

Piano Technicians
Journal

September 1986



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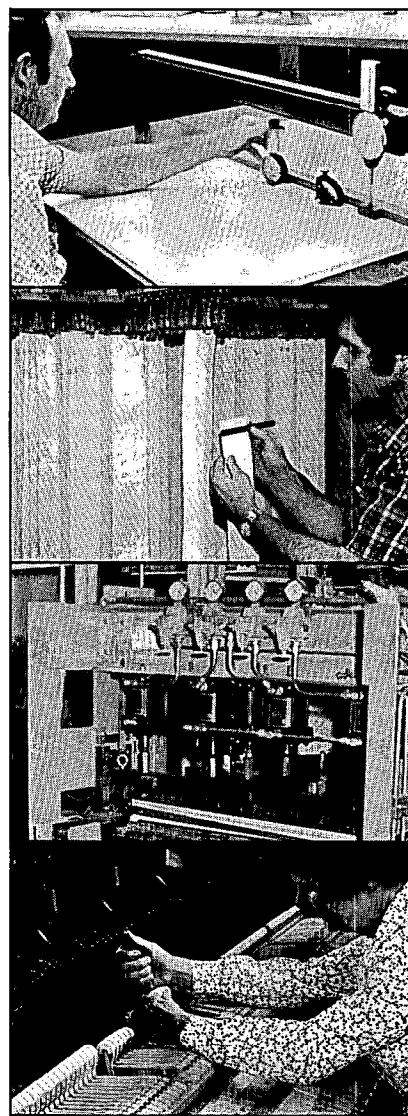
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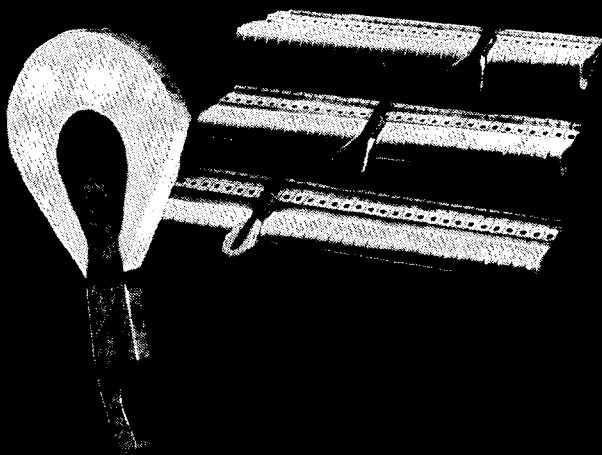
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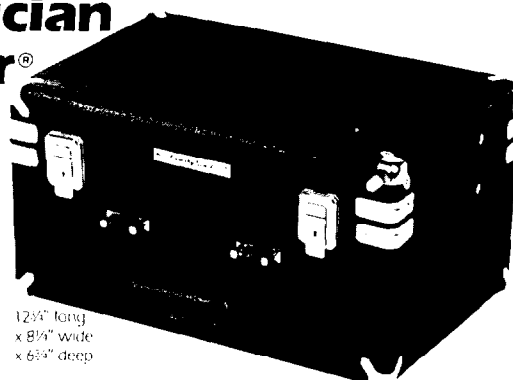
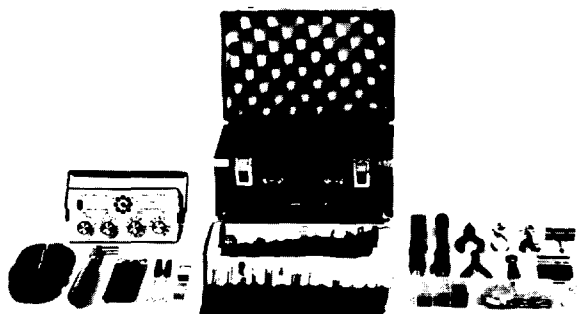
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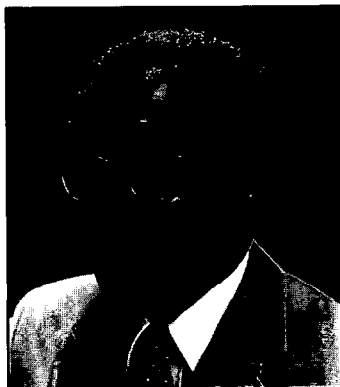
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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE



M.B. Hawkins, RTT
President

Widening Horizons

Over the years it has been my good fortune to visit and live in many lands. As a matter of fact, until recent years I believe I knew more about places outside the North American continent than I knew about various places within our own boundaries. Since becoming a part of the Board of Directors of our association, my travel within the U.S. has increased manyfold.

During the first three years on the Board of Directors, as the Southeast Regional Vice President, those states within the Southeast Region became the object of intense study because the members I represented were there. After three years, my horizons had broadened significantly and there was still much of the region I was unfamiliar with.

After being elected as Vice President, I became aware that I had not lost the region, but instead had gained five additional ones. Yes, there was a fair amount of travel, which carried me to various parts of all six regions as designated by PTG. Although I have studied the regions on the map, I am still tremendously impressed by the geographic diversity of our membership.

Since the close of our Institute and Convention in Las Vegas, it has been my pleasure

to visit some areas I had never seen prior to 1986. As I speak to you now from high above the state of Colorado, let me share with you some recurring thoughts which I hope will mean as much to you as they do to me.

Although our membership can be found beyond the borders of the U.S. and Canada, most of our active and functioning membership is within these borders. While we move into this 30th year of our existence, each of us needs to be fully aware that we as members of the Piano Technicians Guild represent a growing continuum — not only a continuum of knowledge about our chosen subject matter, but a continuum of help and assistance to fellow members and their clients as well.

As the results of this year's Council action are spelled out, be proud of the many, many hours of deliberation and the many years of development through which we have passed in order to be the organization that we are today. We must be proud and hold our heads high as we move about, but at the same time we must recognize that this is not the end, but only a point we are passing.

During the next few months each and every member will be asked for specific input which will enable us to move on to our next plateau. ■

MTNA Names New Executive Director

Dr. Sigfred C. Matson, president of the Music Teachers National Association, announced recently the appointment of Robert J. Elias to the position of Executive Director of the group.

Elias assumed his duties July 15, filling the vacancy left by the recent resignation of Mariann H. Clinton, who had served as MTNA Executive Director since 1977.

Elias previously had served as Executive Director of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and the Orange County, CA, Philharmonic Society. He also held the position of Advertising and

Promotions Manager for Alfred Publishers in Sherman Oaks, CA, and has written numerous articles on music and musicians.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Music History from the University of Southern California, where he also pursued his graduate degree in Historical Musicology. During the 1975-76 academic year, he studied the Kodaly teaching philosophy at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest as one of eight Americans in a Ford Foundation Fellowship Program.

Keyboard Product Directory Launched

Ancott Associates, an informa-

tion service company, has issued the *Music Product Directory*, which contains valuable information on keyboard products currently being marketed in the United States.

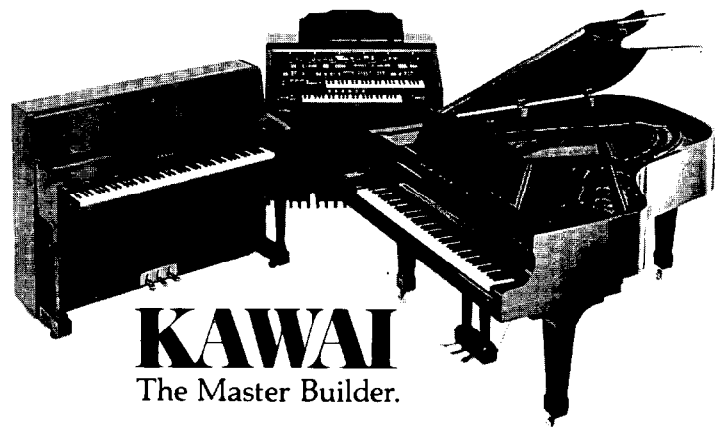
The Directory is the first of a number of information service products planned by Ancott. The Directory will initially focus on keyboard products and will be divided into two editions: Acoustic Pianos and Electronic Keyboards.

Over 40 brands, or 90 percent of the keyboard products sold in the U.S. will be listed, model by model. Actual product feature and price information will be updated on an ongoing basis, and new issues will be distributed every six months.



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Barbara Parks
Executive Director

Convention Memories

It was one of my proudest moments.

In the recent Board meeting which preceded our successful convention at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, Charlie Huether and the members of the 1985-86 Board presented me with a beautiful crystal perfume decanter. The gift and the presentation were a total surprise to me, coming where I had expected to hear a discussion about agenda items for the meeting.

The decanter was a farewell present because, as you may have heard, I will be leaving my present position with the Piano Technicians Guild at the first of the year. Until now, I had thought of my leaving the Guild in abstract terms, as if it was something that would happen a long time down the road.

This decanter, and the thoughtfulness of the board, brought home to me the fact that this will be my last PTG convention. Las Vegas was my third and, in many ways, my favorite of the three.

After sitting at a board table with someone for several days of meetings, you get to know them pretty well. I've gained a great deal of respect for these people because of their selfless attitude toward the Guild and the dedication and energy they have brought to their task. That's why this recognition from them was so meaningful.

Speaking of people who have become friends through the Guild and our conventions, other occurrences make memories of this year's convention bitter-sweet ones. On arriving in Las Vegas, Charlie Huether and I both received touching letters

from John Travis, one of the Guild's founding co-presidents, stating that because of health reasons, he would not be at this year's convention and wishing everyone well.

Then, on the eve of the convention, we were stunned to hear of the passing of Walt Sierota, former president of the Philadelphia Chapter and a longtime supporter of the Guild. I know the Guild will miss Walt a great deal.

Hard on the heels of that blow, we received word that Past President Bob Russell had suffered what was originally diagnosed as a heart attack. We have since heard, however, that Bob is recovering nicely and is even tuning a few pianos again. We look forward to having him back at full steam again.

Despite those shocks, those at the convention carried on and made it a success. You can read more about it in the pages of this issue. If you were there, I hope it brings back fond memories as it does for me. If you missed it, I hope these words and pictures make you realize what you missed so you can make plans now to be at the next convention in Toronto.

When I began working with the Guild almost three years ago, I was told that it was a close, family organization. It has certainly become so for me. In fact, even though I will no longer be Executive Director of the Guild, and even though I'm sure it will be in good hands, I'm trying to figure out a way to make a guest appearance with the 1987 Convention Barbershop Chorus in Toronto! ■



Executive Director Barbara Parks receives a crystal perfume decanter from 1985-86 President Charles P. Huether.

Economic Affairs

Henry Jones, RTT
Wilmington, DE, Chapter

Only The Numbers Have Changed

"One purpose of the Economic Affairs Committee is to research and present information to the Piano Technicians Guild membership to encourage interest in improving individual business sense and economic posture."

Just words for a novice writer to begin with? Not by a long shot! International President M.B. Hawkins used those very words as guidance and inspiration to his newly appointed committee for Economic Affairs.

Our intent is to be sure an article relative to management improvement, business practices, and income assurance appears in the *Journal* each month. We hope the information provided will be of use to all *Journal* readers and would like to think that most of you will look forward to the next issue with some anticipation.

The June 1986 *Journal* has an interesting article titled "Starting Up" by Robert Smit. His suggestions are very important to us all and it would be prudent for us to heed them, new business or "established." His last paragraph is of special significance. "Don't get discouraged if results are not immediate...stick to your plan and be consistent...you have have all the ingredients for success: a willingness, skill, integrity and confidence."

It's not the prerogative of this committee nor that of the Piano Technicians Guild to instruct any of you regarding how to operate your business, self-employed or not. Nor do we want to relate "success stories." We can, and have every intention of doing so, present you with data and thoughts that may help your decisions and actions in improving your lot in life.

Money, a little or a lot, always appears as one of the basic motivators. In the January-February 1969 *Journal*, Leslie Hoskins offered an article titled "You and Your Income." His thoughts were very valid in 1969 and, with a little effort on your part updating his numbers and figures, are just as valid today. We couldn't say it better.

