

SHIGERU KAWAI GRAND PIANO

What is the history of the Shigeru Kawai piano?

The SHIGERU piano is the living legacy of our company's chairman, Mr. Shigeru Kawai. It has long been his dream to create a piano that would transcend any instrument ever built in Japan (and perhaps the world). The SHIGERU piano is the fulfillment of that dream.

What is so very special about the Shigeru Kawai piano?

The SHIGERU piano is handcrafted by a unique breed of craftsman. We call them our Master Piano Artisans (or MPAs). There are only twenty of them. Each one oversees the creation and completion of a given instrument before placing their name on a personal biography that follows the piano wherever it goes.

Can you summarize the process by which each piano is made?

First, the piano is designed with the use of CAD engineering and tonal analysis in our unique anechoic (echoless) chamber. Then, the world's finest materials are selected for use in building each instrument. The woods are carefully seasoned – some as long as 15 years as is the case for the Ezo spruce used in our soundboards. Finally, materials and design are married together to create truly exceptional instruments, meticulously crafted by the finest piano builders on Earth.

What role does the craftsman play in creating the Shigeru Kawai piano?

To some extent, all pianos are handcrafted. The SHIGERU piano is no exception in this regard. However, the difference between the SHIGERU and other pianos is the degree of personal attention and detail at every level of assembly given to each instrument by our Master Piano Artisans (MPAs) who are experts in every facet of piano craftsmanship.

Often in our industry, pianos characterized as “handcrafted” are built by people performing one task day in and day out. When the word *handcrafted* is mentioned, one must immediately ask the next logical question, ‘Crafted by whose hands?’ Skill levels can vary widely from company to company. Because each of our MPAs are capable of building a world-class piano from the ground up, our view of “handcrafted” takes on much deeper meaning. One who plays the SHIGERU piano will quickly sense that the hands of a Master Piano Artisan are indeed masterful.

It is also important to note that Mr. Shigeru Kawai is so deeply committed to this personal line of pianos that he will send one of these Master Piano Artisans from Japan to a purchaser's home or studio within the first year of ownership. I don't know of any other piano builder in the world who can approach that level of commitment.

What makes the sound of the Shigeru piano so unique?

The SHIGERU piano has a wonderfully rich, full-bodied tone. It's difficult to describe in words. People have said that the sound "washes over you like a blanket of velvet." One simply has to experience it.

What are the advantages of the Shigeru piano to musicians?

To the player, the SHIGERU piano offers an infinite pallet of colors, an unsurpassed level of expressiveness, and a somewhat indescribable feeling that the instrument actually senses the player's every nuance and intuition. Mr. Shigeru Kawai's hope is that the SHIGERU piano will inspire tremendous passion and creativity... allowing the player to realize his or her musical dreams.

Do you think the Shigeru Kawai piano has a voice for jazz piano performances as well as for classical? Absolutely. While the SHIGERU piano's warm, full tone is certainly ideal for classical music, it also provides a rich foundation for the lush stylings of jazz. Its expressiveness enables the soloist to communicate with not only precision but also with great "heart." I think jazz players will swoon as they discover the SHIGERU.

How does Yuko Maruyama's "In Tone Nation" CD and surround DVD showcase the special sound of the Shigeru Kawai Piano?

Yuko is a wonderfully sensitive player and composer. It was her sensitivity that made the SHIGERU piano a perfect fit. The first time she played it, she knew that this piano could become an exciting new "voice" for her playing. As you can hear on the "In Tone Nation" CD, her compositions were an ideal showcase for the tone and character of the SHIGERU. We were really privileged to have her become the first artist to record on the SHIGERU VII.

We're also very thrilled about the DVD version of this recording because the higher definition does even more to emphasize and showcase the perfect tone of the piano.

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