

Park Pianos

341 Albany Hwy, Victoria Park, WA, 6100 Phone: 9470 1020

How To Choose A Piano?

(Adapted from brochure produced by Piano Tuners and Technicians Association)

The greatest call for pianos, comes from a beginner, or learner, and frequently, the person choosing the piano is a nonplayer. In all too many cases, the purchaser bases their decision on price and appearance, and all too often, the student winds up with a sub standard piano.

Many people look to second-hand pianos, expecting to pick up an instrument for their child at around \$1000 - \$2000. Unfortunately, there are very few decent second-hand pianos available in this price range. So, where do you go, and what do you do?

Pianos vary so drastically, that it is impossible to give you a formula, which can be used to assure you of a decent instrument when choosing a second hand piano. There are so many points to look for, that the layman would have difficulty in determining whether a piano is defect free.

There is no such thing as a beginner's piano. If the price of the instrument is cheap, there is usually a reason why the seller cannot ask more for it. If the action and keyboard are worn, then the student will not learn the correct touch. If a piano can't be tuned to concert pitch, or won't hold pitch, then the student's ear cannot be trained correctly. If the tone is wrong, then the student's ears will not enjoy the correct sound.

You are spending a lot of money on lessons, and the student is going to spend a lot of time practising. If the student hates the feel and the sound, they are going to be even less inclined to practise, and even if they do spend hours practising, they are not going to develop properly, technically. Don't cut corners by buying a cheapie.

So what can you look for? Is the piano badly out of tune? Any serious seller would at least tune the piano to present it in its best light to prospective purchasers. The chances are that this piano has been badly neglected, and will probably cost big dollars to be put into a reasonable condition. It's probably a good idea to purchase a tuning fork, find out how to use it, and if the piano is in tune, check the tune against your tuning fork. If there is a difference, the piano may be in tune with itself, but not be at concert pitch. If you have done the test properly, the piano probably needs repinning. Look for wear on the face of the hammers. This is the part of the action that strikes the strings. If the face of the hammer has deep lines where the strings have been cutting into the felt, then the piano has had considerable wear. Look at the pedals. If the right pedal has been worn down, then that could be an indication of excessive use. Strings that are rusty are not good, and cause poor sound. There is also a strong possibility that they may break. Check to see if new strings have been fitted recently (they look shiny against dull old ones). If yes, then the indication is that strings are starting to break. Other things that need checking include cracked bridges, cracks in the frame, weakness in the wrest plank, and splits in the soundboard.

We can't stress too highly, that a piano advertised in the weekend press, should be thoroughly checked by an approved piano technician before you make the purchase. This will cost you \$60 - \$80, but could save you a couple of thousand dollars in repairs. Is there a stool with the piano? Piano stools cost between \$100 and \$450. Another outlay is the cost of transporting your purchase to your home. Don't trust **just** anyone. Use the services of a reliable **Piano Removalist**, not just a common carrier. Finally, don't forget that your new purchase has no warranty back up whatsoever.

So what about second-hand pianos from a dealer. You can usually tell a dealer's commitment from their showroom. Does the dealer have a resident piano tuner or tuners? A reputable dealer will not risk their reputation, by selling you a "questionable quality" piano. They will supply you with a warranty, which covers the work done to the piano. **Is the piano a recent import from Japan or Asia? These secondhand pianos are built for their domestic markets, and are not suited to Australian conditions. Over a period of time, these instruments could well suffer from warpage and shrinkage in critical areas, such as soundboard, moving hammer parts, and other wooden parts. These pianos could also be older than you think. Check the age with the chart supplied with this handout. Why would Yamaha warn against buying these instruments? (see brochure attached to this handout) NOTE: Yamaha pianos built in Indonesia are made to Yamaha's exacting standards, and are made for Australian Conditions. Consider very carefully before parting with your hard earned dollars.**

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A third consideration is the **Digital Piano**. Over the years, digital piano design has improved out of all sight. Pianos of current manufacture usually have good tone, and a feel that is not too distant from a real acoustic piano. Some early pianos had actions that while officially weighted, had a less than satisfactory feel. It should be pointed out that some current actions, especially in cheaper models of major brands, are not technically fully weighted. The mid range **Yamaha digital pianos** are a good indication of what a digital piano action should feel like. The **Sample** of the sound in early models was also, usually not of the best quality. The advantages of digital pianos are their light weight, which makes them easy to move for cleaning or relocation, their contemporary look for modern homes, lack of need for tuning, and a headphone facility. Most digital pianos have a MIDI facility, for interfacing with other instruments, tone modules, or computers. They also have a variety of sounds, which add to the enjoyment of the player. They are however, products of computer technology, and thus, are less likely to retain value, as new improved models are released periodically. *On the other hand, it costs over \$100 to tune a piano, and so the saving of this cost over a number of years tends to cancel out this depreciation factor.*

