Piano
AN ENCYCLOPEDIA
Second Edition

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IBACH
The firm of Ibach has long been recognized as one of the most distinguished of German piano manufacturers. It was founded more than two hundred years ago when (Johannes) Adolph Ibach (1766–1848) opened his workshop in Beyenburg (now Barmen), near Düsseldorf, in 1794. Upon taking his elder son Carl Rudolph (1804–1863) as partner in 1834, Adolph revised the name of the firm to Adolph Ibach und Sohn. Carl Rudolph’s brothers Richard (1813–1889) and Gustav Adolph also joined the company. After Adolph’s death the firm continued under the name of Adolph Ibach Söhne, Orgelbauanstalt und Pianofortefabrik. After Carl Rudolph’s death his widow became a partner in the business, with Richard and his nephew, (Peter Adolph) Rudolph (1843–1892), splitting the organ and piano operations. Richard then assumed command of the organ division, while Rudolph, his brothers Gustav Adolph and Walter, together with their mother, directed the piano operations. After Rudolph Ibach’s death in 1892, his widow Hulda Reyscher Ibach (1845–1921) successfully managed the company for more than twelve years, until her sons came of age. The Ibach descendants (as Rud. Ibach Sohn) broadened the business, bringing it into prominence as a factory of international repute. During World War II the Ibach factories at Barmen and Düsseldorf were severely damaged in bombing raids, and the headquarters were consequently moved after 1945. Formerly headed by Adolf Ibach (1911–1999), Rudolf Ibach Sohn is located in Schwelm, where the firm specializes in grand and upright models.

As of 2002 the directors were Rolf (b. 1940) and Christian Ibach. In the 1980s Ibach expanded by purchasing the venerable Schiedmayer piano division (est. in 1809) and the piano firm of Roth and Junius (est. in 1889), known for its affordable instruments for home and school. Both brand names are still in production under the auspices of Rudolf Ibach Sohn. Daewoo of Korea now owns about one-third of the Ibach company.

Martha Novak Clinkscales

Bibliography

ITALY—PIANO INDUSTRY
The piano industry in Italy achieved only a level of semi-craftsmanship until the unification of the various
ITA PYvero piano industry

states into a single kingdom (1860–1870). The production of pianos suffered from the excessive fragmentation of productive factories; in total, the manufacturers that we know of amount to more than four hundred. Because the local product was limited to a few thousand instruments per year, the industry has constantly lagged behind the national demand; in addition, the Italian piano industry never had a true concert grand piano until the 1980s, when the newly established Fazioli firm qualified as one of the first on the international level.

From 1825 until the unification of Italy around 1870, every single state of the peninsula (Regno di Napoli, Granducato di Toscana, Regno Lombardo-Veneto, Ducato di Parma, Regno di Piemonte e Sardegna) developed its own piano industry, with the exception of the Vatican State, extending geographically as far north as Ferrara. However, the various regional industries were economically backward and could not adopt a modern industrial mentality. The productive growth in this period was strongly inhibited by (1) high customs taxes, even between Italian states; (2) not enough capital invested in the industry; (3) no partnerships among industrialists who, in general, were opposed by the government for political reasons; (4) a lack of factories producing accessories, such as metal strings and pins, felt for actions, keys, and so on. To all of that add the snobbish love for imported products and strong preferences for lyric vocal music (something confirmed by the fact that, compared to the enormous number of opera houses in Italy, auditoriums for symphonic music or chamber music constructed in the course of the nineteenth century were almost nonexistent). There were varying trends and types of piano construction in each of the Italian states.

Kingdom of Napoli

Piano production began shortly after Napoleonic rule. Ferdinand II (crowned in 1830) stimulated industrial growth in the Neapolitan provinces. During that period many foreign entrepreneurs were attracted to the region because it offered safe political conditions, protective taxes, good return on investment, and a promising consumer market. Promotion of musical instrument production, in particular, was given an impetus by the Reale Istituto d’incoraggiamento delle scienze naturali (Royal Institute for the Encouragement of Natural Sciences); established in 1806. In Naples the piano builder Carlo De Meglio was the first to produce pianos on a large scale. He had already been an award winner in the Industrial Expositions of 1828 and 1838. De Meglio patented his own action in 1840, making his family (with Giovanni, Leopoldo, and successors, up at least to 1887) the best known among piano builders in Naples during the nineteenth century.

