

Physics of the Piano

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Why would it take two people to review a book with a total page count of 170 (including References and Index)? Simple: This is a book written by a physicist with musical abilities and a passion to share his enthusiasm for the instrument, so we thought it would be fair to have the work reviewed by both a scientist with limited musical abilities (none pertaining to the piano) and by a non-scientist with excellent musical abilities and skills in classical piano.

Both of us agreed that a nice thing about the book is the table of contents, which is very detailed and user friendly. The chapter titles are short and descriptive and they are extremely well-organized. This allows the non-professional to peruse the material in a non-linear manner, picking and choosing according to one's interests. The subdivisions within the chapters are also useful in selecting according to one's curiosity and level.

The chapters too are short but well-illustrated with pictures, graphs and diagrams to facilitate comprehension. Someone with an extensive background in acoustics may choose to gloss-over the most basic material; however, this would be a mistake. The author has a keen sense for explaining with great clarity and both reviewers

appreciated the clean and effective sentences. The definitions of terms and index also aid in making the book more approachable along with the diagrams and photos which facilitate comprehension, especially for the lay person who wishes to become more knowledgeable.

The “non-scientist” focused more on the introductory chapters (“Introduction” and “A Brief Introduction to Waves and Sound”) and on those dedicated to the history of piano (“Why was the Piano Invented?” and “Evolution of the Piano”). The “scientist” found himself fascinated with the mechanics associated with a piano (“Hitting strings with a Hammer” and “Connecting the Strings to the Soundboard”) and both of us read Chapter 11 (“The Magic of Steinway”) with great interest.

The author's passion for the piano is evident on every page; it is abundantly clear that writing this book was a labor of love and the reader will not be disappointed.

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