You And Your Income

Leslie J. Hoskins,
Editor Emeritus

Self employed people often feel frustrated when trying to equate their income with that of others who work for wages. The difficulty is that in addition to his fixed take-home pay the employed worker has tangible fringe benefits. This now prevails in nearly all lines of work. For example, a plumber's pay may be \$5 an hour for 40 hours with time and one half for overtime and double time for Sundays and holidays. And since fringe benefits are based on a percentage of the hourly rate they cannot be computed in a lump sum. Unless the self-employed person provides for these benefits in the conduct of his own business affairs he jeopardizes both his present and future welfare.

Fringe benefits vary with different industries but they are high in all cases and they rise with each new wage contract. By inquiring of many sources I find estimates ranging from 30% to more than 50%. One employer with a wage scale of \$4.50 an hour for semi-skilled labor figures his total cost at \$7.00 per hour. Another evaded a direct reply by saying, "Too damn much!"

We have approached the income problem with a rather loose definition of our actual need and a just reward for our work. If we seem to be coming out all right we let it go at that and avoid any critical analysis. Nevertheless those fringe benefits cannot be swept under the rug; we pay them for other workers in the added cost of all that we buy, *and eventually we must pay them for ourselves*. If we don't make an intelligent provision for them in pricing our work and budgeting our income accordingly, we shall meet them head on when emergencies arise. They can never be avoided.

Let's examine those benefits and see how they apply to us. First there is the retirement pension. This can be big; real big. At least one worker organization contract calls for a very liberal pension after 20 years of employment even though the retiree is only 40 years old. Another has demanded an entire year with pay after seven years of work — "Sabbatical leave" — but I do not know the outcome of this.

Pensions have long been a practice for people in executive capacities but now they are common for nearly all workers. Self employed folk will need more than Social

Continued on next page

Economic Affairs . . .

Security benefits in their retirement, and anything extra must be provided for out of earnings.

The next big item is Hospital-Medical care, the benefits of which are extended to the worker's immediate family members. In some cases dental and optical care are also included. Sometimes the worker pays a portion of the pension and H-M cost, but frequently the employer assumes it all. Hospital bills can be staggering today.

The cost of paid vacations, holidays, sick leave and other times-off is not a minor one. Two weeks was once a liberal vacation but now is fast becoming passe. However, two weeks plus the usual seven holidays costs an employer \$600 for a \$5 an hour employee. And of course the inevitable fringe is added to every dollar.

Some of the smaller benefits are the Social Security tax. Employers are required by law to pay on half of this. Another is Workman's Compensation Insurance paid wholly by the employer. This protects the worker in case of injury at his job. The cost may be partly covered for the employer by the H-M benefits. For the worker it is important protection; even priceless in case of permanent disability. Self employed persons can obtain such insurance as individuals but the premium rate is high.

Unemployment insurance has helped many a worker over a period of unavoidable idleness. The State administers this fund from a pool to which all employers contribute by paying a tax based on a percentage of their payroll. It starts at 3% and remains at that until the employer has built up a predetermined reserve. The tax is then reduced and thereafter fluctuates according to the employer's "lay-off" experience. If employment is stable in his establishment he benefits accordingly, by a reduced tax rate.

There is some injustice in this arrangement for the employer because the reserve which he has built up in the pool is his in name only. If he has no unemployment his contribution goes toward maintaining the pool level which is drawn upon by others who may have a high unemployment rate. Also he may quit business after having built up a large reserve but he forfeits his share the same as though he had used it up in unemployment benefits. The worker is the only one who is protected by the Unemployment Insurance but he pays nothing toward it.

There are other less important benefits but for now we will consider only the better known ones.

1. Retirement pensions.
2. Hospital-Medical Care.
3. Pay for vacations, holidays and other leaves.
4. Social Security tax.
5. Compensation Insurance.

These are all items which you, as a self employed piano technician, must provide for yourself and family. They are real, they are ever-present; whether they become an asset or a liability in your life is for you to decide.

How much of your income should be set aside regularly to take care of these necessities? Many factors govern the answer — your age; the size of your family; property you have already accumulated; the amount and type of life insurance you carry, as well as other types of insurance protection; and what you expect from your retirement years. One executive told me that a self employed person would have to budget a bare minimum of \$1,000 a year to come anywhere near the benefits of an employed worker. Let's be extremely conservative and say 10% of your gross income. This makes for easy figuring and serves as an example, which is all I am trying to do here.

The added 10% makes the weekly wage \$220 and the annual income \$11,440. So if you earn \$220 for 40 hours you will be on a par with the employed man; right? Wrong. Neither you nor the other fellow will work more than 48 weeks out of the year, but he will be paid for 52 weeks whereas you will not. You will be lucky to accomplish 48 weeks, but if you do you will need to bring home \$243.90 to hold your own thus far.

Now more figuring — the employed person has no cost-of-operations in producing his income but you have a great deal of expense in the conduct of your business. This must be fully accounted for before you compute your take-home pay. Just how much it costs you to do business will depend on the extent of your activity, but it will be considerable by the end of the year. Small items are often overlooked. It will pay to examine the larger ones.

Transportation: Tax accountants figure it at 10 a mile.

Meals away from home: If required by your business.

Shop-office rental: If this is on your resident premises then pro-rate the cost according to the percentage of area occupied and divide it into your total home-owner cost. This

means insurance, maintenance, light-heat (but not telephone), interest on mortgage, or if no mortgage then interest on your investment. You may want to carry special insurance for your tools, and you may use more than a pro-rated share of electricity. Figure accordingly and include other cost pertinent to your occupancy.

Tools and equipment: depreciation rate as applied to all the tools you own and the cost of new ones as they are bought.

Business telephone: (and answering service, if any).

Clerical help: bookkeeping services, help with income tax, etc.

Merchandise and supplies: cost laid in.

Membership dues: including PTG and any other organization you belong to for business reasons.

Magazine subscriptions and technical books: all such that are identified as educational in your profession.

Conventions and Seminars: which you attend, but not including vacation expense if combined with such events.

Advertising: include all items designed to establish, promote and maintain customer relations.

Printed forms: letterheads, bill-heads, statements, ledgers, and also postage required by your business.

If you keep careful records you will have other items to add to the ones listed, but these are common to any business enterprise. Only you can determine the cost. You may drive more or less than 10,000 miles; you may buy much material or little, but whatever your practice you must know exactly what it costs you. \$2,500 a year too much? Too little? If you put 10,000 miles on your car it will cost you \$1,000 overall, including depreciation, insurance, maintenance, gas and oil. Attendance at conventions can run anywhere from \$500 to \$1,000. That doesn't leave much for other expense, does it?

The figures I have used for examples are arbitrary but reasonably representative of actual conditions. You will have to be guided by your personal experience as based on your activity; the important thing is *that you do establish an accurate guide and that you revise it as economic conditions dictate*; at least once a year. Be sure your financial affairs are governed by guide posts, not hitching posts.

Summed up now, we see that our mythical \$5 an hour wage earner realizes a total of \$11,440 per year
Continued on next page

including fringe benefits. Allowing for fringe benefits, you must earn a like sum plus your business expense which we have tentatively set at \$2,500, for a grand total of \$13,940.

The customary rebuttals will now be heard:

1. You can't predicate your earnings on 40 hours a week. True, the piano service business doesn't allow for strict regimentation. (The employed man often works more than 40 hours but he gets overtime pay for the extra hours.) There may be weeks when you will work as few as 30 hours due to bad weather, auto repairs, illness in the family and so on. But to have a guide you need to figure on a comparable basis with employed workers.

2. Not many fellows earn \$200 a week take-home pay. Don't fool yourself. An annual wage of \$10,000 is not at all out of line for skilled workers, with fringe benefits added. There are instances of \$1,000 a week or more on special jobs. Earlier in this discussion I cited an industry which has an hourly rate of \$4.50 for semi-skilled labor. That amounts to \$9,360 per year with fringe benefits to be added and no overtime fig-

ured in. This is 1968-69; we cannot let our thoughts gel.

I quoted one employer who estimated that a self employed person would have to set aside a minimum of \$1,000 a year to allow for fringe benefits. If you do this you will have \$1,040 by the end of the year if the sum is held in a savings bank at 4% simple interest. Theoretically but not actually. Inflation at the present rate will have consumed the increment. Or, if you withdraw the interest, you will have only \$960.00 in actual buying power instead of \$1,000 as seen in your pass book. It is like a bucket with a slow leak; water must be added regularly to keep it full.

Estimating and budgeting an income requires serious thought. We piano technicians have to be especially careful because we must calculate within the limitations as well as possibilities of our profession. We are neither stevedores nor atomic scientists, but as skilled craftsmen we have a definite place on the social and economic ladder and as such we are entitled to the rewards seen in other vocations of comparable status. We won't realize these rewards unless we know what they

are and how to find them. We never will know if we continue to paraphrase the Biblical axiom and say, "Sufficient unto the day is the income thereof."

The differentials which arise in comparing the income of a self employed person with that of one on a predetermined wage scale is no reason why we piano technicians should "play-it-by-ear" and hope for the best. It takes only a little time and thought to see where we stand.

For your own satisfaction, or for your chapter as a group undertaking, choose the craft you think comparable to your own in skill and learn the prevailing wage scale in your area. You can usually get this from the applicable union headquarters, together with the percentage of fringe benefits as against direct wages. See what this amounts to for 40 hours, then add your cost of doing business as determined by dividing your annual cost by 52 weeks. Then multiply the grand total by the 48 weeks you hope to work and compare it with the 52 weeks which the employee will be paid for.

Perhaps the findings will please you. If not you will see where the discrepancy lies.

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THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

Fred Odenheimer
Chairman, International
Relations Committee

Memories Of Europe

This is the fourth week of our "homecoming" and I never thought it would be as difficult to get back into a routine as it turned out to be. There is still some mail seen but unattended. There are many letters to write and I imagine they will eventually be written. There are slides, nicely packed into boxes but never seen on a screen. We can only hope that we are able to pinpoint the various places where the pictures were taken after such a lapse of time.

Meanwhile (as this is written) one week before the PTG convention, one reasons that perhaps one should wait with straightening out things until that event is over!

Seven weeks of travel while usually staying one or two nights in a particular place or hotel means seeing a lot, but we know only after we came home how worn out we were, but alas, the memories, they are with us to stay.

Walking up one evening in Prague with Norman Miller from the hotel to the castle and the cathedral and on to an overlook of the city and the Moldau (Moldava) River. In the evening light, especially, it was a beautiful sight. There was a young couple on one side of us and a lady "our age" on the other side. As we conversed in English the lady turned and told us in perfect English that she was waiting there for the rise of the moon. It sounded so romantic but we decided we had to get back to our hotel, only to be told the next morning by Elke, our tour guide, that we should not have missed that particular

moonrise, because it was so beautiful.

One really has to marvel at the skill of the bus drivers. They can turn their long vehicles on a dime and never seem to bat an eye. Buses (PTG tour and tour in Norway) were always meticulously clean, with windows washed. They were a joy to travel in. Trouble only hit once — Walter had parked his bus along the banks of the river Main in Wurzburg. At the time of his parking in the evening, there was no other vehicle in sight. By next morning, however, two small cars were parked in back and front of him and it finally took police to help him to get extricated. This was the only time we were late to a factory.

For quite some time, our route followed the River Danube. This particular road looked more like a country road — or less — and it brought us to a ferry big enough for one ordinary car. Needless to say, we had to turn around. As usual, Walter managed to turn the bus with no room to spare.

Speaking of roads, even this road looked like a superhighway in Norway's fjord country and passing each other was often a major undertaking, with one vehicle backing off until passing was possible. This was by no means an unusual occurrence.

In the middle of June, the apple trees were blooming and pears were just barely starting to open their flowers. Traveling from one place to another one can easily forget that Los Angeles is on the same latitude as North Africa, but that Norway's latitude is similar to Alaska. ■

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29th Annual Convention & Institute Attracts 909 Registrants

CONVENTION

'86

Don Valley
Western North Carolina Chapter

Normally, when one thinks of Las Vegas, his mental screen flashes quick-changing images of bright lights, a big win, mostly big losses, great shows — all related to gambling. Now, I was never a gambler (of money, that is) but I know everyone who attended this year's annual International Convention and Institute was a big winner — absolutely no one lost!

