

## Was Farinelli the first owner of Maria Bárbara's 1730 Ferrini piano?

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### ABSTRACT

Farinelli was bequeathed a 1730 Ferrini piano by Queen Maria Bárbara. The hypothesis is that Farinelli was the first owner of this piano, which he bought from the maker in Florence, and subsequently gave to Maria Bárbara; she then returned the gift in her will. A letter from Thomas Pelham in 1777, who visited Farinelli in Bologna, stated that Farinelli took the piano to London and Spain, apparently confirming the hypothesis. Two Farinelli portraits, of 1734 and c.1755, show him standing beside a keyboard instrument, but the details are too vague to confirm the hypothesis, which remains possible, but not yet substantiated by other sources. The inventory of Maria Bárbara's instruments made after her death lists a 49-note piano, which it is argued here was bequeathed to Farinelli. This implies she did not play a 56-note piano until later (c.1747), when another instrument was purchased, probably from Ferrini. A re-assessment of documents shows that Fernández's harpsichord with a GG-d<sup>9</sup> compass was made as late as 1753 and that no 61-note harpsichord (possibly GG-g<sup>9</sup>) can be dated before 1757 in Maria Bárbara's collection. These dates help clarify when instruments were available for the performance of Scarlatti sonatas composed for the Queen.

That Farinelli (Carlo Broschi) inherited a piano (made by Ferrini in 1730) from Maria Bárbara (1711-1758; Queen consort of Spain 1746-1758) is well known through Kirkpatrick's report, but when and how she came into the possession of this instrument is still unclear.<sup>1</sup> Pollens, enumerating explanations when Farinelli acquired the instrument, suggested that "Farinelli may have ordered the pianoforte directly from the maker, receiving it upon completion in 1730".<sup>2</sup> A letter found by McGeary of an English nobleman visiting Farinelli outside Bologna in 1777, which stated that Farinelli took the piano with him to Spain, appears to confirm this, providing part of the impetus for a further analysis, for re-examining previously-known evidence and making new connections possible, even for other instruments in Maria Bárbara's collection.<sup>3</sup>

The known sources describing Farinelli's inherited piano can be briefly stated. Burney's account (1770) relates that it was "made at Florence in the year 1730" and from Sacchi (1784), Farinelli's biographer, we learn that the maker was "Ferrini Fiorentino".<sup>4</sup> In the inventory of Farinelli's instruments, made in 1783 after his death, it is recorded that the instrument was by "Giovanni Ferrini Fiorentino", and was signed.<sup>5</sup> Even this last statement is not correct, if one of Padre Martini's reports is accurate, which recorded "Joannes Ferrinius Florentinus Bartolomaei / Christophori Patavini Alumnus / faciebat A. D. MDCCXXX".<sup>6</sup> Such an inscription would probably have been on the nameboard, as were others by Ferrini.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kirkpatrick, p. 176, citing Farinelli's biographer Sacchi, p. 47. The inventory (in Spanish) is at p. 361.

<sup>2</sup> Pollens 1995, p. 123. His other two suggestions were that "Farinelli acquired the piano after his arrival in Spain in 1737", and that "he obtained the instrument on his return to Bologna".

<sup>3</sup> McGeary 2014, p. 183. Kindly communicated by Thomas McGeary (25.02.2014).

<sup>4</sup> Burney 1771, pp. 203-4. Burney 1773, p. 211. Sacchi, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Cappelletto p. 209. "Un Cembalo a martellini con suo piede torlito, e coperto di badana rosa; detti martellini servono per piani e forti; il detto Cembalo denominato Raffaele d'Urbino hà per Autore Giovanni Ferrini Fiorentino, firmato". Riccardo Pergolis translated "torlito" as "turned" (personal communication).

<sup>6</sup> Mischiati p. 123. The "/" characters in Mischiati's transcription might indicate line breaks in Martini's notes. As evidence of his accuracy, Martini correctly drew the keyboard of the 1606 Trasuntino Clavemusium Omnitonum (Mischiati, p. 100).

<sup>7</sup> Ferrini signed his name on the 1747 combination harpsichord-piano and the 1755 repair of a Zenti harpsichord "IOANNES FERRINI FLORENTINVS". See Pollens 1991, p. 82 and p. 85.

Farinelli's attachment to his 1730 Ferrini piano is well known through Burney's account of his visit to the singer's villa outside Bologna in 1770. "Signor Farinelli has long left off singing, but amuses himself still on the harpsichord and viol d'amour: he has a great number of harpsichords made in different countries, which he has named according to the place they hold in his favour, after the greatest of the Italian painters. His first favourite is a *piano forte*, made at Florence in the year 1730, on which is written in gold letters. *Rafael d'Urbino*; then, Correggio, Titian, Guido, &c. He played a considerable time upon his Raphael [sic.], with great judgement and delicacy and has composed several elegant pieces for that instrument."<sup>8</sup> A few pages later Burney wrote "I found him at his Raphael, and prevailed on him to play a good deal: he *sings* upon it with infinite taste and expression."<sup>9</sup>

Since Burney reported that Farinelli no longer sang, the expression "he *sings* upon it" *might* be interpreted as a comment on Farinelli's style of playing. Another visitor was entertained with a *fandango*, probably played on Raphael.<sup>10</sup> Desler noted that Sacchi explained why Farinelli was diffident about *singing* for visitors, who would hear the difference between his current ability and his reputation, but that even until three weeks before his death, Farinelli sang almost the whole day.<sup>11</sup>

Farinelli also remained creative: a letter to Metastasio, in 1780, transcribed by Radermacher, describes a composition conceived at the "Cembalo di piano e forte", so possibly at his Ferrini piano, unless he always referred to that as "a martellino".<sup>12</sup> When the name *cembalo* occurs in 18th-century Italian documents it is often not clear whether a piano or a harpsichord was intended. Meccoli wrote c.1703 of the Cristofori "Arpi Cimbalo del piano e forte", but in his testament Farinelli describes the inherited instruments as "trè cembali, uno di registro, altro a martellino, e altro a penna".<sup>13</sup> In the Martini-Morellati correspondence "cembalo a martellini" is used, but often contracted to just "cembalo", when the type was already clear.<sup>14</sup> In the *Inventarium legale* of Farinelli's instruments the "Correggio" is described as "Questo Cembalo...suona li piani e forti a penna...", which shows the range of possible confusion.<sup>15</sup>

Although Farinelli valued the Ferrini piano above his other instruments, and reported that it was one of Maria Bárbara's best three, there is no independent record of its musical quality. Morellati revealed in a letter of 1766 that his first efforts at piano making had not yet achieved the craftsmanship [manifattura] of Ferrini's instrument.<sup>16</sup>

So much for the instrument itself. McGeary found an English traveller's report, by Thomas Pelham (later first Earl of Chichester), in a letter, written in Bologna, 2nd October, 1777, so evidently after meeting Farinelli at his villa outside Bologna.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Burney, *ibid.* Music sent to Marianna Martines by Farinelli in 1783 has not yet come to light.

<sup>9</sup> Burney 1771, p. 221, Burney 1773, p. 229.

<sup>10</sup> McGeary 2014, p. 186: José Viera y Clavijo records "Tambien miraba como cosa sagrada un clave que le regalò la reina Dña. M<sup>a</sup> Bárbara y nos tochè en el fandango".

<sup>11</sup> Desler p. 26, citing Sacchi p. 42: "Tre settimane innanzi alla morte cantò quasi tutto il giorno"

<sup>12</sup> Letter Farinelli to Metastasio, May 1780: "La sonatina che mi dite d'esservi piaciuta in Gesut naturale nacque al mio **Cembalo di piano e forte**..." kindly communicated by Sabine Radermacher (17.03.2026); who suggested it was the "Correggio" harpsichord. Published in Radermacher p. 175.

<sup>13</sup> For Meccoli see note 116. For Farinelli's Testament see Cappelletto p. 203.

<sup>14</sup> See Mischiati p. 127 and Nardi note 16.

<sup>15</sup> Cappelletto p. 209 and Appendix 1. Antonio Viola, a harpsichord maker, drew up the inventory.

<sup>16</sup> Nardi p. 369, letter to Martini 25 June 1766, Morellati online H.086.068.

<sup>17</sup> McGeary 2014, p. 183.

"My dearest Mother, I am just returned from a Visit to the famous Faranelli... & to compleat the Pleasure of my Visit he played two Airs on *the* [my emphasis] Piana-forte that travelled with him to England [and] Spain:" ["and" supplied by McGeary]

This is a remarkable report, which, if correct, would be proof that Farinelli took the 1730 Ferrini piano with him to Spain, from which we could safely infer he was its owner when he took it to England in 1734, before parting for Spain in 1737. Since he was again the owner of it in Bologna in 1777, through Maria Bárbara's bequest, the final goal would be to explain how it went out of his ownership in Spain, but firstly we have to question whether Pelham's testimony could be correct.<sup>18</sup>

There is currently no confirmation of the accuracy of Pelham's statement; it is only the probability which can be assessed. One might be sceptical that Pelham's information about a travelling piano could be correct: travelling *harpsichords* were made, and one which Farinelli owned at c.120cm - 135cm length could have been transported on a coach, but a 239cm long Cristofori-style piano would have been a different matter, and conceivably more difficult.<sup>19</sup>

The "ill state" of the instrument which Charles Jennens reported after he received his Cristofori-style piano in London, sent from Florence in 1732, need also to be considered.<sup>20</sup> Modern reproductions show that the Cristofori action is not "delicate", but on account of the high mechanical advantage and the hygroscopic nature of leather, reacts to changes in humidity, which can cause the hammers to strike the strings without the escapement releasing ("blocking").<sup>21</sup> A practical solution is to set the escapement some 3-5mm under the string, which gives enough latitude to avoid the problem. The other malfunction which can occur is that the hammerbutts ["rotelle" in Maffei's description] stick in their guides through increased humidity (or the ingress of dust). The solution here is to remove the offending hammerbutt and dry or clean it. Cristofori's action had two axles, removable either from the bass or the treble end so that it might not be necessary to remove *all* the hammers for maintainance.<sup>22</sup>

These known difficulties with the action give us plausible explanations of the state of the piano when it arrived in London. The humidity of a sea voyage could have made the action temporarily unplayable, but it would only have taken a couple of hours of

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<sup>18</sup> I am obliged to Michael Latcham's analysis (26.06.2018) in restricting the formulation to what Pelham's letter, if correct, would prove.

<sup>19</sup> "Un Cembalino che si piega per comodo del trasporto sul suo piedestallo, coperto di panno rossa trenaato giallo: Il Cembalo a due Registri con tastiera d'ebano finita d'avorio", quoted in Cappelletto, p. 210. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folding\\_harpsichord](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folding_harpsichord) for photos of this type of instrument, which usually had a C/E-c<sup>3</sup> compass. Folding harpsichords of this type were probably introduced by Marius around 1700, but an instrument by the Italian Grimaldi is also known.

<sup>20</sup> See Wraight 2021/3, p. 3, Holdsworth's letter of 17 February 1733 to Jennens. McGeary 2014, p. 183, note 128, was understandably sceptical that Farinelli would have travelled with a piano: "Given the fragility of the mechanism, and difficulty of keeping them playable, it is unlikely that Farinelli traveled with such an instrument." Personal communication (12.11.2013) with Thomas McGeary led me to give this detailed assessment of the technical weaknesses of the Cristofori action.

<sup>21</sup> Although the action is sensitive to humidity changes, I would not (with Latcham 2007/2, p. 271) call it "delicate" since it is robust enough to withstand the jolting of transport, as modern replicas show.

<sup>22</sup> See Wraight 2015 for Maffei's description of the action. There is also another practical reason why the axle is divided: the core of the hammerbutt contains leather pads which act as a low-noise bearing, but they are intended to contribute some friction. The accumulated friction across the entire rank with a single axle would make its removal more difficult.

adjustment by an experienced hand to correct this. Since Jennens might not previously have dealt with such actions it is understandable if his agitation over the state of the instrument exceeded the seriousness of the misadjustment.

Besides documenting Jennens' acquisition of his piano, the Jennens-Holdsworth correspondence also documented that an English nobleman, Willoughby Bertie, had purchased a Florentine piano in 1727, which would have reached England by 1728 at the latest.<sup>23</sup> Thus, there seems to have been no practical hindrance in moving pianos from Florence by sea to London, nor indeed overland, since another Florentine piano reaching Germany was probably the basis of Silbermann's later, successful piano.<sup>24</sup> Of course the five Florentine pianos which found their way eventually into Maria Bárbara's collection must also have been transported with success to the Iberian peninsular, and in 1737 Farinelli also sought to have a harpsichord sent from Bologna to Spain.<sup>25</sup> We can conclude that the information in Pelham's letter about Farinelli taking a piano to England and Spain was feasible in practice.

What Holdsworth's purchase in Florence *does* reveal is that Cristofori pianos were available for sale in 1732 and did not have to be specially commissioned, with a two-year waiting period.<sup>26</sup> This would have made it relatively easy for Farinelli to have acquired a piano in 1730. However, even *with* a waiting period, Farinelli could have visited the workshop and placed an order in 1728 when he sang in Florence, and he was there again in August 1734, shortly before departing for England. McGeary found the record of a "Trunk" being sent by sea from Leghorn to London on Farinelli's behalf, so we see again how goods could be transported from Italy to England.<sup>27</sup>

If we now consider, *ex hypothesi*, Pelham's statement to be correct, that it was the *same* piano in Bologna which Farinelli had taken to England and Spain, how could it be that Farinelli inherited this instrument from Maria Bárbara if he was previously the owner?

