
STEVE CLAUNCH

1. Teachers need from their tech.
2. Techs need from their teacher.
3. Basic diagram and nomenclature of piano.
4. Piano Repair Breakdown
 - a. Belly
 1. Soundboard
 2. Strings
 3. Bridges
 4. Wrestrplank
 5. Ribs
 6. Agraffes and V-Bars
 7. Plate
 - b. Action
 1. Keybed/Keyframe
 2. Keys
 3. Capstans
 4. Stack frame and rails
 5. Repetitions
 6. Let-off
 7. Backchecks
 8. Hammers/shanks/flanges
 9. Underlever
 10. Dampers
 11. Lyre
 12. Regulation
 13. Voicing
 - c. Casework
 1. Veneer and wood repair
 2. Leg and Lyre supports
 3. Music desk
 4. Finish
 - a. Lacquer
 - b. Polyester

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Teacher Need from Tuner

1. Tuning. There are many temperaments out there and tuners hone in on one that suits their technique. The important factors to the teacher are simple, IN TUNE; A-440 or pitch; pleases the ear of the teacher.
I have always believed there is a simple way to look at tuning -> it is in tune or it isn't. Tuning is relative. In an "equal temperament" or "well-tempered" process, actually all of the individual notes are slightly off. This is to ensure the piano sounds good in any key signature. The best way to know if you are receiving a good tuning is to LIKE IT, and let the tuner do his thing. Criticism from another technician is irrelevant in this area. Trust your own ear.
2. Wise and prudent decisions. The teacher has studied music. Hopefully the tuner has studied piano technology. A teacher may need more than tuning, but the tuner is usually the first person sought to make a decision about work on their piano. Often the decision made to perform work on the piano (other than tuning) is a beneficial result for the teacher. Sometimes it is not. In order to determine if the work sought for the instrument will provide the result the teacher wants, it is wise to play and listen to similar work performed by the particular technician on other instruments. If the tuner has regulated or voiced or even "rebuilt" someone else's piano, go over and visit it. This is not a judgmental act. It is just a good way to determine this answer-> DO I LIKE IT?
3. ALWAYS seek a second opinion on major work. This is true with all aspects of life, why would you not use this same method on your piano? Getting at least three bids on major work is the best way to determine a decision. All technicians charge to run estimates. This is part of their livelihood, but well worth the cost to gain more knowledge.

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4. Maintenance schedule. All pianos need more than just tuning. Tuning is like changing the oil in your vehicle. It is the most common task required. Next would be voicing, third would be regulation. Last is restoration processes. The maintenance schedule should include all of these steps. Different piano manufacturers have their own recommended schedules. These are in your papers or pamphlets when you purchase the instrument. If not, they can be found through the manufacturer websites online.

The “well rounded” program I recommend is as follows:

- a. Tuning: 2 to 4 times annually depending on teaching time per day.
- b. Voicing: At least once every year.
- c. Reshaping of hammers: Every 5 years.
- d. Regulation: Every 5 years on a heavy use. Every 10 years on medium use.
- e. Rebuild: Every brand has its “lifespan”. Follow that guideline.

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Tuner Need from Teacher:

1. Customer.

Every teacher is a client to the tuner. This adds not only that one client for his income, but the referral of his work to all the teacher's students. The piano teacher is the core of the industry. If people were not learning to play the piano, no one would buy one (sales), no one would tune one (service) and the industry would stop. Be aware of the importance of being the piano teacher. You are the prime reason for the industry. The tuner needs to have enough work to provide an acceptable living. The teacher is the basic and first resource he seeks. Institutions also provide a large client base such as schools and churches. Here is a breakdown of the tuners need:

- a. Clients
- b. Consistent income generation
- c. Trust

2. Proper Maintenance.

A great deal of a teachers' success is dependent not only on the condition of the instrument at their teachers' studio, but also on the piano at the home of the student. A poor piano or a good piano in poor condition severely limit the musicality of the student and can lead to a lack of interest and musical growth. It is important for the teacher to maintain their own studio teaching pianos, but also to keep track of the maintenance of their students' pianos. This often requires visits to the homes on the part of the teacher, but can lead to a more successful development of the student. If the student does not like to practice on their instrument and feel rewarded by the experience, this can lead to a lack of interest in lessons in general. Help your students and their parents to understand the philosophy of maintenance.

Scheduling for a technician to provide complete pianos service can also be a problem. Tuning time can be calculated quite accurately, but it is more difficult to estimate how much extra time will be needed to completely service the piano. This can be frustrating to a technician who likes to keep a schedule, and can be one for the reasons why more technicians have not adopted this service plan. The advantages of this type of service are such that this problem should not be allowed to stand in the way of its implementation.

