

The Tuner's Beat

Randy Rush, editor randyrush@earthlink.net

February, 2002

NEXT MEETING:

Monday, February 18th

No Board Meeting

General Meeting at
7:00PM

(Note earlier meeting time)

Helmer's Music

10575 NE 12th Street

Bellevue

Technical Program:

Scott Craven

On Grand Regulation

February Technical Program:

Grand Regulation Presented by Scott Craven

This month's technical will cover that familiar but oh-so-essential territory of regulating grand pianos. Scott Craven will present the theory and practice of grand regulation with a touch of Stanwood's touch weight metrology. This is

not only a good time for our associates to sharpen their skills in regulation, but for the old timers to bring their contributions to the table, and maybe learn something, too. Please note the earlier time for the meeting.

PNWC In Tri-Cities This Spring

If you haven't yet made your plans to attend the Pacific Northwest Regional Conference in Pasco this spring, give it some more thought, because it's not too late. As usual, the conference includes an abundance of quality classes taught by some of the best instructors around the country. Included on the schedule are classes by the Yamaha team, Bill Spurlock, Del Fandrich, Phil Glenn of Young Chang, and the Northwest's own Darrell Fandrich, Rick Wheeler, Keith Kopp, and Don Simonson. The conference is taking place March 21—23 at the Doubletree Hotel in Pasco. For more information or to register, contact registrar Paul Clayton at (509) 946-1075, email apollo77@aol.com.

Dates To Remember:

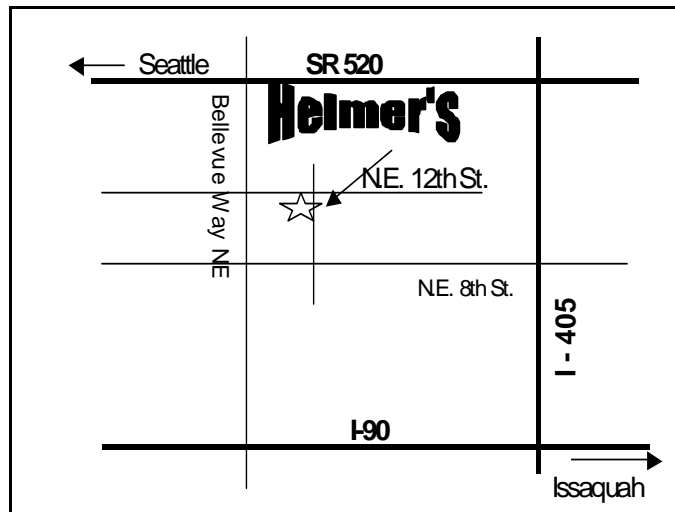
*February 18th, 2002
Chapter Meeting
No Board, 7:00 General*

*March 4, 2002
RPT Tuning Exams
Gable Piano Shop*

*March 21—23
Pacific NW Conference
Pasco, WA*

*April 20, 2002
All Day Seminar
(Details TBA)*

*July 26—30
PTG Annual Convention
Chicago*



RPT Tuning Exams On March 4th

Calling all associates ready to upgrade to registered technician... PTG tuning exams will be offered on Monday, March 4th at Roger Gable's piano shop in Everett, 2914 Hewitt

Avenue. For further information, or to sign up for an exam slot, call Joe Goheen at 425-487-6063. Spaces are limited, so if you've been thinking how nice it would be to be an

RPT, don't put it off—call Joe today.



Minutes From January 21, 2002

President Roger Gable opened the meeting at the North Seattle Prosser's at 7:30 P.M. A quorum was met with 12 RPTs and six Associates. Four guests were present. The November Meeting Minutes were approved as published in The Tuner's Beat.

Treasurer Bill Barber reports \$5434.59 in the CD, \$2975.17 in savings, and \$1841.91 in the checking ac-



count with expenses in December of \$126.21 for the Christmas Party.

Announcements: Roger Gable distributed reprints of Music Trades Magazine articles relating to the Baldwin Company. The Chapter considered and approved the application of former Associate Member Robert Samuelson. Welcome Robert!

Old Business: None.

