Pianos, like people deserve a good life!

THE PIANO TUNER

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SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL
2026

RUNNER UP
GIO AUDIENCE AWARD FOR
BEST AUSTRALIAN DOCUMENTARY
SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL
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WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY NATALIA LASKA PRODUCED BY JULIA OVERTON & TOM ZUBRYCKI ORIGINAL MUSIC BY MARTIN TUCKER

EDITED & CO-WRITTEN BY FIONA STRAIN (ASE) COLOUR &SOUND GRADING MICHAEL GISSING DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY NATALIA LASKA

INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTOR POORHOUSE AU &NZ DISTRIBUTOR ANTIDOTE FILMS

PRESS KIT



THE PIANO TUNER

On a rescue mission to save the piano, a passionate piano tuner meets a diverse mix of owners and their pianos – revealing their stories and relationship with the instrument.



TRAILER

OFFICIAL SELECTION
SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL
2026

cinefest OZ
FILM FESTIVAL
OFFICIAL SELECTION 2026

Adelaide Film Festival 2026
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RUNNER UP
GIO AUDIENCE AWARD FOR
BEST AUSTRALIAN DOCUMENTARY

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL
2026

MOSTLY BRITISH FILM FESTIVAL
SAN FRANCISCO
2027

SYNOPSIS

50 WORDS

Martin Tucker is a travelling 'piano doctor' tuning and restoring everything from forgotten uprights to treasured grand pianos. As he journeys across Australia, each instrument unlocks stories of memory, family and belonging. Filmed over eight years, The Piano Tuner celebrates craftsmanship, community and the enduring love affair with the piano.

100 WORDS

Martin Tucker is a travelling "piano doctor", tuning and restoring everything from forgotten uprights to treasured grand pianos. As Australia's acoustic pianos disappear into landfill, he travels across some of the world's most piano-hostile environments with a carload of tools and strings, seeking new clients and the stories locked inside every instrument. Along the way, hospitable old-timers, isolated eccentrics and musical families reveal how the piano has enriched their lives. Over eight years, director Natalia Laska filmed Martin, capturing his obsession with music and dedication to a disappearing craft while celebrating Australia's enduring love affair with the piano and its music.



250 WORDS

Martin Tucker is a travelling "piano doctor", tuning and restoring everything from forgotten uprights to treasured grand pianos. Australia was once home to more pianos per capita than anywhere in the world, but today many acoustic pianos are being replaced by digital keyboards and destined for landfill.

With a carload of tools and strings, Martin travels across some of the world's most piano-hostile environments, from Tasmania to the tropical north, seeking new clients and breathing new life into pianos. Every instrument he encounters has a story to tell.

Along the way, Martin meets hospitable old-timers, isolated eccentrics, migrant families, concert pianists, artists and collectors. Through their memories and music, each instrument becomes a doorway into stories of family, migration, happiness or loss and need for belonging. What begins as a journey to tune pianos gradually reveals an intimate portrait of contemporary Australia and its enduring relationship with one remarkable instrument in the multicultural society.

Filmed over eight years, director Natalia Laska follows Martin with patience and curiosity, capturing not only his extraordinary dedication to a disappearing craft but also the special attitude that makes him welcome in homes across the country. As Martin restores pianos, he also rekindles memories, fires up communities and reminds people of the joy that acoustic music can bring. Warm, humorous and deeply moving, The Piano Tuner celebrates craftsmanship and Australia's rich piano heritage while exploring the universal power of music to connect people across generations, cultures and landscapes.





DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

After arriving in Australia from Poland, I was searching for some good stories that would explain the country beyond its landscapes and headlines. Accidentally, I found my guide in a traveling piano tuner.
Following Martin Tucker across Australia gave me a rare privilege—to knock on doors and be welcomed into people's homes. Unlike concert halls or the music industry, these were intimate spaces of domestic music, not 'contaminated' by commerce, and close to people’s hearts and minds. Every piano Martin tuned revealed a new story.
Martin speaks about pianos as though they are people. He often says, "They need a good childhood. If they're played regularly, they stay alive much longer." I came to realise he wasn't only talking about pianos. His words became a metaphor for people and communities. Like instruments, we all need care, purpose and connection. We benefit from staying playful throughout our lives.