Among the other early piano makers in Naples (more than one hundred), the outstanding were Carl Fischer (from Vienna, fl. ca. 1820–1830; his sons went to New York about 1840, founding the firm of J. & C. Fischer) Giacomo Ferdinando Sievers (from Russia, active in Naples 1834–1878; in 1834 starting in Kovata’s firm, then in his own) Giorgio Helzel and his son Egidio (fl. 1832–1887) Onorato Mercier (from the Low Countries, fl. 1832) Paolo Nicolai (fl. 1834–1860; also building “upright pianos”) Giovanni Stanzici (fl. 1841–1876) Michele Kovats (Kovats) (from Hungary, fl. 1834–1841) Antonio Fummo (fl. 1843–1873, also building original types of “organized pianos”) Federico Müller and Brother (also Müller Bros. and Reisig) (fl. 1849–1875); they were the first to introduce the double escapement action in that state, for which they received a patent in 1850 Giovanni Maurer (fl. 1849–1882), who in 1853 introduced, for the first time in Italy, a one-piece iron frame Giacomo and Giovanni Schmid (also Schmid and Peter) (fl. 1849–1882) Muti, father (active before 1850) and his son Raffaele (fl. 1854–1860) Paolo Bretschneider (fl. 1850–1880) Giuseppe Chierchia (fl. ca. 1850–1860) Vincenzo Mach (fl. 1850–ca. 1875), who in 1853 received an award for a piano with agrafigi Pasquale Federico and Brother (fl. 1853–1907) Pasquale Dolce (fl. 1856–1860) Raffaele Madonna (fl. 1858–1870) Luigi Nunneri and successors (fl. ca. 1860–1906) Alessandro Falcone (fl. 1860–1883) Giuseppe Riek (fl. 1860–1887) Angelo and Giuseppe Napolitano (fl. 1860–1901) Vittorio Giulian (Giuliani) (fl. 1873–1900) Antonio D’Avenia and his successor Giovanni (fl. 1860–1907) Luigi D’Avenia (fl. 1860–1901; also a mandolin maker) Boznichi (fl. ca. end of 19th—beginning of 20th century) Giuseppe Marciano (fl. 1860–1887) Gabriele (son of Gaetano) Scognamiglio (Scognamillo) and his son Achille (fl. 1860–1903)
Enrico, Federico, and Luigi Del Gais (Gays) (fl. 1860–1906)

Antonio D’Ambrosio e Figlio (fl. 1860–1901), which claims to have been "established in 1758" (probably of the Luthiers family)

Antonio Amendola (fl. 1860–1890)

Federico Coppi (fl. 1860–1910)

Costanzo and Vittorio Fassone (fl. 1882–1904)

Giuseppe Rick (fl. 1882–1910)

Pasquale Sarno (fl. 1882–1900)

All of these artisans made use of every type of action available at the time—Pleyel, Erard, Boisselot, Broadwood, Viennese—often introducing their own personal innovations. Sievers, a manufacturer born in Saint Petersburg (1810, and for five years active also in Riga) who relocated to Naples in 1834, became particularly renowned as the author of the most important treatise on the construction of the piano published worldwide in the whole nineteenth century (1868). In that work he illustrates two actions of his own invention and a few methods of temperament. We must note that until the 1880s the majority of Neapolitan manufacturers rejected equal temperament, preferring instead to use circular tunings even more unequal than the Vallotti temperament.

The number of workers employed by musical instrument builders in the Kingdom of Naples, excluding Sicily, in 1860 was around fifteen hundred—piano being the major instrument produced. In that year industrial production was still protected from high customs taxes (as high as 10 to 12 percent). However, after the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy customs taxes were drastically reduced to 3.5 percent, the lowest in Europe, a rate already in use in the Kingdom of Piedmont and Sardinia. The result was that while in 1860 there were sixty-five to seventy piano builders in Napoli (forty-two of them of important size), by 1877 the number was reduced to thirteen, and by 1887 to seven. Many workers found themselves suddenly unemployed and forced into delinquency. Of the thirty, workers employed by Sievers in 1860, only twelve remained by 1877, of which two were in prison and one just released. At his death in 1878, Sievers left his factory to his employees, but things went from bad to worse, and they were soon forced to shut down. After a few years, Pasquale Curci (1855–1937), who for some time had tried to run the Sievers factory and who is known as the founder of the famous Casa editrice musicale, obtained the exclusive rights to sell the pianos of Erard and Pleyel in southern Italy, thus marking the end of this branch of industry in Naples. In 1907 only three small manufacturers still managed to survive.

Outside the capital city of the kingdom, in the second half of the century, only a very few piano builders were operating.

In Sicily:

Messina

Messina

Adolfo Braun (fl. 1873)

Palermo

Giovanni Sardi (fl. 1846)

L. Lifonti (fl. 1878–1882)

Francesco Stancampiano (fl. 1861–1876), followed by Giuseppe (fl. 1923–1926)

Giuseppe La Grassa and his brother Pietro, also organbuilders (fl. ca. 1870–1900)

Catania

Luciano Strano and his successors (est. 1886 to the present)

In Lecce:

Vincenzo Madonna (est. 1849–fl. 1926)

In Lanciano (Chieti):

Quirino Cipollone (1810–1864)

Giuseppe Di Diego and his brother Luigi (fl. 1870–1877)

Grand Duchy of Tuscany

With the end of the Medici dynasty in 1737, Tuscany passed to a branch of the house of Hapsburg, becoming a district of the government of Vienna. Pianos were imported from Austria where they met immediate favor among the Tuscan, partly because—unlike those of local production—they were polished to an extremely high luster. This preference for the Austrian pianos diverted attention from the prominent workshops of Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655–1732) and Giovanni Ferrini (fl. 1699–1758), leaving the impression that there was no true Tuscan school but just a few isolated artisans. The first pianos to be manufactured on a semi-industrial scale in Tuscany were produced by the house of Lucherin, directed by a German technician, using German labels on his instruments and also using the Viennese action. Around 1830–1831 the brothers Antonio and Michelangelo Ducci (fl. ca. 1830–1847) built instruments almost identical to those of Karl Andreas Stein, with whom Michelangelo Ducci had served as apprentice. In 1841 the two brothers invented a hydraulic veneering machine, imitating the high polish used on the Viennese instruments so popular with the Florentines. The Ducci firm introduced new types of actions—Pleyel, Elke, Bord—and eventually manufactured up to forty pianos per month, but by 1888 all activities of the Ducci firm had ceased. Among the piano makers operating in Florence before 1850, Luigi Berliands (fl. ca. 1830–1847) was one of the first to introduce into Italy the double escapement of Sebastien Erard. Other Florentine builders included Saltini (fl. 1844) and the Reali Brothers (fl. 1861–ca. 1875).
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Among the other Tuscan cities, around the 1860s Livorno was the chief site of piano manufacturing. Livorno builders active at this time included Giuseppe Braccini, Giovacchino Casotti, Ferdinando Marini, and Malenchini.