Actually, the big wins came repeatedly throughout the week for each person. The gambler is always looking to "strike it rich" by chance investment. He ignores the huge odds set against him. Sort of like the young tuner- technician who does not participate outside the scope of his own little world. He is destined not to win. He is limited in his ability to advance as he gropes for answers to magically appear — the slot machine syndrome.

Yes, it costs to take advantage of convention activity. Yes, you lose if you do not — it is that plain. However, the cost expended will come back to you many times over in some form of increased revenue.

Our 1986 convention was jam-packed with solid investments. Those who were absent will realize their losses by considering some of the absolutes we gleaned from being where the jackpots were frequent and big. Al Sanderson in his class on rescaling brought into usa-

ble reality the fact that a small "five-footish grand" can have another foot-worth of sound added through rescaling. That's a big jackpot.

"Let the computer do your work," says Newton Hunt, "in rescaling, record-keeping and many other business procedural details so as to keep you on top of your business in an efficient, unforgettable way."

Strip-file? Jack Caskey and LaRoy Edwards graphically demonstrated this gang-filing procedure with the conclusion that it is more exacting. However, if you don't know the technique, don't experiment on a set of hammers you wish

Of course, the exhibit hall displayed items for bringing new profit types into our tills. That old, worthless, gutted player is now a worthwhile investment again with Howe's complete unit made to order for putting life back into that old chassis. Epo-Tek's epoxy process will give that old pinblock unbelievable tightness where you might have condemned a piano because of it. That is another big-profit item making it possible to do a service for a client heretofore advised against such.

Not new to us, but with a greater market and bigger winning dollars, Pianocorder encourages their product school to certify installers. This can be a continuing jackpot! Then, too, we could not get along without our suppliers who were there in full array for hands-on shopping. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but seeing and feeling is to buy!

Those gorgeous instruments from Young Chang, Baldwin,



***'Even though I've been tuning for over 50 years, the only classes that I really attended — and I'm still looking for more information on it all the time — are the tuning classes.'* — Donn Foli, Vancouver, BC**

Top left: Emil Fries, left, and the late Chuck Burbach were inducted into the Hall of Fame. Top center: 1986 Institute Director Ben McKlveen. Top Right: Host chapter representative Lorelle Nelson. Above left, the A-440 combo added a traditional touch. Above right: Willis Snyder, left, received the Golden Hammer Award from President Huether. Left: Dan Evans received a Presidential Citation, as did Lloyd Winn, Jack Krefting, and M.B. Hawkins.

Steinway, Samick, Kimball, Kawai, Yamaha and Seiler keep us aware of what is out there for our clients and, at the same time, what can be healthy winners for us. Specialty products — some new, some old — kept us open to the many advances of technology in our craft. Damp-Chaser's climate control, McCall's glues and lubricants, Superior Imports' parts specialties, Decals Unlimited for soundboards and fall-boards, music boutique items of all sorts, Isaac's hammers — all these things specifically for the music

***'Key recovering and rebushing was really valuable to me. I wanted to provide more of a service of that nature to my people up in Fairbanks.'* —Brian Leffingwell, Fairbanks, Alaska**

trade. The exhibit floor was spacious and inviting. No one can quite sense that full feeling of professionalism anywhere else.

Well, back to class, now. So you are frustrated over your little shop? Does the clutter make you have nightmares? What about that impeccable shop efficiency displayed by Clair Davies? In this small shop, major work — soundboard replacement, pinblocks, refinishing and all — is accomplished. You can, too, but you have to be at seminars like this to get the complete details.

I can do a complete set of key bushings in 40 minutes, thanks to the efficient methodology taught by

Making Music Is For Everyone, Wilson Tells Convention

"If English was taught like music, a college graduate would be able to recite Shakespeare sonnets but be unable to write a letter to a boy- or girlfriend."

The way music is taught and learned began to fascinate Dr. Frank Wilson, a San Francisco neurologist, when his daughters began studying the piano. Drawing on his medical background, Wilson began to explore the relationship between music and the brain and eventually published his conclusions in a book, "Tone Deaf and All Thumbs: an Invitation to Music-Making for Late Bloomers and Other Non-Prodigies" (Viking-Penguin, 1986).

Dr. Wilson shared his findings with a rapt audience at the opening session of the Guild's 1986 Convention in Las Vegas and then met with convention-goers in the exhibition hall the next morning to autograph copies of his book.

"The reason most people don't continue their early musical studies is that they get a lesson early on: 'This is not for you,' Dr. Wilson said. "What the teacher means is that that person will never make it on the stage."

Decrying the prevailing attitude that if one does not play well, one should not play at all, he cited several examples of people who had picked up an instrument later in life and, although they might never be good enough to play professionally, were enjoying it a great deal. One woman in her 60s who had begun playing drums told him, "I can say things with the drums that I've never been able to say before."

In the course of his neurological

investigations, Dr. Wilson said he had discovered that musical skills are learned in much the same way as an athlete learns to excel in a sport. The muscle groups are smaller and the movements more precise, but the process of conditioning is the same, he said.

Since completing his book, Dr. Wilson has emerged as something of a spokesman for the music industry, addressing a convention of the Music Teachers National Association and contributing to a video produced by the National Piano Foundation. He and his findings also have been the subject of stories in publications from the *New York Times* to the *Honolulu Star*.

A major problem in introducing or re-introducing people to making music, Dr. Wilson said, is the idea that practicing an instrument is work, not fun. It's true that playing involves repetition and practice, but those activities themselves are pleasurable. The idea of the child who is forced to practice looking wistfully out the window at his friends playing football must be stamped out, he said.

"Now is the time to open this opportunity to anyone who wants it," he said.

Dr. Wilson's book, "Tone Deaf and All Thumbs," will be reviewed in a future issue of the Journal.



Dr. Frank Wilson, right, talked with Colette Collier and husband Walt Trohan during a visit to the Exhibit Hall.

Fern Henry. Also, had you attended the keycovering division of that class, you could do your own keytop work — a set in two or three hours. Another winner for you. To weight keys, getting the exacting touch control a fine pianist demands, is not an esoteric feat. It is a skill all of us should have. Those who attended this class are winners in this regard.

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. In good taste, the Baldwin, Steinway and Yamaha social functions featured their finest instruments, their finest pianists and the finest in hospitality for us to enjoy at our leisure. These had to be the most anticipated features of the entire week.

All the flurry of activity for the week was enhanced by perhaps the biggest winner of all — that free exchange of ideas shared from person to person as well as in the



Instructors, clockwise from right: Rick Baldassin, Willis Snyder, Lee Sanky, William Stegeman, Fern Henry (Teacher Relations Class) and Jack Caskey.



more formal setting of committees, regional meetings and caucuses.



This is how we rub elbows with our colleagues from around the world,

Technicians Renew Fight For A-440 Standard

One unexpected product of this year's Convention and Institute in Las Vegas was a resolution calling for continued world-wide acceptance of A-440 hertz as a standard pitch throughout the world.

Citing problems caused by "excessive pitch adjustments necessary to satisfy various orchestras and performers," those attending the convention adopted the resolution.

The pitch issue was investigated in a special forum headed by 1985-1986 Guild President Charles P. Huether, RTT, and Ron Harper, a representative of the Australian Piano Tuners and Technicians Association. Other participants in the discussion were from the United States, Canada and France.

According to participants in the Las Vegas forum, some musical groups insist on tuning to a higher pitch of A-442 or A-445. They noted that raising and lowering the pitch of a piano can cause serious stability problems in the instrument. The higher pitch also puts an unnecessary strain on vocalists and other instrumentalists. Here's the text of the resolution:

Resolution to Encourage the Establishment of World-wide Acceptance of A-440 Hertz as Standard Pitch and Consistent Adherence to This Standard:

WHEREAS: a world-wide representation of more than 750 piano technicians are assembled in convention at Las Vegas, Nevada, on July 23, 1986; and

WHEREAS: it has been brought to the attention of the convention that a serious problem exists in connection with the inconsistencies of the pitch level throughout the world, and

WHEREAS: a committee of the convention has explored the situation in great depth and has unanimously recommended that the convention take action; and

WHEREAS: the stability and well-being of the concert piano is constantly being threatened by the excessive pitch adjustments necessary to satisfy various orchestras and performers; and

WHEREAS: other instruments and singers have problems because of these excessive and frequent changes in pitch level;

BE IT THEREBY RESOLVED: that the Piano Technicians Guild, Inc., states that the standard pitch of A-440 hertz as established in 1939 by international agreement be consistently observed world-wide; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Piano Technicians Guild shall cause this resolution to be widely distributed throughout the world.



Top: Ron Harper and Charles Huether chaired the International Pitch Forum. Right: 25-year pins went to, from left, Charles Huether, Ernest Preuitt, Nicholas Fantuccio, Francis Hollingsworth and August McCollom. Below right: Marty Hess, David Barr and Wayne Yockey compared notes during the Chapter President's Reception.



'There are innumerable things that I can apply immediately to my business. But there are many general principles that I've learned that I think will make me a better businessman in the long run.'

— Richard Anderson, Chicago

realizing our commitment together makes a huge impact on the total realm of music throughout all our continents. This is exciting, to say the least!

Have you gotten the point yet? Have you been reading between the lines? Do you feel you are missing a lot by not being in Las Vegas? Do you feel you are a real winner because you attended? In no way is it possible to cover in a written article the feelings of worth, responsibility and well-being one has during his presence at one of these conventions. The surface has just been scratched. New officers, new committees, con-

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***'I spent most of my time in the rebuilding seminar. I'm at the point in my business where that's my focus now. One of the things that was most helpful was the business part that Wally (Brooks) covered in the first section.'* — Teri Powell, Los Angeles**

tinuing committees and special interest groups are anxious to work in our best interest. Whether or not you take advantage of continuing education, the PTG will work just as diligently to provide the best for all of us.

It is not my wish to bore you with constant reference to attendance, only to inspire you to get in there and see for yourself every year what a positive effect your personal involvement will have on your professional and financial status. You can't afford it? Hogwash! Many students, still without income receipts, spent in excess of \$600 each to be there. In polling many of them, the consensus was that the expense was insignificant in light of the benefits received. *Jackpot!* It would be the same for you, too. For example, one job you

Below left: Larry Crabb conducted the Barbershop Chorus. Below Center: Francis and Grace Mehaffey (seated) were honored during a reunion of former students. Below right "Toronto John" Lillico, in Canadian Mountie regalia, came to Las Vegas to get more than a thousand men and women for next year's convention in Toronto. Bottom left: Retiring board members Dean Thomas, left, and Willem Bles were honored during the closing luncheon. Bottom Center: Vice President Hawkins honored President's Club members Dale Erwin, Ed Barber Sr., Nolan P. Zeringue, the late Walt Sierota and Ernest Preuitt. Sierota's award was accepted by Ralph Onesti.



have estimated as impossibly expensive for your client or not feasible technically for you is now within reason because of your discoveries in Las Vegas. You could have another satisfied customer paying for your week at the convention and continue to promote many more of the same types of jobs in years to come — the continuing results of wise investment.

Now who's hit the jackpot? Those who spent some money and time to acquire additional ongoing skills? Or those who chose not to take a week of salary and time, but still have unanswered questions about those "impossible tasks?" Now who's the gambler? The one who took the week and won repeatedly, or the one who stayed on the job, afraid to break the routine?

Well, there was a winning side to each decision. However, I know who hit the jackpot. He was in Las Vegas taking advantage of the entire week of activity. See you in Toronto next year! ■

Roasting A President



Outgoing President Charles P. Huether was the recipient (or victim) of a surprise roast at the end of the convention awards banquet. After hearing the comments of such old friends as Fred Odenheimer, Ernie Juhn, Ben McKlveen, Willis Snyder, George Defebaugh and even his wife, Agnes, Charlie received a special plaque, engraved with the name of each board member with whom he had served, from emcee and successor M.B. Hawkins.

