

# The Buckeye Backcheck

*Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild*

Volume 42    Issue 1    March 2017



*Sláinte  
is  
Táinte!*

*(Health and Wealth!)*

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## Chapter Meeting Minutes February 21, 2017

The meeting was held at Graves Piano & Organ Co.

### Attendance:

Mitch Staples, Chris Altenburg, Ron Kenreich, Chris Burget, Kim Hoessly, David Chadwick, David Stang, Mark and Marilyn Ritchie, and Leonard Ostrander from KTT

### Treasurer's Report:

\$1519.99

### Old Business:

Future technicals were discussed and tentatively planned for:

March - Tröndlin Fortepiano at the Orange Johnson House in Worthington

April - "Lettoff is Everything, Drop Happens" by Phil Walters, at Graves Pianos

May - Plastic keytop repair (?) by Larry Messerly, CERVP, location TBA

### New Business:

Sam Stahl is back in Columbus and has joined the Guild and will be transferring his membership to our chapter.

More of an announcement than business, Kim Hoessly mentioned that there has been some discussion in PTG online forums about the written exam possibly being offered online. No formal announcement has been made, but it seems the idea has some support and logistics are being discussed.

## Butts & Flanges

Kim Hoessly recently worked on a grand and noticed one key was making a clicking sound. The customer had not complained of it, but Kim took a moment to check it out. At first, she figured the keytop was coming loose but the top appeared to be firmly in place. If she lifted up on the key and tapped on the top, it would click slightly. Figuring that there was no complaint at the time, she would revisit the issue at a later date when there was more time to address it and figured she would ask the group what they thought so she wouldn't forget anything. Some suggested possibilities for the source of the sound included: loose key front; loose key lead; loose backcheck wire/head; backcheck clicking against something; some part of the whippen or jack assembly clicking; or a loose key button or keypin. These are just a few possibilities, as there may be others such as unseen foreign debris, or glue-hardened felt, or loose capstan, just to name a couple more.



**PTG MARC 2017**  
Harrisburg - Hershey, PA  
Thursday 4/27-Sunday 4/30

[www.ptgmarc.org](http://www.ptgmarc.org)

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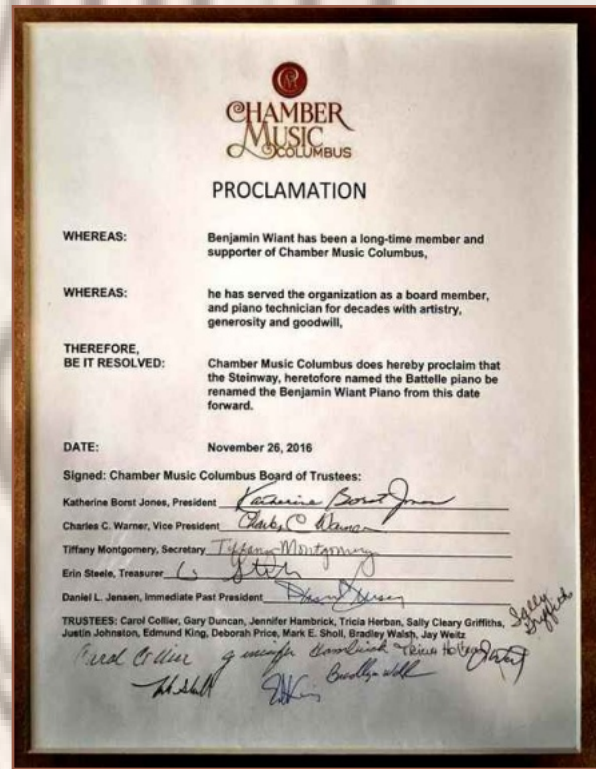
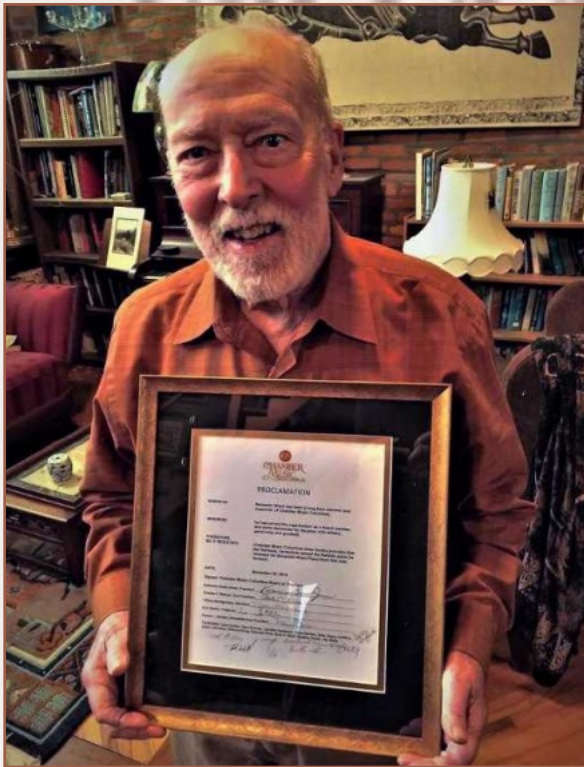
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## ~ The Benjamin Wiant Piano ~

