

PLANT TECHNICIANS
Journal
November 1982





"Whether I'm on the road with the Range, the Grateful Dead or at home in my studio, the Baldwin is my constant companion. Its keyboard action responds equally well when creating a subtle melodic line or a strong driving rhythm."

Bruce Hornsby



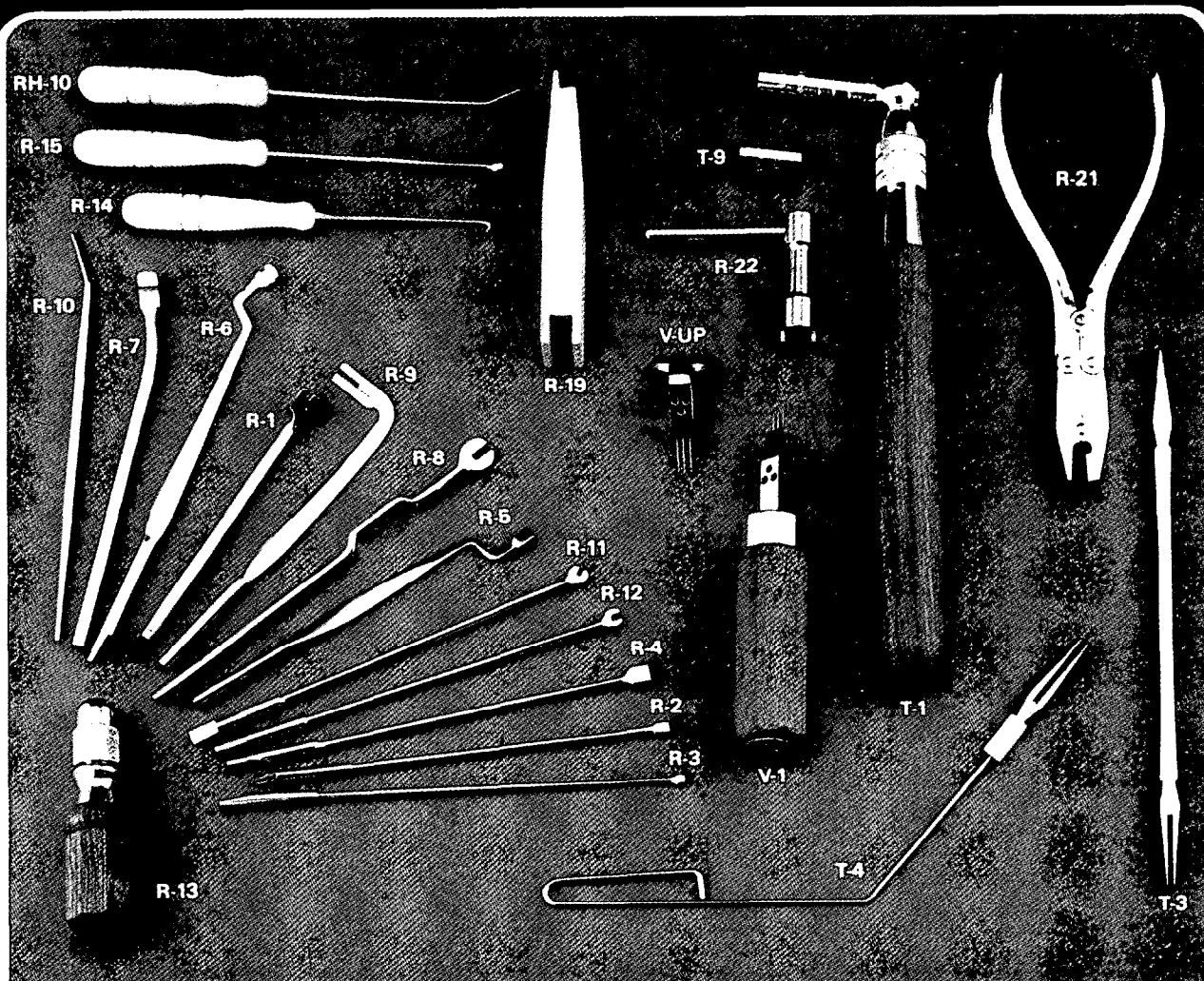
As a pianist and keyboard technician for Bruce Hornsby, I have learned that I can expect great things from the Baldwin piano. As touring instruments, the pianos are moved daily, submitted to changing temperatures — indoors and out, and even danced on by Bruce. It amazes me how they take the abuse, hold their pitch and always sound great. The Baldwin piano rocks!

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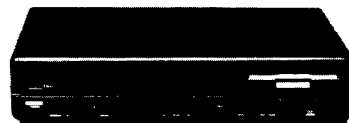
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with stability, and offers a longer soundboard lifetime. We're so pleased with this new design, we're now incorporating it into all our grand pianos.

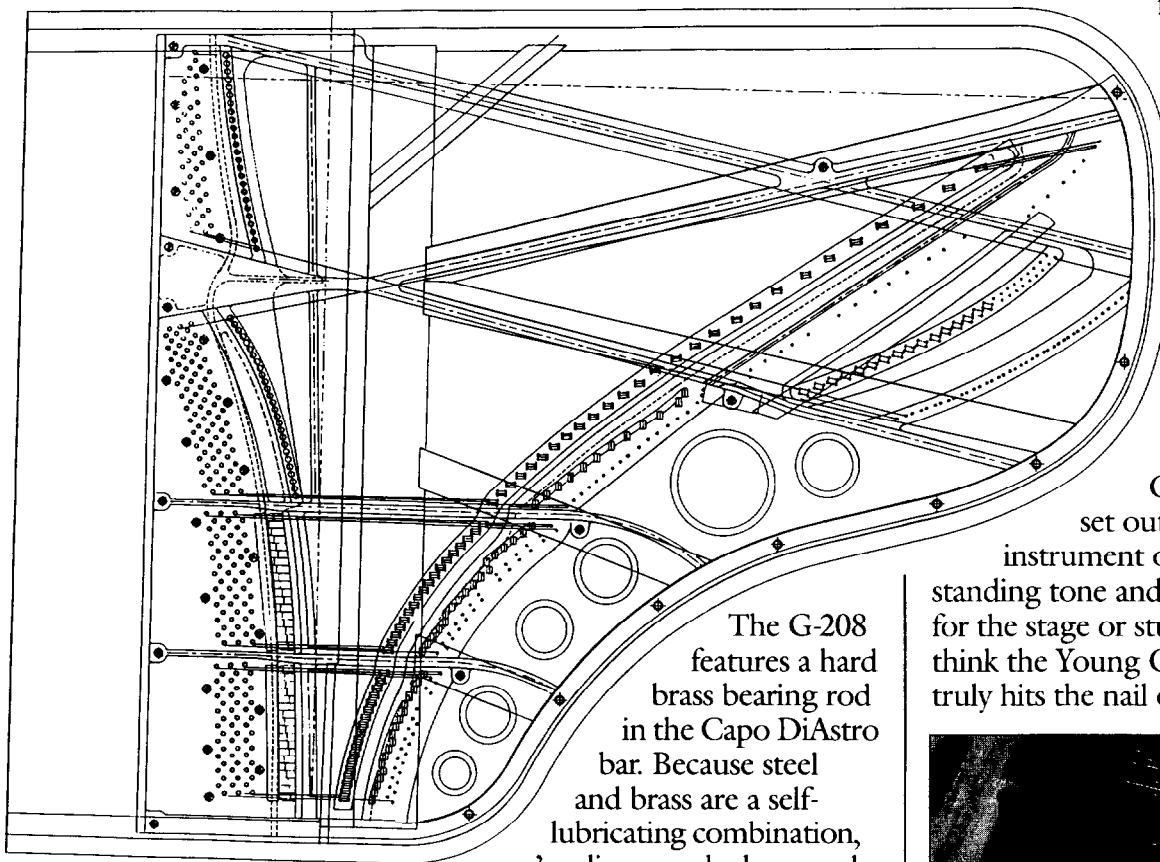
then terminated in equal length offering improved sustain, projection and clarity.

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full sound, greatly improved response and a remarkable evenness of tone throughout the entire range of the keyboard.

Our engineers set out to design an

instrument offering outstanding tone and performance for the stage or studio. And we think the Young Chang G-208 truly hits the nail on the head.



The G-208 features a hard brass bearing rod in the Capo DiAstro bar. Because steel and brass are a self-lubricating combination,

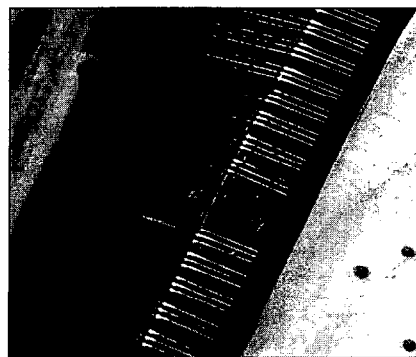
we've discovered a brass rod offers better control of strings during tuning. In addition, the brass rod is easily replaced later in the life of the instrument eliminating the need for reshaping of the capo bar.

We also took a close look at our action and developed an all-new action design which improves response without loss of projection or clarity.

Our new double duplex system terminates the strings at the rear of the bridge and near the tuning pins with duplex bars. Both duplex lengths of the strings for each note are

with big things, and the result is 6'10" long. Our new G-208 grand is a departure for us and represents the smallest and largest of our latest innovations.

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President's Message

TOPIC A: ASSOCIATES ASSOCIATES ASSOCIATES

By all indicators, there will be a lot of discussion in PTG this year about Associates. Just to give you an overview, here is a list of

some of the ideas currently before some Guild committees that focus on Associates:

- The Bylaws Committee (Danny Boone, Chair) will consider the Connecticut Chapter proposal to divide the Associate category in two: Supporting members (who do not tune) and Apprentices (potential RPTs). The 1993 Council will deal with the issue.

- Under Don Valley's leadership, the Continuing Education Committee will evaluate the idea of providing a CE booklet for Associates to use to record their class attendance and document their independent study.

- Gary Neie, already busy planning the 1993 Annual Technical Institute in Milwaukee, has discussed developing a way to identify classes in the schedule that are of special interest to beginning technicians or Associates preparing for the PRT exam, possibly using a distinctive graphic symbol as an identifier.

- Many chapters routinely offer "Associates' Day" programs with private tutoring, group rebuilding projects or other hands-on training experience. Colette Collier, Chair of the Chapter Services Committee, will direct an effort to circulate such ideas for wider chapter use.

- Two exam study guides, one on the technical exam and one on the tuning, will be released for sale this year due to the efforts of the Publications Committee, led by Paul

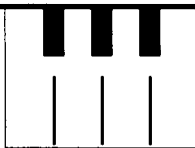
Revenko-Jones. Many Associates have requested such a resource.

- The indefatigable Examination and Test Standards Committee will emphasize examiner training, working to strengthen and support local examiners and to establish new test sites; they are inspired by Jack Stebbins, Chair. ETSC will also promote exam preparation classes at chapters and seminars. Their goal is to provide professional, fair exams to well-prepared candidates!

- The member needs assessment survey, planned through the Marketing Committee and its Chair Keith Bowman, is expected to define more clearly what our Associates as well as RPTs expect, need and want from our PTG programs.

- And the Board plans to examine other ideas, including exam study videos and incentive to encourage Associates to upgrade to RPT.

Certainly the role of the Associate in PTG has been controversial in some chapters. Some RPTs view the increasing number of Associates in our ranks with alarm; and sadly, some Associates have come to feel like second-class citizens. Perhaps we need a fresh perspective. With a positive attitude and the combined efforts of our talented, creative members, we can seize the opportunity, now, to build a better tomorrow in PTG by nurturing our Associate members today.



Technical Forum

36th Annual Sacramento

Convention

Technical Institute

'92 Review

Jim Harvey, RPT
Editor

This issue marks the first anniversary (in actual publications) of my being your *Journal* editor. It just goes to show that time really does fly when you're having fun (?). As many of you know, due to circumstances beyond my control, I missed not only my appointment to this post, but the entire convention last year. Perhaps it is because I was so happy to be at this year's convention (or anywhere else for that matter), that I'm overly sensitive to the following sentiments. The following opinions are *mine*—opinions that could just as well go unwritten, but those I feel should be addressed.

During the past year, I have received a lot of correspondence, the subject matter as diversified as our membership. Not all the letters were technical questions or submissions. Some were those of well-wishing, some just to say thanks for coverage of a particular topic, and yes, some to complain about what is *not* covered in these pages, or to take exception to what is printed. One letter that stands out is from a correspondent who wished to voice a negative opinion about the amount of pre- and post-convention coverage that we feature, followed by starting the process over almost immediately. The writers' sentiments paralleled mine when it comes to televised football.

In my reply I mentioned that, although I do not directly control the amount or intensity of the material regarding the annual convention and institute, I feel that:

- it is the largest single event that our organization supports;
- it is international in both scope and intent;

- it is one of the few exposure vehicles we have to outsiders;
- it is an understatement to say that it is quite labor-intensive, and costly, to stage;
- that roughly one-third of our *active* membership participates in the event.

I also mentioned that, although I am not sure, I am fairly confident that any residual profit (if any) from the proceedings helps keep our dues down to no *more* than they are.

Experience indicates that it is natural to expect a certain attendance attrition when our convention location is polarized—east versus west coast. It is also expected that human factors must be considered in the equation: health, budget, and so on.

In our registration packet this year, the home office provided a page containing a map of the United States.

The map depicted a listing of, by state, the number of convention participants. Of course, this did not include walk-ins, or registrations after the time the map was printed. It was evident, however, that we are fortunate to have such a densely populated technician base in California. Otherwise it could have been a financial nightmare. Let's explore for a moment just what we were faced with this year.

