

CLAIRE TREVOR SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

POLICY FOR PIANO PERFORMANCE EXTENDED TECHNIQUES

This is a guide for guest artists, faculty, and students who plan programs using extended techniques on piano. It is based on the guide prepared by members of the College and University Technicians Committee of the Piano Technicians Guild, in consultation with various pianists and composers. Please read the document, print, sign, and return it to:

Alex Golden, Associate Production Manager, Music CTSA
Claire Trevor School of the Arts, Department of Music
University of California, Irvine
Irvine, CA 92697

1. Advance Notice

If you plan to prepare the piano or use extended techniques, please **send your complete repertoire list and plans for preparing the piano to both Sue Babcock**, Piano Technician, sebabcock@icloud.com, and **Alex Golden**, CTSA Associate Production Manager, golden1@uci.edu, at least three weeks in advance of your performance. If your performance and preparations fall within the guidelines below and are approved by our piano technician, the associate production manager will inform you that you may use the small Kawai grand, currently in Winifred Smith Hall.

2. Structural Changes

The piano technician must approve all structural changes to any piano. This includes removing the lid or other case parts and attaching anything to strings or soundboard to modify the sound.

3. Touching the strings

If the strings will be touched by fingers or hands (harmonics, plucking, rubbing), hands should be washed immediately prior to use. Thin gloves should be worn for extensive contact with the strings.

4. Marking inside the piano

Post-It strips/flags may be used to mark dampers, agraffes or strings. To mark a string node, a thin (1/8") strip of the adhesive part of a sticky note can be worked around the string and stuck to itself, or use a tiny pinch of Bostik Blu-Tack on strings. Never use masking tape, small dot labels, or any other adhesive that may leave a residue, and never use a writing instrument (chalk, pencils, markers, etc.) on anything but the Post-Its. The performer is responsible for removing Post-Its and Blu-Tack immediately after any performance.

5. Dampers

Care must always be used when touching dampers as they are easily damaged or displaced. Post-It strips/flags are the only materials to be used for marking dampers. Never use a writing instrument (chalk, pencils, markers, etc.) or small dot labels. The performer is responsible for removing Post-Its immediately after any performance.

6. Malleable substances on strings

Bostik Blu-Tack, Scotch Removable Mounting Putty, or similar products are the only malleable substances acceptable for direct application to the strings. The piano technician must approve all substances other than Bostik Blu-Tack or Scotch Removable Mounting Putty.

7. Screws, Bolts, and other items inserted between strings

The piano technician must approve plans for inserting items in the strings in advance of the performance. Notify the piano technician at least three weeks in advance so that, if possible, she can supervise the preparation.

In some cases, literature calls for the insertion of screws or other items between piano strings. Proper protocol must be followed when inserting screws. Depress the damper pedal while inserting anything between the strings. Only use new screws and bolts or those in like-new condition in the piano. Materials showing signs of rust or corrosion must never be inserted between the strings. Screws, bolts, and felt should be carefully selected to fit into the gap between the strings with minimum spreading. Screws and bolts must be twisted rather than pushed in. Go slowly, taking great care not to let any object come in contact with the soundboard. Only screws and bolts made from plastic or similar materials softer than metal may be used when inserting between wound strings.

8. Striking and plucking strings

Strings may be struck or plucked with fingers or a guitar pick. Other devices must always be of a material that will not mar or scratch strings. On steel strings only materials that are softer than the steel string, such as brass or aluminum, may be used. Copper wound bass strings must be struck or plucked with a material softer than copper (copper is much softer than steel). Acceptable materials might include wood, plastic, rubber and felt mallets. The general rule is that the material should not be harder than the strings. Never use a steel chisel or screwdriver on piano strings (a substitute may be made from brass stock – we can arrange for you to borrow a brass chisel with advance notice). The piano technician can help you select materials that will not damage the piano.

9. Clean up

The pianist should clean up after their performance and leave the piano in the same condition it was found. To remove screws and bolts, reverse the process of inserting them: depress the damper pedal and twist out anything that has been twisted in rather than pulling it out. Also depress the damper pedal to remove felt. Nothing should be left in the piano. Do not, however, risk damaging the piano for the sake of clean up. If you need assistance removing something please contact the piano technician.

10. Damage avoidance using sound and prudent judgment

Most damage to pianos can easily be avoided by using good judgment and knowledge of the piano.

Please consult with the piano technician before using extended techniques. If you are composing a piece using extended techniques, consult with the piano technician to ascertain what is safe. Usually alternatives to potentially destructive methods can be found to satisfy both the performer and this policy.

I have read and agree to abide by these guidelines.

name

date