New Business: The Board reports it is still working on the Annual All Day Seminar. No date or presenter has been confirmed at this time. Audrey Karabinus suggested to book Bill Spurlock for next year now. It was agreed by general consent that The Beat Editor is authorized to set Newsletter advertising policy. The meeting adjourned at 7:54 PM. Respectfully submitted, Curtis Spiel

January Program Review

Keytop Replacement, presented by Randy Rush

Jeannie Grassi

We were all in for a treat at the January meeting to have Randy Rush share with us his method of keytop replacement. Not only is his approach effective, but his graciousness in allowing members of the group to share their techniques and tools, expanded on what he was demonstrating and enhanced the class overall. He originally based his technique on *Journal* articles by Bill Spurlock in March and May 1991. The jig was an idea he got from Mark Story,

RPT. He has modified and adapted these basic ideas to his own style.

Randy uses a router, mounted on a jig to resurface after the old keytop has been removed. Audrey Karabinus and Jeannie Grassi brought in their own versions of this same idea, with some variations. Some discussion was generated about various methods for removing old fronts, which included soaking the fronts of the keys in acetone (Randy's method), shearing them off with a chisel, and burning them off

with a flame(!). Gouges, tears, or divots in the keytop surface must be filled before gluing on the new material. For this, Randy uses an epoxy/wood flour mix. Other methods brought up were filling with wood repair materials and gluing on veneer or tongue depressors. Discussion about types of replacement keytops included those by Knight, Schaff and APSCO (which might be the same), Vagias, and Pianotek. Different manufacturers have different profiles, widths, and corners; try to find

(Continued on page 4)

The Fine Print

The Tuner's Beat is the official newsletter for the Seattle chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild. It is published 10 to 12 times a year at a subscription rate of \$6 (free to members and exchanging newsletter editors). All articles may be reprinted if credit is given to the Tuner's Beat, as the Seattle chapter newsletter and to individual authors, when indicated. Please address all inquiries or articles to Randy Rush, 2627 NE 86th Street, Seattle, WA 98115 (randyrrush@earthlink.net). The Seattle Chapter PTG usually meets on the third Monday of every month.

"All expressions of opinion and all statements of supposed fact are published on the authority of the author as listed and are not to be regarded as expressing the views of this Chapter or the Piano Technicians Guild unless such statements or opinions have been adopted by the Chapter or the Guild."

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Tuner Profile: Chris Gross

The Jazz Man Among Us

Randy Rush

It seemed an unlikely setting for a jazz concert: all ages, toddlers running back and forth in front of the stage, boomers dining on burgers, pizzas and teriyaki washed down with large soft drinks, and senior citizens drinking coffee and tapping their toes while watching their grandchildren. Yes, it was a Friday night, but the venue was a large community gathering spot/ bookstore/ food court. Unlikely perhaps, but the sounds of fusion jazz wafting through the room had everybody in a good mood.

Onstage, dressed in black save for his red Chuck Taylor tennies, stood the guitarist fronting the Christopher Gross Ensemble, the guy we know as Chris Gross, piano tuner. The five piece group (guitar, bass, drums, keyboard and electric six-string violin) pumped out an upbeat and eclectic array of tunes, ranging from the Irish-inflected "Jiggedy Jig" to the esoterically titled "Hidden Tiger", and including latin and reggae flavored rhythms. Most of the tunes performed in concert and on the band's first CD, "Hit The Mark", were written by Chris. So how does a piano tuner end up being a fusion guitar player? As it happens, it was the other way around. "I had an early exposure to fusion music, like John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra, in the early 70's", says Chris. While still in high school, he studied guitar with local professional guitarist Don Mock. After high school, Chris played in a country and west-

So how does a piano tuner end up being a fusion guitar player? As it happens, it was the other way around.

ern band and a light rock band. It was around this time he also got involved in piano tuning. Oh yeah.... The piano tuning part. While working at Spud's Fish and Chips after high school, Chris found out about piano tuner Jim Baker from a co-worker. He convinced Jim to help him learn how to tune, and before long was able to tune well enough to do floor tunings at Sherman Clay. By 1975, he quit his job at Spud's and began tuning full time. Chris also credits Ed McMorro with helping him with technical as-

pects of the trade as well as tuning training. Ed also got Chris involved in PTG, which Chris joined in 1982.