There are certain phrases used by technicians confronted by difficult problems that may be valid in specific instances, but are sometimes used in situations where they do not apply. For example, "Just play it awhile," implies that the problem will correct itself with playing. Playing will brighten a dull piano tone, but few other problems will correct

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themselves by this method. Other common excuses include “There is no such thing as a perfect piano,” or “Each piano has one bad octave.” It is probably true that there is no perfect piano that most pianos have a weak section, but these phrases are usually applied to situations where there are remedies. “I can’t hear it,” is another response which may or may not be true. Sometimes the technician’s ear is not keen enough to hear the problem, but often it is a pretense because of a lack of skill in solving the problem. It takes real tact to deal with these situations!

It is important when dealing with a technician to be specific. Such phrases as “It doesn’t feel right,” “Some notes stick,” and “It is uneven,” are vague and make it difficult for the technician to respond to quickly. A list including notes that stick, dampers that sing, notes that buzz or stick out, can greatly increase the chances of the technician finding and curing the problem in the least amount of time. Do not assume that he will find the problem just by tuning the piano.

Finally, it can be seen that a successful relationship between piano owner and piano technician may be difficult to achieve. The success of teaching, practicing, and performing is so dependent on this relationship that every piano owner should put forth every effort to achieve a successful relationship with the technician.

3. Purchasing an instrument.

Be a participant in the purchase of your students practice instruments. There are many brands available and the prices vary widely. Today, manufacturers are worldwide. The piano factories are often considered by experts in this genre:

- a. Chinese, Korean, Indonesian instruments are the entry level, least expensive pianos.
- b. Japanese, Czech, and a few Germany plants produce mid-level pianos of moderate quality.
- c. Germany, USA, Italy, and Austria are homes of the high quality, hand made instruments of choice in the concert halls. One USA manufacturer provides over 95% of the concert halls in the world.

The individual retailer often has a program for compensation to the teacher for assisting in a new purchase for a student. Take advantage of this whenever possible, it can reimburse a teacher for the time and effort put into helping maintain their students practice ability.

4. Selecting your technician.

There are 4 levels of service people in the piano realm.

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- a. Tuner. This is one who has a business just tuning pianos. These are often people who take online programs, or are even self- taught. Verify the credentials as possible.
- b. Tuner with minor repair. This is generally someone who has learned to tune, and has had enough field experience to replace broken strings, action parts, but does not go much beyond this point.
- c. Piano technician. This is a generally well taught person who can tune, repair, regulate and possibly even tone regulate, which is the most controversial part of piano repair.
- d. Master craftsman. This is an individual who is all of the above, and also has the training in rebuilding and restoration of pianos. This is usually the person who takes care of the concert halls, and the more discriminate clientele in their area. This is also the person who does no advertising and is not easily found, or easy to get an appointment with. There are fewer and fewer of these individuals every year, and there is also an opportunity for career opportunities if one can get an apprenticeship.

Mutual Benefit:

If the teacher and the tuner are communicating well the result will most often be positive. If the tuner and/or the teacher do not communicate well, the result can most surely be negative.

The best way to communicate is to speak the same language. The tuner will be using the proper names of the piano parts and repairs. The teacher often does not even know the meaning of these names. Take the time to study the basic piano specifications. Know the names of the parts and what the task is called to maintain them properly. We all had to do this when we moved into the computer age. The piano has been around for over 300 years, and people still do not do this. I have often been amazed at how little a pianist knows about the instrument. Take the time to learn.

The tuner can be much more descriptive and precise when speaking to a knowledgeable teacher. The work is then undertaken on a true and accurate course of action. The tuner will know they are providing exactly what the teacher wants, and the teacher knows they are receiving exactly what they want. This is the ultimate MUTUAL BENEFIT.

Too often the tuner has to make a decision on someone else's property because the teacher does not participate in discussing the task or intended result. This is risky and can lead to a bad

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relationship. If a teacher leaves it solely up to the tuner, then the result should please the tuner. It puts the teacher in the position of not having any say in the result. If it doesn't please the teacher the cause would be the fact that they were not part of the equation. This is NOT the fault of the tuner. The result of this situation is the tuner will have a piano he or she is happy, the teacher is of no consequence in this scenario. A basic knowledge of the instrument will keep this scenario in check!

The other side of this situation is the teacher wanting a particular result and the tuner not providing it. Again, it is most likely a lack of communication. Resolution is also back to knowing the instrument. Perhaps another cause that could lead to this result is the tuner solely providing the service to please him. There are tuners out in the market that have a severe idea of how a piano should perform. Their outlook is that it is not right until they have done it. In this scenario, the tuner will ALWAYS be happy, but often the teacher is NOT. The specifications on regulation are just guidelines by the manufacturer. The "touch" and "tone" of the instrument can be varied to please whoever is making the decision. It does not mean that it is wrong, it just makes it different. There is no right or wrong in touch and tone, it is all PREFERENCE. The owner of the instrument should be the one having their preference maintained.