

Harpsichord & *fortepiano*

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THE BROADWOOD TRUST: GRAND FINALE

Katrina Burnett

The name of Broadwood is one of the greatest in the history of piano building. The firm, founded by the Swiss craftsman Burkat Tschudi in 1728 and developed by John Broadwood, is today the oldest surviving piano company in the world. However, the manufacturing side has, in common with most of the once proud British piano industry, dwindled to a trickle, and it is now in another sphere that the name of Broadwood has, in recent years, become celebrated: as sponsor and supporter of musical education.

In 1999, The Broadwood Trust, under its chairman, Adam Johnstone, was finally wound up, and the last available funds were distributed to musical charities and organisations. The last musical organisation to receive a donation was The Finchcocks Charity, which supports the musical and educational projects at the Finchcocks Museum of Historical Keyboard Instruments. Its directors, pianist and collector Richard Burnett, and his wife, Katrina, spent a day with Adam Johnstone, and his wife, Monica, great-great-great-granddaughter of the founder, John Broadwood, and talked to them about the end of an era.

"I'm thankful to be rid of it", says Adam Johnstone, vigorous and clear-headed at the age of eighty-seven. Adam and Monica are at home in a conservatory filled with bougainvillea and other exotic plants, in their pleasant Surrey house created from two old farm cottages; nearby is the old home of Monica's "Uncle Evelyn", Captain Evelyn Broadwood, who, dying in 1975, created the Trust with "the primary objective to advance the education of the general public in the art and science of music, including in particular music played on keyboard instruments of all periods".

This is Broadwood country - the estate which was first acquired by James Shudi Broadwood in 1799, with a loan of £3,000 from his father, John Broadwood, the clever Scottish craftsman who came to London in 1761, to seek his fortune, and to find it, through the workshop of the Swiss harpischord maker, Burkat Tschudi. The newly purchased house was then a "*pleasant little Georgian villa in rural seclusion on the borders of Surrey and Sussex*". Later the estate was enlarged, and the main house rebuilt in 1866 by Monica's ancestor Henry Fowler Broadwood. This is a mile and a half

away, and is now divided into flats, after an abortive attempt to create a museum there. James Shudi Broadwood, in 1835, was much concerned about the possible effect on the value of the estate with the threat of the newly opened Brighton Line railroad, and sought legal assurance that "*no railroad would be allowed to annoy a gentleman in the way of destroying his grounds in so unjustifiable a manner*". What action he might have contemplated today about the frequent interruptions by the arrivals and departures of air traffic from nearby Gatwick airport can only be conjectured.

By the time Adam Johnstone came into the Broadwood family, through his marriage to Monica in 1972, the estate had deteriorated: the house itself was full of dry rot, the cottages run down and derelict and the tenants were paying very small rents. Adam was asked to help, and decided "to get rid of all this nonsense". Over the years he embarked on a policy of renovation and sales, which eventually made it possible to donate approximately £3 million to promote Captain Evelyn's vision.

Monica was brought up on the estate, and was extremely fond of Uncle Evelyn when she was small; he encouraged her to love music, and she thinks it would never have occurred to him that Broadwoods would come to an end. She is sad that there is no one left in the family to carry on, and perhaps over-modestly disclaims any credit for the financial growth of The Broadwood Trust, describing herself as the “teamaker.....Adam likes to work on his own”. Adam Johnstone’s background as a management consultant, merchant banker and former Professor of Marketing at the International Business School at Fontainebleau brought to the Broadwood Trust a much needed professional and financial expertise; his experiences as prisoner of war in Japan and subsequent conflicts with the Mafia in the United States added a steely sense of purpose. But the past twenty-five years have been a hard grind of unpaid work, and the couple feel, with justification, that they have done their bit, and that it would be impossible to find successors with the same sense of dedication to the ideal.

This generosity follows a long and well established tradition of the Broadwood firm (and individuals within it) supporting musical projects since the very earliest days. Young musicians in particular have been helped, ever since a small nine year old boy and his fourteen year old sister were promoted in a concert at the fashionable Hickford’s Room, in Brewer Street, just round the corner from Shudi’s shop. The date was 13 May 1765; the small boy and his sister, Wolfgang and Nanette Mozart, and the instrument on which they played, one of the four new harpsichords commissioned from Shudi by King Frederic the Great of Prussia, and shortly to be sent on its way to the Royal Palace at Potsdam.