The story concerning the creation of a harpsichord by Farinelli for Maria Bárbara is related by Sacchi in his biography of the singer and was brought to general notice by Kirkpatrick.<sup>28</sup> The Queen had asked Farinelli if he knew of harpsichords producing several different types of sound. He replied that he did not, but then sought out Diego Fernández and the two of them conceived a harpsichord with several stops, which Fernández built. Farinelli left the finished instrument in the Queen's apartments to be discovered by her. Following Sacchi's account the date of construction of the harpsichord was previously only located between 1746 and 1758, but Latcham later noticed a source dating it as 1753.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Wraight 2021/3, pp. 2-3. Willoughby Bertie (1692–1760) of Wytham Abbey, Berkshire, later 3rd Earl of Abingdon in 1743, spent the years 1722–1727 in Italy.

<sup>24</sup> The findings of Schneider led to this conclusion, kindly communicated by Kerstin Schwarz. See the discussion in Wraight 2019, pp. 114-115.

<sup>25</sup> The details of Farinelli's request are given later and in note 69.

<sup>26</sup> See Wraight 2019, p. 5. Pollens 1995, p. 123, envisaged that the piano was ordered.

<sup>27</sup> McGeary 2005, p.345. The Duke of Leeds was also involved in this transport.

<sup>28</sup> Sacchi, quoted in Kirkpatrick, p. 176.

<sup>29</sup> Latcham 2007/2, p. 258, restricted the range to 1756 by eliminating MB10 and MB12 as having been delivered in 1757, but Latcham 2019, p. 64, referred to Mischiati p. 124, where the find in the Martini archives of the date 1753 is given.

If Maria Bárbara had shown pleasure in the 1730 piano, it is not implausible to imagine, given the story of the Fernández harpsichord made for her, that Farinelli should have *given* her the piano. She then *returned* the gift of the Ferrini piano in her will, just as she did with the Fernández harpsichord.

However, even *if* Farinelli had taken the 1730 piano as his own instrument to Spain in 1737, being attached to Felipe's household he might not have been in a position, to give it to Maria Bárbara before July 1746, when the King died. An obvious impediment would have been if Farinelli used the piano in his performances for the King.<sup>30</sup>

Although this present is hypothetical, it is in keeping with Farinelli's record of making expensive gifts. Von Dittersdorf recounts how in 1763, having refused payment for playing in a benefit concert in honour of Padre Martini in Bologna, he was given a beautiful gold watch as a reward by an anonymous stranger, who turned out later to be Farinelli's servant, acting on his master's behalf.<sup>31</sup>

There is also the "*flotta Petroniana*" which Farinelli sent in 1783 to Marianna Martines in Vienna, a substantial and eclectic assortment of music, tobacco, sweetmeats, cloth, lace, silk, and perfume, but also six *mortadelle di Bologna* (sausages) and jam for her and Metastasio. This consignment was not the only one sent to Vienna.<sup>32</sup>

Farinelli is recorded by Sacchi as having paid for "il primo de' suoi cembali [a martellini]" made by Morellati, which was presented to Ferdinando, Duke of Parma (b. 1751, married in 1769), Infante of Spain, a grandson of the dowager Queen Isabel Farnese (who brought Farinelli to Spain); Ferdinando had received harpsichord lessons starting in 1760, aged 9.<sup>33</sup> However, Nardi disproves that the singer initiated the construction.<sup>34</sup> Sacchi's account is also not the full story, since according to Gian Luca Pallavicini, *he* was in the process of giving the piano to the Duke of Parma some time around 1771, which we deduce from the date of his letter.<sup>35</sup> However, we are also told that Farinelli had another "cembalo a martellini" made for Pallavicini, in use by 1771, so probably by Morellati; even if we cannot say who paid for it, this at least testifies to the singer's continued interest in the piano.

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<sup>30</sup> Latcham 2007/2, p. 275, conjectured Farinelli could have used a piano when singing to the King.

<sup>31</sup> Related by McGeary 2014, p. 152, from von Dittersdorf's autobiography (1801) pp. 118-120.

<sup>32</sup> As Sabine Radermcher kindly informed me, there was also a package in May 1780 (personal communication 18.04.2025).

<sup>33</sup> Giuseppe Colla was his teacher. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand\\_I,\\_Duke\\_of\\_Parma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand_I,_Duke_of_Parma) citing Grove Music Online, doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.06099.

<sup>34</sup> According to Nardi p. 374, letters between Morellati and Locatelli show that Farinelli first took an interest in the instrument after its completion. Sacchi, 48, states: "Questi fabbricò il primo de' fuoi cembali di commissione, e a spese del Farinello istesso, che poi ne fece un presente all'odierno Duca di Parma Infante di Spagna." I follow Kirkpatrick in calling her "Isabel Farnese", as Queen consort in Spain (1714-1746), but she was born Elisabetta Farnese (b. 1692 in Parma, d. 1766, in Aranjuez).

<sup>35</sup> Ostoja p. 93 quotes from a letter of 1771 which implies that Pallavicini in Bologna [Fieldmarshal Count Gian Luca Pallavicini, a soldier in the service of the Habsburgs, and Governor of Milan, who moved to Bologna in 1765] had also received a *cembalo a martellini* that Farinelli had had made: "Si cantarono diverse arie, e mio figlio [Giuseppe Maria, aged 15] ne accompagnò due col cembalo e fu sentito con gradimento. Fece anche diverse sonate sui cembalo a martellini, che mi ha fatto fare il cavalier Farinella [my underlining], simile a quello che **mando** [my emphasis] alla Infanta di Parma, e ne fui contento." Thomas McGeary kindly provided this article and drew to my attention to the pages mentioning Farinelli.

The hypothesis is therefore formulated thus: that Farinelli bought the 1730 Ferrini piano for his own use, most likely from the maker. As the circumstances of Jennens' instrument indicate, around 1732 Cristofori pianos were available for sale in Florence, and did not have to be specially commissioned with a two-year waiting period, as in 1716. Even with a waiting period, Farinelli could have placed an order in 1728 since he sang in Florence, and could have received it in 1730.<sup>36</sup> According to Pelham's account the piano would have been taken by Farinelli to Spain when he was invited in 1737 by Queen Isabel Farnese (1712–1746) to alleviate the depression of her husband, King Felipe V (b.1683–d.1746), by singing to him, firstly at La Granja. It could be precipitate to infer that Farinelli took the piano *with* him to Spain in August 1737 (as Pelham's report implies) since at that time the remarkably successful outcome of his visit could not have been foreseen. This would then lead to the inference that he had the instrument sent along later, after he had become a *criado familiar* [personal servant], with all its remuneration.

### The two portraits of Farinelli with a keyboard instrument

Hertz suggested that the "*harpsichord*" depicted in Giaquinto's portrait of Farinelli (Fig. 3, discussed below) might have been taken by him to Italy after the Queen's death in 1758, but he also showed the 1734 portrait of Farinelli standing beside a "*harpsichord*", painted by Nazari (Fig. 1.).<sup>37</sup> Can it be that the same instrument is shown in both portraits, which was in fact the 1730 Ferrini piano thereby confirming Pelham's information?

The earlier portrait by Bartolomeo Nazari is signed and dated 1734, evidently painted in Venice when Farinelli sang there, before his London debut in October 1734.<sup>38</sup> The inscription on the nameboard is (unfortunately for us) not that of the instrument maker, but the painter: 'Bartholomeus Nazarij Berg[amensis]:/ Pinxit. Venetus An[no]. 1734.'<sup>39</sup> Could we infer that Nazari, by using the same formulation as instrument makers (name - origin - place of manufacture - date), and even if jesting with us about his being the maker of the instrument, was inadvertently indicating that it was *signed* for all to see? Through his record of the Ferrini signature Martini gave us grounds to believe that the 1730 piano was signed in an easily-visible place, which was probably in the usual way, on the nameboard.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> See Desler p. 281 for the year 1728 and p. 284, for 1730, listing Farinelli's engagements.

<sup>37</sup> Hertz 1984, pp. 363-364, then p. 366 for the Nazari portrait. Cappelletto, p.139, linked the Giaquinto portrait with a Fernández harpsichord made for the Queen, but this would have had black natural keycovers, not the boxwood ones we see.

<sup>38</sup> McGeary 2002, pp. 207-209, purchased, and perhaps commissioned by the Duke of Leeds.

<sup>39</sup> The inscription was recorded by Watson. See also

<https://www.vads.ac.uk/digital/collection/NIRP/id/30946/>

<sup>40</sup> Italian instruments occasionally have a signature on a key, which is not visible until the nameboard and the keylever have been removed. For other Ferrini inscriptions see note 7.



Fig. 1. Bartolomeo Nazari's 1734 portrait of Farinelli. © RCM, London.  
[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a8/Bartolomeo\\_Nazari\\_-\\_Portrait\\_of\\_Farinelli\\_1734\\_-\\_Royal\\_College\\_of\\_Music\\_London.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a8/Bartolomeo_Nazari_-_Portrait_of_Farinelli_1734_-_Royal_College_of_Music_London.jpg)

It is not immediately apparent for us why Farinelli should have chosen to be represented beside a keyboard instrument since we usually associate him with operatic performances, not with singing accompanied at a keyboard, or playing the harpsichord. However, shortly after receiving news of Metastasio's death Farinelli recalled how the two had worked together in Vienna [1732], with Metastasio composing and Farinelli, accompanying himself at the "cembalo", singing the newly-produced work.<sup>41</sup> Radermacher found a letter from Farinelli to Metastasio in April 1782, shortly before the latter's death, which testifies to the singer's continued self-accompaniment, merely five months before his own death.<sup>42</sup> Thus, it is surprising that credible eyewitness accounts of Farinelli accompanying himself are not known.<sup>43</sup> However, Farinelli was not limited to accompaniment; it is recorded that he played the organ in a Handel Oratorio in London with "surprising skill", evidently more than Prevost expected, so there is no doubt about his ability.<sup>44</sup> He was evidently discerning when it came to the quality of the harpsichord since he sought a "buonissimo cembalo" in 1738, apparently for his own use shortly after he had arrived in Spain, when he was already in the King's service.<sup>45</sup> Thus we have every reason to see a *cembalo* as one of Farinelli's "tools of the trade".

In dealing with paintings (of virtually any period) one cannot be sure that something realistically represented confirms that it was actually *in front of the painter*; representational art was not photography.<sup>46</sup> We cannot begin to describe the instruments without understanding the circumstances behind the creation of each portrait.

The Nazari portrait is what we might now call a "fan photo", or perhaps even a "fanfake", having been purchased, and possibly commissioned, by Thomas Osbourne, The Duke of Leeds.<sup>47</sup> According to Desler, Farinelli indicated with the gloved left hand his being a stage performer, but the sheet music (even if not identifiable as a specific aria), the quill, and the inkpot suggest his activity as a composer.<sup>48</sup> We can also note the gold embroidery of the frock coat, every bit as fine

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<sup>41</sup> Recorded in a letter to Marianna Martines 28 May 1783, kindly provided by Irving Godt (25.03.2006) . "... him at his desk and myself at the keyboard, testing with my voice the products of his golden pen when I had the fortune to be in that Imperial Court." (Translation Irving Godt). See also the highlighting of "cembalo" in Appendix 2. There is also the letter to Pepoli on 31 March 1732 in Vitali, p. 99, cited by Desler, p. 32, note 33: "mi fa mettere al cembalo e sonai e cantai da me un'aria", which was the only evidence given that "Farinelli was an accomplished harpsichord player, well able to accompany himself at a professional level."

<sup>42</sup> "(...) e che dalle pazziarelle conoscerete che stammo pazzcando sempre insieme in conversazione, o al Cembalo, o leggendo l'ampia raccolta delli vostri inimitabili Componimenti scartappellando **Arie e Sonatele** sù la certezza che vi piaceranno così le une, come le altre **per esser state cantate, e sonate de me al mio Cembalo**;..." [Radermacher's emphasis]: the first publication of Sabine Radermacher's transcription from Ms 2091, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, with her kind permission. (Personal communications 4.12.2005 and 17.03.2026).

<sup>43</sup> McGeary 2014, pp. 176-177, is sceptical that we can trust Casanova's account of the dowager Electress of Saxony having heard Farinelli sing and accompany himself.

<sup>44</sup> Prevost p.103: " Il y touche l'Orgue lui-même, avec une habileté surprenante.", brought to notice by Deutsch p. 390.

<sup>45</sup> See note 69 and the accompanying text.

<sup>46</sup> Even the apparently realistic Renaissance intarsie are deceptive, see Wraight 2021/2.

<sup>47</sup> McGeary 2002, pp. 207-209. The expression "fanfake" may stem from the early 2020s to indicate a blend of fabricated content by enthusiasts or "fans".

<sup>48</sup> Desler, p. 156, and note 18 discussing the significance of the gloved hand.

as that worn by the Duke of Leeds himself.<sup>49</sup> Was this finery real or invented to underscore Farinelli's standing in the public estimation? With the same measure of caution we have also to question whether the instrument was even present at the sitting for the portrait.

Giaquinto's portrait of Farinelli in his robes of the Order of Calatrava (Fig. 2), was not the first depiction of the singer shown wearing this regalia. An earlier group portrait (Fig. 3, 1750-1752, by Amigoni) shows him in the company of Teresa Castellini and Pietro Metastasio, even though the latter was actually in Vienna, so the librettist could only be included because Farinelli insisted he receive a portrait of him.



Fig. 2. Pietro Metastasio, Teresa Castellini, Farinelli, and the painter Amigoni  
<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/queering-the-family-portrait-jacopo-amigonis-portrait-of-farinelli-and-friends/>

Sheet music is in evidence in Fig. 2, as in most Farinelli portrayals, but this time with the clear indication of himself as a composer through the "CBF" heading [Carlo Broschi Farinelli], the aria title, and readable notes, thus we have a clearly choreographed, but literally impossible "group portrait".<sup>50</sup>

The better known, later painting by Giaquinto (Fig. 3), is usually dated c.1755 and depicts Farinelli in his robes of the Order of Calatrava, a title which was bestowed on

<sup>49</sup> See Fig. 1 in McGeary 2002, p. 202, for a portrait thought to be of the Duke of Leeds..

