

The Buckeye Backcheck

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Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

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Pearl River Presentation with Mark Wisner



Mark Wisner representing Peral River Piano Group at the Piano Gallery for our April Meeting

Mark Wisner, National Service manager for Pearl River, gave a very interesting talk about some service issues with Pearl River Pianos and a slide tour of the main factory. Mark was formerly a service manager with Yamaha Pianos. He was pleased to move to Pearl River when they promised to back up their pianos with good service and make changes to improve the pianos and procedures for manufacture when the changes were shown to be necessary. In other words, they really want to make a good instrument.

The first part of his presentation was on grand and vertical key level issues related to keyframe problems. Much of the problem seems to be the result of design that did not take North American climate changes into account. Pearl River will authorize correction through warranty service and recommends the following: On verticals, take up the lost motion and on grands, set blow at 1-3/4, and level keys. The dip should correct itself. According to the Technical Bulletin, the following changes have been made: the connecting members of the keyframe have been thinned down, the balance rail design has been changed, the profile of the front rail has been modified and two additional dags have been added.

Mark presented pictures in a power point presentation of how the old designs had problems and how the new ones helped. He also showed his very different methods of setting the glide bolts on grands by

using a dial gauge mounted on a wooden tripod using the bottom of the pin block as a reference point. When the dial just begins to move the glide has made contact with the keybed. Mark's second method involved using a multimeter (available at Radio Shack and the like) with aluminum foil placed under the keyframe to make an electrical connection as the bolt make contact with the foil.

Following the technical discussions, Mark took us on a virtual tour of the Pearl River facility in Guangzhou China. It was an almost unbelievably huge complex starting with acres and acres of wood and ending with acres of assembly lines. The company employs hundreds if not thousands of workers to every job in piano manufacture from plates to boards and cases to action parts (although, since production of some components is higher than others, they do get many actions parts from other Chinese manufacturers and also from Renner). Many thanks to Norwin Mergler and The Piano Gallery for sponsoring Mark's visit to Columbus, and thanks again to Mark Wisner for an enlightening presentation.



Norwin Mergler welcomes the Columbus Chapter PTG

Chapter News & Notes

Meeting Minutes (excerpts)

Old Business:

The National Board is still looking for those interested in sitting on committees; those interested should contact Richard Bittner, CERVP

New Business:

Chris Altenburg is confirmed as our delegate and Mark gave him the Delegate's handbook. We will go over the issues for Council at the May meeting. The regional meeting is June 16 of convention week and Chris should attend that for sure as well as any members from the chapter who are going to Kansas City. David Stang is planning to apply for the PTGF scholarship to take exams at the National. The chapter did receive a form for the PTGF Auction if anyone has anything they wish to donate.

Next Meeting on May 17, 2005 @ 7:30 pm

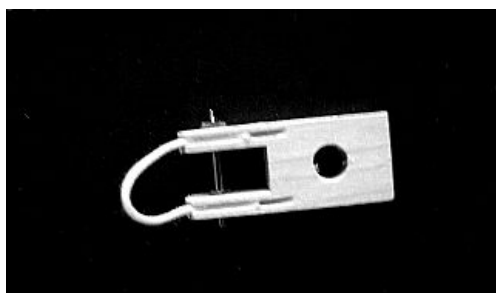
The next meeting of the Columbus Chapter will be May 17th at Ben Wiant's home at Wesley Chapel. David Snediker, an engineer at Battelle will be our guest. David was the head of research on the Teflon

Bushing project for Steinway & Sons, and his expertise is in tribology. This should be a very interesting technical, don't miss it.

Tech Tips

from Mark Ritchie

In many Yamaha vertical actions old style, with the hammer return spring attached by a woven cord to the hammer butt flange, the cord is deteriorating and breaking. The symptoms include poor repetition and checking as well as bobbling hammers. Most of these actions are in the 20+ year old range, and flange replacement is the best and easiest option. The replacement parts are readily available from Yamaha for pianos made for the North American market. While single replacement of the cord can be accomplished on site, be assured that others will continue to fail.



Acrosonic Observations - 1st in a series of articles from Thomas Harr

Tom Harr has been gracious enough to offer a series of articles on the Baldwin model Acrosonic and the number of variations found within them through the years they were built. There are still thousands of these instruments in service, many dating back to some of the earliest models. Tom offers insights into servicing, history, and illustrations of the actions. You may wish to save the illustration page for future reference as the series continues. Next installment : **SERVICING THEIR IDEOSYNCRACIES**

A recent problem seen, indeed possible only, almost exclusively in certain Acrosonic spinet “drop-actions” brought to mind the fact that there have been diverse and sundry pianos found under that name. Incidentally, Baldwin made a little boo-boo in their Greek etymology. The little blue sticker on the plate used to say, “acros = supreme sonus = tone”. Not quite, cf. Acropolis = “the high city” (citadel), archon = “el supremo” (the big cheese). So it either should have been “Arcosonic” or else it *really* means “high toned”. I’ve waited *years* to drop that one on somebody.

