

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I finished writing the first draft of this book in March 2020 just as lockdown began in the UK because of the coronavirus pandemic. Six months later, I revised it while the country was still in various degrees of lockdown. In the intervening period, when we were stuck in the house, many people told me that they had been playing the piano a lot and finding it good for their mental health. They must have been playing a range of music, but the pieces they kept mentioning were the old classics – Bach, Mozart, Beethoven. In June 2020, the *New York Times* reported that while concerts might have disappeared, sales of pianos for the domestic market had gone up. People kept reporting that they found piano-playing an unexpected solace. Children were practising more; adults were embarking upon piano lessons, and families were singing round the piano or playing music together. For me it was heartening to think that the piano was being such a good companion, and had probably entered upon a new chapter of its history.