

February 2012

News & Notes



Newsletter of the Boston Chapter *Piano Technicians Guild*

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FEBRUARY MEETING—Brandeis
FEATURING: Dave Stanwood

When: Tuesday Feb 21st

Where: Brandeis University
415 South Street,
Waltham, MA 02453
Slosberg Music Center

Schedule: **6:00 PM.** Gather, Converse, Eat
7:00 PM. Chapter Business Meeting
7:30 PM. Visit with Dave Stanwood

TOPIC: Insight into tone production is gained by listening to hammers made to high/low extremes in weight, hardness, leverage, and tension. Also the tone made from hammers made with rubber, synthetics, lead, and combinations other alternative materials to mimic ideal tone will be explored.

David C. Stanwood
2007 NBSS Alumni Award Honors
Contributions to Piano Technology

-Posted: October 23 2007
North Bennet Street School
newsletter



"Stanwood asks the audience to hum along with an A-440 tuning fork"

At the June 1, 2007 graduation ceremony, the third annual Distinguished Alumni Award was presented to David C. Stanwood in recognition of his contributions to the science and craft of piano technology. The award is given each year by the alumni to a graduate who has shown outstanding



achievement and creativity in furthering their craft, and who has advanced the body of knowledge in their trade.

He graduated from the North Bennet Street School in 1979. Stanwood invented a fundamental measurement system for pianos called Touch Weight Metrology based on his Equation of Balance in the early 1990s. The system isolates fundamental components in the internal workings of the keyboard in a way that was never possible before. The system employs customized tools, techniques, and computer software to custom build a piano action to a pianist's unique needs.

The system has also been used to help pianists with injuries such as tendonitis and carpal tunnel syndrome. "It took me ten years to develop and refine the Equation of Balance," said Stanwood after accepting the award, "and that creation is my lifetime achievement."

"It makes a pathway for others to follow in the art and craft of piano making and it empowers us as piano technicians. We are in a position to make pianos easier to play and help the piano player to be more of an artist and more able to truly convey feelings through music which is the magic of piano." Pianos balanced with Stanwood's methods are noted for their flawless playing characteristics.

Kent Swafford, president of the Piano Technicians Guild, said, "Stanwood's work fills important gaps in piano knowledge. As a result, it is now possible to elevate the quality and value of older restored pianos to equal and even exceed that of new pianos." Stanwood runs a full-service piano workshop in West Tisbury, Massachusetts on Martha's Vineyard and consults for piano technicians worldwide who are trained to use his techniques.

From His Website: www.stanwoodpiano.com

My name is David Stanwood and my colleagues and I would like to tell you about my new invention for pianos, the "Stanwood Adjustable Leverage Action," also known by the acronym SALA.



We feel that it is an extremely powerful, expansive, magical tool to enable pianists to "customize" the touch and tone of the instrument "on the fly," even during performance. Historically the **key leverage point**, which determines in large part the "feel," the resistance or plangency of the action, is built in and part of the immutable structure of the piano. "The touch is the touch." "That's just the way the piano is..."

Piano builders and restoration experts know that changing the leverage point of a piano keyboard can be a powerful tool in producing pianos that feel lighter or heavier to the touch. Changing leverage points requires redesigning and restructuring the entire piano action—a time-consuming and expensive job, which produces another static touch. Lighter or heavier, perhaps, but immutable.

The **Stanwood Adjustable Leverage Action** changes all that. Elegant in design, complex in execution, and simple in function, SALA allows the pianist to simultaneously move the entire key leverage point of the keyboard by simply **turning two knobs set into the key frame**. These control knobs, one at the bass end and one at the treble end, are revealed by lifting up the **key slip**.





"PREZ SEZ"

Doug Tybor, RPT
President, Boston
Chapter PTG

Making Plans - 2012

The Vermont and Maine Chapters have teamed up to host this year's New England & Eastern Canada Regional Seminar. Plan now to attend! There will be about 50 classes to choose from, and some of the Guild's best instructors will be there.

