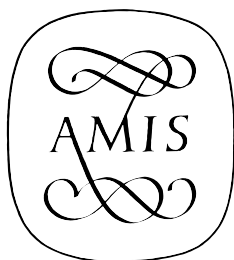


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These three monographs bristle with descriptions, charts, and tables of string lengths, string scalings, string gauges, stress curves, case and case-part dimensions, materials, plucking points, and comparisons of various sorts (O'Brien also offers some equations, but these are relatively simple and easy to understand). This is not a book for bedtime consumption, nor is it intended for those whose interest in the harpsichord is anything but up close and personal; but for specialists it will be invaluable.

It is worth noting that the first two articles in *Aspects of Harpsichord Making in the British Isles* are by a younger generation of scholars (when I first met Martin, Nex, and Whitehead they were students). Furthermore, they all trained at Edinburgh University. Martin, now curator of the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments, received his doctorate from that institution. Nex, now curator of the Museum of Instruments at the Royal College of Music, London, took her MA in Museum Management at Edinburgh. Whitehead also earned his PhD from Edinburgh. Coincidentally, the older Grant O'Brien, the fourth author (and the recipient of our Society's Nicholas Bessaraboff Prize and Curt Sachs Award) also holds a doctorate from Edinburgh. No doubt we will be seeing more fine scholarship coming out of that institution.

A gremlin was at work in the previous volume, *The Historical Harpsichord 4*, changing plates and captions around in one of the monographs and omitting the Foreword in some copies. Evidently the same gremlin was around when *The Historical Harpsichord 5* was produced. There are two page ix's, so the Foreword, by editor John Koster, appears twice. The *verso* of the first page ix contains a color photo of the ca. 1725 Slade harpsichord, but the photo reappears in black and white on the *verso* of the second. Another infelicity occurs on page 191, where the acknowledgment of the information used in a table is found both at the end of the table and, word for word, in a footnote immediately below it. While such inexplicable lapses do not diminish the considerable value of these books, one wonders uneasily if someone at Pendragon—or at their printers—isn't asleep at the switch.

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Preethi de Silva. *The Fortepiano Writings of Streicher, Dieudonné, and the Schiedmayers: Two Manuals and a Notebook, Translated from the Original*

German, with Commentary. Translation and annotation of original texts by Preethi de Silva. With a Foreword by Malcolm Bilson. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2008. 613 pp.: 12 color photographs, 28 black-and-white photographs. ISBN: 978-0-7734-4874-2 (0-7734-4874-8). \$149.95; £89.95 (hardcover).

This massive, detailed book presents three very important documents about fortepianos from two major instrument makers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Andreas Streicher, the husband and assistant of Nanette Streicher, published in Vienna a brief introduction to Streicher pianos, their care and feeding, in 1801, and the Stuttgart makers Carl Dieudonné and Johann Lorenz Schiedmayer published in 1824 a larger discussion of their firm's pianos. Preethi de Silva had earlier presented a translation of Streicher's *Kurze Bemerkungen (Brief Remarks on the Playing, Tuning, and Care of Fortepianos Made in Vienna By Nannette Streicher née Stein* [Ann Arbor, MI: Early Music Facsimiles, 1983]), and here she adds to it both the *Kurze Anleitung* of Dieudonné and Schiedmayer and the "Werkstattbuch," the workshop notebook kept by Johann David and Johann Lorenz Schiedmayer between 1778 and ca. 1821. Extensive histories of both companies and descriptions of pianos made by the Stuttgart firm add to the book's bulk and to its interest for those concerned with the fortepiano in the early nineteenth century. All three documents are presented with original German text and English translations on facing pages. This allows a constant matching of original with translation.