The Names of the Beasts

Not counting the “Acrosonic” console, which is seldom found since the name seems to have been discontinued when the 40" 739 scale was dropped some time in the early 1950's, there have been at least five different models, as far as action variants alone are considered. The earliest Acrosonics, i.e. acrosonic, including all pre-WWII production, used the Wood & Brooks (Aurora Corp.) “Superior Inverted Sticker” action (see Fig. 1). This seems to be rarely encountered in subsequent years since Baldwin began producing their own actions after some date not known to me. This action has two notable features: the massive “auxiliary wippen rail”, and the elaborate cast-iron action brackets which



Fig. 1

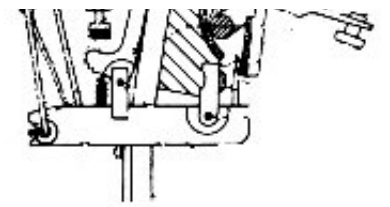


Fig. 4

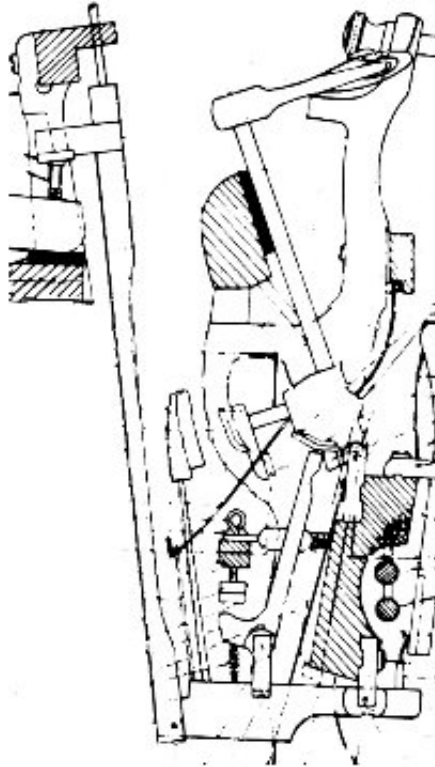


Fig. 2

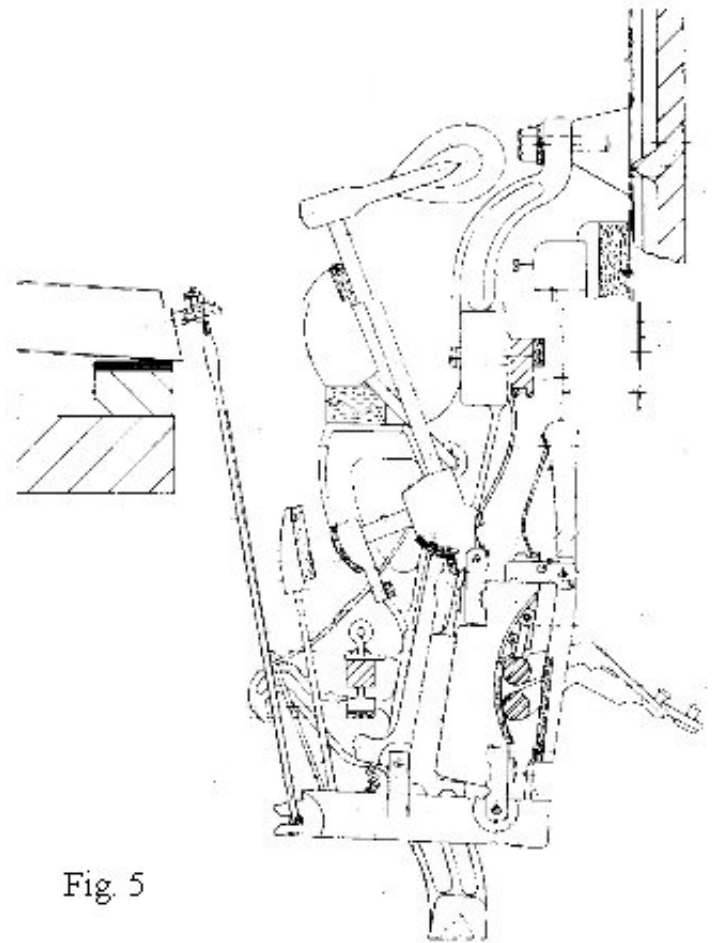


Fig. 5



Aluminum pickup finger

Fig. 3

Baldwin "Full-blow" action

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