

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

Volume 37 Issue 2 March 2012



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Members,

We had a good turn out at our February meeting at Henderson Music in Dublin. The Guild thanks Henderson for letting us meet at their beautiful store. We had a short business meeting followed by another video by Jim Coleman and George Defebaugh. George did a quick tuning down from the temperament which was interesting to me as he used mostly descending major 3rds all the way to the bottom of the piano! Not the way most of us would do it. But, I showed these videos just to help start our discussion. He did say some interesting things about aural tuning. Next we watched a demonstration of hammer technique. We had a good discussion and then members received swell prizes for cleaning sound boards and other tools for voicing etc. I had hoped to demonstrate unison tuning and show how to use some of the tools, but time ran out. So, I would like to continue our discussion and demonstrate the tools I use when tuning unisons at our March meeting.

I want to thank everyone who shared their expertise and help at the meeting. Sharing the knowledge to improve our profession is what we are all about. I also will have some of the swell prizes that were left for those who come that did not receive a prize at the February meeting. I am also thinking about our next technical in April. I have a few stringing jigs and thought we could have a hands on stringing session at the April meeting.

John Schmoll, R.P.T.

President

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Chapter Meeting Minutes

February 21, 2012

The meeting was held at Henderson Music Co.

Attendance:

John Schmoll, Ron Kenreich, Chris Burget, Bob Grubb, Dwight Hansen, Bryan Hartzler, Kim Hoessly, Doug Meszaros, and guest Tim Thompson, and host Norwin Mergler

Treasurer's Report:

The Chapter has \$2,574.14 in checking.

Old Business:

Options for future technicals were discussed briefly, including: locations for future meetings, and possibly more tuning tutorials geared towards Associates preparing for the RPT exams.

New Business:

Kim Hoessly announced that she has new paperwork in from the Home Office for any members interested in taking the Technical Exam. She also mentioned that Doug Atkins, CTE from the Dayton Chapter, is a good person to contact for pre-screening for the Tuning Exam.

There was a brief discussion about the unauthorized use of PTG logos and claims of affiliation with the Guild by non-members in advertising and on web sites.

Snacks at meetings were mentioned. In most cases, the host supplies them. If, however, it were to be a problem for some reason then it was mentioned that the duty could be assigned to a member in lieu of any volunteers. It was generally agreed upon that it was rarely a problem and that keeping the food and drink arrangements simple is just fine. No need to go "overboard" was the general sentiment..

Another group picture of the Chapter is tentatively scheduled for the April 2012 meeting.

Locations for future meetings were discussed and included Capital, Otterbein and Dennison Universities.

Butts & Flanges

Dwight Hansen shared his experiences with a 1952 5' Baldwin Grand that was moved from the Portland, Oregon area. The client inherited it from a family member who was a professional musician. For the most part, the piano was in good condition and had enjoyed the benefits of a Damp-Chaser system and was fairly well maintained. The hammers did need some work, though, so some shaping and voicing was in order. He filed and shaped all the hammers and needled the top octave, or so, using the "Angel Shot" method described in the December 2011 issue of the Journal, and on the Audio/Video page of the Chapter website. In short, one single needles the hammer just off of the strike point going parallel to the layers of felt. This made a big difference. He also noticed vast improvement in the bass from just the filing alone. Here, he posited, the string grooves were deep enough that they had been wrapping around the strings, therefore dampening them slightly upon striking. It really is amazing what even just a reshaping of the hammer and a restoring of proper strike point can do for tone. Not only do deep grooves detract from the tone, but a flattened hammer has all of its "internal tensions" out of whack and balance contributing to poor rebound from the string.

Dwight also told of an old dance hall piano that had "exceeded it's life cycle" as well as a grand player piano for sale.

Kim Hoessly also knows of a Bluethner for sale. It has an extra "raised string" in every unison that vibrates sympathetically when the other strings sound.

Ron Kenreich related a story from a recital at Westerville North High School involving a malfunctioning piano that couldn't be fixed immediately. So, the next piano had to be brought in. It was a digital... and it was 40 cents flat!! After some investigation, Ron learned of a process to restore it to concert pitch that involves holding down both end keys as part of a reset protocol. Who says digitals don't go flat!

