusiastic admirer of Stein's artistry would be delighted at this turn of events; but not Hadrava. "I had to pay, not only the price of the instrument, but also the costs of shipment and customs duties required here," he complained to Schulthesius. "Now you see, my dear friend, how far the friendship of noblemen here extends, and what one should expect from the politeness that they show you."

Did Hadrava value his association with a nobleman more highly than his own possession of what he called "one of the most outstanding instruments of Germany"? Perhaps there was another reason, unstated by Hadrava, why he was uncomfortable with owning Stein's instrument and why he should seek to blame someone else for this situation. Famous all over Europe, Stein could pick and choose his customers, and he probably preferred to sell his best instruments to royalty, nobility, and to famous performers. He sent his vis-à-vis piano-harpsichord to Naples with the understanding that it was to be in the possession of a nobleman. He would probably not have sent it had he known that it would end up in the hands of a commoner and musical amateur. That is perhaps why one may sense some embarrassment in the way Hadrava ended his account, as if he had reason to fear Stein's reaction to the episode: "Our friend Stein knows nothing of this yet, and so far I have had no time to send him a detailed report."

The Naples Vis-à-vis

Two vis-à-vis piano-harpsichords by Stein are known to survive, both in Italy. One is in the Accademia Filarmonica in Verona (Clinkscale no. 6); the other in the Conservatorio di Musica San Pietro a Majella in Naples (Clinkscale no. 12).²⁴ The Verona vis-à-vis, completed in 1777, has been studied carefully and is well known.²⁵ It is a more complicated instrument than the one described by Hadrava, with three keyboards at

24. Martha Novak Clinkscale, *Makers of the Piano 1700–1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 274–75.

25. See John Henry van der Meer and Rainer Weber, *Catalogo degli strumenti musicali dell'Accademia Filarmonica di Verona* [Verona 1982], appendix 2: 92–106; van der Meer, *Musikinstrumente von der Antike bis zum Gegenwart* (Munich: Prestel, 1983), 257; Michael Latcham, "The Check in Some Early Pianos and the Development of Piano Technique around the Turn of the Eighteenth Century," *Early Music* 21, no. 1 (1993): 28–42 (esp. 36–37); and the same author's "The Pianos of Johann Andreas Stein."

the harpsichord end (a double-manual harpsichord and a piano keyboard). On the other hand, the Naples vis-à-vis has never been fully described in print by a scholar who has studied it at first hand.²⁶ Could this instrument be the one that Stein sent to Naples in the late 1780s and on which Hadrava played his sonata and improvised with Paisiello?

Of the history of the Naples vis-à-vis very little is known for certain. According to a tradition that can be traced back to Francesco Florimo's voluminous *La scuola musicale di Napoli e i suoi conservatorii*, published from 1881 to 1883, Emperor Joseph II donated the instrument to the Conservatorio della Pietà dei Turchini shortly after a visit to Naples. Michele Scherillo, an early historian of Neapolitan opera, affixed (at some time unspecified by Florimo) an inscription to a wall behind "the grand piano with three keyboards," by which Florimo presumably meant the Stein vis-à-vis now in the Conservatorio. The inscription, as transcribed by Florimo, reads as follows:

The Emperor of Austria Joseph II, who in Naples in 1774 [*sic*] had refused the splendid celebrations prepared for him by King Ferdinand Bourbon and by Queen Carolina, his [Joseph's] sister, found himself so richly compensated by the concerts of music at the Conservatorio della Pietà dei Turchini when he wished to see at first hand this sanctuary of harmony, and he admired so highly the talent of those students and the skill with which they cultivated the finest of the fine arts, that on his return to Vienna he sent them, in remembrance of his visit, this piano with three keyboards, two with hammers and one with quills, a very new invention at the time. Paisiello, Fenaroli, Tritto, then Zingarelli in this College of S. Pietro a Majella, and after his death Comm[endantore] Florimo, archivist of this College, have always jealously guarded this instrument as testimony to the high esteem in which foreigners hold the Neapolitan school of music.

To whom does it fall, if not to the students of this College, honorably to maintain this school, which emperors preferred to their own more splendid pleasures?²⁷

26. The Naples vis-à-vis was briefly described by Ettore Santagata in his catalogue *Il Museo Storico Musicale di S. Pietro a Majella* (Naples: Giannini, 1930), 93–95. Among the few scholars who have examined the instrument since Santagata was Edwin M. Ripin, whose papers (in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) contain a few notes concerning it. I am grateful to John Koster (personal communication, 29 March 1994) for telling me about Ripin's notes and for summarizing their contents. Donald H. Boalch may have seen the Naples instrument; but his short description in *Makers*, 171, is largely focused on the harpsichord component. Van der Meer described the instrument briefly in *Musikinstrumente*, 257.

27. "L'IMPERATORE D'AUSTRIA GIUSEPPE II che in Napoli nel 1774 avea ricasato le splendide feste che dal Re Ferdinando di Borbone e dalla Regina Carolina sua sorella

The credibility of this account is called into question by the misdating of Joseph's visit. The emperor visited Naples in 1769 and again in 1784. If Joseph did indeed send the Conservatorio a piano, how did Scherillo know that he sent Stein's vis-à-vis? We might expect Joseph to have sent a Viennese piano rather than an instrument made in Augsburg. Perhaps Scherillo or some earlier student of the Conservatorio's history assumed that the institution's most illustrious benefactor must have donated its grandest keyboard instrument.

In October 1994 I briefly examined the Naples vis-à-vis.²⁸ I found Stein's instrument in a small, locked room in the Conservatorio. Both harpsichord and piano actions had deteriorated somewhat since restoration by Horst Rase in 1970. But the instrument's ingenious design, extraordinary craftsmanship, and—to the extent that I could coax it to speak—its brilliant, rich sound were still apparent.

