

Die Elite der Pianisten

des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts auf Welte Mignon I. Teil

**Brahms, Chopin,
Liszt, Schubert,**

Backhaus

Busoni

Carreño

Nikisch

Pugno

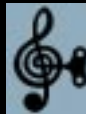
Schnabel

Zeisler

Stavenhagen

Steingraeber & Söhne

GSM





Welte - Mignon

The Freiburg company „M. WELTE & Söhne, Freiburg i. Br.“ (founded in 1832) is credited with the invention that allows pianists' performances, with all their changes in dynamics and rhythm, to be recorded on a paper roll by means of a hole-punching system. This music can then be faithfully reproduced in line with the original performance. Nobody has yet carried out detailed research into the exact recording process. A fire at the Freiburg factory destroyed all the documentation.

There are two kinds of "Welte" mechanical pianos, the push-up player and integral models. The push-up player can be placed in front of any piano instrument. 80 wooden "fingers", covered with felt, activate the keys on the piano, so replacing the pianist. The integral version, however, was a permanent fixture in the instrument, which meant instruments became much larger. An electric motor drives the device. All the functions are carried out pneumatically by means of a "blower" and control pulses read from holes in the paper roll.

An external wind machine in the next room supplied the air via a pipe for this CD recording, so as to eliminate any disturbances during the production of the sound.

A push-up player owned by Peter Zergiebel was used for this CD. The mechanical musical instrument was supplemented by a fine adjusting device for each individual note, which was also provided by Mr. Zergiebel.





Peter Zergiebel

The master piano technician and repairer of wind-driven instruments is a perfectionist. He cares for pianists' instruments in his home region, Vogtland in Saxony. He was forced to limit his activities to eastern Germany until 1990. The trained mechanical engineer spent hundreds of hours carefully restoring his Welte - Mignon push-up player, which was manufactured in 1913. Zergiebel loves piano music and he has collected a variety of Welte musical rolls. Some of these rolls can be heard on this CD. He was responsible for the rendering of the works on this CD.





The GSM

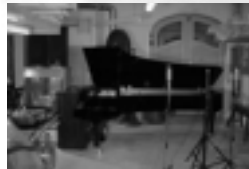
The charitable "Society for Self-Playing Musical Instruments", which was set up in 1975, aims to maintain, publicise and carry out research into the world of self-playing instruments. This international society comprises some 700 members in Germany and abroad, including many institutions like museums, libraries and academic musical institutes, but especially collectors and enthusiasts of these instruments, such as barrel organ players and showmen.

The society publishes a magazine three times a year. It is one of the best specialist periodicals on the market with in-depth articles on the subject of "*Mechanical Musical Instruments and Their Music*". Regular meetings are held to view important collections and exchange significant information. The society also arranges concerts and unique six-monthly collectors' sales, where people can buy or sell instruments.



Contact Ralf Smolne, chairman of the GSM,
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CD-Best.Nr.HB 80300



The Pianists

were clearly queuing up in Freiburg. Nearly all today's big names can be found in the Welte-Mignon catalogue. One significant difference about today's recordings is often very noticeable: the pianists were playing "live" and felt they were on a stage giving a concert. This means they may have made minor errors in phrasing or articulation - and these are exactly documented by the punching machine.

However, these uninhibited performances add to the feeling of authenticity and make people sense that they are listening to a performance in a concert hall.

Wilhelm Backhaus (1884-1969), a virtuoso pianist from Leipzig, a pupil of Dohnányi and d'Albert. He was famous for his phenomenal technique.

Artur Schnabel (1882-1951), an Austrian pianist, the doyen of Beethoven and Schubert interpretation in his time. He went into exile in 1933 and composed music in the 12-tone style.



Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924), the child prodigy from Florence, the star virtuoso pianist encouraged by J. Brahms. He moved to Berlin and was a musical theorist. His written works included "An Outline of New Aesthetics in Tonality".



