

TRADITION, INNOVATION, PERFECTION

FROM INSTRUMENT NO. 1 TO TODAY



STEINWAY & SONS®





The original kitchen piano from 1836

»A Steinway is a Steinway
and there is nothing like it in the world.«

Arthur Rubinstein

FASCINATION

INVENTING THE PIANO

In 1700, Italian Bartolomeo de Francesco Cristofori (1655-1731) made musical history when he presented the first fortepiano to Prince Ferdinando de Medici. The pianoforte was born, the name being derived from its ability to produce different levels of sound—both “piano” (quiet) and “forte” (loud). By around 1726, Cristofori had refined the instrument to such an extent that it already contained the components still used in piano building today. Word of this new keyboard instrument reached Germany in the early 18th century. Gottfried Silbermann, for instance, unveiled his first fortepiano in 1726, after much experimentation. Johann Andreas Stein was another pioneer, working tirelessly on developing a sort of “escapement” action, which created a sensation in 1750 and led to the development of the Viennese action. The instruments created by Anton Walter and Conrad Graf represented the pinnacle of Viennese piano building. The development process continued unabated. In around 1772,



A plan view of a square piano, from Steinway's 1888 illustrated brochure

fortepianos began to be fitted with a “hammer” action. When piano builder John Broadwood became the first person to extend the keyboard from Cristofori’s original four octaves to six, another significant milestone in the piano’s development had been achieved. Two other important inventions were the work of Sebastian Erard, in the shape of the patented agraffe, through which strings were threaded, and the repetition action. Today’s grand piano actions are still built according to Erard’s design. By the early 19th century, it was clear that the fortepianos had become firmly established. Now fashionable, it was found in affluent private homes as well as concert halls. When the piano industry was experiencing this boom in 1800, Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg was a mere three years old! At this time, no one could have predicted that he would thrill the piano world 36 years later with the construction of his first piano...

	1853 – Steinway & Sons is founded in New York.	
1797 – Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg is born in Wolfshagen, Germany.		1855 – The Steinway instruments receive
	1836 – Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg	their first award for excellent quality.
	completes his first grand piano.	



BEST PIANO

A COMMITMENT FOR GENERATIONS TO COME: »TO BUILD THE BEST PIANO POSSIBLE...«

Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg: creator of a world-famous heritage

Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg was born in 1797 in Wolfshagen, a town in the Harz Mountains of Germany, the twelfth child of a forester. His childhood was particularly hard and marred by tragedy. Several of his brothers died in the twin battles of Jena and Auerstadt in 1806 and at the age of eight he lost his mother and other siblings while fleeing from the French army. Returning home after the war, his father resumed his duties as ducal forester, while Heinrich and his three remaining elder brothers worked as lumberjacks. In 1812, fate dealt him another cruel blow when his father and brothers were killed by lightning.



Aged just 15, Heinrich was now a penniless orphan, forced to make his own way in the world. This tragedy affected him for the rest of his life, but also imbued him with dogged determination. Three years later, he gained his first official recognition, which partly compensated for the fate of his family: As a young bugle player in the Brunswick regiment, Heinrich rallied his comrades at the Battle of Waterloo without once missing a note. His bravery earned him a bronze medal for "signaling in the face of the enemy."

Henry E. Steinway, photographed by Matthew Brady, July 3, 1862

1857 – Henry Steinway, Jr. develops the first Steinway patent:
the grand piano action.

1860 – Steinway & Sons moves to a larger factory, which is
situated on today's Park Avenue in Manhattan.

»*I have long admired Steinway pianos
for their qualities of tone, clarity,
pitch consistency, touch responsiveness
and superior craftsmanship.*«
Billy Joel

COMMITMENT FOR GENERATIONS

A love of fine woods and string instruments

Although his affinity for music was becoming more and more evident, at the age of 21, Heinrich started to train as a cabinetmaker in Goslar because he wanted to learn how to work with wood and tools. During the four previous years, he had single-handedly made a zither and taught himself how to play the instrument while serving in the Duke of Brunswick’s army during the war. Friends and acquaintances attested to the young man’s musical talent from an early age, so building stringed instruments was a logical move. Heinrich soon switched from cabinetmaking to organ building because the training period was shorter and there were no onerous guild regulations. He accepted a position with an organ builder in Seesen. Alongside his main task of repairing organs, Heinrich was

