

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

Volume 42 Issue 4 September 2017



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Chapter Meeting Minutes

May 23, 2017

The meeting was held at Columbus Piano Leasing.

Attendance:

Mitch Staples, Chris Altenburg, Ron Kenreich, Chris Burget, David Stang, Phil Walters, Mark Ritchie, Kim Hoessly, guest speaker Larry Messerly, and host Mahlon Ray.

Treasurer's Report:

\$1940.10

Old Business:

The Chapter website's domain name registration is still good for another year.

New Business:

Annual ads for AGO and OMTA were approved.

Future technicals were discussed:

September 26* - Joe Swenson from Samick, at Columbus Piano Leasing. Fourth Tuesday of the month.

October - Mitch Staples, Yamaha Concert Prep, at Solich Piano.

November - TBA. Another attempt for Tröndlin Fortepiano at Orange House was suggested.

Chapter Elections were held and the slate of Officers remained unchanged:

Mitch Staples - President

Chris Altenburg - Vice-President

Ron Kenreich - Treasurer

Chris Burget - Secretary

Kim Hoessly - Immediate Past President

*Editor's Note: Joe Swenson will not be available for the technical on September 26. Kim Hoessly may be giving a technical on unison tuning. The meeting will still be held on the 26th because it has been in place for sometime already.

Butts & Flanges



Kim Hoessly shared a tip on how to secure the stickers on Acrosonics with wooden guide rails when removing the actions. She happened to be doing an Acrosonic a few weeks ago and took a picture of what she was talking about. This is to keep the stickers from coming out of the guide rail. You use two set screw assemblies taken from upright dampers. Pull up on the next to last stickers on either end, slide the metal tube on the sticker and tighten the set screw. That will hold the rail in place so the stickers don't flop about. She forgot who first showed her this spinet tric., but it's been out there for many a year.

Mark Ritchie shared a recent experience when servicing a Weber/Young Chang grand with a piano disc system installed. The primary issue was that the dampers wouldn't completely seat onto the strings, so there was a little bit of bleed-through all over the whole scale. It seems that the heavy weight of the piano disc solenoid was preventing the dampers from properly seating. No amount of adjustments to any part of the trapwork, lyre, and lift tray seemed to correct the problem. Some mentioned that the action must be placed back into the piano in a specific manner. Different PianoDisc versions have slightly different methods for reinstalling the action, such as: slightly lifting up the action so the backs of the keys clear plungers; depressing the damper pedal so the keys can be properly seated under the underlever assembly; or using the keyslip rail to simultaneously depress all keys while moving the action into place. However, this does not appear to have been the problem either. It was also suggested that a solenoid spring may have been broken, or missing.

The Buckeye Backcheck

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From The Chapter Exam Committee

So the PTG Examiner's Digest (chat room) has been active with talk of a 3-note grand action model which may or may not eventually replace the 1-note model currently used for the Tech Exam. Lots of details would need to be worked out, not the least of which would be expenses to the Exam teams and chapters. So while the change is not eminent, it could happen. So here is some explanation that was posted plus a photo of the model:



“Here is some background on the origin of the 3-note action model.

When Rick Baldassin was hired at BYU, one of his charges from the School of Music was to create an educational program. At that time, we recognized the need for a multi-note action model to properly teach regulation. We investigated having the octave models, like those used at the Renner Academy, produced, but this proved cost prohibitive and impractical to produce in the small quantities we would need.

Then Rick had an idea. Could the current one-note action model be modified to accommodate 3 notes? The answer was yes! And without changing the size and footprint of the existing model. Rick specified the modifications that would need to be made, including a pivoting tray and sostenuto, and requested that Renner make a prototype. We received the original prototype about a year ago.

Utilizing a 3-note grand model has been discussed for a number of years, so I asked Rick to bring the prototype to Norfolk so that members of the committee could play with it. The response from those who saw it was positive, and the PTG saw it as a big improvement over what they had been offering to its members. Based on comments received, Rick met with Renner on one of his trips to Germany, and a second prototype was produced. It included levers to activate the pedals, threaded inserts to secure the action, among other improvements.

On the second prototype, the pedals levers pivoted on one of the action brackets, which would necessitate disconnecting the levers in order to remove the action. Rick modified the lever mounting and added capstans and springs to make the pedal system more functional, and these changes were sent to Renner so that a third prototype could be made. The picture I sent was of this modified second prototype.

It is only logical that PTG will utilize this new model if only for educational purposes. We need face the reality that the 1-note model we have been using will likely become discontinued and replaced by the 3-note model. This will happen whether we embrace the features of the 3-note model or not. The fact is we need to stay ahead of the curve. If we are not moving forward, we are moving backwards.”

There is much more back and forth about whether to let Renner have a say in what models are used, whether to use both models, one for some things and the 3 note for others. How well the 3 note will stand up to exam wear and tear (the nightmare of maintaining the damper wires, for example, after multiple examinees have bent the heck out of them, etc. I'm not looking for changes anytime soon, but it is something to be aware of.

Kim Hoessly

The Buckeye Backcheck

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AcryliKey II Ivory Repair

The May 2017 meeting was hosted by Columbus Piano Leasing. Thanks to owner Mahlon Ray for use of the store as well as providing pizza and beverages. And thanks to Larry Messerly, CERVP, who flew in from Wisconsin to give the technical presentation on ivory keytop repair using the AcryliKey II system, designed by Richard Wagner of Wagner Technical LLC.

