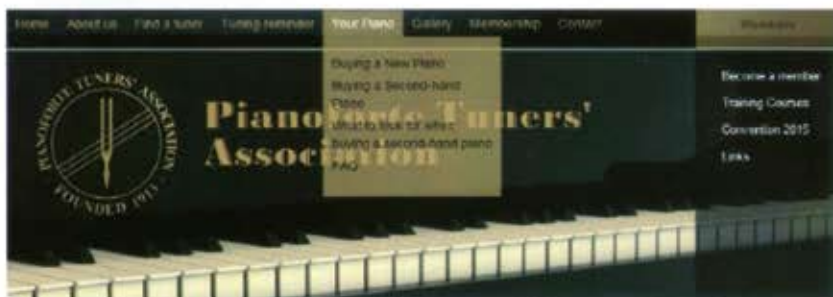




February 2015

# PTA News



## Find a PTA Piano Tuner

This site will enable you to...

- Locate a Piano Tuner who is a Member of the Association
- Find out how to become a Member of the Pianoforte Tuners' Association
- Discover valuable information about pianos, such as:
  - What to look out for when buying a piano
  - How often your piano should be tuned or serviced
  - How you should care for your piano

## Become a PTA Member

Benefits of PTA Membership include:

- £5,000,000 public liability and £5,000,000 product liability insurance
- Living in the 'Find a Tuner' section of this website
- Use PTA letters after your name and the PTA Logo in advertising
- Replacement toolkit should yours be stolen from your car
- Receive European magazine four times a year

The Pianoforte Tuners' Association is an active member of Eurpiano which is a Union of European Piano Builders Associations and a Union of European Piano Tuners & Technicians Associations.



The new PTA Website goes live



Three Counties Hotel, Hereford for the 2015 Convention

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The next deadline for PTA News is: Friday 20th March 2015.

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## CREATING A GOOD SOUND WITH THE PIANO FAIRY

BY ERI ONAMI

I am originally from Japan. I discovered my purpose in life and was guided by the Piano Fairy to live in Hong Kong. My life has been an amazing journey here.



I live in Discovery Bay which is situated on the east coast of Lantau Island in Hong Kong. There are green spaces everywhere and a noticeable lack of noise. The place is far removed from the hectic bustle of Hong Kong Island and is particularly pet friendly, so I am quite enjoying my life here with my cat Karin who is my boss.



Hong Kong, being an international city, has a blend of both Asian and Western cultures. Many expatriates living here bring their beloved pianos from their own countries. Many people of various nationalities are also living in my area. I am very glad to see pianos from Europe quite often.

The weather in Hong Kong is a subtropical climate. There is a humidity level around 80-90% even on sunny days, and the weather forecasters issue a fire warning when the humidity drops to around 80% ---!!! Yes. It's still too high for a piano, many musical instruments and oil paintings as well. It's very difficult to keep all the musical instruments in good condition without humidity control here.

In this situation, most of the piano makers recommend installing a piano heater.



Even with a piano heater, we still need to use dehumidifiers to maintain the room condition. When I find the movement of the dampers is slow, particularly in grand pianos made in Europe, I turn on the dehumidifier. When the humidity level drops to below 65%, which takes about 30 minutes, then the movement of dampers returns back to normal without adjustment.

We need to use air-conditioning during most of the summer. This has a dehumidifying effect but since it is often turned off at night then we have to pay

attention to the summer-type condensation problems such as rusted metal parts, even on a brand new piano!

This weather makes it difficult for owners to maintain their pianos in a stable condition. I recommend maintaining the piano three times a year. Basic maintenance is required each season to check the action and do minor regulation, such as tighten all the action screws including butt plate screws, checking movement of the action flanges and keyboards. Sometimes I find hammer shank centre pins falling out from the butt flanges, twisted hammer shanks, etc.

Each piano has a unique tone and colour. Even the same model will sound different in varying room conditions and with different pianists so I arrange to spend around two hours with my client.



When a grand piano has arrived at a client's home from overseas, the action of the piano is locked. I need to check whether any damage has occurred during the move in order to assist the client with any insurance claim. I make a maintenance plan according to their residence period in Hong Kong. E.g. if they plan to return to their home country a few years later, I suggest that the room condition is kept stable as much possible rather than doing regulation to suit this climate. If I make major adjustments to suit this climate, then when they return home to a drier climate there will be too much play on the keyboard and flanges. It is better to make adjustments to the room environment rather than major piano adjustments. Of course if they are unable to maintain the room environment then I have to adjust the piano. I also advise about the positioning of the piano in their room using sound proofing material from Japan.

I clean inside the piano with a vacuum cleaner before tuning. This little thing helps to make the sound much clearer and the piano is happy. I sometimes find interesting things inside – like a headless dinosaur! The clients kindly allow me to use their vacuum cleaner. I'm now an expert about vacuum cleaners and my favourite is Dyson!

I will listen and speak to the piano during tuning. If you find I mutter to myself, it's me communicating with the Piano Fairy.

Little furry friends of the Piano Fairy are often around me during my service. They are very happy to see me and often just wait beside the piano to enjoy the sound. Do you know why? The sound is vibration and energy. The Piano Fairy told me that animals are very pure beings so that they naturally recognize pure energy and a good sound. The clear and good sound also affects the flow of energy in the room, and it will purify the room and reduce the energy level, as well as giving a healing environment to all of us which is beneficial. I think this is one of the reasons why acoustic musical instruments continue to be loved by many people for more than 200 years. I enjoy taking photos of pets with the piano very much.



The cat is Mr Ming.  
The dog is my  
apprentice, Charlie.



When I was child, I was wondering what the black box inside a piano was ....??? So, I am trying to show my clients, particularly children, the inside of the piano. I let them touch the action and keyboard. They are so excited and it shows in their eyes! It's good opportunity to explain about the piano to the client so that they understand how the periodic maintenance and the room environment are important for the piano.



Children are also happy to see me always and they play the piano for me after tuning.

In Hong Kong, there are many aspects of British culture I am enjoying. I enjoy singing every Sunday at the St John's Anglican Cathedral with the Cathedral Choir. It is a fantastic experience for me to sing in such a historic building and with a choir of a high standard. Last year we celebrated the 165th Anniversary of the founding of the Cathedral with a special concert. There are many guest Choirs visiting us from England and we sometimes sing together. The Choir of Queen's College, Oxford visited in September 2014. How wonderful to have such a special experience in Asia!!

I like England very much. My favourite English things are English tea with carrot cake, Victoria sponge, scones, Harry Potter, Peter Rabbit, beautiful English gardens and more!

My heart is full of gratitude to all PTA Members and particularly the committee who prepare such great seminars at the Convention every year. I look forward to going to England each year to attend the Convention. It is my annual holiday and a good chance to gain more skills and meet fellow tuners.

Thank you so much for giving me an opportunity to write the article.

I love creating a sound of the piano with my heart, that is my joy and happiness. I am very happy to meet my clients with their pets and talk about music.

I am sending a message to people that music is wonderful and my profession as a piano technician has brought great joy to my life.

Creating a good sound to make harmony with your heart.



Three Counties Hotel, interior views

