

INTERVIEW WITH YURY LIVSHETZ, the owner

- 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 have often waked 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 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 tests just to forget all I have learned. Several years after I happened to work in Kalinin Philharmonic. Pianos in there were highly depreciated, and had to be repaired before each performance. Soon I have completely turned myself into piano rebuilder to earn living.

- Where did you go from there?

- My next life stop was in Moscow, in famous Moscow Conservatory. Working as a piano tuner in there I have gained invaluable experience in what we are calling here “troubleshooting”. I learned how to repair the sticking key quickly, how to change torn string in three minutes that were left before performance, etc. 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 part or to replace it. To replace is easier but often a piano with an original part sounds better. Being properly repaired the original parts can give a new life to the 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 until 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 most - 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 the 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 of 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.