The Naples vis-à-vis is dated 1783. Two printed paper labels glued to the soundboard (one, partly destroyed, at the piano end; one, fully legible, at the harpsichord end) read: *Jean André Stein / Faiseur d'Orgues, des Clavicins / et Organiste à l'Eglise des / Minorittes, à Augsbourg / 1783*. The

erano state a Lui preparate, sen trovò tanto compensato dai concerti musicali del Conservatorio della Pietà dei Turchini, quando volle veder appresso quel santuario dell'armonia, e cotanto ammirò l'ingegno di quegli alunni e l'arte onde coltivano la più gentile delle Arti Belle, che di ritorno in Vienna mandò loro per suo ricordo questo pianoforte a tre tastiere, due a martello e uno a penna, nuovissima invenzione in quel tempo: Paisiello, Fenaroli, Tritto, poi Zingarelli in questo Collegio di S. Pietro a Majella e dopo la morte di lui l'Archivista d'esso Collegio Comm. Florimo custodirono sempre gelosamente questo strumento, come contrassegno dell'alta estimazione degli stranieri della scuola di Musica Napolitana. A chi tocca, se non agli alunni di questo Collegio, mantenere in onore questa scuola che gl'Imperatori preferirono ai loro stessi più splendidi piaceri?" Quoted by Francesco Florimo, *La scuola musicale di Napoli e i suoi conservatorii* (Naples 1881–83; reprint Bologna, 1969), 2: 146.

28. I am grateful to Professor Francesco Melisi for permitting me to study the instrument and to Francesco Viscione for his assistance. Within a month of my visit John Henry van der Meer and Michael Latham (independently of me and of each other) made thorough studies of the Naples vis-à-vis in preparation for future publications (Latham's will appear in the *Historical Harpsichord* series published by Pendragon Press). Both Latham and van der Meer subsequently read a draft of this article and kindly shared their findings with me. The following discussion is not meant to be the full analysis that this complex and beautiful instrument deserves and will, in the near future, receive. It is based on my examination, supplemented and corrected by van der Meer and Latham, on published and unpublished descriptions (see note 26), on Horst Rase's drawings and photographs, and on analyses of these drawings and photographs by van der Meer, Latham, and Sabine Matzenauer. In view of the help that I have received, it is important to state that I take full responsibility for any inaccuracies and unsound judgments in what follows.

last two digits of the date are written in ink. A rectangular instrument with six legs, the *vis-à-vis* is 280 cm long (including molding; 276 cm without molding). The width varies slightly: 98 cm along the lower molding at the harpsichord end, 97.5 cm along the lower molding at the piano end. A single rectangular lid is hinged to the instrument at one side. Two panels (one hinged to the other) at each end of the lid cover the keyboards and wrest planks. To open the instrument one first has to fold the hinged panels over the lid. Both ends of the instrument are fitted with very light, delicate, cloth-lined music stands (fig. 6).

The instrument's three keyboards (all with black naturals and white accidentals) have the same five-octave compass: FF—f³. At the piano end is a single keyboard (fig. 6). The harpsichord end has two manuals (fig. 7). Below is a harpsichord keyboard; above it is a keyboard connected by means of an elaborate system of vertical and horizontal trackers of wire and wood to the piano mechanism at the opposite end. The horizontal trackers, in an enclosed compartment under the instrument, intersect at the center of the instrument, producing a lovely fan-like pattern (figs. 8 and 9).

The piano action of the Naples *vis-à-vis* is a normal Prellmechanik with escapement of the type that Stein used consistently after about 1778.²⁹ The hollow hammer heads, leathered on top, are characteristic of what Michael Latham has described as the second phase of Stein's career as a piano maker (ca. 1778–1783); thus they are consistent with the date of the Naples *vis-à-vis*.³⁰ The two connected knee levers, not functional at the time of my visit, serve to lift the dampers from the strings. The piano is double-strung through the lower four octaves and triple-strung in the treble, from e² to f³. Stein used triple stringing in the treble only during Latham's Phase II. The changeover from two strings to three is the same in the Naples *vis-à-vis* as in two other pianos that Stein built in 1783.³¹

The harpsichord has three sets of jacks and three registers: 2 × 8' and 1 × 4'. One set of jacks, fitted with leather plectra, may have originally served as a *peau de buffle*. The original function of the three knee levers at the harpsichord end was not readily apparent at the time of my visit.

29. Edwin M. Ripin, *Papers*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. See also Latham, "The Pianos of Johann Andreas Stein."

30. Latham, "The Pianos of Johann Andreas Stein."

31. *Ibid.*

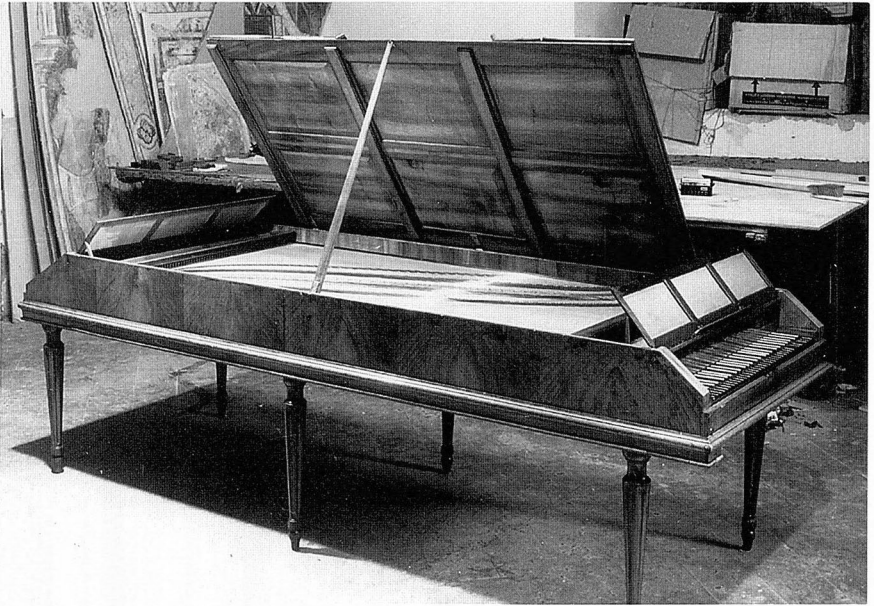


FIGURE 6. Johann Andreas Stein. Vis-à-vis piano-harpsichord (1783). Naples, Conservatorio di San Pietro a Majella. This and the following photographs were taken at the time of the instrument's restoration in 1970. Photo courtesy Horst Rase.