Kingdom of Lombardy-Venice and the Duchy of Parma

In Milan the piano industry officially got underway with Giuseppe Cattaneo (fl. 1834–ca. 1844), who received a gold medal from the Regio Istituto di scienze in 1834 and may have been the first in Italy to have received financial backing from a local businessman to make it possible for him to transform his shop into a small modern factory. After his death, his pupil Ambrogio Riva (fl. 1841–1855) took over the business in partnership with Michele Voetter (Voetter) (fl. 1845–1857). By 1845–1847 they were producing at least one pianoforte per week and three hundred in the course of the first six years of their partnership. During the same time two other pupils of Cattaneo, Angelo Comolbo (est. 1848—successors fl. 1932) and Luigi Scucchi (fl. 1845–1871), traveled to France to improve their craft, the first with Boisselot, the second with Erard. When they returned to Italy, each was able to open an establishment similar to Riva’s.

In the same years other builders emerged, among them Cesare Vago and Company (fl. 1832–1851) and Stefano Abate (fl. 1851–1853), but the leadership of the Milanese piano industry was decisively taken over by Comolbo. From 1855 to 1857 he was able to double the number of employees (up to forty), placing on the market about 150 pianos in two years. Price lists indicate that the pianos made with French actions cost twice as much as the ones made with Viennese actions. Comolbo experimented tirelessly, treating soundboards of his pianos with a special violin varnish invented by his associate Campoy. Comolbo also experimented with various types of frames reinforced with iron. The Gazzetta musicale di Milano (1871) also confirmed that prior to 1859 he was manufacturing pianos with a larger soundboard and with cross-stringing, and incorrectly attributed the invention to him. The 1855 issue of the same journal published the first proposal to introduce duplex scaling in order to improve the sonority of Comolbo’s pianos. This idea was later patented in 1872 by Steinway, who first utilized it in production. Comolbo, along with the other Milanese manufacturers, sold his instruments bearing the family name, not labels contrived of foreign names, as was the custom in other parts of the country.

Among the other Italian cities still under the rule of Austria, Parma was the site of the Berzioli brothers’ factory, founded in 1836 and still active in 1916. The Berzioli, along with the abbot Gregorio Trentin (1768–1854) in Padua, are credited with introducing the piano industry into that region. Padua was already known as a pioneering area and by the 1830s the Nicolò Lachin firm had become established there. Twenty years later, the celebrated Austrian pianist Sigismond Thalberg publicly expressed positive views regarding Lachin’s instruments, which in large part were equipped with the Pleyel action. The number of employees in his establishment had to be tripled to fill the sudden demand.

A distinguished Venetian firm, founded in Rovigo in 1852 by Vincenzo Maltarello (1831–1907), expanded rapidly in early 1859 when he transferred it to Vicenza, producing “Maltarello,” “Zwikko,” and “Pfeifer” marks. At the 1867 Paris Exposition the pianos by this firm were judged the best among those made with Italian construction. By 1871 Maltarello employed one hundred people and the production, not counting the parts furnished to other manufacturers, amounted to 150 per year, some exported to Dalmatia, Egypt, and Turkey. The Maltarello company is also credited as the first in Italy, along with Carlo Perotti (see below), to have used self-covered hammers (in this regard it should be remembered that Pasquale Arcuno of Naples was still manufacturing hammer covers of specially treated deer leather as late as 1859). The Maltarello firm ceased operations in 1938, with a total production of almost 13,000 instruments, some labeled with foreign names.

Among the other early builders active in the Veneto region, Carlo Eberle (Trento, fl. mid-nineteenth century), and Antonio Martinelli (Caldonazzo, Trento, fl. 1832–1836, marque: “Fabbrica Fratelli Martinelli”) should be mentioned. Originally from Trento were also the brothers Biaggio (b. 1769/72–d. 1855) and Carlo (b. ca. 1764) Arnoldi, active in Rome. Carlo is the first builder to have been awarded a prize in an Italian exhibition (Rome, 1810).

Kingdom of Piedmont and Sardinia

During the first half of the nineteenth century there were only a few scattered artisans in this state. Among them were Carlo Panizza (Alessandria, fl. 1838), Domenico Gregori (Nizza, now the French Nice, fl. 1838–1844), Luigi Alovisio (Turin, fl. 1838–1844) and Francesco Weiss (Turin, but originally from Vienna, fl. 1838–1844). As late as 1850 Turin could only claim two small factories that produced square pianos at a level of semi-craftsmanship.