One of Martin's clients, retired music teacher Miss Leila Wills, reflected that music is disappearing from school curricula because it cannot be easily measured. We can test mathematics and sporting achievement, but we cannot quantify imagination, emotion or the joy of making tunes. Perhaps that is precisely why music remains essential—it speaks to the parts of us that cannot be measured.
The Piano Tuner is ultimately not just a film about fixing pianos. It is about creating connections: between generations and cultures, and between people allowing music to shape their lives. Through Martin's craft, I hope audiences will rediscover the extraordinary value of slowing down, listening carefully and keeping our personal melodies alive.

Natalia Laska



ABOUT THE FILM

The Piano Tuner is an observational documentary about a disappearing craft, a changing nation and the enduring power of music to connect people and places. Through the journey of Tasmanian piano tuner Martin Tucker, the film offers a rare portrait of Australia's piano culture—a remarkable chapter of social history that is little known outside the country. Australia was once home to more pianos per capita than anywhere in the world. Today, many of those instruments are abandoned, replaced by digital technology and changing lifestyles.

Determined to rescue both pianos and his own profession from redundancy, Martin becomes a nomadic "piano doctor", travelling from Tasmania to the tropical north through some of the world's most piano-hostile environments. His journey reveals far more than technical craftsmanship.

Every piano opens the door to another home, another family and another life story. The people Martin meets reflect the diversity of contemporary Australia: lifelong pianists, migrant families, artists, collectors, teachers, retirees and children discovering music for the first time. Anglo-Australian, Asian and Indigenous communities all share a common language through the piano, demonstrating how music can bridge cultures, generations and life experiences.

As Martin restores instruments, he also preserves memories, traditions and relationships. His work raises larger questions about ageing, relevance and adaptation in a fast changing world. What happens when a craft, an instrument or even a way of life begins to disappear? How do we preserve our cultural heritage while embracing modernity?

Filmed over eight years, The Piano Tuner celebrates the beauty of handmade craftsmanship and the resilience of communities built around music. In an age increasingly shaped by digital technology and artificial intelligence, the film returns audiences to something profoundly human: listening, conversation, patience and shared experience.

Although deeply rooted in Australia, The Piano Tuner tells a universal story. Across cultures, people form emotional connections with music, inherit instruments from previous generations, and find identity, comfort and belonging through the act of playing. Ultimately, the film is not only about saving pianos—it is about preserving the human stories they carry.

Piano Tuner celebrates the beauty of handmade instruments and the resilience of communities built around music.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The Piano Tuner film follows Tasmanian piano tuner Martin Tucker as he traveled over 5 thousand kilometers across Australia in search of pianos. Rather than constructing a narrative around interviews, the filmmaker adopts a long-form observational approach, allowing real life to unfold naturally over time.

Filming took place across Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and the Northern Territory, capturing an extraordinary diversity of Australian landscapes and communities—from small country towns and remote outback settlements to multicultural suburbs and historic regional centres. Martin's journey unfolds in some of the world's most challenging environments for acoustic pianos, where extreme heat, humidity, dust and distance constantly test both the instruments and the piano tuner.

The films documents more than the restoration of pianos. Invited into private homes, workshops, schools, artists' studios and community spaces, camera records conversations about music, memory and belonging. The film introduces audiences to a remarkable cross-section of Australian society. Each encounter reveals another chapter in Australia's rich and often overlooked piano culture.

Shot entirely on location, The Piano Tuner celebrates the authenticity of observational documentary film-making.





MAIN CHARACTER

Martin Tucker is a Tasmanian piano tuner, restorer and pianist. His relationship with the instrument began in childhood. After emigrating from England to Tasmania at the age of six, Martin rarely stopped playing the piano. Family cassette recordings capture him as a young boy at the keyboard, beginning a lifelong fascination with music. Ironically, his first piano was a modest London-made instrument bearing the family name—Tucker—whose many imperfections may have been his first lesson in hearing what a piano truly needed.