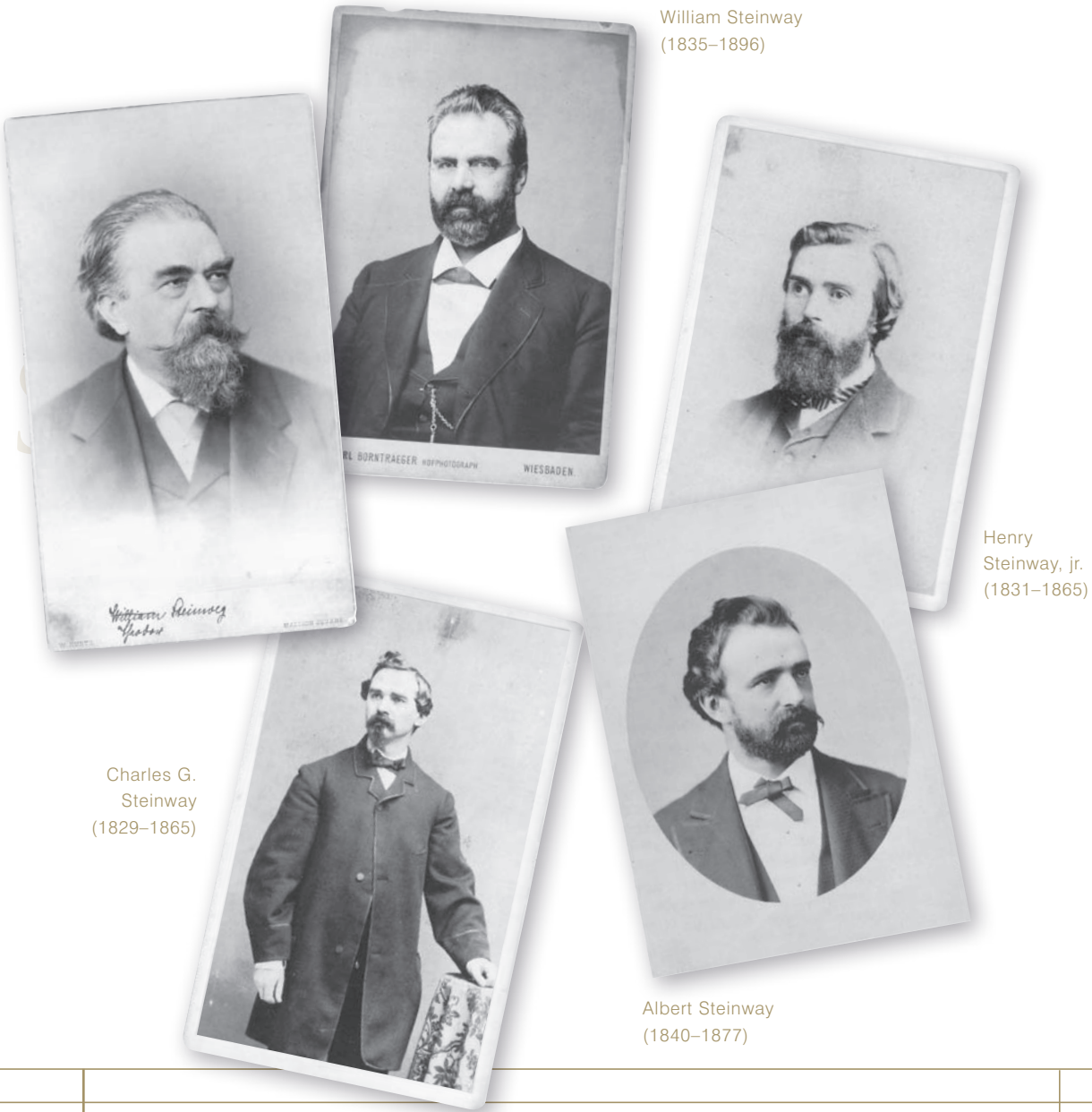
entrusted with maintaining guitars, harpsichords, square pianos, and fortepianos, allowing him to gain experience in many different areas.

