

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

Volume 43 Issue 6 October 2018



President's Message

Greetings members and friends,

I am pleased and honored to have been elected to the chapter's highest position. I hope to bring effective technical and engaging programs and discussions that will invigorate our livelihood within our business practices as well as the many people and institutions that we serve with all the knowledge that we have garnered.

Our profession is unique in a way that lets us control our expectations and limitations while we choose our business path. It reflects on our time spent working and living in a peaceful and rich life. Keeping busy has its rewards and this Fall time of year we will usually see a surge in calls from our clients. It is also good to make time to enjoy family and friends so to relax within the comforts and habits that make us all unique. I feel that our clients benefit from our cheerful presence and sharp attention to the details that make the instruments that are under our hands, and in their homes, the highest standard that is allowed by what is presented to us. My advice is to get your comfort and rest as you want it to be, and the work will show a watershed of happy piano players and instruments in good form.

Over the next several months of meetings I will be looking into as many topics of technicals that will be interesting and informative. As always, any suggestions or technical volunteers are welcome. Are you interested in repairs? I attended a flange bushing party one time and we had a blast along with pizza und bier. Another time, I held a solenoid installation gathering on a retro fit player system. I have plans to restore an old player upright, but am still waiting to get the roof of my garage/shop repaired and walls shelved before I can proceed. But after all that, there are some possibilities for some interesting work to be done.

This month I will be going over the Yamaha Disklavier Enspire system. Accessing the maintenance modes and going through the measured components. Also, I will speak briefly about the "out of the box" regulating procedure for Yamaha grand pianos. I found this approach to be very well laid out in sequence and time efficiency.

I look forward to seeing you all on the 16th!

David Chadwick, RPT

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Chapter Meeting Minutes September 18, 2018

The meeting was held at Graves Piano & Organ Co.

Attendance:

David Chadwick, Chris Burget, Ron Kenreich, Evan Bingham, Sam Stahl, Kim Hoessly, David Stang, Mark Ritchie, and Walter Bagnall

Treasurer's Report:

\$2,044.72

Old Business:

Chapter elections were held and a slate of officers was voted on and unanimously approved:

President: David Chadwick

Vice- President: Chris Purdy

Treasurer: Ron Kenreich

Secretary: Chris Burget

Suggestions for future technicals were discussed. Kim Hoessly mentioned possibly doing one on sostenuto systems in Steinway verticals.

New Business:

PTG Council at the convention has recommended that chapters should review their by-laws. Kim Hoessly suggested that we go over them again. They were last revised in 2014, and can be viewed on the Chapter website at: <http://www.ptgcolumbus.org/bylaws.html>

Suggestions for future technicals were discussed. Evan Bingham said he could possibly do one on the Steinway Spirio player system. David Chadwick also suggested doing something on the Yamaha Disklavier system. David is also attending a Yamaha seminar and may be sharing what he learned from that.

Butts & Flanges

No Major mishaps or calamities reported this month! There was more of a general discussion that flowed through several topics. The technical presentation spurred some discussion of portable work tables and methods of transporting grand actions. Kim has the foldable LaRoy Edwards Grand Action Caddy, which was pictured in the October 2015 newsletter. Mark Ritchie described one as pictured in the June 2009 newsletter. It is basically a small folding table that the owner, Ron May, added small casters to the legs and modified the overall height so as to match that of the average grand keyed allowing actions to easily slide in and out. Ron Kenreich mentioned a dolly with triple wheels that facilitate moving on stairs, which can be viewed at: <https://goo.gl/HYEKkX>

There was also brief discussion about tuning toy pianos, and getting service calls only to walk in and discover the client has a digital piano or keyboard... "What do you mean it's not a piano?" The topic of tuning to alternative pitches also came up.

Evan Bingham asked if anyone knew of someone who specialized in mammoth ivory key recovery. There used to be someone who advertised this service in the Journal, but whoever it was hasn't posted an ad in a while. If anyone knows of someone, let Evan know.