Arthur Nikisch (1855-1922), a German conductor and violinist, leader of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig and the Berlin Philharmonic, was highly regarded as a specialist in performing works of such contrasting composers as Wagner and Brahms.

María Teresa Carreño (1853-1917), an American pianist of Venezuelan origin, a pupil of Louis Moreau Gottschalk. Her third marriage was to d'Albert. She was also a singer and composer.

Raoul Stéphane Pugno (1852-1914), a French pianist and composer, who taught at the Conservatoire in Paris and who was organist at St-Eugène. Famous as an interpreter of Chopin.



Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler (1863-1923), was long regarded as the greatest American pianist. She was born in Austria and had a huge repertoire.

The Steingraeber & Söhne Concert Grand E-272

is a completely new model created by the Bayreuth piano manufacturers. The photos of this prototype were taken in the company's workshops on October 3, 2001, immediately after it had been completed.

The construction is new, but is based on a concept drawn up by the founder of the company, Eduard Steingraeber ("E"), and it is 272 cm long ("272").

The full, transparent sound with its huge potential for modulation marks out its links with Steingraeber's 205 chamber concert grand, an instrument owned by famous names like Franz Liszt and Engelbert Humperdinck and many others. Many of the Welte-Mignon pianists gave concerts in the concert room at Steingraeber House in Bayreuth. This is reason enough to use this unique grand piano for these special recordings.

The E-272 will be premiered for the first time in public on July 24, 2002 at the Markgrave Opera House in Bayreuth at a performance given by Cyprien Katsaris to mark Steingraeber & Söhne's 150th anniversary.

Master piano manufacturer Wolfgang Schäffler (Steingraeber works manager) and concert technician Erich Friedrich prepared the grand piano for this recording.

Further CDs with Peter Zergiebel's Welte-Mignon push-up player are being planned:

Vol II Great Composers Interpret their own Works (Debussy, Saint-Saëns, Strauss)

Vol III Piano Bravura of the 19th Century (Beethoven, Thalberg, Wagner, Liszt)

Vorbestellungen bei:

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www.klavier-zergiebel.de

Klaviermanufaktur

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Steingraeber & Söhne

KLAVIERMANUFAKTUR IN BAYREUTH SEIT 1852

| | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Frédéric Chopin | Raoul Stéphane Pugno | 6 :04 |
| | Grande Polonaise Brillante Es-Dur Op.22 b, (Welte 545) | | |
| 2. | Frédéric Chopin | Teresa Carreño | 8 :59 |
| | Ballade No.1, Op.23 g-moll, (Welte 367) | | |
| 3. | Frédéric Chopin | Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler | 10:27 |
| | Scherzo b-moll Op31, (Welte 1464) | | |
| 4. | Franz Liszt | Bernhard Stavenhagen | 8:11 |
| | Ungarische Rhapsodie No.12 cis-moll, (Welte 1033) (gespielt nach persönlicher Erinnerung an Liszt) | | |
| 5. | Franz Liszt | Ferruccio Benvenuto Busoni | 10:20 |
| | Polonaise No.2 E-Dur, (Welte 1320) | | |
| 6. | Johannes Brahms | Arthur Nikisch | 3:06 |
| | Ungarischer Tanz, No.6 D-Dur, (Welte 383) | | |
| 7. | Franz Schubert | Artur Schnabel | 7:07 |
| | Impromptus Op.90, No.4, As-Dur, (Welte 383) | | |
| 8. | Franz Schubert | Wilhelm Backhaus | 11:30 |
| | Wanderer-Fantasie C-Dur Op.15, I.Satz Allegro con fuoco, II.Satz Adagio, (Welte 3312) | | |
| 9. | III.Satz Presto, IV.Satz Allegro, (Welte 3313) | | 6:51 |
| | | total | 72:35 |

Die CD wurde mit Mikrofonen von Telefunken, ELA - M 250 und dem Mikrofonvorverstärker V 76 vom Tonstudio Braun, Nürnberg aufgenommen.

violadesign

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