

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AND WHAT THE NAY-SAYERS AND MOST NEW PIANO DEALERS **WON'T** TELL YOU.

Apparently both Yamaha and Kawai companies and their dealers find it necessary to attempt to convince buyers that restored pianos from Japan should not be purchased. The reason? COMPETITION! Although they say problems "could" develop, we have not had one single problem with any piano in over 25 years. Larry Fine in his publication, *The Piano Book*, notes that there are no more problems with restored Yamaha and Kawai pianos than new ones. This is corroborated by piano technicians over the U.S. If we did see the problems that are emphasized by dealers and the companies, we would not sell them in the first place nor warranty them. Yamaha Corp. I am told, says that they sell all of their pianos and there is no "competition with used pianos". Having sold hundreds of used Yamaha and Kawai pianos, I happen to know that **those customers did not buy new** and were completely satisfied as well as their technicians that perform service. That is competition! - regardless of what the corporate information officer says.

PLEASE BEAR WITH AND UNDERSTAND THAT THIS GUIDE IS MORE IN THE CLASS OF A MINI ESSAY ON THE ISSUES SURROUNDING THESE PIANOS. IT IS DESIGNED TO LET YOU KNOW THE REALISTIC OTHER SIDE OF THE CONTROVERSY. I consider myself to be un-biased, since I sell all pianos, both new, used and restored and have NO interest in falsely representing anything! My position as a professional church organist, business person and consultant for pianos and organs, involves a reputation that I will not jeopardize for something as mundane and inconsequential as defending something I know is untrue just to make a *few dollars more*. However, your decisions are your own and the purpose of this paper is designed to shed the light of day on the important distinction between quality and value vs. those entities that would have you spend more of your money to buy expensive new products when equally fine restored products are available.

In my opinion, after years of looking at the facts, and listening to this surreal conversation surrounding used and restored pianos, it has become apparent that what has developed is: **a sophisticated scheme, engineered to psychologically maneuver piano customers into NEW PIANO purchases. It is well planned and orchestrated to make you think that restored Yamaha and Kawai pianos are actually second class Yamaha and Kawai pianos and are somehow defective and not a BONAFIDE, GENUINE Yamaha or Kawai!** If you have that picture in your mind, consider yourself *manipulated*....And when you hear or read the term "restored Yamaha or Kawai piano", it sort of tarnishes the piano in your mind...doesn't it? Of course it does, because?...you have been programmed and are being led down the *yellow brick road* to a high priced new piano...*Gotcha didn't they?* Sure they did!...that's what they want you to do.

For a realistic conversation about this, let us look at Steinway and other makers response to questions about used, restored pianos. If you call Steinway, or Bosendorfer, Baldwin, Mason-Hamlin or any quality piano maker and inquire about a used or restored grand or upright that you are about to purchase, you will likely receive a comment similar to this: *Thank you for calling. Yes, we feel our older pianos are very fine and parts are available. However we invite you to look at our new pianos, we do make changes.* This will more or less be the end of the conversation. Why would they want to plant the seed of doubt in your mind about their older pianos or restored pianos or anything else negative regarding their products?

Why do we have the conversation out in the world about "Restored Yamaha & Kawai Pianos"? Why don't we have this conversation about Kimball, Story & Clarke, Young Chang and a multitude of others? Why just Yamaha and Kawai? Well, it so happens that Yamaha and Kawai, without a doubt, have the most efficient process anywhere for producing high quality pianos on an assembly line basis and in large quantities....AND with the engineered in quality that makes the restoration and rebuild of these instruments cost-effective to bring them back to original condition, ready for a second lifetime of use.

What has happened is that both companies have built pianos with such a high order of musical and mechanical integrity that their used pianos have come back as strong competition against their new piano sales. For those buyers that know this, they reap the **rewards by purchasing and owning instruments that they and many manipulated buyers can't afford to buy brand new**. The result being that these lucky students, teachers and churches have the larger and finest models at a fraction of the price of new...which makes a profound difference in instruction, performance and student motivation.

First, let me make it clear that I have the highest opinion of Kawai and Yamaha products having been an authorized dealer for Kawai and having sold Yamaha pianos as a consultant. And we represent their products today both used and restored and continue to refer customers to dealers for new pianos. We know that Kawai imports used pianos from Japan to assist some dealers to compete and it is probably so for Yamaha as well, but I can't prove it. The coined term: **"Yamaha apparently makes an issue over restored pianos and implies that there is something illegal or unethical going on.** Nothing can be further from the truth. I can also tell you that many authorized Yamaha dealers keep some restored pianos for usually a two-part reason:- i.e. If a customer insists on buying a restored piano then they **either** have a **good** one to sell or a very **bad** one to show to customers as representative of "restored" pianos. One way at least they make a sale and the other way they drive a customer toward the latest new 2008 model piano. I am sure they prefer to sell new as opposed to used...BUT how do they handle it if the customer does purchase the good restored piano? I'll bet you a steak dinner that they don't say a thing negative about it! Want to bet? The other problem that dealers have is that if they sell too many restored pianos and the word gets around, they might just have a problem with their new piano supplier! What does that tell you?

