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# THE BIRTH OF PIANO TECHNIQUE

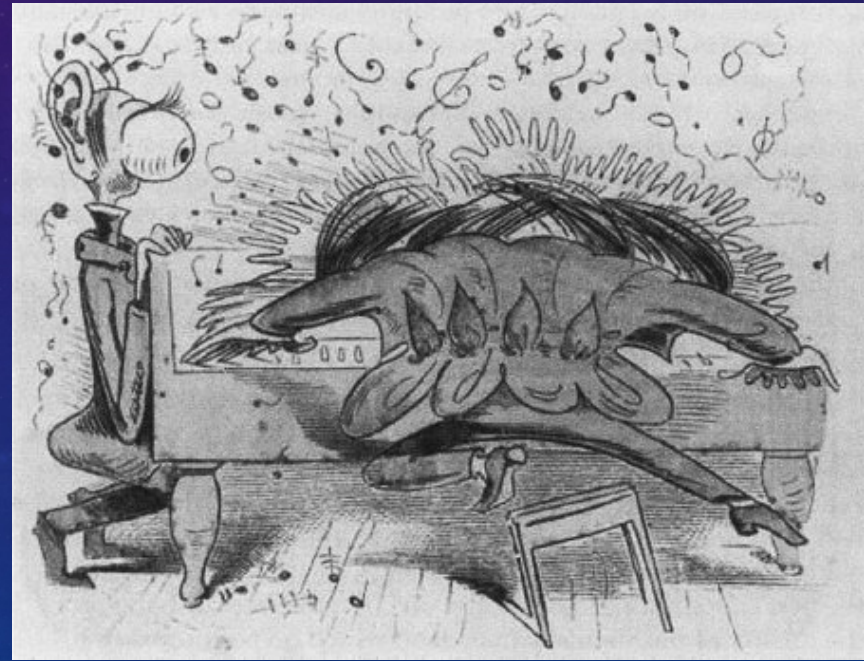
DR. MARGARITA DENENBURG, NCTM

HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY



What do you see?





“To transmit one’s matured conception to one’s auditors requires a considerable degree of mechanical skill, and this skill, in its turn, must be under absolute control of the will”