De Silva is generally a very accurate translator, though a few infelicities crept in. I was initially discouraged to recognize that about a third of Streicher's very first sentence had somehow been omitted from the translation. Not a great deal was lost, and I was pleased not to encounter that kind of mistake again (the end of the last sentence on p. 303, however, was dropped, probably by the printer). I wish she had not used Streicher's term *Tangente* for the escapement lever in the Stein-Streicher action—Michael Cole's suggested translation "pawl" is preferable. The note on page 43 explaining the usage could simply have referred to the German term and its derivation from clavichord technology and the earlier "tangent" pianos. In the Dieudonné and Schiedmayer translation there are a couple of doubtful interpretations. On page 289, De Silva annotates a parenthetical remark in the text that "there are no *steel strings*" (italics in original) with the claim that iron strings had no carbon,

whereas steel does. But wrought iron does contain carbon, though in much lower amounts than steel. Steel certainly was known at that time, but was too expensive for such fripperies as piano wire until the Bessemer method came into use around 1850. A note on page 303 wishes to equate “equal-as-possible” with “equal temperament,” which in my opinion, as the husband of a piano tuner, is sloppy language.

It is very interesting to read these treatises and their observations about pianos and about music. I was fascinated to find comment in Dieudonné and Schiedmayer’s *Kurze Anleitung* on how pianos ought to have different timbres in their different registers. We have gotten so used to the monotony of fine pianos that are intended to have a single timbre from end to end that we often ignore the delights of difference. Those makers were also alive to the music that was being played on their instruments, and many of them were fine players, which gives extreme interest to their comments on the best ways to play and to achieve musical effect.

A great deal of research has gone into writing the family histories of these makers and encapsulating them in genealogical tables. But I wish De Silva had organized some of the other material more conveniently. Her detailed descriptions of Dieudonné and Schiedmayer pianos are in two different places. It would have been much better to combine them so that we could have more concise but graspable access to them and the opportunity to make closer comparisons. Some editing and rearrangement would have improved the usefulness of the “Werkstattbuch.” The original is confusingly organized, with different writers covering their individual years in something other than chronological order. On page 527, for instance, 1787 is followed by 1778. Later on, we get a series of tuning appointments, some identified by customer and some not. These could have been shortened with annotations such as “there follow 35 tunings at unspecified addresses.”

The color photographs are mostly well reproduced, though the last one, showing a grand piano in front of a painting in colors very close to the piano’s, does not set off the instrument at all well. Regrettably, the reproductions of the black-and-white photographs are somewhat fuzzy and unclear.

One should not be churlishly picky with such a wealth of material, which will interest both makers and players of fortepianos, and should be helpful on music of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to players of any instrument. The extensive annotations are very useful, the bibliography is full, with only a few gaps, and the index lists its

entries by document, which is probably the best way to do it. De Silva writes and translates well and clearly, and the whole effect is of an important piece of work well done. Preethi de Silva is to be congratulated both for a long, stellar career and for the award of the Adèle Mellen Prize for distinguished contribution to scholarship.

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Richard Bösel, editor, in collaboration with the Istituto Storico Austriaco a Roma, the Istituto Storico Germanico a Roma, Sezione di Storia della Musica, and the Società Italiana di Musicologia. *La cultura del fortepiano / Die Kultur des Hammerklaviers 1770–1830: Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi / Akten der internationalen Studientagung; Roma 26–29 Maggio 2004 / Rom 26.–29. Mai 2004. Quaderni Clementiani 3. Bologna: Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2009. 516 pp.: 8 color illus., 41 black-and-white illus., 6 tables, 11 musical exx., music CD with 13 tracks. ISBN: 978-88-8109-463-9. €70,00 (cloth).*

This book is meant to reach everyone interested in the history of culture. A conference in Rome in 2004 focused on the constantly increasing prominence of a single musical instrument, the piano, over a period of sixty years around 1800 (a period still commonly known among musicians as the “Viennese Classical period”), considering the many cultural and social aspects of the instrument’s history. The presentations are published here in a beautifully printed and bound volume.

The first eighty-seven pages of this book are written by Richard Bösel, director of the Austrian Institute in Rome, who was responsible for arranging the conference; his texts are presented in both Italian and German. In his preface, Bösel rightly points to the interdisciplinary conception of the *Studientagung* and this conference report. In the essay that follows (which Bösel supplies with a title that reads in translation: “Introduction to the culture of the pianoforte”), we are told that the development of the piano was a force for radical change in music history. He states: “Considering psycho-social aspects, the pianoforte—and later the modern piano—became a kind of leading idol (*Leitikone*), a symbol of the emancipation of bourgeois individualism.” Whether everyone would agree with this statement or not, there can be no doubt that the period in question was one of enormous changes in the lives of musicians, in