Park Pianos have been established for since the early 1970's, and was purchased in 1987 by its current owner, Barry Drysdale. We have a fully equipped Piano Workshop, and three tuners on staff. Pianos are reconditioned on the premises, and all second hand pianos carry a **FIVE** year warranty. All second-hand pianos are supplied with a stool, and are delivered into your home (in the metropolitan area), and one **FREE** tuning in your home is included in the purchase agreement. **Park Pianos** also stock quality **NEW** pianos from Japan's leading manufacturer, **Yamaha**, and leading Korean brand, **Alex Steinbach**. Both of these makes have a **TEN** year transferable warranty period. **Alex Steinbach** has a **75 year transferable warranty** on it's soundboard. **Alex Steinbach** also offer a lifetime warranty to the original purchaser of the piano.

Yamaha has been established since 1887, and have been manufacturing pianos since 1900. Although probably better known for motorbikes, Yamaha's first motorcycle wasn't produced until 1955. In the ensuing century and a bit, Yamaha has become recognised as one of the worlds leading piano manufacturers, supplying pianos to most major universities, conservatories and education facilities around the world. Their pianos have been one of only four makes used extensively in the prestigious World Piano Competition.

Alex Steinbach has been produced under it's manufacturers name for over forty years, and in 1985, was awarded the "Gold Prize" at the Quality Contest sponsored by "The Diapason", the monthly magazine published in France. Domestic honours bestowed upon the company in Korea include "Grand Prize in Industry" in 1977, "Grand Productivity Prize" in 1984, Gold Prize awarded by the minister of Science and Technology at the 6th National New Technical Product Contest in 1986. In September 1988, the Japanese Industry awarded the "Japanese Industrial Standard" mark of excellence. In January 1982, the company signed a joint agreement with the American **Baldwin Piano and Organ Company**. In March 1983, Highly awarded German designer, **Klaus Fenner**, entered into a contract of technical cooperation, and has been responsible for the design of **Alex Steinbach** pianos ever since. Fenner is responsible for the "Imperial German Scale" design feature contained in these pianos. Apart from pianos, the company manufactures other musical instruments, and is the world's largest guitar manufacturer.

As with most manufacturers, Alex Steinbach manufacture some of their pianos offshore, to maintain a price advantage. In the case of Alex Steinbach, their off shore factory is in Indonesia, where CKD (Completely Knocked Down) pianos (including soundboards) are imported from Korea, and assembled into Quality Indonesian made cabinets. The final finicky and time consuming (thus expense incurring) setup of the pianos is done in their Indonesian factory, before the pianos are sent to Australia. As with the Yamaha product, **these instruments are manufactured specifically for Australian conditions.**

We also stock a large range of digital pianos from **Yamaha** and **Technics**. **Yamaha** created the digital piano concept, and have been the industry leader for a number of years. The **Clavinova** product carries a **FULL Three Year Warranty** and all parts and labour. **Technics** is manufactured by the world's largest company, **Panasonic**, and carries all the inbuilt quality that this company is renowned for. It should be noted that the **AMEB** have approved the use of some digital pianos in exams up to Grade Four. Both the **Yamaha** and **Technics** brands have been approved.

Having now purchased your "new" instrument, what is required to care for it, to ensure that it gives you many years of trouble free service? The piano should be placed in a position where it is adequately ventilated. But don't place it in a draft. The best place is on a wall, which separates two rooms. Avoid placing it against an outside wall, because excessive heat or dampness will harm the instrument, and cause extreme instability in tuning. The polished surface of a piano can be damaged if the piano is placed near a window, and changes in humidity will also affect the tuning stability. Certainly, do not place it near a heater or radiator. The ideal humidity range is between 45-60%. Avoid sudden temperature changes, as moisture formed can form on

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the steel strings and turn them rusty. Excessive heat will cause the piano to dry out, causing the Tuning Pins to work loose, thus creating severe tuning instability. Articles placed on top of pianos can rattle and vibrate. **NEVER** place a vase of flowers that needs to be watered on top of a piano. The slightest drop of water can cause untold damage to the action and keys.

