

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO AID IN THE PURCHASE OF A
NEW OR USED PIANO FOR USE IN THE HOME, CHURCH OR SCHOOL

by

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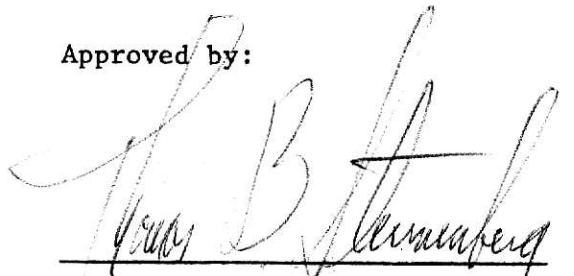
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INTRODUCTION

The need of a guide for individuals purchasing pianos has been evident for some time. This, then, will be an attempt to make available pertinent information to be considered when purchasing a piano. Research of periodicals and manufacturer's brochures provide guidelines for a report such as this. Books by piano technicians and piano researchers provide valuable information about the physical parts of the instruments.

Several years as a tuner-technician has made me realize the need for such a guide, and this experience has been invaluable in preparing this information.

CHAPTER I

THE MODERN PIANO

The piano is a complex, delicate, yet sturdy instrument which may provide many rewarding and relaxing hours. A piano may also be a provocative, disgraceful, and austere piece of furniture. Numerous factors may contribute to either situation.

Although the piano is complex as a unit, it is quite simple when reduced to basic mechanical study. Illustrations of the different kinds of instruments available are intended to aid the potential buyer in identification and evaluation of the proper instrument for the intended service.

A member of the family of stringed instruments, the piano is unique because of the manner by which the strings are excited. This is the only stringed instrument using hammers which inflict blows directly on the strings. The tone of the piano is also unique due to the striking of the strings.

Four elements are common to all pianos, namely:

1. A set of steel wire strings tuned to the eighty-eight sounds of the musical scale, and mounted on an iron plate.
2. An amplifying diaphragm, the soundboard, coupled to the strings, to help carry the sound produced.

3. The "action" which is the mechanism designed to transfer the blow of the hammer from the player to the string.

4. The supporting structure.¹

The illustrations of the different actions employed in pianos are shown for the benefit of anyone wishing to make a complete study. The types of action in vertical pianos should be studied by a person planning to make a purchase to aid in making the best selection. The drop lift action of the spinet piano is the least desirable to service and play due to the added parts necessary to couple the action to the keyboard. Other vertical pianos, employing direct lift action, operate in the same manner and need to be checked only for their response to the performer.

Figure I shows the top view of a grand piano, a portion of the laminated outside frame, and a bottom view.

The grand action is designed to strike the strings from the under side, as in figure II. Figure III is provided for the clarity it shows, and the association of name and part.

The vertical piano, though basically the same as a grand, is visible in a different way. Figure IV illustrates the posts that support the tension, the area of the soundboard,

¹William Braid White, Piano Tuning and Allied Arts, (Boston, Massachusetts, Tuners Supply Company, 1953) p. 113.

the ribs and the moving handle. This will virtually be the same in all vertical pianos.

Figure V is the end view of the larger vertical instrument (prior to 1930), and, again, will apply to all vertical pianos. The identifications made here will be valuable for anyone selecting a used piano.

A front cutaway view of a studio piano, figure VI, gives some idea of the length of the bass strings, and how important height is for achieving maximum length. This model is forty five and one-half inches tall. The speaking length of the longest bass string is forty-one and nine-tenths inches.

The end view of the large vertical piano action (prior to 1930) in figure VII shows that the primary difference between this action and that of the studio and console actions in figures VIII and IX is the length of the capstan. The need of striking the strings at the correct point demands that the action be placed at the proper height within the case.

Figure X, a cutaway view of the spinet piano, shows the compactness of the instrument. Because of shorter bass strings, additional copper windings are added to create proper vibrations. The size of the soundboard has diminished considerably. The end view, figure XI, of the spinet piano, clearly indicates the need of the drop-lift action employed in this piano. To allow the hammers to strike the strings

in the proper place, the action must be lowered below the level of a practical height of the keyboard.

The spinet drop-lift action is the subject of figure XII, showing the abstract that is necessary to cause the hammer to be activated. The additional parts necessary for this are:

1. The abstract rail.
2. The abstract lever.
3. The abstract.

The descriptions above are intended to furnish the reader with a brief illustration of the relationship of the various parts of the modern piano.

The history of the piano may be traced back to the earliest stringed instruments. The hammer action was first introduced in 1709 by Cristofori, and has been in the process of development ever since. The piano continues to be developed, probably because it is the basic instrument for the home and is widely used for solo and ensemble work.

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS PAGES
WITH DIAGRAMS
THAT ARE CROOKED
COMPARED TO THE
REST OF THE
INFORMATION ON
THE PAGE.**

