



Photo 287: The piano ready for new bass strings. The gorgeous colors of the piano really start to look wonderful at this point.



Photo 288: The bass strings as they come from Schaff Piano Supply.

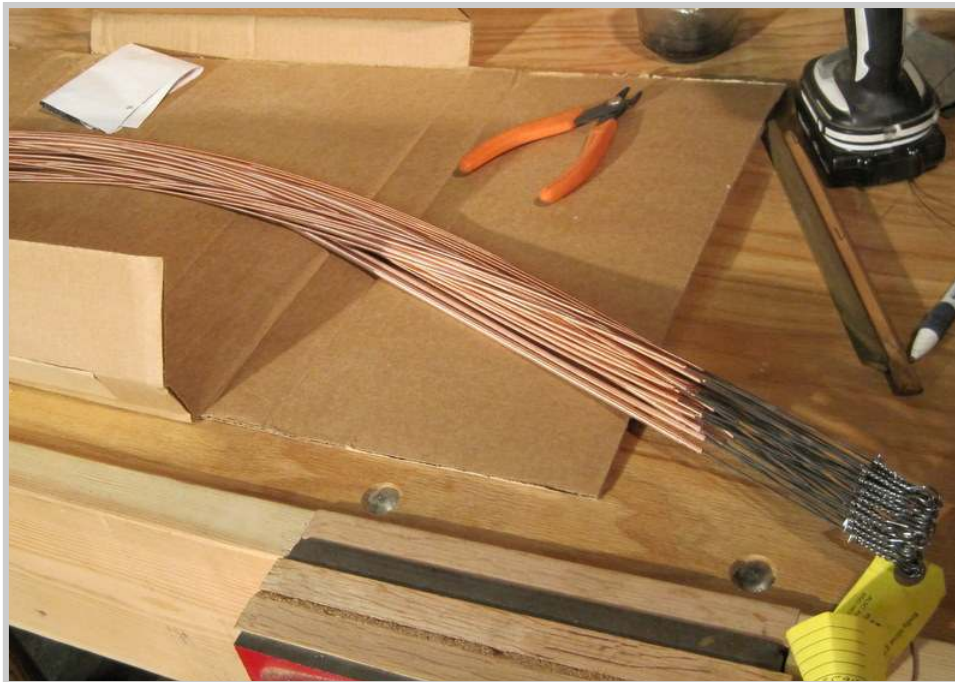


Photo 289: The duplicate bass strings, unwrapped and ready to install.



Photo 290: With tools laid out, the first string is put in.

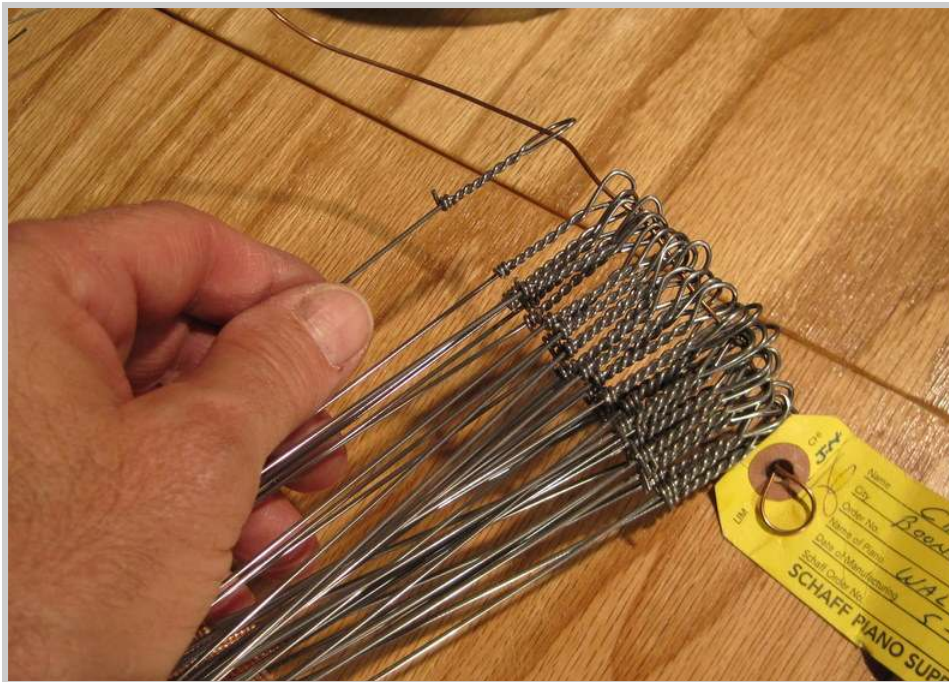


Photo 291: Bass strings come looped to a copper wire. They are drawn off the wire from smallest diameter to largest. The pitch of a note is determined by the length, diameter and tension of the string. Given the same tension, the heavier and longer the string, the lower the tone. Bass strings are loaded with a copper winding, which adds to the mass without the excessive stiffness that a solid steel wire would have.