I thought that perhaps the PTG membership might be interested in this bit of news about Benjamin Wiant.

As you probably know, Ben retired early last Fall. In November, Chamber Music Columbus honored him by dedicating their November 26th concert at the Southern Theatre to him (Joyce Yang, piano). Katherine Borst Jones, CMColumbus President, also announced that their 9' Concert Steinway D is to be re-named "The Benjamin Wiant Piano". The piano is frequently the instrument of choice of local presenting organizations, such as ProMusica, Chamber Music Columbus, CAPA, etc., and is regularly heard in the various theaters and concert halls in Columbus.

Jon Chandler



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## KTT Smart Move Grand Piano Mover

The February 2017 meeting was hosted by Graves Piano & Organ Co. and the technical portion of the meeting was lead by Leonard Ostrander, who demonstrated the KTT Smart Move Grand Piano Mover. We appreciate him for graciously offering his time as he has recently taken a position at Ithaca College and drove back to Ithaca, NY after the meeting.

KTT, which stands for Keyboard Transport Technologies, was founded by Leonard because he saw a need for technicians to be able to transport pianos safely on their own, especially in institutional environments. He has been a piano technician for nearly thirty-three years, as of publication date, and is also a builder of small airplanes, as well as a pilot. He grew up in a machine shop and, after college, he learned TIG welding at Lincoln Electric in Cleveland, Ohio. He first got the idea for such a mover around 1994, and built a simple prototype constructed of a bottle jack and PVC pipe. Among his descriptions of his background and events that lead to his concept, was a story of him telling his wife that he needed their son's help in moving a piano. "He's not going to help you move that piano!" she exclaimed. He responded by telling her that, "No, he's just going to hold the phone and call 911 if something bad happens!" So, that was another impetus that drove the development of the mover. After almost four years and seven different iterations, he now offers the KTT Smart Move in a couple of different configurations, as well as customized versions upon request.

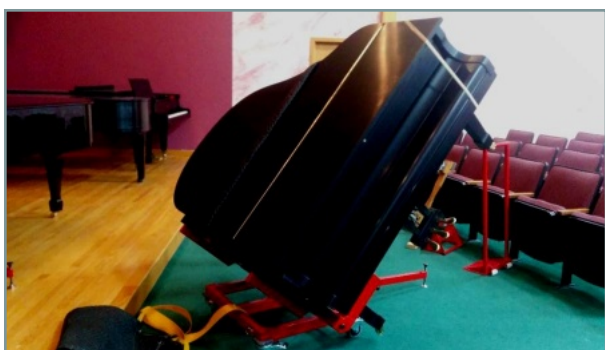
The mover, to summarize, is both a tilter and transporter in one device, which is basically two components: the cradle, and the base. The primary difference between models is the size of the cradles, with the larger size being able to accommodate even the largest concert grands, like those made by Bösendorfer and Fazioli. Custom cradles are also available to accommodate various speaker configurations on player systems. The mover has its own skid board, but is also compatible with other traditional skid boards. Early versions of the device allowed for lifting pianos directly from spider dollies. That is not presently an option but that capability is under further development. Older versions also weighed over 250 lbs, but after further collaboration with an engineer the weight was brought down to 160 lbs.

