

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

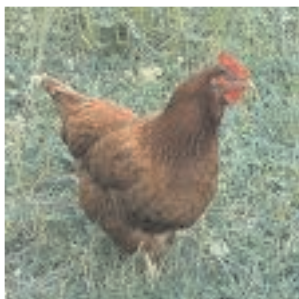
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It never fails that early August is a bit slow because folks are out of town taking those last vacations.

But, as soon as mid August hits, everyone comes home and realizes "oh my, gotta get the piano tuned for fall lessons, oh my gotta get the church pianos tuned for Fall programs, and oh my", well, you get the picture. Sigh. Anyway, hope all of you are keeping your collective heads above water. Don't let anyone talk you into overdoing. It's tempting to overbook, but remember, their lack of preparation does not necessarily constitute an emergency for you (unless it's a very faithful, long-time customer).

So the picnic was great fun at Bryan's, sorry some had to miss. In addition to some fine dining al fresco, we were entertained by Bryan's children and 14 chickens of various colors and configurations. Next time, deviled eggs, eh? Bryan will be hosting the November 18th meeting with a technical on action rebuilding, so you'll get another chance to meet the chickens.



We will not have more than a very brief meeting in September since we want to allow as much time as possible for the Petrof rep to address the chapter and field questions. There will be a "Meet & Greet" reception at 6:30, prior to the meeting which will be at 7:30. All of this takes place at Graves Piano & Organ just south of SR 161 on Karl Road on September 16. We will have a more involved meeting in October (but don't be frightened off, for me that translates as no more than 30 minutes) to discuss chapter business.

Don't forget the Central East Regional Conference in Chicago coming up in October. If you are free, it will be very good.

- Kim

FROM THE PTG CHICAGO CHAPTER

Please see www.wholepiano.com for information about the Central East Regional Conference, October 10-11. Be sure to peruse the list of Exhibitors provided. Please note: the hotel website (a link is provided on the Regional website) has driving directions and a map of the hotel location.

Note: the Early Registration deadline has been extended until September 15.

BUTTS AND FLANGES FROM THE PICNIC

Thanks again to Bryan Hartzler and his family for hosting the August picnic. We didn't have an official meeting, but I was able to listen in on a couple of interesting conversations. There are many subjects on which piano technicians can talk endlessly, one of which is hammers. There are those who swear by Steinway hammers, and there are those who swear *at* them. The bottom line is to be sensitive to what kind of sound the customer wants in a set of new hammers, and use your experience, and the learned advice of our colleagues, to buy the appropriate ones. Then also use that wisdom to treat the hammer felt to get to the desired sound. A set of hammers that sound powerful and project in a concert setting will probably sound maddeningly harsh in a home. Then, it takes an experienced ear to be able to voice the instrument so that it sounds continuous from bottom to top. I feel like I have a long way to go in listening to all the subtleties in piano sounds, but it's a learning experience for us all, and one of the reasons this profession is so interesting.

- David

PS. Sorry, none of my pictures of humans at the picnic turned out very well.

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TECH TIP

Tired of flipping through leftover pieces of sandpaper in a drawer, looking for the grit you want? Need a better way to store it? Try using a metal desktop file sorter (Staples, Office Max). You put the sandpaper in file folders, mark the tabs for grit, wet & dry, etc. and set the sorter on top of a cabinet or desk in your shop. You can find what you want quickly plus the small, but still useful pieces don't get crumbled up in a drawer.

- Kim

SYMPHONY NEWS

There doesn't seem to be much news about the Columbus Symphony, unfortunately. It looks like the fall schedule of concerts will not happen. It is very sad that the country's 15th largest city does not have a functional symphony orchestra. For news and opinion, keep an eye on some of the web sites and blogs:

<http://www.symphonycolumbus.blogspot.com>

<http://my.voyager.net/~randyf926/clasmuscol.html>

<http://glitteringstew.com/reed/>

FROM THE ARTS JOURNAL ...

Pressler Bids Adieu To Beaux Arts Trio

By Tom Huizenga, NPR Arts Reporter

After a 53-year run, the Beaux Arts Trio takes the stage Thursday night at the Tanglewood Music Festival in Massachusetts, to give its final U.S. performance before calling it quits.

