



PIANO
TECHNICIANS
GUILD
COLUMBUS CHAPTER

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

Volume 33 Issue 1 January/February 2008

CHAPTER NEWS AND NOTES

President's Message

Our February meeting will be held at Henderson Music Tuesday, February 19th, starting at the usual time of 7:30 P.M. The actual technical is being solidified at this point. If Kim Hoessly is available, she will present one regarding the basics of tuning, something we can all benefit from keeping foremost in our practices or, we will discuss and test the PitchLock Piano String Coupler product available to piano technicians for several years.

Twelve members enjoyed a meal together in January at Bravos' Restaurant to celebrate the Christmas season. Discussion was lively, the fellowship excellent and the food very good. It was a fine way to usher in the new year as well, a year I hope every one of us finds fruitful in our work and in our personal lives.

For those interested in happenings and technicals from other chapters, check out <http://www.ptg.org/newsletters/941/2008/02.pdf>. It will deliver you to the February, 2008 Leaders Letter. This quarters' letter contains two interesting articles that our members would find interesting and enlightening.

Looking forward to seeing you at **Henderson Music on February 19th!**

Chris

CLASSICAL MUSIC IN COLUMBUS

Here are a few coming events:

Sat, Sun. Feb. 9,10

Alisa Weilerstein, cello

Pontifical College Josephinum, 5:30pm (Sat)

Southern Theatre, 8:00pm (Sunday)

Wed. Feb. 13

Guest Pianists from Bowling Green

Otterbein Battelle Fine Arts Center, 8:00pm

Sun. Feb. 17

Johannes Moser, cello

Jefferson Acad. Series, Art Museum, 2:00pm

Mon. Feb. 18

Kia-Hui Tan, violin, Blaise Bryski, piano

OSU Weigel Auditorium, 8:00pm

Sun. Feb. 24

First Congregational Church Choir,

Benjamin Wiant and Dene Barnard, pianos

Igor Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*

444 E. Broad, 4:00pm

A Columbus Premiere

Mon Feb 25

Stephen Glaser, piano

OSU Weigel Auditorium, 8:00pm

Feb 29, March 2

Opera Columbus

Rossini: *La Cenerentola*

Fri,Sat,Sun March 7,8,9

Columbus Symphony

Michael Chertock, piano

THE COLUMBUS CHAPTER OF THE PIANO TECHNICIAN'S GUILD

President: **Chris Altenburg, RPT**

Vice President: **Bob Grubb, RPT**

Treasurer: **Ron Kenreich**

Secretary: **Mike Varrone**

Immediate Past President: **Mark Ritchie, RPT**

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Ramona Wolfe

Ramona S. Wolfe, 55, of Columbus, passed away December 21, 2007. She is survived by her husband, Victor Wolfe; son, Wayne (Susan) Wolfe; and her beloved dog Fritz. Ramona was a member of Holy Family Church. She worked as an administrative assistant, alongside her husband Victor in their family business, Wolfe's Piano Service. She enjoyed astronomy and aviation. Ramona loved animals but she mostly loved the piano service which allowed her to meet many new friends.

Published in The Columbus Dispatch on 12/24/2007.

FROM THE HOME OFFICE

Just a reminder, Associate members [are] to have used up their materials that include the old Associate logo. As of December 31, Associates must not use the now discontinued Associate logo.

Associates are still strongly encouraged to advertise that they are "Members of the Piano Technicians Guild" but the graphic is no longer available for use after December 31, 2007. Please refer to the current Graphic Standards Manual, available online at <http://www.ptg.org/members/docs/graphics/graphicstandardsman.pdf>, if you have further questions as to the proper use of graphics and logos.

Also, PTG membership application procedures, in effect since June 2006, allow the home office to accept applications online or directly from applicants. When your chapter receives official notice of a new applicant from the PTG office, there is only a limited amount of time to make an objection known to the office, in the unlikely event that there is such an objection. Objections must meet certain criteria.

I encourage you to familiarize yourself with our bylaws, codes and regulations. These documents may be found online at:

<http://www.ptg.org/members/docs/2007/Bylaws2007.pdf> or in your September Supplement. A portion of the bylaws concerning the Application procedure is listed below for your convenience.