A square piano as a wedding gift

In 1825, Heinrich settled in Seesen and married his childhood sweetheart Juliane Thiemer, giving her a square piano with double stringing as his wedding present. Heinrich’s determination to devote more time to constructing keyboard instruments grew, and, as building pianofortes gradually became a full-time occupation, he established his own workshop in Seesen. The seeds of the Steinway legend were sown.

Handing down knowledge to the next generation

The birth of his eldest son, Christian Friedrich Theodor, in November 1825 was followed by five more boys and four daughters. From an early age, Heinrich introduced his sons to the fine art of piano building. He taught them every stage of the process, from selecting the wood for the soundboard to trimming the keyboard, leveling the keys, regulating the action, fitting the strings, and tuning. With his high standards and relentless attention to detail, Heinrich was undoubtedly a hard taskmaster for his sons. But their collective discipline and single-mindedness would one day be handsomely rewarded.



William Steinway
(1835–1896)

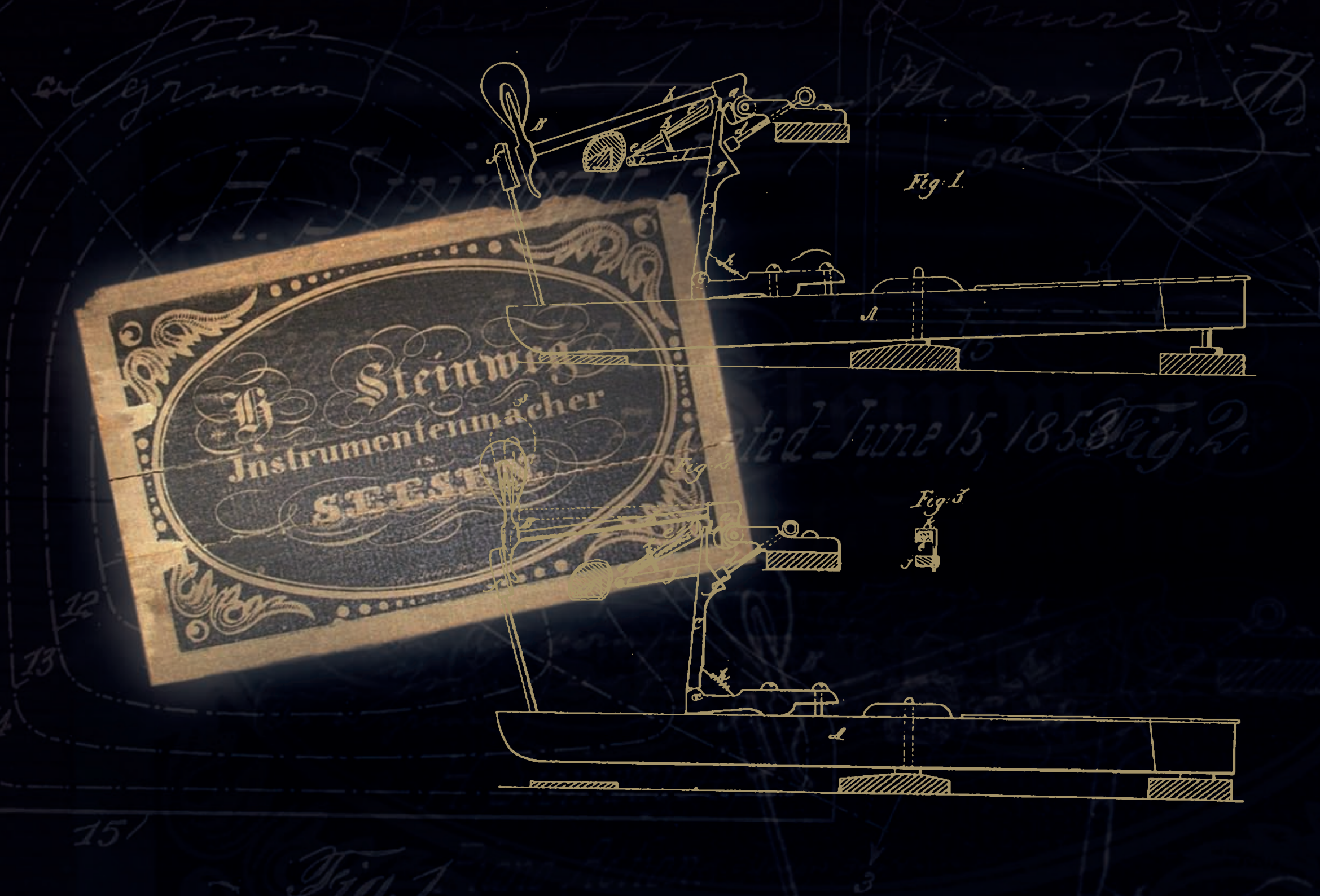
C. F. Theodore Steinway
(1825–1889)