**THIS IS AS
RECEIVED FROM
CUSTOMER.**

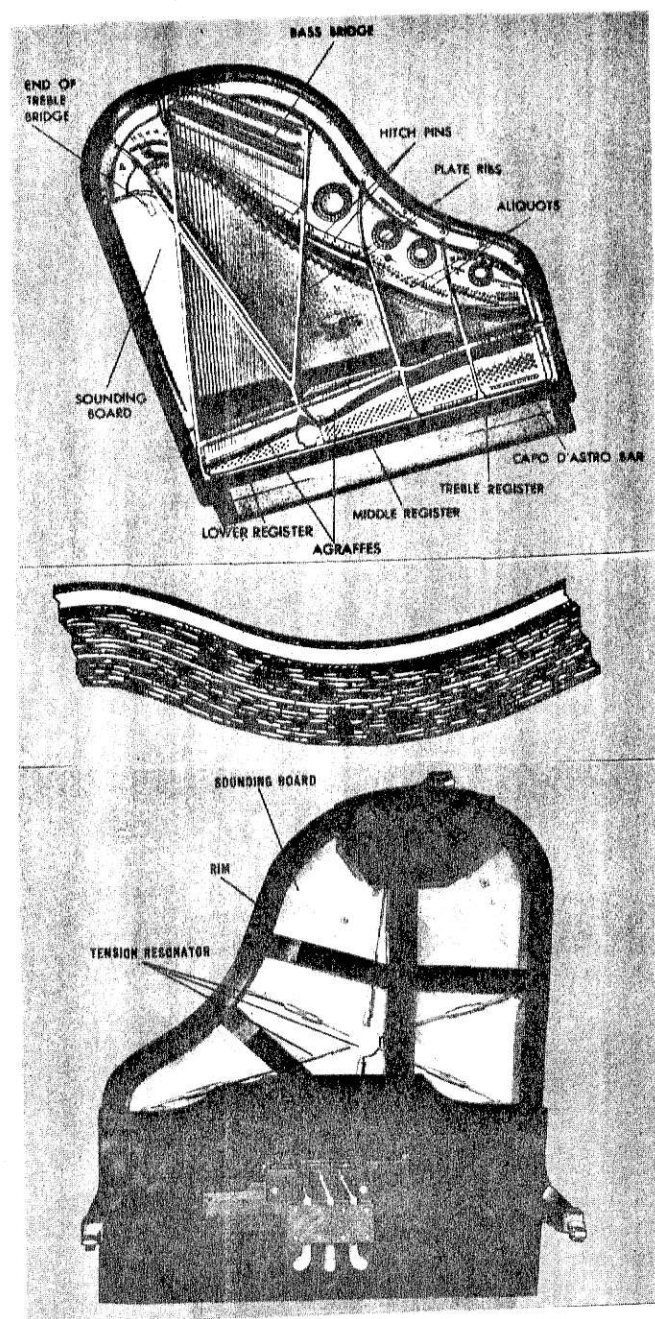
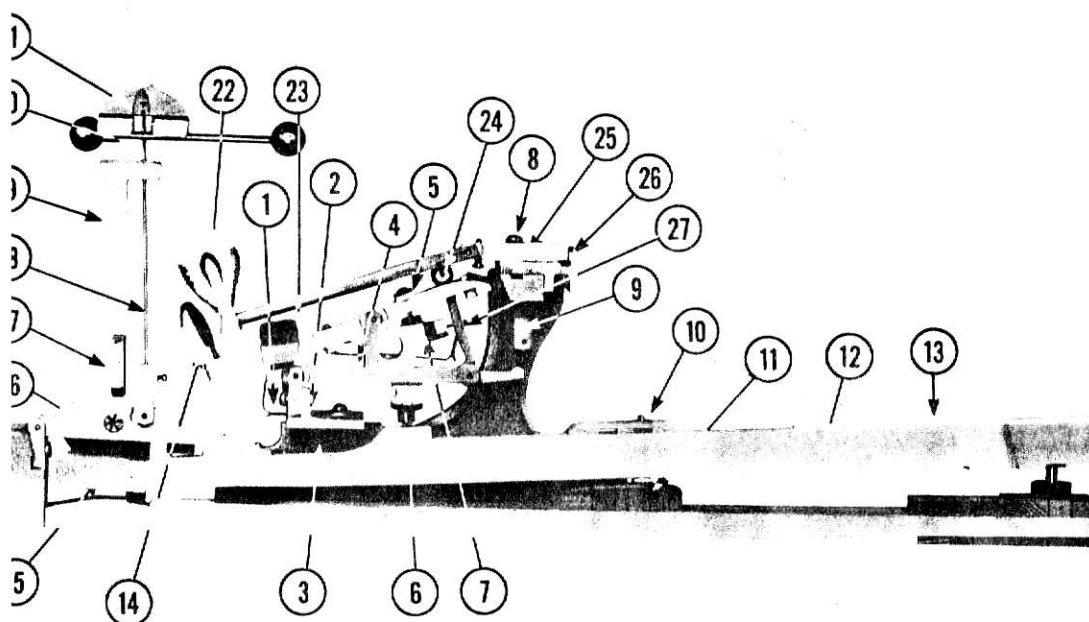


Figure I

1. Top view of a grand piano (Mason Hamlin)
2. View of a portion of the laminated outside frame
3. View of the underside of grand piano

KAWAI GRAND PIANO ACTION



- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Auxiliary Wippen Spring | 14. Back Check |
| 2. Wippen Rail | 15. Damper Lifter Board |
| 3. Action Brackets | 16. Damper Lever |
| 4. Repetition Lever & Jack Spring | 17. Up-Stop Rail |
| 5. Repetition Lever Regulating Screw | 18. Damper Wire |
| 6. Capstan Screw | 19. Damper Guide Rail |
| 7. Repetition Lever Support & Jack Stop | 20. Damper Felt |
| 8. Lock Washer & Screw | 21. Damper Head |
| 9. Let-Off Regulating Dowel | 22. Hammer |
| 10. Key Button | 23. Hammer Shank |
| 11. Inserts for Key Pins | 24. Knuckle (Roller) |
| 12. Spruce Keys | 25. Shank Flange |
| 13. Key Cover | 26. Shank Rail |
| | 27. Jack |

