

STEINWAY & SONS

PIANOFORTE MANUFACTURERS

NEW YORK – LONDON – HAMBURG - BERLIN

Prof.
Dr. med. Christoph Wagner
Hanover University for Music and Drama
Institute of Music Physiology
Emmichplatz 1
3000 Hanover 1

TRANSLATION

Hamburg,
26th February 1986

Dear Professor Wagner,

In reply to your letter of 29th January, we can inform you that we found the following in our documents in New York:

In 1930 a special keyboard for Josef Hofmann was produced from a drawing of 1911, which was 1 3/8 inch = 3.5 cm shorter in breadth than a normal keyboard. However, it is possible there was already another special keyboard produced for Hofmann in the time between the drawing from 1911 and 1930, but records no longer exist. Besides the shortening of the keyboard, modifications were made in the mechanics, which differed from the measures of the standard mechanics only slightly in the axis points. This enabled easier playing (less effort). Mr. Hofmann had developed this together with a German piano technician in the U.S.A. He held a patent on it, which was later sustained by his son.

Mr. Hofmann succeeded also with inventions in other fields. For example, he holds a patent on a windshield wiper for cars. We are searching in our archive whether there are still documents written by Mr. Hofmann or his technician. Should we find anything, we will send you further documents.

About your second question: One of the last essential patents of Steinway & Sons' dates back to May 1963 and dealt with the structure of the pinblock.

The size of the white keys has been determined according to DIN standard 8995 7 1/4 octaves, 88 buttons, 1227 mm + 4 ./ . 0. As far as we know, this was in 1939. To find out an exact date, we have contacted the DIN Standards Committee Acoustics and Vibration Engineering, 1000 Berlin 30, Burggrafstrasse 4-7. However, we have not received an answer to date.

We hope these informations are helpful and remain

with kind regards
STEINWAY & SONS

Max Matthias
Managing Director