Henry
Steinway, jr.
(1831–1865)

Charles G.
Steinway
(1829–1865)

Albert Steinway
(1840–1877)

		1872 – William Steinway plans and promotes concert tours		
1867 – Steinway & Sons is mentioned in		with leading international artists.		
the official report on the “Paris World Fair.”	1871 – Henry E. Steinway dies on February 7th at the age of 73.	Anton Rubinstein is the first such artist to come to America.	1875 – The first European sales office is opened in London.	



INVENTOR
BY *C.F. Th. Steinway*
Ingels, Riegner
ATTORNEYS

THE ORIGINAL NO. 1—THE FOUNDATION OF THE STEINWAY SUCCESS STORY

Inspired by a love of the keyboard

Acutely aware of the need to provide for his growing family, Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg was simply not able to travel around Europe to improve his knowledge of keyboard instruments. While his sphere of operations was probably restricted to the Seesen area, he took advantage of every available opportunity to examine different keyboard instruments and explore their design in detail. He must surely have scrutinized instruments produced by the Viennese workshops of Anton Walter and Conrad Graf, the square pianos and fortepianos of piano builder John Broadwood, and those made by Andreas Stein. Heinrich’s creative genius and perfectionist drive inevitably led to the making of his own instrument. Since regulations prevented him from building new pianos as a proper commercial operation, he did so in secret—the kitchen of his house was turned into a makeshift workshop and Heinrich was finally able to indulge his passion.

The first Steinway piano—built in a family kitchen

The completion of his first fortepiano in 1836 must have been one of the most important events in Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg’s life. He succeeded in building a piano that blended his own ideas with the finest European design features. At 212 cm long, it was a concert grand with the largest and best sound of that period, characterized by close attention to detail, great dimensional accuracy, and perfect woodworking. The new type of action ensures a direct touch with quick repetition, while the leather-covered hammer heads generate a powerful sound throughout all ranges, giving the piano sufficient volume to share a concert stage with accompanying instruments.

	1903 – The grand piano with the serial no. 100,000 is created specially for	
	the White House and presented to then-president Theodore Roosevelt	
1880 – The Hamburg factory is established.	as a gift from the Steinway family to the American people.	



The start of a musical revolution

None of this would have been unusual in itself, but Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg incorporated a number of groundbreaking ideas into this instrument, which is today known as the “kitchen piano.” As a perfectionist with a highly ingenious mind, he succeeded in making the sound-board bridge out of one piece, instead of the normal two. This improved the transmission of energy from the strings to the soundboard and minimized the latter’s rigidity, allowing the soundboard to vibrate more easily. From the Model B upward, all contemporary Steinway grands still feature a one-piece bridge.

Developments that became milestones of Steinway piano building

The innovative bridge had a positive impact on the overall sound, delivering greater consistency throughout the tonal range without the bass-tenor breaks encountered on other pianos. Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg also increased the sound volume by adopting a higher string tension than usual, which necessitated a more robust case. Since then, all Steinway cases have been built to the same design—one of the many factors required to ensure durability and the best possible performance.

In addition, Heinrich improved the dynamics of the instrument by fitting longer than usual keys. In conjunction with light hammer heads and longer hammer shanks, this led to optimized leverage.

A further innovation that helped establish Steinway’s pioneering role relates to the piano’s damping. Instead of following the tradition established by Viennese makers of fortepianos, Heinrich used a system found on English square pianos. Here, the dampers settle more gently on the strings after the right-hand pedal is released. Accordingly, the “kitchen piano” had far greater sonic possibilities and could be played more pianistically than any other instrument.

Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg’s vision of building the best piano possible had become reality. From this point in time, it also became an ongoing commitment for each successive generation.