For openers, and as is the custom, the convention was staged during the time of year when normal service work is at its lowest point—vacation season, when piano lessons and other related activities are practically shut down. So much for that excuse. Next, our host was Sacramento, the city and the chapter, and neither the day nor evening weather could have possibly been more delightful. The hotel accommodations were several cuts above the standard of mediocrity that some of us old-timers can recall, especially considering the good rates for rooms. (It only took one twelve-dollar breakfast for me to find out why you could always get a seat in the restaurant, however—*then* I found out where the crowd was eating.) Then consider the airline fare wars. For two hundred plus dollars, I was able to get a round-trip ticket from South Carolina; most unusual in recent history.

About now I'm trying hard to keep this in focus, and not repeat the "what the PTG means to me" type of writing. The lack of attendance for one group may be attributed to reasons of ill health, or an absolute inability to afford the trip. If we eliminate sickness, and minimize the



An excellent representation of exhibitors awaited attendees



The post-convention exhibit area—not quite as exciting during tear-down

impact on budgets, then that still leaves a couple of other groups. The first is the group who factors in not only the cost of the convention, but the lost time away from income-producing time. Does this not also apply to those of us who were there? I'm sorry, but I don't know anyone *that* important or indispensable.

The other group consists of those who feel that nothing can be gained (or learned) by their attendance. I hate to say it, but as surely as those who earn their RPT status and stop attending chapter meetings, this is the most dangerous group of all! This group has become satisfied with their work.

They apparently cannot be bothered with expanding their rapidly aging cache of knowledge and skills. Too often, this lackadaisical attitude shows

in the quality of work performed, and reflects negatively on the rest of us who are still learning. This is not to mention how it affects how our organization is perceived. Remember that, regardless of what we're called this year, whether Craftsmen, RTTs, or RPTs, we've earned the right to append our names with these suffixes based on *minimum* standards of proficiency. These are terms of recognition and achievement; they are not badges.

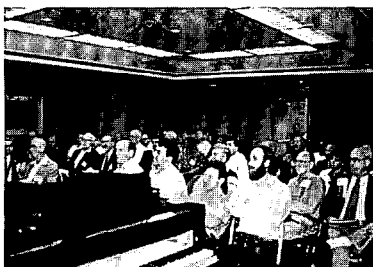
My first national convention was in Hollywood, Florida, at a time in my career that I could least afford to make such a trip. I looked over a list of attendees (they provided such a list that year), and checked off the number of people I knew. There were seven. Following that convention, I decided that one day I hoped to teach at such an event. On a legal pad, I drafted my first program, "The Care and Feeding of Tools." At the same time, I made a personal commitment that when I knew it all, I would quit being a piano technician. I felt then (and still do),

that, considering how much there is to learn, if I ever became *that* self-confident, I would likely be dangerous as well. I then established a criterion for attending conventions, one that has worked for me since then. It's a short list, and one that I'd like to share:

- I must learn at least one new thing from having attended. To me, this justifies and (usually) quickly amortizes the trip. (I learned more than one);

- I must endeavor to share with others (pay back), for all the education I received. (Still paying, thank God);

- I will exercise the fraternal side of the organization—that of establishing new friendships (and resources), and maintaining existing relationships. (I over-exercised.)



A class consisting of nothing BUT instructors!

If the sentiments above make you feel bad, or at least guilty, good! While I dislike writing in negative terms, I hope that in these paragraphs you are able to detect my sincerity and concern. In short, *I was* there this year, but many of you not, and were noticed by your absence. So *please* get your act (and attitude) together.

THE CONVENTION

Having preached enough, I'm happy to report that the convention was a success! As mentioned in a previous column, I don't know how our Institute Directors keep outdoing themselves every year. After spending a little time behind the scenes with Ben, Gary, and Ernie, I'm beginning to think it's a simple matter of their upstaging each other: almost like a contest! There were fifty-seven full-length classes, and twenty-three Mini-Technical classes, all vying for one's time across a three-and-a-half-day period. I find it amusing to overhear the complaints and the decision

processes: "There are so many classes I want to take, and the schedule conflicts, and..." It is highly unlikely that anyone would be able to attend all the classes of choice at any one convention. That's why we have conventions every year, and why some classes are repeated. Walt Disney felt this way too. Some of the classic Disney movies were re-released every seven years: there was an entirely new audience of viewers. I was impressed with the diversity of class titles available this year, and the focus on more finite topics. For example, practically any tuning or troubleshooting class would routinely mention false beats; yet Susan Graham had an entire class devoted to this one subject.

The exhibit hall was jammed with forty-eight exhibitors, totally filling the huge exhibit area provided, as evidenced by the photos. In reality, the photographs do not do justice to the size of the exhibit area, since my camera lens does not turn corners! The exhibits, along with some of the classes, were held in the hotel. The majority of the classes were held just across the street. I'm personally in favor of having all activities under one roof. But then, when I go to a restaurant, I dislike going to the salad bar! In like respect, I'm not a sun person: I might ripen too suddenly. All joking aside, what could have been a logistics problem worked out quite nicely, at least for the attendees. Jim Geiger and company were doing their usual award-winning job of having pianos and equipment magically appear at the right place at the right time, and not squeaking too loudly in the process.

In spite of not enjoying walking for my food, I made quite a few exceptions to this rule. Starting from Randy Potter's reception on Tuesday, which I missed, it was indulge and socialize until you get sick of one or the other, then start over again night after night. (I went out to dinner, *after* the convention was over.) Baldwin hosted a blow-out chow-down following a piano concert. I heard no one complaining. If Yamaha keeps up the momentum, I figure by

next year we'll each be given the keys to a C5 to drive home, providing we can find the kick-starter! Then there was the Billy Taylor concert, hosted by Steinway, and followed by something (Gary Green said it—the word sounded French, and I'd never heard



...Some

speeches: they were all short, but meaningful. (Could we make this a bylaw?) While Larry Crabb finished cleaning everyone else's plate at my table (he's a country boy at heart), LaRoy Edwards announced a first-time ever split-decision in the recipi-



...familiar...

enough adrenaline from somewhere to give a terse but very effective acceptance speech. If this precedent-setting banquet set the standard, I may attend more of them in the future.

As usual, I've likely left out something, and if Murphy's law



...faces

of it, and can't repeat it, but if it was milk, I accidentally got alcohol in mine.)

The official banquet was wonderful (not a typical word for me). We were served non-chicken for a change, and I was pleased to not have any emergency phone calls that usually cause me to miss many of the

ent of the Golden Hammer Award. The recipients were Fred and Mimi Drasche, or maybe it was Mimi and Fred, I wasn't taking notes at the time. Either way, it was a good opportunity to see folks cry who never do (myself included). Our new president, Fern Henry, weary following days of meetings, managed to conjure up

applies, it will have been an important something. But there are no more notes, and my brain imploded right after the convention. So as I turn the writing over to my class reviewers, I would like to first acknowledge and thank these volunteers for their efforts, and to the rest of my col-

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Anne Todd

leagues (old and new) who were there, and who made this one of the most memorable conventions I can recall! We'll start with Don Valley, since he also covered some of the pre-Institute activities.

PRE-INSTITUTE

As a good speechmaker once determined, the effective speaker tells the listener three things: 1. What is going to be said; 2. what is being said; 3. what has been said.

That is sort of the way the PTG convention is layered. We all have had a lot of promo to tell us what is going to be said.

The prevailing sense of feeling about the event—from start to finish—is one of great satisfaction where almost everyone was totally pleased in each and every phase: the two days of council session—the hotel and staff—very good and reasonably priced eating places nearby—the array of class offerings—the abbreviated length of opening assembly and banquet—the scrumptious receptions given by Baldwin and Yamaha—the concert given by Steinway. With total registration approaching 900, there was a great sense of completeness and adequacy.

Your board met for two days filled with business prior to the two days of council. You see, much of the material taken up in board session is that which is destined for the council floor. The board operates at the discretion of council. Material presented by committees, chapters, and other factions is discussed and considered by your board prior to council with recommendations for acceptance, refinement, rejection, and so forth.

This year's council worked expediently and judiciously on many matters of concern to you. Seriousness of purpose and level-headed reasoning allowed steady progress toward finalizing

some goals. The two items, perhaps most significant to the complete membership were that of choosing the use of one title for franchised members and just what that would be, followed by the approval of an association logo. Well, to put it briefly, the RTT is now RPT—Registered Piano Technician. Council voted also to adopt the association logo created by The Phelps Group, our professional marketing firm. With that was passed a motion to refrain from the use of it until after next year's convention in Milwaukee. The reason was to give our marketing firm time to work in our behalf on developing some help for each of us as to its best image presentation for our own stationery, business cards, and whatever other documents we might use. The result will be proper, and easily clarified graphics and the correct connection to the use of the PTG name.

In the meantime, we may continue to use our printed materials just as they now stand. This adoption of the association logo in no way affects the RPT use of the emblem we have had all these years. That still stands as the property of the RPT, to be used just as we have been.

Council ratified several new board members.
President: Fern Henry;
Vice-president: Leon Speir;
Southeast Regional Vice President: Eugenia Carter; South Central RVP: Robert Johnson; Pacific Northwest RVP: Taylor Mackinnon.

Many other actions were taken in the two full days of council. Much more will be spelled out in your regional newsletters.

The Institute was divided into several categories of class content. As I chose from more than sixty topics in the standard ninety-minute class format and the twenty-four mini-technical sessions, that overwhelming feeling of too little

time-so-much-to-do overcame me. So, "do something and do it now" took over. Naturally only a sampling of the total was possible. But the recipe book was complete enough to satisfy all appetites.

THE FALSE BEAT STOPS HERE



Relaxing during a break to establish new, and maintain existing friendships

...is Susan Graham's way of helping us realize the many misunderstandings we have had regarding this phenomenon. The whole point is that false beats are created in relationship to terminus points and that proper concern, care, and

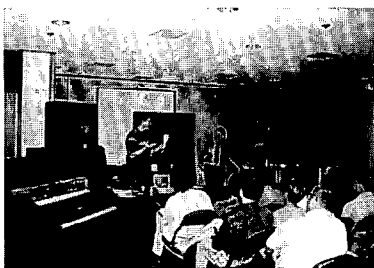
repair of these is the key to their elimination. From Susan's class the technician learned how to correct many frustrations over out-of-tune sensations over out-of-tune circumstances. The attendee learned how to identify problems and where to go after them.

THE DISPOSAL OF A PIANO SERVICE BUSINESS

Have you ever thought of buying or selling a business? A mini-technical session moderated by Sid Stone created an open discussion of figures various people have used in arriving at a fair selling price. Even without an exact standard, certain parameters should be brought into focus for the protection of both the buyer and seller. Also, suggested procedures for a chapter's helping a survivor dispose of the deceased spouse's business topped off a very informative and practical unit.

EXPANDING INCOME VIA NO PRESSURE MARKETING

In a mini-technical format, Gary Kilday of MAFCO gave suggestions as to how the technician can add significantly to income by making clients aware of piano-related products, none of which demand a sizable investment either in



If it doesn't work, get a bigger hammer!

time or money. Some very practical ideas!

MANAGING YOUR TIME

Another jam-packed half hour of help in the efficient use of our time was directed by Dave Patterson. Time is money and the waste of either is proportionately destructive.

MIDI, FOR NON-MIDI PERSONS

MIDI—A new subject this year, and a timely one, taught by Norman Heischouer, covered in a very comprehensible manner a basic understanding of this standardized language of transferring messages from one type of electronic expression to that of a different type. For example, you can know how to get a computer and a piano and a printer to talk to each other (or send and receive messages—or signals) for communicating an

understanding of each other's signals. The more an electronic keyboard player realizes he can return to play the regular piano and still have the facility of the electronic sounds concurrently, the greater the demand for our technical ability in working with Music Instrument Digital Interface—MIDI!

GULBRANSEN MIDI-PIANO RETROFIT

Electronic engineer Anthony Sarain of Gulbransen taught a class on the ease and speed of installing MIDI attachments to the pianos our clients now own. It is not coming, people—it is here! A great way to expand your business in a very tangible way.

CUSTOM GRAND HAMMER INSTALLATION

...and related techniques requires an instructor of extended experience. Dave

Snyder's knowledge in this field is supported by everyday experience. Discussion of the need to return to original tone for the rebuilt older piano led to the requirement for reducing hammer size in order to achieve greater resiliency. With today's larger and harder hammers, such a process is necessary for true reproduction of the original lighter more resilient hammer. A thorough approach as to simple tests used to determine hammer density, how touch weight is affected by improper hammer size, and tests for key frame position when considering a change in strike point filled the class time with exacting and practical knowledge for any who have to meet the expectations of the better piano musician.

SHOP PROCEDURES FOR FUN & PROFIT

When editor Jim Harvey mounts the saddle to ride a class, it goes where he wants it or the spurs are applied. A new

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class for Jim. He struck some notes we all could put into cleaner unisons. If you do not have space dedicated to certain procedures, what do you do about it? What about the environment of your work place? How do you deal with the big, seemingly endless job? Can you make money replacing spinet elbows? Do you perform all tasks related to one note prior to going on to another, or do you work gang style? These questions as well as many others were tackled with answers, rounded out with practical tips as well as common sense. With Jim, it cannot be any other way.

DONT BE AFRAID OF SQUARE PIANOS

Afraid of square grands? In a mini-technical framework, Michael Kimbell encouraged attendees to not be fearful of this element of our trade. How you deal with clients in this regard as to their expectations is of utmost importance. The listing of certain items to carry with you and a useful Rough and Ready Temperament of Michael's promotion, as well as other suggestions, helped class members to come away encouraged and with a more open-minded attitude in our attention to be given this museum beauty. Obviously, the mini-class is not adequate for a subject such as this. Only the surface

could be skimmed because of the restrictions of time.

