

THE SOONER TUNER

NEWSLETTER OF THE OKLAHOMA CHAPTER
OF THE PIANO TECHNICIANS GUILD, INC.



January 1993

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings and Happy New Year! I hope you are having a good beginning for 1993. If I were to choose one resolution for our chapter for this year it would be for us to re-focus on what our needs and interests are currently as a group and as individuals and adapt our agendas and programs to best meet them. Take some time to think about what technical presentations, activities, discussion topics, guest speakers, etc. might make you look forward to coming to a meeting and perhaps bringing a friend in the business.

Tim has planned a different kind of program for our next chapter meeting. Robert Qualls has a long lifetime of experience in our profession which he has agreed to speak about. I'm looking forward to hearing about his life and work over the decades, and I hope to gain better understanding of how an unsighted person can do so many things for which I am so dependent on my own eyesight.

"Have you taken your newsletter editor to lunch?" That's a question posed to us in this month's Leader Letter. Norman works hard to put out this paper and it plays such an important role in keeping us informed and connected. Find a way to let him know your appreciation. See you at Tim's on Saturday.

David Bonham, President

NEWSLETTER EXCHANGE

FROM THE VANCOUVER BEAT REPRINTED FROM THE
VANCOUVER SUN, JULY 10, 1987, FROM THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE BANGKOK PAGE 19 MAY 21. (EDITOR'S NOTE:
SOME ARTISTS ARE NOT RESPONDING)

THE CONCERT ENDED, CHOP-CHOP

By Kenneth Langbell

The recital last evening in the chamber music room of the Erawan Hotel by U.S. pianist Myron Kropp, the first appearance of Mr. Kropp in Bangkok, can only be described by this reviewer and those who witnessed Mr. Kropp's performance as one of the most interesting experiences in a very long time.

There was a bit of disorder at the outset when the ushers, apparently brought in from the dining room, had some trouble placing concertgoers in their proper seats, a situation that was little helped by several late arrivals.

The audience eventually was seated, and a hush fell over the room as Mr. Kropp appeared from the right of the stage, attired in black formal evening-wear with a small white poppy in his lapel. With sparse, sandy hair, a sallow complexion and a deceptively frail looking frame, the man who has popularized Johann Sebastian Bach approached the Baldwin concert grand, bowed to the audience and placed himself upon the stool.

It might be appropriate
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1992-93

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to insert at this juncture that many pianists, including Mr. Kropp, prefer a bench, maintaining that on a screw-type stool they sometimes find themselves turning sideways during a particularly expressive strain. There was a slight delay, in fact, as Mr. Kropp left the stage briefly, apparently in search of a bench, but returned when informed that there was none.

As I have mentioned on several other occasions, the Baldwin concert grand, while basically a fine instrument, needs constant attention, particularly in a climate such as Bangkok. This is even more true when the instrument is as old as the one provided in the music room of the Erawan Hotel.

In this humidity the felts which separate the white keys from the black tend to swell, causing an occasional key to stick, which was apparently the case last evening with the D in the second octave.

During the "raging storm" section of the D-minor toccata and fugue, Mr. Kropp must be complimented for putting up with the awkward D. However, by the time the "storm" was past and he had gotten into the prelude and fugue in D major, in which the second octave D plays a major role, Mr. Kropp's patience was wearing thin.

Some who attended the performance later questioned whether the awkward key justified some of the language which was heard coming from the stage during the softer passages of the fugue.

However, one member of the audience, who had sent his children out of the room by the midway point when he commented over the music and extemporaneous remarks of Mr. Kropp that the workman who greased the stool might have done better to use some of the grease on the second octave D key. Indeed, Mr. Kropp's stool had more than enough grease, and during one passage in which the music and lyrics both were particularly violent, Mr. Kropp was turned completely around.

Whereas before his remarks had been aimed largely at the piano and were therefore somewhat muted, to his surprise and that of those in the chamber music room he found himself addressing himself directly to the audience.

But such things do happen, and the person who began to laugh deserves to be severely reprimanded for this undignified behavior. Unfortunately, laughter is contagious, and by the time it had subsided and the audience had regained its composure Mr. Kropp appeared to be somewhat shaken.

Nevertheless, he swiveled himself back into position facing the piano and leaving the D-major fugue unfinished, commenced on the fantasia and fugue in G minor.