-Joseph Hoffman



# TIME TRAVEL

Bartolomeo  
Cristofori



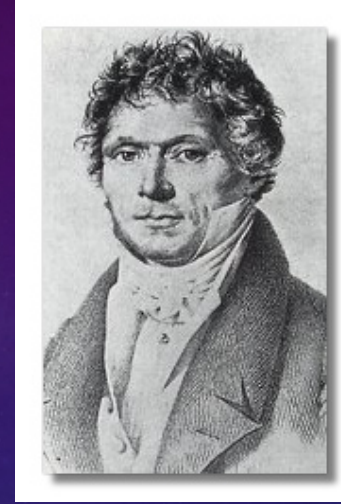
1700

Lodovico  
Giustini



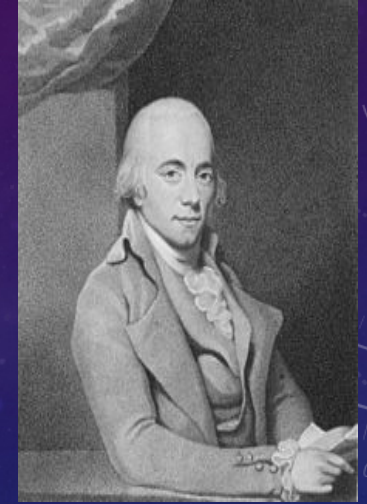
1732

Anton  
Reicha

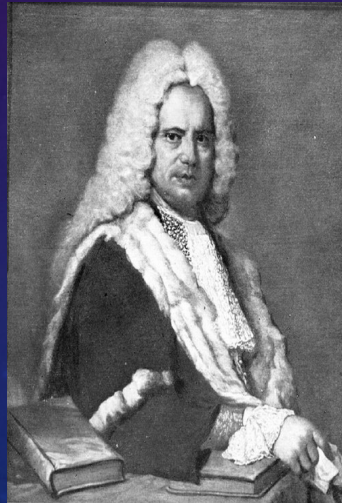


1760

Muzio  
Clementi



1817



Scipione Maffei



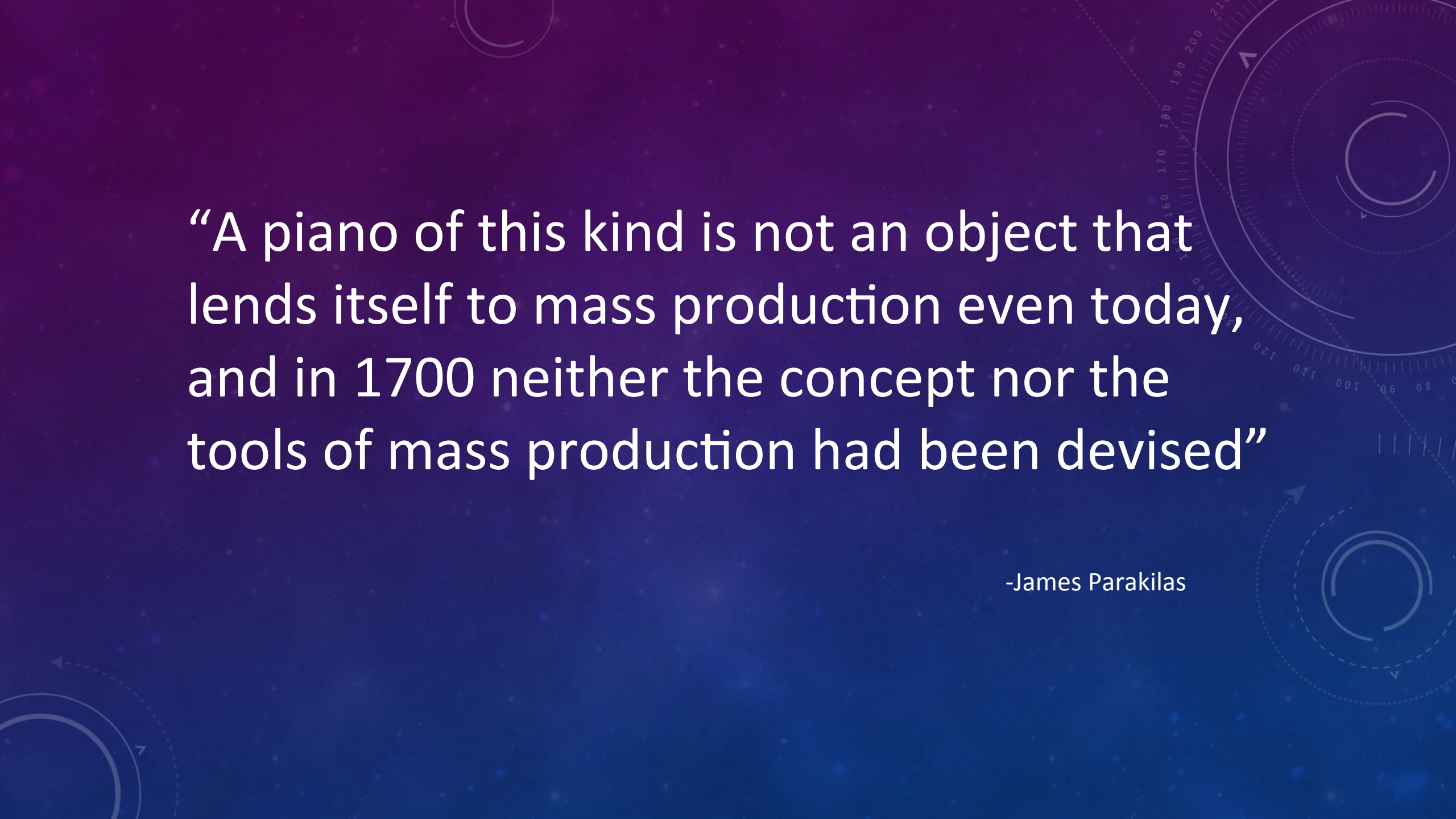
Johann Baptist Cramer

1  
7  
6  
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## 1700 BARTOLOMEIO CRISTOFORI

- Invention of piano
- Beginning in courtly circles
  - Prince of Tuscany
- Piano production was slow
  - Cristofori could not build enough pianos to raise its popularity



The background features a dark blue gradient with a subtle pattern of white stars and faint technical diagrams. On the right side, there are several circular gauges or dials with numerical scales (e.g., 170, 180, 190, 200, 210) and arrows. On the left, there are curved lines and arrows suggesting motion or flow. The overall aesthetic is technical and futuristic.

