

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild
Volume 32 Issue 4 May 2007

CHAPTER MEETING April 17, 2007

Thanks to Paul Graves and Company for hosting our meeting.

Attendance: Chris Altenburg, Bob Grubb, Dean Nedvecki, Mike Hill, Kim Hoessly, David Stang, Doug Brandt, Victor Wolfe.

Treasurers Report

\$500 has been added to our CD account, so it now is \$1000.

Old Business

Last month it was reported that Don Carle would be leaving the area, but in fact he will be staying in the Columbus area and will remain in our chapter.

Our chapter will be placing 1/2-page ads in the annual directories of both the Ohio Music Teachers Association and of the American Guild of Organists. We normally do this every year. We will not be placing an ad in the program for the AGO Convention this June. As a side note, it is nice to have a copy of the OMTA directory in case a customer asks for recommendations for a piano teacher.

New Business

If you would like an individual business-card sized ad placed in the OMTA directory, contact Chris Altenburg. Cost is \$35.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference takes place April 19-22.

An invoice will be submitted to the treasurer for \$109.00 to the Internet Service Provider who hosts our Web Site.

Tentative date for our chapter picnic: The last weekend in August.

PTG National Convention

The proposals to be considered at the National Convention appear in a supplement to the May issue of

the Journal. ***Be sure to read this supplement and be prepared to discuss the issues at our May meeting.*** Our delegate Bob Grubb will be voting on these issues and will appreciate input from our chapter membership. A poll of the members at the meeting will indicate how we feel about the issues. Bob will strongly take our opinions into account, but he will ultimately vote his conscious when the time comes. If you cannot attend the meeting, call or email Bob, as he would be happy to hear any and all opinions.

Pay close attention to Proposal 5, which calls for some major changes in the way membership works.

The May Meeting will be held May 15, 7:30pm at Chris Altenburg's home, 340 Stonewall Ct., Dublin. We will discussing convention proposals, and we will be holding our officer elections.



Directions to Chris Altenburg's: Take 161 (Dublin-Granville Rd./ Bridge St. in Dublin) to Monterey Dr, south to Stonewall Ct.

Butts & Taxes

Since our meeting landed on April 17th, it seemed appropriate to discuss taxes. Randy Potter gives an excellent course on the subject at PTG conferences, and has written articles in past journals which are recommended reading. There are a number of deductions we can take as owners of in-home service businesses, including travel expenses and transportation costs. We are allowed per-mile deductions as well as a per-deum on each non-travelling day of a business trip. This is

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

extended to anyone involved with the business even if he/she is not a full-time employee.

Remember that we must have an Ohio vendor's licence, as piano tuning is a service which is taxed. The tax charged must be at the rate for the county in which we do the service. It is handy to carry a reference sheet which lists those rates. Potential confusion arises from the fact that Delaware and Licking counties each have a separate rate for those parts of the county served by COTA. For more information, have a look at the Ohio Department of Taxation web site

<https://thefinder.tax.ohio.gov/StreamlineSalesTaxWeb>

This web site will find the tax rate for any address.

Sales tax does not need to be collected from Non-Profit entities such as churches. If there is any question, there is a form the customer can sign declaring itself to be a non-profit.

If there is a question or conflict involving sales tax, it is Kim's experience that speaking to them in person can resolve conflicts. Their office is at 4485 Northland Ridge Blvd (near Morse & Karl where the mall used to be) Be sure to bring all the relevant paperwork!

FROM TOM TUNER (a.k.a. Tom Harr) ...