Even though this city was the last to develop a piano industry, in the course of a mere twenty years it transformed itself into one of the major producers of Italian upright pianos. This transformation was begun by
Giacinto Aymonino (marques: “Aymonino” and “Steehinge”), who founded his own factory in 1850, bringing qualified technicians from Paris. In a short time Aymonino was making his own actions and in 1873 was able to produce about 150 pianos per year, some of those exported to Latin America. Aymonino’s successor was Brossa and then Moisè Levi, who still flourished in 1918.

Also active in Turin was the firm of Giovanni Berra and successors (est. 1819 or 1850–fl. 1950; “Baer Berlin—I.C.B.” [Ingegner Cesare Berra]), followed by those of Felice Chiappo (est. 1851–fl. 1939) and Carlo Roeseler (from Berlin, est. 1852–fl. 1918; “Roeseler, Berlin”). The last mentioned was particularly successful and by 1878 his seventy employees were producing at least 450–500 pianos per year. The factory of the three Marchisio Brothers was established in 1862. Two of them, Antonino (1817–1875) and Giuseppe Enrico (1831–1903), were also distinguished pianists (Antonino was considered the founder of the so-called scuola piemontese di pianoforte); furthermore, Giuseppe Enrico invented a frame reinforced with iron, which he called staticofone. The renowned firm of the Marchisio Brothers eventually employed over one hundred people, with an output of 250–300 pianos per year; in 1873 two of the brothers died, and all operations terminated.

The year 1862 saw the birth of another Turin firm, that of Giuseppe Mola (still fl. 1939; “Mola”), which in 1900 (under his successor G. Bellis) was considered the largest builder in Italy of pianos and harmoniums, with an output of some 500–1,000 instruments per year. Another Turin builder, Carlo Perotti (est. 1870–fl. 1926; marques: “Perotti” and “P. Charles”), was known to have invented a machine for producing felt-covered hammers a few years after Maltarello had introduced them into Italy. Perotti’s factory, founded around 1870 with forty to fifty workers, initially was producing only actions, and soon became an important hallmark for Italian builders.

According to the estimates of the time, around 800 to 900 pianos per year were produced in Turin in 1880 and 1,600 in 1898. This production filled the demands of the Piedmont market and also that of nearby Liguria. The best-known and perhaps the only active establishment in this region at the time was that founded by Giuseppe Francesco Pittaluga (1795–1865) in 1848 (Cornigliano Ligure, Genoa). Its output was meager, producing in toto only 550 pianos from the time of its founding until 1953, when it ceased its manufacturing operations.

The “Unità d’Italia”

After the unification of Italy (1870), with the abolishment of local taxes and the rapid growth of the railway system, the quality of life greatly improved in Italy, especially for the middle class. This opened the possibility for the piano industry to assume national dimensions. Among the primary builders were Aymonino (Turin), Brizzi and Niccolai (Florence), Maltarello (Vicenza), Angelo Colombo, Rodolfo Grimm, and Francesco Sala (all of Milan) and, in Turin: Roeseler, Mola, Perotti, Berra, and Federico Colombo.

Turin was a center of great activity around the turn of the century, with the houses of Francesco Allasia (fl. 1891–1900, also actions)
Giuseppe Astesano (fl. 1907–1913, only actions)
Baloire (fl. 1900s)
Bertello (fl. 1900s)
Giuseppe Bertolino (fl. 1882–1900)
Luigi Blanchi and company (fl. 1897–1900)
Giuseppe Boine (fl. 1897–1928)
Giovanni Battista Cerutti and company (fl. 1900, only accessories)
Luigi Caldera (fl. 1868–1888; also “Melo-piano” and HARP-PIANO; “Patent Calderara—Torino”)
Vittorio Collino and Company (fl. 1880–1937, also an organbuilder; “Kugel & C.—Berlin”)
Federico Colombo (est. 1878–fl. 1934; 160 pianos per year in 1898, mainly exported to South America)
Giuseppe Delmastro and Company (fl. ca. 1911–1936)
Carlo Deponti (est. 1860–fl. 1940; “von Bruche”)
Antonio Dotto (fl. 1907, maker of keyboards)
Giovanni Fea e Figlio (est. 1880–fl. 1937, from ca. 1928 in Moncalieri, Turin; “Roslal” and “Romzer”)
Antonio Fea (est. 1900–fl. 1940; “F. E. Anton,” “Kapman,” “Liszt”)
Angelo Forneris and Brother (fl. 1910–1940; “Gebruder Bacher”)
Giuseppe Fusella (fl. 1884–1926)
Giuseppe Govino e Figli (est. 1878–1932; “Schwander”; 100 pianos per year in 1898)
Lodovico Montù and his nephew and successor Attilio Griggio Montù (fl. 1882–1926)
Giovanni Migliano (est. 1869, Migliano e Borello (from ca. 1910–fl. 1938; “Oscar Killard”)
Michele Miretti (fl. 1892–1937; “Muchard” and “Webster”)
Silvio Miretti (est. 1888–fl. 1938)
Molinatto (fl. 1900s)
B. and A. Olivotto (fl. 1909–1933; “Rosenthal,” “Weiss” and “Harrison”)
Giovanni Piatino (est. 1910–ceased 1935; Steinbach from 1935 to present; “Piatino,”
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“Stembach,” “Steinbach,” “Herrmann,” “Zeider,” “Breslau,” and “Hofstein”
Vittorio Felice Quartero (fl. 1909–1928; “Oskar Killar, Berlin”)
Vincenzo Restagno (est. 1908—closed ca. 1943, with a total output of about 500 pianos, mainly upright; “Restagno” and, with a transposing keyboard, “Trasposizioni piano”)
Giuseppe Rivoreda (fl. 1897–1900, actions)
Rodolfo Savi and Company (est. 1905–fl. 1926)
Giovanni Sola Vagione (fl. 1892–1934)
Benedetto Vigone (b. 1844–d. 1918; fl. 1884–1896)
Enrico and Emilio Zaccagnini Brothers (est. 1912–fl. 1938; “Sidmayer,” “Brokner,” “Bekstain,” and “Walter”)
Francesco Zucca (fl. 1897–1907, maker of keyboards)