At fifteen, Martin's father gave him a book entitled How to Tune the Piano. Martin carried it everywhere. It inspired his first job repairing second-hand pianos in a Hobart music shop before leading him to formal training at the New South Wales State Conservatorium under renowned Armenian concert technician Ara Vartoukian. After a year of intensive study and graduating with merit and began a career built on the belief that every piano deserves a long life. For nearly four decades, Martin has tuned entirely by ear and has built lasting friendships with his clients, turning every service call into an opportunity for conversation and music playing. To Martin, pianos are living companions with distinct personalities. His philosophy is simple: "They need a good childhood. When you look after them they will look after you".



DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY

Natalia Laska is a Polish-born Australian documentary filmmaker and journalist, she worked as a reporter and photographer for Polish publications, including ELLE or Newsweek Polska, as well as for talk shows for both Polish Television and private networks.

FILMS

'The New World Manifesto' (2012) (Co-director) A road documentary following activists from Burlington, Vermont, travelling across the United States in a bus fuelled by recycled vegetable oil to meet emerging grassroots changemakers.

'Simon Laks: A Portrait' (2013) Holocaust survivor, composer and former conductor of the Auschwitz-Birkenau prisoners' orchestra, told through the memories of his son, André Laks, in Paris.

IN PRODUCTION

'The Language Party' (2026) A linguist searching for Miriwoong language speakers in Kununurra, Western Australia, discovers that following rather than leading is the key to Indigenous language revitalisation.

'The Queen of Makers ' - Gay Hawkes (1942–2025) Tasmanian artist, furniture maker and sculptor. Based on archival footage of over thirty years, by Roger Scholes, with six years of filming by Natalia Laska, the film follows Gay's artistic practice and legacy.

"From Dili with Music" - Six young students from the Safrei Classical Music School in Timor-Leste travel to Darwin to perform with an orchestra, representing the first generation of Timorese women not restricted to only singing.



PRODUCERS

Tom Zubrycki has been making documentaries for over 45 years. He has won many awards for his directing work and also for his mentorship on behalf of the industry. As producer and executive producer he has worked with both experienced and new and emerging directors.
Recent films include FAIR GAME (2017), UNDERMINED – TALES OF THE KIMBERLEY (2018), ABLAZE (2021), KINDRED (2023) MEMORY FILM – a filmmaker's diary (2023). His latest film as director SENSES OF CINEMA (2022) is a collaboration with Melbourne filmmaker John Hughes.
Tom is a recipient of the prestigious Stanley Hawes Award, and has actively championed the cause of the documentary sector over a number of years.

https://www.jotz.org/

Julia Overton
Julia Overton is an experienced film industry professional. She has worked in key decision-making areas in federal and state funding bodies in Australia and New Zealand. She specialised in documentary during her time at Screen Australia. Her experience in the industry's international production and market sectors has led to strong, enduring contacts. Julia started in drama production in the UK, followed by a stint in News, Current Affairs and Documentary at CBC Canada. In Australia she worked with the Australian Film Television & Radio School before turning to producing and then working with the screen agencies. She has acted as Executive Producer, Producer or Mentor on numerous films and acts as consultant for New Zealand Film Commission, Screen Territory and Screen West, has been on the board of Australian International Documentary Conference, Input Public Television Event and Wide Angle Tasmania. In 2012 she was the recipient of the Stanley Hawes Award in recognition of her contribution to Australian documentary.



The Piano Tuner
The documentary film (90min)

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Written and Directed by
Natalia Laska
Producers
Julia Overton &Tom Zubrycki
Editor, co-writer
Fiona Strain (ASE)
Cinematography by
Natalia Laska
Original Music
Martin Tucker
Sound Design & Mix
Michael Gissing

Financed with assistance from The Screen Innovation Fund by Screen Tasmania. Produced with the assistance of the Screen Australia Producer Equity Program by the Australian Government and Screen Australia.

CONTACT

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https://www.facebook.com/PianoTunerFilm
www.natalialaska.com https://www.jotz.org/
pianosforeverfilm@gmail.com



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Title: The Piano Tuner

Runtime: 88 minutes (1 hour 28 minutes)
Completion Date: December 18, 2025
Country of Origin: Australia
Language: English
Aspect Ratio: 16:9
Shooting Format: 2K, 4K, SD
Exhibition Format: DCP (available on request)
Screener on request

DISTRIBUTION

Australia & New Zealand
Antidote Films
Distributor

United Kingdom
Poor House
Distributor

COMMUNITY & EDUCATIONAL SCREENINGS

please contact:
Natalia Laska
Email: pianosforeverfilm@gmail.com









DURABLE
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FILM CHARACTERS

Tony Gamble is a piano removalist and an ex-coal miner from New Zealand, a self-made man who, in order to avoid retirement, bought himself a truck to move pianos for people. Tony opens every day with a new business idea. He owns an unfinished motel, a hobby farm with donkeys, roosters and emus, and makes toys from old piano keys. The duo of Martin and Tony represents a practical madness, combined with a business model that fuels the mission to save pianos.

