

Resource Guide for Exploring Your Piano from the Inside Out

Notes from 2006 MTNA Convention workshop by Mary Smith, RPT with the Piano Technicians Guild

Books (Elementary Level):

- 1) Mary Blocksma, *The Marvelous Music Machine: A Story of the Piano*; Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1984 (out of print, but used copies available at amazon.com). A history of the piano explaining how it is made, how it works, and many unusual facts about the instrument.
- 2) Sally Coveleskie, *Henry the Steinway and the Piano Recital*; Bright Sky Press, 2002. Ana is not ready to play in the piano recital, but Henry the Steinway helps her prepare.
- 3) Sally Coveleskie, *Henry the Steinway: A Star is Born*; Yorkville Press, 2003. Describes how Henry the Steinway was built, his life as a concert piano, and how he came to live in the house of a girl named Ana.
- 4) Suzanne Guy, *The Music Box: The Story of Cristofori*; Brunswick Publishing, 1998. The story of Bartolomeo Cristofori, the Italian harpsichord maker who invented the piano while working in the city of Florence about three hundred years ago.

Books (Secondary Level):

- 1) Ernest Closson, *History of the Piano*; St. Martin's Press, 1944 (out of print, used copies available on amazon.com). A detailed history of piano evolution, especially good for its action diagrams.
- 2) David Crombie, *Piano: A Photographic History of the World's Most Celebrated Instrument*; Miller Freeman, 1995. Wonderful photographs, action diagrams, and a timeline of historical development.
- 3) James R. Gaines, Ed., *The Lives of the Piano*; Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981. Chapters Three and Four offer insights into piano construction and voicing.
- 4) Ronald V. Ratcliffe, *Steinway*; Chronicle Books, 1989. History of the illustrious American piano-maker. Chapter Three has especially good photos of the factory.
- 5) John-Paul Williams, *The Piano*; Billboard Books, 2002. The section on "Anatomy of the piano" is quite clear and thorough.

Videos and DVDs:

- 1) Mason & Hamlin DVD Factory Tour, *Building the World's Finest Piano*; Burgett Inc., 2001. The factory tour portion has an especially clear description of how a piano is made. This video would be a wonderful presentation for a secondary general music class, followed by class discussion. Available from Mason & Hamlin piano dealers.
- 2) Steinway & Sons Factory Tour DVD, narrated by John Steinway. Available from Steinway piano dealers.
- 3) Martha Stewart Visits the Steinway Factory (VHS). Available from Steinway piano dealers.

Websites:

- 1) ptg.org – Piano Technicians Guild website is home to Piano Learning Center, which contains Piano Parts Word Searches, Elementary Lesson Plan on *The Music Box*, and much more.
- 2) musicplay.com – Demonstration of how piano actions function (link from ptg.org).