

Presentation for Pianists

With Dr. Matthew Bachman

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- A lot of the piano is based on theories presented by Pythagoras
- The modern piano is a descendant of the harpsichord
- Harpsichords have 4, 8, and 16 stops - these numbers are halves of each other because when dividing strings in half the pitch is raised by an octave
- The main difference between a harpsichord and a piano is that the harpsichord plucks the string while the piano hammers the string
- Beethoven was a major force of developing the frame of the piano because his music often pushed the limits of what the piano could do
- The first pianos had entirely wooden frames, and the modern piano has mostly metal frames (and there's 20 tons of force being exerted on those frames!)
- The height of the dampers on the piano determines how much the note and its corresponding overtone series can resonate
- Steinway pianos spend several months 'curing' - placing the wood in a special room to dry down its moisture content to 6%
- Placing humidifiers and dehumidifiers in the piano protects the soundboard from aging prematurely
- Steinways make their entire frame out of hard rock maple, because it's incredibly strong, and the soundboard is Sitka spruce
- When learning a new piano: learn how long the sustain is in the different registers of the instrument and how even the piano is from note to note