Artist Gay Hawkes lost her home and her beloved piano in the 2013 firestorm, which burned the Tasmanian town of Dunalley. She has struggled to rebuild her life and uses music to deal with her trauma. In the film, we see how Martin finds and restores a fine old piano for her. Piano music not only enhances psychological well-being but also bonds the two as friends. Again, Martin is more than a tuner.





Bethany and Gregory McCallum, and their nine children, are an Amish family. They live without electricity and modern infrastructure on a small farm in northeast Tasmania, and their piano is the heart of home entertainment. Martin says a visit to the Amish is like a time travel to an époque when the piano in Australia was ‘a household orchestra and god’.



Scott Trenwith. a music teacher in Darwin with a severe hearing impairment, but for some reason, he prefers the soft sound of a harpsichord to that of a piano. With Martin’s help, the painstaking restoration of the delicate instrument shifts into a two-man mission to strengthen it to withstand the high humidity of Darwin's tropical climate. Scott connects traditional European music with Darwin culture and, at the end of the restoration, delivers a special harpsichord concert for his community.



Wayne Garth used to service player pianos until, around 60’s television in Australia finally sealed their fate. To make ends meet, he managed checkouts at a supermarket in Hobart. Perhaps born in the wrong place and time, Wayne laments the end of the piano era, as well as the loss of musical instrument quality and discipline in life. He surrounds himself with pianos and Titanic memorabilia in his tiny Hobart home. The relationship between Martin and Wayne emphasises the team effort in the struggle against the zeitgeist.



Mary Greenwood. a retired nurse and the widow of Chinese descent. She shares her solitude with an old piano, a precious gift from her deceased husband. Martin repairs the instrument, which other piano tuners have described as a lost cause. He plays for Mary and consoles her, soothing her fears of dying far from her ancestral country. Mary represents the voice of many immigrants who use music as a language of emotions otherwise hard to describe.





Mina Dong, a businesswoman from Harbin, the Northern province of China. She supplies the Darwin building industry with granite bench tops. Mina can’t play piano by herself, but her dream was that her first daughter would. After 14 years of living in Darwin, all the kids of Mina: Jessica, Joanna, and George are piano enthusiasts and piano students, competing to see who plays better. under the supervision of the Chinese grandma, Lijuan Li (non-English speaker). Mina takes Martin to the newly finished villa, to show him the room for the future Yamaha grand piano and to assess the acoustics of the space.

Kirra Voller, a singer, political activist and Wirangu/Kokatha woman. She calls Martin to share the news that she obtained for free, a real, acoustic piano, and she is thrilled because she never thought she would be able to have one of those... Martin is needed to do a serious repair and tuning. Kirra is not going to learn the real cost of the service. Martin just wants her to have the piano and offers some tips to Kirra, who is a self-taught piano beginner.





Bess and Sonya Hart are from a small cattle farm outside Katherine. They offer a testimony to Australian' outback culture, which gained a lot from pianos, which managed to provide generations with an important sense of 'high culture' expressed by local folk music. Sonya, a hardworking cowgirl, sings traditional songs for Martin, assuring him that they all tell stories about the way of life people used and still do in NT, despite ongoing droughts and the hardships that follow.



Jeff Barrett, used to teach music in the Darwin prison. Now he spends his retirement in the sole company of his old Beale piano. Jeff lives off-grid in an old bus, miles away from civilisation, close to Litchfield National Park, surrounded by magnetic termite mounds. Only Martin agrees to travel that far to service Jeff's old piano. While working on the delipidated instrument, Martin will hear stories about sharing this makeshift shelter with poisonous snakes, but also enjoy some of the beautiful songs composed by Jeff in the middle of nowhere.



