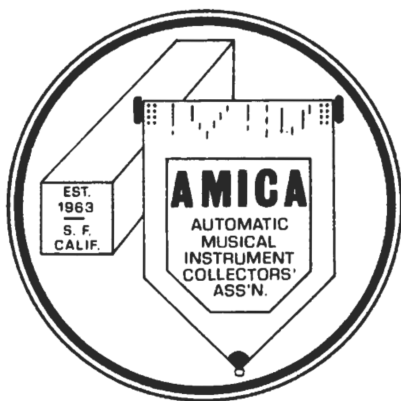


Technicalities



COMPILED BY MEL LUCHETTI

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Greatest Annual Output **STANDARD PLAYER ACTION** *Standard the World Over*

PNEUMATIC REBUILDING

by Jim Fleagle

"My piano plays good now - just got finished recovering a bunch of pneumatics and completely retubed it."
 "What about the stack?" I asked. "Well," was the reply, "I took it out and looked at it - and it seemed OK, so I put it back in again."

Does that sound familiar? We really all know that a good tight stack is so important. I'm confident that until the stack is rebuilt no reproducer will perform as well as it can and should. There are wonderful things in the rolls waiting to be heard. I have several friends that waited years to rebuild their stack and now wonder why they put it off so long. If you were a bug and could look at the stack from the inside, there would be no hesitation I'm sure. Agreed - a stack can be a frightening looking thing to the novice and it does take considerable time to overhaul it. However, once you've committed yourself it becomes an interesting project, a relatively simple mechanical job, and I assure you that the results are rewarding and a source of great satisfaction. Afterwards you'll be an expert and can argue with the rest of us experts.

As you experts have surmised - this article is addressed to the neophyte and if it is at all helpful, then it is worth the writing. However, please read on as I have a goody in here for you.

Before pulling tubes and removing mechanisms I recommend taking photos of it as a whole and of individual close up shots of particularly puzzling areas. Make drawings and notes to yourself to aid in reassembly - for instance - the precise time to reglue the riser flanges to the pneumatics. I like to put masking tape bands on old twill hoses before disassembly - number them as X-2, A-3 etc. and note numbers on your hand drawn schematic. These will later help determine length to cut new hose as well as location. With this information in your keeping - you'll begin to feel that the road back won't be half bad, and there is no need of worrying about trying to remember.

Taking the stack apart is obvious but let me mention that a pair of pliers that have parallel opening jaws is great for popping off riser flanges from pneumatics. These are perfect for holding rectangular objects with a firm grip without scuffing and chewing. I dislike the chisel method of removing pneumatics from the horizontal stack boards. The best way for me is to force or push them off by hand. Grit your teeth and push hard. They'll snap like a shot and off they are - usually coming off clean - or with splinters attached to board.

These pneumatics can be reglued splinter to splinter cavity and you'll enjoy the precise location they afford. Any big chunks left intact on the board I remove with putty knife and glue to pneumatic - particularly if the chunk leaves a gaping hole at the cloth line. Occasionally boards break off so badly that they must be replaced. This is no chore, however it has been my experience that very few break this way.

Glues are seldom compatible so I feel it a must to sand off the old glue - lightly - but definitely down to clean wood. Do all the sides including hinge end. Don't worry about the hinges - you'll build better ones. Pull off the old cloth first - because it usually clogs up the sandpaper. A stationary belt sander is needed. Sears has a suitable one - or maybe a friend - Tool Rental Shop - or if need be - find a woodworking shop with an obliging foreman who will allow off hour use for a slight fee. It's only a 2 hour job and that includes 3 smoke breaks. Important - I found out the hard way.

With a hand sanding block break all sharp or square edges and corners on inside where cloth will be in contact - especially old hot glue barnacles and clingers. I also like to very slightly round the 4 corners of each board.

Nelson Barden says, "Numalon is here to stay." Oh, how I agree, it is terrific and incomparable. Use it for covering and for new hinges. Sometimes old hinges come off easy and sometimes they are buggers. In any event you must also remove the old glue underneath. I find the simple way to do this is to use a Bernz torch to lightly singe the area - not long enough or hot enough to burn wood - but a fraction of a second is all that is needed to turn animal glue into bubbly powder that is easy to sand or scrape. You'll soon get the hang of it and be looking for more things to put the torch to. Ha!-Ha!-Ha! [An old clothes iron set on "Linen" applied to boards also works - ed.]

Next make a row of about 20 pairs of clean boards with hinge ends butting. Apply heavy coat of Goodyear Pliobond - Organ Supply. Cut a long strip of numalon 3/4" wide - apply generous coat of pliobond to nylon side and let dry. Wasted time - you say. Well, you need a break and some fresh air. Go play ball with your dog. He'll love it. My boy Wagner does.

When dry the strip can be rolled up on anything convenient to resemble a roll of masking tape or electrical tape and is then easy to handle. Activate the cement