From the NEECSO Web Site: <http://www.neecso-ptg.org>

"The conference Institute team has worked hard to secure exhibitors to fill the exhibit hall with pianos from the major piano manufacturers, piano parts and tool supply houses who will display their wares, the latest training aids like books and DVDs, and piano technology schools."

Don't want to drive? Check out MegaBus (www.megabus.com). I've seen fares as low as \$1.00 each way. Huh? No, that is not a misprint. One Dollar. Please note, however, that, according to their Web site, it appears like booking reservations isn't possible until exactly 2 months before the Seminar's opening date. If you don't score the one dollar tickets, you might have to pay more. Like three dollars. Or maybe eight.....

Making Plans - 2014

Although over 2 years away, the Boston Chapter has already begun the process of gathering information pursuant to hosting the NEECSO Seminar in the spring of 2014. There has been some discussion at chapter meetings regarding where the event will take place; the Westin Hotel in Waltham has been an excellent location, but Eric Donnelly and I have been exploring other sites that have similar potential to host our event, and at a better price. Some examples: Sheraton in Braintree, Hilton in Dedham, Marriott in Newton, Marriott in Burlington, Sheraton in Lynnfield, Marriott in Peabody.

Your suggestions are welcome! The site must have the room to host about 200 people in the form of a large ballroom for luncheons, at least six "breakout" rooms for classes, sufficient exhibitor space, enough chairs and tables for attendees, and perhaps 1 or 2 small rooms to store pianos, materials and audio visual supplies. There are a lot of mid-size hotel sites out there that may have enough rooms (e.g. Hyatt Place, Holiday Inn Select), but do not have the meeting space to host seminars this size.

Tom Driscoll will be in charge of lining up the instructors. Joe Morocco will serve as registrar. Bill Trotman has offered to help with coordinating the piano moving. There are many other tasks we will need help with, so the call is going out to members who want to join the committee. We will meet on a fairly infrequent basis from now until early 2013, and then perhaps once every month or so after the 2013 PTG-MARC event in Pennsylvania.

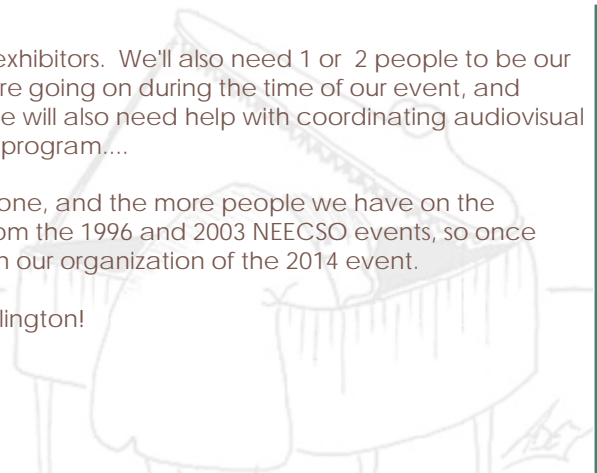
At present we need someone to take charge of lining up exhibitors. We'll also need 1 or 2 people to be our hospitality subcommittee - to find out what tourist events are going on during the time of our event, and perhaps help organize transportation to those activities. We will also need help with coordinating audiovisual equipment, developing and hosting a Web site, printing a program....

It seems a little daunting now, but rest assured, it can be done, and the more people we have on the committee, the easier the tasks are! We have the notes from the 1996 and 2003 NEECSO events, so once those are retrieved and reviewed, they will certainly help in our organization of the 2014 event.

First things first, however.....I hope to see many of you in Burlington!

Thanks,

Doug Tybor



Member Spotlight

Christine Lovgren

Growing up I took piano lessons, like nearly every other kid back then. I remember not liking either of my piano teachers, thinking they didn't like me either. So I switched to violin, until middle school, when that became too nerdy. Then it was flute, so I could join the marching band and ride the team bus to football games.

After high school there was a musical dry spell until someone gave me an old beater upright a few years after graduating from college. I had the local tuner come and tune it (He happened to be blind). He opened it up and told me it needed some other work. I had no idea what he was talking about, but I was smitten by the innards of the piano. Had never before even considered how it worked!