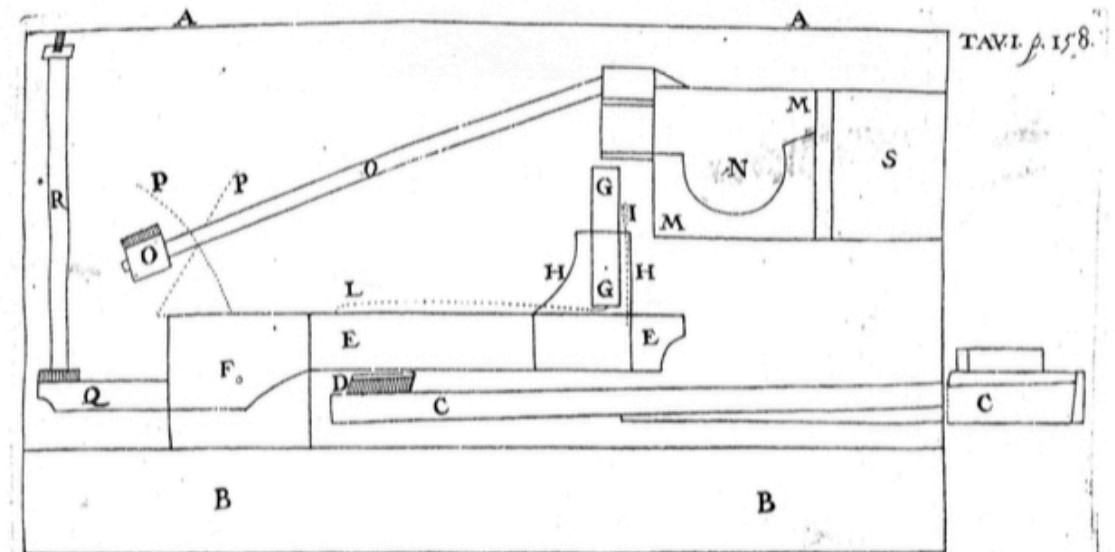
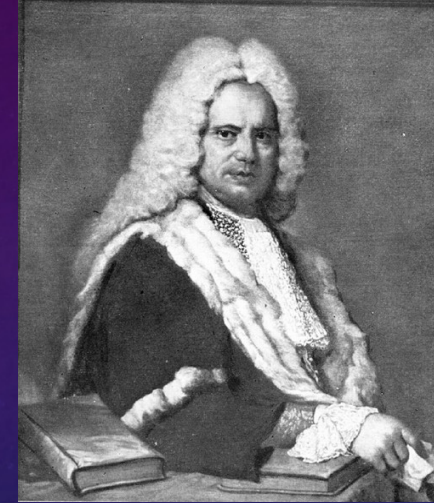
“A piano of this kind is not an object that lends itself to mass production even today, and in 1700 neither the concept nor the tools of mass production had been devised”

-James Parakilas



# 1711 -SCIPIONE MAFFEI

- Anonymously published in 1711 as *Nuova invenzione d'un Gravicembalo col piano, e forte*
- Republished in 1719 in a writing collection *Discrizione Gravicembalo Col Piano, E Forte*
  - Introducing the invention of the piano for the very first time
  - Highlighting its superiority over harpsichord
  - Starting the marketing of piano in courtly circles



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# 1732 – 12 SONATAS BY LODOVICO GIUSTINI

- *12 Sonate da cimbalo di piano e forte detto volgarmente di martelletti*, opus 1, published in Florence
- First work for piano
- Publication for the courtly setting
- No documentation for the next 30 years



Sonata Number 6 by Ludovico Giustini on Cristofori's Piano

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1qDC1cjm4E>

# 1760

“Suddenly, during the 1760s, pianos began to be heard in public concerts, and keyboard publications began to specify the piano, usually as an alternative to the harpsichord”

-James Parakilas

“I have many  
sound  
possibilities”


“I have  
different  
dynamic  
levels”

“I AM POPULAR!”