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Replacing Young Chang Grand Action Brackets

The September meeting was held at Graves Piano & Organ Co., and Evan Bingham, RPT, gave a presentation on replacing Young Chang grand action brackets. As some of you may know, there were many Young Chang grands that had defective action brackets that would keep expanding over time, causing many regulation problems rendering some pianos unplayable. It took many years for the technical community at large to realize the only lasting, and working, solution was total replacement of all the brackets. The years of manufacture affected are roughly between 1989 and 1998, possibly even later. Much literature says between 1990 and 1994, but more examples of affected pianos outside of those years have come to light. This affects not only Young Chang but many of the brands they manufacture pianos under, including: Wurlitzer, Weber, PianoDisc, and Cline.

Evan started out by citing some legal court decisions, mainly *Genovese v. Young Chang America* as a little background. More on that can be found at: <https://www.leagle.com/decision/incaco20120106029>

As stated above, the main problem is the brackets expand over time, and this was due to too much zinc added to the aluminum alloy mixture. The effect is like too much yeast in a batch of dough which continues to rise more than desired. As the brackets expand, they also get brittle and weak, and can actually shatter into many pieces upon minor impact. This expansion process was slow as it was profound, often taking several years for symptoms to fully appear, with some brackets expanding faster than others. The defective brackets are usually grey in color.

There are several symptoms, but the most common, and immediately visible, one is blocking of hammers on strings. Others include unstable regulation, excessive action spread, checking issues, slow una corda shift, and loose let-off dowels from over adjustment in response to hammer blocking. Jacks and whippens are often misaligned under the knuckles, too. Sometimes cracks in the bracket finish may be present, though not always.

Action spread, the distance from the hammer flange center pin to the whippen flange center pin, varies slightly between model years. Up to 1992 it is 112.5 mm; 1993 and after it is 113.5 mm. This can be measured with a ruler, which can be tricky, or the



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(Young Chang continued...)

anchor the stack. Then, tighten the hammer rail, and set the action spread by making any adjustments to the whippen rail, then tighten that. A jig similar to Mark's is described at this point in the handout. Will Truitt, RPT, took a thin piece of 1/8" brass stock and drilled two holes the proper distance apart and placed .050" centerpins into the holes. After removing the center pins from the end hammer shank and whippen, then replacing flanges on the rail, the jig is ready to adjust the spread. The center pins on the jig will fit perfectly into the empty flanges when the spread is properly set.

Total time needed for this job is 4 to 6 hours including regulation, according to the handout. If nobody has previously tried to regulate the action then it may be possible to do it in half that time after doing a few times. First attempt, or two, you may want to give yourself at least the recommended time. If previous attempts were made to regulate, then the regulation specs that are out the most are usually let-off, drop and blow distance. Jack and whippen alignment should be checked as well. Hopefully, hammers that weren't checking before will be now without too much adjustment. Chances are that any piano needing this job will most likely need other work as well, being that they are at least twenty years old by now. This is a good time to upsell any needed work.

Some people shared war stories of their experiences with these, and trying to work on actions that were so expanded they couldn't be easily removed from the pianos. Mark Ritchie had to remove a stretcher because the drop screws were too high on one. Evan had one where the bass end wouldn't come out, but placing a manilla folder on top of the hammer rail helped in sliding it out. Some techs have resorted to just breaking the brackets, while others have had brackets break on their own upon removal causing total collapse of the actions. These brackets can get so brittle that they almost powderize upon impact.

Young Chang no longer pays for this procedure but they still are, at press time, sending the brackets free of charge. They will ask for the serial number, model number, and possibly a picture or video of either the cracked brackets or other symptoms, like blocking hammers. The contact info for ordering the brackets has changed recently. Email Young Chang at:

vincentchoi@ycapiano.com





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| Vice-President | Chris Purdy, RPT |
| Treasurer | Ron Kenreich |
| Secretary | Chris Burget |
| Imm. Past Pres. | Mitch Staples, RPT |

Chapter Meeting

**Tuesday, October 16
7:00pm**

Food & Drinks: 6:30pm

Solich Piano Columbus

6370 Proprietors Rd,
Worthington, OH 43085
(614) 888-3441

solichmusic.com

Topic: Out of the box Yamaha
grand regulation

Map Link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/oSyuD7HKTaU2>

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

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