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Kooperationsprojekt Musikwissen

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Belgium)

Beethoven's Erard: A Tale of Ambition and Frustration

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Of the three extant “Beethoven pianos,” the 1803 Erard Frères *piano en forme de clavecin* in the Oberösterreichisches Museum in Linz has been the least known and studied. “It was an unsolicited gift, and Beethoven was never happy with it,” is the typical line of dismissal in the literature. But this *claveciniste à Vienne* in fact *ordered* his French piano; at some point, moreover, Beethoven contemplated relocating to Paris.

What were the instrument’s influences? At the Orpheus Institute in Ghent, Belgium, Tom Beghin has led a team to study Beethoven & his Erard from a variety of perspectives: organological, socio-cultural, acoustical, and compositional-pianistic—of direct relevance mainly to his Piano Sonatas Op. 53, 54, and 57. That Beethoven had the piano revised to meet some of his habits and instincts (a process that we have called “viennicization”) adds a complex layer to Beethoven’s bout of Francophilia.

Pianist and artistic researcher **Prof. Dr. Tom Beghin** has been praised for his eloquence and originality. His many publications range from a monograph on and a complete recording of Joseph Haydn’s keyboard works (*The Virtual Haydn*, 2009/15) to *Inside the Hearing Machine* (2017), a multi-media publication on Beethoven’s late piano sonatas and the perspective of deafness. An alumnus of the HIP doctoral program at Cornell University, Tom has been professor at the University of California at Los Angeles and McGill University (Montreal). He currently is the principal investigator of the *Declassifying the Classics* research cluster at the Orpheus Institute in Ghent, Belgium, which focuses on the intersections of historical technologies and performance.

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