Gabriel Forteza, 13 years old, self-taught pianist who learned to play on a broken keyboard, back in Manila, his parents' hometown. Martin meets Gabriel at the Middle School in Palmerston, where the boy is practicing on the donated baby grand piano. Martin cries, overwhelmed with emotions, when Gabriel plays Debussy's 'Clair de Lune'" and explains that his parents can't afford either the piano or the piano lessons.



Neville Rodman, a motor mechanic, owner of the 'Skyline' petrol station in South Hobart, bartered his piano tuning for servicing Martin's car. Neville plays his old Canadian piano a few times a week as it finds a place in the corner of his mechanic's workshop. "The sound of E flat is, for me, a kind of cathedral sound, close to nature, it's spiritual," says Neville. Neville complains about modernity's obsession with the NEW. Together with Martin, they discuss the philosophical aspect of piano culture and its long-lasting effect on humanity.

PIANOS - AUSTRALIA

The piano had a cult-like status in colonial Australia. Transported by camel, bullock and horse to all known areas of the Australian terrain. It was estimated that around 700,000 pianos had been imported to Australia by 1888, making it home to one of the highest per capita numbers of pianos in the world.

Australia had its own piano makers – the Irish-born philanthropist Octavius Beale, who arrived in Hobart in 1854, and the German-born merchant Hugo Wertheim, who arrived in Melbourne in 1875. Both became importers of sawing machines and other household items sought by the growing population of the British colony in the Pacific.

Beale and Wertheim were competitors but remained friends, before and after establishing their own piano factories to serve the local market. Beale built what was to become the biggest piano factory in the British Empire, finally closing its doors in Sydney's inner west in 1975. Wertheim opened his piano factory in Melbourne's Richmond and employed over 400 people before the factory became a victim of the 1930s depression, closing in 1935. The site later became the studios of broadcaster Channel Nine. Beale and Wertheim pianos are still alive in Australian homes, maintained by generations of piano technicians. Wertheim is still an Australian-owned company, but its pianos are produced in China and South Korea. The booming demand for pianos among Asian immigrants has driven an unexpected revival of Australia's piano industry. China's number one music retailer opened a store in the Sydney suburb of Chatswood, where 34% of the population has Chinese ancestry.







PIANO PLAYING IN AUSTRALIA

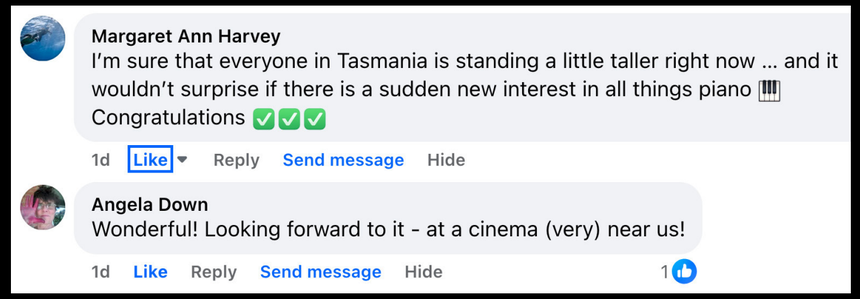
Statistics (from the Australia Council Arts Facts) show that Australians agree that playing an instrument is fun, a good way to express yourself, and a way to gain a sense of accomplishment. 20 per cent of children learn to play music, whilst 70 per cent of adults wish they had learned. Increasingly, parents are seeking an alternative to their children spending less time online and being glued to computer games. More than 80 per cent of Australians believe our society is becoming a lonelier place, according to survey results released today by Lifeline Australia. Figures show we spend an average of 46 hours of our weekly downtime looking at our TVs and digital devices. The Piano Tuner provides a solution for these societal problems. It can get young people and others engaged in learning and playing the piano. The piano connects generations, as older people can share their piano talents as well. This sense of intergenerational bonding is highlighted at Rigby's home in Malmsbury, Victoria, as shown in the film’s trailer. Their Beale piano has been in their family for three generations.

This film can change the way Australians think about their culture by recognising its strong foundation in the art of piano-making and playing. As long as we play pianos, we stay connected, creative and strong.

REVIEWS

'Our entire staff loves The Piano Tuner. It's such a warming film following the piano tuner and all his friends/clients throughout the community far and wide."