A Note on the una corda

Regarding Ben's comment on the German upright with a real una corda: it would be interesting to know how they solved the damper problem. For obvious reasons, the entire action cannot simply slide over to one side. Some years ago it was suggested that the Wood & Brooks 90° action could be adapted for this purpose as the the damper rail is separate from the hammer flange rail and thus could remain fixed in place while the hammers were shifted without throwing the spoons too far out of line with the damper levers, or else crunching the dampers sideways against the strings

The Kimberly Hoessly Square Piano

(for want of another name)

Anent Kim's "unusual piano", and it sure is that; I sent her my thoughts upon viewing the photos. For what they are worth, these are:



- A down-striking action in a 20th century piano must be very nearly unique! A lot of effort was wasted in the two preceding centuries trying to get this to work.
- The action has W&B fingerprints all over it, including the markings on the keys and the characteristic "oilcloth" punchings under the screw heads. Possibly this was adapted from the 90° console action. Closer examination of the jack, wippen and butt might show whether there is any kinship.
- Evidently made in the early 1950's as the Damp-Chaser says, "Ft. Lauderdale, Florida", i.e. before they moved to Hendersonville NC, whenever that was. Also the mahogany veneer and the style of the music rack date it. Further, the cadmium-plated screw heads would date from the early to mid '50's (it was a cheap substitute for nickel plating at the time, or perhaps due to a shortage of nickel as a strategic material during the Korean Police Action).
- At a guess I would pick Gulbransen as a likely perpetrator of this instrument as they produced some short keyboard (mostly 73-note) "student consoles" with

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

two-string unisons during this period, as well as some late “melodion” knock-offs when they were still in the organ business. So this sort of thing would not be outside their proclivities.

- Sure are short bass strings! It may be that's why it has only five octaves. Strings for lower notes would not fit in the case.
- The totally unfinished plate casting says something about the endeavor.
- A final suggestion: Research into old files of *The Music Trades* or similar publications might uncover a mention of the introduction of this model.

One is left with considerable curiosity about such things as the arrangement of the bridges, the soundboard ribs, and the like. I take it that the tone, touch, and other such matters are not going to be worth discussing in a PSO of this sort. As a specimen of a previously completely unknown type it certainly is fascinating. An example, perhaps, of the dreadful lack of preservation of the history of the American piano these latter days. It is a fact that we have more information about the second half of the 19th century than the comparable period of the 20th. [I must confess to being seriously remiss in regards to historical consciousness as can be, since I once had as a customer a person who was surely the last surviving business associate of Farny Wurlitzer from the glory days of The Company in the 1920's when Farny, the youngest son of (Franz) Rudolph Wurlitzer, was running the business after his brothers had bailed out (under interesting circumstances). The man was about 102 years old, sharp as a tack, and frail, but not at all feeble. I had some notion of interviewing him for his recollections, but failed to carry it out before he passed away. He was impressed that I had a book of which about half was an account of The Wurlitzer Company's doings and some of Farny Wurlitzer's comments. About all I got was his favorable reminiscence of Farny as his district representative, “He was a lovely man to work for.” So much for good intentions. (In case you wondered, or even if you didn't, Farny was Frau Wurlitzer's maiden name.)]

Another Unusual Piano

Since we have been showing odd pianos here is one with only 61 notes and no keyboard! Actually it's a “nickelodeon”, more formally an automatic coin piano which plays 10 tune 65-note A-rolls (the other perforations control sustain, soft pedal, mandolin, and a xylophone). The interior view shows the electric motor, pump, roll frame, player stack and xylophone. This is a “Chicago Electric” made by Smith, Barnes & Stroeber about 1916.

[This instrument will soon appear on the web site under “tech photos”, along with an mp3 sound sample. - ed.]

It doesn't get tuned too often because access requires removing the xylophone, spool shelf and stack, besides which the lack of keys makes it a bit of a drag. I understand the factory used a demountable keyboard for the purpose, which makes sense if you are manufacturing the things, but not for one instrument.



Media Sighting

This a.m. [Apr.20th] on Channel 28 Johnny Diloretto interviewed some New Age guru touting the health and spiritual benefits of *tuning fork therapy!* Really big forks, looked like lecturer's demonstration models. Maybe there are unsuspected benefits to aural tuning opposed to using an ETD.

- Tom

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

FROM THE PIANOTECH DISCUSSION LIST

Enlivening Bass Strings

-- Richard Morgan wrote: --

I encountered a nice, very well-taken-care-of Remington upright last week. The owner had the original bill of sale and loan papers showing payments, from 1920 or 1924 (can't remember now), when it was bought new in Nebraska. The bass strings, however, were dead. Can someone point me to a resource for dealing with those strings? It's not really a candidate yet for restringing, and I don't know that the customer would spring for that.

