

THE SOONER TUNER

Newsletter of The Oklahoma Chapter 731 of the Piano Technicians Guild, Inc.
October 2009

“ The fundamental and harmonics one big happy family..... you hope.”

Good day to you all. I hope you are feeling well rested and ready for a new month. In this economy we are all thankful that most people really want to play a piano that is in tune. Treat all your customers with gratitude and humility and find one thing about them that you can compliment. It will really make their day and they might call you back sooner than later.

This October 15th meeting will be held at Oklahoma Christian University (2501 E. Memorial Edmond, Ok. 73013) in the music building conference room at 8:30am. If you need more detailed directions please, call Jordan Bruce at 405-314-2407. This is the normal location we have met at in the past.

The Technical will be demonstrated by Mr. Gary Bruce of Bruce Piano Service. This informative topic will cover aural tuning and how the harmonics and the intervals relate.

From the President's Desk

What's your ALP?

I'm not a Psychologist, but it seems that we all have our own personal "Accepted Level of Perfection", or "ALP" in almost everything we do. By ALP I mean there is a conscience or sub conscience stopping point whereas we have reached our goal and are comfortable with our level of perfection, and we stop, or at least slow down, our efforts to improve.

Of course this will vary with our individual interests and needs.

Our interests are generally governed by our natural abilities, which are usually seen at an early age. For example, musical kids sing, and athletic kids play sports.

Our needs also vary. For example, more effort and time and a much higher ALP will be set for a career endeavor as opposed to a hobby. Most golfers have an ALP based on the abilities of their golf buddies. If they can compete without being embarrassed, that's generally a comfortable level of perfection. Tiger Woods, on the other hand, has no ALP.

I personally don't play golf, but considering my life history and lack of eye-hand coordination, my ALP would be to be able to actually hit the ball without hitting one or both

of my feet, or the side of my head with the golf club!

Most Concert Pianists practice 4-6 hours every day. They generally will give up all outside interests, and focus entirely on the piano. This is a huge sacrifice and certainly takes a tremendous amount of commitment and self discipline. There are many talented musicians in this world, but only a few are willing to dedicate their lives to this calling. Their rewards cannot be measured by fame and fortune, the audiences are comparatively small, and the pay is low.

CONCERT PIANISTS HAVE NO ALP! If they ever reach the point that they feel that they have made it to the top, that there are no more hurdles, then they will become complacent and mediocrity will soon set in. Recently, a concert pianist, who had recently performed at the Kennedy Center, told me that he almost never listens to, or watches videos of his performances because he is usually disappointed with his playing.

I think it's important that, we, as piano technicians, understand this important part of the Concert Pianists Psyche.

It should be no surprise then, that because concert pianists are almost never satisfied with their own playing, that they are also almost never satisfied with the instruments they are playng on. If a concert pianist tells you that the piano that you have just busted your tail to prepare is just "okay", consider it a compliment, that's about as good as you're going to get. When working on these instruments, we too have NO ALP. Pianos are are work in progress!

Success can best be defined as "The progressive realization of a worthwhile goal". I think this definition fits our lifes work.

Bob

This is an article found on the Web about a disgruntled customer. After reading this article what do you think should be done or better yet should have been done.

Ripoff Report

I purchased a grand piano at the end of December from a piano store. It was a vintage grand piano from Germany, however the seller represented himself as a "master technician" and a piano rebuilder with 30 years experience. He charged me \$5,500 for the piano and promised a "lifetime warranty" both verbally and in emails. He claimed to have thoroughly examined the piano and that it was in excellent condition, had a great deal of work done, and that if any problems arose, he would fix them. My piano teacher was giving a recital with her students in the store at the time, and when I showed her the piano, she told me it was excellent, and that if I didn't buy it she would. The piano keys were stiff, but the seller told me that he would fix that problem and any other problems.

Within a week problems started to arise and several defects became apparent. A piano teacher and concert pianist told me that the piano had uneven action and that my inability to play certain pieces was due to defects in the piano. He recommended a different piano technician. However, first the seller came twice to tune and work on the piano. He also took the action to his shop for several days. When it came back, there was no improvement in the stiffness. He told me then, despite his previous promises, that it would cost "time and money" to fix the piano. I had an independent evaluator look at the action, and I was told it required \$2,000 worth of work to correct the problem.

I hired a 2nd independent evaluator, because it turned out the first evaluator did not look at all aspects of the piano. The 2nd evaluation revealed between \$5,000 and \$12,500 or more worth of needed repairs. The piano has 3 cracks in the soundboard, the soundboard has been repainted to make it look better, but it was done improperly and there is paint on the strings, which are rusty and have apparently never been replaced, or if so, more than 50 years ago. The pin block is covered with many cracks. The hammers were installed incorrectly so that many keys do not hit all the strings. The action is very poor. The pedals are defective. There is much more.

I have requested a refund and the seller refused. Instead, he wants me to sell the piano on consignment in his store, which would be unethical in my view. He has offered to reimburse \$1,000 of repairs on a piano where an evaluator stated that none of the work done has been done to industry standards.

I have filed in small claims court and am hoping to be awarded my money, so I can be made whole.

I would urge anyone to have any piano at this store inspected by a technician out of the area. The technicians in the area have a tendency to stick together, or at least to want to protect each other and to avoid conflict. I had to hire someone from 2 hours away to drive up and do the evaluation.

A disgruntled customer

Do you think

- A. The piano was over priced.*
- B. The problems of the piano should have been pointed out to her before she purchased the piano.*
- C. The piano should have been repaired and regulated to justify the cost of the piano.*
- D. The piano should be discarded never to be seen again.*
- E. She should have hired a piano technician to verify the pianos condition.*
- F. The seller shouldn't warranty a used piano from another country.*

You decide.
