

Under the Lid: The Art & Craft of the Concert Piano Technician

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- Who is a concert piano technician?
- The goals:
 1. No obstacles to musical expression
 2. A low-stress experience for the pianist
 3. A successful concert

A Proven Routine

- **1. Learn all you can about the artist and the repertoire well before the event.**
- International Piano Quarterly
- Great Pianists Speak for Themselves
- Repertoire
- **2. Tune the piano and go through *The Concert Checklist*.**
- Do this tuning and service before rehearsal if possible
- Pitch
- **3. Meet with the artist either before or after the rehearsal.**

Do:

- Be brief
- Be positive
- Ask their opinion of the piano
- If you have questions about the program or the rehearsal schedule, ask
- Let them know when you'll be back to touch up, and that they can leave a note with any special requests

Do Not:

- Shake hands unless the pianist offers first
- Give unsolicited advice
- Give solicited advice, unless it's about the piano or the hall
- Talk about yourself
- Spend more than a minute or two unless the artist is doing the talking
- **4. Listen to part of the rehearsal**
- Move around the hall, note how piano sounds different on stage than in hall.
- **5. Touch up the tuning after the rehearsal**
- No voicing changes at this time unless specifically requested by the artist
- Don't clean the keys at this time
- Don't adjust the height of the bench
- **6. Attend the Concert**
- Sit in the house, not backstage
- Make notes about the artist, the piano, the program
- **7. Greet the artist following the performance**

The Concert Checklist

1. Key Bushings/pins
2. Pedal noise
3. Damper pedal timing; damper-up-stop rail
4. Shift pedal
5. Keyframe bedding
6. Cheating jacks
7. Let-off & drop

8. Voicing
9. Backchecks
10. Repetition springs
11. Buzzes & rattles
12. A visual check
13. The bench

Tuning for Concerts

The Goal:

A solid, breathtakingly fine tuning

- Tuning for Concerts:
The piano's environment
- Stage lighting
- HVAC
- Seasonal changes
- Outdoor concerts
- Tuning for Concerts:
Tuning technique
- Analyze the existing tuning
- Tuning hammer technique
- How hard to hit?
- Testing the string
- The forearm smash
- Electronic tuning aids
- Tuning for Concerts:
The Piano's Condition

- Tuning pin tightness vs string-bearing friction
- Tuning for Concerts:
The Piano's Condition
- Tuning pin tightness vs string-bearing friction
- Dealing with high string-bearing friction
- Dealing with low string-bearing friction
- Dealing with false beats
- Tuning for Concerts:
The Art of Touching Up a Tuning
- Why touch up?
- How long do you have?
- Unisons: dead-on, or on the edge?
- Tips for faster tuning
- Most efficient order
- Avoiding a flat treble
- Quick treble tip
- Know the repertoire!

A happy story!