

Arno's New Piano Design



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In contrast to last month's newsletter, this month we will discuss a brand new piano design! I am referring to Arno's 284 model concert grand. This piano is a major redesign of what we see in a modern piano. After ten years of detailed work, Arno Patin, the creator of this new beast, presents the world with a piano to shake the foundation of modern piano manufacture and give the pianist a new instrument to explore. Unfortunately, only one of these piano has been produced in response to a commission, though considering the benefits of the new design, it may only be a matter of time before they become more common.

One of the main features of this instrument is that the strings are all on a single plane instead of crossing over each other like almost all modern grand pianos. This was common among pianos until Steinway invented the overstringing method in the mid 1800's and the rest of the manufacturers quickly followed suit. The benefit of

reimplementing this old design is a greater contrast between the various sections of the keyboard allowing for more distinguished lines while playing polyphony, or many independent lines of music simultaneously like a Bach fugue. It provides a larger color palette than what can be achieved in other pianos.



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Due to the string setup and tonal design, the shape of the instrument is a bit different and the curves of the case follow a unique path. It is large and rounded at the tail end, almost like a bulb. This allows the bass strings to vibrate over a good amount of wood on the soundboard bringing out more clarity and power than its concert grand counterparts. Unfortunately, this makes it harder to move because it needs a special jig to fit to the curve before it can be placed on a dolly.

Besides the string pattern and different color palette made available, this piano has many features that are quite practical. The keys are slightly longer allowing for more space for the fingers. The action has been engineered with the appropriate geometry to give the best feel. This means that it is not too heavy or too light and is comfortable and easy to play. It also means that it has a large dynamic range because all the parts are positioned perfectly and move exactly as they are supposed to without hindering the power or the functionality of the instrument like many commercially manufactured pianos.

The pedals and music desk have been altered as well. The lyre, the case part that contains the pedals, has steel bracing on it that attach underneath the piano providing increased stability and the ability to roll the piano for moving without using special tools or many strong, burly men. The function of the left and middle pedals have been switched to make shifting the action for unacorda playing more ergonomic. The music desk has been greatly expanded to cover the width of the keyboard to accommodate longer pieces of music and to avoid challenging page turns. It surprises me that no manufacturer I know of has explored this before as it seems so obvious.

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If you wish to learn more about this piano please visit arnopianos.com. All photos are credited to Arno Patin.