After introducing himself and describing some of his duties as Regional Vice President, Larry gave his presentation for repairing ivory keytops. He started out by passing around several keys for us to look at. They represented different stages from a cracked/chipped keytop, to a keytop prepped for repair, a keytop with repair material on it, and finally a fully repaired and buffed keytop. (Editor's note: apologies in advance for the poor resolution of some of the pictures and screenshots accompanying this)

The kit is available from Pianotek, as well as a few other distributors, and also directly from Wagner Technical. More info will be provided below. The kit includes: Two 10 gram containers of acrylic polymer powder, one white, one yellow; one bottle of acrylic monomer liquid used to mix with polymer; one pipette/eyedropper; two mixing cups; one scoop spoon; several mixing sticks; two small sanding paddles; and four pages of printed instructions. Also, Larry advised using rubber or latex gloves. There is enough material for approximately fifty repairs. Also, the original AcryliKey system is still available, though it is not chemically compatible with the newer system. System II is supposed to be easier to use.

Essentially, the process involves mixing the polymer powders with the monomer liquid into a creamy puddy that is applied to the key. The polymer then is allowed to harden and is filed and buffed to match the key. This procedure can be done in the home, if needed, though Larry prefers to do it in the shop. He also doesn't typically carry the kit in his car due to the shelf life of the monomer being altered by exposure to high and low temperatures of parked automobiles. The liquid monomer is generally stable for at least a year if stored properly in a cool dry place.

First, clean the keytop from all dirt and dust with damp cloth and, if needed, mild soap. Dry completely. Second, prep the chipped area by filing a slight bevel along the inner edge of the chip. There is no particular angle needed, just smooth the edge a bit to allow for more consistent bonding. Then use an exacto, or small blade or file, to cut a narrow channel along the width of the keyfront where it meets the keytop. This will act as a reservoir that will catch excess repair material and make for a stronger bond in the end.

The next step is not mentioned in the written instructions, but may prove helpful. Larry applied tape to the undamaged areas of the key immediately surrounding the chip. This will protect those areas from over-sanding and filing later on. In some cases, as in forming a missing corner, it helps to build a reservoir with the tape to catch excess material that can be filed and shaped later on.

Next, mix and color-match the powder to the keytop and apply monomer liquid. If using opaque tape, you can color-match the powders, then apply tape to the key, then mix the liquid and powder. To color-match, start by scooping one small spoonful of white powder into a mixing cup, then put a tiny little bit directly onto the key. If the powder is too white, add a little yellow to the cup and check again.



The Buckeye Backcheck

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Keep adding yellow as needed to darken. Always start with white and then, if needed, add yellow. Larry says the mix will darken slightly in the process, so it is important to practice on some spare keys before trying on customer pianos to get a sense of how much to compensate. Larry also stressed that however important, or not, the color may be for any particular piano, the feel and touch of the end repair is the more important factor. When satisfied with the color, add in 4-6 drops of liquid monomer, or 2 drops per scoop of powder, to the polymer powder and mix together until the creamy consistency of melted butter is achieved. Immediately replace lids on powder containers after use. To this, Larry said, "Don't ask me why!"



Using a mixing stick or toothpick, apply mix to the key. It may be runny at first, so use the stick to manipulate the mix as needed to coax it into place as it coagulates. Holding the repair end upward may also help. Generally, the puddy will harden within minutes. It is advisable to build up the material slightly higher than the actual key surface, then sand it back down to match later.



As the repair material is curing, the mixing cup should be cleaned while the mix is still tacky but not yet hardened. Scrape it with the mixing stick then wipe it clean with a soft cloth, which can be lightly dampened with monomer if desired. Larry, and the written instructions, both advise to only do one key at a time and to avoid the temptation to mix a bunch for multiple keys. The mix may actually harden a little too much by the time the second key is attempted and may result in a bond that fails at a later date.



Once hardened, start filing with one of the sanding paddles. Start with the coarser grit then graduate to the finer. Having a variety of files, grits, and shapes is good for the various kinds of chips and cracks that will be encountered. This is where patience and craft are necessary. Do your best to match the repair to the contours of the key. When filing the front lip of the keytop, Larry suggests flipping the key upside down so the bottom is facing up and using the bottom edge of the keyfront as a visual guide to filing the lip. This way you can see how far the lip is actually protruding from all along the width of the front and will help keep the lip square, so to speak. Otherwise, it's all too easy to file at a slight angle from one side to next.



After this, Larry buffed the key using a dremel tool with a buffing wheel and some white buffing compound. Remove tape as needed. Also, keep the buffer moving without staying in any single spot for very long. Otherwise the surface may heat up and compromise the repair.

When asked if this system will work on plastic tops, Larry stated that the instructions say that a darker repair line will be visible. But in his experience, he has been able to get a seamless repair; and if he ever did have a dark line it was because he mixed the polymer too dark to begin with. So, evidently it will bond. Though, again... practice, practice, practice!

If any mistakes are made, or you're not pleased with your results, the repair can be simply filed away and tried again. Also, if any major bleaching or peroxide cleaning of keys going to be done, it is best to do all of that first before using AcryliKey. For more information, go to: <http://www.wagner-technical.com>

There is also a youtube video of a non-technician showing his results using the system. It is a little different than some of what Larry showed, but may still be educational. <http://youtu.be/XbZpWiidF8s>



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www.ptgcolumbus.org

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- Officers -

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

Chapter Meeting

Tuesday, September 26
7:00pm

Fourth Tuesday of September!

Columbus Piano Leasing
6493 Proprietors Rd
Worthington, OH 43085
columbuspianoleasing.com

Pizza & Drinks at **6:30pm**
Meeting at **7:00pm**

Technical: Kim Hoessly,
Unisons

Map Link:
goo.gl/maps/aQFWAu1wbhT2

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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