To what extent does the vis-à-vis now in Naples correspond to what we know of the vis-à-vis played by Hadrava in 1789? First, the date of the Naples instrument is consistent with Hadrava's account. The vis-à-vis that, according to Stetten, Stein exhibited in Augsburg in 1783 could well be the instrument of 1783 now in Naples.³² Since Stetten described that instrument in terms reminiscent of those used by Hadrava, Stetten's account represents a link (admittedly inconclusive) between the Naples vis-à-vis and Hadrava's instrument.

A stronger connection is the similarity between Hadrava's description and the Naples vis-à-vis itself, especially in the number and arrangement of keyboards. The end of the Naples vis-à-vis with a single piano keyboard corresponds to "the side of the vis-à-vis Flügel where there is only one keyboard and the forte piano alone is located"; this would be where Hadrava played the second and third movements of his sonata. The

32. Maribel Meisel and Philip R. Belt, "Stein, Johann (Georg) Andreas," *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan, 1980), 18: 106.

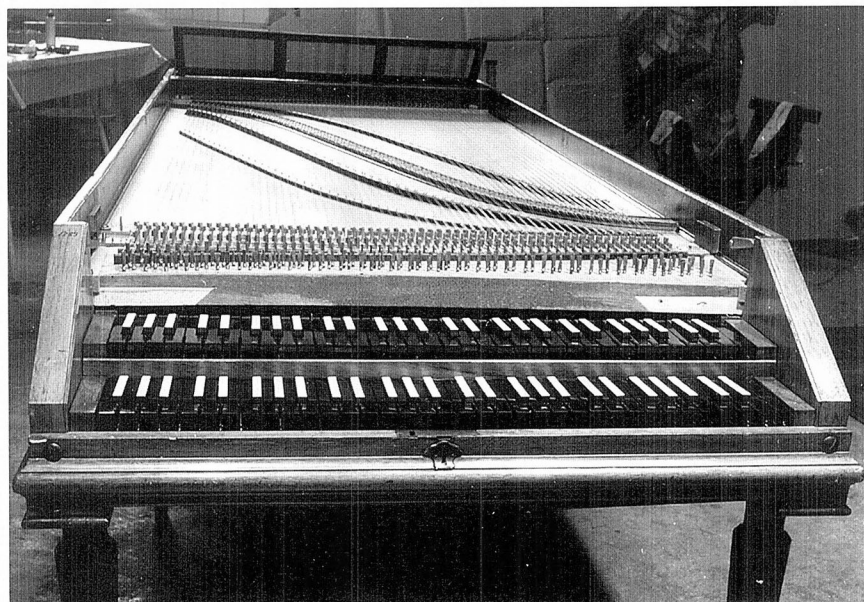


FIGURE 7. Johann Andreas Stein. Vis-à-vis piano-harpsichord (1783). Harpsichord keyboard below, piano keyboard above (connected to the piano action at the other end of the instrument). Photo courtesy Horst Rase.

double keyboard with piano above and harpsichord below corresponds to the double keyboard on which Hadrava played the first and fourth movements of his sonata, creating an “unusual effect” by playing “the fortissimo with one hand at the upper keyboard and the Flügel with the other hand.” The Naples instrument’s single lid allows it to be opened quickly, consistent with Hadrava’s account. Finally, the leather plectra with which Stein apparently furnished the harpsichord action of the Naples vis-à-vis and which may have served as a *peau de buffle* register, recall the *Büffel-Zug* that Hadrava, using Stein’s own terminology, praised on the instrument that he played in 1789.³³

33. The Verona vis-à-vis is quite different from the instrument in Naples. The piano keyboard at the harpsichord end is below the two harpsichord manuals, rather than above them. Instead of a single lid the Verona vis-à-vis has a number of separate panels, which serve, when open, as music stands for musicians accompanying the keyboard player or players (Ripin, *Papers*; van der Meer, *Musikinstrumente*, 257; Latham, “The Pianos of Johann Andreas Stein” and personal communication).



FIGURES 8 and 9. Johann Andreas Stein. Vis-à-vis piano-harpsichord, 1783. The instrument is seen from below, with a panel removed to reveal the system of trackers linking the upper keyboard on the harpsichord end to the piano action at the other end. Photos courtesy Horst Rase.

If the instrument now in Naples was indeed presented to the Conservatorio della Pietà de' Turchini by Joseph II shortly after his second visit to Naples, then of course this instrument cannot have been Hadrava's. But it is also possible that Joseph had nothing to do with the Naples vis-à-vis and that the tradition associating him with it developed sometime in the nineteenth century. Stein's "single favorite creation" may still be in the city whose music lovers admired it so enthusiastically more than two centuries ago.

* * *

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APPENDIX

The appendix contains excerpts from letters written by Norbert Hadrava to Johann Paul Schulthesius about pianos and a vis-à-vis piano-harpsichord by Johann Andreas Stein. Part of the first letter, including the passage quoted here, was transcribed and published in Augustin Scharnagl's *Johann Franz Xaver Sterkel: Ein Beitrag zur Musikgeschichte Mainfrankens* (Würzburg: Trilitsch, 1943). The following transcription, which is based on the original manuscript, differs in several places from Scharnagl's. This collection of Hadrava's letters is in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, Signature S.M. 8979. [The original German is not consistently paragraphed, but divisions are inserted here for ease of reference. Ed.]

