

William Fredart

FOUR SQUARE

*A selection of favourite
C18th & C19th
piano pieces*




Longman and Broadwood's

*played on
square
pianos
of the period.*

4
SQUARE



John Broadwood



Thomas d'Almaine

by **JOANNA LEACH**



FOUR SQUARE

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

*C18th and early C19th piano pieces
played on pianos of the period.*

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Antonio Soler (1729-1783) | 5m 58s |
| | Sonata No.90 in F sharp major | <i>Stodart, c.1823</i> |
| 2 - 4 | Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) | 6m 25s |
| | Sonata in C, Hob.XVI:1 | <i>Broadwood, 1789</i> |
| 5 - 7 | Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) | 7m 24 |
| | Partita No 1 in B flat | <i>Longman & Broderip</i> |
| | (Prelude, Minuets I and II, Gigue) | <i>c.1787</i> |
| 8 | Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) | 5m 28s |
| | Fantasie in D minor, K.397 | <i>Stodart, c.1823</i> |
| 9 | Franz Schubert (1797-1828) | 7m 44s |
| | Impromptu in A flat, D.899 No.4 | <i>D'Almaine, c.1835</i> |
| 10 | Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) | 3m 47s |
| | Lied ohne Worte, Op.19 No.1 | <i>D'Almaine, c.1835</i> |
| 11 - 13 | Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) | 24m 03s |
| | Sonata in A, K.331 | <i>Stodart, c.1823</i> |
| | (Andante grazioso - Menuetto - Rondo alla Turka) | |



ATH CD3

Playing time 61'42"

JOANNA LEACH

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The instruments.

The pianos recorded on this compact disc are by Longman & Broderip (c.1787, 5 octaves), John Broadwood (1789, 5 octaves), William Stodart (c.1823, 5½ octaves), and Thomas D'Almaine (c.1835, 6 octaves). All were restored by Andrew Lancaster, of The School House, Bucks Green, Sussex, who has provided detailed notes later in this booklet.

Tuning, $a'=415$ Hz.

Pitch throughout Europe at this period varied from place to place, a situation bemoaned by many musicians of the time. The Vienna pitch of Mozart's time was $a'=421.6$; Broadwood's in 1820, $a'=433$. Equal temperament was not the general tuning for pianos in England until the 1840's, one of the tempered scales being preferred.

These pianos have been tuned to $a'=415$ equal temperament, a semitone below present pitch. This slightly reduces the strain on the old frames and is convenient, since by transposing the piano part it is possible to accompany instruments tuned to our present concert pitch.

A note about levels.

To maintain technical quality this compact disc has been recorded at normal level, but for realistic reproduction it should be played back at low volume. The square piano is an intimate, domestic instrument, and the level appropriate for playing a record of a modern piano will give a totally false impression of its character.

As a guide, quiet conversation is unhindered by a square piano being played in a normal sized sitting-room, whereas one would have to shout to be heard over a modern one played at full volume.

Notes on the music and choice of instruments.

The pieces on this disc were chosen because I feel they show the varied sounds and characteristics of the four pianos recorded on this disc. They are also works I am frequently asked to play, being special favourites of many of my friends, who particularly enjoy hearing them played on square pianos.

The earliest instrument recorded here, the 1787 Longman and Broderip, is delightful for playing Bach. The positive action and antique sound suit his music admirably, and even the short keys and small keyboard help to stimulate a period feeling.

The 1789 Broadwood, with its very simple single action and somewhat harpsichord-like sound, gives a special charm to the little early Haydn sonata, written for his pupils to play. This work, on a modern piano, sounds too bland to be of much interest.

The Stodart, built in 1823, is a wonderfully expressive piano, capable of the big dramatic gestures required in the Soler Sonata and Mozart Fantasy. The clarity and fine texture of the early piano sound, as well as the delightful sensation of ease when executing the ornaments, add greatly to the enjoyment of performing on this instrument. The Spanish composer Fray Antonio Soler was a priest, and lived most of his life in a monastery. He was a pupil of Domenico Scarlatti, and wrote many keyboard sonatas for harpsichord and fortepiano. The one movement F sharp major sonata is in an improvisatory style with three extremely contrasted ideas, beginning with the rhythm of a grand Bolero, followed by a slower insistent theme expressively ornamented, and thirdly a fast dance, with difficult cross-hand leaps.

The D minor Fantasy is one of Mozart's best known short piano works. It is especially interesting because it gives us an insight into a style he

probably used when extemporising at the keyboard. The other work by Mozart on this disc, the Sonata in A major is also extremely popular, particularly because of the infectious *Rondo alla Turca* finale.

A six octave keyboard is required for the Schubert Impromptu, as the writing extends to d^{'''} flat. The D'Almaine piano, with its warm sound and slightly hazy damping, is very suitable for this early romantic music, and for the *Song without Words* by Mendelssohn. This, from the first set, was published in 1834, just one year before the D'Almaine was built.

Mendelssohn is known to have preferred playing these pieces on square pianos to achieve the soft intimate sound he desired.

