

Graffiti removal guy comes back to discover image of himself.



AS IT WAS WRITTEN

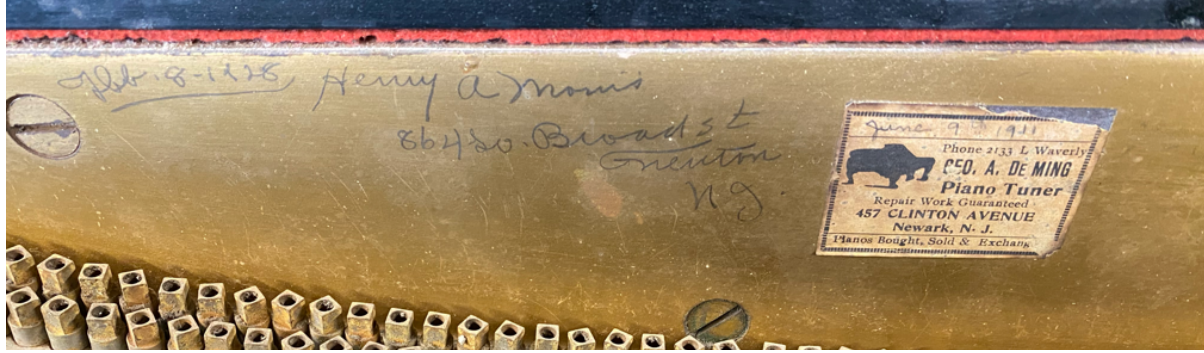


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Often, an artist will hide his signature within his paintings, either in the bottom corners or interwoven within the piece. This is likely one of the more common examples of artist identification in a work, though we can look at more obvious examples of authors identifying themselves beneath the title of their work, “By Kestrel Curro,” for example. As much as this practice is through pride in the work created, it also shows accountability and creates a lasting record of “John Doe was here.”

Many piano craftsman from days of old would sign their names somewhere in the piano with a date. One of these signatures first comes from the man or woman who built and turned a pile of wood, metal, and felt into a beautiful, singing instrument. The subsequent signatures come from other craftsman who helped maintain the piano

over its lifetime or even rebuilt the instrument if the piano is old enough. It is a historical record for those who may encounter the piano in the future, though it is not always all encompassing. It is important to try to preserve these inscriptions as it is a feature of the life of the piano. They can also be helpful to date the piano without using the serial number. It is unfortunate to sometimes find that a refurbished or rebuilt piano contains no signatures or partial signatures of the maker because the work was done too harshly. Some work, however, is so invasive that keeping the signature intact is not possible, therefore a picture of the signature before the work is done is a good alternative.



During my training, I was told not to write inside pianos because it was considered vandalism. That it was better to use a sticker (which can leave a gummy residue) or to leave a card (which can easily be lost or misplaced.) After working on enough pianos and finding joy in discovering old writing in a piano detailing its history, I am not sure that writing inside a piano for professional and historical recording is a bad thing. Some technicians write a record in the piano after every tuning. I'm not sure about doing that, but I like the idea of recording major part replacement and rebuilding work. If I alter the piano in a big way, I feel that it is appropriate to sign my work. However, it is your piano and if you don't want any writing in it, it is understandable. Because most modern pianos are machined and mass produced and not made by hand, signatures of craftsmen are far less common. You usually get a care package with an inspection tag where the workers will sign off on what they did to build the piano, but you won't find anything written inside the instrument except stamped factory numbers.

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I have found signatures on the iron frame/plate/harp with tuning dates. Companies like Steinway and Schimmel have sold pianos with the remaining living family member's signature on the plate to show quality and pomp. I have also found tuning dates written on the top of the piano under the lid in an upright or written on the top of the key sticks inside the piano behind the fallboard. Manufacturing signatures can be found underneath the keys or on the side of one or both of the end keys. The last few hammers in the bass usually have a stamp of the company that produced them. The soundboard likely has a signature of the maker signed discreetly somewhere on the back hidden within the shadows of the beams and case sides. You never know where you might find documentation in a piano.

The question is, what kind of work do you think constitutes writing in a piano?