

TRANSLATION

“The *Ferrari* of pianos is built in Lonigo”.

The name standing out with light golden letters on the side and the cover of piano is all venetian – from Lonigo, indeed – although only by adoption: “*Borgato*”. Venetian, because Luigi Borgato always lived in Padua; from Lonigo, because he has been working for ten years, with his wife Paola, among villa Pisani’s “*barns*”, where he located his laboratory just to design and make concert grand pianos.

Only a few people, except musicians and someone possibly fond of this field, probably know that, in this corner of Vicenza plain where Andrea Palladio chose to build his villa, a downright piano atelier exists. Very high level pianos, carefully made by hand, each piece, so much perfect to be called, on classic music reviews, “*Ferrari*” of pianos. Well-known all over the world. Unique for technical innovations.

A relatively recent business, if we realise that the first model was officially and publicly introduced just in 1991. Recent but continually evolving business, since from that initial prototype and as a result of long study and elaboration, the new “*double Borgato*” now is born: to state briefly, it’s the joint of two concert grand pianos, one of which is driven by 37 pedals similar to a pedal-board.

Just some numbers and technical details of this super-piano: the instrument is 4,20 metres long, it is more than one ton heavy; the pedal-board is made of 37 notes of the scale, that is five more than in the modern organ.

An unusual and ingenious invention. Nothing similar was certainly planned and constructed in modern piano before. The only precedent is in the past and in the great Mozart who first, in 1785, realised a double “*fortepiano*”, moved by the pedal-board.

Friendly and gentle, Luigi Borgato welcomes us personally. We are very proud but almost guilty to violate these secrets spreading all around, to each corner of his laboratory.

This is the only artisan reality existing in this field over whole Europe. Inside there, we can particularly breathe intimacy atmosphere. In fact, a real love feeling exists between craftsman and his creature: we realise it as soon as Borgato begins to tell us about it, from the way he does it.

Luigi Borgato, perhaps only people from Padua have this outstanding inclination for piano?

He laughs...

In fact piano was invented, more than 300 years ago, just by an inhabitant of “*città del Santo*”, that is Padua, called Bartolomeo Cristofori *cembalaro*.

“As I studied instrumental history – Borgato begins – I knew well that Beethoven had constructed a piano with four strings each note for half keyboard, just like an organ pedal of “*forte*” that divides dampers up between bass notes and pitch ones. Working at the idea of this new piano where everything would be changed – number of strings, project of sound board and of iron frame, ankle installation, hammer percussion and string length - I laid the basis of an instrument depending on acoustic data whose main qualities would have revealed themselves thanks to a greater power and fullness, with a greater sound softness between “*piano*” and “*forte*” extremes. That’s how – Borgato goes on - I began to construct this instrument”.

Longer and heavier than a “*Steinway*” – we do add - where performer’s hands can indulge and pleasantly play with further acoustics, just like a painter with his colours palette.

Why did you choose Lonigo, and especially villa Pisani, as the seat of your laboratory?

“As a matter of fact, I owe everything to the previous owner of villa Pisani, countess Ferri, and to her patronage; as soon as she knew about my job, in fact, she offered me and insisted on giving hospitality to my laboratory among villa’s “*barns*”. So I decided to move from Padua to Lonigo. It was a risky bet, but it began a winning one as long as time went by. Because my activity’s ascent started just in Lonigo. This nice relation went on with the new owners of villa Pisani – Mr and Mrs Bedeschi Bonetti - too. I am very happy about it because this is a really prestigious seat”.

How do you build your piano?

“About material, the 80% consists of wood: maple-wood, beech-wood, oak, larch, hornbeam, mahogany, up to the famous “*resonance fir-wood*” useful to construct the sound board. Then there is a 220 kg heavy iron frame just in order to support all strings tension, exceeding in weight 25 tons. Strings are made of steel, instead, and bass ones are covered in copper. The white keys are made of ox bone, the black ones of ebony”.

Your job is completely peculiar: where did you learn it?

“Unfortunately, there are no schools in Italy; only some of them are in Germany and France. I personally studied piano music and worked in a piano factory for six months during 1986. Then passion, unconsciousness and intuition made the rest, so that I planned and built my first piano in 1991”.

A piano that has already seen all the best stages of the world...

“It’s true. “*Scala*” in Milan, “*Carlo Felice*” in Genoa, “*Teatro dell’Opera*” in Versailles, “*Teatro Olimpico*” in Vicenza, just in the last year and just to cite the main theatres”...

What can you see in the future of Borgato firm?

“At present our production, as a result of an artisan reality, doesn’t exceed two or three pianos one year. Consequently, offer is decidedly lower than request on world market. That’s why I’m not excluding the possibility, for the imminent future, to increase my production while keeping, in the meantime, the same workmanship quality, just in order to build at least fifty instruments each year. In this direction, I’m already taking some proposals of co-operation and joint-venture into right consideration”.