

- Top →
- Tuning Pins →
- Wrest Plank →
- Back Brace →
- Iron Frame →
- Steel Wire Strings →
- Music Roll Bearing →
- Felt Hammer →
- Tracker Box Sliding Panel →
- Automatic Tracking Device →
- Tracker Ports or Openings →
- Sustaining Pedal Valve Lever →
- Take-up Spool →
- Tracker Tubing →
- Sustaining Pedal Lever →
- Treble Soft Lever →
- Bass Soft Lever →
- Hinged Lever Cover →
- Valve →
- Vacuum Chest →
- Adjustable Striking Pitman →
- Key Lever →
- Key Balance Rail →
- Striking Pneumatic →
- Pedal Opening Door →
- Reservoir →
- Feeder Bellows →
- Foot Pedal →



# REBUILDING THE PLAYER PIANO

by LARRY GIVENS

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## INTRODUCTION

TIME WAS in the United States when no home could really be considered complete without its player piano. From the early years of the Twentieth Century to the closing days of the Roaring Twenties, the player piano reigned supreme as the outstanding medium of home entertainment. Many were the parents who scrimped and saved so that their children might know of the finer things in life by having one of these marvelous instruments at their command.

Of course they were really family affairs. The old folks could pedal away at "Annie Laurie" and "Silver Threads Among the Gold" to their hearts content, after the youngsters had had their turn at the William Tell Overture and Paderewski's Minuet. Of course the younger set probably preferred to spend its time with rolls like the "Dill Pickle Rag" and "Moonlight and Roses," but only after they had absorbed their daily quota of culture would mother be likely to permit of such mundane listening.

During World War I when, as in all periods of crisis, entertainment of any variety was at a premium, the player piano



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neatly filled this bill by providing an easy means for wafting into the air such tunes as "Roses of Picardy," "My Buddy," "Over There," and "Goodbye Broadway, Hello France." And players helped entertain the boys, too—one well known battleship had six of them on board! And when the boys came back, every player owner felt obliged to rush to his music store for the latest release of "How You Gonna Keep 'em Down on the Farm—(after they've seen Patee?)"

The player was of course not limited to the homes of America. Enterprising men learned early in the game that the public would part with its nickels and dimes to hear these machines located in places of public entertainment, and thus a whole new industry—the nickelodeon business—was formed. No ice cream parlor, pool room, or speakeasy was worthy of public patronage unless standing there, replete with its gaudy stained glass front and repertory of latest hits of the day, was the coin operated piano or orchestration waiting to grab the customers' nickels.

In the homes of the wealthy, for they were the only people who could afford their rather astronomical price tags, were the reproducing pianos—the players capable of exact re-enactment of the performances of the great artists of the day. At a time when the phonograph was barely capable of capturing and playing back squeaks and squawks, the reproducing piano was able to bring into the home magnificent performances from an actual instrument, right there on the spot, exactly as the artist intended.

With the tremendous advances in technology in recent years, this situation has of course changed. Modern high-fidelity electronic equipment has permitted every home to be a veritable music hall of the highest character. But for

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just plain fun, coupled with the nostalgia which Americans in their leisure hours are so fond of seeking, the player piano is simply unequalled.

This book is the first significant attempt to provide the necessary information to bring these fascinating instruments back to life. Mr. Givens is a real expert in these matters, and readers can rest assured that the instructions contained herein are based on much experience. The Vestal Press has taken the lead in re-introducing the player to the American public through its book "Player Piano Treasury" and various catalog reprints, and this volume is a truly significant addition to its publications in this field.

Harvey N. Roehl

April, 1963

