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

Focus On: Keypin Replacement

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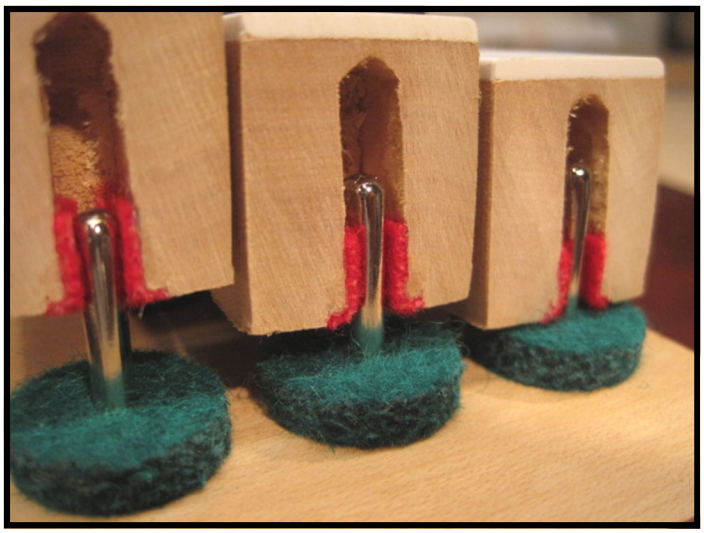
One essential element for the effective operation of the keys in a piano is that the keypins must be smooth to the point of being slippery. Each note has two of these keypins, the front rail pin and the balance rail pin, that keep the key aligned in its proper position. When a note is played and the key rocks forward, the felt bushings of the key make positive contact with the keypins to prevent any wobbly side-to-side movement. Any corrosion on the surface of either keypin will result in unwanted resistance, and will produce excessive wear and tear on the bushings. **The original keypins in your piano have become corroded to the point where replacement is now highly recommended.**

If a piano technician were to simply grind off the corrosion, the slippery nickel plating would be gone, and the dimensions of the keypins would be changed. Replacement therefore is the only practical option.

Corroded keypins *Replacement keypins*

The gritty surface of corroded keypins such as those on above left act as an abrasive and quickly chew into the felt bushings as the piano is used, leaving keys which have discernable wobble. With the replacement keypins on the right, there is a nearly imperceptible resistance on the keys but an absolutely smooth movement up and down with no wiggle perceived to the right or left.



Smooth, polished keypins and good quality bushing felt (the red felts on the insides of the mortises, shown in the above cut-away photo) are essential for this system to work efficiently. By carefully removing the old pins and replace them with a new set of high-quality keypins, the touch of your piano will be improved.

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