

March 2011

THE SOONER TUNER

"Cold weather be gone"

Welcome to the March Edition of the Sooner Tuner. This month's meeting will be held at **Peace Lutheran Church** in Edmond located at 2600 E. Danforth on Thursday March 17 2011. Enter through the doors by the bell tower, the entrance will be marked. The technical will be given by David Bonham on the typical repairs we find on great grandma's antique upright piano. You know the one that has all the sentimental value. While most of these need to be sent to the pasture some are miraculously in working condition and can still hold a tune. David will discuss several topic regarding Great Grandma's beautiful cabinet Grand Piano that won so many world fair prizes. David will tilt the piano on its back and demonstrate how to the CA treatment of the tuning pins, the installation of an institutional dolly, and the glorious repair of brass butt flange plates. Many other topics are sure to be discussed during this session so please come and share your own anecdotes.

From the desk of the President:

Today was Mardi Gras day at the Jefferson Garden Nursing Home. The clarinetist/goose caller, and the accordion player could be heard loud and clear, right outside the door of the retired piano teacher that I came to tune for today. If that wasn't exciting enough, she likes to crank up the heat to a temperature that matches her age. [she's94].

After about 5 verses of, what I'm pretty sure was "When The Saints Go Marching in", I managed to tune out the "vunderful, vunderful" sound of "Sissy and Bobby" enough to raise the pitch, tighten flanges, and space hammers.

Since I've been dieting for the last three weeks, the sauna that I was working in helped with my weight loss!

Our occupation is filled with diversity. Not only do we deal with varying environments, and a variety of personalities, but we work on instruments that can cover a wide range of age, quality, shape, and size. For example, my first tuning today was a Steinway D for a recital, while my last tuning was a Gulbransen spinet for a beginning student. Although the concert grand had to be prepared in greater detail, both needed to be at A-440, and at least playable. This is but one example of the varying needs and demands that are required of the living beast we know as the piano.

The majority of us work on whatever we are called to work on. For this reason, we owe it to ourselves, and our customers, to understand, not only the structure and mechanics of all pianos, but also their individual needs and limitations.

Bob

Get Your Piano Valued - Find Out How Much it is Worth - by Graham Howard

The time has come when you need that space in the corner of your living room and you have an old, BIG piano that has been sitting there, untouched, for many years.

You wonder how you can get rid of this piano.

Maybe it is worth something?

How much will it sell for?

How do you find out the value?

It is VERY OLD, so maybe it is an antique? In fact, *could it be worth a fortune?*

These are questions that I get asked on a daily basis, so I decided to write this article to help out everybody in this predicament.

Now, what I should say first is that the common belief that an old piano is an antique and worth a lot of money is simply not true.

Generally, the older the piano is, *the less it is worth*. The reasons it's worth less is because a piano is classed as a musical instrument – not a piece of furniture – which means the value of a piano depends almost entirely on the condition and quality of the parts on the inside. The piano's cabinet – no matter how nice it looks on the outside – usually has very little bearing on the price.

So a beautiful looking piano that is over 100 years old that has brass candlestick holders, intricate engraving, original parts inside and beautifully shaped legs is more than likely worthless. In fact, you would do well if someone took the piano away from you for. Usually you would have to pay around £60 to £90 to have the piano removed from your house and dumped.

I know this sounds a little harsh, but it is reality. I like to be honest and tell you exactly how it really is.

A fairly new piano doesn't automatically mean that it's worth a lot more either..

If your piano is a famous brand like Bechstein, Bluthner, Steinway, Yamaha, Kawai, etc. and is less than 20 years old, then it will usually have a fairly high valuation.

Modern pianos that have been made in Germany, UK, Japan, or Czech Republic are usually high quality.

Pianos made in China are usually made from cheap materials (there are exceptions to the rule though). I have seen pianos that are just 5 years old that look great on the outside, but the parts on the inside are completely worn and the sound is very harsh.

So how can you value your piano?

The only way and the CORRECT way, is to ask a professional piano tuner/technician to come and

take a look at your piano. Make sure the tuner is a member of the Piano Tuners Association (PTA). Members of the PTA have passed a high level tuning test and also completed general piano repairs. They are experienced and the only real piano experts.

Do not ask your piano teacher or pianist friend to value, or choose a piano for you. Piano teachers and pianists usually know next to nothing about the inner workings of pianos (there are always exceptions to the rule though).

A piano tuner will usually charge you for a valuation. The cost can be anywhere from £20 to £50 depending on your area and the piano tuner's expertise.

It is well worth it though...

You will get your piano examined by someone that knows what to look for. Once you get that valuation you will know exactly how much you can sell your piano for. Sometimes the piano tuner will even buy it from you.

Be careful if you ask a piano dealer or shop to value your piano. The shop is usually interested in buying secondhand pianos and will probably give it a low valuation in the hope that they can buy it off you on the cheap.

Never call someone that advertises that they buy pianos. You usually see these adverts in Yellow Pages or your local newspaper.

The ad will say something like this:

“All types of pianos bought.
Highest prices paid in cash.
Call for immediate collection”.

These guys make a living from picking up decent pianos from next to nothing and selling them on to piano shops or private buyers for a high profit. So you can guess that they will value your piano *extremely low* and find as many faults as possible to justify their low offer. Some of these faults may not even exist!

You will not be able to value a piano yourself, unless you have the time to go on a piano tuning and repair course for at least 2-3 years. The only way to know how much a piano is worth is by acquiring the expertise knowledge.

Pianos consist of at least 5,000 parts – MUCH more complicated than a car – and if one part is overlooked it can be the difference of valuing a piano at a high price or a complete write off.

Example:

A good looking piano, casework has been French polished, the sound is OK but the piano needs tuning, the parts inside look new, the piano is not that old, no problems seem apparent. This piano could be valued at a fairly high price?

BUT...

If the tuning plank is cracked - this is usually very difficult to see – then the tuning pins will probably be loose and will not hold the high tension of the strings. This piano will need a new tuning plank, new pins, and new strings. This could cost anywhere from £1000 to £2500 depending on the work involved.

Another example:

There is a crack at the bottom of the soundboard. To see this, you have to take the piano's bottom board out and check the soundboard thoroughly. Again, this can easily be missed if you don't know what to look for. You also need to know which type of soundboard crack is serious, and which type is not an immediate problem.

So give your local piano tuner a call, it is a safe bet and usually worth spending the valuation fee.

This article is from England. It is recommended you call an RPT,

Oklahoma Chapter of the PTG officers are as follows

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