Figure II

Kawai Grand Action

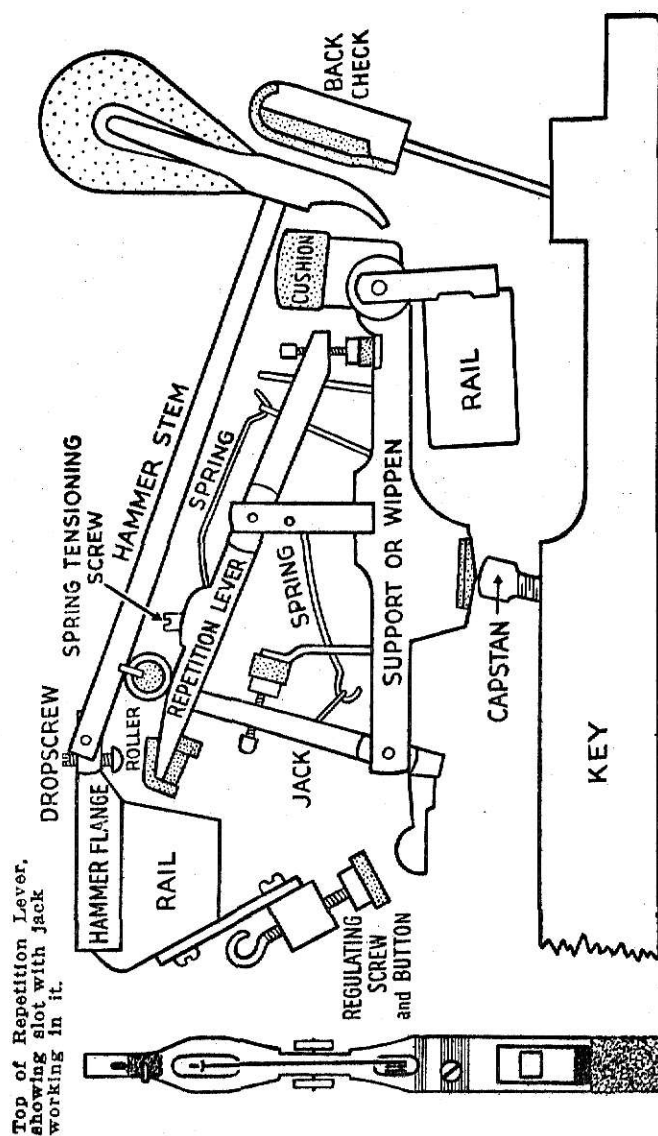


Figure III
Close-up of grand action

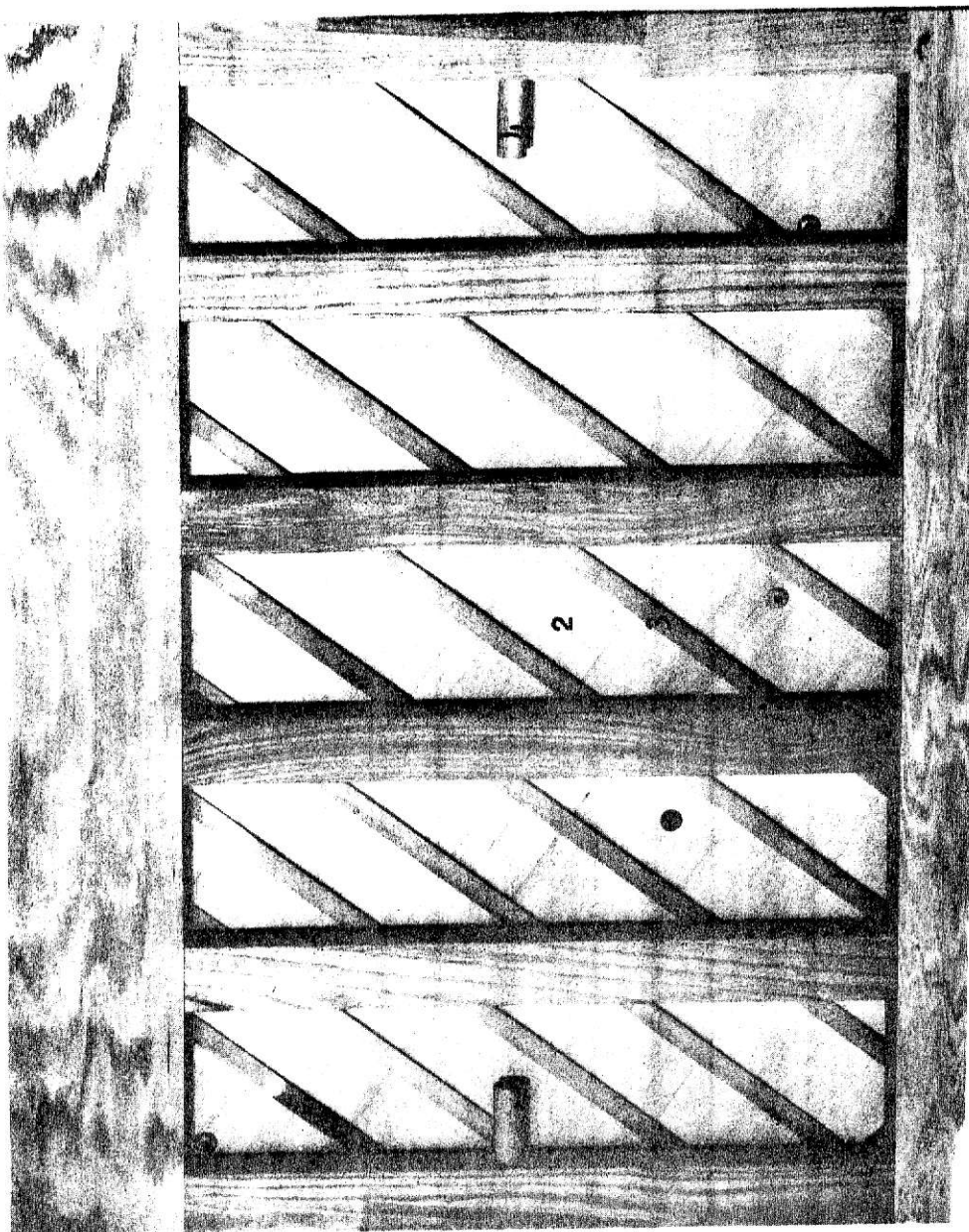


Figure IV

Back of vertical piano

- | | |
|---------|------------------|
| 1. Post | 2. Soundboard |
| 3. Rib | 4. Moving handle |

