

## Interview with Yury Livshetz, the proprietor

### *- Tell me, Yury, how did you choose your career?*

- My mother and my aunt were both pianists. They often invited student singers to our house for rehearsals. Their shrieking voices often woke me up when I was just a toddler. I believe that this early impression determined my life choice.

### *- What is your background?*

- I graduated from the famous Moscow Ippolitov - Ivanov Music School and Sverdlovsk Conservatory. From the age of sixteen I was working as an accompanist.

### *- How did it happen that you became a tuner and a piano rebuilder?*

- I was taking a course of piano repair and tuning while studying in the Ippolitov - Ivanov Music School. I successfully passed all the tests just to forget all I have learned. Several years after, I happened to work with the Kalinin Philharmonic. Pianos in there were very worn, and had to be repaired before each performance. Soon I had completely transformed myself into piano rebuilder to earn living.

### *- Where did you go from there?*

- My next life stop was in Moscow, in the famous Moscow Conservatory. Working as a piano tuner there I gained invaluable experience in "troubleshooting". I learned how to repair sticking key quickly, how to change a broken string in the three minutes that were left before performance. In Russia, piano tuners never could replace worn or broken parts because spare parts were not available; we had to restore old ones.

### *- It must be far easier for you in here where there is no problem with part supply?*

- Of course, here I have a choice to repair a part or to replace it. To replace is easier but often a piano with the original part sounds better. Being properly repaired, the original parts can give a new life to an old instrument.

### *- You have spent half of your career in Russia. Do you prefer European instruments to American ones?*

- In Russia I was dealing primarily with German instruments. Up till now I can't really tell which pianos are better, German or American. Both instruments, made at the beginning of 20-th century, have an excellent design and sound. By the way, pianos made at the end of the 19-th century are even better. This is what I like doing the best, to revive these old hopelessly destroyed instruments.

### *- I know you have sponsored numerous performances at your shop. Can you tell us a little bit more about that?*

- The idea of the concert series came to me when one of my friends, piano teacher, asked to use my shop for a student recital. After that a few more pianists came to me and asked for a performance opportunity. We talked with Faina Briansky and came up with the name for the concert series; "Tradition Reborn". First concert of the series was a piano duet with two prominent Boston musicians Yakov Yakoulov and Igor Tkachenko. The concert was very successful; people still remember this outstanding performance and ask me when this duet will perform again. Since that concert we have had a lot of first-rate music - Rachmaninov, List, Shostakovich, etc. The concerts are free but there is a catch at the end of each concert — my solo with a hat asking for donations. All money goes to musicians, but I also have my reward, excellent music and a good excuse to clean up my shop.