The cradle supports the piano at three points: under the rim on the treble side behind the leg; under the rim on the bass side going toward the back leg; and under the keybed on the bass side. Each point is a rubber-like (high molecular weight polymer) block that grips the piano without marring it. The arms are retractable to accommodate different pianos. There is also a padded strap to wrap around the piano as well as a large heavy duty rubber band to wrap around the treble corner to hold the lid shut.



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The base has a Parker reversible pump hydraulic lift, which was chosen because its design has gone unchanged for over thirty years and is considered so reliable by so many industries. It offers smooth lifting and rotation with no jerking motions whatsoever, even when going “past center”, so to speak. Even if a counter balance valve were to fail, or a leak were to occur, the cradle would just slowly come to rest, either horizontally or on its side, depending on how far past center it has rotated. The design prevents the piano from just dropping by its own weight. The battery is similar to a motorcycle battery, charges in two hours, and can move at least six pianos on a charge, possibly more in some situations. Auxiliary batteries are also available upon request. He relayed a story of moving twenty-six pianos across a mall over a five hour span. All of this is operated via a hand controller on a ten foot flexible spiral cord. The base also has a detachable arm, or counter-balance, that is called the “key”. It is called so because the electrical system is disengaged when the arm is detached, thus preventing inadvertent tilting with an improper center of gravity. It can also prevent unwanted tampering by unauthorized individuals when the technician may not be present. One could keep the key in an office while a piano is being temporarily stored off-stage, for example.

All frame components are constructed from high strength aircraft grade chromoly steel with TIG welds and high strength steel rod screws that won't chip. The head welder has numerous certifications including those governing working in nuclear power facilities. Both he, and Leonard, have backgrounds in aviation, so safety and durability are always paramount. There are also various accessories available like: a skid board; a lifter, which resembles a dolly; and a triangular stand. The stand has non-equilateral triangular dimensions so it can be positioned at three different heights. The lifter and stand are used when moving pianos that are on skid boards. Pianos can be moved with legs on or off. The whole unit, holding a piano with legs removed, can fit inside a 32 inch doorway.

He demonstrated the device by moving and tilting both medium and concert grands. He even moved the medium grand back through a hallway to its original place on the showroom floor. He also covered some basic topics concerning: working alone and with others; basic safety concerns; using with traditional skid boards; and loading to and from stages and trucks. He also welcomes any, and all, feedback on his products and can, as stated earlier, customize orders for individual needs. He also plans to offer more variations in the future. As of publication, the basic KTT Mover sells for around \$5,000. Other features, like concert grand cradle, incur additional cost. For more information go to: [www.kttmartmove.com](http://www.kttmartmove.com) and look for his classes at PTG seminars.



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[www.ptgcolumbus.org](http://www.ptgcolumbus.org)

## Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

### - Officers -

<b>President</b>	Mitch Staples, RPT
<b>Vice-President</b>	Chris Altenburg, RPT
<b>Treasurer</b>	Ron Kenreich
<b>Secretary</b>	Chris Burget
<b>Imm. Past Pres.</b>	Kim Hoessly, RPT

## Chapter Meeting

**Tuesday, March 21  
7:00pm**

**Orange Johnson House Museum**  
956 High St  
Worthington, OH 43085

**Topic:** Tröndlin Fortepiano

**Map Link:**  
<http://goo.gl/maps/RgxAoR9vmBw>

Park in lot in front of Ace Hardware

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

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

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