<sup>50</sup> Hertz p. 362 drew our attention to Farinelli as a composer, read the title of the music "La Partenza" and conjectured that it might refer to an imminent parting of Castellini from Madrid.

him in 1750.<sup>51</sup> Giaquinto arrived in Madrid in August 1753 so the portrait could not have been painted before this date.



Fig. 3. Corrado Giaquinto's portrait of Farinelli, c.1755

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/85/Carlo\\_Broschi.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/85/Carlo_Broschi.jpg)

In the c.1755 Calatrava portrait (Fig. 3) Farinelli is the main subject, brought to possibly unseemly prominence, with King Fernando and Queen Maria Bárbara

<sup>51</sup> Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica, Bologna, cat. no. 312.

depicted suspended in the middle distance *behind* Farinelli in a bower of cloth, supported partly by floating cherubs, but Metastasio again makes an appearance (behind Farinelli, to the right). The dramatic setting in the Calatrava robes (which he later wore in Bologna) shows the theatrical tendency to self-portrayal, even to the improbable (but symbolic) extent of wearing spurs. The sheet music, apparently cast carelessly to the floor, with its "Il Cav. D:<sup>n</sup> Carlo Broschi Far." heading and the title "Son Pastorello amante" [I am a lovesick shepherd], supplies the message, visible if one is close enough to the portrait: Farinelli as Orpheus.<sup>52</sup> With all this carefully-planned detail we have to expect that if Farinelli wished to make any statement with the keyboard instrument, then he could have done so, but the actual results for our enquiry are inauspiciously few.

The carved and gilded stand of the instrument (similar to that in the Nazari portrait, Fig. 1) is sufficiently opulent for the occasion, but not identifiable with any stand of the inventories, so it is probably an invention. The only prominent detail is the boxwood of the natural keycovers: this wood was most often used in *Italian* instruments, and as the inventory recorded, for the unaltered Florentine pianos in Maria Bárbara's collection. If there is any message to be received here, it is that Farinelli wished to be seen identified with Italian harpsichords, or possibly even an Italian piano.

The technical detail is inaccurate with keys projecting beyond the front of the case, and it is not likely that Farinelli would have used a compass with a C/E-short octave bass, as we see in this instrument. The absence of a keyblock between the case and the keyboard and the lack of any arcades on the keyfronts are serious omissions in an accurate portrayal.

Such technical inaccuracies are also found in the Nazari portrait: the keyboard ends on b<sup>2</sup>, which was impossible in the prevailing musical practice, so a compass to c<sup>3</sup> was probably intended. The poor perspective in the keys and the uneven placement of the e<sub>b</sub><sup>2</sup> and g<sub>#</sub><sup>2</sup> keys show that a less competent painter was assigned the work on the instrument than the person who painted the sheet music.

The colour of the pianos' cases is listed in the inventory, with the ninth [MB9] being described as red [encarnado].<sup>53</sup> We even see a red bar in front of the Nazari keyboard, but at this position in either a Cristofori piano or most Italian harpsichords we would expect a cypress moulding in front of the keyframe, not painted casework. On the closed lid we see a light brown colour, which might conceivably be the "palosanto" mentioned for the first instrument [MB1], however this evidence would then conflict with the red of MB9, seen in front of the keys.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Hertz pp. 364-365 drew attention to all these details in the sheet music. Farinelli performed in Orfeo in March 1736, in London. See Desler p. 288.

<sup>53</sup> Following Latcham 2007/2, the instruments are referred to hereinafter with "MB" = Maria Bárbara and the position in the inventory. See Appendix 1.

<sup>54</sup> "Palosanto" is not a pigment name, but refers to a wood, probably *Bursera graveolens*, native to S. America. Translations given for this name include lignum vitae (Latcham 2007/2, p. 257) and palisandar (Pollens 1995, p. 276), rosewood (Kenyon de Pascual [hereinafter KdP] 1985, p. 37). The colour is variously identified as light or dark brown, perhaps with green streaks. Sutherland 1995/1 suggested the colour was a shade of dark green. It seems the wood was rarely used in any large dimensions in Spain, but Fernández used it for keycovers in 1761 (KdP 1985, p. 44). The main point concerning this wood has been missed, that it was used for medicinal or spiritual purposes on account of the fragrance released when it is burned. Wood now offered for this purpose shows a colour similar

As we see in Morellati's portrait (Fig. 5. discussed below), painters were capable of producing technically accurate detail of instruments if it was required, but Nazari's work was the production of portraits, not recording instruments for future organologists to pore over.

There is nothing in either the Nazari or the Giaquinto portrait which would reveal whether a harpsichord or piano was intended as the singer's "working instrument", so this aspect was evidently not considered sufficiently important by Farinelli.<sup>55</sup> One detail, apparently insignificant, is however striking: in both portraits a sloping cheek of the case is shown. This is unusual in Italian harpsichords, and if a real feature, would connect the instrument in the two portraits as probably one and the same.<sup>56</sup> However the part of the lid which would close over the keyboard was omitted by Nazari, so accurate depiction had given way to the requirements of showing Farinelli

What is to be made of the evidence of the two portraits? As the portrait with Metastasio, Castellini, and Farinelli shows, the subjects of the portrait need not have been in front of the painter's easel, thus we have no guarantee that the instruments depicted show anything more than commonly-known elements. Despite this caveat, the sloping cheeks show that the same idea, but possibly that the same instrument, was depicted some 20 years apart. If any significance can be attached to the Italian style boxwood covers in Giaquinto's portrait painted in Spain it would be that Farinelli was associated with, or wished to be seen as associated with, an Italian instrument. Thus, we have no reliable indications that Farinelli's 1730 Ferrini stood as the model for either portrait, but on the other hand nothing which detracts from the hypothesis that Farinelli was the first owner of the Ferrini piano.

## The pianos in the Spanish Royal Palaces

It is a surprising fact that despite the inventories which refer to the piano (unnamed in Spain 1758, but named in Bologna 1783), a biography of the singer, and the reports of visitors (Burney, Pelham, and Morellati), we do not have any correspondences of detail which enable us to identify the 1730 Ferrini piano in the inventory of Maria Bárbara's collection.

There is one painting which reputedly depicts Maria Bárbara playing a green keyboard instrument with boxwood keycovers, which could be identified with a piano in her collection, *if* it were a reliable eyewitness report. Since the painter Gaspare Traverso never left Italy this is considered to be one of his artful inventions.<sup>57</sup>

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to untreated cherry wood, i.e. a light orange-brown. This is an unusual colour for the outer case of a Florentine instrument.

<sup>55</sup> Gabriele Rossi-Rognoni kindly took detailed photos of the keyboard in the Nazari portrait which eliminated the possibility that there was a knob in the treble keyblock. Had this been present it would surely have indicated a Cristofori-style piano *una corda* stop.

<sup>56</sup> This sloping cheek is found in late harpsichords by Vincenzo Sodi, (1778-1789), e.g. from 1791 in the Tagliavini Collection, Bologna, cat. no. 6. See Rolfo, p. 235, for a list of the Sodi instruments. This style of sloping cover over the keyboard is a feature of many rectangular virginals in the inner-outer or false-inner-outer style. An example is the virginals I attributed to Stefano Bolcioni

[https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/object/nmah\\_605988](https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/object/nmah_605988)

<sup>57</sup> Braamcamp Freire House-Museum Art Gallery, Santarém, Portugal. See Traverso, in Bibliography.

Since Latcham, in the most extensive survey of the instruments, identified the 56-note piano (first on the list, MB1) as Ferrini's 1730 instrument, which could be at odds with the hypothesis stated above, it would be an act of negligence if we did not examine the evidence from the inventory of Maria Bárbara's instruments and the surrounding details of court life in order to test the hypothesis of Farinelli as the first owner.

Kirkpatrick reported Farinelli's inheritance and published the inventory of Maria Bárbara's instruments made after her death.<sup>58</sup> The inventory of Maria Bárbara's instruments lists five pianos with compasses having 56, 56, 50, 49, and 54 notes, in this order.<sup>59</sup> The 49-note piano was at Aranjuez, the 54-note instrument at San Lorenzo [Escorial]; the location of the others was not given.

Kirkpatrick initiated the idea that the instruments not specifically located by the inventory were at Buen retiro although he offered no arguments for this.<sup>60</sup>

Latcham's approach to finding the 1730 piano in the inventory was to identify the "best" instruments, and then link them with their position in the list. He started his investigation from Farinelli's translation of the Queen's will that he was bequeathed the three "best" instruments ("li migliori").<sup>61</sup> Then he continued: "The first on the list would probably have been counted as better than the ninth: not only was the first larger and placed first on the list but it was also in Buen Retiro along with the Queen's other two favourites. The ninth was one of only two instruments at Aranjuez. It is thus reasonable to suppose that the first on the list of twelve was the one by Ferrini."<sup>62</sup> In another article he concluded more firmly "...there is little doubt that the first rather than the ninth was the one Farinelli inherited."<sup>63</sup>

That, according to Latcham's hypothesis, the Queen's three "best" instruments were in Buen Retiro suggests an advantage for her in having the good ones together, but it also implies a disadvantage: she would have had to forego the "best" instruments in her other residences, as Kirkpatrick's research on the court's movements implies. Should we interpret the inventory that her three "best" instruments were all kept together where she could not play them for three quarters of the year?

In order to infer more about how the instruments were distributed among the royal palaces we need to understand how these were visited by the royal court. Kirkpatrick re-constructed through newspaper reports the journey from palace to palace throughout the year which was undertaken by the Spanish court after 1733 until the

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<sup>58</sup> See Kirkpatrick, p. 176, citing Farinelli's biographer Sacchi, p. 47. The full inventory (in Spanish) is in Kirkpatrick, p. 361, an English translation in Sutherland 1995/1, p. 249, with a discussion. Latcham 2007/2 gives the Spanish texts in footnotes and discusses his English translations of all the instruments.

<sup>59</sup> Kirkpatrick, p. 361. See the numbered transcription here in Appendix 1.

<sup>60</sup> Kirkpatrick, p. 178.

<sup>61</sup> Latcham 2007/1, p. 235, citing Farinelli's will, reproduced partially in Kirkpatrick p. 362, but more fully in Cappolletto p. 203. A full transcription is in Latcham 2023.

<sup>62</sup> Latcham 2007/1, p. 235. Michael Latcham informed me in his editorial comments that his argument should be about the "best" instruments not the "favourite" ones (personal communication 14.09.2018). In Latcham 2019, p. 61, note 109, he added the argument "The first one on the list was the largest of the pianos and would therefore probably correspond to one of 'the best ones' rather than the one at Aranjuez with only four octaves." The idea that the instruments were listed "perhaps in order of importance" had also been expressed by Kenyon de Pascual 1982, p. 69, note 6.

<sup>63</sup> Latcham 2007/2, p. 257.

end of the reign of Felipe V in 1746: "January to mid-March, the old royal hunting lodge of the Pardo [Palacio Real de El Pardo, 15km NW of Madrid]; Easter, Buen Retiro...[on the outskirts, N of] Madrid; April to June, the bucolic pleasures of Aranjuez [50km S of Madrid]; end of June, Buen Retiro again; July to October, the mountain freshness of La Granja [of San Ildefonso, 80km N of Madrid]; end of October to beginning of December, the chilly fastnesses of the Escorial [El Escorial de San Lorenzo, 50 km NW of Madrid]; end of December, Christmas at Buen Retiro. Actually the court spent little time in Madrid..."<sup>64</sup> 14 Letters written by Farinelli to Count Pepoli between 1738 and 1743 confirm this pattern established by Kirkpatrick, with three minor additions.<sup>65</sup>

Maria Bárbara and the king in waiting were required to participate in the royal itinerary.<sup>66</sup> Of Aranjuez Kirkpatrick wrote "For the next thirteen years [1733-1746] Scarlatti spent every spring there from April to June, and even longer when Fernando and Maria Bárbara ascended the throne, for Aranjuez became their favourite residence."<sup>67</sup> In fact, Aranjuez was the place of Maria Bárbara's death in August 1758, where the 49-note piano was located. La Granja was not visited after 1747 by Maria Bárbara and her husband King Fernando because the dowager Queen Isabel Farnese who was banished from court took up residence there.<sup>68</sup>

Thus, the royal itinerary would have changed somewhat after 1747, with a 3-4 month sojourn at La Granja excluded and more time, possibly these 3-4 months, spent at Aranjuez instead. The table below distinguishes the itineraries according to the reign of Felipe or Fernando, recording the instruments, their locations, and the new acquisitions. Distances are given with reference to Madrid.

	1733-1747 8 (?) instruments	1747-1757 10 instruments 8 + MB2, MB8 (?)	1757-1758 12 instruments 10 + MB10, MB12
January	El Pardo 15km NW	El Pardo	El Pardo
February mid March			
March	Buen retiro, Madrid	Buen retiro	Buen retiro
April	Aranjuez 50km S	Aranjuez	Aranjuez
May			
June	Buen Retiro	Buen retiro	Buen retiro
July	La Granja 80km N	Aranjuez	Aranjuez MB10
August			
September			
October			
November	San Lorenzo 50km NW	San Lorenzo	San Lorenzo MB12
December	Buen retiro	Buen retiro	Buen retiro

<sup>64</sup> Kirkpatrick, pp. 91-92. A similar routine was maintained by Carlos III, King of Spain 1759-1788 after Fernando VI, as Clarke, p. 324, records: "He goes in February or March every year, to the palace of the PARDO; in April to ARANJUEZ; returns in June to MADRID; sets out at the end of July for SAN ILDEPHONSO; goes in October to the ESCURIAL, and from thence, in November, to MADRID."