Photo 292: The installation of the bass strings is simpler than the treble strings in that each string is a single entity. The string is simply anchored to the hitchpin, instead of being looped around it as are the treble strings.



Photo 293: The string is stretched tightly across the upper bridge pin, measured at 3 1/4" from the center of the tuning pin hole, and cut.



Photo 294: The end of the wire is bent with a 90 degree becket.



Photo 295: Using the tuning pin crank, a coil is made with three turns.



Photo 296: Unlike treble string, the copper wound bass strings are installed with a twist. Before the pin is inserted into the pin hole, the wire is turned one revolution in the direction of the winding.

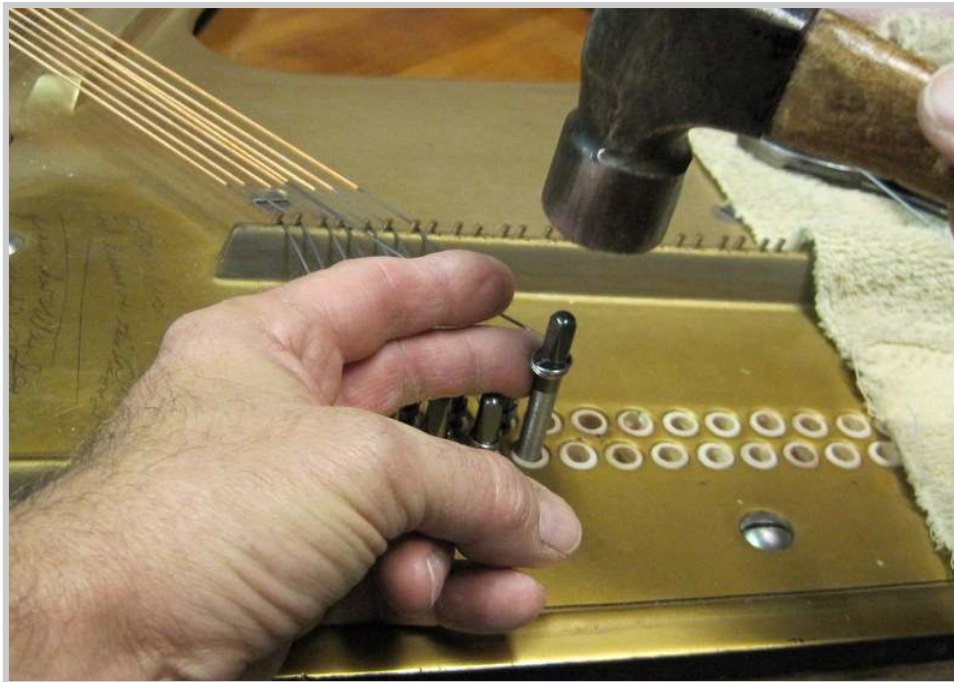


Photo 297: While holding the pin upright, it is gently tapped with the hammer to start it in the hole.



Photo 298: Using the pin punch with depth gauge, the pin is pounded in nearly all the way to the stopping point.