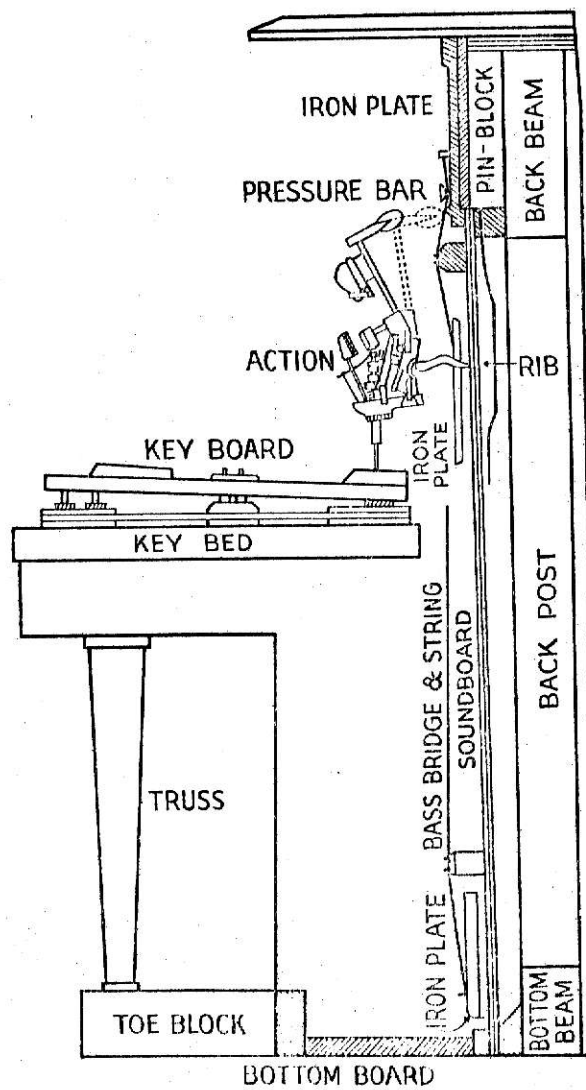


Figure V

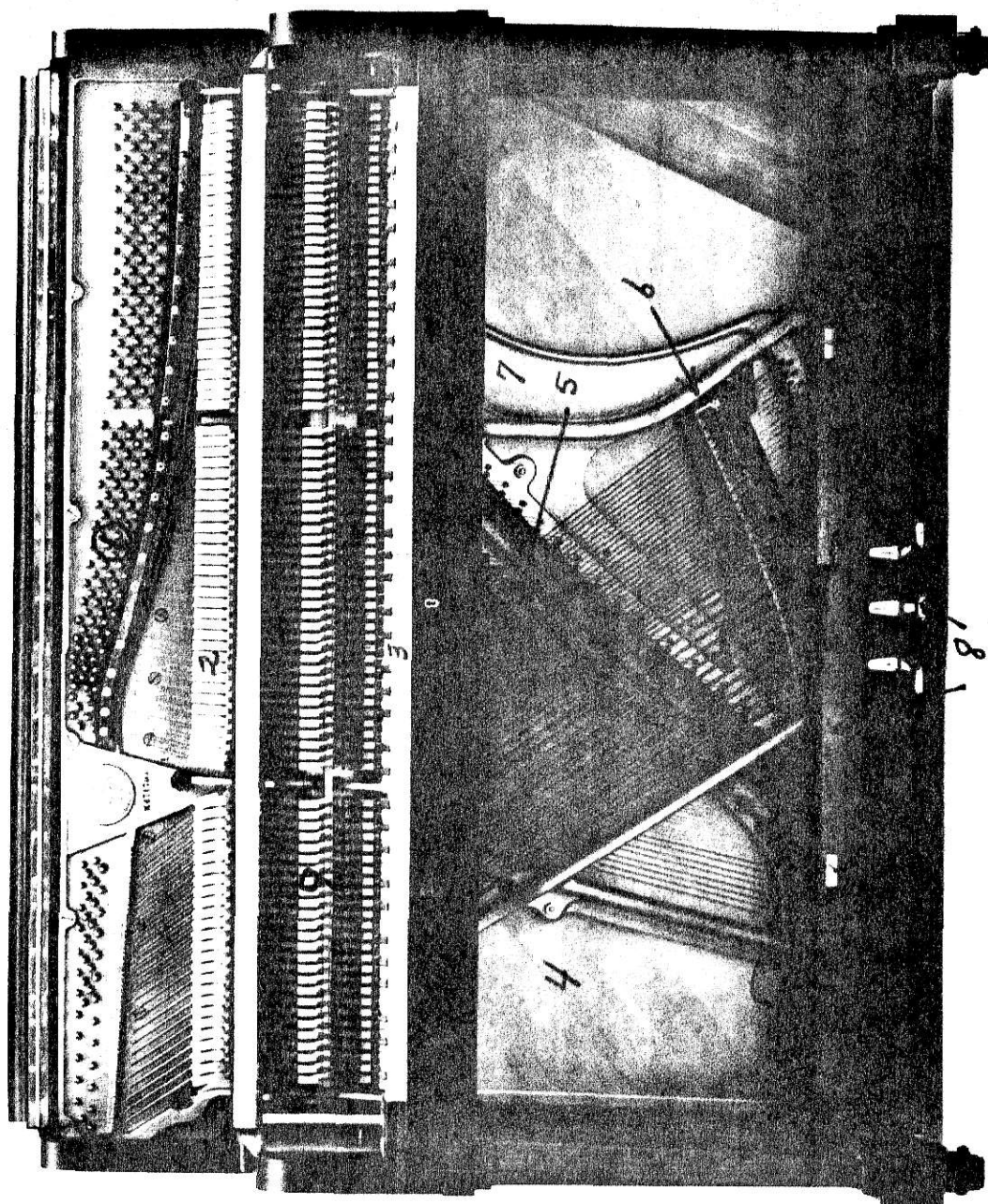


Figure VI

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Tuning pins | 2. Hammers |
| 3. Keyboard | 4. Soundboard |
| 5. Treble bridge | 6. Bass bridge |
| 7. Cast plate | 8. Pedals (trapwork) |
| 9. The action | |