<sup>65</sup> See Vitali, p. 157: Farinelli was in Madrid on 14.11.1739, in Aranjuez on 6.06.1741 and again on 8.09.1742. Sabine Radermacher (in 2005) had kindly sent me the first letter of 1738 which showed that it would be worth investigating the entire correspondence.

<sup>66</sup> Kirkpatrick, p. 83.

<sup>67</sup> Kirkpatrick, pp. 88-89. Scarlatti's presence was assumed, not documented, as state in his note 23.

<sup>68</sup> Kirkpatrick, p. 107. Kirkpatrick, p. 83, note 5, established these details by consulting the Gaceta de Madrid between 1729 to 1757, which listed details of the Royal itinerary.

The inventory of Maria Bárbara's instruments informs us where they were located at her death, but not how many she owned in the period 1729-1746 while she was the Queen-in-waiting, nor how they were distributed among the royal palaces. These were Maria Bárbara's own instruments and presumably did not have to be shared with others or hired out to musicians.

What we can see from the table is that before 1747 Maria Bárbara apparently had only 8 instruments which had to be distributed between 5 palaces, an impossible arithmetic task if we expect the same number of instruments to be at each palace. It is unlikely that she had to do without instruments, so either the inventory of 1758 does not record some earlier instruments, or instruments were transported from palace to palace. It may be significant that she owned 5 Florentine pianos, enough to have one at each residence in the period before 1746.

Some light can be shed on the availability of instruments: at least for Farinelli, as a personal servant of the King, the instruments at El Pardo (and perhaps elsewhere) were apparently unsatisfactory, or lacking, since in February 1738 he wrote to his former agent Count Pepoli in Bologna that he needed a "buonissimo cembalo" and if that of the deceased Count Pietro Albergati (d. 1735) were suitable then he should buy it and have it sent to Spain<sup>69</sup> A sufficiently wide (or chromatic) compass was also specified by Farinelli, but in the next letter, in August 1738, writing from La Granja, he cancelled the order, having found something suitable.<sup>70</sup>

According to Kirkpatrick music was not a prominent interest of King Felipe, so the lack of a suitable harpsichord should not surprise us.<sup>71</sup> However, Queen Isabel Farnese had a harpsichord, and there is a record of simply a "clabe" made by Ferrini which had previously belonged to her. It is unknown when this came into her possession, but the reference to Ferrini by name implies a date after 1730.<sup>72</sup>

Between August 1737, when Farinelli arrived in La Granja and became the King's personal servant, and February 1738 he would have visited each palace in the

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<sup>69</sup> Letter written in El Pardo to Pepoli 22.02.1738, Vitali, pp. 148-149. Sabine Radermacher kindly brought this to my attention in 2005, but with information on Farinelli's location in 2026. Farinelli sought a compass "con ottavea distema [sic. "*distesa*" was probably intended, as suggested by Vitali p. 244 and Radermacher] nei soprani e nei bassi". Italian inventories usually refer to an "*ottava stesa*", signifying a chromatic bass, either from GG or C. See Barbieri 1989, p. 137, Fig.3, for an explanation of the various Italian bass octaves. It is unclear what an "*extended*" octave in the treble might mean, but perhaps a compass beyond c<sup>3</sup>, possibly to d<sup>3</sup>, which was reputedly the upper limit of Farinelli's voice range. Folding harpsichords usually had a C/E-c<sup>3</sup> compass so Farinelli could have been trying to avoid their limitation in the bass.

<sup>70</sup> Letter of 23.8.1738, Vitali, p.151, the relevance of which Radermacher saw and kindly supplied. Farinelli only wrote that "avendone di già ricevuta notizie di altra parte" [having received news from another source] he need not trouble the Count any further. What his solution was is unstated.

<sup>71</sup> According to Kirkpatrick, p. 89, paraphrasing the English Ambassador Keene's observation of the King, who "at this time was notoriously indifferent to music".

<sup>72</sup> KdP 1985, p.47, note 9. Beryl Kenyon de Pascual kindly informed me that it was not recorded if the instrument was quilled or hammered; it was sold at auction after the death of Infante Gabriel in 1788 (personal communication 7.05.2004). The possibility cannot yet be excluded that Isabel acquired one of Maria Bárbara's pianos after her death. See Cuesta and Kenyon de Pascual for details. KdP 1985, p. 35, refers to a receipt of 1724 signed by Fernández for repairing a harpsichord for Isabel, so she cannot have been devoid of instruments. On Cristofori's death see note 88 and Ferrini see note 89.

itinerary and seen what was available in the *King's* household.<sup>73</sup> Farinelli's letters raise other questions for us. Was he able to acquire an instrument from somewhere else, or did he have an instrument made?

Farinelli described the *third* instrument in his testament in sufficient detail, that it can be recognised as the unusual harpsichord with a transposing keyboard, and in the *Inventarium legale* (made after his death) we have a similar, confirming description.<sup>74</sup> The materials of the keycovers permit us to identify a Spanish instrument, but we are not able to identify this harpsichord in the inventory of Maria Bárbara's collection. As Latcham noticed, Burney's account supplies the missing information: "His third favourite [instrument] is one likewise made in Spain, **under his own direction**; [my emphasis] it has moveable keys, by which...the player can transpose a composition either higher or lower...". Latcham inferred this could have been made by Fernández."<sup>75</sup> This was probably Farinelli's personal instrument, which remained in his possession during his stay in Spain, but was it the solution which he had found in August 1738 to his harpsichord problem?

Kirkpatrick suggested that instruments were transported to accompany royal expeditions in the more peripatetic period of 1729-1733, but in the absence of documentation in Maria Bárbara's lifetime this remains a hypothesis.<sup>76</sup> It will be seen from the order of the visits that it was never necessary to undertake the full 130km trip from La Granja to Aranjuez; there was always an intermediate stay at Buen retiro. The "worst case" trip was 80km from La Granja to Buen retiro, perhaps manageable in a day.<sup>77</sup>

The invoices which Fernández submitted for two harpsichords in 1757 permit us to infer that the *possibility* of transport was enabled since the stands could be dismantled, but this is not evidence that they were routinely transported.<sup>78</sup> Stands of this type are so bulky that it would have been convenient for the manufacture and delivery to make separate upper and lower frames with the legs connecting them.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Cappelletto, pp. 61-63, gives 25.08.1737 as the date of Farinelli's first performance with its miraculous effect, and on 30th August Farinelli was appointed a *criado familiar*.

<sup>74</sup> Cappelletto, p. 204, from the Testament: "...il piu grandi di quali [of the three harpsichords] tiene la tastatura movibile che cala, e cresce mezzo tono per commodo di chi canta..." and from the inventory in Cappelletto, p. 210: "Un Cembalo a due registri con tastiera d'ebano intrecciata di madre-perla, amovibile per crescere, e muovere tono comodo a chi canta, detto pè buono, e nuovo con suo piedestallo torlito."

<sup>75</sup> Burney 1771, pp. 203-204. Latcham 2007/2, pp.273-274, describes all these details and identifies this instrument with the "Tiziano" of Farinelli's painters.

<sup>76</sup> Kirkpatrick, p. 83, note 6. His documentation of the request of a cart for harpsichord transport is dated 1767, nine years after Maria Bárbara's death, which was the only evidence he could find for instrument transport. Latcham 2007/2, p. 271, draws on this document recorded for 1767 as a description of transport difficulties pertaining to Maria Bárbara's court. He was vague on the itinerary and incorrectly implies an excessive amount of travel: "...the court seems to have been continually on the move from one residence to the next."

<sup>77</sup> Farinelli travelled the 1250km from Paris to Madrid in 23 days in the summer of 1737, an average of 55km per day, assuming that he travelled every day. Burney's Italian trip, beginning in June 1770, provides most interesting and entertaining information about the difficulties and speed of travel.

<sup>78</sup> KdP 2003, p. 106. Latcham 2007/2, p. 265, conjectured an additional reason for transport in order that MB3 (with its 61-note range, which he dated to 1749) be available everywhere.

<sup>79</sup> A piano attributed to Mirabal 1745, Pollens 1995, p. 125, shows this type of 6-legged stand, widely used also by German harpsichord builders such as Hass and Mietke.

The more it is argued that instruments were transported, the less secure will be the inferences we can draw about the locations given in the inventory.<sup>80</sup>

The instrument situation would have changed after 1747 because Maria Bárbara avoided La Granja when the dowager Queen Isabel was banished there. This meant that the (presumably) 8 instruments needed only be available at 4 palaces.

Archival research by Kenyon de Pascual established that MB10 and MB12 (both 61 notes) were made by Fernández since he signed receipts for two harpsichords in May 1757.<sup>81</sup> Thus, the instrument collection transformed itself by 1757 so that a piano and a 61-note harpsichord were available at both Aranjuez and San Lorenzo. Latcham detected the idea behind the new arrivals as enabling the *use* of a piano, but also of a requirement for a harpsichord with a wide range, at each residence.<sup>82</sup>

Another observation we can make is that the pianos at these two residences did not have the largest ranges, and the *cembalo a martellini* at Aranjuez had the smallest, only a 49-note compass: the keyboard range alone was evidently not the guiding factor for selecting this instrument. Could this mean that this piano was Maria Bàrbara's "best" instrument, or perhaps her "favourite" (even if not the best)?

Without doubt the 49-note piano (MB9) would not have been as versatile for playing Scarlatti's sonatas as the 56-note piano (by elimination located at Buen retiro or El Pardo) so this *seems* to elevate MB9 to a special position in Maria Bárbara's estimation.

However, *this* linking of MB9 with Farinelli's inheritance does not depend on the idea that what *Farinelli* saw as his best instrument was identical with Maria Bárbara's preference, although apparently there was a coincidence of estimation. The assessment here of her "favourite" piano is derived from where Maria Bárbara had most access to it, which is part what makes a stronger claim that the 1730 Ferrini was the 49-note piano at Aranjuez.

### The compasses of the unaltered pianos in the inventory

Through the compasses of the pianos, and an instrument made by Morellati after examining Farinelli's 1730 Ferrini piano in Bologna, we might glean more insight into the use of the instruments and their provenance; at least we attempt to leave no stone unturned.<sup>83</sup>

no.	notes	keys	type in 1758	colour	location
MB1	56	box + ebony	piano	palosanto	(not stated)
MB9	49	box + ebony	piano	red	Aranjuez
MB11	54	box + ebony	piano	green	San Lorenzo (Escorial)

<sup>80</sup> See Latcham 2007/2, p. 271, excepted MB2 from transport on account of the complicated pedal mechanism, and the pianos because of their "delicate hammer actions". See note 21 and the accompanying text for a discussion of this supposed difficulty with the hammer actions.

<sup>81</sup> KdP 1986, p. 125, the full text of the receipt (in Spanish) is in KdP 2003, p. 106.

<sup>82</sup> Latcham 2007/2, p. 267.

<sup>83</sup> I am obliged to Michael Latcham for encouraging me in 2018 to examine the compasses in detail.

**MB1:** The 56-note compass could have been GG,AA–d<sup>3</sup>,e<sup>3</sup> (without GG<sup>#</sup> or e<sup>b3</sup>), as in a harpsichord made by Goccini in *Bologna* in 1721.<sup>84</sup> Alternatively the chromatic compass GG–d<sup>3</sup> is possible, such as was originally made for a "Giusti" harpsichord attributed to Ferrini c.1746.<sup>85</sup> A GG–d<sup>3</sup> compass made in Italy earlier than c.1746 date is not presently known so this lack of data makes it difficult to assess whether Ferrini would have used a compass of GG–d<sup>3</sup> or GG,AA–d<sup>3</sup>,e<sup>3</sup> in 1730 for a *piano* that was being produced for sale to the first available customer. However, if Farinelli (and the Spanish court) had anything to do with a decision of what compass to *order* from Ferrini 1730 - c.1746, then the preference might well have fallen on the fully chromatic version GG–d<sup>3</sup>.<sup>86</sup> A GG–d<sup>3</sup> compass was made by Fernández in 1753 for MB2, and this might also have been the range of the 56-note MB8, which suggests a preference for this chromatic compass in *Spain*.<sup>87</sup>

**MB9:** A 49-note chromatic compass can confidently be identified with a C–c<sup>3</sup> range since its use by Cristofori is documented from 1690 to 1726, and Ferrini also employed this range for his 1731 *spinettone*. It would not be surprising if Ferrini had continued for some years after Cristofori's death in 1732 to make pianos, probably following the 1726 design, with its C–c<sup>3</sup> range.<sup>88</sup> On account of Cristofori's ill health Ferrini must have executed most of the manual work from about the end of 1728 until at least March 1730, which could explain why Ferrini's name was on the nameboard of the 1730 piano.<sup>89</sup> Thus, MB9 could either have been by the "Cristofori workshop" until 1732, or by Ferrini alone thereafter.

The colour red (vermillion) is found on the outer cases of the 1726 Cristofori harpsichord and 1726 Cristofori fortepiano, and both are examples of Florentine red lacquer technique, a popular finish in expensive European cabinet work, in imitation of Chinese lacquer, to which "encarnado" in the inventory could refer.<sup>90</sup> The lacquer

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<sup>84</sup> Tagliavini Collection, Bologna, cat. no. 3. This suggestion was first made by van der Meer 1987.