-piano

“Now, you can  
write more  
dramatic  
compositions -  
just for me”


“I have  
longer  
sustained  
notes”



piano on  
concert stage



Music  
publication



Faster and  
more  
affordable  
manufacture



piano  
made it to  
public

# BAROQUE VS. CLASSICAL PERIOD

The background features a dark blue gradient with a subtle pattern of white stars and constellations. Overlaid on this are several technical diagrams in a lighter blue color. These include circular gauges with numerical scales (e.g., 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210) and arrows indicating direction. There are also dashed lines and solid lines forming various geometric shapes and paths, suggesting a complex technical or scientific theme.

# Baroque Period

Music was utilized mostly for church services and court royalties, imposing compositional limitations

Performing musicians were mostly the composers themselves

Composers were dedicated and faithful only to the desires of their patrons, composing music for religious services, court events, and their patrons' other social whims

Musicians were all professional



# Classical Period

With the rise to the public concert “solo-pianist” began to emerge

With the spread of musical performance and piano to a more public setting, the natural next step was the public’s call to play the instrument

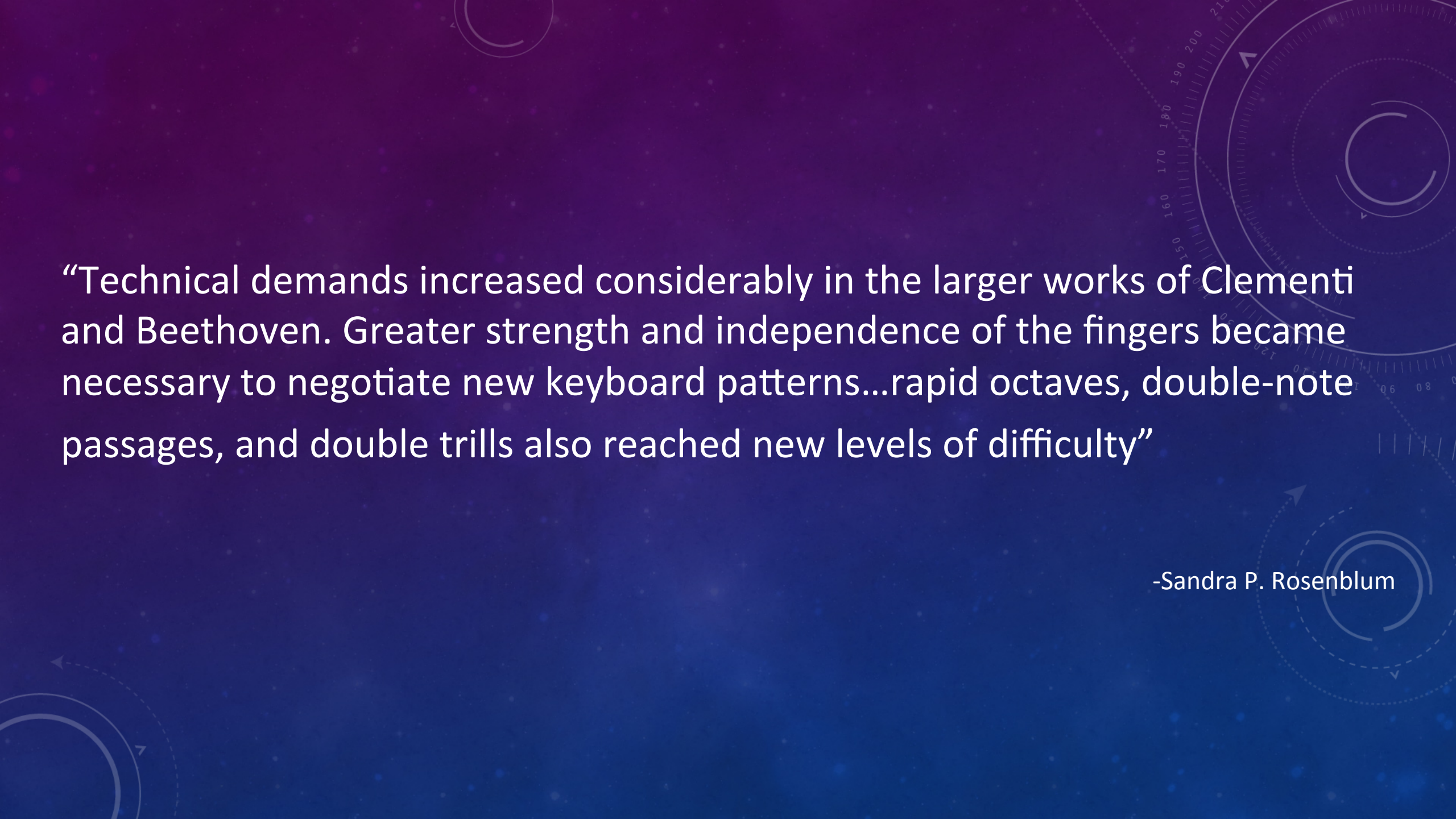
With the sudden rise in popularity of the piano, musicians’ compositional focus shifted from the harpsichord to this new instrument