“It is quite enchanting to hear the fourteen year old sister of this little virtuoso playing the most difficult sonatas on the clavier. Both perform wonders” (Europäische Zeitung)

By 1771 John Broadwood had married his boss’s daughter, Barbara, and was effective head of the business; with the death of his father in law in 1773 he became the controlling partner and developed the policy of working closely with the musicians of the day. When Haydn first visited London in 1791,

lodging with the impresario Salomon in Great Pulteney Street, he was at once lent *“a room for composing at Shudi and Broadwood’s pianoforte shop”*. Two years later, in 1793, he supported a young pianist and composer, Johann Baptist Cramer, who, at the age of twenty-three, was supplied with a piano for his first recorded recital, at the Hanover Square Rooms. In 1802 Broadwood donated a grand piano to the twenty-six year old pianist at the Haymarket Theatre, George Smart, later to become Sir George, organist of the Chapels Royal and conductor of the Philharmonic Society.

John Broadwood died in 1812, *“a truly good man, beloved by all who knew him”*, and his two sons, James Shudi and Thomas Broadwood took over the firm. It was Thomas, who on his Continental travels in 1817 met Beethoven, and presented him with the piano to which he was devoted. This could be seen as a shrewd move, but Thomas always regarded this gift as a personal one, and insisted that the business should not seem to be capitalising on it. The composer Weber was supplied with a piano on his visit to London in 1826, and Mendelssohn was given a grand in 1847. The following year Chopin, then extremely ill and with not long to live, was lent instruments for his London recitals, and also for his concerts in Manchester, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The support of internationally known celebrities is of course one thing; kindness to an up and coming musician who might or might not make it is another, though Broadwoods seemed to be adept at picking out winners. In 1835 William Sterndale Bennett, then still a student at the Royal Academy of Music, was given *“a splendid new Broadwood grand”* and was helped out financially on concert trips to Germany. Charles Halle, who had arrived in England as an unknown refugee fleeing from the violent upheavals on the Continent in 1848 received substantial assistance; in 1860 another talented young musician was given *“a most liberal donation”* towards his expenses at the Conservatoire at Leipzig: this was Arthur Sullivan, who had started his musical career as a bass drummer in the Broadwood Factory Band.



Broadwood concert grand of 1847,
flanked by cottage grand of 1835 by Collard and
Collard and an anonymous English chamber organ,
c. 1790.

Finchcocks Collection.

(Photograph: Boris Cakarun)

In the twentieth century the tradition of supporting musicians expanded with the famous Broadwood Concerts, which were put on in London and in provincial cities from 1902 to 1912. In this series both well established artists, such as the tenor Gervase Elwes, were presented, but also young talent was regularly promoted: Fritz Kreisler, at the age of twenty-seven, twenty-two year old Percy Grainger, and a young bass called Freddie Grisewood; all were heard during this period. Captain Evelyn Broadwood was always swift to lend out instruments and help students, such as Cyril Smith, who at the time was a student at the Royal College of Music.

With the creation of The Broadwood Trust the frequent yet haphazard tradition of supporting music and musicians took on a new and more formalised dimension. In 1978 the Trust gave its first sponsorship to the BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition. At the first disposable funds were limited, but as the capital of the Trust became more substantial the policy of support shifted away from helping individuals to assisting the musical institutions themselves. The four Royal Colleges in particular have over the past twenty-five years received just over £2,500,000 between them. The Royal Academy of Music, always high on Broadwood's list, received overall £1.5 million, and this has been channelled into a number of projects,

including the Academy's largest award for student pianists, the annual Broadwood Trust Piano Scholarship, the Broadwood Visiting Professorship of Piano, support towards the renovation of the Duke's Hall (the Academy's concert venue), and the conversion of the next building, York Gate, which is destined to be a display area for the Academy's collection of instruments and manuscripts. Six of the period pianos from the Broadwood archives, including the instrument which was lent to Chopin, were also donated to the Academy, at present under the wing of the Cobbe Foundation at the National Trust property of Hatchlands. The Royal College of Music received £447,000, which has been transformed into pianos, practice rooms and insulation; the Royal Scottish Academy has established various Chairs of Music to the tune of £350,000, and the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester used £310,000 for various projects, including the very successful Piano Festivals. Dr Curtis Price, Principal of the Royal Academy, has paid tribute to Adam Johnstone for the Broadwood Trust's "constant support over the past decade. He has shown that private and charitable donations can have a substantial effect on the training and development of young musicians".

