

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

Volume 33 Issue 9 October 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last summer, I did some hiking at Glacier Nat'l Park (HIGHLY recommend it). One of the hikes was exhausting but fabulous, the Highline trail, 7.5 miles up thru snowfields (mid July, mind you) and then 4 miles of switchbacks down. The 4 miles down was harder. Pound, pound, pound on the knees through a burn out area, so no tree cover from the, by this time, afternoon sun. Almost reminded me of the Grand Canyon heat. At the end of the trail, the road once again went up for a bit. I was never so happy to see uphill hiking in my life.

I think most of us would prefer not to walk into a tuning and find that we have to raise pitch more than 30 cents (not to mention, 50 or 100 or 150). But from late spring thru Sept (and sometimes into Oct) we often get to lower pitch 30-40 cents (there's where climate control systems really earn their keep). So now, we really come into fall and I am always happy to be doing those pitch raises again as opposed to pitch lowering! It's just so much harder to keep the piano from drifting back up rather than back down. Is it just me?

Many, many thanks to Paul Graves and his staff for having us over to meet Paul Rea from Petrof. Presentations from Company Reps are always interesting and informative. I hope to see you all at the next meeting, which will be at Hughes Hall on the OSU campus. Mitch will share some tips on pitch raising without mutes. Bring your own tips on that topic to share as well.

If you can't get to Chicago this fall, check out the SE Regional conference, Oct 16-19, in Richmond Virginia. Early bird registration good until Oct. 5.

MEETING MINUTES SEPT. 16

From the PTG Home Office:

Under the direction of the PTG Foundation, the Disaster Relief Program was originally set up to provide relief to our fellow technicians in the hurricane-stricken Gulf Coast after the Katrina devastation. We encourage everyone to share any information that you may have regarding those in disaster areas. If you or a PTG member you know have been affected, please get in touch with the home office. All requests for relief are given immediate attention.

Chapter News & Notes

Two former chapter members and a good friend of the chapter have passed away during the past few months: Sandy West, Al Ensminger, and Ben Bechtel. Al was a charter member of our chapter and had known Ben Wiant for many years and many others remember him fondly. Ben Bechtel was a good friend to all of us and was always willing to share his vast knowledge of harpsichords. We sent a \$100 donation to the PTG Foundation in memory of Sandy. The Chapter voted to also send \$100 donations in memory of Al and Ben to the Cancer Society and First Congregational Church, respectively.

Condolences to Phil Walters, whose Mother and Father-in-law both passed away during the same week in July.

Old Business

We would like to have a piano in the Columbus area to use for the RPT tuning test. The 6' Yamaha grand at the Otterbein Chapel is a possibility. Doug Atkins, the closest Certified Tuning Examiner, would need to inspect and approve it.

New Business

The OMTA Music Educator's National Conference will be held in Columbus this February. We may want to set up a booth, and/or advertise in their program.

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Technical Program: Paul Rea of Petrof USA

Our guest Paul Rea, Petrof National Service Manager, spoke about the Petrof Company and some of their latest technology, as well as regulation and voicing practices he has found to be effective and efficient. He provided each of us with a CD containing documents of manuals and recommended prep and voicing procedures. (Presumably these are available to any tech for the asking.)

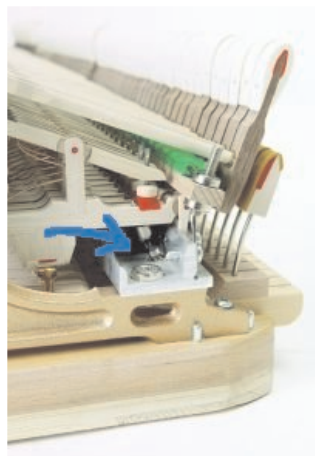
Petrof pianos are now imported and represented in the US by the recently formed Petrof USA, based in San Diego.

Mr. Rea described a few new and unique features of Petrof pianos.

Petrof has engineered a one-of-a-kind cutting machine which uses lasers to precisely control the shape of grand soundboards. The boards cut by this machine have separate crowns for each section of bridge.