# Results?

Compositional Demand

Rise of the Amateur Musician

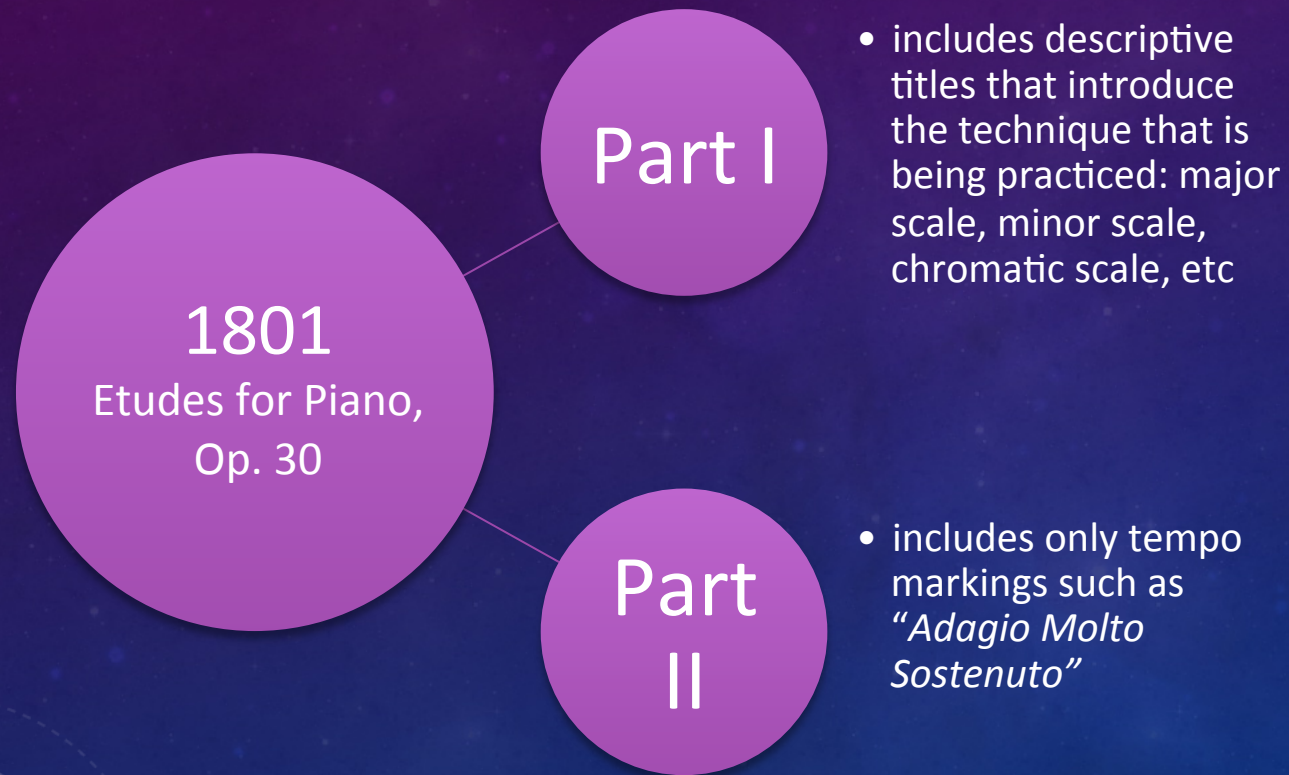
Need in Pedagogical Teaching Aids

The background features a dark blue gradient with a subtle pattern of white stars and faint technical diagrams. On the right side, there are several circular gauges or dials with numerical scales (e.g., 150, 160, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210) and arrows. Some of these diagrams are partially cut off by the edge of the frame. The overall aesthetic is that of a technical or scientific presentation.

“Technical demands increased considerably in the larger works of Clementi and Beethoven. Greater strength and independence of the fingers became necessary to negotiate