After Turin, Milan was the most active area, with
Michele Cessata (fl. ca. 1870–1900s)
Giosué Daverio (fl. 1894–1924)
Rodolfo Griffini and Company (successors of Romeo Gerossi and Co., fl. 1901–1937; “G. Rudolf”)
Rodolfo Grimm (fl. 1870–1881; in 1875: fifty workers, 300 uprights per year)
Antonio Monzino (house est. 1767; in 1901–1937 it made pianos, strings and accessories, joining with Garlandini from 1928–1937)
Oreste Orioli (fl. 1894–1910)
Emilio Ratti (fl. 1881–1906)
Ricordi e Finzi (fl. 1882–1950)
Francesco Sala (fl. 1881–1907), followed by Ambrogio Sala (fl. 1914–1950)
Angelo Norcini (fl. 1888–1902), followed by Giuseppe Norcini (fl. 1926, in Varese and Tradate)
Tedeschi and Raffaele (fl. 1898–1932; this firm was also the best Italian producer of harps)
Giuseppe Turconi (fl. 1884–1885; also had a factory in Istambul, Turkey)
Antonio and Domenico Vigo (Vago) (fl. 1871–1885)

Centers near Milan:

Brescia
Luigi Bassolini (fl. 1889)
Como
Giuseppe Gorli e Figlio Vittorio (est. 1868–ceased 1934; “Gorli” and “Blumman”)
Lodi
Emilio Arosio e Figlio (fl. 1901–1937, also maker of plucked string instruments)

Monza

Carlo Aletti e Figli (fl. 1901–1906, also an organbuilder)
Arrigoni (fl. 1685–1870)
Novara
Ottina and Pellandi (est. 1884–fl. 1932, in 1933 Pietro Ottina only)
Carlo Pomba (eighteen workers in 1892)
Pedro Pomba (ca. 1900–1929, “Optimus”; probably the successor of Carlo; his house was succeeded by the Oldani Bros (see below)
Luigi Vosgien (fl. 1876–1892; twenty-two workers in 1892)

Piacenza
Adamo Cavana (fl. 1888–1926)
Treviso (Bergamo)
Francesco Pozzi and Brother (fl. 1882–1883)
Verona
Giuseppe Giacchetti (fl. 1869–1900, in Ciglione; also “Pianoforte-orologo”)
Anacleto Stangalini and successors (est. 1856–fl. 1928)
Carlo Denis (fourteen workers in 1892, with automatic machinery)

The city of Trieste—especially up to 1918, when still under Austrian administration—was also a distinguished production center:

G. Bertoli and G. Cantone, successors of Giuseppe Dina (fl. 1882–1883)
Enrico Bremitz (est. 1874–fl. 1931; by 1915, 3,000 pianos produced)
A. Cafo (fl. 1875–1885; by 1885, 23,300 pianos produced)
Giovanni Haichele (fl. first half of 19th century)
F. L. Magrina e Figli (est. 1870–fl. 1931; by 1920, 3,400 pianos produced)
Luigi Zannoni (fl. 1882–1937; in 1937: “Stabilimento Pianoforti Zannoni”)

A few other centers were also active:

Treviso
A. Trevisan (est. 1900–fl. 1929, in Castelfranco Veneto)
Vicenza
Locatelli (fl. ca. 1880–1885)
Venice
Antonio Mariacher (fl. 1884–1886)

Florence
Brizzi and Niccolai (1875–ca. 1918), one of the most important Italian builders of the time
Pennetti and Fattori (fl. 1882–1931) followed by Augusto Pennetti (fl. 1937)
Gustavo Volpi and Company (fl. 1888–1892), followed by Michelangelo Volpi (fl. 1912–1926)

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G. and C. Ceccherini, successors of Ducci (fl. 1900–1933)

**Alessandria**

Bernardo Bellotti (est. 1868–fl. 1926)
Federico Pastore (fl. 1888–1900)
Giovanni Gillone (fl. 1881–1884, in Casale Monferrato; "pianoforte verticale portatile scomponibile in due parti")

**Bologna**

Giovanni Racca (fl. 1888–1932, also maker of the "Piano melodico" and the automatic pianos "Verdi" and "Falstaff")

**Modena**

Martinelli (fl. 19th century)
Celso and Gaetano Stanghellini (fl. 1886–1937, also makers of percussion instruments)

**Rome**

Paolo Alessandrini, builder of grand piano prize-winners at the 1873 Vienna exhibition and one of the first in Italy to introduce the double escapement action (fl. 1855–1883)
Giovanni De Santis (fl. 1882–1894)

As seen above, the Neapolitan piano industry was in a phase of extinction, even though the old De Meglio house was still producing quality grand pianos. However, these last instruments were steadily losing ground to the more popular uprights (the so-called pianini); almost every Italian manufacturer, especially in Piedmont, was busy copying those of Bord, Elké, and Pleyel. Even though there were many Italian manufacturers of actions (Maltarello, Perotti, Berra, Mola), a builder of component parts was still lacking in Italy in 1883 (i.e., strings, pins, felt, keys, etc.). To stimulate growth in this regard a heavy tax was levied on the importation of such parts, a tax four times as much as it cost to import a piano already assembled.

