

**Steingraeber Piano Museum**  
**in the 'Belle Étage' of the Steingraeber Haus Bayreuth of 1754**  
**the Former 'Liebhardt'sches Palais', Seat of the Margravian Chamberlain von Liebhardt**

**Rococo Hall**

Liszt grand piano dated 1873.

Wall consoles and furniture dated 1754.

Stucco ceilings by Margrave Court stuccoer Giovanni Battista Pedrozzi, from the remains of the New Palace.

Candlestick Meissen, 19th century (also in the White Salon).

**Cronos Salon** to the Left

Stucco ceiling by Pedrozzi, designed for this room.

Kronos: God of time, upon a cloud alongside his playmate, half concealed by a cloth, doubly encircled by symbols of the four seasons.

Ceiling lights and wallpaper dated 1871. Paintings from the Hermitage: 1930s. Other paintings: 19th century. Baroque bureau and chest: 18th century.

Grand Piano Op. 5930, built 1892, is the predecessor of today's C-212 and is based on Liszt's last grand piano Op. 4328 from 1886. Copy of the supply contract on the music stand of the piano, signed by Cosima Wagner.

**Richard Wagner Room**

Corner room - descriptions in clockwise direction.

Five Wall Panels from the Grassi-Museum Leipzig. Wagner 200th Anniversary Exhibition, 2013

Original Bells of the Holy Grail: Illustration of the instrument made by Eduard Steingraeber, 1881 (still in use today at the Festspielhaus Bayreuth).

Wagner's first apartment in the Dammallee In direct vicinity of Steingraeber Haus.

Postcard and festival program from 1880 With Steingraeber advertisement.

Richard Wagner's business card With order for piano on reverse side. Text on picture board. The originals of the letters from Cosima and Richard Wagner are kept in the Steingraeber safe.

Wagner's birthplace and the family trees of the Liszt and Wagner families.

Square piano identical in construction to Richard Wagner's first Festspielhaus stage piano from 1876.

(Photo of the original above: Wahnfried Richard Wagner Museum and extract from the historical inventory).

Two photos: 'Leubald and Adelaide', Richard Wagner's first work (1827/28), and the 1989 world première adapted and staged by Uwe Hoppe at the Steingraeber Hoftheater. 'Paxiphall and Lohengrün' 1985, world première of the play by Uwe Hoppe in his production with Studiobühne Bayreuth at the Steingraeber Hoftheater.

Two wooden casting models for the production of casting frames for the Bells of the Holy Grail

Left: large 'Grail Bells' from 1926. C-G-A-E, with additional strings interspersed for overtone enrichment.

Right: four-tone 'Grail Bells' from 1912 (still in use today at the National Theatre Weimar, State Opera House Hannover, Liceu Barcelona, Teatr Wielki Warsaw).

Bells of the Holy Grail: New construction 2015, based on the casting model from 1912. This new model has been in use since 2017 in productions at the Bayreuth Festival (under Hartmut Haenchen, and Semyon Bychkov thereafter) and in Munich 2018 (under Kiril Petrenko) as a sampled instrument.

Since 1881 Steingraeber has developed four different types of Bells of the Holy Grail. In addition to the three described here, a Bells of the Holy Grail Piano was built by Heinrich Schmidt-Steingraeber – father of the present owner – for Wieland Wagner, using strings with pickups in a converted square piano, and was in use from c.1965 until 1973.

7 Pictures / Posters: "Rooms frozen into Time" Exhibition at the Steingraeber Gallery, 1987 under the patronage of Wolfgang Wagner (see photo below right, on stage as Patron).  
Eva Wagner Pasquier. Welcoming speech for the exhibition  
'Instruments for Richard Wagner', 2014, Steingraeber Gallery.  
Freedom of Speech – Protest by Wolfgang Wagner. The performance of 'Madame Butterfly' in the Festspielhaus Bayreuth was organized by the American Military Administration in 1946. The newspaper cutting shows a protest letter written by Wolfgang Wagner to the 'Fränkische Presse' daily newspaper in Bayreuth. Newspaper commentary (right).