FROM THE BOTTOM UP

Norm Neblett's detailed slide and sample work presentation of pedal lyre, trap, and damper rod repair and care takes the carelessness and fear from those who casually approach this crucial zone of piano manufacture. His well-thought-out methodical directions create an environment of perfection when the process has been thoroughly worked over. The many spots of the ordinary, as well as the inordinate noises and squeaks, not to mention the unusual structural peculiarities, were completely exposed. This class allowed those who might ignore this area of piano work to realize how basic and yet necessary it is to have a complete familiarity and working knowledge of it. Many how-tos in the areas of glues, gluing techniques, tools, lubricants, materials, and sizes of parts, including changes and adaptations in this zone helped the class to be secure in making repairs. It is a fact: a loose lyre will soon be a broken lyre.

RELIABLE GRAND REGULATING

A practical step-by-step approach to this often mystifying subject. Danny

Boone approaches this procedure within several defined categories. The process begins with a thorough and complete check system, rather than jumping right off into the fine details of the full development of regulation. Once the check points are undertaken, corrections are understood and assumed. These being completed, then a full regulation procedure is undertaken. The total procedure is determined on a postcard-size chart of fifty-seven steps.

RESTORING THE VERTICAL KEYS & ACTION

Richard Elrod of Samick took the avenue of vertical regulation and troubleshooting for this class. Attention was initially given to the most frequent concerns—that of noises. Answers were given to such problems as: worn key holes, tight flanges, stiff wippens, tight keys, damper rod squeaks, position of regulating button rail, leveling sharps the factory way, and the proper setting and regulation of bridle straps. Mr. Elrod fed this class an overwhelming amount of common-sense practical procedures, techniques, tips, and suggestions to take the fear out of upright piano repair and regulation. The gray areas of bridle straps, locations of friction, and others were sensibly explained with ease and clarity.

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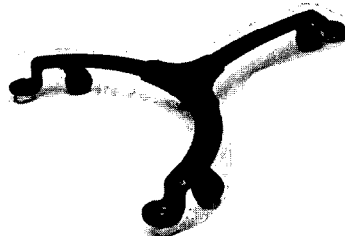


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INTROSPECTIVE

Now, why didn't you attend? These technical institutes are the stage where the sharing of technical knowledge is in concert. There is not just something for everyone—it is everything for everyone. New trends are exposed and explored. Old trends and proven techniques are challenged and refined. If you are not up front in this technical bonanza, you are not riding the crest of the ever-surging wave in piano technology. You will find others advancing beyond you where they will be those sought out for their expert knowledge and abilities in technical skills. Those on the rise are those who have attended all they possibly can squeeze in because they realize that essential factor: one cannot survive among the fittest without continuing education.

WILL I SEE YOU IN MILWAUKEE?

*Don Valley, RPT
Western Carolinas Chapter*

TIME IS MONEY

I don't know any technicians who think they have an over-abundance of either time or money. So why bother to ponder this unpleasant fact of life? But Colette Collier tackled these topics effectively in her high-energy class, "Time is Money". Her practical tips and insights highlighted the ways we often undervalue our time and shortchange ourselves on the way to the bank.

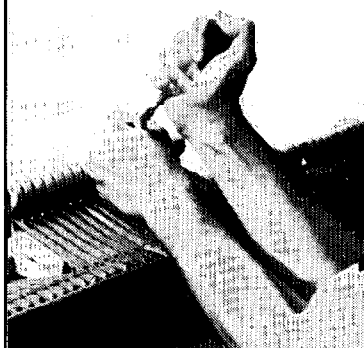
What's so important about time?

Colette contrasted selling a product with selling a service. If you sell a product, the object is clear—to make more money, you have to sell more products in the same amount of time. But as technicians who provide a service, we have only our time to sell. In this class, she demonstrated how we can make our time more profitable by 1) recognizing the value of our time; 2) investing it rather than wasting it; and 3) becoming more efficient.

How much is our time worth?

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We can get a sense of what our service is worth by comparing with other services in our location. (In my area, electricians charge about \$35/hour, phone repairs cost \$56.50 for the first 15 minutes, and furnace repair companies charge \$54 for after-hours service calls. Of course, there is the issue of priorities. I can just hear it now. "Honey, I know the furnace is broken and the kids are frozen, but the piano needs tuning too—do you think the furnace could wait?").

We need to recognize how continuing education makes us more valuable to our customers. Attending PTG seminars sharpens our technical skills and increases our knowledge of the field. This is what Colette calls a "front-end load": an investment of our time and money that our customers benefit from and therefore should pay for down the road.

We can become customer service professionals who provide a level of personalized service that allows us to charge well for our time. (I've seen research that shows that businesses that provide good customer service can charge 9% more for the same service.)

How much do "normal" people work?

Setting realistic working hours begins by being honest about the number of "non-billable" hours we put in. She asked the class how many tunings were a full-day's work—many people said four. Colette's answer: four if you have a wife, three if you don't. She pointed out that the greatest challenge of the self-employed is the difficulty of separating business time from personal time.

Running our business as if time really mattered

Some of Colette's suggestion for business policies were:

- Charge for failed appointments. "We can only sell each block of time once." She has a beeper and car phone so customers can reach her at any time to arrange or alter appointments.
- Discount only for three or more pianos in one location. "Discounts do not breed full-price customers." Instead, she prefers

to give coupons of five dollars off to teachers for referrals.

- Give a time range to customers for the appointment—let them wait for us, like doctors who have patients in the waiting room. (I don't think she means, "I'll be there sometime between Monday afternoon and Wednesday morning".)

Invest it, don't waste it

If we're working and not being paid for it (office time, conferences, marketing, etc.), then we're either investing our time or wasting it. Invested time, just like money, pays future dividends, such as gaining technical experience or getting more referrals. She gave three other reasons to spend time working without immediate financial rewards: 1) servicing our debts—paying back the debt we owe to

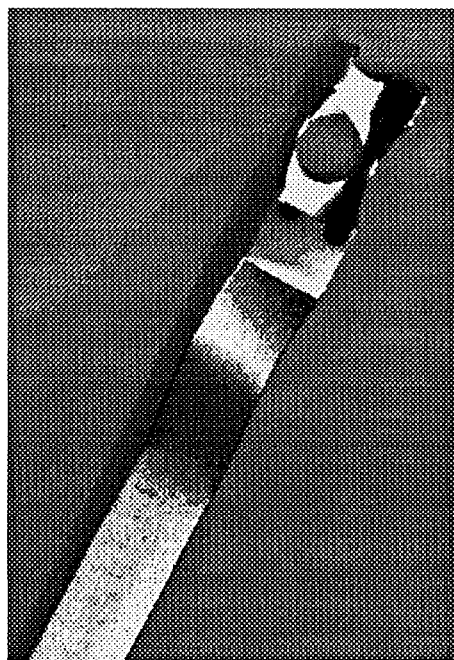
PTG; 2) spending time to save it, as in fixing a squeaking pedal now, rather than returning a week later for a call-back; and 3) planning: She stressed that planning helps us avoid wasting time on things that aren't important, and gives us long-term perspective that can otherwise get lost in the pressure of daily work.

Wasted time includes some activities we shouldn't do at all, and others that we have to do but need to do more efficiently. In the what I call the "just don't do it" category, she includes diagnosing with the customer over the phone, and making reminder calls: "They're co-dependents." (But I would argue that although reminder calls may foster an unhealthy dependency, I'd rather risk sending a customer to therapy than waiting out in the hinterlands for a someone who has forgotten our appointment.)

Time-saving tips for efficiency

In my book, being disorganized isn't a sin, but it won't pay the taxes either. Search and rescue missions in the office and just plain forgetfulness can hamper the most organized soul. Colette shared a number of tips for increasing efficiency:

- Use "Quicken," a financial software program by Intuit, for efficient bookkeeping. It saves time and improves planning by providing important financial reports;
- Put papers in 3-ring binders for easy reference. Colette practices what she preaches—she taught the class from a 3-ring binder.
- Print reminder cards and invoices on a computer using NEBS (New England Business Supply) forms. Let the computer do all the work. (NEBS: 1-800-284-6723);
- Keep a small spiral memo book always at hand. It's useful for making notes about everything;
- Buy a car phone and a beeper—her most passionate suggestion. Colette juggles the



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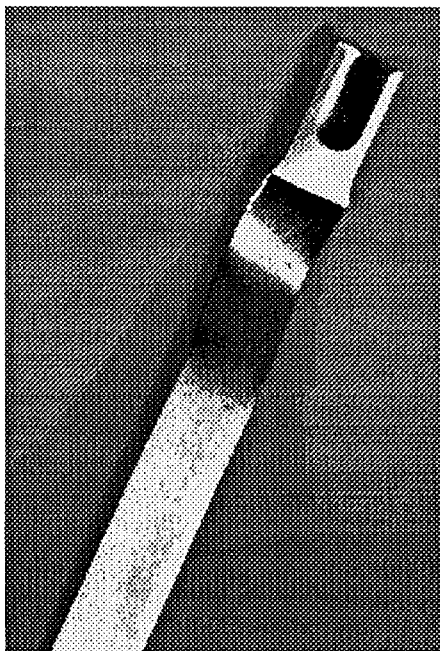
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demands of business, family, and PTG with a car phone and beeper. (She admits needing the "premium talker" plan.)

Time at conventions costs money, too: it's expensive to travel and to take time away from earning income. But based on the lively audience participation, Colette's suggestions and insights made this use of time and money an investment rather than a waste.

Evelyn Smith, RPT
Central North Carolina
Chapter

STEINWAY ON STAGE

Saturday night Steinway and Sons sponsored a concert by The Billy Taylor Trio, who gave a celestial performance for several hundred lucky piano technicians and guests. Those of us who had attended the class held earlier that afternoon, however, had a special insight into the players and the piano.

Dr. Taylor, Victor Gaskin (bass), and Bobby Thomas (percussion) had just finished their warm-up. They had brought with them Jim Anderson, one of New York's finest sound technicians. The discussion began with the sound system.

In jazz, almost everything is improvised. To allow this extemporaneous conversation to take place, it is essential for the performers to hear each other well. Good miking and on-stage monitors allow each musician to hear a balanced sound. The sound technician then adjusts the house system to provide the audience with a sound that is as close as possible to what the performers are experiencing. This situation is quite different from a classical recital where sound reinforcement is considered heretical.

Jim Anderson prefers good-quality condenser microphones placed between the lid and the strings. He has had poor results with PZM mikes and with locations underneath the piano or in the holes of the plate. As is his practice, Jim used two microphones on the Steinway D; he always keeps them at least three times as far from each other as they are from the strings. He showed us how he moves them around for proper balance. Jim sometimes adds a third mike if he wants a stringy sound or extra brilliance.

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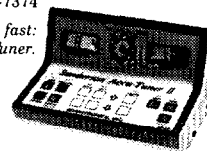
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We learned quickly, however, that microphones cannot make up for deficiencies in the piano. Scott Jones, Steinway's Coordinator of Technical Training Services and the technician for the performance, installed several replacement hammers in the piano. He demonstrated the effect of over-needling, heavy lacquering, and un-level filing. Dr. Taylor was reluctant to play with the trio while the piano was in this condition because the drummer and bassist would lose his musical train of thought whenever those notes were played. The sound technician tried several ways to remedy the problem, all of which made the flaws even more apparent and distorted the piano's overall effect.

Then Scott discussed the crown voicing system used in the Concert and Artist Department at Steinway Hall. Tone is built with lacquer, or more commonly acetone and keytop solution (8 oz. to 1 keytop), applied to the crown of the hammer and allowed to seep all the way to the underfelt. This method builds lots of power in the hammer. It also adds noise, which has to be systematically removed by proper string levelling, hammer filing, hammer travel and burn-in, and multiple passes of precise needling and elimination of open strings. The needles are applied directly into the crown, one needle at a time in the groove of the string that is too loud or noisy. For stability, they are

driven into the underfelt. The idea is maximum placement but minimum number of strokes. This technique has proven very successful over the decades, but requires care, control and practice.

Amongst all this, Dr. Taylor regaled us with humorous and astonishing anecdotes of his experiences around the globe. He played bits and pieces at the piano during these demonstrations, and then played a few tunes with the trio. All together, it was an exceptional experience, which was only enhanced by hearing the outstanding performance that evening, after the piano had been tuned and voiced up a bit. Let's hope that this is only the first of a series of Steinway on Stage.

STEINWAY DESIGN: FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

There are many details in the manufacturing of Steinway pianos that are not readily apparent yet affect the way these fine instruments perform. Scott Jones discussed a few of these small but important design concepts for this class. The structure of the piano, especially the plate, was the first item he discussed. At the front, the strings are anchored by tuning pins in the pinblock, which is securely fastened to the plate and the rim. At the hitch pin end the strings try to lift

the plate. The rim bolts counter this force. Nose bolts keep the plate from flexing in the middle. The forces on the rim and the plate meet at the top corner of the pinblock. This is why Steinway puts so much care into the fit of the pinblock, at the top as well as along the flange. The other concentration of force is under the piano, where the plate horn meets the metal shoe on the cross block. This shoe actually connects the horn directly to the spruce beams, which also stabilizes the plate and cross block. A metal wedge is hammered in place before stringing to assure contact. At pitch, the tension of the strings holds it very securely. This wedge will occasionally fall out if the piano is unstrung.

Scott then moved on to trap lever geometry. The total leverage between the sustaining pedal and the damper tray varies in the different grands. Models S, M, and L have the highest leverage because the keys are shortest. This puts the dowel (pitman) close to the pedal rod. The result is a stiffer pedal and greater tendency for the dampers to thump when the pedal is released. If necessary, this can be improved by relaxing the trap lever spring, putting in a little more lost motion at the damper tray and limiting upward travel.

Scott reminded us that the pivot points for the damper tray and the underlevers are not in line. When the

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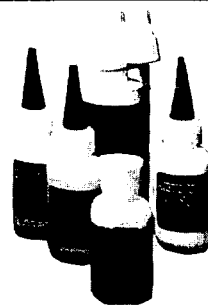
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pedal is depressed, the underlever pivots are lifted. This is the reason for regulating the Steinway damper stop rail with lost motion when both a sharp key and the damper pedal are depressed.