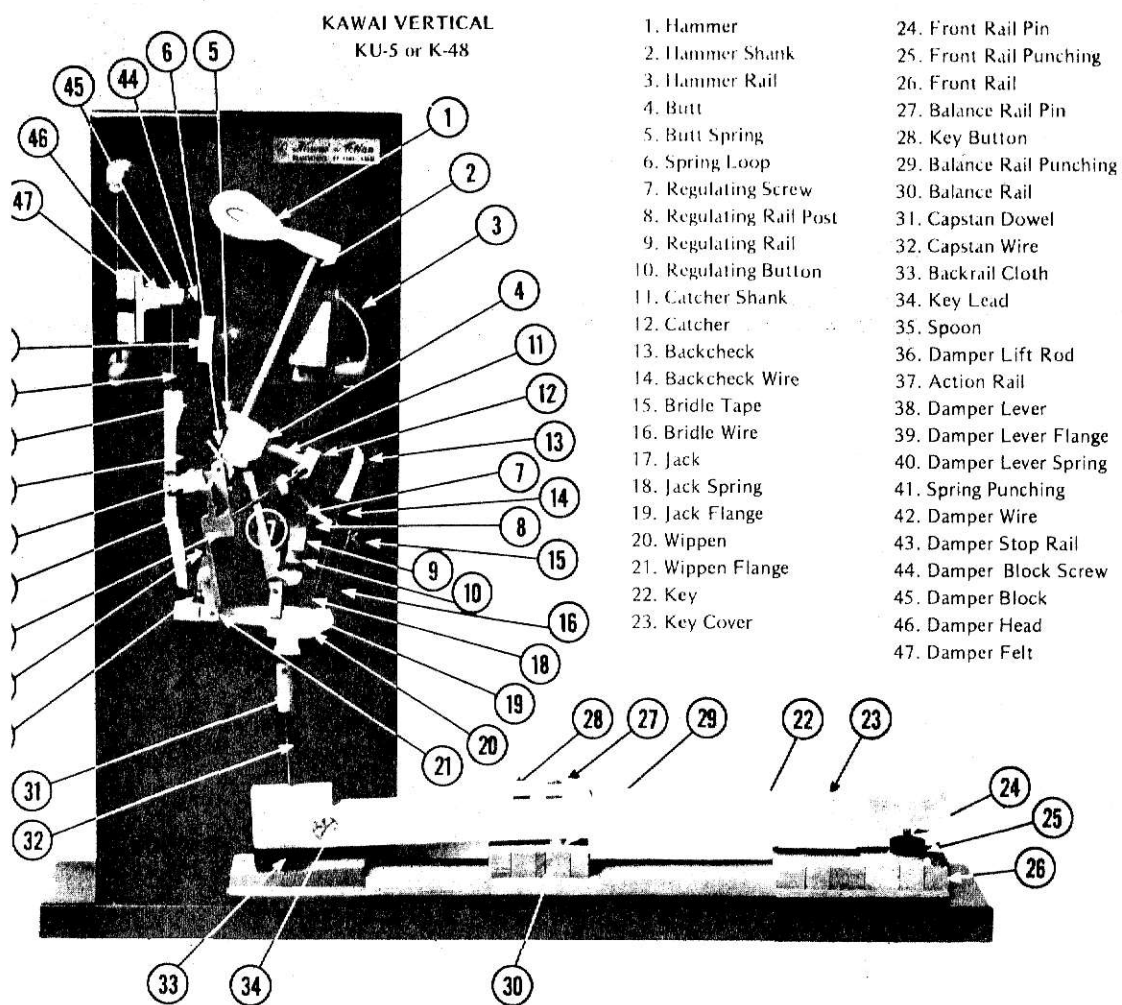


Figure VIII

Kawai studio vertical action

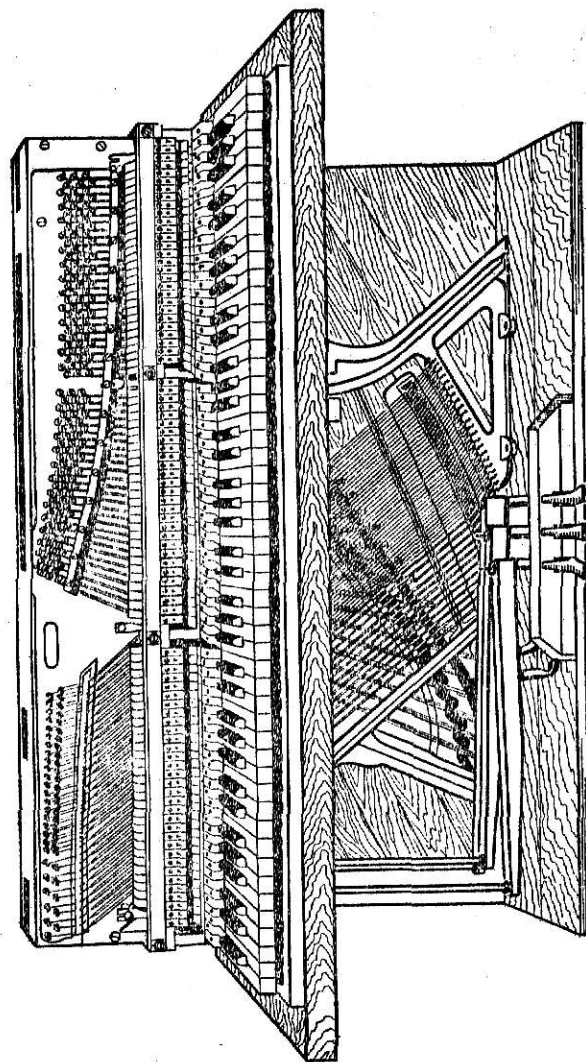


Figure X

Cut away view of spinet piano

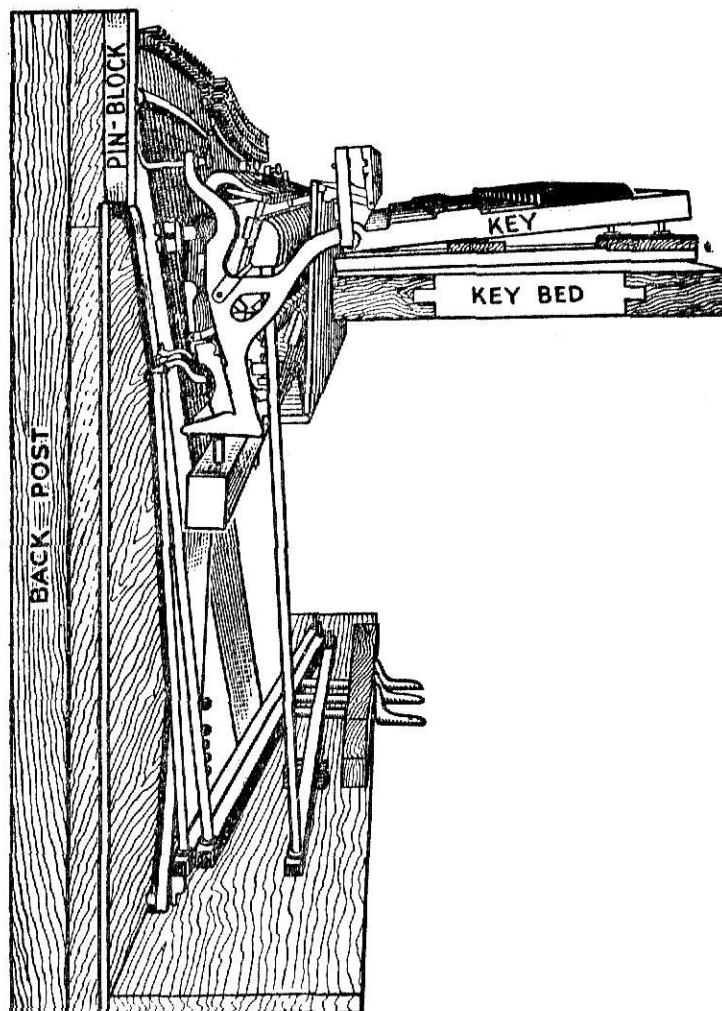


Figure XI

End view of spinet piano

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. Trapwork | 2. Soundboard |
| 3. Drop lift action | |

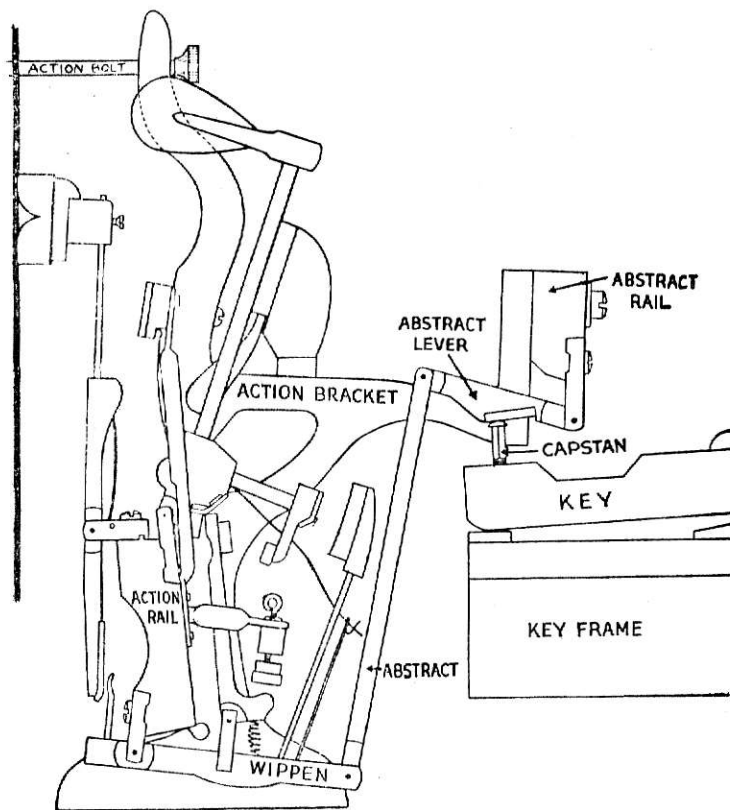


Figure XII
Spinet drop lift action

CHAPTER II

A GUIDE FOR PURCHASING A NEW PIANO

Buying a piano may well be a once-in-a-lifetime happening. A purchasing venture carrying this much importance demands preparation, thought, and study. In any given year, approximately 250,000 Americans will purchase new pianos.¹ Consider the life of the average home piano to be forty to fifty years, as compared to five years for an automobile, and the need for careful buying is quite evident.² The complexity of the instrument, some 12,000 pieces, further emphasizes the importance of dealing with reputable people.³

Who are the people?--merchants, manufacturers, tuner-technicians, and professional musicians. When the decision to purchase a piano is made, utilize as many of these people as possible. Do not hesitate to shop at several different stores, look and listen to as many instruments as are available. Frequently, dealers will carry more than one manufacturer's product, and several of each brand. If unable to

¹"How to choose a new piano," Better Homes & Gardens, Volumes 44 and 45 (October 1966) p. 164.