'Music You Love to Hear'. The concert in the Hofgarten Bayreuth was performed – as in the case of 'Madame Butterfly' – by the Bayreuth Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Erich Bohner. The orchestra was only in existence from 1945 to 1948. Due to lack of support from the city administration it had to cease, something which was also certainly in the the Bayreuth Festival's interest. Erich Bohner subsequently became professor at the University of Music Munich.

Caricature page by Ralf Bergner, 2016. The Berlin artist comments on Bayreuth in all its facets. By this point he had already exhibited in the Steingraeber Gallery and the Bayreuth Art Museum.

Collage '2nd August, 1951', Christa Pawlowski, Bayreuth artist, for the launch of 'New Bayreuth' 1951.

Wagner Bookcase (The key can be requested at the office by students and researchers, however only outside the festival period).

Steingraeber Hoftheater Stage design model by Michael Bachmann for the latest production 'Heda! Heda! Hedo!'

Wagner Piano, No. 5040, built 1888. The medallion in the centre is made of 'bois durci', the first synthetic material, made from ox blood and wood dust.

### **White Salon** – to the Right of the Rococo Salon. Clockwise Direction

The walls are decorated with a replica of the wallpaper found in Liszt's 'White Salon' in Altenburg, Weimar. The wallpaper was reproduced by the Wallpaper Museum in Kassel for Weimar, and was also made for this room during the restoration of the museum rooms at Steingraeber Haus, thanks to the involvement of Professor André Schmidt in Weimar.

Two Oil Paintings, 1844      Mr. & Mrs. Kretschmann (family members).  
'Night!', Moritz Götze, 1999  
Etching      Steingraeber Collection.  
Historical Photographs      Prince Regent Luitpold visits Steingraeber Haus, 1902.  
Display Cabinet      Liszt mini-library.  
Other Furniture and Pieces from the Steingraeber Collection.

### **Instruments**

Square Piano by Henri Pape, Paris c.1825 Most prominent piano innovator of the 1820s, and inventor of the felted piano hammer, the cross-strung soundboard among many other items. (Restored 2017-18 by Ad Libitum, Etobon)

Steingraeber Op. 1, built 1852. It has an unconventional action which combines both Viennese and English mechanisms. (The Viennese mechanism uses a hammer rail and screwed hammer flanges). The shape of the rim is English, the iron bars inside with hitch-pin field are borrowed from the French 'Érard' construction. Tuned to 420 hertz. Stringing mostly original (except tuning pegs). The grand piano is almost entirely in its original condition and is playable.

Steingraeber Piano No. 4910, built 1888. Both equipped with one of the first modern damper actions for upright pianos and straight-strung.

Square Piano, Steingraeber & C<sup>ie</sup>. 1835 together with the first documentary evidence 1826.

The first Steingraeber factory was housed in Neustadt an der Orla, District of Arnshaugk (see photos in next room). Foundation of Steingraeber & Co. by Gottlieb and Christian Steingraeber in Rudolstadt and Arnshaugk c.1820.

Steingraeber Pianino Op. 110      The oldest Steingraeber Upright Piano, built c.1855. With shift una corda and leather hammers.

Érard Grand Piano No. 85180, built 1904. With reinforcing system, straight-strung acoustic system, and underdamped, also to be found on the Steingraeber Op. 1.

### **New Museum Room 1**

The parquet flooring of this corner room was exposed in 2016 and restored by Steingraeber piano makers. The original from 1754 has been preserved, matching almost exactly the floors in the Oriental Building of Sanspareil. Workshop Spindler, Bayreuth. Panel (or filling?) in pine, frame in oak. Exhibits in Clockwise Direction

### **The instruments**

Square Piano, 1930s      This lowest model of upright piano owes its form to the spirit of the times, an example of a misguided path taken from the 1930s right into the 1950s. Pianos should become smaller and smaller, more inconspicuous, made more available to other social classes, and therefore be 'small' in requirements of both space and price. The ultimate 'price' for this however was a highly uncomfortable sub-keyboard-level action. Many famous piano manufacturers themselves became guilty of such a 'fall from grace' and had ceased this approach at the latest by the 1950s. (Steingraeber had already stopped by around the beginning of the Second World War).