new keyboard patterns...rapid octaves, double-note passages, and double trills also reached new levels of difficulty”

-Sandra P. Rosenblum

# 1801 – ANTON REICHA



## More Facts:

- Life long friend of Beethoven
- Teacher of Franz Liszt, Hector Berlioz and Cesar Franck
- Remembered for substantial early contributions to the wind quintet literature

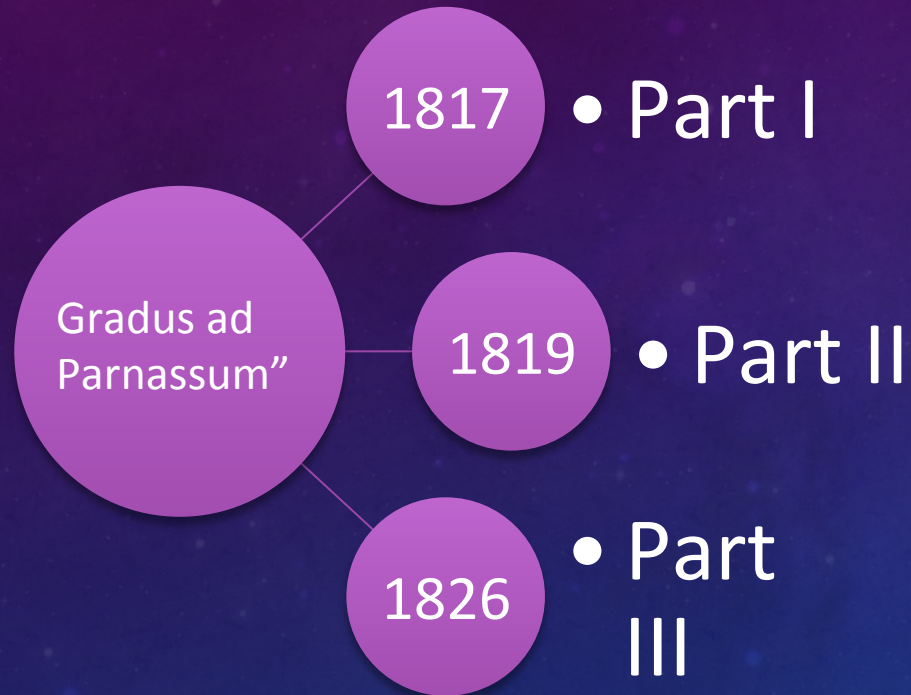
# 1815 – JOHANN BAPTIST CRAMER



## More Facts:

- Op. 50 was composed over a span of twelve years
- Each Part has 21 exercises, total of 84
- Cramer's main compositional interest was as a pedagogue to develop necessary pianistic skills among his students, rather than writing pieces for the concert stage
- Cramer was a student of Clementi