After 1870 France and Austria gave way to the new and powerful German piano industry. Of the total number of pianos imported into Italy in 1875, 750 were from France, 493 from Austria, and only 35 from Germany. Conversely, by 1910 the total number of imports indicated only 162 from France and 3,877 from Germany, with 292 from Austria.

The significant difference between the German and Italian piano industries was that the Italian industry could not raise its standard of quality, nor did its members enter the international market in any major way. Up to 1970, Italy’s exportation amounted to no more than a few hundred pianos per year. These two factors made even stronger the tendency of the Italian manufacturers to sign their products with anonymous German or exotic marques—sometimes hinting at the name of a builder, like the "F. E. Anton" produced by Antonio Fea, the "Merual" by Mario Merula, the "Faber" by Arturo Fabio, the "G. Rudolf" by Rodolfo Griffin, and the "P. Charles" by Carlo Perotti—which proved detrimental to their credibility and inevitably to the quality of their product.

**After World War I**

The twentieth century was characterized mostly by the production of modest studio instruments, a period in which the Anelli house distinguished itself for the superior quality of its uprights. Even though this firm had been founded in 1836 by Antonio Anelli (1795–1883), it became successful only in 1896, the year in which Pietro Anelli (1863–1939), son of Qualitiero (1841–1880), chose Cremona as a permanent location. Among his patents was one that met with particular success: that of 1912 which allowed the regulation of the amount of keyboard resistance. This innovation was given the approval of the Königliche Hochschule für Musik of Berlin, then the largest German music conservatory. In 1918 the Anelli Factory in Cremona was able to produce five pianos per day and in 1923 they had three hundred employees. By 1961 the instruments signed with the marque “Anelli” amounted to a total of twenty-one thousand (to which many others bearing other marques should be added).

A still larger factory, the Fabbrica Italiana Pianoforti (F.I.P.), was founded in Turin in 1917 in order to consolidate all the small companies of that city. Very soon its eight hundred workers were able to produce three thousand pianos per year. The F.I.P. also edited the well-known magazine Il pianoforte and organized seasons of piano recitals. Unfortunately, the factory lost its sponsors and had to close toward 1928–1929; in Turin this gave rise to a great number of small workshops, accentuating the production of low-quality “commercial pianos.” As for grands, a very reliable company, that of the Germans Schütze and Pollmann, was founded in 1928 in Bolzano (and managed by Paul Pollmann, who in 1940–1942 returned to Germany, leaving the factory to his Italian successors).

Around 1930 the Italian output of pianos amounted to some six thousand per year, produced by a total of more than one hundred manufacturers, half of them operating in the Turin area. It should be noted that a few of the smaller firms cited below were simply applying their own marque to imported or assembled instruments, a practice starting at this period but still widespread at present.

Known piano houses in the city of Turin include:

**Autopiani Pianoforti Italia (A.P.I.),** which also makes traditional pianos (fl. 1928–1932; marque: “Kerschen, Berlin”)

Luigi Arduino (fl. 1937–1940; “Euphonos”)
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Arosio (fl. 1920–ca. 1940; “Kelinod”)
Baldi (fl. 1920–ca. 1940; “Forstner”)
Barra and Collino (fl. 1928; “Hugel & C.”)
Bassino (fl. 1920–ca. 1940; “Kleiner”)
Luigi Beruti (fl. 1926–1932)
Mario Biancotto (fl. 1936–1939; “Weisschen”)
Domenico Bigatti (fl. 1928–1934; “Kirkmayer” and “Wulner”)
Boine and Collino
Calipso and Conti (est. 1926–fl. 1940; “Schumacher”)
Costruttori Artigiani Pianoforti Harmonium e Strumenti Affini (C.A.P.H.S.) (fl. 1934–1938)
Capitanii and Toffarello (fl. 1928; “A. Hauptmann”)
Comba (fl. 1928; “Jos. Stalberger”)
Ernesto Comoglio (est. 1933–fl. 1940; “Stipman”)
Conti (fl. 1920–ca. 1940)
Bartolomeo Costa e Figli (fl. 1926–1937; “Meyer” and “Kuster Leipzig”)
Antonio Cucinato (b. 1909, fl. 1933 to present; “Furstenbach,” “Schonelang,” and “Zeitway”)
Della Rovere and Macario (fl. 1928, “Bruckner,” “Steibichler,” and “Steinert”)
Pio Fungi (fl. 1933–1936, maker of keyboards)
Gallia (Gallia) and company (est. 1918–fl. 1937; thirty employees in 1936)
Carlo Guerr (est. 1928–fl. 1947; “Krieg”)
Giuseppe Guidazio (fl. 1928–1939, only accessories)
Industria Nazionale Autopiani e Pianoforti (I.N.A.P.) (owned by Giuseppe Cavana, est. 1920–fl. 1950)
Lachio Brothers (fl. 1910–1939; “Care-Schumann, Berlin”)
Lavorazione Italiana Pianoforti Torino (L.I.P.T.) (est. 1920–fl. 1932)
Mazza and Perrone (est. by Pietro Mazza; fl. 1928–1940; “Rudinbach & Sohn” and “Hoff”)
Mario Merula (est. 1922–fl. 1950; “Rosenthal” and “Merial”)
Lino Miliotis (fl. 1926–1937)
Pollmann and Weiss (est. by Paul Pollmann and Carlo Weiss in 1925–fl. 1932)
Francesco Rivoreda and his nephew (est. 1900–1940, from ca. 1930 in Moncalieri; “Rothenbach” and “Enfons”)
Rivoreda and Arduino (fl. 1933–1934)
Società Anonima Lavorazione Legnami Affini (S.A.L.L.A.) (fl. 1937)
Società Anonima Meccanica Istrumenti Musicali Affini (S.A.M.I.M.A.) (est. 1935–fl. 1951, only actions)
Savio and Chiotti (fl. 1928–1934; “Steinmüller”)
Giovanni Tosco (fl. 1923–1932)
Vincenzo Vassallo (fl. 1926–1932)