²"How much is a piano," Etude, Volume 53 (September 1935) p. 502.

³"Good pianos don't just happen," House and Garden, Volume 100 (December 1951) pp. 181-182.

locate a dealer selling a particular instrument which has been recommended, piano manufacturers will provide information including names of dealers of the specific product in the area.

Tuner-technicians are helpful in selecting both a piano and a dealer. Their experience in servicing most manufacturer's products offer an invaluable knowledge of the "working parts" of a piano. This type of advice is sometimes worthy of a fee, especially if the technician must make a special effort to see the instrument.

Professional musicians, teachers, performing artists, and public school teachers in music have knowledge of many different pianos and may be able to suggest the best instrument for a particular need. These people are an excellent source since they will usually be familiar with the person or persons who will be the prime users of the instrument.

Before deciding on one instrument, consider the use the instrument will get. When buying for a school or church, keep in mind the type of pianists that will be using the instrument. Concert artists usually prefer a piano with a "hard" touch, one that demands strength, developed over years of practice, to initiate a response. Most pianists other than the artists prefer a lighter touch, but not so light that it does not feel responsive. The hard or heavy touch is usually found in the large grand pianos designed for concert use.

Piano manufacturers build instruments with specific needs in mind. Most of the differences between institutional and home pianos are visible from the outside. In other words, the size and the cabinetry will usually identify a church piano, a school piano, and a home piano. Of course, the instruments designed for church and school also are excellent home pianos.

Since a piano is not only a sizeable investment, but also a sizeable piece of furniture, it is wise to be sure the instrument preferred will fit in the available space. If information is obtained from manufacturers, the size of the instrument will be provided. Dealers also have paper cut-outs of grand pianos which may be borrowed to determine the size of instrument that may be adapted to the available space. To determine the size of a grand piano, measure from the front of the keyboard to the farthest point of the rounded end. This measurement may be any length from four feet to nine feet. The designations such as "baby grand," "studio grand," and "concert grand," have no value as a measurement of size since manufacturers and laymen may call a seven foot grand any one of them. The keyboard width of all pianos with the standard eighty-eight keyboard will vary--from fifty six to sixty two inches.

Size determines volume. The larger pianos are designed to fill the largest concert halls. The smaller instruments

are designed to make a pleasing sound in home and studio surroundings. This does not, however, mean that some of the smaller instruments will not provide adequate sound for larger rooms or that large concert instruments will not perform adequately in smaller surroundings. The size of the instrument determines the size of the sounding board, and the effect on the fullness of tone will be quite evident to anyone comparing a grand, a studio, and a spinet piano.

The lowest bass strings vary in length from thirty seven inches in spinet pianos to ninety inches in the large grand pianos. Manufacturers have designed each instrument to respond to striking points and vibration cycles to obtain the best sound from each string length. The top note "C" of all pianos is approximately two inches in length. To compensate for the difference in length of the bass strings of the grand piano and the spinet piano, additional copper windings are added to the strings of the spinet to create near proper vibrations. The pitch of the shorter bass strings may be quite accurate, but the tone will be more harsh, less loud, and of shorter duration. The combined tension of the strings on a piano will total approximately forty thousand pounds. This will vary slightly with the number of strings on the piano. The design of the cast iron plate and the supporting wooden frame will determine how well a piano holds this tension, and consequently, its tune.

To activate the strings of the piano, "a Rube Goldberg maze of hammers, shanks, and other parts - about 7,000 - by which the strings are attacked," called "the action" is employed.⁴ There are three types of action. The grand action is employed only in grand pianos. It lies horizontal and the hammers strike the strings from the under side. Two types of action are found in vertical pianos; direct lift action, meaning the key lifts directly on the leverage which drives the hammer to the string, and drop lift action which has the keybed above the action parts and utilizes additional mechanism called the abstract to move the action. The drop lift action is found only in spinet pianos and is to be avoided whenever possible. A new style piano called the console, which is approximately four inches taller than the spinet, is replacing the spinet because it employs the direct lift action.

The "trapwork," or pedals, may be a selling point on a piano. Both two and three pedal models are manufactured. The pedal on the right side releases the damper from the strings to produce a sustaining quality throughout the instrument. The pedal on the left side moves the keybed to the right on most grand pianos to cause the hammers striking multiple strings (two or three) to strike one less. On

⁴"Good pianos don't just happen," House and Garden, Volume 100 (December 1951) pp. 181-182.

vertical pianos, the hammers are moved closer to the strings to lessen the striking force. Thus, this pedal is often referred to as the "soft" pedal. The center pedal on most grand pianos, and some vertical pianos, will sustain a chord or a note if depressed while either is struck. On vertical pianos, and on some grand pianos, the center pedal will sustain notes in the lower register. This pedal is called the "sostenuto" or selective sustaining pedal. It will be wise to examine the function of the center pedal because some manufacturers install this pedal and link it to the soft pedal, thereby having two pedals performing the same function.

A new instrument has been tuned several times at the factory to establish equal tension and to test the structure. A "voicer" has worked at least seven hours regulating the denseness of the hammers to insure production of an equal sound throughout the instrument. About nine months are required to produce a piano. Each instrument will have its own "personality." Some refer to pianos as being animate, and since each will have its own sound and touch, this may be a valid assessment.

The style and finish of a piano are most certainly a basis for selection. Through the years, many designs have been offered. About fifteen percent of each year's

production is stylistic. The greatest trend in this type of design came in the late nineteen forties and fifties following World War II. Standard furniture designs such as Chippendale, Queen Anne, and Louis XV are predominate with simplifications.⁵ Natural wood finishes and the ebony finish are most popular.

The "best" piano will be the best buy. Prices, as of 1970, range from \$500.00 to \$6,000.00 for home and school pianos with a practical high of \$9,000.00 for a concert grand. Spread over the forty year expected life span of a home piano, the cost of the best piano is reasonable. The better piano will usually maintain better tone with less care, and afford more enjoyment throughout the years.

Piano manufacturers recommend four to six tunings the first year of the home life of a piano, and a minimum of two tunings per year thereafter. Many things will effect the needs of the piano such as temperature changes, humidity changes, moving, and, of course, use. Employing a reliable tuner-technician on an annual basis is often the most economical method of maintaining a piano. He will be able to determine what service is needed, keep the action clean, and help provide the utmost enjoyment from the instrument.

⁵"How to buy, and where to place a piano," House and Garden, Volume 102 (December 1952) pp. 118-121.