San Francisco, Mostly British Film Festival.

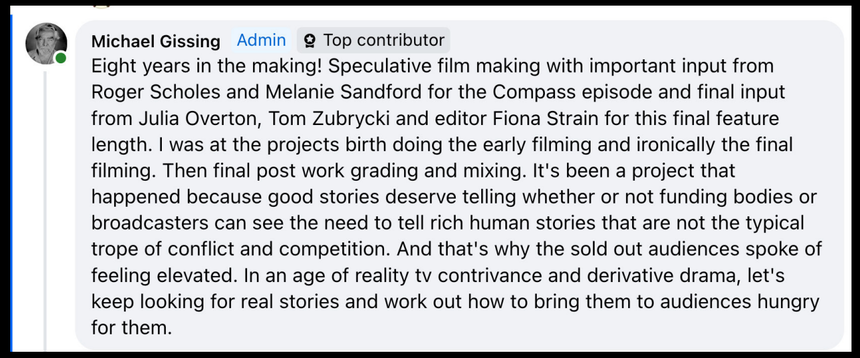


Margaret Ann Harvey
I'm sure that everyone in Tasmania is standing a little taller right now ... and it wouldn't surprise if there is a sudden new interest in all things piano 🎹 Congratulations ✅✅✅

1d Like Reply Send message Hide

Angela Down
Wonderful! Looking forward to it - at a cinema (very) near us!

1d Like Reply Send message Hide 1



Michael Gissing Admin Top contributor
Eight years in the making! Speculative film making with important input from Roger Scholes and Melanie Sandford for the Compass episode and final input from Julia Overton, Tom Zubrycki and editor Fiona Strain for this final feature length. I was at the projects birth doing the early filming and ironically the final filming. Then final post work grading and mixing. It's been a project that happened because good stories deserve telling whether or not funding bodies or broadcasters can see the need to tell rich human stories that are not the typical trope of conflict and competition. And that's why the sold out audiences spoke of feeling elevated. In an age of reality tv contrivance and derivative drama, let's keep looking for real stories and work out how to bring them to audiences hungry for them.

The Sydney Morning Herald

After four decades tuning an estimated 18,000 pianos, Martin Tucker reckons his job is guaranteed to give him a living for as long as he wants.

Australians love playing pianos – as the hit ABC series *The Piano* shows – and the acoustic (non-electronic) ones always go out of tune.



Martin Tucker and his documentary director partner Natalia Laska whose film, The Piano Tuner, is having its world premiere at Sydney Film Festival. GEORGE FRAGOPOULOS

"I haven't got anything in the diary for the month of June but I know that by June there'll be pianos that need tuning," said Tucker, a colourful and talkative Tasmanian who stars in the new documentary *The Piano Tuner*. "I've been through the recession of 2009 or whatever, it was bulletproof.

"We went through COVID. Everyone stayed at home and wanted to play the piano. They weren't spending their money on bigger things like bathroom renovations or new cars but they could afford $200 or $300 to get the piano tuned."

NT News

FILM STRIKES CHORD ON TOP END PIANO CULTURE

Thomas McLean

A documentary about the Northern Territory's unlikely piano culture will make its local premiere in Darwin this month, telling the story of how residents have kept acoustic pianos alive despite a climate that is notoriously harsh on the instruments.

The Piano Tuner, filmed over eight years, follows Martin Tucker, a piano tuner who spent more than two decades travelling from Tasmania to service pianos across the Top End before settling in Darwin.

The film also features piano owners and enthusiasts from Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs.

In the Top End, heat, humidity and the annual Wet-Dry cycle can be punishing for pianos, made largely of wood, felt, glue and steel.

Timber expands and contracts as moisture changes, affecting soundboards, tuning pins and the piano's action.

Metal can rust, glue joints can weaken and tuning can become unstable. Pests including cockroaches, rats, lizards and white ants can also damage instruments.

Still, many Territorians have held on to pianos for generations, treating them as family heirlooms and cultural artefacts rather than disposable household items.

Some instruments arrived in the Territory by camel, bullock, train and truck, travelling long distances to remote towns and communities.

The documentary argues the effort to preserve those pianos reflects a broader Territory habit of maintaining things that are difficult to keep going.

It also points to the decline of acoustic pianos more broadly, as digital instruments increasingly replace them in homes and venues.