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The 1986 P.T.G. Study Tour of Europe: A Report — Part I

Yat-Lam Hong
Western Michigan Chapter

The P.T.G. Study Tour of Europe took place between May 17 and June 7, 1986. Of the 23 participants, 16 were piano technicians, and seven, spouses and friends. With an age range of 23 to 86, this was a rather diverse group. What bonded it was a common interest in the workings of the piano. The average age being 56, this was a mature group, and it can be assumed that these people knew what they were doing, going to Europe when most Europe-bound Americans were cancelling their reservations.

Altogether, we visited ten factories on this trip: seven piano manufacturers (Schimmel, Grotrian-Steinweg, Bluthner, Bosendorfer, Euterpe/Feurich/Hoffmann, Seiler, and Steinway) and three suppliers (Roslau Stahldraht, Hoszwerk Schwaiger, and Louis Renner). Covering a total land distance of 2,837 miles (not counting those walked!), it was a very hectic three weeks, during which we were on the go all the time. The trip started and ended in Hamburg, West Germany. In between, we also visited East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Switzerland. While not touring factories, we were busy sight-seeing, visiting museums, attending concerts and operas, going on shopping and eating sprees...

Throughout the entire trip, we traveled in an air-conditioned bus. Our driver, Walter Holzhauser, and multilingual tour guide, Elke Lehmann, are experienced veterans at their work. They took care of all the details of travel, and everything went smoothly. The three weeks went by like three days. On our return to Hamburg to get ready for the flight home, we found it absolutely incredible that we managed to cram so much

into our trip (and suitcases!) in such a short time, and that we got to know everyone in the group better than we ever thought we would.

Everywhere we went, we were treated royally by our hosts at the factories. We were invited to numerous lunches, dinners, coffee klatsches, cocktail receptions — either in company dining rooms, or in restaurants. The hospitality was overwhelming, and it was as though, unknowingly, our hosts were trying to outdo each other in making us feel welcome. At most of these meals, we didn't eat — we *dined*. In spite of the jogging and swimming some of us did, it was hard not to gain weight — among other things. Even Elke, our guide, said she had never seen a tour group like ours, being invited to meals all over Europe. But then, she didn't know we were special: We represented the Piano Technicians Guild, which is not unknown to our hosts.

The first factory we visited was Wilhelm Schimmel in Braunschweig, which welcomed us with a raised American flag at the main entrance. Mr. Nikolaus Schimmel, the company president, personally greeted us, and introduced us to his staff. We were each issued a set of wireless earphones with individual volume controls, and off we went with Leonardo Duricic, Schimmel's service technician, who led us through the plant. As we soon discovered, in a noisy environment like a piano factory, these wireless earphones were absolutely invaluable. They enabled us to hear every word being said, and nobody even needed to raise his voice to be heard over the tremendous noise level of the machinery. The last person in the group could be as far as 100 feet away from

the guide, and could hear him as clearly as if he were only two feet away. Schimmel was the only factory that provided us with this very thoughtful (and surely costly) convenience.

We went through all the usual departments: outdoor lumber storage, wood-drying kilns, the enormous veneer storage area where veneer of almost every imaginable wood is kept in precisely controlled climatic conditions, wood sawing and gluing, plate preparation, bridge manufacturing, soundboard installation, stringing, action and damper regulation, case polishing and touch-up. Upon entering the plant, one immediately notices the extremely high degree of automation: There is a machine doing almost every job that used to be done strictly by hand, and these machines all appear to be one-of-a-kind devices, designed specifically by Schimmel engineers for a particular job. Obviously, these machines are what makes it possible for only 580 employees to turn out 11,000 pianos a year, 1,400 of which are grands. Like all the other factories we visited, there is no assembly line, but the efficiency at Schimmel is tremendous.

We spent quite a bit of time at the keyboard department, where we saw such technological marvels as the automatic key-balancing machine. This computer-controlled device pivots the key at the balance rail hole, weighs it to check the fore-and-aft balance, automatically drills holes in the back of the key, and inserts the proper amount of lead to compensate for any irregularity in wood density. An entire keyboard can be so balanced in a few minutes, and the machine does it all. The

Continued on next page



Participants in the 1986 European tour pause by their tour bus at the Roslau Wire Factory, Roslau, West Germany. In the center are Han-Joachim Kruger, Roslau engineer, and Herman Scherzer, director.

operator is there only to guide it. (This operation is not to be confused with leading the keys for touch-weight adjustment, for which there are other equally ingenious machines.) This is just one of the many machines we saw which enable Schimmel to produce a quality piano at a reasonable price.

Of course, much of the work still has to be done by hand. At one work station, we saw a woman painstakingly beveling the ends of paper-thin ebony strips for a perfect fit in the veneer inlay design of a fancy grand case. Mr. Duricic apologized for her slowness, explaining that she is still in her first year of apprenticeship. Apprenticeship? It's a term I haven't heard in years, but it's apparently still alive and well in today's German piano factories. The three-and-half-year program is to train a new worker in the *basics* of a job before he is allowed to work independently in the factory.

It became obvious that a worker does not just have a "job" in the factory; he has a life-long career there. If a person were not serious about committing himself to the work and the discipline required, he surely would not be willing to invest so much of his time and energy in the apprenticeship program in the first place. The result of this system is that a company not only has expe-

rienced workers who know what they are doing, but it has their loyalty, too, which is in turn reflected in the quality of the product. (This is quite a contrast to the situation in some American factories, where workers might quit to do something else before they even learn the job well, and the practice seems to be to "join the union first for job security, and learn the job afterwards — if then." In the corporate world where company-hopping is commonplace, I think it's called "climbing the ladder of success.")

An overhead sign at Schimmel reads: "Konnen sichert Qualitat. Qualitat sichert Lohn." ("Knowledge insures quality. Quality insures job.") This is certainly a reminder to everyone that the fortunes of a company are intimately tied to the quality of the workers' output.

At the conclusion of the tour, we were invited to an elegant roast beef lunch in the company dining room, complete with tablecloths and fresh flowers. At the question-and-answer session afterwards, someone asked about the workers' salary level. Mr. Schimmel told us that the highest paid workers in his factory earn DM 55,000.- a year (about US\$26,000.-, at the current exchange rate). Obviously joking, he said he has to pay his workers well to keep them from going over there (pointing outside) to make cars.

(Volkswagen has a plant in Braunschweig, too). With the dedicated employees he has, this is certainly not a realistic fear.

Our next stop was Grotrian-Steinweg, which is also located in Braunschweig, but at the opposite end of town (naturally) from Schimmel. Mr. Knut Grotrian, the president, greeted us at the door and gave us a brief history of the company in the show room before taking us on the tour. A fifth-generation piano-builder, Mr. Grotrian is very familiar with all the operations of his factory, and explained his company philosophy as we walked through the plant. Being a small company with only 140 employees, he said he cannot afford to have his workers specialize in only one job. Consequently, each worker must develop expertise in several areas of production. Grotrian-Steinweg's annual production is about 1,600 pianos, 400 of which are grands, and of these, 20 are concert grands, which are shipped all over the world. Mr. Horst Frankowiak, Grotrian-Steinweg's export manager who has been with the company for 21 years, also accompanied us on the tour to help answer questions.

Being a highly automated plant, Grotrian-Steinweg also has numerous machines doing the work. Two of them I found particularly impressive. One is an automatic loop-making machine, which is necessitated by the one-hitch-pin-per-string design of the Grotrian-Steinweg grands. It makes the double hitch-pin loop, straightens and pre-stretches the wire, and cuts it to a pre-determined length — all by itself. The operator only has to keep the finished wires in the proper storage tubes for the stringer.

The other impressive machine is a tracing router used for grand pinblock fitting. If available at reasonable cost, it could be a rebuilder's dream. After the plate and pinblock are aligned, the plate is lifted perfectly straight up, over the pinblock, and locked in position. Gliding on fixed tracks, this router has a sensor at the top, which is in contact with the plate. It transfers the exact contour of the underside of the webbing to the cutter at the bot-

Continued on next page

European Tour . . .

tom of the router, which shapes the top of the pinblock for a perfect fit, and similarly, the plate flange to the back edge of the pinblock. Within minutes, the pinblock is perfectly fitted to the plate in all directions. There is no need for the usual graphite or chalk, the pounding of pinblock against the plate flange to find the high and low spots, and all the fuss normally associated with the job we call "pinblock fitting." (We later learned that a similar device is used by Steinway to fit pinblocks in its Hamburg factory. Of course, here the operation is much more critical, since the fitting is done after the pinblock is already glued into the case, and mistakes at this point become very costly.) Without seeing these machines in operation, it may be difficult to visualize how they work. After seeing them, one still may not believe one's eyes!

A unique feature about Grottrian's vertical piano production is that case parts, veneer, and finish are applied to the piano *after* the instrument is completely assembled, strung, regulated, voiced, tuned, and in storage for some time to allow for settling. Mr. Frankowiak explains that this sequence permits the company to put on whatever veneer and finish the customers' orders call for, with a minimum disruption of the production line. It permits a small company like Grottrian-Steinweg to adjust very quickly to changing market conditions, which is necessary for survival in this very competitive business.

That evening, we were the dinner guests of Grottrian-Steinweg at a fancy restaurant out in the country. The menu consisted of Wiener Schnitzel (veal cutlet) mit Spargel, a white asparagus grown underground — a German delicacy which happened to be in season during our visit. It was a very special treat indeed.

From Braunschweig, we headed southeast towards Leipzig in East Germany, which is officially known as the German Democratic Republic, to visit the world-famous Bluthner Piano Company. Old-timers may still remember Bluthner as one of the "three B's"

in piano-manufacturing. (The other two are Bosendorfer and Bechstein.) This is the only piano factory on our itinerary that is in a communist country, and our visit there was memorable in many ways.

At the gate to meet us was Mr. Ingbert Bluthner, the company president, who speaks flawless English, and, unlike many East Germans we saw, was impeccably dressed. Knowing that we had just come from Schimmel and Grottrian-Steinweg somehow seemed to put him on the defensive. He explained that Bluthner is a very different operation from those two ultra-modern manufacturers in Braunschweig, and that the emphasis at Bluthner is on the 19th century tradition of hand craftsmanship.

As we soon discovered, he meant what he said. It was as though the calendar had suddenly turned back a hundred years: The brick buildings were old and run-down, and in need of much refurbishing. The few machines there were all used for cutting heavy lumber. Almost everything else was done by hand and muscle power. The lighting was dim, and piles of saw dust and scrap wood were everywhere. The wooden floor often creaked as we walked past. The soundboard varnishing room was not ventilated.

Mr. Bluthner pointed out some of the unusual features of his pianos: Each piano is individually crafted, and not mass-produced. The grand rims are made of solid wood (poplar), and not laminated. Russian spruce is used for soundboard materials. Actions by Renner and Flemming are both used. The lumber supply is allotted by the State, depending on the sales figures. Bluthner makes its own hammers for its pianos. Although most of the work is done by hand rather than by machines, the system provides a lot of jobs to people who would otherwise be unemployed. The 140 employees turn out between 600 and 700 pianos a year, about 50 of which are concert grands. Bluthner and three other East German piano makers have formed a consortium to have greater purchasing power when ordering materials from suppliers.

Many in our group were fascinated by the aliquot string feature in the Bluthner grands. (This is the fourth string that sits on top of the three unison strings in the treble sections. It has its own tuning pin, and must be tuned to one of the partials of the speaking strings for added resonance. It's actually a variation of the duplex scale principle.) Because some recording engineers have difficulty with the resonance from the aliquot strings, Mr. Bluthner said this feature is being discontinued on the newer concert grands.

As the old saying goes, the test of the pudding is in the eating. How does an almost totally hand-crafted piano made in the 19th century tradition compare to its mass-produced counterparts? We had a chance to find out on a new Bluthner concert grand that had just been tuned and regulated. I was asked to play it for the group, and I must say it is a magnificent instrument, comparable to any other concert grand in tone, response, and power. Those who were there readily agreed that it was a superb example of craftsmanship. Listening to this instrument, one begins to wonder: Are those fancy machines really necessary? After all, it is people and their years of experience who build pianos. The machines are only the means to an end. If the result could be achieved without the means, is anything lost in the process? One should not forget that superb pianos have been built long before electricity was even discovered.

