

# The Celesta - The Celeste

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*Celesta 5½ octave Studio model, black oak finish*

THE  
HEAVENLY



**SCHIEDMAYER CELESTA** © 2011

Schiedmayer established 1735 – building Celestas since 1890

# THE INVENTION: PARIS 1886



The inventor of the celesta:  
Victor Mustel (1815-1890)

**Victor Mustel**, a Parisian reed organ, pipe organ, and piano manufacturer, invented the celesta in the year 1886.

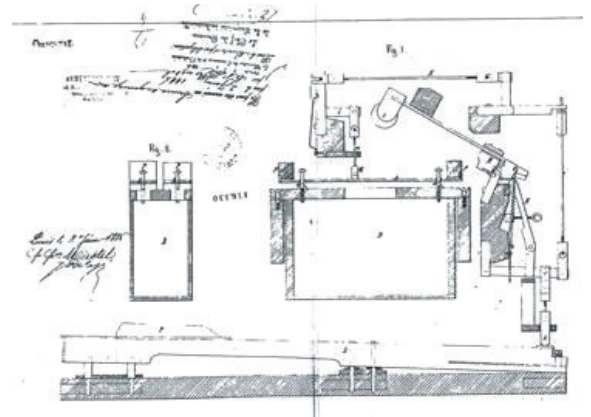
The **original patent** No. 176.530 is preserved today in the Institut National de la Propriété (INPI), Paris.

Victor Mustel himself came up with the name **Celesta** for his new instrument and specified it in the patent.

He explicitly indicated in the patent that the celesta action is distinct from the upright piano action (where hammers strike the vertically aligned strings from the side) and grand piano action (where hammers strike the horizontally aligned strings from below).

The **drawing** (on the right) of Mustel's 1886 patent shows the defining components of the celesta:

- Sound plates are placed above wooden resonators.
- The sound plates are struck by felt hammers from above.



# THE CELESTA ACTION

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- The felt hammer is set in motion by pressing the key.
- The felt hammer strikes the steel sound plate from above.
- The sound plate is placed above a wooden resonator.



# THE BREAKTHROUGH

CÉLESTA. n° 1, Modèle d'Orchestre.



The **Celesta No. 1**, an orchestral model, was presented to the public for the first time at the World Exposition in Paris in 1889.

The instrument was awarded the Grand Prix de l'Exposition Universelle de Paris 1889 and Mustel received the order of **Knight of the Legion of Honor**.

On his way to the inauguration of Carnegie Hall in 1891, **Tchaikovsky** stopped over in Paris to visit Mustel and personally experience the sound of the instrument. Tchaikovsky was fascinated by the unique sound of the celesta and ordered an instrument on the spot.

He wrote *The Nutcracker* featuring the "**Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy**" with its famous celesta solo. The world premiere of *The Nutcracker* at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg in December 1892 led to the international breakthrough of the instrument.

The **heavenly sound** of the celesta has enchanted the entire world of music ever since.



Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

# REPERTOIRE HIGHLIGHTS

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A short selection:

Bartók:	<i>Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta, The Miraculous Mandarin</i>
Bernstein:	<i>West Side Story</i> (Symphonic Dances), <i>Symphony No. 3</i>
Britten:	<i>The Turn of the Screw</i>
Debussy:	<i>Chansons de Bilitis, Images, La Mer</i>
Holst:	<i>The Planets</i> (esp. Neptune)
Kurek:	Concertino for Celesta and Orchestra: <i>Fairy Dreams</i>
Mahler:	<i>Symphonies No. 6 and 8</i>
Ravel:	<i>Mother Goose, Daphnis and Chloé, Rapsodie Espagnole, Boléro</i>
Respighi:	<i>The Pines of Rome, Ancient Aires and Dances, The Birds</i>
Schnittke:	<i>Requiem, Symphony No. 4</i>
Shostakovich:	<i>Symphony No. 4, Concerto for Violoncello No. 1</i>
Strauss, Richard:	<i>Ariadne auf Naxos, Der Rosenkavalier, Salome, Alpine Symphony</i>
Stravinsky:	<i>The Firebird, Petrushka</i>
Tchaikovsky:	<i>The Nutcracker</i> (The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy)
Williams:	<i>Soundtrack to Harry Potter</i> (Hedwig's Theme)

Chamber ensembles, jazz, pop, and rock bands are using the celesta as well, and one can find more and more solo compositions for the instrument.

# TECHNICAL IMPROVEMENTS

Schiedmayer started manufacturing celestas as **early as 1890** and has continuously improved and further developed the instrument.



Full-size piano keyboard

## Resonators

Mustel instruments used to have one resonator for multiple sound plates. To achieve greater power and better sound quality, Schiedmayer now equips each sound plate with its own resonator.

## Pedal

The celesta pedal has the same function as the piano's sustaining pedal. Older celestas had the pedal in the center position, which pianists are not accustomed to. Schiedmayer shifted the pedal to the accustomed right-of-center-position.

## Touch and sound shaping

Playing older celestas with shorter keys and hence heavier touch was not always fun for pianists. Since 1996 Schiedmayer has equipped all instruments with a full-size piano keyboard. This provides the instruments with the important light touch celestists appreciate, allowing a very nuanced tone.



5½ octave Compact model,  
natural oak

The Mustel company, as well as all other celesta-manufacturers such as Morley (England) or Simone Bros. (USA), discontinued their celesta production decades ago. **Today**, Schiedmayer is **worldwide the only manufacturer of the celesta** whose unique **heavenly** sound can only be achieved by the specific Mustel action.



# BUILT-IN CELESTA FOR PIPE ORGAN

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The Schiedmayer Company manufactures built-in Celestas since more than 100 years.

The unique 'heavenly' timbre of the Celesta enriches the sound of churches and concert pipe organs.



## Technical description

- Mechanical or electromagnetic action (24 V-magnets)
- Range: c-c5
- Pitch a1 = 442 Hz (other pitch on request)
- The soundplates are placed in 3 levels. Frame made of solid, selected natural oak (other special construction on request)
- Width 117cm, Height 100cm, Depth 35cm
- Weight 70 kg



**SCHIEDMAYER CELESTA**®

Schiedmayer established 1735 – building Celestas since 1890

## The World's Only Manufacturer of the Celesta



5 1/2 octave Studio model, natural oak

### Celestas

(Cabinet available in natural or black oak - other colors on request):

- 4 octave (c1-c5)
- 5 octave (c-c5)
- 5 1/2 octave Compact model (c-f5)
- 5 1/2 octave Studio model (c-f5)

### Built-in Glockenspiel for Pipe Organs

### Built-in Celesta for Pipe Organs

### Keyboard Glockenspiel "Papageno" (c2-g5)

### Concert Glockenspiel "Bellesta" with mallets

### Services:

- Rental instruments
- Overhauling and refurbishing
- Maintenance and repair
- Worldwide deliveries



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