

Guide for Buying a Used Piano

Howard
PIANO INDUSTRIES

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Check the keys: play every key on the piano

- Are the keys fairly in tune with each other or are there notes that are far out of tune to the rest? If any are far out of tune, this could be a bad sign that the piano has loose tuning pins.
- Check for any sticking keys. This could be a sign that the piano needs repairs.
- Check the tone.
- Check the touch of the piano. What is the weight of the keys like?
- Do the keys wobble back and forth? This could mean key bushings are loose and need replaced.

Check the inside of the piano: if an upright, remove the frontboard

- Check for signs of mice in the piano. This could be a sign of possible damage.
- Check the bridges (which the strings cross over) for cracks. Cracks can cause buzzing noises or tuning instability. Here, you might see some cracks in the soundboard as well.
- Check the structure. Structural problems need major repairs.
- Check damper pedal function.

Check the back of the piano

- Check for cracks in the soundboard. This also causes buzzing noises and tuning instability.
- Check the ribs for stability or separation from the soundboard.
- Check the backposts for condition and separation from the frame.

Check the action: if an upright, open the lid and remove the music desk

- Check tuning pins and strings for excessive rust around or on them. This might mean strings could break in the future. If you see one shiny string, it probably has been replaced, implying a broken string in the past. This means you could have more strings possibly breaking at some point.
- Check hammer condition. If you have very deep string grooves in the hammer (about 1/8" or 1/4" deep), this means that hammers are very worn and don't have much life left to them.
- Check that hammers are evenly spaced and in line. Minor adjustments can be done for a few out of place hammers.
- Check damper condition. If you play a note and it buzzes as you let go, this is a sign of hard spots on the dampers. That would require some maintenance.
- Check down between keys for signs of mice.