-- Joe Goss wrote: --

Now if you are going to do the twist, first twist the wrong way then back. Try it you will like it.

-- Geoff Sykes wrote: --

I get very good results from putting 1/2 twists in bass strings, but I always do it in the same direction as the windings. Joe, by your suggestion of twisting first the wrong way and then back, are you suggesting that the string be brought back up to pitch between these right and wrong twists?

-- Joe Goss wrote: --

First one full twist to the wrong to open up the winding so that it can let go of the crud, then back one turn past (or two depending on how you think of it) to tighten the winding on the coil. Never more than two turns on the thinner wire and one on the heavy monos. More than that puts falseness into the string and if you take the string off after pulling it up, it will look like a snake that has been run over. (Oh well the string was shot anyway.) It will show unequal segments going one way then another. Not the usual wire memory nice coil.

Hechler Family wrote:

My mentor showed me a way but it's hard to describe so I'll make an attempt at it.

First, completely take out the string. Then take the string a form a over-under loop (like the first part of tying your shoe laces) fairly tight but not enough to

loosen the winding. Then roll the "loop" up and down the full length of the string.

This will loosen and should remove all the dirt that has built up in the windings.

-- John Dutton wrote: --

I have had success with this same method except that I only remove the string from the bottom hitch. I generally try to keep the loop in the 6-8" diameter range. This process is described also in Reblitz 2nd edition on page 116. After I do this I try to give a twist or two in the direction of the windings prior to reattaching to the hitch pin.

FROM THE ARTS JOURNAL

Dear Virtuoso, I Wrote This One Just for You

By DANIEL J. WAKIN, *The New York Times*

Mstislav Rostropovich, 80, died April 28, 2007. Mr. Rostropovich played a number of extraordinary roles in his life: brilliant cellist, conductor, thorn in the side of the Soviet regime, champion of artistic and political freedom, mentor and humanitarian.

One of his greatest legacies, though, will probably be a prodigious body of cello music composed for him or inspired by him.

He was the recipient of five pieces by Britten; two cello concertos by Shostakovich; and Prokofiev's *Sinfonia Concertante*. He gave the first performances of works by Penderecki, Dutilleux, Lutoslawski, Schnittke, Messiaen, Bernstein, Auric and Walton and a host of other 20th-century composer. — mostly cello works, but also pieces for orchestra, chamber ensemble and voice and piano (he was a capable accompanist).

An international cello festival in Manchester, England, begins May 2 and will include a tribute to Mr. Rostropovich.

Read the complete article at:

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/29/weekinreview/29wakin.html?_r=1&ref=arts&oref=slogin



The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

www.ptgcolumbus.org

Upcoming Events

Chapter Meeting

Tuesday May 15, 2007, 7:30 pm

Chris Altenburg's, 340 Stonewall Ct., Dublin

*We will be having Chapter Elections,
and discussion of National Proposals*

PTG 50th Anniversary Convention

June 20-24 2007, Kansas City



American Guild of Organists Regional Convention

June 25-29 2007

There will be concerts on some of the great organs in the Columbus area, including one at First Congregational Church featuring their Beckerath and Kimball organs. www.conferencesite.org/AGOSched.htm

INTERNET NEWS:

Be sure to check out the PTG National Website's new feature: *The PTG Blog*.

<http://ptg.org/blog>

It has current information about happenings in PTG and the piano world in general.

If you feel that you have information that you would like to share, contact webmaster@ptg.org.

Disclaimer:

All expressions of opinion and all statements of supposed facts are published on the authority of the author as listed and are not to be regarded as expressing the views of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild unless such statements or opinions have been adopted by the chapter or the Guild.

Articles and illustrations may be re-printed by other PTG newsletters with proper acknowledgement, unless otherwise indicated in the article.

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

David Stang, 286 E. Kelso Rd., Columbus, OH 43202 stang_db@yahoo.com