There is nothing illegal or unethical about restored, pre-owned pianos from Japan. It is simply a case of corporate and dealer paranoia in my opinion and in the opinion of other dealers and savvy buyers of used pianos in the U.S.A. I think you will come to the same conclusion when you peruse the information on the subject. In a strange sense the whole controversy is humorous and in another sense a bit sad to see all that energy spent in trying to invalidate a history of quality products just to scare and manipulate a few buyers. My customers tend to think for themselves and see through the "smoke and mirrors" to the truth...once they purchase a piano, play it and enjoy it, all the controversy becomes a moot point and vanishes in a puff of smoke (like a deflated magic dragon) as it should.

Both companies have an enviable reputation for quality control and consistency in their pianos regardless of where they are sold or "destined" for. This has led to the somewhat sticky situation of new quality competing with older quality. Neither company would dare to publicly and actively criticize their own product just because it is 10, 15 or 25 years old in order to pressure a customer to purchase a new product. But when you analyze innuendos and subtle suggestions phrased to make you *think and feel* that their purpose is to HELP and PROTECT you, it becomes crystal clear that the real **purpose is to create a climate of fear and worry in a customer**. The natural response to that type of strategy is that an astute and savvy buyer will then conclude logically that if they do purchase a **new** piano, **it** could/might/will have the same problems at

some point in a not so far future! You can't flim-flam intelligent, honest folks for very long with that one. I have one client that walked out of a retail store when the salesman tried some of this slick talk on him.

As a technician I get to tune and repair pianos and find that ALL pianos have problems in **extreme** climates. Yamaha and Kawai WILL have problems, Steinway WILL have problems. Think not? then move your piano (any brand) to the high desert or to the tropics. This should bring up in your mind the logical question: What can I expect if I move my piano to an area that it was not "destined" for? For example: from Houston, Texas to Arizona; from c. 55%-90% humidity to 10%-45% humidity not to mention temperature fluctuations. Think about it. What about AC, heating? Is your piano going to survive in a beach-front home? Is it possible that the *Wisdom of the East* could know that a piano purchased in Florida would find its way to New Mexico or anywhere else? Of course not!

This is only the tip of the iceberg of the research available on this general issue. If you wish you can read about wood moisture content, seasoned for destination (whatever that might mean in the long run), parts availability (they are available), and resale value. The bottom line is that if you wish to purchase a brand new Yamaha or Kawai 52" upright for \$12,000, please do so. It helps the economy. On the other hand if you have a reputable dealer of used restored Yamaha and Kawai pianos where you can purchase the same size piano or the same model for 60% less than new and then be able to sell it in 5 years for just about what you paid for it, then you have a win, win situation...you saved about \$5-6000 and still have a quality piano which you can easily sell or trade at a price very close to the price paid. Not so with a NEW piano, read further. It gets better or worse depending upon which side you are on: New Piano Dealers vs. Smart Buyers.

NOW THE REALLY IMPORTANT THINGS to keep in mind: **(\$\$ are important too!)**

- **Would** you really fall for the mis-disinformation of the "restored piano market" conversation and pass up a fully restored, as-new, first class grand or upright, regulated and voiced to factory specs, with a virtually perfect finish, backed up by a first class piano shop. **This piano could make the difference as to whether your son or daughter excels at piano!!**
- **Would** you buy some old upright or some used clunky grand piano that would be a poor 2nd, 3rd, or 4th to a restored Kawai or Yamaha just because some salesman scared you?
- **If you** could not afford the \$33,000 price tag for a NEW Yamaha C3, 6'1" Grand would you let them sell you a new 2nd Line piano instead of purchasing a 1st line restored piano for less \$\$?
- **Would** you take the time to investigate, for example, a 1994, fully restored Yamaha C3 for \$14,000 or possibly less? Or would you just shell out an additional \$12,000 or so because the salesperson told you that something could happen to that piano...somewhere, sometime?
- **Would** you, in the case of an upright, purchase a current date Kawai 52" upright at \$13,600 vs. a 1994 US6X 52" Professional upright at \$4700? Either of these pianos would be the dream piano of any student. I could tell you many stories about how buyers have studied the above questions...and they all have positive outcomes for the students, their parents...and their pocket books.

NOW... take a moment to also review the following examples illustrating the word "**investment**" as it applies to pianos:

ATTENTION! - There is no such thing as an "**investment**" grade piano! All pianos depreciate. The Second Law of Thermodynamics and entropy **always** wins. The stanza: "*Golden lads and lasses must, Like chimney sweeps all come to dust*" applies to pianos as well. The definition of the term "**investment**" as it relates to pianos is simply that some pianos retain more **residual value** over time than others. Your real **investment** is in your child, your financial assets and your musical education. But you **can** purchase a piano from a traditional **investment point-of-view!** It is especially workable with restored Kawai and Yamaha pianos.