I took lessons for a couple years, and had a series of non traditional jobs along the way. One was working in a fertilizer factory, cleaning out huge concrete vats used to mix the chemicals. This was in the very early days of OSHA. One night (yes,



midnight shift) I asked for ear protection since I was operating a jack hammer. The foreman blew me off and said basically "suck it up-- I don't know where that stuff is." So, I got tinnitus. I quit, went to an audiologist and a lawyer. The lawyer chuckled and said "Well, I guess this means you'll never be a piano tuner. Ha ha." The gauntlet was thrown, and I picked it up! Being told you can't do something is a very strong motivator to do that very thing. I ended up at NBSS in the Fall of 1979.

If I hadn't fallen into piano technology, I can't imagine what I might be doing! It's the best job in the world. You get to see different pianos and meet new people almost every day. There's no end to the variety of problems you have to solve. Learning is endless. I teach half time at NBSS and have the rest of my working time to do my own private work. Lots of tuning (mostly in homes, but some concert and recording), some regulation, and occasional rebuilding--a great mix. At this point I have almost more work than I can do. I'd like to cut back over the next few years, so I have more time to do other things, but will probably never retire outright. A few years ago I started taking piano lessons again, and it is one of the best thing I've ever done! I have a super teacher, and look forward to getting to practice on so many in tune pianos. It is immensely rewarding.

If there is a down side to piano technology, I think it's in getting so caught up in your work that it owns you. You have to find a way to make room and time for the other important things in life like family, friends, physical activities and hobbies you are passionate about.



“Key level stick of praise!”

I recently bought a new key level stick from Wessel, Nickel and Gross. It's the best one I've ever used. It's aluminum, with a straight side and a crowned side. It's just the right size and weight, has absolutely no wobble, and was a total pleasure to work with. Well worth the \$ 42 (or so)

Christine Lovgren

“Silica Gel A New Use”

I got a call a few weeks ago from a new customer. Apparently she just moved into town and the movers did not assemble the lyre correctly on her daughters Kawaiii 6 ft. grand. In addition the E4 key was “sticking”. She said another key the G5 was “sticking” before she moved but now it works fine. This piano originally was sold in China. It had another label in front of Kawaiii which I can't remember and I did not write down. -Should have, -new I would forget.

The Lyre was an easy fix sort of, and done last. The E4 key after looking at the action parts did not seem to show anything out of the ordinary other than “parts fine, working fine”. Typically the usual suspects are objects falling into the action when the pianos are newer, unless you find an obviously bad part or one grossly out of adjustment (the piano owner knows enough to go in and turn things). I did not see anything after removing the fall board and blocks so I took the action out of the piano compressing the E4 hammer which was hanging up so it would not break off on the pin block. Still finding nothing I separated the action from the keybed. Typically at this point the objects are smaller to make it this far.

Removing the E4 key I found the culprit. In another 3 years I doubt I would have seen it if my eyesight continues on its dismal path of impressionism. I see the world as an impressionist painter. -I think impressionists painted a bit “blurry” because they couldn't see. Whatever the reason, great stuff. Except when you need to see something. I guess when you look at a painting you really do not need to see much really. -Just enough to get the feel. But when your eyesight goes you need to see enough to know where to feel with out getting slapped or bitten. Being slapped is one thing, could be the highlight of your day, although I never see any of the people on the History Channel show “Swamp People” wearing glasses hunting alligators. I would think half of them would be going out with one arm at this point. Perhaps they are wearing contacts as the director did not want them in glasses. -Eyesight and pianos..another topic.

Anyhow, there it was, right on top of the keybed felt, a tiny white ball. After owning a music store and unpacking thousands of guitars, keyboards and other assorted electronics, I identified it immediately. It was one tiny silica gel ball. For those not familiar, it is packaging to absorb moisture. I had seen these things thousands of times when I was in a hurry to unpack something only to rip the silica gel bag open and send the hundreds of little balls flying everywhere. Never selling new pianos I have no idea if manufacturers use these in packaging. If they do it is no mystery. If they do not, they your guess is as good as mine.

