Pedaling the Piano: A Brief Survey from the Eighteenth Century to the Present

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Abstract

Before World War II, most composers notated relatively few pedal indications, usually to create unsuspected effects. Mutations (Veränderungen) on the early pianos and the uses of hand stops, knee levers, and pedals are discussed based on information from extant instruments, composers' autographs, and comments in tutors by such teachers as Johann Milchmeyer and Louis Adam. Pedaling techniques and uses of the damper, una corda, and sostenuto pedals on the changing instruments of the 19th and 20th c. are described, with particular attention to compositions of Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin, Brahms, Debussy, Villa-Lobos, Boulez, Cage, and Stockhausen.

DOI

10.5642/perfpr.199306.02.08

Recommended Citation


Available at: https://scholarship.claremont.edu/ppr/vol6/iss2/8

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