<sup>85</sup> Stearns Collection, Michigan. Sutherland 1978, attributed the instrument (W151, Wraight 1996, Part 2, p. 115) to Ferrini. David Sutherland kindly provided me with moulding impressions, and after a close examination of these I agreed in 1998 (after my publication) with his attribution. The arcade and soundboard moulding are very close to that in Ferrini's 1746 combination piano and harpsichord, Tagliavini Collection no. 16.

<sup>86</sup> See note 69 on the discussion of Farinelli's requirement in 1738 for a harpsichord chromatic in the bass and treble.

<sup>87</sup> A hypothetical compass of FF–c<sup>3</sup> would also have 56 notes, but a genuine Italian example is not currently known.

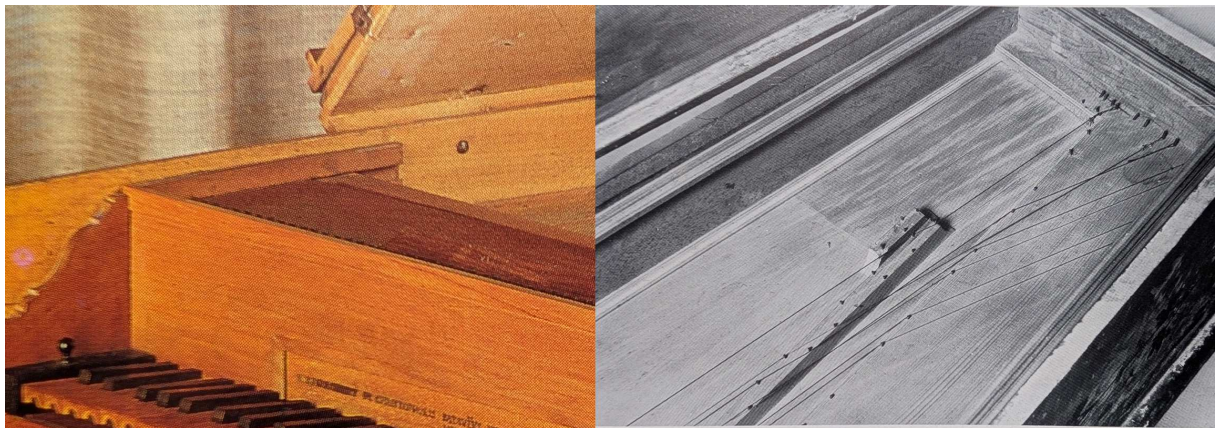
<sup>88</sup> The dates given here are based on our modern calendar where the year begins on 1 January. In Cristofori's time, and until 1750, the Florentine dates, sometimes indicated "ab Inc[arnatione]" (the Feast of Assumption) were based on a beginning of the year on 25 March. Cristofori's death is sometimes given as 1731, which may cause confusion; since he died on 27 January 1731 which is the ab Inc date, but it is 1732 in our modern calendar. My thanks go to Riccardo Pergolis for this background information.

<sup>89</sup> Cristofori's illness is documented in his wills. See O'Brien, Appendix VIII. Sutherland's alternative suggestion (2012, p. 59), was that Ferrini might have left the workshop, which I consider less likely, but the details are too intricate for a full discussion here.

<sup>90</sup> The author of the inventory appears to make a distinction between a colour "color berde" and a technique "color incarnado", which could imply the several layers of gesso required to build up the smooth surface for the visible colour. Since we cannot divine how the author of the inventory understood technical detail and its appropriate description, too much weight cannot be given to this suggestion.

technique with its polished gloss finish was more elaborate than simply painting a case with a cheaper red pigment.<sup>91</sup>

The description of this MB9 reveals a significant difference compared with MB1. MB9 has an interior of cypress, which style we usually call a "false-inner-outer", whereas MB1 lacks this feature. When we see Ferrini's 1746 combination harpsichord-piano we understand how such a cypress interior (with mouldings) could have been executed (Fig. 4B below). Cristofori's 1720, 1722, and 1726 pianos all exhibit a simpler, less expensive style of construction without an interior cypress veneer, which we can call a "non-inner-outer", as in the 1722 piano (Fig. 4A below) where the cypress veneer does not extend beyond the inverted wrestplank.



A: 1722 Cristofori piano = MB9 style<sup>92</sup>

B: 1746 Ferrini piano = MB1 style<sup>93</sup>

Fig. 4. The two styles of Cristofori-Ferrini piano case manufacture

The more elaborate style with interior cypress veneer and mouldings is known from Ferrini's work of 1746 (Fig. 4B above), but he also used the less-expensive style. Thus, the style of MB9 *corresponds* to the style of the Cristofori workshop in 1730, and MB1 to Ferrini's known work of 1746. This evidence provides the other part of the argument that a stronger case can be made for the 49-note MB9 as the 1730 Ferrini piano.

**MB11:** Because this piano is not described as having been made in Florence, it might have been a Portuguese or Spanish variant derived from Cristofori's design.<sup>94</sup> The green colour is known as a finish in Florentine instruments even until 1763, but it was also used for Portuguese harpsichords.

The 54-note compass could indicate the chromatic range GG-c<sup>3</sup>, but the more usual Italian compass would have been FF,GG,AA-c<sup>3</sup>, that is, without FF $\sharp$  or GG $\sharp$ .<sup>95</sup> This is

<sup>91</sup> Breidenstein describes the techniques used on the 1726 instruments with gesso foundation, then iron oxide underpainting for vermillion, before the surface was varnished and polished.

<sup>92</sup> The photo is from Cervelli 1994, p. 152.

<sup>93</sup> The photo is from Tagliavini 1986, p. 189.

<sup>94</sup> Latcham 2007/2, p. 264, includes the possibility of a Portuguese or Spanish imitation. Pollens 1995, pp. 124-135, discusses two Spanish pianos, possibly by Mirabal, based on the Cristofori action.

<sup>95</sup> Morales p. 54 suggested GG-c<sup>3</sup>. The FF,GG,AA-c<sup>3</sup> compass has been suggested by Henkel, p. 12, citing the *spinettone* Leipzig Nr. 86, and Pollens 1995, p. 119, but no suggestion was made by Latcham 2007/2, p. 264.

the original compass of the 1720 Cristofori piano, as Pollens has shown.<sup>96</sup> What was not recorded by earlier authors is that this same compass also occurs in five Florentine instruments made between 1695 and 1720, four other Italian instruments of the same period, and no later than 1730 in a Solfanelli harpsichord made in Pisa.<sup>97</sup> The extension of the range down to FF requires some explanation since it was known up to c.1730, but not thereafter.<sup>98</sup>

A diatonic bass F,G,A- was used in the first half of the 16th century in Italy, and the FF,GG,AA- variant can be seen in relation as a 16' instrument, or with an *ottava bassa*. The name of Cristofori's *spinettone da orchestra* suggests the use of such an instrument with an FF,GG,AA- bass octave.<sup>99</sup> If this history of the FF,GG,AA- octave were not understood, then there could be an inclination to date a 54-note compass as made later than a 49-note one.<sup>100</sup>

If this was a Florentine piano the probability is that it was made no later 1730, thus it was more likely a piano from the Cristofori workshop, rather than a Ferrini instrument made after Cristofori's death in 1732. If it was a Portuguese imitation of Cristofori's work, then it would probably have been based on instruments sent from Florence to Portugal from the inventor's earlier period. No firm conclusion can be reached.

### Morellati's piano building

Other hints to consider in identifying the 1730 Ferrini piano in Maria Bárbara's collection are given by the piano that Paolo Morellati (1741-1807) finished in 1774 and which is shown in the portrait of him (Fig. 5), painted at the request of Padre Martini.<sup>101</sup> Morellati was a student of Martini in Bologna in 1762, became later an organist in Vicenza, and Sacchi records that he measured Farinelli's instruments in Bologna, which is confirmed for 1764 by the Morellati-Martini letters.<sup>102</sup> Morellati describes the use of brass wire in his 1774 piano, which is perhaps the earliest documentary record of the type of string material for what was probably a Cristofori-action piano. It had a 56-note compass, specifically described as GG-d<sup>3</sup>, i.e. the same number of notes as MB1, the Florentine piano in the inventory of Maria Bárbara's instruments, so Morellati *might* have copied the compass of Ferrini's piano,

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<sup>96</sup> Pollens 1985 and 1995, pp. 90-91..

<sup>97</sup> For these instruments, see: Wraight 1997, Part 2: p. 111 (Cristofori 1720); p. 113 (Cristofori unsigned spinet); p. 160 (possibly by Cristofori); p. 214 (Migliai 1695); p. 215 (Migliai undated); p. 217 (attributed to Mondini 1701); p. 268 (Solfanelli 1730); p. 269 (attributed to Solfanelli); p.176 (unidentified W152), p. 214 (unidentified W185).

<sup>98</sup> A GG-c<sup>3</sup> compass would also have 54 notes, but a chromatic bass is unusual in Italian instruments. Lynette Tsiang restored a Mondini harpsichord (W177 in my catalogue, Wraight 1997, Part 2, p. 217) which was thought by her and William Dowd originally to have had a chromatic bass octave GG-c<sup>3</sup> (personal communication from the restoration report). Morales p.54 suggested GG-c<sup>3</sup> for MB11, which is possible from a Spanish perspective, and it is not stated where MB11 was made.

<sup>99</sup> "spinettone da orchestra" is found in a Florentine inventory of 1700: see Gai p. 11, but the compass is only GG,AA-c<sup>3</sup>. Leipzig Nr. 86 in Henkel 1979, pp. 91-93, is such an instrument which originally had the compass FF,GG,AA-c<sup>3</sup>. See also Tenerani p. 119 for the use of such instrument in accompanying the voice in the Settimana Santa.

<sup>100</sup> As occurs in Latcham 2007/2, p. 68, where the assessment is that the 56-note range of MB4 could identify it as a later instrument.

<sup>101</sup> See Bolcato. The music he holds is an Introitus composed by Paolo Morellati

<sup>102</sup> Sacchi, p. 48: "Sopra i detti due cembali fece molte considerazioni, e diligentemente levandone le misure lavorò i suoi il Signor Paolo Morellati di Vicenza, assai dotto nella Mufica, e nell' arte meccanica."

should MB1 have been the 1730 Ferrini instrument. Nardi made this suggestion in 1995, but it seems to have gone unnoticed.<sup>103</sup>



Fig. 5. Paolo Morellati in 1777 by Gaetano Scabari, at Padre Martini's request  
[https://imslp.org/images/8/82/PMLP1310924-scabari\\_portrait\\_of\\_paolo\\_morellati.pdf](https://imslp.org/images/8/82/PMLP1310924-scabari_portrait_of_paolo_morellati.pdf)

<sup>103</sup> Nardi, p. 380. Morellati's description is at pp. 383-384. Latcham 2003, did not make the connection between the two compasses, having concentrated his efforts on deciphering the tonal variations which Morellati's instrument could produce.

Gaetano Scabari's portrait of Morellati is a sight for sore eyes after having analysed the Nazari and Giaquinto renderings of instruments. The perspective in the keys is accurate, the slot for the front board of the case is correctly depicted, and we see a knob in the treble keyblock, such as we know from Cristofori and Ferrini pianos. This is needed for moving the keyboard sideways by a few mm so that the hammers strike only one string: the true *una corda*. All of this encourages us to believe that we have an accurate representation of Morellati's instrument, but does this mean we are also effectively looking at the compass of Farinelli's piano?

Before we are obliged to conjecture what Morellati *might* have copied, let us look at what in the portrait corresponds to recorded details. The natural keycovers are unusual for an Italian instrument in being black (i.e. ebony), while those of MB2, the harpsichord made by Fernández in Spain with 5 registers in 1753, are recorded in the inventory as being of ebony. The number of keys of MB2 is given in the inventory as 56 and the *Inventarium legale* of Farinelli's instrument records an *ottava stesa*, the usual Italian term for a chromatic bass octave.<sup>104</sup> Combining these two pieces of information gives the new inference of a GG-d<sup>3</sup> compass for MB2, such as Morellati described for his piano.<sup>105</sup> The unusual keyfronts on Morellati's piano are also found on harpsichords attributed firstly by Koster and then by Perez to Fernández.<sup>106</sup> Nardi discovered that Morellati was seeking to acquire a tool for making arcades, probably in the traditional Italian, turned style, but evidently he settled on something that he could make himself in Fernández's (and Spanish) marquetry style.<sup>107</sup>



Fig. 6 Montage: Morellati 1774 piano and a Fernández harpsichord <sup>108</sup>

<sup>104</sup> See note 69 for the explanation of *ottava stesa*. Cappelletto, p. 209, gives the inventory.

<sup>105</sup> An FF-c<sup>3</sup> or C-g<sup>3</sup> compass is unlikely. Surprisingly Latcham 2007/1 and 2007/2 did not give the compass of MB2.

<sup>106</sup> Koster, p. 18, Fig. 18, and Perez, p. 64, Fig. 4, where the Fernández white "arrows" on the keyfronts point horizontally, while Morellati's point vertically, but Morellati's alignment agrees with Koster's example and also a 16th-century Spanish organ keyboard shown by Perez p. 96, Fig. 15.

<sup>107</sup> Nardi p. 371, letter of 12 July 1767 to Martini, now Morellati online H.086.075.

<sup>108</sup> Sources: Morellati portrait, Fig. 5 and Perez p. 64, Fig. 4.

