



Figure 20. The cat piano. Each key is connected to a mechanism that pokes a particular cat, who (theoretically) had been trained to meow on cue—supposedly with perfect pitch. “The idea was [once] described in *Musurgia Universalis*, Kircher’s influential book of musicology, [which] has been well-known among scholars since it was first published in 1650. ... In fact, Kircher wasn’t even the first one to come up with it. ... But the idea did get new life from Kircher’s treatment.”