		1938 – The grand with the serial no. 300,000	
	1909 – The Steinway branch in Berlin is opened.	is created as a further gift to the American people.	1941 – When the United States of America enter World War II,
		It is still in the White House today.	Steinway & Sons Hamburg is declared enemy property.
	1923-1928 – A new, larger factory is built in Hamburg.		Production ceased until 1948.





THE BEST WAS NOT GOOD ENOUGH

From Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg to Henry E. Steinway

Early success

Three years after building his first fortepiano, Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg showed his instruments for the first time at a trade exhibition in Brunswick. He was promptly awarded a prize for his outstanding pianos—his tenacity and passion for perfection seemed to have paid off, and this early success encouraged him to continue. Prosperity followed, and by 1850 the former bugler had already sold 482 keyboard instruments.

Embarking for America and a new beginning

Nonetheless, at the age of 53, Heinrich decided to leave the Harz Mountains and make a fresh start in America. This decision was partly due to the uncertain political situation in the aftermath of the 1848 revolution, compounded by the consequences of economic depression. But Heinrich's main objective was to perfect his piano designs and he saw excellent opportunities to do so in the New World. On June 29, 1850, the Steinwegs arrived in New York—and a new era began.



The first Steinway factory in New York (1854)

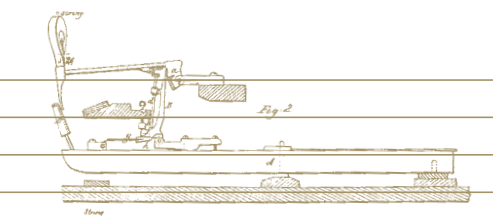
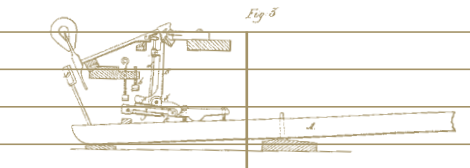
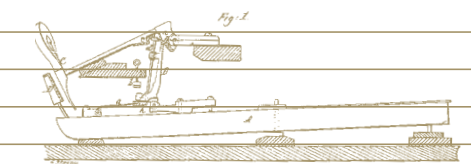
The first Steinway factory in Hamburg (1880)