1. Letter 6, Caserta, 11 December 1784:

er sollte mir Dank gewußt haben, daß ich einer Königl. Cameristin kurz vor seiner Ankunft ein Steinisches Fortepiano verschafft habe, worauf er sich hat hören lassen, und mit wahren Vergnügen auch spielen können, wo er sonst auf seinen elenden Clavichord, woran die Italienschen Ohren nicht gewöhnt sind, mit seinen Sonaten wenig Ehre würde aufgehoben haben, Probe dessen ist mein fürtreffliches Berlinisches Clavichord, welches ein Lieblings Instrument des berühmten Kirnberger ware, und worauf Friedrich Bach mit unaussprechlicher Lust spielte, dennoch denen Italienern allhier nicht behagen wollte.

Nun was macht St. er erkundigte sich genau bey der Cameristin um den Preiß des Steinischen Fortepiano, er fand solchen zu Theuer und machte sich anheischig ein anderes Steinisches Instrument um wohlfeileren Preiß und von besserer Gattung zu liefern, die Cameristin nahm das Anerbieten ganz natürlich an, St. schrieb dem

He [i.e., Sterkel] should have been grateful to me for having obtained, shortly before his arrival, a Stein fortepiano for a royal lady-in-waiting; on this instrument he performed, and he played it with real pleasure, whereas he would have enhanced his reputation little by playing his sonatas on his miserable clavichord, to which Italian ears are not accustomed (proof of which is my outstanding Berlin clavichord, which was a favorite instrument of the famous Kirnberger and on which Friedrich Bach played with inexpressible pleasure; yet it failed to please the Italians here).

Now what did Sterkel do? He inquired of the lady-in-waiting about the price of the Stein fortepiano; he found the price too high and promised to furnish another instrument by Stein at a cheaper price and of a better type. The lady-in-waiting naturally accepted the offer; Sterkel wrote to Stein and may also have mentioned me. I do not

Stein zu, und mag auch von mir Erwähnung gemacht haben; ich kannte Stein nicht persönlich, allein aus seinen Briefen und der Lieferung deren Instrumenten ersah ich, daß er ein rechtschaffener redlicher Deutscher ware, Stein antwortete dem Ster. und sagte Hadrawa zahlt mich genereusement, dafür wende ich auch allen meinen Zucker an seine bestellte Instrumenten, und lege ihm auch einen Vorrath guter Saiten bey nebst Leichter, Stimhamer p—ich zahlte dem Stein für ein Instrument 75 Zecchinen, mit der Fracht zu Lande und auf dem Meer kam ein Instrument bis hierher auf 400 sage vierhundert Wiener Gulden zu stehen, der naseweise Abbé hat das Instrument zu theuer gefunden, ohne weiters die Unkosten des Transports zu berechnen, und mich auch nicht darum befragt, sonst würde ich ihm die Berechnung genau samt hiesigen Mauthgebühr und *bona mancia* vorzeigen können.

Diese Nachricht von den Steinischen Instrumenten kann auch den unrichtigen Artikel berichtigen, welcher in dem Mus. Magazin vom Monat Februar des 1sten Jahrgang enthalten ist, alwo angemerkt wird daß Sr. Mt. die Königin ein Steinisches Pianoforte für 200 Ducaten [added in margin: so ohngefähr 533 Wiener Gulden ausgemacht hätte, man muß daher allzeit den Unterschied zwischen Ducaten und Neap. Ducati machen, welche ganz andere Berechnungen sind] gezahlt hätte. Ich habe für Sr. Mt. um den vorher erwähnten nämlichen Preiß ein Steinisches Instrument, und in der Folge für Sr. Königl. Hoheit die erstgeborne Infantin ein gleiches verschafft, jedes Stück

letters and the quality of his instruments I gathered that he was an honest, upright German. Stein answered Sterkel, saying: "Hadrava pays generously; in return I devote my efforts to the instruments ordered by him, and I furnish him also with a supply of good strings, candlesticks, tuning hammers, etc." I paid Stein 75 zecchini for an instrument; with the cost of freight by land and sea, the price for an instrument here came to 400 Viennese Gulden. The impertinent abbé found the instrument too expensive without counting the cost of transport; nor did he ask me about this cost, otherwise I would have been able to show him the total cost, including customs duties paid here.

This news about the Stein instrument can also serve to correct the erroneous article that was published in the February issue of the first volume of the *Musikalische Magazin*, where it is said that H. M. the Queen [of Naples] had paid 200 Ducats for a Stein pianoforte (which is about 533 Viennese Gulden—one must always keep in mind the difference between ducats and Neapolitan ducati, which are entirely different). I obtained a Stein instrument for H. M. at the above-mentioned price, and later for Her Royal Highness the first-born Infanta [Maria Teresa] a similar one, both instruments for 400 Viennese Gulden, which amounts to 240 Neapolitan Ducati; whereas H. M. the Queen paid

nemlich für 400 Wiener Gulden, welche 240 Neapolitanische Ducati ausmachen, hingegen ist Sr. Mt. der Königin ein Englisches großes Piano-forte auf 600 Ducati oder Tausend Wiener Gulden zu stehen kommen, welches doch bey weiten nicht mit dem Steinischen zu vergleichen ist.

600 Ducati or 1000 Viennese Gulden for a English grand pianoforte, which, however, is not by any means to be compared to a Stein instrument.

2. Excerpt from Letter 17, Capri, 27 April 1789:

Schätzbahrester Freund!

. . . Sie erhalten hierneben meine angekündigte Sonate, die vor kurzem im Stich allhier erschienen ist, und ein *Quartetto* von *Gulielmi* von dem *Oratorio*, welches in der Fasten in dem Hof Theater aufgeführt worden und als ein Meisterstück zu betrachten ist.

