

The Sooner Tuner

Oklahoma Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild, October 2001

Oklahoma Chapter Grows

Welcome to Rhonda Ringer, piano technician from Stillwater, who joined our Oklahoma Chapter at last month's meeting. Rhonda is a graduate of Oklahoma State University in Stillwater where she majored in education. She has decided that she enjoys working on pianos just as much as teaching and is focusing on her work with pianos. We are happy to have her join our group. Rhonda is our third new member for this year.



Convention Here in 2003?

The 2001 Texas State Association PTG Convention for this year is currently underway in Arlington, Texas, and Norman Cantrell RPT is representing our chapter there in offering Oklahoma City as the location for next year's convention. The proposal to submit this offer was unanimously accepted at last month's meeting. If Oklahoma becomes the host chapter we will seek to change the date to spring, hence 2003.

October Meeting

When

Thursday, October 18, 2001, 8:30 a.m.

Where

Gary Bruce's house (we will be meeting in the garage area) 1313 Cedar View. Cedar View is off of Bryant Street on the east side of Edmond. Cedar View is between 15th and 33rd Streets and directly across from Acre View Pet Hospital. You will turn west on to Cedar View and Gary's house is ½ block down. If you get lost, call his cell phone # (405) 413-8863.

Technical Presentation

Bob Scheer will be bringing a vertical action from his collection and Gary Bruce RPT will show us how to replace hammer butt springs.

Extra Feature

Vice President Bob Scheer RPT, Norman Cantrell RPT, and Don Bonds Associate will be bringing back their impressions of the TSA Convention which included an all-day seminar with Del Fandrich.

When Music Is All You Have

Walter Van Tilburg Clark wrote "The Portable Phonograph" during World War II. This is an excerpt of his story. The setting is fictional, depicting survivors in a deserted war zone who have escaped from the city and are living in bombed-out craters and mine tunnels of the battle. Doctor Jenkins lives alone in a hole above a river. This winter night he is hosting three other men.

"When I perceived what was happening," he said, "I told myself, 'It is the end. I cannot take much; I will take these. . . .'"

"You wish to hear the phonograph," he said grudgingly.

The two middle-aged men stared into the fire, unable to formulate and expose the enormity of their desire.

The young man, however, said anxiously, between suppressed coughs, "Oh, please," like an excited child.

The old man rose again in his difficult way, and went to the back of the cell. He returned and placed tenderly upon the packed floor, where the firelight might fall upon it, an old, portable phonograph in a black case. He smoothed the top with his hand. "I have been using thorns as needles," he said, "But tonight, because we have a musician among us"—he bent his head to the young man—"I will use a steel needle. There are only three left. . . . The records, though, are a different matter. Already they are very worn. I do not play them more than once a week. One, once a week, that is what I allow myself."

He had a dozen records with luxuriant gold and red seals. Even in that light the others could see that the threads of the records were becoming worn. Slowly he read out the titles, and the tremendous, dead names of the composers and the artists and the orchestras. The three worked upon the names in their minds, carefully. It was difficult to select from such a wealth what they would at once most like to remember. . . . The musician selected a Debussy nocturne. The others considered and approved.

At the first notes of the piano the listeners were startled. They stared at each other. Even the musician lifted his head in amazement, but then quickly bowed it again. . . . They were all listening deeply, without movement. . . . The individual, delectable presences swept into a sudden tide of unbearable beautiful dissonance, and then continued fully swelling and ebbing of that tide. Every sound was piercing and singularly sweet. . . . At the final, whispering disappearance [the musician] let his head fall back in agony . . . until the others were silent, and until they began to breathe again normally.

Quickly Doctor Jenkins lifted the needle off, to save it, and not to spoil the recollection with scraping. "Come again," he invited, "in a week. We will have [Gershwin's] 'New York.'"

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Statements contained in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the originating organization, the national Piano Technicians Guild.

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