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The pianos.

The square piano was the first type to be made in England, and rapidly achieved popularity following its introduction in the 1760's. The grand piano followed, being developed during the 1770's. While the grand was the instrument favoured for larger recital rooms and in grand houses, the square piano was the domestic instrument familiar to everyone. Although they are small, the tone is robust and carries well. They were used for recitals frequently during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. J. C. Bach, in 1768, played upon a square piano at a concert "for the benefit of Mr. Fischer".

The earliest square pianos were built with a simple mechanism called 'single action' in which a small leather capped push rod at the back of the

key struck the underside of the hammer, bouncing it into contact with the string. This action, though effective, was very limited in the degree of loudness or softness that could be obtained, and the evenness of touch.

In 1786 John Geib obtained a patent for 'double action', which featured an escapement and an intermediate hammer, the under-hammer, which greatly increased the reliability of the action and the range of dynamics available. This action is extremely flexible and responsive, transforming the square piano into an instrument of great subtlety and expressiveness.

Longman and Broderip, c.1787

This instrument, built by the employers of John Geib, has a double action mechanism, but curiously not the one patented by Geib which became ubiquitous, though it shares some of the same principles and is extremely elegant and effective. It is therefore conceivable that the instrument predates the 1786 patent. The piano has five octaves, with overdampers which are pressed against the strings by small springs of whalebone. A small and pretty piano, it has a transparent singing tone. The sustaining mechanism is operated by two handstops, which raise the dampers in two blocks; up to middle c, and from middle c upwards.

Broadwood, 1789

This elegant little piano, in a mahogany case with satinwood crossbanding and elaborate chequer work inlaid stringing, is also five octaves. It has single action, with the brass underdampers patented by Broadwood in 1783. These operate from below the strings, and are hinged brass levers with a piece of cloth at one end which damps the string and a weight at the other, which keeps the damper firmly pressed against the string except when an extension of the jack moves it away. A

characteristic of this type of damper is a momentary upward inflection at the end of the note due to the effective shortening of the string as the tiny piece of cloth makes contact with it. There is no sustaining mechanism.

Stodart, c.1823

A five and a half octave piano with double action and crank dampers. The sustaining mechanism by this period is invariably pedal operated. A fine instrument, which demonstrates how the sound of the piano had evolved in these few years. The hammer coverings, made of soft leather, are an important factor in producing the characteristic tone quality. The firm of Stodart, founded in 1775, was an important one in the development and manufacture of the piano, making many top quality instruments.

D'Almaine, c.1835

A six octave piano in a much larger case, which has heavier and longer strings, showing how the tone of the piano was steadily developing. Though still transparent and light-toned compared to a modern piano, it has very largely lost the "antique" timbre which characterises the earlier instruments. The hammers are cloth covered except for the top octave, which still retains leather coverings.

Recording details.

<i>Track</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Piano</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Soler	Stodart	D & J studio	18 Oct 92
2-4	Haydn	Broadwood	Coldharbour	24 July 92
5-7	Bach	Longman & Broderip	D & J studio	14 Oct 92
8	Mozart, K.397	Stodart	D & J studio	24 Oct 92
9	Schubert	D'Almaine	D & J studio	23 Oct 92
10	Mendelssohn	D'Almaine	D & J studio	23 Oct 92
11-13	Mozart, K.331	Stodart	D & J studio	18 Aug 92

Engineer: David Turner

Tuning: Tim Wrench

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The Broadwood square piano was recorded by courtesy of
Mr and Mrs E. Bridgen, of Coldharbour, Sussex.

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Joanna Leach Discography (recordings on square pianos)

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ath 23003 (ATHCD 3)



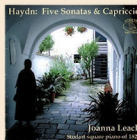
ATHCD1
"Three Square" -
John Field Nocturnes
Broadwood 1823,
D'Almaine 1835
Stodart 1823



ATHCD10
Dussek - Piano Sonata:
Élégie Harmonique
Duos Concertants for harp
and fortepiano
Clementi 1832
Derek Bell (Erard harp)



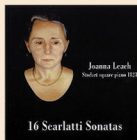
ATHCD2
Haydn: Four Sonatas
& Variations in F minor
Astor c. 1800
Broadwood 1789
Stodart 1823
Longman & Broderip 1787



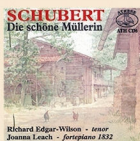
ATHCD22
Haydn -
Five Sonatas and
Capriccio
Stodart 1823



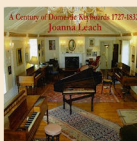
ATHCD3
"Four Square" Recital
Bach, Mozart, Soler, etc.
Broadwood 1789
D'Almaine 1835
Stodart 1823



ATH23025
Domenico Scarlatti-
16 Sonatas
Stodart 1823



ATHCD6
Schubert -
Die schöne Müllerin
Clementi 1832
Richard Edgar-Wilson
(tenor)



ATH23026
A Century of
Domestic Keyboards
Barton spinet 1727
Longman & Broderip 1787
Stodart 1823
Clementi 1832