Der Steinische *vis a vis* Flügel, so sehr als er mir Vergnügen verursachte, hat mir die Musickalische Lust, eines sehr vollkommenen und einzigen Werks, in der vortrefflichen Erfindung und Ausarbeitung zu genießen und das Verdienst des Verfassers und Erfinders zu verbreiten, sehr verbittert, ich beredte durch meine Zuschriften den berühmten und würdigen Mann sein Lieblings Instrument (so er durch mehrere Jahre und zum Versuche seiner ausgebreiteten Kenntnisse in diesem Fache mit größtem Fleiße verfertigte, wie auch allen Freunden und Liebhabern zur Genugthuung mit allem Beyfall und Bewunderung vorzeigte) mir zu überlassen und einem sich anträgenden reichen und ansehnlichen hiesigen Cavalieren den Besitz davon zu ver-gönnen ob zwar er nicht selbst fähig ware durch eigenes Spielen sich für

Dearest Friend,

. . . With this letter you will receive the promised sonata, published here recently in an engraved edition, and a quartet by Guglielmi from the oratorio [*Debora e Sisara*] that was performed in the court theater during Lent and is considered a masterpiece.

The *vis-à-vis* Flügel by Stein, however much pleasure it has given me, has embittered for me the musical pleasure of enjoying a very perfect and unique instrument, so excellent in its design and workmanship, and of spreading the reputation of the builder and inventor. By means of a letter I persuaded the famous and worthy man to entrust to me his favorite instrument (which he built with the greatest diligence over several years, as a test of his wide knowledge of his craft, and which he showed to all friends and music-lovers, to their satisfaction, applause, and admiration) and to grant ownership of it to a rich, eminent Neapolitan nobleman, who was eager to own it. Although he was himself not able, through his own playing, to compensate himself for his expense, he has, however, the pleasure of being able to look forward to

seine Ausgabe schadloß zu halten, hat er dennoch das Vergnügen sich versprechen können theils von mir als von andern Liebhabern dieß vortreffliche Instrument nach meiner Anweisung spielen zu hören.

Als es hier eingetroffen ist, können Sie sich vorstellen Bester Freund, wie alles zugelaufen ist um das Instrument zu besehen, der Besitzer davon ware sehr vergnügt, daß er die Neugier aller hiesigen Tonkünstlern, Musick Liebhabern Mechanikern sodann Aufwärtern und sogenannte Fakiene [facchini] oder hiesigen Mauth und Last Trägern gereizt hat, man konnte sich nach der äußerlichen Form keinen Begrif davon machen, indem keines auf diese Art allhier erschienen ist in Anfange begnügten sich alle das äußere zu besehen, zu betasten, und abzumessen,

ich ließ nicht lange anstehen dem vortrefflichen und verdienstvollen Verfasser sein verdientes Lob eines Meisterwerks bekannt zu machen, ich untersuchte es allein, und nach der Vorschrift wie mir Stein in mehreren Zuschriften gefühlvoll die Schönheiten dieses Instruments und seines einzigen Lieblings Werks bekannt machte, richtete ich mich genau ich fand auch alle Wirkungen die er mir mit vieler Modestie bemerkte, allein durch mehreres Spielen wurde ich ganz hingerissen und enzückt von dem vortrefflichen Effect.

die verschiedenen Proben und Versuche, die ich ganz allein in einem versperrten Saale vorgenommen, verleiteten mich dieß Instrument durch eine Sonate worinn alle vorkommende Veränderungen und Nuancen des Ausdrucks angebracht sind, hören zu lassen, ich kann sagen, alle Zuhörer wurden entzückt von dem großen bis

hearing this excellent instrument being played according to my instructions, partly by me and partly by other amateurs.

When it arrived here, you can imagine, dear friend, how everyone came running to see the instrument, whose owner was very happy that he had excited interest among all the curious musicians here, music-lovers, mechanics, as well as servants and so-called *facchini* (or porters and laborers). One could not form any conception of it, but because nothing of this kind had been seen here before, at the beginning everyone was satisfied to see the exterior, to touch it, and to measure it.

I did not hesitate long to communicate to the excellent and praiseworthy builder the praise that his masterpiece deserves. I tried it alone, and by means of the instructions which Stein had enthusiastically made known to me in several letters, I was perfectly prepared for the beauties of the instrument, his single favorite creation. I found all the effects that he pointed out with such modesty; but as I played the instrument repeatedly, I was completely thrilled and delighted by its excellent effect.

The various trials and attempts that I made, completely alone and in a locked room, led me to reveal this instrument by means of a sonata in which its variety of registration and its nuances of expression are introduced. I can say that all listeners, from the most exalted to the lowliest, were delighted, not on account of my style of

zu dem niedrigsten, nicht wegen meiner Spielart oder meiner darauf verfasten Sonate, sondern von der vortreflichen, und unvermutheten Wirkung dieß Instruments, die überraschende Abwechslung des *Forte*, bis auf das sanfteste *Piano* das wirkliche *Pianoforte*, und der Flügel sodann die Vereinigung von allen in *Tutti*, sind ganz gewiß Effecte die äußerst auffallend, rührend und überraschend sind, ich muß gestehen, Bester Freund, da ich das zweyte mal unter wenigen Zuhörern in dem Saal des Besitzers spielte, daß die im Vorsaal stehende Bediente, Fakiene, und Lazaroni in einer unbeschreiblichen Aufmerksamkeit und Stille den Saal sich näherten, zuhörten und in ein lautes Geschrey nach der unvermutheten und überraschenden Wirkung des Instruments ausgebrochen sind, in wenige Tagen wurde das Instrument wie ein hier nie gesehenes und außerordentliches Wunderthier ausgeruffen, indem keiner deren Zuhörern eine genaue Beschreibung davon machen sondern nur sein Vergnügen und Überraschung bezeigen konnte dabey muß ich auch erinnern daß der Besitzer dieses Instruments, der ohngeachtet seiner wenigen Kenntniß in der Musick von der herrlichen Wirkung dieses harmonischen Werks so entzückt ware, daß er mich in wähernden Spielen und in der Hälfte meiner Sonate mit wahrer Herzenslust mich umarmte.