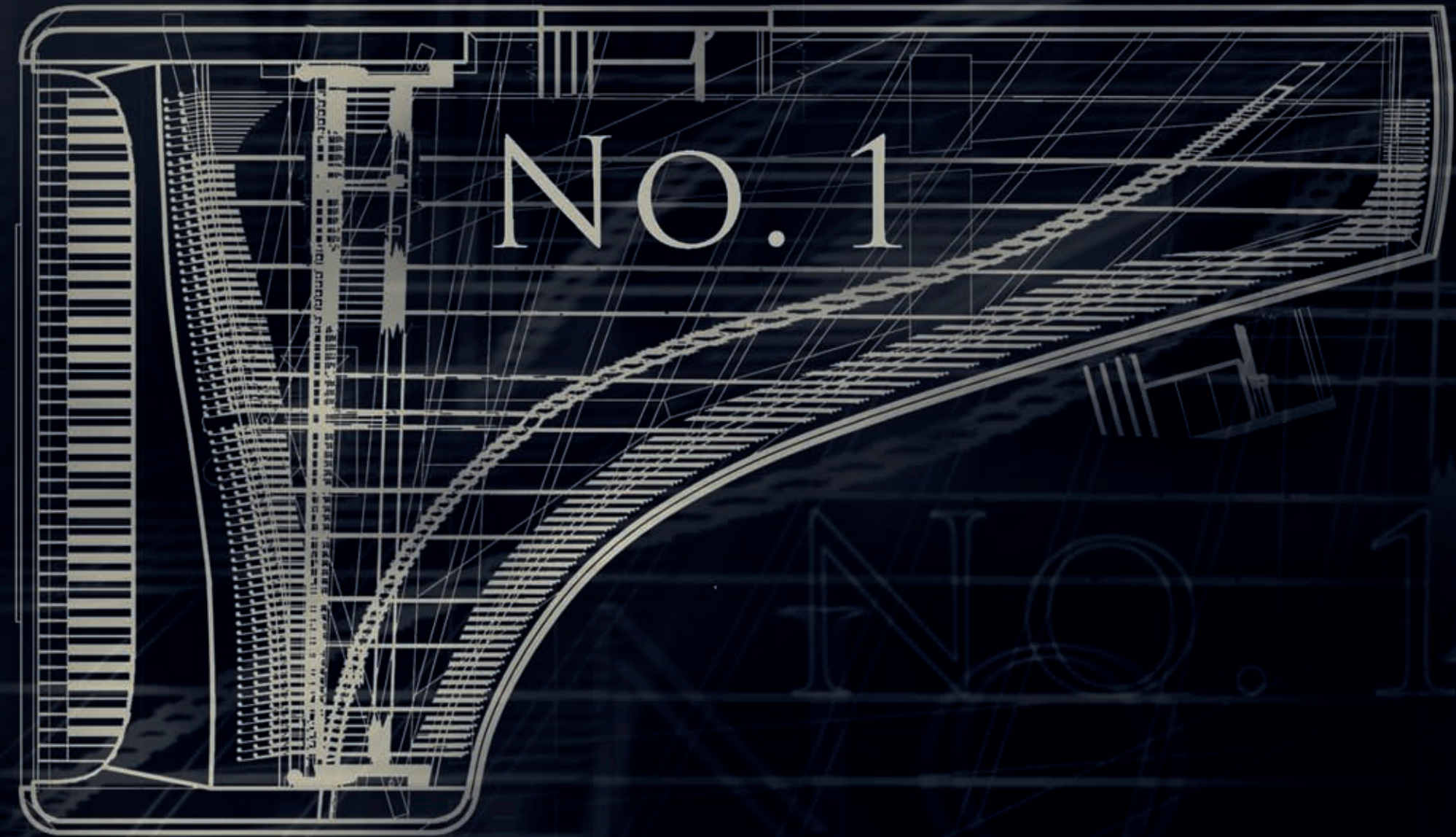


The early days in the New World were not easy for any of the family members, but Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg's single-mindedness would once again pay off. Firstly, he found jobs for his sons with carpentry shops and piano-making companies, each of them working in a different area of piano building. This would prove to be vitally important when the family company was formed. Secondly, he decided to Americanize his name, believing this was necessary to ensure success in America. At age 54, Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg thus became Henry E. Steinway. When all the Steinways had garnered sufficient experience, on March 5, 1853 the time was judged to be right and Steinway & Sons was founded.

H. Steinway Jr.,
Piano Action.
N^o 17238. *Patented May 5, 1857.*

1857 – the first Steinway patent: the grand piano action





THE REPLICA

A MASTERPIECE AND TRIBUTE TO THE FIRST STEINWAY PIANO

Chris Maene: a man with a passion for exceptional instruments

“Piano’s Maene” is Steinway’s authorized dealer in Belgium, with showrooms in Brussels, Gent and Ruselede. But Chris Maene is also an enthusiastic piano builder, who specializes in reconstructions, replicas, and restorations of antique keyboard instruments. His passion for these instruments is plain for all to see in his Ruselede workshop. Here, he receives a wide range of requests from the four corners of the globe to build rare and exceptional harpsichords, pianofortes, and spinets, which he painstakingly recreates, right down to the last decorative flourish. The oldest instrument he has reproduced was a virginal dating from 1610. The corporate philosophy formulated by Henry E. Steinway shortly after the company’s foundation

in 1853—“to build the best piano possible”—not only still holds true today for over 1,000 Steinway employees, but it has also been adopted heart and soul by Chris Maene.

A love affair with Steinway’s “kitchen piano”

His lifetime dream of one day following in the footsteps of Henry E. Steinway has been fulfilled at last. Even as a child, Chris was captivated by the first Steinway piano built in 1836 in the kitchen in Seesen. When he first saw a photograph of the instrument at the age of 7, it was “love at first sight.” In 2006, 170 years after the original event, he was finally able to build a replica of the “kitchen piano,” which astonished the music world at a recent major festival in Bruges.

1999 – Steinway & Sons presents a new edition called		2003 – 150th anniversary of the founding of Steinway & Sons in New York
The Steinway Crown Jewels, made of the finest woods		
1997 – Foundation of the new subsidiary	the world has to offer.	by Henry E. Steinway and his sons.
Steinway & Sons Japan, Ltd. in Tokyo.		

