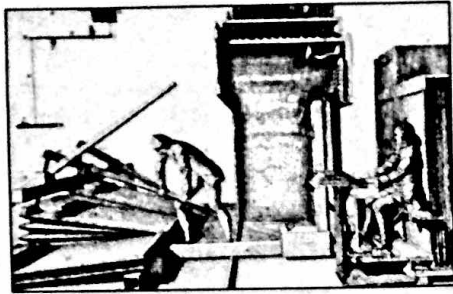


## Baroque keyboard instruments

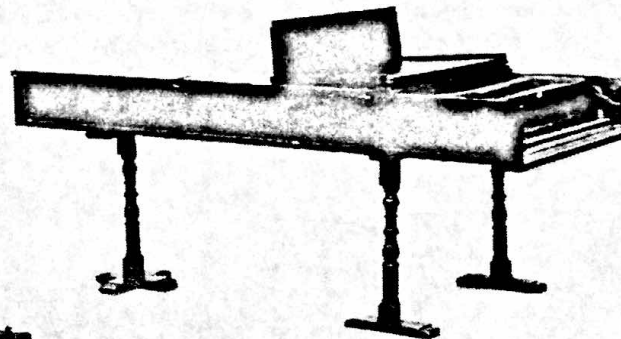
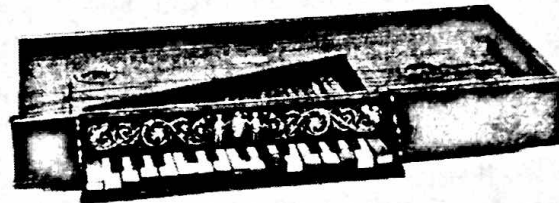


Two people are needed to play the organ, one on the keyboard and a second working the bellows.

The keyboard instruments that were available to musicians in the Baroque period were the organ, the clavichord and the members of the harpsichord family. The members of the harpsichord family all produce sound the same way: when the player strikes a key, the strings are plucked. No matter how hard you hit the keys on the harpsichord, the plucked string always sounds the same way. This is very different from the piano, in which the string is struck by a padded hammer when the key is pressed. The pianist can control the loudness and softness by controlling the force with which the keys are struck. The pianoforte, the ancestor of the piano, was invented during the Baroque period but it did not really gain acceptance until afterwards.

Italian clavichord, around 1600

The clavichord was very popular with Baroque musicians, but its sound was very soft, which made it inappropriate for accompanying other instruments for concerts.

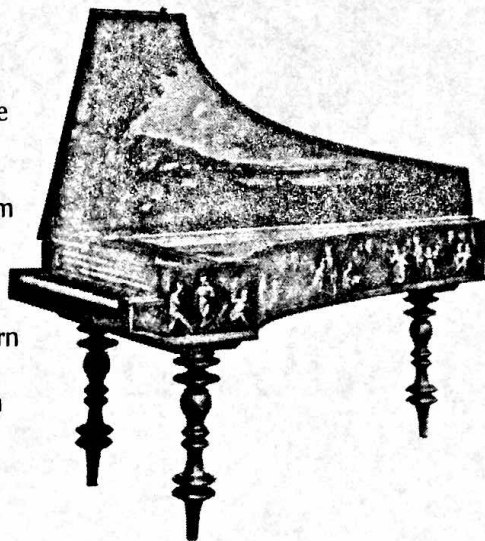


Pianoforte made by Bartholomeo Cristofori in Italy in 1720

The instrument was called a pianoforte, meaning soft-loud, because, unlike the harpsichord, it allows the fingers to vary the volume.

Baroque harpsichord

Notice how the instrument is decorated. It was the custom to decorate the sides and the inside of the lid. Modern harpsichords often maintain this tradition.



This is the organ in the church at Arnstadt where Bach was employed for a time.