Franz Weiss (fl. 1930s; “Franz Weiss di Vienna, Torino”)

In the Turin area:
Moncalieri (near Turin)
Achiele Fca (fl. 1928; “Falkenstein Berlin,” “Röslau,” and “Röhrer”)
Grilli, Pochettino and Salza (est. 1924–fl. 1938, also accessories)
Sebastiano Cugnone (fl. 1926–1937; “S.C. Schubert”)
Giuseppe Scarampi (fl. 1926–1928)
Alpignano
Fabbrica Pianoforti (fl. 1928–1931)

In the Milan area:

Milan
Angelo Avanti (fl. 1932–1950; marque: “Hertinger”)
Giovanni Cervo and Company (fl. 1923–1937; “Kirtisch”)
Gorlini (fl. ca. 1920–1940; “Richter”)
Lombardi and Bonetti (fl. 1928–1929, makers of piano strings)

E. and C. Raffael (fl. 1928–1937, also maker of harps)
Bergamo
Colombo and Company (est. 1903–fl. 1932)
Bovisio
Zari Brothers, initially established in 1869 as a wooden floor factory (fl. 1922–1950; “Homer” and “Muller”); one of the largest piano factories in the country

Corbetta
Industria Lombarda (fl. 1928–1937)
Magenta
Antognazza (fl. 1930s; “Mullnir”)
Seveso S. Pietro
A. Radice e Figli (fl. 1928–1940, also maker of brass instruments)

Como area:
Acquate
Società Anonima Filì e Cavi Acciaio (fl. 1928–1937, maker of piano strings)
Luino
Piero Barozzi (fl. 1928–1937)

In Novara:
Oldani Brothers (“Pombia Succ. Oldani, Ravarino e Bellosi,” fl. 1928–1940); the Oldani brothers made the “Optimus Succ. Pombia” while establishing a facility under their own name (fl. 1928–1963), making the “Oldani” and “Naumann”
Genestrone Brothers (fl. 1923–1940)
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Giacomo Olivieri and Company (fl. 1928–1937, also makers of wind instruments)
Borgatta (fl. 1932; “Burgiefs”)
Faccenda and Violini (fl. 1926–1933; “C.H.O.P.I.N.” [Costruzione Harmonium Organi Pianoforti in Novara])
P. Pomella (fl. 1928–1932)
Cigna Brothers (fl. 1928–1937, in Biella)

In other cities of Italy:
Bagnasco (Cuneo)
Zuccotti and Garzoro (fl. 1926)
Bologna
Rovinazzi (fl. 1928–1929)
Bolzano
Fidel (Pedele) Socin (est. 1871–fl. 1940; in 1871 only harmoniums)
Borgo S. Martino (Alessandria)
Francesco Morandi (fl. ca. 1926–1934; “Franz Mundstein”)

Catania
Francesco Puglisi (fl. 1926–1932)

Florence
Mauri (fl. 1928–1937)
Pupo Pupeschi e Figlio (fl. 1928–1937, also maker of wind instruments)

Genoa
Severi (fl. ca. 1920; “Lehmann”)
Loro Clifenna (Arezzo)
Onofrio Bruschi (fl. 1928–1937)

Pisa
Nicola Di Puccio (fl. 1926–1937)

Rome
Luigi Alfonsi (est. ca. 1930 to present; “Alfonsi,” and “Karl Gescher”; from 1948 only “Alfonsi”)

Salerno
Arturo Fabio (fl. 1923–1925; “Faber”)
Sestri Ponente (Genoa)
Casa Musicale Ligure, directed by Muzzati (fl. 1928–1937, also maker of keyboards)
Strappa (Genoa)

Guglielmo Cavalli (fl. 1926–1937)

Trieste
Minuzzi and Kidrich (fl. 1928–1937), Carmelo Olivo (Olive Carmelo) (est. 1919–fl. 1926)

Antonio Pecar (fl. 1929–1936; “Pecar” and “Antonio Pecar”)
Società Operaia Triestina (fl. 1923–1932)