This one tiny ball got into this piano originally causing the G5 key to stick. She fixed that by calling the piano movers. After that the ball traveled to it's final resting place in the piano under the E4 Key. Now it is in a landfill somewhere. -May it rest in peace, Perhaps an archaeologist will find it 1000 years from now and argue for 50 years with colleagues on it's identity. -most likely candidate, “a failed attempt as a fuel source for going green in the 20th century”.

Bill Trotman



ASSIST WITH THE TUNING EXAM—We have been doing quite a few tuning exams lately. Any RPTs out there willing to help out? The tuning exam requires one CTE (Certified Tuning Exam-iner) and two (or more) RPTs. Recently I asked several RPTs to help out and both were under the mistaken impression that one had to be a CTE to take part in a tuning exam. Not so. Any RPT can help. It's a good way to give back to our organization, have fun and probably learn something. Plus you have the satisfaction of knowing you are helping uphold the high standards of PTG! There is no monetary reward, but you might get a sandwich and cup of coffee, and reimbursement for parking.

Another reminder—the pool of CTEs nationwide is shrinking. If any RPT is considering becoming a CTE, the first step is to take the full tuning exam (entirely by ear) and pass all categories at 90 or above. THE TEST FEE IS WAIVED, whether or not your scores are all 90 or above.

The Boston Chapter does testing on a by request basis. So, if anyone is thinking about taking the tuning exam, it usually takes a few weeks to set up a time. Testing is done at North Bennet St. School on one of three approved pianos: A Steinway L, a Mason & Hamlin BB or a Kawai RX2. Questions? Call or email me. - *Christine Lovgren*



A RECENT BLOG POST FOUND ONLINE:

This truckload of pianos sat in front of my apartment building all weekend long. I imagine this arrival was for a lounge that's opening up on my corner. Now if they're going to actually tickle these ivories, I do hope a piano tuner is on his way. Or maybe this is the piano tuner making his delivery.



Be fffherry fffherry quiet, I'm hunting Pweano Tunas



Just Because your ears are bigger WABBIT doesn't mean you can hear! I got mojo, something you'll never have.



Daffy, Those are my pianos in the back of the Ford....

B. Trotman



The Boston Chapter PTG Meeting on January 17 2012 was held at Mike Morvan's shop at Blackstone Valley Piano.

Joe Morocco presented the Treasurer's Report.

Doug Tybor presented some details about ongoing 2014 NEECOS Seminar planning.

There was a question about speaker fees that was addressed. The general practice is that there is a fee for a speaker at a PTG meeting unless the presentation primarily focused on the selling of a product or service. In the past a general fee has been \$150 plus hotel and travel.

Articles are due by the end of January for the next issue of the newsletter.

February 21 will be David Stanwood presenting at Brandeis about hammers.

March will be Jim laleggio presenting the Steinway action rail.

There will be no meeting in April because of the regional convention.

May will be David Kirkland presenting his book, "The Official Guide to Steinway Pianos."

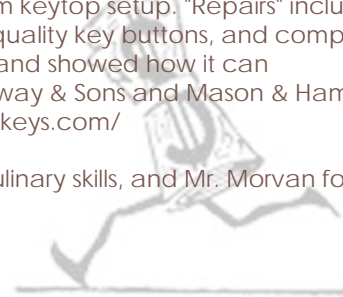
In June, Jude Reveley will be presenting a trial run of his presentation for the national convention.

Eric Donnelly raised an issue about web traffic from the new Boston PTG website, the navigability of the website, and compatibility with new smart phones and devices. The matter was referred to the website committee for further review.

There was a motion on the floor to nominate Patrick Draine to be New England Regional Vice President. The motion was carried.