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Technical Presentation:

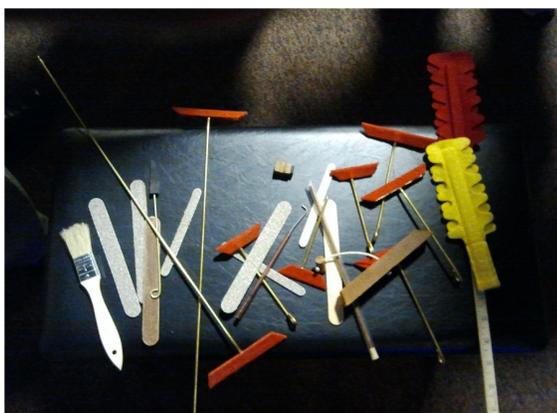
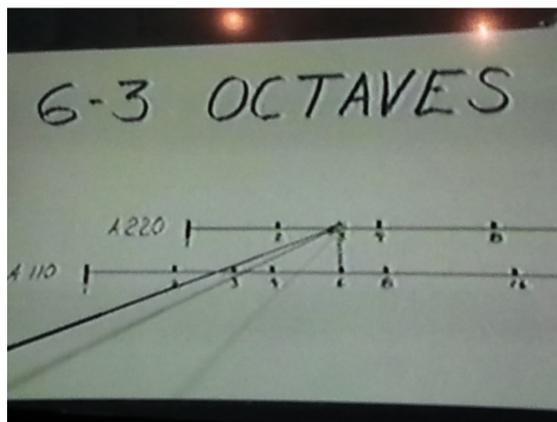
Octave Tuning & Hammer Technique

For the technical portion of the meeting we once again watched a few portions of a tuning video featuring George Defebaugh and Jim Coleman Sr. demonstrating some of their tuning techniques. This was more or less to spur discussion between members of their own methods and observations and how they may, or may not, resemble those in the video segments.

First, George discussed some of the various octave types and gave illustrated examples of how individual partials of each note in an octave may relate to other partials. He would explain, for instance, how a 2:1 octave differs from a 4:2 octave, why they are called such, all the partials involved, and why the first is "narrower" than the latter. He generally pointed out that to tune any one type of octave "pure" or beatless will quite often lead to greater impurity and more beating in other partial matches of the two notes involved; all of which depends on the inharmonicity of the individual piano. So, you often try to find a "sweet spot" in between two types where the beating of each is nearly equal and cancels the other out, leaving a somewhat clear sound; either pure, or nearly so with a very slow roll. Pianos with relatively low inharmonicity may mean that more than one octave type may "line up" and still sound somewhat clean when listening to various individual partial matches. Higher inharmonicity instruments, on the other hand, may make it harder to find such a sweet spot and may often mean making a compromise somewhere in the chain of nearly coincident partials. It may be nearly clean in one partial matchup while another has a perceptible beat. In some poorly scaled pianos this can be a huge problem, especially around the tenor break.

George demonstrated how he carried the octaves downward from the temperament. In this instance, he focused heavily on the thirds and continued to "spread the temperament" outward, then checked them with the octaves, tenths, and seventeenths as they became available. He did this all the way to the bottom octaves. Here the thirds are very slow and change very little from note to note, so tenths and seventeenths are useful. Some members commented that they focus more on fifths here, while others voiced even other preferences based on the type of piano.

Then George and Jim demonstrated some tuning hammer techniques and fundamentals. They explained how the angle of the lever affects how the tuning pin moves in the block. Also, George proclaimed himself to be a "Jerk Tuner" because he more often uses a nudging motion on the hammer as opposed to a smooth pull. This "impact" style is more likely to move the whole pin and not just the top, which may actually bend and twist more than the portion inside the block. John Schmolle reinforced this point with a jig he presented that showed us how this "torsion" is a real phenomenon.



Prizes of the swell and fabulous varieties!



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www.ptgcolumbus.org



Hmmm... Which is harder? Herding cats? ...or tuning cats?

<http://youtu.be/seQDXPDa0J0>

Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

President	John Schmoll, RPT
Vice-President	Mark Ritchie, RPT
Treasurer	Ron Kenreich
Secretary	Christopher Burget

*Contributions and pictures for
the Buckeye Backcheck and the
web page are always welcome,
(even if they are only
peripherally related to pianos)!
- Chris Burget*

Upcoming Events

Chapter Meeting

Tuesday, March 20, 2012,
7:30pm

Otterbein University
Battelle Fine Arts Center
Riley Auditorium
170 W. Park Street
Westerville, Ohio 43081

Topic: Unison Tuning

Map Link:

<http://g.co/maps/dk5jp>

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

Chris Burget, 1706 Pin Oak Dr., Columbus, OH 43229 cjburget@gmail.com