



Negotiations Between Text and Act'. It aims to be fully functional and open to visiting researchers in the course of 2021.

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RESPONSE TO JOHN KOSTER

In his review of my book *Bartolomeo Cristofori and the Invention of the Piano* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017; review published in *Eighteenth-Century Music* 16/1 (2019), 69–72), John Koster suggests that my failure to cite certain articles is evidence of an ‘inattention to recent literature’, when it is an author’s prerogative to cite whatever he or she wishes. For example, my reason for not referring to Eva Badura-Skoda’s contention that Count Watzdorf brought a Cristofori piano back to Austria is that she provides no evidence that this ever transpired.

Koster states that ‘purely as a biography incorporating a thorough assemblage of contemporary documents relating to Cristofori together with detailed descriptions of his extant work, the book is unsurpassed’, but he goes on to assert that my writing about the invention of the piano ‘is less adequately realized’. Here Koster claims that I have overlooked nuances implicit in the concept of ‘invention’, specifically by not sufficiently considering the ‘social, artistic or intellectual context; the initial and long-term reception; and the diffusion and subsequent modification and development of the invention by others’. I submit that these matters are fully explored in chapter 1 (which includes a subsection entitled ‘Critical Reception of Cristofori’s Pianoforte in Florence’), chapter 5 (‘Cristofori’s Influence’) and in my Conclusion. Moreover, this criticism is unwarranted considering the hundreds of pages I devote to Cristofori’s inventiveness and engineering prowess, as well as to detailed technical descriptions and insights into the minutest details of his extraordinary work.

It is inexplicable that Koster characterizes as ‘irrelevant’ my exploration of musical life in Florence during Cristofori’s tenure as keyboard-instrument maker and keeper of the Medici instruments. I believe my presentation of the chronological correlation between the Medici court’s musical activities and Cristofori’s payments is of great scholarly interest and explains why Cristofori developed certain types of keyboard instruments, such as the large, multi-register *spinettone* intended for use in the court’s opera orchestra.

Koster is incorrect in his claim that the seventeenth-century Todini harpsichord at the Metropolitan Museum of Art once featured a separate bass bridge. In my extensive examination of that instrument using infrared reflectography, ultraviolet fluorescence and X-ray imaging I found no evidence of a separate bass bridge. Koster has misidentified old glue or positioning marks left after an eighteenth-century compass enlargement and concomitant repositioning of the bridge, which are detailed in my article in the *Metropolitan Museum Journal* (‘Michele Todini’s Golden Harpsichord: An Examination of the Machine of Galatea and Polyphemos’ (1990), 33–47).

Koster incorrectly states that there is ‘a reference at 270 to leather guides for the escapement jacks in a Portuguese piano which are not present in the instrument and therefore not to be seen in the photo at 271’. In fact, two extant Portuguese pianos have them; this is correctly referenced in the text, and one of them is illustrated on page 270.



Koster criticizes my contention that Cristofori strung his pianos primarily with iron rather than brass wire, which he characterizes as a 'less securely based view' not shared by 'most reputable organologists'. However, my considered conclusion is based upon the fact that all three extant Cristofori pianos were discovered in unrestored states with vestiges of iron wire, and even the recently discovered wreckage of a similarly scaled Cristofori spinet has remnants of iron wire on its tuning pins. Furthermore, in my experience maintaining the Metropolitan Museum's 1720 Cristofori piano (which I believe was improperly restrung in brass in the 1970s) I found it could not be tuned higher than about a third below A₄₁₅, otherwise certain strings below middle C would break. Its low tuning does not represent a conservation concern – that piano is simply tuned as high as it will go with brass wire.

As to Koster's comment about my engaging in 'score-settling', I cannot understand why it is improper to defend one's published positions. One such position that comes to mind was my criticism of Kerstin Schwarz's contention that the Cristofori piano at the Metropolitan Museum has been shortened by about eight inches. In my book I believe I defend my position in a polite and professional way. Incidentally, Koster defends Schwarz by comparing the length of the 1720 Cristofori piano with the length of another maker's later, double-manual combination harpsichord/piano, but his comparison of lengths is irrelevant.

Koster correctly notes the left-to-right reversed image of Cristofori's oval spinet on the cover. This was not my photograph or a printing error of Cambridge University Press, but rather the blunder of the Grassi Museum in Leipzig, which supplied CUP with a reversed photograph of their instrument – and billed me six hundred euros for their efforts!

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RESPONSE TO STEWART POLLENS

Indisputably, Stewart Pollens's book offers a plethora of worthwhile information about Bartolomeo Cristofori, his instruments and his circumstances in Florence. My quibble is with what he did with this information, or rather what he failed to do: that is, to demonstrate how it all relates to Cristofori's invention of the piano. One wishes that, in addition to all the attention given to material of marginal relevance to this main subject, more were given, for example, to the late seventeenth-century keyboard manuscript (available in an edition by Aapo Häkkinen, *The Medici Harpsichord Book* (Bologna: Ut Orpheus, 2011)) briefly described at 233. In such pieces as the *Preludio di Botte*, *Acciachature*, e *Ligature* the anonymous composer (possibly Grand Prince Ferdinando himself) anticipates 'pianistic' effects later employed by Ludovico Giustini and Azzolino Della Ciaia, among others.

It is certainly an author's 'prerogative to cite [or not to cite] whatever he or she wishes', but he or she should be prepared to face criticism for their choices or omissions, deliberate or not. Eva Badura-Skoda's work, I'd agree, often presents rather far-fetched suppositions. In this case, however, the basic facts, established in Nicola Schneider's article cited in my review, are indisputable: that in 1726 the musically keen Christian Heinrich von Watzdorf returned home to Crostau in Saxony after spending more than a year in Florence; that he commissioned Gottfried Silbermann to build an organ, completed in 1732, for Crostau's parish church; and that Watzdorf owned a piano that he must have acquired before 1733. Although one might