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Eva Badura-Skoda. *The Eighteenth-Century Fortepiano Grand and its Patrons from Scarlatti to Beethoven*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017. 492 pp., 11 color plates, 11 black-and-white plates, musical exx. ISBN 978-0-253-02263-9 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-253-02264-6 (e-book). \$125.

Musicologist Eva Badura-Skoda has long been a noted authority on the early keyboard and its history. With her then-husband, pianist Paul Badura-Skoda, she collaborated on an influential book, *Mozart-Interpretation* (1957, published in English in 1962 as *Interpreting Mozart on the Keyboard*, with an expanded and updated second edition in 2008), which was among the first performance practice volumes to deal explicitly with insights gleaned from the use of early pianos. Among her many essays in this field is a much-cited article, “Prolegomena to a History of the Viennese Pianoforte” (*Israel Studies in Musicology* 2, 1980), whose title suggested that there might at some point be a larger work to expand on the subject. In her new book, *The Eighteenth-Century Fortepiano Grand and its Patrons from Scarlatti to Beethoven*, Dr. Badura-Skoda focuses her attention primarily on the wing-shaped, or “grand” piano of the eighteenth century, and widens the scope of her earlier article to encompass pianos beyond Vienna’s boundaries. The book opens with chapters on the instruments of Bartolomeo Cristofori and their relevance for interpreting the music of Domenico Scarlatti. Discussion of German builders from Silbermann to Stein and the repertoire associated with their pianos occupies six chapters at the center of the book, along with a brief look at keyboards in France and the contributions of Sébastien Erard. The final chapters address the fortepiano in Vienna in relation to Haydn and Mozart, as well as offering a short treatment of English makers, especially Broadwood, and the composers Clementi and Beethoven.

The introduction makes it plain that a central theme of the book is one of terminology. Specifically, Badura-Skoda argues that common terms for eighteenth-century keyboards, such as harpsichord, clavecin, cembalo, and Flügel should all be broadly construed as signifying not only wing-shaped instruments with quills but also those with hammers. She cites Charles Burney’s article on “Harpsichord” in Rees’s *Cyclopaedia* (1819), in which he refers to the “hammer harpsichord” and its invention in Florence. Her argument is somewhat undercut by the fact that Burney thereafter switches to the term “piano-forte” when he wants to indicate

keyboard instruments with hammers; nonetheless, her point is certainly well taken in regard to both cembalo and Flügel, with plenty of examples of their dual meanings in circulation through the end of the century. One oddity of the book in regard to terminology is its title, which in *Fortepiano Grand* introduces a styling not found elsewhere. The introduction also provides a useful description of the guild system and the various opportunities and problems it posed for instrument builders. Here Badura-Skoda includes a lengthy section devoted to the Viennese keyboard builder Johann Georg Volkert, whose application to build instruments in Vienna in 1778, and its rejection by the guild, provide excellent examples of terminology and keyboard types at that time. This section largely replicates an earlier article by Rita Steblin that presented the same documents in transcription and translation [see Steblin, “Early Viennese Fortepiano Production: Anton Walter and New Inventions by Johann Georg Volkert in 1777–1783,” *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft* 55 (2009): 269–302]; though Badura-Skoda cites other sources and authors from Steblin’s discussion in her own footnotes, a citation of the article and its author is unfortunately omitted.

The discussion of keyboard terminology continues in chapter 2, with a consideration of Cristofori’s new *arpicembalo che fa il piano e il forte*, the establishment of the terms *pianoforte* or *fortepiano* by Gottfried Silbermann and other German builders, and the longevity of the term *cembalo*, which endured even in the piano music of Mozart and Beethoven. The term *Flügel* receives especially detailed attention, since it appeared in so many guises over the course of the long eighteenth century, from its evident function in Quantz and C.P.E. Bach to distinguish a quilled instrument from a piano with hammers, to the various later permutations like *Hammerflügel* and *Fortepiano-flügel* that point unequivocally to the piano. A lengthy chapter on the music of Domenico Scarlatti examines his connection with the Cristofori piano and its impact on his *Essercizi*; similarly, the pianos of Gottfried Silbermann and their possible link to J. S. Bach form another exploratory topic. Here Badura-Skoda considers several pieces of evidence, especially Bach’s 1733 announcement of “a new harpsichord the like of which has not been heard heretofore” for one of his Collegium concerts, and concludes that Bach acquired a Silbermann piano in 1732. Badura-Skoda also raises the possibility that a “fournirt *Clavecin*,” highly valued in the 1750 evaluation of Bach’s estate, might have been a combined harpsichord-piano. These suggestions serve to introduce another

goal of this book, which is to demonstrate that the piano was known and used by important composers, including Bach, Haydn, and others, quite a bit earlier than normally accepted.

For example, Badura-Skoda proposes that Joseph Haydn became acquainted with the hammer action at the home of “one of his richer pupils,” Countess Wilhelmine von Thun, who “might have been in the 1750s the owner of a fortepiano.” It is doubtful that Haydn ever taught this Countess Thun, later Mozart’s patron but in 1750 only six years old, and who recent research has shown was more likely the pupil of court composer Wenzel Birck. The question of keyboard idiom naturally arises in examination of music composed by Haydn, Birck, Steffan, and others during the 1750s and 1760s. As Badura-Skoda notes, it was A. Peter Brown who first suggested that the presence of dynamic and other expressive markings, such as *spiritoso* and *dolce*, in the music of Birck and Steffan may have signalled use of the fortepiano even before its first reported public performance in Vienna in 1763. Brown, however, remained somewhat wary about assigning this music too fixedly to one type of instrument or another in what was a very fluid period for keyboard practice, while Badura-Skoda states that works by Birck and Steffan from the 1750s were “obviously intended for fortepianos.” The paucity of physical evidence from that period in the form of Viennese pianos leaves this open to further investigation.

This book is full of valuable information and insights, and reprints quite a number of important documents relating to the history of the piano from a variety of secondary sources. As Badura-Skoda herself points out in a preface, this book is not a comprehensive history of the wing-shaped or “grand” pianoforte. The book’s tone is frequently polemical, particularly when the author feels that a topic has been misunderstood by other scholars. Indeed, much of the book engages openly in dialogue with other scholars, often in a friendly way, but often not; one senses that in some cases old battles are being re-waged and long-standing scores settled. This may make the book less than useful for those readers who are unfamiliar with the literature and unequipped to judge for themselves the merits of the arguments. A decided detriment is the very poor editing that the book received, and of this Indiana University Press should take note. The book is filled with grammatical errors and infelicities, mistakes in punctuation, inconsistent use of italics, missing verbs and other words, at least one passage where the author slips into German (understandable,

given the *mélange* of languages present in the text, but this should have been caught by an editor), and many other textual problems. A thoughtful and distinguished author who has labored for years to bring a book to press deserves a better product from her publisher. But in the end, the important thing is that Dr. Badura-Skoda's love for these instruments, and her dedication both to understanding them and to fostering that understanding in others, shine through on every page.

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