Steingraeber Small Piano 'Baroque', built 1951. The in-house name for this curiosity was 'Buckel'.

Rippen Aluminium Grand Piano, built c.1960. Rim and board aluminium full-cast in one piece. Wooden parts in French walnut in the common kidney-shaped form of the 1950s, a typical example of the search for a new spirit for the traditional piano in the post-Second World War period. The Rippen company in Eden, the Netherlands, was one of the most innovative and audacious piano manufacturers of this era.

Utzon Grand Piano D-232, M 1:25. The architect of the Sydney Opera House, Jørn Utzon built the Bagsværd Church in Copenhagen after his famous opera house, a concert church equipped with the 'acoustic ceilings' originally planned for Sydney. Utzon designed this grand piano in 2008, shortly before his death. When turned upside down, echoes of the silhouette of the Sydney Opera House with its 'orange segment' forms can be seen. The body, in contrast, is strictly Scandinavian and simple in style, made using spruce. Built by Steingraeber in 2009, the grand piano in the Bagsværd Kirke is in regular concert use.

Seating area with original furniture from 1754 taken from the Rococo Salon.

The following historical documents and photos can be found on the walls.

Wilhelm Kempf and Engelbert Humperdinck at the latter's Steingraeber grand piano. Photos of two important Steingraeber friends.

View from the window on to Friedrichstraße.

Opposite is Jean-Paul's apartment. He was the favourite author of Robert Schumann who visited the former's widow there in 1828.

Four houses along lived Anna-Thekla Mozart for more than 30 years, the famous 'Bäslé' ('little cousin') with whom Wolfgang Amadeus had a close affair in the 1870s.

George Steingraeber, surrounded by his collection and with a spinet in front of his workshop in Berlin.

A reminiscence of the ingenious designer and older brother of Burkhardt Steingraeber. He left Bayreuth in 1906 and became famous as a harpsichord maker in Berlin (one of his masterpieces is exhibited in the Museum for Musical Instruments (MIM) at the Berlin Philharmonic Hall). Unfortunately he did not donate his collection in

one complete lot, but rather distributed it between the following museums: Nuremberg (Germanisches), Munich (Stadtmuseum), Stuttgart (Fruchtkasten) and Berlin (Konservatorium, later transferred to the MIM).

Three Exhibition Stands, Three Epochs. From bottom to top:

Nuremberg 1894

With the then newly designed concert grand piano, which received on that occasion the gold medal, as indicated on the plaque at the front of the entrance. In the middle stands a rococo grand piano which is shown in colour in the next picture. On the wall on the right, a casting mould exhibited today in Studio I, ground floor, together with casting mould 138. On the left, the wooden casting mould for the cast plates (boards?) of the Liszt Grand Piano.

Centre: Düsseldorf 1951

First post-war music fair with small uprights, partly in Bauhaus style, partly baroque as illustrated by the instrument below. The largest model at that time was the Pianino with a height of just 115 cm.

Above: Frankfurt 1984

Modern Expo folding displays were used for the first time. Combined with real parquet flooring and palm trees made of plastic, Steingraeber presented itself with a particularly modern trade fair image.

Grand Piano 200. Rococo style, No 7085, built 1895, with oil paintings in the style of Watteau. It has been situated in the Palacio Seteais Sintra in Portugal since and has meanwhile been completely restored.

The Centenar Grand Piano was delivered to Alabama in 1900.

Fitted with panels (?) made from real Meissen porcelain. The final medallion form was not originally so intended, but rather as a continuous frieze. A sample panel for this purpose is displayed in the tea table in the next room.

Travel Journal (Wanderbuch) of Eduard Steingraeber. Excerpts and copies. Original in the next room. Of interest is the year 1846, which Eduard Steingraeber spent in Vienna and where he worked at the famous Werkstatt Streicher. There his masters assigned him to concert service for Franz Liszt.