The rest of the evening was devoted to Mike Morvan of Blackstone Valley Piano, who demonstrated his state-of-the-art key repairs and complete keyboard rebuilding, and also his custom keytop setup. "Repairs" included manufacturing complete new sets of modified and improved-from-factory-quality key buttons, and complete key mortise replacement. Mr. Morvan also demonstrated his CNC machine and showed how it can manufacture entire new keyboards. Mr. Morvan has the scale for most Steinway & Sons and Mason & Hamlin keyboards programmed into his CNC machine. <http://www.pianoandorgankeys.com/>

Also, a big thank you to Evan Ewing for once again demonstrating his fine culinary skills, and Mr. Morvan for the presentation and hosting us at his shop for the evening.



Feb 21	David Stanwood Brandeis	May 14	DAVID KIRKLAND from Steinway, talking about his new book The Official Guide to Steinway Pianos
February 10	Dues extension requests due Contact your RVP		
April 2	PTGF scholarship applications due to Home Office		
April 2	Delegate names an Council reports due: kathy@ptg.org		



Currently restoring 3 Steinway model M 5'7" grand pianos, 2 in mahogany cabinets, 1 satin ebony. Let me know if you have interest in any of these pianos.

I now have access to a large number of un-restored Steinway and Mason & Hamlin grand pianos, so if there is a particular model size or cabinet style you are looking for, let me know.

I always have a selection of Yamaha and Kawai upright and grand pianos and some smaller console pianos. If you are searching for a particular piano in a specific style or size, please let me know. I can often search out just the piano for you.

Martin Snow
 781-837-6531
martinsnowpianos@yahoo.com



Kawai KG2, 5'10"
 wonderful tone and a satin finish, excellent original condition from the 1980s. \$6500.00



1985 Yamaha G2, 5'8".

The perfect grand piano for the home. This piano retails new for over \$35K. At Martin Snow Pianos, my NEARLY NEW price of \$11,900 includes delivery, 5 year warranty and first in-home piano tuning.



Kawai KG2, 5'10"

wonderful tone and a satin finish, excellent original condition from the 1980s. \$6500.

SPECIAL STEINERT PIANO SELECTION EVENT IN NATICK!!
 March 1-4 ~ APPT ONLY! ~ NATICK MALL, 1st FLOOR (by Neiman Marcus)
 STEINWAY-BOSTON-ESSEX-WM KNABE-Grands and Uprights--all on sale!!
 MUST CALL: LIZ DIAMOND 617-426-1900 X223

I have a Zuckerman harpsichord built from a kit 30 years ago, and not used for more than five years. It is in good shape, needs some string replacements. I will part with it for a contribution to a non-profit. It is valued at \$600. This instrument is a real harpsichord; it also is a great teaching tool for learning about tuning and shaping plectras which pluck the strings. I built this with my young daughter, who later moved away to college, and on. Center Harbor NH (603) 253-4342 Kent

Steinway Model A Piano (serial 84699)
 # 6'1". My main sound string base, three bridge, eighty-eight note piano. Manufactured in Queens NY, circa 1960. This piano has been completely restored. Restoration included: new soundboard, bridges, pinblock, strings and action.
 All the case parts are original. The ebony case is a Victorian style with fluted, barrel shaped legs, carved music desk and ivory keyboard.
 Lovely sound - Responsive action! **Mary P. Logue**
 857-919-1532
 mlogue@pandogue.com

Steinway A, 6'1, No. 84699. Fifty-seven wound string base, three bridge, eighty-eight note piano. Manufactured in Queens, NY. This piano has been completely restored. Restoration included: **new soundboard, bridges, pinblock, strings, and action.** All the case parts are original; the ebony case is a Victorian style with fluted, barrel-shaped legs, carved music desk, and ivory keyboard. Lovely sound / Responsive action! \$35,000

FOR PART (or further info)!!!
Mary P. Logue
 (857) 919-1532
mlogue@pandogue.com





Bill Fucito at 978-692-3293
(Westford, MA).
Barry Rosenberg, RPT



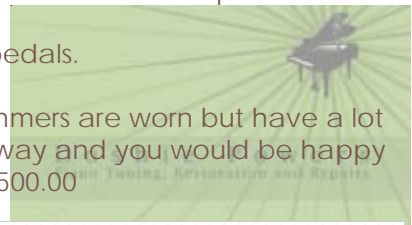
I have a customer who must sell his 5'2" Knabe grand by the end of this month (August). It is in very good shape for original parts (I replaced an agraffe, the two strings that went through it and one hammer head). He wants \$4000 or best offer.