The group gave its first public concert there on July 13, 1955. And for 53 years, one member of the Trio has remained constant: pianist Menahem Pressler. He's 84 now, but he still vividly recalls how that first concert launched a career for three separate musicians who quickly grew into a single musical unit. "Immediately after the debut," Pressler says, "we got 70 concerts, mostly in small towns and high-school auditoriums, and so it really became a trip where we tried everything out and became a trio."

Making a case for chamber music wasn't easy. Rock 'n' roll had just exploded onto the music scene, and some people didn't even know what a piano trio was. In one concert hall, the trio found the piano tucked away inside the orchestra pit. A few muscular audience members hoisted the instrument to the stage, but they dropped it, snapping off the pedals. Rather than cancel, Pressler played the broken piano anyway.

Audiences continued to like what they heard, for decades in the world's big cities and on classical record labels. "There were piano trios before Beaux Arts", says Joshua Kosman, music critic for the San Francisco Chronicle. "But none had the staying power, and none set the bar for the trio repertoire as

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high. It's largely a testament to one man, to Menahem Pressler, and his ability to reinvent himself as an artist, and to reinvent the group around him as an artistic entity."

Pressler had to reimagine the group, Kosman says, because over the decades, five violinists and three cellists filtered through the Beaux Arts Trio. But with each new player, Pressler always made the sound glow like a smoothly polished pearl.

Menahem Pressler's lust for life and music and his jovial attitude belie his unhappy past: he grew up in Nazi Germany, and many of his relatives didn't survive the Holocaust. But he and his parents got out of Germany just in time in 1939.

With millions of musical notes behind him, and the end of his beloved Beaux Arts Trio before him, Pressler is not ready to retire. Nor are his two trio-mates. The young violinist Daniel Hope's career is skyrocketing so quickly now that he doesn't have time for the trio, and veteran cellist Antonio Meneses is in demand around the world as a soloist.

But it is time to say goodbye. Speaking to his bandmates backstage in San Francisco as the final U.S. tour winds down, Pressler, always the patriarch, sends them off on a sentimental note.

"I wanted to say that I have loved you," he says, "and I understand now that you are going now for your careers where you have all my heart and all my wishes to both of you, that you do get the career, because you deserve it as musicians and as people."

Pressler, Hope and Meneses will keep on making music, just not as the Beaux Arts Trio. Fortunately, after Thursday night's final Tanglewood performance, we've got five decades' worth of recordings and memories.

Read the full article and hear the story at:
www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=93734452

The Bowed Piano Ensemble

Colorado College's internationally recognized Bowed Piano Ensemble is a group of ten student, faculty and staff musicians led by Stephen Scott. The musicians use homemade bows, popsicle sticks, tongue depressors, guitar picks, rubber plumbing tape, and other materials to manipulate the strings under the lid of the piano.

To get a sense of what the bowed piano is, imagine a grand piano with the lid lifted off. Musicians crowd around, leaning over the innards of the instrument, like a team of surgeons performing an operation.

"The primary sound is produced by a bow of nylon fish-line, which is rosined, and that's just threaded under the piano string and across it. There's another kind of bow, which is a stick of wood which has horse hair affixed to it, and that's rubbed against the strings to produce a short, percussive sound", says Scott.

It should be stressed that all of the sounds heard in the ensemble pieces are produced by the piano strings; no electronics or other sound producing devices are involved. The recordings are made "live" exactly as they are performed in concert.

The group has made several national and overseas tours.



For more information visit:
<http://www.coloradocollege.edu/dept/mu/Ensembles-BowedPiano.asp>

For a "YouTube" concert, visit
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTCaTBHNbO0>



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www.ptgcolumbus.org

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 periph-
erally related to pianos)!*

- David

Upcoming Events

Chapter Meeting

Tuesday September 16, 7:30pm
Graves Piano, 5798 Karl Rd.
Technical Topic: Presentation by Petrof
Meet & Greet reception beginning at 6:30

Central East Regional Seminar

October 10 - 12, 2008
Des Plaines, Illinois

Chapter Meeting

Tuesday October 21, 7:30pm
Mitch Staples' office, 07 Hughes Hall, OSU
Technical Topic: The mute-less pitch raise

Annual Convention and Institute

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

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

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