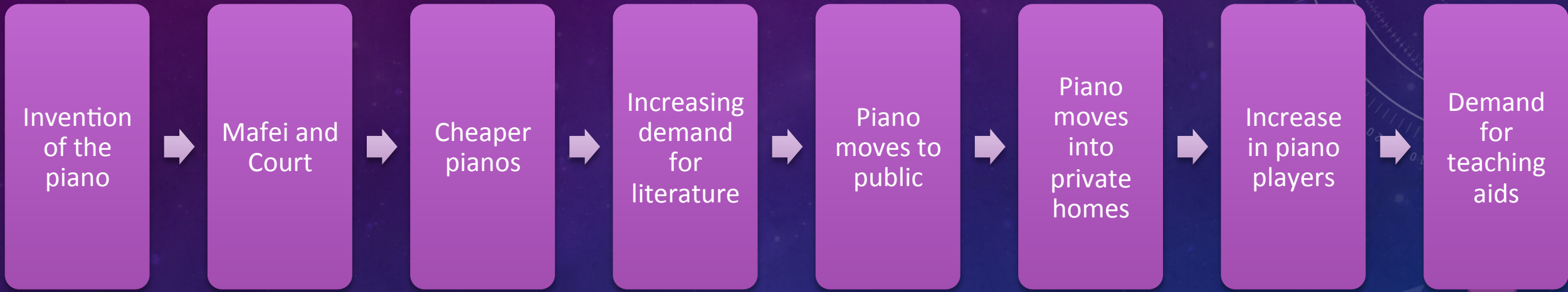
# 1817, 1819, 1826 - MUZIO CLEMENTI



## More Facts:

- Clementi was one of the greatest pianists of his time
- Took a great interest in Piano Pedagogy and technique development
- 1801 – wrote a pedagogy book: *Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Piano Forte*, Op.42
- Op. 42, included useful exercises and scale introductions that reflect the importance of technique for piano students

# SUMMARY



**ETUDE**



## CONCLUSIONS

- The etude became a valuable teaching tool that helped pedagogues and students acquire necessary pianistic skills
- With the expansion of piano repertoire, it became evident that even amateur pianists had to devote a portion of their studies to technique development, and thus playing etudes became a valuable pedagogical tool in any piano lesson
- Today, even as many students resent playing etudes and exercises, perceiving them as dull and uninspiring, we as pedagogues have the responsibility to acknowledge their necessity and enormous significance on pianistic facility





What do I see?



PIANISTS WOULD NOT BE WHERE THEY ARE TODAY  
WITHOUT THE 18TH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
COMPOSITIONAL GENRE RESPONSIBLE FOR MUSICAL  
FLUIDITY AND PIANO PEDAGOGY:

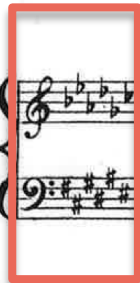
THE ETUDE

# EXAMPLES

The background features a gradient from dark purple to blue, overlaid with a field of small white stars. Several technical diagrams are visible: a circular gauge with a scale from 0 to 210 and an arrow pointing to approximately 180; a circular gauge with a scale from 0 to 160 and an arrow pointing to approximately 140; and a circular gauge with a scale from 0 to 100 and an arrow pointing to approximately 80. There are also various circular lines and arrows scattered across the scene.

10<sup>eme</sup> Exercice.  
L'Enharmonique.

Andante  
Sostenuto



Musical score for the first system, including piano and vocal staves. The piano part features a sequence of chords in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. The vocal part consists of a single line of notes.

Musical score for the second system, including piano and vocal staves. The piano part continues with similar harmonic and melodic patterns. The vocal part continues with a melodic line.

Voyez pour cet exercice les Pages 5 et n° 302

Chromatische Tonleiter.

3<sup>eme</sup> Exercice.  
gamme Chromatiques.

*Allegro*

*Remarques pour la Première Partie.*

*3<sup>eme</sup> Exercice.*

*La gamme Chromatique offre en outre un passage très Singulier ;  
Comme il est neuf et important, j'ai jugé à propos de le donner  
ici séparément.*

The musical score consists of four systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The music is a chromatic scale, starting on G4 in the treble clef and moving stepwise down to G3 in the bass clef. The first system shows the beginning of the scale. The second system has a red bracket on the right side. The third system has a red vertical line on the right side. The fourth system shows the end of the scale with a double bar line.

*4<sup>eme</sup> Exercice.*

*Pour se former aux doubles Cadences d'une seule main.*

6  
in Solfa in 2m 12  
Am Sorantin.

Premiere Partie  
1<sup>er</sup> Exercice  
Les Douze Gammes Majeures

*Allegro*

# Resources

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