Nun zur Sache nach dem ausgebreiteten Lärm in der berühmten Residenz Stadt der Musick näherte sich aus Neugier oder anderer Absicht der viel geliebte Capellmeister *Paisiello*, welcher sein Urtheil über dieß Meisterwerk sprechen wollte, es wurde daher ein Mittagmal von dem Besitzer dieses

playing or of the sonata that I composed on it, but on account of the excellent and unexpected effect of the instrument. The astonishing contrast between forte and the softest piano, the true pianoforte and the harpsichord, and then the uniting of both in a *tutti*, are certainly effects that are most striking, moving, and surprising. I must confess, dear friend, that when I played for the second time among a few listeners in the owner's salon, the servants, *facchini*, and *lazzaroni* standing in the antechamber approached the salon with an indescribable attentiveness and silence, listened, and broke out in a loud cry after hearing the unexpected and surprising effect of the instrument. In a few days the instrument was declared an extraordinary wonder never before seen here, while none of those who heard it could describe it exactly but could only express their pleasure and surprise. Here I must also remember that the owner of this instrument, despite his small knowledge of music, was so enchanted by the wonderful action of this musical creation that while I was playing—in the middle of my sonata—he embraced me with real joy.

Now back to the matter at hand. After talk of the instrument had spread through this famous capital city of music, there appeared, out of curiosity or for some other motive, the much beloved Kapellmeister Paisiello, who wanted to express his opinion of this instrument. Accordingly a lunch was

Instruments veranstaltet und wozu verschiedene Criticker, ohne daß ich es wußte, geladen wurden, ich muß bemerken daß der Schlüssel des *vis a vis* Flügels stets mir überlassen wurde, ohngeachtet ich sehr weit entfernt wohnhaft ware, und nicht täglich erscheinen konnte, wenn einige unvermuthete Gäste oder Neugierige sich mit der äußerlichen Form nicht begnügen wollten, indessen ware mir doppelte Obsorge [inserted in margin: dabey verborgen] fürs erste da keiner ware, der sich dieß Instrument zu spielen getraute, fürs zweyte weil ich bey dem sehr mißtrauischen Besitzer dieses Instruments eben so dafür haften mußte, wie ein Uhrmacher, der sicher steht auf eine gewisse Zeit auch sein Uhrwerk zurück zu nehmen, zu richten und zu verbessern.

Paesiello erschien bey dem Mittagmal, da alle Gäste früher als hier gewöhnlich der Gebrauch zu speisen ist, erschienen sind, so befürchtete ich daß einer mich herausfordern würde, wie es auch geschehen ist, ich wollte es mir nach der Taffel vorbehalten allein da alle Anstalten getroffen waren daß der Koch seine Zurichtung deren Speisen auch verspäten sollte, so ware kein Ausweg mehr. ich öffnete das Steinische prächtige Instrument ließ es vom Paesiello und übrigen genau besehen, allein die Tasten nicht berühren. nachdem alle sich befriedigten mit der bloßen Beschauung setzte ich mich an der einen Seite des *vis a vis* Flügels wo nur ein Griffbret ist und das Forte Piano allein sich befindet, da spielte ich in Gegenwart des Paesiello und aller übrigen Zuhörer das Adagio von meiner Sonate, allein ganz gelinde, und besonders daß man die Aushaltung deren Tönen und Nachklingen in seiner Harmonie nebst genauer

arranged by the owner of this instrument, and various critics, without my knowledge, were invited to attend. I must mention that the key of the *vis-à-vis* Flügel was always entrusted to me, although I lived very far away and could not appear daily when some unexpected guests or curiosity-seekers were not satisfied with the exterior shape. This was a double source of bother for me: first, because there was no one who dared to play this instrument; and second, because I had to cling to the distrustful owner like a watch-maker who must stay for a certain amount of time to take back, adjust, and improve the mechanism.

Paesiello appeared at lunch, and because all the guests arrived earlier than is normal here, I feared that someone would challenge me [to play the instrument], which indeed happened. I wanted to postpone it until after the meal. But as all the arrangements were made for the cook to delay his preparation of the food, there was no way out. I opened Stein's splendid instrument and invited Paesiello and others to inspect it but not to touch the keys. After everyone was satisfied with seeing the instrument only, I sat at the side of the *vis-à-vis* Flügel where there is only one keyboard and the forte piano alone is located, and I played the Adagio of my sonata in the presence of Paesiello and all the other listeners, but very softly, so that one could notice the sustaining of the tones and the reverberation of the harmony, together with the precise lifting of the fingers where necessary. Then I played the Allegretto, which especially

Aufhebung deren Fingern wo es erforderlich ist bemerken konnte, darauf spielte ich das *Allegretto*, welches eigends zur Ermunterung des *Sostenuto* und Abwechslung des *Tempo* diente wobey ich auch *piano pianissimo* und *Forte Fortissimo* beobachtete.