The guarantee, or warranty, covering the different parts of a piano are with the company which manufactured the instrument. The dealer usually provides one free tuning after the piano has been delivered to the purchaser, but he has no obligation for adjustments or warranty.

Should a piano prove to be unsatisfactory, the owner will deal directly with the manufacturer or his assigned representative. A conscientious dealer may assist the owner in such instances.

CHAPTER III

A GUIDE FOR PURCHASING A USED PIANO

There are many pitfalls in purchasing used pianos, and it is the purpose of this chapter to eliminate as many of these as possible.

A piano has a curious split personality. It is actually a musical instrument, and a conspicuous piece of furniture. Although there is a similarity, buying a used piano is quite different from buying a used automobile. Reputable dealers are preferred in both instances. Adding to the risk of buying a used piano is the fact that four out of ten are purchased directly from the owners.¹

When buying a used piano, there are many different people who may offer suggestions. A reputable dealer, a music teacher, a tuner-technician, or a performing artist may provide valuable information. Few individuals have the knowledge to evaluate a piano. A teacher or performer may be able to judge the touch, tone, and exterior condition. A tuner-technician may be able to appraise the working parts of an instrument, but he may have little knowledge of other

¹"A buying guide for used pianos," Good Housekeeping, (September, 1962) pp. 158, 159.

factors, especially as to how the instrument will respond for another person. Therefore, though it may merit a fee, it is wise to obtain advice from more than one source. Purchasing a used piano without careful inspection could prove to be most unsatisfactory.

The condition of a used piano is much more important than age. Many of the things that require inspection may be observed by the layman. The outward appearance of a piano can be repaired by anyone with some ability for working with wood. Refinishing of wood, painting and gluing veneer are quite simple tasks. If the instrument is to be refinished or painted, remove all parts that a tuner will have to remove when tuning the piano. A few screws will allow most all of the wood on the front of the piano to be removed. This will insure against chipping the surface after the instrument is re-assembled.

Start the inspection of the working parts at the back of the instrument. The wood between the posts is the soundboard. The grain will run diagonally and be reinforced by "ribs." If there is a separation from the ribs, don't buy the piano, for this is a costly repair. Small cracks paralleling the grain of the soundboard are not necessarily reasons to discard the instrument. Few used instruments are completely free from these; however, they may add to later

problems.² If there is doubt about the seriousness of such a crack, strike a note opposite the crack. If this produces a buzz, the crack will probably be beyond practical repair.

The keyboard is the next part to inspect. Ignore discoloration of ivories, as light sanding will remove most discoloration. Missing ivories may be replaced; however, if several are missing, it may be an indication of deterioration of glue throughout the instrument. Replacement of ivories worn by playing is best accomplished by sending them to a piano supply house for complete recovering at an approximate cost of sixty dollars. Older instruments had ivory covering on the keys, and this was always in two pieces, one on the key and the other on the tail piece. More recent instruments are covered with ivory or plastic coverings put on in one piece. This has been a most satisfactory covering which is easy to maintain. The keys should have slight movement from side to side, but not so much as to let them touch adjacent keys. Excessive movement of several keys indicates missing felts which, again, may cost more to repair than the instrument will merit.

With the front of the piano removed, the entire action becomes visible. The hammers, the part of the action which strikes the strings to produce sound, should have slight

²Paul Gordon, "How to buy a good used piano," Better Homes and Gardens, (March, 1964) pp. 104-106.

grooves where they contact the strings.³ If this is not evident, the piano has not been used, or the hammers have been restored. Often, pianos that have not been used become "dead," and will never produce pleasing sound. If the hammers have been restored, they will appear nearly white in color and this is a good indication of proper care. Check for loose hammers by twisting them slightly. Loose hammers will not produce good sounds, and may cause clicking noises.

The small web straps with leather tips are called bridle straps. Their purpose is to return the hammer for rapid playing. If they are new, this is another indication of good care. If they show age, and some are broken, test them by pulling gently on them. Replacement of bridle straps is not a costly repair--approximately fifteen to twenty dollars.

Strike some notes. If they give a crisp sound which stops upon releasing the key, the dampers are satisfactory. The dampers are the pieces of felt pressing against the strings, except in the upper two octaves. Their purpose is to stop the vibration of the strings. If moisture, moth, or mice have damaged the instrument, the dampers are usually the first to show it.

³Jay J. Earl, "Buy a piano you'll keep on enjoying," Popular Mechanics Magazine, (February, 1964) pp. 124-125.

Look carefully at the strings, checking for rust, spliced or replaced strings, and the number of strings. Some of the excessively cheap pianos have only two strings per note in the upper register. Avoid such an instrument. The bass strings with copper windings sometimes collect rust and dirt, and the windings may come loose and cause unwanted vibrations. The single strings may show excessive rust at the tuning pins. All of these indications may lead to string replacement. The cost of replacing the bass strings will be from seventy five to one hundred dollars.

The "pins" were previously mentioned. The tuning pin holds the upper end of the string, and is the means of tightening or loosening the string for tuning. The pins are set in a plank of plywood. If there is any unevenness in size of the pins or any show of oily substance around the tuning pins, the piano is in serious need of repairs, or is possibly unrepairable. If there are any notes extremely out of tune, have a tuner-technician check the instrument to see if it can be tuned.

The action may have some lateral movement, but should not have so much that it is noisy when striking a note. If it produces a rattling sound and has lateral movement, the cost of repair is probably beyond the value of the instrument. A tuner-technician can detect the cause of such movement, and in rare cases, adjustments can be made to correct this type of defect quite reasonably.

Indications of moisture inside the instrument should give cause for concern. The effect of moisture on glue and felt may produce latent repairs.

Another cause of rattles or buzzing is a cracked plate. The cast iron "plate" is the "backbone" of the piano. The purpose of the plate is to strengthen the surrounding wood and make it stable. Cracks usually occur around bolt holes in the narrow portions of the plate. If cracks are found, the instrument is not worthy of repair.

The "bridges" are found under the keyboard. They are the pieces of hardwood glued to the front side of the soundboard that carry the bottom end of the strings. They also transfer the vibrations of the strings to the soundboard. Many small bridge pins which are placed to keep the strings from rattling may have caused the bridges to crack. If the cracks are serious enough to let the strings rattle, the repair will be too costly to be practical.

Some dealers offer reconditioned pianos. This usually indicates that they have tightened some screws, blown out some dust and polished the case. Actually, this is all some pianos require to make them ready for sale.

Rebuilt pianos offered by some stores, especially stores employing a technician on a regular basis, supposedly have been restored to "like new" condition. The previously mentioned inspection has been done by the technician and only

those instruments worthy of restoration are salvaged. When the work can be assured, these instruments are a safe, wise purchase. Grand pianos are usually available in rebuilt condition.