Why a sharp? A sharp is shorter than a natural, and yet all 88 capstans must rise the same distance. For proper feel, the balance pins are further back, the wood behind the sharp's keytops is higher at rest, and more dip is required. This means the key end felt and backchecks on the sharps are higher when the front is depressed. On today's models S, M, and L, the natural key dip is approximately .420 inches. Sharp dip is set to get the same aftertouch, but will measure closer to .443. Model B and D dip is at least .390, and often more. On all models, sharp height is recommended to be never less than half an inch.

Steinway keys are leveled slightly higher at middle C (about 1/32nd inch). This follows the shape of the keybed, which also has a slight crown. The keyframe has a slight reverse crown to it and is pinched by the keyblocks. The amount of pinch is adjusted with shims under the front of the keyblocks, and should be only enough to pull the ends of the keyframe down to the keybed. Steinway has found this system provides them with reliably solid contact along the entire length of the front rail.

Tubular action rails are characteristic of Steinway pianos. These rails become much more rigid after all the flanges are screwed on. The flanges are designed to contact the rail along the crimps (ridges), with the cloth underneath acting as a pressure washer. The crimps stiffen the rail and allow for expansion of the maple dowel (installed at moisture contents lower than soundboards). This means the brass tube is effectively spring-loaded, which eliminates rattling in dry weather. The maple core allows for use of wood screws and makes for easy repair of stripped threads.

Steinway changed some action dimensions around 1984, principally in knuckle placement. In current production, the knuckle is slightly farther from the center pin. This results in slightly different leverage. To maintain the same hammer blow distance the key must move farther, and less force is required. This idea had been tried earlier by concert

pianist Josef Hofmann, in the 1930s. He reversed the position of the center pin and drop screw. This was a marked change, resulting in a very light and very deep action. Hofmann liked it, and about 50 such actions were built. Because there have been design changes over the years, problems can arise when replacing parts. It is possible to mix new hammershanks and old wippens, but in general it is best to match parts. When ordering from Steinway, include the piano's serial number, or call Glorie LeFrak at customer service for help.

Backchecks have also changed. Years ago, backcheck wires were inserted at an angle not perpendicular to the key. This yielded more flex in the wire, which required a longer backcheck. Modern backchecks wires are inserted in line with the forces generated when the hammer goes into check. Scott warned us about raising backchecks: you know they're too high when the hammer felt catches on the leather as it bounces on the rest cushion. You can also set checking distance too high: the check grabs the tail as the hammer rises, especially on a hard blow (test this by pushing down gently on the top of the hammer as you press down on

the key), or else the end of the tail will bounce off the top of the backcheck (test with a soft blow with the action in the piano).

The final topic was Steinway's hammer making process. The most significant change is the new hydraulic press, which has replaced a wrench and a tired workman. The other obvious change was eliminating the color in the reinforcement. The colorant was environmentally undesirable and produced cosmetic inconsistencies. The reinforcement is still in the low shoulders, but it is now less visible.

Once again, Scott Jones presented another fine class on the Steinway piano. He always brings clarity and humor to his classes, and of course some excellent visual aids. Scott teaches the factory seminars for select technicians at Steinway's manufacturing facility in New York. Those who have been to one of his classes understand a lot more about these famous instruments; those who have not, should.

Doug Wood, RPT
Seattle Chapter

J

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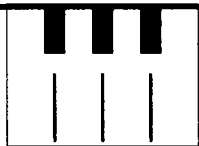


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Foundation News



Bruce Dornfeld, RPT

A Museum Of PIANO TECHNOLOGY

T

he Piano Technicians Guild Foundation is making plans to create a Museum of Piano Technology.

This has been under consideration since October of 1991, and the opportunity to use the new PTG-owned home office has us more excited than ever.

Our vision of a museum includes three separate divisions: a research library, organizational historical archives, and a museum of tools and related paraphernalia. I will elaborate on these.

The Foundation has maintained the Steve Jellen Library since its inception in 1982. As mentioned last month, this lending library has been virtually unused and is smaller and somewhat redundant compared to most chapter libraries. The new museum will house a research library of rare and out of print books and other materials that are not so common in chapter libraries. Since much of this material will be fragile and irreplaceable, it will be available for use only in the Kansas City facility. We hope this will become the home of several libraries that are now privately owned. One name for this new library that we are considering is the William Braid White Research Library. Tell us what you think.

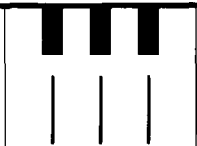
The organizational historical archives are currently PTG property. We have photos, newspaper articles, convention programs, and reams of correspondence from PTG's early days. In the museum we expect to office some displays of these items, as well as videotaped interviews with such luminaries as Putt Crawl, George Defebaugh and Fred Drasche. Honoring those who have guided us will be an important theme.

The museum itself will be composed mainly of tools. It is a bit hard to elaborate on this right now because we do not have a thing to display yet. Those of you who saw the old tools displayed at the PTG Annual

Convention in Dallas two year ago have an idea of what we hope to start with.

We hope to get the tools, books, and other material donated or loaned to the Foundation by you and everyone involved in piano technology. Any donations to the PTG Foundation are tax deductible. Right now, I ask any of you who may have tools, books or other appropriate materials, to send us a list of items you may donate or lend. If you have books, please give us the title, author, edition date, and whether it is hard cover or soft. If tools, please describe them, give approximate age and the name of people who used them if known. We also need display cases for the museum. We do not expect to accept any donations of pianos.

Please send your lists and any comments to the Home Office. Money will be needed to make this dream a reality, so don't forget to donate to the Foundation. A separate fund will be earmarked for Museum development. Please send your check with a note that it is for the new Museum project. Honor your past, invest in your future!



Tuning Corner

Tuning With Hearing Aids? Certainly!

Daniel L. Bowman, RPT

Contributing Editor

Richmond Chapter

Editors note: Dan's subject this month deals with an issue that many of us must face sooner or later: that of hearing loss, whether natural due to the aging process, or other reasons. When the subject is discussed at all, which is rare, it usually concerns not being able to hear higher frequencies as well as before, or perhaps a failure to hear a buzz, jingle, or rattle as pointed out by the client. Whatever the case, I have received correspondence asking for confidential advice on this subject. This is understandable, because a tuner's hearing is not only a point of pride, it also deals with one's vanity. Consider the following information, extracted from the Gateway Tuner Newsletter, as quoted from Dr. Dolores Grebe, Chiropractic Physician:

Everybody gets it. It is just a matter of how bad. This is not inflammatory arthritis, but is degeneration due to wear and tear of everyday living. It is mainly due to the effects of gravity and poor posture. However, an injury which has not been treated may result in early degeneration of the involved body part. It is also a result of lack of motion at a joint. The body requires movement to keep healthy, yet aberrant movement at a joint will increase the onset of osteoarthritis.

Osteoarthritis can be found at any joint of the body. Even the most tiny bones, the ossicles of the ear, may become involved. When this happens hearing may become impaired. Be aware that this can happen to anyone, even piano tuners. Perfection with aural tuning may become difficult, but other options are available. This may be a good time to become more familiar with electronic tuning aids.

For these reasons, and at my request, Dan has extended the suggestion of electronic tuning aids with that of electronic hearing aids. I hope you enjoy the results of his efforts as much as I did! -jh-

This article is written in consultation with Jeffrey M. Rinehart, Hearing Aid Specialist, Wagner Hearing Aid Service, Inc., Harrisonburg, VA.

Is it possible to enjoy music wearing hearing aids? Yes. Is it possible to produce music wearing hearing aids? Yes. Is it possible to tune pianos wearing hearing aids? Yes. Is it possible to enjoy and produce art wearing glasses? Yes. Is it possible to fly a Boeing 747 wearing glasses and hearing aids? Yes!

Notice how these questions are phrased from the standpoint of anxious doubt or prejudice as though the hearing aid is an undesirable obstacle. The vision questions were included to help show this. In reality the hearing aid, like glasses, is a problem solver, a facilitator. Often the problem of hearing difficulty comes up among tuners, and sometimes visual tuning is seen as the solution. But, don't forget, the ear is still the final arbiter. If you tried hearing aids three to five years ago and didn't like the results, try again. Developments in hearing aid technology over the past several years are as fantastic as in the electronics industry generally. For some people the hearing aid is or can be as respectable an aid to tuning as that other fantastic electronic tuning aid, the Accu-Tuner.

When discussing hearing problems in connection with piano tuning and voicing, keep in mind that often the problem is not hearing acuity

per se, but rather a problem of orientation and training. How many times have you experienced or heard of situations like these: Once I couldn't hear the beats in the top octave. Now with training and practice I hear them readily. Once I couldn't hear the difference when a voicing needle was stuck into the shoulder of a hammer. Now I most certainly can. Once I couldn't hear what happens to the tone of a grand piano sitting on a concrete floor when it is put onto wood blocks. Now I can. Once I could not discern what people meant by qualities like power, impact, projection. Now these are meaningful realities in my piano work. The piano technician's life is full of hearing problems which are not matters of acuity but of training and orientation. Don't be too quick to conclude that my hearing is not good enough for a career in tuning.

But, sometimes the ultimate question must be faced: How bad can a hearing impairment get before a career in tuning must be ended or ruled out? This question cannot be and should not be answered with a formula such as, "In order to tune adequately, one's hearing must be 85 per cent of normal." One thing for certain, it should not be answered without first having a thorough hearing examination including an investigation into the feasibility of hearing aids. Then answer the question of whether your hearing is good enough by taking the PTG tuning exam. That way you get an objective opinion from the proper experts. Hearing specialists, vocational guid-

ance counselors, and probably also musicians do not know what kind of hearing is needed to do good tuning.

What kind of hearing aid should the piano tuner look for? Whoa, whoa! Wrong question! Don't let your vanity nor a smattering of information about hearing aids from articles like this trip you into going into the hearing aid market with your mind already made up about what you want. That also applies to your realistic concern about what your clients might think. You need professional guidance in selecting the hearing aid best suited for your situation. Correcting hearing is much more complex and expensive than correcting vision. The proper approach is to go first to a physician, preferably otolaryngologist or ENT specialist, then work your way through to an audiologist and licensed hearing aid specialist. The hearing aid specialist is the dealer from whom you buy the hearing aids.

So why write any further? Hearing aids do solve problems, but their fitting and adjustment is more time consuming and frustrating than for glasses. For tuners there are the additional problems associated with the hearing aid's reaction to piano sound. The intent in the following paragraphs is to highlight certain areas which may help you and your

audiologist or specialist focus more quickly on some of these problems. The aim is to help make hearing aids more piano friendly.

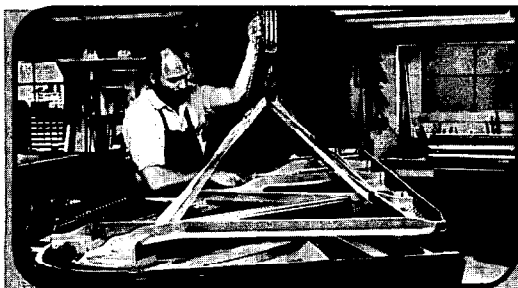
When trying to make hearing aids function better with piano sound, the first thing to keep in mind is that they are designed and built primarily for transmission of human speech. There is an overwhelming good reason for this narrow focus, though many people such as musicians, piano tuners and visually impaired persons are vitally interested in other sounds as well. The reason is unwanted noise. Piping amplified sound directly into the ear does bring improved hearing in many settings, but it also brings a plague of unwanted noise. That is why brand new aids get hidden away in dresser drawers. To cope with this the hearing aid designer/builder first chooses the narrow focus, that is, amplify only the sound frequencies involved in human speech. Then he resorts to quite an array of electronic wizardry called signal processors or noise reduction circuits to further reduce unwanted noise. These techniques do work wonderfully, but when these noise control techniques are overdone or are not properly matched to the individual's needs, we have another set of reasons why hearing aids go into dresser drawers. Sometimes the hearing aid's set up

may be OK for speech, but the individual is unhappy with piano sound. Piano sound seems to be a special challenge to hearing aids. Getting the various noise coping devices of the hearing aid more finely tuned to piano sound can facilitate piano listening. The following are some areas which can be considered when trying to skew the hearing aid's set up in directions more suitable for the piano technician. Some are considerations which must be made at time of initial purchase. Others are adjustments that can be tinkered with later.

There are three basic types of hearing aids. They are in-the-ear, behind-the-ear, and body-aids. All are, or should be, custom fitted to the individual's particular hearing impairment, just like prescribing glasses for a particular vision impairment. With some models, all of this customizing is done by the manufacturer to the audiologist's/specialist's specifications; the user can change nothing without returning the aid to the specialist who in turn may have to return it to the manufacturer. Other models have an assortment of adjustable features which can be set and altered by the local specialist or by the user him/herself. More user adjustable features may be a quagmire for some persons but a God-send for others. In my opinion the piano

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technician's situation calls for a lot of local or user adjustability.

One of the reasons piano sound is a challenge to hearing aids is the piano's very wide frequency range—wider, when including the upper partials of the upper notes, than the normal human hearing range. This problem cannot ordinarily be solved directly by widening the hearing aid's frequency range. But there is an indirect approach. The interface between the ear and hearing aid is the custom fitted plastic ear mold. This mold can be made quite tight acoustically, virtually shutting out all sound except that from the hearing aid. Or, through the use of a vent hole, the mold can be made quite open acoustically. In this case the hearing aid supplements or augments the sound from the outside world. The type of mold and the degree of venting is predetermined by the hearing aid specialist in relation to the particular hearing loss and the life situation of the patient. This is almost as important as the electronic circuitry in successful fitting of hearing aids. Recall that the hearing aid is focused on the narrow range of frequencies required for speech but the piano's sound involves a range even wider than normal hearing. The person equipped with a tight mold will be forced to listen to the piano through the window of a narrow frequency range, and will experience the sound as rather impoverished. The hearing aid specialist does not have an entirely free hand in making that vent as open as he or the patient might want, but I am suggesting that crowding the design of the mold as far on the open side as possible will help with piano sound. Ironically, the piano tuner that must wear a mold that is tighter acoustically than he/she might choose may experience a gain in an important area. One characteristic of that impoverished piano sound mentioned above is that the beating stands out rather starkly. So watch out! That competitor of yours wearing a hearing aid may be hearing the beats more clearly than you do.