»It is a privilege and an honor
to perform on Steinway pianos.«

Diana Krall



REPLICA

Two visionaries, one passion

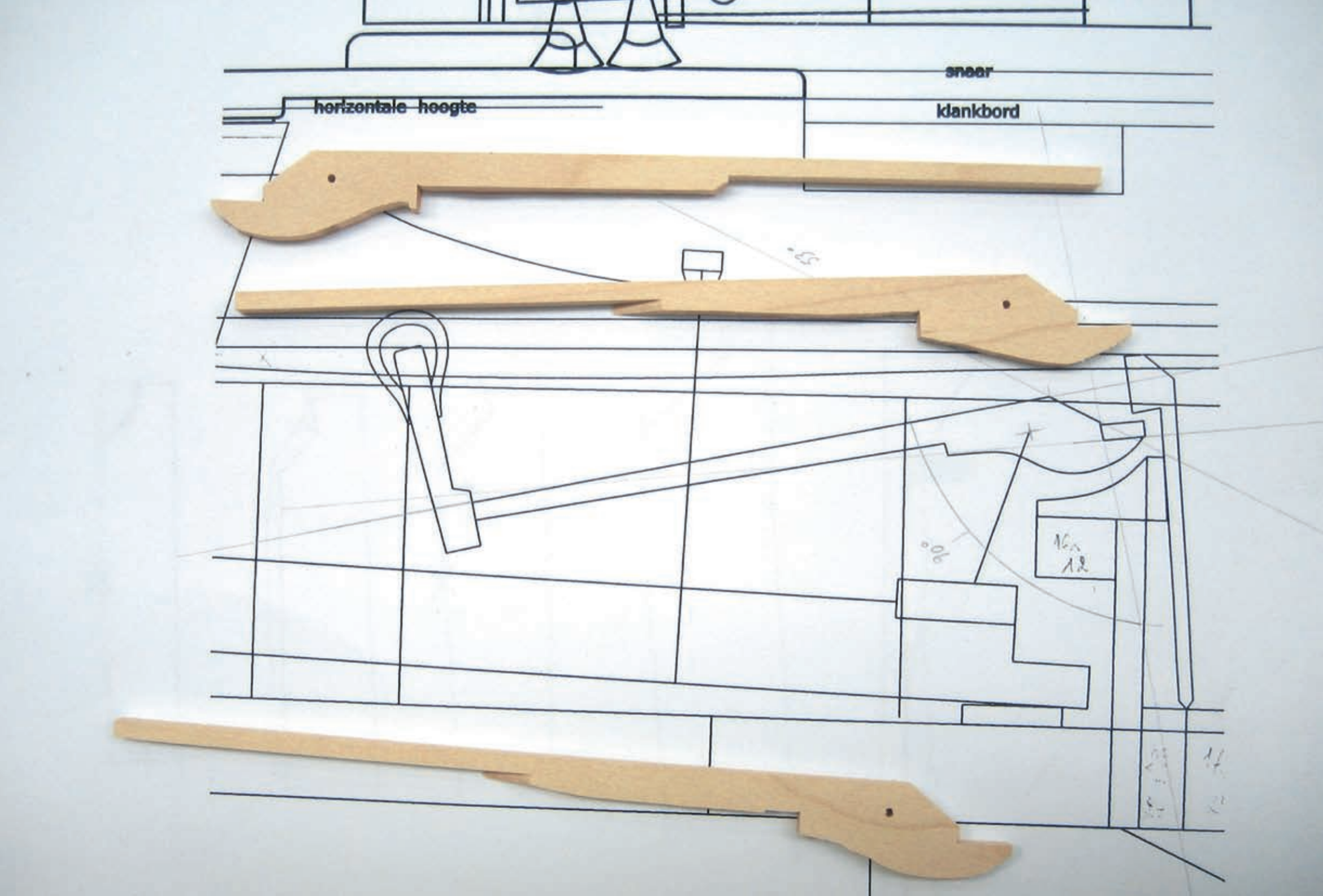
But let’s start at the beginning. Intriguing parallels can be found in the biographies of Henry E. Steinway and Chris Maene, such as a shared desire to achieve perfection. Incredibly, Chris’s father also built his first keyboard instruments in his kitchen. Even today, the smell of wood glue transports Chris back to his childhood. Like Henry E. Steinway, Chris received no formal training as a piano builder but discovered his passion for music and piano building by chance, despite his father having taught piano students in the family home. It was not until later that Chris acquired the skills that have made him one of the world’s leading experts in the restoration and reconstruction of period instruments.