Wie diese zwey Stücke zu Ende waren, entfernte ich mich von dieser Seite des *vis a vis* Flügels, und setzte mich an jener wo zwey Griffbretre vorhanden sind und zwar [inserted in margin: ganz oben das *Piano Forte* und ganz unten das *Cembalo* nebst] seinen Veränderungen so besteht von dem Kielen Register, der *Octavin*, und des Büffel Zugs wie es Herr Stein allenthalben benannt hat, allein ich habe es nicht anständig gefunden, auf solche Art zur Erklärung in das Italienische buchstäblich zu übersetzen indem man es hätte müssen *Buffalo* benennen und die Ausdrücke *dei Buffali* in dem Gespräche sind sehr lächerlich, so habe ich um der hiesigen Zweydeutigkeit auszuweichen diesen Zug *Harmonica* benannt, dieser Ausdruck schien mir auch angemessen, indem ich beobachtete daß die hiesigen musikalische Ohren, welche nur bloß für das Gesang bis auf das stillste Falzetto deren Tenor-Sängern gespannt sind, von dem Steinischen genannten Büffel Zug und meiner getauften *Harmonica*, ganz gespitz wurden und die Zuhörer das feine Gefühl ihres Vergnügens in den Gesichtszügen ausdrückten.

ich spielte also an der Seite des doppelten Griffbrets das erste *Allegro*, und hieran, das *Prestissimo*, in welchen beyden Stücken ich einen sehr befremdenden Effect hin und wieder anbrachte und mit einer Hand auf dem oberen Griffbret das *Forte piano* und mit der anderen Hand den Flügel darzu spielte, und so wechselweise, wie

encouraged *sostenuto* playing and changes of tempo; and in the same movement I also observed the piano and pianissimo, the forte and fortissimo.

At the conclusion of these two pieces, I moved from this side of the vis-à-vis Flügel and sat down at the side where two keyboards are located, namely the pianoforte above and the harpsichord below—the harpsichord together with its various registers: the octave and the *Büffel* stop, as Herr Stein has often called it. But I have not found it suitable to translate this term into Italian spelling; for one must call it *buffalo*, and the expression *dei buffali* is very funny in Italian; so to eliminate any impropriety I have named this stop the *harmonica*, a term that seems suitable in that I noticed that musical ears in Naples, which are attentive only to vocal music—even to the tenor's quietest falsetto, were completely attentive to what Stein calls the *Büffel* stop and I call the *harmonica*, and the listeners expressed in their facial features their feelings of pleasure.

So I played the first *Allegro* on the side with the double keyboard and also the *Prestissimo*, in both of which movements I introduced a very unusual effect now and then, and played the fortepiano with one hand at the upper keyboard and the Flügel [i.e., harpsichord] with the other hand, and *vice versa*, as you will gather from

Sie es aus meiner Sonate wo ich eigens die verschiedene Abwechslungen hinschreiben ließ ersehen werden, die übrigen Abdrücke der Sonate sind nur mit *piano*, *forte*, *pianissimo* *fortissimo* bezeichnet um die Verschiedenheit des Ausdrucks auf jeden anderen Instrument auch anzubringen.

Wie ich denn zum Ende der Sonate bemerkt daß alle Zuhörer von der Vortreflichkeit des Steinischen *vis a vis* Flügels überzeugt waren, so verfiel jemand aus der Gesellschaft auf den Gedanken, da dieß Instrument zum Gebrauch für zwey Personen auch gerichtet seye, nur noch abginge diesen Effect zu hören, *Paesiello* entschloß sich also gleich mit mir seine Fantasien zu vereinigen, kaum setzten wir sich an die gegenseitige Claviere als die äußerste Stille unter denen Zuhörern herrschte, ich ließ *Paesiello* den ersten Gedanken vorführen, welcher in einem *Grave* bestund und eine nachfolgende Ouverture im theatralischen Geschmack andeutete, ich antwortete ihm mit aller Herzhaftigkeit, durch abwechselnde Antworten vermehrten sich unsere Ideen, wir änderten die *Tempo*, ich stimmte einen neuen Gedanken an als zum zweyten Stück der Ouverture, welchen *Paesiello* gleich aufnahm und weiters ausführte, kurz wir fantasirten beynah eine halbe Stunde und beschlossen mit dem *Fortissimo*, und deren accorden mit *contratempo* wie es *Paesiello* häufig in seinen Theater Stücken anbringt, wir genossen beyde der größten Zufriedenheit unserer ausgeführten Fantasie, so zwar daß wir beyde zu Ende nicht auf die Zuhörer bemerkten sondern sich gegenseitig anstauten, und gleichsam das Vergnügen beyderseitig sich verdanken wollten.

Darauf setzten wir sich zur Taffel, und es wurde vieles von der Musick gesprochen, zu Ende der Taffel forderten alle versamlete Liebhaber, daß

my sonata, in which I have written various changes of registration. The other copies of the sonata are marked only with *piano*, *pianissimo*, *forte*, *fortissimo*, so that the differences of expression might be introduced on any other instrument.

As I noticed at the end of the sonata that all the listeners were convinced of the excellence of Stein's *vis-à-vis* Flügel, someone in the group hit upon the idea that this instrument was also designed for two persons, and this effect had not yet been heard. Paisiello decided immediately to join with me in improvisation. Hardly had we sat down at the facing keyboards when the listeners fell into utmost silence. I let Paisiello suggest the first theme, which consisted of a *Grave* and implied an overture in theatrical style to follow. I responded to him with complete confidence. Through alternating answers our ideas multiplied; we changed the tempo; I began with a new theme, as if for the second movement of the overture, which Paisiello immediately took up and developed further. In short, we improvised for almost half an hour, and concluded with a *fortissimo* and with chords with *contratempo*, as Paisiello often does in his theatrical works. We both enjoyed the performance of our improvisation with such satisfaction that at the end we paid no attention to the audience but instead gazed at one another in astonishment, as if wanting to thank one another for the pleasure.

Afterwards we sat down to lunch, during which music was the main topic of conversation. After lunch all the assembled music-lovers asked that we

wir einen anderen Versuch auf den *vis a vis* Flügel vornehmen sollten, ich wollte nicht einwilligen, *Paesiello* aber ließ sich bereden und ich konnte mich sodann nicht mehr entschuldigen, er machte abermals den Anfang, allein diese Fantasie gelang nicht so gut, ich suchte so bald als möglich ware abzu brechen und zu beschliessen, denn die Verdauungskräfte haben unsere Ideen ermattet.

ich wünschte auf diesem vortrefflichen Instrument das vollkommenste Vergnügen zu geniessen, und zwar mit *Mozart* oder *Kozeluk* zu Nachts ohne Lichter eine Stunde lang zu fantasiren.