Eduard Steingraeber

With his family, and work stations in Bayreuth.

Family Photo in Front of the Courtyard Door – of the staircase leading to the present day chamber music hall – where today the courtyard theatre is housed.

First Newspaper Advertisement Most probably published by Steingraeber himself.

The masterpiece with Master Certificates and founding documents, 1852, from the Bayreuth City Archive.

Advertisement from Weimarer Zeitung, 1853 For the firm Steingraeber & Co.

Photo: Square piano

The construction of this model is broadly similar to that of the original seen in the previous room.

Photos: Arnshaugk Castle, Neustadt an der Orla, one of the first Steingraeber factories (previously at Rudolstadt, Thuringia).

## **New Museum Room 2 Exhibits in Clockwise Direction**

'Pianola',

Historical Player Piano A playback device with perforated rolls from the early 20th century.

Harmonium, Burkard Steingraeber, Bamberg The brother of Eduard Steingraeber settled in Bamberg, where he founded a piano shop and factory. Later he later moved to Bayreuth and his brother. This harmonium is the sole evidence of his further activities in instrument making.

Steingraeber Piano in 'Empire style', No. 13053, built 1903. Concert grand piano 146 cm in height, acoustically equivalent to a grand piano with a height of 200 cm. It has a displacement mechanism with double damping resembling a grand piano even more. This elaborate mechanism is displayed above, with displacement angle and additional modern damper action under the strike line in the bass register. At that time Steingraeber also built underdamped pianos with additional dampers over the hammers.

Steingraeber Patented Grand Piano Action, 1885. 'Humperdinck Pedal'. Action with half-blow pedal (?), as is customary with upright pianos. Engelbert Humperdinck also requested this modification for his Steingraeber grand piano. A second Steingraeber patent relates to the lever with a coil spring fitted with fabric inside.

Eduard Steingraeber Pianino, No. 4007, built c.1882. Full cast iron plate, full iron frame, cross-strung, highly modern, however overdamped and with iron-wound strings in the low tenor. For demonstration purposes the original parts of the middle octave have been restored, reviving the original sound of its time. The upper front (?) has also been renovated in a single strip. Richard Wagner medallion (locket/centrepiece?) in 'bois durci'. Strips of walnut root restored in shellac, visible when lid is closed.

Zither, built c.1852 (or slightly later). Eduard Steingraeber built not only upright and grand pianos in Bayreuth, but also other instruments as well, as the label inside the zither illustrates. The rosewood matches exactly that used in the 'Masterpiece' grand piano Op.1.

Meissen Porcelain.

Test panel for the 'Centenar' grand piano.

Pictures of Lilly Hermann, née Steingraeber and husband Dr. Heinz Hermann. The subject of the latter's doctorate was Regensburg piano makers Spät and Schmal. The couple represented the 4th Steingraeber generation from 1921 to 1931.

Historic bending trestle, 1873 (or earlier). In use until 2008 for the Liszt Grand Piano 200 and up to its successor, the 205. Opposite Wall:

Factory photo, 2005

One of the last rim bending operations performed using this bending trestle. To The Right:

'On the Pedestal of a Flower Goddess'. Installation in Steingraeber Haus. With bending trestle by Kornelia Hoffmann (Bremen), March 2013, in honour of Jean Paul Friedrich Richter. Photo: Hans-Jürgen Herrmann