The ideal tuning period for a piano is every three months, however, a piano should not be allowed to go more than twelve months without tuning, whether it is being played or not. The amount of stress and strain a piano has to withstand is enormous. The tension on an upright piano can be as much as 18 tonnes when tuned to A440 CPS. If the tuning is not regular, then each time it is tuned, undue stress will be placed upon the frame. If the piano appears to go uneven, then a technician should regulate the instrument. This should be done every time the piano is tuned. Periodically, the piano will need voicing. This entails making the sound of the piano even and pure.

Apart from the benefits of purchasing a **New or Second-hand or Digital** piano from **Park Pianos** as outlined above, we have many other products available as well. We have a comprehensive and expanding sheet music section, and most requests for music can be met immediately, or if not in stock, can be ordered for you, with a waiting time (depending on suppliers stock holding) of no more than 2 weeks. We carry a huge range of Portable Keyboards, Guitars (acoustic and electric), Amplifiers, and accessories. Our Drum Department is stocked with a full range of percussion equipment, from tambourines and shakers, to full professional drum kits. Our Professional Keyboard department stocks synthesizers from the world's major manufacturers, as well as professional software and recording equipment. Our PA department has Perth's largest showroom, and has installations in many of Perth's major churches and clubs.

As a purchaser of a New or used acoustic or digital piano from **Park Pianos**, you will be entitled to 15% discount off most print music lines, and at least 10% on **most** other products that we sell. We will also guarantee to credit you **At Least the** purchase price of your piano against the cost of an upgrade at some time in the future, providing the piano has been properly and regularly maintained and serviced by a technician of our approval.

NOTE: *Yamaha Pianos are manufactured to three different specifications, correlating to different destinations. **Pianos imported and warranted by Yamaha Australia are manufactured to the "Super Dry Specification"**. Imported domestic pianos are manufactured to the other extreme called the "Wet Specification". These pianos would only have had a one year warranty on their original parts and have no Yamaha warranty in Australia. In some cases, the age of these used pianos is not truthfully represented.*

So What's The Story With Imported Second-Hand Pianos?

(Reprinted from Yamaha A.I.M.S. Newsletter 1997)

Today, it has become commonplace for second-hand luxury commodities to be shipped around the world. Shopping the global village has never been easier, and many have heard the horror stories of luxury cars... exotic furniture imported from the tropics... and of once **fine pianos that self-destruct in their new and alien environment**. Even finely crafted instruments such as Japanese pianos are not immune to the risks of re-location.

So what does happen to the well presented piano you buy second hand, unaware that it's first 10 or even 20 years were spent in say, Tokyo or Manila?

The piano has been moved to Australia, into an enormously different temperature and humidity environment. As a consequence, the **fine timber soundboard**, the piano's "heart" – **may slowly and progressively begin to warp**. Delicately moving **hammer parts can stick**, while other **wooden parts may over time, shrink and become loose**. The piano's once beautiful tone and smooth response could be lost forever. You may have unknowingly, **bought yourself a bomb**.

Before you consider buying a second-hand Yamaha piano, why not give Yamaha a call. Tell us the serial number, and we will tell you immediately, how old it is, and where possible, whether it began its playing career in Sydney or the Sudan. Considering that you are about to make a substantial investment, and may even want their piano to be passed down as a family heirloom, take the time to check what is available from your authorised Yamaha Gold Standard Piano Dealer. There may just be a "Gold Standard" used piano available. And whilst a Gold Standard used piano can never be as good as brand new Yamaha, you can rest assured that you are purchasing a piano that has been marketed by Yamaha Music Australia in the long term interests of Australian Consumers. Whilst you are at your Yamaha dealer, check out the new contemporary Series Yamahas... a new piano may be cheaper than you think.

Yamaha – The Gold Standard In Pianos

How Yamaha 'Seasons' its Pianos for Different Climatic Conditions!

There are a number of reasons why Yamaha pianos are way ahead of its competitors. Certainly too many to mention here. However, besides the company's much celebrated and recognised reputation for superior quality and craftsmanship, Yamaha is also renowned for its appreciation of different climatic conditions and its affect on musical instruments.

The above consideration is very interesting; especially when confronted with used piano imports being contemplated by potential piano purchasers. So what is the difference between a Yamaha Piano originally destined for Australia, and the used piano import.

As the piano travels through its extensive production process, there are three important stages that Yamaha employs to ensure that the piano will play at the most optimum level within its destined environment.