Another characteristic of piano sound that challenges hearing aid technology is the very wide dynamic range. Recall the piano's initial attack, sometimes very loud,

crashing and metallic, involving a wide range of frequencies, all fading away into the nether regions of audibility! (What a medium for art!) This wide dynamic range can put the

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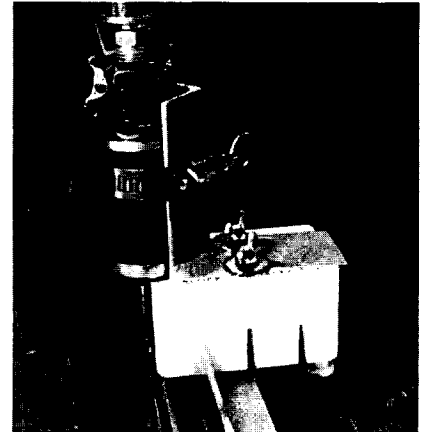
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hearing aid into spasms in its noise reduction circuits or signal processors. Two signal processors of importance to piano sound are automatic volume control (AVC) and automatic gain control (AGC). You are familiar with AVC if you use cassette recorders. This artificially lengthens the piano's decay period. Also, as the piano's sound decays, the AVC circuitry increases the volume of total sound output, thus bringing background noise (hiss) to the fore as the piano's tone fades away. This can be quite annoying to the devotee and critic of piano sound. Worse yet for piano sound is AGC. AGC is like AVC except that it acts on specific frequencies rather than total volume output and its attack and release timing is in micro seconds. This can produce a fine metallic sizzle-like distortion to the piano's tone. Don't go trying to file the capo bar; just turn the AGC setting down a bit. It's easier that way. The initial settings for AVC and AGC are done first by the specialist to his/her

best judgement about how much noise control is needed. The settings are often changed later by the specialist or by the user. The adjustments are usually made by adjusting tiny screws in the body of the aid. Any one who likes to tinker with tiny objects and who likes to listen to fine nuances of tonal change can do this. That qualifies any good piano technician, right? Remember, in this tinkering you will find that sometimes choices have to be made between making the aid more friendly to speech or to piano sound.

Another foible of hearing aids is that the piano technician should keep alert to is the phenomenon of spiking. Each hearing aid has its own frequency curve, that is a chart showing the amount of gain at the various frequencies. That is as it should be because these different frequency/gain patterns are the key to matching the aid to the varying hearing loss patterns. But hearing aid frequency response curves are not necessarily nicely curved. There are frequencies

where the aids output soars or drops off sharply. On the chart it shows as jagged spikes and valleys. The wearer experiences sounds at some frequencies as too loud and some as not loud enough. The spiking hearing aid is picked up immediately by the piano technician when he plays chromatically up and down the keyboard. Certain notes will come through like gang busters and others will have him reaching for the lacquer bottle. When you find this same pattern on every piano, you'll know it's the hearing aid, not the piano. Implications for voicing are obvious. For the tuner a little extra attention at initial fitting to frequency response curves of different hearing aids with respect to spiking is worth while. In some hearing aids, this spiking problem can be greatly eased by inserting little filters (baffles) into the tubing or channel which carries the sound from the aid to the ear.

Harmonic distortion is another buzz word the piano technician should know. This is not an

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adjustable feature. You want to land in the right ball park here at initial purchase. On hearing aid specification sheets you will see harmonic distortion expressed as a percent value. You want that figure as low as you can get it. Actually, harmonic distortion is but one of several forms of distortion. We can't do a mini course here on problems associated with electronic sound reproduction; that wouldn't help you buy a better hearing aid anyway. But, a most significant observation for the tuner/musician is this: A hearing aid running at half its volume capacity will have less distortion than another producing the same total volume but running at or near its maximum gain. In other words, hearing aids, like stereo systems and public address systems, and indeed also pianos, sound better, that is, have less distortion, if they are designed and built with sufficient capacity to produce the desired output without working at or near maximum capacity. This means that the tuner, who would really like a small invisible aid may have to switch to a larger, perhaps visible, aid to get this larger working capacity.

The serious piano technician may well end up with the hearing aid's adjustments heavily skewed toward good piano listening at the expense of best speech reception. Two sets of aids can be purchased, one set for piano days, worn during the week. The other set for people days like church, the county fair, PTG conventions, etc. The new generation of digital hearing aids with little remote control devices hidden in a pocket (like President Ronald Reagan's) are probably the ultimate answer. The remote control can quickly change whole configurations of settings.

Getting the right hearing aid at initial purchase and then fine tuning the adjustments to the piano technician's needs can be time consuming and exhausting. Look for a very patient specialist to work with you. Offer up front to pay for the extra trial and fitting time your case will require. Don't bargain his price down to the point where he can hardly afford to give you the needed time.

But, you ask, what will be my client's reactions to my hearing aids? To a degree you are at the mercy of other people's innocent and even willful ignorance and prejudice about hearing aids. But, you are not without options! A professional bearing based on solid technical mastery and a self-confident people liking life stance does work wonders in restructuring those attitudes. I am an ex-vocational rehabilitation counselor and I know whereof I speak here. Bad attitudes about disabilities (including hearing aids) and the disabled are out there, yes. But as factors dictating the outcome of your particular case, they are less significant than your own attitude about yourself and your abilities. Regardless of your hearing loss, if you pass the PTG tuning exam, especially with scores at the CTE level, that is an objective measure of what you can do and there is no good reason why you should not stand tall as a professional piano tuner-technician. Go for it!!

J



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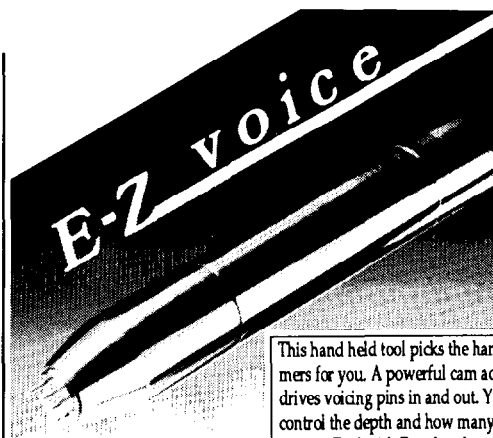
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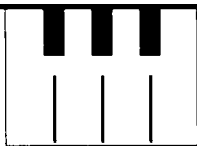
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Pinblock Layout & Cutting:

Another Look

By
Nick Gravagne
Contributing Editor
New Mexico Chapter

T

he last few articles in this series have dealt with various operations and methods for removing and installing

pinblocks. As is always true when writing about a complex subject, any attempt to cover every minute detail will fatten the prose to disgusting proportions. Regarding pinblock work, some readers have expressed either confusion as to how something should actually be done, or newcomer befuddlement with the less than encyclopedic coverage of the topic. I have received a few questions, the answers of which should clarify certain points, or remind many of us of some things we already know.

But first, by way of another reminder, pinblock replacement has also been covered by Susan Graham and Wally Brooks in the August, September, and October 1991 *Journal*. There are certain technical details there—such as how to know what size drill bits are required to fit the plate screws—which I have opted to leave out of this series.

Q: After applying extreme care in laying out and cutting out a Steinway B block, my first trial fit to the flange was grossly disappointing. The entire bass section stood a full 1/8 inch from the flange, the treble section wasn't all that great a fit either, and

the block was shifted towards the bass. I managed to get a tight fit eventually but can't understand why such a careful cutout should have been so far off the mark. Is tracing the bottom edge of the old block onto the top surface

of the new block really the way to do this? Why not trace the top edge onto the new block? Any thoughts?

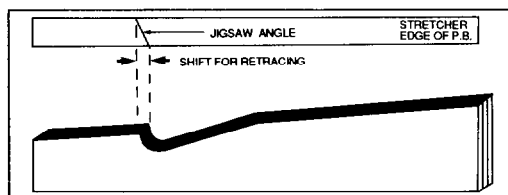
A: Tracing the old blocks bottom edge onto the top surface of the new block may not be ideal, but it remains the most popular way to lay out a new pinblock. Reversing the scheme—using the top edge of the old

block for tracing—simply reverses the problem in that what you get is the top outline of the old block drawn on what will have to be the bottom edge of the new block.

Consider the easiest block to layout and cut—the type which is straight from bass to treble, i.e., there is no notch or cutout between the bass and treble sections. Simply placing the old block on top of the new and tracing the bottom edge will yield a duplication of the original block provided that the correct flange angle is set at the band saw.

Now, is the relationship of old block to new any different for a notched pinblock? Yes, and no. Yes, in the areas of the general flange angle. But in the notch area, anything goes. There are some conditions to anticipate. The familiar shape of the Steinway B block appears in *drawing 1*. Note the large, rounded cut out section. Such notched sections require special care in both assessing the true conditions of block-to-flange interface, as well as in making the saw cut. First, let's consider the plate flange and the flange angle. Due to inconsistencies in either the original wooden pattern (for casting), or in control of cooling procedures, or in any subsequent machining of the casting, the general flange angle is usually not exactly the same from bass to treble, although it is close. But check the design angle in the notch area! Not only is it often nowhere near the general angle, but, as in the case of the Steinway B, it changes significantly (steeper angle) as it sweeps around the turn.

Cutting out and fitting such a block requires some thought. I can tell you how some of us do this. Trace the old block onto the new material as usual. But before any cuts are made the notch area must be retraced. Note that if you study Drawing 1, and with a little thought, it is obvious that the notch trace line must be moved (relatively translated) towards the bass. For the Steinway B this line must be moved by about a quarter inch towards the bass. The drawing shows how to determine the amount to shift the block. Complicated? Not really.



Drawing 1

TRACING AND RETRACING

One method for tracing and retracing is this. Draw or scribe as usual the bottom edge of the old block onto the top edge of the new. Now, while keeping the old block more or less lined up with the trace line, shift the old block towards the bass by the required amount. With the old block in this position, retrace the curve of the notch. It is *this* line that will be used for making the saw cut. Understand that you will now have *two* lines forming the notch curve (part of the curve, actually): one which represents the top curved line, and another which represents the bottom line. If you were to darken in the area formed by these two lines, what you have is a two-dimensional representation of the vertical *flange face* in a short section of the notch area.

The real purpose of this technique is not so much to make fitting that rounded cutout section easier, but to insure that the left-to-right orientation of the new block remains positioned relative to the plate flange. Failure to move the trace line at the notch towards the bass will yield a newly cut block which is entirely shifted towards the bass relative to the actual plate flange. In addition, with the notch cut properly laid out, the rebuilder can work with reasonable assurance that the remainder of the fitting process will serve to close the gaps at the flange, but not significantly shift the block left or right. This discussion also applies to the simpler type of notched blocks as found in the Steinway A, M, O, and L. These blocks are easier to fit since they do not have a rounded cut out section containing a wildly varying angle.

Set the band saw to the correct general angle and cut as far through the treble and tenor as possible. Ignore

GENERAL CUTTING OF THE BLOCK

the sharper radius of the notch area. Since it can't be cut in one pass

anyway, just bypass it. The August cover of the *Journal* shows John Ellinthorpe cutting out a pinblock on a band saw. The direction of the feed of the block through the blade is from treble to bass. This feed direction allows for the block to be cut well into the notch area. After sawing as far as possible into the notch, the block can be backed up a bit, and the cutting continued through the bass section. Note that the tilting saw table only has to be set once for the entire cut.

CUTTING THE NOTCH

Once the general cut has been made, set the block in a Workmate or some such holding device so that the notch can be cut out with a sabre saw. My sabre saw, a 3 amp Skill rated at one-third horsepower, and variable at zero to 3,200 strokes per minute, is not super powerful but it is up to this task. Set the saw angle per the original block as shown in the drawing, and make the cut. The typical sabre saw blade may be a bit too wide to turn through the radius of the cut without binding. If so, nibble a wider kerf into the waste material for the necessary clearance.

FIRST FIT—UGH!

Now what do you have after making this cut? A block that is not even close to fitting the flange. Why? The notch section angle cut was made at a too-shallow, uniform angle. But, as already explained, the flange angle in this section varies, getting steeper as it gets deeper into the turn, and then lessening as it meets the general angle in the tenor section. So, in order for the block to mate with the flange here, that varying angle needs to be rasped into the wood since it couldn't be cut in, either at the band saw, or with the sabre saw. A rotary rasp chucked in an electric drill works well for this operation. The block fitting procedure is the usual tap and rasp as explained in an earlier article. As the

varying notch angle begins to come into sync, the long block sections of treble and bass begin to meet the flange as well. Eventually, contact between the block and flange becomes evident everywhere, and what first looked to be an impossible fitting task finally looks not only possible, but inevitable.

Possibly the best plan for tracing out a new pinblock would be somehow to accomplish transferring the *top* of the old pinblock contour to the *top* surface of the new block. Then the angled cuts could be made everywhere without regard to adjustments and retracing. In the future I will try this by using a pattern to pick up the old block's top contour. If it works I'll let you know.

Q: You mentioned...a technique called cheap-glassing in a recent article. Aside from using a plastic resin (water mix) glue, is there something else that might be used?

A: The idea of cheap glassing refers to the technique of filling in relatively short or thin block-to-flange gaps with a glue or epoxy-type filler. Cheap glassing suggests a spot touch-up to a traditional wood-to-flange fit as opposed to an all-out epoxy fit.