Thus, Morellati followed the GG-d<sup>3</sup> compass and style of Fernández's harpsichord keyboard, but what else can we glean from the Martini letters? In 1761 Morellati became a "scolaro" of Martini, but it is not known how in addition to these studies he could have acquired instrument-making skills by the age of 23. Before making his first piano Morellati wrote to Martini in December 1764 describing his "*urgent need*" [estremo bisogno] of the elevation and plan views of Farinelli's "gravicembalo".<sup>109</sup> An old harpsichord case was used instead of an entirely new construction, which evidently simplified the task for the first instrument, but in 1766 for the second piano, to be made for Martini, Morellati admitted that he did not have sufficient skill to make the entire instrument.<sup>110</sup> Here he stated that he would use an old harpsichord case again, but that he had not yet achieved a result as good as Farinelli's piano on account of the inaccuracy of Paganuzzi's drawing.<sup>111</sup> Later, when giving an estimate for making another instrument he described the quality of the materials, proportions, and work which he *would* guarantee, but that he could not vouch for the quality of the tone since this is a matter of luck [...un colpo di fortuna].<sup>112</sup>

From all this, and the lack of a tool for making arcades, we can see that Morellati was not an instrument maker with the same level of knowledge, skill, and facilities as Ferrini before him. Since he was dependent on an existing harpsichord case in 1766, his "piano" at that stage may only have been a "Tangentenflügel", with wooden strips in the jackslots striking the strings. There is a substantial difference between the line of jacks in a harpsichord and the strike line for piano hammers, which makes converting any existing harpsichord into a Ferrini piano difficult. Morellati's lack of experience would have made it convenient for him in 1774 to have followed Fernández's harpsichord case design rather than have to extend a Ferrini C-c<sup>3</sup> instrument, *should* that have been the range of the 1730 piano.

There is no detail in his description of the 1774 piano which reveals how much he copied from Ferrini's piano, but it did have an escapement piano action, described as producing a 6:1 mechanical advantage. Despite his evident awe of Farinelli's piano in 1766, Morellati did not even hint in his published 1775 account that he had studied the Ferrini instrument.

If we examine the development of the Italian keyboard compass, in 1730 the range of a Farinelli piano would probably have been the Cristofori workshop's commonly-used C-c<sup>3</sup> (49 notes), documented from 1722-1726. In 1746 Ferrini produced the combined piano-harpsichord with a GG,AA-e<sup>3</sup> compass (57 notes), and, showing the gradual increase in keyboard range, the Florentine Giovanni Piero Migliai in 1763 made a harpsichord with GG-f<sup>3</sup> (59 notes). We find a similarly wide compass in another harpsichord, probably made by Ferrini, with GG,AA-f<sup>3</sup> (58 notes).<sup>113</sup> Thus, considering this gradual extension of the range from 1730 onwards it does not seem *prima facie* likely that Morellati would have copied a C-c<sup>3</sup> compass in 1774, which would also help explain the choice of a GG-d<sup>3</sup> range.

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<sup>109</sup> Nardi p. 365, letter to Martini 21 December 1764, online H.086.063. "gravicembalo" is a common name for a harpsichord from the 16th century onwards.

<sup>110</sup> Nardi p. 369, letter to Martini 25 June 1766, online H.086.068. "... non avendo io sufficiente cognizione per formarne uno nuovo..."

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.* We do not know who Signor Paganuzzi was.

<sup>112</sup> Nardi, p. 372, letter to Martini, undated, [1768?], online H.086.052

<sup>113</sup> The 1746 instrument is Tagliavini's combined harpsichord and fortepiano. The GG,AA-f<sup>3</sup> compass is Leipzig no. 89, W652, which I attributed to Ferrini, Wraight 1997, Part 2, p. 114.

In order to understand Morellati's project better we need to examine more of what is known about Morellati's 1774 piano, which was probably the fifth (including those he made between 1766 and 1771).<sup>114</sup> Morellati's 1774 piano, explicitly with an escapement mechanism, could produce twelve different types of sound.<sup>115</sup> This recalls for us the 12 "andamenti" which Meccoli recorded c.1703 as being possible with Cristofori's "Arpa Cimbalo del piano e forte"<sup>116</sup> The implication is that the "andamenti" were ways of conveying the character of music usually produced by the nine instruments and three styles mentioned, rather than 12 different tonal resources achieved by technical means. This tells us how Cristofori's new invention was received and used by musicians.

However, Morellati's instrument, which shared with Meccoli's account the *mandolino* and *arpa* stops, must have used various technical means, as Latcham perspicaciously decyphered. He inferred five stops: that the harpsichord sound was produced by unleathered hammers, an *una corda* was available, and various means of modifying the string sound (damping and buzzing) must have been available.<sup>117</sup>

Now that we know that Morellati copied Fernández's 1753 case size, compass, and imitated the keyboard style of the harpsichord with 5 registers, we do not have to look further for some of his inspiration.<sup>118</sup> Morellati's instrument with 12 tonal variations obviously went far beyond what Cristofori or Ferrini are *known* to have produced. From the portrait, which shows the correspondences with MB2 in the inventory, and from the copying of Fernández's keyboard compass and style, together with Morellati's own description, we can infer that his orientation was on the Fernández harpsichord, even if he used a piano action. Given also the development of the Florentine keyboard range after 1730, it would be unsafe to conclude that Morellati's 1774 compass of GG-d<sup>3</sup> was identical with that of Ferrini's 1730 piano.

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<sup>114</sup> According the Nardi, p. 368, the first piano was finished in January 1766. A fortepiano for Padre Martin followed in 1767. The third and fourth pianos for the Duke of Parma and Pallavicini must have been completed by about 1771, the date of Pallavicini's letter (see note 35). Latcham 2019, pp. 73-81, gives some additional information from letters to Martini, not found in Nardi, but these have yet to be synchronised with her account, a matter too complicated for this article.

<sup>115</sup> Nardi, pp. 383-384, reproducing Morellati's own description.

<sup>116</sup> Cervelli 1981, pp. 159-160, with higher quality photographic reproduction in Cervelli 1994, pp. 149-150, which largely reprints the 1981 publication. The document is written in a copy of Zarlino's *Istitutioni harmoniche*, 1558. According to his own account, written under the list of andamenti, Federigo Meccoli was "musico e organista dell'A. Reale di Toscana l'ha saputo suonare con questi sopradetti Andamenti". The nine instruments mentioned were, Viola, Leuto alla francese, Mandolino, Tiorba, Timpanino, Leuto all'Italiana, Arpa, Bassetto, then the three styles, cantabile, Bassi andanti, Bassi raddoppiati. Cervelli 1981 and 1994 omit the "cantabile" from the list, which is in the photographic reproduction. Latcham 2019, p. 73, note 157, mentions this subject only in passing, counting 14 andamenti by including the bottom two lines, which may just be repetitions since the Tiorba and Viola were already listed.

<sup>117</sup> Latcham 2003, pp. 160-163.

<sup>118</sup> Sacchi, p. 48. On Fernández's instrument see Latcham 2007/1, pp. 237-240. Latcham 2003 did not mention Fernández, but instead compared Morellati's 1774 invention with the Tangentenflügel of the German tradition. However, Latcham 2019 brought Fernández into the discussion.

## The altered pianos

Lastly, we can consider the two altered Florentine pianos, MB4 and MB5.

no.	notes	keys	type in 1758	colour	location
MB4	56	ebony + bone	harpsichord	green	(not stated)
MB5	50	ebony + bone	harpsichord	green	(not stated)

Given that Fernández was paid to maintain King Felipe's instruments from at least 1722, attended Maria Bárbara's collection at least from 1733, and provided invoices for instruments in 1749 and 1757, it is likely that he was responsible for the re-building of the pianos as harpsichords.<sup>119</sup> He might also have supplied the instrument descriptions for the inventory since the style and content of his 1757 invoice for harpsichords is similar to the inventory description of MB10.<sup>120</sup>

There has been no consensus achieved why such rare instruments as these two Florentine pianos should have been turned into harpsichords. The suggestions include four areas, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive: preference of an instrument type, a change of requirements, malfunction, and difficulty of maintenance or transport.<sup>121</sup> The strike line of piano hammers is not compatible with the plucking line of jacks, so such a modification required extensive changes.

After 1747 the 5 pianos needed only to be used in 4 palaces since the dowager Queen Isabel was ensconced in La Granja, which Maria Bárbara avoided; this fact might have brought about a re-assessment of the use of the instruments. Given the large number of possible explanations, and because we do not know when they were acquired, the *motivation* for the modifications will not be analysed further here. Instead, only brief suggestions will be made on the possible *original* state of the instruments, given that these could have been older instruments.

**MB4:** might originally have had a 54-note compass FF,GG,AA-c<sup>3</sup> (used until c.1730 in Florence) which was modified to 56 notes, e.g. GG-d<sup>3</sup> (as with Fernández's MB2).

**MB5:** might originally have had a 49-note compass, C-c<sup>3</sup>. to which only one natural need have been added in order to create a 50-note (GG/BB-c<sup>3</sup>?) compass.

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<sup>119</sup> KdP 1985 established Fernández's activity as starting in 1722. Latcham 2023, reported in Morales 2025, p. 55, note 9, found the description (in the *Inventarium legale* of Farinelli's possessions) of a tuning hammer for Maria Bárbara dated 1733.

<sup>120</sup> Dated May 1757: "---un Clavicordio de madera de Alamo blanco, la Caxa interior, Atril, y batiente de Cedro, y cipres. Teclado con 61 teclas de evano, nacar, y hueso. Pie de aia torneado con chapas, y tornillos de yerro para desarmar." KdP 2003, p.106, gave the original text of her translation: see my note 81.

<sup>121</sup> This list is not exhaustive: Kirkpatrick, p. 183-184 gave no specific reason for the modifications, but in general saw Scarlatti's preference for the harpsichord. Pollens 1995, p. 120, suggested a greater need for harpsichords, or a preference for them, but also the possibility that correct function could not be maintained; see also Pollens 2009, p. 310. Sutherland 1995/1, p. 250, suggested that the early type of action might have been considered obsolete, or that structural weakness of the piano was ameliorated by conversion to the lighter stringing of a harpsichord. Latcham 2007/2, pp. 270-273 saw an increased requirement after 1747 for continuo harpsichords with their stronger tone, and the difficulty of moving pianos because of their "delicate" actions.

## Can the harpsichord MB3 be identified with Farinelli's fourth instrument [F4]?

Latcham's idea that the instruments in the Spanish inventory of 1758 were listed in the order of their quality led him by "a process of elimination" to conclude that it was MB3, the third of the "li migliori" which Farinelli inherited, but which was listed as the fourth instrument [F4] in the *Inventarium legale* of 1783 made after Farinelli's death.<sup>122</sup>

Thus, there is a lack of correspondence between the three "best" instruments left to Farinelli and his own collection where F3, *his* third best with the transposing keyboard, enjoyed a higher status than MB3. This is not fatal to Latcham's argument about Maria Bárbara's pianos since his identification of the harpsichord MB3 as F4 depended on other details.

In the 1783 inventory F4 is described as "*A harpsichord on its stand of six turned legs, screwed with iron screws...*"<sup>123</sup> A similar description of a stand with screws occurs in the 1757 invoice Fernández supplied for two 61-note harpsichords, which Kenyon de Pascual found.<sup>124</sup> However, another invoice for a Fernández *harpsichord* in 1749 was discovered by Kenyon de Pascual who (prior to Latcham) suggested that MB6 or MB8 could be identified with Farinelli's F4.<sup>125</sup>

Latcham described an invoice Fernández reportedly sent for a *stand* in 1749 "that may well have been intended for this sixty-one-note harpsichord [MB3]", also with screws for dismantling. In this way he dated the harpsichord MB3, for which he thought the stand was intended, to 1749 or slightly earlier. The difficulty with this linking is that there was no such record of an invoice supplied by Fernández in 1749 for a *stand*, as cited.<sup>126</sup>

Latcham's identification procedure is built on the foundation that MB3 would have been the third of the "best" instruments. If one abandons this hypothetical prerequisite, and omits the phantom 1749 stand invoice, then either MB10 or MB12, both by Fernández, could have been F4 since they had screwed-together stands. MB10 at the more frequented Aranjuez might have been Maria Bárbara's preference.

This review is necessary because further conclusions were drawn from Latcham's inferences that MB1 was the 1730 Ferrini with 56 notes and MB3 a 1749 Fernández with 61 notes: he wrote that "It thus seems reasonable to speculate that until about 1749 Maria Bárbara's favourite playing instrument was her fifty-six-note *piano forte* of 1730 by Ferrini and that after about 1749 she had two favourites, the *piano forte* by Ferrini and the

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<sup>122</sup> Farinelli's instrument is described in Appendix 1.

<sup>123</sup> Cappelletto, p. 210: "Un Cembalo sul suo piedistallo a sei piedi torlito, e vitati con viti di ferro..." Latcham 2007/2, p. 279, note 20.

<sup>124</sup> KdP 2003, p. 106, dated May 1757: "---un Clavicordio de madera de Alamo blanco, la Caxa interior, Atril, y batiente de Cedro, y cipres. Teclado con 61 teclas de evano, nacar, y hueso. Pie de aia torneado con chapas, y tornillos de yerro para desarmar." [my emphasis]

<sup>125</sup> KdP 1986, p. 125, then in Spanish in KdP 2003, p. 104. She also challenged Latcham's 2007/2 idea in a private communication, as reported in Latcham 2008, p. 393, note 84.

<sup>126</sup> Latcham 2007/2, p. 262, note 22, cites KdP 2003 (without a page reference) as the source of the 1749 invoice for a *stand*, but KdP 2003, p. 104, only records the price of 2.100 reales for a *harpsichord*. There is no invoice from Fernández for a stand. This price was previously reported by KdP 1986, p. 126. Latcham might have conflated the statement in KdP 1986, pp. 125-126, with the 1757 invoice: "A separate bill for 180 reales was presented on 1 September [1749?] by the royal cabinet-maker for a turned harpsichord stand", where there is no mention of screws.

sixty-one-note quilled harpschord [MB3], probably by Fernández."<sup>127</sup> This assessment will be overturned after the other pianos have been examined.