Why the concert grand piano's G key in the third octave chose that particular time to begin sticking I hesitate to guess. However, it certainly is safe to say that Mr. Kropp himself did nothing to help matters when he began using his feet to kick the lower portion of the piano instead of operating the pedals as is generally done.

Possibly it was this jarring, or the un-Bach-like hammering to

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which the sticking keyboard was being subjected. Something caused the right front leg of the piano to buckle slightly inward, leaving the entire instrument listing at approximately a 35-degree angle from that which is normal.

A gasp went up from the audience, for if the piano had actually fallen, several of Mr. Kropp's toes, if not both his feet, would surely have been broken.

It was with a sigh of relief, therefore, that the audience saw Mr. Kropp slowly rise from his stool and leave the stage. A few men in the back of the room began clapping, and when Mr. Kropp reappeared a moment later it seemed he was responding to the ovation.

Apparently, however, he had left to get the red-handled fire axe which was hung back stage in case of fire, for that was what he had in his hand.

My first reaction at seeing Mr. Kropp begin to chop at the left leg of the grand piano was that he was attempting to make it the same angle as the right leg and thereby correct the list.

However, when the weakened legs finally collapsed altogether with a great crash and Mr. Kropp continued to chop, it became obvious to all that he had no intention of going on with the concert.

The ushers, who had heard the snapping of piano wire and splintering of sounding board from the dining room, came rushing in and with the help of the hotel manager, two Indian watchmen and a passing police corporal, finally succeeded in disarming Mr. Kropp and dragging him off the stage.

PIANO PROVERBS

While it is true that money can't buy happiness some try to rent it!

The Sooner Tuner

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NORM'S NONCENTS

Well I hope everyone had a good holiday and that Santa was good to you all. I hope you have also had time to reflect on last year to evaluate where you are, where you have come and to set some goals for where you are going. I also hope that you haven't already blown most of your New Year's Resolutions by the time you receive this newsletter.

When I was teaching teenagers in Sunday School I always tried to teach them that, "If you aim at nothing you will hit it every time." How do you go about setting goals for you life, for your business, for your family? Goal setting should first be realistic. If for example you desire to increase your business earnings for most of us it would be impossible to triple our gross sales. We could however, increase those sales. How do you set a realistic goal. You must evaluate the things you are doing right. You must also evaluate the things you are doing wrong. This is harder to do since most of us tend either to be blind to our own weaknesses or else our pride doesn't allow us to be honest. I find in this situation that an evaluation by someone else who will be totally honest yet trustworthy is quite helpful.

Most of us cannot afford to hire a large consulting firm to examine our businesses and help us to determine areas which need (See Noncents pg.4)

NONCENTS (cont.)

improvement. Each of us probably knows someone who is older and wiser in the ways of business to whom we can turn as a type of mentor if you please. Try asking this person or persons to help you evaluate where you are. If you cannot afford to pay them for this insight at least take them out to a nice restaurant or buy them a nice gift. After all if they are right you could stand to afford such a gift from future earnings. Free advice is worth what you pay for it.

Setting goals should not only be realistic and attainable but should also involve sub-goals. These sub-goals are the rungs of the ladder of progress. As we attain these sub-goals it is like climbing up one rung at a time.

Give yourself time goals as well. By this I mean to plot a deadline for attaining your goals. This deadline may or may not be met but at least you are aiming at something. In addition to establishing these time limits (people do work better under pressure) advertise these time limits by telling someone when you expect to have completed the goal at hand. Ask them to check up on you and hold you accountable. Accountability is a very strong motivator.

I hope these simple steps can help you by at least reminding you of what you already know about setting goals. Good luck and remember persistence pays off.

Norman Cantrell, ED.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The next scheduled meeting for the Oklahoma Chapter PTG is January 16th at 2:00 p.m. The meeting is to be held at Tim Hast Piano shop in Edmond. Tim has scheduled Bob Qualls to speak to us about his experiences over the years as a piano technician. This should prove to be an exciting time especially if you appreciate history up close and personal.

You will also need to mark your calendars for March 12-14 for the South Central Regional Seminar. This years event will be held in Fort Smith. Apart from hosting the seminar ourselves this event couldn't be closer geographically. If you plan to attend contact Bill Yick; Rt. 3, Box C644, Charleston, AR 72933. Many of the members of the Arkansas chapters attended our seminar last year and it would be great to show our support.

**AVAILABLE
AND
WANTED**

I am needing articles and contributions for the newsletter. If you haven't written in a while or have never written an article please consider submitting a contribution. Thank you.

The Editor