

BORGATO  
HANDCRAFTED CONCERT-GRAND PIANOS

## Keyboard instruments with pedalboard – a brief history

However unusual or even bizarre it may seem, the idea of a piano endowed with a pedalboard similar to that of an organ actually has a long history behind it. Its antecedents are the clavichord and the harpsichord with single or double keyboard, which also often had a pedalboard attached. The first citation of a clavichord with pedalboard appeared around 1460 in the section dedicated to musical instruments of the encyclopedic treatise written by the scholar Paulus Paulirinus (1413-1471). It was thus established as an instrument useful for "practice" reasons, in exercises useful for coordinating the hands and feet, that organists could also use if they wished to avoid having to activate the organs' bellows or the rigorous cold of the churches. **J. S. Bach** owned a clavichord with two keyboards and pedalboard for which he composed the Trio Sonata BWV 525-530, the Passacaglia in C minor BWV 582 and other works.

**W. A. Mozart** owned a fortepiano with independent pedals, built expressly for him in 1785 by Anton Walter. In the autographed manuscript of the Concerto in D minor K 466, composed the same year, the magnitude of the bass notes is evident. Furthermore, in letters to his father, Mozart mentions use of this piano with pedalboard in public improvisations.

The instrument **R. Schumann** refers to as a pedalfügel (piano with pedalboard) first entered his home in Dresden in 1845. Schumann's enthusiasm for this piano endowed with a pedalboard was so great that it inspired him to compose three works: Studies for Pedalfügel Op. 56, Skizzen for Pedalfügel Op.58 and Six Fugues on the name of "Bach" Op. 60; he was also able to convince **F. Mendelssohn Bartholdy** to inaugurate a class especially for the pedalfügel in the Conservatorium of Leipzig.

There are various systems with which a pedalboard was attached to the piano: the most common was that of a pedalboard fastened under the piano that activated its mechanics-keyboard; another System, though less frequent, was that of placing two independent pianos (each with its separate mechanics and strings) one above the other, as with the instrument Mozart required of Anton Walter. With time the request for this polyvalent instrument declined, so much so that works written specifically, such as those of Schumann, were performed more and more often on the organ, or transcribed into versions for four-hands or two pianos.

Inspired by the compositions mentioned above, at the end of this last century the piano-maker **Luigi Borgato** realized a new instrument, the "**DOPPIO BORGATO**": a double piano of extensive form, joining a concert-grand together with a second piano activated by a pedalboard comprised of 37 pedals, thus augmenting the expressive qualities of its 18<sup>th</sup> century predecessors.

The "**DOPPIO BORGATO**" opens up a new page for the musical world, this particular instrument offering new possibilities to both composers and interpreters.

**In the 19th and 20th centuries other composers also wrote for the piano with pedalboard, among these:**

**Alexandre Pierre François Boëly 1785 – 1858**

Twelve pieces Op. 18

**Robert Schumann 1810 – 1856**

Studien op. 56; Skizzen Op. 58; Six Fugues on B-A-C-H Op. 60

**Franz Liszt 1811 – 1886**

Fantasia und Fuge über den Choral "Ad nos, ad salutarem undam" from Meyerbeer's "Prophet"

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#### **Charles Valentin Alkan 1813 – 1888**

Twelve Études pour les pieds seulement

Benedictus in D minor Op. 54

Thirteen Prières Op. 64

Eleven Grands Préludes et une transcription du "Messiah" de Händel Op. 66

Impromptu sur le choral de Luther "Ein Feste Burg ist unser Gott" Op. 69

#### **Charles Gounod 1818 - 1893**

Fantasia sur l'hymne national russe for piano with pedalboard and orchestra

Suite Concertante for piano with pedalboard and orchestra

Danse Roumaine for piano with pedalboard and orchestra Larghetto for violin, viola, 'cello and piano with pedalboard

Marcia Solenne

#### **Camille Saint-Saëns 1835 – 1921**

Concerto for piano with pedalboard and orchestra (First version of the 2nd Piano Concerto)

#### **Léon Boëllmann 1862 – 1897**

Twelve pieces Op. 16

#### **Franco Oppo 1935**

"Freu dich sehr o meine Seele" (2000)

#### **Fabrizio Marchionni 1976**

"S'Indàssa" (2000)

#### **Jean Guillou 1930**

"Epitases" (2002)

#### **Charlemagne Palestine**

(2005) Compositions for piano with pedalboard

### **Examples of works composed for Musical Clocks able to be performed on Piano with Pedalboard**

#### **Ludwig van Beethoven 1770 - 1827**

Fünf Stücke für Flötenuhr WoO 33

#### **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756 – 1791**

Adagio and Allegro in F minor K 594 (Vienna, Ott – Dec 1790)

Fantasia in F minor Kv 608 (Vienna, March 1791)

Andante in F major Kv 616 (Vienna, May 1791)

The first editions were published for four hands in 1799 by Johann Traeg and in 1800 by Breitkopf & Härtel.