Steinway Model K 1903

Doshie Powers, RPT 617-773-1223

If you or a client is in the market for a Steinway, I just saw a beauty. Model K 1903, mahogany, in excellent condition. A small crack in high treble (#83-88), otherwise board, block and bridges in excellent shape. The piano has been in one family since new and kept well all those years.

The finish is original, some chipped ivory, nickel plate worn off pedals.



Still. Has a wonderful full tone, no vertigris, not even a hint. Hammers are worn but have a lot of life left. This is a great opportunity for a client to own a Steinway and you would be happy (I would) to take care of it. Located in West Roxbury, asking \$3500.00



Boston grand piano for sale.

GP-193 6'4". 10 years old. Polished Mahogany Finish. Pristine. Comes with M.Steinert trade-up guarantee.

Claudia Cimenti

email: cimenti@gmail.com
Stowe, MA

Steinway B from around 1900. Completely redone in the mid 80's at Camaleri in NY. Spade legs (not original), black case. Authentic Steinway parts used throughout. Plastic keytops. 88 notes. Well maintained. Piano located in Cambridge. Asking low 30's. Call Christine Lovgren 508 733 2935

Original owner of an upright Charles R. Walter (1999) Traditional Console Model 1520, serial # 524283, with a Cherry Finish and Bench. The piano is in excellent condition, has been regularly tuned, and played only by our daughter. \$2,400 or Best Offer. Boston Tel: 617-620-8651.

Steinway 45 upright, Serial #553473 (circa 2000)
Mahogany "Crown Jewel Collection"
Dampp-Chaser installed

Owned and played by an RPT, second owner
Hammers recently filed, action recently regulated, tuned regularly,
tight pinblock, perfect soundboard
Middle pedal is true sostenuto mechanism
Asking \$14,500.00

Christopher A. Storch
(617) 489-6436



February 2012
Steinway M - \$10950
(Allston)



Chris Pleim
119 Braintree St Rm 511
Allston MA
617-783-1030
chrispleimpiano@me.com

2 Ivers and Pond Full Sized
Uprights - \$1650 (Allston)
and
\$1950



Beautiful tone 5'7" baby grand from the '20's, Steinway's golden age. As far as structural work, it has replaced pinblock, strings, dampers, which generally costs at least \$6000. The action has had the hammers, shanks and flanges replaced, which are the parts that wear and have the dreaded "vertigris" found in most older Steinways. We are regulating it now, which is the fine action adjustment to make the touch feel like new. This action work is normally at least \$3500.

It has been refinished in an open grain walnut worth \$4000. Adding all the work done, the piano is less than free at this price. We are paying you to buy this piano!

The final evolution of the full sized upright; deep rich sound surpassing most baby grands. Uprights this good are mostly no longer made, and when they are they cost well over 10K.

Original mahogany finish in good shape. Includes complete Life Saver System (humidity control which costs \$600 installed). This piano is fully tuned, regulated, and guaranteed.

Classic Knabe 5'2" baby grand

in original condition; thoroughly regulated and voiced. \$2000.



Mason & Hamlin "A" 5'8" Grand Piano

Unique, customized instrument with many design improvements resulting in a very special, one of a kind piano. \$35,000.



2001 Steinway grand piano Model M Serial # 558545

in ebony satin. This piano is in excellent condition, like new, and has been lovingly maintained and regularly tuned. It has beautiful rich sound. It has had little play.



Earhworks
PIANO MIC
SYSTEM

Need a high quality piano Microphone?
Need Wholesale Prices?
Need more Information?
call or email me
Bill Trotman 866-446-4135 or
service@pianofix.net

Victor Belanger:
617-484-4678
vbela@mit.edu



CHAPTER ADMINISTRATION

News & Notes
www.bostonptg.org



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LOCATION MAPS