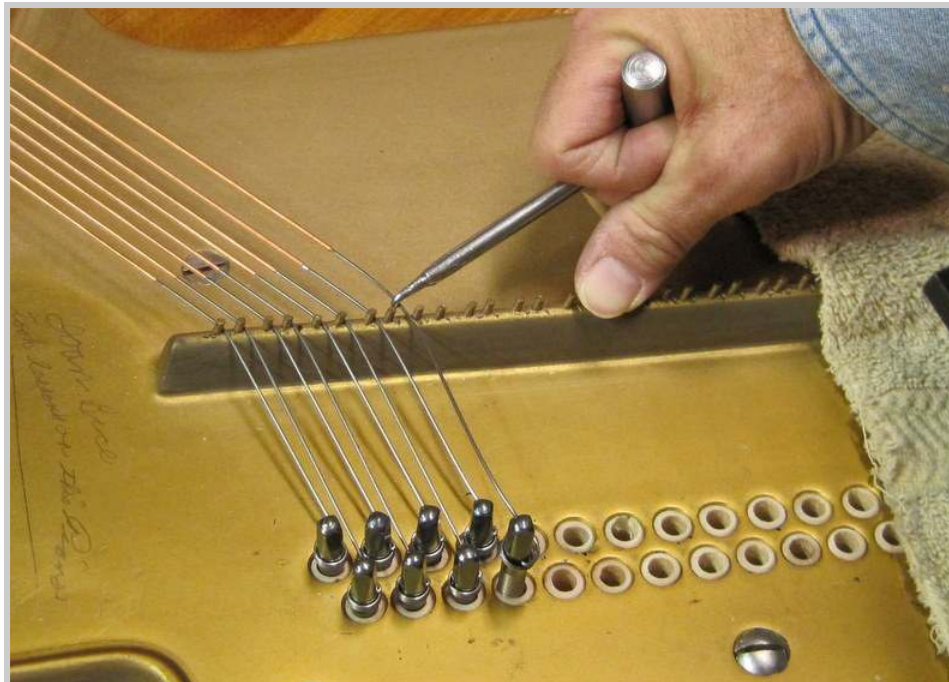


Photo 299: A string hook is used to pull the string along side the correct upper bass bridge pin.



Photo 300: While turning the pin with the tuning hammer, the coil is tightened using the string hook.



Photo 301: Completed coils.



Photo 302: An interesting perspective on things.



Photo 303: The keybed, which had been hung up and aired out all summer, and then was covered with baking soda for an addition month, is ready to clean and install back in the piano.



Photo 304: The baking soda, with all remaining mouse odor, is sucked up, clogging the filter of the shop vac.



Photo 305: The keybed, with 99.9% of the odor removed. A shellac / polyurethane sealer will complete the process.



Photo 306: The toerail is returned into position.



Photo 307: Followed by the floor of the piano. . .



Photo 308: . . . and the keybed.



Photo 309: New sockets for the new casters are added in.. . .



Photo 310: . . . followed by the casters. These double-wheeled Rubberex casters work soooo much better than the old steel wheels.



Photo 311: The old foot pedals were missing a right hand pedal. At some point in the past, the middle pedal had been shifted over to the sustain pedal position, leaving the slot for the middle pedal vacant (see insert). Fortunately, I have a number of vintage pedal sets rescued from pianos being discarded. The pedals on the left were made with the same important measurements, probably by the same factory. The only difference is in the ornamentation on the toes of the pedals.

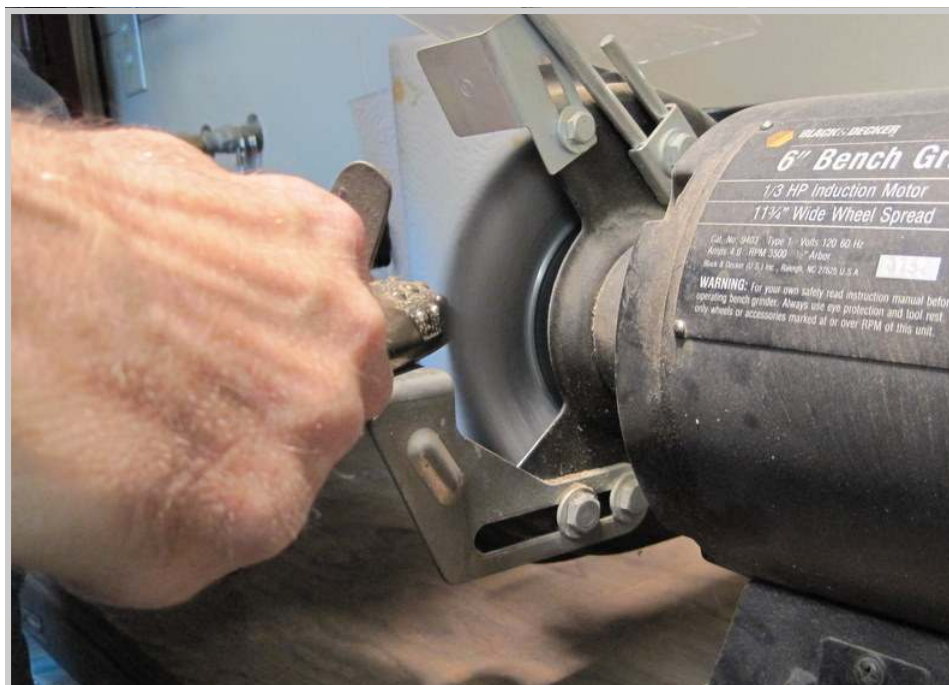


Photo 312: Each pedal was buffed to a sheen on the wire wheel.