The bridge caps on some grand models are made of different wood of varying hardness: Rock maple on the bass bridge, hornbeam on the mid section, and ebony on the treble. The varying hardness corresponds to varying impedance characteristics. For instance, the very hard ebony is good at transmitting the high frequencies in the upper range.

A very interesting new feature on some grands is "Magnetically Accelerated Action". This involves a pair of opposing magnets in each whippen. The opposing force of the magnets provides a boost to the acceleration of the key when it is pressed, thus reducing the need for lead in the front of the key.



Some experiments were done during the development of this system where players claimed they were less tired after playing on an instrument with the magnets compared to one without but with the same down-weight.

Mr. Rea also demonstrated a few



regulation and voicing procedures he likes to use. He brought out the idea that "full sound" voicing is different from "attack" voicing. The full sound is voiced by treating the bulk of the hammer, while attack is voiced by treating the surface of the hammer. He showed a few tools he likes to use, such as a dental molar extractor to squeeze the sides of a hammer, and a surgeon's towel clamp with very sharp points to needle into the sides. For hardening the attack, he suggested applying a very small amount of a 10-to-1 solution of polyurethane sanding-sealer and acetone.

For more on Petrof pianos and their contact information, go to www.petrofusa.com.

Upcoming Meetings

October 21 at Mitch Staples' office at OSU. Mitch will lead a discussion about pitch raising. (Park in the Ohio Union garage at High St. & 12th Ave. From there, walk east along the south end of the oval. Hughes hall is 1899 College Rd., at the S.E. corner of the oval. The meeting may be in another room due to space considerations in Mitch's shop, in which case there will be a note on the door.)

November 18 at Bryan Hatzler's shop.

In the works for next year: Mike Masters, RPT of the Cleveland Chapter on diagnostics; and CERVP Richard Bittner, RPT

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FROM THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Thomas Allen Hechesky, age 51, of Columbus, died suddenly on September 8, 2008. Preceded in death by father Eugene Hechesky and mother-in-law Pennie Haines. Survived by wife of 22 years, Lennie; daughter, Leigh Hechesky; mother, Virginia Hechesky; sisters, Sue (Ed) Ryan of Pickerington, Kay (Bob) Cirino of Westerville and Carol (Steve) Moore of Ashville; father-in-law, Jerry Haines; sister-in-law, Tami Miller; brothers-in-law, Gerald and Fred Haines; many nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. Tom is a graduate of Marion-Franklin High School. Lifelong career in piano restoration which he took great pride in his work. Former owner of the Brothers'-in-law. Tom's true passion was fishing which he shared with his family and friends every chance he had.

NEW PRODUCT

The QuicKey Leveler™

The QuicKey Leveler™ piano key leveling method consists of a rail apparatus and software program. The rail apparatus is designed with a universal mounting system that positions a precision measuring device over the piano keyboard. The measuring device provides the position data for all keys (white and black) in the rest and depressed state, without any disassembly of the piano. The data collected from the measuring device is applied to the QuicKey Leveler™ Software program where it is analyzed using a sophisticated mathematical model. The QuicKey Leveler™ Software program then returns to the technician a data set that instructs how each key must be adjusted at the balance and front rail based on an arched, straight or optimized leveling plane. Here's the best part ... all the keys may then be removed to provide a well lit unconfined work area where punchings at the balance rail and front rail can be easily adjusted and returned to the key pins. No more repetitive motion and guess work!

More information is at www.levelwithme.net

FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

Henry Z. Steinway, the last Steinway to run the piano-making company his family started in 1853, died Thursday at his home in Manhattan. He was 93.

Henry Ziegler Steinway was born in 1915, and the great-grandson of Heinrich Engelhard Steinway, and son of Theodore E. Steinway. He joined the company after graduating from Harvard in 1937 and began his career by building pianos, just as his father and uncles had. In the 1940s Mr. Steinway began overseeing operations at the company's three factories in Queens.

He became the factory manager after the war and president of the company in 1955, when his father made a surprise announcement that he was stepping down, immediately.