 Udine
Guido Condutti (fl. 1928–1937, also maker of percussion and wind instruments)

Vicenza
Giuseppe Lievore (fl. 1920–1932)

Venice
Romolo Brusegan, at present “Brusegan Pianoforti” (est. 1919 to present in

Campoverardo; “R. Brudenstein” and “Bruder & Sohn”)
E. Sanzin and Company (fl. 1923–1939; “E. Scharzegg” and “Scheffler”)

The industry was affected adversely, as were other national piano industries, by the economic crisis due to the depression of the early 1930s and by the increasing popularity of the radio in homes. In addition, Italian piano manufacturers had been supplying the market with inferior products, using exotic names, a practice that had already caused a formal protest on the part of the association of German piano builders in 1924. Finally, in June 1933, a new law was put into effect by the Fascist government, solicited by Pietro Anelli, that compelled builders to sign every single instrument with the mark of the manufacturer and the city in which it was made, so, for example, marques like “Baer Berlin—I.C.B.” had to be changed to “Ing. C. Berra—Torino.”

After World War II

This period was characterized by a progressive growth in imports. Among the suppliers were not only a recovered West Germany but also—up to the 1990s—some European countries behind the Iron Curtain, particularly East Germany and Czechoslovakia. Around 1962 Japan entered the field, followed some fifteen years later by South Korea, whose place was taken over, in 1993–1994, by China—three nations that together appropriated to themselves a large portion of the Italian market (from 0.3 percent in 1962 up to 55.1 percent in 1997). In this same year, 1997, Japan alone accounted for some 38 percent of Italian imports of grand pianos, a market traditionally dominated by Germany. In regard to Italian production, exportation (even though very modest) steadily increased up to 1992, a year in which it reached the historic number of almost thirty-two hundred instruments, mainly sent to France, Spain, and Germany. The commercial output in the last decades of the twentieth century can largely be attributed to the following factories:

Farfisa (Ancona), an accordion factory which, from 1960 up to December 1998 when it ceased production, also made pianos (3,600 uprights in 1978; marques “Anelli,” “Furstein-Farfisa,” “Furstein,” “Hubschen,” and “Hermann”)

Generalmusic (est. 1983 in Saludecio, near Forli; 3,000 pianos per year in 1985, “Bachmann”)

Clement (est. 1937 by Bozzetta in Bolzano, ceased 1991; around 1983–1987 their twenty-five employees were producing 600 instruments per year; “Clement”)
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Schulze Pollmann (est. 1928, in Pineta di Laves, Bolzano)
Steinbach (est. 1935 in Turin by Platino; 200 per year in 1991; “Steinbach”)

Minor manufacturers:

Lucio Maurutto (in Turin, fl. 1989, now ceased; “Steinert”)
Egidio Galvan (in Borgotalsugana, Trento, est. 1935; “Galvan”)
Romeo Tolin (in Fossò, Venice, fl. 1990)

About 1992 a marked decline in the production and exportation of uprights began, a matter of concern to all major international piano firms. As of 2000 Italian production is mainly restricted to the above-mentioned Schulze Pollmann (from June 1998 in Fermignano, Pescara, owned by Generalmusic, now producing about 1,500–2,000 pianos per year, including grands). In addition, since 1991 the Enrico Ciresa Società a Responsabilità Limitata (equivalent to “Co. Ltd.”) (established in Tesero, Trento, in 1952) has supplied soundboards of the celebrated Val di Fiemme’s spruce (the “abete rosso” once used by Antonio Stradivari) to some of the most internationally renowned builders. Enrico Ciresa had previously worked in the firm Delmarco and Bozzetta, which in 1946–1947 made pianos in Tesero (trade mark “Delmarco & Bozzetta”).

As for concert grand pianos, Cesare Augusto Tallone began his activity as a builder around 1940 and, after twenty years of experimentation, succeeded in producing his pianoforte dal suono italiano, presented at the Milan Conservatory in 1967. Tallone (who was also the personal tuner of Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli) at his death in 1981 left in toto no more than three hundred instruments of all kinds, each of them a prototype.

Luigi Borgato, who established his firm in Bagnolo di Lornigo, Vicenza in 1990, builds concert grand pianos—only a few instruments per year—which have provisions for a pedal board with a three-octave compass. In addition a particular place must be reserved for PAOLO FAZIOLI, a Roman engineer and pianist who in 1981 founded a now internationally known firm specifically for grand pianos. In more than one-and-one half centuries of activity it seems that the Italian piano industry has finally been able to produce a concert instrument with its own individual personality and worldwide marketability.

See also Fazioli, Paolo

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IVÓRIES

The ivories are the white keys of the piano (also called naturals), which were once made of wood covered with three thin strips of elephant ivory. Because of strict laws enacted to protect the world’s elephants, piano manufacturers now substitute a white glossy plastic, or ivoryine, for the natural ivory. Early pianos, especially those made in Germany, sometimes had ebony-covered natural keys and ivory-capped accidentals. Other builders used brown-stained boxwood for the natural keys. By the middle of the nineteenth century, piano makers patented cheap substitutes for ivory key covers. These included mother-of-pearl, white oxen-bone, enamel, porcelain, and glass.

See also Ebonies

PEGGY FLANAGAN BAIRD