Photo 313: The newly polished nickel in comparison with the piano's original pedal.



Photo 314: The "new" set of pedals gleams after being polished and sprayed with protective lacquer.



Photo 315: The old pedal hardware, before and after time on the wire wheel.

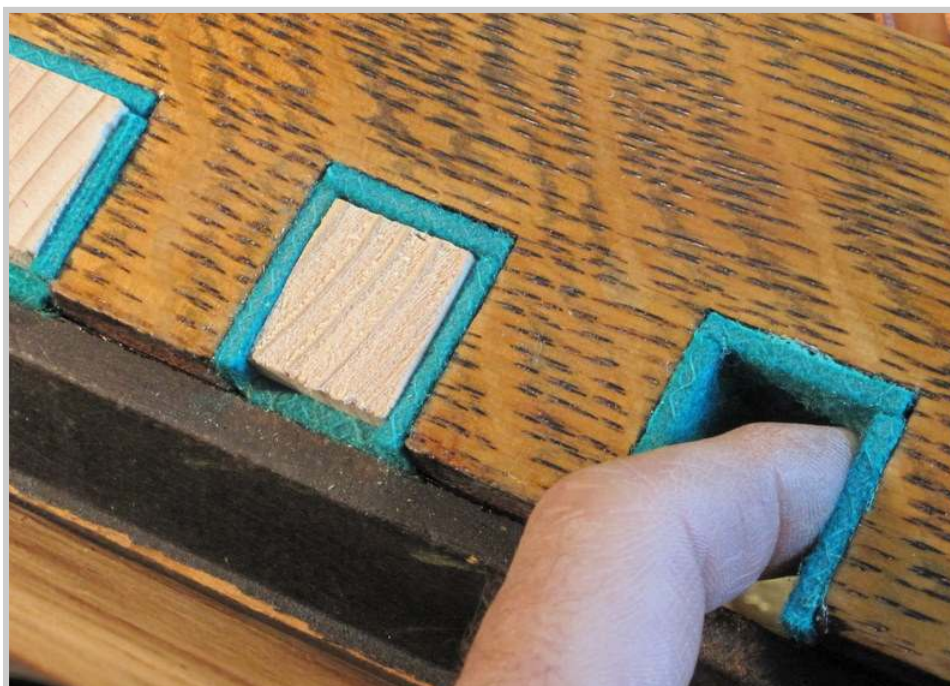


Photo 316: The pedal slots on the toe rail are refelted. The wooden forms ensure proper adhesion.



Photo 317: The first coat of shellac sealer is applied to the keybed.



Photo 318: The pedals with polished hardware are attached to the floor of the piano. The middle pedal is a dummy pedal, but is equipped with a coil spring to give it lifelike movement. The leaf spring to the left remains to be taken off, polished, and returned to the piano.



Photo 319: Finally, after having been flat on its back for the last several months. the piano is put back on its feet. It may have been my imagination, but I think I could hear an, "Ahhhh!" Or maybe, it was just the wind outside. Who knows? Music and nature, I always have believed, go hand in hand.



Photo 320: Things are starting to come together at last. This is the part of the job where it no longer seems like work. It's just fun.

Restoration Project Photo Essay



Next up: The keyframe receives a transformation (above), new hammers and hammer butt springs are installed. The whippens are refelted and put back in the action. Keys are recovered and rebushed. The piano begins to look and feel more and more like it once did in the showroom at the turn of the previous century. Exciting stuff, in my humble opinion.

Arthur C. Clarke, in a story titled "The Sentinel" once wrote, "The act of destruction is infinitely easier than the act of creation." I think about that statement quite often as I work in the shop on one of these old instruments, because it's really true. It's so much easier for those who tend to dismiss an older instrument out of hand, because it's too much work to bring back to life. Restoration work, I would be the first to admit, is very labor-intensive and very time consuming.

I would like to add a corollary to the above statement, however, that I believe is equally true. "The act of creation is infinitely more satisfying than the act of destruction." To anyone who has never had the pleasure of doing a job where at the end of the day one just stands back for five or ten minutes and contemplates the work that's been accomplished, you are truly missing out. This type of work is truly a joy.