While having refreshments in the outdoor lumber yard, we had an opportunity for further visit with Mr. Bluthner, who seems to be the only English-speaking person in the entire factory. When asked about his workers' salaries, he didn't answer the question directly. Instead, he talked at length about the price structure of consumer goods in East and West Germany. The implication is that, although direct comparison is difficult because of the different economic systems, his workers do live very well. We may never find out whether he said what he said because he knew Bettina, our Leipzig tour guide, was listening and might report any untoward

remarks to higher authorities. On our way to the bus, we came across a shed with some 40 or so bicycles parked in it. We can only assume that Bluthner employees are rather fitness-conscious.

Our next visit was to the Roslau Stahl und Drahtwerk in Roslau, West Germany, which is a small village about 22 miles east of Bayreuth. A major supplier of piano wire worldwide, Roslau has been in business since 1882. In addition to piano wires, it also makes springs and other steel products — mostly for the automobile industry. Mr. Hermann Scherzer, the company president, and his assistants, Christian Staeudel and Hans-Joachim Kruger, welcomed us at the factory parking lot.

The process of making piano wire is a fascinating one, and is perhaps worthy of a step-by-step description. The raw material at Roslau originates from steel mills in Sweden. It comes in huge coils of wire rod about a quarter-inch in diameter, and weighing up to 2,640 lbs. per coil. To develop the characteristics necessary for drawing, the wire rod is heated in a long, electric furnace to between 1,652 and 2,012 degrees Fahrenheit, and then cooled to between 932 and 1,022 degrees Fahrenheit in a lead bath. This process is called "patenting."

Patenting also produces an undesirable scaly substance on the wire, which must be removed. This done by "pickling" the wire in huge tanks filled with hydrochloric acid, after which the residual acid is washed off with pressurized water. (The pickling process, if overdone, will pit the metal, eventually causing "sour" notes, and it's carefully controlled.) Then the wire is dipped in a zinc phosphate solution, which coats it with a lubricating film necessary for drawing.

After this series of chemical treatments, the wire is ready for drawing, that is, being pulled through a series of dies to reduce its cross-section a little at a time. In the initial stages, the dies are made of hardened steel. When the wire gets down closer to piano wire sizes, diamond dies are used. On the multiple drawing machine, as many as eight dies

can be used in tandem, and the graduation in die size is precisely monitored. As the wire is pulled through a die, it gets thinner and longer at the same time, which means the next drawing drum will have to spin a little faster to take up the excess length. The same wire leaving the other end of this drawing drum goes through the next die, and gets still thinner and longer, which means the second drawing drum will have to spin faster yet to catch up with the increasing length...and so on. By the time the wire reaches the last die, the corresponding drawing drum is spinning so fast it becomes a total blur to the eye. The graduation in speed of the drawing drums is determined by the rate of reduction in die sizes, and is totally controlled by a bank of computers along the wall.

After the cross-section has been reduced a certain amount, the wire becomes quite stiff. To restore its tensile strength, the wire will have to go through the whole cycle (patenting, pickling, descaling, phosphating, and drawing) again and again, until the wire reaches the desired diameter. The final series of drawings are done with diamond dies, and take place totally submerged in oil, which is used both for cooling and additional lubrication.

Roslau makes piano wires in two finishes: the plain polished finish and the tinned finish, which plates the wire with a coating of tin. The tinned wire is supposedly more attractive and rust-resistant, but some technicians still prefer the tone of the polished wire. Each coil of wire is tested at the factory for size, irregularities, breaking load, and tensile strength. Only those coils meeting the rigid specifications are shipped out to customers.

Because of the long start-up time, Roslau operates 24 hours a day with three shifts of employees. It is shut down only on weekends and long holidays. Considering the fact that it takes almost five full days for a single coil of wire to completely go through the furnace, one can understand the necessity of this around-the-clock operation.

After the tour, we were treated

to a delightful lunch in Roslau's company dining room. This was particularly appreciated, since the next stretch of road on our trip had no restaurants.

From Roslau, we went to Vienna, Austria, to see Bosendorfer — after a most memorable weekend-stopover in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Bosendorfer, we learned, now has two factories. The new one, a large facility where the bulk of the manufacturing is done, is 34 miles south of Vienna, and scheduling problems didn't permit us a trip there. Instead, we visited the old factory on Bosendorferstrasse (of course), where finished pianos from the other plant are shipped in for final tuning, regulation, voicing, inspection, display, and packing. The old factory also contains the bass-string manufacturing department, the company show room, and the Bosendorfer Hall, a small recital hall where up-and-coming young artists frequently perform. However, Mrs. Annelies Langer, the factory superintendent, was kind enough to show us a videotape of the various departments in the new plant, which partially made up for the disappointment of not being able to see it in person.

Another one of the "three B's," Bosendorfer has had its share of ups and downs since Ignaz Bosendorfer founded the company in 1828. For example, the economic crisis of 1931-34 brought the production practically to a standstill. In 1944, the factory was bombed, and almost totally destroyed. In the early 1960s, it almost went out of business due to slow sales. Fortunately, the company was revitalized when it was purchased by Kimball International Inc., of Jasper, Indiana, in 1966. Today, the company is again enjoying an enviable reputation, and producing more pianos than it has ever had — about 800 a year, most of which are grands.

An example of the high standards of workmanship can be seen (and heard) in the voicing department, where we spent much time visiting with (and interrupting the work of) the head voicer, who happens to be a Canadian. We learned that, like most German pianos, Bosendorfer uses hammers

Continued on next page

European Tour . . .

manufactured by Renner of Stuttgart. Typically, the final voicing alone of a Bosendorfer takes about eight hours. For the most critical pianos, it can take as long as 16 hours. He feels that soft hammers are useless, but hard hammers can always be voiced down to the desired tone level, and that technicians who cannot get a good tone from a set of hard hammers usually have made the mistake of quitting too soon. We are most grateful for that bit of wisdom.

Holzwerke Schwaiger, as the name implies, is a wood factory, which specializes in the production of piano soundboards. Located in Hengersberg, West Germany (near Passau), this company has been in business for 70 years, and it is still owned by the Schwaiger family. President Josef

Schwaiger and his staff greeted us in the parking lot, and give us a brief company history and a preview of what we were about to see. This was important, because the deafening noise from the powerful machinery in the plant often made talking impossible.

For many years, Schwaiger has been supplying soundboards to a number of well-known German piano manufacturers, such as Bechstein, Euterpe, Ibach, Manthey, Sauter, Schimmel, Seiler, Steingraeber, and Steinway. Now, it also ships soundboards to major manufacturers in the United States and the Orient. Occupying some 670,000 square feet (over 15 acres), this ultra-modern plant processes wood with incredible speed.

The basic material Schwaiger works with is Bavarian spruce from nearby mountains. The logs are stored outdoors, and sprayed with water by an automatic sprinkler system 24 hours a day to prevent uneven drying. An enormous cross-conveyor mounted on railroad tracks delivers them to the debarking machines. The logs are then "end-buttet," which trims off the thickened end to match the diameter of the narrow end. (The wood grains in this widened part of the tree trunk near the roots are irregular and unsuitable for soundboards.) In cold weather, one day's production of logs are stored indoors a day ahead of time to allow for defrosting.

Logs of up to six feet in diameter are then quarter-sawn into 1 3/4-inch thick panels by the computerized bandsaw, which uses a blade about one foot wide, with a loop of about 30 feet long. This should give one an idea of the size of the machine. After inspection, these panels are then cut into varying lengths and widths for soundboards and ribs, which are dried in electronically-controlled kilns to a maximum moisture content of 6 percent.

According to customers' specifications, the boards are then matched in color and grain patterns in a well-lit area for further inspection and subsequent gluing in the hydraulic presses. At this point, any visible resin pockets in the boards are cut out, and filled with oblong spruce plugs. This operation is done strictly for appearance, and has no effect on tone. The ribs, either shaped or unshaped (depending on the orders), are then glued on.

From logs to soundboards, it takes about four weeks. Schwaiger considers itself a "green mill," which means the soundboards it ships out are not immediately ready for installation in pianos. They have to be further dried by the individual piano manufacturers. ■

Continued in next months issue.

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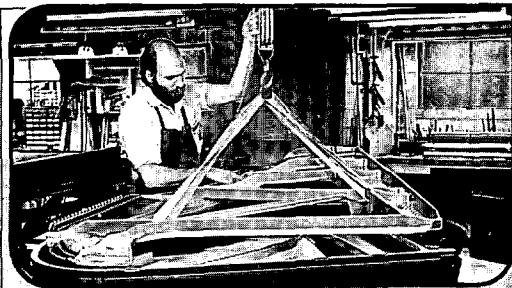
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T H E TECHNICAL F O R U M

More on plate welding, Grand Rebuilding Hammers Caught Below Hammerline Again, Tips For apprentices, the Dumb Sales Claim Contest Termination Buzz and Regulating Assistance Needed.

Jack Krefting
Journal Technical Editor

More On Plate Welding

Since our June issue appeared, with its article on plate welding by Wilford Young, we have received further information which we are pleased to pass along. We hasten to caution our readers once more, however, that if too much heat is applied in any one place, the cast iron will break immediately adjacent to the weld as soon as tension is applied; so, despite Young's success with such repairs, most of us cannot be assured that this process will work the first time or every time. In fact, we would recommend that the interested technician experiment first on junk uprights and that the resulting success rate be candidly reported to prospective clients before such procedures are attempted on their instruments.

Having said all that, we now present Part 2 of this information:

In most cases a broken plate is the result of faulty design. If it is to be successfully repaired it must be made stronger than it was before.

The technician-welder must become a plate designer. He will determine where to place added metal in order to give the plate the greater strength it needs. I find that strips of mild steel welded to the plate give it

“

Before beginning any welding, one should try to restore the original configuration of the plate if possible. One will likely find that after relieving the string tension there will still be some distortion.

”

great additional strength. 1/8-inch stock works well. A strip might be 1 1/2 inches wide by 8 inches long, welded transversely to the crack line. If logic dictates the use of more than one strip then use more. Near the outside edges of the plate I like to reinforce the break area with a length of 3/8 inch steel rod — 8 or 10 inches long — which is bent to fit the curve contour of the plate just inside the outer ridge. (see fig. 1)

Before beginning any welding one should try to restore the original configuration of the plate if possible. One will most likely find that after relieving the string tension there will still be some distortion. A broken bar will likely have moved away from the bridge, which if not corrected will result in different downbearing measurements.

A certain amount of correction can be obtained using a hydraulic jack and a system of blocks between the plate and the key bed (in an upright). However, a method which I like better is to drill a small hole in the soundboard near the cracked bar, insert a continuous threaded

bolt and using the back post as an anchor, pull the bar to its original position. The whole plate follows right along. (see fig. 2)

It is more important to remove this kind of distortion (plate moving away from the bridge) than it is to worry about plate movement in a direction parallel to string length. This second kind of movement, which changes string length slightly (but not speaking length), has little effect on tone as opposed to the first kind which changes downbearing.

The nose bolt most likely will have been stripped out of its post threads, requiring its replacement with a different kind of bolt. The easiest way I know to remove the old bolt is to quickly cut it off with a torch (done between the soundboard and the post) using a damp cloth to protect the nearby wood from scorching. I then drill the bolt-

hole completely through the post and countersink the last 5/8 inch, allowing space for an adjusting nut that will not protrude outside the back of the piano. Using a continuous threaded bolt with four nuts I can then reset the proper position of the plate in relation to the bridge and lock it in place.

Often the break goes through the hitchpin area. One must decide where to put the hitchpin after welding has taken place. To drill a hole in welded metal is very difficult. One may drill a new hitchpin hole slightly above or below the weld or it is even possible to weld a hitchpin directly to the face of the plate.

