

10 Expert Tips To Buying a Used Piano

Thanks for your interest in pianos...

Sometimes, people who have a used piano that is for sale know a great deal about the piano and its past. On the other hand, many times they have no information whatsoever about the real history of the piano, even if it came from a family member. Hopefully, the following tips will prove helpful, whether considering a piano from a private owner or a piano dealer.

Tip #1:

Did the current owner/seller purchase or acquire the piano new or used?

- If the piano was purchased used it can be a sign to proceed cautiously; much of the piano's life and history may be unknown to the current owner/seller, especially the crucial early part...
- If the piano was purchased new, the seller should know and be able to relate most, if not the entire, history of the instrument.

Tip #2:

Where has the piano spent its life?

- If the piano has not been consistently in a home or homelike environment there could be any number of issues, inside and out. Beware of any piano that has been in storage, or in the basement or a garage.
- Temperature and humidity are the things that most greatly affect the life of a piano.
- Smoke, pets and insects can impart odors (or more!) that can linger and be very difficult to deal with or correct.
- Open the lid and the bottom of the piano to look for evidence of moisture, wooden or felt parts being chewed on, or unpleasant aromas. Be alert!

Tip #3:

When was the piano last tuned? Has it been tuned regularly?

- Regular tuning and maintenance are very important to the longevity of a piano, especially when it's new. Pianos should be tuned at

least once a year to insure their continued acceptable musical performance.

- Even if the piano was purchased new, if it hasn't been maintained regularly there could be problems that are not readily apparent to the untrained eye...especially if it has been several years since it was service.

Tip #4:

Listen to the piano, one note at a time; play the keys slowly, then quickly, from one end of the keyboard to the other...

- Do you like the sound or 'tone' of the piano? Is it pleasant to your ear?
- Do you hear any notes that sound way "out-of-whack?"
- An unpleasant tone will tend to get more and more unpleasant over time, unless a competent technician can correct it.

Tip #5:

Again, one note at a time, this time paying attention to the feel or 'touch' of the keyboard...

- Do all the keys work? Do they feel the same across the piano keyboard?
- Are the keys level? -Do the keys move easily side-to-side or have gaps between?
- Any of these conditions might indicate that work must be done on the piano to make it acceptable as a suitable learning instrument.

Tip #6:

Look at the cabinet and outside of the piano, including the pedals...

- Many people use a piano as a 'table top,' placing all kinds of items, including flower vases full of water, on top of the piano as decoration; it's also common for people to place drinks, pencils and other objects on the piano lid or the music shelf...
- Look for damage to the finish by spilled water, scratches from picture frames, or other cabinet damage—is that damage acceptable to you?

- If there is evidence of moisture on the outside of the cabinet, check the inside to be sure the water never got inside (see Tip #2).

Tip #7:

Who played the piano?

- If the piano was only played by children learning to play, it could be fine or it could have been unintentionally mistreated with toys or kids tools. Look again for damage to the keys.
- It's a much better sign if a serious or conscientious student played the piano over a long period of time.

Tip #8:

Why is the piano for sale?

This may have already been stated by or before this point...if not, it's good to know why someone would be willing to part with a quality musical instrument...does the reason make sense?

Tip #9:

How will the piano fit in your home?

- Remember that a piano placed in a room becomes the focal point of that room, almost without exception.
- When trying to find a decent used piano, the first thing that is usually sacrificed is the cabinet style or appearance—there are many really good used pianos that were designed for homes years ago with different decorative styles
- Be sure you will not regret choosing your piano every time you (or anyone) enters the room!

Tip #10:

After considering the preceding tips, step back and use your common sense and your five senses:

- Sight – How does it look?
- Hearing – How does it sound?
- Touch – How does it feel and play?
- Smell – Are there any odors associated with the piano?
- Taste – Is this piano something I can live with in my home for years?

If you would like more help or have any questions, feel free to make a request call or visit us on the web.

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