An excellent product for quickie glassing is called Marine Tex. Call your local boat sales and service store and ask for it. Marine Tex is a two-part epoxy resin substance, and is ideally suited for spot pinblock glassing. The stuff I get locally comes in a two-ounce jar (cost about \$6.00). A small vial of catalyst is included¹. The Marine Tex, which is white (and dries white), has a consistency not unlike half-melted Turkish taffy, but once the catalyst is added the stuff becomes creamy and spreadable. In fact, I determine when I've added enough catalyst according to consistency rather than the volume-by-parts recipe. The substance doesn't run or sag when applied to a vertical surface, it's shatterproof, and is unaffected by cold as low as -60 degrees F, or heat as high as 300 degrees F—which means,

unless you work for certain educational institutions, you won't have to worry about temperature failure.

So when do I use Marine Tex? A scenario would be this: the new block has been dry-fitted with no thought of needing any glassing tricks. The fitting worked out fine except for, say, a two-inch length of thin gap which just won't seem to go away no matter what I do. Why fight it? Why spend an hour or more working the entire length of the pinblock edge when a quick glassing technique is available? So I mix up the epoxy, apply it to the pinblock edge at the gap area, position the block and clamp it in place both to the web and into the flange to squeeze out excess epoxy. The iron flange must be treated with a release agent or the block and plate will be epoxied together. For this purpose I use steel wool wax (check your piano supply catalog under refinishing supplies). Rub a generous but not sloppy film of wax onto the flange; when the Marine Tex has dried, the block and flange will separate with no trouble.

(Note: Marine Tex can also be used to fill tricky cracks in soundboards. Since it dries white, coloring agents, as found in arts supply stores, must be mixed in to change the hue to something acceptable. Experiment with coloring and hardening before actually using the mixture in a soundboard).

Q: I recently installed a new block in a Steinway M and noticed that the stretcher-to-block joint is not perpendicular to the keybed. To achieve a full-fit, the stretcher edge of the new block should have an angled cut, right? When in the process should this be done, and how does all this impact your techniques of using a pattern for outlining and cutting out pinblocks?

A: This one's easy. In *all* pinblock fittings the flange fit should be made at the plate first. Once that has been done the extra material at the ends of the block and at the stretcher edge can be removed. The stretcher cut is the last one I make. When the

new block requires an angled stretcher cut, simply set the band saw to the angle and make the cut. When working with full patterns as I do, there are no additional considerations to deal with. Just remember which way the angle goes and cut along the line as if a right angle cut were being made.

Q: I achieved a real tight fit of the block to the flange, installed all plate screws (the fit was still good), and finally cut the block ends and stretcher edge for a nice full-fit. The block was installed in the case, but when I finally screwed the plate to the new block I thought I might check the flange fit one last time. I was distressed to find a gap along the bass edge of 0.0004 inch! How can this be? Anyway, I loosened all screws, applied clamps to the plate and stretcher face to close the gap, and re-tightened the plate screws. When I removed the clamps the gap was gone. But will it reappear?

A: This rebuilder did well in making that last check. It should be a habit. The clamping remedy was the right one, and the gap will not reappear. But even if she had missed that gap, chances are good that once the bass strings were pulled to pitch the thin gap would have mostly, if not completely, closed. It remains something of a mystery why, after all the previous painstaking work, the thin gap should appear at all, but it often does. Possibilities include: a slight change having taken place in plate-to-flange orientation after the new block had been glued in place; upper nose bolt shanks can sometimes slightly inhibit a natural full contact of flange to block; and plate screws which either aren't centered, or are off-center toward the *rear* of the piano, will mate with countersunk plate holes such as to drive the block away from a tight flange fit. If plate screws are going to be off-center, favor the *front* half of the hole. Then, when the screw is driven home into the countersink, a force will be exerted which drives the block *towards* the flange rather than away from it. It is a good idea when install-

ing plate screws to bring each one to a lightly snug fit at first. This process allows the block and plate to float and adjust until all screws are installed.

MISCELLANEOUS

Now, let me clarify or expand upon some points made in previous articles.

On Pinblock removal—make sure to *completely* drill out the one-half inch diameter dowels which go through the block and into the bass and treble shelves. Using a half inch bit usually doesn't work. Better is a five-eighths (or even larger) spade bit working in a powerful half-inch capacity electric drill motor. Check your hardware stores for long-shanked spade bits; mine are sixteen inches long. Also, remember that these dowels were originally installed at an angle of about five degrees. If these dowels aren't properly drilled out they will present considerable difficulty in forcing the block up off the keybed with the use of a scissors jack or stringing support. Even if you are one of those who prefers to cut the block out and chisel off the waste ends still clinging to the shelves, it helps to drill out the dowels.

While on the subject, *anytime* you use a chisel to either purposely or inadvertently wedge apart the pinblock from any case parts (rim or stretcher) you run a real risk of doing damage to case joints. Sometimes this damage will run all the way down into the cheeks. You may have gotten lucky in the past, but I guarantee that sooner or later wedging techniques are going to buy you some tricky case and veneer repairs. Just avoid the problem—don't wedge.

Now, having said this, let's once again consider sawing old pinblocks out of cases. No saw can make the stretcher cut all the way to the bass rim or the treble rim. These last little lengths must be chiseled out all the way down to the shelves. While doing this, keep in mind that what you are doing is cutting out a clear-

ance by removing old block material. Stay alert not to drive the chisel such that it begins to wedge things apart.

This caution is especially in order at the ends of the old block, where they butt into the outer rim. If you are the type (as I am) who prefers to remove as much of the original block intact as possible, you will have to chisel out a v-channel at the bass and treble ends. It is not always necessary to chisel all the way down to the shelves, but sometimes you must before the block will break loose. Again, take pains to avoid using the chisel as a wedge as it is very easy to separate the rim from the stretcher, and to open up the cheeks.

Finally, when fitting and installing the new block, a tight fit to the outer rims is a goal. But, don't overdo it either. If you must pound the block into place it is too tight; light tapping is the most force that should be required. Some rebuilders purposely cut the new block a quarter of an inch or so too short at the bass end. The final fit is achieved by driving a hardwood wedge down into the gap. If this appeals to you, easy does it.

Next month we'll address drilling operations.

J

¹ Ed. note: It is advisable when working with any catalyst-activated materials, to make up a small batch and test the results. These materials invariably have a shelf life, and its better to know ahead of time, rather than risk jeopardizing hours of work. Even newly purchased products can be bad, depending on how long they've been on the dealers shelf.

-jh-

Industry News

Brenda Dillon Selected As National Facilitator For PMAI Market Development Program

DALLAS, TX—Brenda Dillon, Project Director for the National Piano Foundation, was selected by the Piano Manufacturers Association International Executive Committee as the NPF Facilitator for PMAI's SPELLS Program. (Study of Piano Enhances Learning and Life's Success.) Piano retailers throughout the country have submitted applications for initial review, and funding decisions were to have been made by late August.

Dillon, a professor of music at Brookhaven College in Dallas, is on the board of the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy, serves as associate editor of *Keyboard Companion* magazine and presents workshops and clinics throughout the U.S. In addition to numerous magazine articles, she has co-authored two music texts. She has served as consultant to projects from Wurlitzer, Musitronic and Yamaha. As NPF Project Director, Dillon has coordinated videos, brochures, slide/script presentations and the "Piano Marketing Essentials" kit. She also edited the *Call Report*, a newsletter for district managers for PMAI member companies.

In the early 1980s, Dillon founded and chaired a "Support

Music Network" for Dallas. "Although our purpose at that time was to maintain music programs in the schools," Dillon notes, "there are many similarities between that networking concept and the SPELLS Program. Both require teamwork and a passion for communicating the benefits of music to the general community."

Dillon states, "The cornerstone of the SPELLS Program is getting retailers to set aside their differences and work together with teachers and technicians to promote the benefits of active piano participation". Campaign elements include generic television advertisements, public service announcements, special events, a targeted public relations program, publicity focused on National piano month, a Music Speakers Bureau and the support of Dillon as a facilitator. In tandem with SPELLS, PMAI is funding academic research to substantiate the benefits of piano playing and technicians.

Knowledge On Tap...

...Come See What's Brewing In

Milwaukee In 1993

It's not too early to start planning to attend the 1993 Convention and Technical Institute...guaranteed to be full of information, training, fun and friends. Watch for upcoming brochures explaining details about how to be a part of the excitement in Milwaukee...

...and then come see what's brewing...for you!



Marketing Ourselves

Ring a ding.

"Hello. Randy Guy's Piano Service."

"Hi, my name is Ada Kanari. My piano sounds like a flock of drunk Canadian geese or an Arkansas chicken laying her first egg. I'm phoning around for the lowest price. How much are you?"

"Let me ask some questions first. What kind of piano do you have — a grand or an upright?"

"It's a grand piano that my dear departed mama left me. It's the piano I grew up with. I used to play a lot, but I've been too busy until now. I'm starting lessons with the famous Madame Cohenmeister next month. So how much?"

"Any estimate I give over the phone would be only a guess, and that wouldn't be fair to you. I can give you an accurate answer after I inspect the piano. I'm available tomorrow at 3 o'clock. Is that convenient, or would Thursday morning be better?"

"Yes, tomorrow is fine. I live in the stately mansion on the hill. Turn left at the goat retirement home and right at the tractor cemetery. The piano is either a Mason or a Hamlin, two B's or maybe not two B's. Ever heard of it?"

Choke. "Yes. Bye."

Ding a dong.

"Hi, I'm Randy Guy, piano technician. And you are —"

"Glad to see you. The piano is in the parlor. Why, here's Annie the dog. She doesn't bite, but she sings so pretty when I play Bartok. Listen."

The hound howls harmonically. In key, on pitch, in time.

"What an unusual animal. And what a beautiful instrument. You play extremely well. You must have studied at a very fine music school."

"Thanks. I attended Corndish Conservatory, and then taught for seven years. I gave it all up when I married Eaton. We just retired from the pretzel business — ever heard of Twisted StiverSticks? — so now I have time to play again. But this piano is about as musical as leftover oatmeal. What's wrong?"

"Let's take a look."

Boing a doing, screech, creak.

"Yes, I agree it needs attention. It sounds like it hasn't been tuned in a while. Do you know the last time it was serviced?"

"Well, I was twenty..."

"So at least five years ago."

"Don't make me blush. So how much already?"

"I need to measure the pitch and take a look inside. Then I'll be able to make an informed estimate."

A-440? — NOT!!! Clank the keys, yikes the drop, and springs of flacidity.

"I'll discuss tuning first. Most pianos get tuned at least once or twice a year, so we have some catching up to do. After checking with my tuning fork, I recommend we first do a pitch raise to get it close, then a fine tuning to get it stable."

"Pitch fork? Stable? What do you raise, horses?"

"Pitch raising is an initial tuning on a neglected piano to get it close enough to then permit a truly precise tuning. This technical bulletin published by the Piano Technicians Guild explains pitch raising in greater detail. Here's another Guild pamphlet titled 'How often should my piano be serviced?'"

"I'll read these while I make some coffee. Cream, sugar?"

"Thanks, no sweets. Black would be beautiful." Dear God, please not instant.

A FAT PITCH

MITCH KIEL
Marketing Committee

"Careful, hot java. I hope you don't mind fresh ground. Your pitch raising bulletin explained why correct pitch is important and why extra work is needed to rescue my piano. But I'm only nouveau rich. Wouldn't it be cheaper to tune it halfway to pitch today?"

"No, it would actually cost more. Presently, the pitch is much lower than it should be. If we raise it only halfway, you'll still have a piano at incorrect pitch

that would require a second pitch raise at my next tuning visit. It's better to pitch raise it completely today. That way the piano would need only a less expensive regular tuning at all future visits."

"It costs less money to do it right?"

"Yes."

"Such a deal. Make it so."

"Tell me, what did you think of the pamphlet on servicing your piano?"

"The pamphlet said exactly the same as you on how often to tune my piano. So maybe you know what you're talking about. It keeps mentioning some guy named Reggie Stirred as being the most qualified. What's his phone number?"

"I've been a Registered Piano Technician in the Piano Technicians Guild for nine years. It's the organization for professionals who service pianos. The Guild helps apprentices learn the trade, reinforces ethical conduct, and establishes proficiency

story continues—page 38

PROMOTE PROPER PIANO CARE WITH PTG BUSINESS AIDS

Brochures

The six-page, stapled brochures are 2-color, printed on glossy-coated paper, and measure 9" by 3 3/4". Formats are consistent among all brochures. The three brochures intended for customers feature a description of PTG and RPTs on the final inside page. \$35/100, \$150/500

Why should I be a member of the Piano Technicians Guild?

This brochure answers typical questions from potential members of PTG. It describes membership categories, RPT



ORDER SAMPLES & QUANTITIES TODAY!

exams, benefits of membership and includes our Mission Statement. A form is included to request a membership application of further information. Chapter officers as well as individual technicians should have these. *There is no charge for this brochure.*

How should I take care of my piano?

Written with the average piano owner in mind, this brochure covers such topics as finish care, regulation, voicing, humidity problems and tuning needs. Basic rules of piano care are spelled out, along with advice to seek professional piano care from an RPT member of the Guild. This is an excellent brochure for individual clients and for bulk displays in piano stores and music studios.

How often should my piano be serviced?

This brochure begins with a brief description of factors affecting maintenance frequency (climate swings, placement in the home, quality of manufacture), then presents quotes from ten piano manufacturers outlining their specific service recommendations. This is an essential tool when answering the perennial question, "How often should my piano be tuned". The manufacturer quotes lend credibility to your advice.

The special care and maintenance of the teaching piano.

Proper maintenance is especially important to piano teachers, who must provide their students with a responsive

action and a musical tone at correct pitch. This brochure describes tuning needs, regulation and voicing as well as their relation to the student's ability to perform. An excellent business builder with teachers, it includes such topics as "What should my regular maintenance program consist of?", "How should I go about selecting a piano?" and "How do I find a qualified person to service my teaching piano?"