The first stage happens within the Kiln drying process of the lumber employed to craft the piano. The seasoning of the lumber occurs to further control the moisture content of the wood. Careful consideration is taken to keep in mind the final destination of the eventual piano. Temperatures and time within the kiln are adjusted to prepare the piano for its final destination.

The second stage occurs towards the end of a piano's completion. Just after the assembly of the external parts of the piano, and before the piano's final tuning, regulation, and voicing, the completed piano is placed in a controlled seasoning room. The piano sits within this enclosure for a period of time to enable stabilisation of the full unit and all its parts.

The ventilation and air circulation within the seasoning room is fashioned to that of the piano's final destination. This is done in an attempt to ensure that the piano and all its "living" parts are stabilised and settled in an environment similar to that of its final destination. (After all parts of the piano have been assembled and glued - the piano is still "living". That is, parts are still moving and not stable)

Depending on what region within the world the piano will finally be shipped to, the piano can spend up to a number of weeks within the seasoning room. Pianos destined for an environment that has a "super dry" climate, e.g: Australia, spend a longer period of time within this seasoning process.

After the piano has graduated from the seasoning process, all parts are checked, and adjusted if movement or shifting has occurred. At this point the piano's final tuning, regulation, and voicing occurs. It is then stamped and ready for shipment.

The final and third stage includes the secure packing of the instrument. The piano is packed to ensure the conservation of the seasoning process. As the piano travels and is shipped across various humidity and climatic conditions, such as tropical regions and high temperatures, the piano needs to be securely encased to ensure no "exposure" occurs.

Any exposure may tamper with the piano's seasoning result, and result in shifting of parts, shrinkage or expansion of the soundboard. Thus, ultimately hindering the piano's performance and condition within its eventual environmental home.

*For further details on Yamaha's Piano Production Process, or for further details on responding to consumers most asked questions about new vs old pianos, please contact Iva Luburic at Yamaha Music Australia.
Phone.. 03 9693 5162*

When Was Your Yamaha or Eterna Piano Made?

To check the age of a Yamaha or Eterna piano made in Japan, simply check the serial number against the list below.

YEAR	SERIAL No.	YEAR	SERIAL No.	YEAR	SERIAL No.
1900	Start of Production	1966	460,000	1983	3,680,000
1926	10,000	1967	570,000	1984	3,890,000
1934	20,000	1968	700,000	1985	4,040,000
1938	30,000	1969	820,000	1986	4,210,000
1947	40,000	1970	980,000	1987	4,360,000
1952	50,000	1971	1,150,000	1988	4,560,000
1954	60,000	1972	1,340,000	1989	4,680,000
1956	70,000	1973	1,540,000	1990	4,820,000
1957	80,000	1974	1,740,000	1991	4,960,000
1958	90,000	1975	1,950,000	1992	5,080,000
1959	100,000	1976	2,150,000	1993	5,190,000
1960	120,000	1977	2,360,000	1994	5,300,000
1961	150,000	1978	2,570,000	1995	5,390,000
1962	180,000	1979	2,800,000	1996	5,460,000
1963	230,000	1980	3,030,000	1997	5,520,000
1964	300,000	1981	3,260,000	1998	5,590,000
1965	370,000	1982	3,480,000	1999	5,810,000

Indonesia and Yamaha Pianos

LX-LU and U1F pianos are designed and developed at Yamaha Headquarters in Japan, drawing on over 100 years of accumulated Yamaha expertise. Many of the major parts are produced here as well, including flawlessly vacuum-cast V-Pro frames, copper wound strings for superb bass tones, and lathe-cut nickel-plated tuning pins. Yamaha Japan also oversees the production of other components, and provides technical support for assembly of these pianos, at Yamaha Indonesia.

Additional parts are produced and the pianos are assembled at Yamaha's ISO 9002-certified facilities in Indonesia. Here, components from other Yamaha production bases are combined with Indonesian Made structural and cabinetry elements, and transformed into finely finished Yamaha pianos. Tuning, regulation, voicing and inspection are performed by expert technicians, skilfully trained at Yamaha Japan, to ensure that the tone, touch and overall quality of these instruments meets Yamaha's worldwide standards.

Established in 1981, Yamaha Indonesia builds pianos to the same high standards for which all Yamaha instruments are renowned. Using Yamaha training, tools and techniques, this advanced, modern production base has earned the coveted ISO9002 certification for superior quality control.

Note: Only LX-LU model pianos are imported from Indonesia to Australia. The pianos imported to Australia are specifically built for Australian Conditions. The U1F piano is sold in Asia. Australia markets the U1PEZ piano from Japan.