### **The formation of Maria Bárbara's instrument collection**

When Maria Bárbara at the age of 18 in 1729 left for Spain and married the Spanish heir to the crown she took no keyboard instruments with her, as Doderer has established.<sup>128</sup> He inferred that it might have been expected that Maria Bárbara would find suitable instruments in Spain.

If the 1730 Ferrini piano was bought by Farinelli from the maker and taken by him to Spain in 1737, as Pelham's testimony indicates, then this instrument could not have been seen by Maria Bárbara until that year, when Farinelli was engaged to sing for King Felipe in *his* household (until 1746). Although the King and his heir had separate households there was apparently contact between Farinelli and Maria Bárbara before 1746 since it is recorded that Queen Isabel Farnese attempted to prevent it.<sup>129</sup> However, Farinelli standing beside an undefined keyboard instrument in each portrait is too weak a link to confirm the hypothesis of Farinelli's ownership of the 1730 Ferrini and his bringing it to Spain in 1737.

It might seem insignificant whether Farinelli brought the 1730 Ferrini piano to Spain or not, but the implications for the formation of Maria Bárbara's instrument collection are different, depending on whether this hypothesis is correct.

*With* Farinelli's involvement we have to imagine the period 1729-1737 where Maria Bárbara could not have known the 1730 piano, with all its possible implications.

*Without* Farinelli's bringing the piano to Spain in 1737 we have the probability that Maria Bárbara would have acquired this instrument when it was newly made, i.e. in 1730. The date could indicate that it was the first piano she acquired in Spain.

There is a report that Cristofori sold at least two instruments, presumably pianos, at an unknown date, to the King of Portugal.<sup>130</sup> Whether these instruments were later sent to Spain we do not presently know, but the hypothesis is worth considering that they might have included MB4 and MB5.<sup>131</sup>

However, a *new* chronology of some parts of the *harpsichords* in the collection can now be assembled from the collation of invoices supplied by Fernández and the comparison with the inventory of Farinelli's instruments (new findings in BOLD).

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<sup>127</sup> Latcham 2007/2, p. 262.

<sup>128</sup> Doderer, p.176.

<sup>129</sup> Kirkpatrick, p. 97, citing Clarke, p. 329.

<sup>130</sup> Niccolò Susier, a theobo player in Ferdinando de' Medici's household, who recorded the details in his diary on the death of Cristofori. See Pollens 1995, pp. 54-55, for the Italian text and a translation.

<sup>131</sup> Latcham 2007/2 p. 268, built on Doderer's information to suggest that the Portugese pianos *were* sent to Spain after Maria Bárbara's arrival there.

Date	inventory	notes	compass	location
1749	<b>MB8?</b> <sup>132</sup>	<b>56?</b>	<b>GG-d<sup>3</sup>?</b>	
1753	MB2	56	<b>GG-d<sup>3</sup></b>	
1757	MB10	61	GG-g <sup>3</sup> ? / FF,GG,AA-g <sup>3</sup> ?	Aranjuez
1757	MB12	61	GG-g <sup>3</sup> ? / FF,GG,AA-g <sup>3</sup> ?	San Lorenzo

Morales observed that harpsichords ranging from GG to g<sup>3</sup> seem to have been favoured for the performance of Scarlatti's sonatas at the Madrid court, even after the composer's death.<sup>133</sup> Although we are accustomed to interpreting a 61-note compass as fully chromatic, following the older diatonic tradition it could have started on FF with BB<sub>b</sub> as the first "raised note", which could have been seen as "*B rotundo*".<sup>134</sup>

Martini confirmed the date of the 1730 piano, and as argued here, a stronger case can be made that it was MB9 at Aranjuez, where Maria Bárbara spent the most time.

Date	inventory	notes	compass	location
1730	1730 = <b>MB9?</b>	49		Aranjuez
c.1746?	<b>c.1746? = MB1?</b>	56	GG-d <sup>3</sup> ? / GG,AA-d <sup>3</sup> ,e <sup>3</sup> ?	

If MB1 was not the 1730 piano, it would likely have been made by Ferrini at some later date. Given the increase in musical activity after Maria Bárbara became Queen Consort in July 1746, the acquisition of a Ferrini piano after this date seems plausible, but it is not guaranteed. From what we understand of the development of the Italian keyboard range, MB1 could have been provided with about 56 notes by 1746, and the style of construction with an interior veneer of cypress matches Ferrini's known work in 1746 (shown in Fig. 4B above).

With the dating of MB11, if Italian work, as made possibly no later than 1730 there is the hint that this piano might have followed Maria Bárbara to Spain, thus, there is the possibility with MB4 and MB5 that these were also older pianos, made before Cristofori's death.<sup>135</sup> However, because in older instruments the keyboard range would have extended only to c<sup>3</sup>, the question is raised how Maria Bárbara would have played Scarlatti sonatas on them when the range reached above c<sup>3</sup>.

Although May 1757 is the date of the arrival of two 61-note harpsichords in the collection, only 15 months before Maria Bárbara's death, this also raises the question of what preceded them. Should we imagine that before the construction of MB10 and MB12 that there were no harpsichords in Aranjuez and San Lorenzo? From the perceived view of a music-loving Maria Bárbara, it would seem unthinkable that she should have been restricted to one piano at each palace, but this reflection forces us to recognise that the inventory is only a record of the state of the collection at her death and does not provide a view of its gradual development.

<sup>132</sup> The reader will recall that Latcham 2007/2 identified MB3 with the 1749 invoice, but Kenyon de Pascual suggested MB6 or MB8: see note 125.

<sup>133</sup> Morales p. 57, note 19.

<sup>134</sup> Morales p. 57 discusses the possibility of the FF,GG,AA- bass octave and its suitability for Scarlatti sonatas. Wright 2021/1 describes the earlier tradition and Schlick's record where B<sub>b</sub>, as a "white note", appeared even in organ pedal keyboards around 1500.

<sup>135</sup> As already suggested by Latcham 2007/2, pp. 263-264.

It is a curious result that the hypothesis of Farinelli's first ownership of the 1730 Ferrini, because neither substantiated nor disproved, has complicated our view of how and when the instrument collection was assembled.

However, having reached different conclusions than Latcham regarding the 1730 piano, now seen as a 49-note instrument, and the 1749 harpsichord now seen (with Kenyon de Pascual) as more likely the 56-note MB8, we have a different chronology to consider.

The inference that MB2, the harpsichord Farinelli designed with Fernández in 1753, still had a GG-d<sup>3</sup> compass shows that the transition to a 61-note compass was a late development in Maria Bárbara's collection, probably between 1753 and 1757.

According to the arguments of this article Maria Bárbara's most-used ("favourite") piano would have been the 49-note Ferrini, C-c<sup>3</sup>, and she might not have played a piano with a compass reaching above c<sup>3</sup> before c.1746. Her datable harpsichord MB2 still had a GG-d<sup>2</sup> compass in 1753, no larger than Kenyon de Pascual's suggestion of MB8 (56 notes) as the harpsichord acquired in 1749. The *date* of the introduction of the 61-note harpsichords in Maria Bárbara's collection is only presently documented as May 1757.<sup>136</sup>

On this reading of the evidence it was MB9 (1730 Ferrini, 49 notes), MB2 (1753 Fernández, GG-d<sup>3</sup>) and MB10 (or MB12, both 1757 Fernández, 61 notes) which were the three instruments inherited by Farinelli.

## Conclusions

The hypothesis investigated here is that the castrato Farinelli was the first owner of the 1730 Ferrini piano, which he bought from the maker in Florence, took to Spain, gave to Maria Bárbara and received after her death as a bequest. Pelham's letter reporting that a "Piana-forte" travelled with Farinelli to England (in 1734) and Spain (in 1737) supports and helps formulate this hypothesis. Further documents show that Farinelli accompanied himself at the "*cembalo*", but played the organ in a Handel Oratorio, testifying also to his use of keyboard instruments. Jennens had a Cristofori piano sent from Florence to London in 1732, and Farinelli requested a harpsichord be sent to Spain, from which we recognise that the transport of instruments was normal and therefore Pelham's information could be correct.

Portraits of Farinelli, 1734 in Venice (Fig. 1) and c.1755 in Spain (Fig. 3), show him beside a keyboard instrument, but even if an actual instrument stood model for the painter, the inaccuracy of details does not permit us to conclude it was the same instrument, let alone whether it was owned by Farinelli. There is as yet no additional evidence to confirm Pelham's report that Farinelli bought the instrument in 1730 and gave it to the Queen after 1737; the hypothesis might be correct, but remains unproven.

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<sup>136</sup> van der Meer 1997 contains much useful information concerning Scarlatti's keyboard music and possible instruments for it, even though some details on makers and compasses has been superseded by more recent research. He noted the 2-3 month stay each Spring at Aranjuez.

Despite two inventories (1758 in Spain, 1783 after Farinelli's death) and visitors to Farinelli at Bologna after his return from Spain, no details have yet emerged which permit us to identify which one of Maria Bárbara's instruments was the 1730 Ferrini piano the singer inherited.

The style of construction described in the 1758 inventory links the 49-note, ninth instrument (MB9) with the type of case made in the Cristofori workshop around 1730 (Fig. 4A), and the 56-note, first piano (MB1) with a Ferrini piano of c.1746 (Fig. 4B). In addition to the stylistic detail, a strong case can also be made that MB9 was the 1730 Ferrini based on the fact that it was located at Aranjuez in 1758, where the Queen spent most of her time, in total 6 months of the year.

Latcham's competing explanation, based on the *order* of the inventory as supposedly indicating the three "best" instruments (as evaluated by the Queen and reported by Farinelli), identified MB1 with the 1730 Ferrini piano. However, this argument implies the disadvantage that the "best" instruments would only have been accessible to Maria Bárbara for about 2 months of the year.

The second instrument in the 1758 inventory, MB2, Farinelli's harpsichord for the Queen, designed with Fernández in 1753 (and later inherited by Farinelli, F2), had a GG-d<sup>3</sup> compass (56 notes) as a comparison of the two inventories here reveals.

Morellati visited Farinelli in Bologna in 1765 and examined the Fernández and Ferrini instruments so his piano-building activity could provide evidence which would identify the 1730 piano. However, Morellati's GG-d<sup>3</sup> keyboard follows that of Fernández's harpsichord (MB2) in range and style (as Koster's and Perez's work clarifies), but not necessarily the 1730 Ferrini piano. Nardi has shown that Sacchi's account of Farinelli commissioning a piano for the Duke of Parma is not correct. Further examination of the Morellati-Martini correspondence, and including a little-known letter by Pallavicini, indicates that Morellati made at least five pianos, with some involvement by Farinelli.

Even if the hypothesis of Farinelli's first ownership of the 1730 piano is not confirmed, the creation of Maria Bárbara's instrument collection is more complicated to explain. If Farinelli was the first owner of the 1730 piano he would not have been in a position to give it to Maria Bárbara before 1737. If Farinelli was *not* the first owner then Maria Bárbara would probably have bought the piano in 1730, shortly after she came to Spain.

From the known documents, MB3, a 61-note Spanish harpsichord in the 1758 inventory cannot be linked with Farinelli's third instrument (F3), nor is the date as 1749 confirmed, thereby changing the chronology of Maria Bárbara's collection.

The current chronology of Maria Bárbara's instruments indicates that she might not have had a 56-note piano (GG-d<sup>3</sup> compass?) before 1746, that until 1753 a GG-d<sup>3</sup> compass was considered sufficient, and that only in May 1757 can the date of the first use of a 61-note compass (GG-g<sup>3</sup> or FF,GG,AA-g<sup>3</sup>) be established. These dates help clarify when instruments were available for the performance of Scarlatti sonatas composed for the Queen.

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This article is part of one initially written in 2018 for a book honouring Tagliavini (Wraight 2019) for which Michael Latcham was an editor. After my 2018 manuscript was withdrawn Latcham published his abbreviated summary of my formulation of the hypothesis of Farinelli's ownership of the piano (Latcham 2019, pp. 62-63), but it is not implied that he would agree with the arguments or conclusions presented here. The argument (then and here) benefitted from his searching analysis, and his suggestion to examine the compasses of the pianos in detail.

Gerhard Doderer discussed the subject of the instruments sold by Cristofori to Portugal, providing essential background knowledge in this area.

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Sabine Radermacher discussed a number of matters over the years surrounding Farinelli and the Ferrini *piano e forte*, giving insights and generously supplying me with unpublished letters which might have a bearing on this study.

Gabriele Rossi-Rognoni kindly took photos in order to clarify the question whether a piano could be the instrument shown in the Nazari portrait.

As ever, my wife Claudia has participated with patience in the many discussions of obscure minutiae as part of the process of developing the argument, which often suggested further lines of enquiry. She also read the manuscript thereby exposing the areas where more explanation was needed.

## APPENDIX 1: Two inventories of keyboard instruments

### The Inventory of Maria Bárbara's Instruments, 1758

Source: Kirkpatrick p. 316 (my emphases, bold and underlined),  
MB [= Maria Bárbara] following Latcham 2007/2.

MB1. **Un clavicordio de Piano** echo en Florencia todo lo interior de Zipres; la Cassa de chopo dada de color de palosanto, teclado de Vox, y ebano, con cinquenta y seis teclas, **[56]** y pie torneado de aya.

MB2. Otro clavicordio de nogal con cinco registros, y quatro ordines de cuerdas para pluma, teclado con cinquenta y seis teclas **[56]** de ebano, y nacar, pie de pino en tres columnas con adorno de talla.

MB3. Otro clavicordio de pluma, la cassa de alamo blanco y lo interior de zedro, y zipres con sesenta y una teclas **[61]** de ebano y nacar con pie torneado de aya.