On a grand that has a crack going through the wrest plank area weld several thin vertical struts connecting the wrest plank to the pressure bar. This will prevent sagging of the wrest plank when the

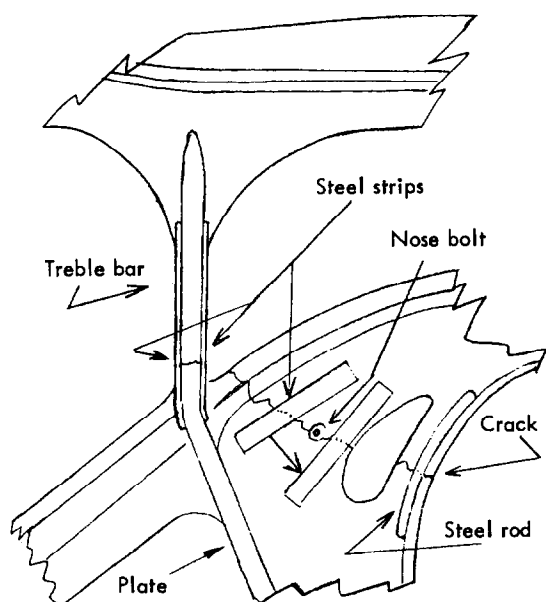
string tension is applied. These strips must be carefully placed so as not to interfere with string alignment.

After welding, one can smooth out the burrs with an abrasive grinder. Automobile body putty is ideal for creating a finished surface. After sanding and painting, the plate looks slightly heavier than it was before the operation but that is what it is now, a heavier plate.

This bit of information may stimulate a would-be welder to try some experimenting and research of his own. Practical, on-hands experience is the best teacher.

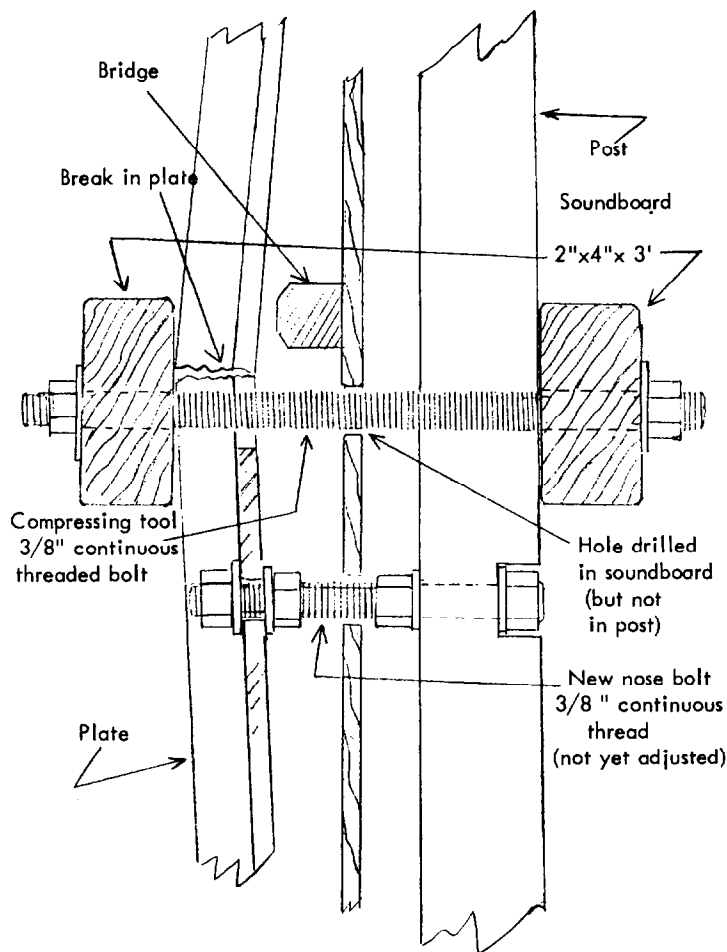
Is a piano worth this much work? That must be decided by the owner.

Wilford Young RTT
Ogden, Utah



Detail showing a typical break in an upright and the placement of steel strips to give it greater strength.

Fig. 1



Detail of an upright broken plate showing how it can be pulled back into alignment and how an adapted nose bolt can give stronger than original support.

Fig. 2

Hammers Caught Below Hammerline, Again

In our July issue we published an anonymous letter from a university technician who complained of hammers dropping below the hammerline and "getting stuck on the backcheck" when struck with a firm blow. Our response was that it was probably a combination of tight centers and weak springs, an answer which didn't entirely satisfy reader Bill Bremmer of Madison, Wisconsin. Bill alertly points out that this condition could well be caused by weak springs and loose centers also, especially if the complaint hadn't specifically included the comment that this primarily happens on a firm blow. Here's Bremmer:

From what I gather, support for the hammer after escapement is shared by friction in the repetition lever center and tension on the spring. Inadequate friction forces the spring to take the entire load. This would cause the problem mentioned in the writer's question of the hammer dropping down too far and failing to repeat. For the repetition lever to do its job under such circumstances, the spring would have to have so much tension that it would cause that jerking or kicking feeling that is considered undesirable. Any easing of tension on the spring will cause the hammer to fall down and not repeat. It becomes an "all too much or nothing at all" situation.

I have had this experience myself while trying to regulate a grand action (with cloth bushings of course; I agree that the bushing material itself has nothing to do with the problem — it is the amount of friction which is relevant) and have corrected the problem by repinning the repetition lever center to attain greater friction and subsequently weakening the spring for smoother, less jerky action. What do you think?"

**Bill Bremmer, RTT
Madison, Wisconsin**

I think we are talking about two different sets of circumstances, and that we are both right. In fact, we argued Bremmer's very point

nearly to exhaustion a couple of years ago when one reader from Illinois insisted that there should be no friction at all in the action centers, and the the action should be a balanced system of levers and weights. In that instance the piano in question was a regular Baldwin action whose repetition lever height adjustment buttons would not rest solidly on their cushions and the springs had to be strengthened to the point of jerkiness just to get the action to work at all. We never did convince our friend from Illinois that more friction was needed in the repetition center, but we tried.

The difference between the two situations is in the strength of the springs, tightness of repetition centers, and the kind of keystroke that causes the malfunction. First of all, since both actions worked most of the time, after a fashion at least, the spring strength must have borne some relation to the repetition center torque; the stronger springs were in the action with tighter centers, assuming we are right about that. Given that situation, a weak spring/loose center condition will primarily fail to repeat after a slow release or a light blow, rather than after a firm or staccato keystroke.

Another difference is that in Bremmer's instance the piano had been regulated to some extent; at least, someone had apparently strengthened the springs without touching the centers, because ordinarily the springs will weaken as the centers wear, especially in a piano that is played a lot.

On the other hand, teflon bushings can tighten up in dry weather, especially if they haven't been well maintained, and these university instruments obviously haven't. This was the basis for our response, but we are grateful to Bill for reminding us that the opposite conditions could very well cause similar symptoms.

I think we can all agree that a certain amount of friction — say about 5 grams, but by all means consistent from note to note — is desirable, and that the spring must be free to move from end to end and be strong enough to lift the hammer smoothly and quickly from

the backcheck; that the knuckle nap be smooth when stroked in the direction of the hammer and rough when stroked toward the flange, and that each hammer passes the wink test, dropping when the tender is touched and returning

Grand Rebuilding Second In A Series

The second of our four cost categories is that of materials, which we consider now. Basically, our feeling on this can be reduced to three maxims:

1. Materials are always the cheapest part of the job.
2. The best material available isn't quite good enough.
3. If you can't tell which materials are best, buy the most expensive.

Cheap materials are an example of false economy, especially for the low-volume custom rebuilder, and here's why: A high-volume manufacturer with a production level of, say, 20,000 per year would not be dismayed to learn that ten or twenty of them suffered broken plates, even if he had to replace them under the warranty, because the fact that a few of them had broken was proof that the company wasn't wasting money on excessively strong plates. Such a ratio would please a good engineer, because it indicates efficiency in the design as viewed from his standpoint. But as small operators, we can't afford to let even one job go sour; any failure represents a disaster to us, so a reasonable added expenditure to be sure that failure won't occur makes good business sense in our situation, just as the use of the cheaper material might be a good business decision for the volume manufacturer.

when it is released. When set up in that manner, the action *will* perform without repetition trouble, assuming everything else is all right.

Tips For Apprentices

A Good Choice ...

The Starrett Cutnipper is our choice for cutting music wire, as it is easy to use and, with its replaceable jaws, will last a lifetime. Its only disadvantage is its inability to cut wire in close quarters such as between tuning pins, but other than that it is an excellent tool for piano work.

...And A Poor One

The so-called "bridge repair agraffes" which are sold by supply houses as a quick fix for a split bridge cap are one of our pet peeves. First of all, they require drilling two more holes in an already split bridge; then, once in place, they hold the strings of that particular unison off the bridge, further complicating sound transfer and changing the regulation of the hammer and damper. The rendering of the strings during tuning is affected negatively, the down-bearing is altered, and these devices can cause buzzes of their own.

A much better repair, assuming this is to be done in the customer's home and therefore replacing the bridge cap is out of the question, would be to pull out the loose bridge pins and epoxy them back in place. After the epoxy has cured, the strings can be placed back in their original positions without any of the problems cited above.

DSC Contest

This month's entrant in our contest to find the Dumbest Sales Claim is Jack Caskey of Anaheim, California, who has two claims to share with us:

There was a day when it was a definite sales advantage to be handling a piano that possessed a "Wessell Nickel & Gross" action. Strangely enough the name was quite well known to the public at one time. There was one salesperson who slightly distorted this famous name to his advantage. If he was selling a piano which did not use the W. N. & G. action he would mention off-handedly, and in a rather hurried and subdued manner, that this particular piano used a "Wood Nickel & Brass action etc. etc.," and usually the potential customer heard just enough of the magic ring of his words so that subconsciously it registered Wessell Nickel & Gross; of course most actions are made out of wood, nickel and brass so we can't really accuse him of lying — now can we?

Then there was the trick where is the upright being sold boasted of a "Bell Metal Iron Plate", one simply reached into his pocket and pulled out a silver dollar. At the same time you would surreptitiously press down the sustain pedal and demonstrate how the bell metal plate rang out loud and clear when you tapped it with the dollar.

Termination Buzz

William Quinn sends along the following account of the solution to a buzzing problem. The photographer was Blais Wight, also of the North Central Arizona Chapter. Here's Quinn:

The North Central Arizona Chapter at Prescott was well represented at the Arizona State Seminar in Tucson this year. Thanks to the knowledge of our excellent instructors, Lewis Herwig, George Defenbough and Chris Robinson, we learned the correct way to test for and repair strings and suspected of buzzing at the agraffe, i.e.: use either a screwdriver between the strings and twist to increase side-bearing or use a string lifter and pull up on buzzing strings at the exit point of the non-speaking side of the agraffe. If the buzzing stops, you have isolated the problem.

Where only one string or one unison is buzzing, the agraffe itself may be suspect, defective or worn from hard use. However, where a general condition exists, i.e.: several in a row, the cause may well be poor termination due to insufficient exit angle of the string from the agraffe. To repair, increase the angle by building up the string rest felt.

Interested members of our chapter were invited to participate in the repair of a 1962 Steinway M with just such a problem. The first seven



Blais Wight and William Quinn examine a Steinway M with buzzing strings.

unisons up from the bass/tenor break were buzzing. After testing we were convinced that the condition was due to insufficient exit angle.

To repair, we first cut through the understring rest felt and backing material with a razor knife (see photo). Because the backing, material was glued down, it was necessary to remove the coils from the pins in order to be able to shim under the backing material. For aesthetic reasons we wanted to shim under this material rather than build up on top. Several shimming materials were considered, but popsicle sticks turned out to be our best solution. (see photo)

Needless to say, it was most rewarding to retune the grand and find all buzzing had disappeared. The owners were delighted and for the first time during their ownership of the Steinway they could enjoy the piano to the fullest degree. Thank you P.T.G. for another very useful bit of information!