Nun muß ich Ihnen sagen um den Besitzer dieses *vis a vis* Flügels eine doppelte Freude zu verschaffen ließ ich diese Sonate, welche ich eigends wie ich oben bemeldt für dieß Instrument verfaßte, ohne sein Wissen stechen, und dedicirte sie ihm, auf solche Art ist auch sein Name in der Musikalischen Welt verbreitet worden, und er konnte bey Vorzeigen dieses Instruments jederman die Sonate vorlegen und den Effect davon ohne meiner bekanntmachen was meynen Sie wohl Bester Freund was dieser Neap. Cavalier mir für einen Dank dafür wußte wie er das *Rouleau*, da ich die Sonate zusammengerollt überschickte, öffnete, so sah er es ganz kaltblütig an und sagte: ich glaubte einen Wechsel mit Geld zu empfangen, und so sehe ich nur Noten. was giebt es wohl für Leute, und welche Gesinnungen entdeckt man in wohlhabenden und begüterten Adelichen?

Nun werden Sie sich aber noch mehr wundern Bester Freund das Ende der Geschichte zu vernehmen; in kurzer Zeit nach meiner erschienenen Sonate hat der hiesige Cavalier sein Hauß verlassen, und in ein anderen Pallast überziehen müssen, da ware er in Verlegenheit wie er das vortreffliche

make another attempt on the *vis-à-vis* Flügel. I did not want to agree to this, but *Paisiello* let himself be persuaded, so I could no longer excuse myself. Again he began, but this improvisation did not succeed so well. I tried as soon as possible to interrupt and to conclude, for the process of digestion had weakened our imaginations.

I would like to enjoy the most perfect pleasure at this excellent instrument: that of improvising for a whole hour—at night and without lights—with *Mozart* or *Kozeluk*.

Now I must tell you that, in order to give the owner of this *vis-à-vis* Flügel double pleasure, I had this sonata (which, as I mentioned above, I composed especially for this instrument) engraved, without his knowledge, and I dedicated it to him; in this way his name is made known to the musical world, and when he displays this instrument, he can show the sonata to everyone and make its effects known without my being present.

How, my good friend, how did this Neapolitan nobleman thank me for my efforts? When he opened the scroll in which I had rolled up the sonata in order to present it to him, he looked at it cold-bloodedly and said: "I thought I would receive a bill of exchange for money, and instead I see only notes." What kind of a person is this! What attitudes one finds among the wealthy and the noble!

But you will be even more surprised, good friend, to learn the end of the story. A short time after the publication of my sonata the Neapolitan nobleman had to leave his home and move into another palace. Since he was uncertain where to put the instrument in his new abode, and I

Instrument in seiner neuen Behausung situiren solle, und ich erfuhr unter der Hand, daß er dieß Instrument einigen hiesigen Liebhabern zum Verkauf angetragen. Da befürchtete ich daß dieß berühmte Steinische Meisterwerk vielleicht in Hände eines unerfahrenen gerathen konnte der es auch nicht zu schätzen wüßte, ich gieng also gerade zu diesem Cavalier und sagte ihm da er Willens wäre dieß Instrument zu verkauffen daß ich dafür Käuffer seye, er weigerte sich anfänglich, sodann überließ er es mir, und ich mußte nicht nur den Preiß des Instruments sondern auch die Fracht und Mauth Kosten auf das genaueste bezahlen, sehen Sie nun Bester Freund, wie weit sich die Freundschaft der hiesigen adelichen Herrn erstreckt, und was man von denen Ihnen erzeugten Höflichkeiten zu erwarten hat; außerdem hat dieser Cavalier seine Genugthuung die nur hier gewöhnlich ist, sich unter dem ganzen Adel zu prahlen, daß er eines der vortreflichsten Instrumenten aus deutsch[er] Land von dem berühmtesten Meister für sein Geld sich hat kommen lassen, welches seines Gleichen in ganz Italien nicht findet, und ob zwar er das Piano forte selbst nicht spielte, so wüßte er es dennoch so zu schätzen, wie seine prächtige Gemähldte von den jetzt lebenden Mahlern, ohngeachtet er die Mahlerey nicht verstünde alles *ostentation*, und wenn es nur noch dabey verbliebe, so wäre es eher zu verzeihen, allein meine weitläufige Erzählung schildert eine fast nicht glaubenswürdige Handlung und Charackter;

unser bester Stein weiß noch nichts davon, und ich habe bisher auch nicht Zeit ihm eine umständliche Geschichte mitzutheilen. . . .

learned through other channels that he had offered to sell this outstanding instrument to some music-lovers here, and since I feared that this famous masterpiece by Stein could perhaps fall into the hands of an inexperienced man who did not know how to appreciate it, I went immediately to this nobleman and said to him that, since he was willing to sell this instrument, I would be the buyer. He hesitated at first, but eventually he let me have it; and I had to pay, not only the price of the instrument, but also the costs of shipment and customs duties required here. Now you see, my dear friend, how far the friendship of noblemen here extends and what one should expect from the politeness that they show you. Moreover, this nobleman has the satisfaction that is normal only here of boasting among the whole nobility that he brought here with his money one of the most outstanding instruments of Germany, made by the most celebrated master, and which has no equal in all Italy. Although he does not himself know how to play the piano forte, he knew how to treasure it as he treasures his splendid paintings by contemporary artists, although he understands nothing of art. Everything is ostentation; and if he persisted in it, one might be able to forgive him; but my rambling story describes almost unbelievable behavior and character.

Our friend Stein knows nothing of this yet, and so far I have had no time to send him a detailed report. . . .