He gave up chairmanship when he retired at 65, but he never really left. Until a few months ago, he went to Steinway Hall most days. He also went to the factory to autograph just-finished pianos, signing the cast-iron plates with felt-tip pens. At times he served as a goodwill ambassador, visiting piano dealers and attending music-industry conventions.

read the complete article at:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/19/arts/music/19steinway.html>

FROM TOM HARR

String Loops

I regret not having contributed to the Backcheck lately, but nothing has come up to be worth remarking on.

Here is one topic that arose on an Internet forum: making string loops in heavy gauge wire. The question was about making “german” loops. The trick here is to form the eye around a nail of the appropriate diameter that is siezed in a stout machinist's vise bolted to a stout bench (preferably anchored to the floor). You do not want it walking around when you apply some force. For “english” loops, of the type found on bass strings, you can use a looping machine up to about #20 or #21 gauge. Heavier wire will not work in the machine and may tear it up, so they will have to be made free-hand in the vise.

Some points to note: the lengths of the wire should be sufficient to allow you generous “handles” as you will need to pull hard to make a neat twist. After forming the eye and siezing it in the vise the angle between the two wires determines the pitch of the twist. After about two turns of the twist clamp that portion in the vise jaws and continue another two turns. Continue doing so until the twist is the desired length. Keeping it clamped helps to keep it straight and neat. Fter making the turn at the end of the twist and clipping off the running end short you can close up the turn by squeezing it in the vise jaws and straighten out any kinks.

Besides replacement single-ended strings, or restringing say a Chickering grand, very heavy gauge string loops are handy for splicing bass strings that have broken at the bridge pin. Using the original loop requires making a double splice across the bridge, which is a mite tricky. That's another article.

Pictured here is the Schaff looping machine modified to make “german” loops a bit smaller and neater than is otherwise possible.



Tom has posted a series of pictures of loop-making on his "Flickr" page at www.flickr.com/photos/tom_tuner. I recommend visiting this page because he has a bunch of other interesting pictures there as well. -ed.

An Historical Note

Our First Family's Home. The Ohio Governor's Home and Heritage Garden

Ohio University Press 2008.

This recent book on the current Ohio Governor's official home in Bexley makes note of the first “Governor's Mansion”, 1919-1956, which was the house at 1234 E. Broad St. built by Charles H. Lindenberg in 1905.

Lindenberg made his fortune as a founder of M.C.Lilley & Co., makers of “fraternal regalia” (for the Masons, Shriners, Odd Fellows, and similar organizations). More to the point, he was a principal in The Columbus Piano Co. makers of the “Lindenberg” player-piano, the only such manufacturer in central Ohio that I know of. The Lindenberg mansion still exists as the home of the Columbus Foundation.

The present governor's house was built by Malcolm Jeffrey of the well-known Jeffrey Manufacturing Co. which produced mining equipment in Columbus for many years. Up to 1917 the governor was expected to provide his own digs until the (in)famous James M. “Boss” Cox found out that his choice had been pre-empted by his secretary of state. The legislature quickly enacted a bill to prevent any future contretemps by providing an “official” residence.

The book also contains photos of native Ohio plants to be found in the garden.



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www.ptgcolumbus.org

FROM THE WEB-MASTER

Make sure your contact info on the MEMBERS page is up-to-date. Contact me at stang_db@yahoo.com when there are changes. Thanks!

- Dave

Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

President Kim Hoessly, RPT
Vice-President Chris Altenburg, RPT
Treasurer Ron Kenreich
Secretary David Stang

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

- David

Upcoming Events

Chapter Meeting

Tuesday October 21, 7:30pm
Mitch Staples' office, 09 Hughes Hall, OSU
Technical Topic: Discussion of pitch raising

Central East Regional Seminar

October 10 - 12, 2008
Des Plaines, Illinois

Southeast Regional Conference

October 16-19, 2008
Richmond, VA

Chapter Meeting

Tuesday November 18, 7:30pm
Bryan Hartzler's Shop
1179 S. Galena Rd.
Technical Topic: Bryan's Baldwin restoration

Annual Convention and Institute

July 15 - 19, 2009
Grand Rapids, Michigan
Visit www.ptg.org/conv/2009
Bookmark it and check often for updates.

Thank you to Kim Hoessly, Mark Ritchie, and Tom Harr for their contributions and suggestions.

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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.

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

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