

HUBBARD HARPSICHORDS INCORPORATED

ASSESSING YOUR HARPSICHORD FOR REPAIR OR RESALE

Whether you wish to repair your instrument for your own continued use or possible resale, we are happy to consult and give some guidance. Obviously, without directly examining the instrument, we cannot do more than render approximations of your instrument's state of need or its possible value. The purpose of this sheet is to lead you through a modest list of possible areas of concern, which, on evaluation, may lead you to further discoveries. We can start to help you once you have developed a comprehensive list of things that do not look right.

Things to look for:

1. Visible case distortion, especially cheek-cock.
2. Soundboard cracks (especially swarms near the treble end of the 8' bridge).
3. Open joints around the outside and inside of the case (especially between the hitchpin rails and the inside of the case in the extreme bass and treble).
4. Pinched jack registers due either to the wrestplank bowing toward the soundboard or the soundboard forcing the header toward the keyboards.
5. Broken strings.
6. Broken plectra.
7. Tight or rubbing keys.
8. Depressed bridges (perhaps with strings slipped off their pins) or slapping strings.
9. Abnormally high patches of soundboard.

Things to photograph:

Case distortion – any line you would expect to be straight and isn't or any two lines you would expect to be parallel and aren't.

Open joints – try to get as close as you can focus and light the area from the side so that the gap is accentuated.

Unfortunate string leading – as with the previous entry, try to make the problem as explicit in the photo as possible.

Soundboard cracks – please include at least one sharp close-up of the soundboard at the jack gap in an instance where the front edge is not straight but stepped.

Anything else that doesn't seem right, either structurally or cosmetically (e.g., broken paint over joints that should be aligned but are not) - please choose a point of view that best illustrates the problem and also allows sharp focus.

In all instances please indicate where the photo was taken. Suggestions for views follow on the next page.

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PHOTO VIEWS TO HELP EVALUATE AN INSTRUMENT'S CONDITION

1. Treble soundboard area (with the jack rail removed) including the hitchpin rail moulding, any cracks in the soundboard and the front of the soundboard by the jacks from over the jacks, standing full height, the view nearly straight down.
2. The hitchpin rail at the tail of the instrument (the shortest, angled side furthest from the keyboard) from over the bentside (about 3 feet from the pointed end of the instrument standing full height).
3. Looking over the top of the cheek (to the right of the keyboard) to the spine (long side) from about 3 feet away from the cheek. The angle of the view should be such that 1., the nameboard is placed in the center of the photograph perpendicular to the baseline and 2., only the very top of the bass-most tuning pins are visible. This is to gauge whether or how much the cheek has twisted in relation to the rest of the instrument.
4. Looking down the top of the cheek from about 3 feet away from and about a foot above the front of the cheek.
5. A close-up of the joint between the cheek and bentside from about 1 foot away and 1 foot above the top of the outside of the joint. Please include the whole length of the joint
6. Overall views of the soundboard showing any distortion.
7. Overall view of the keyboards from the front from about 5-6 feet away from the front of the instrument standing full height or slightly stooped.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR SENDING PHOTOS TO US FOR EVALUATION

If you wish to send us photos we are more than willing to receive 4" x 6" prints by post. When taking the photos you intend to send as prints please be certain that you get close enough to fill the frame optimally while maintaining sharp focus of the features you need us to see.

For electronic transmission of photos we ask you keep in mind that we still collect e-mail with a 56K modem embedded in a legacy Windows appliance. Really. As befits a maker of harpsichords, it dates from an earlier century. Please consider the following guidelines.

Feel free to take the best pictures you and your camera can but, please, crop the photos for efficient transmission of information (i.e., remove any empty space, meaningless surroundings, etc.). Then, please, resize them. We would favor the longest side being 600 or so pixels and a middling compression. With the cropped and SIZED image displayed on your monitor at 100%, look for tiling or what can look like turbulence around important details - increase or decrease the quality until the distortion does not interfere with the transmission of information - this option usually presents itself when you choose the Save As... menu option. ANY photo software should be able to do this. If it is possible to strip the embedded IPTC and EXIF data (look for a menu option named approximately 'Save for web') please do so; that will also help bring the download time within reason (ideally, no more than 4 or 5 minutes). You will find that, as with film, the best results will come from photos that are taken close enough to need no substantial cropping.

Collect the photos into their own folder and instruct your mail program to attach the folder. Beyond that, you need not do anything - it is normal when transmitting for a modern mail client to zip multiple files into one. Jpegs are already compressed so zipping a single file will not gain you much and makes for minor headaches here. If you are using Apple's Mail, there should be a checkbox (in the attachments dialog box) to send Windows-friendly attachments.

Above all, please, maintain sharp focus! Otherwise it can easily be a waste of time for everyone concerned.

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