Technical Bulletins

The technical bulletins are written for the customer who is considering a particular maintenance option. They provide detailed information on specific topics in a question-and-answer format. The attractive, single-page documents are printed on heavy ivory card stock in 2 colors, punched for a three ring binder. 8 1/2 x 11. \$20/100, \$90/500

Bulletin #1: Pitch Raising

This bulletin emphasizes the importance of keeping a piano tuned to A-440 for best sound and proper ear training. It explains how climate and neglect affect pitch and why the technician must perform a pitch raise before doing a fine tuning.

Bulletin #2: Regulation

Topics covered are "What is regulation and how does it affect my piano's performance?", "How often is regulation needed?", "What are the signs that my piano needs regulation?", the difference between regulation and tuning and information on reconditioning and rebuilding. Space is included for your comments. This bulletin features a detailed diagram of a grand and vertical action.

Bulletin #3: Climate Control

Topics include, "How does humidity level affect my piano's tuning?", "What is relative humidity?", "What can be done to minimize humidity problems?" and "How will humidity control benefit my piano?". A chart is provided for recording relative humidity levels and pitch data. Together with an accurate hygrometer, this bulletin helps you in diagnosing climate-caused stability problems and recommending solutions. Clients receive educational material on the effects of climate as well as documentation of their specific problem.

Client Newsletter:

"The PTG Soundboard"

Used to keep in touch with clients and provide them with interesting information, the newsletter projects a positive image of piano playing and conveys your commitment to your customers. The first issue of "The PTG Soundboard" contains articles on the recent trend of adults starting to take piano lessons, the benefits of piano playing to child development, and how to find a qualified technician, along with photos, a quiz and trivia. Printed on textured paper with attractive typefaces and design. 2 color. 4 pages. 8 1/2 x 11. \$28/100, \$115/500

These new brochures, technical bulletins, and the client newsletter educate the public about a wide range of piano services and the benefits of proper maintenance. They promote PTG as a source of qualified technicians, and their professional appearance projects quality onto your business.

All products provide a space for your business stamp or label.

How to Use These Products

- Get your chapter to order in bulk to take advantage of quantity discounts. Different titles may be combined to meet the 500-copy price break.
- Provide appropriate brochures to your clients at every service call. Stamped or labeled with your business name, they can also be handed out whenever you are asked for a card.
- Provide brochures in bulk to piano stores, along with a holder for countertop display.
- Provide piano teachers with a supply to give to their students.
- When proposing a special service (such as regulation), offer clients the appropriate technical bulletin to provide them with additional information on their problem. This positions you as a provider of quality information, building your credibility and reputation.
- Send selected clients "The PTG Soundboard" newsletter along with their service reminder card or as an implied "thank you" after each job.

Three Ways To Order...

TO ORDER BY PHONE

Call 816-753-7747
8:30 - 5:00 (CT) M-F

TO ORDER BY FAX OR BY MAIL

Write your order on
an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet.
Include: your name,
shipping address,
PTG member number,
Visa or Mastercard
number and
expiration date

SHIPPING:
Items are shipped in
minimum orders of
100. For each 100
items ordered, a
\$2 shipping fee
will apply.

Items listed sold
only to RPTs.

Fax it 24 hours/
7 days a week to:
816-531-0070

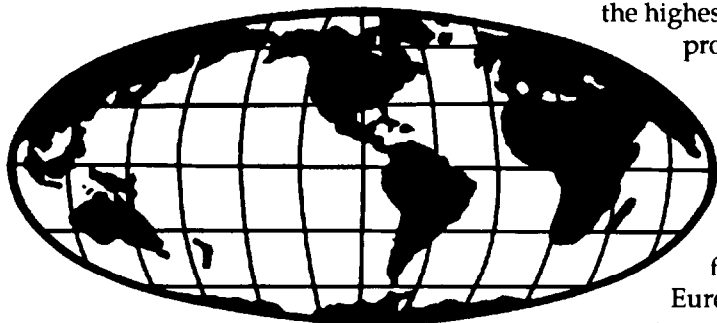
Mail it to:
PTG Home Office
3930 Washington
Kansas City, MO 64111-2963

To receive a free sample packet:
Send \$3.00 to cover shipping and handling to
the Home Office address printed above.



International Relations

European Tour Planned for '93...



Make Plans To Attend!

I imagine strolling around Constable country in England, rubbing shoulders with the best technicians in England. Then imagine dining on a river boat in the Seine in Paris, visiting the Eiffel tower, riding on the fastest train in the world, the TGV. All this along with being among the best technicians from Europe and Asia. This meeting of Europiano and IAPBT should be the largest assemblage of technicians from all over the world that has ever been held. After these meetings go on to Germany and see factories which produce some of the highest quality pianos produced anywhere.

May 1993,
make your
plans to join
us. We are
waiting on a few
final details from
Europe before we can
present you with the full
details of the trip. But you can bet that
it will be the chance of a lifetime. You
can combine seeing these parts of the
world with plenty of technical information.
From classes on new materials at an
acoustics research lab to a concert on
historical instruments at the museum at
the Paris conservatory, you will get a
look at the piano industry which you
can't get anywhere else.

Watch these pages for full details,
but start saving now for the trip of a
lifetime.

As a director of IAPBT, I would like to thank all of you who have contributed to the "Friends of IAPBT" during the past years. IAPBT has a mission to make the world

smaller for piano technicians. Dealing internationally is always more expensive than dealing locally. Your contributions make it possible for PTG to take the leadership role it should take in IAPBT. As the dues billings arrive, please add that \$15 extra and be a "Friend of IAPBT" and help PTG continue its role in IAPBT to bring technicians together. PTG will be hosting the IAPBT meeting in 1995 in Albuguerque.

Ron Berry
Director, IAPBT

This month we have a report from Ernie Juhn who taught at the Pianoforte Tuners Association meeting in Britain. This is the same organization whose convention we will be going to in May of 1993 on the IAPBT tour.

A Visit To England

Ernie Juhn, RPT
New York Chapter

I was invited to give a "technical" at the 1992 PTA convention which took place in Llanelli, a charming little town on the coast of Wales. The month was May, which turned out to be just about the best time for a visit to the area.

The original invitation came to me from Ralph Long during his visit at our PTG convention in Philadelphia. Ralph asked me if I would be willing to "lecture" and I was overjoyed to have an opportunity to be the one and only instructor from the U.S.

First, let me explain that the attendance is just about one tenth of our PTG conventions. Naturally, there are fewer classes and the entire structure is different. In addition to a registration fee, registrants have to sign up and pay for the classes they want to attend. For example, my class on "troubleshooting" was a half day class and the fee was 15.-pounds for members, 20.-pounds for students and 30.-pounds for everyone else. My class was sold out at 20 people. That will give you a little bit of an idea how things worked.

Since everything is so different and it was my first time of teaching a class in another country, I did not quite know what to expect. As some of you may know, I use a certain amount of humor—some "Ernie Juhnisms" etc. I made sure not to go overboard, released some of the

helium from the balloon and stayed on solid grounds. Well, all my apprehension was dispelled right from the beginning. I experienced something rather nice: all the instructors are introduced before they start their classes and in my case, Ralph Long did the intro. He said so many nice and flattering things about me that I could not go wrong—even if I wanted to. In any case,

after a few years of instructing and teaching, I have learned to sense after a few minutes how well my presentation is accepted and the feeling was great. Later I was told that my class was chosen one of the better classes at the convention.

Now for something rather interesting. I attended a class called "Tuning Comparisons". It was taught by Ralph Long and had for its basis the use of the Accu-tuner. The questions and discussions revolved almost entirely around the use of visual tuning aids. The arguments seemed to be exactly the same as I remember from long ago in the U.S. I might point out that tuning exams for membership in PTA are based strictly on aural tuning.

Exhibits: There too, one can't compare the size to our PTG convention exhibits but there were some suppliers and again I found one from the U.S.—Damp-Chaser—represented by Robert Mair and his lovely wife.

One observation I might share with you: the suppliers exhibited some tools and materials PLUS stuff we do not see at most of our convention exhibit booths. Variety of felt as well

as quality. Even at a much smaller booth I found choices of more and better bushing cloths and felts than we generally see here.

Change of subject: I was picked up and taken care of in every way, shape and form by Ralph Long and his lovely wife Jean. Ralph also did all the driving to the convention which was a relief for me because I somewhat did not want to make the change over to drive on the "wrong" side of the road and in a car that has the steering wheel on the "wrong" side too.

On the way from the Long's to Llanelli, we stopped at the Royal National College in Hereford. This institution specializes in the education of visually impaired people. Piano tuning and repair is a specialty and I had the opportunity to visit the entire facility, meeting some of the key people. I was quite impressed with the quality and level of education.

Later, (a little out of sequence), when visiting London's largest department store, Harrod's, I observed one of the college's graduates tuning some floor pianos. Returning to the convention for a moment, I

should mention that there was very little speech-making. Almost everything revolved around education in piano technology.

All in all I certainly enjoyed participating in this convention.

**"RALPH LONG
ASKED ME TO
LECTURE AND I
WAS OVERJOYED
TO HAVE AN
OPPORTUNITY TO
BE THE ONE AND
ONLY INSTRUCTOR
FROM THE U.S."**

Ernie Juhn,
RPT

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November 7, 1992	St. Louis Chapter One Day Seminar St. Louis, MO Contact: Karl Starbuck 314-534-4001
November 12-15, 1992	North Carolina State Conference Charleston, SC Contact: Jim Harvey, 205 Parker Ave., Greenwood, SC 29649 803-223-2889
January 8-9, 1993	Arizona State Seminar Phoenix, AZ Contact: Gary Miles, 3722 W. Port Royale Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85023 602-942-2588
February 12-14, 1993	California State Convention Sheraton Long Beach Contact: Bruce Stevens, 1442 E. 64th St., Long Beach, CA 90805 310-423-7023
March 12-14, 1993	South Central Regional Seminar Fort Smith, Arkansas Contact: Bill Yick, Rt 3, Box C644, Charleston, AR 72933 501-965-7945
March 18-21, 1993	Pennsylvania State Convention Holiday Inn-Bucks County, Trevoese, PA Contact: Patricia Sierota, 102 Bridle Path Lane, Feasterville, PA 19053 215-364-2564
April 15-17, 1993	Mid-South Spring Seminar Memphis, TN Contact: Vincent Mrykalo, 7046 Autumn Hill Lane, Bartlett, TN 38135 901-678-3772
April 23-25, 1993	Florida State Seminar Howard Johnson's-Daytona Beach, FL Contact: Walter Pearson, 1128 State Ave., Holly Hill, FL 32117
April 30-May 2, 1993	Central West Regional Seminar Collins Plaza Hotel, Cedar Rapids, IA Contact: David C. Brown, 1719 Bever Ave. S.E., Cedar Rapids, IA 52403 319-362-0820
April 30-May 2, 1993	New England/Eastern Canada Seminar Merrimack, N.H. Contact: Bill Ballard, R.R. 3 Box 875, Putney, VT 05346
July 14-18, 1993	36th Annual PTG Convention and Technical Institute Milwaukee Hyatt, Milwaukee, WI Council 13& 14 Classes 15-18 Contact: PTG Home Office 3930 Washington, Kansas City, MO 64111 816-753-7747

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E X C H A N G E

Dedicated To Auxiliary News and Interests

When I took this job I was told that one of my duties is to write a President's message every month. What to say! It then occurred to me the people who read these messages are already members of the Auxiliary, which means it's like preaching to the converted. So, this message is directed to those who are NOT in our membership. I call this message, "What Do You Miss?"

I thought it might be interesting to look up the word Auxiliary in the dictionary. The definition I like has a nautical twist: "Equipped with an engine or other power to supplement the motive power of sails." We in the Auxiliary are what supplements the activity of our spouses. Notice the word "supplement." It is not "back up" or "encourage." We fill up our spouse's sails, we counteract their deficiencies, we complete an incomplete activity.

For some of us the all-important goal is to help keep the income coming in. For others it is the good feeling that comes from being an appreciated helpmate. For still others it is a binding glue that brings together and holds together two who are engaged in a mutual enterprise called marriage.

So, what do you miss? Do you miss the opportunity to be involved more deeply in your spouse's all-important activity? Once Sigmund Freud was asked what is most important in a man's (person's) life? His reply was "Arbeiten and Lieben"—his

work and his loving relationship to others. When you are deeply involved in both these important elements you become more of one than of two.

Are you missing the feeling of belonging? Are you missing the feeling of being part of a bigger picture? Do you feel you are not contributing? Are you longing for new friendships and relationships? Are you longing to strengthen those you already have? Are you looking for a way to use your talents and be appreciated? Then come join us.

Now that more and more men are husbands of working tuning wives, our male membership is growing. (Look to Paul Cook who is the Auxiliary's National Vice President). By joining the Auxiliary you can gain insights into the work of the Auxiliary and how you can lend much needed support. Sometimes it doesn't come easily. But there is hope! Just as man and woman can together give each other mutual support, the Auxiliary and its members can encourage and support each other, learning new ideas and animate the future of the industry. We need YOU and YOU need us.

*Phyllis K. Tremper
President*

From The Auxiliary Editor

As another November comes around it is time to reflect on the last years accomplishments and failures in order to assess what's happened and be thankful for "the learning experiences", as my late beloved aunt would have said.

The leaves are turning (as I write this in September) and are falling and waiting for the yard rake. Gone are the days of smoldering piles of leaves—there's no smell quite the same—and in place of the bonfire is the large bright blue recycling dumpster.

I have been guilty of "semi-neglecting" my assignment to keep the Auxiliary Exchange pages new and interesting over the last few months what with all of the crazy, time-demanding things that seem to happen. As we settle down into some sort of routine over the course of the winter and spring, hopefully these pages will keep your interest.

