**Fortepiano Silbermann**

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Gottfried Silbermann (1683 – 1753) was the first German fortepiano maker. In 1732, he copied the instruments first developed by Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655 – 1731), inventor of the “gravicembalo col piano e forte” (1700). Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, was so impressed that he purchased 15 Silbermann fortepianos. He used them for his own flute performances, accompanied by Carl Philippe Emmanuel Bach at the keyboard.

Carl Philippe’s father, Johann Sebastian Bach, was (unsurprisingly!) hard to please, but the later instruments (from 1745) met with his approval. It was on one of Frederick the Great’s fortepianos that J.S. Bach improvised the three-part Ricercar, later published in “The Musical Offering”.

Paul McNulty’s FF - e3 after Silbermann is a reconstruction of the 1749 instrument in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg. This represents the final version in Silbermann’s development of the Cristofori design.