MB4. **Otro clavicordio** de pluma que antes **fue de piano echo en Florencia**, lo interior de zipres y lo exterior dado de color berde con cinquenta y sistecelas **[56]** de ebano y hueso en pie torneado de aya.

MB5. **Otro clavicordio de la misma manera y color berde echo tambien en Florencia** que fue de piano, y aora es de pluma con cinquenta teclas **[50]** de ebano y hueso en pie torneado de aya.

MB6. Otro clavicordio de nogal con tres ordenes de cuerdas para pluma con cinquenta y ocho teclas **[58]** de ebano y hueso en pie torneado de aya.

MB7. Otro echo en Flandes dado de charol obscuro con tres ordines de querdas para pluma teclado de ebano y hueso en pie torneado de aya.

MB8. Otro clavicordio de nogal con tres ordenes de cuerdas para pluma teclado con cinquenta y seis teclas **[56]** de ebano y hueso en pie torneado de aya.

Por D<sup>n</sup>. Gregorio Garcia de la Vega, que està presente & expressò que amas de los citados clavicordios havia dexado Su Magestad otros quatro que estaban dos en Aranjuez y dos en S<sup>n</sup>. Lorenzo de los quales tenia puntual noticia y segun la que ahora . . . se imbentarean asauer.

MB9. **Un clavicordio de Piano echo en Florencia** de cipres dado de color encarnado teclado de Vox y ebano con quarenta y nueve teclas **[49]** en pie torneado de aya, que está en Aranjuez.

MB10. Otro que lo exterior es de alamo blanco y lo interior de zedro y zipres con dos ordines de cuerdas para pluma teclado de ebano y nacar con sesenta y una teclas **[61]** en pie torneado de aya que tambien está en Aranjuez.

MB11. **Otro Clavicordio de Piano** de Zipres color berde teclado de Box y ebano con cinquenta y quatro teclas **[54]** y pie torneado de Aya el qual se halla en el Real sitio de San Lorenzo.

MB12. Otro Clavicordio de pluma la cassa de alamo blanco y lo interior de cedro y cipres teclado de ebano y nacar con sesenta y una teclas **[61]** en pie torneado de Aya que tambien esta en el Sitio de San Lorenzo.

## Farinelli's keyboard instruments in the *Inventarium legale* of 1783

Transcribed by Cappelletto, p. 209-210.

Descrizione  
de' Cembali, Violini, e Ghitarra firmati  
dal Sig:r Antonio Viola Perito Cembalaro

[F1] Un Cembalo a martellini con suo piede torlito, e copertoro di badana rosa; detti martellini servono per piani, e forti; il detto Cembalo denominato Raffaele d'(Urbino hà per Autore Giovanni Ferrini Fiorentino, firmato. L 1000

[F2] Un Cembalo con suo piede composto di trè colonne lavorate e dipinte torchino celeste, copertoro di badana stampata gialla. Questo Cembalo è di invenzione del Sig:r Testatore, suona li piani e forti a penna, è raro, e vien denominato il Corregio, fù eseguito in Madrid da D:n Diego Fernandez spagnolo servitore di Sua Maestà Cattolica. E di ottava stesa, hà trè qualità di corde rame, acciaio, e budelle, che suonano unite, separate, e miste, secondo la formola che se dà quì appreso de' suoi varj Registri. È sostenuto dal detto suo piede a trè colonne, delle quali le due a destra e sinistra della tastiera nascondono le Molli mosse dalle Suste, che ancor esse sono nascoste sotto il Pedale, vengono le dette Suste mosse da dieci Bottoni, secondo che si vogliono far sonare i Registri. Vi sono ancora due Pomi di piombo movibili, se vuolsi tenere di continuo premuto uno o due Bottoni, quando i Piedi non bastano. Li dieci Bottoni, che si premono col piede si cominciano a contare dalla mano sinistra verso la destra in questo modo...[description follows]  
L 1500

[F3] Un Cembalo a due registri con tastiera d'ebano intrecciata di madre-perla, amovibile per crescere, e muovere tono a comodo di chi canta; detto pè buono, e nuovo con suo piedistallo torlito. L 500

[F4] Un Cembalo sul suo piedistallo a sei piedi torliti, e vitati con vite di ferro con copertoro di damasco cremesi; il Cembalo a due registri con tastiera di ebano intrecciata di madre-perla. L 600

[F5] Un Cembalino che si piega per comodo del trasporto sul suo piedistallo, copertoro di panno rosso trenato giallo; Il Cembalo a due Registri con tastiera d'ebano finita d'auorio. L 450

[F6] Un Cembalino a levatojo di Violac della Cina, incastratura a fiorame di madre-perla, tastatura coperta tartaruga, e madre-perla; Detto Cembalino in due pezzi, cioè la tastatura d'un pezzo, ed il resto del Cembalino in un altro pezzo che poi si piega in trè per mezzo di molli d'ottone; Detto Cembalino vâ in sua Cassetta dipinta rosso, e fiorata d'oro con serraturta, ciarniera e chiaue di ottone, foderata colla sua divisione di saya rosso  
L 300

[F7] Uno Spinettino tutto d'un pezzo amovibile con tastatura coperta di Bosso, e d'ebano con bottoni d'avorio; Detto Spinettino vâ in sua cassa fatta a guisa di cassetta da viaggio con lamette, cianiere, serratura, e chiaue di ferro con contracassa di legno. L 60



parte, che a vicenda han fatto onore a se stessi, ed all' Umanità, e non dispero, che così Lei come il Signor Giuseppe con tutta la sua stimabile famiglia (ch'io riverisco) voglia per filiazione continuarmi la benevolenza de' loro Genitori e del Gemello; e la mia Signora D<sup>na</sup> Marianna può considerarmi ammiratore de' suoi rari talenti nelle Composizioni Armoniche, e delle doti del Suo bell' Animo, e della sua proprietà, che mi farà raddoppiato piacere di darmi le occasioni di servirla.

Dalla detta stimat<sup>ma</sup> sua lettera sento, che non era ancora arrivata la **consaputa flotta Petroniana**; onde per suo maggior governo, le replico la nota di quel, che contiene più dettagliata della prima, nella quale li termini, "Picciarilli," "Pazziarelle," e "chiapparielli in forma di musiche note," ed altri simili vocaboli erano scherzi, che adopravo col mio Car<sup>mo</sup>, ed Impareggiabil Gemello (requiescat) che intendeva le grazie della Lingua Napolitana.

Il Padre Guardiano dei Cappucini che fù a farmi compagnia giorni sono, bevendo alla di Lei salute, m'incaricò di portargli li Suoi complimenti, ed al medesimo hò pregato di farle pervenir in sue mani la presente.

La mia salute gentil<sup>ma</sup> Sig<sup>ra</sup> Marianna stà in toni minori più del solito, perchè stò sconzolato vieppiù della perdita, che abbiamo fatto; del che mi vò sollevando con la rassegnazione secondo c'insegna il Nostro Divino Maestro, e Redentore; Fiat Voluntas Domini. Nel mentre la prego darmi la piacere de' suoi Comandi, mi confermo con piena Stima ed Amicizia qual sempre  
Della Sig<sup>ra</sup> Marianna stimat<sup>ma</sup>

party, reciprocally did honor to itself and to all humanity; and I do not despair, that thus you like Signor Giuseppe and all his estimable family (to whom I do reverence) may choose, by family custom, to continue to me the benevolence of your parents and of my twin, and that Milady Marianna may consider me an admirer of her rare talent for musical composition, and for the gifts of her beautiful soul and her dignity, which will double the pleasure of giving me occasion to serve her.

From your aforementioned esteemed letter I learn that the **our famous Petronian Cargo** has not yet arrived; wherefore, for your better information I duplicate the list of what it contains in greater detail than previously [and] in which the terms "Picciarilli," "Pazziarelle," and "chiapparielli in the form of musical notes," and other similar words were [mere] jests I used with my

Dear and Incomparable Twin (May he rest in Peace) which invoked the charms of the Neapolitan dialect.

The Capuchin Father Guardian who was here to keep me company a few days since, drinking to your health charged me to convey his compliments to you, and at the same time I prayed him to see that these lines reach your hands. As to my health, dearest Lady Marianna, it rests in a minor key more than usual, all the more since I am disconsolate over the loss that we have experienced; for which I console myself with resignation according to the teachings of our Divine Master and Redeemer: Thy will be done, O Lord. Meanwhile, I praying you grant me the pleasure of your commands, I confirm myself full of respect and amity, ever  
of the Esteemed Lady Marianna,

Bologna, 28 maggio 1782  
Devot<sup>mo</sup>, ed Obl<sup>mo</sup> servitore  
Carlo Broschi

== Contenuto della Cassa  
spedita in Vienna ne' principi di  
aprile 1782: al Sig<sup>r</sup> Abate Don  
Pietro Metastasio per mezzo del  
Sig<sup>r</sup> Giuseppe Antonio Calegari,  
franca di ogni spesa fin là  
raccomandata alli Sig<sup>ri</sup> Briani  
e Rizzoni di Mantova, bene  
imballata, e marcata G: A: C: ==  
=Primo Piano=

Una Cassetta a guisa di Libro coperto  
di marrocchino rosso, foderato di raso  
torchino, con ciappette d'argento  
dorato, e cartellino soprache dice:  
"Armonica Raccolta di Voce e Pensieri  
Gemellici in Parnaso," in cui si  
trovano; dieci quinterni, o libretti  
di musica, arie, e sonate in cartone  
miniate con due rosette ad ognuno di  
nastri rigati di varie colori, al  
frontispizio del primo de' quali vedrà  
una Leggiadra Signorina Tedesca Maestra  
di Musica, che seduta studia al cembalo  
il Recitativo coll' Aria: "In van ti  
chiamo." E così di mano in mano la  
miniatura di ogni cartone è allusiva  
alle Arie, e sonate da cembalo, che  
dentro di essi contengono, con altra  
sonatina sciolta senza esser colorita,  
ed altre sciolte con duettini  
per divertirsi in buona compagnia;  
Due Caraffine di cristallo con  
diavolini; ed un ventaglio Cinese.

Una cassetta col cartellino  
parimente, che dice: "Scaccia Pensieri"  
nella quale trovansi cinque vasetti  
tondi di latta, quattro di quali con  
varie sorti di tabacco di Spagna, e'l  
quinto per custodia della tabacchiera,  
e della miniatura de Gemelli al Cembalo.  
Una scatola di canditi di Ferrara.  
Due scatole di prugne delle Monache  
di Carpi.

Bologna, 28 May 1782,  
the Most Devoted and Humble Servant,  
Carlo Broschi

== CONTENTS OF THE CRATE  
shipped to Vienna at the beginning of  
April 1782 to Milord Abbot Don  
Pietro Metastasio through the agency of  
Signor Giuseppe Antonio Calegari  
free of all charges to destination,  
consigned to the Messers Briani  
and Rizzoni of Mantua, well-packed  
and labeled G: A: C: ==  
=FIRST LAYER=

A box in the form of a book bound in  
red morocco sheathed in deep blue satin,  
with [clasps?] of gilded silver  
and a card which reads:

"Musical Collection for Voice and  
Twinly Thoughts on Parnassus," in which  
are found: ten quinterns, or pamphlets  
of music, arias and sonatas in boards  
each decorated with with two rosettes  
of striped ribbon in various colors;  
on the cover [?] of the first of them  
you will see a pretty German music  
teacher seated at the keyboard reading  
the Recitative and Aria, "In van ti  
chiamo." And thus throughout, the  
drawings on cover alludes to the  
arias and keyboard sonatas that  
are contained within--with another  
loose sonata without a drawing,  
and some other loose duets with which  
to amuse one's self in good company;  
Two little crystal flasks [ornamented  
with] imps; and a Chinese fan.

A little box with a similar  
card reading "Kill Care"  
in which are found five little round  
tin jars, four of them with various  
kinds of Spanish tobacco, and the  
fifth to use as a dispenser, and with a  
minature of the Twins at the keyboard.  
A box of candied [fruits] of Ferrara.  
Two boxes prunes by the Nuns of Carpi.

**=Secondo Piano=**

Una scatola con due [illegibile] a punto di Marsiglia; Due pezzi di tela di Persia fiorata; Una pezza di sei fazzoletti seta di Aleppo; sei altri sciolti seta di Castiglia. Sedeci Boccette di Rosoglio di diverse qualità. Sei mortadelle di Bologna. Ventiquattro scatolette di cotognata delle Monache di San Lorenzo di Bologna, divise in tre pacchetti. Una scatola con una Boccetta d'Acqua di Cannella della celebre spezzeria de' Padri di San Francesco di Paola di Napoli, o sia Latte di Cannella. Due scatole piccole; in una prugne candite di Carpi; nell'altra compagna frutti albericocchi canditi in detto Carpi. Ventiquattro Pacchetti sciolti con persicata di Ferrara.

**=SECOND LAYER=**

A box with two bodices<sup>137</sup> in lace of Marseilles; two lengths of flowered Persian cloth; a length for six kerchiefs of Aleppo silk; [and] six others, loose, of Castilian silk. Sixteen vials of rosolio of diverse qualities. Six mortadella [sausages] of Bologna. Twenty-four jars of quince jelly of the Monks of San Lorenzo of Bologna, divided into three packages. A box containing a vial of Water of Cinnamon, called "Milk of Cinamon" from the famous spice shop of the Fathers of Saint Francis de Paul of Naples; Two little boxes: in one, candied prunes from Carpi, and in its companion, candied apricots from the same Carpi. Twenty-four loose packets of peach jam from Ferrara.

**Transl.: Irving Godt**

<sup>137</sup> Translation evident from FARN's [Farinelli's] catalogue in the letter of 24 Apr 82; possibly waistcoats are meant. [Footnote by Irving Godt]

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