After two full-house screenings at the Sydney Film Festival, where it was runner-up for the audience award for best Australian documentary,

The Piano Tuner is scheduled to premiere at Deckchair Cinema on September 24.

That will be followed by a question-and-answer session and community screenings in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs in October.



The Piano Tuner follows Martin Tucker, a piano tuner who spent more than two decades travelling to service pianos in the NT.



The Piano Tuner

★★★★☆

Click here if you liked this article 3 ❤️

https://www.sff.org.au/program/event/the-piano-tuner/

Date Reviewed: 28/05/2026

Let me start with, I am a piano teacher. I am very in love with the instrument that is the piano. I once found a beautiful but neglected piano - then two pianos - with every intention of learning to tune and restore them. However, I find out the hard truth and that is that, some pianos are just not worth saving. My piano restoration dreams aside, The Piano Tuner fed that tiny ember of a dream just that little bit.

In this documentary style film, we follow Martin as he journeys from Hobart in Tasmania north to Darwin in the Northern Territory. He meets with a number of existing and new clients along the way, tuning and fixing their pianos. Subsequently, we meet a number of pianos, with all their quirks and character that old pianos come with. Martin treats the pianos just like their owners; like meeting old friends.

Martin's passion and enthusiasm for acoustics is evident from the very beginning. Barefoot and completely at ease amongst nature, he listens intently to the sounds surrounding him, sensing the vibrations and isolating even the smallest nuances to the ear. His highly trained ear becomes especially apparent as he tunes each piano entirely by ear, without the use of any electronic devices. Only true passion drives such levels of expertise, which shines through in this documentary style film.

Martin brings with him tools collected from tuners past and gifts from piano-owners, and you can almost feel through the screen the community that he carries with him. I can't emphasise enough the character layered on, in both person and instrument, that you just can't buy in the modern world. This is history through the perspective of pianos. Which is interesting as, stereotypically, we think of European or American style musics tied to the instrument. To learn of the piano's footing in Australian history is a refreshing take on the instrument, and one that is not commonly found in music education.

The Piano Tuner is a subtle love letter to the piano. Unfortunately, there are too many old pianos and not enough use and worth in them to warrant keeping them all. As the instrument is slowly getting replaced by newer models or the lower maintenance digital derivative, the old, character-filled ones are left to deteriorate. History left to burn, however inevitable, is melancholic. This was an earthy film that, if you love history or piano music, would be a recommended watch by me.

Reviewed by Juliet Morelli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and Wash
after Yourself




DECKCHAIR CINEMA
Darwin Film Society
LICENSED VENUE
No BYO alcohol permitted
Picnic and Pillows welcome
DECKCHAIR CINEMA
Welcome to Deckchair
THE PIANO TUNER




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screen Tasmania
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PRODUCED BY JULIA OVERTON & TOM ZUBRYCKI
ORIGINAL MUSIC BY MARTIN TUCKER
EDITED & CO-WRITTEN BY FIONA STRAIN (ASE)
COLOUR & SOUND GRADING MICHAEL GISSING
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY NATALIA LASKA
POORHOUSE
ANTIDOTE FILMS

IN review

FILM & TV

Adelaide Film Festival review: The Piano Tuner

Modern life has meant once-prized pianos are going out of fashion, left to warp in the sun and become habitat for termites. A new Australian documentary follows one man who isn't giving up on them.

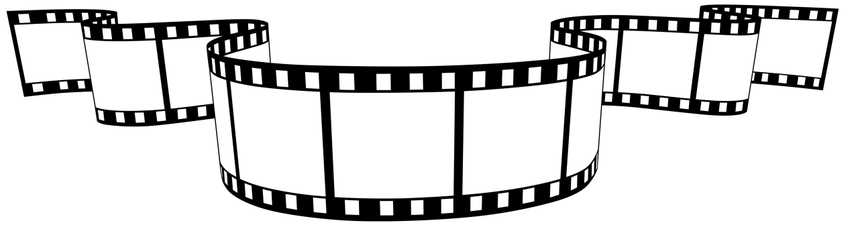
Heather Taylor Johnson

Oct 19, 2026, updated Oct 19, 2026

Republish



"It already feels to be an Australian classic".



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