

How to Buy a Good Used Piano

This is written mainly for those buying their first piano or simply trying to sort through all the many choices of used pianos they might find in their hunt for the right instrument at the right price.

Finding a good used piano is a lot like finding a good used car. The right choice can give you a lot of benefit for perhaps not a lot of money. However, a poor decision can be quite disappointing regardless of the initial cost. The important thing is to know for your own piece of mind what that piano must deliver to make it worth your trouble and expense.

This Piano's Beautiful!

What occurs first to many people is how the piano looks. There have been a lot of pianos brought home because someone fell in love with the piano cabinet before finding out of how this beautiful antique could tune or what extent of internal restoration it might need to be a useful musical instrument rather than just being something to decorate a room.

For a limited few, the sound quality and playability of a piano is not even an issue, and for these folks there are plenty of beautiful but nearly useless instruments that can be found.

But if you are looking for an instrument that sounds beautiful, consider this: refinishing - although not cheap - can add significantly to the visual appeal of an experienced piano that is already mechanically sound.

Check the stores and the advertising and you will find the piano manufacturers telling us that even some of their smaller upright pianos can cost \$5,000 to \$10,000 or more.

If a used piano you are considering looks rough around the edges but is reasonable sound internally, and the initial cost is not out-of-line, then the cost of refinishing the cabinet to high standards will give you something that looks great and sounds great for far less than what you would spend in a new piano showroom.

This Piano Sounds Great!

If someone has already decided a particular used piano sounds great, there you might have difficulty convincing them otherwise.

But you won't regret listening to multiple pianos and comparing. There is a great deal of variation in tone and resonance from one piano to the next. Even the most established piano artists vary a good bit on what they prefer in the tone department.

The important thing to pay attention to when checking for tone quality is consistency in volume and clarity as you play different parts of the keyboard.

Especially notice when you play in the bass area and move to the middle section of the keyboard. Many times if there is a problem with the soundboard or bass bridge, this is where it becomes obvious first.

You can get great sound, great looks, and great value in a used piano. But that piano will be in your home for a long time, so invest a little time up front to get something you will be happy with.