PIANO TUNERS OVER THE CENTURIES

Elaine Quigley

In the winter journal readers were introduced to Gill Green, a piano tuner of some 15 years' experience and a lady who has studied the subject to the extent that she has gained an M.A. in Musicology. As a result of her fascination with piano tuning history, she has collected samples of invoices that cover a couple of centuries and she has provided samples starting at 1841 for this journal. As discussed in the last journal, they all display the crispness of stroke that betokens the writer with sharpness of hearing and aural awareness.

Cispness throughout - light pressure, without workble. Clean writing - ranely smudged.

[False join - cane, to make it appear tidy]

Flow, movement, hythm, harmony

Jocused. Precision. Lyricism.

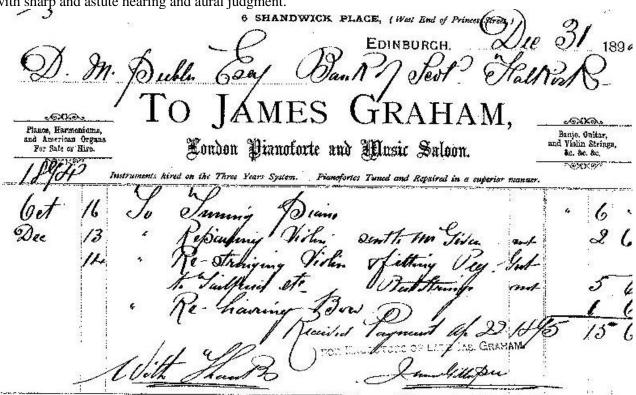
(Wemorandum,
THOMAS FILKIN'S, Jo Mr. John Evans
PIANC PORTE & MUSICAL INSTRUMENT WAREHOUSE,
Tiverpool, March 2 1867
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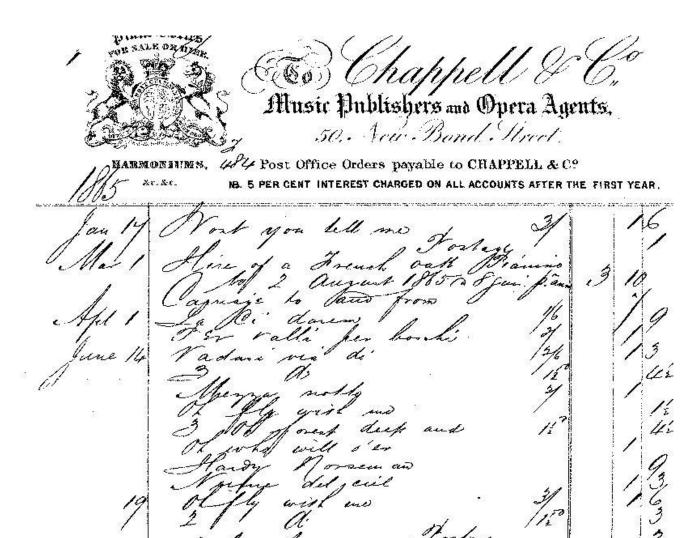
The most fascinating feature that may strike you as the similarity of Gill's writing produced in January 2006, to a particular sample, written by a male piano tuner on 4th March 1867. Gill has a huge file of piano tuning receipts and hadn't examined them particularly closely, so any similarity will be natural, rather than through familiarity with the writings.

Gill's notes above, as we discussed the various samples, were made easily and quickly, typical of her everyday script. The sample below them, from Thomas Filkin, was presumably something he wrote as a receipt to his clients as a matter of daily necessity. The dimension of both scripts is fairly similar, the continuity is also and many letter shapes are too. Noticeable is the upper case 'C', which moves into the lower zone and then continues rightward beneath the subsequent letters of the word. Instinctively both writers use this movement – 139 years apart. Not only that, but the loops are narrow, the middle zone letters have much similarity and though the sample from Gill in this piece of writing is a little more vertical than the writing of Thomas Filkin, her sample in the winter journal is more rightward slanting, very much in accord with Thomas Filkin's sample. Another match is the end 'n' that terminates both signatures and each is made as a very shallow arcade and extended.

Gill has developed her script instinctively and has maintained it almost exactly, according to my samples of her writing obtained over the years.

Thanks to Gill's kind permission to delve into her collection, a selection of piano tuners' scripts are offered for you to note the predominance of this fine, crisp stroke that characterizes the natural style of those with sharp and astute hearing and aural judgment.





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