Reconstructing a legend

Chris’s long experience and attention to detail helped persuade Steinway & Sons and Henry Z. Steinway, the company founder’s great-grandson, to grant him permission back in 2004 to become the first piano builder to reconstruct the legendary instrument. The “Flemish piano man,” as the local press dubbed him, immediately got down to work. First, he flew with his team to New York to inspect, examine, and measure the original, which now stands in the Steinway showroom at the Queens factory. Thanks to the latest 21st century technology, it was possible to produce digital drawings and record minute details of the historic instrument. Using x-ray images, Chris was also able to reveal the piano’s interior, which the firmly glued frame and soundboard had previously hidden from sight.

	2005 – The Hamburg factory celebrates its 125th anniversary.
2004 – Steinway Piano (Shanghai) Co., Ltd. officially commences operations as a separate company, importing instruments to supply the Chinese dealer network.	Steinway & Sons presents the limited edition “The 125th Anniversary Limited Edition Grand Piano designed by Goertz,” created by the famous designer Count Albrecht Goertz.





»*Steinway grand pianos*
are the best in the world.«

Maurizio Pollini

2,000 hours to perfection

Chris and his team returned to Belgium with a haul of valuable data, where they immediately started producing detailed drawings of the case and strings. The University of Liège performed a dendrochronological examination to establish the types of wood used and their age—choosing the same wood is essential when building a faithful replica because of its crucial impact on sound characteristics. For the replica of the No. 1, this meant using Cuban mahogany as a veneer with the original thickness of 3 mm, for example, and not 1 mm as is customary today. After all, the replica was intended to emulate the exact sound created by Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg in 1836.

After 2,000 hours of work, the job was complete—featuring the same level of perfection and painstaking attention to detail as in 1836. Elated rather than exhausted, Chris Maene had realized this dream. He presented the music world with a unique replica based on an instrument that had been a key milestone in the history of piano design and a legend for over 170 years.

2006 – Introduction of the “Essex—designed by Steinway & Sons” instruments.

With the three brands Steinway & Sons, Boston and Essex, the “Family of Steinway-Designed pianos” is complete,
offering unbeatable choice to suit every requirement.

2007 – Instrument no. 579,450 leaves the factory.

THE INSTRUMENT

HEINRICH ENGELHARD STEINWEG

FORTEPIANO AND REPLICA

Year of construction: Original: 1836
Replica: 2006

Length: 212 cm

Width: 121 cm

Case finish: Cuban mahogany veneer, maple inlay, shellac hand polish

Style: Biedermeier

Keys: Spruce, 6 octaves, 73 keys from FF to f^{'''}, ebony for black keys, bone for white keys

Hammer heads: Linden wood covered with leather

Hammer shanks: Maple

Action components: Maple and pear wood

Action type: Viennese action

Dampers: Beech, mahogany, and felt

Keybed: Spruce, maple, and beech

Soundboard: Spruce

Bridge: Maple

Bridge pins: Iron/brass

Pinblock: Beech and maple

Wrestpins: Iron with flat square head

Strings: The 15 lowest-sounding strings are made of yellow brass; the remainder are iron wire

Stringing: Straight-strung, three strings per note

Cast-iron plate: None

Lid: Solid spruce

Hinges: Brass

Music desk: Spruce and mahogany, mahogany veneer

Lyre: Maple with mahogany veneer and maple inlay

Original: 2 pedals (damping and una corda)

Replica : additional third pedal (moderator)



The lyre—the only difference between replica and original

Legs: Solid spruce with Cuban mahogany veneer, maple inlay, black decorative maple rings

Key cover: Spruce

Case: Solid spruce

Case bottom: Spruce with maple brace to support an iron brace that adds rigidity between the pinblock and cross block

» *This must have been the best piano at that time,
for a pianist as a performer.* «

Abdel Rahmad El Bacha –
first pianist to play the No. 1 in Bruges
at the opening concert on November 25, 2006



STEINWAY & SONS®

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