HERE IS HOW IT WORKS. USE ANY MODEL AND EITHER BUILDER (KAWAI OR YAMAHA) AND ENTER YOUR OWN NUMBERS. THE RESULT WILL BE SIMILAR.

- 1. Start with **Savings gained** by the purchase of a restored C3 @ \$14,000 (Savings of \$19,000 off **new** price)
- 2. **\$19,000** (savings) invested at the rate of 6.5% for 9 years compounded monthly = c.**\$34,051.00** (Assumption: piano study is continuous from age 7 through age16).
- 3. **Plus** the sale of the C3 @ **\$10,000** when your child goes to college.
- 4. **GRAND TOTAL = \$44,051.00 ! In your pocket.** This is a good start for college. Had you purchased the **new** C3 you would only realize the sale from the piano which could be from c. \$8,000 - \$14,000...**IF** you are a good salesman and find a buyer and the piano is in **1st class condition**. If you had purchased the New Yamaha C3 you would only gain from the sale of the 9 year old piano and would loose a potential \$30,000 even with a top sale price for the new C3. Don't forget to include any tax and finance charges in the purchase.
- 5. **Finally:** If you are really sharp and actively manage your finances you would find *market* instruments of investment, especially mutual funds and others that would produce in excess of 6.5%. Assume 10.5% return and ...what would your net have been had you purchased a restored Yamaha or Kawai grand piano rather than new??: **WOW! \$48,682.00!** Not bad...you have your money... **not the new piano dealer!** This is one reason that used, restored Yamaha and Kawai pianos are purchased widely with near 100% satisfaction. The other reason is they are fantastic pianos and pianists and teachers **LOVE THEM**. I will assure you of one thing that will come to pass. If you buy the new piano and let some smooth talking sales guy talk you out of a restored piano, you will secretly kick yourself in the pants 9 years later when you realize how much money you have lost. On the other hand, feel perfectly free to buy new...this economy needs the input to keep growing. Thus, I sell more pianos. I'm for you either way...it's your money, your piano, your choice! America means Freedom! Enjoy.

Read the research doc: "**The Cloud**".pdf.

- 6. **And last but probably more important than any technical argument...here is the final proof:** In my situation, my customers know who I am, where I live and have my phone numbers. This is probably true for any honest and legitimate piano dealer as well. I have never had one complaint about restored Yamaha and Kawai pianos..period! Would irate customers call me at midnight complaining if they had problems with their restored piano?..You bet they would! Would I sell them year after year in the first place if my phone is ringing at midnight with irate buyers? Of

course not! I sleep well and so should you if you should purchase a restored Kawai or Yamaha...(REMEMBER: the only piano better than a restored piano is a new one).

**This guide is based on accumulated data consisting of: published information; personal testimony; experience in the piano trades over 30 years; customer comments and abstracts of technical articles, personal experience with these products and communication with various technicians, dealers and restoration factories. It has been observed over decades that all pianos require at some point either restoration, rebuild or other service to maintain operation and original quality. It is my personal opinion that the restoration process of Kawai and Yamaha pianos can only be successfully completed by technicians, quality control personnel and workers trained in the procedures and technology of the original builders of these pianos. This is in fact true with restored Kawai and Yamaha pianos from Japan. Our restored Yamaha & Kawai pianos carry a 10 yr warranty, same as new. There has never been a better option for a quality piano purchase than restored Yamaha and Kawai pianos. And there is nothing substantial that can be said to invalidate the quality of these pianos.

P.S.:

...Do we expect you to read this essay and beat our door down and buy all our pianos? Not at all. What we would like to see is the live analog (a current reader) to the addressees of Waldo Emerson's essay delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at Cambridge, August 31, 1837. As closely as I can remember (since it was required memorization in a Graduate Forum, *The American Philosophers*), is an excerpt about scholarship and thinking, something we should all do about all things at all times:

"The Scholar is Man thinking... He and he only knows the world. The world of any moment is the merest appearance. Some great decorum, some government, some ephemeral trade, or war, or man, is cried up by half mankind and cried down by the other half, as if all depended on this particular up or down. The odds are that the whole question is not worth the poorest thought which the scholar has lost in listening to the controversy. Let him not quit his belief that a popgun is a popgun, though the ancient and honorable of the earth affirm it to be the crack of doom. In silence, in steadiness, in severe abstraction, let him hold by himself: add observations to observation, patient of neglect, patient of reproach; and bide his own time, - happy enough, if he can satisfy himself alone, that this day he has seen something truly."

I would be happy enough for only one piano buyer that has seen something that presents as truth in this essay that assists them in conserving wealth and magnifying musicianship by purchasing one of our fine restored Yamaha and Kawai pianos. But, there are hundreds buyers over the last 20 years that are fully pleased with their purchases with no problems and only successes in music for their children.

Best Musical Wishes, C. Anthony Pessarra, KeyArts Piano of Houston.

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