This leads me to my usual plea for input from you, the members and readers, for information that you would like to see appear in the Exchange. I am sure that everyone would much rather have a cross-section of information from all over the country than my views from my little corner of the world!

May your Thanksgiving Day be blessed with nice weather, lots of family around and the smell of pumpkin pie and dressing in every room!

P.S. Have you thought of ordering a PTGA cookbook as a Christmas gift for someone?

—jr

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Meet The Board: Paul Cook—Vice President

Aboard a United Airlines Boeing 747 at 37,000 feet I made a commitment to my wife and the Piano Technicians Guild at the same time. We were married while en route to the beginning of a PTG tour of Asia. A Registered Piano Technician and ordained minister, Ed Hilbert, performed the ceremony. My infamous relationship with PTG was well on its way. But, let me start at my beginning.

I was born in Los Angeles, California in the nineteen-forties. My father worked at the family business, surveying land. This survey and engineering company was started by my grandfather in 1911, surveying land in a boom time for Southern California.

I began surveying with my dad on weekends and during summer vacations when I was growing up. Shortly after high school, I decided to pursue this career and was working full time surveying land. College was spent at UCLA extension night school. After this and 11 years of field work I was qualified to take the 16 hour exam to become a Licensed Land Surveyor in the State of California.

Once licensed, I moved into the office where there was climate control, and worked as an office surveyor. I learned the business end of things. When my father retired in 1976, my younger brother and I took over the company.

We expanded the small family business to 65 people at one point, but with the economic downturn severely affecting real estate, the company is now 18 people strong. We are the oldest land surveying, civil engineering company in Los Angeles and counting.

I have been the president and CEO since my father's retirement and active in a number of professional organizations. Unlike piano technicians, with one professional organization, land surveyors and civil engineers have a number of different organizations to belong to. Some are just state wide, others are national and

international, all with local chapters.

We now do far more than land surveying in our family business. We have added civil engineering and land use entitlement processing. I work closely with homeowner groups, councilmembers, planning commissions and other boards. I make many public hearing presentations on behalf of my clients. These discussions sometimes get quite controversial with all the slow growth and no growth attitudes in California.


As a child whose mother was a music teacher, I played the piano, accordion, trumpet, saxophone, clarinet and xylophone. Today, I play the stereo. I enjoy many different types of music; from symphonic classics to country n' western and bluegrass.

Claudia, my wife (the piano technician), and I formed the homeowners association for our 131-home tract where we live. We are still very active on its board. I served my community for over five years as a Councilman on the Town Council and presently serve as a commissioner for Los Angeles County.

Together, my wife and I have three children, (two girls and one boy) and four grandchildren (two boys and two girls).

I am proud to have had two photos taken at piano factories on our European trip used on the covers of the *PTG Journal*, October and November of 1987. Photography, computers, camping, bicycle riding, hiking and time with the family are a few of my favorite things. We have a motorhome and go camping on an average of once a month.

Claudia and I have traveled the world with the Piano Technicians Guild, including Europe in 1986 and Asia in 1989. It was on the Asian tour that we staged our much-talked-about wedding. So, now that our union is sanctioned by God and the Piano Technicians Guild, we are looking forward to many more years of fun with our PTG friends.



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...A Fat Pitch continued from page 28

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*Next month: Our hero makes a pilgrim-
age to Madame Cohenmeister's studio.

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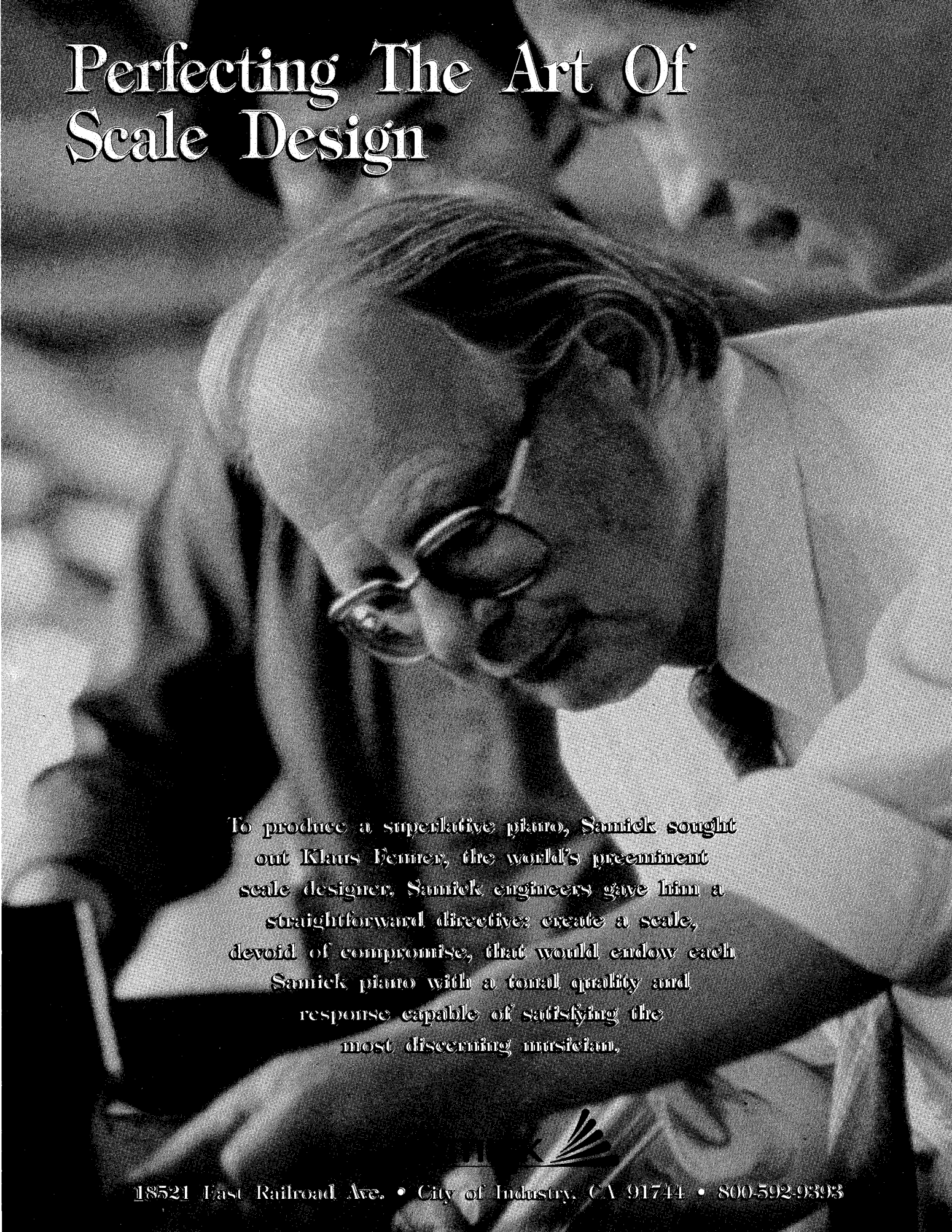
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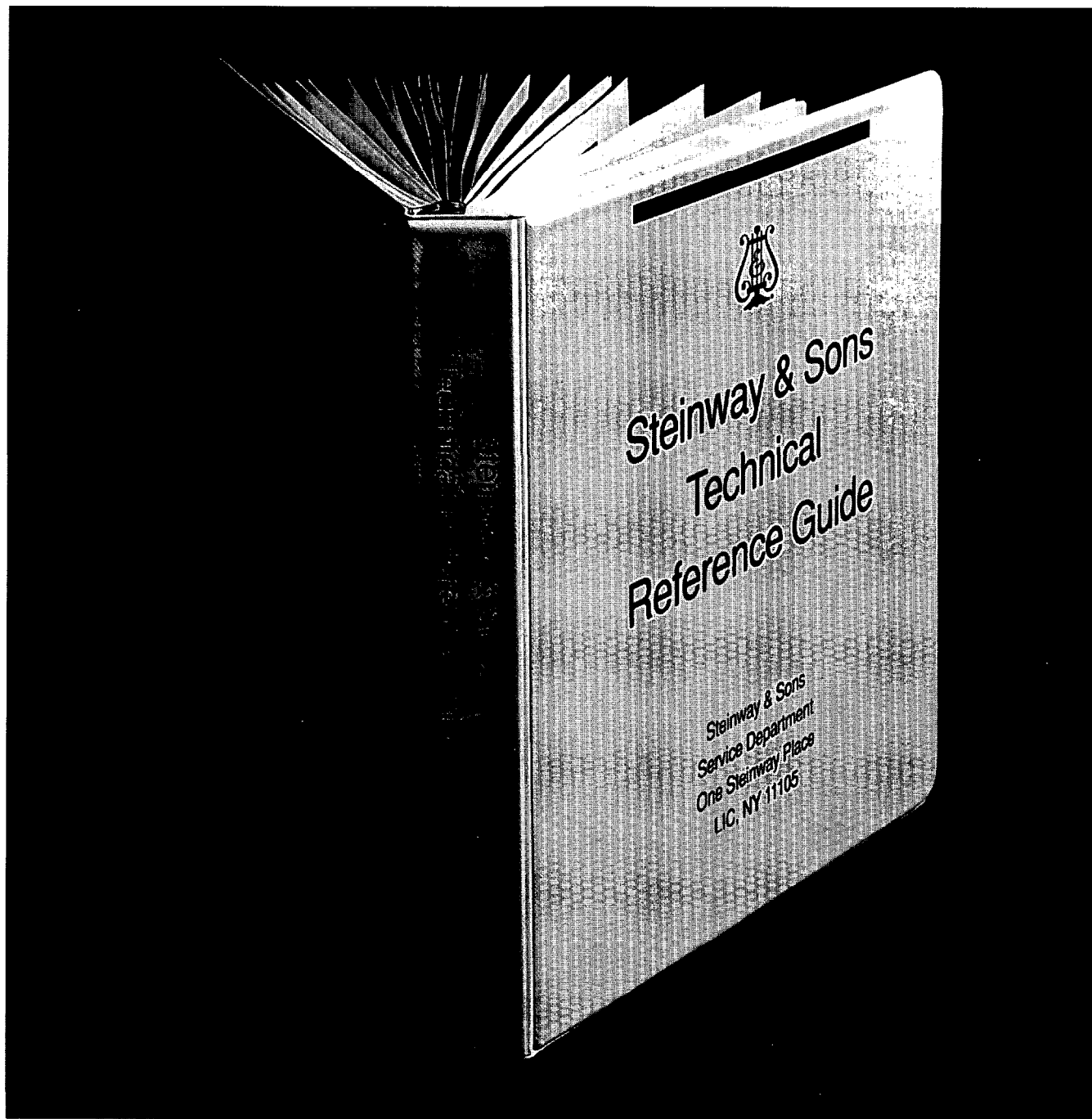
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Tech Gazette

Yamaha Piano Service

November, 1992

THE PERFORMANCE PIANO

Last month, we began the discussion of servicing the "performance" piano. We talked about complete piano service, accuracy and decision making, time limitations and building a trust with the pianist. Now, how about doing some actual work on the piano? Where do you start? What is important? How do you do it all? Well...

In your analysis of the instrument (and the needs of the pianist), you have made some decisions. Now it's time to carry them through. We like to look at the work under 4 different headings: Pitch, Tuning, Regulation, and Voicing. Obviously, everything that needed repair has been taken care of, to allow you to do the type of work expected.

PITCH & TUNING

A440 is the standard. If at all possible, follow this. Stability is important, so get the piano into the condition to allow for a final and stable tuning. Respect the harmonic relationships in your tuning. Remember that the piano is a complete musical instrument, and should be tuned so that the entire piano reflects this idea.

REGULATION

There is really nothing out of the ordinary here. Nearly all pianists "just want it right", and not something exotic. The important elements here are *accuracy and consistency*. The goal to get every key to feel the same is an obvious one, but one that is seldom achieved. Keep this in mind.

The pianist can adapt to many things; but inconsistency in the regulation is one of the hardest obstacles to overcome. Check the aftertouch feel. If incorrect or uneven, it will be necessary to work with the combination of key height, key dip, and hammer to string distance. But don't forget that the accuracy of all your other regulation procedures will also affect the aftertouch feeling to one degree or another.

VOICING

Keep in mind why you are doing this procedure. It is to improve the music created by the piano. The musician can then perform better, and the music is more enjoyable for the listener. In this process, you will be adjusting the instrument's general quality of tone, doing your best to make it even throughout the entire range of the piano. Achieving this quality and evenness at all dynamic levels should be foremost in your mind.

What factors (under your control) influence tone quality? Of course, these include the basic condition of the piano, the precision of the regulation and the accuracy of the tuning. What about the hammer? Well, of course this is important, but not until everything else has been taken care of. So, when you are finally ready to address the hammer, you must keep these factors in mind: the dynamics of the blow (controlled by the pianist), the striking point, the shape of the hammer and the elasticity of the felt.

PERSONNEL PROFILE

CHARLOTTE ROMAS



We would like to introduce you to a new member of the Piano Service Team.

Charlotte "Char" Romas has taken a new position within Piano Services, that of Data Specialist. Charlotte has been with Yamaha as a Senior Word Processor in the Music Education Division for 10 years. She has three grown children and five grandsons. Charlotte was part of the opening ceremonies of the 1984 Olympics as part of the German Ethnic Dance Group. Maybe you remember her from her TV debut there? Charlotte's hobbies include tennis and clogging.

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#113 November 16 - 20

#114 December 7 - 11

#115 January 4 - 8

DISKLAVIER™ SERVICE SEMINARS:

#31 November 2-6

#32 January 25 - 29

NORTH CAROLINA STATE PTG CONFERENCE:

November 13-15

Charleston, South Carolina

NAMM SHOW:

January 15 - 18, Anaheim, CA

SERVICE: (800) 854-1569

PARTS: (800) 521-9477

FAX: (714) 527-5782