**Fortepiano Anton Walter**

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Anton Walter (1752–1826) was the most famous fortepiano maker of his time. Entitled “Kays. Königl. Hof Orgel und Instrumentenbauer” (“Imperial Royal Chamber Organ Builder and Instrument Maker”), his Viennese school of piano marking is the heir to Johann Andreas Stein’s workshop in Augsburg. Walter’s improvements to the Viennese piano action were long considered benchmarks. His addition of a backcheck to the action, for example, catches the hammer on its descent, preventing it from ricocheting when struck powerfully, and was greatly appreciated by virtuosi.

Walter built about 700 instruments. They were praised for their quality by Mozart (who bought one in 1782), and Beethoven (who nearly succeeded in buying one in 1802). According to Mozart‘s son Carl: *“Most remarkable is the wing-shaped pianoforte for which my father had a special preference, to such a degree that he not only wanted to have it in his study all the time, but exclusively used this and no other instrument in all his concerts, regardless of whether they took place in court, in the palaces of noblemen, or in theatres or other public places.”*

Walter was born near Stuttgart and was active in Vienna from the early 1770s. He was joined in 1800 by his stepson. Anton Walter und Sohn increased their keyboard compass but retained the same fundamental proportions and tonal concept until Walter’s death in 1826.