Regulating Assistance Needed

Walt Thatcher, 648 Decker Lane, Creve Coeur, Missouri 63141, asks our readers for whatever assistance they may be able to provide on regulating the following piano:

Hoelling-Spangenberg, #13695 — 85 note

Hof Pianoforte Fabrick

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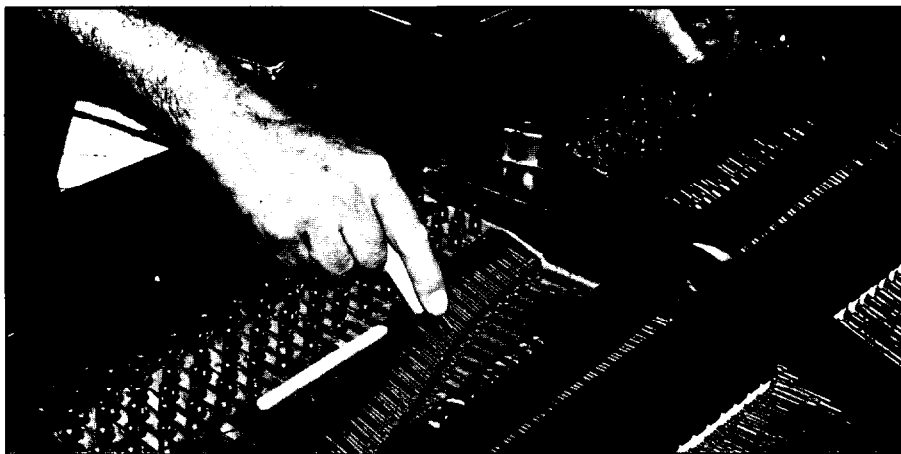
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S O U N D BACKGROUND

Bach And Silbermann Pianos

Jack Greenfield
Chicago Chapter

Bach Criticism of Silbermann's First Pianos

The only account by a contemporary writer who had some knowledge of Silbermann's early pianos is a report on Bach's comments after he played one:

Mr. Gottfried Silbermann had at first built two of these instruments. One of them was seen by the late Kapellmeister, Mr. Johann Sebastian Bach. He had praised, indeed admired its tone; but he complained it was "etwas schwachern Laut in der Hohe" and "zu schwer zu spielen" (tone too weak in the treble and too hard to play — referring to heavy action). This had been taken greatly amiss by Mr. Silbermann, he could not bear to have any fault found in his handiworks. And yet his conscience told him Mr. Bach was not wrong. He therefore decided — greatly to his credit be it said — not to deliver any more of these instruments, but instead to think all the harder about how to eliminate the faults Mr. J. S. Bach had observed. He worked for many years on this. And that this was the real cause of this postponement I have the less doubt since I myself heard it frankly acknowledged by Mr. Silbermann.

The writer was a student of Bach during the years 1738-41, Johann Friedrich Agricola, who

provided this information in notes he wrote for a treatise on the organ and other instruments, *Musica Mechanica Organoedi* (1768) by Jacob Adlung.

Bach's Trips to Dresden

Bach's encounters with Silbermann and his work have been of considerable interest to music historians. After Bach settled in Leipzig where he lived for the rest of his life, he occasionally made trips to Dresden, a distance of about 65 miles. He spent several days there in September 1725 performing on the Silbermann organ at Sophienkirche in concerts for the Court musicians. In September 1731 he again performed at Sophienkirche and also at court. His concerts received enthusiastic reviews from local newspaper critics.

Bach returned to Dresden for a longer stay of several months in 1733 when, after the death of Frederick Augustus I, Saxony observed a five-month period of national mourning. In addition to paying his respects to the Saxon royal household, Bach had several other objectives. One of these was to secure a court title. He believed he had a good chance for this because the new ruler Frederick Augustus II

was more devoted to music than his father had been. During the mourning period, Bach had written several sections of a Mass in B minor. In July 1733, he presented his manuscripts to Augustus II together with a letter requesting appointment as "Hofkomponist" — court composer. Although the music was accepted and performed, no action was taken to grant Bach's request.

Bach's son, Wilhelm Friedemann, who had just completed four years of study at the University of Leipzig, had also come to Dresden at this time to audition for a part-time position as organist at the Sophienkirche. He won the post easily, receiving the warmest commendations from Pantaleon Hebenstreit who as assistant Kapellmeister had observed the audition.

Bach and Silbermann Meet in Dresden

While Bach may have played the Silbermann pianos in Dresden during his trip there in 1733, he is more likely to have done so when he came to Dresden again in 1736. Bach had continued his efforts and finally, through the intervention of his patron, Count Keyserlingk and after another letter of application, he received the court title he desired, in November 1736. Bach

was in Dresden to receive the award.

In appreciation of the occasion, on December 1 he presented a two-hour recital on the new Silbermann organ in the Frauenkirche, Dresden's newest and most prominent church. It was an impressive occasion attended by an audience including persons of high rank and foreign dignitaries. Bach gave a magnificent performance on a great organ that Silbermann had taken four years to build. Silbermann was also honored and given the title "Hofund Landorgelbauer" — court organ builder.

Bach and Silbermann On Friendly Terms

The Silbermann piano that Bach first played on may have been one that had been presented to Augustus II. Bach's criticism did not create any animosity. He and Silbermann remained on friendly terms. According to a story by a contemporary writer (in *The Bach Reader* edited by David and Mendel, Norton, 1966), after Bach's performance at Frauenkirche, he patted Silbermann on the back and said "Your organs are excellent. You are rightly called Silbermann, for your organs have a silver tone and thundering basses."

Bach and Silbermann disagreed on keyboard tuning. Bach preferred circulating temperaments suitable for playing in any key while Silbermann tuned organs in regular 1/6 comma meantone. This gives one very sharp "wolf" fifth and four very sharp major thirds prominent in flat keys, and produces an especially bad A-flat major chord. A contemporary story concerning their tuning differences relates that whenever Silbermann was present among an informal group gathered to listen to him, Bach liked to tease Silbermann by playing a Fantasia in A-flat major on the organ Silbermann had tuned. Silbermann invariably left to avoid hearing his "wolf" intervals and chords.

Silbermann's Pianos Improve

Considering the similarity in the design of the surviving later Silbermann pianos, modern music historians speculate that Silbermann probably obtained a later

Cristofori piano for use as a model after Bach's criticism of the earlier Silbermann pianos. Agricola's account states Silbermann's changes to improve his piano design were mainly in the action. This suggests that Silbermann first copied the Cristofori design drawn by Maffei which Cristofori abandoned in his later pianos. Agricola also reported that Silbermann sold one of his first improved models to the Court of the Prince Rudolstat.

Frederick The Great Buys Silbermann Pianos

The two Silbermann pianos still in existence are instruments he sold to Frederick II, King of Prussia in the middle 1740s. Known as Frederick The Great for accomplishments as a military commander, he was also an outstanding student and patron of the arts and letters. Frederick began the study of music at the age of seven. He took up the study of the flute later and became an accomplished player under the instruction of Europe's leading flautist J. J. Quantz. After his marriage in 1733 and while still Crown Prince, he began to maintain a small group of instrumentalists at his residence. He inherited the throne after the death of his father Frederick I in May 1740.

Although he was soon involved on the battlefield in warfare to enlarge Prussia's geographical boundaries, he also found time to increase its cultural activities. He made plans for establishment of the Berlin Opera, sending his Kapellmeister C. H. Graun to Italy to assemble a staff of singers and commissioning an architect to design and begin work on a new opera house, completed in 1742. Frederick enlarged his musical staff, hiring outstanding instrumentalists at enormous salaries. Carl Phillip Emanuel, Bach's son, was appointed first cembalist. However since he was quite young and inexperienced, he was one of the lowest-paid musicians. C. P. E., then 26 years old, had had seven years of university education in liberal arts and law in addition to the intensive training in music that he received from his father. His pri-

mary work as a court musician was as accompanist in the royal chamber music. Frederick liked to perform flute solos accompanied by C. P. E. on the harpsichord. Frederick was quite good but not professional. Besides the chamber music programs, usually three evenings per week, at times C. P. E. had to serve as transposer, arranger, composer and copyist. Frederick composed but usually only wrote out the melody and the bass, leaving the inner parts and orchestration to be written by C. P. E. or others.

Frederick's purchase of the Silbermann pianos was reported by Agricola in the notes previously mentioned — "His Majesty the King of Prussia had one of these instruments ordered, and, when it met with His Majesty's Most Gracious approval, he had several more ordered from Mr. Silbermann." Forkel, in his biography of Bach, stated that Frederick ordered all the pianos Silbermann had, a total of 15, to be distributed in the royal palaces. Another report said the number was only six.

Bach Approval Of Late Silbermann Pianos

Bach had the opportunity to play later Silbermann pianos when he visited the Prussian court in Potsdam at the invitation of Frederick. In September 1746, he and Silbermann had worked together as consultants engaged to evaluate an organ which had been rebuilt at St. Wenceslaus Church in Naumburg. In the following year, Bach made the trip to Potsdam, accompanied by his son Wilhelm Friedemann. A report on the visit in a Berlin newspaper, *Spener's Gazette* of May 11, 1747, contains the following:

His majesty was told that Music Director Bach had arrived in Potsdam. His Highness immediately gave the command to have him come in. Upon Bach's entrance, His Majesty went to the so-called Forte and Piano and without any preparation deigned in His own exalted Person, to play a theme for Music Director Bach, which the latter was to work out in a fugue.

After finishing his playing on the piano, Bach, followed by a group of musicians, went from

room to room where he tried the other Silbermann pianos that were there. There is no record of his comments but he did indicate complete approval. The next day he was taken to all of the organs in Potsdam to play them for the King as he had done on the pianos. After Bach's return to Leipzig, he went to work on a complex chamber music work in several movements, which he based on the theme Frederick had given him. The work published in late September under

the title *Musikalisches Opfer* (*Musical Offering*) was dedicated to Frederick the Great.

The usual instrumentation in performance of *Musical Offering* is harpsichord, violin, and flute, although Bach was somewhat vague in his directions. A modern scholar specializing in research on Bach, Christoph Wolff, states that there are indications that Bach wrote at least one movement of the work to be suitable for performance on the piano. (New Research on

Bach's "Musical Offering," *Music Quarterly*, 57 (1971), pp 403).

The same reference discloses recently discovered evidence that Bach acted as a sales agent in Leipzig for Silbermann's pianos. A Polish publication, *Muzyka*, 1967, presents a May 9, 1749, sales voucher found in Polish archives. The voucher for the sale of a "Piano et Forte" to Count Branitsky of Bialystok, contains the signature of J. S. Bach. In 1749, Bach's health had deteriorated and he could only work part of the time. His health continued to worsen and he died in July of the following year.

Silbermann, who had been born two years before Bach, died three years later, August 1753, in Dresden. He left a considerable sum of money. His business was carried on by his second oldest nephew, Johann Daniel Silbermann.

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Calendar Of Coming Events

Date	Event
Sept. 19-21, 1986	Milwaukee Days Howard Johnsons, Milwaukee, WI Timothy C. Dixon; 2959 North 40th; Milwaukee, WI 53210
Sept. 26-28, 1986	Florida State Seminar St. Petersburg Beach Hilton Inn, St. Petersburg, FL Charles W. Reynolds; 4923 Suwanee Ave.; Tampa, FL 33603; (813) 237-8387
Sept. 27, 1986	Rhode Island State Seminar Seekonk, MA Larry M. Brown; 20 Casey Drive; Middletown, RI 02840; (401) 847-0529
Oct. 10-12, 1986	Ohio State Conference Wickliff, OH Kevin and Janet Leary; 18817 Hilliard; Rocky River, Oh 44116; (216) 331-5605
Oct. 16-19, 1986	New York State Conference New York, NY Nancy Hazzard; 1 Ruth Place; Staten Island, NY 10305; (718) 979-5154
Oct. 17-19, 1986	Texas State Seminar Intercontinental Airport Holiday Inn, Houston, TX James B. Kozak; 301 W. 19th St.; Houston, TX 77008
Nov. 7-9, 1986	North Carolina State Conference Adams Mark Hotel, Charlotte, NC Eugenia Carter; 4317 Commonwealth Ave.; Charlotte, NC 28205; (704) 568-1231
Nov. 8, 1986	Intermountain Seminar Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah Jack Reeves; 486 N. 300 W.; Orem, UT 84057; (801) 225-1757
Jan 9-10, 1987	Arizona State Seminar Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ Wirt Harvey; 5901 Calle del Norte; Phoenix, AZ 85018; (602) 945-8515
Feb. 13-16, 1987	California State Conference San Francisco Sheraton Palace Sid Stone; 16875 East 14th St.; San Leandro, CA 94578; (415) 481-1903
* July 20-24, 1987	30th Annual Piano Technicians Guild Convention & Institute Constellation Hotel, Toronto, Ontario, Canada Home Office; 9140 Ward Parkway; Kansas City, MO 64114; (816) 444-3500

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Some Bold and Important Legislation...

