

The Piano Owner's Heads-Up Guide to Important Piano Maintenance

Focus On: Refinishing the Repaired Soundboard



Information provided courtesy of:
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Once a soundboard has been successfully shimmed, it is important to refinish the board for both appearance and durability. A new finish will not only add beauty to the finished product, but it will prevent the soundboard from taking on and losing moisture content excessively when swings in humidity occur. This in turn will give the piano a more stable tuning.

After the soundboard has been stripped of its old finish, and the shims (and the board itself) sanded smooth with a fine grit of sandpaper, shellac is applied (above photo). Three successive coats are brushed on and buffed out between coats.

When the final coat has been allowed to cure, it is polished with deluxing compound (photo at top of next column). This gives the soundboard a beautiful sheen that is very durable and resistant to moisture. With the protective coating of a new finish, newly installed shims are protected as well, giving the soundboard a new lease on life.



In addition to the soundboard, bridges are refinished as well (photo below). The sides and notches of the bridges are stripped and sanded, then shellacked. The top surface of the bridges (which must be slippery for strings to slide over easily) is coated with DAG, a product specifically designed for surfaces which must be friction-free.

With the soundboard and bridges put back into good condition, the piano will be ready for the reinstallation of the cast iron plate along with repinning and restringing.



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