BYLAWS: ARTICLE III - APPLICATION AND EXAMINATION

Section A - Application

1. All Applicants shall complete an official PTG Membership Application Form and submit it, along with the application fee, to the Home Office.
2. The Home Office shall send a copy of the application and the Chapter's portion of the application fee to the Chapter. A dues bill, pro-rated from the beginning of the month, shall be sent to the applicant. Following receipt by PTG of pro-rated dues, a PTG applicant shall be entitled to a Journal subscription and member rates at the PTG store and Annual Convention. Applicants shall not be eligible to take the RPT exams or otherwise represent themselves as members of PTG until the application process is complete.
3. The local Chapter shall contact the Home Office regarding any objections to the application. In order to be considered, such notice of objection (See Regulations, Article III, Section A) shall be received in writing by the Home Office within 130 days of receipt of the original application by the Home Office.

If you have any questions about either of these things please feel free to contact your RVP.

Dale E. Probst, RPT
PTG President

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FROM TOM HARR

The Botcher's Award - Keyboard Division

A church in [a small nearby town] acquired for their sanctuary a hysterectomized* Chickering grand to replace their Hamilton 243. This unfortunate instrument had been subject to the attentions of a real klutz. It had been “ebonized” in...what?, house paint? Without removing whatever had been the original finish, filling in the dings, sanding, or any other niceties. Ditto for the “re-gilded” plate. It will tell you something when I say that I solved at least half of the complaints about this thing by tightening all the loose action screws! The real capper was when, despite a 3/8” gap between the keyslip and the cheek block on the treble end quite a lot of the keys were binding. After some difficulty removing the keyslip, which proved to be secured with dry-wall screws, a real sign of craftsmanship, guess what? A set of .075” keytops w/fronTS had been installed without milling down the keys or removing the original fronts and trimming them. “Well we can go back and do it the way it should have been done in the first place, or you can learn to live with a big gap on the end of the keyboard.”

A lesson I learned early on: Do it right the first time. It saves trouble.

A lot closer to home (about two miles away) a church obtained a nice, tho' small (Style L), Vose & Sons grand. In this case investigating why the sharps were getting seriously buried revealed that a set of replacement plastic keytops had been installed right over the original ivories! The only way this guy got away with it was by stripping the felt off the bottom of the fallboard.

*It was an ex-Ampico. The reproducing mechanism had been removed. Since the serial number had been obliterated I could not date it exactly, but it wasn't a Stoddard-Ampico, nor a model B, so we will say mid-1920's.

- Tom

FROM THE ARTS JOURNAL ...

Columbus Symphony Deficits

The Columbus Symphony is suffering a deficit which the board members feel is serious enough to require some major cutbacks. The official audit report from the 06-07 season indicated a loss of nearly \$2.2 million, with about \$10.4M in income and \$12.6M in expenses.

The symphony board has put forth a proposal which cuts the number of full-time musicians and diminishes the number of regular season concerts. Robert Trafford, Chairman of the Board was quoted in the *Columbus Dispatch* as saying “This is to try to save the orchestra and enable us to grow”.

The symphony musicians have responded to this proposal with outrage, stating “The Orchestra's financial situation is symptomatic of the true problem, a failure of governance by the Board”.

Norman Lebrecht, an internationally known, and one of the most widely read music commentators states: “Surely no-one imagines that ... kicking musicians into limbo will improve morale. Cutting an orchestra is usually one short step from killing it altogether. ... Slash and burn, which is what the board is proposing, is a policy that went out in the 90's with the bonfire of vanities.”

The Board's proposal may be found as a PDF at the symphony web site:

www.columbussymphony.com

Click on “The Path to Financial and Future Growth”

The Symphony Musician's response may be found at their web site:

www.symphonymusicians.com

This site also links to a number of articles on the subject from various sources.

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In an era without blockbusters, Grammy Awards look lost

Chicago Tribune Arts & Leisure Blog

Neil Portnow, the president of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, has been sounding desperate in recent days.