Ronald L. Berry, RTT
Vice President

I want to express my thanks to the PTG for electing me to the office of Vice President. I have served PTG as the chairman of the ETS committee for two years, then as Secretary/Treasurer for four years, and have truly enjoyed the time spent at these jobs. With the job of Vice President it now becomes my duty and pleasure to use these pages to express ideas that are on my mind.

At the Council meeting in July in Las Vegas, the Council passed some bold and important legislation which changed the entire membership structure of PTG. Our members will fall into two basic categories, Registered Tuner Technician and Associate. The RTT category is unchanged from the way we have always known it. Student, Apprentices, Allied Tradesmen, and Associates will now all be classified as Associates. There are no exams for Associate members so this will speed up processing of new members. Everyone joining PTG will join as an Associate member. Those who are qualified will later reclassify to RTT by taking the series of exams (written, technical, and tuning). This will eliminate any backlog of people waiting for testing in order to become members. They can be processed quickly and become part of the mainstream of PTG until exams can be arranged.

Membership is open to "any individual with a professional or avocation interest in piano technology." Bylaws are now clearly stated that only individuals may be members and that no company may use the name PTG in an advertisement unless the technician's name accompanies it.

Members-at-Large have been eliminated. All members must be members of a chapter. For those outside the jurisdiction of any chapter, the nearest active chapter is the logical place to become

a member. The feeling of Council was that this contact with a chapter, even if the chapter is 300-400 miles away, will provide closer contact with PTG than being a member without any chapter affiliation at all. Particularly if the chapter has a newsletter, this contact will be beneficial to the former MAL. The Montana Chapter is a shining example of what can be done in this light. No one is further spread out than the handful of members in Montana. Their chapter covers the entire state. They meet once a year and keep in contact by mail and phone in the meantime. Those who are presently Members-at-Large will be placed in a chapter and will work with the RVP to determine which chapter if they are far from any chapter.

PTG dues for all members except Affiliates, (who are members who live outside the U.S. and Canada), will be \$114. Setting the dues the same was partly to simplify dues collection procedures and partly to reflect the feeling that students are learning a trade which will last a lifetime and should pay their share of the dues, especially when the rates are as reasonable as they are. Former Student member dues will become due on January 1 like all other dues by prorating the part of the year left at the new rate when Student dues expire. Those former Student members, now Associate members, whose dues come due between July and December, 1986, will be allowed to renew one more time at \$60 to carry them into 1987. All members except Affiliates will be added to the \$1000 life insurance policy since everyone will be paying full dues.

The round logo we are all used to as well as the titles "Registered Tuner-Technician" and "Registered Craftsman" will become the exclusive symbols of the RTT.

Associate members may identify as PTG members with the words "Associate member, Piano Technicians Guild," with the words "Associate member" being no smaller than "Piano Technicians Guild." This puts the burden on the RTTs to advertise themselves as RTTs and to help the public see the difference. I will expound more on advertising next month.

Many changes were made relative to examinations and many of those affect the way the Examinations and Test Standards committee operates. Those changes which affect the general membership are:

1. Raising the tuning exam fee from \$40 to \$60.
2. Allowing written and technical tests to be given by any approved test site. This means that seminars may offer these exams. Since they are now standardized, Council felt this was appropriate. Since only members are allowed to take the RTT exams, this ensures that the person taking the exam has already been processed by the chapter.
3. Changing the tuning exam scoring method to make Pitch, Temperament and Midrange sections more difficult. The score to achieve a Craftsman rating remains at 80%, but pitch score no longer compensates for fork error, the temperament point multiplier is changed from 2 to 2.5, and the midrange point multiplier is changed from 1 to 1.5. Detailed study of exam results by Dr. Sanderson showed that the difficulty of these sections was less than the difficulty of the other sections. These changes should make each section of the tuning exam of equal difficulty.
4. Two changes in the tuning exam were made for those who

tune using electronic aids. The time limit to tune the strip-muted piano, that is tune 88 single strings, was changed from 1 1/2 hours to 1 hour for those using the electronic aid. Electronic tuners must also tune octaves three and four again tuning aurally, and the time limit for this part was raised to 45 minutes. Also, the score they must achieve on this part of the test was raised from 60 to 70 percent. The time limit changes were made to reapportion the time to what the electronic tuners seem to require and

to make electronic and aural exams both take about the same amount of time to schedule. The previous 60 percent on octaves three and four aurally was a much worse tuning than one would expect from the numbers and the 70 percent level shows that the tuner has enough aural skill to know when the machine is not working correctly. I will discuss more about exams in future months in this column.

This Council session made many bold moves which will solve some long-term problems. The

Home Office and I are putting ourselves to the task of reorganizing the administrative procedures to accommodate this new membership structure. Starting with Application forms, many things must be changed.

I personally want to thank the Council for accepting the restructure proposal so smoothly and again would like to thank my Restructure Committee: Jim Bryant, Marcel Carey, Colette Collier, and Kevin Leary for the hard work they have done this past year. ■

Monthly Membership Report

Please note that this report reflects membership activity during the month of July. Therefore, new members listed here were admitted under the old membership structure, rather than that approved by the Guild Council.

New Members

REGION 1

Toronto, ON — 062
Gilchrist, Paul D.
74 Greenbelt Crescent
Richmond Hill, ON L4C
5R8

CANADA
(Allied Tradesman)

Connecticut — 064
Moffa, Robert
170 Pequot Ave.
Southport, CT 06490
(Allied Tradesman)

Philadelphia, PA — 191
Ficca, James J.
900 Main St.
Upland, PA 19015
(Student)

REGION 4

Dayton, OH — 454
Wasson, Steven
415 Corona Ave.
Dayton, OH 45419
(Student)

Lansing, MI — 489
Alexander, Rachel A.
412 Lathrop
Lansing, MI 48912
(Student)

Western Michigan — 493
Burke, Kevin L.
604 Windsor Terr., S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
(Student)

REGION 5

St. Louis, MO — 631
Porter, David B.
Cathcart Drive, 69B
Ellisville, MO 63021
(Student)

Klaus, Paul R.
Rt. 3, Box 345
Edwardsville, IL 62025
(Registered Technician)

Colorado West — 815
Gierke, Helen T.
1107 So. 12th St.
Montrose, CO 81401
(Apprentice)

REGION 6

San Francisco, CA — 941
Darst, William E.
437 Oak St.
San Francisco, CA 94102
(Registered Technician)

Hickey, Jeffrey T.
1261 1/2 Jefferson St.
Napa, CA 94558
(Apprentice)

Modesto, CA — 953
Hendersen, Harry P.
22105 Ferretti Rd.
Groveland, CA 95321
(Apprentice)

Sacramento, Valley, CA — 956
Poulson, Patrick C.
15474 Airport Road
Nevada City, CA 95959
(Student)

Reclassifications

REGION 2

Roanoke, VA — 240
Harden, John
106 Middleboro Place
Lynchburg, VA 24502
(Apprentice to RTT)

REGION 5

St. Louis, MO — 631
Corwin, Rex B.
422 Garrison
Cahokia, IL 62206
(Apprentice to RTT)

Schaefer, Delores L.
PO Box 506
Greenville, IL 62246
(Student to RTT)

REGION 6

San Francisco, CA — 941
Peters, John E.
2109 Shattuck Ave., #207
Berkeley, CA 94704
(Apprentice to RTT)

Central Washington — 993
Troncoso, Jose A.
907 G. Ave.
La Grande, OR 97850
(Apprentice to RTT)

Correction

In the reclassifications listed in the July *Journal*, Kenneth Ponche's membership classification was omitted. Mr. Ponche, of the San Diego Chapter, was reclassified from student to RTT.

The Auxiliary Exchange

From The President

Upon assuming PTGA's highest office, many incoming presidents may have said to themselves, "I have a dream." I am no different. I hope my goals for the coming year are the same as yours — to increase membership, be it on a one-to-one basis or through developing some method of creating more chapters; and to give our members the types of convention programs they desire so they will return home from each convention saying "this was the best ever."

We cannot do this alone, but must have your help. Please give me your thoughts and desires. I will answer each letter personally and present each and every-

one to the Executive board.

While we cannot be all things to all members, we will certainly try.

You have elected a most competent board, all of whom are eager to put your ideas to work. All they ask is that you, the members, give them that work to do so they can discuss and investigate all the suggestions. Through this cooperative effort, we will succeed in making the PTG Auxiliary the strong, meaningful organization we all want.

Thank you for placing your confidence in me to lead you in the coming year. I am proud to represent you as your president and assure you I will "keep on wheeling."

Ginger Bryant

Christmas In July

In several issues our readers noted the box column announcing the Auxiliary's Christmas in July fete and no doubt wondered how such an event could take place in Las Vegas!! Well, the event did take place, was a most delightful affair and, better still, it was a huge success artistically, socially and financially! The creativity of some of our members seemed boundless, with the California and Pennsylvania contingents coming out on top. An elegant German-made toy train was the first prize in the Auxiliary "sweepstake" and that much-envied item was won by our visitor from Australia, Ron Harper. He has already made plans to extend an area of his garage, erect a platform and properly house his proud winning. He and his lovely wife Nell are the grandparents of eight little ones who will enjoy the train along with grandpa!

Our second prize, an afgan, was won by Beatrice Drago of the New York — Cristofori Chapter, Long Island, N.Y. This is the second time that Bea has won an afgan!

Maybe next time it will be the Lottery...

There was a surprise gift to the person completing an Auxiliary questionnaire. That prize was won by Vera Pierson.

Planning For Toronto

Our Auxiliary President, Ginger Bryant, will leave for Toronto,

Canada, on Sept. 10, 1986, to attend the planning meeting for the 1987 International Convention of PTG in July. Any ideas, suggestions, proposals for next year's Auxiliary activities will be much appreciated. Just drop a note to Ginger, and she will do her best to explore the possibility of putting your request into action.

Las Vegas Report

Look for details of our Las Vegas convention in next month's Auxiliary Exchange. Our corresponding secretary, Helena Thomas, has prepared a full account of the Auxiliary events in Nevada.

— A.H.

New York State Convention

The New York State Convention in New York City this fall promises an exciting and entertaining program of activities. Of special interest to the spouse/Auxiliary member as well as the technician are two comprehensive tours. One bus trip around New York County covers from Times Square in midtown to South Street Seaport and the Battery at the southern tip of Manhattan Island, traveling through Chinatown, Greenwich Village, Wall Street to the World Trade Center. From the Battery, one will board a ferry to Liberty Island and the Statue of Liberty. Enroute back to the hotel, the tour will include a view of the United Nations Headquarters and Rockefeller Center.

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2310A East Randolph Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22301

Edited by:
AGNES HUETHER
34 Jacklin Court
Clifton, New Jersey 07012

The second tour covers the Lincoln Center complex with visits to the Metropolitan Opera House, Avery Fisher Hall, the N.Y. State Theatre and Alice Tully Hall. A must-see for every music lover. October 17-19.

Nominating Committee

Our Nominating Committee for the 1987 convention was elected at the Council meeting of the Auxiliary. Helena Thomas, Recording Secretary, will chair, with Barbara Fandrich and Grace Mehaffey.

Suncatchers are still available. Write to Louise Strong.

Idea Books may be obtained from Norma Lamb.



PTGA officers, from left: Louis Strong, immediate past president; Kathryn Snyder, treasurer; Ginger Bryant, president; Deanna Zeringue, vice president; Helena Thomas, recording secretary; and Rebecca Heneberry, corresponding secretary.



The Auxiliary Council in session in the Nero Room of Caesars Palace.



Julie Berry instructs



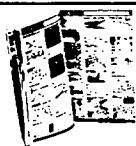
Above, Ruth Pollard applauds Santa. At right, technician Lorelle Nelson and pianist Laura Spitzer entertain with an account of their travels in rural Nevada.



Santa greets Ginger



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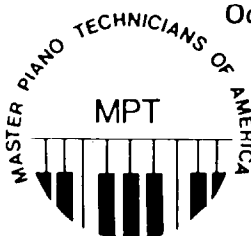
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