A piano bearing a reputable manufacturer's name on the fall board, which covers the keys when the instrument is not in use, may not necessarily be made by that company. Some reconditioners apply a "name" stencil on the front of the piano to increase saleability. Most manufacturers have their name cast in the plate inside the piano. This is another good reason for looking inside the instrument. Be sure the name on the outside matches the name on the inside.

Most tuner-technicians have "Michel's Piano Atlas," recently changed to "Bob Pierce's Piano Atlas," giving the year of manufacture of nearly all pianos produced in the last one hundred years. To help with some general identifications, the large upright pianos were discontinued in 1929.⁴ Spinet pianos became prominent in the late nineteen thirties and about nine out of ten new pianos sold are of the spinet-console variety.⁵ During World War II, several spinet pianos were made with plastic elbows on the abstract of the action. At this time, these are deteriorating and may be replaced with wood at an approximate cost of one dollar per elbow.

⁴"A buying guide for used pianos," Good Housekeeping Magazine, (September 1962) pp. 158-159.

⁵Lenore and Sidney G. Wolfe, "Do you know how to buy a piano?", House and Garden Magazine, (December, 1951) p. 181.

A good piano has a life expectancy of forty to fifty years. In certain instances, pianos seventy years old and older are found to be in good playing condition. However, pianos, like most everything else, do not improve with age. Normal wear loosens the action, and age deteriorates the glued parts. In older instruments, felt parts may be badly moth eaten. Felts in more recent instruments have been moth-proofed. Technological developments through the years have improved design and materials used in the construction of pianos, and in recent years, many more models and styles of pianos have been built to meet larger demands of the market. Most of the added models are in the cheaper price range which adds to the caution necessary when buying a used piano. All companies continue to manufacture at least one first line instrument, and this is the piano which affords the best buy when purchasing either a new or used instrument. It is advisable to select the largest instrument which can be accommodated for the utmost in tone, quality, and lasting enjoyment.

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MANUFACTURER'S BULLETINS

Aeolian Corporation, 2722 Pershing Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee.

Manufacturers of: Cable, Chickering, Hardman, Ivers
& Pond, Knabe, Kranich & Bach, Mason & Hamlin, Musette,
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of: Everett, Cable-Nelson.

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Kohler & Campbell, Inc., Granite Falls, North Carolina.

Krakauer Bros., 115 East 138th Street, Bronx, New York.

Rippen Piano-Fabriek N.V., Ede, Holland.

Steinway & Sons, Steinway Place, Long Island City, New York.

Wurlitzer Piano & Organ Company, DeKalb, Illinois.

Yamaha International Corporation, 6600 Orangethorpe Avenue
Buena Park, California.

GLOSSARY

- Abstract - The additional parts required to connect the key to the action on a spinet piano.
- Action - The mechanism interposed between the hammer and the performer.
- Bridge - A wooden structure fastened to the soundboard coupling to the latter the strings which pass across it.
- Bridge pin - Steel wires placed in the bridge to maintain proper string alignment.
- Bridle tape - Used only in vertical pianos to return the hammer to home position.
- Cabinetry - The case of the piano whether stylized or conventional.
- Case - The outer part of the piano.
- Chord - Two or more notes played simultaneously.
- Console - A designation for the smallest piano employing direct lift action.
- Damper - The felt part which causes the vibrations of a string to stop.
- Direct lift - Refers to the action in vertical pianos which is activated directly from the key.
- Drop lift - refers to the action in a spinet piano which employs the abstract to activate the hammer.
- Fall board - The part of the cabinetry designed to cover the keyboard when the piano is not in use.
- Grain - The grain of the wood used in the construction of a piano.
- Grand - Common terminology for the "Grand Piano."
- Hammer - A felt covered piece of wood which strikes the string of the piano to cause it to vibrate and create sound.
- Ivory - Used as a covering for the keys on older pianos, and it now implies "Ivory" or plastic presently being used.
- Jack - A part of the action which is directly responsible for the movement of the hammer.
- Key - The part of the piano which links the performer with the action.
- Keybed - Structural framing under the keyboard.
- Keyboard - Refers to the entire playing area of the piano, usually consisting of eighty eight keys.
- Pedal - The part of the trapwork which the performer utilizes to aid in the control of the sound of the piano.
- Pin - Refers to the tuning pin which is set in the wrest plank and is turned to raise or lower the pitch of a string.
- Plate - The cast iron framing inside the piano which aids in controlling the tension.
- Rib - The reinforcing wood added to the soundboard.

Glossary continued:

- Rebuilt - Refers to used pianos which have been restored to "like new" condition.
- Reconditioned - Indicates that some attention has been given to a used piano.
- Soundboard - The diaphragm of the piano which amplifies the sound created by the strings through the bridges.
- Spinnet - The smallest piano manufactured utilizing the drop lift action.
- String - Terminology for the steel wires which cause the piano to produce sound.
- Soft - Usually refers to the left pedal.
- Sostenuto - The center pedal of the trapwork - selective sustaining pedal.
- Sustaining - The right pedal on the piano which removes the dampers from the strings.
- Tailpiece - The extended part of the key.
- Trapwork - Refers to the mechanism which is activated by the pedals.
- Vertical - A term used to define pianos which have vertical action and strings.
- Vibrations - A measurement relating to sound and sound produced.
- Windings - The copper or steel windings placed over the strings in the lower register of the piano.
- Wrestplank - A piece of laminated wood which has holes drilled to receive the tuning pins.

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO AID IN THE PURCHASE OF A
NEW OR USED PIANO FOR USE IN THE HOME, CHURCH OR SCHOOL

by

CLAIRE EUGENE KAHLER

B. A. OTTAWA UNIVERSITY, 1959

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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ABSTRACT

The need for a guide for purchasing pianos became evident through my work as a piano technician.

The modern piano has evolved from the family of stringed instruments to its present day reality as a result of research, study, and trial and error developments. As a complete unit, the piano becomes complicated, however, the basic mechanics of the instrument are quite simple. Two main classifications of this instrument continue to be manufactured. They are the grand piano, and the vertical piano. The vertical is often referred to as an upright, cabinet grand, spinet, console and studio piano.

Popularity of the piano continues to make it a standard in the field of music. Frequent use of the piano in the home has increased the need for fundamental knowledge of the instrument to many more people. The need of organizations, such as churches and schools, to purchase new instruments make such a report helpful and worthwhile for those assigned to direct such a purchase. Familiarity with warranties, and the obligations of dealers need to be clearly defined and understood before a new instrument is purchased.

Due to the large number of used instruments purchased, it seems only fitting that buyers be as well informed as is possible before purchasing the used piano. Persons, such as teachers, dealers, and tuner-technicians may assist in the

purchase of either a new or used instrument. If there is not time or desire for consideration of this report or similar information, one who is assigned, or plans to make such a purchase, should contact as many of these informants as possible.

The bibliography is selected from informative articles written by qualified individuals in this field, and the glossary is intended to fulfill the most immediate needs of someone desiring a basic understanding of the indentifications and functions of parts of the piano.