For 50 years, the Grammys have been the most prestigious (and most criticized) of the music awards shows. In many ways, they still are. But they're still operating as if it's 1988. Much like the industry they represent, the Grammys have been slow to adjust to the massive technological changes that have made music more accessible than ever.

The blockbuster era is over. Radio and MTV have been rendered nearly obsolete as mediums for breaking music, and CD sales are nose-diving. Business was down 14 percent in 2007, and shows no signs of turning around in the first few weeks of '08.

A prime-time TV "event," needs big stars and big hits to thrive. And the Grammys are hurting in that department. Winehouse, one of the music industry's few rising stars, is up for six Grammy nominations this year, but she hasn't sold even 1 million albums - for decades the standard by which mainstream hits were measured.

Yet just because there are no mega-stars doesn't mean music has lost any of its cultural importance. On the contrary, more people are listening to more music than ever. A beehive of musical niches and subcultures has sprung up, built on free MP3 files, blogs, youtube videos and myspace-generated buzz. The year-end music polls of critics celebrate those niches.

Can the Grammys reinvent themselves? Possibly. But first the industry that the Grammys purport to serve must undergo radical change. The corporations are still looking for blockbusters to prop up their profit statements. But the best music is already reaching an audience that doesn't need multimillion-dollar marketing campaigns or glittery awards shows to validate its tastes.

Read the complete article at

http://leisureblogs.chicagotribune.com/turn_it_up/2008/02/in-an-era-witho.html

FROM THE MUSIC TRADES ..

Yamaha finalized its acquisition of Bösendorfer, the famed Vienna-based piano maker, from Bawag Bank, on December 20, 2007. Estimates place it at approximately \$21.0 million.

In announcing the acquisition, Yamaha CEO Mitsuru Umemura stressed that both piano businesses would continue to operate independently and that the Bösendorfer factory in Vienna would be maintained. However, he said that combining Yamaha's manufacturing, marketing, and management expertise with Bösendorfer's craftsmanship, tradition, and tonal quality would strengthen both businesses, and that the combined enterprise would be better equipped to address the growing global market for premium pianos.

Umemura stressed that Yamaha is committed to preserving Bösendorfer's unique tonal quality and that there were no plans to alter the handcrafted manufacturing process or shift production outside of Vienna. He said that "Bösendorfer's manufacturing facilities, which are the basis for the company's craftsmanship, are in solid condition," adding, "Craftsmanship resides in people. We will sustain the current employee group as part of our plan to carry on Bösendorfer's technology and skill."

Since 1999 the company has struggled financially, selling approximately 300 units yearly.

Umemura said, "The positioning of Yamaha pianos and Bösendorfer pianos is completely different. The two pianos are built to satisfy completely different tastes. By combining the two product lines, we will be able to satisfy the needs and tastes of a wider spectrum of performers."

Founded in Vienna in 1828 by Ignaz Bösendorfer, it remained in family hands until 1907, when it was sold to Carl Hutterstrasser, an employee. In 1996 the company was acquired by Kimball Piano & Organ, which hoped to use Bösendorfer's reputation to enhance the image of its American made pianos. Kimball exited the U.S. piano business in 1988 and sold Bösendorfer to Bawag Bank of Austria in 2002.



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www.ptgcolumbus.org

Upcoming Events

Chapter Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 19, 7:30pm
Henderson Music, 2829 Festival Lane
(S-E of the Sawmill-161 intersection)
Tentative Technical Topic:
Basic Aural Tuning, by Kim Hoessly, if she's available!

FOR SALE

[Mitch Staples passed this along]

I got a call from A guy who has a player piano for sale. I'm not interested but I told him that I'd pass the info on.

1921 Dekalb Player Piano
In storage, needs work
Contact Keith Wilson 614-419-7696

INTERNET NEWS

It's always interesting to browse newsletters from other chapters that appear on-line.

Check out:

www.ptg.org/newsletters/941/2008/02.pdf

And here is a *must-see* YouTube video:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTCaTBHNb00

This newsletter was created using the open-source program *Scribus* running on the Linux/Ubuntu operating system.

Disclaimer:

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Comments, articles, and advertising requests may be sent to the editor.

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