Another £1 million has been distributed amongst other institutions and musical projects: £41,000 to Leeds College of Music to establish a piano technology workshop and to provide a number of practice pianos; £96,000 for Hereford Summer School, £22,305 to Fenton House, which sponsored The Broadwood Trust Harpsichord Competition; £10,000 to the London College for the Blind, £8,000 to the Yehudi Menuhin School, £5,580 for the Scottish Piano Competition, and assistance to Canford Summer School, the Henry Wood Home for retired musicians; the Pestalozzi

International School near Battle, to help them acquire instruments..... and £198,261 to Finchcocks Museum of Historical Keyboard Instruments.

At Finchcocks we were encouraged to seek assistance from The Broadwood Trust by Dr. Alastair Laurence, himself a former director of the manufacturing company, John Broadwood and Sons Ltd. (which is today completely separate from The Broadwood Trust), and also a direct descendant of Alexander Finlayson, one of the Scottish craftsmen who came south to seek his fortune with the original John Broadwood. (Alastair still possesses his ancestor's tuning forks, and is, appropriately enough, one of the Royal Tuners to the fleet of seven pianos in Buckingham Palace, of which three are Broadwoods). Adam Johnstone's response to our request was immediate, personal and positive, and for the past fifteen years the financial assistance of The Trust has provided the kernel of sponsorship from which we could build our musical programme. A regular £10,000 each year, increasing to £12,500 enabled us to run our Festival, providing fees for performers, as well assisting the educational events, with help for student and school visits, bursaries for visiting musicians and scholars. It also extended its support to various special projects, such as the first early piano competition in Great Britain, "The Broadwood Trust Fortepiano Competition", held at Finchcocks in March 1992. This event was co-organised by the late Christopher Kite, then director of Musical Studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, and his untimely death robbed the cause of performance practice on period pianos of one of its most formidable advocates.

Finchcocks has developed more recent links with the Royal College of Music, encouraged particularly by two professors of early piano there, Simon Nicholls and David Ward, and David is now a Trustee of our own Finchcocks Charity. Trinity College of Music, under its principal, Gavin Henderson, and in its new quarters at the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, is a lively partner for early music projects, and there have been a number of workshops and concerts organised through the

keyboard department: with pianists Philip Fowke and Douglas Finch and the harpsichordist, John Henry.

Quite young children often have a natural feeling for period keyboards and it has always been part of our policy to familiarise schoolchildren with the full range of harpsichords, spinets, chamber organs, clavichords and early pianos which form the 100 or so instruments in the Finchcocks Collection. Amongst a new generation of young players who have had regular access to these instruments from an early age is Holly Manktelow, now a student at the Royal Northern College, and harpsichordist Steven Devine, who has been closely involved with Finchcocks since he first turned up to a Sunday Open Day at the age of twelve. Steven was the winner of the first Broadwood Trust Harpsichord Competition held at Fenton House when he was nineteen, and now, at the age of 26, is well established as player, editor and conductor, as well as being Assistant Curator at Finchcocks, spearheading our Outreach programme.

None of these projects would have been possible without the support of The Broadwood Trust. In 1999 The Finchcocks Charity was donated a final lump sum of £55,761, and this was not only the last donation paid out to us, but the very last donation from the Trust itself. Adam Johnstone wrote to us:

"The Broadwood Trust has now been wound up and all the assets distributed.....we hope that this cheque will enable you to carry on your good works and wish you even more achievement in the years to come." We will certainly do our best to keep alight the flame.

Adam Johnstone saw his role as director as a "sacred trust", and would like the name of Broadwood to be remembered through its good works. The winding up of the Trust leaves a gap in the musical life of this country which is not easy to fill. Yet Adam and Monica Johnstone deserve their rest after their labours. Adam has been awarded the OBE in 1996; he is Hon FRAM, Hon. Men RNCM, Fellow RSAMD, and Hon Mem RCM. As Peter Shelland, Director of Development at the Royal

Academy, has written: "he has stood way ahead of any other private benefactor, and all of who have received the benefit of this generosity have much to thank him for."

It is also perhaps a source of especial pride, and humility, for us to have been assisted by The

Broadwood Trust, and through it to be in touch with such an important crucible of piano development in our culture, with all its innovations, its triumphs and its difficulties: so human a story interwoven with some of the most outstanding creative and interpretative talents of our past.



Photograph of Adam Johnstone taken with Elizabeth Wells, the Curator, in the Royal College of Music Museum of Instruments. This marked the generous funding the College received from The Broadwood Trust for the purchase of pianos for the new hall of residence, College Hall. The new Yamaha piano in the photograph is alongside a 1799 Broadwood housed in the Museum.

(Photograph: Chris. Christodoulou)

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Quotations: "Broadwood By Appointment", by David Wainwright (Quiller Press, London 1982)