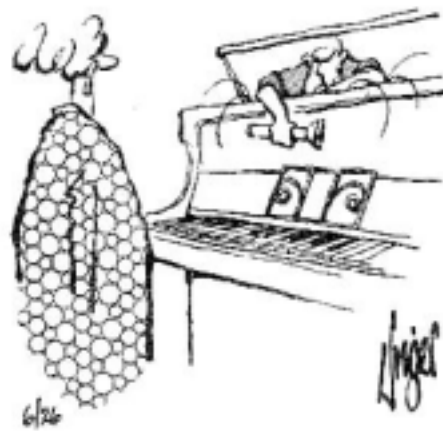
As a piano tuner hailing from West Seattle, Chris is part of what might be termed the "West Seattle Tuning Mafia", a group which includes such Seattle chapter notables as Bill Smith, William Craig, Curtis Spiel, Frank and George Morgan, and Susan Willanger. "I've known Susan since I was seven years old", says Chris. Susan was learning to tune about the same time Chris was thinking of getting into it, and he acknowledges her influence in getting him involved in the business.

Concurrent with all this piano tuning education and business building, Chris was still playing the guitar. For a period of about ten years, he studied only classical guitar, returning to the electric and playing in groups in the mid-eighties. All the

while writing and making demos of his own fusion material, Chris eventually found a group of like-minded individuals, and formed the fusion ensemble, which recorded its first CD in 1998. Venues have included the aforementioned Third Place Books and the similarly-styled Crossroads Mall, clubs such as Jazz Bones in Tacoma and Red Hook's Trolleyman Pub, as well as various fairs like the Bite of Seattle, Taste of Edmonds and Taste of Tacoma. They will be going in to a studio to record a new CD in a few weeks.

Upcoming performances include March 1st at Crossroads Shopping Center, March 19 and April 30 at the Steel Sky (formerly Madison's Café), and May 10 at Third Place Books in Lake Forest Park. For further schedule or CD information about the Christopher Gross Ensemble, contact Chris by calling 425-640-8518, or emailing him at christophergross@earthlink.net.

HERMAN / JIM UNGER



"No wonder the piano tuner wanted 25 bucks!"

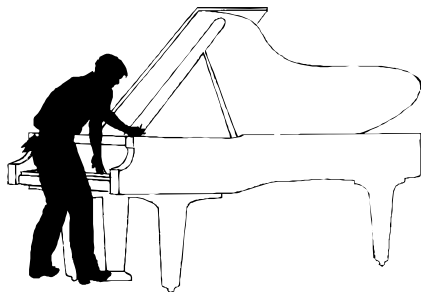
The Tuner's Beat

Newsletter of the Seattle Chapter of
The Piano Technicians Guild

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Keytop Class

(Continued from page 2)
the best match for the keys at hand.

For cutting the notches, Randy uses a spiral-fluted router bit. He has a sliding jig with a groove for excess keytop side overhang. He then trims the edges with a flush trimming router bit. He finishes by hand filing; for filing, he places the key on its side in a spring-loaded clamp.

Randy demonstrated the actual steps with his router and jigs, which helped to give a better understanding of the process. It was a great class and it was good to have Randy teaching again.



Classified Ads

Come and get it - Free advertising space to chapter members. Contact Randy Rush at 206-525-7601 or randyrush@earthlink.net to place your ad here.

Now available - Maple dowels in handy pre-cut lengths. 7/32" and 3/16" diameters. Lots of uses - Cheap!!! Call Roger Gable, 425-252-5000.

ad

Key Clamp Reference

In my keytop class last month, I promise to cite the Journal article where I got my idea for the clamp I use to hold the keys while hand filing. I managed to locate that article, which incidentally is more broadly about the whole process of keytop replacement, and has other good ideas about the task. It's in the April, 1980 issue, on page 16. If you are unable to locate this issue, write me at randyrush@earthlink.net, and I'll send you a scanned picture.

- Randy Rush