## **Photos and Drawings**

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Magdalene Schmidt                   | 1917-2015. Joint proprietor together with husband Heinrich Schmidt – nephew of Lilly Steingraeber – and mother of the present Managing Partner, Udo Schmidt-Steingraeber   |
| Artist pictures                     | Steingraeber at various engagements: Open Air at Schloss Werneck under the baton of Ulf Klausenitzer; the Stuttgart Opera with various white lacquered grand pianos; Franz and Martin Mazura, Mannheim; the Bayreuth Artists' Tavern 'Eule' (from left to right Uwe Hoppe, Udo Schmidt-Steingraeber, Will ..., Bernd Weikl); the Steingraeber manufactory at a workshop by Alfons Kontarsky with students; chamber music course at the Forum Junger Musiker (Young Musicians Forum); Easter festival; vernissage in honour of Reinhard Heinrich, long-time stage designer of Wolfgang Wagner, with Mrs. Gudrun and Mr. Wolfgang Wagner, as well as Udo Schmidt-Steingraeber. |
| Piano designs by Lilly Steingraeber |  |
| 'A General View of Bayreuth'        | Coloured early photo. Precise date unknown (between 1898 and 1912).  |
| Piano Designs Then & Now            | Clockwise from top left: Postmodern models; 'Classic' modified with colour and brass decoration; various 'curiosities' from c.1900, a time when Steingraeber employed 25 church sculptors.   |
| Yesterday & Today                   | Drawings by Lilly Steingraeber and photos from the 1990s.<br>Bistropiano with integrated lighting and marble lid. Piano with application painted by a comic.   |
| Architects' Grand Piano             | Three examples in two frames: Niemeyer, Thomas Theodor Heine, Bruno Paul.  |
| Nazi-era                            | letter from 1st August 1939 A Steingraeber worker ('PG', or Party Comrade) is requested to attend the Nazi Party Congress in September 1939. Steingraeber management rejects the request. Nazi district leadership insists upon attendance in a letter from 19th August 1939.<br>From the same era comes the somewhat Nazi-leaning brochure, which otherwise, however, focuses on the artists and not on Nazi-related themes.  |

Work photos from then and the more recent past.

### Bending Trestle Containing Historical Documents

Jubilee gift for the 50th anniversary in 1902. The very lavishly designed book made of embossed leather with brass edgings (surround?) was presented to Eduard Steingraeber by his workers. While there were five executives and 119 employees on the firm's employee list, there appears to be not a single woman among them. It is therefore doubtful whether all employees have indeed been listed, as women were at least active in office and housekeeping duties.

Patent Specification Piano Mechanics

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Certificate of Purveyor | To the Court from King Ludwig                                |
| Certificate of Purveyor | To the Court of Saxony Coburg Gotha and the King of Bulgaria |
| Patent Certificate      | Grand Piano Mechanics  |
| Medals Awards           | received at various exhibitions since 1867                   |
| Travel Journal          | Eduard Steingraeber  |

### Exit

Daniel Barenboim. Original letter from 2002. Early photo, ca. 1980. During the International Young Artists' Festival together with its director Grete Bart. Barenboim would regularly autograph his so-called "summer pianos", after which they were in great demand.

### Staircase

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Mr. and Mrs. Herte, Lübeck, ancestors of the wife of Eduard Steingraeber. Oil painting, 1776.  | Two further family portraits, 19th century.   |
| La ville: Fernand Leger  | Three lithographs. Drawn. Published posthumously, 1959 by Nadja Leger. Stamped F. Leger. H. C. ('Hors Commerce' – artist's own edition): Opéra, Le Danseur, le French Can Can.  |
| Enamel: Moritz Götze, 2005   | Acting (functioning?) as the 'Margravine' in Steingraeber Haus  |
| Folichon: Ottmar Hörl, 2016  | The Margravine's dog  |
| Renaissance Cupboard   | Rebuilt with veneers fixed at a later date above and in the caskets, as well as somewhat inappropriate legs with undercarriage (20th century).  |
| Baroque Commode  | Used for the housing of a mineral collection.   |
| Mignon Grand Piano. Bruno Paul Design No. 15695, built 1909. Situated on the ground floor. Owned by the composer Hans-Jürgen von Bose. |   |
| Frame Behind Which the Stencil Painting of the Staircase is Explained.   | Ground floor. The wall painting originates from 1912. It consists of one basic colour and 3 additional 'layers' ('strokes'), i.e. 3 different oiled paper stencils for 3 different ornamental shapes, in 3 different colours. Together they result in a 4-colour pattern. Restored in 2004 for the 250th anniversary of Steingraeber Haus / Liebhardt'sches Palais. |